

Blessed DE MAZENOD

# LETTERS

TO THE S. CONGREGATION  
OF PROPAGANDA FIDE  
AND TO THE SOCIETY  
OF THE PROPAGATION  
OF THE FAITH

1832-1861





**Letters to The Sacred Congregation  
of Propaganda Fide  
and to The Society  
of The Propagation of the Faith**





Blessed EUGENE DE MAZENOD  
1782-1861

Collection: *Oblate Writings V*

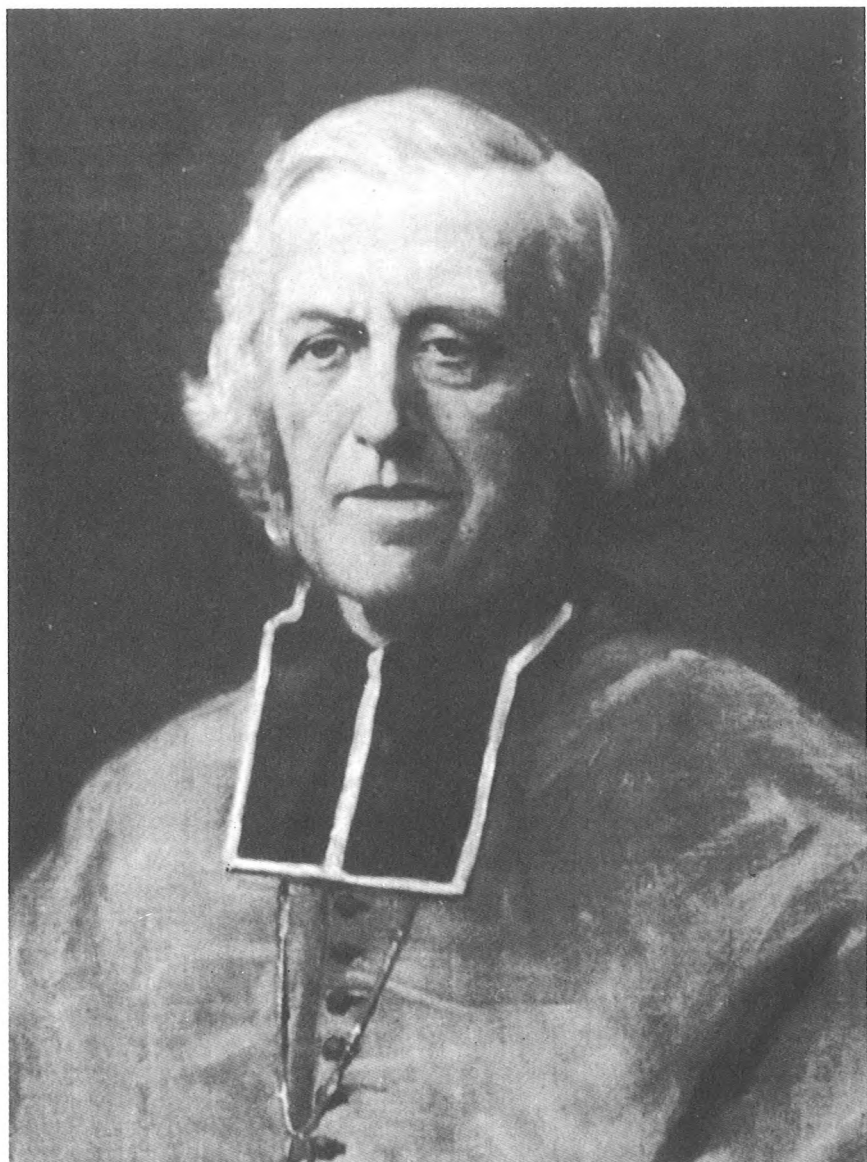
**Letters to The Sacred Congregation  
of Propaganda Fide  
and to The Society  
of The Propagation of The Faith**

1832-1861

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*Bishop Charles Joseph de Mazenod (1782-1861), Founder of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1816; named Bishop of Marseilles in 1837 and Senator in 1856, nominated for the Cardinalate in 1859.*





*Card. Alessandro Barnabò (1801-1874), Pro-Secretary of the S. C. of Propaganda Fide (12 July, 1847 – 13 August, 1848), Secretary (13 August, 1848 – 19 June, 1856), Cardinal Prefect (20 June 1856 – 24 February, 1874).*



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## **Introduction**

*The first four volumes of The Writings of Blessed C. J. Eugène de Mazenod, the founder of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, contained all the letters gathered here and there over the last few decades and addressed prevalently to his missionary sons in North America, the British Isles, South Africa, and Ceylon.*

*This correspondence revives the initial missionary fervor of the Congregation which was so generous from the very outset in the number of members it sent throughout the world and the spirit which was its fundamental inspiration.*

*These same missions, however, would not have been able to survive or prosper without the wise guidance of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide and the financial assistance of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith. That is why in this volume we present a selection of letters addressed to the Sacred Congregation and the Missionary Society.*

### **Letters to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, Rome**

*Among all the letters sent by the Founder of the Oblates to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, we are only publishing those which directly relate to the Oblate missions, and that means approximately half of the letters he wrote to that Congregation. We have omitted the other letters dealing with his nomination to the episcopacy under the title of Bishop of Icosia, the plan of his elevation to Cardinal, the revolution in the Papal States and the wars in Italy, the various letters of recommendation, and especially those on his difficulties with the many Oriental priests who sought refuge and money in France. In this regard, he wrote in one of his letters to Cardinal Fransoni: "One of our poets begins one of his elegies with these words: 'Who will Deliver me from the Greek, etc.' In truth, I would willingly say the same thing.*

*After so many problems caused by bishops, monks, and priests from these 'blessed' African and Asian countries, here there is another Greek priest who has fallen out of the sky...'*<sup>1</sup>

*In the Founder's missionary correspondence there are always two dominant concerns: proclaiming the Gospel to unbelievers and establishing the Congregation on solid bases. Everything which represented a threat or an obstacle to those driving concerns made him impatient, and everything which made them impossible to achieve obliged him to make radical decisions. That was the reason why he withdrew from Algeria in 1850 to send his missionaries towards South Africa, and was about to remove his fathers from Red River when Fr. Taché was appointed coadjutor to Bishop Provencher in St. Boniface.*

*Under the jurisdiction of Oblate bishops (Bishops Allard in Natal, Taché and Grandin in northwestern Canada, and Guigues in the East) the evangelisation of unbelievers, the Oblate religious life, and the establishment of the Congregation followed the Founder's guidelines and proceeded without serious difficulties. Therefore, those missions are hardly ever mentioned in the letters to Propaganda Fide. All the correspondence concerns the missions in Ceylon and Oregon under the jurisdiction of non-Oblate bishops.*

*At first glance these letters addressed to the Sacred Congregation are far from edifying! They are quite surprising in the hardness of the expressions used, the severity of the judgements voiced, and the insistence – not to say stubbornness – with which Bishop de Mazenod submitted certain projects in the hopes of bringing Propaganda Fide around to his views.*

*This can be explained by the language in which the letters were written and the fact that the Founder was writing to superiors and in particular to his friend Bishop Barnabò, secretary of Propaganda Fide from 1848 to 1856, and then its Cardinal Prefect.*

<sup>1</sup> Bishop de Mazenod to Cardinal Franson, May 16, 1844. Marseilles, archives of the Archdiocese, Registry of Administrative Letters, Vol. 5, p. 18. In some of his letters the Founder uses the Italian expression 'benedette nazioni' (blessed nations). This adjective is used at times in Italian as an antiphrasis to avoid saying 'maledette nazioni' (cursed nations). In his correspondence in French the Founder never used that adjective when referring to a person. The adjective has therefore been literally translated by 'blessed'. The Italian word 'benedetto' is also used when referring to someone out of impatience or anger and maintains that certain sense of reserve which the word 'maudit' does not have in French.

*Almost all these letters are written in Italian.<sup>2</sup> Now, for many years Fr. de Mazenod had little opportunity to write in that language. He had picked up his Italian vocabulary during the period of exile when he was from 10 to 20 years of age, and it is a well known fact that young people are extremists by nature and tend to express themselves in an excess of language which often surpasses their own initial intention. This would seem to help in explaining, at least partially, the harshness of the words and expressions often used in these letters when, for example, he referred to the Republicans in Rome in 1848-1850 (scoundrels, rogues, rabble; July 30, 1849, February 27, 1850), the Goans in Ceylon (true executioners of souls, that breed, those loafers; August 11, 1847, October 20, 1850),<sup>3</sup> the bishops of Ceylon and Oregon whom he never ceased to complain about (insincere prelate, crafty and unfriendly prelate, disloyal person, conniving rascal, prelates of that species, arrogance, truly tyrannical jurisdiction, stubborn and unjust opposition; June 15, July 8 and December 8, 1851, October 28, 1853, July 12 and August 2, 1855).*

*Moreover, Bishop de Mazenod often wrote under the effect of the emotion triggered by certain letters and without having the time to reread what had been written in order not to miss the postal service and because he was so busy. He admits that himself, and it can be seen in the rough style, the Italianized French words, and the repetition of the same ideas in the same letters. In sharp contrast is the style and varied array of points made in his letter of March 29, 1861; but Bishop de Mazenod was then ill and thus had the time to revise his text which a secretary had written.*

<sup>2</sup> I wish to thank Fr. P. Pirlot for the attentive work he did reviewing my translation. I also wish to thank the translators for the English edition and all those who provided their assistance in a discrete yet essential way: Fr. F. George, director of the editions, and Frs. A. Baillargeon, F. Sullivan, I. Tourigny, and especially A. Kedl who checked the translations and read the final proofs. A very special word of thanks to Fr. Paul Sion who checked all the French texts and Fr. D. Levasseur who corrected the first proofs of all the volumes in both editions and keeps a watchful eye on printing operations in Richelieu.

<sup>3</sup> Bishop de Mazenod was not the only one to express a severe judgement on the Goans. Here are a few excerpts from letters written by bishops in Ceylon. Bishop Bettachini to Cardinal Fransoni, 1850: "After so many crimes, encroachment of jurisdiction, pilfering, drunkenness, etc., some Goans continue to celebrate Mass." Rome, archives of Prop. Fide. Scrit. rif. nei Congressi, Indie Orientali, v. 12, (1849-1850), p. 707. Bishop Bravi to Cardinal Fransoni, August 14, 1851: "Goan priests, darker of heart than body." *Ibid.*, v. 13 (1851-1852), p. 567 sq. Bishop Gaetano Musulce, Goan, to Cardinal Fransoni, Sept. 14, 1850: "Sunt enim ii disubidentes (sic) et obstinati..." Archives, archdiocese of Colombo.

*The Founder knew very well that he had to speak frankly to superiors who were friends, to whom he could voice his feelings in a very open way. "You will forgive my frankness, Your Eminence" he wrote Cardinal Barnabò on July 28, 1858, "You know that with you I think out loud, that is to say, I always speak my mind without any reservations. Such is the result of the confidence that I have in your goodness towards me and of the openness of heart that I have always had for you from the moment I have had the good fortune of knowing you." On August 12, 1860 he wrote in the same vein: "When I take the liberty of writing to Your Eminence confidentially, it is in order to bare my heart to you with the fullest trust. I leave aside all the customary precautions of formal language in order to give voice, frankly and without any reservations, to what I think about people and events. In this disposition of my soul which presents itself before you without fear and in all simplicity, you must not take umbrage at any of my thoughts or judgements. I may be mistaken, undoubtedly, but I should not be blamed since the more severe I will have been in my assessments, all the more will I have shown you my affectionate trust and friendly surrender."*<sup>4</sup>

*Together with these reasons which at least partially explain the excesses in form in these letters, we must also consider the serious nature of the problems which arose one after another in Oregon and Ceylon.*

*The Oblates left for Walla Walla (Oregon) in February 1847. While in eastern Canada they had found a true father in Bishop Bourget of Montreal. The two brothers, Norbert and Magloire Blanchet, the archbishop of Oregon City and the bishop of Walla Walla respectively, were of a completely different nature. Both of them had an eminently apostolic spirit, but were very jealous of their authority and claimed the right to exercise control over everything, financial administration as well as the secular and religious clergy.<sup>5</sup> In a few years time they lost the few secular priests who had come with them and the Jesuits who transferred their operations to California in 1850. Fr. Accolti explained the reasons for that decision to Fr. Elet, the Jesuit provincial in*

<sup>4</sup> Refer as well to the following letters by the Founder to Propaganda Fide: July 8, 1851, July 21, 1853, September 20, 1854, July 12, August 2, December 18, 1855, March 27, 1861.

<sup>5</sup> Their principles are stated in 'Note on the establishment of a metropolitan See' Rome, archives of Prop. Fide. Acta, vol. 209, pp. 188-189.

Missouri, with these words: "The bishop of Walla Walla holds on mordicus to his authority, understood not according to the holy canons and laws of the Church, but according to his own interpretation which is far removed from ecclesiastical rules, and once he has spoken, he is adamant... As soon as he arrived in this country, he obtained the names of our fathers in charge of the various missions and immediately sent each of them a personal letter of appointment as the missionary-pastor of that place, limiting the jurisdiction of each one to his own mission and not beyond it, and ending with the clause: until the repeal thereof... Reverend Father, you can well understand the problems and obstacles he placed before these poor missionaries as well as the superior who, because of this act, was deprived of his authority and unable to dispose of his subjects as he saw fit, according to our holy rules, and transfer them from one place to another when he might have felt it opportune to do so either for the good of his subjects or for the well-being of these unfortunate savages... Moreover, "the property of the missions is diocesan property and belongs to the bishop. The houses and the churches fall under this same right. The bishop can request a report on the use made of allocations from the Propagation of the Faith. It is up to the bishop to decide if a mission is suitable in this place or somewhere else... I have read very much on the history of our early missions in various parts of the world, and I have never noticed anything like this elsewhere."<sup>6</sup>

Despite his pointed complaints and the vain nature of his efforts to reach some sort of satisfactory arrangement,<sup>7</sup> Bishop de Mazenod seems to have been the most patient of the collaborators with the Blanchet brothers. He only permitted the Oblates to leave Oregon in 1858 after their missions of St. Joseph and St. Ann had been burned to

<sup>6</sup> Cf. excerpts of this letter from Fr. Accolti in the letter to Bishop Barnabò from the General of the Jesuits, Sept. 14, 1850. *Ibid.*, *Scrit. rif. nei Congressi, America Centrale*, v. 15 (1849-1851), ff. 583, 584...

<sup>7</sup> In order to provide the reader with an idea of Bishop Magloire Blanchet's character and a better understanding of how he looked upon the signed agreements, here are excerpts from two of his letters. "I am readily willing to do everything that will not go against my conscience for the good of my diocese. However, as I wrote to the Superior of a religious Order, if my conscience instructs me not to grant this or that, I would not grant it even if all the missions of Oregon were to collapse as a consequence..." Letter to Cardinal Frasoni, April 5, 1854. *Ibid.*, vol. 16 (1853-1855) f. 975. "I don't like these major arrangements and to put it briefly, I recognize none of them, whether large or small, old or new." Text quoted by Fr. d'Herbomez to Bishop de Mazenod, October 19, 1854. Rome O.M.I. Gen. archives.

the ground by the Americans and the Indians during the Cayou revolt in 1855-1856.

The Oblates then headed north where Bishop Demers of Vancouver had been waiting for them for a few years to evangelize the Indians and thereby continue, as he put it, "the work of their salvation which I began myself, was then continued by the Jesuits, and then abandoned by them without even giving me any notice."<sup>8</sup> The Oblates first settled in Esquimalt on the island of Vancouver and then launched into the evangelisation of the Indians in British Colombia. Even though relations with Bishop Demers were fairly good, Bishop de Mazenod was convinced, like many other religious superiors at that time, that his sons would work with greater unity and ease under the jurisdiction of one of their own. That is why he highly recommended that Propaganda Fide establish the apostolic vicariate of British Colombia and entrust it to an Oblate. However, he was not to live long enough to see his efforts crowned with success. It was only in 1863 that Fr. d'Herbomez was appointed Apostolic Vicar of that new vicariate.

The difficulties encountered in Ceylon were much more complicated. Basically speaking, Bishop de Mazenod always esteemed Bishop Bettachini and was grateful to this Apostolic Vicar of Jaffna who had asked for the Oblates in 1847. Nonetheless, the Founder had cause to complain about the allocation from the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith which the Apostolic Vicar wanted entirely for himself, and about the opportuneness of appointing Fr. Semeria coadjutor of Jaffna in 1850. Bishop Bettachini acknowledged the fact that Fr. Semeria was the ideal person to succeed him, but felt that the appointment of a coadjutor at that time was "premature and inappropriate"<sup>9</sup> since he enjoyed good health and there were only a few priests in his vicariate. He held firmly to his position. Bishop de Mazenod did not relax his insistent efforts to ensure his sons a solid position: "It is not right," he wrote in 1852, "to leave my Congregation on a distant island, upon my death, with an uncertain future as if it were a simple missionary."<sup>10</sup> Bishop Bettachini lost his patience and sent a less than

<sup>8</sup> Bishop Demers to Cardinal Fransoni, April 8, 1856. Rome, archives of Prop. Fide. Scrit. rif. nei Congressi, America Centrale, v. 17 (1855-1857), f. 603.

<sup>9</sup> Propaganda to Bishop Bettachini, Dec. 11, 1850. *Ibid.*, Lettere e decreti, vol. 339 (1850), f. 1041; Bishop Bettachini to Cardinal Fransoni, Jan. 7, 1852. *Ibid.*, Scrit. rif. nei Cong. Indie Orientali, v. 13 (1851-1852), f. 784.

<sup>10</sup> Excerpt of a letter from Bishop de Mazenod to Bishop Bettachini. Copied in the letter to Bishop Barnabò of April 16, 1852. *Ibid.*, Indie Orientali, vol. 13 (1851-1852), f. 903.



courteous reply to the Bishop of Marseilles who took the matter up with the Propaganda. Cardinal Fransonì then wrote to the Apostolic Vicar of Jaffna who was on bad terms as well with the Apostolic Vicar and Coadjutor of Colombo: "The letters you write... are couched in such terms that they greatly afflict your correspondents... I therefore exhort you with love to abide by that Christian moderation whereby you will know how to temper this excessive ardor or sharpness in your words... which does nothing more than alienate people from you..."<sup>11</sup>

Bishop Bettachini held to his position, but in his answer to the Cardinal Prefect he ended with these words: "Do as you so will, out of obedience I would even descend into Hades."<sup>12</sup> On January 25, 1856 he finally accepted the appointment of a coadjutor, but pointed out to the Cardinal Prefect: "I only ask you not to stress my incapacity or convince me with better arguments that I am inane and stupid, because it is too painful for me to be considered as such."<sup>13</sup>

Fr. Semeria was appointed coadjutor in 1856 and then Apostolic Vicar of Jaffna in 1857, after Bishop Bettachini's death.

A good part of the Founder's letters to Propaganda Fide deal with the problems raised by Bishop Bravi and the vicariate of Colombo, despite the fact that there were only four Oblates in this Vicariate, who had arrived in 1851 upon the direct request of the Sacred Congregation. Bishop Bravi, an Italian and coadjutor to Bishop Gaetano Musulce, was opposed to their arrival. He was afraid that the presence of the Oblates, already settled in Jaffna, would entail the abusive interference of that vicariate in the affairs of the Colombo vicariate. Since he was a Silvestrinian he also hoped to bequeath the vicariate to his Order which, unfortunately, had too few members to support his plans. While he did not refuse the Oblates who had been imposed upon him, he clearly expressed how he felt in their regard: "If the four promised subjects are now to come, let them come, but as simple missionaries, alone and isolated without the slightest idea of having to establish a mission for themselves and even less of opening a house of their Order."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Cardinal Fransonì to Bishop Bettachini, Dec. 13, 1851. *Ibid.*, Lettere e decreti, vol. 340 (1851), f. 964.

<sup>12</sup> Bishop Bettachini to Cardinal Fransonì, Jan. 7, 1852. *Ibid.*, Scrit. rif. nei Congressi, Indie Orientali, vol. 13 (1851-1852), f. 784.

<sup>13</sup> *IDEM*, *Ibid.*, vol. 15 (1855-1856), f. 896 v.

<sup>14</sup> Bishop Bravi to Cardinal Fransonì, Nov. 29, 1854. *Ibid.*, vol. 13, f. 405.

Nonetheless, Bishop Bravi assured the Founder that he would be a second father to the Oblates. In exchange, he was able to have Fr. Semeria appear as only the nominal superior of the young Oblates whom he scattered among the poor and distant missions. Slowly but surely he did everything in his power to discourage them. He had plenty of time for that because he was on very bad terms with Bishop Musulce who persisted in wanting to administer the vicariate on his own.<sup>15</sup> In addition to that, Bishop Bravi bowed to the wishes of the Goans in order to win them over to his side. He kept his pectoral cross out of sight, did no "visits or confirmations",<sup>16</sup> and backed them in their opposition to the Oblates who were considered overly zealous in their apostolate, especially in admitting children to Holy Communion. The fact that the Oblates, young and without any guidance, did act imprudently at times was acknowledged by Bishop de Mazenod. However, like a loving father, he defended them before the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide and lodged a protest against Bishop Bravi's behavior. The latter never changed his attitude and his dislike for the four Oblates even increased when they sided with Jaffna in the dispute between the two vicariates on the question of jurisdiction over some important missions, e.g. the Sanctuary of St. Ann of Talamula, the Chilaw mission, and later on the mission of Kurunegala.

In order to settle that matter on the basis of precise information, Propaganda Fide sent out an apostolic visitor in the person of Bishop Bonnard, the apostolic vicar of Pondichery. It took into account the conclusions of his report and, on April 2, 1855, it was decided that Jaffna would keep Chilaw, take over St. Ann under certain conditions, and that the number of Oblate missionaries in Colombo would be increased "in order to give it exclusively to this Congregation which has already been entrusted with the vicariate of Jaffna."<sup>17</sup>

It is easy to understand why, after this, Bishop Bravi was even more diligent in the use of all his diplomatic talents to avoid this outcome and why Bishop de Mazenod urged Propaganda Fide to hasten the effective application of that decision, if even by successive stages.

<sup>15</sup> Bishop Bettachini to Cardinal Franson, Nov. 29, 1854. *Ibid.*, vol. 14 (1853-1854) f. 1427.

<sup>16</sup> Letter from Bishop Bettachini to Bishop Bravi (April 24, 1852), transcribed in the letter from Léon Cingolani (missionary) to Cardinal Franson, May 9, 1852. *Ibid.*, vol. 13, f. 980.

<sup>17</sup> General Congregation of April 2, 1855. *Ibid.*, Acta, vol. 219, ff. 276-281.

*He thought the moment had come when Bishop Bravi died in 1859. He raised the point with Cardinal Barnabò in all his last letters. However, Propaganda Fide hesitated to remove their only mission from the Sylvestrinians. After two years of vacancy Colombo was assigned to another Sylvestrinian by the name of Sillani. It was only in 1883 that an Oblate, Fr. Bonjean, was appointed to Colombo.*

## **Letters to the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith of Lyon and of Paris**

*Together with the letters addressed to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, we also present those sent by Bishop de Mazenod to the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith. The former deal with problems related to the mission fields, relations with bishops, and evangelisation in general, while the latter dwell mostly upon financial matters.*

*It has often been said that money is the backbone of war. Bishop de Mazenod was a very realistic man and quickly realized that the same held true for the missions. Without money it was impossible to send the missionaries on their way and provide for their support in those poor regions where everything had to be totally begun. That is why he always considered the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith to be indispensable and referred to it as: "the Work of Works" (August 6, 1851), "the living providence of the foreign missions" (Nov. 17, 1851), "the admirable Work... to which no other will ever able to be compared" (April 14, 1856). That is also why he appealed to it with oft repeated and ever more urgent requests as the number of Oblate missionaries increased and their works advanced on the four continents.*

*We have found 107 letters<sup>18</sup> addressed to the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith and 2 to the Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood. We are only publishing 64 of them so as not to over amplify the size of this volume and in order to avoid a dry and repetitive reading of letters which deal almost exclusively with money and business. These letters were all signed by the Founder and written in the first person as if he had written them himself. The actual handwriting is often enough that of secretaries who wrote the letters according to his wishes.*

<sup>18</sup> They are almost all on file in the archives of the Postulation in Rome. They were in the archives of the Propagation of the Faith in Fribourg (Switzerland) and were given to the Congregation during the period of research to prepare Mgr. J. Leflon's work on the Founder and the historical position for the Founder's cause.

*The Missionary Society is very well known. The 1842 report, published in the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith,<sup>19</sup> narrated how it began. "The beginnings of the Missionary Society are obscure and vague; such is the destiny of Christian institutions. God often disposes things in such a way that no one can be called their author and no human name connected to them. He hides and divides their source like that of the great rivers where no one can tell from which stream they began. Two cries of distress, one from the East and the other from the West, were heard by two pious women in a provincial city (Miss Pauline Jaricot and Mrs. Petit) and inspired the design which was fortunately realized and already provides efficient assistance to missions in the two worlds."*

*On May 3, 1822, 10 apostles, priests and laymen, officially founded the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon, affiliated to a similar association which already worked with the Seminary of the Foreign Missions in Paris. The purpose was to collect funds and have people pray for the missions. The basic organization followed the decimal system which Pauline Jaricot had applied to Christian charity. The members, gathered together in groups of 10 and 100, undertook to pray each day and give a penny a week for the missions.*

*The Missionary Society spread quickly throughout the dioceses of France and in less than 10 years had expanded into Savoy, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, and eventually to all Catholic countries. It collected 22,915 francs in 1823, 309,947 in 1833, and 4,163,065 francs in 1843. The total sum collected remained more or less at that level until 1860.*

*Beginning in 1843 the Founder had a very detailed report prepared each year on the needs of the Oblate missions. The exact nature and the clarity of these documents which were ordinarily written by the secretary of the Congregation, Fr. Casimir Aubert, earned the praise of the administrators of the Missionary Society.<sup>20</sup> The Congregation received 12,500 francs in 1843. This amount increased by approxi-*

<sup>19</sup> *Annales de la Propagation de la foi*, Lyon, t. 15 (1853), p. 172.

<sup>20</sup> Letter from the Founder to the Missionary Society, Feb. 29, 1860. Relations between the Missionary Society and Bishop de Mazenod were described by Fr. N. KOWALSKY, O.M.I., in *Études Oblates*, "Mgr de Mazenod et l'Oeuvre de la Propagation de la foi", t. 11 (1952), pp. 239-260.

mately 10,000 francs each year and reached 95,000 francs in 1852. It jumped to 150,000 francs in 1853 and then up to 190,000 in 1859.<sup>21</sup>

Bishop de Mazenod had his Council study the report very carefully and always took a personal interest in it, even during his final illness. "Even though I have now been confined to my bed of pain for more than three months," he wrote on April 10, 1861, "the Lord has granted me the grace, in the midst of my sufferings, to be able to deal with the matters that concern me in my twofold quality. I myself have closely examined the report I am sending to you..."

The letters we have selected are especially those which accompanied these reports or dealt with special needs.

The expressions used at the beginning and the end of each letter indicate that the Founder always addressed the administrators of the Missionary Society with the utmost respect and esteem, even though he wasn't that inclined to trust laymen with the affairs of the Church.<sup>22</sup> He often reiterated the gratitude felt by the Congregation. Nonetheless, he never ceased to be himself, with a great freedom of judgement, a frankness that is a bit harsh at times, and a dynamism which drew its strength from his love for God and the salvation of souls.

In 1848 for example, when four fathers were to be sent to Ceylon he did not accept the orientation of the administrators of Lyon who wanted to give everything to Bishop Bettachini and nothing to the Oblates. "Gentlemen, you are not the agents of the Apostolic Vicar of Jaffna", he wrote on October 24, "but the benevolent dispensers of the alms of the faithful which you distribute according to the needs, not only of the bishops and apostolic vicars, but also of the religious orders entrusted by the Church to evangelise infidel countries..." He received what he judged to be a discourteous reply, took offence, and for a year ceased all correspondence with Lyon. When he resumed the dialogue after what he had written was judged to be correct, he was once again very courteous, but he always bolstered his requests for financial aid for the Congregation, the scholasticate in England, and the other extraordinary needs with examples of similar aid granted to other Institutes and included in the annual reports published in the Annals.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> We only have on file the last 7 reports (1855-1861), copied in the Registry of Letters (1855-1861)... Rome, archives of the Postulation, DM X.

<sup>22</sup> We have an example in his relations with L. Veuillot. Cf. *Inquisitio Historica Servi Dei C. J. E. de Mazenod*, Rome, 1968, pp. 441-447.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. letters dated May 23, 1850, March 5, 1853, april 15, 1853, etc.

*When he received a sum too far below what he had requested, he would return to the attack either by exposing the abusive expenditures to be met with aid granted or by showing how the Oblates lived in misery. "I will speak to you later about the needs in Oregon," he wrote on October 24, 1848, "These missionaries appeal to you, they say, not to construct beautiful churches as is done in the United States, but to build huts where they can find protection against the inclemency of the seasons and to procure the simple food which supports their efforts and keeps them from dying of hunger..." "The members of the Propagation of the Faith make their donations for the missionaries who work to announce the Gospel to the infidels," he added on December 22, 1850, "and not to embellish churches... or furnish the bishop's residence..." In the last letter he wrote to the Missionary Society on April 10, 1861, we read in very much the same sense: "For our missionaries I ask you not for what they need to lead a comfortable and pleasant life, but what is needed to procure very simple food and very modest upkeep in order to put up with their very difficult work and ensure some respect for the sacred character with which they are endowed and the august ministry they fulfill."*

*On two occasions the Founder recognized the fact that he had exaggerated in the way he asked for more money, to the extent that he had belaboured the administrators. He humbly apologized and clarified his intentions in a letter written on Jan. 8, 1857. "I have learned from the bishop of St. Boniface and the bishop of Olympia that the letter I had the occasion to write to you in order to stress the needs of our mission caused you distress. My secretary must have badly misunderstood my thoughts if he happened to use an expression which may have offended you. It is so far from my spirit and my heart to wish to cause the slightest distress to men such as yourselves, dedicated to good and for whom I harbour the deepest consideration and profess such admiration, that when signing my letter I did not notice that it contained anything other than the expression of our difficulties and the wish that your charity would provide for them. Nonetheless, I am so distressed by the fact that, even involuntarily, I was able to offend you that I hasten to express my regret and extend my apologies..."<sup>24</sup>*

*Bishop de Mazenod also complained at times to the Missionary Society about the articles published in the Annals. In 1853 the*

<sup>24</sup> Cf. letter dated October 10, 1860.

publication already had a circulation of 150,000 copies, and 212,000 in 1861, of which 138,000 for the French edition. It was widely read due to the interest generated by the letters from missionaries. The fact of having letters and reports written by Oblates published in the *Annals* meant increased exposure for the Congregation and its works. The Founder never failed to send in the best letters written by the missionaries. Except for 1848 and 1853, one or two were published every year starting in 1845. Despite numerous reminders, only one more letter was published in 1854 and another in 1855. The Founder then thought it was the right moment to raise his voice. "I would have liked people not to have forgotten to mention the names of the missionaries who left for the missions," he wrote on Jan. 17, 1854. "The dioceses which give them to us are surprised when no mention is made of them. I say nothing more about carrying the letters I have sent to Lyon on numerous occasions. I happen to read less interesting ones. It seems to me that in order to honor the various Orders known to exercise the missionary ministry, their correspondence should be published on a rotation basis, if only to prove they are not idle." In a letter written on April 14, 1856, he expressed himself in an even more forceful fashion. "The latest edition of *Annals* once again only contains more or less interesting letters from the missions in China. Aren't you afraid of overly promoting the interests of the Holy Childhood by only talking about countries which are depicted as having to absorb all the funds destined for children, as if in the other missions just as large a number of these poor creatures were not baptized. I do not think I am exaggerating when I feel that I have sent you perhaps more edifying letters than some of those which have received preference in the *Annals*, and they have the merit of diversity. People end up by being bored with only hearing about China, Cochinchina, and Tonkin." The message was received. Beginning in 1858 numerous letters written by Oblates appeared in the *Annals* each year.

We have dwelt here on only a few aspects of the correspondence whose importance the reader himself will understand in terms of how it helps us to know Bishop de Mazenod better and enlighten us on the missionary activity of the Oblates. In effect, in these letters which deal especially with business matters, the Founder is not just someone who solicits or administers. He is always inspired by the nature and the goal of the Congregation, the salvation of souls, the presence of the Church in the world, and the glory of God. On the other hand, even if these letters do not deal very much with the religious life of the missionaries

and are not rich in counsel and reflections which could contribute to the edification of today's Oblates, they are as important as the letters thus far published in the sense of highlighting the rapid expansion of the Oblate foreign missions, the increase in the number of missionaries, their works, their sacrifices, and the spirit which inspired them. May they stand as a monument, humble yet sincere, expressing the gratitude felt by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate for the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith of Lyon and Paris.

## The Founder's Missionary Correspondence

*This fifth volume concludes the Founder's missionary correspondence. Ever faithful to the watchword given to his sons, he himself spared no efforts to assure the stability and progress of the missions entrusted to the Oblates: recruiting members, forming them, stimulating them, giving them a line of courageous conduct for their apostolate among unbelievers, and procuring indispensable financial resources for them; proposing to Propaganda Fide the best ways to render apostolic work more effective and creating an atmosphere conducive to more generous dedication, even, when necessary, defending the missionaries before the bishops who did not understand them, by stressing their zeal and good will: these are the main themes in this correspondence which, while fully confirming what is already known about his impulsive character, clearly indicates how the Founder was truly missionary in spirit.<sup>25</sup> "He possessed that spirit of conquest which impelled the apostles to go ever forward to spread the kingdom of God. As head of a Congregation dedicated to the missions, he always had clearly before his mind's eye a real concern for the territories entrusted to his sons. The apostolate, the problems of the various missions, the efforts of the missionaries, nothing was foreign to him. He concentrated his attention on every new Christian community that was being born. He gathered information and sought counsel in order to be able to give each missionary appropriate instructions. Unfortunately he did not have all the data we have today on missionary methods and problems... However, these methods and techniques are not everything in the missionary apostolate. What is essential is the burning concern to preach the message of the Redeemer*

<sup>25</sup> A. PERBAL, "La vocation missionnaire d'Eugène de Mazenod" in *Études Oblates*, 17 (1958), pp. 289-319; *Id.*, "Eugène de Mazenod reste marqué par sa vocation missionnaire", *Ibid.*, 19 (1960), pp. 23-73.



*to the world, the apostolic charity which flamed in the heart of St. Paul and launched him along the roads of the Roman Empire to win souls over to Christ. This charity also burned in the heart of Bishop de Mazenod... who contributed more than anyone else in creating the missionary spirit of the Congregation."*<sup>26</sup>

Yvon Beaudoin, O.M.I.

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N.B. When this volume had practically reached the stage of final printing, a collection of Propaganda Fide archives never before examined by the Oblates came to light when doing research on Fr. Tempier. The collection is entitled *Scritture originali: Congressi Generali* and, for example, volumes 989 and 990 contain the originals of letters 71, 74, 77 and 78 of this fifth volume of *Oblate Writings*. A last letter from the Founder, not published here, written by a secretary who was undoubtedly Fr. Rey and sent to Cardinal Barnabò on April 15, 1861, was signed by the Founder who added two lines of greetings in practically illegible script and said that he was still waiting for "some good news from Colombo."

<sup>26</sup> Martin QUÉRÉ, *Mgr de Mazenod et les missions étrangères*, Rome, 1960, p. 80.



**LETTERS  
TO THE SACRED CONGREGATION  
OF PROPAGANDA FIDE**



## 1832-1833

### 1. [To Cardinal Pedicini: Prefect of the S. C. of Propaganda Fide].<sup>1</sup>

*Steps taken with the Government to send Oblates to Algeria. The priests who had left since 1830 were too few in number and ill prepared. Fr. de Mazenod once again offers the services of his missionaries who will always be grateful for the role played by Cardinal Pedicini in the approval of the Rules of the Congregation.*

Marseilles, April 10, 1832.

Bishopric of Marseilles

Your Eminence

As soon as Algiers had fallen to the arms of good King Charles X,<sup>2</sup> I set to work in an attempt to provide the Catholics in the colony with the assistance of our religion. Ever nourishing the hope of one day seeing many infidels open their eyes to the light of the Faith, I wrote to my uncle, the bishop of Marseille,<sup>3</sup> and asked him to write both to the Prime Minister<sup>4</sup> at that time and to the Cardinal Chaplain<sup>5</sup> for aid and protection to that effect. The project was very warmly received and we were informed that this very important subject would be immediately broached and our Congregation given the

<sup>1</sup> Original, Italian: Rome, archives of Pr. Fide. Scrit. rif. nei Congressi, Barbaria, v. 13 (1828-1832), ff. 292-293. Cardinal Pedicini took this letter very seriously since he wrote to the Nuncio in Paris on the matter. The latter answered, on June 29, 1832, that the Government would not accept the Oblates because the Congregation was not officially recognized, and because Fr. de Mazenod and his missionaries were not held in favour. *Ibid.*, ff. 340-342.

<sup>2</sup> Algiers was taken on July 4, 1830. The news reached Marseilles on July 9.

<sup>3</sup> Bishop Charles-Fortuné de Mazenod.

<sup>4</sup> Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod to Prince de Polignac, July 12, 1830. Archives of Archdiocese of Marseilles, admin. letters, v. II, p. 296.

<sup>5</sup> Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod to the Great Chaplain, Cardinal Prince de Croÿ, archbishop of Rouen, July 11, 1830. *Ibid.*, v. II, pp. 295-296.

protection and aid as requested. I was about to write to the Supreme Pontiff, our dear and ever magnanimous protector,<sup>6</sup> when all of a sudden the disastrous revolution befell us.<sup>7</sup> We waited to see what was going to happen and whether or not France would keep its conquest.

The news we later received from those territories revealed the insufficiency, considering the number of Catholics flocking to those regions, of the assistance that the few priests who are unaccustomed to the sacred ministry can give them. That was when I felt a renewed desire to step forward and offer anew the services of our Congregation, not to the Government which no longer harbors the same zeal for the faith, but to Rome, which by right and disposition, entertains the *sollicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum*.<sup>8</sup> I therefore wrote to my friend, His Eminence de Rohan,<sup>9</sup> and asked him to speak with your Eminence. In the meantime Propaganda sent two priests into the area. I hope they will be able to accomplish something, but I cannot help but feel that they will not suffice since there is so much to do, all the more so since they both seem very young to me and one of them not in the best of health.<sup>10</sup>

In any case, should your Eminence wish to increase the size of the Mission, I again offer our tiny Congregation which, I would dare to venture, was in some way the very creation of your doing. Your Eminence will remember being our benevolent Ponens when His Holiness Pope Leo XII deigned to approve it as he did *in forma*

<sup>6</sup> Leo XII.

<sup>7</sup> Revolution of July 1830. Charles X had to seek refuge in England. Louis-Philippe of Orléans was proclaimed king.

<sup>8</sup> The concern of all the churches.

<sup>9</sup> L. F. Auguste de Rohan-Chabot, archbishop of Besançon. Eugène de Mazenod met him during his stay in Paris (1808-1811) when the Duke de Rohan-Chabot, still a layman (he entered the seminary in 1815), was a member of the Knights of the Faith. Cf. J. LEFLON, *Mgr de Mazenod*, v. II, p. 78, note 1.

<sup>10</sup> A report of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide to the Pope (Sept. 21, 1833), gave the names of three priests working in Algeria (Collin, Müller, Montera) and added that two more priests had been sent. Fr. E. PIONEAU, in his book *Vie de Mgr Dupuch* (Bordeaux, 1866, 485 pp.), indicated some other priests, most of them rather old (pp. 189, 203, 204). One of them, Fr. Banvoy, arrived in 1831. *Ibid.*, p. 171. The other priest could have been Fr. de Pieri, the chaplain of the Expeditionary Corps to Bône. Cf. Teobaldo FILESI: L'attenzione della S. Congregazione per l'Africa settentrionale, in *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide memoria rerum, 1622-1972*, v. III/1, Herder, 1975, p. 173.

*specifica*.<sup>11</sup> My recognition and that of the entire congregation is very much alive in our hearts and is a duty that will always remain with us, even after my death. In fact, the following words appear printed in the introduction to our Rules *ad perpetuam rei memoriam*, and it is truly a joy for me to reproduce them here: "The eminent, pious Cardinal Pedicini, having accepted the task of *Ponens* for our cause, showed himself tireless in all the work required for a careful – and, for us, successful – study of our Constitutions."<sup>12</sup>

The person who will deliver this letter, the superior of the major seminary of Marseilles and one of the first members of the Congregation,<sup>13</sup> will provide Your Eminence with all further details should you wish to use the Oblates of the Immaculate Conception in the Algerian Mission.

Your Eminence, I remain your most humble and grateful servant,

Mazenod, sup. gen. O.M.I., Vicar General of Marseilles.

## 2. Notes for the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide.<sup>14</sup>

*The isolated priests who have gone to Algeria have not accomplished much. To work in a more unified way and give good example, religious such as the Oblates of Mary Immaculate should be sent. The superior*

<sup>11</sup> Cf. G. COSENTINO: "La forme d'approbation de nos Règles en 1826", in *Études Oblates*, v. 12 (1953), pp. 234-265.

<sup>12</sup> Text quoted in Latin by the Founder.

<sup>13</sup> Fr. Tempier had been sent to Rome by Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod to ask the Pope to raise Fr. Eugène de Mazenod to the episcopacy.

<sup>14</sup> Original, Italian: Rome, archives of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Congressi, Barbaria, v. 14 (1833-1835), ff. 220-221.

Two texts of this note were left to Propaganda Fide: one to the secretary, Bishop A. Mai, and another longer one most likely addressed to the Prefect, which we publish here.

The Founder himself translated this note for Fr. Tempier in the letter dated Oct. 31, 1833 which has been lost. In his manuscript *Les Saintes Règles*, vol. IX, p. 131, Yenveux quoted some paragraphs which have been put in quotation marks.

Bishop de Mazenod of Icosia, was in Rome from the beginning of August, having been called by Cardinal Pedicini who was under pressure from the French Government which didn't want a bishop in France who had been appointed without their knowledge.

*should be a bishop. The qualities of Fr. Joseph Guibert. The names of the Oblates who could accompany him.*

Rome, September 14, 1833.

In line with the views expressed by the secretary of Propaganda Fides, I will include in this letter the ideas your Excellency seemed to have warmly received in our recent conversation on the Algerian Mission.

Experience has shown that the so-called "unattached" priests who have thus far offered their services have accomplished little or nothing at all. For some of them this has been due to a lack of zeal or good intentions, whereas for others it has been the result of a lack of strength and cooperation. I am not referring to unworthy priests who are so filled with vice that they cannot be blessed by God and are the ruin of the Church wherever they set foot.

"Since I have been asked to express the deepest feelings of my soul and conscience, I must admit my firm conviction that perfect harmony between the means to be used is absolutely necessary and that the workers to be assigned must overflow with the Spirit of God. The best solution would be to entrust this mission to the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception which has most of its houses in the southern dioceses of France, mostly "in Marseilles, and "could therefore supply men with greater ease and less expense".<sup>15</sup>

"Since, thanks be to God, regular discipline is a feature of this Congregation founded by Pope Leo XII, the Holy Father could rest assured as to the virtue and exemplary life of the men chosen for the Mission. They would live together in community, subject to their superior, whom they are accustomed to obey.

I fully agree with the Secretary. The superior should receive episcopal consecration. The choice is therefore a very important one. That is the reason why I have suggested to him one of the most outstanding subjects I know "in France".<sup>16</sup> I consider him so for his virtues, talents, and that remarkable savoir-faire to win hearts and

<sup>15</sup> Some words in this sentence were miscopied in Yenveux.

<sup>16</sup> The French text quoted by Yenveux continues, but it is an abbreviated version of the Italian text we have preferred to translate.



conquer spirits. His name is Joseph Guibert and he is presently the superior of the house of the aforementioned missionaries at the famous Sanctuary of Notre Dame du Laus in Dauphiné, visited by 50,000 pilgrims every year.

Should the Holy Father approve this approach, the Bishop of Icosia etc., would be prepared to provide any further information as required. What he can state immediately is that Fr. Guibert is a very good subject, one of the best, and possesses all those qualities required to be an excellent bishop and to ensure the success of this mission which is so important for the propagation of our religion in Africa.

P.S. I have found the copy of the note I sent to Bishop Mai on the Algerian Mission and am enclosing it together with a list of the Missionaries who could be chosen were the Lazarists to recognize the fact that they are not able to cover the Eastern Missions currently in their trust, and that it would therefore be imprudent to take on the added responsibility of a new mission as important as Algeria and run the risk of serving it poorly.

I fail to recall the baptismal names of the subjects, but I can easily obtain them once I return to France:

Joseph Guibert: superior of Notre Dame du Laus in the diocese of Gap. He is the first and the very worthy subject I have already mentioned. Telmon, born at Barcelonnette, in the diocese of Digne, presently at Notre Dame du Laus. Ricard, born in Allauch in the diocese of Marseilles. Bernard, from the diocese of Aix. Eymar,<sup>17</sup> from the diocese of Gap, Gignoux, from the diocese of Gap.

Should Bishop Mai decide to choose some of these men for the Algerian Mission, something I heartily desire *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*, it would suffice for him to inform His Excellency the Bishop of Marseilles, as if recommending them to his charity, without mentioning my name. I would understand this, and I would reply through the missionaries, thus remaining completely out of sight.

If, God willing, this holy mission had started off in the right direction from the very outset, these good men would already be hard at work!

<sup>17</sup> Ms. Aimard. It was Fr. Jacques Eymar.



1843

3. [To Cardinal Fransoni, Prefect of the S. Cong. Prop. Fide].<sup>1</sup>

*The death of Bishop Rosati: Mention of the Oblates was omitted in the Notice statistique des missions catholiques dans le monde. Details on the Institute's Approval by Leo XII and on the state of houses and personnel.*

Marseilles, November 6, 1843.

Your Eminence,

When Bishop Rosati,<sup>2</sup> a kind and goodly man who has recently passed away, came through Marseilles it was my honor and privilege to have him as a guest in my house. A very strong bond of friendship grew between us during the few days he spent with me and this is why I so deeply feel and share the loss suffered by the Church with the death of such an exemplary bishop.

Prior to his departure, this very close and inspiring friend gave me a small book entitled: *Notice statistique des Missions catholiques dans le Monde*.<sup>3</sup> I read it with the pleasure that a bishop must experience before the prodigious propagation of the faith. However, while I do thank God for the number of workers the Father of the family has sent into his harvest and find cause for consolation in the zeal of so many priests and religious working throughout the world

<sup>1</sup> Original, Italian: Rome, archives of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Congressi, America Centrale, v. 13 (1841-1844) ff. 803-804. On Dec. 5 the Cardinal replied that the inexact statistical report was not official and that, were a new version to be prepared, the 'pious and meritorious Institute of the Oblates of Mary' would not be forgotten. Original: Rome, archives of the Postulation, L. Fransoni-Mazenod.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Rosati, Italian Lazarist, Bishop of St. Louis (U.S.A.), died in Rome on Sept. 25, 1843.

<sup>3</sup> Title and text in Italian: Notizia statistica delle missioni cattoliche in tutto il mondo.

to preach the Gospel truth and proclaim God and His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, I must confess that, when I realized that among the ranks of this distinguished army the author had forgotten to mention the Congregation to which I belong, I was deeply hurt. This Congregation was approved by His Holiness Leo XII in specific form,<sup>4</sup> during the third year of his pontificat, on March 21, 1826, by the Apostolic Letters *Si tempus unquam plane fuit* and, sealed with the ring of the fishermen, under the name Congregation of the Oblates of the Most Holy Virgin Mary Immaculate. Here are the words used by His Holiness: "We hereby establish this family and wish that it be known by the name of the Congregation of the Oblates of the Most Holy Virgin Mary conceived without sin."<sup>5</sup>

It is a well known fact that, ever since their Congregation was founded, these men have dedicated themselves with unceasing labour to Missions in France, Corsica, and recently in Switzerland. Two years ago they began working in Canada, and shortly thereafter in Great Britain where they have accomplished wonders for the glory of God and the conversion of souls, especially of heretics and unbelievers.

Invited to come to Canada by the Bishop Bourget of Montreal, these men preach missions throughout his vast diocese, not only to the Catholics but also in the townships and mixed villages where the comforts of religion are unknown and heretics and apostates abound. These people are called back to the faith through the efforts of the missionaries who also work among the natives whose language has already been learned by several Fathers.

Bishop Baines, Vicar Apostolic in England, who recently passed away, entrusted the mission of Penzance in the county of Cornwall to the Congregation of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary Immaculate. A beautiful Church has been built there and is visited and attended by heretics from all the different sects. A number of them are converted to the Truth each day.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Georges COSENTINO, "La forme d'approbation de nos Règles en 1826", in *Études Oblates*, v. 12 (1953), pp. 234-265.

<sup>5</sup> The Founder quoted this text in Latin: *Eamdem ipsam (familiam) constituimus, eamque nomine Congregationis Oblatorum Sanctissimæ Virginis Mariæ sine labe conceptæ volumus insignitam.*

Another Vicar Apostolic of England has also requested the assistance of their sacred ministry, and so have other bishops in Canada.

Bishop Rosati was very surprised when he learned all about this and promised to make up for the involuntary oversight which, as he well understood, had caused such distress to myself and the Congregation. Death, however, has taken this holy bishop from us and his intent would remain without effect if I were not able to turn to your Eminence to do justice to our cause, especially because the forgotten Congregation precedes in time a number of other religious families mentioned in the *Statistical Bulletin* such as the Oblates of Pignerolo, and the Marists who, moreover, owe their later approbation to the special favour granted to me by His Holiness Pope Leo XII of venerable memory.

Your Eminence, it would take too long to narrate how the Lord moved the spirit and the heart of the Sovereign Pontif to grant me what he had thus far refused to others. Suffice it to say that the Holy Father did not merely make his will known to the Archpriest Adinolfi, at that time replacing the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Religious, by telling him "*We wish to approve it*", but he himself selected the Eminent Cardinals who were to examine the Constitutions. These Cardinals unanimously expressed their favourable opinion on February 15, 1826 and asked the Holy Father to approve them by Apostolic Letter. The Holy Father placed his seal of approval on the Congregation as well as its Rules and Constitutions on February 17 and ordered the Apostolic Letters to be sent under the form of brief. As I indicated earlier, these letters were sent on March 21, 1826.

Even though I have provided Your Eminences with a detailed account of past events, I feel it my direct responsibility to provide you, for a more complete record, with the following documents:

1. A printed copy of the Apostolic Letters approving the Congregation;
2. A copy of letters from other Sovereign Pontiffs in this regard.
3. A copy of the edict whereby the Bishop of Montreal (Canada) formally established the Congregation in his diocese.

As to the number of missions, even though I do understand that this is not matter for the *Statistical Bulletin* but, as a matter of record,

I can inform you that the Congregation of the Most Holy Immaculate Mary presently has the following missions in addition to those in America and England: a house of missionaries in the Archdiocese of Aix; a house of missionaries in Marseilles where we also direct the diocesan major seminary; a house of missionaries and a preparatory noviciate at the sanctuary of Notre Dame de Lumieres in the Archdiocese of Avignon; a house of missionaries and a novitiate at the sanctuary of Notre Dame de l'Osier in the diocese of Grenoble. In Corsica, we have a house of missionaries in Vico, and moreover, direct the major seminary of Ajaccio where the Fathers teach, as in Marseilles, dogmatic and moral theology, canon law, Sacred Scripture, philosophy, etc.

What I call the foreign missions includes:

1. The diocese of Montreal (Canada) where the missionaries evangelize heretics in the townships and work with the Indians. In the community there are 8 priests, 2 deacons who have perhaps already been ordained, 6 student-novices, two professed, and 5 lay brothers.
2. At Penzance (England) in the western part of Cornwall we have three missionary priests, three students, a lay brother and a beautiful church. The entire population is to be converted because there are still only a few Catholics.

I finish this very long letter your Eminence, with an act of filial devotion.

Your humble and faithfull servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

1846-1847

4. [To Cardinal Frasoni, Prefect of the S. Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>1</sup>

*Success of the Oblates' Apostolate in Canada. The desire to receive a blessing from the Holy Father.*

Marseilles, December 23, 1846.

Your Eminence,

...By the time you receive this letter you will undoubtedly have already seen the holy Bishop of Montreal, Canada, and been informed by him as to the blessings the Lord grants to the ministry of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Not only do they preach missions in the dioceses of Montreal, Kingston and Quebec, but they are also evangelising the savages along the Ottawa, St. Maurice, and Saguenay Rivers and have recently ventured as far as St. Boniface on the Red River and into the vast forest area full of savage tribes.

Oh what a joy it would be if the Holy Father were to be informed of this work and that, from his paternal heart, he could grant a blessing which would multiply a hundredfold the divine seed in the Father's field.

Your Eminence, you know that the late Pope Gregory XVI, shortly before his demise, confirmed the Constitutions and the Congregation by Apostolic Letters on March 20, 1846. The Congre-

<sup>1</sup> Original Italian: Rome, Arch. di Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Grecia Arcipelago e Canada, V. 43 (1845-1846), ff. 829-830. We are only publishing the last paragraph of this letter. In the first part of the letter, the Founder dealt with the Greek priest Macario Spiro and Thomas Escoffier, a priest from Marseilles. In the *post-scriptum*, he invited Propaganda Fide to oppose Bishop Bourget's plan to join the Jesuits.

gation had been approved in specific form by Pope Leo XII, of holy memory, by the Apostolic Letters of March 21, 1826. I venture to mention these details, your Eminence, so that you, as Prefect of the S. Congregation of Propaganda Fide, know the qualities of the workers who labour under your protection in the vineyard of the Lord.

Please accept your Eminence, the expression of full respect and affection from your most humble and faithful servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**5. [To Cardinal Franson, Prefect of the S. Cong. of Propaganda Fide].<sup>2</sup>**

*The Oblates send three missionaries to Ceylon. Reasons and conditions for that decision. The apostolate of the Congregation in various countries. The departure of Bishop Bettachini. Has the diocese of Bytown been erected?*

Marseilles, August 11, 1847.

Your Eminence,

...I cannot but help to once again raise the question of the unhappy mission of Ceylon. We have spoken about it at length with the excellent Bishop Bettachini. I am convinced that help must be sent to these people who are ready to receive the light of truth, but who, alas, have been neglected by these Goans, real destroyers of souls. It is all the more important that upright priests who are true men of God be sent there because, apart from the schism which can be disregarded, heresy wishes to make that land a center of error, and an Anglican bishop has already been established there. Your Eminence, you know how I feel as a Catholic at heart. It was that deep feeling that inspired me to found the Congregation of the

<sup>2</sup> Original Italian: Rome, Arch. di Pr. Fide, Scrit. ref. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 11 (1847-1848), ff. 401-402. We have omitted the first part of this letter in which the Founder wrote about his trip to Viviers, the Greek rite Church in Marseilles, and Macario Spiro.



Oblates of Mary Immaculate which received canonical life from Pope Leo XII in what I would call a practically miraculous way. This Congregation has spread not only in France and England where it is doing so much good, but also in America, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, where its members evangelise the savages who come to the banks of the St. Lawrence, St. Maurice, Saguenay, and Ottawa Rivers. These missionaries have established themselves in St. Boniface on the Red River and in Oregon, and are now moving along the Moose (River) towards Hudson Bay. Well here we are, prepared to take on the missions on the island of Ceylon under the jurisdiction of the holy bishop of Torona to whom I recently promised three excellent members, one of whom is the superior of the Corsican missions where he is working miracles of conversion. The only condition I place upon this gift is that these worthy missionaries not be subject to the caprices of the Goans, but work directly under the coadjuteur, Bishop Bettachini, who thoroughly impressed me during the two days he spent with me in Marseilles. This God-fearing Prelate is leaving by boat today but since he is feeling the effects of his travels, he will spend a few days in his hometown Città di Castello. He plans to be in Rome on the 25th of this month. This period of rest will be (too) short, I think, because he really needs to recover his strength.

Now, your Eminence, I would be very grateful if you could let me know what has been decided regarding the diocese of Bytown in Canada. The bishop of Montreal informed me that the Sacred Congregation was to address the Bulls of the Bishop to me if the Holy Father decided to erect that diocese. I was impatient to know if his Holiness had chosen the candidate presented by the bishops of the province of Quebec, since he is a member of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. It would seem that the Bulls have been sent through another channel. Nonetheless, I would like to be informed. I beg your forgiveness for the importunity of my request and ask you to accept the respectful devotion of your most humble servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

6. [To Cardinal Fransoni, Prefect of the S. Cong. of Propaganda Fide].<sup>3</sup>

*Joy to know that the Cardinal agrees on sending Oblate missionaries to Ceylon. The names and qualities of the three fathers who will make up the first colony. The request that they be granted the title of Apostolic missionaries. The hope to have them travel as far as Alexandria free of charge.*

Marseilles, September 25, 1847.

Your Eminence,

I was very pleased to learn, from your welcome letter of September 7, that you have accepted my offer of three Oblate missionaries of the Most Holy Mary Immaculate. According to what I understood during talks with Bishop Bettachini on this mission, this is a grace of Divine Providence in favor of the people of Ceylon who are in such need of aid.

In keeping with the views of the Sacred Congregation, it has been my concern to select three very good men. This was not a very difficult task since our Oblates of the Most Holy Mary Immaculate, by the grace of God, are all good and all ready to sacrifice their lives for the glory of God to and work for the conversion and sanctification of souls. That is the precise goal of their vocation. I have selected the best from among these good men; Fr. Étienne Semeria. He is still rather young, only 34 years old, but does possess the required maturity as far as virtues and all religious qualities are concerned. He has been the superior of the Corsican missions for a number of years. It is unbelievable with what success, with what blessings of God, even bandits have come to prostrate themselves before him; and marvellous indeed are the cases of reconciliation in this land we all know due to his zeal and goodness. When the bishop learns of this theft I am about to perpetrate, I don't know if he will forgive me. The Congregation, however, loans its members, it does not donate them. It is of utmost importance that there be a religious such as Fr. Semeria at the head of this first small community. I have chosen another Italian, likewise a very good religious, as the first companion of Fr. Semeria. The third is also an angel in terms of appearance and

<sup>3</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. ref. nei Congr. Indie Orientali, V. 11 (1847-1848), ff. 478-479.

way of life; I have chosen him from among the Irish Oblates, because the English language is so important these countries. He will be both an interpreter and teacher for his two companions. Fr. Ciamin, the second one I mentioned, is already beginning to speak the language.

I would beseech you, Your Eminence, to grant a favour to these three missionaries; endow them with the title and the faculties of Apostolic Missionaries. Since they will be living under obedience to Bishop Bettachini whom I hold in real esteem, I would not want them to be less favored than other priests already on the island. You can rest assured, Your Eminence, that this favor will not be misused, and that they will do honour to the title and faculties granted to them.

I await an answer from the Government to my written request for free passage to Alexandria. If it is not granted, I will need the help of the Sacred Congregation which would make better use of its money by using it to this end than by wasting it, in a certain sense, on that freeloader Macario who only knows how to eat and gad about. He's always saying that he wants to leave and the other day he had me sign a petition and write to request a passage for Constantinople. Let him leave: he has become unbearable to all of us.

Please accept the affectionate homage with which I am, your Eminence, your most humble and devoted servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

Here are the names of the three Oblate Fathers of the Most Holy Mary Immaculate who are to leave for the island of Ceylon.

1. Fr. Etienne Semeria from La Colla, diocese of Ventimiglia.
2. Fr. Joseph Ciamin from Nice.
3. Fr. Louis Keating from Mountmellick, diocese of Carlow in Ireland.
4. A lay brother.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Br. Gaspard De Steffanis.



1848

7. [To Canon Löwenbruck in Rome].<sup>1</sup>

*Ordination of Italian religious in Marseilles. Complaints against the Blanchet brothers in Oregon. Opportune to appoint Fr. Pascal Ricard, O.M.I., bishop of Nesqually and a Jesuit as Apostolic Vicar of the Rocky Mountains. Inform Bishop Barnabò of these projects in a confidential way.*

Marseilles, October 26, 1848.

Dear Canon,

I was very upset during your last trip to Marseilles because I was only able to be with you for a few moments. I had to ordain one of those poor Jesuits who, as a religious without Sacred Orders, the authorities in the States of the King of Sardinia want to conscript. Intolerance has reached such a point that bishops who take it upon themselves to ordain religious are threatened with dire treatment. That is what brings them all to me, since I will not be intimidated. I have already done about a dozen *extra tempora* ordinations to save these good religious from persecution, and do not complain about it, whatever fatigue that may entail.

During our brief visit we did say something about an item that is very important for the service of the Church and the salvation of souls. I would now like to talk about it at greater length and I leave it up to your sense of discretion to share this with Bishop Barnabò, and with him alone, should you deem it advisable. You can well

<sup>1</sup> Orig. Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Congressi, America Centrale, V. 14 (1845-1848), ff. 750-751. M. Löwenbruck was honorary Canon of Marseilles but did not live there.

understand how important it be that, while being well informed, he never let people even suspect that he learned what is happening in Oregon from me. The bishops of that area, who are very close indeed, would never forgive our good Oblate Fathers of Mary who already suffer enough as it is. First of all, I don't know whether Bishop Barnabò is aware of the characters of the two Blanchet brothers; one is the Archbishop of Oregon City, and the other is bishop of Walla Walla. They are two dominant figures before whom all must give way. They have adopted a system, into which they have drawn Bishop Demers of Vancouver<sup>2</sup> whereby they see themselves not only as pastors but as the masters and owners of all religious establishments existing on the land under their jurisdiction.

Since they recognize no privileges of Congregations or religious Orders, they strive to lay their hands on everything the religious possess, at least what they receive from the Propagation of the Faith, and that is all these religious have. This system disturbed the Jesuits to such an extent as to jeopardize their mission. Now it is the turn of the Oblates of Mary. These good Prelates, who presently aspire to retirement, do not understand that by trying to assimilate the Congregations and Religious Orders to the free priests they have with them, they destroy the sinew of regular discipline and undermine the development of the resources of their zeal for the propagation of the Gospel. I am not privy to the Jesuits' grievances but I know that they have had plenty to complain about with the bishops' way of doing things. Now I see, to my great distress, that these Prelates are also giving the Oblates of Mary reason for dissatisfaction and anxiety. And yet these are very devoted men who have left everything, their family and countries, to dedicate themselves to the conversion of unbelievers. I think that bishops, who most certainly cannot do everything by themselves, should consider themselves fortunate to have such helpers and take better care of them.

I have been informed that Bishop Demers of Vancouver Island, is coming to Europe. He will undoubtedly come to Rome to have the Sacred Congregation approve a number of projects. Among others, and to perpetuate this sort of monopoly the bishops have in Oregon, he will propose a Canadian priest (they are all Canadians) for the see of Nesqually.<sup>3</sup> That would be the bitter end! In such a case, both the

<sup>2</sup> Ms. Vancouver.

<sup>3</sup> Ms. Nesqually.

Jesuits who have already done so much good and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate could depart, because the claims of these bishops are unbearable. What remedy is there for this disorder? People should be firmly convinced that there is no other way than to raise a member of one of the religious Congregations working in the area to the See of Nesqually. The Jesuits say that their Institute does not allow them to accept an episcopal see. The choice should therefore fall upon one of the Oblates of Mary and naturally upon the present superior who is a very pious man, full of common sense, and fully devoted to the service of the Church. He is Fr. Pascal Ricard, born on May 16, 1805 in Allauch, in the diocese of Marseilles. He was ordained priest in 1831 and is provincial superior of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Oregon. This wise measure would give religious priests a protector and would enable both the Jesuits and the Oblates to exercise their zeal in full freedom without being exposed to the obstacles encountered in the outlandish claims advanced by the Canadian bishops who have laid their hands on this entire vast country. If I could venture my opinion as to what ought to be done for Jesuits, one of them could be appointed Apostolic Vicar for the Rocky Mountains. That would be the only way to deliver them from the impediments they encounter in their holy ministry.

I'm sure you understand, dear Canon, that the more I speak to you with an open heart and only in view of what is good, all the more should you take the necessary precautions so that the Oregon bishops never ever know about this my appeal to Bishop Barnabò through you. I have full trust in his discretion: please remember that you must speak to him alone. I know through experience that no secrets are kept in offices and secretariates, and you know that all would be lost if the Sacred Congregation should not approve what I propose and the bishops got wind of it. I place my full trust in your wisdom.

There are so many things I could say about other missions, but I will stop here. I will feel that I have accomplished a lot for the glory of God and the salvation of poor savages if I obtain what I have just communicated to you. If I can realize a longstanding desire to come to Rome and meet Bishop Barnabò, whose acquaintance I would like to make, I could discuss many interesting aspects of this subject with him.

Adieu, my dear Canon, and please accept renewed assurance of my affection and friendship.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**8. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>4</sup>**

*The wish to go to Rome. The message entrusted to Canon Löwenbruck. It would be advisable to raise a religious to the new See of Nesqually: Fr. Pascal Ricard. Do not communicate these reflections to the Oregon bishops.*

Marseilles, November 23, 1848.

Very Reverend Monseigneur,

I had always hoped to be able to come to Rome to render homage to our Holy Father, towards whom I am borne by the deep sentiments of my heart, but increasingly adverse circumstances have made it impossible for me to leave my diocese.<sup>5</sup> The regret I experience is further heightened, Most Reverend Monseigneur, because I so much want to meet you personally since I already know you not only by name, from having read it in Propaganda documents, but also by your merits from what I have been told by people I know who have had the pleasure of dealing with you. Perhaps peaceful days will arrive and allow me to make the trip. In the meantime, I have taken advantage of the occasion presented me by having to write to his Eminence, the Cardinal Prefect, to enclose this brief letter addressed to you and confide something to you. I did not feel able to broach the matter directly with you. That is why I wrote to the Apostolic Missionary Löwenbruck, an honorary Canon of my Cathedral, asking him to talk privately with you and transmit what I had told him about the Oregon Mission. Since then I have received a letter written by Canon Löwenbruck the day he left Rome. I realized that he had not received my letter and I deemed it opportune to instruct M.

<sup>4</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Congr., America Centrale, V. 14 (1845-1848), ff. 749-752.

<sup>5</sup> The Pope resided in Gaeta after the assassination of Pellegrino Rossi on November 15, 1848. He stayed there until April 12, 1850.



Ferruci<sup>6</sup> to remove my letter from the mail and give it to you to read. I regret having to do things in this shameful way, but when the glory of God and the salvation of souls are at stake, there is no evil in expressing oneself with simplicity and speaking with an open heart. You will consider and weigh the matter before God; and what you decide thereafter will be well done.

I feel that the system followed by the Oregon bishops is not good. I also feel that if future bishops are chosen in Canada from among the friends of the present bishops, the monopoly will become so strong that no remedy will any longer be possible. The idea of providing the Religious, and the religious Congregations, with a protector by raising a member of one of these Congregations to one of the Sees is certainly an excellent way to maintain a proper balance and to do the most good. If the present system used by the bishops were to continue and grow in strength through the arrival of an additional support, I can envision the day when the Jesuits and the religious from other Congregations will be forced to withdraw and, in that case, the missions entrusted to more or less edifying secular priests will deteriorate. Pray consider the fact as well that a bishop from a religious Congregation, accustomed to living a common and regular life, will not strive to ensure his own ease and comfort, but will continue to be a missionary, and will walk at the head of his men in the search for the lost sheep.

If these considerations seem good to you, and were you to judge it more opportune to appoint, for example, a missionary of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate to the See of Nesqually, the religious I would venture to suggest that the Sacred Congregation consider the provincial superior, a mature and pious man of solid doctrine, good common sense, and unshakeable zeal. The Jesuit Fathers in Vancouver, those of St. Francis Xavier if I'm not mistaken, could give you very favorable references on the man I am proposing but it takes a long time to receive news from that distant country. I am sure of what I have said because I have read a letter in this sense from one of those Fathers. The name of this Provincial is Pascal Ricard, born in Allauch in the diocese of Marseilles, baptized on May 16, 1805 and ordained priest in 1831.

<sup>6</sup> M. Ferruci was the agent for the diocese of Marseilles to the Roman Congregations.

You must understand, Monseigneur, just how important it is that the Oregon bishops never know I have expressed myself so frankly, to you according to my conscience and in full confidence, for the good of that important mission. The bishops would be very upset indeed and then woe be tide the poor missionaries.

Please accept the sentiments of esteem and veneration where-with, Most Reverend Monseigneur, I am your humble and devoted servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**9. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the S. C. of Propaganda Fide].<sup>7</sup>**

*The joy to have received an answer to the letter of November 23 and to know that Bishop Barnabò shares his views on the opportuneness of raising a religious to the See of Nesqually. Qualities and virtues of Fr. Semeria whom an English Jesuit would like to replace at Bishop Bettachini's side. The Jesuits plan to open a house in Ceylon. They should not establish themselves at Jaffna. News of the Pope who had written a personal letter and may come to Marseilles.*

Marseilles, December 30, 1848.

Very Reverend Monseigneur,

It was a deep consolation for me to receive your kind reply. I was afraid that the current situation would force you to bow before the storm. That would have been disastrous for those poor missions which are in such need of your wise direction.

I note with pleasure that you do not reject the solution that strikes me as the best way to keep the peace and insure the good of the distant missions. Otherwise, those "blessed" bishops would be on their own, to their own detriment and even more that of souls, to remain alone with the few secular priests who ended up there in a way known to God alone, since the religious Congregations could not further withstand such despotism and claims which are so little in conformity with Canon law.

<sup>7</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 11 (1847-1848), ff. 977-978.

A bishop chosen from among the members of an Order or a Congregation would maintain a balance and would give the Congregations the necessary proper freedom, in conformity with the Holy Canons and necessary for maintaining dependence upon their Superiors, fidelity to the Rules, and the indispensable fervour for the good of souls. This suffices as far as Oregon is concerned.

Since you invite me to be open and sincere in what I think about the missions, I will not shy away from confiding in you again, this time regarding the missions in Ceylon.

You know that Bishop Bettachini took some missionaries of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate with him. One of them is Fr. Etienne Semeria, an exemplary man whom I heartily recommend to the Sacred Congregation should you one day need to select an Apostolic Vicar from among the missionaries.

Bishop Bettachini holds him in such high regard that he made him, so to speak, his secretary, because he is a good theologian, writes well, and is a man of great piety, endowed with solid character. Now what can I really say? A certain English Jesuit, who is too zealous for his Order, plotted with two Spanish or Italian missionaries in an attempt to remove Fr. Semeria from the bishop's side and assume control. Fortunately their plot met with failure because His Excellency refused to adopt such a measure in evident contrast with his kindness and his own interests. Nonetheless, the Jesuits will most likely move into the island as has been their wish for some time. I could say a few things about this. Would that they could all be prophets! I do feel, however, that it would be important to allocate the missions in such a way as to avoid discord. I would therefore ask you to entrust Jaffna and its environs to the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and assign another mission to the later arrivals, the Jesuits.

This division would be all the more opportune if, in the future, Bishop Bettachini were to become Apostolic Vicar of Colombo. The Sacred Congregation could then appoint the superior of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate Apostolic vicar of Jaffna, the mission already entrusted to that Congregation. I do not know if I am taking undue advantage of the liberty you gave me to express my ideas for the greater good of the missions with frankness and simplicity. Forgive

me if I have gone beyond the limits, even though there are many other things I would like to tell you *viva voce*.

I am sure you will be glad to receive news of the Pope. He had His Eminence Cardinal Antonelli write to me and, not satisfied with that expression of his goodness, he showed the fullness of his benevolence for me by writing a letter of such fatherly concern that I was moved to tears. He was in good health. Who knows, perhaps I will have the chance to prostrate myself at his feet and be held close to that chest where such a good heart throbs. Can you shed light on this sentence in his priceless letter: "...I do hope, however, that it will be possible to manifest the sentiments of our heart in a more consoling way to you and your people just as now, with great affection, we grant you the Apostolic blessing".

I would have much preferred to render homage to the Pope in Rome, but were Divine Providence to lead him to France, what a joy it would be for me to receive him in my own house! Oh yes, what we wouldn't do to alleviate the sorrow of such a Pontiff, so beloved a Father!

Very Reverend Monseigneur, please accept the homage of my sentiments of respect and affection wherewith I remain your most humble servant!

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

1849

10. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the S. Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>1</sup>

*The liberation of Rome. The Jesuits as well as the Oblates propose Fr. Ricard as the future bishop of Nesqually. The state of poverty and fatigue of Bishop Demers and the Blanchet brothers. In Ceylon, M. Reinaud harbors hopes of becoming bishop. It would be more opportune to appoint Fr. Semeria. A Ceylonese missionary praises the Oblates and hopes they will open a house in the vicariat of Colombo.*

Marseilles, July 30, 1849.

Very Reverend Monseigneur,

I impatiently awaited the joyful moment of the liberation of our beloved Rome from that band of ruffians who laid such waste in their path.<sup>2</sup> During that disastrous period I often tried to discover whether any misfortune had befallen your worthy person. I was told that you were living in hiding in Rome and you can rest assured that I was never tempted to bring your name to the attention of those rogues. Throughout that period I always corresponded with Gaeta. Forever inadequate is my praise for the goodness of the Holy Father and the rapidity with which replies were sent. The same holds true for the kindness of the Ministers who rapidly sent me the instructions as well as the favors I had requested of the Holy Father. Only yesterday I received a very kind letter from His Eminence the Cardinal Pro-Secretary of State and a dispensation sent by the Inquisitor. However, Monseigneur, there are certain questions that

<sup>1</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif nei Cong., America Centrale, V. 15 (1849-1851), ff. 283-286.

<sup>2</sup> Proclaimed of Feb. 9, 1849, the Roman Republic ended when French Troops entered Rome on July 2, 1849. The main leaders of the Republic were Mazzini, Aurelio Saffi and Carlo Armellini.

demand direct contact with you, especially those regarding the Missions. I therefore waited for Rome to be swept free of that frightening rabble to renew my correspondence with you on this topics.

I will first of all deal with Oregon and I would venture to refer you to the information you received in writing from the Superior General of the Jesuits. He sent you the news he had received from his Fathers who had informed him as to the miserable state of the missionaries who are subject to the harrassment of these "holy" bishops. The letters I have myself received from my Oblates fully confirm the Jesuit version of events. The pretentious claims put forth by the Archbishop and his brother, the bishop of Walla Walla, are really unbelievable. The Archbishop has contracted debts for hundreds of thousands of francs and now wants to literally squeeze blood out of a stone.<sup>3</sup>

These prelates would like everything to belong to them and they sap the strength and courage of the missionaries who are disposed to work for the good of the souls they have gone to seek in those distant reaches of the earth. The only solution to so many loathsome episodes and problems would be to make one of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate an Apostolic Vicar. This is exactly the same thought expressed by the Jesuits residing in that area. They also add that the person to be proposed to the Sacred Congregation is the same one I wrote you about in earlier letters, the superior, Fr. Ricard. It will be up to you, very Reverend Monseigneur, to decide whether it would be more opportune to appoint him Apostolic Vicar or titular bishop of Nesqually. The latter title would make him co-provincial of the ecclesiastical province of Oregon and that would be a counterbalance to the system adapted by those three bishops who all come from Canada and apparently wish to add another Canadian to their number in order to further oppress anyone who does not share their views.

Your Excellency, you can well understand that this is a very delicate issue and I strongly appeal to you not to breathe a word of it

<sup>3</sup> The exact text of the Italian proverb used by the Founder is "to squeeze blood from a turnip". The turnip becomes a stone in the English version of the same proverb.

to Bishop Deluquet who, according to what I have been told, would inform his correspondents, these prelates. Bishop Demers will not delay his trip to Europe to receive approval for the plan agreed upon for Oregon. Even though he may be, I have been told, the most moderate of the three bishops, beware of according undue trust in his concerns and the reports he will submit. It could be that Bishop Blanchet, dissatisfied with his diocese of Walla Walla, may request to be transferred to Nesqually, that Bishop Demers may ask to be appointed Coadjutor to the Archbishop, and they propose a person of their liking as successor to Bishop Blanchet in Walla Walla. According to the view expressed by the missionaries, irreparable damage would be caused by accepting the position of the three prelates and losing the occasion to give the missionaries a protector, and room for their zeal by appointing a missionary bishop to Nesqually.

There is a further consideration which I find it difficult to express in a letter. I would much prefer talking to you about it directly: under the secret. The fact is that the present bishops are exhausted and are looking for some rest rather than the tiring demands of the missions. I beg you, Monseigneur, do not betray me and never let anyone know the secret my conscience inspires me to share with you alone. This will not be the case with Fr. Ricard. His election will bring about no changes in his habitual zeal and sacrifice. He will always be a humble religious principally concerned with his apostolic ministry. All of the missionaries, Jesuits as well as Oblates of Mary Immaculate, will regain courage which will bring good results for the propagation of religion in these abandoned regions. I must inform you that the Missionary Oblates have already started to settle down in Nesqually where they approached the savages who have begun to receive instructions from them. Reflect on all this, your Excellency, and take your decision.

After Oregon, I would like to talk about Ceylon. I am sure you have already been able to discern the jealousy and pretentious claims that exist on that island. Among other things, I have always thought that a certain person named Reinaud, who is about to return to Rome before going to Ceylon, is just dying to become a bishop. I feel, on the contrary, that it would be opportune to grant the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate what I would consider, not an independent status, but a freer one by allocating part of the island to their zeal under an Apostolic Vicar selected from their group.

I believe this same thought is shared by Bishop Bettachini and those who strive for the good of the island. In such a case, a very good subject for you and the Sacred Congregation to consider would be Fr. Semeria. I can fully vouch for his merits under all aspects: knowledge, goodness, zeal, capability, and solid virtue. Bishop Bettachini undoubtedly has praised him to you. I recently received and unexpected letter from a very worthy missionary named Domini-que Priori who wrote in the following terms: "I refer to the dear Fathers you sent to the Northern Vicariat of this island. I am convinced the Oblates of Mary Immaculate give ample reason to hope that the life of the Christians in these regions will improve in the near future. What I mean is that the inhabitants are like cretins: unruly beasts, lazy, and liars. Edified by the example of the Fathers, guided by their instruction, and refrained by their severity tempered with prudence and love commanded by our Lord, these people will lose or at least change, for the better of their souls, their inbred nature which is not only corrupt as in all mortals but also affected by the numerous prejudices rooted in their pride. It is my joy to inform you, my dear Monseigneur, that this immense undertaking of the island's improvement is already underway with appreciable success in Jaffna where Fr. Semeria is at work and in Manar with Fr. Ciamin. The constant dedication of Frs. Mouchel, Leydier, and Lebescou in learning the Tamil language, and their perseverance in the study of moral and dogma together with their religious exercises leaves no doubt in my mind that the Christian communities to which they will be sent will benefit from the same advantages. It is no surprise that these Religious accomplish so much good because they all have before their eyes, etc." (here there are some compliments in my regard which I will not repeat) "and, in silence, I have often had the pleasure to observe Fr. Semeria recommend this imitation to his confreres by his very example. If I could write more I would willingly do so, but I am still ill... I would just add that it is my firm intention to achieve what I have set out to do, and that is to see an Oblate house opened in our Southern Vicariate."<sup>4</sup>

That is all I wanted to share with you, your Excellency, in order to illustrate the esteem for Fr. Semeria and his companions in the mind of the good priests and the Bishop who have God and the good of souls in view.

<sup>4</sup> Italian text quoted by the Founder.



Please accept, very reverend Monseigneur, the homage of my sentiments of respect and affection wherewith I am your true servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**11. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the S. Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>5</sup>**

*Cholera outbreak in Marseilles. Establishment of aid teams. Departure of the Greek Curate and Macario Spiro from Marseilles. Reminder of the advantages in appointing Fr. Semeria Coadjutor to Bishop Bettachini in Jaffna and Fr. Ricard bishop of Nesqually. Purity of intentions in these proposals. Dispatch of a report on the Oregon Missions.*

Marseilles, October 8, 1849.

Very Reverend Monseigneur,

Your latest and most kind letter reached Marseilles when I was away from the diocese. I hastened back due to the cholera outbreak and I had so much to do that I hardly had time to breathe. The plague still weighs heavily upon my poor Marseilles and even though more than 80,000 souls have left the city, 30 to 40 people still fall victim to the horrible disease each day. Since the all-male aid teams, who assist the cholera-stricken through zeal or for other reasons, gave me cause for concern when they went to care for those of the opposite sex, I myself set up all-female groups from now on solely responsible for charitable assistance to women afflicted by the disease. Oh, how happy I am to have taken that step. Charity alone moves these beautiful souls inspired by religion and sent forth by their Pastor, while before that, the philanthropic endeavors organized by laicism were not able to suppress the most impudent vice hidden beneath that cloak.

There were other things I wished to tell you, but without even realizing it, my heart has been somewhat relieved of the burden it bore. The first thing I wanted to bring to your attention was our Melchite curate who has returned to his country on the verge of death. You know, your Excellency, that here in Marseilles I have a Greek Melchite Church. Up to now, the pastor has always been

<sup>5</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., America Centrale, V. 15 (1849-1851), ff. 303-304.

chosen from among the monks of Mount Lebanon. Since the present pastor has departed, I must appoint another one in order to avoid the suppression of a title recognized by the Government. It is important for me, however, to avoid the presence in my diocese of an unedifying pastor or ecclesiastic such as seem to abound in the East. I would therefore ask you to give me the name of a good priest of that rite, known and approved by Propaganda Fide.

I don't know if I informed you about the departure of Macario Spiro. He could no longer remain in Marseilles. I assure you, in all sincerity, even though I had to put up a considerable sum of money to pay for his trip and provide him with many of the things he needed, I am very much freed and relieved that he is no longer on my back. I also gave him a letter of recommendation for the Archbishop of Smyrne and for Bishop Hillereau so he will have help once back in those countries. He sent me his thanks from Athens where he had stopped before going on to Constantinople.

You will have already met with Fr. Reinaud by the time you receive this letter. I have received more letters from Bishop Bettachini and Fr. Semeria in Ceylon. No one approves the projects advanced by that priest. Moreover, the Holy Father has already decided the matter.

Your Excellency, you will recall my request in favor of Fr. Semeria should it be decided to give Bishop Bettachini a coadjutor, as has already been done in the case of Bishop Gaetano. This would be the most effective way to better ensure the present and future good of that important mission.

Please bear with me if I come back to the Oregon mission. I was not able to hold back my tears as I read the latest letters from these missions. Rest assured that the Jesuits and the Oblates are doing everything, but their's is a life of privations, heroic mortification, fatigue and danger, with no consolation at all from the bishops. On the contrary, they are afflicted by all kinds of disheartening episodes and constraints. Therefore, I feel it to be of the utmost importance to appoint the provincial superior of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Fr. Pascal Ricard, as bishop of Nesqually. He already lives in that town and will be ready with his men to serve the savages in that region as well as the Europeans and Americans who live in various settlements. The independence thus gained will enhance the good of these Missions which need a fixed site in order to avoid losing all courage.

Please believe me, dear Monseigneur, I am a bishop and believe that I understand the great responsibilities of my sacred character. I would sacrifice my life a thousand times over for the glory of God and the salvation of souls and I would rather see my hand wither than to write even a single syllable contrary to that end, the sole object of my every thought.

My dear Monseigneur, I find it impossible to fully explain the ease with which I open my heart to you, were not for the profound esteem and confidential trust I nourish for your worthy person. I plead that sentiment as a reason for your indulgence if I have ventured too far and if you ever feel I have been excessive. Please accept the affectionate respect wherewith I remain, your Excellency, your humble and devoted servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. In order to provide you with a better idea of the Oblate missions in Oregon, with this letter please find enclosed a report sent by one of the missionaries to his superior, Fr. Ricard. I am sure you will enjoy reading it.

I have not seen the Good Shephard Sister you mentioned in your letter, nor the priest who was supposed to accompany her. If they had come to me, I would have received them with the respect I will always have for someone you recommend.

**12. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the S. Cong. of Propaganda Fide].<sup>6</sup>**

*Bishop Demers journeys to Rome. He will ask for Bishop Magloire Blanchet to be transferred to the seat of Nesqually to which Fr. Ricard should be appointed instead. Memorandum of Bishop Luquet.*

Marseilles, 29 December, 1849.

Very Reverend Monseigneur

Bishop Demers is traveling to Rome to ask for the bishop of Walla Walla to be transferred to Nesqually. If he succeeds in having

<sup>6</sup> Printed Italian text entitled: "Observations proposées au Secrétaire de la S. C....", Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Acta, V. 212 (1849-1850), ff. 282-283.

Bishop Blanchet's pretentious plan approved, it will bode ill for the missions in that region. You will recall what I have already written you on this subject. The Oblates of Mary are already established in Nesqually, they have had to cover all their own expenses, and have had to work hard to ensure protection against the bad weather and all the other dangers. They are in the very midst of the savages whom they are to catechize and are able to do a lot of good as long as they are not disturbed, as has been the case thus far for them and for the Jesuits. It will never be possible to adopt the principles in the famous memorandum drawn up by Bishop Luquet<sup>7</sup>, proclaimed by these bishops and by Bishop Pompallier.<sup>8</sup> I therefore, reiterate the fact that it would be necessary to counterbalance these unjust and anti-canonical doctrines in contrast with equity and good order, by appointing a bishop who belongs to one of the Congregations involved in the evangelization of Oregon. Fr. Ricard would be the right person, and it would be more opportune to appoint him, rather than His Excellency the bishop of Walla Walla, to the see of Nesqually where the Oblates are established.

I know that Bishop Demers will use another line of reasoning because his job is to ensure the aforementioned transfer.

There are so many things I could say *viva voce*, but it is impossible for me to put them down on paper. I will therefore refrain from speaking until I have the chance to see you in Rome when the Holy Father returns. Then it will be too late, however, if the Sacred

<sup>7</sup> Bishop J. F. O. Luquet (1810-1858) of the Paris Foreign Missions was a missionary in India. He was sent to Rome in 1844 to obtain approval for the decisions of the Pondichéry Synod. On that occasion he wrote *Éclaircissement sur le Synode de Pondichéry*, wherein he proposed the establishment of seminaries to form indigenous clergy and the erection of bishoprics and not apostolic vicariates in all the missions. He was not very favorable to Religious. On Sept. 7, 1845 he was consecrated bishop of Hesebon *in partibus*, coadjutor of Bishop C. Bonnard († 1861), Apostolic Vicar of Pondichéry. Bishop Bonnard and the missionaries were displeased with his nomination and that is why Bishop Luquet spent the last fourteen years of his life in Rome.

<sup>8</sup> Bishop J. B. F. Pompallier, the first Apostolic Vicar of New Zealand, had problems with the Marists who had been assigned the diocese of Port Nicholson in 1848. He was in Europe from 1846-1849 and shared Bishop Luquet's ideas. "The bishop was not singular in his desire to have absolute control in his diocese over the clergy who has undertaken to accept his rule... He himself did not wish to be tied to accepting only Marist subjects". Cf. Lillian KEYS, *The Life and the Times of Bishop Pompallier*. Christchurch, The Pegasus Press, 1957, pp. 250-251.

Congregation immediately accepts proposals advanced by the Oregon bishops.

I beg your indulgence. I have written this letter in haste in the hopes of getting it on board before the ship leaves. The bishop has already embarked.

Please accept, very reverend Monseigneur, the affectionate sentiments wherewith I am your humble and devoted servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.



1850

13. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the S. Cong. of Propaganda Fide].<sup>1</sup>

*Fr. Lespron has left for Rome. The reasons which hastened his departure. Rather tense relations between Bishop Bettachini and Bishop Bravi who wants to remove the rich mission of St. Anne from the poor Vicariate of Jaffna. The advantages in assigning the Vicariate of Jaffna to the Oblates. A Brief from the Holy Father who is still in Gaeta. The desire to go to Rome.*

Marseilles, February 27, 1850.

Very Reverend Monseigneur

I did not wait for your latest letter before freeing myself from poor Father Lesbron.<sup>2</sup> I reached an agreement with a ship and had him embarked as soon as possible. It was impossible to let the poor soul remain any longer in Marseilles. He was very well known because he went around telling everyone, "Ego sum episcopus" and then this poor "episcopus" would lose all control of himself with a glass of wine. He was seen in a state of drunkenness a number of times. On one occasion he didn't return to the Convent where I had secured him lodging because he met one of those "gentlemen" who had set him free in Rome. The rogue flattered him and took him someplace among people of the same bent who gave him a little alcohol to drink, which was enough to unsettle his mind. What happened next? Poor Lesbron woke up the next morning in a stall in the midst of mules and horses. That is what made me decide to have him leave immediately. He raised no objections and accepted the reprimand he deserved. In truth, I feel real compassion for the poor man since he is so bereft of any sense of judgement.

<sup>1</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Congr. Indie Orientali, V. 12 (1849-1850), ff. 740-741.

<sup>2</sup> Fr. Lespron was a Mexican Jesuit, cf. letter from Bishop de Mazenod to Bishop Barnabò, April 18, 1850. It later becomes clear that Fr. Lespron was imprisoned in Rome. The Republicans freed him in 1848.

I felt it necessary to give your Excellency these details so you can take the steps you deem opportune for the good of religion. I don't think he should be allowed to go out of the house by himself. He has such a weak character that the first rascal he might meet could induce him to do something silly.

I was able to obtain a reduction in the travel expenses through friends. I am not counting the money I gave him upon departure as I had done during the time he was in my diocese. All of that remains at my expense. I was able to reduce the cost of the crossing from Marseilles to Civitavecchia to 65 francs. The Papal Consul will repay that sum if he has received money from the Holy Father; if not, there is no hurry.

Since I do have this chance to write to you, I cannot help but say something about Ceylon. I have reason to believe that relations between Bishop Bettachini and the new bishop, Bravi,<sup>3</sup> have become very cold and all the more so since it would seem that the latter wants to take everything and reduce the former to sheer misery in the division of the two vicariates. I do not want to get involved in this matter. The Sacred Congregation must be sufficiently informed and know that if the Vicariate of Jaffna loses the North-Western Province where the church of St. Ann is located, it will no longer have the means to satisfy the needs of its missionaries. While the Christians in the vicariate of Colombo are more numerous, much richer, and more generous, the schools in the vicariate receive 100 pounds sterling from the government every year. The schools in the Jaffna vicariate receive nothing at all.

I am speaking about this because I have had the occasion to write to you and the idea I would venture to submit for your

<sup>3</sup> In the letter to Bishop Barnabò on Jan. 28, 1850 (omitted here since it deals with Fr. Lespron alone), the Founder wrote in closing: "Bishop Bettachini has been struck to the heart. He feels that Bishop Bravi has slighted him before the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide." On April 18 the Founder added: (in a letter dealing with Bishop Charbonnel of Toronto): "I imagine you have received my letter in response to yours of March 18. I received news from Ceylon after that date which would be a real source of affliction should they prove to be true: it would seem that Bishop Bravi manifested his aversion for Bishop Bettachini to the extent that he had himself consecrated by the Goan Bishop, assisted by two priests, rather than invite Bishop Bettachini to be one of his co-consecrators. I have also been told his obstinate attempt to expand his Vicariate would undermine the good of the Jaffna Vicariate which is already one third smaller, poorer, and with much fewer Catholics. Oh what misery!"



Excellency's consideration would be to obtain from the Sacred Congregation that the vicariate of Jaffna to be served totally by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, and that an Oblate, for example the by me oft praised Fr. Semeria, be chosen as coadjutor of the present Apostolic Vicar with the right of succession. I feel that this measure would ensure the good of that Vicariate which would prosper thanks to unity of discipline and conformity of views. It would then be possible to attach greater importance to the propagation of the faith, establish a house of education and, if possible, a seminary. All of this would be possible for a religious Congregation, but very difficult for isolated priests working on their own. There are already a number of Missionary Oblates in the Vicariate, two more are about to leave for it and others will follow, so that in the near future, there will be a noticeable improvement without the least upheavals. I entrust these thoughts to your heart to use according to how God may inspire you.

I recently received a very kind Brief from the Holy Father. When will I ever have the chance to thank him in person for such kindness? I do understand, however, that this is not the right time to expose oneself to the shifting moods of an unsettled population. I will come to kneel at his feet only when I know that he has returned to Rome to sit on his independent and sovereign throne.

I will also have a chance to meet you, your Excellency, and personally to express the sentiments of esteem which I can only now transmit in writing.

Your most humble and devoted servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**14. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the S. Cong. of Propaganda Fide].<sup>4</sup>**

*The Congregation agrees to send missionaries to Natal under the direction of an Oblate Apostolic Vicar. The fathers would work better in Ceylon and Oregon if an area were assigned to them alone. Fr.*

<sup>4</sup> Printed Italian text: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Acta, V. 212 (1849-1850), ff. 511-512.

*Charles Bellon is the best qualified subject to become Apostolic Vicar in Natal.*

Marseilles, March 30, 1850.

Very Reverend Monseigneur,

The Sacred Congregation will find the Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate always ready at its slightest call. They will always obey joyfully if they can perform the task proposed to them.

You are already familiar with the zeal with which these sons of Mary work to convert the heretics and agnostics in England, Ceylon, in upper and lower Canada, in the Vicariate of His Excellency the bishop of Juliopolis on the Red River, even in Hudson Bay in the very midst of tribes that have never heard about God, and in Oregon in the United States. I therefore have reason to believe that they will accomplish just as much good in the new mission you have proposed to me. I also note, with great pleasure, that you plan to form a separate Apostolic Vicariate to be entrusted to the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Your Excellency knows how I feel on that subject. There will never be any comparison between the good that can be accomplished by a Congregation working under an Apostolic Vicar chosen from its own ranks and what a Congregation is allowed to do, in the midst of serious difficulties in missions where, all too often, the bishops succumb to certain pretences and prejudices that are bad for the good of souls and the peace and tranquillity to be justifiably enjoyed by fervent religious who have left their families, their homeland, and all the comforts of our civilized countries to sacrifice themselves as heroic volunteers.

That is the reason why I have so often pleaded with you that the Sacred Congregation assign the mission of Nesqually in Oregon to the Missionary Oblates of Mary and that the Apostolic Vicar be chosen from among its members. You will recall that I had also suggested Fr. Pascal Ricard, the superior of the mission, for that office. I know for certain that the Jesuit Fathers expressed the same feeling to their Superior General and are agreed on the principle at stake and the person to be selected. I was thinking the same thing for Ceylon. That is the reason why, when Bishop Bettachini wrote to inform me that he intended to ask for Fr. Semeria as Coadjutor, I gave my wholehearted approval, and I would recommend the idea to you. When the Sacred Congregation deems it opportune, I believe it would be most useful for the Vicariate of Jaffna to be entrusted in its entirety to the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary.

It may very well be that His Excellency the bishop of Vancouver, an assuredly upright man but hardly gifted as you will have already realized, has come to Rome with a completely different plan drawn up together with his two confreres in Oregon who have proved themselves to be very unwise administrators (I express myself so frankly only when writing to you). He will have presented quite different principles for your consideration. It is up to the Sacred Congregation to decide in its wisdom if the special interests of these Prelates, brothers and friends, are to be preferred to the good of that Mission.

Fr. Reinaud will have spoken in his own way about his own interests, but to no effect. I am speaking the truth, inspired solely by the greatest glory of God and the good of the souls to be converted to the faith.

In response to the proposal Your Excellency made in your letter of March 18, my answer is that, were it to please the Sacred Congregation to entrust the new Vicariate of Natal to the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, I am ready to accept with the hope in God that we will be able to accomplish the task. In this case I would propose, as Apostolic Vicar, a religious of meritorious virtue and knowledge, who enjoys learning languages, and is called "little Mezzofanti".<sup>5</sup> He knows Hebrew and I don't know what other Oriental language, Latin obviously, French, Provençal, English, German, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese as well if I'm not mistaken. However, since he is humbler than he is gifted, were he to be chosen by the Sacred Congregation it would require no less than a direct order from the Holy Father to make him accept to become a bishop. This subject's name is Charles Bartholemew Bellon, 36 years old, a priest of my diocese and a religious in the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate for 15 years, and now superior of the Congregation's novitiate in England. He is duly esteemed in and outside the Congregation and, I repeat, his consecration as bishop will require a direct command from the Pope and certitude that he will remain a son of the Congregation. I almost forgot to tell you that Fr. Bellon was also a theology professor at the seminaries of Ajaccio and Marseilles.

<sup>5</sup> Gaspare Mezzofanti, Bolognese Cardinal, renowned philosopher and Orientalist (1774-1849).

What I have written is what I felt I should write in response to your letter. Please accept my sentiments of affection and respect wherewith, Your Excellency, I remain your most devoted and obedient servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**15. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the S. Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>6</sup>**

*Fr. Bellon cannot be appointed Apostolic Vicar of Natal for reasons of health. Presentation of Fr. François Allard, a virtuous and capable man. Success of the missions in England among the Protestants as well as Catholics.*

Marseilles, May 24, 1850.

Very Reverend Monseigneur,

In my letter written on March 30 in response to the one in which Your Excellency asked me to accept the new Vicariate of Natal, I accepted your proposal in hopes of working for the glory of God and the good of souls, the principal goal of the Institute of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. I also had the honor of presenting the subject I considered to be the most capable of assuming responsibility for the Mission. However, I have just met with the visitor of the 8 Oblate Missions in England. He told me that Fr. Bellon, the religious I proposed to the Sacred Congregation, is in such a delicate state of health that he could not stand the slightest fatigue, the shortest trip.

Therefore, I find it necessary to write to Your Excellency again and present an equally meritorious subject. His name is Fr. François Allard, a professed priest, 42 years old, a religious for 10 years. He has been a theology professor and is now superior of the Oblate Community in the diocese and town of Bytown in Upper Canada as well as novice master in the same province.

Fr. François Allard is a man of proven virtue and knowledge. The offices he has held and does in the Congregation are full proof of his merit. I would not know how to give him due praise. Wherever he has worked he has been considered the living Rule of ecclesiastic and religious perfection. I consider him worthy of the sacred character

<sup>6</sup> Printed Italian text: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Acta V. 212 (1849-1850), f. 513.

that marks an Apostolic Vicar and I know that he will perfectly fulfil the ministry to which the Holy See may call him.

The news from the visitor to the province of the Oblates of Mary in England is very consoling. These missionaries gave two missions in Manchester and Liverpool that have produced miraculous results. The visitor's report on this subject is most interesting. In Liverpool, besides the immense good accomplished by these missionaries, as in Manchester, for all the Catholics who so need their spiritual aid and occupy their time night and day, they have also brought about 25 recantations. Moreover, wherever they reside they bring heretics back into the Church each and every day. I am telling you all this for your consolation because you are the father of all Missions.

Very Reverend Monseigneur, please accept the sentiments of affection and respect wherewith I am your humble and very devoted servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**16. [To Cardinal Fransoni, Prefect of the S. Cong. of Propaganda Fide].<sup>7</sup>**

*State of the Oblate Congregation in the world. Regret expressed for the transfer of Bishop Magloire Blanchet to the seat of Nesqually. Impossible to accept a mission field in Melanasia. Indicate as soon as possible whether Fr. Allard has been appointed Apostolic Vicar to Natal. It would be unfortunate for English Catholics if Bishop Wiseman, recently created Cardinal, were called to reside in Rome.*

London, July 25, 1850.

Your Eminence,

My long overdue answer to your kind letter of June 25 comes from London after my extensive trip throughout England.

As always, I must begin by thanking you for your very kind intentions towards this very small Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. More than ever before am I able to attest that the Apostolic Blessing granted by Pope Leo and all his successors has

<sup>7</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Congr., Anglia, V. 12 (1848-1850), ff. 545-546.

produced fruits of salvation that would surprise anyone: 11 communities in France to serve missions and seminaries, and six houses in England to serve 12 missions, a novitiate, and a house of studies in the two kingdoms. In Canada, we have two communities in the diocese of Montreal for the urban and rural missions; one community in Saguenay, in the diocese of Quebec, for missions in the colonies and among the savages. In the diocese of Bytown the Oblates of Mary Immaculate do practically everything: they have a novitiate, staff the seminary, go on missions among the savages of Abitibi and Temiscaming and evangelize the lumbermen, the hundreds of men who spend most of the year in the woods cutting lumber. They used to be more like wildmen than Christians, but they have changed completely since the Oblate Fathers have been visiting them at the cost of great hardship and sacrifice. Moreover, the Oblate Congregation is still providing almost all services in the vicariate of St. Boniface on the Red River and is moving towards Île à la Crosse and Hudson Bay. In the United States, His Excellency the bishop of Buffalo has installed the Oblates in his diocese for the seminary and missions. The Congregation also takes care of missions for savages in Oregon, Walla Walla, Vancouver, and Nesqually where the poor missionaries built a tolerable wooden dwelling with their own hands and, at the cost of unbelievable exertion, laid out a garden to grow potatoes so they wouldn't starve to death. May it please God that the transfer of the bishop of Walla Walla to the new seat of Nesqually will not disturb the missionaries in their miserable shelter. I had heard that Bishop Blanchet, an assuredly worthy prelate, was also a man with whom it was not that easy to live in peace. I sent my reflections on this subject to Propaganda. I see from what was said about the transfer that my observations did not prevail at the Council of the Sacred Congregation.<sup>8</sup>

Your Eminence, to conclude the picture I wish to place before you, I would recall that 10 Oblate missionaries are working in the Vicariate of Jaffna in Ceylon and others will follow when it may please the Holy See to entrust that Vicariate to the Congregation,

<sup>8</sup> Cardinal Franson answered this letter on Aug. 16, 1850 stating that the appointment of an Oblate to the seat of Nesqually had been taken into consideration, but that once Bishop Magloire had abandoned Walla Walla after the hostilities between the Americans and the Indians, the Sacred Congregation had to put him somewhere.

not only to facilitate the expansion of missionary activities for the conversion of idolaters but also to found schools and a seminary.

When I add to these ministries the Vicariate of Natal which I accepted, you can clearly see, Your Eminence, the smallest and latest Congregation of God's Church is giving sufficient proof of its good will. For the Congregation to do more at present would be beyond its strength. I am therefore forced to refuse the Vicariate of Melanasia you have proposed in Oceania.<sup>9</sup> I do not have sufficient members and even if I did, I would still refuse since I could not delude myself that I would succeed where failure has befallen the Marists who are bereft neither of zeal nor members since I have heard they want to open a house in England.

I await new orders from the Sacred Congregation for the Vicariate of Natal. The men are ready. Should the Holy Father deem it opportune to appoint as Apostolic Vicar the person I felt duty bound to bring to his attention, I would have to be informed as early as possible because I will have to call him from Canada where he is a professor of theology and a master of novices. Your Eminence knows that even though the trip by steamboat is rapid, at least two months will be required to prepare everything.

Since I am writing to Your Eminence from London, I would almost have scruples if I were not to say that, if it is true that the newly created Cardinal Archbishop Wiseman will have to leave London, as people are saying here, all of the good Catholics would consider that measure an irreparable misfortune for the religion in England where Archbishop Wiseman is respected more than anyone else by the Protestants and by the government. All merits being equal, any other prelate could do what Archbishop Wiseman would do in Rome, but no one would be able to take his place in England. I am not speaking on my own behalf, I am only referring what I have heard from the numerous and good Catholics in England.

I leave tomorrow and will spend a week in Paris on matters dealing with my diocese. I plan to be in Marseilles for the feast of the

<sup>9</sup> The mission was Melanasia and Micronesia in Oceania (cf. Card. Franson's letter to Bishop de Mazenod, June 25, 1850). The Prefect understood the reasons advanced by Bishop de Mazenod and did not insist. (Cf. Card. Franson's letter to Bishop de Mazenod, Aug. 16, 1850).

Assumption. Therefore, Your Eminence can address your letters there should you have orders to give me.

Please accept the respect with which I remain your most humble and devoted servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**17. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>10</sup>**

*Inclusion of a passage from a letter written by Fr. Semeria. Outbreak of cholera in Jaffna. Goan Schism. Invitation to assign a vicariate in Ceylon to the Oblates so they can undertake the evangelization of infidels.*

Marseilles, October 20, 1850.

Dear Monseigneur,

Your Excellency may be pleased to receive recent news from the Mission of Ceylon. I recently received a letter from Fr. Semeria which will enlighten you as to how our men and the Apostolic Vicar reacted to the cholera outbreak on that poor island...<sup>11</sup>

I also see from the same letter that the Goan priests pursue their deplorable opposition. One of our Oblates was sent to Mantotte to combat the schism and, thanks to the Grace of God, to bring back a good part of those who had become the prey of our foes and to hold the others together in unity. Some of these priests do unbelievable things to continue their opposition against the authority of the Apostolic Vicar. Others, who have yet to declare themselves openly, are suspected to harbour thoughts of schism. It would be very good if we could find a way to repress that breed. Now that there are sufficient European missionaries to replace these idlers and we can

<sup>10</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 12 (1849-1850), ff. 1089-1090.

<sup>11</sup> At this point, the Founder quoted the letter in French. "While your Grace and a good number of our Fathers are meeting in Chapter to discuss the affairs of our dear Congregation, we, Fr. Lebescou and myself, are in Jaffna in the midst of great desolation, surrounded by the dead and the dying afflicted by that terrible plague of God, morbus cholera. The outbreak of this cruel disease occurred in Jaffna on the feast of the Assumption. Each and every day since then it has caused a certain number of victims. Only a few of those affected by the disease have survived. Every day we have 10, 12, 15, 18, and even 22 deaths..."



send more when necessary, and once the Sacred Congregation has made a decision on my request to entrust an Apostolic Vicariate on the island to the Oblate Congregation, my deepest hope would be to send out a large enough number of men to undertake the conversion of the more than one million infidels.

In my opinion, the work that has been undertaken will remain imperfect as long as the zeal of missionaries cannot extend to seek the conversion of such a large number of idolaters. I am well aware that something is being done in the villages where there are Christians, but I would like the Missionaries to be numerous and independent enough to penetrate the world of the totally pagan populations. I also feel that the undertaking would not then be that difficult, at least it would not be beyond the will and courage of our good Oblates of Mary who place their full confidence in God and in the protection of their Mother, Mary.

Please accept, dear Monseigneur, the homage of my devotion and friendship.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**18. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the S. Congregation of the Propaganda Fide].<sup>12</sup>**

*The numerous concerns of the Bishop of Marseilles. Gratitude expressed to Bishop Musulce and Bishop Bravi who want to have the Oblates in Colombo. Trip to Rome in the near future.*

Marseilles, December 18, 1850.

Very Dear and Reverend Monseigneur,

I would like to thank you a thousand times over for your precise answers, despite your numerous and heavy responsibilities, to my letters which are often necessary but infrequent so as not to unnecessarily disturb you. Experience has taught me about the demands of certain offices. Here I can never find a free moment with the numerous religious ceremonies in a large practicing city such as mine where the faithful are not happy unless their bishop is with them, the daily schedule of visits, the foreign prelates who come and

<sup>12</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong. Indie Orientali, V. 12 (1849-1850), ff. 1141-1142.

go and for some of whom I must provide hospitality in keeping with the propriety due to brothers in Catholicism and the episcopacy, and the confirmation of the dying, etc. I no longer know which way to turn. That is the reason for the delay in answering your letter of Nov. 15.

The proposal advanced by His Excellency the bishop of Usula<sup>13</sup> and Apostolic Vicar of Colombo, undoubtedly inspired by Bishop Bravi, merits our gratitude. The Oblate Congregation will consider itself fortunate indeed if it is called to that Vicariate to do the good it has been able to accomplish in Jaffna. On the other hand, I fail to understand the whim that led Bishop Bravi to be so discourteous in his exclusion of French missionaries who are not known to be any less zealous than others. In this case, the good prelate is in disaccord with Pope Gregory XVI whose words I will not repeat for the sake of discretion. Nonetheless, I would not be too concerned about his resolve and it would not be impossible to satisfy him, despite the somewhat singular nature of his manner. I had already been informed about Bishop Bravi's prejudice and so I am not offended.

Your Excellency, there are further reflections I would like to share with you but perhaps it would be better to put them aside until the trip I hope to make to Rome in the near future. I do not wish to further delay my prostration at the feet of the Holy Father to give voice to the feelings of my heart and offer him the homage of my devotion. No bishop has ever been in a position to feel the joy of hosting such a well loved and persecuted Father in his own residence. It is almost a good thing I was deprived of that joy. I wish to make up for that, however, by contemplating his countenance, kissing his hand, and, from his own mouth, hearing the words of blessing inspired by his heart for my good. I plan to leave towards the middle of January.

In the meantime, please accept the sentiments of esteem and affection I would so wish to express personally and heart to heart.

Your most humble and devoted servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

<sup>13</sup> Bishop Gaetano Antonio Musulce.

1851

**19. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda Fide].<sup>1</sup>**

*The missionaries assigned to the Vicariate of Colombo have already departed. Letter from Bishop Bettachini who does not want a Coadjutor right away in Jaffna. It is important for the Oblates to work in Ceylon with the certainty of staying there and evangelizing the infidels.*

Marseilles, June 15, 1851.

My Dear Monseigneur,

I am always late in writing to you on the Missions.<sup>2</sup> However, I do have a number of things to say in this regard. I have sent the 4 missionaries I had promised, all excellent religious. How they will be received by Bishop Bravi is something we will know later, but extracts from letters do not seem to indicate a promising situation. That spurious prelate complains about everyone, including the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide.

Bishop Bettachini's answer to the letter you advised me to write to him was not satisfactory at all. Always considering things from his own point of view alone, he insists on the fact at present he does not need a Coadjutor. In response to what I had to say about the ever present possibility of his demise, just guess what he said: "My reaction is that when I die there will be one less simpleton in the world and, in any case, the Sacred Congregation is aware of my

<sup>1</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong. Indie Orientali, V. 13 (1851-1852), ff. 514-515.

<sup>2</sup> In earlier letters written in 1851 and at the beginning of this one, Bishop de Mazenod referred to his trip to Rome and the pallium he had received from the Holy Father.

intentions". He expresses displeasure in my disbelief of his word which has always been to dispose things in such a way that, one day, the vicariate would be entrusted to the Oblates but at present he doesn't see the need for choosing a coadjutor and that it suffices for me to know what he plans to do, etc. In truth, it is not enough for me to know what he plans to do. Thirteen missionaries of our Congregation are already at work on the island. I am willing to send more subjects to perfect the work at hand, but I must admit that I will not feel at ease until I see an Oblate of Mary in a position to take the reins of the Mission as soon as the position of Apostolic Vicar becomes vacant. This is necessary in my opinion. I can provide a number of reasons for that, among which the confession (not sacramental) of a young Jesuit<sup>3</sup> who passed here and threw himself at my feet to beg forgiveness for having been guilty, together with two Ceylonese missionaries, of trying to have the Oblates expelled from the island. His excuse was his youth and his lack of experience, etc. The plot was therefore real, and one of those missionaries is the same one who hopes to become Apostolic Vicar. You can well understand that it is impossible for a Congregation, which sacrifices its members to a mission, to ask them to live under a sort of death sentence.

I would therefore plead with the Sacred Congregation to understand this position and, whether he likes it or not, give the Apostolic Vicar of Jaffna a Coadjutor taken from among the Oblates, not so much to satisfy the needs of the present Vicar, but for the honor and the security of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary who are certainly more capable of propagating the faith in this island than those missionaries chosen here and there.

Dear Monseigneur, this matter merits your due consideration. The Gordian Knot must be cut as soon as possible to avoid the emergence of plots and jealousies. I would rather withdraw all our missionaries than see them under the sword of Damocles and always uncertain about their future.

Please accept, dear Monseigneur, the most friendly greetings of your friend and servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

<sup>3</sup> Fr. Strickland, S.J.

20. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>4</sup>

*Dispatch of letters and a proclamation from the Municipal Council of Marseilles to the Pope with regard to the pallium. Future Consecration of Bishop Allard soon to depart for England and Africa. Bishop Norbert Blanchet hinders his priests from becoming religious. Intention to withdraw the Oblates from Oregon.*

[Marseilles], July 8, 1851.

— on visit to St. Joseph —

Very Dear Monseigneur,

Only two words so as to take advantage of the departure of two excellent priests from Grenoble. I trust that you received the envelope I had entrusted to the Pontifical Consul. Besides a personal letter for you, the envelope also contained a letter from the Mayor of Marseilles and a proclamation of the Municipal Council addressed to His Holiness. Since the Mayor had charged me to forward his letter and the proclamation to the Pope, I felt it my duty to include an accompanying letter, and I addressed everything to Your Excellency.

A few days after that dispatch, I received a very kind personal letter from the Pope and another one for the Chapter of my Cathedral.

Our Apostolic Vicar for Natal<sup>5</sup> has reached Marseilles from Canada. I plan to consecrate him bishop on Sunday. I would like to know whether Propaganda Fide has any instructions for him prior to his departure. He will travel by way of England to consult with the Government. I have been told that the Governor of Natal is a convert.

The Oregon bishops are still the same. I would have too much to say if I were to dwell upon their outlandish claims. Just think that this “holy” man, that is not to say “gentleman” Archbishop,<sup>6</sup> has threatened one of our religious, professed for one or two years, with *suspensio etiam a sacris* if he does not quit his community and return

<sup>4</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., America Centrale, V. 15 (1849-1851), ff. 817-818.

<sup>5</sup> Bishop Allard.

<sup>6</sup> Bishop Norbert Blanchet.

to him. This father<sup>7</sup> resides in the new diocese of Nesqually which the Sacred Congregation allowed itself to be convinced to entrust to the bishop of Walla Walla. When I reflect on the few words pronounced by the bishop of Nesqually during a visit to the Oblate community which had settled in the diocese before his transfer, I can see the storm building and hear the thunder. I felt it would be difficult to live with prelates like that. However, what a misfortune it would be for that poor mission if the bishops were to be reduced to the point of dependence upon a few secular priests who are all dissatisfied each more than the other.

It is evident that these bishops are making abusive use of the faculties received from Propaganda to vex the religious. Isn't it heinous to make the prohibition to become a religious retroactive when a well-proven vocation and perhaps the need to defend oneself against the dangers for the soul in that country of great liberty led a priest to seek shelter.

Oh, I would have so many things to say to you. However, it would require many hours of conversation and not a simple letter. Moreover, if the Blanchet bishops continue to persecute the Oblates in this way, I will not abandon my sons to their arrogance (I am addressing myself to you confidentially and in all frankness). Rather than seeing them reduced to despair, I would send them down to California or somewhere else where they would be able to do good and with their hearts in peace.

Please accept my respectful and affectionate good wishes.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**21. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the Sacred Cong. of Propaganda Fide].<sup>8</sup>**

*News from Ceylon. Bishop Allen Collier of Port Louis invites the Oblates to come to the Seychelles. Request for a dispensation, for reasons of age, to ordain Fr. De l'Hermite.*

<sup>7</sup> Fr. J. Jayol who had taken vows on Dec. 8, 1849.

<sup>8</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Africa, Isole dell'Oceano Australe, etc., V. 3 (1841-1851), f. 982.

Marseilles, August 6, 1851.

Very Dear Monseigneur,

Every time I write to you I should always begin by thanking you for your kindness and constant benevolence despite the problems I always add to your concerns. However, to whom could I turn if not to the friend I would be prepared to help in the same way were it in my power to do so.

I will no longer say anything about Ceylon. The last words of your kind letter of July 8 put my mind totally at rest. I trust Propaganda Fide is aware that Bishop Bettachini has left to spend a few months on the Continent. They said in Ceylon that he planned to go to Rome. He has given ample faculties to Fr. Semeria and that is proof of the full esteem he has for him.

By this time Bishop Bravi will have received the 4 missionaries requested of me by the Sacred Congregation. They are excellent men, but only one is Italian, if Corsica can be considered thus. However, he as well as the others are outstanding in their virtue and capabilities.

A few days ago I received a letter from Bishop Allen Collier of Port-Louis. I am sending you a copy so that Your Excellency can give me an opinion on the proposal which has been made. I would be disposed to say "yes", if the Sacred Congregation gives its approval, because the Seychelles are a little more than six or seven hundred leagues from Port Natal and at present it would suffice to send two missionaries.<sup>9</sup>

As you will see from the bishop's letter, he feels that these islands are too far away from Mauritius for him to visit and could be assigned to the Congregation as an Apostolic Vicariate.

In closing I would have a favour to ask of you. I would need a sixteen month dispensation to ordain an Oblate deacon. The faculties

<sup>9</sup> On August 26, 1851 Bishop Barnabò officially offered the Oblates the new prefecture of the Seychelles upon the condition that they send one or more British subjects. The Founder did not reply. Cardinal Fransonni made a new offer on November 24, 1851 stating that at least the new Prefect should be a British subject. The Founder's letters in response to these offers have not been found, but a Propaganda Fide memorandum on March 16, 1852 notes the definitive refusal on the part of the Oblates. Cf. A. PERBAL: "Les missions acceptées par Mgr de Mazenod de 1841 à 1861", in *Études Oblates*, t. 23 (1964), pp. 140-142.

I received from Rome do not surpass one year and you know that the special faculties granted to me by the Holy Father for our Missionaries presuppose an urgent case without the time to have recourse to Rome. Therefore, I would ask you to obtain this 16 or 17 month dispensation in favour of the Deacon Oblate of Mary Immaculate Mark Melchior Tristan de L'Hermite whom I need for the service of the Church in the ministries entrusted to the Congregation.

Please accept, dear Monseigneur, the affection wherewith I am your servant and friend.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**22. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>10</sup>**

*Kindest regards. The visit of Bishop Prince, Coadjutor of Bishop Bourget, to Marseilles. Difficulties with Bishop Blanchet in Oregon.*

Marseilles, December 2, 1851.

My Dearest Monseigneur,

After his short visit with me I cannot permit the Coadjutor of Montreal to leave without these brief words of greeting for you. I will write later to His Eminence Cardinal Frasoni on matters in Oregon where the situation is very serious due to the inconsiderate, and even arrogant attitude of Bishop Blanchet. Today I wish only to renew the expression of my friendship.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**23. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>11</sup>**

*Presentation of Bishop Taché who is leaving for Rome. Sacrifices borne by the missionaries in Hudson Bay. Dispatch of two missionaries to Jaffna where Fr. Semeria should be appointed coadjutor. A vice-superior will be appointed in Colombo. Bishop Allard has left for Africa.*

<sup>10</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., America Settentrionale, V. 6 (1849-1857), f. 386.

<sup>11</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., America Settentrionale, V. 6 (1849-1857), ff. 388-389.



*The new boundaries of his vicariate. The Oblates in Oregon will move to another mission field. Calm in Marseilles.*

Marseilles, December 8, 1851.

My dearest Monseigneur,

I only have a few minutes to write you this brief note before the departure of Bishop Taché of Arath and Bishop Provencher's coadjutor, whom I consecrated 15 days ago. It is not necessary for me to recommend this goodly Prelate to your kind regard. In my eyes, he and his companions, the Oblates of Mary, are true heroes of zeal and all sorts of sacrifices. Human nature is not made to bear with the privations of their frightful mission. They depend upon nothing less than the immense grace of divine goodness to support them in the wretched life, and I would even call it the horrible life they must live in the frozen districts of Hudson Bay where there is nothing, not even a piece of bread which the missionaries, including the bishop, haven't eaten for five years or more. I would ask you to give Bishop Taché the opportunity to be introduced into the presence of the Holy Father. Once he has give you a report on his mission, he will be able to amuse you by singing some of the Indian songs, and praying the Our Father and Hail Mary in the languages of the Montagnais and Cree tribes as proof that the prophecy of King David "Praise the Lord, all peoples" is fulfilled in our day.

My one wish is to please you in everything. Therefore, I will do everything in my power to send Bishop Bettachini the two missionaries he has requested, even though it will be very difficult to find the English man he would like to have because I really need them in England where the missions are growing in number and importance.

It took your heartening words to reassure me on the destiny of our missions in Ceylon, but I find it impossible to understand Bishop Bettachini's difficulties with regard to the Coadjutor whom I consider so important for the tranquillity of our Congregation and the peace of the missionaries.

I responded to Bishop Bravi according to his wishes. I cannot do without the most meritorious Fr. Semeria as general superior of all the Missionary Oblates of Mary on the island, but I have given my consent for a vice-superior in the vicariate of Colombo who will not depend, at least apparently, upon the resident superior in Jaffna.

Bishop Allard had already left when I received your letter addressed to him. I do not know when I will be able to forward it to him, but it will be as soon as I possibly can. In the meantime, however, in the Portuguese countries which this last Brief removes from his vicariate he may well exercise his jurisdiction in virtue of the first two briefs.

I am taking advantage of the same occasion to write to His Eminence the Cardinal Prefect to register a very strong complaint against the unbearable behavior of the bishops Blanchet. It is no longer possible to bear with such arrogance. After having harrassed the Jesuits, they have now, and from the very outset, begun to torment our men. As far as I am concerned, I cannot reduce men who have sacrificed so much for the glory of God to such a state, nor can I abandon them to the mere whim of prelates who abuse their power to such a degree. The simplest thing to do would be to let them be absolute masters in their realm and go somewhere else to do the good which cannot be accomplished under their tyrannical rule.

I think I have responded to your various questions and all that remains is to assure you anew of the sincere affection of your humble servant and friend,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. Everything is very calm in Marseilles, as if nothing had happened in Paris.<sup>12</sup> Yesterday and today I performed my functions openly and in public without the slightest problem. Yesterday, I personally gave Holy Communion to nine hundred men.

#### 24. [To Cardinal Fransoni, Prefect of the S. Cong. of Propaganda Fide].<sup>13</sup>

*Complaints lodged against Bishop Blanchet who, in virtue of a privilege granted by Propaganda Fide, prohibits secular priests of his diocese from becoming religious. The European priests who follow bishops to*

<sup>12</sup> Reference to the Coup d'État of Louis-Napoléon on Dec. 2, 1851. There was an outbreak of an insurrection in Paris on Dec. 3 and 4, but it was rapidly repressed.

<sup>13</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., America Centrale, V. 15 (1849-1851), ff. 929-930.

*America remain free and their commitment is in no way comparable to that of students from the Propaganda Fide.*

Marseilles, December 8, 1851.

Monseigneur,

When I learned in Rome that Your Eminence had granted the bishops of Oregon the enormous privilege to oppose, as they deemed necessary, the religious vocation of priests in their diocese, I could not help but express my distress to Bishop Barnabò and tell him that those prelates would not delay in making abusive use of such a concession. That is exactly what has occurred. Bishop Blanchet applied the rescript with a retroactive effect and immediately used that powerful weapon to order a priest who had already made his profession in the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary to leave his community and return to him under the pain of suspension.<sup>14</sup> The father in question, imbued with the responsibilities imposed by his vows and his oath, was not impelled to comply with the Prelate's demand which would have made him an apostate. Therefore, Bishop Blanchet addressed himself to another priest who had already taken the habit but was still a novice and, with a letter which I herewith transcribe, ordered him to leave the novitiate and proceed to the place to which he had been assigned. The letter was addressed to the superior; "It is my honor to inform you that it has pleased the Holy See to declare that secular priests cannot become religious without the permission of the bishops of the Province;" and in another letter to the same superior "I hereby inform you that it has pleased the Holy See to decree that, for Oregon, there will be neither novitiate nor entrance into religious orders for secular priests... consequently, M. Leclair (the aforementioned novice)<sup>15</sup> remains attached to the diocese and should expect to receive an assignment."

The poor superior, crushed by those words, released the priest who had come to the novitiate in search of asylum and whom the Archbishop, having stripped him of his holy habit, assigned with no regard whatsoever for his dislikes or his vocation. The superior duly informed me about what had occurred in order that I would advise.

<sup>14</sup> Fr. Jayol.

<sup>15</sup> Entered the novitiate on August 14, 1850.

Monseigneur, the decision before me is very clear. Justice is requested of Your Eminence. The two facts I have placed before Your Eminence are so outrageous that the only measure I can take is to withdraw my missionaries from Oregon if they are to be treated in such a way in that region. How can religious congregations trust bishops who act towards them in such a way? It would be better to withdraw and go somewhere else to do good without such obstacles. These bishops must have neither great esteem for religious bodies nor much gratitude for the good they accomplish in their missions if they give rise to grief and sadness among the religious over two simple persons who, fearing the dangers of the ministry, wished to strengthen themselves in the practice of the evangelical counsels in order to work for good with greater merit and less danger for themselves! Why should they be in a worse condition than the other priests who have been able to leave Oregon to return to Europe or go somewhere else? When accepting to follow the bishops to this mission, did these priests accept to bond their liberty and place themselves at the service of the bishops as if they were valets or mercenaries? Never! Most of these priests have given ample proof that they considered themselves free, since they made their decision as soon as they realized the true nature of the prelates they were dealing with. And will it no longer be possible for the more devoted and zealous priests to enter a religious community whose members consecrate their existence to those same tasks that the bishops wish to inflict upon these poor priests by tearing them away from the community they have chosen in response to their conscience in order to better accomplish that work and without any threat to their salvation? That is just too much!

The position of these priests can in no way be considered the same as that of the students of Propaganda! The latter were chosen in their own countries at an ordinarily very young age and knew very well that they had been chosen to be formed to become missionaries in their own country. Expenses for their travel, their education, and their care are borne for a number of years. They take an oath to fulfill the mission to which they have committed themselves, etc. This is not the situation at all for the priest who leaves Europe to follow a bishop in America. His only commitment is to try and see whether this ministry is suitable to him. When he realizes that it is not right for him, he withdraws. What right would the bishop have to restrain him? It is because he might have paid for his travel? But, did he pay with his own money? Everyone knows that traveling expenses are

paid by Propagation of the Faith which provides the money without claiming to impose a condition of servitude which no one would want to accept, at least not in France. Therefore, the claims advanced by bishops upon those who have entered religious life in order to protect their salvation while working to convert people whose customs entail real dangers represents an injustice we cannot suffer. That is all I am going to talk about because it is the only thing that regards me. As far as everything else that happens in this unique ecclesiastical province with 8 bishoprics<sup>16</sup> for 1,500 catholics scattered over the whole of Oregon, that is none of my concern.

I respectfully remain, Your Eminence, your most humble and obedient servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

<sup>16</sup> The ecclesiastical province of Oregon City had two suffragan bishoprics: Vancouver and Walla Walla (Nesqually), though the Blanchet brothers had proposed the division into 8 bishoprics in 1846. Cf. J. LEFLON, *Mgr de Mazenod*, t. III, p. 178.



1852

25. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the S. Cong. of Propaganda Fide].<sup>1</sup>

*Petition to the Holy Father. Bro. Barthelemy, a Christian Brother, wishes to join the Oblates. Bishop Taché has left for his missions of Red River with 4 missionaries. Three other missionaries will soon leave for Ceylon.*

Marseilles, February 8, 1852.

My dear Monseigneur,

I am writing to ask you to present the Holy Father with the petition I have included with this letter. As you will see, Brother Joseph Barthelemy requests permission to be able to pass from the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools to that of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The ministry of the latter is more suitable to his true vocation which leads him to consecrate himself to the service of the foreign missions.

I must thank you for the many favors rendered for the Bishop of Arath. He has left for his most arduous mission. Four other Missionary Oblates of Mary have left with him, inspired by a zeal which shrinks before no privation. Three other missionaries will leave shortly for Ceylon. That good Bishop Bettachini is daunted by nothing. Besides the obstinacy of his refusals which, as he could well understand, do not satisfy me at all, he continues to ask me for new men and I am too good at heart to turn him down.

<sup>1</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong. Missioni, V. 23 (1850-1854), f. 480.

My dear Monseigneur, please accept the renewed expression of my affectionate friendship.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**26. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the S. Cong. of Propaganda Fide].<sup>2</sup>**

*Request for information on Fr. H. J. Roth, professor of languages in Marseilles. Jealousy between the two vicariates in Ceylon. Difficulties the fathers in Colombo have with Bishop Bravi. Bishop Bettachini continues to delay the presentation of Fr. Semeria as Coadjutor. Propaganda must state its position on the behavior of the Oregon Bishops who prevent diocesan priests from becoming religious.*

Marseilles, April 16, 1852.

Beloved Monseigneur,

I am writing to you to ask for information on a student of Propaganda Fide named Hermann Joseph Roth from the diocese of Trêves. This young priest was not able to work under the Bishop of Algiers<sup>3</sup> and, like so many others from all the nations of the earth<sup>4</sup>, he has come to seek refuge in Marseilles where he has been living for more than a month. I saw him yesterday for the first time when he came to the Chancery to renew his permit<sup>5</sup>. I therefore had the occasion to question him, but his explanations did not fully satisfy me. How can it be that a student of Propaganda Fide leaves the mission that, I suspect, was assigned to him in Algeria and comes to live in Marseilles where we don't know what to do with his services. What is the sense of a young priest having to support himself here by teaching languages? I don't think that is the purpose of the costly education given to a student of Propaganda Fide. Moreover, I have remarked that Roth is a handsome young man, rather refined in his hair style and his dress, even though he does wear the cassock as prescribed in my diocese. He has a well trimmed Oriental beard, gracious manners, and alluring conversation as well as behaviour.

<sup>2</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 13 (1851-1852), ff. 902, 905.

<sup>3</sup> Bishop Dupuch.

<sup>4</sup> Phrase in Latin in the original letter.

<sup>5</sup> Italian original: "pagella".



What can I really say, except that I am afraid the job of language professor is dangerous for him. Moreover, I fail to understand how a student of Propaganda Fide does not have another mission than to spend the best years of his life in such an occupation.

I am not surprised that the document he received from the bishop of Algiers is rather laconical and simply states that the bishop is not aware of Roth having been bound by any censure. It could be that the bishop, displeased by the departure of the young priest, didn't want to grace him with a recommendation, but the whole affair leaves me somewhat ill at ease. It is for that reason I beg you to provide me with the information I need in conscience for this case.

I have received letters from Ceylon. Jealousy is more than ever rampant between the two vicariates. Bishop Bravi is exasperating the precautions dictated by his so called policy. Your Eminence, you know that I granted Bishop Bravi all possible concessions in allowing the Oblates of Mary in his vicariate not to appear dependent upon the Superior who lives in the vicariate of Jaffna. I wouldn't want Bishop Bravi to press the issue according to his outlook because I want Fr. Semeria to be the real Superior of all the Oblates on the island. My impression is that the Prelate is not revealing all the reasons behind his request for an excessively total separation. I suspect Bishop Bravi is afraid of people in Jaffna knowing too much about the resources of the missionaries in Colombo and does not want to provide arms against his claims. What leads me to this explanation of the situation is the decision, very unjust in my opinion, to reduce the Oblate Missionaries in his vicariate to the alms of Mass stipends, when they can find them, and depriving them of the rights of stole fees which all the other missionaries possess. I await further information, and if the system is not changed, I will address my protests first to the Prelate and then to the Sacred Congregation.

Bishop Bettachini is convinced that Bishop Bravi is too cunning and perhaps lacking in sincerity. With regard to the former, who strikes me as a fundamentally good man, he took offense because I complained about his obstinacy and maintains that his frank but sincere letters are of greater worth than the compliments of that other Prelate. Nonetheless, he persists in his feelings: high esteem for Fr. Semeria, strong intention to present his name to the Sacred Congregation, but delay in the execution of the project. Please find

enclosed a copy of the second last letter sent to me by Bishop Bettachini.

All that remains would be to say something about Oregon, but I am waiting for the Sacred Congregation and its Venerable Prefect to give me cause for satisfaction on my protests relative to the pretences of those blessed bishops who want to set themselves against the vocation of those priests, whom they could not prevent from returning to Europe if they so desired, yet strive to prevent their entrance into Congregations whose members work in their diocese, but in such a way as not to risk the salvation of their souls. I am not at all attached to that Mission which was practically forced upon me after repeated refusals.

Please accept, dear Monseigneur, the expression of my sincere friendship.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

1853

27. To His Eminence Cardinal Fransoni.<sup>1</sup>

*Dispatch of a letter from the bishop of Perth. Conversions brought about by the Oblates in Ceylon. Two fathers will leave for the vicariate of Jaffna. The Colombo vicariate would need many more missionaries, even though they have problems with the Goans and the bishops.*

Marseilles, March 1, 1853.

Your Eminence,

I am unaware of the reason why the letter from the bishop of Perth was addressed to me by that prelate to be forwarded to Your Eminence. It was enclosed in an envelope with a large seal of Spanish wax which tore the paper glued to the seal on the outer envelope addressed to me. I feel it unnecessary to add that, despite that mishap, the secrecy of the letter was respected. No one besides myself touched the letter and I would have been assailed by scruples had I read but one line.

Perhaps it would be fitting for me to tell Your Eminence about the good our Oblates of Mary are doing in the Missions of Ceylon. I have often received very heartening news. It would truly seem that the Lord is helping them in a very special way. I am convinced that they have been gifted with a certain participation in the miracle of Pentecost. How would it otherwise be possible to explain that in such a short time, they have been able to know enough of those difficult languages to instruct and confess the natives of that country. The last missionaries to arrive in the vicariate of Colombo have perhaps done too much in the opinion of the Goans who do nothing at all. In any case, one father alone has converted 110 protestants to our holy faith and another has converted 82 Buddhists. There is very much I could

<sup>1</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 14 (1853-1854), ff. 170-171.

tell you about the opposition they have encountered on the part of the Goans who worked up the elderly bishop G. Antonio<sup>2</sup> against them. Their great crime was to have dedicated too much attention to poor abandoned youth and to have given First Communion to a large number of young people, 12, 15, 20 years old and older. That was not the custom for the Goans who let the people die without having received their First Communion. Our missionaries were convinced that the young people were quite mature for instruction and that it was important to give it to them no matter what it might cost the missionaries themselves. In this regard, they have told me things which bring to one's eyes tears of devotion and affection. You can be sure, Your Eminence, that four Oblates are not needed in the vicariate of Colombo, but 10 or even more if it were possible. However....

Bishop Bettachini has asked me for two more missionaries for his vicariate of Jaffna. They will leave immediately after Easter. One of those who was already in the vicariate died a very holy death last year, a victim of his zeal for those stricken with cholera. The arrival of the two missionaries about to leave will bring the number to 12 Oblates of Mary Immaculate in the vicariate of Jaffna. With the four in the vicariate of Colombo, there are 16 of our missionaries on the island, but you can well imagine that Colombo would need just as many as there are in Jaffna.

I am sure that Bishop Bravi will have given you a favorable report on the four men working under his jurisdiction. As far as I am concerned, I can vouch that they are four angels. That is why the Lord showers such blessings on their ministry. With his humble prayers, one of them has obtained two truly miraculous healings and I believe Bishop Bravi calls him the little Xavier.

I felt that these few details would bring pleasure to Your Eminence and I could write a whole volume were I to narrate the works of all our missionaries throughout the world.

Please accept, Your Eminence, the sentiments of respect and veneration wherewith I am you very humble and devoted servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Gaetano Antonio Musulce, Apostolic Vicar of Colombo.

28. [To Cardinal Frasoni, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>3</sup>

*The Oblates will stay in Oregon in keeping with the wishes expressed by Propaganda, even though the bishops do not act like fathers and the missionaries are discouraged. Advantages to be had by assigning Vicariates to religious Congregations; do so as soon as possible in Jaffna.*

Marseilles, April 8, 1853.

Your Eminence,

Your slightest wish will always be a command for me. It is true, however, that the rather strange behavior of the bishops with regard to the missionaries has made it practically impossible for the latter to accomplish good works in Oregon. Instead of being treated in a paternal way and with that indispensable concern dictated by the immense sacrifice which the missionaries have had to make to consecrate their lives to a mission so displeasing to human nature, these men, who had left their homes, families and friends out of obedience and not out of fancy and self interest, were treated with suspicion and at times even as enemies.

Your Eminence believes that matters will proceed in a better way in the future. So may it be! I had understood that there was very little to be done in those countries, and even that to the detriment of my poor sons. That is the reason why I had agreed for them to go somewhere else to exercise their zeal. So many requests are advanced! However, the Sacred Congregation wants us to remain there and we will remain. I will write in this same sense to the superior who is very discouraged but ready to persevere in his sacrifice.

Discord such as this does not exist where a Congregation is in charge of a Vicariate. When that element is missing it is impossible to rely on the stability which is so necessary for the accomplishment of good that demands considerable time. For this and other opportune reasons so well understood by Your Eminence and your S. Congregation during my last trip to Rome, I worked so hard in the attempt to have the meritorious Fr. Semeria raised to the episcopal dignity

<sup>3</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., America Centrale, V. 16 (1852-1854), ff. 563-564.

with at least the title of Coadjutor to the Apostolic Vicar in Jaffna. This seemed to be an indispensable measure in order to consolidate the good, the extraordinary amount of good that has already been done and what we hope can be accomplished in the future.

This measure, wise and just in my opinion, would reassure the Missionary Oblates of Mary and the entire Congregation which would evermore take to heart the prosperity of that Mission where there is so much to be done. I do not want to give the impression, God forbid, that I am disappointed by the excessive delay in the realization of this project approved three years ago, but I must say that the delay is to the disadvantage of the greater good which could be done on that Island.

Please accept, Your Eminence, the respect and affection where-with I am your humble and devoted servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**29. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>4</sup>**

*The Oblates will remain in Oregon. Appoint Fr. Semeria Coadjutor in Jaffna. Bishop Bravi is complaining about the overly enterprising zeal of the young fathers in his Vicariate.*

Marseilles, April 8, 1853.

My dearest Monseigneur and friend,

I am writing today to His Eminence the Prefect in response to the letter in which I was asked not to abandon the Oregon Mission. I obey the instructions of the Sacred Congregation even though I am convinced that there is little good to be done in those countries and with those holy bishops. That mission I had refused when asked by Archbishop Blanchet was practically imposed upon me by his brother in Canada who had persuaded our men from that country. I have always regretted the fact of having been too open to the requests made at that time, especially when I found out about the

<sup>4</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., America Centrale, V. 16 (1852-1854), ff. 565-566.

personality of the then bishop of Walla Walla who unfortunately became bishop of Nesqually where our men had settled before him.

I reminded His Eminence the Prefect about the plan recognized as opportune for the stability of the Oblates on the island of Ceylon. I am sending two more missionaries to the vicariate of Jaffna. They are not going to seek their fortune! They are leaving out of obedience and inspired by zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. I have reason to believe that there are other missionaries in the vicariate of Colombo whose motives are not as pure as those of the religious who are members of a Congregation and that they are causing Bishop Bravi reason for concern. This is evident in light of the apprehension expressed by Bishop Bravi that our men would allow themselves to be convinced by the former. Bishop Bravi will never have cause to fear a similar type of opposition from the Oblates. He gives the impression of being very satisfied with them, even though I could suspect that perhaps he does not write in that sense. He has complained that two of our men, one of whom is the one he calls "little St. Francis Xavier", are doing too much. How is it even possible to follow in the footsteps of those Goan priests who let souls rot in ignorance and unbelievable vice accusing them of being incapable of instruction, while our men have realized that, with a little effort, those poor Christians who were really abandoned are very capable of receiving absolution and showing the disposition necessary to receive Communion. They have obtained truly heroic acts from the youth and are convinced that the youth apostolate is the only way to give Christianity on that island the life it has been missing due to the abominable system thus far pursued. Hence the anger<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, I have told our men to follow Bishop Bravi's instructions which, unlike those of the black bishop<sup>6</sup> will never entail doing anything against one's conscience.

I would like to say more, but the Passionist father who is to carry this letter has come for it and is leaving immediately.

Please accept, dear Monseigneur and friend, the expression of my most affectionate sentiments,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

<sup>5</sup> Text quoted in latin: *Inde iræ.*

<sup>6</sup> Bishop Musulce.

30. To His Eminence Cardinal Franson, Prefect [of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>7</sup>

*Departure of two Missionaries for the Vicariate of Jaffna. Sixteen Oblates in Ceylon. Complaints made by the Apostolic Vicar of Colombo against the Oblates who are working very much with youth. Departure of a number of Missionaries for Africa and Canada. Success of the Oblates' apostolate everywhere.*

Marseilles, April 28, 1853.

Your Eminence,

It is my duty to inform Your Eminence that two new missionaries of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate have left for the island of Ceylon. They are directed to the Vicariate of Jaffna and, upon their arrival, there will be twelve Oblates in that Vicariate and, with the four men serving in the Vicariate of Colombo, sixteen Oblates on the island.

I would suppose that the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda receives reports on the good being done in the two Vicariates. The reports I receive lead me to bless the Lord from the depths of my heart. It is true that the good Vicar G. Antonio complains because, in his opinion, the Oblates are doing too much, but the truth is that the zeal of the missionaries, who spare themselves no effort, produces very evident fruits of salvation, and their dedication to youth, giving them solid instruction and a taste for the sacraments which they never receive, will bring about a total change in that Christianity which thus far has been Christian in name alone. That is why the people disobey and rebel so easily and let themselves be led into schism. Nonetheless, I have advised the missionaries to act with prudence, and those in Colombo to follow Bishop Bravi's instructions. I have reason to believe they are acting in that way. However, I would never even try to convince them that in order to avoid incurring the disfavor of the Goan priests they should abandon the poor youth to wallow in vice and ignorance, convinced that they are unable of being admitted to the Sacraments at 15, 20, or 30 years of age. Our missionaries have seen what can be achieved through the untiring zeal which induces them to sacrifice themselves in order to

<sup>7</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong. Indie Orientali, V. 14 (1853-1854), ff. 320-321.



instruct and animate these poor people. I have had reports of the truly heroic acts performed by these youth; proof of the virtue of which they are capable.

Your Eminence, I wanted to give you these brief details because I suspect that the goodly Apostolic Vicar, G. Antonio, overly prejudiced and badly advised, will have complained about the so-called excessive zeal of our missionaries. In truth, these men will never succumb to living the life of a Brahmin in the midst of Christians who are in such dire need of instruction, good example, and, in brief, a spiritual life.

A few days after the departure of two Oblate Missionaries for Ceylon, I sent three others to Natal. In three days time, more missionaries will be leaving for Canada. Four have been sent to the Red River, that is to the diocese of St. Boniface. In this way our small family is working for the glory of God and the salvation of the most abandoned souls in distant countries, while working tirelessly to the same end in France and England with the success which is an unfathomable blessing of God.

I am sure, Your Eminence, that this news will be agreeable to your piety and it is for that reason that I took the liberty to duly inform you.

Please accept the humble expression of my most affectionate wishes wherewith I am your most devoted servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

### 31. To His Eminence Cardinal Fransoni.<sup>8</sup>

*Dispatch of a letter from Fr. Semeria. Bishop Bettachini's desolation over the sad state of his diocese. It is no longer opportune to send Oblates to Ceylon if Fr. Semeria is not appointed Coadjutor.*

Marseilles, July 21, 1853.

Your Eminence,

I have just received a letter from our missionaries in the vicariate of Jaffna on the island of Ceylon and it contains a letter for Your

<sup>8</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 14 (1853-1854), ff. 548-551.

Eminence from Fr. Semeria. That wise as well as modest religious has left it up to me to decide whether or not his letter should be forwarded to Your Eminence. I feel that Your Eminence should receive information from all sides in order to better arrive at your decisions in this important matter. What I can say is that Fr. Semeria is an unprejudiced, wise, and just man, zealous for the glory of God, the honor of the Church, and the salvation of souls, but at the same time humble and obedient. Your Eminence can rest assured that the words of that holy religious conform to the truth.

Bishop Bettachini, for his part, wrote me a distressing letter on the desperate state in which he sees his vicariate. It is not my role to meddle with his difficulties. However, I will say that, if the vicariate of Jaffna is reduced to that state of misery as to cause such concern to the goodly Bishop Bettachini, it will no longer be the case to send more missionaries to his vicariate. Moreover, if Bishop Bravi, who hesitated to receive 4 Oblates from Marseilles in his vicariate of Colombo and does not want any more, prefers to call the Sylvestrians to his side, it will be necessary to relinquish the hope I was given by Propaganda Fide to slowly fill the island with our missionaries to launch an assault against the infidels who had been left to steep in their errors. It is certain my missionaries will never complain. They go where obedience sends them. They do not have to worry about the yield of the apostolic vineyard. All they ask is "food and clothing"<sup>9</sup> and they can find that everywhere. They leave it up to me to decide on the opportuneness of matters, and Your Eminence knows my thoughts on the moral state of our men on the island of Ceylon.

It is with a sense of sorrow that I see, fading into the distance, the time when the existence of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary was to be strenghtened on the island by the appointment of the superior as Coadjutor to the Apostolic Vicar with the right of succession. The matter seemed so natural to me that I find it hard to understand how such a wise measure has been able to be postponed due to the futile objection advanced by Bishop Bettachini. The fact that he may not feel the pressing need to have at his side someone equal to him in sacred character of Orders, even though obliging and obedient, is something I can understand. What I find even easier to understand is that the Oblate Congregation, which so generously

<sup>9</sup> Orig. in Latin *victum et vestitum*.

provides all the men requested, would wish to be established in a stable way on that island fecundated by the sweat and willingly by the blood of its members, one of whom sacrificed himself and died at the service of the cholera victims. Another missionary is on the point of death due to the unhealthy climate in those missions where he had accomplished so much good.

I fear that the repetition of the same matter may annoy Your Eminence, but I am sure you will bear with me knowing very well that it is the task of the superior of a Congregation to be very frank in expressing his thoughts on what can best ensure and strengthen the good thus far accomplished and yet to be done by that Congregation with the Grace of God.

Please accept, Your Eminence, the expression of respect and affection wherewith I remain your humble and most devoted servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

### 32. To His Eminence Cardinal Fransoni.<sup>10</sup>

*Excerpt of a letter from Fr. Semeria. The Missionaries continue to work with youth even if they haven't been endowed with the gift of rendering them sinless.*

Marseilles, August 30, 1853.

Your Eminence,

Since the letter entrusted by Fr. Semeria to my judgment to forward to Your Eminence did meet with your pleasure, I think you would appreciate further details which I received from Jaffna at the beginning of last July. Your Eminence knows French too well for me to indulge in the unnecessary task of translating the paragraph I feel should be submitted for your consideration...<sup>11</sup>

That is what Fr. Semeria has written on the matter. In his letter he went on to describe the good being accomplished everywhere by our missionaries even though they have not received from God the gift of granting sinlessness to their converts. Disgrace befell one of our holiest missionaries in Colombo because a poor girl unfortu-

<sup>10</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 14 (1853-1854), f. 591-592.

<sup>11</sup> The Founder included a part of Fr. Semeria's letter, which we omit here, on the income of the Jaffna and Colombo vicariates.

nately fell into sin after having been admitted to the reception of the Sacraments. It is undoubtedly true that this misfortune would not have happened to the Goan priests whose principle was not to admit anyone to the sacraments, and that is the reason why the most distressing indifference and gross ignorance reign supreme in that poor Christian milieu.

I realize it is necessary to proceed slowly and with prudence, but our missionaries cannot resign themselves to letting the faithful reach 30 years of age without having received Communion even once. They are convinced that with zeal and perseverance it is possible to bring about a noticeable change in the habits of the abandoned youth and neglected children. They will receive instruction, and that is something they have never had! With the help of the Grace of God and the sacraments they will correct their ways and dedicate themselves to the practice of the Christian virtues as many have already done. They will not become sinless, but that is not a reason to abandon them. In light of the good work being done, I can only say that I hope Bishop Bravi will have a large number of missionaries like the ones I sent him out of obedience to Your Eminence.

Please accept the expression of respect and affection wherewith I remain your most humble and devoted servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**33. [To Cardinal Fransoni, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>12</sup>**

*The Oblates in the Vicariate of Colombo have refused to sign a petition requesting the annexation of the mission of St. Ann to the Colombo vicariate; the reasons behind their refusal.*

Marseilles, September 20, 1853.

Your Eminence,

I consider it my duty to inform you of what I learn from letters sent to me by our missionaries on the island of Ceylon. The only thing that gives me cause for concern is that, at Propaganda Fide, it may be felt that I wish to interfere in matters to be dealt with and

<sup>12</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 14 (1853-1854), ff. 636-637.

decided by the Sacred Congregation and Your Eminence alone. Please rest assured that I am moved to write on certain matters in the interests of these missions, partly entrusted to the Oblate Congregation, and due to the obligation in conscience to provide Your Eminence with all the information I receive in order that you can determine the true state of affairs. I would also add that there are certain circumstances I will pass over in silence since I find it repugnant to communicate them to you in other than a verbal and confidential way.

The missionaries inform me that Bishop Bravi, in an attempt to achieve his purpose at all costs, has requested the missionaries in his Vicariate to sign a petition to the Sacred Congregation in conformity with his plans. The Oblates have refused to sign because their conscience forbids them from affirming things they know to be false, harmful to the good of the religion, and contrary to justice. Only one of them was deceived and signed because he was not familiar with the true situation. Once he had been duly informed, he promptly withdrew his support. The father whose mission borders next to Chilaw tells me that he can state that it would be very bad indeed if that district were to be united to the Vicariate of Colombo. He uses very strong language to help me understand why he did not want to sign Bishop Bravi's petition: he wants to save his soul and, in conscience, he cannot render himself guilty of falsehood and injustice just to gratify the Apostolic Vicar. Everyone agrees that the Vicariate of Colombo is rich while that of Jaffna is truly poor and to withdraw the mission of St. Ann from it would be tantamount to removing its basic support. It is also felt that such a measure would further promote the schism.

Our poor Missionary Oblates of Mary fully understand that their refusal to bend to the will of the Apostolic Vicar will bring disfavor upon them, but they could not overcome their repugnancy to do something they considered malicious. It could very well be that the Apostolic Vicar has addressed his complaints to you, but I am sure that Your Eminence will accord justice to the discretion of the conscience of these missionaries who at no cost wish to compromise their souls, and in that I cannot blame them.

September 26.

Here are some new letters I have received from Ceylon. I cannot help but send an excerpt to Your Eminence. It is too important for

you to be well informed about everything. I refrain from judgement, but I am surprised by what I hear. Poor mission! And yet, so much good could be accomplished. Our missionaries, inspired by the desire for the glory of God and of souls, feel they are doing good, but how can they be successful with the system adopted in the Vicariate of Colombo? The Goan priests seem to have neither faith nor morals. Any hope to win them over is in vain. They hate Europeans and strive to take possession of everything. Their arrogance has reached the point of forcing Bishop Bravi to hide his pectoral cross. The poor bishop does not talk about it because he wishes to be diplomatic at all costs. That is his own expression in letters to me and he is undoubtedly acting thus in the pursuit of good, but his hopes are in vain. I know for certain that the Goan priests do not trust him because they are convinced he is insincere. They openly belittle him and make fun of his professed diplomacy which they hold to be mere deception.

Perhaps I have said too much, even though I have not said everything. However, when writing to Your Eminence, I would be assailed by scruples where I not to disclose at least part of what I know to be true. If Your Eminence wishes to know how I feel about the situation, according to my knowledge of the missions in Ceylon, I would say the vicariate of Colombo needs 4 more Missionary Oblates of Mary despite the reluctance of the Apostolic Vicar and even his Coadjutor to request them of the Sacred Congregation. Regardless of my own position and because it is necessary to overlook formalities and state the truth when speaking before God to the person who represents Him, I feel bound to assure you that for a number of reasons the Missionary Oblates of Mary are the best suited for the needs of the Vicariate of Colombo and to be preferred to any other missionaries. Conscience bound to express myself in those terms, I place myself in a rather difficult position since, were the Sacred Congregation to ask me for those missionaries, it would be very hard to provide them. The Oblates have been called this year to direct the Major Seminary of Valence and preach the missions in that diocese. Moreover, they are about to open a house in another large French diocese for missions and to revive a Sanctuary to Our Lady which was very celebrated in the past and today is abandoned.<sup>13</sup> They have also taken over the Sanctuary of Sion in the

<sup>13</sup> Our Lady of Talence (Bordeaux).

diocese of Nancy where they are hard at work combatting the heresy of the Baillard brothers, apostate priests who supported the errors of Vintras.<sup>14</sup>

It remains for me to render the due homage of your humble servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**34. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>15</sup>**

*The death of Bishop Provencher, of St. Boniface. The uncertain position of the Oblates in Colombo who refused to sign Bishop Bravi's petition. The bishops in Oregon have only the Oblates to assist them. Is Fr. Semeria to be appointed Coadjutor in Jaffna?*

Marseilles, October 5, 1853.

CONFIDENTIAL

My dearest Monseigneur,

...<sup>16</sup> I have received letters from Bishop Taché, of Arath and coadjutor of St. Boniface. He has informed me of the death of Bishop Provencher of St. Boniface and has asked me to inform the Sacred Congregation.

I recently wrote to His Eminence the Prefect to forward news I had received from Ceylon. Our missionaries in the Colombo vicariate, one of whom is called "the little St. Francis Xavier" by Bishop Bravi, are afraid they will be criticized by the prelates in the vicariate because they refused to sign the petition which, in their eyes, requested something unjust and asserted, as I see it, things which were not true. They are not daunted by that, but it is clear that they are in a very delicate position. I would have much more to say. It is better to keep silent.

<sup>14</sup> Ms. Bayard and Ventras: Vintras proclaimed himself invested by Jesus Christ with the plenitude of the priesthood to regenerate the Church in suffering. Cf. J. LEFLON, *Mgr de Mazenod*, t. III, pp. 732-734.

<sup>15</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 14 (1853-1854), ff. 670-671.

<sup>16</sup> The first part of this letter has been omitted. It dealt with Fr. Lavigne, from the diocese of Grenoble, who was not to receive the title of Apostolic Missionary.

And the mission in Oregon! Your Excellency is aware that all the secular priests have left, as well as the sisters. If our men had left, the bishops would have been left alone. God help that mission!

Even though it may be importune my dearest Monseigneur, I would like you to tell me confidentially whether the repeated promises made to me on the position of excellent Father Semeria and which entail the stability and expansion of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary on the island are to go unfulfilled. I am very interested in knowing what is the intention of the Sacred Congregation. If the Sylvestrians are to retain jurisdiction, as people say down there, it will be very difficult for another Congregation to accomplish much good on the island. It would therefore be useless to increase the number of Oblates, if they were one day to be evicted or never achieve their goal which is to undertake the conversion of the numerous infidels, more than 1 million, in Ceylon. On the other hand, I would be in a position to respond to the numerous French bishops who press me with requests for Oblates for their seminaries and the missions in their dioceses. I am unable to satisfy all the requests and my heart cries aloud, because I am well aware of the good being done by our men in the missions and the seminaries. I have proof of this in the many letters from bishops who sing their praises. My dear Monseigneur, please respond frankly, in a short confidential letter outside the normal diplomacy of the S. Congregations.

Persevere in your kind consideration for me and rest assured that you have few friends who bear you the same esteem and affection as I.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**35. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>17</sup>**

*Bishop Bravi, lacking in uprightness, has appealed to the Franciscans. Bishop Bettachini is in Rome.*

<sup>17</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 14 (1853-1854), f. 683.



Marseilles, October 28, 1853.

My dearest Monseigneur,

It is very important for you to know everything. One of our missionaries writes me:

“After having addressed a request to the Sylvestrians in Rome and not having been able to receive anyone, Bishop Bravi turned to the Franciscans. Yesterday a missionary arrived from China on the mailboat and went to Colombo to meet Bishop Bravi and discuss the conditions on the request for other missionaries. I do not know if he will stay or not but he is no less than one of our friends and I know him personally. Since Fr. P. Reinaud has asked to leave the mission, it is highly probable that he will be replaced in Kandy by this missionary. I am still in Galle, but Bishop Bravi unwillingly accepts my presence there because in that way the existence of the Oblate Congregation becomes too public. Since he cannot transfer me without the risk of once again seeing Christianity reduced to the depths in which I found it, he bears the situation patiently while awaiting missionaries. I am telling you these things Monseigneur so you can act with full knowledge of the present state of affairs. Bishop Bettachini will be able to furnish any necessary information since His Grace is the one who discovered the mystery and let me know so I could inform you.”<sup>18</sup>

I have heard that Bishop Bettachini is in Rome. He will be able to inform the Sacred Congregation about everything that has to do with the good of the mission of Ceylon.

As far as I am concerned, when I compare Bishop Bravi's words with his acts, I am unable to avoid a painful recognition of the fact that he unfortunately merits the reputation he enjoys among the island's inhabitants, and even more so among the Europeans; he is a conniving and cunning<sup>19</sup> individual in the full sense of the expression. Therefore, the Sacred Congregation can never be overly cautious in judging his affirmations in the disputes he has caused with Bishop Bettachini who is a man with a completely different character. You know that I feel no obligation in his regard since he has always been

<sup>18</sup> This part of the letter is in French.

<sup>19</sup> The Italian word used is “furbo” which covers a range of meanings from sharp to deceitfully cunning.

opposed to the just request I advanced, and which you supported, in favor of Fr. Semeria and the Congregation which has done so much for him and for the good of the island.

Dear Monseigneur, please accept the expression of the sincere friendship which I bear in my heart for you.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**36. [To Cardinal Fransonì, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>20</sup>**

*Detailed information on M. Lempfrit, an ex-Oblate, unfaithful to his vocation in Oregon.*

Marseilles, November 24, 1853.

Your Eminence,

Unfortunately, it is true that the Lempfrit to which you refer is an unworthy priest. I feel, however, that when His Excellency the Archbishop of Oregon City wrote to give you that unpleasant news, he should have added that this misfortunate priest had no longer been a member of the Oblate Congregation for some time. I would also add that he is not someone trained in the Congregation which has too much to regret for having received him at an advanced age, 44 years old I believe, placing excessive trust in the many years he spent in the Carthusians where he had filled important posts such as, according to him, Master of Novices, etc. Inspired by a great fervor for the conversion of the infidels he requested and received permission from the Holy See to leave the Carthusians and enter another religious family dedicated to that sacred ministry. Lempfrit was undecided between the Dominicans and the Oblates, and unfortunately preferred the latter. In all frankness, he was received with pleasure because it was felt that a man who had been a Carthusian for more than ten years, who had received permission from Rome to follow the impulse of his zeal, who was well-mannered, mature, endowed with natural talents, gifted in twelve or fifteen trades, and knowledgeable in the art of medicine was a gift from heaven.

<sup>20</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., America Centrale, V. 16 (1852-1854), ff. 825-826.

It would have been considered offensive to treat such a religious, as I have already said, who had been Master of Novices in his order as an ordinary candidate. His desire to hasten to the conversion of the infidels was so ardent that he was allowed to shorten his novitiate in the Oblates to six months. He left for Oregon which is considered the most arduous mission. He accomplished wonders at the beginning, facilitated by his knowledge of medicine and his talents in various trades, but did not delay in refusing obedience to the Superior of the Mission who, from then on, ceased to be responsible for the acts of such a person. Once informed of the situation, we threw him out of the Congregation to which he no longer belongs.

For the honor of the Congregation, I repeat that Lempfrit was not trained by us since that unworthy man only spent six months in the novitiate, and deceived the Congregation as a religious who had recently left the Carthusians with due permission and false testimonials. Despite that, it was with deep sorrow that I learned of the excesses of that wretch who will assuredly deceive others in California, so alluring are his manners and his words. Since he was born in 1803, he is no longer young. He is more than fifty years old.

It should also be remembered that he came to us with a lay brother from the Carthusians.<sup>21</sup> This brother is a little saint who is doing a lot of good in the missions in Ceylon. In this way God gives us cause for consolation to help bear the sorrow.

Please accept, Your Eminence, the expression of my respect wherewith I remain your most humble servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**37. [To Cardinal Frasoni, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>22</sup>**

*Dispatch of excerpts from letters written by Oblates in the vicariate of Colombo. Problems caused by the Goans. The Fathers had to appear before the tribunal of the Vicariate. Bishop Bravi is looking for*

<sup>21</sup> Bro. De Steffanis.

<sup>22</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 14 (1853-1854), ff. 774, 777.

*missionaries other than the Oblates who could nonetheless renew the life of the Christians and penetrate among the infidels.*

Marseilles, December 18, 1853.

Your Eminence,

Bishop Bettachini will have informed you by now about everything that concerns the island of Ceylon and the problems which the Goans and to a certain extent the so-called policy of Bishop Bravi have caused in the two Apostolic Vicariates. Nonetheless, and besides all that I have been able to communicate to you, I feel bound to send you an excerpt of the latest letters sent to me by our missionaries who exercise the sacred ministry in the Vicariate of Colombo.

I had foreseen from the very outset that they would be the object of jealousy on the part of the Goans and hardly protected by Bishop Bravi even though that prelate had assured me that he would be a father to them, as much as I myself. The fact of the matter is that Bishop Bravi, after a thousand difficulties to avoid the arrival of the Oblates in the Vicariate of Colombo, has done little or nothing to protect them against the more than ridiculous demands of the old Vicar prompted by his Goans, men bereft of theological principles, most of whom are dissolute and scandalous.

It is no wonder that men such as that despise our missionaries who pursue only the glory of God and the salvation of the souls they have travelled so far and made such sacrifices to seek, out of obedience to their vocation. The fact that the Goans have taken umbrage is understandable, but that the bishops, one in an open fashion like G. Antonio and another tacitly, go to the extreme of bringing those good and zealous missionaries before a tribunal (if I did not repress my indignation, I would say almost that of Caiphus) to condemn them publicly for their behavior in keeping with the principles of sound theology, reproach and threaten them is just too much! I would be failing in my duty were I not to address these complaints to Your Eminence.

The letter from our missionaries indicates that the bishop of Colombo and his coadjutor are doing everything to discourage them, and that they have always been provoked in every possible way in an attempt to wear down their patience, especially since their refusal to sign that scarcely truthful petition to be sent from Colombo to Rome.

His Excellency obviously hopes to find it easier to attract isolated missionaries without regular discipline to his ideas. Nonetheless, our missionaries are doing an immense amount of good and continue along their way without complaining, scarcely venturing to inform me about their situation in an attempt to obtain encouragement from me. They make a total abstraction of the problems caused them, seek solely to bring about the salvation of souls through the assiduity of their ministry, and their only desire is to see the number of Oblates increased since they are convinced, I must say, that the Oblates do more and much better than others.

Bishop Bravi, however, does not refrain before this evidence and rather than increase the number of Oblates of Mary, he would call I don't know whom! He had a Capuchin come and gave him the best mission in his Vicariate while he chose the worst for the Oblates. I fail to understand this way of acting which is so strange in my eyes that I would hesitate to believe it if I did not know about his ways from the goodly Bishop Bettachini who could no longer bear with him and came to Rome for justice.

Might it please God that instead of 4 Missionary Oblates of Mary in the Vicariate of Colombo there might be 10. Then it would soon be possible to see the revival of that practically moribund Christianity, and what is even closer to my heart, to see the missionaries penetrate among the infidels who would not be able to resist before the example of their regular life and the efforts of their zeal. One man has written that in a short time he had the joy to convert 47, and another has received the abjuration of close to a hundred protestants. I will say no more. Bishop Bettachini who is now in Rome and the missionary Cassinelli will be able to respond to all Your Eminence's questions.

Please accept the respect wherewith I remain your most humble servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.



1854

38. To His Eminence Cardinal Fransoni.<sup>1</sup>

*Upon the orders of the Prefect of Propaganda two fathers will leave as soon as possible for Jaffna. The success of the Oblate apostolate in Ceylon.*

Marseilles, May 4, 1854.

Your Eminence,

In conformity with Your Eminence's orders I have made arrangements for two missionaries to leave as soon as possible for the vicariate of Jaffna in Ceylon. They will most likely leave before Bishop Bettachini has decided to write to me, but it suffices for me to have received orders from Your Eminence. I will pay the travel expenses out of the share of the Propagation of the Faith grant which I have in hand.

I recently received a report on the immense good accomplished by our missionaries in Ceylon last year and up until the recent months. There is reason to thank the Lord. Just think that in our missions where the atrocious cholera epidemic was rampant, all of the schismatics, one after another, wished to die in the bosom of the true Church and received the sacraments from our missionaries. I cannot tell you how happy I am with the regularity and fervor of these good fathers. They truly live like angels and the Lord recompenses them by blessing their ministry beyond all limits. Those in Colombo never tire from the difficulties they encounter and progress with the help of God.

Please accept the sentiments of respect wherewith I am your most humble and devoted servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

<sup>1</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 14 (1853-1854), f. 1033.

### 39. To His Eminence the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda Fide.<sup>2</sup>

*The Oblate Congregation cannot accept new mission fields at present. Recent departure of a number of fathers for Canada, England, Natal, and Ceylon. Shouldn't the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith provide the missionaries with liturgical vestments, sacred vessels, etc?*

Marseilles, June 8, 1854.

Your Eminence,

My answer to your most welcome letter of May 16 has been somewhat delayed due to a pastoral visit I was making when the letter reached Marseilles.

I am most grateful for the intention expressed by Your Eminence to turn to our tiny Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate when there is a need to propagate our holy faith in infidel lands, and I would like to be able to adhere to your wishes.<sup>3</sup> At present, however, it is impossible for the Congregation to accept any service other than the numerous ones it is already providing with the greatest possible zeal. It is of the utmost importance to supply those places with sufficient reinforcements to satisfy all the needs and that is what I have always tried to do. I recently sent three missionaries to St. Boniface and to Canada. Shortly before that, I sent two missionaries and a lay brother to Natal. Four have left for the missions of England, and two are ready to leave for Oregon even though Bishop Blanchet, the bishop of Nesqually, took the liberty of distributing a document through Canada, his country, which was insulting for the Missionary Oblates in his diocese. Two excellent men, priests in the Congregation, left this week for Ceylon. I had to be satisfied with sending two because Bishop Bettachini didn't ask for more. In fact, he advised that not more than three thousand francs be spent for their trip. That was an impossible feat. Even though one of the two missionaries accepted to pass himself off as the manservant of the other in order to save half of the cost, the trip from Suez to Galle alone costs three thousand francs. The English have a

<sup>2</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 14 (1853-1854), ff. 1087-1088.

<sup>3</sup> The Founder had refused the mission of Senegambie offered by Propaganda Fide in May 1954. Cf. A. PERBAL, "Missions acceptées de 1841 à 1861" in *Études Oblates*, t. 23 (1964), pp. 142-144.



monopoly over the Red Sea. They charge 80 pounds sterling in first class and 40 in second class which is available only to the servants of those in first class. Otherwise, there would have been no difficulty for the two missionaries to travel in second class. And what about the rest of the trip and food from Marseilles to Alexandria, from Alexandria to Cairo, and from Galle to Jaffna. How can you pay without money?

In this regard, Your Eminence, I feel you should decide that it would be more than fitting for the expenses relative to the vestments, sacred vessels, etc. which each missionary must bring along to be taken from the grants given by the Propagation of the Faith to the Apostolic Vicar of Jaffna. Thus far the Congregation, with great sacrifice, has taken care of supplying the Oblate Missionaries who are sent, but this is an unjust and unbearable burden. Don't the missionaries who leave from Rome receive these necessary vestments from Propaganda Fide? Why should this expense be imposed upon the Congregation when the fact of providing its members should suffice?

Please accept the respectful sentiments wherewith I am your most humble and obedient servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**40. [To Cardinal Fransonì, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>4</sup>**

*The blessings of God upon the Oblate Missions in Ceylon, particularly in Colombo.*

Marseilles, October 18, 1854.

Your Eminence,

...<sup>5</sup> The news I receive from our Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Ceylon is more and more consoling and edifying. Among others, the missionaries in the Vicariate of Colombo are doing an immense amount of good even though they are not held in

<sup>4</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 14 (1853-1854), f. 1369.

<sup>5</sup> This letter begins with Bishop de Mazenod's response to the Prefect that he does not think a certain Giambattista Gova was born in Marseilles.

high esteem by those who are not willing to imitate them. The graces with which the Most Blessed God accompanies their painful ministry are truly prodigious in my opinion. I would readily compare them to the tangible assistance of the Holy Spirit during the early life of the Church. It would take too long to give you an exact report. I do feel, however, that it would please you to read an excerpt of the latest letter written by Fr. Pulicani to his father. It is true that our missionaries are angels of virtue, especially the one I mentioned who is called "the saint" by all; even by Bishop Bravi. It would therefore be a real misfortune to deter those good workers of the missions where they are doing so much good and where, in all confidence, things were going badly before the missions were assigned to them.

Please accept, Your Eminence, the expression of affectionate respect wherewith I am your most devoted servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

1855

**41. To Bishop Barnabò.<sup>1</sup>**

*Overabundance of work for Bishop de Mazenod upon his return from Rome. Dispatch of a letter to Fr. Semeria. Rigorous climate in the diocese of St. Boniface. Gratitude to the Holy Father.*

Marseilles, January 26, 1855.

Dearly beloved Monseigneur,

Since my return to Marseilles I can say that I have not had a moment's respite. My dear subjects are making me pay the arrears of the services they were deprived of during my stay in Rome. I do not complain, for a long time I have had those words of St. Paul engraved in my mind: *Nos autem servos vestros per Jesum.*<sup>2</sup> The Archbishop of Paris<sup>3</sup> passed through Marseilles yesterday, came to the Bishopric, celebrated Mass in my chapel, had breakfast, and took his leave without my having a chance to see him because I was giving Confirmation at the Youth Reformatory where I also gave Communion to three hundred of these young inmates who are being instructed and transformed by religion.

I have received news from Ceylon. Bishop Bettachini has finally arrived. Our men are accomplishing miracles of charity in the epidemics which reign in that country. The goodly, excellent Fr. Semeria has sent me his report with his customary simplicity. I felt that it would please you, His Eminence The Cardinal Prefect, and Bishop Buratti, to know how things are going and that you would be

<sup>1</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 15 (1855-1856), ff. 278, 281.

<sup>2</sup> We are your servants through Jesus.

<sup>3</sup> Bishop M. D. A. Sibour.

as edified as I was by the zeal and the devotion of our good Oblates of Mary. I enclose a copy of the letter written by Fr. Semeria, and apologize for the ink spot I was not able to erase.

The news from our other missions is consoling because of the good being done, but God knows what it costs to nature. The letters written by Bishop Taché of St. Boniface, are terrifying when you consider what these missionaries have to endure because of the ice and the cold, 40° below zero. They do not complain, but I can guess what it is like and I admire them for it.

In your next audience, I would ask you to renew the expression of my sentiments of gratitude and love to the Holy Father. I repeat it here every day, but I would never tire of having it heard by the Pope himself because those sentiments are not a mere formality, but permanent in my heart along with those of my affectionate friendship for you, whose most devote servant and friend I remain forever.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**42. To His Eminence Cardinal Franson, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide.<sup>4</sup>**

*The diocese of Vancouver needs missionaries; difficult for the few Fathers in Oregon to go there. Letter from Propaganda Fide to Bishop Allard who has begun the evangelization of the Kafirs.*

Marseilles, March 12, 1855.

Your Eminence,

I recently received your letter of February 6. I would not have delayed in sending an answer to you if unforeseen circumstances had not prevented it until now.

You can rest assured that nothing pleases me more than to comply with the wishes of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, especially when it is a matter of spreading the Gospel.

I was well aware of what Your Eminence told me about the diocese of Vancouver in the province of Oregon and in particular the

<sup>4</sup> Orig. Latin: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., America Centrale, V. 17 (1855-1857), ff. 220-221.

insufficient number of missionaries to evangelize the many tribes which seem to be well disposed. Our missionaries as well as the bishop of Vancouver have spoken to me about the situation a number of times. In order to respond to the needs in the province of Oregon, I recently sent two workers to help their confrères already at work in that part of the Father's field. However, since the harvest is so great, I fear their number is still less than actual needs and that none of them are able to go to the diocese of Vancouver. Moreover, I would not want Bishop Demers to harbor hope of aid from us.

With regard to the dispensation granted to Bishop François Allard, the Apostolic Vicar in the land of Natal, I will send it to the goodly prelate as soon as possible. I received a letter from him a few days ago in which he described the situation in the missions at length and told me that our men have already undertaken the conversion of the Kafirs to the Gospel. Fully aware of your zeal for the expansion of the faith, I recommend this very difficult work to your prayers.

Your Eminence, I pray God that He keep you at the service of His Church for a long time to come. Your most humble and devoted brother and servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

#### **43. To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of Propaganda Fide.<sup>5</sup>**

*Bishop de Mazenod regrets that he did not take better advantage of his stay in Rome. The Oregon bishops boast that the Pope has decided in their favor against the Oblates as to title over the properties of the Congregation. Propaganda Fide should be increasingly wary of the Blanchet brothers. It will be difficult for the Oblates to remain in Oregon.*

Marseilles, March 29, 1855.

My dearest Monseigneur,

When I was in Rome recently, I was moved to compassion by the ceaseless amount of work you were given by those bishops who had to discuss matters relative to their missions with you. Many were the times I deprived myself of the joy to go to Propaganda to visit

<sup>5</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., America Centrale, V. 17 (1855-1857), ff. 241-242.

you because I was afraid my presence would disturb you. I regret it now but it is too late. In fact, I too had important matters to discuss and I ask myself why I postponed them out of excessive discretion? It would have been necessary for me to know what the bishops from Oregon had made people believe and perhaps obtained with their plots. They should be well enough known in Rome for their gossip to make or be able to make much of an impression. Since their unfounded complaints concerned not only the Jesuits but perhaps even more so the Oblates of Mary, I should have done what was necessary to respond to their accusations and assert my own reasons. You know, Your Excellency, that I have wanted to leave that mission for a long time due to the detestable character of the two Blanchet prelates, especially that of the bishop of Nesqually. No one has ever been able to live with him. Our men remain in that mission because the Sacred Congregation asked me to do so. However, I can understand that it will no longer be possible to resist now that that bishop claims to have crushed the poor missionaries under his feet and wants to treat them like slaves.

Part of a letter written by one of the Blanchet brothers came into my possession by chance. I transcribe it for you exactly as it was written: "The bishops have won. Everything has vanished like smoke. *Facta evanescere* I am told: *facta excludi* (I do not understand what is meant by that *facta excludi*) the bishop of Nesqually is told with the letter from the Holy Father. The Holy See has settled the claims of the Oblate Fathers. They only have life and lodging. The rest is for the missions. Nothing like citizens."<sup>6</sup>

I cannot believe that all these beautiful things had been decided without my having been questioned or even given a hearing; and I would have spent two long months in Rome without anyone even mentioning it to me! The consequences of these outlandish claims are too serious for anyone to believe that they correspond to the truth. In the meantime, the bishop of Nesqually has written me an insolent letter to which I should respond with moderation, certainly, but also as befits a bishop of my age and my personality. I do not know what the Blanchet bishops received from the Holy Father, but it is certain that if their claims were approved, it was done so on the basis of a

<sup>6</sup> The Founder copied this text in its original form in French.

false presentation of the facts. Rather than be confined under the tyranny of those prelates and reduced to the miserable state they wish to impose upon those tireless workers who have suffered so much in that mission, I am convinced they will ask me to return to Europe or leave the Congregation. I can well understand their indignation over the outrageous behavior of the bishop of Nesqually, and I myself consider it an injustice, an unbearable act of ingratitude. That bishop complains about the lack of respect on the part of the Oblates, just like his brother complained about Fr. Accolti. Whose fault is it? These men whom you yourselves mistreat, whom you dispise, and wish to despoil are to be pardoned for somewhat surpassing the limits of strict propriety in their defence. Whatever the case may be, things cannot continue in this way. With the support of the alleged decisions of Rome, the bishop is abusive and pitiless. As superior of the Oblates he no longer wants the person to whom I entrusted the office, nor does he want to deal with that other Oblate I had appointed vice-superior. As far as I am concerned, I think very highly of this Superior upon whom I imposed the sacrifice to consecrate himself to that mission which has cost him so many difficulties ever since the beginning and he has suffered them to the extent of compromising his health. I do not want to change him, all the more since I wouldn't find anyone disposed to replace him and deal with a bishop like Bishop Blanchet. It could be that the superior, Fr. Ricard, does not have the good manners demanded by Bishop Blanchet and that he has often exposed himself to outright refusals. That father, however, is an excellent priest, one of the first of our men to go to Oregon 10 years ago, a man who practically created everything from nothing with great sacrifice, and who still enjoys the confidence and respect of all the missionaries. Were he to depart, everyone would leave and Bishop Blanchet would remain alone with his responsibility before God and men.

I do not intend to respond to that part of the letter I copied for you. I would probably have too much to say. This "nothing like citizens" leads me to imagine some sort of plot enacted by those bishops who yearn to enrich themselves at the expense of others. "*Nothing like citizens*" and with what right? The Oblates are neither monks, nor friars, nor members of an Order as such. They are, according to the text of the Rule – if their Excellencies the bishops didn't know it – *Sacerdotes sæculares coadunati sicut fratres habitantes in unum*. That is why the Rule, approved by the Church, adds:

*Quisque nostrum bonorum suorum jus retinebit. De his igitur disponere valet per testamentum*, etc.

It is therefore clear that the Oblates possess legitimately the right of ownership and no one has the right to despoil them of their possessions, which are truly their own property and of which they renounce the usufruct in favor of the Congregation. With that, the day an Oblate leaves the Congregation he does so with his possessions of "citizen" or others. There is no doubt of this except in the type of imbroglio perpetrated by those bishops who don't have enough to do in their deserted dioceses and therefore fret over creating problems. I'm afraid Rome isn't sufficiently cautious, even though it has more than enough reasons not to heed men who had grossly deceived it when they wanted to become bishops in their own little family and have an ecclesiastical Province erected with eight dioceses when an Apostolic Vicariate would have sufficed for all of Oregon for many years.

I practically become upset when I talk about these tyrants. It would be better for me to stop, all the more since I have no more paper and only enough space to renew my regards and the expression of my sincere and heartfelt friendship. Your most humble servant and friend.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**44. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>7</sup>**

*The slanderous statements of Bishop Bravi against the Oblates. The inquiry of Fr. Semeria. Fr. Mola's trip to Europe. Bishop Bettachini's shortcomings; he still refuses the aid of a Coadjutor.*

Marseilles, July 12, 1855.

Monseigneur and very dear friend,

If I could travel to Rome by rail in 24 hours as I can from Marseilles to Paris in 18, you can be sure that I would not hesitate to undertake the trip to talk with you about matters in Ceylon.

<sup>7</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 15 (1855-1856), ff. 543-544.



It is very difficult to write on certain matters, especially when it entails complaints about important people who in a certain sense merit respect and consideration. There is always a fear of going beyond acceptable limits, and yet it is necessary at times to explain things which are disagreeable and often dishonorable. So, what is to be done?

I would be remiss in my duty were I not to inform you about the obstinate and unjust opposition of Bishop Bravi against our missionaries whom he does not forgive for entering the Vicariate of Colombo in spite of him. In addition to all the earlier vexations he has caused our men, he now lends an ear to all sorts of calumnies spread by jealous persons because of the good done by the Oblates which others haven't been able or wanted to do. Fr. Semeria has written me an eight page letter which illustrates the falsity of the facts. Bishop Bravi should have referred to Fr. Semeria rather than spread them without having ascertained their foundation. In keeping with the wisdom that distinguishes him, Fr. Semeria took all necessary measures to ascertain the truth and is firmly convinced as to the complete innocence of the accused. Just think that one of the accusations, among others, involved a missionary who was supposed to have gotten drunk on a certain native drink. What did Fr. Semeria discover in his investigation on this subject? The poor missionary had travelled for an entire day without eating and when he arrived, exhausted and half dead, he accepted a small glass of that drink to which he was not accustomed and suffered a fit of vomiting. There you have the supposed drunkenness.

That good missionary felt under the obligation of conscience to inform the Coadjutor about certain immoral actions committed by a Sylvestrian. *Inde Irae!*<sup>8</sup> Then there is the letter received by Propaganda Fide on the censure applied to the Oblates for having given Communion to *pueris et puellis*,<sup>9</sup> which infuriated Bishop Bravi even more. He would like to avoid the reprimand by throwing it on the Goan bishop. What is even worse is that, in order to make his apologies and prove his worth in Rome, with his customary shrewdness that Bishop indoctrinated a discontented individual returning to Italy so that he would speak in his favor. That is

<sup>8</sup> Hence the anger.

<sup>9</sup> To boys and girls.

something he has already done other times and I have reason to believe that this time a certain Fr. Mola has received this task from the prelate. This is where a conversation would be necessary and not the stark characters of a letter. For many years this Fr. Mola was treated with the best of manners by Fr. Semeria and the other Oblates. He was so grateful and edified that he had felt the desire to join the Congregation.<sup>10</sup> At that time he reproved the policy of Bishop Bravi, etc. Certain altercations with Bishop Bettachini led Fr. Mola to return to Europe. He stopped in Colombo and Bishop Bravi was talented enough to infuse his own prejudices into the man's spirit. That Fr. Mola then forgets all the edification received during his period with the Oblates and writes to one of his comrades, a very worthy missionary and close friend of the Oblates for whom he bears the most respect, to dissuade him from the thought he harbored of entering the Congregation. Such unfair behavior made it necessary for Fr. Semeria to write a letter to Fr. Mola which was very charitable but in which he made the necessary reprimands and punished him in a certain sense by reminding him of his own letters written to Fr. Semeria full of respect for the Congregation and the Oblate Missionaries. I am telling you this in order that you be on your guard in case that Fr. Mola undertakes the commission of Bishop Bravi.

Incredible as it is, but injustice has reached the point of wanting to convince people that our missionaries in Colombo know nothing, not even how to say Mass. Let it be well known that in France we do not ordain a priest if he has not studied moral and dogmatic theology for at least three years and after repeated examinations on all the subjects. It is true that our men do not know how to say Mass in 15 minutes. If it takes them 25 or 30 minutes, it is not due to hesitation, but to accomplish that great act with suitable respect and composure.

There are still so many things I would have to say. That is enough for now. And the fact that Bishop Bettachini was called in an insolent fashion "Ragazzaccio" by a certain missionary, i.e. a child lacking in practical judgement and in many other qualities. He is really fortunate, however, to have a helper like Fr. Semeria. What heroic patience that good father must have, a true saint! It seems

<sup>10</sup> He entered the novitiate in 1857 and took his vows at Notre-Dame de l'Osier on Sept. 11, 1858.

unbelievable that this goodly Bishop Bettachini, forgetful of what he had written me on that subject and what he undoubtedly had to say to Propaganda Fide, had the courage to affirm that he was not the one who didn't want a coadjutor, but the Sacred Congregation which had even forbidden him to come to France in order to avoid a meeting with me since it was taken for granted that I would have insisted that he request the Coadjutor that the Sacred Congregation did not want to grant. What type of men are these?

Your Excellency knows that the prelate who declared he did not have the money to call one or two more missionaries, did have enough to bring two music teachers with him. The surprising fact is that, once they reached Ceylon, these teachers wanted to leave Bishop Bettachini and go with Bishop Bravi. Not knowing whom to be upset with, Bishop Bettachini accused one of our fathers of having given them that suggestion. It is absolutely false. I am telling you about all these troubles in order to help you better understand how important it is to strengthen authority on that island with a prompt and efficient measure.

Nothing less than the duty imposed by my responsibility impels me to disturb you with such a long letter.

In conclusion, please accept the expression of the heartfelt affection wherewith, Your Excellency, I remain your most humble servant and friend.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**45. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>11</sup>**

*The Oblate Congregation cannot send missionaries to Vancouver. The needs of the other Oblate missions. The conversion of schismatic Goans at the mission of Mantotte.*

Marseilles, August 2, 1855.

My dearest Monseigneur,

While awaiting a heartily expected response on our missions in Ceylon by way of a letter from Yourself or His Eminence the Prefect,

<sup>11</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., America Centrale, V. 17 (1855-1857), f. 393.

a response which I flattered myself to be favorable, I received your dispatch dated July 23 in which Your Excellency asks me for new missionaries for Vancouver. I would like to be able to respond to the immense charity of the Sacred Congregation, but the little family of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate is not large enough to satisfy so many needs.

It is absolutely impossible to provide missionaries for Vancouver. His Excellency the Bishop must know this in order to look elsewhere. Enough and perhaps too much is being done for Oregon. The Vicar of Natal asks for aid now that work has begun among the Kafirs. The bishop of St. Boniface is not satisfied with those we send him from time to time. Ceylon would like at least those whom the Lord has called to Him to be replaced,<sup>12</sup> but Bishop Bettachini insists on not wanting to pay anything for their trip and uses the money of the Propagation of the Faith to buy candelabras and I don't know what else. Our seminaries and other houses in France and England give me no respite in their requests for men. *Ad impossibile nemo tenetur*<sup>13</sup> I have no other answer to give to His Excellency the bishop of Vancouver.

After once again grieving one of our missionaries who passed away at the service of the cholera victims, I received very consoling news from Ceylon. Fr. Semeria has forwarded me a letter from our missionary Oblate Fr. Vivier in which he states that, with the grace of God, in his mission of Mantotte, the center of schism, he has obtained the conversion of 100 schismatic families in the Cadeier caste,<sup>14</sup> and harbours the hope of soon bringing all the other members of this numerous caste into the fold of the Holy Church.

These are the answers which our good, our very good missionaries give to the calumnies and jealousy of certain people who perhaps send their poison to Rome under the form of honey.

Please accept, Monseigneur, the sentiments wherewith I am your devoted servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

<sup>12</sup> Three fathers had already died in Ceylon: Felix Leydier on June 16, 1851 (cholera), Joseph Ciamin on Nov. 10, 1853 (fever) and Victor Lacombe on Jan. 22, 1855 who died at the service of cholera victims.

<sup>13</sup> No one is held to the impossible.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Th. ORTOLAN, *Les Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, t. 1, p. 409.

46. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>15</sup>

*Warning apropos of Bishop Bravi on a visit to Rome. Excerpts from letters from Ceylon on the negative frame of mind towards the Oblates. Bishop Bettachini is in convalescence. Fr. Semeria, in charge of the vicariate, should be appointed coadjutor.*

Marseilles, August 2, 1855.

CONFIDENTIAL

My dearest Monseigneur,

I wish to add this confidential letter to the official dispatch. Bishop Bravi is now in Rome. What should one expect from that shrewd and unfriendly prelate, and more... His behavior with regard to our missionaries is well known to you. It could be said that despite the glowing compliments for me at the outset, he has never forgiven nor forgotten that the Oblates of Mary were imposed upon him and his constant fear has been to witness the arrival of others so that he would lose the hope of calling someone else, whoever they may be, as long as they aren't Oblates. God alone knows the subterfuges he is about to unleash in Propaganda Fide to achieve his ends! I know that you will be able to distinguish the truth. However, the good Cardinal Prefect will listen to his gossip, without being on his guard against his shrewdness. All the deceits this man is capable of are unbelievable. It would be possible to write an entire volume. One of our missionaries in Colombo recently wrote the following to Fr. Semeria... "When I was in Colombo recently to visit the old bishop who is ill, Bishop Bravi embraced me very warmly and said to me: Fr. Lallemant, let us always be good friends! Monseigneur, I responded, I see no reason why we should become enemies... Bishop Bravi then told me that one of his very close friends had written him that some missionaries were about to leave Rome for the Vicariate of Colombo. After having said that, Monseigneur stood up, and slapped me on the shoulder saying, Fr. Lallemant, I have finally won."

Another Missionary from Colombo, Fr. Duffo, also writes that Bishop Bravi, always placing hope in the arrival of other mission-

<sup>15</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 15 (1855-1856), ff. 599-600.

aries, said at the very beginning when the Oblates were sent to Colombo "They will be the first and the last even if I have to go look for missionaries in the heart of China."

After these disclosures, the excellent Fr. Semeria wrote "Well, Monseigneur, that is where we are. With all that is it really surprising if our fathers are more or less disturbed and burn with the desire to see their position improved? If they do complain at times about the way they are treated, despite the illusion of certain external demonstrations, in my heart I cannot always condemn them entirely, even though I never cease to exhort them to be patient and prudent, and inspire them to trust always in the Lord who, I hope, will not delay in coming strongly to our aid."

There you can clearly see the good character of Fr. Semeria. If that father were in Rome to respond to Bishop Bravi and inform the Sacred Congregation as to the truth of matters and the real needs of the island I would feel at ease. However, when I imagine the shrewd Bravi all by himself with the authority of this episcopal character and the firm determination to achieve success at all costs, I cannot help but get upset, in the French and Italian sense of the expression.<sup>16</sup>

In the meantime, our poor missionaries are at their wit's end with all the work there is to do. I don't know how the good Fr. Semeria stands it. Just think that since his return from Rome, Bishop Bettachini has not been seen in Jaffna. He fell ill and has gone to the mountains of Kandy to recuperate. Who bears the burden in the meantime? The poor and humble Fr. Semeria. I seek justice, not a favour. If everyone in Propaganda Fide could understand as well as you do I would not remain in that state of anxiety which torments my mind and my heart. For the love of God, give one last push and put an end to this whole affair.

I wanted to give you this confidential news in a personal letter and thereby we can avoid any indiscretion. It only remains for me to beg your forgiveness for the tediousness of my remarks, but you can well understand that it is important for you to know everything.

Please accept the expression of my most affectionate sentiments.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

<sup>16</sup> The Founder used the verb "inquietare" in the Italian text. In French it corresponds to "être inquiet," and in English it literally means "to be upset".

47. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>17</sup>

*Request for a 15 month dispensation for the ordination of J. J. Mauran. There is an external delay in Rome on the decision relative to the situation of the Oblates in Ceylon. Bishop Bettachini now wants to relegate them to the depths of the Vicariate. Temptation to abandon Ceylon in the face of the lack of recognition and even opposition on the part of the bishops.*

Marseilles, November 15, 1855.

My dear Monseigneur,

I would please ask you to obtain a fifteen month dispensation from the Holy Father in order that the deacon, Jacques Joseph Mauran, a missionary religious of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, can be ordained priest at the December ordination. The needs of the Congregation require this dispensation, and since the faculties granted the bishop of Marseilles do not surpass twelve months, I need to turn to your goodness to obtain the additional period required.

I would no longer talk to you about the Ceylon question after the many promises made to me over the last four years, if I did not realize that the situation is worsening due to that truly eternal slowness in carrying out a just and reasonable decision. Undoubtedly informed as to the favourable disposition of the Sacred Congregation in favor of Fr. Semeria and perhaps instigated by a Spanish missionary named Garcia, Bishop Bettachini gives in to a sentiment of jealousy and dismisses Fr. Semeria, whom he had used thus far for all sorts of services. He also advances the ridiculous proposal to relegate the Oblates to the hinterland of the Vicariate and reserve the mission of Chilaw and the best of the Vicariate to himself and two or three other missionaries. Moreover he proposes to take half of the grants from the Propagation of the Faith for himself and the three or four unattached missionaries, and leave the other half to the Oblates who are more than twice as numerous and charged with the missions that are the poorest, the most distant one from another, and the most expensive in terms of the long, fatiguing, and costly trips. Fr. Semeria

<sup>17</sup> Authenticated copy in Italian: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, Registre des copies et extraits des lettres les plus importantes..., 1855-1863, p. 37.

did not wish to accept this proposal without first consulting me, and it seems strange to me that, considering the actual situation with the Sacred Congregation at work on the system to be established on the island. Bishop Bettachini decides on the distribution of areas as he sees fit.

If I add to these loathsome episodes the enmity of Bishop Bravi, his shrewdness in achieving his ends, and his influence with the Cardinal Prefect and others whom he will know how to persuade with his verbal art without the adverse party being able to respond to him, I feel almost oppressed and the idea comes to mind to abandon the field to these gentlemen who bear so little respect for the services and sacrifices of the Oblates, three of whom have already left this life in the martyrdom of charity while they, more sagacious and prudent, have maintained their good health. Our missionaries would not remain idle upon their return to Europe. I cannot satisfy the requests I receive from our bishops in France who would like to have them in their dioceses where there are so many unbelievers, even though baptized, to be converted.

Your Excellency, please bear with my truly unbearable suffering and never cease to believe that, with all my heart, I am your most devoted servant and friend.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**48. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>18</sup>**

*Acknowledgement for the dispatch of the requested rescript and for the notification of an imminent decision on Ceylon. Trust in the friendship of Bishop Barnabò and the hope that he will be named a Cardinal.*

Marseilles, December 13, 1855.

My dearest Monseigneur,

A thousand million thanks for the rescript obtained from the Holy Father and for the good news Your Excellency gives me on the imminent provision relative to the great matter in Ceylon.

<sup>18</sup> Authenticated copy in Italian: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation. Registre..., 1855-1863, p. 39.



If I were younger and did not have a diocese which does not leave me a day of rest, I would have gone to Rome to pit my answers against all the affirmations which I can well imagine were advanced by him who knows how to twist the truth at times. I placed my trust in the goodness of God and the perspicacious benevolence demonstrated by Your Excellency, whom I have always considered a sincere as well as a just friend. I therefore peacefully await the long desired result for the good of a mission which has cost me too much not to hold it very dear.

Do you know what my apprehension was when I saw things prolonged in time? That my friend Barnabò would become a cardinal before they were decided. It seems impossible that, at each consistory, so many services rendered to the Church are always deferred for due reward.

My dearest friend, please accept the constant sentiments of my heartfelt affection and consider me your most devoted servant and friend.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**49. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>19</sup>**

*Reception extended to the bishop of Nesqually during his stay in Marseilles. Bishop Blanchet appeared completely different from what is seen in his letters.*

Marseilles, December 18, 1855.

...<sup>20</sup> Your Excellency will perhaps laugh upon hearing that Bishop Blanchet received hospitality in my house. I assure you that I treated him as I was inspired by charity, as a brother. I myself took him in my carriage and tried to be as amiable as possible as if nothing had happened. In all truth and in order to be just, I must tell you that I was pleased with him. He was very reserved when talking

<sup>19</sup> Authenticated copy, in Italian: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation. Registre..., 1855-1863, p. 39.

<sup>20</sup> The first part of this letter was not copied into the Registry and the original has been found in Propaganda Fide.

to me about current affairs and the disputes which have arisen between him and the missionaries.

I had well understood that the excerpt of a letter I mentioned to Your Excellency in my last letter had been written by him or by his brother, but I refrained from reproaching him for it and limited myself to thwarting the application of principles. In brief, Bishop Blanchet revealed himself to be quite different from what his letters indicated. It is quite certain that if we want things to be done for the glory of God, everyone will have to do their own part and that it be possible to say that the bishops are the fathers of the missionaries and not their adversaries. I have the impression that the bishop of Nesqually has understood that.

That is all I wanted to tell you dear Monseigneur so that you would know that, if in the defense of the missionaries at times I have protested against what I considered unjust pretences, charity nonetheless reigns in my heart and I have given proof of it in this circumstance.

Please accept...

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

1856

50. To His Eminence Cardinal Fransoni.<sup>1</sup>

*Acknowledgement for the information on Fr. Serra and for the notification of an imminent decision in favor of the Oblates in the Vicariate of Jaffna.*

Marseilles, January 25, 1856.

Your Eminence,

I would like to express my thanks to Your Eminence for the notice on Fr. Serra. The bishop of Heraclea<sup>2</sup> was badly informed in believing that this priest was working in my diocese as a parish priest. Unfortunately, I have too much experience to have any great faith in all these vagabonds who pass through Marseilles. When their papers are in order, at the most I allow them to say Mass, first for a few days and then for a few months. Two months do not go by without my having to expel someone. It is unbelievable! According to my registries I see that two Serras have been here. I had more than sufficient reasons to ask them to keep travelling; I would almost say to go hang themselves somewhere else. Neither one of these Serras is the ex-Jesuit mentioned by Your Eminence. Nonetheless, I will take note of his merits if he ever comes to Marseilles like so many others in the search of fortune.

I would also like to thank Your Eminence for the good news on the imminent decision concerning our missions in Ceylon. I say Ceylon, even though you only referred to Jaffna. I would be displeased were our missionaries to be so consigned in the vicariate

<sup>1</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 15 (1855-1856), f. 897.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Joseph Baccinelli, Coadjutor to the Apostolic Vicar of Verapoly.

of Jaffna, so arduous and difficult to evangelize, that they would no longer have the hope of being called to that of Colombo where, on the basis of the encouragement received from Propaganda Fide, I have always flattered myself seeing the Oblates of Mary Immaculate sent forth to win over the infidels.

In any case, Your Eminence, I respectfully await the supreme decision and, with sentiments of affection and veneration, remain your most humble and devoted servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**51. [To Bishop Barnabò, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>3</sup>**

*Reproach to Bishop Barnabò who writes no longer. In January the Prefect had announced an immanent decision on Ceylon, but no direct news from Rome has arrived since then. Copy of the address delivered by the bishop of Marseilles during Cardinal Legate's visit. Congratulations for Bishop Barnabò's elevation to Cardinal. Hope he will become Prefect of the S. Congregation.*

Marseilles, June 7, 1856.

Monseigneur and dear friend,

I hasten to chide you before the dignity to be conferred upon you imposes silence upon my ire. Is it possible that you have forgotten me, as you have done. I who have you present in my mind every day, who pray for you every day placing you among my dearest friends, you neglect me to the point of leaving me months and months without a sign of life, without sending me the slightest word on the matters which I hold so dearly to heart as you well know.

After waiting for a number of years I finally receive a letter from the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda, countersigned Barnabò, in which I am informed as to the prompt or, better yet, immanent definition of the important interests of the mission of Ceylon in these

<sup>3</sup> Orig. French: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Francia, V. 4 1857-1861, ff. 225-228.

terms: "I take this occasion as well to inform you that, at the next audience with the Holy Father, a report will be given to His Holiness on the state of the Mission of Jaffna and the planned measures. In due time I will inform you as to the results and in the meantime I would invite you to keep what has been said to yourself."<sup>4</sup>

That letter was dated January 12. We are now in the month of June, six months after that notification and with no further news at all. It would not seem, however, that the same discretion has been applied to everyone since, in Ceylon and especially in Colombo, what has been decided is well known.

I must admit that I was surprised by the fact that I was not informed at the same time. Don't you think that a bit too much abstraction was made of my position in this whole affair. Nonetheless, it would have been very pleasing for me to know if the S(acred) Congregation had decided to assign the Coadjutorship of Jaffna or Colombo to Fr. Semeria, supposing that Bishop Bravi was not to return to the island. In such a case, I would have asked you to send the Bulls or Apostolic Letters of his institution to me in Marseilles because that Father is about to come here for the General Chapter of the Congregation and we would have been three bishops belonging to the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary to consecrate him. That would have been a real consolation for us.

I had the joy to receive His Eminence Cardinal Legate<sup>5</sup> and the three prelates of his party in my house. They arrived just in time, before a terrible storm which would have tried them severely at sea. All the appropriate honors were rendered to them here. I thought it would be fitting to deliver a short address to the Cardinal at the entrance to the Church in order to manifest our sentiments for the Head of the Church on the occasion of the mission by his representative. I am sending you a copy of this brief address in order that you might be so kind as to submit it to the Holy Father who will perhaps be inclined to have a brief look at it. In keeping with my constant thought, in the presence of all the authorities and in the midst of my people, I wanted to make a public homage of my sentiments towards the Holy See and the Sovereign Pontiff, in order

<sup>4</sup> Excerpt quoted in Italian.

<sup>5</sup> His Eminence Cardinal Patrizi, Papal legate to the baptism of the Imperial Prince.

to always guide all hearts towards the common center of our faith and our affection.

Before closing my letter, please allow me to extend my congratulations upon the dignity to which you will be shortly raised. I see it as a reason to rejoice because it is the just reward for all the work you have done for the Church, but my joy would be tempered by a secret sorrow were you to withdraw from the exalted direction of Propaganda Fide. I still have hopes that the Holy Father, who more than anyone else knows the services that no one better than yourself would be able to render in this highly important department of the Church, will move you from your very meritorious post as secretary of the Congregation to that of Prefect. In that case everything will be just as I could wish. I express that very sincere wish and address it to you, with my customary openness in your regard, as further proof of my respect and most affectionate friendship.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**52. [To Cardinal Barnabò].<sup>6</sup>**

*Congratulations for his elevation to the Cardinalate. Insistence upon the fact that Fr. Semeria be consecrated in Marseilles during the Oblate Chapter. Bishop de Mazenod has been appointed senator, but the Emperor would rather have liked to present him for the Cardinalate.*

[Paris] June 30, 1856.

Your Eminence,

I have just belatedly received your most kind letter of June 14 in Paris where I am retained on Senate affairs. That delay is the reason behind the tardiness of this answer. Moreover, I had wanted to extend my sincere and friendly congratulations for the high dignity conferred upon you by the Holy Father, and I harbour the hope to rejoice over the news of your appointment as Prefect of the Sacred Congregation where Your Eminence has always been the work horse. Our relations will therefore continue as before, and it is that to which I aspired with all my wishes.

<sup>6</sup> Authenticated copy, in Italian: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, Registre..., 1855-1863, pp. 68-69.

I hasten immediately to ask you to grant me the first of your favours allowing me to perform the imposition of my hands upon my dear son in Jesus Christ, the person I would almost call the saint, Fr. Semeria. He will be in Marseilles where in conformity with the rules of the Institute, he has come to attend the General Chapter of the Oblate Congregation.

I understand from the same letter of June 14 that the Pontifical Briefs have been sent to Ceylon. The subject in question will no longer be there, and I, his elderly Father together with two other bishops, they too sons of the aforementioned Congregation, are together at the Chapter in Marseilles. You will agree Your Eminence, you who bear me such affection, that it would be an indescribable consolation for me to consecrate that dear Fr. Semeria whom I received in the Congregation still a boy, educated, and guided towards the missions where, through the Grace of God, he has been so successful. The Holy Father, endowed as he is with such a good heart, will understand the sentiment which animates me and this gives me confidence in obtaining the favour I request with the aid of the mediation exercised by the Cardinal Prefect, the same who was my friend when he was Bishop Secretary.

I would add a second favour to this first one, and that would be to send me in Marseilles, as soon as possible, the permission which I await from Your kindness. The Chapter will be held during the first fortnight of August. If you would be so obliging as to hasten matters, the permission could arrive while the Chapter is in session.

In case there is a slight delay, I will still have the two bishops with me, one of whom will travel to Rome after the sacred ceremony.

How many things I would have to tell you if I had the chance to meet with you. Without knowing anything about it, I have been appointed senator; the day before I knew nothing at all. Nor did I have the chance to see the Emperor before or after my appointment. I had to thank him by letter just as he was leaving for the baths.

The fact that truly pleased me was that I was assured that the Emperor, knowing my friendly relations with Rome, had wanted to propose me for the cardinalate, and, failing in that, he appointed me senator. I am telling this to you alone in the strictest confidence. Although I am grateful for this latter favour, I am all the more so because of the initial intention and the reason which inspired it.

Your Eminence, please accept evermore my unfailing and affectionate friendship, and consider me with all my heart... etc.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**53. [To Cardinal Barnabò, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>7</sup>**

*Request for permission from the Holy Father to consecrate Fr. Semeria in Marseilles.*

Marseilles, July 21, 1856.

Your Eminence, my ever dear and dearest friend,

It was with indescribable pleasure that upon my return to Marseilles, I found Fr. Semeria had arrived, as I said in my last letter from Paris, to attend the General Chapter of the Congregation of the Oblates of the Most Holy Mary Immaculate. Even if St. Francis Xavier had appeared before me, I would not have felt a greater affection or more vivid emotion. After 10 years to see a son whom I ordained priest and who has acquired so many merits in the difficult Mission where he has given repeated proof of his capability and his virtues, to see him there, simple and humble, ever prepared for any sacrifice, was something which truly moved me to tears.

I would now like to once again beseech Your Eminence to secure for me the greatest consolation I could ever experience; it will be a favour for which I would never be too grateful. It is obtaining from the Holy Father, whose heart is so loving and will very well understand the sentiment which inspires my request, obtaining as I said permission to personally consecrate our excellent brother Stefano Semeria, assisted by two other bishops of the Oblate Congregation who are now with me for the General Chapter. By granting me that favour the Holy Father will bestow an immense joy upon me and upon all those good missionaries, full of the merits of their highly arduous missions, who have gathered from all parts of the world. I rest assured that through your charitable and friendly protection close to Holy Father, the favour I seek with such insistence will not be refused.

<sup>7</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Francia, V. 3 (1848-1856), ff. 1004-1005.



Moreover, it will be very useful and important for Fr. Semeria to return to his mission already consecrated bishop. For sometime now Bishop Bettachini's health has been rather delicate, and a number of times as well as quite recently he has suffered serious illnesses which have placed his life in danger. The elderly Apostolic Vicar of Colombo is perhaps not lucid enough to venture a rather serious act such as the consecration of a bishop. Once he has arrived in Ceylon, it could become difficult if not impossible for the chosen one to have himself consecrated. Your Eminence, avail yourself of all these serious reasons to obtain the favour requested of the Holy Father.

I feel that Your Eminence will be pleased that the new bishop travel to Rome to receive his orders and enlighten you verbally with detailed information on the entire mission on the island. When responding to this letter, favourably I trust, Your Eminence will be able to tell me your feelings on this trip I mention.

Please accept, my dear Eminence, the most sincere expression of my respect and the heartfelt affection wherewith I remain your most humble and devoted servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**54. [To Cardinal Barnabò, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>8</sup>**

*Expression of gratitude for having obtained the favour to consecrate Fr. Semeria in Marseilles. Qualities and virtues of the new bishop. Missionaries from the Vicariate of Colombo. The hope that the Oblates will one day evangelize the whole island of Ceylon.*

Marseilles, August 30, 1856.

Your Eminence, my dear lord and friend,

I hasten to tell you how grateful I am to you for the favour received to consecrate that little saint of ours, Fr. Semeria, today bishop of Olympia. It was an indescribable joy for me and an edifying occasion for all who assisted. More modesty and humility

<sup>8</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 15 (1855-1856), f. 1209.

linked to other virtues cannot be found. Your Eminence will see him and come to know him. He does not have a handsome face but his glance mirrors that gentleness and innocence which reveal his beautiful soul. He is well educated and has rare common sense which he has amply proven in the difficulties which arose in Ceylon due to the pretensions of Bishop Bravi who has undoubtedly been true to his character during his long stay in Rome which has not yet ended.

In all simplicity I will say that I would have been pleased to know something about the decisions made by the Sacred Congregation on those disputes which involve my Congregation. What will become of Colombo? Will Bishop Bravi have had the final say in his thrashing about in search for a way to thwart the sending of new missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate into his Vicariate of Colombo? Quite on the contrary, it would be auspicious for the Oblates to penetrate gradually into that vicariate which is much more important than that of Jaffna in order to arrange things in such a way that, at a given moment, the entire island would be evangelized by the same Congregation. That would be beneficial, not only for serving the Christians, but also for the conversions of the numerous infidels which fill that country.<sup>9</sup>

Due to my ignorance of the Sacred Congregation's resolutions, I will say no more. Bishop Semeria, truthfull and unprejudiced, will provide Your Eminence with all necessary details on the needs and the state of the missions in the entire island that he knows so well.

Please accept, with your customary kindness for me, the sentiments of my tireless love wherewith, Your Eminence, I remain your most humble and affectionate servant and friend.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

<sup>9</sup> At the end of his letter written on October 29 to Cardinal Barnabò on sister Felicity, the Founder writes: "I regretfully witness the disappearance of a hope instilled in me a few years ago to see the two vicariates entrusted one day to the Oblates. How much easier it is to accomplish good in Colombo than in Jaffna!

1857

**55. [To Cardinal Barnabò, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>1</sup>**

*Expression of gratitude for the dispatch of a dispensation. Fr. Ricard, superior of the Oblates in Oregon, has returned to Europe. Abandonment of some missions in Oregon due to the war.*

Marseilles, June 18, 1857.

Your Eminence and dear friend,

I do not wish to undertake my long trip to England, Ireland and Scotland without thanking you for your kindness in sending me in time the dispensation I had requested of your goodness. For me and the deacon I am to ordain a priest, it will be a great joy for which I am most grateful....

Fr. Ricard, the superior who did not get along with Bishop Blanchet of Nesqually, has returned from his mission in Oregon. His health could not stand up to that climate. The report he gave me on the good being done by our missionaries was of great consolation to me. They have had to abandon the missions of the Cayouses and the Yakimas due to the hostilities between the Americans and the savages, and have fallen back to their house near Olympia in Puget Sound from where they have visited the savages in that county with great profit for the faith. The country, however, is not at all peaceful on the side of the Americans.

Please accept, Your Eminence, the expression of my unremitting sentiments.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

<sup>1</sup> Authenticated copy in Italian: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation. Registre des lettres... 1855-1863, p. 110. The original copy of this letter has not been found at Propaganda Fide and only part of it seems to be copied in the Postulation's Registre.

56. [To Cardinal Barnabò, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>2</sup>

*Trip to England, Scotland, and Ireland. General Impressions. Warm reception from the Protestants and enthusiasm on the part of the Catholics. The Oblates are doing excellent work everywhere. Parish and school in Liverpool. Blessing of the new church of Leeds in the presence of Wiseman and Manning. Houses in Scotland (Galashiels) and Ireland (Dublin). An Irish bishop should be named cardinal.*

Marseilles, October 1, 1857.

Your Eminence,

Upon my return from the trip in England, Scotland, and Ireland, it is a pleasure for me to share my impressions with Your Eminence and inform you on the state in which I found the missions of our Oblates of the Most Holy Mary Immaculate.

A very surprising fact! I can say that my trip in that heretical country was a continual triumph. I don't think I encountered a single surly face or sneer among the heretics, and the Catholics expressed their respect in a very vivacious way that nothing could restrain, to such an extent that in Liverpool, Leeds, and again in Dublin, enthusiastic cries of joy and *vivat* in their language greeted my appearance. I am not referring to the public compliments received in meetings, always in the honor of our Holy Catholic religion regardless of the heretics who abandoned themselves, I would say, in chorus with the Catholics. It is truly a remarkable fact that so much freedom does not foster the least reprisal or produce any evil effect. In fact, numerous heterodox and many ministers fill our churches listening to the instructions of our priests, and attend our religious exercises and ceremonies with reverence.

Moving from these general considerations to the state of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of the Most Holy Mary Immaculate in the three British realms, I will tell you that, to my greatest joy, everyone assured me that the Oblates are doing an immense amount of good. The province of England which includes Scotland and Ireland, consists presently of 5 houses, one of which is

<sup>2</sup> Authenticated copy in Italian: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, Registre des lettres... 1855-1863, pp. 125-127.

the novitiate. The Oblates in Liverpool not only work in a large parish entrusted to their care, but have also built a school which has saved from seduction hundreds of Catholic children who attended protestant schools to the detriment of their faith. In Leeds, where I was invited to bless the beautiful new Church they built, the Oblates have brought more than 400 protestants back into the Church in a very short time. They have now become very fervent Catholics. At the inauguration of that new Catholic Church, entrusted to the Oblates with the surrounding area as a parish, Cardinal Wiseman came to preach at the Pontifical Mass I celebrated in the morning, and the excellent Dr. Manning preached in the evening. Other ministers, converted to teach the truth where before they had taught error, preached throughout the octave to the edification of all.

I do not know whether the Roman newspapers reported on all the ceremonies which were truly magnificent. With the sight of those arches of triumph, the flags, the immense crowd of joyful and festive people, the protestants themselves mingling with the Catholics to celebrate that day in which not even they wanted to work, who could ever imagined to be in a country with two hundred thousand protestants, especially when thousand upon thousand of voices exclaimed in English *Viva! Viva!* upon my appearance.

In Scotland, the Oblates have settled in Galashiels, a town bordering the land of the heirs of Walter Scott who have become Catholics. Work is about to be finished on a beautiful Church built at the expense of that family so that the Oblates could celebrate the divine services in a fitting manner. It proves the generosity of their faith, and will ensure a certain material superiority which will benefit the practice of the Catholic religion in an area where, before the arrival of the Oblates, I don't know if there were any Catholics.

In Ireland, I don't know what deserves the most praise. Before taking up permanent residence in Dublin, the Oblates had given missions in the Church of the Carmelites.<sup>3</sup> The good they accomplished was so prodigious that those good religious, and especially a bishop of that Order who had been Apostolic Vicar in Madras, made thousands of requests for the Oblates to open a house in Dublin. Not

<sup>3</sup> The Founder mistakenly wrote "Carmelites". It was the Church of the Augustinians and Bishop O'Connor. Cf. *Écrits Oblats*, III, pp. 131, 138, 141, 208.

only was His Excellency the Archbishop pleased, but he wanted to immediately assign them to a suburb of the city in need of spiritual assistance. They have wrought such good there that the Prelate wanted to establish a parish entrusted to their care. The people were carried away with joy and in a week the workers built a very pretty wooden church able to hold more than 1,200 people. I saw it with my own eyes. I said Mass in that Church and gave communion to more than 1,000 people prepared by the Missionaries.

Dublin is a truly remarkable city, not only for the number of its inhabitants and their faith, but also for the numerous religious houses which enrich the city. Ireland would really deserve a special favour from the Holy See. Were I among the advisors to the Holy Father, I would propose that it be treated at least on the same level as England and advise the Pope to choose one of the Irish prelates and make him a Cardinal. The position occupied by the Archbishop of Dublin, the highly populated and principal city on the Island, would lead one to believe that, all things being equal, he should have preference. I can see that I am making you laugh, Your Eminence, but doesn't the proverb say that when you are right, you have made a Pope! Well, in my dreams, I make a Cardinal!

Please bear with my humor and accept the affectionate respect wherewith I remain your devoted servant and friend.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**57. [To Cardinal Barnabò, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>4</sup>**

*Many Oblates in Jaffna are ill: unhealthy climate in the Vicariate. Would it be possible for some fathers to work in the Vicariate of Colombo in order to recover their health and gradually prepare themselves to take charge of those missions. The Sylvestrians are too limited in number.*

Marseilles, October 21, 1857.

Your Eminence,

You are well aware of the confidence with which I am accustomed to speak to you on every occasion. Allow me therefore to

<sup>4</sup> Authenticated copy in Italian: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation. Reg. letters 1855-1863, pp. 133-134. The final part of the letter was not copied into the Registre.

open my heart to you on this circumstance. The latest letters I have received from Jaffna convince me that the vicariate is to a great extent unhealthy. Almost all the missionaries suffer from fever and it would be very important for their health if they could have a change of air every so often. I have felt this need a number of times ever since I was given the hope in Propaganda that our missionaries were still to be used in the Vicariate of Colombo, a healthy region and a thousand times preferable to the miserable vicariate of Jaffna. Bishop Bravi had led me to believe that I would one day see my hopes fulfilled; he promised Fr. Semeria that, were he unable to serve the Vicariate of Colombo with his Sylvestrians, he would turn for aid to no one else except the Oblates. The realization of this thought would have insured the prosperity of that mission, especially if upon his death or retirement, the entire island had returned to the state of a single Apostolic Vicariate. Sheer illusion. It seems that it is impossible to trust the words of this blessed Bishop Bravi. Lacking in Sylvestrians who, voluntarily perhaps, are too few in number for the needs of the vicariate of Colombo, not only does Bishop Bravi shirk his responsibility to call Oblates, a step which would greatly facilitate the service due to communications with those in Jaffna, but I have heard that he strives to attract missionaries from Australia to the Vicariate of Colombo. Despite his beautiful declarations, it could be said that this Prelate has a sort of insuperable repugnance for the Oblates. I find it difficult to understand why since it is impossible for him to be unaware of the zeal and the many sacrifices with which they serve their most arduous missions as well as the blessing God showers upon their ministry.

I feel that Bishop Bravi's disposition is an evil and that the Sacred Congregation should do somehow remedy it.

Would it not be possible to arrange things in such a way that the poor Oblates who will have suffered for a number of years in the miserable vicariate of Jaffna might be able to find a way in the easier, less tiring and healthier missions of Colombo to build up their strength in order to be able to work anew with renewed force and vigor? I recall what Bishop Buratti told me a number of times: have no doubts, the time will come when the entire island of Ceylon will be served by the Oblates. Why not settle things now so that, at a latter date, it will be possible to achieve that end which would be truly the most reasonable. Have Bishop Bravi come to Rome to rest.

What can he do in the missions with his excessive obesity? Let Bishop Semeria be transferred to Colombo and matters will gradually settle by themselves, without effort and slowly but surely without any disturbance *suaviter!*

An Italian missionary who had returned from Ceylon told me that people have realized that the division of the island into two vicariates was not appropriate and that it would be much better to return to the earlier situation. He had lived in Ceylon for many years and had seen each of the missionaries at work, and felt that it would be preferable for the Oblate Congregation to be called upon to ensure the good of uniform service throughout the island. I am of the same opinion and that is why I am speaking to you about it with such simplicity...

**58. [To Cardinal Barnabò, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>5</sup>**

*The exact names of Fr. Grandin, appointed as Coadjutor of St. Boniface. Request to send the appointment as soon as possible since it will take time to reach Red River.*

Marseilles, November 16, 1857.

Your Eminence,

I have received the reply relative to the names of Fr. Grandin, appointed coadjutor of St. Boniface by the Holy Father. Yes, his name is Vital, and then Justin, not Julian. His full name is therefore Vital Justin Grandin. I would ask you to please add "of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of the Most Holy Mary Immaculate" as stated in the Apostolic Letters of Leo XII approving the Institute and in the other documents of Gregory XVI and Pius IX, *eamque nomine Congregationis Oblatorum Sanctissimæ Virginis Mariæ sine labe concepta volumus insignitiam*.

As soon as Your Eminence sends me the appointment of the new Prelate I will dutifully dispatch it to that beautiful country where

<sup>5</sup> Authenticated copy in Italian: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation. Reg. letters 1855-1863, p. 142.



letters only arrive twice a year; the true country of polar bears and 45° below zero during the winter which lasts nine whole months.

I am writing to Your Eminence on other matters in a separate sheet.

Please accept... etc.

**59. [To Cardinal Barnabò, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>6</sup>**

*Send Bishop Grandin's appointment as soon as possible. Celebration in Marseilles to inaugurate the monument to the Immaculate Conception.*

Marseilles, December 9, 1857.

Your Eminence,

One of our Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, an Englishman, is leaving for Rome and I am taking advantage of the occasion to ask Your Eminence not to delay, if possible, in sending me in Marseilles the appointment of the Coadjutor in St. Boniface. Your Eminence knows that only twice a year do letters reach the depths of that immense diocese, Île-à-la-Crosse where the bishop-elect is stationed. Time presses if we wish to avail ourselves of departures during this season, otherwise there would be no possible way until the summer.

Oh what a beautiful celebration we held yesterday for the blessing of the monumental statue erected on a column of Carrara marble. It is impossible for the language of mortals to express the religious enthusiasm of the entire population of three hundred thousand souls participating in that great celebration, that great triumph of Mary. What a Mass was mine on the altar at the foot of the monument. When I elevated the Most Holy Sacrament, adored in silence by so many people, I could hardly bring myself to replace It on the altar, and the same for the Chalice, as I was borne away by the thought of the glory received by the Most Divine Redeemer from all those hearts in adoration and thanksgiving. It is something that cannot be expressed; there is no city like ours.

<sup>6</sup> Orig. Italian: Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., America Settentrionale, V. 6 (1849-1857), f. 1053.

Fr. Lynch wishes to leave and I will stop writing but my heart overflows.

Please accept the respect and affection wherewith I am, my dearest Eminence, your most humble and devoted servant and friend.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

## 60. To His Eminence Cardinal Barnabò.<sup>7</sup>

*The Superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition is leaving for Rome. Send Bishop Grandin's appointment letters without delay. Best wishes for the New Year.*

Marseilles, December 20, 1857.

Your Eminence,

When I learned that Your Eminence would like the Superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition to come to Rome, I took it upon myself to convince her to make that trip, somewhat costly for the poor finances of that small family. I hope Your Eminence will be pleased with that Sister and the information you will receive from her.

I do not know if the English Missionary Oblate to whom I had given a letter for Your Eminence has delivered it to you. I will therefore repeat that it is most important to send me the rescript of the appointment of the Coadjutor to St. Boniface so that there is still time to use the only winter packet which can reach Île-à-la-Crosse where the future prelate is stationed. If we miss this occasion it will be necessary to wait for the summer packet since, as I told you, only two mail packets a year go to that most remote area where, during the long winters, there are no contacts even with St. Boniface. Correspondence with St. Boniface is possible once a month from Europe.

I will not finish this letter without wishing Your Eminence Holy Feast days and a joyful year.

<sup>7</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., America Settentrionale, V. 6 (1849-1857), f. 1057.

Please accept the renewed expression of my respect and ceaseless friendship.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. I thought that the Holy Father would be pleased to learn of the beautiful celebration held in Marseilles for the feast of the Immaculate Conception. I have sent him a brief report. Please do not forget my thoughts and recommendations on Ceylon. In my opinion, everything could be settled by appointing Bishop Semeria Coadjutor of Colombo.



1858-1859

**61. To His Eminence the Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide.<sup>1</sup>**

*Report of the Visitor to Oregon. The missions of Yakimas and Cayouses, destroyed by the war, cannot be reopened. The missionaries could go to Vancouver or establish a new Vicariate in New Caledonia. The illness of Bishop Blanchet. Baptisms and marriages in 1857. Dispensation for reasons of age to ordain a deacon.*

Marseilles, April 28, 1858.

Your Eminence,

Before responding to your letter of December 2, 1857 I wanted to wait until I had received the report from the Visitor sent to Oregon<sup>2</sup> to determine the exact state of that Mission. I received that report a few days ago. I had to know the actual extent of the tumult due to the tragic war between the whites and the savages and if the missions of to the Yakimas and Cayouses, destroyed by those devilish plunderers, left any hopes of being able to be reopened. That has been deemed impossible. In that case the missionaries who had established these destroyed missions were free and I could have sent them to Vancouver. As a way to obtain some results, the Visitor also advised me to ask the Sacred Congregation to establish an Apostolic Vicariate in New Caledonia<sup>3</sup> assigned entirely to the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. In the vast reaches of that country there are numerous tribes of savages and the Oblates already know

<sup>1</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Francia, V. 4 (1857-1861), f. 215.

<sup>2</sup> Fr. F. Bermond, O.M.I.

<sup>3</sup> That was the name given to the Pacific Coast.

their languages. The boundaries of that Vicariate would begin from 49° latitude and extend to the Russian possessions<sup>4</sup> in that part of America. Among the advantages of such an organization, the Visitor considers that most important one of no longer having to suffer those endless spites inflicted by the Oregon bishops upon the missionaries who risk losing their courage and their vocation. Moreover, I have heard that Bishop Demers, who has been thus far unable to gather priests to his side to help him, would willingly move down to Nesqually if Bishop Blanchet, reported to be seriously ill, were to die. The report I have received from our Oblates for last year includes the number of adult Baptisms (625), children (200), weddings (234) and more than 30 baptisms in the month of January alone this year.

It remains for me to ask Your Eminence to grant me an 18 month dispensation for reasons of age in order to ordain Deacon Giovanni Gallo, a professed Oblate of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. He was born in October 17, 1834 in San Remo in the diocese of Ventimiglia. I have the most urgent need for his ministry in order to give spiritual aid to the 25,000 Genoans in my city, without counting the Neapolitans and Piedmontese whose exact numbers I do not know. As to the deacon for whom I request the dispensation, he is an angel of piety, talented and has finished his studies in moral and dogmatic theology.

Your Eminence, please accept the expression of respect and affection wherewith I remain your most humble and devoted servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

## 62. To His Eminence the Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide.<sup>5</sup>

*Bishop de Mazenod left his sons in the unhealthy Vicariate of Jaffna in the hope of one day sending them to evangelise the whole island. They are working with success but many are sick. Copy of a letter which indicates Bishop Bravi's opposition to the Oblates and his wish to organize the Vicariate of Colombo without their participation. The scandal to be caused in the island by the presence of two vicariates, one*

<sup>4</sup> Territories which are today part of Alaska.

<sup>5</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 16 (1857-1858), ff. 1172-1173.

*rich and the other very poor. Religious who leave for the missions by vocation are worth more than unattached priests who are often attracted by other than apostolic motives.*

Marseilles, December 3, 1858.

CONFIDENTIAL

Your Eminence,

I availed myself of the same messenger to write to you about the affairs of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Apparition. This other letter concerns me in a direct way. I have always considered you as a friend who returns the same immense affection I feel for you and my cordial trust in you is too great not to address myself to you with an open heart, as we say in France.

On the basis of precise declarations that I could recall, I had always flattered myself that the day would come when the whole island of Ceylon would be entrusted to the zeal of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. I had to nourish that hope within me in order to endure with resignation the privations and the most arduous difficulties of the unfortunate vicariate of Jaffna. Three of our men have already died from their efforts and I can see others exhausted by the fatigue of those distant missions and the fevers of the unhealthy climate. It is true that their ministry is not like that of so many others who know how to do little and take it easy, it is truly an apostolic work. If the reports they send me, which make me cry with fondness and admiration, were shorter, I would send them to you for your edification and joy as Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda Fide.

It can be said that these missionaries really strive to propagate the faith. They consume their health and lives to win over souls to Jesus Christ and, with the grace of God, work wonders in conversions not only among the Catholics who have neglected their duty for so many years, but also among the heretics and pagans. That is the situation in the missions of Baticaloa, Tricomali, and others. If I were younger I would feel able to coming to Rome simply to meet with you in the greater interests of religion in the countries subject to your jurisdiction as representing the Head of the Church in those areas. Since I believe you are already of the same opinion, it would not be difficult for me to convince you as to the difference that exists

between missionaries who go to the missions to create their own position and many to make a little money and then bide their time doing very little or nothing at all, and the other missionaries inspired solely by zeal for the salvation of souls, sent out by obedience and working for the glory of God with no personal gain. *Ex fructibus eorum cognoscetis eos.*<sup>6</sup>

I repeat that I had justifiably flattered myself to see the Oblate Congregation one day exercise its zeal in the two vicariates, which I would readily see reduced to one, both for the greater good which would have resulted, as well as for the possibility to transfer exhausted or sick subjects from the unhealthy vicariate of Jaffna to that of Colombo according to the needs of their health.

Instead! According to what I hear, the policy Bishop Bravi has bragged about so much has won the day! God knows if it is for the greater good of souls. An experienced missionary, who wrote to me from Alexandria, doesn't think so and neither do I. Here is an excerpt from his letter: "In Alexandria, in the Convent of the Holy Land, I learned that the prelate Bishop Bravi had come from Rome to make his coadjutor and successor is Fr. Sillani from S. Stefano del Cacco. The good friar who spoke about him was convinced that he had already been consecrated. This fact convinces me that Bishop Bravi makes no mystery of his intentions and that perhaps Fr. Sillani does not speak about them in a less explicit fashion. A certain Fr. Cingolani passed through Alexandria on his way to Ceylon after an absence of a year and a half. His task was to find missionaries of any nation and color for the vicariate of Colombo, miserably bereft of evangelical workers. All of these circumstances lead me to a series of reflections which are neither the most encouraging nor the most pleasant. If the vicariate of the South is strengthened and consolidated in its present state, I am afraid that this dear island of Ceylon will present the Church with the spectacle of two Churches, diametrically opposed in their spirit and the principles upon which they are based. I am familiar with the spirit of those in the South and I fail to see how the contrast between the vicariates can bring about the glory of the Lord in anyway, except for what He can draw from the misery and perversity of men. For example, where will these poor and materially minded Indians assign importance when they see

<sup>6</sup> By their fruit you shall know them.



before them two Apostolic vicariates; one rich in all human resources, ablaze – pardon my use of the word – with external glory, proud of its programme and its advantages, and with what I would call an insulting smile on its lips for the other vicariate of the North which extends along the coast with long stretches both deserted and inhospitable, poor in all human resources and which by principle rejects all those advantages that could accrue from a less scrupulous programme, beautiful in its poverty and simplicity, but a hidden beauty which is most certainly pleasing to the angels but not apparent to these materialistic Indians. There is certainly something very consoling for us in all of this, but I cannot help but think that for a long time, for an indeterminate period of time the struggle of the Spirit of Christ against that other Spirit which is not of Christ will hold souls in suspense. For a long time to come, the true conquerors will assume the appearance of the conquered, and before the victory comes about there will be much to suffer. Patience is necessary, but many offenses will be committed against the Lord, and that is not a matter for patience.”

What more can I say! My *conviction* remains unchangeable. I state it before God in all simplicity. For the good to be done for the conversion of souls there can be no comparison between a Congregation founded in the Church to that effect and for that need, and these improvised vocations of men who had never even considered that possibility before they were led to weigh the temporal advantages to be gained in terms of independence, profit, honors, etc. In fact, when did a Sylvestrian ever become a Sylvestrian to go to the missions among the infidels. If I am not mistaken, the Sylvestrians are a very small branch of Religious who, I learned in Rome, have very little to do and do very little. Once they reach the missions they no longer live like Religious, but like the others who are secular priests and, according to what I hear, not that fervent.

I do not forget that I am speaking in full confidence as a bishop to a Cardinal Prefect, and to no one else. I imagine that Bishop Bravi will soon be seen returning to Rome to rest upon his laurels. Someone should ask him how many conversions he has made. That is not important, he has been successful in his so-called policy. It remains to be seen if the Kingdom of Jesus Christ has progressed much in his vicariate.

Meanwhile, due to his obstinence in not wishing to call other Oblates besides the four he was obliged to accept by Propaganda

Fide, I had to recall one Oblate who was an excellent subject when I sent him, but who suffered from the isolation. I have refrained from replacing him since I have received no request in that sense from the Vicar who apparently is not concerned about providing the missionaries with the means they require to remain fervent since he deprives my men of a companion who would be very useful to his confrères. Perhaps I am mistaken and I hope that I am, but I have ventured to speak to Your Eminence as I feel impelled to do so in full confidence and simplicity. It will be up to you to judge and take the necessary steps as required.

It is impossible to be brief when there is so much to be said. Nonetheless, I beg your pardon for the length of this letter.

Your forgiveness will be further proof of your kindness towards an old but most affectionate servant and friend.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

### 63. To His Eminence the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda Fide.<sup>7</sup>

*Participation in the Holy Father's tribulation over events in Italy. The Fathers in Ceylon are exhausted. The Vicariate of Colombo is excessively favored by some employees in the Congregation of Propaganda Fide. The report of the Visitor to Oregon. We must penetrate New Caledonia before the Protestants.*

[Marseilles, July 12, 1859].

Your Eminence,

I have had to write to you for some weeks now on matters concerning our missions but I did not have the courage to write to Rome anything besides groans and expressions of sorrow.<sup>8</sup> You can well imagine my state of anguish when I knew that the Holy Father, the Holy See, and you yourself in particular and so many other

<sup>7</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 17 (1859-1861), ff. 601, 610.

<sup>8</sup> Reference to events in Italy which weakened the Pontifical States. In the spring 1859, Vittorio Emanuele, King of Sardinia, Piedmont, and Savoy, drove the Austrians out of Northern Italy after the battles of Solferino and Magenta. In June 1859 there was a popular uprisings in the Romagna, a province which was part of the Papal States and wanted to join Piedmont.

people in Rome were afflicted and deeply concerned over recent events. The only thing I could do was pray and have others pray. I would nonetheless like to tell you that contrary to the feelings of others, I had full confidence in the promises of our Emperor, the only anchor of salvation left by God to my hopes in this darkness of infernal malice which completely surrounded the country and people so dear to my heart. The Holy Father's last encyclical brought me down into the depths of sorrow. I immediately took it upon myself to share the views of the Holy Father prescribing special prayers for his intentions. In order to console the heart of that good Father within the limits of my possibilities I answered with a filial letter to express my feelings. It is not in vain that the Holy Father leans upon the Episcopacy and therein seeks consolation. We all live of his life, and when the Head suffers the entire Body is affected and suffers as well.

My dear Eminence, please refer all of this on my behalf to the Holy Father to ease the burden upon his heart.

I will now move on to other matters and tell you that, as far as I am concerned, I experience a true sense of repulsion over what I hear about our missions in Ceylon. I would like people to have a little more respect for the holy Bishop Semeria and his missionaries who do so much good in their wretched vicariate. Why belabour them with repeated vexations? I fail to understand the predilection of the S. Congregation of Propaganda Fide for the Vicariate of Colombo which is already overly favored in comparison to the poor Vicariate of Jaffna. The missionaries do not complain about the excessive work caused by the distance between their missions and the poverty of the places, but they are distressed to see that each pretension advanced by Colombo is followed by a new one, and that everything is always to their disadvantage. It seems that the shrewdness of Bishop Bravi sufficed to employ every occasion to his own advantage and persuade people that he is always right. In addition, there was Fr. Cingolani who came to Rome as a tireless and most welcome advocate (permit me to use that expression) for some people in the S. Congregation in favor of the Vicar and the Vicariate of Colombo and always against the Vicariate of Jaffna.

I do not know how to tell you to what point our missionaries were repulsed by the latest pretence to take over Kurunegala. With things going in that direction I can see the day where, instead of one day seeing the entire island evangelized by the Congregation of the

Oblates of Mary, the Oblates will have to withdraw to leave the field to those who are favoured by the people upon whom Your Eminence must rely due to the excessive responsibilities of your supreme position.

I have had to spend too much time on the mission of Ceylon and in another letter I will dwell upon that of Vancouver where I have conformed to the wishes of Your Eminence.

It will also be my duty to inform you on the report of the Visitor who has visited those places. If possible, it would be necessary to move into New Caledonia<sup>9</sup> before the Protestant ministers take possession of the settlements. Bishop Demers has more than he can handle in Vancouver. It would seem opportune to withdraw New Caledonia from his jurisdiction, because he can send no one since he has only one priest, and establish a new Apostolic Vicariate served by the Oblates. I say this in passing since I hasten to conclude this long letter in which I speak with my customary frankness and trust.

Your Eminence, please accept the sentiments of respect and constant affection wherewith I remain your most humble and devoted servant and friend,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. I enclose a copy of the letter sent to me by one of our Missionaries in response to my request for information. It will be important for you to read it.

<sup>9</sup> The Pacific coast.

1860

64. [To Cardinal Barnabò, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>1</sup>

*Impossible to send missionaries to Archbishop N. Blanchet of Oregon City. Almost all the Oblates of Nesqually now serve Bishop Demers in Vancouver. It will soon be necessary to establish a Vicariate farther north.*

Your Eminence,

Paris, March 16, 1860.

This second letter is in response to yours of March 7 in which Your Eminence invites me to send some Oblate missionaries to the Archbishop of Oregon City to help him in the service of his diocese. Your Eminence is well aware of the type of "blessed" gentlemen we have in these Blanchet prelates. It is not easy to live with them in common accord. That is certainly not due to a lack of virtue, but from what I hear they have a character which is difficult to bear. I know it at least about the brother bishop of Nesqually by way of direct experience, and I have been told that neither one nor the other is able to keep any priests or sisters at his side. These considerations would suffice to dissuade me from sending some of our men into that sort of martyrdom if they were available. The fact is that I am unable to satisfy the needs of our missions which are constantly growing thanks to the zeal of our missionaries. The bishop of Satala, coadjutor of S. Boniface, has taken away six for his mission which is a real trial of nature, 49° below zero cold and where there are many sufferings, often even hunger. Well, there are 30 Oblates in that mission, of whom 22 are priests, and they are all pleased with their

<sup>1</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., America Centrale, V. 18 (1859-1860), f. 1251.

destiny due to a special grace from the Lord which compensates their sacrifices with immense spiritual consolations.

At present, therefore, I could not give even the slightest aid to his Excellency the Archbishop of Oregon City. Moreover, I must say that due to the ever new difficulties which arise with his Excellency the Bishop of Nesqually, only one place remains under the Oblates in his most ungrateful diocese. In obedience to the wish expressed by Your Eminence subsequent to the request advanced by His Excellency the Bishop of Vancouver, I transferred some of the missionaries who were in the diocese of Nesqually and sent others from here to help Bishop Demers, who I believe was left with only one priest for companion, to evangelize the savages in those areas.

The experience of our missionaries has led to a project which I had to submit to your judgement. I cannot venture to explain their thought to you since here in Paris I do not have the documents I would have to consult in order to present the project in a suitable fashion. It would entail establishing an Apostolic Vicariate in the remotest parts of those English possessions. Its boundaries would extend up to the Rocky Mountains and it would border on the immense diocese of S. Boniface entirely evangelized by our Oblates. I am unable to explain everything since I do not have the documents I would have to consult. I only know that this project is presented to me as being of utmost importance for the propagation of the faith in those regions where the protestants will not delay in setting foot, if they haven't already done so.

Your Eminence, please accept the expression of respect where-with I remain your most humble and devoted servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

## 65. To His Eminence Cardinal Barnabò.<sup>2</sup>

*The Oblates work in the British Colonies north of Vancouver. Improved disposition on the part of Bishop Magloire Blanchet. The situation of the Oblates in Jaffna. Cardinal Barnabò should be the protector in*

<sup>2</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Francia, V. 4 (1857-1861), ff. 479-480.

*Rome of Bishop Semeria and his missionaries. Regrets over not having been called to Rome.*

Marseilles, April 15, 1860.

...<sup>3</sup> What heartening news I receive from Vancouver! The Oblates of Mary Immaculate have advanced into Colombia to arrive before the protestant ministers. In Oregon the bishop of Nesqually has become more human and has proposed something acceptable to the Oblates. My difficulty is to satisfy so many needs. There is an immense amount of good to be done in the British possessions; the savages cry aloud for the missionaries.

In Asia, however, our poor mission of Jaffna is still pursued, or even better, persecuted<sup>4</sup> by that blessed Bishop Bravi who is too powerful in Rome in the Sacred Congregation. I am not referring to Your Eminencé but to others who overly heed Bishop Bravi's emissary who is a very good friend to some people. I turn to you for special protection for the Apostolic Vicar and his missionaries in Jaffna who merit much more before God and the Church for the way in which they work for souls and the hardships to which they are exposed to the detriment of their health. The proof of this is that three, if not four, have already died and another is dying.<sup>5</sup> He may be dead already since I have received no letters. I would be willing to wager that not a single missionary in Colombo has died. That is matter for reflection. My conscience impels me to communicate these thoughts of mine to Your Eminence. I repeat, something must be done for the greater good in the island of Ceylon.

If my Cardinalate had not remained in the air<sup>6</sup> and had I been called to Rome, perhaps I would have proposed leaving the field free to Bishop Bravi and his men if there is no hope of succession to his

<sup>3</sup> The first page of this letter has been omitted. The Founder announced his return from Paris and requested an extension of his faculties for ordinations.

<sup>4</sup> The Italian text is a play on words with the two verbs: *proseguire* (to continue, pursue) and *perseguitare* (harass, persecute).

<sup>5</sup> Bro. R. B. Byrne, deceased in 1860.

<sup>6</sup> A letter from the Ministry of Cults, received on August 15, 1859, informed Bishop de Mazenod that the Emperor had proposed him to the Holy See "for the Cardinal's hat vacant in the order of appointments for France." A personal letter from the Pope informed Bishop de Mazenod on Jan. 28, 1860, that he would be made a Cardinal as soon as circumstances made it possible. The wars in Italy and the uprising in the Pontifical States at that time impeded the Creation of new cardinals. Favorable circumstances did not materialize before the death of the Founder.

vicariate in order to establish one for the entire island directed with the same spirit and the same zeal.

My dearest Eminence, please accept the expression of my sentiments of respect and affection wherewith I remain your most humble and devoted servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

## 66. To His Eminence Cardinal Barnabò.<sup>7</sup>

*Dispatch of a letter from Bishop Allard. The evangelization of the Kafirs is going to be difficult. Consoling news from all the other missions.*

Marseilles, May 14, 1860.

Your Eminence,

I have suspended my pastoral visit for one day to take advantage of the visit of His Excellency of Arras<sup>8</sup> who is leaving for Rome.

In my envelope please find enclosed a letter addressed to the late Prefect of the S. Congregation<sup>9</sup> from the Apostolic Vicar of Natal<sup>10</sup> who was unaware of his death and the election of Your Eminence.

The missionaries encounter great difficulty in bringing about the conversion of those Kafirs. These infidels base themselves on the decision of the Protestant bishop and ministers who feel that, since the Patriarchs had more than one wife, it is not consider it necessary for the Kafirs to retain one alone.

While it is still arduous to accomplish good in that mission, in all the others the amount of good being done is immense. If I was not so taken up with the pastoral visit I would give you details which would bring great consolation to your heart. If the sad circumstances we have to suffer had not impeded the trip I thought of making to Rome, I would have discussed with you the interests of all the

<sup>7</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong. Francia, V. 4 (1857-1861), f. 483.

<sup>8</sup> Bishop Pierre Louis Parisis.

<sup>9</sup> Cardinal Franson, who died in 1856.

<sup>10</sup> Bishop Allard, O.M.I. It is quite probable that the Founder inadvertently expressed himself badly in the original Italian which seems to indicate that Bishop Allard was in Marseilles. He was not there and the text has been corrected in the translation.



missions of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. I plan to write about those matters in a later letter....<sup>11</sup>

**67. [To Cardinal Barnabò, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>12</sup>**

*Dispatch of Bishop Allard's letter, left out of the earlier pouch. Do not make any decisions on Ceylon before receiving the report of the Visitor.*

Marseilles, May 19, 1860.

Your Eminence,

I discover that in my haste to send my last letter with the bishop of Arras I did not include in the pouch the letter from the Apostolic Vicar of Natal which I had mentioned. I am making up for that oversight today and I will not delve into the subject of the missions. I would just beseech Your Eminence not to decide anything on the issues which have arisen between the two Apostolic Vicariates in Ceylon before having received the report from the Bishop-Visitor.<sup>13</sup> I have reason to believe that Bishop Bravi's emissary<sup>14</sup> in Rome is pressing in the opposite direction and counting on the aid of some people in Your Eminence's S. Congregation, and that is the precise reason which impels me to request that the decision not be made before the information arrives. I would have much to say, but I do not have the time since I have to resume my pastoral visits which I conduct without fatigue as if I were 40 years old, and I am 78.

Your Eminence, please accept the expression of respect and affection from your humble servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. Do not forget my ordinands.

<sup>11</sup> The end of this letter dealt with faculties requested for ordinations.

<sup>12</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Africa, Isole dell'Oceano Australe, ecc, V. 4 (1852-1860), f. 664.

<sup>13</sup> Bishop Bonnard.

<sup>14</sup> Fr. Cingolani.

68. [To Cardinal Barnabò, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>15</sup>

*A secretary of the Sacred Congregation informed Bishop Bravi about the content of Bishop de Mazenod's letter to Cardinal Barnabò. Bishop Bravi's defaults and the increasing opposition to the Oblates.*

Marseilles, July 4, 1860.

MOST CONFIDENTIAL

Monseigneur,

Allow me to write to Your Eminence in my native language. I feel that I would have greater mastery of expression in the serious complaints I have to address to you on the account of Bishop Bravi and his followers in your S. Congregation.

I knew beyond a doubt that there was someone in the S. Congregation devoted to the interests, or rather the pretensions of Bishop Bravi, but I never would have wanted to believe that this devotion, hardly equitable in itself, had reached the point of betrayal. Yes, Monseigneur, it is this formal betrayal that I denounce to Your Eminence. I have proof that a secretary employed in your S. Congregation informed Bishop Bravi of my correspondence with Your Eminence, the judgment I expressed on that prelate, the projects I had exposed to Your Eminence, and among other things the opinion I had confidentially expressed to you when I wrote about entrusting the two vicariates to the zeal and the devotion of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

In a state of rage and even cold blood, the impulsive Bishop Bravi made the most unfitting comments on my account and that of the most saintly and under-appreciated Bishop Semeria, and swore that it would never occur. He is not satisfied with his obstinate and apparently unfounded refusal of my sending a fourth Oblate missionary to his vicariate as I see necessary for the good of regular discipline. While he tells me that his vicariate does not need this help, he strives to get missionaries from everywhere and some of them

<sup>15</sup> Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 17 (1859-1861), ff. 1292-1293.

have not manifested a great zeal for the salvation of souls. Do I really have to tell you, Monseigneur, that very little is being done for the salvation of souls in the vicariate of Colombo. The priests who provide the services are unfit to bear the name of missionaries. They are men who, in their eyes, occupy places of rest, follow a routine which is not sufficient to bring about the conversion of infidels or heretics, and who are little concerned about leaving the unfortunate Christians to wallow in their ignorance and what stems therefrom, and are therefore Christians in name alone. This inaction is to be compared with everything which zeal inspires to the true missionaries in the poor vicariate of Jaffna. If you were to receive a report on the wonders accomplished by their ministry, you would be more and more convinced that the interests of the glory of God and the salvation of souls would be enhanced were these truly apostolic men, who do not seek *quæ sua sunt*, entrusted to evangelise the entire island. I will never cease to say that because I am convinced that I am right. What is the sense of insisting upon this point? Doesn't the Oblate Congregation have vast fields elsewhere to fulfill the designs held by the Church in founding it? France, England, Ireland, Scotland, Upper and Lower Canada, the United States, Mexico, Oregon and today the Kafirs and the boundless Northwest of America are bathed with their sweat, and we could even say with their blood since many have sacrificed their lives and died out of exhaustion due to the excessive work like the four missionaries who died in Ceylon in the most active exercise of their ministry.

Isn't it unbearable to witness the antipathy which they constantly suffer on that island on the part of that unjust and inconsiderate prelate who is – this I will say to you Monseigneur – jealous and in bad faith and follows a preconceived plan in which he strongly believes out of self love, and from which he will never desist since he claims to have the support and approval of the Sacred Congregation where, through his friends, he has managed to procure protectors who are undoubtedly unaware of being the accomplices of a very bad passion which neutralizes good in that important part of the globe. Would you believe that this imprudent bishop, who all too often feels the itch to speak, had the gall to state “that the longstanding relations of friendship and trust which existed between Your Eminence and myself had now ceased to exist!” After that, what is one to think of such an inconsiderate, not to say spiteful prelate, if he invented such a shameful assumption? Or should we believe that

his friends in Rome, to encourage him in the detestable path he follows, might have done something to inspire this hateful invention?

In order to better specify my conscientious charges, I am going to present Your Eminence with facts I learned through a channel other than the Oblates.

One day, at table, Fr. Cingolani (the same priest who did so much in Rome for Bishop Bravi during two years, perhaps with the idea of becoming his coadjutor) said that: "During his round of visits, Bishop Bravi had to, or was to baptize five or six Buddhist families," and added that "the yearly number of adult baptisms in the vicariate is 5, 6, 700. Nonetheless, the bishop of Marseilles persists in his appeal to Rome for the vicariate of Colombo presenting the Benedictines as incapable of administering this mission." Fr. Cingolani added: "He had come by that information from one of the secretaries in Propaganda Fide who had told it to him in Rome."!

It is true: I had said and written it to Your Eminence. However, what should one think of this secretary who took it upon himself to confide such information to Fr. Cingolani? In response to this Father's affirmation on the beautiful successes in the vicariate of Colombo, I would add what I learned from a letter on the subject. "We were dumbstruck by this statement which is manifestly improper all the more so since the adult baptisms boasted about by Fr. Cingolani were the fruit of the work done by the Oblates who exercise their ministry in the vicariate of Colombo." The Oblates are so little to the liking of Bishop Bravi that, when talking one day to a non-Oblate missionary, he assured him that he would never turn his vicariate over to the Oblates and that if he was not able to find the necessary men in his Congregation, he would call in the Jesuits or any other order.

There you are, Monseigneur, the grievances that I present to Your Eminence in all confidence. That is all I have to do. If adverse circumstances had not suspended the effects of the Holy Father's good will in my regard, I would have had the occasion to come to Rome and personally plead the true interests of religion in Ceylon. Your Eminence, however, knows enough about the matter to avoid being taken by surprise by the more than rash allegations of a prelate who believes that, in what he complacently calls his policy, all means are valid in the attempt to achieve his end.

I have just reread my letter. It is harsh, but I retract nothing of what I have written. I had to speak frankly and directly in addressing myself to Your Eminence in order that nothing be hidden concerning the missions of which you are the main moderator, the true Head and the Father.

Please accept, Your Eminence, the expression of profound respect and tender affection wherewith I remain your most devoted servant and friend.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. I enclose for Your Eminence a copy of the announcement I felt it my duty to publish in favor of the Pope's loan. I take advantage of all occasions to foster in my diocesan subjects the love they owe to the Holy Father and the interest they should have in everything that concerns him.

#### 69. To His Eminence Cardinal Barnabò.<sup>16</sup>

*A fifth Oblate is seriously ill in Jaffna and all the missionaries suffer due to fever. It is urgent to assign them some missions in the Vicariate of Colombo. Impose this obligation upon Bishop Bravi or recall him to Rome. Three Fathers are leaving for Ceylon.*

Marseilles, July 20, 1860.

CONFIDENTIAL

Monseigneur,

Allow me to return to the question I dealt with in my last confidential letter addressed to Your Eminence. As the doctors says, it is a question of life or death for our Oblates who serve the vicariate of Jaffna. We have already lost four and now there is another who is condemned<sup>17</sup> and without the slightest hope of recovery. All of the

<sup>16</sup> Orig. Rome: Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 17 (1859-1861), ff. 1268-1269.

<sup>17</sup> Bro. P. E. Poorey, deceased on May 8, 1861.

others, with the exception of the Apostolic Vicar, are more or less ill and almost all successively affected by intermittent fever which reigns in the unhealthy areas where they are at work. The sole remedy indicated to redress the serious disadvantages of this state of affairs would be a change of air and a temporary stay in a better climate. Nothing would be easier in order to achieve this felicitous and desirable result. It would mean having some missions in the vicariate of Colombo where the temperature is ideal everywhere. It cannot be forgotten, however, that as long as Bishop Bravi governs that Vicariate like a despot, even if all the missionaries in Jaffna were to die, he would never assign any of his missions to the Oblates on his own. These holy missionaries have in him a stubborn enemy. Far from ever calling any of them, he pulls all the strings of what he calls his policy, and I call his plot, so that in the future the Oblates will be kept out from the Vicariate of Colombo. And God knows how much that Vicariate would need men of zeal and devotion like our missionaries.

However, the state of matters that I have presented to Your Eminence is too serious and can lead to such disastrous consequences for me not to have recourse to your authority for a solution.

The two Vicariates most certainly must be assigned to the Oblates who would move missionaries from one vicariate to the other as needed. In order to do that it would suffice to recall Bishop Bravi to Italy. He remains in Ceylon out of spite, because he cannot overlook the fact that his health is seriously threatened and that, apart from his illness, he should be on his guard against any tricks his enormous obesity could play on him.

Were it impossible to apply this radical measure which would produce an immense good for the souls which are so badly cared for in the Vicariate of Colombo, I request Your Eminence to order Bishop Bravi to assign at least two more missions in his Vicariate to the Oblates so that the superior of the Oblates can send to them those subjects who have the most urgent need for a change of air and to live in a healthy area. Rest assured that the souls would have everything to gain because the Oblate Missionaries are not men who do not work. I repeat, however, that it will be necessary for Your Eminence to use your authority to overcome the obstinancy and bad will of Bishop Bravi who should be obliged to give in to the extreme need of the tireless workers in the Vicariate of Jaffna. In a few days I

am going to send them the aid of three new missionaries.<sup>18</sup> My heart bleeds, however, when these excellent subjects who can be used to much greater advantage elsewhere, must be told: "Go to a country which will consume you in a very short time."

I place all my hope in you, Monseigneur, but you must be on your guard against the artifices and the 'furberie'<sup>19</sup> of Bishop Bravi and his followers whom I have learned to know.

When I recall what Bishop Buratti told me during one of my trips to Rome: "Have no fear, the entire island will be for the Oblates,"<sup>20</sup> and think that Your Eminence leans towards that same idea, and that today I witness all the plots perpetrated to mount obstacles secretly which people hope will become unsurmountable, I am less indignant over the harm this will cause to the Oblates, in comparison to the good that will not be done. My necessary relationships with that mission have proved to me beyond a doubt that the missionaries of Colombo are not worth the minimum part of those in Jaffna in terms of zeal for the salvation of souls and devotion to all kinds of good in a spirit of heroic personal disinterest. I also add that the best that has been accomplished in the Vicariate of Colombo is due to the three Oblates who were assigned there by the authority of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide.

I would place my hand on burning coals as sure as I am that the Prelate Visitor<sup>21</sup> you appointed to inspect the missions on the island of Ceylon will not contradict me. My only hope is that he travel to Rome to inform you personally about everything he has seen with his own eyes, the things he may hesitate to put down in writing.

Perhaps I am insisting too much. What I find it impossible to avoid is to experience a great solicitude for a mission served by such a large number of my Oblates over whose health and sanctification I must be watchful together with the great amount of good they can accomplish.

<sup>18</sup> Frs. Crousel, Gourdon, Salaün. Bro. Bennett accompanied them.

<sup>19</sup> Tricks, wiles.

<sup>20</sup> Orig. in Italian.

<sup>21</sup> Bishop Bonnard, Apostolic Vicar of Pondichéry.

Monseigneur, please accept the customary expression of my most affectionate and respectful sentiments wherewith I remain, Your Eminence, your most devoted servant and friend.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

## 70. To His Eminence Cardinal Barnabò.<sup>22</sup>

*The sense to be given to his confidential letters. The missions in the Vicariate of Colombo which would be assigned to the Oblates, to allow them a change of air, would remain under the jurisdiction of Colombo.*

Marseilles, August, 12, 1860.

Monseigneur,

When I take the liberty of writing confidentially to Your Eminence, it is in order to open my heart to you in the freedom of the most complete trust. I leave aside all the customary precautions of formal language to state frankly and without circumspection everything I think about people and matters in general. In this disposition of my soul which places itself open before you, without fear and in all simplicity, you should not take offence over any of my thoughts, any of my judgments. I may be mistaken, undoubtedly, but I should not be blamed since the more I will have been harsh in my appraisals all the more will I have shown you affectionate trust and friendly abandonment.

As I am sincerely convinced of having stated nothing but the truth in my letters to Your Eminence, I would not have come back to this subject if I had not realized that you had not grasped my thought in the proposal I had thought it necessary to submit to you on assigning, under your authority, two more Oblates to two missions in the Vicariate of Colombo. I had been too astounded in seeing Bishop Bravi twice advance the claim to take over two districts of the Vicariate of Jaffna to fall myself into the same impropriety. No, I never asked for two missions to be removed from the jurisdiction of his Excellency the Vicar of Colombo. What I felt I had expressed was only for Your Eminence to suggest or order two missions in the Vicariate of Colombo, no matter which, to be set aside to be served

<sup>22</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Francia, V. 4 (1857-1861), ff. 537-538.



by two Oblate Missionaries, obviously under the jurisdiction of the Apostolic Vicar of Colombo. I presented Your Eminence with the reason for this, and I will not repeat it. However, I do insist on the fact that most of the missions in the Vicariate of Jaffna are unhealthy and excessively tiring and that our fathers, without excepting the Apostolic Vicar, have all contracted fever which weakens their constitution and ends up killing them. It is not to be said that Bishop Bettachini has not been a victim as well, like our fathers who have passed away and the one who is on the verge of death.

It is therefore quite natural for me, the father of the family entrusted to my care, vigilant over its existence, and alarmed when I see them decimated by the unhealthy climate and the excesses of their work, to ask that missions in the healthy vicariate of Colombo be assigned to them in order that the superior of the Oblates have the chance to send them there those men who need a change of air. Any other bishop besides Bishop Bravi would have found this a very simple measure and would be very pleased, while charitably providing relief to these devoted men who sacrifice themselves out of obedience at the service of these poor Indians, to employ good workers for the sanctification of the souls entrusted to his care.

I have said enough to explain my thought.<sup>23</sup>

#### **71. To Cardinal Barnabò, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide.<sup>24</sup>**

*Death of Bishop Bravi. Advantages to be obtained by entrusting the missions of Ceylon to the Oblates. The Catholic children in the Vicariate of Colombo attend Protestant school. Bishop Semeria should be appointed Apostolic Vicar in Colombo, with a pro-vicar in Jaffna.*

Marseilles, September 13, 1860.

Monseigneur,

It is upon descending from the Altar where I have just offered the Holy Sacrifice for the soul of the deceased Bishop Bravi<sup>25</sup> that I

<sup>23</sup> The end of this letter has been omitted. It dealt with the Theatin privileges which Bishop de Mazenod wished to obtain and had been refused.

<sup>24</sup> Certified Copy: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, Registre des Lettres... 1855-1863, pp. 279-280.

<sup>25</sup> Bishop Bravi died on board a ship and was buried near Suez.

take up my pen to dwell with Your Eminence on the great interests of the important mission of Ceylon. Your Eminence cannot consider it improper for me to concern myself with the good of a mission served in part by the Fathers of the Congregation of which I am the superior and the father.

Well! Monseigneur, speaking to Your Eminence before God and with my extensive knowledge of the needs of the missions in Ceylon, in all conscience I repeat that it is absolutely advisable to take advantage of the circumstance of Bishop Bravi's death to entrust the direction of all the missions on the island to the Missionary Oblates of Mary, whether you maintain the two vicariates, or take what perhaps would be the better solution, reestablish the original status and place the entire island under the jurisdiction of a single Apostolic Vicar.

Your Eminence must be too well informed on the state of the missions not have realized that the baneful system followed by Bishop Bravi has caused a frightful situation in the Vicariate entrusted to his care. I knew that all too well, but the memorandum I am sending in copy to Your Eminence gives even better proof with the details it contains. I ask you to please take note of the memorandum and the copy of the letter I am sending as well. The question is too important at present not to gather all the information which will help to make a decisive judgement.

May God have mercy on poor Bishop Bravi, but it is certain that what he called his policy has seriously prejudiced the good of his Vicariate. There is no surprise in the fact that no one ever wanted to adopt it in the vicariate of Jaffna where the Vicar and the missionaries, true men of God, wished to act only with a supernatural view. What a difference in the results obtained as well!

Everyone should agree that it is deplorable that on the same island, under the same government, instead of unity of action and conformity of principles, what reigns is a vast divergence of opinions and behavior. The fact is that, in conscience, Bishop Semeria could not adapt the principles supported by Bishop Bravi and followed in his Vicariate. How can one accept that guilty tolerance which made him so agreeable for the Protestants in the schools he permitted Catholic students to attend to the extreme detriment of their faith instead of being concerned about establishing Catholic schools as the (Apostolic) Vicar of Jaffna managed to do with infinitely less

resources than it would have been possible to procure in Colombo. The fact is that Bishop Bravi placed great store in the praise he received from the Protestant press which he subsidized in order not to be attacked, and at that price he was praised and called the popular Doctor Bravi, the amiable Bishop of the Catholics of Ceylon. He was praised for his liberal and enlightened views in education following the unbelievable words from the lips of a bishop pronounced before the Education Committee.

In the notes<sup>26</sup> I have taken it upon myself to send to you, Your Eminence will see the limited zeal with which Bishop Bravi provided for the spiritual needs of his Vicariate through the limited number and quality of the missionaries he felt it necessary to have at his side. I think I told this to Your Eminence. When he responded to my offer to send him some Oblates to help their confreres and said he didn't need missionaries, he used to stop unknown men passing through who had left Australia in disagreement with their bishops and perhaps sent home by them.

Moreover, there was that weakness in dealing with those he convinced to stay with his outlandish magnimity. He left them free to do nothing at all and didn't even take the trouble to require them to learn the language of the country; they are also too few in number and many are incompetent. That is what explains why so little is done for the instruction and edification of souls and consequently for the progress of the mission in this Vicariate. Compare that with the zeal and the dedication of all the Oblates, together with the transcending merit of many of them and the truly apostolic virtues of Mgr. Semeria whose sanctity is known by no one as much as by myself. Oh Monseigneur, I have no qualms in saying to Your Eminence that, in hearkening to my conscience, you must appoint Bishop Semeria Apostolic Vicar of Colombo if you wish to see this Mission prosper. You could appoint a pro-vicar in Jaffna if you feel it proper, but you would entrust both vicariates to the one Congregation of the Oblates. Bishop Semeria is the embodiment of kindness, you have naught to fear that he would act unkindly towards the missionaries he would find in Colombo. Some of them have had enough of the sad trade they are plying, and the others will try to imitate the zeal of the Oblates or quietly withdraw. There you

<sup>26</sup> Notes from Frs. Duffo and Mola. Cf. Mazenod to Semeria, September 17, 1860.

have the cause I would have pleaded before you, in Rome itself, if my delicate position had allowed me, because it is not my advanced age which impedes me from undertaking a journey which would foster hopes for such an advantageous result for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

I am now sending three missionaries and a catechist to Ceylon. They will bear the same dedication as their predecessors and I trust that the Lord will bless their works.

Would that I could have them soon followed by good news I await from the decision of the Sacred Congregation.

Please accept... etc.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**72. [To Cardinal Barnabò, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>27</sup>**

*Dispatch of the report from the Visitor to Oregon: plan to establish a Vicariate in British Colombia. The bishops of Canada propose an Oblate as successor to Bishop Demers in Vancouver. The time has come to make a decision on Ceylon: appoint Bishop Semeria to Colombia and revert to a single Vicariate.*

Marseilles, October 6, 1860.

Monseigneur,

...<sup>28</sup> Shall now speak of what I have to communicate to you? I do not have the time to discuss the very important matter I had to deal with; I beseech Your Eminence to consider the statement or report which prompted me to write to you. I had brought it to Your Eminence's attention in several of my letters. It involved the establishment of an Apostolic Vicariate in British Colombia and reducing the diocese of Vancouver to the island alone. The report explains matters as well as I could. I must add that, according to correspondence from the missionaries who are still in the area, I see

<sup>27</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Francia, V. 4 (1857-1861), ff. 548-549.

<sup>28</sup> We have omitted the first pages of this letter, in which Bishop de Mazenod transcribed excerpts from a letter sent to the Minister of Cults on the Papal States and the wars in Italy.

they all perfectly agree with the view of the Visitor whose Report I enclose for Your Eminence. They write me from Canada that upon your request addressed to the bishop of Montreal to indicate the person he considered fitting to succeed Bishop Demers who wishes to retire, the bishops of Canada have suggested an Oblate to you. On the assumption that Your Eminence finds favour in this idea which in effect strikes me as the most suitable, that would not impede you from establishing the Apostolic Vicariate proposed by our Oblate Fathers. It would be a permanent mission granted to the Oblates with all the advantages which assuredly result from such a measure. Reduced to proportions sufficient for a Bishop who would be obliged to find his own priests, not an easy task in these areas, the diocese of Vancouver could already be served temporarily by the Oblates during the episcopacy of the prelate chosen from their Congregation and even afterwards if felt opportune by the successor who would come after him.

In truth, I do not know how I have the courage to speak about the matter under the present sad circumstances in which we live; I am heart-broken. The need to provide for the necessities of the missions is required in order to reach the decision to delve into these sorts of questions. I therefore would ask Your Eminence to respond in some way on this subject so I can determine my position with regard to our missionaries who are tempted to accuse me of negligence, such is the importance they attach to this matter which they consider capital for the success of their work. They press me so much with their correspondence as though the decision were up to me.

I will not finish this letter without once again stressing the very important matter of the mission of Ceylon to Your Eminence. The time has come to establish unity of principles, doctrine, and discipline on this island; it is useless to deceive oneself, experience shows what has been done. I am speaking as a Bishop and not as a biased superior. The Oblates of Mary have earned the confidence and preference they await from the justice of the Sacred Congregation and its Eminent Prefect. You will ensure an immense good on the island by entrusting it entirely to their proven zeal. The heartily desirable improvement in the Vicariate of Colombo will take place smoothly with wisdom and great prudence by appointing, as I have proposed to Your Eminence, Bishop Semeria, Apostolic Vicar of that Vicariate, and appointing a pro-vicar in Jaffna if you wish to keep

that Vicariate separate from Colombo. That would not be necessary if you entrust the Oblate Congregation with the service of the entire island, a fact I consider decisive for the preservation of the faith among the Christians and the conversion of the infidels. Monseigneur, you will forgive me for speaking to you with such frankness and simplicity. The fact is that I am speaking before God and out of conscience, with my knowledge of the state of affairs. If my cardinalate had not been left in abeyance and, invested with that dignity, had I been part of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, I would have expressed myself in the same sense with more authority but with no more reason than I do now, being what I am knowing what I am.

Please accept, Your Eminence, the expression of respect and affection wherewith I remain your most devoted servant and friend.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**73. [To Cardinal Barnabò, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>29</sup>**

*Dispatch of a letter of a missionary in Ceylon: The state of health of Bishop Semeria who should be appointed Apostolic Vicar of Colombo. New circular letter drafted by the Bishop of Marseilles on the Papal States.*

Marseilles, October 18, 1860.

Monseigneur,

Since I last wrote to Your Eminence on the occasion of a visit to Marseilles by His Excellency the Bishop of La Rochelle<sup>30</sup>, I have received further information from Ceylon. Among other things there is a letter from one of our missionaries, a very distinguished priest of eminent virtue and great capability.<sup>31</sup> I felt that it would be fitting for me to send a copy of his letter to Your Eminence. The judgments expressed by a man of his experience merit due considera-

<sup>29</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 17 (1859-1861), f. 392.

<sup>30</sup> Bishop J. B. A. Landriot, bishop of La Rochelle.

<sup>31</sup> Fr. Bonjean.

tion. The first page is dedicated to informing me on the state of health of Bishop Semeria. You will see there the esteem reserved for that holy prelate. In the following part of the letter the writer presents the reasons which support what I requested of Your Eminence; that is to transfer the present Apostolic Vicar of Jaffna to Colombo. That is a preference truly merited in light of the personal qualities of Bishop Semeria, the assiduous services of the Oblate Congregation over many years, and the loss they have suffered in the four missionaries who succumbed due to the work and the inclemency of the climate. Whatever way be the decision of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda on the Apostolic Vicariates of the island of Ceylon, whether to maintain the two Vicariates or reunite them with one, I persist in my request for Bishop Semeria's translation to Colombo. I ask it as a favour, or even as an act of justice from which souls will draw the greatest advantage. This point is undeniable. One would have to want to be blind not to recognize it. I do not think it would be possible to compare the merit and the valor of Bishop Semeria with the merit and valor of any of the missionaries currently in the Vicariate of Colombo. You will not send someone from Rome since, down there, you have an Apostolic Vicar whose services merit recompense and whose health merits proper care.

I am fully aware that I am only asking for something just and infinitely advantageous for the good of religion when I insist, as I do, for the translation of Bishop Semeria to Colombo. To refuse me this favour would more than sadden me; I would experience a profound sorrow, a discouragement which it would be impossible for me to surmount. I am counting on your spirit of justice, your knowledge of the state and the needs of the mission of Ceylon and, allow me to add, your friendship for me to emphasize, for those who are to give their opinion, the opportuneness, advantages, and justice of the measure I solicit in my twofold quality as a Bishop and superior General of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

I have just issued a new circular letter on the occasion of the Holy Father's latest allocution.<sup>32</sup> I believe that I have been faithful to the views of His Holiness. Through the last letter I had the honor to

<sup>32</sup> The circular letter of Oct. 14 regarding the latest invasions of the States of the Church.

write to you, you know that I am not satisfied with preaching the truth from the rooftops, but that I make it arrive fearlessly to the ears of those who are not accustomed to hearing it proclaimed. May God open their hearts and guide their wills.

Monseigneur, please accept the expression of profound respect and affection wherewith I remain the most devoted servant of Your Eminence.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**74. [To Cardinal Barnabò, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>33</sup>**

*Plan to establish an Apostolic Vicariate in British Colombia. Fr. Sillani, a Sylvestrian in Colombo, does not speak English.*

Marseilles, November 27, 1860.

I wrote at length to Cardinal Barnabò in response to his letter of... in which he asked me, according to the view expressed to him by the Bishops of Canada, to associate our Oblates of Mary to Bishop Trudeau, appointed to the diocese of Vancouver.

I set forth the view of the Father Visitor of the missions of Vancouver which is to establish an Apostolic Vicariate out of the two dioceses of Coleville and Queen Charlotte and the adjacent islands. I also add that when the Fr. Visitor expressed that opinion, the diocese of Vancouver was not vacant, but today he would be of the opinion that the diocese of Vancouver itself be annexed to the Apostolic Vicariate. It would be opportune to give this vicariate everything beginning from the 49° latitude up to the Russian territories and in longitude, all the islands and the continent as far as the Rocky Mountains.

<sup>33</sup> This letter was not found in the Archives of Propaganda. In the *Registre des lettres...* 1855-1863, p. 283 (kept in the Postulation) the Founder himself wrote the summary published here. He omitted the date of Cardinal Barnabò's letter and made a number of mistakes and inaccuracies, for example: he obviously intended the territories and not the "dioceses" of Coleville and Queen Charlotte. The diocese of Vancouver was not vacant. Bishop Demers stayed there for more than 10 years, but he wanted an auxiliary. With regard to the Irish soldiers in Ceylon, they were obviously English soldiers who were Catholic and of Irish descent.



I then entertained the Cardinal on the state of the Vicariate of Colombo where Fr. Sillani, the only priest to serve the Church attended by the Irish soldiers and all those who speak English, does not know a word of that language. This fact has been remarked even in the Protestant newspapers.

**75. To His Eminence Cardinal Barnabò.**<sup>34</sup>

*Dispatch of a rough sketch of British Colombia.*

Marseilles, December 10, 1860.

Most Eminent and dear friend,

...<sup>35</sup> I think Your Eminence will appreciate having a small sketch of British Colombia. It is a very imperfect work, but it does give an idea of this distant country. If necessary we could ask for something more complete from the same missionary who sent this drawing. He has baptized 600 savage children on his own and is most confident he will be able to accomplish a great amount of good among all these tribes, especially if you erect the Apostolic Vicariate according to the plan submitted to Your Eminence.

Monseigneur, please accept the profound respect wherewith I remain your most devoted servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**76. [To Cardinal Barnabò, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].**<sup>36</sup>

*Pastoral letter by Bishop Semeria. Brochure by Fr. Bonjean on education. This father would do much good in Colombo if Bishop*

<sup>34</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, rif. nei Cong., Francia, V. 4 (1857-1861), ff. 568-570.

<sup>35</sup> We have omitted the first pages of this letter where Bishop de Mazenod announced the dispatch of circular letter on St. Peter's Pence and explained that he continues to tell the Emperor the truth. The Pope has no reason to be displeased with the bishop of Marseilles.

<sup>36</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 17 (1859-1861), f. 1547.

*Semeria was appointed Apostolic Vicar. Success of the popular missions in Jaffna. Four missionaries sent to Ceylon and 2 speak English.*

Marseilles, December 15, 1860.

I have just received a pastoral letter from Bishop Semeria in Tamil and in English. It is an interesting piece and I suppose that prelate will have forwarded a copy to Your Eminence. You will find in that letter the proof of the enlightened zeal of this priceless bishop who was just barely escaped being taken away from the love and admiration of all those who know him by a very dangerous illness contracted in his apostolic efforts in the horribly unhealthy areas of his vicariate of Jaffna. For the love of God, take him out of there. He will end up by succumbing and it will not be easy to find a man of his talent.

I must say, however, that in that mission we have first-rate missionaries such as Fr. Bonjean who, in terms of capability and virtue, was considered the outstanding man in the diocese of Clermont. He has recently published a brochure in English, one of the six or seven languages of which he is master. A copy should have been sent to Your Eminence. This brochure was deemed necessary in order to repair Bishop Bravi's negligence in the field of Catholic education. It has made a very good impression and will lead, one hopes, to very happy results. If Your Eminence comes to a decision, as I have never ceased to beseech you, to transfer Bishop Semeria to Colombo, Fr. Bonjean would be called upon to do an infinite amount of good in that Vicariate which is truly lifeless.

When the Vicariate of Colombo receives the same careful attention as that of Jaffna, it will be possible to count on a renewal of the faith in this important part of the island where the faith is dying away visibly due to the negligence and the bad system which has been followed thus far and would be continued if the Sacred Congregation does not make the decision which in spirit and conscience I never cease to solicit and will have most certainly been suggested to you by the Apostolic Visitor<sup>37</sup> who has first seen things at hand and objectively.

<sup>37</sup> Bishop Bonnard.

Your Eminence would be surprised and would surely bless the Lord if I were able to send you the reports I receive on the missions our Oblates of Mary give in Ceylon. Their fruits are truly prodigious. I have never seen anything like that in the Vicariate of Colombo where a system of repose is followed which leaves each person to flounder in his own ignorance and in every misery. In the missions of the Oblates, God brings about striking conversions. Not only do the Christians find renewal but a good number of Buddhists enter the bosom of the Church and, even more surprising, Muslims as well have opened their eyes to the light.

I have recently strengthened this mission with four good evangelical workers, one of whom is English and I had another one spend a number of years in the English missions and who now speaks the language like an Englishman.<sup>38</sup> That is what is lacking and what is so bitterly complained about in the Vicariate of Colombo. I would be able to provide what is needed immediately to the great satisfaction of the principal inhabitants of the capital of that Vicariate.

Monseigneur, I felt that it was my duty to add this information to what I had already sent to Your Eminence. I think that I could never exaggerate in my insistence to prepare the ways for a coveted result regarded as decisive for the progress of good in the island of Ceylon by all those who are able to judge the true interests of religion in that country.

Allow me to renew the assurance of my respectful affection wherewith Your Eminence, I remain forever the most devoted of your servants.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**77. [To Cardinal Barnabò, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>39</sup>**

*Dispatch of a map of British Colombia where an Apostolic Vicariate entrusted to the Oblates should be erected. Excerpts of letters from Ceylon. Bishop Bonnard's report. Best wishes for the New Year.*

<sup>38</sup> Bro. Bennett and Fr. Crousel, accompanied by Frs. Gourdon and Salaün.

<sup>39</sup> Certified copy: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, Registre des lettres... 1855-1863, p. 284.

Marseilles, December 28, 1860.

Monseigneur,

I have found the map I mentioned to Your Eminence in my last letter. It was done by one of our missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate and he sent it to me. It gives a rather good idea of the territory which should be included in the Apostolic Vicariate which seems to be required by the needs of the large number of tribes in that area.

Except for one priest or two at the most who are only there in passing and waiting to have their little patrimony built up, this immense land is only evangelized by the Oblates. Your Eminence has understood how it would be important for them to exercise their ministry under an Apostolic Vicar chosen by the Holy See from among their number. The fact of entrusting this Vicariate to the Congregation of the Oblates would cut short all the miseries encountered in relations with the bishops of this country when one works in their dioceses. Matters reach a point where it would be absolutely necessary to withdraw and let them manage by themselves, to such an extent are they vexing and unbearable. I am talking especially about Bishop Blanchet. His Excellency the bishop of Nesqually, may well have advanced his own complaints, but if Your Eminence had my correspondence before your eyes, you would certainly judge matters as severely as I. No one is able to stay with him, except for his vicar general who perhaps hopes to become coadjutor. I know nothing about that, I am just saying it in a very simple way to Your Eminence from whom I hide none of my thoughts.

I thought you would appreciate receiving detailed information on some of the works of the Oblates in Ceylon. I have had excerpts copied from one or two letters which I have just received.

I fail to understand how the report of His Excellency the Bishop Visitor has yet to reach you. It would be so important for Your Eminence to be informed through that channel on the state of affairs on the island.

The map of British Colombia which I enclose in my packet can be kept in Rome, in the archives of the Sacred Congregation. I have a copy in my possession.

It only remains for me to express a sort of holy season's greetings to Your Eminence since, in the sorrow by which we are oppressed, one

does not dare venture to wish Happy New Year. Nonetheless, I am unable to uproot from my heart the hope of a better future. If you only know how much we are praying! I would venture to say that, for the 40 hours devotion, our churches are full day and night.

Please accept...

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.



1861

78. [To Cardinal Barnabò, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].<sup>1</sup>

*Words of thanks for the interest shown by the Cardinal and the Holy Father during Bishop de Mazenod's illness. Despite his many qualities, Fr. Trudeau is not the right man to become bishop of Vancouver. The Oblate Congregation can propose a number of names for one of the future bishoprics in British Colombia. Hopes for a solution favorable to the Oblates in the near future on the problems of the Church in Ceylon.*

Marseilles, March 27, 1861.

Monseigneur,

I have just received your letter of the 21st of this month. Before proceeding to respond to the serious matters therein contained, I first feel it necessary to thank Your Eminence for the kind and affectionate thoughts transmitted through my auxiliary, Bishop Jeancard, and for what you added personally in your latest letter. On this occasion, as always, you have shown me how sincere and profound was your affection for me. Rest assured that as far as I am concerned, the sentiments of affectionate esteem which Your Eminence has always inspired are and will remain unaltered. My strength is slowly returning and I hope that slowly but surely and with the help of God, I will be able to regain sufficient strength.

I was also profoundly touched by what the Holy Father instructed you to tell me and the Apostolic Blessing he granted to me. Alas! This well-beloved Father is on Calvary: if the filial expression of the part I assume of his tribulations can sweeten the

<sup>1</sup> Certified copy: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, Registre des lettres... 1855-1863.

bitterness of his pain, I would be very grateful if you could assure His Holiness that my heart as a son shares all his pains and that I pray the Lord to shorten the days of tribulation and finally bring about the triumph of justice and truth in the person of their most august representative.

With regard to the matter for which I am writing, I request your permission to address you with that complete frankness by which you know me and which many times has not displeased you. In all the communications I have had the honor to have with Your Eminence, I have never had but the greatest good in view. In this matter as in all others, I am inspired by the same reason.

Firstly, I can only be very grateful to the Bishops of Canada who made the choice and to Your Eminence who agreed upon this priest for the See of Vancouver from the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary of which I am the Founder and the Father. I could not be indifferent to this sign of esteem. Therefore, if I asked Your Eminence to be so kind as not to appoint the designated subject, Fr. Trudeau, to that See, I did so to fulfill a duty of conscience imposed upon me by the confidential and most personal communications that Father felt it necessary to send me as his superior. In the eyes of Your Eminence my observations must have that special character with which they are endowed by my profound knowledge of the subject. I am in no way surprised that His Excellency the Bishop of Montreal, judging on the basis of external qualities alone, is of a contrary opinion and insists upon the adoption of his choice. My opinion, however, should not be compared with that of this worthy prelate. We begin from a different principle and while one only considers the exterior, the other considers the interior dispositions. These dispositions oblige one to insist anew that Fr. Trudeau, in whom I am pleased to note excellent qualities, should not be raised to the episcopacy. My insistence in this way with Your Eminence is in compliance with the wish expressed to me by that Father through his confessor in a letter written after the one I had Fr. Tempier write to you on the matter.<sup>2</sup> I am telling Your Eminence all of this to justify my insistence, but I take the liberty to point out that I am confiding all of this to you alone. Without betraying the trust placed in me by this religious, I could not permit the members of the Sacred

<sup>2</sup> Allusion to the letter of Nov. 29, 1860, which has not been found. It is mentioned in the *Registre des lettres*... 1855-1863, p. 283.



Congregation to know all I have had the honor to tell you on this matter. I therefore venture to hope that taking my new requests into serious consideration Your Eminence will not give effect to the nomination of Fr. Trudeau to the See of Vancouver.

Nor should I conceal from Your Eminence how great my suffering would be if an Irish priest<sup>3</sup> were appointed to that See. His Excellency the Bishop of Montreal sees absolutely no one like that in all of Canada who could be proposed. However, there is one in Vancouver and he is the only secular priest Bishop Demers has in his diocese. That priest has already made himself known and his elevation to the episcopacy would make the ministry of our Oblates of Mary impossible in his diocese. His Excellency the Bishop of Vancouver called them there, and the Sacred Congregation ordered me to send them there. I did it eagerly as I will always do. Their ministry there has encountered slowness, difficulties, and clashes, some of which certainly inherent to the location and the type of ministry, but many others were caused. Some of them have been overcome but it was only with time that it was possible to triumph, and even that in an incomplete fashion, over all the problems which had been raised by this priest who exercises such a great and unfortunate influence over the character of a naturally irresolute Bishop Demers. Like many other priests from his country, this Irish priest went to this mission to do good undoubtedly, but perhaps and especially to create a position for himself. That concern to advance is the only thing to which I can attribute the proposal made to Your Eminence by Bishop Demers. It was suggested to him by this priest who wants to become a bishop to do, no doubt, on a larger scale what he can only do today in a way which is more modest and insufficient for his aspirations. I know that Your Eminence will stigmatize views like that and I am convinced that to make them known to you means to put a stop to them. With similar thoughts of money and ambition not only does one not accomplish good, but one also prevents it from being accomplished. That is what has come to pass in part and what would have happened completely without perseverance on one hand and without certain feelings of respect for public opinion on the other hand.

<sup>3</sup> Bishop Demers' successor in 1873 was Fr. C. J. Seghers.

I would have no difficulty at all with the appointment to that See of a Canadian priest truly worthy of the episcopacy and especially such a responsibility. Through experience, however, I am led to consider the reasons advanced by the worthy Bishop of Montreal quite weak. Bishop Demers is Canadian. He is not the only Canadian bishop in the province of Oregon. Over the twenty years that this province has been occupied by Canadian bishops, the rapidity with which priests from Canada have hastened to join them has struck me as being quite limited. There have been none at all for the diocese of Vancouver and if there were some, they were few in number and didn't stay long. The Fathers of the Oblate Congregation represent practically all of the clergy in this immense but wretched diocese. That was one of the principal reasons which lead to the choice of Fr. Trudeau for that See. Wouldn't it seem to Your Eminence that it would only be necessary to change the person and select another Oblate to take over the See which is not one to be coveted by anyone.

I was unaware of the request addressed to Your Eminence by Bishop Demers when I requested the erection of the Apostolic Vicariate of British Colombia composed of two episcopal sees which have been merged into that of Vancouver. I had advanced that request to finally give our missions some stability, to protect our missionaries from the many problems which tire and discourage them, to unite all authority under the same hand in order to bring to all the works more togetherness, unity, and activity, and to be able to work with greater ardor for the conversion of a large number of savage tribes which have thus far been practically neglected. I have told Your Eminence and must repeat that vexations and obstacles end up by exhausting the strongest zeal, and that our missionaries who ask for nothing better than to devote themselves with generosity and abnegation to these works need to have before them a perspective other than what they have had to date. I venture to hope that by adopting the way I have indicated, Your Eminence would be able to assure what has already been done and prepare what remains to be done for the general good. What remains to be done is very much more than what has already been done.

What I take the liberty to propose to Your Eminence has already been done, and I would dare to say with success, for the mission of Red River. This truly thankless and difficult mission

prosper today. Why couldn't it be the same in this immense diocese of Vancouver made up of three dioceses<sup>4</sup> and where the savage populations especially abound and await the Good News. The diocese of St. Boniface, by being entrusted to the Oblates, is far from being neglected by the bishops, priests, and people of Canada. I dare to flatter myself that it could be the same in Vancouver and I do not believe I am rash in my confidence.

If Your Eminence deigns to take into consideration what I have had the honor to present to you and requests it of me, I could indicate one or more subjects to you who could be presented to assume this See.

I could not conclude this very long letter, which I regret not having been able to write with my own hand as I have had the happiness to do so many times, without telling Your Eminence how much I was consoled by the most kind dispositions you saw it fit to address to me for our mission in Ceylon.<sup>5</sup> With paternal impatience I await the solution which you give me reason to hope will be in conformity with my wishes. Your Eminence will have added a further title to those you already bear in the respectful gratitude of all my dear Oblates and especially our missionaries in Ceylon and their worthy Apostolic Vicar. As far as I am concerned, you will have satisfied one of the dearest wishes of my heart and if my affection and esteem for you could increase, this new evidence of your benevolent interest would make them increase in a special way.

Please accept...

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

<sup>4</sup> The reference is to the territory of Oregon, divided into three dioceses.

<sup>5</sup> Bishop de Mazenod adds further on that it was one of the wishes dearest to his heart. He then spoke of transferring Bishop Semeria to Colombo. However, this solution was never adopted. The Sylvestrian Sillani was appointed Apostolic Vicar after a two year vacancy. The Founder's last letter to Cardinal Barnabò was written by Bishop Jeancard on April 6, 1861 and deals with the Pope's illness. The Founder signed the letter himself and added in shaky script: "For the love of God, do not forget Ceylon or our excellent Bishop Semeria.



**LETTERS TO THE COUNCILS  
OF THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY  
OF THE PROPAGATION  
OF THE FAITH IN LYON AND PARIS**



1842

79. To Mr. Choiselat, President<sup>1</sup> of the Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Place St. Sulpice, Paris.<sup>2</sup>

*Apostolate of the Oblates in Canada. Request for assistance to send two missionaries to Canada.*

Marseilles, July 31, 1842.

Dear Sir,

The Council of the Propagation of the Faith will have learned with interest of the good already achieved in Canada by the presence of missionaries from the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate who were called there by His Excellency the Bishop of Montreal. Put to work immediately upon their arrival, they have never ceased to exercise their holy ministry and from the local papers we have learned of the blessings bestowed by the Lord upon their apostolic works. Together with the countless conversions of sinners they have had the consolation to witness numerous abjurations and the return of several apostates. The savages would also like to benefit from the devotion of these tireless men, but how is it possible to cope with what is beyond the limits of human resources? It is in order to come to their aid as well as to provide them with the means to spread even further the Kingdom of Jesus Christ that I have decided to fulfill, earlier than I would have thought, the promise I made to His Excellency the Bishop of Montreal to add two missionaries to the four I had already sent him.<sup>3</sup> It would be urgent for them to be on

<sup>1</sup> In subsequent letters, Mr. Choiselat is indicated by his real title: "Treasurer".

<sup>2</sup> Orig.: Paris, Arch. of the Propagation of the Faith.

<sup>3</sup> The first group of Oblates sent to Canada was made up of 4 fathers (Honorat, Baudrand, Telmon, and Lagier) and two brothers (Roux and Basile Fastray), on the basis of the explanation provided in the following letter of Aug. 20, the Council sent the requested amount, but no missionary left in 1842.

their way. To undertake this trip, however, we require the aid of the Propagation of the Faith. The request which His Excellency the Bishop of Montreal should address to you in that regard would unduly delay their departure which could only take place next year to the great detriment of the good of souls. I therefore feel it my duty to address this request to you myself since they are missionaries who belong to the Congregation of which I am the Superior. I hope that the Council, upon the proposal I would pray you to present to it, will please grant our two missionaries the sum necessary for their journey from Marseilles to Montreal in Canada where Bishop Bourget will then send them on to wherever the need demands. I estimate they will need 1 200 FF apiece. Please be so kind as to let me know the Council's decision as soon as it has been made so I can immediately send our two missionaries on their way to LeHavre where they will have to embark.

I am happy to recall my person to your kind memory on the occasion of a request so worthy of your piety. I avail myself of this to recommend myself to your prayers and assure you of the sentiments wherewith I remain your most humble and obedient servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**80. To Mr. Choiselat, Treasurer of the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith, in Paris.<sup>4</sup>**

*Observations relating to the probable refusal to grant a subsidy for the journey of two missionaries. The bishop of Marseilles is the Superior General of a canonically approved Congregation, quite distinct from the Oblates of Mary, as they are called, of Pignerol. The Oblates of Mary Immaculate sent to Canada are true missionaries and the Congregation has never received a grant.*

Marseilles, August 20, 1842.

Dear Sir:

The answer you did me the honour of sending me, following the request I had made to the Missionary Society of the Propagation of

<sup>4</sup> Orig.: Paris, Arch. of the Propagation of the Faith.



the Faith to pay the travelling expenses of two missionaries sent to Canada prompts me to offer a certain number of comments.

In my opinion, the reasons you advance to explain why you think that no grant will be given to these two missionaries do not apply in this case.

1. By no means are they *isolated missionaries*, they are going to join several of their confreres who left for Canada last year. They are members of a Congregation canonically approved by the Church and are sent by the Superior General of this Congregation while being at the same time called by His Excellency the Bishop of Montreal.

2. The grant in question would not be given by the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith to a Bishop of France acting in that capacity, but to a bishop who is the head of Missions. It is as Superior General of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate that I presented my request to you, and since a certain number of our men are employed in the foreign Missions I feel that you should not consider me in any worse condition than the Superior of the house of Foreign Missions of Paris or the provincial superior of the Jesuits. That can be neither the spirit no more than it can be the letter of the rules you mention to me and have not applied to me in the sense of your response because you were not aware of my true position with regard to the Missionaries for whom I appeal to the kindness of the Council of the Missionary Society.

3. I do understand that the dioceses of Quebec and Montreal receive no assistance from the Propagation of the Faith for their priests who exercise the ordinary parish ministry in those areas for the resident catholic and civilized population, but I do not think we can equate to the latter those European missionaries whose settlement afar and close to the savage inhabitants aims at the conversion or spiritual direction of these poor natives rather than the colonists. The ministry of these missionaries falls well within the category assisted by the resources of the Propagation of the Faith and it was precisely that ministry I recommend to your attention requesting a rather modest sum since it is a matter only of paying the travelling expenses of the two priests who are going to dedicate themselves to this difficult apostolate.

4. You tell me that the Congregation of the Oblates received 32 000 F. the first time this year and recently received another 10 000 F.

Allow me to inform you that there is an error on your part. It is quite possible, or even better it is certain that the two sums you mention were received by the Oblates of Mary, as they are called, of Pignerol, while *the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate* for whom I wrote to you are a Congregation quite distinct from that of Pignerol. It was established earlier and its foreign mission houses are only in Canada. It has not received the sum mentioned in your letter and there is therefore no room for fear of being too generous towards it.

I flatter myself with the thought that the Central Council of Paris, to which I beg you to submit this letter along with the first one I had the honor to address to you, will give due consideration to the observations I am making, in response to your objections and will do honour to my request. Moreover, I thank you for having informed me, prior to any decision by the Council, of the reasons you considered in opposition to the grant I had requested. You thereby provided me with the opportunity to present unknown facts and thus prevent practically unavoidable errors.

I was under the impression that the object of my first letter only concerned the Central Council of Paris alone competent to decide upon the matter at hand, but now you refer to two Councils.<sup>5</sup> Since I have written to you alone, Sir, I would ask you to be so kind as to forward my two letters to each of the two Councils which are to deal with this matter.

I count on your most obliging zeal and it is an honor for me to consider myself, Sir, your most humble and obedient servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

<sup>5</sup> The association was directed from the time of its foundation, by the Central Councils of Lyon and Paris. "This sort of two-headed structure, the result of circumstances which prevailed at the foundation of the Missionary Society, hampered neither the extent of its progress nor the harmony of its government." Cf. François Veuillot, *L'Oeuvre de la Propagation de la foi*, Paris (1922), p. 15.

1843

81. To Mr. Choiselat, place St. Sulpice, Paris.<sup>1</sup>

*Expression of gratitude for the grant requested. Success of the Oblate apostolate in Canada. Fr. Casimir Aubert will be passing through Paris; he will request aid for the county of Cornwall and the principality of Wales.*

Marseilles, June 3, 1843.

Dear Sir,

Divine Providence places me in a position to be grateful for the kindness granted to our missionaries by the Propagation of the Faith. I can send you three thousand and some hundred francs. Please let me know if I am to remit this sum to Paris or Lyon, or if it suffices for me to turn the amount over to our Treasurer in Marseilles.<sup>2</sup>

I assume that you will soon see one of our missionaries from Canada.<sup>3</sup> He will tell you about all the wonders brought about by their ministry. They have already brought back a large number of heretics and the one whom I expect coming to Europe for a few months singlehandedly confuted 5 or 6 ministers in a public debate they had had the temerity to promote.

There is another missionary of the same Congregation of the Oblates of the Immaculate Conception who will come to visit you.

<sup>1</sup> Orig.: Paris, Arch. of the Propagation of the Faith.

<sup>2</sup> The Council had granted the 2400 F. requested and most likely had asked the Founder to deduct them from the sum collected by the Missionary Society in Marseilles.

<sup>3</sup> Fr. Telmon was to come to Europe to attend the General Chapter.

He too will have wonders to tell you about his mission in Ireland and in the county of Cornwall in England. I was not in time to send him a letter of recommendation for you, but he can recommend himself well enough alone. He is one of the most distinguished men who has already earned the esteem and trust of all the bishops of Ireland and England with whom he has been in contact. These bishops place upon him and his companions all their hopes for the conversion of the heretics in the county of Cornwall and the principality of Wales. His name is Fr. Aubert. He has already opened a church in Penzance where for the last 300 years no one has ever seen a single external rite of our holy religion. Ten abjurations have been the prelude to what grace will bring about in these areas. However, he will need the assistance of your Council. I hope you will be good enough to promote the cause of these poor heretics who await only the moment of grace to return to the fold. Fr. Aubert's community now consists of three priests and four novices. He is coming to France to ask me for more men whom he needs in order to include the provinces ready to receive him and thereby respond to the pressing requests from the bishops who have placed their hope in him. Fr. Aubert will be able to give you a better explanation of his position and the state of affairs. I think you will consider his a just case to benefit from the aid of the Missionary Society.

Please accept the expression of affectionate sentiments where-with it is my honor to be your most humble and obedient servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. Allow me to include in this letter a short note for Fr. Aubert. I forgot to tell you that the two missionaries who were to leave for Canada were held up at the time of embarkation due to illness. They will leave with the person I am waiting for and who should go back in August.<sup>4</sup> If Fr. Aubert has already been through, please destroy my short note.

<sup>4</sup> Three missionaries left with Fr. Telmon: Fr. Allard and two deacons: J.-N. Laverlochère and Aug. Alexandre Brunet.

**82. To Mr. Choiselat Gallien, Treasurer of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, near the Church of St. Sulpice, Paris.<sup>5</sup>**

*Development of the Congregation of the Oblates in Canada. Foundations planned in England. The assistance of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith is indispensable.*

Marseilles, June 15, 1843.

Dear Sirs,

The Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, of which I am the Superior General, after evangelizing for a number of years after its approbation by the Holy See a large number of dioceses in southern France has undertaken to open foundations abroad. Around two years ago a number of its members left for Canada. There are now seven priests and six lay brothers<sup>6</sup> and in the novitiate they have received young ecclesiastics who wish to join their ministry. The good they have wrought in the diocese of Montreal as well as the surrounding dioceses has been the cause of great wonderment in those areas. While His Excellency the Bishop of Montreal encourages their effort in favor of his sheep among whom they are established, the other bishops also ask them to open houses in their dioceses. They are especially prompted to this effect by the prelates of Upper Canada. Their increase in this country, however, depends very much on the resources to be placed at their disposal.

This same Congregation has also opened a house in the county of Cornwall in England. This house begins with the founded hope of being a powerful means for the conversion of the Protestant population of the county. Everything already bodes for the best and a number of conversions have in a certain way inaugurated a work which from its very birth has encountered a nearly general sympathy in the country. The Church of the missionaries constructed in Penzance is spacious but it has not been paid for entirely. In this

<sup>5</sup> Orig.: Paris, Arch. of the Propagation of the Faith.

<sup>6</sup> Only 6 of these fathers and brothers came from France. The others entered the Congregation in Canada: e.g. Frs. Dandurand, Léonard Baveux, E. Durocher and other novices not yet priests.

sense, nothing can be requested from the Protestants who nonetheless enjoy coming to attend the services of the Catholic Church and listening to the instructions delivered by our men. (Moreover, their house has yet to be built so they can stop being tenants).<sup>7</sup> This initial success has given rise to the upcoming establishment of a new foundation in Wales in keeping with the wishes of the Apostolic Vicar of that district.<sup>8</sup> There are hopes for joyful fruits of salvation in England.

I also felt it necessary to consent to the opening of another house in Cork in Ireland.<sup>9</sup> Besides the fact that our missionaries, who have already tested their mettle in that country, will be very useful assistants to the local clergy since their own spirit makes them particularly suitable for a ministry which furthers the action of the Irish clergy, it is necessary for our men to recruit workers from among this clergy for Upper Canada where English is spoken and for the English missions. Candidates for this will not be lacking and they will be able to fulfill their vocation perfectly if we receive them young enough to form them properly in the religious education of a good novitiate.

The activities abroad, however, are too vast for our Congregation to be able to suffice with its resources along. The Congregation needs the assistance of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, and I request that aid with all the more confidence since what we have done has assumed today sufficient importance and extent for us not to be disregarded in the distribution of funds destined for the foreign missions. I hope that as of this year you will be so obliging as to grant us the aid which will allow us to accomplish what the Lord has permitted us to begin with the visible effect of His blessing.

Please accept the expression of the greatest respect wherewith, gentlemen, I remain your most humble and obedient servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

<sup>7</sup> This sentence was written on the margin of the first page.

<sup>8</sup> Bishop P.-A. Baines.

<sup>9</sup> The Founder acted as spokesman for Frs. C. Aubert and Daly who had numerous yet vague projects. We know that a foundation was not possible in Ireland at that time because the bishop's didn't have sufficient trust in the religious who were not dependent upon them. The Oblates didn't have a house in Wales. This project appears in a very general way only in this letter, in that of July 26, and in F. Aubert's report to the General Chapter in 1843.

### 83. To the Council of the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon.<sup>10</sup>

*State of the Penzance mission and its needs. Plans and hopes. Future foundation in the principality of Wales.*

Marseilles, July 26, 1843.

"...The Congregation of the Oblates has recently opened a very important mission in the duchy of Cornwall at Penzance which is one of the largest cities in the country and is like the center for the entire western part of the duchy. The mission covers a very extensive area towards the northeast in a highly populated region where there are 5 or 6 cities and a large number of villages. The total population of Cornwall exceeds 400 000 inhabitants who belong to the different Protestant sects which exist in England. There are very few Catholics in the mission territory and they are generally poor. In Penzance their number does not even reach 100, and they are even less in number in the other places. The resources of the mission are very limited or better yet non-existent since the few Catholics in the area, far from being able to support it with their contributions, would be in need of assistance themselves. Due to this state of affairs, it has been necessary to open the foundation with very limited personnel. However, since the Rule requires missionaries to be at least two together, we have in the meantime assigned that number in Penzance together with a lay brother to serve the priests and take care of the church, etc. Annual expenses include the nutrition, maintenance, and lodging of this small community. That would entail around 100 pounds sterling (2 900 F.) without including expenses for the maintenance of the Church, sacred vestments, etc. Extraordinary expenses are due to the debts incurred in building the church which is not entirely finished. These debts, including expenses still to be

<sup>10</sup> Excerpt transcribed in Lyon and kept in Paris, Arch. of the Propagation of the Faith. The Founder began his correspondence with the Council of Paris. He must have been asked to address his request to the Council of Southern France since practically all his letters were sent to Lyon after the summer of 1843. After that he wrote to Paris occasionally, especially when he had cause to reproach those in charge of the Missionary Society in Lyon. A duplicate was made of some of his letters, thus the same letter was sent to both Councils. Since the letters were written by hand and ordinarily by the Secretary General of the Institute, some words are written in different ways. In such cases we hold to the text of the letters sent to Lyon, the originals of which have been given to the Oblates.

borne, could add up to one thousand pounds (25 000 F.) of which at least 10 000 F. will have to be paid within the present year.

This mission gives rise to very consoling hopes. The people in the area seem to be very disposed to Catholicism and since they are in error due only to ignorance or to prejudice stemming from birth, there is reason to believe that they will rally to the truth as soon as it is known to them. The large number of sects into which the country is divided and a certain liberty of conscience resulting from this will very much facilitate the progress of Catholicism. There have already been about 15 conversions in the very short time since the opening of the Penzance mission. Close to 300 Protestants regularly attend exercises in the Catholic chapel and foster hopes for an abundant harvest. However, since the Catholics in the mission are poor and religion can not appear there in its just splendor, that will represent an obstacle hindering a large number. A tremendous amount of good could be accomplished if resources were available to enhance the splendor of worship, to open a Catholic school in the area, to set up a public reading library as well as a sort of bookstore with works distributed free of charge in order to enlighten the protestants and dispel their religious prejudices.

The other mission for which the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate would request assistance from the Association of the Propagation of the Faith is the one offered to the Congregation in the Principality of Wales. Once again this is an area that is practically abandoned where only very few missions have been founded due to an absolute lack of resources. This foundation would be both a central mission house for that vast district which is more than 100 leagues in circumference, and would become in time a kind of minor and major seminary in order to provide an education to the youth of this abandoned territory and form priests worthy of their vocation. However, it would suffice that the subsidy requested of the Propagation of the Faith to this end be included in the 1844 budget since the work on the foundation could not begin in this present year. The ordinary expenses at the outset would be the same as those of the Penzance Mission; 100 pounds sterling for two missionaries and a lay brother. As far as the extraordinary expenses are concerned, they would be higher since the house one would have to build to fulfill the twofold purpose indicated above, no matter how modest in size one makes it, will cost at least 2 000 pounds sterling, of which one fourth would have to be paid each year."



**84. Letter dated September 19, 1843<sup>11</sup> to the Council of the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon.**

*The Founder thanked the Council for the subsidy granted for the mission of Penzance.*

LETTER OMITTED

**85. To Mr. Choiselat Gallien, rue Pot de Fer, Paris.<sup>12</sup>**

*Fr. Casimir Aubert will come through Paris and withdraw the amount granted for Penzance. The Council of Lyon refuses to pay the travelling expenses of Missionaries assigned to the diocese of Montreal.*

Marseilles, September 26, 1843.

Dear Sir,

Even though within the citadel of our ecclesiastical retreat, I am taking the time to write a short note before the departure of our excellent Fr. Aubert who is going to the Penzance Mission in Cornwall. This letter is not intended so much to serve as credentials for the bearer and authorize him to withdraw the sum accorded to his mission by the Council as it is to thank you for your kind regard in this matter.

The gentlemen in Lyon have written to inform me that they are unable to pay the travelling costs of the two missionaries I sent to Canada to evangelize the savages. This decision leaves me bereft of aid for the enormous sum of 5 000 francs I had to spend in order to avoid having such an interesting mission fall by the wayside. I do understand the reasons behind this refusal.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, since no

<sup>11</sup> Orig.: Paris, Arch. of the Propagation of the Faith. The Founder only signed the letter.

<sup>12</sup> Orig.: Paris, Arch. of the Propagation of the Faith.

<sup>13</sup> Bishop Bourget had refused to introduce the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith into his diocese and therefore the latter did not feel obliged to assist the missions in the diocese of Montreal. Cf. Blessed de Mazenod, *Letters to North America, 1841-1850*, pp. 61-62.

where it is stated that our missionaries will not go beyond the limits of the diocese of Montreal in their apostolic journeys, I do think the purse strings could have been loosened without offending justice. What do you think? If His Excellency the bishop of Montreal does not come to our aid we will be the victims of a petty dispute between himself and the Council of the Propagation of the Faith. I hope the Good Lord for whom we all work will provide a solution to this difficulty.

Please accept sir the expression of my affectionate sentiments wherewith I remain your most humble and obedient servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

1844

**86. Letter dated February 6, 1844, addressed to the Council of the Propagation of the Faith in Paris.<sup>1</sup>**

*Dispatch of Fr. Aubert's letter on the needs of Penzance. Apologies for the very high sum requested by the Superior of Penzance, but work on the church must be concluded as soon as possible.*

LETTER OMITTED

**87. To the Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>2</sup>**

*Oblate foundation in Bytown in the diocese of Kingston. Request for assistance in paying the journey of two missionaries.*

Marseilles, May 5, 1844.

Dear Sir,

The extraordinary success achieved with the grace of God by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in the diocese of Montreal has prompted His Excellency the bishop of Kingston<sup>3</sup> to call them into his diocese and entrust them with the mission among the savages. He is assigning them the house of Bytown on the banks of the Ottawa.<sup>4</sup> That will be their base for travelling among these poor

<sup>1</sup> Orig.: Paris, Arch. of the Propagation of the Faith. Fr. Aubert's letter had been addressed to the Lyon Council. The Founder kept the damaged letter in Marseilles and made a copy which he sent to Paris instead.

<sup>2</sup> Copy made in Lyon and kept in Paris: Arch. of the Propagation of the Faith.

<sup>3</sup> Bishop R. Gaulin. The Oblates were mostly in contact with his Coadjutor Bishop Phelan.

<sup>4</sup> Ms.: Ottawa.

idolaters in order to bring them to a knowledge of the true God and His Son our Lord Jesus Christ. The men I had sent to Canada earlier are all at work in the vast diocese of Montreal. Therefore, in order to reply to the invitation of His Excellency the Bishop of Kingston, I am obliged to send from here at least two good Missionaries of the aforementioned Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate who will go directly to Bytown where one of their confreres has already taken possession of the important mission entrusted to them.<sup>5</sup>

I have recourse to you, Gentlemen, begging you be so kind as to grant the sum necessary to cover the costs of this long journey. I calculate that no less than 1 200 F. apiece will be required. That is more or less what it cost me to pay the expenses of the ones I sent to Montreal last year and Bytown is approximately 100 leagues farther inland. I plan to have our two missionaries leave towards the end of this month. I would therefore be most obliged if you would be so kind as to process my request as soon as possible.

Please accept, gentlemen, the assurance of my most high regards.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. I take the liberty of referring you once again to the needs of the Penzance mission in Cornwall<sup>6</sup>. I refer to the note I had sent you.

## **88. To The Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>7</sup>**

*The Founder insists on the need to receive immediately the sum granted for the house in Penzance. Excerpts from a letter written by Fr. Daly on his apostolate among the Protestants.*

[Marseilles, July 21, 1844].

Gentlemen,

...I wish to take advantage of this occasion to remind you the pressing, the most pressing needs of the mission of Penzance in

<sup>5</sup> Fr. Telmon. Three missionaries left for Canada in 1844: Fr. Guigues, Fr. Pierre Aubert and Sch. Bro. Garin.

<sup>6</sup> Ms.: Cornwall.

<sup>7</sup> Excerpt copied in Lyon and kept in Paris: Arch. of the Propagation of the Faith.

Cornwall. Fr. Daly who directs that mission with ever increasing success is in a most embarrassing situation. Not only does he lack the means of subsistence for himself and his two companions, but he is also pressured by the workers who worked on the construction of the church and will wait no longer for the settlement of their due which had been promised for a date that has already passed. I therefore beseech you gentlemen to give the necessary instructions for the payment of the sum granted to the mission of Penzance by the Council, I had instructed Fr. Aubert to write you on this matter. Despite that, I have no difficulty in personally bringing to your attention the needs of this Mission for which I would request of you even something more than last year both to settle as quickly as possible the large debt contracted for the constructions of the church, and to supply the missionaries with the means necessary to extend their mission outside their city of residence as they have already started to do for the great advantage of souls.

Here is what Fr. Daly writes to me in his somewhat English style: "I am very pleased to give you news about our mission which, thanks be to God, could not be more consoling. We have opened two new missions, one in a village called St. Just and the other in a village where one of our convert families lives; it is called Goldsithney.<sup>8</sup> I opened the mission of St. Just on the 9th of this month. I went there on foot with Fr. Dowling<sup>9</sup> and one of our poor Catholics. We were very well received by the good people of St. Just who all work in the mines. They are very simple people but their minds have been poisoned by the bad doctrines of their sects and therefore they are very prejudiced against our Holy Religion. As soon as I entered a home I was surrounded by women and children. I was a real attraction for them because they had never see a Catholic priest. The mistress of the house is the sister of one of our converts. She received me very well and is preparing herself for baptism. I spent the day in a most pleasant way and went from house to house visiting the inhabitants of the village. In general I was very well received. It had been agreed that the sermon would take place at 6 in the evening and I returned to the house where I was to preach. At 5 o'clock the women began to ready the house. Chairs and benches were brought from all sides and the house was soon filled by the most important

<sup>8</sup> Ms.: Gold Settaney.

<sup>9</sup> Ms.: Dawlins.

people of the village. Since the house could not hold everyone, it was necessary to remove the windows and I preached to more than one thousand people who were all very happy. Since then, many have come to tell me that they were Catholics in heart. Next Sunday I will baptize 10 people, 2 entire families. I baptized an old woman who is 90 years old... since my last letter I have received 5 more persons... two made their first communion last Sunday: an 18 years old girl and a young man 21 years old. The young girl will become a saint. There are many other very interesting things with respect to the mission, but I do not have the time and will tell you about them in my next letter."

...A few days ago I received a letter from Rev. Dr. Wiseman who asks us to take on a mission in his district. I replied to His Excellency how happy I would be, etc..."

You see, Gentlemen, how important it is to support such joyful beginnings. The harvest will be most abundant throughout this land, abandoned until present. All will be lost, however, if the missionaries do not honour their commitments. Please, therefore, I pray you, take the matter to heart. I place all my trust in your zeal. Please accept my thanks beforehand as well as the sentiments wherewith I remain,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

In an earlier letter Fr. Daly told me: "Things are going splendidly (at Penzance). It is truly consoling to see our beautiful church full of people every Sunday; almost never less than three of four hundred protestants from different sects come to hear us preach the truths of our Holy Religion. The protestant temples are practically abandoned and our church is always full even when the weather is inclement. Some people come out of curiosity, but they depart edified and satisfied, and return. At present there is an extraordinary tendency towards our Holy Religion. Minds are all astir and seeking the truth with inexpressable eagerness. Easter Sunday was truly a beautiful day for us" (After a detailed description of that day he added), "The Protestants were enchanted by everything they saw and heard and the church was filled with the most respectable persons 2 hours before the evening service. There were

at least 500 people in the pews and 250 obliged to remain standing. In the midst of this crowd, almost all protestant, there was always the deepest silence without the slightest confusion. After the sermon and benediction, I baptized an entire family composed of 6 people. I am unable to depict, etc...”

Rereading Fr. Daly's letter I see that he also speaks about the school they have begun to build. They already had 30 children at that time and counted on receiving a very large number, even Protestants; an additional reason to prompt the Council to grant to this special mission an even larger sum than what was granted last year.

**89. Letter dated August 13, 1844, to the members of the Council of the Missionary Society.<sup>10</sup>**

*Reminder as to the needs of Penzance where a third missionary is soon to be sent.*

LETTER OMITTED

**90. To the Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>11</sup>**

*The needs of the Bytown foundation and the Hudson Bay Mission which will soon be accepted. The apostolate of the Fathers in the lumber camps and among the Indians.*

[Marseilles], December 23, 1844.

Dear Sirs,

I wish to avail myself of this occasion to tell you something about the importance and the needs of the foundation recently opened by our Congregation at Bytown in the diocese of Kingston, as well as the one to be opened next spring in the Hudson Bay district. Besides the service rendered to the Catholics entrusted to

<sup>10</sup> Excerpt copied in Lyon and kept in Paris: Arch. of the Propagation of the Faith.

<sup>11</sup> Excerpt copied in Lyon and kept in Paris: Arch. of the Propagation of the Faith.

their care in the city itself and to those of the other parishes where they go to preach missions, the fathers in the Bytown community have also been instructed to bring spiritual assistance to the men working in the lumber camps. There are thousands of these lumberjacks in small groups spread throughout the forest where they spend the summer season felling trees. Up to now bereft of the comfort of religion, they have abandoned themselves to all kinds of excesses and became the scourges of the parishes where they returned after their work. In order to prevent such a great evil, the bishop of the Diocese wanted the Missionaries of Bytown to be assigned to visit these various lumber camps to provide the comfort of their ministry to all those gathered there.

The foundation which the Oblates of Mary have in this part of Upper Canada would therefore be of the greatest importance even if it were only to consist of the different ministries I have mentioned. The fathers in the Bytown house, however, are still involved in tasks which are no less interesting in themselves and no less useful for religion. They are to be entrusted with the missions among the savages throughout north-western Canada. It is therefore extremely important that this establishment be encouraged and placed on a solid base. Four missionaries are already there and will soon be joined by 2 of their confreres. As soon as the circumstances so permit, there will be a further increase in personnel. The parish church of Bytown entrusted to their care is unfinished and burdened with debts. The Fathers have no house for themselves and the income assigned to them would barely suffice to support the three fathers necessary for the parish. In this state of affairs our Fathers in America have written to me a number of times in order that I present their needs to the Propagation of the Faith whose generous alms alone will enable them to accomplish part of the good there is to be done. They would need at least forty thousand francs; thirty thousand to purchase the land and build as soon as possible a house for the community. The remaining ten thousand francs would be for the support of the Fathers assigned to the lumber camps and the missions among the savages, as well as for the construction of chapels to receive neophytes and better attract the unbelievers.

I feel, gentlemen, that I have sufficiently illustrated for you the needs of the Bytown foundation and its importance in the light of the various ministries carried out by the missionaries there, an



importance which increases every day considering the position of this city at the very center of communications between Upper and Lower Canada, the United States, and the North of this part of America. The renowned zeal which inspires you and associates you to any enterprise whose object is the propagation of the faith and the good of religion, the generosity with which you have granted abundant alms to various foundations opened in the United States and elsewhere by other missionary societies, and the goodness with which you have accepted our requests in favor of the Cornwall mission entrusted to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in England, leads me to hope and assures me that you will be so kind as to take our new foundations in America under your protection and include them among the missions supported by the admirable Missionary Society you administer with such wisdom and devotion.

Before concluding, Gentlemen, I would add that counting in advance on your good will to come to our aid, I have accepted the proposal of His Excellency Bishop Provencher<sup>12</sup> of Juliopolis, who has called us into his Apostolic Vicariate of Hudson Bay. In this fashion the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate witnesses the opening of a new field to its zealous efforts and will now embrace all the missions in the vast territories of Great Britain in North America. The new foundation also requires the alms of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith and will never be able to commence without a grant of ten thousand francs.

Should greater details and further information be required, Gentlemen, please do not hesitate to let me know. I do wish, however, to receive an answer as soon as possible on the decisions made by the Council of the Missionary Society relative to our requests on behalf of Bytown and Hudson Bay in order to be able to duly inform our missionaries in America who need to know what attitude to assume with regard to this important matter.

Please accept, Gentlemen, the repeated assurance of my devotion and highest regards, etc.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

<sup>12</sup> Ms.: Provenchère.



1845

**91. To the President of the Council of the Missionary Society of Propagation of the Faith in Lyon, Rhône.<sup>1</sup>**

*Foundation of a mission at Saguenay in the diocese of Quebec. Success of the mission of Penzance which is expanding to neighboring villages. More men would be needed to respond to all the requests.*

Marseilles, February 6, 1845

Dear Sirs,

His Excellency the bishop of Quebec<sup>2</sup> wrote to me as follows last October 27... "Please accept the expression of my deepest gratitude for the kindness done to my diocese in granting it a few members of your excellent Congregation of the Oblates of Mary. Fr. Honorat left three weeks ago with three of his confreres to open a house of his institute at Grande Baie on the Saguenay river. This site is more or less at the center of the settlements being established on the banks of this large river and within the reach of the various places visited by the savages. The opening of this house will be of great advantage for religion especially if the members can be increased as the needs increase, etc."

The Father who fulfils the task of Provincial<sup>3</sup> has written to me that the Bishop of Quebec has taken upon himself the initial costs for this foundation and for that will give 250 Louis, which may not be sufficient, and will give 200 Louis every year for the support of the missionaries and the house. This explains why the bishop of Quebec mentioned in a letter he wrote to you the costs of the foundation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in his diocese.

<sup>1</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Signay.

<sup>3</sup> Fr. Guigues.

On this point I am very afraid that in a country where everything is so expensive the aforementioned sums will not suffice and the missionaries will be obliged to add something.

With regard to the journey of the missionaries I will try to be as clear as possible and thus the following. In order to respond to the requests of His Excellency the Archbishop of Québec I was obliged to add a missionary to the two I was sending to help in the foundation of the Bytown house in the diocese of Kingston. Since, however, four missionaries were needed for the diocese of Quebec and the Provincial had to choose among those who had made the trip to America at the expense of the Congregation, I suppose (this is a supposition, since no one has written me anything on the matter) the Provincial had the Archbishop reimburse the cost of the journey of the two missionaries he had granted to him.

Gentlemen, there you have all the information it is my power to give you in response to your kind letter of January 25.

I have received most satisfactory news from the Penzance mission in England. That mission is expanding to all the surrounding towns which are receiving the missionaries with a sort of eagerness. Fr. Daly writes that conversions are multiplying and adds that if he could construct chapels he would render the temples deserted as in Penzance. In that city the school is filling up and the Protestants have no misgivings about sending their children who are thereby being disposed to become Catholics. I am obliged to send out a new missionary as of next spring to assist those who are exhausting themselves due to the excessive amount of work. I will not burden you with the budget of this interesting mission; suffice it to recall the pressing needs of Bytown in the diocese of Kingston which I have already dwelt upon. Far from any fear of annoying you, I would like to have enough men available to be able to address further requests to you because I know the price you accord to the propagation of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Please accept, Gentlemen, the renewed expression of the sentiments wherewith I remain,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**92. To the members of the Central Council of Southern France for the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith.<sup>4</sup>**

*Dispatch of two notes prepared by Fr. Casimir Aubert on the missions of England and Canada. It is to the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith alone that the missions "of Cornwall owe their existence and those of America await their development and prosperity." The importance of the future missions of Hudson Bay and the Red River. Imminent departure of four missionaries. Request to publish the reports sent on the missions among the American Indians in the Annals. Gratitude for the kindness of the Missionary Society.*

Marseilles, March 18, 1845.

Dear Sirs,

I am honored to forward to you with this letter two notes; one regarding the missions of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in the county of Cornwall (England) and the other on their missions in North America. These two documents, written by Fr. Aubert who was the founder of our first mission in England and procurator of our Canadian missions, will respond, I trust, to your needs and wishes for information and details which must be placed before you every time a grant is requested of the Missionary Society whose supreme administration is entrusted to your care. This Father's personal knowledge of our missions in Cornwall and the special relations he entertains with those we have founded in North America guarantee in a most satisfactory fashion the exactitude of his presentation.

Gentlemen, the content of these notes easily enables you to understand all the importance of the various missions held by the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in foreign countries and how much they merit the full interest of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith to which those in Cornwall owe their existence and from which those in America await their development and prosperity. I feel it would be superfluous for myself to add further considerations to what is so clearly proven by the documents I am sending to you. I would just like to state that without the

<sup>4</sup> Orig.: Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder: a similar text is kept in Paris.

generous aid you will grant to these different missions, all the good already accomplished and the even greater good that is held in store would be completely destroyed. This is absolutely true for the missions of our Congregation in the county of Cornwall because, apart from the alms of the Propagation of the Faith they have no other resources, even for the support of the missionaries. In the case of our missions in America which seek the assistance of this Missionary Society so useful for the religion, their very existence would be seriously compromised were the aid requested not to be granted. The Bytown foundation, in the diocese of Kingston in Upper Canada, would then be entirely dependent upon the bishop and would be permanently reduced to 2 or 3 missionaries taken up with their work in the city parish entrusted to their care and with the Catholics in the area. Therefore, it would be necessary to withdraw from the ministry in the lumber camps and the missions among the savages throughout Northwestern Canada, such interesting works whose abandonment would be to the serious detriment of religion in these areas where there is such a great need from this point of view.

The foundation accepted by our Congregation in the district of His Excellency the bishop of Juliopolis<sup>5</sup> which is to be opened this summer would be in even more disastrous conditions without the grant we request in its favor. That would mean that the missions spread among the savages of Hudson Bay, the Red River, and other unknown tribes which live in the hinterland would again be abandoned or postponed for an indefinite period of time. I insist all the more on the need to look kindly upon this foundation since I myself have received most pressing solicitations on this matter not only from the bishop of Juliopolis, but the Archbishop of Quebec and the bishop of Montreal as well who have always presented this as a work of the greatest importance.

Gentlemen, it is therefore with full and complete confidence that the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate addresses itself to you and presents you with its requests in favor of its missions in foreign countries. The generous fashion in which you have dealt with our mission in Cornwall bolsters my hopes that you will continue showing the same interest in that same mission now that its needs increase with its importance. The kind reception reserved to my letter

<sup>5</sup> Bishop Provencher.

written at the beginning of this year on our foundations of Bytown and Hudson Bay leads me to believe likewise that I am not being overly confident when I count upon the grant requested of you for these missions.

In the two notes you will find herein enclosed, Fr. Aubert did not make any reference to the travelling expenses of the two priests and one brother whom I plan to send to Canada in a few months, and the expenses of one of our fathers who will soon leave Marseilles for our missions in Cornwall. We thought it would be better to present this request only at the time of the missionaries' departure, as has been done in the past.

I take the liberty, Gentlemen, to remind you here of the promise made to me to publish, in next May's edition of the Annals, the report of our fathers on the missions among the savages in North America with a notice serving as an introduction to these letters. I have reasons to wish that this publication not be postponed to a later date.

I do not wish to conclude this letter without expressing a deeply felt gratitude for the favor with which you have received the requests for assistance already addressed to you a number of times by the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. I would also like to tell you just how satisfied I have been with our correspondence, for everything which concerns me personally in your letters.

Please accept, Gentlemen, the renewed expression of high regard wherewith it is my honor to remain your most humble and obedient servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

### 93. To Mr. Choiselat, Place St. Sulpice 8, Paris.<sup>6</sup>

*Reminder as to the needs of the Oblate missions in England and Canada. Fr. Muller protests that the funds of the Propagation are not being properly used in the United States.*

<sup>6</sup> Orig.: Paris, Arch. of the Propagation of the Faith. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

Marseilles May 13, 1845.

Dear Sir,

I wish to introduce to you Fr. Perron who will join his confreres in Penzance. The needs of that mission have made this reinforcement necessary. Fr. Perron will deliver any message you have for England. I take advantage of this occasion to recommend to your kind attention this mission of Penzance which tends to expand throughout the district and is well along the path of progress, thanks be to God. I also entreat you not to forget the mission of Bytown in the diocese of Kingston in Canada and that of Red River, both entrusted to our Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The two Councils have before them all of our reports on these missions; I trust that those reports will capture the attention of the members. Since I have not the honor of knowing them personally, I am addressing myself to you directly in order that you take this matter in hand and obtain the entire grant requested because it is really needed by the missionaries in their present situation. They arrived at just the right time for the missions among the savages which were in a state of extreme suffering. The Bytown foundation is of the greatest importance and the proposals made for the different items will help to raise the morale of these people who are in such great need of it.

I recently met with Fr. Muller, a missionary in the United States. I do not know very much about what he wanted to tell me, but I did understand from his own words that he had informed the Pope that the funds of the Propagation of the Faith were not being used in a very good way in the United States. I wish to believe that this priest is exaggerating the real evil, but I did see quite an inconvenience in the fact that, in a certain fashion, he had denounced the bishops of that country to the Pope. That would tend to generate suspicions and misgivings in Rome which could have unfavorable effects on the French Propagation of the Faith. I felt it my duty to inform you so that you may inquire as to whether some discontent renders this priest unjust. I wanted him to go into further details on some facts but he remained very vague, and limited himself to telling me that the missionaries were left bereft of everything. This Muller person comes from the diocese of Nancy. Do not mention my name if you have information to seek, and strive to fend off the attack from Rome.



Please accept, sir, the assurance of the affectionate sentiments wherewith it is an honor for me to be your most humble and obedient servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**94. To Mr. de Jessé, president of the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>7</sup>**

*Recommendation for Bishop J. Hiliani. Reminder of the needs of the Oblate missions. Overly frequent journeys of Bishop Trioche.*

Marseilles June 26, 1845.

Dear Sir,

Bishop J. Hiliani, the Catholic Archbishop of the Syrian Rite in Damascus, had requested permission of me to carry out a collection in Marseilles for his diocese. I had to inform him that I had made it a rule not to permit any of these collections in order to avoid distracting the charity of the faithful from the great work of the Propagation of the Faith. In order to compensate for my refusal, I promised the prelate that I would write to you and recommend him to the zeal of your Council. I also advised him that you would also like him to be recommended by Propaganda Fide in Rome. Please do not feel that I have even the slightest doubt as to his own identity. He was presented to me by merchants from his country whom I know very well, but I felt it would be opportune for him to have an authentic document he could show in order to be recognized. He will soon have this document since he wrote to Rome asking to receive it when he passes by Civitavecchia on his way to Marseilles from Constantinople.

Since I do have this opportunity of writing to you, I would ask you not to forget the needs of our missions in Canada and England; I expect of your charity that they be placed on top of the list.

The latest letters I have received from Penzance are most consoling, conversions are increasing by the dozens; just recently a Methodist preacher returned to the bosom of the Church. The Protestants are starting to become alarmed and in some families it is

<sup>7</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation. L. M.P.

said that people resort to threats and abuse in an attempt to dissuade those who have returned to the true faith. A young girl harassed by her mother told her in a very forceful way that they could kill her, but never divert her from the goodly path she wished to follow and that she would be happy to die for the faith.

With regard to the missions in Upper Canada, they are of such importance that I do not think they can be equated to those of the United States, and yet what assistance hasn't the Propagation of the Faith provided to the latter? I have no one at all in Paris or Lyon to intercede in support of the missions of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and I leave it up entirely to the spirit of justice and the benevolence of the two Councils.

Bishop Trioche<sup>8</sup> is here again. If his travels are at the expense of the Propagation, there is ground to consider them as somewhat too frequent.

Please accept sir, the most distinguished consideration where-with I remain your most humble and obedient servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**95. To Mr. de Jessé, president of the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith at Lyon, Rhône.<sup>9</sup>**

*Frs. Molloy, Bermond, and Chevalier are leaving for Canada; 4000 francs are needed for their journey and 300 francs for that of Fr. Perron to England. Reminder as to the needs of the Oblate missions.*

Marseilles June 26, 1845.

Gentlemen,

Three members of our Congregation of Mary Immaculate will soon leave for the missions of Canada: they are Fr. Molloy,<sup>10</sup> of Irish origin, for the mission of Bytown in the diocese of Kingston, and Frs.

<sup>8</sup> Bishop Laurent Trioche, bishop of Babylon.

<sup>9</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

<sup>10</sup> Ms.: Mulloy.

Bermond and Chevalier,<sup>11</sup> from the diocese of Gap, assigned to our mission of Longueuil, near Montreal. Since the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith willingly accepted to assume the travelling expenses of our missionaries sent to foreign countries, I hereby request of the Council which represents its supreme administrative body the same favor as that granted to us in previous years. The departure of this new group will take place towards the middle of July at the latest and it would therefore be good if the sum allocated for their journey were available at that time. Please inform me as soon as possible as to the form of payment you prefer: whether the missionaries are to receive the sum in Paris directly from the treasurer of the Missionary Society or, what would perhaps be most suitable for us, have the sum sent by a negotiable voucher to Marseilles. I would like to inform you that the sum of 1200 francs thus far allocated for each missionary does not cover all the expenses encountered for their journey by land and their ocean crossing and the Congregation has always had to add 100-150 francs for each of them. In your impartial wisdom you can determine whether it would not be opportune for the grant given by the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith to be increased by that amount in order to suffice for the total cost. The amount requested for the three missionaries who will soon leave for the missions in Canada would therefore be 4000 francs.

In one of my letters I spoke to you about one of our Fathers whom I had send to England to increase the personnel in the Cornwall mission. This missionary left last month. The treasury of our Congregation advanced the sum necessary for his journey. I do not think your Council will refuse to withdraw from the funds of the Missionary Society a small sum for this expenditure which only amounts to the modest total of 300 francs.

I would be very grateful if in your answering letter, Gentlemen you could tell me something about the requests for assistance addressed to you by the Congregation of Mary Immaculate for its foreign missions and when the treasurer of the Missionary Society would be able to pay out, in full or in part, the sums requested. The urgent needs of our mission of Bytown in Upper Canada and the rather difficult position of our missionaries in Cornwall make it necessary for me to renew these entreaties today.

<sup>11</sup> Ms.: Chevallier.

Sir, please accept the expression of my gratitude and high regards.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.  
S. G. of the O.M.I's

**96. To the Members of the Central Council of Southern France for the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>12</sup>**

*Expression of thanks for the generous subsidies granted to the mission of Cornwall and for the advance already received. Why was the allocation requested for Bytown reduced to such an extent? Should the Holy Childhood be permitted to operate in Marseilles?*

Marseilles October 27, 1845.

Gentlemen,

I recently received the letter dated the 20th of this month in which you informed me on the decision of your Council relative to the grant requested for 1845 in favor of the missions of the Oblates of the Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary in England as well as in America. I would like to inform you that I have likewise received the note added by the treasurer of the Missionary Society placing at our disposal an advance of 16 000 francs on the sums granted to the different missions.

Gentlemen, I had no doubts as to your interest this year again for our foundation in Cornwall. The ever increasing good it continues to accomplish, the importance it has already acquired and the expansion it is destined to experience were for me a sure guarantee that, in the distribution of the funds, you would destine to it a sum in proportion to its needs. I feel obliged all the same to express my deepest gratitude for the generous charity with which you responded to our requests on this matter by granting to that mission, including the possible supplement, a much higher sum than I would have ever hoped for, after the general reduction applied to the grants approved in favor of the foreign missions.

<sup>12</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. The Founder only signed the letter and added the P.S.

I wish to thank you as well, Gentlemen, for the kind reception reserved to our requests for assistance on behalf of our missions in America, and for including them in the annual distribution of subsidies by the Missionary Society whose top administration is entrusted to your care. In my eyes, this represents further proof of the interest you harbor for the missions of our Congregation in foreign countries and your sincere wish to provide for their existence and contribute to their development.

I would, however, like to raise a point regarding the grant given by your Council to our establishment in Bytown in Upper Canada. The reduction you applied to the amount requested for that house is quite considerable since from 40 000 francs we drop to 15 000 and it was impossible for me not to be somewhat taken aback. I would go so far as to admit that I reached the point of suspecting that there were particular reasons behind that measure which you did not see it opportune to share with me. Could it be that the bishop of the diocese had requested a grant for that same purpose from the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith? I can not believe that, the prelate in question, who has promised an income arising from the curia of Bytown for the support of the missionaries assigned to that city and the Catholic parishes, has declined any and all responsibility in relation to the material needs of that establishment and left it up to the Congregation. Could you have thought that this mission was in an eminently religious country, that its needs should not be that extensive, and that the sum requested was therefore too high? This observation which could be correct in the case of establishments in Lower Canada, is totally contrary to the truth of the situation with regard to our missions in Upper Canada. These latter are to be placed in the same category as most of the missions in the United States entrusted to religious congregations. Gentlemen, you are well aware of the generosity with which the Propagation of the Faith has contributed in preceeding years to the foundation of the Redemptorists in Baltimore, to that of the Fathers of Divine Mercy in New York and to others which certainly had neither greater needs nor more importance than what we have founded in Bytown in the diocese of Kingston. It is therefore not without a certain foundation that the doubt I have submitted to you arose in my mind. Gentlemen, you would render me a great service if you would be so kind as to clarify a doubt of this nature, which I deem all the more necessary to resolve since it deals with a rather delicate matter.

I recently received news from our missions in America. The Fathers chosen for Red River and Hudson Bay left Montreal at the beginning of July. Their journey will take 45 days and they will therefore reach their destination towards the middle of August. However, due to the infrequent communications between those wild zones and the rest of North America we have no positive news of them as yet. With regard to the missionaries who evangelized the groups of people along the Canadian border this summer, they have returned from their apostolic tour and are preparing the report on their efforts, which will soon be sent to us. It will be a pleasure for me to send you the most interesting excerpts so you can publish them in the Annals and thus your readers, while finding therein material for their own edification, will also see all the good to which the Associates of the Propagation of the Faith can contribute.

Please accept, Gentlemen, the renewed assurance of the sentiments of gratitude and high regard wherewith I remain your most humble servant.

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

P.S.<sup>13</sup> Pressure is being exercised upon me to authorize the Missionary Society of the Holy Childhood in my diocese. Even his Excellency the Archbishop of Chalcedon<sup>14</sup> has written me to that effect, and the Marquis de Janson constantly returns to the attack. I have always refused due to the fear that this society would be prejudicial to the interests of the Propagation of the Faith. Mr. de Janson claims that the Council of Paris is not of the same opinion at all. Please let me know what the exact viewpoint is. I am not prepared to surrender.

#### **97. To the Members of the Central Council of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>15</sup>**

*Dispatch of a letter by Fr. Laverlochère and another by Fr. Pierre Aubert for the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith. Request to send*

<sup>13</sup> This P.S. was added in the margin of the first page.

<sup>14</sup> Bishop Raphaël Bonamie, of the Picpus Fathers.

<sup>15</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. The Founder only signed this letter.

*the grant for the Hudson Bay mission to Marseilles. The assistance granted to Bytown does not suffice.*

Marseilles, December 12, 1845.

Dear Sirs,

Please find enclosed two letters written by Fathers of our Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate who work in the missions among the savages of North America. One of them is Fr. Laverlochère, the author of a report you included in the issue of *Annals* published in the month of May. This summer he visited the same places as last year evangelizing along his route the indians of Temiscamingue<sup>16</sup>, Abitibi,<sup>17</sup> the Great Lake, etc. His ministry was accompanied everywhere by bountiful blessings. The details contained in his narration will be read with pleasure by the pious members of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith.

The other letter gives a report on the trip undertaken by Fr. Aubert who left Montreal this summer with his companion Fr. Taché to open our foundation in Red River in the Apostolic Vicariate of Hudson Bay. It was only after two months of navigation along the rivers and lakes of Western Canada that they finally reached St. Boniface where His Excellency the bishop of Juliopolis has his residence. Together with the interest inspired by the narration of a journey undertaken uniquely for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, we also have the interest which arises naturally from the subject matter itself. Since the lands referred to in the letter written by this courageous missionary are still little known by the reader, his report has the twofold advantage of arousing curiosity through the description of practically unexplored territories and teaching notions of geography which are not easily found in other books. Moreover, since this mission of Red River is destined to expand in a marked fashion and therefore provide some edifying pages for the *Annals* of the Propagation of the Faith, it is opportune for the associates to be aware of the beginnings of this work of zeal and devotion and become familiar with the missionaries called upon to work there. I therefore have no doubts whatsoever that you will have the letters I am sending you today appear in one of the next issues of the *Annals*.

<sup>16</sup> Ms.: Témiskaming.

<sup>17</sup> Ms.: Abbitibi.

There are a number of reasons which lead me to request their prompt publication, without considering the fact that in a short time I will have other reports to send you on the missions given by our fathers to the Indian tribes in the diocese of Quebec.

Gentlemen, there is no need for me to remind you that we soon hope to receive from the treasurer of the Missionary Society the sum you kindly allocated to our mission of Hudson Bay for the year 1845. Since part of that amount is to be used to purchase various materials required by that foundation for the divine cult as well as for the use of the missionaries and the education of the savages, and since everything has to be sent from France, it would be best for us not to have to wait too long in doing what is needed so that the shipment would reach Montreal early enough to be shipped out on the boats of the English Company scheduled to leave in the spring for the Northwestern regions of America.

I regret that, despite your good will, you were not able to acquiesce to the appeals contained in my last letter in the attempt to obtain and increase in the grant approved by your Council for our mission of Bytown in Upper Canada. If it had been granted to us, that favor would have come at just the right time since the missionaries for whom it had been requested are going to be faced with very high expenses for the construction of their house. Moreover, they are forced to contract a large debt in order that the church they serve can be finished. The sum you have kindly granted them, while insufficient for their needs, will help them to resolve part of their financial woes.

Gentlemen, please accept the renewed assurance of my gratitude and high regard:

Your most humble and obedient servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.



1846

**98. Letter of April 7, 1846, to the Members of the Central Council (Southern France) of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>1</sup>**

*The Founder acknowledges reception of the sum of 9 000 francs. He will soon send an estimate of the needs of the Oblate missions for 1846 and would like the Annals to be published every month.*

LETTER OMITTED

**99. To the Members of the Central Council of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>2</sup>**

*Dispatch of notes by Fr. Casimir Aubert, procurator for the missions, on the subsidies requested by the Oblate Congregation. The missions depend on the aid of the Propagation of the Faith. Even if the amount requested is high, it is important that it not be reduced. New foundation in the county of Leicester in England.*

Marseilles, April 20, 1846.

Dear Sirs,

Please find herein enclosed the two notes written by Fr. Aubert, the procurator for the foreign missions of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. These two notes relative to the grant requested of your Council by the aforementioned Congregation for

<sup>1</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. Only the last lines of this letter and the signature are the Founder's.

<sup>2</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. The Founder only signed the letter.

its missions in 1846 would have reached you earlier if the Father responsible for this task had not been obliged to delay the conclusion by a few weeks. I therefore hope they will reach you in sufficient time in order for the needs of our various foundations in foreign countries to be included in the distribution process presently underway.

I can vouch for the exactitude of the information upon which these two notes I am sending are based. They present the actual state of our distant missions with all the details one could desire and give such an exact picture of their needs as well as the qualities they possess to claim the assistance of the Propagation of the Faith that I feel dispensed from adding anything myself in this letter.

Nor do I feel it necessary, Gentlemen, for me to return to what I have had the honor to state a number of times on the position of the Missions of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate for which the aid of the Missionary Society is requested. Their position is such that without the charitable alms of the Propagation of the Faith not only would they be unable to undertake the development for which they are destined, they wouldn't even be able to sustain the good begun. Were Providence to withdraw from them the hand which provides for their needs they would collapse in a short time and end up by being reduced to nothing. Their very existence is therefore bound to this condition. This observation applies as well to the missions of our Congregation in Cornwall, Upper Canada, and the Apostolic Vicariate of Hudson Bay. This clearly indicates, Gentlemen, that I hope you will grant the entire amount of the assistance requested to the extent to which the resources of the Missionary Society will make it possible.

You may find the total figure of the allocations requested by the various missions of our Congregation<sup>3</sup> somewhat high, but I should point out that it is a matter of extraordinary expenses which, once made will never appear again in the future. For example, the increased amount of our requests for America as well as England is due solely to the expense entailed in the construction of the house for the workers in these different missions.

By no means do I wish to finish my letter without expressing on my own behalf the keen desire I nourish to see you receive in a

<sup>3</sup> Fr. Aubert requested 27 000 francs for England and 65 000 for America.

favorable manner the request for aid to found a new Catholic post in Leicester County in England.<sup>4</sup> This act of generous charity which befits the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith at all times, will produce an even more beneficial effect under the present circumstances when it is so important to promote everything that can contribute to the movement back to Catholicism which so evident in that part of Great Britain.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of my high regard and the gratitude wherewith I remain your most humble and devoted servant.

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

**100. To the Members of the Central Council of Southern France, the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>5</sup>**

*Announcement of the departure of two missionaries for America; their journey and that of the two brothers going to St. Boniface will cost 7 500 francs.*

Marseilles, May 15, 1846.

Dear Sirs,

The two missionaries of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, whose departure was announced in one of the notes I sent you with my letter of April 21st, are to leave for Canada, where together with two Canadian catechists, they are to go to the Apostolic Vicariate of Hudson Bay to join their confreres, who have been there since last year, on the banks of the Red River in the midst of the savage tribes of North America. Since the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith has thus far kindly paid the travelling expenses for the members of our Congregation who labor in the foreign missions, I have every reason to hope that it will not refuse to continue granting us that same favor. Therefore, I hereby ask you Gentlemen to grant us the sum already requested to that effect in the aforementioned note, and that is 2 500 francs for the journey of the

<sup>4</sup> Grâce-Dieu, the second Oblate house in England.

<sup>5</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. The Founder only signed this letter.

two missionaries from Marseilles to Montreal, and 5 000 francs for their passage and that of the two catechists from Montreal to St. Boniface on the Red River. The departure is scheduled for the beginning of June from LeHavre and there is no need for me to tell you that it would be desirable if your answer were to reach me before the end of this month so it will be possible for us to make sure that the approved grant will reach its destination.

Nor is it necessary to inform you that, even if no further reference will be made in my letters subsequent to the departure of these two missionaries of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, you can announce it in the next issue of the Annals; they are Fr. Ryan, of Irish origin, and Fr. Faraud from the diocese of Avignon. You can add to them Frs. Molloy, Bermond, and Chevalier, who left for Canada last year in July.

With my high regards, I remain your most humble and obedient servant.

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

**101. Letter of July 6, 1846 to Mr. de Jessé, president of the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>6</sup>**

*Announcement of the visit to Lyon by Fr. Casimir Aubert who will illustrate the needs of the Oblate Missions and in particular those of Ashby, near Grace-Dieu.*

LETTER OMITTED

**102. To the Members of the Central Council of Southern France for the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>7</sup>**

*Grateful acknowledgement for the grant given to the Oblates in 1846 and request for an advance. The life of the missions depends upon these alms.*

<sup>6</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

<sup>7</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

Marseilles, October 18, 1846.

Dear Sirs,

I would have liked to have sent you prompt acknowledgement for the reception of the bank draft for 15 000 francs which you sent me at the end of September as payment on account for the grant approved by the two Councils of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith in favor of the foreign missions of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. However, the absence of the Procurator General of the Congregation to whom that draft was addressed along with the accompanying letter impeded an earlier response on my part. I am taking advantage of his return to Marseilles to attend to your letter and hasten to write to you.

I first of all must thank you, Gentlemen, on behalf of our Congregation for the kindness with which you continue to manifest your interest in the missions entrusted to it in foreign countries. In particular, I thank you for the favorable vote expressed by the two Councils of the Missionary Society which granted us the sum of 36 800 francs for this year. This sum, even though well below the needs to which it is supposed to respond, is nonetheless further proof in our eyes of your keen interest in our overseas missions. Gentlemen, you know that these missions were founded through your alms, and their development and prosperity depend on your generosity. If our missionaries today travel through the savage lands of North America to evangelise the inhabitants and if other members of the Congregation work with success in bringing the most abandoned people in England back to the Catholic faith, it is to your Missionary Society that we are in debt. If the former as well as the latter have the clothing and nutrition which suffices to the apostolic worker they are provided by your alms, and if in the future they have their own roof to shelter them, this further kindness will be due again to the alms you will have granted them.

Assured as we are of your benevolent disposition, we have no doubt, Gentlemen, that the additional sum of 9 200 francs promised to us will be granted definitively in favor of our Congregation's foreign missions when you will have determined the exact income figure for 1846. This new subsidy will finally enable our foundation in America as well as in England to begin work on buildings to house the Fathers assigned to work in those missions. I would also venture to inform you that the obligations contracted by the superiors of

these houses make us hope that we can soon receive a further advance on this year's allocation and forward the sum to them before the end of December.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of the sincere gratitude and high regard wherewith I remain your most humble servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

1847

- 103. Letter dated February 25, 1847, to The Members of the Central Council of Southern France of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>1</sup>**

*The Founder acknowledges reception of 4 900 francs, payment on account for the 1846 subsidy, and urges the remittance of the additional sum promised. He includes two letters for the Annals and announces the departure of four missionaries for Oregon: Ricard, Pandosy, Chirouse, and Blanchet.*

LETTER OMITTED

- 104. Letter dated April 26, 1847, to the Members of the Central Council of Southern France for the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>2</sup>**

*A brief letter in which the Founder expressed his thanks for the supplement to the grant of 1846 and indicated that the procurator for the missions was preparing the documentation to serve as a basis for the 1847 allocation.*

LETTER OMITTED

<sup>1</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

<sup>2</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

**105. To the Members of the Central Council of Southern France for the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith.<sup>3</sup>**

*Enclosure of notes relative to the needs of the Oblate missions for 1847. The total amount has increased, but the foundations in Canada are more numerous and very distant one from another.*

Marseilles, May 30, 1847.

Dear Sirs,

Please find herein enclosed the notes relative to the foreign missions<sup>4</sup> of the Congregation of the Oblates of the Immaculate Conception. These documents, prepared by Fr. Aubert, the founder of our houses in England and procurator of the three foundations belonging to the Congregation in various parts of North America, are only a summary of the reports sent in during the year by the superiors of these missions on their actual state, their needs, and their future. Therefore I can submit them to you in all confidence and vouch for their exactitude.

Gentlemen, you will excuse me if I do not insist here on the importance of the foundations in question and their absolute need for the assistance of the Missionary Society whose supreme administration is entrusted to your care. I would consider it superfluous for me to add any considerations to what is so clearly illustrated by the documents included in this letter. I only feel that I should take advantage of this occasion to submit to you a few observations which could help you better appreciate the reasons behind our requests and induce you to treat us with that kindness and generosity which our foreign missions expect of you.

Firstly, I would ask you not to forget the fact that if the total amount of our requests this year reflects such a sharp increase, it is because the number of missions for which we make the requests has increased as well. Instead of the two foundations in foreign countries which our Congregation possessed when the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith accepted to include it in the distribution of its funds, we now have five; two in England and three in North

<sup>3</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. The Founder only signed this letter. There is also a copy in Paris.

<sup>4</sup> Words omitted in the text kept in Rome.



America. It is therefore in no way surprising, on the contrary quite natural, that the figure of the requests increases with the increase in the number of houses. Moreover, for most of these missions it is of initial foundation costs which always entail rather high expenses and which the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith never refuses to undertake under similar circumstances, as we see in the report it publishes every year.

I am very pleased to inform you, Gentlemen, that the foreign missions of the Congregation in America are quite distinct one from another and form, each on its own, a work important enough to merit the full interest of the Propagation of the Faith. The missions of Hudson Bay and Oregon are located in areas where the missionary has no financial resources and could be placed, in this latter respect and so many others, on the same footing with the missions of Oceania or any other country still considered infidel. That is what you understand so well in the case of the missions in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains opened by the Jesuit Fathers. Therefore, we have reason to believe that you would not reserve a different treatment to those which our Congregation has accepted both in the district of Bishop Provencher<sup>5</sup> as well as in that of Walla Walla since these missions are in more or less similar territories, subject to the same conditions and moreover, those of Hudson Bay extend over more extensive regions and to a larger number of people. This observation will suffice to justify the increase in the total figure of our requests before your own Council and in the eyes of the public to whom you present an annual report on the balance of your income and expenses.

I would also like to remind you, Gentlemen, that in the budget submitted to you by the Congregation of the Immaculate Conception we have taken into due consideration the present state of the income of the Missionary Society to whose generosity we appeal. That is the consideration which led us to request only what is strictly necessary for our three foundations in North America and guided us as well in determining the sum relative to the expenses for our missions in England. We have reason to hope that your Council will give due consideration to this attention on our part and continue to prove benevolent and generous towards a Congregation which, on its part,

<sup>5</sup> Ms.: Provenchère.

knows how to appreciate favors received and will always appreciate including you among its benefactors.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of the highest esteem wherewith I remain your most humble servant,

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

**106. To the Members of the Central Council of Southern France for the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>6</sup>**

*Request to send 7 000 francs for the journey of 5 missionaries to America. Four Oblates will also leave for Ceylon, a mission recently accepted by the Congregation upon the direct request of Bishop Bettachini. 12 000 francs are required for their travelling expenses and the initial settlement costs. Bishop Pompallier wishes to take up a collection in Marseilles.*

Marseilles, August 14, 1847.

Dear Sirs,

Since some of our missionaries are about to leave for the missions which our Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate has founded in North America, I address this request to you to grant us the sum necessary for their travelling expenses from Marseilles to Montreal as you did in the past for their confreres who left for the same destination. These missionaries are five in number and their costs, all included, amount to 1 300 francs apiece. This makes the total sum of approximately 7 000 francs which I request of you on their behalf and which I hope to receive soon enough so they can leave during the month of September.

That same period will also mark the departure of a group of four of our missionaries I have placed at the disposal of Bishop Bettachini, the coadjutor of the Apostolic Vicar of Ceylon. During the few days he spent in Marseilles, when I had a number of conversations with him, this prelate painted such a picture of the deplorable state of the religion in that island that I was unable to refuse coming to his aid despite the needs of the other foreign missions entrusted to our Congregation. The work to be done there

<sup>6</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. Letter only signed by the Founder.

entails nothing less than the reformation of a Christian population close to 150 000 souls, the conversion of more than one million infidels, and the need to prevent the Protestants from taking possession of one of the most beautiful lands of India. It is not necessary for me to say any more to illustrate the importance of such a mission. Moreover, I know that, during his stay in Lyon and Paris, Bishop Bettachini presented the state of affairs to the Councils of the Missionary Society and that you have understood, Gentlemen, to what extent it would be worthy of the justice and charity which reigns in all your decisions to include the mission of Ceylon among those assisted by the generous alms of the Propagation of the Faith.

This assurance of your benevolent disposition towards the mission of Ceylon along with the striking examples of the interest you reserve to our Congregation made it impossible for me to retreat before the request advanced by His Excellency the bishop of Torona.<sup>7</sup> I therefore, granted him the missionaries to whom he plans to entrust the central province of Kandy. He made it quite clear, it is true, the resources at his disposal would not suffice to take on additional expenses. However, fully confident in your generosity, I responded that we would find the means to provide for everything. It is up to you, Gentlemen, to demonstrate that my trust was well founded. I recognize the fact that we cannot claim a large grant in light of the requests already advanced this year by our Congregation for its missions in America and England. Therefore we will restrict ourselves to what is strictly necessary for our mission in Ceylon; the travelling expenses of the four missionaries and the initial settlement and support costs. That will require at least 12 000 francs. In conclusion I would venture to remind you that the departure of our Fathers for Ceylon and for America cannot be delayed any later than the period from September 15th to 20th. It would therefore be opportune for the subsidy approved in their favor to be placed at our disposal before that date.

Gentlemen, please accept my highest regards;

Your most humble servant,

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

<sup>7</sup> Ms.: Bishop Bettachini.

P.S. Mr. Samatan<sup>8</sup> will have informed you of the forceful way in which I rejected the request made by Bishop Pompallier<sup>9</sup> to take up a collection in Marseilles for his missions. I told that prelate I would willingly grant him the men he might find in my diocese but that I would never permit a collection which would necessarily detract from the income of the Missionary Society of the Propagation.

**107. To the Members of the Central Council for Southern France, of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>10</sup>**

*Acknowledgement of reception of the grant for 1847 and expression of thanks, even if the sum granted is far below what was requested. Request to grant a sum to each of the missions in America. If the Council does not pay the journey of the Oblates assigned to Ceylon, they will most likely not be able to leave.*

Marseilles, August 30, 1847.

Dear Sirs,

I must not delay any longer in acknowledging reception of your letter dated August 20 and the two drafts for 11 000 francs therein enclosed. Despite the substantial reduction which the two Central Councils of Lyon and Paris felt it necessary to apply to the grant requested for the foreign missions entrusted to the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, I feel nonetheless obliged to thank you on my own behalf for the portion you granted to the Congregation in the distribution of the funds of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith. It is truly a misfortune for us that this measure, which you were forced to apply due to the present circumstances, came at a time when our Congregation counted on a

<sup>8</sup> Treasurer of the Missionary Society in Marseilles.

<sup>9</sup> Jean-Baptiste-François Pompallier, Bishop of Auckland (New Zealand).

<sup>10</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

more substantial grant than in the past due to the new missions it has founded. We hope the decrease in the income of the Missionary Society will only be a passing incident and that in future years the Central Councils will be able to respond in a more satisfactory fashion to the requests we address to them on behalf of missions which can only exist through the generous alms of the Propagation of the Faith.

I would like to point out, Gentlemen, that our missions in America which demand your assistance are entirely separate one from another and form distinct foundations both for jurisdiction and material administration. Therefore, in your distribution system, would you be so kind as to maintain the form used by the procurator of those missions in the notes sent to you each year and instead of approving a general allocation for the missions, clearly indicate the amount granted to each one of them. Besides the reasons which inspire me to wish that it be done in this fashion, there will also be another advantage. In the report published every year, the readers of the *Annals* will have a more obvious justification of the use made of the funds of the Missionary Society as well as an opportunity to have more detailed and complete information on the different missions held by the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in foreign countries. I insist on this point.

With regard to the mission in Ceylon, Bishop Bettachini informed me that you had given me 16 000 francs. This sum, however, will only cover the cost of his journey, that of three secular priests and four nuns, and a few of his other expenses he still has to make. His decision to take some of our missionaries was only made definitively during his stay in Marseilles. Since this is a very important question for the good of religion and I wouldn't place much hope in any material help from Propaganda Fide, I have turned to you to appeal to your charity. If you are unable to give us anything and if we obtain little from Rome, I do not know what will become of our project relative to Ceylon. God is witness to our good will. We will have done what is within our power. I abandon all to Divine Providence.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of my highest regards wherewith I remain your most humble servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**108. Letter dated September 15, 1847 to the Council of Lyon.<sup>11</sup>**

*Distribution of the grant between the various missions of America. The Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide will not pay for the journey of the Oblates to Ceylon. Bishop Bettachini has 2 000 francs for that expense, but the Missionary Society will have to supply an additional 3 000 francs.*

LETTER OMITTED

**109. To the Members of the Central Council for Southern France, of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>12</sup>**

*Thanks for the 3 000 francs for the Oblates' travelling expenses to Ceylon. The amount given to the Oblate missionaries of Ceylon should be given with their name in the Annals. List of the missionaries sent in 1847. Publish in the Annals the letters sent with this in view.*

Marseilles, October 14, 1847.

Dear Sirs,

I awaited your response to my letter of September 15 last with a sort of anxiety. In effect, I saw the day arrive when it would be necessary to decide on the departure of our missionaries for Ceylon and I still had no assurance of finding the means to send them to their destination. The government, upon which I had counted for a free passage to Alexandria, informed me that it was against the regulations to grant the favor I had requested. On the other hand, if the pressing appeal I had made to your sense of religion and benevolence went unanswered, I would have been forced to forego a foundation of the utmost importance. Gentlemen, this gives you an idea of the distressing state from which I was rescued by the reception of your letter of October 4th and the draft for 3 000 francs it contained. It is true that I had never let the thought enter my mind for a single moment that there would be a refusal on your part to my

<sup>11</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

<sup>12</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

just request. However, I am nonetheless grateful for the generosity with which you have responded to my expectations and I feel all the more obliged towards the Councils of the Propagation of the Faith insofar as the state of impoverishment it experiences at present helps me to better appreciate this new favor granted to the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

Gentlemen, please bear with me if I make a few comments on one part of your letter. You state that the 3 000 francs already received, as well as the 2 000 chargeable to a possible future allocation, upon which I count so much that I am going to advance them, will be registered in the Annals under the name of Bishop Bettachini. I see no reason for using that system of registration. On the contrary, I consider it much more natural for the sum which you must show in the report of your annual distribution to be attributed to those who will have actually received it. Moreover, the missions of Kandy to be entrusted to the Fathers of our Congregation will form a mission completely separate from that of Jaffnapatam and the other missions in Ceylon. Therefore, we insist very much that it be presented that way in your report and thereby become known to your readers like the other foreign missions already held by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in other parts of the world.

Here are the names of the missionaries due to leave for Ceylon: Fr. Etienne Semeria from the diocese of Ventimiglia (Kingdom of Sardinia), Fr. Joseph Ciamin from the diocese of Nice, Fr. Louis Keating from the diocese of Carlow (Ireland), and Bro. Gaspard De Steffanis, catechist.

I will also give you the names of those who left from LeHavre on the 10th of this month for the missions of North America: Fr. Honoré<sup>13</sup> Lempfrit from the diocese of Nancy, Frs. Bernard and Gaudet from the diocese of Grenoble, and Bros. Arnaud, Triolle,<sup>14</sup> and Tisserand, catechists.

Gentlemen, I would ask you to include these departures in the next issue of the Annals. I would venture to believe with certainty that you will not delay further the publication of the letters written by our fathers on their missions among the savages of North

<sup>13</sup> Ms.: Honorat.

<sup>14</sup> Ms.: Triole.

America. I should soon be receiving further reports on their Apostolic works but before sending them to you I await the publication of those I sent you last year.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of gratitude and high regard wherewith I remain your most humble servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. I enclose the response of the superior of the future mission of Ceylon to the circular letter I sent him on your behalf. As soon as I receive those you are to send me for the other superiors of our foreign missions, I will forward them to their destination.

**110. To the Members of the Central Council for Southern France of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>15</sup>**

*Request for an advance on the grant of 1847. As soon as possible the Council will be informed as to the name of the mission assigned to the Oblates in Ceylon. List of Oblates who left for the missions in 1847.*

Marseilles, December 14, 1847.

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to ask you for a second installment of the grant approved by your Council for the foreign missions of the Congregation of Mary Immaculate. The pressing needs faced by these missions made it necessary for us to advance to them part of the sums you kindly granted them on the year 1847. Moreover, in a few days our general procurator is going to have to send close to 10 000 francs to our mission of Red River. You would therefore be doing us a true service if, before the end of this month, you could place at our disposal at least a good part of the sum which the Treasurer of the Missionary Society is still to disburse to us on the grant of this year. I will say no more since I am confident that, after this presentation of

<sup>15</sup> Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. Only final salutations and the signature were written by the Founder.



the urgency of our needs, you will acquiesce to my request with the same rapidity you have demonstrated everytime we have had recourse to your kindness.

With regard to what you wrote me recently on the mission of Ceylon there is still something I must explain to you. When dealing with Propaganda Fide on the question of the dispatch of our missionaries to that island, I had insistently asked Cardinal Fransoni that they be placed in Kandy under the direction of Bishop Bettachini and free from any relationship of dependence upon the Goan clergy and their Apostolic Vicar. According to the arrangements adopted by the Sacred Congregation, the province of Kandy belongs to the old Apostolic Vicar and therefore our fathers who are only to be responsible to Bishop Bettachini will be located elsewhere; that is in the northern part of Ceylon which has been assigned exclusively to the European Coadjutor. We will know by the next post the exact province in which the Oblates of Mary Immaculate will exercise their ministry with the name of the mission assigned to them. I will then hasten to inform you so you can publish it in the issue of the Annals next May.

Speaking of the Annals, Gentlemen, I hope to see the reports of our missionaries in America which we sent you a year ago finally published in the January number. We have recently received further reports on their works this year and they will be sent to you as soon as the first ones have been published.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of the high regard wherewith I remain your most humble and obedient servant,

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

P.S. According to what is ordinarily done for the other Congregations, in your next edition I would like you to publish the list of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate who have left this year for the foreign missions. They are: departures in February for Oregon: Frs. Ricard and Pandosy<sup>16</sup> from the diocese of Marseilles, Fr. Blanchet from Grenoble, Fr. Chirouse from Valence, and Bro. Verney,<sup>17</sup> catechist. Departures in September for Canada: Fr. Lempfrit from the diocese

<sup>16</sup> Ms.: Pandossi.

<sup>17</sup> Ms.: Vernet.

of Nancy, Frs. Bernard and Gaudet from Grenoble, and Brs. Arnaud, Triolle,<sup>18</sup> and Tisserand, catechists. Departures in October for Ceylon: Frs. Semeria and Ciamin from the diocese of Ventimiglia, Fr. Keating from the diocese of Carlow (Ireland) and Bro. De Steffanis, catechist.

<sup>18</sup> Ms.: Triole.

1848

**111. To the Members of the Central Council for Southern France of the Missionary Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>1</sup>**

*Enclosure of a note from Bishop Guigues of Bytown on the needs of this diocese, and a letter from Fr. Semeria. Expression of thanks for the publication of a letter from Fr. Pierre Aubert. Request to send the balance of the 1847 allocation as soon as possible.*

Marseilles, February 5, 1848.

Dear Sir,

I enclose two letters, one of which reached me some time ago and could have been forwarded to you at an earlier date. However, I felt it opportune to wait until this month when you begin to take up the business of distributing the funds of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith. The letter in question was written by Fr. Eugène Bruno Guigues, the Visitor General of our missions in Canada and bishop-elect of the new diocese of Bytown, in order to provide you with an exact idea of the state of that diocese and its extensive needs. It will serve as a basis for the deliberations of your Council when the time comes to decide upon the amount of the grant to be approved in favor of that prelate and the Congregation of which he is a member, for the various works which in his diocese require your charitable assistance. There is no need for me to add anything to the reasons advanced by the Bishop of Bytown to interest you in his position. The straightforward presentation of the state of affairs contained in the enclosed letter speaks rather eloquently on its own. I have no doubts that it will make a deep impression upon generous hearts such as yours which understand so well the noble

<sup>1</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

mission of assisting, through your effective aid, the zeal and the devotion of the new apostles of the Catholic faith in distant countries and in the infidel lands. I will come back to the request addressed to you in this letter when the procurator of the foreign missions of our Congregation has received all the reports and drawn up the budget for those of our foundations which the Propagation of the Faith has included in the distribution of its alms. I think that work will be finished in a few days and I will still be able to send you the results towards the end of the month.

The other document enclosed is a letter from Fr. Semeria, the superior of the mission of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Ceylon. It is a most interesting account of the missionaries journey and the excellent reception given to the Apostolic Vicar upon his arrival on that island. I felt it would merit a place in your Annals. The details it contains and the spirit by which it is inspired cannot but interest and edify the pious curiosity of the associates of the Missionary Society, and at the same time serve to the glory of the Catholic religion.

I saw with pleasure in your January issue the letter by Fr. Aubert, a missionary of our Congregation at Red River in the territory of the Hudson Bay Company. I hope that in the March issue you will publish the report of 1846 on the Missions in the wild lands of Canada. I will then send you the report relative to 1847 which I have already received, and which contains very interesting details on those missions.

In concluding this letter, Gentlemen, I would ask you to send us as soon as possible the balance of the grant given to our various foreign missions for the year 1847. The procurator of the Congregation is in urgent need thereof both to satisfy the repeated requests of our fathers in England who count upon their part of that sum in order to meet payments in the near future, and to recover the funds he was obliged to advance for the missionaries who left nearly a year ago for Oregon.

Please accept, Gentlemen, the renewed expression of the gratitude and high regard wherewith I remain your most humble and obedient servant,

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

**112. To the Members of the Central Council for Southern France of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>2</sup>**

*Dispatch of Fr. Casimir Aubert's report on the need of the Oblate missions. The procurator has taken into account the decrease in the Missionary Society's income. The Oblate missions are only beginning, are full of promise, and therefore should be helped as much as possible. A dozen missionaries will be sent out this year.*

Marseilles, May 8, 1848.

Dear Sirs,

I have the honour of sending you the enclosed documents compiled by Fr. Aubert, procurator of the foreign missions of our Congregation, to be presented to the two Councils of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith and serve as a basis for the deliberations during which you are so kind as to dwell upon the interests of these different missions and set the figure of the grants approved in their favor for 1848.

I would have sent these documents to you at the usual time, i.e. in March, if it had not been for the unforeseen events<sup>3</sup> which intervened to suspend any and all activities. Today, however, I do not believe I should delay further, and even though the situation is not the most reassuring, it is nonetheless possible to hope that your administration will be able to pursue its course and its operations more or less as before.

I have nothing to add to what is stated by the Fr. Procurator of our foreign missions on their pressing needs and the numerous reasons they can advance in claiming the assistance of the Propagation of the Faith. Even though succinct, his presentation will suffice to arouse your zeal in their favor and assure them a generous vote on your part. I will therefore refrain from insisting on the reasons therein contained. I nonetheless feel it necessary to recommend to your attention the cause of the bishop of Bytown. This prelate is going to be in an extremely difficult situation which he will only be able to manage through your charitable cooperation. There is an

<sup>2</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder. A similar text is kept in Paris.

<sup>3</sup> Reference to the Revolution of 1848.

immense amount of good to be done in his diocese for the erection of which the goodly Bishop of Montreal did not fear to make a second trip to Rome. His financial resources, however, are practically non-existent considering the pressing needs of all kinds.

Together with the requests we address to you in favor of the foreign missions of the Congregation, it is my pleasure, Gentlemen, to submit to you a few observations which I would ask you to keep in mind in deciding these requests. First of all, the missions on behalf of which we appeal to your zeal and generosity are of such a nature as to bring about great results for the good of religion and, if success is to count for anything as a criterion determining the distribution of your alms, our missions of Cornwall in England, together with those in Ceylon and America are worthy of your benevolence and merit a large portion in that distribution. I also feel it necessary to comment that the recent date of our foreign missions' establishment makes them more interesting and should foster the deepest interest on your part in their favor. The oldest two have not yet existed for five years and the other in Ceylon and Oregon were only founded last year. Should it be surprising that they are still unable to do without the alms of the Propagation of the Faith and that we hold this assistance to be an indispensable condition for their very existence? If some missions, less than others, are to suffer the consequences of a reduction in the income of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, is it just that it be the incipient missions rather than those which, founded for sometime, can at least subsist for a certain lapse of time on their own resources and await more favorable circumstances without suffering too much.

It goes without saying that in the notes I am sending you the Rev. Fr. Procurator of the foreign missions of the Congregations of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate has taken into consideration the distressing situation experienced this year by the Missionary Society whose supreme administration is entrusted to your care. That is why he has included in his budget only the strictly necessary expenses and has set the figure at the minimum level. This will be readily evident when you look through the different articles of the situations he has drawn up for each mission in detail. It is quite certain that the sums requested for our missions in foreign countries are less than half of what appears in the reports of the Annals for other missions under the same conditions. It is true that the total sum of the grants

requested for our foreign missions is rather high. It should not be forgotten, however, that these grants are to be shared among 5 or 6 foundations scattered in three different parts of the globe and that these foundations will together receive comparatively less than what the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith grants each year for the missions of one or another Society in a single part of the world, for example in America or Oceania.

Besides the sums indicated in the enclosed documents, the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate requests of you, Gentlemen, a special grant of 12 000 francs for the travelling expenses of the missionaries it must send this year to the aid of our Missions in America. The Congregation has chosen a dozen members for this holy expedition. A much larger number offered themselves and would be ready to go but certain limitations are necessary while awaiting for the resources of the Propagation of the Faith to be such as to enable it to respond to the needs of the missions and the zeal of the apostolic workers with more abundant alms.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of the high regard wherewith I remain your most humble and obedient servant,

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

**113. Letter dated July 17, 1848 addressed to "The Members of the Central Council of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon."<sup>4</sup>**

*The Founder insists in order to obtain the supplement request in 1847 and spent before having received it for the travelling expenses of numerous missionaries. During his trip to Lyon, Fr. Tempier had been promised that the supplement would be granted.*

LETTER OMITTED

<sup>4</sup> Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder. A copy of this letter is kept in Paris as well.

**114. Letter dated August 18, 1848 addressed "To the Members of the Central Council for Southern France for the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon."<sup>5</sup>**

*Acknowledged reception of a draft for 8 000 francs. Regrets expressed for the decrease in the resources of the Propagation of the Faith.*

LETTER OMITTED

**115. To the Members of the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith.<sup>6</sup>**

*Thanks expressed for the dispatch of a bank draft. Bishop de Mazenod has depleted his personnel resources for the missions, the 100 Oblate students, and the poor of Marseilles. It is not just for the Oblates to receive no assistance and for everything to be reserved to Bishop Bettachini. Warfare in Oregon. The lives of the missionaries are in danger.*

Marseilles, October 24, 1848.

Dear Sirs,

I have received the bank draft you were kind enough to send me and I thank you for it. Fr. Aubert, who must have seen you when he was in Lyon, will have told you about my present situation. I have exhausted my personal resources for the 100 Oblates who are not yet ordained priests or novices or brothers whom I must nourish, educate, and clothe. I advanced a rather substantial sum for the journey of those missionaries who left for the island of Ceylon, and I am overwhelmed by all the unfortunates who turn to me in their extreme distress. I can therefore do nothing more for the missions. Nonetheless, I receive urgent requests to send men from all sides and I can well understand the need. I am asked for six to go to Ceylon, and the insistence on the part of Bishop Bettachini reaches what I venture to consider harrassment and yet this holy bishop, according to what you have written me, wishes to take for himself the entire grant you assign to Ceylon.

<sup>5</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

<sup>6</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.



Gentlemen, allow me to protest against this pretention. By no means is it up to Bishop Bettachini to impose conditions upon the Propagation of the Faith which offend the rights of a third party. Gentlemen, you are not the commercial representatives of the Apostolic Vicar of Jaffna, but the benevolent dispensers of the alms donated by the faithful which you distribute according to the needs, not only of bishops and Apostolic Vicars, but also of the Religious orders assigned by the Church to evangelise infidel countries. I feel too deeply the drawback of having been deprived of the grant which had been assigned to the Oblates of Mary for the island of Ceylon not to ask you the favor to reverse your decision. I needed that grant to pay the travelling expenses of the missionaries which the needs of the mission demand and which His Excellency the Apostolic Vicar Bettachini requests with such constant insistence. Having been deprived thereof, I had to leave that mission in a state of suffering and I will be able to do nothing for it as long as the Propagation of the Faith does not provide me the means to pay the passage of the missionaries. It will cost no less than 2 000 francs for each of them, and both His Excellency the Apostolic Vicar as well as the superior of the mission are asking me for 6 missionaries.

Please note, Gentlemen, that I am asking for nothing for the missionaries once they have reached the island. My request concerns their costly travelling expenses alone. Moreover, don't you grant separate grants to the Jesuits, the Lazarists, the Capuchins, etc.? Why should the Oblates of Mary be treated in a different way than these Congregations and Religious Orders? This exception is hurtful and you are too just to wish to inflict it upon a deserving Congregation of the Church which I represent before you.<sup>7</sup>

I will take up the needs of Oregon at a later date. These missionaries do not appeal to your aid, they say, to construct beautiful churches as in the United States, but to construct huts

<sup>7</sup> The Council of Lyon took umbrage over this lecture of sorts and responded in a way that offended Bishop de Mazenod who no longer wished to correspond with that Council. (Cf. The letter to the Council of Paris, November 26, 1849). Fr. Tempier was appointed to correspond with Lyon (Cf. his letters of February 20, March 10, and April 10, 1849). Subsequent to the letter dated February 20, 1849, Bishop Bettachini accepted the Founder's position since he sent instructions to the effect that the sums for Jaffna be given directly to the Bishop of Marseilles. Normal correspondence with Lyon resumed in 1850.

where they can shelter themselves from the inclemency of the seasons and to purchase the poor food to support their efforts and not die of hunger. They already penetrated among the savages and reached the point of gathering the latter around them when the woeful war of the Americans came to dash their hopes. When they wrote to me it was their intention to push deeper into the hinterland, beyond the reach of the combatants, to exercise their most worthy ministry with fewer obstacles. May God protect them from other sorts of dangers.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of my high regard wherewith I remain your most humble and obedient servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. Bishop Bettachini has sent me a letter of credit, but it is to pay his debts in Lyon and provides nothing for the journey of the missionaries.

1849

116. To Mr. Choiselat, Paris.<sup>1</sup>

*Enclosure of a draft from Bishop Bettachini. Hope that some assistance will be accorded to the Fathers in Algeria. Disagreement with the Council of Lyon which wishes to give the funds to the Bishops alone and not to the religious congregations.*

Marseilles, November 26, 1849.

Dear Sir,

Bishop Bettachini, Apostolic Vicar in Ceylon, has just sent me a draft which is not perfectly in order. I have therefore decided to send it to you. Please let me know if you are disposed to honor it in its present form. I can testify to the fact that the draft has been personally endorsed by the goodly Bishop of Torona.<sup>2</sup> As to the sum indicated in the draft, he has asked me to purchase books for him and, with the rest, obtain a letter of credit on a bank in London. Since I do not know yet how much I will have to spend for the books he has requested of me, I think it would be better for you to send me the entire amount of the sum indicated in the enclosed draft. Is it possible that the Council of Lyon would refuse granting the Missionary Oblates of Mary the modest sum you have promised to grant them in order to help them in opening their foundation in Algiers. If the conversion of the indigenous population is to be attempted in a serious way, the only way to do so will be through the religious Congregations. The secular priests who go to that country have other ideas. Therefore, the religious Congregations must have a house separate and independent from the small parishes they are

<sup>1</sup> Orig.: Paris, Arch. of the Propagation of the Faith.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Bettachini.

being offered in the meantime. That is what you began to provide for with your proposed grant. It is therefore necessary to go through the Council of Lyon which last year responded to me in such a fashion as to dispense me from further direct correspondence with them. I had asked that Council to give me the funds necessary to send to Ceylon the three missionaries requested of me by the Apostolic Vicar. I was informed that it had been decided to give the funds to the Bishops alone who would then, according to their own discretion, distribute them to the religious Congregations. This is a detestable system and it would not have been difficult for me to demonstrate that, but I refrained from doing it. Somewhat taken aback as I was, even though bishop and moreover the bishop of a diocese where I preside over a Council very devoted to the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith and where I do believe that I have rendered some services to the Missionary Society, I considered myself bereft of the 1 500 francs I had advanced to permit the passage of the missionaries who are already employed on the island. That is a sacrifice I made willingly, but I do not easily admit that I am wrong on the principle of not giving special grants to the Congregations apart from what is given to the bishops. Don't people know that there are some bishops who more readily use the money of the Propagation of the Faith to construct beautiful churches, etc., instead of satisfying the most urgent needs of the missionaries. Look at what is happening in Oregon.<sup>3</sup> I will stop here; perhaps I have said too much, but I am speaking to a zealous member of the worthy society of the Propagation of the Faith. It is good for you to be informed well enough to examine certain matters attentively.

Please accept, Sir, the expression of the affectionate sentiments wherewith I remain your most humble and obedient servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

<sup>3</sup> In Oregon, Fr. Ricard constantly had reason to complain about Bishop Blanchet who did not easily allow the Oblates to own property and left them very little income.

1850

117. To Mr. de Jessé, Lyon.<sup>1</sup>

*Distress expressed over the missions of Oregon and the Red River. Request to send the grant of Bishop Bettachini to Marseilles and to publish the names of the Oblates who leave for the missions in the Annals. Subsidies would be needed for the travelling expenses of the Fathers assigned to Buffalo.*

Marseilles, March 20, 1850.

Dear Mr. President,

I wish to begin this letter by expressing my thanks to you as well as to the Council for the grant allocated to the missions served by the Missionary Oblates of Mary. You would not believe the extreme needs of the missions, among others, of Oregon and Red River. In Oregon, the men are on the verge of dying from hunger. The reports I receive show me missionaries reduced to eating, as if it were a banquet, dogs and wolves, walking barefoot since they do not have the means to purchase shoes, and forced to clothe themselves by cutting up a blanket to make a sort of cassock. You know that I did not neglect to send them what they needed most, but the passage to reach that extremity of the world is so lengthy that they suffered considerably during the long wait. The men in Red River live in any icy environment and are so distant one from another that it costs an enormous amount of money to procure even the simplest foodstuffs. For these men, only God can account for the sacrifice of all they suffer for his glory and the salvation of the poor and truly abandoned<sup>2</sup> souls.

<sup>1</sup> Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

<sup>2</sup> This first part of the letter was published in the *Annals of the Propagation of the Faith*, t. 22 (1850), pp. 315-316 and dated "February 1850".

When asking me for more missionaries for his island of Ceylon, Bishop Bettachini<sup>3</sup> has informed me in a number of his letters that he had asked you to send me the grant given to his mission. He provides me with instructions as to the use to be made of these funds, part of which are to be used for the travelling expenses of the missionaries he requests of me with repeated insistence. Gentlemen, I await information on the amount of this grant in order to comply with the instructions of his Excellency the Apostolic Vicar and to send the missionaries to him. Since the costs which I must bear have increased beyond reasonable limits, it is no longer possible for me to incur the expenses I had undertook when our first missionaries left for Ceylon. I gave them 1 500 francs which were well spent. I therefore counted upon a special grant for our missionaries in Ceylon, which was rejected. Bishop Bettachini strongly insists that I have the missionaries leave immediately after Easter. He is in extreme need of this additional aid. My missionaries are ready, but I will not be able to send them on their way until I have received the sum granted to his Excellency the Apostolic Vicar of Jaffna.

Fr. Tempier has been instructed to send you the exact information you requested of me in your last letter. We shall not delay in submitting to you the requests for this year. Rest assured that we will remain well below the real needs.

There is one thing I would like very much to be done and which I am never able to obtain and that is that you publish in the *Annals* the names of the Oblates of Mary who leave for the various missions as you do for the members of other Congregations. This silence is incomprehensible to those countries which have provided the Congregation with men and saps the zeal of those who had decided to follow them. People think that we keep in Europe those who enter the Congregation to consecrate themselves to the missions among the savages or other infidels. I would therefore ask you that when you refer to the departure of other missionaries, kindly do not forget the names of the missionaries of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. I will put these names on a separate piece of paper so that you can give it to the person in charge of that item and he can submit them to the printer of the *Annals*.

<sup>3</sup> Ms.: Bettacchini, very often written that way by the Founder.

I would also ask you to kindly advance us the small sum Mr. Tempier requested of you on behalf of Bishop Timon, to pay the passage of the four missionaries who are to go to Buffalo, the diocese of Bishop Timon.

Mr. President and members of the Council, please accept my highest regards wherewith I remain your most humble servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**118. To the Members of the Central Council for Southern France of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>4</sup>**

*Request for subsidies for the Maryvale Scholasticate.*

Marseilles, May 23, 1850.

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to you today to inform you about a project which has already begun and for the completion of which the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate requests the aid of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, which it hopes to receive out of your zeal for the interests of religion and out of your benevolence in favor of the foundations it has opened in the midst of heretical or infidel nations.

The substantial number of missions we already hold in America and in the English colonies makes it necessary for us to prepare men destined for those missions in a special way and to bring them to a sufficiently perfect knowledge of the English language. Experience has shown us that we are unable to achieve that end in France. We have therefore decided to have our men assigned to the foreign missions spend at least a year in England where they can accustom themselves both to the language and to the customs of the countries in which they will exercise their holy ministry. His Excellency, the Apostolic Vicar of the Central district of England<sup>5</sup> has been kind enough to deed us very suitable premises near Birmingham for this foundation which in English is called the Missionary College of

<sup>4</sup> Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder. A similar text is kept in Paris.

<sup>5</sup> Bishop Ullathorne.

Maryvale. It is already much to have the premises, but it is not everything, since it is necessary to meet the cost of the nourishment and the support of the young missionaries gathered there and the Fathers assigned to direct them. The minimum figure required annually is approximately 500 pounds sterling or 12 000 and a few hundred francs in our currency. In order to handle these expenses during the six months Maryvale has been open, the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate made sacrifices which it can no longer sustain considering the substantial charges it bears to support its novitiate and house of theological studies in France. The Congregation therefore has no other recourse than the generosity of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith and asks you, Gentlemen, to kindly assume this foundation so closely bound to the interests of religion in a foreign country.

Gentlemen, we have every reason to believe that in this matter you will treat us no less favorable than the Congregation of the Lazarists and that of the Society of the Foreign Missions in Paris which receive annual grants for their colleges of the Levant and the Indies. Nor should we be treated less favorably than the seminary of Dumcondra near Dublin which, even though assisted by the contributions of the generous inhabitants of that Catholic country, likewise receives a grant from your Councils. Our seminary of Maryvale, on the other hand, can only subsist through the assistance it will receive from your charity established as it is in a kingdom that is the high road of Protestantism. Therefore, by no means is it an exception we seek from you today with this request. All we ask of you is to let us share in the assistance granted for the same purpose to other respectable Congregations who are likewise devoted to the conversion of heretics and infidels.

May we also be permitted to add, Gentlemen, that if an exception were to be made in this case, the Missionary Society whose administration is entrusted to you, would be fully justified for any decision made in our favor. This would be true both in light of the destination of this assistance which, coming mostly from France, would be granted to a French Congregation, and because of the immediate and most certain advantages which would accrue to our religion since all those in the Maryvale foundation are already committed by vows to the Missions and prepared to leave for the various countries where they will be called by the voice of God.



Gentlemen, please accept the high regards wherewith I remain  
your most humble and obedient servant,

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

**119. Letter dated October 29, 1850 to the President of the Council of  
Lyon.<sup>6</sup>**

*The Founder submits a letter from Fr. Chirouse in Oregon for the  
Annals and asked if the Council maintained its opinion on the Holy  
Childhood.*

LETTER OMITTED

**120. Letter dated November 19, 1850 to the President of the Council of  
Lyon.<sup>7</sup>**

*Bishops de Mazenod sent a letter from Fr. Laverlochère which he asked  
to be published in the Annals as soon as possible, since the author had  
just returned to France and is planning to preach in a number of cities  
to promote the Missionary Society.*

LETTER OMITTED

**121. Letter dated December 2, 1850 to Mr. Choiselat, Paris.<sup>8</sup>**

*By decree, only in Paris can stampless bills be stamped by exception.  
This new regulation will make it necessary for the Missionary Society  
to change its system of grant payments.*

LETTER OMITTED

<sup>6</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

<sup>7</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

<sup>8</sup> Orig.: Paris, Arch. of the Propagation of the Faith.

122. To the President of the Missionary Society, Lyon.<sup>9</sup>

*Request for immediate assistance to send four missionaries to the Vicariate of Colombo, and for the new vicariate of Natal. The Oblates have declined the vicariates in Oceania recently vacated by the Marists. Three Oblates are missionary bishops. Fr. Laverlochère is preaching with success. Certain bishops in the United States are making abusive use of their grants.*

Marseilles, December 22, 1850.

Dear Mr. President;

I hasten to inform you in all confidence that the Holy See has recently entrusted the Apostolic Vicariate of Natal to the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The Holy Father has asked me to submit to him the person from among the Oblates, whom I deem worthy to be raised to the episcopacy in order to appoint him Apostolic Vicar and head of this mission which will include the Kafirs.<sup>10</sup> I was informed about the apostolic letters or Bulls in the latest letter I recently received from the Propaganda Fide. The obedience which inspired our decision to accept this difficult vicariate encourages Rome to propose for our acceptance also the two vicariates merged into one which the Marist Fathers were obliged to vacate in Oceania. I declined this because I have never had any confidence in these missions of Oceania served by the good Marist Fathers with so much zeal and so little success. I have more hopes for Natal, and this with all the more reason because I neither requested nor sought this vicariate, and in accepting it I did nothing more than comply with the wish and the will of the Head of the Church. I do not have to tell you that Rome counts entirely upon the Propagation of the Faith to see to the needs of this Vicariate and the travelling expenses of the four missionaries who will travel to their appointed destination as soon as the Apostolic Vicar has been consecrated. I hasten to write to you so you will have the time needed to trim something off the grants for the United States where our money is frequently used to construct beautiful churches, in order to establish a grant for this Apostolic Vicariate of Natal.

Propaganda has asked me for four more missionaries for the Apostolic Vicariate of Colombo on the island of Ceylon. I will not

<sup>9</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

<sup>10</sup> Ms.: Caffres.

refuse them, obviously, if the passage is paid. I have been instructed to settle the matter with you: "With regard to the travelling expenses, I am convinced the pious Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith will not refuse its aid. I pray you take this matter to heart, etc."<sup>11</sup>

What pleases me in this correspondence is the information it provides me on the good accomplished by our Oblates of Mary in the vicariate of Jaffna. That is the reason why their presence is so insistently requested in that of Colombo. "Propagande Fide now has a very favourable occasion to show you the consideration it harbours for your most edifying Society, etc."<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the Congregation is literally bombarded with requests because, besides the bishop of Bytown and the Apostolic Vicar of Natal, another Oblate has been chosen as coadjutor to the bishop of St. Boniface on the Red River, a mission served entirely by the Oblates.

With regard to these good Fathers, I would like to inform you that Fr. Laverlochère, the excellent missionary from Hudson Bay, is accomplishing marvels wherever he goes. The account of his mission is of supreme interest to the vast crowds which gather to listen to him. Since he links everything to the Propagation of the Faith, I believe he will have increased the number of its associates. From Aix they have written to me: "The assembly in the city was immense. He preached in order to recommend the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith and I repeat that the effect of his words, so simple and so apostolic, was excellent. M.P. (a professor at the university) told me earlier that he had cried while listening to and seeing the living witness of the divine character of the Christian apostolate, the successor to the fishermen of the lake of Genesareth converted as they were into fishers of men, and renewing in himself the wonders of Pentecost.... M.T. (dean of the faculty) spoke to me in very much the same sense... His Excellency, the Archbishop had a similar saintly impression and noted the favourable impression made

<sup>11</sup> The Founder quoted the original Italian text: "Per le spese del viaggio la pia opera della Propagazione della Fede, son persuaso, non ricuserà il suo soccorso. La prego di prendere a cuore tal cosa..."

<sup>12</sup> Translation of the Italian text quoted by the Founder: "Si offre poi al presente una favorevolissima occasione alla Propaganda di mostrare a V.S. Ill.ma qual conto faccia della sua edificantissima Società..."

on all. In brief, Fr. Laverlochère has reawakened faith and zeal for the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, etc.”

I am not surprised by these words due to what we ourselves have experienced here. I would advise you to have this true apostle speak from the pulpits of Lyon. I would have liked him to have travel throughout all of France, but he is anxious to return to his mission, as ghastly as it to human nature.

Please be so kind as to respond briefly to the various items in my letter and accept the repeated expression of my highest regards.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. I consider it my duty to inform you confidentially about what I have learned from a person worthy of trust. I only ask you not to quote me. Here are the exact words from a letter I have read: it is written by someone who is well informed.

“I have heard details which it would be just as good to be ignorant of. One of the prelates (United States) recently received a substantial sum. It was then spent in clothing for himself and furniture for his residence, and he had no qualms about letting it be known in public afterwards. Bishop Timon who is certainly of the highest virtue and a talented man, has spent 75 000 piastres to purchase a beautiful piece of land for his cathedral: and yet, the church he already had was beautiful and large enough, according to what I was told, for a number of years. His Excellency the bishop of New York is in Lyon at present to solicit aid, but I think that instead of asking for money, he could donate a substantial amount for the other dioceses.”

I was therefore correct in telling you that the Counsel could justifiably cut down on grants to the United States. The associates of the Propagation of the Faith intend to donate for missionaries who work to announce the Gospel to infidels, and not to embellish the churches of the United States or furnish bishoprics. In the United States there are cities with 20, 30, and up to 100 000 Catholics and even more. Let the bishops turn to them for the local needs of their churches.

It is not necessary for me to repeat that by no means do I want to be quoted on this information. Would you please even burn this note!

123. To the President of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>13</sup>

*Bishop de Mazenod's reply to a letter written to him on the destination of the collections taken up by Fr. Laverlochère who should be brought to preach in Lyon. A letter enclosed from Fr. Semeria in Ceylon.*

Marseilles, December 26, 1850.

Dear Sir,

The person who gave you, or claimed to give you information with regard to the sermons of Fr. Laverlochère was either deaf or very distracted if he was able to tell you that the purpose of those sermons was collections, and collections exclusively for the mission to which Fr. Laverlochère is assigned. I was present at the sermon delivered by Fr. Laverlochère in the church of St. Martin. It is impossible to speak with more emphasis and zeal for the Propagation of the Faith, acknowledging, after having spoken about the wonders of his apostolate, that without the holy Missionary Society of the Propagation which provides missionaries with the means to reach the ends of the earth, all that good would not be accomplished. He then exhorted all those present to become members, etc. He even mentioned examples of entire families forming entire groups by themselves; one of these was led to this by the constancy of a small child who offered up his bread at lunch every day, etc. After that, what evil can there be if the missionary briefly talks about the special needs of his mission, the most remote and perhaps the most laborious of all the missions, so that if some generous soul touched by compassion wishes to give something to him, without detracting anything from what this person would do for the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, to pay the considerable expenses he still has to face even when he has received his share of the aid from the Propagation of the Faith, and gives it directly to him? It would be unjust to hold this against him, and all the more so since without this additional assistance this missionary would really not be able to accomplish his mission due to the extent of his expenses. He has to pay 6 men 15 to 20 piastres a month as boatmen. I also believe he has to feed them. Once he is in the glacial territory of his mission, he can get nothing except at insane prices. There is no problem for his food

<sup>13</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

since he is happy with anything. At one point he was reduced to eating moss which he had to boil without even being able to soften it. For the Mass, however, wine is necessary. Do you know how much a bottle costs? No less than 80 francs. And if the missionary were to spend even the slightest amount on himself! No! When his cassock is reduced to a waistcoat, the rest having fallen away in shreds, he travels around exposed to the elements. I am deeply saddened by the fact that such a lowly, trumped-up charge has been launched against a man like Fr. Laverlochère, apostolic and dedicated to the point of heroism. People are all the more at fault and have been all the more unjust when it is clear that his preaching has increased the number of associates. The other day I went to visit the family of one of our most important merchants. They told me that the day after the sermon delivered by the good Father at St. Martin, a peasant woman known to the family came into the store and spoke there in such a way as to form her group of ten right there among the sales staff. I mention this example that I know of; how many others could be mentioned. After the sermon a soldier joined a group, etc. I therefore conclude that in no way should you be concerned, and it would be desirable if Fr. Laverlochère were less anxious to return to his savages and able to travel throughout France. There is no comparison between the interest he has inspired in the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith with his straightforward of the Faith with his straightforward, unpretentious stories, and everything people have heard thus far from the very lips of the bishops who have spoken on the subject. You could say that this positive reaction is general. Therefore, remember what I told you in my first letter and believe me, it would be to the advantage of the Missionary Society, which we all have so much at heart, to have him preach in Lyon. I do not think the people of Lyon would be less susceptible than the Provençals to the narration of the mercy of God upon savage tribes who are becoming, through regeneration, comparable to the first Christians of the apostolic era.

I felt it necessary to delve into these details in order to inform you as to how things stand and to reassure you against the inopportune fears instilled in you.

Mr. President, please accept the renewed expression of my highest regards.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. I enclose a copy of an excerpt of a letter from Ceylon. I do not know if you deem it worthy to be published. I am sending it to you because I know Bishop Bettachini would be quite pleased.

Please ask His Excellency the Archbishop what happened in Aix. I know that Fr. Laverlochère brought a large number of people to join the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> This last paragraph was written along the margin of the first page.





1851

**124. To the President of the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>1</sup>**

*Expression of thanks for sending the grant. 20 000 francs are needed for Natal. Fr. Fabre, the procurator general, is authorized to sign the latest drafts. The success of Fr. Laverlochère's preaching.*

Rome, March 12, 1851.

Dear Mr. President,

I have been informed from Marseilles that the Council of the Propagation of the Faith has sent the sum of 10 000 francs for the new Apostolic Vicariate of Natal. I begin by thanking you for this grant which is due to the attention you kindly paid to the counsel I ventured to give you when the Holy See entrusted our Congregation with this interesting mission. His Excellency the bishop of Mauritius<sup>2</sup> whom I saw here, told me that it would be a country of the future, a superb mission for the good we are called to do there. I must send there no less than three missionaries with the bishop, the Apostolic Vicar who will be the head of the mission, and two brothers to serve them and act as catechists as needed. This tells you that the sum of 10 000 francs is totally insufficient to pay for the travelling expenses of these 6 people and to provide for their needs during their first year after their arrival in that mission. Wouldn't it also be necessary to provide the bishop and his missionaries with a chapel? Mr. President, you can undoubtedly see that twice the sum granted would be necessary to provide for all these various needs. I ask you to be good enough to address that proposal to the Council on my behalf and to support it with your recommendation and your vote.

<sup>1</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop J. B. Allen Collier.

I still must thank you for the 20 000 francs you were kind enough to grant for the other missions of our Congregation as an installment on what will be granted for 1850, and for the 1 500 francs you had the charity to allocate in favor of the mission in England in particular. I have written to Fr. Fabre, the present procurator general of the Congregation, instructing him to sign these drafts. Please accept his signature.

I feel that you will have been satisfied with the effect produced everywhere by the tour of our admirable Fr. Laverlochère. In Marseilles, Aix, Toulon, and Nîmes deep enthusiasm marked all the good Christians who filled the churches where this holy missionary narrated the marvels of his ministry with such simplicity. The priests and bishops were moved by it just like the rank and file faithful. In Marseilles as well, groups not of tens but of hundreds formed at the sound of his voice. No one, whether missionary or missionary bishop, has ever produced that effect.

Mr. President, please accept the high regard wherewith I remain your most humble and obedient servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

### 125. To Mr. Choiselat, Paris.<sup>3</sup>

*It is absolutely necessary to increase the sum granted to the missionaries going to Colombo. The exaggerated cost of passage on English ships.*

Marseilles, May 21, 1851.

Dear Sir;

During his stay in Paris, Mr. Tempier will have explained to you the difficulties I have in sending to Ceylon and Natal the missionaries whose arrival is awaited with such eagerness. First of all, the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, upon the repeated and most insistent requests of Bishop Bravi, the coadjutor in the vicariate of Colombo, has somewhat required me to send at least four missionaries to that vicariate which is disturbed and beset by those schismatic Goans. I promised to send them, but I am at a standstill due to the impossibility of paying for the passage of the four

<sup>3</sup> Orig.: Paris, Arch. of the Propagation of the Faith.

missionaries with the sum withheld on the grant you made to the Vicariate of Colombo. Perhaps you do not know that one has to cope with the English monopoly on the Red Sea. These gentlemen have decided to allow passage in second class only when places have been reserved in first class. In that case, they give a place in second class to the person who is seen as the servant to the first class passenger. Places in second class are hardly fitting for priests. I recently met an English Jesuit here who admitted to me that he would have considered that arrangement below the dignity of his priestly character. Our poor missionaries are less delicate, but it is not within their power to force the hand of the Boating Company across the Red Sea.

In the case of the four missionaries I am prepared to send to Ceylon, we have to consider that at least two will have to travel in first class and that means 80 guineas apiece, equalling 4 000 francs. The two in second class will pay 35 guineas apiece, adding up to 1 720 francs. The total is 5 720 francs. Add to that the travelling expenses for the journey from Marseilles to Suez which I estimate to be 500 francs apiece. That means 2 000 to be added to the 5 720 francs, for a total of 7 720 francs. They will also have to be supplied with provisions for their missions as well as for themselves. How can that can be provided for with the 5 500 francs you have held back on the grant made to the Vicariate of Colombo? I think the first thing to do is to allocate funds for the passage of the missionaries who are required by the needs of the missions. These needs are so urgent that Bishop Bravi wrote to Propaganda Fide to say that if the four missionaries did not arrive by Easter, his mission would be lost. Therefore, Sir, you see what you have to do. If you do not take it upon yourself to advance an additional 1 500 to 2 000 francs on the grant for the Vicariate of Colombo, it will be impossible for me to send the four missionaries considered indispensable. All I am able to do, overburdened by expenses as I am, is to give each of them a chalice and some vestments.

Sir, I ask you to take into serious consideration what I have had the honor to tell you in the interests of religion. Please be so kind as to send me an answer as quickly as possible in order to avoid excessive delays in the departure, if it is to take place.

Please accept the expression of my highest regards.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**126. Letter dated May 21, 1851, to the Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>4</sup>**

*Bishop de Mazenod requests twice the sum which has been allocated to the mission of Natal.*

LETTER OMITTED

**127. Letter dated June 7, 1851 to the President of the Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Paris.<sup>5</sup>**

*Bishop de Mazenod awaits an answer to the letter in which he requested subsidies for the journey of the missionaries to Colombo. At his own expense he will dispatch the missionaries whose arrival has been awaited for so long. The grant for Natal is far below real needs.*

LETTER OMITTED

**128. To the President of the Council of Lyon.<sup>6</sup>**

*The Founder earnestly requests the Council not to establish the grant for Natal to the detriment of the Congregations other missions which receive nothing from the Holy Childhood and live in a very poor state.*

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, June 24, 1851.

Dear Mr. President,

I had instructed Fr. Aubert to recommend our Apostolic Vicariate of Natal to you while he was in Lyon. This father has written me that he found you most favorably disposed in that regard, but it was to be feared that the additional amount you acknowledged as necessary for the foundation of that vicariate would only be granted to the detriment of the grant to be approved for our other missions. Allow me, sir, to bring to your attention the fact that it is

<sup>4</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

<sup>5</sup> Orig.: Paris, Arch. of the Propagation of the Faith.

<sup>6</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was most certainly read at the meeting of the Council of Lyon. Someone wrote the following words on the back of the last page: "The letter is important and not long. I am of the opinion to read it in its entirety."

impossible to deduct anything from what has been requested of you for those missions; that would seriously endanger their service. Please keep in mind that in our missions we allow nothing in terms of luxury or fancy. We are not involved in the construction of beautiful churches or comfortable lodgings, nor do we buy those magnificent ornaments which would not be out of place in our European Cathedrals. The amount of the grants is used for what is strictly necessary: the travelling expenses of the missionaries, and their modest support. I do not wish to accuse anyone, God forbid, but you must realize that if deductions are to be made, it cannot be from the grants requested for the various missions of our Congregation. Please note that, apart from the much higher amounts of other grants, the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary receives nothing from the Holy Childhood, assuredly because its Superior General did not want to let that Society enter his diocese out of the fear of damaging the interests of the Propagation of the Faith.

I am somewhat distant to plead the cause of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary which does not have a single representative in your Councils, but I have too much faith in your sense of justice not to be convinced that you champion the cause of those who are not present, and that nothing will be deducted from what is absolutely necessary for them to fulfill the responsibilities of their ministry.

Mr. President, please accept the renewed expression of the most high regards wherewith I remain your most humble and obedient servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

## 129. To the President of the Council of Lyon.<sup>7</sup>

*The Superior General gives permission for Fr. Laverlochère to return to Europe. The representatives of Bouches-du-Rhône have obtained from the government free transportation for missionaries.*

Marseilles, August 6, 1851.

Dear Mr. President,

I knew that Fr. Laverlochère had reawakened zeal for the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith in every place he

<sup>7</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

spoke during his tour. I was very pleased to receive confirmation of this in the letter you were kind enough to write me on July 28. You know my feelings for the Missionary Society which I deem to be the Society of Societies, the most important of all those which foster the piety of the faithful.

You feel that it would be beneficial for the goodly Fr. Laverlochère to return to France in order to continue his account in those cities he was unable to visit during his last trip. You are the best judges in this matter. If that is your opinion, I willingly share it with you. We still have the problem of his trip. That will be no problem for the dauntless navigator who braves the eternal ice of the polar region. It will be more difficult to convince the Canadian bishops who have him preach in favor of their missions during the winter. Nevertheless, I would venture to attempt overcoming that difficulty if you hold to your intention as presented to me.

It could very well be that Fr. Laverlochère himself, despite his good will, might envisage some sort of unsurmountable obstacle. That is why I intend to write to him as soon as he returns from his arduous mission. I will take the necessary steps in this sense as soon as he returns.

I do not think it necessary to bring to your attention a slight error which slipped into one of your letters, but since I am writing to you, I take this occasion to correct it. It was not 2 500 francs which the Central Council of Paris gave me on the future grant of Bishop Bravi, the Apostolic Vicar (Coadjutor) of Colombo, but only 2 000 francs. In the future we will have fewer expenses, I hope, for these trips. I had consistently insisted before our good representatives of the Bouches-du-Rhône to obtain for the passage of all missionaries the favor which thus far had been granted only to the Lazarist fathers. This has been granted. Please God that it would be possible to deal in the same way with the English Company of the Red Sea, but there is no way to make them listen to reason.

Mr. President, please accept the expression of my sentiments of esteem and gratitude, for yourself and all the members of the Council, for the good you have done to our Holy Religion through your dedication to the great work of the Propagation of the Faith.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**130. Letter dated September 10, 1851, "To the President of the Central Council of Lyon".<sup>8</sup>**

*The Founder informs the Council that he has not received the pictures which he had been informed he would receive.*

LETTER OMITTED

**131. Letter dated September 19, 1851, to the Secretary of the Central Council, Lyon.<sup>9</sup>**

*The pictures sent for the missions have reached Marseilles. Details on the pious death of Fr. Leydier in Ceylon.*

LETTER OMITTED

**132. To the Members of the Central Council for Southern France for the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>10</sup>**

*Request for an advance of 10 000 francs on the grant for the year. The missionaries of Natal have been sent. Request for money for the missions of Natal and Texas. The illness of Fr. Laverlochère who will not be able to come and preach in Europe. A list of the Oblates who have left for the missions in 1851.*

Marseilles, November 17, 1851.

Dear Sirs,

I address myself to you today to ask you to kindly send us a further advance of 10 000 francs on the grant which the Central Councils forming the supreme administration of the Propagation of the Faith approved this year in favor of the foreign missions of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. This sum is destined to satisfy the most urgent needs of some these missions, such as those in Oregon and the Hudson Bay territory which have up to

<sup>8</sup> Orig.: Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

<sup>9</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. An excerpt from this letter was published in the introduction to the Founder's *Letters to Ceylon and Africa*.

<sup>10</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

now always received, before the month of November, part of the aid granted them every year by the Councils of the Missionary Society.

You will have certainly learned from the newspapers about the departure of Bishop Allard and his companions for the territory of Natal where the Apostolic Vicariate has been entrusted by the Holy See to our Congregation. I must not forget to point out, gentlemen, that the 10 000 francs you were kind enough to grant to this new mission is far from sufficient for the expenses to be faced during the first year of its foundation. The mere travelling expenses, together with the purchase items indispensable for the missionaries have already absorbed most of that amount, to the point that they will have barely 3 000 francs once they have reached their destination. I now ask you, with such an amount is there any way to provide for the nourishment and upkeep of 5 persons, the expenses of the divine cult, and the thousands of miscellaneous costs which are always part of the foundation of an important mission? Hence, we do not believe we are demanding too much of your charity when asking for an additional grant in favor of Natal when, in a few months' time, you will be making a definitive decision on the amount of the general grant given for 1851 to the missions served by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

I will also take advantage of this occasion to present a more or less similar request in favor of the two foundations we are going to open in Texas; one in Brownsville, and the other in Galveston. Bishop Odin, who plans to call on you when passing through Lyon, will be able to tell you how, upon his repeated requests, we agreed to give him six of our Fathers to begin these two foundations I have just mentioned. This prelate, whose zeal and unselfishness are rather well known to you, will do everything in his power to help these workers who are going to join him in his apostolic efforts. Since his own resources are very limited, the foundations in question will be necessarily endangered if they do not receive aid from elsewhere, at least for the first years. It can only come their way from the Propagation of the Faith, the living providence of the foreign missions. The benevolence which the Councils of the Missionary Society have always manifested towards the missions entrusted to the Oblates of Mary leads us to hope that you will also include our foundations in Texas among those which benefit from your alms. We think that an allocation of 12 000 francs to be shared between the



fathers of Brownsville and Galveston would enable them to handle the most urgent expenses. This sum, however, would also have to be included in the budget for this year so that, upon the final collection of funds for this year, it can be placed at the disposal of our missionaries in Texas.

Gentlemen, I hasten to send you a report on the North American missions which will be of great interest to the associates of the Propagation of the Faith. There is no doubt that this type of narration, made *viva voce* by a missionary upon his return from these distant territories, generates a different type of interest and always leads to more good. I willingly acquiesced to your request to recall Fr. Laverlochère to France this winter. God, however, has disposed otherwise. Upon his return from the midst of his dear savages at the end of September, this tireless Apostle was stricken by an attack of paralysis, the effects of which will remain with him for a long time. I have been informed, however, that he has improved.

I am also enclosing a list of our missionaries who left this year. Please include it in the next issue of the Annals which should appear in January.

Gentlemen, please accept the renewed expression of my gratitude and high regards,

Your most humble and devoted servant,

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

P.S. I sent you everything I know about Bishop Bettachini and the missionaries during the cholera epidemic in Ceylon.



1852

133. To the President of the Council of Lyon.<sup>1</sup>

*Enclosure of a letter from a Father in Ceylon. Imminent departure of three missionaries for Jaffna. They will circumnavigate Africa.*

Marseilles, February 7, 1852.

Dear Mr. President,

Among the letters which I have received from Ceylon and dealing more or less with the missions of that island, I have selected one from the youngest of our missionaries which will be of interest to the readers of the Annals. You will note therein a truly miraculous fact proving that the Lord sanctions, today as in the early times of Christianity, the preaching of His Holy Gospel by the apostles. I will soon send three new missionaries to the missions of Jaffna.<sup>2</sup> Please deduct their travelling expenses from the grant to Bishop Bettachini. In all probability, I will have them embark on the sailing vessels which travel by way of Bourbon or Pondichéry. The journey by way of Alexandria and Suez is too expensive. What else can we do? When dealing with the English Companies you have to accept the hard conditions they impose. They have now decided not to accept the missionaries in second class which, they say, is reserved for servants. However, that is just an excuse to charge 80 pounds sterling for the passage from Suez to Ceylon. It nonetheless pains me to consign our poor missionaries for four or five months to the hazards of such a long and dangerous passage. I always recommend their needs and those of their confreres to the charity of your Missionary Society. In

<sup>1</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

<sup>2</sup> Two missionaries were sent in 1852: Constant Chouvanel and Léon-Jean Pélissier.

the report of your Council you will have seen that the members of my diocese continue to prove their generosity.<sup>3</sup> I hope it is the same elsewhere.

Please accept, sir, the expression of my highest regards.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**134. Letter dated March 18 to the President of the Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>4</sup>**

*Distribution of the funds allocated to the Oblates. Red River – 16 000 francs; Oregon – 17 500 francs; England – 12 500 francs; Natal – 24 000 francs. The six missionaries for Texas will leave on March 22. Bishop Allard has reached Natal.*

LETTER OMITTED

**135. To the Members of the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>5</sup>**

*Dispatch of the procurator General's report on the needs of the Oblate missions. The spirit of poverty and sacrifice of the missionaries in Northern Canada. Bishop Taché: Coadjutor in St. Boniface. The needs of the missions in Hudson Bay and Texas. New foundation in the dioceses of Buffalo and Detroit. Fr. Fabre is the procurator General.*

Marseilles, April 17, 1852.

Dear Sirs,

I hasten to enclose the notes compiled by the procurator general of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate relative to

<sup>3</sup> The total sum of donations to the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith in the diocese of Marseilles amounted to approximately 34 000 francs in 1842. It was to rise to nearly 40 000 francs in 1846, thereby making Marseilles the most generous diocese in France: Cf. J. LEFLON, *Mgr. de Mazenod*, v. III, pp. 127-128.

<sup>4</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

<sup>5</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder. A similar text is on record in Paris.

our foreign missions. They will be able to serve as a basis for the discussion during which you will set the portion reserved to these missions for 1852 in the general distribution of the funds of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith. These notes, compiled with care from the reports submitted directly by the superiors of the missions in question, merit your full trust. I have nothing to add in order to guarantee their exactitude and truthfulness in your eyes.

One observation I feel I should dwell on concerns the fact that our requests for assistance deal with expenses that are strictly necessary so that the missions entrusted to our Congregation are able to continue the good they have already accomplished in the various territories in which they are established. In effect, missionaries who have made a vow of poverty and are accustomed to the simplicity of life in common should not be finicky with regard to food and clothing with which, as St. Paul stated, the apostolic worker should be satisfied. Not only do they know how to put into practice this maxim of that great Apostle, but it often happens that many of them must put up with much more painful conditions in their missions. For example, when we know the privations endured by those of our men who evangelize the savages in the territory of the Hudson Bay Company where they are exposed to all the rigors of the polar climate and have nothing else to eat than what they obtain with great difficulty in those severe regions, we are forced to admire the power of grace which makes them abound in joy in the midsts of so many sacrifices. It is therefore right not to forget their needs, and to use in such a way the alms of the faithful who contribute to the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith corresponds perfectly to their intentions.

The total amount of the grant we are requesting for this year will perhaps seem a bit high to you. I agree that it is much higher than that of former years. However, I pray you to note that this increase is due only to the number of our foreign missions which increases each year. In the case of the missions already established, even though their needs have increased in keeping with their development, the amount of the grant requested for each of them individually is less than that of past years. If, by way of exception, we this year request a higher grant in favor of the mission of Hudson Bay in the diocese of St. Boniface, the reason is easy to understand. Since

Bishop Taché, a member of our Congregation, has been made Coadjutor to the bishop of that diocese, in our opinion his mission assumes such an importance that, in order to support the young prelate in his zeal for the conversion of the savages, we have granted him four new missionaries and a brother catechist. One can thus see that this means an increase in expenses. The travelling expenses alone for this apostolic colony will amount to 10 000 francs. Moreover, Gentlemen, since my considerations are based on the report published every year in the Annals, I can affirm without the slightest doubt of being mistaken that, in proportion and considering the number and the importance of the missions, the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate is among all those which work in the foreign missions one of the most moderate in its requests for assistance and among the most economic in its use of the alms received from the Propagation of the Faith.

Among the missions entrusted to our Congregation, I recommend to your benevolence the one in Texas which we recently accepted upon the request of Bishop Odin, of Galveston. I hope you will not refuse to extend to that mission the favor granted to so many other missions in the United States which are under the direction of religious Congregations. Bishop Odin is in agreement with us not to include our foundations in the budget he submits to you for the expenses of his diocese, and thereby leaves it up to our Congregation to deal directly with the Councils of the Missionary Society in order to obtain an annual grant. Besides the mission in Texas, in the United States we have also accepted a foundation in the diocese of Buffalo and will open another one in the diocese of Detroit. You can see, Gentlemen, that our Congregation duly merits some encouragement and that it responds in a worthy fashion to what can be expected of the zeal and the generosity of its members.

Before closing, Gentlemen, I must take advantage of this occasion to express my gratitude for the constant kindness you have always demonstrated towards the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, and in particular for the assistance granted to us last year. I have just received the last installment of that grant from your treasurer. I have given the sum directly to Fr. Fabre whom I had empower to represent our Congregation before the Councils of the Missionary Society and who has been appointed Procurator General.

Gentlemen, please accept the renewed expression of the high regard wherewith I remain your most humble and devoted servant,

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

**136. Letter dated April 24, to the Central Council of Lyon.<sup>6</sup>**

*Enclosure of a letter from a missionary in Northern Canada for publication in the Annals.*

LETTER OMITTED

**137. Letter dated July 8 to the Central Council of Lyon.<sup>7</sup>**

*Reception acknowledged for a draft of 20 000 francs and a chalice for the poorest Oblate Mission. Fr. Laverlochère would be willing to return to France.*

LETTER OMITTED

**138. Letter dated November 11 to the President of the Council of the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon, Rhone.<sup>8</sup>**

*Bishop de Mazenod expresses his thanks for the grant given to the Oblates in 1852 and for the dispatch of orders from the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide on the conscientious distribution of grants.*

LETTER OMITTED

<sup>6</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

<sup>7</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

<sup>8</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

**139. To Mr. de Jessé, President of the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>9</sup>**

*Fr. Laverlochère's state of health makes it impossible for him to come to France at present.*

Marseilles, December 14, 1852.

I attach too much importance to everything which can work to the advantage of the valuable Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith to have neglected to pursue the plan which you had submitted to me of using the preaching of Fr. Laverlochère to stimulate the zeal of the faithful throughout France. I was in perfect agreement with your opinion since I was convinced that the result could in no way be better. As you know, however, the good God has tried his servant with a very cruel dispease. He felt well enough to accept the new mission I had hastened to assign to him and wrote to me himself in that regard. It seems that his ever burning zeal for the glory of God was deceptive and he counted too much on his own strength which did not respond to his good will. His local superiors do not feel that he is strong enough at present to undertake a task of this nature. They do hope that the change of climate and a period of rest in his native country will enable him to recover, and I think they are willing to adopt that remedy. They do believe, however, that Fr. Laverlochère will still need some time before he can devote himself to the preaching ministry. If he does come we ourselves will judge his state of health and act in accordance therewith.

Please accept, sir, my most affectionate greetings,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

<sup>9</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.



1853

140. To the Central Council of Lyon.<sup>1</sup>

*Breakdown of the sums granted to the Oblate Missions in 1852. Request to publish this information in the Annals as it is presented.*

Marseilles, March 5, 1853.

Dear Sirs,

I hasten to send you by return mail the response to what you requested of me in your letter dated March 3. The total amount of the allocation of 95 000 francs which you kindly granted to the foreign missions of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1852 is to be divided as follows:

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| - missions of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in England:   | 23 000 f. |
| - missions of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Oregon:  | 19 500 f. |
| - to Bishop Taché, Coadjutor bishop of St. Boniface in the Hudson Bay Territory (Missions of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate) | 22 500 f. |
| - to Bishop Allard, bishop and Apostolic Vicar of Natal (Africa) (Missions of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate)                | 20 000 f. |
| - Missions of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Texas:   | 10 000 f. |

This distribution is based upon the amount of the request for each mission individually which had to be reduced in proportion to the reduction you applied to the total amount.

<sup>1</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

Gentlemen, I would ask you please to make sure that this distribution be published in your report as it is presented here and in the same form. I take the liberty of making this comment because last year under the *single* heading of the Oblate Missions in Cornwall you indicated the grant we had requested and which you undoubtedly intended to give for all our missions in England. As far as this year is concerned there are reasons, that I will elaborate upon in a subsequent letter, why we want the grant given to our missions in England not to appear in any other form in the report you are preparing for publication in the next issue of the Annals. You have already used this general presentation for the Marists: even though they only have one mission in England (London) I feel we have at least the same right, we who have 5 missions in that kingdom, among which Leeds and Liverpool have urgent needs.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of the highest regards wherewith I remain your most humble servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**141. Letter dated April 3, 1853, to "The Members of the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon."**<sup>2</sup>

*The Founder is having the Annual report on the needs of the Oblate Missions prepared. He requests an advance on the last grant.*

LETTER OMITTED

**142. To the Members of the Central Council of Southern France for the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.**<sup>3</sup>

*Presentation of the annual report on the needs of the Oblate Missions. Reasons which these missions submit to support their requests for*

<sup>2</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

<sup>3</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder. A similar text is on file in Paris and dated April 15.

*assistance and in particular Buffalo, Leeds, and Liverpool. Reasons for the withdrawal from Penzance. Request to publish in the Annals letters from some missionaries and the list of those sent out.*

Marseilles, April 15, 1853.<sup>4</sup>

Dear Sirs,

Please find enclosed the annual report on the foreign missions of our Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate which I had drawn up by the procurator general of those missions. The report contains both a brief summary of their needs and an indication as to the amount of their expenses. These documents will fully suffice to enlighten your Council on the allocation to be attributed to our foreign missions this year in its imminent deliberations on the general distribution of the funds of the Missionary Society.

Gentlemen, it is not necessary for me to vouch for the exactitude of the facts which make up the substance of this report nor to insist upon the qualifications possessed by our various missions for sharing in the alms of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith. The enclosed documents are only an excerpt of the reports which the respective superiors send us for this purpose, and a summary of the information provided by letters written during the year on the state of these missions. In themselves, therefore, they bear the proof of their faithfulness and authenticity.

With regard to the qualifications which our foreign missions can offer to support the request we submit for a grant in their favor, they are the same as the ones we presented in past years, the complete justice and value of which you accepted by approving almost the entire amounts requested. Most of these are missions established in completely new countries where everything is still to be created, at least from a religious point of view, and which do not provide the missionaries with any local resources to help them sustain the expenses of food, maintenance, and the costs of the divine cult. A decision to refuse to these missions the continuation of the aid which has had to be extended them from the very beginning of their foundation or even to reduce that aid to a lower figure would

<sup>4</sup> The letter sent to Lyon was not dated.

not only reduce them to dire straits and endanger their very existence, but would also signify their death sentence and thereby wipe away, in one fell blow, what has been accomplished only with great effort after a good number of years and at the price of numerous sacrifices.

Such, in particular, are the missions of Natal in Africa, Oregon, and the diocese of St. Boniface in North America.

With regard to the foundations of Texas and Buffalo in the United States, even though their conditions are not difficult, it is none the less certain that without the assistance we request in their favor, they would not be able to establish themselves in that solid fashion which will guarantee their future. For them too, therefore, it is a question of life or death. Moreover, it is not a privilege we seek, but the application of a measure which has been up to now applied generally by your Councils in favor of other foundations of the same type in this interesting part of North America. In addition, it should not be forgotten that the sacrifices we request of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith for these foundations, apart from the immense results they are destined to produce for the good of religion, are only for a limited period of time. After a few years, with the aid of these grants, these foundations will certainly have reached the point of becoming self-sufficient with the resources which these apostolic workers will not fail to receive in a civilized country, especially when they undertake the education of youth. Therefore, I have no doubts whatsoever, Gentlemen, that you will continue to give our foundations in Texas the assistance you so kindly began to extend to them last year and that you will not refuse to include Buffalo among the number of works in foreign countries which you had the goodness to add in the distribution of the funds entrusted to your administration.

What I have said about Texas and Buffalo naturally applies to some of our foundations in England, and among others to those of Leeds and Liverpool. The importance of these two missions located in the centers of two of the largest cities in England in a moment of crisis when it is necessary to employ all the means possible to increase the impact of the action of Catholicism against heresy, their importance, I say, needs no proof. It is a fact which suffices to be stated in order to be admitted as undeniable. You understood that

perfectly, Gentlemen, when you granted the Marist fathers an allocation of 50 000 francs last year for their foundation in one of the districts of London, even though they had already received an even more substantial grant for that foundation from another source. I venture to believe that you would not treat with less benevolence the Oblates of Mary Immaculate who have the same qualifications, if not more convincing ones, to submit in favor of many of their missions in Great Britain.

Since I am on the subject of our missions in England, Gentlemen, I am prepared to give you further details on the event which you must have learned about during a trip to France made last summer by His Excellency the bishop of Plymouth in whose diocese everything happened. I am referring to the surrender of the mission of Penzance and those attached to it in the county of Cornwall forced upon the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Our Congregation did everything it could to avoid this event, which in itself was very unfortunate as well as in the causes which led to it, but circumstances combined in such a way that it was impossible for the Congregation to avoid that extreme measure. You will readily understand this as soon as I have given you a few details. This mission of Penzance, founded by an Irish priest, in 1843 had been turned over to the Oblates of Mary represented by Fr. Daly, at that time the only British member of the Congregation and thereby with the legal right to acquire ownership in England. This Father, who had directed his work perfectly for many years and thereby earned the trust of his superiors in the Congregation and the Catholic clergy of England, all of a sudden thought he had to work to give the Congregation a more illustrious and fitting position according to his own ideas. He discovered that a magnificent domaine in the center of the country was to be sold, and he offered to purchase it. Without taking the time to write and consult with us, he concluded the act of purchase and offered as collateral the deeds to our properties of Penzance which had been made out in his name. It was only at that time that we learned about the whole matter, but it was already too late to rectify the situation or avoid the fatal results. The Congregation made unheard of efforts to nullify this unfortunate contract or to obtain conditions from the other party which would enable us, even by making great sacrifices, to buy back the Penzance deeds so imprudently pledged. All to no avail. We disavowed Fr. Daly, and as punishment for his irregular behavior expelled him

from the Congregation. However, the Penzance deeds pledged as collateral for his baneful contract could not be withdrawn from the other party which, after having seized the property they had sold to Fr. Daly at an exorbitant price due to lack of payment, used the deeds in their possession to take legal action on the church and the rectory of Penzance. These two buildings were then put up for sale and His Excellency the bishop of Plymouth, who originally hadn't wanted to buy back the deeds together with the Congregation since the latter demanded that its right to coownership be safeguarded in the new contract, preferred to figure as the only purchaser and thereby became the sole proprietor for the diocese.

In this new state of affairs, it was no longer fitting for us to keep this mission. Urgent needs elsewhere in England called for the presence of the Fathers working in Cornwall and we decided to recall them after reaching an agreement with the bishop of the diocese so that religion would not suffer from that measure, which was only enacted when a secular priest had been sent to replace our Fathers in Penzance and to visit from time to time the Catholic stations established in the vicinity. That is how this sad matter ended and the length of my letter has allowed me to give you only an incomplete account of it. For that same reason I will only spend a few words on some points I wish to submit for your consideration.

The first entails the reports written by our missionaries which had been sent to you on several occasions and which I had asked you to publish in the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith. I was not the only person to be surprised upon not finding any of them in the latest issues you have published. I would have more reports to send you, but before doing so I await your providing the public with those which have the right of priority.

Secondly, I wanted to speak about the departure of a number of our missionaries who are about to leave France and travel to distant lands where they are awaited to share in the work of their confreres. I will give you their names and the dioceses to which they belong on a separate piece of paper enclosed herein. Please be so kind as to include it, as is customary, in the next issue of the Annals.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of the high regard wherewith I remain your most humble and devoted servant,

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

**143. Letter dated June 6, 1853, to the President of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon, Rhône.<sup>5</sup>**

*Liverpool, which would need 12 000 francs, was left out of the grant request for 1853. That would bring the assistance requested by the Oblates up to 148 000 francs.*

LETTER OMITTED

**144. Letter dated June 21, 1853, to the Members of the Central Council for Southern France of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>6</sup>**

*Urgent request for an advance of 25 000 francs on the 1853 allocation. A letter from Texas and the list of missionaries who were sent in 1853 is enclosed for publication in the Annals.*

LETTER OMITTED

**145. Letter dated August 2, 1853, to the Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>7</sup>**

*Urgent needs of the missions of Natal.*

LETTER OMITTED

**146. Letter dated October 3, 1853, to the President of the Central Council of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon.<sup>8</sup>**

*Gratitude expressed for the sum of 148 000 francs allocated to the Oblates in 1853 and for the payment of a second installment of 48 000 francs.*

LETTER OMITTED

<sup>5</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. A similar text is on file in Paris.

<sup>6</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

<sup>7</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

<sup>8</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

**147. To the Members of the Central Council for Southern France of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>9</sup>**

*Thanks expressed for the Mass stipends. News on Fr. Laverlochère's health. Letter from Bishop Taché for the Annals.*

Marseilles, October 18, 1853.

Dear Sirs,

In response to your latest letter, I wish to begin my letter by acknowledging reception of the 300 francs you sent to me for the Masses to be celebrated for you by the Oblates of Mary. This attention, for which I thank you on behalf of their Congregation, is further proof of your benevolence in their regard. I will now delve into the direct purpose of your letter.

I am pleased to inform you that Fr. Laverlochère is much better since his last visit to Lyon. He came to Marseilles in August for some bathing in the sea and it helped him. He then felt up to spending a few weeks in our noviciate in the diocese of Grenoble and the presence of this apostle of the savage tribes of North America did wonders to animate the zeal and the fervor of these young men, many of whom will one day be sent to these same missions. Fr. Laverlochère is soon to return to Marseilles where he will spend the winter in order to restore his health which was so severely shaken. Everything leads to the hope that in a few months he will have recovered enough strength so that, with the help of God, he will be able to respond to your wishes and those of the pious members of the Propagation of the Faith. Rest assured, Gentlemen, that as far as I am concerned I will do everything in my power to further your excellent idea to place the sermons of this holy priest once again at the service of the Missionary Society which is so worthy of interest and whose supreme administration is in your hands. This disposition is inspired within me both by the attraction I feel as a bishop for the Propagation of the Faith and the gratitude which binds me to it due to the generous aid it extends to the Missions of the Oblates of Mary.

You will find enclosed a letter which Bishop Taché of St. Boniface and superior of our mission of Hudson Bay instructed me

<sup>9</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.



to forward to you. It contains a brief article on Bishop Provencher<sup>10</sup> and on this mission; Bishop Taché would like to see published in your Annals. I will no longer mention the various reports of our missionaries which I sent you some time ago. I will only say that I was quite surprised to see that none of them were published in the latest issue.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of the high regard wherewith I remain your most humble and obedient servant,

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

**148. Letter dated November 21, 1853, to the President of the Council of the Propagation of the Faith of Lyon.<sup>11</sup>**

*Recommendation for M. Cassinelli, a missionary in Ceylon, who will visit Lyon to illustrate the needs of the missions of Jaffna.*

LETTER OMITTED

**149. To the Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>12</sup>**

*Acknowledgement of Mass stipends. List of missionaries who were sent in 1853. Request to publish an article on the missions of Red River in the Annals.*

Marseilles, December 27, 1853.

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to you today to thank you for your considerable attention for the Oblates of Mary in the form of the two hundred stipends for the foreign missions. I endorsed the draft for 200 francs you had sent to that effect and presented it as usual to your Lyonnaise banker. The Masses will be celebrated *in the foreign*

<sup>10</sup> Ms.: Provenchère.

<sup>11</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

<sup>12</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

*missions* of our Congregation as ordered by the Central Council and according to the intention of the donors.

I would like to take advantage of this occasion to remind you that in the past you were kind enough to include, in the January edition of the *Annals*, the list of Oblate departures for the foreign missions at various times during the preceeding year. Therefore in the next edition I would ask you to publish the following list containing the departures in 1853.

1. departures for England
  - Frs. Richard and Mounier in January.
  - Frs. Bargy and Cooper in July.
2. departures for the missions of the Apostolic Vicariate of Natal (Southern Africa)
  - Fr. Barret from the diocese of Tarbes, Fr. Gérard from the diocese of Nancy, and Bro. Bernard, Catechist.
3. departures for the missions in the Apostolic Vicariate of Jaffna, Ceylon
  - Fr. Lacombe from the diocese of Viviers.
  - Fr. Rouffiac from the diocese of Albi.
4. departures for the Canadian missions
  - Fr. Reboul from the diocese of Viviers.
  - Fr. Royer from the diocese of Mans.

In the January issue I also hope to see the article on the missions of Red River in the diocese of St. Boniface and on the late Bishop Provencher,<sup>13</sup> the first bishop of that diocese, sent to you a few months ago by his successor, Bishop Taché of the Oblate Congregation. It is really about time that something from our Congregation appears in *Annals* of the Propagation of the Faith.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of my highest regard wherewith I remain your most humble servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

<sup>13</sup> Ms.: Provenchère.

1854

**150. To Mr. Meynis, Secretary of the Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>1</sup>**

*Communications with Red River are possible only during the summer. Complaints lodged against those in charge of the Annals who do not publish anything on the Oblates.*

Marseilles, January 17, 1854.

Dear Sir,

I have received the letter you sent me for Bishop Taché. I will forward it intact to His Excellency but I must inform you that communications are not easy. Only in the month of August will the letter be able to be sent on to its destination.

Bishop Taché was very intent on having the letter he sent you published in the Annals. It expresses the homage of his gratitude for his predecessor. It is a question of what is fitting and proper.

As far as I am concerned, I would have liked mention of the names of the missionaries who leave for the missions not to have been forgotten. The dioceses which provide us with them are surprised when they are not mentioned. I will say nothing more about the insertion of the letters which, on numerous occasions, I have forwarded to Lyon. I read some which are less interesting. I feel that for the honor of the different Orders known as carrying on the ministry of the missions, their correspondence should be published in turn, if only to prove that they are not idle.

Please accept, sir, the expression of my distinct regards.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

<sup>1</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

**151. To the Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>2</sup>**

*Fr. Laverlochère has begun his round of preaching in Southern France. He will then follow what is suggested by the Council of Lyon.*

Marseilles, February 18, 1854.

Dear Sirs,

I would like to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated the 3rd of this month which contained a draft for 1 000 francs for the travelling expenses of Fr. Laverlochère as well as another letter addressed directly to this zealous missionary of the savages.

Gentlemen, I thank you for the generous fashion in which you will provide for the expenses to be met by Fr. Laverlochère in preaching for the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith in the various dioceses of France and for the tactful attention regarding his health. Even though he has made progress since his return from America, he is still far from total recovery. Rest assured that this good Father is prepared to devote all his ardour and his strength to the admirable Missionary Society whose importance for the missions he fully understands. We will therefore have to moderate his zeal and it is a wise measure to limit his preaching to the dioceses closest to us until the health of Fr. Laverlochère enables him to go farther afield. He has already begun his first attempts at preaching close to Marseilles and is now in the diocese of Fréjus where he was called for the same purpose. As soon as he has returned I will give him your letter and have him submit to me the campaign programme he will have established according to your instructions.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of the my high regard and gratitude wherewith I remain your most humble servant.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

<sup>2</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

**152. Letter dated February 26, 1854, to "The President of the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith at Lyon, Rhône".<sup>3</sup>**

*The Founder sends the information relative to the distribution of the 140 000 francs granted to the Congregation among the Oblate Missions. He requests a further installment.*

LETTER OMITTED

**153. Letter dated March 4, 1854, to "The President of the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith at Lyon, Rhône".<sup>4</sup>**

*The Founder indicates the way he had distributed the 500 Mass stipends received from the Council among the Oblate Missions.*

LETTER OMITTED

**154. Letter dated March 23, 1854, to the Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>5</sup>**

*Bishop de Mazenod expresses his surprise over not receiving the additional installment he has requested on the grant given to the Oblates.*

LETTER OMITTED

**155. To the Members of the Central Council for Southern France of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>6</sup>**

*Dispatch of a report on the needs of the Oblate Missions. Galveston, Buffalo, and Leeds are in need of special aid.*

<sup>3</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

<sup>4</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

<sup>5</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

<sup>6</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder. A similar text dated May 1 is on file in Paris.

Marseilles, April 30, 1854.

Dear Sirs,

Please find enclosed the documents which contain our requests for assistance for the foreign missions of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate with the indication of the relative amounts, the addition of which represents the total grant we hope to obtain for them in 1854 from the admirable Missionary Society whose temporal interests you administer with such wisdom and zeal.

Gentlemen, you know that these documents are drawn up on the basis of the annual reports sent in to the Secretary General of the Congregation by the superiors of each mission, and therefore it is not necessary to accompany them with any justification as to their truthfulness. It is sufficient for me to submit them to you. They thereby receive a complete guarantee as to exactitude and authenticity.

Nonetheless, I wish to make a few comments relative to the total amount of expenses in our missions. I would first of all like to state that, even though it may seem quite high, it is not much beyond that of last year which was limited to the strictly necessary in terms of the ordinary expenses for the nourishment and support of the missionaries as well as the extraordinary expenses for the purchase of land, construction of buildings, etc. As in the case of last year, the increase in the total amount of the expenses in our missions is principally due to this last item of expenditure. The sums requested for this item, however, are absolutely indispensable since the three missions for which this extraordinary assistance is requested are in such need that their very existence depends upon it and if they receive nothing they will be completely ruined.

The Galveston mission in Texas requests it urgently to complete the building which is to serve as a lodging for the Fathers and a college-seminary for the diocese. The completion of the building is one of the conditions set by the Company which sold the land. Buffalo is more or less in the same situation because, if the person who sold the land does not receive the amount promised this year, he will be able to repossess his property by forced expropriation without having to return the money already received. Lastly, the mission of Leeds is also compelled to turn to the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith in order to be able to pay for the land they had

purchased and to construct on it the church which corresponds to the needs of the area. In particular, Gentlemen, I would ask you to consider the importance of this foundation which is like the center of our operations in Great Britain, where our missionaries work with such zeal and devotion for the good of religion and where their efforts have already produced such happy fruits of salvation and conversion. They merit your encouragement all the more since they have thus far completely forgotten their temporal interests, and after a sufficiently long number of years they still do not have a suitable house which, as you can well understand, a community should have when it already has enough foundations in a country to form a regular province.

The third item of expenditure is represented by the travelling expenses of the new apostolic workers sent by the Congregation to its various missions in the foreign countries. These journeys are long and difficult and ordinarily cross territories where the means of transportation are very expensive. The number of departures this year will easily amount to a dozen and that will consequently entail considerable costs.

Therefore, Gentlemen, you can see that our requests for assistance only involve absolutely necessary expenses and, once again, I have no hesitations in affirming a fact which can be easily verified in your annual report of the month of May. I am referring to the fact that, among all the religious Institutes, the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary, with due consideration for the number and importance of the missions, is the most moderate in terms of the amount of grants requested and the most economic in the use of the alms received from the charity of the Missionary Society whose supreme administration is entrusted to you.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of the highest regards wherewith I remain your most humble and obedient servant,

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

156. Letter dated August 8, 1854, "To the President of the Council of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, place Bellecour, Lyon, Rhône".<sup>7</sup>

*Request to send an installment of the 1854 grant. Fr. Laverlochère has been visiting the dioceses of Southern France for three months and is now travelling towards Lyon.*

LETTER OMITTED

<sup>7</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.



1855

**157. To the Members of the Central Council for Southern France, of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>1</sup>**

*Condolences for the death of Mr. de Jessé. Request not to forget Bishop Taché's allocation and to send an additional installment on the 1854 grant.*

Marseilles, January 15, 1855.

Dear Sirs,

Upon my return from Rome at the beginning of this new year I received your letter informing me of the loss recently suffered by the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith in the person of Mr. de Jessé, the worthy president of your Council. I fully shared in your legitimate sorrow and offered prayers to God for the repose of the soul of the deceased to whom all the friends of the Missionary Society owe a debt of gratitude for the services he rendered to them. Moreover, I had a letter written to the superiors of our various missions so they would all have a Mass said and pray for the same intention.

While depriving you of a wise and zealous associate, the death of Mr. de Jessé does not create an irreplaceable void in your Council since fortunately you were able to replace him with Mr. Terret, whose experience already acquired in your Administration will make it easier for him to perform his duties as President. We are convinced that this twofold event will in no way alter our good relations with the Central Council of Lyon and that under the new President the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate will continue to

<sup>1</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

experience nothing but full satisfaction with your kindness and generosity in favor of its foreign missions. Speaking of these missions, I must not forget to satisfy the request of Bishop Taché of St. Boniface in the territory of the Hudson Bay Company in North America.

This missionary-prelate, fearful that his request for a grant might not reach you if he addressed it directly to the Central Council due to the lack of security in the postal service between Europe and the practically unknown lands where he lives, wrote and asked me to address this request to you on his behalf. Unfortunately, however, his letter arrived very late. I received it in Rome at the end of last November while it should have reached me in May in order to be in time for the distribution of the Missionary Society funds for this year. Nonetheless, a delay for which no one is at fault should not mean that this poor bishop and his mission will be deprived of the ordinary assistance granted to him each year by the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith. Even though the titular of the See of St. Boniface is now an Oblate of Mary, there is no reason to withdraw from him that alm which the Missionary Society judged necessary for his predecessor, Bishop Provencher<sup>2</sup>, because he has the same expenses and even more. On the other hand, as a bishop, he receives nothing from the grant given to the Oblates of Mary for their missions in his diocese. The assistance he requests is therefore indispensable for his secular clergy, his sisters, and the other responsibilities for which he must provide. In the note he left you during his trip to France in 1852, he indicated the reasons why it is necessary to preserve the distinction between the aid granted to the bishop of St. Boniface and that extended to the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary in his diocese. In that same note he gave a detailed account of his budget and the figure alone for the support of his personnel and the ordinary expenses of the divine cult is around 20 000 francs every year. He then adds: "Bishop Taché also ventures to point out that the aforementioned figures are exactly what would be required, not to provide the missionaries with living conditions similar to those of *poor priests* in civilized countries, but simply to free them from work unfitting to their character and harmful to the success of their missions."

<sup>2</sup> Ms.: Provenchère.

After that, Gentlemen, I have nothing more to say. What remains is to find the way to provide the necessary aid to Bishop Taché on the funds of 1854. I know these funds have already been distributed. I do think, however, that you always keep a more or less high amount in reserve for contingencies such as the one under consideration at present. It is therefore still possible for you to take an additional vote and come to the aid of the poor bishop of St. Boniface who in all respects merits this sign of your charity as you can see by the interesting letter he wrote me, a copy of which I plan to send to you posthaste for the Annals.

Before closing, Gentlemen, I would ask you to please send us as soon as possible a further installment on the total sum you granted to the missions of our Congregation for this year. Many of those missions have exhausted the resources for which they are indebted each year to the Missionary Society and would be in a very difficult position if prompt aid were not sent to them. In order to provide for the most urgent needs, the procurator of these missions insistently requests of us the sum of 25 000 francs.

Gentlemen, please accept the renewed expression of our gratitude and high regard wherewith I remain your most humble and obedient servant,

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

**158. Letter dated January 25, 1855, to the Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>3</sup>**

*Bishop de Mazenod sends a letter from Bishop Taché for the Annals and asks to know the amount of the grant made to the diocese of St. Boniface.*

LETTER OMITTED

<sup>3</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

**159. Letter dated January 28, 1855, to "The President of the Council of the Propagation of the Faith", Lyon.<sup>4</sup>**

*The Founder thanks the Council for the Mass stipends sent to the Missionaries and invites the members never to forget them because "our poor missionaries exposed to so many privations find solace to much misery in this small aid."*

LETTER OMITTED

**160. To The Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>5</sup>**

*Dispatch of the table showing the distribution among the Oblate missions of the sum allocated to the Congregation in 1854. A letter from Ceylon for the Annals.*

Marseilles, February 25, 1855.

Dear Sirs,

In conformity with the wish expressed in your letter of the 19th of this month, please find enclosed the table showing the distribution among the foreign missions of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary of the sum granted to it by your Councils for 1854. Taking as a basis the individual figure of the sum requested for these missions, we have the following results:

Total sum of the allocation	150 000 f.
Europe: missions in England	42 000 f.
North America: Missions in Oregon	21 000 f.
Missions of St. Boniface, Hudson Bay Territory	22 000 f.
Missions in Texas	22 000 f.
Mission and college in Buffalo	21 000 f.
Africa: missions in the Apostolic Vicariate of Natal (Bishop Allard)	22 000 f.

<sup>4</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

<sup>5</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

In response to another item in your letter, Gentlemen, I hasten to inform you that the 33 francs and 33 centimes, the Mass stipend you were charitable enough to offer us, were allotted to the mission of Oregon as well as the donation of 5 francs you granted to our missions of America.

Gentlemen, I must not forget to remind you of the request I forwarded to you a short time ago on behalf of Bishop Taché of St. Boniface in the territory of the Hudson Bay Company. I do not think I have to insist on this item. Now that you have made a final decision on the total sum of your grants for this year you can more easily judge and determine, according to your cash balance, which sum you would allocate out of these funds to Bishop Taché for the missions and other works of his diocese which are entrusted to others besides the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, and which are entirely his responsibility. His quality as a member of our Congregation should not deprive him of the advantages you extended to his predecessor Bishop Provencher<sup>6</sup> since, far from decreasing, the reasons to aid the bishop of St. Boniface with your alms have become more numerous and urgent.

I also enclose the copy of a letter written by one of our missionaries in Ceylon. It seemed interesting to us and of such a nature as to edify the pious readers of the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith. You can include it when the time comes in one of the issues to be published during the year.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of the high regard wherewith I remain your most humble and obedient servant,

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

**161. To the President of the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>7</sup>**

*Reception acknowledged of the letter notifying the balance of the grant for 1854. Impending dispatch of the report on the needs for 1855. Fr.*

<sup>6</sup> Ms.: Provenchère.

<sup>7</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

*Laverlochère is sick and will be replaced by Fr. Vincens in the round of preaching undertaken in favor of the Missionary Society.*

Marseilles, April 15, 1855.

Dear Mr. President,

I hasten to acknowledge reception of the letter containing the balance to my credit for the rest of the sum allocated by the Councils of the Propagation of the Faith to the missions of Mary Immaculate, and in relation to which the relative drafts will be sent to me. Within this week you will receive the report you requested on the needs of these missions so you can set the grant for 1855.

I also hasten to inform you that I have noted the sufferings endured by the good Fr. Laverlochère dealt such a strong blow to his constitution that he has not been able to recover his original strength in such a way as to be able to render the services to the holy Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith that we expected of him. I therefore asked him to end his preaching which would not have produced the desired results. Since it is so important, however, for the Missionary Society to be promoted, I suggested to Fr. Vincens, a missionary of distinguished merit endowed with considerable talent and above all a gentle and persuasive eloquence, that he replace Fr. Laverlochère in the mission entrusted to him by the Propagation of the Faith. Nothing flags the zeal of Fr. Vincens whose only respite from his countless missions is to preach the annual pastoral retreats which have earned him the trust of all the bishops who have called upon him. He has accepted my proposal, obviously subject to your approval. Therefore, Mr. President, you have only to let me know if you accept this replacement which will be, and you can take my word for it, entirely to the advantage of our holy Missionary Society and will produce, I venture to assure you, very good results to increase the number of associates to the Propagation of the Faith. Fr. Vincens is a man able to travel throughout France without any effect upon his health. His instructions are very solid and always enjoyed. I am sure he will draw up some very interesting ones on subjects he will be asked to treat, and that you will be fully satisfied with the choice I propose to you. Please let me know your wishes. I will keep Fr. Vincens here with me all week.

Mr. President, please accept the expression of the high regard wherewith I remain your most humble and obedient servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**162. To the President and Members of the Central Council of Southern France for the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>8</sup>**

*Dispatch of notes by the secretary of the Congregation on the needs of the Oblate missions for assistance. Observations on the grant requested for the new foundations of Plattsburg and the Isle of Man.*

Marseilles, April 17, 1855.

Dear Sirs,

I hasten to send you the notes which it is customarily the task of the Secretary General of the Congregation to compile and to which he was only able to dedicate his attention a short time ago, having been impeded from doing so earlier by ill health. These notes contain the needs of the missions directed by the Oblates of Mary in foreign countries and indicate the amount of each request for this or that mission in particular. They are intended to help you, at least with regard to our missions, in that major effort of distributing the funds of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith whose interests are entrusted to you. I do not have to insist and prove to you that these documents, compiled on the basis of the detailed reports submitted each year by the superiors of the various missions, merit your total trust and can be used as the basis for the amount of the grant which the Councils of the Missionary Society shall make to our Congregation for this year. Nonetheless I feel it necessary to present one or two observations, and in my recommendation support two of the requests contains in the enclosed documents.

The main remark refers to the total amount of our requests which is higher than usual and therefore would seem to require justification.

<sup>8</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder. A similar text, dated April 18, is on file in Paris.

It must be noted first of all that our requests for assistance only refer to strictly necessary elements and are intended to obviate pressing needs. When it is evident that one of our missions can do without the assistance of the Propagation of the Faith or a less substantial aid is sufficient, we ask for nothing better than to lighten the budget of the Missionary Society by that amount. This time, for example, the amount of the individual grants for many of our missions is already less than it was last year. This reduction will be even more in the future as the extraordinary expenses are met for the purchase of land, construction of houses and chapels, etc., and most of these foundations will only have to appeal to the Propagation of the Faith for their current expenses. We have not reached that point this year, but, even though our foreign missions are rather recent, we will soon be there if they continue to be assisted by the generous alms of the Missionary Society as they have been up to now, without being in a more favorable condition from a material point of view and able to survive and develop with less substantial grants. The increase in the total figure of the allocation we now request of you is due to two causes immediately evident in the enclosed documents: the introduction of a new mission in the number of requests and the acquisition of a new outpost for one of our most important foundations in England.

The new missions we ask you to add to those which your Councils have accepted to include in the distribution of the funds of the Missionary Society was founded last year in Plattsburgh<sup>9</sup>, one of the main cities of the diocese of Albany in the United States, along the border with Lower Canada. It was upon the request of His Excellency the bishop of Albany<sup>10</sup> and the entreaties of the bishop of Montreal that our fathers accepted the mission of this city. It is a place where there is an immense amount of good to be accomplished as much among the very large Canadian population as among the Americans. How is it possible, however, to give them the religious assistance which both beg for without a fitting place in which they can be gathered together for religious exercises? Faced with such an imperative need, the Oblates of Mary in Plattsburgh felt it necessary to summon up their courage. They began to construct a church, but it

<sup>9</sup> Ms.: Platzburg, always spelled this way in this letter.

<sup>10</sup> Bishop Jean MacCloskey, bishop of Albany.



would be impossible for them to meet the costs of this construction without the assistance of the Propagation of the Faith. With confidence, therefore, they appeal to the Councils of the Missionary Society, and I add my entreaties to their requests, in order that you kindly agree to grant them, Gentlemen, the rather modest grant they earnestly request of your charity.

I express the same recommendation for the request submitted to you by the Oblates in England for a foundation to which we attach the greatest importance not only for the immediate advantages it is to procure to our missions in Great Britain but also because we consider it indispensable for the success of our foreign missions where it is necessary to speak English almost everywhere. This foundation is the house destined to prepare English men or those who speak that language for these missions. It is a matter of opening this foundation in a place where it will enjoy the most favorable conditions in all respects. The place is a small island<sup>11</sup> equally distant from Liverpool, Dublin, and Glasgow. With the sum we request of you, it will be possible as of this first year to construct a rather suitable building for the community which is to live there and found on a solid basis a work whose services for religion are of the utmost importance. Gentlemen, I need say no more to obtain your favorable reception of this request from the Oblates of Mary in England.

I am unable to close my letter without renewing the expression of the gratitude of our Congregation for the kindness you show it everytime the occasion arises, and in particular for the favorable reception encountered each year in your Councils by the requests for assistance in favor of the foreign missions which it directs through its sons.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of the highest regards wherewith I remain your most humble and devoted servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

<sup>11</sup> Isle of Man, cf. report of April 16.

163. Letter dated September 26 to "The Members of the Central Council, for Southern France, of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith."<sup>12</sup>

*Request to send an installment on the year's grant and to help the foundation of Leeds in a special way.*

LETTER OMITTED

164. Letter dated October 5, 1855, to "The Members of the Central Council for Southern France, of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon."<sup>13</sup>

*Reception acknowledged of the installment requested on the 1855 grant and a request to indicate the amount of aid to be granted to Bishop Taché.*

LETTER OMITTED

165. Letter dated November 6, 1855, to the Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>14</sup>

*Request for a grant for Fr. Laverlochère's return trip to his missions. Dispatch of a report on the apostolate of the Oblates in Ceylon for the Annals.*

LETTER OMITTED

<sup>12</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

<sup>13</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

<sup>14</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

1856

166. Letter dated February 25, 1856 to, "The Members of the Central Council, for Southern France, of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon."<sup>1</sup>

*Distribution of the 150 000 francs grant among the Oblate Missions. Articles on the Oblates have not been published in the Annals for a long time.*

LETTER OMITTED

167. To the Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>2</sup>

*Bishop de Mazenod, acknowledges the reception of the balance of his grant and protests that only articles on China and Tonkin are published in the Annals. He suggests having Abbé Desgeorges sent to Rome to defend the interests of the Missionary Society.*

Marseilles, April 14, 1856.

Dear Sirs,

I hasten to acknowledge reception of the receipt which I received yesterday. I signed it and will give it to the banker of the Missionary Society.

The latest number of the Annals once again contains nothing but more or less interesting letters from the missions in China. Aren't

<sup>1</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

<sup>2</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

you afraid of overly promoting the Holy Childhood by speaking only of the country which is presented as having to absorb all the funds intended for children, almost as if a large number of these poor, tiny creatures were not baptized in the other missions. I do not feel I am exaggerating in my conviction that I have sent you letters perhaps more edifying than some of those which have received preference in the Annals. Moreover, they possess the merit of diversity. You end up by being bored only hearing about China, Cochinchina, and Tonkin.<sup>3</sup>

I am annoyed that the advice I gave in a letter to His Eminence Cardinal de Bonald was not followed. My advice was to send Canon Desgeorges to Rome to defend the cause of the Propagation of the Faith. Nothing less than a man like him was needed to counter-balance the intrigues of Mr. James. In Rome each cause must have its advocate. It is necessary to act, to speak, and to vindicate one's rights with persistence and firmness.

I only present these reflections out of the interest inspired within me by the great Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith to which no other will ever be able be comparable.<sup>4</sup>

Gentlemen, please accept the renewed expression of my highest regards and my gratitude for your admirable devotion to the conversion of souls.

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

#### **168. To the President of the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>5</sup>**

*Dispatch of the Procurator General's report on the needs of the Oblate missions. Please not to reduce the amount requested too much because the needs everywhere are numerous.*

<sup>3</sup> Ms.: Tonking.

<sup>4</sup> A note attached to this letter reads: "We will do our best to accede to the just observations made by Bishop Mazenod. Initial satisfaction is already given in the May issue. If it is possible to do more, it will be done."

<sup>5</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder. A similar text is on file in Paris.

Marseilles, April 14, 1856.

Dear Sirs,

I hasten to send you the notes which the Procurator General of the Congregation was instructed to compile. These notes present the needs of the missions directed by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in foreign countries and indicate the amount of each request for this or that missions in particular. They are intended to help you, at least with regard to our missions, in that major task of distributing the funds of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, the interests of which are in your hands. I do not have to insist in proving to you that these notes, compiled on the basis of the detailed reports submitted each year by the superiors of the various missions, merit your total trust and can be used as the basis for the amount of the grant which the Councils of the Missionary Society will accord our Congregation for this year.

I must, however, make one comment on the total amount of our requests which is higher than last year. I have to tell you first of all that our requests generally deal with objects of essential necessity. In the different countries where they work, our missionaries live in the most economic way, often depriving themselves, not only of what is superfluous which is normal, but of what would be really necessary for their health. Unfortunately, the countries where they work are bereft of resources and the needs only increase as the mission expands and the number of missionaries also necessarily increases, not as much, however, as requested by the bishops in the different dioceses in which our Fathers work.

With regard to the extraordinary expenses for construction costs, the purchase of land, and initial foundation costs, these will decrease very soon, I hope. I ask for nothing better than to lighten the budget of the Missionary Society as far as we are concerned, aware as I am of the immense responsibilities weighing upon it and the numerous requests submitted to it for the various missions.

I dare to hope that you will not apply overly substantial reductions to the different requests I submit to you since I myself have already reduced them to what is strictly necessary.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The amount requested amounted to 186 000 francs.

I do not wish to close my letter without expressing the gratitude of our Congregation for the kindness you have shown it everytime the occasion has arisen and, in particular, for the favorable reception reserved each year in your Councils to the requests of assistance for the foreign missions directed by its sons.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression the highest regard wherewith I remain your most humble and obedient servant,

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

**169. Letter dated November 8, 1856, to the Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>7</sup>**

*A report on the mission among the Kafirs (Natal) for the Annals. Request to grant an advance of 40 000 francs on the 1856 grant.*

LETTER OMITTED

**170. To the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>8</sup>**

*Reception of 45 000 francs acknowledged. Surprise and protest over the sharp reduction applied to the requests for grants. The hope that an additional amount will be approved to reestablish the necessary proportion.*

Marseilles, November 26, 1856.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Dear Sirs,

I consider it my duty to acknowledge reception of your letter dated the 20th of this month and the draft, in the form of a receipt, for the sum of 45 002 francs which you enclosed. At the same time I would like to thank you on behalf of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate for the favorable reception you thereby reserved to our recent request for an advance on the total grant approved by your Councils in favor of our foreign missions for 1856. However, I

<sup>7</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

<sup>8</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

cannot help but express the surprise and distress I felt when seeing the amount of the grant, the enormous reduction applied by the Central Councils of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith to the sum we requested for the Oblate missions. The fact that the Councils of the Missionary Society, despite their good will to accede to the requests for assistance addressed to them every year, do not do so in their entirety can be understood. For example, we have not been taken aback by the reductions they have applied in past years to the figures in the budget of our foreign missions, and thus far we have not considered it necessary to submit any protest in that regard. The reason is that, even though they were substantial, these reductions were spread over each of our missions and did not excessively decrease the amount we counted on in each request since the proportional average of the decrease was never higher than one-eighth of the amount requested. This time, however, the situation is completely different. The reduction applied by the Councils of the Missionary Society all of a sudden becomes twice what it was in the past, since instead of one-eighth, you deduct practically one-fourth from the total amount of our requests. To tell you the truth, I fail to understand the reason for a decision which is in such contrast with the kindness and generosity thus far reserved to our Congregation. It is true that the budget for our foreign missions is higher than in preceeding years, but you are aware of the special reasons which justify that increase since they were submitted to you in the report containing our requests for assistance for this year. Moreover, I would not complain if the reduction were in proportion to this increase; but what a difference!... The total amount of our requests has increased by approximately one-eighth over that of last year, and the amount of the allocation for this year would be reduced by one-fourth... In reality, you grant us the same sum as last year without taking into consideration the need which has compelled us to ask you for an increase in aid. This means that in some way you do not believe in this need and that the increase of the amount in the budget of our missions is due to an arbitrary decision and not the result of a serious examination and exact assessment of their needs. Thus, Gentlemen, you will not be surprised that I am unable to accept the vote of the Councils of the Missionary Society relative to our grant for 1856 as definitive and irrevocable. The honor of our Congregation and the sacred interests of our foreign missions make it impossible for me to do so. I therefore ask you to accept our protests

and meet with the members of the Central Council of Paris in order that, by means of a supplementary vote or any other fashion you may deem suitable, you reestablish the proportion thus far admitted between the amount of our requests and that of the sums granted. While awaiting a favorable response, Gentlemen, with the highest regards I remain your most humble and obedient servant,

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

P.S. The seven hundred Masses you were good enough to assign to us have been celebrated by our Fathers in the Apostolic Vicariate of Natal in Africa. The two mentioned in your latest letter will be celebrated by the Fathers in Texas.

<sup>9</sup> 150 000 francs were granted out of the 186 000 requested. Cf. Fr. Aubert's letter to the Council, 1857.



**171. To the Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>1</sup>**

*Bishop de Mazenod expresses his regrets for what in his last letter may have upset the Members of the Council and extends his apologies.*

Marseilles, January 8, 1857.

Dear Sirs,

I have learned from His Excellency the bishop of St. Boniface and His Excellency the bishop of Olympia<sup>2</sup> that the letter I wrote you insisting upon the needs of our missions caused you distress. My secretary must have misunderstood my thought if he slipped out with an expression that might have offended you. It is so far from my spirit and my heart to wish to cause the slightest distress to men such as yourselves, devoted to the good of all and for whom I harbor the greatest sympathy and profess all my admiration, that when signing my letter I did not realize that it contained anything besides the expression of our difficulties and the wish that your charity could provide for them. Nonetheless, I am so grieved over having been able, even involuntarily, to offend you that I hasten to express my regrets and extend my apologies. Please accept them as further evidence of my affectionate regards and my firm gratitude.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**172. To the President of the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>3</sup>**

*Dispatch of the document containing the request for aid for 1857. Everything has been reduced to what is strictly necessary.*

Marseilles, April 24, 1857.

Please find enclosed the report relative to the needs of the foreign missions entrusted to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate which

<sup>1</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

<sup>2</sup> Their Excellencies Taché and Semeria.

<sup>3</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder. A similar text in on file in Paris.

is to help you in your distribution of the funds of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith. I draw your attention to the manner in which the work was done according to my instructions. Only the urgent needs are submitted to you, and the figures are presented for your consideration only after having been examined with care and discussed.<sup>4</sup> Everything that regards the personal expenses of the missionaries is calculated from the point of view of the strictest economy. If our requests are still substantial it is because, on one hand, the number of missionaries increases in each mission and, on the other hand, construction work is underway to enable the missionaries to accomplish even more good. As soon as it will be possible for us to reduce the amount of our requests, I will hasten to do so because I do understand the extent of the burdens incumbent upon your Councils and the needs for which they must provide.

Mr. President, I trust that in its consideration of our requests the Council will bear in mind what I have set forth and that, if it finds it necessary to apply a reduction due to a lack of resources, that reduction will be as low as possible. I ask this of you for the good of our missions and also for the good of our missionaries. At times they deprive themselves of what is necessary in order to consecrate to their works that which is granted them for their nourishment since they consider the former as indispensable whenever, they do not receive former as indispensable whenever, due to the reductions applied they do not receive what they requested.

Mr. President, with the expression of my highest regards I remain your most humble and obedient servant,

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

**173. Letter dated October 8, 1857 "To the Members of the Central Council for Southern France of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon."**<sup>5</sup>

*Bishop de Mazenod asks the Council to grant him an installment of 45-50 000 francs on the year's grant.*

LETTER OMITTED

<sup>4</sup> 190 000 francs were requested: cf. the April report.

<sup>5</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

**174. To Mr. Levasseur, director of the Missionary Society of the Holy Childhood.<sup>6</sup>**

*Grateful acknowledgement for the aid granted to Bishop Taché and Bishop Semeria. Address the money to Fr. Fabre, the procurator of the Oblate missions.*

Marseilles, October 31, 1857.

Dear Mr. Director,

I hasten to thank you on behalf of Bishop Taché and Bishop Semeria for the aid which the Council of the Missionary Society of the Holy Childhood granted to each of these two prelates who are members of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. They will both be all the more pleased to receive this aid since their needs increase constantly and despite the deep concern on the part of the Council of the Propagation of the Faith, it cannot provide them with everything required by the state of their Christian communities.

Very often, for example, they are called upon in their ministry to baptize poor children who are in a similar situation to those in China. They themselves must have informed you as to what their solicitude entails, and the spirit of your Missionary Society proves itself Catholic by leading you to include among those your charity wishes to save the children of Buddhists in Ceylon and savages in America, with those of China.

Mr. Director, you ask me the safest and least expensive way to send the two prelates the aid granted to them. I do not think I can indicate a better way than through the Procurator General of the Oblate Congregation who maintains regular correspondence with Ceylon and St. Boniface and is in charge of providing in many ways for the interests of the missions of Bishop Semeria and Bishop Taché.

The Procurator General of the Oblates is Fr. Fabre, the superior of the major seminary of Marseilles. He is at your disposal to carry out the instructions he will receive from you. He possesses special facilities in this regard.

Together with the sentiments of the two bishops, I wish to add the expression of my personal gratitude for the aid you extend to the

<sup>6</sup> Certified Copy: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, DM. 10. Registre des lettres... 1855-1863, p. 136.

ministry of our men by granting them a share in the distribution of the funds from your Missionary Society.

Therefore, please accept, etc.

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**175. To the President of the Central Council of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>7</sup>**

*Request to advance the grant of 15 000 francs assigned to Buffalo. The Oblates have withdrawn from the schools of Buffalo and Galveston but continue to work in those dioceses.*

Marseilles, December 30, 1857.

Dear Sir,

The distressing position into which unforeseen circumstances have cast our foundation of the Oblates of Mary in Buffalo (United States of America) compels me today, to appeal anew to your kindness.

Due to the terrible crisis experienced at present by the American trade, the bank where our fathers had borrowed part of the money necessary to purchase the land they occupy is in a state of extreme difficulty, demands the immediate repayment of that sum, and has already begun a lawsuit to have the property sold in the case of non-payment. In order to save this foundation from the complete ruin with which it is threatened we will do everything we can here, but the Congregation does not have the funds to provide the sum needed in this case. You would render us a great service if, to the installment you were so kind to grant us on this year's allocation, you could add 15 000 francs which more or less represents the share due to Buffalo on the grant of this year.

Please note that this is by no means an increase in assistance nor properly speaking, a sacrifice, but only an advance payment. It is nevertheless a true service you would render to us and upon which,

<sup>7</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder. A similar text, dated December 26, is on file in Paris.

allow me to say it, we feel we have good reason to bank in view of the kindness you have always shown for the missions of our Congregation.

With regard to Buffalo, Gentlemen, I feel it necessary to inform you on the present condition of our Fathers in that city and the change which occurred not long ago. According to our agreement with Bishop Timon it was supposed to be both a college-seminary and a mission house. That is why, at the very beginning, they purchased a rather large plot of land in order to construct a building for that purpose, and to which a public chapel was to be added for the religious services for the residents in that part of the city. However, a few year's experience has sufficed to show that this college-seminary would never be more than a training school where, only with difficulty, would it be possible to gather together a small number of seminarians. Most of them would have to work as supervisors or professors and that would very much jeopardize their ecclesiastical education. Compelled, therefore, to give up the idea of making their foundation a house of education, our fathers dedicated it exclusively to a purpose more in conformity with the spirit of their vocation, which is the apostolic ministry. They have devoted themselves to the religious service of the district in which they live, and for part of the year visit the parishes of the diocese to preach missions and retreats to the immense satisfaction of the clergy and the great advantage of the people whom these exercises have restored to fidelity in their religious duties or brought back to the Church since most of them are separated brethren.

Gentlemen, I would also like to take advantage of this occasion to give you similar details regarding one of our foundations in Texas. You know that upon request of Bishop Odin, the bishop of that territory, we sent Fathers of Our Congregation to Galveston and Brownsville a few years ago. The former group was to direct a college-seminary. The bishop of Galveston obtained a piece of land in the city, to which he added another lot he had purchased. A building suitable for the planned foundation was constructed on that land to a great extent with the aid approved on numerous occasions by the Propagation of the Faith. In Galveston as in Buffalo, however, experience soon proved that these good prelates were overly confident in their hopes because unless you are in the areas with a large Catholic population, it is very difficult in the United States to open

houses of education other than elementary or training schools. Insofar as it is not at all in conformity with the vocation of our missionaries to undertake similar works, since the Congregation assumes the education of youth only in seminaries where the goal is priestly formation, we had to try and place our Fathers in Galveston in conditions closer to the spirit of their state of life. After having an agreement with Bishop Odin in this matter, the Fathers went to Brownsville to join their confreres and help them provide for the spiritual care of the population of that city and the vast district for which it acts as a center. They transferred the college and all its dependencies to the bishop of Galveston and agreed to a rather trivial indemnity for the sacrifices of all kinds they had to impose upon themselves for five years in order to create this foundation and raise it to the position worthy of respect it occupied when they voluntarily withdrew in favor of the diocese. Moreover, the goodly Prelate expressed his gratitude for their devotedness to the work he had entrusted to them and his sincere wish to compensate them more fully, as soon as he was able, for the sacrifices they had made in material terms for his college. He most probably is counting on something for that purpose from the assistance of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith. However, it is not necessary for me to say, Gentlemen, that if the Councils of the Missionary Society grant him aid to that end, by no means is it to be to the detriment of our missionaries. In Brownsville they have even greater need for the total grant requested in our budget of this year for Texas, because they must meet the expenses of their two communities united into one, they no longer have the income from the college, and, moreover, they must defray the construction costs of their new church begun some time ago.

In this matter, I leave it entirely to your just appreciation and the well known interest you harbor for the foreign missions of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of my highest regards,

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

1858

**176. To the Members of the Central Council for Southern France, of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>1</sup>**

*Dispatch of documents relative to the needs of the Oblate missions. Special recommendation for Leeds, Liverpool, and Montreal.*

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marseilles, April 29, 1858.

Dear Sirs,

I enclose the documents which the Secretary General of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate was instructed to compile on the requests we address to you each year in favor of our foreign missions. This report would have reached you earlier if some of the documents we expected from our missionaries in foreign countries had reached the Father in charge of preparing these documents in the usual time. His report, which he could finish only today, contains as usual a brief presentation of the needs of the foreign missions entrusted to the Oblates of Mary and presents the amount of the requests for assistance for each mission.

Gentlemen, it is not necessary for me to insist and prove to you that these documents, compiled according to the information supplied by the respective superiors of our foreign missions, merit your full trust and that, with regard to our grant, you can use them as the basis for your work in distributing the funds of the Missionary Society whose interests are entrusted to your renowned zeal and to your perfect spirit of justice and charity.

<sup>1</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder. A similar text, dated April 30, is on file in Paris.

Allow me to submit a special recommendation for two important missions, those of Leeds and Liverpool in England, which still require your generous assistance in order to be definitively placed on a solid and respectable footing.

I also call upon your kindness concern in favor of our foundation of Montreal in Canada. On behalf of that mission we submit a request for a direct and more substantial aid than what it receives for its ordinary needs through the local administration of the Propagation of the Faith. In this regard, I must point out that in order to avoid making this grant overly burdensome for the Missionary Society by including it in the budget of our foreign missions, we have reduced the figure initially advanced in the requests for assistance of our other missions, so that the total amount we request for 1858 remains more or less the same as what was requested last year.<sup>2</sup> We thus hope that if you yourselves find it necessary to reduce further the grant your Councils will soon approve in favor of the foreign missions of the Oblates of Mary, you will be so kind as to consider the fact that we have already reduced our request.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of my devoted sentiments and highest regards,

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

P.S. The procurator of our foreign missions would be very grateful if your treasurer would send us the balance of the grant approved for 1857, the amount which we received up to now during the month of April.

**177. Letter dated August 7, 1858, "to the President of the Council of the Propagation of the Faith", Lyon.<sup>3</sup>**

*Bishop de Mazenod awaits a response from Rome to know if he is to allow Bishop Macario of Damascus, to preach in Marseilles.*

LETTER OMITTED

<sup>2</sup> The sum requested in 1858 amounted to 195 000 francs. Cf. the notes of April 29, 1858.

<sup>3</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.



**178. Letter dated October 12, 1858, "to the Members of the Central Council of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith."<sup>4</sup>**

*Bishop de Mazenod sends the report of a mission given in the Vicariate of Jaffna, for the Annals. He requests an installment of 40-50 000 francs on the year's grant and transmits the list of missionaries who left during the summer.*

LETTER OMITTED

<sup>4</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.



1859

**179. To the Members of the Central Council, for Southern France, of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>1</sup>**

*Dispatch of the document containing the request for assistance for the Oblate Missions in 1859. The amount requested is equal to that of 1858. The special needs of the foundations of Île-à-la-Crosse, New Caledonia and St. Michel in South Africa.*

Marseilles, May 10, 1859.

Dear Sirs,

I enclose the report of the Secretary General of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate on the present state of our foreign missions with the request for assistance intended to provide for their respected needs this year. Compiled on the basis of official documents submitted by the superiors of these missions, this document was also examined by the members of my Council for the Affairs of the Congregation who considered it matter for a serious and detailed analysis thereby endowing it with a full guarantee for its exactness and authenticity.

You will observe, Gentlemen, that despite the progressive development of our foundations which are assisted by the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith and the increase in the needs of many of them, we have not raised the total amount of the allocation requested in the past years by the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in favor of the missions entrusted to it

<sup>1</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. Only the final salutations and the signature were written personally by the Founder. A copy of this letter, dated May 7, is on file in Paris.

in foreign countries.<sup>2</sup> This is because the amount of each individual request is limited to what is strictly necessary for the missionaries themselves and the expenses of the divine cult as well as for the expenses relative to the construction of the houses for the missionaries and public chapels which represent the part of the budget under extraordinary expenses.

I would therefore ask you, Gentlemen, to please consider this important observation in your examination of the enclosed report and the determination of the sums you deem it suitable to grant to each of our missions which, in the final analysis, will produce the general grant in favor of the Oblates of Mary in 1859. I venture to believe that, since things stand as I have presented them to you, the amounts in our requests will not be subject to any reduction on your part. Otherwise it will be impossible for us to provide for the needs of our missions whose very existence depends upon the generous charity of the Missionary Society which has confided its material interests to the zeal and renowned wisdom of your supreme administration.

Among the foreign missions of our Congregation, I would like to draw your attention in a special way to three of them which this year are in a special condition which requires higher expenses than usual. The first is Île à la Crosse whose missionary superior Fr. Grandin, is to be raised to the episcopal dignity as Coadjutor to Bishop Taché of St. Boniface. The second is New Caledonia in the English possessions of Oregon which is destined to assume great importance and where everything is still to be done. Lastly, a third mission which merits your special attention is the station of St. Michel in the midsts of the Kafirs and where the cost of forming a solid foundation will necessarily be substantial.

Gentlemen, I had to make special mention of the needs of these three important missions in order to explain the increase in the amount of our requests in their favor in the enclosed report. It is an exceptional case whose just reasons you will be able to appreciate and to which I trust you will not refuse your full accord.

<sup>2</sup> 195 000 francs were requested and 190 000 granted. Cf. letters of Fr. Aubert (May 6, 1859) and the Founder's letter of October 17, 1859.

Together with the expression of my gratitude Gentlemen, please accept my highest regards,

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

P.S. I have been asked to recommend to your benevolence a new mission in the county of Cornwall, the diocese of Plymouth in England. This mission, located in a place called Camborne had to be included by Bishop Vaughan among those of his diocese for which he requests aid from the Councils of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith. Since after a visit to the place during my journey in England, I am personally aware of the interest which that mission merits and I heartily add my recommendation to the request of the diocesan bishop.<sup>3</sup>

**180. Letter dated the month of September 1859, to the Council of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>4</sup>**

*Request for an installment on the 1859 grant.*

LETTER OMITTED

**181. Letter dated October 17, 1859 to "The Members of the Central Council for Southern France, of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon".<sup>5</sup>**

*Gratitude expressed for the allocation of 190 000 francs granted in 1859 and for the advance of 106 000 francs.*

LETTER OMITTED

<sup>3</sup> This P.S. is only found in the letter sent to Paris.

<sup>4</sup> Certified Copy: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, DM. 10. Registre des lettres... 1855-1863, pp. 236-237.

<sup>5</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. Only the salutations and the signature were written personally by the Founder.



1860

**182. To Mr. de Prandiére, president of the Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>1</sup>**

*Work is underway in Marseilles on the report for the grant required by the Oblate missions in 1860. The death of Fr. Casimir Aubert.*

Paris, February 29, 1860.

Dear Mr. President,

I have just received in Paris the letter you were kind enough to address to me in Marseilles on February 24. I will send it to Marseilles today so that your every request be promptly satisfied. If there have been delays, alas, they are to be attributed to the tragic misfortune recently suffered by the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in the sudden and untimely death of that very kind Fr. Aubert who was responsible for all the affairs of our foreign missions. His accuracy and the lucidity of his reports had earned him your praise. I recommend him to your prayers.

Mr. President, please accept the expression of the regards wherewith I remain your most humble and obedient servant,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**183. To the President and the Members of the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith.<sup>2</sup>**

*Dispatch of the report on the needs of the Oblate Missions. The money needed for each foundation has been reduced to the essentials. The*

<sup>1</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

<sup>2</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

*special needs of the house near Edinburgh and the missions in the diocese of St. Boniface where there are 32 Oblates. The state of the missions of Natal and the United States.*

Marseilles, April 5, 1860.

Dear Sirs,

I enclose the report of the Procurator General of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate indicating the different needs of the foreign missions entrusted to our Fathers, assisted up to now in an effective way by the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith. In keeping with my instructions, this work was done with very special care and on the basis of the information supplied by the superiors of the various missions which receive aid. Even while keeping in mind the needs as notified, I wanted due consideration to be given to the enormous responsibilities which weigh upon your Society, and to the special obligation imposed upon each missionary by his profession to religious life. Moreover, I also wanted requests for personal assistance to be limited to what is strictly necessary. I always make these recommendations every year, and this year I felt it necessary to attend to their observation in a very special way. I examined this work and had my Council do so as well, and I would venture to say that my wishes were scrupulously respected. I therefore submit our requests to you with full trust. This is inspired by your customary kindness for our missions and missionaries and reposes as well upon the deep feeling and well founded conviction that I ask you for only what is absolutely indispensable. I have no doubts that my twofold character will endow my affirmation with the value I wish to attribute to it and that, I hope, you will accept it.

The grand total of our requests is higher than that of the two preceeding years.<sup>3</sup> The report presented to you fully justifies this increase which I nonetheless wish to explain to you briefly myself. The increase concerns two missions: England and the diocese of St. Boniface. Near the gates of Edinburgh in Scotland, we have had to open a new foundation very urgently requested of us by Bishop Gillis. It is this foundation which has raised the amount of our request for England. However, neither for this new foundation nor for the others we have in this Province, has it or will it ever occur to

<sup>3</sup> The request amounted to 204 500 francs; cf. report dated March 27.



us to ask you for what is needed to pay the totality of the debts contracted or to settle all we have to pay during the course of each year. We ask you for what is needed to cover part of the expenses. To procure what is necessary for the rest, our fathers have to take up collections, seek contributions, and impose personal sacrifices upon themselves. The second increase involves the amount requested for our missions of St. Boniface. There are two reasons for this increase: the opening of a foundation in Pembina which we had to undertake in order to avoid its collapse, and the departure of four Fathers and three Brother-catechists who are accompanying the new Coadjutor of St. Boniface. This latter expense is entirely exceptional. Bishop Grandin personally illustrated this expense to the members of the Council of Paris who seemed to receive it with their customary benevolence. I would like to inform you that in that immense diocese and for the six foundations entrusted to us, we have 22 Fathers and 10 Brother-catechists – 32 persons in all, of whom 28 depend upon your grant for all of their needs. The other four are the responsibility of the bishop of St. Boniface whose grant is totally distinct in its use and in your intentions, because the interests of the diocese of St. Boniface are in no way confused with those of our foundations located in this diocese and should not to be. On the other hand, as the report illustrates in detail, everything we ordinarily request for our missions among the savages is practically limited to meeting normal expenses and not to provide us with independent and permanent resources.

In the case of the missions in Oregon and Natal, even though during the past year to satisfy partially the urgent appeal addressed to me I had to send two more Fathers to the former and a Father as well as two Brother-catechists to the latter, I only ask for a slight increase for Oregon and none at all for Natal. I am very happy to be able to draw this fact to your attention. It's not that in either of these missions the needs are not great and the privations limited in number, but I felt it my duty not to advance a higher figure. In the second of these missions, together with Bishop Allard, the Apostolic Vicar, we have 5 Fathers and 5 Brother-catechists. The neighboring vicariates perhaps do not have the same number of evangelical workers and their situation is perhaps not the same as Natal where they have before them an Anglican bishop, about thirty Protestant ministers and a Kaffir population accustomed to consider the truth and teaching they receive according to the amount of gold they give

it. In Oregon, at present we have 8 Fathers and 6 Brother-catechists and I receive further requests from that area which are supported by the Propaganda Fide. However, before I consent to send new missionaries there or anywhere else, I must first of all be sure that they will be able to find what they need to live, in keeping with poverty if you want, but at least within the limits of what suffices for their needs. Lastly, I am pleased to inform you that I was able to decrease by approximately one third the grant I ask of you for our two foundations of Texas and Buffalo in the United States, as is indicated in the enclosed report. Even though they are located in formally constituted dioceses, these two foundations are nonetheless mission foundations. Our Fathers are not involved merely in performing curial functions. I never accept those functions on their own and only allow our Fathers to accept them insofar as they permit the Fathers to remain religious, to live as such, and especially to be essentially missionaries.

I felt it necessary to go into these few details to justify the legitimacy and sincerity of our requests and also to justify the benevolence which you have thus far reserved to our foreign missions. These missions owe their existence to you. You will kindly continue your most precious aid to them. Our missionaries place their trust in you in order to support and to develop the good which has already begun. Your generous charity will not let them down. I share this trust entirely.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of the highest regards wherewith I remain your most humble and obedient servant,

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

#### **184. To the Pontifical Society of the Holy Childhood.<sup>4</sup>**

*The presence of the Society of the Holy Childhood is tolerated in Marseilles as long as it operates with discretion.*

<sup>4</sup> Certified Copy: Marseilles, Registre des lettres administratives, Vol. III, p. 87, n. 221.

Marseilles, June 1, 1860.

Dear Father,

The existence of the Holy Childhood in the diocese of Marseilles is a reality in which, as you know, I have had no part. Despite my friendship for the founder of this Society<sup>5</sup>, I have always refused him my assistance. I thereby displeased a very close and lifelong friend, but I felt I had to be opposed, at least passively, to what appeared to me to be of such a nature as to represent fatal competition to the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith.

Nonetheless, since the Society exists and operates today in Marseilles, I feel I can give my consent that a report be compiled locally as to the income in each parish. I hope that will be done without too much of a stir and within the prescribed limits, so that there will be no disadvantage for the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith. I would like to be able to go further than what I ask you to consider as a simple affirmation of tolerance, but I still entertain qualms and, for the time being, I will leave things be without mounting opposition.

I have no less praise, Sir, for the religious zeal which inspires the directors of the Society of the Holy Childhood and if their full success does not endanger a greater interest, I would commend them with all my heart.

Please accept...

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

**185. Letter dated September 27, 1860, to the President of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>6</sup>**

*Enclosure of a letter from a Missionary in Buffalo for the Annals. Request to send an installment on the 1860 grant.*

LETTER OMITTED

<sup>5</sup> Mgr. de Forbin-Janson.

<sup>6</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

**186. To the President of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>7</sup>**

*Gratitude for the sentiments of deep consideration expressed in the latest letter received from the Council. Apologies for the protests advanced, but the aid is very little in comparison to the numerous needs. The foundation of Lys-Marie is to be struck from the list of grants.*

Marseilles, October 10, 1860.

Dear Mr. President,

I can well leave it up to the Procurator General of the Oblates of Mary to handle with you the financial interests of the numerous missions of the Congregation, but I reserve to myself conveying my deep gratitude to you for the sentiments you were so kind to express in your recent letter. I venture to add that I have a certain right to your affectionate consideration due to the esteem I have for devoted men who dedicate their time and energy to the worthy Society which they help to prosper through their wise administration, and due to the attention with which I have always heeded their lead which is in perfect harmony with the way I view this matter. If I happened to use words expressing distress, what I have just said will explain that it was more in the sense of chagrin than protest. I like to believe that I was misinformed, but I was told that it had been decided beforehand to reduce my proposed grants for reasons against which I fully intend to conduct a victorious battle. What else is there to do? Is it necessary to forego forging new conquests over the adversary of the salvation of men? If God opens the way for us to penetrate further into the camp of the enemy, are we to remain stationary due to the lack of means for pitching our tents?

You must have noted that while the amount of our proposed grants has risen this year beyond that of past years, it is because we have been in the forefront in the relentless war we wage against the devil. What difference is there if it is the same Congregation or a new one which proposes an increase in expenses if that increase is based on the numerical expansion of the missions called for in response to the needs of the people. In my opinion, it is not a question of giving a set

<sup>7</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

amount to a Congregation so that it manages to get by in any way it can. Your grants should be based on the more or less large number of mission foundations and provide, I would venture to add, for the newly born. I accept the fact that Lys-Marie is unacceptable since you decided that this type of foundation is not among those supported by the Propagation of the Faith. However, please note that due consideration must be reserved to the increase in the number of missionaries and the outrageous prices paid to reach their missions.

Mr. President, please accept the renewed expression of my highest regards,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.



1861

**187. To the Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.<sup>1</sup>**

*Dispatch of a report on the needs of the Oblate missions. Only what is essential is requested. The missionaries live in a state of privation. The list of missionaries who were sent in 1860.*

Marseilles, April 10, 1861.<sup>2</sup>

Dear Mr. President and Members of the Council  
of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.

It is my pleasure to enclose the report compiled by the Procurator General of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate informing you on the needs of the different missions entrusted to our Fathers, to whose assistance your Society has generously come every year. Even though I have been confined to my bed of pain for more than three months, the Lord granted me the Grace, in the midst of my sufferings, to deal with matters incumbent upon me in my twofold quality. I myself conducted a detailed examination of the report I am sending to you. I had given instructions that, when compiling the report, due consideration be reserved to the enormous responsibilities which weigh upon your Society, and that in the requests advanced the amounts be limited as in the past to what is strictly necessary and an attempt be made to reduce the total amount of these requests. I am pleased to inform you that we have reached that result. The grand total of our requests is less than what it was in the past two years.<sup>3</sup> I must not conceal the fact that we were only able to achieve that result by dedicating the most scrupulous attention to the documents sent to

<sup>1</sup> Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. Letter only signed by the Founder. A similar copy is kept in Paris.

<sup>2</sup> This letter is not dated. In his diary, the Founder gave it as: April 10.

<sup>3</sup> Fr. Fabre's report likewise bears no date. The amount requested was 204 000 francs.

us by the various missions, eliminating everything which could be eliminated, and decreasing what could be decreased without imposing excessive privations and without impeding or hampering the good to be accomplished. I therefore submit this report to you with full confidence. I venture to hope that in your examination of the different amounts requested, you will refrain from applying overly substantial reductions in addition to those I have already imposed myself. They would place our missionaries in unbearable straits and in certain places, make it impossible for them to continue the good works which have been started.

I would not recommend any mission in particular to your kindness. They all deserve the generous concern you have been so kind to reserve to them thus far. I would dare to say that what you will do for our missionaries will not be lost. Their gratitude for your kindness is without limits. Their zeal will be supported by your assistance, and your generous aid will consolidate the works which are most pleasing to God, and most useful to souls, but founded in the midsts of the greatest difficulties and at the price of the most painful privations. I do not ask you to assume all the expenses of these works but, for subsidy in aid of those who sustain them and remain responsible for the largest part. For our missionaries I request not what they need to lead a comfortable and easy life, but what they require in order to procure their meager sustenance, to provide for their modest upkeep, to cope with very arduous tasks, and to ensure a certain amount of respect for the sacred character with which they are invested and the august ministry they discharge.

I venture to hope that, this year as always, you will persevere in the kind interest you have never ceased to manifest for our missionaries and their missions, and I harbor the promising trust that you will continue to manifest it always and nothing will ever be able to make it waver.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of my gratitude and the repeated assurance of my highest regards,

† C. J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles,  
Superieur General of the Missionary Oblates  
of Mary Immaculate

P.S. Last February I instructed our Procurator General to send you the list of the missionaries who had left for our foreign missions in 1860. In case this list did not reach you, I am including it here so you



can publish it in the next edition of the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith.

The following Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate were sent from the mother-house in Marseilles:

For the missions of England and Ireland:

- Fr. Healy from the diocese of Ferns (Ireland).
- Fr. King from the diocese of Down and Connor (Ireland).
- Fr. Lenoir from the diocese of St. Claude.
- Br. Matthews, scholastic, from the diocese of Clifton (England).

Bishop Grandin, the bishop of Satala (in partibus), Coadjutor to Bishop Taché (bishop of St. Boniface), and a member of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, who came to France for his consecration which took place in Marseilles on November 30, 1860, has taken the following missionaries with him to the mission of St. Boniface:

P.S. Last February I instructed our Procurator General to send you the list of the missionaries who had left for our foreign missions in

- Fr. Simonin from the diocese of Bayonne.
- Fr. Séguin from the diocese of Clermont-Ferrand.
- Fr. Caër from the diocese of Quimper.
- Fr. Gasté from the diocese of Laval.
- Bro. Grouard, scholastic from the diocese of Laval.
- Bro. Glenat from the diocese of Grenoble, catechist.
- Bro. Boiramé, catechist, from the diocese of Laval.

For the missions of Buffalo (United States).

- Fr. Bournigalle from the diocese of Vannes.
- Fr. Lux, from Holland.
- Bro. Génin, scholastic, from the diocese of Grenoble.

For the missions of Ceylon:

- Fr. Crousel from the diocese of Bruges (Belgium).
- Fr. Gourdon from the diocese of Fréjus.
- Fr. Salaün from the diocese of Quimper.
- Bro. Bennett, catechist, from the diocese of Dublin (Ireland).

For the missions of Texas and Mexico:

- Fr. Maurel, from the diocese of Toulouse.
- Fr. Schumacher from the diocese of Luxembourg.
- Fr. Clos from the diocese of Tarbes.

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