

Blessed DE MAZENOD

LETTERS

to various correspondents
on the
Congregation of the O.M.I.
1815-1861



**Letters to the Oblates
of France**

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Blessed EUGENE DE MAZENOD
1782-1861

Collection: *Oblate Writings XIII*

Letters to various correspondents
on the Congregation of the
Missionary Oblates of
Mary Immaculate
1815-1861

Translated by Ronald Zimmer, O.M.I.

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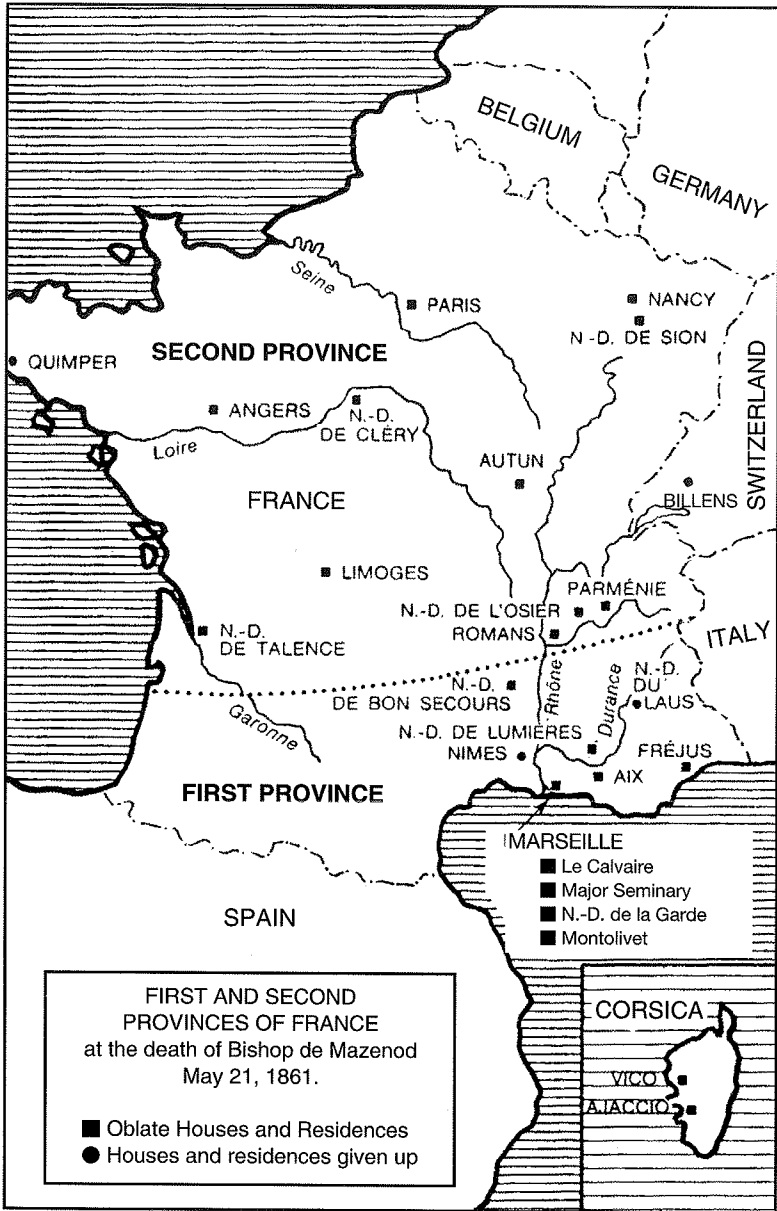
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Charles Joseph Eugene de Mazenod
Bishop of Marseilles
Superior General and Founder of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate



Introduction

Before publishing Bishop de Mazenod's diary and spiritual writings, it is fitting to conclude the publication of his letters with those that concern the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

Volumes VI-XII in the collection of Oblate Writings include all the Founder's letters to his sons stationed in France. But he often spoke about them to his father and mother, to friends, civil authorities and especially to the Bishops of France. In this volume we have gathered and presented 184 letters sent to various non-Oblate correspondents between 1815 and 1861.¹

We find therein a resumé of the Congregation's history in France: its birth, the problems caused by the parish priests of Aix, the steps taken to obtain the approval of the Vicars General at Aix, of governmental authorities and the Sovereign Pontiff, and lastly, negotiations with the episcopacy either of founding or closing Oblate houses in various dioceses.

This compilation likewise presents an overall view of Bishop de Mazenod's entire life as Founder and Superior General, with its joys and sorrows, the successes and failures of his sons, and especially the incessant reminders regarding the nature of their vocation in the service of Bishops to evangelize the poor. This theme appears here as an unforgettable leitmotiv.

These letters are generally marked by a polished style and noble tone, found less often in letters written to Oblates: with the latter the Founder used a simpler, more direct language.

As always, he reacts energetically and firmly when he considers his Congregation to have been unjustly treated. There were several occasions like this, especially when the Oblates were dismissed from N.-D. du Laus

¹ We omit none of the known letters to non-Oblate correspondents about the Congregation except those to Forbin-Janson already published in *Oblate Writings* 6, and some business letters sent to the Bishops of Gap after 1840 at the time when the Oblates left N.-D. du Laus. Letters to bishops and other non-Oblates in America, Canada and Sri Lanka have already been published in this collection's first volumes.

in 1841-1842 and from the seminaries of Romans and Quimper in 1857.² At Romans, the Jesuits of Lyons too readily lent themselves to supporting the Bishop's plans to replace the Oblates. Bishop de Mazenod reproached the Provincial on October 20, 1857. He wrote, "The readiness you showed in agreeing with a Bishop who passed judgment and condemned a religious Congregation before hearing it out makes you a veritable accomplice in this injustice. If the Bishop had not relied on you, he may have looked twice before taking such a drastic measure ... Why didn't you draw back when faced with such a contrivance? Didn't it appear to you as supplanting a Congregation which undoubtedly is only an atom compared to your Society, but which nevertheless has the right that no one hold a noteworthy bias against the reputation it needs to do the good in God's Church that it has been assigned to do there? No, Reverend Father, I cannot excuse you ... That is how I do things. I always put my cards on the table. My distinctive characteristics are frankness and uprightness. I am horrified by duplicity wherever I find it, but especially where it should never be found. After that, when I have done what I had to do, come whatever may, I resign myself to whatever God allows and pray for those who caused me any harm."

Father Pachiaudi left the Congregation in 1837 without consulting his superiors and withdrew to the Great Carthusian monastery where he was welcomed without question. After some time a Carthusian who knew Bishop de Mazenod wrote to find out if the Bishop approved of the fugitive's and his hosts' conduct. The Founder replied: If the Reverend Father General "had written me as propriety would require, I would have given him my observations and would have listened to and maturely reflected on his. None of that was done, canonical rules, respect and politeness have been violated. First, they went ahead without knowledge of cause; after that, they persisted in spite of Father Tempier's strong protests. I doubt if God blesses work like that ... It is all very sad and unedifying, and the best wish I can make for your holy Order is that it may develop by using other means ... I know how to be silent, but when I speak I always tell the truth."³

² Laus, cf. letters nos. 96, 98, 99; Romans, letters nos. 154, 160, 161, 163; Quimper, letters nos. 156, 157.

³ Letter no. 93 to Father G. Testou, September 1, 1837.

The last sentences in these letters perfectly describe one of Bishop de Mazenod's character traits. He knew how to quietly accept at times some situations that he did not like: he did speak out when the seriousness of the case or event demanded it, without regard for persons, frankly and forcefully.

On another point the Founder never changed throughout his life: the spirit which always animated him was God's glory, zeal for the salvation of souls and his Congregation's honor. The following pages confirm this.

Father Yvon Beaudoin, O.M.I.

1815 - 1818

1. [To Mr. Charles Antoine de Mazenod, at Palermo].¹

Foundation of the Missionaries of Provence. Need of money.

L.J.C.

Aix, this November 8, 1815.

... I am strongly inclined to write to François² that he give me some money for an establishment that I am forming at Aix for Provence. It is a foundation of Missionaries whose duty it will be to cover the countryside and bring people back to the religious sense that they have lost. We will establish ourselves in the former Carmelite monastery and go out from there on our apostolic travels. The newspapers took the initiative of giving an account of it and have totally overlooked me as the leader of this establishment.³ What is good about it is that I am forming it without a penny. We must trust fully in divine Providence. If your rich people of Palermo would want to contribute to it, that would be the most wonderful work

¹ Orig.: Aix, Méjanes library, Boisgelin section. We are publishing only the last paragraph of this letter. It starts with some details on the hundred days, praises Louis XVIII and treats of the plan for the de Mazenods' return to France.

² François Cannizzaro, one of the sons of the Duke of Cannizzaro and the princess of Lardereria, a family that Eugene knew intimately at Palermo, cf. J. Leflon, *Eugene de Mazenod*, vol. 1, 1961, pp. 188, 191, 235.

³ Mr. de Mazenod replied on February 27, 1816: "... In the degree that your followers increase, it will be necessary to increase also the number of your cooperators and since the public considers you as the leader of the good work you must act like a true founder, keeping for yourself the administration, direction and general supervision, leaving the details to your associates.

We have here a similar group of holy priests who have gathered to give missions in the surrounding area and are doing a lot of good. As well there is an almost similar institution called Missionaries of the Redeemer established *all'Uditore*. They recognize their Founder as Bishop Liguori of St-Agatha in the kingdom of Naples, who died in the odor of sanctity and whose beautification they are presently working on in Rome by the Pope's command. I flatter myself that sometime in the future some Sovereign Pontiff will give the same orders in favor of Charles Joseph Eugène, but while waiting I would have liked you to send me the newspapers that speak of your Institute and of yourself ..."

they have ever done.⁴ One has no idea of the peoples' need. Farewell, I embrace you again ...

2. [To] the Capitular Vicars General, [at Aix].⁵

Request of authorization to form a missionary community. Principal points of rule.

The undersigned priests:

- deeply moved by the deplorable situation of the small towns and villages of Provence that have almost completely lost the faith;
- knowing from experience that the callousness or indifference of these people renders the ordinary help supplied by your concern for their salvation insufficient and even useless;
- convinced that missions are the only means by which these people who have gone astray can be brought out of their degradation;
- desirous, at the same time, of responding to the call which summons them to consecrate themselves to this arduous ministry;
- and wishing to accomplish it in a manner as useful to themselves as it is advantageous for the people whom they propose to evangelize;
- have the honour of requesting from you the authorization to come together at Aix in the old house of the Carmelites which one of them has acquired; and to live there in community under a Rule whose main points they now indicate to you.

⁴ In the letter of February 27, 1816, Eugene's father added: "... it matters little that you have formed your establishment without funds, since God who sees its usefulness and the purity of your intentions, will know how to gain them for you very well. But I am upset to let you know that you can expect nothing from those you call Palermo's rich people, since, except for very few persons, I see only people who are loaded down with debts and taxes. Your idea of having François contribute something makes more sense. Born with a 600 pound pension and having a 600 thousand income, it would be natural that he acknowledge this gift of Providence by helping you in your religious works. But I am not happy with his conduct toward you. I can only blame him for spending several months with his brother at Paris without having looked you up to renew your former bonds of friendship. You will risk nothing by writing to him ..."

⁵ Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives. DM IX 1. We have two manuscripts signed by the Founder and his collaborators. One is a rough draft with several erasures; we are publishing the definitive text which must have been sent to the Capitular Vicars and returned by them with their approval, dated January 29. Maunier's name is given only in the reply.

The end of this Society is not only to work for the salvation of one's neighbor by dedicating itself to the ministry of preaching; its chief aim also includes providing its members with the means necessary to practice the virtues of religion to which they are so strongly attached that the greater number of them would have consecrated themselves for life to their observance in some religious order, did they not nurture the hope of finding in the Missionaries' community more or less the same advantages as in the religious state to which they wanted to pledge themselves.

If they preferred to form a regular community of Missionaries, it is in an effort to be useful to the diocese, while at the same time working at their own sanctification in conformity with their vocation.

Thus their life will be spent in prayer, in meditating the sacred truths, in practising the virtues of religion, in studying Sacred Scripture, the holy Fathers, dogmatic and moral theology, in preaching and in the direction of youth.

The Missionaries will divide their group in such a way that while some strive in community to acquire the virtues and knowledge proper to a good missionary, others are touring the rural areas proclaiming the word of God.

When their apostolic journeys are over, they will return to the community to rest from their labours by exercising a ministry that is less demanding, and to prepare themselves through meditation and study for a more fruitful ministry when next called upon to undertake new work.

On entering the Society, the Missionaries must resolve to persevere in it until the end of their lives.

The Society is pledged to keep each of its members despite infirmities that may arise either from old age or from the labours of their ministry.

It accepts no obligations with regard to those who may leave its ranks.

Towards the Society each member assumes the obligation of living in obedience to the superior and of observing the statutes and regulations.

The Society is governed by a superior elected for life by its members and approved by the local Ordinary.

Those who present themselves for admission into the Society will be tested in a novitiate until they finish their studies or are judged fit for the work of the missions.

The Missionaries will be accepted into the Society definitively only after two years of probation.

Those who have been accepted into the Society may be sent away only for serious reasons on the request of the superior plus a two-thirds majority voted assent of the other Missionaries.

When neighboring dioceses have provided the Society with men suited for service in the missions, the superior may, when requested by the Bishops and with the permission of the Ordinary, send them on missions to the diocese from which they came; and, if necessary, add to their number some of their companions, even if these latter are from the diocese of Aix.

The House of the Mission will be totally exempt from the jurisdiction of the parish priest. It is subject only to the Ordinary. In this matter, it will enjoy the privileges of former religious houses.

The church which the Missionaries have in their charge will also be under the immediate jurisdiction and supervision of the local Ordinary.

Vicars General and Gentlemen: Such is a comprehensive outline of the regulations that the undersigned priests present for your approval in requesting your authorization to form a community.

Done at Aix, January 25, 1816.

Eugene de Mazenod, Tempier, Icard,⁶ Mie, Maunier, Deblieu.

3. [To M. Charles Antoine de Mazenod at Palermo].⁷

News about the Missionaries of Provence. Success of the missions. Request to send the Redemptorists' Constitutions and Rules, etc.

Aix, May 1, 1816.

... To tell you about ourselves, I would need more time than I have since there would be much to tell. I think that I'll have to leave the details

⁶ Icard's name was erased; the Founder asked him to leave after the mission at Grans (February 11 - March 17, 1816). For a study of this text, cf Jos. Pielorz, *Nouvelle recherche sur la fondation de notre Congrégation*, in *Missions O.M.I.*, vol. 84 (1957), pp. 137-154.

⁷ Yenville I, 15-16; IV, 162; Rambert I, 180, 182, 186; Rey I, 193, 194, 197.

till our first encounter. To form an establishment at the bat of an eye, to see its components come together in spite of obstacles which seemed insurmountable to human wisdom, to meet men dedicated to God's work even though a thousand apparently good reasons might have turned them away; these men, among whom I am the eldest,⁸ are producing such surprising fruits of salvation as to silence any calumny and all that before anyone was convinced that the almost unknown plan was a reality: such are the prodigies of which we are witnesses and instruments.

Our first attempt was at Pignans.⁹ It worked marvels; I was not there, but had the consolation of heading the mission at Grans.¹⁰ I had never seen miracles, which now I cannot say. The people were abandoned and had completely strayed. Faith had died out. They only knew about God to blaspheme his name in the most horrible manner, and that by women and children as well as by men. Needless to say, no one made their Easter duties. The parish priest did not even confess two men; even the women and children had taken the same part, and soon one could have closed the church, so seldom was it used; half the population had not set foot there for 25 years.¹¹ What more could I tell you? Everything that you could imagine.

Well, the mission changed everything; from the first week, blasphemy was totally eradicated, so much so that the inhabitants informed the people of Salon who passed through Grans and still used blasphemy that they should give up that terrible habit they had or take a different route if they didn't want to be punished for their insolence. The day after our arrival, we set up confessionals for the four missionaries,¹² they were besieged from three o'clock in the morning, I tell you this because it is a fact, and we stayed there for the following 28 hours. Twenty-eight hours, I must repeat it so that you don't think I made a mistake in writing it. As for the details as to what happened during the mission, it is impossible to

⁸ Fathers Mie (1768-1841) and Maunier (1769-1844) were older than the Founder.

⁹ Mission at Pignans (end of 1815-beginning of 1816), preached by the Abbés Mie and Icard or Deblieu, cf. J. Pielorz, *Premières missions des Missionnaires de Provence*, in *Missions O.M.I.* vol. 82 (1955), p. 550.

¹⁰ Mission at Grans, given from February 11 to March 17, 1816.

¹¹ We are following Yenveux's text here as always; Rey and Rambert leave out or change sentences; Rambert even seems to add here: "It was with the hope of remedying all these evils that the good parish priest, Mr. Négret Bruni, was so eager to obtain this mission. He saw its effects; everything was changed from the first week."

¹² Fathers de Mazenod, Mie, Deblieu and Icard.

attempt to tell them. Excessive cold did not stop the church from being full from three in the morning onward. Three hours of religious exercises did not quench the holy eagerness of these good country people; in the evening they hurried back from the fields to take their place ...

I wanted to ask you to see the Missionaries of the Redeemer to beg them to send me their Constitutions and Rules, the office of their holy¹³ founder, his life and relics if possible, at least a picture large enough to put in our community room until we can place it in our church. I have studied his works extensively and we have taken him as one of our patrons; we would like to walk in his footsteps and imitate his virtues. Ask for and send me many details about these good Fathers who are his disciples and implore them to pray to the good Lord for us who have a great need for support in the midst of the difficulties and obstacles we are meeting ... I have some (of his writings), among others his moral theology which I like very much and have studied in a special way when I had the time to study since at the present time I can do nothing else but be active, and that is very much against my inclination, but since the good Lord demands it, I certainly must do it.

4. To Mr. Arquier, Vicar General of Aix, Parish priest of Saint-Remi, Bouches-du-Rhône.¹⁴

Regrets not being able to preach a mission at Saint-Remi in 1817. Lack of missionaries to answer every request.

L.J.C.

Aix, December 25, 1816.

Dear Sir,

It is very hard for me, who have consecrated myself to preaching missions solely to come to the aid of good pastors who wish to bring their people back to the religion that 25 years of revolution have caused them to abandon, not to be able to reply to their requests addressed to me except with good wishes and vague promises.

¹³ Alphonsus Liguori, beatified on September 6, 1816 (Brief) was only canonized on May 26, 1839. Mr. de Mazenod replied on November 11, 1816: "It is not without many difficulties and delays that we have come to procure what you asked for, consisting in relics, pictures, Constitutions and an abridged life."

¹⁴ Orig.; St-Remi parish archives, B.-du-R.

It is a heartbreaking experience of every day, but what can we do who are only four poor missionaries and you are the twenty-second parish priest who has called on us. My entire ambition would be to unite enough missionaries to combat hell on every point at once, but that is a pious dream which will never come true. But if we were at least able to form two rolling balls of fire, that is, if we could be two bands of which one would rest while the other was active, we would then be able, with God's help, to do a great deal of work.

God willing, we will come to that but it will be when the Lord has inspired in a few men the necessary zeal and disinterestedness to worthily carry out our holy ministry and in ecclesiastical superiors enough courage to allow them to follow their vocation.

While waiting I am reduced to being unable to satisfy a quarter of the requests made to me and that is possibly of all the sufferings and annoyances I am experiencing the one I feel most deeply.

However I do not despair of one day being able to go to support your zeal and share in your pastoral solicitude but that cannot be this year which is completely taken up. I will also place the parish of Mouriès on the list once the parish priest has let me know his intentions.

I am honored to be, with the most distinguished consideration, your very humble and obedient servant.

Eugene de Mazenod, Missi[ona]ry priest.

5. To Mr. Duclaux, Superior General of St-Sulpice, Pot de fer Street, No. 17 at Paris.¹⁵

Numerous occupations. Consolations in the ministry. Opposition of several priests.

L.J.C.

Aix, January 1, 1817.

Oh! How this New Year's Day comes at the right time, my dear Father, to help me out of my embarrassment; I no longer knew how to write to you, being so greatly ashamed of having not done it for so long, and what is comical is that I only kept putting off this duty from day to day in order to better fulfill it; I wanted to write you at length, going into

¹⁵ Orig.: Paris, St-Sulpice archives.

details which would interest you very much, and never having the time before me (that is the literal truth) that I needed for it, I kept putting it off to the morrow without succeeding any better on that day. Today, I am changing my system, taking up my pen even if only for five minutes, to take it up again as many times as I will be forced to lay it down. Yesterday I could only put on the date, it's always like that, you will at least see that today's coming and going did not stop me from thinking of that good Father whom I will never forget and will always love wholeheartedly.

I don't know where to start to bring you somewhat up to date on the marvels that the good Lord is working here through our ministry. We truly see repeated before our eyes the prodigies of Christianity's early times and God shows us at every moment that we are nothing but the trumpet he uses to awaken and bring souls back to life, so evident and direct, I'll say even miraculous, is his working.

April 21.

I am still obliged to put off the details which it would have been a pleasure for me to give you about the works that it has pleased God to confide to me; but since days would have to have more than 24 hours for me, I cannot at this moment do otherwise than remind my dear Father of myself and ask very insistently for his prayers. This letter will be remitted to you by one of our Congregation members who is going to Paris on some business, a military man, a good Christian whom I recommend to you. If his departure had not been so hurried, I think I would have made the trip with him, since I feel I will be obliged to such a measure; I am terrified by the thought of it as it is so difficult to detach myself from here where my presence still seems necessary, because you will scarcely believe that, having only good in view, I will say more, really doing good with God's grace, I must nevertheless struggle against a continuous persecution on the part of a certain number of priests whose efforts are however rendered ineffective by the position in which it has pleased God to place me; I pretend to ignore their underhanded dealings and, strictly speaking, I defend myself only by my good bearing and by the continuation of all that the good Lord wants me to do in spite of them. It seems to me that the saints would do the same in my place and my whole ambition will be to try to be like them; I do their works while waiting to acquire a small share of their virtues. We believed to have recognized that the Lord is protecting us by the very abundant blessings that he is showering on what we are undertaking for his glory. That more than compensates us for all the pain that these false prophets would like to inflict on us, all the while pretending to be unconcerned.

At this time as I have the pleasure of talking with you, I feel how much I regret not being able to do so more often or as long as I would like to; but to give you some idea of my life, imagine that having gone to bed at midnight as usual and gotten up at 5 o'clock, at this moment of writing to you I have not finished my meditation from which they drew me out this morning and that I have not finished Matins even though it is almost 9 o'clock. If I did not continually recall that passage from Saint Paul *nos autem servos vestros per Jesum*,¹⁶ I could not hold on, but that thought seems to lighten everything. However, I experience great loss in not being able to spend enough time on myself ... So pray that the good Lord might grant me the means to think more about my poor soul.

My ambassador is going to leave, so I close by pressing you to my heart which is yours in Our L[ord].

Eug[e]ne de Mazenod, priest, m[issiona]ry.

6. To the Abbé de Forbin-Janson, priest of the Missionaries of France, Notre-Dame des Champs Street, n. [8], at Paris.¹⁷

Numerous occupations. Charles writes too little and is not looking after the business of Eugene who must go to Paris.

L.J.C.

Aix, this January 16, 1817.

Were I to write you only two lines, very dear friend and good brother, I would do it so that no unfitting norm be established, something that would be inexcusable from both sides. I am starting even though I certainly do not have more free time; but, by hastening my lunch, I will get it done; it has not yet happened since my return from our last mission,¹⁸ that I ate even once with the community. And today, the time I steal is for you and Collegno. I am leaving a letter to my father on my desk begun on the 3rd of this month, one for Mr. Duclaux, begun on the 1st and others which I will probably never finish. I know, very dear friend, that you are not

¹⁶ 2 Cor. 4: 5 "Ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake".

¹⁷ Orig.: Paris, Archives of the Holy Childhood. "Paris" had been erased and replaced by "at the Bishop's house in Tours".

¹⁸ Arles Mission (November 2-December 16, 1817).

dead, because the newspapers keep us up to date on your doings and activities, but you are not aware that I am still alive, I, a miserable, obscure missionary, who preaches [to] people who don't know how to read and write.

January 21. - Before going to bed, and while everyone else in the house is sleeping, and even before saying Vespers, for which I scarcely have time anymore, I will again speak briefly with you, very dear friend. I am grieved by your silence and your brevity when you do break it. I had no sweeter pleasure than to receive your letters. Soon they will be reduced to an Easter duty, once a year. If your missions were like ours, that is to say that you were always in the confessional when you were not in the pulpit, I would understand it. But, according to what Hilaire¹⁹ told me, that is not quite the case. Why then don't you write me in the intervals? I am numbering this deprivation among my sacrifices. Myself, I have no time for anything. My work in preaching is almost as [great] in the city as on mission. I am sometimes tempted to think that people abuse my good will somewhat. But I do not give in to that thought which is contrary to a sentiment which seems to be deeply engraved in my heart, namely that we must be servants of all. I was confirmed in that resolution in meditation today. It is a painful obedience for nature, but if we know how to do [it], it will be very meritorious. What costs me most at this time is that this forced and constant service hinders me from going to Paris, where family matters and those of our house call me; but how can I abandon so many neophytes, poor young people of 20 to 25 years who daily come to throw themselves into my arms to reconcile them with God and return them to the right road. The hours which must be spent with them set back my work and throw me into desperation. You could have spared me half my cares if, being on the spot, you had been willing to budge a little for me. But you have never followed up on any beginning. And so you also have gained nothing. You had told me however, at the outset, that everyone was in your favour ...

Ourselves, we are still five in all, really killing ourselves; especially myself, for whom the stay in the city is never a rest, far from it! When I die, they will say: *What a pity! he killed himself!* while the assassins are those who refuse us indispensable help.

Goodbye, dear friend, pray hard to the good Lord that I have time to merit heaven before I die.

¹⁹ Hilaire Aubert, a missionary of France who had preached at Aix at the end of October 1816.

7. [To Mr. Chabert, parish priest at Fuveau].²⁰

Joy at knowing the parishioners' fervor is continuing. Plan to respond to the invitation of the faithful and to visit soon.

L.J.C.

Aix, May 23, 1817.

I was going to leave for Mouriès,²¹ very dear Sir, when I received your charming letter of April 25 and all the edifying things you tell me in it about the fervor of your good parishioners was a great source of consolation to me. I bless the Lord for giving you the strength to endure the excessive work that you had to do,²² and I congratulated myself on seeing the ground we tilled in hands as capable and faithful as yours. That recompense was due to your zeal for the salvation of your flock, all the more so because that was what we had been uniquely striving for; may God grant you the grace to experience that joy for a long time for only the Good Shepherd can measure and evaluate things.

I will do all that depends on me to respond to your invitation:²³ all kinds of reasons attract me to you and your people; I have not at all forgotten your goodness and the value you seemed to place on the devotedness with which we worked for their salvation. The difficulty, however, is to tear myself away from here ...

Farewell, very dear pastor, do not forget me in your good prayers and believe in the respect with which I have the honor to be your very humble servant.

Eugène de Mazenod, missionary priest.

²⁰ Copy in M.J. MOISAN, *Paroisse de Fuveau, Serviteur de Dieu C.J.E. de Mazenod* ..., Marseilles, 1936, pp. 125-126. The mission of Fuveau took place September 1-29, 1816.

²¹ The Founder was going to pay a simple visit to Mouriès since he had just given a mission there from February 9 to March 15.

²² The parish priest had written that 750 parishioners out of about 1300 had made their Easter duty.

²³ The return of this mission took place only in September 1822 by the Founder, assisted by Fathers Honorat and Suzanne; the parish was without a pastor at that time, cf. Moisan, *op.cit.*, pp. 20, 30-32.

8. Madame Roux, née de Bonnacorse, Street of the Dominicans, No. 34, at Marseilles.²⁴

Thanks for a gift in favor of a subdeacon who entered the Mission of Provence. Promise of prayers.

L.J.C.

Aix, this June 15, 1817.

Before thanking you, Madame, I must bless Divine Providence which just gave me new proof that one must never weary of trusting in it. I see now that it was the good Lord who inspired me not to reject this young subdeacon who, as rich in virtue as he was poor in this world's goods, offered himself to me to serve God in the work of the missions.²⁵ I received him with open arms without considering the distressed condition of our house; I thought of sharing my portion with him, happy as I was to assure with some sacrifice to the Church a faithful minister and an apostle to the abandoned faithful, when behold the good Lord charged you to supply me with what is needed to sustain him this year. Isn't that admirable? How fortunate you are to have contributed to such a good work! Your reward and that of your charitable relatives and friends who helped you with such good intentions will be proportionate not at all to the amount of money or to the merit of ordinary corporal works of mercy, but to the price of souls for whose salvation the efforts of our missionaries solely strive.

Now, I thank you for the promptness and grace that you put forth to give us help. God will take it upon himself to return you a hundredfold for these 425 francs which came exactly at a moment they were least expected, but I assure you that we will ask in our weak prayers with even greater promptness, for you and yours, that the Lord enrich you with a great many virtues and spiritual blessings. On the feast of the Sacred Heart I offered the holy sacrifice for that intention; so you see that you were not mistaken when you counted on a special remembrance on that day. Besides, you know that you and your whole family will be from now on participants in all the prayers, fastings, sacrifices and whatever good works that are done by all the members of our little society, with the con-

²⁴ Orig.: Marseilles, Archbishop's Archives.

²⁵ Only one novice took the habit in 1817, G. Dalmas, but he was not a subdeacon. N.F. Moreau, ordained a priest on September 19, 1818 was certainly a subdeacon in 1817, but we cannot say that he is meant here since he only started noviciate on April 22, 1818.

dition that you pray for us too, and I willingly add especially for me who have more need than anyone.

Accept, Madame, the assurance of respect with which I have the honor of being your very humble servant.

Eug[è]ne de Mazenod, m[ission]ary priest.

I beg you to remember me to all your good family and to thank them in the name of our work for what the good Lord has inspired them to do for it.

9. To Mr. Lainé, Minister of the Interior, at Paris.²⁶

Father de Mazenod requests government authorization for the Missionaries of Provence.

Paris, July 31, 1817.

Your Lordship,

The kindness that Your Lordship showed me in the audience which you granted me the other day encourages me to open my heart completely to you concerning the matter which led me to see you.

I view the little known ministry which I have undertaken as being of the greatest importance in the present circumstances, not only for the good of religion but for the service of the King and public order; and I must truly be imbued with this thought for I willingly sacrifice for it every advantage that other available and possibly enticing careers offered me.²⁷

The testimonies of the Division General, the Inspector of the National Guard and the Subprefect are proof of what I am asserting.²⁸

But I do not want to hide from Your Lordship that, in order to bring about the immense good assured us by the first success Providence has granted us, I must be invested not only with the confidence of ecclesiastical superiors, such as they have granted me without restriction up to the

²⁶ Orig.: Paris, National archives F 19 5556.

²⁷ To avoid any promotion, Father de Mazenod did not visit influential people at Paris that he knew, such as the Duke de Berry and especially Cardinal Talleyrand, Head Chaplain to the King, who held the portfolio for benefices, cf. J. Leflon, *Mgr de Mazenod*, II, 65-68.

²⁸ Baron Damas, Division General, Count de Panisse, Inspector of the National Guard and the Marquis de Foresta, Subprefect of Aix.

present, but also with the approval of the Government for which I have been working as efficaciously as I have been for the Church.

Everyone knows that I have come to Paris to obtain approval for our establishment, which is nothing other than the gathering of several priests who devote themselves principally to the service of country people whom the lack of pastors has caused to fall unwittingly into degradation, and to the instruction of the city's youth in the sole aspect of morals and religion.

If I return to my diocese without bringing back some little sign of Government approval, I will have lost half of my effectiveness and even run the risk of seeing the priests united around me become discouraged, return to their homes and some may even leave the kingdom as they had considered doing before I attracted them to myself; and then we would have to forsake all the benefits that religion, society and the State could expect from their zeal.

Your Lordship believes that a law is necessary to render our little society capable of receiving the gift that I want to give it and the bequests which may be left to it by people who are already convinced of its usefulness because of all the good that they have seen it accomplishing under their very eyes.

I respect Your Lordship's thoughts too much to argue about that, but at least, and to that I will limit my request at this time, what, I almost dare to say, I claim as a recompense for my zeal, is that the King can at least, by a provisional ordonnance and until a law definitively determines the manner of this establishment's existence, authorize the abbé de Mazenod to join with several priests of good will in the former house of the Carmelites at Aix in order to devote themselves to the religious instruction of youth and to travel from there into the parishes of cities and especially of the countryside which are calling to their ministry for help.

If I have cause to regret not being better known to Your Lordship, it is especially in this circumstance for it seems that I need to inspire some confidence in your religious outlook so that you could truly weigh the reasons that I take the liberty to propose to you; but independently of what opinion people may have of me, Your Lordship has too much zeal for good and too much wisdom not to realize the happy results that this testimony of approval would bring about; it would possibly be less necessary if people did not know that I had asked for it, but now it has become indispensable because of the efforts I have made to obtain it.

I hope, My Lord, that I am not addressing myself to Your Lordship in vain with this confidence and openness of heart which enable you to read

my thoughts; and that you will gladly grant the request that I make to you solely in view of the good you will always promote and to which I would like to contribute with all my power.

Accept, My Lord, the homage of profound respect by which I have the honor to be Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant,

the abbé Eugène de Mazenod.

10. To Madame de Mazenod, Papassaudy Street, at Aix, B.-du-Rhône.²⁹

The life Eugene is leading at Paris is far from being in line with his vocation, but he will refuse any post that would take him away from Aix.

L.J.C.

Paris, August 21, 1817.

Dear mama, you did not tell me when you plan to return to St-Laurent. Still I think that it would be too long to wait for your return before writing to you. So, I am risking this letter, which may take more than a month to reach you; it will bring you more pleasure than indirect news that you will receive about me.

You are quite mistaken to worry yourself on my account. I am leading a life very suited to putting on weight and giving rest to my body from all its fatigue, but my poor soul is also feeling its effects. But you have taken the attitude not to bother yourself by this last item, which however is well worth that we think of it a little. When I return to Aix, I will no longer know how to preach or hear confessions; I do nothing of that here. I busy myself from morning to night only in drawing up memoranda, making visits, petitioning, etc. Confidentially, I was flattered, but I steadfastly refused everything that would have taken me away from Aix.³⁰ By doing so, I have, as the world expresses it, sacrificed my career. I don't know if those at home would approve of my preferring to work in obscure places for the spiritual welfare of my fellow-men rather than in the places of prestige which were offered to me and which could have led me to the

²⁹ Orig.: Château des Boisgelin, at St-Martin-des-Pallières. Further on in this letter, Father de Mazenod said that it was too late to obtain pensions and posts for his father and uncles, and consequently, it will be difficult to have them return to France.

³⁰ see *supra*, note 27.

very top.³¹ Too bad if they cannot appreciate my devotion to duty. As long as others profit from it, that is all that matters and I am content ...

11. [To his father and uncles, at Palermo].³²

Return to France immediately: Fortuné is named Bishop of Marseilles. He will be the protector of the Missionaries of Provence.

L.J.C.

[Paris,] August 28 [1817].

I am reopening my letter, my very dear friends; I was too late in getting it off to you yesterday.³³ The reason I've re-opened it is to tell you, but under the strictest secrecy, that the king has just appointed my uncle, Charles Fortuné, to the bishopric of Marseilles.³⁴ I am still filled to overflowing with gratitude to God. Without my uncle's having even thought of desiring it, the Lord has given him the most coveted bishopric in all France. Its location, resources, perfectly disposed people and excellent clergy all make it so ...

What enormous good we are going to do! Provence will be regenerated. All the Bishops of the province will be of but one mind; I know them all. The Society which the Good Lord has confided to me is becoming astonishingly strong; I am preparing choice troops for the Bishop of Marseilles. There are beautiful days ahead for the Church. But, enough ...

September 6

You have possibly left already, my dear friends.³⁵ If that were so, I would be very pleased, since I can't wait till you have set foot in France.

³¹ According to Jeancard (*Mélanges historiques*, p. 165) Bishop de Latil had proposed to him the post of Vicar General of Chartres, before having him named Bishop, cf. also Mazenod to Tempier, October 22, 1817 and Bishop de Latil to Father de Mazenod, March 25, 1826.

³² The Founder's manuscript copy: Aix, Méjanes archives. An eight-page letter. We are publishing only those paragraphs where the Missionaries of Provence are concerned. Among the reasons given for Fortuné to accept the bishopric is this one: he could gradually pay back his debts and those of the de Mazenods with the 15,000 francs in salary that he would receive from the Government.

³³ The first part of the letter has not come down to us.

³⁴ We know that this appointment did not take effect until 1823, c.f. J. Leflon, *Mgr de Mazenod*, II, 65-79, 84-86, 184-194.

³⁵ They left Sicily at the beginning of December.

It doesn't matter which way you come from now. However, I would like you to avoid landing at Marseilles; I would prefer that you enter through Toulon or Nice.

Since my last letter, I have gathered the opinion of certain others who are most qualified to give such a decision and also to assess our obligations in regard to the Church; M. Duclaux for one, and there are others besides. All of them agree that my uncle is obliged in conscience to accept the bishopric of Marseilles. Besides, the King does not want to accept refusals, he would even be irritated by them since, as he says, when a soldier is called to the flag, honor demands that he hasten to respond, in the same way religion enjoins a cleric to respond with all his might for the good to be done in the post to which he is assigned.

I think my Uncle is convinced of this outlook; and that he will consider as a call from Providence an appointment to which neither he himself nor those close to him contributed, about which we weren't even thinking, and which is so designed by Providence, by the Master of hearts and events that it is perfectly appropriate to consolidate, nay, to put it better, to save the work to which God has linked France's salvation.³⁶

But if I were able to imagine that he could hesitate somewhat, I would throw myself at his feet and charge him by all that is most sacred to reject totally every pusillanimous thought under whatever plausible exterior it might disguise itself. How many compelling reasons there are! The very first is that if ever the will of God was evident in human events it is surely now. My uncle, completely forgotten, was living in far away Sicily, as far removed from thinking of the episcopacy as that island is from our capital. His nephew, the only person who could prompt anyone to think of him, was detained by the duties of the ministry that Providence had entrusted to him in the countryside of Provence, which he was evangelizing with his respectable coworkers; and while he was wearing himself out in those demanding works (I spat up blood), he said: people blame me surely for forgetting my family in order to live among these poor people, but, for my part, I know that one must first of all fulfill the task that the Father of the household assigns to his servants; my presence is needed here to avoid the ruin of the infant work against which Hell is stirring up every kind of enemy; I will stay there, and God, who knows the purity of my intentions and what everyone needs, will see to everything.

³⁶ The parish priests at Aix made life difficult for the Missionaries; Father de Mazonod went to Paris to defend his work and obtain Government approval which was refused him.

What has happened? All this while, the steps that I had taken f[o]r my father, always weak when done from a distance, resulted in nothing. The King appointed people to French bishoprics; my uncle was not included. Everything was lost for us. Because of that there were reproaches for not having acted according to rules of human prudence, etc. But God, forever just, had not forgotten that it was for the glory of his name and filled with confidence in him that I had sacrificed everything for him, brought about an event that obliged me to come to Paris to defend his work under attack from evil influence. To fulfill the law of courtesy and justice, I was obliged first to present myself to the Minister, and then to a Bishop whom I knew no more than he knew me;³⁷ we spoke briefly about my uncle, I put on his desk a half-sheet of paper outlining an account of his service; the following day he was named Bishop of Marseilles. This means that at the very moment when I was seeking earthly support, the Lord, the proven Protector of our great work of instructing and converting poor country people, chose with his own hand the most suitable instrument for sustaining our Society in the very province where our sublime ministry must be carried on: I need not point out to you what it will mean to this Society to have the uncle of its Superior as bishop of one of the principal dioceses in which it exercises its salutary influence. No matter how little we may heed the ways of Divine Providence, what reflections could not be made on this matter! Let me point out only one which shows sufficiently that God wisely directs all things here on earth. If I had neglected to labor for his glory and left Provence to come to Paris in order to solicit a bishopric for my uncle, I would have acted contrary to my conscience. Even though I might have succeeded, one thing is sure; my uncle would not have been appointed to the See of Marseilles and we would have had to reproach ourselves for having acted humanly in a matter where everything must be motivated by the supernatural. Thank God, I acted as a good priest should: *quaerite primum regnum Dei*.³⁸ I had only God in mind and God has now worked what is almost a miracle in my favor: for, note well, my dear uncle, I am not thinking of the honor that may come to you from it, etc. Not at all! And that is what makes my reasoning invincible. I have in mind only the welfare of the Church, the glory of God, and the salvation of souls. I consider you only as being chosen to contribute to these great things and consequently as obliged, and obliged under pain of sin, yes sin (I say it in all seriousness, and I have a fair enough reputation

³⁷ Bishop de Latil.

³⁸ Luke 12: 31. "Seek first the kingdom of God."

as a theologian), to give yourself, to submit and to sacrifice yourself. Refusal, even a delay would go contrary to the unfolding and designs of Providence in a most unfortunate way. It would bring about the greatest evil and would make your views, since the King sees it as a crime, an outrage against his concern for the Church's well-being, and he does not want to hear of it. You would thus put yourself in full revolt against your King, sadden all those good people and even contribute to a considerable disorder that you undoubtedly want to avoid with all your strength, for I know your principles.

Now, what objections could you make? There are no general admissible ones whatsoever. You are not wiser than the Church ... What personal and special objections could you be tempted to offer? Would it be your age? Half of those named are as old as you are; several are older. Besides, they knew your age, and far from being an obstacle, it seemed to be an advantage. Your infirmities? They would be an extra merit. Your diocese is not large, it will not be difficult to visit it; according to the new boundaries, it scarcely includes more than the city and suburbs of Marseilles. I will be with you, and others as well, as zealous as I can be; and if, later on, your infirmities increase, no one would cause any difficulty to giving you a coadjutor and the choice would most likely not fall on anyone you don't know. And here I must again tell you that of all the dioceses of France Marseilles is the most favored by God. The population is the opposite to what it was at the beginning of the Revolution. Everyone, rich and poor alike, ardently want a bishop. You will be welcomed there like an angel of God. All the authorities are good and friends of ours. Villeneuve is Prefect, Montgrand is Mayor, Panisse is Commander of the National Guard; he is my friend, as well as the Division Commander, Baron de Damas, who receives Communion every week. The clergy is perfect; the principal pastors are graduates of the Sacred Heart, full of zeal and good will; they would all be like soft wax in your hands. The semin[a]ry has the same spirit; I know all those gentlemen. I must add that in my community you will have true Oblates who are ready for all good things and who will renew your villages. In a word, I will say it a thousand times, there is no diocese in France which presents fewer difficulties and more consolations and hope. You would possibly want to tell us of your unworthiness for such a great dignity. It is good for you to think so, but either we have to burn books or you must not be your own judge in this matter.

To all these undeniable reasons I have put before you, I could add many others, but it would take too much space to go into them. However, there is one especially which takes first place in my heart because I know

its full importance. It alone would be sufficient to persuade you, if you appreciated it well, namely, your acceptance is necessary for the future of our work. If I know anything of the workings of Divine Providence, the good Lord reserved Marseilles for you with the view towards giving us special protection. Ah, this fervent community which relives in our day all the virtues of the most beautiful times of Christianity was worthy of the Lord's consideration! Shame on you if, not recognizing your calling, you were to reject that noble protectorate on which depends the salvation of so many souls ...

Before concluding, I should complain somewhat to all of you for having absolutely lost the habit of writing to me. I don't know if I have received any news from you in six months. I don't understand in truth what that means. If there are no ships, are you afraid to write to me by post? Why leave me thus in distress? It is certainly enough to be separated from you for nearly twenty years. What is more, we may not recognize each other when we see each other again; let's at least keep up some way of finding each other. I say that without pretending to make the least complaint, but it is sure that it would be easy for me to set the exact time when our contacts ceased to be what they were up to then.³⁹ I saw no more trust; reserve had taken its place, and it could also be that tenderness gave in to some other cooler feeling I cannot name. It is true that on my part, at times tired out by a resistance that seemed unreasonable to me, I wrote in lively terms. But since when is such vivacity a crime among sensible people? Come soon and put all that in order ...

³⁹ Correspondence between Eugene and his father, quite limited in 1806 and 1907, discontinued from 1808 to 1812, because of the Napoleonic wars which made communication with Sicily difficult, but also because the de Mazenods did not want to return to France and certainly because Mr. de Mazenod did not approve of his son's vocation, cf. J. Morabito, in *Etudes Oblates* 13 (1954), 115-116. We have one letter from Eugene to his father in 1813, in which he speaks of his priestly vocation, then from 1814 on he wrote several letters each year, always begging him to return.

12. [To the abbé Fortuné de Mazenod, at Palermo].⁴⁰

Fortuné is named bishop of Marseilles. This appointment is providential for the Missionaries of Provence.

[Aix], September 16,⁴¹ 1817.

All the newspapers have informed the whole of France and Europe of what you, on your island removed from this world, may still not know.

The King has named you Bishop of Marseilles, and everyone approves of this appointment. I announced it to you in a thousand letters written from every direction and I am writing this one without attempting to repeat all that I said in previous ones. God alone is the author of this appointment; men have been involved in it only in as much as that was needed to obey and follow the direction indicated by Divine Providence. It chose Marseilles for you, which in my opinion is the most valuable See in France because there you will be able to support and protect all the good that my fervent community has done unceasingly since it began. It needs such support and God, in whom alone it has always placed its hopes, has provided it. You see that I consider things with a faith-vision; that is the only thing that I have in mind when I feel obliged to tell you, in line with the opinion of all who are the most reliable here, that you are obliged in conscience to respond to the King's confidence and to consecrate yourself with absolute devotion to the service of the Church in the post being assigned to you ... As for myself and my work, which are the salvation of youth and the poor countryside people, that is all that I could ask from God.

Come right away by the shortest route. Farewell.

P.S. Take courage, I will be your other-self.

⁴⁰ Copy: Rambert I, 239-240 (November 16); Rey I, 215 (September 17); Jeancard 170-172 (September 18). This letter summarizes the previous ones of August 28 and September 6. Here we are publishing only what concerns the Missionaries of Provence.

⁴¹ The exact date of this letter seems to be September 16, cf. Charles Antoine de Mazenod to his son, October 27, 1817.

13. [To the Pastor at Salernes],⁴²

Regrets not being able to give a mission there this year.

Aix, June 15, 1818.

If only I had an army of good gospel workers at my disposal! You would not then have long to wait to see all those you need gathered around you. Alas! We have such a small number of them. The whole diocese is feeling the need that you are experiencing. We have been using our feeble means to come and help various pastors for three years now and the Lord has been pleased to bless abundantly the people we have evangelized. But what are 4 or 5 missionaries for such a vast diocese? My heart bleeds when I see myself forced to put off to another time so excellent a work on which the salvation of so many souls depends. I can't describe it to you, it's a real torment for me which I suffer at every request I receive ... It's truly heart-wrenching when I have to tell you that it is impossible for us to come to your place this year.⁴³ While we wait, let's ask the Lord who knows the needs of his people to provide us with the means of meeting them.

The funds you have seem sufficient to me since we receive no personal salaries at all and follow to the letter the Master's words: *Gratis accepistis, gratis date.*⁴⁴ It is enough to cover the missionaries' travelling expenses and that they are given hospitality where the mission takes place. That is the rule of our little Society.

14. [To the Pastor of Barjols],⁴⁵

In view of the parish's need, the Missionaries will go and preach a mission at Barjols.

[Aix], August 20, 1818.

More than fifty pastors are asking insistently for a mission. To be somewhat fair in choosing, I think it necessary to consider the date of the request. However, I am inclined to give you preference. It seems to me

⁴² Yenveux V, 31.

⁴³ The Founder never did go there.

⁴⁴ Matt. 10: 8. "Freely you have received, freely give."

⁴⁵ Yenveux I, 97 and 107.

that our duty is to rush to where there is the most urgent need.⁴⁶ They asked for us at Marseilles;⁴⁷ we could expect consolation there, whereas at Barjols we must await only contradictions and difficulty; but we will at least have the happiness of coming to help a good pastor's solicitude for his lost sheep. If we were to gain from our mission nothing else than having struggled against hell with and under the direction of such a capable veteran as you, we would still have to congratulate ourselves on having done so.

All expenses amount only to frugal meals for the missionaries; we do not receive any salaries at all for our fatigue and work which can be repaid only by the Lord.⁴⁸

15. [To Madame de Servan at Saint-Remy].⁴⁹

Gratitude for a significant donation made to the Missionaries of Provence.

Aix, August 20, 1818.

When the abbé Chausse was good enough to give me the sum of five hundred francs that a pious and charitable lady of St-Remy had given him for the missions, it was not difficult for me to guess that this lady could only be you, whose zeal for the propagation of the faith and the conversion of sinners is too well known to me for me to be mistaken. So, Madame, the secret that your modesty wished to keep was not at all betrayed; rather it was discovered and you will allow me to use this knowledge to express my gratitude to you in the name of the holy work that the Lord has charged me with despite my great unworthiness.

By contributing, as you propose to do, to the education and upkeep of members who devote themselves to the work of the missions, you are acting more meritoriously than you may think, for this temporal charity has a direct relationship with the spiritual aid which is given to the most abandoned souls: without it they would remain in their sin and probably miserably perish therein.

⁴⁶ The mission at Barjols was preached from November 8 to December 20, 1818.

⁴⁷ The mission at Marseilles took place only in 1820, from January 2 to February 27.

⁴⁸ In Yenveux I, 97, these few lines are dated July 20.

⁴⁹ Yenveux VI, 177-178.

Somewhere in Holy Scripture it says that whoever receives a prophet, as a prophet, will receive a prophet's reward;⁵⁰ I have always felt that those consoling words should apply with even greater reason to those who furnish ministers with the means of exercising their ministry. They will receive the reward of a minister; the more sublime the ministry, the more its results are of greater significance, the more the work is laborious, the greater will be the reward not only for the minister who zealously fulfills his duties but also for the one who provided the means for him to accomplish the same.

You see, Madame, that we do not presume to show our gratitude by *simple compliments or words which would hardly amount to thanking you in a Christian manner for the charitable deeds which came from too pure a source to be paid in that way.* God is the guarantor of our debt. His infinite goodness undertakes to repay it a hundredfold. Nevertheless, here is how we, for our part, will try to contribute, though feebly; we will pray several times a day from the depths of our heart for the benefactors of this holy apostolic work; in the missions we will have the just who have been affirmed and the converted sinners pray for the same intention; finally we will very often offer the Holy Sacrifice for them and grant them a full and complete sharing in all the good works, prayers and penances, etc. done on missions or outside of them by all the members of our society. That is not much, to be sure, but when you give all that you have, what more can you do. After expressing in all simplicity all the good we wish for you, I dare to ask some share in your prayers for me and my little community, which, thanks be to God, walks better before the Lord than does its poor Superior who is a very lax and unfaithful servant.

Accept ...

⁵⁰ Matt. 10: 41.

16. [To Mr. Arbaud, Vicar General of Digne].⁵¹

Plan to make a foundation at Notre-Dame du Laus.

Aix, August 23, 1818.

Sir,

I have no other desire than to do a little good; thus, if you think that the plan you have thought of⁵² might gain some glory for God and contribute to the salvation of souls, I am totally disposed to offer myself for all the arrangements which are compatible with my commitments in this diocese and the duties of my position in our little Society. In matters like this things do not go well by letter. I was undecided whether I should accompany our deacon⁵³ to his ordination but your letter resolved my uncertainty; I will go with him to Digne, where I will have the honor of seeing you and discussing this matter with you. We will put our ideas together; thus, I will have the double pleasure of renewing your acquaintance,⁵⁴ and of showing you my good will in support of your truly untiring zeal.

⁵¹ Rambert I, 281; Rey I, 229; Yenveux V, 31.

⁵² In a letter of August 16, Mr. Arbaud had proposed to the Missionaries of Provence that they establish themselves at Laus. One of the arguments he invoked was of a kind to impress Father de Mazenod whose relations with the parish priests of Aix were not getting better: "Besides it seems to me," said Mr. Arbaud, "that it is in your interest to have two houses under your direction so that you can make some changes that certain circumstances may demand. It is not something indifferent to have places in two dioceses; thus when the weather is bad in relations with one of the administrations, you can take refuge in the safety of the other."

⁵³ Brother Moreau, from the diocese of Digne, had recently entered the noviciate.

⁵⁴ We don't know when or where the Founder had met Mr. Arbaud; no doubt the latter had several times accompanied Bishop Miollis, his bishop, who had several times come to give Confirmation at Aix, his birthplace.

**17. To Bishop de Mazenod, appointed to the See of Marseilles,
Mission House, place des Carmélites, at Aix, Bouches-du-
Rhône.⁵⁵**

*Account of the trip from Aix to St-Laurent. Request for prayers.
Greetings.*

L.J.C.

St-Laurent, September 4, 1818.

Our trip, very dear uncle, was very agreeable, very happy and not at all tiring. We arrived at St-Paul with enough time to make our adoration at the church, while our dear family⁵⁶ took a refreshing walk; we said our rosary walking on the main road while they ate supper and the day after we were already on the road while they were still sleeping, so that they could have said *ego dormio et cor meum vigilat*⁵⁷ since they had been very much present and part of our feeble prayers. We arrived at Gréoux at 8 o'clock; I had the joy of saying Holy Mass, and we left again at 11 o'clock; we were only three in the carriage which dropped us off at Allemagne where our horses had been waiting since morning. It was full daylight when we arrived at St-Laurent. Mama came to meet us. I found her in good health.

First of all, our good Moreau⁵⁸ wants me to remind you to pray for him to the good Lord; he expects the same service from the community and the congregation; though I assured him that this would not be forgotten he finds it better to take extra precautions. So, you are all well and duly notified: for your part, be assured that he will do the same for you.

We must not neglect our two items of business with Mr. G[uigou]. It is essential that the ordonnance mention the approval given to our *Statutes and regulations*.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Orig.: Aix, Méjanes library.

⁵⁶ The fellow-Oblates at the Aix house.

⁵⁷ Song of Songs 5: 2 "I was sleeping, but my heart kept vigil".

⁵⁸ N.F. Moreau, a novice from April 22 to November 1, 1818, was ordained to the priesthood at Digne on September 19.

⁵⁹ On November 13, 1818, Mr. Guigou signed an ordonnance by which he definitively approved the Missionaries of Provence. The other matter concerned Fortuné to whom Mr. Guigou granted a pension of 1200 francs per year, cf. Fortuné to the President, September 3, 1818.

Nathalie⁶⁰ was very grateful for your kind remembrance. She is very sensible and will not abuse it. Her father has just come in; both recall your remembrance; our two Fathers⁶¹ and I present our respects and, what is more, I embrace you with all my heart.

Eugène.

Our Fathers at Aix are always present in our thoughts and in our solitude we make our religious exercises in union with theirs.

18. [To the Parish Priest of Rougiers].⁶²

They cannot go to Rougiers this year.

[Aix], October 30, 1818.

Alas! How it costs me to refuse you:⁶³ this year we can scarcely fulfill the promises we made three years ago, and requests have continued to come in since them. Next year, if the Gentlemen Vicars General do not take it on themselves to determine the parishes which should have preference, we will be obliged to cast lots, for there are so many requests and so little means to respond to them. Let's recommend the matter to God who will perhaps be pleased to send workers to labor in such an abundant harvest that is ripening on all sides.

19. [To Mr. Rauzan, Superior General of the Missionaries of France].⁶⁴

The Missionaries of Provence will join the Missionaries of France for the mission at Marseilles; they will preach in the part of the city where the ordinary people live.

[Aix, October 30, 1818].

Sir and dear friend,

We are so happy to be able to lend a hand to your work in our area that we will not hesitate to leave everything and follow you to

⁶⁰ Nathalie de Boisgelin, daughter of Armand and Eugénie de Mazenod.

⁶¹ The deacon Moreau and the acolyte Suzanne, both novices, whom the Founder here calls *Fathers*. In general, at that time everyone was referred to as *Mister*; at the General Chapter of 1826 they decided to replace *Mister* with *Father*; it was decided at the General Chapter of 1826 that simple Oblates who were not priests, were to be called *Brothers*.

⁶² Yenveux V, 31.

⁶³ Fathers Deblieu, Touche and Moreau preached a mission at Rougiers from November 14 to December 12, 1819.

⁶⁴ Rambert I, 306-307; Yenveux I, 107.

Marseilles.⁶⁵ Because of that we will have to go back on our word to the parish priest where we were to go at the time set for your mission; I will try, however, to have a directive given me by our Vicars General who will certainly not refuse to lend themselves to an arrangement that seems to suit you and which can contribute to the greater glory of God. You can therefore count on us, but we must not hide the fact that we shall be of very feeble help; fortunately, your zeal and talents will supply for our insufficiency. If you are willing, we shall take charge, as we did at Arles,⁶⁶ of that part of the city inhabited by the lower classes; thus we will not be going against the Rules of our Institute which require us to devote ourselves to that portion of the flock of Jesus Christ. To tell you now that I feel the sweetest consolation from the realization that I am about to work together with you would be to repeat what you already know, for I hope that you have never had any doubts regarding the sentiments you have able to inspire in me and which I beg you to accept, as well as the respectful attachment with which I am, etc. ...

20. [To Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod at Aix].⁶⁷

Work at the mission at Barjols. Success. Father de Mazenod's illness.

Barjols,⁶⁸ November 22, 1818.

My dear uncle, you must absolutely excuse me for not having replied to your fine letters. I don't have to thank you for all the touching things your goodness had to say to me. You know how grateful I am for all that your tenderness for me inspires you to do for me. I hasten to tell you that I am in good health. My voice has come back, and my chest doesn't hurt any more. However, I am to content myself to giving instructions which I tailor to the actual strength of my lungs. I do hear confessions but it is clear that I am not at all tired out by them. There is a very great number of people. Men take up the time we should be giving to the women. I don't know what we can do. The mayor, assistants, judges, notaries, lawyers, businessmen, manufacturers, middle class people, everyone is moving, each trying to outdo the others.

⁶⁵ The mission at Marseilles took place from January 2 to February 27, 1820.

⁶⁶ From November 2 to December 16, 1817, Fathers Deblieu and Mie had preached a mission at Arles in collaboration with the Missionaries of France.

⁶⁷ Manuscript copy from Fortuné in his letter of November 26 to the President: Rome, Postulation Archives, Boisgeline Collection.

⁶⁸ Mission preached from November 8 to December 20, 1818 by Fathers de Mazenod, Deblieu, Maunier, Mie, Maurius Aubert and Moreau.

People are publicly and spontaneously reconciled at the foot of the cross. It is marvelous. Pray for us and for them. Oh! How right Saint Vincent de Paul was when he said that only the devil could be opposed to missions.

Farewell, I embrace you.

21. [To Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod at Aix].⁶⁹

Greetings. Success of the mission.

Barjols, December 9, 1818.

Dear uncle, I am obeying you and not writing to you; but I embrace you with all my heart. You must pray hard for the mission since the Lord is continuing to work miracles here. Yesterday I was called to the home of an old official who would have melted rocks by the affection he showed me; he was weeping all the while he was kissing my hands. I embrace you again. Pass this on to my father and uncle [the Knight].

⁶⁹ Handwritten copy from Fortuné in his letters of December 9 and 10, 1818 to the President: Rome, Postulation Archives, Boisgelin Collection.

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22. [To Mr. Arbaud, Vicar General of Digne].¹

The Missionaries of Provence will need to recruit for themselves when they settle in Laus. The holiness needed to carry on the mission of the Apostles.

[Aix], January 1,² 1819.

We need men who are detached, zealous for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, in a word, intent on following and practising the evangelical counsels. Without this, little or no good can be expected of them. The missions are the apostolic work par excellence. If we wish to achieve the same results as the Apostles and the first followers of the Gospel, we must use the same means as they, and this all the more because we do not have the power to perform miracles and so we must bring back those who have gone astray by the splendor of our virtues. I am embarrassed as I pen these lines. Alas! No one understands better than I do that it is easier to teach by word than by example ...

The parish priest at Barjols tells me that during the past 18 years he had only ten men at Mass ..., whereas, during the mission³ we heard more than 3000 general confessions and those who made the mission before Christmas came to the Holy Table again on New Year's Day to prove they had made the firm resolution to carry out their Easter duties.

¹ Yenneux VIII, 12

² Yenneux wrote: January 1st. This letter may have been started on January 1, but the last lines must be from at least the 3, the date of Father Tempier's departure for N.-D. du Laus; in the meanwhile the Founder must have received a letter from Barjols, written on January 1 or 2.

³ The mission had closed on December 20, 1818.

23. [To the parish priest at Rians].⁴

Regrets not being able to preach a mission at Rians.

[Aix], January 4, 1819.

... So try, dear Pastor, to obtain by some other way the important help for the flock entrusted to you and which you cherish like a father. Nevertheless, I will put you on the list of missions requested so that, in the future, if you have not been able to accomplish your plan, your parish will be evangelized in its turn.⁵

24. [To Bishop Miollis of Digne].⁶

Success of the mission at Remollon. The diocese of Digne will have to furnish men for the Missionaries of Provence established at Laus.

[Remollon],⁷ February 13, 1819.

I don't think I can give you any news more consoling than the great success of the mission at Remollon that you had entrusted to me. It was your prayers and pastoral blessing that we received when you passed through Manosque which brought on our work all the graces that resulted in so many conversions. May Your Lordship long enjoy the happiness that this sort of consolation gives to a heart like yours; for our part, may we often be in a position to obtain that kind of happiness for you. For that to happen, however, you must in your goodness be concerned about us and furnish us with the means to action. Up to now you have granted us only one of the most ordinary men⁸ from your diocese; nevertheless, we were four priests at Remollon. The diocese of Aix, with fewer men than that of Digne but which has given us eight priests and as many novices,

⁴ Yenveux V, 33.

⁵ The Founder could not give the mission at Rians until November 11 to December 20, 1822.

⁶ Yenveux III, 158.

⁷ The mission at Remollon in the Upper Alps was preached from January 12 to February 14, 1819. According to a custom established very early by the Founder, the superior of the mission was to send a report to the Ordinary of the place right after each mission.

⁸ In February 1819, there were two priests from the diocese of Digne in the Institute: Father Moreau, an Oblate since November 1, 1818, and Touche, still a novice, but who went along with the Fathers on mission. Father Moreau was born in the diocese of Aix but belonged to the diocese of Digne, cf. Mr. Arbaud to Mazenod, August 16, 1818.

will not accept that we wage war with its soldiers outside of its territory, as long as it does not see a real contingent furnished by the diocese of Digne in this offensive and defensive war alliance between the two dioceses against the forces of evil.

There are certainly some priests in your diocese who are called to the work of the missions, priests who need a regular life lived in community so as not to be lost; when you entrust them to us you are not making a sacrifice since by assuring their own salvation they will work more effectively for the conversion of your own flock, so many of whom show no other evidence of being Christian than the fact of being baptized. But we need capable men to serve in this work, men fit worthily to proclaim the word of God. At Remollon we paid the price, for the men of Digne were not able to preach. The news alone that there are missionaries at Notre-Dame du Laus attracts a great number of sinners, even at this season, who occupy and weary that confrere of mine whom I left there with Mr. Touche. What will it be in summer, and how can we respond to so many needs? ... if you do not offer me some men who will certainly be most usefully at work in the whole diocese.

May Your Lordship carefully weigh all these things before the Lord and no longer be afraid to make a few sacrifices for which you will be immediately amply rewarded.

I have the honor to be, with deepest respect, Your Lordship's very humble servant.

25. [To Count Félix d'Albertas].⁹

Greetings and affection. A book received, useful to future missionaries. Eugène longs for solitude.

Aix, June 21, 1819.

I am embarrassed, dear Félix, every time you address yourself to me for advice on matters that you understand as well or much better than I: you know that two years ago your good mind knew and anticipated the judgment that you wanted me to give.¹⁰ I assure you that it cost me to be

⁹ Orig.: Aix, Albertas Archives. Félix d'Albertas (1789-1872) was Eugène de Mazenod's friend. His father had been President of the Court of Accounts with Charles Antoine, the Founder's father.

¹⁰ Eugène's letter of July 6, 1817 had been sent to Gémenos where the Albertas had a chateau.

obliged to give a decision that was not favorable to your interests, but you knew how to soften the somewhat painful position that you put me in by the noble sentiments you were careful to show me. I did not need this new proof of your loyalty to appreciate your worth. I really don't know why I am telling you this, but I feel some pleasure in having you read my thought. It seems that I am afraid that you don't sufficiently know how much love I bear you and the case I make for you. Forgive me this little aside: it compensates for what I cannot express when I am nearer to you and cannot reach you ...¹¹

Your Bonald¹² has done infinite good to my young philosophers, who, even though Christian, are not any less exposed to the contagion of this poisonous air that corrupts everything around us. Whenever you receive anything good along that line, political, moral, religious, once you have read it and had others read and reread it, pass it on to me; you will be doing great good. I am ever more dismayed at the tendency of all young heads to adopt all the systems that favor license. Should we then be surprised that so many old beards, even some among your class and mine, haven't more sense, in spite of their experience. And so, if it were not for the duties of my vocation, I would become a misanthrope to the point of hiding myself in solitude and concern myself only with eternity. I am losing my life's tranquility in trying to do some good for people. Have pity on me, for from morning to night, I am obliged to sacrifice my tastes and inclinations to what I believe to be my duty.

Farewell, pardon the length of my letter. I am happy to converse with you since you are among the small number of those whom I esteem and love.

E. de Mazenod

¹¹ There follows a paragraph, that we omit here, about a case of conscience concerning a financial matter.

¹² Viscount Louis de Bonald (1754-1840), a writer and defender of monarchical and Catholic principles, published several works among which is *Recherches philosophiques sur les premiers objets des connaissances morales* ...

26. To Madame Roux-Bonnecorse at Marseilles.¹³

Gratitude. Request for prayers for the next mission at Marseilles and for the Missionaries.

L.J.C.

Aix, July 27, 1819.

Madame,

I must begin by making excuses for having replied so tardily to the letter that you did the honor of writing to me. Please put the blame on those who will not accept the least delay in the usual services that they demand of my feeble person. I am grateful for the errands that you accepted to do, it's only fair that I do the ones you address to me, but what can you expect from someone who is so little a saint. At least I have the quality of knowing my inadequacy, and especially my lack of virtues; I do not, however, leaving off praying for those whose needs are less than mine, and to whom I recommend, in all confidence, my poor soul laden with its troubles.

It seems most likely that we will go to your area in January and February for the mission planned for such a long time; then we will need the help of your prayers and those of all the holy souls who are interested in God's glory and the salvation of souls. However, take care not to wait till then to recommend me to the Lord.

Please accept the assurance of my respectful sentiments; I have the honor of being your very humble servant.

Eug[è]ne de Mazenod, m[issiona]ry priest.

¹³ Orig.: Marseilles, Archives at the Bishop's Palace. Madame Roux, née de Bonnecorse, came from a family at Aix and lived at Marseilles. She was a benefactress of the Congregation and worked to have it established at Le Calvaire. In 1975 family descendants gave to the Archbishop of Marseilles 18 letters written by the Founder to Madame Roux between 1817 and 1843.

27. [To Archbishop de Bausset of Aix].¹⁴

An historical brief about the beginnings of the Society of the Missionaries of Provence and a request for a subsidy for the Fathers and study burses for the novices.

Aix, December 16, 1819.

Your Grace,

During the course of the year 1815, the abbés de Janson and Rauzan got together to respond to the Holy Father's views: the Pope wanted missions to be given in France. These gentlemen, counting on my good will, requested me to join them in that holy work. Their insistence was so pressing and the reasons they presented so conclusive that I could not but go along with their idea.

It was with great sorrow, however, that I saw myself almost forced to leave my diocese. From the time that I entered the clerical state, I had in my mind consecrated myself to its service. When I had the happiness of being made a priest, I persevered in that same intention and refused the gracious offers of the Bishop of Amiens who wanted to keep me close to himself as his Vicar General; I followed the attraction which inclined me to work in my own diocese. So it would cost me dearly to leave it and possibly never return.

I was in that state of perplexity when the Lord inspired me with the plan of establishing a society of missionaries at Aix who, as a priority, would undertake to evangelize the poor country people, even in the smallest Provençal hamlets. I shared my idea with the Vicars General who approved it; and immediately I started to put the plan in motion by setting down the foundation of this little society which has worked incessantly for five years for the conversion of souls with a success that is due to God alone and can be regarded as miraculous.

From that time on I could reply to the gentlemen de Janson and Rauzan that it was impossible for me to accede to their invitation because the needs of my own diocese were claiming my services. With some zealous companions I was going to start immediately that same ministry to which they had wanted to recruit me, ministry among the poor abandoned

¹⁴ A letter copied by Fortuné in his letter of December 30, 1819 to the President: Rome, Postulation Archives, fonds Boisgelin II, 2. Bishop de Bausset-Roquefort, transferred from Vannes on August 8, 1817, was not installed at Aix until November 13, 1819.

souls all around us. These gentlemen made another attempt, for they thought that I could be of some use to their society. They have never given up asking me to join them, always presenting very good reasons. These reasons do not answer my main argument which is based on the extreme needs of a diocese destitute of priests and full of unlettered poor people who can not be helped except by missionaries from their own people, who speak the same language and, if need be, are ready to return to them more than once a year to solidify the work of their conversion. So, I persisted in my first plan.

I cannot congratulate myself enough on the interest and confidence that I was shown by the Vicars General on the occasion of this establishment. They took this work under their protection and they continually defended it as enlightened administrators against all the efforts that Satan did not fail to apply and destroy it. I made it a point of principle to submit to these gentlemen that plan that I had conceived in order to render the service of the missionaries more useful to the diocese. They approved it and it was immediately put into action.

I took it upon myself to acquire at my own expense the locale which was to serve as a dwelling place for the new community. But the diocese would have to rightfully furnish the missionaries' upkeep. It was determined that this payment would be taken from vacant rectories of vicarial posts, in default of other means, which could have been found in the funds from the revenue of chairs of which the surplus could not have been more fittingly used. The Vicars General preferred to promise me what the deceased Mr. de Cicé called a *custodi nos* for each missionary, that is, the salary destined for the rector of a vacant parish: but I don't know by what chance, that arrangement was never carried out. I attribute this oversight to the conviction that the Vicars General possibly entertained that I could find the means to support the missionaries in some other way and that it would be that much of a saving for the diocese. At least I thought I understood it that way, and far from taking this in bad humor, I smiled at the thought and to reply to the secret intention that I attributed to them, I did in fact do all that I could to assist the diocese. But now our resources are all dried up; and it is not just now that such is the case. And how could it be otherwise? For the five years that we have been established, we have between all of us taken only 1162 francs from the diocese which, divided by and five and shared out to seven, the number of missionaries, comes to an annual income of thirty-three francs and a few pennies for each missionary, the only resource they have to feed and clothe themselves. I don't think I am offending my co-workers when I say that they are as rich in

virtue as they are poor in the goods of fortune. So, up to now I have been obliged to supplement what has not been done for them, whether by my own special means, or by the help I have procured in contributions from a very limited number of people of good will. These resources have dried up at the same time. The expenses of the establishment which cost me more than twenty thousand francs that I've not yet been able to finish paying, make it impossible for me to supply any longer from my own account the upkeep and food for my co-workers. My friends on their part have become tired in seeing no end to our needs; so the missionaries find themselves at the point of having nothing more to live on. Consequently, I am in the absolute necessity of having recourse to the Archbishop's kindness, an Archbishop who is too just to allow priests who sacrifice themselves in such a demanding ministry as preaching missions, priests who are always ready to move quickly at all times and at the least sign to that place where obedience shows us that some good is to be done, to suffer from not having the necessities of life. They are certainly far removed from wanting to rake in money; and so I'm asking for them only a sufficient salary to pay for their food and upkeep which I estimate to be four hundred francs per person.¹⁵

Besides this help for priests, I allow myself to add a request for six burses for those whom we call novices. They are young clerics whom we are forming for the ministry and who would all be an expense to the diocese in some seminary if they were not at the Mission. I must testify on their behalf that they all give the greatest hope and there are several who, by their great piety and talents, promise to serve the diocese in a distinguished manner. Our noviciate should be regarded as a true seminary; that's why, in granting the six burses that I'm asking for, Your Grace should not fear to divert the six burses from their original destination, even more so since I offer definite assurance for the perseverance of those of our students for whom I request this favor.

I have the honor of being, etc.

¹⁵ On December 22, 1819, Fortuné wrote to the President: "[Your son's] memorandum has been approved and gained for him an account of 1500 francs which he immediately withdrew."

28. [To Archbishop de Bausset of Aix, at Toulon].¹⁶

Events which took place at the cathedral on the closing day of the mission.

[Aix, May 1, 1820].

... Sunday was the day set to close the mission.¹⁷ We had prepared the remaining men and a few women for Communion. There was a very great number of these fervent, converted people: there were more than *nine hundred*. According to our custom, we were supposed to have a procession with the Blessed Sacrament on the same day.

The Gentlemen of the Chapter were not concerned about this and, with the intent to oppose it indirectly, changed the time of their Vespers to five o'clock.

I went to see Mr. Beylet, the Vicar General; I suggested that we put off the procession to the next day; such was not the view of the Vicar General who advised me to have it at noon.

Even though it was not a good time because of the heat, I counted enough on the zeal of the faithful to expose them to full heat of the burning sun. The procession took place; but since the Gentlemen of the Chapter had decided to supply nothing, when we were ready to start, we found no vestments, not even candlesticks for the acolytes. We were obliged to send someone successively to bring the dais, copes, chasubles, dalmatics, large candles, candlesticks, albs, censor, etc. from the poor church of the Missionaries. The delay brought on by this disorder kept the procession from starting until two o'clock. The route it was supposed to follow was rather long and there was a considerable number of faithful; in short, we returned rather late, all tired out from the heat. Since I would not have time to finish the closing talk before the Office of the Chapter, I preferred to send the faithful away to rest and I announced that the talk and the directives which were to follow would be at the usual time of our exercises.

That arrangement did not please them. Without telling me, Mr. Rey¹⁸ wanted to force the people to leave after the blessing that closed the

¹⁶ Rambert I, 317-319.

¹⁷ The closing of the mission was planned for April 24. In order to hear the confessions of late-comers, the Missionaries of Provence prolonged another week the exercises which ended on Sunday, April 30. The Founder wrote on the next morning.

¹⁸ Mr. Claude Rey whom Louis-Philippe named Bishop of Dijon on July 9, 1831. He was not approved till February 24, 1832.

Office of the Canons. Mr. Beylet commanded the parish priest to announce from the pulpit that the mission was closed and that there was nothing further to be said. The crowd did not budge, waiting for what I had announced shortly before. Mr. Rey took the liberty of scolding them: they murmured rather loudly; then he wanted them to say a *Pater* and an *Ave* to make up for what he called a scandal; they did not make an effort to reply, or to put it better, many people gave him definite signs of disapproval. After this exchange, Father Delbieu¹⁹ came up to have them sing hymns. No sooner had the people seen a Missionary appear than they applauded, shouting out: "Long life the Missionaries". Father Deblieu announced that, since the mission would end only with the closing talk, they were going to start singing till I arrived. That announcement brought on new transports of joy, which he quietened by intoning the hymns. I arrived not suspecting anything; I entered the church and found that calm had been perfectly restored. I prepared to go into the pulpit when they alerted me that Mr. Beylet had forbidden me to preach. I went to the parish priest to find out if this strange news was true.²⁰ Mr. Honorat assured me that the Grand Vicar had commanded him expressly to notify me that I was forbidden to preach. I shuddered at the consequences of such an untimely contradiction; but, believing that in God's eyes it was more perfect to obey, I climbed up on a chair to prepare this crowd for the news that I hesitated so much to give.

Though I chose my words carefully they were filled with indignation. Shouting, they threw themselves on me. I escaped but they did not leave me. When I got out of the church, the shouts redoubled with everyone hurrying to embrace me; the men lifted me up, shouting: "Long live Father de Mazenod, long live the Missionaries!" The crowd kept getting larger every moment and it was with great difficulty that I was able to start on the way to our house, accompanied all the way by that crowd which filled our church, our house and Carmelite square. Unfortunately the anger against the authors of the disorder which had just taken place was mixed in with affectionate shouts about us. In the midst of all this tumult, I succeeded in making myself heard from the steps of our church.

¹⁹ Fathers de Mazenod and Deblieu preached at the Cathedral, Maunier and Mie at St-Jean *extra muros*, Tempier and Moreau at the church of the Mission.

²⁰ Yenneux (III,156) quotes from this letter; his text differs from that of Rambert: "At this strange news, I shuddered at the consequences ... I even hesitated to make a decision; I was tempted to disobey in order to avoid the horrible scandal that I foresaw ... but believing that in God's eyes it was more perfect to obey ..."

I beseeched the people to calm down, to respect authority and keep the peace. I asked this of them as an expression of their attachment to me. Apparently they were touched by my words and promised to leave, all the while shouting out again: “Long live the Missionaries, etc.” The most eager ones had entered the house and did not leave until far into the night in spite of my insistence. This morning the crowd has gathered again.

29. To Madame de Mazenod, Papassaudy Street, no. 2, at Aix, B.-du-Rhône.²¹

Peace and solitude at N.-D. du Laus.

L.J.C.

Notre-Dame du Laus, Feast of St. Peter [June 29, 1820].

Dear mother, if everyone who is dear to me were here, I would be quite glad never to leave, so delightful is my stay. You would have to be here to grasp that. Separated from the whole world, we see in this solitude only fervent Christians concerned only with their salvation and because of their example one is not tempted to be involved in anything else. The life I am leading is so peaceful and I taste its charms so strongly that I cannot think without a feeling of aversion that I must soon leave it²² and go back into that tiresome situation²³ that I detest so much and to which I am dedicated almost like a victim. If it weren't so difficult to travel at this season, I would invite you to make this pilgrimage...²⁴

30. [To Mr. Adolphe Tavernier, at Aix].²⁵

Father de Mazenod's apostolate with pilgrims. Friendship.

Notre-Dame-du-Laus, July 2, 1820.

I am really caught, dear Adolphe; I had reserved today to write to you and to chat a little longer after having taken care of all my little business

²¹ Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives, Boisgeline Collection I, 8.

²² Father de Mazenod arrived at Laus with the novices on June 21, 1821; he had to stay there till the middle of August to replace Father Tempier, detained at Aix by the illness and death of his father.

²³ That is the only way that this word *oulvari* can be read: it is not French, Italian or Provençal; did the Founder want to write: *charivari*?

²⁴ Further on in the letter, the Founder invites his mother to take care of her health.

²⁵ Copy in A. Tavernier, *Quelques souvenirs sur Mgr C.-E. de Mazenod*, Aix, 1872, p.76.

and it so happens that I haven't a single minute. Since early morning an immense crowd has gathered in this desert and told us that two processions were near, that means two entire populations were coming here to pay their homage to the Blessed Virgin, according to their custom. We had to go immediately and hear the confessions of these fervent pilgrims and then to preach in order to satisfy their ardor.

I am stopping since it is impossible for me to continue; my hand is trembling to the point of not being able to hold the pen; don't be alarmed at this phenomenon, I know the reason for it. The nerves of my arm are tired out from a grueling exercise that it had to carry on for two hours. All the faithful gathered here would not go away satisfied without having kissed the relic of the true cross and the reliquary is too heavy. In short, I cannot go on and I prefer to send you this scribbling rather than have you think that I neglected writing to you. Farewell, I embrace you a thousand times and am for you what you know.

The evening Office has just ended. The church was not able to hold the crowd of faithful any more than it did this morning. Hymns are echoing all over; everyone is leaving; it is six o'clock; most of them still have four hours to walk, and they will continue to sing their praises of the Lord like that all the way home. You have to see what is going on here to get an idea of it. Farewell, good evening, good night. I embrace you once more ...

31. [To Mr. Adrien Chappuis at Aix].²⁶

An account of Father Courtès' first Mass. The Community's emotions. Regret at seeing Adrien resisting grace.

[N.-D. du Laus], July 31, 1820.

I have just come down from the altar where I assisted our angelic Courtès who offered the Holy Sacrifice for the first time. O friend, if only you had been there! You would have shared in the happiness, the delightful joy, a kind of ecstasy on the part of all those whom devotion had attracted to our shrine.²⁷

²⁶ Yenneux IV, 77; V, 45; Rambert I, 324-327.

²⁷ Father Courtès was ordained on July 30 at Gap. Father Rambert wrote in this regard: "It was a great event in the humble Society of the Missionaries of Provence, the ordination and first Mass of a new priest. The family was so few in numbers, vocations so rare, formation of men so slow and difficult! Furthermore, we were so united in this little family; so well we are only one body and one spirit, that one's joy was everyone's joy, and the grace received by the new priest was a grace received by all his brothers ..."

I will certainly not undertake to repeat what has taken place among us, such things cannot be described. All I want to say is that I regret that you were not there, because I am sure that at least in this moment when heaven opened to us to lavish on our souls a superabundance of unutterable external consolations, your soul would have been lifted up to God, absorbed in him as ours were, and you would have loved, yes, dear Adrien, you would have loved the infinitely lovable²⁸.

Mass lasted for an hour and a half and I don't say enough; but everyone found it too short. Imagine a cherubim filled with the purest love of God, imbued with the grandeur of the action working in his favor and through his ministry, whose soul was visibly acting on that weak body that you know and transforming it; no, that cannot be described. That mixture of recollection, sweetness, piety, love, and possession visible on his face, evident in every bodily expression; the tears, sobs, that kind of faintness at the formidable moment when Jesus Christ was going to obey for the first time the suppliant voice of his new minister, once again, that cannot be described, you must experience it, and you would have felt it as we did if you had been present. It's not a matter of faith at those happy moments, you don't think about it, you see, feel, and touch; Oh! No. You no longer touch earth, you find yourself without knowing how in full communication with heaven. We are, in a word, in God as we will be when, after being freed from this wrapping of flesh, we will be able to contemplate him face to face. And so how delighted we all were! It was a kind of ecstasy. Tears were running or better streaming from every eye. Even Ignace²⁹ who had never been able to cry in his life was all wet and suppressing his sobs. The holy fire which was burning on the altar, aided so efficaciously by the love and fervor of the new priest, the angel who was offering the Holy Sacrifice, was circulating and enveloping all of us. I am not concocting formulas, I'm looking for a way to express what I see myself incapable of saying but which I feel very deeply. My emotion did not last only during this memorable Mass of Courtès, my soul was as though insatiable for the happiness that it had just tasted; I assisted at the Mass of Thanksgiving that Mr. Touche offered for us; I remained kneeling all the while it lasted, and the impression of what had just happened was so strong and profound that I stayed in the same state right to the end, and it would have lasted longer had they not disturbed me.

²⁸ Adrien Chappuis, born in 1820, was a member of the youth congregation and had thought about being a missionary. In 1820 his conduct caused Father de Mazenod some concern; so, the latter made use of this good occasion to try and touch the heart of one of his beloved sons. Adrien, a lawyer, became the inspector general of finances at Paris and always maintained excellent relations with Bishop de Mazenod.

²⁹ Ignace Voitot, a former soldier, entered novitiate on May 30, 1822 as a Brother. He left in 1823.

Dear Adrien, would you believe it? During the most precious moments, you never ceased being present to me; in truth, it was not, as often happens, with a predominant feeling of bitterness and chagrin; no, you were present to me as I understand we are to the Saints who enjoy in heaven a happiness which cannot be troubled by the sight and knowledge of our miseries which they nevertheless want to remedy very effectively; but that state regarding you lasted only during the Mass of Courtès. I did not cease praying very much for you and offering for this same intention the powerful mediation of the new priest who had placed his own intention at my disposal; for you will never grasp the immensity of my love for you.

After the Mass and during the one that followed, my soul, which was constantly permeated with the intimate presence of God who just manifested himself to us, gave into a feeling of sadness it had never experienced before. First of all, the sight of my sins covered me with great confusion, especially when I weighed God's goodness against my ingratitude, I groaned bitterly and begged pardon with tears; immediately you were once again present in my thoughts, but then I felt the full weight of my care and an ardent desire for your true happiness, contradicted and compromised by the obstacles that you always put in the way. Knowing the superabundant graces that the Lord has granted you since he confided you to me, and the experience of the carelessness, not to say contempt, with which you rejected them ... Courtès, your childhood companion, your fellow disciple, filled with consolation, lifted up to heaven, because he was docile to my counsel, faithful to grace; and you who, even though in another state, could proportionately feel the same happiness, given over to dissipation, lacking in good works and merits, having sown only wind, able to harvest only tempests, because, forever refusing my kind advice, the counsels of my friendship, you have wanted to follow another route than the one I traced out for you. This striking contrast threw me once again into a kind of inner desolation which made me offer even more ardent prayers for your salvation, to the point of offering to God, as I did several times, my own life in exchange for your perseverance and sanctification. I find some consolation in that thought, for *majorem charitatem nemo habet ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis*.³⁰

Farewell. May you one day understand my heart and console it!

Eugène.

³⁰ John 15:13. "There is no greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

**32. To Madame Roux, née Bonnacorse, Dominicans Street,
Marseilles.³¹**

*The Missionaries would be happy to work in the service of the poor at
Marseilles.*

L.J.C.

Aix, Janu[ary] 3, 1821.

Madame,

My uncle and Mr. Deblieu have just informed me of all that your kind heart and the desire for good which animates you have inspired you to do, in spite of the bad weather and the state of your health. I thank you very sincerely for these things and leave to God, as in regard to very many other things, the care of rewarding you. At the same time my uncle informed me about the proposal of the Gentlemen of Providence. If I understood it well, these Gentlemen would want to know if we could undertake the direction of the poor people that their charity has gathered together in the former property of Mr. Allemand. That kind of ministry enters perfectly into our line of work; I was so convinced of that that three years ago I took some steps to bring the poor of the city of Aix together and instruct them in their religious duties; certain difficulties obliged me to put off that plan to another time. Now it is all done at Marseilles. If those Gentlemen think that we can second the holy work that they have undertaken, we are at their command. Our good desire asks only that we can promote it, that we be supplied with the means to do good, that's all we want; besides, to be truthful, they must then undertake to help us do the task well by praying very much for us, for we recognize that we are inadequate and so we count only on the powerful help of God who never abandons those who place their full trust in him.

Accept, Madame, the assurance of my respectful sentiments and the strong sincere wishes that I make for you and your respectable family in this New Year.

Eug[è]ne de Mazenod, p[riest], m[issionary].

³¹ Orig.: Marseilles, Archives of the Archbishop's house.

33. To the Archbishop of Aix at Marseilles.³²

Requests a blessing for the success of the Brignoles Mission. Father de Mazenod will reply to Mr. Rauzan that the Parish Priests of Marseilles prefer the Missionaries of Provence over the Missionaries of France.

Aix, January 12, 1821.

Your Grace,

We are going to leave for the Mission at Brignoles.³³ Your absence deprives us of the happiness of receiving your blessing which we have always regarded as a sure sign of our success. So, please make up for it by sending it to us from the holy altar the first time that you offer the holy sacrifice. I don't hide all the difficulties of the demanding enterprise that we are going to start, but the prayers of our chief pastor will be heard and grace will triumph over man's perversity. I entertain this confidence all the more because I have always shown an extreme repugnance for this mission and Providence has guided events in such a manner that does not let me put it off any longer.

Your Grace, I believe it a duty to finally break silence on a topic about which I have always hesitated to talk with you. Even though I didn't know how to win your confidence and consequently my view would not have carried great weight, I was afraid to show it since that could very well have turned you against an establishment which at first glance you might have considered useful to your diocese. Now that a deeper examination and the opinion of the wisest men in the diocese have been obliged to make you aware of the drawbacks of this appealing plan, I am taking the liberty to speak to you about it; not as yet to let you know what I think about it but to let you know the position in which I find myself in regard to Mr. Rauzan. He calls me to let him know my viewpoint and that of the wise men of the diocese, and my viewpoint, in accord with that of the wise men of the diocese, is contrary to his outlook. I am all the more embarrassed because, if I am to tell him the truth, I must let him know that the Parish Priests of Marseilles would not gladly see the Missionaries of his Society come in, but that they have shown the "greatest" desire to have such an establishment of missionaries like ours in their city to which they would entrust the care of those members of their flock who are most abandoned. They have experienced the incalculable advan-

³² Orig.: Aix, Archives of the Archbishop's house.

³³ The mission was preached from January 14 to February 25, 1821.

tage of such an establishment, not only for the great many people of this great city, but also for all the sectors that they would successively evangelize, and that could thereafter be easily cared for. Some respectable people went further, formally proposing that I agree to make this establishment as soon as possible: I referred them to the decision that you will take when you are on the spot, because I cannot determine anything else than what you consider fitting. It is up to you, Your Grace, to decide the matter. It is not up to me to exert pressure on your solicitude; I know too well the desire you have for the good of your people and so I do not feel obliged to do anything else than expose the facts to you. It is easy enough to acquaint yourself with the parish priests of Marseilles, and after that you will let me know your intentions to which I will always be eager promptly to conform myself.³⁴

In the meantime, I will finally reply to Mr. Rauzan even though it costs me a lot to do so. But I think that he has been prepared for what I am forced to tell him, when he was made aware of how the parish priests of Marseilles think. Never will a letter be more carefully weighed.

Accept, Your Grace, the sentiments of profound respect with which I am your very humble servant, Eugène de Mazenod.

34. [To. Mr. Rauzan at Paris].³⁵

Father de Mazenod will accept Archbishop de Bausset's decision about establishment of Missionaries at Marseilles.

[Aix, January 12, 1821].³⁶

... All of us, you and we, work for the glory of God. May God be glorified! That is all I want. It matters little whether it is through our ministry or yours. For myself, I shall always rejoice over all the good you accomplish and all the blessings that come to you. I go where I am sent and take the place assigned to me. It is for the bishop who represents the

³⁴ Bishop de Bausset authorized both Societies to be established at Marseilles, cf. J. Leflon, *Eugene de Mazenod*, Vol. II, pp. 170-184.

³⁵ Rey I, 261; Rambert I, 329.

³⁶ A passage copied by Rey and Rambert without date. The Founder most likely wrote it at the same time as the previous one to Archbishop de Bausset; he left the day after for Brignoles where he stayed till the end of February (Rey I, 261). We possess only the end of this letter.

Father of the family to determine what work is to be done and the portion of the vineyard where a given worker will do the most good and that in a way that is more or less useful. Come what may, I shall always be devoted to you and shall always attach the greatest value to the friendship you have kindly shown me.

35. To Madame de Mazenod [at Aix].³⁷

Regrets he did not meet Madame de Mazenod before leaving for the mission at Brignoles. Request for prayers.

L.S.J.C.

Brignoles, J[anuar]y 16, 1821.

Good mother, I cannot tell you how sorry I was that I could not embrace you before leaving. I was very surprised when I asked where you were to hear that you had taken the road to Grans. I remembered then that you had spoken about it, but I didn't know it was for that day. My regret increased when I learned that you had knocked at my door; but apparently I was at the other end of the second room and did not hear you. So it is that you are at Grans and I am at Brignoles. But, even though we are separated in body, we can be present to each other in spirit. Certainly, I greatly need you to be concerned about me before the good Lord: it is no light matter to be burdened with a ministry like that laid on me: to announce the day of the Lord to a large number of people, to a lost people, and in some way to respond for the immense treasure which will certainly have to be spent and that at the burden of the church; to fear lest the lack of virtue, the personal infidelity of the minister be an obstacle, intercepting, so to speak, the flow of those precious graces of salvation, those life-giving waters which are meant to reach the faithful through his channel. There is enough to be concerned about; and if it were not for the experience of God's superabundant mercies and his compassion for the incapacity and weakness of those he sends, no doubt because he favors the people he wishes to save, there would be every reason to lose courage. However everything here is going beyond our hopes and God will be greatly glorified. I embrace you as well as my uncle.

³⁷ Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives, Boisgelin Collection I, 8.

36. To Madame Roux-Bonnet, at the home of Masters Roux, brothers, Marseilles.³⁸

Difficulties encountered in the plan to found the Missionaries at Marseilles. God's will.

L.J.C.

Brignoles, Feb[ruary] 11, 1821.

Madame,

You are acquainted with the work of a mission, the one in Brignoles even surpasses them; in my estimation, it is too much, so I have time for nothing, not even to reply to business letters nor to thank people like you, Madame, who give us so many marks of friendship. You know what that situation is, I bank on that. I am completely resigned to whatever Providence will decide for us. I would gladly have formed an establishment at Marseilles; if the schemes and self-love of men oppose it, I will not hold a grudge against anyone nor will I complain about it to whomever it might be. I seem to perceive in the resolution that you told me about in your last letter, that it might be a little manoeuvre on the part of those who place a great value on seeing the arrival of the gentlemen from Paris; they perhaps consider that if those gentlemen saw us established at M[arsei]lles before they came, they might possibly give up their plan and that is why they propose this extraordinary measure of taking a so-called indefinite time to decide the question; in the meantime, the gentlemen from Paris will come, then they will raise the negative reasons, which will be suggested by the Archbishop's Council, against having two houses of Missionaries in the same city, etc., and that will be that! The good Lord knows our good will, the plans we conceive for his glory and the good of the people of Marseilles and its surroundings. Possibly we will not merit being the instruments of his mercy, or perhaps the people will not merit experiencing its effects. We are none the less grateful to you and to Mr. Roux whose good spirit and friendship I have felt in this circumstance.

They have informed Mr. Père that the priests of Marseilles are starting a general retreat today, which clearly tells us that they are not too sure about the one that the Archbishop wanted the Miss[ion]aries of Paris to

³⁸ Orig.: Marseilles, archives of the Archbishop's house.

give and which had been announced to us by the aloof Mr. Damico³⁹ who didn't want to disturb me when he passed through Brignoles and was content to see and speak with Mr. Père who was ten paces away and just as busy as I was.

I pray that God will keep you and your whole family. What does it matter that you bring daughters into the world if they are predestined to possess God for all eternity. You will always be a happy mother and I hope happy through your children.

I am writing to you bundled up in my coat from having just come down from the pulpit in order not to miss the mail which is about to leave. So forgive my scribbling.

I have the honor of being your very humble servant,

Eug[è]ne de Mazenod.

37. [To Madame Roux-Bonnecorse at Marseilles].⁴⁰

The Missionaries of Provence will establish themselves at the Oeuvre de la Providence, but will not accept the stingy conditions that a minority of the administrators wanted to lay down.

L.J.C.

St-Chamas, April 11, [1821].

Madame,

The parish priest of St-Laurent advised me the very day of the meeting⁴¹ of the decision taken in our regard; so as not to miss the mail, however, he wrote only a few words. The details you added please me greatly for I consider it very important to miss nothing of all that is going on and to be informed about everything.

³⁹ Mr. Damico, assistant priest at St.-Martin, had with Madame Emérigon, organized a campaign to have the Missionaries of France established at Marseilles as soon as possible.

⁴⁰ Orig.: Marseilles, Archives of the Archbishop's house.

⁴¹ The general assembly of the administrators of the Oeuvre de la Providence pour les orphelins.

It seems that among the gentlemen of the minority⁴² there are some Administrators who had imposed on the Brothers of St. John of God certain conditions which made them flunkies of the work that they intended to serve.

I have always held that the Church's ministers should be the most disinterested men in the world; but no one, however, professes more loudly than I that is impossible for them to do the least good if they do not give honor to their ministry first of all by the virtues that they must strive to practice, and then by never allowing anyone to debase their person by demanding shameful concessions which lowers them in the eyes of those very people in whose favor they made them.

It is already a great drawback, a rather humiliating circumstance that we were not called by a unanimous vote without this minority, as lacking in zeal as it is uncivil, still wanting to lay down conditions which give the impression that they are doing us a favor, which we can accept only if we debase ourselves.

Notice the impropriety. At the same time as they kneel before the gentlemen of Paris (I'm writing only for you and your husband) to beg them to accept a house as property and all the rest, they seem to scorn our gentlemen to the point of laying down ignominious conditions on them if they want to come and occupy a corner of the house of the children of Providence, leaving to individuals the care of providing table, chair and bed to furnish their room. I swear that had I been in these gentlemen's place, I would never have acted like that. The whole Society should have regarded as a precious opportunity the founding of an establishment deemed useful by all the city's parish priests, and it should have done it in a manner required by politeness and civility. In any case, I am resolved to pass over whatever one might have wished or expected from a group of religious and learned men, I will ignore everything that was crude in adopting a plan in which I seek only the glory of God and the good of neighbor; as to the conditions, however, I will never consent to accept those of little honour for the Society of which I am the superior and consequently the guardian and defender.

⁴² A rather small but active minority were in fact fighting the plan to confide the chaplaincy of the Divine Providence Orphanage to the Missionaries, objecting that this spiritual ministry would encroach on the authority and prerogatives of the lay administration, cf. J. Leflon, *Eugène de Mazenod*, Vol. II, p. 180.

I will not respond to the reflections of those gentlemen who pretend that it will not be I who will go to Marseilles but some young apprentice missionary. What do they know about it? If this establishment were to take the stability that I ask the Lord to provide for it, why would I not be involved to a great extent therein? Do they know the value of all the men we have so as to scorn everyone else besides myself or Mr. D[ebliu]? Let them know that I have several co-workers whom I prefer to Mr. D[ebliu]. Besides, do they think that Mr. Rauzan or Mr. Guion will come and establish themselves at Marseilles?

I will be at Aix on Monday, consequently, take this into account when writing to me. Don't let anyone read my letter: someone could misinterpret it if he didn't know me; to you however, I owe the truth.

Eugène.

38. To the Gentlemen Directors of the Oeuvre de la Providence, at Marseilles.⁴³

The Missionaries of Provence will live at the Oeuvre de la Providence to provide spiritual direction for the orphans.

Aix, April 20, 1821.

Gentlemen,

When one⁴⁴ of your respected associates came to me on your behalf to sound out my attitude towards the project you were envisaging, I had to tell him that I gladly shared your views, for they were in perfect harmony with the spirit of our statute and with the desire we entertain to cooperate as much as we can in the welfare of a city whose population is so dear to us.

It was a matter of establishing a house of our Society under the roof⁴⁵ which serves as shelter to the children of Providence, so that the members of this house, while attending to the different works of their ministry, could also apply themselves to the *spiritual* direction of these children.

⁴³ Orig.: Aix, Arbaud museum, 2687-A3.

⁴⁴ Mr. Dugas, a friend of Father de Mazenod's, cf. J. Leflon, *op.cit.*, p.180.

⁴⁵ De Lenche square, in the former hotel of Riqueti de Mirabeau.

It was all the easier for me to accept in advance the proposal presented to me because I felt confident that, in agreeing thereto, I would be responding to the wishes of all the persons of good will in Marseilles, and especially to the desire expressed by the parish priests of this city. When consulted about the proposal to set up an establishment of Missionaries, the latter honoured our Society with unanimous support.

In answer to your letter of the 17th instant that you did me the honour of writing wherein you sent me an excerpt of your deliberations of April 16th, in which you propose that I establish a house of our Congregation on your premises, I have only to ratify the consent I had given previously.

With thanks, therefore, I accept the offer you make to me and the premises you provide for our accommodation in your establishment.

However, while I admire the fine tact in your procedure, which tact keeps you silent about the condition that you can consider as burdensome to us, I have no intention of backing away from this obligation: not only because it is quite right that, by calling the missionaries to be so near to the children whom your charity is nourishing, they relieve your concern of a responsibility which by nature must rest upon them, for it is an integral part of their holy ministry; but also because such is the formal intention of His Grace the Archbishop who gave me an order in this sense when he gave his consent that I could accept your proposal. Besides, the proprieties are eloquent enough on this point to let us feel its necessity, independently of the peremptory reasons I have just exposed, which determine the nature of our duties and which, consequently, have to be the rule of our conduct. When I spoke of the direction of the children, I meant to speak only of the direction of their conscience and of giving those instructions that the Church reserves to her ministers. Nothing is more edifying than to see good Christian laity teaching children the basics of Christian doctrine. Such good work cannot be too much encouraged and deserves the greatest praise.

My plan is to come to Marseilles on Monday. I venture to hope that in my eagerness to respond to your invitation you will recognize the sincere desire I shall always have to share your views and to cooperate in your good works.

Gentlemen, I am respectfully your very humble and obedient servant,

Eug[è]ne de Mazenod, priest, missionary.

39. [To the Pastor of Brignoles].⁴⁶

Complains to the pastor for not appreciating and for speaking badly of the mission given by the Missionaries of Provence.

Aix, August 23, 1821.

Dear Pastor, possibly I have been too sensitive in regard to your behavior; it may be that I have expressed too honestly a reaction that is too strong. If that is the case, I do not intend to justify myself. What man, however, would not feel badly wounded when he saw you apply as much care to keep us away from your parishioners (at the time of the return mission), as everyone else in like circumstances would have applied to bring us close to them. Do not think that the righteous discontent I express has any other motive than the duty our character lays on us. If we consider the matter from a human point of view, it is of little importance to us to reappear at your place for a return mission; we wanted merely to consolidate by renewed effort a work so happily begun. If I asked you for it, it was for a greater good and contrary to my own inclination and needs which rather have led me to take a rest. If you had some good reason for putting off these exercises which are considered everywhere as necessary after a mission, it was easy for you to tell me so politely without having recourse to a veritable defamation. Wasn't it at your insistent demand that we went and sacrificed our rest and health for two whole months in order to be of some use to your people? You were in a position to notice our constant attention to render you, I don't say merely all the respect that politeness demands, but a continual deference which made us renounce in some circumstances some of our customs only out of consideration for you whose ideas we wanted to counter in the least possible way. And how come you are not sensitive to the feelings of frank and affectionate friendship, of which I never ceased to give you proof all the time that I was with you, as well as to the repeated manifestation of respect and deference that I showed for your person, eager to express at every encounter the sentiments I had vowed to you. You reproached me for my rancor, a baseness that has never had a place in my heart, even in regard to those who wanted to harm me most. That has reached a point that I don't have any great merit when I forgive injuries.

You tell anyone who is willing to listen that: "the fire left only cinders". If that were the case, you would have succeeded in filling us with

⁴⁶ Yenveux (I, 132-136; V, 66) does not say which pastor is involved. Brignoles was the only large parish evangelized during the missionary campaign of 1820-1821.

deeply felt sadness; and even though we certainly knew that we were not responsible for such defection, we would be nonetheless afflicted by it; but, thanks be to God, I find something in your own letter to reassure me. First, you told me that no girls went to the feast-day ball; that is already something, that half of the population remembered the principles that we had inculcated in them. Who knows if the young men in great number would not have followed the example of the girls if, supported as they should have been, they would have found the necessary help in a Congregation? That was our view. Moreover, you tell me that the dissipation did not nearly produce the results that I seemed to fear; this is due to good things remembered from the mission.

As to the calculations you make about the number of Easter Communion, we must remember that reconciliation in the sacrament of Penance does not give impeccability any more than justification in baptism does. We cannot avoid groaning with bitterness when we consider the instability of resolutions and the extreme misery of human weakness. Alas! Fortunately for us! O [our] L[ord] knew the sad condition of our corrupt nature; that's why, in instituting the sacrament of Penance in such a way that it may be worthily received several times by the same person, he has reassured in advance the priest who administers it according to the rules, and at the same time has held back the poor sinner from the despair to which he might have given in without this provident mercy. Your comment, therefore, gives me no scruples, and I continue to believe that even what did not last was still real and not just apparent, as you think.

Allow me to quote you the following incident, in order to soften the pain that you rightly feel at the defection of a great number of your parishioners. One of the most respectable pastors of Marseilles, after noticing all the good that came to his parishioners during the mission, said to our Missionaries: "I am very happy at the present good result; but I will be very happy if five percent continue; then I would not consider our efforts lost". - Six months later, beaming with joy, he told us: "I am more happy than I had hoped; for your return mission you will still find more than 15. And what did he not do to achieve this result?" And so, according to your figuring, you are much better off than he, since, by your admission, you found 50 percent at Easter; and you would undoubtedly have had more, if you had been able to get a sixth priest you were asking for at that time, for you were not able to take care of all the great number of penitents with your four assistants.

There remains only to reject your blaming me for not speaking enough about the Sunday Mass. If your age and infirmities had allowed

you to take part in the morning instructions, which gave an explanation of the Commandments, you would be aware that we said everything we ought to about this matter.

Your letter will stay with us as a memorial of man's ingratitude. It will teach our missionaries that they should not expect any other reward from men for their work except insults and scorn, and that they should place their trust only in God. I apply this lesson to myself. I believe I can say that, insensitive as I am to all praise because of the poor opinion I have of myself, ever since I have been working in the holy ministry, I was elated only by your approbation; I was also counting on your esteem and friendship. God has enlightened me; I am grateful to him.

This letter will seem severe to you, especially if you have forgotten the content of your own. It is not, you should see it only as the necessary response to what I have received from you. In conscience I had to refute the charges which outrage my ministry and the group of which I am a part; but I have done so only in the interest of truth ... I am no less filled with veneration for you all of whose merits I know and appreciate, and I am no less disposed to prove to you now and always that you do not have a more devoted friend; these feelings are sincere and not incompatible with my desire to freely use the right to say what I think when someone unjustly attacks our conduct or intentions ...⁴⁷

⁴⁷ The pastor asked pardon and the Founder replied on August 29: "Sir, you give me your hand, I take it gladly and embrace you as a sign of perfect reconciliation, even though it is true that we were at variance for a moment. The letter that I think you did not really want to write will be burnt and I will keep in exchange the one in which you were good enough to give me the assurance of your undying friendship. I did all that depended on me to merit it, and possibly I would have been less sensitive to the fear of making a mistake when I was assured of it, if I had appreciated it less. Accept, then, I beg you, the renewed assurance that I give you of all my good sentiments and forever reserve for the place in your heart that you have chosen to give me. I have the honor of being, etc. ...

(Yenveux V, 86)

**40. To Madame de Mazenod, Papassaudy Street, No. 2, Aix,
Bouches-du-Rhône.**⁴⁸

Good start of the mission. News.

L.J.C.

La Ciotat, November 6, 1821.

You would probably be sad, dear Mother, if I did not give you some news about myself. So, I am writing a few lines to say that we arrived safely, in marvelous health.⁴⁹

We are very pleased with the beginning of our mission. Continue to pray that some good is done and that everyone may profit from such a precious grace as that which is now offered to the inhabitants of this city. As I must treat you as a mother, I won't forget to tell you that we are eating excellent fish here and are lacking nothing for our bodily needs.

I had no time to tell you more yesterday and today I am going to make a short trip which hinders me from writing to the Mission as I had intended to do. I embrace you wholeheartedly, as well as our whole family.

Eug[è]ne.

41. [To Mr. Adolphe Tavernier at Aix].⁵⁰

Friendship. Mission.

[La Ciotat, November-December 1821].⁵¹

If I didn't give any sign of life to my dear Adolphe, what he think of me? He would think me insensitive, ungrateful. Even as I write him these

⁴⁸ Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives, Boisgelin Collection I, 8.

⁴⁹ The Mission at Ciotat was preached from November 4 to December 23.

⁵⁰ Copy in A. Tavernier, *Quelques souvenirs sur Mgr C.-E. de Mazenod...* Aix 1872, p. 81.

⁵¹ An undated letter; it is placed after the one dated July 29, 1821. It seems to be written during the first mission that the Founder preached in the autumn, namely the one at La Ciotat, from November 4 to December 23. It is probably a reply to the last letter we have of A. Tavernier, written on October 9, 1821, in which Adolphe describes the state of his soul and praises the Founder's virtues: "Affectionate friend, do you want us to deplore together the inseparable vexations of our condition? Never has my heart been more disposed to complain of all the evils that we meet ceaselessly at every step; and here I am speaking more to the one whom heaven has given me as a support in the way of virtue than to a friend

few lines he will know that I am not responding to him because I don't trust my heart which would be too tempted to take away from the duties of state a moment that it would find so sweet to spend with him. I embrace him wholeheartedly. May this dear friend be pleased by this short note that I am writing him in the midst of combat, on the battlefield, still armed with every weapon against hell against which we are powerfully striking, with God's help.

42. [To Mr. Figon, Pastor of Aubagne].⁵²

The Missionaries of Provence will give a mission at Aubagne during the following Lent. Details and advice.

Aix, October 5, 1822.

Dear Sir,

It is truly enough that you had the goodness to cede your right last year so as not to oppose carrying out of commitments that the Archbishop had made in favor of another parish. You can count on us for the period you have chosen, that is for Lent of 1823. You will allow me to put off fixing an exact date for the opening until after the missions which must precede that at Aubagne; circumstances that cannot be foreseen may require a week's delay.⁵³

whom my heart has chosen. Why does it happen in life that what we have detested, what appeared to us as being most hideous in our sight, reappears in our thoughts with a charm we did not think it had and awakens in the depths of our heart something that we thought extinguished? Why is there this power of evil? Why does virtue often attract us less than vice? Why do we sometimes find ourselves reduced to not finding even in prayer the peace we had been looking for? I have already replied to all of these questions, but is your voice that I wish to hear. You know what it can do for my soul. It is possibly from you that will come the peace that I am seeking. Ah! How often has it happened that I placed you before my eyes, to see you as you were, generous, strong, guiding your great soul through the midst of seductions that you despised so much. Before such a beautiful model, who would not blush at not sacrificing himself? Who would not blush to follow with such slow steps where you had run so rapidly? Who would not have been afire to get where you are? My soul doesn't know how to resist the enthusiasm sparked by a whole life wherein the force of the first days equals the holiness of those spent in the ministry. And the one whom I admire, I can call him my friend! Stop at that last thought if the others have displeased you: consider also that, if my heart often needed to tell you that it loved you, it also often felt the need to describe you as you really are.

Adieu! Adieu! (*ibid.* pp. 67-68)

⁵² Orig. Aubagne, Parish Archives.

⁵³ This mission was preached by Fathers Mie and Suzanne only in Lent of 1826. Fortune's nomination to the See of Marseilles by the Royal Ordonnance of January 13, 1823, hindered Father de Mazenod from keeping his promise.

You will help us greatly if you do not entrust the feeding of the Missionaries to some restaurant-keeper; the Parish Board will be responsible for finding some good lady who can do that service at less cost and in a more fitting manner. We are forbidden to take such items as poultry, game and pastry. So it will not be hard to find someone who can put a pot on the fire and make what we call in Provence *la Carbonade*.

I would like to know the exact number of the population of your parish so I can determine the number of Missionaries. Since we follow the confessional method of your holy patriarch, Saint Vincent de Paul,⁵⁴ that is, hearing confessions without intermission, we don't go very fast. I hope that your Assistants will want to help us in this demanding ministry, in which case we can include them in our calculations. To sum up I flatter myself that we all form but one family of which you will be the father and that we will have but one heart and one will. Do not make any expenses for our lodging or furniture for the rooms you will assign to us. A cot, chair and table suffice for each Missionary. Only the Superior will need a desk to lock up the letters he receives.

Sir, I remain with full respect your very humble and obedient servant,

Eugène de Mazenod.

43. To Mr. F[r]ançois Roux, President of the Men's Religious Association of Divine Providence, at Marseilles.⁵⁵

The Missionaries of Provence will always be ready to second the plans of the Gentlemen of Divine Providence. The Superior will be away for the next two missions.

L.S.J.C.

Rians,⁵⁶ December 2, 1822.

You will not be at all surprised that I gladly support in every way the generous initiatives of the work of Providence, even if our own vocation did not oblige me to perform with alacrity every good work that we are

⁵⁴ The Pastor Figon was a former Lazarist who had been Professor of Moral Theology at Arles and Marseilles before the Revolution. He died at Aubagne in 1824.

⁵⁵ Orig.: Aix, Arbaud Museum, 2687 A 3.

⁵⁶ The Founder directed the Missionat Rians from November 11 to December 20.

asked to do, when we see that we can perform it properly. The gratitude we owe to your work for having associated our Congregation to the concern for the poor children your work nourishes and wishes to form in virtue⁵⁷ makes this a duty which it will always be a pleasure for us to fulfill.

However, Gentlemen, I would hold it against myself if I did not remind you of what I told Mr. Bonnefoux, namely, that previous engagements would probably oblige me to withdraw during the first two missions of this year from the plan that you had proposed and that I had gladly accepted with the proviso that a reasonable latitude of freedom be allowed to the one I assign to this service to be absent for a time and be replaced as is done in the case of priests who are in charge of the care of souls. Beginnings are always difficult, but if it pleases God to give our Society the increase that people's needs are begging from its goodness, then not only the priest who is in charge of your children, but all of our members who will be assigned to this city will be delighted to be at the service of your work.

Sir, I am most respectfully your very humble and obedient servant.

Eug[è]ne de Mazenod.

44. [To Bishop C.A. de Richery of Fréjus].⁵⁸

The Rules of the Missionaries of Provence are not opposed to the right of Bishops. The latter cannot annul vows made with their implicit consent. The Society of Missionaries exists only through and for Bishops.

Marseilles, November 12, 1823.

Your Lordship,

Fully reassured by all the kindness you have always shown to me and by the protection you have deigned to grant to our Society when I asked your blessing on it and on myself at Paris, I kept silence when your Council in a grave decision detached three members of a group which has constantly been employed in the service of your diocese.⁵⁹ The respect

⁵⁷ The installation of the Missionaries took place on May 6 at Le Calvaire and on May 13 at the Divine Providence where they were staying.

⁵⁸ Rambert I, 383-386; Rey I, 319.

⁵⁹ E. Maunier, S. Deblieu and F. Jeancard left the Congregation when Fathers de Mazenod and Tempier became Vicars General of Marseilles at the beginning of 1823.

that I profess for your sacred person as well as the concern of displeasing you hindered me from giving you some explanations which if they had arrived on time, would probably have changed the Council's mind from crudely pronouncing the nullity of certain commitments voluntarily taken, with the permission of legitimate power at that time, for the greater good of the individuals and to the benefit of the respective dioceses they had been charged with evangelizing. These explanations would have proved to you, my Lord, that priests who make profession of the most absolute devotedness to their chief pastors, and who in everything act only in their name and under their orders, take care not to withdraw themselves from their jurisdiction. On this point, I would only have had to acquaint you with one of the basic articles of our Rules which is couched in these terms:

“The members of this Congregation will, under *the authority of the Bishops on whom they always depend*, make every effort to provide spiritual aid for the poor people scattered over the countryside and for the inhabitants of rural villages, who have the greatest need of this spiritual assistance.”

I do not wish to say, my Lord, that you are unable, in strict law, to dispense those of your diocesan clergy for whom the regularity of our way of life has become a burden. We have never claimed to deny the rights of bishops in this matter; all we wanted to do was to abstain willingly from the right of having recourse to it ourselves.

The promise to persevere in the Society which seems to have cast a shadow of suspicion in your Council, is a means of preservation which is, as we take it, not at all opposed to the rights of bishops over their subjects. We are prepared to go to wherever they may call us; we receive our mission only from them, and we shall be careful not to take even the least step that is not in perfect conformity with their wishes. Thus we have conducted ourselves hitherto, and none of us has ever thought of swerving from this rule of conduct. How then can one declare those commitments to be null which were taken with the knowledge of the competent authority which governed the dioceses that were linked at that time. Those commitments were made freely and voluntarily, several times renewed and confirmed; commitments which are not at all contrary to the bishops' rights which we gladly recognize. To dispense us would be in order if you judged there were sufficient reasons to take such an extreme measure; but to annul them! With better information, this would certainly never have been done.

Through the imprudence of those who provoked this decision and are spreading it from house to house, however, everyone is taken up by it, and each is giving his own opinion without understanding the root of the question. We are blamed without being listened to, for we refrain from speaking. We are calumniated and ill-favored, and this tends to discredit our persons and ministry. After eight years of peaceful profession this storm is breaking over us! And the fatal blow is struck by that authority on whose support alone we rely, under the auspices of which we were founded, have grown, and continue to exist. In fact, are not the bishops our natural guardians, our fathers and the object of our veneration and love?

Yes, my Lord, their will is our rule, their authority the soul of our corps, the component of all our activities; we exist only through them and for them, to work without respite, on their orders, for the salvation of the people entrusted to them, and to alleviate their preoccupations by all our zealous efforts.

Eight years have gone by without our having received the least reproach in the exercise of our holy duties. Our way of life, our conduct, I can honestly say, has been the subject of edification for all those who have been in a position to follow and appreciate it.

Our ecclesiastical superiors, under whose eyes we are working, have constantly encouraged us and always approved every step we have taken. We were about to spread the good effects of our ministry by multiplying our work through the establishment of various houses in the dioceses which we have evangelized. The Lord Bishops of Gap, Digne, Marseilles and Nîmes have given us the most laudatory signs of their protection and were calling for our service, which we were ready to give them, exactly as we would have done for you at your first sign; and now your arm smites us a fatal blow which confounds all our plans, and in its consequences shakes our institutions, injures our persons and leaves us, so to say, at the mercy of our enemies who are none other than those whose tendencies we opposed and whose passions we thwarted by fulfilling exactly the sacred duties of the ministry entrusted to us.

Admit, my Lord, that we have a just cause to be put out because of this. Besides, if I go by the rumors I hear, this is only the beginning of our woes and you are preparing an even more serious blow for us.

For, when all is said and done, since those who provoked the decision of your Council want to leave, let them go. But is it possible that Your Lordship, whose kindness and gentleness are so well known, may further

do violence to the will of the small number of our brothers who love the holiness of life that we lead in our houses and are called by the attraction of a special vocation to practice higher virtues in great regularity of conduct and wanting to profit from the inestimable benefit of community life, yet without renouncing the exercise of ministry, and thus considering it their supreme happiness to live among us, that you want, Your Lordship, to uproot them from the refuge that Providence has provided them, in which two out of the three of them have been brought up from their childhood and at our expense? I will never be convinced of that ...

In closing, I wonder if it is to Your Lordship that I have had to write a kind of apology? I had flattered myself and would have been proud to have merited your goodness by my respect and attachment to your sacred person; I would have thought myself excused from giving further proofs; it took nothing less than all the noise made all around me to arouse my attention and oblige me to reclaim the sentiments that I would never have believed you to doubt in regard to myself and a Society that belongs to you.

Please allow me to repeat the assurance of profound respect and devotion with which I have the honor of being Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant.

Eugène de Mazenod.

45. To Madame de Mazenod, Papassaudy Street No. 2, at Aix, Bouches-du-R[hône].⁶⁰

Tell Father Courtès to retain the Missionaries who are to open the Oblate house at Nîmes.

L.J.C.

Lyons, May 13, 1825.⁶¹

... Please give news of me to the Mission and tell Father Courtès that I have written to Father Tempier at Marseilles that, if we still have the

⁶⁰ Orig.: Aix, Boisgelin Hotel MJ I-1.

⁶¹ Father de Mazenod and his uncle, Bishop Fortuné, left Aix on May 9. They went to attend the coronation of Charles X on May 29. The trip was prolonged at Paris due to the sickness and death, on June 26, of Caroline de Boisgelin who was boarding with the Ladies of the Sacred Heart.

time and if he does not find it inconvenient, we can put off going to Nîmes till the Octave of Pentecost, for his sake and due to the somewhat sudden vacancy that Father Honorat's absence would make during the preparations for the feast.⁶² Mr. Laresche,⁶³ to whom I have written and from whom I feared an evasive response which had induced me to advance the departure a little, is traveling with the Bishop.⁶⁴ Besides that, I leave things for further reflection we can make on the spot and the decision that we must take. I am communicating my thoughts for now.

Please show Father Courtès this part of the letter and point out to him that he can decide nothing without writing to Father Tempier who may have reserved places or made arrangements that he can no longer change ...⁶⁵

46. [To Bishop Miollis of Digne].⁶⁶

The Missionaries of Provence will do everything to form good priests even though some are unfaithful to grace.

[Paris], June 22, 1825.

Be assured, Your Lordship, that we will neglect nothing to prepare ministers for the Church who are worthy to serve her. We have the consolation of seeing the Lord bless the efforts of our zeal for his glory, but it would be too happy a situation if we did not have to grieve over the infidelity to grace in the case of some of them.⁶⁷ We must share in the bitterness felt by the most Sacred Heart of Jesus at the treason of Judas. If I can judge by the sadness that I feel in regard to this kind of infidelity, it must have been excessive. It is a cruel balance to the delight that I reap from the perfection of life led by all those who are submissive to our Rule.

⁶² The Founder had gone to Nîmes at the beginning of April and accepted to send some Missionaries there (Mie, Honorat and Guibert) who would reside in a house near the major seminary.

⁶³ Canon and Bishop's Secretary.

⁶⁴ Bishop Chaffoy.

⁶⁵ Father Honorat and Brother Guibert were at Aix, and that is why the Founder invited Father Courtès not to let them leave without speaking about it to Father Tempier at Marseilles.

⁶⁶ Yenveux IV, 128.

⁶⁷ We do not know the exact circumstances of this letter. Several novices left in 1825; two Fathers, originally from the diocese of Digne, did not give satisfaction and left the Congregation: Vachon and Touche, cf. Mazenod to Tempier, June 22, 1825 and Mazenod to Touche, September 11, 1825.

47. [To the Pastors of Aix].⁶⁸

The Missionaries of Provence will gladly preach the jubilee in the parishes of Aix.

[Marseilles], October 20, 1825.

I could not be more moved than I am by the letter by which you honored me. If it is true, as you say, that we have already had the happiness of doing some good among your flock, we heartily thank the Lord for he could not give us a grace to which we would attach more value than to contribute to the sanctification of the city that was the cradle of our Society and to which we are linked by so many bonds. Not only are all our missionaries at your command for this memorable time of the jubilee, but there is none among them who is not disposed to prove to you, by all the services that our holy ministry includes, the desire our Society has to be in tune with you and to cooperate on every occasion for the good work which your zeal constantly inspires you to undertake for the salvation of your flocks.⁶⁹

Gentlemen, it is up to you to determine what measures will best assure, with God's grace, the success of the holy exercises of the jubilee; I will come to Aix next week to discuss with you the order and steps that you see fit to be taken. All I can tell you at the present is that you can count on ten Missionaries who will be able to serve your five parishes during the entire month that the jubilee lasts. In regard to that, however, the Archbishop, and please request this of him, must not set the opening date till the end of January or the beginning of February: serving our four houses and the Mission that the Bishop of Nîmes is giving in his episcopal city during December and January, in which we could not but be involved, would not leave us enough men available if the jubilee at Aix would coincide with the Mission of Nîmes, to serve, as we desire, all your churches and to give each of you a proof of the respect and devotion of our entire Society.

⁶⁸ Yenveux I, 110-111.

⁶⁹ Relations with the Pastors of Aix during the first ten years of the Congregation had been very poor. cf. J. Pielorz, *Les rapports du Fondateur avec les Curés d'Aix* (1823-1826), in *Etudes Oblates*, Vol. 19 (1960), pp. 147-171, 328-367 and Vol. 20 (1961), pp. 39-60.

That is why the Founder was touched by the invitation of the Pastors to preach the jubilee and why he put ten Missionaries at their disposal. He would have preferred, however, to see his sons taken up solely with Missions. He wrote to Father Courtès on July 22, 1826: "I was very upset that they attached so much value to celebrate the jubilee at Aix. If, instead of that parade, we had evangelized the most abandoned poor people, God would have been glorified and we would have been filled with blessings ..."

Allow me to join to the common sentiment of all our Missionaries the special expression of distinguished consideration with which I have the honor of being your very humble and obedient servant.

Eugène de Mazenod, Superior General.

48. [To His Holiness Pope Leo XII].⁷⁰

Brief history of the foundation and expansion of the Society. Purposes. Request for approval of the Rule, the Institute and the name of Oblates of the Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary.

Rome, December 8, 1825.⁷¹

Most Holy Father,

The Abbé de Mazenod, Vicar General of Marseilles, prostrate at the feet of Your Holiness, has the honor of informing you that since 1815, after the Sovereign Pontiff Pius VII had manifested his desire that Missions be preached in France to the people who are demoralized by the Revolution, he saw it as a duty to dedicate himself, with several chosen companions, to this holy ministry in the Diocese of Aix in Provence.

The extraordinary blessings that God deigned to shower on the efforts of their zeal sparked the desire in neighboring Bishops to procure the same benefits for their flocks. They repeatedly requested the Abbé de Mazenod to have him and his companions evangelize the people of their dioceses. The Abbé de Mazenod considered himself fortunate to be able to second the pastoral concern of these venerable Prelates, and was delighted to be able thus to further knowledge of Jesus Christ and to [assure] the return of a greater number of lost sheep to good principles. Now the Missionaries thought quite rightly that, since they were to expand into various diocese, it was necessary to set common rules which would be like the bond of their new-born Society.

They themselves have been struck by the wonders that grace has achieved through their ministry. They feel that to become worthy of their vocation, they must walk in the footsteps of the Saints; that the members of their Society must have the possibility of working at their perfection,

⁷⁰ Orig.: Rome, Vatican Secret Archives, Bishops and Regular Clergy: Marseilles 1846.

⁷¹ The Founder wrote or at least completed the composition of this petition on December 8, Cf. Diary for December 8 and letter of Mazenod to Tempier, December 9, 1825.

and at the same time, they would provide the people with the means of salvation by preaching penance to them.

They have resolved to embrace the evangelical counsels and to devote themselves totally to whatever would promote the greatest glory of God, the salvation of the most abandoned souls, and the service of the Church.

The Rules and Constitutions of the Society of the Missionary Oblates of Saint Charles (which is the name they had taken), commonly known as the Missionaries of Provence, have been drawn up in this spirit.

They have devoted themselves mainly to the missions, which is the principal end of their Institute and this preferably in the most abandoned areas, preaching there in the vernacular, that is in the dialect, the daily language of the people who do not understand French well in these remote places. They have offered their assistance to the Clergy in view of a moral reform by means of retreats and a good priestly training in seminaries. They have dedicated themselves to the care of the youth whom they gather in Christian groups in order to withdraw them from the world's corruption. They have also been engaged in serving poor prisoners whom they instruct, to whom they administer the Sacraments and those who are condemned to death they accompany even to the gallows.

Pope Pius VII granted liberal indulgences to the Society of Missionaries and the Bishops have not ceased to encourage their good works. It was soon necessary to expand beyond Provence and go into Dauphiné and Languedoc to respond to the wishes and concerns of the Prelates. All those in whose dioceses the Missionaries are working have approved their Rule in most flattering terms. There are seven of them. Several wanted to write this approval in their own hand so as to give in this manner more force to their honorable witness. All accompanied it with the most touching expressions of the liveliest and most sincere interest.

The Missionary Oblates of S[ain]t Charles thus constituted have four houses and a hostel at the present. They are serving in six large dioceses. They are entrusted with the hospitals of Aix, the prisons of Marseilles, the prisons of Aix, and the shrine of Notre-Dame du Laus. Bishops are calling them to assume the direction of their seminaries. They have, furthermore, the consolation of enjoying the affection and esteem of their Superiors and fellow citizens.

But they still lack something that they desire with great intensity, that which each of them begs with greatest insistence through their

spokesman, the Abbé de Mazenod, their superior: they still lack the approval of Your Holiness.

It is true that Your Holiness has deigned to implicitly recognize their Congregation by granting it very precious privileges and indulgences and allowing it, in your rescript of February 22, 1825, to celebrate the Office and Feast of Blessed Alphonse-Marie de Liguori in each church or mission of the Society, *ut in omnibus ecclesiis vel domibus societatis Missionariorum a Gallo-Provincia nuncupat[orum]* etc. You have given it a sign of your paternal goodness in charging His Eminence the Cardinal Grand Penitentiary⁷² to communicate to it the goodwill with which you wished to honor it by means of the letter that his Eminence wrote on the matter to the Bishop of Marseilles. The expressions of Your Holiness' paternal goodness and the assurance of your high protection has left such a strong impression in the hearts of the Missionaries that they will never be able to forget it. "*Placuit quippe Sanctitati Suae hoc erga te (episcop[um] Massimilien[sem] pontificiae benevolentiate testimonium praebere, nec non palam insimul facere qua sit voluntate erga lectissimam sacerdotum familiam, qui ... ministerio verbi se se devoverunt sacrisque expeditionibus in procuranda animarum salute collaborant.*"

Such touching signs of the great protection on the part of Your Holiness is already a kind of approval; besides, the Society of Missionaries is pleased to regard them as an inalienable title, of which it hopes, with God's grace, never to be unworthy. Now this family of which Your Holiness is the beloved father, this family completely devoted to the Church, to the Holy Apostolic See and to the sacred person of Your Holiness, begs you to add to the foresaid benefits already granted that of giving it a consistance which it cannot acquire except from Your Holiness, from whom it confidently awaits the formal approval that Your Holiness will deign to give to its Rules.

The experience of almost ten years proves that these Rules are suitable for helping the members of the Society achieve the goals they have set for themselves. The approval of seven noteworthy bishops such as the Archbishop of Aix and the Bishops of Marseilles, Gap, Digne, Fréjus, Nîmes and Nice are a second guarantee, equally certain, that the Missionaries dare to present to Your Holiness.

Most Holy Father, deign to affix the final seal and consolidate for ever such an important work by fortifying it with pontifical approval and your apostolic blessing.

⁷² Cardinal F.X. Castiglioni, Grand Penitentiary.

At the same time, we ask Your Holiness that, in the Brief of Approval which the Missionaries request, you give them the name of Oblates of the Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary instead of Oblates of S[ain]t Charles: this to avoid any confusion of names with other Congregations; and further, if you are agreeable and if you approve, to make it clear that the Abbé de Mazenod, who was thereto named by unanimous vote of his co-workers, be and remain the superior of the Society of the Missionary (from now on called, if it pleases Your Holiness) Oblates of the Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary.

The most humble, faithful and devoted son of Your Holiness,

The Abbé de Mazenod, Vicar General of Marseilles.

49. To the Archpriest [Pietro] Adinolfi, Under-secretary for the Congreg[atio]n of Bishops and Regulars, [at Rome].⁷³

Gratitude for the welcome received. Success of parish missions among the poor. Danger that the Society faces if the Rules are not approved by Rome.

Rome, December 23, 1825.

I know you don't want any compliments; I won't make any, for it is not a compliment to let you know how moved I was by the most cordial welcome that you gave me and the interest that you have taken in the h[ol]y work that I have most confidently placed in your hands. You must understand how much I take this to heart. You would appreciate this even more, if you were aware, as I am, of the immense good that this Society has done for ten years now in our southern provinces. The witness of our Bishops is general evidence of it and the terms they use communicate quite well their honest feelings; but the details, if it were possible to report them, would make you praise God, for you would see renewed the conversion marvels of the first days of Christianity.

Our Society is working in the cities, as you have seen in the Rules, and there it is engaged in every kind of good work; it prefers, however, to evangelize poor abandoned souls with all the zeal it can muster. It seeks them out in the most remote corners, on the highest mountains of Provence and Dauphiné, close to those glaciers which date from time of

⁷³ Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives, DM XII 2a.

the universal flood. God knows how much those people need the visit of our gospel laborers! As these make their way, they bring back to the Church the dissidents who did not want to accept the Concordat of 1801 and who, in the retreat of those mountains, have been living since then in complete schism. Now they are working in the Cévennes where there has possibly been no mission since S[ain]t Francis Régis; and the Protestants in those areas are starting to come back to the bosom of the Church. Their journey, in a word, is a non-interrupted series of miracles which grace is working for these poor souls. I can tell you so without exaggerating, having seen it with my own eyes. I briefly recall to you this special aspect of the ministry which our Society is carrying out so that you may well understand the interest that it ought to inspire in everyone who has the true Christian spirit which is to spread knowledge of J[esus] C[hrist] and to expand his spiritual kingdom in souls.

To this I will only add that our Society is the body of the French clergy which is the most attached to the H[ol]y Apostolic See. The one whom God has used to form it has given proof of this.

Now we find ourselves in a very critical situation. We have come to find strength and stability from the H[ol]y See with a trust comparable to that of a child who speaks to a father whom he loves. If the H[ol]y See does not give us its approval, we will have come, on the contrary, to receive the death-blow; because, at the point at which we are at now, not to approve us means to dissolve us. I have already taken the liberty to point this out to His H[oli]ness when I explained to him the reasons for my request; I beg you to express it to him once again with your customary wisdom.

The Bishops know that I have come to Rome to have the Society approved; such is their greatest desire. If it is not approved, they will suspect some secret motive which will make them wary. We take it for granted that this thought will not occur to them because of the esteem they certainly have for us; yet, we can fear that in an emergency when they deem they need priests for certain ministries incompatible with our duties and contrary to our Institute, they will remember that it is not approved and recall their subjects without ceremony; with that, our Society will be destroyed.

On the other hand, the members of the Society themselves, all of whom expect this approbation, will, if it is refused, lose the esteem they have nurtured for it up until now and will no longer set value on their Rules. They will be tempted to consider their commitments as irrevocable

no longer, and the administration of the Society as no longer stable. At the slightest dissatisfaction, at the least temptation, they will let themselves prefer the comforts, conveniences and prompt promotion of ordinary priests rather than the salutary constraint of a life according to a Rule. From then on, all is over: we have ceased to exist.

Reverend Archpriest, please set once again before o[ur] H[ol]y F[ather] the Pope our very founded fears; and gain from his goodness a sign to the Congregation that his intention is that our Society be not only praised, but approved. The manifest desire of H[is] H[oli]ness will be seen as a command that they will not reject. Reverend Archpriest, be assured that we merit this favor, this exception, if it is one, by our proven dedication to the H[ol]y See, the style of our ministry and the great virtues which everyone, myself alone excepted, in the Society constantly practices by living according to these Rules of which we so insistently request the approval.

The kindness you have already shown us has gained you the right to the gratitude of our Society and has made it my duty to associate you with the merit of its works. Please accept this offering, etc.

N[ota] B[ene]. This letter was not necessary. Before it arrived at his address, the H[ol]y Father had positively told his Reverence, the Archpriest, that he loves our Society, that he wishes to favor it, and that his intention is that its Rules be not only praised, but approved. He had directed Mr. Adinolfi to go on his behalf to the Cardinal Ponent⁷⁴ of the Cause and let him know this.

50. To the Archpriest Adinolfi, Under-Secretary for the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars.⁷⁵

During the audience with Father de Mazenod on December 20, the Pope granted several privileges to the Congregation.

Rome, December 26, 1825.

Reverend Archpriest,

Your conversation is so interesting and I derive so much pleasure in talking with you that I want to be on my guard lest I become a burden to you by making my visits too close together. That is why I decided to write

⁷⁴ Cardinal Pedicini

⁷⁵ Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives DM 12 2a.

to you today to bring to your attention a very important circumstance in our matter, which would seem essential to mention to the Cardinal Ponent and the other Cardinals of the Congregation.

The fact is this.

Our Holy Father the Pope, through a resolution which closely resembles what we call *vivae vocis oraculum*, in the audience which he deigned to honor me with on the 20th of this month:

1 authorized the members of our Society to continue to live in the Society in conformity with the Rules previously approved by the seven bishops;

2 approved that dispensation from the simple vows of chastity, poverty and obedience as well as from the oath and vow of perseverance that are taken in the Society, be reserved to the Superior General and the Sovereign Pontiff.

3 confirmed that the one appointed Superior General by the Society is truly such.

Moreover, by a rescript in good and proper form, His Holiness granted a plenary indulgence to each member of the Society on the day of his vows and annually on the anniversary of this oblation: this is the name we use among ourselves for profession.

I wish you well for the festive season and a little rest. I will come for your instructions only on Thursday morning so as not to disturb you during the feast-days.

Please accept, etc.

51. [To Cardinal Carlo Maria Pedicini, Ponent of the Cause, at Rome].⁷⁶

The approval of the Congregation must be valid for every country in the Catholic world. The name of Oblates of the Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary.

[Rome, January 2, 1826]⁷⁷

Your Eminence,

The last time I had the honor of conversing with Your Eminence, I had the impression that Your Eminence believed we were requesting the

⁷⁶ Orig. Italian: Rome, Vatican Secret Archives, Collection of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, Marseilles 1846 (2119/2-4993/2). We find this translation in *Missions O.M.I.* Vol. 70 (1936), pp. 502-503.

⁷⁷ The date does not appear on the original. This one is proposed by Father Duval, cf. *Missions O.M.I.* Vol. 79 (1952), pp. 82-83.

specific approbation of our Congregation only for France. Such a misunderstanding would be too harmful to the good the Congregation intends to accomplish with God's help. Hence I have the duty to assure Your Eminence, by this present letter, that one of the main reasons prompting us to seek the approbation of the Holy See was precisely our ardent desire to spread abroad in all parts of the Catholic world, the benefits of the ministries to which the members of our Society are dedicated. And this, on the invitation of the common Father of all the faithful as well as at the request of the bishops of various dioceses.

Your Eminence will read among the approbations found *ad calcem* of the Constitutions, that of Bishop Colonna of Nice, in which that very worthy prelate seems anxious to see the Congregation established in his diocese which has already experienced the benefits of our missionaries' Gospel preaching. It is a matter of founding a house for them in the area near the episcopal city. A memorandum for this purpose has been sent to His Majesty, the King of Sardinia; and I must take up this matter when I pass through Turin on my return to France.

The Savoy dioceses will hasten to share in the concern that Gospel laborers have to seek out the most abandoned sheep; and God knows whether, when the grain of mustard has grown, the very unfortunate inhabitants of Sardinia and others no less ignorant or vicious may not profit from the efforts of these missionaries who, since they have consecrated themselves to God, have had no other homeland than the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church.

Several members of the Congregation would willingly go and preach the gospel to non-believers; when they will be more numerous it is possible that the superiors will send them to America, either to be of assistance to poor Catholics who are bereft of every spiritual benefit, or to win new members to the faith.

Your Eminence can conclude from all this that the approbation requested should extend to the entire Church. It was all this that we intended to ask from His Holiness and which we hope to obtain for the greater glory of God and the greatest benefit of souls.

I also beg Your Eminence to note that one of our requests to the Holy Father is that he give the members of the Congregation the name of Oblates of the Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary, instead of that of Oblates of Saint Charles.

With very deep respect, devoutly kissing your hand, I declare myself to be the very humble and obedient servant of Your Eminence.

Charles-Joseph-Eugène de Mazenod,
Vicar General of Marseilles.

**52. [To Cardinal Bartolomeo Pacca, Prefect of the Sacred
Congregation for Bishops and Regular Clergy, at Rome].⁷⁸**

Request to shorten the procedure for approval. That there be only two Cardinals called to read the Constitutions.

Rome, J[anuary]y 7, 1826.

Your Lordship,

With confidence I address myself to Your Eminence and beg you to present to our Holy Father the Pope the humble request which circumstances oblige me to make.

In the audience that His Holiness was good enough to grant me, after giving me the most moving signs of his high protection, the Holy Father deigned himself to outline for me the steps I had to take in this important matter I had just presented for his decision. I promptly carried them out and I am most pleased with everything that has been done up to now.

But I am very put out when I see that, by following the necessary ordinary course of events, several months will go by before all the Eminent Cardinals who make up the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars will have examined the rather lengthy Rules which are in the hands of His Eminence Cardinal Pedicini at this moment.

In other circumstances, I would patiently wait the distant result of this prolonged work; but the Jubilee is soon going to open in France. Your Eminence knows that in that Kingdom Jubilees are celebrated by means of missions, which means that they preach twice daily for a full month wherever the Jubilee is being made. In this state of affairs, the important diocese where I am Vicar General is calling for my attention. The lack of priests and especially of those capable of preaching the Word of God demands that those to whom the Lord has given a certain facility show their good will. I am one of them; and by my position, my presence would possibly be necessary to employ others who, joined with me, could render some service, whereas alone they would not be able to accomplish very much.

On the other hand, pursuing the essential matter for which I have come to the Holy See is too important to religion for me to abandon it. I owe it to our Society and all the works that it has taken on to further with my every effort the designs of Divine Providence.

⁷⁸ Authenticated copy, Rome, Postulation Archives, DM 12 2a.

Our Holy Father the Pope could regulate everything by a measure which has its precedents and which depends on his will to prescribe. This would be that His Eminence Cardinal Pedicini, once he has examined with the most scrupulous exactitude the Rules and Constitutions of our Society, make a report to Your Eminence as Prefect of the Sacred Congregation and, after Your Eminence has added your own reflections, you would submit it to His Holiness who would then decide.⁷⁹

Please accept, Your Lordship, the assurance of respect, etc.

53. [To Cardinal Bartolomeo Pacca, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, at Rome].⁸⁰

Cardinals Pedicini and Pallotta as well as Bishop Marchetti are waiting for the calling of the special Congregation relative to the approval of the Rules.

Rome, J[anuar]y 31, 1826.

This morning I went to Cardinal Pedicini's place who told me to wait for orders from Your Eminence, since his work was completed two weeks ago. He also told me that Cardinal Pallotta, whom he has involved in our business, is feeling well now and that he would come to Your Eminence's place at first notice. Bishop Marchetti, whom I also saw this morning, will communicate your orders as soon as you have been good enough to instruct him to do so.

Your Eminence deigned to tell me of your desire to expedite my business as soon as possible. Now all the elements are in order; there remains only that they be set in motion. It is up to Your Eminence to do so. Thus, I beg you to have the kindness to write a note to Bishop Marchetti and have him notify their Eminences Pedicini and Pallotta as to the day that Your Eminence will be pleased to call them together at your place. I also beg you to excuse my importunity. Your Eminence knows the motive and can appreciate it.

I am with the deepest respect, the ... of Your Eminence, etc.

⁷⁹ The Founder added at the end of the copy of this letter that the Holy Father had allowed the formation of a commission composed of three Cardinals and Bishop Marchetti, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars.

⁸⁰ Authenticated copy, Rome, Postulation Archives DM 12 2a.

54. [To Cardinal Carlo Maria Pedicini, Ponent of the Cause, at Rome].⁸¹

Concerning several modifications to the Rules proposed by Cardinal Pallotta before the special Congregation of February 15th.

[Rome, February 14 and 15, 1826].⁸²

Since I had the honor of seeing the most eminent Lord Cardinal Pallotta, I have not had the time to obtain the rule of the Ignorantine Brothers; but I can testify that I know from themselves that the first time they make vows, they do so for a limited period; when that is over, they then proceed to make perpetual vows.

As to the oath added to the vow of perseverance in the Rule of Blessed Alphonse-Marie de Liguori, here are his own words which I have faithfully copied from those Rules that I obtained this very evening:

“If the novices have conducted themselves well during this probationary year, they will with the permission of the Major Superior, be admitted to oblation, making simple vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, *with the vow and oath of perseverance* for the benefit of the Congregation accepting them: which vows and *oath* cannot be renounced or dispensed from except by the Sovereign Pontiff or Major Superior and it is only with this condition understood that they are made.”

As to the freedom that each one gives to inform the superior of whatever may have been noticed in him by his brother religious, I can assure you that it is found in the Rule of Saint Ignatius. I cannot on this point cite the text since I do not have the above mentioned Rules at hand; however, I can present His Eminence with an almost similar text from the Rule of Saint Vincent de Paul which I have before my eyes. [...]

The reflection made by the Most Eminent Lord Cardinal about the renewal that the priests should make on profession day as they are about to receive Communion during their Mass, is full of wisdom and worthy of his insights; one might consider, in fact, that this renewal should be made with expressed words. However, that is not the case: it is made, as I had

⁸¹ Original Italian, Rome, Vatican Secret Archives, Collection of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, Marseilles 1846 (2119/2-4993/2).

⁸² Undated letter, but the 14 and 15 of February according to the indications furnished by the Founder in the very text of the letter. The translation is in *Missions O.M.I.* Vol. 79 (1952), pp. 115-116.

the honor of telling you, without saying anything; it is only a mental renewal of the profession made a little earlier. I do not have the text of our Rules present; but, supposing that the matter is not understood like that, it would be easy to amend by adding the word *mentaliter*.

The undersigned, while kissing your hands, declares himself to be, with profound respect, the very humble and devoted servant of Your Eminence.

Eugène de Mazenod, Vicar General of Marseilles.

55. [To Father Celestino Cocle, Superior General of the Redemptorists, at Naples].⁸³

Devotion to Blessed Alphonse de Liguori. Request for a biography and relics.

[Rome, February 1826].⁸⁴

Very Reverend Father,

Your Reverence will no doubt have learned from Reverend Father Mautone and one of his assistants, whom I had the good fortune to know in Rome, how great my devotion is in regard to your blessed Founder and how much I desire to make him and his so remarkable and holy works ever better known in France. I will not repeat to you all that I have done for this purpose: you already know part of it and besides, I don't take any pride therein: rather, I consider myself very fortunate to have been chosen in some way by Divine Providence to procure some glory for the blessed one and some profit to souls who are able to learn from his example and to be enlightened by his insights. If I tell you of this it is to show you that, if we consider affection only, I could also call myself a son of your blessed Father; and it is in virtue of this and in view of greater good that I would very dearly want to possess the first life of him written by Father Tannoia.⁸⁵ Your Reverence can be assured that it is in no way to make public some things that your Congregation would not want to be divulged, as I perfectly understand. But my devotion to the blessed one is nourished by the least circumstances to which the public would be indifferent;

⁸³ Copy, Rome, Oblate Postulation Archives. The Redemptorist Fathers did not find the original.

⁸⁴ The date is not exact, but certainly it is in February 1826, cf. A. Sampers, *Contatti tra il b. Eugenio de Mazenod e il p. Giuseppe Mautone ... Spicilegium historicum Cong. SS. Redemptoris*, Vol. 23 (1975), pp. 112-113.

⁸⁵ [A. Tannoia], *Della vita ed istituto del ven. S. di D. Alfonso M. Liguori*, 3 volumes, Naples, 1798-1802.

words, advice, in a word, everything coming from him has great value for me and this book would become my favorite reading: there are also some little matters that I could add to the translation which we have already done of his life; but I repeat, these matters are of pure edification, suitable to bring out even more the heroicity of the blessed one's virtues.

I beg you then to obtain for me at any price this life in three volumes, which I would like to take back to France with me, along with some relics. Father Mautone promised me a small fragment but I want more. To begin with, Marseille's cathedral is the first church in France which, thanks to my uncle, the Bishop of this diocese, has celebrated the feast of the blessed one; it is only proper then that we should obtain for it an extraordinary relic. The Bishop should also have one. Further, the church of the Missionaries, where we also solemnly celebrate the blessed one's feast, should not be deprived of a relic, indeed a more important one than those usually given to simple individuals. Finally, three other communities of these same missionaries which also celebrate this feast in virtue of the same pontifical rescript⁸⁶ would be envious if they did not share in the generosity of your Congregation.

Your Reverence can therefore see that I have good reason to address myself to you as to the source: if I do not admit that my claims are immense, at least I acknowledge that I have many requests.

I had hoped at some time to be able to come to the Saint's tomb to venerate his precious remains; but I'm afraid that I will not be able to fulfill this plan that strongly appeals to me. I have not however lost all hope but, for that to happen, my business would have to be expedited this week which I do not dare to hope for. I must leave for Marseilles immediately after Easter, the very next day after the feast, and I want to be in Rome for Holy Week; so you see how difficult it would be to find time for a trip to Nocera between these two commitments.

If I do not have the good fortune of meeting you, do not hesitate to recommend me to God through the intercession of your blessed Father and accept the sentiments of respect with which I remain, Your Reverence,

Eugène de Mazenod, Vicar General of Marseilles.

⁸⁶ Rescript of the Sacred Congregation of Rites of August 10, 1824, cf. *Missions O.M.I.* Vol. 79 (1952), 264. The Founder obtained Father Tannoia's book, an authenticated text and a relic *ex ossibus* of Blessed Alphonse, cf. A. Sampers, *art. cit.*, pp.113, 115.

56. To the Abbé Lanteri at Turin.⁸⁷

Explains the lateness of this letter. Thanks to the benevolence of Leo XII, Father de Mazenod's Congregation has been approved. Will visit Turin to examine if it is expedient to unite the two Congregations. Cause of Canonisation of Blessed Alphonse.

Rome, March 1, 1826.

Dear sir and reverend friend,

You must be quite surprised at not receiving any news from me as yet. If I had followed my inspiration, I would have sent you information, since, however, you were so good as to promise to send me a list of several books that you felt I should get for myself in Rome, I was daily waiting for your letter; and I would possibly still be waiting if, by mere chance, when I was recently passing by the post office, I had not had the inspiration to ask if there was a letter addressed to me. Oh! Sir, the clerks told me, *ne abbiamo un fascio*.⁸⁸ In this bundle, there was your kind letter, one from my dear friend Collegno, one from the Archbishop of Genoa⁸⁹ and twenty others. The mystery resides in that I depended on the room valet of the person to whose address they were sending my letters from France and that good man found it simpler to tell me that there was nothing for me, apparently thinking that everyone could figure out that they had to send my letters to the home of Bishop Isoard, the Dean of the Rota. Please tell this pleasant mishap to Collegno, it will also explain my silence in his regard, though I was on the point of breaking it to give him a friendly reproach and just then the dike broke.

For about three weeks now I have been extremely busy carrying out the Holy Father's wishes. I will not undertake to tell you the marvels that the Good Lord has worked in favor of our project. I had placed all my trust in him: that filial trust was certainly not mistaken. The Lord disposed the heart of the Church's Head to do, so to say, more than I had dared to ask him for. Everything done in our favor was done through his own very special will; he determined everything; I wept for joy and gratitude. I will tell you everything by word of mouth, since it would be impossible to write everything in less than a volume. I beg you as well as the venerable Mr. Gualla to assist me in thanking the Lord.

⁸⁷ Original, Rome, Postulation Archives of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary.

⁸⁸ We have a bundle of them.

⁸⁹ Bishop L. Lambruschini.

During my journey I have taken care to be informed of your business matter as I go along; Marquis de Croza told me that it has been completed. I congratulate you wholeheartedly,⁹⁰ but I continue to think that we must consider before God whether the project that you entertained for some time ago would not benefit the good cause. If I am not mistaken, we are firmly established, and have ten years of experience in living the Rules that the Holy See has just approved; but it is especially the manner in which they were approved that impresses me. Ordinarily, the Pope commissions a Congregation to examine the matter, and without himself going into a knowledge of the cause, he relies on the judgement of the Cardinals which he then confirms. In our case, it was the Supreme Head of the Church who made the judgment and made his will known to the Cardinals, nevertheless asking them to make their usual examination; their approval was unanimous. The Pope confirmed their decision and settled, with fullest knowledge of cause, the difficulties that the Devil had not failed to bring against it.

The Cause for the canonization of Blessed Liguori is going ahead by leaps and bounds. I have seen a religious miraculously cured by him: they are working on the proof of this miracle. I did not have a chance to learn whether they teach the Moral Theology of the Blessed at Propaganda in preference to any other; I will tell you about it when I pass through Turin. The Liguorians at Naples are insistently asking for the little work written by the person whom you know; you can not believe what pleasure he has given to the children of our holy Patron. One of them, Father Panzuti, wrote a theology based on that of his master, in 4 volumes in 12.⁹¹ Are you aware of it? What do you think of it? In the meantime I bought a copy but have not as yet had time to read it.

I plan on leaving immediately after Easter; on my way back, I will pass through Loretto and Milan. If you have some errands to give me, I am at your disposal.

Please accept the assurance of my respectful and affectionate sentiments, with which I have the honor of being, dear Sir and respectful friend, your very humble and obedient servant.

The Ab[bé] de Mazenod, Vicar General of Marseilles.

⁹⁰ The Congregation of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary was also approved by Rome in 1826, on November first.

⁹¹ Biagio Panzuti, *Theologia moralis b. Alphonsi M. de Ligorio in Institutiones redacta*. Napoli, 1824.

57. [To His Holiness Pope Leo XII].⁹²

Petition to obtain the privileges, etc., granted to the Congregation of the Redemptorists.

Rome, April 28, 1826.

Most Holy Father,

Charles-Joseph-Eugène de Mazenod, Superior General of the Missionary Oblates of The Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary, prostrate at the feet of Your Holiness, humbly begs you to grant to his tiny Congregation, which Your Holiness recently constituted by approving in *forma specifica* the Institute, Constitutions and Rules by your Brief of March 21 of this year, all the privileges, exemptions, indults and other spiritual benefits granted by your Predecessors, the Sovereign Pontiffs, to the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, to its superiors, members, churches and houses, whether generally or specifically; and not only those granted directly to the foresaid Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer but also others granted by way of communication with other Congregations and Religious Orders; whether for benefits, privileges, exemptions, indults previously granted, or for those which may be granted later; so that the above mentioned Congregation of Missionary Oblates of the Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary may, in the future, use, take advantage of and freely and licitly enjoy these same privileges, exemptions, indults and other spiritual benefits, all as specially and expressly in the same manner and way as they were granted. May etc.

58. [To Madame de Mazenod at Aix].⁹³

Invitation to come to Marseilles. Poverty of the Congregation.

Marseilles, July 22, 1826.

A short note, dear mother, will please you; so I am writing in haste, but to ask for news about you, for you have a cold and you are leaving early in the morning. Take care of yourself a little more than you are. Stop

⁹² Original Italian, Rome, Vatican Secret Archives, Collection of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, Marseilles 1846 (2119/2-4993/2). We find this translation in *Missions O.M.I.*, Vol. 79 (1952), pp. 190-191. The requested privileges were granted by the Pope during the audience granted to Bishop G. Marchetti on April 28.

⁹³ Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives, Boisgelin Collection I, 8.

worrying about me; I am fine. Your advice about Father Moreau has been promptly followed, but we are not any richer to furnish abundantly what each one needs.⁹⁴ What can one do? They have made profession of poverty; they know how to be content with little. Now that you are alone at the house,⁹⁵ you could come here to relax a little; we would at least see each other at meal times. Ask Father Courtès for the authentic document of your relic;⁹⁶ I left it on the shelves of the library in my room.

Farewell, kind mother. I embrace you tenderly.

Eugène.

59. [To Bishop Arbaud of Gap].⁹⁷

Oblate vows are perpetual; dispensation is a great misfortune.

[Marseilles], August 13, 1826.

... Our vows are as perpetual as the most solemn vows in the world. When we made the vow of perseverance we intended to oblige ourselves to live and die in the Congregation that has accepted our commitment. It is not up to the individual to operate according to his schemes and whims, much less to foresee a possible case of dispensation. Such a thing would not be permissible before the profession and it is absolutely impossible afterwards (questo poi è anticanonico,⁹⁸ the Sovereign Pontiff said regarding this matter).

In our Congregation, dispensation is considered so great a disaster that we like to think there will never be any such case, now that we have been approved by the Church and have been placed in the same rank as the Lazarists, Passionists and Redemptorists ...

⁹⁴ Several Fathers were sick from 1826 to 1829. We don't know if it is a question here of taking care of Father Moreau or of obtaining clothes for him. He was finishing a long novitiate at that time and spent the autumn preaching in the Cévennes with Father Mie. During the crisis of 1823, Father Moreau left the Congregation for several months (Cf. *Oblate Writings*, 6, 126). In 1824, the Founder judged him not regular enough to be admonitor to Father Courtès (*Ibid.*, 143). We have his formula of oblation made on July 13, 1826, although he had made vows the first time on November 1, 1818.

⁹⁵ Madame de Mazenod was living at the Joannis residence with Eugénie and her children. The latter usually spent the summer at the Boisgelin summer home at St-Martin-des-Pallières in the Var.

⁹⁶ When he came back from Rome, Father de Mazenod no doubt gave his mother one of the relics of Blessed Alphonse de Liguori, cf. *supra*, letter No. 55.

⁹⁷ Yenveux VIII, 254.

⁹⁸ "This is not canonical." According to Yenveux, Bishop Arbaud pretended to have the right to dispense from their vows those who had been born in his diocese, and did not want to give dimissorial letters except on this condition.

1827-1837

60. [To Bishop P.B. de Chaffoy of Nîmes].¹

The Missionaries' house should belong to them. The Superior's zeal. Oblates are at the service of the Church.

[June-July], 1827.²

I find it repugnant to consent to arrangements that would compromise the existence of our little Society in your diocese where you have nevertheless considered its establishment to be worthwhile, as a consequence of your good will toward it and in the hope that it will benefit your flock. Property is the surest guarantee of stability; tenants are exposed to too many risks; they never acclimatize for they always see themselves as strangers; they are tempted to change place at the least unpleasantness, the least discontent. Such a precarious state is essentially detrimental to the good: it is only half-heartedly undertaken when one doesn't see any future ahead. It seems that everyone agrees on that, for no society consents to establish a community unless it is assured that at least the living quarters where they are to reside will be their property.³

... Father Honorat needs care; his zeal would never allow him to refuse work; the strength of his temperament, however, does not always coincide with his good will.

... Your Lordship knows that our Society willingly works under your orders. When it is more numerous it will do even more, at least in as much as you will command it, for the ambition of each of us is, as long as we are in your diocese, to remain devoted to you and give your paternal heart every consolation it has a right to expect from priests who know your concern and the extent of their duty.

¹ Yenvoux III, 24-25, 139; IX, 138.

² Yenvoux copied three excerpts from letters to the Bishop of Nîmes. The first is dated July 8, the second June 8 and the third July 12. Here we are publishing these excerpts with the indication: June-July.

³ Bishop Chaffoy wanted the Oblate house, to which the people of Nîmes had contributed through collections, to belong to the diocese (Yenvoux III, 24). In 1825, the Oblates took up residence in a house near the seminary. In 1826, they acquired a new house (6 de la Faïencerie Street) which included a dwelling and some out-buildings. It was in the middle of the Protestant quarter (Ortolan, *Hist. de la Congrégation*, I, 178-179).

61. [To a priest of the diocese of Digne].⁴

To follow his missionary vocation he must obtain his Bishop's permission.

[Marseilles], July 22, 1827.

Since our Society has been approved by the Church, it enjoys the same privileges as the Company of Jesus, but it uses them sparingly for the same reasons. Anxious to maintain the complete benevolence of our Lords the Bishops for the greater good of their flocks, we accept only those men whom they are willing to give up.

It is not up to me to decide whether they can oppose the vocation of those whom the Lord deigns to call to the religious state: the Sovereign Pontiffs have given their decisions about that. As for ourselves, we submit with chagrin to any refusal, even the most unforeseen: since they employ us continually for the salvation and sanctification of souls in their dioceses, it would seem to be right that they furnish us with the means of doing good work.

In your particular case, I tell you that it is impossible not to recognize your vocation to the religious state; that the constant attraction you have for the missions indicates the choice that you ought to make, that I would consequently be very disposed to admit you to our novitiate, that the Bishop of Digne who still employs our Society in his diocese should not refuse you permission to join us; we are forced, however, in spite of all the rights you would have to follow your vocation and all our privileges to make it easier for you to do so, to wait until it pleases My Lord to grant you permission to carry out your plans.

Your Prelate is incontestably a holy bishop;⁵ he should thus know the Rules of the Church. He should not then think he can oppose your vocation, but he is allowed to test you; he can then make it difficult, turn a deaf ear, with the idea that your position is only wishful thinking, only the result of a passing fancy. Be insistent with him, point out the main reasons for your vocation to a more perfect state; entreat, beg, try again, do not be deterred by evasive answers. He will not resist persevering requests which will prove to him the reality of your vocation.

⁴ Yenveux VIII, 27. It was not possible to determine to whom he was speaking in this letter, nor in the one addressed to Bishop Arbaud on September 27, 1827. Yenveux (VIII, 24) transcribed a few lines from the letter to the Bishop of Gap: "Who knows whether, by putting it off, he may lose his vocation? Because you know that Saint Thomas distinguishes the grace of the vocation from the grace of perseverance in the vocation. He calls the first one a transitory grace which must be accepted when it comes ..."

⁵ Bishop F.C.B. Miollis.

I have now only to express the wish that the Lord may inspire in both of you whatever will contribute most to his glory and the accomplishment of his merciful plans for the most abandoned souls to whose service our Society is especially devoted.

62. [To Archbishop de Bausset of Aix].⁶

Requests that a priest from Aix be allowed to enter novitiate.

[Marseilles], August 13, 1827.

Would you be good enough, Your Grace, to console this afflicted⁷ soul who is earnestly manifesting the desire to join our Society. I think I can tell you that by undergoing a thorough examination in a good novitiate, this man who is very weak, but not bad, will probably become capable of doing good work in your diocese or, if he were too discredited there, we would employ him elsewhere. We will do all we can to correct the shortcomings attributed to him and make him fit for good work that bears no trace of his imperfections.

63. [To Bishop C.A. de Richery of Fréjus].⁸

The Bishop of Fréjus did not allow the Missionaries of Provence to give a mission in his diocese; the Founder's grief.

[Marseilles], January 26, 1828.

... I was deeply afflicted on receiving your letter; and God gave me the grace not to wait even a second to place all the bitterness of this outrage at the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ. I raise my objection to no one but yourself, for I am afraid of losing the merit of this ordeal. They know at Aix, at Gap, Nîmes and Marseilles that a pastor from your diocese has called upon our Gentlemen and that they were rejected by the Bishop.

⁶ Yenveux VIII, 85.

⁷ Yenveux says that it is a priest. Probably it is Jacques Symphorien Reynier, a priest from the diocese of Aix who started novitiate on August 11, under Father Guibert's direction. He made his oblation on November 1, 1828, but was later expelled from the Congregation, cf. Register for the taking of the habit 1816-1850, no. 76.

⁸ Yenveux V, 68. Father Yenveux introduced this short extract as follows: "A pastor of the Fréjus diocese asked for a mission in his parish and Father de Mazenod upset his whole apostolic plan in order to respond to this good pastor. He wrote to the Bishop of Fréjus to ask for the necessary powers. There was not much time; the reply was long in coming and when it did arrive, it was overwhelming for Reverend Father de Mazenod. The Bishop had refused in very stern terms."

64. [To Bishop Arbaud of Gap].⁹

Father de Mazenod's anxiety on reading a "painful communication" from the Bishop. Oblates must be principally employed in missions; they will never leave N.-D. du Laus on their own.

Marseilles, March 10, 1828.

Your Lordship,

I had intended to reply to the letter that you did me the honor of writing on January 30, when our Missionaries returned.¹⁰ When they left, I could not take pen in hand. I wanted to have a little time to reflect on the painful communication contained in your letter. I could not find it. Now I am almost fully at ease. When a person is deeply affected, it is difficult to avoid some expression which could be misinterpreted, and I would be inconsolable were I to offend when my intention is certainly only to register a complaint. I am very pleased that you got along well with our Fathers Mie and Touche, and dare to hope that you will get along as well with everyone else whom you are willing to deem fit to employ in your diocese. I will not send anyone whom you do not like, and if by chance someone may displease you, you would only have to notify me and he will definitely refrain from every external exercise of ministry in your diocese; but I am not overly concerned about that.

Our Missionaries are to be employed principally, but not exclusively, in the missions. Thus, they could sometimes be working, as though in a sort of retreat, in parishes where the parish priest is absent.

⁹ Excerpt from the Registers of N.-D. du Laus, p. 270. Cf. also Yenveux III, 248 and IV, 87.

¹⁰ This letter of January 30 has not been found, but Father Simonin summarizes it in these words: The Bishop sets out therein the accepted principles in his diocese for the administration of the sacraments, principles with which, according to the pastors, the missionaries were in disagreement. Matters cannot continue in this way and those who work in the diocese must commit themselves to follow our principles: "I need," the Bishop says, "auxiliary priests to replace the pastors in vacant parishes; they are becoming more and more rare, and I can take priests from outside or within my diocese who will stay with me and whom I will send where there is need. If your missionaries do not want to fulfill this function, let me know whether, without the financial resources of auxiliary priests, you think you will be able to stay at Laus." *Missions OMI*, 1897, p. 366.

We possess an excerpt from Bishop Arbaud's reply to the letter of March 10: "I was very satisfied with your last letter. The slight fog that has befuddled our relations for some time is certainly dissipated for good. Had I been in your place, I would have been hurt by my letters; if you had been in mine, you would have done as I did," April 10, cf. *Missions OMI*, 1897, p. 367.

I have always spoken to you in the same language in regard to Notre-Dame du Laus. This shrine is dear to the whole Society since all of us profess a very special devotion to the Mother of God. The Church has laid on us a duty — pleasing, to be sure, but a duty nonetheless — of spreading devotion to her: “We firmly hope that the members of this holy Family, who are employed in the ministry of the word of God under rules so well fitted to form hearts to piety, and who claim as their patroness, the Virgin Mother of God conceived without sin, will strive with all their strength and especially by their example, to bring back to the bosom of the Mother of Mercy those men, whom Jesus Christ on his Cross willed to give her as her sons.” These are the words of the decree.¹¹ We shall then never leave the shrine unless we are constrained to do so, under duress. When the assistance of auxiliary priests may be lacking, Providence will provide. Had you not planned to name a parish vicar at Laus? The crowds of people coming there from everywhere would require two of them. Why would you not carry out this project now? It wouldn’t cost the diocese anything, and it would be a means of sustenance for those who serve the shrine.

Your Lordship, I have the honor of being respectfully your very humble and obedient servant.

Mazenod, Vicar General.

65. [To Bishop Miollis of Digne].¹²

Formation at the novitiate.

[Marseilles], March 10, 1828.

We have a very strict novitiate. If men are judged unfit for religious virtues, they are simply sent away. Thus it is an established fact that the small number who persevere are really called.

If divine anger has a new persecution in store for us,¹³ I think that those who have been prepared there in the secret of God’s house and who

¹¹ Decree of Leo XII of March 2, 1826.

¹² Yenveux VIII, 60.

¹³ An allusion to the plan of governmental ordinances against the Jesuits and minor seminaries, cf. *Oblate Writings VII*, 158-159 and the letter of Fortuné to the Bishops, February 24, 1828.

will have imitated the Apostles in their self-sacrifice, will not be the least faithful and will console us for the defection of a great number which we can expect.

66. [To Bishop P.B. de Chaffoy of Nîmes].¹⁴

Missionaries will serve the prison. Obedience.

[Marseilles], March 10, 1828.

We consider you so much our father that we refuse nothing that you are pleased to propose to us. You think that our Missionaries would do well at the prison. So be it. With your blessing, they will certainly succeed. Obedience has worked as many miracles as faith has; my dear Missionaries have experienced that wherever your Lordship has sent them.

The motto is: Let's do some good while we have the time.

67. To the Countess Madame de Boisgelin née Mazenod, Papassaudy Street, no. 2, at Aix, Bouch[es]-du-Rhône.¹⁵

Invitation to the consecration of the Church of Le Calvaire. Next ordination.

Marseilles, May 24, 1828.

My dear sister, I had written you a long letter which I leave on my desk in order to write you another that is shorter. It is to invite you to come with mother, if she is back from her trip, the day after tomorrow to attend the consecration of our church.¹⁶ The consecration will take place on Tuesday after Pentecost at 7 o'clock in the morning; but you must be here the evening before, because the ceremony starts with first vespers. The occasion is unique because of the tribunes which allow one to see what is going on in the church, where no one is admitted during the consecration. I have sent word to Father Courtès to come if he can and it is convenient; tell him again on my behalf. He can stay here till the ordination on Saturday during which our two brothers Guigues and Hermitte

¹⁴ Yenneux III, 11a, 248; V, 46.

¹⁵ Orig.: Aix Boisgelin Hotel, MJ I-2.

¹⁶ Consecration of the church of Le Calvaire, by Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod on May 27.

will be made priests. Tell him not to forget to ask for dimissorial letters for the minor orders for our brother Cailas¹⁷ whom I wish to ordain with several others at this ordination. I don't have time to say more. I must go to hear confessions for my second session on Saturday; the one this morning was only six good hours.¹⁸ Farewell. I greet the w[ho]le family.

Eugène.

68. [To Mr. Testou, Vicar General of Grenoble].¹⁹

Oblates work in service of the Bishops and the poor.

[N.-D. du Laus], June 17, 1828.

In a city, during the interval between missions, our Missionaries, dedicated as they are to the service of the abandoned, carry on a very useful ministry among the lowest classes of people. For example, in Marseilles, they care for the scum of society, people who are at the age of 25 to 30, and have not yet made their first Holy Communion, and who do not know their God or their souls; they instruct them carefully, and their labours have been crowned with the greatest success.

We consider the bishops as our fathers from the moment they adopt us; their diocese becomes our family, and I can state that these children of adoption witness to it before anyone by their affection and attachment. Besides, we have the consolation of seeing Our Lords the Bishops give us constant unequivocal moving signs of preference.

We are the Bishop's men; we are at his disposition at every moment of the day or night. We must live habitually under his influence.

¹⁷ Manuscript: Caylas. François Victor Cailas made his oblation on June 3, 1827. He did not persevere in the Congregation.

¹⁸ May 24 was a Saturday, the Vigil of Pentecost.

¹⁹ Yenneux I, 34-35; III, 139. Mr. Testou wrote to ask for a foundation at Isère. The Founder who had gone to make a canonical visitation of N.-D. du Laus, passed through Grenoble before returning to Marseilles on July the first.

69. To Madame de Mazenod at Aix, B.-du Rhône.²⁰

We can send Father Arnoux to the countryside.

Marseilles, July 12, 1828.

... why would you refuse that our h[ol]y Father Arnoux be settled in the north room of the country house of Arc, I mean that little room opposite the attics, or else at Banon,²¹ should we think that would be comfortable for him? I don't know why we don't arrange to send him to the Enclos; maybe we fear that the sight of the place where he would be placed after his death would adversely impress him. Outside of that, in my opinion, this garden would be preferable to all else ...

70. [To Bishop Philibert de Bruillard of Grenoble].²²

Gratitude for the welcome received at Grenoble. Death of Father Arnoux.

[Marseilles], July 21, 1828.

My first concern is to pay a debt of gratitude to Your Lordship, to try to express how much I was moved by the kindness with which you received me during the short stay that I had in Grenoble.

One of our priests just died at Aix in the odor of sanctity. The manifestations of public devotion were so immediate and universal that we had to give up his soutane to save the vestments and even some parts of his body that the crowd's affection would not have spared. He is the fourth to go to heaven by this door. Their happy death is a new sanction of the Rules through which they sanctified themselves and an encouragement to those who still live to imitate their virtues.²³

²⁰ Orig.: Aix, Boisgelin Hotel MJ I-1. We are publishing only the second paragraph of the letter, which speaks of Father Arnoux.

²¹ The Founder is speaking about Madame de Mazenod's properties at the city gates. On July 8, he had written to Father Courtès that they could send the Father to the country "but very near, very near to Aix". Madame de Mazenod no doubt thought he was too sick to make the short trip. In fact, Father Arnoux died on July 13.

²² Yenveux III, 248; IX, 158.

²³ Yenveux (IX, 158) copied three lines from a letter written to the Archbishop of Aix on July 23: "We just lost one of our Gentlemen who ended his holy life in our house at Aix. In that city he used up the little strength that he had."

Likewise, Yenveux copied (III, 139) several lines from a letter written to the Bishop of Grenoble on January 3, 1829: "Our family already numbers you as one of its fathers; our heart gladly gives this title to Pontiffs who deign to adopt us. In fact, they have no children who are more submissive, affectionate and attached to their sacred persons."

71. [To Mr. Durand, Parish Priest of Quissac, Gard].²⁴

The Mission should finish a week before All Saints Day. Annual retreat of the Oblates.

[Marseilles], October 20, 1828.

Father Honorat made a big mistake when he promised you to prolong the mission till the 28th of this month, for at that time we are always on retreat in our houses. However, if he deems it beneficial to consolidate the good they have done with God's grace to continue their religious program till the Bishop's arrival, I will give them permission, but regretfully, for that is not our practice. In this case they will prolong their retreat beyond All Saints Day, while doing on that day what we are accustomed to do.²⁵ I beg you to tell that to those Gentlemen on my behalf. I wrote to Father Honorat at Nîmes several days ago. I affectionately greet him as well as his companion.²⁶

72. [To the Marquis de Croza, Sardinia's chargé d'affaires to the Holy See].²⁷

Request to hand the Pope the biography of Blessed Alphonsus Liguori. Would like to establish a seminary at Rome.

[Grans],²⁸ July 22, 1829.

My dear Marquis and friend,

I address myself to you in all confidence for an important errand, if not in the object itself, at least because of the great personage to which it is directed. Two reasons decided me to turn to you for carrying it out. The first is the friendship you honor me with and the pleasure I consequently experience in making use of a friend's service. The second is that in my

²⁴ Yenveux IV, 179.

²⁵ Renewal of vows at the end of the retreat.

²⁶ Fathers Martin and Sumien were at Nîmes with Father Honorat at the beginning of the year (cf. Mazenod to Honorat, February 19, 1828); Father Guibert joined them in March (cf. Mazenod to Guibert, March 18 and April 15, 1828).

²⁷ Yenveux III, 208.

²⁸ After the death of Father Suzanne in January and the illness of Father Courtès in April, the Founder fell gravely ill in May. On July 18, *l'Ami de la Religion* announced his death. In fact he was already better and together with Father Jeancard was convalescing at Grans, in the home of his uncle Roze-Joannis.

capacity as a Knight of Saint Maurice, I belong to your nation and you are truly my ambassador to the Apostolic See.²⁹

Here is what it is about. When the Pope was the Cardinal Grand Penitentiary,³⁰ he was involved with Leo XII of b[less]ed memory in gaining for my uncle the Bishop of Marseilles the right to pray the Office and celebrate the feast of Blessed Alphonsus Liguori in his diocese; in his letters on this matter, he gave witness of great devotion to this Blessed person. Since one of my priests³¹ has written a biography of Blessed Alphonsus which has merit both in terms of facts and also of style, I thought it would be proper for our Holy Father the Pope to have a copy of it and I am offering him one. I recommended that we bind it as nicely as possible. One of our young missionaries thought of making an embellished cover which turned out to be quite beautiful. I would like the Pope to use this to cover his ceremonial breviary; you could suggest the idea to him; it would be too bad if such a beautiful work would only gather dust in a library.

Dear friend, I beg you to present to the Pope on my behalf this little tribute of my devotedness to his sacred person and to the Holy Apostolic See. Do not forget to assure the Holy Father that he has no more devoted son in France; please tell him that. Ah! If only he wished us to set up a seminary for the secular clergy in Rome in the model of those in France to which we owe reform in morals and the whole brilliance of this Church ... Leo XII was not alien to such a project. *Questo ci manca*³² he said, when he approved the Rules of our Congregation which, among other ministries, includes that one, and, thanks be to God, it is successful.

This is the first time that I am wielding the pen after an illness that has lasted more than two months and led me to the threshold of the grave. I have scarcely started my convalescence.

²⁹ The young de Mazenod knew the Marquis de Croza at the College of Nobles at Turin. The Founder was named a Knight of the Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus by Carlo Felice, King of Sardinia on January 13, 1827.

³⁰ Francesco Saverio Castiglioni, who became Pius VIII on March 31, 1829.

³¹ Father Jacques Jeancard, cf. J. Pielorz, *Le rôle du Fondateur dans la publication de la première biographie française de s. Alphonse de Liguori*, in *Etudes Oblates*, vol. 18, (1959), pp. 163-180.

³² That's what we are lacking.

73. [To Bishop A. Billiet of Saint-Jean de Maurienne, Savoy].³³

Conditions for sending a copy of the Rules.

[Marseilles], April 17, 1830.

It is only right that you express the desire to know about our Rules. We can show them confidently, since we have them from the Head of the Church who commanded us to observe them by approving them with his praise and Apostolic Blessing. So, I am very willing to respond to your desire. I would only like to know from you whether the Abbé Favre has correctly interpreted your intentions, because we should make our Rules known only with very great prudence and when some good for the Church or the Congregation might result therefrom.³⁴ If Your Lordship truly wishes to know them in order to settle on our Institute, that would qualify; if on the contrary, you are only furthering a simple suggestion made to you without yourself being too concerned about it, that would be an indiscretion on my part. So, I beg you to give me your wishes directly.

74. [To Bishop Billiet of Saint-Jean de Maurienne].³⁵

Sending a copy of the Congregation's Rules. Prudence in accepting new establishments.

[Marseilles], June 7, 1830.

I ask Your Lordship as a favor to keep the book in your own hands. We would not be comfortable if it were available to anyone other than yourself. I take the liberty of asking that you return it once you have read it.

³³ Yenveux IV, 41.

³⁴ On the way back from Rome in 1826, Father de Mazenod passed through Chambéry to meet the Abbé Favre, Superior of a community of Missionaries in Savoy, to whom he proposed uniting the two Institutes (cf. *Oblate Writings* VII, 104-114). In August 1828, the Founder received a letter from Father Favre who invited him to Chambéry: there was hope of a foundation and a fusion. Father de Mazenod immediately made the trip but obtained nothing from the King, Father Favre or Bishop Martinet of Chambéry. We understand from this letter that now that he didn't count very much on the possibility of an establishment in the States of the King of Sardinia.

³⁵ Yenveux IV, 41; VII, 32.

... On that occasion,³⁶ I took the resolution never to rush the time of Providence and in the future to allow myself to be led quite gently by it, to let it speak twice, lest I not understand its adorable designs very well.

75. [To Bishop Billiet of Saint-Jean de Maurienne].³⁷

Wants to meet the Bishop. The Holy Father directed Father de Mazenod to continue his work.

[Fribourg], September 1830.

I would have liked to consult you, for I am imbued with respect for and confidence in your person ... I drew near to your place convinced you were filled with God's spirit; and since I want to be led only by that spirit, a grace I daily ask Our Lord for at the holy altar immediately before Communion, my sole desire has been to confer with you.³⁸ I will try to make up for it in writing, but it isn't the same thing.

Your Lordship has seen the directive that the Head of the Church has given me to continue my work, the expressions he uses are as touching as they are powerful.³⁹ So, I must not neglect anything on my part to carry out the mission he gives me in confirmation of the one I had already received from his holy predecessor; it would seem purely and simply easier to establish several of our men at Nice to start working there.

³⁶ A trip made in August 1829, cf. *supra*, note 34. The following July 11, soon after the French Army took Algeria, Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod wrote to the Grand Aumonier and proposed that he send to Algeria the Oblates whom he still called Missionaries of Provence, cf. Marseilles, Archives of the Archbishop's House, Register of Administrative Letters, Vol. 2, p. 295, no. 98.

³⁷ Yenveux VII, 33.

³⁸ An excerpt copied by Yenveux himself and rendered ambiguous, as he undoubtedly modified the text according to his practice. The Founder seems to say that he has and has not met Bishop Billiet.

After the July Revolution, the Oblates suddenly left Nîmes and feared for the house at Aix where Archbishop de Richery had just died. That is why the Founder tried to prepare the way for a foundation, whether in the diocese of Cagliari, in that of St-Jean de Maurienne in Savoy (at that time part of the states of Piedmont-Sardinia), or in the diocese of Nice, cf. Rey I, 498.

³⁹ Letter from Pope Pius VIII of August 26, 1829. Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives, Letter Pius VIII-Mazenod, cf. *infra*, Letter no. 77.

76. [To Father J. Anthony Grassi, S.J., at Turin].⁴⁰

Ministries of the Congregation and the dioceses in which it is working. Hopes to form communities in the Kingdom of Sardinia, in Sardinia, Savoy and at Nice.

[Nice], December 11, 1830.⁴¹

Right after I had arrived at Nice after a long and very difficult journey, I considered before God in the best disposition possible I could muster the interesting topic of our long conversation at Turin. I don't think I am mistaken in seeing therein the way that Divine Providence seems to be indicating to us, that is, in the States of His Majesty to use a Congregation which is by duty devoted to the salvation of the most abandoned souls as well as to the special education of clerics.

I did not overlook the difficulties which one may encounter in carrying out a project whose consequences ought to be so beneficial to the Church and the State. Since, however, we wish to strive only for God's glory and the salvation of souls redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, my trust is such that I fear nothing, not even the dangers which threaten those who dedicate their lives to the reform of morals and discipline in the territory where you propose that we exercise our holy ministry.

I am thus disposed, Reverend Father, if His Majesty so wishes, to place at his disposition all the members of our Congregation that he deems useful for his service and that of his people in Sardinia, as well as in any other portion of his states, whether to assist in their conversion by the conducting of holy missions, or by regular instruction and hearing confessions in the residences that His Majesty will designate as our living quarters, or finally by working diligently under the guidance of Our Lords the Bishops in the formation of clerics in seminaries [of those dioceses] which have one. Already several years of experience in several countries⁴² is a sure sign for me of the blessings that the Lord will shower on the

⁴⁰ Yenveux VII, 70-72. Father Grassi (1775-1849) had been a missionary in Russia and in the United States of America. He held many important posts in Italy from 1817 to 1849, especially that of Rector of the College of Nobles at Turin, Provincial of the Jesuit Province of Turin and Confessor to King Charles Felix of Savoy and to the Queen.

⁴¹ Yenveux wrote: September 11, 1831. From the context, this letter must have been written at the beginning of December 1830. After a difficult trip from Billens to Turin, the Founder arrived at Nice on December 2.

⁴² The Congregation had only directed the seminary of Marseilles up to that time. "The experience of several years in several countries" refers to the ministry of preaching missions and the word "country" is taken in the Italian sense of a village or hamlet.

zealous efforts of these evangelical laborers. I would need to write volumes were I to report the marvels that God has deigned to work through their ministry, especially since the Sovereign Pontiff has solemnly approved their Institute and placed this family among the Congregations recognized by God's Church.

These effects have occurred in the dioceses of Aix, Marseilles, Nîmes, Fréjus, Digne, Gap, Grenoble and even that of Nice. If the facts spoke less clearly and were not bolstered by the witness of the entire populations of all those areas, I could give undeniable proofs of the same. All the bishops of those different dioceses have personally attested to the usefulness of this Congregation and to all the good it has already done in their respective dioceses where it has been at work for fifteen years with a success due to God alone, for the sanctification of souls, by giving holy missions, taking care of poor prisoners, charitable hospices, seminaries, every work of mercy, in a word, that the bishops entrust to them.

Thus, at Aix, for example, besides the church that belongs to their house, where the members of the Congregation attached thereto offer divine service and every evening after prayer give an informal instruction to the people, they are assigned to give religious instruction to prisoners, hearing their confessions, something unheard of before, and when one of them is condemned to death, they accompany him to the scaffold. Besides that, they do the religious services at the hospital for incurables, for foundlings, for charity and at the college. At Marseilles, besides the service at the church and in prisons as at Aix, they instruct the people from Genoa in Italian and they direct the Major Seminary which is recognized as one of the best in France. At Nîmes, besides the church services and the difficult missions in the Cévennes, which are sprinkled with Protestants, the Bishop has wished to assign to them the camp of 1400 condemned prisoners, a degraded group, who have some notion of morals and religion only from the time that they were confided to the charity of the members of our Congregation who, in this den of thieves, have worked true miracles of conversion. Everywhere else the most difficult works of the holy ministry are entrusted to these religious, and if I am to believe the reports that the bishops testify to, they acquit themselves in a way that fully satisfies the solicitude of these vigilant first Pastors.

Would someone want to oppose us as foreigners? The members of a Congregation recognized by the Church, whose Superior is named by the Pope, are Catholic before all else. Their lives are dedicated according to the spirit of their vocation to the service of souls without preference for persons or nations, their ministry is entirely spiritual, they belong to the

country that adopts them, and live there under the protecting mantle of the law as faithful subjects, solely occupied with the purpose of their heavenly mission which strives to accomplish every duty, whether to God or to the Prince, his representative among men.

The Apostles were foreigners in the countries to which Our Lord Jesus Christ assigned them to preach the gospel. Religious who laid the first foundations of their Orders in various parts of Christianity were also foreigners and were not rejected because of that.

No one more than I will praise the wise measures that result in keeping a State from the contagion of evil doctrines and the influence of perverse men who trouble society elsewhere and shake its foundations; but would it be reasonable to suppose that one equally fears what is good, proven, what could only be useful and advantageous?

I will not end this long letter without pointing out something that I find remarkable. At the same time that Your Reverence spoke to me about the good that our Congregation could do in Sardinia, the Bishop of St-Jean de Maurienne wrote to have it introduced into his diocese, and the Bishop of Nice proposed through his Vicar General that we give him some men whom he could establish in the former abbey of Saint-Pons to give spiritual exercises to the clergy and holy missions in all parts of the diocese where they speak a special dialect which is the same as Provençal, one that several members of our Congregation know perfectly.

So, it may be that our Congregation, if it pleases His Majesty to adopt it, will devote at one and the same time its ministry in the service of souls in Sardinia, in Savoy and in the county of Nice, and thus assist with all its might in sanctifying the people who are happy to live under the fatherly dominion of so good a King.

77. [To the Chevalier Louis de Collegno at Turin].⁴³

Difficulties encountered in making a foundation in Sardinia or at Nice. The Pope's command. Confidences.

[Nice], January 19, 1831.

Dear friend,

It is not just today that I learn how many difficulties we meet when it is a matter of doing good in this lowly world. And so I was expecting

⁴³ Yenveux V, 57-59. The Chevalier de Collegno, attached to the ministry of foreign affairs for the monarch of Piedmont, was an old friend of the Founder; they had met at the College of Nobles.

obstacles in the project that I spoke to you about. This time, however, it is something more than obstacles: rather the impossibility of even broaching the matter even if it is considered by the friends of religion as so important that for almost nine years we have been constantly putting the issue on the table.⁴⁴ Should we give up pursuing it further, or rather should we not get discouraged and try again to achieve success? If we listen only to human nature which gets tired, it would seem that I can put my heart at peace by telling myself that I have done all that depended on me and possibly more than I was obliged to do. But I can argue all I want, I continually seem to hear and marvel at the words that the Head of the Church addressed to me in that precious Brief that I think I showed you: "*Laetamur in Domino, tibi que gradulamur tamquam filio recuperato, quem credideremus amissum, (the newspapers had announced my death) quemque non dubitamus ad majorem apud Deum et homines merita fuisse divinae providentiae judicio reservatum. Confortare igitur in gratia quae est in Christo Jesu, ac te alacri animo ad consueta refer opera laborans sicut bonus miles Christi.*"⁴⁵

I don't know if I poorly understand the sense of this kind of injunction, but my conscience presents it to me as a command given by God's representative on earth not to halt the kind of work previously imposed on me by the Church, and that command seems all that more sacred because the Vicar of Jesus Christ uses the very words of Holy Scripture. I need nothing less than these considerations to sustain me in the midst of the unpleasantness and weariness of soul that my unusual position lays on me. If I didn't have Leo XII and Pius VIII as guarantors, then, as I look around me, I would fear having made a mistake in taking the direction that I have, even though I certainly took them with a disinterested view and in the hope of greater good, etc. ... However firm my inner conviction that I would have done everything to acquit myself worthily of the great burden (onus) which they wanted to lay upon me,⁴⁶ I assured myself

⁴⁴ He probably alluded to the plan of a community at St-Pons, near Nice, in 1824, cf. *Oblate Writings* VI, pp. 161-164, 165.

⁴⁵ Ill during the summer of 1829, the Founder had a letter written to Pope Pius VIII on the occasion of his election. The Holy Father replied on the first of August. The letter was not sent since they had learned at Rome the news of the death of the Abbé de Mazenod. When they learned at the Secretariate of State that he was not dead but on the contrary was getting better, they sent the letter with a *post scriptum*, dated August 26, 1829, in which we read this text.

⁴⁶ In December, 1811, the day after Eugene's ordination by Bishop Demandolx, the Bishop offered to name him Vicar General of Amiens and to further his career according to the custom of the Ancien Régime, cf. Jean Leflon, *Eugene de Mazenod*, Vol. I, p. 393.

that I could accomplish more good in a more modest career, in this sense that replacements for the high position to which they wanted to assign me were not lacking, whereas probably no one would even dream of caring for these poor neglected souls who can be really helped only by getting very close to them and by caring for all their needs in detail. The success or rather the blessings that God has showered on everything I have undertaken for his glory, either personally or through the ministry of those whom I associated to myself, and above all the Church's paternal approbation obtained as if by a miracle and counter to everyone's expectations, have been ample consolation to me for the pain and the set-backs which the enemy has not failed to cause me.

I followed my vocation and here I am, but somewhat tired in the new difficulties brought on as much by the hard times in which we are living as by the malice of the eternal enemy of all good. See how I have just been carried away by surrendering to a friendship based on esteem and which inspires me with limitless confidence. I didn't take up the pen to tell you all that I had just said; nevertheless, I am relieved to have entrusted this to you.

Now I am going to set out to you the state of things, and again call for your good advice. According to what you sent me, I must absolutely renounce Sardinia, even though I had already set my sights on this island as avidly as Saint Francis Xavier had done on China, on the shores of which he died with his holy plans. You think then that it would be best to start with Nice and you had the kindness to point out the way to follow even before undertaking it.⁴⁷ I want to ask for your advice again as I set my difficulties before you. I will choose from the two alternatives that are open when I know what you think.

As for the resources needed for the Missionaries' sustenance, we would first of all apply to them the 1600 francs of which the Bishop⁴⁸ can dispose, as well as what he could grant from bequests for the missions, as we wait for other means that he sees as forthcoming; this, along with Mass stipends, would be enough for apostolic men who know how to be content with *victum et vestitum*.

⁴⁷ Nice was still part of the Kingdom of Sardinia.

⁴⁸ Bishop Jean Baptiste Colonna d'Istria.

78. To Count de Montalembert, Peer of France, Hotel de la Croix de Malte, at Marseilles.⁴⁹

Father de Mazenod is not Montalembert's adversary, but does not share his opinions. Roman spirit.

Marseilles, October 24, 1831.

Dear Count,

I am sorry that the indiscretion of certain of our missionaries has led you to believe that I am one of your fiercest antagonists to be found in the ranks of your fellow Catholics.⁵⁰

I very definitely am not an enemy of any fellow Catholic. I agree that there are some whose political doctrines I do not share, but in all else I revere them most deeply and defend their good name with every bit as much zeal, and perhaps with more success than the staunchest supporters of their system. However, I do not hide that my respect and affection for their person could never shake or unsettle my principles which spring from a simple faith; for these principles compel me to look upon the authority of the Head of the Church as my guide and the guide of my religious family, independently of any doctrinal decision or any solemn decree *ex cathedra*, etc. ... Possibly, that is being too orthodox for times like these, but what one may say or think of my orthodoxy does not disturb me.

Sir, you give too much credit to our poor Missionaries who can scarcely have their existence accepted for the little good that they can do. I don't think that they are in a position to be very useful to your work, but I assure you that I have never levied the interdiction that you imagine; my prohibition was limited only to what has been disapproved of by the Head of the Church.

Please accept my gratitude for the book that you had the kindness to send me, and excuse me for not coming to your residence to express my

⁴⁹ Orig.: La Roche-en-Brenil, Archives of the Chateau Montalembert, dossier 570, no. 34.

⁵⁰ Montalembert was passing through Marseilles. He was involved in a propaganda campaign on behalf of the general Agency for the defense of religious liberty. This was a good initiative taken by Félicité de La Mennais, but independently of the Hierarchy which he even criticized, especially in the paper *l'Avenir*. We can understand that the Founder was prudent, especially as some Oblates like Courtès and Touche remained very attached to La Mennais and the paper *l'Avenir* which was forbidden to be read in Oblate houses by the General Chapter of September 1831, cf. Jean Leflon, *Eugene de Mazenod*, Vol. II, p. 405.

gratitude; but today I started a retreat, impelled by the need for recollection and the desire to prepare myself for death in case the cholera requires me to devote myself to the salvation of those of my brothers who will be struck down by it. I take the liberty to recommend myself to your prayers to gain from God the graces I need and I have the honor to remain respectfully your very humble and obedient servant.

The Abbé de Mazenod, Vicar General.

79. [To Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod, at Marseilles].⁵¹

Visit to N.-D. du Laus. Leaving soon for Turin and Rome.

[Notre-Dame du Laus, August 1, 1832].

This holy place is ever more delightful. Those who live here inspire almost as much devotion as does the shrine. The house is clean, silence and recollection dominate it, there is joy on every face; oh! it is good to live here. I will only pass through however. I leave tomorrow to get to Briançon on Friday in the early morning and will continue immediately and be at my friend Collegno's place on Sunday.

80. For the Most Reverend Canon Del Bufalo.⁵²

Regrets not being able to unite the two Societies.

[Rome, September-October 1832]⁵³

I have attentively read the authentic copy and the other papers that the Most Reverend Canon Del Bufalo had the kindness to send me, and I

⁵¹ Rey I, 544. Sent to Rome by Bishop Fortuné, Father Tempier had obtained from Pope Gregory XVI the elevation of the Founder to the Episcopate. The Founder left Aix on July 30, after appointing Father Courtès Vicar General of the Congregation. He arrived in Rome soon after August 15.

⁵² Original Italian: Rome, General Archives of the Congregation of Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

Gaspar Del Bufalo (1786-1837), canonized on June 12, 1954, had founded the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood in 1815. The Rule was approved by Gregory XVI in 1841. Father de Mazenod met him in Rome in 1826 and had an interview with Don G. Merlini, the saint's collaborator, in 1832. The question of vows was the main obstacle to this union, cf. Fabio Ciardi, *Un projet de fusion avec les Missionnaires du Précieux Sang*, in *Vie Oblate Life*, Vol. 37 (1978), pp. 65-71.

⁵³ Undated letter. Don Merlini had written on the original: "This Institution exists in France and in 1832 has 6 houses." Thus, the Founder met Don Merlini and wrote this letter during his stay in Rome from the middle of August to the beginning of November, 1832.

was truly edified by them. Seeing so many good priests dedicated to such a holy life and lofty ministry, I regret all the more that my views were not acceptable.

When I proposed to the venerable Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood to unite with our little Congregation of the Immaculate Conception, I was moved by a sincere desire to multiply good in God's Church; and if on the one hand I considered acquiring a great number of excellent priests as a blessing for our Congregation, be assured that in the sincerity of the zeal that God gives me to see his holy work accomplished, I deemed it would be to the advantage of the pious union of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood to amalgamate with a Society that had been raised to the rank of a Religious Congregation in the Church and in which the pious union would have found the same spirit and ministry, almost the same rule, and wherein it would have immediately made up the major and more interesting part. I thought that the Archconfraternity would gain in perfection and stability; and if through the proposed union the Congregation would acquire a new splendor and greater extension, the good Lord would thereby be much more glorified, the Church better served and souls given more help in their spiritual needs.

Such were my ideas. I still think the same, and I leave it to God to make known to all those very worthy priests who make up the pious union of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood the great merit of vows which mistakenly frighten some of them. Besides, in taking these steps I obeyed the Lord's inspiration who indicated that it was for his glory, so I leave the discernment and responsibility to someone with more enlightenment and grace than I, and I rest in the peace of a heart which will always confidently say, no matter what happens, *particeps ego sum omnium timentium te*.⁵⁴

† Charles-Joseph Eugène, Bishop of Icosia.

⁵⁴ Ps. 119: 63.

81. [To Bishop Arbaud of Gap].⁵⁵

Defends the Oblates at Laus and Father Guibert who will remain Superior of the community.

Marseilles, February 20, 1833.

I deliberately put off replying to the two letters that you did me the honor of writing. I had hoped that further reflection would soften the extensive rigor of your thinking, and that you would not insist on cruelly grieving priests who pride themselves on having some claim to your affection and to whom you have not denied your high regard. God is my witness that in my relationships with you, I have done all that depended on me to avoid a collision. I had to place many things at the foot of the cross, for I have scarcely been spared. Will it be said that two Bishops do not agree when it is a matter of the Church's interests, the honor of the priesthood and the rights of justice and fairness? If I knew that one of our men was in the wrong, I don't say in the respect and submission that is your due, but even in the esteem only that your dignity and virtues require, I would not possess expressions strong enough to censure him, and I would be ready to demand that he make all the amends that you would require. Thanks be to God, however, there is no question of that, and in the chagrin that your correspondence gives me, I have the consolation of finding therein the assurance that you are satisfied with everyone's conduct. It all comes down to a few vague allegations, evidently exaggerated, that some secret enemy communicated to you.

If Father Guibert⁵⁶ is to blame, he should be punished, but your letters prove the opposite. If he is innocent, why should he be punished? However, through what ordeals has he not been put? A model of obedience, he has scrupulously obeyed everything, without allowing himself to make the least observation. Now, you are going further and want me to take him away from the house which he is directing with piety, wisdom and discretion. You are asking too much, Your Lordship! You are wrongly imputing a crime to Father Guibert for not turning away from the novitiate the men of your diocese who come to present themselves there. You know the Church's rules in that matter of vocations ... Why do you

⁵⁵ Yenveux V, 63; IX, 130.

⁵⁶ Bishop Arbaud, Gallican and Jansenist, made a thousand difficulties for Father Guibert whom he accused of laxity and of menasian attitudes. In 1832, the Bishop wanted to change N.-D. du Laus into a retirement home for aged and infirm priests and found the conditions of the Superior too demanding.

want to oblige me to recall such a valuable man whom you have praised to me on every occasion? Why deprive him of a climate that is very good for his precarious health? Why force me to deprive the young men that he is instructing in the ways of perfection of the priceless benefits of his good direction? I deny the calumnies of those who say that he is displeasing to your clergy. The one who slandered him could have discovered the opposite this very year itself during the clergy retreat at N.-D. du Laus. Out of 22 priests, twenty chose him for director. No, Your Lordship, Father Guibert is not well enough known. This excellent priest is not only mentally gifted, but eminently virtuous and, because of that, should be precious to a Bishop like yourself. I hope that you will render him your good graces which he has done nothing to lose. If my letter weren't so long, I would quote you an example which would show you the uprightness and simplicity of his soul ...

82. [To Bishop Philibert de Bruillard of Grenoble].⁵⁷

Will send another missionary soon if that is what the Bishop wants. Oblates are religious but dedicate themselves to the service of the Bishops.

Marseilles, August 18, 1834.

Your Lordship.

Mr. Dupuy has written to ask me for another man from our Congregation, and he assures me that he takes this step with your approval. I confess, Your Lordship, that I was so upset at first for not having followed the impulse of my heart which inclined me to write to you when he urged me to add Mr. Guigues to Mr. Dassý, whom he had taken with him, first with the intent of restoring his health, but whom he then retained as being very helpful to his work, so that nothing could determine me to accede to Mr. Dupuy's wishes prior to knowing explicitly from yourself whether you agreed with this.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Rambert I, 652-653.

⁵⁸ J.-A. Dupuy left the Congregation in 1830. He offered his services to Bishop de Bruillard in 1832 and was named Parish Priest of N.-D. de l'Osier. On his own, he asked the Oblates to come to his assistance and restore the pilgrimage and preach missions. The Founder wanted to be assured that the Bishop approved of this project before sending some Fathers.

I knew that Mr. Dupuy had the honor of your protection and is moved by the desire to support your views which are always so fruitful for the good of the diocese which you rule with so much wisdom. Here I have seen him sacrifice true well-being in a most fortunate position in order to devote himself to the work which has gained not only your approval, but your encouragement. I would have feared opposing God's designs, which I love to recognize in the conduct and direction of first Pastors like yourself, if I had allowed myself to resist the urgent requests of the one you have placed in charge of the Holy Virgin's affairs, so to say. May I tell Your Lordship, in my trusting delusion, I thought to perceive that you had wished it so.

There is no doubt that Mr. Dupuy, who is on the spot wherein he at first expected to accomplish the work of religion all by himself or with the help of a few priests of the area, saw that it would be too difficult and even impractical to form a community made up of heterogeneous elements, and he probably did not feel strong enough to spend his life in close association with strangers, each with his own will, divergent ideas, and unique spirit.

He had come to know and appreciate the priests of our Congregation; he knew that our communities are paradise on earth; that peace, agreement, and the most perfect charity reign therein; that there is only one will, one heart, the practice and love of obedience. And so, he wanted to bring in these men who here below seek only the glory of God and the salvation of souls and who would not oppose his good objectives. I can assure you that, even though these priests belong to a religious Congregation, you will find in them respect, obedience, and devotedness equal to any test. They will be subject to you as to their bishop, they will love you as their father; as their protector and guide, you are assured of their trust and gratitude in advance.

They will certainly do everything possible to support your views and to please you, for they have long been trained to be subject to the bishops, whom their Institute requires them to honor in a very special manner, not *ad oculum servientes*, but *propter conscientiam*.⁵⁹ In a word, they will be your men; and though the interior government of their community is determined by their Rules, even in that you will discover that they will do your will, for you do not ask for anything better than to see them live in perfect regularity, in conformity with what the Church has prescribed for them when it approved their Constitutions.

⁵⁹ Ephes. 6: 6.

That is, Your Lordship, what the good Lord has inspired me to write to you in all simplicity. Speak and everything will be ironed out.

The man that I am assigning to increase the little family is excellent in every respect. I am making a great sacrifice by sending him to that community, for I was counting on giving him as Superior of the house that we have in the Canton of Fribourg. He preaches like a true apostle, that means very well, without pretension and with results. He is kind, agreeable and regular, he will be a treasure for the house of l'Osier.⁶⁰

But, no matter what Mr. Dupuy may say and no matter how eager he may be to see him come before the feast of the shrine, September 8, he will not leave until you have given me your directives.

Allow me, Your Lordship, as I end this long letter, to recommend myself earnestly to your prayers. From then on I will have another claim to your charity and friendship, for you have become a father to my sons.

83. [To Bishop T. Casanelli d'Istria of Ajaccio].⁶¹

The Oblates accept the direction of the Major Seminary of Ajaccio. Personnel.

[Marseilles], September 19, 1834.

I do not at all retract the promise that I made to support you with all my strength in the great mission that you must fulfill in the diocese that Divine Providence has just entrusted to your care.⁶² I have thanked the Lord countless times for having given those people a Chief Pastor like you, for I know how widespread evil is and I also know all that can be expected from your piety, zeal and the care which urges you to respond to your unfortunate flock, so long-abandoned.

The field seems so vast and fertile to me, though covered with thorns, that, if I were still only a simple priest, I would not yield to anyone the honor of going myself to you and helping you to clear it; but what I am not able to do myself, others will do for me. Because of the quality men that you need, it will cost me a lot to tear them away from the various ministries that they are carrying out with incredible blessings and success;

⁶⁰ He is speaking of Father Vincens.

⁶¹ Pagnelle de Follenay I, 319-320; Rey I, 610; Rambert I, 659-660; *Missions O.M.I.*, 1935, 157-158.

⁶² Named to Ajaccio in 1833, Bishop Casanelli d'Istria took possession of his See on March 23, 1834.

but I am determined to make every sacrifice to establish solidly the immense good that you have in view and which will be done, with God's help, through the cooperation of the men of God whom according to your command I am going to place at your disposal to set up your Major Seminary.

You are aware of Father Albini's reputation: he is a learned theologian and also a holy missionary; he is teaching theology with distinction since a great number of years and he spends his vacations in evangelizing the poor. Besides he is doing such good work here at Marseilles that by taking him away from here I am going to offend everyone; he's the man you need. I cede him to you. A dogma professor will go with him, a man of talent who teaches Holy Scripture and liturgy.⁶³ Then I will give you as superior the priest who is most distinguished in our regions for his deep piety, his vast knowledge and his delicate and refined spirit. He is greatly appreciated in the diocese of Gap where he is the superior of the shrine confided to us; impossible to say who reveres him more, the bishop, the clergy or the lay people. I don't know how I will come to terms with all those groups, but that's of little importance; he is also the man you need, at least in the beginning ...⁶⁴

84. To Madame de Mazenod, rue Papassaudy, n. 2, at Aix.⁶⁵

Impressions of Notre-Dame de l'Osier. Health.

Notre-Dame de l'Osier, July 5, 1835.

Dear mother, I wrote to you a short letter from Avignon⁶⁶ simply to let you know I am still alive. I will write more from l'Osier where I have been for two days. It's a charming place, where you must not fail to come once the rooms for pilgrims are prepared. They are doing that now. I do not compare this shrine with that of Notre-Dame du Laus; it's completely different. Each has its own merit. This one does not yet hold first place in terms of devotion, although it is beginning to make its mark. With time

⁶³ Father A. Telmon.

⁶⁴ Father H. Guibert.

⁶⁵ Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives, FB I-9. We are leaving out a paragraph in which the Founder asks about the health of Eugénie and his mother.

⁶⁶ The Founder had been invited to perform an ordination at Avignon. Besides, he had to leave Marseilles due to the Icosia affair. He spent the summer at N.-D. de l'Osier which he visited for the first time, and at N.-D. du Laus.

and the care that our missionaries take to give good direction to piety, something still not well understood by a great number of those who come here, everything will make an about-face, and God will be glorified here as he is at Laus. I plan on spending at least eight days here in this charming solitude ...

You would not be satisfied unless I told you that I am feeling marvelous. This morning I preached at Mass which I offered for the people of the village and the faithful who have come here. My voice was clear and I was not at all tired. I told you that I was flooded with attention at Avignon. I got along very well at the Major Seminary, where I would have gladly stayed a few days more had I not been expected here. I only passed through Valence where I said H[oly] Mass on the feast of the Visitation. I left that city in the morning and in a few hours was at l'Osier by a beautiful road through a superb countryside. The only thing I don't like here is that I am in the midst of workers who are repairing the church; but as soon as I arrived, I had them bring the Blessed Sacrament into the house where we can adore and pray in silence, far from the debris, dust and noise. That is where I gladly converse about you, dear mother, with the good Lord to whom you on your part are undoubtedly recommending me.

Farewell, very dear and good mother. I embrace you with all my heart; I also embrace our Louis⁶⁷ and remind him how dear he is to me.

† Ch. Jos. Eugene, Bishop of Icosia.

85. To Madame de Mazenod, rue Papassaudy n. 2, at Aix, Bouches-du-Rhône.⁶⁸

Cholera at Marseilles and Aix. Madame de Mazenod should leave immediately for St-Martin. Couldn't we send the novices to St-Laurent?

Notre-Dame de l'Osier, July 20, 1835.

I don't doubt, dear mother, that you have obeyed Tempier's⁶⁹ urgent request without hesitation: he tells me that he had urged you to go and

⁶⁷ Louis de Boisgelin was studying law at Aix, cf. Mazenod to his mother, October 6, 1834.

⁶⁸ Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives, FB I-9.

⁶⁹ Cf. *Oblate Writings*, II, 2, p. 108, Father Tempier's letter to Madame de Mazenod, July 17, 1835.

join Eugénie at St-Martin, and to take Louis and Césarie with you. That is only reasonable; you must do this immediately. The cities are evidently infected; up to now, the country places, especially those far from the cities, are exempt from being infected. Don't give in to anyone's reasoning, no matter who it is. You must leave without the slightest delay. Good air is the best doctor, and in the cities it is infectious. Experience speaks louder than all resistance. There is too much danger in facing an evil that snuffs you out without warning. Leave immediately then, if you haven't already done so. You owe it to your family which requires this from your tender love for it.

I am worried about our novitiate. There is nothing more fitting than that all priests stay to carry out their ministry zealously even at the peril of their lives; but all those young men who are the hope of the Congregation that I founded with such difficulty, to what good is it to expose them without benefit for anyone? I am entertaining an idea which I wanted to tell you and receive your reaction before mentioning it to anyone else. What if I were to send them to St-Laurent. They could sleep in the hayloft, for there are no beds, and they could live in the chateau, safe from any danger, and attend to their regular religious exercises. Give me your reply, but do not worry. I won't speak to anyone about it if you do not approve of this plan.⁷⁰

We are going to leave for Vinay where the mail goes. I embrace you with all my heart.

I don't think that I will be here to receive your reply. So write to Tempier who will pass it on to me to wherever he knows I will be, for I keep him informed by writing to him daily.

⁷⁰ It seems that Madame de Mazenod did not approve of this suggestion. She herself went to St-Laurent, cf. E. Mazenod to Madame de Mazenod, July 26 and August 5, 1835. The novices stayed at Aix and worked among those with cholera until their departure for N.-D. du Laus at the end of July, cf. *Oblate Writings* I, 8, pp. 173, 177-178.

86. To Madame de Mazenod at St-Laurent-les-Verdon, near Quinson, through Riez, Lower Alps.⁷¹

Good health. The novices went up to N.-D. du Laus.

From Notre-Dame du Laus, August 5, 1835.

I can only write you briefly, dear mother, for an opportunity has come up for Gap and I must take it immediately. This is to acknowledge your letter, date[d] from St-Laurent which I received yesterday and which gave me great pleasure: I had been anxious since you were close to Gréoux which was affected by the sickness. It is true that the sanitary situation of this area has improved but I nevertheless needed to be reassured.

I am very well. Up to now none of our men at Aix or Marseilles has become ill, and that is certainly not due to failure of exposing themselves ...

I beg you to tell Mr. Aubert that I have his youngest son with me and am waiting the arrival of his eldest,⁷² to whom I wrote to come and continue directing the novices whom I called to this shrine to shelter them from contagion and to give them the means of continuing their novitiate and studies ...

Farewell, dear and good mother. I embrace you very tenderly. Yesterday, I wrote to Eugénie who has never given me any sign of life, no more than lazy Louis has.

† Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop of Icosia.

87. To Madame de Mazenod at St-Laurent-les-Verdon, near Quinson, through Riez, Lower Alps.⁷³

The Founder's occupation at N.-D. du Laus.

L.J.C. et M.I.

At Notre-Dame du Laus, September 25, 1835.

... You would not believe how filled my days are here. I am always busy but without being tired. On Saturday I ordained the good Semeria to

⁷¹ Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives, FB I-9. We omit the second paragraph which treats of Bishop Fortuné's health.

⁷² Fathers Pierre and Casimir Aubert; the latter was Master of Novices.

⁷³ Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives, FB I-9. We are leaving out the first two paragraphs of this letter in which the Founder gives advice to his mother who is returning to Aix.

the priesthood. I had him come expressly from Marseilles. On Sunday, I officiated at the morning and evening Pontifical Office in the cathedral of the Gap on the feast of the Diocese's patron. Yesterday, the Bishop of Gap came to spend the day with us. But the usual relationships that I have with all the individual persons in the house, who rightly want to profit from my stay among them, are my greatest occupation along with the correspondence which keeps on continually. I like this peaceful life and will only regretfully exchange it for the turmoil of administration which has always tired me out as much as it has annoyed me.

The bell is ringing to call me to Office. So, I leave you in order to go and pray to God. That is what hinders me this time from filling up the paper. I embrace you tenderly.

† Ch. Jos. Eugene, Bish[op] of Ic[osia].

88. To Madame de Mazenod, Papassaudy Street, at Aix, Bouch[es]-du-Rhône.⁷⁴

Departure soon for Marseilles. Teeth. Feast of N.-D. du Laus.

L.J.C. et M.I.

At Notre-Dame du Laus, October 14, [1835],
anniversary of my Episcopal Ordination.

I will most likely⁷⁵ not write to you again from here, dear mother; I plan to leave on Monday, unless I receive counter-instructions from Marseilles.⁷⁶ In that case, I will have the pleasure of embracing you on Tuesday at Aix where I intend to stop for twenty four hours. I will leave again from Aix for Marseilles in a special carriage for I do not feel at ease arriving in that city with the stage-coach.

I received your letter of the 8th in which you inform me of your return to Aix and give me the details of your trip. I am grateful to the Parish Priest of St-Laurent for his attention and very pleased to have seen you cross that infected route without accident. Take good care of yourself at Aix so as to acclimatize yourself. You will find me in as good health as

⁷⁴ Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives, FB I-9.

⁷⁵ Manuscript: *Vraissementablement*, a misspelling in French.

⁷⁶ Father Tempier allowed him to return to Marseilles, cf. letter of October 4, in *Oblate Writings*, II, 2, p. 119-120.

I would like to see you. Only my formerly fine teeth want at all costs to leave me, breaking one after the other. They have the kindness not to hurt me too much as they fall to pieces. One has to give some sign of old age. Everything else is going well, very well, marvelously.⁷⁷

We had a festivity in the refectory after we had celebrated at the altar. I treated the community. One would have said that it was you who had ordered the meal.⁷⁸ We have an oven in the house. François made fruit cakes which were found to be very good. We had talking in the refectory and I saw with pleasure that everyone did his duty.

You know that we have the novices here under the direction of the excellent Aubert. I will leave them here. The Oblates have returned to Marseilles to study their theology and to prepare themselves to support their elders who cannot keep up with the work that is coming from every direction.

Farewell, dear and good mother. I embrace you with all my heart.

† Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop of Icosia.

89. To Madame de Mazenod at St-Laurent-les-Verdon, through Riez, Lower Alps.⁷⁹

Bishop Flaget's visit. Illness of Father J.A. Martin.

Marseilles, Sept[em]ber 3, 1836.

Dear mother, you are totally right to complain about me. However, you are aware of my being usually interrupted, which is enough of an excuse and adequately explains my forced silence. Besides the ordinary business matters which already take up my time, there has been added the stay of Bishop Flaget⁸⁰ at the Archbishop's house, one of the most respectable bishops that I know. You feel that you must be present to him, and so how can you get to your desk unless required by some urgent matter? Nevertheless, I feel guilty for having left you so long without direct

⁷⁷ The Founder's joy is evident here. Finally he is able to come back among his own at Marseilles, after the happy outcome of the Icosia affair, thanks to the tact of Father Guibert at Paris.

⁷⁸ Manuscript has *dîné*, an incorrect form in French.

⁷⁹ Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives, FB I-9.

⁸⁰ Bishop B.J. Flaget of Bardstown, USA, a Sulpician.

news from me. I hope that they gave you some from St-Martin where I wrote several days ago about a sale of oats.

Everyone here is very well; that is something that I mustn't forget to tell you. I add that Father Martin has even completed his convalescence. He owes his life to the excellent d'Astros who did not hesitate, in spite of what everyone said, to bleed him four times in one day, not counting the forty bloodsuckers that he placed on his stomach. Without that decisive act, a blood clot was forming in his brain and that would have finished our dear missionary. You can well see that d'Astros is a capable doctor, and he daily (ferverently) invokes the good Lord who helps and enlightens him in the practice of his art, an art he carries out conscientiously. At his request, I am going to allow Martin to go to Notre-Dame du Laus for a change of air.

We are going to leave for the Cathedral where Bishop Flaget will pontificate on the occasion of our great solemnity of Saint Lazarus.

Dear mother, I embrace you with all the affection of my filial heart.

† Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop of Icosia.

90. To the Bishop of Ajaccio.⁸¹

Father Mouchel will go the Major Seminary of Ajaccio; Fathers Albini and Telmon will preach missions.

[Marseilles], October 23, 1836.

Very dear Lord and friend,

You are always positively the first in the devotedness of father to sons when it is a matter of seconding you in the works that you have entrusted to their Congregation. I do not stop with stripping Switzerland of a man who knew how to win the esteem and affection not only of the holy Bishop of Lausanne⁸² who loves our men so much, but of all his clergy and people of the various cantons of Switzerland that he continually evangelized. Because I understand the importance of this great and truly marvelous seminary which is visibly growing under your protective mantle as though in your bosom, I am adding to it a charming man filled

⁸¹ Draft copy, Rome, Postulation Archives, Letter of Mazenod to Casanelli d'Istria.

⁸² Bishop T. Yenni of Lausanne.

with good sense and piety, a most loveable character, of perfect deportment, good for everything, who will be able not only to help the Superior in his demanding administration, but because of the special study he had made of Hebrew and his knowledge of Scripture, will be able not only to teach Holy Scripture but if need be to teach Hebrew to those pupils who have a taste for that study.⁸³

I would also like to reinforce the Mission house at Vico immediately, but that will not be till a little later. In the meanwhile, Father Albin and his companion, Father Telmon, will preach the good news of salvation to the people who are reaching out for them. What marvelous events! I thank God for them every day and sincerely rejoice with you in the happiness that you experience from them.

May you rejoice in them for a long time and see grow to a hundred-fold the divine seed that you, as a good Shepherd, have been sowing in that land which has lain waste too long.

I embrace you with all my heart's affection.

† Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop of Icosia.

91. [To Archbishop Dupont of Avignon].⁸⁴

The Oblates will be established at Notre-Dame de Lumières.

Marseilles, December 7, 1836.

Today, I met Father Gilles of the house of Aiguebelle.⁸⁵ This religious proposed that I buy the convent and the church of Notre-Dame de Lumières as a future establishment for missionaries. I told him I would gladly agree to his plans if they were in accord with the views of Your Lordship. The project pleased me all the more because our missionaries have been specially called to work in the Southern diocese whose language they know and, placed by the Holy See under the protection of the

⁸³ Father Frédéric Mouchel preached in Switzerland, but worked at Marseilles and Aix before being sent to Corsica (only in the autumn of 1837). cf. Mazenod diary, October 9 and 19, 1837. Father Renaud left with Father Guibert in 1836, cf. Mazenod to Courtès, September 16, 1836.

⁸⁴ Letter copied in the Founder's Diary, January 26, 1837. Aut.: Rome, Postulation Archives, JM, pp. 12 & 13.

⁸⁵ Gilles Pastoret, a Trappist, cf. JM, *ib.*, p. 11.

Blessed Virgin, they have a special predilection to establish themselves in shrines that are dedicated to her. Thus, by disposition of divine Providence, they already serve several such shrines where they have happily succeeded in making hitherto neglected devotion flourish again. Good Father Gilles assured me that you would be pleased to see one of our communities established at Notre-Dame de Lumières, and that you had even commissioned him to speak to me about it. For my part, I foresee such great good in this work undertaken under the goodwill and secure protection of a Prelate such as Your Lordship, that I most ardently hope that the difficulties, which stand in the way because of the outlandish attitude of the person who has seized that property, can be straightened out.⁸⁶ As soon as you consider it opportune, I shall send Father Tempier, the superior of the Major Seminary of Marseilles and a member of our Congregation, to Avignon, to receive your directives; for our rule is to accept the initiatives of the diocesan bishop, who is always the first father of our missionaries in his diocese. I would have been pleased and see it as a duty to come myself to you in this instance, happy to have an occasion to be united more closely with a prelate for whom I profess the greatest esteem; I am suffering so much from coughing blood, however, that I could not even write this letter by my own hand.

Please accept, etc. ...

† Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop of Icosia.

92. [To Mr. Jaquemet, Vicar General of Aix].⁸⁷

Recommendation for the abbé M. Grognard who left the Congregation of Oblates of M.I.

Marseilles, March 9, 1837.

Dear Vicar General,

According to what has been decided by Our Lords, the Archbishops and Bishops, men who leave the Congregation of the Missionaries return by right, by the very fact of their leaving, to the diocese to which they belong. Thus, I consider it my duty to inform you that Mr. Marcellin

⁸⁶ The tenant who would renounce any claim if given 4800 francs compensation, cf. JM, *ib.*, p. 13.

⁸⁷ Orig.: Aix, Archives at the Archbishop's house. We omit the last two paragraphs which treat of the abbé Jonjon and the Ladies of St-Thomas.

Grognard, born in Gardanne, has just left the Society of Missionaries which he had joined.⁸⁸ I indicated to him that he had to present himself to you and place himself at your disposal; I take the liberty of recommending this young priest to your kindness. He was not sent away due to any immorality, but as unsuited to do good in the Congregation which he failed to edify by that exact regularity which it requires from each of its members. I think that, with supervision, Mr. Grognard can acquire that common virtue seen as sufficient in a great number of others, but it would be desirable that he not be given a load beyond his strength. Mr. Grognard has a polite manner, a lot of finesse in character, but also a depth of vanity which hinders him from recognizing his mediocrity, casts him into a childish dejection when he does not succeed to attain the illusions that he imagines.

I am going into these details to ease my conscience and to answer in advance some questions that you might want to ask me. If need be, Mr. Courtès can answer any questions that you may see fit to address to him ...

93. [To Father Gabriel Testou, at the Grande Chartreuse].⁸⁹

Without a dispensation, Father Pachiaudi left the Congregation of Oblates; the Carthusians should have informed themselves before accepting him.

Marseilles, September 1, 1837.

Reverend Father,

I understand the letter that you did me the honor of writing only by supposing that you were interested in knowing whether I approved of Father Pachiaudi's⁹⁰ conduct. It would be a deception if I were to leave you in the least doubt about this matter. I blame him with my whole heart; everything was irregular in this business, and if anything has surprised me, it is that your very Reverend Father General, to entice a subject who

⁸⁸ Marcellin Grognard had made his vows on January 6, 1833. Ordained priest on April 6, 1833, he asked for and received the dispensation from vows at the beginning of 1837, cf. Mazenod Diary, March 7 and 8 and the Register of Expulsions, March 7, 1837.

⁸⁹ An autograph copy in the Mazenod Diary, September 1, 1837; Rome, Postulation Archives, J.M. pp. 168-169.

⁹⁰ Pierre Pachiaudi (1811-1879), ordained priest in 1834, had made his oblation on July 24, 1835.

illegally left a Congregation to which he was bound by vows, an oath and indented deed, dispensed himself from the relationship that is always maintained between Congregations or Religious Orders in similar circumstances.

The Reverend Trappist Fathers acted quite differently. In any case, Father Pachiaudi fled without asking me for any permission, without even informing me in spite of the view of the most holy and recommendable Fathers of the Congregation.⁹¹ It seems that he left without knowing whether he would be received among you for he had been refused by the Trappist Fathers and I don't believe that he had any secret correspondence with your very reverend Father General. If the latter had written to me as propriety would seem to demand, I would have given him my observations and I would have listened to and carefully reflected on his. Nothing of all this took place, canonical rules, respect, and tact were violated. First of all, people acted without knowledge of cause; then, they persisted in spite of Mr. Tempier's strong protests. I doubt that God blesses deeds of this kind. The Diocesan Bishop was not consulted any more than the regular Superior; on his part, the latter protests the disregard of his authority, since he was judge in the first instance and, because there was a legal dispute, he should have been consulted. All this is very sad and unedifying, and the best wish that I can make for your holy Order is that it use other means to develop. Besides, I doubt that Father Pachiaudi will continue in solitude, no matter how agreeable and proper it may seem to him. When he was in our houses, he had to go on some trip after he had spent only a few days inside. Beginnings are pleasant. He finds everything easy among you because he is sustained by the energy of a will that is bolstered by another spirit than that of God. We will see later on.

Farewell, dear Father, you may communicate my letter directly to those who asked you to write to me or to anyone else. I know how to keep silence, but when I speak, always tell the truth.

I wish you God's blessings.

† Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop of Icosia.

⁹¹ An allusion to Father Albini who had been Father Pachiaudi's confessor and had just received a letter from him. *Ibid.* pp. 169-171.

94. [To Bishop P.E. de Sausin of Blois],⁹²

Recommendation for the Abbé Kotterer.

[Marseilles, September 1837].⁹³

Your Lordship,

I take the liberty of recommending the Abbé Kotterer to your kindness. This priest is especially well known to me as I even had him under my direction for a long time. I can affirm that his morals have always been upright and that he is not lacking in talents. The testimonials that he bears give evidence that he has successfully exercised the ministry of preaching. Thus, I do not doubt that he can be useful in your diocese, where he is known to the Superior of the Major Seminary and which gives him hope of being favorably received. I have every hope that Mr. Kotterer will not make you sorry for the adoption that you will graciously grant him and that he will be more useful to you than he could to me, for here one has necessarily to understand and even speak Provençal in order to be assigned. Knowing your kindness and the good dispositions of Mr. le Duc,⁹⁴ I did not hesitate to encourage Mr. Kotterer's plan to prefer the diocese of Blois to any other, and I dare to ask you to take this young priest under your protection. The occasions of writing you are rare,⁹⁵ so I have gladly taken this one to remind you of the feelings of profound veneration that I have expressed to you and which I am happy to be able to repeat, recommending myself to your prayers.

⁹² Autograph copy in the Mazenod Diary, December 21, 1839, Rome, Postulation Archives.

⁹³ Undated letter, but written in September, 1837. Cf. Mazenod Diary, September 5, 1837. After his father's death, Father Kotterer asked to be dispensed from his vows to help his mother. He went to live with her in spite of the Founder's refusal. To avoid a scandal in the diocese where Kotterer was well known, Bishop de Mazenod asked the Bishop of Grenoble not to employ this Father, but the two Bishops recommended him to the Bishop of Blois where Kotterer had an influential friend among the clergy. Madame Kotterer died after that (cf. JM, September 15, 1837) and Kotterer returned to the Congregation in 1838. However, he did not persevere.

⁹⁴ Mr. le Duc: Mr. le Belot, Superior of the Major Seminary?

⁹⁵ Father de Mazenod had sent him the biography of Blessed Alphonsus Liguori through Jeancard, and the Bishop had replied with a letter of praise, cf. Mazenod to Garnier, March 13, 1828.

1838-1854

95. The Superior of the Sisters of St. Clare at Marseilles.¹

Requests prayers for Father Albini who is gravely ill.

Marseilles, November 17, 1838.

Dear Mother Abbess, may your community please do violence to God. He wants to remove from earth the Apostle on whom rested all my hopes for the conversion of the Corsican people. I have just learned that the holy Father Albini is in the gravest danger. He had to receive the Last Sacraments on the day the letter that I received was dated. His loss would be a real calamity for the Church. This saint is worth more against the powers of hell than an army drawn up in battle against the enemy. I am overwhelmed by this unexpected blow. Let's wrest this blessed one from heaven's glory in favor of an infinite number of souls whose salvation depends on his life here below.

Pray for me as well who am overburdened by this new cross.

I bless you.

† C.J.E., Bishop of Marseilles.

96. [To Bishop N.A. de La Croix d'Azolette of Gap].²

Sadness that the Bishop of Gap supports the claims of his clergy against the Oblates at N.-D. du Laus. Conditions for the establishment at Laus in 1819.

Marseilles, November 6, 1839.

Your Lordship,

As much as in the ordinary course of events, mutual good relations with you are a pleasure to me, so, in the present circumstance, I would have wished to be dispensed from the sad necessity of coming to tell you that your letter, in spite of all the expressions of great kindness³ therein,

¹ Orig.: Marseilles, Monastery of Poor Clares.

² Orig.: N.-D. du Laus.

³ Letter of October 24. Bishop de La Croix asked Bishop de Mazenod to "find in his charity some admissible means to shorten the term of the stay at Laus".

has very much increased the profound grief that I feel since learning of what has happened during the last two pastoral retreats in your diocese. In the midst of this sorrow, I retained one source of hope: I told myself that you were the born defender of all the works placed under your care, and I was sure that you would reject, as it deserved the unspeakable attack provoked by a faction and [which gathered round it, taken in by surprise] a certain number of your priests against the community at Laus.⁴

The words that you expressed to me on your own initiative during your trip to Marseilles to assure me of your attitude was full of confidence and concern in regard to that community;⁵ similar statements that you made officially and in writing to members who are part of it; the language that you used concerning this matter on several remarkable occasions, especially at Lyons when speaking to a parish priest from my diocese; and finally, what has been reported to me as coming from your lips by Mr. Jeancard, a Canon of my Cathedral, who recently had the honor of seeing you on my behalf at Gap and at Embrun,⁶ everything assured me that you would defend by your authority, essentially a custodian of that which is good, a work that has never ceased to have the right to your protection. I was counting on it so much the more because, besides the perfect confidence that your justice, zeal for your charge, and whatever the piety of a Bishop makes him feel for those who have dedicated themselves unreservedly to the services of the Church which adopted them, inspired in me, I could not convince myself that there was the least chance that you would carry out what took place in the retreats with so much scandal for your diocese; you who, as you tell me in your letter, consider that the matter in question should be treated only by a few persons. How is it now, Your Lordship, that I am condemned to see, in the overture that you make to me, a first concession to the suggestions of certain people whose spirit is so opposed to your own, without respect for your character, persons who want you to bless a revolting injustice? I certainly am not going to do you the wrong of believing that you could ever become, as some might expect, the pitiless executor of the plan by which they had the audacity to

⁴ During the retreats of 1838 and 1839, a petition was signed by the clergy asking for the establishment of a hospice for elderly priests at N.-D. du Laus, and indirectly, asking for the dismissal of the Oblates.

⁵ Bishop de la Croix had stopped at Marseilles at the beginning of 1838, cf. *Oblate Writings*, 9, p. 79 (Mazenod to Mille, January 6, 1838).

⁶ Letter of Jeancard to Bishop de La Croix, October 15, 1839, *Ibid.* "I was pleased to repeat what I heard from your own mouth that nothing will be done during your episcopate against the Laus community."

compromise your authority; you are too wise, too just, to sum up in one word, too much a Bishop in your sentiments to come to that. Besides, Your letter formally says that we need not fear such an extremity. Nevertheless, the proposition that it contains seems to be a direct result of the plan I am speaking about, and pursuing the same goal: it can only produce in me the most painful surprise. This very painful feeling which I cannot help you will not find amiss, I hope, and I confide it to your tact as a complaint drawn from the soul of one of your colleagues who expected news that is more consoling and better merited.

Your Lordship requests me to find some appropriate means to shorten the term of the possession, that is to say to set the time when the community of Laus would cease to exist. I can only reply to you in this regard that I don't know of any means which would allow me to set such a date. When that community was canonically established by your predecessors, there was no time limit for its duration. It was well understood at that time that the premises that it occupies, as well as the service of the Church with the title of Parish Priest was granted them in perpetuity. It was a matter of forming, not a temporary establishment, but a stable and perpetual community in as much as things of this world can be such. I would never have accepted the proposals made to me by the ecclesiastical authority and by the owner of the house, if the community had not been definitively and perpetually established. The canonical act of institution, in accord with everything that was said at that time, forbade a supposition contrary to a perpetual establishment. There is more: a note of Mr. Peix, the owner, stating that the premises had been acquired as well as all the dependent property "with the intention of forming a retirement home for elderly priests or to make a gift of it to some religious Congregation which would serve the Church and restore the devotion of the h[ol]y place". The known dispositions of this excellent gentleman and what he told the Superior of Laus during his last moments makes one believe that his intention was, when making the Parish Priest his heir in his will, to endow his right upon that of the members of the existing community who would be in charge of the Parish, which, according to the agreement made in his presence with the Ordinary of the diocese, was always to rest on one of these gentlemen.

It is true that the lease signed by myself and the person who granted the house and its dependents legally assures the possession for only twenty-nine years, but that act did not, in our common thought, set the date when the community would have to leave. That was so well understood that the first agreement would have made the lease for 99 years, and it was only on the erroneous decision of a lawyer consulted by myself (I

still have his reply at hand), which told me that we could not make such a contract, that I proposed to reduce the lease to 29 years. We agreed on this, promising each other that the agreement would be renewed at each expiry, if, as seemed likely at that time, a testamentary arrangement or other would not have already transferred the property to the Missionaries who were being asked at that time to serve the shrine.

Your Lordship is thus aware that the real claim of the community at Laus is not that of people who offer themselves to serve a diocese for a specified time. A perpetual establishment has been formed, and, if one is not to be counter to agreements made, it can be undone only if those who are part of it were to deserve the loss of your confidence through their conduct. That is the condition for all establishments of this nature. They are all protected by possession which creates a true right in the eyes of the Church. I would violate justice if, without there being any complaints, I would, according to my own whim, send away the Jesuits or the Capucians from my diocese, even though nothing had been stipulated with them. The community at Laus can not be treated with less consideration after twenty years of an existence so well earned by so much service rendered to the diocese. Even Your Lordship had no different sentiments when you instructed your secretary to write to the Superior at Laus the following letter: "You now have undoubtedly learned about our Bishop's plan relative to a diocesan establishment that he intends to form. I must tell you that after a long conversation with His Lordship in which I set before him all the pain I would feel if he had any notion of being contrary to you in his diocese, he instructed me to tell you that he had no such intention; that your work was infinitely dear to his heart, that he valued you and respected you too much to undertake anything that could alarm you. There is enough work for everyone, he told me again, and even if there were twelve of those Gentlemen at Laus, we could still use all of them for the good of the diocese."⁷ Relying on such formal words and others similar, the Missionaries at Laus have continued with the same zeal their ministry which is so profitable for souls. However, I do not wish to speak of the gratitude owed to them, nor of the confidence placed in them by the faithful and by so many good priests and which you yourself have shown them up to now; nor of the scandal which would certainly result from the destruction of their community and which without their generous as well as edifying concern would have already broken out in a deplorable

⁷ We do not have this letter. In 1838, Bishop de la Croix founded a community of diocesan Missionaries, cf. J-M. Salgado, *Les Oblats à N.-D. du Laus, Etude et documents, 1950-1965*, polycopied, p. 24.

manner: I will limit myself to saying that is impossible to agree that other works must be built up on their ruins. There is no precedent in the Church for destroying a community which is what it should be in order to replace it with another. The Jesuits establish themselves next to the Dominicans, the latter next to the Franciscans, the Redemptorists next to the Lazarists, etc. ..., but none is sacrificed to the other, acquired rights are always respected. Without this spirit of conservation nothing would be stable where a good work must assist pre-existing good work and never destroy it. Thus, I sincerely wish the Lord to bless your works, but when my affection is involved in this question, I would regard their success as a scandal if it had to be bought at the price of destroying another holy work which has the blessing of the Catholic Church upon it.

I hope, Your Lordship, that the reasons that I have just succinctly set forward and which can be corroborated by so many others which the limits of a letter do not even allow me to indicate, will be strong enough to make you aware of how unreconcilable with tact and fairness is the plan according to which one would want, under the guise of good, go counter to your religious attitude.

Please accept, Your Lordship, the assurance of respectful attachment with which I remain your very humble and obedient servant.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

97. To The Reverend Mother Abbess of the S[ain]t Clare convent.⁸

Request for prayers: "persecution" in the diocese of Gap and lack of vocations.

Marseilles, November 23, 1839.

I thank you, Good Mother, for your attention. I profit from the occasion you provide me to beg you to enjoin your community to recommend especially to God the Congregation of our Missionaries which is suffering a cruel persecution in the diocese of Gap. To you alone I tell the reason; you must not let your Sisters know about it. We lack men, it is impossible to fulfill all the ministries that the Congregation wants to do. The death of the holy Father Albini has completely undone the missions in Corsica. We are obliged to pass over a great number of missions in various dioceses evangelized by the Congregation. In short, a time of trial; we need the

⁸ Orig.: Marseilles, Monastery of the Poor Clares.

help of your prayers to repel the evil one to whom God has allowed some power to sow darnel in the field and to devastate the inheritance of the Father of the family.

I let you know these things so that you can speak confidently to God about them. I unite myself in advance with your prayers and bless you as well as your whole community.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

98. [To Bishop de La Croix d'Azolette of Gap, at Paris].⁹

The matter of Laus. Sends a copy of the agreement signed in 1818 between Father de Mazenod and Mr. Peix. Bishop de Mazenod does not appeal to the civil law, but to "the all powerful justice in a Bishop's conscience".

Marseilles, December 19, 1839.

Your Lordship,

When you wrote asking me to shorten the term of the stay of the community at Notre-Dame du Laus, I was in a sort of impossibility to understand that such a request could be addressed to me by the Bishop of the diocese where the community that they want to expel has never ceased to do good. I was distressed to see that you lent yourself to a death-wish directed against a holy work of which you are the natural guardian, and which both the Church by approving it, and your predecessor by adopting it, had destined it to the greatest possible duration and recommended it to your benevolence. Nevertheless, I hoped that the reasons that I gave in reply to your letter would make a decisive impression in the eyes of justice as well as of religion. I invoked the evidence of agreements; I said that through the reciprocal consent of the ecclesiastical authority and the owner of the property on one hand, and of myself on the other hand, the community of Laus was set up to be perpetual, that I would never have accepted on any other conditions the proposals made to me, and that if the lease stipulated only twenty-nine years, it was the result of an error on a lawyer's part. They had offered me to have it last for ninety-nine years. On top of that, it was only a legal title that we agreed to renew at each expiry if we had not foreseen beforehand in a definitive manner to the perpetuity of the work that was established, but in reality the agreement of trust guaranteed that perpetuity.

⁹ Orig.: N.-D. du Laus.

I thus appealed, not to the civil law which could know only the written agreement whose term was still far away, but rather to the all-powerful equity in a Bishop's conscience. I reassured myself with your given word that I recalled and I was thus even further from thinking that after that reply the matter could ever take on a legal character which your own letter formally stated [that you wished to avoid]: "As much as it is in my power," you said, "I dismiss and will [always] dismiss from this matter any legal action distressing to human hearts. That thought will always be far from my mind or rather it will never have a place there. Would it be fitting for us who, in the position that Divine Providence has placed us, ought especially and before all else to give the example of impartiality and maintain concord between brother? That is the language I have used at every meeting."¹⁰

How astonished I was when, after my explanation about the right of the community, I received a letter in which you asked me for the agreement with Mr. Peix, and, speaking of this matter, gave me to understand that you wanted to examine to what point it would be legally speaking an obstacle to your plans.¹¹

It is certainly normal that you know the agreement, but the manner in which you asked for it supposes that you consider it as the only title that I can urge; from which it follows either that you did not believe what I told you about the agreement of trust, in which case you do me the most cruel injury that a Bishop can receive from one of his colleagues; or that the agreement of trust which binds both honor and conscience, and which has full authority between honest people doesn't seem to have any importance for you since the civil law would not recognize them, and in that case you would harm yourself, Your Lordship, and it would be your sacred character that you would blemish. Will you tolerate that your brother in the episcopate speaks to you with such gospel honesty, between yourself and him? He has no intention of hurting you; on the contrary, he still hopes that it will suffice to offer you these observations so that once your piety and zeal are roused, they will stop you from committing an injustice which is far from your heart, but which would be notorious if, taking advantage of what may be discovered as some legal nullity in the written agreement — qualified legal consultants say there is none — you would attempt to remove the community of Laus from the position that it now occupies.

¹⁰ The Bishop of Gap to Bishop de Mazenod, October 24, 1839. Orig.: N.-D. du Laus.

¹¹ The Bishop of Gap to Bishop de Mazenod, November 16, 1839. *Ibid.*

They say that you plan to have the Government decide the question: but is that something that is fitting for a bishop to do?¹² Would you hand over to the secular arm a community that has never ceased to merit good things from the Church? I can't believe it, for that would be the greatest scandal of the present time, as well as your going back on your given word. Moreover, it is as an individual that I arranged the lease with Mr. Peix, the owner, and between myself and those who might come forward, even without any basis, as having a case to settle with Mr. Peix. The Government would not be competent, but rather the courts to which I have not had recourse: they alone, if we want a full-scale scandal broadcast all over France, could force me to abandon the property to which I have a right, as they would surely recognize.

I thought I should send along this declaration with the copy of the agreement with Mr. Peix, herein included.

I hope that what I tell you in a straight forward manner, but not without profound grief, will be understood by you in a sense favorable to the community which I defend, now that you are far from the wearisome obsessions of certain individuals, and are at the point of becoming the shepherd of another flock.¹³ I admit that, on hearing of this circumstance, I thought that you would discontinue a plan that could no longer have the same interest for you, and which, if it were to be complete during the remainder of your jurisdiction, would be totally unexplainable.

The community at Laus has certainly not merited to be persecuted by you beyond your episcopate.

Please accept, Your Lordship, with the same sentiment of charity with which I address it to you, the language that zeal for justice inspires in me; think it over in your conscience at the foot of your crucifix; weigh the consequences of this whole matter with the standard of the altar, and we will immediately be reunited in the same mind of equality and guardianship. If unfortunately it would be otherwise, the responsibility of the public scandal would not fall on me, neither before God nor before men. But no, the charity of Jesus Christ will triumph, peace will be restored to a community that you highly regard and which at this very moment does not respond to the blows rained upon it except by the fruits of salvation that it is producing through its work in the midst of your flock.

¹² Bishop de La Croix had submitted the matter to the Minister of Worship in a memorandum dated December 13, 1839.

¹³ Bishop de La Croix had just been promoted to the Archdiocese of Auch and was then at Paris.

I still hope from you a return to the kindness that your episcopal heart cannot refuse to evangelical workers who have never ceased to be devoted to you, and I remain, with respectful attachment, Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. I take the occasion to complain to you about the raid that three priests sent by your Vicar General made at Notre-Dame du Laus to present to Father Mille a summation (with threats) to hand over the agreement, without leaving me, after I myself had written about this matter, twenty-four hours between the request and the reply to be made. You will be the judge of this lack of respect for me and this lack of tact. Besides, that is only one incident in a thousand in this deplorable matter.¹⁴

99. [To Mr. Rua, Parish Priest of N.-D. du Laus].¹⁵

A court case in the matter of Laus would be favorable to the Oblates; however, Bishop de Mazenod is ready to consider proposed conciliatory possibilities.

Marseilles, October 13, 1841.

I have received, Sir, your letter of the 9th.

When you informed me of the dispositions to which you are bound, you told me that the legal consultants considered that the courts would decide in favor of the case which you are to represent against myself. In that case, I would pity the judges who would be forced to render justice contrary to fairness. Fortunately, however, other very capable legal consultants, some living in Marseilles and others in Grenoble, have invariably and unanimously upheld an opinion contrary to that of your advisers.

The objections taken in article 4 of the agreement were brought up without deterring in any way the lawyers that I consulted. According to

¹⁴ In his letter of November 16 to the Founder, Bishop de La Croix had asked for a copy "of the titles that you have in your possession which formed the agreement between yourself and Mr. Peix". Bishop de Mazenod was late in replying, and that is why Mr. Martel, the Vicar General of Gap, sent three priests to Laus, carrying a summation which demanded the titles immediately. Bishop Jeancard had already protested in the name of Bishop de Mazenod and explained the reason for the delay, cf. Jeancard to Callandre, Secretary of the Bishop's house in Gap, December 15, 1839, *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Copy, N.-D. du Laus, Register of letters, p. 358.

them, there can be no doubt in the matter; they have given me formal assurance and they see several means of defense which would be successful.

However, you speak of possible ways of conciliation. If these are not just empty words, if they have the consent of the Bishop of Gap who must be acquainted with them, then they need to be explained. As for myself, in spite of the unheard of conduct of that prelate in my regard and in regard to my religious,¹⁶ and even though I must not in any way be the aggressor in the process, I would reproach myself for not having taken every occasion freeing me from bringing public complaints against one of my colleagues. Thus I await what you will tell me about the conciliatory routes that you would like to take. Speak openly and with authorization from whomever it may concern. Accept, Sir, the assurance of my consideration.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

100. [To Bishop D.A. Sibour of Digne].¹⁷

The Oblates are owners of the boarding school of Canon Durand at Annot. Wants to establish a community of Missionaries there.

[Marseilles], September 9, 1843.

Your Lordship,

Even though Mr. Tempier has informed you of the cession that Canon Durand just made to me of his property at Annot, I see it my duty to speak to you about it myself and to express the satisfaction I feel in being able to tell you that the only change in this operation is the name of

¹⁶ Bishop Louis Rossat was installed at Gap on March 10, 1841. In September, he named Mr. Rua as Parish Priest of Laus and on September 30, dissatisfied with Father Mille, he withdrew from the Oblates the powers of jurisdiction and the faculty of celebrating Mass in the diocese. The Fathers then left Laus, except for Father Mille, the Superior, who stayed there till April, 1842, to settle the differences between the Bishop and the Oblates in the matter of property. We still have 5 letters from the Founder on this subject: to Mr. Blanc-Subé, lawyer, on February 28, 1842, to Bishop Rossat of Gap, March 15 and April 6, 1840, and to his successor, Bishop J.I. Depéry, November 8 and December 16, 1844. We omit those lengthy business letters. To understand them correctly and for the sake of fairness, we would have to publish the replies of the Bishops of Gap as well. The entire matter has been studied by Father J.-M. Salgado, *Les Oblats à N.-D. du Laus. Etude et Documents*. Rome, 1950-1965, polycopied, 339 p.

¹⁷ Yenveux II, 24-25.

the owner, and that the establishment will continue more than ever under your high patronage, only under your jurisdiction and in the interests of your diocese.

Mr. Tempier undoubtedly explained to you how I was in a way forced into acquiring Mr. Durand's property. I refused three times in writing and by word of mouth, for the Congregation never accepts the direction of similar establishments. Finally, I gave in to this good priest's pressing offers, on condition however that I would not get involved at all in the boarding school which would continue to be ruled and governed as in the past. I assure you that if it were not you who is Bishop of Digne, I would have resisted to the end, for on my part, I needed a kind of guarantee to be able some day to establish, in this house or adjoining it, a few missionaries who would be authorized to evangelize the parishes of these high mountains: this is in accord with the purposes of our Institute for which you have always shown esteem and affection. If I had to choose, I would never have looked to such a distance for a dwelling for our missionaries, but since it was offered to us with such great insistence and since it was a matter of some day placing ourselves under your paternal and very friendly jurisdiction, to offer when he judges fit, to a Bishop friend, the cooperation and service of laborers devoted to his person and zealous for the salvation of his flock, I felt it would be failing to recognize God's will if I were to refuse any longer. That is frankly what determined my acceptance and what I hope will have you sanction by your approval an agreement which is to the full advantage of your dear flock. Please accept, etc. ...

101. [To The Rector of the Academy at Nîmes].¹⁸

Purpose of the juniorate at N.-D. de Lumières.

Marseilles, November 3, 1843.

... The establishment that has been formed at Lumières has no other goal than to prepare young people to enter novitiate for diocesan or foreign missions. I would never tolerate that this establishment be in the least deflected from this purpose, for any reason whatsoever. Their occupations have only clerical instruction as their goal. They will all wear the soutane at all times. Previously, five of their fellow students were sent to the novitiate; several of those now at Lumières are about to be sent to the same

¹⁸ Yenveux VIII, 117.

place. As soon as we notice that there is someone who is not fit for the vocation for which he presented himself, we hasten to send him away. We are all that much more strict in this regard for it is extremely important that the house avoid entirely the spirit and character of a boarding school; and, what is more, all those young men supported there for a special vocation do not even pay their eating expenses. We have definitely a different idea than simply to give a free education to children called to some worldly profession. The latter is a kind of good that we cannot and do not want to do, not any more than we want to form clerics for parish work.

102. [To the Rector of the Academy of Nîmes].¹⁹

Information about the pupils at N.-D. de Lumières.

Marseilles, July 22, 1844.

My dear Rector,

Thank you for kindly addressing yourself to me for information about the facts that were reported to you relative to the community of Lumières.

I cannot understand without further information how anyone could tell the Inspector that there were 60 pupils there who were in no way different from educational boarding school students. The young men living there to prepare for preaching missions are eleven or twelve in number. There are none there who are preparing for a lay career. Everyone, once they are sufficiently prepared, is directed to the novitiate properly speaking. None of them has been returned to his family as a boarding school pupil. They are almost all outsiders to the Vaucluse department. Only one that I know of is from the neighborhood; they are presently carefully examining his vocation, and if he is judged to be unsuited to the holy work for which he came, he will be sent back to his parents. I would not tolerate keeping anyone with any other intention than forming a missionary for diocesan or foreign missions, and I am certain that the Director of the community keeps scrupulously within the limits of the goal I have mentioned. He knows very well that if he went beyond them he would diminish the spirit and purpose of an institution that I am not supporting in order to have pupils for school and that he would compromise a precious interest of the spiritual order for the good of souls.

¹⁹ Copy, Marseilles, Archives at the Archbishop's residence, Register of Administrative Letters, 1844-1851, p.22.

However, my dear Rector, I can explain how the number that they gave to the Inspector about the number of young people at Lumières is so much above what is there. They confused the students from the Major Seminary in Marseilles where they are studying theology, who went to spend their holidays at Lumières with the young men who live there on a regular basis. The first have already completed their novitiate and are there only for the holidays without being at all taken up with classical studies,²⁰ and they are usually some 18. The others, much fewer in number, are as yet only postulants who are quite different from boarders in an educational institute, are far from being able to pay for any upkeep for the establishment for which I must find other sources. They do not belong to well-to-do families as you were told.

Dear Rector, I can guarantee the correctness of the information that I have the honor of giving you. If it seems incomplete, please ask me for more and you will thus be better informed than through any other channel. The spirit of tact that you are using to proceed in this inspires me with the greatest confidence, and on the other hand, the truth is so much in accord with what I want to have you know for me to fear telling you things exactly as they are.

Once again I express my gratitude for the goodwill which inspires the letters that you send to me and I remain with great consideration, Mr. Rector, your ...

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

103. To the Marquis de Cambis, Peer of France, at Avignon.²¹

The Mayor of Goult was laying claims on the property of the Oblates at N.-D. de Lumières. Would Mr. de Cambis serve as intermediary for a friendly settlement.

Marseilles, December 4, 1844.

My dear Marquis,

You know that I acquired the former property of the Carmelites at N.-D. de Lumières in order to station at the shrine some devoted priests who work and serve in the Avignon diocese. Each day I was more pleased to

²⁰ The scholastic brothers.

²¹ Orig.: Avignon, Calvet Museum, Manuscript 3551, p. 74. The Marquis Luc de Cambis-d'Orsan, a former deputy of Vaucluse, was a Peer of France since 1837.

have made this sacrifice since everyone assures me — and you have told me the same thing yourself — that those good priests are fulfilling their ministry worthily and are doing a great deal of good be it in the parishes to which they are invited,²² be it at Lumières where they live. But now the Mayor of Goult²³ is troubling me regarding the possession of my property by bringing up claims contrary to what I believe to be my rights. Here I have consulted distinguished legal advisers who recognized my titles to be legitimate and are sure that, if the Mayor persists in his claims, he would lose his suit. However, I must admit, my dear Marquis, that wh[at]ever my convictions might be on this matter, I feel I am extremely reluctant to stake the extreme measure of pleading my cause against the very commune where is located the residence of these kind priests who are peaceful by character as well as by vocation. Thus I confidently approach you to use your good standing with the Prefect and have him dissuade this troublesome Mayor from forcing me to defend my rights before the courts; to avoid this trouble, I would be on my part willing to make some sacrifices. I will not go into detail, but leave it to Father Ricard, who will have the honor of presenting you my letter, to explain this whole matter to you.

Accept the assurance of my great consideration with which I have the honor of remaining, my dear Marquis, your very humble and obedient servant.

† C.J. Eug., Bishop of Marseilles.

104. [To Bishop Baluffi, Secretary of the Congregation for Bishops and Regulars, at Rome].²⁴

Wants to obtain a new approval of the Congregation.

Marseilles, January 12, 1846.

Your Most Venerable Excellency,

How grateful I am for the interest you have shown in the matter that I referred to your kindness. No one could advise me better than you in

²² The manuscript has *appellés*, a misspelling.

²³ The Mayor of Goult was M.H. Chauvet, a Freemason.

²⁴ Original Italian, Rome, Vatican Secret Archives, Collection: Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. March 1846. On January 25, Bishop de Mazenod sent a petition to Gregory XVI in the same sense (Latin text, *ibid.*).

terms of having its success. I will thus completely be in line with what was agreed upon with the very worthy Bishop of Viviers²⁵ who has informed me of your views on this matter. We will set aside the various canons of the General Chapters. In fact, I am convinced that it is not opportune to involve the Holy See in these particular regulations; the motive which had inspired me proceeded from my devotion to pontifical authority, that is my excuse.

What I have especially at heart is to obtain from the Holy Father a confirmation of the solemn approval given to the Congregation by Pope Leo XII of happy memory. You are aware that the Bishop of Viviers spoke about this to the Holy Father. With his usual kindness the latter replied that he would gladly grant this confirmation since he could do nothing better than to approve the decisions of his predecessor Leo. I am therefore once again having recourse to Your Lordship to obtain this great favour. I would like this confirmation to be granted through Apostolic Letters as the first approbation was and in the usual terms of kindness which greatly encourage a Congregation's members and binds them to their vocation. You can be sure that they are worthy of this consolation, so much do they generously accept sacrifices to go and preach the faith to unbelievers to the ends of the world.

This expansion of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate²⁶ obliges me especially to ask the Holy Father, as you indicate in your precious letter, that the General Chapters, held every three years up to now according to the Constitutions, take place every six years from now on. This modification was judged necessary by the Chapter of 1843, considering the distance of the Institute's new houses in America, as far as the Red River and Hudson's Bay. Since this change would be a modification of a point in the Constitutions already approved by the Holy See, this decree of the Chapter must have a similar approval from the Holy Father. That is what I request, the more so because the Chapter should have taken place this very year, something which is now impossible due to the above-mentioned circumstances.²⁷

²⁵ Bishop Hippolyte Guibert, accompanied by Father Courtès, had made a trip to Corsica and Rome in November-December, 1845. At Rome he had left the Founder's request for the approval of the decrees of the General Chapters of 1826, 1831, 1837 and 1843. This was refused by a letter of December 16, 1845 to which the Founder is replying here.

²⁶ Oblati di Maria Santissima Immacolata ...

²⁷ The two favours were granted by a decree of March 14 and by Apostolic Letters from Gregory XVI, March 20, 1846, cf. Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives, DM XII 3.

Excuse my indiscretion, Your Lordship, but you have shown me so much kindness that I had to place my confidence in you.

Accept my sentiments of gratitude and affection. Your very humble and devoted servant,

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

105. [To Bishop Casanelli d'Istria of Ajaccio].²⁸

Sadness at Father Moreau's death. Father Tempier is sent to Ajaccio; he will propose Father Semeria as Superior of the Major Seminary.

[Marseilles], March 12, 1846.

I am still stunned by the blow which just took Father Moreau from us.²⁹ I am truly inconsolable at his loss. I was his father and guided him from his first steps in the holy vocation that he embraced. I watched him grow in knowledge and virtue; he never gave me an anxious moment; he was always worthy of his calling; in a word, he was a perfect Churchman. The good Lord wished to reward him, so I do not mean to envy his happiness, but I groan bitterly at his loss. Believe me, Your Lordship, that the loss I feel it brings to your diocese is a great part of my grief. You know very well that I have shared your solicitude from the beginning of your episcopate!

I am deeply grateful for your kind consideration in having the precious remains of our dear Father Moreau transported to Vico. They are well placed near the remains of his brother³⁰ which rest in that sacred solitude. Oh! May their memory rouse zeal in all those who come after them! What a guarantee of dedication for the Congregation.

The bonds which join you and me, my dear Lord and friend, will last throughout this life and beyond.

... I am sending you Father Tempier, who has my fullest confidence and whom I know you regard very highly, to plan with you everything that will be of the best advantage for your diocese. He will let you know

²⁸ Yenveux I, 77*; IX, 172b.

²⁹ Father F.N. Moreau died on February 2, 1846, after a few days of illness.

³⁰ No doubt "brother religious", missing from the original. He is referring to Father Albini.

that I didn't think that I could make a better choice to succeed our dear departed than a man filled with God's spirit, wise, prudent, learned, already well known to great advantage in your diocese which he loves and by which he is loved, very capable in spite of his modesty, which sums up in a word all of Father Semeria's good qualities. Only his age is against him, being only 33 years old. One has only to be 30 to be bishop, so it is a canonical age, but he has already given so many proofs of his prudence that he truly causes no fear on that score. Have confidence, my Lord, in the good God and the Blessed Virgin, our Mother and Patroness, and everything will go as we desire.

106. [To Bishop Casanelli d'Istria of Ajaccio].³¹

Plans to name Father Semeria or Father Lagier Superior of the Major Seminary.

[Marseilles], April 15, 1846.

... When I proposed Father Semeria as Superior for your Major Seminary, I was quite convinced that this excellent man would worthily fulfill that position. The Bishop of Viviers wrote me in these terms: "I don't think that anyone would be better suited for directing the seminary in Ajaccio than Father Semeria. He will leave a great void in our missions. Your inspiration is good." Only his too-great modesty is against him, but once he starts to work, he would infallibly move into his proper place ...

I am proposing Father Lagier to succeed Father Moreau.³² He has experience in a seminary, and is prudent; everyone admires his virtues; he is personally attached to Your Lordship; he has directed a seminary for several years as director and professor; he possesses all the required qualities of a good and worthy seminary Superior ...

³¹ Yenveux I, 78*; IX, 143.

³² From the time of his interview with Father Tempier in March, the Bishop refused Fathers Semeria and Lagier. Bishop de Mazenod did not dare send Father Burfin nor Father Courtès. Finally, Father Magnan replaced Father Moreau, cf. *Oblate Writings*, 10, pp. 124-131, 144.

107. [To Mr. Ambrose Lisle March Phillipps, Grâce-Dieu Manor].³³

Is sending Fathers Casimir Aubert and Robert Cooke. Invitation to come to Marseilles.

Marseilles, July 2, 1846.

Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin.

Today, I am pleased, dear Sir, to give you new proof of the interest I take in your mission. I am putting two excellent religious of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate on their way to Grâce-Dieu. One is French, the other is Irish. Both are of great worth. Without speaking of the former, I will tell you that Father Cooke is a man distinguished for his learning and piety. He has just tested his zeal here among a colony of English people who came to work for the railways. This good Father Cook[e] succeeded in winning over those people, and had several of them return to the Church's bosom. You will be pleased with his modest and edifying bearing, his conversation, good judgment; in a word I am giving you a veritable present, and have great hope in him for the good of the mission. Reverend Father Aubert, to whom I have given powers of Visitor, will have the honor of seeing you and discussing everything concerning the good of religion in your region. He is my alter-ego whose merits you already know.

I will not close without thanking you for all the kindness that you always show to our Fathers.³⁴ They are grateful for it as I am on my part. God willing, I hope to be able to go and thank you personally by word of mouth in paying you a short visit next year at Grâce-Dieu.³⁵

If you are ever inclined to make a pilgrimage to Rome, remember that you must make yourself at home by coming here and resting a few days. It would be a great consolation for me to have you in my manor in the city or in the country depending on which season you might choose for your trip. If my invitation would suffice to help you decide, I give it wholeheartedly as well as to Madame Phillipps,³⁶ and I assure you that my house is big enough for me to welcome the grandchildren as well as their

³³ Orig.: Stockerston Hall near Uppinham, Family Archives of Everard de Lisle. This letter was graciously sent to the Postulation on April 9, 1987, by The Squire de Lisle, great-grandson of Mr. Ambrose (1809-1878).

³⁴ Fathers Perron and Naughten, cf. *Oblate Writings*, 3, p. 17.

³⁵ Bishop de Mazenod did not make this trip till 1850.

³⁶ Manuscript has Phillipps.

governess if they are to come with you. You must make this trip sooner or later. Make sure that you do not put it off too long so that I can show you around my beautiful episcopal city before I die or become too old.

Accept, dear Sir, the assurance of the sentiments with which I have the honor of being your very humble and obedient servant.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

108. [To Bishop Casanelli d'Istria of Ajaccio].³⁷

Bishop de Mazenod insists that Bishop Casanelli d'Istria accept Father Lagier as Superior of the Ajaccio seminary.

[Marseilles], July 15, 1846.

Your Lordship,

You state that Father Lagier had not gained the support of his fellow-religious. Possibly, when they were his equals, they took the liberty not to always agree with him, but once he becomes their Superior, everything changes in a religious Society animated with a good spirit which, thanks to God, reigns in ours. I can prove it to you in the present case since, from the moment they knew I had designated Father Lagier as Superior, his fellow-religious wrote to assure me of their perfect obedience, submission and deference for the one who holds the place of God among them. So, I think, Your Lordship, that everything should move you to overcome your first reluctance which was founded only on a supposition that does not exist any more, and thus allow me to offer you again Father Lagier as Superior of your seminary, of which he is already *bene merito* through several years of assiduous and fruitful service. It would be too inconsiderate to reward him with the dishonor of a kind of rejection which might ruin his reputation ...

109. [To Cardinal de La Tour d'Auverne, Bishop of Arras].³⁸

Hopes to make a foundation at Boulogne.

[Marseilles, October 10, 1846].

I would like to ask you if it would be agreeable to you that we make a small foundation of our Missionaries at Boulogne. They are men who are

³⁷ Yenveux III, 68.

³⁸ Yenveux III, 140.

essentially devoted to the bishops, and act only according to their guidance and decision and, it must be said to God's glory, that they are doing infinite good in all the territories they are evangelizing. If Your Eminence would consent that they take a foothold at Boulogne, or in some other part of your diocese that you may prefer, I don't doubt that you will be able to congratulate yourself on having taken them under your patronage.

I point to Boulogne because we have several houses in England and it would be very convenient to have a place in [a city] where our Missionaries embark or disembark.³⁹

I present these thoughts to your wisdom. I would be very pleased if you were to like them, because these Missionaries have been formed by myself in the interests of the Church and for the service of the episcopacy, and their admission into your diocese would fashion new bonds between Your Eminence and myself ...

110. [To Bishop A.B. Menjaud of Nancy].⁴⁰

Plan for a foundation at Nancy. The Oblates are the "Bishop's men".

[Marseilles], June 14, 1847.

I would be happy if you could become a second father to my sons ... I dare assure you, and I guarantee that you will never regret having adopted them. The spirit I instill into them and which they have perfectly understood, is that they see themselves as the bishop's men, promising him inviolable submission and affection, making his person and authority respected everywhere and by everyone, never doing anything without his approval, in a word, to be in his regard what children are toward their father ...⁴¹

³⁹ During the General Council of March 12, 1845, Father Tempier had spoken of the need to make a foundation in northern France or Belgium to have a relay stop between the houses of southern France and England. At the end of January and in April 1846, Cardinal de La Tour d'Auvergne stopped at Marseilles, (cf. *Oblate Writings*, 10, pp. 119 and 130). No doubt, the Founder saw the occasion as furnished by Providence to offer him the service of his Missionaries.

⁴⁰ Yenveux III, 143.

⁴¹ Yenveux adds a paragraph which is certainly not an excerpt from this letter.

111. [To Mr. Marguet, Vicar General of Nancy].⁴²

In spite of the high cost of a house, the Oblates will come to Nancy.

[Marseilles], June 15, 1847.

... Faced with this enormous burden, there would be reason for anxiety were it not for the unlimited confidence that God has placed in my heart toward his adorable Providence.⁴³ Let's go forward then and make the best of this business. I can only pray to the Lord that he bless this holy undertaking which has been conceived in so pure and supernatural an outlook; his divine hand is urging us on; let us allow ourselves to be led and make every effort to cooperate with his adorable designs.

112. [To Bishop Menjaud of Nancy].⁴⁴

Obedience and dedication of the Oblates.

[Marseilles], July 24, 1847.

I dare to assure you that, in the family you are adopting, you are giving yourself not only good workers to cultivate your vineyard, but also devoted sons who by principle attach themselves to their bishop as to their father. They are the born defenders of his interests in regard to everyone and against all, in a word, his right-hand men ready to carry out all his commands, because they know the value of obedience to the one who represents God in the diocese ...

113. [To Mr. Marguet, Vicar General of Nancy].⁴⁵

Mr. Marguet can in all confidence discuss with Father Tempier the question of the foundation at Nancy. Excellence of the Oblate vocation.

[Marseilles], July 30, 1847.

You will settle everything with Father Tempier, my Vicar General and my first and eldest companion in the holy work that you plan to adopt

⁴² Yenveux VII, 35.

⁴³ Father Leonard's tour of recruitment brought in many vocations. Hence the plan to open a second novitiate in the north. Father Leonard met the Vicar General of Nancy who was favorable to the Oblates and offered a property which would cost 100.000 francs (Yenveux VII, 37). Father Tempier made the trip to Nancy in July and bought a house at the price of 65.000 francs, whereas Bishop de Mazenod had asked him not to go beyond 45.000. Cf. *Oblate Writings*, 10, pp. 160, 165, 173-174.

⁴⁴ Yenveux III, 143. This letter was entrusted to Father Tempier who was leaving for Nancy.

⁴⁵ Yenveux VIII, 137; IX, 211.

in your diocese. In advance I approve everything that he may decide. You will have no difficulty in coming to an agreement with him; he is a zealous and dedicated man, very wise, very astute in business matters. By excellent qualities he compensates what may be lacking in some external graces, if you judge him by his coldness. But capable men value merit on its true scale. Father Tempier has my fullest confidence and you can give him yours without hesitation.

... May it please God that in the diocese of Nancy, as you make me hope for the future, will be understood the excellence of the vocation which dedicates a man to the glory of God, the service of the Church in its most difficult duties, and the salvation of the most abandoned souls.

114. [To Cardinal Orioli, Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars].⁴⁶

Petition to shorten the novitiate period of Fathers Ciamin and Lemfrit.

Marseilles, July 30, 1847.

Your Lordship,

I was waiting for an occasion to communicate to Your Eminence my sincere congratulations for the new mark of confidence that Our Holy Father has just given you. No one was more suited than Your Eminence for such a delicate position which demands special learning, the application of which is not always so easy.⁴⁷

The favor that I am asking of Your Eminence does not contain such difficulties, so I have recourse only to Your Kindness.

It is a matter of granting to two priest novices of the Congregation, of which our immortal protector, benefactor and father Leo XII made me the Superior, a dispensation of several months of novitiate in order to canonically make religious profession before the year required by the decrees. There is an urgent and legitimate reason for this dispensation.

The Congregation of Oblates of Mary Immaculate is evangelizing the indigenous people along the banks of the Saint Lawrence, Saint Maurice, Ottawa and Saguenay Rivers; they are also preaching the gospel to those

⁴⁶ Orig.: Rome, Vatican Secret Archives, Collection of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars: Episcoporum 1847.

⁴⁷ The Cardinal had just been named Prefect of the Congregation.

of Abitibi and Temiscaming.⁴⁸ They have just penetrated into Oregon, are already on the Red River, and are planning to head toward the Hudson Bay⁴⁹ on the Moose River. Your Eminence is quite aware that we need men for all these missions. It is indispensable that I send at least four of them without delay, but two who are most apt for this difficult ministry have not completed their novitiate year; they are however sufficiently tested and full of holy zeal for their sublime vocation. I therefore beg Your Eminence to obtain from the Sovereign Pontiff the dispensation that I am requesting in the enclosed form.

I dare to add the request to expedite without the least delay the Apostolic Rescript, for it is very important that the Missionaries leave during the first week of September.

I am aware, Your Lordship, that I have surpassed all limits of discretion in asking you to instruct the offices of the Congregation that they request from Mr. Ferrucci, my agent, the Chancery fees which may be required for the rescript that which I am asking of Your kindness.

Pressed as I am for time, I have addressed my petition directly to Your Eminence by way of the Consul. I would probably have lost several days if I had sent it through Ferrucci's hands, and I strongly desire it to be carried out promptly because of the date of the Missionaries' departure.

Accept, Your Lordship, both my excuses and the expression of respectful sentiments filled with affection with which I remain the very humble and obedient servant of Your Eminence.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

⁴⁸ Manuscript has Abbitibi and Temiskaming.

⁴⁹ Manuscript has Baye.

115. [To Bishop Buissas of Limoges].⁵⁰

The Oblates accept to form a community at Limoges. They will arrive after the Feast of All Saints.

[Marseilles], October 7, 1847.⁵¹

In the Church there exists a small Congregation whose main purpose is to preach the gospel to the poor and to help the most abandoned.⁵² These are the very words of the Constitutions and Rules of the Missionaries, Your Lordship, which indicate the kind of ministry you may entrust to them. I hope that by God's mercy they will receive in your diocese, under your paternal protection, the same blessings that have constantly been theirs in the dioceses which they have never ceased to evangelize.

... According to the Rule the community in each house of the Congregation makes an eight-day retreat immediately before All Saints' Day.

116. [To Bishop Casanelli d'Istria of Ajaccio].⁵³

Father Semeria is being sent to Ceylon; Father Rollerri will replace him at Vico.

[Marseilles] October 7, 1847.

You are aware of the sacrifice that the Lord of the harvest is imposing on us by calling us to work on an island where 1500 thousand gentiles are awaiting the light of the gospel which the Vicar of Jesus Christ commands us to set before their eyes and where 150,000 nearly abandoned Christians are also asking for the help of our ministry. It is an extremely delicate mission for several reasons; and I needed a proven man like Father Semeria to whom I can confide in with complete peace of soul.

⁵⁰ Yenveux IV, 180; Rambert II, 255.

⁵¹ An undated letter in Rambert.

⁵² Bishop de Mazenod had just received a letter from the Bishop of Limoges who wrote: "I have heard a lot of good about a Religious Congregation called Oblates established in your diocese, of which you are the Superior General. The desire to have Missionaries or Assistant Priests in my diocese has prompted me to have a very fine house built ... which I would like to entrust to the priests of your Congregation. I would be very happy if you could send me four or five priests and a Brother ..." (Rambert II, 255).

⁵³ Yenveux I, 78*; IX, 192.

That is the sacrifice that the good Lord is asking of us and I must joyfully make it with firm confidence of the immense good that will result: the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda is calling for our help *opportunitissimo et necessario*.

I have every reason to believe that Father Rolleri who will replace him at Vico will do well. Here he has shown himself competent in the direction of the great work among the Italians of which he has been in charge for several years. It is an on-going mission that he has carried out marvelously; he has acquired great experience in this task. I am deeply convinced that you will be satisfied.

117. [To Mr. Marguet, Vicar General of Nancy].⁵⁴

The Nature of Oblate preaching; Father Dassy's qualities.

[Marseilles], October 21, 1847.

I very much want to acquaint you with the spirit of our Society which does not correspond to certain ideas that are usually entertained and which undoubtedly have their good side, but are not ours. You recommend that I send you excellent men and remind me that you are spoilt at Nancy by the best preachers who succeed one another in your area. I will not ask you if these excellent preachers have converted many people. That is not the practice of excellent preachers; and that is what has made a former Parish Priest of Toulon, who always used to call on all the famous preachers, say that they never drew anyone to the confessional; and that is why he asked me for some Missionaries, whom I constantly refused to send him precisely because people were too accustomed to hearing excellent preachers. I will modestly reply by quoting a passage of our Rules which sets down the method that our Missionaries are to follow ...⁵⁵

I wanted to transcribe this passage for you to commit you to always keep our Missionaries in the humility of their vocation and not expose them to do otherwise than what is recommended to them by their Rules.

The Superior that I am sending you is a perfect Missionary, a true conqueror who has continually won victories in the Viviers diocese. I would not want you to use him in the city. He can make his presence known in several of your villages, while he is waiting for me to send him some companions ...

⁵⁴ Yenveux II, 81: Rambert II, 257.

⁵⁵ Yenveux omits this quote.

118. [To Bishop Buissas of Limoges].⁵⁶

Missionary vocation of the Oblates.

Marseilles, October 24, 1847.⁵⁷

Your Lordship will allow me to make an observation in regard to what you tell me that at Limoges you need not only virtue but also talent among our Missionaries. I agree if it is a question of talent suited to the ministry that our Missionaries must fulfill. They are called to evangelize the poor and work for the salvation of the most abandoned souls. To fulfill this ministry appropriately, they must first of all possess virtue and then talent in accord with the needs of those whom they are to lead back to God. That is all we must require. I have a residence of Jesuits at Marseilles; I assure you that except for one and only one who can carry out any function, all the others have only the kind of talent of which I am speaking. Thus when you have Father Burfin [and] Father Baret who have exceptional talent, and Father Coste who has the wherewithall to improve, it seems to me that you can be satisfied with their good simplicity and solid instruction, even though it may be less brilliant than that of the others.⁵⁸ I must even say about this matter that the Oblate Rule forbids them to preach Lenten and Advent sermons, and they need an express dispensation to accept that type of preaching which we want to leave to others, being satisfied on our part with the blessings that the Lord has never ceased to lavish on the humble ministry of missions for which the Oblates have been established. I beg you to look elsewhere than to the Oblates for Advent and Lenten preachers. We must keep the Rule; our men must keep their feet on the ground, live in humility and efface themselves before men.

⁵⁶ Yeneux I, 34; II, 80 and 84.

⁵⁷ Yeneux sets the date of this letter as follows: October 24, 1835 (I,34); October 24, 1845 (II,80), October 24, 1855 (II,84). The Founder accepted a foundation at Limoges in October 1847. Father Courtès was the first Superior, replaced by Father Burfin after several months (Mazenod to Courtès, October 19, 1847). Bishop de Mazenod writes here: "When you will have Father Burfin ..." Thus the letter is probably written at the end of 1847 or beginning of 1848. We keep the date of October 24 even if according to the context this letter would seem to have been written several months at least after the arrival of the Oblates at Limoges, at the beginning of November.

⁵⁸ The others are Fathers Viala and Chauliac and Brother Ferrand who left with Father Courtès, cf. JM, November 4, 1847.

119. [To Bishop Buissas of Limoges].⁵⁹

The Oblates must live in community. Their purpose is to preach Missions, not to work in parishes.

[Marseilles], February 20, 1848.

I experience grief which I cannot but confide to you. You know that each one must live one's own life and follow one's own vocation. It happens that because of the system followed in Limoges, our Oblates are deprived of what they have come to seek in the Congregation. To live in community, they have given up the ordinary parish ministry, and it is especially through the use of the missions that they lead souls to God. Their Rules provide that they live in community, so much so that they prescribe that they always go forth in pairs: *Duo saltem ibunt ad missiones*. I understand that at times it is necessary to dispense from this point of the Rule, especially when a missionary is sent to assist a parish priest. It is essential, however, that this be a temporary measure only. You understand, Your Lordship, that there are good reasons for this. Moreover, there is a point in the Rule that says: *Nequamquam licet parocias regere*. Their lot gives them enough to do, so that they can leave to others the care of parishes for which they are not called ...

I wanted to give Your Lordship a general view of our missionaries' Constitutions,⁶⁰ to help you understand that we cannot give them another orientation than that which they have received from the Church. Even were I to desire it, my authority does not go that far. Hence it is essential that the Oblates form a community, where they can always find the spiritual aid the Constitutions assure them. In continuously disposing them to replace parish priests, they are deprived above all of the advantages they had come to seek in religious life, in community life; they are isolated for long periods of time, which is contrary to their Rules, and they are thrown into the parish ministry, which is also against their Rules and their vocation: they are called to the Congregation precisely never to be parish priests. Furthermore, it is within their community that, by practicing virtues prescribed for them by mutual example and good direction, they find the means needed to preserve them in their fervor and the ways of perfection so that their ministry may be blessed by God and produce the fruit which, by God's grace, we have always reaped.

⁵⁹ Yenveux II, 146.

⁶⁰ Yenveux omits the excerpts from the Rule mentioned by the Founder.

Your Lordship is aware that I am speaking frankly and freely. The Bishop who is as far advanced as you in the ways of God will understand better than I know how to express the importance of the considerations that I have only indicated. You are the father, the protector and the counselor of our Oblates; no one should be more concerned than you that they be worthy of their vocation at all times, since it is in this way that they will be able to render themselves truly useful to your diocese where they will certainly do good, as they are doing in every place where they are established.

120. [To Bishop J.M. Doney of Montauban].⁶¹

Personnel of a Major Seminary.

[Marseilles], August 28, 1848.

For service in a Major Seminary, it is customary that are appointed: a Superior, a dogma professor, a moral professor, a philosophy professor, a professor of Sacred Scripture who looks after ceremonies, etc., and a bur-sar. The Superior that I have in mind can teach Hebrew if you wish this language to be studied in your seminary.

121. [To Father Roothaan, Superior General of the Society of Jesus].⁶²

Complaint against Father Strickland, S.J., who wanted to supplant the Oblates at Jaffna. Good relations between Jesuits and Oblates in Oregon.

Marseilles, October 28, 1848.

Very Reverend Father,

I received a letter from the Superior of our missions on the island of Ceylon which includes some facts about which I must inform you. The person who wrote is truly a man of God, incapable of exaggeration and a friend of your Society as are all my sons, to the point of having made a trip to Negapatam to visit Bishop Canoz, the Apostolic Vicar of Maduré, to petition him for two of your Fathers for one or two years.

⁶¹ Yenveux (II,10) wrote that the Bishop of Montauban had manifested a desire to confide his Major Seminary to the Oblates.

⁶² Orig.: Rome, General Archives of the Jesuits: Maduré I-XIII, 14.

[We omit here Father Semeria's long letter, transcribed here by Bishop de Mazenod, in which this Father declares that Father Strickland S.J. had come to Jaffna to offer the service of the Jesuits to help Bishop Bettachini to stamp out the first symptoms of opposition from the Goanese priests. In fact, he proposed the establishment of a college and the appointment of a new secretary for the Bishop, a friend of the Jesuits, as a replacement for Father Semeria; he had even advised Bishop Bettachini to write to Marseilles not to send him any more Oblates].

I have no doubt that in reading this letter, Reverend Father, you will experience pain. The work of God must not be accomplished in this manner. I am upset that they did not name the one among your Fathers who conducted himself with so little tact; it would have been appropriate that you know of it so that you could have given him the advice he truly needs from his Superiors, so that he may conduct himself with more charity and in a less compromising manner — for it would be disturbing if one were to think him to be so determined in his improper actions only if he were acting with his Provincial's approval. It is with this system of infringement that a person makes himself disagreeable and brings blame on the whole corps, for which only those who have provoked it by their imprudence and misdirected zeal are responsible. When the Archbishop of Oregon City asked me for men from our Congregation, I refused him vigorously for the sole reason that the Jesuit Fathers were already serving his diocese; later I gave in to the wishes of the Bishop of Walla-Walla in the conviction that he had no other religious groups to evangelize the unbelievers entrusted to his zeal, basing myself on the principle which, it seems to me, that the Church usually adopts and which it has learnt from the Apostle Saint Paul: *Sic autem praedicavi Evangelium hoc, non ubi nominatus est Christus, ne super alienum fundamentum aedificarem.*⁶³

I would have preferred to communicate these complaints to you by word of mouth, Reverend Father; what seemed to me your too extended absence, however, obliges me to write to you.⁶⁴ I beg you, dear Father, not to allow yourself to be tempted by the requests of all those who come to visit you. Come back to us as soon as possible, you know how happy we will be to see you here; it seems to me that it is an acquired right of which you should not deprive us. As for myself personally I am happy to con-

⁶³ Romans 15, 20.

⁶⁴ The Revolution of 1848 had forced Father Roothaan to leave Rome. He found refuge for some time in Marseilles.

verse with you; my good sentiments towards you date for a long time and nothing can change them. Please accept this assurance and pray for me.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. To compensate for what I have written about the unfortunate procedure of this English Jesuit Father, I am pleased to transcribe for you what the Superior of our Oblates of Mary in Oregon wrote to me: "Good Father Accolti, with whom I have been staying since our arrival in the Walamet, manifests the most cordial friendship. This good spirit between the sons of Jesus and those of Mary has so surprised our Bishops that they could not but say that they never believed it possible to have such union between members of two corporations. They had dreamt of rivals and saw only brothers. I assure you that I would have to write you a very long letter if I were to inform you of all the evidence of the most sincere friendship which all the sons of Saint Ignatius have given us both in the United States and here. Father Joset wrote me a letter in which all the beauty and kindness of his heart are evident: I am keeping this letter as a precious relic, etc."

Father Ricard then speaks to me about the memoire of the Apostolic Vicar of Oregon, who become Archbishop of Oregon City; he told me that if I did not know about it, you would be able to show it to me. This good Father didn't know that you were obliged to leave Rome and were really not able to carry papers of that nature with you. I do not want to end this letter without expressing to you my fullest gratitude for the charitable deeds of your Fathers in Oregon. You see that they are not dealing with ungrateful people; and certainly, if Bishop Barnabò agreed with the viewpoints in the letter you sent to him from Marseilles, your Fathers would find in the one chosen all the facilities desirable to exercise their holy ministry with that liberty and proper independence needed to do good work.⁶⁵

I repeat, my dear and Very Reverend Father, the assurance of my affectionate friendship.

⁶⁵ The Jesuits and Oblates in Oregon had proposed Father Ricard as the future Bishop of Nesqually, cf. *Oblate Writings*, 5, p. 23.

Father Roothaan replied on November 7, 1848 and closed with these words: "Oh! how I needed the consolation that you had the kindness to add by the P.S. regarding Father Accolti's conduct in Oregon."

122. [To Bishop Wicart of Fréjus].⁶⁶

Invitation to allow the Abbé Sumien to return to the Congregation.

[Marseilles], January 24, 1849.

The Abbé Sumien, former parish priest of Varages, has sincerely presented the state of his soul to me. I have some claim to this confidence. I raised Mr. Sumien and he received his clerical education in the bosom of the Congregation of Missionaries to which he had bound himself by vows. At a certain moment, he allowed himself to forget his commitment and left. He was employed in the diocese of Fréjus and went from Montfort to Varages where he has spent 17 years. During this long space of time, he never ceased to experience remorse which he covered up by promising himself to return later to his first vocation. Thus he deluded himself and it took the circumstances of his moving to another parish to make him decide to finally break the habit he had acquired and which favored the natural inclinations that tend to seek ease and the little pleasures of life. I could only applaud this resolution and didn't hesitate to open to him the doors of the family which he should never have left. No other priest of his age would have been accepted, but for him it was a matter of not opposing the reparation of a great fault. I considered it a duty, Your Lordship, to inform you of Mr. Sumien's position and to send him back to you for your blessing and to ask your consent before he returns to his spiritual family which is glad to forget his mistake in favour of the good dispositions that he manifests.

123. [To Bishop Berteaud of Tulle].⁶⁷

Gratitude. Request to allow the seminarian Delpuech to enter novitiate. The Oblates are "true sons of the Bishops".

[Marseilles], May 7, 1849.

The kindness that you have shown to our Father Nicolas touched him so much that he could not but write to me and express his deepest gratitude for what he has experienced. He is aware how sensitive I am in

⁶⁶ Yenveux IX, 199. A.M. Sumien (1802-1883), became an Oblate on May 30, 1822, and left in 1831. He made a second novitiate in 1849, followed by oblation on March 5, 1850.

⁶⁷ Yenveux III, 143; IX, 77; Rey II, 308 (May 6).

everything that concerns my sons and I know that so I am very pleased with him for obtaining that consolation for me. The happiness that I feel makes it a duty to thank you.

There is a favour that I wish very much to obtain from you and which your kindness will not refuse me. You have a young sub-deacon in your seminary who ardently wishes to enter the Congregation of Oblates of Mary Immaculate. You have not refused him this favour, but you have rightly wished to test his vocation. He has now persisted for two years with this holy desire. He realizes that he needs another year for the novitiate. That is more than is necessary to assure us of his dispositions. Please then, Your Lordship, allow him to follow his inclination. It will be nothing more than a loan that you make to the Congregation, for he is very well disposed to work in your diocese.

... Our Missionaries are true sons of the Bishops whom they recognize as their fathers; they have been established only to rally around them, ready to march at their least signal to cooperate in every good work proposed to them.

124. [To Bishop Buissas of Limoges].⁶⁸

Invitation to forgive an Oblate who offended the Bishop.

[Marseilles], October 24, 1850.

I beg you to forgive him who may have inadvertently offended you. I do not wish to excuse him, not at all. However, my dear Lord, as your kindness so well tells me, we must take into consideration our poor humanity. When a man is a good priest, has zeal and talent, it is best not to harp on certain defects of character which may perhaps be his own torment.

It isn't easy to meet perfection in this world. Since we too often witness examples of all kinds of other miseries, I think we should take into account the virtues of those who do not give us that kind of sorrow and forgive them their simple defects of character.

⁶⁸ Yenneux V, 223.

125. [To Bishop Ph. de Bruillard of Grenoble].⁶⁹

The Bishop of Marseilles is in principle against the moving of Bishops and cannot recommend to Bishop Guibert to accept the See of Grenoble.

Marseilles, May 1852.

Your Lordship,

I was waiting until the Bishop of Viviers informed me of the content of the letter that he was supposed to write to Y[our] E[xcellency] before replying to the one that you did the honor of addressing to me. That delay and countless interruptions which came at the time of the elections, the outcome of which could be very compromising for my clergy, have resulted in this too long drawn-out delay; please forgive it, Your Lordship, with your usual kindness.

Can I tell Your Lordship the impression that the resolution you believed that you had to take for what you consider the good of your diocese had on me! It moved me to the depths of my being. I recognized there the saintly Prelate, the generous Bishop who, bearing in mind only the consolidation of all the great works with which he has endowed his diocese during his episcopate, is looking for a way to strengthen them by trying to find for himself a successor worthy of his trust and capable of understanding and following his intentions. Your Lordship's choice proves the shrewdness of an eye accustomed to recognize and appreciate true merit. I think as you do that Bishop Guibert was the Prelate most apt to second those plans. I consider him to be one of the best Bishops of France in every regard. But I would have preferred not to be called upon to give my opinion about the plan for his transfer. My principles on this matter are known and I started by applying them to myself when, on two different occasions, I refused to break the bonds contracted with my Church in view of two archbishoprics that were proposed to me one after the other. Thus, I cannot recommend to Bishop Guibert that he follow a different line of conduct than the one which my own conscience inspires me. If he had made this decision himself, I would have respected his decision, supported as it is by an authority so respected as yours; but no other consideration can convince me to give such advice, and certainly your good heart suggests some very attractive ones. May God bless your excel-

⁶⁹ Copy, Marseilles, Archives at the Archbishop's Residence, Register of Administrative Letters, Vol. VI, pp. 70-71. Bishop de Mazenod wrote another letter in the same vein to Bishop Bruillard on June 3, 1852. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

lent intentions for the continuation of your valuable existence on this earth, for the consolation of your flock and the good of the Church. I wish you all the best most sincerely and beg you to accept the homage of my most affectionate respect.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

126. [To Bishop Ph. de Bruillard of Grenoble].⁷⁰

Dispensation from vows of Father Lavigne.

[Marseilles], August 20, 1852.

It is my duty to notify you of a defection. It is sad to see some men, who had especially consecrated themselves to God for life by religious vows and a solemn oath of perseverance, compromise their salvation and give a bad example to the Church by breaking their sacred bonds under vain pretexts. For a long time already, Mr. Lavigne had borne the sacred yoke of religious life with difficulty. The overly good opinion that he had of himself hindered him from recognizing any merit above his own in any of his fellow religious; from this arose antipathies which he felt authorized him to a sort of independence which he abundantly practised.

On the other hand, the success that he had in his preaching and the praise that people voiced to him about it, flattered his self-love and made the duties of obedience more difficult for him. He very much loved to preach; he did not feel at home in the house because there he did not occupy the first or second place. It is pitiful to read what he himself wrote about his sermons. I foresaw from that what has just happened; that is the sure punishment for a pride that is pushed to this point of insanity. Yesterday even the Superior of our Jesuits attributed to this disorder the defection of those of their Society about whom he was speaking to me. I did certainly attempt some advice to recall him to Christian humility, but one has to go gently in order to avoid the scandal of a break which I wanted to ward off, even though I was convinced that it would come sooner or later. We were in that state of affairs when the Bishop of Viviers denounced the teachings of Mr. Lavigne to me. The Vicar General of Valence wrote to me in the same vein. Father Vincens called Mr. Lavigne in my name, but he did not come. I called him myself and he came but excused himself from showing me his manuscripts saying that in

⁷⁰ Yenveux VIII, 281.

my council there was no one capable of judging them. Finally, *ob duritiam cordis* I had to grant him the dispensation he was asking for, and leave to him the full responsibility before God. That, Your Lordship, is the sad upsetting news that I must tell you; your good heart will sympathize with my grief and you will pray for me and this poor little Congregation that the good Lord allows the demon to sift, but which will work no less on that account under the protection of the Church and the Bishops for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

127. [To Cardinal Archbishop Donnet of Bordeaux].⁷¹

Father Vincens will go and preach at Talence.

[Marseilles], January 19, 1853.

Our Fathers tell me that you would be happy to have dear Father Vincens direct the Mission at Talence. How could I refuse you anything? Father Vincens will therefore go. He will be able to help the Superior⁷² of Talence to ward off some blows from the ill-disposed at Talence. Sustained patience and the Missionaries' virtues will overcome every obstacle ...

I am grateful for the paternal affection with which you honor our sons; they are truly yours, as they are mine, by the attachment that they have pledged to you.

128. To Mother Saint-Joseph at Bordeaux.⁷³

Gratitude for the care given to Father de l'Hermitte.

Marseilles, June 9, 1853.

My venerable Sister, I have begun too late to write to you. I have just a moment to myself and want to express to you all my gratitude for the kindness you have shown to all my sons and especially to my very dear Father l'Hermitte. When he told me about all that your charity had inspired you to do to comfort him in his suffering, I felt a gratitude that I would wish to express to you by word of mouth. I still pride myself that, old as I

⁷¹ Yenneux III, 144; IX, 214.

⁷² Father Dassy.

⁷³ Orig.: Bordeaux, House of the Sisters of St-Joseph.

am, I still hope to pay a short visit to Bordeaux; but that would mean, if I follow my heart, putting off too long expressing my feelings that gratitude inspires in me and which I beg you to accept, as well as the wishes I have that the Lord bestow his fullest blessings on you and your whole community.

In return, please grant me a large portion in your holy prayers.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

129. [To Cardinal Archbishop Morlot of Tours].⁷⁴

Father Vincens will preach at Tours in 1854.

[Marseilles], September 15, 1853.

Father Vincens will preach the two pastoral retreats at Fréjus. Your Eminence can count on this good Father for the two retreats of the priests of your diocese. From Carcassonne, where he is to give a pastoral retreat from Sunday, September 1, 1854 to Saturday the 7th, he can go to Tours where you will put his zeal to the test according to your good pleasure. This good Father does not tire from preaching; the pulpit is his element; God has given him all he needs to work good in souls. He has been appreciated everywhere and I trust that Your Eminence will be satisfied with the very solid basis and the unpretentious manner of the instructions given by this man of God.

130. [To Bishop P. Chatrousse of Valence].⁷⁵

Father Burfin will be responsible for the Missionary team at Valence and Father Bellon will be Superior of the Oblates.

[Marseilles], September 28, 1853.

Father Burfin, whom I am placing at the head of the Missions in your diocese, is known to you and favored; his zeal is untiring and he will certainly not spare himself from the mission he will receive from you for the conversion and sanctification of your flock.

⁷⁴ Yenveux IX, 214.

⁷⁵ Yenveux B 11; IX, 58.

Father Bellon, whom I am giving you as Superior of our Fathers,⁷⁶ is one of our best men. I am making an enormous sacrifice in sending him away from me. He has virtue, talent, refined judgment, everything that makes up a good priest, an excellent religious and accomplished Superior.

131. [To Bishop J.A. Gignoux of Beauvais].⁷⁷

At the moment the Oblates cannot make a foundation at Beauvais. Nature of their vocation.

[Marseilles], October 18, 1853.

Our Oblates have been founded especially for the service of the bishops, through the ministry of preaching, for the conversion of souls, especially the most abandoned. Our society is entirely for the service of the bishops in God's Church.

I am obliged to reply: *patientiam habe*, provided that is compatible with the needs of your diocese.⁷⁸ If this delay were to embarrass in any way in the arrangements that you might have wanted to take, I would severely blame myself for being an obstacle to the good that you are considering for your diocese.

132. [To Bishop Dupanloup of Orléans].⁷⁹

Departure of several Fathers shortly for N.-D. de Cléry.

Marseilles, January 5, 1854.

Your Lordship,

On receiving your letter I wrote to Limoges so that Father Brun may prepare to go to you at Orléans as soon as possible. The person who will be his companion I will free from here and the Superior of the Marseilles community will go with them to determine their position and receive your

⁷⁶ Father Bellon had been recalled from England to be Superior of the Major Seminary at Romans, of which the Congregation was taking charge, and of the team of preachers.

⁷⁷ Yenveux III, 140; V, 33.

⁷⁸ Yenveux (V,33) wrote that the Founder begged the Bishop to choose another Congregation if the delay requested by the Oblates would be detrimental to God's glory.

⁷⁹ Orig.: Paris, National Library, Manuscript Department, Correspondence Dupanloup, vol. 27.

directives in their regard and for those who will join them a little sooner or later.⁸⁰ The Missionaries are not demanding men, but they will nevertheless need what is strictly necessary, a place to live, some rough furniture as beds, tables, chairs, some bedding, some common towels, a few common plates and dishes, kitchen utensils, etc. The expenses of a first establishment are not very high, but they [should] be the responsibility of the dioceses in which the Missionaries are to serve.

As soon as I have received the reply I am waiting for from Limoges, I will be honored to let you know about it. If Father Brun is not committed to some mission, he will leave immediately; if he is on mission, he will set out as soon as he is finished.

Please accept, Your Lordship, the homage of my respectful and affectionate sentiments.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

133. [To Bishop Dupanloup of Orléans].⁸¹

Gratitude. The Oblates have the grace of state for ministry among the poor.

Marseilles, February 28, 1854.

Your Lordship,

I was awaiting Father Dassy's return to thank you for all the kindness that you have shown him and his companions. I am pleased that they will be established in your diocese. I hope they will accomplish the good that you expect of them. I request you only to remember that they belong to a newborn family and that you must be satisfied with seeing them engaged, in all humility, in the conversion of the most abandoned souls. Reserve the poor for them. Their gift of grace is for this kind of ministry.

Accept, Your Lordship, the renewed assurance of my respect and most affectionate sentiments.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

⁸⁰ The first Missionaries at Cléry were Fathers Brun and Marchal, accompanied by Father Dassy, cf. Mazenod to Bellon, January 28, 1854.

⁸¹ Orig.: Paris, National Library, Manuscript Department, Correspondence Dupanloup, Vol. 27.

134. [To Cardinal Archbishop Dupont of Bourges].⁸²

Oblates do not accept the direction of Minor Seminaries.

Marseilles, May 3, 1854.

Your Lordship,

A short trip undertaken after Easter obliged me to delay replying to the letter that Your Eminence did me the honor of writing. The proposal you made to me recalled the propitious time when such friendly relations were established between us on the occasion of your adopting the Oblates of Mary for your diocese of Avignon, Oblates whom you placed at Notre-Dame de Lumières and entrusted with the Missions to preach the gospel to your people. You can assess, Your Lordship, how dear to my heart it would be once again to place my sons under your high protection and in the service of the flock under your pastoral care. But, as they are dedicated essentially to the Missions and to the direction of Major Seminaries, the Oblates are explicitly forbidden by their Rules to take on the direction of Minor Seminaries and houses of education ... Possibly some day the Congregation of the Missionaries of Mary Immaculate will be able to render other services to your diocese in the realm of its competencies. I desire it with all my wishes, recalling to Your Eminence, the homage of respectful attachment with which I remain, etc.

⁸² Rey II, 497 in a note; Yenveux II, 23.

1855-1861

135. [To the Abbé Sebaux, parish priest of Laval].¹

Death of Bishop Bouvier. Proper Mass and Office of Mans. Praises Father Grandin and Brother Boisramé. Request to send some seminarians to the Oblates.

Marseilles, March 28, 1855.

I am anxious, Reverend Sir and dear Abbé, to thank you for remembering me; you could give me no more pleasing proof than reminding me of the new title that the venerable Bishop whom we are mourning has to the gratitude of the diocese which he helped so much.² I have read with interest and edification the proper that you had the kindness to send me: it is worthy of its author and those who worked with him in the research that needed to be done.

I know how interested you are in our good Father Grandin. You will be glad to learn that he is happy in the austere mission that is now his lot. He is a very excellent religious. I hope his brother, who should certainly resemble him, will carry out the plan that he has of coming to replace the one who is already applying his zeal and apostolate. May it please God that your diocese continue to provide us with many men. They are good and edifying. I have just ordained the excellent Boisramé, a model of virtue, to the diaconate. You will do a good thing if you were to whisper to the Superior of the seminary that he direct the vocations of those who aspire to religious life toward our Congregation. You can assure him that in it people serve the good Lord well and that they die therein like the predestined do when the good Lord calls.

Please accept, Reverend Sir and dear Abbé, the renewed assurance of my most affectionate sentiments.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. I beg you to remember me to Vicar General Vincent and Canon Mautouchet.

¹ Orig.: Archives of the Laval Bishop's residence. Mr. Sebaux had been Bishop Bouvier's secretary. He was a great benefactor of Bishop Grandin.

² Bishop Bouvier (1783-1854) of Mans, died in Rome on December 29, 1854. Bishop de Mazenod took care of him during his last moments.

136. [To the Abbé Lusso].³

Qualities required for admission to novitiate.

Marseilles, May 17, 1855.

Your letter, dear Abbé Lusso, greatly pleased me, from its content, yes, but even more from the sentiments you express to me. I am sensitive to gratitude; it is a counter-balance to the ingratitude of so many others. I congratulate you on the good position that you have attained and the good use you are making of it.⁴

As for the young man of whom you speak to me, you know what our novitiate is like. It is true that, considering your dispositions when you were there and since you lived there like an outsider, I might say, you were not able to savour its quality; but, among the Oblate scholastics who have come down to be near me, I see the effects of the fervor which animates their minds and hearts. I have about forty of them. I couldn't say who is the holiest. I count on them very much. Besides, you know what dispositions are required for admittance. One must have a true base of solid virtue, great zeal for one's own sanctification and the salvation of souls, sufficient capacity for study and preaching, great detachment from relatives and all worldly things, the spirit of mortification, indifference so as to accept whatever ministry is proposed by obedience. What more can I say that you do not already know? This will suffice.

I wish you happiness and bless you with all my heart.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

137. To Mr. Sebaux, parish priest of Laval.⁵

Gratitude for the information about the Abbé Grandin who is to enter novitiate.

Marseilles, September 29, 1855.

My very dear Abbé, thank you for the information that you have given me in the report on Mr. Grandin.⁶ I have no difficulty granting him

³ Copy of the original Italian, Rome, Postulation Archives, DM, X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, p.14.

⁴ The Abbé Louis Lusso, born in 1808 in Castelrosso in Italy, began his novitiate on February 9, 1853.

⁵ Orig.: Archives at Bishop's house of Laval.

⁶ The Abbé Jean Louis Grandin, the older brother of Father Vital Grandin, began his novitiate on November 20, 1855.

the assurance that he requests for the relief of his father and sister. Whatever the post he will be given after his religious profession, we will make sure that his poor parents will receive the three hundred francs that he believes they need.

I do not think that Mr. Grandin should wait for the new Bishop's⁷ arrival to go to the novitiate. That would mean new delays which must be taken into account when we consider this good priest's age. Rather he should leave as soon as he receives my letter; he needs no other authorization, I beg you to let him know that on my behalf. He would shorten the trip and lessen the expense by going directly to Notre-Dame de l'Osier near Vinay in the diocese of Grenoble where the novitiate is located. If he prefers to come all the way to Marseilles, he will certainly be welcome. Because of the effects he will bring along, I would prefer the other alternative. It would be good if he were to bring, besides his wearing apparel and linen undergarments, a few pairs of bed sheets. As for books, should he have some good ones, it would be best if he left them in storage somewhere until the time of his profession, which can take place only one year after his entry to novitiate. That is why I would like him to start novitiate as soon as possible.

I will speak to those concerned about the person mentioned in the confidential part of your letter. I hope that you do not cast doubt on the dedication I will apply to draw attention to the qualities that I admired in him. They are too rare to be left unappreciated. They will be stopping at my place when they pass through Marseilles, which will be soon.

Farewell, my dear Abbé, I am somewhat in a hurry, but will not close without renewing the assurance of my warmest affection.

† C.J. Eugène, Bishop of Marseilles.

138. [To Bishop Dupanloup of Orléans].⁸

Father Brun will return to N.-D. de Cléry. The Missionaries' salary must be raised.

December 1855.

My Lord,

I was getting ready to write you a long letter about our dear foundation at N.-D. de Cléry when your good letter arrived. So I will start by replying to what concerns Father Brun.

⁷ Bishop J. Wicart, first Bishop of the Laval diocese, made his solemn entrance on November 28, 1855.

⁸ Copy: Rome, Postulation Archives, DM, X: Register Letters, 1855-1861, pp. 40-41.

Since I wanted to give a competent Superior to N.-D. de Cléry, I felt that I had to recall Father Brun for a bit of time who, even though he didn't have the title of Superior, had until then to carry the main duties of one. I found in that measure the double advantage of allowing Father Brun some time to renew himself in a perfectly regular house by taking part in the general retreat and of giving the new Superior more ease to establish his authority.⁹

I suspect somewhat that the people who claim to know that Father Brun will no longer return gave his letter a meaning that it did not have; I would be very surprised if he wrote something that he himself did not know. The fact is, Your Lordship, that I would perhaps have had sufficient reasons to change his post: but if I had taken such a line of thought, Your Lordship would have been the first person I would have informed.

I admit that in these circumstances I am not very accustomed to the protests that I receive from the local people. However, besides the fact that the Mayor of Cléry has shown himself too kind in regard to our Fathers that I should want to trouble him, Your Lordship's wishes are my command; for the time being there will no longer be any question of this change.

Another item does give me trouble and concern about this dear establishment and it is on that that I had decided to write to you. It was with distinct pleasure that I perceived the arrival of our Fathers at Cléry as marking a kind of resurrection. They accomplished in the parish all the good that one could hope from their zeal and good will; yet, I must admit to Your Lordship, that in spite of such happy beginnings, we find ourselves somewhat disappointed in our hopes. To be sure, I do not want to blame Your Lordship. Allow me to say that, not only have you kept your promises, but to restore this pilgrimage place you have put forth efforts that only your genuine zeal as a bishop for God's glory and the salvation of souls could have inspired in you. It is I who had hoped for too much. When to support your good intent I accepted this work, I had as an encouragement thereto the vision of what has taken place in our other pilgrimage places.

At Notre-Dame de l'Osier in Dauphiné, at Notre-Dame de Bon-Secours in Vivarais, at Notre-Dame de Talence at Bordeaux, we very quickly brought about a situation in which we could nearly make ends meet. This experience prompted me to request from Your Lordship only

⁹ Father de l'Hermite, cf. *Oblate Writings*, 11, p. 289.

that which was strictly necessary for our Fathers, and I have come to the sad certitude that they will never receive this minimum that is strictly necessary.

During the year the pilgrimage brought in absolutely nothing; and the feast day of the Patron Saint, instead of being an income as it is in the other houses, became a heavy expense. Our Missionaries have only their modest salary of six hundred francs each and with that they have to provide their food, clothes, food and clothes for two lay Brothers who are indispensable to them, for the trips needed for changes of men and for almsgiving to which they are obliged both as pastors and as a religious house. Evidently this is an impossible situation. In our Major Seminaries our men receive only six hundred francs, but they are fed, heated, given light, cared for in sickness and all the domestic help are paid besides, etc.

The matter is too obvious: we shall not be able to carry on. Your Lordship will probably wonder how then we could accept? As I have said, we had counted on the pilgrimage and since we understand all the sacrifices that Your Lordship has taken on yourself for the good of your diocese, we did not want to lack in generosity. But, in the end, our men must live if they are to work. If Your Lordship wants to continue this work, it is indispensable that we can agree on an increase in salary. I don't think we can go on unless we are allotted eight hundred francs per man or, what will amount to the same, for the time being, that it be stipulated that two men are necessary for parish service, and since they then have to shoulder all duties, they will also receive all the income, salary and casual entries, while the other four Missionaries will continue to receive only six hundred francs.

I most deeply regret, My Lord, that I come to request new sacrifices from Your Lordship ... If our houses were not quite so poor ... but each one can scarcely manage to meet its own obligations.

Receive, My Lord, etc.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

139. [To Bishop Dupanloup of Orléans].¹⁰

Father Brun will not return to Cléry as parish priest.

Marseilles, December 13, 1855.

Your Lordship,

Your little note is quite sad since it is open to misgivings; the more nuanced letter of Father de l’Hermite is no less so and yet I assure you that I find myself relieved of an overwhelming burden. What you have just learned had been made known to me and it cost me infinitely not to share with Your Lordship the sadness which burdened me alone and which I knew perfectly well you would have agreed to share with me. But I was bound to secrecy in such a way that I found it impossible to speak and almost to act. I immediately did what it was in my power to do: I sent a visitor with the directive to probe the wound and put everything in motion to heal it. We had to use a great deal of prudence: we didn’t know exactly how great the evil was and in those circumstances one has everything to fear from human weakness; the man was called to make a retreat from which he knew how to benefit.

The wound, I must tell Your Lordship, was not as serious as we had suspected. There were imprudences, very serious imprudences about which illusions were born but for which we could still hope for a remedy.

In the impossibility of acting as I would have wanted, I had planned to send this man back to Cléry without removing his title so as to avoid all notoriety, but with instructions to the Superior not to use him any more as a Missionary; I would have taken from him every faculty for Cléry.

What you have written me yourself, Your Lordship, and what you have communicated with Father l’Hermite has put an end to all embarrassment. I am sending you the Father’s resignation. I will need a little time to determine the choice of the man fit to present to you as his successor.

Alas, Your Lordship, the laborers are already so rare, why must the evil one find means to render ineffectual those who give promise of good hope. I am deeply grieved, Your Lordship, and recommend myself to your holy sacrifices and renew the assurance of my respectful and very affectionate dedication.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

¹⁰ Copy: Rome, Postulation Archives DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, pp. 41-42.

140. [To Bishop Dupanloup of Orléans].¹¹

Father Brun will not return to Cléry. Father de l'Hermitte will be the parish priest.

Marseilles, December 20, 1855.

Your Lordship,

According to the wish expressed by Your Lordship, Father Brun is definitely withdrawn from Cléry and will return there no more. Last week I sent you his act of resignation as parish priest. Now you are asking that I designate the successor whom you might present to the government in his place. I admit to Your Lordship that this appointment places me in some embarrassment in choosing the man. Only two means of solving it are open to me: either to take someone from among the Fathers of our other houses or choose for this post the present Superior of the community. After having well considered everything, I think that I must settle on the second alternative. Father de l'Hermitte is young, it is true, but he abundantly makes up for that shortcoming, if it is one, by incontestable qualities in the areas of zeal, talent and skill. Besides, he is already well settled in the locale and what is more his appointment to the first place in the Church at Cléry will remove certain difficulties which could have arisen from his position as Superior vis-à-vis to that of another member of the community who would have occupied the post of parish priest.

I will immediately send Your Lordship a 5th Father to strengthen the community of Cléry and thus render it apt to fulfill its double purpose which is to take care of the parish and to work in the missions in the diocese. As to the 6th man of which Your Lordship speaks, because the campaign plan for the work of Missionaries for this winter has already been drawn up since All Saints Day, it is hardly possible to change it by taking some Father from another house and giving him to Cléry, and so we must wait till after Easter.

I think there is no need to speak here again of the new conditions which ought to exist from now on between the community of our Fathers and the diocese in regard to material concerns. What Your Lordship has told me about this in your last letters and even the sole fact of your request for one of our Missionaries as the new parish priest for Cléry, show me that you are quite willing to fulfill our requests in that regard.

Please accept, Your Lordship, etc.,

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

¹¹ Copy: Rome, Postulation Archives, DM, X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, p. 42.

141. [To Bishop Dupanloup of Orléans].¹²

Sending a fifth Father to N.-D. de Cléry. The financial and religious situation of the community must be settled.

Marseilles, April 10, 1856.

Your Lordship,

The work of our Missionaries during the winter campaign has finally ended and I hasten to let you know that, in line with the promise contained in one of my letters, I am going to send a fifth Father to Cléry as part of that community.¹³ He should be leaving here at the beginning of next week and consequently arrive at his post about the 15th of this month. The news that I receive from our Fathers, who this year have started fulfilling their apostolic ministry in your diocese, are very consoling and show me that there also God has been pleased to bless the efforts of their zeal by very special graces; these first attempts are a good omen for the future. As to the modifications to be made in the articles of the agreement signed with Your Lordship concerning the temporal affairs of our community's Missionaries at Cléry, we will continue to abide by them as they are for some time yet, since that is your desire.

In spite of the wise direction that the new Superior,¹⁴ who is so worthy of our fullest trust, will not fail to give to this aspect of his administration, I doubt that the experience we will gain of the agreement will result in our finding that the first provisions are sufficient for the community in regard to its material existence. Since we are staying there for the time being, I do not want to make any remark at all concerning the note you were kind enough to send me; nevertheless, I must tell you, Your Lordship, that I cannot agree to our Fathers being away from their house for nine months of the year. This is against the Rule which wants them to be not only missionaries but religious as well. This is against what is being practised in all our communities, where the members spend the greater part of the year in their house, performing the exercises of the religious life which makes them more suitable to fulfill worthily the duties of their apostolic ministry.

Please accept, Your Lordship, etc.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

¹² Copy, Rome, Postulation Archives, DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, pp. 57-58.

¹³ Father Eynard, cf. *Oblate Writings*, 12, p.9.

¹⁴ Father de l'Hermite, *ibid*, 11, p. 289; 12, pp. 9 and 10.

142. [To the Abbé Sebaux, parish priest of Laval].¹⁵

Bishop de Mazenod's esteem for Mister Sebaux. Regrets not having replied to a letter. Eccentricity of the Abbé Grandin.

Marseilles, May 1856.

I cannot forgive you, my dear Pastor, for having so misunderstood my sentiments in your regard. How is it that you are so little aware of how highly I regard you? Is it possible! If I have always given you evidence of my affection, because you have inspired in me a profound esteem and I know how to appreciate the excellent qualities of your heart. And you doubt those sentiments which will never die out in me once they have arisen, because I have delayed rather than neglected to answer your last letter. That is a terrible injustice about which I can't complain too much. And don't you know that there is no other bishop in France who is so little master of his activities as myself. I absolutely do not belong to myself. I am at everyone's disposition from morning till night and if I am able to write you these few lines today, it is because, when I returned home from a pastoral visit that took me most of the day, I took an hour when passing by my country residence to dispatch promptly the most urgent letters that I have to do and I am showing you the place that you occupy in my mind.

Truly, if I were not afraid of grieving you, I would further reproach you. How can you think I would blame you for the extraordinary conduct of Mr. Grandin. One would have to be out of one's mind to hold you responsible for the eccentricities of that good man.¹⁶ So, dear friend, entertain a better opinion of me and especially believe in my affection for you.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. I don't have your letter at hand, but I well remember what it contains, and so I must congratulate you for the good you are doing in your new position and to thank God along with you. Farewell.

When I returned to Marseilles I found the newspaper that you said you were sending me. I read your speech with interest. If the writer is telling the truth, the Bishop will be compensated at Laval for the grief inflicted on him at Fréjus.¹⁷

¹⁵ Orig.: Archives of the Archbishop's residence in Laval.

¹⁶ The Abbé Jean Louis Grandin spent only a few months at the novitiate.

¹⁷ Bishop Wicart.

143. To the Abbé Lusso, parish priest in the diocese of Beauvais.¹⁸

Friendship. Conditions for receiving an elderly priest at the novitiate. The Congregation cannot make a foundation in the diocese of Beauvais.

Near Marseilles, May 22, 1856.

Very dear Pastor,

I begin by thanking you for your good and affectionate remembrance. Be assured that I always gladly receive your letters; they are always inspired by a sentiment worthy of your kind heart.

I regret to see you in a post so ungrateful and disagreeable for a zealous and capable priest. It seems to me that it would be better for you to teach literature to young people who wish to profit therefrom rather than to waste your time and care in vain for the unfortunate people of whom you speak to me.

I don't know whether the priest you point out to me is the same as the one you already spoke about in another letter and of whom I have had no further news. In any case, since he has been chosen by you, who are acquainted with the purpose of the Institute of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and know the qualities that we demand of those who present themselves, I don't doubt that he can usefully serve the Church, do honor to the Congregation and sanctify himself in its bosom. Since he has become your friend, I beg you to carefully examine the stability of his character, the purity of his intentions and, if there is hope that he can endure this canonical year of novitiate, which is somewhat difficult for an elderly man, even though we take care to mitigate it as much as we can for that type of person. At this time, he would be encouraged by four very zealous priests who are making their novitiate in a very edifying manner.¹⁹ He would need a dispensation for his age. I will gladly give it if the man is worthy. Allow me to tell you in confidence that what matters is that the man has not given any scandal in his priestly conduct. That suffices. You know as well as I what is fitting. I trust you.

I cannot write to the Bishop of Beauvais: I will tell you why. That very worthy Prelate has written me four most urgent letters, requesting our missionaries for a foundation in his diocese. I have always had to

¹⁸ Copy of the original Italian, Postulation Archives. DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, pp.64-65.

¹⁹ In 1857 there were at least three priests from Marseilles at the novitiate: the Abbés Roux, Paul and Cas. Bérengier.

reply that it was impossible for the moment since death has carved a great chasm among us to enrich heaven. This is true for those taken have died like saints.

In order to respond to the interest that you have had the goodness to show me in regard to our Congregation, I will tell you that the news which comes to me from all our communities gives us every reason to thank the Lord for his merciful protection. What is happening in our missions is truly prodigious, thanks be to God. I am as though in a daze even though I should be used to it.

Dear pastor, there remains only to assure you again of my affectionate sentiments, recommending myself to your good prayers.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

144. [To Bishop Sergent of Quimper].²⁰

The Oblates accept the direction of the Major Seminary of Quimper.

Marseilles, July 22, 1856.

Before replying to the precious letter that you honored me with, allow me to open my heart with that frankness that God has given me. I cannot refrain from expressing to you the impression of respect, veneration, and gentle sympathy that I felt in the relationship which Divine Providence established between us when we met at Paris, by chance so to say. I thanked the Lord more than once so much do I hope that a successful outcome will result.

I willingly accept the proposal that in your goodness you offer to me. It is up to you to set the conditions and to arrange everything that is proper. Let me know your intentions, we will have no difficulty in coming to an agreement. If you could possibly at the beginning be content, as you did me the honor of telling me at Paris, with the Superior and another man, you would greatly make things easier for me. The General Chapter of the Congregation is going to open and I expect the representatives from the four corners of the earth will fire red hot bullets at me in asking for men. Once this tidal wave has passed, we will be able to navigate more easily.

Accept, My Lord, the assurance of my affectionate respect.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

²⁰ Orig.: Quimper, Archives of the Major Seminary.

145. [To Bishop Sergent of Quimper].²¹

Fathers Lagier and Bellon are appointed to Quimper.

Marseilles, August 23, 1856.

Our General Chapter has ended and the holy Coadjutor Bishop of Jaffna has been consecrated,²² so I come to let you know that, in spite of all the guns that I told you they would fire at me from every part of the world to be given capable men to extend the kingdom of Jesus Christ, I have kept the best I had for you. The two religious who have been assigned to start your important work are first of all two men of God, filled with the spirit of their state, devoted to the Church, eminently suited to communicate the love of God which fills them. Both have been professors in Major Seminaries for several years; both have been Superiors. Father Lagier, whom I present to you as the Superior of your seminary, is 50 years old, and has a long experience in the holy ministry. He was an assistant parish priest when he entered the Congregation of Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate more than 20 years ago. The seminary at Fréjus, where he was Superior till this year, owes to him the fervor that animates the community since he took over its direction. Father Bellon is a little younger, forty-two years old, and bears the beauty of his soul on his features. He is a most distinguished man in every respect. I present him to you as a director and as professor of dogma. He has a special talent for languages which he learns by himself as a sort of recreation in free moments. I call him the little Mezzofante. He can work with oriental languages, speaks English and Spanish, knows Italian, and German too I think, and all that without any sign of having worked at this. He can very well accomplish your plan for the conferences that you wish to start in your diocese. In the diocese of Valence, where he was Superior of the Major Seminary, he was in charge of supervising the sermons of the young priests and, if I am not mistaken, was alone assigned to oversee the conferences in several cantons of the diocese.

These two Fathers will be happy to find such a good spirit among the priests whom you are willing to leave with them and you can count on their respect for them, especially for Mr. the Viscount de la Houssaye whom you praised and whom they will gladly want to continue as professor of moral. I accept the arrangements that you see good to take for this first year. I do not mention the salary that you are willing to give to our

²¹ Orig.: Quimper, Archives of the Major Seminary.

²² Bishop Semeria.

Gentlemen until such time as you give them the entire management of temporal goods as you are now giving them the direction of spiritual affairs. Whatever you decide will be done well. I have no difficulty with this kind of interest. All that I ask of God is to bless our efforts to enter into your views, and of you, My Lord, your constant protection and paternal affection for the portion of my family that with so much confidence and good heart I place under your shepherd's crook. As for myself, I am pleased with the closer bonds that will arise between us. You will become the father of my sons and, I hope, the friend of their father.

Please accept, My Lord, the renewed assurance of my respect and most affectionate sentiments.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

146. [To Bishop Chatrouse of Valence].²³

Father Bellon must leave the seminary. He will soon be replaced.

Marseilles, August 26, 1856.

My Lord,

Consequent to the deliberations of the Congregation's General Chapter, we seriously took up the just requests of Your Lordship. We recognized that in spite of Father Bellon's virtues, knowledge and all his excellent qualities, it will not be possible for him to go and do good work in your seminary. We assigned this excellent religious for another destination which he accepted with the humility so proper to chosen souls. The choice of his successor, whom Father Vincens has been asked to present to you, has fallen on a very good man who, I hope, will be in tune with his fellow religious.²⁴ He will bring along with him another fine man who has been in my seminary for three years. Making this sacrifice costs me a great deal. It took nothing less than the desire to please you to make me decide to detach myself from this angel. I recommend him very especially to your kindness.²⁵

I rejoice in the hope of meeting you at N.-D. de l'Osier to where I think the Bishop of Grenoble has invited you to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the foundation of that shrine.

In the meantime, my Lord, please accept the profound homage of all my greatest respects.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

²³ Copy of the Original: Rome, Postulation Archives, DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, p. 72.

²⁴ Father Lancenay.

²⁵ Father Martinet.

147. [To Viscount de La Houssaye, Director at the Major Seminary of Quimper].²⁶

Greetings. The Oblates gladly accept the direction of the Major Seminary of Quimper where Mr. de la Houssaye will continue as moral professor.

Marseilles, August 30, 1856.

Reverend Abbé.

I wanted to wait before writing to you until I had learnt that you had returned to Quimper; however, since I am about to leave for N.-D. de l'Osier to attend the great festivities they are celebrating on the day of the Blessed Virgin's Birth, I am taking my precautions, and though my letter may have to wait for you, I feel obliged to write it. I am late, Sir, in thanking you for your constant good will towards the family of which God has made me the father. We are just at the point of reaping new proofs of that and I am happy to see the bonds of trust and friendship which already bind us being drawn closer by the frequent contacts which will be made between us. What support your presence and cooperation will be for those of our Fathers who are going to take over the direction of your seminary! I see this event as a new proof of Divine Providence's protection. Who would have surmised that your new Bishop would be inspired to invite the Oblates of Mary Immaculate into his M[ajor] Seminary. We wanted to see an establishment of our men in that good diocese of Quimper. All hope was lost when we learned that the Jesuits had been invited to Brest and that they even had a fixed station in Quimper itself; and then your holy Bishop, in the first interview with me at Paris, seriously proposed to me to give us his seminary and followed up on this idea so to bring it to a successful conclusion. And it is precisely in that seminary that you, our friend, are and where our men will have the satisfaction of working with you to instruct and sanctify clerics confided to us. How can we not see in this event a visible intervention of Divine Providence! Consequently, I am confident that good will be done.

I have most attentively read the advice that you offered us: it will be followed exactly. During the past few days I have written to the Bishop of Quimper to inform him that I have chosen the men destined for his seminary. They are two holy priests who have both been first professors and then Superiors of a seminary, one of them teaches dogma; and we urgently beg you to continue as moral professor. Are you not like one of us? The Bishop will have told you that for this year he is glad that the

²⁶ Original copy, Rome, Postulation Archives DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, p. 74.

seminary be managed by its fine treasurer. I willingly go along with all the conditions that his kind spirit suggests to him.

I am writing you in haste: they are waiting for me and urging me on. Please accept the expression of my most affectionate sentiments.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

148. [To Bishop Jordany of Fréjus].²⁷

Father Lagier is named Superior of the Major Seminary of Quimper; Father Magnan will replace him at the Major Seminary of Fréjus.

Marseilles, September 3, 1856.

My Lord,

I have not ignored the little clouds that have arisen against our good Father Lagier who most likely made the mistake of expressing too openly his opinion about the advisability of admitting to your council a given person who is otherwise very recommendable. I understood that it would be difficult for Father Lagier to continue doing good work because of this gentleman who was aware of the opinion expressed by the Father and who would naturally be inclined to misinterpret the least measure the latter did. I know that they have already accused him of having too close a relationship with those whom Mr. ... regards as his adversaries and who form a sort of clique which is always quite regrettable in a diocese. Father Lagier denies it, but nonetheless that prejudice is enough to seed distrust and nullify the good that should come from a united effort and in a complete freedom of mind. So I thought it would be better to give Father Lagier another assignment. And since the Bishop of Quimper has decided to confide the direction of his seminary to the Oblates of Mary Imm., I have named him Superior of that new establishment. Then I concerned myself with finding for your seminary a Superior with experience to continue the good that Father Lagier had definitely begun and which he had accomplished. The Superior that I am sending you and whom I have the honor of presenting to you is a very capable man, of good character, very good deportment and already experienced in the ministry of major seminaries. He has been Superior of the Major Seminary in Ajaccio for ten years and was able to live such a long time in the greatest harmony, I say not only with the Bishops, one of whom granted him the intimate trust of making his confession to him, but with the whole diocesan clergy.

²⁷ Original copy, Rome, Postulation Archives, DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, pp. 72-73.

It is quite agreed that it is his custom not to become involved at Fréjus with anything other than his seminary, of which he will render an account only to Your Lordship. I have every reason to believe that you will be perfectly satisfied with this choice of predilection I have made before God in all confidence, in order thus to give you new proof of my dedication to your person and of my interest for a diocese which is dear to me for so many reasons. How could I forget that I preached the gospel in its main districts during my first years in the priesthood!

Please accept, my Lord, the homage, etc. ...

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

149. [To Bishop Thibault of Montpellier].²⁸

Information about the Abbé Berthuel, dispensed from his vows in the Congregation.

N.-D. de l'Osier, September 12, 1856.

My Lord,

It is at a shrine consecrated to the Blessed Virgin Mary where I have come at the invitation of the Bishop of Grenoble to take part in the solemn celebrations that are going on this week that I received your letter concerning a priest of the Oblate Congregation, the Abbé Berthuel who is requesting to work in your diocese to which he belongs by origin.

In reply to the information that you request, I must tell Your Lordship that since Mr. Berthuel considered it appropriate to take all the steps which have led him to the point where he is now without consulting his superiors, he has in a way himself left the bosom of the Congregation; hence his conduct is considered by us as a sort of apostasy.

Thus he is taking on himself the full responsibility for his departure from the Congregation and I have no reason to keep him there in spite of himself by refusing to release him from his religious commitments. And so he should already have received the formal act of dispensation from his vows.

According to what I have just told you, I do not want to pronounce myself here on the value of the motives that Mr. Berthuel offers to justify his departure; but I cannot resist strongly blaming the lack of openness and the little tact he showed in all this matter, and, what is still more objectionable, is disregard of the most sacred duty of gratitude.

²⁸ Original copy, Rome, Postulation Archives DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, pp. 74-75.

As to Mr. Berthuel's attitude in the area of faith and moral conduct, we have not had any reproach to address to him either in the Congregation or elsewhere. At least, I do not know of any complaint about him in this matter.

Accept, my Lord, the homage ...

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles, sup. gen.

150. [To Bishop Buissas of Limoges].²⁹

The Oblates cannot accept the establishment at N.-D. de Sauvagnac.

Marseilles, September 22, 1856.

My Lord,

Reverend Father Vincens has kept me up to date on his correspondence with Mr. de Bogenet concerning the proposal which Your Lordship has made to us to establish at N.-D. de Sauvagnac a mission station dependent on the Oblate house of Limoges. This Father has been only the official mouthpiece for the Superior General and his Council in all this matter and especially in his last letter in which he declined to accept the above-mentioned proposal because of the plan to move our house of Limoges to another section of the city and because of the financial state of the Congregation.

In the letter which you honored me with and to which I am replying now, Your Lordship seems to consider that the plan to settle the Oblates of Mary in another section of Limoges has little relationship with that which concerns Sauvagnac and that the situation of our finances would not be an obstacle to carrying out the latter. Allow me, Your Lordship, to point out to you, first of all, that moving our community in Limoges into the suburb where you plan to locate it brings about a real modification to the position of that community and it is of such nature as to destroy the main reason for us to accept the establishment at Sauvagnac. In effect, in the Chapel attached to the new house they are to occupy, our Fathers even though they won't have charge of a parish, will still have to carry out among the population deprived of religious care a rather active ministry to sustain their zeal during the season of the year in which the preaching of missions and retreats is suspended. Such being the case, there is no reason

²⁹Original copy, Rome, Postulation Archives DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, p. 76.

for accepting an establishment which, by dividing them, could only diminish their forces, to say nothing of certain inconveniences which would also result therefrom.

As to the reason based on the present state of the Congregation's finances, it also merits to be taken into consideration. And in that regard, Your Lordship, I must frankly tell you that there was a misunderstanding between Mr. de Bogenet, your Vicar General, and Reverend Father Vincens, and thereby even between ourselves. Because of certain of Father Vincens' expressions you have most likely thought that the Oblates, once the land had been given by the diocese, would take on themselves the cost of constructing and furnishing the house at Sauvagnac, while on our side we were convinced that there would be no expense that the Congregation had to make in this establishment. Reverend Father Vincens thus based himself on a serious reason when he brought up the lack of financial resources as a reason to decline accepting the plan in question. Furthermore, your Vicar General in his last letter put us very much at ease in this matter when he said that if we saw inconveniences in accepting, we could still withdraw and everyone could consider as not binding all that has been said and agreed on so far. These terms of Mr. de Bogenet frees us from our first accepting; we felt it wise to profit by our freedom and renounce a plan which no longer suited us. That is what made Father Vincens write recently in the sense that you know of, and I think that there is no reason for the Congregation to go back on that decision. Your Lordship is therefore perfectly free to approach others in regard to the project of Notre-Dame de Sauvagnac. While we regret not being able to accept your proposals in this matter, we hope that you will be able to achieve them for the glory of our holy Mother, the Immaculate Virgin Mary, and that you will thus be able to add yet another work to those that your piety and zeal have already brought into existence in the diocese of Limoges.

Accept, my Lord, the homage of my respectful sentiments and my sincere dedication.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

151. [To Bishop Thibault of Montpellier].³⁰

Request to accept the Abbé Berthuel into his diocese.

Marseilles, October 2, 1856.

My Lord,

I would be very embarrassed to be the reason why you would withdraw your charitable goodwill from this poor Berthuel who had counted on a place in your diocese as something altogether assured. I do not claim to excuse his departure from a Congregation to which he had bound himself for life. It is possible that if Mr. Mas, instead of encouraging the ideas of this poor religious who was obviously negligent about his duties, had some remarks to dissuade him from a culpable resolve, Mr. Berthuel might have examined himself and been content with the help that the Congregation generously granted him for his elderly mother, and not consider any more breaking the bonds that he had contracted *usque ad mortem*. But he was, so to say, encouraged in this course of action. On the other hand, his mother's distress affected his heart too strongly and so he had the misfortune of giving in to this temptation of infidelity. No doubt it is a fault in God's eyes, and a very grave wrong to the Congregation, but this poor priest should inspire compassion all that much more in that we have never had anything against him concerning his morals. Thus, my Lord, I dare to beg you to have compassion on him and grant him a post wherein he is able to make his living.

By the fact of his departure he no longer belongs to the Congregation, and the necessary consequence was dispensation from his vows. What will happen to him if you abandon him? Have mercy on him then, I beg Your Lordship, even while I recognize very well the feeling of contempt and indignation aroused in you, I will say, by the ingratitude or weakness of him whom I have the courage of recommending to your compassion.

I am moved and grateful for the good things that you say to me on the occasion of my appointment as Senator. You have already made me so used to your kindness that this good will on your part comes as a surprise for me. With all my heart I hope soon to be able to offer you the same compliment.

Please accept, etc. ...

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

³⁰ Original copy, Rome, Postulation Archives, DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, p. 77.

152. [To Bishop Sergent of Quimper].³¹

Father Vincens will not be able to preach pastoral retreats at Quimper in 1857. Gratitude for the reception given to Fathers Lagier and Bellon.

Marseilles, October 28, 1856.

My Lord,

I was waiting for Father Vincens' return to inform him of your intention that you communicate to me about, namely, to call him to give the pastoral retreats of your diocese in 1857. Father Vincens would be glad to fulfill your wishes but he is committed to eight pastoral retreats and it is impossible for him to find time for those of your diocese. If you want to enlist him for the following year, he will consider himself fortunate to be able to meet your need; he only asks you to fix the date in advance lest he may be unable to serve you as he was this year.

Our Fathers Lagier and Bellon have informed me of all the kindness that you show them. I assure Your Lordship that they are very grateful and that they render you in dedication what you grant them as a favor. They are very pleased with the warm welcome they have received from the Vicars General, the Seminary Directors and the clergy in general as well as the city officials with whom they have been in contact. I am happy with this cooperation: much good should result therefrom.

Please accept, My Lord, my gratitude and receive the homage of my respect and most affectionate sentiments.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

153. [To Bishop Sergent of Quimper].³²

Gratitude for the Bishop's kindness to Fathers Lagier and Bellon. Plan to visit Quimper.

Montolivet, near Marseilles, January 8, 1857.

My Lord,

I have come to hide away for a few days in our Oblate house in order to escape from the slavery of my situation in our large city of Marseilles. They don't allow me even a moment's rest there. I must tell you that, my Lord, in order to excuse the lateness of this letter which I wanted to be the first on the list.

³¹ Original: Quimper, Archives of the Major Seminary.

³² Original copy: Rome, Postulation Archives, DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, p. 86.

I do not know how to tell Your Lordship my gratitude for the kindness you shower on our dear Fathers Lagier and Bellon. They continually tell me about it with heartfelt sentiment. Please accept as well my gratitude for what concerns me personally. You will always find me disposed to enter into your viewpoint. We both have only one goal: the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls, so how could we not understand each other? It seems to me that I would draw back only in regard to what was absolutely impossible. There are things which have only an apparently weak beginning, but develop with time. I experience that every day.

If you have to go to Paris, I hope that it will only be in February. For my part, I cannot go there in January. Since the Senate has been convoked only for February 16, I will be in the Capital at that time. If I can escape after being present for several weeks, my plan would be to pay you a short visit at Quimper before returning to Marseilles for Holy Week.

In the meanwhile, please accept the homage of my profound veneration and my respectful affection.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. I don't know what will happen with our poor Archbishop of Aix. He was very ill yesterday. He could receive only Extreme Unction. I still hope that the public prayers enjoined by the Vicars General will obtain his return to health.³³

154. [To Bishop Chatrousse of Valence].³⁴

Reply to the Bishop's accusations about the financial administration of the Oblates at the seminary of Romans.

Marseilles, February 1, 1857.

My Lord,

By your letter of last December 23, you informed me of the embarrassing situation in which the financial state of your Major Seminary found itself at the beginning of this school year consequent to the excessive spending done in that establishment since its direction was entrusted

³³ Archbishop Darcimoles.

³⁴ Original copy, Rome Postulation Archives DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, pp. 89-90. We are publishing only a part of this long letter which studies in detail the financial administration of the Oblates at Romans.

During the school year 1856-1857, Father Lancenay succeeded Father Bellon as Superior and Father Martinet replaced Father Berthuel as Treasurer.

to us. During this time our Director and Missionary Fathers received from their salaries the sum of 5800 francs, that is, about 250 francs each per year. They should still receive as completion of their salaries, below that received in all the other seminaries which our Fathers direct in France, the sum of 8600 francs. You request me to give up this sum because, you say, that it is fair that those who dig the hole should contribute in filling it up, all the more since, in your opinion, the Congregation will in no way feel this sacrifice. I cannot possibly leave Your Lordship believe that the Congregation is at such a point that it can give up without suffering harm even the minimal sums that the works of its members can gain for it; all the more so, the surrender of such a considerable sum would constitute a true loss for it, and that because its needs are becoming more and more numerous and its income is not in relation to these needs. No matter what the debts that burden your diocesan establishments, I beg you earnestly to accept that our houses are far from being in a flourishing state in regard to temporal goods. If it were otherwise, Your Lordship, I would gladly accede to your wishes and help to reduce the embarrassment and sufferings of a Prelate who has given the Congregation so many proofs of his goodwill and to further the development of an establishment which is dear to us for so many reasons. However, My Lord, the motive you gave in your letter to induce me to make that surrender seemed so serious to me that I felt it my duty to examine carefully whether from the administration of our Fathers for three years, there does result an obligation for us that Your Lordship, through tact no doubt, wished to label with the title of a sacrifice.

From this enquiry, done with the most conscientious attention, I am profoundly convinced that if the former Superior and Treasurer were quite imprudent, nevertheless they are not at all culpable ...

I hope, as Your Lordship does, that the new administration will more and more merit your confidence, and that our Fathers will show more respect and deference for the advice that I dare to insistently beg you not to refuse them and which I recommend that they ask for more and more on every occasion.

Please accept, etc. ...

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

155. [To Marshall Vaillant, Minister of War].³⁵

Request that Brother Roussenq does not return to the army.

Marseilles, May 15, 1857.

Dear Minister,

I am taking the liberty of having recourse to your kindness in favor of a young man who belongs as a coadjutor Brother to the Institute of the Oblates of Mary that I have established at Marseilles. He is Roussenq Barnabé, native of Tavern in the department of Var, enrolled consequent to the military conscription in the nursing Corps in 1853; he took part in the Eastern Campaign, after which he received a leave at Constantinople, renewable for six months. This leave was changed for him last January 31 to another leave which expires at the end of this coming June. While waiting, this young man thought it was his duty to return to his community and consequently has joined the religious state again in which he is fulfilling its obligations with the greatest fidelity and is employed in serving the public in a chapel entrusted to his care. It would be very troublesome now if he were forced to go and take up military service once more. Since the government doesn't need men to complete the army's ranks, we thought it would agree that Roussenq's leave be continued as renewable every six months. His Superiors have very strongly insisted that I myself intervene in this matter, which I could not refuse them; I have noted as well that the young man in question is truly worthy of this exceptional measure.

I beg you then, Mr. Minister, to willingly grant him the favor we are asking for him and to give your consequent instructions to the General of the subdivision at Marseilles during the course of this coming June.³⁶

Please accept, Mr. Minister, the homage of the high esteem with which I have the honor of being Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles, Senator.

³⁵ Original copy, Rome, Postulation Archives DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, p. 106.

³⁶ A note in the register reads: "The temporary leave of the said Roussenq was granted him at Marseilles. It is signed by General de Carondelet with the number 499".

156. [To Bishop Sergent of Quimper].³⁷

Urges him to not dismiss the Oblates from the Major Seminary.

Galashiels in Scotland, August 6, 1857.

My Lord,

I have just received in far away Scotland the letter which you honored to write to me, dated the 1st of August. What a thunderbolt that letter was for me! Now what happened during the few days that have elapsed since our very friendly interview at Paris. How did the sentiments of complete paternal benevolence for the good priests that you have adopted give place to a death sentence, which, in expelling them from the seminary to which you invited them, is crushing the Congregation which granted them to you with such confidence and deeply-felt gratitude? Are they not the same men whom you have praised to me so touchingly in writing and by word of mouth and who were inspired by your spirit in the direction of your seminary where they have done nothing except at your advice or directive? They will be sacrificed and the Congregation to which they belong dishonored in their persons, because there has arisen some opposition already foreseen and judged by Your Lordship. What interpretation can one give to this inexplicable measure? It was an attempt that failed ... First of all, it was not at all an attempt. It was a decision, well and duly taken by both sides. Who would have agreed to an attempt which could have such disastrous consequences? You called the Congregation to your seminary with the confidence inspired in you by its experience and the blessings that God has granted it in the seminaries it has been directing for so many years. The Congregation took the matter seriously by giving you tried members of its Institute, men who had already proven themselves in other seminaries, men of learning and virtue who dedicated themselves heart and soul to your service and who have given no cause for complaint in all the years that have elapsed.

“This so-called attempt did not succeed to the satisfaction of those who were put out by the choice you made of the Congregation.”

But I have the proof that they were mistaken in their assessment. I find this proof both in the letters that you have honored me with and the very encouraging words that you spoke to me on this subject, and finally in the request that you made on several occasions to complete the number

³⁷ Original, Quimper, Archives of the Major Seminary. About this “disappointing effort” at Quimper, cf. *Etudes Oblates*, vol. 23 (1964), pp. 107-126.

of Directors and Professors which you had the right to request, and who only put off their arrival in line with the measure you had taken to introduce them into seminary only at the end of the year. Everything was arranged according to your will as you had expressed it to me at Paris last month: it allowed you to keep in the seminary the Philosophy Professor with whom you were content. That was agreed upon without any problem.

You say that “there was a radical and essential difference between our conditions and the ones you had proposed.” But, My Lord, it could never have entered my mind to impose conditions on you. It was a matter of forming an agreement similar to those we make in all seminaries. I had to present a plan to you, offer you some proposals, but never in my life did I think of imposing conditions on you. That is so true that I would have been perfectly willing to forego an agreement had it not seemed fitting to establish in some way the position of the seminary directors in the diocese. I thought myself to be in line with your ideas. In Paris you saw how easily I erased an article which did not seem to suit you. It would have been the same in regard to the wishes that you would have manifested after reflection on the written text which was submitted to you for examination and approval.

So, My Lord, I appeal to your sense of justice regarding a measure that I see as disastrous and degrading for the Congregation at whose head the Church has placed me. No, it will not be the hand of a Bishop such as yourself which will indelibly tarnish a religious family that entrusted itself to you with confidence and certainty. And do not say that we can attribute the lack of understanding to the conditions of the agreement. First of all, from my point of view, I could not do it since that would be a lie in my mouth. And even so, would I want to take upon myself before the Church the ridicule of not having been able to come to an understanding with you on such a simple matter, the like of which one can not find an example in any diocese of France? That would be wanting to make me look like a stupid old man who presents claims that no one can reasonably accept. That would be equivalent to closing the door of every diocese to my Congregation. No, Your Lordship, no one will misunderstand that, and soon they will know in all France and at Rome that the Congregation of Oblates was shamefully dismissed from the seminary of Quimper which had been confided to it. Some, who are always ready to think and speak evil, will say it is their own fault, without knowing the reasons. Others who better informed will not fail to say that the Congregation succumbed to the intrigue of some malcontents who have extorted from the Bishop a decision contrary to his own sentiments which have been so often

expressed and reported — I say it clearly — to so many Bishops and friends, by myself who have had no reason to hide your good conduct and the good will for you that it aroused in myself.

Please admit, my Lord, that this is a violent and truly discouraging state of affairs. I beg you then, through the tender love of Jesus Christ, to listen only to your heart and to yield yourself to nothing except your own judgment. Have a little more trust in the good spirit of the majority of your priests and in the wisdom of the Directors of your seminary whose behavior you have approved up until now and who will make it their duty to dissipate by their kind attentions in every encounter the prejudice that has been quite wrongfully brought against them. Release me as well, I beg you, from the strange position in which I am put. Everyone is aware that on my return from England I was to go to Quimper where you yourself have planned to meet me and from where we were to go and visit the shrine that you wanted to entrust to our Missionaries. The Bishop of Nantes is waiting for a letter from me to set the date of my arrival at his place. They are also waiting for me at l'Ile and Vilaine to see me when I go to Quimper. The Archbishop of Tours has arranged his pastoral visits in view of my trip to Brittany. What kind of a figure will I cut by cancelling all these meetings? Did I have to wait till my old age for such a humiliation? Can I console myself, Your Lordship, that it comes from you whom I have been accustomed to considering as a friend whose good proceedings I have been repaying with unlimited esteem and sincere affection? Decide, My Lord. I will await for your reply at Paris where I will be on the day after the Assumption.

Kindly accept, my Lord, the homage of my respect and affectionate sentiments.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

157. [To Bishop Sergent of Quimper].³⁸

Protest against the dismissal of the Oblates from the Major Seminary.

Tours, August 25, 1857.

My Lord,

I had hoped up to the last moment that the reasoned letter I had the honor of writing you from Galashiels might have deterred you from a resolution that inflicts serious harm to the reputation of the Congregation of

³⁸ Original, Quimper, Archives of the Major Seminary.

the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. I thought I had resolved in a satisfactory way the difficulties which seemed to concern you and that I only had to await a return on your part to the first sentiments that you manifested several times to me both in writing and by word of mouth.

Such was not the case, and Your Lordship persisted in that fatal resolution against which my duty of state obliges me to protest. But this protest, inspired by duty, will not be made with any noise or scandal, for it is addressed to the same tribunal that I first invoked with such confidence, namely, that of your conscience. Well then, my Lord, before this tribunal and in God's presence, without any bad feeling or animosity, without losing thereby the esteem and respect that I profess for your venerable person, solely to satisfy my own conscience, and with that holy liberty which our sacred character permits, I do not hesitate to tell you that you allowed yourself to be dominated by a concern which led you to commit an injustice.

The truth is that by the very fact of your request and of my acceptance there existed a true contract between us which was fully executed by the exercise of an entire year of services by the Oblates in your seminary. The agreement which was to follow was merely an indifferent accessory which, as I had the honor of pointing out to you in my first letter, could not be considered as anything but a regularized position that could present no serious difficulties, for it was to be pretty well the regularized position generally adopted in every seminary; and besides, we were disposed to accept the conditions that suited you.

What was radical and did not need to be expressed was that, when you invited the Oblates to your seminary, they were expected to conduct themselves as good clerics, to fulfill all the duties of their assignment, to give an example of every virtue, good direction and Catholic teaching so as to form good men to serve the diocese.

What is even more radical is that the Oblates were to live in dependence on the First Shepherd and in perfect union with him; they placed themselves under his protection with that filial attitude that their Institute inspires in them for Bishops whose men they in some way are and whom they make it a duty to have honored everywhere, whose prerogatives they defend and to whom they strive to bring back those persons whom they meet in various places who are ill-disposed towards that sacred authority which the Oblates profess to honor and hold in esteem.

If the Oblates had failed in one of these duties, there is no doubt that the Bishop could use his irrevocable right to maintain order, discipline

and sound doctrine, and, in virtue of his inalienable right, he could dismiss the Oblates or whomever else from his seminary or diocese.

But if, on the contrary, the Oblates worthily fulfilled all their duties, then all the conditions of the contract are fulfilled on their part. In such a case, they cannot be expelled as they have been without offending all propriety but even without a veritable injustice.

The question was decided by yourself, my Lord, at a time when you unceasingly praised the Superior and Director whom I had given you. You especially ratified the contract when you insisted that I complete the number of professors deemed necessary, and told me of your regret at not having introduced them into your seminary sooner. Those professors were already chosen from among the best. I was then not a matter of bringing up the futile reasons that served as a pretext for the new resolution that you have irrevocably taken. At that time you were so little afraid of the clergy's opposition that I could recall the very words which came from your mouth to prove the little importance you granted it and your discontent in regard to those whom you thought responsible for it. The friendly welcome given to Fathers Lagier and Bellon in the visit they have just made to a part of your diocese would prove if need be how this little-founded opposition could easily be dissipated and be replaced by a totally different attitude.

Your Lordship, I must still repudiate with all the energy of a calumniated man the perfidious and disloyal insinuations that have come to you and which have made such a deep impression on your spirit. Would to God that my age, my seniority, and the sentiments I have pledged to you, with the openness of heart proper to me, might have inspired in you enough confidence for you to confide in me. I would have had no difficulty in completely dissipating them, even if it had been necessary to call before you those imprudent detractors who certainly didn't weigh the consequence of their ill-considered assertions. Why did you not take the time to know me better! You would have been convinced that there is no one on earth who professes a deeper respect for the episcopacy and who better defends its prerogatives. You would have discovered that I had the honor of being raised to this dignity after I had taken a path leading away from it, and was far from thinking that later on I would be obliged to accept this burden; I told my students in stressing the grandeur of bishops in the Church, that I would like to be their step-ladder and exalt them in the eyes of the faithful. My greatest preoccupation has always been to instill the greatest devotedness and filial affection towards the Prelates who would

call them to work in their dioceses. Once I became a bishop myself, I hardly think that this attitude, always so deeply rooted in me, diminished. My teaching remained the same. It was only through thoughtfulness that I kept in the background, insofar as I was able, in the relationships that arose between the bishops and the members of my Congregation, a Congregation God inspired me to found for the sole purpose of serving the bishops, at a time when they were in such great need of collaborators in their dioceses bereft of assistance. Would I then inspire my followers with a spirit of invasion to the detriment of the bishop's authority? That is the most terrible calumny that could be hurled against our religious family and its chief, since, as I have told you at the beginning of this letter, our Oblates are essentially bishop's men, who abide by their spirit and have no other fathers than they, who must make their sacred authority prevail in everything, and lead back to them those who disregard it either by excess or lack of principles and are thus wanting in due respect and obedience.

By chance I found a recent letter in my briefcase from one of those people who said something which made you suspicious and contributed in bringing on the Congregation of Oblates a disgrace so little-deserved:

"I willingly consent that you ordain the Abbé N.N., a member of my diocese, who has become your son as member of your Congregation. I ardently hope that he will be a fervent religious and fill all the desires of your heart. *All he has to do for that is to imbibe during his novitiate the spirit that you have given to your holy Institute ...*"

"My prayers and heart accompany you in your long trip ..."

I am closing. I would be too long, so strong am I on this point which is, however, so misunderstood. I close this letter, my Lord, which was inspired by the duty of a legitimate defence, by stating to you that the severity of your conduct towards the Oblates who have been treated so unworthily by you, changes nothing of the sentiments of respect and veneration that I have pledged to you.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles, Sup. Gen. of the Obl. of M.I.

P.S. This letter, which was written at Tours during the few days I stayed there, went with me to Marseilles where I was given to hope that I would receive a few lines from you.

158. [To Bishop Desprez of Limoges].³⁹

Reflections on the plan to move some Missionaries who are to live in a suburb of Limoges.

Marseilles, September 10, 1857.

My Lord,

The letter that you did me the honor of writing to me on the 22nd of last month was given to me only on my return from the long trip that I have just made. That will explain to you the reason for my tardiness in replying to you. I most deeply regret that, because I was in a hurry to return to my diocese, I did not take a detour from my route to go and present my respects to you at Limoges. On the spot it seems to me that I would have understood much better your intentions regarding the moving of the Missionaries. Since I am convinced of the interest that you take in the good laborers who have been working in your vineyard for so many years and because I myself desire to agree with your every point of view for the greater good of your diocese, it seems to me that I would have had no difficulty in acceding to what you propose. But I must not conceal from you that the Missionaries are extremely reluctant to leave the house that had been destined for them. I've heard it said that they don't have any great hope of doing good work in that outlying part of the suburb to which they are to be relegated, and it seems that they are not anxious to go there before the house and the church which they are to serve are built. In repeating these observations to Your Lordship, I am far from wanting to go against your viewpoint in the new arrangement that you wish to make; I am simply informing you of the difficulty experienced by the Missionaries. To the annoyance of leaving their home are they also reluctant to go and live in a less suitable local? I could not say. Would they have preferred to be definitively stationed in the former Visitation convent? I hazard to think so without being sure. I am judging by an old recollection.

In any case, I regret to no end that the provincial, Father Vincens, already known to Your Lordship, cannot go and talk things over with you. Accustomed as I am to keep in the background as much as I possibly can, I rely on him to handle all the business with our Lords the Bishops. I am not well acquainted with the places and local customs, so it is hard for [me] to judge in a way without knowledge of cause. However, in the pre-

³⁹ Original copy, Rome Postulation Archives DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, pp. 117-118.

sent circumstances, I understand that you are in a hurry to have a decision. Can I do better than to place myself in your hands? You are the father, the Missionaries are your sons, you know the needs of a community of laborers whose members, after the oppressive fatigue of Missions, must be able to regain their strength in well-ventilated living quarters, provided with a garden, etc. I place their destiny in your hands. You will do only what is fitting and just. Dispose of their house since you consider the sacrifice they will make to be of great benefit to your diocese and when they make this sacrifice they will be doing something agreeable to you.

Please recognize, My Lord, in this conduct on my part, the unlimited confidence that you inspire in me and accept as well the homage of my most respectful sentiments.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

159. To His Eminence Cardinal Archbishop Donnet of Bordeaux.⁴⁰

Gratitude for His Eminence's agreement to the plan of affiliating the Association of the Holy Family to the Congregation of Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

Marseilles, October 10, 1857.

Your Eminence,

Nothing could be more agreeable to me than to be obliged to negotiate with your Eminence as intermediary in this matter, one so important for the Congregation of which I am the Founder.

I am grateful to Your Lordship for having consented to the project of the Abbé Noailles and for the assistance you have deigned to lend in finalizing this agreement.

Under the protection of Your Lordship, the project will succeed if it coincides with God's plans. In fact, I see precious advantages from this combining of graces and strength that Divine Providence has shared out to each of these groups.

The project will not go ahead without presenting some difficulties; Your Lordship's wisdom and the frank and pure intentions of the contracting parties will smooth out everything; I dare to hope so.

⁴⁰ Original, Rome, General Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Family.

I am sending Your Eminence the notes given to me by my Council: they ought to form the basis of the projected agreement.

Accept Your Lordship the homage of profound respect with which I am Your Eminence's very humble and obedient servant.

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

160. [To Bishop Lyonnet of Valence].⁴¹

The Oblates will withdraw immediately from the Major Seminary of Romans, since the Bishop has made arrangements with the Jesuits to take direction of it.

Marseilles, October 10, 1857.

My Lord,

Reverend Father Lanceney has just informed me of the conversation that he had with you, from which I learn that you have felt it your duty to arrange with the Reverend Jesuit Fathers and entrust your Major Seminary of Romans to them. That decision implies the more or less immediate dismissal of the Oblate Fathers who had been invited to direct this seminary by your predecessor. Consequently, I have had to take the course of recalling those Fathers who could not suitably be present to a community that has been advised of their approaching dismissal and over which it would have been impossible for them to exercise the least authority. I have the honor of informing Your Grace of this measure so that you may take the required steps. The Reverend Jesuit Fathers are numerous enough and will not be at a loss to provide capable men on whom you have counted, according to the proposals made to you by their Reverend Father Provincial.⁴²

⁴¹ Original copy, Rome, Postulation Archives DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, p. 127.

⁴² Bishop de Mazenod himself copied this letter into the Register and added: "N.B. Father Gautrelet is the Provincial referred to in this letter, assisted by Father de Jocas, the former Provincial. It is good to know one's friends and with what tact they proceed. The details of this intrigue, admitted by the Prelate himself, give an indication of the little sensitivity of the one and of the others. The knowledge that Father Lancenay gave us about this obliged me to write the letter I have just copied."

Concerning the stay and departure of the Oblates from Romans, cf. *Etudes Oblates*, Vol. 23 (1964); pp. 127-160; Vol. 24 (1965), pp. 161-177.

Father Lanceney will remain in place to hand over the house to those whom you have appointed.

I have the honor of remaining Your Lordship's very humble and obedient servant.

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

161. [To Father P.J. Beckx, Superior General of the Jesuits, at Rome].⁴³

Narrative of the events which occasioned the replacement of the Oblates by the Jesuits at the Major Seminary of Romans.

Marseilles, October 12, 1857.

Reverend Father,

It seems to be that it is only right that you be informed of the manner in which your Fathers carry on business in our region. I will be a simple historian in a matter wherein I would have strong reasons to complain.

Four years ago, the former Bishop of Valence earnestly entreated me to accept the direction of his Major Seminary. I acceded to his insistence and gave him men capable of worthily fulfilling the tasks entrusted to them. The Bishop of Valence was so happy with that arrangement that he wrote a pastoral letter to express his joy. Besides that, he required the Congregation of Oblates of Mary Immaculate, which was taking on the direction of his seminary, to provide him as well with three Missionaries to preach the gospel in his diocese. We acceded to this desire, or to put it better, to this Prelate's will, though reluctantly, for I thought that the Missionaries established at Notre-Dame de l'Osier bordering on the diocese of Valence could have carried out this service without any expense to the Valence diocese; the latter was obliged to build a house to receive the Missionaries. The Oblates of Mary Immaculate remained in possession of the Major Seminary until the Bishop's death.

His successor, acting on the strength of certain prejudices, seems to have approached your Fathers to obtain their cooperation in the plan he

⁴³ Copy of the original, Rome, Postulation Archives DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, pp. 127-129. Father Beckx replied on October 24 that he had sent a telegram to Lyons on October 11 or 12: "If the former Directors have left voluntarily, accept; otherwise, wait." He added: "From the information Your Lordship gave me, it appears to me there has been a regrettable haste ..." General Archives, External Jesuit Relations, XI, pp. 29-30.

had to place them in the Oblates' position. News of this spread, two of your Fathers did not hesitate to speak thereof to a priest of the Valence diocese, who felt it his duty to inform the Oblate Fathers: the latter had no misgivings at all in their seminary of Romans where they were preparing to receive their students. The Superior, more surprised than anyone for he had recently seen the Bishop who had not said a word to him about this, went to Lyons to receive the Prelate's explanation. The latter was a little surprised at first, but soon adopted an open attitude and told the Superior: Well! I am going to tell you how things have happened. "Several days ago I was having dinner at the Archbishop's house with Father de Jocas and several other Jesuit Fathers. Father de Jocas said to me: "Well! My Lord! It is fortunate we were not at St-Flour because you are leaving that diocese." I replied: "What does it matter, Father, it is not for the Bishop that you ought to go to St-Flour, but to do some good there." "Oh! Father de Jocas told me, we will be able to do good in your new diocese, where they say that you have to dismiss the Oblates." The Bishop undoubtedly didn't think it was fitting to say anything more about that conference to the Oblate Superior, but what he added is proof that the exchange went further: Several days later, the Bishop continued, Father Provincial came to see me here at Fourvières (in the Jesuit house where he was making his retreat) and that Father told me that he was glad to inform me that he was going to write to Rome and have Father General arrange the personnel of professors for the Major Seminary which was to be entrusted to them. The Bishop then went into generalities as if to lull the Superior. The latter, in order to know definitively what action to take, proposed that the Bishop deny these rumors by some positive act. The Bishop then became angry saying that he was the master, etc. The Superior bowed and took his leave of the Prelate. When he returned to his seminary, he told his brother religious what had just happened. They were of the opinion that the Superior should come to me to give me an account of this unexpected event.

One does not have to be very perspicacious to understand that the Bishop, once he had been assured of the cooperation of the Reverend Jesuit Fathers, made this matter nothing more than only a question of time, and that as soon as the Fathers would have the personnel they were preparing, the Bishop would bid farewell to the Oblates, so much the more so since the Jesuits would not only furnish the personnel for the Major Seminary but would also accept responsibility for giving missions in the diocese without the diocese being obliged to give any salary however meagre to the Missionaries. Further, because they belonged to a large Society which abounds in distinguished men, they would provide him

with preachers for his cathedral, etc. I am giving verbatim the Prelate's very words.

After learning of these facts, I had only one avenue to take, namely, to write to the Bishop that I was immediately withdrawing the Oblates from his seminary. That is what I did. And the Bishop, assured of the arrangements made with your Fathers, *submitted to God's will*. Such are the edifying words of his reply to which I did not reply!

I feel that I am too old to understand the ways of acting that obtain in modern society. I limit myself to only pointing them out, strongly resolved never to allow myself to do likewise to anyone else.

Reverend Father, excuse the haste of my letter: I do not have the time to reread it, I am nevertheless sending it to you, not in the form of a complaint but as information.

Please accept, Reverend Father, the assurance of my very high consideration and most affectionate sentiments.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

162. [To Father Gautrelet, Jesuit Provincial at Lyons].⁴⁴

Complaints against the Provincial who acted badly in regard to the Oblate Directors of the Major Seminary of Romans.

Marseilles, October 20, 1857.

Reverend Father,

I ask nothing better than to persuade myself that, in fact, you did not provoke, by offering your services, the unworthy measure that the Bishop of Valence has just taken in regard to the Oblate Fathers of Mary Immaculate. It would be too painful for me, who, long before any of you were born, loved your Society perhaps more than you love it yourself and who have all my life given proofs of my esteem and affection even to the point of several times compromising myself; it would be painful, I say, to believe you capable of such infamy.

Reverend Father, I have given you an exact account of the conversation of the Bishop of Valence with Father Lanceney. The latter would be ready to confirm by oath what he has reported. What the Bishop was able

⁴⁴ Copy of the original, Rome, Postulation Archives DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, pp. 132-133.

to say is not in agreement with what you assert. Faced with the alternative, I do not hesitate to believe that you are telling the truth. A Prelate who has principles so little based on justice and fairness, could also have very elastic ones about openness and sincerity.

I forego condemnation, therefore, and willingly acquit you of this unworthy initiative which would render you the most miserable of men in the judgment of all those who retain sentiments of tact and honor.

However, I do not entirely find you without fault. The ease which you showed in agreeing with the viewpoint of a Bishop who judged and condemned a religious congregation before hearing it makes you a veritable accomplice in this injustice. If the Bishop had not counted on you, he may have thought twice before taking such a violent decision. He would have taken the time to consult immediately the Grand Vicars he had chosen, and so many other venerable people who would have diverted him from the error into which some spiteful people had pushed him. He would certainly then have respected the rights and reputation of a religious corps which has done so much good in this diocese for so many years.

Counting on you, however, and weighing the advantages that a powerful Society like yours offered him in talent and so many other things, he made up his mind beforehand with the idea that it was nothing more than a matter of time, that is, of possibly delaying for a few months more till you could provide the personnel you had promised him, and then strike the blow whenever it pleased him.

How is it that you did not withdraw from such a contrivance? Didn't you see it as supplanting a Congregation which, to be sure, is only an atom in comparison to your Society, but which has nevertheless some right not to have people bring a notable prejudice against a reputation it needs in order to do in God's Church the good it is expected to accomplish? No, Reverend Father, I cannot excuse you and I can tell you in all simplicity that all those who learn about this incident express themselves in terms that I would not want to repeat. I do not know what you will gain from this encroachment, but I see with sadness that you are to lose a great deal of respect.

As for myself, I had to do what I did as soon as I perceived the insidious tactic of the Bishop of Valence. I preferred to withdraw our Oblates before anyone went and openly chased them out, and so I left the field open for you.

Such, Reverend Father, is my way of acting. I always put my cards on the table. My distinctive character is openness and honor. I am horri-

fied by duplicity wherever I meet it but even more so if I discover it where it should least be found. After that, once I have done what I had to, let *come what may*, I resign myself to whatever God permits and I pray for those who have wronged me.

Accept, Reverend Father, the assurance of my distinguished consideration and respectful sentiments.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

163. [To Father Beckx, Superior General of the Jesuits, at Rome].⁴⁵

Sends a letter received from Father Gautrelet and Bishop de Mazenod's reply. Future attitude towards the Jesuits.

Marseilles, October 21, 1857.

Very Reverend Father,

I am glad that you know my opinion concerning the somewhat tactless procedure of your Society in regard to the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate of which I am the Superior. For that, I can do nothing better than to send you a copy of the letter which I addressed to Reverend Father Provincial in reply to the one which he felt his duty to write me as an explanation of his conduct. At the same time, I am passing on to you a copy of his letter.

After this we will not speak anymore about this matter, which has unfortunately aroused universal blame against your Company.

I cannot sufficiently express to you my resentment for your having placed me in the painful position of having from now on to suppress the sentiments of esteem and affection in my heart that I have always had and that I maintain for your Company; the most ordinary decency requires that I cease to show the sympathy that people know I had for you, in order to keep myself aloof within the bounds of strict charity.⁴⁶ Please accept, etc.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

⁴⁵ Copy of the original, Rome, Postulation Archives DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, p. 134.

⁴⁶ Father Beckx replied on November 7, 1857, with words of regret for this matter, begging Bishop de Mazenod to preserve his affection for the Jesuits. Jesuit General Archives, External Relations XI, pp. 32-33.

164. To His Lordship the Bishop of Orléans.⁴⁷

Requests that Abbé Dufour may stay at the Oblate novitiate.

Marseilles, November 4, 1857.

Very dear and revered Lord,

After I was consulted by Mr. Dufour, a priest of your diocese, I counted enough in your benevolence and replied to him that, since he was already there in the novitiate house, it would suffice if he were to write you to obtain confirmation from your kindness of the consent that you had previously given him to enter the Congregation of Mary Immaculate. Thus we would cut short with all the bother his relatives will not fail to give him, for they are opposed to his decision. We would save him a costly and difficult trip and we would not delay the time of the holy vows which he has been called to make and which cannot take place before a full year after his admission to novitiate.

I beg you, my dear Lord, to ratify my decision by a short note on your part.

Please accept, dear and revered Lord, the new assurance of my respect and most affectionate sentiments.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

165. To His Eminence, Cardinal Archbishop Donnet of Bordeaux.⁴⁸

Sends the agreement of affiliation of the Association of the Holy Family. It can be signed.

Marseilles, December 28, 1857.

Your Eminence,

I have the honor of returning to you the attached agreement of affiliation between the Congregation of Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the Association of the Holy Family that you recently sent to me. After mature examination of it with the General Assistants who form my Council, we thought that this version sufficiently expresses the goal proposed by the two contracting parties, as well as the guarantees which must safeguard

⁴⁷ Orig.: Paris, National Library, Manuscript Department, Correspondance Dupanloup, vol. 27.

⁴⁸ Orig.: Rome, General Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Family.

their respective interests. Nothing hinders then this project in its actual form from being definitively adopted as a treaty of union between the two spiritual families which from now on ought to be only one, in order to help each other in doing good in the God's Church.

Your Eminence will be good enough to send the Abbé Noailles the enclosed agreement so that he can make, as soon as possible, three copies which will then be signed with the required signatures and secured with the seals of the contracting parties. Thus will be brought to completion, under your auspices and high intervention, this good work which can be added to so many others which do honor to your administration in the diocese of Bordeaux.

I beg Your Eminence to accept the homage of my respectful attachment.

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

166. To the Abbé Noailles at Bordeaux.⁴⁹

The agreement of affiliation between the Association of the Holy Family and the Oblates can be signed. Benefits of this affiliation.

Marseilles, December 28, 1857.

I have just forwarded to His Lordship the Cardinal Archbishop of Bordeaux the agreement of affiliation between our two spiritual families, which His Eminence had sent me two weeks ago. I had to submit this document to the deliberation of the Council of my Assistants General; then came the Christmas celebrations which hindered me from writing to you immediately after to inform you of the result: I hasten to send you that today.

The Council of the Congregation, after making a serious examination of the articles which make up the project in question, believe that the draft as you have formulated it can be adopted as a *definitive agreement* of the union of the Association of the Holy Family with the Congregation of Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Thus, as soon as His Eminence sends you the document that I sent to him, you can make three copies of it, as agreed upon, which must then bear the required signatures and be stamped with the seals of the two contracting parties. Thus signed and sealed first by yourselves, you will send them to us so that after we have added our seal

⁴⁹ Orig.: Rome, General Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Family.

and signatures we will send two of them back to you, one for the Holy Family, the other for the Archbishop of Bordeaux, and we will keep the third for our archives. We will thus bring to completion this union from which, like yourself, I hope that our two families will draw great benefit and which can only result in a greater good for souls: this has been the goal consistently proposed by both parties, but which we will be better able to attain in the future when the two forces are united and march under the same flag. We must both ask God that these hopes come to their full realization and thank him at the same time as the Immaculate Virgin Mary, our Mother, that the obstacles which could have arisen to oppose this union were removed and that everything seems to have concurred to conclude such a delicate matter to our mutual satisfaction. To you, my dear Abbé Noailles, belongs the consolation for having taken the initiative in this important transaction and for having, through the happy conclusion which has resulted, put the final touch to the diverse works which, under the title of Association of the Holy Family, owe their existence to you and rightly give evidence of wanting to enjoy for a long time yet the wise and paternal direction of their worthy founder.

Now I will reply to your question about priests who, since they are related to your Works, might become vocations to the Congregation of Oblates of Mary. To facilitate their entrance, I don't think it is necessary to make any changes in our Constitutions and Rules. Even though the vow of obedience doesn't admit any restriction or condition in principle if, from among the men concerned, one presented himself who had such a preference, but founded as well on a very evident aptitude either for preaching missions or teaching, we could give them the assurance that they will be employed therein once they have been definitively attached to the Congregation as the other members which belong to it. That should suffice for men who are animated with God's spirit and seek above all to accomplish his Holy Will in the type of vocation they wish to embrace.

In closing, allow me to offer you my best wishes for happiness and heavenly blessings in the New Year which will soon begin and accept at the same time the assurance of my respectful and devoted affection.

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

167. To Mr. Sebaux, Parish Priest of Notre-Dame at Laval.⁵⁰

Father Vital Grandin has been named Bishop of Satala. Poverty and extent of his diocese.

[Marseilles, 1858].⁵¹

As I am about to leave, my dear Pastor, I have only time to thank you for your kind remembrance and good wishes. You know what I wish for you. The sentiments you have inspired in me are indelible.

It is quite true that Father Grandin has been promoted to the episcopacy by the Sovereign Pontiff who has chosen him as Coadjutor to the Archbishop of Saint Boniface with the title Bishop of Satala *in partibus infidelium*.

I don't know if I will be able to arrange it that he be sent to me in France so that I may have the consolation of consecrating him as I had of ordaining him. You would then have the pleasure of seeing that excellent man to whose education, if I remember rightly, you contributed. It is difficult to be more virtuous, and I trust that he will be as good a Bishop as he is a good religious and dedicated missionary. It is not a crown of flowers that they will place on his head. What a diocese he will have to evangelize! From here I can see his palace at Ile-a-la-Crosse, a few pieces of wood cemented together with mud, ice fields and wandering natives after whom he must travel immense distances of two or three hundred leagues to bring a few of them to the knowledge of God and his Divine Son Jesus Christ and through him to the way of salvation.

This poor dear Father will be devastated when he learns what Providence has in store for him. He can try all he wants, there is no turning back. Help him by your kind prayers to resign himself to carry such a heavy burden.

I will do all I can to reply to the letters I have received from his brother, his sister and friends. In any case, be kind enough to let them know that they have not been misinformed by the news of their brother's promotion.

Please accept, my dear Pastor, the renewed assurance of my most affectionate regards.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

⁵⁰ Orig.: Archives of the Bishop's house in Laval.

⁵¹ Undated letter, however from the beginning of 1858, at the time of Father Grandin's appointment.

168. To the Abbé ...⁵²

Father Vital Grandin has been named Bishop of Satala. Hopes to consecrate him at Marseilles.

Marseilles, January 9, 1858.

You were not misinformed, dear Abbé, when they told you that Reverend Father Vital Grandin had been raised to the episcopacy. The Sovereign Pontiff has chosen him to be the Coadjutor of the Bishop of Saint Boniface under the title Bishop of Satala *in partibus infidelium*. Even though he is still young, Reverend Father Grandin merits in every way the choice that was made of him. To carry the heavy burden laid upon him he must be endowed with great virtue and courage to face every challenge and that is precisely what the good Lord has granted to this dear Prelate. He has always been a model in every position that, though still young, he has been placed. And so the Bishop of Saint Boniface and I have in full confidence presented him to the Holy See to place on his head this crown of thorns which he will have strength to bear. But what chagrin this poor son will experience when he learns what Providence has reserved for him. His friends must pray for him so that he will resign himself to God's holy will.

What you plan to do by yourself and your fellow disciples will be a very precious homage rendered to the virtues of this excellent prelate. Since I, for my part, want to look after him, I will be pleased to know, after the proceedings, what you will have decided. We have some time before us. He may know of his appointment only in six months. I will do all I can to have him sent here to be consecrated by myself; that would be a fine occasion for his friends to come and see our beautiful city of Marseilles. But I don't dare to say I will succeed. He is so far away. Ile-a-la-Crosse is another 300 leagues beyond Saint Boniface and it will be the new Bishop's residence in that diocese which is as big as Europe.

Please accept, etc.

† Ch. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

⁵² Copy, Rome, Postulation Archives. This is a former fellow-student of Bishop Grandin at the seminary of Le Mans.

169. To the Abbé Noailles at Bordeaux.⁵³

The General Council will soon designate an Oblate to collaborate with Mr. Noailles in the Association of the Holy Family.

Paris, March 15, 1858.

Dear Sir and revered Superior,

I am ashamed of replying so tardily to the letters that you did me the honor of writing. Distracted here by countless matters, by troublesome situations of every kind, and by two trips I had to make, I had relied on good Father Vincens to send you my excuses and to tell you by word of mouth that I had been constrained to put off writing to you.

Now I have just discovered that Father Vincens did not have the pleasure of seeing you when he apparently passed through Bordeaux too rapidly, or perhaps you were not there at that time. I am immediately presenting you my excuses, first of all, and I am asking you to give me time to return to Marseilles to deliberate with my Council about the choice that would best suit your point of view. At the present all my men are on mission. We had to crowd all sails in order to satisfy all the requests occasioned by the Jubilee. After Easter we will be more at ease. So while we wait I join you in prayer that the good Lord may bless our families and our works and especially that he keep you for a long time at the head of those Holy Institutes that your zeal has founded in the Church.

I leave you to busy myself with a report I have been assigned to make to the senate. That will be my last business matter here, for I am in a hurry to return to my diocese for Holy Week.

Please accept, Sir and revered Superior, the assurance of my respectful and very affectionate regards.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. I asked the Superior of Good Hope of Nancy to remember me to you. Our Oblate Fathers have already had the pleasure of rendering some services to that community. I have also seen our Sisters on Calais Street, whose Superior was somewhat ill. I will regret leaving without seeing her again.

⁵³ Orig.: Rome, General Archives of the Holy Family.

170. [To the Abbé Noailles at Bordeaux].⁵⁴

Sending Father Bellon to Bordeaux.

Marseilles, May 8, 1858.

... I must now⁵⁵ tell you, dear Sir, about Reverend Father Bellon whom I am sending you to be initiated under your direction into the knowledge and the management of the works which make up the Association of the Holy Family; he is to represent the Congregation of Oblates of Mary Immaculate both to you and to the members who make up the higher administration of these Works. I have already introduced him to the General Directress who has no doubt already mentioned this to you. He is a man of quality under every aspect, who leaves nothing to be desired in terms of knowledge and piety. He is of mature age, since he is over forty, and has had occasion to prove himself at length in the direction of communities for he was Director or Superior of a Major Seminary for more than fifteen years. His good character and excellent mind will make him a wise and enlightened cooperator in your hands as well as your faithful representative in the diverse works which you have created. In spite of my wanting to send him to you immediately, I was obliged to delay his departure for Bordeaux till the end of the month. This Father is Superior of one of our houses in Marseilles and we need two or three weeks before I can withdraw him from that position.

Sending Father Bellon to Bordeaux and introducing him to the direction of your works can be considered as the culmination of the transaction that has occupied us for six months and has been happily concluded by the agreement of affiliation of the Association of which you are the Founder and the Congregation of Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The affiliation makes the two families into only one so that they may help each other working, each in its own sphere, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. By the fact alone of this union, very special bonds are established between us which, even though they must ordinarily pass through Reverend Father Bellon as intermediary, can also be carried on directly with me; this will from time to time give me the pleasure of corresponding with you by letter and of receiving you in person on the occasion of your visits. In this regard, I beg you to consider yourself from now on as one of us and to tell yourself that you will be at home every time that you come to Marseilles.

Please accept, etc.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

⁵⁴ Copy, Rome, Postulation Archives DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, pp. 180-181.

⁵⁵ We omit the first part of this long letter which speaks about the foundation of the two works of the Holy Family at Marseilles.

171. [To Bishop Menjaud of Nancy].⁵⁶

The Oblates want to continue working with prisoners.

Marseilles, June 4, 1858.

My dear Lord,

I realize the anxiety you must have been cast into by the strange report of Mr. Marguet. You will allow me not to feel bound to reply to that document, it would be too painful for me to comment on it. Truly I no longer understand good Mr. Marguet! But, let's not talk about it, there would be too much to say!

Prison ministry is too much in line with the goals that the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary has adopted for itself for us to abandon a service that we have kept up in most difficult times and at the price of sacrifices which I don't need to recall. We were hoping to continue it when the present situation is in place, a situation that makes it easier and just as meritorious.

Whatever Mr. Marguet may say about the contrived plan to remove from us this work, which you yourself recognize as having been well carried out by our Congregation, we can give you one of our Fathers who is especially dedicated to it. There is nothing against him having his living quarters and bed close to the prison, and there is no doubt that a good religious will show at least as much zeal and dedication as one of the priests at Mr. Marguet's disposal. Only I must not hide from you that I would be very put out if this Father were exposed to the mean pestering of the Sister who egged Mr. Marguet to take the step which your heart has reason to disavow.

I have given Father Provincial orders to put the Father destined for this service at your disposal. Please accept, etc.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

⁵⁶ Copy, Rome, Postulation Archives, DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, p. 189.

172. To Titular Bishop J. Novella of Patara.⁵⁷

Qualities and conditions required for entrance to the Oblate novitiate.

Marseilles, August 23, 1858.

Recalling your stop at Marseilles,⁵⁸ it was with pleasure that I received your very fine letter of August 10. I am replying to it immediately.

I would gladly accept a good priest who is able to do ministry in the missions among non-believers. But how can I assess his worth at the distance that we are removed? The age of the man you speak of is a bit advanced, but if he has the required qualities, age is of little importance, even though it might be a hindrance in learning languages.

Since the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate is an Order of Gospel workers, it is only right that, since they are to preach to others, they must be of impeccable conduct. A priest who had to expiate scandals in his conduct would not be suited for such a holy ministry. We are not looking for men with outstanding talents; nevertheless, they must be capable, well instructed, of good character, zealous for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. It would be fitting for the candidate to bring something with him, for the Congregation has no funds and is not rich. However, it places no conditions on this point. However, one must know that in the Congregation, after a year of novitiate we make perpetual vows of religion with a fourth row of perseverance.

With your experience, Your Lordship can judge if the priest in question has the required qualities for admittance. Question him, examine him: it would be too unfortunate if, after a costly trip, he would not be accepted because he lacked one of the conditions indispensable for his acceptance.

I can't understand how this priest in his far-away province⁵⁹ knew of our little Congregation, and how he had the thought of preferring it over so many other Congregations closer to him. I want to mention that he must bring with him all the certificates to prove his good conduct, his priestly character, etc.

⁵⁷ Copy of the original Italian, Rome, Postulation Archives DXM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, p. 197.

⁵⁸ Bishop Novella, O.F.M. Ref., had just recently returned from China where he had been Bishop.

⁵⁹ According to the Register, this priest was from the neighborhood of Naples. There does not seem to be any Italian priest who entered novitiate in 1858 or 1859.

Very revered Lord, I have now only to beg you to accept the homage of my respect with which I am your humble and very devoted servant.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

173. [To Bishop Caverot of St-Dié].⁶⁰

The Congregation, overwhelmed with debts, cannot make a foundation in the diocese of St-Dié.

Marseilles, August 31, 1858.

There is not a single member of the Congregation of Oblates of Mary who would not consider himself happy to work for the sanctification of souls in your diocese. We have always experienced true sympathy⁶¹ for St-Dié, a profound veneration and sincere attachment for its Bishop. It must be said, My Lord, that the desire to prove these sentiments by placing a dedicated community under your shepherd's staff exerted a sort of fascination on good Father Vincens, so much so that he forgot that the Congregation is so overwhelmed with debts that it is impossible for it to undertake the least expense. A cry of alarm greeted the reading of Father Vincens's first letter in my Council, because it is impossible for us to take out any new loans in the state to which we are reduced. Good Father Vincens ended up by recognizing that himself, and was obliged to cut back on promises which are very difficult to carry out.

Believe me, my Lord, that this inability to support your wishes is truly heart-breaking for me personally: I attach so much value to entrusting to your paternal kindness a portion of the family that the good Lord has given me.

My Lord, kindly accept my sincere regrets at the same time the homage of my deep respect and affectionate attachment.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

⁶⁰ Copy, Rome, Postulation Archives DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, pp. 197-198.

⁶¹ Register: and.

174. [To the Abbé Noailles at Bordeaux].⁶²

Father Bellon's character and qualities.

Marseilles, October 2, 1858.

Very dear and esteemed Father,

I don't know how to explain the incredible delay in this reply to the fine, edifying letter that you had the kindness to write me during the course of my visits. I would fill up my paper if I were to set out all that could excuse me, but it is better that I start with business immediately.

To convince you of Father Bellon's opinions either of you or of your holy work, I would have only to show you his letters. There is not a single one which does not prove his respect and confidence in you, his attachment, I might say his admiration for your work. He is heart and soul dedicated to it and you can rely on him as on another myself.

Consider his reserve only as an effect of his extreme modesty. Father Bellon is candor itself; he doesn't even know the word for what you would call politics. He only lacks a bit in worldly ways since he has incessantly spent his innocent and holy life in the secret of God's house and in seminaries. You will render him a service by initiating him with lessons from your experience on how to deal with people. He would not tend to suspect enough the malice or shrewdness of those whom he meets, for he doesn't even suspect any evil.

I think as you do that, there being a house of his Order at Bordeaux, it is fitting that he live there; this does not hinder him from being able to stay temporarily at your place on certain occasions or when work demands it.

I have already been interrupted three times since I took up the pen to write you, now night has fallen and it is time to return to the city. Tomorrow I will be busy during the morning and in the evening with religious ceremonies in two churches. The day after tomorrow I must say Mass at the Capuchins and from there return to my community. So it is better that I finish my letter here rather than leave it three more days on the waiting-list. This is how it usually happens that I can never do anything that I would like. That is the situation in which God has placed me so I should not complain; but you do understand that it excuses me for not being punctual in my correspondence. Please excuse me then and accept, etc. ...

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

⁶² Copy, Rome, Postulation Archives DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, p. 200.

175. [To Bishop Marguerye of Autun].⁶³

Glad that the Oblates are doing well at Autun. Plan for a trip.

Marseilles, December 26, 1858.

My Lord,

How your charming letter helped me spend a beautiful feast day! You can not tell me anything that gives me more pleasure than the news you had the kindness to give me of our missions. How much I thanked God for the blessings he showered on the ministry that you have entrusted to our dear Oblates. I rejoiced doubly for I understand the satisfaction experienced by your Bishop's heart.

Our Fathers did not leave me uninformed of the goodness with which you console them and I certainly will not limit myself to thanking you only in writing: I want to do that by word of mouth. For that I will try to organize a short trip as far as Autun, should I have to go there from here in springtime, even though it would be easier for me to go there from Paris when I am convoked to the Senate. But at that time the Missionaries are giving Missions and it would pain me not to seem them while passing by so close to them. I would also like to express my gratitude to your clergy who, taking example from their Bishop, gave such a gracious welcome to those newcomers who were coming in the name of the Lord and the call of the Chief Shepherd to help and comfort them in their work. These friendly deeds witness to their good spirit and give honor to the direction given them by their leader. All those things delight me and give me strength, ancient and very old as I am, to undertake my planned trip to Autun.

Please accept, My Lord, along with my good wishes for the New Year, the homage of my affectionate devotion.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

⁶³ Copy, Rome, Postulation Archives DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, p. 213.

176. [To Bishop Marilley of Lausanne and Geneva].⁶⁴

The Oblates accept to make a foundation at Montet.

Marseilles, December 30, 1858.

My Lord,

At the same time that I received your letter dated at the end of last month, I had just addressed one to Reverend Father Bise, the content of which solely centered around the matter that Your Grace officially proposed to me. Since my conclusion completely agrees with the views and wishes expressed in your letter, I think that Father Bise, who was aware of the interest you would attach to such a conclusion, will have already informed Your Grace about it. However, I did not thereby regard myself as being dispensed from writing to you myself in reply to the fine letter that you wrote to me to ask officially that several Missionaries of the Congregation of Oblates of Mary come to settle in the canton of Fribourg. I perceive, My Lord, that in the situation that the political troubles have created for the Catholic religion in Switzerland, you add a very special interest to provide for a certain portion of your diocese the help of apostolic laborers who might make up in some manner for the absence of active Religious Orders who have been forced to leave the canton of Fribourg because of persecution. Because I, for my part, want to support Your Grace's concern, I am disposed, in spite of the great need that the Congregation has for men, to give you three to form a small establishment envisaged at Montet. I also agree that this establishment be formed according to the manner and conditions that you indicate in your letter and which Father Bise had already communicated to me. I must however point out to you, what I also told Father Bise, that this beginning of an establishment of Oblates of Mary in your diocese can only take place after Easter, a time in which the apostolic work of our Missionaries for the winter campaign shall have been concluded, when it will be easier for us to dispose of two men who are to serve as Father Bise's companions.

I beg you to accept, along with my best wishes for the New Year, the homage of my deep respect and all my most affectionate regards.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

⁶⁴ Copy, Rome, Postulation Archives, DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, p. 214.

177. [To Bishop Casanelli d'Istria of Ajaccio].⁶⁵

Grief at the death of Father Luigi.

Marseilles, January 5, 1859.

Very dear and respected Lord,

May you be a thousand times blest for the warm letter that your charity inspired you to write to me. I was steeped in the most bitter grief, in a sort of dejection, overwhelmed by the terrible blow that has just struck us. Your kind words, so like the feelings of my own heart, comforted me to some degree. I still shed some tears when I was reading the details you imparted to me, but especially when I recognized how much you loved that perfect being that the Lord, in his inscrutable decrees, has just taken from us. How can I tell you, My Lord, and you can estimate my weakness or my little virtue, that when this unexpected thunderbolt burst on my ears, or rather in my heart, I went to throw myself at the foot of the holy altar where our Saviour resides and there, before pronouncing that act of resignation to the sovereign will of God which is enjoined on us by all kinds of reasons, in the bitterness of my grief I allowed myself to complain to our kind Master. I was alone with him. I told him without restraint: yes, I will accept the bitter chalice that you impose on me, I will drink it to the dregs, but before that, Lord, allow me to lament, to weep, to even ask why you remove from me the means to accomplish the task that you have pointed out to us in your Church. I well understand that you wish to harvest the ripe fruit and reward your faithful servants, but isn't eternity long enough! My Lord, I repeat to you the impertinence of my senseless speech. The good Lord will pardon me, he who wept over Lazarus whom he was, however, going to restore to life, he who to console our weakness did indeed say before accepting the ignominy and the anguish of his passion: *si possibile est transeat a me calix iste*.⁶⁶

You had an excellent inspiration in wanting to place this new saintly body between the two other saints who rest in the crypt of Vico.⁶⁷ Vico is becoming a true shrine. It is on the altar that they would have placed those venerable remains in past times, when the *fama sanctitatis* and the triumph discerned by all the surrounding population, was enough to motivate the cult of veneration due to Saints.

⁶⁵ Copy, Rome, Postulation Archives DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, pp. 214-215.

⁶⁶ Matt. 26: 39.

⁶⁷ Fathers Albini and Moreau.

I was delighted with the good Pastor's account and will send it back to you when all those you indicated will have read it. I took the liberty of copying it, as well as your moving letter, for the edification of every member of the Congregation of Oblates of Mary Immaculate and for the honor due to the memory of the angel whom we mourn.

Kindly accept, etc. . . . ,

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

178. [To the Abbé Gay, Vicar General of Poitiers].⁶⁸

Gratitude for the advice that Mr. Gay gave to Father Charles Baret who had just preached with success at Poitiers.

Marseilles, May 13, 1859.

Dear Vicar General,

I am very grateful for the consideration that the Bishop of Poitiers showed in informing me through you that he was satisfied with the sermon that my very dear Father Baret preached before him. He no doubt wanted to have me rejoice as a father. I am also grateful to you, dear Vicar General, for being inspired by the same sentiment in the testimony that you added on your own account. I have always regarded it as fortunate that our young Father Baret has you for a friend. His veneration and admiration for you allows him to accept confidently every observation that your experience and insights prompt you to make to him, and I am sure that he will profit from them to correct all that you found lacking in his composition.

Especially teach him to forget himself and to preach only Jesus Christ and him crucified. May he always have the salvation of souls in mind when he preaches and expect his reward from God rather than from people's praise. In a word, my heartfelt wish is that he imitate you in everything.

Kindly accept, dear Vicar General, the homage of my high esteem and affectionate regards.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

⁶⁸ Original, Rome, Postulation Archives, L.M-Gay.

179. [To Bishop Martial of St-Brieuc].⁶⁹

Seminaries directed by the Oblates are not inferior to others. One Father is ready to leave as Superior of the Major Seminary at Brieuc.

Marseilles, October 15, 1859.

My Lord,

In the worthy Bishop of St-Brieuc I recognize the excellent Vicar General of Bordeaux who has always given signs of kindness to the Oblates of Mary who, on their part, have been very devoted to him. And so I welcomed the idea which you communicated to me in your letter of the 10th of this month as a good inspiration. I am able to reply to the proposal you make with a sort of confidence based on experience. Seminaries directed by the Oblates leave nothing to be desired; I see that with my own eyes and I know it in a positive manner besides. Even though everyone has been assigned to a post, I can, however, give you a Superior immediately, a man of wisdom and experience, well versed in theology which he has taught for a great number of years and who has also been a Seminary Superior for more than eight years. If you plan on calling him soon, I can without serious inconvenience free him by withdrawing him from the community he is directing. Kindly let me know your intentions so that I can consider his replacement.

I await your reply before writing to him, according to the instructions you give me. I do not overlook the fact that his position will be somewhat difficult; even though those replaced may be little put out by the change, they have the talent to look down on newcomers. That is what is so inconvenient about a partial change, but in your wisdom you will know how to provide for that and to assist moderation and the good intentions of the eminently virtuous man whom I have marked out for you.

Accept, My Lord, etc.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

⁶⁹ Copy, Rome, Postulation Archives, DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, pp. 240-241.

180. [To Bishop Angebault of Angers].⁷⁰

Plan to establish Oblates at Angers.

Marseilles, June 16, 1860.

My Lord,

I don't know how to apologize for my tardiness in replying to the letter that Your Lordship honored me with. I was waiting for a reply from our excellent friend, the Archbishop of Tours;⁷¹ my pastoral visits, a trip to Paris, and the continuous business matters given me by the indiscretion of three hundred and sixty thousand inhabitants in our immense city of Marseilles in whose midst I find myself, such are the causes of the shortcoming of which I accuse myself. In an attempt to repair it, I have come to hide away for a few hours in the country, without anyone knowing about it, for they would certainly come to ferret me out.

The first thing that I must do, My Lord, is thank you for the information that you have confided to me. I can only admire the nobility of your speech and adhere to the principles you set out. I allowed myself to say something similar when I spoke to the Emperor himself. How can we look with indifference at the direction we have been adopting for some time now?⁷²

Do not be surprised, My Lord, if I am much inclined to place several of our Oblates of Mary under your shepherd's crook. We like to situate them close⁷³ to Bishops like yourself. They are essentially Bishops' men. That is what makes their ministry so useful in the dioceses wherein they are at work. God is pleased to shower the most abundant blessings on their works. I had gladly accepted the proposal made to me to establish them, evidently with your approval, at Notre-Dame des Anges, even though I always prefer to see them stationed nearer to the Bishops whose inspirations they must receive. Your Lordship thinks that this plan is not feasible. So, I withdraw it.⁷⁴ The plan you yourself propose to station them at Angers would be more acceptable, but unfortunately the

⁷⁰ Original, Angers, Bishop's Archives.

⁷¹ Bishop Guibert.

⁷² Almost all of the Bishops had sent out a pastoral letter in defense of the Papal States; Bishop de Mazenod had instead written personally to the Emperor, requesting him not to assist Piedmont.

⁷³ Manuscript has a different spelling in the French.

⁷⁴ Father Loewenbrück had originally offered his property called "of the Angels", somewhat distant from Angers; thereafter, he gave his house in the city to the Oblates.

Congregation of Oblates has exhausted all its own resources and mine in the enormous expense it must spend in providing for more than one hundred brother novices or scholastics. What can I tell you! We are⁷⁵ somewhat frightened about the place that is proposed. The claim is that it had been abandoned by the diocesan Missionaries, that the Capuchins didn't want it, nor the Lazarists, that the house was rather small and dominated by the windows of a community of women Ah! If we were to form a community in the city's interior, we would be better able to do some good! Thus, my Lord, since the proposed location doesn't seem to be suitable, see if your paternal charity could not find some other means of obtaining the devoted assistants that I would be so happy to place under your direction.

May Your Lordship accept the homage of my profound respect and most affectionate regards.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

181. [To Bishop Angebault of Angers].⁷⁶

Hopes to see the Oblates settled at Angers.

Marseilles, [the end of] July, 1860.⁷⁷

I will not allow my assistant, Father Vincens, to leave without entrusting to him with these few lines which express to you how pleased I am in the hope of placing a portion of my spiritual family under your paternal protection for the ministerial service to which it is dedicated and which it exercises through God's mercy with abundant blessings for the salvation of souls.

I hope that this will be an occasion to go and thank you personally for the choice you have made. I trust that you will very soon experience that you have adopted submissive and devoted sons.

I offer Your Lordship the homage of my most affectionate attachment.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

⁷⁵ Manuscript has "a" instead of "est" in French.

⁷⁶ Original, Anger, Archives at the Bishop's house.

⁷⁷ Undated. Bishop Angebault received it on July 29.

182. [To Bishop Angebault of Angers].⁷⁸

Gratitude for welcome granted to Father Vincens and for receiving the Oblates in his diocese.

Marseilles, August 5, 1860.

My Lord,

When I received your last, very kind letter, I wanted to write immediately to thank you from my heart for the fatherly welcome you gave our dear Father Vincens. That Father was moved to the point of tears by it. Indeed they poured from his eyes at the moment you gave him your holy and fatherly blessing, after having invoked the Holy Spirit in your chapel. I am deeply confident it will produce fruit. By adopting our family and by declaring yourself to be its father, which you did by such a moving gesture, Your Lordship has acquired devoted sons who will be your consolation by responding to your concern for the salvation of the souls confided to your zeal. Elderly and overly aged as I am (on the 1st of this month, I began my 79th year), I promise myself to personally go and express the sentiments which your kindness inspires within me. Please accept this pledge in writing as well as my deep respect and affectionate regards.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

183. [To Bishop Angebault of Angers].⁷⁹

Joy that the Bishop is satisfied with the Oblates.

Marseilles, December 6, 1860

My Lord,

Could anyone be more kind to me than you? And so, I do not know how to express my gratitude to you for the moving attention you took in informing me of the blessings that the Lord is deigning to shower on the works of our dear Oblates, whom your paternal kindness gladly adopted. I am happy, Your Lordship, both for the good that they have done and for the satisfaction that your Bishop's heart derives therefrom. I hope that these good workers in the vineyard, which you have given them to cultivate, will always make themselves more worthy of your protection and

⁷⁸ Original, Angers, Archives at the Bishop's house.

⁷⁹ Original, Angers, Archives at the Bishop's house.

truly paternal love. May Your Lordship always grant me a share in those sentiments in return for the deep respect and sincere affection that I have promised you.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

184. To His Eminence, Cardinal Archbishop Donnet of Bordeaux.⁸⁰

Death of the Abbé Noailles. Father Bellon is named Pro-Director of the Holy Family. Illness.

Marseilles, February 12, 1861.

My Lord,

Confined to my bed of suffering for the last several weeks, I have just learned of the death of the venerable Abbé Noailles, the pious Founder of the Works of the Holy Family. The Council for these Ladies, in announcing this regrettable loss to me, recalled the obligations that I had contracted as Superior General of the Oblates of Mary in the agreement finalized under the auspices of Your Eminence.

If the obligations I accepted were exclusively personal, perhaps I should have waited until I am completely well before accepting the duties they lay on me; but since it is the Superior General who is bound by them, I felt it my duty to reply already today to the Council of the Holy Family that as of now I accept the consequences of my given word. Thus I have, according to formally expressed wishes of those Ladies, designated Father Bellon, who is already known to Your Eminence, to reside at Bordeaux and represent me in regard to the Holy Family.

I did not hesitate, Your Lordship, to respond instantly to the terms of the request from the Council of the Holy Family: I recall that you yourself encouraged this affiliation and shared with me your hope that from it would result a greater good for the glory of God and the benefit of souls. It will be the case if God, taking Your Eminence's and my intentions into account, as well as those of the Congregation of these Ladies, deigns to bless a work to which we brought no human motivation.

Is it necessary, My Lord, to request Your Eminence's continued protection and beg you to freely give at every moment your advice and counsel to Father Bellon, who has been advised to seek them.

⁸⁰ Original, Bordeaux, Archdiocesan Archives: religieux oblats.

As for myself, My Lord, I am in God's hands. The doctors and those around me give me hope that my good health will return. May God's will be done!

Your Eminence is aware how much moved I am by the sentiments of goodwill and friendship that you have always shown me. I thank you once again for the encouraging cooperation that you lent me in finalizing the matter that I have just spoken about and which I like to regard as your own work.

I recommend myself to your good prayers which will be pleasing to God, for they come from a friend's heart.

On my part, Your Lordship, I renew the assurance of my total and constant dedication.

† C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

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