

**Blessed DE MAZENOD**

**LETTERS  
TO THE OBLATES  
OF FRANCE  
1831 - 1836**







**Letters to the Oblates  
of France**





**Blessed EUGENE DE MAZENOD**  
**1782-1861**

Collection: *Oblate Writings VIII*

# **Letters to the Oblates of France**

1831-1836

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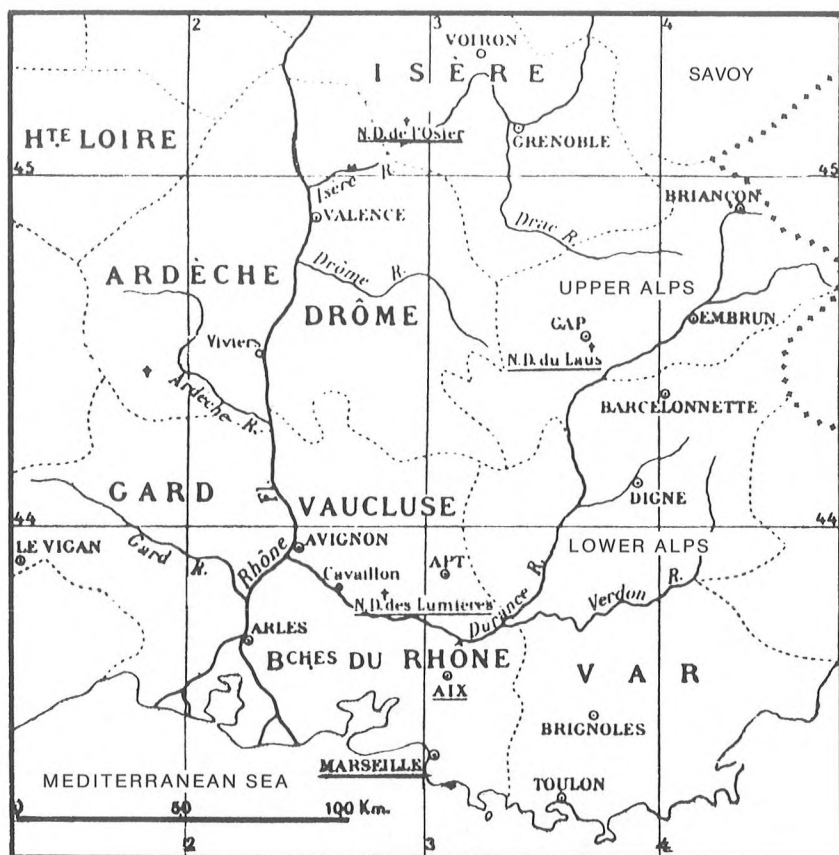
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*Bishop de Mazenod of Icosia (1832-1836)*  
*Painting kept at the General House.*





*Provence and Dauphiné.*

*Place names underlined indicate the Oblate Houses in France in 1837.*



*Father Hippolyte Guibert (1802-1886)*  
*Superior of the major seminary at Ajaccio (1834-1841).*



## ***Introduction***

*This eighth volume of Oblate Writings is made up of 221 letters by the Founder, addressed to the Oblates in France, dating from January 1831 up to the end of December, 1836.*

*As with the previous volumes, most of the letters that follow have had to be pieced together from short extracts made by Yenveux and the Founder's first biographers. The preparation of later volumes promises to be an easier task: beginning with Letter n.491, addressed to Father Casimir Aubert on October 11, 1834, we have the originals of a good half of Bishop de Mazenod's letters to Oblates. The reader's interest too is thereby heightened as the Founder comes through more effectively in all his spontaneity and as the wide range of problems he had to treat of with his sons becomes more evident.*

*The correspondence of the years 1831-1836 revolves almost entirely around two themes: the Founder's personal crisis that drags on painfully until 1836, and the efforts made to renew the expansion of the Congregation and to revive its spirit.*

### **The Founder's Personal Crisis is Prolonged by the Icosia Incident**

*As March 1831 opens, Father de Mazenod, after several months' rest in Switzerland, comes back to Marseilles and without much enthusiasm takes up again his duties as vicar-general. He writes to Father Mille, on May 7, 1831: "It's one long endless paper war against the powers of this world, big and small, far and near . . ." The civil authorities, both locally and in Paris, show themselves more and more in an anti-clerical light. This tendency is apparent in many measures: the reduction of the bishops' and vicar-generals' stipends, the enforced removal of the fleurs de lys from crosses and churches, the surveillance of sermons, opposition to processions, complaints of failing adequately to solemnize religious ceremonies commemorating the King's birthday or the anniversary of the victims of the July Revolution of 1830, etc.*

*When the elections of July 1831 are in progress, Fathers de Mazenod and Tempier are even under suspicion of having written a pamphlet against the Mayor. At the time they were making their way*

to Fribourg. Informed of this grave accusation, they turn back without delay to Marseilles to defend themselves. Prefect Thomas, the man destined to be the Founder's chief adversary throughout the years 1831-1835, places no credence himself in this accusation which in the end comes to nothing. At the same time he writes to the Minister of Worship on July 26, 1831: "I want [Mazenod and Tempier] to recommence their journey to Fribourg sooner rather than later; even if they are not responsible for the election pamphlets, I haven't changed my opinion in the least that they are priests whose absence would be a blessing."

But an event of greater gravity had taken place in the month of May. The municipal council of Marseilles had sought from the Government the suppression of the Bishopric of Marseilles on the death of Bishop Fortuné. The aged bishop, now some 83 years old, defended his See. His first step was to encourage the clergy and faithful to write letters of protest against the plan. Then in 1832 he went further, proposing a concrete solution to Gergory XVI. He wrote to him, on March 11: "I am now exceedingly old, Holy Father, and I do not entertain the vain hope that God will keep me alive much longer . . . . It is not the closeness of death that causes me pain: my pilgrimage has lasted quite long enough . . . . But what will become of my poor diocese? In the preoccupation that ensues from this thought, God has given me this inspiration: that Your Holiness might give me, not a coadjutor — that is impossible, and besides I do not want the Government to get involved in this matter in any way — but a bishop in partibus, someone who would enjoy my confidence and that of my clergy and people. For the little time that is left to me, such a bishop would be a solace in the exercise of my ministry, while on my death he would become the stay of my flock, the hope of my clergy, the mainstay of all my institutions."

Fearing that the project would remain a dead-letter, Bishop Fortuné despatched Father Tempier to Rome. The latter personally presented to the Pope the Bishop of Marseilles' letter and gave the Roman authorities an oral account of the situation of the Church at Marseilles.

After careful consideration, but without consulting the French Government, the Pope accedes to the request of Bishop Fortuné. He summons Father de Mazenod and, on October 1, elevates him to the episcopal state with the title of Bishop of Icosia in partibus infidelium, while the Congregation of Propaganda names him apostolic visitor for Tunis and Tripoli.

*After an absence of three months, the Bishop of Icosia returns to Marseilles and resumes his duties. Quite frequently he takes his uncle's place in pastoral visits and confirmations, but he remains unobtrusive. All seems quite calm and the new Bishop judges his relationships with the Prefect and the city authorities to be fairly good.*

*One may judge his surprise when, at the end of July 1833, he receives two letters summoning him immediately to Rome where the Pope has something of importance to communicate to him.*

*"Heavy of heart," he leaves Marseilles not knowing what to expect. He suspects that the Holy Father wishes to entrust him with "some troublesome mission in some region of America." He declares however that "when the Pope speaks to a bishop with the good of the Church in view, he must be obeyed, cost what it might."<sup>1</sup>*

*The Roman authorities gradually disclose to him the truth of the situation: the French Government wants no more of him in France. Behind the seemingly serene atmosphere that has prevailed at Marseilles for the space of a year, both Prefect and Mayor and civil and military authorities have been watching the Prelate's every move, twisting his words, denouncing him to Paris and accusing him of engaging in politics, of perhaps even having been involved in the assassination of the chief of police of Marseilles. In their reports, the French Ambassador at Rome and the Internuncio at Paris had put pressure on Gregory XVI to recall the Bishop of Icosia to Rome or to despatch him to Africa.*

*It will take Bishop de Mazenod four months to prove his innocence and get the Pope's permission to return to France at the beginning of December 1833, against the wishes of the Ambassador. "Comparing one prison with another," writes the Bishop to Father Tempier on September 8, 1833, "I would as soon try the one threatened by our fine ministers . . . . They are costing me my time, my money and my health. May God forgive them! It has put me in an ugly mood."*

*He continues working alongside his uncle, even though officially he is no longer recognized as vicar-general of Marseilles. In fact, the Minister of Worship had written to Bishop Fortuné on September 13,*

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Father Courtès, July 31, 1833, and to Father Tempier, August 8, 1833.

1833: "Bishop de Mazenod, having neither solicited nor received the authorization of the Government to accept the conferring of a bishopric in partibus, is legally disabled, in virtue of articles 32 and 33 of Law 18 of Germinal 18, Year X, from exercising any ecclesiastical function in the kingdom or of continuing to fulfil those of vicar-general, which ought to have ceased from the moment of his installation as Bishop of Icosia. I have therefore had to order the Prefect of Bouches-du-Rhône to withhold the release of any mandate in his favour."

The assertions of the Minister posed the problem in all its gravity. It was no longer simply a personal matter between the Bishop of Icosia and the Government, but a question of principle wherein the independence of the Church itself was not being recognized.

A short time after his return to Marseilles, in December 1833, the Bishop of Icosia decides to defend himself before the courts. The matter is going ahead rapidly when, at the beginning of January 1834, Cardinal Bernetti is instrumental in having an unofficial letter written from Rome in which he invites the Bishop not to go ahead with the court case and to live as far as possible in retirement, in accordance with the express wish of the Government. "The line of conduct called for here," says the Roman correspondent, "is quite unconnected with the personal opinion held of you. You are esteemed as a bishop who has every quality that is needed to make the Church loved in time of peace and feared when there is war, in both cases conferring honour on the Church, even to the point of martyrdom; but you are not considered to be sufficiently flexible and easy to deal with when it is a question neither of peace nor of war."<sup>2</sup>

In consequence Bishop de Mazenod renounces his action and keeps as much as possible out of the public eye. Even so he does preside at some religious ceremonies in Marseilles and conducts some pastoral visitations in the diocese of Avignon. Even this is too much. Paris is kept informed of everything and the Government takes the steps necessary to force him into leaving the country, striking out his name from the electoral list, as an alien. The Bishop of Icosia comes to know of this step at the beginning of September 1834, and, without delay, he lodges a fresh appeal against this decision; at the same time he informs

<sup>2</sup> Letter cited by RAMBERT, I, 641-642.

*the French bishops of the persecution he is suffering. He also writes to Rome to explain the reason for his re-opening the case notwithstanding the representations previously made to him. Bishop Capaccini immediately replies, in the name of the Pope, that he must again renounce his action. The prelate's letter even contains some expressions that would lead one to think that the Pope is not pleased.*

*It is the crucial point in this difficult episode of Bishop de Mazenod's life. The faithful "Roman" appears abandoned by the Curia, at a time when the police are free to expel him from France whenever they like and so separate him from all his loved ones: his uncle Fortuné, Tempier, the Oblates, etc. With good reason Rey writes that the year 1834 was a year of anguish for the Founder.<sup>3</sup> Even so, his letters to the Oblates remain very discreet about the matter. While during his four months' stay in Rome in 1833 he writes 34 letters to Father Tempier, giving a detailed account of all the accusations he has to face and of his steps in his own defence, for the year 1834 only 21 letters to Oblates survive and they touch but rarely on his personal difficulties.*

*He passes the winter of 1834-1835 at Marseilles, but in the spring he sees that his position is untenable. He has Msgr. F.-H. Chaiz named as vicar-general and leaves for l'Osier and N.-D. du Laus. There he will stay until the end of October.*

*It is at this moment that Father Guibert, the recently named superior of the major seminary at Ajaccio, makes a journey to Paris in search of financial subsidies for his institution. As a devoted son and consummate diplomat, he meets with the King, with the Queen, with the ministers. He dispels in their regard the misunderstandings and grievances formulated against the Bishop of Icosia and skillfully negotiates a reconciliation. In January 1836, accompanied by his dear son and advocate, the Bishop of Icosia takes the oath to Louis-Philippe and the Government enters on the register the bull that had raised him to the episcopal state.*

*Throughout the three-year conflict with the civil authorities the Founder's reactions are quite different from those of 1827-1830. He keeps his serenity for the most part, and is occasionally light-hearted,*

<sup>3</sup> REY, I, 608.



often displaying his characteristic energy and pugnacity. In particular he makes two resolutions and sticks firmly to them: submission to God's will and the refusal to become residential bishop.

He takes the first resolution when on retreat in preparation for episcopal ordination in 1832. He writes to Father Tempier on October 10: "It is precisely on this point that the power of the Holy Spirit draws me to dwell, and it is the fruit that I want and hope for from my retreat. In other words, in this last phase of my life I think I can say that I am firmly resolved, through the overflowing abundance of graces that I will receive, to try, by assiduous application, so to conform myself to God's will that not a single fibre of my being will knowingly swerve from it. I am telling you this quite frankly as you are my director and also for you as my admonitor to remind me of it, if need be, every day of my life."

He did not know at the time how much suffering his title of Bishop of Icosia would entail and how much patience and abandonment to God it would in consequence exact. But there is no doubting that he kept his word.<sup>4</sup> Called unexpectedly and urgently to Rome in 1833, he writes to Father Courtès on July 31: "The Pope will be obeyed, cost what it might." Evidently he sees God's will in this call of the Holy Father. Being apprised at Rome of all the accusations that have been made against him and seeing that it will be impossible for him to return immediately to Marseilles, he writes to Father Tempier on October 24: "... there is no need of regrets when one has done one's best. God makes use even of human mistakes to achieve his purposes. I do not know what he expects of me; all I know is that he governs with his wisdom those whose sole purpose is to work for his glory. I am attracted by the thought of peace and quiet. I have good reason to be weary of human injustice. And so I act accordingly, in view of my soul's good, even though I should obtain it for a time only. If God has decided differently, he will direct events and bend the will of his creatures in such a way as to achieve his ends."

The second resolution: refusal to become a residential bishop. At the time of his consecration, in 1832, the Founder writes to the Fathers and Brothers at Billens, on October 24, that the over-riding reason for the docility "of his will to his uncle's plan was the good that could flow

<sup>4</sup> Cf.: Letters nos. 379, 469, 470, 509, etc.

from it for the Congregation." When he is called to Rome in 1833, he declares to Father Tempier, on August 21, that "it is not with any eye to a future succession" that he accepted to be bishop at his uncle's side: "Were they to offer me the see of Paris, I would politely decline." This decision was transformed into a categorical refusal when Guibert spoke to him of reconciliation and of assignment to a see outside Marseilles or, at least, to the office of auxiliary to Bishop Fortuné. In the course of his reflections, in his letters to Father Tempier, he sets out a whole range of reasons for refusal: desire for peace and quiet and the regular life in an Oblate community so as to prepare himself for death,<sup>5</sup> incapacity to do any good,<sup>6</sup> ingratitude of the people of Marseilles,<sup>7</sup> human injustice which has embittered his feelings, although "at one time" he felt himself capable of the achievements of the greatest bishops,<sup>8</sup> too old,<sup>9</sup> inability to "compromise with error",<sup>10</sup> etc. On August 25, 1835, he discloses his whole state of mind to Father Tempier and explains the profound reasons that he has for refusing a see outside Marseilles "in his current state of mind" and where he stands vis-a-vis the Government. It would be contrary to his conscience, contrary to his happiness and contrary to his honour. He develops these three points at length. As to his conscientious objections to accepting a see, he explains: "People are always making rash judgments. Because I have successfully managed some difficult situations that would perhaps have been too much for others, they think that I am enterprising by nature and have a need for activity and to be busy. The truth is quite the contrary. If I have been an active man, if I have led a busy life, if I have undertaken difficult enterprises and brought them to a happy conclusion, it is because of a sense of duty, it is because it was impossible for me not to face the facts that indicated to me that such was the mission Providence was giving me; whereas on the basis of my temperament I have always had a strong aversion to all kinds of public affairs. I have never been able to understand how a man could move a muscle, make the smallest overture, for ambition . . . . When I began my ministry I sacrificed my inclinations so as to devote myself to the people. I

<sup>5</sup> Cf.: Letters nos. 390, 415, 435, 455, 465, 469, 536, 542, 548.

<sup>6</sup> Cf.: Letter no. 465.

<sup>7</sup> Cf.: Letter no. 528.

<sup>8</sup> Cf.: Letter no. 535.

<sup>9</sup> Cf.: Letter no. 535.

<sup>10</sup> Cf.: Letter no. 536.

took action inspired by zeal to have my good works on their behalf continue even after my death through the agency of those whom I have associated with my work. They will be happier than I, and I hope that God will grant them the consolations that have been denied to me . . . .”

Concerning his honour, the Bishop of Icosia affirms that he must stay close to his aged uncle, to Father Tempier and to the Oblates. “Again, do you not see,” he goes on, “that my honour would be as compromised as my happiness in the new career into which they want to push me? In the first place, everyone will say that I have sold my loyalty in exchange for a see, that this is what I was after all along, etc. The very Government, believing me capable of such baseness, will think to buy me for that price and will persuade itself that it will be able to make demands upon me that my conscience and my tact would no less have refused it . . . .” Finally, he concludes that he will take the oath to the Government on condition of remaining as a simple vicar-general of Marseilles or his uncle’s suffragan.

On August 26, 1835, he confirms his reflections of the day before. He will take the oath on condition of staying in Marseilles: “If I am more pliant on this point,” he confides, “it is on account of my uncle’s health and of our reasonable expectation of having him with us for many years yet: I have a breathing-space and time to reflect on what I would have to do if I do not die before him, as I have already failed to do on two occasions and as might well be my fate. In the period of waiting my position would be decently settled and my heart satisfied . . . .”

The Government made no nomination at that time of an auxiliary bishop. In accordance with his wishes, the Founder took the oath in his own person and continued to help his uncle as honorary vicar-general until his nomination to the see of Marseilles in 1837.

## **Attempts to Renew the Congregation’s Growth and to Revive its Spirit**

The Congregation, like the Founder, was going through a crisis at that time: few sound vocations, many departures, mission preaching impossible because of the July 1830 Revolution, difficulties in expanding outside of France, etc.

The situation does not apparently change much between 1831 and 1836. If there were 4 deaths and 10 departures during the period 1826-1830, we find 2 deaths (Capmas and Pons) and 13 departures in 1831-

1836. The number of Fathers and Brothers however rises from 34 to 39, since there are also some ten entries into the novitiate each year, of whom nearly a half make their profession.

In 1831-1833 the Founder's principal correspondent is Father Mille, in Switzerland. This is where the novices and scholastics are living; and it is where it is still possible to preach. In France the Fathers must fill in their time as best they can or do parish work. "I am in complete agreement with you concerning the disadvantages of parochial ministry," writes Father de Mazenod to Father Tempier, January 14, 1831. "The state of necessity to which we are reduced is a heavy cross for me and I would wish more than anything not to be reduced to this extremity." Father Honorat in particular chafes for want of employment. He proposes a kind of itinerant preaching, done by solitary missionaries, in such a way as not to attract attention: "Full of zeal for the salvation of souls," writes the Founder to Father Tempier, on January 20, 1831, "he would like to preach to the poor, from place to place, convinced that his ministry would not be unfruitful."

At N.-D. du Laus, Father Guibert and his colleagues receive priests coming to make their retreat and help the neighbouring pastors, at the same time inviting the clergy to volunteer for the American missions where the Bishops have appealed for help. The superior of Laus too urges the Superior General to find new areas of apostolate: "A budding Congregation stands in need of an element of zeal," he writes in 1832, "for us to take it easy would prove mortal."<sup>11</sup> Father de Mazenod knocks at several doors at that time, without success: in Sardinia and le Vallais in 1831,<sup>12</sup> in Rome<sup>13</sup> and in Algeria<sup>14</sup> in 1832 and 1833.

<sup>11</sup> Letter to the Founder, cited by PAGUELLE DE FOLLENAY: *Vie du cardinal Guibert*, I, 271-272.

<sup>12</sup> Letters nos. 383, 400.

<sup>13</sup> Letters nos. 425-462.

<sup>14</sup> Letters of the Founder to Cardinal Pedicini, April 10, 1832 and September 14, 1833; Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod to Prince de Polignac, July 12, 1830, to the Grand-Almoner, July 11, 1830.

*Several of the fathers press to be sent to the foreign missions, amongst them Ricard, Touche, Bernard, Tempier.<sup>15</sup> The Founder even thought "that there are too many with that idea."<sup>16</sup> He writes to Father Tempier on November 21, 1833: "Let's not push too hard, [let us wait on] Providence . . . . It really is madness to want to have children before one is ready for marriage. First you establish the hive, then you send out the swarms."*

*The position changes in 1834. Rey writes that it was a year of agony for the Founder, but the cross is a source of life: the year 1834 witnesses an exceptional fecundity for the Congregation.<sup>17</sup> The preaching of missions begins again in all the dioceses; in addition two important works are offered and accepted: the major seminary of Ajaccio and the sanctuary of N.-D. de l'Osier. Father Guibert is named superior of the major seminary of Ajaccio and Father Guigues superior of l'Osier. It is there that these two Fathers will in the course of a few years display the whole range of their talents and zeal before becoming bishops, the one in France (Viviers, Tours and Paris), the other at Bytown, the future capital of Canada.*

*These foundations and the revival of the missions are a new lease on life and the Founder judges the moment to be ripe to set the Congregation once again on a fair course. He insists on two points: an almost exclusive application to the principal end of the Institute and renewal of religious life in complete fidelity to the Rule. Nearly all his letters at this time are addressed to superiors and treat of these themes, which he judges essential. Father Tempier, superior of the major seminary at Marseilles and of the Oblate Scholasticate, remains the principal confidant; 85 letters are sent to him between 1831 and 1836, 49 to Father Courtès, superior of the house at Aix, 32 to Father Mille, superior at Billens and then at N.-D. du Laus, 21 to Father Guigues at N.-D. de l'Osier, 18 to Father Casimir Aubert, master of novices.<sup>18</sup>*

<sup>15</sup> Letters of the Founder to Father Mille, September 25, 1831, to Father Tempier, November 21, 1833.

<sup>16</sup> Letter to Father Courtès, November 29, 1831.

<sup>17</sup> REY, I, 608.

<sup>18</sup> The correspondence between the Founder and Father Guibert, superior of N.-D. du Laus, and later of Ajaccio, was at that time abundant and had been conserved. Paguette de Follenay had it in his hands at the end of the last century and quotes several extracts; nothing of it has since been found. Father Honorat, superior of Calvaire at Marseilles, received verbal counsel and advice.

*In many letters the Founder speaks of missions so as to recall to mind that they constitute the principal end of the Congregation.<sup>19</sup> He himself settles the list of missions to be preached,<sup>20</sup> he expresses wonder at their success and "the miracles" that they always produce,<sup>21</sup> he insists on the serious preparation of sermons,<sup>22</sup> he esteems missions more highly than occasional sermons,<sup>23</sup> even than retreats.<sup>24</sup> He is against ministry to sisters<sup>25</sup> and does not look favourably on the apostolate of the pen,<sup>26</sup> he turns down a college at Manosque: "This institution does not come within our province," he writes to Father Mille on May 16, 1836, " . . . it would once again divert some of our already scarce manpower from the principal ministry of the Congregation." The Superior General makes an exception in the case of the Fathers engaged with the novices or in teaching at the scholasticate and major seminaries. In their case he feels bound to insist on the duty of state of professors and formators,<sup>27</sup> to reproach the novice master for having gone on missions,<sup>28</sup> and constantly to reprove Father Mille who, in Switzerland, is engaged too much in preaching and not enough with the novices and scholastics:<sup>29</sup> "You are a good missionary at the expense of being a poor superior," he writes to him on April 21, 1832.*

*But it is the spiritual renewal of the Congregation above all that the Founder desires. He ceaselessly recalls the necessity of a sound formation for the novices and for the strict observance of the Rule by every one of the Society's members. At Calvaire "the force of circumstances on the one hand and sickness, death and other factors on the other have conspired to disturb our fidelity," Father de Mazenod writes to Father Courtès on March 6, 1831. He notes the same irregularities in all the houses.<sup>30</sup> He requires of the master of novices and directors of scholastics that they put their candidates to study as much as possi-*

<sup>19</sup> Letters nos. 500, 569.

<sup>20</sup> Letters nos. 498, 500, 503, 514, 593.

<sup>21</sup> Letters nos. 502, 503, 510, 568.

<sup>22</sup> Letters nos. 378, 389, 532, 546, 563.

<sup>23</sup> Letter no. 502.

<sup>24</sup> Letter no. 504.

<sup>25</sup> Letters nos. 510, 563, 566, 567, 586.

<sup>26</sup> Letters nos. 392, 568.

<sup>27</sup> Letters nos. 404, 550.

<sup>28</sup> Letters nos. 557, 559, 564.

<sup>29</sup> Letters nos. 392, 393, 397.

<sup>30</sup> Letters nos. 378, 390.

ble,<sup>31</sup> that they pay special attention to spiritual formation,<sup>32</sup> to regularity,<sup>33</sup> to detachment,<sup>34</sup> to meditation on the Rule and on the greatness of the Oblate vocation.<sup>35</sup> He requires of superiors that they write each month, convoke their council regularly, keep accurate accounts, be a model for the others.<sup>36</sup>

Following the canonical visit of N.-D. de l'Osier and N.-D. du Laus, during the summer of 1836, he writes to Father Mille, August 23-25: "The comparison between our practice and the abuses permitted to enter our houses by our young local superiors and encouraged by their own example only fills me with distress. Acting in accordance with their own ideas, local superiors have just managed to re-fashion the Congregation. I no longer recognize my spirit in the houses I have just visited, and indeed how could it be found there when no-one bothers any longer to consult me? Haven't I told you often enough, you young superiors, that necessity forced me to place you at the head of our communities long before you were fit to exercise authority, that your major defect has been to follow your own ideas, instead of taking your lead from what has been the practice prior to your arrival. If you had taken pains to follow in our footsteps, you would not have brought in all the abuses that I am having such trouble in rooting out . . . ."

In the summer of 1836, the novitiate moves from Laus to Aix, then from Aix to Marseilles. Father Casimir Aubert complains about this. The Founder gives him a reply on September 26: "The sudden death of Father Pons, whose absence will always be felt, and the blameworthy departure of Father Pachiaudi place me in the necessity of calling you to the major seminary at Marseilles. In consequence the novitiate will follow you to Marseilles. It is not through mere flightiness that I am changing the project in this way; but who can cope with completely unforeseeable events? Who can offer resistance to the very power of God? The ways of Providence are a deep mystery to me. Our

<sup>31</sup> Letters nos. 377, 387, 389, 393, 401, 442. But the Founder is not happy with Father Reinaud who registered in the University of Aix, cf. Letter no. 504.

<sup>32</sup> Letters nos. 393, 397, 443, 534.

<sup>33</sup> Letters nos. 378, 555, 571.

<sup>34</sup> Letter no. 388.

<sup>35</sup> Letters nos. 406, 407, 494, 547.

<sup>36</sup> Letters nos. 501, 513, 541, 547, 568, 569, 571, 572, 573.

*part is to submit ourselves to whatever they bring that is hard or painful, without ever being disconcerted, even when they pitch us into situations of great difficulty. When we cannot proceed under full sail, then we must resort to tacking and make progress with sails trimmed, even down to the smallest sail that is raised on the mast-head and called the topgallant sail. All I ask in these painful and perplexing circumstances is that the pilot be in charge during the storm, that the crew obey in silence and that I be spared complaints that are out of place in a crisis when each one must carry out his task as best he may in the post assigned to him."*

*These wise thoughts give us a good picture of the Founder and his energetic character but also of his perfect submission to God's will. The General Chapter, held at Marseilles in 1837, will be entirely devoted to the question of discipline in the Congregation. Little by little the Congregation will recover all its strength and it will be ready in 1841 to confront the demands that are going to be made upon it from now on, following on its very rapid expansion in Europe and in three other continents. Bishop de Mazenod himself, with the maturity gained from experience and suffering, will be ready to stand for a period of 25 years with a steady hand at the helm of the two ships: the Congregation and the diocese of Marseilles of which he will be named Bishop in 1837.*

Yvon Beaudoin





377. [To Father Mille, at Billens].<sup>1</sup>

*The Government's economies are made at the clergy's expense. The scholastics must not neglect the humanities and Italian studies.*

Nice, January 3, 1831.

... All the Government's economies are made at the clergy's expense. At Châlons, so as to be rid of it all the sooner, the minor seminary has been destroyed by fire, and a hundred students, badly needed by this poor diocese, have returned to their homes. What will happen to other institutions? I have no information, but I have no doubt that in the end they will take away all the help that had been provided for them.

You can see that soon our dear students will be the Church's only resource. I know that there is no need for me to urge them to be always worthy of their vocation. If you knew how wretched are some of the clergy I have come across, I will not mention here where, they would work twice as hard.

It is impossible to insist too much on the importance of study: and not just theology and philosophy, but the humanities too. We must oppose modern errors with up-to-date weapons. I never cease to be astonished at seeing so many able young writers amongst our enemies, using such art and skill on the side of lies and deceptions of every kind. We must prepare ourselves for this kind of combat too. We must have a good understanding of our own language and practice to use it well. It will be time well-spent. Get some fire out of that flintstone. You must strike it to start a fire, the spark is only produced by the blow.

<sup>1</sup> YENVEUX, VIII, 173, 177; REY, I, 506.

But never forget that it is for God you are working, that the glory of his holy name is at stake. that the Church expects this service from you. It means you must supernaturalize your studies, sanctify them by the integrity of your intention, leaving all self-love aside, not seeking yourself in anything; in this way profane authors have the same capacity to lift your thoughts to God as do the Fathers of the Church.

I recommend Brother Semeria not to neglect Italian, it might be very necessary for us one day. Those of you who already have some acquaintance with it would do well not to lose what they have and to build on it.

378. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>2</sup>

*The regularity of the community at Billens a model for all. Father Bernard.*

[Nice,] January 10, 1831.

. . . I would not have left Billens. It is a real heaven on earth. The virtues and innocence manifested in the life of all who live there would have been the joy of my life and have made up for the lower standards and lack of regularity of so many others who ought to be the ones giving them a good example. By regularity I mean fidelity in shaping one's life according to the spirit and the letter of the Rule. The Rule obliges us to work very seriously at becoming more perfect men — much more so than the ordinary run of cleric.

I fret with impatience at being hindered from bringing this home personally to all who do not understand it and who imagine that they have done their duty while still remaining far from their goal. Enough on this point which pains me too much! I simply cannot accept that anyone should settle for being less than adequate in his calling. The root of the matter is the acceptance of obedience and absolute detachment as to whether one does this or that, whether this one or that one is the superior. Without that, you haven't got anything.

<sup>2</sup> YENVEUX, II, 58; III, 66; IV, 4.

. . . I think that the person in question should have a supply of sermons ready: he asked for free time for that purpose. But I'm afraid the time he spends reading and perusing articles in newspapers diverts him a great deal from this work, which I had explicitly directed he should do. I urge Father Bernard to increase his stock.

**379. [To Father Mille, at Billens].<sup>3</sup>**

*Accounts to be kept in good order and historical notes of house to be compiled. Death of Father Capmas.*

Nice, January 10, 1831.

. . . I suggest that you keep your accounts in good order as I want them to give me a clear picture. Make it your business too to write an accurate history of your house and to record its small events daily: for example, the Bishop's visit, your conversations with the Deputy of Lausanne and other such people and what you talked about. Practically everything you put in your letters to me can be inserted in these notes. I am imposing this on you as a duty; put it on the list with your top-priorities. Don't forget the daily duties you perform in the parish, nor anything outstanding in the way of acts of charity, mortification, humility or fervour coming from members of your community — but this part is to remain secret from everybody, not to be made public until the proper time. Make sure you let me know as soon as you are up-to-date and get on with the work immediately. This is not just a suggestion I am making but a formal obedience. Leave aside other business if necessary to get on with this.

. . . Father Grassi has written to me again and to the same effect.<sup>4</sup> Let us compose ourselves in patience and a spirit of resignation to wait on the Lord. But we must never give up praying earnestly to be worthy of carrying out his holy will. God in his goodness wishes us to tread the path of trials and tribulations: let us accept everything from his hands. We need to be fully rooted in these great principles, for at this very

<sup>3</sup> YENVEUX, VI, 119; VII, 32, 266; IX, 60.

<sup>4</sup> Allusion to Father Grassi of Turin with whom the Founder was corresponding with a view to a foundation in Sardinia (REY, I, 502-503).

moment a great misfortune threatens us. Perhaps at this very moment our dear Father Capmas<sup>5</sup> has breathed his last. I have just today received a letter informing me that he is very near the end. However, just as the post was leaving he began to recover consciousness but this slight improvement does not give me much hope. You can imagine my anxiety. For three days I won't receive any further news! It is a truly mortifying situation: I feel it deep down in the depths of my being. You know the man and understand like myself what a loss he will be to the Congregation if the Lord takes him from us. But he is the Master of all and of everyone!

January 13.

I didn't want to place my letter in the hands of the postman the day before yesterday so as to be in a position to give you the news I was expecting today from Marseilles. My worst fears have been realized. It is with sorrow that I inform you that the Lord has called our dear Father Capmas to himself, on the 10th of this month, at 12:30 p.m., after a long and painful agony. I am told that, although unable to make himself understood because of the extreme weakness to which he was reduced, even so he entered with deep piety into the spirit of the prayers made with him. He has been buried in the vault of the seminary at Saint-Just. Please offer your suffrages for him with all the fervour you have! Pray to God for me, for the grace to accept the designs of divine providence with perfect resignation. *Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit*,<sup>6</sup> and it is our duty to add: *sit nomen Domini benedictum*.

### 380. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>7</sup>

*Father Capmas's illness. The Founder suffers but submits to God's will. Last will of Oblates.*

Nice, January 11, 1831.

My dear friend, you will readily understand my grief for our poor Father Capmas's well-nigh desperate plight. I am waiting for Thursday's post with impatience as well as anxiety: in all probability it will

<sup>5</sup> Father Capmas had entered the novitiate at 39 years of age. He had been novice master for some months, then missionary in the Upper Alps and finally chaplain to the soldiers ill in the isolation hospital (the "Lazaret") at Marseilles.

<sup>6</sup> Job 1. 21.

<sup>7</sup> YENVEUX, V. 91; VI. 136. 139; RAMBERT, I. 571; REY, I. 501-502.

give me definitive news of his fate. One must confess that sickness and death are finding their mark amongst us in an uncanny way: men less submissive to God's will than ourselves would be dismayed. The thought does not discourage me — I think that this is because I am sufficiently used to bending myself to the impenetrable designs of divine Providence. At the same time I certainly do not boast to being insensitive to the blows that seem at times about to crush us. I would not want that kind of perfection if it were offered me. I will even go further and say that I am in a way scandalized to see it lauded in some biographies and attributed (no doubt without foundation) to men who are thus, at the expense of truth, dehumanized and calumniated, in my opinion, in a cruel way. Jesus Christ is our only model and he did not set us an example of that kind. I adore Him as he sighs and weeps outside Lazarus's tomb and I despise and abhor displays of stoicism, insensitivity and egoism from people who seem to want to outdo this prototype of every perfection, who so wanted to sanctify every aspect of our sad pilgrimage.

So I tremble as I wait for the news you will give me on Thursday. My thoughts are all, on this occasion, for the common welfare of the family, more than of any personal consideration or affection. I prepare myself for whatever may happen with prayer and complete abandonment to the will of Him who is Master of our destinies and for whom we have been placed on this earth.

Here now is something else to add to your worries, my dear friend. If God in his goodness takes this poor sick man to Himself, you are going to find yourself in an embarrassing situation, and all because some in their wisdom would say that it is a useless precaution in time of health to make a will. I have nothing to reproach myself with on the score of not giving advice when it was needed. While passing through N.-D. du Laus I had advised him to gather together the money he used to leave scattered about with unbelievable carelessness. He told me on that occasion that it was his intention to leave some of it to our family. I think it my duty to inform you of the intention he confided to me. Take steps to see that his papers are not destroyed. I make no bones about claiming ownership of them. I mean his sermons, instructions etc. Don't let any one at all touch them, and if someone has already been indiscreet, make sure you get everything back into your possession. Lazy or incompetent people are quite capable of decking themselves in borrowed plumes. Please God, all these precautions will prove unnecessary.

My patience has reached its limits over my enforced inaction; if by tomorrow or Saturday the 15th at the latest I have received no letters, I will do my best to come to an understanding with the Vicar General<sup>8</sup> and leave.

**381. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>9</sup>**

*Death of Father Capmas. Suffrages. Will. Disadvantages of parochial ministry. Provençal association for the defence of the Catholic religion.*

[Nice,] January 14, 1831.

My dear Tempier, I was only too expectant of the sad news you convey in your letter of the 11th. I have been doing my best to prepare for it from the day you informed me of the danger. I foresaw its outcome and was left without the consolation of even a single ray of hope. So now we are left without one of our best members, a man capable of every form of ministry, while remaining simple and obedient, ever ready to do his duty and to do it well, and having no more pretensions than a child. Praise the Lord! It will be our refrain in times of adversity and of the worst afflictions as in times of prosperity and consolations. My grief is redoubled in that our dear friend died without receiving holy viaticum. I ask God every day, in the holy sacrifice, not to let me be deprived of that blessing at my death. The doctors ought to have foreseen the danger sooner; they do not have to wait for a man to be in a state of delirium before giving warning of the danger; this will be a lesson to us to be a little more on our guard another time. However, the communion you gave him during the night of New Year's Day will have made up for the lack of holy viaticum, and our poor patient (I place my hopes in God's goodness) will have received all the supernatural and extraordinary graces he needed in that final moment. The Lord will have looked kindly on the charity that spurred him to ask for the favour of enclosing himself in the isolation hospital to lavish the graces of his ministry on the many soldiers stricken with the epidemic

<sup>8</sup> Allusion to the expectation of letters from Father Grassi concerning a foundation in Sardinia. The latter wrote on the 10th, but still without being able to give a definite answer (REY, I, 502).

<sup>9</sup> YENVEUX, II, 41, 140; III, 32; VI, 139; IX, 61; REY, I, 502, 504; RAMBERT, I, 572, 573.

from Africa. Finally, he died in the bosom of the Society, and this is a sign of predestination. It only remains for us to apply in his favour the suffrages he has a right to and by whose means his soul will enter all the sooner into the full possession of that God who is so good, so faithful to his promises, who was the lot chosen for him and who must be his reward.

If it were permissible to express regrets other than these in the face of such an enormous loss, it would be to lament the failure to do what I had so strongly urged when I passed through Laus. Nor did I forget to put it into one, if not several, of my letters from Fribourg. See how thus we lose both crew and cargo! It is not that, precisely because of the lack of a will, we could not in conscience consider ourselves as our brother's heirs — when I say “ourselves” I mean the family. Art. 23 of Par. 1, ch. 1, 2 p, is clear on the point, but it is in the realm of conscience only, for it would not be possible to vindicate this right in the external forum. However it is a sufficient ground to set your mind at ease on a number of points . . . . In a word, you can well say to those who have written to you that they ought not to count on what they will get: the poor deceased had informed me positively of his intentions, which he had not had the time to execute, since death surprised him sooner than he was expecting it. I say again: this clearly manifested intention together with the aforementioned article should put you at your ease. It would not be right, for example, that in a bilateral contract only one of the parties were to be bound while the other were not held to anything.

I am in complete agreement with you concerning the disadvantages of parochial ministry. The state of necessity to which we are reduced is a heavy cross for me and I would wish more than anything not to be reduced to this extremity.<sup>10</sup> But what can be done about it? Must I leave in idleness men who are capable of working? All other considerations apart, I cannot assent to that! With a little more virtue it would be possible to obviate the disadvantages: such must be the direction taken by men who are sensitive to the demands of conscience and duty. To expose them to such dangers in times of normality would be wrong, but when no other course is possible, we must make a virtue

<sup>10</sup> The July Revolution made it impossible, for a time, to preach missions.



of necessity. They are not children, they can find in fidelity to their Rule the strength they need to sustain themselves in the fervour of their holy state of life.

. . . An association for the defence within the law of the Catholic religion appeals to me as both praiseworthy and in the spirit of the law of the land. Liberty of speech and the freedom of the press must be for all to share. However it is important that those who put themselves forward for written publications be persons of merit and able to sustain a conflict with a host of unrelenting enemies. I can quite see that there would be disadvantages in your being president of this council, but if it is in a good cause and you are really sure that your colleagues will never abandon the path of duty and leave you in a compromising situation, you could risk leaving yourself open to the unpleasantness that it is all too easy to foresee. As to the newspaper,<sup>11</sup> you know my opinion on the matter. A long time ago I would have loved to see it come into existence; today our resources are not the same. For myself I can no longer pledge in that quarter what I would willingly have given two years ago. If one that comes up to the mark is eventually founded, I would not see any difficulty in Jacques'<sup>12</sup> contributing occasional articles, provided he remained outside any . . .

**382. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>13</sup>**

*The Founder does not authorize Father Honorat's apostolic project. Difficulties in making a foundation in Sardinia or Nice.*

[Nice,] January 20, 1831.

I have had a letter from Honorat, as I expected, but I do not mean to write in reply as I think you are in correspondence with him. Please convey to him my opinion on the matter he asked me about. Full of zeal for the salvation of souls, he would like to preach to the poor, from place to place, convinced that his ministry would not be unfruitful, seeking nothing but the glory of God, and not wanting any wages

<sup>11</sup> *La Gazette du Midi*.

<sup>12</sup> The prospectus of the association was signed by Father Tempier, by several lay people and by Jeancard. Thus it is Jacques Jeancard who is referred to; he left the Congregation in 1834 but remained a diocesan priest at Marseilles.

<sup>13</sup> YENVEUX, IX, 138; REY, I, 505.

other than his daily bread. His noble convictions evoke my admiration although they do not surprise me; this holy priest is fully equal to all the demands of his state of life and is capable of exceptional zeal. Even so I do not authorize the pilgrimage he plans to La Louvesc;<sup>14</sup> apart from it being out of season, I see other disadvantages too.

I am sick and tired, more than I can say, of the absurd obstacles that keep coming up in a matter of a higher nature and where those who make the difficulties would have everything to gain.<sup>15</sup> They suffer from a lack of missionaries but they imagine that they are abundantly provided: that is the kind of understanding the laity have of religious affairs. The ecclesiastical authorities have a better knowledge of their needs, but they are placed in a position of such dependence that they scarcely have left the liberty of begging cap in hand. In their caution they carry servility to the point of putting in question projects that they are in a position to execute and of suppressing any request that might cause problems. You may judge from this how difficult it is to make a case, however convincing the reasons advanced. If it were not a question of God's work, one would be quite disheartened, but so that I may have nothing to reproach myself with, I still go on.

<sup>14</sup> La Louvesc in Ardèche, where the tomb of St. Francis Régis is found.

<sup>15</sup> The religious authorities in Piedmont were unable to take any decision without the King's consent. This is why the project for an Oblate foundation in Sardinia could not succeed. The Founder had written to the Chevalier di Collegno on this matter: "It is not only today, my dear friend, that I wake up to the fact of how many difficulties one runs into when it is a question of doing some good here below, so I was anticipating some obstacles in the project that I communicated to you. But this time it is not only a question of obstacles, it is the impossibility of making a beginning at all in the matter, even though it is a matter considered by the friends of religion as being of such importance that, for close on nine years, it has been brought up again and again at every opportunity. Should we renounce pursuing the matter further, or should we rather refuse to be discouraged and try again to make it succeed? Were I to remain on the level of nature, prone to flag, I think I could compose my heart in peace, telling myself that I had done all that depended on me, and perhaps more than duty requires . . . . According to what you say, all thought of Sardinia must be given up, although I had already fixed my gaze on this island as avidly as St. Francis Xavier did on China . . . ." Letter dated January 19, 1831. YENVEUX, V, 57-59.

383. [To Father Mille, the novices and scholastics at Billens].<sup>16</sup>

*Collapse of plans for an Italian foundation; Founder's departure for Marseilles imminent. Death of Father Capmas. Prudence in correspondence. Sixteenth anniversary of the foundation of the Congregation. Visitors at Billens. Friendship.*

[Nice,] January 24, 1831.

. . . The plans I spoke to you about in my last letter have met shipwreck: heavy storm clouds cover the heavens. So there is no point in my prolonging my stay where nothing further remains for me to do. It is a pity, an immense apostolate is closed to us. They are turning down a providential offer of assistance: God knows how greatly they stand in need of our ministry! The fault will not be laid at our door. I have done everything that depended on me, nothing remains but to lament how hard it is to do good in circumstances where so many succeed in doing evil and to adore God and his ways even when I find them very hard. It is the disposition I have tried to adopt in the latest misfortune which has befallen us, for I have felt very deeply the loss of our dear Father Capmas. To the grief that his premature death has brought me is added the sorrow of not having been able to render for him those services that I would not want to withhold from anyone in like circumstances. He certainly did not lack care and attention, but I would have been more satisfied if I had been able to be present as he breathed his last. It seemed that the Lord had sent us this man to fill the aching void left by that other tragic loss whose second anniversary we are going to celebrate in a few days time. Alas! the relief was of short duration. If Mouchel's<sup>17</sup> health is not an obstacle to his admission, we must hope that he will fill his place for a longer period of time.

. . . From now on address your letters to Marseilles. I do not need to remind you it would be imprudent to be very explicit in what you write, for the religious persecution is still raging. You will not find one

<sup>16</sup> YENVEUX, III, 21-22; V, 82, 123, 179, 180, 198; IX, 61.

<sup>17</sup> Allusion to Father Suzanne, who died in January 1829, and to Brother Fr.-P. Mouchel, who entered the novitiate at Billens in December 1830. Born at Rouen in 1802, Brother Mouchel had been a theology student at St.-Sulpice, Paris.

In YENVEUX (IX, 61) these three lines are included in the letter dated January 14 to Father Tempier; but they must belong here; they come from page 209, lines 15-20, of a notebook now missing, although the rest of this letter is taken from pages 208, 210-212.

action or a single letter coming from the ministry of ecclesiastical affairs that is not oppressive of the Church and her ministers. And this is still nothing in comparison with what they promise us. There is no lack of determination on their part: we must be grateful for their attentions as we wait for them to achieve even greater feats.<sup>18</sup>

Tomorrow I celebrate the anniversary of the day, sixteen years ago, I left my mother's house to go and set up house at the Mission. Father Tempier had taken possession of it some days before. Our lodging had none of the splendour of the mansion at Billens, and whatever deprivations you may be subject to, ours were greater still. My camp-bed was placed in the small passageway which leads to the library: it was then a large room used as a bedroom for Father Tempier and for one other whose name we no longer mention amongst us.<sup>19</sup> It was also our community room. One lamp was all our lighting and, when it was time for bed, it was placed in the doorway to give light to all three of us.

The table that adorned our refectory was one plank laid alongside another, on top of two old barrels. We have never enjoyed the blessing of such poverty since the time we took the vow. Without question, it was a foreshadowing of the state of perfection that we now live so imperfectly. I highlight this wholly voluntary deprivation deliberately (it would have been easy to put a stop to it and to have everything that was needed brought from my mother's house) so as to draw the lesson that God in his goodness was directing us even then, and really without us having yet given it a thought, towards the evangelical counsels which we were to profess later on. It is through experiencing them that we learnt their value. I assure you we lost none of our merriment; on the contrary, as this new way of life was in quite striking contrast with that we had just left, we often found ourselves having a hearty laugh over it. I owed this tribute to the memory of our first day of common life. How happy I would be to live it now with you!

... I think moderation is needed in issuing these kinds of invitations, not so much for the expense, although this must also be taken into account in our position, as for the way the house is arranged.

<sup>18</sup> In YENVEUX (V. 123) this paragraph is prefixed with the date November 17, 1830; it must however find its place here in view of the context and because it is taken from page 209, the last six lines, of the aforementioned notebook.

<sup>19</sup> Icard.

Billens is not like a house purposely built for a community. In that kind of a house one can have visitors without upsetting the community in the least degree. Sometimes it is hard to imagine that they are in the same house, or if you see them, it is when you want to do so and at the times set apart for that. At Billens, you could not bring in anyone without it having an effect on regularity.

So I advise you not to invite anyone to stay with you apart from the Bishop or some other important person. On the contrary, the way the house is arranged must serve as your excuse, and you must not be afraid to use it to exclude all invitations; otherwise now this person now the other will come to distract your students, to turn them from their occupations, from their Rule and to disturb you too — you really have no time for that. I do not have to counsel you any further against going to Fribourg except for the gravest reasons, that goes without saying.

January 25

I have just sent again to the post in the hope that there was some mistake this morning. Nothing, nothing from you; I am really upset. Patience; but I intend to penalize you for your negligence by bringing my letter to an end at this point although I had planned to tell you some stories about Marseilles that you would have found amusing. Even so I hate to leave all this space empty and not to tell you again how dear you are to me and that it is quite amiss of Father Mille, who is our intermediary and at the same time an integral part of that precious family, to let me wither on the vine, for want of the sustenance that is necessary for my affection. You know them, I am your father and how much a father! So, I cannot be satisfied to be treated simply as a superior. If you could place an ear to the keyhole when I am talking about you, or read what I write about you, you would understand what you mean to me, but you do know it and it is in the presence of God that you repay me my love. Your virtues, your devotion to God's glory and to the service of the Church will be my glory and my consolation in the midst of the assembly of the saints. As I wait for that, it brings a secret joy to my heart and I bless you and ask you for yet more prayers and for you to keep me ever in mind.

Goodbye again my dear children, how cold it must be in Switzerland. They talk of 10° at Turin, but that is not exactly hot. Here it is the rain that plagues one. There is something to put up with wherever you are.

All I know is that I would be happy anywhere in your company!

384. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>20</sup>

*The Capuchins at Marseilles must give up their distinctive dress.*

[Nice,] January 27, 1831.

I thought that the Capuchins had taken themselves off.<sup>21</sup> How ever did you allow yourself to be placed in a compromising position pointlessly, simply to comply with the caprice of two old brothers who are not willing to leave off their habit? That does not make good sense. We are not called to go against the tide of events and risk, at no profit to the good cause, a persecution that would give plenty of trouble in matters of much greater importance. If the civil or military authorities seized and imprisoned these religious, it's fine thanks you would have for protesting on their behalf. It is pointless to lay yourself open to more difficulties than the quite troublesome ones you already have in virtue of your office. Please, tell Father Bonaventure that he must bow before the storm as so many others of his confrères have done; that if he wants to stay on in Marseilles, and receive official approval, he must wear ordinary ecclesiastical dress; and that the two old brothers, if they want to keep their beards, must bring them somewhere where they will not be signs of contradiction. This is the Bishop's view as well as mine. Take whatever steps will best achieve this result, making full use of your authority.

<sup>20</sup> YENVEUX, V, 126.

<sup>21</sup> On the invitation of Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod, the Capuchins had established a foundation at Marseilles in 1825-1826. The Government tolerated their habit and beard as it wished to prepare missionaries to revive the French works in the Levant. But the Liberals were not slow to denounce them as they had always been an unauthorized Congregation since the French Revolution. In 1828-1829 the Government required their departure along with that of the Jesuits. The two De Mazenods put up a strong defence of the Jesuits but consented to let the Capuchins go: their Marseilles convent was not doing well, the members of the community lacked fervour. Cf.: J. Leflon, *Eugene de Mazenod*, II, 314-321.

385. [To Father Mille, at Billens].<sup>22</sup>

*Brother Mazet's illness. Father Mille's apostolate: he will need the help of another priest.*

[Marseilles]<sup>23</sup>, February 20, 1831.

I am quite shocked at his condition and never thought it would reduce him to this state. As it is, what is to be done? Only the doctors can say. If they consider that his native air would put him on his feet again that would settle the matter, whatever disadvantages such a course presents. Studies, piety and religious spirit will all suffer as a result. On the other hand, if he risks death by staying where he is, there can be no question of exposing him to that fate if there is a reasonable chance that he would get better in his own country. If the danger were so grave that it cannot be avoided by either course, I would not hesitate to say it would be better for him to finish his days amongst his brothers and with all the helps that the practice of religion affords to its children. But it would be important to take all the precautions necessary to avoid contagion and even excessive disturbance of the community. Even so I hope that it will not come to that, and perhaps the poor child is by now on the mend. If it had been possible to move him without danger, the right thing to do would have been to consult Mr. Récamier who is a very able doctor. Certainly you will not have overlooked this precaution in Brother Mouchel's case. To come back to Mazet, I would foresee plenty of trouble on the journey, if that desperate decision were taken. How would you send him on his way? I could not agree to one of our men accompanying him; it would be necessary therefore to be on the look out for some kind of traveller to look after him, but it is not easy to find such a person. So the best thing is for him to get well where he is.

. . . I thank the Lord for the blessings that he continues to pour out on you and on your ministry, and I am delighted to hear of your first appearance in the pulpit at Romont. My whole aim is that your presence in the neighbourhood should be appreciated and that your zeal should be constantly challenged. For this I feel that you need the

<sup>22</sup> YENVEUX, VI, 128; VIII, 159.

<sup>23</sup> Father de Mazenod returned to Marseilles at the beginning of February and his uncle at the beginning of March.

help of an assistant both for mass and for some of the instructions. If Brother Mouchel is ordained at the time you told me, you have your helper right there. We must not keep him waiting too long and if God in his goodness removes certain obstacles, I could very well be sending you a fine priest who is at the moment the superior of a minor seminary.<sup>24</sup>

. . . I want to go back again to the subject of poor Mazet's dreadful state. By all means find some way of getting him home to see if his native air will bring about some change in his cruel illness, but will he be up to making the journey unaccompanied? It is true that once he were in the coach there would be no problem, as he would be able to carry on quite comfortably and with no danger. I think that his parents would be generous enough to pay his fare. If it is absolutely out of the question for him to risk undertaking this journey unaccompanied, you would have to write to his family for someone to come and meet him at Geneva. You would have someone accompany him there to meet them on an agreed day: again I would not want him to be accompanied by one of our men even to Geneva. Jean could be entrusted with this charitable work. I really would have been happy if Doctor Récamier had been within reach to be consulted, we would have a better idea what course to take.

### 386. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>25</sup>

*Canonical visit of the house at Calvaire. Father Martin, Father Roger.*

[Marseilles,] March 6, 1831.

I have spent two days at Calvaire in spite of overly-pusillanimous advice that would have deterred me from this course. Perhaps I would have paid more heed to it if I had not felt duty-bound in conscience to attend to everyone's welfare. Both the force of circumstances on the one hand and sickness, death and other factors on the other had conspired to disturb our fidelity. Before crossing the threshold I heard each

<sup>24</sup> The reference is perhaps to J.-F. Allard, director at the minor seminary at Embrun. But it is only in 1837 that he was authorized by his bishop to enter the novitiate.

<sup>25</sup> YENVEUX, III, 61; IV, 17; VII, 100.



one in private. In the presence of the Blessed Sacrament I pondered on the persons and matters concerned. Then, with the Rule in my hand, I proceeded to re-establish the good order without which I would have had no title to enter the house. It must be said, to everyone's credit, that the matter needed only a half-hour conference in the course of which I put everything in its rightful place and from that moment everything has gone perfectly.

Only Father Martin, who has no more courage than he has common sense, finds it difficult to reconcile the work that he has been given and the regularity that I demand. The world will not be won with apostles of this kind. If I had been like that at 25 years of age, I think I would have begged God to let me drown in a luke-warm bath as a punishment for such cowardice.

I like better our good Father Roger,<sup>26</sup> who was living in the tranquillity of Fribourg. At a single word from the P[rovincial], he sets out within 24 hours and arrives at Marseilles without even knowing the purpose of his call. It was quite simply to name him chaplain of a poor community of fallen women who have amended their ways or are in the process of doing so.

**387. [To Father Mille, at Billens].<sup>27</sup>**

*Steadfastness displayed in defence of crosses. Anti-religious acts at Paris. Coming ordinations at Billens. Courses in literature and philosophy.*

[Marseilles,] March 19, 1831.

... In heaven's name, gather closely around this good Saviour who has made his home amongst you, redouble your love and your reverence for his divine person, press your lips again and again to the altar where he lies. Prostrate yourselves before him and pay him all the honour that is his due. Give him tangible proof of your desire to make reparation for all the outrages he is receiving in France. It is not only images of him that are being profaned; his very body has in these days

<sup>26</sup> The reference is to a Jesuit priest. The Company had a college at Fribourg.

<sup>27</sup> YENVEUX, IV, 144; VII, 50-51; VIII, 182, 210; REY, I, 507; RAMBERT, I, 574.

been trodden underfoot and devoured by wicked men in the church of St. Louis in Paris. A shudder goes through me as I tell it. This is where the illusion of freedom has brought us. For our part here, we have done our duty and rallied to the defence of the sacred wood of the Cross. They did not only want to take it away from us but to make us tear it down with our own hands. Twice his lordship the mayor sent us a member of the town council to persuade us to do that infamous thing on the pretext that it was the only way to save the town from a massacre. You can imagine how we replied and with what indignation we repulsed that infamous suggestion and so frustrated their wicked plan. But I would not be so bold as to say that they will not have their way in the end, if anti-religious acts continue to get protection. The fact remains that no priest of Jesus Christ will ever make himself an accomplice in such grave crimes nor be an idle on-looker while mankind's Savior endures anew his passion.

. . . As I write, the Bishop is ordaining a small group of two deacons and one sub-deacon<sup>28</sup> in his chapel; on Trinity Sunday there will be sixteen or seventeen priests, but not a single one for the holy Immaculate Virgin. Patience, each one from Billens will count for ten. I cannot tell you how much it means to me to let my thoughts dwell on you. I find there a real haven and many are the times I betake myself there. I want you please to let Father Mouchel<sup>29</sup> know how I share in his happiness and of my satisfaction on learning from you of his edifying conduct in the community. His priesthood will be the source of new blessings in a family that knows how to appreciate them. Soon our dear Pons will make his contribution to the spiritual riches of his brothers. I hope that the dispensations reach you in time: they arrived a little late from Rome but even so in time for him to be ordained on Holy Saturday if his lordship the Bishop of Lausanne holds an ordination on that day as of course you will not fail to request. Then Dassy and Ricard will have their turns and you will have to build a basilica for all the altars you will need to satisfy the devotion of so many new priests. Banter aside, I am not too clear how you will cope. In your place I would set up a small altar in the room on the ground floor where we reserved the Blessed Sacrament.

<sup>28</sup> This paragraph, copied by Yenveux without date reference (VIII, 210), belongs to the letter dated March 19. On that day, in effect, Bishop Fortuné ordained two deacons (A. Chirac and J.-C. Brun) and a sub-deacon (P.-H.-J. Martin). Cf.: *Registre des Insinuations*, Archives archevêché de Marseilles, March 19, 1831.

<sup>29</sup> Ordained priest at Fribourg on February 26, 1831.

Let us get down to business. Brother Ricard's grandiose plan afforded us some amusement. He might as well have suggested buying another mansion — and the finest, biggest and most expensive one in all of Switzerland at that — as embark on that plan. Money means nothing to him, he thinks it grows on trees. I do not pass the same remarks on Dassy's plan: this is a reasonable one and I do not hesitate to adopt it. Indeed, I think it is necessary to get on with it as a matter of urgency. I impose only one condition, and I leave it to your discretion as you are the only one in a position to judge: it is that you have reasonable grounds for thinking that the peace you enjoy is not going to be disturbed. You understand that if this is not so it would be imprudent to incur needless expenses, especially when we are already running low because of our previous exertions. Note that it is important to position the doors of the rooms differently than I see them in the plan: they must be three-quarters or at least half-way along the dividing wall of the rooms in such wise as to screen the bed when opened. Nor do I see any indication that you have thought about bringing some light into the two small side corridors. Will it be enough to put a window above the door of two cells? Think about it. Otherwise you could make a small opening at the back, but I do not think that we are anxious to let a northerly air current into the house. Next, keep down the expenses as much as possible. As to the plan to provide accommodation for the tenant-farmer, postpone it for now. I will look into it on the spot when I next come. Let's stick to essentials, it is quite enough for the moment. While we are on the subject of finance, my answer is that it is only right that your mass stipends be for your house; but locally you will only get stipends of 15 sous while we are able to provide some for 20 sous. You may draw the money from me when it has mounted up to a certain sum.

It does annoy me that you have not been able to sell the barouche. The money would have served to pay for the construction of the rooms on the second floor. In the spring it would be a good idea to advertize it. The coach-builder who made it would have bought it perhaps if we had let it go for 34 louis. If the sacrifice of one louis would close the sale, we would be wise to accept, if only to avoid the bank charges that would accrue if we sent you money from here, when we certainly have nothing to spare. You know how things are, so I am not afraid that you will abuse the freedom I am giving you to draw on me from now on for your current needs. Avoid needless expenses, indeed every expense that has not had my approval. But do not deprive yourself of what is necessary. You mentioned the tailor's bill and that of the shoe-

maker, you must also pay the butcher, and I do not see that you have the money, the 50 crowns from Lausanne must have long since been used up. So my dear friend do not hesitate to draw on me, I will honour your bills.

It remains to speak to you about studies. You will soon be finishing the literature course. However, I would not want you to leave it aside entirely.<sup>30</sup> It would be possible to continue on with it at least once a week, at the same time as the major course of philosophy begins. Make sure that this course of philosophy is done well. I think it was settled for Brother Aubert to teach it but that Pons and yourself would help him out with your advice to make the class go smoothly. I think that it should be begun after Easter. Do not keep putting it off. If anyone has a taste for Latin, provided he has the talent for it as well, let him develop it, Pons could give a helping hand to such a man of good will.

In your next letter give me a long report on the matter of studies. We will send you on some books as soon as possible.

**388. [To Father Mille, at Billens].<sup>31</sup>**

*Detachment from family ties. Community pilgrimage from Billens to Part-Dieu.*

[Marseilles,] March 27, 1831.

I would really like to set you an example of detachment and in my letters from now on not respond to all the impulses of nature. I will be frank and tell you even that this thought came to me one day during oraison. A host of examples crowded into my mind and encouraged me in this resolution. The pall that is draped over the bodies of the sisters in some orders — the Visitation for example — on the day of their profession, was a further confirmation. To be short, it has taken a sermon almost on the subject for me to come around to explaining that I will not any longer be giving you news of your parents<sup>32</sup> prior to the

<sup>30</sup> YENVEUX (VIII, 182) places two lines here that we have put at the end of the letter.

<sup>31</sup> YENVEUX, IV, 47-48; V, 266.

<sup>32</sup> Father Mille was born at Cassis near Marseilles.

time of our next meeting. But I do not want to take you by surprise but to let you have time to reflect on it. However, I can tell you that all without exception are well. I do not know what practice you follow in writing to them but I advise you to do so infrequently. I am afraid that you go a little too far on this point, especially in view of the fact that your parents can easily find out from me how you are. There is, you must agree, some underlying imperfection here. That parents should be demanding is all too natural and most assuredly I readily excuse them for it, but as for ourselves we understand the matter better for our opportunities have been greater. I could be more precise in saying what I mean, but I prefer to pass it on to you for your reflection. I know the man I am dealing with. To soften the severity that this way of thinking might suggest, I will not be satisfied today just to give you news of your parents: I will speak of your friends too, if indeed they deserve that name when not a single one of them has had the good sense to follow your example.

. . . For the simple matter of going and performing a ceremony you are expending too much effort. But I would be very happy for you to make the acquaintance of the Bremond family: I am delighted at your pilgrimage to Part-Dieu.<sup>33</sup> Something of that kind enriches a community that likes to be edified and knows how to profit from the good example that it affords. It is good to see these pious hermits consecrate their lives to prayer. What a help they must be to labourers in the vineyard who without a shadow of a doubt are following right on the heels of the Saviour in their apostolic ministry but who even so have always much to gain from seeing at close quarters the fervour and renunciation of the world practised by these wonderful children of St. Bruno. If they but knew of your needs, perhaps they would find in the vineyards that they surely possess the means to supply you with wine for the sacrifice.

<sup>33</sup> Cistercian monastery.

389. [To Father Mille, at Billens].<sup>34</sup>

*Sermons must not be too long. Ministry at Billens and Romont. Develop all the scholastics' talents. Prepare a precise report on each member of the community.*

[Marseilles,] April 15, 1831.

I do not agree with Good Friday sermons that last two and a half hours. You went on for a good hour too long. Make no mistake, whatever flatterers may say, long discourses like that are hard for both listener and preacher. Three quarters of an hour for an ordinary sermon, one hour and a half for a Good Friday sermon: that is the norm, do not trespass outside it. I see that you are being rather generous to the town of Romont. But you must learn to pace yourself, not too much, not too little. For the rest it is good at least that they appreciate their good fortune in having neighbours such as yourselves. I do hope that they will show their gratitude, at least by an outward civility.

. . . I understand you have always refused any payment for sermons you have been able to preach to them. That is how it should always be when you have the happiness of proclaiming the Word of God to them.<sup>35</sup>

It seems to me that the parish of Billens keeps you very busy, but also what a lot of good you are doing there! All I ask is that studies do not suffer because of it. We live in an age when it is absolutely vital to be able to confront evil doctrines with means other than good example alone. I would like some at least to prepare themselves for the polemics for which the enemies of the faith have such a facility and for which they show such talent. See that they both speak and write well. Think up some exercises that will give them the facility for this. Develop each one's natural aptitudes. Cultivate Latin. It would bring me much pleasure to see our dear Pons prepare some students to have the same success as himself. I would suggest that he encourage those he knows have

<sup>34</sup> YENVEUX, A. 19; II. 72; VII. 243; VIII. 174.

<sup>35</sup> These four lines (A. 19) were copied by Yenveux, but Father Estève did not insert them in the bound volumes. They carry the date of April 11, but they probably belong to the letter dated the 15th as the handwriting and paper are identical with those of the first paragraph (YENVEUX, II. 72).

the necessary aptitudes. I am waiting impatiently for the details about studies that you promised me. I say no more on this subject, except that I will return to it when you have written.

There is another point too on which I am eagerly awaiting detailed news. It is the reports on the personnel of our dear community; have them all submitted for my inspection, for me to reflect on at my leisure, each in turn, for me to see them as they really are. Their company does me good; it is as if they were coming for direction. It gives me such pleasure to speak about them, to call them by their names. I have them all present in my mind's eye. You really must tell them. At this very moment, I feel as though I had them around me, the spirit spans all distances!

**390. [To Father Mille, at Billens].<sup>36</sup>**

*Alterations to the house at Billens. Stipend of Bishop F. de Mazenod and the vicars general. The May 3 procession. Father Mouchel should work with the novices and scholastics.*

[Marseilles,] May 7, 1831.

... A choice has to be made between brick and wood for the partition walls. I would prefer brick, if it were not so heavy and provided it were not much more expensive. If you find that you can make a worthwhile saving by using wood, do not hesitate; in that case it would be sensible to have the planks well-planed and to give them a coat of grey paint. But I beg you not to go beyond what is strictly necessary, our reserves are considerably diminished. We cannot count any longer on the munificence of a certain person<sup>37</sup> who has just been deprived of 12,000 francs in revenue that he used to devote wholly to various charities. He had always considered our work as well-deserving a place amongst these. What is more, T[empier] and myself are also losing the income we have always used for the family; others' incomes too will be considerably reduced. This obliges each and every one of us not to put God to the test.

<sup>36</sup> YENVEUX, I, 211-213; VII, 93, 55\*; VIII, 158, 172; REY, I, 512, 513; RAMBERT, I, 576-577.

<sup>37</sup> Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod.

... It's one long endless paper war against the powers of this world, big and small, far and near. It is a correspondence that centres repetitiously on the most minute details with all who must needs consult us so as to leave the responsibility for our decisions on our shoulders; add to this council meetings that last for four hours, etc.

But I must say that in all this turmoil there is some consolation to be had. To give you an example for your edification, May 3 was a real triumph for the cross and it is thanks to the resolution we took always to honour our ministry and not to back down in the face of any danger when it is a question of duty. It was only right, after we had saved the cross from the latest outrage, when twice before the arrival of the Bishop the mayor had sent a town councillor to beseech us to remove it and shown us the bomb ready to explode and the town on the point of running with blood if we should pay no heed to such a just request, it was only right I say not to let the feast of the Finding of the Cross pass by without paying a signal act of homage to the crucified Saviour. It was consoling to think that, while in most French towns Christ had been profaned and his cross torn from the people's midst, our cross in the heart of an immense population soared above every head and was displayed as in the greatest days of its triumph. As a help to our people's piety and to make reparation as far as it lay in our power for the outrages that Jesus our God had suffered elsewhere, we decided to give to this beautiful feast all the pomp that the people had the right to expect. In line with this, the full octave was announced at Calvaire, a triumphal arch was erected above the cross, the holy place was adorned with garlands of greenery, banners and tapestries and drew the attention of the passers-by, ravished with joy on learning of a ceremony so much in tune with their sentiments.

The only ones put out were the mayor and some members of a sect opposed to religion. Letter followed letter on the subject, visits and warnings from the police, threats and dreadful ire. Luckily, in the interval that has elapsed since the glorious days (of the revolution), we have taken to heart its message of freedom which we as much as everyone else must be entitled to. In line with that our replies were firm and our determination to exploit our rights steadfast. Although the mayor wrote that if the Bishop would not renounce his project to hold the procession, he would hold him responsible for every eventuality, the procession took place. His threat would perhaps have intimidated other men, as on the vigil and the day preceding the vigil he had let a band of thugs roam the town singing the Marseillaise and end up by



breaking windows in the St. John district. But we placed our trust in the Lord and in our people's good sense. The Bishop wanted to take part in the procession. Nothing like it has been seen since the mission. Good order, piety and joy overflowing amongst the faithful. The presence of the crowd around the cross went on throughout the day and it was quite a job to move them out from Calvaire — from the outer boundary I mean, needless to say that the Church was full too — when we wanted to lock up at nightfall. There were no incidents, whether in the course of the procession or later, that could have given the least cause for alarm; on the contrary, tears flowed from all eyes as countless throats cried out with full voice: Long live Jesus, long live his cross! etc. Given the situation, it was very moving. The venerable pastor, Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod, was the object of countless blessings, and a certain person known to you and who, as you can imagine, had made his modest contribution to that beautiful day and who as usual had taken on his shoulders the contentious side affair and all the drudgery of the discussions between the two authorities, rejoiced secretly in his heart to see its fruits: glory to God, honour to the Church and its leading pastor, the joy of all the faithful, and he was happy for his part on the sidelines, keeping out of the limelight and desiring to be even more hidden, so weary is he of the duties that his position imposes, so much does he yearn for peace.

It is on May 1 that Eymar made his offering to the Lord. I am very pleased with him and I hope that he will attain the level of our dear Billens people without difficulty. He will need to apply himself to studies. He will begin to read holy scripture in the original, so be warned that you will have a hebraist in your academy.

I note with pleasure that in your community studies, piety and in the case of some the duties of ministry are moving ahead, it both delights and edifies me, but I do advise you to keep an eye on our new priest; it is essential that he serve his brothers, for him it is the ideal ministry, so take care that all the other things do no harm to general studies. I gladly approve his idea of starting a children's sodality with Dassy but only in so far as you judge it to be wise and neither his other occupations nor his health suffer as a result.

391. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>38</sup>

*The Fathers at Aix are lacking in respect for the Superior General. Father Courtès ought to come more often to Marseilles. The daily programme at Calvaire.*

[Marseilles,] May 17, 1831.

I cannot praise too highly the detachment of our community's priests. I have not forgotten that on my last but one visit M[oreau],<sup>39</sup> while he saw me enter choir after evening prayer, left off seeing me until the next day, and the other day B[ernard],<sup>40</sup> knowing quite well that I was to come to dine at one o'clock, absented himself from the house at that hour, so eager was he to get on with his work. I mention these things in passing to show my appreciation of each one's feelings and to congratulate them from my heart on the loftiness of their thoughts. . . . However, no matter how holy these good Fathers may be, I would be very happy if in accordance with article XII of paragraph VII, chapter I, Part III, you would let me know once each month how they stand.

It is really a pity that your health makes travelling so difficult for you, otherwise I would derive a lot of pleasure and profit from your coming from time to time to share your thoughts with me. I have to leave you in ignorance of many matters, as everything cannot be put on paper, that I would for all that like you to know about. At this very moment I find myself in a real perplexity with regard to two individuals, and in things of this kind I do not like to act solely on my own judgment, and a second opinion would be a great help to me.

<sup>38</sup> YENVEUX, A 18; II, 133; IV, 18; VII, 83, 247.

Father Rey (I, 513) summarizes a letter to Father Courtès that he dates May 4, but which belongs rather to the present one, since the Founder speaks of the next procession of the Blessed Sacrament on June 5 and of the refusal of the civil authorities to take part in it: "We try our best to make up to Our Lord for so many acts of apostasy. In any case, he has never, hardly, received such glory from these enforced participants. I take comfort in advance from their absence."

<sup>39</sup> Moreau was a member of the community at Aix and was the house's delegate at the chapter of September, 1831.

<sup>40</sup> YENVEUX writes: B. The reference is without doubt to Bernard who was responsible for the ministry in the church of the Mission.

... I cannot keep Father [Martin]<sup>41</sup> here, as the assignments he has been given overly distract him from his principal duties which are the fulfilment of his Rule. He must be given the help necessary to put him back on his feet.

I always forget to tell you that I feel all the better here for having introduced prime and terce after oraison, and matins and lauds after evening prayer. The bell goes for examen at 8:30, we pray, afterwards comes office. At 9:30 it has all been done. In this way we can devote ourselves to the other duties of our ministry, in the morning from 6:15 until 11:30 when the bell goes for sext, and from 2:15 to 7 o'clock when we come together for oraison.

**392. [To Father Mille, at Billens].<sup>42</sup>**

*Father Pons's project to enter the field of controversy.*

[Marseilles,] May 27, 1831.

... It would seem that the project proposed to me by Father Pons would change somewhat the plan he had previously confided to me. Isn't there a suggestion of superficiality in these various projects? It isn't that I do not approve, even wholeheartedly approve, the idea behind Pons's plan. What concerns me is that the community should not suffer on its account, for I cannot repeat too often that everything must yield to this first duty. He must give pride of place to the progress of his brothers using every means that he has at his disposal. The least negligence in this regard would be an unpardonable offence in my eyes. Provided the essential principle is kept intact, I very readily give my consent to his busying himself with the refutation and confutation of the Church's enemies. It will endear the family still more to the Catholics of the country. I leave you however the task of judging how opportune the thing is. Father Telmon would ask for nothing better than to contribute to the work's value with his research but it will be very difficult to have these materials transmitted to another's hands to be further elaborated. Over and above that, it is not sure that Jeancard clearly grasps and appreciates Pons's opinions, I see other difficulties

<sup>41</sup> In the letter dated March 6, Father de Mazenod had complained about Father Martin who had no idea how to reconcile work and regularity.

<sup>42</sup> YENVEUX, II, 38.

there too. I am not saying that the work could not be perfected by others than the originators who would have made a first elaboration; but I go back to my first concern: that the service of the community should not suffer for it . . . .

**393. [To Father Mille, in Switzerland].<sup>43</sup>**

*Sends Brothers Aymar and Azan. Advice on their formation.*

[Marseilles,] June 6, 1831.

. . . What I want is that you should give these young men all your attention. It is a question of giving them a formation, of passing on to them our spirit, of inspiring in them that love of the family without which they will not achieve anything of value. They are new to all that. You must apply yourself to that task as your first priority and not rely on anyone else to perform it. Eymard<sup>44</sup> has not so far had all the help he needs. It is not his fault and I think he has the aptitude to profit from all the stimuli that you will be giving him for his edification and that he will be getting from his brothers. He knows I want him to make up for what he has missed. Remind him of it again and read over to him this paragraph of my letter. He has little experience of obedience and there are grounds for fearing that he was inclined to be obstinate. I would be afraid that he lacks that equanimity of character which is such an asset in social intercourse, insistence must be laid on his practising self-renunciation and holy detachment, the pivot of religious life. He needs to lay a real foundation for his studies, examine him carefully on this point; whatever the price, the gaps have to be filled up in an education that has been interrupted several times and which must have suffered a lot from this alternation of good and bad influences. In a word, at all costs candidates, be they who they may, must be ready to do everything required for the completion of their studies and so prepare themselves for the service of the Church whose teachings are under attack from able opponents. My concern is not to drag out the period of formation. The essential is that nothing remain buried, that each one make the most of the measure of talents the Lord has given

<sup>43</sup> YENVEUX, VIII, 151.

<sup>44</sup> Jacques Eymar took his vows on May 1, 1831 and was sent to Billens after receiving minor orders.

him; in a word, that a man is in a state of readiness to defend the truth and the sacred deposit of faith, not only with prayer, but by word and the pen if need be. He has done very well in his philosophy and theology courses. Even so, it is your duty to consider if it would be desirable for him to revise the Latin authors and tackle the field of literature while the time is available.

Azan<sup>45</sup> doesn't have the same facility. He has also done badly at his studies, you must see what you can get out of him. He is said to be very virtuous, you have the means to test this at hand. Use it freely. You understand that your work is becoming that much more difficult and that it won't be possible for you any longer to devote yourself as much as you have done up to now to external works.

... I had forgotten to tell you while speaking of Azan that through a badly-understood humility he used not to study while at the seminary so as to be unable to answer questions and so as to be scoffed at. He often used to say before the whole class "I don't understand" so as to be taken for a fool; he considered himself unworthy of ordination and he would willingly have settled to remain a brother all his life. All these false ideas must be corrected and he must be made to understand that today the duty of every soldier of Jesus Christ is to prepare himself for everything according to the range of the capacity and talents that the Lord has seen fit to give to each one. Give these newcomers a guiding angel to help them in their new lives and to give them a taste in the contacts ensuing from their little mission of the full value of their vocation and of the allure of the virtues they will have to practise. You must give me an account of all this.

<sup>45</sup> J.-L. Azan was a seminarist at Marseilles. He went to begin his novitiate at Billens and left before taking his vows.

394. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>46</sup>

*Expulsion of Father Gustave-Léon Reynier.*

[Marseilles,] June 23, 1831.<sup>47</sup>

My dear friend, I have just fulfilled a duty that was very painful but both my conscience and the interests of the Society were loudly clamouring for me to act. I have just expelled Reynier whose behaviour had become truly scandalous in its habitual and open contempt of all the Rules. It would take too long to enter into the details of the matter. I ask God to forgive me, for the sake of the purity of my intentions, for having over-long delayed a measure of strict justice due to the Society rather than for my rigour towards the unhappy man it has affected. He was not prepared to do a single thing to deflect the blow which threatened him, and the all too human sentiments he manifested to me in this terrible situation make me fear that he has secretly nourished in his heart the desire that this frightful destitution would come about, which will have put this poor child in an habitual state of mortal sin. Even so he used to say mass every day and he found someone sufficiently ignorant of the indispensable duties of our state of life to absolve him in this criminal course of action to say nothing of the continual breach of every Rule and obligation, even of a higher order.

It remains for me now to discover the identity of this incompetant confessor, to exclude him permanently from hearing the confessions of religious of any Order whatsoever.

<sup>46</sup> YENVEUX, VIII, 274.

<sup>47</sup> YENVEUX (IV, 127) copies a line of a letter dated June 18, to Father Courtès: "The three postulants arrived on the feastday of the Sacred Heart, at 10 o'clock in the evening." As well as Eymar and Azan (letter dated June 6), three others from Marseilles and Aix went up to Billens in June-July 1831: Joseph Sicard, J.-A. Bernard and Saluzzo.

395. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>48</sup>

*Attachment of clergy and faithful of Marseilles to Father de Mazenod.*

[Marseilles,] July 17, 1831.

Complaints are made in your community that you do not give them enough to eat. In God's name, don't measure their stomachs by your own; they have good appetites, give them the wherewithal to satisfy them.

. . . It is on these occasions that one can see if the clergy is behind me. The fact is that they understand my dedication; they feel stronger when I am with them. But it is not only the clergy, all the faithful have displayed a satisfaction that is quite remarkable, and I am thankful to them for it.<sup>49</sup>

396. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>50</sup>

*Have Father Bernard looked after immediately.*

[Marseilles,] July 21, 1831.

My dear friend, if it is true that Father Bernard is as ill as I am told he is, he must be freed immediately from all work, d'Astros must be consulted and his directions followed to the letter. If the doctor thinks a rest in the country can help his recovery and that the house of Saint-Just, in the Marseilles area and away from the sea, is suitable for the patient, send him to me without delay. There is no time for hesitation when one is faced with such symptoms: an excessive thinness on top of his cough — and such a cough! I can hear it from here. If the service of the Church must suffer in consequence it is a misfortune, but the greatest tragedy of all is to see a man wear himself out and fall victim to a

<sup>48</sup> YENVEUX, VII, 195; REY, I, 514.

<sup>49</sup> Father de Mazenod had passed through Aix on July 2 and 3. He was going to make the canonical visitation of N.-D. du Laus, while accompanying at the same time three postulants who continued on their journey to Billens. The Founder had to return to Marseilles where disturbances had broken out on the occasion of the elections. He was welcomed with open expressions of joy.

<sup>50</sup> YENVEUX, VI, 114.

fatal consumption. Spare no effort in this regard. Perhaps we have already delayed too long in bringing help. I am writing a short note for d'Astros.

397. [To Father Mille, at Billens].<sup>51</sup>

*Care to be given to the new students. Devotion to Mary.*

[Marseilles.] July 24, 1831.

You have six new students.<sup>52</sup> It is absolutely essential that you do for them what was done for you — and more besides; the way the future turns out hangs on that, otherwise you will form good priests but you will never have real students. Understand me well, it is a matter of necessity that you make them your special responsibility, that they study what the others know already, that there be classes for them on their own, even though you may well feel that the others would also be able to profit from them. It is a question of matters that have to be hammered home to the hilt, things at the level of general principles. After that the constitutive elements particular to the subject they are studying and to which they must apply themselves. I know people who have run into difficulties for having neglected these preliminaries. Let us learn from experience. It will not be hard for you to see that nobody but yourself can be responsible for this important duty. It's all very well that Ricard helps out as your assistant but the chief responsibility must rest on you, as a result you will have to ease up in other areas as you cannot do everything. First of all you must cut back on the outings to Fribourg and on many others too which are probably more justifiable. Stay as much as possible with your community, keep for yourself the over-all direction only of temporal affairs, relying on someone else for the minutiae. If you can pass on to somebody else the responsibility for the theology class, you would have all the more time to give to your own task. I must not conceal from you that our new pupils expect to receive from you solid instruction, wise direction and noble example. I hope that they will not be deceived in their expectations.

<sup>51</sup> YENVEUX, IV, 90; VIII, 155.

<sup>52</sup> Scholastic students or novices. Cf.: Footnote 47 to the letter dated June 23, 1831. Eymar's name also was seen in the letter dated June 6, footnote 44. In the Register of those taking the habit, preserved in the General Archives, there are inscribed, in the period 1830-1831, only the names of those who have taken first vows.



Don't let's forget the Blessed Virgin, our patron; I believe her destined to appease heaven's anger by her powerful mediation with her divine Son whose redemptive work men have scorned. We must look to her for the prayer of Jesus Christ to be extended to those too (now so many) he said he would not pray for. *Non pro mundo rogo*.<sup>53</sup> This thought is one I often dwell on, I pass it on to you, with my blessing and a brotherly embrace.

**398. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].**<sup>54</sup>

*Firmness in face of the authorities.*

[Marseilles,] July 27, 1831.

I approve your attitude of reserve. It is a difficult situation; but with coolness and calculation you will win through in spite of everything, but you must be careful never to sacrifice principles. Thus it would have been necessary to run the risk of seeing the church closed rather than sing a high mass in thanksgiving for one of the greatest crimes committed since the world began,<sup>55</sup> whose immediate consequences have been to throw Europe and the entire world into commotion. It would have been an evil act, a sin, a huge scandal, a sacrilege, a profanation, a monstrosity. So I am not surprised that the clergy of Aix did not heed this unjust command, as you are [not] bound to obey when superiors command a sin. If Mr. Gal does not lodge an objection, as did Mr. de Suffren,<sup>56</sup> he is failing essentially in his duty. The time has come for the diocese to know where it stands.

<sup>53</sup> John 17, 9.

<sup>54</sup> YENVEUX, V, 99; REY, I, 537, footnote 1.

<sup>55</sup> Mr. Rey, vicar capitular of Aix, had arranged a solemn mass on the occasion of the anniversary of the "three glorious days" of July (the July Revolution, 1830).

<sup>56</sup> Mr. Gal, capitular vicar general; Mr. de Suffren, honorary vicar general.

399. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>57</sup>

*Mr. Tavernier's illness.*

[Marseilles,] August 2, 1831.

I am overwhelmed at the news of our friend Tavernier's grave illness. Not trusting in my own prayers, straightaway I called in the help of all our religious communities: Capuchins, Poor Clares, Visitandines, etc., everyone prayed fervently for this dear friend. I am waiting impatiently or rather with anxiety for news, please let me hear from you soon. Goodbye.

400. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>58</sup>

*Joy at seeing once more the Fathers and Brothers of Billens. Plan to make a foundation at le Valais.*

[Billens,] August 19, 1831.

We were all so happy to see each other again, after a year's absence, and a conversation (not foreseen by the Rule) got started, almost in spite of myself, by a kind of bewitchment, and went on until after 11 o'clock . . . . On the journey I made the acquaintance of a fine fellow from le Valais<sup>59</sup> who might be useful to me if I decide when I am there to do something in his country.

Please ask the holy Capuchin sisters to pray that I for my part may place no obstacle to the accomplishment of God's will, and that no-one may put obstacles in the path of goodness if that is the direction it is to take, but I always anticipate a lot of problems when a new enterprise in a foreign country is on the agenda.

<sup>57</sup> YENVEUX, VI, 169.

<sup>58</sup> YENVEUX, VII, 33; REY, I, 514. The Founder arrived at Billens on August 17. He made the canonical visitation of the community. The *Acts* dated August 26 are preserved.

<sup>59</sup> The Founder wanted to make a foundation in le Valais. On August 28 he visited Bishop F.-M. Roten of Sion with this in mind. But the project proved impossible as it needed the approval of the Diet for aliens to settle in the region.

401. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>60</sup>

*Progress of people, studies and material affairs at Billens.*

Billens, August 22, 1831.

. . . The over-all picture at least is as excellent as one could wish. In the course of the conference, I noted nothing but virtue. The only thing is that Dassý lets the bossy side of his character have too much play and it is the same with his stubbornness when he has once got some idea into his head.

Let us turn to matters of management. It is a great pity. There will be no harvest this year. The whole ground was sown, three sacks of wheat I think. Six were harvested from which the seed must be deducted before being divided up. It would have been as well to leave the land unsown. There will be absolutely no profit of any kind whatsoever. That leaves the potatoes, turnips and some cabbages. I don't understand a thing of the mess they have got into over their cows: they sold the ones that were giving milk to buy some younger ones that give practically none. I haven't yet plumbed the depths of this mystery but I suspect that Mille has been duped by the tenant-farmer who has only his own interest in view, and it doesn't always coincide with ours. Meanwhile, all the purchases of animals, which belong jointly to the landlord and tenant-farmer and which ought also to have been bought at joint expense, have come out of our bottomless pocket, thus adding to what the tenant-farmer owes without in any way augmenting his capacity to pay it off. However, there is no choice but to buy cows to eat up the hay, practically the only thing produced in these parts, but at the end I would like to see some butter and cheeses for sale and I am shown nothing but cow-pats. In short, I am very dissatisfied without knowing who precisely to blame for the situation.

Everyone is very well. And in fact the only thing lacking here is wine, a lack shared by everyone in these parts. They drink it occasionally with visitors. For the rest, it does not enter their heads. The daily fare is very good. Every day they have soup, two helpings, a good piece of beef, a course of cabbage and newly-salted pork, very fine and tasty and very often too some local sausage. That makes three courses, not

<sup>60</sup> YENVEUX, VII, 190-191; VIII, 173.

counting the sausages. At other times they have a plate of creamed turnips and cheese for dessert. At evening they often have veal. The morning and evening soups are made from stock and bread is freely available. You see there is no cause for complaint.

With this they do good work, teachers and students, each does his duty. Classes of dogmatic and moral theology, philosophy, sacred elocution, mathematics, literature, history, geography, not to mention singing and liturgy. For the moment German cannot be fitted in, there are not sufficient hours in the day or even in the week. All these different occupations are well distributed, in such a way that not a moment of the day is lost.<sup>61</sup>

**402. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>62</sup>**

*The August 15 procession.*

Billens, August 24, 1831.

. . . What splendid people we have at Marseilles! You will have to go a long way to find their equals! Yes, that dastardly outrage<sup>63</sup> well deserved the punishment meted out to the people responsible, and if they come back another time it will serve them right if you hit them even harder, for it is really too bad when a bunch of hooligans can brag of their immunity and insult religion and all that is dear to the 140,000 who make up the majority of the people here.

<sup>61</sup> Father Yenveux writes that this paragraph is an extract from the acts of visitation, but we are dealing surely with the continuation of the letter dated August 22. The person addressed is not indicated, but on the basis of the content there can be no doubt about his identity.

<sup>62</sup> REY, I, 519.

<sup>63</sup> The mayor had requested the suppression of the procession on the feast of the Assumption. Bishop Fortuné went ahead with it all the same. A group of men attacked the young girls who led the procession and momentarily seized possession of the Cross, which was courageously defended by the Catholics who followed the procession.

**403. [To Father Mille and the novices and scholastics of Billens].**<sup>64</sup>

*Sorrow on having to leave Billens.*

[Geneva,] September 17,<sup>65</sup> 1831.

My dear children, I am never going to become such a stoic as not to feel it when taking my leave of a community like yours. It is just as well I don't experience the need to acquire that pagan brand of virtue, sign as it is of a total lack of charity and complete heartlessness. The men we model ourselves on suggest a different way, theirs is the only teaching I understand and I would not be able to imitate any other style of perfection.<sup>66</sup>

How much I love you! I feel it when I am with you, I feel it when I am far from you, you are always present to my thoughts and you live in my heart. Yesterday and today I was with you in the spirit at your holy exercises. This morning I was at Our Lord's feet in the church at Geneva at the self-same moment as you were surrounding the divine Master in the course of the office of sext and examen. I saw you in Him, and thus, although already far away, we were very close to one another. I am writing to you in all probability at the very time you are discussing me, it is the time of your recreation after supper. I entertain myself in this way with this cherished illusion. How could I lose sight of, how could I forget the happiness I felt when you were around me and I wanted to be wholly present to each one of you? I will try to make a virtue of this cruel privation, resigning myself to its endurance, as such is God's will and in that lies all my duty. I will keep close watch on myself not to transgress.

As I leave you now I am going to say vespers and compline, matins and lauds, bringing me into your hours of slumber. So I will be keeping watch close by you in spirit, as Our Lord was close to his apostles, and if I cannot tuck you back into your blankets, as the Master did for them when their cloaks slipped off them, at least I will see you in my

<sup>64</sup> YENVEUX, V, 165, 178.

<sup>65</sup> Father Rey (I, 515) says that the Founder and his nephew Louis de Boisgelin left Billens on September 12.

<sup>66</sup> Yenveux (V, 165) says that this paragraph is an extract from the act of visitation, but the passage is not found in the act of visitation; what is more, it is taken from page 218 (first 5 lines) of the notebook of letters, missing today, while the rest of the letter dated September 17 comes from page 218 (last 14 lines).

mind's eye as you rest, and that vision will be a powerful motive for my fervour, so ingenious is love, so potent an agent of our souls' transformation. Goodbye, I hold you all close to my heart and give you my blessing.

**404. [To Father Mille, at Billens].<sup>67</sup>**

*Father Mille's retreat. Importance of his task. Studies. The time is not ripe for going to the foreign missions.*

[Marseilles,] September 25,<sup>68</sup> 1831.

. . . the life of St. Liguori you wish to make a present of to the Carthusians.<sup>69</sup> I would like to join you in this little token of gratitude for the charitable welcome they gave you and for their indirect offers of help, inspired as they were by an initial movement of compassion. You were right to seem not to have understood. If it was more than a holy velleity, their being aware of the need they can of their own accord supply the remedy. You have to be satisfied with that. I am really happy that you experienced consolation during your retreat. I would not have second thoughts about having put you in the way of this happiness if you have rooted yourself in the profound conviction that while we are nothing, we can achieve a lot with God's help when, placing ourselves in a state of complete detachment, we turn for guidance to obedience as making known to us the will of the Master we serve and who has pledged himself to give us his powerful help by means of his grace in the various ministries that he assigns to us. So if you renounce yourself entirely, together with your tastes and even the reasonings your mind may entertain, you will give a good account of yourself in the delicate task imposed on you. I am not trying to minimize your own estimate of the burden that weighs you down. On the contrary, I agree that it could not weigh more heavily on your shoulders, but by living in close union with God, pondering frequently on the importance of your tasks and studying how men who have

<sup>67</sup> YENVEUX. VIII. 154, 158, 193.

<sup>68</sup> Yenveux prefixes these three extracts with the same date: September 25. This poses a problem. In the second paragraph, the Founder speaks of the C(hapter) "which wanted to pass a canon on studies." The Chapter however was held on September 28, 29 and 30. We think that the letter could have been begun on the 25th and finished only after the Chapter.

<sup>69</sup> Probably Father Mille had made his annual retreat with the Carthusians.

achieved success in this field have acted, you will achieve the same results. But you must apply yourself to your task and tell yourself again and again that God, Church and religious family will be demanding an account *villicationis tuae*.<sup>70</sup> Go ahead finally with full confidence and quietly correct in the light of experience the small mistakes that come to light as you go on your way.

I am waiting impatiently to hear that Father Pons has set to work. We were agreed that from now on an over-view of the tracts would be given and that the professor would not wait until the beginning of class to see what there is to say. I make no comment on past mistakes, but for the future it would without question be a very serious matter. I was very careful not to speak of it in the C[hapter] which wanted to pass a canon on studies, such is the value and with good reason that we all place on studies. It is the duty of the philosophy teacher to prod his pupils somewhat. In any case someone else must have the job of giving the finishing touches.

I urge you to deter Ricard from his plans of going overseas. That is out of the question for him; he should consider himself lucky that he is working ahead of time in the vineyard of the Father of the family. He should walk humbly before Him and not give himself up to idle dreams of a future that will perhaps never come. It seems that Father Tempier's words were wasted on you when he addressed you on the subject of the idle desires swarming inside Father Touche's head. Busy yourselves with your studies at Billens and let each one strive might and main to acquire the virtues of his holy state. A man is being formed for every kind of ministry when it is obedience that assigns each one his duties.

**405. [To the novices and scholastics, at Billens].<sup>71</sup>**

*Greetings and prayers on the occasion of the annual retreat.*

[Marseilles,] October 25, 1831.

My very dear friends, you would be surprised if you did not receive a few lines from me, by the hand of my nephew, but I remind you that I am on retreat. You know that I will emerge from it only

<sup>70</sup> Luke 16, 2.

<sup>71</sup> YENVEUX, IV, 183.

after All Saints' Day. I defer until then my reply to the letter that came to me yesterday from Billens. All I can do today is to commend myself to your prayers as I unite myself with you in your holy exercises . . . .

**406. [To Father Mille and the Fathers and Brothers at Billens].<sup>72</sup>**

*Union in prayer. Greatness of our vocation which is that of the apostles. Responsibility. Brother Bernard. Virtues that must be imparted to the novices. Local assistants.*

[Marseilles, ] November 1, 1831.

To give you tangible proof of my good will, I cannot bring my retreat to an end without writing you at least a few lines. From this you see, my dear ones, that you are first in my thoughts on my descent from the holy mountain where, in conformity with the Rule and following the counsel of our divine Master, I have just *quiescere pusillum*.<sup>73</sup> I must even admit that I have not waited for the end of my retreat to turn my thoughts in your direction. On many occasions you were in my thoughts and not by way of distraction. This morning as on others, in the deep silence of the pre-dawn celebration of the sacred mysteries in the seminary chapel, you were there in my thoughts to swell the number of the fervent disciples who had anticipated the break of day to give thanks to God for the great gift that has not been accorded to all. This kiss of peace and all the graces of the communion of saints went forth far and wide and reached as far as yourselves, I have no doubt, as the sacrifice from which they flow was offered for you as for those present. My joyful thoughts reached all the way to Pierre,<sup>74</sup> our Benjamin, the youngest member of our family, who must this day leave childhood behind and grow up to the measure of the perfect man.

We should often come together like this, in Jesus Christ, our common centre where all our hearts become as one and our affections are brought to fulfilment. Dear friends, this is my bouquet for this beautiful feastday.

<sup>72</sup> YENVEUX. I. 36-38; IV. 17. 180-181; V. 26. 86; VII. 198; VIII. 66-67.

<sup>73</sup> Mark 6, 31: "requiescite pusillum."

<sup>74</sup> Pierre Aubert took his vows on November 1, 1831.



I leave my room to betake myself to the cathedral for divine service. Gladly indeed would I prolong still further my period of solitude, but St. Peter too would very gladly have remained on Mount Tabor. He was told as we are that one must come down from the mountain. Rest is neither due nor granted to us this side of heaven.

November 3.

I take up my letter again, I would like if possible to send it off today. Happily your last letter reached me at a point during my retreat when by God's grace I had reached the state of detachment one has to have if one is not to lose one's peace of mind amidst the contradictions and difficulties of life, and yet it seems to me that my indignation has grown against men who, called to perfection and enriched by the divine bounty with the most efficacious means to achieve it, do not respond to their call. I have nothing but compassion for poor sinners, for errant men who have never seen the light except from afar, who do not know God and in consequence have no idea of the delight and happiness that there is in his service, in loving him, in devotion to him, in consecrating one's existence to him, but for those who are not ignorant of these things and seem to despise them, it is only by taking time to deliberate that I can bring myself to endure their ingratitude and folly.

I re-read our Rule during my annual retreat, in a profound spirit of recollection, and I remained convinced that we are, of all men, the least worthy of heaven's favours, if we are not penetrated with a gratitude that would inspire us to the point of heroism for the favour that God has done us. There is nothing on earth higher than our vocation. Amongst religious, some are called to one good work, others to another; some are destined, be it indirectly, to the same end as ourselves. But for us, our principal end, I would almost say our only end, is the self-same end that Jesus Christ proposed to himself on coming into the world, the self-same end that he gave to the Apostles, to whom, without any doubt, he taught the most perfect way. And so our humble society knows no other founder than Jesus Christ, who spoke through the mouth of his Vicar, and no other Fathers than the Apostles. It is stated unmistakably. Let me delineate some of the features that emerge of the image of high perfection required of us by our Rules:

*Sacerdotes . . . firma pietate praediti . . . callentes necessitatem emendationis propriae . . . serio sanctitati suae incumbere habent . . . debent vivere in voluntate perpetua perfectionis apicem obtinendi.*

*Habent instare viriliter easdem vias quas tot apostoli, quas tot operarii evangelici . . . qui . . . tot mora nobis tantarumque virtutum exempla suppeditarunt.*<sup>75</sup>

*Toti erunt etiam missionarii, qui pristinum harumce religiosarum institutionum pietatis ardorem, in pectore suo resuscitent et foveant, necnon istarum [et pia ministeria] et virtutes, et observantissimae vitae exercitationes, puta consiliorum evangelicorum studium, amorem solitudinis et silentii, contemptum omnium vanitatum mundi, subtractionem a nugis mente religiosa indignis, divitiarum horrorem, carnis et animae mortificationem, divinum officium palam et communiter recitatum.*<sup>76</sup> *Si quis noster esse voluerit, propriae perfectionis desiderio flagrabit.*<sup>77</sup>

*Jam dictum est missionarios, quantum humana patitur fragilitas, imitari debere in omnibus exempla Christi Domini, praecipui Societatis institutoris, necnon apostolorum nostri progenitorum.*<sup>78</sup>

*Virtutes D.N.J.C. [quas] membra Societatis [nostrae] debent in semetipsis ad vivum exprimere, et quolibet mense peculiarem huius divini Exemplaris virtutem sibi eligent, ut modo perfectiori ad hujus virtutis praxim sese exerceant.*<sup>79</sup>

*Odorem amabilium [ejus] virtutum . . . ubique diffundent.*<sup>80</sup>

I am annoyed that Bernard<sup>81</sup> is not more sensible of the value of the life and exercises of the novitiate. Lest he be deceived, it is there that is being laid the foundation of all the good he is being called to do. One must begin with self-renunciation; room must be made for the Lord to work in. Our clay is no good to serve as the building's foundation. Abnegation, humility, and finally holy detachment as to all that God can ask of us, and which he makes known to us through superiors, here is the treasure hidden in the solitude of the novitiate. My God! how badly one knows oneself if one hopes to do anything

<sup>75</sup> Constitutiones et Regulae, 1827, preface, pp. 2 and 3, passim.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. p. 10: 1 pars, cap. I, art. IV.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. p. 146: 3 pars, cap. II, para. 1, art. 19.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. p. 77: 2 pars, cap. III, para. 1.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. p. 70: 2 pars, cap. II, para. 2, art. 1.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. p. 78: 2 pars, cap. III, para. 1, art. 3.

<sup>81</sup> Jean Antoine Bernard, who entered the novitiate on July 16, 1831. He took vows on July 16, 1832.

without that! The most lively zeal will bring forth nothing but the vanity of pride. Far from finding long the short period of time devoted to preparation, it must be confessed that it is not ample enough for the purpose of divesting oneself of what remains of the old man, of adorning one's soul with the many virtues we lack and thus disposing ourselves to make to God an offering as little unworthy of him as possible. So preach humility and distrust of self and inspire a great longing for perfection, cost what it may to our nature to achieve it. It is a work of patience and one all too often seasoned with sorrows that is imposed on you. That does not matter, you have obedience to facilitate a task that would be very burdensome if you were left to your own natural resources. Overcome evil with good; never lose courage; all who have exercised the same ministry as yourself have known the same anguish. Ask God to enlighten you, ponder carefully all that depends on you for success, and then abandon yourself with untroubled heart and without anxiety to divine providence which will not let those who rest their hope on it be confounded.

... There is no question of the first assistant kneeling at the feet of the second when he enters late for office. The offices are equal in dignity, if you will, but always with the pre-eminence of the first over the second; thus the order in which they preside whenever the superior is away is not left open, but it is always the first who exercises a superiority over the second such that the latter can do nothing without his permission, like every other member of the community.

**407. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>82</sup>**

*The Aix community. Holiness of the Rules. Is it true that it cost Father Courtès a lot to give up reading "L'Avenir"?*

[Marseilles,] November 4, 1831.

My dear Father Courtès, your last two letters gave me enormous pleasure. I mean those where you give me an account of the state of your community and of your own situation in particular. The one I

<sup>82</sup> YENVEUX, IV, 15-16; VII, 44\*; REY, I, 523; RAMBERT, I, 594.

received after my retreat afforded me all the more consolation in that I had myself just come from a very serious meditation centered precisely on what had struck you yourself. Perhaps like never before I grasped the value of the favour that God has shown us and like never before I came to appreciate the means that God puts at our disposal in the Congregation to serve him as we should and sanctify ourselves.

Those who do not make good use of them will be culpable indeed. I beg you to inform all our Fathers of my satisfaction on reading what you say to me concerning themselves. I exhort them to read the Rules with as much attention as I have just given them, perhaps they will have some surprises and make some fresh discoveries. As for myself, here is one of the meditations I entered in my retreat notes: "I said to myself while meditating on our Rules that we would never be able sufficiently to thank the divine bounty for having given them to us, for God alone indisputably is their author. The person who consigned them to writing does not recognize anything therein that comes from himself; so it is in full liberty that he passes judgment on them, as of a work to which he is a stranger. But how can I even speak of judgment where the Church speaks in the person of its head! I stress here the wording of the apostolic letters. Then I ponder on the value conferred on all our works, on all our actions, since they are all directed by the Rule, on the *sedulo servari praecipimus*, emanating from the Head of the Church, from the Vicar of Jesus Christ. And on the *saluberrimi operis* and on the *quibusdam legibus, efformandis ad pietatem animis adeo opportunis*.<sup>83</sup> I am no longer astonished at the *saluberrimi operis* when I consider that the end of our Institute is the same as Our Lord proposed to himself when he came into the world. I come across I don't know how many passages which are proof again and again of the perfection of our Institute and the excellence of the means it puts at our disposal to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and his apostles. I could go on for ever on this subject."

. . . I am asking you now to give me a straightforward answer to what I am going to say to you. If you are in the wrong, admit it sincerely. If there has been exaggeration or even falsehood refute the charge to the best of your ability.

<sup>83</sup> Extracts from the brief of approbation of the Rule, March 21, 1826, para. 5 and 6. Cf. *Missions O.M.I.*, 1952, pp. 167-173.

I have told you how Mr. de Montalembert and Mr. Combalot, who came here to exploit the credulity and good nature of their followers, made two assertions about you: that you only gave up "*L'Avenir*" against your will and with the deepest regret, and that you were a great supporter of Mr. Rey.<sup>84</sup> I leave aside the second charge so as to apply myself to the first, which concerns me more. If these gentlemen were my only source of information, I would rather think that they have lied than that a man of your age, of your experience, who has pondered on his duties and who is certainly no fool, were capable of forgetting himself to this extent in the presence of an arrogant young man of twenty,<sup>85</sup> who has taken on himself the mission of reforming our minds and lecturing the whole world. It was already a lot, indeed too much, to let him know that in effect I had forbidden the reading of that dangerous, pernicious, revolting work that is called "*L'Avenir*"; one might as well let him read the Acts of our Chapter!<sup>86</sup> But to portray oneself in public as men tyrannized, to display a defective obedience which submits only on the exterior and does not change one's inner attitudes and least of all that of the will, this is something I cannot believe, even after hearing two of our fathers who, to excuse themselves for having fallen into the same fault, assured me that it was so, "that you were mortified at not being able to read "*L'Avenir*" any more," these are his expressions, and the other that "you had shed tears," these are again his expressions, "at being obliged to deprive yourself of that reading." However that may be, to the devil with a work that could inspire such detestable sentiments in men who ought to be capable of higher sacrifices than these!

I am waiting to receive your conscientious explanation of this matter, whether it be to humble yourself before God if you are at fault, or to refute the charge that I wish to believe rashly made by those who attribute this conduct to you.

<sup>84</sup> Claude Rey, vicar capitular of Aix in 1830, named Bishop of Dijon in 1831.

<sup>85</sup> Montalembert.

<sup>86</sup> Canon 7 of the General Chapter of 1831 forbade "the reception in the Society of any newspaper not approved by the Superior General, and in particular *l'Avenir*, on account of its political doctrines."

408. [To Father Mille, at Billens].<sup>87</sup>

*Infidelity of Brother Saluzzo. Generosity of Brother Sicard.*

[Marseilles,] November 17, 1831.

... I needed to learn what you said about the fervor of the retreat to console me for Saluzzo's defection. What he went through can in no way be called a temptation; he was completely overcome by a deplorable infidelity. If he returns, for which I have only faint hopes in view of his resistance to the grace of the retreat, he will have God to thank for a second call and I exhort him to be more faithful to it than he was to the first, unless he wishes to play fast and loose with his eternal destiny. *Nemo mittens manum suam ad aratrum, et respiciens retro, aptus est. regno Dei.*<sup>88</sup> And note that the unhappy man to whom the Saviour addressed this formidable judgment, was not saying like Saluzzo that he was not at all obliged to follow the most perfect way, on the contrary, he declared that he would follow the Lord: *Sequar te, Domine, sed permitte mihi primum renuntiare his quae domi sunt;*<sup>89</sup> it needed only that for him to hear from the mouth of Truth itself that, only for that, he was not fit for the kingdom of heaven, because after being called he laid down conditions for his obedience. When I read these words, which do not find a place in the sacred text without good and clear reason on the part of Providence, I shudder from head to toe, for I see there the condemnation of all who are unfaithful.

Well done, Sicard! Here is a heart docile to the inspirations of grace! What hopes for the future his generosity holds out! Oh yes, my son, I ratify the promise you have made to your God who is so good, so little known, and who is hard put to find a handful of disciples amongst all the men he has ransomed with his blood.

My affectionate greetings too to our dear Brother Pierre,<sup>90</sup> to whom I have already conveyed my congratulations on the very day of his consecration.

<sup>87</sup> YENVEUX, VII, 21.

<sup>88</sup> Luke 9, 62.

<sup>89</sup> Luke 9, 61.

<sup>90</sup> Pierre Aubert who took his vows on November 1.

**409. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>91</sup>**

*Father de Lamennais leaves for Rome. Missionary spirit at N.-D. du Laus.*

[Marseilles, ] November 29, 1831.

. . . We are waiting for Mr. de Lamennais who is on his way to Rome. I do not believe that he is thinking of going to see you when he is passing by Aix; if he does, I do not need to urge you to be very civil towards him, he merits every respect.<sup>92</sup>

. . . Father Guibert does not lose heart. His constancy in the pursuit of his task is admirable. If Aix were not like a morgue, I would ask you if anyone is turning his eyes in the direction of America.<sup>93</sup> I don't mean amongst our own men, there are already too many with that idea, but in the diocese . . . . And now the novitiate is open . . . .<sup>94</sup>

**410. [To Father Mille, at Billens].<sup>95</sup>**

*Brother Mazet is dispensed from his vows.*

[Marseilles, ] December 8, 1831.

. . . As Mazet's sleepwalking habit is still so strong, on several occasions there have been instances of his reading and writing in pitch darkness, and as the doctors have assured me that if a cure is possible it would not be before he is fifty, the Council has discerned in this condition a more than sufficient reason for dispensation. Judgment has thus been pronounced.

<sup>91</sup> REY, I, 536; RAMBERT, I, 588.

<sup>92</sup> Lamennais passed through Marseilles at the beginning of December. On the 3rd, Father de Mazenod gave him a letter of introduction to Cardinal Pacca. Cf. RAMBERT, I, 588-589.

<sup>93</sup> At N.-D. du Laus, Father Guibert gave retreats to the clergy and seminarists and encouraged them to go as missionaries to North America where the bishops were asking for help.

<sup>94</sup> N.-D. du Laus became again the seat of the novitiate in December 1831. Cf. REY, I, 534-535 and the Register of those taking the habit.

<sup>95</sup> YENVEUX, VIII, 249.

411. [To Scholastic Brother Saluzzo, at Billens].<sup>96</sup>

*Obedience for the community of N.-D. du Laus to reflect on his vocation under Father Guibert's direction.*

[Marseilles, ] December 8, 1831.

The way Father Mille has handled your case has been perfectly prudent. It was his duty not to give way at the first signs of a temptation whose awful consequences for yourself he foresaw. Your vocation had been discerned by the superior of the seminary who was at the time your director.<sup>97</sup> You were yourself so convinced that he was not deceived that after several months' trial you did not experience in yourself any doubts about it, at least you did not confide the least difficulty to me, on the contrary, you told me you were happy when I visited Billens. All of a sudden your attitude changes and the reasons that you allege are so pitiful that no man of good sense would have entertained them for a moment. However, what was in question was nothing less than the renunciation of your vocation. What should a good director do? Precisely what Father Mille did.

Now you persist in your infidelity. The judgment that Our Lord pronounced in advance on those who look back, after putting their hand to the plough, does not put you out of countenance, even though the reasons you bring forward are more or less of the same stamp as those that did not save the young man of the Gospel from our Saviour's anathema. It is a very great misfortune, but it is not in our power to prevent it; we will deplore your loss, but we will be guiltless in that respect before God after we have done all that is in our power to deter you from a resolution evidently inspired by the enemy of your salvation. So I consent to your leaving Billens, to your separating yourself from those angels whose very company was a safeguard for your feeble virtue. You will come first to N.-D. du Laus to place yourself until further orders under the mantle of our Good Mother. It is my last effort to save you. Go there with an upright heart, call fervently upon this powerful protector, ask her to enlighten the director I appoint for you in this holy place and to give you the simplicity and docility you

<sup>96</sup> YENVEUX, VIII, 289.

<sup>97</sup> Father Tempier, superior of the major seminary at Marseilles.



need in this situation, decisive as it is for your life. You will eventually write to me, and Father Guibert as well, under whose direction I place you, and I will then give you a definitive reply. In the meantime I call upon the Lord to pardon and enlighten you.

**412. [To Father Mille, at Billens].<sup>98</sup>**

*Father Mouchel is called to vows. Brother Saluzzo. Rodriquez. Oblate dress. Father Ricard, treasurer of the house of Billens.*

[Marseilles,] December 19, 1831.

I begin with the most important matter, I mean that of Father Mouchel. He has no one to blame but himself for the delay that circumstances beyond my control have imposed on the accomplishment of what I suppose to be his wishes; if he had answered God's call with more simplicity, and had not wanted so to speak to enter into debate with the Master, you would not have thought it necessary to consult me to settle a whole lot of doubts and to make a decision about so many unforeseen incidents, and he would have had the consolation of making his offering to Jesus our Saviour at the foot of the crib, on the beautiful night of his entry into the world. However I do not want to place too big a distance between him and the mystery that he would have so honoured by his oblation. Jesus is always poor and obedient even in his manifestation to the gentiles who came to adore him at Bethlehem; not having been able to be present with the shepherds, he will be able to range himself behind the Magi and offer with them gold, incense and myrrh. You understand that I presuppose on Father Mouchel's part the dispositions that are indispensable for a consecration of this kind. Having for my part given the matter much consideration, in a word, I interpose no opposition or if you like, to speak more exactly, I consent to his being admitted. Now you did well to show him Mr. Cadus' letter; the thing is done and so, as the proverb has it, further discussion is useless, but if you want to know my opinion, I think that, given the character of the individual in question, his perplexities, his torments, you would have done better to throw it into the fire. You see

<sup>98</sup> YENVEUX, IV, 86; VI, 24; VII, 52\*; VIII, 102-103, 107.

that it has only caused problems and this state would have deterred me, if it were another person who was involved, from giving my consent because speaking in general it is not in this fashion that one should give oneself to God.

You tell me nothing of Saluzzo, what have you done with him? My letter, you were saying the last time you spoke to me of him, did not make a big impression on him. I conclude that he is really sick. I deplore it with my whole soul. My last effort was to place him under the protection of the Holy Virgin and have him spend some time at Notre-Dame. How is he? Has he opened his eyes? Has he hardened his heart? Even if he has at last seen the precipice at his feet, I think it would be useful for him to come to Notre-Dame, unless you judge him so strengthened that you have no further cause to worry.

Let me dwell a moment on dear Sicard as a consolation for the sorrow of watching the feeble struggles of an unfaithful man against the flesh and blood which would conquer grace. Let me dwell too on all those good friends who are always present in my thoughts and live in my heart, may they be blessed by God, and all who follow in their footsteps.

. . . My verdict is that all Rodriquez' explanations are applicable to us and that, not knowing anything better in the matter than his various treatises, generally speaking he is to be followed in his decisions; nevertheless, the quotation concerning direction<sup>99</sup> applies only in that particular case.

. . . As to the habit, I cannot say anything at the moment; what is certain is that the cloak is no part of it. It is an outer garment that forms no part of the habit, for if it were necessary to adopt a cloak it would be a ceremonial one that one would not have to leave in the cloakroom, consequently one can without difficulty use indiscriminately either a cloak or a smock according to need, however since we are exposed to the necessity of travelling and as cloaks are more useful on a journey, [when] there is question of an outer garment, a cloak would be preferable, taking care not to overstep the norms imposed by poverty as to quality.

<sup>99</sup> A phrase lacking clarity, probably badly copied by Yenveux's copyist.

Fr. Ricard is to be named treasurer in the strict sense, you understand what this means as the superior must practice obedience and poverty like everyone else. Tell Father Ricard that he has no doubt forgotten what I told him: namely, four times a year, and more often if he judges it suitable, but always without question four times a year, he must write and make a report on his work and render me an account.

## 1832

### 413. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>1</sup>

*Letter from Pope Gregory XVI. One of the Fathers from N.-D. du Laus is sent to Aix.*

[Marseilles,] January 7, 1832.

The Sovereign Pontiff has replied to the letter I wrote him from Fribourg,<sup>2</sup> in the same moving and really paternal style as his predecessor; at the first opportunity I will have a copy of this document sent to you, precious as it is to our Congregation. Read it out to the community. I know you will be as moved as we were. The Pope saw fit to put his own signature to the brief, a signal mark of protection and a favour rarely accorded: I draw it to your attention for our consolation.

I know none greater here below than to receive praise, approval and encouragement from the mouth of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, as he gives his personal guidance to the family whose head he is, as he is of the whole Church, laying down for it the road that it must follow and in a certain way placing the seal of infallibility on its existence and its works.

In acknowledgement of this, as is our duty, and in response to the wishes of the Head of the Church, have the community recite for nine days one *pater* and one *ave*, followed by the prayer *pro Papa*. Thereafter this prayer will continue to be said always at evening prayer.

<sup>1</sup> YENVEUX, III, 174; IV, 201; VIII, 194; REY, I, 532; RAMBERT, I, 596-597.

<sup>2</sup> The Founder had written to Gregory XVI in September on the occasion of his election. The Holy Father replied on December 10, 1831.

. . . I am quite aware, my dear friend, that you will not get much out of the man<sup>3</sup> I have recently sent you: I was not really thinking of him as an addition to your strength. He had to leave N.-D. [du Laus] as his health was suffering from the acute cold that is found in that part of the world. Before that he had persuaded himself that the climate of Marseilles was no longer doing his chest any good at all. Thus we had no choice left and he had to be called to Aix. He has arrived there, and if I am to judge by his letter he is ready to do his best there. I hope he keeps his word, but this wretched nature of ours, when it gets too much attention, leaves weak people open to strong temptations. I think it then my duty to tell you for your guidance that our dear Brother is prone to excess in this matter. It is unbelievable how far in the past he has carried his precautions in this regard. Death must have been in his eyes a really great evil and he must have quite lost sight of the fact that it opens the gates of heaven to us, seeing he could impose so many sacrifices on himself for its avoidance. Such great precautions cannot be taken without notable loss to the interior life. At the same time there is a serious weakening of personal virtue. I do not know if he had held on to even the least vestige of religious life, at any rate he was far from understanding the value of perfection as affirmed by all who serve as models in this field. It was inevitable that his behaviour would be affected by an outlook so little in accord with the spirit of Jesus Christ . . . The sense of belonging to a single family was allowed to grow dim, at any rate he let months and years go by without writing to me. Perhaps he considered I was already informed, a common excuse with the wayward, while as an open-minded and lenient judge I merely bemoaned . . .

You know the man is sound at bottom but over-much esteem for learning to which perhaps he gave preference over sanctity caused a withdrawal of grace and light; then, over-much care of his health led him to neglect even things that can never be abandoned with impunity.

<sup>3</sup> The reference is probably to Father J. L. Richaud or to Father Telmon. Father Richaud had been practically continuously at Aix and had only recently come to N.-D. du Laus. He could have replaced Father Martin at Calvaire, Marseilles, at the beginning of the summer. Father Telmon taught at the major seminary at Marseilles in the academic years of 1829-1830, 1830-1831. Both are officially listed amongst the Fathers of N.-D. du Laus until 1835. The words "over-estimates learning" could apply to each of them.

From that results a state of imperfection from which it is vital that he emerge [if he] does not want to leave himself open to complete collapse.<sup>4</sup>

**414. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>5</sup>**

*The Vicar General's heavy commitments.*

[Marseilles,] February 3, 1832.

. . . You must not conclude from my silence that I am not getting on with the matter that you are concerned with, but when one has a string of meetings often going on for three hours at a time and all the subsequent business that arises, when one has to organize, negotiate, reply, carry out, conciliate so many different interests, to say nothing of ordinary administration which is necessarily very complex with our dense population, etc., one really has no time left to breathe, much less to write . . . .

**415. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>6</sup>**

*Detachment from the world. Duty of state.*

[Marseilles,] February 18, 1832.

. . . I give it no further thought as, thanks be to God, without being a St. Francis de Sales or a St. Teresa, there is little that I desire, and the little I desire I desire but little. It is not only in recent days that the world's show has seemed but a passing shadow to me; I live in habitual awareness that I have only a limited number of days to live, and obliged as I am to work from dawn to dusk, I do it only as a duty, like a man who has been given one of the most painful of penances by the Master to whom all obedience is due.

<sup>4</sup> A letter that is probably badly copied. The founder switches from "il" to "on" several times.

<sup>5</sup> REY, I, 531.

<sup>6</sup> YENVEUX, V, 254; REY, I, 531.

**416. [To Father Mille, at Billens].<sup>7</sup>**

*Submission to the decisions of the Holy Father.*

[Marseilles,] February 18, 1832.

... With us one must have enough simplicity to renounce one's own opinions when they do not conform, I do not say to the decisions of the Holy See, but even to its viewpoint. We acknowledge none other as our teacher and we adopt its judgment even before it has been made a dogmatic pronouncement . . . .<sup>8</sup>

**417. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>9</sup>**

*New French bishops. Father Courtès cannot accept to be Bishop Rey's Vicar General at Dijon.*

[Marseilles,] March 11, 1832.

I had a letter from Rome in these terms: "Three Churches of France put an end to their widowhood yesterday."<sup>10</sup> Some will emit deep sighs, for others it is murmuring and bitterness; as for you, I know, you will bend in adoration before God's judgment on these unhappy Churches and you will give yourselves to prayer. The very evening of the day of the consistory, a messenger came and announced the taking of Ancona by the French.<sup>11</sup> The details which have come to us are horrifying; you have to go back to the time of the barbarians to find like examples of cowardly betrayal or rather of so revolting a treachery.

<sup>7</sup> REY, I, 532; RAMBERT, I, 597.

<sup>8</sup> The Founder was inviting Father Mille to dismiss a postulant who was too attached to the teaching of Lamennais. The errors published in *L'Avenir* were condemned by the Pope only on August 15, by the encyclical "Mirari vos."

<sup>9</sup> REY, I, 537.

<sup>10</sup> Aix, Avignon, and Dijon.

<sup>11</sup> After 1830 there were revolutionary upheavals in the whole of Europe: Belgium, Poland, Germany, Switzerland and the Papal States. With a view to helping the Pope, Austrian troops had just occupied the Romagna at the beginning of 1832. As a counterweight to this intervention Louis-Philippe ordered the occupation of Ancona, against the wishes of the Sovereign Pontiff.

. . . The proposal made to you by Bishop Rey would arouse my gratitude, if his only purpose were to show you his esteem. I am a little less impressed in the view of the position he is in and the advantages he would hope to derive from your services. You are right to conclude that his proposal is unacceptable. First because of your health . . . I see no less difficulty on the moral side. Bishop Rey has been installed by the Sovereign Pontiff, but is there anyone who does not know that this installation was extracted by force? Has not Bishop Rey allowed himself to be used by a government that is hostile to the Church? To receive his patronage would be in everyone's eyes a frank admission of complicity. The very idea fills me with horror . . .<sup>12</sup>

**418. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>13</sup>**

*Refusal of a postulant who lacks sound judgment. The superior of a major seminary is normally a vicar general.*

[Marseilles,] March 23, 1832.

. . . Sound judgment is an indispensable quality, so much so that we have no right to overlook its absence in presenting candidates. What price any good quality when the intellect is damaged? A doubt would be sufficient reason for us to decline to assent to the request of our good Mr. Poët,<sup>14</sup> all the more so after what Father Jerome<sup>15</sup> told you. So convey to this excellent young man my regrets, but tell him at the same time the reason motivating our non-acceptance.

It is quite normal that a Bishop, whoever he may be, who has been in position to get to know a Congregation throughout the many years it has been active, one might say before his own eyes, should be keen to strengthen his diocese by confiding to it the direction of his seminary.<sup>16</sup> Nothing could be more natural afterwards than that he

<sup>12</sup> Bishop Rey supported Louis-Philippe and the government, hostile though it was to the Church.

<sup>13</sup> YENVEUX, II, 7; VIII, 16.

<sup>14</sup> This Mr. Poët will not enter the novitiate.

<sup>15</sup> Father Jerome, superior of the Retraite Chrétienne at Aix.

<sup>16</sup> No doubt Bishop Rey, vicar capitular of Aix, recently named Bishop of Dijon, offered the Oblates the direction of the major seminary of his diocese. The Founder seems to want to accept it, notwithstanding his adverse judgment on the Bishop in the preceding letter. It is more than likely that he wished to please Father Courtès, knowing well that the latter would never decide to leave Aix.



should give a more particular sign of confidence to the man whom he has placed at the head of his seminary and make him his vicar general. I would see in this step a sufficient reason for a dispensation, taking into consideration both the good of the diocese and the advantage to the Congregation. I would be left only with the difficulty consisting in the state of your health. You give me reassurance on this score . . .

**419. [To Father Guigues, at N.-D. du Laus].<sup>17</sup>**

*Devotion to St. Joseph. Collection on behalf of the Brothers' schools at Marseilles and for the construction of the church of St. Lazarus.*

[Marseilles,] March 23, 1832.

My dear Father Guigues, it is very kind of you to have remembered that I live under the patronage of great St. Joseph and not to have forgotten me in your prayers to this saint on the day of his feast. You will not be surprised in your turn that I have not forgotten that you have the happiness to bear the name and that you have been aware of its worth.

I believe his soul more excellent than all the celestial intelligences, above which it is indubitably placed in heaven.

In that blessed abode Jesus Christ, Mary and Joseph are just as inseparable as they were on earth. I believe in these things with the most certain faith, that is to say, just as certainly as I believe in the Immaculate Conception of Mary and for the same reasons, due proportion being observed. I am going to tell you too another thought that is dear to me: I am quite persuaded as well that the body of St. Joseph is already in glory and that is where it is meant to be for all time. Speaking of his soul close to Jesus and Mary I said it was: *super choros Angelorum*. And so you would search in vain for his relics over the face of the earth. You will no more find his relics than any of his holy spouse. Of neither the one nor the other do we possess anything except articles, while the world is filled with the relics of the Apostles, and of saints who were the Saviour's contemporaries: St. John the Baptist, etc. No one has ever presumed to produce even false ones of

<sup>17</sup> YENVEUX, IV, 153; V, 41. At the beginning of the extract (V, 41), Yenveux writes: "To Father Guigues, at Aix." Father Guigues however belonged to the house of N.-D. du Laus.

these two eminent personages, and I consider this as due to a special divine disposition. I simply record the fact, you will give it what value you please. For myself, it is but a confirmation<sup>18</sup> of my strongly held view and I make bold to profess it. If it attracts your piety, meditate on it and I have no doubt that you will accept it, I mean the whole body of my teaching on the arch-saint whom we venerate with all our hearts.

. . . I hope that the collection for our schools will be sufficient. I had ten thousand francs, nearly double that will be needed again. The rent of the house alone will cost more than four thousand.

Providence will come to our help but what a body-blow for our church of St. Lazarus.<sup>19</sup> When we were laying our plans, we had no thought of the Brothers' misfortune.<sup>20</sup> No matter, there is no shortage of courage, we gave them priority because the living members of Christ, which all these poor abandoned children are, ought to have preference over the temple even of Jesus Christ. This good Master, who inspires us and who judges our intention, will not abandon us. I am pledged for thirty thousand francs. He would send down a shower of gold from the skies sooner than see our trust betrayed.

#### 420. [To Father Mille, at Billens].<sup>21</sup>

*Danger of cholera in Switzerland. Prudence. Father Mille, a good missionary but a poor superior. His work is with the novices and scholastics not preaching. Lack of charity amongst the brothers.*

[Marseilles,] April 21, 1832.

. . . The first thing I want to speak to you about is the cholera-morbus that the papers tell us has penetrated Switzerland; it makes me very worried to know that you are so close to a danger-zone and so far away from me. We are under the same threat as yourselves, and it is

<sup>18</sup> Yenneux's copyist (IV, 153) wrote: "conformateur," but the correct reading is probably: "confirmatur." According to Larousse the reference is to an instrument used by hatters to measure the size and exact shape of a client's head.

<sup>19</sup> At the time he was proceeding with the construction of the church of St. Lazarus to serve the new neighbourhoods near the Aix Gate. (REY, I, 530, 531).

<sup>20</sup> The municipal council had withdrawn the stipend and premises of the Christian Brothers (Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes).

<sup>21</sup> YENNEUX, II, 119; V, 215; VIII, 156.

beyond my understanding how it has not yet got within our walls, seeing the total absence of precautions that simple prudence would demand. God is giving me the grace not to be afraid of it, but I am afraid for you, as you have demonstrated that your wisdom is not always equal to your zeal. A great responsibility rests on your shoulders and you must not forget that the least imprudence that compromises the community in your charge would be imputed to you. In the event of its coming, those who are not priests must be put in a place of safety and the priests themselves must carry out the charitable duties required of their holy ministry, taking suitable precautions.

You will take care to consult me on the steps you have a mind to take. Do supply for the shortage of priests in the countryside round about you, within a given distance, but to widen the area over-much would be as unreasonable as if you took it into your head to go and offer your services in Paris. I exhort you in advance to moderation and prudence, for you need both.

While I am on the subject, I will say a word in passing about your zealous works during the Forty Hours. Do you want to know the conclusion that I have come to from your account? It is that you are as good a missionary as you are a poor superior. Did you ever hear of the priests from Estavayer leaving their house — a house of priests and former religious — to go off preaching as you have done? Does conscience require one to forsake one's special task to embrace another, however better it be in appearance? What can one say of your facility in interpreting your superior's intentions in a sense exactly contrary to his precise words and to his perfectly well-known intention — and he certainly *has* an intention! No my dear friend, that is not the way to go about things. It is a poor concept of obedience to be always doing the opposite of what is prescribed. You cut a dash, you earn men's plaudits, you may even do some good, but you fail to do your duty — and what profit can one expect in such circumstances from even the most brilliant of deeds? It really hurts me to make these observations to you, but they are the fruit of meditation in the Lord's presence. *There* values are reduced to their simplest form of expression: what counts for more in worldly terms often counts for nothing on *its* scales with its enormous counterweights. As a simple missionary everything you did would have been admirable provided it were done under obedience. But as superior charged with the care of the élite of our family and with the duty of caring for it like the apple of your eye, you have not done well, and those whom you consulted made the mistake (their

youth excuses them) of leaving out of consideration your personal obligations and taking into consideration only the act itself, under the influence of the same zeal that led you yourself astray.

Once and for all impress this upon yourself: I have not sent you to Switzerland to exercise the exterior ministry but to direct, instruct and look after the community that is entrusted to you; this has been repeated and explained too often for there to be the least shadow of doubt about the course that you must follow in your situation. Apply yourself unreservedly to giving edification by your regularity to those at whose perfection it is your duty to labour. They will repay what you have done for them when, come to the end of their studies, they begin to work in our Father's vineyard; it is then you will harvest what you are now sowing. You will have a double portion in all their works and it will amply repay you for the sacrifice you are making for them. God will reward you precisely for what you omit, or better, for what you do not do, in virtue of holy obedience. He alone can assign a value to your actions . . . .

How these petty quarrels amongst the Brothers distress me! I know that they do their best to quickly heal these wounds to charity, but they should not fall into these faults which inevitably damage a virtue they ought to have in the highest degree. I strongly exhort them to take pains to uproot this kind of petty antipathy that does them injury in their hearts . . . . It will cost me a lot to be deprived of seeing you this year, but how can a person leave his post when cholera threatens?

In your letter of the 19th you begin by speaking of cholera-morbus. I hope the Lord will spare your countryside, but if this catastrophe must make its appearance there, I will never give advice that is unworthy of your holy profession and, in this as in everything else, we will always fall in with the Bishop of Lausanne's position.

421. [To Father Tempier, at Rome].<sup>22</sup>

*Disturbances at Marseilles on the occasion of the Duchess de Berry's passage.*

[Marseilles,] May 6, 1832.

... Now everything is in a turmoil, mutual suspicions disrupt the peace. At every turn the troops make hostile demonstrations. The reason behind this state of affairs is a very bizarre call to arms. Three men thought they could create a big impression by hoisting a white flag on the top of the steeple of Saint-Laurent.<sup>23</sup> I am still asking myself if those responsible for such a ridiculous plot oughtn't to be sent to the madhouse rather than to prison where they are now held in close custody.

<sup>22</sup> REY, I, 543. Father Rey does not indicate the person to whom the letter is addressed. The person in question is without doubt Father Tempier who had been at Rome since May 3.

The municipal council of Marseilles, at the beginning of 1831, had passed a resolution voting for the suppression of the episcopal see on the death of the incumbent. Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod, already 84 years of age, wrote to the Pope on March 11, 1832: "I am now exceedingly old. Holy Father, and I do not entertain the vain hope that God will keep me alive much longer . . . . It is not the closeness of death that causes me pain: my pilgrimage has lasted quite long enough . . . . But what will become of my poor diocese of Marseilles, so recently restored from its ruinous state by your predecessor Pius VII? . . . In the preoccupation that ensues from this thought, God has given me an inspiration: that Your Holiness might give me, not a coadjutor — that is impossible, and besides I do not want the Government to get involved in this matter in any way — but a bishop *in partibus*, someone who would enjoy my confidence and that of my clergy and people. For the little time that is left to me, such a bishop would be a solace in the exercise of my ministry, while on my death he would become the stay of my flock, the hope of my clergy, the mainstay of all my institutions. I have in mind a man who is already my vicar general and who on my death will undoubtedly be named vicar capitular by my Chapter, all of whose members esteem and respect him highly. In this way he will govern the diocese with the powers of an ordinary, he will animate everyone by his zeal, his presence will sustain all the good that he has already achieved, he will administer the sacrament of order and so ensure the unbroken continuity of the priesthood, in expectation of the moment when better times permit Your Holiness to provide my church with the successor of your choice. . . ."

To ensure the success of this project, Bishop Fortuné sent Father Tempier to Rome.

<sup>23</sup> This white flag, symbol of the legitimate monarchy overthrown in 1830, had been hoisted on the church tower when the Duchess de Berry disembarked at Marseilles.

**422. [To Father Tempier, at Rome].**<sup>24</sup>

*Human fragility and the brevity of life.*

[Marseilles,] May 14, 1832.

. . . All things pass away, everything contains the seed of its own destruction. Even man himself does not have time to take stock of his gradual deterioration, he is whisked off before he can learn the lesson of his own fragility. So when I see so many making such ado to make a little noise, their weakness fills me with pity, and although I have only just reached the age of fifty, I would discover within myself an insurmountable aversion to making any plan at all which went beyond, so to speak, the day that I track out in space while revolving with the earth where we live. But where have my reflections brought me? Let us come back to our situation. You really are in Rome, and I see you ensconced there, how I do not know exactly; it is in a way a magical effect . . . .

**423. [To Father Mille, at Billens].**<sup>25</sup>

*Chapel of the Oblate house at Billens. Oblates may make their desires known, but obedience has the last word. Dangers of disobedience.*

[Marseilles,] May 30, 1832.

. . . Don't be anxious about the chapel. It is quite unnecessary for you to approach the Apostolic Nuncio for that. We have the privilege of setting one up in the interior of our houses. Set it up where you had planned it and celebrate mass without further formalities.

I don't find Father Bernard's observations out of place if they go no further than you indicate in your letter. Nothing could be more legitimate than to make one's desires known, but there is also the aspect that it is proper to put one's confidence in the wisdom and lights that the good God gives to superiors. It would be a grave disorder to cherish so exclusive a love for one kind of ministry that one could not be placed elsewhere, even for a short period, without getting upset

<sup>24</sup> YENVEUX, V, 254.

<sup>25</sup> YENVEUX, II, 55; III, 75-76; IV, 58.

about it. A superior cannot be tied down by any conditions. He might need someone to answer the door or to sweep up and that person must then be convinced that he is more agreeable to God answering the door and sweeping up than he would be if on his own account he were to preach or hear confessions. St. Anthony of Padua spent many years in the kitchen without thinking of complaining. There is no serving the good God without renunciation. Unfortunately only too often, and I shudder as I say it, we find great sinners amongst the preachers, confessors and all those ministers who are slaves to their caprices. The saints are found amongst the obedient, modestly accepting their missions in a quite different way. In God's name, ponder on these reflections. Whoever we are, we are unprofitable servants in Our Father's house. Our actions and the services we render have value only to the extent that we do what the Master asks of us. It will go hard with anyone who turns up his nose at the least important tasks because he believes himself suitable for more lofty ones. His reckoning will be swift. Not only that, before long he will find himself with a new master: Lucifer for Jesus Christ. Believe me, I speak from experience. I could cite more examples than I can count on the fingers of my hand.

I was very happy to learn of the success of your first sermon at Fribourg. At the same time don't attach too much importance to this kind of praise. Goodbye dear friend and all you dear friends. My prayer is that your love will never cease to grow and overflow. I give you my blessing.

**424. [To Father Courtès, at Aix]<sup>26</sup>**

*Mutual respect that should exist amongst the members of the same community. State of Oblate houses.*

[Marseilles,] June 12, 1832.

. . . If experience had not taught me that even the holiest and most fervent of communities are not exempt from some kinds of affliction, it would have amazed me that one could come across conflicts even of a merely fleeting character amongst ourselves originating in

<sup>26</sup> YENVEUX, V, 245; IX, 104; REY, I, 533-534.

pride. Unfortunately, it is our nature's sad lot that pride is very difficult to subjugate completely. In this regard you will do well to stress the duty of mutual respect we owe each other and you must make war on that sneering manner that does not suit men like ourselves. I admire the way you have turned this factor to good use to avoid the danger of meeting certain people. It is accepted that they cannot be admitted. It is one more difficulty in the task of serving.

... The Calvaire community is excellent, the progress of the Fathers could not be bettered. Billens goes from strength to strength and N.-D. du Laus as well is exemplary in its regularity. This latter house has become quite important. Father Guibert is equal to the task which, thanks to a certain Bishop,<sup>27</sup> is a very difficult one.

#### 425. [To Father Tempier, at Rome]<sup>28</sup>

*Project for an Oblate foundation at Rome.*

[Marseilles,] June 18, 1832.

... I told you in my last letter that in Rome as everywhere else you have to prepare the ground if you want to achieve your goal, basing myself on that passage of St. Ignatius that in all things you must put your trust in God as if human effort availed for naught and then apply yourself to the task making use of every human artifice as if God did not enter into the matter. However that may be, if you have hopes of getting the house that you are seeking,<sup>29</sup> you may defer your departure from Rome. That would be splendid but my hopes are dim. It would seem that although the project has not been rejected out of hand, they would like to see some Italians involved. You know our limits here. There is only Albini, for Rossi will never be presentable especially as a witness to exterior regularity, as all his virtues are in-

<sup>27</sup> Bishop Arbaud of Gap.

<sup>28</sup> YENVEUX, VII, 23, 69.

<sup>29</sup> Father Tempier's journey to Rome had two motives: to obtain Father de Mazenod's elevation to the episcopate and to prepare the way for an Oblate foundation. In the Holy Father's audience on June 19, Father Tempier openly asked the Pope for permission to establish the Oblates at Rome, in a house furnished by the generosity of the Holy Father. Gregory XVI replied that he had received two similar requests and that he was experiencing difficulty in their implementation. Cf.: REY, I, 542.



terior ones. In my opinion, the only chance of success is to envisage the thing in relation to seminaries. Leo XII understood, but the present Pope, never having been in France, has no means of knowing the superiority of our methods in comparison with all those used elsewhere. You might want to try it out to start with in one of the dioceses of the papal states, at Civitavecchia, for example, which is I think in Cardinal Pacca's diocese! If Cardinal Odescalchi were still Bishop of Ferrara, he would be one to appreciate the project, but now he has no diocese. I repeat, it is a fine project, but very difficult as it entails overcoming national prejudice and making use of new methods whose results will be immense for the regularity of the secular clergy but which would be so much in contrast with some established practices that you would have to anticipate powerful opposition. This would not trouble me if I saw the least opening. What we have to fear most is a curt refusal leaving no room for negotiation.

**426. [To Father Tempier, at Rome.]<sup>30</sup>**

*The civil authorities at Marseilles no longer allow processions.*

[Marseilles,] June 25, 1832.

. . . I stood in need of your consolation in my distress over the arbitrary prohibition on processions after everything was set to pay honour to Our Lord in a fitting manner. When you read *La Gazette* you will see our notice; it will give you some idea of our anger. They simply forgot to underline the quotation from the Prefect's letter and left out the last paragraph announcing what the Bishop would provide to make up for the forcible suppression of Friday's procession, the Feast of the Sacred Heart. That day he will say a low mass at the Cathedral and all the faithful are invited to come and to go to Communion. We will have the Bishop of Nancy<sup>31</sup> preside; he has been here for several weeks and he devotes himself without stint to every work of preaching or ministry he is offered.

Bring me the large life of the Venerable Paul of the Cross,<sup>32</sup> I have only a small and very unsatisfactory one. If you find a life of Blessed Leonard of Port Maurice, get it for me.

<sup>30</sup> YENVEUX, IV, 172, 174; REY, I, 543-544.

<sup>31</sup> Bishop de Forbin-Janson.

<sup>32</sup> Father Tempier stayed with the Passionists.

427. [To Father Tempier, at Rome].<sup>33</sup>

*Danger of making concessions over fasting. Feast of the Sacred Heart at Marseilles.*

[Marseilles,] July 9, 1832.

. . . As for me, I see in each of these concessions, which are not called for in any way by a real necessity,<sup>34</sup> an act of weakness, a veritable sacrifice offered in this antichristian world to pacify the tiger. I will tell you frankly my opinion: they want to seem gentle and compassionate and now that the thing has started it is a question of who will give the most dispensations so as not to be left behind by the others. That isn't how St. Charles would have acted, and neither I who am no St. Charles but just plain Charles.

You know how things went here but you could never get any idea from the papers of the beauty, emotion and divine quality of our celebration of the Feast of the Sacred Heart that took place on the day you celebrated the Feast of St. Peter at Rome. The Bishop was distributing communion for two and a quarter hours. Everyone in the Cathedral, and it was packed, went up for communion. It was a magnificent evening. Ah well, we did our best to make it up to Our Saviour for the insult offered him. Goodbye, dear friend, I will not write again unless you advise me to the contrary.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> YENVEUX, IV, 136, 203; REY, I, 544.

<sup>34</sup> Through fear of cholera, some bishops had dispensed their subjects from the fast.

<sup>35</sup> Father Tempier sent the news that his mission had succeeded. Father de Mazenod was to leave for Rome where he would be ordained bishop. The latter left Aix on July 30, after naming Father Courtès as vicar general of the Congregation (REY, I, 544; letter to Mrs. de Mazenod, July 28).

*Holy Father's audience. Lamennais.*

[Rome,] August 29, 1832.

My very dear friend, you ought to have received details of my news from Marseilles. I asked for that in all my letters.<sup>37</sup> I delayed writing until I was ensconced in this capital and brought up to date concerning *certain matters* which touch the people you know.<sup>38</sup>

Even before seeing the Holy Father, I was informed of his intentions: they correspond to what I told you. It is what he thinks, what he wants, he confirmed it personally in the audience he gave me yesterday that lasted nearly three-quarters of an hour and to which, as a special mark of distinction, he summoned me himself, informing his Chamberlain that I was to be in his antechamber and that he should have me enter. And that is how it happened, to the great astonishment of all who had arrived before me and who had difficulty getting in in the course of the morning. The Holy Father spoke first and disclosed his intentions to me about the person in whom you take such interest, in the kindest way. He told me plainly that he was busy finding the best means to achieve the end proposed. He added some flattering words to what he had to say in which one can lawfully take some pleasure as coming from the mouth of the Head of the Church and when the recipient has the spirit of faith and sees Jesus Christ in his Vicar. You see that I did not have to open my mouth, although I understood that patience is going to be called for in the matter as in everything that goes on here.

. . . The Holy Father was not slow to let me know his judgment on the latest teaching of Mr. de Lamennais. There is cause for satisfaction in having come down on the same side as the Head of the Church.

<sup>36</sup> YENVEUX, III, 207-208; RAMBERT, I, 605-606; REY, I, 545.

<sup>37</sup> Father de Mazenod arrived in Rome a little after August 15 (REY, I, 544). He wrote a letter addressed to Marseilles on August 18, probably to Mr. Cailhol, the bishop's secretary, to whom he wrote again on September 13 and 27 (YENVEUX, III, 201, writes: "to X, August 18").

<sup>38</sup> Only a few people knew why he was going to Rome, Father Courtès among them.

429. [To the Fathers and Brothers at Billens].<sup>39</sup>

*The Holy Father's audience. Condemnation of Lamennais.*

[Rome,] September 11, 1832.

You will be curious to know if I have seen the Holy Father. It is only to be expected since it was he who summoned me to Rome. The audience he gave me lasted three quarters of an hour. He was very well disposed towards me and opened his mind to me with kindness and precision. I may say, for your guidance, that he spoke in a surprisingly strong way against Mr. de Lamennais. He could not have displayed more power and conviction in his condemnation of him. I count myself fortunate to have followed so faithfully the line of thought of the Church's head in banning, as I did two years ago, the detestable newspaper in which that dangerous man and his lunatic disciples pour out the venom of their pernicious teachings. If the encyclical is not enough to constrain them, the Pope told me he would go further. I hope that they will submit. Our Holy Father the Pope has instructed Cardinal Pacca to write to Mr. de Lamennais and to send him a copy of the encyclical. This cardinal, who overwhelms me with kindness and with whom I dine today, September 11, with our Father Tempier, has told him in the Pope's name that out of respect he was not named in the Encyclical, but that he should be quite clear on the point that it was the Holy Father's intention in it to condemn his principles. All we know to date is that he has received the communication; he will no doubt reply soon: I pray God that it will be in an acceptable way.

What I am glad of is that it was I who enabled Mr. de Lamennais to establish contact with the illustrious dean of the Sacred College, by means of a letter of recommendation that I gave him at Marseilles for this important personage. He owes it to my recommendation that he had a mediator of such weight. All the same while recommending the celebrated writer to the most distinguished Prince of the Church and while pointing out the real basis of his worth, you will understand that I took care to say that I was far from sharing all his teaching. Mr. de Lamennais was free to read this qualification, one that was necessary for my conscience. No doubt it confirmed what he already knew about

<sup>39</sup> YENVEUX, III, 171-172; REY, I, 545; RAMBERT, I, 607.

my aversion to the execrable principles of *L'Avenir*. The French Bishops went further, for you must have learned that a considerable number of them censured more than fifty propositions taken not only from *L'Avenir* but from *l'Essai*,<sup>40</sup> from a work of Mr. Gerbet<sup>41</sup> and from the *Catéchisme du sens commun de M. Rohrbacher*.<sup>42</sup> This information must put you on your guard against adopting anything emanating from these authors prior to a pronouncement of the Holy See. I do not know if it will condemn all the propositions censured by the Bishops, but I can vouch for the fact that the censure in general was a source of satisfaction to the Holy Father. It is significant that when the Cardinal Chief Penitentiary<sup>43</sup> was giving him an account of the adhesion of a number of bishops and said that the Bishop of Marseilles had replied that he would excuse himself from judging the propositions that were already condemned since the censure had already been sent here to the Holy See, the Pope said to him: Oh! I know through his nephew that he is of the same opinion.

I finish with what I wrote last year to Mr. de Montalembert, who protested against my banning the reading of *L'Avenir* in our Congregation. For us, even before the Head of the Church makes a dogmatic pronouncement in an apostolic constitution *ex cathedra*, his opinion as teacher of this Church, which he instructs by means of his daily decisions on all points of morality and dogma, is the greatest and leading authority here on earth. We adhere to it in heart and spirit, without waiting for the solemn promulgations that a variety of circumstances can often delay or even block. I repeat this to you, dear children, for you to make of this principle the habitual norm of your conduct and for you to transmit it to those who come after you, as you receive it from me.

<sup>40</sup> The reference is to Lamennais's *L'essai sur l'indifférence*.

<sup>41</sup> Father Gerbet's work bore the title: *Doctrines philosophiques sur la certitude*.

<sup>42</sup> Yenveux's copyist wrote: Rabachet.

<sup>43</sup> The Grand Penitentiary: Card. Di Gregorio.

430. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>44</sup>

*Many defections amongst religious, even at Rome.*

[Rome,] September 15, 1832.

In the meantime for your consolation let me remind you that in the days of Blessed Alphonse Mary de Liguori a large number of candidates entered his Congregation to receive the priesthood and went off as soon as they had laid their hands on it. I may add that the other day a Prelate, that is how I render the title he receives in Latin, was saying to me that in his experience he never kept more than a third of his pupils and that they took their departure often after being ten years with him. This morning again the person I stayed with six years ago<sup>45</sup> was telling me a whole lot of stories of this kind. Several of those I knew had gone off either *insalutato hospite*<sup>46</sup> or on the flimsiest of pretexts, and he assured me that some of those who stay wear him out and are a frightful burden to him. From all this I come to the conclusion that a considerable number of pitiful characters are to be found everywhere and that it would be foolish to seek exemption from the common lot. You can read over these remarks and facts to your friends to give them some consolation in the sorrow that such-like infamous acts always give rise to in good men, convinced of the holiness of their obligations. But even while I am speaking to you in this fashion, I still tremble at the prospect of God's judgment on such guilty men.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> YENVEUX, VIII, 275.

<sup>45</sup> The reference is no doubt to the superior of the Lazarists at San Silvestro al Quirinale.

<sup>46</sup> To leave "insalutato hospite": to leave in a great hurry, without time even to say goodbye.

<sup>47</sup> It is not clear of whom precisely the Founder is speaking. The context suggests that these reflections, like those of September 21-25, are occasioned by difficulties occurring at Billens and by his diminished confidence in Father Mille. But a number of Oblates in France were guilty of misconduct and were dispensed from their vows in 1832, 1833 and 1834: Vincent Dumazert, L.-S. Mazet, Barthélemy Bernard and even Father Jacques Jeancard.

**431. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>48</sup>**

*Sadness and isolation at Rome.*

[Rome,] September 21, 1832.

My dear friend, I am sure you are just waiting to hear my groans. What else can you expect in my dreadful isolation? I am deprived all at once of your gentle presence, far removed from all I love, alone in a city where I have nothing to see and, I may say, nothing to do, left to my own sad thoughts, weary of delays, even more bored with all the fussy details I wouldn't even want to think about; that's my position: do you judge that pleasant? You will reply that I am doing God's will and that that must be enough for me. I agree as to submission of will and spirit; but that attitude (which I hope I have) is not incompatible with my feeling very vividly all the difficulties that go with my position. Perhaps somebody else would put up with them without difficulty at the thought of what is going to happen in a few weeks time. First of all, that idea does not enter into my head; I am quite apathetic about that event,<sup>49</sup> and even if it should come to mind, as I shall be quite alone and deprived of the comfort and support that my usual circle of friends would have given me, I see it only as a thing of grandeur, severe, wrapped in silence, offering me [nothing] at least in my present mood but food for contemplation and profound wonder.

**432. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>50</sup>**

*Few good members in the Congregation; many are ungrateful and unfaithful to their vocation. Billens.*

[Rome] September 25,<sup>51</sup> 1832.

You are in a position now to understand what is my daily fare in my relations with certain members, men with no heart, no honour, no delicacy, no feelings, no conscience, for whom apostasy is a game, per-

<sup>48</sup> RAMBERT, I, 608. Father Tempier left Rome on September 20, going by sea. He arrived at Marseilles on the 27th.

<sup>49</sup> Episcopal consecration.

<sup>50</sup> YENVEUX, III, 99; VIII, 14; REY, I, 545-546.

<sup>51</sup> Yenveux's extracts are dated from September 25; Rey's from the 21st.

jury a mere trifle, who care nothing for their reputations, traitors, ingrates . . . but upon whom even so I have not ceased to lavish without stint kindnesses of every sort and a quite excessive amount of good will. If it were permissible to be sorry that one has striven to do good, it would be easy for me to regret the waste of my best years and the sorry outcome of so many fine plans that the Lord inspired me with, no doubt in expectation of deeper understanding and a different kind of reception. What a state of degradation have we thus fallen into! If St. Ignatius had met up only with men of that sort his work would remain to be done; but what athletes were abroad in those days! Each soldier was an army in himself! I won't pursue these thoughts further, they would take me further than I intend and I would not have allowed myself even to go so far as I have were I writing to anyone other than yourself.

There is no obstacle to your calling Mille to Notre Dame and informing Guibert that you are placing him at his disposition. I am not annoyed at your exercising everywhere your authority as Vicar-General of the Congregation, in this way we become accustomed to seeing God alone in obedience. This is the right way to bolster discipline. So I will do no more here than publish what you decide in the matter. Here those who are in the same position as myself do as I was obliged to do sometimes, but they have all told me that they leave in God's hands the judgment of the grave crime of apostasy *a religione*: perpetuity, synallagmatic contract accepted by both parties, solemn oath for life, etc., there is injustice, sacrilege, wickedness . . . .

**433. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>52</sup>**

*Resignation and obedience while awaiting his nomination to the episcopate.*

[Rome,] September 27, 1832.

. . . Believe me, my obedience and resignation are undergoing a stiff test. How many times I have been tempted to go away; I could almost persuade myself that it is the right thing to do. But my respect

<sup>52</sup> RAMBERT, I, 608-609; REY, I, 545.



for the person concerned, deference to the will of Him to whom we must all submit, the merit inherent in this sacrifice and the opportunity it affords of offering God each day the homage of one's own will, soon prevail over these impulses which take their origin in the lower part of the soul as it rebels . . . .

**434. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>53</sup>**

*Relations with Archbishop Raillon, newly appointed to Aix.*

[Rome,] September 30, 1832.

. . . Remember that your appearance and manner of discourse create a rather severe impression that could lead those who do not know you to believe that you intend to indicate in this way your opposition and dissatisfaction; so you must compensate for this fault, if fault it be, by yourself making some overtures; one can guess that in the Prelate's present position he will be a little susceptible . . . .

**435. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>54</sup>**

*Patience and prayer while waiting to be ordained Bishop of Icosia on October 14.*

[Rome,] October 1,<sup>55</sup> 1832.

. . . However, I must tell you that patience and resignation have won the day and that our friend<sup>56</sup> has found spiritual consolation and true interior joy in his solitude. He revels in the silence and peace that surround him. He fills in his time as piously as he can; he hardly ever goes out except when he must, finding everything he needs at home for the nourishment of his piety. He gladly makes use especially, quite frequently and for long periods of time, of a little gallery that opens out

<sup>53</sup> YENVEUX, V, 132.

<sup>54</sup> YENVEUX, IV, 61; RAMBERT, I, 609-610; REY, I, 546-547.

<sup>55</sup> RAMBERT, 609-610, writes: September 27. The date given by Rey and Yenveux is preferable: October 1, after the feast of St. Michael, September 29. The Founder was named Bishop of Icosia on October 1.

<sup>56</sup> Father de Mazenod refers to himself in the third person to avoid the suspicions of the French Government.

onto the altar of the Blessed Sacrament and, in fact, if God's will were not that he should be otherwise engaged, he would abandon himself wholeheartedly to spending the days of his pilgrimage here below in this way. St. Michael Archangel, to whose care he particularly commended himself on the day the Church celebrates his feastday, brought him on that day to the home of Mr. Cartra and he talked with him for quite a long time. In the course of their conversation this gentleman told him that he was really distressed that he had not spoken at all on the preceding Sunday of the matter he had been charged with but that the next day it would be the first thing he would attend to and that he was proposing to make a particular suggestion: that is to say, precisely the one contained in a certain letter during the period you were here. So true it is that one must always follow the maxim I read yesterday in the life of Father Paul: that the Servant of God, and we all meet this description but some more than others, must follow the inspirations that the Lord gives them.

The day before yesterday in the evening the Pope made the nomination; yesterday the minute was placed before him and he signed it; this morning the two briefs were transcribed on parchment.

If you have an interest in Icosia, put this in your notebook; it is in Africa, as I told you; your friend's mission is for Tripoli, with Tunis added on. The sensitivity of the French Government is no doubt the reason for not including Algiers. Cardinal Odescalchi was delighted with the proposition;<sup>57</sup> the day has been set for the 14th of the month, the day on which in Rome they celebrate the feast of the Maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the meantime, pray and have others pray for me; do not forget to have my mother and sister and all the religious go to communion. To be absolutely sure, I am going to write to Billens and Notre Dame du Laus.

<sup>57</sup> In the absence of Cardinal Pacca, the Founder asked the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars to be the ordaining prelate.

436. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>58</sup>

*Interior dispositions on the eve of ordination. Icosia said to be the present Algiers.*

Rome, October 10, 1832.

My dear friend, I continued to be undecided for some time whether I ought to allow myself to interrupt my retreat to write to you. I have come down on the side of doing so by applying the method I use which you are familiar with, that it is good to mortify oneself but better still not to impose sacrifices or privations on others that they have not asked you for. I know with what anxiety you must be waiting for my news; it would be cruel to leave you in that state. So I believe I am making the right decision in spending some free moments of my retreat to converse with you. Besides, what we have to say to one another could not be a distraction. It is not that I wish to enter into the details of my spiritual exercises, we are too far apart and there is too little space in a letter to broach such a topic. It is enough for you to know that God in his goodness is helping me as usual, that is to say, he is revealing himself as he is, infinitely good, infinitely merciful, every time I approach him; that he is purifying my heart, illuminating my feeble understanding, stirring up my will and bringing it to perfection; that I am happy in his presence, whatever my feelings may be like when he communicates his divine Spirit to me. I invoke that Spirit as you can imagine in my present situation, with assiduity and persistence, I dare not say with fervour. Thus, whether my thoughts go to the immensity of God's goodness that he has accompanied me from childhood and led me to perform the various tasks that he has confided to me in the course of my life, or whether I meditate on the interior workings of grace, all of a kind to arouse my gratitude and love, or whether I reflect on my sins, my innumerable infidelities, which would make the very stones cry out against me and make me the first of my accusers, I know all the time that it is my Father who is in heaven I am dealing with, who has at his right hand his Son Jesus Christ, our Saviour, who is our advocate, our mediator, who never ceases to make intercession for us, with that powerful prayer which has the right to be heard and which is in actual fact always heard if we put no obstacle in its way. It

<sup>58</sup> YENVEUX, III, 231; REY, I, 546-547; RAMBERT, I, 611.

is precisely on this point that the power of the Holy Spirit draws me to dwell and it is the fruit that I want and hope for from my retreat. In other words in this last phase of my life I think I can say that I am firmly resolved, through the overflowing abundance of graces that I will receive, to try, by assiduous application, so to conform myself to God's will that not a single fibre of my being will knowingly swerve from it. I am telling you this quite frankly as you are my director and also for you as my admonitor to remind me of it, if needs be, every day of my life; for you know me too well not to understand that the greatness of the dignity to which I am going to be elevated, all unworthy as I am, will change nothing of my interior dispositions nor in my ties of trust and of religious simplicity, with you in the first place and also with everyone else, due proportion being observed. That is enough on that topic.

[Thursday, October 11]

If you knew what Icosia is your heart would beat a little faster. Its origins go back to the time of the fables; it is claimed that it was built by Hercules' twelve companions who settled there at the time of the famous expedition to horizons *nec plus ultra*, in other words to the Straits.<sup>59</sup> Its Greek name means: twenty. What is more certain is that it was the episcopal city in the heyday of the African Church and that Laurentius, its bishop, took part in the Council of Carthage held in 419, as legate of Mauretania Caesariensis, its province: *Laurentius Icositanus, Legatus Mauritaniae Caesariensis*, which serves to fix pretty well its location, and — pay careful attention, Father Hardouin<sup>60</sup> claims that it is today's Algiers. For my own part too I do not question it any more than he, and you will doubtless follow my opinion. I shall not fail to point it out to the Holy Father, on the day I go to receive his blessing. Goodbye. Accept my fond affection. My health is first rate. I am able to fast and observe the house regulation. Thursday has come, Sunday is nearly on us. I place all my trust in God.

<sup>59</sup> Gibraltar.

<sup>60</sup> Hardouin Jean, Jesuit and scholar (Quimper 1646 - Paris 1729).

437. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>61</sup>

*Greatness of the episcopate. Aspirations for holiness.*

[Rome,] October 20, 1832.

The Holy Spirit, the object of so many saintly people's prayers, made his appearance on the great day,<sup>62</sup> and I assure you that not a day has passed since then, and I could even say an hour, that he has not imparted ineffable spiritual experiences to that person whom he deigned to choose and sanctify. I did not count in vain on his powerful help for my whole retreat was made in a spirit of trust. I feel renewed and am in a spiritual state that I cannot put into words. All my life I had been filled with respect for the episcopate, I had always considered it in a great spirit of faith; it was, so to speak, an instinctive reflex of my soul. If I had not held myself back, I would many times have been carried away and fallen prostrate at the feet of some good bishop, as one does before the Pope. I wanted everyone to think as I did and to render noble acts of homage to these successors of the apostles. I was ready to let them walk right over me so as to exalt them the more, and now the Lord raises me myself to the summit of this greatness and what is more, now he is making me understand that I still fell short in my estimate of this plenitude of the priesthood of Jesus Christ. This profound conviction of my soul sits very well with the feeling of my own lowliness, personal poverty and unworthiness; but none the less I am sure that, through God's mercy, I have completely changed. I have a clearer knowledge of my duties and I think I have obtained, with the Holy Spirit, the resolve to discharge them faithfully. To offer offence to God — but what am I saying, the very thought of consciously saddening the Holy Spirit seems to me a monstrosity henceforth impossible. Life means nothing to me; I had asked God to have me die beneath the hands of the consecrating Bishops at the moment of my receiving the Holy Spirit if I must needs cause it offence by any deliberate fault. No doubt I will still have much to grieve over in the course of a life already

<sup>61</sup> REY, I, 548; RAMBERT, I, 615-616.

<sup>62</sup> The rite took place in the Church of San Silvestro al Quirinale. The ordaining prelates were Cardinal Odescalchi, Archbishop Falconieri of Ravenna and Bishop Frezza, secretary of the Congregation for Ecclesiastical Affairs. The new bishop wrote that same day to his uncle Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod.

full of miseries, but really I look forward with confidence to not offending God deliberately any more, be it ever so slightly, if indeed in a way one can call "slight" anything that gives displeasure to so good a Father and so great a majesty.

**438. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>63</sup>**

*Last audience with the Pope. Privileges of the Redemptorists given to the Oblates.*

[Rome,] October 24, 1832.

. . . He has been very kind and, without giving me a chance to thank him, he spoke to me about my matter and of everything pertaining to my title as vicar or visitor apostolic for Tunis and Tripoli with no obligation of residence. That matter once disposed of, I spoke with him about the dispensation from the fast which we need because of the cholera; he readily agreed, but told me to come to an understanding concerning that with Cardinal Lambruschini to whom he had given the responsibility of giving the same dispensations to the Archbishop of Paris and the other French Bishops. He is so well-disposed towards our Bishops that he himself found excuses for those Prelates for keeping quiet about his granting the concession to avoid compromising themselves by giving the impression, in the eyes of all the carping critics, of being in touch with him. I admired the Pope's goodness . . . I had my crucifix blessed for the *Via Crucis*. I spoke to him about our requests for the Office. I explained the matter to him very clearly and asked him to confirm the grant made by his predecessor Leo XII. While I was explaining explicitly the communication of Offices, he did not raise the least difficulty, and he would not have done so later on if he had not restricted this communication to the Liguorians. He told me to speak to the Prelate of the Congregation for Bishops and Regulars about it to put the matter in order. When I showed him the petition I had ready, he read it from first to last and, without making any comment<sup>64</sup> he

<sup>63</sup> YENVEUX, II, 136; REY, I, 549.

<sup>64</sup> We have followed here Yenveux's text rather than Rey's, which is shorter and better composed but certainly less faithful to the manuscript, except for a few words whose sense in Yenveux is difficult to grasp: ". . . sans en perdre aucune . . . abréviation? ou observation? . . ."

took his pen and wrote at the bottom, with his own hand: *die 24 octobris 1832, annuimus juxta petita. Gregorius PP. XVI.* So that's that matter brought to the desired conclusion. I will make sure to get a written document, with Father Moffa's signature, setting out what are the votive masses said by the Redemptorist Fathers. You have the others in their proper. Now my business is finished here, so I intend to leave as soon as I can; as it is all the same to me whether I live or die, I will take advantage of the first steam-packet available.

**439. [To the Fathers and Brothers, at Billens].<sup>65</sup>**

*The founder accepted being named bishop with a view especially to protecting the Congregation on the death of Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod.*

[Rome,] October 24, 1832.

. . . you will readily understand that this high dignity, this great character that has been bestowed upon me, does not relax a single one of the bonds that bind me to our Congregation, since, rather, the overriding reason for the submission of my will has been the consciousness of the good that would flow from it for the Congregation when the moment comes (and may God leave us undisturbed for many a long year yet!) when we shall have the misfortune to lose the protector whom the Lord has preserved for us amongst the ranks of the chief pastors, in the person of my venerable uncle, the Bishop of Marseilles. Confined as we are, and still little known, it is my opinion, and those other Oblates whom I was bound to consult thought the same, that it would be very advantageous if we could when need arose indicate that the representative of this small and unknown family, but newly-born, and which has had to begin its growth in the midst of thorns, is a bishop, and a bishop chosen, elected by the Supreme Head of the Church, consecrated under his eyes and at his command, in the capital of the christian world, by a Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops and Regular Clergy, who represented him in this sublime function.

<sup>65</sup> YENVEUX, III, 233; RAMBERT, I, 602. Here we follow Rambert's text. Yenveux himself copied a part of this letter, making a summary of it.

**440. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>66</sup>**

*Visit to the French Ambassador.*

[Rome,] October 28, 1832.

. . . As I make my departure I am sorry I didn't bring his lack of civility home to him.<sup>67</sup> It calls for an act of virtue on my part to hold myself back, for I do not forgive his insolent lack of respect for my status as Bishop; the four fruitless visits I made him as a priest I overlook; but on the last occasion he saw what I am.

**441. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>68</sup>**

*Jesuit hospitality at Genoa.*

[Genoa,] November 10, 1832.

. . . I confess I am a little ashamed to be here in this condition; but they have the good sense to understand and accept me as they find me . . . .<sup>69</sup>

<sup>66</sup> REY, I, 548.

<sup>67</sup> Bishop de Mazenod left Rome on November 4. He had made four visits to Mr. de Saint-Aulaire, the French ambassador, without being able to meet him. On the fifth visit, the ambassador received him courteously, but without any apology and without making a return visit.

<sup>68</sup> REY, I, 549.

<sup>69</sup> After leaving Civitavecchia on the 6th on the *Henri-IV*, the Founder had to change to another boat at Livorno. He made the passage from Livorno to Genoa on the *Colombo* and from Genoa to Marseilles, November 14-16, on the *Sully*. While waiting for the boat at Genoa he stayed with the Jesuits. There had been very rough seas and he had had a very severe dose of sea-sickness. It is probably of his pitiful condition that he speaks in this letter.





## 1833

### 442. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>1</sup>

*The scholastic brothers return from Billens to Marseilles.*

[Marseilles,] January 8, 1833.

. . . The report which Father Guibert gave me on the matter was the most satisfactory in every way.<sup>2</sup> He had them undergo three examinations and was preparing a fourth one for them. He tells me: "These young men, I can tell you, have embarked on a journey that will bring them far, they have made remarkable progress under Father Pons, not so much in the details of the subject as in methodology, etc." On the score of virtue too they are going ahead wonderfully. It is very consoling.

### 443. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>3</sup>

*To help the bishop of Aix.*

[Marseilles,] March 25, 1833.

. . . I shall always be at the disposition of the Archbishop of Aix for the good of the Church and to relieve him personally, on account of his ill-health . . .<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> REY, I, 554.

<sup>2</sup> Father Guibert had been designated, in December 1832, to make the canonical visitation of the house of Billens and to organize the students' return. They arrived at Marseilles at the beginning of January.

<sup>3</sup> REY, I, 559.

<sup>4</sup> In 1833, 1834 and 1835, because of the Government's opposition, Bishop de Mazenod often had to absent himself from the diocese of Marseilles; he lent his services to the bishops of the neighbouring dioceses, in particular to Archbishop Jacques Raillon of Aix.

**444. [To Father Guibert, at N.-D. du Laus].<sup>5</sup>**

*Congratulations to Father Guibert who has succeeded in reaching an understanding with Bishop Arbaud. Proximate ordination of Casimir Aubert.*

[Marseilles.] March 25, 1833.

. . . I admired the means you employed to bring this difficult man to a more reasonable frame of mind, and in taking the whole affair into your hands you got me out of a very embarrassing situation and saved the day. Discussion in the context envisaged by the Bishop of Gap would have been bound to come out badly.<sup>6</sup> We had right, fair dealing and justice on our side, he had might and unbridled power in his hands and given his character and formation he would have used them. You were not too far out in what you said concerning Lamennais' views. These gentlemen have always mistaken my esteem for the author with the use they imagined I made of his works, nor did they make any distinction as to period. I am also strongly in favour of the plan of action you propose to follow in his respect; for his part he ought to remove the obstacles he places to all vocations . . .

. . . There is no need for me to tell you that all these good brothers are asking for your prayers and those of our Fathers. Aubert in particular has been really insistent lest I forget his commission; he is on retreat, I could not refuse to let him have a fortnight off to prepare himself for the priestly ordination that his unblemished life has already made him so worthy of. What an outstanding fellow he is! Intelligence,

<sup>5</sup> REY. I, 558-559

<sup>6</sup> The Bishop and clergy of Gap were already having thoughts of resuming the direction of N.-D. du Laus and of making it a retirement home for elderly priests. As to the latter, Father Guibert was prepared to accept them but Bishop Arbaud found his conditions too onerous. The Bishop of Gap continued to find fault with the Oblates especially on account of the interests they had shown in Lamennais and of their moral teaching, inspired by St. Alphonse. While saying nothing more about the dismissal of the Oblates, he asked for at least Father Guibert's departure. Bishop de Mazenod refused and told the superior to pass on this refusal to the prelate, who left things as they were. The better relationship that now existed between Bishop Arbaud and Father Guibert saved the Founder from an embarrassing situation: basically, it was the latter's moral teachings and past relationships with Lamennais that the Bishop did not approve.

character, virtue, heart: he has them all to perfection. You can congratulate yourself on winning such a prize and the family will be eternally grateful.<sup>7</sup>

**445. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>8</sup>**

*Pastoral visitation.*

[Marseilles,] May 4, 1833.

My dear friend, I am on my way to make a pastoral visitation in a part of the diocese.<sup>9</sup> It will take me a fortnight and, please God, I won't be wasting my time.

A bishop is a missionary par excellence; I know my duty, it only remains for me to accomplish it as I ought. If resolve were all that were needed, I would have no doubts about it, but it is something that has to be earned, for what greater grace can a man have than that of doing his duty well. It needs prayers: it is up to you to give me your help, my dear children.

**446. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>10</sup>**

*Visit to Aix on Feast of Sacred Heart impossible.*

[Marseilles,] June 5, 1833.

. . . You know quite well what a pleasure it would be for me to spend the Feast of the Sacred Heart with you. But various reasons oblige me to be absent. In the first place a pastoral visitation has been fixed for the vigil and the day after . . .

<sup>7</sup> Father Casimir Aubert was the first Oblate ordained priest by Bishop de Mazonod, on April 6.

<sup>8</sup> YENVEUX, III, 232; RAMBERT, I, 618; REY, I, 559.

<sup>9</sup> Starting on May 6, he made the pastoral visitation of the towns of La Valentine, Roquevaire, Auriol, Cuges, Cassis, La Ciotat and Aubagne.

<sup>10</sup> YENVEUX, IV, 122; REY, I, 560.

447. [To the Fathers at Billens].<sup>11</sup>

*Bad spirit amongst the Fathers at Billens. The Superior is recalled to France.*

[Marseilles,] June 23, 1833.

. . . I have to confess that the pen fell from my hand each time I made the effort to write you. What's there to say to men who after so many years of religious life don't have the first idea of their chief and essential obligations, and some of whom go so far as to threaten to leave if their obedience is not changed, in other words, if instead of being told what they have to do, they are not asked to place their orders, so that their tastes can be complied with . . . . You want me to write and I have no blessing to impart, only anathemas. You are all at fault, without a single exception. The instrument you had the temerity to send me in your collective names is madness. I hold Father M<sup>12</sup> responsible for it before God. He has infected everyone with his discontent and the men he had to deal with were weak enough to allow themselves to be influenced . . . . You betray your office by your weak-

<sup>11</sup> YENVEUX, VI, 79.

<sup>12</sup> Already in 1832 Father de Mazenod was dissatisfied with the superior, Father Mille, who was engaged too much with preaching and not enough with the scholastics. On September 25 the Superior General even invites Father Courtès, vicar general, to send Father Mille to N.-D. du Laus.

In the act of visitation of Billens, December 6, 1832, Father Guibert reproaches the community for having made excursions during the summer "as far as the frontiers of foreign and distant kingdoms," against the Superior General's orders.

It is understandable why this letter seems severe. It is a renewed condemnation of faults that should not have been revived.

It is Father Yenveux himself who copies this letter, with plenty of suspension points and leaving proper names incomplete. After the departure of the scholastics, at the beginning of January, several of the Fathers stayed on in Switzerland as preachers: Martin, Mouchel, Ricard, Dassý, Bernard, Pons, etc. In the necrological circular of the latter, Father Billon writes that Father Pons "traversed the whole of catholic and protestant Switzerland on foot . . . . Brother Pierre (Aubert), his faithful companion, will tell more fully than I can the various adventures that befell them on these journeys, the longest of which took him to Milan." (Not. néc., Vol. I, p. 361).

This "M" — is it Father Mille who would still have been superior in June 1833? It seems so, even if we find him preaching in the Lower Alps in April 1833 (REY, I, 559). In any case what is said about the superior fits him very well. Furthermore, Fathers Martin and Mouchel stayed at Billens after 1833, while we find Father Mille in France along with Father Pons, named professor of dogma at the major seminary of Marseilles in October 1833, after a strict retreat without permission to celebrate mass.

ness and go with the stream it is your duty to control, and today once again you let yourself be persuaded that one must needs compromise with these bad religious and give them the means to relieve their boredom. What a pity that these apostles — so holy, so exemplary! — are unable any longer to preach as their pure and supernatural zeal would yearn for! And since their vocation calls them to no other kind of perfection and they no longer have anything to do, since they are no longer in a position to display their splendid talents in the Christian pulpit, they must be allowed to travel the world, make little pleasure trips, and make a scandalous spectacle of themselves before all Switzerland, which will not be amused. In the meantime this irregular absence, all the more blameworthy since you all knew I did not approve of it, puts you in the position of being unable to carry out as promptly as should be the orders that I have for you. I am determined to reshuffle your community; but you must be aware that it is against my will and under constraint that I am doing so; consequently you will all be responsible before God for the resulting inconveniences. I begin by recalling Father M. He will leave immediately on receipt of this letter . . . . I will let you know the destination of the others in due course . . . . It is my wish that this letter be read aloud in the community so that each individual will be made aware of my displeasure, and no one will escape the reproaches that I feel obliged to make in all conscience.

**448. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>13</sup>**

*The Pope recalls Bishop de Mazenod to Rome.*

[Marseilles,] July 31, 1833.

. . . Now I cannot put off telling you something that will come as quite a shock. I am leaving for Rome. The Pope has just put my obedience to this test. Don't tell anyone about this journey before it has been made public and even then don't say I am going on the Pope's command. My sense of foreboding in view of the trust that the Head of the Church is showing me is more than I can say. He wants me to leave without the least delay for an important message that he wishes to communicate to me personally and to induce me to respond promptly

<sup>13</sup> YENVEUX, III, 191; REY, I, 561; RAMBERT, I, 620.

to his invitation he appeals to my well-known sense of devotion to our holy faith. Not content with communicating with me through the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda,<sup>14</sup> he also commissioned another prelate, who is used to handling very sensitive matters and whose friendship with me he well knew, to urge me on his part, in the Pope's sovereign name, to hasten my departure. I don't hesitate for a moment to obey but I have a presentiment that I am going to be entrusted with some troublesome mission in some region of America. Colleagues who had to be brought in on the matter are carried away by other kinds of conjectures. For myself I see no other possibility. When the Pope speaks to a bishop with the good of the Church in view, he must be obeyed, cost what it might. Redouble your prayers on my behalf. Affectionate greetings.

**449. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>15</sup>**

*The Bishop of Icosia "heavy of heart" as he sets out from Marseilles.*

Nice, August 8, 1833.

My dear friends, whenever I had to take my leave of you, it has always been heavy of heart, but this time there is no consolation at all on the horizon to ease my sorrow. Leaving you, my dear friend, in such an unsatisfactory state of health and burdening you with all the details I would normally handle myself each day, leaving my venerable uncle, eighty-five years old, disappearing at the very moment of my nephew's arrival,<sup>16</sup> just when he needs my direction; then there are Billens and Aix, the one as difficult as the other — Patience! Every-

<sup>14</sup> Cardinal Pedicini and Bishop Frezza, secretary of the Congregation for Ecclesiastical Affairs, were the ones who wrote to the Founder. After his nomination as Bishop without the consent of the Government of Louis-Philippe, an abundant correspondence had flowed between the civil authorities of Marseilles and Paris and between Paris and Rome. The upshot of these negotiations was: the Pope had to find employment outside France for a bishop named without the consent of the French Government, all the more since the Bishop of Icosia was considered politically very dangerous. Rome took fright. To avoid complications, the Holy Father summoned Bishop de Mazenod to his side.

<sup>15</sup> YENVEUX, III, 191; REY, I, 562; RAMBERT, I, 620-621.

<sup>16</sup> Louis de Boisgelin, a student with the Jesuits at Fribourg, was coming to spend the holidays at Marseilles and wanted to enter the Jesuit novitiate.

thing must be sanctified by supernatural obedience. It is a matter of the good of the Church. After saying: *Si fieri potest transeat a me calix iste*, I go on to say: *fiat voluntas tua*.<sup>17</sup>

**450. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>18</sup>**

*Beauty of the coast road between Nice and Genoa.*

[Genoa,] August 12, 1833.

. . . In all my life I haven't had a more agreeable journey and I don't think it would be possible anywhere in the world to make a more delightful one than this journey from Nice to Genoa along the so-called Corniche, which is along its whole length a very beautiful and good road. It has a magical quality, impossible to describe. You never leave the edge of the sea which affords a continuous and charming picture, but at each bend in the winding roads in every bay you are delighted by a new vista with a view of hills dotted with large villages and a large number of little towns built at shore-level whose houses can be descried from afar, always surmounted by beautiful steeples and very tall churches. You don't stop remarking on its beauty all the way to Genoa, which you see against a scenic background, crowning the finest view in the whole universe.

. . . We will never see the like in our great city of Marseilles, however many pains we take; this depressing thought came to me as I went around this beautiful building.<sup>19</sup> Be sure to aim at giving our two churches<sup>20</sup> real height; eliminate from your consideration everything we have; every example we have in Marseilles of this style is ghastly. There is not a single village on the entire Genoan coastline that does not surpass in beauty the so-called best we have to offer.

<sup>17</sup> Matt. 26. 39.

<sup>18</sup> REY. I, 562.

<sup>19</sup> He had visited the church at Finale.

<sup>20</sup> The churches of Saint-Lazare and Saint Joseph were then under construction.



451. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>21</sup>

*The Superior General of the Sommaschi judges the Jesuits harshly.*

Livorno, August 13, [1833].

My dear friend, another brief word, while on the road; I wrote you from Genoa, but I don't think it will upset you to get another brief word from Livorno.

On board I found myself sharing a cabin<sup>22</sup> with the Superior General of the [Sommaschi] on his way back to Rome. We have already had some long conversations together. Would you believe it? Judging from their letter, they hold the same prejudices in that Congregation with respect to the Jesuits as prevailed at the time of Fra Paolo. His accusations on the moral principles taught by them would bring a smile of pity to your lips: these poor Fathers are rooted in a laxity that is subversive of all principles. When I assert the contrary, out come examples which have as much foundation as those formerly adduced by Port-Royal and Co.: "Father, I owe such-and-such in restitution"; "Bah! you are not yet on the point of death, time enough then to think of that," and so on; and it is falsehoods of that ilk that a General serves up to a Bishop in the year 1833! I say nothing of the forbidden books that they make available for a price, at the same time enjoining silence. It arouses pity and horror, for if the conversation of the heads of Orders can centre on such calumnies, and this is the food they give their Congregation, what good can the Church expect of them!

452. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>23</sup>

*Journey from Livorno to Rome. Arrival at Civitavecchia in the afternoon of the 15th, too late to celebrate mass.*

Rome, August 16, [1833].

My dear friend, before washing my face I am going to go on with my account of the course of my journey right into this capital city.

<sup>21</sup> RAMBERT, I, 621; REY, I, 563.

<sup>22</sup> The Founder went by sea from Genoa to Civitavecchia.

<sup>23</sup> RAMBERT, I, 622; REY, I, 564; YENVEUX, VI, 5.

We embarked at one o'clock at Livorno for an immediate departure.<sup>24</sup> We finally cast off at six o'clock. I resigned myself to observing a rigorous fast in the hope of being able to say mass the next day, at least at three or four o'clock in the afternoon, but my abstinence was futile, we arrived at the port of Civitavecchia only at half-past three. It was past five by the time we had entered; it was six by the time we had emerged from the customs, police, etc. However, I was still fasting; but there was little merit in it, as if I had taken something to eat while on board I would have been at death's door the same as everybody else on account of the big swell that rocked our ship. I stayed stretched out almost all the time and on my bunk, where my bones were cramped, I followed in my mind's eye what was going on at Marseilles. I said: at such-and-such a time so-and-so is saying mass, at another hour someone else, at ten thirty the pontifical office. If I were at Marseilles, I would have celebrated this feast in fine style. Whatever about my sorrow at the deprivation, there was one moment when I said with laughter: at this moment they are dining at the Bishop's Palace! Obedience, obedience, there are times when we must pay dearly to obtain your merit.

The next day we got into the carriage towards six o'clock, to arrive at four o'clock in the great city of Rome.

**453. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>25</sup>**

*How viaticum is brought to the sick at Livorno. Visit to Bishop Frezza.*

[Rome.] August 17, 1833.

[. . . At Livorno, I was witness to a religious spectacle that] rubbed salt in my wounds. You know how I suffer at the unworthy manner holy viaticum is brought to the sick at Marseilles and you were often as vexed as I was. Well, listen now to how it ought to be done and how it *is* done at Livorno. When there is no urgency, one waits until nightfall. Then the blessed sacrament, borne by a priest in cope and large humeral veil, issues majestically from the church beneath a large canopy of four if not six poles. It is preceded by forty or so

<sup>24</sup> August 14.

<sup>25</sup> YENVEUX, IV, 74; REY, I, 563-564.

at least members of the confraternity, torches in hand, followed by a priest carrying the small canopy that is needed in the stairway, accompanied by an immense throng all reciting aloud the *miserere*. At the toll of the bell all windows in a thrice are lit up from the first to the fourth floor. There are lamps, candles large and small and candelabras and, as the sick person's house is neared, eight to ten relatives or friends come forward, torches in hand, in front of the blessed sacrament and join the procession. While the sacrament is administered to the sick person, those assisting remain at the door and recite aloud Our Lady's litanies and other prayers. The journey back is done in like fashion save that as the church is neared the *Te Deum* is sung. Admit that this is wonderful and that one cannot help waxing indignant when making comparisons with the way we do it.

. . . I don't know if you will draw the same conclusion as myself, I will be able to tell you by the first post what it is all about. I was fed up with it before, I am even more fed up with it now, and God grant that I will not be even more so later on.<sup>26</sup> Goodbye. I was forgetting to tell you that I have come and taken up lodging at Saint Sylvester's; I cannot stand hotels, restaurants and all that turmoil. Here I am quiet and perfectly comfortable.

#### 454. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>27</sup>

*Visits to Bishop Frezza, Cardinal Pedicini, Bishop Maï, and Mr. de Tallenay. French Government's intrigue, fearing political influence of Bishop de Mazenod. False accusations.*

[Rome,] August 20, 1833.

My dear Tempier, I put a letter in the post for you the day before yesterday. Since then I have seen Bishop Frezza and had a long talk with him in that spirit of mutual cordiality that you know exists between us; but not having been charged with the communication of what the Holy Father has to tell me, he was content to suggest I pass by the Cardinal Seceretary of State to be apprised of it. I understood

<sup>26</sup> Bishop de Mazenod paid a visit to Bishop Frezza on the very evening of his arrival in Rome. The prelate did not reveal to him the reason for his summons to Rome, saying that the Holy Father had reserved the communication of this to himself.

<sup>27</sup> YENVEUX, A, 3; REY, I, 564-566; RAMBERT, I, 623-624.

enough not to be under any illusion on the matter in question and it was one reason more for me to await the command of the Holy Father who was so very impatient for my arrival.

Yesterday, Sunday, I did not go out the whole day. I said mass at the same altar where I was consecrated, and I am continuing this practice every day and asking God that I may never be unworthy of the sublime character and high dignity I received on that spot, but always be a credit to my great ministry through a truly apostolic courage which will enable me never to yield to the powers of hell nor to those of earth which in these days find there their inspirations.

This morning I went to Trinità del Monte. I saw the superior of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart and Mrs. de Coriolis<sup>28</sup> while waiting for a meeting (Congresso) to end which prevented my seeing the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda. He was available when I came away from the Sisters and welcomed me with his usual kindness. He confirmed my suspicions of Saturday, namely that I am the victim of a governmental intrigue and I was subsequently assured of the fact by Bishop Maï, the present Secretary of Propaganda, whom I saw as I came down. They have at least received my letter which was placed yesterday before the Pope. The whole thing is nothing but an intrigue of the French Government which wished to suppress the diocese of Marseilles and fears my influence in the country. It is a poor government that does not realize what it owes me precisely by reason of that influence it so foolishly dreads. Complaint was laid before the Pope, threats made to arraign me before the courts on the ground that I had been ordained bishop without consultation. How I wish I had known about this charge before leaving! I would have settled the question myself and we would have seen if, under our present laws, it is not permissible for me to be ordained bishop when I could freely, it seemed to me, become a muselman! It is by means of harassments of this sort that these gentlemen think to win the support of the clergy! I have just been told that the *Gazette du Midi* reports certain other facts which prove that someone has set about subverting in particular the ecclesiastical administration at Marseilles. This, in the light of moves made elsewhere, is proof of the method that they wish to adopt, namely, the suppression of this ancient see to the confusion of a great and eminently catholic popula-

<sup>28</sup> Mrs. de Coriolis was closely related to the de Boisgelin family.

tion. It seems to have been contrived that I should be away precisely at the time you would find it useful for me to work with you in defence of our liberties. Don't limit yourself to consulting the timid lawyers who abound in the province; write to Paris, to Hennequin and Berryer. Don't let yourself be stifled or bludgeoned. Before I left, we ought to have written a letter of appeal about the shameful development at the isolation hospital, left without a chaplain. Harassment must not lead us to neglect our duty. The Minister is at fault for not replying to the Bishop on a matter of this importance. It is necessary to write to him again, bringing it politely but very clearly home to him that a formal letter on such a topic ought not to have been left unanswered.

I have just read the article of the *Gazette du Midi* which carries the petulant insult of Mr. Fortoul.<sup>29</sup> This fellow wants to act like a lesser Manuel. What a pity that a city should be so badly mishandled by a bunch of outsiders. Wouldn't it be an opportune moment to write to the minister to deplore that at a time when it would be important to rally every decent and religious element in support, the majority of the population are being irritated by annoying harassments and that the clergy, to which the Government owes more than it realizes, is being filled with disgust. Her Grace the Duchess of Berry is expected here; you won't be surprised that I won't be moving a muscle to go and see her.

In the absence of his Excellency the Ambassador, I have been to see the secretary of the Embassy, Mr. de Tallenay who received me very decently. I learned from him that Mr. de Sainte-Aulaire and Mr. de Latour-Maubourg have each in turn been very busy concerning the Bishop of Icosia. I don't know how many notes have been exchanged on the matter. Mr. de Broglie,<sup>30</sup> notwithstanding the religious sentiment that Mr. Thomas credits him with, has taken a great deal of trouble to challenge the right of the Head of the Church to name whomever he pleases as bishop. It seems that the response has been wise and reasoned, but they return to it again and again, not knowing where to attack; they have cast this peace-loving Bishop in the guise of Carlist leader holding political meetings at the Bishop's Palace, etc. They know him but little, these ambassadors and far-sighted ministers!

<sup>29</sup> Mr. Fortoul, a member of the Marseilles municipal council, had made the proposal of ordering the closure of all the churches that were not legally authorized.

<sup>30</sup> The Minister of Foreign Affairs.

If as they so erroneously believe the Bishop were leader of the Carlists, the events of April 30 might well have given them something more to worry about. This alleged leader is going to allow the Duchess of Berry to pass by without desiring even so much as to call on her. In the whole course of his life he has not been implicated in any conspiracy. Really, these people who are afraid of their own shadows would almost make one sorry that one has been of more help to them than they deserve.

**455. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>31</sup>**

*Bishop Fortuné ought to write to the Minister of Cult regarding the journey to Rome of the Bishop of Icosia.*

[Rome,] August 21, 1833.

... I think that it would be very much to the point for my uncle to write to the Minister that Mr. de Mazenod, his Vicar General, Bishop of Icosia, having been summoned to Rome by the Pope, he fully believed that his absence would be of short duration but in view of the possibility that he might be obliged to put off his return for a fortnight, asks his consent in the event that his nephew should have no other choice. Perhaps the minister will take the opportunity to broach the question and we shall deal with it as circumstances dictate.<sup>32</sup> Could it be they actually think that at the time the Pope was pleased to make me bishop to superintend the missions at Tunis and Tripoli, I would have accepted if I hadn't seen here a means of lightening my uncle's load, on the eve of the ninetieth birthday, in the exacting functions of his ministry? Really, I will not conceal from them that the answer is 'no'; but to give them reassurance, it is not with any eye to a future succession. Were they to offer me the See of Paris, I would politely decline. People who think I am after anything except peace and quiet don't know me very well. Please let me know if there is anything you want as I shall be coming to a decision after the audience on what I shall have to do. Goodbye.

<sup>31</sup> REY, I, 567.

<sup>32</sup> The Bishop of Icosia sought in this way an occasion to oblige the Government to treat directly with his uncle or with himself concerning the grievances it was nursing.

456. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>33</sup>

*Cardinal Bernetti has nothing to say to the Bishop of Icosia. The Pope's Chamberlain does not reply to his request for an audience. How dispensations from vows are understood at Rome.*

[Rome,] August 24, 1833.

. . . You have the text of Propaganda's letter; it was as if religion were going to be dealt an enormous blow if there were the least delay. His Holiness had a most private and important item to communicate to me face to face. They appealed to my well-known sense of devotion to our holy faith. I set off in the face of every obstacle with a promptitude reminiscent of the military under Napoleon. As the sea-route was closed, I take the land-route, notwithstanding the excessive heat and my tendency to coach sickness. On arrival at Genoa, judging the land-route to be too long, I take to the boat. I brave the bad weather, I make the biggest sacrifice I have made in my whole life in this respect. I celebrate no mass on the Blessed Virgin's great feastday, although I fasted for thirty hours in the hope of not being deprived of this happiness. I come to Civitavecchia, I snatch some rest and I leave the next day at first light; no sooner am I in Rome than I present myself before Bishop Frezza, who is in raptures and marvels to behold me, my written reply not yet having been received; that very evening he informs the Secretariat of State of my arrival, as no less than that morning disquietude had been expressed at the fact that nothing had been received from me. Wouldn't you think that the next day the gushing Cardinal, in whose office, between you and me, I believe even the simplest matters have been botched, would have summoned me without fail. No, he does not even speak to the Pope of my eagerly-awaited arrival, at any rate on the Sunday evening the Pope discussed my reply with the Secretary of Propaganda who was unaware, like the Holy Father, that I had been in Rome for two days!

. . . His Eminence sends me word that if I have something to communicate to him, I am free to go in, that he has nothing in particular to say to me<sup>34</sup> . . . . Since then I have seen the French

<sup>33</sup> YENVEUX, III, 192; VIII, 317; REY, I, 567.

<sup>34</sup> The Founder had asked for an audience on the 21st. Not having received any reply, he presented himself on the 24th at the Secretariat of State: there they "had nothing in particular" to tell him.

Chargé d’Affaires again and he didn’t try to pretend that matters were different from what he understood I knew them to be; I said what had to be said, but I am so fed up that I spend days on end without going out.

. . . A Roman prelate has let me have a copy of a very remarkable decree that was issued after much debate on the basis of the memoranda of all the generals and procurator generals of the Religious Orders, which proves that secularization and *a fortiori* dispensations do not destroy . . . in such a way that when such persons re-enter their Congregation, they are no longer bound to make a fresh novitiate, nor to pronounce again their vows, but may be admitted after a sufficient trial period and a retreat. Does one need further proof that secularizations and dispensations are only granted while *duritiam cordis* lasts and is there not a further conclusion to be drawn that those who persevere in this kind of apostasy are really to be pitied?

**457. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>35</sup>**

*Waiting for papal audience. Boredom.*

[Rome,] August 27, 1833.

. . . I have nothing else to say to you today. It is nobody’s fault, certainly not the fault of the Pope, but the fact remains that I have not seen him yet, with the result that I have spent more time waiting for his audience than I took in coming to Rome. Bishops Maï and Frezza are thoroughly mortified at this inexplicable hitch: Bishop Frezza will be speaking this evening to the Pope of this absurd difficulty. In the meantime I am bored silly. If I didn’t know Rome, I could make use of this enforced leisure-time to go and see its places of beauty, but even this possibility is denied me as there is nothing I haven’t already seen ten times over.

<sup>35</sup> REY, I, 567.



458. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles],<sup>36</sup>

*Papal audience. The Bishop of Icosia is accused of having been made bishop without the Government's consent and in particular of being a leading Carlist, opposed to Louis-Philippe.*

Rome, August 28, 1833.

. . . The audience with the Pope was closed to all but myself and the ministers. I was with His Holiness for a very long time. Well now! after the government had made futile protestations against my elevation to the episcopate, since it could not deny the Holy See an authority it exercises every day, another line of attack was prepared and they let it be known confidentially that, since I was a well-known Carlist leader and was holding political meetings in the Bishop's Palace, it would be necessary to prosecute me before the courts; that this would be the subject of an official note unless the Pope wisely intervened, as was the hope, for it would be very distasteful to the Government to be reduced to the extremity of bringing a bishop before the courts. The Pope, in good faith and to shield me from this dishonour, issued his summons. If I had been told why, you know I would have replied in proper manner, and since I have made no moves, or said a single word in favour of the Carlist cause, granted even there be such a cause, seeing that my principles are that the clergy has enough on its hands to defend the faith without getting mixed up in politics, I would have gone to the courts myself if needs be, sure of carrying the day. Since I am here, I shall see the matter through . . .

<sup>36</sup> REY, I, 568; RAMBERT, I, 625.

459. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>37</sup>

*It would be easy to defend himself on the political charges. His principles in this field. Father Pons to make a retreat on his return from Switzerland.*

Rome, August 31, 1833.

... It was necessary in effect to take pause after my Wednesday morning session. I lie low, I need to think, to have light, I ask God to grant me enlightenment, my need all the greater in that men's plans seemingly pit themselves against the inspirations of the Holy Spirit . . . .

September 1.

I resume my letter on September 1st and the first thing I am doing is imagining myself back at Marseilles, as I am unable to bear being at Rome, however much kindness they want to show me here. The ever-reliable Cardinal Pacca, dean of the College of Cardinals, came to see me yesterday, since, he said, he could not bear it any longer, knowing I was in Rome and seeing that I would never meet him at his place. He has invited me to dine today. I celebrated St. Lazarus' feastday along with you and that of the canonized bishops of the diocese, for I still see myself as its vicar general in spite of all the claims and caprices of certain Carbonari. We know the Church's law better than they do and all that we undertake to do with them is to discuss the laws of the police. We shall see how they sustain before the courts the charge that I have held Carlist meetings at the Bishop's Palace. That scare story enabled them to get to the Pope who pictured me already in the dock and put himself to too much trouble to get me out of that ignominious situation; but I am by no means alarmed. The Jacobins of Marseilles were furious to see two bishops where they did not want to see a single one; it is they apparently who have laid this plot, and the Government asked no more than to take advantage of this pretext to rid itself of me, whom it has made the mistake of fearing, although the principles I profess are more beneficial than harmful to it, since I have always taught that the clergy must not compromise itself by getting mixed up with party politics, our ministry being one of peace and reconciliation.

<sup>37</sup> YENVEUX, III, 129; VI, 48; REY, I, 568-569; RAMBERT, I, 625-626.

The Prefect of Bouches-du-Rhône is well aware of this,<sup>38</sup> I have told him as much on more than one occasion and he must be aware too that our conduct has been in line with our principles, — April 30th bears this out. I shall know within the week the definitive opinion of Rome. If it does injury to my rights, my independence as a French citizen or my honour, I am leaving and I will provoke the attack the Government threatens me with before the Pope, without ever giving me an inkling of it.

. . . It won't be enough to give Pons a lecture when he arrives, he really deserves a stiff penance. Have him do a retreat in the course of which I forbid him to say mass, and I approve no one but yourself as his confessor during that retreat.

My! what consciences they have! They have to learn that you don't play games with God and with the most sacred of commitments at your imagination's fancy. If they don't know what their obligations are, instruct them in them and let them pour out their sorrow in the meantime before God for not knowing them when they ought to have known them, or better still, let them shed bitter tears for having disregarded them. I don't see any sign of that here. These gentlemen are shut up in a little village, a wretched community of three who keep to the house. No-one would dream of saying they became missionaries just for this or that particular work. Obedience is the sole norm and let no-one flinch from it, be he sixty or eighty years old. Health does not enter into it any more than anything else. A man has just died while on a mission because obedience bade him go although he was ill; he went knowing that he would not return, and that is why God is granting miraculous cures at his intercession.

There aren't two ways. Just because some people abandon all principles, we cannot allow ourselves to fail in our responsibility and humour their folly. Read them this section of my letter without sparing them anything. We have been all too lenient through an excess of kindness.

. . . Our scholastics have confirmed what a priest had told me, namely, that they throw a party for all comers, without regard for the family's difficult situation and the efforts that have gone into finding the necessities of life for their house; it is really deplorable.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Mr. Thomas, who was the arch-adversary of the Bishop of Icosia. The reference is to the passage through Marseilles of the Duchess of Berry in 1832 cf. letter no. 421.

<sup>39</sup> YENVEUX (VI, 48) does not give the date of this extract.

**460. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].**<sup>40</sup>

*First interview with Cardinal Bernetti, Secretary of State.*

[Rome,] September 5, 1833.

. . . I spent nearly an hour with the Minister who could not have been kinder. I found him clear in his mind that the complaint against me is groundless; everyone has come around to this now. He confirmed what I had been told elsewhere. Threatening letters were being sent to them to press them to summon me to Rome, failing which I would be indicted on the ground of Carlism . . . . The Pope in his wisdom judged that I must be rescued from that danger. What say you about these gentlemen and their clever ruse!

**461. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].**<sup>41</sup>

*The Bishop of Icosia has never been engaged in politics.*

[Rome,] September 8, 1833.

I spend my days without going out; comparing one prison with another, I would as soon try the one threatened by our fine ministers while awaiting trial at their behest. As I have told you, my alleged crime is that I held Carlist meetings at the Bishop's Palace. You know how little such an absurd allegation troubles me. I really want to see the thing brought to a conclusion and to do that I must return as soon as possible; at the right moment I shall see to it that the Ministers have advance warning that I am going to place myself at their disposition. Really, I have absolutely no reason to fear the most thorough investigation. To think that I, who have on principle never got mixed up in politics, am accused of holding Carlist meetings! It is too comical! They do me more honour than I deserve; it is all I can do and more to carry out my duties in the high office I hold in the Church.

I hope these gentlemen never have enemies more dangerous than myself. At the same time with nonsenses of this kind they are costing me my time, my money and my health. May God forgive them! It has put me in an ugly mood.

<sup>40</sup> REY, I, 569.

<sup>41</sup> RAMBERT, I, 626

462. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>42</sup>

*Project for a seminary at Rome to serve the sub-urbicarian dioceses. Obedience.*

[Rome,] September 12, 1833.

. . . I have for my part made another proposal, of greater use to the Church and of more profit to souls. This evening I am expecting in my rooms Cardinal Odescalchi who has made an appointment to meet me there, to make him a proposal of a different kind that would in the space of a few years renew the clergy of the suburbicarian dioceses, but how can I get them here to appreciate any new project. Pope Leo XII is no more. This is what I propose, briefly: it would be to set up at Rome, in the house of St. Alexis, which everyone is after, a major seminary like those in France to bring together the clerics of the five suburbicarian dioceses, the greater number of whose priests are in a condition not short of degradation which is reducing the people to a state of crass ignorance and abandoning them to every vice. It would be the finest institution set up for centuries and the consequences would be enormous; you take my meaning without my having to spell it out further, but will anyone else want to understand? If Cardinal Odescalchi, one of these bishops who is hardest up for clergy, wants to back me up, we shall see in turn all the other suburbicarian bishops, and if these five leading Cardinals joined together to ask the Pope for this foundation, I don't think that he would be able to say no. You understand from your own position whom I would propose to be the director of this major seminary, but I am not building up my hopes of being heard; at least I will have the merit of having made the proposal, I don't say of having conceived it, as the thought came to me from God during holy mass.

September 13.

Cardinal Odescalchi spent nearly two hours with me yesterday evening. He is delighted with my proposal, but I understand that the first part attracted him more than the second, as he told me that it would be easier to find one good professor in Rome for each part of the course than five individuals, one from each diocese. I led him to

<sup>42</sup> YENVEUX, II, 1-2; III, 112.

reflect that more was needed than professors to salve so ancient a sore and that it is absolutely indispensable to employ men for this purpose who have experience in this area. He understood, but I would have to pursue the project for myself: it will not be accepted so easily by the others, amongst whom there are many who do not know and therefore cannot understand the value of our seminaries, Cardinal Pedicini for example.

I am going to put my ideas down on paper and I will try to find the force of expression that God occasionally imparts to me, You would have to allow a full year for them to discuss it. If only they saw it as I do! I don't know anything finer, more useful, more indispensable at the level of institutions. If I were in their shoes for the space of eight days, the thing would be done. I often see Adinolfi, you know how expert he is in the matter.

. . . If a man does not steep himself in obedience, he is good for nothing, whatever be his virtues or whatever talents he may have.

**463. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>43</sup>**

*Third interview with the Secretary of State: the Government's accusation against the Bishop of Icosia.*

Rome, September,<sup>44</sup> 1833.

The Cardinal Secretary of State whom I have been to see for a third time, and whom I have always found to be both considerate and perfectly right-minded, had had the kindness to have a copy made for me of a curious document that I will bring back for you; he was not afraid to show me this trust, even going so far as to give me sight of the original; he puts no credence whatsoever in what it charges me with. The Cardinal is moreover quite determined to do justice so far as it falls to him. The Holy Father, who as you know leans always towards restraint, has, even so, made an energetic pronouncement on this affair. As for myself, I now know explicitly what the charges are that the French Government has against me.

<sup>43</sup> RAMBERT, I, 627-629.

<sup>44</sup> Father Rambert does not date this letter. The Founder replies to these accusations in his letter dated September 14 to Cardinal Bernetti (A.S.V. Segr. di Stato, 261. 1833). This present letter is probably to be dated in mid-September.

The Government, according to what His Grace the Duc de Broglie states, was dissatisfied with me even before I was a bishop on account of my unequivocal hostility to the present situation in France. Do you know anyone in the world, my dear friend, who gets less mixed up in these things than myself? Let that pass, the Minister continues. He is even more dissatisfied with me since I became a bishop, as the Bishop of Marseilles, being unable to attend to the affairs of his diocese on account of his old age (something that befell him of course the instant I became a bishop), his nephew is directing the diocese to suit himself, the danger to the Government being all the greater as the episcopal character increases his influence. Isn't that a pretty state of affairs? Let us go on, *sempre crescendo*, in absurdity and lies. It goes on to say that I presided at the Bishop's palace over a society known by the name of the *Society of the Bishop's Palace*, whose sole concern was politics, and politics hostile to the Government. Do you know any other political society at the Bishop's Palace than good Mr. Flayol, snoozing after dinner over the newspaper he hasn't had time to finish? That is already quite a lot, but there is a lot more to come, let us continue. In this alleged society, they had gone so far as to open a subscription on behalf of certain men convicted in connection with the assassination by the Government's enemies of a police inspector. There now, were you prepared for *that*? The conclusion is inevitable. There is no gallows high enough for a monster such as myself; if I am guilty of all these abuses, the least I can expect is to be exiled. Therefore, the Minister goes on, *in genere*, it is not a good thing for a vicar general to be also a bishop, he is annoyed that the Church thinks differently, and that there are at the present moment a hundred dioceses where this is so. But the Bishop of Icosia could no longer be tolerated as vicar general of Marseilles, this Bishop had pushed things to the point that the responsible minister would see himself as compelled to bring him before the courts and to call for criminal sanctions against him. Could you, or would anybody else at all, be able to tell me what it is I have done, unless it is a crime to go several times a week to administer confirmation at the hospital, for I believe that that is all I have done since becoming a bishop. But don't be worried, the Minister has so much respect for the episcopate that, since there is question here of a bishop, he gives his assurance that the Government would act in this way only as a last resort. That is why, after receiving a long and fairly detailed letter from the Minister of the Interior and of Worship, he brings his insinuations to bear upon the Holy See for the Holy Father to compel the said bishop to take up residence at Rome or even to send him off to the missions.

It is quite simple. We have here a fine example of rough justice. Accused: therefore guilty, therefore hung, drawn and quartered. *Ma piano*, we will have a little something to say before we submit to being throttled . . . .

**464. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>45</sup>**

*Eugène de Boisgelin must not enter the minor seminary.*

[Rome,] October 2, 1833.

. . . I cannot bear the idea of entering Eugene<sup>46</sup> in the minor seminary, if it were only for the accent; a man of good breeding today cannot get away with a bad accent, you wouldn't believe the damage that does in the world.

**465. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>47</sup>**

*The Bishop of Icosia postpones his departure from Rome. Bishop Fortuné should write to the King.*

Rome, October 8, 1833.

My dear friend, I don't have much to tell you today, but if I did not write you might be worried about the effect that your letter of September 28<sup>48</sup> might have had on me.

I won't pretend that I wasn't upset at the last point you make, more because it delays my return to my family than from sorrow that obstacles have been placed to the exercise of my ministry. If it didn't

<sup>45</sup> YENVEUX, VIII, 125.

<sup>46</sup> The reference is doubtless to his nephew, Eugène de Boisgelin. It was hoped to send him to the Jesuits at Fribourg with his brother Louis.

<sup>47</sup> YENVEUX, V, 235; REY, I, 572; RAMBERT, I, 636-637.

<sup>48</sup> The Founder had seen the Pope again on October 2, and was to leave Rome on the 11th. He received however the letter dated September 28 in which Father Tempier sent him a letter from Mr. Barthe, Minister of Worship, in which he declared the Bishop of Icosia to be incapacitated from exercising any ecclesiastical function in the Kingdom and to be no longer vicar general of Marseilles. Father Tempier consequently put it to his superior that he should stay on in Rome so as not to expose himself to expulsion from France by the police.



damage the principles of the Catholic faith or the Church's discipline, I would on the contrary be delighted by this turn of events, it is the nicest thing that could happen to me and it would get me the peace and quiet I have been longing for for so long, but infinitely more since I've seen how impotent one is to accomplish good works even by self-sacrifice. I have paid my dues to the Church. On my retirement I could say like St. Paul that I have not made myself wealthy in the course of my ministry, since I haven't pocketed a farthing of what is allowed to those who serve the Church.

I have received the fulness of the priesthood, and this is for myself and for the whole Church the best witness possible that I have served it well; it only remains for me now to make use for my own personal sanctification of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that I have received so abundantly and from which I have not yet derived as much profit as I would like.

It would have been a reasonable expectation on people's part to think that I am still young enough to be able to do something for them. As God disposes differently, and allows wicked men their way, I will turn it to my profit, at least this is my hope in reliance on his mercy; whether in France or in Rome, it will be open to me to choose a place of retirement.

I am newly come back from the embassy where I promised the *Chargé d'Affaires* to wait on his Excellency the Ambassador to have an interview with him. He had already written to Paris that I had decided to leave, denying all the charges made against me, with regard to which I ask nothing better than to come to judgment if the necessity arises of making a defence before the courts. It would really bring little honour to the Government to see all of its accusations collapse in the course of argument. A letter to the King coming from my uncle seems to me to be the most sensible solution, for the reasons I have set out for you. I beg my uncle not to upset himself over all this hostility, and you too, do not let yourself be weighed down by gloom.<sup>49</sup> We must endure trials in this world, I confess for my part that if my honour had not been

<sup>49</sup> Father Tempier ended his letter dated September 28 with these words: "As for myself, if you knew how much I suffer inside myself here . . . I long each day to be one of those whose only care is to do what they are told." (REY, I, 571).

compromised by so many calumnies, and if religious principles were not a necessary casualty, I would give the whole thing up and would not suggest the making of any overtures.

**466. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>50</sup>**

*Blow struck at Church's rights.*

[Rome,] October 10, 1833.

. . . I don't conceal from myself the fact that what is happening is a major scandal and that since the time of Bonaparte<sup>51</sup> the Church hasn't taken such a blow to its independence and the inalienable rights she received from her divine Founder.

**467. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>52</sup>**

*Visit to the Ambassador. Letter to Mr. Thiers, Minister of the Interior. Anniversary of his consecration.*

[Rome,] October 12,<sup>53</sup> 1833.

. . . You won't have failed to point out to the lawyers you have consulted that everything contrary to the consitutional charter is abrogated by the charter. Now Bonaparte's decree, which made so arbitrary and false an application of Article 17 of the Civil Code, is diametrically opposed to the article which declares that everyone is to enjoy freedom of religion.

It is of faith that the Pope has the power to create bishops throughout the Church; he alone had the power to limit this faculty by the concession which it pleased him to make in various concordats. It

<sup>50</sup> REY. I, 572; RAMBERT, I, 630.

<sup>51</sup> To forbid the Bishop of Icosia to perform his religious functions in France, the Government invoked art. 17 of the Civil Code, the Decree dated January 7, 1808, and arts. 32 and 33 of the Law of Germinal, Year X.

<sup>52</sup> REY. I, 572-573; RAMBERT, I, 634-636.

<sup>53</sup> According to RAMBERT (I, 634-636), this extract would belong to October 22. Rey makes a summary of it and inserts it after the visit to the Ambassador on October 12; this is confirmed by what is said at the end of the letter: "The day after tomorrow is the anniversary of my consecration . . ."

is in this way that he agreed to approve the appointment of diocesan bishops in certain kingdoms only from amongst subjects who were presented to him by the sovereigns of those states; but he always reserved to himself the right to the episcopate, with the title *in partibus*, any priest he judged it useful to consecrate for the good and service of the Church. That is an attribute that pertains to his primacy, which is of divine law. It is an article of the Catholic faith. Now Bonaparte's decree places an obstacle to the exercise of this primatial right, both by requiring a prior permission from civil authority and by punishing with a very heavy penalty any Catholic acknowledging this right in the Head of the Church and submitting to it. Consequently that decree is contrary to the article of the charter which assures to everyone the free practice of religion; it is therefore abrogated by the Charter and it would be illegal for the Government to seek to put it into force again . . . .

You will consider whether it is wise for you to forestall the absurd charges made against me and as to which I ask nothing better than to be brought to judgment. It seems as if I am dreaming when they are being discussed. But no, it really is so: although my tastes, habits have led me never to get mixed up in politics, although I have no relationships even of a purely social kind with anyone, and live in the Bishop's Palace absorbed in the duties of my state of life, a slave from dawn to dusk, my every action an open book, even so I am the one who is depicted to the Council of Ministers as the leader of the royalists at Marseilles, stirring up trouble and fanning the flames of discord between the parties. I already knew, through the letter of the Chargé d'Affaires to the Pope, that Mr. de Broglie was furious with me; the Ambassador has just told me that the Minister of the Interior is no less so, that my arrest had been seriously contemplated but there was fear it might occasion disturbances. Doesn't that make you feel both pity and anger at the same time?

So I have seen the Ambassador this morning: our meeting lasted an hour and a half. His view of me was so coloured by what he had been told about me at Paris that he had great difficulty in persuading himself that I was a wholly different kind of man . . . . To convince me of the importance the Government attached to my removal, he insisted that if I persisted in my intention of returning to Marseilles, he would feel obliged to send a special courier ahead of me, just as one had been sent here to ask for my summons to Rome. Wouldn't it make you

laugh? or rather, as I said before, wouldn't it make you seethe with indignation? For God knows, as do you and everyone, that never did a calumny have less foundation.

When you think that a person has taken a stand as I did to keep his distance from all parties, there really is ground for getting annoyed when one sees oneself persecuted in this way, whereas rightly speaking my persecutors ought to be thanking me.

. . . I gave way to his opinion<sup>54</sup> more as an act of compliance than from conviction, for an upright man, a bishop, can be permitted to repudiate in a forceful manner so atrocious a calumny as that of having assassins in his pay. I will make the effort to draught this letter in the tone indicated by the Ambassador, it will be the hundred thousandth document I have draughted in my time here, I cannot tell you how weary I am of it all.

The day after tomorrow is the anniversary of my consecration; what a happy day it's going to be, that feast we would have celebrated as a family occasion in compensation for not having been able to celebrate it together on the day itself of that high-point in my life! This poor life has known moments of high tension; my friends can judge for themselves if I have always been appreciated; it is a temptation sometimes to think that I am worth more than the times I live in a sense; that I could defend without detriment to my humility, but I am not complaining, I have accomplished some good and the Church has passed a favourable judgment on it, that is all the reward I need while waiting for God's mercy.

#### 468. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>55</sup>

*Invitation to optimism.*

Rome, October 17, 1833.

. . . So you have the advantage of enjoying the pleasure of surprise when, contrary to your expectation, things go better than you thought they would. It makes up for the distress felt by one who has

<sup>54</sup> Mr. de Broglie counselled him to soften the tone of his letter justifying himself to the Government, and to address it to Mr. Thiers, Minister of the Interior.

<sup>55</sup> YENVEUX, B, 18.

gloomy moods like that. People who see the world through rose-coloured spectacles escape that distress but by the same token they have a less-lively sense of the well-being they take for granted; on the other hand if a person like that suffers a let-down, although he would not escape scot-free, he is not floored by the falling of the blow in question, from which my conclusion would definitely be that a tendency to optimism rather than to gloom best assures peace and tranquility of soul.

**469. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>56</sup>**

*The Bishop of Icosia has only one desire: peace and quiet. Relics of St. Agatha and St. Philomena.*

Rome, October 24, 1833.

. . . There is no need of regrets when one has done one's best. God makes use even of human mistakes to achieve his purpose. I do not know what he expects of me; all I know is that he governs with his wisdom those whose sole purpose is to work for his glory. I am attracted by the thought of peace and quiet. I have good reason to be weary of human injustice. And so I act accordingly, in view of my soul's good, even though I should obtain it for a time only. If God has decided differently, he will direct events and bend the will of his creatures in such a way as to achieve his ends.

For my own part, I will gladly retire to the seminary at Marseilles, where I can be of some use to the young ecclesiastics who must be formed in the knowledge and practice of the virtues of their state; I will keep up my ministry to the sick, with its consolations, and I will live in obscurity, as is my deepest wish . . .

. . . We who call upon the Lord must find our consolation above all in the thought that we are guided all unseen by his Providence. Today's Office shows us that trials are a good sign and encourage us to trust in God's good pleasure in us.

. . . I'll relax for a moment and tell you how I went yesterday to say mass at the monastery del Bambino Gesù, where they were celebrating the feast of Gesù Nazareno. This [act] of piety had been arranged

<sup>56</sup> YENVEUX, IV, 147; V, 107; REY, I, 574; RAMBERT, I, 637.

the other day at the house of the very pious English Sisters, along with Bishop Genovesi, my co-consecrator at the consecration of Bishop della Genga.<sup>57</sup> I was very satisfied with my pilgrimage, in that church situated below St. Mary Major's. My faith had been enkindled by the account of a first miracle that occurred there a few years ago through the power of the Divine Saviour, invoked by that title and in that place. It would take too long to recount it. The body of St. Agatha, a young martyr at the age of ten or twelve years, whose bones had been crushed in Diocletian's persecution, had been placed in this same church. Her precious body has recently come to light again in the cemetery of San Ciriaco along with an ampulla containing her blood and an inscription bearing the martyr's sign and the name of the saint.

If God works as many miracles by this martyr-saint's intercession as he has by that of another one who has also come to light in recent years in the catacombs, there will be double reason for wonder before the workings of Providence, which was biding its time for the display of its power and the glory of these saints after so many centuries. The one I wish to mention is another young martyr, called Philomena, whose solemn translation in the Kingdom of Naples witnessed an unbroken series of miracles. That is some consolation for human wickedness and affords some hope in face of the power that seems in our time to have been given to hell and its minions. While returning from my excursion I passed by the Secretariat of State and the residence of the French Ambassador.

. . . The code of conduct I hold, and that I instil in others, is that the clergy must stay outside parties so as not to compromise their ministry.

**470. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>58</sup>**

*Submission to God's will.*

[Rome,] October 28, 1833.

My dear friend, I am trying to ground myself ever more securely in the principles I unfolded in my last letter, namely, that one must discern within the course of events and even within the course set by

<sup>57</sup> It is on the third Sunday of September that he was one of the co-consecrating bishops at the ordination of Monsignor della Genga, the nephew of Pope Leo XII.

<sup>58</sup> YENVEUX, V, 90.

man's deliberate choice a higher course set by Providence which governs all by its wisdom. *Attingit ergo a fine usque ad finem fortiter, et disponat omnia suaviter*,<sup>59</sup> and that creatures who place their trust in God and call upon him in their need do not go unremembered before him, *scimus quoniam apud te sumus computati*.<sup>60</sup> I need this when I am tempted to be vexed at not having followed a particular inspiration that I believed to be better than its opposite which in fact I settled on, whether out of deference for the opinion of others or for any other reason, especially when drawbacks result that are difficult to remedy. Were I not wedded to these principles, I would deeply regret that I did not leave on the day I had originally planned.

**471. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>61</sup>**

*He must have Mr. Thier's reply and Father Tempier's counsel before leaving Rome. How the young Fathers can be helped.*

[Rome,] October 29, 1833.

. . . I must of necessity wait for the Minister's reply; and if its purport goes contrary to my sole desire, what kind of a position does that leave me in? So you see, my dear friend, you will have to put your thinking-cap on before giving me your opinion. Not that it is not necessary to give it to me, on the contrary. It is very important that I know it, but since in view of the long distance between us I have no means of bringing forward objections or observations, and as I have no thought but to go along with what you tell me, it is really essential that you mull over your counsel, even talk it over with some person of good judgment who is capable of having a mind of his own and will not let himself be influenced by you, Cailhol would be such a one, I have a profound appreciation of his common sense, young though he is, someone whose spirited character would make up for a defect you cannot always hold in check, which derives from one of your qualities, prudence, I mean an over-concentration on the difficulties of the matter and being intimidated by the fear of not being able to overcome

<sup>59</sup> Wis. 8,1: "(Wisdom) reaches mightily from one end of the earth to the other, and she orders all things well."

<sup>60</sup> Wis. 15,2: ". . . we know that we are accounted thine."

<sup>61</sup> YENVEUX, III, 88; IV, 44; VII, 125, 150, 205; VIII, 165.

them; don't think that I am saying this by way of criticism, that would be very unjust on my part, but as a rule of conduct that we must adhere to so as to be less liable to deceive ourselves.

. . . When moving someone you must always ask whether it will result in the dismantling of the work that person is doing . . . . You could not do better than change Pélissier,<sup>62</sup> Marseilles does not have much to offer him, but I doubt whether he has the capacity to endure the solitude at Billens; his vocation is too recent to be put to that test. It would be quite different if the house were well-established, for it is unthinkable that any appointment should be other than a matter of indifference to all of us; for example, that would be incomprehensible here, where it is not regarded as an act of virtue to be satisfied with wheresoever one has been placed, that is taken for granted and no-one would even think of questioning it.

You did the right thing in giving that angel Aubert a change of air for a while; I do hope that it is only a question of his taking a break which you felt he should have, not of a mandatory rest. I am always anxious about that child, for fear that his health may suffer as a result of all the work he has . He must be dispensed each day from a part of the choral office. It is normal for professors to have a dispensation. There is only one formal article of the Rule that would cause me concern. That is why I propose this *mezzo termine*, dispense him from Matins and Lauds five or six times a week and the same for the first two little hours. I am delighted that Vincens<sup>63</sup> is not flagging, a few like him would do wonders for you.

Give G[ignoux]<sup>64</sup> a good shaking up, show him no mercy. What a pity that with all that talent he should surrender himself to that otiose mysticity that will end up leaving him in a complete fog and deprive him in the meantime of all possibility of doing some good.

Take care not to discourage Marcellin;<sup>65</sup> he mustn't be made too conscious of his mediocrity, that would quite incapacitate him; he has good qualities, he should be helped to exploit them.

<sup>62</sup> J.-A. -André Pélissier, ordained priest April 6, 1833.

<sup>63</sup> J.-Ambroise Vincens, ordained priest September 18, 1830, entered the novitiate on August 24, 1833.

<sup>64</sup> J.-A.-Jérôme Gignoux, ordained priest on June 2, 1833.

<sup>65</sup> Marcellin.-H. Grogard, ordained priest on April 6, 1833.



472. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>66</sup>

*Project for setting up a seminary at Rome for the suburbicarian dioceses. Friendship.*

[Rome,] October 31, 1833.

. . . I am all too familiar with the difficulties that exist here in getting the somewhat complicated machinery underway to have any illusions about the success of the fine project that I proposed to them for their suburbicarian dioceses; I have so far spoken of it to none but Cardinal Odescalchi and the Cardinal Dean who were delighted with it and begged me to put my proposal in writing. I have done so in a little ten-page memorandum, closely-reasoned, which I will be giving them when they come back. I am quite sure that I shall escape with nothing more than hearing a lot of praise for my idea and the merit of having sought its execution. None the less, as under the heading of means of execution I put forward the use of certain people, it is as well you should know that I would be forced to look in the direction of Guibert, Albini and Telmon, others too as judged necessary, at least six in all.

In my plan, everything is to be taught in the house: dogmatic theology, moral theology, canon law, holy scripture, church history; Propaganda has been set up on this footing; one could not propose less; in addition, everything concerning ceremonies, parish duties, etc. If there is a miracle and my plan goes through, you would find yourself making another little journey to Rome to help me arrange all these things. But that would be too much to hope for, it must not be counted on.

. . . through all this, although I have a keen desire to be in closer touch with those who have my affectionate love, yet it is such a consoling experience interiorly that I cannot bring myself to lament or regret it; I love my friends, so worthy as they are of that title, for all that they are as well as for all that they achieve; it is a flowing stream that runs in a flood that causes no damage and whose abundant waters can but irrigate and make fertile . . . .

<sup>66</sup> YENVEUX, II, 3; REY, I, 575-576.

473. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>67</sup>

*Father Tempier and Bishop Fortuné reproached for not putting up a sufficient defence of the Bishop of Icosia to the Government.*

[Rome,] November 5, 1833.

. . . You have no doubt got a lot on hand but I must insist that nothing exceeds my own affair in importance. It is inconceivable that you should have handled it as you have. You have dragged your feet in the matter and I am faced with an inexplicable lack of energy. One would think you were struck dumb or blind. We may leave aside what concerns me personally; did it concern the Bishop of Morocco or the least important people, the Bishop of Marseilles cannot forgo issuing a condemnation of the Minister of Worship's outrageous letter. If you were at a loss to know how to reply to that letter, you ought to have turned to somebody who has some mettle, you ought to have written to Paris, have gone there if need be, rather than let seven weeks go by without replying to such a letter as the Minister's. The blow struck at his episcopal jurisdiction demanded a protest, the application of decrees and laws that have met with protest from the Holy See and that no catholic bishop can assent to demanded resistance, that letter demanded to be treated as a nullity, as it strikes a blow at the rights of the episcopate and is contrary to catholic principles and so to the Charter itself. It is not everyday that one is called on to defend such lofty theses, but in all truth to refrain from all reply, to utter not a word, that really passes belief! That the first day should find you dumb-founded at the effrontery of the blow delivered I can understand, but that with reflection you were not moved to any action, surpasses my capacity to understand.

<sup>67</sup> YENVEUX, V, 94-95.

Faced with your letter today my arms fell to my sides. I see that you have not reflected on this matter, that you are still groping in the dark.<sup>68</sup> I do not understand how you persuaded yourself to put political consideration first, that is not your business. Your adversary is the Minister of Worship who is attacking your rights and does so in reliance on laws that are contrary to the Catholic religion, whose ordained champion in your diocese is yourself. You, the Bishop of Marseilles, who has been deprived of his vicar general. God grant that my letter gets to you in time to save you from this fresh blunder.

Moreover, all my observations are made without bitterness, I have made them because I owe you the truth; but above all I must acknowledge God's will to which I submit myself heart and soul. I do not love you any the less for what is more mistake than neglect of my affairs, you wouldn't be capable of that. You were lacking in discernment, but rest assured that my distress will abate the moment I put myself in God's presence.

I send my affectionate greetings to all and assure you of my accustomed esteem and friendship. You will have seen in my mother's letter how far I am in agreement with my uncle over the letter to the King, it was a suggestion that depended on the supposition that you made in your first letter, to which I replied at the time.

<sup>68</sup> These reproaches fell equally on Bishop Fortuné. The latter had written to Mr. d'Argout, the Minister of Worship, on September 10, to communicate that Mr. de Mazenod, his nephew and one of his vicar generals, had left for Rome at the request of the Holy Father. The Minister replied on September 23 that Mr. de Mazenod, having been made a bishop *in partibus* without the Government's permission, had lost his French citizenship and could not therefore continue to fulfill for the Bishop the functions of vicar general. The Prefect of Bouches-du-Rhône had furthermore been directed to cease payment of his stipend.

The Bishop of Icosia was very surprised to learn that Father Tempier had let six weeks pass by before thinking to reply to the Minister's letter. Bishop Fortuné did not wait to receive his nephew's observations on the draft reply that Tempier sent to Rome. The long letter of the Bishop of Marseilles is dated November 5 and directed to Mr. de Broglie, the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

**474. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].**<sup>69</sup>

*Notes from the Bishop of Icosia to the Secretary of State and Bishop Frezza.*

[Rome,] November 9, 1833.

. . . My notes have been much appreciated both at the Secretariat for State and by Bishop Frezza. They have all acknowledged that I have put my finger on the nub of the question and thought it through correctly. My effort will not be wasted; they are going to make a protest to protect the Holy See's rights.

**475. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].**<sup>70</sup>

*Father Tempier should not consult with Father Jeancard or Father Courtès, but rather with Father Guibert or Father Cailhol.*

[Rome,] November 14, 1833.

. . . Don't ever go to J[eancard] for advice, nor to C[ourtès]; the former is good only for making a good exposé of something that has first been explained to him, in serious matters he is no good, he never approaches any matter from the right angle; he is prone to exaggerate as to both events and people, he always twists everything to suit the point of view that strikes him; he is the right man in short to lead his listener astray, for he loves the sound of his own voice and he is well able to dress up his ideas. I have no more confidence in C[ourtès]; he too is prone to exaggerate and is always the pessimist. If Guibert had a little more experience of the world and had served some apprenticeship in affairs, there you would have someone whose advice would be worth having, he is open to reason, he sees the pros and cons, he is able to make practical suggestions for action in matters he understands, but I'll say no more about him as he is not available. The one who would give me most confidence is Cailhol; I counted on him as a moderating influence on what you know is the gloomy view that you take on broaching matters involving difficulties; but it seems that he has let himself be

<sup>69</sup> RAMBERT, I, 633; REY, I, 573.

<sup>70</sup> YENVEUX, VII, 83.

influenced by the gloom you are all suffering from, and on this occasion he hasn't come up to my expectations. Patience, let's not go back over that, just make up for the time that has been lost.

**476. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>71</sup>**

*Sudden death of a Lazarist priest at St. Sylvester's.*

[Marseilles,] November 16, 1833.

The Lazarists have just lost one of their best men, snatched away by sudden death. The day before yesterday, he leaves the house in good health, he delivers an energetic sermon at Montecitorio; after the sermon he returns to his rooms where, following the laudable custom of these priests, he kneels in adoration before God and in all likelihood offers to God the sermon that he had just delivered, it was the last meritorious act of life of unbroken regularity, it is at this moment that he was struck, and one can say that he died sword in hand, for he gave no further sign of life save for some last feeble breaths during the few hours he continued to live.

**477. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>72</sup>**

*Imminent departure from Rome. Father Bernard is not sufficiently prepared to be sent to Algeria.*

Rome, November 21, 1833.

In those moments when my worldly nature is in a mood to have her own way in the face of considerations of supernatural origin, it would be easy for me to have regrets over not leaving on the date originally fixed. A difference of two whole months, what a penance! If God had not come to the rescue, this would have been cause for anger. However, I am enduring misfortune in a spirit of resignation, but I do feel it a lot . . . . Even so I am going to set about seriously preparing

<sup>71</sup> YENVEUX, II, 55.

<sup>72</sup> YENVEUX, I, 98\*; REY, I, 576.

my departure. I have waited long enough, as I promised, for the Minister's reply. I found my uncle's letter to the Pope perfect in content and form, its Latin was excellent.<sup>73</sup>

Bernard certainly could not be one of those chosen.<sup>74</sup> This candidate's preparation is by no means completed and the fact that he is not happy at Billens is not a sufficient reason to select him for a distant mission that can be confided only to proven and tested men. Let's not push too hard, [let us wait on] Providence . . . . It really is madness to want to have children before one is ready for marriage. First you establish the hive, then you send out the swarm.

#### **478. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>75</sup>**

*Last audience. Note of the Holy See to the French Government on the Icosia affair.*

Rome, November 26, 1833.

I was received by our Holy Father on Friday, the 22nd, and I am the bearer of his apostolic blessing. I went into his presence immediately after the Secretary of State who in the course of this audience presented him with the note that the Holy See is communicating to the Government with regard to my affair. The Pope read it twice and signified his approval. It ought to have been delivered yesterday to His Excellency the Ambassador who will probably give his explanation today orally, as he had asked for an audience for today, even before receiving the note . . . . I will see his Excellency tomorrow or the day after, but not until I have made sure I will be received, for since the time I was refused, I have not set foot again in his house. I had asked

<sup>73</sup> Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod, no doubt stimulated by his nephew's letter dated November 5, wrote to the Pope, to the Minister of the Interior on the 26th, to the Secretary of State on the 30th. On the 14th he had written to the Bishop of Icosia: "I have right and justice on my side. I am quite determined to press home my point. This Government will find out that, whatever may be said about me, I am far from having fallen into a state of decrepitude and of being unable to act for myself. My will remains firm." (REY, I, 576). Bishop Fortuné's letter to the Pope is dated the 25th. Probably he sent it to his nephew sometime before that date, who forwarded it to the Pope after reading it.

<sup>74</sup> While he was at Rome, the Founder had made the proposal to Propaganda to send some Oblates into Algeria. (Letter dated September 14.)

<sup>75</sup> REY, I, 576-577; RAMBERT, I, 638.

Madame Ambassador at what hour I could see her; that lady, replying to my courtesy in a way one should not employ with a servant, had the message conveyed to me that her apartments were not yet ready to receive me. You can understand that after such pretty ways a man does not expose himself to fresh affrontery . . . . Some insults are hard to swallow. At the same time I am amply compensated for these impertinences by the esteem that both Romans and others have for me. Since you have let me have your point of view, if no new obstacles arise, I will leave on the 1st or the 6th and, as you wish, I will visit my mother at Aix, while waiting to hear from you on what day to make my return to Marseilles.<sup>76</sup>

The Holy See's note to the Government has been communicated to me. It is wholly in my favour; it refers particularly to my extremely accommodating attitude and all the steps I have taken in this matter.

<sup>76</sup> Bishop de Mazenod returned to the Bishop's Residence at Marseilles on December 11.

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479. [To Father Dassy, at N.-D. de l'Osier].<sup>1</sup>

*Congratulations on the good work he has embarked upon at N.-D. de l'Osier. He mustn't tire himself*

[Marseilles, ] April 25, 1834.

My dear friend, it makes me very happy to see the good work you have embarked upon, but I don't attach as much value as you to all the praises and plaudits that are showered upon you. It doesn't amount to much in my estimation; what does strike me is the trouble that the project outlined by the Bishop<sup>2</sup> is going to cause you, of sending some priests of his diocese to join you the next time there is an ordination.

. . . In the meantime I'm relying on you not to lose the spirit of your Rule. Make your manner of observing it the matter of your daily examen, otherwise you are going to feel the strain of your isolation, and the ministry that you are now doing out of zeal is going to become your means of escape. Don't take on too much work, you understand you cannot accept every offer, there must be moderation in everything.

<sup>1</sup> YENVEUX. IV, 23; V, 135. Father Dupuy, an ex-Oblate, had bought the former Augustinian convent near the Sanctuary of N.-D. de l'Osier in the district of Vinay (Isère). He took possession on March 14, with Father Dassy, who was just recovering from an illness and went there for a rest. The latter however preached a first communion retreat in April (REY, I, 608-609).

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Philibert de Bruillard.



**480. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>3</sup>**

*The Oblates establish themselves at N.-D. de l'Osier.*

[Marseilles, ] May 1, 1834.

Now let's turn to Notre-Dame de l'Osier,<sup>4</sup> which is becoming a very important establishment for us. Its really admirable how the hand of Providence has guided the affair up to now, but there is a lot to think about to avoid upsetting the diocesan administrators and clergy; this is a real source of anxiety to me.

**481. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>5</sup>**

*Desire to go and help out the bishops.*

[N.-D. du Laus, ] May 22, 1834.

. . . Amongst the people I met here was a priest of the diocese of Valence. He told me that the Bishop<sup>6</sup> has not visited his valley for twelve years. My uncle isn't *that* far behind. This has given birth to a desire to become in some fashion a missionary amongst my fellow bishops.

I would like all who are impeded by age from fulfilling the essential duty of pastoral visitation and administration of the sacrament of confirmation in the parts of their diocese that are difficult of access to send me there, so long as I have some youth left, that is to say, if God grants me the health, over the period of the next ten years or so. The truth is, I feel a lot of compassion for these people who are left without a service they have a right to and which is so necessary for their sanctification.

Goodbye, I give you an affectionate embrace.

<sup>3</sup> RAMBERT, I, 652.

<sup>4</sup> Father Guigues, named superior of the future community, arrived at l'Osier on May 20, followed by Father Vincens on September 7 (REY, I, 609).

<sup>5</sup> YENVEUX, III, 233; V, 54; REY, I, 592; RAMBERT, I, 672-673. Father Rey (I, 589) cites a phrase from another of Father Tempier's letters, dated April 11: "Mr. Persil, what a minister of Worship!"

<sup>6</sup> Bishop M.-A. Larivoire de La Tourette, bishop from 1819-1840.

**482. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>7</sup>**

*Next visit to Aix. Pastoral visitation in the diocese of Avignon.*

[Marseilles, ] July 17, 1834.

My dear Courtès, just a brief word, through the courtesy of Father Pons. I am sorry to hear that you are suffering from your usual fever. These importunate guests set themselves up as masters in our poor bodies. If we cannot get rid of them, let us at least try to teach them some manners to make them liveable with.

I am thinking of going to spend two days with you as I am on my way to the Durance Valley where I am going to administer the sacrament of confirmation in place of the poor Archbishop of Avignon<sup>8</sup> who is confined to his room. They have not seen a bishop in those parts for fifteen to twenty years; could one refuse the faithful the service they have a right to? I know that I am not strictly obliged to perform this act of charity but it seems to me that there is a kind of solidarity in the episcopate. I wish I had the health to do more, but this irritation that is lodged in my gullet restrains me willy nilly when it comes to preaching, since I can hardly speak sometimes for any length of time.

**483. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>9</sup>**

*Pastoral visitation in the diocese of Avignon.*

[Vallée de la Durance,<sup>10</sup> ] August 7, 1834.

. . . It seems clear to me that God has signified his approval of what I was doing. I no longer feel at all the effects of the indisposition which bothered me for such a long time. Everywhere I have been able to function normally with no more fatigue than I normally feel in a like situation.

<sup>7</sup> YENVEUX, VI, 122; REY, I, 593-594.

<sup>8</sup> Bishop Louis-Joseph d'Humières who died on September 21, 1834.

<sup>9</sup> REY, I, 594. Father Tempier was perhaps still at Aix, since he returned there with the Founder on July 30.

<sup>10</sup> He administered the sacrament of confirmation at Cucuron, Tour-d'Aigues and Pertuis. He was eagerly welcomed everywhere.

. . . I was only an African bishop, but I was a bishop! What if it had been the local bishop himself! Alas, I could say a lot on that topic.

**484. [To Father Guigues and Dassy, at N.-D. de l'Osier].<sup>11</sup>**

*Create perfect regularity in the new community.*

[Marseilles, ] August 18, 1834.

. . . I will be sending you Father Vincens who begins his retreat today for his oblation on Monday. I am asking a big sacrifice. I was counting on him to assist the Master of Novices and to prepare himself through an on-going experience of the novitiate's classical regularity to become Superior at Billens . . . .

I want Father Guigues to have a thorough grasp of all the obligations incumbent upon him. If he fails to institute perfect regularity in his community, he will have to answer for it to God and the Society. I permit no re-interpretation. The Rule should be followed in all its details and by everyone. If the number of visitors is found to be a disturbing factor, steps should be taken to preserve regularity, notwithstanding that. There will be more edification through fidelity like that than from an over-politeness that would entail wasting a considerable amount of time and a lot of disturbance. Keep me up to date in everything and consult with me often. Father Dassy will make the superior's task easier by his obedience and his zeal for regularity. He will be his cooperator in laying the firm foundations of an institution that can prosper and bring honour to our Congregation only in so far as it is instituted on this basis. Keep in mind furthermore that Father Vincens whom I am going to send you has been with us only a year; slackness will either scandalize him or lead him astray down a path diametrically opposed to what he has been taught is the only one by which the Society's goals can be attained. You see my concern, my dear children; in God's name, carry out my wishes; you have the ability, you have the will; set to work. Notwithstanding our poverty, as soon as we get more priests, I will send you another one.

<sup>11</sup> YENVEUX, VII, 158.



*Father Joseph-Eugène Guigues (1805-1874)*  
*Superior of N.-D. de l'Osier 1834-1844*  
*Bishop of Bytown (Ottawa), 1848-1874*

485. [To Father Guigues, at N.-D. de l'Osier].<sup>12</sup>

*The bishop of Grenoble is happy to confide the sanctuary of N.-D. de l'Osier to the Oblates. The superior's assistants. Advice.*

[Marseilles, ] September 3, 1834.

My dear Father Guigues, I have just left the altar where I offered the holy sacrifice in thanksgiving for the happy conclusion to the affair that means so much to us. Father Vincens is bringing you the copy of the letter the Bishop of Grenoble has just written me.<sup>13</sup> See how the Master of hearts leads them as he wishes and join me in praising the Lord.

The only appropriate expression of the gratitude we owe God for this miracle is a firm resolution to walk always in his presence according to our vocation, in the exact observance of our Rules. This is your responsibility, most dear Father Guigues, the man I have named superior of this new house and to whom I am confidently imparting a large share in the solicitude that is mine. It is for you to open the Rule book so that each one may draw his inspirations from it, and knowledge of the style of conduct he must pursue. Put aside all counsels of human prudence. There is no true wisdom outside the fulfillment of one's duties, and duties are fixed and sanctioned by the infallible authority that has imposed them. Let the introduction of the least abuse be anathema to you, God would call you to account for it, for it is you who are to build the foundations of the new community, and it is vital that it diffuse abroad the good odour of Jesus Christ.

Father Vincens will back you up to the full. He has been a model of regularity during his novitiate and he has very sound ideas on the duties of his holy state. I name him your first assistant and your

<sup>12</sup> YENVEUX, VI, 48; VII, 156-157.

<sup>13</sup> Father Dupuy, on becoming pastor of N.-D. de l'Osier had, it seems, set about forming a community of diocesan priests to serve the Sanctuary. When the Founder understood what was going on, he wrote to explain the situation to Bishop Bruillard on August 8, 1834. The latter replied on August 30: "I will owe my good fortune to an imprudence on the part of Mr. Dupuy. I wanted missionaries of local origin, and now I will have men who come to me from the heart of Provence. If I had had some from Dauphiné, they would have needed a period of formation and it would have been necessary to see the adoption of a Rule. Now I will have men already tried and accustomed to a Rule approved by the Sovereign Pontiff . . . In all truth, my dear Sir, far from being put out by Mr. Dupuy, I am tempted to exclaim: *Felix culpa!* Yes, I accept your dear children . . ." (REY, I, 609; RAMBERT, I, 652-654).

admonitor. He is a wise counsellor, go to him for advice. Father Dassy will be your second assistant. So now your little community is fully constituted. With God's help, we will eventually send it another new member. In the meantime, make good use of what you have. Clearly, Father Vincens will leave a gap elsewhere. But I don't regret giving him to you, as I have it very much at heart to see you make a good beginning, and come up to the expectations that have been raised.

Keep me up to date on everything. There are decisions that were made for N.-D. du Laus that are applicable to your community, both as to the general body of pilgrims and as to any priests who may turn up to make a retreat or just to visit you. Make up your minds never to become easy-going types, time-wasters, nor must your house be a well-appointed guest-house. Each one must do there what is his to do in uninterrupted freedom. Dupuy may devote himself more to what is exterior; as to you, it is essential that you form good habits. People will be more edified by your reserve than by endless idle chatter, for you must expect to see an uninterrupted stream of priests.

I urge you again not to make changes in the daily programme that is in normal use amongst us. I settled that point on my last visit to N.-D. du Laus.

Don't introduce anything that I will have to change. People shouldn't come to you to have a good time. If someone doesn't like your daily fare, he is free to go to the hotel. The courses of your meals should be plentiful but not more in number than is prescribed.

In conclusion, I reiterate my most urgent recommendations that you place everything on a sound basis as it should be. For me it is a matter of conscience, and I make it a charge on yours.

I give you my affectionate greetings, you know how great my affection is and I give you all my blessing. Goodbye.

† Ch. Joseph Eugène, Bishop of Icosia.

*Relationships with Father Casimir Aubert, master of novices, and the novitiate, transferred to Aix.*

[Marseilles.] October 2 & 3, 1834.

. . . It is essential that the novitiate be entirely separated from the priests who form the rest of the community. The superior alone is to have open access to the novitiate; he alone may penetrate into its precincts which must be closed to all others. The novices, for their part, must never go out of their sector to wander at large in the house; they are bound to the strictest silence with regard to everyone save the superior. If some priest so forgets himself as to address them, they are to reply in monosyllables only, withdrawing themselves immediately with courtesy and modesty; but I trust that the novices will not be put to that test, once the priests are informed that they are forbidden to speak with the novices.

Although the superior must always have the last word in the house, he will nonetheless leave a large measure of independence to the master of novices in his novitiate and with regard to his novices. The master of novices will take care to give him an account of the state of his novitiate; and it is in the course of these conferences that the superior will share his thoughts with the master of novices, so that every directive comes to the novices through their master; even so, so far as concerns the general order of the house, the novices depend directly on the superior. So when they have to go out of the house or when they come back, when they have to do some penance in the refectory, etc., they will ask the consent of the superior.

In view of the lay-out of the property and to remove all pretext for the novices to move feely throughout the house, I would like some means to be found for them to have access to the superior without having to go and find him in his room. For example he could be asked for these permissions at the end of one of the exercises in common which requires the superior to preside: after vespers, for going out; after examen for what has to be done in the refectory.

<sup>14</sup> YENVEUX, VII, 5\*, 27\*, 31\*; VIII, 42, 50; IX, 34. Some parts of this letter are from the 2nd, some from the 21st, or simply from October, while others, written more clearly, are from the 3rd. The context indicates a single letter considerably cut up by Yenveux and of which it is impossible to discern the original order of paragraphs.

The master of novices must give himself fully to his task. Consequently, he must never be diverted from his usual occupations concerning the novices whom he must, so to speak, gather under his wings as the hen gathers her young under her wings. If on occasion the superior wishes to employ the master of novices for some purpose, he should come to some arrangement with him as to a suitable time, so that the novitiate, which is properly-speaking his only concern, will not suffer on account of it. I say the same for when the superior wishes to have the services of a novice; he will always come to an understanding with the master of novices and leave him the full freedom of making all the observations that he thinks his office requires.

So that the novices may never have the [oc]casion to enter into relationships outside their novitiate, I would be glad if their linen were separate and kept within their precincts.

It does not worry me if they are put to work in the sacristy, unless one is set up for their use. Our privileges would suffice for that.

All ascetical literature and other books which could be of use to the novices will be at the disposition of the master of novices. He will also be the custodian of paper, pens, ink, etc., of which the novices have need.

All the novices' letters will pass by the hands of the master of novices.

No one will ever be admitted to the novitiate without prior notice to me. At least once a month I will receive a report on everything. In case of doubt on anything, I will be consulted.

The oblates I have sent with the novices are to be looked upon as novices; I have deemed it necessary to strengthen their religious formation in this way. They will have no different relationships with the priests of the house than the simple novices; in a word, they are to be treated as novices.

I urge you to keep an eye on the novice-master's health; being very young and consulting his zeal more than his strength, he could easily ruin his constitution, which is not strong.

I am delighted with what you say about Father Aubert.<sup>15</sup> I knew him too well not to be sure that he would satisfy you in every way. For his part, he has written to me to praise your behaviour towards him

<sup>15</sup> Father Casimir Aubert, master of novices. His brother Pierre was likewise at Aix.



and to reiterate his resolution to be the most respectful of your subjects. You can confide fully in him concerning the problems that certain gentlemen are giving you. You would not believe the virtues that there are in that beautiful soul and how precocious and sound is his judgment.

**487. [To Father Casimir Aubert].<sup>16</sup>**

*Despatch of two Italians who do not seem to be cut out for the novitiate.*

[Marseilles,] October 2 & 3, 1834.

. . . I happened to be at Calvaire when the two Italians arrived there.<sup>17</sup> After a long conversation with them, I came to the conclusion that the one lacked the capacity while the other was lacking in virtue. Father Albini, in whose hands I left them, is sending them on to you for you to make a definitive judgment. I don't want you to have the wool pulled over your eyes, which is why I am writing again this evening. In the first place I see no possibility of admitting the one who is sub-standard in intelligence. He did very badly in school, he was sent away from the Jesuit college for the precise reason that he did not succeed in his studies. It is some teacher in the town who pushed him through his studies in double quick time. What is more he expresses himself with great difficulty. I don't think he is cut out for us.

The other one has a bad appearance, a crooked smile, a fastidiousness about his toilet that makes one suppose he thinks he is an attractive young man. I don't think he has the least idea about the religious virtues and it could well be has come for some ulterior motive. What tends to confirm me in this opinion is that this fine fellow was in Marseilles for eight days without evincing the least desire to go to the novitiate. He admitted that before making inquiries he wanted to satisfy his curiosity which took him so far as going to have a look at Toulon. I plied him with questions and got it out of him that he had been to the theatre both here and at Toulon. In all likelihood he didn't deny himself the same pleasure at Nice. To tell the truth, he told

<sup>16</sup> YENVEUX, VIII, 16, 32, 36.

<sup>17</sup> No Italian entered the novitiate at the end of 1834.

me that he didn't think that there was as much evil in it as I was beginning to make him see. But, but, but, with all these tendencies what does this vocation amount to? And when a person is so permissive towards himself, isn't there ground to fear that he may be rotten to the core? The more I think about it, the less I like it, and after weighing the whole thing up, I think it would be imprudent to take the risk.

This young man is over twenty, and no fool; if his entry with us has an ulterior motive, he will make a better job of pretending than he did today, especially after seeing what effect the admissions I wrung out of him were having. In short, it seems to me it would take a miracle for him to acquire the religious virtues and it would worry me a lot to introduce to the novitiate a young man infected with vice, especially when he shows not the least sign of religious fervour, in case it should prove harmful to men who have a real need of good example. Even so, I am not making a definite pronouncement for his exclusion. If you think you have the courage to set about his conversion, trusting in a miracle, you are free to try, but be on your guard, don't deceive yourself, and above all exclude any idea of admitting him before he has had an intensive trial for one month.

While on the subject, I want to tell you that when you are dealing with people who have experienced sexual weakness, the novitiate year does not suffice for admission to vows, even if they go through the year without failing. This is not a vice that dies by being put to sleep. And if it has well and truly taken hold, especially when someone has had experience of vices that require complicity, such as f[ornication] and a[dultery], three times as much virtue is needed to hold out promise for the future.

**488. [To Father Guigues, at N.D. de l'Osier].<sup>18</sup>**

*How to receive and help priests. Advice.*

[Marseilles, ] October 6, 1834.

. . . It will be important for you to come to an understanding with Father Vincens on how to conduct retreats for the ecclesiastics and priests who will be coming for this purpose to your house. It grieves

<sup>18</sup> YENVEUX. I, 57, 63, 64; VII, 130, 172.

me, but comes as no surprise, to learn that some of the neighbouring priests have changed their attitude towards you. My advice is to seem not to have noticed and to keep up the courtesies, at the same time changing nothing of what is upsetting them, in other words be ever more regular, ever more aloof from dissipation, from the style of life they have adopted; in the long run, you will win the support even of those who see in your way of life a silent condemnation of their own. Remember that you have to compensate for your youthfulness, and I will venture to say your childlike appearance, with a special exterior gravity, which is not inconsistent with courtesy.

I think it is quite a while since you laid down a regulation for visitors and that the charge to cover expenses is fixed and in such a way that no one can plead ignorance. Be guided by common sense, as well as any regulations that I may have given you.

I urge you to keep your accounts in order so as to be able to pass me a copy at least each semester.

I cannot urge you too much to be assiduous in cultivating the good opinion of the Bishop.

**489. [To Father Guigues, at N.-D. de l'Osier].<sup>19</sup>**

*The success of the apostolate at l'Osier is due to regularity.*

[Marseilles, ] October 9, 1834.

Like you I have offered praise to the Lord for the graces bestowed on the house of l'Osier. It is with much satisfaction that I hear from you once again that devotion at the sanctuary is on the increase and growing in depth. It is God's way of rewarding your zeal and devotion. Interior regularity and your fidelity to the Rule have brought you this grace that you are relishing. Keep on without flagging, but pray that, by the intercession of the Holy Virgin, we may emerge from the state of infancy where so many unfortunate circumstances have conspired to keep us.

<sup>19</sup> YENVEUX, II, 154.

*Gratitude towards Bishop Bruillard. Advice on preaching.*

[Marseilles,] October 10, 1834.

. . . I am lost in admiration at all you tell me. Give thanks for it to the good God and the Holy Virgin, and continue to make yourself worthy of this powerful protection, by an exemplary life and diffusing abroad the good odour of Jesus Christ and giving signal proof that there are yet men who, amidst a general demoralization that infects even the clergy, have known how to understand the ways of this divine master and to follow his counsels faithfully.

You cannot be too grateful to the Bishop of Grenoble for his immeasurable goodwill towards you. Always maintain trusting relations with him such as a good man like that is capable of appreciating, and take pains to give him proof that there are no priests in his diocese more devoted to him than ourselves. It is not enough that you are such, see to it somehow that he knows it. You owe him that consolation.

My ear too like that of the Bishop is offended by that jarring note in the accents of some of our priests; what annoys me all the more is that if they had followed my advice when they were younger, especially when I called them to Switzerland, they could have done a lot to correct it, however when all is said and done, if the inside is good, I don't worry too much about the outer covering; I don't easily pass over faults of form, that is to say, the correction of style, gesture, delivery, etc., on these matters they cannot plead the hardening of the organs. It is quite simply lack of application, carelessness, routine. One has to be inflexible on these points.

<sup>20</sup> YENVEUX, I, 123; II, 72; III, 139.

491. [To Father C. Aubert, at Aix].<sup>21</sup>

*Departure for Gemenos. The Bishop of Grenoble, well-disposed towards the Oblates, will allow those of his priests who are so desirous to enter the Congregation. Advice to the novices.*

*L.J.C. et M.I.*

Marseilles, October 11, 1834.

My dear Aubert, I am going to set off for Gemenos in spite of the torrents of rain that are falling from time to time, and I am writing a short note by means of a certain person who is on his way back to Aix. The reason is to tell you that I do not absolve you of the duty of passing on the details that you were proposing to give me when my letter turned your attention away from that subject, one that I always find very interesting.

Guigue[s] has written me the most consoling things about how his community is getting on with the Bishop of Grenoble, who praised him and his confreres to the skies in the presence of all the clergy gathered for the retreat. He even gave the latter a free hand to betake themselves to the novitiate if they wanted to. It is really marvellous!

I have written at length to Father Courtès who ought to have communicated my letter to you; he had the kindness to acknowledge its receipt. I don't feel the need of making any recommendation except to your novices and oblates to apply themselves seriously to the work of their perfection which will be achieved only by obedience to those to whom God has given the responsibility of their direction.

Goodbye, my uncle is patiently awaiting my letter, I won't prolong it any further. I embrace you with all tenderness.

† Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop of Icosia.

Send me news of Courtès cholérine.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Postulation, L. M-Aubert C.

<sup>22</sup> Bilious cholera: cholera nostras, an illness analogous to cholera but benign.



*N.-D. de l'Osier, in the diocese of Grenoble. The Oblates came here in 1834 and are still serving this Marian shrine. The Congregation had a novitiate here from 1841 to 1903.*

**492. [To Father C. Aubert, at Aix].<sup>23</sup>**

*Novice Roucou's behaviour. Reception of holy communion.*

[Marseilles, ] October 14, 1834.

It is through forgetfulness that I failed to tell you that I was leaving the communions to you; you must admit, however, after what you told me of these gentlemen's dispositions when they arrived at Aix, that they well deserved the deprivation I had ordered. As to that, I urge you to be very severe.

Communion during the week presupposes that they are walking in the path of perfection of their holy state. If they deviate from it, it can no longer be granted them.

. . . Roucou's<sup>24</sup> behaviour in the circumstances you relate is worthy of the highest praise. When a person has done something like this, he shouldn't have any more problems in making great strides in the way of his vocation. He has the proof of God's assistance, it will certainly never be lacking save by his own fault. And I am confident that he will never be so culpable. How I love these generous souls!

**493. [To Father Guibert, at N.-D. du Laus].<sup>25</sup>**

*The Congregation accepts the direction of the major seminary of Ajaccio. Father Guibert will be superior of the Oblates in Corsica.*

[Marseilles,] October 18, 1834.

My dear friend, today isn't the first time I've bewailed the necessity of being separated from the men Providence has given me as councillors in the administration of the family.

I wouldn't want to arrive at any decisions without hearing all of them; I feel a need to help out my own judgment with their ideas and helpful advice, inspired as they are with zeal for the family's prosperity and the Church's good in the exercise of the ministry that it embraces.

<sup>23</sup> YENVEUX, VIII, 26, 80.

<sup>24</sup> Romain Aug. Roucou, entered the novitiate on July 15, 1834. He left before taking vows.

<sup>25</sup> PAGUELLE DE FOLLENAY, I, 314-316; RAMBERT, I, 656-657; REY, I, 610-611.

At this particular moment, more than ever, I would have liked to dialogue with you especially, before taking a decision which must have very great consequences, but it does not admit of the least delay. I am obliged to reply immediately, and once again I am afraid of not having enough time for the letter to arrive which must decide me, not on a mere changing of personnel, but on a real upheaval in our houses.

A vast horizon opens up before us; we are perhaps called to the work of regenerating the clergy and the entire people of Corsica. The Bishop is calling us to direct the seminary, and he is ready to confide to us the missions in his diocese; we must take it or leave it. The latter choice would be unworthy, little though we may be able to do; it would be disheartening if we should find ourselves unable to respond to the pressing invitation which offers us everything we are hoping for. The truth is we are able to accept the offer we have longed for, and which we won't ever have again if we turn it down now. But fulfilling this task is going to cost us very heavy sacrifices. I'll never manage to explain it all in a letter.

How can I put down on paper, in effect, the content of six days' continuous dialogue with the sole assistant to whom I have access? I have weighed everything, pondered on it all; I have put all the objections to myself, I have considered all the disadvantages, and the inescapable conclusion is that we must be prepared for any sacrifice at all if we are not going to reproach ourselves for closing the door that Providence is opening to us.

But who shall we send to found this important establishment? Professors are needed, above all a very capable superior is needed. We have no one in the Society but yourself, my dear friend, who unites in his person the qualities required to make this foundation. I say it before God and after wearing myself out with every conceivable possibility. I am all too conscious of the gap you will be leaving elsewhere; but I repeat, the foundation can be made by no one but you. You won't expect me to give you proof; your modesty would have you resist while at the same time the spirit of obedience that fills you would impel you to accept.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Father Guibert was fourth assistant general; he replied to his Superior General: "I accept with zeal and eagerness the mission you assign me. In doing so I am motivated both by my loyalty towards the Society to which I unreservedly belong and by the filial love that I have pledged to you. This does not imply that I am worthy . . ." (PAGUELLE . . . , I, 316).



We are going to be upside down for a year; no one more so than myself, but it is a necessity that must be submitted to in view of the immense good which must result from it.

Goodbye, pray to the holy Virgin for yourself, for me and for the whole family, that we may receive light, strength and perpetual help. With my affectionate embrace and blessing.

† Charles Joseph Eugène, Bishop of Icosia.

**494. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>27</sup>**

*Annual retreat. Cite frequently the words of the Rule.*

[Marseilles, ] October 21,<sup>28</sup> 1834.

What I want is that in retreat talks, especially in the novitiate, there should be frequent and textual citation of the words of our Rules, both to form the attitude of respect that each of us owes them and for there to be a clear understanding that that is the code that lays down our duties. It is the first general retreat in which our new men have participated, it is important that it should make a big impression on them: make it your concern to achieve this happy result . . . .

**495. [To Father C. Aubert, at Aix].<sup>29</sup>**

*Annual retreat of Father Aubert and the novices.*

[Marseilles, ] October 21, 1834.

Dear friend, I am counting on having an opportunity, perhaps it will offer itself tomorrow. At all events I am going to write a few words in reply to your letter of today.

I appreciate that it would be to your liking to make a retreat, but I cannot conceive how you can imagine that it is a practical proposition when you are the director of the whole group which is going to make it at the same time as yourself.

<sup>27</sup> YENVEUX, IV, 187; REY, I, 602.

<sup>28</sup> Rey writes; October 31. The context and the letter to Aubert dated October 21 suggest that this letter too is dated the 21st.

<sup>29</sup> YENVEUX, IV, 184, 185.

I do really want to lighten your load and see you free from the instruction you agreed to give, — but the confessions and the counselling that you cannot refuse to so many beginners? Won't this heavy responsibility take all your time? How do you see this aspect? All things considered and notwithstanding anything I may have just written to Father Courtès, I think it will be a lot easier for you to take time off from your duties at some other time altogether, for you to have the opportunity to turn your thoughts wholly to God, rather than try to do the retreat along with those whom you direct.

I can see only one possibility, to begin a day before the others, which would be all your own, and to continue on three days afterwards, that is to say the Feast of All Saints, the Sunday and All Souls Day. Since your charges are almost wholly occupied in church during those days, you could easily find a replacement. In my opinion that is the best solution.

Those four days, plus the little you glean during the retreat the others are making, will give you enough, and you can, believe me, rest satisfied with that.

. . . I have written to Father Courtès that I want the one who gives the talks to base himself largely on the text of our Rules which he is to cite as the Code of the Congregation. This method builds up respect for these Rules and is a better way of inculcating the precepts contained in them.

**496. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>30</sup>**

*Prudence in selecting candidates for the novitiate.*

[Marseilles,] November 30, 1834.

Nothing upsets me more than having to send anyone away after the ceremonies of entry into the novitiate. Why not give ourselves enough time to form a reasonable judgment on them? In this case it is clear that the young man in question cannot be admitted. The plan that Vincens proposed does not seem as absurd to me as it does to you. It is a sound and reasonable opinion.

<sup>30</sup> YENVEUX, VIII, 38.

**497. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>31</sup>**

*Suffrages for Mrs. d'Ethienne.*

[Marseilles, ] December 4, 1834.

My dear friend, such a long time has already passed since the death of good Mrs. d'Ethienne. I much regret the loss of that excellent christian woman whom I have always held in special esteem. I was in a position to appreciate her virtues and the rare qualities she was endowed with. I urge you not to forget her in the suffrages we extend to our friends and deceased benefactors. And it is not only in virtue of the first of these titles that she has a right to them: it could well be that our suffrages are her due also by reason of the second quality. I can't say more on that score, for reasons of proper tact, even so find out, using prudence and every discretion, whether this holy person left something in writing or recalled on her deathbed the interest she took in the great work of the mission. You understand how delicate a matter it is, for whatever may have been her good intention, if she left nothing in writing and didn't say anything, there could be no proof that she wished to do something for the missionaries, and if she did manifest her intentions, great care is called for not to give the impression of being afraid that her heirs, who are really fine people and whom I esteem and love beyond words, might neglect to carry them out scrupulously.

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

**498. [To Father Guigues, at N.-D. de l'Osier].<sup>32</sup>**

*Draw up the schedule for the missions in good time.*

[Marseilles, ] December 18, 1834.

Get a move on then and take a decision. The workers cannot be left in suspense, nor can the pastors who are offering the missions be left in uncertainty. Another thing that is needed is for pastors to get into the habit of writing you sooner. Here we are at Christmas and you

<sup>31</sup> YENVEUX, VI, 170.

<sup>32</sup> YENVEUX, I, 98, 112.

don't know yet if the pastor of Grandbois is going to ask for you. How can we keep missionaries in reserve while there are requests from all sides? We could have used ten missionaries at Laus: judge for yourself whether they can be left in idleness. From now on, arrange everything in advance, as the Rule requires. Find out in advance how many requests there are, so as to settle with the diocesan Bishop which parishes he wants to have priority. Weigh up the forces at your command, calculate what preachers the other houses can supply you with, by agreement with the proper authority; then give your word and stick to it, leaving to the following year the work you cannot do this year.

If you had let me know, I would have sent Father Guibert; it would have been an incalculable advantage to give a good training to the two Fathers whom you were obliged to send without their having any idea what a mission is. I don't doubt they came back really happy after their first attempt; but they will get the idea that method doesn't matter.

**499. [To Father Honorat, superior of the Calvaire community, at Marseilles].<sup>33</sup>**

*Father Honorat is invited to keep his temper.*

Marseilles, [1834 - 1935].<sup>34</sup>

My dear Father Honorat, . . . once and for all I ask you in all seriousness to abate your rage every time someone does not go along with your way of thinking. Those gentlemen of ours who asked you yesterday on my behalf for the theology book that was needed for Father Telmon to prepare his class went away scandalized by your manner of refusal. You paid no regard to the fact that there was a novice amongst them. Today you went after Father Sicard because he asked you in my name for the items he needs. Do you really think that

<sup>33</sup> YENVEUX, VII, 184.

<sup>34</sup> This letter is copied without a date in Yenveux. It was probably written either in the autumn of 1834 or in the period February - March 1835. Father Sicard was ordained in 1833 and left the Congregation in October 1836. During this period Father Telmon was residing at Marseilles — at the major seminary without doubt — only in the autumn of 1834 and in the spring of 1835, before leaving for Corsica in April. In January he preached a mission with Father Guibert. Father Honorat was superior at Calvaire from 1830 to 1837.

these Fathers are obliged to put up with your bad temper? I assure you that they were far from edified. Father Sicard told me that he was afraid you were going to strike him. I am appealing to you to exercise more control over yourself. These outbursts do more damage, and harm you more, than you think.

## 1835

### 500. [To Father C. Aubert at Aix].<sup>1</sup>

*Intense cold. News of the Congregation.*

Marseilles, January 11, 1835.

. . . I don't have a fire in my room and I've found this quite bearable for these last few days; but at the end of December we had some days that were so cold that I had to wrap myself up in my cloak so as to be able to stay in my office; and during the day I used to go and pay an occasional visit to the fireplace in my uncle's chambers. I would have liked our students to have the same opportunity — certainly not for them to huddle around the stove all day, but so they might warm themselves up for a moment, with permission, when the cold got into them. Some relief of this nature, I thought, was especially necessary for the men with rooms facing north. I've lived in one of those rooms and I know from experience what it means not to have the sun.

I've received a very consoling letter from Father Vincens at N.-D. de l'Osier; Father Mille, superior of N.-D. du Laus, has written me in his turn; Father Bernard continues to work at Billens and the others too; I have just sent Father Moreau to lend a hand to our two Corsicans;<sup>2</sup> from all this you can see that the blood is circulating in our veins. Tell our students about it for their edification. It will re-kindle their zeal, for they must be given frequent talks on the principal end of the Institute.

<sup>1</sup> RAMBERT, I, 668; REY, I, 615-616.

<sup>2</sup> Before leaving for Corsica, Fathers Guibert and Telmon preached a mission at Auriol, with the assistance first of Father Martin and then of Father Moreau (REY, I, 616).

501. To Mr. Mille, priest, at Notre-Dame du Laus, near Gap, Upper Alps.<sup>3</sup>

*Write each month. Prudence in localities of mixed religion: there is no point in working for the conversion of Protestants.*

Marseilles, January 15, 1835.

My dear Father Mille, you mustn't think I'm in a bad humour if I don't write much; it really isn't my fault, but I can't keep up with all my affairs, and my correspondence must necessarily feel the effect. But that is no reason why you should deprive me of your letters. As a rule one is due at least once a month, not counting special occasions such as missions, retreats, etc.

I think Father Guibert has written you that he thinks it would do Father Hermite good to go out occasionally on a mission. He must have given you his advice about the leader you would be well-advised to name. Whoever it is, I urge him to be very prudent in the matter. This is especially necessary in the mixed localities that you evangelize. Don't direct your efforts to converting protestants. All the better for them if they profit from our passage, but don't have them particularly in mind, the private good could be at the expense of the common good; what is more, you are sent *ad domesticos fidei*. Organize yourselves on that basis. It wouldn't take much to unleash a persecution whose consequences would be incalculable.

Goodbye, I thank your dear colleagues for their kind letters. I reply with an affectionate embrace and a blessing for them as for you.

† C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Icosia.

<sup>3</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Postulation, L. M-Mille. One of the Fathers at Laus erased the address and wrote: "To Montbrand, by Veynes."

**502. To Mr. Guigue[s] priest, at Notre-Dame de l'Osier, near Vinay, Isère.<sup>4</sup>**

*Occasional sermons achieve nothing; stick to missions. Success of various missions preached by Oblates. Novitiate.*

Marseilles, January 17, 1835.

My dear Father Guigue[s], I have, it is true, received a letter from Father Vincens,<sup>5</sup> but it refers me to the information that you were to have given me for details of his mission.<sup>6</sup> I have some information about it, but that does not excuse Father Vincens from making an exact report of everything that happened, beginning with the disappointments of the opening days, etc.

What you tell me about the effect produced by occasional sermons given at Grenoble confirms me in the attitude I have always adopted of dissuading our men from this type of activity which has never been the cause of a single act of love of God, let alone produce a conversion. Let's stick to our missions, retreats, catechetical instructions, this is the way grace communicates itself to souls. Let's go straight for our objective by the simplicity of our ministry and leave human considerations to those who seek something other than God.

For their first attempt, our two missionaries must be pleased with themselves. What a good account they gave of themselves in that frightful country. It's no small consolation to see the Lord directing our men's steps like this, giving them his assistance and working miracles by their holy ministry. It's the same everywhere they go. The letters that reach me from the Upper and Lower Alpes are full of marvels. Here at Auriol, where four of our men are giving the mission under the direction of Father Guibert, it is like our own times all over again: just think of our two apprentices renewing a countryside like that you described! Never stop thanking God for such signal favours. I forgot to mention what our three poor abandoned missionaries are doing in their turn in Switzerland. When will I be able to go to their help, and yours too? — I don't see how it can be done. The novitiate is going well;

<sup>4</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Postulation, L. M-Guigues.

<sup>5</sup> Ms.: Vincent, Bishop de Mazenod usually wrote it with a "t".

<sup>6</sup> Mission at St. Georges-d'Espéranche (Isère).



there are two priests who are about to issue forth fully-armed for war, on the devil of course. Most of the others have finished their theology, and they will be priests in the year following their oblation. In the meantime we must suffer in patience, and especially not try to go faster than God urges us. He knows the needs of his Church and our good will.

Goodbye, my dear friend, don't be guilty of any imprudence that might damage your health. With my love and blessing.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Icosia.

*P.S.* I haven't heard whether the brothers you mentioned have arrived at the novitiate. But undergoing that test is indispensable. Our members can be formed only in this mould.

### 503. For Father Vincens.<sup>7</sup>

*Miracles worked on the Missions. Advice on confessions.*

Marseilles, January 17, 1835.

My dear Father Vincens, The Lord be praised for what he has accomplished by means of your ministry and dear Father Dassy's. Good master as he is, he wanted to give you some encouragement and he let his blessings accompany your words. Like us I'm sure you give all the credit for our work's success to his grace and his grace alone. That's what gets through to the heart while our words merely enter the ear, and here we see precisely where the immense difference lies between our sermons and those of fashionable preachers which are infinitely superior in other respects. At the voice of the missionary miracles abound and he is so struck by the wonder of so many conversions that the poor instrument of these marvels is the first to be confounded, and while praising God and rejoicing he humbles himself in his littleness and nothingness. What sign of approbation can come up to a miracle, and never were there greater ones than those that are worked on missions, those you have yourself worked.

<sup>7</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post. After the letter M-Guigues, January 17, 1835.

You wouldn't have experienced those problems you speak of if you had been able to serve your apprenticeship with some experienced veteran. The first session with the penitent having to be concerned with the principal points, e.g., the first and sixth commandments, you base your judgment on that. You tell yourself: I will absolve this man unless he does not amend his life at all. When he comes back again, although you don't recognize him, if he has amended his life you give him absolution on the strength of the first judgment you made at the time he confessed. As to the problem you have over not being able to arouse contrition sufficiently in each penitent, this preoccupation would vanish if you made use of our invaluable service for the act of contrition, it is one of our most potent methods, it is proper to our Congregation and up to now has always proved infallible. But don't worry, God in his goodness will make up for what is lacking. Goodbye, my affectionate greetings to you and your companions together with my blessing.

† C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Icosia.

**504. To Mr. Courtès, priest at the Mission of Aix, Bouch[es]-du-Rhône.<sup>8</sup>**

*Forthcoming missions. Preference for missions over retreats. Brother Reinaud ought not to go to the university*

Marseilles, February 3, 1835.

My dear Courtès, I did manage to get our men together to plan the assignments for the various missions that we have been asked to do. The outcome of our meeting was that we shouldn't hesitate to give preference to missions over retreats. Also that the Peynier<sup>9</sup> mission must be determined, since the Pastor requests it, but that it isn't opportune to offer the retreat at Fontvieille in as much as such an exercise given by only two missionaries over a fortnight would have only shallow results in a population of some two thousand five hundred. If one is going to get involved at all, it must be in an effective way, and the thing is impossible as conceived by the pastor of Fontvieille. If the old fellow has given you an answer in the meantime, you can tell him

<sup>8</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post., L. M-Courtès.

<sup>9</sup> Ms.: Peinier.

without hesitation that you approached me on the matter and I refused to release missionaries for a simple retreat. To achieve anything in such a tough area at least three missionaries are needed on a four-week mission. He can take it or leave it.

The Auriol mission was wonderful, our men worked like Trojans but are ready to get back to work.

If Fontvieille mission doesn't come off, I won't scruple to use the men in the diocese of Marseilles which has more right than any other to the Congregation's services. However, so as not to upset our regulars at the Mission, I still intend to send you Father Martin, after a few days' rest, to wait at Aix for the opening date which must be at Fontvieille or elsewhere one week from Sunday.

It will be a long time before I'll let Brother Reinaud<sup>10</sup> go and waste his time at the university. I'm not at all pleased with this young man for thinking of asking for it. But I give top marks to Father André for sticking to the principles I can only presume you inspired him with. To confirm him in his good resolutions, read him the following decree that we made this year and which deals explicitly with this matter:

*Graviora ubi sunt scandala muros aëros ipsis nos objicere debemus, et quo major peccantium numerus, eo severioris disciplinae boni aemulatores simus necesse est quamvis igitur atrocissimi sceleris quod perduellium vocant furor in dies augeatur, non continui sanctissimas Ecclesiae leges dilacerare, aut ab aliis haberi sinere possumus. Toto igitur suo robore vigere declaramus hanc Ritualis Rubricam: Negatur sepultura Ecclesiastica morientibus in duello, etiamsi ante obitum signa poenitentiae dederint. Quam his verbis Benedictus XIV. Pont. max. explicavit et confirmavit: Morientes in duello . . . etiamsi poenitentiae signa dederint . . . absoluti sint apud Deum et Sacramentis donentur, privantur nihilominus Ecclesiastica sepultura, ut alii teneantur et ab eo detestabili scelere abstineant, etc.*

Goodbye, my very dear friend,

† C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Icosia.

<sup>10</sup> Ms.: Reynaud. The reference is to J.-A.-V. Reinaud, often written "Reynaud" by the Founder.

505. [To Father Rossi].<sup>11</sup>

*Father Rossi reproached for living outside the community without bothering to regularize his position.*

[Marseilles.] February 12, 1835.

My dear Father Rossi, it gave me great pleasure to get your letter. To be frank, I was experiencing some disquietude at your continued failure to give any sign of life once you moved outside community. The verbal authorization given during my absence seems to me to have been a giving way to importunity and to lack a sound basis. I don't see any trace of the relationships that ought always to subsist in cases like this between superiors and men who are canonically authorized to live on a temporary basis at a distance from here. Your soul is compromised by such conduct and its state is a source of grief to me. *Deus non irridetur*.<sup>12</sup> One doesn't play with obligations such as you have contracted with impunity. What is at stake is nothing less than your salvation.

It is my earnest wish to put to rights the defective aspects of your case. For this, good faith is needed on your part, and straightforwardness, in a word that you speak in good conscience and in the face of eternity; on my part you will find every condescension consistent with duty. Answer these questions before God: Can you regard your request made to Father Tempier as legitimate? When you made it, were you properly disposed as your duty required? Do you believe the permission you were given is valid, in view of what instigated it? Is your alleged motive true? Isn't it exaggerated, that is to say, is it true that your father and mother had fallen into extreme need since the time you made your profession? Was there no other remedy except to live outside community and to go and try to earn money to see to their needs? Does the permission that you obtained dispense you from all the duties of obedience? Isn't some norm required in relation to poverty? Isn't some norm required with regard to the conduct that you must follow in the midst of the dangers surrounding you? There is no

<sup>11</sup> YENVEUX, VIII, 250, 252.

<sup>12</sup> Gal. 6, 7: God is not mocked.

end to my questions. Which goes to prove with what fickleness you acted and how much mistaken you are if you allow yourself to be persuaded that your position is a regular one.

While waiting for more ample information, which you will give me by letter, I authorize you to stay where you are. But understand clearly that my authorization is based on the extreme need of your father and mother which I presume cannot be remedied without the help that your work furnishes them.

You are bound to use any surplus with great moderation and in a spirit of poverty. You cannot make use of what is superfluous except in conformity with the prescriptions of obedience and it is up to you to ask for them.

This means that you must write from time to time with a report on how you are getting on and for spiritual direction. You must give an account of what you are doing, whether you have employment that is decent and entails no risk for your soul, what you earn, what you give to your parents, what are the observances from which you judge your present and temporary situation entitles you to ask for a dispensation. In other words write like someone who is deeply committed to his duties of state and in such a way as to make it evident that it really is by virtue of a kind of overriding power against your will, that you are obliged to make use of a permission that takes you outside the way of life that is yours providentially, and the practice of the duties that you once vowed freely and for ever to the Lord. Goodbye, my dear Father Rossi, I hope that you will recognize in everything I've said the solicitude of a father who loves you.

**506. To Mr. Courtès, priest, Place des Carmélites, top of Le Cours, Aix.**<sup>13</sup>

*Intention to go to the funeral of Bishop Raillon, even though the Capitular Vicars General haven't invited Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod.*

Marseilles, February 15, 1835.

My dear Friend, it is important for me to be really well-informed on the respects to be paid to the remains of Bishop Raillon.<sup>14</sup> The Capitular Vicars General haven't communicated with the Bishop of Marseilles who as first suffragan ought to preside at the funeral. Whatever about the respect they do or do not intend to pay to the venerable dean of the French Bishops, I do want to be present at the religious ceremony, to assist only of course, but I do want to assist. So please have yourself well-informed on everything that has to be done, when and how, etc. I don't have anything else to say to you today. Goodbye.

**507. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].**<sup>15</sup>

*Brother Kotterer is to go to Aix to make his retreat for ordination under Father Casimir Aubert's direction.*

L.J.C. and M.I.

Marseilles, March 1, 1835.

My dear Son, my intention is to ordain Brother Kotterer at the first ordination in Lent. I am far from displeased, this child is going to make a good retreat in preparation for that and it wouldn't be easy for him to find the necessary facilities here on account of the demands which the disease that is afflicting us is making on our Fathers. For this reason I am sending him to Aix, my intention being that he enter the novitiate and spend the whole time there in profound retreat under

<sup>13</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post., L. M-Courtès.

<sup>14</sup> Archbishop Jacques Raillon of Aix died February 13, 1835.

<sup>15</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post., L. M-Courtès.

the special direction of the master of novices. Please place this dear ordination candidate in his care as I have placed him in yours so that he may become a good priest of the kind the Church needs.

Affectionate greetings and my blessing to all.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Icosia.

**508. To Mr. Aubert, priest, c/o Mr. Courtès, Place des Carmélites at the top of Le Cour, Aix, Bouch[es]-du-Rhône.<sup>16</sup>**

*The cholera epidemic is making a lot of work for the clergy. Impossible to go to Aix. Principles of religious life that just might be inculcated in Brother Kotterer.*

L.J.C. and M.I.

Marseilles, March 10, 1835.

My dear Son, the demands made on us increase by the day. It was two hours past midnight before I got to bed yesterday. We are in a state of maximum alert on account of the re-appearance of the horrid disease that is afflicting our city. We have had to bring immediate relief to the most urgent cases. In some parishes, like La Major and St. Laurent, the clergy were at the end of their tether. I have given two missionaries to St. Laurent. Calvaire is doing more in the line of service than a parish; the people like to come to the missionaries in their need. I am myself on call in every district for the administration of the sacrament of confirmation to the large number of those who've neglected to receive it; I am fresh now from the hospital, and on my return there are a host of matters to be attended to from all over. I have just received a summons at this very moment to a poor woman who will not be for this world tomorrow. I take up my pen again to express my regrets at my inability to respond to your requests which I would love to satisfy, but you understand that my place is here, and that I must give an example of a holy courage. We are going to offer solemn prayers. Tomorrow we are bringing down Our Lady de la Garde for exposition in the cathedral for three days. Afterwards we will have a procession of the Blessed Sacrament for all who wish to take part as you can read in the brief pastoral directive I am sending you.

<sup>16</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post., L. M-Cas. Aubert.

Goodbye, please pass on my news to my mother, I don't have time to write to her. Don't tell her what I'm up to, it would only give her unnecessary worry. Pray for us. This calamity has brought to light serious problems, but in the midst of this moral depravation what wonderful faith! The Lord couldn't but be moved by it.

Please take special care of Brother Kotterer. Take advantage of his retreat to instil in him the great principles of religious life: detachment especially, death to self, cheerful obedience, total dedication to the Church and to the family, support of his brothers, etc.

I hold you close to my heart, and wish you every blessing.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Icosia.

**509. [To Father Casimir Aubert, at Aix].<sup>17</sup>**

*Few novices. Will of God.*

[Marseilles,] April 1, 1835.

It pains me to see that our<sup>18</sup> novitiate is going to be small in number, it is a great pity<sup>19</sup> . . . Don't let's set our hearts on things being any different than God in his goodness allows.

<sup>17</sup> YENVEUX, V, 84.

<sup>18</sup> YENVEUX, who copied this text himself, either changed "ton" to "votre" (the Founder always used the familiar form with Aubert) or read the text incorrectly ("votre" instead of "notre" which fits better with what follows).

<sup>19</sup> Although 17 entered the novitiate in 1834, only 5 young men took the habit in 1835.



510. To Mr. Guigue[s], priest, Notre-Dame de l'Osier near Vinay,  
Department of l'Isère.<sup>20</sup>

*Impossibility of finding religious for the convent of N.-D. de l'Osier.  
Success of the missions. Pray for vocations.*

L.J.C. and M.I.

Marseilles, April 7, 1835.

My dear Friend, I was all excited at the prospect of the news that I thought I would be able to give you and my pleasure was all the greater because I know it would certainly appeal to your excellent second father, His Lordship the Bishop of Grenoble, my profound veneration for whom, and my gratitude, you well know. I was convinced I had found the treasure we have been looking for in vain. I was planning a veritable masterstroke (sanctified however by the motive which was inspiring me in the project), to confound the poor superior of the Visitation whom I suspected quite wrongly of not having chosen for me out of her community the sister whom I believed to be the right one to govern your convent. Now it turns out that I discover just in time, and in such a way that I cannot be mistaken, that that sister, whom I was counting on to propose to the election of your convent, is quite unsuitable to be superior. Mr. Tempier had been deceived like myself by certain exterior appearances, but having come into possession of serious and detailed information, I can no longer conceal from myself that her endowments amounted to no more than a touch of the blarney, little intelligence, little judgment, some narrow ideas, that she was scrupulous, in short, that she had none of the qualities necessary for being a superior. What deceived me in her regard is that in charge of a classroom and being not too bad a speaker, she<sup>21</sup> did quite well provided one saw her only briefly and in the context of her job. So we must give up all hope in that quarter, my dear son, I am as much put out by this as you are.

I am captivated by the account of your missions or retreats and it awakens in my heart very lively feelings of gratitude towards the Lord who is everywhere working marvels by the ministry of our dear missionaries. Those of Notre-Dame du Laus have subdued by the power

<sup>20</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post., L. M-Guigues.

<sup>21</sup> Ms.: inserts the negative particle here.

of God's word and the powerful assistance of the Holy Spirit some impregnable fortresses where the Devil had been entrenched for centuries. In the dioceses of Aix and Marseilles it is the same story. The whole of Auriol is converted to the great astonishment of the Pastor and his curates who saw falling *mille et decem millia*<sup>22</sup> on the right side and on the left and who gave a hand themselves in gathering in the spoils in the sacrament of penance. At St.-Julien it is the same story, and now at Peynier. My dear friend, the harvest is ripe, let us pray, let us pray the Master to send workers, for requests are coming in from all quarters and I can respond only with my regrets. In Switzerland you wouldn't believe how much good your confreres are doing, both in the canton of Geneva and in the canton of Vaud and the Gex country, but they would need three times the number of workers than there are; and yourself! do you think that I don't understand that you are too few for the field that the father of your family has given you to cultivate? Urge him to pray in his turn to God, whom he serves so well and whom he loves so much, that some of the many clerics on whom he imposes hands and whom I would like him to fill with his spirit, may be steered by zeal in your direction.

Goodbye, my dear son, my heart has taken over my pen, I can only conclude with my warmest greetings.

† C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Icosia.

### 511. [To Father Casimir Aubert, at Aix].<sup>23</sup>

*Affection and mutual bond between the Founder and Father Aubert.*

[Marseilles.] April 7, 1835.

My dear Son, the joy that your letters give me, with the very tender and touching sentiments that you convey so beautifully in them, would be altogether excessive were it not that the anguish I experience in living separated from a child so much loved and so worthy of that love, on whom my tenderest affections rest and whose presence has always been balm for my soul, is corrective enough for the too lively

<sup>22</sup> Ps. 90.

<sup>23</sup> YENVEUX, V, 157; IX, 34; REY, I, 618-619.

emotions of my heart. I resign myself to the sacrifice that the needs of the Congregation and of the Church impose upon us, duty demands no more. Nor will I go any further as that is not the teaching I hear at the school of Martha, Magdalen and Lazarus, of St. John, St. Peter and Jesus Christ himself. So much the worse for those who don't understand. They cannot make me see in the Gospel what is not there and I read there very clearly something they do not understand, something which we two feel in a wonderful way.

I have secluded myself to write to you and already twice someone has tried to interrupt me, but the silence between us has lasted long enough. I had no choice but to observe it as a deprivation so long as the cholera imposed it by increasing my workload. Now today there is no risk in keeping someone waiting. Other men in my position would now be at recreation or taking a walk, for we have just left the table . . .

Goodbye, well-beloved son, may the Lord fill you more and more with his grace and blessings.

**512. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>24</sup>**

*Holy Thursday ceremonies at Aix.*

[Aix] April 19, 1835.

I was at the Archbishop's Palace<sup>25</sup> for the washing of the feet; an insipid ceremony, denatured as it is here. What sign value is there in washing the feet of giggling choirboys, sniggering at this great commemoration of the great example given us by the Saviour. As much as I am moved when I do it at Marseilles, it has left me here with a sense of disappointment.

I assisted at the Office, then I made the visit of the churches with the Chapter.

You know that God in his goodness gives me the grace to enter wholeheartedly into all the functions of my ministry.

<sup>24</sup> YENVEUX, V, 127.

<sup>25</sup> The diocese of Aix was without a bishop following the death of Archbishop Raillon. The Vicar Capitulars invited the Bishop of Icosia for the ceremonies of Holy Week (REY, I, 620).

513. [To Father Mille, at N.-D. du Laus].<sup>26</sup>

*Advice on the construction of the spire. The superior of a community must be its model. Opening of the major seminary at Ajaccio.*

[Marseilles.] May 2, 1835.

My advice is to follow Father Guibert's notes exactly in the building of your spire; don't launch out, please, on something that will land you in trouble. Our finances are not in a healthy state, don't put God to the test. I censure in advance all that is not dictated by wisdom.

I authorize you to say Mass before oraison, provided the service of the sanctuary does not suffer in consequence; but be on guard against dissipation and don't feel obliged to spend your day with the workmen; the community, the faithful and you yourself would all be the losers.

Remember that you must be a model for everyone. Make your oraison often on the subject of the duties of your position; it isn't a small thing; keep a close eye on yourself.

Father Guibert has won his spurs at the first attempt. You wouldn't believe the speed and ability he has shown in forwarding his task. The seminary is already set up, and on the sixth of the month the solemn opening will take place, in all likelihood by the Bishop himself<sup>27</sup> who will just have returned at that time. Father Guibert left him at Bastia to choose a favourable site to treat with the authorities. Ajaccio is agog to see the completion in such a short time of an operation which seemed interminable.

<sup>26</sup> YENVEUX. IV, 18-19; VII, 127, 135; IX, 132.

<sup>27</sup> Bishop Casanelli d'Istria.



*Former major seminary of Ajaccio  
rebuilt by Father Guibert in 1837-1838.*

**514. To Mr. Guigue[s], priest, at Notre-Dame de l'Osier, near Vinay, Isère.<sup>28</sup>**

*Father Gignoux is staying at N.-D. du Laus. Father Kotterer is going to l'Osier. Impossible to take Father Albini from Marseilles. The Bourg-d'Oisans mission. Plan to go to N.-D. de l'Osier. Request for Father Dupuy to write. Brothers Ferrand and Roux.*

L.J.C. and M.I.

Marseilles, May 3, 1835.

My dear Father Guigue[s], it isn't without pain that I have been obliged to go back on my decision concerning Father Gignoux, but it has been impossible for me to turn a deaf ear to the protestations of the superior of N.-D. du Laus who was absolutely unable to make his house function if I took away from him this single worker. Although your numbers are too small, you at l'Osier<sup>29</sup> are still the best off, it is Laus, Corsica, and Switzerland especially that are suffering. Every superior rightly speaks up for his house, but you mustn't lose sight of wider needs and of the family as a whole for which I am obliged to provide. In Corsica, for example, I thought I had supplied what the importance of the work which we undertook there demanded, and in truth, in sending there Guibert, Albini and Telmon, I left nothing to be desired, but when the time came to carry out the plan, six thousand Italians, who have no one to turn to for their salvation but Father Albini, let out a distress call, and I found that my conscience wouldn't let me deprive them of this real man of God who conducts a continuing mission amongst this folk, with wonderful results. Even so, a third director is needed in Corsica and I don't know where to take him from before the end of the academic year. You wouldn't believe with what ability Guibert has conducted his business, quite unaided, for His Lordship the Bishop stayed at Bastia while Guibert treated at Ajaccio with the civil authorities. I mention it in passing for your satisfaction. They needed your Father Vincens in Switzerland, to buck them up, both its morale and its temporalities have been allowed to drain away too long under the destructive rule of that pretence of a superior who was appointed out of sheer necessity and against all reason. Does this

<sup>28</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post., L. M-Guigues.

<sup>29</sup> Ms.: Lozier.

mean that I don't want to do anything for you? No! but I would like to bring home to you that my good will outruns my capacity. In giving you Father Vincens, I sacrificed Billens for you; I am leaving him with you however, and soon I will send you Kotterer who has already made his debut in the pulpit, with success, and whom you will form in the other areas of your ministry while awaiting the opening of the missions. He holds you in high esteem and recognizes your authority as superior, he also thinks a lot of Father Vincens and the esteem he professes for Father Dassy holds out promise of perfect harmony and the indispensable obedience demanded by the Rules.

You don't say anything in your last letter about what I wrote you, for a motive it is easy to understand. I did not know our men had gone to Bourg-d'Oisan[s], but I learned with great pleasure of the blessings that God has showered on their works. If the Pastor really wanted to keep them for another eight days, it would have been advantageous to grant it, especially if it is true that they would have finished the work. We have often shown flexibility in this matter. That's what we just did for St.-Julien near M[arsei]lles. However, if they were too tired I am far from blaming them.

Although I now hate travelling, I don't know if I shall be able to resist the temptation of going to see you this year. If His Lordship the Bishop of Valence<sup>30</sup> counted a little more on my good will and was more alert to the misfortune of so many centres of population in his diocese which haven't received a visit from their chief pastor for twenty-five years, he would afford me the occasion by asking me to perform my ministry in some of those mountains which border on yourself. Even without this pretext for a visit, it could happen that I decide on it out of the simple desire to see you and visit your sanctuary. I wouldn't hesitate if it were possible for me to dispense myself from pressing on as far as Grenoble to greet His Lordship the Bishop, but I sense that that cannot be. I will think about it a little longer.

Dupuy has become lazy about writing, give him a friendly nudge from me; as to your confreres, I am the one who is behind, but I have so little time for myself! Today I have made the most of the time for

<sup>30</sup> Bishop A. Larivoire de la Tourette.

High Mass which the downpour has impeded me from attending so as to chat with you at somewhat greater length. Affectionate greetings to you and my other children.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Icosia.

*P.S.* Your letters don't give enough detail, and are on occasion too difficult to decipher.

At one time didn't you mention a candidate for the brothers? I passed on the news to the novitiate. I have sent Brother Ferrand to Corsica. That leaves us only Brother Roux. They are a rare breed but vital, and when we find some it is important to give them a good formation.

**515. [To Father Casimir Aubert, at Aix].<sup>31</sup>**

*Problems caused by rascally priests.*

[Marseilles,] May 23, 1835.

My dear Child, far from hoping for some rest, each day I see fresh difficulties come up that put my patience and dedication to tests. I make bold to say, that are more than flesh and blood can bear. Rascally priests<sup>32</sup> think to wear my courage down after taking advantage of my goodwill. They would succeed in their objective if I didn't constantly tell myself that men, with perhaps one slight exception, aren't worth the trouble one takes to help them.

<sup>31</sup> REY, I, 624.

<sup>32</sup> The reference at that moment was especially to Fathers Bicheron and Jonjon, cf. J. LEFLON, *Mgr de Mazenod*, II, 545-551, 558-571.



516. [To Father Guigues, at N.-D. de l'Osier].<sup>33</sup>

*Exterior ministry not to be unremitting. Usefulness of brothers. Personnel.*

[Marseilles.] May 27, 1835.

It disturbs me to see you overloading yourself with engagements; I don't at all approve of that way of doing things, it has the two-fold disadvantage of leaving your men worn out and of keeping them overlong outside the house. This unremitting application to works of the exterior ministry is absolutely against the Rules.

Let us put aside every consideration of too human origin. If the missionaries of Lyon are asked for, may God's blessings be on their works. But beware of driving yourself as if it were a challenge. In God's name, go back to the bosom of the community to renew yourselves in the spirit of your vocation, otherwise it is all up with our missionaries, they will soon be no more than sounding cymbals.

The responsibility falls on you, it is my duty to alert you to it. Hold fast to the observance of the Rules, amongst other things be faithful to the theological conference, remember that this is obligatory.

I'm not prepared to absolve you of the obligation of sending me reports on personnel and events at least once monthly. In that respect your letters leave a lot to be desired. I'm completely in the dark about the situation of the members of your community and even your own. Please tell Fathers Dassy and Vincens that their letters always give me the greatest joy; if I don't reply, it is to reduce postal charges that are a heavy burden on the houses.

So far I have only been able to send to Ajaccio Guibert, Telmon and Brother Ferrand, without whom Guibert tells me he wouldn't have been able to open his seminary, so useful is he to them. Let's have no more debate about the good brothers after that! So I'm going to admit Brother Roux to his final oblation. It's up to the rest of you to come up with some more.

<sup>33</sup> YENVEUX, IV, 19; V, 88; VI, 63; VIII, 221.

Along with Kotterer I had earmarked Bernard for you, the wonder-worker of Switzerland,<sup>34</sup> but an over-riding necessity forced me to change my mind, I'm sorry to say.

Let us learn more and more to quiet our desires and let our will follow where Providence indicates through the events that it permits or originates.

Goodbye, affectionate greetings and my blessing for you all.

**517. To Mr. Courtès, priest, place des Carmélites, top of Le Cours, at Aix, Bouch[es]-du-Rhône.<sup>35</sup>**

*Mr. Paraudier can preach in the church of the Mission at Aix. The Founder will be going to Aix to administer confirmation. He doesn't favour the transfer of bishops from one diocese to another more important one.*

Marseilles, June 4, 1835.

My dear Courtès, I don't see any problem in Mr. Paraudier's<sup>36</sup> preaching in your church, but would he be willing to wait so long at Aix to do you this service? This good man has to be taken with a grain of salt. His constancy has never been reliable, on the evening before he could easily announce his departure, so don't leave him any loopholes.

I shall definitely be going to Aix, Mr. Bony has invited me on behalf of his colleagues to administer confirmation on the Monday of Trinity. He was to have sent me some ordinands from outside the diocese, but as no ordinations are held here at Trinity, I preferred to get to Aix some days earlier and do the ordinations there of those they see fit to present to me. They hesitate in dealing with diocesans in face of a

<sup>34</sup> It is doubtless in a very broad sense that the Founder uses the word here. In the necrological circular of Father Jean-Antoine Bernard, Father Martin, who preached with him in Switzerland, says simply: "Father Bernard, whose courage was equal to every trial, worked real marvels in those difficult missions." Cf.: *Notices nécrologiques*, t.2, Paris, 1869, p. 219.

<sup>35</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post., L. M-Courtès.

<sup>36</sup> Mr. Paraudier belonged to the Missionaries of France, and preached at Marseilles in 1827.

difficulty that I don't have. I have let them know my opinion, I don't know if they will follow it. In any case warn our Reinaud to get himself ready for the diaconate.

My plan is to get to Aix on Thursday evening, June 11, and to stay over until Wednesday.

You are mistaken in thinking that the master of novices and the new Oblate had told me all about the ceremony that took place the other day in your house, your letter is the first news I've had of it. Their letter must have been lost, find out if they wrote and how they sent it.

I thought that the new Archbishop<sup>37</sup> had consented to his transfer, for I had the impression that these kinds of appointments were made public only when the Government was assured of the prelates' consent. It doesn't take long to say yes or no. What's the point of all this shilly-shallying? I presume Mr. Dupont will be quicker in accepting Avignon? It is a strange system and doesn't really conform with the spirit of the Church, to set up a kind of promotion amongst the bishops. In a way it legalizes an abuse. Archbishops like bishops should be named such from the start and shouldn't leave their diocese except to go to heaven or for reasons of real utility to the Church.

Goodbye, my dear son, you see that I'm always the same. Abuses shock me, afflict me wherever I come across them, but that doesn't result in their abolition and when that holy man Mr. Duclaux said one day before the whole seminary that God had raised me up to put the Church's drooping discipline on its feet again, he might have added that in the little world I move in it would be the death of me and I would be a martyr to it. Goodbye.

Today's post brought Father Aubert's interesting letter and that of the new Oblate.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Bishop Joseph Bernet, transferred from La Rochelle on October 6, 1835.

<sup>38</sup> Brother Auguste Roustan. He took his vows on June 1, 1835.

**518. To Mr. Guigue[s], Superior at Notre-Dame de l'Osier<sup>39</sup>**

*Father Kotterer's departure for l'Osier. That priest's good and bad qualities. Founder's visit in July.*

Marseilles, June 9, 1835.

Dear Father Guigue[s], This letter will be brought to you by our Father Kotterer who is going to put himself under obedience to you. I assure you he didn't have to make a big effort to submit himself to that destination, so much was it to his taste. He is leaving in an excellent spirit, I have every reason to believe that it is genuine. Father Kotterer is full of esteem and affection for you, he esteems his confreres highly and it is my hope that he will behave in such a way as to attract your friendship and that of the other Fathers of the house. I persist in the view that he is the man best suited to your house. I'm relying on you to look after him well. While he has some negative traits, he does respond to kindness. He is of good heart, and open to reason. In my opinion he has matured. I have to tell you that he didn't completely satisfy his theology teachers, not at all because he couldn't get through his work when he put his mind to it but because he had a way of doing things that was not, whatever he may say, that of a good student. My conclusion is that he ought to continue his theological studies. His bent would be more for other sciences. Don't be unfaithful to the theological conferences prescribed by the Rule, I have no intention of giving anyone in any house a dispensation. Be firm about this in your community.

I have just been invited to do the ordination at Avignon on the 28th of this month, so it will only be in the first days of July that I will have the pleasure of going to greet you. Don't broadcast it in the neighbourhood, it's best if no one knows until I arrive.

Make some summer arrangements for your district. A man can't work the whole year through without taking a break from ministry.

Goodbye, dear Father Guigue[s]. You don't write often enough. With my affectionate greetings and blessing.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Icosia.

<sup>39</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Postulation, L. M-Guigues.

**519. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>40</sup>**

*Informative process in the beatification process of Jean de La Salle, founder of the Christian Brothers.*

[Aix] June 18, 1835.

Pay no attention to the Brothers' requests; we know how things are done at Rome. I have no intention of letting anyone replace me in the direction of this process. I am the one who decided on the undertaking of this process at Rome. If it meets with the success I expect, the Congregation of Brothers will owe it to me.

**520. To Mr. Tempier, vic[ar] gen[eral] at Marseilles.<sup>41</sup>**

*Apostolic activities during his visit to Aix and at Avignon. Advice and remarks on matters concerning Marseilles.*

L.J.C. and M.I.

Aix, June 23, 1835.

My very dear Friend, I shan't have been wasting my time at Aix — ordination, general confirmation, confirmation at la Roque d'Antheron, confirmation at Lambesc, item<sup>42</sup> at the minor seminary and the Hospitallers' house, item at the Ursulines', item at the college, not counting some sick calls. Pontifical office at St.-Saveur on Corpus Christi, procession of the Blessed Sacrament, lastly consecration of the Church of the Greyfriars. With that I will bring my mission in the diocese of Aix to a close, on the very day I leave for Avignon, namely tomorrow.

I will write to you from that city, presuming they keep me there to administer confirmation after the ordination. If I am not asked to perform this ministry in the interval of waiting for their archbishop, I will begin to make my way to l'Osier on Monday.

<sup>40</sup> REY, I, 625, in a footnote.

<sup>41</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post., L. M-Tempier.

<sup>42</sup> Item: furthermore, moreover.

I'm not entering into a detailed written discussion of Marseilles affairs as it would be too long and a complete waste of time. Jeancard must discuss it with you all and you must do what you think best. The difficulty of forming a tribunal must be taken into consideration. It's on occasions like this that one realizes the poverty of the diocese. You will have had the pleasure this morning of seeing the radiant orator still full of the subject he discussed with such heat in yesterday's long session. Clearly this won't have carried any weight with the Bishop whose authority he is challenging. I presume he was treated with the contempt he deserves.<sup>43</sup>

See if Gandolfe wouldn't do better at the cathedral, supposing that you have decided to move him. Make sure Cailhol and Jeancard are present at Council meetings.

Goodbye, affectionate greetings to you and to my Uncle and Cailhol too. Affectionate greetings too to my sister and Eugène.

**521. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>44</sup>**

*Warm welcome at the major seminary of Avignon. Religious ceremonies.*

[Avignon] June 29, 1835.

It isn't just the very respectful consideration, the attention of every kind, the sustained eagerness on the part of the major seminary's superior and all the directors, but the cordiality of their attentions and the manifestation of such an esteem as you might expect in a long-established friendship. In all the religious exercises I am the one who takes the superior's part. It's always been I to preside at the community Mass. The day I spent in retreat and followed all the religious exercises with exactitude, the superior was very anxious for me to say a few words to the students, something I couldn't refuse. The ordination, the first for three years, was very moving; the Vicars General were present. There were forty-eight ordinands, all very edifying, of whom seven were for the priesthood. The Chapter came as a body to invite me to

<sup>43</sup> The reference is to the Jonquier affair, the pastor of Aygalades, and his advocate: Father Martin-Lazare. Cf.: J. LEFLON, *Mgr de Mazenod* . . . , t.II, pp. 549-558.

<sup>44</sup> REY, I, 626.

carry the Blessed Sacrament and to officiate at Sunday Vespers on the day of the ordination, June 28, and I readily agreed. The procession lasted three hours. I was delighted with the seminary. The men directing it are filled with the Spirit of God and their students take full advantage of the fact.

**522. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>45</sup>**

*Calumnies against the Bishop of Icosia in some Marseilles newspapers. Bishop Fortuné ought to make a public protest.*

N.-D. de l'Osier, July 13 & 14, 1835.

. . . My wish would be to be forgotten by the world as I have for my part forgotten it. But it seems that the spirit of hell doesn't consent to give me respite. Absent though I am, it is pursuing me with its calumnies and continues to persecute me with all the fury of its sworn hatred.<sup>46</sup> It could really go to my head. The culprits it seems are in great dread of me, completely inoffensive though I am. But no, it isn't pride I feel, but a real embarrassment at not having carried out my duty in full, putting up for too long with men who are so ungrateful today, through my misplaced trust in their false promises to turn over a new leaf.

However absurd the article you have forwarded to me may be,<sup>47</sup> I wouldn't have thought it wise to leave it unanswered. You had the evidence that the writer was a police lackey, since you had in truth received a letter addressed to me from Cardinal Pacca and only the police could have given him this information. But by letting it be

<sup>45</sup> REY, I, 628-629; YENVEUX, V, 256. We combine the extracts dated 13th and 14th which treat of the same subject and seem to be parts of one and the same letter.

The Founder arrived at N.-D. de l'Osier on July 2; on the 4th he wrote to Father Tempier. Father Rey (I, 627) copies, in the third person, a phrase from this letter: "Charmed first by the road leading to Vinay, he was ravished by the prospect of this residence in its deep solitude that could not be more attractive."

<sup>46</sup> A group of ill-disposed priests at odds with their Bishop, amongst them Jonjon, Bicheron and Martin-Lazare, were contributing articles to the revolutionary press against Bishop Fortuné and especially against the Bishop of Icosia. They alleged that the Pope had forbidden the latter to exercise any episcopal function in the diocese.

<sup>47</sup> An article of Martin-Lazare that appeared on July 10 in the *Sémaphore*. It claimed that Cardinal Pacca had written to the Bishop of Icosia to complain of his maladministration of the diocese of Marseilles. (REY, I, 628).

known that the content of the letter was full of kindness, as are all His Eminence's letters, you would be laying a charge of flagrant calumny against the article's worthless author, and so that everyone might have the opportunity of learning the truth, after having read it to the *Gazette*, you would deposit the original at the secretariat in the Bishop's Palace with instructions to show it to all and sundry.

14th.

I don't get too upset at everything the culprits are staging against me; I would sometimes be tempted to shield myself even from the tiresomeness of having to know what they are plotting against me, taking no more part in human affairs. However, I realize that it isn't the moment to deliver the sanctity of my episcopal character and the honour of my ministry to the calumny of men who are out to condemn in my person the whole of the administration and the diocesan bishop himself. It seems to me that my uncle ought to make a public protest . . . . But as always I leave my opinion to another's judgment and remain passive, with no anxiety and with no great effort. So you can go ahead freely ; whether a strong stand is taken or nothing at all is done is a matter of indifference to me, for I don't give twopence for men's opinion.

**523. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>48</sup>**

*Cholera epidemic at Marseilles. Desire to administer to the sick.*

From Notre-Dame de l'Osier, July 19, 1835.

My dear Father Tempier, your letters become more and more distressing.<sup>49</sup> Today it's the heartbreaking recital of the disasters caused by the cholera, and the possibility of the plague at Toulon, and the all too just fears that the proximity of the unfortunate infected city inspires in you. On this last count, I really need to have daily bulletins about the locality where you are living through a daily newspaper, like the *Gazette*. I hope you won't have neglected to procure me this

<sup>48</sup> RAMBERT, I, 676; REY, I, 633.

<sup>49</sup> The cholera epidemic that was raging at Toulon struck Marseilles some time later and then on July 16. Aix. From then on Father Tempier wrote to the Founder every day.



gloomy consolation . . . I am in such anguish to know that you are once again in the danger-zone that I would like to go and share it with you, for your own consolation and mine. I am kept back here for quite specious reasons; I am waiting for a short while more; what has my uncle got to say? I can't bear to think that he might be put out by my absence.<sup>50</sup> God is my witness that I'm not afraid to die of cholera, typhus, or the plague, granted that it is while fulfilling the duties of my ministry to the sick that I contract one of these evils. On the contrary, I ardently desire that kind of death, for I think it would be a very good way to expiate my sins; so if I go to Marseilles, I'm going to throw myself unreservedly into the fray after three days' retreat, to put my soul in order before God. I will carry out this plan the moment the danger becomes pressing. If matters stay as they are, I will only come back for the ordination. In normal times I wouldn't budge from here, my stay is so pleasant.

We are going to pray for you everyday; tell my uncle how much I feel for him, for you and all our friends; the misfortune of so many families touches me deeply. Say just one word and I'll be there.

**524. [To Father Mille, at N.-D. du Laus].<sup>51</sup>**

*Plan to go to N.-D. du Laus. Prayers to implore the cessation of the cholera epidemic.*

[N.-D. de l'Osier,] July 19, 1835.

I certainly haven't given up my plan of going to see you, I will carry it out a little later on unless the terrible news I get from Marseilles obliges me to return directly there from here. Nothing short of that extremity would suffice to deprive me of the pleasure I promise myself in visiting you.

As the danger is constant and at each hour of the day and night our Fathers are exposed to infection from this cruel evil that gives no warning of its coming, at the end of every community exercise you will

<sup>50</sup> Father Tempier had written on the 16th: "The Bishop very much wants you to stay outside the area of the epidemic, seeing that you are in fact away." (REY, I, 633). Same wish, July 22 (Ib.).

<sup>51</sup> REY, I, 633.

say together one *Pater* and one *Ave* with the *Sub tuum* and the prayer *Defende*, one *Gloria Patri* to our protector St. Joseph and an *Angele Dei*. On all half-doubles you will say the collect, etc., *pro Congregatione et familia*. These are the prayers I am ordering in all our houses: you will add, by reason of your happy position at Mary's feet, a daily visit in community to the sanctuary where you will recite with every ounce of fervour you have the Litany of our good Mother. That done, we will throw ourselves with confidence into the bosom of divine Providence, submitting ourselves in advance with all our hearts to whatever plans it pleases him to make for us . . . .<sup>52</sup>

**525. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>53</sup>**

*Desire to return to Marseilles notwithstanding the danger of cholera. He wants Father Tempier to allow him to do this as soon as possible.*

[N.-D. de l'Osier,] July 20, 1835.

My Dear Tempier, your letter of the 17th fills me with dismay. On top of the heartbreak at the picture of so many families' desolation there's the thought of the danger you are running, and that is hanging over the heads of all our Fathers at Aix and Marseilles. I am being kept here and I would like to take my leave for your sake and theirs too, although it is true they don't need any encouragement. It's all very well to say that just as I did the right thing to confront the danger when I was there on the spot, so it would be unreasonable to go looking for it when I am not there; that no-one has ever seen a superior general leaving Rome or the place where he lives to go to cities in the shadow of the scourge; that I must reason along these lines and not as would and should a bishop who has a flock to care for — I admit the argument, but I can't bring myself to go along with its consequences, with the result that I'm the subject of an uneasy anxiety. It seems to me that the honour (I cannot say of my ministry, as I am nowhere a pas-

<sup>52</sup> This paragraph is copied by Father Rey without indicating to whom it is sent. There is no doubt that it is a part of the letter dated the 19th to Father Mille. A similar letter was sent to the other houses of the Congregation. (REY, I, 633, footnote 2).

<sup>53</sup> RAMBERT, I. 677-678; REY, I, 634.

tor, but of the episcopal character I bear) is compromised in this sense, that very often at Marseilles I am confused with the residential bishop, whose solicitude I have always been seen to share.

My contribution has always been misunderstood, my devotion condemned, in other words men are wholly ungrateful towards me; but if it were to be thought that my absence was the result of fear for my safety, wouldn't it be a stain on the nobility of my episcopal character? Does that savour too much of human reasoning? It seems to me that my motivation is supernatural in origin, for I attach no importance to what people think of me; I have become all too accustomed to their ingratitude.

There is perhaps more trace of human sentiment in my preoccupation over you yourself, my uncle, our other good friends. May I not then risk myself with the motive of avoiding the danger of knowing them to be ill while beyond the reach of my tender loving care? It would be more dangerous for me than for you, they tell me, as you are inured to the atmosphere there while I am no longer used to it, and it would be a sheer waste for me to go and risk myself when I'm in no way obliged to do so.

In heaven's name, what can arguments do in face of a feeling that has complete possession of me? That is the truth, and my heart won't yield to the judgments of my mind. Again, when you are at Marseilles, they say, will it be only for our men's sake? No, you'll give yourself totally, and quite beyond the limits of your strength, to all the duties of the residential bishop. We can see you now going through every section of the city; as on that first occasion, every day you'll be going to the hospital to administer confirmation, and so in the end it won't be for your men's sake that you'll be risking yourself. All that is true, but I'm being impelled towards you with all the strength of a heart that you are very familiar with.

In God's name, get me out of this cruel perplexity,<sup>54</sup> — no, it isn't possible, as some would urge, for the Congregation to have the right to oppose a devotion that can only be for its advantage, as I've done all it could expect of me and from now on I've practically nothing to offer

<sup>54</sup> Father Tempier replied on the 22nd: "The Bishop still persists in his opinion that it would be better for you to stay away." (REY, I, 634).

while my death would bring it glory and be a great good for myself, as I'd hope to expiate by this sacrifice all the sins of my my life. So say just one word, one little word, and the scales I'm holding evenly in spite of myself will go flying down with all their weight on the side of my desire, as yet ineffectual more out of scruple, than from conviction. I appeal to you, answer as a man of conscience. It will be an easier thing to set off post haste in your direction than it was for me to get up from my bed and mount on horseback, as I did that time on the Barcelonnette mission.

**526. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>55</sup>**

*Devotedness of the Fathers at Aix and Marseilles. Father Courtès shouldn't allow the novices to work in the cholera hospitals.*

[N.-D. de l'Osier.] July 25, 1835.

Your outstanding conduct during the cholera outbreak won't wipe out the stain of C's unworthy cowardice.<sup>56</sup> It was enough to demoralize a community to which he was dutybound to give a example of courage and devotion.

May God bless all our Fathers for their admirable though indispensable devotedness. Could one expect anything less from religious consecrated to live all the virtues to a heroic degree? I give my unreserved approval for our priests to sacrifice themselves for their brothers' salvation.

As our brother novices aren't yet in a position to offer their ministry to the unfortunate members of the faithful who are struck by the epidemic, my intention was to withdraw them from the danger-zone, having them leave Aix and head for N.-D. du Laus.<sup>57</sup> So I was quite upset that Father Courtès took it into his head, without warning me, to risk the lives of these young men, for whom I'm responsible before God and men, and impose on them a temporal service in the cholera hospi-

<sup>55</sup> YENVEUX, II, 122.

<sup>56</sup> The Founder was displeased with Father Courtès who had sent the novices into the hospitals; but perhaps he was referring to Cailhol, the Bishop's secretary.

<sup>57</sup> The novices, with Brother Pierre Aubert and Father Cas. Aubert were at N.-D. du Laus in August; cf. letter of Eug. de Mazenod to his mother, dated August 9, 1835.

tal. No one would have dreamt of raising an objection while we were devoting all our priests to the service of the cholera patients that we were putting in a place of safety men who couldn't render them any spiritual help. It is an error of such gravity that if I went right to the heart of the matter I'd uncover behind this unwarranted decision a purely human motive.

**527. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>58</sup>**

*Indecision about the timeliness of returning to Marseilles.*

Grenoble,<sup>59</sup> July 26, 1835.

. . . In all this, the strange thing is that I'm functioning and acting without having any conviction about the timeliness of what I'm doing; for no human consideration makes the least impression on me and I don't discern the supernatural principle that should be involved in my position and as things are at the moment.<sup>60</sup>

**528. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>61</sup>**

*Conflict between heart and head on the timeliness of a return to Marseilles. Ingratitude of its people.*

Notre-Dame du Laus, July 31, 1835.

My dear Friend, you understand the cruel anguish I've been experiencing ever since I've been aware that you, my uncle and friends are living under the threat of an epidemic as murderous as that hanging over your heads. I find it impossible to express the state of my feelings. You'll readily understand that from the first day I learnt of the danger, I had the thought of going to join you.

<sup>58</sup> REY, I, 635, footnote 1.

<sup>59</sup> The Founder left N.-D. de l'Osier on the 25th. He stopped at Grenoble on the 26th and 27th, at Gap on the 28th, and arrived at N.-D. du Laus on the evening of the 28th.

<sup>60</sup> An allusion to his doubts as to whether or not it was opportune to return to Marseilles where cholera was claiming up to 400 victims each day (REY, I, 635). The text's meaning comes out more clearly in the letter dated July 31.

<sup>61</sup> RAMBERT, I, 680-681; II, 623; REY, I, 634; YENVEUX, III, 233.

The situation improved, at least the letters I received gave me that impression. I was convinced that I oughtn't to interrupt the important business of the new foundation. Things got worse, I left notwithstanding the observations or rather the protestations of those around me. It was always instinct that bore me towards those I love, whom I sensed to be in some way at grips with death. I frankly confess that I wasn't moved by any other desire. That is why the reasons on which you based your opinion never made the slightest impression upon me. In short, my only choice was between the affection that bore me towards you and duties of another order which bade me watch over the common good of the family, that is to say, between a natural desire, since you and our men were not deprived of spiritual assistance, and an obligation judged to be grave by those who think that to expose myself to death, when Providence had placed me outside the danger-zone, would be inflicting an injury on the family which believes it still has need of me. There lies all the difficulty; and so there is a violent conflict between my heart and my head; the latter, since it could not let itself be influenced like the former, fought against being convinced. What a cruel perplexity!

As to my position vis-à-vis Marseilles, it has been made absolutely clear, my ties were broken by my resignation and the appointment to the office of vicar general of my successor.<sup>62</sup> I'm not the pastor of the people of Marseilles, and I don't ever want to be; what does their opinion matter to me? People's injustice has taught me to scorn infamous judgments that come down always on the side of lies rather than truth. Vis-à-vis Marseilles, I gave them all for twelve years; sacrifices of all kinds; complete devotedness, with no return on the part of the townsfolk except the basest ingratitude. I made up my mind long ago, that after the death of my much loved and venerable uncle, I'd keep my independence and free myself of all the cares that have taken their toll of me during all the years I was everyone's lackey, even my bitter enemies'. I do not want to become the pastor of Marseilles, never with a

<sup>62</sup> He had had to renounce his office as vicar general, having been deprived of his rights as a French citizen and threatened with expulsion following the Government's refusal to recognize his title as Bishop of Icosia, cf.: J. LEFLON, *Mgr de Mazenod*, II, 473-487. In the *Almanach du Clergé de France* for the years 1835, 1836 and 1837, Bishop E. de Mazenod's name no longer appears as vicar general, but nobody else replaces him.

capital N. My present attitude is that the diocese of Marseilles has no greater claim on me than any other. And so I come back to my first dilemma: can I, having regard to my obligations towards the family, expose myself to certain death to satisfy a yearning of my heart?

Notwithstanding all I have said, if priests were needed at Marseilles to bring spiritual help to the dying, I would willingly expose myself to this danger, but will that be the ministry that I would have on finding myself in that city? The fact is that I would like to have a genuinely supernatural reason for my decision, the foreseeable results of my absence not being of that order. For the rest, it could happen that tomorrow all my logic will collapse in face of my heart's urgings and I'll make an explosive arrival in your midst.

**529. [To Father Guigues, at N.-D. de l'Osier].<sup>63</sup>**

*Devotedness of the Fathers and Brothers of Marseilles and Aix during the cholera epidemic. Novices and scholastics at N.-D. du Laus.*

[N.-D. du Laus] August 1, 1835.

. . . The entire clergy of Marseilles, including our missionaries, acquitted themselves marvelously. At Aix, it is a scandal. They left it all to be done by our Fathers who did wonders, but in addition people gave them due credit, pending divine reward. What is truly miraculous is that no one was taken ill despite experiencing excessive fatigue like that. And as for our Oblates<sup>64</sup> it is impossible to narrate the heroism of their devotedness, for here it was a matter of touching, rubbing down, drying off an evergrowing number of cholera patients, men in a shocking state, giving off an unbearable stench, whose cold sweat sometimes drenched them, that is a literal description. Their sweat was so abundant that while changing them one wiped it off with the hand like after getting out of a bath. Our men had the experience while tending the dying of that icy sweat running down along their hands and arms down their sleeves to wet them through to their chests. It makes me shiver to narrate all these details. It was high time for me to bring them out of such a dangerous spot, they were on the point of going under. They

<sup>63</sup> YENVEUX, II, 121-122.

<sup>64</sup> Novices and scholastics, not priests.

were already experiencing in varying degrees certain premonitory signs that would not have been long in developing into something more. As it was only a matter of giving the temporary relief that these rubbings down give and which have no curative value, I ought not to have exposed the lives of those who are entrusted to me and who are furthermore the only hope for the Congregation's survival, to whose conservation I must attend as I am its father; this service could have been given by paid help. In the case of priests and even deacons, the situation is different. May God bless their zeal and reward their charity! They are at their post. I never cease to pray and to have others pray for their safety, but I envy them a lot and I don't insult them by feeling sorry for them. How happy they are to be able to sacrifice themselves for their brothers whom they are sanctifying, saving, placing in glory, at the price of their lives, like our Divine Master who died for the salvation of men! How admirable they are! But also, how fortunate, these dear martyrs of love! What a beautiful page in the history of our Congregation! But the truth is my words are inadequate to express what they are doing. After reaching exhaustion at the hospital, they come back quite late in the night-time to take a little rest, someone arrives to tear them away from it to bring the help of their ministry to the sick in the city. They have themselves followed, both in Aix and Marseilles, by deacons who, to give them more time to hear confessions, bring holy viaticum and do the burials. The one at Aix<sup>65</sup> baptizes all the hospital children; they are continuously on their feet, while, if truth be told, there are curates and even pastors who, sick with fear, do not venture outside their houses; keep that to yourself; if it is to be known outside the city, which is disgusted by it, I would sooner it were through somebody else than ourselves. And so it seems that God in his goodness watches over our men's safety. It can be said that the house at Aix has been besieged and even invaded by death. Not only those who are divided from the missionaries by no more than the party wall, and who therefore lived under the same roof, have perished, but the wing of the house that we weren't able to get possession of and which gives onto the courtyard was full of the dead who could be seen in their coffins from our windows and balcony. So the infection was right inside our house, what a hold it could have been expected to get on a

<sup>65</sup> Etienne Semeria had been a deacon since March 14, 1835. He was ordained priest at N.-D. du Laus on September 19. Brother Reinaud was also a deacon.



family of twenty-two people all huddled together, what odds could be expected that they would not be decimated? But the Lord's angel was watching over these devoted men and their brothers whose shield they wore. For three days I have not ceased blessing and thanking the Lord for it, for truly in my eyes this borders on the miraculous. But even while giving thanks for God's help towards our Fathers, and the good fortune they have had to sacrifice themselves for their brothers, I cannot help being sorry for myself or rather, with more justice, cannot help recognizing that the Lord has punished me for my infidelities, in sending me to exercise a ministry elsewhere which deprived me of the happiness of sharing in their merits and participating in their glory. If I had been on the spot, nothing could have stopped me sacrificing myself at the head of the others. Far from the scene of the evil, I have been caged-up; but I am sick with annoyance in consequence. I wanted to set out from here, riding rough-shod over all the considerations that have bound me up to the present, but Father Tempier has leagued himself with the Bishop of Marseilles, who has the final say in the matter, to require me to stay at Laus where the novices and oblates have been sent leaderless to me. Let me have your sympathy and prayers please.

**530. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>66</sup>**

*The Founder's attachment to Father Tempier.*

[N.-D. du Laus,] August 1, 1835.

I am not happy with my position. Need I say it? Although you are often quite moody, and one can't ever share with you the pleasure of throwing reserve to the winds, of those unhibited exchanges that are true joy for two souls as united as we are, and although without it being really your fault, I know, but due to your personality, you are always deferring to me, even so I am unable to live without you. When I'm — I won't say separated from you, this often happens we are under the same roof — estranged from you, I am missing something that is essential to my existence. I am only half-alive and very gloomy.

<sup>66</sup> REY, I, 666-667.

531. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>67</sup>

*Anxiety about the health of the Fathers of Aix and Marseilles.  
Devotedness of the Aix community during the cholera.*

[N.-D. du Laus,] August 7, 1835.

My dear Friend, normal life is impossible at this unhappy juncture. My heart and mind are in an emotional state that breeds anxiety, that makes it impossible to rest in peace. Prayer is the only course open to me, any other activity is impossible. Apart from that, my imagination plagues me with unhappy and gloomy thoughts; as a result I sometimes even have nervous spasms, I mean I start involuntarily at the thought of the evil that I fear may befall the people who are dear to me, or of their death. For two days I had no letters from you, it was all that was needed to torture me with the idea that perhaps you were dead.

At the time of the first epidemic, when I was there on the spot, sharing the same dangers, I experienced hardly any anxiety for others any more than myself. It seemed as if we were all invulnerable; now that for my sins I am in a place of safety, the most acute suffering is never absent from me. Even so I really think that the Lord is watching over you, since up to the present not one has been taken ill in the course of the ministry, perilous as it is, that our Fathers have so heroically embraced. At Aix especially it has been really wonderful. Words will never be able to express what our good Fathers achieved both at the hospital and in the city. Father Lagier, who has been magnificent through all this period of trial, was telling me yesterday that they felt as if they were endowed with a supernatural strength and experienced an inner anointing which enabled them to carry out their ministry with courage and joy. The missionaries were ready to drop from fatigue.

When they had had barely a half-hour's rest, and someone would come along to rouse them again with the ingenuous request: "Come and confess these sick people," they didn't hesitate an instant. That is the literal truth. The missionaries did not fail to get up in haste to save these souls. As a result, not a single sick person was refused religious assistance; all, on the contrary, would stifle their cries of pain so as to hear the priest, answer his questions and receive the sacraments. Our

<sup>67</sup> RAMBERT, I, 683-684; REY, I, 638-639.

missionaries were inspired, for they had no fear of giving them communion seeing them so well disposed, and there isn't a single sick person who refused the sacred species. One could go on forever on this topic.

**532. [To Father Guigues, at N.-D. de l'Osier].<sup>68</sup>**

*Father Lagier's vows and Brother Gibelli's. Entry into the novitiate of Brother Bellon. The Fathers should prepare their sermons.*

[N.-D. du Laus,] August 13, 1835.

. . . For my part I am delighted to see you rid of all those workmen, for I yield to none in insisting that everything that could damage perfect regularity should be removed straightaway.

. . . We have Father Lagier here, he did not spare himself either; he is going to make his oblation and he is preparing for it with angelic fervour, and Brother Gibelli who is going to do it at the same time as he is really worthy to be at his side. It is a great consolation. Their place in the novitiate is being taken by a young cleric full of candour, piety and talents, who has already been tested at the major seminary of Marseilles and is thus giving us an extra guarantee of his perseverance.<sup>69</sup> It is an excellent acquisition and Our Lady's day will really be a splendid one for the family. The odour of the virtues of our Fathers at l'Osier really ought to attract some from your countryside, but I would like to have them younger and more malleable than the Father you speak of. The Bishop of Grenoble mentioned a priest he thought disposed to come, I didn't think it tactful to ask him for further details. But it would be a good thing if you knew him.

If you have the chance to have my slippers sent on to me — the cobbler at Vinay will I am sure have them sent to you — I shall be very grateful, but not if the costs of carriage are going to double their price. You'll just have to seize the opportunity when it is at hand and perhaps you won't find it easy.

<sup>68</sup> YENVEUX, II, 59; III, 27; VI, 33; VII, 176; VIII, 136.

<sup>69</sup> Charles Bellon.

I think you ought to know<sup>70</sup> that the pastor of Vif,<sup>71</sup> the country town in the Grenoble region, has written to Father Mille, asking him for a mission.

Goodbye, my dear son, insist on everyone in your house preparing some instructions, and don't neglect to spend some time at it yourself. It is a conscientious duty that I'm obliged to recall to your attention on pain of sinning myself if I failed to do it.

**533. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>72</sup>**

*The devotedness of the scholastics towards the cholera patients at Aix. Father Lagier's fervour.*

[N.-D. du Laus.] August 16, 1835.

It is good to do justice to the devotedness of our two deacons<sup>73</sup> and of those of our Oblates who were granted the opportunity of consecrating themselves to the bodily relief of the cholera patients at Aix. The young philanthropists there was so much talk about vanished one by one, and our young Oblates, whom nobody had heard of, stuck it out to the end. Even so it took a lot to overcome human nature time after time, to say nothing of the ever-present danger of taking the sickness. What foulness when they were cleaning up. What natural revulsion to overcome when, wiping away their cold sweat, it flowed from their hands into their sleeves and down to wet them through to their chests! Well, not a single one of them has bragged, even to me, of what is the subject of my admiration. Although I've criticized the idea of using them in this hard ministry for the reasons that I've given you in my letters, that will make a fine page in the history of our Congregation; and the full story of what our Fathers did, and how they did it, can never be told. The service of the hospital at Aix, it can be said, was

<sup>70</sup> In one of these passages (VII, 176) Yenveux's copyist writes "you know" in the familiar form. It would seem that after his stay at N.-D. de l'Osier, in July 1835, the Founder began to use both this form and the formal with Father Guigues.

<sup>71</sup> Yenveux's copyist wrote "Fit". The reference is certainly to Vif, the principal town of the canton, where Father Guigues went in the summer of 1836, cf.: de Mazenod's letter to Guigues dated August 25, 1836.

<sup>72</sup> YENVEUX, II, 122; IX, 143; RAMBERT, I, 684; REY, I, 639.

<sup>73</sup> Probably Etienne Semeria and J.-A. Valentine Reinaud.

provided wholly by our Fathers, for only one Jesuit and two Capuchins turned up; the two latter provided only corporal services to the sick.

Speaking of Father Lagier, I can tell you that I have never seen anyone prepare himself for a holy event of oblation as he did. And in consequence what fruits won't he derive from it? Father Lagier can't contain himself for jubilation. He told us, he who has always been so fervent both at the seminary and in the parish, that he has never known such peace and happiness, that he was overflowing with gladness and along with these outpourings from his noble soul he brings a firm resolution to do all for the glory of God, the service of the Church and of the Society, in whatever work obedience assigns him. He is on fire to work for the salvation of souls, but he waits without anxiety for his superiors to choose the ministry in which they wish to employ him. To sum it all up in a few words, a more perfect subject couldn't be found.

**534. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>74</sup>**

*Bishop Fortuné should take advantage of the good understanding between the Government and the Church to write to the King on behalf of the Bishop of Icosia*

[N.-D. du Laus.] August 17, 1835.

My dear Friend, reflecting on your letter of yesterday, it has to be acknowledged that it is through orders from higher up that these overtures have been made. In the light of this it has to be presumed that there is an intention to bring about a reconciliation, and that one could count on finding attitudes of goodwill, at least in these first moments.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>74</sup> RAMBERT, I, 700; REY, I, 643.

<sup>75</sup> The Bishop of Icosia had been deprived of his rights as citizen and could be driven out of France. Two circumstances helped to bring about a reconciliation between the Government and the Bishop: the Fieschi outrage and Father Guibert's stay at Paris. Here the Founder alludes to the attempt made by Fieschi on the lives of the King and his family on July 28. There were several victims but the King and his party escaped unharmed. This contributed to a better understanding between Church and State. The Minister of Worship, for the first time since 1830, approached the Bishops in the King's name to ask that prayers be commanded for the victims and that a *Te Deum* be sung in thanksgiving for the safe deliverance of the royal family (RAMBERT, I, 699).

And so I think it would be to the point for my uncle to write in his own hand to the King, to put an end to the persecution that is weighing upon me . . . I think that there would be good reason for us to reproach ourselves if we did not try in this way to bring about a cessation of this state of unjust oppression. If we don't succeed, it will be a set-back, but we will have done what prudence and wisdom suggest. Not that I can promise myself in consequence that I shall be left in peace, I would not ask for more than to lead the life that I have been leading these last two months, during which I compete in exactitude of performance at all the exercises of our communities with the least of the novices. But isn't it my duty to safeguard myself against the possibility of a still more fierce persecution?

**535. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>76</sup>**

*The Bishop of Icosia doesn't think the time is ripe to write to the King.*

Notre-Dame du Laus, August 20, 1835.

My dear Tempier, you saw in my last letter that I concur with what Guibert sends you without raising any doubts that he has been able to prepare the way and that the King showed himself to be very disposed.

As to the letter you advise me to write, I don't think it opportune at this moment, for it would be difficult to do it without demeaning oneself. When I have received justice, if they decide to do so, then will be the time to say thank you; but now, when I am still liable to be rebuffed, I put too much at risk. That Minister<sup>77</sup> has taught me to fear those kinds of set-backs; I still remember the insolent reply he gave to

<sup>76</sup> RAMBERT, I, 703; REY, I, 646-647; PAGUELLE DE FOLLENAY, I, 465-466.

<sup>77</sup> Father Guibert had gone to Paris to seek financial subsidies for the major seminary of Ajaccio. In the course of his visits to the King, to the Minister of Worship, to the Nuncio, etc., he spoke of the Bishop of Icosia and observed that the parties were sufficiently well-disposed to come to terms with the Prelate. As July ended Father Guibert began a regular correspondence with Father Tempier and showed him what path to follow in the quest for a settlement. First, Fortuné de Mazenod must write to the King and to the Minister of Worship. The aged Bishop readily played his part. Then the Bishop of Icosia must write to the King "concerning the events of the 28th and barely alluding to his own positions" (Guibert to Father Tempier, August 1835). According to Rambert (I, 703) Father Guibert asked especially for an exculpatory letter to the Minister of Worship.

my generous overtures; so I am not going to write, I want at least to preserve my dignity, even if I am the victim of injustice and calumny. I set out my whole thinking on the matter to you in my last letter; if I weren't afraid that in the future the peace and quiet that is my sole desire would be disturbed, far from promoting matters, I would put a stop to the whole affair. What am I lacking, after all? Absolutely nothing. I want to live, as I am doing, in retirement in one of our houses, with nothing to distinguish me except the pectoral cross I wear, without which I would forget that I am endowed with a sacramental character that is superior to those who surround me; they would no doubt forget it too were it not for this exterior sign, for my life-style, from five in the morning until dark, is so simple and entirely in conformity with their own. I feel myself to be quite unable to begin again a career for which I have an invincible repugnance. At one time the labours of the greatest bishops in Christendom, the works even of those who have done most to shed lustre on the Church, didn't seem beyond my courage; I asked but the opportunity to follow in their footsteps, and to rival them, if I dare speak in this way, in zeal. Today, whether because I am too old to begin again, or because men's injustice has embittered or changed my character, I don't view things any longer in the same way, and my only happiness lies in the hope of finishing the course busying myself with nought but my personal sanctification and that of the family I am already charged with; it is really a lot.

**536. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>78</sup>**

*The Bishop of Icosia refuses to write to the King and the Minister; he won't accept to be named coadjutor bishop or titular bishop.*

[N.-D. du Laus,] August 23, 1835.

My dear Friend, what have you done? What is this abyss you wish to hurl me into? I have reached harbour, and do you want to expose my frail craft once again to tempest and reef, which it would be

<sup>78</sup> RAMBERT, I, 704-706; REY, I, 647-648; PAGUELLE DE FOLLENAY, I, 466.

impossible for me to avoid? No, no, no! I've learnt by experience. I am not up to achieving any good in that elevated position in this day and age.<sup>79</sup>

One would almost say that providence made a mistake over the century in having me born in this one, with the dispositions and, if you like, the qualities that were needed to do great things two hundred years ago. I'm unable to compromise with error, lies and impiety. I'm a man of dedication; but the frankness of my character and my uprightness in all that I undertake hinder me from clouding the issue, as you have to do to succeed when one has to deal with people who don't have a sincere desire for what is good, and apply themselves to it only because it's politic.

Clearly your friendship is leading you astray in your hope of making peace all round through the use of a method that would be disastrous for me. My career is over; I have neither the strength nor the flexibility to embark on another where it wouldn't be long before I were submerged in every kind of sorrow, compensated by precious few consolations. I said it in my last letter: my appetite has been whetted again for my old vocation. Withdrawal in our houses, following the Rule like the least of the novices, not getting involved in any matters in a world that has no more sympathy for me than I have for it; there you have what remains for me to do here below. And so all our efforts must have their outcome in placing me in a position where nothing gets in the way of my passing my time in these tranquil pursuits, and where no one can disturb my peace. This is what moved me to urge you to take advantage of a favourable moment which my uncle had to obtain quite simply a review of the severe and unjust decisions that are leaving me open continuously to snubs to which I could call a halt only by means of a court-case, so resounding that I would do anything to avoid going through it. That's it, nothing more is needed. All my reflections lead me to the conclusion that I cannot in conscience accept a see if one were offered me. What a following I would have gathered if I offered the least hint to the contrary! This conviction is so rooted in me

<sup>79</sup> In his letter dated August 17 to Father Tempier, Father Guibert said that he had made the proposal to the Minister that he name the Bishop of Icosia coadjutor to his uncle or even to the first vacant see (RAMBERT, I, 704); this would oblige him to take the oath and to prove to the Government and to the King that he was not hostile to them. (REY, I, 645).



that nothing short of a formal precept from the Head of the Church would suffice to overcome my justifiable repugnance, and then I would be condemned to a most unhappy life, and one which would certainly be cut short on account of the continual violence that I would have to do to myself. To this repugnance are added reasons of conscience which ought to distance me from any see, which would necessarily entail a double responsibility for me.

**537. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>80</sup>**

*The Founder isn't enterprising by nature; if he has always been busy, it is out of a sense of duty. Refusal to be named titular bishop; the most he would accept would be to be vicar general or suffragan of his uncle.*

Notre-Dame du Laus, August 25, [1835.]

The idea that anyone at Paris could take seriously the project of offering me a see disturbs me and leaves me no more peace. My repugnance towards entering into that career at fifty-four years of age, with the tastes I have at present, and in the position I find myself in vis-à-vis the Government and the universal Church, is insurmountable; it goes against my conscience, my happiness and my honour. My conscience imperiously demands that I reject the burden with all my strength; all the more because it is certain that, notwithstanding all the good will in the world, and even if you like with a connatural understanding of what the duties of a bishop are, and even if I could work miracles, I would never be able to obtain satisfactory results. The reason for this is basically the prejudices that have been disseminated everywhere against me. I have other conscientious reasons too so strong that I put them on the same level as if I had taken a vow against ever accepting a diocese.

People are always making rash judgments. Because in my lifetime I have successfully managed some difficult situations that would perhaps have been too much for most people, they think that I am enterprising by nature and have a need for activity and to be busy. The truth is quite the contrary. If I have been an active man, if I have led a busy life, if I have undertaken difficult enterprises and brought them to a happy conclusion, it is because of a sense of duty, it was because it was

<sup>80</sup> RAMBERT, I, 706-708; REY, I, 648-650.

impossible for me not to face the facts that indicated to me that such was the mission that Providence was giving me; whereas on the basis of my temperament I have always had a strong aversion to all kinds of public affairs. I have never been able to understand how a man could move a muscle, make the smallest overture, for ambition.

The thought of the futility of every passing thing has been so profound in me that it would almost deprive me of the merit of renouncing everything here below because it comes so naturally to me. I have always had the thought in my mind that I was to die, as it were, on the morrow; so what value can be attached both to things in themselves and to men's opinions? So you've been in a position to see that in the midst of a very hectic life, every opportunity I've had for hiding myself away, to withdraw from people's sight, to sit down, in a word, in solitude, I've been as it were in my element, and I had to do violence to myself to tear myself away.

When I began my ministry I sacrificed my inclinations so as to devote myself to people. I took action inspired by zeal to have my good works on their behalf continue even after my death through the agency of those whom I have associated with my work. They will be happier than I, and I hope that God will grant them the consolations that have been denied to me.

Even so some good has been achieved: what does men's injustice matter? Haven't I myself been ungrateful to God? Who could count up my infidelities and the times I've abused his grace? So I'm not complaining about people, while I do at the same time take note of the fact of their injustice. I have paid my share;<sup>81</sup> it is time I stopped doing violence to my affections and what I am attracted to. I want to return to the solitude of private life to devote all my time to the things of eternity and to the happiness of those around me, without refusing at the same time to render all the services I can as a bishop, when I'm asked.

Again, do you not see that my honour would be as compromised as my happiness in the new career into which they want to push me? In the first place, everyone will say that I have sold my loyalty in exchange for a see, that this is what I was after all along, etc.

<sup>81</sup> "Payer son écot".

The very Government, believing me capable of such baseness, will think to buy me for that price and will persuade itself that it will be able to make demands upon me that my conscience and my tact would no less have refused it; and then what will happen? It will accuse me of deceit and lies, and it will resume its persecution, putting all kinds of obstacles in the way of the exercise of my ministry, a ministry which, as you know, can, when it has to, manage without its protection, but which is always a painful and costly struggle when the temporal power is opposed to it.

So once again it is my justifiable conclusion that nothing else is required of me but to remain in my present state, recognized as such by the Government, to which I don't refuse to take the oath, if it asks for it, as suffragan or vicar general of my uncle, since I have always had it as one of my principles, although it didn't want to believe it, that the ministers of the Church are established for the spiritual order only, that they must submit to what God permits, maintain peace by the influence of their holy ministry, shun letting themselves be the instruments of any party whatsoever, be they legitimists or republicans, as that would be to compromise the Church, the defence of whose interests is their principal duty.

My tenacity in this position will make its impression, I think, on you and my uncle. My reasoning is based on principle, consistent always with the just affection I owe him and that I have pledged to him with all my heart. And why, after letting my conscience and head have their say, should I not let my heart speak too?

Yes, anything that would separate me from so venerable and dear an uncle, from you and a very small number of others, would be of all exiles the least bearable, practically a death sentence. Who will say that I am obliged to make so many sacrifices?

538. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>82</sup>

*Prefect Thomas' calumnies. The Founder could accept being named his uncle's coadjutor. Reconciliation with the Government must be achieved without compromising the reputation and honour of the Bishop of Icosia. Jeancard at N.-D. du Laus.*

[N.-D. du Laus,] August 26, 1835.

If it is the prefecture<sup>83</sup> that is behind the atrocious calumnies that have so irritated the Government against me, I could expatiate without scruple on the infamous deceit of these men who betrayed their conscience with their lying accusations against me, especially as they protested, and they did, both to myself and to my friends, that they had nothing to do with the unworthy intrigues that malice had plotted against me.

. . . If I am more pliant on this point, it's on account of my uncle's health and our reasonable expectation of having him with us for many years yet: I have a beathing-space and time to reflect on what I would have to do if I don't die before he does, as I have already come close to doing on two occasions and as might well be my fate. In the period of waiting my position would be decently settled and my heart satisfied with being able to continue to live in my element which is, as you know, to breathe the air of intimate friendship and, if God in his goodness were to take my uncle before my own mortal career were over, I could retire into my solitude with colours flying before taking possession, that is to say, before having contracted the definitive engagement which to my eyes, in the spirit of faith, binds the bishop's life to the bosom of his people until death. And so the only desirable objective for me as for my friends is the fulfilment of this wish which, everything considered, I can formulate in good conscience.

To be sure this present reconciliation offers in addition some advantage to the Government and, in point of fact, compromises no one but myself at the bar of public opinion. That is why I must go

<sup>82</sup> REY, I, 646 in footnote, 650-651; RAMBERT, I, 708-709, 711.

<sup>83</sup> The Prefect Thomas, while always outwardly courteous in his dealings with the Bishop of Icosia, did not let up on his denunciations of him to Paris, cf.: J. LEFLON, *Mgr de Mazenod*, II, 487-507.

slowly, for I cannot for the sake of peace renounce my reputation and, if I don't observe a certain reserve in my overtures, I would quickly be put down as an ambitious man who sells his honour for a position, although it is precisely that position that I dread more than death. I haven't in fact written the letter precisely to avoid that criticism. My feeling was that, in my absence, my uncle had spoken on my behalf in his letter, it ought to be enough to satisfy them. Wouldn't I give the impression of being down on both knees, when it is I who am the injured party, who has been calumniated, persecuted, deprived of my rights! I tell you frankly that I felt that it would be time enough to say thank you when I had received justice.

Guibert's last letter leaves one to suppose that this point has been the subject of discussion and that a letter from me had been agreed upon either to the Ambassador or to the Minister. In these circumstances I would not want to insist too much on my own opinion, but I have considerable distrust of myself when I am not acting according to my own way of seeing things, for fear of acting badly. So I am sending the outline of a letter; if you persist in the view that I must write, tell me so and if there is something to be corrected, write it down for me, I am keeping a copy.

Jeancard is coming into my room, to my great astonishment. It gave me the greatest pleasure to see him. We will attend to the rest, if needs be. But you must not get upset when some accident imposes a delay in a matter. Your last two letters are too brusque;<sup>84</sup> you mustn't be surprised that I am hesitant when conscience, honour and the peace of my whole life are at stake.

<sup>84</sup> Father Tempier was alarmed by the letter dated August 20th, in which the Founder announced that he would not write to the Minister. He sent Father Jeancard to persuade him to write to the King and the Minister and also no doubt to help him find the tone of expression judged indispensable by Father Guibert. Jeancard brought with him too a letter from Father Tempier dated August 24, in which he urged the founder to collaborate with his friends for his own good: "Do you or don't you want to extract yourself from the dire situation in which you are placed? If not, well and good! But in that case you really shouldn't let us incur all the expenses of the proceedings, you ought to forbid Guibert categorically to speak a word about you; you will have to put up with all the injuries they heap on you; you must say *amen* to all the harrassment, past, present and future, whether coming from ill-disposed members of the Society or from the Government. If that is what you want, I have nothing to say. But if, on the contrary, you do wish to extract yourself from this situation, that I am justified in describing as wretched, you will have to submit to some extent and yield to the opinion of your friends who also have some concern for your honour . . ." (REY, I, 652).

539. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>85</sup>

*Letters to the King and the Minister of Worship.*

[N.-D. du Laus,] August 31, 1835.

My dear Tempier,

This letter will be brought you by Jeancard who will tell you orally everything we discussed together. Even so I'm giving him a letter for you, though it isn't my intention to scold you for the scant good humour you were able to hold back in the last two items of our correspondence. I understand that you could be upset at finding me resistant to certain plans you have set your heart on; however, the motives I adduced were sufficiently well-founded in reason and especially in religion to turn aside any annoyance at my resistance. I see in the letter I got today that your anger hasn't cooled down yet; the laconic nature of your account of the audience with Bishop Garibaldi would be proof of that. However, you must have received my letter, sent on the 27th from Gap, in which I wrote out for you what I was proposing to write to the King. It has been dispatched and in all probability will be in his hands the day after tomorrow; I hope he will find it satisfactory and the first stage of our business will soon reach a satisfactory conclusion.<sup>86</sup>

I'm expecting any day now to receive a letter from Rome inviting me to write to the King, for certainly Bishop Garibaldi won't have omitted to note down what the King said to him in his audience, making me out to be an obstinate fellow, unwilling to make the necessary overtures. I don't see any obstinacy in all that. I only want to reconcile honour, conscience and my peace with the Government's demands and the desires of my friends. And so we've put together a letter for the Minister<sup>87</sup> in which the dignity of my episcopal character isn't compromised and the condition stipulated in Guibert's letter is met. Read over again the letter of the 17th. You will see what was agreed with Mr. Schmit, the Ambassador and the Queen too. This is what convinced me to put pen to paper. We shall see if they keep their word. It was said in these various discussions: "Eight days later, the Bishop of Mar-

<sup>85</sup> REY, I. 653-654; RAMBERT, I. 711-712.

<sup>86</sup> The letter to the King is dated August 24, cf. the text in REY, I. 655-656.

<sup>87</sup> Letter dated August 30 (REY, I. 656).

seilles will petition the King to the effect that it is his dearest wish to propose to him his nephew as coadjutor. There you see on what footing the matter was discussed before Mr. Schmit . . . I have also unfolded this plan to the Queen and the Ambassador and it has been approved."

Jeancard will tell you in what sense I agree to the matter of being coadjutor and do not want a see. It is that if I have misfortune to lose my uncle, no-one would force me to accept the succession.

**540. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>88</sup>**

*Reconciliation imminent between The Bishop of Icosia and the Government.*

Notre-Dame du Laus, September 1, [1835].

Your letter of the 30th informs me of the conclusion of my affair. It can't be denied that the King has been gracious in the matter;<sup>89</sup> for he didn't wait for the letter that he must have been told he could expect from me. I have the feeling that there is an expectation that I thank the King; and there's the rub; for when all is said and done, it's an act of justice that has been rendered me and I'm still owed some reparation. What's there in that to get excited about? Perhaps you'll find the tone of my remarks shocking. I am waiting.

<sup>88</sup> RAMBERT, I, 715; REY, I, 657.

<sup>89</sup> The King, Louis-Philippe, in a letter dated August 25, conveyed his thanks to Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod for the letter written on July 28 on the occasion of the Fieschi outrage. The letter ended with these words: "The King has not forgotten, my Lord, the circumstances of your stay in Sicily, that you now remind him of. His favour remains undiminished; His Majesty wishes to give proof of this and to restore to His Lordship the Bishop of Icosia the French citizenship rights that you have asked for on his behalf." (RAMBERT, I, 714-715).

541. [To Father Guigues, at N.-D. de l'Osier].<sup>90</sup>

*Advice. Service of the sanctuary. Slippers.*

[N.-D. du Laus,] September 3, 1835.

I left in too much of a hurry to conclude my visit as I would have liked; I had put off until the end the private interview with the superior that I had with the others in the course of my stay at l'Osier, and it proved impossible. Make up for this deficiency by going over again all the things I said or pointed out with a view to good order or edification.

Always keep me up-to-date in your letters with regard to everyone's conduct in the community and all that goes on in your house.

You tell me that priests are beginning to come. I hope they will be edified by what they see in your house. No amount of politeness counts as much as scrupulous fidelity to all our observances. I hope what I have laid down in that regard will be followed punctiliously.

We do need to pray the *Dominum messis* for him to send us workers. The most efficacious means of being heard is for us to be everything we are called to be. This duty is shared by everyone, but in a very special way and with an awesome responsibility it weighs upon superiors who are bound *sub gravi* to maintain regularity in their communities by their example and authority.

As to matters outside the house, remember that Providence has put you at the service of this sanctuary so as to give a better direction to people's devotion. I pray that their devotion to the Holy Virgin will bring them to conversion through your ministry.

Because of you I am going about in my bare feet. I really needed the slippers I had made at Vinay. They were ready, the cobbler made a pattern just for me, I am a little afraid he will have been rather annoyed by your refusal to accept his product.

<sup>90</sup> YENVEUX, II, 154; VI, 33; VII, 162, 241, 247.



542. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>91</sup>

*The Bishop of Icosia's letters haven't satisfied the King or the Minister of Worship. Inability to lie. Dissatisfaction with Father Guibert.*

[N.-D. du Laus.] September 14, 1835.

So now we see where all these fine hopes, these assurances have brought us! It seems that Guibert has been the dupe of people abler and more steeped than he in all kinds of wheeler-dealing. Even the royal word itself has gone by default. I don't see that there is any way at all to defend myself against so venomous an ill-will. All the humiliations that are urged on me would serve no other purpose than to make me as vile in their eyes as I am hateful. Let my destiny be fulfilled. It will be as God wishes. I couldn't be more annoyed with Guibert. This hurry that he is in to set off is quite out of place. So what are these phrases that he is asking for?<sup>92</sup> My feelings are all set out in a proper manner in my letter to the King, I have nothing at all to say about all that to the Minister.

As to the rest, have no regrets, their conduct is proof to me that they wouldn't have done any more even if I had written as Guibert wants. Don't be angry with me. Even if I wanted to go along with your views, I wouldn't be able to put pen to paper. I have never known how to tell lies, it is impossible for me to say what I do not think. I could sign what someone else had phrased in such a way as to avoid lying, but I am not capable of searching out these crooked paths. I'm telling you this in all sincerity.

You are talking now of a second letter to the King; but how can I reconcile these two things, a letter to the King to thank him for giving me what the Minister, according to Guibert, has put off indefinitely and a letter to the Minister in which I acknowledge that I have not yet received anything.

<sup>91</sup> REY, I, 659-660; RAMBERT, I, 715.

<sup>92</sup> The Bishop of Icosia's letters to the King and to the Minister of Worship displayed an affected coldness. "A sentence or two more would have done wonders," wrote Father Guibert on September 4, as he requested a fresh letter for the Minister of Worship.

I would find it easier to write to the Ambassador to explain my embarrassment to him, but if Guibert has left, I wouldn't even know where to send my letter. How all this wearies me! Were it not for the pain that I feel this is giving you with regard to myself, I would throw it all to the winds. I don't concern myself with the favour of anyone in the world, whoever he may be. More and more I scorn what the world goes in search of. All I ask is to be in God's grace and to await death in peace in some quiet corner, within reach however of those I love.

**543. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>93</sup>**

*Second letter to the Minister of Worship.*

[N.-D. du Laus,] September 15, 1835.

My dear Tempier, my letter of yesterday will have caused you pain; and so I'm hastening to write again today to let you know my second thoughts; believe you me, you and my other friends are the main reason for this resolution for it isn't right that you should be saddened through your affection towards me and the desire it inspires in you.

Very well, then, I have decided to write to the Minister, as if I ought not to be shocked by all his suspicions, injurious to my character.

Without further ado I am copying you out my letter,<sup>94</sup> which has already left. I hope it will make you happy.

<sup>93</sup> RAMBERT, I, 716-717; REY, I, 661.

<sup>94</sup> We omit this letter. One of the arguments used by the Founder to explain the restraint of his first letter was expressed in this way: "... I admit frankly that I am of the school of Fénelon, whose views correspond with my deepest feelings. Those who are in disfavour, he wrote in a similar situation, do well to be reserved and not too gushing.

"Perhaps I am being over-tactful but it would be hard to convict me of it when it rests on such good authority."

544. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>95</sup>

*Ordination of Father Etienne Semeria. One of the novices will have to do military service.*

[N.-D. du Laus,] September 22, 1835.

[The ordination of Father Semeria<sup>96</sup> was a real family feastday] which gave a special character to that solemnity where grace flowed from the father over his children, sole witnesses of the wonders worked for the glory of one of their brothers and for the good of all and of God's Church. The next day<sup>97</sup> the first mass was celebrated in the miraculous sanctuary at 5 o'clock in the morning according to our normal usages so that those who were to come with me to Gap would be free early enough to arrive in time for the liturgy that was due to begin at 9 o'clock. That liturgy, in honour of St. Arnoult, patron of the diocese, was as solemn as Gap could make it and was followed by an interminable procession that completed my exhaustion on the day after a fastday, and with me having risen at four o'clock and made a two-hour journey. But if I was really exhausted, the piety of all the people, who went down on their knees for my blessing the whole length of my passage, provided a more than abundant compensation of spiritual consolation. Father Mille gave the panegyric and I was pleased with it. It took him only a few hours during the night to compose it and commit it to memory. It was a remarkable performance both in its facility and as a feat of memory.

. . . To plunge a poor young man with joy in his heart into an abyss of corruption from which one can be preserved only by miracle, to drag someone out of his vocation for that, to make him leave a novitiate where he has lived for more than a year in innocence and the practice of all the virtues, and for a bishop to do this, it is a monstrosity that surpasses belief! The thing is so terrible, to speak frankly so criminal, that I am convinced it is only a joke on his part and that he

<sup>95</sup> REY, I, 663, 664. Father Rey does not name to whom the letter is sent. It is probably Father Tempier, to whom the Founder was writing very frequently at this time.

<sup>96</sup> Father Jean-Etienne Semeria was ordained at N.-D. du Laus on September 19.

<sup>97</sup> On Sunday, the 20th, the Founder went to Gap to take part in the celebrations for the feast of the patron of the diocese.

has secretly sent the certificate that he cannot in conscience refuse since it is a question only of verifying a fact in the form stipulated by law. Were it otherwise it would be a trick worthy of Neros and Domitians.<sup>98</sup>

**545. [To Brother Ferrand, at Ajaccio].<sup>99</sup>**

*Reciprocal attachment.*

[N.-D. du Laus,] October 1, 1835.

I find it delightful to discern in your heart the affection and attachment you have for your father in Jesus Christ, and it gives me pleasure to assure you that you are paid in return . . .

**546. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>100</sup>**

*Father Guibert's visit to N.-D. du Laus. Books mustn't leave the houses. Sermons of the Fathers of Laus. Course of humanities.*

[N.-D. du Laus,] October 4, 1835.

You will have seen Guibert by now. I was delighted to spend some days in his company.<sup>101</sup> I'm giving him two companions for the major seminary of Ajaccio: Fathers Albini and Sicard. Speaking of Father Guibert, it hurts me to disappoint him, but I am expressly instructing you to recover from his possession Mr. Combalot's work on philosophy and any other books he has taken from Laus. It is a law I myself made and which is known to all, not to permit the taking of a single volume from the library of one of our houses to take it to

<sup>98</sup> Rey copied this passage (I, 664) without naming to whom it is sent and giving no date. But in his book it follows the preceding paragraph dated the 22. The Bishop in question had refused a certificate of ecclesiastical studies to a novice subject to conscription.

<sup>99</sup> *Notices nécrologiques o.m.i.*, II, 149.

<sup>100</sup> YENVEUX, II, 58; V, 46; VII, 41, 56; VIII, 172; REY, I, 665.

<sup>101</sup> In order to bring the Founder up-to-date on the proceedings at Paris and to encourage him to submit freely to what was asked of him, Father Guibert broke his journey to Corsica at N.-D. du Laus from September 21 to the beginning of October. The *Icosia* Affair was nearly over. On September 27, Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod sent the brief of institution to Paris for the Council of State to make a decision as to its registration.

another house without my express permission. Father Mille has received a strong reprimand for permitting himself to break these precise rules that I have set out above and which he was perfectly well-acquainted with. I was not asked for my consent. In consequence, I cannot turn a blind eye to this abuse. The books must be returned to Laus. I say this in all seriousness and instruct you to recover them. At the same time I reiterate the prohibition on yourself making any disposition of anything at all without my authorization, be it for Corsica or for any other destination. I am going to insist that the physics books which were used for the course which has just ended shall be returned to your library.

Father Pons has to give a course on the humanities to the scholastics.<sup>102</sup> Here Father Mille, who is certainly not short of work, used to give that course, and it didn't get in the way of his giving a course of theology to the whole community. That's how it should be everywhere. To be always ready to do with a good grace whatever may work towards the Church's good and the Congregation's benefit. There should be no question of asking if it's going to be hard or put you out. You will never find it so if you form the good habit of willingly doing everything everywhere for God, seeking nothing for oneself. It seems to me that that is so fundamental that it would be superfluous for me to insist on it.

I am not at all happy with the instructions given by any of our good Fathers at N.-D. du Laus: it is very bad. I am tired of telling them to write them down; they always have some excuse ready to do nothing about it. If that is how they preach on a mission, it is pitiful. The fact is that . . .

It is vital that the scholastics get at least two hours of the humanities each week, if we don't want to have a bunch of half-wits<sup>103</sup> incapable of writing a few lines. The French students need to acquire polish; but for the Italian students it is a first priority.

Someone ought to look into the material side of things here; no-one understands anything about it. It is the side of things that I find most tedious, as I don't exactly like to get involved in matters of

<sup>102</sup> The scholastics, dispersed at Aix, Laus and Calvaire, lived at the major seminary at Marseilles from October 1835 until 1854.

<sup>103</sup> "Apoco": an Italian word: a man of little wit or sense.

housekeeping and I feel it to be rather out of place, in view of my position of dignity to go into all these details, but how can one let go by all these idiotic situations whose existence isn't even suspected.

**547. [To Father Guigues, at N.-D. de l'Osier].<sup>104</sup>**

*Father Guigues' projected trip. Live in accordance with the Rule, even in the presence of visiting priests. Write every month and give plenty of detail about the life of the community.*

[N.-D. du Laus,] October 8, 1835.

My dear Son, I was putting off writing to you until you had let me have your decision on the trip your brother-in-law suggested. Although I left you every latitude in that respect, I frankly admit that I am delighted that you have plumped for not leaving your post, especially as you can cope with the matters that call for your attention by mail. Could you please explain a little more what precisely you want Father Mille and myself to do for your sister in the circumstances? Is it to discern if this young person really feels called to the religious state?

Your correspondence falls far short of what is expected of a man in your position. There is no call for you to grudge the time you have to spend in writing to me. Putting it briefly, let me remind you that through your correspondence you must make every thing that happens to you, or rather, in your house, present to me. You don't keep me sufficiently in the picture as to all the things that concern me, be it in the moral or the economic sphere of the house; once a month, the superior must give me a report not only of all its domestic affairs, but he must address me each time about each member of the community, and he must do this not in a superficial way, but in such a way as to make me informed and able to form a judgment just as if I were present. I can't surrender this right, without which it would be impossible for me to acquit myself of my duty.

I recommend you to be very flexible as to formalities but rigid when it comes to what is basic, for everything that pertains to the Rule or the spirit of the Congregation. Eliminate anything that savours of

<sup>104</sup> YENVEUX, I, 60-61; VI, 81; VII, 153, 163, 248.

childishness from amongst you. Don't forget to let me know what the position is with regard to the written instructions that I have required of each one; not excepting the superior. I make the same requirement in all our houses.

Independently of the obligation that rests on all of the Fathers, and on you in particular as superior, to observe the Rule and to be faithful to all I have prescribed, the good that results from this with regard to the outside world is incalculable. I know this here by experience. People vie with one another in their admiration for the regularity, good order, piety that reign in the house. It is to the point that of all the many priests who have passed whole weeks here, there hasn't been one who wanted to receive the least thing over and above what the community eats on fastdays of the Rule, that is to say, they have all followed our Rule with a wonderful fervour. They find edification in everything: the silence that reigns in the house, the punctuality at all the exercises, the office, the small refectory penances. So be always what you ought to be and never let the presence of strangers bring you to make changes in anything, whether it be in the Rule or in our customs. If one can find in your house no more than a group of priests living under the same roof, as pastors from the surrounding neighbourhood might do, you will be guilty — before me, before the Congregation and before God; and the people for whose sake you surrendered your Oblate way of life will go away but little edified and certainly deceived in their expectations. And so I recommend you to be quite rigid on all of this. I want none of your expediency or human respect. Everyone knows who you are, so be worthy of your vocation and strive to accept its every least demand.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>105</sup> This paragraph is copied by Yenneux using the impersonal form of address and bearing the date "October" (imprimé, I, 60-61). We insert it here with these other extracts of October 8.

548. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>106</sup>

*Uneasiness when Father Tempier doesn't write for some days. Regret at the dismissal of a servant. Joy at being able to return soon to Marseilles. Happiness of living in an Oblate community, far from the perverse world.*

[N.-D. du Laus,] October 9, 1835.

There's no need for me to tell you all I've suffered these last several days. Everyone was saying you were dangerously ill. You know me well enough to understand how I felt with this dagger plunged deep into my soul. From the 25th September until October 6th this martyrdom was mine to taste. Towards the end, I was no longer in the land of the living. Your letter puts me at rest. Let us say no more about it; what an amount of suffering you would have saved me by one single line from your pen! But I forgive you everything. There is nothing but love in my heart. I thank God for not submitting me to any worse test than this, heart-breaking and excessive though it was.

How can you ask me to intervene actively in a matter in which I would already derive intense suffering in a merely passive role. I have never voluntarily inflicted pain on anyone, even those who have done me the greatest injury, how could I cast someone into despair who is sincerely attached to me and has been manservant both to me and to my uncle?<sup>107</sup> Certainly he has caused me a lot of trouble, it has to be acknowledged, because of his very difficult character rather than from a sustained malice. I know that he has let everyone down in a very uncivil manner, as he has myself, and that is what hurts me most; but it is because of his character, it is a lack of formation and often through being over-attentive. I am saying this, not to excuse him: who is more critical than I am of his behaviour? Who feels more sharply the repercussions? But I do it so that the cause of his misdoings will be understood and to raise the hope that he won't repeat them again, for a month has passed now in which he has given satisfaction. I know that

<sup>106</sup> YENVEUX, III, 109; IV, 46; V, 158; RAMBERT, I, 718-719; REY, I, 666-667.

<sup>107</sup> His servant, probably Pascal Testamire, dismissed in January 1839, cf.: Journal Mazenod, January 19, 1939: "Departure of my servant Pascal Testamire. This time I have let him go for good, sorry though I am for him. His dreadful character shocked everyone and has asked too much of me during these three years."



he'll be unhappy to leave my household. How can I bring myself to plunge him into this unhappiness? To make someone who loves me unhappy, when I can't bear the idea of those who mean nothing to me suffering! I can't do it.

You really are the bearer of glad tidings, summoning me back next week. Isn't it too much happiness? I can savour it already! Even so, however anxious I may be to enjoy it, I'm still going to wait for a more explicit and precise signal before I take wing in your direction. It isn't as if I weren't very well situated where I am. On the contrary, I'm in my element here for a host of reasons. I like our houses' regularity very much. The exercises of piety that are done in common are completely to my taste and I never weary of following them punctiliously. As the range of my activities doesn't go beyond our spiritual family, which I think has benefited from my stay in its midst, I have lost sight of the rest of the world, those perverse, wicked men with whom I'll have to be in constant contact when I leave here, and I cannot express what a solace it is for me. I am happy to be forgotten by all those I have no reason to love save in the great universal charity. I ask nothing of anyone, because I am satisfied and more than satisfied with the life that God has made for me. But — shall I confess it? Is it a weakness? Is it an imperfection? In my way of seeing things it is neither the one nor the other: — something is always lacking to me, a big thing, too big, so long as I must live apart from a certain person known to me.

Very good, so it will be in the course of next week that I'll see you again, press you to my heart, that I shall embrace my good uncle, that beloved father whose long and precious life receives nourishment from my affection, that I shall be giving you a big hug; but isn't it too much happiness? I can savour it already!<sup>108</sup>

<sup>108</sup> The Founder left N.-D. du Laus on October 18. He stopped at Aix from the 19th to the 22nd and arrived at Marseilles on the 22nd (REY, I, 670). The unnamed person the Founder most wishes to see again is clearly Father Tempier.

**549. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].**<sup>109</sup>

*Priests on retreat at N.-D. du Laus. The Bishop of Gap doesn't permit his priests to enter the Oblates.*

[N.-D. du Laus,] October 13, 1835.

The house of N.-D. du Laus is full of priests who come there to make a retreat and conduct themselves in a way that gives everyone edification. On arrival they are seized by a certain indefinable impression that is imparted to them by the sight of our community marching in step, with the bishop at its head; and this, added to the perfume that is exhaled unceasingly from the sanctuary of our good Mother, makes a ravishing whole that inevitably has its effect. Ah! if only the Bishop of Gap could understand! He would certainly stop placing an insurmountable obstacle in the way of a large number of clearly-indicated vocations. Almost immediately we could count on ten excellent priests, irresistibly impelled towards us by God's grace. As it is, not only is the Bishop implacable in his refusal to give them the permission that he has no right to require, but he isn't even willing to give them a hearing when they go to discuss this important subject: it is deplorable.

**550. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].**<sup>110</sup>

*Advice to the Fathers of the seminary. Attachment to his servant.*

[N.-D. du Laus,] October 17, 1835.

. . . I would like to see the Fathers of the Marseilles seminary get down without delay to the regular life and work; their holidays have lasted long enough; in particular, no more full free days; two a year are quite sufficient.

. . . I don't, strictly speaking, need this man's services, nor anybody else's. What I can't bear is having in my hands the fate of someone devoted to me, having it in my power to make him happy or unhappy, and giving my consent to his being plunged into misfortune. Were it question of someone else altogether in the same position vis-à-

<sup>109</sup> YENVEUX, I, 61; *Missions OMI*, 1902, 65.

<sup>110</sup> YENVEUX, II, 19; V, 158.

vis myself, I would say the same thing, for I would experience the same scruples. God made me that way; and I say that God made me that way with good reason, for if you went back over my whole life, you'd find I don't know how many times when I had precisely the same feelings I'm experiencing now. When nine years old I almost choked in my grief just at getting the news of the death of my nurse's daughter, for the sole reason that this sorrow would sadden my nurse. You must note that the persons concerned were not there with me; I was at Turin and they were at Aix. I repeat, should this man's happiness be assured, I give way without any problem.

**551. [To Father Casimir Aubert, at N.-D. du Laus].<sup>111</sup>**

*The workings of grace in Father Aubert's soul. The Founder's pursuits at Marseilles.*

[Marseilles,] November 10, 1835.

My dear Child, I dislike having to resort to the pen to express the ineffable feelings of my heart. Happily your gentle soul understands mine without need of speech, and I too miss nothing of what issues from yours. My love attracts and unites your heart to me, independently of distance that can separate us only physically.

When I hear what you say about the workings of grace in yourself, I am filled with an almost tangible joy; that is how God in his goodness deals with his children when they display goodwill! The profound impressions that your soul thus receives are not given merely for your progress in these days of fervour when the dew of heaven falls in a tangible way for your consolation and encouragement, but also for times of trial and darkness, should the Lord condemn you to them, as he sometimes does even those he loves much. Then the memory of intimate communications of grace is a sustaining force: one lives, so to speak, on these provisions.

. . . I have come back to this tiresome whirligig that is so much opposed to my liking and diverts me time and again from pursuits that are closer to my heart. Scarcely had I come out of the retreat that I had the consolation of making at the major seminary with my dear oblates, than I was compelled to receive and make some unavoidable calls.

<sup>111</sup> YENVEUX, IV, 46; V, 30; IX, 34.

**552. [To Father Casimir Aubert, at N.-D. du Laus].<sup>112</sup>**

*The Founder's pursuits.*

[Marseilles,] December 16, 1835.

My dear Child, for heaven's sake, don't ever reproach me for my letters' delay and for being behind with my correspondence; it can't be avoided. My life is a continuous purgatory, I don't have time to breathe.<sup>113</sup> I recently wrote a letter to l'Osier after six attempts and that was on my desk for a fortnight.

**553. [To Father Rossi].<sup>114</sup>**

*The Superior General cannot agree to dispense Father Rossi from his vows. Reproaches. He must go to N.-D. du Laus.*

[Marseilles,] December 30, 1835.

My dear Father Rossi, it is really deplorable to see the extent to which you nurse your dreadful self-deception. Do you think you can mock God as you mock men? Surely you can see that in your heart you have apostasized and that the pitiful reasons you allege are but miserable pretexts quite powerless to mask the crime of your defection.

You took your perpetual vows, you took an oath in the presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ to persevere until death in the Congregation which was entering into an engagement with you under this formidable guarantee.

<sup>112</sup> REY, I. 671-672.

<sup>113</sup> Bishop F. de Mazenod was ill in November. Bishop Eugene de Mazenod had "to do the pastoral visitations in the principal towns of the cantons within the diocese, three, ordinations, a host of ceremonies, not to mention attendance at Council meetings and involvement in the ordinary administration of religious affairs." (REY, I. 672). The Bishop of Icosia was also getting ready to leave for Paris to take the oath. A letter from Paris had informed him that the Council of State was at last giving its approval to the proposed ordinance which would declare that the brief nominating him to the Bishopric of Icosia had been received officially in the Kingdom.

<sup>114</sup> YENVEUX, VIII. 250-251. According to a previous letter, Father Rossi was probably at his parents' home. His birthplace was Demonte in the diocese of Cuneo in Italy.

If by some misfortune overriding reasons were to intervene after your profession for you to ask for a dispensation and it was judged that there was no other way, the application would perforce be accompanied by a spirit of profound grief, regret — surely it would be so. And is that what your conduct suggests? Not at all.

And could you really think that my conscience would be as feeble as your own and that I'd make the decision that since through your most serious fault you are a useless member of our Congregation, I'd give my consent illicitly and therefore invalidly to the breaking of bonds that had been undertaken for all time? It is entirely up to you to employ within the Congregation of your adoption the measure of talents you received. All the worse for it if it acquired in you but a worthless member; that doesn't justify it in getting rid of you; it was for it to evaluate you during the novitiate, as it was your affair, in that period of trial, to weigh up the advantages it was offering you. You weren't a child; you knew what you were doing. On your head be it if in the secret of your heart you were pondering sacrilege. As to the Congregation, it is liable for all the consequences of its engagement; it considers itself under an obligation to retain you as you are, the reasons you allege being worthless in its eyes.

Your conduct and the feelings you display might well make you unworthy of it, on account of their being contrary to the strict duties of your vocation, but that would then be the ground for an expulsion process which would leave with you the full responsibility for the dreadful consequences that would ensue for yourself, since the burden would be on you to win judgment in your favour by the resumption of your duties. It is really pitiful to see you so to speak groping in your darkness and clutching at any imaginary straw . . . . In the last analysis, the reasons you allege<sup>115</sup> cannot be admitted on account of their utter frivolity, and since the Congregation has too much respect for the sacred ties and awesome oath that binds its members to dispense them without grave and weighty reasons, you are and will remain a member of the Congregation, and as such are bound to the obedience you have vowed; in consequence I am ordering you to go as soon as possible to

<sup>115</sup> First he had said his parents could not manage without his help; now he was afraid of cholera and claimed not to know enough French to preach in that language (YENVEUX, VIII, 251).

our house of N.-D. du Laus;<sup>116</sup> and should it enter into your head to approach the Holy See directly, in the hope of obtaining the dispensation that I am obliged in conscience to refuse you, I am ordering you in virtue of holy obedience to attach an exact copy of this letter to the request that you may have the unhappy idea of making, as it is essential for the Sacred Congregation to be fully informed before it makes its judgment.

You understand, my dear Father Rossi, that nothing less than an obligation of conscience could stop me from opening wide the door to a man who is showing how little worthy he is of a family that accepted and received him into its bosom when he was in trouble and had so to speak no place to lay his head; but, once again, one does not play games with God: *Deus non irridetur*.<sup>117</sup> I pray that you will at last come to a full understanding of the extent of your duties and enter without delay on their fulfilment. May God bless you.

† Charles Joseph Eugene, Bishop of Icosia.

<sup>116</sup> It seems that Father Rossi went to Laus and that it is from there that he definitely left the Congregation in 1836.

<sup>117</sup> Gal. 6,7.

1836

554. To Mr. Champsaur, goldsmith, for Mr. Aubert, priest, at Gap.  
Upper Alps.<sup>1</sup>

*Advice on the formation of novices and some young fathers. He mustn't neglect the sciences. Work on the Rules. Brother Calmettes. Practical norms on the admission of novices.*

L.J.C. and M.I.

Marseilles, January 3, 1836.

My dear Son, the letter I've just received from you came as a great consolation. I was carried away in spirit to your shrine and thus I understood the full meaning of the inspiration that God's Spirit bestowed on you on this occasion.<sup>2</sup> It was right that you should be the one to offer to the Lord the men you had taken such pains to prepare for him. Praise the Lord<sup>3</sup> for the confidence that their good dispositions give you. I'm happy to share it, and it's my earnest desire that the man who is aspiring to the same happiness as his two brothers<sup>4</sup> should give us the same guarantees and cause for joy. The details you go into concerning your interior life could not but be most pleasing to me. I have sincerely thanked God for the happiness he is giving you, and I can only applaud the resolution you have taken. But since the aptitude you received for the sciences is a gift from God, I judge it important

<sup>1</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post., L. M-Aubert Casimir.

<sup>2</sup> The Founder is alluding to the final vows of Brothers Lucien-Antoine Lagier and Antoine Calmettes on December 27, 1835.

<sup>3</sup> Ms.: bénit ("blesses").

<sup>4</sup> There were at that time in the Congregation two Lagier brothers and two Aubert brothers, but no Lagier or Aubert took the habit at that time. The Founder doubtless intends to refer to the first of the novices who was due to make his oblation. They were at that time small in number: Honoré Pélissier who entered the novitiate on January 24, 1835 but did not make his oblation and Charles Bellon, who entered on August 14, 1835, and made his oblation on August 15, 1836.

that you don't neglect them. Assign them a subordinate role, yes; shun and leave them in disuse, no. I urge you not to be selfish in savouring all alone God's communications. Be generous with your riches, share them with others. Draw them, impel them if need be by the power given you by the light and grace you have received.<sup>5</sup> I'm not asking this just for your handful of novices but for all those around you, especially those I've placed expressly under your direction. I knew you would be faithful and I was counting without hesitation on an overflowing abundance in which I wanted certain of our men to share. That's why I directed young Father Reinaud<sup>6</sup> amongst others towards Laus as I couldn't bear to see him vegetating, with the sap he could furnish if the plant were given some care. I didn't conceal my intention from him, I wrote to him again yesterday to this effect. I don't think he is neglecting to open up to you. In any case don't be afraid to break the ice; that would be precisely what I want. Keep me continuously informed of the steps he takes and of your approaches. He would be very culpable if he were to derive no profit from the grace of the imposition of our hands and the paternal solicitude that induced me to send him to you in our Mother's sacred sanctuary on the morrow of his ordination. I say nothing about the other man.<sup>7</sup> You can help him with gentleness, but you must be firm with them all. Go on with your work on our Rules. It's never been a cause of concern to me what ideas you might have on that subject. Only men of superficial intelligence or proud men like some who have gone through could fail to understand their spirit and thrust. It would be good for you to say at large what you wrote to me about that, the professed as well as the novices could profit from it, to the shame of the former.

January 7.

I've seen Father Pons in the interval since writing the above. According to what he told me, Brother Calmette[s] should come here early in February. So you could have him leave on the 1st of that month which is Monday, he would inform himself straightaway about the school programme, and he could at the same time take advantage

<sup>5</sup> Ms.: a small error of spelling here.

<sup>6</sup> Reinaud or Reynaud Jean-André-Valentin.

<sup>7</sup> Perhaps he means Father Joseph Rossi or Marcellin Grogard (letter dated April 21, 1836, to Father Aubert).



of the coaching session that is timed to begin then. I owe you a reply on several points from your last-but-one letter. 1.- The local council of the house where the novitiate is situated is not called to pass on the admission of candidates to the novitiate. 2.- The candidates for admission to the novitiate do not have to be presented to that council. But it is fitting to present them to the local superior who will normally be given advance notice on his part by the Superior General about a new candidate in the house of which he is superior. The master of novices will follow on each occasion in this respect the directions given him by the Superior General. 3.- As long as our sphere is circumscribed as it is, I should certainly receive advance warning of requests for admission before the master of novices gives his answer, the latter must put me in a position to make a judgment on the suitability of that admission. 4.- My authorization to the master of novices is likewise needed each time for the admission of a probationer to the novitiate, and consequently the master of novices must give me a report on the probationer's conduct together with his judgment on the candidate he is presenting.

I am bringing my letter to a close, my dear son, so as not to miss the post again, the day has flown and someone is waiting for me, but I have sat down, on my return from the confirmation of a sick person, just to write you this last page which I bring to an end now with my warmest greetings, you know my affection for you, and I give you and all your community my blessing.

† Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop of Icosia.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The page has been cut below the signature, where a few lines had been added.

555. [To Brother Pierre Aubert].<sup>9</sup>

*He must thank God for his cure and resume living the religious life along with his brothers.*

[Marseilles,] January 13, 1836.

My dear Son, I would have preferred anything rather than that you should be the author of a letter like that I received from you today. It betrays a weakness and an imperfection of which I had thought you incapable. In all truth, after the signal grace of your cure, I wasn't expecting you to show so little generosity. Not only should you not have asked me for what you are so insistently soliciting, even after the reply you knew I had given to your brother, but the very idea shouldn't have entered your head, so contrary is it to the spirit of your state and all that is fitting. Restrain your imagination and put a break on your fancies.<sup>10</sup> The Lord who has deigned to hear your brothers' prayers and cured you will surely complete his work, if you don't make yourself unworthy of it by your infidelities. What you should be doing is to begin repairing the breaks that are always made in the practice of piety by a long illness in the course of which a person is much preoccupied with the things of the body, and for that purpose the sight and example of your brothers will be a bigger help than anything else. They have been wonderful in their constant care, charity and patience. They have done their duty, you must do yours. As for me, I'm very unhappy to see that notwithstanding my every care and all the means I have employed to form good religious, a person is ignorant of the basic concepts of the spirit of that state after several years of profession. I

<sup>9</sup> YENVEUX, VI, 131. Yenveux does not say to whom the letter was addressed. The Lagier and Aubert brothers were the only members of the Congregation so related at that time. The Lagiers had taken their vows on August 15 and December 27, 1835 and were not sick. It follows that it is Pierre Aubert who is referred to. There is no positive written evidence of Brother Pierre having a long illness, but the fact that he ended his novitiate in November 1831 and was not ordained deacon until June 26, 1836, suggests that he was ill. He was definitely at N.-D. du Laus in the summer of 1835 and again shortly before the date of this letter since he had already received a reply from the Founder through his brother, the master of novices at N.-D. du Laus. However, the end of the first paragraph of the letter suggests that Brother Pierre might have gone back to Aix or even to Marseilles, since otherwise the Founder could have spoken with him instead of writing.

<sup>10</sup> He had no doubt asked to spend some time with his family.

say no more. I prefer to write and spare you the unpleasant experience of a talk with me on this subject that would perhaps bring a blush to your cheek.

You ask me for my blessing and I do not refuse it, but it is with the intention of winning for you from God such an acceptance of the refusal that I am obliged to give you that you will forget that you even thought of asking me for something so out of place in every respect.

*P.S.* There is one paragraph of your letter that hurt me even though you give expression there to some quite proper sentiments. How could you imagine that I would think you capable of so heinous an idea, any more than I would think you wanted to fly, blaspheme or . . .

**556. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>11</sup>**

*Arrival at Paris of the Bishop of Icosia who will take the oath in a personal capacity. Visit to the Minister of Worship and the King.*

[Paris,] January 20,<sup>12</sup> 1836.

It is the literal truth, since the date of that letter it has been impossible for me to take my pen in my hand. Father Guibert, who has been just as busy as myself, has equally had no time for writing, for the incident that intervened<sup>13</sup> gave us a lot of trouble because of the negotiations it entailed and the mediators who had to be brought in. It all ended with the resolution I took to overlook the difficulty in so far as it might have unpleasant repercussions for me, once I obtained the assurance that this would not reflect on the others. I don't know whether the Minister and the King will appreciate the degree of delicacy and generosity contained in that decision, but I did not conceal from the former

<sup>11</sup> REY, I, 676-677; RAMBERT, I, 722-724.

<sup>12</sup> Rambert writes: January 20. The letter's opening indicates it was begun on the 20th, but the text copied by Rey and Rambert was written on the 23rd, the date given by Rey.

<sup>13</sup> Bishop E. de Mazenod left for Paris on January 11 with Father Guibert. They stayed at the seminary of the Foreign Missions. On their arrival, Archbishop de Quélen of Paris and Bishop de Forbin-Janson of Nancy came to congratulate the Bishop of Icosia and were surprised to learn that he had not been named coadjutor at Marseilles: in this case he should not take the oath. He sought advice and, to surmount the difficulty, decided to take the oath not as Bishop of Icosia but as a private person, thus giving the lie to his accusers and affording a guarantee to the Government (RAMBERT, I, 722).

that I made the decision so as not to compromise him vis-à-vis the Council of State and even the Council of Ministers with whom I know he had been dealing in a very positive manner, for it is good that you should know that both the Council of State and that of the Ministers has put great difficulties in the way of what the King wanted out of fear of making a mistake by favouring a man as dangerous in their eyes as myself. Mr. Portalis, Mr. de Latour-Maubourg, and Father Guibert took part in this mediation, acting in my name before I appeared myself.

It all went off with a lot of thoughtfulness and nobility. The King was accurately informed both about the question that had been raised and about the discussion's progress, and finally about the decision that I thought it necessary to take. I saw the Keeper of the Seals<sup>14</sup> the next day. I had previously been with Mr. Schmit. The reception I got was as precious as can be, it gave the impression even of putting the blame for the orders that had been made against me on unfortunate circumstances and the shock of passion. The Minister informed me how much the King and his Government wanted the prosperity of religion, convinced that it is the basis of order, etc. He told me that the King would be very glad to see me; he was even sure that he had already set down a day for the audience, once he understood that I wanted to see him again before the day fixed to take the oath. That seemed reasonable to me. The Minister invited me not to delay in requesting that audience. On leaving him I wrote to the aide-de-camp who gave me a reply that same evening that the King would receive me on the next day, which was yesterday, at midday.

And so yesterday, the 22nd, the King who had already been so gracious as not to want to put off seeing me for a single day, sent me a new dispatch putting forward the audience by half-an-hour and he did this, as I was able to see at the Palace, so that I might be the first to go in. I took the splendid hired carriage and, accompanied by Father Guibert and my manservant, I headed towards the Tuileries where I arrived, actually, a quarter of an hour ahead of the Generals and Marshals of France who waited until I had passed through. At midday the door of the King's chambers opened and my name was called. The King came to meet me, paying me a small and very gracious compli-

<sup>14</sup> Mr. Persil, the Minister of Worship.

ment, then he had me sit down opposite him, and after I had expressed a few words of thanks to him, he told me that he was enchanted that I had gone to him, and he went on from there to recount, very ably, the story of the events that had forced him, against his will, to accept the crown so as to save France from the anarchy into which it was on the point of falling. Every time the name of Charles X came up in his narrative, it was always in the acceptable way. Every now and then I interjected some words, more to avoid seeming dumb than to interrupt. I also brought the conversation around to the terrible incident that put the King's life in grave peril: he spoke very strongly on that; he had a lot to say on his good intentions to do all he could for the advancement of religion; he hadn't always done all he would have wished, but there were grave obstacles. He wishes to increase the bishops' stipend, as he acknowledges it is inadequate.

In a word, how can I tell you everything he said to me in the course of a conversation that lasted three-quarters of an hour. I forgot that, at the outset of the audience, he asked me news of my uncle and reminded me of Palermo.

We talked a little about Marseilles, and he didn't conceal the fact that the clergy had been represented as hostile to the Government. I told him the truth about that. I finished by asking permission to pay my homage to the Queen. So he loudly summoned his Chamberlain, and in such a way that all who were awaiting an audience could hear, he commanded that the Queen too be advised of my visit, and when on taking my leave I reminded him that it was on Monday that I was to return to him to take the oath, he very graciously replied: "Yes, my Lord Bishop, it is on Monday that I will have the pleasure of seeing you again, and it is with every confidence that I will receive your oath." I went to the Queen's apartments who had me sit beside her; we spoke about my uncle, the Queen of Naples, the welcome the King had just given me, and several other matters, and I withdrew.

557. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>15</sup>

*Paris business concluded. The King's ordinance. Opinion of Parisian priests. Father Casimir Aubert must not go on missions.*

[Paris,] January 29 & 30, 1836.

Here my business is finished. So I don't expect to be here much longer. You know how bored I get at Paris doing this kind of thing: receiving and returning calls isn't how I would choose to pass my time.

The King's Ordinance was delivered to me yesterday. In all honesty, I ought to protest at its contents, for it does not content itself with saying what my letter and that of the Bishop of Marseilles said, but it expressly asserts that I acknowledged the irregularity in my acceptance of the title of Bishop of Icosia before obtaining the King's authorization. I have never acknowledged that, we did nothing but petition the King to regularize, in other words to harmonize my perfectly legitimate advancement with the laws or usages of the realm. That isn't the only thing I have to complain about. They have been as lacking in generosity as I have been noble in my initiatives and procedure. I didn't put a single condition, I wanted to speak of nothing but my own case, but no one could have failed to be aware that, like my uncle, I too wanted to be placed conveniently close to his side, at least for his lifetime, for they weren't to know my secret wish to return to private life as soon as I can conveniently do it. As for them, it has to be said, they are all delighted with me and they say it openly, no doubt they are thinking to reward all that those fine dispositions promise by reserving for me in their plans one of the leading sees as they fall vacant. I want none of their rewards, thank you very much! I haven't been able to profit from any of the advantages that the King's good-will gave me, expressed in very touching terms and a very striking likeable way, and the good opinion that the Queen and Mrs. Adelaide have formed of me too, as my delicacy and my conscience alike would refuse to let me say a word on that subject. Mr. Schmit thought he was obliged to tell me that it was nothing personal, but it had been necessary to make a general regulation to respond to so many requests. I let him see that it was distasteful for me to see the conversation turning on a subject that

<sup>15</sup> REY, I, 679-680; RAMBERT, I, 725; YENVEUX, VII, 10\*.

imposed silence on me and, in fact, while taking into account the good intention that had moved him to broach the subject, I did find it a little indelicate.

And so my business is finished, but Father Guibert's has scarcely begun. I must say I've had enough of Paris and all it contains, not excluding priests and bishops. I can't get used to the genre of these last survivors of the two orders. Nothing but endless back-biting about everybody's doings and talk. Woe betide the preachers, Mr. Combalot included! Come the evening, they are tastefully stretched on the cross, and it's a competition to see who will hit the hardest blows with the hammer to fix them to it. It's great sport, I can tell you, and doesn't cost a penny!

. . . Father Mille's idea of sending Father Aubert for a mission is inexcusably irresponsible. Father Aubert knows well enough what my mind was when I assigned him where he is not to believe himself authorized to obey any command that would separate him from the family I have confided to him and for which he answers. Help could have been given to Vif to complete the work that is being done there with every hope of success.

**558. To Mr. Courtès, priest, place des Carmélites, top of the Cours, at Aix. Bouch[es]-du-Rhône.<sup>16</sup>**

*Visits to the King. Interview with Archbishop Bernet, new archbishop of Aix, who seems well-disposed towards Father Courtès and the Bishop of Icosia*

L.J.C. and M.I.

Paris, January 31, 1836.

My dear Father Courtès, although Tempier is charged with the duty of passing on my news to those entitled, I don't want my stay here to be prolonged any further without writing to you directly myself. I

<sup>16</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post., L. M-Courtès. Father Yenveux (V. 84) cites an extract of a letter of the Founder to Father Courtès dated January 20. This is hardly likely in view of what is written in this letter. What the Founder is supposed to have written, on the theme of conformity to God's will, goes as follows: "Gratias tibi ago quod, ut validius me traheres ad te, aliquot mihi corporales acgritudines, angustias animi et adversitates immisisti; ac miserabili vicissitudine consolationum et desolationum erudiens, ne in prosperis extollar, aut in adversis deficiam."

have completed the business which dragged me to this capital city. Now I am properly and legally a French prelate. No longer need I fear expulsion from the borders of France, to return no more, at the hands of some moody minister suffering an attack of ill-temper. I have been twice to the Palace. In the first audience [the King] had me sit down beside him and kept me for a full three-quarters of an hour. He spoke to me very ably on all the topics he broached and took pains to give me reasons that I wouldn't have dreamed or dared to ask for. The Queen and Mrs. Adelaide were also very gracious to me, but the King's affection during the second audience passed imagination: for ten minutes he held my hands in his, and when I had to leave he again took my hands and told me yet again . . . .

February 5th.

You'll get some idea of what Paris is like from the time that has elapsed before I could resume this letter. I get up early, religious duties take up the first two hours of the day. When I get back to my room I find that there is already someone waiting to see me, as it is accepted in this part of the world that one has to call early if one really wants to meet people. Before midday lunch must be taken so as to go out in one's turn, for the errands to be run are unending. Here comes someone now — and that's it for today. I take up my pen again for I want to finish it as I imagine you may be vexed at not getting any news from me. I have seen His Grace the Archbishop of Aix several times and am bringing him right up to date on what is happening at Aix. I have my doubts whether he will be going to his diocese much before Easter. He is very well known here and in high favour, and I got the impression that he wants to put his diocese on a good footing. I had the chance to put in a word for Mr. Boulard, but I didn't feel able to do the same for Mr. Abel. He has a young priest with him who is his vicar general. He seems very talented. I hope to see you before the Archbishop arrives, he hasn't asked me anything about the Mission. I restricted myself to giving him my opinion of you. He told me that you had corresponded on several occasions, he seemed satisfied with the contacts he had with you. We got on very well together, at least outwardly, as I don't know what is going on inside of him. But he did say to his manservant, who passed it on to mine, that I was suited to him, that he liked my way of doing things. Goodbye, affectionate greetings to all.

† Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop.



559. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>17</sup>

*Service rendered to a priest of Marseilles. Casimir Aubert mustn't go on a mission.*

Paris, February 17, 1836.

... When the Promotor refused him a *celebret*, I took him to His Grace the Archbishop himself who did not want to take it on himself to make a decision in the case. He asked me to write to him and we haven't yet received the reply. Mr. Jonjon will find there a case to add to his own which he thought to be unique.<sup>18</sup> Here and elsewhere one does not normally stand on ceremony.

I say no more on the subject of Aubert's saintly escapade. Whatever consolation he may have reaped in that fortuitous mission, I will hold him guilty none the less of abandoning his post, delivering the house into the keeping of the youngest priest in the Society, leaving his novices without a director, etc. It's all very well for Mille to be guided by his impulses to which he subordinates every other consideration, but I didn't expect the like from someone as shrewd, as reflective as Aubert. You'll do well to let him know my way of thinking.

<sup>17</sup> YENVEUX, VII, 10\*; REY, I, 680-681. Rey (I, 680) copies some lines of a letter dated February 10 to Father Tempier where the Founder recounts his visit to Issy on the 9th. Father Rey put the first part of this text into the third person: "If he had had the time he would have loved to go all around Paris on the same omnibus, all for the price of 6 sous. Father Guibert and I had a good laugh about it — like myself he was very amused by this mode of transport.

<sup>18</sup> This priest's name has not been ascertained. Mr. Jonjon was on bad terms with the diocesan authorities who disapproved of the two priests who were his collaborators in the boarding-school he was running. The Bishop of Icosia was trying to restore peace.

**560. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>19</sup>**

*Visits of Father Jonjon to Paris. He isn't willing to give up his assistants.*

Paris, February 19, 1836.

Mr. Jonjon's visit has been a long one.<sup>20</sup> He disclosed to me his determination to win a victory or perish beneath the ruins of Menpenti. Even so he did make me a proposal of a compromise. I replied coldly that I wasn't empowered to do that, but that if I had to tell him what I thought of it myself, I believed that the Bishop of Marseilles would not listen to any proposition so long as he remained in association with his two friends. He replied that it was impossible for him to undertake to tell them such a thing. I retorted that he could easily entrust the task to a third person. — "My honour would be compromised." I reminded him of other obligations that he was regrettably relegating to second or third place. I explained what I thought clearly while at the same time making it clear that I was speaking only for myself and that he mustn't on any account base himself on it. But I told him that the chief reason that had decided the Bishop of Marseilles to deter his flock from entering the house of Menpenti wasn't, as he had calumniously asserted, to keep the pupils in his own minor seminary, since the Univeristy was constantly on our backs with its complaints about our numbers exceeding the legal limit, but because in his capacity as pastor he believed his conscience would be compromised if he did not object to the faithful whose souls were entrusted to him receiving their education in a house directed by two unworthy priests. So long as that position subsisted, the Bishop of Marseilles could not change his stance. I didn't omit to give Mr. Jonjon his share of the blame, while saying at the same time that these faults were such that they could be absolved with suitable reparation, but that his colleagues' infamy was irreparable and would always remain a factor. Mr. Jonjon went off little content with the success of his visit.

<sup>19</sup> REY, I, 681-682.

<sup>20</sup> A visit preceded by a letter in which Father Jonjon seems to have made up his mind to come to terms with the diocesan authorities and in which we can discern the conviction, fairly common at the time amongst the clergy of Marseilles, of the preponderant role of the Bishop of Icosia in diocesan affairs: "I know from my own experience, my Lord, that every failure in the administrative processes cannot be laid at your door. But you certainly have it in your power to take whatever initiative for good that you see fit and there is no one who can say you nay on the matter . . ." (REY, I, 681).

This morning he made a fresh appearance and spoke in a more assured tone. He brought with him a reply from the Sacred Penitentiary which decided that a confessor could give absolution to a young man who was present in an educational establishment, like many in France since the Revolution, where the principles professed were not reassuring, etc., provided that the child kept himself personally from error, etc. This case, submitted with some phantasy, gives him, he claims, victory in the case. It would remain to be seen however; if this decision gives jurisdiction to those who don't have it. He makes use of the letter of Mr. Chaix, the vicar general, which declares that he would not hear the confession of or absolve his pupils who did not leave the establishment. I read his document very coldly and gave it back to him saying that the Bishop would not be surprised and would know what to do. I did ask him however what would be the competent tribunal to judge the case. — "The metropolitan." I rejected that claim. — "Well, the public one, I have a memorandum all ready that I am going to have printed." Nothing disconcerted I congratulated him on this new idea; since he was speaking about religion and catholicism, this kind of appeal was new to me, as I had always thought the Church was governed by the Bishops. — "For the rest, Sir, you may do as you please, I will not myself undertake to pass on what you have said; you must write directly to his Lordship the Bishop if you judge it proper."

That's what he will do in all probability. I wanted to give you advance warning. If a reply is made, weigh your words well so that he can't take advantage of anything. Yesterday I learnt from the lips of a priest some very distressing details about Mr. Jonjon's two assistants. As if a Bishop who is obliged to forbid the reading of bad books for fear of the perversion of his flock, may not forbid his flock from going and placing itself under the direction of, and receiving the deadly formation that derives from a monster like that! The Sacred Penitentiary hasn't given a response to *that* case.

561. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>21</sup>

*Activities of Father Jonjon at Paris. Founder's visit to the new Minister of Worship. Purchase of a piano.*

[Paris,] February 26, 1836.

I haven't seen Mr. Jonjon again since his second visit. I know he has written a long letter to His Grace the Archbishop of Aix<sup>22</sup> who finds the matter tedious. He must be busy with his memorandum or working in the Ministry of Public Education to get some protectors. If I had the authority I would have gone and commended him to the Minister, but I'm not up to it. I'm sure that if you decided it wise to reply to the letter he was to write to the Bishop of Marseilles, you'll have weighed your words and expressed yourself with dignity. When one reflects on it, this affair would really infuriate one.

. . . He spoke to me very courteously and wasn't afraid to make profession of very catholic sentiments. This one<sup>23</sup> at least understands the terminology, and doesn't ask a bishop transferred to an archbishopric as the other one did: when would he be consecrated, astounded by the reply made him by the Prelate that one isn't re-consecrated when one moves from an episcopal to an archiepiscopal see. Father Guibert was with me; I presented him to the new Keeper of the Seals who gave him a private audience for Monday the 29th.

. . . You moved very fast in the purchase of a piano and making a considerable outlay; it would have been wise to make inquiries at Paris and get an instrument here from one of the better masters which would not perhaps have been dearer than that bought at Marseilles.

. . . I heard about it here at the Embassy. I'm not going to say anything today about the family. I would like M.<sup>24</sup> to moderate his tone at Ferney. He seems rather irrate with Voltaire. That's fine but he must take care not to upset certain susceptibilities.

<sup>21</sup> REY, I, 683, 684; YENVEUX, III, 23; V, 75.

<sup>22</sup> The new archbishop of Aix, Archbishop J. Bernet, was also at Paris to take the oath.

<sup>23</sup> The visit of the Founder and Father Guibert to Paris was prolonged as Broglie's government fell at the beginning of February. A new government was formed on February 22, under Mr. Thiers. Mr. Sauzet replaced Mr. Persil at the Ministry of Justice and Worship.

<sup>24</sup> The Oblates from Billens were preaching at Ferney, Voltaire's country. The priest indicated by the letter "M" is Father Martin.

562. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].<sup>25</sup>

*Paris pursuits. Consecration of their Lordships Bishops Robiou and Gousset.*

[Paris,] March 8, 1836.

As I have no news on the matter you are interested in, I can hardly pluck up the courage to tell you what is filling in our time in Paris. You know that on Sunday, March 6, the Archbishop of Paris, the Bishop of Nancy and myself consecrated the Bishops of Coutances and Périgueux, Bishops Robiou of La Tréhonnois and Bishop Gousset. After the ceremony and lunch with the Carmelites, we bishops went to assist as a body at Mr. Lacordaire's conference. His Grace the Archbishop had expressed this desire to us to make the occasion more solemn and make a protest in this way against the assertions of certain newspapers which had spoken badly of the preacher. And so at the centre of this immense assembly that filled the entire central nave of Notre-Dame and the nave facing the pulpit, there rose the seat of His Grace the Archbishop, and on his right the Archbishop of Aix, the Bishop of Coutances and the Bishop of Périgueux; at his left the Bishop of Nancy, the Bishop of Icosia and Bishop Garibaldi, representing the Pope; behind us, the entire Chapter of Notre-Dame and other ecclesiastics. Mr. Lacordaire showed himself worthy, by his eloquence and the content of his discourse, of the lofty mission he has received.

On coming out of Notre-Dame, His Lordship the Bishop of Nancy and I went to visit the Carmelites of Rue d'Enfer; after that we assisted at vespers and sermon at Saint-Jacques where the preacher was a nephew of the Father Desplaces you have at Marseilles at this moment. In the evening His Grace the Archbishop brought us together: the bishops, His Eminence the Cardinal<sup>26</sup> and several ecclesiastics, in the rooms he occupies at Sacré-Coeur, for a dinner put on by those Madames who spare nothing when it is a question of honouring their pastor. Before sitting down to table, we went up to visit the aged Bishop of Sisteron<sup>27</sup> to pay homage to his 91 years. It was a special joy to me to think that my uncle was set to imitate this example of graceful longevity.

<sup>25</sup> REY, I, 684-685.

<sup>26</sup> Cardinal de Cheverus, recently named.

<sup>27</sup> Bishop François de Bovet.

What else will I say? Well, this evening another gathering of all the Bishops and Archbishops, the Cardinal, the Ablegate,<sup>28</sup> who has arrived at last, Bishop Garibaldi, Messrs. Rauzan, Dubosc and Langlois and some other heads of Orders, etc., at the Bishop of Nancy's place, who is solemnly entertaining us all to dinner. We shall have to repeat this same ceremony on Friday at Bishop Garibaldi's place, Lent notwithstanding, which is thus being observed in a very mild way. And so I keep strictly to my small collations that I take only at midday and with the good resolution, if God preserves me, of observing this holy season a little more canonically next year. In these circumstances it would hardly be proper for me to hold forth to so many bishops, amongst whom I can say with more reason than St. Paul that I am but someone untimely born.

**563. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>29</sup>**

*Work of the Fathers at the Sacré-Coeur boarding-school. Sermon preparation.*

[Marseilles,] April 14, 1836.

My dear Courtès, I have just had a long chat with Father Magnan. Amongst the questions I put to him, some were intended to discover how they went about it at Sacré-Coeur to replace you in the disagreeable service you were providing there. It came as no surprise to learn that these Madames didn't veer from the method they usually use, even as regards yourself. What surprises me more is that Magnan was still engaged in giving an instruction every Sunday in the boarding-school. Thus the step that I thought it necessary to take has resulted only in depriving the house of the paltry stipend put up by these Madames. This state of affairs cannot continue. The Jesuits are the true and only directors of that house, I see no advantage in serving as their stand-ins.

<sup>28</sup> Bishop Sisto Riario, papal ablegate, brought the letters apostolic for Cardinal de Cheverus: cf.: Archives S. Vaticanes, Le carte Macchi, doss. 29, n. 83.

<sup>29</sup> YENVEUX, II, 58; VII, 173.

It is absolutely essential that he<sup>30</sup> prepare too some solid instructions on the great truths of religion. It is really pitiful to see missionaries who do not set about the task of preaching. If he needs time to compose, let him take it; but it is my intention that he and the others get down to work whatever it costs them. It is not a counsel that I'm giving here, but a formal command which each person must submit to as a conscientious duty.

**564. [To Father Casimir Aubert, at N.-D. du Laus].<sup>31</sup>**

*Scholastic brothers at the Major Seminary of Marseilles. Pélissier. The master of novices mustn't go on a mission. Death of Bishop Arbaud of Gap.*

[Marseilles,] April 21, 1836.

I haven't yet been able to establish full contact with our oblates, but I see them from time to time and I assure you that my judgment on them isn't as harsh as yours and especially not as harsh as Lagier's. Certainly these children aren't perfect, but they are good, full of goodwill; they listen readily to the minor strictures that they receive; they talk good sense when one enters into conversation with them. I told you that I wasn't as anxious with regard to the oblates as our good Father Lagier. I hope a little later to have the opportunity to follow them more closely. They claim that they receive little encouragement where they are. I give credence to this because of the superior's many engagements and perhaps a little due to his character that they are not perhaps in a position to appreciate.<sup>32</sup>

Pélissier has been pushed out. I don't find much consistency in the way you treated him. You no doubt allowed yourself to be influenced by Father Mille who came down against him. It wasn't for him to pass a judgment on what happened before his return, as I had expunged it from the record; can it be said that he was afforded every means to put

<sup>30</sup> The person referred to here is not necessarily Father Magnan, since we are dealing with two separate and incomplete paragraphs of the letter dated the 14th. Father Magnan was however still a young priest, ordained November 1, 1834.

<sup>31</sup> YENVEUX, VII, 7\*, 185, 219; VIII, 38, 84, 131, 194, 223.

<sup>32</sup> The Oblate scholastics were staying at the major seminary of Marseilles, where Father Tempier was superior.

right what was wrong in his relationship with the unworthy Roustan?<sup>33</sup> He was pushed almost to the limit. There are trials too strong for our fragile humanity. Whatever about that, in future don't let's wait so long to come to a decision on our novices' vocations. This man has left protesting his attachment to the Congregation and vowing that if he is ordained priest he will offer himself again to consecrate his life to it.

Praise the Lord for the good that you did while on the mission, but I repeat what I communicated to you through Father Tempier, that you are not to get involved even briefly in that ministry without my express authorization. I don't hesitate to assert that it is something unique in the chronicles of novitiates to see a master of novices giving his flock the slip to go running hither and thither after lost sinners. Father Tempier has assured me that he gave no authorization in this regard and, in actual fact, he didn't have the authority to do it. Don't think from what I am saying that I am in a huff, that I'm annoyed with you for acting in a way directly contrary to what I had laid down. You oughtn't to interpret my conscientiously-made remarks in that way, I am doing my duty, just that.

Once you have received the information you need on the postulant Armand,<sup>34</sup> you can admit him as a novice, provided of course you have formed the judgement during his probation that he has supernaturalized his outlook and isn't acting under a foreign impulse in joining our family.

It seems to me that we should take advantage of the vacancy of the see to admit those diocesans who want to come and held back solely through the iron will of the deceased prelate.<sup>35</sup> We had several vocations in the neighbourhood that were already developing; your presence, now that the artillery has been silenced, will have a determining influence. Blow a little on the sails to help the ship to port, but with simplicity and without broadcasting the fact.

What I have just said about the novitiate mustn't hinder you from sharing with me the remarks you mentioned. I'm avid to know them as soon as possible. Only too often it happens that, by delaying to speak,

<sup>33</sup> Honoré Pélissier entered the novitiate on January 23, 1835. Brother Auguste Roustan was expelled from the Congregation on October 21, 1835.

<sup>34</sup> He did not enter the novitiate.

<sup>35</sup> Bishop F.-A. Arbaud, Bishop of Gap, died March 27, 1836.



the right moment has passed when one does decide to do so. I insist too on your sending me without delay your comments on Fathers Reinaud and Marcellin<sup>36</sup> as well as the other Fathers of the house. You ought to have done it already since the letter of the 7th when you promised it. Don't be afraid of multiplying letters and making them long ones when something so important is in question.

I haven't given approval to your project of sending the brother cobbler to Marseilles. If you judge him unfit, he must be sent away; if not, keep him at the novitiate for a full year. The novices, irrespective of who they are, must live under the care of the master of novices up to their oblation. What can this man do at Marseilles? make slippers to sell to the shoe shops to make a profit for the house? I never heard anything more ridiculous. It isn't a question of knowing if one can utilize them sufficiently in the novitiate house during the year of their testing, they have to learn what it is to be a religious and a year is not too much for that, but it is vital to take pains with them, the more uncouth they are the more unremitting the care they need. If they don't shape up — then out, and that's the end of the matter.

**565. [To Father Mille, at N.-D. du Laus].<sup>37</sup>**

*Paucity of vocations.*

[Marseilles,] April 23, 1836.

My praises to the Lord would be doubled if, as well as the conversions effected, you had succeeded in attracting some candidates to the house. It pains me to be able to reply only with refusals to the requests that come to me from all our houses, it is to wither on the vine.

<sup>36</sup> Marcellin Grogard.

<sup>37</sup> YENVEUX, VIII, 131.

**566. [To Father Guigues, at N.-D. de l'Osier].<sup>38</sup>**

*The parish of N.-D. de l'Osier.*

[Marseilles,] April 27, 1836.

If the Bishop of Grenoble decides to give us the parish of l'Osier, we would have to choose someone who could perform this task in partnership with you. Father Magnan would probably be the one I would give preference to.

... For heaven's sake, no women's convents alongside your house.

**567. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>39</sup>**

*The Oblates mustn't be chaplains to women religious. Collaboration with His Grace Archbishop Bernet of Aix. Bishop Bruillard of Grenoble confers on the Congregation the rectorship of l'Osier.*

[Marseilles,] May 7, 1836.

The summing-up you have let me have is very sound. The Madames of the Sacred Heart have their rigid methods, it is of their essence to be directed by the Jesuits. They are polite, adroit, so they don't reveal exteriorly the annoyance they feel but is it very nice to be imposed on them? I find this situation little to my liking. Only a real and unlimited trust can make up for the troublesomeness of permanent contacts with any religious women.

Only satisfactory stipends could<sup>40</sup> for a period have induced us to grant a dispensation from an article of the Rule that all of us consider it important to keep and to which it isn't wise to do violence for too long.

We have learnt from Bicheron, my dear son, that His Grace the Archbishop was satisfied with the reception you gave him the day he came to your church. As to His Grace the Archbishop and his Vicar General, it is essential that you keep up that attitude of respectful but

<sup>38</sup> YENVEUX, A, 13; II, 138.

<sup>39</sup> YENVEUX, II, 33; III, 147; REY, I, 692.

<sup>40</sup> Ms. Yenveux: Yenveux has written "could have" over the words "ought to have".

intimate trust. Both the one and the other will be flattered by it and will find your views on many matters that they must have little information on as acceptable as they are useful.

His Lordship the Bishop of Grenoble has decided to confide to the Congregation the rectorship of l'Osier. He continues to be very satisfied with our Fathers and loves them dearly and holds them in high regard. He is requiring us to let him have one more man. It is impossible for us to refuse a Prelate who shows himself both by speech and in writing, as witness his ordinances and circulars, the protector and friend of our work. He has positively turned down the help offered him by the missionaries of the diocese of Belley, replying that he had his own and that they have been with him for only a year, while we have been at Aix for twenty years.

**568. To Mr. Guigue[s], superior at N.-D. de l'Osier, Isère.<sup>41</sup>**

*Congratulations on the good work done by the Fathers in the shrine and on missions. He must write frequently. Father Guigues should himself compose a little work on N.-D. de l'Osier. Reprimand for Father Vincens who has disregarded the directives of the canonical visit.*

Marseilles, May 13, 1836.

My dear Son, Dupuy catches me unprepared, he leaves tomorrow morning; I don't have the time to gather my thoughts for a moment to write you. However I would like to congratulate you on all the good you have done on your missions this year and on the way devotion at Notre-Dame de l'Osier is going through your efforts. I would like to be able to say something to each of you; not only to Father Vincens who had the happy thought of writing to me, but also to the two others who see nothing wrong it seems in letting a whole year pass by without giving me any sign of life. I would like to go into the inmost details that would profit from discussion, but I can't do it today. I will only say that I am seriously thinking of giving you another assistant at the expense of the other two houses who won't take it lying down and whose needs are as great as yours. I don't think however that you

<sup>41</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post., L. M-Guigues.

ought to give him the title of rector when the time comes to effect the transfer. You must yourself be invested with this office, the same as is done at N.-D. du Laus.

I urge you to keep things very orderly in the area of finances, and don't lay out any expenditures that I have not approved. I require this strictly from you as well as from all the other local superiors. Adapt the practice of consulting rather than interpreting. I am not that far away that I should not be called upon to interpret things myself, if need be.

All things considered, I don't like the idea of having an outsider compose the little book on N.-D. de l'Osier. It would be tantamount to admitting that there isn't anyone in the Congregation up to such a trifling task. The dedication to the Bishop would be meaningless coming from anyone else but you. So you will have to set about this matter yourself. Clearly it isn't a labour of Hercules. *The thing is to get started.* Let us have a look at it<sup>42</sup> before it is published.

I gather from the letter that Father Vincens wrote me that he is more attached to his own way of seeing things than to the recommendations I expressed with such clarity in my act of visitation as to leave him no excuse for impeding their execution. We shall perhaps owe it to him if we have one day beneath our windows, and enclosed within our property, a kind of very noisy and highly scandalous nightclub. We will owe this burden to his wise direction. It would have been still wiser had he brought the matter to my notice.

You will be glad to know that the Bishop of Ajaccio has given me the gift of the convent of Vico. So here we have a second foundation in Corsica that will give its fruit in due season.

Do everything you can to get candidates for our novitiate which is in crying need of them.

Goodbye, dear son, I hope not to let the year go by without the pleasure of visiting you. Affectionate greetings and my blessing.

† Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop of Icosia.

<sup>42</sup> It seems that the Founder first wrote "them" (referring to the book and the dedication) but changed it as in the text.

**569. To Mr. Mille, superior at N.-D. du Laus.<sup>43</sup>**

*Visit of the Secretary of the Bishop of Marseilles to N.-D. du Laus. Secondary high school at Manosque. Vocations. He must keep the Superior General up-to-date on all the community's activities.*

L.J.C. and M.I.

Marseilles, May 16, 1836.

My very dear Son, instead of my visit you are going to have one from our dear friend Cailhol who is having a little trip by way of vacation. There's no need for me to tell you to look after him. He is so much a part of my family that he should feel himself at home wherever we have a place. Tempier has with him the last letter you wrote me. So I can't go over it again to take up each point separately as I usually do. I will only say that I see big difficulties in the teaching project at Manosque.<sup>44</sup> We haven't been lucky in our forays into this kind of work. I have but slight inclination in that direction as this institution does not come within our province and would once again divert some of our already scarce manpower from the principal ministry of the Congregation.

You don't say anything anymore about all those men of good-will who were chafing at the delay imposed by the late Bishop on their wishes. Ne'er a one returns to the charge now that the way is made straight. We will see at the June ordinations if resolutions are as fickle<sup>45</sup> at Grenoble as they are at Gap.

I hope that in future you won't leave me to learn by chance of your exterior activities. I don't like it when someone makes mysteries where I should rightly be informed and strangers are better informed than I am of what is going on in our houses and of what our men are doing. I trust you will have taken steps to see that the 10,000 francs of your fixed price doesn't fall on us directly or indirectly.

<sup>43</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post., L. M-Mille.

<sup>44</sup> The priests from N.-D. du Laus had preached a mission at Manosque. They had been offered the direction of an institution of secondary education. (REY, I, 692).

<sup>45</sup> A colloquial expression used in the French.

I haven't the time to write you at greater length. I have just come out of a meeting of pastors that only went on for three hours and darkness is falling. Goodbye dear son, my greetings and blessings to the whole community.

† Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop of Icosia.

**570. To Mr. Aubert, priest, at Notre-Dame du Laus.<sup>46</sup>**

*Friendship. Regret at having to keep Father Aubert at a distance from Marseilles.*

L.J.C. and M.I.

Marseilles, May 16, 1836.

My dear Son, although it is very late, I shall not go to bed without writing you a few lines. I don't want to tell you that it seems to me that it is already too long a time since you wrote me, perhaps you would think<sup>47</sup> me too demanding. The truth is that I get a lot of pleasure from your letters, I will go as far as to say that they do me a lot of good. And at the same time isn't a man entitled rather to want to make use of what is his; now you know that you and I are one in heart and spirit, quite apart from the supernatural bonds that bind us so closely. You understand in that light that it is already a lot to be deprived of your presence and make the sacrifice of your pleasant company for the Congregation's sake; so you mustn't deprive me for too long of the sole compensation that my tenderness demands. And so I expect at the latest when Cailhol comes back a small or even a long letter from you. Don't wait until the last moment to write to me, and, if it has to be that way, rather than stay up late, just write a few lines.

I had in mind to tell you something else too, but I must hand my letter to our traveller who is leaving tomorrow at 4.30, before I get up. With my most affectionate greetings.

† C.J.E. Bishop.

<sup>46</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Postulation, L. M-Aubert Cas.

<sup>47</sup> Ms.: "you will find".

**571. [To Father Mille, at N.-D. du Laus],<sup>48</sup>**

*Uniform system of accounting and administration. The local council must be regularly convoked and the Superior General kept informed of its deliberations and decisions. Twice as much effort at regularity when the pilgrimage season is on.*

[Marseilles,] May 18, 1836.

. . . I would like to establish in our houses a uniform system of accounting and administration which would put the Superior General in a position, as he should be, to know all that happens in each house, its moral and financial condition, just as if he were personally present. Nothing more would be needed for that than to observe the Rule. It would be necessary to insist that everyone persevere in the competencies of the charge entrusted to them, that councils be held punctually, that the superiors faithfully send me the minutes of these council meetings, with the details of what each assessor said and of the discussion, that accounts be always kept in order, that there be a serious discussion on them and that twice a year they be sent to the Superior General.

The embarrassing difficulties you have encountered in the building of the steeple of N.-D. du Laus lead me to seek a clear distinction and separation of the interests involved.

In Council meetings the superior must make it possible for the assessors to check everything, while listening to their observations and benefiting from them, for they have a real say in the Council and, in accordance with the Constitutions, everything that concerns a house, in any way whatsoever, must be dealt with in the Council. The superior must not merely consult, but he must take the advice of the assessors into consideration, especially when it is backed up by good reasons. I would like my remarks to be heeded, as explanatory norms, when the need arises, not only for the house of Laus, but for all the others, and for all time.

Now the feast of Pentecost is upon us, appeal to the whole community, in my name, to take twice as much care to see that the crowds of visitors don't give rise to a kind of exterior dissipation which

<sup>48</sup> YENVEUX, IV, 48; VII, 200, 244.

wouldn't be edifying in men from whom one expects behaviour that is not only full of zeal but truly modest, grave and recollected as well. Please, insist a lot on this subject. Let it be demonstrated that, when a religious has to devote himself to external ministry, the habitual regularity that he should have acquired in the bosom of the community is a source of abundant graces and help, so that he isn't found wanting and doesn't disappoint the faithful's expectations: more is required of him than of others in the wholly supernatural action of his demanding work.

**572. [To Father Casimir Aubert, at N.-D. du Laus].<sup>49</sup>**

*The superior must always consult his council. He mustn't leave the novices to themselves when the crowds of pilgrims start coming.*

[Marseilles,] May 18, 1836.

. . . I presume that he will let the community know my mind as no doubt he will share with you and Father Gignoux my observations concerning the local administration of our houses. I have noticed that there is a lack of sufficient regularity in the handling of money, in particular that the intent of the Rule is not followed in the various meetings or councils that ought to be held in each house at fixed intervals. I don't know if it's the fault of superiors or of assessors but it is certainly true that these councils, which certainly ought to deal with everything that touches the moral no less than the material aspects of each community, leave no trace of their having been held behind them, since nothing is done in them which is worth the bother of communicating to the Superior General who is left in total ignorance of what was transacted. I would like things to be put on a regular basis everywhere and make a serious appeal on this point as on all others, for the observance of the Rules: it is not my intention to give anybody a dispensation.

It's a queer thing; I am always amazed to see that as soon as one of our men is named superior in a particular community, he sets himself up as the sole master, he arranges everything, orders everything as he sees fit, without making the least effort to ask my advice or

<sup>49</sup> YENVEUX, VII, 6\*, 198, 200-201.



to consult the men the Rule appoints as his councillors. In this way our local superiors assert their independence far more than the Superior General who never acts without hearing the men around him. They don't do this deliberately, rather they are letting themselves be influenced, imitating the fashion, I would nearly say, followed in other places, and that is how abuses set in. It's about time to correct all this, and since this won't come about of itself, as it ought, I am going to see to it myself.

There is no shortage of priests at Laus. So I urge you not to leave the novices to themselves when the crowds of pilgrims start coming. I know your zeal and understand what in particular drives you to exercise it in the circumstances. That is why I am taking the precaution of reminding you that your little family has more need than ever at such times for watchfulness and looking after.

**573. [To Father Mille, at N.-D. du Laus].<sup>50</sup>**

*Religious must obey and humbly accept their superior's observations. Father Mille should inspire respect and confidence in his men by his attitude.*

[Marseilles,] May 21, 1836.

A virtuous religious must understand that all are bound to accept humbly their superior's observations and even their criticisms. It's odd that it should be necessary to take so many precautions for fear of going against your men's likes and ideas and, if I may say so, their frequently bizarre ideas. Their pride has to be handled with kid gloves so as not to distress or discourage them. What kind of virtue is that, in all truth? A little more humility, a sounder idea of the indifference that is so much recommended, finding contentment in all things and a real happiness under the gentle yoke of obedience, these are the sure means to arrive at the practice of the rudiments of religious life; they should be inculcated in the novitiate and never laid aside.

Make an effort to win respect and trust; for this you must keep a close watch on yourself, for you don't do enough to overcome the handicap of your youth by seriousness and self-assurance in your rela-

<sup>50</sup> YENVEUX, III, 64; VII, 1.

tionships with the men you are living with and whose superior you are in actual fact. It calls for application like everything else, that does not come naturally. You wouldn't believe how much a man demeans himself by certain familiarities, by a kind of joking that may provoke laughter but always to the detriment of one's esteem, especially when one is superior of one's peers.

#### 574. To Father Courtès, at Aix.<sup>51</sup>

*Father Tempier is going to Aix to study the project for the purchase of the Couteron house and to see what attitude the Fathers should adopt vis-à-vis certain less well-disposed members of the diocesan administration.*

L.J.C. and M.I.

Marseilles, May 23, 1836.

My dear Son, I'm sending Tempier to Aix not so much to terminate after some discussion the matter of the Couteron house, as to get together with you concerning the sinister rumours which have reached even my ears through Father Martin. This good father, who has no inkling of our longstanding disquietude, speaks indignantly to me of that malice that he attributes to the same clique that has already stirred up other problems, but I am myself far from being at ease and you know why. Talk this over with Tempier and he will report to me your thinking on the matter. I was expecting you to write about it, it quite escapes me to understand why you have not done so. You understand that I must be concerned. I'm not speaking of your last audience. It aroused all my feelings of honesty, justice, delicacy; even so I have just written to Father Martin to do nothing except under your guidance and not to talk openly except to you and Magnan on whom I have urged the same thing. A.<sup>52</sup> is too imprudent, too much of a gossip, too lacking in judgment to risk<sup>53</sup> in his presence the least murmur, the least complaint.

I think it is a favourable moment to buy that house that overlooks our courtyard, but I wouldn't want to take on that life annuity that Tavernier mentions. It's all very well to have the lady's dowry of 7.200

<sup>51</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post., L. M-Courtès.

<sup>52</sup> Father André (Daniel-Valentin) or rather Father Antoine-André Pélissier.

<sup>53</sup> Ms.: an unusual spelling in the French.

fr. on deposit, but I would like to pay up and be free of the outstanding 2,800 fr. Talk all this over with Tempier to whom I am going to give a blank delegation for him to fill in with your name if he cannot conclude the matter in the course of tomorrow.

Tempier will bring you up to date on what is happening in Corsica and all the family's affairs. I haven't time to say more, but I give you my cordial greetings and bless you with all my heart.

† Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop of Icosia.

**575. [To Father Mille, at N.-D. du Laus].<sup>54</sup>**

*He must see that the measures taken in the Act of Visitation are observed. He must not accept pilgrims in the kitchen. Firmness with Father Rossi.*

[Marseilles,] May 26, 1836.

With regard to your question, I frankly confess that I don't like to nullify by letter the very wise stipulations of a Visitation. If some modification should be judged necessary, it will be laid down in a subsequent Act of Visitation; there you have my policy. The reasons that led me to take the measure that you are objecting to are very grave; they are what I felt when I was present on the spot, and the objections you put forward are nothing but a repetition of what was said then and turned down.

I completely rule out our house becoming a kind of restaurant and our bursar becoming the supplier for all the pilgrims who flock to Laus. Quite apart from the rapid destruction of all that belongs to the house, you can imagine the commotion in the kitchen, often to the detriment of the community! If you want to set up a separate kitchen, employ a servant to look after these rooms and furnish them with what is needed for the pilgrims, I raise no objection, provided the house's purse doesn't suffer in consequence.

I hope you weren't weak in your interview with Father R[ossi]. You must indignantly brand the very idea of apostasy. It is such a serious crime that the only way is to rise up forcefully against the least

<sup>54</sup> YENVEUX, III, 12; VII, 100, 102; VIII, 265.

suspicion of such a detestable prevarication. I am so convinced of this principle that it fills me with the resolve to use every means to win respect for vows and oaths that have been taken and that are ratified a hundred-fold by the presence of Jesus Christ, the guarantor of these sacred and truly solemn promises, more awesome to my eyes precisely for that reason than the vows the Church calls solemn, made as they are in most religious orders in the privacy of a chapter house. Once you have rejected, censured, forcibly and even imperiously condemned what cannot be tolerated for a single moment of one's life, I don't object to your showing some interest in the position of this person's relatives.

**576. To Mr. Courtès, priest, place des Carmélites, top of the Cours, at Aix. Bouch[es]-du-Rhône.<sup>55</sup>**

*Patience and humility called for to bear with the difficulties caused by ecclesiastical authority at Aix.*

L.J.C. and M.I.

Marseilles, June 8, 1836.

My dear Son, I was watching each post for one of your letters so as to write to you. I feel that in the position you find yourself, the least I can do is to offer you some consolation and encouragement if not by my presence at least by my words. Who would have said that after twenty-five years of hard work and devotion we would be reduced to the status of suppliants waiting on the grant of a favour or rather, asking just to be allowed to go on living? This violent situation cannot last for ever, but it means we must adopt the late Mr. Emery's <sup>56</sup> maxim: prepare for a long haul if you don't want to go under, everyone has to move on eventually. This maxim that my former teacher constantly acted on is wise: somewhat opposed as it is to my temperament, I do urge you to adopt it, or rather, I congratulate you on following it. Providence wishes our growth to take place in the midst of tribulations. Hardly do we begin to draw breath on one side than we are fired on from the other side. Let us bide our time: you know quite well what we had to put up with for several years in the diocese of

<sup>55</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post., L. M-Courtès.

<sup>56</sup> Ms.: Emeri.

Gap. The Bishop,<sup>57</sup> while protesting all the while his esteem for each of the members of the Congregation which had done and was still doing so much good in his diocese, used every means to discredit and ruin it. He acknowledged the superior's merit<sup>58</sup> and wrote me letter after letter for his recall, because, he said, he was too brilliant for his mountains, and because he enjoyed the esteem of all, which made him all the more of a threat. At a loss how to make them lose their patience, he reduced their faculties in that shrine where the affluence of pilgrims and the reasons that brought many of their number to the feet of the Holy Virgin cried out for unlimited faculties. The Prelate cloaked the harm he was doing us so badly that he let slip the remark<sup>59</sup> one day that he would have several interesting pages devoted to him in our history. Anyway, through patience things had already begun to change before his death. Keep me constantly up to date on the smallest details. It is a waste of time to send me Pélissier, tell Father Martin from me to follow your line and to help you bear the very heavy burden that Providence has imposed on you. Don't be anxious. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Contradictions must come. I am confident that they are heralds of some good news. But once again, call your little community together and ask them from me to redouble their prayers, to overcome evil by good, to rejoice to be humiliated a little, to renounce all arrogance, I don't mean of a personal kind, as I'm sure that such a thing can't be found amongst you, but as a group, choosing humility rather than glory when God wants to have us go that road. Make no mistake, any other course would be pure illusion.

Goodbye, my very dear son, my blessing is on you and your men if you but follow my counsel which is certainly from God in what I am bidding you do.

<sup>57</sup> Bishop Arbaud.

<sup>58</sup> Father Guibert.

<sup>59</sup> Ms.: an unusual spelling in the French.

**577. To Mr. Champsaur, goldsmith, place St. Etienne, for Mr. Aubert, priest, at Gap. Upper Alps.<sup>60</sup>**

*The Bishop of Icosia's many engagements. Father Aubert should look after his health; his love and fidelity are a consolation to the Superior General in face of the ingratitude of some Oblates. He should take an interest in the young Fathers.*

Marseilles, June 13, 1836.

My dear Son, it seems that the good Brother Bellon didn't tell you what he saw all the same with his own eyes, that it was physically impossible for me to have a moment to myself during his short stay at Marseilles. On top of everything I have had to entertain an Armenian prelate who came with the recommendation of the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda. I distinctly asked that good child to give you a full explanation so you wouldn't be surprised at getting nothing from me on this occasion. It was my mistake not to tell you myself, even were it only in a couple of lines.

Despite the care you take to assure me that you didn't go further than prudence would allow in your ministry at the church when the crowds came, I can read between the lines as to what actually happened, but I find it difficult to believe that you kept your promise to yourself and went to bed a little sooner<sup>61</sup> to make up for the time taken from sleep. I can see you doing it once and making up for a spoilt night's rest with a half-hour's nap. That isn't how I do arithmetic.

My dear son, you are spoiling me by the moving and affectionate tone of your letters. There really isn't any great merit in giving one's tender love to a child like you. I forestalled you, no more than that. Everything else follows naturally. Have you ever caused me a single moment's pain since I've adopted you? Isn't it rather that your soul and mine in some way mingled from the moment they met and since that first moment has there ever been the least interruption, the least cloud? Far from it. How could I not enjoy a friendship that hasn't known a moment's lapse when there have been so many ingrates to rend apart

<sup>60</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post., L. M-Cas. Aubert.

<sup>61</sup> Ms.: an unusual spelling in the French.

my paternal feelings and who still today after being loaded with so many favours give me small respite? Their hearts indeed are not like yours. And am I to be dead to that? It is already a lot that I forgive them and bend myself to accept men as the sin of Adam has made them, but if my affections turn with all the more tenderness and sweetness to your beautiful soul, if my heart rests on yours that so closely mirrors it, what's surprising in that, how could it be any other way? I never intended to talk to you like this. But I'm not sorry that it has come out if it is only to repay you for your filial love and to bestow pleasure a soul like yours so richly deserves.

I'm pleased that you have a word of praise for Father Reinaud's budding talent. Although he's one of those I spoke about above, I am happy at his successes in the hope that they will prove to be of benefit to the Congregation to which he owes his existence. I'm sorry for him in so far as he has allowed suspicions [to hang]<sup>62</sup> over him that are to his discredit [both in my eyes] and in those of many others besides. At any rate it was [wrong of him not] to do anything at all to allay the fears that his questionable attitude could give rise to. He didn't [even blush,] and what efforts has he made to put an end to speculations that [could] rankle and that threaten his honour as much as [ours]. We shall see what will be the result of his visit home which I have given him permission for *ob duritia[m] cordis*, though I did put limits on this concession, placing the responsibility on the loc[al] superior. Isn't it over-trusting to send him off on his own? Try to bring your influence to bear on Gignoux to get him into the way of a sensible measure of regularity, the way to go about it is to set up some chats with him in which without any affectation you talk about what real perfection consists in. Don't neglect this kind of fraternal and trusting sharing with the others as well, it always has good results and ends up forming a family spirit even amongst those who were not drawn to it at the outset. I understand that it can be more agreeable to stay in one's cell, but that kind of apostolate is more advantageous and more in line with my ideas. Goodbye, very dear son, with my love and blessing.

† Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop of Icosia.

<sup>62</sup> A part of the page has been torn off and lost. The bracketed words are a conjectural reconstruction.

578. To Mr. Guigues, superior at N.-D. de l'Osier, near Vinay. Isère.<sup>63</sup>

*Canonical visit to N.-D. du Laus; imminent departure for l'Osier with Fathers Tempier, Mille and Guibert.*

L.J.C. and M.I.

Marseilles, July 6, 1836.

My dear Son, notwithstanding the dreadful, suffocating heat, this is the only time I have free to make my visit to N.-D. du Laus and N.-D. de l'Osier. I have put off all the rural confirmations in the diocese until September, the pastors not being willing usually to present the children sooner<sup>64</sup> than that. Besides, I dread the thought of certain dinner engagements at this season. So I can't . . .

From Notre-Dame du Laus, July 15.

I arrived at Notre-Dame three days ago accompanied by Father Tempier. I have begun my visitation and it won't take long to complete; I shall not stay long in this house, as I would like to be back at M[arseilles] for the Assumption, as the pontifical liturgy is now too much for my uncle. I would really like to spend at least some ten days with you. So arrange things in such a wise that the community will all be there at the time of my stay at l'Osier. I am not going to fix the day of my departure until I get your reply. It couldn't be until after Sunday the 24th. Now I have to know when His Lordship the Bishop of Grenoble will be passing by your house so that I don't get there at the same time. That would make things too difficult for him and it would distract<sup>65</sup> me too from the business that brings me to l'Osier. Even so, I would not want to enter the diocese without seeing its Bishop, so be so kind as to let me have his itinerary. I propose returning again by Grenoble. So if I don't find him in his episcopal city on my outward journey, I will see him on my way back. Dupuy must surely be back in his parish by now. The journey from Lyon can't have taken this long. However, if he is away, write and tell him to be there at the house so we can all be there together. We shall be quite a crowd as Father Mille is keen to pay you a visit, and perhaps Father Guibert will be in the

<sup>63</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post., L. M-Guigues.

<sup>64</sup> Ms. an unusual spelling in the French.

<sup>65</sup> Ms. an unusual spelling in the French.



group. It's not definite, don't take it as certain. As far as Tempier is concerned it is definite. If you have any special directions to give me concerning the carriage or the road I should take, put them in your reply. If we have to leave the main road before Vinay, you'll have to tell me where. I would as soon avoid an exchange of courtesies with the parish priest of Vinay. On the other hand I would like to get to l'Osier as quickly as possible in the carriage, even if it is a country wagon, as the midday heat at this time of year is not very pleasant.

I have a letter from Father G[uiber]t telling me he is leaving for l'Osier, he is in a bit of a hurry to get there, for I had a letter sent him from Gap on the very day of my arrival suggesting he follow the same route as myself, it would have been an opportunity to pass a little time together at Laus and we would have made the journey to you together. There's always got to be some mix-up in this world to cause us annoyance in even the smallest things.

I will be all the more eager to join you at the time I indicated, namely Monday the 25th. So don't waste a single day in sending me your reply.

I am going to receive into the novitiate a priest<sup>66</sup> who has already received his formation and who will I hope persevere and be a useful acquisition. What about the men in your part of the world who were displaying a certain interest?

Affectionate greetings and my blessing to all the community.

† Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop of Icosia.

<sup>66</sup> Cyriaque Chauvet, born at Carpentras in 1804, entered the novitiate on July 15, 1836.

579. [To Father Mille, at N.-D. du Laus].<sup>67</sup>

*Reflections on the communities of Laus and l'Osier after the canonical visitation of these houses. Youthful superiors have introduced abuses, such as "ridiculous profusion" at meals and pleasure trips. Certain Oblates' lack of generosity.*

[Marseilles,] August 23-25, 1836.

. . . The comparison between our own practice and the abuses permitted to enter our houses by our young superiors and encouraged by their own example only fills me with distress. Acting in accordance with their ideas, local superiors have just about managed to re-fashion the Congregation. I no longer recognize my spirit in the houses I have just visited, and indeed how could it be found when no one bothers any longer to consult me?

Haven't I told you often enough, you young superiors, that necessity forced me to place you at the head of our communities long before you were fit to exercise authority, that your major defect has been to follow your own ideas, instead of taking your lead from what has been the practice prior to your arrival. If you had taken pains to follow in our footsteps, you would not have brought in all the abuses that I am having such trouble in rooting out.<sup>68</sup>

In our time we were satisfied with the more than sufficient ordinary fare laid down by the Rule, and it never entered our heads to measure the worth of visitors by the number of courses being served up. It never occurred to us that anyone would object to being treated as we treat ourselves. Since then our houses have become *table d'hôte* hotels! No one scruples to spend large sums of money, without any permission, for dishes that are superfluous. No one bothers about the scandal caused by a ridiculous profusion. There is such a reluctance to get straight on this point and to get back to our regular usages, that every year during my visits I have the distasteful task of keeping watch

<sup>67</sup> YENVEUX, VI, 49, 80; VII, 161, 162; VIII, 72; REY, I, 696.

<sup>68</sup> These two paragraphs (VII, 161 dated August 23rd and 162 dated August 25th) are copied by Yenveux himself and summarize it seems in a different way the Founder's text written on the 23rd or the 25th or perhaps, as often is the case, begun on the 23rd and finished on the 25th.

lest anyone exceed the Rule which people always have some excuse for evading. You are going to say that my letter is harsh, and it is. The truth is I'm tired of making these ineffective remonstrances.

We used to do as much work as you can do, but it never entered our heads that we needed a vacation. Our relaxation consisted in a change of work, in moving from the exhausting work of giving missions to working unremittingly as zealous ministers in the neighbourhood of our residence, systematic instructions, study, and so on. You find it necessary to make tourist trips, excursions, etc. The superior leads the way, the rest follow. A man hasn't made use of what he is entitled to if he hasn't procured this innocent recreation. This practice dates only from you. I never permitted myself anything of the kind. It's twenty years since I visited Laus; how many times have I been to Switzerland as I passed by Grenoble? It took a special reason, at 55 years of age, to get me, when I happened to be a few leagues away, to make the climb up to the Grande Chartreuse. What's the point of these trips to admire the beauties of nature? And all these excuses for pleasure seeking of which men who are already but little given to inner recollection stand in no need? I don't want any more of these abuses. From now on let no one absent himself from our houses without my special permission; and I'm warning you now in advance that I'm going to say no to all these pastimes that have come in behind my back. In line with this I thoroughly disapprove of Father Aubert's indiscreet pilgrimage to the Grande Chartreuse. For the future let there be no more trips outside what your ministry requires. That is already more than enough; it is all that we had in our time.<sup>69</sup>

. . . But I'm easily upset when I'm faced with men who render themselves unavailable for various positions of trust that I would like to give them, whether because of a lack of virtue or because they don't give a sufficient assurance of wisdom in their conduct. At the present

<sup>69</sup> YENVEUX, (VI, 80) and REY (I, 696) reproduce a text dated August 25 that is practically identical with this one (YENVEUX, VI, 80: 23 August): "People can criticize that I do not do all this sight-seeing and tourism that you have introduced and that were unknown among us. We certainly put in as much work as you are capable of. We had no other relaxation than a change of work, passing from the hard work of the missions to the constant preoccupations of zealous ministry. I therefore quite explicitly forbid for the future any journey by any member whosoever without my express permission, a permission that you will ask for in vain for a trip, pilgrimage or outing that is not required for the purposes of our ministry, because I would refuse it."

moment you have two men who could give satisfaction in the most pressing of needs, but what are they like when it comes to regularity, are they living according to the spirit of their holy state of life? Are they detached, available for any task? I sent them to Laus as being an easier way to get them up to the level that every member of the Congregation should achieve. Where are my hopes now? Is it such a difficult thing to be equal to one's duties? I am saddened in spite of myself when I consider how small some men's generosity is.

Goodbye, my dear Father Mille, my blessing on you and all the community.<sup>70</sup>

**580. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>71</sup>**

*Father Martin's sickness. He may take a rest in an Oblate house, not with his family.*

[Marseilles,] August 24, 1836.

Father Martin wrote for permission to take a little rest, he suggested going for treatments at his father's. I had no intention of yielding to a suggestion that it should not enter anyone's head to make, and I was going to reply as did Blessed Liguori in like circumstances that by God's grace the Congregation has sufficient houses in various climates to be able, without going outside our own premises, to find the repose that one is looking for. Now you tell me he is in bed, I'll wait until his strength has picked up and then I'll suggest that he comes and spends some time in one of our houses in Marseilles in conditions of complete rest and where I can have the pleasure of many conversations with him. A change of air is all he needs to put him back on his feet after a sickness like the one he is suffering from.

<sup>70</sup> This paragraph (YENVEUX, VIII, 72) bears the date July 23, when the Founder was still at Laus. The text belongs rather to the letter dated August 23-25 in which precisely the Superior General makes some reflections on his visit, brought to a conclusion at Laus on July 24 and at l'Osier on August 15.

<sup>71</sup> YENVEUX, VI, 133.

**581. To Mr. Guigue[s], superior at Notre-Dame de l'Osier, near Vinay, Isère.<sup>72</sup>**

*N.-D. du Laus will once again cease to be the novitiate. Despatch of a sacristan brother for l'Osier. Take out a subscription for the newspaper "l'Ami de la Religion". No unnecessary trips.*

L.J.C. and M.I.

Marseilles, August 25, 1836.

My dear Son, I was waiting for a letter from you to write in my turn. Although very busy, I will even so do it today since, just having sent to Notre-Dame du Laus for Father Aubert to come down to Aix<sup>73</sup> without delay together with his charges, it would be opportune for you to inform the former pastor of Chantes<sup>74</sup> without delay that he can take the road for Aix at the beginning of September. I think it will be useful, not to say indispensable, for you to have a sacristan brother. The man<sup>75</sup> I'm going to send you hasn't quite finished his novitiate, but I don't think it opportune to have him come to Aix just for two months. He will complete his time with you, it being understood that you will look after him carefully. I am giving Father Vincens the special charge of being his novice master; he will make his first oblation at the end of the annual retreat at All Saints.

I'm not going into particulars today as it's quite impossible. I'm just snatching the opportunity to tell you that in my opinion the newspaper *l'Ami de la Religion* is everything a religious community could desire, so terminate your subscription to the one you have started to take in your house without consulting me and take out a subscription to *l'Ami de la Religion*. I'm sure Mr. Picot will give you a 5 franc discount if you explain that it's for a missionary community that has no spare cash and is approaching him on my advice.

<sup>72</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post., L. M-Guigues.

<sup>73</sup> The novitiate was transferred first to Aix, then in October to Calvaire, Marseilles, which had been partly empty since the scholastics went to live in the major seminary. After Father Pons' death, Father Aubert had to take his place teaching in the major seminary, while still remaining master of novices.

<sup>74</sup> No doubt Jacques Cuynat, priest of the diocese of Grenoble, born 1797, who entered the novitiate on October 31, 1836.

<sup>75</sup> Probably Brother J.-A.-Hippolythe Blanc who had begun his novitiate on October 31, 1835.

I authorize your trip to Vif in view of the useful purpose you foresee, but there are to be no other trips without my being informed, except when they are called for by your ministry.

There are people clamouring for my attention, it's impossible to continue. Affectionate greetings.

† Ch. Jos. Eug., Bp.

**582. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>76</sup>**

*Father Mouchel replaces Father Martin at Aix. Everyone must have seven hours sleep.*

[Marseilles,] September 8, 1836.

I don't want to let Father Mouchel go off without a brief word for your ear. In the first place I commend this Father to you, he is I think a dutiful man. He enjoys here the confidence of many men who go to him for confession; he also confesses a large number of women; in this way, although he is no preacher, he made himself very useful in this poor house of Calvaire where there is so much to do and so few men able to function.

. . . [The obligation of seven hours of sleep is imposed to remedy] the extravagant piety of certain men who want to serve God as they see fit in defiance of all reason, common sense, justice and enlightened religion. What can a man do, there's no cure for crackpots. I urge you to order Father Aubert on my behalf never to take less than seven hours sleep. This young priest needs a lot of sleep, he isn't willing to admit it but it is obviously so. I noticed it a long time ago and others too have made the same observation. I don't permit any excuses. I positively insist that he submit to this ruling.

<sup>76</sup> YENVEUX. II, 149; IV, 219; IX, 173.

583. [To Father Mille, at N.-D. du Laus].<sup>77</sup>

*It is impossible to send a priest to replace Father Aubert. Departure of Father Pachiaudi. Father Pon's imminent death.*

[Marseilles,] September 15, 1836.

Do not add, I beseech you all, to the difficulties of my position and my soul's bitter distress, the painful experience of your complaints coming in all at the same time and from every direction. Is it my fault that there aren't more of you and if amongst our small numbers there are so few men of ability? I would give my life to make your number grow, knowing the good works that you could achieve, that offer themselves in every quarter but which will remain undone for lack of workers. And now another blow, what can I do in the face of Providence's severe decrees, what can I do even when faced with the cowardly folly and insensitivity of men? Let us speak no more of Pachiaudi<sup>78</sup> who has so unworthily betrayed the Society and trodden underfoot so many duties. Even so his desertion does leave a gap that I cannot fill; but still more crushing, tearing at my soul and striking at my very existence, is the desperate condition in which our wonderful and irreplaceable Pons<sup>79</sup> finds himself. For four days he has been betwixt life and death, and short of a miracle he cannot survive. The nature of his illness moreover keeps me in a state of continual anxiety for all these good young brothers who are nursing him with prodigal and heroic charity. He has no less than the most virulent form of typhus, and all those who are nursing him, which includes the whole community, feel in varying degrees the effects of the influence of this sickness that is carrying our dear and precious brother to the grave. And so, my dear friend, you understand how incapable I am, in the midst of the desolation this fearful misfortune throws me into, to endure the least discussion especially with regard to matters whose necessity is obvious, whatever complaints you make. And so I am just

<sup>77</sup> YENVEUX, V, 90; IX, 184; REY, I, 693; RAMBERT, I, 728.

<sup>78</sup> Father Pachiaudi entered the monastery at La Grande Chartreuse where he later held important positions.

<sup>79</sup> Father A.-M. Pons, professor at the major seminary of Marseilles, died on September 16, at the age of 28.

going to say in as many words that I had no choice but to summon Aubert to Aix; it followed of necessity that the two or three novices under his direction came along too. Heavens! I must even broach the subject of mission with you; there are two absolutely vital ones, the one at Carpentras, the other at Fontvieille in the diocese of Aix. I will probably need you for one of these missions, so that of the diocese of Gap will have to be suspended. The mission of Carpentras is asked for Advent; the one at Fontvieille for December or January. Hold yourself in readiness. It doesn't disturb me at all to defer any of the missions in the Upper Alps; it is these two latter ones that are really important.

**584. To Mr. Courtès, superior of the missionaries, place des Carmélites, top of the Cours, at Aix.<sup>80</sup>**

*Grave illness of Father Pons. Dearth of members. Father Reinaud to go to Ajaccio.*

L.J.C. and M.I.

Marseilles, September 16, 1836.

With our dear Pons in the desperate condition that he is, it is impossible for me to speak of any other topic, for I want it to be from my own lips that you come to know of our misfortune. Yesterday evening a feeble glimmer of reason gave birth to a flicker of hope only to be snatched away in the wretched night that followed. So we have to resign ourselves to the loss of one of our best men and it will be a long time before we find a replacement. It is God's will, that is everything; but it goes to the heart and the gap will make itself felt.

This dreadful misfortune, which seems to me to be imminent, on top of Pachiaudi's escapade, puts all my plans at sea. I need patience, all the more as requests for help pour in from all sides; I will end up not answering their letters any more if they persist in ignoring the situation Providence has placed us in. All the same I am giving you advance warning that Father Reinaud is assigned to go and teach dogma in our seminary at Ajaccio. He will leave together with our Father Guibert who is going to set off next week at the latest. I will tell you the exact

<sup>80</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post., L. M-Courtès.



day after seeing Guibert, against whose arrival I am keeping my letter open. In any case I shall write and tell you in the coming days. It wouldn't be opportune for Reinaud to come to Marseilles before I summon him. I will in any case give him time to see his family as he passes and to tell me how I should employ the sum of money I promised him for his family.

Goodbye, affectionate greetings to you and my blessing on the whole community, please pray for our dear sick colleague so *benemerite*<sup>81</sup> of the Congregation which he served so well and with such devotion.

† Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop of Icosia.

**585. To Mr. Champsaur, goldsmith, for Mr. Mille, at Gap. Upper Alps.**<sup>82</sup>

*Death of Father Pons. His virtues. Submission to God's will. Suffrages.*

L.J.C. and M.I.

Marseilles, September 17, 1836.

The Lord has just taken away our excellent Father Alexandre Marie Pons, at 28 years of age, in the 8th year since his call. He died as one predestined, yesterday at 8.00 p.m., assisted by all his brothers, who had nursed him with heroic charity throughout his illness, fearless of its malign and contagious nature. My presence and words were so much of a comfort to our poor sick confrère that I made it my personal duty to console him until the end came. Although for four hours he could no longer speak, he remained conscious and fervently followed every edifying suggestion made. Following our custom his confessor, Father Tempier, frequently repeated the act of absolution which he received with joy. I think he had received an interior light warning him that his end was near, for since the holidays he has devoted himself

<sup>81</sup> The Founder expresses himself here with an Italianism.

<sup>82</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post., L. M-Mille.

to every practice of perfection, living out such an exact regularity that the whole community was edified. His conversation was only of God, and he did all things for him.

It is thus that the Lord is pleased to form his elect in our midst, he shapes them, brings them to perfection and when they are ripe for heaven, he takes them from us although we are counting on them to help us in carrying the heavy load he has imposed on us. His will be done. I bless him for the good that he pledges to my children and I pray that he will hearken to the petitions they certainly make in heaven both for me and for us all and for the Congregation that has given birth to them, fed them and formed them for his glory.

You know the rights the Rule accords our dear departed, pay your debt from the day you receive my letter, which I bring to an end at this point so as not to miss the post. Receive my blessing.

† Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop of Icosia.

**586. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>83</sup>**

*Father Courtès should stop being confessor to the Madames of the Sacred Heart.*

[Marseilles,] September 18, 1836.

... The Jesuit Fathers could more suitably offer this service. Everyone knows that they are naturally the directors of these Ladies. Whoever may be their ordinary confessors, they are always the true and only directors, basically they are over the boarding establishments as well as the communities. It does not suit us to be their stand-ins. Your office makes it even more unsuitable in your case than might be the case for someone else. It's fine for Figuières to play this role, ridiculous in the case of a man who is a canon. You are too highly placed to go on being the simple chaplain of a boarding establishment of the Madames of the Sacred Heart, in other words a bestower of absolution, for it is in the interest of these Ladies to reduce the chaplain to just that.

<sup>83</sup> YENVEUX, V, 225.

587. [To Father Casimir Aubert, Master of Novices at Aix].<sup>84</sup>

*Grief at Father Pon's death. Too few vocations.*

L.J.C. and M.I.

Marseilles, September 20, 1836.

My dear Son, I was telling Father Courtès that your letter and his did me a lot of good, because in times of deep grief one needs the heart of someone one loves to lean on. God's decrees are inscrutable. They bring to nought each and every scheme that a most pure zeal for the glory of his holy name could devise. God opens up a vast field before us, he summons us to harvest it because it is ripe, we hasten to obey his voice. He proceeds to take the scythe<sup>85</sup> from our hands, blessed be his holy name.

22nd

My visits to administer the sacrament of confirmation in various districts left me free to receive your letter of today. I am replying by return as time is short for Brother Pont.<sup>86</sup> I am asking Father Courtès for his advice, as soon as I have it I shall call the council together to consider his admission. What you tell me about him is more than enough to convince me. He has got my vote. I don't see any big problem in your deferring his oblation, especially if he needs further studies in philosophy. There would certainly be some advantage in his spending a few days with his brothers before the school year begins, but if you have stronger reasons for a postponement, I readily agree. As to the idea of coming here for the oblation, we will have time to think about it, perhaps from now on God will take pity on us. He *is* now sending us a priest.<sup>87</sup> If it goes well for him he could bring in another one. The pastor of Chantes will surely be arriving soon. Probably the Bishop of Digne won't refuse Fabre de Jouque the permission which I requested

<sup>84</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post., L. M-Aubert Cas.

<sup>85</sup> Ms.; an unusual spelling here in French.

<sup>86</sup> Jérôme Pont, who made his oblation on November 1, 1836.

<sup>87</sup> Probably an allusion to Father C.-Antoine Chauvet, born at Carpentras in 1804, who entered the novitiate on July 15. The pastor of Chantes was Jacques Cuynat, who entered the novitiate on October 31.

from him. Perhaps others are on the way. The one you mention, Mr. Allard, should get on with it and make up his mind without so much fuss. And what is stopping that cowardly fellow Calandre from dropping his resistance to God's call? You know that there were some spare men at Gap, as Mr. Arnaud told me that the Bishop of Digne had helped them by taking one of their new ordinands. If Calandre were to make his departure without fuss, a replacement would be found for him, but no, you'll see, he will become an assistant at Gap! A fine vocation.<sup>88</sup>

**588. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>89</sup>**

*Father Courtès will preach the annual retreat at the major seminary of Marseilles.*

[Marseilles,] September 22, 1836.

Now that you are rid of your convent, I want to use you for works more commensurate with our vocation. I know you are tireless when it is a question of preaching God's word and that you acquit yourself worthily in that great ministry. That is why I am asking you to preach the retreat at the start of the year at our seminary, some priests will be joining in too, for example the ones who staffed the parishes during the pastoral retreat. I had named our good Father Pons for this mission. No one is better qualified than yourself to take his place. I am giving you advance warning so that you can get your material ready. You know that this retreat takes place at Marseilles in the week leading up to All Saints'. It is an opportunity for the clergy to find out the services you are capable of rendering to the Church and that there isn't any need to have recourse to outside talent to remind it of its duties.

<sup>88</sup> The second page of this letter is lost.

<sup>89</sup> YENVEUX, I. 56.

589. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>90</sup>

*Submission to Providence. Being short-handed, each priest must do more.*

[Marseilles,] September 25, 1836.

Pachiaudi's departure reduces Calvaire to complete silence and even so the prayers must be conducted every evening and four sermons preached every Sunday, namely, to the men in the morning, the women before Vespers, after Vespers the sermon from the church pulpit, in the evening the Italian sermon.<sup>91</sup>

As for myself, I humbly confess I am helpless in the face of the decrees of Providence. I had everything arranged, counting on the two men who have been snatched away from me; I must perforce fall back on our remaining resources to meet various sacred commitments, conformable moreover as they are to our vocation. I don't conceal from myself the fact that many things are suffering in consequence; but I repeat, I'm not the master of events. Our duty to all is to do our best, each in his own sphere, with the means that remain to us. These trials should not be beyond our courage. Small wonder when a boat bowls along with the wind behind it! The sailors can relax. But when the wind is contrary and the seas are rough, that is the moment for them to jump to so as to make a happy landfall. So let's show patience and be of good courage; don't let's allow ourselves to be beaten. How many times have we had the calm after the storm! So let there be no weakness but put a good face on things; men may pass, let us wait on God's good time.

<sup>90</sup> YENVEUX, II, 149; VII, 175; REY, I, 693; RAMBERT, I, 730.

<sup>91</sup> This extract is copied undated in Yenveux (II, 149). Father Pachiaudi left the Congregation on August 25. We link this extract and that of September 25 since they treat of Pachiaudi's departure and the death of Father Pons.

590. [To Father Casimir Aubert, master of novices, at Aix].<sup>92</sup>

*Father Aubert reproached for complaining about being moved to Aix. One should obey with a good heart especially when circumstances are difficult. The novitiate will be moved to Marseilles.*

[Marseilles,] September 26, 1836.

My dear Son, without beating about the bush I am going to tell you quite frankly that I strongly deplore the repugnance you showed for the place I assigned you and the people living there. I was far from edified to see that you felt no shame at confiding this to others. Also, your remarks about it not being opportune to have the novitiate at Aix impressed me very little. In this light your comments seemed to me to originate in stubborn prejudice, like the arguments good lawyers have no trouble in finding to defend even bad cases.

The sudden death of Father Pons, whose absence will always be felt, and the blameworthy departure of Father Pachiaudi, place me in the necessity of calling you to the major seminary at Marseilles. In consequence the novitiate will follow you to Marseilles. It is not through mere flightiness that I am changing the project in this way; but who can cope with completely unforeseeable events? Who can offer resistance to the very power of God? The ways of Providence are a deep mystery to me. Our part is to submit ourselves to whatever they bring that is hard or painful, without ever being disconcerted, even when they pitch us into situations of great difficulty. When we cannot proceed under full sail, then we must resort to tacking and make progress with sails trimmed, even down to the smallest sail that is raised on the mast-head and called the topgallant sail. All I ask in these painful and perplexing circumstances is that the pilot be in charge during the storm, that the crew obey in silence and that I be spared complaints that are out of place in a crisis when each one must carry out his task as best as he may in the post assigned to him.

<sup>92</sup> YENVEUX, III, 74; V, 84; REY, I, 694.

**591. To Mr. Courtès, superior of the Mission. Place des Carmélites, top of the Cours, at Aix.<sup>93</sup>**

*Father Courtès can come and follow the sermons of the pastoral retreat. Obediences. Inquiries to be made of Mrs. de Régusse.*

L.J.C. and M.I.

Marseilles, October 1, 1836.

Dear Son, I'm losing no time in giving you an answer so that you will be in time to carry out your plan if you still want to come and attend the conferences at our retreat. The man giving it, Mr. Bouet, has the reputation of being capable in this ministry, I can only pass on what I hear, but both in Dauphiné and here His Lordship the Bishop of Angoulême praised<sup>94</sup> him highly to me. I don't think it will be a pretentious affair. I won't conceal the fact that your plan delighted me as I would be very keen for you to give some retreats of this sort yourself one day. So it's fine that you want to find out how they are done, but I do really hope that eventually you'll handle your material in your own way and as you know how. So come, don't tie yourself down to the retreat exercises, just be satisfied with attending the conferences and meditations. Come from Calvaire with Honorat and Lagier who will be sleeping in that house because of lack of space at the seminary which is really packed, they have even made the classrooms into dormitories.

I am very open to granting the permission you are nudging André to ask me for. If you were afraid that a certain timidity or embarrassment would deter him from taking this step, you could write to him that you have asked me for it in his name and that I readily granted it. I leave it to your judgment.

Badly stuck as we are, I haven't been able to make other arrangements than those I've indicated to you. It came to the point of my having to take a decision willy nilly after Tempier, Guibert and I had worn ourselves out for three days trying to find a workable solution. They accepted my plan on the spot as really it was the only option

<sup>93</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post., L. M-Courtès.

<sup>94</sup> Ms.: has the plural instead of the singular form here.

available. You didn't notice that I am giving Martin the title of first assessor only. Perhaps this won't go down too well, but it was my belief that it was better that he should replace the local superior only temporarily, this will give me a chance to see how he copes.

I asked you to find out what the customary offering is at Aix for retreat directors, don't forget this please. Also I would like you to ask Mrs. Régusse if Mrs. de Castellane has any apartments to rent at Nice. We have here Mr. and Mrs. de Bourbon-Bussé, they are thinking of going in a few days time to that part of the world, I would be very happy if they could find a place to stay with people I know, for they are very pious. In any case ask Mrs. Régusse to give me a letter of introduction for her daughter for me to pass on to that splendid family.

Goodbye, my office is always crowded, I am writing this letter one piece at a time, which doesn't stop me finishing up with my affectionate greetings.

† Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop of Icosia.

The Couteron business is no concern of mother's. It's up to us to pay the expenses if there are any, but I would have liked Tavernier to tell us what we owe. I don't think the costs of our adversary's lawyer can be charged to us, it can only be a question of court costs.

**592. [To Father Guigues, at N.-D. de l'Osier].<sup>95</sup>**

*He must learn to regulate his commitments according to the number of missionaries available.*

[Marseilles,] October 2, 1836.

I'm only too aware of the picture you paint for me of your situation but I can only repeat that God knows it better than we do and we must abide by his will.

Make your plans in function of the means available, don't extend yourself beyond your capacity and don't lose your peace of mind; that's where wisdom lies.

<sup>95</sup> YENVEUX, VII, 188.



593. To Mr. Champsaur, goldsmith, place St.-Etienne, for Mr. Mille, at Gap. Upper Alps.<sup>96</sup>

*Preachers at forthcoming missions.*

L.J.C. and M.I.

Marseilles, October 9, 1836.

My dear Son, we are emerging from the pastoral retreat which was followed in a remarkably edifying fashion. My first preoccupation is to write and remind you that it will be necessary this year to suspend the missions in the Upper Alps because, as we can't give them everywhere, we must give the preference for various reasons known to myself to other regions.

Amongst other calls it is essential to go to Carpentras in Advent, and to Fontvieille, in the Aix Diocese, in January.

Now here is my plan for the personnel, I am giving you advance notice so that if you have any observations to make I shall get them in time.

I would like to send Father Courtès to Carpentras, he is quite keen to try out his prowess, you would go with him and since I have to consider the possibility that he will not be able to do everything his courage inspires him to attempt, I will add Father Gignoux to the group, even though the parish priest is only asking for two missionaries. Hermitte and Marcellin<sup>97</sup> would look after Laus during this mission. That of Fontvieille would be done by Honorat and yourself, but since Honorat cannot depend on his stomach, a third man would be necessary, namely Hermitte.

During that mission Gignoux would go back to look after Laus and Marcellin would go to l'Osier to lend a hand to the Fathers there who are no longer counting on getting any help this year.

<sup>96</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post., L. M-Mille.

<sup>97</sup> Marcellin Grognaud.

Father Courtès would have been very anxious for us not to refuse the Castellanne mission that the pastor has just asked for. He would be up to volunteering, but how can we fit it in? The good pastor is asking for five or six missionaries.

Another thing, haven't you promised something to Mane? In any case, you can understand that it is quite indispensable for you to go to Carpentras and Fontvieille. Should you have made a commitment for Mane, these two missions must even so receive preference.

Give me an immediate answer to all this and tell me too what Father Martin was trying to tell me when he spoke of the effervescent and exalted state enjoyed by all the members of your community.

I have willingly admitted the trappist you recommended.<sup>98</sup> He is delighted with everything we do in our houses and never tires of saying that our fervour far exceeds that at the Chartreuse where all that glitters is not gold. I had a glimpse of that myself.

Goodbye, I'm really busy and I can't see a thing now, affectionate greetings and my blessing to all.

† Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop of Icosia.

**594. [To Father Telmon, at the Major Seminary, Ajaccio].<sup>99</sup>**

*Father Telmon reproached for criticizing the Congregation and lack of respect towards Father Tempier.*

[Marseilles,] October 14, 1836.

What was your intention, my dear fellow, in addressing to me this collection of impertinences that you are writing to Father Tempier? It seems that you intended to crown the work by associating me with the insult; that must be the way of it since, for fear lest I might misunderstand your intention, you end your letter by advising Father Tempier

<sup>98</sup> There were three novitiate entrants at Marseilles on October 31, 1836: Father Jacques Cuynat, Auguste Bouveyron and Pierre Rouvière, a native of Cazillac (Montpellier diocese), the only one who persevered. It has not been possible to ascertain if one of them had been a Carthusian.

<sup>99</sup> YENVEUX, III, 104-107.

to show it to me. Well, would to God I were the only one to be insulted both in your thoughts and in your letter! My paternal heart would understand how to pardon you and it would suffice for me to pray over you the Lord so that an awesome word of the Holy Spirit, guaranteed by the Church to its pontiffs, might never be pronounced over you; but since perforce you require me to be the witness of the abuses you permit yourself against one who is an elder in the priesthood, against your superior in the hierarchical order of our Congregation, to whom you owe on other scores too both respect and gratitude, it is my duty to administer to you a rebuke and reprimand you in terms that are, alas, only too well-merited.

I leave on one side the lack of respect and the vulgarity that is no more seemly coming from the pen of a priest than from anyone else. But how can I excuse the evident malice and desire to wound that flows from each expression of this unhappy letter. Independently of the fact that there is something uncalled for in the rôle you arrogate to yourself, how could you fail to feel the absurdity of the rôle that you are playing at your age, and endowed with so few virtues, constitute yourself as teacher, distributing blame, from this elevated position where your pride has placed you above everyone and everything, according to your own way of seeing things? Come now, who made you your brother's judge, especially of those to whom you owe deference on account of your respective positions in the Congregation, by what right do you make yourself the interpreter of our Rules? Doesn't it contain, like every Society, a power to act at its discretion and a superior to whom alone it pertains to judge what actions, permissions or dispensations are opportune for the Church's service and the greatest good of the Congregation? Imagine the disorder that would ensue were everyone to thus arrogate to themselves — following their caprices, moods, prejudices and, to speak plainly, their self-interest — the right to raise up their voices in criticism and abuse as they wish! Show me one well-ordered Society where such a reversal of rôles would be tolerated. Show me the superior crazy enough to put up with it. In consequence, my dear son, I cannot find words to express adequately my condemnation of the way you have acted in this matter. Again, if a genuine, even if misplaced, zeal were discernible at back of this errant behaviour, it would be possible to pardon the intention, but no, there is no sign of that here. You want to inflict wounds, you are like a ravening beast, you pass rash judgments on your brothers, it seems as if you delight in blackening your mother's name. None of our enemies ever showed us such scant respect. Great heavens, your black mood blinds

you both to the virtues of the former and to the excellent qualities of the latter. You are completely in the wrong, even Pachiaudi whom you praise without any sympathy for the Congregation that is losing in him a man well-able to fulfil the ministries that the Church has confided to her, — even Pachiaudi as he leaves is paying her a written homage that she deserves in the eyes of all balanced, religious-minded people with the grace to appreciate her nature and worth. He is careful too not to say that he is going in search of something better, he knows quite well that there's nothing better than what Jesus Christ and the Apostles did, nothing better than what we have ourselves vowed on oath to do. But he lays stress on certain motives influenced by his personal weaknesses as a reason for withdrawing into solitude. I hope with all my heart that he finds there peace and happiness; there exist there, as everywhere where there are people, plenty of troubles and very big ones too, at all events we shall perhaps be making an exchange, for the Trappist General has just sent me one of his protégés for me to receive amongst us. He recommends him as an excellent religious, both virtuous and talented, but a person whom the solitude could drive mad, as has happened on a number of occasions; as for the rest, calm down, no-one wants to brand Pachiaudi as an apostate, which many of the others do deserve; we think he is mistaken, that his sick imagination, whose weakness he has himself many times acknowledged, has taken advantage of him and carried him outside his vocation, but we do sympathize with this psychological weakness and don't withhold from him our esteem and love, and you are at fault in this regard as in several of the other assertions you make for the gratuitous and unjust calumny of your brothers and fathers. It is true that by way of making amends you are deeply troubled by all these élite souls who have betrayed their vows and oaths, whether in deserting the Society, or in forcing us to expel them for their bad conduct. To listen to you one would think we lavish every sort of praise on them when they are with us . . . . I cannot find words to express just how deplorable this whole letter of yours is and how blameworthy you are for having written it.

Ah! if one of your superiors set about telling you off for your very real faults in this way, what wouldn't you have to say about the matter! What a screech you would let out! I have some experience, and he would have the right and duty to reprove you, even so he would be at fault for the method used, if indeed you could find a single one who would so far forget himself as to speak so harshly to you! As there cannot be a double standard, we would earn God's condemnation, but let us rather be hard on ourselves, implacable in tracking down and

correcting our own defects, let us bear with the imperfection of others and take special care to avoid judging them when they have been placed in our care. Let us devote ourselves to prayer and humility, and may the charity of Jesus Christ inspire us, without it we run the risk of becoming mere pharisees, well able to see the speck of dust in our brothers' eyes but unable to see the beam which afflicts our own.

Goodbye, dear son, your unhappy letter has affected me so much that I can't speak to you of anything else. And I would have found a lot of consolation in conversing with you about the wonders the Lord is working in that land he has entrusted to our zeal, but affliction must needs prevail; my cup of troubles is never full, praise the Lord. I give you my blessing.

**595. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].<sup>100</sup>**

*Loss of three members in the course of the year. Father Courtès' difficulties with the Fathers of his community. Father Pélissier's laziness, the virtues of Father Magnan and André. Memorandum for the Archbishop of Aix.*

[Marseilles,] November 11, 1836.

. . . So who could have expected disappointments like this year's? Perhaps it would go unnoticed in a big Society, like the Jesuits for example; in 1529 they lost or dismissed a good third of the men they had admitted, but it was 200 out of 600. There still remained enough to tackle all that had to be done. While in a little family like our own the loss of three men<sup>101</sup> in a few months constitutes an irreparable breach.

The zero character of the one you speak about is beyond compare, Father Pélissier's preaching for thirteen minutes on a subject like purgatory, it leaves one speechless. Again, his laziness in other services is outrageous, as he can see with his own eyes the urgency of the need. I have decided therefore to have him go back up to Laus. He hasn't come up to my expectations; he hasn't taken advantage of his stay in

<sup>100</sup> YENVEUX, II, 58; VII, 141, 153; VIII, 312; REY, I, 698.

<sup>101</sup> Fathers J.-A. Sicard (left in October 1836), Pons (deceased), and Pachiaudi (entered the Carthusians).

the city to make something out of himself; he will take up again the direction of the devout at Gap in the shrine where his emptiness will be less evident. The worse problem is finding a replacement for him. It's not easy. You have already got rid of a number of men in such a way as to close the door on recalling them to you. Even so one of their number could have been useful at Aix as at Marseilles where he is doing a lot of work, both in the prisons and at Calvaire. Couldn't it be that you are too easily discouraged and don't apply yourself sufficiently to the formation of the men who need it or whose talent is small? Certainly had I been in your place I would have been more exigent in the case of Pélissier whose laziness and lack of zeal I would never have let pass by. It pains me to hear what you tell me about Father Magnan after the praises he'd earned from you. You tell me he has lost the ability that he was beginning to acquire for the work of the locality. The conclusion must be that this work is not practical, for of all the Society's members Magnan is the one who submits himself with the best grace and has even reached the point of doing willingly for a religious motive and out of duty things that everyone else finds repugnant and he baulks only at the impossible. What I'm saying is that if this fine man is not up to carrying out the ministries that the house of Aix has taken on, you'll have to give up completely any further involvement in them. This judgment that you are passing on him is one of the things that grieves me the most for I was rejoicing up until then to have found someone who was able to play his part through virtue and who, when all is said and done, had enough ability to carry through with credit whatever his wholly sincere and very real zeal inspired him to undertake.

It was high time to call a halt to the deceptive show of a superficial and vacuous performance. Who could rest easy in his conscience faced with a performance like Father André's? For my part, I have always believed him incapable of doing anything well. I kept silent until your talk of miracles. We mustn't let ourselves be blinded any longer but come to the realization that the conscientious though less brilliant work of a really good man is not only worth more than all this din, but is the only really good and solid kind.

I have made up my mind, after several days worry over not being able to find any convincing solution for Aix to take a man from Laus who will leave a big gap behind him, seeing his suitability for the Alpine missions; but he is the only man who will do: it goes without saying that you must take pains to understand him, direct him, bring

out the best in him while never rushing him.<sup>102</sup> He likes the regular life, is zealous, but it must be faced that, like all missionaries, he prefers the ministry of missions to any other. So it would be good if he could be given some retreats similar to missions, in the jails, or for incurables. He is capable of moving people, for he has eloquence when he is really inspired. He has a superb voice and commands attention, but his manner isn't always proper. In short, we have here a good man with deficiencies in some areas of style.

I'm not going to bother answering your suggestion about Father Dassy. It's quite out of the question, don't even dream of it.

I was pleased with your memorandum. I do find you a little over-modest however. For the rest, it is a shame that after so many services rendered and so constant a devotion, we are obliged to excuse ourselves in this fashion.

**596. [To Father Pélissier, at Aix].<sup>103</sup>**

*Father Pélissier reproached for threatening to leave the Congregation if not given another work.*

[Marseilles,] December 16, 1836.

To me your letter is a thorough scandal and I see it as a disregard of all the proprieties and every duty. Your threats of apostasy don't frighten me at all. The crucifix you claim to consult ought to have told you that you are blinded by your pride. What did you commit yourself to when you vowed obedience? Was it just to do what you want? Your bishop would have had the power to despatch you to the most insignificant parish to spend your life with shepherds, who, deaf to your voice, would have left you to languish for weeks on end in enervating inactivity, but I do not have the right to oblige you to do a work of charity

<sup>102</sup> The reference is probably to Father Hermitte. The community at Laus consisted of Fathers Mille, Gignoux, Hermitte and Grogard.

<sup>103</sup> YENVEUX, 273. Father Yenveux writes: "to Father P." Probably it refers to Father Pélissier who was at Aix. Father Courtès was not satisfied with him and the Founder wrote in his diary on January 11, 1837 that Father Pélissier's vocation was unsteady and that he showed a disposition towards apostasy.

for poor sick folk, or even to instruct little children in the gospel, and there will be no sin your trying to force me to give you a quite different ministry! This request accompanied by a threat of apostasy is inspired by a spirit of revolt. Don't deceive yourself, the number of those guilty like yourself doesn't make your case any better nor your perjury less sacrilegious. After such a misdemeanour if I do not expel you it is out of pity for your soul, and because of the plight that infidelity has in store for those you wish to imitate. I prefer the Judases to hang themselves by their own hand.

If you accept what I am saying, do penance for your crime, for you have sinned very grievously, and I am sorry for your confessor's blindness, if he has passed a different judgment from mine. I will give you my blessing only when I have received news of your amendment.

**597. To Mr. Guigue[s], superior at Notre-Dame de l'Osier, near Vinay. Isère.<sup>104</sup>**

*Founder's illness. New foundation at N.-D. de Lumières. He should send Father Gignoux as soon as possible to N.-D. du Laus. Carpentras mission.*

L.J.C. and M.I.

Marseilles, December 16, 1836.

My dear Friend, two days have passed without my coughing blood.<sup>105</sup> But my chest is still not right and it is still a painful effort for me to speak a few words in a hoarse and husky voice, which goes to show that the irritation is still there. But I am better since I do have the strength to write to you in Father Tempier's absence who hasn't come back yet from his little trip in the Avignon diocese, where I sent him to acquire Notre-Dame de Lumières.<sup>106</sup> His Grace the Archbishop<sup>107</sup> set too much store on having a house of our Congregation for me to

<sup>104</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Postulation, L. M-Guigues.

<sup>105</sup> The Founder was ill from November 12 to the end of December; fever, coughing blood, etc.

<sup>106</sup> The church and convent of N.-D. de Lumières (diocese of Avignon) belonged to the Trappists. Father Gilles proposed their purchase to Bishop de Mazenod.

<sup>107</sup> Archbishop C. Dupont of Avignon.



refuse to take the opportunity offered by Providence, but I have warned him that it is rather a pledge of our good will than an effective service, our small numbers not permitting us for the moment to take on new commitments.

I am certainly put out that Father Gignoux hasn't made himself available; I needed him badly at N.-D. du Laus which has been left too long in the care of two men like Fathers H[ermitte] and M[arcellin Grognaud]. Not that I don't appreciate the good that can come from Father G[ignoux] by exercising our ministry with confrères who will have no intention of sparing him with their useful observations, but we are unfortunately in a position of having to do that which is the most urgent. Since Providence has permitted him to begin this new mission, I will wait in patience, but I feel bound to say that you should never in the future commit yourself like this to pass from one mission to another without giving any rest at all to the missionaries. There must always be an interval of at least eight days to let the workers recover their breath.

Your news of the mission you have just finished consoles me for the fears that the Carpentras missionaries arouse in me. I don't understand how with such an audience they have yet produced so little fruit. Perhaps they placed too much reliance on the resources of human eloquence. So much the worse for those who do not steep themselves in the spirit of our Rules on this matter. They end up like mere Lenten preachers. But I want to believe that that isn't how it is and that the sowing of the divine word will begin to sprout before the end of the exercises. I haven't been able to give them any encouragement and guidance in this situation as it has been impossible for me to write. Only today I've risked taking up the pen to put your mind at ease on the subject of Father Gignoux and that is tiring me out so much that I'm obliged to stop.

Accept my love by way of conclusion and my blessing.

† Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop of Icosia.

**598. To Mr. Courtès, superior, c/o the Reverend Curé de l'Observance at Carpentras. Vaucluse.<sup>108</sup>**

*Illness. Advice and encouragement.*

Marseilles, December 18, 1836.

My dear Father Courtès, four days have gone by without my coughing blood, and today I really feel much better although my voice hasn't come back completely. I'm taking advantage of this rest to pass on my news to you directly and to congratulate you on God's sustaining hand in your unaccustomed travails. I read with interest what you sent me about your mission. I would have liked to be able to give you encouragement, it is already a lot that you attracted such a large audience. The same people who lack the courage to correspond with the grace you are offering them will derive profit from it later on when this sowing starts to sprout. I would really have liked you to give the retreat you intended to give to the men. On the mission especially one must act with faith and trust. After setting out the duties, make an appeal to the heart, don't be afraid of letting go. It always worked for me, I don't recall a single occasion of resistance when I used to exercise your holy ministry.

I won't prolong my letter so as not to abuse my permission and draw down reproaches on myself. I am very anxious to celebrate holy mass on Christmas night, it's five weeks now that I've been deprived of this happiness. I have had to be content with hearing it in my room. It is the only advantage I take of my position in this long trial.

Please pass on my very best wishes to your two companions, they really ought to have written me in the course of the mission. I forgive them this oversight and send them my love, and you too, and bestow my blessing on you all.

† Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop of Icosia.

My affectionate greetings to your charming pastor. If I go one day to visit N.-D. de Lumières, it will be hard to resist the courtesy of going to renew<sup>109</sup> my acquaintance with him.

<sup>108</sup> Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post., L. M-Courtès.

<sup>109</sup> Ms.: has an unusual spelling. Father Guérin was pastor of Carpentras.



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