

Blessed DE MAZENOD

LETTERS

TO THE OBLATES

OF FRANCE

1826-1830



Letters to the Oblates of France

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Letters to the Oblates of France

1826-1830

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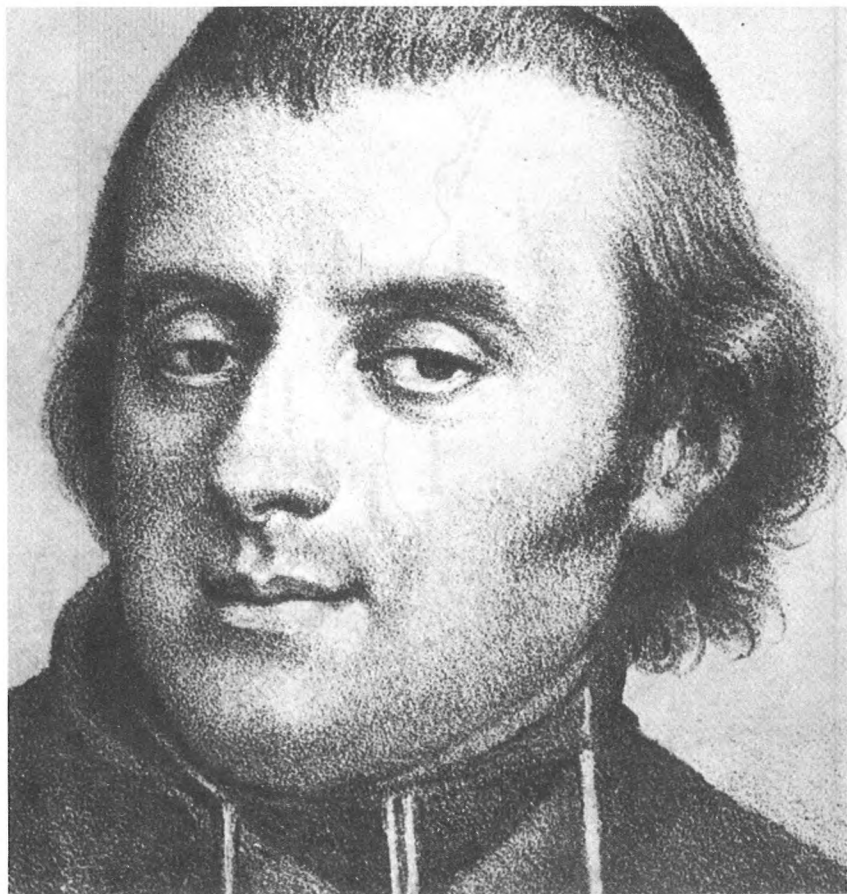
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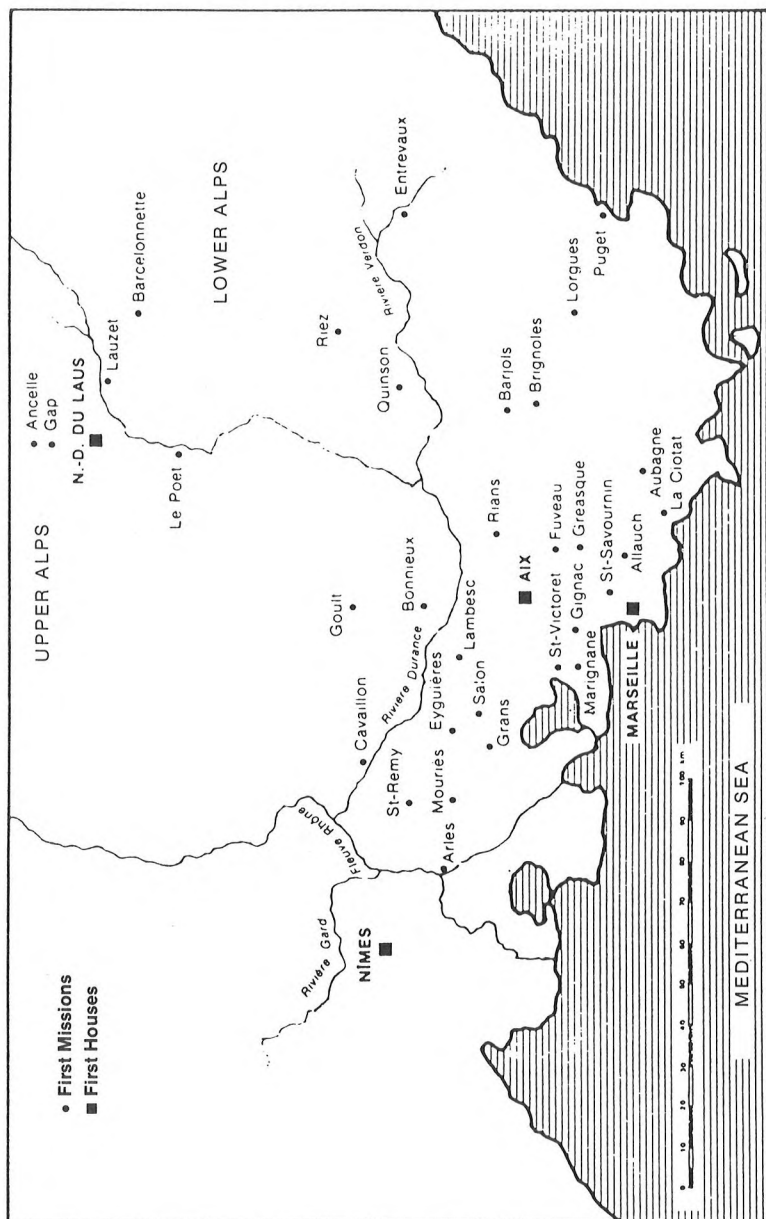
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Father Eugene de Mazenod, Vicar General of Marseilles (1823-1836)
Lithography of Marlet, dated 1825.



Map of the South of France

Introduction

This seventh volume of Oblate Writings comprises two groups of letters of unequal worth: those written in Rome and during his trip back to France, in the period from July 1825 to June 1826; and others, somewhat fragmented, written from July 1826 to December 1830.

I — Letters of 1826: Approbation of the Congregation

The letters written at Rome make up the more important part of this volume, not because of their number but because of their length and content. One cannot over-estimate their worth and significance.

From 1825 to 1826, Father de Mazenod lived through one of the crucial periods of his life and the Congregation crossed, somewhat unknowingly, a major threshold of its existence. We readily perceive this as we read and reread these pages wherein vivacity, humour,¹ joy, gratitude and a strong, vibrant faith constantly grip our interest and prompt us to sing the Te Deum as did our Founder on February 18th.

Seeking the Approbation of Rome

Father de Mazenod had already been aware for several years, because of difficulties he had had with certain bishops, that in order to bring his work to fruition and shelter it from adversaries, he must seek recognition from the Holy See. However he could not make up his mind to go to Rome. Father Rambert explains the motives of this hesitation: "They were then so few, so small, so obscure! Moreover, it must be said, there was a personal motive which paralyzed the courage of the Superior General. Although being an utterly resolute man who by the sheer force of his personality could strive for good untiringly and with the utmost audacity, incapable of retreating before apparently

¹ There are not a few pages in these letters wherein the Founder, although tired and preoccupied, laughs heartily nonetheless over little misadventures which have befallen others or himself.

insurmountable obstacles, he could not quite find within himself the confidence he needed to go and obtain approval for his Congregation. It is true that by nature he lacked the obsequious disposition which those who solicit favours are inclined to show. But apart from having to overcome the natural pride of his character and a certain sensitivity in temperament, he also had to contend with his humility. He told himself, as he has mentioned several times, that he had not the stature to get himself recognized by the Church as founder of a religious order, that it would be presumptuous for him to go and seek from the Sovereign Pontiff a deed which implied this title . . . On the other hand he also felt that if his overtures were in vain, failure would throw his Congregation into disfavour. The bishops would in their turn withdraw their approbation and prospective candidates would hesitate to enter a religious community which Rome refused to recognize . . . ²

In any event he left for Rome in November 1825, urged by the wishes of all the members of the Congregation and of Father Albini in particular. Here is what he himself wrote in his *Mémoires*: “. . . seven bishops had approved our Rules. Armed with all these quite flattering approbations, I was still hesitant about undertaking the journey to Rome when our holy Father Albini pushed me by the shoulders (literally, for he impelled me with both hands) asserting with assurance: ‘Go, dear Father, go. You will succeed.’ So I went, putting my trust in Providence.”³

The Founder arrived at Rome on November 26th and spent the first weeks entering into contact with cardinals and bishops, with prefects and secretaries of Sacred Congregations and with sundry other prelates and personages. He noted apprehensively that it was a long standing practice for the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars to grant only a laudatory decree to a congregation instead of the approbation requested. He resolved therefore to say to the Holy Father with all the ardour and conviction of which he was capable that a laudatory decree “would not satisfy him.”⁴

His first audience took place on December 20th. Only half an hour sufficed the Founder to convince Leo XII that it was necessary to approve rather than merely praise. The conviction acquired by the

² RAMBERT, *Vie de Mgr. de Mazenod*, I, 412-413.

³ *Ibid.*, 413-414.

⁴ Letter of December 22, 1825.

*Pope became a categorical decision conveyed a few days later to the pro-secretary of the Congregation of the Bishops and Regulars, the archpriest Adinolfi: "This Society pleases me," the Holy Father is reported to have said to Adinolfi, "I wish to favour it. Choose one of the mildest cardinals . . . , see him on my behalf and tell him that my intention is that these Rules be not merely praised but approved."*⁵

Encouraged by such benevolence, Father de Mazenod immediately went about obtaining a simplification of the procedure which otherwise could have lasted several months as eight cardinals would each have had to read the manuscript of the Rules first before assembling in order to give their assessment. So well did he present this new request that Cardinal Pacca, prefect of the Sacred Congregation, was authorized by the Pope on January 18th to form a committee composed only of three cardinals: Pacca, Pedicini as "ponens," and Pallotta, a friend of the cardinal "ponens."

A third obstacle was suddenly encountered which, however, served only to hasten a happy outcome. Three bishops of southern France, Arbaud, de Bausset and Miollis, who had at first given their approbation to the Rules, wrote to the Pope to explain that the statutes of the Oblates had been examined too quickly and now appeared unacceptable on the grounds of being derogatory to the rights of bishops and the civil laws of the Kingdom. As these motives were inspired by Gallicanism, they were not able to deter the Cardinals who, on the contrary, became still more resolved to affirm, by an authentic act, the authority of the Holy See.

The Cardinals met at the residence of Cardinal Pacca on February 15th and unanimously decided to approve the Rules. Two days later, Leo XII approved and confirmed the decision of the Congregation.

The Founder's amazement and power to influence others

The Founder subsequently felt surprised over the positive and rapid result of his overtures, a result obtained from the goodness of God but attributable also to the kind of fascination he exercised on the persons whom he had met and whose warm welcome and kind understanding elated him. Indeed, during his sojourn at Rome between 1825 and 1826, Father de Mazenod gained or regained awareness first of the charm and ascendancy of his personality which strongly impressed and

⁵ Idem.

won the goodwill of everyone and then especially of the infinite goodness of God towards himself and his Congregation. He thus acquired the conviction more than ever that he must surrender himself entirely to the holy will of God after having done his best. Here are some revealing excerpts of his letters: “. . . were I not intimately convinced that the good God has been pleased to prepare the way and open hearts, I could truly have taken pride in seeing the eagerness, esteem and affection that everyone has shown to me during my sojourn in this capital of the world. Thanks to the Lord, I have not even been tempted by such base pride; but to say that I have felt no satisfaction and consolation over this welcome would be to lie; on the contrary, I have been constantly imbued with joy and gratitude for I must say that, from the servants and lay brothers, etc., all the way up to the Pope, they have vied with each other in showing me the liveliest signs of attachment and affection. If you had seen the Pope during the audience of a full half-hour that he granted me yesterday, you would have wept with emotion . . .” (letter of April 16).

On the occasion of his farewell visit to the French Embassy on May 4th, Montmorency-Laval, towards whom the Founder always showed himself courteous but quite reserved, avowed that Father de Mazenod “was very highly considered at Rome.” He added that he would write that very day to tell the King that “among the priests who had come to Rome, the one who had been the most reputable and with whom they had been the most satisfied, was the Abbé de Mazenod . . .” (letter of May 4th).

Father Mautone, the procurator general of the Redemptorists, would not let the Founder leave without giving him several marks of esteem. The latter wrote in his private journal: “Father Mautone, the Redemptorist who had the happiness of knowing Blessed Liguori, gave me a precious gift of which I think more highly than of any treasure: a piece of bone of the blessed man and a letter written entirely in his hand I was also very affected by what he said as he presented them. It is perhaps a weakness to repeat it but as this admission, which comes from the mouth of a man who has never in his life been one to give compliments to anyone, explains the enigma of the welcome generally given to me at Rome, I wish to record it here, not for my own remembrance, but for the consolation of our friends, to whom alone this journal will be confided, (and) to give them some moments of pleasure: ‘All who have made your acquaintance at Rome (so this good Father said to me) repeat that you have known how to gain all hearts,

that none amongst them do not love and esteem you.' He added: 'It is the Blessed (Liguori) who has done that' (Diary, April 24th, 1826).

Intense activity and habitual union with God

But the success of the work of the Founder was also obtained thanks to his indefatigable activity, even if the role of begging from door to door continually displeased him: "Ah, dear friend,," he admitted to Father Tempier on February 11th, "It is better to preach missions, it is even better to endure the trials of a Grand Vicar, than to do the dismal jobs I have to do here." On January 5th, he wrote: ". . . I am on the run, always on the run, to the Post Office I run" On February 20th, he added: "I neglect no means that human prudence can suggest, and I spare myself no running about, nor do I give any rest to my mind, in order to second the plans of divine Providence" Again on the 27th, he repeats to Father Tempier, "I lost not a moment of time, for it is well for you to know that, since I have been in this country, I keep myself incredibly busy in order to expedite all I have to do; also, either in a way because of that, or more likely because the good God helps me at every step, I leave behind me plenty of people who began six months before me"

In a letter of January 4th, the Founder made this admission to Father Tempier: "Believe me, I take no rest; I will take the baths on my return for admittedly this operation cannot be accomplished without over-exerting. Nevertheless, I am in the best of health, physically and mentally — it truly seems that the good God wills me to pursue my task while united to him, and he does not let me offend him, at least not in a manner I can perceive." On January 10th, he rectified this statement which, he confided, "would be too absurd and ridiculous were I not writing in intimacy and trustfulness to a friend, the confidant of my most secret thoughts; certainly I would not have let it slip out with any other person. When I said I was not sinning, I meant to say that I was sinning less; the reason for this is quite simple. First, while busy with our affairs, I have tried my best to profit from all the extraordinary and manifold graces of the Jubilee. Besides, everything here reminds me of the great examples of the saints who seem to be still living for those who go about this city with a modicum of faith. Moreover, having in my hands an affair of the utmost importance, of which the consequences must so influence the building up the Church, the glorifying of God and the sanctifying of souls, an affair that hell must thwart and which can only succeed thanks to a very special pro-

tection from God, to whom alone belongs the power to touch the hearts and guide the wills of men, I have had of necessity to convince myself that it is my duty to do all in my power to live in the most intimate state of union with God that I possibly can and be resolved in consequence to be faithful to his grace and not give cause for grief to his spirit. As things stand at present, the least voluntary infidelity would seem to me a crime, not only because it would be displeasing to God, which doubtless would be the worst evil, but still more because of the consequences it could bring about.

"I should add that since my departure from France and especially since I have been at Rome, the good God aids me with everything in so tangible a manner that I cannot see how it would be possible not to keep in my soul a constant feeling of gratitude which prompts me to praise, to bless, to thank God, Our Lord Jesus Christ, and in due proportion the holy Virgin, the holy Angels and the Saints to whom I believe myself indebted for the protection and the consolations that are mine. That in no way impedes me from confessing twice a week and constantly finding greater or lesser reason for humbling myself before God"

Self-surrender to God. Gratitude. Obligation to strive for holiness

The conviction of the goodness of God for him and the Congregation grew ever stronger in him. He wrote soon after his first audience with the Pope: "We must be mindful of the saying of St. Ignatius that we must pursue our affairs as if success depends solely on our initiative while trusting wholly in God as if all our efforts are in vain. Yet I must admit that, from what so far has happened, I count solely on the help of God and what I do for my part is just go through the motions for the sake of not seeming to tempt God" (letter of December 28, 1825).

On January 20th, after being dispensed from the obligation of a scrutiny by eight cardinals, he expressed himself thus: "Let us continue to pray, my dear friend, and let us not cease to put our confidence in God. It is for him alone to rule and dispose of all things according to his infinite wisdom for the greater glory of his name. I must admit that never in my life have I understood as well as now the value of self-surrender to God, never have I felt more disposed to put this virtue (for such it is) into practice as in the present circumstances When I reflect on how our enterprise is going forward, I am filled with admiration for the goodness of God and I feel carried away

with feelings of great gratitude. Up to this moment, it wholly bears the mark of special protection. Who could have prepared the way for me? Who could have disposed the Head of the Church to decide to make a unique exception for us? Who inspires him to perceive that all I propose to him is good?"

The conclusion that Father de Mazenod drew for himself and his sons from this incomprehensible goodness of God is that they must henceforth live more saintly lives, have greater love for the Congregation and observe more faithfully her Rules, which now compare in worth with those of the great Orders. He wrote on March 9th: "Cardinal Pedicini was certainly right: had the good God not shown his divine hand, we would have had more than a year to wait. What amuses me is the surprise of the Archpriest Adinolfi who is, as I have told you, the king-pin of the secretariate. To him it is incredible how well things have turned out for our cause from the beginning. Non si è visto mai — never have we seen the Pope, he said, take it upon himself in an affair of this kind to smooth out everything, cut through difficulties, prescribe in detail, even stipulate how to word the brief. These Messieurs of ours, do they know this? If they knew what all this means, they would jump for joy or be overcome with admiration. People here wait sometimes six months for a yes or a no, they peer at a sign, they try to penetrate some thought of the Sovereign Pontiff, they consider themselves happy to have some slight hope, however remote it might be. And it is this same Sovereign Pontiff who has done everything for us. What right have we to this? Who is it who has given me, in a single audience, wherewith to inspire in him an interest so strong, so real, so constant? How is it not possible to see the supernatural in this? From now on how can we not be carried away with gratitude towards God and, looking seriously at ourselves, not attach ourselves still more to the Society which has just obtained such convincing proofs of the protection of the Lord, to whom we now belong in quite another manner since, in the hierarchical order, it is by her that we are attached to the supreme Head of the Church who is the sovereign moderator thereof. Now is the time to adopt this esprit de corps which incites us not to be surpassed by any other community in virtue, in regularity, etc. . . ." He continues on March 20th: "Oh! yes, we must needs tell ourselves that we have received a great grace! The more closely I consider all its aspects, the more I see the worth of this gift. We can never properly respond to it other than by an unwavering fidelity, and by a redoubled zeal and devotedness on behalf of the glory of God, the service of the

Church and the salvation of souls, especially the most abandoned, as is called for by our vocation. For the rest, what I ask of God is that he choose for us and send us the people we need to do his work. You are quite right in saying that you all seem to have become other men: this is truly so. May we all understand what we are! I hope that the Lord will give us this grace, with the assistance and by the protection of our holy Mother, the Immaculate Mary, for whom we must have a great devotion in our Congregation. Does it not seem to you that it is a sign of predestination to bear the name of Oblates of Mary, a name the Congregation bears as a family name held in common with the most holy and immaculate Mother of God? It is enough to make others jealous"

Response of the Congregation

We have but an imperfect idea of the response of the Congregation. The letters of Father Tempier have disappeared. Only a few lines have been preserved from what he wrote on March 9th: "We have reason to be ecstatic when we consider the work of Providence in the conduct of our enterprise. Eternal gratitude to the great and holy pontiff Leo XII who so worthily occupies the chair of St. Peter and who will live eternally in our hearts! The memory of his benefactions, as well as of his virtues, will be handed down from one to the other in our Society as long as there remains a member of the family. Rest assured, my dear Father that this sentiment is profoundly engraved in the heart of your children. You should have seen us when I went to read to those of our Fathers who are at Aubagne,⁶ the letter in which you inform us that our Holy Father has approved the decision of the Congregation; you should, I repeat, have seen us! We embraced each other with rapturous joy, we felt I know not what in us which told us we were other men. Tears of joy and gratitude ran from our eyes. Such sentiments were manifest too in the house of Aix."

The acts of the General Chapter, held at Marseilles from the 10th to the 13th of July, record the joy and enthusiasm of all. The Chapter closed with a solemn assembly and the renewal of vows by all the Oblates: "The presence of Our Lord in the midst of our whole family united for the great occasion, the profound recollection of all and the sublime thoughts dwelling in our minds, gave the ceremony a celestial aura. Some shed abundant tears, some were otherwise moved and God

⁶ RAMBERT, I, 450. Fathers Moreau, Suzanne and Jeancard were preaching the mission.

himself was surely touched. A solemn Te Deum in thanksgiving for all the gifts showered upon the Society as well as benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament concluded this pious assembly."

On coming out of the chapel, the Founder had further words to say to his Oblates: "This is a happy beginning of a new era for our Society. God has ratified the projects we have planned for his glory; he has blessed the bonds which unite us; henceforth we will fight the enemies of heaven under a standard which will be our own, and which the Church has given us. From this standard shines forth the glorious name of the most holy Virgin Mary Immaculate; this very name has become ours, for it is to the holy Virgin that we are consecrated; we are especially her children; and her protection over us, hitherto so tangible, will still be more so in the future if we show ourselves worthy of such a mother"

II — Letters of 1827-1830: Personal Crisis of the Founder

Was the approbation of the Rules and of the Institute really followed by "the happy beginning of a new era for the Society" as the Founder expressed it at the Chapter of 1826? On this occasion, Father de Mazenod was not a good prophet. The period from 1826 to 1831 was as drab as any that the Congregation has seen while the Founder himself went through a dark night both of the senses and of the soul which lasted for ten years. Our spiritual writers have given little study to this period of his life⁷ but without a doubt he went through a profound crisis which had multiple causes; failure to improve the training and perseverance of the members, failure of the Congregation to attain the desired level of religious and apostolic life, resistance of the diocese of Marseilles to the reforms that had been judged necessary, the death of cherished persons such as Marcou, Suzanne, Nathalie de Boisgelin and Leo XII, the illness of several Fathers and of the Founder himself who was incapacitated for eighteen months.

One circumstance accentuates still more the difference of tone between the letters of 1826 and the ones written in following years. Those of the first group remain practically intact while only fragments

⁷ Fr. Robert Moosbrugger, O.M.I., treats of this crisis in his work: *The spirituality of blessed Eug. de Mazenod . . . from the beginning of the Congregation (1818) until he takes possession of the diocese of Marseilles as bishop (1837)*. Romae, Officium libri catholici, 1981, 153 pp.

or brief excerpts have survived of the second. Even if there are marvelous pages which express a spirit of faith and submission to God, Yenveux and the biographers seem to have retained for this period mostly passages in which Father de Mazenod speaks of illness, deaths, apostasies, disappointments, the boredom of being Vicar Général and hence of stagnating in one place instead of going out with his brothers to announce the Gospel.⁸

Slow growth of the Congregation

The Society seems to have maintained the slow but sure growth of the preceding years. First there was the acquisition of two new houses. That of Nîmes had to be closed because of the July Revolution of 1830 but a new community had already been formed in 1827 at Marseilles in order to provide a teaching staff for the Seminary and, in September, an old chateau was purchased at Billens in Switzerland for use as a refuge for the novices and scholastics.

The Congregation numbered fifteen priests and fifteen novices or scholastics in 1826 while in 1831 there were twenty-two priests, eighteen scholastic brothers, two lay brothers and five or six novices. But behind this apparently solid façade, there were fissures in the edifice.

Problems of the novitiate and of perseverance

Few young men of serious calibre were being attracted to the Congregation. In 1826, only three out of nine who had taken the habit made their first vows, three out of thirteen in 1827, six out of ten in 1828, nine out of fifteen in 1829 and three out of seventeen in 1830. Moreover, these novices were still not receiving the solid training which the Founder desired. While visiting different religious houses in Italy from 1825 to 1826, he was struck by the perfect regularity which reigned everywhere. "Here I am going round the most reputable houses," he wrote on March 16th, "I interview the most experienced men. In a word, I try as much as possible to render my journey useful to our Society. I conclude from all I see and hear that from the beginning we have sinned in respect of the novitiate and that it is not yet what it should be" In spite of the numerous cares of the Founder at Rome, the needs of the novitiate and the future of the Congregation

⁸ For this period are conserved only excerpts copied by Yenveux and the biographers of the Founder.

*weighed on his mind unceasingly. At the beginning of January he took an important decision. As Father Courtès was too busy at Aix with the Youth Sodality and ministry at the Chapel, he could not provide sufficient training to the novices. Father Guibert had as soon as possible to take charge of the novices and they would be brought under the eye of the Superior General and of Father Tempier. "As long as I am at Marseilles," he wrote on January 10th, "I will seek for the novitiate to be placed in that city because I will be able to give the Novice Master a hand and keep an eye on the students"*⁹

As soon as he had returned to Marseilles in the summer of 1826, the Founder named Father Guibert as Novice Master. The latter proceeded with zeal and intelligence to train the future Oblates. But, in less than two years, the sedentary nature of this work made him sicken. After several weeks of rest during the summer of 1828 he asked to be permitted to resume missionary work and this was granted. The Superior General then called in Father Honorat, one of the few remaining good missionaries. He wrote to him on May 4th, 1828: "Providence gave us in Father Guibert a master of novices who seemed to be quite apt to fill this very important post. He applied himself to the task with all his heart at the outset but his health, which had never been good, began to fluctuate. It became necessary to give him a change of air and free him entirely from this employment. However it is the most important there is in the Society; without a novitiate, the Society is done for So the heart of our novitiate must be very sound at this time and for this we need a master of novices. This master of novices is you, my dear Father Honorat, who combine an unshakeable loyalty to the Society with a love of order and regularity. I have thought this matter through. I would have wished to find some one else in order to leave you at Nîmes where you are doing well but there is no one else in the Society and no one will take it amiss that I put this task above everything else, given that it is a question of training the members who are to prevent it from dying out." Did Father Honorat refuse or was he too immersed in several important missions? He took up the post only a year later, from November, 1829, to the summer of 1830. During that time and afterwards, younger Fathers performed the functions of master of novices: Father Reynier at Marseilles (Spring of 1828), Father Guigues at St. Just (June, 1828, to August, 1829), Father Capmas at

⁹ Cf. also the letter to Fr. Courtès of February 2nd and those to Fr. Tempier on February 11th and 27th and March 30th.

St. Just (September to October, 1830) and Father Mille in Switzerland from 1830 to 1831. This constant changing of the person in charge and of the place was certainly detrimental to the training.

Moreover, during this period, the failure of the Congregation to retain its members continued. In six years, ten professed members including six Fathers left the community or were expelled for want of the religious spirit.

Nonetheless they continued to fulfil the Institute's principal ministry, that of preaching missions to the people, but with reduced personnel and beset by many difficulties. There was the obligation to preach the Jubilee of 1826 which prevented the Fathers from fulfilling their essential role and this greatly displeased the Founder.¹⁰ Also, at Notre Dame of Laus, Bishop Arbaud entrusted the Oblates with few missions in his diocese and even then always found fault with their doctrine and their ministry in the confessional. Finally the July Revolution of 1830 put a drastic end to this apostolate.

Concern for vocations together with the training of candidates and their perseverance seems at this time to have been the principal preoccupation of the superiors. It was the predominant question at the General Chapter of 1831. Strangely enough, not a word was said about the problem which could provoke the death of the Institute: the inability, which had lasted over a year, to preach missions.¹¹

Untalented personnel

At grips with these obstacles and weakened by illness, how could Father de Mazenod make plans for the future? There were not a few young Fathers, of whom some were not lacking in talent and virtue (Aubert, Telmon, Ricard, Martin, Semeria, Dassy), but the Founder saw his men generally as quite inferior to what was demanded by the grave problems and difficulties of the times. Obligated to rest at Fribourg in 1830, he wrote to Father Tempier, on August 1st: "Again yesterday, when the solemnity and length of the ceremonies of the Feast of St. Ignatius, at which they asked me to preside, and the circumstance of it

¹⁰ Letter to Fr. Courtès, July 22, 1826: "I could only be chagrined by their wanting so much to do the jubilee of Aix. If instead of this parade, they had evangelized the poor abandoned souls, God would have been glorified thereby . . ."

¹¹ They decided, however, on September 29th, to send Oblates to the foreign missions "as soon as there would be a favourable occasion." The July Revolution was fatal to the Missionaries of France.

being the last day of my forty-eighth year, aroused in me more devout thoughts and holy desires and allowed me also leisure to reflect under the aegis of Jesus Christ present and exposed, how deeply into my soul did I plunge! How many and diverse my feelings! I was happy at the altar as I offered the holy sacrifice for the Order of Jesuits without forgetting our own family. I congratulated their holy Founder for the marvels he had worked. But what great help did he receive! There is nothing like it in our days. Though he had so many heretics and bad Christians as enemies, how mightily he was protected by most eminent Popes and Bishops! Seeing everything as lost they confided to his Order the fate of the Church. It was thus that he obtained all.

“And, let it be noted, by what men he was supported! From the first years of their coming together, it could be said of each of them that they did more than he did. I do not speak only of the first companions, I speak of all those who joined them as soon as they became known. It seems that all those zealous to defend the Church so horribly torn apart, who felt they had the ability to be useful to her and the virtue to devote themselves to this great task, flocked to the banner of Ignatius. His company was from the beginning an army of generals. Can you then be surprised at all they have done!

“Can we look around us and see anything similar? We have to labour at training a few children most of whom are not able to conceive the great ideals which would raise them above their milieu. Not one of them has anything to give of his own, a stone to bring to the edifice that must be built by concerted effort. Wretched are these times and detestable is the influence of this age on minds! If any of them can produce anything, it is in the contrary sense and, instead of a soaring achievement attained by the acting in concert of several wills intent on the same goal we have to watch the dampening and deadening of all the impulses of our souls by the carefulness, cautiousness and scheming we have to employ in their regard in order to utilize them at least in some average sphere where such cold and flabby souls prefer to be.

“I finished by asking God to take me out of this world if I am not to do anything more than I am doing”¹²

¹² When continuing his letter on August 2nd, the Founder realized that he had exaggerated. He wrote: “I beg you, my dear friend, to burn the preceding sheet. This outspokenness is good for you Most certainly, there is a good number of them whom I esteem. Some of them cannot be in doubt that, while I love them, I would wish them other than they are For the rest, we must bless the good God for the hope that we have in regard to the future”

Administration of the diocese of Marseilles

The difficulties encountered in the administration of the diocese of Marseilles scarcely appear in the letters to the Oblates. Canon Leflon has well described them in his biography of the Founder.¹³ Both of the Mazenods had to act with firmness, particularly in regard to the clergy, accustomed for a quarter of a century to live independently, that is, without a resident bishop. The pastoral manner and acts of kindness were usually attributed to Bishop Fortuné while on the contrary his nephew was held responsible for the measures that were strict. Leflon writes that it was believed "that the prelate reserved the dispensing of mercy to himself and that the imperious commands of the Monita, the vigour of the interdicts and the severe tone of the letters were forced upon the weak-willed uncle by a nephew who had firmness enough for two. The reports of the prefect Thomas, the articles that appeared in the liberal newspapers and the memoranda that were drawn up against the bishop's administration always distinguished between the meek executant and his adviser who led him about and controlled him; they extolled the uncle only the better to downgrade the nephew" (II, 525). The historians of the Founder¹⁴ have had little difficulty in showing the falsehood of these accusations in that, from the end of the year 1825 to the beginning of the year 1831, the Vicar General spent at least twenty-two months outside the diocese and almost another year without working at the chancellery because of the illness of others or because he himself was ill. It remains true just the same that these criticisms and the office itself of Vicar General weighed heavily on him. He never concealed this. He wrote to Father Honorat on December 12, 1827: "All that you add completes the tableau of these fine missions . . . If I could only take part in them more directly! But my sins keep me in the servitude of an infinity of alien occupations, none of which is to my taste; no, there is not a single occupation of the day which pleases me and which I do not offer to God somewhat bitterly in expiation of my sins, so much do they weigh me down and are burdensome to bear. So many painful matters! So many anxieties that ceaselessly crop up! I am sometimes weary unto death and have no one to console me." A little later on January 2nd, as he offers good wishes for the New Year to Father Courtès, he continues: ". . . the clutter of my office is such that

¹³ JEAN LEFLON, *Eugene de Mazenod*, II, 199-223; 234-241; 517-531.

¹⁴ RAMBERT, REY, LEFLON, and [A. MITRI], *Inquisitio historica de quibusdam animadversionibus in servi Dei [C.J.E. de Mazenod] vitam et operositatem . . .*, Romae, 1968.

I am not able to instal a lamp in it. It is just as if I had nothing to do. I no longer feel I have the strength to continue this job. If my conscience had not kept me at it, I would have long since forsaken it but my responsibility frightens me somewhat or rather should I say considerably. When I speak of responsibility, I mean that which I contracted in 1817 and 1823.¹⁵ I thought I was acting for the best and it is possible that I did so. I see fortunate results for our religion every day but I did not think sufficiently of my personal interest, of my (need for) leisure, of my entire existence being sacrificed with the additional unpleasantness of being bound down and, as I am in an essentially dependent position, I cannot do half the good I would wish to do and even what I am happy to do cannot be done as I feel it ought to be done. Moreover how can I deal with all these routine details which absorb half and often the whole of my days! Dear Courtès, I am at the end of my tether while death comes near as I approach old age. When I shall be free, I will no longer be able to act. While waiting for the good God to deliver you from the nonentity of a man that I have become, act, you others, on my behalf. May the work of the Lord be accomplished”

Illness and decease of several Oblates

Difficulties did not normally have the effect of laying the Founder low but instead rendered him more energetic and increased his resistance. During the period 1817-1831, he did not have this resilience. The sorrow caused by the death of persons dear to him greatly weakened him physically and morally. This is an important fact in his life. Five of his best Oblates died: Father J. Marcou in 1826, Father V. Arnoux and Brother P. Dumolard in 1828, Father M. Suzanne in 1829 and Father J. Capmas on January 10, 1831. In addition illness impeded some of the older and more active ones: Dupuy in 1826, Reynier, Albin and Guibert in 1827, Suzanne in 1828, Mye, Courtès and the Founder himself in 1829-1830.

In June 1826, Father de Mazenod returned to Marseilles in great haste, without stopping at Gap and Our Lady of Laus, in order to get to the sickbed of Father Suzanne. He recovered but Father Marcou died on August 20. “The good God has just taken from us . . . one of our most saintly missionaries,” we read in his letter of August 21 to Father Honorat. “I weep for a brother so precious to our Society, to

¹⁵ That of Vicar General of Marseilles in 1823. In 1817, he had worked to have his uncle named to the bishopric of Marseilles.

which he was so attached, but I rather reproach myself for my tears, as if I dared to bemoan his happiness. He will be our protector close to God. Let us be resigned. Our Father in Heaven knows our needs, he will see to them; my heart nevertheless is plunged in sorrow. I have not enough virtue to completely surpass my nature, one that is quite raised up it is true, if not of an exceptional nature, with the love I have for you, my dear children, whom I love so much in the Lord and who deserve it in so many ways."

The summer of 1827 brought the turn of Fathers Albin and Guibert, as well as of Brother Reynier, to fall ill and preoccupy the Founder. He himself was the victim of an accident to a carriage in which he was riding, his legs being severely bruised. He wrote to Father Suzanne, July 18: "I was wrong, my dear Father Suzanne, I admit, not to give some details on the subject of the accident to my legs Since then, other events have preoccupied my mind: the fear of seeing our brother Reynier succumb to an inflammation, anxiety, chagrin, and I am not sure whether I should not add fatigue. All of these together make me forget my own suffering, which I always feel less than that of others."

In July 1828, within days of each other, Father Arnoux and Brother Dumolard died. "I cannot reconcile myself to the loss of members of the calibre of Father Arnoux," he groaned in a letter of July 8 to Father Courtès. "You would not believe how promising for his part was the poor Dumolard who has been at grips with death for quite a long time The good God knows what is necessary to each of his creatures, he knows also what is best for the families who live under his laws. This is a powerful motive for resignation." And again on July 9: "Pray . . . for me who always feels blows of this sort too acutely."

On learning of the death of Father Arnoux, he wrote to Father Courtès, July 27: ". . . I preferred to keep silence but I indeed felt deeply the deprivation you imposed on me by your neglecting to inform me of the health of our saintly sufferer. Do you not know that I regard it as a principal duty to assist all those of our brothers within reach of me who are in danger. Are we then so far from Aix that in several hours I could not have come to the side of the sick one? . . . I need not tell you with what avidity we have read the details you give of his last moments and his burial; I have watered your letters with tears each time I have read them"

Death of Father Suzanne

During this whole period, the illness of Father Suzanne was however the greatest concern of Father de Mazenod and contributed more than all the rest to diminish, little by little, his vitality. After having vomited blood in 1826 and in February, 1827, a third relapse in November, 1828, left no more hope of any return to health. For more than two months, the desolate father spent his days and nights close to the one whom he had known as a youth at Aix (as also Marcou, Honorat and Courtès) and whom he loved and cherished as a son. In all his letters from 1826 to January 1829 is a crescendo of concern and sorrow about the illness of Suzanne. The strongest expressions of an inconsolable soul come from his pen: "The susceptibility of my excessive tenderness" (March 29, 1828, to Suzanne); "... as for me ... the sorrow that I have felt these two days past has been so acute and so constant that I consider it a kind of miracle not to have succumbed to it. Happily, I have been able to shed tears in great abundance and this, I believe, has saved me. I remain however extremely fatigued. It will cost me my life to love you in the manner that I do. Yet I cannot either regret or complain about it. Adieu" (Nov. 15, 1828, to Courtès). "My body must be of iron to resist such violent and continuous emotions of soul You are on the battlefield and I at the foot of the cross on which our poor brother is nailed" (Nov. 26, 1828, to Guibert). "If I showed exteriorly all the anguish I am going through, they would take me for a madman, while yet I am but a man . . ." (Dec. 15, 1828, to Courtès). "I believe, my friend, that it is a long time since I have written to you; my hours, my days and my nights are spent near our blessed patient who consummates his sacrifice with heroic sentiments. Each one is intent on gathering his words, while as for me, I meditate on the holy Virgin's sufferings at the foot of the cross of which up to now I have only had a very dim idea My God! these thoughts are rife within me and nourish my sorrow, but I wish to drink this chalice to the dregs! . . . Adieu, I press you to my heart; it could not be wounded more deeply. Adieu" (Jan. 29, 1829, to Courtès).

Father Suzanne died on January 31, 1829. For several months Father de Mazenod was almost incapable of working. He wrote this to Father Courtès, February 19: "... when I have to enter my study, I have as much repugnance for anything requiring attention as someone with hydrophobia has for water. Such is the state in which this bereavement has left me and which I feel as much now as I did on the first day. I do not think I am lacking in resignation; I do not refuse the consola-

tions which the holy death of this too dear child procures for a Christian father; but the still bleeding wound cannot be healed, even by this supernatural balm. I always have my child before my eyes, just as grace fashioned him in his last illness”

Illness of Father Courtès

At the time when Father Suzanne was ill, Father Courtès did not feel very well. The Founder had written to him on November 18, 1828: “I order you to take care of yourself, for two blows of this kind would make me lose either my mind or my life.” And now, on April 10, 1829, he was told that Father Courtès was gravely ill. “For the still mangled heart of Father de Mazenod, that was truly a lightning bolt” (Rey: I,467). He loved Father Courtès for much the same reasons as he loved Father Suzanne, that is, as one of his first children, as one who best understood him and as one who was entirely imbued with his spirit and his sentiments. Besides, Father Courtès had talents, prudence, an aptitude for affairs, a religious spirit, and a devotedness so unshakeable that he had become indispensable and the one upon whom, after God, the Founder counted for the future of his work”

Father de Mazenod spent a month at the bedside of this other stricken son. By May 10th, he was at the end of his strength. He wrote to Father Tempier: “I tore up the letter I was writing to you It expressed too vividly the state of anguish and how my heart is being rent by the condition in which our dear Father Courtès is. Also you yourself would have been too afflicted on seeing me as I am. I do not really have the strength to write and tell you that I am left almost without any hope For myself, while nothing shows exteriorly, I am powerless to say a word. The self-restraint I am obliged to exercise leaves me in a state similar to agonizing. I do not know if it is exhaustion or prostration or what it is. I do not feel the physical strength to do again what I did for that other apple of my eye who was taken from me, now that I am menaced with losing this other one. I would have to be more disinterested than I am in his existence to be able to converse with him about the imminence of his death; the element of my despair is inseparable from it. However resigned one must be to the decrees of divine Providence, I will not be less unhappy for the rest of my sorrowful life, after losing two such as these. No one in the world could ever conceive what they have been for me. This one, while giving more proof of it every day, confirms (I do not say ‘renews’ for I have forgotten nothing) all that the other was to me. Never will be known the

perfection of their confidence, their love, their trust in me. And our Society, how would she be able to rise again after being bludgeoned by these two blows? All this loss overwhelms me, I will never recover from it”

Illness and convalescence of Father de Mazenod

Father Courtès improved little by little after May 15, 1829, while the Founder had to go to bed. He explained to Father Tempier on May 15th the nature of his malady: “. . . My present state is that of a man whose interior organs might not have enough space to dilate and do their functions so that I have tightness in the chest, the heart, the stomach, the head and everywhere.”

His state became so aggravated that on June 14th, Father Tempier came to administer extreme unction and holy viaticum. He then made his will and named Father Tempier as Vicar General of the Institute.

A month later, July 18th, his death was announced in the review *L'Ami de la Religion*: “We do not have details about his premature death but we do not doubt that it too has been as edifying as his life.”¹⁶ This false rumour even reached Rome.¹⁷ But the sick man was then out of danger and staying with his uncle Roze-Joannis at Grans. His convalescence was, however, one of interminable ups and downs, and interrupted particularly by the loss of his niece Nathalie de Boisgelin, aged nineteen years, with whom he stayed two months.

The Founder spent the winter and spring in semi-repose at Marseilles, then left at the beginning of July, still to rest, for Switzerland in the company of his sister, his mother and his nephew, Louis de Boisgelin. The July Revolution of 1830 obliged him to postpone his return to Marseilles until February, 1831. Prior to this, he stopped for several months at Nice with his uncle Fortuné. It is there that he learned of the death of another Oblate whom he much esteemed, Father Capmas. The reflections that he shared with Father Tempier on January 11, 1831, give us the key to the principles which inspired his affections and show clearly enough that the trials he had gone through had helped him better to dominate his heart and render his submission to the will of God less painful for his affectionate nature: “. . . It must be admitted that illness and death strike in our midst with a shrewd manner that

¹⁶ *L'Ami de la Religion*, vol. 60, p. 311.

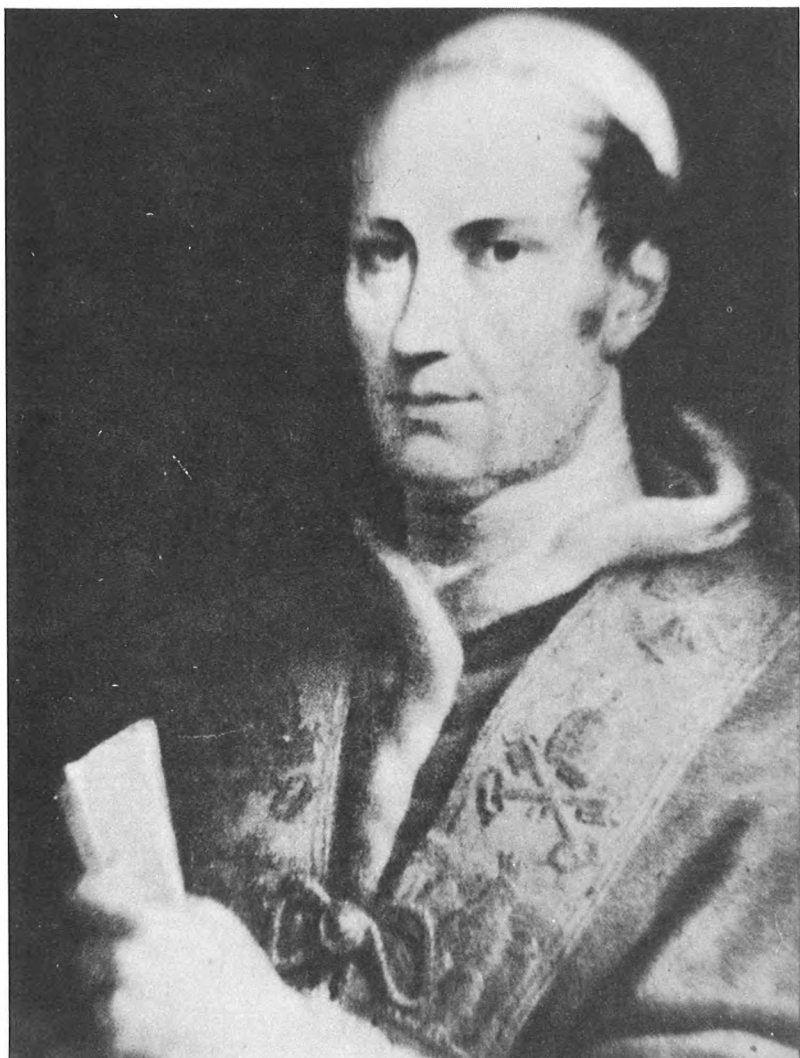
¹⁷ Letter of the Pope to the Founder, August 1, 1829.

would unnerve men less submissive to the will of God than ourselves. I do not fear to make this reflection because it seems to me that I am well enough established in the habit of conforming to the impenetrable designs of divine Providence, although I have no claim to be insensible to the blows which sometimes seem as though they cannot fail to overwhelm us. Were this kind of perfection offered to me, I would not wish it. Moreover I say that to me it is something of a scandal when I see it extolled in certain biographies of which the authors attribute it, falsely no doubt, to men whom they try, not without deceit, to raise beyond human nature and whom they calumniate, in my opinion, in a manner that is cruel. Jesus Christ, our only model, does not give us this example. I adore his trembling and tears before the tomb of Lazarus just as much as I disdain and abhor the stoicism, the insensibility and the egoism of all those who would wish, so it seems, to surpass this prototype of all perfection, who has well wished to sanctify all the situations of our sad pilgrimage. I await then in trembling the news that you will give me on Thursday, and this time, what will absorb all my thoughts is the general good of the family, much more than all other considerations or personal affections. I prepare myself for all eventuality by prayer and by the most absolute surrender to the will of the Master of our destinies for whose sake we are here below."

* * *

These letters of 1827-1830 are in contrast with those written from Rome in 1825-1826, in which are found zest, dynamism, joy, gratitude, plans for the future. In the second series, we have fatigue, illness, desire for death, sadness, pessimism, resignation. Here are two tableaux, two phases of one and the same life, two attitudes of one and the same man facing the vicissitudes of life. But an attentive reading of these letters will help us to understand him better, to see how close he is to us, as well as to the problems of today, and indeed to those of all times!

Yvon Beaudoin, O.M.I.



Pope Leo XII (1760-1829)



Fr. Marie Jacques Antoine Suzanne (1799-1829)
Superior of the House of Calvary at Marseilles (1824-1829)

215. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].¹

New Year wishes. Cardinal F. X. Castiglioni, Grand Penitentiary, does not concur with the Pope that the Constitutions be approved immediately. Seven cardinals are to read the book of the Rules. Favours bestowed by the Holy Father. The Founder has little hope of soon reaching a conclusion. Asks for prayers. Proposes to go to Nocera de' Pagani to pray at the tomb of the Blessed Alphonse. French bishops have probably written to Cardinal Castiglioni.

L.J.C.

Rome, January 1, 1826.

It is to have the pleasure of wishing you a happy New Year in good and due form, my dear Tempier, that I begin my letter today shortly after posting the one I began the other day, and while waiting for your dear and evermore avidly awaited news. By way of presenting you with your gift, I will transcribe for you the precious favours granted by our Holy Father the Pope to our poor Society which will apparently never have peace on this earth, as seemingly those who persecute her take turns to relieve one another so as not to give us time to catch our breath. Your long memorandum,² which has just been handed to me, replies perfectly to all the objections; it is made with both strength and moderation and the response proves that it made an impression on the person who had evidently written the first letter *ab irato*.

¹ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 208-213.

² Some French bishops had written to Rome to oppose the approbation of the Rules. In a letter written to Fr. Tempier, November 8, 1825, Bishop Arbaud of Gap had explained what he did not accept in the Constitutions. Fr. Tempier replied to him at length on November 16th. This reply is probably what the Founder refers as "your long memorandum."

My overtures today, January 2, have not given me much satisfaction. I met a Cardinal upon whom I thought I should be able to count because it is he who approached me, having called me to him at the Vatican chapel yesterday in order to voice aloud the desire he had to make my acquaintance, given that he was the good servant of My Lord the Bishop of Marseilles, etc. He said he had been to see me; in fact, I had found his visiting card at my lodging. In short, he gave me an appointment for this morning at nine o'clock. It was in order to speak to me of his pleasure on seeing that the Bishop of Marseilles had set up a house where love and respect for the doctrine of the Blessed Alphonse is professed, etc. He was in such good vein and the fine things he said on this subject made me believe quite simply that I had made a fortunate find. So I expressed my regret to him that he was not a member of the Congregation which had to judge our cause and, with a view to his giving me a good recommendation to those who compose it, I had the guilelessness to speak to him frankly and in detail of our affair. What was my surprise on finding his attitude quite opposed to that of the Pope!³ It was pitiable to see the objections that he made to me. He went so far as to ask me if I had spoken to our Ambassador, as if one consults lay persons regarding cases of conscience, and many things of this kind. Oh! how I fumed! Fortunately I was fasting, otherwise the violent reaction that I had would have been capable of impeding my digestion. My whole fear is that he may speak to the Pope in the same way as to me and that this verbiage may have an adverse effect on the Holy Father, who has shown himself up to now so favourable, as you will have been able to judge from all I have consigned to you in my second last letter.

After leaving the Cardinal Grand Penitentiary, I went to see Cardinal Pedicini. The course of the proceedings was explained to me. Another vexation! I had thought that his role of ponent would be to make a report of the matter and that it would be this report which would be sent to each Cardinal in the Congregation; not at all. He has to read our big volume and annexed documents and the same big volume has to be passed on successively to all six of the other Cardinals who each in turn will make an attentive reading of it. Truly must I regret not being content with the direct approbations of our Bishops

³ He refers to Cardinal Castiglioni who, in 1829, would become Pope Pius VIII. His opposition was only apparent; cf. the following letter. The Duke of Montmorency-Laval was Ambassador of France at Rome.

and the indirect one of the Pope! If at least we were to obtain what we desire, but nothing is more doubtful. The Cardinals will no doubt be wiser than the Pope. However, we have his particular opinion and it is a pity that he considers himself obliged to observe the formalities which crush us.

But let us have done with telling you these disagreeable things. Now I will transcribe for you the favours accorded by the Sovereign Pontiff. You must not forget that he had each article read to him, one after the other, and that he granted all of them knowingly. You will even note that the two important graces accorded in perpetuity had first been granted with the others *ad septennium* because he who wrote the supplication had so presented it. I took this matter up once and, in a second audience, the Archbishop Secretary of the Congregation of Propaganda again brought up my request and thus fixed the attention of the Holy Father on a matter of such great importance and the Holy Father, quite freely, reflectively and most voluntarily, has granted in perpetuity an indult which ought to be considered as an approbation thereof once and for all. The indult granted in perpetuity in the second audience was not included in the inscription of the one *ad septennium*, because I made my second request on the day following the first audience and before the Secretary had put in order the notes he had taken at the audience itself, under the dictation of the Pope. The two versions were thus made after the second audience and the Pope, after having by special grace granted the indulgence in perpetuity, it would have been useless to mention the first grace which he had only granted for seven years. All these explanations are not excessive when they concern a matter of such great interest. If I were to return within fifteen days, I would not take the trouble to transcribe this long memorandum; but as I am detained here, I do not wish you to be deprived of the pleasure and profit that you will have by receiving sooner these numerous graces that the munificence and fatherly goodness of the Head of the Church is according to you.⁴

I still have many errands to run; it is true that one often has time to rest in antichambers or salons for I must say I am never left long in an antichamber. That would be nothing if one were to finish by obtaining what one is so justified in requesting; but I am afraid my time and

⁴ Indults of the 11th and 18th of December, 1825, published at the end of the Rules, cf.: *Missions O.M.I.*, 1952, pp. 38, 42, 45-46.

trouble will be wasted. The turn of events annoys me. I know that in all affairs, there are ups and downs, happy moments, shocks and setbacks; but it is hard to have on one's side the assent and goodwill of the Pope, the only true judge, and then to have these grim formalities threatening us with a result not different from that which so many others have obtained, in whose favour the Pope has not pronounced himself (like M. Deshayes and M. Coudrin).⁵ If I had been able to foresee that the known will of the Pope would not decide the opinions of all the Cardinals of the Congregation, I would have beseeched the Holy Father to let me be content with his verbal approbation and with the graces that he deigned to add. Redouble your prayers. The result will perhaps be different from what appearances make us presume.

January 3. — Although today I am extremely behind, having had to defer saying my office yesterday evening in order to write to you, and the community having risen at a later hour because of the vigils of the Forty Hours, I would not wish to give you the bad example of leaving blank space in my letters, and I insist on this one being posted today itself. I come back to the prospect of my stay here being prolonged eternally: what do you think? What should we envisage? Here the Jubilee is over; it will begin in France. It is not normal that in such circumstances I prolong my stay abroad for my own pleasure or for my devotion. One could well propose that, since I find myself at Rome, I push on as far as Naples and, in that case, it will be possible for me to make the pilgrimage to Nocera de' Pagani where lies the body of the blessed Alphonse who will likely be canonized in less than a year. I have seen here a Father of his Company, one whom he has had at his side. This one has told me remarkable things about which we were completely ignorant. He compared him to St. Joseph Calasanctius in respect of domestic woes and injustices committed against him. It reminds you of what I have told you about this saint. Our saint died under a kind of anathema. Pius VI, upon a false report, without hearing or consulting him, had another Major Rector named, separated the Blessed one and his Fathers from the kingdom of Naples, from the Congregation, etc. It is only after his death that matters were straightened out again and unity was re-established.

⁵ Fr. Gabriel Deshayes (1767-1841), founder of the Brother Farmers of St. Francis of Assisi, and restorer of the Brothers of St. Gabriel. Fr. P. M. J. Coudrin (1768-1837), founder of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary of Picpus.

I can see how these disorders can happen. It suffices with the aid of the devil to misinform whomever makes a report from this or that side to the Pope; normally the latter relies on it and, as you know, it is easier to create negative prejudice than to get favourable views adopted. A propos of bias, does a thought not come to me that the one who wrote you while in a very bad temper wrote at the same time to the Cardinal Grand Penitentiary?⁶ I cannot explain otherwise certain remarks I have had to swallow though, let it be understood, with the grace of God; for example, that one could not trust attestations, even if with the grand seal affixed and written for the most part in the proper handwriting of the Bishops, and that one should write to them or even to neighbouring Bishops. You can imagine that, leaving aside everything that outraged me in these remarks expressed with much gentleness and with reticences which in my eyes did not save them from being ridiculous, I responded as was proper to the matter in itself. But one certainly feels on such an occasion a need and indeed one experiences the help of grace. I repeat, although this Cardinal is not a member of the Congregation, I fear he may hurt us, especially if he has received some sort of tattling letter. There remains only enough space to embrace you, yourself and all our fine family.

216. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁷

The letter of December 8 from the Bishops de Bausset-Roquefort, Miollis and Arbaud to the Pope did not convince Cardinals Castiglioni and Pedicini who favour the approbation of the Constitutions. Visits to Arch. Marchetti, secretary of the S. C. of Bishops and Regulars. Hopes to find a way to shorten the procedure.

L.J.C.

Rome, January 4, 1826.

If I had, dear friend, as much virtue as perspicacity, I would consider myself quite happy. Had I not guessed what has happened? And in spite of all the finesse of the Lord Cardinal, all detours, all the precautions that he took in this famous conversation which lasted

⁶ Bishop Arbaud had in effect written to Card. Castiglioni, December 8, 1825.

⁷ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 214-219; YENVEUX, IV, 13.

nearly two hours, had I not grasped the secret motive of this strange opposition? It is all out now and what I had supposed in my letter of yesterday is only too true. One of the Bishops who had approved has instructed his agent to raise objections so that our affair, which was forging ahead with full sails, now encounters an obstacle which I do not believe it can pass by. I still do not know who is this man, whom God will judge, who has just dealt such a terrible blow to the work of God; but it can only be, in my opinion, the Bishop of Gap. Such is the gratitude that he shows us for all the good that we have done for him. To properly describe this move, one would have to estimate its consequences. You cannot imagine the effect that is produced here by a proceeding of this kind, apart from the major inconvenience of publicizing an affair which demands the greatest secrecy. There are many things that one can explain only verbally. It is a pity to see the politics and the kind of vile dependency of certain personages, who count on the help of courts in certain eventualities which they anticipate at will. Let us leave the matter be. That is where we are.

This morning I believed I should go and converse with Arch. Marchetti, who has become, as I have told you, the secretary of the Congregation. I was scarcely seated when he revealed to me that an emissary had presented an objection on the part of one of the same Bishops who had approved. An emissary, a miserable clerk has become the accredited procurator of a Bishop in an affair of this importance, and who is going to set in motion such a sinister train of events! I had no time to open my mouth to reply when all of a sudden, Cardinal Castiglioni was announced, the same Cardinal whom I had seen the day before yesterday, and with whom my conversation had been so unsatisfactory, as I have related to you. I rose immediately so as not to meet him, but as I left, I told the Archbishop that he was contrary to us, in order to give some warning concerning what I supposed he had come to tell. I also announced that I would return tomorrow to see him.

I wished to begin my letter immediately because, being able to see the Archbishop only towards noon, and as the post leaves in two hours, I was afraid I would not have time to let you know about this unfortunate snag. What betrayal on the part of this Bishop who only is a Bishop because I did not take his see! If we did not suit him, nothing was more simple than to tell us to leave his diocese; so by what right does he come to oppose our progress and prevent us from doing good elsewhere, as the spirit of God indicates to us to do? This unworthy

and underhand protest is going to do nothing less than weaken all the other approbations and render them, so to speak, of no effect: what evil this man has done to us!

I began my letter at the address of Ferruci,⁸, which was on my way to the Cardinal to whom Cardinal Pedicini was to pass on our manuscript after he had studied it. I became more confirmed in my intimate conviction that our cause was gained but for the shameful intervention of this Bishop. I conversed for three quarters of an hour with the Cardinal, gently brought him round to my side and thoroughly briefed him in our interests. It is he who said: "Even if the Congregation were not to hold this opinion, we are, after all, but counsellors of the Pope and, when he so wills, he can act independently of our opinion." Now the Pope did so will and willed so well that he had charged the Secretary to make known his will to the Cardinal ponent. But at present it is entirely to be feared that he may let things proceed according to the ordinary train of events, thanks to the panic and terror inspired here by the opposition of a Bishop of France which, they imagine, sets all the Gauls afoot.

Cardinal Castiglioni will not have failed to speak to the Holy Father to this effect and, you know, when someone abounds on one side and no one replies, how easy it is to make an impression. When I think of the incalculable evil that this Bishop is doing to us, at a total loss to himself, I say the *Pater Noster* in order to stifle the feeling of indignation that such proceedings arouse in my soul. For the rest, I am not yet sure that it may be him, I shall not be long in knowing it positively. I shall return tomorrow to see Arch. Marchetti and shall try to draw the matter into the open. What is the word for this whole conspiracy? Need we have other proofs to be convinced of the necessity of what we seek to do? I say this to you and I repeat it, our cause would be won but for this wretched incident to which the spirit of darkness has given rise and he well knows why. I call a halt for if I surrendered myself to my reflections, I would leave no more room for what remains to me to tell you tomorrow when I shall have seen Arch. Marchetti who will have, no doubt, been well indoctrinated today by this blessed Cardinal Castiglioni.

⁸ Abbé Ferruci was the agent of the Bishop of Marseilles to the Roman Congregations.

January 5. — I began my day by going to offer the holy sacrifice on the tomb of St. Joseph Calasanctius, with the intention of obtaining by his intercession the light and the strength necessary to sustain this new battle prompted by the demon against our holy enterprise. I emerged from there to go to the house of the archpriest Adinolfi, whom I had not seen since the day I met him at the door of Arch. Marchetti. His countenance reassured me strongly. He told me that not one, but three of those who had approved, had written quite a bold letter in common which had no common sense and which was utterly anti-canonical: these are his own expressions. He had at first believed it to be the trick of some emissary jealous of Ferruci, and had compared the signatures but there was no doubt that the three Bishops have signed this letter. He has much reassured me and he avowed to me that from the beginning of this affair, he who is so accustomed to deal with similar matters, had been astonished by its pace, he could not conceive how it could go so grandly forward without meeting obstacles. This one did not surprise him but it did not cause him much fear. I had taken strong resolutions before St. Joseph Calasanctius; the words of the archpriest have added hope to my faith.

I quickly made my way towards the Quirinal where Arch. Marchetti is lodged. I was close to Saint Peter's, at least in the vicinity of the Castel San Angelo, that is to say at the other extremity of the city. When I arrived at Arch. Marchetti's a new surprise. "Guess," he said to me, "what Cardinal Casiglioni came here to do yesterday. He came to recommend your affair very warmly, at the same time proffering to me the greatest praise for you personally." At this I rubbed my eyes. "But all he told me was the objections that he would make to you, etc." Would it not be, I said to myself interiorly, that he saw the Pope persist in his resolution? That is the idea which came to my mind. What I must tell you is that the Pope was so delighted with the account I gave him that he said to the pro-Secretary⁹ of the Congregation: "I am enchanted with this institution, we lack such in Italy and I would well wish it established in my States." Whatever the case may be, Arch. Marchetti assured me that he knew Cardinal Castiglioni and that he had certainly spoken to him sincerely. That is all to the good.

I ran over to Cardinal Pedicini whom I found still with our volume in his hands. Great compliments and great praise, he found not

⁹ YENVEUX (IV, 13) writes "to the Prefect."

a word to criticize, all is taken care of, all is admirable, all is holy. "But, Monseigneur, that certain letter? I come here to reply to it." "There it is, read it aloud." And, while I was reading it, he did not leave to me the trouble of refuting it but took charge of that himself by citing the very words of our document. In fact it was such a pitiable thing that I blush for the honour of our Episcopate. It has been miserably produced by this fine Bishop of Gap, the hand-writing being that of his secretary, and at its foot there are the signatures of the Archbishop of Aix, the Bishop of Digne and his own.

Were not my watch lying there on the desk and hurrying me for the post, I would speak longer on this item but I fear to miss the departure and that would delay me to Sunday, while I would like you to know as soon as possible these details I am going to try something, but cannot be sure of its success that is, to beg Cardinal Pacca¹⁰ to request the Pope on my behalf to consent that the report of the Cardinal ponent be presented to him without the affair having to pass through so many hands, which would keep me here more than the good of the diocese and of the family would permit. If the Cardinal agrees to present my request and the Pope consents to it, we will be all right; otherwise, I shall languish here for still a very long time, for you can see the time that it will take. Cardinal Pedicini will not be able to hand on the dossier to him who comes after him until the end of next week, and there are seven after him. Believe me, I take no rest; I will go to the baths on my return for admittedly this operation cannot be accomplished without over-exertion. Nevertheless, I am in the best of health, physically and mentally — it truly seems that the good God wills me to pursue my task while united to him, and he does not let me offend him, at least not in a manner I can perceive.

Adieu, I run, I am always on the run, I run to the post office. I dine this evening with the Ambassador. I embrace you as well as my uncle and all the family.

¹⁰ The Founder wrote to Cardinal Pacca, prefect of the S.C. of Bishops and Regulars, to ask him to present his report to the Pope after the examination of Cardinal Pedicini, without waiting for the advice of the other Cardinals.

217. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].¹¹

State of soul of the Founder who endeavours to live in the most saintly manner possible. Proposal to establish the novitiate at Marseilles. Illness of Cardinal Pacca.

L.J.C.

Rome, January 10, 1826.

I begin, my dear Fr. Tempier, by rectifying a statement of my last letter which would be too absurd and ridiculous were I not writing in intimacy and trustfulness to a friend, the confidant of my most secret thoughts; certainly I would not have let it slip out with any other person. When I said I was not sinning, I meant to say that I was sinning less; the reason for this is quite simple. First, while busy with our affairs, I have tried my best to profit from all the extraordinary and manifold graces of the Jubilee. Besides, everything here reminds me of the great examples of the saints who seem to be still living for those who go about this city with a modicum of faith. Moreover, having in my hands an affair of the utmost importance, of which the consequences must so influence the building up of the Church, the glorifying of God and the sanctifying of souls, an affair that hell must thwart and which can only succeed thanks to a very special protection from God, to whom alone belongs the power to touch the hearts and guide the wills of men, I have had of necessity to convince myself that it is my duty to do all in my power to live in the most intimate state of union with God that I possibly can and be resolved in consequence to be faithful to his grace and not give cause for grief to his spirit. As things stand at present, the least voluntary infidelity would seem to me a crime, not only because it would be displeasing to God, which doubtless would be the worst evil, but still more because of the consequences it could bring about.

I should add that since my departure from France and especially since I have been at Rome, the good God aids me with everything in so tangible a manner that I cannot see how it would be possible not to keep in my soul a constant feeling of gratitude which prompts me to praise, to bless, to thank God, Our Lord Jesus Christ, and in due proportion the holy Virgin, the holy Angels and the Saints to whom I

¹¹ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 219-221; YENVEUX, VIII, 43.

believe myself indebted for the protection and the consolations that are mine. That in no way impedes me from confessing twice a week and constantly finding greater or lesser reason for humbling myself before God

I will have nothing new to tell you concerning the matter for which I am here, until tomorrow, that is, if Cardinal Pacca, with whom I dined yesterday, does not forget to present to the Pope the request that I am trying to make to him. I have forewarned today Cardinal Pedicini, so that he will postpone sending the documents to the Cardinal who would examine them after him, until we know whether or not the Pope has consented to my request

. . . Since I am at Marseilles I will endeavour to have the novitiate moved to that city because I will be able to give the Novice Master a hand and keep my eye on the students. But it would be necessary to adopt the practice which is observed everywhere of not letting the novices be in communication even with the Fathers of the Society. They would be entirely separated during their year of novitiate — *segregati* — doing everything in common and by themselves, except in church and at the table. In all the novitiates that I have seen and am seeing, the novices do not have a particular room. Whatever they do, the others do also, that is to say, at the sound of the small bell, they pass from the reading of Holy Scripture to that of the Rules, and so on. But when we have got to that point, I will give instructions to the one who will have charge of this

January 11. — Cardinal Pacca, being rather indisposed, has not been to his audience with the Pope this morning, so there is no new development. If he has improved on Friday, which is his second audience day, he will do what he would have done today; let us pray in the meantime for holy patience. This minor illness of Cardinal Pacca drags out the matter for Cardinal Pedicini has completed his study; but it is better to lose a few days rather than allow things to proceed in a manner that will become irrevocable. Ah! if the Pope would consent to let the examination be done only by three! But I dare not hope for this. Admittedly however it will be very hard to prolong my stay here indefinitely. I have already had enough. I embrace you all.

218. [To. Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].¹²

Illness of Cardinal Pacca. Numerous invitations to dinner. Visits the tomb of St. Peter and tombs of other Roman saints.

L.J.C.

Rome, January 13, 1826.

One must have patience in these affairs, my dear friend; I pray the good God to give me some so that I may not lose the merit of my trials. I had told you that it was agreed with Cardinal Pacca that he would propose, last Tuesday, that the Pope accept the examination made by the Cardinal ponent after the latter had conferred about it with him, prefect of the Congregation, before they would subsequently present their work to the Holy Father. But that Tuesday the Cardinal was indisposed and did not go to the Pope. I was hoping that matters would mend today and went purposely yesterday evening to the Secretary of the Cardinal so as to have him remind his Eminence about the matter and find out at the same time if he intended to have his audience. I was assured that his Eminence would go and was promised that before midnight he would be informed of the purpose of my visit. This morning found me in the Secretary of State's salon at the time I thought my Cardinal was with the Pope. By chance I mentioned him to a gentleman next to me. He assured me that the Cardinal had not left his house and, as I appeared to doubt his assertion, he did not fail to reveal that this had been prescribed by himself whence I concluded that it was his doctor. You can imagine the pleasure this fellow gave me with his verdict.

On leaving the Vatican, I sent someone to the Cardinal's house to find out what the situation was; the report came back that his Eminence had not gone out. He suffers from occasional attacks of rheumatism. So if this time of year is an obstacle to his going out, and rheumatism is incurable, he is finished for the whole winter. That is how amusing the situation is. In the meantime, as Cardinal Pedicini finished his work several days ago, if it becomes definite that we must follow the usual procedure, this will be so much time lost. However the hope of shortening it so considerably helps me to accept this loss with less regret. I ought however to admit that I was not pleased with being

¹² *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 221-225; YENVEUX, IV, 160.

foiled this morning and had need to go and receive the benediction of the most holy Sacrament in order to resign myself and not murmur. I had clearly proposed yesterday to Cardinal Pedicini that he go himself to the Pope in order to make the request that I had begged Cardinal Pacca to present; but he had demurred, fearing that the other Cardinals of the Congregation might believe he wished to take over the whole affair himself. He could only decide to do so if the Cardinal Prefect would authorize him in writing. I praised his discretion and shall see tomorrow if I can persuade Cardinal Pacca to give him this commission. Nonetheless this makes for quite a delicate situation since I will seem to be weary and fed up with the first mediator. My fear is that while waiting, the Pope may be informed of the letter in question and that may cool his ardour and even prevent him from acceding to my proposal. We shall see, this suffices for this evening.

January 14. — I have not a great deal to add to what I told you yesterday. I went to see Cardinal Pacca and we agreed that if he cannot see the Pope on Tuesday, he will request Cardinal Pedicini in writing to go in his name. Let us wait then with patience until Tuesday. Tomorrow, I will not have time to finish my letter because I must go again to the Vatican to see the Cardinal Secretary of State who has given me an appointment; I will then visit Cardinal Pedicini to let him know what has been agreed with Cardinal Pacca. I will also have to see the Secretary of the Congregation; so I shall not post my letter until Tuesday when I will know if my Cardinal has decided to go up and see the Pope.

January 16. — Were I at Rome only to while some time pleasantly away in amusing myself and receiving very flattering testimonies of esteem and consideration from most distinguished personages, I certainly would have reason to be very satisfied for I am abashed by all they do for me and the the opinion of me they have kindly conceived, no doubt because of my label. Since the beginning of January, I have not dined three times at the house, I do not know when all these goings on will finish but I am engaged again until Thursday and on that day, it will be with the Cardinal of whom I have spoken to you. I do not know in whose company I shall find myself at his house. We'll see. But that is not why I am here and I am utterly wearied by the delay which our affair is suffering. I have been again today to seek new strength and invoke abundant help on the tomb of the holy Apostles; I have said mass for the third time on the confession of Saint Peter and I confess that the good God deigned to compensate me by his grace for

the troubles that hell is fomenting against us. I invoked St. Peter with all my heart and he proved that he knew how to be a good patron. I profited from the opportunity to recommend you all most earnestly to God. I prayed for an ample share for all of you in the virtues and rewards of this great Apostle. Prayer becomes confident, I assure you, when one feels in the company of Jesus Christ, his Vicar, his apostles and first heads of the Church such as St. Linus¹³, etc., offering the holy sacrifice over bodies which have been animated by such great souls, over members which have touched the Saviour, from which still seems to spring the sacred fire of the love which handed them over to the torments of martyrdom, so as to confess the name of their Master, who also is ours! But cease! for soon there will be no more room to tell you that I have seen Cardinal Pacca. Alas! I dare not tell you he will see the Pope tomorrow; he assured me however that he would take means to shorten the work. He seems to be annoyed at being the cause of a delay which he knows is grieving me very much; but how to fend off a doctor's orders coupled with the threat of seeing the malady become incurable if his prescriptions are disobeyed? I intimated mildly that I also had rheumatism in a thigh which I dragged along all the time on streets and high roads. Tomorrow I will be able at least, before sealing my letter, to tell you if he has gone to see the Pope or if he has stayed at home. If he has seen the Pope, I will not be able to give you the result of his visit, because I will have to put my letter in the post before his return from the Vatican, but please God I will be able to say that he has been out! I do not dare delude myself. However I have informed Cardinal Pedicini, who is greatly interested in the matter, so that if Cardinal Pacca decides to write to him, he will betake himself as quickly as possible to the Holy Father in order that we may at last have a decision. But I would prefer that Cardinal Pacca himself undertake this mission.

January 17. — It has turned cold only two days ago and today the icy wind here known as the *tramontana* is fairly strong. This is by way of telling you that Cardinal Pacca will not have dared to go up to the Vatican. I am not yet sure of it but I expect presently, when I go round to his dwelling, to hear myself being told: His Eminence has not left the house because of the bad weather . . . So I am going out to learn that my Cardinal, intimidated by his doctor, is staying near his fireplace. I will put that into the margin that remains. I will use the rest of this

¹³ YENVEUX: St. Leon.

page to testify once more what it costs me to live in separation from my dear family. I embrace you at least very affectionately as well as my dear uncle and those of our people who are at Marseilles. Adieu.

What I had foreseen has happened, the Cardinal did not go out. It is however a fine day and the sun shines but it is cold. What can be done? No one is surprised here, affairs simply do not move any quicker than this. Would that there be an end of it! And these delays give time to others to stir up trouble, apart from the prospect that the Pope may fall ill again. I will write to you again in a few days. I am hastening to send my letter to the post although the courier of Tuesday is not so quick as that of Thursday.

219. [To. Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].¹⁴

Leave everything to Providence. Prayers and steps taken for the success of the cause. Three cardinals instead of eight will examine the Constitutions. Letters from Fr. Tempier and Bishop Fortuné. Poverty of those who enter the Congregation.

L.J.C.

Rome, January 20, 1826.

Let us continue to pray, my dear friend, and let us not cease to put our confidence in God. It is for him alone to rule and dispose all things according to his infinite wisdom for the greater glory of his name. I must admit that never in my life have I understood as well as now the value of self-surrender to God, never have I felt more disposed to put this virtue (for such it is) into practice as in the present circumstances. The true Christian should never dispense himself therefrom. Oh! how well off I now find myself through having done all I could do to make a habit of it. That does not prevent me from praying heartily to obtain what I think is good; on the contrary, I pray with more confidence, and with a kind of assurance that I will be heard.

You know that since my arrival at Rome, I have been offering the holy sacrifice for the success of our cause and never come before the holy sacrament without speaking of it to our Lord. I never invoke a saint without begging him to be our intercessor and even recite, if

¹⁴ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 226-229; YENVEUX, VII, 89.

somewhat badly, certain prayers to this end such as the litanies of the saints and others similar. Moreover, I neglect no means that human prudence can suggest; I spare myself from no endeavours and allow my mind no rest in trying to second the designs of divine Providence. Up until now, everything has succeeded beyond our hopes. Yet the good God has permitted some alarm and has left room for some anxiety but he has not taken away our confidence; on the contrary, in sorrowful moments, prayer has taken on more tenderness and I dare say almost the familiarity of a child towards a father.

When I reflect on how our enterprise is going forward, I am filled with admiration for the goodness of God and feel carried away with feelings of great gratitude. Up to this moment, it all bears the mark of a special protection. Who could have disposed the Head of the Church to decide to make a unique exception for us? Who inspires him to perceive that all I propose to him is good? Again yesterday, to whom are we indebted for his having consented without the slightest difficulty to dispense me from the interminable examination of eight Cardinals, whom it would perhaps have been difficult to induce to abandon for our sake a system adopted for all the others, and authorize Cardinal Pacca to hold in his house a small congregation of three Cardinals, that is to say, to take on another Cardinal who, with Cardinal Pedicini and the secretary Archbishop of the Congregation, will give their judgement on the book and report on it directly to the Holy Father? It is God, master of all hearts, moved by the powerful mediation of his son, Our Lord. Thus the matter now stands, dear friend, whence you will understand how much it has been simplified. Now it is up to Cardinal Pacca to convoke at his house, whenever he wishes, his little congregation. Although he is rather slow, it cannot drag on much longer. I hope that Cardinal Pallotta, who has been chosen, will not have opinions other than the one giving the report. I perhaps will learn something between now and the departure of the mail.

January 21. — Not having been able to dispense myself from attending the requiem which took place here today as in France on the 21st, the time suitable for visiting our Cardinals was spent at St. Louis. So you will only know from my first letter when our commission will meet; at this point several days more or less will not make much difference to our business. I will not, however, let them go to sleep. In the meantime, I will express, or rather I cannot express, the pleasure given me by your very ample letter, just the kind I like, about the family. Although you only acknowledge receipt of my letter of the 22nd, I

understand from a note added to that from my uncle, that you have also received mine of the 25th; I am not sure if I am wrong about the date, at least I wish to speak of that which gives you details of my audience; you must indeed have received it by the 8th or before; your number 7 is of that date. I knew in advance how pleased you would be and certainly the news I sent to you was such as to overwhelm you all with the keenest joy; my subsequent letters must have lessened this feeling by their oscillation between fear and hope that I scrupulously conveyed to you in order to keep you always abreast of all phases of our gripping story

January 22. — I would wish you not to overlook a matter which preoccupies me constantly and that is that no one of our company has a penny and that the day when certain sources will dry up, it will be quite perplexing to know how to feed and clothe so many people; I know that we must count on divine Providence as Christian wisdom counsels us. That is why my purpose has always been to set aside a fund which could furnish the most pressing necessities of life, not of course with a thought of hoarding, but in order to supplement the endowments that all Congregations have in all countries of the world, for should it happen one day that we are reduced to mass stipends, there will not be enough to keep our communities going. If we were to use this money for building, that would reduce us to zero. Think well on this, for those who give themselves to God in our company have a right to have their needs looked after. If they have brought nothing with them, that is not their fault; it was with our knowledge and consent.

Say to my dear and good uncle that I am very grateful for the few words he kindly adds to your letters; I am not writing directly to him so as not to add needless expense, but he knows how much I love him and how much it costs me to be far from him. Affairs move slowly here and yet how indebted I am to the Holy Father for having reduced my routine by more than two thirds, without counting the obstacles and difficulties which would have multiplied in proportion with the number of voters; it means at least three months saved and mountains removed. Problems still remain and I shall not cry victory until the day when I shall hold the palm in my hand, that is to say, the brief, should I succeed in obtaining it.

I embrace you, my good and dear friend, with all my heart. I kiss the hands of my uncle and greet all who are so deserving of this remembrance on my part. Adieu.

220. [To. Fr. Suzanne at Nîmes].¹⁵

Regrets having to remain at Rome while the Oblates have so much to do. The conduct of the Bishop of Gap is inexplicable.

Rome, January 25, 1826.

Alas! I can only watch over you from afar. Judge for yourself how resigned I need to be to bear with patience the sight of myself here going from one engagement to another, from dinner with his Eminence to that of His Excellency, from Cardinals to Ambassadors, from Monseigneurs to Ministers, from Prelates to Dukes, while my whole, dear family is in the field, at grips with hell, giving themselves over to strenuous toil, to all manner of hardships and pains. I can only offer to God my boredom

The conduct of the Bishop of Gap is inexplicable. For him it is only a question that is quite simple: if something does not suit you, do not use it. What is the good of frightening judges who, situated 300 leagues away, can easily be given a false impression and be afraid of an opposition which is certainly not going to materialize? That is the situation. One must admit that the demon has employed a means very suitable to allow him to attain his ends, that of using a bishop to snuff out the good that he has so many reasons to fear. Let us pray to God that the enemy may not prevail, but you will understand that, in spite of doing my utmost to stay resigned, I cannot help having some very distressing moments

221. [To. Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].¹⁶

Slowness of Cardinal Pacca, prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. Letters of Bishop Arbaud opposing the approbation of the Rules. Carnival. The three Cardinals will meet at the beginning of Lent. Write every week. Expenses. Worn-out clothing. German Brothers.

¹⁵ REY, I, 367, 369-370.

¹⁶ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 229-235; YENVEUX, VI, 20; RAMBERT, I, 441-442; REY, I, 386.

Rome, January 28, 1826.

Here, my dear Tempier, is still another week lost, thanks to the slowness of this good Cardinal Pacca. It was on the feast of Saint Peter's Chair, that is to say, the 18th, if I am not mistaken, that the Holy Father granted, when he requested it on my behalf, that he meet with two other Cardinals and the Secretary Archbishop of the Congregation, to examine the matter in question: and now today, the 28th, he has not yet passed on this sovereign decision to those who are simply waiting for the word to despatch the matter promptly. For that I have been running errands galore, without counting all the trouble I took in getting him to make my representations to the Pope! In the meantime, the enemy wastes no time. He writes letter after letter and finally sends a memorandum to dissuade them from making the decision that we request. Judge for yourself the effect produced by such opposition, while those who have presented similar affairs before me have all been supported by a great number of Bishops who were certainly not as obliged towards them as this one who acts against us so furiously. I am fully certain that, without this unseemly opposition, we would have gained everything with ease: first, because the Pope had pronounced himself in the clearest and most categoric manner; then because the Cardinal ponent was perfectly amenable to our views; the Cardinal prefect, briefed by frequent interviews with me, would not have had an opinion other than that of the Cardinal ponent; the Secretary, who had taken things amiss before having seen me, yielded to my reasons easily and with such good grace that, without my requesting him, he informed the Pope about the matter in a very favourable light, found the Holy Father still in the same frame of mind, and brought from his audience a favourable report which he read to me; and lastly, because the third Cardinal was of our choice, a friend of the ponent, and disposed to accept his report. Now, what can we hope after all the commotion that has been made and does not cease to be made by this man whom the demon is using to ruin our cause? The first protestations did not make a great impression; but they tell me so much about how he persists in prosecuting us that I cannot help being seized with some fear, not because they find his reasons sound, on the contrary, they look pitiful to everybody but because they think twice before indisposing him and those in whose name he speaks.

Who would have expected that from this man whom we believed to be a friend of our work and of our Society? If the good God permits

that, in spite of his ruses and his efforts, we attain our ends, we can consider this success as the greatest miracle of its kind which has happened, and this trial can shine amongst those which have always been met by those in whose steps we are following; for undoubtedly they have been faced with opposition and difficulty but they were not of this kind; on the contrary, they have always been supported before the Holy See by those who persecute us for having done them too much good. In effect, it is not those who do not owe us anything, those for whose sake we have not exuded a drop of sweat, who pursue us; no, it is those to whom we have devoted ourselves for ten years of exorbitant labours, of all manner of privations, of sacrificing our health and our lives. Disgusting!

However pained I am by conduct so little in keeping with justice, so contrary to the spirit of religion, of which the consequences can be so prejudicial for the glory of God, the edification of the Church and the salvation of souls, I do not say with any less devotion the *Pater*, which covers all we ought to ask in these circumstances, as always; that the name of God be hallowed, that his will be done, that he pardon us as we pardon others, that he deliver us from evil, that he protect us against the demon, that he does not permit our trials and temptations to be beyond our strength. I willingly add also that the Lord enables me to bear with resignation the boredom of my sojourn here and the tiresome tasks I am obliged to perform.

I have just seen Cardinal Pacca. He told me that he was most desirous of seeing the matter terminated, all the more so because that is what the Holy Father intends; but as one of the Cardinals he had chosen is somewhat ill, he wanted to see Cardinal Pedicini in order to choose another. Knowing that Cardinal Pedicini greatly favours that this sick Cardinal be assigned, I begged Cardinal Pacca to stay with his first choice. He gave me hope that they would meet at the beginning of Lent; today is the beginning of the Carnival here and while I write, the whole city is *al Corso* to see the horse races which take place three times a week until Lent. So the verdict has been given, I will be obliged to remain here until Lent. My God, what a penance! It will be no problem to observe the detestable fasting they practice here, because of the soapy oil with which they sauce everything but, after three months of absence, not to be able to see the end of my exile, is too much! At least write to me regularly each week. You are a little behind this time, for I suppose you must have received three of my letters since the last letter you wrote me on the 18th. I sympathize with you in regard to

your numerous and very serious occupations but you must make this effort for me, it is my unique consolation.

I have sent to my uncle, by sea, a plaster bust of the ruling Pope; it is done by a great master and the resemblance is perfect. I saw one in the Cardinal Secretary of State's rooms and was struck by it. I seemed to see him as on the day of my famous audience. I immediately thought of sending one to my uncle so that he might place it on the console in his salon. But, as nothing is easy here, I had to run errand after errand to get it loaded rather poorly on the ship which is to carry it to Marseilles. There being no more space, I had to be satisfied with leaving it on the deck, fortunately well crated, but at quite a cost as I well know. Had I not been sure that sending it would please my uncle, it would have annoyed me to do it, so much do I find the prices exorbitant for all these things.

Today I drew 100 piastres from the representative of M. Cailhol and Co.

The letter M. Regnier gave me for M. Torlonia was of great value in procuring many courtesies from this banker who is a very rich lord, since he has bought the dukedom of Bracciano and he extends, one must say, the honours of Rome. He has had me twice to dinner, while M. Civrani has shown me politeness only with words. But I dared not ask Torlonia for the slight sum of 100 Roman crowns. So it is from M. Civrani that I have drawn them. I will ask my uncle to account for this with Messrs. Cailhol and Verdillon.

With this money I have paid my debts, that is to say, two months board in the house where I lodge. Although I do not eat here half the time, they make me pay 4 paules per day. The chocolate is at my expense when I wish to have some; that depends on my rounds. I pay the laundry and they furnish me oil for my lamp. It would not be dear if I ate every day at the house but this month I have taken meals fifteen times elsewhere. It is my clothes that give me trouble. You should see the care I take with them. I take advantage of the dry weather to use my old britches which have holes at both knees, between the legs, before and behind, but the soutane covers all. When it rains, I have to lift up this coverall and thus let them see too much. I have too many half shirts but as for my stockings, they are a torment. Every time I pull them on I cannot help making holes in them. Were I not obliged to appear every day before some Cardinal or other, I would not put off my old cassock, of which my fine cloak hides the creases. I put it on in

the morning before going out. It takes nothing less than love of poverty to make me dress three times a day for in the evening, when I return, I change once more. It is because I am afraid I am appalled for only half the time I will be here.

I am keeping for tomorrow the other side of this paper in the hope of receiving something from you. In the meantime, I entertain you with these frivolous matters by way of recreation. Thus I join in the Carnival by chatting with you as though you were present. When will the day come when it will no longer be a fiction! Adieu, until tomorrow.

January 29. — The post has arrived and has brought me no letters from you. Yet I was counting at least on one for I am quite right in supposing that you have been able to reply to three of my letters, those of the first, third and fifth of January. I receive your letters on the tenth day, which is not surprising, since they do not take longer from Paris; if mine reach you as soon as that, you will have received my three letters by the 15th; it is now the 29th so you will have had four days to reply to the last, and proportionately more to reply to the other two; I have since written you on the 11th or 12th, the 17th, the 22nd and the 26th. Check if this is correct, not counting my letters to Suzanne of the 12th and the 26th. Well, we will just wait patiently for the next post. But it is hard on me to be thus disappointed. If you knew how anxiously I count the days and even, I must say, the minutes. To know that you would have to feel what it is like to find yourself three hundred leagues from your family, with no one near you who represents it, and with whom you can converse about it. Nevertheless I do not intend to make reproaches to you because I know your position, especially since at the moment you have to look after the hospital sisters. While they are being persecuted at Marseilles, the Pope is settling some of them here and encouraging them in every way. I do not know who is mostly to blame, the administrators or the ministers, especially the one who has the duty of devoting himself entirely to the defense of these heroines of Christian charity.

The Brother who serves me would very much wish to follow me: he is still only a novice, twenty years of age and a cobbler by trade. He is a charming boy who understands how to sew a little and knows how to make an omelette. It is repugnant to my sense of delicacy to consent to his wishes; but it is hard for us not to have any Brothers, while here they have a surfeit of them. Amongst others, they have three Germans worth a fortune. One is a carpenter, the other a cook, the third a tailor.

I do not know why we have none of these good Germans in France. As for the French, one knows why they are not to be found: it is because young people inclined to enter religious life, seeing that they can be admitted into the ecclesiastical state without money and without a talent, let themselves be tempted to make this deal

Speak to me a little about the house. Cardinal Pacca wishes me to give him an excerpt of the letter which Suzanne has written to me, in order to read it to the Pope. My God! when will we be home free? . . . Adieu, I embrace you as well as my uncle and our Fathers.

222. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].¹⁷

Reasons for this letter. Advice on the subject of Fr. Suzanne, chaplain of the hospital, Fr. Bernard, etc. Youth Sodality. Painting of Blessed Alphonse of Liguori. Care of the novices.

[Rome] February 2, 1826.

. . . Perhaps it would be more in keeping with strict poverty to deprive myself of the pleasure of writing to you and thus spare you the postal charge for my letter, knowing besides that you are not deprived of my news, since Father Tempier takes care to give you them and even to pass on to you my letters. But apart from that being a case of insisting a little too much on perfection in that virtue, even had I no other reason to write you than the mutual pleasure of a correspondence that is legitimate, you are superior of the most interesting house of our Society, you have under your direction the hope of the Company, you are one of the principal members of the family, so it is lawful for me to write you from time to time directly, and I do it without scruple and with all the satisfaction that I always feel in all my relations with you whom it has been my habit and happiness to love since almost from the time you began to exist.

. . . I am glad that Fr. Suzanne has been able to fulfill the functions of chaplain at the hospital of Aix You must also watch carefully over the health of this child who is not too strong and oblige him to notify you when he finds himself too tired. However holy and meritorious this ministry may be, it is not one of our obligations, and

¹⁷ YENVEUX, II, 35, 65; IV, 126, 167; VI, 64; VIII, 71; REY, I, 377.

also you know better than anyone that we took on this charge only under duress; I am quite afraid that we may have much trouble getting rid of it and that the favourable occasion that you and I seek may never come during the episcopate of our Lord the Archbishop.

... You have Bernard near you, look after his health which is delicate, but do not leave him idle; have him exert himself at writing sermons, take advantage of his ability and freshness of imagination but also insist that he study a little theology every day and acquire familiarity with all the best authors, in a word, cultivate him; by being a little methodical, one gets a lot done. Make this your objective, I count on you.

... Since you speak to me of the Sacred Heart and the nomination for the new prefectship, as well as of the painting that you are going to order, I must say you have done very well but take care lest they think this dignity is for life, and let them pray the good God that Mme. de La Fare¹⁸ last out the year of her mandate. Reflect before inscribing the names of the two who preceded her. You must arrange matters so that there is no interval when the Congregation has been without a head, this would be to show openly our negligence. What you tell me of the project of the painting by M. Clairian pleases me. There is every likelihood that within a year the blessed Liguori will be canonized. The engraving that we have of his apotheosis will have helped to give some idea to the painter. My advice would be, in the absence of a better, that to attain two ends in one, one might show the Sacred Heart in glory with the Saint in the foreground of the painting as the principal personage and with the attributes proper to him; it should be remarked that if he is shown on earth, it is necessary to retain his appearance as an old man with his head bowed upon his chest. If they decide on something else, and show him rising towards heaven, they will then be free to represent him otherwise because the resurrection heals from all deformities those who are called to reign in

¹⁸ Fr. Rey writes: [Fr. de Mazenod] is not forgetful of the works to which he had devoted his first years in the apostolate: the Sodality of Youth at Aix, the Sodality in honour of the Sacred Heart, the cult of devotion towards the Blessed Liguori" (p. 377). Madame de La Fare was probably in charge of the Sodality in honour of the Sacred Heart. The Sodality of Youth had as prefect in 1826 M. Biesson (Assembly of December 26, 1825) and in 1827, M. de Fourbelle (Assembly of December 26, 1826); cf.: Register of proceedings, pp. 101, 103, Rome, Archives of the Postulation DM VIII 2 b.

heaven. The essential thing is to characterize him in a manner that he will not be taken for a Saint Augustine or a Saint Francis of Sales.

What shall I say about the Sodality for the young men? It is what jealousy and hatred of good have made of it. But as long as it remains, the succession of prefects must continue. Here I see all kinds which have more the spirit of piety than ours. With the Philippines, the Jesuits and others, they take the discipline in a Sodality three times a week. No one runs away because of that.

[Our novices] still do not have the spirit of our Society, they must be formed in obedience, self-abnegation, love of poverty and in quite a number of other virtues unknown in the seminaries where they have lived until now. The hope of the Society depends on the good use of time in the novitiate, and I will not back down from that. I will not hesitate to sacrifice everything for this prime need of the Company; so much the worse for these schoolboys on probation; I am sorry that their progress will be slowed down but let them go elsewhere for instruction if they want to advance more quickly. We will take them back when they have learned what they need to enter novitiate. I conclude by recommending that you refrain from doing what you say tires you out even if the schoolboys have to suffer; and you must not count for a long time either on Riccardi or on Reynier whom I will not allow to leave novitiate until they are really trained in the religious spirit.

223. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].¹⁹

The congregation of three cardinals will be held on Wednesday, February 15. Slowness of Cardinal Pacca, preciseness of Cardinal Pedicini, illness of Cardinal Pallotta. A cure due to the prayers of Fr. Albini during the mission of Noyers. Health of Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod. Work on the house of Calvary at Marseilles in view of establishing the novitiate there.

L.J.C.

Rome, February 11, 1826.

My worries begin once more, my dear Tempier, in regard to how our affairs are progressing, for they are underway now after a month of stagnation. The day before yesterday, I did my customary rounds for

¹⁹ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 235-241; YENVEUX, VII, 90; VIII, 41; REY, I, 374.

the hundredth time; this time it was rewarding. Having learned that the Bishop of Ancyra was actually with Cardinal Pacca, I hid myself to where this Eminence lives; but before going up to his antichamber, I entered his secretariate to write a couple of words which I requested his chamberlain to put in his hands immediately. This was done. I said to the Cardinal in this note that since my Lord the Secretary was actually in his study, I begged him to give the necessary instructions so that the particular Congregation which was to be held in his house might begin its work. The reply came back that all would be arranged as I desired. This morning, on returning to the sacristy after my mass, I found Cardinal Pedicini had sent a servant to ask me to come to him. This good Cardinal, a man very punctilious in doing what he is bound in conscience to do, had been grieved over the slowness with which our affair was being dealt; to his delight, he had now received the official letter for which he had been waiting so long and wished to tell me that he had promptly sent the dossier to Cardinal Pallotta and that I should go as soon as possible to see that Cardinal.

I did not lose a minute; on coming out of Cardinal Pedicini's house, I had myself conveyed immediately to that of Cardinal Pallotta. His chamberlain, of a kind usually annoyed by petitioners, received me frigidly and told me that his Eminence, being somewhat affected by a cold, had not yet got out of bed. I insisted on knowing when I could see him; the man had no idea. However, as I said that I had come on behalf of Cardinal Pedicini, the chamberlain replied, still with the same hauteur, that Cardinal Pallotta had just written to Cardinal Pedicini to request a document which he was lacking, and that I could try and return at ten o'clock in the evening to see his Eminence. At Rome I was not used to being treated so curtly, and so I was not at all happy; and, if I didn't have to deal with this Cardinal and foresee that I will have to return to this icy person who is responsible for bringing matters and persons to his master's attention, I would have perhaps shown him that I did not consider such coldness of manner very polite. In any event, I footed it back to Cardinal Pedicini and related my misadventure to him. He was replying to the letter of Cardinal Pallotta. The latter was right, he had not received the letter of notification and had requested at least for a copy of that written to Cardinal Pedicini. I offered to his Eminence to be bearer of his reply in the hope that it would serve as passport to enter the sanctuary of Cardinal Pallotta; but, before leaving my Cardinal, who always receives me with open arms, I amused him a little with my remarks about the Cerberus that Pallotta had placed in his antichamber.

As I returned thither, I took a round about way so as to give him time to get up. A superfluous precaution. Though it was almost noon when I arrived, he was still in bed, though that had not prevented him from giving audience to the gentleman who is his auditor. I hoped that he would not be disinclined to show himself also to me in his night cap. But no. The letter I had brought was taken in to him. I was not informed if he had expressed his thanks. The chamberlain did not even give me the hope of seeing him at ten o'clock; I nearly showed my annoyance but refrained so as not to spoil matters. Instead, I offered to God all this stalling, running to and fro, and being blocked in anti-chambers which is the hardest penance possible to impose on me. I am so little deterred that I will try again today to see this invisible man; at least I will present myself, at his door at ten o'clock and this will be the third time in one day. All this makes me feel sorry I did not ask for another cardinal but the Cardinal ponent seems less doubtful of this one than of any of the others; he counts on him to adopt the position without any discussion. Any of the others would give more or less anxiety and it was this that prevents me from making any move to choose another. At last we are on the way; Wednesday has been set for this congregation at the house of the Cardinal prefect, at least if Cardinal Pallotta does not find the intervening time too short. It was in order to persuade him to the contrary that I desired so much to see him before he had time to become discouraged by the large volume he is condemned to read.

I have put the originals of our rescripts in the hands of the Cardinal ponent, these documents being made in order to impress. Happily they were what I concerned myself with obtaining first as today I would have run out of time; poor Bishop Caprano is now prey to a serious illness which has even caused alarm for his life and his convalescence therefrom will be very long. If I had not got hold of my papers, I could well have left without obtaining them. I have transcribed for you, I think, the whole content of these rescripts. The first thing asked was for a prorogation of seven years of the plenary indulgence granted by Pius VII and its extension to all the places where we give missions. I thought that a rescript which costs nothing would suffice for the purpose I have in mind while a brief would have cost dearly. On Monday I will return to Cardinal Pedicini's and copy this article to send you, as a precaution.

I did not fail to make known an account of the miracle and it must have been put before the Pope. Everyone is enthused about it. If

things have happened as you were told, it is a remarkable favour for our Society; for it seems that the good God allowed that it be prompted by the prayers of one of us, coupled with the powerful intercession of him who deserves to be heard *pro sua reverentia* that this miracle was granted. I discreetly made this reflection in the excerpt which I wrote to be placed under the eyes of the Pope.²⁰

Believe me, I am never without anxiety for the health of my uncle. These frequent head colds cannot be other than alarming because they show a propensity for congestion to lodge in the chest and as he obstinately refuses to take regular, daily exercise (for taking a walk every eight days is nothing), I fear that this congestion will finish by accumulating to the point when it will no longer dissolve. Insist again that he goes for walks. The reason he gives for not wishing to disturb any of us is worthless because at the most, there would be no great inconvenience to have him accompanied sometimes by his servant, while choosing the side roads and the country round about. Everyone follows this rule here and certainly they have more occupations than elsewhere, but there are times when one must avoid all business. I hope you will persuade him to eat well and that he takes something in the morning. At seventy-eight years of age, he is no longer obliged to fast, much less than a strong young man of twenty. Give me exact news about him every time you write and do not wait fifteen days as you have done this time.

February 12. — My third journey to the residence of Cardinal Pallotta has not been any more successful than the two others. This time he was with his confessor. His chamberlain was instructed to tell me that his Eminence was indisposed and could not see me until Tuesday, the eve of the congregation, to which he had been convoked. There was no way to get another word out of this doorkeeper. He had received his orders; one must abide by them. "I would have thought," said I, "that my Lord the Cardinal would have been pleased to receive some verbal explanations on the subject with which he is going to be concerned." "He will receive you on Tuesday." That was simply his response. I had taken my precautions in advance so that this bizarre manner of proceeding did not upset me at all; I descended the stairs

²⁰ The cure of a man who had been struck dumb after having blasphemed against the Mission of Noyers (Lower Alps). He was cured during a Mass which Fr. Albini celebrated, cf.: letter of Fr. Tempier to Fr. de Mazenod, January 23, 1826. Orig. Vatican, Secret Archives, rubr. 283, 1826.

laughing up my sleeve. Yet I was annoyed that this Cardinal wishes to see me only on the eve of the congregation for I wanted very much to converse with him to ward off the misgivings that could be planted in his mind by the letters to be found in the bundle which they call here the *position*. I remain still more annoyed at not having asked for another Cardinal, but what makes me refrain is that he suits the Cardinal ponent more than the others. I have to presume that he thinks that this one will concur with his report. So I will be on tenterhooks until Tuesday and Wednesday. Ah! dear friend, it is much better to preach missions, much better even to endure the boredom of the grand vicarship than be immersed in the sorry demands of what I have to do here. The blessed Alphonse was in an even more trying position, several times during his life. I invoke him now to obtain patience and success at last, for all these pains and pricks will be nothing if we finish by obtaining what we ask. What you propose to me in regard to getting the Pope to sign what he has approved *viva voce* is not feasible. At Rome we are slaves of red tape. We have to go through the mill. Let us wait then for the result of the congregation on Wednesday; if I learn it in time, I will send it to you in Thursday's post. If I do not write you that day, do not worry; it will be proof that I will not have known the result by then and I will send you news in the Sunday post, the 19th. In keeping you posted day by day, it is as if you were here.

I think you are likely to be busy finishing the house so that we can have the novitiate there if we definitely choose to transfer it to Marseilles; but I cannot overdo it in reminding you to keep to simplicity and strict necessity. I have here under my regard fine examples. Should it be so necessary that the novices have mattresses on their beds? Alas! should we not refrain from having them ourselves? Rather than mattresses, I would complete our stock with a supply of good but coarse linen for bed sheets, towels, serviettes and dusters (we should go without table cloths as at Aix) a small set of kitchen utensils, books and the chapel. After that, let us begin to restitute what the Society has furnished for several years because it is urgent that we assure ourselves of having on our side some sort of annual fund for the needs of the members of the Society, if only to provide them with food and clothing, for I see the time is coming when Digne and Gap will no longer contribute anything and then what shall we do? Do not overlook that in all the plans that you might form.

Finally I would wish you to invest some twelve thousand francs belonging to my uncle in government bonds after taking previous

advice; that would make a revenue of 600 francs for him to employ for the education of his grandnephews. As he firmly intends to make me his heir, you should purchase these bonds in my name. It is useless to let this money rot in coffers without earning anything, when there are so many bills and so little revenue. You must take advantage of the first decline in value and even if the purchase were only to be at 5%, you should take it rather than keep money idle with so many mouths depending on it. I embrace you all. Adieu.

224. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].²¹

The Rules are approved. Gratitude to God. Providence has directed the steps of the Founder. Visit to Cardinal Pallotta who made several remarks about the Rules. The Congregation of the Cardinals takes place while Fr. de Mazenod prays at the church of St. Mary in Campitelli Corrections made with Arch. Marchetti.

L.J.C.

Rome, February 16, 1826.

Hush! dear Tempier, I speak to you softly yet loud enough for you to hear. Yesterday, the 15th of the month of February of the year of grace 1826, the Congregation of Cardinals, assembled under the presidency of Cardinal Pacca, prefect, has unanimously approved the Rules, except for slight modifications proposed by the Cardinal ponent, the judgement of the Congregation being that our Holy Father the Pope grant the brief of approbation in good and due form. Although this is a signal grace that the Lord is granting us, one that calls for our entire gratitude, I think it is opportune to put limits on the exterior tributes of our rightful sentiments and to defer manifesting them until our Holy Father will have approved the decision of the Congregation and will have ordered the brief to be sent. Once the brief has been made and the operation, in consequence, achieved, then no bounds other than what moderation and prudence will dictate. While waiting, nevertheless, make arrangements so that God may be thanked, either by those whom you ought to bring into your confidence or by others besides, as your wisdom sees fit. Let us acknowledge that the conduct of divine Providence in this matter has been admirable and

²¹ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 241-247; REY, I, 380-381; RAMBERT, I, 444-445.

that none of us should ever become oblivious of how evident his protection has been. Perhaps never in matters like this has anyone seen hearts, of which God has decidedly shown himself to be master, disposed as they have been. First, that of the Sovereign Pontiff, and then that of everyone who has had to deal with this matter. All my steps, all my overtures seemed guided by a supernatural light which led me to do and say precisely what was necessary to please, to persuade. One could say of me, as of Esther, in regard to each of those with whom I had to deal: *Placuit ei et invenit gratiam in conspectu illius*.²² It is true that I have always put all my confidence in the goodness of God. As I have told you, I offered the holy sacrifice every day for this intention; I constantly invoked the holy Virgin and all the saints, but especially the sovereign Mediator, to whose glory all our intentions are directed; and I ought to avow, if ever I have prayed as much, never have I prayed with so much consolation (effect of an absolute but filial confidence) to the point of speaking to our Lord as I dare believe I would have done had I had the happiness of living when he moved about this earth to spread his goodness and grant to each what he asked. It was especially at communion, when our divine Saviour is on the point of giving us the utmost proof of his love that I was prompted to abandon myself to all the sentiments that his divine presence and the immensity of his mercy, never better felt than when I see him not disdaining a sinner like me, inspired at that precious moment in my miserable soul. These same sentiments were renewed when I presented myself before him to adore him, whether at my hour of adoration, whether on appearing before him as I left or entered the house, still again on visits I tried to make often during the Forty Hours, or in other churches where the holy Sacrament was exposed. But I ought to let you know that such confidence and sentiments were all due, after the grace which inspired them, to the thought that I was asking something in keeping with the will of God, apt to procure his glory, the salvation of souls and the good of the Church, and also because I regarded myself as the interpreter of all of you and because I felt, so to speak, borne along by the prayers, merits and works of the whole Society.

Now that I have dilated a little my heart, I am going to resume the flow of events of which I take care to render you an account with scrupulous and minute fidelity.

²² Esther, 7, 3: *Si inveni gratiam in oculis tuis, o rex, et si tibi placet . . .*

I think I told you that Cardinal Pallotta had put me off until Tuesday at ten o'clock. I went punctually to this appointment. I was introduced immediately into the apartment of his Eminence who received me with every sign of a most amiable politeness. He made excuses to me for having obliged me to return three times to his house, put the blame for it on his chamberlain, and showed me how pleased he was to make my acquaintance. He told me that although they had only given him two days to examine our affair, he had hastened to read the whole position from one end to the other; that he was very satisfied, but had made a few small observations that he was going to submit to me, yet I ought not to take them amiss because, other than they were of minor detail, this care and scrupulousness would give, on the contrary, new weight to the thing and show forth more its worth. I liked his reasons and read with him the remarks he had formulated. I replied to some of them and left to the Congregation the matter of doing justice to the others. The first concerned the title. I was sure that they would not be adopted. He would have wished to correct the *arcta via* in fear that this exigency might frighten those we wanted to convert; I replied that all the rest as a whole proved sufficiently the mildness of the direction that we proposed to follow, but I did not insist, knowing quite well that they would reconsider it at the Congregation. He would not have wished it to be supposed that there are bad priests, and launched into a long argument about this based on the words: *Nolite tangere Christos meos*.²³ He disapproved of something else that I proved to him to be textually in the Rule of the Blessed Alphonse. Finally, he would not have wished that the Brothers reiterate three times the same object; so I explained it. I made him appreciate the fittingness and based it on the practice of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. He objected also to the provision for making known to the superior the imperfections which would be perceived, and wished especially the suppression of the written exception that this does not apply to what became known through confession. I replied also to that with reasons and examples. Not content with having done it verbally that evening, I put it in writing the next day, which was yesterday, and I handed him this paper before the Congregation. You would have laughed at the indifference with which he told me: "There is, in the position, a letter, etc." I explained to him the motive behind this on a

²³ Ps. 104, 15 and I. Par. 16,22: "Do not touch my anointed.

tone which matched his and which showed that I gave it no more importance than he did.

We spoke then of the good that our dear companions are doing and he was affected by the account that I gave him of their work, and justly remarked, on the subject of the miraculous cure of the dumb man struck by God, that it was nothing in comparison with the miracles of conversion operated in souls. I withdrew very pleased with him, and he appeared quite satisfied with me, for as he accompanied me, he tapped me on the cheek as a sign of friendship, which Cardinal Pedicini had not failed to do for his part, so as to show the interest he took in me, on the second or third time I went to see him. I do not know if, to complete my account of that evening, I ought to tell you that Cardinal Pallotta, apparently as a crowning touch, announced to me that I would be a Bishop; I smiled at this proposal, not believing I was obliged to tell him why nothing would ever come of this.

Yesterday I did not waste a minute. I said Mass early, and then visited Cardinal Pedicini to inform him of Cardinal Pallotta's remarks and my replies to them. From there I called on the Archbishop of Ancyra, and without drawing breath, hurried on to tell Cardinal Pacca that I would be waiting in the church of Santa Maria *in Campitelli*, opposite his palace, while the Congregation was in session. Coming out, I asked them to send me word when the meeting ended; they forgot, so I had time to hear nine Masses. However I assure you that, being prepared for a long wait, I did not find the time long at all; on the contrary, I was quite happy in this beautiful church, occupied as one would wish to be occupied always. However, when I realized it was impossible that the Cardinals should still be in session, I left the church. It was one o'clock. In fact, the meeting had ended more than an hour earlier. I waited till evening to get some news of the result from the Archbishop Secretary. As he was not in the first time I called, I returned later, and, with his usual goodwill towards me, he told me everything had gone wonderfully well, and the Congregation had approved, with some modifications which he would put before me. We set to work immediately, and continued to work for more than two hours. He wielded the pen and wrote down our determinations with his own hand. You will find these on the original which I shall keep; I shall leave a copy here, I must have one made tomorrow.

No one can deny that Cardinal Pedicini has done his share of the work conscientiously. Judging by the notes he made, he must have studied the matter with the greatest possible care. We have, however,

changed some things which the Congregation left to us to explain. It would take too long to give you the details, they do not concern any essential point, merely some points which are inexact, or which he considered inexact. For instance, it says in the Preface that sinners, by their ingratitude, etc., have filled up the measure; this expression had to be changed because it is too positive on a matter which we cannot know with certainty, and it seems to set limits to the mercy of God, and so on. The Archbishop Secretary and I will finish the work this evening and the conclusion of the Congregation will probably be presented to the Holy Father at tomorrow evening's audience. You can see that things are moving, but much remains to be done. I must stop now and snatch a quick dinner. I'll finish this letter afterwards if I have time to catch the post.

Although I have dined in ten minutes, my watch makes me fearful of missing the post. I can still keep writing to you for a quarter of an hour but not more, for it would not be right to risk a delay of three days in your receiving the interesting news that I am giving you. Your letter of the 6th has arrived while I have been writing to you. I have no time to reread it but certainly, if what I am giving you is good, what you give me in return is detestable. What good is it if heaven and earth outvie each other to help us here when hell takes away what we have at home?²⁴ So it goes! This is just like the beginnings of the Redemptorists but they would recuperate on the one hand what they lost with the other. No matter, nothing happens save what God permits, let us not lose courage . . . I shall return to that, the time for the post is upon me. I have read with pleasure the four lines that our dear Fathers of Nîmes have written on the back of your letter; I embrace them as well as yourself. Some time ago I was told that Marcou is somewhat ailing, I recommend that you watch over his health; tell this dear child that I am interested in all that concerns him and that if I do not write him, it is because I have time to do nothing else than to run from one Cardinal to the other in the interest of the affairs which retain me here . . . In vain I hurry, time flies. A thousand regards and much affection to my uncle to whom I have written on the 5th. I embrace once more Suzanne and our Fathers as well as the whole family. Adieu.

²⁴ An allusion, it seems, to the deacon N. Riccardi who had fled from the community at Aix.

225. [To Bro. Nicolas Riccardi at Marseilles].²⁵

Reproaches and counsels Bro. Riccardi who has fled from the novitiate. Exhorts him to repent and return to an Oblate community under the direction of Fr. Tempier.

[Rome] February 17, 1826.

Is it derisively, my dear Riccardi, that you still call me Father and mock me when you say you will submit yourself entirely to what I judge best for your salvation? Had you forgotten what I had judged best for your salvation when you wrenched yourself from my bosom and did you not know the motives which had resolved me to receive you in the Society? You said it when you repeated these words: "I feel that I am very little suited to the ministry," that is to say when you would be on your own and deprived of the help that would have been given you by the Society which had received you with as much charity as you have shown disdain for it. However, I ought to tell you that when, upon directing you for some time and coming to know your character well, I had to decide on your vocation according to the desires that you expressed to me, I put aside my position as superior and decided in your interests, considering myself in this circumstance as responsible for seeking and assuring your happiness to the extent that I could. Perhaps, if I had acted in my twofold capacity, I would have kept in mind the risk which the Society incurred through the deficiency of your character but, being sure of the good that would result for you from entering the Society in which and with the help of which you would put to good advantage the talents that the good God had given you, while otherwise they would be almost useless, and also convinced you would find therein a powerful remedy against your perplexities and incertitudes, I do not say your scruples in the wake of the stubborn, multiple and voluntary faults that you had the boldness to commit, I did not hesitate for I believed you had a conscience, feelings, a heart. I did not doubt you would be enamoured right from the start with all the delight to be found in a family devoted to God and to the Church, making great strides in the ways of perfection, of which some of the members were preparing themselves by the practice of the most

²⁵ YENVEUX, VIII, 307. Brother N. L. Riccardi became deacon on September 24, 1825; he made his vows on July 13, 1826; he was dismissed from the Congregation in 1829. He was probably with his mother in Marseilles.

excellent virtues to become worthy ministers of the mercy of God to the people, while the others, by assiduous work and efforts of zeal that would be admirable in the greatest saints, reproduce the marvels operated by the preaching of the first disciples of the Gospel. It is not my fault if your heart shut out the sweet emotions that grace no doubt would have aroused therein had you offered yourself to God with more generosity and less diffidence, had you not glanced back so much as you calculated the advantages that the world could offer you and listened to the voice of flesh and blood. Men of this stamp have never done any good in the Church, I do not see any raised to the honours of the altar and I doubt that there are any in heaven. You would tremble if I translated for you what the Blessed Alphonse foresaw in regard to young men deceived like you by sinister illusions, and unfaithful like you to the grace of their vocation. I have under my eyes his terrible words and unfortunately also the proof that verifies his prognostics.

I cannot say otherwise or better than this great saint: "Woe to you for not having known the voice and the day of the Lord, indeed say I, for having scorned his voice upon hearing it." Your conscience cries out in spite of you. You rap out one after the other four lines which form a sequence in your letter: "I understand the loss that I suffer by leaving the community, I would be in despair if, and I know this only too well, I was obliged to leave it for ever, I feel that I am made to live in community." Say rather that you have a need, an extreme need, to live in community. That is why you are right in what you understand, but you do not understand enough the sorrow you cause by leaving the community. But if it is beyond doubt that you need to live in community, and if it is true you would have reason to despair were you obliged to leave it for ever, it is not less true that the community needs from those who form it that they do not give her the distasteful spectacle of an acute disorder, of an insulting disdain, of a disedifying irregularity, or a scandalous desertion, all of which trouble her tranquility, her peace, her happiness, and even compromise her existence. Nothing can excuse your conduct, it is execrable in every way. You have let the Society down; your defection has not only been a scandal, you have hurt her substantially by the bad impression your fault must have made on the feeble souls who are not ready for such blows; and in quite another manner, you have let God down by trifling with what is sacred amongst men since in scorn of your engagements you have taken counsel only with your exalted imagination. You have obeyed only your own caprice or rather let us say, the demon who alone could inspire you with a resolve so contrary to your true interests as well as your

sacred duties towards God. Nothing in your position could justify your doing what you have done with yourself. Of all the motives that you put before me, only one would deserve to be examined by those having a right to pronounce themselves; it is that of your mother. There had been some question about this, but we did not find her to be in gravely exceptional circumstances such as could have blocked you from following your vocation. I rectify, in passing, the error you have fallen into, that of believing you are in a position in which a professed religious can ask and obtain his secularization that is granted but only by way of permitting that one help one's mother by engaging in some lucrative ministry.

Because a mother cannot live on her means and is obliged for example to obtain a pension to provide for her needs, would it result that the son has to sacrifice his vocation and frankly engage in occupations or ministries which are not only less perfect than the life to which he is called, but also leave him open to performing his duties badly and failing to achieve or at least achieving his salvation with difficulty? First there would surely have been no apostles who could follow Jesus Christ and, since Christianity began, how many disciples and later how many religious who have sanctified themselves in the practice of the evangelical counsels would have been lost for ever with their mothers? There lies a palpable truth which I need not elaborate. To sum up, for I must finish this letter which I did not intend to be so long when I took up my pen, after yielding to a scarcely credible impulse and making up your own mind about it, then coming a little to your senses again and realizing your fault, overpowered somewhat as you are by the obvious truth, you make the admissions I have recalled to you above and add still another: "you foresee that in the world you will be out of your element" and, besides laying before me motives that you think have some weight, you beg me to decide what you should do while promising to submit yourself entirely to anything I will judge helpful to your salvation, remarking withal that only my reply, whatever it may be, can get you out of the predicament in which you find yourself. This reply is easy and difficult at the same time. Easy, if I ought to decide in your interests, for your individual good, considering only your salvation; easy if also I could totally abstract from all the ties which bind me to you, from the zeal I have exerted in seeking your sanctification ever since you took me as the director of your conscience, and if I could pronounce only on the facts inasmuch as your salvation is concerned. On the one hand, I would not hesitate to decide that you should

promptly do penance for your fault, ask pardon for the scandal that you have given and beg on both knees to be received once more into the shelter that Providence has provided for your weakness, resolved to accept all that can be a means for you to repair the evil you have done. On the other hand, I should judge that an individual capable of letting himself go so far, culpable of such an enormous fault which perhaps is only the consequence of an innumerable crowd of other faults and ceaseless infidelities is unworthy to be admitted into a Society he knew not how to appreciate and whose peace he would disturb with new vagaries. But as I cannot entirely divest myself of the feelings with which God inspired me in your regard when I took over your direction, and as it is painful for me to rule for an exclusion which would have such grim results for you, I will decide nothing from here and will refrain from making up my mind until I am on the spot. In the meantime, live under the obedience of M. Tempier and follow exactly whatever he prescribes for you. For my part, I will pray God for you that, through the intercession of all the saints of whom I am reminded here, those especially who grasped better than you the words of life contained in the evangelical counsels, followed them with great generosity and inculcated them in countless others, you may return to your better self, cease to obstruct God's plans for you and give proofs of your repentance and perseverance in doing what is right. May I be able on my return to ensure your true happiness without compromising the honour and tranquility of the Society to which God has just given, this very evening, the greatest proof of protection that we can hope for on earth. Your letter forsooth had to dampen my rightful joy with a bitter sorrow that you certainly ought to have spared me.

Adieu.

226. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].²⁶

Pope Leo XII has approved the rules. Gratitude and praise to God. New obligation of holiness and zeal. Will have to spend days recopying the Rules. Hopes to obtain the brief soon and to leave after Easter. Letter to Bro. Riccardi. Defections in all religious Orders.

²⁶ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 247-253; manuscript copy at Rome, Archives of the Postulation: DM 12, 2 a; RAMBERT, I, 447-449. We quote the text from *Missions* which is more complete, while we add some words in parenthesis which are found in the copy of the Postulation.

Te Deum laudamus, te Dominum confitemur. Te per orbem terrarum sancta confitetur ecclesia. Per singulos dies benedicimus te et laudamus nomen tuum in saeculum, et in saeculum seculi.

My dear friend, my dear brothers, on February 17, 1826, yesterday evening, the Sovereign Pontiff Leo XII confirmed the decision of the congregation of Cardinals and specifically approved the Institute, the Rules and Constitutions of the Missionary Oblates of the most holy and immaculate Virgin Mary, and accompanied this solemn act of his pontifical power, with most admiring words for those who happily form this Society from which the head of the Church indeed expects the greatest good.

Everyone is stupefied at this. Even those called upon to contribute with their votes to the execution of the very emphatic will of the Pope, are surprised by the unanimous agreement of views and especially with the imperturbable resolution of the Holy Father, whom nothing has been able to deter from the first thought with which the Holy Spirit inspired him on the first day that I knelt at his feet and presented to him the plan of this enterprise which now we can call *divine*. The Pope knew everything and weighed everything in his profound wisdom. We have not here the decision, the view, the approbation of a certain few, of certain Prelates: we have the decision, the view, the approbation of the Head of the Church who has not depended on the judgement of others, even that of the congregation of Cardinals to which he entrusted the matter for examination, but who has pronounced himself on the facts presented, with full and entire cognizance thereof. I need not tell you that he was not delayed an instant by the fine protestations brought to his attention. They will have left him with no great opinion of the one whose sorry idea it was to make them, for they impugned his sovereign jurisdiction, as he well remarked, since it would devolve therefrom that no Pope could ever have been right in approving in the Church religious Orders or regular Congregations which all are exempt, as to their interior rule and their members as well, from ordinary jurisdictions.

The brief which is going to be delivered to us will also be, in a way, the work of the Holy Father in the sense that he himself decided on several things to be inserted in it, and notably the prior approbation of the Bishops which is much to our liking: indeed one whom you well know will no doubt be flattered enough to refrain from alluding to the

other signature, extorted to be sure, but which gives him scant honour when compared with the pompous approbation written entirely in his own hand.

But let us leave these reflections aside so as to stop and consider only the infinite goodness of God and the designs of his Providence on our behalf. Do you realize that nothing ever has been seen so astonishing as this? Those whose duty it is to deal with such matters are the first to make this remark and to be all the more surprised with the happy outcome of the steps we took, all of them inspired, directed, blessed by God, inasmuch as the policy was no longer to do anything of the sort and I, being right here engaged in my quest with the aid of the Master of all hearts, have seen several others come to grief and not obtain what they sought. The conclusion to be drawn from this, my dear friends and good brothers, is: we must work, with renewed ardour and still more total devotedness, to bring to God all the glory that stems from our efforts and, to the needy souls of our neighbours, salvation in all possible ways; we must attach ourselves heart and soul to our Rules and practice [more] exactly what they prescribe to us. To do this well, would mean remaking our novitiate so as to meditate at leisure on all they contain. They are not a bagatelle, they are no longer simple regulations, merely pious directions; they are Rules approved by the Church after most minute examination. They have been judged holy and eminently suited to lead those who have embraced them to their goal. They have become the property of the Church that has adopted them. The Pope, by approving them, has become their guarantor. He whom God has used to draw them up disappears; it is certain today that he was merely the mechanical instrument which the Spirit of God put into play in order to show the path he wanted to be followed by those whom he had predestined and preordained for the work of his mercy, in calling them to form and maintain our poor, little and modest Society. Somewhat puny as we are, being weak and few in number, we nonetheless have an existence in the Church no less than that of the most celebrated bodies, the most holy societies. It is thus we are constituted. Just now I can say to you quietly what I will say to you out loud when the brief is delivered: know your dignity, take care never to dishonour your Mother who has just been enthroned and recognized as Queen in the household of the Spouse, whose grace will make her fecund enough to engender a great number of children, if we are faithful and do not draw upon her a shameful sterility by our prevarications. In the name of God, let us be saints.

Speak only to our own about the success of our cause and to my uncle, of course, as well as to Cailhol,²⁷ whom I regard always as one of the family; let him not be perturbed if he reads these words: it is because of the tender affection that I have for him and the sentiments that I know he has for all the members of the Society. But I think that we must wait for the brief to be sent before we hold forth without restraint about the mercies of the Lord for our dear little Society.

The brief will only be expedited after I shall have terminated a large work. I have to copy the entire volume of the Rules and Constitutions, because it is this copy which will be endorsed and put back into my hands. The original, to which are appended the approbations of the Bishops and the signature of the members of the Society, must remain in the archives of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. I am somewhat dismayed by this task; I had first had the thought of doing it myself but I fear not to be able to go quickly enough, often being obliged to go off on unavoidable errands. Until now these goings to and fro have taken all my time, and I tell you, in passing, that it is impossible for me to undertake a continuous task like that which you propose to me, either for the history of beginnings of the Society or for the novitiate. I am going today to get in touch with a copyist in order that he will start to work tomorrow, Monday, and that I may be able to present the manuscript at the latest next week. If he does not promise me to finish in a week, I will sacrifice everything and shut myself up in order to do this work myself, keeping at it day and night. If I dared to unbind the volume, I could take on several copyists. I will consider that in a little while and if I can do it without inconvenience, I will adopt this choice which will shorten the time of waiting, and avoid the inconvenience of the delays which are annoying in all matters, but still more in those of a nature like ours. Now I begin to hope to be able to leave immediately after Easter, unless the procedure with the brief is drawn out at length. I lull myself into thinking the contrary for I find that it is indeed a long time since I am separated from you and the family; but I feel that it had to be so and the good God has chosen me to render this service to the Society; and I ought to offer thanksgiving to him for whom we work, for having so well disposed hearts in my favour, that each of those with whom I had to deal advanced to meet me half-way, were favourable to begin with and found good in all I proposed, as if the Lord revealed to them the sentiments of my soul

²⁷ Cailhol, canon, secretary at the chancellery.

and let them perceive from within that my sole ambition is to please God and procure his glory by serving the Church and saving souls. I must add, that from the facts I presented and all that the weight of the truth obliged me to say, they conceived, the Pope especially, a very favourable idea of the whole Society, which ought to stimulate us to deserve more and more, by our devotedness to all good, a protection so high and so honourable. *Amen.*

I have written a long letter to [Riccardi]; I am sending it to you because I want you to have it copied before giving it to him. I think it as well that one should know in future what I think of these harlequins, who have as much of the motley in their soul as these fine citizens of Bergamo have in their costumes. Do not be surprised at so many defections. There were countless such in the time of the blessed Alphonse in his Congregation and after his death, it had gone so far that quite a number of candidates entered the Society to be ordained without a patrimony and said farewell to the company as soon as they were priests. They were obliged to take the precaution of having them sign a document whereby they were obliged, if they left the Society before ten years, to defray the expenses they had incurred. Amongst the Lazarists, one fine day, eight students, that is to say, amongst those who had made their vows and completed their courses of philosophy and theology, decided amongst themselves to go and become Dominicans. The event perhaps had less of an effect on them, because they were more numerous, but this misfortune nonetheless happened to them as to us. Who could count the secularisations and even the apostasies in the religious Orders? Poor human race, how few the men you number!

Adieu, very dear friend, I wanted to sign today in style but I have only enough space to embrace you as well as the whole family.

227. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].²⁸

The Founder has copied the volume of the Rules in three days. He must now wait for the brief. Letters of Fr. Tempier. News of Fathers Marcou and Dupuy. Advice to Fathers Suzanne and Guibert.

L.J.C.

²⁸ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 253-259; YENVEUX, I, 33, 2*; II, 71; III, 220.

Rome, February 27, 1826.

Although all my limbs are numb, my dear Tempier, with the penal labour that I have just undergone, I thought I would write you at least half of a sheet, when I returned from seeing the Archbishop of Ancyra; but the brief time remaining to take advantage of the post had to be employed in making a duplicate of the long petition to be attached to the brief or, at least, to be given to the Prelate entrusted with the composition of the said document. But what is that compared to copying with my own hand the two hundred pages in-folio (whereof the original which I brought to Rome has to remain in the secretariate of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars)?²⁹ I had told you in my last letter that I was going to engage one or more copyists to despatch this work quickly, fearful as I was of being caught by the holidays of Holy Week and Easter, and thus being able to leave only at Pentecost. I did not lose a moment of time for you might as well know that, since being in this country, I have been deploying an incredible amount of effort in expediting what I have to do; also, either somewhat because of that or even much more because the good God helps me at every step, I have left behind me plenty of people who had begun six months before me. I would have thought it easy to find these copyists, I was wrong; after having lost three days looking for people who wrote very badly, and who would only promise to finish within three weeks (it being quite understood into the bargain that I would pay them well, that is to say five or six louis for their kind offices) I took the big decision to undertake the task myself. I calculated that it would take about fifty hours of writing; I barged through this job in three days and part of the nights; I must admit it was an enormous task; I can also say that I was in it from head to toe; with head, chest, arms, hands, legs, feet and an unmentionable part of me being cruelly tried. But there remains not a trace of this temporary suffering which I was well inspired to offer to the good God, in expiation of my sins and for the good of our Society.

You can tell our dear Jeancard that never have I felt so fond of him, under the circumstances. Copying what he had written was a real comfort for me: he seemed really present, keeping me company. If he had really been with me, he would have shortened the work a third by dictating it to me but such help was lacking. You would scarcely

²⁹ The original has never been rediscovered in Rome. There is in the archives of the Postulation (DM XI 6) the authentic copy made by the Founder.

believe how sorry the obligation to leave this manuscript makes me but it is the one they want, apparently because of the original approbations of the Bishops and the corrections made in the text. In place of this pretty volume, written so neatly and so pleasing to look at, I will only bring back quite a vile manuscript very badly done: 1° because I write less well than Jeancard; 2° because I was obliged to write quite fast, being absolutely determined to finish in three days; 3° because the paper is coarse and bad; 4° because, finally, the ink did not run any better than that which I am using at present, my pens were detestable and my pen knife was able only to spoil them further when I tried to retouch them. In any event, as long as it is readable, that is all that matters.

It is impossible to be nicer than this excellent Archbishop of Ancyra. He receives me with a friendliness and goodness that are charming. I have told you how we worked together, as amicably as can be imagined, in two long sessions lasting a whole evening, at the minor changes that it had been decided to make in agreement with me. When I returned to him after having copied my in-folio, he was quite amused and vowed he would not have had the courage to undertake it himself; indeed such is not what I would ask him to do; this was Saturday. Yesterday, Sunday, I returned to his dwelling. His letter for Mgr. Capaccini³⁰ was already written. He read it to me. I feel favoured by the expressions that he kindly used in my regard. This letter was written to inform Mgr. Capaccini that His Holiness wishes him to come to see the Archbishop of Ancyra and arrange with him the composition of the brief, etc. I was the bearer of this letter but did not find the Prelate in; however, I returned without fail this morning to see Arch. Marchetti and find out if Mgr. Capaccini, whom I again did not find in this morning, had replied to him. He had replied that he would be at his disposition this evening. And so it was this evening that this little conference took place. Tomorrow, Mgr. Capaccini will have his audience with the Pope (here each branch of administration has had its day for centuries) when it seems he will receive his orders from the Pope and, if he is expeditious, our brief will be delivered before Easter. If that happens, I will break camp and take a carriage out on the third day of Easter; on the other hand, if composing the brief takes more time, I

³⁰ Letter of Arch. Giovanni Marchetti, secretary of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars to Mgr. Francesco Capaccini, substitute of Briefs, February 25, 1826, cf.: *Missions O.M.I.*, N° 280 (1952), p. 156.

cannot count on being free until after the Easter holidays. You see we have not lost a minute; ever since we set forth, we have kept going forward. We keep up this pace thanks to the punctuality of our good Arch. Marchetti. I have never been put off by him; we are informal, I am in and out two or three times a day, I stay some time or a little as the occasion demands; it is always quite all right. I did well to hurry with my copying for he needed the original this evening. We have agreed, at the secretariate of the Congregation, that Thursday morning I will see the Secretary designated together to collate the copy of the manuscript. It is fortunate that I have been able to copy it myself, I think the Archbishop remarked on this to the Pope, for this is the secretariate's prerogative and, as they only do such work in their spare time, I would have had six weeks to wait at least. Yet I do not hope to have nothing to pay; the essential thing is to finish.

This morning, as I returned from San Andrea della Valle where the chancellery of the Congregation is, your two letters were handed to me. I wish I could have fine fare like this every day. I have already read them twice; but before replying to them, I must read once more that of the 6th, which immediately preceded them.

You did very well to make known to my uncle the intrigues of his provincial colleague. But you must rein in the ardour of his indignation; I do not know if I told you in his second letter he said he had given his approbation, urged by solicitations and by the fear that the Missionaries might leave his diocese. That is an indirect compliment which made me laugh. My subsequent letters, which apprised you of the success that the good God has kindly wished to grant us, in spite of all the hindrances that could have upset everything, if the Lord had not acted miraculously to dispose minds and hearts in our favour, will have distracted you from sending me the complete volume of the decisions adopted by the Prelate; I fear that they may cost me ten francs or so for postage; this work certainly is not worth that; besides, I cannot make any use of them.

I come now to your letters of today. Fine indeed, I am grateful to you for the double portion you have given me; this is as you put it so well, a compensation for the blows that you see fit to give me from time to time; yet it was not worth the trouble to have the difference of the new format. I have measured them and at the most there are three little lines more which in truth, for a man who was bankrupted a month ago, was in no way too much. However, all that comes to me

from yourself is precious to me. I thank the kind widow Brebion for giving you paper as a favour and am glad not to have anything more to do with that greedy Mossy who has always displeased me with his ingratitude and his conceit.

I am delighted with your little trip to Avignon with my uncle, that will have done you good and him also. I embrace you with all my heart.

I was always afraid that our fine sons might commit imprudences and tire themselves too much; I see this has happened and here we have three of them ill. I need not tell you anything as to the care you must take of them. The poor *Marchetto*³¹ is delicate and puts great ardour into all he does; put him in the hands of Trussy. Write on my behalf to Dupuy that I have the greatest concern for his health and that I beg him to have a good rest and do all he must to get better. As for Suzanne you say nothing in either of your two letters; but watch over him, I entreat you; let him protest as much as he likes that he is well, I absolutely insist that he rest. If between one mission and another, he comes to Marseilles to be massacred, that is not in order. He does not know how to preach with moderation, he always preaches like a missionary which is absurd in the body of our church. I have always said that it is not sermons that are required. What are necessary are what the Philippines do here and everywhere, that is, instructions in the tone of conversation, that one could keep up, so to speak, all day without tiring oneself; but they should never go beyond three quarters of an hour. I do not know why we have so much trouble keeping to what is reasonable. God forbid you could have consented to send Courtès to Digne! Apart from the harm that would have been for him, you had the presence of mind to see that Guibert ought to enter into his functions from scratch. It must be a time of renewal and of reform. That is so true that I do not hesitate to say that, however advantageous it was to begin as soon as possible, it is better to await my return and not to begin the work until they have heard all that I will have to say. Do not go ahead with this reform but tell Guibert in advance so that he may prepare himself by reading some good books, such as Fr. Judde, etc.

The house of Marseilles is quite small for a novitiate; however I am much inclined to put it there for my own sake; but how can they be cooped up in the little place above the chapel? They will have private

³¹ Fr. Marcou.

exercises and there is no common room. Use that of St. John Baptist; you must prepare it for the novices who are to come to it in silence by the corridor on the first floor, after descending by the main staircase. This route will not be convenient. Ah! I never thought that the old chapel would be suitable for them at all.

The first house that we will set up will be under the invocation of the Immaculate Conception.

You have said nothing about Nîmes or about our Jesuit apprentice.³² An oath is child's play for adepts of his ilk. Ah! I do not hesitate to say like St. Vincent de Paul: "He who will not sanctify himself in the Congregation will not sanctify himself any better in other Orders." Well do you see how wary one must be of taking such men into our confidence.

228. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].³³

The preparation of the brief with Mgr. Capaccini. A long session spent in collating the second manuscript of the Rules. Dates of the letters written from Rome. Hopes to leave Rome during Easter week. The house of Calvary could receive retreatants.

L.J.C.

Rome, March 5, 1826.

I was expecting today, dear friend, a letter from one or other of the family. After the great news I gave you in my last two letters, what remains for me to tell you will seem of little moment; there is however some continuation and winding-up but not yet, at least not today, the end of this great undertaking of which God has been pleased to direct, I can say in all truth, every detail. I would wish not to repeat myself but I keep going back and forth so often to see the same persons and deal with the same matters, so it is not surprising if I cannot recall precisely at what point I stopped in the minute account I am giving you.

I think however that I told you that I was bearer of a letter of Arch. Marchetti of Ancyra, secretary of the Congregation of Bishops

³² He refers perhaps to Riccardi who had fled during his novitiate.

³³ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 259-265.

and Regulars, to Mgr. Capaccini, under secretary of briefs, who in the absence of Cardinal Albani, secretary, works directly with the Pope, seeking an appointment with him regarding our business, in pursuance of the orders given by the Holy Father. This appointment took place on the evening of the next day. Mgr. Capaccini received the instructions from Arch. Marchetti, and requested me to come and arrange with him the brief ordered by the Pope. I did not fail to go to him the next day; I knew that he had had his audience the evening before and I was confident that he had spoken of our matter with His Holiness. This indeed he apprised me of while welcoming me in the most polite manner; he told me that the Holy Father had spoken very obligingly of me and had given him orders to expedite my affair. Mgr. Capaccini kindly went so far as to propose to send to my domicile the person entrusted with drawing up the minutes of the briefs so that he might concur with me as to what details I would like to have inserted and in what way. I refused this obliging offer as I wished absolutely to go myself and see this gentleman whose address he gave me. I did not lose a minute of my time and, on leaving the palace of the Consulta where Mgr. Capaccini is lodged, went immediately to M. Barluzzi with whom I conversed as much as was necessary to make him conversant with our affair. They had in any event given him the copy of my petition which comprises four pages in-folio and from which he can draw up the necessary documents.

I was obliged to make three copies of this petition; but that is nothing, even when counting the first three copies that I had made in French, in comparison with the two hundred pages in-folio of our dear Jeancard, which I had to copy in three days, without having anyone to dictate them to me. This is still nothing in comparison with the task which remained for me to do and which I never would have believed would be so burdensome.

In between errands of which I have spoken to you above, I had not forgotten to go to the secretariate with my two volumes under my arms, hidden under my woolen cloak which served admirably to ply my job as carrier; I would have wished them to hurry up with the collating of my copy, then attach the seal and be done with at least that part of it. But, to put it mildly, we do not always find those we seek in this country. Tired of it all, I begged one of these gentlemen, these under secretaries, in the absence of the Archpriest Adinolfi, to help me undertake the job myself; but, as can be imagined, the sight of the two volumes left them without courage to get down to work. Besides I saw

that they were indeed busy. I insisted however with all the grace I could muster, and even put my foot down a little and more than a little. I generously offered to share the burden for besides, that would be the only way not to let this work drag on for fifteen days. I do not know if it was to oblige or rid themselves of me that they pointed to one of the secretaries who had his nose down as he wrote; he was the one, they said, who was given this kind of thing. I approach him politely, he shows me his desk laden with papers; I sympathize with him over his excessive work and propose to him forthwith that I come to his house in the evening. This does not suit him, he prefers to give me a rendez-vous for his day off, that is to say Thursday³⁴ at nine in the morning.

Nine o'clock prompt, I am at his door; my gibbet was ready by then and before executing me, the holy man had already taken the precaution of saying his Vespers. You can understand what I twigged from that. I had fallen on the most scrupulous priest in Christendom; to that I owed being expedited in one day but the delicacy of his conscience resulted in my paying *usque ad ultimum quadrantem*. He had been told to collate the manuscript, he did not spare me a single *iota*. He took my copy while I read the original aloud; in vain I hastened, he dogged along after me with eyes and nose, for he did not really see beyond his nose, physically as well as morally. He interrupted my agony for a moment while he took his coffee; he forcefully wanted me to drink a cup with him but I held out so that I would not cost him more than a glass of water which had become indispensable to me; I drank it drop by drop during my long session which lasted more than four hours and during which my throat lost its elasticity twenty times, which a mouthful of water restored immediately it was taken. At last, at half past one, I got through and pronounced the last word of my manuscript which might fain have been the last of my life. Anyway I was through at the cost of having my throat inflamed for the rest of the day. By evening, I could swallow again and things returned to normal. The priest, good man, wanted me to carry away my volumes. It had been enough trouble to collate them with such scrupulousness; could I not now have added to them all the heresies of the time? I wished then that he take it upon himself to carry them as they were to the Chancellery where I went to get news of them the following day. This time, I found the Archpriest who handed over my copy so that I could insert before my preface the duplicate of my petition. I rendered a good

³⁴ March 2nd.

account of his collaborator, assuring him that they could depend on him, and returned to my dwelling to get down to work. The volume is now in the hands of the binder. On Monday,³⁵ I will take it once more to the Secretariat where perhaps it can now be finished off. I have dwelled on these details to amuse you for a while at my expense and to give you at the same time an idea of how agreeable my occupations are.

What I now want to say after this concerns an idea I have in my head which rather disturbs me. I fear that you may not have received all my letters. Twice, when in a hurry at posting time, I have sent them to the post with a French ecclesiastic who sometimes came in to see me and was with me at time of the post. This young man has just unfrocked himself and had this not been perceived in time, he would have gone off with some thirty francs that he owed. Would this joker have pocketed the three miserable *baiocco*³⁶ that I gave him each time to post my letters? To a day more or less, here are the dates of those I have written to you since I have been at Rome: November 27; December 4, 11, 21, 25; January 1, 3, 5, 12, 17, 22, 29; February 12, 16, 19, 28; and today, March 5. I wrote to Courtès on December 8 and he has received that letter; and on February 2, I have had no news to that effect. I quite believe that it is two of those during the month of January that this joker undertook to post. I have often asked you to acknowledge exactly the receipt of my letters, you often forget this request.

According to all appearances, I will leave here in Easter week; I will indicate to you more precisely when I get hold of the brief — they are still composing it — which will not be done until Monday; it will then have to be examined, and after that, copied, and I fear that this last ceremony may be somewhat long. It will then remain only to obtain my audience of farewell. One cannot always be as fortunate as I was the first time. A certain prelate presented himself four times without being able to go in. Whatever desire I have to go and venerate the body of the Blessed Alphonse, I think I will have to renounce the idea; that would delay me still another eight to ten days; and since I cannot dispense myself from going through Loretto and Milan, and as I ought

³⁵ March 6th.

³⁶ The Founder employs the word *imposter* from the Italian *impostare* which means "to put into the mail." The *baiocco* was a small Italian copper coin in the currency of the Roman States. It was worth about five French centimes.

to stay some days at Turin and, as time permits, go by way of Annecy, I will still have to spend several weeks on this journey.

To come back to my fears; you did not write to me from January 8 to 23. In this interval you ought to have received my letters of the 1st, 3rd, 5th and 12th of January. However in your letter of the 23rd you content yourself with saying: "Reading your letter makes me feel, etc." Why do you say "your letter" if you are replying to four, and if at this time you had not received my letters, it is a proof that my rascal has thrown them into the fire and has pocketed my six *baiocca*. I will not be reassured until you send word that all my letters have reached you. This anxiety suffices as a lesson. But how can one be mistrustful even of an ecclesiastic wearing a soutane? One could be cheated every day. Your letters usually reach me by the tenth day when you do not miss the post. I reread once more your letter of the 23rd; you do say you have received three of my letters that are quite ample; after those, of which you do not mention the date, you speak to me only of that of the 29th of January. Rid me of my worry if you have received everything, although the damage would be beyond repair if this ecclesiastic has abused my confidence.

The prices of everything here are sky high so I am convinced that they will fleece us for the painting that you want me to order; I am making some inquiries about it but I am not sure I would put this painting in the inner chapel. It seems to me that, since there is an altar dedicated to the Blessed one in the church, it would be better to consecrate the chapel to the most holy Virgin. I also will be sorry to renounce the hope of being able to give retreats in the house; they do so much good. I know that in France their benefits are unknown and confessors do not trouble themselves to recommend them; but even if we would only bring together half a dozen persons, perhaps the liking for them will catch on and God knows with what profit for souls! But, if we are going to have novices in the house, what room will remain to lodge the retreatants? If we were sure this work would succeed, we would have to be able to buy the neighbouring houses. These thoughts come to my mind as I go about the streets of Rome pursuing our affairs.

Adieu, I embrace you all. A letter from one or other of you would have given me great pleasure today.

229. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].³⁷

The brief has been composed. Gratitude for the personal interest taken by the Pope in the approbation of the Rules. The Oblates of Mary Immaculate are henceforth a body in the Church, like the Lazarists, etc. A new reason to be faithful. Hymn books. Life of the Blessed Alphonse by Jeancard. The clergy of Marseilles.

L.J.C.

Rome, March 9, 1826.

My letter will leave without my being able to say anything more to you about our affair; now it remains a question of composition and formalities which necessarily are dragged out; I nonetheless pursue all details diligently; yet again this morning I went on several trips for this purpose. The composition of the brief is finished: they came to communicate its contents to me — I have the impression that this has not been the practice heretofore. Mgr. Capaccini will presumably take it tomorrow to Arch. Marchetti and if they agree about its contents, they will have it transcribed and I will pay for it; for briefs of whatever sort have to be paid for. On the other hand, they will undertake to draw up the decree of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars at the secretariate of this Congregation. This business will not be ready before Saturday. Cardinal Pedicini was only too right; if the good God had not intervened we would have had enough to take up more than a year. What amuses me is the surprise of the Archpriest Adinolfi who is, as I have told you, the key worker of the secretariate. He cannot believe the way this matter has gone since the beginning. *Non si è visto mai*: never have we seen the Pope, he said, take it upon himself in an affair of this kind to smooth out everything, cut through difficulties, prescribe in detail, stipulate even the wording of the brief.

These Gentlemen of ours, do they at least know this? If they knew what all this means, they would jump for joy or be overcome with admiration. People here wait sometimes six months for a yes or a no, scrutinize a sign, try to divine the meaning of some thought of the Sovereign Pontiff who has done everything for us. What right did we have to this? Who is it who gave me, in a single audience, the where-

³⁷ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 265-269; YENVEUX, I, 176; II, 88; III, 74, 148-149, 220; IV, 1-2, 15, VIII, 259.

withal to inspire in him an interest so strong, so real, so constant? How is it not possible to see the supernatural in this? From now on how can we not be overwhelmed with gratitude towards God and, looking seriously at ourselves, not attach ourselves still more to the Society which has just obtained such convincing proofs of the protection of the Lord, to whom we now belong in quite another manner since, in the hierarchical order, it is by her that we are attached to the supreme Head of the Church who is the sovereign moderator thereof. Now is the time to adopt this *esprit de corps* which incites us not to be surpassed by any other community in regularity, etc. . . .

The Oblates of the Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary are a body, a Society, otherwise called a Congregation in the Church, as I have told you already, just like the Lazarists, the Passionists, the Liguorists, etc. The members who compose these Congregations honour their mothers by the affection they bear them. Could unnatural sons be found amongst us? Let any such beware. They have no more excuses, or rather pretexts, to delude themselves with thoughts of infidelity. They will render an account now to God and to the Church. The Jesuit, the Franciscan, the Chartreux has not a greater obligation to observe his Rules than we; these as much as they are under the same sanction. We were no doubt bound so to this observance when we were only tolerated; and now that we are approved and that the least details of our Constitutions are avowed and guaranteed by the Church, woe to him who will scorn them! Until my return and more ample explanations are given, I forbid, under any pretext whatever, any communication, whether by letter or conversation or by any intermediary of any kind, with persons belonging to other Societies, with the intentions of joining such Societies, [this being] in order to obviate any scandal resulting from such overtures. I bid you notify those who are to be reproached in this matter that henceforth it is prescribed in our Society, in virtue of holy obedience, to inform the Superior General when anyone has the intention of leaving the Society, in order that one may take, on receiving such advice, the steps judged necessary should the case occur. But let these persons know that we can say to them with as much reason as Saint Vincent de Paul that it is much to be feared that they may not sanctify themselves elsewhere, if they do not know how to sanctify themselves with us, and that the Blessed Alphonse always trembled for the salvation of these deserters, for the reason that it was greatly to be presumed that these second vocations did not come from God but from the inconstancy of man, because the spirit of God does not change course, like the will of man

If all the members of the Society were what they ought to be, would we be in such a predicament in regard to composing the personnel of our houses? Is it not a pity that we have to defer to caprices or aversions? Has such a scandal ever been seen? Why can Fr. Touche not live under the obedience of Fr. Honorat? Whence this repugnance which troubles the order of a nascent Society in which there should be only one heart and one soul? The fact is we are steeped in pride while still wishing to appear humble

You have given me an agreeable surprise by letting me know that the mission of Aubagne has already begun. As soon as Fr. Mye gets over his annoyance at Fr. Suzanne being in charge, I think it is better that way, but they need more confessors than you have given them.

. . . Advise him, while at the same time being careful of secrecy, to consult often and thoroughly in the beginning

We will have to have our hymn book approved by the Bishop of Marseilles and that of Nîmes, and use the former approbation of the Archbishop. You would do well also to have it approved by the Bishop of Fréjus. If you decide on that, you must say to him that I have directed you to present for his approbation this book that is already in use throughout his diocese. I think that it will suffice to print 2000 copies. I hope that you have not made changes likely to confuse those who have the former editions. I would have wished them to include the special psalms for the Vespers of martyrs, confessors and the holy Virgin for the convenience of those who only have this book.³⁸

I have missed the post by returning too late, after having made a fruitless trip to see Mgr. Capaccini; he has not yet taken the text of the brief to Arch. Marchetti, who is waiting for it impatiently. He sent word that he would go tomorrow, as today he has a meeting in his department. So I contented myself with going to see M. Jules Barluzzi who will see Mgr. Capaccini this evening to recommend that he do not postpone this interview any further. My whole fear is that they may not completely finish this affair before Holy Week; then I would be stuck for a long time. To avoid this nuisance, our brief must be presented for the Pope's signature next Tuesday; the remainder of the week will then

³⁸ This paragraph is cited without a date in YENVEUX, I, 176. It seems to be part of this letter, partly recorded in *Missions*, but which deals with the missions. Letters took about 10 days to reach Marseilles. Bishop Fortuné approved the reprinting of the hymn book on March 20th, cf.: *Missions O.M.I.*, N° 280 (1952), p. 36.

suffice to make the copy on parchment, etc., being helped as I will be by the offices. If by misfortune, through Mgr. Capaccini's fault, we miss the audience of Tuesday,³⁹ he will only be able to see the Pope on the following Tuesday which will be Tuesday of Holy Week; the following day will start the holidays; goodbye then until Monday of Quasimodo. I will do all I can to avoid this great inconvenience.

I took the pleasure of informing you a little in advance that on Monday will take place the consistory in which the Archbishop of Reims⁴⁰ will be made a cardinal, and because of this delay my letter will not leave until the evening. In the meantime, I can tell you to hurry to write all you need me to know while at Rome for, as soon as I have my hands on the brief, I will notify you of my departure; however I cannot say I have absolutely renounced making the pilgrimage to *Nocera de' Pagani*. This journey, if it takes place, will delay me some twelve days; so, write me until being told by me to address your letters *poste restante* at Turin. It is very unlikely that I will return through that city.

I am very pleased that Jeancard is working on the life of the Blessed [Alphonse]. I have found here a life of this Saint in three volumes in-quarto which is also the detailed history of his Congregation; full of most interesting facts, it will redouble interest and devotion in his regard. However, I have not been able to obtain this work although I have written to the General Director at Naples. The Pope had to waive on my behalf the excommunication decreed against anyone removing a book from a religious library so that I could read it conveniently in my lodging. Yesterday I forgot myself in it until two o'clock in the morning. This biography contains letters of the Saint on perseverance in one's vocation which are marvellously appropriate for us. He comes down hard on those who break faith. The work is badly written, too profuse, etc. But had I been able to obtain it sooner, I would have extracted details which Jeancard could have used to good advantage after retouching them. I will not desist from sending him a poor translation of the kind of life he led as a bishop; but it would be indispensable also to be able to send on to him the reports of his pastoral visits. Good grief! What a man! Suspension, excommunication, imprisonments, and what else besides?

³⁹ Tuesday, March 14, or Tuesday, March 21.

⁴⁰ Archbishop de Latil of Reims.

... A Vicar General⁴¹ putting his name to a protest against a decision of his Bishop! This is a monstrosity which would be unbelievable if one did not know the person. This protest seemed so strange a thing here that they did not hesitate to say that all those who had signed it deserved to lose their positions. My Lord has behaved truly as a Bishop. But it must be made known once and for all to these gentlemen that the Bishop, while always ready to listen to individual observations that anyone will deem appropriate to make to him, will never accept collective petitions that he regards as contrary to the rules of discipline. Good grief! What a clergy we have at Marseilles. They have great difficulty in renouncing the democratic style and the republican system which they adopted when anarchy flourished. God forbid that one weaken before them. Watch at least over the seminary and let different attitudes be inspired in the students. For the rest, let my dear uncle not be surprised by these contradictions. Any bishop who does his duty will always meet them. I have learnt recently that the excellent Archbishop of Genoa,⁴² a man of eminent merit, experiences in his diocese all sorts of annoyances with his clergy because he wishes to put some order into many things his predecessors allowed to prevail. If these parish priests make so much fuss over confessional grills, what would they have said of the reforms of St. Charles, what will they say about those we will have to make at Marseilles notwithstanding?

Must a bishop damn himself rather than trouble them about holding on to abuses that he is obliged in conscience to reform? One simply cannot show them too much displeasure over this brandishing of shields on their part! Oh! how necessary it is to have a Visitation! One is taking place at Rome just now and the bishops who are making it, in the name of the Pope, are certainly keeping close watch, nothing escapes them. I see that in lieu of rest from the fatigues of my long journey, instead of tasting the sweetness of repose a while amongst my friends, I will have to take up arms immediately to defend us from the encroachments of presbyterianism. It has been shown that any concession for the sake of appeasement is ruinous and will result in nothing less than the destruction of principles, and that these people do not

⁴¹ On February 13, Ricaud and Bonnefoy, Vicar generals, presented to Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod the letter written on January 14 and signed by 12 parish priests and rectors of Marseilles against the obligation of confessional grills.

⁴² Louis Lambruschini, Archbishop of Genoa.

have either the generosity or enough sense to appreciate acts of kindness, or to take into account the overtures that have been made only too often.

Adieu, I embrace you and all our members with all my heart.

Charles Joseph Eugene, Oblate of Mary.

230. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁴³

The slowness of Mgr. Capaccini. Lenten fast. The text of the brief has been handed over to the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. Public consistory. We must reorganize the novitiate.

L.J.C.

Rome, March 16, 1826.

In lieu of the brief of which the text lies soporifically on the desk of Mgr. Capaccini, whom I cannot budge either verbally or by writing, I am going, my dear friend, to transcribe for you, if only so you can refresh yourself for a while, the approbation of the Congregation, and more importantly that of our Holy Father the Pope, placed one after the other at the end of the manuscript which I have had to make in place of that of Jeancard, which remains in the archives of the Chancellery. At least I have this document in my hands, which only cost me 30 francs; but watch out for the brief!

“Sacra Congregatio particularis habita de mandato Sanctissimi Domini Nostri Leonis PP. XII trium Emorum et Rmorum S. R. E. Cardinalium Pacca Praefecti, Pallotta et Pedicini Ponentis, negotiis et consultationibus Eporum et Regularium praepositorum, visis videndis ac consideratis considerandis, censuit rescribendum, quoad Constitutiones et Regulas Societatis Missionariorum sub titulo Sanctissimae Virginis Mariae Immaculatae emendatas juxta praeinsertum tenorem, prout rescripsit: *supplicandum Sanctissimo pro expeditione Litterarum Apostolicarum in forma brevis.*”

⁴³ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 269-276.

Romae, 15 februarii 1826.

“Et facta de praemissis relatione ab infrapto D. Secretario sacre Congregationis Sanctissimo Domino Nostro sub die 17 ejusdem mensis et anni Sanctitas sua *Congregationem* Societatis Missionariorum sub titulo SSmae Virginis Mariae Immaculatae, ejusque Constitutiones et Regulas juxta correctiones et emendationes ab Emo Ponente propositas et ab eadem Congregatione particulari a Sanctitate sua deputata confirmatas, apostolica auctoritate *approbavit*, mandavitque Litteras Apostolicas expendiri in forma brevis. Romae.

B. Cardinalis Pacca, S. Congnis Eporum et Regul. Praefectus.

J. Arch. Ancy., Secrius⁴⁴

This is a great deal, in a way, it is everything. But, as I must await the brief, I am not satisfied. It took the loss of Mgr. Capaccini's principal agent who directed all the work of a bureau under this Prelate to put him in complete disarray. From that moment, everything has had to be in abeyance. This is a misfortune which puts me off until after Easter, perhaps even for the signature of the brief. In the meantime, I am continually making useless trips which weary both mind and body. For if this blessed Mgr. Capaccini had taken the text to Arch. Marchetti in the course of the week, they would by now be putting the finishing touches to it and the Pope would be signing it tomorrow. They would then transcribe it on parchment, and I would be free after Easter. Arch. Marchetti, because of these delays has given me not much hope that this can now be the case, and it is certainly not his fault. This holy Archbishop is a model of punctuality but these Gentlemen, the Prelates *di mantellone*, do not bother to imitate him.

I have told you that the corrections do not amount to much, they are not worth mentioning. I have transcribed the report that the Archbishop Secretary made thereof to his Holiness. All these details are interesting in that they show the process through which these things go and, as far as our affair in particular is concerned, we may rest assured that all has been done with scrupulous care and that the Head of the Church has acted by himself and according to his own conviction. Let us now be patient in regard to the rest.

⁴⁴ Rescripts already published in Latin, in *Missions O.M.I.*, N° 280 (1952) pp. 118 and 138.

When Lent is finished, I will have a little more strength for I admit I have never in my life observed a Lent comparable to this one. It happens often that I go through the day with two badly cooked eggs in my stomach and even then it is forbidden to eat them three days of the week. It is beyond me, I cannot overcome the repugnance I have for the stinking oil they use in this house. When they give me fish, I swallow it without seasoning but sometimes it will not go down. I would vomit rather than eat three pieces of another kind of fish pickled in vinegar with spices that nauseate me. Often the soup is disgusting; it is a mixture of cheese, bread and greens; I always force it down my throat; but I compensate myself with fruit, I eat my bread with nuts, almonds and usually two pears with which I am not parcimonious. After all that, in the evening, if I followed my inclination, I would pass up my bit of bread; but I eat it just the same, except on Saturday, because on Sunday morning, I breakfast with chocolate, raw or cooked. In lieu of other penances, I offer this to the good God. I have not dined a single time with Mgr. Isoard since the beginning of Lent. I have not been able to refuse going twice to the Ambassador's and once with Cardinal Pacca. But at his place the portion of those who fasted was not considerable because that day some relatives turned up unexpectedly. I smile sometimes when I think of the advice that St. Bernard, I believe, gave to his religious on the dispositions with which they ought to go to the refectory. I have little trouble entering into the spirit of this saint, and certainly it is not an act of virtue for me to proceed there as if to martyrdom; my stomach is turned just by approaching the refectory. I have no fear of sinning there by sensuality. In spite of all that, I am very well. I have not been unwell for a moment since leaving France.

My dear, we have to look after ourselves. Mgr. Capaccini decidedly does not wish to move. Yesterday I climbed up to his third floor apartment for nothing. His servant advised me to return this morning at seven o'clock but the embarrassed valet told me his master had left for an audience with the Pope. I took care not to believe him, it was not true. You can imagine what that means when, after having been told yesterday evening that I should return this morning, I found this fine response ready for me. This Mgr. Capaccini is a Prelate *di mantellone*, that is, second class, an adventurer who makes himself out to be someone because he is employed at many things. Cardinal Albani, secretary of briefs, being on a legation, it is his substitute, Mgr. Capac-

cini who works with the Pope and as he apparently has other matters on hand, deliberately neglects ours without troubling himself about the wrong thus done to us.

I will spare you all the other trips that I have already made this morning, and those which I am going to make soon before my sorry dinner, so as not to throw in the towel, and try, even with little hope, every means in order to get the better of this devious man whose dealings I will quietly speak of only after I have got my chestnuts out of the fire . . .

Here I am back again, I had gone in pursuit of a certain D. Angelo, habitual guest and friend of Capaccini, treasurer and supervisor in the office of briefs. I waited for him beside an aged clerk of good manners who spoke French very well; at last Jules⁴⁵ arrived to introduce me to this D. Angelo and I quite understood by certain signs made by Jules that it was important to take good advantage of the moment. I flattered this little minister by saying to him as I entered, while alluding to his name, that I had come to make him my guardian angel; he laughed and promised to speak again today to Mgr. Capaccini to get him to take the text of the brief to Arch. Marchetti. I discovered thereupon that he would have done it already if he had not had, at the same time, to write him a note, which he had not had the time to do. As I showed him my concern, fearing that Mgr. Capaccini might not have another audience with the Pope until after Easter, he told me that in effect he would not have any more but it would not be impossible, even so, to get the brief signed by the Holy Father. In lieu of the real thing, these hopes gave me pleasure and I communicate them to you immediately though I may cancel them a little later. I will not have my letter go by the post of today, as I wrote you before yesterday. Between now and the day after tomorrow, we will have something new to say. In the meantime, I will go this evening to pay my respect to the General of the Capuchins⁴⁶ who was made Cardinal yesterday at the same time as the Abbot of the Camaldolese,⁴⁷ the Archbishop of Valence,⁴⁸ that elderly prelate whom we saw go through Marseilles, and our Archbishop of Reims⁴⁹ to whom I wrote yesterday

⁴⁵ Jules Barluzzi.

⁴⁶ Louis Micara who received the hat at Rome, March 16,

⁴⁷ Mauro Cappellari who received the hat at Rome, March 16.

⁴⁸ François-Xavier de Cienfuegos-y-Jove Llanos di Oviedo.

⁴⁹ Jean-Baptiste-M.-A.-A. de Latil.

via the departure of the noble guard who took to him his red beretta. There was some amusement at Rome last week over the pretense that he was dead. It was the Pope who put an end to that rumour by affirming that he was well.

Invoking my guardian angel was not without effect, I had felt sure. This was why I made, this evening, on returning from the Forty Hours, a little visit to Arch. Marchetti. This holy Archbishop is so good and shows me so much kindness, that I do not fear to trouble him two or three times a day. He had not returned, but as I learned from his secretary that he had on his desk a missive from Mgr. Capaccini, I waited for him. You will have an idea of his indulgence when I tell you that, without taking time to put on his house robe, he sat down immediately at his desk to read the text of the brief, remove from it a little thing that I was not happy about being left in, and add a phrase that seemed to me useful to insert. These two slight corrections would have been done before the text was sent to him, if I had thought of it, when they had considerably read it to me but I only thought of it subsequently. The removal consists none other than in not mentioning Notre Dame du Laus in the brief, so that the Bishop of Gap cannot say that our service of this shrine has influenced, even in the slightest, the approbation that the Holy See grants us. They had put it in the brief because it was in my petition but I prefer that it not be. So once more we see our affair going forward but Holy Week is too close for us to hope that it will be expedited before Easter. I will count myself very fortunate if the Pope can sign it before then, because I am always fearful he will fall sick and when the Holy Father so much as takes to his bed, that makes a delay of two or three months.

This time, dear friend, I am at a loss; I have to send you my letter unfinished or wait for Sunday to send it. I prefer to deprive you of the other side which I would have wished to fill rather than have you wait two days more. I am going upstairs.

... I have come from the public consistory in which our Holy Father has given the hat to the two new cardinals. It is a ceremony I was happy to witness. It is very beautiful and impressive. I always find ways to get a good seat; I was immediately behind the Cardinals and able, in consequence, to see and hear everything. I will keep the details for my return as well as everything I have seen in this beautiful city. It would be too long to undertake that today, all the more so as the post is about to leave. I have several things to tell you which do come to my

mind just now while I am in this hurry. I was surprised not to have received any letter from Courtès by the post which has just come. On my return, I will assemble all the Oblates to find out all that has been done, and establish things on a uniform and stable footing. Here I go about the most reputable houses, I interview the most experienced men, I try in a word to make my journey as useful to the Society as possible. I conclude from all I see and hear that from the beginning we have sinned in respect of the novitiate and which is still not up to the standard where it should be; for the rest, to add a hundredth point of resemblance, although accidental, with the beginnings of Blessed Liguori, it was the same thing with him, as I see from the history which I am reading.

Adieu, I embrace you, my uncle and the missionaries of Aubagne.

231. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁵⁰

Joy and gratitude of the Oblates for the approbation of the Rules. The name of Oblates of Mary Immaculate is a sign of predestination. The Congregation is approved for all countries. Excerpt from a biography of the Blessed Alphonse de Liguori re the approbation of the Rules of the Redemptorists. Leo XII has willed that the Congregation be approved and not merely praised. The sending of a bust of the Pope for the episcopal residence of Marseilles. Jubilee of Aix. Possibility of going on a pilgrimage to the tomb of the Blessed Alphonse at Nocera de' Pagani.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Rome, March 20, 1826.

I have torn up, my dear Tempier, a letter that I had begun before receiving yours of the 9th, and it contained many things, many sentiments. I expected nothing less of you and of our dear confreres, in response to the news that I had announced to you in the letter to which you were replying. The goodness of Providence, the evident protection of God were too great, too tangible for hearts like yours not to be moved; and I assure you that I have read and reread the account that

⁵⁰ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 276-283; YENVEUX, I, 33; V, 36; RAMBERT, I, 449; REY, I, 383.

you have given me; it has stirred up in my soul renewed joy, consolation and gratitude in response to all the sentiments that you yourselves have experienced.

Now, you are going to ask me why I have torn up my letter, of which there were already two pages written; it is simply because I was relating to you what had been done by the Blessed Alphonse and his members in the same situation. But it was inappropriate to your feelings and fineness of sensibility to quote to you examples from outside; indeed, none can give a family like ours a lesson of this kind. Oh! yes, we must needs tell ourselves that we have received a great grace! The more closely I consider it in all its aspects, the more I see the worth of this gift. We can never properly respond to it other than by an unwavering fidelity, and by a redoubled zeal and devotedness on behalf of the glory of God, the service of the Church and the salvation of souls, especially the most abandoned, as is called for by our vocation. For the rest, what I ask of God, is that he choose for us and send us the people we need to do his work. You are quite right in saying that you all seem to have become other men: this is truly so. May we understand well what we are! I hope that the Lord will give us this grace, with the assistance and by the protection of our holy Mother, the Immaculate Mary, for whom we must have a great devotion in our Congregation. Does it not seem to you that it is a sign of predestination to bear the name of Oblates of Mary, that is, consecrated to God under the patronage of Mary, a name the Congregation bears as a family name held in common with the most holy and immaculate Mother of God? It is enough to make others jealous; but it is the Church who has given us this beautiful name, we receive it with respect, love and gratitude, proud of our dignity and of the rights that it gives us to the protection of her who is All Powerful in God's presence. Let us tarry no longer in taking to ourselves this beautiful name whenever prudence permits: I bid you notify all our people thereof; however I do not think that it is yet time to put it on our letterheads or in our public acts.

The more I think of our situation, the more I see therein the hand of God and his doings; the same has been perceived likewise by all those who have been the instruments of his mercies towards ourselves. To think that we are the only ones favoured in this manner and that it is the Pope who has done everything! We have not even had the anxiety which the blessed Alphonse experienced when his Congregation was approved in 1749 by Pope Benedict XIV. First they only wished to approve it for the kingdom of Naples, then refused to

approve the Institute: *Regulam et non Institutum*. As for us, the Pope not only approves the Congregation but he founds it: *Constituimus*. They first thought we were only asking for France and the Cardinal ponent said to me: "Take that now, the rest will come after." I was not of his opinion and the matter was resolved as we desired. I ought to say that it sufficed for me to make the observation that our Congregation would not limit her charity to a small corner of the earth and that all abandoned souls, wherever they were, would always be the object of her zeal and would have the right to her services, for them to accede to my views. There is so much resemblance between the event which overwhelms us with joy just now and that which happened at the time of the Blessed Alphonse that I will not resist the desire to let you know the details. The Blessed man, being unwell, had remained in Ciorani with the other Fathers. Fr. Villani was the one who was pursuing this matter at Rome. This is what the historian says:

"Each one can imagine with what anxiety Alphonse and others of us, gathered at Ciorani, were waiting from hour to hour for the happy news. The moments seemed like centuries and we kept increasing our prayers to God and our mortifications. The letter which all awaited with so much impatience having finally arrived, Alphonse did not dare open it at once, as one ordinarily does, but he began little by little to unfold the paper and read one after the other the letters which composed the first word. On perceiving a *g*, then an *l* followed by an *o*, which indicated the word *gloria*, there was hope for something good. The whole letter was then opened and the distinct words were read: *Gloria Patri* etc. *The Congregation has been approved*. Alphonse yielding to tears threw himself immediately face down on the ground and all of us likewise who had run to his room. We remained a long time in this attitude, thanking God for so great a blessing. They then rang the community bell and we followed Alphonse into the church; we sang the *Te Deum* by way of thanksgiving and Alphonse, speaking to God, made an allocution on these words: *Visita, Domine, vineam istam et perface eam quam plantavit dextera tua*, and he exhorted us all, at the same time, to correspond to this priceless blessing by the exact observance of the Rules and by making ourselves more agreeable to Our Lord Jesus Christ and to the most Holy Virgin."

It was not without reason that they were anxious at Ciorani with regard to the success of the undertakings of Fr. Villani for he had met many difficulties, in spite of being protected openly and quite enthusi-

astically by several Cardinals: "The demon did not fail," the historian says, "to jeopardize the work of God. A well respected community of Naples (note the resemblance), looking askance at Alphonse and the progress of his Congregation, instructed one of their people at Rome to place obstacles in the way of the undertaking. Fr. Villani, believing this individual to be one of our friends, went to pay him a visit; this person coldly spoke to him these words: "Yesterday when I was with Cardinal Porto-Carrera, we opened by chance St. Thomas and fell on the article: Whether it is expedient to approve new Religious communities . . . his conclusion being negative." He added maliciously, "The Cardinal marked the passage." That was enough to reveal to Fr. Villani the unfavourable dispositions of this fine Father, who ought to have remembered that St. Thomas had been dead for three centuries and that the Congregation of which he was member did not exist in the time of this saint But if hell could not prevent grace coming from the Holy See, it tried at least to diminish its perfection Abbé Fiore, having been won over by the Father to whom we have referred, took care when drawing up the brief to say that the Rule, and not the Institute, had been approved: *Regulam et non Institutum* When Cardinal Passionei, to whom the matter had been confided, expressed surprise, the Abbé maintained in his presence that it was the practice of the Holy See to approve the Rule before approving the Institute and that it had not been done otherwise for the Passionists. The Cardinal saw the trap and, taking his pen, wrote with his own hand: *Regulam et Institutum*, in conformity with the decision of the Congregation of Cardinals. It is thus that, in spite of hell, and to the shame of those who bore ill will, our Rule and our Institute were approved at Rome on February 25, 1749."

We ourselves did not meet only with an Abbé Fiore in the Abbé Adinolfi who, in his report to the Pope, concluded simply that he should be content with praising the work; but we have found, prepared long in advance, like a formidable battery which no one was able to remove, a principle established by the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars to no longer approve specifically any congregation but to be satisfied with praising it. This principle had not been set aside by the Pope up to now, the Holy Father being the first to let me know about it; but also for our eternal consolation, it is the Holy Father who decided to derogate from it in our favour and this resolution was put in his head by no one; I err, for the Holy Spirit who assisted him was alone able to cause it to spring up in his soul and direct his will so that

he insisted on it to the end, directing himself the whole proceedings throughout, speaking on several occasions of the approbation he intended to give to our work which he said pleased him and which he wished to see spreading.

Is there not something supernatural in that? When have Popes ever taken such matters upon themselves? Petitions are presented to them that they do not read; they are sent to the Congregation of which the Secretary makes a report; the Congregation decides and the Pope approves what has been done for or against. Our matter proceeded as usual until the report of the Secretary but the Pope stopped it there and then; far from accepting his report, he let him know that he willed that our Congregation be approved specifically, while speaking highly of our work at the same time. He himself chose the Cardinal ponent to avoid our falling into the hands of some other formalist who might tire us out; he ordered the Secretary to make known to the Cardinal ponent his will in our favour. The Secretary was flabbergasted and did not know what to think, he still has not got over his surprise and never stops saying that he has never seen such a thing. In the meantime, the Archbishop of Ancyra is appointed and one would say that this was in order to support the Pope; in all his audiences, he converses about us with the Holy Father always in the most favourable manner. The Cardinal ponent is enchanted with the Rule and the Institute, he studies rather than merely reads it, as is proved by the slight corrections that he proposed. The protests arrive. The Archbishop, the Cardinals, the Pope take cognizance and do prompt justice to them without giving me the trouble of replying to them, indeed not wishing me to say a word about them; it was they, it was the Pope himself, who said more in favour of our cause than I could have done. In order to expedite sooner an affair which he had at heart, the Pope did not let me ask twice to be authorized to have it dealt with by a special congregation of Cardinals, to which the Archbishop secretary was attached with a deliberative vote. The decision was unanimously in favour. The Pope approved it and confirmed it on the next day. What more do we need? *Video caelos apertos*. In the execution of the formalities, there were new proceedings, each more favourable than the other. Whence it follows that if the work did meet adversaries it was in order to show the seal of God; they simply served to show up more clearly his truly miraculous protection for us. Try never to show ourselves unworthy, and let us merit seeing the designs of the mercy of God accomplished in favour of the Congregation and of poor souls.

I want to finish my letter today so that it can leave tomorrow. The text of the brief has been made ready; Mgr. Capaccini is taking it with him to be signed by the Pope. Perhaps it has been done by now, I have nothing more to do. Let us add a word about the family. I hope that the bust has reached you, I sent word to you that I had entrusted it to Captain Pierre Mazel of Cette, captain of the sloop *Léonie-et-Anaïs*. Find out if the ship has arrived; I would not wish that they inflate the amount for the bust which cost me 4 piastres and as much for the packing, without counting the transport which you will pay at Marseilles.

I do not enter into the details of the mission of Aubagne, I was there with you yesterday, but I am alarmed to see the Jubilee at Aix begin so soon afterwards; it is impossible that Mye and Suzanne hold up; it is deliberately tempting God⁵¹! I have learnt that Suzanne coughed a lot at the mission of Nîmes, that of Aubagne will not have restored him; watch over this child who is more precious to me than life itself.

It is a bit late for me to think of it but if you reply to me immediately, there will still be time for me to procure a relic for each of our Fathers and Brothers; send me without delay the names of their patron saints. Hurry up everything because I will not delay notifying you to write no more to me at Rome. I have however decided, after what my uncle has told me, to make the pilgrimage to the tomb of the Blessed Alphonse. The day of my departure for Naples is not determined, I will know it only in the course of the week. From Naples I will return to Rome; it is then that I will send word to you to write here no more. Adieu, I bless you all.

232. To the Reverend Fathers and very dear Oblate Brothers of the Congregation of the Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary, greetings in Christ Jesus.⁵²

⁵¹ While not being perfect, relations were quite good between the parish priests of Aix and the Oblates. In fact, Fathers Guibert and Suzanne preached the Jubilee (from March 28 to April 27) at the Cathedral of Saint Saviour, Fathers Mye and Honorat at St. John extra muros, Fathers Courtès and Jeancard at St. Jerome, cf.: *Notes et instructions au sujet du jubilé de 1826*, archives of the Archdiocese of Aix.

⁵² Original in Latin. Text published in the volume of the Constitutions and Rules, ed. 1930.

Exhorts them to be joyful and faithful. The Oblates of Mary Immaculate are henceforth a religious Congregation approved by the Church. Gratitude towards Pope Leo XII for his will not to praise but to approve the Rules and towards the Cardinals who formed the congregation for the study of the Constitutions and Rules.

Rome, March 25, 1826.

Rejoice with me and congratulate yourselves, my beloved, for it has pleased the Lord to grant us great favours; Our Holy Father the Pope, Leo XII, gloriously reigning from the chair of St. Peter, has sanctioned with his apostolic approbation, on March 21 of this current year, our Institute, our Constitutions and our Rules. See then our little flock, to whom the Father of the family has kindly wished to open wide the field of the holy Church, given a place in the hierarchic order, associated with the venerable Congregations which have spread throughout the Church so many great benefits and enlightened the entire world with so bright a light; see her, right from her birth, enriched with the same privileges of those illustrious Societies, in the footsteps of which, with all her strength and all her means, she will certainly strive to walk steadily forward.

What prayers of thanksgiving, in keeping with such a favour, can we possibly offer to God who is so great and so good? Is it not by being consumed by an ardent piety and by performing with an eagerness and a greater joy than ever the duties of our holy vocation? If hitherto you have just been trying out as a model for your life this Rule become so dear to you and of which the holy guidance has won the support of the illustrious and venerable heads of the dioceses which for ten years now you have ceaselessly toured while preaching repentance, if, I say, it is thus you have been bearers of the Word and bringers of life to the peoples you have evangelized, what will you be in the future now that, with the strength and support that Apostolic authority gives to our Institute as well as to our Rules and Constitutions, our so young and recent Society has been raised to the dignity of a religious Congregation like the venerable Societies which have preceded us, for example those of the Priests of the Mission of Saint Vincent de Paul, of the Most Holy Redeemer, of the Most Holy Cross and of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, etc.?

There is none amongst you who, while happy over the grace obtained, cannot understand at the same time what a strict account we must render for it; the Church has the right to expect work which is

not inferior to the benefit bestowed; certainly it is a benefaction which strikes you, like us, with astonishment since you well know the almost insurmountable obstacles which blocked the way to this quite un hoped for favour. For some time the Congregation of eminent Cardinals, that deals with affairs and requests of Bishops and Regulars, granted to no one the preliminary approbation, basis of the pontifical decision. In the course of last year, in conformity with this principle, this favour was refused to several Societies, of which the heads themselves had come to the eternal city to solicit the approbation of the Apostolic See, and in spite of all efforts exerted, these venerable men have only obtained letters of praise, in which the Sovereign Pontiff makes a brilliant elogium but omits purposely to speak of their Institute and Rules.

Normally the same fate would have been in store for us. But divine Providence, which from our cradle has surrounded us with vigilant care, and has thereafter extended over us its wings and protected us, has directed our footsteps and, shielding us with much goodness from the arrows of our adversaries, has now finally inspired us to put in the hands of the Father of every Christian the concern we have for our existence, the ardour which impels us to promote the glory of God and the salvation of souls, the ceaseless desire with which we burn for our own perfection, in a word the fate of our poor nascent Society, divine Providence, I say, has concerted all things so powerfully and so gently that we were able to foresee, from the moment of our first audience with the Holy Father, a most favourable outcome.

Shall I recall the affability and graciousness with which His Holiness deigned to receive me and his exquisite kindness certainly far beyond my deserts, and which will never cease to make my heart quicken with feelings of gratitude as well as confusion? As for the finesse, the deep perspicacity and profound wisdom that the Holy Father manifested in the course of this interview, no tongue can express it. Prostrate at his feet and very tenderly moved by the presence of the Vicar of Christ, I softly shed tears, I gathered with avidity each one of his words as an oracle of the Almighty whose place he holds; scarcely had I made known to him the reasons for my journey and my request than he understood perfectly and discerned with the first glance on his eye all the great advantages which would result therefrom. O truly surprising marvel and which will always be the joy and honour of the Congregation! In this affair of an extreme importance for the Church, for the Society and for each of us, the Sovereign Pontiff did everything of his own accord and under the prompting of

the Holy Spirit who guides him always in the government of the Church. Whence comes, indeed, this benevolence, this untiring concern to protect us, this zeal full of solicitude which, by a decision of his sovereign power, has removed all obstacles? He deigned to indicate to me himself the manner to fulfill all the formalities, to point out to me those whom I ought to go and see and made me take down in writing on his desk, with the pen that his august and venerable hand presented to me, their names and their addresses. But, a matter still more surprising, as the Pro-secretary of the Sacred Congregation concerned with Bishops and Regulars (for the functions of secretary had not yet been turned over to Arch. Marchetti of Ancyra, this man eminent in all kinds of sciences and virtues to whom, by reason of his great alacrity to execute the orders of the Sovereign Pontiff, we are much in debt), as the said Pro-secretary, in the first report that he made to His Holiness about our affair, concluded, in accordance with the practice of the said Congregation, that our Constitutions should simply be praised, our most Holy Father, reiterating his satisfaction, let him know to his great surprise that it was his will that our Society, of which the worth seemed manifest to him, receive the guarantee of the solemn approbation called "in special form" and that she thus be constituted in the Church as a real Order of religious.

In such circumstances, the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars in charge of the examination of the Code and of our Rules had to be apprised of the desire of the Holy Father. He himself chose for this task some cardinals, to whose memory our lively gratitude will always remain attached. God permits that it was the most Eminent Cardinal Pacca, prefect in particular of this Congregation, a man recommendable to the utmost for his zeal to help the Church in her misfortunes and for his unshakeable fidelity to the Sovereign Pontiff, in spite of outrages, persecutions and moreover even unto irons and prison an intrepid confessor of the Catholic Faith; then the eminent and pious Cardinal Pedicini who assumed the task of ponent of our cause and in the course of the very attentive and certainly for us very honorable discussion of our Constitutions, applied himself tirelessly to all stages of the work; finally, to these two were joined the most eminent Pallotta, of vigorous talent and remarkable erudition. These Prelates, after having weighed everything with the greatest attention, have declared, on February 15, 1826, that a petition should be addressed to the Holy Father in view of expediting apostolic Letters in the form of a brief; His Holiness sanctioned this decision and added thereto his con-

firmation; He approved our Institute and its Constitutions and Rules and gave the order to expedite the Letters in the form of a brief on February 17, 1826.

Now, my Reverend Fathers and Brothers most beloved in the Lord, what more shall I say to you to whom the divine Spirit who inflames your hearts has inspired everything, if not, after these so numerous and so great signs of the protection of the Most High, that you ought to give yourselves eagerly to the promotion of the glory of God, ready to endure for his honour the most dire sacrifices; that you have been chosen, by a special grace, in these times of calamity, to rekindle the flame of piety of the first disciples of the faith, reproduce in your life the illustrious examples of so many Religious who, by the attentive exercise of these same virtues you practice, have arrived at the summit of holiness and have thus consoled the holy Mother of Christians who deplores the destruction of these Orders, crushed in several places by the violent tempest of the persecution; finally, that by a sustained effort you ought to bring help to souls, especially, following the spirit of our Institute, the most abandoned, repeating without cease with joyful eagerness this word of the Apostle: "I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls."

In consequence, receive with delight this code of our Rules that I joyfully send you. Keep these Rules with the most scrupulous care; they have been judged by the Sovereign Pontiff as very apt to bring souls to perfection; may the peace of God which surpasses all sentiment keep your hearts in Christ Jesus, and may the Lord grant that you increase, as faithful stewards, and render you rich in charity for each other and towards all. Amen.

Given at Rome, the year of the Lord 1826, on the day of the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, March 25th.

C. J. Eugène de Mazenod,
superior general.

233. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁵³

For economy's sake, the Founder will not go to Naples. Some letters have disappeared. The Jubilee of Aix. Advice to preachers. The

⁵³ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 283-289; YENVEUX, I, 122-123, 160, 168; II, 70, 147, 148; VI, 23, 24.

Church of the Mission of Aix. Novitiate transferred to Marseilles during the Jubilee. Itinerary of trip home. The Brothers' habit.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Rome, March 30, 1826.

I have definitely renounced, my dear Tempier, my journey to Naples. The reason is: 1° this detour will risk delaying me for three weeks; 2° it will occasion for me extra expenses that I wish to avoid, because I have committed the folly of buying some books at Rome, where such merchandise is not cheap; I shall thus give myself the consolation of saying to myself that the money I have put in books would have been spent on the high roads. Yet do not think that I have been too extravagant. In all I have not spent 100 crowns. The misfortune is that I cannot find the books, I want, such as the history of the Council of Trent by Cardinal Pallavicini and others. It is a fact that there is a lack of books at Rome and those to be found are very dear.

According to the check that you have made, it seems what I feared has happened. It is certain that at the beginning of January, I wrote you consecutively three letters. I find I have noted 1, 3 and 5; it is to be presumed that it is one of these three letters that have not been posted, and as neither you or Courtès speak to me of that which I wrote him on February 2, this will be another letter entrusted to the individual whose trustworthiness I doubt. You can imagine how vexing this mishap is for me, especially if this young man dared to read them before burning them. Search once more to relieve my anxiety. It seems to me that I was then writing to you bit by bit because at the time I was most taken up and involved. I gave you an account in one of these letters, inasmuch as I can recall it, of the visit that I made to the Cardinal Penitentiary and the impression that was made on me by the difficulties that he exposed, which made me suspect that he had received some protestations. The following day, I discovered the intrigues of our friend on the mountain and I still remember the phrase with which I began my letter; I told you that I would be happy if I had as much virtue as perspicacity. See if you have the letter which begins with this thought. I am truly chagrined by this abominable trick. Who knows what I said to you at that moment? See also if the letter to Courtès is not missing, he said not a word about it in that which he wrote me from Marseilles.

The news that you give me about the Jubilee of Aix is murderous. It is not possible for our Brothers to resist such fatigue. That is what

we did in our beginnings, to the great detriment of my health. I fear lest Fr. Mye and Fr. Suzanne especially who rises to such occasions with such vivacity, will be affected. We must do everything to avoid ruining workers of this calibre. I have not understood what Fr. Courtès wished to say to me about the humiliations of which he speaks; I presume that it is the disdain of those for whom we sacrifice ourselves. That is a very small misfortune. All I desire is that they preach in a profitable manner, putting aside all self-love. One will not produce much fruit otherwise. I hope that our Fathers will have told themselves also to act with much prudence, when having to do with men so badly disposed. Recommend that they conduct themselves like saints, like real apostles, joining to their preaching an exterior modesty, a great charity for sinners. Let people be able to perceive from their manner that they are not ordinary preachers, that they are truly animated by a zeal which is proper to their holy vocation. Let them not forget themselves if they wish to be truly useful to others. Let them therefore pray much. The good God will then come to their help and all will go well.

I approve your naming a superior for the whole mission, but this ought not to prejudice the rights of the local superior within the house; so Fr. Courtès should have said the *Benedicite* if they were eating with the whole community, because in the presence of his subjects, he ought always to be the superior.

I am annoyed not to have made sooner the reflection that I have just made to you regarding exterior modesty. It was a very important thing, all having their eyes upon them, that they preach while walking in the streets by their bearing, at the Church by their profound respect for the holy place, in all places by their conduct in their words, their mildness, their affability. The city will have been stupefied to see so many missionaries coming out of this house which they had frequently said was destroyed; but it was essential that they were struck still more by the edifying spectacle of the great regularity of these resuscitated men. You still have time to insist on my behalf on this very important point. I would wish, as much as possible, that they go out always in company, that they walk slowly in the streets, and that they try to keep their eyes somewhat restrained, I do not dare to say lowered downwards, but close to that. I am daily much edified here on this score. Let them have no fear of overdoing it.

Try also, without affectation, to restore popularity to our church. Where will they ever glorify more the good God at Aix? The demon well knows that, it is why he has done everything to take the faithful

away from it, but I would wish that you perfect the kind of instruction that we give there on Sunday. In my time, I gave conferences which were very useful to instruct and to bring people to God: the church then was not big enough to contain the faithful who flocked from all parts of the city; since they have started giving sermons, there is no longer anyone. I am very annoyed not to be at Aix myself for the close of the Jubilee; we would have arranged to do something about it. I would very much like us to teach catechism with an hour glass on the table; they need instruction. The evening service has not been for a long time the way I used to do it. Substance and tone have both changed. They now give a sort of little sermon. That is not what I had in mind. They spend too much time on it and take too much trouble, all to no avail. Fr. Courtès once gave during Lent a course of instructions. The course of instruction was good but not suitable for this kind of service.

I would not have wished that you had the novices come to Marseilles as you can keep them away from dissipation very easily at Aix. They would need more help than you can give them at Marseilles, in spite of your good will. I am all the more surprised at your decision, that you had felt that this transmigration ought to be solemn, as a prelude to changes *ad strictiora*. The thing is done, there is nothing more to say about it, but it is in every way a bad move. You have been too impressed by the inconveniences that the Jubilee could produce. What harm would there be, after all, with missionary novices being involved with what happens in a Jubilee? I believe, on the contrary, that it would have been an excellent subject of conversation during the recreations. The novitiate should not be transferred to Marseilles by pretext, and once there should begin a new era. I understand that when one is full of an idea, there is a risk of not seeing clearly enough the reasons which would prevent one from being captivated by it. This one is, in my opinion, most unfortunate and is quite contrary to the plan that I had formed. The more I look at it, the more this decision displeases me. It is amongst those on which it would have been better to consult me, especially after the overtures that I had made to you. We will think no more about it. Please God that, in order to get out of the difficulty, although you have thought how little suitable it would be to confide the class to x***, you do not allow yourself to do it! What! Not one of the assistants will have had the good sense to make some observations to you? Let them adopt the habit of reflecting before giving advice.

Whatever may be my repugnance to delay my arrival at Aix and at Marseilles, I had proposed to return to France via Savoy, to pass through Grenoble to see the Bishop at Gap and to discuss matters with him. You had mentioned to me in one of your letters the desire that I return by way of Nice, now you would wish that I go to Gap; I cannot do both things but I will try to arrange at Turin what you would have wished that I could do at Nice. If they do not reject the project, I will be able to write about it at Nice, but I have not much hope in that quarter just now. So, in spite of the extreme repugnance that I have to go and plunge into the snows of the Alps, while by taking the Riviera, I could have travelled amid the flowers of springtime, I will take that direction so as to have the advantage of speaking with the Bishop. His agent is so ashamed, he dares not greet me when he meets me. I do not know what he could have written to him, but I will tell him *viva voce* what he may want to know.

I had told you in one of my letters that I had drawn from M. Celani 100 Roman crowns, that is to say, 100 piastres. I think that he will have advised MM. Cailhol & Co. to this effect. I propose today to draw another sixty, to suffice until I draw some money at Turin, if I have not enough to continue my journey. I have spent nothing on myself, except for a pair of shoes which I had to have made to go and see the Pope. Not a sou for cabs. It is enough to have to give tips wherever one goes. You ask me what kind of habit to give to our Brothers; I think that you will just have to give them a soutane with the turned up collar like ours and a small cincture of wool three fingers wide.

My plan had been to go this morning to see the Grand Penitentiary but the time has been spent in writing to you and I do not wish to miss the post, because it is eight days ago that I wrote you last. I am waiting to have news of my uncle, after the Holy Week which will have been tiring for him. I do not need to beg you to say to him on my behalf a thousand tender things. When writing to our Fathers, commend me to them and to their prayers, while advising them not to tempt God by working to excess which is not in order. Adieu to all.

234. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁵⁴

The brief is ready; hopes to obtain it gratuitously. The Founder will leave Rome as soon as he will have been received by the Pope. Forty Hours at the Trinità dei Monti.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Rome, April 5, 1826.

You would deserve, bad friend, that I be relentless with you and, to render you tit for tat, and let fifteen days go by without writing to you; for, whether it please you or not, your last letter is dated March 15. However, generous as I always am, I know so little how to avenge myself, that I would not even have waited for the post today to write to you, if I had not had the hope of announcing to you the day of my departure if I postponed my letter accordingly. But, as I have just learned that it will be only tomorrow that I will have the reply on which I thought I would be able to base my decision, I do not wish you to be anxiously waiting to know more. I had warned you that vacations are protracted in this country, and I was wholly afraid to be trapped by those of Easter. I have not escaped. What is amusing is that this Mgr. Capaccini whom I had urged so much to get the brief signed before Holy Week and who had let me know, on Palm Sunday, in the house where we dined together, that he was sure he would have it signed during the week, although he had no longer any official audience, this Mgr. Capaccini I say must be quite surprised at my indifference and at the lack of haste with which I seem to pursue my interests; I present myself no more at his place, although his office has been open for several days. The beauty of it is this:

Having learned that it would cost me at least 50 piastres for the tax on my brief, independently of the usual office fees, I was inspired, not by the demon of avarice, but by a certain spirit of order, economy or poverty, what you will, to try and obtain exemption from this tax. I spoke of it to my illustrious friend Cardinal Pacca, who found the matter quite simple and promised to speak of it to the Pope at his audience on Tuesday; I did not fail to recall this to him on the very morning of that day, but I do not know if he forgot or if he possibly had no opportunity to perform my commission. He has invited me to

⁵⁴ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 289-292.

dinner since then, the day of his first audience after Easter. I have just been to his place to find out how things have been, but he was receiving people in his study and the Cardinal sent word to me to return tomorrow evening at nightfall. So I am in a state of incertitude. I am going to explain to you now why I am taking care to avoid presenting myself to Mgr. Capaccini; the question is that of payment. If the Pope has signed the brief, as it has been transcribed in advance on parchment, this being the copy that will be handed to me, they will make it their duty to send this document to me immediately, knowing the hurry in which I am to return; but then it would be necessary that, without demur, for they give no credit in these offices, I give them in exchange for so many kind deeds my poor 50 piastres, which our dear Oblates would then be deprived of: it is a duty to feed them who are rich only in virtues; so I thought that it would be wiser, more in keeping with that prudence of which you give me every day such a fine example, to wait for my amiable Cardinal to propose to the Holy Father the good deed of applying to the needs of the Society the crowns that these gentlemen of the Treasury would have willingly gobbled up. This stratagem pleases you? Is it worthy of you? I mean in moments when you are of a mind not to be wasteful.

In the meantime, I am busy thinking of you. Invited to “put on” as they say here the Forty Hours in the French church of *Trinità dei Monti*, I did the ceremony *in fiocchi* like a real Prelate, and I had the consolation of singing the high mass of your holy patron,⁵⁵ whose feast is celebrated in this church of the Minimes under the double rite of the first class. That is why he prevailed over Saint Isidore to whom I had to commend myself mentally, while excusing myself to him for my infidelity. Today, I am going once more for the office of “taking off” the Forty Hours. This time we will sing the high mass of our great patron Saint Joseph, and after having had, as yesterday, the procession, I will give the benediction and pray our Lord to make it extend as far as Marseilles, Aix, Nîmes and Notre Dame du Laus, everywhere indeed where Oblates of Mary are to be found, at present or in the future, for I extend actually my poor prayers to the *futuros esse proenoscis*. So great is my desire to return to my family that I have already

⁵⁵ François de Paule, founder of the Minimes. This feast was celebrated on April 2nd, but in 1826, it fell on the first Sunday after Easter. The Minimes celebrated this feast on Tuesday, April 4, feast of St. Isidore. The Superior of the *Trinità dei Monti* was Fr. Bruno Monteinard.

made the journey to you several times in my dreams, but the reality is still far off; I must needs hope that this moment will come and that I will find all of you in as good health as I have seen you in my dreams.

The Prelate and his brother,⁵⁶ with whom I was tempted to make the journey to Nocera, leave today; I have told you that I had given up this pilgrimage so as not to delay my return even one day. The moment that I shall know the reply of the Pope, I will write you to cease writing to me, and I will only remain at Rome for the time presumed to be necessary for you to receive my letter. Just one thing causes me a little regret and it is that if the Pope grants me, as I hope, an audience of farewell, I will not be able to time my departure from that moment because I dare not count on being as fortunate as the first time; I see many Prelates obliged to return several times to the Palace, not having been able to be received, and a similar disappointment could well happen to me. Whatever happens, I am happy that I have reached the time to prepare for the road and it is not without pleasure that I entertain this thought.

I fear not being able as is my custom to fill in the back of my letter but the time approaches to go to the *Trinità dei Monti* and I have not yet said my office, which sleep prevented me from reciting yesterday evening. So I am going to perform this duty. If time remains, it will be for you. I embrace you in the meantime.

From *Trinità dei monti* after the Office — It is now a quarter to two; I have only time to run to the post office which closes at two o'clock. I will write you soon, especially if I receive a letter from you today. I embrace with all my heart my dear uncle and all our Fathers. Adieu.

235. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁵⁷

Reproaches Fr. Tempier for not writing often enough. The brief will be gratuitous. Waiting for his audience with the Pope. Success of the mission at Aubagne. Rights of the Oblates in the diocese of Gap. Anniversary of the death of Caroline de Boisgelin.

⁵⁶ Father Pietro Rispoli and his brother, Bishop André Rispoli of Squillace. Cf.: A. Sampers, *Contatti tra il b. Eugenio de Mazenod e il p. G. Mautone*, in *Spicilegium historicum Congr. SS. Redemptoris*, ann. XXIII (1975), pp. 113-114.

⁵⁷ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 292-296; YENVEUX, III, 159-160.

Rome, April 9, 1826.

To all appearances, my dear friend, you do not count the moments, as I do, for you would not have left me fifteen days without letters. You cannot ignore however that it is the sole means to help me endure an absence which is prolonged beyond my strength to bear; for here it is the fifth month that I am separated from all that is dear to me, alone, isolated, having no one with whom I can share a sentiment, nor the slightest affection. When I remain more than a week without receiving your news, I cannot defend myself against a thousand sad thoughts; it seems to me that someone is ill, I am anxious about my uncle, sadness takes over my soul and I am obliged to try hard to be reasonable. You could have spared me several times this anguish if you had thought of my sensitivity and my situation. I have written to you on Thursday so that you would not be able to make the same reproach to me, although your situation is very different from mine.

You will have learnt that I had not been in a hurry to see the result of my last overtures to Mgr. Capaccini, because I wished to know beforehand what Cardinal Pacca had obtained for me. I can today inform you that all is well and we have succeeded over and above our hopes. The Pope has signed the brief; the brief is copied. As soon as the Cardinal proposed to the Holy Father to exempt me from the tax, he replied "Very willingly" immediately with charming grace, and he added that he would be pleased to see me when I would wish to present myself for an audience. So, you see that we simply cannot thank God enough for his mercies. Already the under-secretary, the Archpriest Adinolfi, has received the order to write to Mgr. Capaccini to inform him officially of the new grace granted by His Holiness; I presume then that in the course of the week our affair will be completely terminated and I will have the brief in my pocket, for it was copied some time ago.

There remains the audience of farewell which is not easy, I do not say to obtain, for that is already granted, but it is difficult to get in because of the crowd. The antichamber is usually encumbered with Cardinals who naturally go in before anyone else, Ministers who work with the Sovereign Pontiff for quite a while, and other heads or secretaries of Congregations, whether for ecclesiastical affairs or civil matters and who come to give their reports or receive orders. It is this uncertainty about the day I will be able to be received by the Pope

which prevents me from telling you today to cease writing. I will tell you only after I shall have received my audience. On that day I will send you word and, to allow time for any letters that you might have sent before receiving it to elapse, I will stay on at Rome for the space of time that my letter will take to reach you. You will see from this that I will remain here not much longer.

I have just received your letter of the 29th which seems to have left on the 30th; that makes fifteen complete days between this letter and the last I received from you. I will not repeat my reflections. I begin by expressing pleasure at all the good that has been done at Aubagne and I thank God with all my heart. Will the Marseilles Gentlemen be persuaded that God can do good through others who are not outsiders? But I forgot that they had not perceived that which had been done in their own city by the ministry of these same men, and that they had loaded them with humiliations in recompense for their sacrifices! Please God at Aix they will know how to profit from the gifts of God. For that the missionaries must be forgetful of themselves, and have nothing in view save the greater glory of God and the salvation of these poor souls who have not had any help since the mission.

If they could, on this occasion, build up somewhat the Sodality for young people, it would be a great good. Let them confer together and consider what would be best to do in order to perpetuate and confirm whatever good they achieve; but recommend to them always not to go to excess. Do not fail before I leave Rome to give me new details about the work of our dear Brothers; I am extremely consoled to see them employed as they are in the service of the Church; it is that which has earned for me all the aid I have met with here and the affection that everyone has shown to me and which you would be delighted to see. They do not simply acknowledge it to me but I find out every day that Cardinals and even the Supreme Pontiff speak of me in the most flattering terms. I give glory to God who disposes hearts in this manner, so as to procure for us the inestimable advantage that we all desired in view of the greatest good.

So much the better if you are pleased with T***, to whom I am very attached, but I am truly afflicted when I see him unresponsive to his vocation and to the most binding of his duties. I would wish that he understand, once and for all, that he saddens the spirit of God, when he gives ear to the suggestions of the demon who is not less the enemy of all good when he takes on the appearance of the spirit of light.

I do not understand the conduct of the Bishop of Gap; I trembled when I saw the concession you are inclined to make to him.⁵⁸ Can you really think of doing this? We cannot do it in conscience, you have not yet imbued yourself with what we are, we cannot do it.

In no instance are you allowed to lose members of the Congregation. If these members leave the Society, let them rightfully enter his diocese; but supposing that we withdraw from his diocese, which we certainly do not have the intention of doing, we would not thereby have the right to make those members leave the Society who would by chance be the diocesans of this Bishop. Limit yourself then to tell him that, in future, if he is opposed to men of his diocese entering our Society, we will not receive them; but that those who are already members of the Congregation cannot make a declaration which would be entirely null in law as being contrary to the vows approved by the Church, which assimilates them to all the other members of the religious Congregations which are in the Church and from which the Bishop certainly would not have any idea of exacting such a declaration. It would be contrary to all canon law.

It is of the nature of any Institute, approved by the Holy See, that the priests who join it must follow the obedience professed in this Institute, in all that is incompatible with that of the Bishop. Otherwise, it would not be, and it would never have been in the power of the Sovereign Pontiffs to approve any religious body or congregation in a manner so as to exempt priests from obedience to the Bishop. Religious remain really and in fact under the rule of Ordinaries inasmuch as it is possible to remain so, in conformity with the religious Rule. So, to be apt for confessions, they are only approved ad hoc by the Ordinary. In the dioceses where they are established, they are perfectly submissive in everything which is of exterior discipline and the bishop can visit them, suspend them, and send them away from his diocese for all canonical causes which give him the right to do so in regard to any other of his priests. In the dioceses where they are not established, they cannot go there to exercise the holy ministry of the sacraments and the word of God if the bishop does not expressly call them. They do it then

⁵⁸ Fr. Tempier asked, at the beginning of 1826, for dimissorials for the ordination of Brothers Martin and Richaud. Bishop Arbaud replied, in the month of March, that these persons, native of Gap, ought to take the engagement of returning to the diocese if they left the Society or if the latter withdrew some day from Notre Dame du Laus, cf. *Missions O.M.I.*, 1897, pp. 342-343.

under his supervision and his correction when he judges it a propos; moreover, he has every freedom to come to an understanding with the superiors about the subjects whom he will employ for the work for which he has asked them; that is the limit of the authority of the bishop. If he had the power to dispose of his diocesan subjects who have become Oblates, as if they were not bound by any other tie, the work itself would thereby be destroyed and pontifical authority would be rendered illusory

It was just as well to prepare my letter yesterday evening. I would not have had the time this morning; I had however saved something to say to you which does not occur to me at present, because I am pressed by lack of time before the post. My morning has been employed in having young ladies of the French convent of Saint Denis make their first communion; think of my sorrow when I had to speak to these young people of the age of our poor Caroline and dressed as I had seen her last year about this time on the day of her first communion and even after her death. Certainly my sentiments and consequently my griefs are not ephemeral! Adieu, my respects to my dear uncle, regards to all our Brothers. Must I send you another bust of the Pope?

236. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁵⁹

Fr. de Mazenod will leave Rome on April 27 and stay two days at Loretto. The brief is ready, but he will have to give 8 crowns to have it. Excessive work of Fathers Suzanne and Courtès during the Jubilee preached at Aix. Pray for vocations.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Rome, April 13, 1826.

The desire, somewhat insatiable I would say, of receiving news of you and of our dear family, of my uncle and all my people, has made me make a wrong calculation which I perceive only now, and which I rectify, I would say almost with regret. I have told you that I would wait until I saw the Holy Father before sending word to you not to write any more, and I would wait further, after having given you this information, for the days to expire that it would take for my letter to reach you, before hastening to leave myself. I have just this moment

⁵⁹ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 296-301; YENVEUX, I, 117, 232, 2*; VIII, 85.

seen that I misled myself and that I have incurred the risk of missing one or other of your letters because it is probable that you will have written to me perhaps only a few days before receiving my warning letter, and that it is impossible that I wait still another twenty-two days, especially if I write it only after having seen the Pope. To remedy partially this inconvenience, although I ought not to present myself to see the Pope before Saturday, I write you today to announce that I will leave on the 23rd, or at the latest on the 27th. What would incline me to choose the 27th is that, as I wish to stop at Loretto, I will be obliged to leave the stage coach which will take me there, so as to be taken back on the following coach; now, if I leave Rome on Sunday the 23rd, I will be obliged to sojourn for three days at Loretto, while by leaving on the 27th, I will stay there only two days, because the stage coaches leave only on Sunday and on Thursday. It will then be just as well that I stay two more days at Rome, either so as to spend less time at Loretto, or in the hope of receiving yet another of your letters by the courier of Monday and of Wednesday. If you knew how long the days seem to me at present! I would almost be tempted to hurry off as soon I will have presented my respects to the Holy Father and taken leave of him; but I will last out in the hope of being consoled by your letters.

In the meantime, I am tiring myself out making useless errands, at least, such as I still have yet to do. I told you that the brief had been signed and that I had not wished to claim back my copy before they knew at the secretariate of briefs that the Holy Father had exempted me from the tax. I thought today that enough time had elapsed for this to be notified to them. I had made yesterday a trip to the chancellery of the Bishops and Regulars to find out if the official letter had been written; I returned there today, and the Archpriest Adinolfi has assured me that it had been sent several days ago. I proceed with confidence to the chancellery of briefs, they show me my brief, I put my hands on our parchment, but they tell me at the same time that they have not received the official advice of the concession of the Pope. Sometimes I look more simple than I am. What shall I say? I thought the man was lying and that he was introducing this little delay to make me see and understand, if I could, that the Pope, while he had waived the tax, had not meant to include what they call in these offices the *exercice*, that is to say, the duty owing to the agents who, however, are paid by the treasury. What strengthened my suspicions was the care they took to have me notice several times the figures on the dossier which distinguished clearly the 47 crowns and a half of the tax from the 8 crowns

and a half of the *exercise*, fearing apparently that I might not have on my person this little sum, or that I might neglect to bring it tomorrow when I will return to pick up my document. Whatever the case may be, I will not quarrel about it and I count myself fortunate to escape so cheaply. I could not help laughing when this same man, whom I suspect is lying, and who is the confidant of the Prelate with whom he eats and with whom he lodges, told me that it would have been quicker to have my request presented to the Pope by Mgr. Capaccini. Not so stupid, I would have been sure to fail if I had taken this course for I knew that he is one of these financiers who, in the interests of the public treasury, make the Pope aware that he must not grant too easily exemptions from taxes. The main thing is that I have succeeded and it would be, at the least, doubtful that I would have been happier if I had chosen a patron other than Cardinal Pacca. Oh! how fastidious are these little details! It is a fact that for the nearly five months I have been at Rome I have had each day something to do, someone to see; in a word, I have had my nose to the grindstone so much that I have not dared to absent myself twenty-four hours to see the fountains of Tivoli, nor any other attraction around here. For the rest, I am not curious about sight-seeing and have no desire other than to find myself once more among my own people.

I will mention in passing that they continue to follow for all the others the policy of praising, which is equivalent, as a Cardinal says, to holy water of the court or an honest greeting. We continue therefore to be the object of surprise, I do not say of holy jealousy, of those who have been less favoured than ourselves by God and his Vicar on earth.

Night and day the labours of our Fathers are on my mind and I cannot put it at rest. It is not possible that they are bearing up to it: it tries me truly and cruelly. How long then will last this so highly rated Jubilee in our blessed city of Aix? I see Suzanne from here forcing his voice in that great church of Saint Saviour. How could his chest not suffer thereby? And Courtès, is he not also forcing himself, although preaching in a church less vast? At least let no one think of joining to this work any other work whatever. Make your plans ahead; it is absolutely indispensable and I absolutely wish that they rest an entire month after such excessive fatigue. When I say rest themselves, I mean a total cessation from preaching for those at least who are at it for such a long time and the others who will have been tired by shorter work but still above their strength. You will quite simply have to refuse any

proposal and not fear to give the reason why, they will all have to understand that men are not made of iron and that even iron wears out.

Reassure me about this when writing to me at Turin, *poste restante*. I will continue myself to write you until the moment of my departure to let you know my precise itinerary. My plan is to stop no more than three days at Milan, but at Turin I will likely remain a little longer, but the least I can nevertheless, for I have no other desire than to arrive there where I shall find you all, you who are my life, dear Brothers, dear friends that I can no longer do without.

I did not take the trouble of writing to Port Maurizio because I supposed that R[iccardi] would perhaps have left before my letter would have arrived. Yet I nevertheless had some inclination to say to him that if he met in that part of the world some one who did not resemble him, at least in regard to character, that he procure him for us. This idea came to me as I noticed that most of the scholastics of the house where I am are from the Riviera of Genoa and are fine boys. There is at the moment great concern in this house: for several days now one of their best novices gives signs of madness and it is the second one to whom this has happened; I mention it so as to remind ourselves that if we knew more about the troubles of others, we would be less surprised and discouraged by the misfortunes that happen to us.

Let us work truly for God, I say this once more concerning our Jubilee at Aix. Let them keep instructing and converting and, if possible, to take some means in view of perseverance. For that it would be necessary that our houses be better furnished with members, my God! Let us pray to good effect so that the Father of the family send us workers to cultivate the vineyard he has confided to us. This grace is one which is for our good Mother to obtain for us for the glory of her divine Son; let us ask for it from her with fervour and perseverance. What we need are men who have finished their studies, philosophers and theologians but people of this kind see in their grasp treasures which are going to rain on them; when with their parents they used to eat only a little whole meal bread and onions and now they think themselves destined to become columns of the Church. What grace they need to acquire truer and more reasonable ideas!

Do not forget to write me at Turin *poste restante* and reckon according to the plan I have given you. I am still undecided about the gate through which I will enter France; I will choose definitely when I

am at Turin; your letters will also contribute to the decision that I will take. If it were possible that my arrival might be combined with the rest that our Brothers must take after the Jubilee of Aix, this would be marvellous because then we could more easily come together as we must then do on the occasion of the crowning of our work and in order to decide in a Chapter all that there is to do. Adieu, I am going at once in spite of the rain to take my letter to the post so that you will receive it as soon as possible. I reiterate my recommendation that you make all our people rest. I forgot to tell you that they must insist in their instructions on the obligation to show themselves Christians [especially in the instructions addressed to the men]⁶⁰ so that it will no longer be said in France, judging by what they see, that one would believe that only amongst the women are disciples of Jesus Christ to be found. I embrace you all and my uncle. Have prayers said for my journey from the 23rd on. Adieu.

237. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁶¹

Last audience with the Pope; his emotions and gratitude. Farewell visit to the Secretary of State and to Cardinal Pacca to whom the Congregation owes so much.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Rome, April 16, 1826.

I see, my dear friend, by your letter of the 6th that I have just received, that you would not be impervious to a little anxiety, and that I was right, in the course of my correspondence, not to delay reassuring you when I have had occasion to communicate to you sometimes the troubles that happened to me because of the glaciers of France which, to tell you the truth, have never been of long duration. I smiled on reading of your anxiety because of the silence I maintained in the letter about the signing of the brief. The following letter will have alleviated your worry by explaining to you the reason for my apparent unconcern. It was by design that I had said nothing to you; I was ranging my batteries if it is all right to refer by this term to the simple requests that it sufficed me to make to obtain all I wished. If I were not intimately

⁶⁰ Text of YENVEUX, I, 232.

⁶¹ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 301-307.

convinced that the good God was pleased to prepare the way for me and open all hearts to me, it would truly be something for me to pride myself about, when seeing the eagerness, the esteem and affection that everyone has shown to me during my sojourn in this capital of the world. Thanks to the Lord, I have not been even tempted with this vile pride; but to say that I have not been satisfied and consoled by this welcome in general, would be to lie; on the contrary, I have experienced a habitual feeling of joy and gratitude for, I must tell you, from the lackeys, the lay brothers, etc. all the way up to the Pope, they have all vied with one another to see who would give me the most tangible signs of attachment or affection.

If you had seen the Pope in the audience of a good half hour that he granted me yesterday, you would have wept with joy. With what goodness he spoke to me, with what grace he smiled at the things I said, with what abandon he granted me all that I asked, with what confidence, I cannot help telling you, he spoke to me of things quite secret, which proved to me the opinion that he kindly has of me; but I knew it already by all that the Holy Father had said about me on different occasions to different persons. Also, I was quite at ease remaining on my knees at his feet which he would never let me kiss; he presented to me, instead his holy hand that I kissed, you might think with ecstasy, but no, just with emotion and recollection, taking the liberty of pressing it to my forehead.

But how is it I have come to tell you all that, without preparing you with my usual historical narration? It just so happened that the matter escaped me. Now you know the result, the preceding details will interest you no longer, but I will be compensated in thinking that you have enjoyed this happy outcome a few moments sooner. I will not pass over the rest in silence, however, because you will wish to know my operation down to the least detail and that, for my part, I am pleased to share with you.

Cardinal Pacca, as I let you know, had undertaken, when he requested the exemption from the tax, to obtain at the same time my farewell audience. The Pope granted the exemption very willingly and sent word that I had only to present myself whenever I wished. I found myself several days later seated beside Mgr. Barberini, major domo (or as they say in France, high chamberlain), at a brilliant performance of the Academy of the *Arcadia*, held on the Capitol, attended by the

Queen of Sardinia and almost all the Sacred College, without counting a crowd of Prelates. I took advantage of the occasion to ask Mgr. Barberini what day I should present myself to His Holiness. He fixed Saturday. We were then at Tuesday, and that seemed to me somewhat far off; but having reflected that the other days were all taken by the audiences of the ministers, of the Congregation of the Holy Office which has Thursday with the Pope, etc., I had recourse to patience. In the meantime, I bade farewell to the excellent Cardinal Pacca, who had to go and make an appearance in his diocese of Porto; I will not tell you all the assurances of friendship that this estimable confessor of the faith made to me, one of the most remarkable members of the Sacred College and worthy of the reputation that he enjoys in the whole of Europe. I think I have told you that he conceived for me a very great affection and makes much more fuss over me than I deserve. We owe much to him for you must remember that it is he who asked the Holy Father to kindly name a commission of Cardinals, which the Pope granted without difficulty. It is impossible to say how much inconvenience was avoided by this more than excellent provision. He spared us some fifty piastres which the brief would have cost, and what is truly charming, it sufficed that I propose things for him to agree to them immediately with the greatest grace in the world, without ever making the slightest difficulty, without making any bones about it, without leaving even the shadow of doubt that the matter would succeed. In the beginning, when the people who were in waiting in the first antichamber said to me, according to their custom, that his Eminence had retired, that is to say, that he would see no more people, I went away; but since then, I said, well and good! and then proceeded to the third antichamber where the valets and trainbearer were to be found, and one or the other let the Cardinal know that I was there and immediately I was introduced into his study. I could not tire of citing the interest, the confidence, the genuine affection that this venerable Cardinal has shown me at every encounter. I hope to see him again once more, the evening of my departure which is fixed for the 27th, because he will come to spend twenty-four hours at Rome before proceeding to Civitavecchia, which the Pope has just joined to his diocese, in order to take possession of it.

On Friday, I bade farewell to the Cardinal Secretary of State, who has been very amiable towards me, as is his wont. He had the kindness to manifest to me the regret that he had to see me leave, and he embraced me tenderly.

At last on Saturday, that is to say, yesterday, having provided myself with a good number of rosaries, and having marked on a piece of paper sixteen different things which I proposed to take up with the Pope, I esconsed myself, like a real Prelate in the carriage of Mgr. Isoard, with coachmen and whip, and off to the Vatican. You know that on certain occasions, I know how to put myself out in front. It is not only when the tocsin sounds at Aix to march against General Brune or when duty calls to go to the aid of the poor prisoners during the epidemic and catch in their very midst the germs of death, then it is the real thing and charity, the honour of the ministry, the extreme need of souls, the recompense crowning the death that one meets, if not by obligation, at least by legitimate devotedness, all this make it a solemn occasion; but in this case it is a matter for amusement. I pass proudly before the first guardroom, I proceed without trouble beyond the second and the third posts where noble guards are stationed, I enter into the fourth where I greet casually those, I don't quite know who, posted there and sweeping through two more salons, I arrive in the throne room where I find many genteel persons who, on seeing me arrive, certainly do not suspect that I might pass before them, or even if they will themselves go in, because I may not leave them time to do so. But I myself see, not without anxiety, seven or eight Prelates, ministers or chiefs called to work with the Sovereign Pontiff. It was not without reason that I feared that the arrival of Mgr. the Treasurer (that is to say the minister of finance), which closes, so to speak, the audience for the day, because they send away everybody when he appears, I feared, I say, that all these Prelates might not have finished their business and this would hardly suit mine. I keep my courage and, approaching Mgr. the Chamberlain, I recall to him that he has given me the rendez-vous for today and that the Holy Father has sent word that I must present myself at his audience. This little precaution is not useless, for were it not to please this personage to announce you, the Pope, in his study, would be unaware that you are there. I understood that he would not play this trick on me, but let the others who come afterwards beware, the treasurer is not far behind.

On the stroke of noon, the Prelates who were before me had gone through, my turn comes because the Pope is good enough to call me. Mgr. the Chamberlain opens the door of the Pope's study makes his genuflection, announces me by my name and titles, and withdraws. Behold me for the second time at the feet of the Head of the Church; but, this time, what new entitlements he had acquired to my heart and

to my gratitude! It is the first thing I spoke about to him and he cut me short there and then with the graciousness which enhances still more his benefactions, and he kept me for more than a half hour while conversing on the most interesting things. As on the first occasion, in spite of his insistance, I kept myself at his knees all during this precious audience. The Pope was all smiles and disposed to grant me everything I asked. I had noted sixteen articles and I began by begging him to permit me to be indiscreet for the last time that I had the happiness of seeing him. The audience settled into a very animated conversation, in the sense that there was not a moment of time lost. It would be too long to relate to you all that was said on either side; there are even things that I would refrain from writing, although there might arise therefrom evident proof of the confidence that the Holy Father wished to show me. I was completely at ease and was not afraid to speak to him most openly about a host of items; I would have to begin my letter all over again, if I were to say everything. Be satisfied, for the moment, to know that he has kindly consented to be the protector of the Congregation, that he has authorized me to declare that he extended *ad perpetuum* all the graces and indulgences that he had accorded us *ad septennium* in the rescript of the month of December; that he authorized all the members of the Congregation to celebrate two hours after noon, on the occasion of travelling, etc., that he dispenses them from the divine Office on the busiest days during the missions, that he authorizes them once a year and at the time of death to be absolved by their own confessor from all censures and irregularities, etc. But all these favours were mingled with precious words that must never be forgotten. He handed me a letter for my uncle and bade me greet him affectionately, he promised me a rosary for him, and gave us both his apostolic blessing *de rore coeli*, said he, with the most tender expression. Finally he did not wish me to kiss his foot but twice presented me his hand.

238. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁶²

Departure from Rome for Loretto, Milan and Turin. Rheumatism in one leg. Participation in the privileges, etc., of the Redemptorists. Visit to the Ambassador.

⁶² *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 307-310.

Rome, May 4, 1826.

If you have been delighted, dear friend, to see one of my letters arrive with the reverse side blank, you must be more jubilant still on receiving this on which only a part will probably be scrawled upon. I leave today, which explains to you my laconicism. You will perhaps ask how is it I have not left sooner. This, I assure you, was in spite of me; my seat was reserved for Sunday, but I was waiting for a very important paper that they could not send me the day after the Holy Father had, as usual, granted me the favour; I would have left regretfully, had I left this document behind. I was able, not without trouble, to exchange the seat I had for Sunday with the one for today.⁶³ I do not know if I ought to regard this delay as quite fortunate in one way; but the fact is, I tell you so that someone may not alarm you unduly, that on Saturday, I caught a pain in the thigh similar to the one which struck me in the arm two years ago. I was not able to walk so you can imagine my predicament for God knows how much I use my legs. Happily the wife of a doctor who saw my pitiful state gave me a small phial of the same ointment which Trussy had ordered for my arm; believe me three applications sufficed to remove all pain and give me back the ability to walk. I am quite well now and I am going to leave without the slightest anxiety. I would have wished to dispense with mentioning to you this minor inconvenience but too many people saw me limp and, amongst others, two Frenchmen who leave today for the south of France. I feared that they might speak of me and that they might exaggerate my trouble in a way as to give you a fright, when it was nothing. The only result will be that I will be unable to ask for the prorogation of the Jubilee and some other minor things, but it will be easy to do so by writing. I had also reserved for these last days time to go and see some sights with which I did not bother while busy with our affairs. I will leave without seeing them and, I assure you, without regret; I am besides so pleased to have recovered the use of my leg that I renounce the rest.

The document that I waited for was precious to the Oblates. It was the participation in all graces, exemptions, privileges, indults and indulgences accorded to the Redemptorists by different Sovereign Pontiffs. The Pope replied that he granted this grace *amplissime*, extending

⁶³ Ascension Thursday.

it to everything hitherto granted and all to be granted in future. He even said to Arch. Marchetti, who had made the presentation, that if I would like to have a brief, I had only to say so, and that he would have it drawn up by Mgr. Capaccini. The rescript sufficed but I will perhaps request Arch. Marchetti to apply for it. I did not think I ought to put off my departure for that. Certainly if I had remained, I would not have hesitated, sure that I would have obtained it gratuitously. The rescript only cost me 10 *paules*, that is to say, 1 piastre, and that is all. You will see from this final initiative that I have neglected nothing for the good, the profit, the stability and the firmness of the Congregation. God has helped me beyond my dreams; now it is up to those for whom the Lord has done everything, to take advantage of all this benevolence for their sanctification and for the good of the Church.

I dined the other day with our Ambassador; he showed me more kindnesses than usual; he begged me to visit him the next day in the morning, and we conferred together for an hour and a half alone in his study. We discussed several subjects and, among others, that of the particular purpose of my journey; he reproached me frankly for not having taken him into my confidence; I replied just as frankly by giving him explanations which I thought appropriate and suitable for him. He revealed to me that I had indeed enjoyed great esteem at Rome and that he would inform the King by the courier of that day that, among the priests who had been at Rome, the one who had been the most remarkable and of whom they had been the most appreciative was the Abbé de Mazenod; he would mention my having obtained special concessions for the Missionaries of southern France. This letter goes to the King's desk. The Ambassador also brought up the current declaration.⁶⁴ He asked whether I thought the Bishops of the South would sign it; I replied to him that I did not think they would refuse to recognize that the Church has no power in regard to the temporal domain of princes, provided the focus was only on this generalized question; for the Popes themselves have never laid the least claim to power over purely temporal things. Beyond that, whether it was opportune to make this declaration, was quite another matter. What will surprise you is that he was in perfect agreement with me; but say nothing of this to anyone. The Ambassador appeared as pleased with me as I was with him. He embraced me cordially and upon this, we parted.

⁶⁴ Declaration of the Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops of France, April 3, 1826, on the authority and interdependence of the temporal and spiritual powers.

I will be at Loretto on Saturday and will not leave until Tuesday; I count on being at Milan on Pentecost Day and will leave on the third day of the Feast if I find a conveyance. But I will write you en route. As I fear to miss the postal service, I will not say more.

I have said a mass for poor Giustiniani;⁶⁵ I do not know however if it is not three we should say. In any case, I will do this as I travel. The death of this poor young priest has afflicted me; I have done so much for him, though with little consolation. Adieu, once more, I rejoice to set forth on the road which leads me to you and to all our brothers, good relatives and friends. I embrace you all.

239. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁶⁶

His visit and masses at the shrine of Our Lady of Loretto.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Our Lady of Loretto, May 7, 1826.

Without being yet much closer to you, I am nevertheless at 172 miles from Rome which I left on Ascension Day at half past one in the cab of the stage coach. The journey was quite happy and punctual for I arrived yesterday at eleven in the morning. We stopped long enough at Macerata for me to be able to say holy mass with the gentlemen of the Mission who have a very pretty house in that town, but short of men as elsewhere. I had a letter of recommendation for the Pro-vicar general and another for a young Canon who immediately gave me proof of their esteem. They have not left me, either of them, since I have been at Loretto.

This morning I had the happiness to offer the holy sacrifice in the revered house where the Son of God became incarnate; it is not a palace but nonetheless it inspires sentiments that one does not experience in the palaces of the earth's great ones. When one celebrates in this holy place, one keenly welcomes the moment when our Lord comes again into the house in which he dwelt during his sojourn on this

⁶⁵ Marc-Antoine Giustiniani, titular canon, deceased April 11, 1826, aged 27 years.

⁶⁶ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 310-313; YENVEUX, IV, 148; RAMBERT, I, 454-455; REY, I, 392.

earth. One needs a permission in writing to say mass for oneself; I had taken care to ask the Grand Vicar for it; so my intention was for the family, an intention extended to those worthy to belong to it. Tomorrow, I hope again to be able to say mass in the *Santa Casa* but it must be applied to the intentions that are received in abundance here. There was a time when it was never possible to say mass for one's own intentions. The Pope has slightly mitigated this but wishes that occasions be rare and does not grant all such requests. By applying a secondary intention, I will make up for it being impossible to offer Mass again for our own explicit intentions.

I will shortly present myself to the Bishop,⁶⁷ a holy prelate of eighty-seven years, strong in health which he owes no doubt to the habit that he formed long ago to walk at least one league each day. This is what he set out to do the moment the office finished; he went off putting his best foot forward, and while awaiting his return, I am writing to you, not quite at ease because the young Canon accompanying me waits for me to finish. For his sake I will have to finish somewhat sooner than usual.

All our friends will not be surprised that I kept them in mind yesterday evening in the holy chapel, uttering a little prayer for each of them in particular. I did not come out until forced to do so by fatigue. The piety of the faithful who come and go in the chapel, and who do not leave until they have kissed the walls several times, with an effusion of affection that is very touching, inspires me with inexpressible tenderness and causes me to be at one with them.

The *Santa Casa* is situated in the middle of the church. The interior is the same as when carried by the Angels; so one sees walls of brick on three sides of the House; the back, behind the altar, arranged in a kind of small sanctuary, is entirely walled with what once were silver panels; today, alas! I think they are only of shiny brass. There is to be found the hearth where the Mother of God prepared the modest and meagre repast of the Holy Family. The holy House is enclosed, I would say cloaked with marble, that is to say, the exterior wall seen from the church is entirely incrustated with marbles and statues of prophets and sibyls, as well as bas-relief representing several episodes of the life of the holy Virgin, such as the Presentation in the temple, etc.

⁶⁷ Bishop Stefano Bellini.

After the mass, the name of the one who has celebrated it is inscribed in a register; I found therein that of our poor Gustiniani, whose death truly afflicted me, although this holy child made me endure some very bad moments because of his detestable character. I then went into the treasury. It is enough to make one groan. One sees scattered here and there a few chalices, monstrances, pearls and diamonds; but the great cupboards which contained so many riches, candlesticks of gold, lamps of the same metal and all sorts of riches, today contain nothing but candlesticks of wood and some very ordinary vestments.

The house is filling with Canons; I can continue no longer. It would not be fitting to ignore these personages who wear into the choir episcopal insignia, even the pectoral cross. Adieu to all and to my dear uncle, to whose attention I beg you to bring the method of the Bishop of Loretto. I embrace you all with all my heart. Give my news to Maman and all the family who also have been very present to me in this holy place. I will leave only on Tuesday, I hope to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost at Milan. Adieu.

240. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁶⁸

Visit to Bologna. Tombs of Saint Catherine and Saint Dominic. Stops at Modena, Reggio, Parma and Piacenza. Visit to the tomb of Saint Charles at Milan. Will shortly leave for Turin.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Milan, holy day of Pentecost [May 14, 1826].

I have written to my uncle from Bologna, my very dear Tempier, where I spent all day Thursday. I write to you today from Milan, while resting from going to and fro all morning with the brother of the Grand Vicar of Loretto, a charming priest who has served me as *cicerone* so politely and amiably as to prevent me from noticing any possible indiscretion in the extent to which he was obliging. We came in at three o'clock and I immediately took up my pen in order to give you an account of this stage of my journey. The holy Virgin having given me the grace of taking away my pain, there is no longer any question of it; so I will make no further mention of it, if it is only to tell you that I feared for a moment that it might be an obstacle to the

⁶⁸ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 313-317; YENVEUX, IV, 206.

continuation of my journey. I was confident enough to brave what might befall; our Mother inspired me with this sentiment; the pain went away as if by magic. I spent all day Thursday going about Bologna; I had said holy mass in the church of the Mission, I dined and supped with these gentlemen. Amongst the remarkable things I did at Bologna, I ought not to forget telling you, that I went to venerate the body, entirely preserved until this day, of Saint Catherine of Bologna. The Father Confessor had the kindness to take me into the inner sanctuary where the saint was seated, dressed in precious raiment. The skin of the face, the feet and hands have darkened but the lower part of the face retains a more natural colour; they claim it is this part of her face that the Infant Jesus kissed in an apparition. The membranes of the nose are not destroyed; when regarding the saint in profile, one distinguishes the very noticeable aquiline shape. The body keeps its suppleness; they perhaps overdo it a little by arraying it with different robes, at least four times a year. The hands and fingers are in good state and one distinguishes perfectly well the form of the nails.

I also visited the church where lies the body of Saint Dominic.

Towards ten o'clock in the evening, I took my place in the carriage and slept soundly, while waiting for the departure which occurred at three o'clock in the morning. I said holy mass at Modena in the church of the Jesuit Fathers. We stopped several hours at Reggio and the following day, at six in the morning, I got down from the coach at a quarter of a league from Piacenza in order to see the celebrated college of Cardinal Alberoni, directed by the Lazarists. I said mass in their interior chapel. They obliged me to take at least a cup of coffee; I pleaded in vain my habit of fasting the eve of Pentecost. They would listen to none of this, they had countless good reasons to give me. After having held out for some time, made aware that I would be disobliging them, I took the coffee which served in a way as my collation. I waited to have my meal until my arrival at Milan. I ate there with a fairly good appetite, although without voracity. I have often been more hungry, it is true that I was tired. I had not undressed since Loretto; only at Parma did I throw myself on a bed, after having gone about the whole city, while waiting for the departure of the stage coach, which only started out at midnight.

I only got up at seven o'clock and at eight I came to this palace, from which I write to you, to see the brother of the Grand Vicar of

Loretto, and Count Milerio, whom I had met at Rome in the Sistine Chapel where we became acquainted with each other. Count Milerio is an excellent man and infinitely to be esteemed. He had been named Great Chancellor of the kingdom of Italy attending the Emperor of Austria and he had the grandeur of soul to resign from this office because he could not exercise it as he would wish. Immensely rich, the Lord has put his virtue to the test by taking away his wife and his only daughter; he lives in retirement amongst some friends, amongst whom he kindly wishes to include me. Yesterday he wished that I lunch and dine with him and he renewed today the same invitation. Fearing that the excursions of the morning might have tired me too much, he gave me one of his carriages to go about the city after dinner. We went with the Abbé Polidory to see the Circus and the Arc of Triumph begun by Bonaparte, and to be completed by order of the Emperor. We went along the different promenades and I finished the evening with a visit to the Cardinal Archbishop, at whose pontifical mass I had assisted in the morning, in the beautiful church where lies [the body of] Saint Charles. I had said mass in the church of the Barnabites, who have recently re-established themselves at Milan.

Today I had the consolation of celebrating the sacred mysteries in the underground chapel where the body of the holy Archbishop is laid: I am going to return there soon to examine this chapel closely, entirely incrustated with silver, and to see uncovered the body of the saint which is enclosed in a coffin of massive silver. If I can obtain a relic, I will be very pleased for all the ones they gave me at Rome are only pieces of his purple robe and do not satisfy my devotion enough.

I have reserved my place for Thursday morning; I will be at Turin Wednesday evening or at the latest, Saturday morning. My first care will be to run to the post office to seek the letters you must have addressed to me there and which I am longing to receive, as it is indeed for a long time that I have been deprived of news of the family. I hope that you are all well. Do not neglect to let my mother and my sister know of my progress in travelling towards you. It is high time that I see you again. I dare not tell myself how long I have been living away from you. If I had considered that before leaving, I would have had much trouble deciding myself to set forth on a journey so prolonged. The good God spares our weakness by leading us gently to his ends. Until now, it has been impossible to succeed better from every point of view. After so much success, a few setbacks would not surprise me for

these words must come true: *Nemo propheta in patria sua*.⁶⁹ This proverb was belied for me at Aix, I do not know how it would have applied at Marseilles. For the rest, the happiness of pressing my friends, my brothers, my children to my heart means everything to me on earth. I embrace you all with these sentiments; I embrace my uncle, maman, my sister and her children. This morning I thought of you all beside Saint Charles and am about to return there. Adieu, we are no longer so far from one another as when I was at Rome. Adieu.

The post leaves only today, Wednesday; I still have time to embrace you once more. I have just resisted strong entreaties of Count de Senfft, Austrian Minister at Turin, who absolutely wished I only leave on Tuesday, so that he could receive me under his roof at Turin, and have me lodge there. I have waited too long to have your news, I prefer waiting a few days. Count Milerio invites me every day to dinner and when we are together it is as if we had known each other for twenty years.

I have seen Saint Charles; but I have no more space. Adieu.

241. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁷⁰

Disappointment on arrival at Turin: no letters from Marseilles.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Turin, May 20, 1826.

Explain to me how it is I find no letters from you, to be called for, at Turin. Here am I, left in the lurch! What sort of reckoning have you made? On my way here I was overwhelmed with desire to have news of you; your letters were supposed to meet me along the way; now I am worried about you all and do not know what to think. You should have written to me every week to keep me in touch with the many things that you no doubt had to tell me; had you simply arranged for me to find only one letter from you as I went, it was the simplest thing in the world. I presume however that is what you thought you would do and that again you have reckoned badly, although I left Rome later than I said I would.

⁶⁹ Luke, 4, 24.

⁷⁰ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 317-318.

Whatever the case may be, I hasten to tell you I will not budge from here until you have written to me. I arrived yesterday evening, in very good health, having had politeness and kindness heaped upon me at Milan. I lodge in the same house as when I first came through. I have found the same welcome. Count de Senfft, Minister of Austria at Turin, wished me to wait for him to have the pleasure of being lodged with him. The anxiety in which I was to receive your letters on which I counted made me resist his pressing invitations. What a hoax when I found nothing! If this annoying mishap has not been occasioned by some strange cause, I will have trouble pardoning you. The only vengeance that I allow myself at the moment is to tell you nothing more.

I was so impatient to know the decision that the good God will have inspired my uncle to take, and so many other things. Adieu. Write to me post by post if you wish me to get away from Italy. I embrace my uncle and all of you.

242. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁷¹

Take good care of Fr. Marcou, gravely ill. The project of the union between the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the Oblates of the Virgin Mary is abandoned. Route of return: Chambéry and Gap. Approaching ordination of Brothers Martin and Arnoux. Suzanne must rest.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Turin, May 24, 1826.

God be blessed, my dear Tempier! They have brought me all at once ten letters, amongst which I find three from you. I had sent three times to the post office, I had been there myself failing to get anyone to agree that they had anything; today a new attempt has produced happier results.

The first thing to which I reply, because it affects me to the depths of my soul, is the sad news of the dangerous illness of our good Fr. Marcou. I am desolate because so rare is recovery in such cases that I cannot cajole myself into believing I shall see him cured. However some I have met here and there who, even advanced in age, have spit

⁷¹ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 318-322; YENVEUX, VI, 113, 160; REY, I, 393; RAMBERT, I, 513.

and vomited blood; so you must not lose courage and especially do not fail to give hope to the sick man. I need not tell you with what care and charity you must treat him. Even if we have to sell things down to our shoes, let nothing be spared to comfort him; if his relatives were to propose that they take him home, do not consent; it is amongst his brothers that he ought to find all the services his condition demands, day and night, spiritual as well as temporal. The only thing I recommend to you is to take all suitable precautions lest, if sadly it happens to this dear Father to fall into consumption, that our other young Fathers may not be thus exposed to some unfortunate contagion; you must mark all that he uses, etc. After that, or better say, above all, we must pray every day that the good God may preserve this good Father, if such be his holy will. I will say mass for him for I have taken the resolution to reserve my masses for the Society. Write something on my behalf to Fr. Marcou, to show him my very sincere and very lively affection.

I await a reply from Savoy in order to decide by which entrance I will regain France. Pray, in the meantime, that it be through Chambéry. I have discovered that in those parts there is a missionary⁷² who does much good and who would not demur to attach himself to any Society which devotes itself to the same ministry. It would be possible that Providence might use him to establish our Congregation in some diocese of Savoy. He has been written to in order to sound out what his feelings are at present; it seems we will arrange to meet and discuss a possible agreement if he is still of the same mind. I will keep you informed. We cannot receive a reply before Saturday. The waiting is rather hard but you will agree the matter is too important to neglect.

I think no more of those whom I saw on my way down. The head is a man of the greatest merit but he is aged and weakened, and led by the nose by one of his three or four companions. Their method, to which they cling obstinately, could not be employed by us; they only give retreats of eight days and they do in those eight days what we would have difficulty doing in thirty. For the rest, the one idea held by Fathers who are esteemed in these parts and certainly one that is encouraging for us, although it must upset poor M. Dalga, is that eight days suffice to finish the task. They get a lot done when they prolong it up to fifteen and that is the method of all — Jesuits, Passionists, Lazarists, and religious of all orders.

⁷² M. Favre, missionary, cf.: Letter of May 29.

If I go by way of Mount Cenis, I shall see the Bishop of Gap because, naturally, I will go through Laus. I will behave towards him just as if we have no complaints about his proceedings. I will have no qualm about showing him the entire brief, for we would lose too much by hiding from him the least part. As for the restriction of his dimissorials, let him apply it if inclined to do so. If there is anything contrary to the canons, it is certainly this pleasant phrase. What does it matter to us? All we wish is to do things that please, and nothing hostile. Having obtained full and entire sharing of all privileges, etc., we would not even need, by law, his dimissorials to ordain our members; but it would not be well for us to make use of these privileges and, as soon as he consents that the members be ordained, the rest is of no importance. He will have time to reflect.

I hope that Ferrucci will send you the dispensation of age for Arnoux although he has forgotten to have me sign the request. With what impatience I wait for the ordination of these two priests, Martin and Arnoux! It is like rebirth for me to see these two children raised to the priesthood. May the good God keep Marcou with us! Losing him is not what we want but the Lord knows our needs. Perhaps it is necessary in Heaven that there be in the presence of the Lamb representatives of all the families who combat on earth for the glory of his name: in this case, we could count on our poor Jourdan, who was very saintly, and whose death was of a kind that could not be imputed to his will.

My pen is balky and I am in a hurry. Do not be inclined to think that I am getting impatient. I commiserate with our dear Suzanne; these pains are a sore trial. Tell him to obtain a flannel waistcoat, or at least a sleeve. But let him rest, although at Marseilles he may be tempted to do the contrary. This is not just advice that I give him. If such a thing is too difficult at Marseilles, let him go elsewhere, provided that he rests. When I think that in three days I could be with you, you can believe it is a cruel torment to tarry and plan detours. But the greatest good, the greatest glory of God stifle all murmurings of the heart.

And my uncle, what is this he is doing? Ah! he is incorrigible, preaching three times in a row is too much. I have written to him from Bologna and to you from Milan. I am so happy today to know you are all in good health! If you knew how impossible it is for me not to be upset when I receive no news! I have spent three bad days at Turin

because of that. Were it not for the state of our poor Marcou, I would be overjoyed. Adieu, my dear friend, I embrace you all very tenderly; I seem about to touch you; but if I have to go through Savoy, it will be another delay. I will leave probably on Monday for I can have no reply before Saturday and, as the individual in question is on a mission, perhaps I will still experience another delay. Adieu. I forgot to tell you that I left an order in Rome for the sending to the Bishop a box of books, my small valise and a painting which is a portrait of the Pope, done by a dauber, but it is a resemblance. It is not good enough to show in the bishop's house because, in truth, it is a mediocrity which cost me only 25 or 30 francs; but it will not be out of place in one of our houses.

The ailment of our poor Suzanne concerns me. What I have found good is rubbing with oil of sweet almonds, mixed with a certain drug, and very smelly. I embrace once more our dear patient whom I love too much not to feel all his ills.

243. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].⁷³

The room to be used as infirmary for Fr. Marcou.

[Turin] May 26, 1826.

. . . You must designate a place to be used as infirmary. I would not choose the room which is at the end of the corridor, because it is outside the cloister and those of the house would continually have to be following lay people and women in order to go to the sick man. If the room which opens on the interior parlor was not so cold, I would prefer it, although there is still the disadvantage of being too close to the common living quarters

244. [To Fr. Honorat at Notre Dame du Laus].⁷⁴

Desire to see the Oblates again. Prolonged stay at Turin in order to meet M. Favre. The Founder celebrates each day mass for the intentions of the Congregation. Behaviour one should adopt with Bishop Arbaud of Gap.

⁷³ YENVEUX, VI, 71.

⁷⁴ YENVEUX, V, 86, 230; VI, 13; REY, I, 392-393.

Turin, May 28, 1826.

The thought of finding myself so close to you, after having spent six months at so great a distance, adds yet more to my happiness although I do not consider France as the promised land; however as what I love the most in the world is found therein, I cannot prevent myself from groaning somewhat at being held up, like the Israelites, when on the point of reaching it. For eight days now I am at Turin, that is to say, that if I could have continued on the road, I would already have arrived at my destination; but you know we are led by Providence. We must therefore always take the direction which seems to be indicated. On acting in dependence on divine will, one has no reproaches to make to oneself, even when one does not reach what it was permitted to desire, always for the greatest glory of God, the salvation of souls and the good of the Society

I await a reply from Chambéry which could be of great importance to us. Lay this matter, like all those which concern us, at the feet of the most holy Virgin

Oh! how many things we will not have to tell each other! I have written much that they have no doubt communicated to you, but who could have done justice to so many marvellous things? In the name of God, let us correspond to the favours which God has, in recent times, accorded only to us. On my side, not knowing what to do to thank God worthily, I have taken the resolution of offering the holy Sacrifice every day, either to render thanksgiving to God for his benefactions, or to obtain that each of us becomes more and more worthy of his vocation. It seemed to me that it was indispensable that there be in the Society a daily sacrifice offered to this intention which includes many others besides, always in the same spirit.

. . . One must admit that the demon employed a very apt means to arrive at his ends by availing himself of a Bishop to suppress the good which he had so many reasons to fear. The enemy has not prevailed I need not recommend that you show much respect and deference to the Bishop of [Gap]. The more we have been favoured, the more fitting it is that we use moderately and humbly the rights that our new status gives us. What do we want? Nothing more than to do all the good that we can. Now, we cannot do this great good if by our fault we alienate from us the hearts of those in whose name and in favour of

whom we wish to do this good. Do not believe that it is always a misfortune to meet men who leave to God the care of recompensing us for our services.

Adieu, I embrace you and bless you *de rore coeli* to use the same phrase of our Holy Father the Pope.

245. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁷⁵

Will stay at Turin until June 7 in order to be able to met M. Favre, missionary.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Turin, May 29, 1826.

I did not count on writing you until Thursday, my very dear Fr. Tempier, having written today to X***, who will have given you my news; but the reply that I have just received from Chambéry obliges me to let you know immediately the plan which I am obliged to adopt. Unfortunately, I have only a moment, the time of the departure of the post being near. By one of those chance events which Providence directs, I have learnt, on arriving at Turin, that there was in Savoy a missionary entirely devoted to God and to his neighbour, enjoying a very great esteem with the Bishops and clergy, and whose work is blessed by God. He who let me know this is himself a holy religious, to whom this person once confided the desire he had either to form a union of gospel workers, or himself to join some such Society already formed. I have too little time to enter into the details. We decided to write and let him know that what he desires exists. He is out on a mission. This is what he replies to the Father: "Your letter caused me a very great joy. I thank you for it a thousand times. I see myself about to realize a project which I have so much at heart, and which I have turned over in my mind so often without getting any farther ahead. Until June 7, I will be busy with the mission of Bozet. This parish is situated very far from the route of M. de Mazenod and I do not see any way I can absent myself; but after the 7th of June, I shall be at the mission of L'Hôpital. He will only have to leave Turin a few days later to be able to reach me at L'Hôpital which is almost on his way."

⁷⁵ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 322-323.

I have decided then not to leave Turin until next Tuesday in order to converse with M. Favre. This interview could be of the greatest importance and what I think is that I cannot in conscience neglect it. To realize what it costs me, one would have to know to what point I am tired of my absence from the places where my life is to be found. I will return by way of Grenoble, etc. Adieu, they are waiting for my letter. I've finished. I have received all yours; it takes only four days for them to arrive.

246. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁷⁶

The Founder will go through Chambéry in order to meet M. Favre who could, with his missionaries, join the Oblates. Plans to return to France via Grenoble and Gap. Illness of Fathers Suzanne, Marcou and Dupuy.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Turin, May 30, 1826.

I am taking time a little in advance, my dear Fr. Tempier, so as to write you with a clear head and in a rather more orderly manner than I must have done yesterday. I was obliged to write you at the moment when the servant of the house where I was came to take the letters to carry to the post; I do not know, in truth, if you will be able to make out that letter but I was anxious to let you know without delay of the circumstances which are delaying my return more than a week. I judged this matter to be of major concern and in spite of the extreme repugnance I have to be on the high road, especially when almost going in the opposite direction from where I long so much to be, I have not hesitated to undertake this journey. Even were it to be fruitless, I will have no regrets for having made it, as I would reproach myself always for not having done my duty if, for some motive I might have been able to adduce, I had done otherwise.

A man who is remarkable for his virtues and for the success of his ministry has with ardent zeal sought for a long time precisely what we are in a position to offer him, namely the clearly predictable advantages of a union which would prepare the way to an establishment in Savoy, and the almost certain hope of obtaining a good number of excellent

⁷⁶ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 324-327; YENVEUX, II, 69; REY, I, 387-388, 393.

members. Such an opportunity seems to afford a powerful incentive, and a still more imperious indication of Providence, which I cannot permit myself to neglect. So I will leave on Tuesday next, June 6th, by stage coach which I will leave four leagues from Chambéry, thence to take a side road and arrive, with God's help, at a place called L'Hôpital where M. Favre will be found. I will converse with him and if we are able to agree, as the person who pointed him out to me bids me to hope, we will plan what will be best to do. I will write you then from Chambéry, either to let you know the result of this trip, or to give you my itinerary, which I will be able to decide upon only after having spoken with M. Favre.

My plan is to return via Grenoble, and to arrive at Gap where I will see the Bishop and will visit afterwards our house of Laus. Do not worry in the least about the lack of mention of Laus in the brief. This is as it should be. Laus does not belong to us, we ought not to show it as ours. I made mention of it in my petition letter, that is to say, in the document which is our work; the brief is the work of the Pope. The Bishop will be able to think that the Pope did not wish to speak of it, precisely because of the proceedings he took up with the Holy See. I see in that two good things: the consideration that the Holy See thought it should show towards him, at least the Bishop will be able to envisage it thus; for, in truth, the Pope was little perturbed by his representations; in the second place, the proof that independently of all that the Bishop could say or think, the Pope, leaving aside his diocese, approved, established and constituted the Company for the service of God and the Church in all places where the good it does with the grace of God will be approved. So, do not worry about that. The essential thing is that he grant dimissorials, because it is important that everything proceeds amiably; I would have wished that you ask at the same time those for Arnoux, in order not to be obliged to return to this matter. If you write to him, you can announce to the Prelate the intention that I have to go and present to him my respects, to tell him even that it is mostly to see him that I take the route of Gap.

I am worried about the persistence of the pain of Fr. Suzanne; recommend to him to take the waters that they have ordered for him, as is necessary. As for Fr. Marcou, I do not cease to recommend his health to the good God. I have had him prayed for by the Religious of the house where I am. You must not be in a hurry to have him travel; there are examples that, with extraordinary care, a person who has vomited blood can be restored.

I do not dare tell you to address a letter to me, to be called for, at Chambéry; however, I would willingly look for news from you there. It is certain that, if I leave here on Tuesday, your reply will have time to arrive there before me; however little I remain with M. Favre, I will stay a full twenty-four hours. Then I will have to take the road back in order to take the coach at Chambéry. You can therefore bet that I will spend Sunday the 11th at Chambéry: now letters should not take more than three or four days to get there; so, upon reflection, write me in that city, for there is no cause for writing me here.

I understand the worry that you must have had, because of the delay of all the letters which I had nevertheless taken care to write you from all my stops in Italy. It seems that it is the same courier which has collected them all, but it is a vile trick that has been played on us. Please God, the moment will come when we will be able to hear each other's words without the help of these gentlemen.

. . . I will never adhere to a declaration⁷⁷ which I would have advised against making if they had consulted me before drawing it up: 1° because the principal proposition (the first in the declaration of 1682) taken in its generality, is not correct; 2° because it is unseemly and even ridiculous that the whole Episcopate gets worked up because an author puts forward an opinion which is sustained for that matter by so many Bishops and Doctors in all the countries of the world. Where would we be if for every proposition advanced by such a lot of authors who intervene to write and with which one disagrees, prompted them to retort with opposing declarations?

I consider this, under the circumstances, as an act of weakness, contrary to episcopal dignity.

The principles of the Bishops are based on the Gospel, their fidelity is sheltered from all attack, they are strong in their conscience; their teaching is known, it is manifested daily by the doctrine with which they nourish their peoples. What need is there of this declaration? Do they not seem to recognize that people have the right to doubt their positions?

⁷⁷ A declaration was demanded from the Bishops of France, which tended to defend the presumed Gallican freedoms against Lamennais. This paragraph relating to Lamennais (REY, I, 387-388) and the following concerning a vagabond priest (YENVEUX, II, 69) can be placed here. This last paragraph is condensed into three lines in *Missions*.

This declaration is a concession made to the liberal party that they fear and which will not cease to plot our downfall in spite of all such declarations which it mocks.

Besides is it fitting that the Bishops appear to join together to overwhelm with the weight of their authority a priest who employs all the moments of his life to defend religion, who alone attacks impiety with immortal writings? Can one call this priest, writing on theological matters, a man without a mission? Saint Jerome did not have anyone but himself. He had sometimes an opinion contrary to that of Saint Augustine. I am not aware that this holy bishop accused him of being a man without a mission. Such are some of the reasons which would have prevented me from subscribing to this declaration, whatever those who had the idea to write it think to the contrary, and I do not consider myself any less good a Frenchman than they and whoever else besides.

. . . I do not believe we ought to accept in the diocese N . . . ; he is a vagabond who, out of the whole field of ministry, seeks only the pulpit for the pleasure of talking. He has not an ounce of zeal. As for us, let us always seek substance; never cease to urge this on all our men but, at the same time, insist much on the observance of the Rules and on regularity in everything.

You have not told me if Fr. Dupuy no longer suffers from his former tiredness. Tell him lots of things on my behalf, as well as Fr. Jeancard, who also must need rest. I embrace him very tenderly, as well as all of you. I pine, believe me, because of the need I feel to be and live with you all. This latest delay taxes my spirit of resignation to the limit; when I think that, without it, I would already have pressed you by now to my heart, I am saddened; but it needs must be. Adieu, adieu.

247. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].⁷⁸

The Founder's few virtues. The joy of soon being able to see his family again is marred by the grave illness of Fr. Marcou.

⁷⁸ YENVEUX, V, 29, 143, 160; VI, 113, VII, 218; RAMBERT, I, 513; REY, I, 393.

[Turin] May 31, 1826.

. . . I will forgive you . . . for the compliments you offer me, but it will be on condition that you will no longer thus make a mockery of me. What virtue do you wish that I perceive in myself? Alas! I have no illusions! The appreciation of what is true and good is not among the virtues, it would rather be at the most a disposition, an aptitude for virtue, but what is the good of it or how can I boast about it if, on the contrary, it is what humiliates me and confounds me more, since this tree only produces flowers but no fruits. Believe, my children, that I have need of you all so I can try and be smuggled in with so much good merchandise.

Never tire then to urge all your people on to the most sublime virtues of our state. A total abnegation of self, a great humility which, joined to the zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, to a great esteem and entire submissiveness towards our Rules whereby we ought to reach our goal, will truly make us achieve this.

A few small details would have given me pleasure; you wish to give me that of surprise, and I consent thereto. But how much the happiness that I promise myself on seeing you again is going to be marred by the state in which our dear Father Marcou is at present. Therein lies a sorrow which nothing can console. The fear of losing this child saddens me excessively. I would wish to precede you all, which is only right since age would qualify me, although not old, to be the father of all of you. I need not urge you, if Fr. Marcou comes to Aix,⁷⁹ to give him more care than he could have in his paternal house, even if you have to sell linen and chalices. I do not think the climate of Marseilles suits his health, the air of Aix will be better for him, only you will need to designate a place to use as infirmary.

. . . I love to think that in fifteen days there will be no more mountains or seas between us. I leave Turin on Tuesday; do not fear that anything can hold me back in Savoy. As soon as I have dealt with the matter that takes me there and for which, as is customary, you will take care to pray, I get on the stage coach and so arrive, with God's help, first at Notre Dame du Laus where I will remain two days so as not to disappoint our Fathers and then on to Aix where I could well

⁷⁹ Fr. Marcou was a member of the community of Nîmes.

nigh suffocate you as I press you to my heart which palpitates just at the very thought of the happiness of finding myself at the core of all my affections.

248. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁸⁰

Journey to Chambéry and to L'Hôpital. The style of life and the missionary methods of M. Favre and his associates who already follow a Rule. Plan to unite the two groups during the vacation and to found an establishment at Chambéry.

L.J.C. and M.I.

L'Hôpital-sur-l'Isère, June 10, 1826.

On the advice that I had received, I did not leave Turin until Tuesday, the 6th of this month, by stage coach. We slept in the evening at Suze where we had time to go and see the well preserved Arc of Triumph built in honour of Augustus; it is situated on the ancient road which formerly led to Dauphiné. Regretful over the delay that this detour which I have been obliged to make causes me, I could not help grieving that it was not possible from there to cross into our country. I would soon have been laying my petitions at the feet of Our Lady of Laus.

After having spent quite a bad night, we got into our vehicle before three o'clock in the morning and ascended immediately Mount Cenis by a superb road. It was cool, but the snow had melted. They gave us time to take a quick look at the hospice that we passed. The two priests that I saw there, of which one was a religious, but wearing like the other a simple soutane, inspired me with neither respect or confidence. We crossed the Maurienne, which is the first province to be found on the other side of Mount Cenis; they speak here, as in the rest of Savoy, a better French than in several provinces of France; but the country is frightful. We went along as far as Aiguebelle, where we only arrived on the following noon. The river Arc and, in truth, the river and the high road, fill the valley between the high mountains that are to be crossed. We slept in the evening at Saint-Michel. The 12th,

⁸⁰ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1872, 327-332; YENVEUX, V, 85; REY, I, 394.

we saw as we passed the little town of Saint-Jean de Maurienne, residence of the Bishop of this province, and we arrived for dinner at Aiguebelle.⁸¹

Wishing to arrive at L'Hôpital, which was only four leagues away, the former dwelling-place of the Dukes of Savoy, it was convenient for me to let the stage coach go on and take a small carriage and go off towards L'Hôpital; but the Isere was too swollen to take the risk of crossing it, I was told by those who would have rented the carriage to me; I came then to Chambéry for the night, whence I left yesterday at three o'clock in the morning en route to L'Hôpital where I arrived at noon. The Bishop of Tarantaise⁸² had been there since the beginning of the mission; I wished to see him only after saying holy mass. The Bishop received me very politely; he stayed during my dinner as well as the missionaries and priests who are here for confessions. I had seen M. Favre only for a moment; as soon as the Bishop had left, I got hold of him in order to discuss our affair. I was only there for that purpose so I restated all the overtures that the Bishop made for me to take part in the mission, overtures that he has not ceased to make since then, but against which I have constantly held out.

I propose to leave tomorrow for Annecy, for I would reproach myself for not having visited the tomb of Saint Francis of Sales, this being only a few leagues distant. As you can imagine, all the time that the work of the mission left M. Favre free has been employed in discussing the purpose of my journey. I had brought with me the manuscript and apostolic letters; he took cognizance of them. In our conferences yesterday I found that he spoke much to me of his customs, his plans, etc. I thought, for my part, that it would be difficult for us to agree, and without regretting having made this journey, I began to believe that it would not amount to much. I would perhaps have not undertaken it had I known that these gentlemen already have a kind of rule, and settled ideas that it is difficult to bend to another regime; however the spirit is the same apart from a few differences and the means they employ.

M. Favre is a man of merit, acting only for God; although simple in his manners and neglectful of his person, he enjoys in these regions a

⁸¹ These three lines, dated June 12, were probably written in the margin of the letter, after the return from L'Hôpital.

⁸² Bishop Antoine Martinet of Tarantaise.

reputation which stifles all ill will. He will have at his disposition all the resources of which he will have need for in his work and it appears that he will not want for members. I do not see however that a great number of members have joined him; those he has here with him seem devoted but I found them quite weak; they are exhausted even physically; for the work they do is excessive. They are on the twelfth mission which they have done without rest. This, from our point of view, would not do; they are not pleased themselves. I admit that I do not conceive how, the way they are going, they can be effective anywhere. They persist just the same in believing that their method is excellent.

They rise at four o'clock, make an hour of oraison, say their masses and confess until nine o'clock. At nine begins the first exercise of the mission, that is to say, an examination, unbelievably cold and insipid, done from the pulpit by a missionary on a commandment of God. Mass follows; at the Gospel, another missionary goes up to the pulpit to preach a sermon, after which the mass is completed and they retire until two o'clock when they begin another exercise. A missionary then proceeds with catechism by interrogating a child trained to reply properly; the questions and answers follow one upon the other very rapidly. This is what, of all these gentlemen do, pleases me the most. When three o'clock sounded, the catechism finished and a conference began. I assisted at that of yesterday and the one today. M. Favre himself gave it. Alas! how bad it is! I cannot conceive how they keep it up. It was the complement of the sermon of this morning which was excessively bad. In these conferences, which are truly dialogues that are silly, they repeat without ceasing. When I say repeat, I mean the same idea, the same words. Today, for example they spoke of all the sins that one commits against every commandment. They did at each commandment the same enumeration: two sins per day make fourteen per week, sixty per month, etc., per year, per ten years, per twenty years, etc., and so on. After the commandments, they reviewed those one makes by the senses, by the body, by the mind, in childhood, in youth, in mature age, in old age, always calculating by addition and multiplication, using always the same expressions, without bringing in the least feeling. Oh! how bad it is! I could stand no more.

The lecturer comes down from the pulpit, another speaker goes up to replace him and give an explanation of an act, which is followed by a brief examination, then evening prayer. The Holy Sacrament is exposed; M. Favre who always gives the benediction, before giving it, upbraids the people with the same words which he used the first day:

"Behold the God who created you and whom you have outraged," etc., this being without any inspiring manner. The other missionary, still in the pulpit, makes an act of contrition during which the superior gives the benediction, somewhat like we have the custom of doing. As a whole, it is quite bad. After the benediction, those who wish to confess approach the confessionals. There, each missionary spends an hour or more giving to the small number of penitents who surround them an examination on one or two commandments, which does not dispense them from going over the same questions while confessing each of them. It is this examination, which is the most useful thing, and the most fatiguing for the missionaries and which makes them lose precious time, that M. Favre regards as his invention and which he is persuaded is of major importance.

I wished to share these observations with you before coming to the last conversation we had with M. Favre. He has read everything, considered the matter before the good God, and believes our enterprise comes from God. He is therefore resolved to unite his own to it. We would found an establishment at Chambéry, where there will be a house ample enough to contain fifty persons. He makes much of the fact that the Archbishop is all for him. It is during the vacation that this affair should be dealt with. He will write me beforehand and we will not lack for members. Can I say I regard the matter as concluded? I would not be sure of it. We will judge by results.

In the meantime, I have done all I ought to, God will do the rest. We live only for him; we seek only the glory of his holy name and the salvation of the souls he has redeemed. When we have employed all the human means in our power, we ought to remain at peace and be worried about nothing.

I burn with desire to return into the bosom of the family; one day's delay weighs on me to the extent that, may God pardon me, I contemplated about not going to Annecy;⁸³ but I will surely not go up to the great Chartreuse, although this trip ought not to take more than a day. God grant I may find a carriage for tomorrow; I am undecided because they ask me 12 francs, while on Monday, I would get one for 4

⁸³ On his return from Chambéry, the Founder received a letter from Fr. Tempier which informed him of the illness of Fr. Suzanne, who was prey to violent fits of spitting blood. Fr. de Mazenod "struck with dark forebodings" renounced his intended journey to Annecy and returned immediately to Aix, without stopping at Gap or at Notre Dame du Laus. Cf.: REY, I, 394.

francs. The spirit of poverty fights against all my other inclinations. How the journey is going to seem long to me, if I put it off until Monday!

Adieu, dear Father and tender friend, I embrace you and all our Fathers and all the family. I have written to my uncle from Chambéry.⁸⁴ I hope it will not be the same with these letters as with those I wrote you during my travels in Italy.

249. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].⁸⁵

Illness of Bro. Arnoux. His parents must be informed if his state is serious.

[Gap]⁸⁶ June 26, 1826.

I will speak first of what concerns me most, this being the state of our holy Bro. Arnoux.⁸⁷ I cannot console myself while knowing he is at grips with death, and it seems I hear at every moment some fatal announcement. My sorrow increases with the grief in which I see his truly good father, replete with reason as with religion. He would be appreciative to know precisely the state of the malady for both he and his wife would be in despair were their dear child to die without their having had the consolation of seeing and embracing him. Write to him then directly to tell him frankly how things are and whether in putting off their appearance at Aix until the time of the fair of Beaucaire, that is to say, towards the 16th of next month, they may run the risk of not seeing their child again. You can state frankly the situation just as it is. If the case is urgent, whatever the affairs which keep them at Gap, they will leave everything

I am not in favour that we send away from our communities our sick when they are in danger of death. They have the right to a care of the best order and the consolation of dying in the arms of their

⁸⁴ Letter of June 8.

⁸⁵ YENVEUX, VI, 140, REY, I, 395.

⁸⁶ After spending fifteen days at Marseilles and at Aix, the Founder once more took the road into the High Alps to visit the Oblates at Notre Dame du Laus and Bishop Arbaud of Gap. He returned to Marseilles towards July 7, in order to take part in the General Chapter which was held in the house of Calvary (July 11-13). REY, I, 395-396.

⁸⁷ Brother Victor-Antoine Arnoux, born at Gap on January 22, 1804, was ordained priest on September 3, 1826. He died July 13, 1828.

brothers is certainly something for a good religious who knows the value of supernatural aids.

250. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].⁸⁸

The Oblates would have done better to evangelize the poor rather than preach the Jubilee at Aix.

[Marseilles] July 22, 1826.

... I had enough to groan over their attributing so much importance to preaching of the Jubilee at Aix. If, in the place of this parade, they had evangelized the poor abandoned souls, God would have been glorified and we would have been heaped with benedictions and consolations, instead of the disappointments that we have experienced. I am not therefore tempted to consent that we recommence. Say what they will, I care not a fig and I exhort you to care not one whit more than I do. We are not, moreover, in a position to give a mission at Saint-Rémy; there will be no dearth of little places for us.

251. [To Fr. Honorat at Notre Dame du Laus].⁸⁹

Death of Fr. Marcou. Account of his last moments. Sorrow of the Founder.

[Marseilles] August 21, 1826.

The good God has just taken from us, my very dear Father, one of our most saintly missionaries. Yesterday at four o'clock in the afternoon our truly blessed brother went to take possession of the glory that our divine Master has promised to the faithful servant who dies in the peace of the Lord.

I would have wished that all the members of our Society might be present at the inspiring departure of a pure soul who is going to be united to his God for all eternity. What a holy death! He kept perfect consciousness until the last sigh which had been preceded immediately

⁸⁸ YENVEUX, I, 93.

⁸⁹ YENVEUX, IX, 157; REY, I, 413; RAMBERT, I, 515. Born at Aix June 16, 1799, Fr. Marcou had been a member of the Youth Sodality. He died August 20 at St.-Just near Marseilles.

by this touching word: Beautiful heaven! expressed with the sweetest accents and a celestial smile. I have no doubt that this holy religious, this dear and beloved son, perceived in that moment the place that he was going to occupy at the foot of the throne of our good Mother who has assisted him in a tangible manner in this last passing; also with what tenderness of devotion did he bring to his mouth and over his heart the image that I presented to him five minutes before he expired. He has been miraculously delivered of all anguish and fear. It is evident that heaven was assured to him. He was sure of arriving there by the protection of our Mother and the sovereign mediation of our divine Master.

I weep for a brother so precious to our Society, to which he was so attached, but I do reproach myself for my tears in a way, as if I dared regret his happiness. He will be our protector beside God. Let us be resigned. Our Father who is in heaven knows our needs, he will see to it; my heart nevertheless suffers much. I have not enough virtue to place myself wholly above nature, a nature quite raised up however, if it is not of a kind apart, in the love that I have for you, my dear children, whom I love so much in the Lord and who deserve it for many reasons.

I will give you some day more circumstantial details. You know that besides the mass of requiem which ought to be sung in all our houses, you have five masses each to say for our holy one who is gone, the office of the dead and all the indulgences, good works, etc., during eight days. Be sure to fulfill all these duties.

I wait with impatience for the news of our Fathers Suzanne and Dupuy. Speak to me of the cold of Fr. Suzanne and the health of all of you. I embrace you with the best of my heart.

We will find it difficult to replace such a member; for the rest, I invoke him in our needs and already I like to be persuaded that he has obtained a grace for me which I asked for through his intercession.

252. [To Fr. Honorat at Notre Dame du Laus].⁹⁰

Exhortation and evening prayers for the faithful at Notre Dame du Laus. Community oraison. Watch over the health of the members.

⁹⁰ YENVEUX, II, 148; IV, 52, 57, 221.

[Marseilles] August 26, 1826.

. . . Do not lose from sight that it is not a question, in this exercise, of preaching but of furnishing matter for meditation [for the faithful].

The evening oraison ought always to take place at half past seven, during the half hour which precedes supper. In order not to deprive him who conducts the evening prayers from the entire oraison of the community, when the oraison coincides with the time of the other, see to it that this prayer does not last more than a quarter of an hour. In no instance must it go beyond twenty minutes, but let it not go over a quarter of an hour when the times of the two exercises coincide.

As the community must make its oraison before the Blessed Sacrament and you do not have the holy Eucharist in your interior chapel, the one who takes the evening prayer for the faithful must do so in a very moderate voice so as not to disturb the community. I was always opposed to the vociferations uttered at Marseilles, that I heard in the house when they had prayers in the hut.⁹¹

. . . In wishing to do too much, a person makes himself powerless, and then what detriment of the spirit does not ensue? He is obliged to live in a manner quite earthly, he cares only for his body, no more for the Rule and very little for regularity; that is all one gains. The superiors look at the wreck and dare say nothing for fear of aggravating the evil, even by giving some simple advice that might annoy the member, expose him to murmuring and thus be detrimental to soul and body both. May God deliver then our brothers from all such misfortune, may at least they do nothing to draw it upon themselves.

253. [To Fr. Mye in the Cévennes].⁹²

Success of the preaching of Fathers Mye and Moreau in the Cévennes. Need for rest.

⁹¹ The chapel at Calvary was first located in a hut; it was Fr. Suzanne who had the present chapel constructed; it was terminated in 1826.

⁹² YENVEUX, I, 3*; IX, 156.

[Marseilles] September 7, 1826.

I well knew that you would have all the trouble in the world to extricate yourselves from the Cévennes. This country is attractive for missionaries starved for the salvation of souls, but in the undertakings you propose to me I see that rest has not been taken into account. Now it is just as necessary as work. I prefer no doubt that you employ your zeal in favour of the poor abandoned mountain people rather than waste your time with the proud citizens of disdainful cities. But, once more, I cannot dispense you from taking the rest which is your due by natural right.

I rejoice over all you and Fr. Moreau tell me about your first campaign; the letter of Fr. Moreau on this subject is truly interesting and in fact will be of historical value for it presents perfectly the plan of campaign and shows how to appraise your endeavours. Thanks be to God for this! If our good Fr. Marcou had recovered his health, what happiness might not have been his to help you in this work. Without doubt, he is still more useful to our work being, as we hope, in heaven, on the steps of the throne of the Eternal, quite close to the most holy Virgin in whom he had utmost confidence until his last breath. I see by your last letter which is of the 1st of September that you have not yet received that in which I informed you of the blessed end of this dear and venerable brother; they will no doubt have handed it to you by this time.

254. [To Fr. Sumien at Aix],⁹³

Fr. Sumien will go to Notre Dame du Laus. Fr. Suzanne being ill is to come back to Marseilles.

[Marseilles] September 15, 1826.

This is to tell you to be ready to proceed to Notre Dame du Laus. You will go as far as Manosque in the cab which I am going to write to Fr. Courtès to send to fetch Fr. Suzanne who will come down from

⁹³ YENVEUX, VII, 23. Fr. Sumien was sent, at least temporarily, to Notre Dame du Laus while Fathers Honorat and Touche were preaching the mission of Saint-Julien-en-Champsaur which began on September 24. Cf.: *Missions O.M.I.*, 1897, 350.

Gap and you will go from Manosque up to Gap in the carriage which will have brought him. Thus you are taken care of. May God help me to arrange the rest.

255. [To Fr. Mye at Montdardier].⁹⁴

Reproaches Fr. Mye for undertaking a mission without planning for rest and for the annual retreat, so necessary for missionaries.

[Marseilles] October 2, 1826.

. . . What has got into your head, my dear Father Mye, acting as you do on the spur of the moment, seeing only what is before your eyes and constantly forgetting every detail of the directions I gave you. In the name of God, keep with scrupulous exactness to the plan laid down in advance which embraces all our operations as a whole. You well realize that if each went his own way as he felt like, we would have no possibility to make things go as they ought to go, and I cannot trifle with Bishops who have had the deference to wait for our decision before arranging the Jubilee in their dioceses, simply because it pleases you to prolong indefinitely a mission for countless reasons which seem good to you, and which are no longer so the moment they disturb the general order with which you ought to comply first of all like everybody else.

. . . So take care not to undertake the mission of Saint-Laurent; you will need rest on your return from Montdardier. When will you begin it and when will you finish it? You have forgotten that I have sent word to you by Fr. Tempier that you must be available for All Saints and that you must be rested by that time from your latest work; now, if you undertake this mission of Saint-Laurent, when will you find time to rest? So speak no more for the moment of this mission or of any other. On returning from Montdardier you will stop at Nîmes to take a rest with Fr. Moreau, if you do not prefer rather to go to Aix or Marseilles where of strict necessity you must be on the 23rd so as to make with us the regular retreat which begins the 24th.

⁹⁴ YENVEUX, I, 3*; III, 128. After the annual retreat, Fr. Moreau preached the mission of Upaix with Fathers Albini and Dupuy, while Fathers Mye, Jeancard and Guibert preached at Digne from November 3 to December 11. Cf.: *Missions O.M.I.*, 1897, 350-352.

Adieu, very dear Father Mye, do not be annoyed at what I have said to you as my conscience requires; rest yourself well and do not delay to come to embrace us, you and our dear Fr. Moreau whom I greet as well as yourself.

256. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].⁹⁵

Legacy of Madame de Grimaldi. The Congregation needs benefactors.

[Marseilles] October 10, 1826.

I am indeed quite grateful, my dear Courtès, to this excellent Madame de Grimaldi for having thought of the poor missionaries of whom no one thinks, as if they ought to live on air, so spiritual they are supposed to be. The said lady was well known to me, she is first cousin of the Panisse, her mother being the sister of Monsieur de Panisse, the senior, with whom she has been disaffected⁹⁶ all her life.

I admit I would not have expected this kind remembrance on the part of this departed soul. The amount, as you say, is not considerable but it makes a good example, for I am certain that it was not in anyone's mind that it was only right, or even possible, to leave something to men who surely lack nothing, since they do everything gratuitously. It is however essential to take notice that the benefactrice could not have proceeded thus for no doubt an heir with little scruple could have, according to the laws in force, appropriated this legacy. I do not believe that M. Alexandre de Panisse is capable of such vileness, but all the heirs could well not be like him. For example, if the good God inspired this rich invalid to leave behind something for people she esteems so much, she should take great care not to commit this error; but how to intimate this advice to her? I do not know. Out of charity for our work, Madame de R. should make a sacrifice and go a little oftener to see this invalid. The occasion would present itself to make some mention. Who knows? Perhaps at a favourable moment one could broach the question frankly in speaking of the future and the problem of providing for the needs of so many people rich in virtue but deprived of all earthly goods.

⁹⁵ YENVEUX, VI, 175-176.

⁹⁶ The term copied in Yenveux is *en proie* which is probably a mistake for *en froid*.

257. [To Fr. Mye at Campestre].⁹⁷

Further reproaches to Fr. Mye who knows not how to rest or to listen to advice received. Come to Marseilles on October 24th in order to take part in the annual retreat.

[Marseilles] October 11, 1826.

I told you positively to do only one mission when you left Marseilles and I even fixed a limit, as I wished you to take some rest before undertaking the retreat of Fuveau which was to precede ours immediately. You however plunge yourselves into a maze from which you can no longer extricate yourselves. There are only two of you and you take on work enough for six. You go from one region to another, separating from each other, contrary to the will of our Rules which are well known to you, and you do not even think of taking the least moment of rest nor making your companion take some himself. In vain I write you to stop, to catch your breath, you keep on just the same. I make known to you the difficulty I have to fulfil the engagements I have made, but that makes no difference, you take on new ones yourself. Finally, I thought you were at Nîmes on the point of responding to my reiterated summons; but now I see you off to Campestre where you propose to remain three weeks, not bothering about but just putting aside the retreat prescribed by our Rules which is to begin the 24th in all our houses.

The Jubilee [of Digne] will open on All Saints Day, consequently you must go there. But before it would be well for you to make your retreat. That is why, on receiving my letter, you will finish what you can finish, and you will leave the rest for a more opportune time, which for the diocese of Nîmes will be in the month of January, the time when ten of our Fathers will go to evangelize these regions. At present, my dear Father, I beg you to excuse me if I do not confine myself to advising you as I have done hitherto, but good order demands that I stipulate to you, as I do by this letter, to you and to Fr. Moreau, to leave everything so as to be able to be at Marseilles for the evening of the 24th, when our retreat begins. I would betray my duty if I did not act as I am doing; do not take this amiss, my dear Father, and get here.

⁹⁷ YENVEUX, I, 5* and 6*.

258. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].⁹⁸

Watch over the health of those under you.

[Marseilles] October 15, 1826.

. . . Adieu, be wise all of you, that is to say, do not kill yourselves, for that's the only sorrow you can give me, I mean to make yourselves ill, for the rest let us not speak of it, I cannot bear the thought of it. Lack of [virtue] you may say; I could well have something to reply to that without nevertheless wishing to pass for being virtuous, for that I am certainly not. Adieu once again. I embrace you with all the tenderness of a heart which can be outdone by no one when it comes to loving.

. . . I am anxious to see appear some pages of the new work that you are going to compose under the name of a Dictionary.

259. [To Fathers Mye, Jeancard and Guibert at Digne].⁹⁹

Mission of Digne. Inconvenience of collections. Fraternal correction.

[Marseilles] November 21, 1826.

Believe me, my dear friends, that I am just as impatient to write you as you can be to receive my news; those you have given me in your two letters give me the greatest hope; the contradictions that Fr. Jeancard tells me about have no more disquieted me than they have shaken his courage which has become virile and truly worthy of an Oblate of Mary who counts on the protection of this powerful Mother and on the help of God which she never fails to obtain for those who put their confidence in her. The beginning of success that Fr. Guibert takes pleasure in writing me about has consoled me as well as him, but has not surprised me. You had to expect all the precautions that have been taken, however strange they may be. What does it matter, after all, you will not do any less good provided that you never lose from sight the true spirit of the Society and that you seek only God and the souls which his son Jesus Christ has redeemed with his blood.

⁹⁸ YENVEUX, imp. II, 50; ms, V, 144.

⁹⁹ YENVEUX, II, 52, 149; V, 89.

What shall I tell you about the collection? The matter is quite delicate in my opinion. I have never liked collections, it is rare that they do not entail some inconveniences. One has to go to so much trouble, one loses so much time, and while it can happen that they are not as abundant as the people suppose, they are tempted to think and sometimes say that we are collecting for our convent. I do not tell you however not to take up collections for the poor, if you judge that they are of great utility, but in that case take firm precautions to avoid even the shadow of suspicion that evil minds can cast amongst the people.

At the seminary of Digne, be polite towards the superior Above all be quite saintly for one gains more by deeds than by words. Do not refrain, I conjure you, from making charitable remarks to each other.

1827

260. [To Fr. Honorat at Notre Dame du Laus].¹

Fr. Honorat may not go and see his aunt, a religious at Carpentras. The Founder does not as a rule permit such visits. The scholastics at Calvary are working hard.

[Marseilles] January 24 [and 25], 1827.

You are strong enough, my dear Honorat, to bear a refusal. That is why I do not spare you this negative response that I am making to your request to go to Carpentras to see your aunt who is a religious sister there. I do not think her superiors will permit her to come and visit you. So leave her in peace in her cloister and go on your way with a greater spirit of detachment from relatives. On the grounds of similar principles, I have just refused to let Fr. Martin go and see his sister at Gap. All the clergy of the diocese have intervened in this affair but there are always consequences to be considered in a Society, so I have refused Fr. Martin's relatives just as I have refused those of Fr. Telmon, of Fr. Jeancard, and of Fr. Sumien. Accommodating all this fine affection for relatives would oblige one to empty a house in one week or to disrupt a mission or several missions. I find it very costly to maintain regularity at such a price but duty before all. Adieu, very dear Father, I embrace you as well as dear Fr. Albini.

. . . I assure you they are working,² but they do so willingly and with much success. It is thus that the whole Society fulfils her task for the greater glory of God.

¹ YENVEUX, VI, 99; REY, I, 421.

² REY (I, 421) puts these three lines under the date of January 25 and does not indicate to whom they are addressed. It could well have been Fr. Courtès. It was in the month of January, 1827, that the scholastics of Aix went to join the novices already transferred to Marseilles some time before, under the direction of Fr. Guibert. Rey writes that the house of Calvary then contained twelve priests, five scholastics and eleven novices.

261. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].³

Difficulties with Bishop Arbaud at Gap.

[Marseilles] January 31, 1827.

His Lordship at Gap ungraciously refuses to give us a recruit He has sent me five moral propositions to which he demands a categorical reply, while telling me his responsibility is compromised. I have written him an epistle which could well bring on a break in relationships.

262. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].⁴

Preoccupations and prayers of the Founder for Fr. Suzanne, gravely ill.

[Marseilles] February 16, 1827.

I write to comfort my heart, being unable to be at the place and beside the bed of our sick one so as to take care of him. I think only of him and it is with more painful feelings than when I see him. I pray and have prayers said but I would need above all to ask for and obtain resignation. It costs me nothing when it is for my own sake but for you and whatever concerns you it is another matter.

Do not forget that tomorrow is the anniversary of the approbation and ratification of our Institute. We will sing high mass in our interior chapel before the Blessed Sacrament exposed and we will sing the *Te Deum* before Benediction. You can be sure that in giving thanks for the gifts granted we will not neglect to petition for the present and the future. The health of our dear Suzanne seems so precious a thing to me that we must raise a holy tumult with our Lord. At Mass yesterday and today, I have pushed my pleas almost to the point of profanation, if indeed a Master so good can find it amiss that I let myself go in my

³ *Missions O.M.I.*, 1897, p. 363. According to Fr. G. Simonin, Bishop Arbaud had written to the Founder on January 22 to complain especially about Fr. Touche. Fr. de Mazenod replied that the Oblates followed the moral teaching of the Blessed Alphonse de Liguori. In September, he wrote once more to the Prelate, this time not to defend himself but to attack: "In my presence and when speaking to me, you are full of goodness and, when you write to me, one would say your inkwell is sour . . ." *Ibid.* p. 364.

⁴ YENVEUX, IV, 78; VIII, 94; REY, I, 423.

trust and uttered boldly: *ecce quem amas infirmatur*.⁵ I said it more than thirty times during Communion. Magdalen was not more close to him when she asked him, together with her sister, for the cure of Lazarus. As for us [who] cannot count on resurrection, we ought to insist that he be restored. I think I am raving. Adieu. I embrace you and my poor Suzanne. I pine away. Adieu.

263. [To Fr. Suzanne at Aix].⁶

The Founder explains why he has not written and why he has not made his monthly visit to Aix at the beginning of February.

[Marseilles, February 16, 1827].

I was not worried about your health, of which news was given me almost every day, and as my thoughts were at rest on this score, I put

⁵ John 11, 3: "Lord, he whom you love is ill."

⁶ YENVEUX, V, 176. Yenveux writes at the beginning of this excerpt: "To Fr. Courtès, February 16, 1827, p. 144, the last four lines; p. 145, the first two lines." These are excerpts taken from a register no longer extant. This text poses several problems. First, according to YENVEUX (IV, 78), the letter to Fr. Courtès of February 16 finishes on page 144 of the register above mentioned. Then there is no explanation why the Founder would have written: "I was not worried about *your* health . . ." Nowhere in the Oblate writings is there mention of a grave illness of Fr. Courtès at the beginning of the year 1827. It seems therefore more probable that Fr. Yenveux may have written, by distraction, Courtès instead of Suzanne to whom the Founder would have written on February 16 this letter copied in the register after that of Fr. Courtès. The expression "I was not worried about *your* health" is then easy to explain. One must however suppose that Fr. Suzanne was at Aix at the beginning of the month, and this is not certain. It is evident, from the letters of 1826, that Fr. Suzanne fell ill in June, 1826. Although not recovered, he remained superior of the community at Calvary. In January, 1827, it seems (REY, I, 421) that the Founder, displeased with the lack of regularity of the community, humiliated Suzanne by removing him from his post right in the middle of a Chapter of Faults. He was probably then sent to Aix where he would have stayed before accompanying Fr. Tempier to Nîmes from the 8th to the 14th of February (Fr. Rey however says that they left from Marseilles). It was on returning from Nîmes, February 14, that Suzanne began to vomit blood, during a brief stop at Aix. He was forced to remain there. Fr. Tempier returned immediately to Marseilles to warn Fr. de Mazenod who came "immediately" (REY, I, 423) to see the sick man. After the Chapter of Faults of January, a certain malaise existed between the father and the beloved son. This would explain the end of the paragraph in which the Founder seems to wish to excuse himself for having sent Fr. Suzanne to Nîmes. He explains why he had not written at the beginning of the month (Fr. Courtès or others gave him news each day) and why he had not come, as was his custom, to visit the community, the first Friday of the month. He no doubt had not had the time nor had he deemed it opportune to give an explanation on this latter point during his lightning visit of the 14th, immediately after the hemorrhage of Fr. Suzanne.

off to the morrow my letter, which was not easier for me than the evening before. If I did not go to see you on the first Friday of the month as I had planned, it was because I perceived it would upset my uncle a little too much; it is a sacrifice that I had to add to many others of the same kind . . .

264. [To Fr. Suzanne at Aix].⁷

Fr. de Mazenod is knighted. Lenten pastoral. May Fr. Suzanne's illness work to his perfection.

[Marseilles] March 7, 1827.

. . . I really think you make fun of me in your manner of remarking about my knighthood. But I see some hope of it being useful to the Society.⁸ What pleases me, you see, is that the King indicates precisely the reason why I have done good to his subjects, that is, by missions. He could have stated others which would have availed me nothing or at least which I could not have called upon in the event of some overture we might make.

I am surprised that the pastoral has not inspired you with reflections other than the remark about the displeasure of the Prefect.⁹ The response of thinking people here prompts a different conclusion and at

⁷ YENVEUX, III, 249; V, 258; VI, 137; REY, I, 424, 426. Fr. Rey copies these same texts while dating them under March 12.

⁸ The King of Sardinia, Charles-Felix, had named Fr. de Mazenod knight of the religious and military order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus in order to recompense him for his ministry on behalf of the Italians at Marseilles. In place of the honorary title, the Founder would have preferred to obtain permission to establish a house of missionaries at Piedmont, but this was refused.

⁹ An allusion to the Lenten pastoral of 1827. Abbé de la Bruyère, priest of the diocese of Viviers, preached at Marseilles with much success until being interdicted by the Bishop. The latter had grave motives for acting in this manner, motives that he preferred not to make known in public. Many priests and lay people of Marseilles spoke in defense of the Abbé. In his pastoral letter of February 11, Fortuné addressed serious reproaches to them: ". . . The duties of the faithful in regard to their Bishop, so clearly laid down in apostolic times, have just recently again been disregarded by some wayward men, to the great scandal of all our flock . . ." The civil authorities judged this public intervention to be too strong, all the more because no one was alluding any more to this affair. "The multiple errors [of the Bishop] although caused by the purest principles, estrange from him those who could support him in his episcopate and are an obstacle for the public servants" wrote the procurator, General La Boulie, to the Minister, March 3, 1827. "Like myself, the Prefect [Villeneuve-Bargemont] groans over the mistakes of the good Bishop . . ." National Archives, Paris, BB 18 1294.

the seminary they were inclined to applaud, which will prove to you that they still have some feeling for what is appropriate. It is a bishop's duty to apply the remedy that fits the disease, regardless of whether Prefects are hurt or not — too bad if they are worm-eaten. St. Ambrose and St. John Chrysostom show little concern about such repercussions.

. . . You must be patient, your strength can only return little by little; seek some consolation from God in your condition at not being able to do all you would like for his glory. Nothing will be lost if you put this enforced idleness to good account for the sake of your own perfection; you know how distracting your outside activities have been.

265. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].¹⁰

Pastoral activities of Fr. de Mazenod at Marseilles. Fr. Suzanne ought to remain convalescent in the community at Aix where he finds friendship, good example and regularity.

[Marseilles] March 8, 1827.

. . . I have made it a rule, my dear friend, to refuse no one in the confessional; the result is an extraordinary increase of work for me but I do not recoil on that account for I am persuaded that I exercise by this means my ministry as a missionary without going on missions. I thus draw benefit from my situation. Thus I make use of my position, and the results being the same, even though the means are somewhat different; I console myself for being unable to do all that our Fathers are doing. My confiding this to you is by way of explaining why our correspondence has somewhat diminished. Time is materially lacking to me. The overseeing of the house, independently of confessing people in it, keeps me busy also and episcopal affairs finish me off; now you will understand.¹¹

I revert to the subject of Fr. Suzanne. You are afraid he is bored at Aix. You will admit that is quite wrong for, if I am not mistaken, we

¹⁰ YENVEUX, II, 87; IV, 47.

¹¹ Fr. YENVEUX (II, 87) does not indicate to whom this paragraph was addressed. It is probably part of the letter to Fr. Courtès written on the same day. The Founder excuses himself for not writing often; his last letter to Fr. Courtès was in fact on February 16. Fr. de Mazenod lived at the Calvary. He was even superior there after discharging Fr. Suzanne in the month of January. The latter resumed this post in the autumn.

ought to find our happiness within the confines of our houses; far from seeking out and taking pleasure in the outside disturbance and relations that circumstances necessitate with persons outside, we ought, if we have the spirit of our calling, to groan, to be upset and do all that depends on us to extricate ourselves therefrom as soon as possible. Marseilles would however be only present to Fr. Suzanne distractions of this kind, I cannot believe he pines for them. The house of Aix as a community offers all the advantages that we can desire; the priests who live there are virtuous and exemplary, regularity is maintained, much good can be done there, the house is beautiful, the church is devout, all those who dwell therein are devoted to the Society, you yourself are there, for it is not forbidden to consider as an advantage to find oneself close to a veteran brother who deserves in every respect all our confidence and our friendship. There is more than enough to please a good religious. That will not prevent me from recalling him to Marseilles as soon as he is strong enough to endure the journey. As for the idea of going to Switzerland, it does not seem reasonable to me. A hundred good reasons ought to discountenance it, I beg you never to speak of it and not to allow these good Ladies, who have no idea of religious propriety, to bring it up again. Apart from all considerations of this kind, who would take it upon himself to advise a man who can suddenly spit blood with all the frightful symptoms which accompany this tendency in him — what will happen if he falls sick at an inn?

266. [To Fr. Honorat at Notre Dame du Laus].¹²

He must rest after a mission. Men can enter the house for confession but ought not to be found there at all hours.

[Marseilles] March 13, 1827.

After the exertions of a hard mission, is it abnormal that I demand that you rest and that I be upset if you get immersed in very arduous work and if I see you disposed to take on yet more strenuous tasks? There are no considerations which are valid. I would have wished you to reply nothing to what they have the indiscretion to ask of you, except to tell them to address themselves to me. We will now permit the children's jubilee which will tire you much more than you

¹² YENVEUX, I, 4*; V, 196.

think, but nothing after that. I absolutely insist that you rest and that you study; one must know when it is time to close one's door. As for the Congregation of which you speak, I approve your taking care of them but it is an abuse not to be the master in one's home. That the men come to confession in the house is all right, but that they come and instal themselves at all hours and remain especially during the time for our recreation, that cannot be. There will never be recollection amongst us, never any freedom; oh no! No more of such servitude, this is clearly an abuse, let us not lapse into it again.

267. [To Fr. Guibert at Roquevaire].¹³

Sleep is necessary while on a mission. The timetable to be followed by the Fathers during the Jubilee at Roquevaire. Jubilee at the Calvary.

[Marseilles] March 20, 1827.

It seems to me, my dear Fr. Guibert, that you have been received with open arms by our Fathers at Roquevaire. Their need was extreme. Also, so that you may not be overburdened, I am sending you a vicar of Notre Dame du Mont who will help you with confessions. I see that you need more than elsewhere to take care of yourself. Work sweeps you off your feet. It is wholly necessary therefore that you take all possible precautions to devote to sleep the time that our poor bodies need. You are obliged to begin the morning exercise at a very early hour; that is good, since it is necessary. But then let it be the rule that two missionaries take turns to rest until six o'clock. Bro. Hermitte can go to bed a little sooner; some one other than he can sound the bell at ten o'clock; do not keep him up for that. By going to bed early, he will rise always for the morning service, so as to be able to do the morning prayer and the prayers of the mass; two other missionaries will get up, one to do the instruction, the other to say the holy mass; the two others will rest. By this means, you will not be tired at all; put confidence in my experience; what has always tired us most on missions is lack of sleep; also, I do not hesitate to prescribe to you the aforementioned

¹³ YENVEUX, I (printed) 168. The Founder addressed the young Guibert as *vous* before his profession but as *tu* from 1823 to 1825-26. After that it seems to have reverted to *vous* for several years; there is no exception in the excerpts made by different copyists of Yenveux. In this letter, the Founder addresses himself first to Fr. Guibert, but subsequently speaks of his collaborators: Fathers Mye, Jeancard, Albin and Brother Hermitte, subdeacon.

procedure which you will be permitted to put aside on the eve of the communions. I have no need to tell you how much I bless the Lord for all he is doing through your ministry; we are all in transports of joy, as if this were new to us. I have read our Fathers' letter to the community, after the explanation of the Rule; it has the wherewithall to encourage our good novices to work in the acquisition of the virtues which ought to be the base of the edifice of Oblate life; I well believe that it made their mouths water. The mission continues also in our church;¹⁴ it would take ten confessors permanently and we are only three halves.

268. [To Fr. Suzanne at Aix].¹⁵

Is exhorted to practice patience in his illness and to take heart. Success of the Jubilee at Calvary and Roquevaire.

[Marseilles] March 20,¹⁶ 1827.

I leave it to you to judge, my dear child, as to whether I am touched by your pining and your trials; but my grief would be greater still were I to believe you to be too much affected by your state. We are surrounded here by young people like yourself who have vomited blood, not occasionally and in small quantity but very copiously and continuously for fifteen days in a row, but they keep on their way. The deacon Camoin, Rouden, Beaussier are in this situation; so, my dear, you will get better as they do, although somewhat more slowly and with some extra treatment. The essential thing is that you practice patience interiorly and that your spirit be at rest in God. I did not forget your anniversary.¹⁷ I was surrounded by our whole family and you know that you are never absent from my heart . . .

¹⁴ Fr. de Mazenod preached the Jubilee in the church of the Calvary, cf. YENVEUX, I (printed), 228-229.

¹⁵ JEANCARD, 385-386; REY, I, 423-424.

¹⁶ We omit the following excerpt cited by REY (I, 426) unaddressed and bearing the date of March 24. Rey speaks of the clergy of Marseilles. The Founder would therefore be alluding to the effort of the Bishop to eliminate the bad priests of the diocese: "We are pursuing our system of purification, two or three more expeditions at the most and all our whole countryside will be in good hands; also the Jubilee has done wonders everywhere; the accounts which our parish priests are giving us are splendid; everybody is going to confession . . ."

¹⁷ Fr. REY (I, 424) writes: "your feast, saint Joseph."

I have now spent two days almost entirely in the church which is full all the time. If there were ten of us to confess, we would still be busy. On Sunday, March 11th, we gave Benediction three times, in the morning after the instruction in Provençal, at half past ten for the departure of our missionaries of Roquevaire and again in the evening, at which time there were not enough seats. There are lots of people every day and especially there are throngs of poor fishermen¹⁸ at the confessionals. Our ministry is thriving; all goes well . . . I have been obliged to send Fr. Guibert to Roquevaire and I have just commissioned a vicar of the city to help them with confessions. The parish priest is continually in tears at what he sees happening under his eyes; the terrorists, the radicals, the libertines, all are coming forward like lambs after having sworn to make a mockery of all the efforts of our Fathers . . .

269. [To Fr. Suzanne at Aix].¹⁹

If the doctor permits, Fr. Suzanne can come to Marseilles. Precautions to be taken.

[Marseilles] March 28, 1827.

Since the doctor assures that there is no reason why you may not make the short journey from Aix to Marseilles, I have no objection; I leave you entirely in his hands; come when you wish. However, I myself do not dare to tell you to come. Whether you are to set forth is for the doctor and yourself to decide; as for myself, for three years now I no longer give orders or advice. It is impossible nevertheless for me not to notice that carriages always shake somewhat. I never make a journey without some ill effect for my chest. What means can one take? I do not know. If you decide to come, you could send for me; then I would go to fetch you on Monday for it is impossible for me to stir from here this week; tomorrow, confessions left over from this morning, the men not having been able to prevent the women from coming; Friday, main feast of the resurrection of Lazarus; Saturday the ordination; Sunday, instruction, unless I leave in the evening. Write me precisely what I ought to do. It seems to me that in going to fetch you

¹⁸ Fr. REY (I, 424) clearly writes: *pêcheurs* (fishermen). The Calvary was situated close to the port of Marseilles.

¹⁹ JEANCARD, 386; REY, I, 458-459.

with the Bishop's small carriage, we could travel without being greatly shaken at every step. You laugh perhaps at my precautions, but you will agree that I have reason to be fearful; perhaps it is less the state of your health than the keenness of my excessive tenderness

270. [To Fr. Suzanne at Aix].²⁰

The founder will meet Fr. Suzanne at Aix for a confidential interview.

[Marseilles] May 9, 1827.

Your letter of the 7th, my dear Fr. Suzanne, full of good sense and feeling, leaves me quite at a loss for a reply. Were it a question of a third party who would be in my position, nothing would be easier to know what to think and what to do; but when it is a question of one's self, things are very different. Delicacy, I would almost say conscience, is loath to admit one's own thoughts, or check them, or combine them, or to assess them, still more to act or cause to act in consequence, whatever may be the apparent good, or, if you will, the real good which could result therefrom. Your ideas are sound; if I had thought myself able to give an account of mine, I would tell you that I have never thought otherwise. So do not refrain from communicating the other thoughts that occur to you; it might be still possible that they concur with those others which I would permit to become manifest. I will explain myself subsequently *viva voce*, when I will have the pleasure of seeing you at Aix. You know with what abandon I love to discourse with those of my children who, like yourself, deserve all my confidence and of whose attachment, either for me or for the Society, I am aware

I embrace you with all my heart and enjoin you to get well quickly.

Adieu.

271. [To Fr. Suzanne at Aix].²¹

Fr. Suzanne can come to Marseilles and afterwards go to the Alps.

²⁰ JEANCARD, 387.

²¹ JEANCARD, 387-388; REY, I, 459.

[Marseilles] May 11, 1827.

. . . You know the rule which I impose on myself in regard to you; I can only approve the decisions of the doctor, and never shall I prescribe anything myself. He insists on sending you into the Alps, well and good! The hours of travelling from Aix to Veynes will be centuries for me; it is the journey which alarms me most; I shall be in quite a state until I know you have arrived. We will have to find a way to go in short stages and not quickly.

Since you think yourself able, by way of trial, to do the journey to Marseilles, we must combine things so that you may return with us when we take the road to Tourves. Fr. Tempier has asked me to go to Aix; he will arrive there on Monday. I think that he will return on Wednesday and you can make the journey together; you will remain here the remainder of the week and we would bring you back to Aix on Tuesday, the 22nd.²² The heat is not yet intense enough to prompt anyone to escape to the mountains; I fear, on the contrary, that it may be somewhat too cold up there

272. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].²³

Convalescence of Fr. Suzanne.

[Marseilles] July 15, 1827.

I still would like to consecrate our church²⁴ to the Sacred Heart but the simplest plans sometimes encounter obstacles in certain places and with certain people.

. . . A palace and being cared for by an illustrious Prelate are too much for a poor religious who will need after his convalescence to promptly resume the observance of regular life,²⁵ if he does not wish to run the risk of damning himself. One would be greatly to be pitied if one could become cured only this way.

²² Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod and his nephew were to go to Aix that day, cf. letter of Eugene to his mother, May 14, 1827.

²³ YENVEUX, IV, 126; VI, 120, 132; REY, I, 415.

²⁴ This refers to the new chapel of the Calvary which was dedicated to *Notre Dame de Bon Secours*, title of the ancient collegiate church of *Notre Dame des Accoules*.

²⁵ Archbishop Bausset-Roquefort of Aix and senator, wanted to have Fr. Suzanne as secretary.

Look after yourself and take great care of everyone for illnesses make for loss of regularity.

273. [To Fr. Suzanne at Notre Dame du Laus].²⁶

The Founder in an accident. Fr. Suzanne ought not go and live with Arch. Bausset.

L.J.C. and M.I.

[Marseilles] July 18,²⁷ 1827.

I was wrong, my dear Suzanne, I admit, not to have gone into some detail about the accident which happened to my legs.²⁸ Fr. Guigues will explain it to you, I have almost forgotten it. Since then other events have preoccupied my mind; the fear of seeing our brother Reynier perish from an inflammation, disquiet and chagrin, I do not know if I ought not to add fatigue, all that together have made me forgetful of my own suffering, of which besides I am always less conscious than that of others.

They propose that I send you to St.-Antonin²⁹ in the hope that in this honourable post, where you will only have to take the morning and evening prayers, say mass and keep company with the Prelate, you will be able to regain all your strength So much in earnest is this proposal that seemingly it will bring on disagreement when they take it up again with me These offers are not *propter Jesum tantum*. You will think you are dreaming when you read this but nevertheless it is so. Is it possible that they know so little about the dignity of our profession. I am surprised more than ever. Let us not forget this at least ourselves and let the holiness of our life prevail to the extent of sparing us the humiliation of certain favours. On this subject, I will not hide from you that I have read with joy the *diarium* you have sent me. By being faithful thereto, you will soon repair the almost inevitable breaches that a long convalescence occasions to the detriment of our

²⁶ YENVEUX, V, 66; VI, 130; REY, I, 430. Fr. Suzanne spent some weeks at the Chateau de Reveillac, Veynes, then he went to Notre Dame du Laus from July to October. Cf. *Missions O.M.I.*, 1897, 355.

²⁷ REY (I, 430) writes: July 19.

²⁸ He suffered three wounds in the legs, July 20, when mounting into the cab which was to take him to Aix. (REY, I, 430).

²⁹ Hamlet of the diocese of Aix where, doubtless, the Archbishop had a summer residence.

souls. One must be keenly on one's guard to sanctify oneself in these infirmities. One would think otherwise, but experience proves it.

274. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].³⁰

Brother Gustave Reynier is better.

[Marseilles] August 8, 1827.

I begin by telling you, my dear Courtès, that our Reynier is much better, thanks to the protection of the Blessed Alphonse who has saved him, for he was about to die from the overly atrocious pains he endures, when by a simple invocation to the Blessed, at the very moment he invoked him, with me present, and after having said to me: My Father pray for me, I am dying, the pain ceased and they had time to administer remedies.

275. [To Fr. Honorat at Nîmes].³¹

He must not let Fr. Albini go, ill as he is, on a mission. The Archbishop of Aix does not permit his priests to enter the Congregation.

[Marseilles] August 23, 1827.

. . . If this is so, how have you dared to let him undertake a mission? You could not do so in conscience. Be well aware that were he to fall ill again and I am unable to employ him in the post which I have in mind for him,³² it would be a frightful mess, one which would be of major consequence! I hope to God that such will not happen. I would be unconsolable. If Father Albini was unwell, why not wait for the help that I would have sent? In important matters, one must not follow one's own inclination.

³⁰ YENVEUX, IV, 166. Brother G. Renyier, scholastic, was ordained priest on October 14, 1827. The Founder attributes his cure to the intercession of Blessed Alphonse of Liguori.

³¹ YENVEUX, VIII, 28; REY, I, 432-433. In the month of April, 1827, Fr. Honorat was named superior at Nîmes and Fr. Mye superior at Notre Dame du Laus where Bishop Arbaud, who was difficult to satisfy, preferred Fr. Mye to Fr. Honorat.

³² Before the school year 1827-1828, Fr. Albini was named professor and director at the grand seminary of Marseilles, confided to the Oblates.

. . . Neither the authority of the Prelate, nor the sophisms of the superior have convinced our priests whom I have been obliged to catechize in order to prevent them from acting impetuously. That makes four priests refused to us in a diocese that we have drenched with our sweat for eleven years and where they overwhelm us with work. We have had on our side right and reason, the counsels and apostolic constitutions but to no avail. We have to undergo the law of the strongest for the sake of peace and other considerations besides.

276. [To Fr. Suzanne at Notre Dame du Laus].³³

Fr. Suzanne is working too hard on a work of apologetics. He must rest so that he will get well sooner and preach once again. Conversions are obtained more by word than by the pen.

Marseilles, August 25, 1827.

I think, my dear friend, that you would be a little less tired if you put a little less ardour into the work you have imposed on yourself; it appears to me that you are going at it quite excessively, and I know of nothing in the world which deserves to absorb the time and thoughts of a reasonable man other than the question of salvation and what ought to contribute directly and efficaciously to the conversion of souls, such as the ministry of our missions. Why push yourself so much to the detriment of the health of which you are delaying, with these excesses, the perfect restoration. The work you have undertaken,³⁴ even were it to become as perfect as you hope, will be read by few persons, should a printer happen to take it upon himself to print it; and how many will it bring back to the truth? Very few, infinitely few, almost none. All has been said, and short of being one of these rare men raised up by God, like a de Maistre or a Lamennais, one does not convert with books. Those who have resisted the proofs of religion developed with so much talent by those who have gone before us and whereof, after all, the arguments are only being repeated, will resist with still more arrogance authors whom they regard at best as their equals, if they do not put them, in their minds, far beneath themselves. By this I do not want to say that you should not be writing: I only claim that you should be less

³³ YENVEUX, II, 39-40; JEANCARD, 388-389; REY, I, 459.

³⁴ Fr. Suzanne was writing a book: "The profession of faith of a priest of Provence." His illness did not permit him to have it printed.

hasty about it. A little sooner, a little later, one achieves soon enough the good that is to be done by such writings. The grace of conversation is eminently attached to the word, it is the strength of God; miracles are operated by it. That is the mysterious net, when it is thrown *in nomine Jesu*. From Saint Peter to our days, and it will be so until the end of the world, it is by the spoken word and not by the written word that numerous conversions are worked. So do not kill yourself doing this work, I repeat, you will get there in time by walking more slowly. Continue to give me from time to time news about yourself; work less and get yourself well.

Adieu, I love you and embrace you with all my heart.

277. [To Fr. Guibert at the Reynarde].³⁵

He ought to recuperate with his parents.

[Marseilles] September 5, 1827.

My dear Father Guibert, I was quite sure that you would be vexed with my decision; indeed it took nothing less than the doctor's orders to determine me to inform you of it.³⁶ Your health demands this sacrifice, you must do it and with such good grace that you will put no obstacles in the way of the results that we hope from this remedy by the violence you would have to inflict on yourself if you persist in only submitting yourself forcibly. However, I certainly wish to grant part of your wishes, if only not to make your trial too great. You will be able to return Saturday evening to arrange yourself what is best to do for your religious sisters.³⁷ You are doubtless not surprised that the welfare of these Ladies is only considered secondarily. It matters little if they make their retreat a little sooner or a little later. I have to care for the needs of your health and nothing else. Although I say you can return on Saturday, I think it would be more in keeping with religious simplicity and really better, if you find your sojourn in the country does you good, to remain there without ado for eight days more. In

³⁵ YENVEUX, VI, 121-122; PAGUELLE DE FOLLENAY, I, 150; REY, I, 431.

³⁶ Fr. Guibert, master of novices at the Calvary for a year, was very tired. The Founder sent him to rest outside the city, at the Reynarde, where his parents were employed as managers.

³⁷ He was confessor of the sisters of Saint Charles, cf. letter of Fr. Guibert to Fr. de Mazenod, September 4, 1827 (REY, I, 430-431). Fr. Albini replaced him.

your place, I would not hesitate to do it. In this case only the brother [Telmon]³⁸ would return on Saturday and I would send you someone else to keep you company.

Adieu, my very dear Father, I embrace you with all my heart as well as your companion who, assuredly, is taking good care of you.

278. [To Fr. Guibert at the Reynarde].³⁹

Let Fr. Guibert not worry; someone will replace him at Marseilles.

[Marseilles] September 13, 1827.

Very dear friend, do not be worried about anything concerning the house of the Ladies of Saint Charles; we are taking care of all that you could possibly do even to the extent that I myself will go today for confessions. So do not tire yourself; you will put off your appearance until next week; I shall hope to have the pleasure of seeing you here by then

Adieu, dear friend, I embrace your charitable companion and yourself, my dear friend, with all my heart.

279. [To Fr. Suzanne at Notre Dame du Laus].⁴⁰

Codex historicus and customs.

[Marseilles] September 23, 1827.

Remember that you were present when we took possession of the Calvary; so it is not simply the arrival of the Bishop at Marseilles that you ought to fix upon. To help you in seeking out the facts that are no longer present to your mind or which have not come to your knowledge, you will request on my behalf that these good sirs of ours at Laus put in writing all they know and all that happened in the course of their missions. I am going to enjoin this on them as a precept. This operation would be finished if the orders that I sent to the Society from Rome had been transmitted to them. Each will devote to this

³⁸ It was Fr. Telmon who accompanied Fr. Guibert. *Ibid.*, 431.

³⁹ REY, I, 432.

⁴⁰ YENVEUX, VII, 263, 47*.

work the equivalent of two hours per week. It is sovereignly ridiculous that we do not yet have any Memoirs of the Society; such is not the case anywhere else. Would it be that elsewhere they resolve to obey with somewhat less difficulty?

For years I have never stopped asking for the names of the holy patrons of the places where missions have been given. Has anyone given me a single one? Ask them.

There is no recording of customs anywhere; hence all the things that you and Fr. Dupuy established at Calvary have fallen into disuse. The Congregation⁴¹ has no rule and is not, properly speaking, constituted. The girls in charge have been so for several years. It all amounts to their being assembled in the Holy Sepulchre in order to be given a bit of instruction at which some thirty persons attend. They claim not to know that the procession of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows has long been neglected. Yet several members of the Congregation have been complaining that there is no intention of doing it.

280. [To Fr. Mye at Notre Dame du Laus].⁴²

Let each Father of the community employ two hours each week in putting his memories of the Society in writing.

[Marseilles] September 23, 1827.

The General Chapter having assigned three of our Fathers to work on the Memoirs of our Society, I beg you to impose on all the members of your community and upon yourself the employment of at least two hours per week in writing down all that you remember having done or seen done in the Society, and concerning her external relations.

281. [To Fr. Suzanne at Notre Dame du Laus].⁴³

Miraculous cure worked at Marseilles by the Blessed Alphonse de Liguori.

⁴¹ At Calvary, several Congregations or pious Associations had been set up, one of them being a Youth Sodality modelled on that of Aix, cf. *Études Oblates*, 36, (1977), pp. 140-141.

⁴² YENVEUX, VII, 268.

⁴³ REY, I, 435.

[Marseilles] September 25, 1827.

I am sending you a fragment of the soutane of the Blessed Alphonse of Liguori with his portrait and litanies. They must have sent word to you that this great saint has just operated a most miraculous cure in favour of your former renter of chairs at the Calvary. For the sake of being more certain, I have decided it is owing to prudence to wait another three weeks before drawing up the authentic written record;⁴⁴ I shall do so only at the beginning of October. This girl's health is being marvellously sustained and every day becomes more flourishing. Doctor Chastan, practicing surgeon of the hospital and who, for more than three years has provided her with most assiduous and most charitable care, is far from attributing to medical skill what belongs only to God and his saints. If my confidence in the Blessed Alphonse could increase still more, this miracle would bring it to new heights. I have had a charming portrait made of him by an excellent Bavarian painter who has forsaken the old law to embrace the new and I have placed it in my receiving room so as not to let it out of my sight.

282. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].⁴⁵

A letter for Fr. Sumien. "Friendly remarks" for Fr. Courtès who does not sufficiently account for his administration to the Superior General.

[Marseilles] September 26, 1827.

I am sending to you, my dear Fr. Courtès, the letter for Fr. Sumien that I had no time to write yesterday. I perceive on rereading it that it is a little severe, but it must also be admitted that one has never seen such behaviour. The permission has been, one can say, extorted and the prolongation of his stay, however he justifies it, remains in my view a proof of his thoughtlessness, lack of zeal and of charity, although not a formal act of disobedience

On this subject, I tell you that it is not permissible to leave me as you have done until now in absolute ignorance of the affairs of your

⁴⁴ This official account was sent to the Pope in the month of October, 1828. The person who was cured was named "*Babé Fluchaire*." Cf. Fortuné de Mazenod to the Pope, October 2, 1828, archives of the Archdiocese of Marseilles, *Reg. Lettres administratives*, vol. 2. p. 182, n° 118.

⁴⁵ YENVEUX, III, 65; VII, 245-246.

house. One would say that you have no account to render to anyone and that your house is totally exempt. I have under my eyes reports in great detail of the houses of Our Lady of Laus and of Nîmes, I dare not admit I know nothing of what is being done at Aix. That is not in order. It is not just a matter of steering the ship properly, you must also show me your chart. I beg you to reread the Rule on this subject and act in consequence for the quiet of your conscience and of mine. I am sure, dear friend, you do not get annoyed when I speak to you with frankness and simplicity. These are not reproaches that I make to you, but amicable remarks which for a right mind will suffice to rectify all things promptly and put everything in order.

Adieu, my very dear Fr. Courtès, I embrace you with all my heart and love you likewise.

283. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].⁴⁶

Illness of Fr. Honorat, Let Fr. Martin prepare the instructions for the missions.

[Marseilles] September 27 and 28, 1827.

. . . You would have done better not to write to Fr. Honorat, I shall not write myself, but from your letter it is to be feared that he may interpret otherwise than I would have decided, for as to this illness of his father, one either escapes or dies immediately. In one or the other case, it is useless to abandon his post.

. . . Our vocation being the missions, only by obedience must one do anything else. So enjoin Fr. Martin to use the free time that is left to him to prepare some instructions.

284. [To Fr. Guibert at the Reynarde].⁴⁷

Anticipated return to Marseilles.

⁴⁶ YENVEUX, I, 95 (Sept. 28); VI, 107 (Sept. 27). This we have formed of two excerpts, dated September 27 and 28, in Yenveux.

⁴⁷ REY, I, 432.

[Marseilles] September 25, 1827.

Since I last saw you, my dear Father Guibert, I have been on the run⁴⁸ thanks to the famous herb that has done you so much good and has given me much trouble. The greatest inconvenience I have suffered has been my inability to go and see you. They tell me that you count on returning soon, but that may not be prior to receiving from Mr. Martin the diet that you must follow. I absolutely insist on this. Take care to let me know the day you decide upon so that I may send you the carriage.⁴⁹

285. [To Fr. Suzanne at Notre Dame du Laus].⁵⁰

The personal papers of Fr. Suzanne are kept in Fr. de Mazenod's room. He is not against Oblates being writers, provided that they have permission from their superior and prefer the apostolate of the word to that of the pen.

[Marseilles] October 5, 1827.

I do not wish, my dear friend, to wait for your return to Provence before reassuring you about the fate of your papers. I see only too well that people often exaggerate things galore, and sometimes would be tempted to have all letters addressed to me so as to correct all that is not exact or charitable enough. First, he⁵¹ who possibly induced me to think you were working too strenuously was far from wishing to do anything that would grieve you; it was, on the contrary, by attachment to you, and the way he praised what he knew of your work proves his good intentions well enough, independently of the knowledge that I have of his true sentiments. As for me, I would be inconsolable if a spirit of irritability set into the Society which might inspire bitterness against those who, often with the best intentions, cause others to

⁴⁸ From this picturesque language that the Founder uses here we can perhaps infer that the herbal medicine of which he speaks gave him diarrhoea.

⁴⁹ It was on October 3rd that Fr. Guibert resumed the post of director of the novitiate.

⁵⁰ YENVEUX, II, 40, 43; IV, 228; VII, 218; JEANCARD, 389-391; REY, I, 460. According to Yenveux (II, 40, 43; VII, 218) the third paragraph from "all that I desire . . ." would be taken from the letter of August 25th. We here prefer to follow Jeancard and Rey.

⁵¹ The allusion no doubt is to Fr. Dupuy, bursar of Notre Dame du Laus, known as a gossip and who corresponded regularly with the Founder.

receive some timely observations which might sometimes, in truth, be contrary to their views or shocking to their vanity, but which are all the more necessary if they are called for. So, I find quite inappropriate the reflection of Fr. C[ourtès]⁵² telling you that he would carefully avoid letting the pages of his work be read so as not to risk . . . what? apparently being praised too much, for I owe it to the truth to say that he whom he mentioned had nothing but praise for what he had heard about yours.

I come to the indiscretion of Brother . . . whom you tell me must have read the resolutions taken in your retreats. I asked him about this. He has most positively assured me that he read nothing but a few lines of torn paper that he picked up while sweeping your room; they were, indeed, good thoughts, and not at all the kind you thought they were. Your papers are all under lock and key in my room and it is I who removed them from your room where you had left them.

As to the matter in question, I am certainly very agreeable that you employ your leisure in composing something useful and, while admiring the dispositions of your heart and the detachment that you observe towards what you have produced and with which you have taken much trouble, never shall I put you to the trial of sacrificing them. All that I desire is that you be well persuaded that a good catechism, if it converts many souls, ought to be preferred to the most beautiful tome. My fear is lest self-love, self-esteem, scorn for others, and all that follows, insinuate themselves amongst you; I have several worries on this subject. When one is young, one is tempted to believe so. One is not satisfied to try out one's wings; but one goes off and avoids receiving the advice of those in whom one should have the most confidence, if only because of the sincere interest that they take in you and of the good they want for your souls and the care they take of your reputation, because they love you, and with what love! Is it not unseemly that I learn only yesterday that Fr. C[ourtès] plans to do some kind of novel, and that I learn of it by chance from someone other than himself. If the plan is such that I have been told about, he can dispense himself from writing it, for I will tear it up with my own

⁵² Yenveux, Jeancard and Rey write: "C". They refer to Fr. Courtès, the only Father whose name then began by this letter. The meaning of the end of this paragraph copied only by Jeancard, is obscure. Without doubt, one should read: ". . . that he would take care to have the pages of his work read."

hands. Oh! how far you are from the perfection of your state! It is hard for me to have to remind you of what you owe to your superior in regard to being communicative with him, while my heart had always persuaded me that when it comes to showing confidence, I had every right independently of this title, indeed unlimited rights extending to everything. It was so perhaps in your first youth; but today, now that you are authors, it is no longer so. On the contrary, were I to believe a certain indiscreet person who perhaps has misunderstood you, you have set yourselves up in judgement on your father

286. [To Fr. Honorat at Nîmes].⁵³

Is reproached for proceeding to Aix without permission.

[Marseilles] October 6, 1827.

Fr. M[oreau] will perhaps lament to you somewhat at your having recalled him from his mission, and if you were not so afflicted, I could not refrain from reproaching you. I must however speak to you for your guidance. If, according as the Rule prescribes, you had not quit your post, you would not have been obliged to recall Fr. Moreau. He then could have been able to finish the entire population of Montdardier and give the fourth retreat elsewhere that he had promised besides. When it is a question of saving souls, the matter is delicate, and before taking a decision, we must weigh and reweigh the motives that must influence us. To tell the truth, for thanks be to God, and I willingly give you this credit, you are capable of hearing the truth whole and entire without anyone having to resort to the mollycoddling that insults a soul like yours. Eh bien! my formal intention, one I had even expressed in writing to Fr. Courtès, was that you do not come to Aix. What I had read a few days before in the life of the blessed Liguori encouraged me to take this resolution. Now the thing is done, let us speak no more of it.

. . . Aligning yourself in all things with docility and faith with the spirit of our holy Rules, thanks to which we ought to arrive in heaven, after having served God and the Church on earth. Adieu! I embrace you with all my heart.

⁵³ YENVEUX, IV, 5; VI, 109. Fr. Honorat, superior of Nîmes, was perhaps still at Aix where he had gone to see his sick father.

287. [To Fr. Courtès].⁵⁴

Let each Father write down his souvenirs about the beginnings of the Society. Visit of Arch. Bausset-Roquefort to Marseilles.

[Marseilles] November 27, 1827.

I reiterate the precept that all employ at least an hour each week to put in writing everything you have done since you have been in the Society and all that you remember of what has been achieved in your time, or even before by others. The events, the vicissitudes, the consolations, the persecutions, the griefs, apostasies, all in a word without omitting anything, making as you go portraits of the different personages, friends or enemies, who have played a part in our affairs. Each will hand over to me this work which will be done on separate sheets, numbered and with half a margin; no excuse for exempting oneself from this work.

. . . M. de R[obineau]⁵⁵ can well ask the Archbishop if I looked after him with minute care; I abandoned everything to serve him at the altar and was assiduous in paying court to him, for I have no more remembrance than I have resentment.

288. [To Fr. Honorat at Nîmes].⁵⁶

Thanks Fr. Honorat for the account that he has given of the missions preached. Woes of Fr. de Mazenod who does not like being Vicar General.

[Marseilles] December 12, 1827.

. . . All that you add completes the tableau of these fine missions and increases my gratitude. If only I could take a more direct part in them! But my sins keep me in the servitude of an infinity of other occupations of which none is to my liking; no, there is not a single task throughout the day which is pleasant to me and which I do not offer to God with a sort of bitterness in expiation of my sins, so burdensome

⁵⁴ YENVEUX, III, 149; VII, 264.

⁵⁵ A Canon at Aix.

⁵⁶ YENVEUX, V, 149; RAMBERT, I, 671-672.

are they all and hard to accomplish. What subjects of woe! What anxieties that ceaselessly recur! I am sometimes sick to death of them and have no one to console me.

1828

289. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].¹

New Year wishes. The Founder is disgusted with his post as Vicar General which prevents him from preaching missions.

[Marseilles] January 2, 1828.

I wish a happy New Year to my very dear Fr. Courtès and to all his community and, as usual, I am in too much of a hurry to say anything else to him; the clutter on my desk is such that I cannot put a lamp on it. It is just as if I had nothing to do. I no longer feel I have the strength to continue at this work. If my conscience had not kept me at it, I would have long since forsaken it but my responsibility frightens me somewhat or rather I should say considerably. When I speak of responsibility, I mean that which I contracted in 1817 and in 1823.² I thought I acted for the best and it is possible that I did so. I see fortunate results for religion every day but I did not think enough of my own interest, of my (need for) leisure, of the sacrifice of my entire existence with the additional unpleasantness of being bound down so that, as I am in an essentially dependent position, I cannot do half the good I would wish to do and even what I am happy to do cannot be done as I feel it ought to be done.

Moreover how can I deal with all these routine details which absorb half and often the whole of my days! Dear Courtès, I am at the end of my tether while death comes near as I approach old age. When I shall be free, I will no longer be able to act. While waiting for the good God to deliver you from the nonentity of the man that I have become, act, you others, on my behalf. May the work of the Lord be accomplished”

¹ YENVEUX, V, 145-146; RAMBERT, I, 672.

² Steps taken at Paris in favour of his uncle Fortuné (1817) and his nomination (1823) to the see of Marseilles.

290. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].³

Statue of the Blessed Alphonse of Liguori in the Church of the Calvary.

[Marseilles] January 13, 1828.

I am going to order a full-length statue of the Blessed Alphonse for our Church of the Calvary. Soon they will be lighting more candles at the altar of this Blessed person than at the Holy Virgin's. It is true that several persons have benefitted from the effects of the protection of this great Servant of God

291. [To Fr. Honorat on mission to Sabran].⁴

The missionaries ought to take seven hours sleep.

[Marseilles] January 22, 1828.

I insist on you taking at least seven hours of sleep. Those not able to come to confession one day will come on another and, even if they do not manage to do so, I do not take back my order. I embrace these dear missionaries, it is hard for me not to go on any of their campaigns. May the good God heap on you his most abundant graces. For my part, I bless you in his name and I love you. Adieu.

292. [To Fr. Honorat on mission at Condoulet].⁵

Reproaches Fr. Honorat and his companions for not taking any rest between missions.

[Marseilles] January 29, 1828.

Scarcely returned from Sabran, here you are off for Condoulet. Why so, my dear friend? This zeal is not consonant with reason. You are all young and need rest after a mission. Fifteen days would not

³ REY, I, 435

⁴ YENVEUX, I, 169. Fr. Honorat was then on a mission with Frs. Martin and Sumien, cf: letter of February 19.

⁵ YENVEUX, I, 4*

have been excessive. I do not permit you to put less of an interval between that of Condoulet and that you plan to do at Fourquet.

I finish by begging you to spare your companions and to spare yourself. I am not without anxiety over this excess that you have just committed by beginning the mission of Condoulet immediately after that of Sabran.

293. [To Fr. Touche at Notre Dame du Laus].⁶

One Father must stay at the shrine. Biography of Blessed Alphonse of Liguori in French. It is forbidden to take books out of the house.

[Marseilles] January 30, 1828.

You absolutely cannot abandon our shrine to outside priests. I insist that no such thing be done. What does it matter if you do this or that, provided that you do not your own will but that of God. This is the only way not to work in vain; never, never will there be merit in anything unless it is prescribed by obedience.

On the subject of your instructions, keep at your studies and you will get better and better. Draw up good plans, well thought out and replete with doctrine.

I will not delay to send you a biography of our Blessed patron. They are finishing the printing this week, I hope that you will receive a copy before Lent. You know that this work is by our Father Jeancard. It is perfectly written and interesting to the utmost, you will need time to read it for there are over 600 pages.

. . . In spite of that, I will not permit you to take it outside the house to read. On this question of taking books out, I am obliged to forbid you to take any away from the house. I know that several have been lost and others damaged. In Italy, it is forbidden under pain of excommunication to take a single book outside the libraries of the communities. The same reason exists for us; you must no longer take them on your journeys. Take advantage of journeys to meditate.

⁶ YENVEUX, II, 57; III, 113; IV, 163: VII, 41*. The last paragraph is preceded by the date of September 28 in YENVEUX (VII, 41*) but is in the same letter. This text is taken from the end of page 160 of the journal already mentioned while that which precedes, dated the 30th, is taken from page 159 and from the beginning of page 160.

294. [To Fr. Honorat at Condoulet].⁷

Rest after the mission of Condoulet.

[Marseilles] February 19, 1828.

You are on the point, my dear Fr. Honorat, of finishing your mission at Condoulet; I am preparing a letter to await your arrival at Nîmes. God forbid that I consent that you omit taking some rest before you return to the field. That is a thing you must never ask. One may not always feel fatigue, but it is no less necessary to rest, especially when one is young as are our dear Fathers Martin and Sumien and as for you, although a little older, you have more need than the others because you do not know how to be moderate.

295. [To Fr. Honorat at Condoulet].⁸

Rest is necessary between missions. Forthcoming departure of Fr. Guibert for Nîmes.

[Marseilles] February 21, 1828.

I began in my other office,⁹ my dear Fr. Honorat, a letter which will leave after this one. It is urgent that you find, on arriving at Nîmes, my instructions. *In primis et ante omnia*: rest, rest, rest. Your first duty is to ensure it for your collaborators. So, whatever arrangements you make, as long as you are young, you will put fifteen days interval between one mission and another. Never undertake to do more than you can. If you have committed an imprudence of this kind, revoke any promise that has been too lightly given.

Fr. Guibert has the greatest desire to do some mission work. It is possible that to please him I may send him to you; but you must not count on him for preaching; I give him no authority.

296. [To Fr. Honorat at Nîmes].¹⁰

Rest. Fr. Guibert is going to come but he must not work.

⁷ YENVEUX, I, 7*

⁸ YENVEUX, I, 10*; PAGUELLE DE FOLLENAY, I, 195.

⁹ Fr. de Mazenod had his office at the bishop's house and resided at Calvary.

¹⁰ YENVEUX, I, 7*; PAGUELLE DE FOLLENAY, I, 140.

[Marseilles] March 4, 1828.

. . . You will see from the preceding that I never change my mind on the question of rest. You feel the need more than when you took it in your head to leave so quickly for Condoulet. In spite of all that you do, convince yourself that there will always remain much for you to do; so it is useless to ruin yourselves, I cannot conceive that by doing yourselves in, you will succeed in doing all there is to be done.

Fr. Guibert is about to leave, but remember that he is not coming to Nîmes to work. You were wrong to count on him. He is leaving Marseilles for reasons of health. He is not even permitted to give a morning instruction, the most he can do is hear some confessions.¹¹

297. [To Fr. Guibert at Nîmes].¹² ''

Improvement of the health of Fr. Guibert. Rest and walks.

[Marseilles] March 18, 1828.

I am sincerely happy, my very dear Fr. Guibert, that you have a feeling of well-being and think you perceive some improvement in your health. I do not yet hail victory and do not cease either to recommend urgently that you do not for a moment spread your wings. Do not forget for an instant that you have not been sent to work but to have a change. Undertaking anything the least bit onerous will be a departure from obedience and the good that could result therefrom would not be in order. Resist any temptation of the kind. Once back from Nîmes at Easter, they must not think of beginning other missions because our Fathers are all in need of rest. They must be firm and make the Bishop understand that the work of the missions is excessively tiring and cannot last throughout the whole year.

¹¹ This paragraph is without date in Paguelle de Follenay. We put it with this letter of March 4. Paguelle d F. (I, 139) says that Guibert obtained, February 19, leave to go to Nîmes. REY, (I, 440) writes: "In the month of February, 1828, the fatigue became so grave that the Founder thought he must withdraw him from this post [of master of novices] and give him an obedience for the house of Nîmes. He applied to his disciple the treatment to which he had submitted himself several times: the life of a missionary had given him back his health." We believe that Fr. Guibert left after March 4 since he sends news on March 12 of his journey (REY, I, 440), Fr. de Mazenod's rule being that one must always send news without delay.

¹² YENVEUX, I, 9*; VI, 75; PAGUELLE DE FOLLENAY, I, 195.

The missionaries need prolonged rest for the body and interior tranquillity in their holy house for the spirit and the soul. One must observe our Rules on that point as on all the others. Be of a common accord in establishing perfect regularity in your house.

. . . There is no reason why you should not take a good walk every day with one or other of our Fathers; consider this item prescribed.

298. [To Fr. Guibert at Nîmes].¹³

Illness of Brother Dumolard. Would there be no vocations to religious life at the Seminary of Nîmes?

[Marseilles] April 15, 1828.

Our Dumolard gives us anxiety. I doubt that he can recover from this frightful malady although yesterday and today he is a little better. It is truly a pity. Pray for this child who never stops edifying us and who, without doubt, would have greatly helped the family. Is it possible your seminary may not produce anyone for us? There is certainly no lack of demand.

299. [To Fr. Honorat at Nîmes].¹⁴

Fr. Honorat must renounce missionary life in order to become master of novices. Importance of the novitiate; they will no longer study in it.

[Marseilles] May 4, 1828.

. . . Concerning a successor, I ought to let you know that I see myself obliged to designate one for you. I wish to let you know a little in advance, so that you can make your arrangements accordingly.

Providence gave us in Fr. Guibert a master of novices who seemed to me quite apt to fill this very important post. He applied himself to the task with all his heart at the outset but his health, which had never been good, began to fluctuate. It became necessary to give him a

¹³ YENVEUX, IX, 84.

¹⁴ YENVEUX, VII, 3-4*; VIII, 53; IX, 123-124, 139.

change of air and free him entirely from this employment. However it is the most important there is in the Society; without a novitiate, the Society is done for.

. . . So at this time the heart of our novitiate must be very sound and for this we need a master of novices. This master of novices is you,¹⁵ my dear Fr. Honorat, who combine an unshakeable loyalty to the Society with a love of order and regularity. I have thought this matter through. I would have wished to find someone else in order to leave you at Nîmes where you are doing well but there is no one else in the Society and no one will take it amiss that I put this task above everything else, given that it is a question of training the members who are to save it from extinction.

Begin the day you receive my letter to converse with Fr. Guibert on this matter; ask him to communicate to you the result of the study that he had to do at the time in order to discharge his task well, discuss it at length with him and deeply. Read some books which are related to this new occupation. I think I ought to forewarn you that, beginning at the end of the school year, that is to say by the month of July, there will be no more studies at the novitiate. Study can scarcely be associated with deep recollection and with the heavenly and supernatural thoughts on which the novices ought to dwell continually. Our experience has been that study absorbs too considerable a part of the time of which there is hardly enough for the task of acquiring so many virtues and for imbuing oneself with the spirit of the Society. Study at such a time is, so to speak, a hole through which runs out some of the substance one is pouring into the mold. I cancel it then for the novices, whatever the advantages offered by the kind we tried out in view of the pressing need we have for new members. I feel that it will perhaps be a temptation for our new novices¹⁶ who are passionately fond of study, but nonetheless, they must undergo this trial. One must strive to render the novitiate interesting and to make good progress in the virtues of our holy and sublime state.

I hope, my dear Father Honorat, that you have reflected yourself on the excellence of religious virtues so that you now find yourself

¹⁵ It was Fr. Bruno Guigues, scarcely ordained, who was master of novices from June 1828 to June 1829. Fr. Honorat filled in from November 1829 to the summer of 1830.

¹⁶ These young novices were Mille, Pons, Capmas and some others who did not make their first vows.

totally detached as to whatever obedience may call for. The Lord usually blesses such a disposition by the most unexpected successes. It is a great misfortune for us that Fr. Guibert who cannot, because of his health, work on the missions, can neither continue to look after this task for which he was very suited. The good God will provide for the rest, for I do not hide from myself that the missions will suffer, but never mind — all must be sacrificed for the novitiate, because all the good that the Society will be able to do in future depends therefrom, and we ought to recognize that if this one or that one had made a good novitiate, they would be far less imperfect than they are. Prepare then to leave towards the end of the month or at the latest at the beginning of the next.

300. [To Fr. Honorat at Nîmes].¹⁷

One must have talent and virtues to become an Oblate. No more studies at the novitiate.

[Marseilles] May 9, 1828.

Fr. Martin has spoken to me of two young men who faithfully attend our mission and whom he depicts to me as models of virtue, but do they have any talent? We cannot any longer accept anyone who is deprived of such for this is what our ministry demands. Let them forge ahead and finish the classes they have begun for, on entering the novitiate, they must leave their textbooks unopened. The test that we have made this year has confirmed the resolution I had previously taken to call a truce with study during the year of the novitiate. There isn't enough time, when they have to follow and prepare classes, to be instructed in so many things that they have to learn in order to be well prepared for their oblation.

301. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].¹⁸

Consecration of the Church of the Calvary by Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod.

¹⁷ YENVEUX, VIII, 15, 53.

¹⁸ REY, I, 440. The consecration took place on the Tuesday of Pentecost, May 27.

[Marseilles] May 29, 1828.

The Bishop stood up well to the ceremony of consecration, which went on for not less than five hours, as if it were nothing and in the evening he was still in surprisingly good voice at the singing of Vespers. I do not say as much for myself. My body could do no more but my spirit was with the angels for it is impossible to find anything more beautiful, more grandiose and which fills our souls with such noble sentiments.

It was the first consecration of a church which Marseilles has witnessed since the re-establishment of the episcopal see. The crowd was extraordinary. Father Jeancard pronounced the discourse for the occasion at the evening office.

302. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].¹⁹

The novitiate transferred to Aix under the direction of Fr. Guigues. The formation that is to be given to the novices.

[Notre Dame du Laus]²⁰ June 18, 1828.

Take the greatest care that the novitiate may make a good beginning at Aix. I have urged Fr. Courtès about this too. He well recalls the *horarium* that should be adopted. There must especially be stability in these matters.

Arrange everything well in advance with him and Fr. Guigues²¹ whom I have advised to nourish himself with reading suitable to his new employment, such as Fr. Lallemant,²² Rigoleuc, Judde, etc. It is vexing for me not to be present for this new order of things.

The most ardent desire for perfection, real joy at being placed in a position so favourable to attain it, devotion for the Church, zeal for the salvation of souls and a great attachment to the family, ought to

¹⁹ YENVEUX, VII, 2*; VIII, 53, 61, 69.

²⁰ The Founder left Aix on June 10 and went to pay a canonical visit to Our Lady of Laus, stopping at Gap on the way. On Friday, the 20th, he made a visit to the Count of Vitrolles, a family friend, near Gap. He returned to Marseilles on July 1st.

²¹ Fr. Guigues, born August 27, 1805, had been ordained priest on May 31.

²² Ms.: Allemand. The correct name is Fr. Louis Lallemant, S.J. (1578-1635). Ms.: Rigolez. The correct name is Fr. Jean Rigoleuc, S.J. (1595-1658), disciple of Fr. Lallemant; Claude Judde, S.J. (1661-1735).

characterize all our novices; love, esteem and fidelity for the Rules, poverty, obedience, respect for superiors, etc., let us help each other to attain these results

303. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].²³

Blessing of a chapel in honour of the Sacred Heart at Vitrolles. Blasphemy on the occasion of the procession of Corpus Christi in Paris.

[Notre Dame du Laus] June 21, 1828.

The Baron of Vitrolles, his wife and their saintly daughter have overwhelmed me with friendship. I knew that the Bishop of Gap²⁴ ought to be there that day; the Marquis of Roussy, prefect of the department, was there also with his wife, a grand niece of St. Francis de Sales. Even if I had no such legitimate motives to authorize a visit which politeness demanded of me, I could not reproach myself for the time lost, for I employed almost all of it in church. It was the day of the Octave of the Sacred Heart. The Bishop, with the help of my experience in the matter of ceremonies, performed the blessing of the chapel which the Baron had built in honour of the Sacred Heart in order to please the tender devotion of his daughter who herself has painted the tableau representing Our Lord crucified with the Holy Virgin, Saint John and Saint Magdalen at the foot of the Cross. This painting is delightful, one would want to pray before it all day. The blessing over, I sang the high mass *in fiocchi*,²⁵ with deacon and subdeacon, with the parish priests of the neighborhood as incense bearers and singers, and the Bishop assisting pontifically. It was truly a feast for the whole castle, and the Countess of Vitrolles, that is to say Mademoiselle de Vitrolles who, being a canoness, is addressed as Madame the Countess, took particular pleasure in thinking that he who had received her into the association, and who had contributed to spread this devotion throughout our regions, was to be found there precisely to offer the holy sacrifice for the first time on this altar and in this chapel built thanks to her.

²³ YENVEUX, IV, 143-144; REY, I, 442-443, 444.

²⁴ Bishop Arbaud.

²⁵ The Italian expression *in fiocchi* means to be attired ornately.

Before leaving Vitrolles, I gave the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and did all the singing which earned for my delicious voice praise and homage that I would wish my soul deserved, for it was superlative and they had never heard a priest sing the preface, etc., so melodiously. It is true that the contrast with all the bawlers surrounding me brought out the difference quite a lot. I admit that I went at it wholeheartedly and affectionately, for I had just learned of the horrible blasphemy proliferated by a newspaper and repeated in consequence in the whole of France, against the Saviour of men and the shameful weakness, not to say impiety of the stewards of the Chamber of Deputies who had removed from the monogram *Jesus Hominum Salvator*, JHS, the J and the S, thus ostensibly reducing Our Lord Jesus Christ simply to the status of a man. I still shudder in thinking of it. I suppose that you know of the event and perhaps I err but here it is in a few words.

During the procession of Corpus Christi, they made as usual a repository at the palace where the Chamber of Deputies holds its sessions. The decorator had placed, by way of ornamentation, the monogram which is found everywhere but which the Jesuits have adopted for their coat of arms. It does not belong any more to them than to me or you, they do not even have the merit of having invented it, for St. Bernardine, a religious of St. Francis, raised it in a place of honour everywhere he preached, and I remember that someone pointed it out to me at Rome in the Church of *Ara Coeli*, belonging to this Order, to prove to me by the antiquity of this painting the priority of invention, since it existed long before the Jesuits were established. A certain M. Dupin, deputy, let forth loud cries on seeing this emblem; he was mocked but as the whole of Paris had come to see with its own eyes the sorrowful image which recalls to men that they have been redeemed by Our Lord Jesus Christ, they quietly effaced the J and the S; thus the monogram presented nothing more than the figure H, which could be interpreted: man. It is then that they wanted to raise it up a hundred cubits so as to make resound in every place the praises of this man, yes, but of this man-God who has redeemed the ungrateful, the abominable, the execrable men from the slavery of the demon, of the demon who possesses them and whom they deserved to have still as master and executioner during the whole of eternity.

I am going to try and calm myself in order to speak of business It is quite painful to me not to be at my post in a circum-

stance when some resolution must be taken if, as it is said, the decree on the minor seminaries deserves to be censured.²⁶

304. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].²⁷

Mishap of Founder while on the road. The June decrees. The plague at Marseilles. A plan to establish at Grenoble. The illness of Fr. Arnoux.

[Notre Dame du Laus] June 24, 1828.

I no longer feel anything from my fall, so let there be no more mention of it.²⁸ Please God I might exhaust upon myself all the bolts of divine anger with which France is menaced. The decree which, by expelling the Jesuits,²⁹ deprives all Christian families of the kingdom of the sole means that remains to them to have their children raised in the principles of our holy religion and to preserve their morals from the frightful contagion that the University colleges propagate, is a public crime which has as many accomplices as it has people to approve it. The scandal of seeing a Bishop³⁰ countersign this decree and provoke it by a revolting report, is also a misdeed which it will not be easy either to expiate. How can I express the sorrow that I feel at the sight of such great disorders? You understand, you who share so well my sentiments. It is not enough to groan, one must make resound in the entire world the voice of the strongest remonstrances; it is on these occasions that I experience some remorse for having in some sort acted contrarily to the views of divine Providence by refusing a bishopric, who seems indeed to have offered it to me,³¹ so as to place me in the breach as a

²⁶ On June 10th, King Charles X had signed the "Decrees of June." The second of these concerned the minor seminaries. It limited the number of students, forbade the acceptance of non-boarders and demanded of the professors that they affirm in writing that they did not belong to any Congregation not legally established in France.

²⁷ YENVEUX, II, 117; V, 35, 37-38; VI, 132; REY, I, 444-445; RAMBERT, I, 503-504.

²⁸ While proceeding from Gap to Notre Dame du Laus, the carriage provided by Bishop Arbaud overturned as it approached the village of Rambaud and the Founder struck his head violently enough to receive a cut over the temple (REY, I, 441).

²⁹ The first of the June decrees made ecclesiastical secondary schools subject to the rule of the University and the certificate of studies. It explicitly forbade the Jesuits to teach.

³⁰ Bishop Feutrier of Beauvais and Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs.

³¹ In 1823, Eugene could have been named bishop (letter to Fr. Tempier, June, 1823) but it does not seem that he was offered a see between 1823 and 1828. However, in 1829, Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod wrote that the King will name his nephew to one of the first vacant sees (letter to the Pope, June 5, 1829).

forward sentinel who might have done his duty by the grace of Him who has given me the sentiment of what I can do, while in the place I am, I find myself like a lion who feels all his vigour, his strength and his courage, but who gnaws impotently on his chain and bit, whitening them with his froth.

Would it not be right for my uncle to give his adhesion to the protests of the Archbishop of Paris,³² or else could we not insert in the newspaper of Lyon an extract of the circular of the Bishops with every word well weighed? But I would wish to be at Marseilles to arrange everything with the Bishop and yourself; I would like to be there also to watch out for the dangers that you indicate to me,³³ I would like to be there so as to be with the family at the moment of this new establishment³⁴ which is rising in the midst of the storms, but it seems that I cannot turn my back on the place where Providence calls us

My plan would be to leave Saturday from Grenoble and Monday from Gap, for I ardently desire to join you in circumstances so painful from every point of view. Fr. Mye and Fr. Touche have asked me immediately to call them to Marseilles if the plague is there. Fr. Dupuy would wish like them, to devote himself in the service of the stricken; these offers are made by these good Fathers in the most edifying and most serious manner. Fr. Touche has begun by proposing to God the sacrifice of his life while offering the holy sacrifice this morning.

Here we are then menaced by another misfortune; we will lose this angelic Fr. Arnoux. Why have you consented to their sending him to Fuveau? What do you hope from this change? It is the vilest place in nature, without shade, without anywhere to walk, arid, hot; would it not be better to keep this angel at Aix, and if they absolutely wished him to breathe the country air, have we not a retreat which is worth more than all the Fuveaus in the world? I do not like our sick, especially when they are ripe for heaven, to leave our houses at the risk of

³² On June 10th, Archbishop H. L. de Quelen of Paris, wrote a letter of protest to M. Portalis, Keeper of the Seals.

³³ An epidemic of smallpox had just broken out at Marseilles, brought by a vessel arriving from the Orient.

³⁴ Abbé Teston, Vicar General of Grenoble, had written to ask the Oblates to establish a house of missionaries in the Isère valley.

dying without being assisted by their brothers. If you are in time, get this decision changed; it is not to my liking; or rather it is not fitting.

305. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].³⁵

Article in La Quotidienne. Illness of Bro. Dumolard and of Fr. Arnoux. Submission to the will of God. They can send Fr. Arnoux to the country.

[Marseilles] July 8, 1828.

I would have wished for all the world not to read in *La Quotidienne* the article signed at Aix. There are expressions which are inexcusable and deserve to be censured; one ought never to write in moments of exasperation.³⁶

... I cannot reconcile myself to the idea of losing men of the calibre of Fr. Arnoux. You would not believe how promising in himself was poor Dumolard who has been at grips with death for a long time; he made his oblation on the evening of the [feast of] Saint Peter because, from then on, they expected to lose him at every moment. The good God knows what is necessary to each of his creatures, he knows also what is best for the families who live under his laws. This is a powerful motive for resignation, so let us make it the subject of our reflections and thus prepare ourselves for the double blow with which we are threatened. If the country should do good to our dear patient, far from being dissuasive I would urge you to send him there, but what good will this transfer do as things are now? Nevertheless, if the patient desires, you could send him but much closer, much closer to Aix. In case it will be necessary to ask the friend of the sister of the parish priest of Fuveau to come and take care of him, you could request this from him on my behalf.

³⁵ YENVEUX, VI, 115, 116, 128, 168; REY, I, 447.

³⁶ University people had prompted a manifestation against the Jesuits of the minor seminary at Aix. Fr. André, Oblate, witnessed it and reported what he had seen and heard to Abbé Bicheron who wrote a description in the Conservative journal *La Quotidienne*. The Prefect wrote to Fr. de Mazenod to ask that he remove Fr. André to another place because his declaration was without grounds. The Founder proved that the account of Fr. André was founded and declared that this Father would remain as chaplain to the prisons of Aix: "... in my view, he wrote, it is the butchers and not the victims who ought to be punished ..." (Letter to Prefect Villeneuve-Bargemont, July 21, 1828).

Adieu, my dear, assure our good patient of all my tenderness and the desire that I would have to wait on him and help him. If Pellingue were at Aix, we should have him painted on a canvas the size of the portrait of Fr. Mye, leaving room for the names. It is a final outlay I would not regret. All we want is that it be a resemblance. Adieu.

306. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].³⁷

Announcement of the death of Bro. Philippe Dumolard.

[Marseilles] July 9, 1828.

My very dear Fr. Courtès,

The Lord has just call to himself our very dear brother Philippe Dumolard,³⁸ who retained consciousness until the very last and, profiting from this, added to his merit. One of his last prayers was to St. Joseph for the preservation of all his brothers: "St. Joseph," he said, "obtain for all a long life,"

As for me, I ask only for a death similar to his. He had evidently been called to join us only to die in the perfection of religious life. He renewed his vows several times in the course of the morning, the last of his mortal life. He died in the sweetest peace of soul, without experiencing a single instant the slightest terror, suffering with heroic patience from the horrible torments of the searing wounds with which he was covered; so I have no fear that purgatory is for him; however you will discharge the duties that are imposed upon you by the charity of our holy Rules. Pray at the same time for me, who feel ever too keenly such blows. Humanly speaking, we suffer a great loss; his spirit was as good as his heart; but how advanced in heaven! He is another intercessor, another link in our mystical chain. Adieu.

307. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].³⁹

Death of Fr. Arnoux; reproaches Fr. Courtès for not having warned the Founder in time. The Oblate community in Heaven includes four brothers, placed very close to Mary. Holiness of the Oblate Rule.

³⁷ RAMBERT, I, 516; REY, I, 448.

³⁸ Philippe Pierre Dumolard, born at La Mure on May 8, 1808, became an Oblate on June 28, 1828, and died July 9th at Marseilles.

³⁹ YENVEUX, VI, 128, 138, 157, 162, JEANCARD, 392-393; REY, I, 448-449; RAMBERT, I, 519-520.

Marseilles, July 22, 1828.

You are perhaps surprised, my dear Father Courtès, not to have yet received a letter from me since you have learned of the distressing and likewise the consoling news of the passing of our blessed Fr. Arnoux.⁴⁰ The principal reason for this delay has been the fear of aggravating the sorrow of your position by reproaches which it was impossible for me not to make to you in this circumstance. I have preferred to remain silent but, certainly, I have keenly felt the privation that you have imposed on me by your negligence in informing me of the state of our holy patient. Do you not know that I regard it as a principal duty to assist all those of our brothers who are in danger of death and within reach of me? Are we then so far from Aix, that in a few hours I could not have reached the side of the sick man? Supposing that you only saw the danger to be imminent on Sunday morning, I could still have arrived at Aix by evening. I will regret the whole of my life that one of my brothers died so close to me without my being able to be with him as he went. I have no need to tell you with what avidity we have read the details that you give us of his last moments and of his burial; I have drenched your letters with my tears each time I have reread them. I have asked those who have lived with him the longest to gather the various details of his life; for your part, write what you know of him so that an ample description will be made for the edification of those who come after us.

Now we have four in Heaven; this is already a nice community.⁴¹ They are the first stones, the foundation stones of the edifice which must be built in the celestial Jerusalem; they are before God with the sign, the kind of character proper to our Society, the common vows of all her members, the practice of the same virtues. We are attached to them by the bonds of a particular charity, they are still our brothers, and we are theirs; they dwell in our motherhouse, our headquarters; their prayers, the love which they keep for us, will draw us one day to them so as to dwell with them in the place of our rest. I presume that our community above must be placed quite close to our Patron; I

⁴⁰ Fr. Victor-Antoine Arnoux, born at Gap on January 22, 1804, ordained priest September 3, 1826, died at Aix, July 13th. Fr. Courtès had written to the Founder on this day: "Aix, Sunday, July 13th, half past eleven in the evening. Our angel has just rendered his last breath, after a sweet and peaceful agony, like that of the saints."

⁴¹ Fathers J. A. Jourdan (+April, 1823), J. J. Marcou (+August 20, 1826), Brother P. P. Dumolard (+July 9, 1828) and Father V. A. Arnoux (+July 13, 1828).

see them at the side of Mary Immaculate and, consequently, close to our Lord Jesus Christ, whom they have followed on earth and whom they contemplate with delight; we will receive our part of this fullness if we render ourselves worthy of them by our fidelity in practicing constantly this Rule which has helped them to arrive where they are. Their holy death is, in my opinion, a great sanctioning of our Rules; they have received thereby a new seal of divine approbation. The gate of Heaven is at the end of the path along which we walk. Just to reflect on all that gives us enough to be ecstatic about. Speak thereof to your community; make it the subject of your conversations with Fr. Suzanne who ought to be in Aix today; may efficacious and lasting resolutions result therefrom.

Will you have had time to have his portrait done? I had made known to you my wish in this regard . . .

308. [To Fr. Guibert at Nîmes].⁴²

Deaths of Bro. Dumolard and of Fr. Arnoux. Write and send souvenirs of Fr. Arnoux.

[Marseilles] July 29, 1828.

So now our dear Dumolard, who had given us so much hope, who had shown an affection for the Society that one would scarcely find in several of our older members, has been taken from us. Our blessed Father Arnoux, model of all the virtues, heroic in observance of the Rules, as spiritual as he was holy, has gone to take possession of Heaven at the age of twenty-four years and five months, leaving us as desolate over his loss as we are edified by his coming amongst us. I do not know which sentiment predominates but I am now afflicted, now consoled, sad and serene. To be separated from one's own costs more than one thinks, but to have the certitude that they are in Heaven, and that they have arrived there by the path which we march, oh! what a sweet thought!

You know the details of the very holy death of this blessed brother; I have given orders that they write his life; if you remember some edifying particulars, put them in writing and get them to me. I

⁴² YENVEUX, IX, 84.

have learned yesterday that he had worked a miracle; I do not know yet the details. I am in no way surprised because canonized saints have not been more perfect than he. Invoke him then, my dear Father, and ask of him, amongst other things, to be able to live according to the spirit of our Rules; moreover the health of Father Guibert

309. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁴³

Little hope of founding a house in Savoy.

Chambéry August 15, 1828.

I fear that M. Favre has been deluded in this matter and especially that he is not aware of the negotiations entered into by the Ministers of the King.⁴⁴ The Archbishop⁴⁵ has told me in effect that he believed that they had contacted other religious. That tells all, I replied to him, for it would be hopeless for me to compete with others. The Archbishop has not given up; he would ask nothing better than to see us preferred over all others, but I doubt whether he has the courage needed to overcome the difficulties . . .

310. [To Fr. Honorat at Nîmes].⁴⁶

Take a rest and prepare subject matter for a retreat.

[Chambéry] August 15, 1828.

I have nothing urgent to tell you, if it be only to reproach you for the excess of work which you have taken upon yourself. You do not think of it until the moment of departure but you must also think

⁴³ REY, I, 450.

⁴⁴ The Founder had received a letter from Abbé Favre which invited him to go to Chambéry: "The King has a house to give to a Congregation of Missionaries," he wrote on August 3rd, "... If you can establish yourselves in Savoy, we will merge with you . . ." He left towards August 10th. He went through Lyon on the 12th, remained at Chambéry from the 14th to the 20th and returned to Marseilles on the 23rd. Cf.: letter to his mother, August 12 and 26, 1828.

⁴⁵ Arch. Ant. Martinet.

⁴⁶ YENVEUX, I, 11*.

about your stay and calculate all that has preceded and which must follow. As to that, you have failed in foresight, which is also quite a virtue. Now rest yourself, take care during the retreat to observe the Rule and prepare subject matter. It is necessary that you write and the others also. Let each provide himself first with enough for a retreat. That is to say, prepare the subjects that one deals with ordinarily in these kinds of exercises; as for you, see to it that you do not exceed the hour. You have great need at this time to rest your voice; so, do not consent to preach. Do not fear to give this reason and be adamant in refusing. Do not ask me for men for Nîmes.

311. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁴⁷

Futility of the journey to Chambéry.

[Chambéry] August [20],⁴⁸ 1828.

... I make no other reflections, other than that it is apparently the same with certain works as it is with certain peoples for whose sake one strives a lot without gaining anything. There are sterile fields as there are hardened men. Think of what it is costing me, this desire to do good in Savoy; in 1826, the delay of a month at Turin, a long journey through the valleys to reach M. Favre. Now a costly and tiring journey, loss of precious time, unsuspected and unheard of affronts, without counting what may yet happen. God be praised!

312. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].⁴⁹

Fr. Courtès at the lyceum at Aix.

⁴⁷ REY, I, 451.

⁴⁸ Undated letter in Rey. The Founder left Chambéry, it seems, on August 20th. This letter could have been written before his departure, after having presented himself twice in vain at the house of Arch. Martinet to take leave of him. Count Colombo, minister of the King, had said to the Bishop that the affair of a house of missionaries was already concluded. Fr. de Mazenod wished even so to meet him in order to convince him of the advantages of the Oblates establishing themselves in Savoy when the Bishop, at first favourable, refused to support this project for fear of offending the King.

⁴⁹ REY, I, 454.

[Marseilles] August 26, 1828.

. . . If next year the convocation⁵⁰ is to be presided over by the same man, you will have good reason to spare yourself the misery of being in attendance. I hope that public indignation will do justice to this outrage which makes me throw my arms up at the pity of it.

313. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁵¹

The novices are few but seem good.

La Mazenode,⁵² October 21, 1828.

. . . All is admirable here, save for the number; there is much to groan about considering how few ecclesiastics understand the spirit of the divine Founder and close their ears to his counsels. Since it cannot be otherwise, let us be pleased with what we have. For it seems to me that it is good. Adieu, my faithful and dear companion, son, brother and cherished father

314. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].⁵³

Sorrow at the sight of Fr. Suzanne, gravely ill.

⁵⁰ Fr. Courtès was chaplain at the lyceum at Aix. During the distribution of prizes, he was obliged to complain of lack of consideration in his regard. The Founder consoles him by these few lines. Fr REY (I, 452) transcribes, at the same time as he modifies, another passage of this letter in which there is question of Fr. Suzanne, being named canon by Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod. The Founder received this nomination favourably, writes Fr. Rey, but on condition that "nothing be changed either in the costume or in the style of life and, at the first sign of the superior, one would strip oneself without flinching of what one had only accepted by obedience and by conviction of the opportuneness thereof for the common good."

⁵¹ REY, I, 454.

⁵² A property which bore this name at Saint-Just near Marseilles. It was bought by Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod in 1824 for the seminarists while the seminary of *rue Rouge* was under construction (Mazenod to Tempier, June 7, 1824, cf.: REY, I, 324). From 1828 to 1830, this house was used to lodge the novices under the direction of Fr. Guigues.

⁵³ REY, I, 462; RAMBERT, I, 523-524.

[Marseilles] November 15, 1828.

. . . I have had prayers said here so that the good God will preserve for us this beloved brother;⁵⁴ do as much yourself; as for me, the sorrow that I have experienced these past two days has been so acute and so constant that I consider it a kind of miracle not to have succumbed to it; happily, I have been able to shed an abundance of tears which, I believe, has saved me. There still remains however an extreme weariness. It will cost me my life to love you as I do. Nevertheless I cannot be sorry for this or complain. Adieu.

315. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].⁵⁵

Father Suzanne is a little better.

[Marseilles] November 18, 1828.

. . . The doctor assures me that the patient is as well as he can be; in the meantime, what worry, what grief, what a weight upon my heart, how rent it is! Send word to Fuveau⁵⁶ that all goes as well as it can. You know it is I who proposed this concern; they had no thought of asking me for it but doubted I could be more of a father than any father who can exist! Only I have it in me to respond thus, if indeed it were possible for me to express what goes on in my soul; I will never be able to explain it, and no one can fathom it.

Adieu, I order you to take care of yourself for two blows of this kind would make me lose either my mind or my life.

316. [To Fr. Guibert at Bourg-d'Oisans].⁵⁷

Pray for Fr. Suzanne who has received holy viaticum on the Feast of the Presentation. Mission of Bourg-d'Oisans.

⁵⁴ Fr. Suzanne had vomited much blood on November 9th; he had another crisis several days afterwards.

⁵⁵ RAMBERT, I, 524; REY, I, 462.

⁵⁶ Village where the father of Suzanne lived.

⁵⁷ YENVEUX, I, 123; JEANCARD 393-394; RAMBERT, I, 524; REY, I, 463.

Marseilles, November 26, 1828.

You must not be surprised, my dear Father Guibert, if I am in arrears with you. I have received your letter at a time so painful, and my anguish has been prolonged for so long that I have not found the time to write you. We have been on the point of losing our Fr. Suzanne and now it is seventeen days we are suspended between fear and hope. This time it was not only spitting but truly a vomiting of blood, accompanied by a tenacious fever that has not yet yielded to the most assiduous care of the art of medicine; for Batigne, in this circumstance as in so many others, has given us proof of devotedness for which we cannot be too grateful. Things are better today, and we would reassure ourselves almost by counting the seventh day since the last spitting, if the vomiting only came eight days after the first spitting. I leave you to think of the state in which we have been and all that I have suffered particularly. My body must be of iron to resist such violent and continuous emotions of the soul. I recommend that you pray hard to God that he will preserve this dear patient; offer for this intention, to the Lord, the work that you are doing at this moment of his glory. You are on the field of battle and I am at the foot of the cross whereon our poor brother is nailed. Never was an octave more brilliant, better followed, more edifying; they sang in the church and I swallowed my tears at the head of the bed of my friend. I administered to him holy viaticum on the very day of the Presentation; what a contrast! The church, splendidly decorated while we come almost stealthily to take the Lord from his tabernacle to carry him to this good servant, to whom we owe the building of this holy edifice and all the good that never ceases to be done therein.

I bless God for all he has inspired in regard to the success of the mission. It is impossible not to notice the action of the evil spirit in all the obstacles that you have encountered; hell will only be more shamed by its defeat; fight it ceaselessly with the arms of faith. May peoples be converted, but may the priests remain edified by the zeal, the unity, the humility and the regularity of our missionaries, your collaborators.

P.S.: The onslaught of fever that we were expecting has not come; this is a great deal. It is now Wednesday evening; there has not been any spitting since Thursday. But we are quite exhausted and on water and cream of rice as our sole nourishment. . . .

317. [To the Fathers at Nîmes, on mission].⁵⁸

Avoid excessive work. Gratitude to God for the success of the missions.

[Marseilles] December 1,⁵⁹ 1828.

I shall never cease to urge you to husband your strength. Never allow yourselves to go to extremes. This inclination does not come from God. You must, in exercising your zeal, discern what comes from God. Keep Fr. Honorat in check for he is to be watched and he ordinarily is affected by his imprudence, because he has less strength than he has will. In everything, do not be overloaded with work and do not believe you are wasting time when you are resting.

I thank the good God for the consolations that he gives you in your mission, this is the first recompense that he grants to your zeal and devotedness. As long as you credit only Him with all the glory, as you do, you can savour this kind of delight. They tell us that at Bourg-d'Oisans things went splendidly in spite of all the efforts that the demon made first to prevent, then to hinder, the work of God

318. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].⁶⁰

Little hope of seeing Fr. Suzanne regain his health. Love of the Founder for his sons.

Marseilles, December 15, 1828.

D'Astros will have let you know, my very dear friend, of the state of our patient. You will, no doubt, be profoundly afflicted when you learn how little hope there is of seeing him regain his health. I told myself this before the visit of the doctor; but his fears added to mine all the weight of his experience and knowledge. If I showed exteriorly all

⁵⁸ YENVEUX, I pr., 169, 235.

⁵⁹ Above these two excerpts, Yenveux writes "September 1st". This is incorrect as the mission of Bourg-d'Oisans in the diocese of Grenoble was preached by Fathers Mye, Honorat, Jeancard, Capmas and Guibert from the beginning of November to December 8th. In the month of October, Fr. Honorat and his companions had preached at Quissac (Gard), cf. Mazenod to the parish priest of Quissac, October 20, 1828, YENVEUX, IV, 179.

⁶⁰ YENVEUX, V, 175; JEANCARD, 394-395; RAMBERT, I, 525 (January 15); REY, I, 463 (January 15).

the anguish I am going through, they would take me for a madman, when in truth I am simply a man who, so I wish to believe, is rendered very imperfect by my love. Yes! indeed I am such imperfectly, and so be it, so as not to be such as to be more resigned than I am and calmly watch perish the beings for whom I would give my life. You will never understand what I am for you. Believe me, I pay bitterly for the happiness of loving you. If I were only your father like your own fathers, perhaps I would love you in the manner of that of Suzanne; but it is another thing, quite another thing. Ah! if you were to give me a single moment of grief, how ungrateful you would be!

. . . Putting oneself to work after all that is devastating; indeed I am saddened unto death.

1829

319. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].¹

Send the rosary that had belonged to Fr. Arnoux. Only a miracle can save Fr. Suzanne.

Marseilles, January 7, 1829.

... We need a miracle. The sick man expects it from our Fr. Arnoux. He has had a dream in this sense; if we succeed, it will no longer be a dream. Send me immediately, my dear friend, the rosary of our holy deceased and anything else used by him, but especially his rosary, because it is the object which came to the mind of our dear patient during his sleep. I would like to have him swallow something that was part of his holy body, such as a hair. Who knows, perhaps fortune has allowed our Father to become so low only to raise him miraculously by the intercession of this servant [of God]. I will receive in trust whatever you send me; join your prayers to ours.

320. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].²

The strength of Fr. Suzanne is waning.

Marseilles, January 12, 1829.

I should have acknowledged receipt, my dear Fr. Courtès, of the precious package which you sent the other day. It has been received with the respect which the contents deserved. Never has confidence been equal to that which infused our souls. It was truly extraordinary in that it was common [to all]. There is no explanation as to how it happened but each experienced it at the same time. Although we were

¹ YENVEUX, IX, 25.

² YENVEUX, IX, 25.

asking for a miracle of the first order, comparable to the resurrection of someone dead, it seemed to us that a cure must happen; who knows, if the confidence of the sick man had been equal to ours, perhaps we would have obtained this grace but his faith, which several days before had been so lively, weakened; it has quickened since then, especially at the reading of a letter that Fr. Honorat wrote to Fr. Tempier in which he gave him a description of the cure effected in a young man following a vision in a dream wherein the servant of God appeared wearing a surplice sprinkled with stars of gold and a halo above his head, spoke to him of humility, put his hand on the place of the malady and cured him. It has not been so with our dear Fr. Suzanne. I have the sorrow of seeing him decline under my eyes. His strength is on the wane. He spits no more blood but coughs often rather than much.

321. [To Fr. Tempier at the seminary at Marseilles].³.

Difficulties with Bishop Arbaud of Gap.

[Marseilles] January 16, 1829.

. . . The Bishop of Gap has just dismissed from his seminary and his college all directors and professors whom he thinks are not Gallican enough. Judge what he intends to do with us whom he considers so ultramontane! This is yet another reason to spend no more on Notre Dame du Laus and to get our chattels together.

322. [To Fr. Honorat at Nîmes].⁴

Reproaches the Fathers of Nîmes for their lack of the spirit of poverty. Illness of Fr. Suzanne.

[Marseilles] January 16, 1829.

. . . I must blame your administration in regard to finances. It is impossible to continue at the rate you are going. How do you reconcile with such exorbitant expenses the spirit of poverty that you all ought to practice?

³ YENVEUX, III, 199.

⁴ YENVEUX, I, 169-170; III, 7, 24; VI, 35, 37; VII, 34*. In all these excerpts, the Founder is apparently addressing the whole community.

Explain to me how you can spend 2024 francs on feeding three or four people who are absent half the year. This expenditure is absurd not to say scandalous. The Society can hardly afford this amount just to feed the miserable carcass of each of its members. Here we spend 400 [francs] a head for the twelve months of the year; you will be good enough to arrange matters so as not to exceed this sum. It is a lot for poor people; I know many of them who would manage well on less.

Why did you have to spend 638 francs on furniture? What on earth are these items? Do you need anything other than a table of common wood and some straw-matted chairs?

You must have been out of your minds to think of disbursing 494 francs for books. You should have been satisfied with those you had while counting on Providence to send what was necessary to fill your library. You should borrow from your friends the books which are indispensable to you or, better still, take the trouble to go, just like so many people who have not taken the vow of poverty, to consult the public library. For this item, I forbid that you spend without my permission more than 30 francs a year. Let us pay our debts; we will then see what remains available after we have seen to the upkeep of our family.

Strike out the item for the barber. It is enough to raise a fuss, this budgeting 25 francs for such a purpose. Take care of this yourselves. You are dextrous enough to trim your tonsures for each other. We have no other custom here. And as people who are unpretentious in regard to the appearance of their coiffures, it will not be difficult for you even to do haircuts. Fr. Albini and others have the charity to do it for their brothers here.

I see 23 francs for almsgiving. You are not obliged to give alms in the way of money to others. In your position, you have no alms to give but to exercise your ministry gratuitously and to give away whatever would spoil of the food left over from your frugal table. Let us pay our debts — you owe 28000 francs — then you can be generous.

... In the meantime, I recommend the greatest moderation while on missions so that you do not tire yourselves. The sight before my eyes which distresses me every moment of the day, and in a most cruel manner, makes me determined to insist as far as you are concerned that you regard the least imprudence as a crime.

323. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].⁵

Last moments of the life of Fr. Suzanne. Have the grave dug in the Mazenod family plot at Aix. Love and desolation of the Founder.

[Marseilles, Wednesday] January 29, 1829.

I believe, dear friend, it has been a long time since last I wrote you. My hours, my days and my nights are spent beside our blessed patient who accomplishes his sacrifice with heroic dispositions. Everyone is intent on gathering his every word while I am occupied with meditating on the holy Virgin's sufferings at the foot of the cross whereof until this day, I have had a very imperfect idea. To the malady which is taking away this beloved son and which would have led him, it seems, into eternity without too great suffering, is added an inflammation of the bowels and of the stomach, a continual hiccup which nothing can relieve, and frequent convulsions, etc., which rank him amongst the martyrs. He can, this dear child, feel all these pains, for he remains fully conscious and communicates to me all his agony with a rending of soul which is inconceivable while repeating to me a thousand times, with the most tender accent, these words: "My good father" which sooth him and pierce me, for indeed that is what I am, good Father, and that is what kills me, being on the point of losing so good a son, a being whom I have always cherished more than myself.

For the last eight days I had intended to write and say that if you could come here for a while without strain on your health, you may decide for yourself. I almost dare not repeat this to you today; we are so low! although there still remains not a little strength. Do, in this regard, whatever God will inspire you to do.

Good God! What a fuss! I have written to the Mayor of Aix about this matter you know of.⁶ He has replied to me quite honestly and in the affirmative. Understand me without my having to say it; let everything be done suitably. If the fellow looking after our plot does

⁵ RAMBERT, I, 526 (January 29, two days before Suzanne's death); JEANCARD, 395-396 (Wednesday, January 30); YENVEUX, V, 179 (January 30, the day before Suzanne's death). Rambert writes before copying this text: "This letter which we have before our eyes is still stained with the great tears that the Founder shed while writing it. Several lines are erased and illegible and the characters, half formed, show the emotion of the trembling hand which was tracing them."

⁶ Fr. Suzanne was buried at Aix in the Mazenod family plot.

not act willingly or well, hire someone else. It will only be for a short time. I am going, on my arrival at Aix, to give orders to erect a small chapel. What made me put it off was first my being so far, and then the difficulty of choosing the place. Poor dear child! He has asked me twenty times not to put him in Saint Just.⁷ How can my pen write down such things! Let it be quite deep so as to preserve this blessed body from the ravages of water, since we cannot avoid his being attained by My God! such thoughts haunt me, they nourish my grief, I am going to drink this chalice to the dregs!

I don't know if I have anything else to say to you Adieu, I press you to my heart; its wound cannot go any deeper. Adieu.

Mazenod, O.M.I.

324. [To Fr. Honorat, superior of the community at Nîmes].⁸

Death of Fr. Suzanne. Intercessory prayers for the deceased.

[Marseilles] January 31, 1829.

We have just lost this very day at two o'clock in the afternoon our very dear and very precious Fr. Suzanne. All his qualities are known to you; but what you have not been able to admire, as we have, are the sublime and heroic virtues that he constantly showed forth in the course of the long and cruel illness which took him away from us. In the state of desolation in which we are, I have only time to commend him to your community prayers of intercession. On receipt of this letter, proceed according to our Rules with the number of masses specified, and make intercession for eight days. I will make you cognizant later of the details of this precious death.

325. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].⁹

Depression of the Founder who cannot get over the loss of Fr. Suzanne. Say a mass for the intentions of Fr. Jourdan.

Marseilles, February 19, 1829.

Do not think, my dear friend, that it is through forgetfulness that I do not write to you. I tell myself every day it is a long time since I

⁷ A property owned by the Mazenod family which was used for the novitiate.

⁸ YENVEUX, IX, 201.

⁹ JEANCARD, 397-398; RAMBERT, I, 527-528; YENVEUX, VI, 150; IX, 201.

have done so; I need to converse with you, I feel it, I would not let you out of my sight a moment if you were near me; but on entering my study, I have as much repugnance for anything requiring attention as someone with hydrophobia has for water. Such is the state in which this bereavement has left me and which I feel as much now as I did on the first day. I do not think I am lacking resignation; I do not refuse the consolations which the holy death of this too dear child procures for a Christian father; but the still bleeding wound cannot be healed, even by this supernatural balm. I always have my child before my eyes, just as grace fashioned him in his last illness; I review in my mind all the circumstances of his life; I recall to mind all the sentiments which he never tired of expressing to me. The happiness that I experienced after certain clouds were dissipated and after he tried to assuage my heart over the sorrows which grieved him so to have given me; the hopes that I had formed for the future, either for my personal peace or for the good of the Society, come back so keenly, so profoundly, so continually that it is remarkable that I hold up. My firm constitution must however reassure you as to my physical condition; but as to my morale, I am affected, I am truly ill; I am no longer able to concentrate; my spirit goes by itself towards the object of my love and of my eternal regret. I think of him; I speak of him, I dwell on him ceaselessly; I am in no state to write a letter.

Besides the recommendations that our beloved made to me, he insisted that we do not forget Jourdan, who from Purgatory had apprised him of complaints about us. It is possible that we have not made all the intercessions for him that were stipulated later in favour of all our members. Each of us here has said a mass for his intention. Do the same at Aix. I will prescribe the same at Laus and at Nîmes. The next time I come to Aix, I will bring you the words we have written down; you will certainly be very edified by them. Fr. Jeancard gave quite a suitable funeral oration in our church; we try thus to console our sorrow, but all remedies are worthless, the ill is too incurable.¹⁰

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

¹⁰ The memory of Fr. Suzanne remained ever fresh in the mind of the Founder. On March 9th, he wrote on the reverse side of an image of the Holy Virgin found in his breviary after his death in 1861: "An image that is precious for a desolate and inconsolable father. It was kissed twice gently and with ecstasy by our beloved Fr. Suzanne, several moments before his death, January 31, 1829 Oh my son, your features like your virtues are indelibly engraved in my soul. I will love you absent as I loved you when you were the happiness of my life. What! Do I say absent? Do you not ceaselessly live in my heart, are you not always present in my thoughts?"

326. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].¹¹

Let a necrological notice be composed for each deceased Oblate and keep the codex historicus up to date for each house.

[Marseilles] March 29, 1829.

. . . I would have wished you to undertake to write down a short biography of our Fr. Arnoux, not in an oratorical but in an historical style; the smallest details are of interest in view of edifying the family. I want the same to be done for all our deceased and that on the anniversary day of their passing to a better life, this necrology be read each year in all our houses.

I would like us to note all remarkable things and all events which could serve for the history of our Society. Our relations with the college,¹² the good that was done there in spite of storm and strife etc., whatever has happened in our church for the good of so great a number of soldiers, etc., ought to be entered in our books. If you continue to write nothing down, we will always be at the same stage, that is to say, of never beginning.

327. [To Fr. Guibert at Notre Dame du Laus].¹³

A return mission to Bourg d'Oisans. Uncertainty as to founding a mission house in the diocese of Grenoble.

[Marseilles] April 13, 1829.

. . . I have just seen the Bishop of Grenoble¹⁴ who is delighted that you are returning to Bourg d'Oisans. He gives you, and to the companion that you would be able to take with you, all the powers that he can give. We try to render every prompt service to this Prelate. He is very amiable towards us, but says not a word about prospects.¹⁵ I am tempted to believe that he has given up the idea because of circum-

¹¹ YENVEUX, VI, 162; VII, 266.

¹² Fr. Courtès was chaplain at the Lyceum of Aix.

¹³ YENVEUX, VII, 31.

¹⁴ Bishop Ph. Bruillard who evidently was visiting Marseilles.

¹⁵ There has been a question of founding a mission house in the diocese of Grenoble. Bishop Bruillard did not pursue the matter after Bishop Arbaud of Gap had told him that the Oblates were ultramontane and "Menaisiens", cf. REY, I, 477.

stances. I have not decided to speak to him about it for it would be the third time and there is too much risk of a refusal or at least a defeat. Providence knows what is needed by his Church and what is good for us.

328. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].¹⁶

Illness of Fr. Courtès. Desolation of the Founder who, with the death of Father Courtès on top of that of Suzanne would lose the apple of his eyes.

[Aix] May 10, 1829.

I tore up the letter I was writing to you, my dear Tempier, for it expressed too vividly the state of anguish, and how my heart is rent asunder by the condition in which our dear Fr. Courtès is.¹⁷ Also you yourself would be too afflicted at seeing me as I am. I do not really have the strength even to write and tell you that I am left almost without any hope. D'Astros has just told me to give him the last rites, because he gives no hope of recovery in the event of a recurrence of what happened last night. Yes, what strength would be left (to him) after that? For myself, while nothing shows exteriorly, I am unable to utter a word. The self-restraint I am obliged to exercise leaves me in a state similar to agonizing. I do not know if it is exhaustion or prostration or what it is. I do not feel the physical strength to do again what I did for that other apple of my eye who was taken from me, now that I am threatened with losing this one too. I would have to be less concerned for his existence to be able to converse with him about the imminence of death; the thought of my despair is inseparable therefrom. However resigned one must be to the decree of divine Providence, I will not be less miserable for the rest of my sorrowful life, after losing two such men as these. No one in the world could ever conceive what they have been for me. The latter, while giving more proof of it every day, confirms (I do not say 'renews' for I have forgotten nothing)

¹⁶ YENVEUX, IX, 68; RAMBERT, I, 535-536; REY, I, 467-468.

¹⁷ Fr. Courtès fell ill on April 10th. Fr. Rey writes: "For the still lacerated heart of Fr. de Mazenod, this was truly a thunderbolt. He loved Fr. Courtès as much as Fr. Suzanne. With the latter, who was one of his first children, one of those who understood him best and who was entirely imbued with his spirit and his sentiments. Besides, Fr. Courtès, thanks to his talents, his rare prudence, his aptitude for affairs, his religious spirit, his devotedness beyond measure, was an indispensable man, on whom, after God, the Founder counted for the future of his work . . ."

all that the former was to me. No one can ever know the perfection of their confidence, their love, their trust in me. And our Society, how would she be able to rise again after being bludgeoned by these two blows? I am overwhelmed by all this loss, I will never recover from it.

But you will say to me: Courtès is not dead. True enough, so let us take refuge in what remains of hope, we will see what may happen tonight. You will understand that I will not budge from here until the final outcome; but if the worst befalls, where shall I go to eat out my heart? I feel no strength except for the time being; the future for me is death by inches. I urge the others to pray, because the remembrance of passed ills enfeebles, so to speak, in spite of myself, any confidence that I will be heard. I will content myself with offering the holy Sacrifice so that the good God may have pity on me, and that he does not deprive our Society of one of her foundation stones . . .

329. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].¹⁸

Fr. Courtès is a little better; his supernatural spirit. First signs of the Founder's illness.

[Aix] May 11, 1829.

The crisis of which we feared the onslaught happened earlier than expected since it granted only six hours of respite; but thanks be to God, and to the dose of quinine the day before yesterday, far from being mortal as we feared, it was very feeble and very short, having begun its invasion just an hour after midnight and then ceased close to nine o'clock.

In the interval, one could not have been more edified by the sentiments of this beloved patient; he wanted me to be close to his bed so as to converse with me about supernatural things. Yesterday evening, he spoke to me on this level in the most perfect manner possible. He anticipated his last hour with the sentiments of a holy religious and, I can say, with a pure, innocent soul, full of fervour. "I have always loved our good Master," he told me, "and I ought to admit that I have never been able to see or hear him offended without trembling with horror; but I would wish still to love him more and I have said to him

¹⁸ YENVEUX, IX, 69; RAMBERT, I, 536-537; REY, I, 468-469, 479.

that I am resolved never to give him sorrow in the slightest thing and to serve him with more fidelity still in the most exact observance of our Rules. If it were to be otherwise, I ask him earnestly not to permit that I be cured, because I prefer death rather than commit the least deliberate fault." All that he said in a low voice, peacefully, with great calmness of mind. He confided also very simply that he had always had a devotion to his holy guardian angel who had assisted him very often and had preserved him. There was question of holy communion that he had already received several times but which he desired again. We agreed to give it to him in viaticum because he thought there must be special graces attached to this communion; I reminded him that that was true for everybody, but still more so for us who renew in this moment our consecration to God. However, he did not receive it because, seeing him so tranquil, they obliged me to go to bed towards midnight and they did not wish to wake me up, since I had kept vigil the night before. Continue to pray and to have him prayed for. Here the whole city shows the keenest interest in our sick man and this is general

The pain I have in my heart has been strong and persistent yesterday and today; it has now been clearly proved to me that morale has an extraordinary influence on our physical condition. I am going to see if, in the event it is impossible to cure the soul of its wounds, I can, by means of remedies, neutralize the reaction that my body is undergoing.¹⁹

Six o'clock in the evening. We perceive no adverse symptom, on the contrary, the state of calm continues and without delving too far into the cause, let us rejoice over this calm and in the hope that it gives. If the night is as good as the day, the doctor will risk a favourable prognosis. I propose nonetheless to administer Holy Viaticum this evening . . . with this vile fever, things can change from one moment to the other.

¹⁹ The first sign of an illness which was to oblige Fr. de Mazenod to lie in bed or otherwise take rest for six months. Fr. Honorat, named 4th Assistant General after the death of Fr. Suzanne, was called to Aix to take care of the two sick men. While Fr. Courtès gradually improved, the illness of the Founder worsened to the point that Fr. Tempier had to come and administer Extreme Unction and Holy Viaticum, on June 14th. The Founder then made his will and named Fr. Tempier Vicar General of the Society (letter of Tempier to Guibert, June 14th, RAMBERT, I, 539-540).

I pray that you express kind wishes on my behalf to Mr. Flayol.²⁰ I am always quite touched by his friendship. It inspires me with a sentiment in his regard which adds to the respect and esteem that I have for him.

330. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].²¹

Nature of the Founder's illness.

[Aix] May 15, 1829.

I promised you the truth, I will tell you then that yesterday after dinner my customary indisposition gave me a little fever. The doctor made me put my feet in water; but, I know not the reason for such pleasantries, he had me examined by two of his colleagues.²² The result of their consultation was that, far from my having a disposition to distention, what I was experiencing was on the contrary a contraction produced by grief. In consequence, I must, according to them, avoid being preoccupied by disagreeable things, and take walks, etc.

This evening, at the same time as the preceding one, I felt pain in the heart, but while it hurt, it was not nearly as strong as during the evening before, and lasted not so long. Hence I was able, while having some trouble in breathing, not only to sit up in bed, but to get up; it took no less to wake the good brother Ferrand²³ who slept in the room in front of my little alcove; in vain did I call to him, whistled or banged on the wall; he got up and prepared some lime water for me to drink as the doctor had ordered; but as in the meantime the pain became more supportable, I thought that I ought to endure it so as not to be deprived of the happiness of saying holy mass. The pain subsequently discontinued and I went back to sleep. I said mass at seven o'clock while taking the precaution to be assisted. My actual state is that of a

²⁰ M. Flayol was named Vicar General of Marseilles in place of M. Bonnefoy, deceased March 16th.

²¹ YENVEUX, VI, 4 (May 14); RAMBERT, I, 537 (May 15); REY, I, 469 (undated). This letter was probably written on the 15th after his mass. On the 14th he had written to M. Cailhol, saying that he had had to call on a Father to help him finish mass. In this letter, he writes that he had taken the precaution of having an assistant during his mass.

²² Doctors d'Astros, Arnaud and Guiraud.

²³ Yenveux's copyist writes: Bro. "Armand"; no doubt the brother in question was J. B. Ferrand. Cf. REY, I, 471.

man whose interior organs do not have enough room to dilate and perform their functions while I am constricted in the chest, in the heart, in the stomach, in the head, everywhere. It is something quite bizarre but does not disquiet me at all.

331. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].²⁴

Progress of the Founder's illness.

[Aix] May 16, 1829.

. . . Let us come to my own situation, since I must refer to it. Yesterday was not entirely good; I took flight when I saw the doctors arrive but did not escape, however, their charitable pursuit.

. . . The day has been quite good for me, apart from a somewhat too animated conversation which agitated me and made me resolve to let the world go by on its own, if I can, even if they declare to me that bulls fly, although I would be more inclined to believe that asses talk.

332. [To Fr. Albini at Marseilles].²⁵

Course of the Founder's illness. Bitterness caused by Oblates unfaithful to their vocation.

[Aix, at the start of July],²⁶ 1829.

My dear Fr. Albini, although I still keep to my room, it is a fact that I am getting much better. While waiting for further interventions

²⁴ RAMBERT, I, 538; I, 469.

²⁵ YENVEUX, VIII, 247.

²⁶ Letter copied by Yenveux without its date. It must have been written about the beginning of July when the Founder was getting up and succeeded even, on the 3rd to be present for the recitation of the rosary and of vespers, cf. REY, I, 472. On June 26th, Jeancard had to write on his behalf to Fr. Tempier: "He obliged me to speak of the novitiate and of the occupations of the Oblates during vacation. His advice is that you be careful of them so that their health may strengthen. As for Italian, he absolutely wishes me to tell you that he approves of their learning this language and, as I had spoken to him of Tasso and Dante whose works Telmon has bought, he told me that we do not know Italian literature and that if we knew it, we would take care not to read these two authors whom he regards as dangerous. In consequence, he desires that you withdraw without delay from the possession of Fr. Telmon these two authors and that you enjoin them to keep to prose and choose preferably Father Segneri, who is an Italian Massillon. He insisted a great deal that I write you on this subject, because he could not rest if you did not take the precaution that he indicates."

of the mercy of God, I have time to savour other kinds of bitterness, infinitely more felt, because God is grievously offended and there results for our dear family a disorder which it is hard not to endure without dismay²⁷

I am forced to come to this extremity; and the members who draw on themselves this frightful fate will be eternally to blame for it. These profanations and perjuries provoke horror; they scandalize the Church and outrage God, hence I cite all these profanators before the judgement of God who will punish them for having dealt so basely with him. I bless you, you and all who are faithful to their vows and their oaths. We will never be able to do enough to make reparation by unlimited devotedness on our part, even unto the sacrifice of our lives in order to make up for sacrileges springing, so to speak, from our midst, and committed by those whom we have called our brothers.

333. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].²⁸

Advice regarding canonical visits to be made to the various communities.

²⁷ Fr. S. Reynier, of the house of Nîmes, was expelled on June 13, 1829; he was already a priest when he entered the Congregation. Fr. Riccardi had already been expelled in 1828 but his expulsion was only put into effect on June 14, 1829.

²⁸ YENVEUX, IV, 47; V, 196; VI, 72, 117; VII, 88, 146, 32*; VIII, 176, 229. This letter is difficult to reconstitute and is very incomplete. Two days before, Jeancard wrote to Fr. Tempier to communicate to him the orders of the Founder on the subject of the canonical visitation of the houses: ["The Very Rev. Father] bids me say to you:

1° — that your visit of the houses of the Society must be general, without excepting that of the novitiate;

2° — that you must give warning several days before your arrival amongst those who dwell in these houses;

3° — to make few rules or none at all;

4° — to show yourself as strict concerning the finances of the house of Nîmes and to authorize only the most urgent expenditures for the house of Notre Dame du Laus where you will try to settle the affair pertaining to the building which was set aside because of the opposition of the Grand Vicar;

5° — not overly to prolong your stay in the houses that you visit;

6° — you must treat Fr. Dupuy with confidence and mildness in order to dissipate the unjust prejudices that he has conceived" (YENVEUX, VII, 97).

[Grans]²⁹ July 16, 1829.

... I advise him³⁰ to dally less in the sacristy, in the tailor's shop and in the parlour. I do not believe it advantageous for him to be always with his mother who makes him waste a lot of time discussing useless things; once a week would appear to me quite sufficient otherwise let him not think he will ever acquire the spirit of his state.

I love this dear brother too much, who is continually present in my thoughts, not to be most keenly concerned in his regard, obliged as I am to live far from him. I would wish that he study more, as duty demands, inasmuch of course as his state may permit. In a word, insist in all essential matters that he sanctify himself according to his vocation.

If it is impossible for Fr. Capmas, who has now become master of novices, to absent himself half a day each week, relying on an assistant to replace him in the house while he goes to confess the Ladies of Saint Charles, let them have a priest come from Lyon. I am not in favour of assigning this duty to Cailhol.³¹ Let us avoid taking him away from the bishop's work.

I believe you have settled Fr. Albini out in the country, this being not only beneficial to his health but also a good way to spare him the company of Fr. Mye who would get his goat.

I cannot go too far in recommending Bro. Ricard³² to you; he is a good child, but a weakling. I do not think he studies at all and you know how ignorant he is. Confront him with his duties kindly but firmly.

²⁹ Shortly before the middle of July, Fr. de Mazenod, accompanied by Fr. Jean-card, went to convalesce with his uncle, Roze-Joannis, at Grans. Several days later (July 18), *L'Ami de la religion* announced his decease: "We do not yet have details concerning his premature death, but we do not doubt that it was as edifying as his life" (vol. 60, p. 311). This false rumour reached Rome (the Pope to the Founder, August 1, 1829).

³⁰ Fr. YENVEUX writes (VIII, 176) that this refers to Bro. Reynier. No doubt he means Father Gustave Leon Reynier, born in Marseilles and ordained to the priesthood on October 14, 1827.

³¹ Cailhol was the bishop's secretary.

³² Yenveux's copyist writes: Michaud. None of the scholastic brothers, of whom there were about ten in 1829, bore this name. Of their names, the closest to Michaud was Ricard.

If you can persuade this odd fellow, Biallez,³³ to go and spend some time at the novitiate in order to prepare himself for profession, I think we could still get some good out of him. Do not treat him during your visit quite as a stranger. This is rather an affected attitude that he maintains. The brothers have a fairly good idea of their state; I recommend that you encourage them but tell them to give less time to reading than to work. Send me word as to what keeps him going, tell him on my behalf that we love him as a good brother, but that it is impossible for me not to expect him to be diligent in observing the Rule. Try to obtain that those who do errands outside avoid doing so during the time for exercises in common.

While making your visit at Aix, do not forget to decide on the remuneration for the chaplain of the boarding school of Mlle. Chaniac. In the present state of our poor financial position, we must positively know on what we ought to count. I would wish that we would decline any gift of sacred vessels. The house is richly enough provided. If there are some well disposed people, we ought not to be averse to receiving alms for it is money that we need in order to feed our novitiate.

I have spoken with Fr. Courtès about the inconvenience of the parlour. He feels this as much as I do, but the difficulty is to find a remedy. During his visit, you cannot refrain from speaking about it. I think that some of the inconvenience could be avoided by their abstaining from entering the parlour during recreation.

Have no concern for the moment, if the cloister is violated by mother's cook; there is a major reason to tolerate it, that is, she has to teach Bro. Gibert to prepare meals; advise him to behave in a suitable manner towards her.³⁴

As for the local superior at Laus,³⁵ give him advice as coming from yourself, mildly and in a conversational manner, to be less susceptible than he is; it seems evident that this is a fault of his which he

³³ Joseph M. Biallez, who entered the Congregation on December 24, 1826, did not make any vows.

³⁴ YENVEUX, (VI, 71) writes at the beginning of this paragraph: letter to Fr. Courtès. It seems rather that it was an excerpt of a letter to Fr. Tempier where the Founder speaks of the house of Aix at the end of the second page of the original (YENVEUX, VI, 72; VII, 88).

³⁵ The reference, it seems, is to Fr. Dupuy (cf. letter of July 14, note 28), in charge of the material welfare of the house, whereas Fr. Guibert was responsible for the spiritual aspect.

has yet to acknowledge. I will not wait for your visit to name Fr. Sumien as second counsellor. I am quite agreeable to have this mark of confidence come to him directly from me so as to prove that I have restored him to my good grace, which he was convinced he had lost.

Must I speak to you of my health? I improve slowly and while it remains impossible on account of my weakness to offer the holy sacrifice, I have the happiness of receiving communion every day, which consoles me in my long and sorrowful infirmity. We did not forget you on the anniversary of St. Henry,³⁶ join with me on the 20th of next month, day of the novena of the Prince of Hohenlohe.³⁷ I would consider myself very happy if I could on that day say mass; but judging from my present state, that could not be unless his intercession had already taken effect.³⁸

I embrace you with all my heart. My compliments and usual respects to all to whom they are due.

334. [To Fr. Tempier at Nîmes].³⁹

Litanies of the saints at the "particular examen." Novitiate.

[Grans] August 6, 1829.

. . . I have never been able to get our people to give me the names of the holy patrons of the parishes where they have preached missions; this is the reason why our litanies are still incomplete. My intention would be, when finally we will have succeeded in finding out their names, if they are too numerous, to spread them throughout the

³⁶ Patron of Fr. François de Paule-Henri Tempier.

³⁷ This novena of the Founder to the Prince of Hohenlohe is rather mysterious. Prince Alexander Leopold de Hohenlohe (1794-1844) was ordained priest in 1815. At first a canon at Bamberg, he had to go to Vienna in 1822 and then to Grooswardein in Hungary because of the commotion over the cures that he obtained by his prayers. Several of his works of spirituality had been translated into French before 1829.

³⁸ At the beginning of his stay at Grans, the Founder was too feeble to say mass (REY, I, 473). On August 9th he wrote to his uncle, Fortuné de Mazenod: "Would you believe, my very dear uncle, that what tires me the most in this eternal convalescence is writing: my hand refuses to obey; so I save it only for important occasions" (REY, I, 473).

³⁹ YENVEUX, IV, 42-43; VII, 33*. Fr. Rey writes that Fr. Tempier finished his canonical visit at the house of Nîmes. He did that of Notre Dame du Laus at the end of the month of July, cf. letter of Fr. Guibert to Fr. de Mazenod, August 2, 1829, REY, I, 474.

months; in this way you need not worry lest you may never recite the martyrologium. Ask then, to begin with, the Fathers of Nîmes to give you the list of the saints under the patronage of whom they have evangelized the people until now. The work would be less burdensome to them if they had obeyed my first injunctions.

... I do not remember if I gave you my reply that when Oblates⁴⁰ happen to be with novices when Father Master is away (a thing which should never happen) the novices who wish to absent themselves for a moment must ask permission from their dean and not from the Oblates who are only there by circumstance.

335. [To Fr. Honorat at Nîmes].⁴¹

The health of the Founder is improving very slowly. Fr. Honorat ought to remain superior of the house at Nîmes. Canonical visitation of Fr. Tempier.

[Grans] August 9, 1829.

I would have believed, my dear Father Honorat, that either Fr. Tempier or Fr. Courtès would have kept you informed of the state of my health; it is improving so slowly that it is still impossible for me to keep up with my correspondence.

It is useless to ask to be freed from governing others after three years of superiorship; we will see what will have to be done. I even have trouble persuading myself that it is in keeping with good order to permit you a month's absence in order to renew yourself, as you say, in the novitiate.⁴² The place of a superior is at the head of his community; the graces of God will not be lacking to him when at his post.

At the moment of receiving my letter, you will be enjoying the presence of our dear Fr. Tempier; it is with regret that I have substituted him in place of myself for the visit that he is making to you; but one must be submissive in everything to the will of God, even if it means staying for the whole of one's life in the state of nullity in which I find myself.

⁴⁰ The Oblate scholastics.

⁴¹ YENVEUX, VI, 135; VII, 140, 238.

⁴² Fr. Honorat was named master of novices during the month of October.

336. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁴³

Decree announcing the jubilee on the occasion of the election of Pope Pius VIII.

[Grans] August 16, 1829.

What on earth has happened to you at Marseilles, my dear Father Tempier, why is there no sign of life from anyone? I have simply been made to wait for my uncle's reply to the question of how he meant to draw up his decree.⁴⁴ Time is getting short, if you intend to follow the plan of which Cailhol spoke, and announce it at the beginning of September in order not to be too hard pressed. I think the opening should only occur on the Sunday of the solemnity of St. Lazarus.⁴⁵

Oh how annoyed I am that M. Feutrier⁴⁶ fell before the letter I was thinking of writing to him in the name of the Bishop could be sent in reply to his very improper one. It was to begin with these words: "My Lord, I not only had cognizance of the encyclical of our holy Father Pius VIII, but it was addressed directly to me as to all Bishops of the Catholic world for, thanks be to God, I am in communion with the apostolic Holy See." We will consider whether such a draft of the letter, as I had planned it, ought not to be recorded in the main register of the diocese in witness to the Bishop's fidelity in order that his successors may know of it, for I had proposed to tell the Minister that, in obedience to the voice of the superior of the bishops and in compliance with his directives, I was warning my people about all these things which his solicitude impelled him to denounce as dangerous to their souls.

⁴³ YENVEUX, III, 190; REY, I, 474.

⁴⁴ The Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs had forbidden the Bishops of France to publish, before having received the approbation of the Council of State, the letters which Pius VIII had addressed to the Bishops of the world on the occasion of his accession to the pontifical see and of the Jubilee which he granted to the faithful.

⁴⁵ September 6th.

⁴⁶ Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs under the Martignac government which fell on August 8th.

337. [To Fr. Jeancard at Aix].⁴⁷

Illness of Nathalie de Boisgelin. Sufferings of the Founder and submission to the will of God. Reproaches and encouragement to Fr. Jeancard. The care that he must give to the brothers.

[St. Martin des Pallières]⁴⁸ September 26, 1829.

When will my anguish end? Since All Saints 1828, I have not spent a day that has not been steeped in bitterness. The past, the present, the future are alike in weighing down my heart; I do not conceive how I can exist. However my strength returns and seems to stay proportionate with my need to sustain such great trials. I have been in pain all the time I have lived . . . am better since being here; but they nag me to get out of this mood. What would I go and do elsewhere? The doctor absolutely does not wish me to be occupied. Ah! if the good God had wished to permit that I die when all accounts had been settled, how much grief he might have spared me, but may his holy will be done, I say this with entire submission, in spite of all the revolting of a nature deprived of all its most legitimate affections. But I have not taken up my pen to discourse with you about my sorrows.

Nothing is more proper, my dear friend, than to make observations especially when they are addressed to a superior whose sentiments and the way he acts are known to you. You knew me not to be one of those who, indifferent to all the little preferences, I would even say weaknesses, of their subjects, only see perfect obedience in what they require them to do and never bother about anything else apart from what has to be done. I have always tried to combine all (particular) interests which can be combined with the good order of the Society and the good of souls, so, without approving your distastes, I have

⁴⁷ YENVEUX, III, 95-96; VI, 136; VIII, 229. According to the context of this letter, Fr. Jeancard was still at Aix where he kept Fr. Courtès company. Several other details, omitted by the copyist, are difficult to ascertain. "I suffered all the time I lived . . ." probably refers to his stay at Grans where the Founder spent the summer. In the last paragraph, the reference is perhaps to Fr. Honorat who had to go and preach in the Dauphiné, and would go through Marseilles or Aix.

⁴⁸ It seems that the Founder returned to Marseilles only at the end of November. On September 26th, he was probably with his sister at the summer house of St. Martin des Pallières where "for two months" writes Fr. REY (I, 478), he performed "the role of consoling angel" to his niece, Nathalie de Boisgelin. She died from an infection "of the chest" on November 14th, aged 19. Cf. letters of Rose-Joannis to Mme. de Mazenod, September 28, October 22 and November 18, 1829.

always been careful to put them on the scales, and if they have not always won the day, they have always been weighed nevertheless. It is, one cannot deny, a great pity that you have not been better at resisting them and all the more so because they extend to several individuals towards all of whom your prejudices are equally unjust. But there lies your failing and the precise evil of which you are not cured and which I deplore in you because I am convinced that these (lapses) are more voluntary than you think and that they spring from sentiments which are certainly not virtuous. In any case, to please you I have changed our plan; you will not go to the Dauphiné, Father Honorat will go in your stead on this mission; you will remain in Languedoc and work there until further notice.

. . . It is useless for him to go by way of Marseilles; we will see each other at Aix, where it seems I am to go. I commend Brother Gibert to you. One should never omit instructing our brothers in their duties, at least once a week. One must insist that they render an account of their daily conduct, that they do not become immersed in things which do not lie within their competence, etc.,

Adieu, my dear Fr. Jeancard.

338. [To Fr. Tempier at Aix].⁴⁹

Confidence and friendship, in spite of lack of deference on Fr. Tempier's part.

[St. Martin des Pallieres] October 6, 1829.

I cannot be annoyed with you about anything, even when you fail in some duty, because you do it rather by distraction or by some sort of habitual independence that your position has given you ever since you joined the Society. Notwithstanding such reflections, I must say I would have left unhesitatingly this very day in order to be with you, had you not let me know that your retreat which began on Sunday

⁴⁹ YENVEUX, III, 97; IX, 210. Fr. Yenveux writes, by way of presenting the first paragraph (IX, 210): "Rev. Fr. Tempier, not having informed in time the Rev. Fr. Superior General of the date of the annual retreat at the house of Aix, and having asked Rev. Fr. de Mazenod to come and hear his retreat confession, the latter admonished him paternally that too often he only told him of things after they had been done, which is contrary to the deference due to superiors."

would last only four days.⁵⁰ I thought I would arrive only after you had made your confession and would thus be of no use to you; so I have not stirred. I confine myself to uniting my feeble prayers to yours in order to draw down upon you all the blessings that I could wish for myself, and that is not remarkable because I have never considered you other than as one who is identical to myself; that is why I not only love you very much, but share with you so willingly all my thoughts, while being surprised nevertheless that independently of our inter-related positions, you have so much trouble sharing yours with me. Make a resolution once and for all to be less tight-lipped with me. I learn about things after they have been done. This manner of acting is diametrically opposed to the idea that one ought to have of deference and subordination, understood even in the mildest sense.

339. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁵¹

Nathalie de Boisgelin in the throes of dying.

[Aix] October 28, 1829.

. . . She confided to me that even if she desired it on the one hand, she was extremely repelled by it on the other because Purgatory made her horribly afraid and she trembled in all her limbs just at the thought that on leaving this world she would be separated from God, since in Purgatory one cannot see God while going through cruel expiation of one's sins. She wept while speaking thus to me. Judge for yourself my position. Obligated, by duty of conscience, not to divert her mind from the death which she told me must be very close, and to suppress in my heart all the anguish and havoc that the sight of her did to me! You will know that I neglected nothing to inspire in this beautiful soul the amply justified motives of confidence which she ought to entertain. But martyrdom on the rack, or iron claws or fire are nothing in comparison with the torments that conversing with her thus for half an hour made me feel. I cannot conceive how my heart does not burst on such occasions when I am forced to contain it while behaving and speaking as if no upheaval was going on within me.

⁵⁰ The 6th was a Tuesday.

⁵¹ YENVEUX, II, 115-116. It seems that the Boisgelins had returned to Aix at the end of the holiday period. The Founder was certainly there on October 31st (letter to his uncle Fortuné) and on November 8th (letter of Fortuné to Eugene).

So I confirmed, by a superhuman effort which overwhelmed my whole being, the vague persuasion which she had that her end was imminent; she wished me to administer her the last sacraments; what a duty to fulfil! I have perforce to remain beside her; our Rules prescribe that we go, several times a day if necessary, to the sick persons in our care who are in danger; I stay right at my post and perform my ministry, but am very much in need of God's assistance. I expressly bid you to let the Capuchin Sisters know my niece's condition, so that they may pray and obtain for her the graces which she needs in this terrible moment; strength, courage, confidence in God. As for me, I will need resignation when the fatal moment arrives, but for the moment, a surpassing strength in order to act with freedom of spirit and seeming imperturbability when my soul is in utmost desolation. Our sick girl is ever a model of patience which she exerts to the point of heroism.

I will not be at Marseilles for All Saints, I will celebrate this feast with our brothers at Aix; have our community at Marseilles pray every day for my intention.

340. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].⁵²

The preaching of Oblate subdeacons: Mille, Clement, Pons and Paris.

[Marseilles] December 14, 1829.

. . . We are having our subdeacons preach on Sunday and I assure you that the two I have heard these last two Sundays have pleased me very much. Mille was excellent and Clement very good. I would not have expected it had they not told me in advance that I would be pleased. Next Sunday will be the turn of Pons, and on Christmas Day, Paris, and the second feast will be Mille again who has not yet begun to write his text, which shows you that he composes with great ease.

341. [To Fr. Jeancard on mission at Saint-Remy].⁵³

Let Jeancard take care of his chest. Regrets having so few missionaries. State of the Founder's health.

⁵² YENVEUX, VIII, 172.

⁵³ YENVEUX, I, 170; REY, I, 479.

[Marseilles] December 14, 1829.

What's all this about the chest which you never used to mention except to vaunt its resonance? So now it feels tender and you have to complain about it! Just husband your voice more; you shout too much when you preach and even when you speak. Take some milk or something else to sooth it; in a word, reflect on how you can keep your fires burning. I am not surprised at what you tell me of the state of affairs at Saint-Remy, I was convinced beforehand that my plan had been to have the exercises begin eight days before the opening of the Jubilee so that they might have time to respond to the eagerness of this numerous population, but, but, but! it is always the same thing. *Hominem non habeo*; those who can work are already doing too much; so we have to be content with less. God knows our good will, he will take it into account.

I would wish with all my heart to share in your efforts, so I can count on a portion of your merits, but it seems that the good God wills that I be content with suffering from my inaction and from the causes which subject me thereto. I have more bodily ills at present than I had when we were at Grans. I mention this to you in response to the interest that you take in my wretched carcass.

1830

342. [To Brother Pons at Marseilles].¹

Oblates are to take as their author in moral theology Blessed Alphonse of Liguori and not Concina.

[Marseilles] January 28, 1830.

It was wrong of me, my dear Bro. Pons, to allow you to nourish yourself with Concina being, as you are, inclined to embrace opinions that are far too rigid. Concina will never be the author for our Congregation. Doctrinal uniformity being prescribed for us, we take it especially from the surest authors and prefer to derive from those whom the Church has recognized as having reached heaven a teaching quite contrary to that for which you have taken a liking. Liguori, Blessed Liguori, who is going to be canonized, has been adopted by us as the doctor with whom we ought to be more in agreement. The Jesuits and some other Congregations are still more exclusive than we; I am content for the moment with the term I have employed; so, my dear Bro. Pons, let Concina lie in the stacks of the library and take Liguori in order to temper the severity of the opinions that you have adopted too lightly. You can console yourself for this separation by the thought that you are advancing along the right path, by following in the footsteps of saints. I was hoping to tell you all this *viva voce*; but my conscience prompts me not to leave it until tomorrow, since I'm at fault in giving consent upon too little reflection.

Adieu, dear son, I bless you.

¹ YENVEUX, VIII, 181; RAMBERT, I, 499. Bro. Pons was a scholastic studying at the seminary of Marseilles.

343. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].²

The crosses of deceased Oblates are to be passed on to new brothers.

[Marseilles] March 8, 1830.

... They must be passed on to the new Oblates who will profit from such a heritage. I wish to have proper care shown in this distribution.³

... Fr. Campas is working wonders in the Dauphiné.

344. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].⁴

The cross of Fr. Arnoux must be given to a young Oblate. No exception will be made for anyone unless it be for those who work miracles.

[Marseilles] March 13, 1830.

As I read your modest plea regarding the cross of our Fr. Arnoux, I almost sided with your opinion, feeling that the reasons you gave were well founded, but to decide thus would occasion some inconvenience. We would in fact have to keep a forest of crosses in our houses for I hope, thanks to the goodness of God, that all those who die in the bosom of the Society will arrive in heaven laden with merits after having edified their brothers and dedicated their lives in the service of the Church and the sanctification of souls. Who will be judge of the degree of heroism to which one must attain in order to be preferred, supposing that we wish to grant this only to an excellence that is remarkable. Will these distinctions not have something odious about them in a Society of which all the members work to become saints in the exercise of the same ministry and the exact practice of the same Rules? I for one will not make any such discernment. I see miracles only as a reason for an exception. They will prove, not that those who do not work them are less saintly, or that they have lived less well or have died in the Lord to a less evident degree, but that God is pleased to manifest

² REY, I, 482, 483.

³ The Founder ordered that the name of the deceased Father or Brother be engraved on the upper part of the copper plate which covers the arms of the cross (REY, I, 482).

⁴ REY, I, 483.

his glory through them, and so they ought to be distinguished amongst the other predestined who have entered heaven by the little door which opens more quietly or, to put it better, without a fanfare. Thus, up to present, I do not see that we have to make any exception to the Rule that I have established.

345. [To Fr. Guibert at Notre Dame du Laus].⁵

Court sentence against Fr. Capmas. Submission to the will of God.

[Marseilles] May 22, 1830.

First, I rejoice, my dear Father, that you no longer spit blood. It is not surprising that so much agitation and anxiety have undermined your health. There is certainly much to be vexed about in seeing iniquity ready to pounce and hatred against religion and her ministers triumphing even over justice.⁶ However let us submit to these unfortunate circumstances and put our trust in God who permits only what is necessary; they can never act beyond his will.

346. [To Fr. Jeancard at Aix].⁷

Fr. Jeancard will remain at Aix but he ought to busy himself according to his Oblate vocation.

[Marseilles] June 4, 1830.

I was delighted to learn, my dear Fr. Jeancard, that your little apostolic journey was not detrimental to your health. I hope that it will have also been of great benefit to your soul. This should be the case regarding all we do dutifully if we know what is best for us. Our greatest repugnances would have no more effect on us than a dream, if we were quite determined not to harbour them despite a thousand pretexts likely to fill us with illusions but of no weight in the scales of religion,

⁵ REY, I, 482.

⁶ On his return from a retreat preached at the minor seminary of Embrun, the horse which Fr. Capmas was riding took fright and knocked down a man who died several days after the accident. On May 22, the court of Embrun, presided over by anticlericals, condemned the missionary to three months imprisonment, a fine of 50 francs and 1200 francs damages. The appeal court of Gap later brought in a judgement of complete acquittal in favour of Fr. Capmas (REY, I, 482).

⁷ YENVEUX, III, 92; IV, 232; REY, I, 484.

the same that will be held by an archangel on the day of Judgement. So let us perform well and even willingly all that the Rule or obedience prescribe to us. We are servants here below of God and of the Church. The steward of the Father of the family cannot always employ us according to our tastes, he has a more pressing duty to fulfil which is that of service itself. What does it matter after all that we do this or that, provided that we act on behalf of God in the sphere which is indicated to us by our superiors. Apart from all these supernatural considerations, which yet have their weight, one should know humanly speaking how to comport oneself and make virtue out of necessity. That is what all people of good sense do. I have seen soldiers who would not be keen on going to Algeria but they went as gaily as the others. A stay at Aix is not as torrid as in Africa and one is not exposed to cannon shot. Seriously one cannot commiserate easily with the fate of him who is wherever duty keeps him. So, dear friend, seeing that I cannot do other than leave you there, be intent on busying yourself with tasks that are in conformity with your vocation. Do not waste time gazing at the moon. Work, you have too much talent not to be gravely responsible for any inaction which nothing can justify in my eyes. Now that you are sufficiently refreshed by the little outing you have just had, get to work as if short of time, as indeed we are in this fleeting life, in the short span of which we have to fulfil our mission.

347. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁸

Firmness in the direction of communities.

[Notre Dame du Laus]⁹ July 11, 1830.

... We must never permit these concessions, they are allowed for a while and then we forget to maintain the precept and it is thus that abuses creep in.

⁸ REY, I, 485.

⁹ The Founder was absent nearly seven months from Marseilles. He undertook this journey into Switzerland, July 6, on the explicit orders of his doctors and of Fr. Tempier (Leflon, II, 338-339); moreover it was a good opportunity to help his sister, Mme. de Boisgelin, to take her mind off the sorrow caused by the death of her daughter Nathalie (letter of Fr. de Mazenod to his mother, June 15, 1830). The July Revolution then took place which, during its first years, was very anticlerical. Fr. de Mazenod decided it would be well to purchase a house at Billens, in Switzerland, and to bring the scholastics there. On his way, he stopped at Notre Dame du Laus where he made a canonical visitation and encouraged Fr. Guibert who had some difficulty in establishing strictness of observance according to the Rules.

348. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].¹⁰

Joy at learning of the conquest of Algeria.

[Grenoble]¹¹ July 15, 1830.

It is you who have apprised me of the splendid news about Algeria. I read your letter under a tree at Rambaud; I was moved by gratitude towards God, ecstatic with joy . . . I admire the promptness of the resolutions of our very dear Bishop; he is always the first to make the right response.¹²

349. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].¹³

Visit to Geneva and Lausanne; reflections on the situation of the Catholic Church in Switzerland. Notre Dame du Laus. The desire to found a mission in Algeria. Marguerite-Marie Alacoque.

Fribourg, July 26, 1830.

. . . We arrived very early in this capital of untruth. I can give you no idea of the painful impression that I felt. The sight of the Catholic Church where I hastened to go and adore Our Lord, only served to aggravate my anguish; the smallness of this church, in the centre of a city so remarkably well built, its apparent poverty in the midst of so many riches; the thought that the fine edifice of St. Peter is in the power of the heretics, everybody I met in the streets marked with the sign of heresy, all contributed to chill the soul and throw me into a deep sadness.

¹⁰ RAMBERT, I, 544; REY, I, 486.

¹¹ The Founder, his sister and his mother remained at Grenoble from the 12th to the 17th.

¹² It was on Tuesday the 13th that the Founder received the news of the capture of Algiers. Fr. Tempier told him that they had learned this at Marseilles at noon on the 9th. "At two o'clock, all the bells were rung by order of the Bishop . . . [who] is preparing a pastoral directive."

¹³ RAMBERT, I, 544-545; REY, I, 485, 486, 487, 488. REY (I, 487) copies, without giving a date, two lines probably taken from this same letter in which the Founder describes the journey from Annecy to Geneva: "The route most picturesque, the fairest and most verdant, the most beautiful and varied that one could wish for."

However, I did not wish to deprive myself of the consolation of saying holy mass in this land of infidels, and offered the holy sacrifice with intentions you can surmise; I avow it was not without some emotion for after all, to offer the holy victim on this boulevard of error, to adore Jesus Christ there, to raise him in the sight of so many rebels, and invoke on them his mercy or, failing that his justice, is worth while, especially when one thinks of the past centuries and the present disposition of minds. Nonetheless it would be impossible for me to live in such a place; we left as quickly as possible, continuing on our road. Nothing is as beautiful as the lake shore that we followed throughout its whole length in magnificent weather; we thus arrived at Lausanne where I wished to see the beautiful cathedral from which our brothers were expelled and which is the pride today of the Waldensians who have not even the monstrous belief of Calvin. What a spectacle is this vast and beautiful church, deserted, uninhabited, which no longer says anything to the soul, of which the majestic architecture is in contrast with the nudity of the sanctuary and the ignobility of the restaurant table which serves as an altar and is the sole object of exterior cult. There still remain however some tombs of bishops and even that of a Pope who seem to be there to protest against the sacrilegious invasion of this once so holy place, today so horribly profaned. What sorrow on leaving this great edifice to see the little church that they have built not far from there. Oh! how much one then feels this hard oppression! To see oneself chased away from a magnificent palace, and reduced to build a hovel compared to this beautiful church, and be obliged to keep silent and even to think oneself fortunate!

... There is no doubt that Fr. Guibert possesses better than anyone of his house the spirit of our vocation; he might have sinned in manner but in substance he is right. With only three days to spend in this community, I have had to act with a mixture of mildness and firmness.

... I beg you to say to Brother Ricard¹⁴ that his letter gave me the greatest pleasure; let him be at peace while awaiting God's good

¹⁴ Bro. Ricard had written to him: "... on learning of the capture of Algiers you could not restrain your tears; as for me, I assure you that since hearing these happy tidings I rest no more Right at the beginning of this war, you showed very clearly that if it were possible, you would establish a mission in these infidel parts; a surprising success has just crowned the efforts of our troops and not doubting to see your plans soon realized, I have not been able to await your return in order to solicit the great favour of crossing the sea . . ." (REY, I, 486).

time. The Lord will manifest his will to us when it pleases him, we will try to aid his plans but I am alarmed at the smallness of our numbers when considering a colony.

. . . The Jesuits are counting much on the goodness of God in these circumstances. They are bringing to the tomb of the Lord's servant¹⁵ two of their desperately ill members in the hope they will be cured. I would wish this with all my heart for the sake of most holy devotion to the Sacred Heart.

350. [To Fr. Guibert at Notre Dame du Laus].¹⁶

Journey to Annecy and Geneva. Joy of arriving at Fribourg in a Catholic country. One must observe the Rule everywhere and practice charity.

[Fribourg]¹⁷ July 29, 1830.

I had promised you, my dear Fr. Guibert, to send you news about myself when I had arrived at Fribourg. This is where I now am, since Thursday. Thanks be to God, we have not experienced any untoward incident en route and we have arrived safe and sound at the place of our destination. While going through Annecy, I did not forget to place you under the protection of St. Francis of Sales and of St. Jeanne de Chantal. I made plans so as to be able to say holy mass in the venerable sanctuary which contains their precious relics.

I also said holy mass in that city of Geneva, the boulevard of the heresy of Calvin, where a Catholic heart finds itself so ill at ease, so oppressed by all it sees and by all it meets. My first care was to go quickly to the church to adore Jesus Christ betrayed for so long a time and blasphemed in this den of apostasy.

I confess I experienced some consolation to find him in this hostile country and it seems to me that the homage I was inspired to give him was such that particularly elevated the soul and united it sweetly to God. I celebrated on the following day the holy mysteries in these sen-

¹⁵ At Chambéry, the Founder met the Provincial of the Jesuits of France who had to go to Autun to be present at the opening of the tomb of Marguerite-Marie Alacoque.

¹⁶ YENVEUX, I, 23; III, 5, 113; IV, 25; V, 131, 205; RAMBERT, I, 545.

¹⁷ The travellers arrived on July 21st at Fribourg where they stayed until mid-November. Louis de Boisgelin was there, boarding at the college of the Jesuits.

timents and took pleasure in recognizing our divine Master as the sovereign Lord of all men, even those who rebel against his grace; but, no matter, it would be impossible for me to live in these regions where he is so generally disregarded. Also, my heart was gladdened at the sight of the first cross I perceived as I entered the canton of Fribourg. We recited with joy the *Vexilla* as if we had just found our compass once more. Yet we had journeyed only two days in this beautiful country ravaged by heresy.

It is on these occasions that one feels what it is to be Catholic and the full rapture of this veritable charity which unites us all to our common centre who is Jesus Christ, to whom be honour and glory in all places, at all times and for all eternity!

I am still grieved, my dear friend, by what I have seen at Notre Dame du Laus. May it be God's will that my exhortations have produced the effect that I have the right to expect. I hope that each will have told himself that he is rigorously obliged to observe our Rule strictly. Where would we be if we were only faithful to it in the houses that I can supervise myself? Once that is achieved, we will still be far from realizing the end that we propose; we must be filled with our spirit and live only by it. This is self-evident without it being necessary to explain it. Just as we have in a Society a common dress, common Rules, so must there be a common spirit which vivifies this particular body. The spirit of Bernardine is not that of the Jesuit. Ours also is our own. Those who have not grasped this, through not having made a good novitiate, are among us like dislocated members. They make the whole body suffer and are not themselves at ease. It is indispensable that they put themselves back in their place.

Charity is the pivot on which our whole existence turns. That which we ought to have for God makes us renounce the world and has vowed us to his glory by all manner of sacrifice, were it even to be our lives. It is in order to be worthy of this God to whom we are consecrated that we have vowed to renounce ourselves by obedience, riches by poverty, pleasures by chastity. I have no complaint about this last article. I have little to say about the second, but the first is not understood by certain individuals. Whence the disorders that I have had to deplore. Let us not cease to meditate on this point that is so important; that we are not religious by observing it as badly as we have up to now.

Charity for our neighbour is again an essential part of our spirit. We practice it first amongst us by loving each other as brothers, by considering our Society only as the most united family which exists on the earth, by rejoicing over the virtues, the talents and other qualities that our brothers possess just as much as if we possessed them ourselves, in bearing with mildness the little faults that some have not yet overcome, covering them over with the mantle of the most sincere charity, etc.; and as for the rest of mankind, in considering ourselves only as the servants of the Father of the family commanded to succour, to aid, to bring back his children by working to the utmost, in the midst of tribulations, of persecutions of every kind, without claiming any reward other than that which the Lord has promised to faithful servants who have worthily fulfilled their mission.

Regard the Rule as our code, the superiors as God, our brothers like our other selves. Let each judge himself, correct himself or otherwise regard himself as reprobate. The sentence seems severe but it is certain. Indeed I would give my life a thousand times in order that no one amongst us ever give the scandal of not being worthy of his vocation. To preserve ourselves from this misfortune: *Argue, obsecra, increpa, in omni patientia et doctrina. Deus pacis aptet vos in omnibus.*¹⁸

The postal rates being very costly at the distance we are from each other, I pray you to share this letter in common with all your community. Have it sent subsequently at the first opportunity to Fr. Tempier. I embrace you all and commend myself to your prayers.

351. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].¹⁹

Reflections on the occasion of his 49th birthday. Little talent or virtue among the members of the Congregation while St. Ignatius was surrounded by extraordinary men. Said mass at the Jesuits and at the Redemptorists. Think no more of Algeria.

¹⁸ 2 Tim. 4, 2; Hebr. 13, 20; *Deus autem pacis . . . aptet vos in omni bono.* . . . convince, rebuke and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching . . . may the God of peace equip you with everything good . . ."

¹⁹ YENVEUX, I, 27; V, 35; VIII, 13, 192; IX, 28*; RAMBERT, I, 546-548; REY, I, 488.

[Fribourg] August 1, 1830.

As you look at the date on this letter, you will recall my dear friend that I enter today into my forty-ninth year. I was busy yesterday, the whole day, with the thoughts that the circumstance of the end of my forty-eighth year brought to mind. I have groaned, as you can imagine, over a quantity of miseries; I thanked God for many graces, but I was saddened — and it is herein that I have been wrong — to find in my life as a whole a field more vast than that which I have traversed; I meant that it seems to me I have not really fulfilled my course. Is it my fault? Is it a question of time?

The director to whom I confided these regrets seemed persuaded that it is the fault of the times and the misfortune of circumstances. I then complained in a way to God for having given me more thoughts, more desires, more means, more will than strength. If, to be just, I agreed to admit to myself that I had habitually profited enough from the positions in which I have found myself to act, even with some courage, in the midst of obstacles of every kind, I felt rather annoyed in a way at not having been placed in another time, or in some other position where I could have discharged all the energy that was in me, and which wanes through being unsustained.

The great works of a saint like Charles Borromeo have always excited in my heart more satisfaction and joy than admiration. I did not utter it, for fear of pride. I did not dwell on this thought, but fundamentally I have never been able to ward it off, I have never been able to dispel from the depths of my being that in his place I would have done as much. Again yesterday, when the solemnity and length of the ceremonies of the Feast of St. Ignatius, at which they asked me to preside, and the circumstance of it being the last day of my forty-eighth year, aroused in me more devout thoughts and holy desires and allowed me also leisure to reflect under the aegis of Jesus Christ present and exposed, how deep into my soul I plunged! How many and diverse my feelings! I was happy at the altar as I offered the holy sacrifice for the Order of Jesuits without forgetting our own family. I congratulated their holy Founder for the marvels he had worked. But how great the help he received! There is nothing like it in our days. Though he had so many heretics and bad Christians as enemies, how mightily he was protected by most eminent Popes and Bishops! Seeing everything as lost in the Church they confided to his Order the fate of the Church: it was thus he obtained all.

But, let it be noted, by what men he was supported! From the first years of their coming together, it could be said of each of them that they did more than he did. I do not speak only of the first companions, I speak of all those who joined them as soon as they became known. It seems that all those zealous to defend the Church so horribly torn apart, who felt they had the ability to be useful to her and the virtue to devote themselves to this great task, flocked to the banner of Ignatius. His company was from the beginning an army of generals. Can we then be surprised at all they have done! I have just read, in twenty-four hours, the whole life of Fr. Canisius, one of these men whom I admire and whom I covet for our times. The emperors, the electors, the bishops betook him to themselves. He made seven journeys to Rome, where all that was good came together, with several other religious of his calibre who, without doubt, concurred with St. Ignatius for the success of all his projects. Can we look around us and see anything similar? We have to labour at training a few children who are mostly incapable of conceiving the great ideals which would raise them above their milieu. Not one of them has anything to give of his own, a stone to bring to the edifice that must be built by concerted effort. Wretched are these times and detestable is the influence of this age on minds! If any of them can produce anything, it is contrariwise and, instead of a soaring achievement attained by the acting in concert of several wills intent on the same goal, we have to watch the dampening and deadening of all the impulses of our souls by the carefulness, cautiousness and scheming we have to employ in their regard in order to utilize them at least in some mediocre sphere where such cold and feeble souls prefer to be.

I finished by asking God to take me out of this world if I am not to do anything more than I have done.

August 2.

I beg you, my dear friend, to burn the page which precedes.²⁰ This outpouring is all right for you, from whom I have nothing to hide but were someone else to read it, he could interpret it badly and be persuaded that I little appreciate the brothers that God has given us while, quite certainly, there is a good number of them that I esteem. Some

²⁰ Fr. Tempier wrote in the margin of this letter, probably after the death of the Founder in 1861: "I did not at the time dare to tear up this letter and throw it in the fire, as my venerated Father bid me to do; still less will I do it today."

cannot be in doubt that while loving them, I would wish them to be other than they are since I do not cease to tell them so and I write to them when the occasion presents itself. For the rest, we must bless the good God for the hopes that we have in the future. The Blessed Alphonse de Liguori was not any more fortunate than we during his lifetime.

I said the holy mass, this morning, in a house of his Congregation. What is singular is that I am the only one today who has celebrated his feast. It is transferred to Sunday because of the Portioncula which draws the faithful into the churches of the Franciscans. The beginnings are difficult from all appearances for everybody. The Liguorian Fathers were first situated in the Valsainte (Holyvale) where they could not hold out because of the cold that prevailed. When the seminary of Fribourg was transferred into a wing of the boarding school, they bought the house and church which the seminary had abandoned. That is where they are, although badly lodged, because they rightly insisted on establishing themselves here. Their ministry is to confess in their little church and preach. Most of the Fathers fan out through the countryside to say mass in the villages. A consequence is that they have their candidates ordained even before they have done their course of theology and the house of Fribourg is like our Calvary in regard to studies.

I will spend all day of next Sunday with this community, just as I spent that of Saturday with the Jesuits, on the occasion of the feast of St. Ignatius. They give me, both of them, a most edifying example.

. . . I see by the letter of Honorat that they are much too concerned with Algeria. Tell the two houses that that is enough. When the time comes, if indeed it comes, then we shall see. For now, let each mind his business, let each prepare for any eventuality by study and by piety and let them await without commotion and without care for the good God to show us his plans.

352. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].²¹

Revolution at Paris, anxiety of the Founder.

²¹ RAMBERT, I, 549-550.

[Fribourg] August 4, 1830.

You can understand, my dear friend, how impatiently I await news from you. You did not write on the 30th, the day, by my calculations, when you ought to have been informed of the events at Paris.²²

You were at fault, for you can imagine the extent of my anxiety after the rumours, increasingly exaggerated one after the other, during the three days that the courier failed to arrive. Yesterday at last, the *Constitutionnel* of the 31st informed us of the state of affairs, by what it said and by what it omitted. Some letters, addressed to Swiss families, whose heads are in the service of France, confirmed in part the accounts of the journalist. Now it remains to know what happened where you are. Whatever they may tell me here, if you think at Marseilles that it would be necessary that I return, you are to send for me. My ailment is not one of those that a change of air can cure; my heart left me rather tired during the course of yesterday; I am well otherwise.

353. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].²³

Anxiety; should he return to his post at Marseilles.

[Fribourg] August 9, 1830.

Is it conceivable that you have had the obduracy, in such times as we are traversing, to leave me without letters from July 27 to August 4! I told you, in my last letter, to let me know immediately whether my uncle would consider it wise that I return to his side. I repeat the same question; I am utterly out of my element here, being moreover of no use for anything or to anyone.

354. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].²⁴

Write three times a week. Praise for Fr. Tempier and Fr. Guibert who remained at their post; reproaches the Fathers at Nîmes. Let the scholastics redouble their fervour and their application to study.

²² Allusion to the July Revolution (27-29) 1830 which brought about the fall of Charles X and the accession of Louis-Philippe (July Monarchy).

²³ RAMBERT, I, 550.

²⁴ RAMBERT, I, 550-552; REY, I, 489.

[Fribourg] August 13, 1830.

Unless, my dear friend, you may have written letters to me on the 20th, the 27th and August 4th, it is impossible not to be afflicted over your failure to send me news of yourselves of which I have such great need. I am tired of repeating that, in the grave circumstances in which you are, it would not be too much to write three times a week. You can imagine that I think only of you and that I feel here like a fish out of water.

I long for the moment when the doctors will decide that I am well enough to resume my ordinary occupations and share your work. Consult my regular doctor. I am at his orders. Those here are not sufficiently aware of my temperament; but abjure him not to be so concerned with my carcass as to overlook my duties which I cannot discharge here.

I approve your conduct entirely.²⁵ I did not expect less of you. You have done what must be done. I wish I were able to give the same praise to those of whom you speak to me.²⁶ Guibert has written to me and has not imitated them.²⁷ Unless things have happened that you do not mention, I cannot conceive how the chaplain left his post.²⁸ He did not do his duty in these circumstances; did he not have sick people to care for? That is where I would have remained — beside them. This good example would have done honour to his courage and to his ministry which is wholly one of charity. In the name of God, let none of this turmoil effect adversely the regularity of our people. Let them be concerned with these events only to the extent that is necessary for them not to be aloof from what is happening; but let their piety and the holy practices of their state not suffer the least detriment. On the contrary, may all redouble their fervour and their application to their duties. Maintain vigorously their studies; learning is an indispensable condition to be utilized wherever one may be.

Let them keep to the Rule more than ever; it is only thus that they will draw down the blessings of God on themselves and on others.

²⁵ Fr. Tempier had written on August 8th: "Our motto is prudence and moderation, but vigilance, firmness and courage" (REY, I, 489).

²⁶ At Nîmes, the clergy was threatened. The Bishop, Canons and also the Oblates had left the city (REY, I, 489).

²⁷ At Notre Dame du Laus, all was calm, cf. Guibert to Mazenod, August 6th (REY, I, 489).

²⁸ The letter of Fr. Tempier has not been preserved. It is not easy to determine to what this refers.

Speak strongly on this subject to all. I put it to them as a matter of conscience. I see here only people who are regular and perfectly conformed to their state. Why should we not imitate them? All is good for them. *Domini est terra et plenitudo ejus*.²⁹

. . . I embrace you and am very vexed to be at such a great distance from you, my uncle and all my friends; out of three thoughts, two and a half are for all of you.

August 14th.

I have been busy for several days looking for a country house. If I find something suitable, I will not let it slip from me.³⁰

355. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].³¹

Intends to buy a house in Switzerland to which the scholastics can be transferred.

[Fribourg] August 15, 1830.

. . . There is no other choice than to buy a country house or an old chateau which may not be too expensive.³² I have two in view; they are both situated at four or five leagues from here in the midst of a Catholic population. I regard it as very important to have a fixed establishment. Providence will guide us thereafter according to his adorable designs. In this house there should be some priests who could as need arises bring help to the country priests. They would do in the French region what the Liguorians do in the German area. It is only thus that they could make themselves appreciated. I would establish in the same place our students, for do not imagine that you will be able to keep them together in your sight.

It remains to know, now, if they would be offended here to see several priests living in community. I am going to quietly inform myself.

²⁹ Ps. 23, 1.

³⁰ These three lines of August 14th are perhaps taken from a letter distinct from that of the 13th.

³¹ RAMBERT, I, 552.

³² Fr. REY (I, 489) wrote that the Founder had formed on his arrival at Fribourg the plan to found a house in this Catholic canton of Switzerland. Fr. Rambert seems rather to say that this idea came to him after the July Revolution. "Most of the best minds in France were persuaded," wrote RAMBERT (I, 552), "that the Revolution of 1830 would not be long in falling into the excesses of that of (17)93."

356. [To Fr. Courtès at Aix].³³

Foundation in Switzerland. Let all be fervent and faithful to their duties.

[Fribourg] August 15, 1830.

I would have been gone quite a while from here had I not believed that Providence meant me to stay in order to find some means of preserving the family. Without being told to remain, I would have done nothing; could I have thought I was in my place? So little did I think so that I was afraid my absence might be a scandal for several people.

See to it firmly that each performs his duty punctually. It is especially in critical moments that one must be more fervent, more like men of God, irreproachable in every way. The extraordinary graces that one needs would not be granted to lukewarm souls, to earthly-minded men. This life is nothing for those who count on eternity; the essential is to please God, to accomplish his commandments and his counsels, to do in everything his holy will, however costly that may be to one's nature. Our vocation is to do good to everybody; when we will no longer be able to do it in one place, we will do it in another.

357. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].³⁴

The singing of the Domine salvum fac regem. Let Bishop Fortuné go and rest at Nice.

[Fribourg] August 19, 1830.

I quite expected the difficulty which would face you on the 15th in regard to singing the *Domine salvum fac*.³⁵ I prefer the conclusion more than all the reasonings and (views of) authorities which preceded. Your council will certainly derive consequences therefrom which I

³³ RAMBERT, I, 553.

³⁴ RAMBERT, I, 558-559; REY, I, 490.

³⁵ The new civil authorities had demanded the singing, on the feast of August 15th, of the *Domine salvum fac regem Ludovicum Philippum*. This would have the effect of making the Church recognize a *de facto* government having supplanted a *de jure* government. A grand council, convoked at the bishopric, decided on the singing of the *Domine salvum fac regem* without designating the head of the government, and that they would maintain this policy until a decision was made by the Sovereign Pontiff (REY, I, 490).

would certainly not wish to adopt. I see in them the doctrine of the *de facto* government. All I ask is that they do not harass my uncle³⁶ and if it irks him to accept the resolutions at which I foresee they will arrive, let him leave for Italy. It is not at his age that one can stand up to the struggles of the kind for which preparations are underway.

358. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].³⁷

If Bishop Fortuné judges it opportune to submit himself to the usurping government, he can remain at Marseilles, if not it is better for him to leave.

[Fribourg] August 21, 1830.

I leave everything to Providence but reiterate my concern for my uncle. I think that it will be necessary for him to choose a course that depends on the opinion he will embrace. If he adopts the affirmative on his own initiative, there is no obstacle to his remaining; but if it is in the negative, I think that it would be as well that he leave as soon as possible, for how will he have the strength to bear all the consequences?

359. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].³⁸

Be resigned to the will of God in the present difficulties. Interior consolations.

[Fribourg] August 23, 1830.

I found, my dear friend, your letter of the 17th on my return from a short walk. Although I expect each day more bad news, when they arrive it is impossible to ward off a profound impression of sadness, especially when domestic sorrows come and pile themselves on top of the burden already too heavy to bear. I will say to you however that I am not discouraged and that I am afflicted without being laid low. It seems to me that Our Lord will help us by his grace to endure all our sorrows.

³⁶ Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod was 82 years old.

³⁷ RAMBERT, I, 559.

³⁸ YENVEUX, IV, 79; RAMBERT, I, 561.

This morning, before communion, I dared to speak to this good Master with the same freedom that I would have had if I had had the happiness to live when he walked on earth, and if I had found myself in the same predicament. I said mass in a particular chapel, I was not impeded by anyone's presence. I exposed to him our needs, asked his light and his assistance, and then I surrendered myself entirely to him, wishing absolutely nothing else than his holy will. I took communion in this disposition. As soon as I had taken the precious blood, it was impossible for me to withstand such an abundance of interior consolations that it was necessary, in spite of my efforts not to reveal before the brother servant what was going on in my soul, to utter sighs and shed such a quantity of tears that the corporal and the altar cloth were saturated. No painful thought provoked this explosion, on the contrary, I was well, I was happy and if I was not so miserable, I would believe that I was loving, that I was grateful. This state lasted quite a long time; it was prolonged during my thanksgiving, which I only shortened for a reason.

I concluded from this that our good Saviour had wished to give me proof that he accepted the sentiments that I had just expressed to him in the simplicity of my heart. I share with the same simplicity what has happened with you, for your own consolation and for your encouragement. Do not bring it up again to me, and continue to pray for me.

360. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].³⁹

Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod ought to leave Marseilles as soon as possible.

[Fribourg] August 24, 1830.

According to the last thing you relate⁴⁰ to me as having happened before the episcopal place, I would no longer stay in my palace; I would be out of there the following day. In no other place have they committed such violence. Here we have the Cardinal Archbishop of

³⁹ RAMBERT, I, 559-560; REY, I, 491.

⁴⁰ The Lieutenant-General, the General in command of the National Guard, the Mayor, etc., had come, on August 20th, against the will of the Bishop, to hoist the tricolour flag before the Bishop's house. Letter of Fr. Tempier to Fr. de Mazenod, August 20th (REY, I, 490-491).

Besançon.⁴¹ I have seen one of his priests this very day who told me nothing of this sort happened to them. Once again, I do not think my uncle ought to stay in a house where they have proved to him that he is not the master.⁴²

361. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles],⁴³

Insists that Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod leave Marseilles.

[Fribourg] August 26, 1830.

I have intimated to you in several letters, my very dear friend, that my opinion would be that his Lordship depart for Italy in order not to be exposed to all the troubles that, at his very advanced age, could affect his morale to the point where his health would suffer considerably. I persist in having this opinion. Nice not being far he can very easily make the journey and its closeness would provide him the opportunity of not being a stranger to his diocese as long as the troubles last, and to return promptly as soon as his presence would be judged necessary. I insist on this project with all the more reason in that the same policy has been taken by a certain number of his colleagues who had less reason than he to decide on this wise means of reconciling several interests. The plausible motive that he could give would be the violence that they did to him the other day. His domicile was certainly violated when they forcibly did that which he refused several times to have done. This violence has not been exercised against anyone in all his diocese. How is it that it has been permitted in regard to him? Since they have treated him in such cavalier fashion in this instance, it is not difficult to foresee that they will not be more accommodating to him on further occasions. At his age, such shocks will not be felt with impunity; it is then only his natural right to avoid them by withdrawing for a time.

Remember that if he does not follow this advice, he will regret it. Sensible as he is, there is no other decision he could take, which will not disquiet him, perturb his mind more or less and have an adverse effect on his temperament.

⁴¹ Cardinal de Rohan.

⁴² Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod did not leave Marseilles for Nice until September 21st. He was accompanied by Fr. Dupuy.

⁴³ RAMBERT, I, 560; REY, I, 491.

362. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁴⁴

Words of encouragement for Fr. Tempier in the difficult circumstances in which he is.

[Fribourg] September 2, 1830.

While my application is on its way towards Berne,⁴⁵ my very dear friend, I come as is my wont to discourse several moments with you. Before speaking to you about business, I will encourage you in your trials and all the perplexities into which you are plunged by present events and by all those with whom you have dealings. It is precisely in such circumstances that one ought to make one's soul soar as high as it can go, sustaining its constancy and energy, multiplying all the resources of our intellectual faculties so as never to allow ourselves to be cast down by adversity, or overcome by the obstacles and difficulties. I know that our ministry of peace often presents painful difficulties because it is attached to all the duties of conscience, but God will communicate to us the light of his spirit if we invoke him with confidence. After all, tribulations are envisaged by Providence as a means of sanctification for the elect. Far from acquiescing to the tedium of life mingled with the bitterness of adversity, it is then that one must resolve to live in greater conformity with our divine model and serve his Church with the most perfect disinterestedness. A day spent in this disposition gains more merit for us in heaven than years in happiness and prosperity. I simply communicate to you the thoughts that are most familiar to me in the sorry position in which I find myself. They are true, let us not be convinced otherwise.

363. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁴⁶

Profanation of mission crosses. Doctrines of Lamennais.

⁴⁴ YENVEUX, V, 61; RAMBERT, I, 562; REY, I, 491.

⁴⁵ The reference perhaps is to papers necessary for the acquisition of the property of Billens of which the deed of purchase was signed on September 25 (REY, I, 492).

⁴⁶ YENVEUX, III, 200; V, 103; RAMBERT, I, 562-563; REY, I, 492-493, 495.

[Fribourg] September 13, 1830.

Oh! how concerned I was at mass this morning with all these profanations which have been done to the cross of our divine Saviour.⁴⁷ The hairs on my head bristled on hearing of these infamies. It is worse than in the other revolution. Be it God's will that this may not draw down in response a comparable malediction on our unfortunate country! As for me, I would consider myself an accomplice of this sort of apostasy if I consented, as they have done in several places, to the removal of the adorable sign of our redemption. The Catholics by virtue of their beliefs have the right to raise up this cross, the worthy object of their adoration and no one can lawfully take it away from them. In my opinion, there is a greater scandal in the benevolent compromise between the civil and religious authorities whereby the image of Jesus Christ is clandestinely made to disappear from the midst of his people, than in the profanation perpetrated by a horde of illdoers who smash it to pieces. I doubt that they have had the courage to propose this odious confiscation at Marseilles, but I would not swear that it was the same at Aix. That is their affair, I have never given myself the right to vent my opinion in that region where, however, I am not a stranger. They tell me that the Messieurs of the seminary have adopted conciliatory opinions. They are men of very little merit in my eyes. It is possible that by dint of such illogic they may succeed in changing the accepted meaning of words; then this will be different but, in that eventuality, I would wish that they leave God aside and not implicate him disrespectfully in all these human vagaries and vicissitudes.

. . . If the doctrines of M. de Lamennais are the same as those avowed by his disciples, I renounce him completely.⁴⁸ I am revolted by the trends of the *Mémorial* and the *Revue*. Into what sort of principles do they want to drag the Catholics? As soon as our subscription is finished, cease to renew it. I do not look forward to anything better in their new journal for which they are circulating their prospectus.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ At Paris and in several large cities, the revolution was very anti-clerical: the assaulting of priests and high ranking prelates, pillaging of episcopal palaces, convents, residences of Jesuits, of the house of the Missionaries of France at Paris, destruction of Calvaries, statues and numerous mission crosses. Cf.: Jean Leflon, *Eugene de Mazenod*, II, 344.

⁴⁸ The Founder was particularly opposed to the ideas of the separation of Church and State.

⁴⁹ The newspaper *L'Avenir* of which the first number appeared on October 16th.

Great God! Into what aberrations the human spirit sinks by dint of wishing to assimilate the most contrary theories! They finish by losing all reason.

364. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁵⁰

Purchase of the chateau of Billens. Description of the property.

[Fribourg] September 20, 1830.

. . . After many costly trips, for one does not travel gratuitously in this country, I have reached a decision and have concluded a very onerous transaction, but one which had to be undertaken if I did not wish to risk being left with nothing by way of a settlement. They have arrived at an advance agreement, save for my approbation, on one of the most agreeable dwellings of the canton. I have visited it and admit that I find it charming, both in regard to the site and the conveniences that go with it. It is at quite a short distance from a small town and within reach of a village. The view looks over a pretty plain towards foothills which rise to the high mountains of the Gruyere but at a distance far enough not to be oppressed by them. The house has a pretty garden in front; from the ground floor one reaches, by a charming path, a little wood in which a stream meanders. A greensward has been cleared in its shade with benches that invite walkers to sit and contemplate the beauties of nature.

Beyond is a fine stretch of grass where calmly browse the cows of the farm which is situated a short distance from the chateau. Over there is the barn for the cows, and that for horses, hay lofts, threshing floor, repair shop, chicken house, dairy and all the farming equipment. Shall I tell you what? Three wagons, a sleigh, an elegant carriage, for all these objects had to be included in the expensive sale which was imposed on me. You will realize there was no question of hesitating, and that I ratified the contract that had been drawn up to bind the seller.

The distance is not very great since the other day I left at half past five from our chateau and arrived at Fribourg at a quarter to nine. However they reckon six leagues. You can see that they are not the leagues of Provence.

⁵⁰ RAMBERT, I, 553-554.

365. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁵¹

The Founder takes possession of Billens where everything is ready to receive the scholastic brothers.

[Fribourg] October 10, 1830.

It is today that I take possession of Billens. I went there the day before yesterday with my mother who remained to arrange a thousand details. I would wish we could settle in on the 15th, the feast of Saint Theresa and St. Cannat. Having signed the contract on the feast of Saint Defendant,⁵² patron or at least saint of the diocese of Marseilles, I would be happy to enter the house on the day we celebrate the feast of another patron of Marseilles. There are many things to do but, for the moment, we will sleep on mattresses; the bed boards of pine only cost ten francs; they are small but very pretty

366. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁵³

Arrival of the scholastic brothers at Billens and blessing of the house.

Billens, October 15, 1830.

Imbued with sweet emotions that the Lord never fails to produce in our souls when we try to approach him, I must not forget, my dear friend, that you are perhaps put out at the delay of my letters.

I had gone to Billens the day before yesterday to prepare the beds of our students. Despite any precautions we might have taken, it was necessary for them yesterday on arrival⁵⁴ to sleep on the floor on mattresses I had had made to be placed on beds which had not yet been fabricated, for workmen in this country take things easily. Yet this did not prevent them from having a good sleep. This morning I blessed the house and chapel where I enshrined the Blessed Sacrament. Devotion seemed to me at its best and we gave Our Lord a welcome from the depths of our hearts. I have reason to believe that this good Master has

⁵¹ RAMBERT, I, 554.

⁵² September 25th.

⁵³ RAMBERT, I, 555; REY, I, 491.

⁵⁴ The first group of scholastics had left Marseilles on September 8th. Others followed at intervals of several days. All fourteen of them passed through Notre Dame du Laus and thence proceeded by different routes to their destination (REY, I, 492).

well accepted our humble homage and has been pleased with our surrender and our confidence. For my part, I have been filled with consolation, and as I acknowledged myself to be unworthiest of all, I conclude that they must have amply shared in the happiness of this memorable day.

We placed ourselves under the special protection of our good Mother, of Saint Joseph, of Saint Cannat and Saint Theresa. After a short instruction fitting the occasion, I said holy mass; all took communion with great piety. We then had the benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament.

367. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁵⁵

His joy living with the scholastic brothers. The fare.

[Fribourg]⁵⁶ October 24, 1830.

I am still in ecstasy, my very dear friend, with the happiness which I have enjoyed during the nine days that I have spent with the family at Billens. I was deprived for such a long time of living thus with all these angels, whose worth I have experienced to the full. My presence was very agreeable to them and they never tired of assuring me thereof. I think also that it was useful to them for several reasons, if only to accustom them by my example to some indispensable privations, which are for that matter well worth it in exchange for all the advantages which are to be obtained in this agreeable dwelling.

The bread is of wheat and rye but very good; the quantity they eat is enormous. The people here, who eat little of it because it is dear and because their potatoes are excellent and make up for it, are astonished. Imagine that I have been obliged to have dough mixed twice in the same day. The wine is very bad in this country and very dear; the peasants likewise drink very little of it; they find themselves better off for this. The privation is not felt; besides it is too much in keeping with poverty for anyone to allow himself to regret it. When all the people of

⁵⁵ RAMBERT, I, 555-556. Fr. REY, (I, 494) cites two other lines of this letter in which the Founder said that he would soon leave to join his uncle at Nice: "I ought to assume my share of the solicitude and anguish that weigh on the others."

⁵⁶ According to the first lines of this letter, the Founder seems to be writing from Fribourg.

the area where one lives do not use a given thing, it would be unpardonable to regret it. At Billens, the water is of the best quality; everybody finds it good and is content with it; they take every day a copious and very good soup at lunch; it is the custom of the country; they have it likewise in the evening.

368. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁵⁷

Do not renew subscriptions to the Mémorial and to L'Avenir. Several French bishops show trust in the pseudo-prophet Martin.

[Billens] October 26, 1830.

. . . When our subscriptions to the *Mémorial* and to *L'Avenir* expired, I do not wish them to be renewed. Write this to Notre Dame du Laus and to Aix.⁵⁸ I am not in a mood to pay so dearly for the extravagances of the school of M. de Lamennais and I would be inconsolable should anyone amongst us be taken by these crazy notions. It is a great pity to see a man of his genius waste time writing newspaper articles in order to establish a ridiculous system which presumes that Catholics are in power in France while not even having a party, which indicates greedy men, who do not ask for better, to divest the clergy of its modest salary, and a very legitimate right, since it is only a feeble compensation for the immense goods that have been taken from them under the pretext of rendering them more independent, though they are made more dependent than ever, in that they no longer have any sustenance and no one will give them any. Much more could be said about this. Let him rather busy himself bringing to completion the works which Europe awaits with rightful impatience. Therein lies the vocation of this great man, and he is not responding to it.

. . . I indeed feel regret about the Bishop of Nancy⁵⁹ and similarly the former Bishop of Strasbourg;⁶⁰ they are both up to their necks in prophecies. Cardinal de Rohan is quite involved with them too, and

⁵⁷ RAMBERT, I, 565-566; REY, I, 495-496. According to the context, this letter might have been written at Fribourg where Fr. de Mazenod met several French exiles. We believe however that he would have written it rather after returning to Billens in order to join the community for the annual retreat.

⁵⁸ Most of the Oblates were Lamennaisians, in particular Fr. Touche who was in correspondence with Felicité (REY, I, 494).

⁵⁹ Bishop de Forbin-Janson.

⁶⁰ Bishop Tharin.

Abbé P[errin]⁶¹ with others of the Grand Almoners and I know not how many lay people; Count O'Mahony as much and more than they. When one talks with them, they speak thereof however with much calm, like people who believe themselves sure of their position. The Archangel said so to Martin;⁶² what more do you want? In the meantime, you have to swallow absurdities and, worse still, you have to put up with frightful calumnies which would put Louis XVIII, Charles X, the Dauphin maid, etc., in the class of the greatest scoundrels amongst men. No matter, Martin has said so; it is not to be doubted. I am, amongst all these people, the unbeliever *par excellence*. They offer excuses for me because I have neither seen nor heard; and I smile at their credulity. For the rest, we will not have to wait to see who is wrong because one of the prophecies already has to be fulfilled before the end of November. But this one, I believe, is not Martin's because everybody joins in the prediction of the future. Alas! good sense only makes us foresee things too much, without having recourse to good souls abused by their imagination, without believing in prophecies, for which I avow myself to be the most unbelieving of mortals.

369. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁶³

The Pope's decision concerning the pledge to be made to the new Government. Martin's prophecy.

[Billens] October 28, 1830.

Do not compromise yourselves further with the authorities of your country.⁶⁴ If the Pope states that you can do something, you remain free to do it or not, but a bishop cannot forbid it. It is no dishonour to modify one's opinion when the head of the Church gives his instruc-

⁶¹ Secretary of Cardinal Rohan-Chabot.

⁶² Martin, a visionary, who announced the return of Louis XVII.

⁶³ RAMBERT, I, 563-565; REY, I, 494-495. Rey dates this letter as of October 22nd and 24th while Rambert writes: the 28th. We prefer to follow Rambert who copies two extracts from this letter, each time with the same date. It is he, besides, who narrates more in detail all the happenings of the journey in Switzerland.

⁶⁴ Fr. de Mazenod and the diocesan administration had decided not to pronounce the political oath demanded by the functionaries of the State and which, besides, had not been required of the clergy. In his letter of September 29th to Cardinal de Rohan, the Pope expressed himself as being contrary to their stance. The Founder hastened then to invite Fr. Tempier to submit to this decision and thus to remove at least this point of dispute with the civil authorities.

tions. If the decision of the Pope is what they have told me, my opinion is no one should give an order, but simply let this decision be known and abstain from forbidding what it authorizes. One must be consistent in one's positions. The Pope, doctor of the Church, has pronounced himself, let that suffice for our consciences. It is not a question, it is true, of a point of dogma. It is not therefore a question of infallibility, so each is free not to do it. But also, it is permitted to each to conform himself to the decision of the first authority there is on this earth! According to the charter, the oath can no longer be considered as something sacred; it is a formality that is required, a transitory promise meant only to last as long as this temporary state of affairs subsists. It is incontestably this our legislators intend, and with the principle of the sovereignty of the people, one cannot interpret it otherwise. It is all a question of agreement amongst men, especially as to what the terms are worth. You will agree with me how delicate the matter is; when conscience can be more facile than honour, one is often embarrassed; one must therefore not be precipitate.

. . . If I were to believe the prophecies of souls who meddle with reading the future, I would tell you that after two years, but in less than three, of troubles and frightful disorders, calm will return. The famous Martin has said so; but you know my little faith for all that is not revealed in Holy Scripture. That Martin has said so is indubitable; that it will happen is to be seen.⁶⁵

370. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁶⁶

Feast of All Saints at Billens. Fervour of the community.

Billens, Saint Joseph, November 1, 1830.

I will not get much done on my letter today, my very dear friend, for I can only employ the time of the family supper which is even somewhat advanced, but it would cost me too much not to discourse a few moments with you on such a beautiful day when our angels have been so fervent and have crowned their holy retreat in the most touching manner, especially in present circumstances.

⁶⁵ REY (I, 495) and RAMBERT (I, 565) quote this paragraph without indicating the date. We include it with this letter of the 28th since the allusion to Martin inclines us to believe that the Founder had already informed Fr. Tempier of these prophecies.

⁶⁶ RAMBERT, I, 556-557. 563.

I kept you present in this charming little chapel where, from six o'clock in the morning, after our hour of oraison, we have begun this ravishing exercise which transports us heavenward, or at least brings Heaven so close to us that we could believe we were there, so tangible is the presence of God our Saviour to all our hearts. The tears which flowed from all eyes witness the sentiments which animated them and the supernatural happiness that was experienced. However we have kept to the fore our situation and have spoken to our Lord of our absent brothers for whom, by my order, prayers are said every day in the litanies which follow the examen. No matter, this very remembrance rendered the ceremony more touching, and all there remains for me to desire is that everyone be as well prepared everywhere and facing the present with hearts as ready. I could go on endlessly if I wished to speak to you of all the good there is to say about everyone without exception. They are just what I could have wished, without however presuming to flatter myself about them. They have realized all my hopes, as much in respect to virtues as to bearing and conduct.

November 3.

Our dear children left me no time to say more to you yesterday. They do not wish to lose a single one of the moments that I have still to remain with them.⁶⁷ One has no idea of all the gestures of deference and affection they show me; it is truly a touching thing; so I feel very keenly the sorrow of leaving them, the more so because this community life amongst youths so fervent is something so sweet that one perceives none of the little privations that it imposes; it is truly a paradise on earth.

As for the place, it is delightful, we are never tired of it. The habitants adore us; they are ravished with the beauty of the ceremonies and of the eloquence of our preachers. Yesterday, the service at the parish was most solemn; the rector has vestments worthy of a cathedral. As I could not profit from his invitation to officiate, he sang high mass with a deacon, sub-deacon and assistant priest, incense bearers, acolytes, etc. Never had they seen that in the village. Fr. Mille⁶⁸ preached marvelously. I officiated in the evening and led the parish in the procession of the dead which is, in this country, the most touching thing in the world

⁶⁷ The Founder, his mother, his sister and nephew Eugene de Boisgelin left Billens on November 16th.

⁶⁸ Fr. Mille was named superior of the community at Billens.

because of the piety and faith of the faithful. I would never finish if I wanted to enter in the thousand details which would assuredly interest you very much.

. . . I have let you know long ago my attitude about the crosses; better to die than take part in this apostasy.

371. [To Fr. Mille and the Scholastic Brothers at Billens].⁶⁹

Visit of Bishop de Forbin-Janson to Billens. Affection of the Founder for his sons. Discretion to be used in corresponding with France.

Nyon, November 17, 1830, noon.

God alone, my dear children, can know what a sacrifice has been imposed on me by the touching and insistant friendship of the excellent Bishop of Nancy. I had promised myself several hours to enjoy your sweet company, my heart felt the need to be expansive, to express to each of you the sentiments of this tender affection with which it is filled for children so worthy of all my love. It was necessary to suppress, to stifle somewhat this outpouring of a soul which powerfully felt the need to communicate itself, and on leaving you I had to bear away my sorrow, my regret, without any of the consolations that I hoped from your last embraces and the moments I had saved in order to devote them to you entirely. This sacrifice has been so painful that I have dared to offer it to the good God in expiation of what perhaps is excessive in the affection that I have for you, if however one can love too much the children who have never given me the least reason for displeasure, who advance with fervour in the way that God has traced for them and who give such fine hope to the Church and our Congregation which they serve already so well by their regularity and their good example. Dear children, may God keep you always in the dispositions in which I see you! May you ever grow in wisdom and virtue since the store thereof is inexhaustible. You know that the attachment of your father is proportioned to the efforts that you make to approach more closely the perfection for which we all ought to strive.

. . . One well sees that you have not yet acquired a right idea of the circumspection with which one must write in times of revolution. It would be impossible to let pass a certain number of expressions apt to

⁶⁹ YENVEUX, V, 123, 177; RAMBERT, I, 566-567; REY, I, 496.

compromise those who write to me and those who receive the letters. So, my dear children, I beg you to content yourselves henceforth to give news of yourselves to your parents through Fr. Tempier. The matter is too important to leave it to your inexperience. Mazet, for example, did not realize that he committed an extreme imprudence by relating that the Bishop of Nancy had come to visit you as soon as he arrived in Fribourg. He did not know apparently that this holy Bishop is proscribed, that a price has been put on his head by the brigands of his diocese, that they spy on all his movements and that all those who have too intimate relations with him become suspect. When necessary, one ought to fear nothing but, without necessity, one ought not to. Others, in addressing some of our Fathers, call them by their real names, others express themselves unconcerned about what goes on at Billens; in short, in spite of my recommendations, you have all more or less committed some imprudence.⁷⁰ So here I am obliged to take to Nice your letters so as to have them pass more easily or to transcribe them if there be need to suppress what should not have been written.

Geneva, eight o'clock in the evening.

It did not suffice to busy myself part of the day with you while reading the letters that you have written, and in discoursing with you while the horses were eating their hay; I do not wish to retire before saying to you a few words more.

My dear children, here I am already two days' journey from you, each day separates me further from my cherished family; you are all present to me, just as you are, and most willingly I concern myself about you before God! That is where I give you rendez-vous. Speak often of me to our common Father who is, with his divine Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, at the centre of our hearts; love him, ever let us love each other more in him.

I recommend to dear Fr. Mille to speak to me of all, of each of you in all his letters; as long as I am at Nice you need not stint yourselves. Each in turn can write me two lines on his own account in each of these letters; but do not expect me to write to you, it would take too long for my impatience. In several days Fr. Mille can address me a

⁷⁰ The scholastic brothers had given the Founder letters for Marseilles; he read them during the journey from Billens to Geneva.

letter, by general delivery, at Nice-on-sea, Savoy, without however giving me in the address qualities other than those known by everybody

My very dear children, I love you, I embrace you and I bless you with all the effusion of my heart.

372. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁷¹

Snowstorm while travelling from Turin to Nice.

Nice, December [2],⁷² 1830.

Our journey which had been very pleasant as far as Turin finished by our being plagued with a thousand annoyances. The weather was superb at Turin. It began to cloud on Saturday, the day of our departure.⁷³ We arrived on the evening of the same day at Limon, the last stop at the foot of the mountain; snow began to fall. We had, to crown our misfortune, one of those coachmen more brutish than human.

The postmaster had him told there was still time to leave because the snow had only been falling a few hours; he was careful not to tell us that; he let us sleep in peace at Limon. During the night, the snow had its way and when we had to leave in the morning, we were told that the mountain was closed by the quantity of snow that had fallen during the night. There we were completely stuck. I consulted the postmaster who assured me that it was now impossible to pass through.

I was on the point of returning to Coni when we saw from afar the carriage of Cardinal de Rohan who was on his way to becoming entrapped like us. I explained our position to him and that in which he was placed himself. It irked him to take the road back in order to proceed by way of Savona; that is the decision that we ought to have taken; we had been strongly tempted to follow this route when we left Turin; now it was necessary to decide promptly because the snow was

⁷¹ RAMBERT, I, 568-571.

⁷² Letter of which Rambert has not indicated the date but which narrates the journey from Turin to Nice as does that sent to Fr. Mille and is erroneously dated December 12th. Rey writes that the travellers arrived at Nice on December 2nd. The Founder had to begin this letter on the very day of his arrival. He would not have waited until the 12th to relate these details.

⁷³ November 27th was a Saturday; Rey writes that they left Turin on the 28th.

falling in large flakes. The postmaster, when consulted, did not hide the difficulty of the enterprise; he said however that it would not be impossible to succeed by muscular energy; he took charge of it himself, the Cardinal having been recommended to him by the postmaster general. From that moment, there was no more ground to hesitate, it was up to us to follow behind the Cardinal and to take advantage of the tracks that a gang of roadmen was going to dig out so that his carriage could pass through. We ourselves took some mules and several men to aid our coach and off we started, unfortunately two hours too late. We went up bit by bit through the ruts in the snow which had been dug ahead of the first carriage. But what striving and difficulty to arrive at the summit of the mountain! What awaited us there was what they call *la tourmente* that is to say, a most impetuous kind of gale which whips up the snow, obstructs vision and sometimes hurls down men, mules and carriages. We would have risked this new danger if daylight had not failed us. But the accidents inevitable in such a trip, the ropes which part asunder, the mules which refuse to advance, the harness which breaks and causes frequent delays! In short, it was night when we arrived at a little shelter which the King of Sardinia had had constructed, three years ago, as an asylum for those who would find themselves in our predicament. No one has perished since the good King had this excellent idea.

The Cardinal greatly desired to cross over; it was a case of descending as far as Ca, another hut situated below the three bends which are the sharpest and most difficult on the slope of Tende. The postmaster refused, declaring it was impossible. We were obliged to admit, two days later, that he was right. So we stayed cooped up there in the hope of descending the mountain on the following day; but the blizzard kept roaring on and we had to huddle in this miserable inn with scarcely enough to prevent ourselves dying of hunger. The Cardinal and his chaplain shut themselves up in their carriage that they had pulled into a lean-to shed where the numerous band of mountaineers who had escorted us had settled around an enormous stove whence the smoke had no escape and filled the house to the point of making us all shed tears and (our eyes) smarted greatly. So the night passed. In the morning, we were no further ahead. The postmaster, who shared our lot, told us again that it would not be possible to go down the first three curves which are most dangerous because the wind, covering over and instantly filling with new snow the ruts that the men would open with their shovels, there was no means of getting the carriage through.

There was no question of moving ours which was condemned to stay the whole winter.

Had I been alone, I would have risked going down on foot, with two men to help; but I could not abandon my mother and my sister. We resolved to share the lot of the Cardinal; that was the wisest decision that we could take. The day was thus spent in the boredom of this irksome position and in the discussion of schemes as to how to get out. Our men withdrew to their cabins with orders to come back the following day if the wind abated a little; we invoked the holy Virgin for that and recited the litanies.

The wind lessened during the night and ceased entirely as the day dawned. Promptly at ten o'clock, they brought skids on which to place the carriage of the Cardinal. I had begged him to take with him Mme. de Boisgelin and her son; my mother took the seat behind with the priest and as for me, I started off gaily in my shoes; but scarcely had they sledded forward ten steps, the priest and my mother were alarmed and wanted to get down. Ten minutes later, the sled broke and the Cardinal preferred to go on foot, as well as my sister, and there we were floundering on the summit of this frightful mountain, with snow up to the knees. Two men supported the travellers and helped them appreciably. I had none at my service because I had left mine in charge of our bags. I only fell twice into the mattress of snow and, after pushing on for a quarter of a league, we saw clear sky, something we had not had for three days. We went on foot as far as Tende, in water and mud up to our knees; but I was so pleased to be extricated from the snow that nothing displeased me

At last, at nine o'clock in the evening, we arrived at Nice and were taken to our respectable and beloved uncle; and after a good supper, of which we had an extreme need, we went to rest, thankful to God that no one took ill, not even my mother, who was wonderful at an age as advanced as hers.

373. [To Fr. Mille at Billens].⁷⁴

Difficulties of the journey from Turin to Nice.

⁷⁴ REY, I, 496-497.

[Nice] December 2, 1830.

. . . The snow began to fall when we arrived at Limon which is at the foot of the ascent. The postmaster hastened to tell our coachman that he should go through immediately otherwise he would have no more time; that worthy kept this a secret to himself and had us pass the night quietly at Limon. The next day, the pass was closed by deep snow. We were about to take the road back in order to proceed by way of Savona when we saw approaching the carriage of Cardinal de Rohan and thus coming into the trap like ourselves. He found it too hard to turn back and insisted on trying to pass. The postmaster did not dare refuse him; he sent twenty men ahead to clear the snow and tripled the teams to pull the carriage. We thought we should take advantage of such considerable measures and follow in the wake of this Prince of the Church; we climbed to the top of the mountain with unbelievable difficulties, but daylight was lacking when we had most need of it and a blizzard began to blow; one would say it was like the most impetuous of our hurricanes. Courage failed our mountaineers and they declared the danger would be grave if we wished to advance beyond the house of shelter so we stayed there and remained two days buried under the snow, seeing neither land or sky because of the wind which made the snowflakes whirl in every direction. We could only extricate ourselves by descending the mountain on foot, with snow above our knees and, lower down, mud and water above the ankles. After five hours walking, we arrived at Tende whence we set out for Nice in the middle of the night in an open carriage. At last, December 2, at nine in the evening, we entered the city and went directly to our respectable and beloved uncle whom the Cardinal, who on arriving several hours before us, had already informed. On seeing him so well, we were consoled for all the mishaps of our journey and thanked God that no one took ill, not even my mother who did wonders for one so advanced in years.

374. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁷⁵

Death of the Archbishop of Aix.

⁷⁵ REY, I, 498.

Nice, December 4, 1830.

I had great sorrow in not being able to preside myself the office for the Archbishop, for I sincerely mourn this good Prelate.⁷⁶ I share your fears regarding the choice of his successor and for several reasons; that is why I will not forget to prepare a shelter for those who will likely be asked to depart.⁷⁷ I have proceeded with this matter since my departure from Fribourg and I am not without hope of succeeding, if our prayers obtain God's protection; there are great difficulties to overcome, but what obstacles can thwart the prayers of souls who only wish to please God?

375. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁷⁸

Let Fr. Tempier be prudent in his relations and correspondence with the civil authorities. State of the Founder's health.

Nice, December 24, 1830.

I would have wished that some expressions be removed from your letters⁷⁹ and especially that you had not thought of printing your claim in a newspaper. That a journal speak of it, all well and good, but that you arrange for it to do so brings some disadvantages to mind. In short, I think that in the circumstances one must be strong but measured in one's terms, first in order not to give anyone a hold on us, then so as not to seem moved by an irascibility that they could attribute to the frenzy of being defeated, for we must not overlook the fact that they put us in the category of the vanquished. It is this tone that is moderate, but firm, that I advise you to take in the reply that you will

⁷⁶ Archbishop C. A. de Richery, of Aix, had died suddenly on November 26th.

⁷⁷ The house of Nîmes was closed (letter of Fr. Tempier, Sept. 3rd, in REY, I, 497) but that of Aix did not seem to be in danger. The Founder, in his travels in Switzerland and Italy, tried however to prepare the way for other foundations outside France; in Sardinia, in the diocese of Saint-Jean de Maurienne and in the diocese of Nice (REY, I, 498).

⁷⁸ REY, I, 499-500.

⁷⁹ In the Register of administrative letters of the Archbishopric of Marseilles, are preserved numerous letters of Fr. Tempier to the civil authorities who tried on every possible occasion to create difficulties. The letter of Fr. Tempier to which the Founder alludes concerned the dispute which arose following an incident provoked by young people during a service in the church of St. Theodore, November 28th. JEAN LEFLON (*Eugene de Mazenod*, II, 344-396) narrates in detail the difficulties between the episcopal administration and the civil authorities following the July Revolution of 1830.

make to the inconceivable and truly ridiculous letter of Monsieur Merilhou.⁸⁰ I think one must keep the heaviest words for the last extremity. I admit nevertheless that there is reason to lose patience A little word on freedom could be inserted appropriately. We cannot hide from the fact that the persecution is beginning. Write to us immediately after Christmas; I fear some scandal on that holy night and they will not ask for better than to make you responsible for it.

. . . It is unbelievable how the morale influences my sorry person physically. My heart is heavy, it beats with difficulty and too fast.⁸¹

376. [To Fr. Tempier at Marseilles].⁸²

Desire to return to Marseilles.

Nice, December 31, 1830.

Are you surprised that these wretches insult you when they treat the bishop as a fugitive,⁸³ a bishop with the age and merits of my uncle! It all makes me desirous to return as soon as possible and be beside you, but I am still waiting for the reply from Turin.⁸⁴ Believe me I am very vexed that my uncle is still here while the civil authorities weary his administration with their petty exigencies and their ridiculous pretensions, but it seems that the bishop has decided to remain for the winter at Nice unless the situation worsens and hastens his return. That is what pins me down here where every day I tell my woes to the waves of the sea which seem to me to lap the house in which you dwell by its side The pleasure I will feel on seeing you again will put my heart at ease once more.

⁸⁰ The Minister of Worship, who required that there be no assemblies in churches except on Sundays and on four religious holidays retained by the Concordat of 1801.

⁸¹ A great many concerns affected the Founder: the chaplaincy of the College of Aix had been taken from the Oblates, the house of Nîmes closed, Fr. Capmas had fallen gravely ill, Fortuné had also been ill for several days, etc.

⁸² REY, I, 500.

⁸³ They threatened to discontinue the financial subsidy paid to Bishop Fortuné if he did not soon return to Marseilles.

⁸⁴ Reply to the request to establish a house in Sardinia.



Father Hippolyte Courtès (1798-1863)
Superior of the House at Aix from 1823 to 1863.

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