

Saint EUGENE de MAZENOD

DIARY

1791 - 1821



St. EUGENE de MAZENOD

DIARY
(1791 - 1821)

Translated by
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INTRODUCTION

There have already been published, in the collection Oblate Writings, the letters of the Founder to his religious sons (vols. 1-4, 6-12) or concerning the Congregation (vols. 5 and 13), as well as his principal spiritual writings (vols. 14 and 15). With this Volume 16, we begin the publication of his Diary, so as to possess in one single collection all his writings relative to the Congregation and his ascetic and mystical life.

What is meant by the Founder's "Diary"?

We must not be misled by this unitary title: it covers a set of documents that are quite varied, the originals of most of which have disappeared, but which have been published in part in Missions OMI or else in the Founder's biographies.

Bishop de Mazenod, fairly regularly from 1837 to 1860, kept a record of the principal events of his life as Superior General of the Oblates and as Bishop of Marseilles. Here we have the main part of his Diary. But he also left accounts of his travels, such as those he made during his exile from 1791 to 1802, the trips to Paris in 1805, Rome in 1825-1826 and 1854, to Algeria in 1842. Finally he kept a Diary of some of his first missions in 1816-1817 and of the Aix Youth Congregation from 1813 to 1821.

Editing Method

In our publication of these various sections of the Diary we will base ourselves on extant manuscripts and prior publications plus all their eventual editorial corrections, which will be indicated, in so far as

they can be detected, in the introduction or the footnotes to each part of the Diary.

The Founder always wrote at speed, with no precise verification of names of places and persons or of the precise dates of events. We will make the corrections in the text and indicate in the footnotes what was faulty in the manuscripts or in the prior publication.

We will also add, when necessary, titles and subtitles. The seventy-five pages of the Exile Diary, for example, are published in Missions OMI 1866 without any subdivisions.

In this Volume 16, we have the Exile Diary (1791-1802), that of the stay in Paris in 1805, the essential content of the Diary of the Aix Youth Congregation from 1813 to 1821, and lastly that of the Marignane and Mouriès missions in 1816-1817.

Father Yvon Beaudoin, OMI

Most of the photographs in this volume are by Father Jozef Pielorz, OMI.

I have benefited from the advice and help of Fathers Michel Courvoisier and Laurent Roy.



Eugene at 23 years of age.
(Portrait sketched by G. L. Chrétien, Paris, 1805)

A – DIARY OF HIS ITALIAN EXILE

(1791-1802)

INTRODUCTION

Eugene de Mazenod's Diary of his exile in Italy was published under the general title of "Family Memoirs," In *Missions OMI* 1866 (pp. 109-144 and 265-304).

Father Achille Rey, OMI, then editor of *Missions*, presents these "Memoirs" with the following short introduction:

Under this title, we are beginning the publication of a number of documents that the perusal of our archives has placed in our hands: they all concern the first years of our venerated Founder's life. They are reproduced textually: our work consists solely in forging into a unified story the various episodes that are told as separate items. We let Bishop de Mazenod speak for himself, as we cite the extracts of a narration, that was written by him between sixteen and nineteen years of age, and completed later, concerning his travels and stay in Italy.

This introduction of Father Rey points to an editorial work in three stages: a narration, made by Eugene "between sixteen and nineteen years of age," a supplementary writing "later" by Bishop de Mazenod, and the additions of the editor of *Missions* "in forging into a unified story various episodes that are told as separate items."

What is it we know exactly about each of these stages of the editing process of the exile Diary?

1 – Eugene's composition prior to his return to Aix in 1802.

Eugene certainly took notes at the time of his travels to Naples and in Sicily, but he expressly affirms, in 1805, that he lost everything.

At the beginning of 1805, he informed his father of his imminent trip to Paris. The latter then gave him some prudential advice and invited him to write his memoirs. Eugene replied on May 24:

If I had been luckier and the diary of my travels, which I can no longer find, had fallen into your hands, you would not have felt obliged to suggest I keep a record on my journeys of whatever would appear to merit remembering. And what use would travelling be, if one neglected to make thoughtful observations on the different objects of interest that so frequently present themselves. I cannot imagine what pleasure there can be in running around the world, bundled like a parcel from one carriage to another. If that is how one travels nowadays, it is not my way.

Mr. de Mazenod replied on July 11, 1805:

“Why did you not tell me sooner that you forgot here your account of your earlier travels? Perhaps I could have recovered it, but after three years there is nothing that can be done. I only remember that after your departure, there were on the floor of your room some sheets of paper scattered about that one would have taken for waste paper and that Nanon¹ will have used to feed her kitchen fire, as on another occasion a famous library served to heat the baths of Alexandria. Ignorant barbarians are the same in all countries, but you were much at fault as well, for you should not have compiled your observations on loose sheets, but in copybooks which would have been less likely to go astray.”²

Did Eugene rediscover, after 1805, any fragments of this Diary? Father Rey leads one to suppose as much when he presents these “Family Memoirs,” and the Founder also affirms this when he speaks of his visit to Pompeii in 1798: “I find in my notes that only a street, a theatre, and a country house were as yet discovered....”³ But nothing remains today of these original notes.

¹ Nanon: Widow Anne Feraud, domestic servant of the de Mazenods from 1783. She followed them to Italy and died in Palermo on March 20, 1811.

² Eugene to his father, Aix, May 24, 1805 and the President's reply of July 11, 1805. Orig.: Bibl. Méjanès, papiers Boisgelin.

³ Cf. *infra*, p. 73.

2 – When did Bishop de Mazenod “later complete” his travel notes?

Through internal criticism of the text, one may succeed in fixing some fairly precise dates.

After his return to France in 1802, Eugene delves into his father's papers and gets interested in his family history. He would then have had the time to write his memoirs, as he was often at a loose end. But he does not seem to have gone back over the story of his exile in Italy just then; he would have said something about it in the numerous letters he wrote to his father.

A number of details allow us to affirm that a section of this Diary was written between 1823 and 1839. When he told the story of his journey from Nice to Turin, at the end of 1791, he adds: “These are all places I have since seen again with different eyes and in other circumstances.” Now, in the subsequent period, he repeated the journey twice. He passed through Nice and Turin while going to Rome in November 1825, then, in the opposite direction, while returning from Switzerland at the end of November 1830.⁴ Next he names the members of his family who made the journey from Turin to Venice in 1794. After the name of his uncle Charles-Fortuné, he writes: “Now Bishop of Marseilles,”⁵ i.e., between 1823 and 1837. At the end of the journey from Turin to Venice, Eugene mentions the name of the Marquis de Montgrand, and adds: “If someone had said we would find ourselves forty and forty-five years later, the one the Mayor, and the other first Vicar General and then Bishop of Marseilles, we would have said he was dreaming. But that is precisely what happened.”⁶ Forty and forty-five years after 1794, brings us to the years 1834-1839.⁷

⁴ Cf. *infra*, p. 28, and note 20.

⁵ Cf. *infra*, p. 34.

⁶ Cf. *infra*, p. 36. The Marquis de Montgrand was Mayor of Marseilles from 1813 to 1829.

⁷ Other examples could be given: the Revest family told their stories of Eugene's goodness as a child “30 years later.” Thirty years after 1790-1791 brings us beyond 1820 (Cf. *infra*, p. 21).

Among the teachers at the College of Nobles, Turin, was Father Cadolini “today a bishop in the Marches of Ancona” (Cf. *infra*, p. 29). Father Cadolini was named Bishop of Cesena in 1822 and transferred to Ancona in 1838. He was made Cardinal in 1843. Bishop de Mazenod does not mention the cardinalate, he probably wrote this page between 1838 and 1843.

So this is the time Bishop de Mazenod would have written the first part of this Diary. He would have found the time for this quite easily since, between 1833 and 1835, as bishop of Icosia, he could not exercise his role as Vicar General of Marseilles and, in 1835, he spent several months in the houses of N.-D. de l'Osier and N.-D. de Laus. He likewise considerably reduced his activities for a number of months in 1837 for health reasons. He even had to go and rest outside Marseilles from May 29 to August 2.⁸

On the basis of other phrases one must conclude that other parts of the Diary were written after 1849-1851. This is surprising as during the last ten years of his life bishop de Mazenod was always very busy.

During his stay in Naples, in 1798, Eugene made a visit to Portici and another to Pompeii. When he speaks of Portici, he writes: "This is where Pope Pius IX was received during his stay in Naples."⁹ Now Pius IX stayed in the royal castle of Portici from September 4, 1849 to April 4, 1850.

In his narration of the visit to Pompeii, Bishop de Mazenod makes the following remark: "I later recognized the house in which our guide had made some pretty pictures visible by throwing water on the walls."¹⁰ This is a surprising remark. Nowhere in all his writings does bishop de Mazenod even hint that he made a second visit to Pompeii. But Father Rey¹¹ says that on the occasion of their trip to Rome, from the end of January to the beginning of April 1851, for the approbation of some changes in the Rules, the Founder and Father Tempier spent "five days" in Naples. On the basis of this Diary entry, they would thus have gone as well to Pompeii.

In Palermo, Eugene speaks of the three daughters of King Ferdinand "two of whom are dead" (see *infra* p. 94). Now, one died in

⁸ Cf. *Oblate Writings* 9, pp. 36-51, and 9, p.XXIII.

⁹ Cf. *infra*, p. 72 and note 77.

¹⁰ Cf. *infra*, p. 73.

¹¹ Cf. Rey, II, p. 484. In 1851, Father Rey lived in Marseilles and thus spoke from his own knowledge of the matter.

1806 and the other, Marie-Christine, in 1849.¹² These various comments of the Founder, in the course of his narrative, allow us this to say that he wrote these pages at various times after 1823 and up to the last years of his life.

3 – What was Father Rey's contribution?

Father Achille Rey, first editor of *Missions OMI* from 1862 to 1867,¹³ had the intention “solely of forging into a unified story the various episodes that are told as separate items.”

However, he certainly went further. A third of the narrative is of his writing. It is easy to spot what is his, since he writes in the third person singular, while the Founder tells his story in the first person.

The pages written by Father Rey are of great interest. They disclose a host of details, highly coloured, relating to Eugene's childhood and his life as an exile.¹⁴

But what are Father Rey's sources for this? He knew Mrs. de Mazenod.¹⁵ He could have got her talking and heard from her some anecdotes on Eugene's character as a child.¹⁶ But most of the other details could have been known only to, and told by, Bishop de Mazenod himself, as his mother and his sister Eugenie only lived with him for less than a year in Venice.

The first editor of *Missions* spent some fifteen years in the major seminary of Marseilles, just a few steps from the Bishop's Palace. Like other scholastics and Fathers from the seminary he may have helped the Founder copy his letters into the Register of important letters and

¹² Yet another detail reveals that Bishop de Mazenod wrote after 1847. At the time of his visit to Caserta in 1798, Eugene alludes to the Roquefavour aqueduct near Aix (Cf. *infra*, p. 73). This aqueduct was under construction between 1842 and 1847.

¹³ Cf. E. Baffie, *Le bon Pere L.-A. Rey...*, Paris, (1912), pp. 53 and 71, and H. Verkin, *Missions de la Congregation des Missionnaires Oblats de M.I.*, in *Dictionnaire historique oblat*.

¹⁴ They must be published: without them the Founder's text would be incomplete and less intelligible because lacking its historical context.

¹⁵ He arrived at the Marseilles scholasticate in 1846 and Mrs. de Mazenod died in 1851. She used to spend a few months each year in the Bishop's Palace.

¹⁶ *infra*, pp. 20-21.

worked with him, all the more since he was already known for his talents as a writer. It seems it was he himself and Father Casimir Aubert who, at Bishop de Mazenod's request, edited and published the *Notice historique et statistique sur la Congregation* for the years 1853-1854, 1854-1855 and 1857-1858.¹⁷ He will then have had the opportunity of questioning the Superior General about his past as he did Father Tempier.¹⁸ That is what he affirms, moreover, when he speaks of the extraction of Eugene's cyst in Turin. He writes: "We heard him tell us he invoked the Holy Spirit."¹⁹

But while he may have heard from the Founder's own mouth some of the details of his story, Father Rey also made use of written sources. He had in his possession letters and documents that subsequently disappeared, in particular the President's letters to his son while the latter was in the College of Nobles, Turin, from 1792-1793.²⁰ Again, he seems to publish only certain pages of the Founder's text and to summarize or tell in his own words the contents of other pages. An example enables us to make this assertion. Speaking of the period in Naples, Father Rey writes: "On the subject of piety, we have no information for the whole period Eugene spent in Naples, except that he was so little embarrassed at displaying his Christian allegiance that, big lad and fine young man though he was, he did not hesitate to serve each day the mass of his uncle, now Bishop of Marseilles." Thus the editor follows the Founder's text so closely here that he copies out this detail: "Now Bishop of Marseilles." This can readily be attributed to the pen of Bishop de Mazenod writing a section of the Diary when his uncle was Bishop of Marseilles before 1837, while it cannot be put down to Father Rey who could not have written this before 1837 as he did not enter the novitiate until 1844.²¹

¹⁷ Cf. Y. Beaudoin, *Father Casimir Aubert OMI* in *Oblate Writings* II, 5, 1993, p. 94, and H. Verkin, *Missions...* in *Dictionnaire historique oblat*.

¹⁸ He published some notes on Father Tempier before the latter's death, Cf. *Oblate Writings* II, Vol. I, p. 229, note 1.

¹⁹ Cf. *infra*, p. 31.

²⁰ *Infra*, p. 27.

²¹ Cf. *infra*, p. 65.

Whether he writes what he “heard told” by the Founder or whether he puts into his own words the latter’s written texts, one can be sure that Father Rey is striving to be accurate. Father Boudens, who made a study of the historical reliability of the Founder’s first biographies, those of J. Jeancard, A. Ricard, R. Cooke, T. Rambert and A. Rey, wrote: “Of all the biographers of whom we have spoken, Father Rey is without a doubt the most conscientious and the most exact. He verifies his facts wherever possible. Often he corrected those who had written prior to himself.”²²

Why did Bishop de Mazenod write this Diary?

For young people especially, travel like study expands the horizons and develops the understanding. In his youth, Eugene did not think one could travel the world “bundled like a parcel from one carriage to another.” “What use would travelling be,” he wrote his father in 1805, “if one neglected to make thoughtful observations on the different objects of interest that so frequently present themselves?”²³

If he took these notes up again much later in his life, it was solely to please his friends. He wrote this himself before recounting the story of his trip to Vesuvius: “I merely sketch out,” he affirms, “for the amusement of my friends, who have expressed to me a desire to know about my adventures while in exile, some features that are personal to myself and possess no other interest than what the friendship they bear me would give them.”²⁴

²² Cf. R. Boudens, *Les premiers biographes de Mgr de Mazenod*, in *Etudes oblates* 17 (1958), pp. 3-37. Father Rey has reproduced in his biography of the Founder most of the pages he had written in the Exile Diary.

²³ Letter dated May 24, 1805. Orig.: Aix, Bibl. Méjanès, papiers Boisgelin.

²⁴ Cf. *infra*, p. 68. The friends in question would be Bishop Jeancard, Canon Ricard, his future biographers, but also Oblates, such as Fathers Tempier, C. Aubert, and also Rey. On January 27, 1859, the latter was singled out by the General Council for work as “chronicler of the Congregation.”

Conclusion

In this Exile Diary one comes actually to know Eugene by means of “some features” that are personal to him, and also by the way in which he tells the story of a number of journeys and the principal festivities he took part in Venice, Palermo, and Monreale.

These pages, few as they are, are not simply “Family Memoirs,” but a precious heritage without which the childhood and youth of the Founder would be much less well known.

Father Yvon Beaudoin, O.M.I.

TEXT¹

1 – Family childhood and early school days in Aix

(1782-1791)

1) Family

Charles Joseph Eugene de Mazenod was born in Aix on August 1, 1782. You know that his family held one of the foremost ranks in the magistracy. His grandfather,² a lovable and cultivated man, had first served in the musketeers; when his health forbade him to continue in that service, he became President of the Court of Excise, Exchequer, etc. of Provence; his talents soon brought him to the summit of that College, whose complete confidence he enjoyed. He was dispatched to Paris to represent it in the endless disputes arising between it and the Parliament with which it was meant to work in harmony, and over which it would have had certain rights of precedence, as it had succeeded the former court of Exchequer of Provence, well before the foundation of Parliament.³ On his trips to Paris he was admitted into the intimate counsels of His Royal Highness the Dauphin,⁴ the father of King Louis XVI, Louis XVIII and Charles X, along with President d'Eguilles,⁵ his

¹ Orig. disappeared. Copy in *Missions OMI* 1866, pp. 109-144, 265-304.

² Charles Alexander de Mazenod (1718-1795) served in the first company of the mounted musketeers from 1735 to 1739. He then studied law and obtained by royal letters dated February 10, 1741, an appointment as president of the Court of Exchequer, Excizes and Finances of Provence.

³ On the debates between the Court of Exchequer and the Parliament of Provence, and the role played by Charles Alexander, cf. J. Leflon, *Eugene de Mazenod*, (Tr. Francis D. Flanagan, omi) Vol. I: The Steps of a vocation, 1782-1814, Fordham University Press, New York, 1961, 37-40, 42-45.

⁴ Louis, son King Louis XV (1710-1774) and Queen Marie Leszczynska, born in 1729, and dying before his father in 1765.

⁵ Alexander Jean Baptiste Boyer, Marquis of Eguilles (+1783), related by marriage to Charles Alexander.

relative and friend. When Parliament was united in Provence with the Court of Exchequer, something that should have been done everywhere, he not only maintained the same influence in his College whose second President he was, (Mr. D'Albertas⁶ was the first), but he exerted it throughout the province with that superiority that comes from giftedness joined with virtue: he was its model. His son,⁷ president at the same time as himself both in the Court of Exchequer and in Parliament, distinguished himself in like fashion by a lofty ability. The revolution interrupted his career. The last public act that testifies to the opinion the countryside had formed of him is his nomination by the Estates of Provence to the French National Assembly. It is of him that Eugene was born.

2) Childhood: character, goodness and uprightness, piety.

It is impossible not to discern the future designs of Providence for this child, when one considers the qualities which developed early on in his soul. I have heard it told that while still in rompers the sure way to quieten him when he cried was to take him to the church; there he fell silent at once, and one could not help smiling when one saw him listening to the preacher, as if he understood what he was saying, and imitating with his tiny hands the gestures he saw him making.

When he started talking, he showed a strength of character rare in children of that age, which thrilled his maternal grandfather,⁸ who had a great fondness for him. He never sought anything by crying, and before he had learned how one ought to behave when one wanted something, in those early years when children show what they want by tears, he would say haughtily: "I want it."

⁶ Jean Baptiste d'Albertas (+1790)

⁷ Charles Antoine (1745-1820), Eugene's father, licensed *in utroque* in 1763 and 1764, and in 1771 President in the Court of Exchequer, Excise and Finances of Provence. On March 12, 1789, he was elected as deputy of Provence to the Estates General, convoked in Versailles for the following April 27. His election and that of his colleagues was not recognized as valid. Cf. J. Leflon, 59-62.

⁸ Joseph Thomas Joannis (1717-1795), Mrs. de Mazenod's father. He was a medical doctor and royal professor in the faculty of Aix. Cf. J. Leflon, I, p. 29-30.

His family's social position obliged it to have a large domestic staff: there were twelve in his father's house, all anxious to serve him and anticipate his every desire; but foreshadowing that simple life-style he adopted later on he used to slip away quietly and devote himself to various good deeds, which his maternal grandfather decided he should be left free to perform without anyone seeming to notice, happy to see the development so early in this young child, who was no more than five or six, of qualities that are often acquired only with a great deal of effort at a more advanced age. A thing that was noticed about him from this early age, with some wonder, was an unusual degree of affectivity which caused him to empathize, to the point of sharing in their pain, with all the troubles of others. At such times he knew no peace until he had brought comfort in his own way to those he saw grieving or suffering. His grandfather, a man of outstanding piety, encouraged his good tendencies by letting him have, small child though he was, a sum to give away as alms. He was once seen giving away his coat to a little charcoal-burner who had none, and when he was corrected by someone affecting to contrast his position and that of the little charcoal-burner, he answered cheerily: "What of it? I will be a charcoal-burner president."

The whole family of Mr. Revest, the famous Parliamentary lawyer, cherished a strong affection for Eugene. This man of law, who would assemble in his study the most brilliant members of the bar in Aix, allowed no one near him when he was busy in his office or dictating to his clerks, but little Eugene was the exception to the rule. As soon as he entered, Mr. Revest picked him up in his arms and went on with his dictation as he walked up and down holding this child, who listened attentively to his pronouncements.

One day Eugene went into the lawyer's house and was surprised to see there was no fire: "Why, he said to the family, don't you have any heating today, although it is really cold?" The ladies answered, teasing him, the child was not yet six: "Because we are poor and wood is expensive." Eugene said goodbye and left: an hour later he is seen pushing along with some difficulty a little cart, loaded up with branches, that he drops briskly outside their door, saying: "Now then, here's something to warm you up." You can imagine the whole family's feelings confronted with this sign of goodness. Several of its members used to tell it still thirty years later with tears in their eyes.

You will find it surprising that Eugene was able to do this kind of thing without interference, but you must not forget his maternal grandfather's orders to let him be when his little heart inspired him to some good work. An eye was kept on him from a distance, he was observed without suspecting it, and Eugene told nothing to anyone, delighted to have done his bit without anyone knowing. So it was he was permitted on this occasion to do all this work that was really beyond his age, and he carried it out with an incredible vigor.

This sensitivity towards the trouble of others, along with a tender affection for all who loved him, has been one of his distinctive characteristics all his life. At the age of ten, when he was in the college in Turin, he learnt of the death of his mother's chambermaid's daughter. The thought of the grief this young person's mother must have felt and distress at the loss of someone devoted to him, had such a strong effect on him that they had to get him to lie down on his bed, where he wept hot tears and sobbed even though these people were not present to his sight.

It was the same thing in Venice when he witnessed the death in the Zinelli house, where he had been welcomed with such kindness, as we shall be narrating below, of the eldest brother of this respected family. He was then fourteen, but it was so touching to see him in the grief he felt and the evidence of concern he expressed both to the mother and the brothers of the deceased, that that family pledged him a paternal attachment that never flagged.

Another remarkable quality that developed in Eugene from his tenderest years was a great sense of justice and love for the truth that rendered him incapable of the least lie. So, when he was at fault, he never made excuses, still less did he conceal his wrongdoing. This frankness took its origin in the depths of that forceful character he bore from his birth.

We have said he did not cry for what he wanted; rather he showed himself to be wilful, but he would always respond to reason: he would have balked at punishment, especially if he did not think it deserved. Besides, he did not behave in such a way as to incur it. His sense of justice did not allow him to be passive when others were subject to the slightest unjustified accusation.

One day a child gave him something in exchange for a beautiful fan of his mother's that Eugene thought he could give away. The child's parents, seeing him come home with this expensive fan, were afraid he had stolen it, and when they wanted to know how he had got it, he insisted *little Eugene had given it to him. They hurriedly went with their son to Madame de Mazenod's to return this valuable object. The more they made excuses for their son's foolishness, the more Eugene feared this child would be accused of having filched the fan, and without hesitating to own his own culpability, he forcefully exclaimed: "Don't accuse that child, he paid for the fan."* Eugene's mother contented herself with telling her son he had done wrong to give away what did not belong to him, but in acknowledgment of the correct behavior of the other child's good parents, she nobly begged the mother to accept the fan as a gift.

He never liked children's games, and was always seen to prefer the company of grown-ups. When the conversation turned to serious matters, he ran off for a stool and sat at the speaker's feet, attentively listening to all they said without even indulging himself in interruptions, unless these people, surprised at the interest shown by a child in a conversation that seemed beyond his years, saw fit to question him so as to hear the sensible answers that did not fail him.

He liked all the same to play 'chapel,'⁹ but he was serious in his representation of the Church's ceremonies, and those who served him would have very much displeased him if they had let slip a smile at his sermon, or if they had seemed distracted in the tasks he entrusted them with for the service of his chapel.

One would have said he prided himself on not being a child, but in his case it was something natural and due to precocious qualities that developed daily. So, when he had to leave France at the time of the Revolution, he was only nine.¹⁰ He was told the evening before that he would be leaving the next day. He asked earnestly if he might go and

⁹ Imitating liturgical ceremonies, like a serious game.

¹⁰ To be precise, eight years and eight months.

give a hug to his good friends in the Revest family, promising solemnly that he would not betray the secret that had just been confided to him. Sure enough, he had himself brought to the Revest home, and feeling the tears coming on at the thought that he was going to leave them behind he abruptly left the group with his heart bursting, wishing them all a curt good evening. The family, after being so good to this child, understood what it meant only when it learned the next day that Eugene had left for Nice.



The City of Aix



The De Mazenod Residence in Aix



The Joannis Residence in Aix

II – Nice and Turin (1791-1794)

3) Reasons for the departure

Here then are the reasons for that hasty departure, as they are given to us in the account we have promised:

As he had been declared under arrest by the revolutionaries, on his return from his mission to the Estates General, my father left France and went to Nice¹¹ and soon from there he sent me his brother to bring me to him. I left Aix with my uncle on April 20, 1791,¹² and arrived in Nice on April 23, which was Holy Saturday. There really must have been a genuine fear of the threat made to do away with the children of the nobility, for my mother to have consented to let me undertake that journey even before I had quite got over an illness that had taken a lot out of me. My two grandfathers, my grandmother,¹³ my uncle the priest,¹⁴ my whole family together raised not a single objection to the prompt execution of my father's orders. I was not yet nine years old. All I could do was to keep the secret as a grown-up would have done. This was enjoined upon me, and faithfully observed.

This departure interrupted the studies Eugene had begun in the Bourbon College, where he was in the sixth¹⁵ form with the success he always had in his classes. We have turned up a prize he was awarded

¹¹ President de Mazenod left Aix on December 13, 1790. Nice was then part of the Kingdom of Sardinia.

¹² In *Missions OMI 1866, 114* it is written: "March 31, 1790, and I arrived in Nice on April 3." These dates are erroneous, cf. J. Leflon I, p. 79, note 40. Eugene left with his uncle Charles Louis Eugene (1750-1832), chevalier and naval captain.

¹³ Mrs. Joannis, née Catherine Elizabeth Bonnet (+1811).

¹⁴ Fortuné de Mazenod (1749-1841).

¹⁵ "The sixth," i.e., the beginning of the secondary course. The Mazenods and the Joannis withdrew Eugene from the Bourbon College no doubt a little after January 30, 1791. That was actually the day the Doctrinaires, teachers in the College, had solemnly taken the constitutional oath prescribed on November 27, 1790, to all ecclesiastical functionaries. Cf. J. Leflon I, pp. 76-77.

that year, while some letters that his father wrote him from Nice,¹⁶ during the time Eugene was placed in the Turin college, prove he was consistently first in his class in that college, as his father advised him, on that occasion, not to be puffed up with pride at his success, and always to have for the competitors he was outstripping feelings of friendship and goodwill.

4) Eugene's short stay in Nice in 1791

Moreover, in the classes in the Turin college, there was a double merit in overcoming the difficulties, for teaching was done in Italian, and this was clearly not Eugene's native tongue. His whole knowledge of it at that time consisted in what he had learned in the few months he had spent in Nice before going on to Turin. His father had him follow a course in the former of these cities. What a problem to compose his essay or translation in a foreign language! What did Eugene do? He called in aid all the passers-by. His family were living in the Sauvaigne home, which gave onto the embankment, a public promenade beside the sea. Eugene was doing his work on the doorway and as soon as he was stuck for the meaning of an Italian word, he would stop the first pedestrian to come along, who would be only too happy to explain it to him.

I stayed in Nice five months, the account continues. Meanwhile, my mother and aunt came to join us;¹⁷ their mother came too meaning to return soon to my grandfather's side. This was a great joy for me. Believing the events in France did not permit of an early return, my parents got down to securing me the possibility of continuing my education. It was decided to place me in the College of Noble, Turin.¹⁸ My mother and grandmother undertook to bring me. My mother at that time

¹⁶ These letters have not been found. In a letter to his sister Eugenie, written from Palermo on March 12, 1802. Eugene confirms that he had received in Turin several letters from his father, carefully preserved.

¹⁷ Mrs. de Mazenod, her sister Mrs. Dedons de Pierrefeu and their mother, Mrs. Joannis.

¹⁸ At that time Turin was the capital of the kingdom of Sardinia and hence the royal residence.

was scarcely thirty years old, and my grandmother just over fifty. Every reminder I have of that darling grandmother moves me deeply. I always loved her as dearly as my mother: which means as much as one can love here below.¹⁹

5) His education at the College of Nobles, Turin. His first communion.

We arrived at Turin by way of l'Escarène,²⁰ Sospel; we crossed the Col de Tende, came down by Limone, Cuneo, Savigliano, Racconigi, all places I have since seen again with different eyes and in different circumstances. I think that this was in September 1791.²¹

The College of Nobles where I was placed had just been entrusted to the Barnabite Fathers by King Victor Amadeus. These religious devoted themselves to giving a polished education to the children of the distinguished families entrusted to them. I was among the first to enter this college, and Father Scati,²² who was rector, made me his great friend from that moment. He was a highly esteemed religious. He died as General of the Barnabites, after refusing a bishopric, which was offered him during the Revolution. If he had continued longer in his career, he would have been made cardinal. We own him the complete edition of the works of Cardinal Gerdil,²³ his colleague and friend.

¹⁹ Eugene got to know and appreciate his grandmother especially after his return to Aix between 1802 and 1808. He wrote her several letters from the seminary of St. Sulpice. Some of them have been published in *Oblate Writings* 14. Eugene was very distressed when he learned of her death on August 15, 1811. He was still at the seminary, on holidays at Issy.

²⁰ In *Missions* we find: Escarena, Sorpella, Limon, Coni, Savillan, Raconigi.

²¹ Written as: "September 1790," in *Missions* 1866, (p. 116). Eugene made the same journey afterwards at least twice. He passed by Nice and Turin going to Rome for the approval of the Rules in November 1825. At the end of November 1830, he did it in the opposite direction when he left Switzerland where he had spent the summer. He passed by Turin to rejoin his uncle in Nice. Cf. *Oblate Writings* 6, pp. 189-192, and 7, pp. 225-228.

²² Father Leopoldo Scati (written as Scatti in *Missions*), who died on December 10, 1816, was not general but provincial of the Barnabites in Piedmont.

²³ Jean-François Gerdil, Barnabite, was born in Samoëns in Savoy on June 23, 1718. He was appointed cardinal *in petto* on April 26, 1773. He was Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda and a member of several curial congregations. He died in Rome on August 12, 1802.

I stayed at the College just over three years. My teacher was Father Massimini, and at that time Father Cadolini,²⁴ today bishop in the Marches of Ancona, was one of my masters. Mr. Tavenet, of St. Sulpice, was assistant of one of the dormitories I lived in, and I owe it to his severity that I studied properly, and was consistently at the top of my classes.²⁵

We have told above how Eugene got his homework done. It seems his masters and in particular Father Scati were also happy with his good sense, for he was admitted to first communion before the age of ten. He had this joy on Holy Thursday in the year 1792.²⁶ Prior to this, apparently finding him more level-headed than his fellows, he was made prefect over his dormitory (*camerata*). His father, ever attentive to direct Eugene's development from afar, wrote him again on this subject to advise him to make use in a proper manner of this authority, and to make allowances for his companions' weaknesses.

Father Rector and the other Fathers always held him in great affection, and held him up as a model. For this child was endowed with qualities rarely found in one of that age. He had the opportunity of displaying them at various times when he was able to make use of his influence in his dormitory to maintain the good spirit the Superiors wanted to see prevail there.

This was the time that the Duke d'Angoulême and the Duke de Berry,²⁷ who took refuge in Turin close to the King, their grandfather,

²⁴ Antonio Maria Cadolini (1771-1851), bishop of Cesena in 1822, transferred to Ancona in 1838. He was made cardinal in 1843.

²⁵ On studies and formation method in the College of Nobles, see J. Leflon, I, pp. 83ff.

²⁶ April 5, 1792.

²⁷ Louis Antoine, Duke d'Angoulême (1775-1884) and Charles Ferdinand, Duke de Berry (1778-1820), son of the future King Charles X, married to Marie Therese, daughter of the King of Sardinia.

came to visit the College of Nobles, accompanied by His Grace the Duke de Sorrent, their tutor. Eugene was presented to them, and the princes were invited to enter his little room as being the neatest in the whole dormitory. His Grace the Duke de Berry wanted to measure his height against Eugene's, who, although younger by four years, was taller than he, which the prince remarked on with astonishment.

6) Operation for a cyst. Confirmation.

In the interval between his first communion and his confirmation, namely, between Holy Thursday and Trinity Sunday 1792,²⁸ Eugene gave fresh proof of the delicacy of his feelings and his strength of character. It is noteworthy on account of his age. The child had carried from birth a cyst in the inside corner of his left eye. His parents, fearful lest this cyst grow and disfigure him, decided to have it removed by a competent surgeon, such as was Doctor Pinchinati, first surgeon to the King. There was no trouble in getting the child's consent, too well-disposed to go against his family's wishes. The day was fixed, and his mother was due to arrive from Nice the evening before to be present at this painful operation. Eugene wanted to spare her the pain of seeing him suffer. He insistently asked Reverend Father Rector to graciously allow the operation to be brought forward, so that his mother would find it already over when she arrived. The Reverend Father Rector was touched by this delicate thought, and gladly gave his consent.

Everything was got ready in the rooms of Father Rector who wished to be present at the operation. The first surgeon to the King arrived accompanied by his pupils; the child was praised for his courage, he was displaying a resolution that astonished everyone. It was here that God was waiting for him to give him a small humiliation which he drew down on himself perhaps by counting too much on his *own strength*. *When all the instruments which had been shut up in the doctor's case had been set out on a table, when the child saw the lancet,*

²⁸ Confirmation on June 3, 1792.

bistouri, hooked scissors, tongs, lint, etc., he thought they were going to cut off his head, and his courage deserted him; all those instruments of torture had to be put away again, and the surgeon and his pupils left.

Eugene went back to his room in total confusion, and with a movement of fervour he threw himself on his knees and invoked Our Lord Jesus Christ, whom it would seem he had not prayed to beforehand. We have heard him say he addressed himself to the Holy Spirit with great confidence. This fervent prayer was agreeable to the Lord, for immediately the child rose with fresh courage, and going back into the room of Father Rector he asked him to recall the doctor, resolved that he would undergo the operation, however painful it might be. Father Rector, in wonder at this change, had Mr. Pinchinati recalled, and he immediately got ready to begin the operation. It was very long and painful, frightening even on account of the amount of blood which came from the vein that had to be severed to remove the cyst. The cyst could only be removed by repeatedly draining off the fatty matter which it contained, and cutting it each time with the hooked scissors, which considerably prolonged the operation. The supernatural strength that Eugene had obtained from the Holy Spirit by his prayer, did not show itself only in the resolution to undergo the operation, but in the courage which sustained him throughout: no cry came from him and he uttered not a single complaint. His mother arrived that very evening and was touched, as one can well imagine, by the thoughtfulness of her son who had wanted to spare her the pain of seeing him suffer.

The treatment was prolonged, so much so that the time for the general confirmation having arrived, there was a fear that Eugene would not be able to take part. His Eminence Cardinal Archbishop Costa, Archbishop of Turin, thoughtfully suggested confirming him in private. But it proved unnecessary to have resort to this kindness, and the child was confirmed along with all the others on Trinity Sunday, 1792, in the tiny church adjacent to the Archbishop's palace.

Eugene's attraction to piety sustained him throughout the time he spent in the college. It showed itself in the relish he always showed for religious ceremonies. During the whole time he spent in the dormitory called St. Anthony, the second he occupied during his stay in the college, he got up regularly nearly an hour before the rest to say mass gravely in a little chapel he had got ready with his comrades, and which was furnished with all the necessary furnishings.

With the French patriots, the account says, threatening to overrun the whole of Piedmont, my father did not feel his family to safe in Turin: he made the decision to leave this city to move to Venice, and take shelter in the lagoons of a republic which he thought would be respected by the French republicans.



The City of Nice



Turin



The College of Nobles in Turin

III – Venice (1794-1797)

7) Journey from Turin to Venice. Twelve days on a boat.

On May 2, 1797, my father hired a large boat on which he embarked with all his family, made up at that time of my father, Charles Antoine de Mazenod; my mother, Marie Rose Eugenie de Joannis; my great uncle Auguste André de Mazenod, archdeacon, vicar general of Marseilles; my uncle Charles Fortuné de Mazenod, sacristan, vicar general of Aix, since become bishop of Marseilles; my uncle Charles Louis Eugene de Mazenod, Chevalier of St. Louis, then captain of the King's fleet, since become real-admiral; my aunt Elizabeth de Joannis, Marchioness of Dons Pierrefeu; my first cousin little Joseph Emile de Dons, Marquis of Pierrefeu; Nanon, chambermaid of my mother, along with my cousin's nurse; my sister and myself. Many emigrés made the same decision, and asked my father permission to embark with us: among them were many priests. Among the lay folk we had the Colonia family, that of Durand-Dubraye, and the Marquis of Pontevès. Never was travel had so cheaply. Thanks to my father's graciousness, to whom the boat was hired, it cost only 15 livres from Piedmont, and likewise only 12 livres for the priests, who were judged to be poorer than the lay folk. The journey was not without its light side; it lasted twelve days, for every evening we would stop somewhere for the night.

Everywhere we met with the most cordial hospitality. The patriots²⁹ had not yet passed that way. It was a question of who could do the most for us! They came upon board to take and lodge us comfortably in the town. The first evening we stopped at Casale Monferrato,³⁰ capital of Montferrat. It was an honest lawyer who sought the privilege of having my father and mother. Not content with having us in his home for supper and to sleep, he and his wife accompanied us back to the boat, and forced us to accept some small provisions for the day's journey. I deeply regret not keeping a record of the name of these fine people.

²⁹ The Revolutionaries.

³⁰ Wrongly written as "Casal Maggiore" in *Missions 1866*, p. 120.

The second halting-place was in Piacenza. This town is not on the river. We had to make quite a journey to get there. We were lodged in a hotel, and I remember that we bought some excellent strawberries in the market. This whole countryside is magnificent.

The next day we continued our journey as far as a village situated opposite Cremona. A lot of our fellow travelers went to visit that town, where the Marchioness of Colonia met a generous person who, out of pity for the ill fortune of this numerous group of emigrés, obliged to flee so far from home, adroitly slipped into her hand a quantity of gold pieces which the lady declined.

The following day our boat stopped about midday in a lovely spot which the whole group of travelers wanted to enjoy. There we rested in the shade of thick foliage, and judging from the gaiety everybody showed both in lively banter and in song and laughter, no one would have dreamt that here were a group of emigrés fleeing from tyrants who sought their lives and who had stripped them of all their goods.

Passing through these charming localities, we came upon a pretty house occupied by a venerable old man who invited us in to rest. He immediately put all he had at our disposal, and distressed at our refusal, we could console him only by accepting at least a cup of coffee which he had served to us with a generous heart. He kept showering us with blessings, and made us promise to get in touch with him whenever we thought he might be of help. We came close that very evening to being obliged to have recourse to his generosity.

After taking our leave of the good old man, we went to rejoin our joyful group, which we found considerably augmented. A boat filled like ours with emigrés and priests was following apparently close on our heels, it halted in the same place, and my parents had the consolation of greeting several of their friends, such as Bishop de Bausset,³¹ Bishop of Fréjus, and His Lordship the Marquis de Grimaldi. They shed tears together over their plight, did their best to console one another, and the signal was given to cast off to go in convoy to Ostiglia, a place it is odious to recall where all our poor emigrés were treated like suspicious

³¹ Bishop François de Bausset, bishop of Fréjus from 1766 to 1801, uncle of His Grace Archbishop Ferdinand de Bausset-Roquefort, archbishop of Aix from 1819 to 1829 and well known to Father de Mazenod.

characters, people not to be trusted. The local authorities placed guards on board the two boats, and no one was allowed to land except those chosen to go and do the shopping; the precaution was taken too of placing them under military escort. This barbarous treatment astonished everyone, it was like nothing we had experienced up till then, and happily it was not repeated elsewhere.

When day came, we put that inhospitable place behind us, and in the evening we were amply compensated for the previous evening's maltreatment by the prompt, generous and touching welcome we were given in Sermide, where we stopped for the night. Sermide is not quite on the Po, you get there by a fine tree-lined way that shelters the traveler from the hot rays of the sun.

Scarcely had we arrived when the municipal authority came to welcome us. He undertook to give lodgings to all the lay folk; the arch-priest, who had come with him to meet us, undertook to put up the priests in comfort.

My father, mother, and all my family received hospitality in the house of the leading person of the locality; he treated us magnificently. The municipal authority had such respect for and trust in my father that for a long time he kept up a correspondence with him. He it was who informed us of the death of our excellent host some months after we were set up in Venice. The Marquis de Montgrand, still a young man, was numbered among the guests the evening of our passing by Sermide. So many were we that there was only one bed between us two. I remember I was so overcome with sleepiness that I slept right through supper; clearly I can't have been much trouble to my companion. If anyone had told us that we would meet again forty and forty-five years later, the one as mayor, and the other first vicar general and then Bishop of Marseilles,³² we would have said they were dreaming. That however is how it turned out.

³² "Forty and forty-five years later," i.e. after 1794; this indicates that Bishop de Mazenod wrote this text between 1834 and 1839. The marquis J. B. de Montgrand (1776-1847) was mayor of Marseilles from 1813 to 1829.

In the evening of this memorable day, we halted at Borgoforte to spend the night. There it was that our fellow travelers, who were bound for Verona, separated from us. In particular our boat was relieved of the burden of an emigré who had the talent for making himself detested by everyone. There was one time when he could have ended up overboard. A person who was not thrown, but who fell overboard, was our poor Nanon. She would undoubtedly have perished had it not been for the skill and courage of one of our sailors. By way of exchange, one day we were saved by the professional observation of my uncle, the chevalier, who steered our boat away just at the moment it was going to be dragged into a millstream. It would have been smashed.

We continued our journey as far as Ponte Lagoscuro, where all the priests with us left to enter the Papal States. My family and a small number of others including the Chevalier de Montgrand, who threw in his lot with us until his departure from Venice, where he was lodged and ate with us, not letting ourselves be intimidated by the false rumor that was circulating that no foreigners were being allowed to enter Venice, changed boats at the expense of our companion, and entered by the Polesine into the Venetian States.

This is a very interesting passage. As the bed of the Po is much higher than the countryside it has to cross, there was a series of locks that serve to make the descent to the places where one wishes to stop, and to bring the boats back up to the level of the river. So we went down the Polesine without getting out of our *burciello*; that is what they call the very comfortable boats that are in service for this passage. By way of this canal one has access to the different rivers that meander through this beautiful country. One crosses the Tartaro, the Adigetto and the Adige, and one arrives at Chiozza or Chioggia, where we lay up to await the boats that were to tow our *burciello* into the lagoons that separate the mainland from the beautiful city of Venice.

A few hours sufficed for us to reach that queen of seas majestically enthroned amidst her waters, whence in times past she exacted tribute from the trade of every nation. The ancient republic that counted so many countries of life was still in existence, but it was on the decline, and was soon to expire before our very eyes. One might say that she existed in a way only in people's minds by the time we came to take refuge in her domain. Visitors were still pouring in to enjoy the freedom

and diversions that Venice offered especially at Ascension time,³³ a day fixed for the marriage of the Doge, representing the republic, and the sea. The feast lasts more than eight days, and comes around each year. We were not in a state to take much part or much pleasure in it. On the contrary, we were annoyed to arrive so inopportunately, not being able to find lodging anywhere.

We spent one or two nights again in our boat, while waiting until a trickster³⁴ we had picked up on the journey, and who had held himself out as being an Austrian officer, while he and his wife were in fact only street singers, had found us a place to stay, pitiful though it was. This was not the only service this noble trickster, called I believe Montecatini, rendered us out of gratitude for the kindness we had shown in letting him onto our boat free of charge, for him to go to Venice with his wife whither the gathering of visitors on the occasion of the Ascension Fair attracted him. Seeing two priests in our family he thought we might like to make the acquaintance of an *abbatino*, one of his friends. He was, I think, quite frankly a writer for the stage, but it was enough for Montecatini to know that he was a priest to suggest he be introduced to my uncles, and invite him to help them. This perfumed³⁵ priest, who was no longer in his first youth, was named Zerbini; he undertook to present my uncles to the parish priest of the parish where he said mass, it was the church of Saint Fantin, opposite the theatre, where I really believe he suggested we go. My uncles continued to frequent the church and cultivate the acquaintance of the respectable *pievan* or parish priest, who received them with honor. Zerbini also introduced us to the Fathers Coletti, really respectable people; one of them was a former Jesuit, very old, the other continued to visit us as long as we stayed in Venice, and was always glad to be of service.

8) Lodgings on the Grand Canal. Life of study and prayer with the Zinelli family.

Montecatini had got for us, from the second day of our arrival, a little apartment, composed of two rooms, where the eleven people who made up our family, including masters, children and servants, had to be

³³ The feast of the Ascension fell on May 29 in 1794.

³⁴ Someone who lives on his wits.

³⁵ "Musqué."

housed. We patiently survived a month in this sorry place, where we were crowded together; finally the visitors, drawn by the Ascension celebrations, went their way and we were able to find on the Grand Canal, opposite the beautiful Grimani palace, a pretty lodging that we kept until we left. It was Divine Providence who chose it for us in his merciful designs on me, for I owe to our stay in this house all the good I have been able to do in my life, if I have done some small thing with God's grace. This house, situated in the parish of Saint Sylvester, which had as parish priest or *pievan* Father Milesi,³⁶ vicar general of Murano, later Bishop of Vigevano, and ultimately Patriarch of Venice, was separated by no more than a tiny street from that of the Zinelli family, a patriarchal family, composed of a respectable old mother, Dona Camilla Brighenti, and six sons. Two were clerics, one still a deacon and the other a priest, called D. Bartolo³⁷ (Bartholomew), the others were rich Venetian business men. It was this priest D. Bartolo, who died later in the odour of sanctity, who instructed me in religion and inspired in me the sentiments of piety which preserved me from the youthful aberrations so many others have lived to regret, for want of meeting with similar help.

This phase of my life bears too clearly the stamp of the divine goodness towards me for me to pass it over without recalling every circumstance in all its details, if only to awaken in me the gratitude I shall owe God as long as I live, and to arouse praise of God in everyone whose life touches mine or who indirectly have in their turn derived some benefit for it.

I said that on arriving in Venice my uncles were introduced to the parish priest of Saint Fantin by the *abbate* Zerbini. They said their mass in the church of Saint Fantin, all the time we lived in the apartment we had stumbled on upon our arrival, but when we changed our apartment, and found ourselves some distance away from this church, my great uncle preferred the parish church of our new dwelling. My uncle, push-

³⁶ François Marie Milesi (1744-1819), named bishop of Vigevano in 1805, patriarch of Venice in 1815.

³⁷ Bartolo Zinelli (1766-1802). He entered the Company of the Fathers of Faith in 1799.

ing politeness to excess, did not want to leave Saint Fantin, where he had been as well received as his uncle. Our new parish was that of Saint Sylvester, which I spoke of above.

From the very first days my great uncle was the object of the parish priest's veneration and that of all his clergy, and he had endless and very moving demonstrations of it up to his death. He went every day to say mass at the time he was free to choose, and I went faithfully to serve it for him. This was how I got to be known particularly by the parish priest Milesi. He was a man of acknowledged merit, a good shepherd in every sense of the term. In easy circumstances financially, he made the best use of his income, and being endowed with a fine talent for teaching, he distributed every Sunday the bread of the word to his people, who were joined by a large number of people from neighboring parishes who always filled his church. He was assiduous in the confessional, and refused his ministry to no one; he was, in a word, the very model of a good shepherd.

Father Milesi formed a great affection for me, and having discerned some good in me in the frequent dealings he had with me, he subsequently without my knowing it got the idea of helping me. The position of my family did not permit it to get me the teachers necessary for me to continue my studies; Father Milesi decided to make good the deficiency, and God blessed his charitable intention. He had in his parish, as I have already said, the respectable Zinelli family, one of whose members, a holy priest, went every day to the church to celebrate the holy mysteries. The *pievan*, Father Milesi, got together with him, and it was not difficult to get him to come to the aid of my youth. Here is how their charitable hearts inspired them to achieve their end.

One day I was amusing myself at the window that gave on to the house of the Zinelli family opposite. D. Bartolo appeared on his side, and addressing me said: "Master Eugene, doesn't it scare you to waste your time in idleness like this at the window?" – "Alas, sir," I replied, "it is indeed a pity, but what can I do? You know I am a foreigner, and I haven't any books at my disposition." That was the opening he wanted: "That's no problem, my dear child, you see me here actually in my library, where there are many books in Latin, Italian, French even, if you want them."

"There is nothing I would like better," I answered. Immediately D. Bartolo undid the bar that held the shutters of the window, and placing

on it a book, passed it over to me across the little street that separated us. The book was soon read, for I was always an avid reader, and next day my father advised me to go and take it back and thank D. Bartolo. This was all planned.

D. Bartolo received me with the greatest kindness; he showed me his library, and from there I had access to the study where he studied around a large table with his brother, D. Pietro, who was still only a deacon. "All our books are at your disposition," D. Bartolo told me. Then he added: "This is where my brother and I study: you see over there the place that was occupied by one of my brothers whom God in his goodness has called to himself. If you would like to take his place, you have only to say the word, it will be a real pleasure for us to have you continue with your studies, which clearly you have not yet finished." You can imagine my surprise and joy. "I shall be overjoyed, sir, and my father will happily give his consent." – "Very well, come from tomorrow, and we will make a beginning." My parents thanked God for having obtained for me so great a benefit.

From this time on, every day over a period of nearly four years, I went after mass to be with these most benevolent teachers who put me to work until midday. After dinner, D. Bartolo, whose health required a lot of attention, would come to find me at home to go for a walk, which had in view a visit of some church where we would stop to pray. On our return, I got back to work, which lasted until evening. Some priests got together at that time to say the office in common. Then we would come down to the drawing room, where some family friends entered into some wholesome recreation. We had coffee and went away, except for myself who already in a way formed part of the family, and stayed for supper and to say the rosary and pray with them following the holy custom of that country, that was at that time so good. Afterwards I went off, in the company of a family servant. At home everybody had long gone to bed for in Venice, where they turn night into day, it was always nearly midnight before supper was over. Sundays and Thursdays I was also kept back, as a rule,³⁸ for dinner.

³⁸ "de fondation."

Four years passed by in this way: the affection of everyone in this very worthy family which had adopted me grew in proportion to the attachment I experienced myself in its regard. Father Milesi enjoyed, in his turn, success in his charitable schemes. How could I fail to make some progress in such a good school? The family in whose bosom I lived was outstandingly Christian, and D. Bartolo, who was chiefly responsible for me, was really canonizable as a saint. You will find among my papers a summary of his life that Bishop de la Gaude,³⁹ Bishop of Venice, and later of Namur, got for me on his return from Rome a little after the happy death of my saintly teacher. Can I ever thank God sufficiently for getting for me, out of his infinite goodness, help such as this precisely at the most difficult time of life, a decisive time for me, in which were planted by a man of God, in my soul prepared by his skillful hand and the grace of the Holy Spirit whose instrument he was, the foundations of religion and piety on which the mercy of God has built the edifice of my spiritual life? It was in the school of this holy priest that I learnt to despise worldly vanities, to taste the things of God: far removed from all dissipation, from every contact with young people of my age, I did not even give a thought to what constitutes the object of their desires. I went to confession every Saturday, to communion every Sunday. The reading of good books and prayer were the only distractions I allowed from the careful pursuit of my studies. I heard and served mass every day, and every day too I recited the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary. I had derived from my pious reading a certain attraction for mortification, and child as I still was, I made it a rule to fast every Friday, and in Lent on three days in the week; my parents did not notice. I often placed planks under my bed sheet, and on Saturdays, so as to be more sure of waking early so as to spend more time in church, I slept quite simply on the ground on a simple blanket. My health came to no harm at all from it, and I persevered with this regime for as long as I lived in Venice.

If I have related these facts, it is only to highlight the graces I was blessed with from my tenderest childhood, and how deeply I must humble myself for not having derived greater benefit from them. It is from then that I date my vocation to the clerical state, and perhaps to a more

³⁹ Bishop C. F. Joseph Pisani de la Gaude, Bishop of Vence from 1783 to 1801.

perfect state, and certainly if we had stayed only one year more in Venice, I would have followed my saintly director and his brother, now a priest, into the religious Congregation they chose,⁴⁰ and in which they both died in the exercise of an heroic zeal.

This disposition towards entry into the clerical state is the origin of an anecdote I would like to tell: One day my venerable great uncle, after my reading him a chapter of the New Testament out of my little Elzevir that I still have, said in a serious tone, as it seemed to me: "Is it true, Eugene, that you wish to enter the clerical state?" – "But yes, uncle," I replied without hesitation. – "My child, how could you take a decision like that? Don't you know that you are the only descendant of our family which will thus become extinct?" Astonished at seeing a consideration like that come forth from the mouth of so venerable a man, I replied hotly: "What of it, uncle, wouldn't it be a great honor for our family to finish up with a priest?" My uncle was teasing. Delighted to hear a child of thirteen years of age reply in this fashion, he put his arms around me and gave me his blessing. This precocious vocation was able to come to fruition only much later. I had to undergo further trials. We were in full flight, and my exile was to go on still for many more years.

This vocation of Eugene showed itself in fact by unequivocal signs. D. Barthélemy fulfilled like a saint the duties he had assumed in his regard: his aim was not only to have him continue on with his Latin classes, but to form the youthful heart of his pupil in the love of God and his mind in the knowledge of religion. How many times haven't we heard Eugene now a priest say that he owed to this holy teacher all he had acquired of solid principles in this area. Religious instruction did not limit itself to the catechism. And so Eugene progressed in such a way as to astound all who knew him, and the dispositions he had promised from his college days developed to the point that his strong attraction to the clerical state became evident to his family. Thus, when he was at home, he could be seen happily dressing up in a cloak that resembled a soutane; he drew in the folds with a cincture, and with a square bonnet on his head, he used to parade in the big space called in Venice the Portico, devoutly saying his Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, that he said in its entirety every day. He often did his spiritual

⁴⁰ The Society of the Fathers of the Faith, founded in Rome in 1797. It proposed to revive in a certain way the Society of Jesus, suppressed by Clement XIV in 1773.

reading out loud in a preaching voice; for this he used to seat himself down on a wide stool that served him for a pulpit.

We have seen his punctiliousness as to his weekly confession and communions. From that time too became apparent his taste for bodily mortifications, especially fasting. He easily succeeded in hiding from his family and friends the practices he undertook. When he was absent for a meal at home, his parents thought he was eating with the Zinellis, as was usually the case; and if he did not eat with the Zinellis, they thought he had taken something at home. This attraction for fasting was kept up in Eugene's case up to the time when the burdens of work obliged him to suspend everything which he had imposed on himself extraordinarily, with the exception of that of Fridays, which he was never willing to renounce.

However, the deacon Zinelli, who often amused himself by teasing him, led him one day in this matter to a discovery which saddened him. Indeed Eugene gave in only after a long argument, and when the case had been well and truly demonstrated to him by arguments, namely, that whoever fasts before the prescribed age has less merit than he who fasts to obey the precept of the Church.⁴¹ He was not discouraged by his defeat, and he continued his holy practice as before.

9) 1795: Mrs. De Mazenod's departure. Death of Canon Charles Auguste André de Mazenod.

In 1795, Eugene had the opportunity to take a little trip into Tuscany to accompany his mother, whom family interests were summoning back to France. Already the Marchioness de Dons, her sister, had returned with her son; Eugene's mother would have lost all her rights of inheritance from her father, if she had prolonged her stay abroad. So this parting had to take place, she brought her daughter with her: Charlotte Césarie Antoinette Eugénie de Mazenod, later to become the Marchioness de Boisgelin.

⁴¹ That is what was usually thought at that time, giving exaggerated value to the merit of obedience. St. Thomas thought differently. In the *Summa Theologica* (II-II, q. 104, art. 1, ad 3), he raises the following difficulty: "Is not a service all the more acceptable the more it is spontaneous? In that case our works would be worth less, if they were done out of obedience and obedience were a duty." He replies: "What renders an action virtuous, honorable and meritorious, is that it be intentional. So, although obedience as such is a duty, if the intention goes eagerly along with it, merit loses nothing, especially before God who sees not only the external action but the will within."

During this journey, Eugene demonstrated what grace had worked in him. First he provided himself with a large crucifix which he hung around his neck as a sign of his faith and of the public profession of it that he was prepared to make, if needs must be. The occasion presented itself at the first inn where they stopped. Although the crucifix was fastened under Eugene's waistcoat, it was big enough to be seen; it became a subject of malicious pleasantries on the part of the inn's servants, but Eugene, far from blushing, replied to these insolent people with a truly Christian courage, something these impious people were not expecting from a child of thirteen.

On arriving at Leghorn, the family stopped a few days in that town. When Eugene observed that the house domestic where they resided was extremely ignorant in religious matters, his chief occupation was to explain to this woman the catechism, which he did in so interesting a manner that the mistress of the house was pleased to join in and, from what she said, to her great profit. Zeal was one of the distinctive traits of Eugene's piety, and thus foreshadowed the ministry he was one day to exercise towards the most abandoned souls.

On being separated from his mother and sister, he returned with his father to Venice to go on with his studies and tasks with the Zinellis, with whom he stayed until the time of his family's departure for Naples.

That year – 1795 – did not come to an end without bringing fresh sorrow to Eugene. The narration tells us: My great uncle, Bishop de Belloy's venerable friend and vicar general, as he had been vicar general of the celebrated Belzunce, brought his holy life to a close on November 22, 1795. He was buried in that same church of St. Sylvester in which he had celebrated daily the holy sacrifice. While on this subject, I cannot pass over in silence the gracious conduct of the respected parish priest, Father Milesi, later, as I have said, to become Bishop of Vigevano, and ultimately the Patriarch of Venice, this same Father Milesi who had conceived such a lively and paternal affection in my regard, and to whom I owe all the good that my saintly teacher and true friend D. Bartolo Zinelli did for me. When my uncle died, my father sent me to the parish priest to ask him to take charge of the funeral arrangements, fully intending it to be understood however that we were exiles and, notwithstanding my uncle's dignity, we had to stay within the limits of the strictest simplicity. The parish priest replied that he understood perfectly, and that we might leave it with him. He was as

good as his word, but what did he do? Magnificent funeral arrangements: confraternities, a host of clergy, the finest candles, the most beautiful catafalque in the church, decorated with countless tapers, and everything to match. What could we say? Everything was done on the parish priest's orders. But when the time came to ask for the bill for all this magnificent display, the parish priest replied that, having good reason to share the all too justified sorrow of my family, he thought himself fortunate, with this solemn funeral, to have rendered to so holy a person the homage that was due his virtues and dignity, that so far as he was concerned in this he was discharging a duty, and that in consequence we had nothing to pay! This is the man God placed on my path in this foreign land to be the first instrument of his mercies toward me!

I did not see him until 1811,⁴² when we met in Paris at the time of the National Council to which he was called as Bishop of Vigevano.⁴³ Our meeting happened right in the choir of Notre Dame, when the bishops were going to their places. It was a touching sight. I was acting as master of ceremonies under Fathers de Quélen and de Sambucy. Seeing Bishop Milesi arrive, whom I had not found at home the previous evening, I accosted him mentioning my name. The good bishop was besides himself with joy at finding again his adopted child now twenty eight years old, a deacon, and, unmindful of where he was and the occasion, he fell on my neck and drew me tenderly against his breast. I was as moved as he, and everyone asked what it could mean. Ah! had they but been able to understand, more than one would have mingled his tears with ours!

With the French advancing on Venice, it was time to think of decamping. We were present at the ignoble and wretched finale of that worm-eaten republic that crumbled as it were in on itself. It was no doubt difficult to resist the star or, if you prefer, the genius of Bonaparte, but at least there should have been some show of energy and no going tamely into shame and self-abasement⁴⁴ as was the case.

⁴² Wrongly transcribed as 1810 in *Missions 1866*, p. 132.

⁴³ Eugene met him in the church of Notre Dame de Paris, at the time of the inaugural session of the National Council, convoked by Napoleon in the Spring of 1811, cf. J. Leflon I, pp. 380-385.

⁴⁴ "This one-sided judgment, writes J. Leflon (I, 135), ... hardly tallies with the facts of history or even with the later sentiments of the Bishop of Marseilles.... It does, however, reflect exactly what the youth Eugene felt during those lamentable days."

Between the end of this ancient republic and the entry of the French into the city, there was a time of anarchy that gave rise to a highly dangerous clash between the Slavonic troops⁴⁵ returning from the mainland, from which they had been pushed back on Venice, and the local patriots who were seizing control of the government. We were mere spectators of these tumultuous scenes, but we could very easily have become victims in that short interval. The Venetians very easily confused the exiles with those French whose approach they were fearing, and who were shortly going to overwhelm them completely. God watched over us, and we were not harmed.

I do not know how it happened that shortly before this Admiral Brueys⁴⁶ turned up in the Adriatic. I was too young to have known or remembered him. The fact is that the happy memory that he cherished of my uncle the chevalier, his old comrade, came close to costing us our lives. We saw him arrive one day in his admiral's barge and knock at our door that gave on to the Grand Canal. He had learned that my uncle was in Venice, and he wanted to greet him. It was close to the fall of the old republic. From then on we were a suspect family, and it took every bit of the good opinion that had been formed of my father and uncles as trustworthy men, with whom they had rubbed shoulders for the four years they had lived in the country, to neutralize the bad effect this purely friendly and certainly not political visit of the admiral, my uncle's friend, produced.

10) Festivities in Venice: regattas, the Ascension.

I find in my note an account of certain feasts and ceremonies peculiar to Venice, which was not at that time a country like any other. Shall I say something about them? I hesitate, for their story must have been told in many works that are accessible to everyone.

In Venice it is the regattas that are the most popular spectacle. They take place only very rarely on big occasions, like the visit of a foreign

⁴⁵ Slav mercenaries (troops from Slovenia or Croatia in the service of the Venetian republic), whom Bonaparte had driven from the mainland and who were embarking to return to their homes, cf., J. Leflon I, 139.

⁴⁶ François Paul Brueys d'Aiguilliers (1753-1798); written as *Brueix* in *Missions* 1866, p. 133. He was admiral of the French fleet under Bonaparte.

prince, or on the occasion of some big event. The *regata* is a boat race on the Grand Canal that crosses Venice. Once the day is published, everyone gets ready to make it more magnificent. The whole city gets down to it, visitors flock in from all parts, especially they who are called the inhabitants of the mainland. It reaches the point that food prices rocket, and the streets are blocked by this swelling in the population. All the houses overlooking the Grand Canal display tapestries on the balcony, and all the householders consider it their duty to invite as many of their relatives as their houses will hold; on every side refreshments are available, there is no stinting them in Venice. The inflow of the curious, the windows not just of the houses fronting on the Grand Canal, but of all the houses that, from whatever angle it may be, afford a view of the canal, a multitude of boats filled with people that so block the Grand Canal along its whole length that there scarcely remains the space necessary for the boats that have to engage in the race to get by, the congestion of this crowd, this atmosphere of feast and general jubilation produce an effect impossible to describe.

It is always after dinner that these races take place. The first is made up of single sculls. These boats are so light and tiny that it would be perilous to put a second person on board; anyway, it is never permissible to do so. The oarsmen steering them are very elegantly turned out: they are dressed in white with silk sashes of different colours. When the signal is given, the boats leave from the mouth of the Grand Canal. The first to arrive before the Forcari palace, where a lovely antique-style temple has been erected, wins first prize for the race. He is handed an elegant flag that he proudly raises on his tiny boat. The second receives another flag of a different colour, which he likewise raises on his boat. The third too receives a flag, but on its fabric is painted a pig. It is the last prize, the boats coming afterwards don't get anything.

The first race gives way to the second. The boats entering the lists are for two oarsmen, turned out as elegantly as the first; they get the same signs of their victory, and prizes in proportion to their places. Then come the races for boats with four oarsmen, and those with eight, who win their victory on the same conditions.

The races concluded to the acclamations of the crowd, the innumerable craft that are stationed along the Grand Canal or various little adjacent canals cast off from every side, and cover the surface of the Canal as they skillfully streak it with furrows. The laureates make their

way amidst this immense multitude of craft, and humbly hold out their hats for the tribute that no one denies is due their valor, such is the enthusiasm in Venice for these kinds of entertainments! This abundant collection, along with the amount of the prizes that is faithfully paid them the next day, lightens the lot of these good sailors whom everybody takes an interest in, as they are really fine fellows.

One of these great Venetian festivals was the Ascension of Our Lord. I'm sorry to say I am not referring to the religious festival. It went by unnoticed in this huge crowd which arrived at the republic's capital from every part of what they call the mainland and the neighboring countries, like Milan, Ferrara, Bologna, etc. A full fortnight's fair is devoted to the most ridiculous dissipation. The city heaves with visitors, to the point that it is only with the greatest difficulty that one can get around in the streets which are in all truth very narrow.

St. Mark's Square becomes a kind of universal bazaar; they set up another square within the square so to speak. There are porticos beneath which one passes, the shops and especially the cafés are wonderfully got up; a number of rows of seats are taken by the promenaders who take their seats to enjoy the spectacle that they themselves are part of. Joy radiates on every countenance, for they only come here to enjoy themselves; musical instruments entertain the crowd with their melodies; they excel in Italy in this kind of music. The *bautes*, – a kind of domino costume that serves for mask in these parts and beneath which, without a false face, (one wears it like a hat), one has more liberty, – mingle in the crowd with its elegant women and fashionable⁴⁷ men, each group prolonging its ridiculous dissipation the whole day through. And this goes on for the whole fortnight the fair lasts. I hardly need to add that during this time all the theatres are open, the cafés are never empty of men and women who have come to spend their money, that people find their amusement too in the casinos and everywhere in the city and on the water; the canal of the Giudecca and the Grand

⁴⁷ In French: "Les fashionables." Bishop de Mazenod probably means: fashionably dressed and devoted to pleasure. We saw in the introduction that he wrote this after 1850 1851. He went to England in 1850 and he became familiar with this word and uses it once when speaking of Father Daly's lack of religious spirit "too much accustomed to ways that are fashionable in England." Cf. *Oblate Writings* 3, p. 83, French text *Ecrits Oblats* 3, p. 88.

Canal, the Esclavons Quay and the gulf of St. George are furrowed with boats and gondolas, with other craft in attendance filled with musicians who make the air resound with their instruments.

What a place of dissipation Venice was in those days! A thousand blessings would not suffice to bless the Lord for keeping me safe with all my youthful inexperience from all these dangers, for placing me under the tutelary care of the Zinelli family and my saintly master D. Bartolo.

I continue with my tale, especially because what remains for me to tell about this festival will not recur in the future, this ceremony having ceased with the republic of that time, which lived only on its traditions.

The day of the festival of the Ascension was appointed for the so-called solemn marriage ceremony between the City Government and the sea. I do not know how far back the beginnings of this singular function⁴⁸ go. I write from memory, and I do not have any book to hand to verify the facts. It probably dates to the period of Venice's great maritime ascendancy, when this republic together with that of Genoa carried on the commerce of the entire known world. Who really would have dared to dispute her imperial sway over the sea, when it was proved, by the marriage renewed every year on Ascension Day, that the sea must be subject to the Venetian Republic as a wife is to her husband?

From daybreak on this great day, the entire population was in a state of expectancy. There was a scramble for boats, gondolas or other craft to accompany the *Bucentaure* on its nuptial voyage. The *Bucentaure* exists no longer, it was set on fire by the Vandals of the time, who, following in the footsteps of our own, made it their business to destroy anything that might remind people of better times. It was a magnificent vessel, gilded from stem to stern, and on the bridge crimson velvet tapestries bordered with superb golden braids; its sculpture works are likewise gilded and represent various aspects of the hours of the day and the seasons, pagan deities and other features. The great standard of the republic, the winged lion of St. Mark, flew on the vessel's poop and dominated the canopy that was to shade the City Government from the

48 Using an Italian expression Bishop de Mazenod gives this word a liturgical overtone.

heat of the sun. At the oars are the men of the Arsenal, with the Admiral at the tiller: he answers with his head for the safety of the crossing. That is why, if the weather is not good on the feast day, they wait until another day to be sure of the weather. At the appointed time, the Doge, accompanied by the City Council, ten canons in cope and all the chief functionaries of the State, exits on foot from the palace to take himself to the Piazzetta where the *Bucentaure* has been waiting for him since the previous evening. When the whole cortège is aboard, the ship gets majestically under way to go to the Lido, one of the outlets by which the high seas communicate with and feed the lagoons. Immediately all the vessels decked with flags make a salute with artillery fire, the bells ring out, the immense crowd makes the air resound with its cries, the péottes,⁴⁹ the gondolas, all the craft row flat out and cover the sea with their awnings. It is a race to get closest to the *Bucentaure*, which can be likened to a huge hen surrounded by its innumerable chicks. The lagoons now present a ravishing sight, a unique spectacle, never to be seen again.

The Patriarch is waiting for the Doge's passing on an island called St. Helena, occupied by the Olivetan Fathers. These Fathers have to serve him chestnuts and a flask of water, a frugal breakfast that the Patriarch declines with the excuse that he has to say mass and so cannot accept their kind offer, the *Bucentaure* arrives, the Patriarch gets into his boat to go and meet her and accompany her. While the voyage continues, the Patriarch blesses the water which is to be cast into the sea.

Once arrived at the Lido, the vessel is free of the lagoons, and the Doge, while pronouncing a form of words that express his supreme authority and dominion over the sea, throws into the water a golden ring. Immediately a mass of sailors make a dash and it is rare that they do not recover the precious trinket. That is truly a moment of joyful cries as so many capable divers dispute the fate of that honorable prize. the *Bucentaure* returns immediately to the Lido and the Doge, followed by his numerous cortège, disembarks to hear mass in the church of Saint Nicholas. His Grace the Patriarch is the one who celebrates this mass, after which comes the return to Venice, amid the same throng, and the Doge invites to a great public feast everyone who has had the honor of accompanying him in this ceremony.

⁴⁹ Italian: peota: large gondola.

You must not think that with the *Ascensa* over, that's what they call the Ascension, there is an end to the pleasures of Venice. They have many carnivals in that city, soirées, or to be exact, night balls, the nocturnal walks called *I freschi*, serenades etc., the season of the Brensa, and as well as that the natural good humour of the Venetians that unfailingly adds spice to all these different amusements, and makes of this all too famous place the rendez-vous of all pleasure seekers and lovers of dissipation.

11) His fondness for the Zinellis. Contrasts: tenderhearted, strong in character.

In among this foolishness, one would even so come across some families who held back from taking part. I give as proof the Zinelli family, but they were few. There were found the traditions of true piety and ancient simplicity of manners, love of study and work, benevolent charity and suave urbanity, and it is in this atmosphere I lived four years of my life, from twelve to sixteen years of age.

When the time came to leave, the separation was really cruel. D. Bartolo wrote me when I arrived in Naples, that he had been able to find consolation only at the altar, where no doubt he had offered the holy sacrifice for me, that God might watch over me in my youthfulness as I was going to be exposed to so many dangers, far from him and in places so corrupted. This holy priest was heard, for, thanks be to God, deprived though I was, I have to say, of every help, I was no different in Naples than I had been in Venice.

One readily understands all the suffering involved in the separation of the master and the disciple: the disciple who owed everything to D. Bartolo and was so tenderly fond of him: that of the master who was seeing the departure of one he had cared for so generously over a number of years, whom he had so to speak fashioned with his hands, directed and instructed, and it must be said, who had been capable of benefiting from the pains that the worthy master had taken with him, for Eugene's mind, that had been developing from his tenderest years, had acquired under the direction of the holy priest a remarkable solidity.

We find fresh proof of it in a letter Mr. Lourdet, the former royal censor, who had been sent by the king to the Mékhitaristes⁵⁰ in Venice

⁵⁰ Mékhitaristes: catholic religious Armenians, founded by Pierre Manoug, called Mékhitar (1670-1749).

to work on an Armenian-French dictionary, wrote him at that time. Mr. Lourdet had the occasion to come to know Eugene, and wrote him from Tuscany, where he had gone with the intention of returning to France, a charming letter that demonstrates the opinion this famous man had of the young Eugene, then fourteen years of age.

The habitual relations Eugene enjoyed not only with his master D. Bartolo, but with D. Bartolo's brother, who had been ordained priest, and with several respected priests, Italian and French, for whom the Zinelli household was a rendez-vous, had acquainted him with all the affairs of the Church. His natural curiosity and the attraction that drew him towards knowledge of ecclesiastical science, had placed him in possession of a fairly extended range of theological notions, to the extent that he could give his opinion, even on the question of grace and the famous question of the four articles.⁵¹ It can be said that he was an ultramontane from very early on, for, in the middle of these gatherings of French and Italian priests, he always sided with the latter, whose teaching was more satisfying to his good sense and intelligence.

Bishop de Montagnac,⁵² Bishop of Tarbes, was able to pay homage to the precocious knowledge of this little theologian. Eugene had among his books *l'Ami de la jeunesse*, by Father Filassier, which he had read with great pleasure, but having noticed in this author a certain veneer of suspect teachings, or perhaps after being forewarned by his uncle, who had no fear of letting him have it, that the author had a tendency towards Jansenism, Eugene felt obliged to write on the flyleaf an anti-jansenist profession of faith, so as to preserve from any scandal persons who might notice the work in his little library. The Bishop of Tarbes, having entered one day into Eugene's room, who was then in Naples, as we believe, happened to open the book in question and read the profession of faith that Eugene had made. This prelate was so astonished that he could not be persuaded that it was the work of a child.⁵³

⁵¹ The four articles: a brief summation of the Gallican teachings, made by Bossuet in 1682, cf. Text in *Catholicisme hier, aujourd'hui, demain*, Letouzey et Ané, t.IV, col. 1737-1738.

⁵² François de Gain de Montagnac, Bishop of Tarbes from 1782 to 1802.

⁵³ This profession of faith is published in *Oblate Writings*, Vol. 14, p.1.

We must not pass over in silence the protection that Providence showed with regard to Eugene, when he was in danger of losing his life when he was still in Venice. One summer's day, after dinner, Eugene was taking his recreation in the doorway of the house; we have mentioned that it was situated beside the Grand Canal, it was the time of high tide. All of a sudden his foot seemed to slip under him and Eugene found himself fallen into the water, – the canal is ten or twelve feet deep, – and not a soul at hand to give him the least help; but his guardian angel, who was watching over him, saved him miraculously, for without knowing how, he made his way through the water and was able to lift himself onto the steps and from there he got back to the house safe and sound.

All that Eugene could say about this event was that he did not know how he had fallen, nor even if he had fallen, but that he found himself certainly as it were in the middle of a storm, with no idea where he was, with a frightful noise inside his head produced by the water that was entering his ears and mouth, and that on opening his eyes to the light he saw he was in the middle of the water and able to hang on to the long pole with which he was playing, and that he made use of it to get to the steps of the house.

Saved from this peril, he did not know how he was going to show himself to his parents, soaked as he was from head to toe; he was afraid that his mother whom he loved tenderly would have a nasty shock. Before opening the door of her apartment, Eugene let her know that he had a surprise for her, and only when he had given her assurance by this conversation, he let her see him. This precaution, that shows the delicacy of the affection that this child of thirteen had for his parents, spared his mother a nasty surprise that could have affected her seriously in the delicate state of health she normally enjoyed.

Being tender-hearted did not react harmfully on Eugene's strength of character; we have proof of this in what follows: to appreciate it, one has only to reflect on the power human respect daily wields over the most solidly principled of men.

Having been invited to a great dinner at the Spanish ambassador's house, all took their places at the table without saying the prayer known as the *Benedicite*. Eugene, seeing that no one was fulfilling this duty, hesitated for one moment. That moment of hesitation allowed everyone time to get seated, so that Eugene was left standing there all by himself:

all eyes were on him. Then, with an effort that one can only call heroic for one of his age, angry inside with himself for his hesitation he made the sign of the cross and said the prayer, without being put out of countenance and paying no heed to what would be said of him.

Eugene has been heard to say that every time he overcame human respect he was interiorly rewarded for it by the Lord, and this happened often. His love for religion ran deep within him, and he would have been guilty of betraying himself if he had brought himself for a single moment to disavow its holy practices, especially in the company of people who had no use for them or made fun of them.

12) Eugene the adolescent - testimonials of esteem

So it was he was much loved by all the good folk who had the occasion to get to know him. We have seen the proofs of affection that Bishop Milesi poured out to him. That venerable priest did not let a day go by without demonstrating these same sentiments towards him. Eugene had the greatest trust in him, and when he could not go to his ordinary confessor, old Father Zauli, an ex-Jesuit, who lived at the outer limits of the town, he went to Bishop Milesi for confession which he did punctiliously once a week, so as to receive communion every Sunday.

Bishop Giovanelli,⁵⁴ Patriarch of Venice at that time, also gave him indications of good will on the occasion of a number of meetings. Quite blind though he was, he loved to provoke Eugene whose turn of humor he liked. He like to get him going on the subject of national pride. And on this topic, he used to tell him, alluding to Eugene's first name, that he well knew what saint he had most devotion to, since he bore his name, namely, Prince Eugene of Savoy. The child would then protest: and from that came a little tussle that amused everyone and gave the good Patriarch a laugh.

Bishop de Bausset, Bishop of Fréjus, Bishop Pisani de la Gaude, Bishop of Vence who died the Bishop of Namur, and several other saintly personages likewise gave proof of a special esteem, a remarkable

⁵⁴ Bishop F. M. Giovanelli, Patriarch of Venice from 1776 to 1800.

thing with respect to a child of that age; but his piety, good behaviour, prococious learning stood out in a way that drew down on him the general goodwill.

Eugene's character was taking on a particular temper. Living daily with intelligent and specially distinguished people, without ever the opportunity of meeting a single child or of learning any amusement with even the slightest touch of worldliness about it, formed in him early on serious tastes and thoughts of a high order. He owes it to that formation that he was preserved all his life from all the weaknesses so common to young people. His soul was so penetrated with the love of certain virtues, that he even developed a kind of excessive distance from persons of the opposite sex. This strong cast of his first years sheltered him from the faults which young people pride themselves on in the world, and yet at the same time a greater measure of liberty and an infinite number of seducing attractions which he will meet with on his journey could have left him more open to some downfall.

At the point of time we are dealing with in Eugene's life, namely, from twelve to sixteen years of age, the way he distanced himself from persons of the opposite sex had a touch of rusticity about it. One day a French gentleman, seeing him leave the house with a simple wave to his aunt, allowed himself to make the observation that he had not kissed her hand. Eugene, surprised by this remark, drily replied that it was not his habit. At that, the officer insisted and wanted to prove to him that he should be more gallant with the ladies and that it was a sign of gallantry to kiss their hand. Eugene's masculine pride was revolted by this idea, and he maintained haughtily that he would think it lowering to man's dignity to submit to this effeminate mannerism, and that he would never lower himself so far as to kiss the hand of a lady. The soldier, seeing our young man so decided, gave up forming him in the ways of worldly gallantry, and Eugene's aunt, who knew his principles and character had a good laugh at this sally.

The time had come however to leave Venice. The French had taken over that city, and the harassment the émigrés were subject to, made this stay formerly so peaceful, highly disagreeable for Eugene's parents, who made the decision to move on to Naples. This determination deeply saddened Eugene, who was going to be deprived of the happiness he had enjoyed over several years by the side of his master D. Bartolo Zinelli and his respected family. As he thought of the changes this move

was going to bring him he was filled with dread. Of all the many family members with whom he had arrived in Venice, there remained with him only his father and his uncle the chevalier; his mother, sister, aunt, half-cousin and his uncle the priest, later Bishop of Marseilles, one by one left; his venerable great-aunt died there; the thought of his good relatives joined with the prospect of leaving behind for ever the Zinellis and Bishop Milesi whom he loved so tenderly, aroused a very lively grief in his soul; this departure, in a word, was for Eugene a real desolation. He had no choice, however, but to resign himself to it. His grief was shared by his good Venetian friends who looked upon Eugene as their child. The separation was destined to be for life.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Here ends the first part of the text published in *Missions 1866*, pp. 109-144.



Venice



The Church of St. Sylvester in Venice



The "tiny street" between the Zinelli House (to the left) and the House where the de Mazenods lived in Venice

IV – Naples (January 1, 1798 - January 3, 1799)

13) Journey by sea from Venice to Manfredonia

In the same year as the death of my great uncle, 1795, first my aunt, the Marquise de Dons and her son, and a little later on my mother and sister, had left Venice to go to France. They were summoned there by our families' interests. It was in the hope of saving their marriage dowry from the wreckage that would swallow up the fortunes of all the émigrés. They were successful, but this was at the price of the painful sacrifice of a separation that was to last for seven years. My uncle the priest left in his turn to take advantage of the permission allowing exiled priests to return to their homes.⁵⁷ This respite was of short duration; the iniquitous law of 18 Fructidor soon retracted this concession, and he had once again to go into exile so as not to risk losing his life. In any case, when we left Venice, there were only my father, my uncle the chevalier and myself.⁵⁸ We wanted to go to Naples, on the invitation of the family of Baron de Talleyrand,⁵⁹ which we had got to know well in Venice. But we had little money left from the diamonds my darling mother had left for us; so it was a matter of seeking out the cheapest form of transport; the journey by land would have been too expensive; and so the only course was to go by sea. But what vessel were we to

⁵⁷ Taking advantage of a lull in the laws against priests, Fortuné returned to Aix in August 1797, purposing to recover the part of the inheritance that was coming to him from his uncle Canon Charles André, who had died in 1795. But a fresh decision of 18 fructidor (September 5, 1797) put an end to the suspension of the laws brought in against priests under the Convention. Fortuné risked being automatically deported to Guiana. He hurriedly, rejoined his brothers in Naples. He arrived in February 1798. Cf. J. Leflon, I, 141ff. 154-5.

⁵⁸ On May 2, 1797, Bonaparte declared war on Venice. By May 11 the President de Mazenod had got himself passports for Naples. He left on November 11, with his brother the chevalier, his son and Nanon, the servant, cf. Leflon I, 138.

⁵⁹ The family of Baron Louis M. A. de Talleyrand, general and diplomat (1738-1799), named French ambassador to Naples in 1788. He had two sons: Auguste Louis (1770-1832) and Alexandre (1776-1839), a major in the Neapolitan army during the Revolution. The Baron was the uncle of C. M. de Talleyrand-Périgord (1754-1838), the defrocked Bishop of Autun, and later a politician who was involved in the entire history of this period.

choose? A wretched *manzera*, so-called because she served to carry cattle (*manzi*) from Istria and Dalmatia to Venice. It was on this miserable boat, after several days wait at Chioggia, that we were to travel the length of the Adriatic to get us to Manfredonia at which point we were to cross Italy and get to Naples, from the spur in that town. But what trials we would have to pass through before reaching harbour! The favourable wind blew all the while we were in Chioggia waiting while our sad *manzera* got ready; the moment we left, the wind became unfavourable and pushed us back from Carnaro,⁶⁰ that we should have cleared, upon Istria, where we had no business. We lay off Rovigno, but we were not allowed to land. We were banished to *lo Scoglio*, a little island two gunshots from the town, where boats were usually quarantined. Rovigno is sixty miles from the gulf called Carnaro, which the contrary winds prevented us crossing. It would have been a lot simpler to rest up in a little inhabited harbour a short distance from Pola, where we could have waited for the favourable wind, which was not long in coming, but our captain was ill, and he wanted to find a doctor: this is why we were subjected to a fierce storm in the night. It was not without its danger, to judge from the attitude of the sailors, whom I heard complaining and cursing the hour they came on board.

We had left Venice on November 11 and Chioggia on the 15th in the year 1797. Others besides ourselves had spent time on this rock; we put together the well-nigh fabulous story. This *Scoglio*, this island, has but one resident, a worthy cobbler, and caretaker of the chapel, where my father summoned a priest to say mass; he lived there with his wife and little daughter, who charmed us on account of her perfect resemblance to my sister, whom at that time we were well justified in calling our 'little' Eugenie, since she was then only twelve. This is what those good folk told us in the long hours of boredom we had to spend on their island. Shortly before ourselves, they had played host to a personage who said he was a Bishop, they had held him in the highest esteem, and it seemed to them that he deserved it: "But, would you believe it? we have since learned that it was a woman in disguise who was on her way to Pola to have her baby."

⁶⁰ Gulf of Carnaro in Istria, modern Croatia. Written as Carnero in *Missions 1866*, p. 266.

This alleged woman was none other than Bishop de Montagnac, Bishop of Tarbes. I gave him a good laugh when, seeing him again in Naples, I told him this story.

These good folk of Rovigno were unfortunate in their conjectures. Here is another example. On this same *Scoglio* where we were languishing, they saw in transit a community of religious on their way to Fiume. They were actually Visitation Nuns,⁶¹ who had to leave Modena where they had settled when they left France, and who had chosen the town of Fiume as a shelter from fresh vexations. The Rovigno authorities had assigned them the *Scoglio* to rest up for a few days. At first people were delighted to see them and even brought them alms, but all at once their good dispositions gave way to suspicions: people began to think they were French spies disguised as religious, and they were ordered to leave. It is hard to believe. So the little daughter of the shoemaker, the caretaker of the island, told us: "I can definitely assure you they were women, for I kissed them all, and the skin on their faces was so smooth, smooth, that no one in this place ever had skin like it."

In the end, my father and uncle, seeing that our captain was not making any use of the favourable winds which would let him put to sea, asserted themselves and forced him to leave. When we reached the latitude of Carnaro, we again encountered the head wind, but this time we put in at the neighboring port of Pola from which the fine ancient amphitheatre which is outside its walls is plainly visible. After a two-day wait we crossed the gulf and beyond it we had to go into what is called the Nattons, namely the arm of the sea that lies between the shores of Dalmatia and a number of islands which skirt it practically to Zara. The drawback of this course is that one can only go by day and has to stop each evening so as not to run aground on the islands. The channel is so narrow that in some places two ships could not possibly pass abreast.

There was no way to relieve the boredom of this tedious voyage. On Sunday we stopped in front of a country chapel, no more than a shanty, to hear mass. The priest my father arranged to come from some neighbouring village looked like a beggar: he was practically barefoot,

⁶¹ *Visitandines*.

and the torn soutane that scarcely covered him was in tatters. I served this Mass and the priest went away very contented with the stipend my father gave him, rather bigger clearly than he was used to receiving. A strange thing was that we saw not a single man along this whole shore. It is the women who do the farm work on the rocky slopes, the men go to sea or stay further inland. It is to be supposed, as reports have it, that further inland the land is good; but, if it is fertile, would we have seen those poor women coming and asking insistently for the powder that lies at the bottom of the sacks of biscuits of the sailors to make soup for their sick people? Bread was nowhere available.

At last, on the forty-third day of our crossing, we arrived at Zara, capital of Dalmatia. The Austrian commander, on reading our passports, offered us his services; my father insisted on not disembarking so as not to risk having to go into quarantine on our arrival in Manfredonia. We were still only half-way there after such a long voyage. Luckily the following wind freshened and we were able to put out into the open sea. We went so briskly that in two days we arrived off the shore of Manfredonia, where we wanted to disembark. Delighted to have escaped the Algerian pirates who infested those waters, we were thanking God for reaching land when we were informed that his excellency the governor was not prepared to let us land. My father brushed this aside and we disembarked, really, notwithstanding the governor. We stayed eight whole days in this sad town. This was for the Christmas holidays. I remember that after the Midnight Mass everyone is invited to kiss a little Child Jesus; I kissed him like the others, I will not say with more devotion, but with more respect, for it is a real scrimmage. The canons perform the liturgy in mitre: they do not enhance its dignity by so doing, judging by the one I saw officiate in the cathedral. I do not know if the impression I got on the matter left me with an unfavourable prejudice, but I have never been able to accept this privilege granted to many chapters in Italy and elsewhere. In general, all these encroachments on the vestments reserved to bishops do not add much to canons, whom one knows after all to be nothing but simple priests, and tend to over-familiarize people with vestments whose only purpose moreover is to enhance in their eyes the great and lofty dignity of pontiffs.

After the holidays we headed for Naples passing by Foggia, Ariano and Avellino. Foggia is famous for the death of Charles I of Aragon. You see there immense granaries constructed underground. Ariano, situated on the height, reminded us of the title once borne by one of the most

illustrious families of Provence with which we are connected, the Sabran family, counts of Ariano under the prince of the house of Aragon. And Avellino, situated in country covered with hazels called in Italian *avellane*, from which clearly the town took its name, is known for being the place of St. Andrea Avellino, of the Theatine order.⁶² Everywhere in this countryside we were crossing we were struck by the beauty of the vegetation; the land is cultivated right to the top of the highest mountains. We arrived in Naples on the evening of January 1, 1798. We had left Venice on November 11. So we came to the end of a journey of fifty one days. Travel is different today. Our entrance by the Capuan Gate was anything but triumphal. We were packed into a miserable carriage that was not designed to attract the attention of onlookers, and we got down at a hotel to match. It was the Hotel of the Red Hat, but it was not a cardinal's hat.

So we found ourselves in Naples for a stay of barely a year. This was to verify the prediction of General Baraquay⁶³ d'Hilliers, who said to my father when he signed his passport: "What are you going to Naples for? We will be there within the year."

It was the same general who, arriving in Venice to take command temporarily of the French troops, called the émigrés together at his quarters to give them a good dressing down, with the object clearly of intimidating them. After these official and quite harsh words, he bent over to my father's ear and said in a whisper: "If I can be of any service to you, let me know."

I have no intention in writing these notes of describing the countries I passed through, but merely of retracing after a fashion the itinerary of my travels and the memory of the events that are of interest to me and mine. So just as in talking of Venice I left out all mention of the magnificent churches, fine palaces and innumerable paintings of the great masters of the Venetian school which foreigners come there to admire, similarly I will say nothing, in my stay in Naples, of all the things that go reported with justifiable enthusiasm by every author who writes about this town and its environs.

⁶² A religious order founded in 1524 by Gaetano da Thiene and Pietro Caraffa, the future Pope Paul IV.

⁶³ Spelt "Barguey" in *Missions* 1866, p. 269.

14) Sad monotony of Eugene's life in Naples. The English presence.

Eugene spent the whole of this year in Naples in gloomy fashion. We gather from the surviving letters of D. Bartolomeo Zinelli to his cherished pupil, that he suffered much from living away from so good a master. His life was very withdrawn in that capital where he had no desire at all to strike up acquaintanceships. It seems, from the letters just mentioned, that he applied himself to study assiduously enough, and chose a confessor from among the Fathers of *Santa Maria in Portico*, a religious house situated close by that where he and his family lived with the Marquis de Sabran, his father's friend. The only distraction he allowed himself was to accompany his father, uncle and the Marquis de Sabran to Baron de Talleyrand's place, the former French ambassador, where they went usually to spend the evening. The society of these solemn gentlemen cannot have been very amusing for a young man of sixteen, but at least it sheltered him in his youth from many a danger.

We know nothing, in the area of piety, concerning the whole time Eugene spent in Naples save that he had so little sense of shame about displaying his Christianity that, grown boy and fine young man as he was, he did not hesitate to go and serve every day the Mass of his uncle, later Bishop of Marseilles.

My stay in Naples, the account continues, was for me an oppressive year of very gloomy monotony. I did not have any more my good friends the Zinellis, I no longer had a fixed task, relationships suited to my tastes and inclination. I can say I wasted my time there. Was it my fault? I do not think so. I learned German for three months. In so short a time I made such great progress in that difficult language that my teacher led me to hope I would soon master it; but he fell ill and died, and with him went what I knew. He was minor official in the King of Naples' service; clearly he was happy with very little. The destitution of the emigrant's lot barred my father from giving me another teacher, we had to be patient. I have regretted all my life not having been able to foster the facility I had then for learning languages and pronouncing them well. I would have done some additional good in my ministry. What a sad existence for a young man of sixteen, to have nothing to do, no idea what to fill his time with, know no one, be unable to see anything, except the church, where I went to serve my uncle's Mass! The explanation lies in the sad situation to which so many years of emigration had brought us. The money my mother's diamonds had furnished us with to

live on had to be eked out. Hence, no teacher. I was too young to be left alone in a town like Naples, and my father and uncles had so little curiosity that they left Naples, after a stay of a year, without having seen anything or visited any of its environs. We went to spend the evening at the Baron de Talleyrand's place, where some acquaintances of this former ambassador used to meet, and my whole recreation, as I did not play whist⁶⁴ like my father, was to chat a little or listen to others chatting. In this context I will tell a story that does no credit to my humility. One evening I had had a long chat with a Marquis whose family claims to go back to St. Januarius. This gentleman, clearly because of the attention that youth attracts when it speaks some sense, seemed entranced by my conversation. At least he expressed himself in that sense to my father, who answered him: "You can have no idea how young my son is whom you seem so pleased with: he is still only sixteen." The Marquis Aoleta was too polite to reply other than with a compliment. But I remember, I say it to my shame, I was very upset over the disclosure which harmless paternal pride had led my father to make, and that evening I ventured to complain about it to him, telling him I would henceforth be looked upon only as a child whose opinions do not count.

It is not surprising that people mistook my age; although very young, I already had the height and figure of a man of twenty, and the fact of my having lived habitually only with men of mature sense had given me a certain aplomb and a rectitude of judgment that was a little precocious. I showed it in that same house one evening, when I was obliged to react to a rather tasteless remark and a stupid joke from a Parisian canon who made fun of the fact that the Pope was having triduum of prayers said in Rome to defend himself from the French invasion, instead of devoting himself to the drafting of decent soldiers. I was the youngest of the group, and, if one consulted only the practices of the world, I should have held my silence and been satisfied with silent disapproval of the canon's silly remark; but seeing that, so far from reacting to this remark, which I found shameful, a number of those who heard it were smiling and seemed to accept it, I could not control myself, and, paying no heed to human respect, I raised my voice in reprimand of such misplaced remarks. My reply must have been a fitting

⁶⁴ Whist: a card game, the forerunner of bridge.

one, for, the next day, the Count of Chastellux,⁶⁵ Knight of Honour of Madame Victoire de France, who was present, reported the incident to the Princesses Royal,⁶⁶ in Caserta, lauding the young de Mazenod, who had spoken better than the old canon and had politely put him right. Who would have said at that time that one of the daughters of this respected gentleman was to become the mother-in-law of my own niece! I also used to see in that company Count Roger de Damas, a general in the service of the King of Naples. It is his son whom my niece married. I remember embracing him when he left to place himself at the head of his division; but neither he nor I imagined that the day would come when our blood would mingle in a union which would make of my niece the wife of his only son and his grandchildren my grand-nephews. The Count later married Miss Pauline de Chastellux whose son Charles de Damas married my niece Césarie de Boisgelin.⁶⁷ See how amusing it would be to read the decrees of God if it pleased Him to reveal the future to us. That future was not exactly a smiling one just then. If Count Roger de Damas was leaving for the army, it was because the French were getting close, and they lost no time as it turned out to invade the whole country, both the Papal States, to whose help was the objective, and the Kingdom of Naples which soon had to be abandoned to their triumphant armies.

Before recounting that catastrophe, I will say a word about my trip to Vesuvius and about the great event that occurred that same year, 1798. I mean the all too famous Battle of Aboukir⁶⁸ (August 3, 1798), in which the French navy suffered a reverse from which it never recovered. When the news reached Naples, my uncle the chevalier, a rear-admiral at his death, who was a fine naval officier, refused to believe it. He insisted, on the basis of his professional knowledge, that it was

⁶⁵ H. G. Cèsar de Chastellux, agent of Louis XVIII in Naples, cf. J. Leflon, I. p. 188. In Palermo Eugene used to visit with this family and was a friend of the son, Cèsar-Laurent, born in 1780, cf. *infra*. p. 80.

⁶⁶ The daughters of the royal family. Eugene is referring here to Victoria and Adelaide, daughters of King Louis XV, who emigrated to Italy during the Revolution.

⁶⁷ The marriage was solemnized by Bishop de Mazenod in Albano, near Rome, on July 16, 1845.

⁶⁸ Naval battle north-east of Alexandria in Egypt where the English Admiral Nelson destroyed the French fleet commanded by Brueys.

impossible for an admiral to have moored in such a way as to leave a passage between the land and his fleet.

I do not know what other reason he gave as well to prove the falsehood of the account which was however coming in from everywhere. The English legation was triumphant: it was when Sir Hamilton⁶⁹ was minister, and his wife, whose story I need not tell, carried fanaticism to the point of extravagance. She adorned her head with an anchor of gold on a background of a metal band that bore the names of all the captains of the vessels of the victorious squadron; her gown was hemmed with another metal band on which were engraved the names of the ships: her whole costume was in the national colours. She insisted that all the French ladies belonging to the *émigré* families from Toulon, who were receiving help from England, wear also on their dresses indications of the victory won. I do not know if the Neapolitans shared sincerely in this great joy; as for those of us who had no acquaintance with the English legation, I frankly admit we were humiliated rather than pleased. No more, a little later, did the sight of this famous admiral, who came to Naples to receive the plaudits of his fellow-countrymen, impress us. We saw him closer-up in Palermo, at the Russian ambassador's, when he came in pursuit of Lady Hamilton, to play *quarante-et-un*⁷⁰ for fine guineas, which he lost with sangfroid, and we were in a position to form a judgment that if he was a great sailor, which no one could deny, he was neither handsome nor very nice. His appearance was very commonplace.

15) Outing to Vesuvius

What will I say about Naples that you will not read in all the published 'Travels?' No need to recall the beauty of its position, the grandeur of the town, the number of its inhabitants, and the customs and manners of this very well-known people. I do not claim to be writing a history or composing a new Travel Book. I simply trace, for amusement of my friends, who have manifested a desire to hear about the adventures of my exile, some events that are personal to me and which have no interest beyond what the friendship they bear me bestows on them.

⁶⁹ Cf. J. Leflon I, pp. 203-4.

⁷⁰ Probably a card game.

They will have been moved by this year of my youth spent so gloomily in Naples. Thanks to the sedentary habits of my family and their excessive solicitude for my health, I would have left Naples like them, without seeing anything whether of the town or of its environs, if an émigré of our acquaintance, Sir de Galembert,⁷¹ with whom I formed a bond of friendship based on esteem and gratitude, had not prevailed on my father to let me be his companion on some trips he planned to make in the neighboring countryside. But when he announced that we would begin with a visit to Vesuvius, the permission was almost withdrawn, so strong was the impression that this was a dangerous trip, arousing clearly in the mind of my dear family memories of the fate of Empedocles. However, I was entrusted to the Chevalier; but my uncle the priest could only find reassurance by going off to say his Mass for me, which I was unable to serve on that particular day as we had to leave too early in the morning.

On the appointed day, Mr. Galembert came to fetch me, and we set out for Vesuvius, which was not at all in a menacing mood. We went by *ralesse*, a small carriage used thereabouts, as far as Resina, where we took on what is called a *cicerone*, a name very inappropriately applied to these talkative guides which seeks to compare them with the great Roman orator, a two-fold injustice that would tend to suggest that this prince of eloquence talks more than he might and is a mere patron of chatterboxes. We set out immediately, and, directed by our guide, we clambered courageously to the top of the mountain; but what it cost us to get there! First one has to cross a large space bristling with uneven and sharp stretches of lava, over which one can walk only gingerly. When one has traversed these jagged undulations one finds oneself at the foot of a very steep cone, which one must somehow take by assault taking one step forward and two steps back, so slippery are the cinders which cover it from top to bottom. However great our ardour, we had to give in to fatigue, and half-way up the cone, running with perspiration and exhausted, we lay out on the cinders to have a little rest. We were parched with thirst and it was well for us that, when leaving Naples, we had yielded to the concern of my uncle, who insisted we put some oranges in our pockets. Never did fruit seem more delicious; by refresh-

⁷¹ Gaspard de Bodin de Galembert. He became the tutor of the sons of the Prince of Cannizzaro in Palermo. It was into this Cannizzaro family that Eugene was welcomed as a son, cf. *infra*, p. 84, and J. Leflon, I, pp. 191-197.

ing our palates, it gave us back our faculty of speech and strength to continue our painful ascent. What struck me as very funny at that moment was the moral my traveling companion chose to draw from it. Even as he ate his orange, he told me in all seriousness how good for one it was to learn to bear with hunger and thirst. I agreed even as I thanked God and my good uncle for having provided me with the means of hearing and understanding the lesson, which would certainly not have been appreciated in the state we were in before we got our faculties back thanks to eating our fruit. However, our journey beckoned. This rest gave us the needed strength. Our exertions brought us finally to the top of the mountain, that is to say, to the huge crater that crowns everything. This enormous cavity, at a rough estimate about a mile in circumference, is of unplumbed depth. It is beyond my understanding how people who claim to have gone down into it went about it. I presume, if they are telling the truth, they did not penetrate very far into this abyss, out of which smoke is pouring continually, in small quantities clearly, but still enough so that from the foot of the mountain, the sea and all round about, one sees it rising above the crater as an indication of the underground fires that are feeding it.

It was in the eruption of June 1794 that the cone at the top of the mountain gave place to this enormous abyss. On our climb up we visited the part of the mountain where the lava issued on the occasion of this eruption. It was on the flank that it came out, through an orifice much smaller than that of the principal crater that is at the top of Vesuvius. The ground we were walking on at the edge of this new abyss was hot; but we did not see any smoke coming out from the hole, whose depth our eye could not measure. I wanted to throw a stone down it, but, when I pulled it out of the ground, I was dazzled by the beauty of this type of mineral which had for me the shape of a cauliflower made of lava, sulfur, crystal and limestone. It was a prized possession, especially as the hermit brother whom we visited shortly afterwards swore that he had never seen one so beautiful, and offered me his entire collection of stones if I would surrender it to him. I would have none of it; but that curious stone got lost in one or other of our moves.

The descent of the cone was quicker than going up, we did in a quarter of an hour what had taken us more than an hour of cruel effort. But one did not have to set about it as I did, to get down quicker. All one had to do on the descent, according to our guide's advice, was to slide on one's heels while striving to keep one's balance. To avoid bumping

into my traveling companion who was sliding in front of me, I tried to swerve without coming to a stop, but pulled by the slope I could no longer check myself, I had sufficient presence of mind to realize that I was going to be precipitated onto the lava that one comes to as soon as the cinders finish, and, without further hesitation, I let myself fall on the cinders, giving my companion a bad fright, but without doing myself any injury. By way of a rest, our guide led us by a little valley between the Somma and Vesuvius, in the direction of the hermit's house, who expects the visit of travelers, and offers them wine which those who partake of it declare palatable; one acknowledges the hospitality received with a payment that the hermit does not ask for but which he accepts with thanks. We were soon back in Naples, where my family were very glad to welcome me back.

16) Visit to Pozzuoli, Portici, Herculaneum, Pompeii and Caserta.

As that outing went so well, we soon embarked on another. This time our destination was Pozzuoli.⁷² We left on foot early in the morning, and arrived at Pozzuoli quite early without overtiring ourselves. Mr. de Galember was a hard walker, and I was young enough to keep pace with him. We visited the cathedral, which contains some remarkable antiquities, such as some well-preserved pedestals. We also visited the underground gallery where St. Januarius was exposed to the beasts without being devoured by them. From there we went on to the famous temple of Serapis, which authors describe, and we returned to Naples by the Solfatara. This is an extinct volcano which travelers do not neglect to visit. The place is deserted and uninhabited. One finds, on the level ground situated at the top of this not very high mountain, the remains of a sulphur factory, which serves as a landmark for the traveler who wishes to go down into the shaft worked to extract this sulphur; but however strong the curiosity that drives him, he will not venture far in this underground area. Scarcely has he gone down a few paces than he is obliged to climb back up as quickly as possible so as not to be asphyxiated. Inevitably I tried it out for myself, and since, despite the protests of the *cicerone*, I decided to go down some paces more than he allowed, I almost met my end there. Straight away a profuse perspiration drenched me, and, on the point of feeling ill, with difficulty I got

⁷² Pozzuoli, a small port on the Gulf of Naples.

back up to get some air and a scolding from the stern guide. It would seem that the mountain is hollow. The *cicerone* never omits hurling a big stone with both hands on to the ground which immediately resounds with a dull thump. They show you a hole where a noise is emitted like a smithy; when a stone is placed in front of this hole, it is blown away by the wind which comes out violently from it. We returned to Naples going along Lake Agnano and were back home well before nightfall.

It was only by chance so to speak that I was able to visit the environs of Naples, my father and uncles being firmly decided not to budge. So I took advantage of the generous offer to join a party of compatriots who were going to visit Portici, Herculaneum and Pompeii. Portici is an extension of Naples. One gets there by a fine way lined with country houses. A fine street it would seem. In Portici there is a royal palace where the court takes up residence sometimes. It was there that Pius IX was received at the time of his stay in Naples.⁷³ There was to be seen there, at the time I am describing, a museum which has since been moved to Naples; it held at that time some very interesting items: namely, everything found in the excavations of Pompeii.⁷⁴ It is there I saw for the first time, making use of a wonderful technique, the unravelling of the calcinated leaves of papyrus from which emerged very legibly the letters, words and sentences of works that had originally been written on these leaves.

Beneath Portici is Herculaneum,⁷⁵ formerly buried beneath the lava of Vesuvius. I do not know what has happened since, but at that time they abstained from doing a lot of excavating, partly because of the difficulty of breaking up this lava that is as hard as stone, partly so as not to risk bringing down all the houses of Portici built on this lava. However they point out an underground theatre where they bring visitors with *torches à vent*. I remember I did not take a great liking to this underground descent. The darkness of the place, which was lit only by the *cicerone*'s dismal and spluttering torch, the rumbling sound of the

⁷³ Exiled first in Gaeta in 1848 and 1849, Pius IX lived in the royal mansion of Portici from September 4, 1849 to April 4, 1850. Clearly the Founder reworked this part of his Notes after 1850 and even after 1851, cf. *infra*, note 76.

⁷⁴ Roman city buried in ash and lava at the time of the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D.

⁷⁵ Today 'Ercolano.'

carriages passing overhead, and which seemed to threaten in a voice of thunder to loosen some portions of these suspended masses and obliterate us, put to flight our curiosity which was soon satisfied, and we exited from this cavern to go to Pompeii, where we were able to take our frugal meal seasoned by our hunger.

Pompeii was not then as one sees it today, far from it. There had so far been uncovered under the ashes that had engulfed it only a very small part of that quite large town. I find in my notes that they still knew of only one street, a theatre and a country house. The street was lined with houses and shops; it was paved with wide stones on which are scored quite deeply the grooves of wheels. I recognized later the house in which our *cicerone* made some very pretty pictures come out by throwing water on the walls. But what is that in comparison with what one admires today?⁷⁶ It is not the intention of these notes to enter into a description of them. Plenty of modern books are available to satisfy curiosity on the subject: I have only to report what I find in my old manuscript. It was on the ruins of the theatre that we took our snack gaily enough, according to the text, but we did not leave without visiting the country house; there are still to be seen there in the cellars big amphoras for keeping wine in. We were shown some of this petrified wine in the Portici Museum.

I also find in my notes an excursion to Caserta, the royal residence built by King Charles III,⁷⁷ which foreigners visit to admire the magnificent stair case by which one ascends to the beautiful apartments of this truly royal palace; the chapel matches the magnificence of this whole beautiful building. The gardens are immense and well-kept. One does not go to Caserta without extending one's journey as far as the great aqueduct which brings abundant water to the palace and the town. It has three tiers of arcades, but what is that now that today we have so close to us the aqueduct of Roquefavour?⁷⁸

⁷⁶ When in Rome from the end of January to the beginning of April 1851, for the approval of changes in the Constitutions, the Founder and Father Tempier spent "five days" in Naples, cf. Rey II, 484. From this page of the Diary we can deduce that they visited Pompeii on that occasion.

⁷⁷ Charles III (1716-1788), King of Spain, who reigned over Parma, then over Naples and Sicily.

⁷⁸ An aqueduct built over the period 1842-1847 and which crossed the Arc valley in the Bouches-du-Rhône, a dozen kilometres west of Aix.

Caserta brings back a little deed that does honour to my youth, – my exchange with the Parisian canon. I refer the glory to the saintly teacher who laid down in my heart the religious principles that have been the consolation of my life.

17) Departure from Naples. Danger run by Eugene on December 21, 1798.

The year's respite promised by General Baraguay-d'Hilliers was rolling by: the French armies were advancing on Naples. Despite the King's efforts to defend himself from the invasion that threatened, his troops yielded, and General Championnet advanced swiftly in the conquest of this beautiful kingdom. The danger was imminent; it was decided that the King would withdraw to Palermo with the Queen and the Royal Family. Admiral Nelson was to receive them on board his ship. Everything was ready for embarkation when the people, finding out, rose as one to prevent it. One December 21, 1798, a memorable date, the immense populace came out from every section of the town, headed noisily in the direction of the royal palace, and packed the square and all its surrounds. All these bands of angry men carried at their head banners of saints and cried: *Viva san Gennaro!* The King was obliged to show himself on the balcony to reassure this multitude that had no wish to be abandoned by its king. I do not know if any promises were given to appease it. But what I cannot forget is that I found myself in the middle of that rumpus. This is how it came about:

Warned by the Queen⁷⁹ of the hasty departure of the court to save itself in the face of the French army, whose entry into Naples was now inevitable, my father too turned his thoughts to flight. The Queen, ever thoughtful of the good of my family, had made sure of places for us on one of the transport vessels, but my father decided we would be better served by the kind offer of Count de Puységur, my uncle's comrade, who was in command of the Portuguese flagship, in convoy with Nelson in the roadsteads off Naples. This good friend proposed taking us on board his ship when the time came to flee before our redoubtable enemy. When the time came, he sent his sailors with a hand cart; this

⁷⁹ Queen Maria Carolina (1752-1814), an Austrian, wife of Ferdinand I, King of Naples. The Mazenods owed her a lot: it was she who gave them a stipend to live on in Naples and Palermo.

was precisely the night leading up to the morning of December 21. Before our packages had been made ready and our trunks were placed on the cart, dawn broke. Naturally I was charged to accompany our effects, and that was when, all unsuspecting, having in order to get to the harbour to pass close to the Palace square and go along by the St. Charles Theatre and the castle, I found myself surrounded on all sides by the throngs which flooded out from all the streets which led to the palace. There was no way back. I had to brazen my way through if I were not to suffer the fate of other French émigrés who like myself were bringing their belongings to the harbour where they intended to put them on board ship. Seized and pinioned by the people, they had to abandon their carts in the street and suffer being dragged to a guard-room that served as their prison all that day. Luckier than they, thanks to the Portuguese sailors by whom I was accompanied and to the ruse I adopted of shouting just the words: "Portuguese flagship," I saved myself from this danger, but once arrived at the harbour, it was impossible to get anyone to let us through to the quay side. The admiral's boat, where our effects were to be placed, was not there. The tumult was growing all the time. I saw in the distance some sabres drawn from their scabbards. That is perhaps when the Russian consul was stabbed, and a courier of the Royal Cabinet massacred. The danger was growing ever more pressing. I stuck to making no reply to the insults and the affront of "Jacobin"⁸⁰ that emanated from the mouths of these people roused to fury except my magic words: "Portuguese flagship." In this way I out-faced them, and they let me retrace my steps as far as the gateway of the Arsenal. In the sight of that gateway I saw salvation, although it was closed. I went boldly up to the sentry and ordered him to let me in to save the effects I was charged to carry on board the Portuguese flagship. The look on my face intimidated this good soldier whom I held responsible for the loss of the effects, and he let me pass. Scarcely had I entered the Arsenal when the officer of the guard came running to countermand this flagrant breach of orders, but I calmly made him listen to reason. At the same time he saw the admiral's boat taking on my effects; it was thus evident to him that I had not deceived him, and he altogether calmed down. I was to discover on board, once I got there, what had been happening in town.

⁸⁰ The Jacobins were fanatical revolutionaries who met in the convent of St-Jacques in Paris.

During the long duration of this riot, a friend of my father's betook himself to his house to let him know what was happening. In his account, clearly exaggerated, he told how at the height of the confusion, a young man accompanying a cart loaded with effects had been assassinated. This was a terrible moment for my father and uncles; they were convinced this young man was none other than myself. Luckily I arrived at that moment, coming home by way of the Arsenal, returning from my dangerous mission. My presence allayed the fears of my good relatives, and my uncle the priest reminded me that I was in time to hear Mass in the nearby church, where I went immediately, both to satisfy the precept of the day, and to thank God for keeping me safe from all the dangers I had just run. It was the feast of St. Thomas the Apostle, December 21, 1798. It was on that very day, thirteen years later, I had the signal happiness of being raised to the priesthood in Amiens.

The riot had died down, and a sort of stupor had succeeded all that energy of the morning; the rest of the day went by in a state of great anxiety. In the evening, at eight o'clock, we learned that the Court had gone on board. Mr. de Puységur sent word that he would come to fetch us during the night, which he duly did, like the good comrade-in-arms of my uncle that he was. At the mole we found the boat and clambered on to it to proceed aboard the Portuguese flagship that Mr. de Puységur commanded. He gave up his cabin for us, and the Marquis de Nizza entertained us, and all the numerous company that had taken refuge on board, with the magnificence of a true aristocrat.

The King, the Queen and the Royal Family had gone on board the flagship commanded by Nelson. They left before us to proceed to Palermo; but they were assailed in the course of the crossing by a terrible storm. The danger was so great that they made ready to cut the masts. Prince Albert, the King's son, died during this short crossing. It goes without saying that all the ships that went in convoy with the flagship suffered dreadfully.

Our Portuguese vessel had received the order not to leave Naples until later. We rode out the storm in the roadstead; we lost an anchor, another Portuguese vessel lost three, a brig was driven ashore. This gave us an idea of what those who were on the high seas must have suffered.

Our delay was longer than we expected.

In the period of eight or ten days that the Portuguese admiral still stayed in the roadstead, Eugene went ashore to wind up some affairs

with the owner of the house the family occupied, and sell the effects that had been left behind. When it was time to return on board, on being warned by Baron de Talleyrand that the vessel was making ready for sea during the night, Eugene showed his mettle and ran enormous risks to rejoin the ship in the teeth of a raging wind and in black darkness. The boat's sailors were already at their ropes; the chambermaid they were bringing on board had covered her head with her apron so as not to see the danger; Eugene shouted words of encouragement to the sailors, baled out the water that was filling the boat. Finally, after tremendous exertions, the vessel was reached, which, by its sweeping movements threatened to bear down on the boat at any moment. Eugene leapt on the band that encircled the vessel; his guardian angel was with him, for it is inconceivable how, in so great a roll, he could hang on to the ledge. The woman had to be hoisted with pulleys and heartfelt thanks were offered afterwards to God for not having perished ten times over. Eugene escaped with the loss of his voice in the middle of the fracas, the movements and cries that were needed to emerge from this danger. We see that, when the need arose, he was able to assume initiative and commit himself personally, although normally he led a very tranquil and sedentary life.

One day when Eugene was walking on the upper deck, an English doctor, struck by his appearance, asked someone he knew how old the young man was: he received the reply that he was only eighteen. "What a pity, said the doctor: he will not live long: that young man is too precocious, too mature, morally and physically, to last very long in his career." Eugene heard of the sentence and gave himself leave to appeal it, protesting to the doctor that he was in very good health.

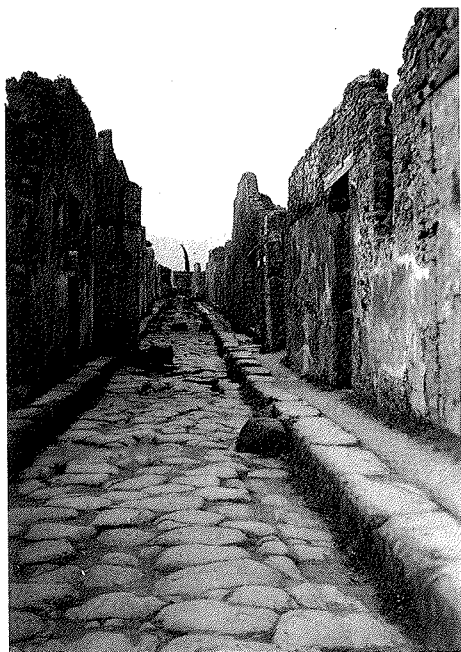
We only left Naples, the account continues on January 3, 1799, after setting fire to all the gunboat launches that had been constructed for coastal defence. On one occasion we saw on board Cardinal Braschi Onesti, Pope Pius VI's nephew, and Bishop Galeffi, well-known to the French priests who had lived in Rome. They did not stay long; but Bishop de Montagnac, Bishop of Tarbes, came with us as far as Palermo, where we arrived on the 6th in the evening, the holy day of Epiphany, with calm weather and quite without incident.



Naples



Santa Maria in Portico, Naples



A Street in Pompei

V – Palermo (January 6, 1799 - October 11, 1802)

18) Arrival in Palermo. Trip to the Temple of Segesta.

So there we were in Palermo, happy to have come through so many dangers; but we were blissfully unaware that once we had landed in that beautiful and great town, we would be at a loss for somewhere to stay. Who would believe it? There was not a single hotel in this the capital of Sicily, and the foreigners who were all arriving at the same time would find themselves literally on the streets. We were lucky enough to meet up with a friend who had got there before us and had got himself lodgings. He let us have his room where we lay our mattresses on the floor, very content to have a roof over our heads.

The Queen, immediately she arrived, was so kind as to inquire after us, being anxious over us, knowing that our finances were very low. She sent 25 ounces to my uncle, along with a request to say a Mass for her. It was a delicate way to see there were the basic necessities she assumed we lacked. We lost no time in going to look for a place to stay among the decent folk of the tanning community, and we had nothing but pleasant memories of our treatment among these fine people. The colony took shape and we soon found our bearings in familiar territory, there were so many Frenchmen crowding into Palermo.

Among these Frenchmen there was one, belonging to a highly respectable family, with whom I formed a special bond: he was the eldest son of the Count de Chastellux. César de Chastellux was my elder by a few years; but the similarity of our religious principles and the regular tenor of life that he followed like myself formed the basis of our friendship, which was never to flounder. He later entered the service of the King of Naples, and did not cease from giving witness as a good Christian, soldier though he became. It was with him that I made the trip to the Temple of Segesta, in the interior of the Sicilian countryside. We set off from Palermo on horseback early in the morning, and we stopped to rest our horses in Partinico,⁸¹ a small very badly built town. While

⁸¹ spelled "Partenico" in *Missions* 1866, p. 285

they grazed, we strolled in the countryside which we found to be as beautiful as the township was ugly. From there we went on to Valguarnera, a dreadful little village which I mention only to remark on the depravation of its inhabitants. We could judge of this from the sight of a dirty house that had bestowed upon it the pompous name of *Home for Foundings*. Imagine, a home for foundings found in a miserable village of a few hundred people? Yes, we saw, not the home but the hole in which these poor victims of dissolute living were dumped. We counted ourselves lucky they did not find any on the day we passed through. From Valguarnera we arrived by impassable paths in Alcamo, quite a big town. It was from there we were to take our bearings for Segesta. We had an introduction to the Reverend Father Pastori, one of the most considerable men thereabouts. This cleric received us very politely and gave us hospitality. After a very light supper for young men of our age, overcome with the fatigue of an arduous journey, we asked leave to retire. We were brought to a quite nice bedroom with two beds; uncomfortable as they were, we slept soundly till dawn the next day, when we were to leave for Segesta, so as to be able to get back it time for dinner. We heard Mass before mounting and soon found ourselves going across country in the absence of any marked paths. That is how it is, for that matter, almost everywhere in Sicily. Leaving aside the arduous nature of a prolonged trek in ploughed or sown land, one cannot but admire the beauty of these hills. The perfume exhaled by the narcissi, thyme, rosemary, wormwood and all the aromatic plants trodden underfoot, the sight of the rose-laurels and so many other shrubs that in other places are kept carefully in conservatories, charm the senses of sight and smell. We were bewitched, my companion and I, when he, having called truce to our admiration, consumed by hunger, observed that man cannot live off perfumes and aromas, and that it was time to look for something to get our teeth into. How could we manage it in this desert? For we were not encountering anybody at all, and our guide no more than ourselves had thought of bringing along any provisions. "Friend," I said laughingly to him, "what you say is too prosaic. What need of eating when, following in the footsteps of so many heroes who have gone before us, we journey, like Aeneas, Alcestis and good father Anchises, in search of the revered Temple of the people of Segesta? Who knows? Perhaps we will encounter at the approaches to the Temple some new Alcestis to quench our thirst, as once he did for Anchises and his companions, giving them some of that palatable wine that is mentioned in the story." My

friend burst out laughing and like a stout fellow bravely resigned himself, that is possessed himself in patience like myself.

However, the sun, which was darting its burning rays right on our shoulders, was really troubling us; overcome by the heat, we ended up nodding off on our mounts who, like so many Rosinantes, would only go at walking speed, when all of a sudden our guide, letting out a great cry, woke us up with a start to show us the Temple, which appeared majestically before us. "There it is, there it is," we cried out to one another, "the Temple revered for three thousand years, object of admiration for so many generations who have come since. How beautiful it is, rising majestic over the many surrounding ruins! What beautiful proportions! What an elegant construction!" In a bound we had gone to see it closer up. I am sorry now I could not measure its length: we did not have the instruments for that. I can easily be ascertained by consulting books by archaeologists which give dimensions. All I can say is that we counted thirty six columns of great height and placed quite a long way from one another, perfectly preserved, none having fallen out of plumb. The vault, if there ever was one, has collapsed; not a trace remains, which could suggest the Temple was not finished, especially as one cannot find the place of the altar and it has never been ascertained to which god it was dedicated. The steps are too high not to imply that every second one is missing. The pedement is supported by four columns which are matched on the rear of the Temple. Time, which has respected these beautiful columns, has even so decreed to leave on them the sign of its iron grip; they are all pitted some two inches deep as if they had been eaten up by innumerable insects; this gives rise to a roughed up layer that allows the profane, like myself admittedly, to break off some pieces to keep as a souvenir of this punishing pilgrimage.

A Temple of such a large size leads one to think there was once not far away a sizeable population. We lost no time in discovering the site of the town, quite large indeed, which bore the name *Segesta*. It seems it took in within its perimeter two hills a short distance from that on which the Temple rises. What would not one find under these ruins, if one took the trouble to excavating them! At every step one sees the trunks of columns, capitals and fragments of marble. It is on the site of the ancient amphitheatre especially that one encounters traces of the antique splendour of this town now vanished from the earth. It is beyond my powers to describe the impression made on us by the comparison of the sight of these ruins which attested to the existence of a large town

and its many inhabitants, with the silence and solitude of these now deserted places, where we saw no living creatures save a few cows browsing in the neighbourhood and a herdsman sent, it seemed, by Providence to save us from dying of hunger; the pangs of thirst were making themselves felt even more perhaps. In actual fact, we had reached the end of our tether; my good companion, a man at that time blessed with a huge appetite, was flat out, in every sense of the word. We hollered out to this good herdsman and at our urging he hastened to milk a cow into an enormous receptacle that we filled with bread, and this gave us the most delicious meal we had ever had, coming as it did just in time to answer our extreme need.

Despite our enthusiasm for the beauty of these places, we had now to set our thoughts on the return journey, if we wanted to get back to Alcamo in time to dine with our host. We had ourselves convinced that this honest priest would have taken the necessary steps to give us a meal to make up for the poor supper of the evening before. Unfortunately, we reckoned, it must be said, without our host! Our dinner consisted of a plate of macaroni and a piece of boiled meat that we found impossible to chew, it was so tough and of so bad a quality. I looked over at my friend César with eyes of pity, understanding the torment he must be suffering, when there arrives on the table an enormous chicken. César jumps up immediately to carve it, in the hope of finding on it the where-withal to satiate his hunger. But, cruel deception! For all his skill and, it must be said, his good will, he could not succeed in detaching a single member of that strange bird. He succeeded at last with great difficulty; but up against something that had so long resisted the edge of a well-sharpened knife, could we flatter ourselves it would yield to the pressure of our precious twenty-year-old teeth? Alas, no! and it was in vain that we put our jaws to the test. They would I believe have made dents in an iron bar, but it was beyond them to chew this old cock, which had no doubt greeted us with its song when we entered the house. "Poor César," I said to myself, "what will become of you? We will both die of hunger: and so our story will end." But no ... see they are bringing us a bake and honey to flavour it: *Butyrum et mel comedet*, says our host, to excuse having no sugar to offer us. We were not so finicky, and this proved to be the best course of all, the one that saved our lives.

Shall I say something about the town of Alcamo, of which our host, Father Pastori, was governor? It is quite well situated, but badly built. Its population is upwards of 13,000 souls. There are a number of

churches to be seen there, and convents of monks and religious women. One admires, in the church of the Recollecti, a superb painting by Raphael: it is a seated Virgin, holding the Child Jesus on her knees; St. Joseph is on her left, and with an anachronism quite common among painters, St. Francis has been placed on the right of the Blessed Virgin. In the foreground of the painting are depicted some men and women. What a pity such a beautiful painting is placed in so remote a church!

Our host wanted to bring us to visit the Capuchins, to whom clearly he extended his patronage, for he seemed very much at home among them. As we did not find the same attraction in being crowded together with eight or ten of these good Fathers in a confined cell, we made the visit brief and after a short walk we returned to our lodging, to prepare for our departure, which took place the next day very early. We went back over the route we had followed in coming by way of Portinico and Monreale, and from there we made the descent to Palermo, to get some rest in my friend's house after the fatigues of the journey, and restore ourselves with a good dinner after the fasting and privations of the preceding days.

19) Eugene's welcome in the family of the Duke of Cannizzaro.

I have spoken of the French colony that took shape in Palermo on the arrival of the King of Naples and the Court. Apart from the two families de Chastellux and de Talleyrand, with whom I had very frequent contracts, I did not see much of the others. Providence, which has always watched over me since my tenderest years as an infant, gave me entry into a Sicilian family, in which I was accepted from the first as a child of the house. This was the family of the Duke of Cannizzaro.⁸² His wife, the Princess of Larderia, was a saint. Both the one and the other formed a strong affection for me, and it seems they considered themselves fortunate to give to their two sons, who were about my own age, although a little younger, a companion who could both become their friend and give them an example of good behaviour, a very rare com-

⁸² Always spelled "Cannizzaro" in *Missions* 1866, p. 289ff.; the names of their sons were Francis and Michael.

modity, practically a phenomenon, in a country like theirs. From this time until my return to France, I was one of the family: my place was always set at their table; I followed them to the country in the summer, and everything in the house was at my service as it was for their own children, who considered themselves my brothers. And this I did become, actually, in terms of affection, and their mother, who used to say that she had acquired a third son, drew me so close to her through her kindnesses, that her own children certainly did not love her more than I. I proved this when she died⁸³ and everyone could see that my grief was incomparably more tender and profound than that of her children. The Princess, whom with every right I used to call my mother, was taken from us without warning: it was a cruel blow and a deep wound; it affected me for a long time; I even became ill over it. I was told that at the sight of her dead body I fell prostrate at the foot of her bed uttering repeatedly this lamentation: "I have lost my mother! I have lost my mother!" The ties of the closest friendship between father and children were drawn even tighter as a result of this appalling event. We became as it were inseparable until the day came I had to leave Sicily and return to France.

20) Friendship with the Vintimilles.

Among the people I got to know, I would have to place among the foremost the Vintimille family, though our families were already very closely connected with the French branch, which formed a connection with that of Sicily by marriage of the daughter of the Count de Vintimille, Knight of Honour of the Countess d'Anjou, with the Prince of Vintimille.⁸⁴ The Prince's home was like my own, and I will not have any self-reproaches forgetting the kindness of either the Prince or the Princess, or the Countess of Vintimille, the Princess's mother, or the Countess de Vêrac, her other daughter, who had come to rejoin the fam-

⁸³ Died April 29, 1802, cf. J. Leflon I, p. 223, note 74.

⁸⁴ The Mazenods had already met Count Charles François de Vintimille in Turin, where he was the representative of the Count of Provence (future King Louis XVIII).

ily in the beautiful mansion that the Prince had built in the outskirts of Palermo, on the slopes of the Arenella. Father Monti has sung the praises of this hillside in very beautiful Italian verses, wonderfully translated by my father.

21) Familiarity with the Duke de Berry. Eugene dislocates a shoulder while swimming.

I owed to this intimate liaison with the Vintimilles the honour and pleasure of spending practically every evening of my stay in Palermo in a measure of familiarity, respectful on my part, with the hapless Duke de Berry.⁸⁵ The Prince, to relax after the day's formality, used to come every evening to take tea at the Princess de Vintimille's, accompanied by the Chevalier de Sourdis, his aide-de-camp. I was alone in being admitted into the élite group along with the Prince de Vintimille and the Countess his mother-in-law: Madame de Vérac had not yet arrived in Palermo. We used to go occasionally as a group for a walk in the outskirts of the town. On Saturdays, the Duke would laughingly give me an appointment for his revue the next day. It was an official reception he accorded on Sundays to all the French colony. He had come to Palermo to seek the hand of one of the princesses, the daughters of the King of Naples. The Prince told a good story of his meeting with the one whom they destined for him. The Queen, enchanted by this alliance, had them kneel before her holding hands, and she blessed them in that position, wishing them every happiness. The King for his part leafed through the drawings in the Prince's album. One would have said that it was going to be all harmony between these two branches of the Bourbon family. But an old diplomat, who had clearly not been consulted in all these negotiations for the wedding, General Acton,⁸⁶ was easily able to persuade the King that it would be foolish to adopt a hapless prince in this way, whose family would never re-ascend the throne of France, who

⁸⁵ Charles-Ferdinand, Duke de Berry, son of Charles X, King of France from 1824 to 1830 and nephew of Louis XVIII, King from 1814 to 1824. He was assassinated on February 13, 1820.

⁸⁶ Cf. J. Leflon I, pp. 174-5, 198.

would therefore be a heavy charge on the State, which would of necessity have to provide him with an appanage; that the best thing therefore was to go no further, to break off, quietly certainly, and to that end the Prince was let know that it was advisable for him to take a trip to Rome. That is what he did and no more was said. The Sicilian princess later married the King of Sardinia, and the Duke de Berry, after the Restoration, married, for this part, the grand-daughter of that same king who, following the advice of his minister, had not wanted to have him for a son-in-law, namely, the daughter of King Francis, successor to Ferdinand, his father.

I do not say this to boast, but to edify any of mine who read this account: when in 1817 I went to Paris to bring to the attention of the *Grand Aumonerie*⁸⁷ my uncle's rights, I purposely abstained from presenting myself at the Tuileries,⁸⁸ to this Duke de Berry, then a power in the land, out of a very justifiable fear that the memory of the kindnesses it would not be too much to describe as acts of friendship with which he had showered me in Palermo would lead him to exact my attaching myself to the Court. I deprived myself even of the pleasure of seeing him. The reason is I wanted to be and remain as the priest of the poor and of children, and not the chaplain of a great prince and a court bishop.

I fear that anything I might say further, following the notes that still remain to me about my stay in Sicily, lose their interest after the account I have just given of my relations with the heir apparent to the throne of France, the hapless Duke de Berry, who fell to the parricidal blade of the conspirators who were hoping by assassinating him, plunging the dagger into his heart, to cut short with him all his line.

Why indeed not tell how one fine morning, July 7, on my way to Arenalla to spend the day at the mansion of the Prince de Vintimille, I fell in with this Prince as he made his way towards the sea where his

⁸⁷ The *Grand Aumonier* (Chief Almoner) was the chief chaplain of the court of the Kings of France. His responsibilities were extensive, in particular in the choice of bishops. Eugene had recourse to the *Grand Aumonier* to have Fortuné named Bishop of Marseilles, in 1817, cf. J. Leflon II, pp. 68, 70-72.

⁸⁸ Tuileries: the royal residence in Paris.

boat was awaiting him. He pressed me to go swimming with him. Once out at sea, he dived into the water before me. I dived in after him, but whether my foot slipped or for some other want of agility, I fell horizontally rather than cleaving into the water as one ought. The fact is that I put out my shoulder without even suspecting it. I did certainly feel a very bad pain that stopped me using my arm to swim, but I put it down to a very bad cramp. I was undeceived only when I arrived at the grotto we were heading for, and when I was getting out of the water, it was the Prince who exclaimed: "You have put out your shoulder." A rueful smile came to my lips, I remember, at what had happened, when I saw the dislocated limb. The exertion I had had to expend had clearly aggravated the dislocation: my arm was completely twisted around. Great care was needed to get me dressed. It had to suffice just to cover the injured part, and the Prince's boat brought me as far as the town gateway, called the Marina, where I got into a carriage, not to go home as my father and uncles would have been quite terrified to see me in that state, but to my adopted home, the Cannizzaro's where everything possible was done for me on the spot. I only sent and adverted my relatives after the painful and long operation I was obliged to undergo so that the professionals might put the dislocated limb back in place. The leading surgeon in the town had been summoned. After working for close on half an hour, which made him perspire profusely, and the pressure of which I felt so much that I would have cried out in agony had I been made of softer stuff, the able surgeon had got the displaced bone as far as the cavity which he had to get it back into, but he confessed he was not strong enough to do that by himself. They immediately sent out for a young apprentice from the neighboring hospital. They chose a good one, he was a colossus; with a single blow of his powerful hand, he got the bone back into its cavity and I no longer felt any pain. They nursed me, and I carried my arm in a sling for quite a long time, which did not stop me feeling it again over a period of more than thirty years, whenever my arm got a little tired.

I must not omit, as I bring the account of my mishap to a close, something I find in my notes, expressed with a profound feeling of gratitude and a very keen sensitivity. It is how the sight of the pitiful state in which I was brought to her home affected the person I used to call with every justification my second mother. Her splendid heart was dismayed. She it was who immediately sent out to find that famous surgeon and saw I had all the care and attention my plight demanded. The

whole family shared her anxiety and, throughout the convalescence that followed my accident, the apartment I occupied was never empty of the choice society to which my relation with the Cannizzaros had introduced me. I will mention only the Prince and Princess of Butera, their cousins, the Duchess S. Michele, her brother, the Prince of Cimina and the Princess of that name, who became in her widowhood the spouse of King Ferdinand, the Prince of Paterno, a gentleman as rich as the Prince of Butera but more balanced than he. He gathered an elite group in his home every Saturday evening, to sit them down to sup at midnight on rich fare. The Princess Malvagna, a friend worthy of the Duchess of Cannizzaro because of the conformity of their virtues and their exemplary behaviour, which was in strong contrast with the scarcely acceptable morals of the rest of the women of that country.

22) High Society in Palermo – its morals. Feast of St. Rosalia.

There would be altogether too much to say about the depraved morals of Palermo's high society: I shall not broach the subject. I want only to affirm the infinite goodness of God, who by his powerful grace preserved me constantly amid very real dangers by inspiring me not with a spirit of mere aloofness but with a kind of horror for every kind of dissipation that might result in the sort of aberrations I deplored with disgust in others: thanks be to God, I pushed delicacy in this sphere to the point of excess.

What would be the good of my dwelling on this country's morals? I prefer to talk of the feast that came one after the other and in which everybody took part. I begin with those that take place annually in honour of St. Rosalia, Palermo's patroness. The solemnity is celebrated on July 15, the day of the finding of the saint's body in the outskirts of the town. This solemnity is preceded by entertainments that begin on the 11th of this privileged month. In honour of the saint there is prepared a kind of mobile triumphal arch. It is an enormous float, as high as the tallest houses, and on it is the statue of the saint. Into a first level of this enormous machine, far below the statue, which soars above everything, are inserted musicians who do their utmost to keep playing their noisy instruments throughout the float's entire course. I saw them passing by from the lofty first floor balcony of the palace of the Prince Granmonte, and I noted the fact that they were moving along at the height of this storey. The float is drawn by twelve pairs of oxen, highly ornamented

and dressed up somehow. Two hours before nightfall, the float starts to move, leaving from the Porta Felice, which is at the end of the long Via Cassero beside the sea; it proceeds along the whole length of this street, magnificently decked out with beautiful tapestries suspended from the windows of the houses and palaces which adorn this avenue, and arrives at nightfall at the Porta Nuova, situated at the other end of the Cassero. The crowd throngs the street and parts only to let the float pass. As night falls, the town lights up, and so that the promenaders who want to enjoy this beautiful display, which means the whole and entire population, may not be disturbed, vehicles are forbidden to drive on the street once the float has passed by. At two o'clock, night-time, that is two hours after sunset, they let off a huge fireworks display on the Marina, opposite the palace of the Prince of Butera. The King was invited to watch it from there, and he made his way there with the whole court. I too was there. It goes without saying that in these sort of gatherings, *i rinfreschi*, ice and biscuits are on offer in profusion. After the fireworks, the King sat down to play faro,⁸⁹ and the dances were got going in the beautiful salons of this palace. I was far removed from sharing in these entertainments. On the contrary, – and it is a strange thing –, as I find myself caught up in this dissipation, with the noise of the instruments and that wholly mundane gaiety, now my heart feels a tug, a sadness comes over me, and I pick out a place apart where, separated from this whole world which seems madness to me, I give myself over to serious, even melancholy thoughts, to the point of being close to tears. A number of times people I knew came on me by surprise when I was in this mood, and they wanted to shake me out of it, as they did not understand it. The fact is I was not in my element. I found myself now willy nilly in the world. It had no attraction at all for me. I condemned this dissipation of which I was the spectator; it went against all the feelings of my soul, which aspired to a quite different joy. The greater the others' dissipation was, the more extreme was my reaction and the more it engaged the whole of my feelings. That is how I explain this strange phenomenon for myself.

⁸⁹ A kind of card game.

The night of the 11th passed after this fashion. The next day there was horse racing in this same Via Cassero that was so very straight and thus very suitable for this kind of race. The Prince of Vintimille had his palace on this street. His was the privilege of having the King for this day and the next. His Majesty was very fond of watching horse races; they are peculiar in Palermo in so far as the horses run without riders: they are made to go by means of prickly knobs attached on their backs which stick into them all the time they are running. As they go by, the animals are worked up by the actions and voices of the immense number of people who have come to Via Cassero to see them. When the races are over, the King sits down to play as on the previous evening, while waiting for the float, all lit up, to take again the route it followed the preceding day, and return to the place from which it started. As on the evening before, the musicians went on playing their symphonies non-stop, to the great delight of all the people who continued to pass through Via Cassero, filling it up. At the palace of the Prince of Vintimille like that of the Prince Butera there were abundant *rin freschi*. The King, as was his custom, left at midnight; now the crowd in the Via Cassero gave way to a procession of carriages that lasted more than an hour. It was time to retire and get some rest in expectation of the next day's fresh delights.

It is the 13th. Again there was horse racing on the Via Cassero. The King returned to the Prince of Vintimille's palace; I was there too. One stayed at this prince's place until it was time for the second fireworks display, again held at the Marina and which the King went to see at the place of the Prince of Butera, who, on this occasion, offered a second feast like the first, with games, refreshments and dancing till daylight. Again there is a brilliant display of lights both on the via Cassero and at the Marina, etc. It is, in short, a repetition of what took place the previous evening. On the 14th, more horse racing on the Via Cassero: the public is insatiable. Again the King is invited to the Prince of Vintimille's place. He stays there this time only until 10 o'clock, and goes from there to the cathedral; we follow behind and assist at First Vespers of St. Rosalia. Nothing is so beautiful as the illumination of this church. It is lit up that evening by more than seven thousand candles which transform the temple into a vault of light. It is really beautiful! The King is so enchanted by it that he takes the President Paternó by the hand and highly compliments him – he had overseen the reconstruction of this

church and was no doubt the director of the feast. The Vespers are set to music and therefore deemed we could withdraw and go for supper and come back later by carriage to join the promenade that takes place this evening like the others after midnight, in the bright glow of the illumination.

The 15th, the day of the feast. One had to get there early to get a decent place in the cathedral, where the *capella reale*⁹⁰ would take place. This is the name given to the solemn assistance of the King at the High Mass of certain principal feastdays, such as the feast of St. Rosalia. The King comes, on such a day, surrounded by the entire Court. When he is crowned, he wears the crown on his head, and is invested with the royal mantle. He ascends a throne raised higher than normal, and he makes the act of confession at the beginning of the Mass together with the officiating Bishop. He is incensed upon his throne, and he remains covered for this incensation; he remains covered too during the Gospel, apparently to demonstrate his readiness to defend it against all-comers. I found the sight edifying and it brought to a pious close a series of rejoicing and feasts instituted more or less directly in honour of the people of Palermo's patron saint.

One would be inclined to believe that after so many horse races, the King would have had enough. It took a good deal more in fact to satisfy his appetite for this form of amusement. He began by setting the example and organizing one at his own expense in the Via Nuova. It went as he had hoped, and he did not conceal the fact. Immediately his courtiers vied with one another to procure him this diversion. The Prince of Latrabbia, his chief equerry, had four put on for successive Sundays in the Via Monreale. The King and the entire Court were invited to dinner; the rest made do with refreshments. The turn of the Prince of the Cattolica came on the feast of Holy Cross, the principal feast of Misilmeri, a fief belonging to his family. The King had to be invited to the horse races and to dinner. The Prince invited us to the feast and to the refreshments that always went with it. The King, with an insatiable appetite for this form of amusement, expressed a wish to assist at a race

⁹⁰ A liturgical ceremony in the presence of the King.

that took place a half-league outside Palermo, on the sea shore, in a place called Romagnolo or Mustarolo. The Princess of Larderia has a pretty little holiday house in this place. She had no choice but to invite His Majesty to come and watch the race go by from her place and to do her the honour of accepting to dine. The King did not need to be asked twice. He came with pleasure, and the Princess added to this delight some little games in the sea that gave him much pleasure. The Princess was 400 ounces out of pocket by way of expenses, close on 5000 francs. It was rather an expensive honour. The saintly lady would have preferred to spend this sum on good works.

I have said enough of horse races; so I will do no more than mention the races at Bagheria, Colli, Terre Rosse, that is enough...

24) Feast of the Triumph of the Redemption in Monreale.

Let us say a word about Monreale. It is a little town some three miles outside Palermo, seat of the archdiocese with a cathedral which holds the entrails of our King St. Louis, who was embalmed here after the manner of the ancients. One finds there too the tombs of William the Good and William the Bad, and a gigantic mosaic portrait of Our Lord.

On September 8, they celebrate the Blessed Virgin's feast with great solemnity. The town never fails to invite the King to the fireworks display and to the evening's entertainment that it gives on this occasion: the King always accepts, and we were among those invited. The King leaves early, and we do not delay in following him, leaving the field free for the lovers of the dance, to devote themselves to this pleasure the whole night long if such be their wish. There is no shortage of refreshments at this feast.

I will conclude the lengthy account based on my notes, as I chose to write them down in all haste, with a picturesque description of the famous century old procession of Monreale. This unique feast took place perhaps in this year 1800⁹¹ not just be faithful to tradition but also

⁹¹ It was in 1800 or 1801 that Eugene was present at this celebration, as with that of St. Rosalia, since he never names Queen Maria Carolina. She was in fact in Austria in 1800 and 1801, cf. J. Leflon, I, p. 206, 209.

because of a rather adroit calculation on the part of the neighbourhood's administrators. During the time of shortages, they had laid by a very large store of grain in the hope of turning it to a profit. As the price of this commodity dropped each day, the town saw itself at risk of losing a considerable sum. To forestall this misfortune, the local inhabitants lit upon an expedient to dispose of their goods: they proposed to declare the great centenary feast, which lasts eight days and attracts a huge number of customers to Monreale. I cannot guarantee the truth of this story: it is what went around Palermo at the time. This much is certain: the feast took place and the whole of Palermo and its environs made the journey to Monreale to see it. I say "see", because the central event of the feast consists in a procession whose description I am going to give. The King was invited and was present with the three princesses his daughters,⁹² who were then young like myself and two of whom have since died, the youngest, Marie-Antoinette, Queen of Spain; the other, Maria-Christina, who had been destined for the Duke de Berry, Queen of Sardinia, and the sole survivor, Maria-Amelia, wife of Louis Philippe, King of the French. The last-named was exactly my own age born in the same year as myself. We were near to one another when we saw this famous procession go by.

The feast is called the Triumph of the Redemption. It is for the Cross that it is held. The procession leaves from the church, each one assumes as he leaves the pose that he will maintain the whole time the procession is going on. First comes divine Justice preceded by several instruments of military music. She is followed by two Angels who precede Adam and Eve: Eve holding a fig leaf from India in her hand, Adam covering his face. Divine Mercy comes next. She is followed by

⁹² The daughters of Ferdinand I (1751 - 1825), King of Naples, were: Maria-Antionette, married in 1802 to Ferdinand VIII of Spain and died in 1806; Maria-Christina, Queen of Sardigna, died in 1849, and Maria-Amelia (1782-1866), wife of Louis-Philippe, King of the French from 1830-1848. Bishop de Mazenod met the latter in Paris in 1835, on the occasion of his visit to bring to an end to the Icosia affair, cf. J. Leflon, II. p. 500.

two Genii. Then one sees the Redemption carrying a cardboard Cross; she is leading Death and Sin in chains, who make some gruesome contortions. Next comes an Angel, the Plague, Famine, War and Earthquake; Cain and Abel: Abel carrying a lamb, Cain a bloody club; Abraham and Isaac, Melchisedek, Moses with the tables of the law; Aaron, high priest. A serpent attached to a piece of wood; a number of Israelites who gaze at it, trembling all over; the great leader Joshua, Samson, King Solomon and his court. Judith with a drawn sword; the soldiers of Bethulia with the head of Holofernes. These follow the four major prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah weeping, Ezekiel and Daniel; then Virginity, Humility, the Archangel Gabriel, the Blessed Virgin and the Child Jesus, the Angel who announces the birth of the Infant to the shepherds, the Blessed Virgin and the Child Jesus in a hand-sized crib, accompanied by St. Joseph; Joy and Peace, Iris, the appearance of the Star, the three Magi, two emblems, the Light of the Gospel torch in hand, idolatry with a broken censer and some little marionettes, the Flight into Egypt, the Blessed Virgin on a mare with St. Joseph and a number of children; the massacre of the Innocents, some women and tyrants, with cardboard children in their hands; Herod with his sceptre; Jesus Christ accompanied by the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph; Our Lord disputing with the Doctors; his baptism; St. John the Baptist clothed in skins; the Saviour at the moment of receiving baptism; an Angel; the miracles of Jesus Christ; a crowd of the blind, deaf, lame and lepers; the Saviour with the Samaritan Woman, the Resurrection of Lazarus, Martha, Mary Magdalene, Jesus Christ with the risen Lazarus; the Council of the Synagogue, two guards, the High Priest, the Elders, the Temple magistrates, the members of the Sanhedrin; the entry into Jerusalem, the Saviour seated on an ass, surrounded or better followed by his disciples, and preceded by a number of children. The Passion; soldiers and constables with Judas at their head; Annas, Caiaphas, Herod; appearance before Pilate with scourges, a crown, a wash-basin and a water jar to wash the hands; soldiers with the instruments of crucifixion; a centurion on horseback, a soldier with a lance, a number of soldier converts; Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus with jars of perfumes, the Blessed Virgin, St. John, Mary Cleopas and Mary Magdalene, the four Evangelists pretending to write on a missal; the Human Race carrying a cross; the four quarters of the World; Sicily dressed as a queen, with a standard, mounted with the portrait of the King; the Val de Marrara, Palermo with the eagle, the serpent and the dog; the Val de Noto crowned with spikes of grain and carrying one in the hand; the Val

de Demone crowned with flowers and oaks, Etna; Courage with the helmet, breastplate, lance and buckler; Strength as an Amazon; Constancy, Magnanimity holding a golden vase in the hand, Justice with scales and sword, Clemency with an olive branch, Security with the anchor, the whole followed by the Genius of Monreale, in hero's garb, crowned with a golden star and holding a cornucopia; it holds in the hand a paper on which is written in large letters: Long live the King! The procession closes with a triumphal chariot on which is seated Religion on a globe and treading under foot a number of impious or heretical books. Incredulity, Heresy, Superstition and Libertinage with their followers are lead along behind the chariot; Incredulity with hands tied behind the back and a crossed sword in the mouth; the *brutissima*, the exceedingly ugly old Heresy crowned with serpents, a bit in the mouth and a pen; Superstition clad in Fury, Libertinage and several symbols; a troop of their followers: unbelievers, heretics, the superstitions, libertines. The march closes with music and a squadron of cavalry.

Here my notes come to an end, I find nothing in them of the origins of this unusual procession in which one sees passing before one so many extraordinary things. I have to say that the execution of this drama contains nothing special.

25) Eugene's tepidity in Palermo. Departure for France.

Eugene stayed in Palermo until October 1802. We know little by way of detail about how he spent his time in that town. We only know that, as we have just seen, he found there, as in Venice, a family that welcomed him into its bosom and treated him as their own child: the Duke and Duchess of Cannizzaro, who adopted him and treated him as a son. The Duchess especially, a lady of great piety, certainly the most pious person in high society, who communicated twice a week and led an exemplary life, – the Duchess was very happy to have found in Eugene a friend for her children, one who could lead them on the right path and steer them away from any other influence.

It seems that after the Princess's death, Eugene's piety diminished. No longer having before him the good example of this venerable woman who would often engage him in conversation on pious subjects, and who sustained him in the practice of virtue with her counsels, he neglected, not perhaps his religious duties, but those assiduous practices that are like bulwarks for the soul and the guardian of virtue. Even so he

did have Bishop Bonnarò as his confessor, an Oratorian known for his virtue and his distinguished birth, and he frequented the house of the Olivella, where he got to know many other Oratorians⁹³ who loved him and even cited him to other young people as a model; but he himself knew quite well that he was considerably lacking in the fervour he had felt previously. This tepidity is to be attributed to the more frequent contacts he had with high society where, despite oneself, a thousand ways to dissipate yourself bear down on you and turn you away from piety. Even so he always avoided the vices that others boasted of; not that there were not many occasions and dangers when anyone else perhaps would have succumbed, but the strength of his religious principles and the aversion he always had for certain vices, coupled with his habit of distancing himself from any relationship with persons of the opposite sex, preserved him from any aberration of that kind, an astonishing thing for someone of his age and personal attractiveness, given the seductive environment and the general morals of the country he was living in. He owed it to the Lord's grace that he was able to bear the witness that we heard from him personally when he was older, when he was a priest, and in the intimacy of friendship, that he never had to accuse himself of the least fault with persons of the opposite sex, amid all the traps that were set for him with a greater or lesser degree of malice, but always with considerable artfulness. He was in the position a number of times of having to repulse even by force the advances that were made to him, and of having to resort on two occasions to flight to save himself.

He always retained in this respect such a strong sense of modesty that it gave rise to jokes at his expense on the part of people who did nevertheless think a lot of him. Finding himself one evening at the home of the old Countess of Vintimille, as he was about to leave, the Countess asked him to be so kind as to escort Miss de Puget, a young lady whose father and mother lived in the same house as Eugene's relatives. This proposal, which gave proof of the trust Eugene inspired, visibly embar-

⁹³ Religious of the Congregation of the Oratory, founded in Rome in 1564 by St. Philip Neri.

rassed him; there was some laughter over his embarrassment and they insisted. Eugene, unable to refuse, gave his arm to the young lady, but, moved by a feeling definitely rather rare at this age, he felt such confusion over walking alone in the streets of Palermo by night, escorting a young lady, that as each carriage passed with its lights and torches he made her get in under some gateway or entrance so as not to be seen, so much did he blush at even the mere appearance of gallantry. Miss de Puget could not help telling about it; Eugene's father was critical of this excessive modesty, yet everybody praised the principles which underlay it.

Eugene's relatives⁹⁴ in France were continually urging his father to reach a decision to let him return to his native land. The country was in a state of tranquillity since Bonaparte had seized power. His mother, and specially his grandmother, feared the coming of death before they could embrace this child they loved so tenderly. Their dread was that in case of death their inheritance to him would be disputed. In short, they produced so many good reasons that his father made up his mind to let him leave.

It was on October 11, 1802, that Eugene embarked on the vessel that was to bring him to France. There is no need to recount the distress involved in that separation; Eugene's father, uncles; his two faithful friends, the sons of the Duke of Cannizzaro; their tutor, Mr. de Galembert, and the maid Nanon whom he would never see again, all mingled their tears with his which flowed bitterly. The vessel set sail to go and complete its cargo in Cefalù. It continued on its way, but on Saturday the 16th in the afternoon, as the vessel's position was between Sicily and Sardinia, a frightful storm came up which put it in peril for four whole hours. The seas were so strong they came into the vessel; all thought of steering was impossible, the wheel being completely submerged. Finally they managed to free it. Rain fell in torrents, thunder

⁹⁴ That is, Mrs. de Mazenod, Eugénie and Grandmother Joannis.

passed overhead and rumbled clap on clap, so as to make the vessel shudder; in the middle of this torment that left the sailors exhausted, pumping had to go on all the time as the bilges took in huge amounts of water. Captain Reynier was very afraid, as he was helpless to do anything. He wrote in his notes that the wind boxed the compass over the two hour period rain and thunder continued. Finally, the wind settled in a fixed direction and the peril passed. They sighted the isle of Elba only on the 20th; the shores of Bastia were sighted the same day. Finally, after fourteen days at sea, they entered the port of Marseilles. And so ended Eugene's exile.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ It was on October 24, 1802, that Eugene went ashore in the port of Marseilles.



Palermo

The Olivella Church
and Convent



The
Segesta
Temple
in
Sicily

B – DIARY OF A STAY IN PARIS¹

(June 14 - September 23, 1805)

INTRODUCTION

In 1804 and 1805 – when he was 22-23 years old – Eugene turned his thoughts seriously to the future. He had returned to France, in 1802, because his mother had found him a future bride “rich beyond his expectations.”² This young lady died however of consumption soon after Eugene’s return. In January 1805 a second project takes shape. It fell through because the young lady is not rich enough.³ Meanwhile, Eugene was suffocating in a family milieu consisting of rather highly-strung women whose conversation centers on business matters; further, he disliked life in Aix’s society, finding it heavy, humorless and starchy.⁴

In 1804, Eugene had concocted a plan to carve out a future in Sicily. Through the good offices of his contacts in the Sicilian nobility, he hoped to obtain a commission as lieutenant or captain in the palatine guard of the King of Naples who was at that time in Palermo. Then he would purchase an estate, not far from his father and uncles, out of the proceeds of the sale of the property at St. Laurent du Verdon that his mother had promised him. President de Mazenod, who very much wanted to see his son again, judged the project feasible, but recommended discretion. Mrs. de Mazenod must never guess her son’s real intentions, otherwise she would never give him permission to undertake the journey.

¹ Orig.: Aix, Bibliothèques Méjanès, papiers Boisgelin. This is the location of the correspondence between Eugene and his father up to 1817.

² Mrs. de Mazenod to her husband, January 17, 1802. Orig.: Rome, archives de la Postulation, FB 1-4.

³ cf. J. Leflon I, p.230

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.253ff. The three women: his mother, his aunt Mrs Dedons and his grandmother. Eugene was very attached to his sister; he says little about his cousin Emile Dedons.

Emboldened by this support and advice, Eugene needed to get hold of a passport. Providence seemed to smile on his plan. His aunt, Mrs. Dedons de Pierrefeu, had to go to Paris to find an educational establishment for her son Emile; she asked her nephew to accompany her and offered to pay the travelling expenses.⁵

As soon as he learns of this planned trip to Paris, Mr. de Mazenod suggests to his son that he keep “a little diary to note,” he wrote, “everything you deem worthy of observation and curiosity.” Eugene makes no promises but replies that, on principle, he notes down on his travels what he thinks is worth remembering.⁶

– Why this Diary?

During his stay in Paris from June 14 to September 23, Eugene wrote six long letters to his father without further mention of the Diary. But after the travellers’ return, the President brings up again his desire to receive the requested Diary; he even indicates what he hopes to find in it.

“When you are well-rested from your exertions,” he writes on October 3, “I count on you making me a detailed report of all you saw in Paris, both things and persons, for up to now you have only related them in part and succinctly, though it is not as if the pages of your letters were not filled up... What’s wanted now is for you to give the details of your journey, stay and return, with a certain amount of order.”

Eugene replies, November 1:

“I am asking for time before sending you the ragguaglio distinto⁷ of my journey. I haven’t yet assembled all the materials and my Diary is still not in shape, so you would not find it interesting.”

⁵ *Ibid.*: p.262-267.

⁶ President to his son, April 4, 1805, and Eugene’s reply May 24, 1805.

⁷ “Distinguished report” (Italian).

The President again insists on November 28:

"I would also like from you, when you are well-rested from your exertions, that at your leisure you would send me a detailed report of your journey and return which you have spoken of only in bits and pieces. Put in your comments that you know I value greatly. This little work will be of service to us both alike, to you to clarify and preserve your thoughts and to me to correct mine on a lot of things which with the passage of time have undergone so many changes as to seem quite new to me. But I don't want you to send it all on to me at once. It will be plenty for me to see you set aside for this purpose one or two pages of each of your letters following the styles of the gazettes. Afterwards it will be up to me to put all these fragments together in one piece of work which will be a real source of pleasure for me."

– The Diary

Eugene finally decided to respond to his father's wishes. At the beginning of the letter of November 28, which enclosed the Diary, he makes it clear that it involves only the Diary of the stay in Paris.

"Not to tumble into the folly of mountains that make a great to do and give birth to a mouse," he writes, "I will send you right away, my dear Father, without further preparation, not the Diary of my journey, which would be too long and tiresome, but that of my stay in Paris; if it bores you, remember you asked for it and I have merely faithfully copied what I had hastily scribbled on a few sheets of paper."

It seems in fact as if, disappointed at not obtaining a passport and so seeing his plans to set up in Sicily come crashing down, Eugene wanted to forget his trip to Paris as soon as possible.

His father was asking him for the detailed account of everything he saw in Paris "both things and people." Eugene says nothing of the journey and nothing about the people he met, except the Archbishop. But in his letters he had told the story of his interviews with various people with the idea of obtaining some pension or post for his father and uncles. He contents himself with reciting the account of some visits to museums, parks, libraries and churches. Again, he apparently wrote very rapidly. As a result, spelling mistakes abound, especially on the first page.⁸

⁸ The list of spelling mistakes and outdated spellings is long – no attempt is made to detail this here.

It is a short text but full of life. One will note Eugene's dynamism at 23 years of age, his trenchant judgments and even what he apparently reveals of his preoccupations.

It is interesting to underline among others his reflection after the description of the chaste love of a male elephant and his mate: "This example would of itself suffice for me as a proof that they can be followed" (see below p. 111). Was he turning his thoughts already to a renunciation of marriage? Mr. de Mazenod, no doubt using his intuition, noted a change in his son's outlook. On September 22, Eugene had sent him the balance sheet of his expenses. He had also passed a very severe judgment on the prostitutes encountered in some quarters of Paris.⁹ In his reply, dated October 31, the President praises his son's wisdom and chastity, but assures him he will get married and find the partner who will bring him "happiness and well-being." Here is an extract from that letter:

"I cannot refrain from mentioning all the pleasure your letters give me. I am not referring to the sentiments they contain, that goes without saying, but I mean the turn of phrase, the energy and the pleasing quality of your expressions. I see you acquiring every day something in the dimension of style and I am really proud to think I may have contributed to its formation by my letters. That's how my revered father formed mine and you will do the same for your children; for while you may well say that there isn't any partner available to your liking and who might bring

⁹ On his expenses and the subject of prostitutes Eugene wrote: "I should send you now the little account of my expenses, not for you to pay it, let that be clear, but to convince you with this evidence that I can be as wise and sparing in the capital, amid pleasure and dissipation, as in the depths of the province. Actually, there is not much merit in it, for unless one is crazy, I think it does not enter anyone's head to buy the pretty things he sees, when he has no money, and unless one is the most licentious of libertines, it is impossible that the snares they tender to youth, or perhaps even more to age, can make the least impression. In actual fact, what are they? Miserable prostitutes, disgusting in the shamelessness they display, they take you by the coat as you go by in the evening at the Palais Royal or its neighborhood. They are usually very ugly. But even if they were prettier, has beauty any charms when it is separated from a certain reserve that is called modesty, with which the author of nature so wisely adorned the weaker sex? As for me, I confess their presence wearies me to the point that I keep away in the evening from the sink of iniquity they have taken up as their sphere... Even so if ever it fell to me to regulate the area of public decency I would banish these vile people to barns or caves from which they would emerge only to weep for their sins."

you happiness and well-being, she will turn up. Never doubt it!... Your wisdom and chastity are alike well known to me and make me feel ashamed when I think seriously about myself, but as well as that what a joy to see you in this so different from what I was."

– The President's Reaction to the Diary

On January 23, 1806, Mr. de Mazenod thanks his son for the despatch of the pages of his diary. He takes the opportunity to offer some criticism over its content and its form:

"I have read with interest and satisfaction the beginning of your Diary. You confine yourself to that of your stay in Paris, and so as not to bore me you are suppressing that of your journey. I readily agree to this arrangement without accepting the reason given, for you very well know that I would never tire of listening to or reading you, but what I cannot approve is your using for your first missive five pages of your letter. Hold hard, captain, that will not settle my account for then you will no longer have enough space left to answer the points in my letters or to put in the other things you have to tell me. So, both for these reasons and to humor my wishes, content yourself for the future with devoting a page or a page and a half at most to the continuation of your Diary. As the proverb says, you must never rob one altar to adorn another, and your good father, justly avid for all your productions, claims to have the hoc et illud, i.e., he wants to enjoy your story without losing your replies."

Eugene apparently had more notes on his stay in Paris, but he forwards nothing further subsequently. On December 26, 1805, he admits he copied, in his letter dated November 28, a "piece" of his Diary so as not to "resist" his father's wish; he goes on: "Just now I cannot bring myself to give you the rest for two excellent reasons: first to spare you repeatedly the boredom of an unfinished product, secondly because I feel a distinct repugnance to copying out some wretched scraps which lack all rhyme or reason."

In 1805 Eugene wrote his father seventeen letters four to eight pages long and we have sixteen replies that equally abound. In 1806 and 1807 they each wrote at intervals only four or five letters two pages long. From 1808 to 1813, the correspondence between them stopped

because of the political situation.¹⁰ The English controlled the seaways and made traffic between France and Sicily difficult, following the Continental Blockade imposed by Napoleon against England. It is understandable then that Eugene gave only the most important news and says no more subsequently about the “Diary of his Stay in Paris.”

P. Yvon Beaudoin, OMI

¹⁰ In a letter of Mr. de Mazenod dated April 12, 1812, he said he had received no letters for four years. The correspondence will resume on a regular basis after Napoleon's fall in 1814.

TEXT

Aix, November 28, 1805¹¹

I arrived in Paris on June 14 towards 11:00 a.m. and got down at the Hotel de France, Rue Montmartre, only to make an immediate exit and go running to Notre Dame. So I began my Paris sightseeing by paying an act of homage to God in France's first city. I am not impressed by this church. Vast as it is, it bears no comparison with the common run of Italian churches. It is gothic in style like most French cathedrals and in my view was deprived of some of its merit when it was white-washed. It is putting a modern style of dress on an aged body, while a gothic temple must of necessity be smoke-begrimed, all those marks of antiquity inspire respect. Isn't it a pleasure in the times we are living in to be able to pretend and, in the presence of Him who always had existence, try and imagine that we are still living in the centuries when respect and love for religion had such beautiful monuments raised up to God? Now a layer of whitewash spoils this pleasing reverie I used sometimes so to look forward to.¹²

This church, founded by Estienne de Sully, Bishop of Paris, who laid the first stone in the year 522, was reconstructed in 1171 during the reign of Louis the Younger. Sacked and pillaged in 1790 and 1791, re-furbished after the Concordat, I think at the time of Bonaparte's coronation. He took the opportunity to make it large gifts of silverware and ornaments. A noteworthy feature of its construction is its daring ele-

¹¹ This Diary takes up a few pages of the letter dated "November 1805". Acknowledging his son's letter the President, on January 23, 1806, wrote: "My dear and good son, another of your letters has arrived. Praise the Lord. I am unable to cite you the date as you forgot it and put only the month, but I presume it is November 28, as it arrived along with those from France of that date and the previous last I received from you was dated the 1st of that month."

¹² The President comments on the reflections contained in the first paragraph on January 23, 1806: "The longer the run from Rue Montmartre to the Church of Notre Dame, the greater my praise for your initiative at the outset of making a start by paying homage to the sovereign master of heaven and earth; My thoughts on the whitewashing of gothic basilicas are like your own, it is a kind of cosmetic that, far from beautifying, degrades them. St. Sauveur's, in Aix, lost much of its attraction by a like treatment."

vation, it is 60 toises¹³ long, 24 wide, 17 high, its towers are 347 high. 120 pillars support its weight overall. It is built on piles, and I am told one could pass beneath it in a boat.¹⁴

Among the Capital's treasures, I must not overlook the Cardinal Archbishop.¹⁵ He is phenomenal. 97 years of age, he is not subject to any kind of infirmity. He zealously fulfills all the functions of his ministry, and would err by excess were he not restrained by his entourage. He is abstemious, drinks only white wine, and never omits to get some exercise, it is good for him. His preference for his walks is the Botanical Gardens¹⁶ of which he does a circuit. That is where I saw him for the first time. Once my name was mentioned, he welcomed me most warmly, introduced me to the people around him as the grand-nephew of his dearest friend and he has never seen me since without speaking of that incomparable man whom we mourn all the more every day.¹⁷ He invited me to dine and I have been there every Friday of my stay in Paris.

¹³ An old French measurement of length, equal to 1.949 meters.

¹⁴ On January 23, 1806, the President corrects several of these assertions: "I am obliged, to straighten out some of your ideas, to point out some historical errors that have crept into your narrative. There was never a Bishop of Paris called Etienne de Sully. The Bishop of Paris did not found Notre Dame in 522; he rebuilt it in the 12th century and it was not he who laid the first stone. These are the true facts that I derive from my old notes." Mr. de Mazenod goes on in a long paragraph to give some details on the history of the church of Notre Dame. His "old notes" were thus quite extensive and it is surprising he managed to hang on to them in his movements from Aix to Palermo. That the President knew Paris well one can indeed believe; he spent several months there just before his exile in 1790, Cf. J. Leflon, I, pp.59ff. *Fortuné* could help him in a pinch as he studied for eight years in the seminary of St. Sulpice and the Sorbonne, from 1768-1776.

¹⁵ Archbishop J.B. de Belloy, Archbishop of Paris from 1802-1808, was born in 1709.

¹⁶ Botanical Gardens, given the name National Museum of Natural History in 1793. It has among others the section of natural history with a zoology gallery (stuffed animals) and a Zoological Gardens (Zoo).

¹⁷ Archbishop de Belloy had been Bishop of Marseille from 1755-1791. So he knew the Mazenod family, in particular Charles Auguste André who was one of his vicar generals. The President makes the following comment: "I was as moved by the way you came to meet the Cardinal as edified by the welcome you received and touched by the tender remembrance he retained for the memory of our venerated uncle. Quite certainly he never had or would have had any friend more faithful or colleague more worthy. The prelate who was ten years older than his vicar general will survive him by perhaps thirty years. I know it is given to few individuals to become centenarians but that will never make me cease regretting the mistakes of this old Israelite of Venice but for which we might still have had for many years this saintly uncle who was the source of our happiness and consolation." On Charles Auguste André and his death in Venice, cf. above pp. 45-46.

Through him I made the acquaintance of Mr. Haüy,¹⁸ professor of natural history, a man as courteous and upright as he is learned and modest. In a most gracious manner he offered me tickets affording entry even at times designated for study. I gratefully accepted and returned on July 15 to make use of this privilege.

I entered directly into the natural history section where I passed fairly quickly through the room containing mineralogical specimens. Very ignorant in this area, I could enjoy only the display. I gave a little more attention to the examination of the animals, although on a first visit one cannot go much into details. On view in a unusual display brought together in these galleries and beautifully exhibited are everything from humming-birds to ostriches, scarabs to elephants. This poor creature had lived for a long time in the zoo at Versailles along with a dear female companion who is ill-supporting her grief, all that she has since the death of her spouse. She loved him all the more as his love for her was chaste, and nothing savoring of carnality ever inter-mingled with his gentle caresses. They followed to the letter Plato's counsel and were such faithful followers of his precepts, over the period of several years they lived together, that this example would of itself be enough to convince me they can be followed.¹⁹

Among the remarkable animals this section holds, I observed the giraffe, a quadruped larger than the horse, endowed with a neck longer

¹⁸ Father René Just Haüy, mineralogist (1743-1822).

¹⁹ These reflections of Eugene gave rise to a number of philosophical and spiritual thoughts on the part of his father: "I follow your steps to the Botanical Garden, the Natural History Display and the Zoo simply to join you in wonder at the omnipotence of a God who is the creator and conservator of so many substances and beings so different from and disproportionate to each other, but I cannot let it pass without comment that that platonic love of the elephant for its mate, that so enchanted you and seemed so easy of imitation, is neither natural nor decreed by Providence which said to every living creature: increase and multiply. It is true that man, who makes ill-use of all God's gifts, has interpreted this license or command under the influence of the disordered desires of his corrupt heart, while the beasts, held bound by their instinct to the Creator's original intention, require for embarking on the process of multiplication a degree of heat that is proper temperature in the climate to which they were brought and could not achieve consummation in the flames of love. They were limited to the feelings of friendship that their common captivity enhanced still more, but their chastity which resulted solely from their impotence could not be a virtue like that of a chaste human being in whom it is the effect of a free and meditated decision, which by the help of divine grace leads him to dedicate himself to privations to attain a higher perfection."

again than its body at whose extremity is a quite small head. It greatly resembles the dromedary in its bodily shape and physiognomy. Mr. de Buffon had not had a thorough acquaintance of this animal. It was donated only a few years ago by a traveller who claims to have killed it in Africa. I won't say anything about the other animals that everyone is familiar with and are displayed for the most part in every natural history collection.

I would really like to have visited as well the comparative anatomy section, but two o'clock struck and the doors closed as it were on the dot and simultaneously. So I had to go on to the zoo, where I paid my respects for a moment to that most serene of elephants I mentioned above. She conversed for some moments of her deep grief, which remained unabated even with the passage of time.²⁰ She wanted to know if I had admired her husband's fine figure. Her trunk was towards me, her mouth agape, in my mind's eye I saw it as my grave if I gave the lady displeasure, so I spoke highly of her dead husband. She seemed satisfied and swallowed at a gulp a full bucket of water to restore her spirits, cast down by the baleful memory of someone she had so loved. You are doubtless familiar with the way these animals tackle their food. Since they have no neck, and their huge head cannot get down to ground level to take the foods that are necessary to them, the Creator has provided them with a long trunk with which they seize by a sucking action everything they want, even very heavy things. Then they bring this instrument up to the level of a hole that serves as their mouth, into which they violently hurl what needs to be chewed up. For water, they suck it in and then let it fall all together into their mouth. Its capacity must be remarkable for the noise the water makes as it falls resounds as in a vat. You can imagine I did not get close enough to the widow to investigate at close quarters, so I am relying here on my conjectures.

Next I went through the other houses in the zoo and visited with interest the goats and Asiatic cattle, dromedaries, deer, monkeys and so to the birds. All the different dwellings are picturesquely situated, some on a height, others in a dip, others in a little valley, the whole forming a vast English garden in which the little wooden bridge has not been overlooked.

²⁰ Italian expression: "with the passage of time".

The savage beasts will soon be placed in the middle of the zoo in carefully constructed houses circular in shape. At present they are found towards the gate of the Botanical Gardens. The lion, tiger, leopard, the dog bred from a wolf, and some other animals attract attention by their ferocious mien. I felt sorry for an unfortunate white bear that for several years had done nothing but move its head from right to left and left to right like a pendulum. Perhaps the boredom of a harsh and over-long captivity has weakened this poor animal's brain, it could then be called "the mad bear".

I was very shocked that they leave exposed to the public gaze, including many young ladies and girls, a Lascar monkey that is continuously engaged in highly indecent contortions and gestures especially on the approach of a lady. I noted, not without some surprise, that it is precisely in front of the cage where this little libertine makes a show of himself that our curious mistresses flock in crowds. Draw your own conclusions, I must speak the truth.

It was still quite early when we had gone through all there was to see in the garden created, so to speak, by the celebrated Buffon. We wanted to make good use of the rest of the day and after taking a snack we went to Gobelins.²¹ Such is the fame of this factory that I could not but be eager to go and carefully investigate how they make those precious tapestries that can well be compared to the most beautiful pictures sprung from the brushes of the greatest painter. The location is infamous. As one enters the workshops it is hard to imagine that it is from a den like this so many masterpieces emerge. They are dimly-lit, damp, low-ceilinged and narrow. The looms on top of each other, the workers work in silence and scarcely reply when you question them. The picture that serves as their model is placed behind the one who has to copy it, so that he has to look behind to examine the colors and their shades. Then he uses wools that should produce the same effect in the copy, but the surprising thing is that the worker works from the back, without seeing therefore the whole of his work.

²¹ Gobelins: an establishment on Faubourg St. Marcel to which, in the 17th century, Flemish tapestry-workers were invited. Later on there were workers representing all the arts.

After spending several hours following the wonderful work of these marvelous artist, I ascended to a gallery where many of their pictures are exhibited. How can I describe the beauty of these amazing productions, these artistic masterpieces? Is it credible someone could imitate so perfectly in wool the transparency of a veil as in the picture of Xeusis,²² in which among the women being presented to him to model his famous statue, you can see some who cover their nakedness with a veil through which you may see very distinctly their comely figure and the coloring of their skin. Nothing could be more imposing than the picture that shows the scene of Joash being acknowledged as king in the presence of Atholiah frothing with rage in the temple of Jerusalem. What more perfect imitation of nature than Narcissus leaping into the pool that shows him his reflection. I would never end if I wanted to list all the pictures before which I stood in ecstasy. Be satisfied with the little I have said, and above all don't be afraid of forming an exaggerated idea, it will always fall short of the reality.

A visitor cannot stay long in Paris without going to visit the superb collection of paintings located in the great gallery of the Louvre.²³ There you can see gathered together the works of the greatest masters of the famous schools. Italy has provided a large part of the beauties one admires there. I recognized some masterpieces I had seen elsewhere, such as the Wedding Feast of Cana by Paolo Veronese, the Cenacle, Saint Jerome, the Descent from the Cross, the Transfiguration and a hundred others. I will refrain from delivering myself of the many reflections this topic gives rise to, I will simply put the question whether "St. Jerome dying in the arms of Religion" was not better housed in a venerated temple of which it was the chief ornament than in a profane gallery between Venus and Love? Another reflection that occurred to me as I went through this immense gallery added a sour note to the pleasure I felt at finding myself among so many beautiful objects. A single person, I told myself, could destroy for ever the precious collection, one barbarian of the many engendered by the Revolution would suffice to set the blaze alight and the work of so many famous men would disappear without trace. Even supposing no one is daring enough to commit

²² Famous Greek painter (464-398 BC).

²³ The Louvre: one-time royal residence in Paris. Completed under Napoleon III (emperor from 1852-1870), it has become one of the richest museums in the world.

such an atrocity, could not a thunderbolt reduce to dust what has been assembled with such care? It follows from what I have just said that, everything considered, it would be better for the arts that these works be dispersed.

Not only have pains been taken to place in a single locale all the masterpieces of painting, those of sculpture likewise have been assembled, ancient statues from another collection no less precious and very interesting. They are situated in the rooms beneath the great gallery. That's where one finds today the famous group of Laocoon, the Belvedere Apollo, the Medici Venus²⁴ and an endless number of other statues or busts, less precious but no less famous.

You know I have always had a weakness for books. An admirer of the fine arts, I have never felt in myself more than a *venerando rispetto*²⁵ for them, and I have always felt unworthy to penetrate their sanctuary. Little endowed by nature, I felt no inclination to imitate the masters who have left us models in this genre. Besides, I have always found there was something arid about them, much to please and little instruction. It is not like that with the sciences. In the school of the great men who have cultivated them, every day one learns something new. These are acquaintances which not only satisfy one's taste but also one's mind. When one chooses one's models well one learns to become better as well as wiser, and I find a sweet satisfaction in growing so to speak each day in knowledge and goodness. Stop, stop, stop... What a preamble to tell you I went to the Library!²⁶ Heavens above, where did I go astray? Anyway, to punish myself for the prolixity, I will not say a word about the books it contains. It owed its humble beginnings to King John who had scarcely 20 volumes; Charles V added 900 tomes. The Duke of Bedford, regent of the realm, bought it after the death of Charles VI for 1200, about a half of the evaluation. this sum went to the contractor of the mausoleum of Charles VI and Isabeau of Bavaria, and the books were taken to London. However some of these tomes were recovered. Francis I and Louis XIII built it up considerably and it is during the reigns of

²⁴ Famous sculptures from the Vatican Museum, carried off to Paris by Napoleon's soldiers.

²⁵ "Respectful veneration" (Italian).

²⁶ The reference is to the National Library which, in Napoleon's time, was called the Imperial Library.

Louis XIV, Louis XV, and Louis XVI that it was brought to the pitch of magnificence which makes it today one of the finest libraries in existence. It holds more than a hundred thousand volumes. It further contains a quantity of precious manuscripts some of which have been brought from Italy. It was high time, after admiring so many ancient things of beauty, for me to go and see a product of our age, the beautiful church of St. Genevieve.²⁷ I have my doubts this superb building will be finished for a long time yet, not that much remains to be done really in comparison with what has been done already. But a temple today, however beautiful it may be, is looked on as the seat of superstition and there is little hurry to put the finishing touches to it. However. St. Genevieve would be Paris's finest building. It was drawn up according to the plans of Germain Soufflot. Construction began in 1747. In plan it is in the shape of a Greek cross. Its length including the porch is 339 feet,²⁸ its width measured in the middle of the cross is 253 feet 9 inches. The porch based on that of Rome's Pantheon is formed of 22 columns, each 5 foot 2 inches in diameter and 53 feet 3 inches in height, including the bases and capitals which are decorated with acanthus leaves. The porch consists of three doors; 130 columns decorate the interior. They are each 3 feet 6 inches in diameter and 27 feet 8 inches high. As to the exterior, the dome is shaped as a wide circle made up of 32 pillars. The over-all height of this temple is 282 feet. It is claimed that the altar situated in the middle of the church would have been on a level with the height of the towers of Notre Dame. The Vandals of the 18th century commenced their degradation of this superb monument by having the fleurs de lys sculptured in the vault and throughout the temple's interior destroyed. Then they made ready to profane it even before it was consecrated by placing there remains of Voltaire, Rousseau, Marat, Mirabeau, and many other similar monsters. I remark in passing that this kind of cult that they decree to the philosophers, who like Voltaire and Rousseau died before our disasters befell us, is proof along with their evil works that it is to them we owe this horrible Revolution which

²⁷ The Church of St. Genevieve was in construction from 1764-1780. During the French Revolutionary period it became a temple designated to receive the ashes of the great: the Pantheon.

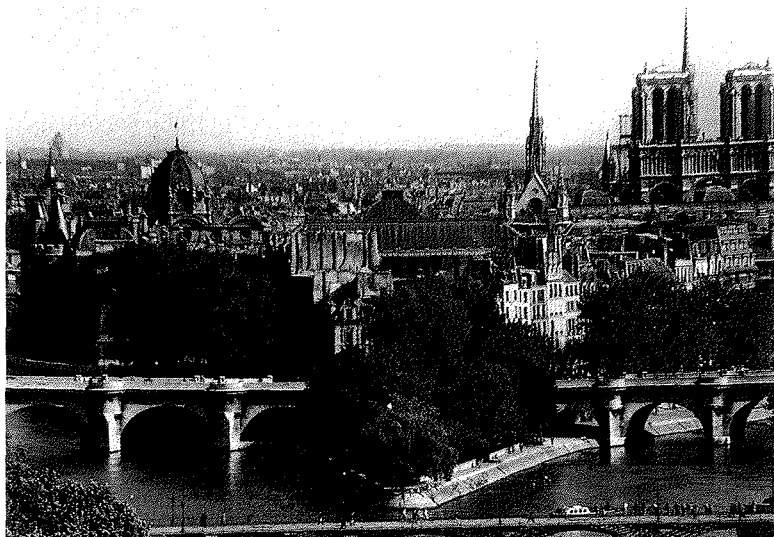
²⁸ An ancient measure of length equivalent to about 33 cms. The French foot was a little longer than the present English foot. The inch, a twelfth of a foot, was equivalent to 27.07 mm.

has turned the whole world upside down. They only give them first place in their profane den because they have always taken them as masters and in gratitude for the surprising effects that resulted from merely acting on their principles. And while I am on the subject, I cannot allow myself to refrain from citing what the diarists of that ilk were saying about it at the beginning of the Revolution while speaking about Voltaire: "He did not see all he did," they said, "but he did all we see." Add to that affirmation those of the sophist Condorcet both in the Assembly and in his writings, when he saw the triumph of his hateful sect, and you will get a just idea of what we owe these coryphées of the philosophy that was so humored in a time of madness. I was curious to go down below ground level where they have placed these saints of a new alloy. I must say that approaching the icy ashes of the Patriarch of Ferney,²⁹ I felt a feeling of horror, an involuntary fear that made me shiver. All the evil this ambitious atheist did, or counselled to be done, came back to memory, and at the sight of that dust once animated by a soul so black, I could not contain my indignation and gave vocal expression to the sovereign contempt that one who profaned so deplorably the gifts the Creator had so to speak lavished on him so prodigally has always inspired in me. I did not find myself in good enough company to stay long in that underground place now rendered unclean. I came out but shortly after entering to purify myself in the fresh air of the impurities I had contracted in the presence of that host of enemies of God and his Christ.³⁰

²⁹ Voltaire, born in Paris in 1694, lived at Ferney from 1759 to his death in 1778.

³⁰ With regard to this last paragraph, the President replies: "What you tell me about the Imperial Library is fine, one must add merely that its first seat in Charles V's time was in one of the towers of the Louvre which for this reason was called the Library Tower. I endorse all your ideas and reflections concerning St. Genevieve's Church or the Pantheon, and I mention it only to rejoice in the fact that our friend Chevalier* got the place of Keeper of this library. It could not have fallen into better hands and while we are on the subject I will tell you that I got hold of his works on the Propontide and the Troade. The first I found somewhat dry, succinct in detail, and really useful only for the learned and well-versed in the art. I got a lot more out of the second and it brought back pleasant memories of our trip to Istria and Dalmatia, just as your uncle was reminded of various trips he made in the archipelago. That concludes all my observations on the first part of your Diary whose sequel I am awaiting with impatience."

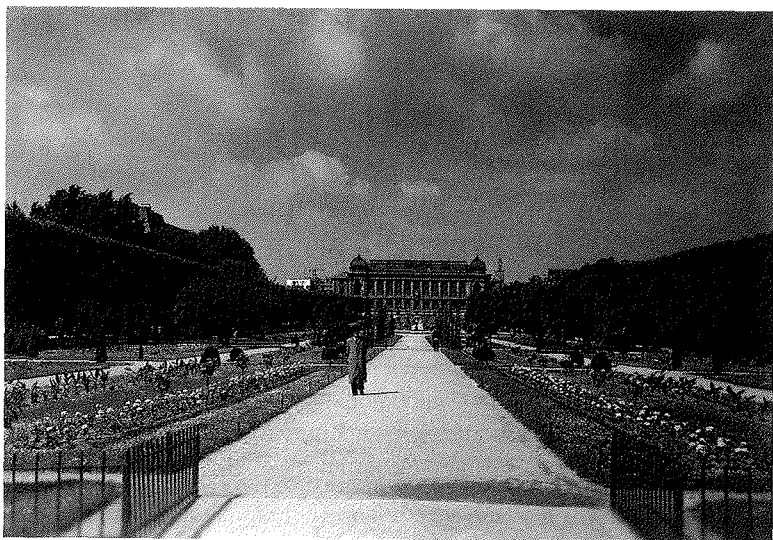
* (Mr. Lechevalier – whom Mr. de Mazenod always refers to as "The Savant" – was an erudite traveller who became under the Empire the Keeper of the Library. A friend of the de Mazenods, Eugene often sought his advice in Paris.)



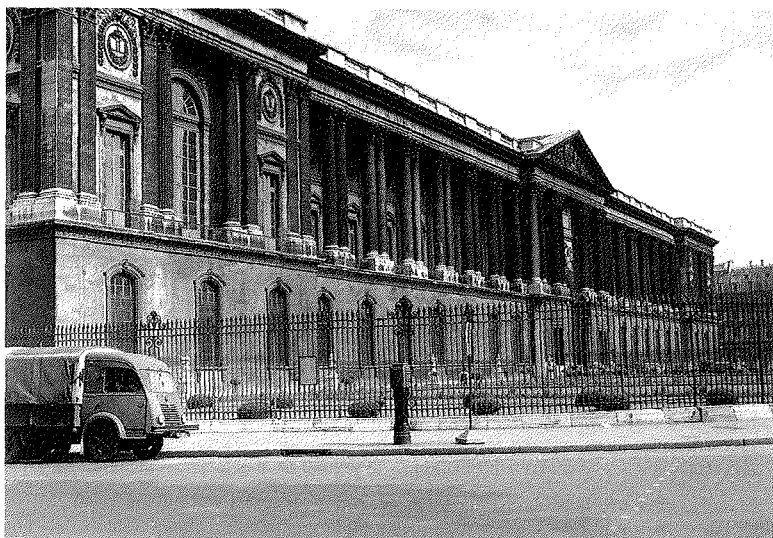
Notre-Dame in Paris



The Pantheon



The Botanical Gardens



The Louvre Museum

C – DIARY OF THE YOUTH CONGREGATION OF AIX 1813-1821¹

INTRODUCTION

Among the resources available at the Postulation Office, in the Oblate General Archives, we retain a number of registers² pertaining to the Aix Christian Youth Association, which very soon took the name of Youth Congregation.³ Among these registers is the **Diary** we are publishing here practically in its entirety.⁴

This Diary has a twofold importance. First, it gives us a real insight into one of the principal apostolic activities of Father Eugene de Mazenod during his earliest years of ministry, activities otherwise little known for lack of documentary evidence, especially for the years 1813 and 1814.⁵ Secondly, the Youth Congregation was a kind of testing ground for the future institute of the Missionaries of Provence. In the

¹ The exact title of the manuscript is: *Journal des délibérations, lois et coutumes de l'Association de la Jeunesse chrétienne établie à Aix sous les auspices de la très sainte Vierge, le 25 avril 1813*, 82 pages written entirely in Eugene de Mazenod's own hand. APR DM VIII 2 a.

² This includes, as well as this Diary, the *Statuts et Règlements*, draft and definitive text of 1816, and the *Minutes des délibérations prises par les divers Conseils de la Congrégation de la Jeunesse chrétienne d'Aix*, 1817-[1837], 117 pp. APR DM VIII 2 b.

³ As from April 25, 1813, Eugene uses the words "association" and "congregation" indifferently. After the Spring of 1814, the word "association" is rarely used.

⁴ Normally we will omit the lists of congregants which appear on the occasion of the many ceremonies for the reception of new members. We depart from this method when it is a question of the names of young men who will later be entering the Missionaries of Provence, or too of the names of Missionaries who are received as members of the Congregation. We also omit the list of responsibilities renewed at each year's end.

⁵ There are but few letters from Eugene in the course of these two years when the political situation made it practically impossible to correspond with Sicily. After the fall of Napoleon (April 1814), Eugene begins again to write to his father and this correspondence allows us to follow him more closely in his various activities.

Diary's Introduction, in the statutes,⁶ the exposition of pious exercises, acceptance ceremonies and expulsions, the narration of the Director's grief on the occasion of the death of congregants, etc., can be seen the first outlines of the future missionary Congregation. In addition it is out of this rich breeding-ground that Father de Mazenod will derive a number of vocations to religious life.

When did Eugene write this Diary?

From various indications within the text it is easy to give a precise response to this question. The entries from April 25, 1813 to December 8, 1815 [pp. 1-43 of the original] were made practically on the day in question. Those from July 4, 1816, to March 26, 1818 [pp. 61-72], Father de Mazenod begins again noting events on the day in question and is already aware that he will not keep this up for long on account of his multiple occupations. Finally, the narrative that goes from December 26, 1818, to July 8, 1821, [p. 73-82], was written in the autumn of 1821.

Why this Congregation?

Father de Mazenod returned to Aix at the beginning of November, 1812. During his annual retreat, made in December at the major seminary in Aix, he wrote out his rule of life and it focusses exclusively on his duties towards God.⁷ Reading this regulation, one would think it was made for a monk whose exclusive concern was prayer. However, from the following Ash Wednesday, March 3, 1813, Eugene begins to preach in Provençal in the Church of the Magdalene and continues throughout the Sundays of Lent until April 11. On April 25, the first Sunday after Easter, about six months after his return to Provence, he is laying the foundation of the Christian Youth Congregation with seven young people including J.J. Marcou who will be a Missionary of Provence. Has Eugene been able in so short a time to attain a grasp of the sad religious state of the young people of college age? He scarcely mentions it in his writings, whether in the seminary or in the years 1812-1813. One has to go back to his first years back in Aix after the exile in Italy to find a

⁶ Cf. E. Lamirande, *Les Règlements de la Congrégation de la Jeunesse chrétienne d'Aix et nos saintes Règles*, in *Etudes Oblates*, 15 (1956) pp. 17-33.

⁷ Cf. *Oblate Writings* 15, pp. 11-27.

reflection coming from his pen on the situation of young people. In a letter to his father dated August 16, 1805, he is speaking of the advantages of the 1801 Concordat and adds:

“Religion had been given up for dead in this kingdom; and if the peace accorded to the Church had not enabled its ministers to preserve the young, I mean the naissant generation, from the contagion which had affected all age-groups, but especially those we call the ‘children of the revolution,’ all those of 18, 20 years of age would be ignorant of God’s very existence. I was going to expatiate and tell you the loveliest things in the world, but the sun is at the antipodes and dusk has passed.”⁸ The Diary begins with an introduction in which Father de Mazenod describes the situation of the young. The success of Napoleon’s policy is “terrifying,” he writes: “Already the land of France is bestrewn with lycées, military schools and other establishments where impiety is encouraged, bad morals at least tolerated, materialism promoted and applauded.” In another paragraph he insists: “This is a terrifying picture, but a true one, and I could embellish it still more without fear of being accused of exaggeration.”⁹ He adds finally: “What means are to be employed by the seducer himself. He felt he could succeed in corrupting France only by perverting young people, it is towards them he directs all his efforts. Very well, it will also be upon young people that I will work.” These formulas point to those he will use in 1818 in the *Nota Bene* at the beginning of the Rules. After describing the sad situation of the Church of France, he no longer asks: what did Napoleon do, but “what did Our Lord Jesus Christ do when he wanted to convert the world?” Very well, one will imitate him. “Terrifying” though it might appear, the religious and moral situation of the young people of Aix was certainly not to be despaired of; the rapid growth of the membership of the Association is proof of this.

⁸ *Oblate Writings* 14, p. 19.

⁹ The lycées and colleges were congregated in the Imperial University which was set up in 1808. This was not a “lay” entity in the modern sense of the word. Religion figured in it, in principle, as one of the essential bases of human and civic education. In practice however the atmosphere of the colleges and lycées was non-believing. The chaplains had an official role while exercising no real influence. Eugene de Mazenod passes a severe judgment on the lack of zeal of the one in the Aix college, cf. *Journal*, November 1, 1817, and J. Leflon, *La crise révolutionnaire 1789-1846*, vol. 20, in Fliche-Martin, *l’Histoire de l’église*, vol. 20, p. 237.

The Congregants

The Youth Congregation developed at a steady pace: about 25 members at the end of 1813, about sixty in 1814, 120 in 1815, 200 in 1816 and about 300 at the end of 1817. Clearly Father de Mazenod's personality and a special talent for winning over the young may have played their part in this success but, probably too, the initiative was answering a need of the better families.¹⁰ These young people came from every social class.¹¹ Postulants were accepted from the ages of 10-12, but they had to have made their first communion¹² before being received as members. In 1815 a section was set up for young people of 18 and upwards.¹³ To develop the members' sense of responsibility, the Director surrounded himself with some forty high officers and collaborators who enrolled, controlled, supported all the young people: Prefect, Vice-Prefect, Assessors, Zealots, Elders, Sacristans, Chorists and Choir Masters, Lectors, Porters, Librarians, Secretaries, Treasurers, Infirm-

¹⁰ These figures can be established starting from the lists of entrants which appear regularly in the Association's Diary. In his personal Diary, Bishop de Mazenod will write, on March 31, 1839: "My apprenticeship consisted in surrounding myself with young people whom I used to instruct. I have seen as many as 280 gathered around me." The *L'Ami de la Religion et du Roi* of July 17, 1816, wrote that "close on three hundred young people" took part in the procession of the Sacred Heart. In 1820, Fortuné de Mazenod speaks of 400 congregationists, cf. letter to the President, June 11, 1820. According to Father Pierlorz, o.m.i., some four to five hundred young people passed through the Congregation between 1813 and 1822, cf. *L'abbé de Mazenod et les Curés d'Aix*, ms., Vol. III, p. 701. The Youth Congregation of Mr. Allemand in Marseilles counted 80 members shortly after its reopening in 1814, and about 400 in 1826, cf. Gaduel, *Jean-Joseph Allemand*, Paris-Lyon, 1867, pp. 167-182. In that of Father Delpuits in Paris about 600 members were inscribed in 1817, but many, it seems, did not attend. Father Leblanc, who joined on his arrival in Paris in 1820, wrote that he attended one big feast-day and "the number of those present did not exceed 120 or 140, so far as I could judge," cf. Leblanc to Eugene de Mazenod, July 10, 1820 and Grandmaison, *La Congrégation*, Paris 1890, pp. 162, 314.

¹¹ Cf. J. Pierlorz, *Op. cit.* III, p. 697: 32 from the nobility, 168 middle-class, and 100 working-class.

¹² In the last century one usually made one's first communion at about 12 years of age. According to the Diary, some congregants made theirs at eleven and a half and twelve and a half (August 30, 1818), Chabot made his at thirteen (February 26, 1815) and Chappuis was fifteen (April 2, 1815). The 1816 Statutes (art. 44) say that one may not be a probationer before 14 years of age, after about a year's postulancy. Entry was therefore normally at about 13 years of age.

¹³ Cf. Diary, February 20, 1815.

arians, Guardian Angels, etc. After the foundation of the Missionaries of Provence and the opening of the chapel in 1816, the common rooms of the house seem to have been used by the youth members as well as by the missionaries, especially on Thursdays and Sundays. This explains how some twenty youth members became postulants or novices¹⁴ with the Missionaries; but only H. Courtès, J.-B. Honorat, J. J. Marcou and J. de Saboulin persevered. At the same time ten missionary postulants or novices were received as members of the Youth Congregation,¹⁵ as well as six ecclesiastics including Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod.

The Regulation and its Observance

From the first months of the existence of the Youth Association, Father de Mazenod drew up a regulation "which covers all the duties that [the members] are to fulfil, whether as Christians, or as congregants, and which provides them with the means to sustain their piety, to study properly, in a word to achieve their salvation amid all the dangers that beset them on every side." He held a public reading of this regulation on February 2, 1814, the congregants gave it their approval and adopted it "as the Association's law."¹⁶ Little by little this regulation was completed. In 1816, the *Statutes* appear, comprising 544 articles, dealing with the duties first of one's personal religious life, and then one's duties as a congregant.¹⁷ Canon Leflon comments on these *Statutes* and adds: "... this immense regulation might seem as rigoristic as it was out of proportion and over-burdened did we not know the temper of the times. In those days, there was need to react vigorously against the religious and moral chaos left by the Revolution, and to combat indifference and neglect with intensive cultivation and watchful severity. The nineteenth century, as a whole, was faced with this situation and formed its youth groups in opposition to a society against which one had to defend oneself and into which one had very little inclination to enter.

¹⁴ We put the names in the footnotes.

¹⁵ See the names in the footnotes. Only three persevered in the OMI Congregation: N.F. Moreau, M. Suzanne and H. Tempier.

¹⁶ Orig.: APR DM VIII 1 a.

¹⁷ Orig.: APR DM VIII 1 b.

Consequently, there was a general tendency to isolate these young charges and treat them like hothouse flowers... Moderation, conciseness, balance: these certainly are not the literary virtues of youth. Eugene de Mazenod's devouring zeal and his way of writing hastily without going back over what he had written led him to copiousness. But, he himself was in the first fervor of beginnings, filled with a completely meridional enthusiasm, and a natural and supernatural dynamism which conceived this austere and ponderous body of 544 articles and gave it strenuous life. He excelled in imparting enthusiasm, in creating an atmosphere wherein souls expanded..."¹⁸ Eugene de Mazenod never liked half-measures. He always exacted a rigorous observance of the regulations and, in the Youth Congregation as later in the Oblate Congregation, he will expel without pity those who did not march in step. Between 1813 and 1822, sixty-four congregants, or about 20%, will be struck off or told to go.¹⁹ We are publishing most of what he wrote on this topic. The reasons given are non-observance of the regu-

¹⁸ J. Leflon II, pp. 14-15. An unsigned letter dated May 6, 1817 (DM VIII 3) summarizes the criticisms made of the Director of the Congregation by the Marquess d'Arlatan and her friends and attempts to give a response. As to Eugene's hold on young people, we read: "Many people, and people who have no connection with the Congregation, have assured me that it is doing an infinite amount of good in the town; and that all the children composing it edify everyone with their good sense and piety. Several fathers of families have told me that their children who had previously given signs of depravity and of being surly towards their wishes, since they have been received at Father de Mazenod's establishment have become quite different children, assiduous in their duties, sensible, pious, obedient in a way that never ceases to surprise me and a source of consolation now in their lives. One has to say, someone who is a frequent attendant at the congregation told me, without however being connected with the Congregation, that Mr. de Mazenod has a quite special talent of making himself loved and respected by all these children. As soon as he appears, they all rush towards him, one hangs on his neck, another on his cincture, one kisses his hand, another his soutane, for his part he caresses them, loves them as a father loves his children, and often he does for them what a father does not always do. He makes no distinction as to persons; the son of a cobbler is received by him as cordially and fraternally as the son of a counsellor at court. He pays attention only to good sense and piety. It was he who gave the instruction the day I assisted at their exercise. It has to be said that he speaks well, with real ease and in good measure, and as to this one may say that the children who attend it will learn their religion and to speak well..."

¹⁹ At the beginnings of the OMI Congregation, there was also a Register of Expulsions that we still have. Eugene often called "apostates" those who left or who had to be expelled from the Oblate Congregation as formerly those of the Youth Congregation (cf. May 6, 1821).

lation, absence from meetings, keeping bad company, visits to the theatre, misconduct, slackness, etc.²⁰ The Director was very close to the congregants. He strove to win over with gentleness and persuasion any who gave signs of slackness or infidelity. He found it very painful to be severe. He wrote on February 2, 1817: "Who can say how much this cruel pruning cost him; a person would have had to be there at the talk he gave on that occasion to the Congregation assembled in the choir of the church of the Mission. He was so moved [...] that most of the congregants broke down in tears and this showed how much they shared their common father's grief."

Activities on Sundays and Thursdays

The members used to meet every Sunday and Thursdays. The place of meeting changed frequently from 1813 to the end of 1815: Pavillon l'Enfant, major seminary, the Joannis house, the house of the Misses Mille, the Enclos, the Valbelle house, the Ursuline church and house of the Mission.²¹ According to Canon Leflon, these changes of meeting-place would have been "prudent precautions" so as not to arouse the vigilance of the imperial police.²² One is inclined to think however that motives of a more mundane kind are the explanation for these movements, especially as they continued on for some time after the fall of Napoleon: few religious or society ladies, however generous, can put up for long with the disturbances, noise and inconveniences of some fifty young people in some of the rooms of their house!²³ Father de Mazenod gives his friend Charles de Forbin-Janson the Sunday programme: "On the stroke of seven, we begin with a little reading to give time for people to come. Then Matins of the Blessed Virgin is said. After that I give an instruction of about an hour... The instruction is followed by Lauds, during which I get vested for holy mass. After mass, the little hours of

²⁰ See, e.g., the Diary entries for December 12, 1813, January 3, 1814, February 8, 1815, August 6 and 23, 1818, etc.

²¹ For the details on these various places, see the footnotes to the text nn. 3, 6, 9, 12, 20 and 41.

²² J. Leflon I, p. 416.

²³ Cf. Diary October 23, 1814, April 16, 1815, November 1815.

the Blessed Virgin, and this ends our morning exercises. Lunch is taken before returning to town, where we arrive usually in time for high mass. After dinner, after Vespers, an hour's catechism *per i bisognosi*. . . . The whole of the time remaining until evening is spent in play."²⁴ On July 24, 1814, the Vicar Capitular authorizes the Director to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in the Congregation's chapel. From that day, at least three congregants, with replacements every half-hour, are continually in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. Every year the Director prepares, with a retreat of several days, one or more groups of congregants for first communion and confirmation.²⁵ These sacraments are normally given in the Congregation's chapel, except in 1817 because of the opposition of the parish priests, after the opening of the Church of the Mission.²⁶ The Director often relates these events in the Diary. A good liturgist and fond of beautiful ceremonies, he takes a special pleasure in setting out in detail those of the feast of St. Aloysius Gonzaga²⁷ and the reception of new members.²⁸

Illnesses and deaths

It is especially when a congregant is hit by illness, and even more so on the occasion of deaths, that the Director lets all his concern and affection for these young people manifest itself. The Diary becomes at such a time more prolix. There were eleven deaths from 1813 to 1822.²⁹

²⁴ Letter to Forbin-Janson, July 1, 1814 (OW 15 n. 125 p. 66) and Diary entry May 15, 1814.

²⁵ Cf. Diary entries June 5 and 26, 1814; March 9 and 28, April 2 and 27, September 17, 1815; July 5, and August 30, 1818, etc.

²⁶ On this question, see the important study of Father J. Pierlorz, *L'abbé de Mazenod et les cures d'Aix*, 3 vols. ms., Rome, 1959.

²⁷ Cf. Diary entries for June 25, 1815, and June 21, 1818.

²⁸ Cf. Diary entries for February 2 and July 17, November 21, 1814, April 6, 1815, June 18, 1818, etc. He also often describes processions, cf. Diary entries for June 12 and 26, 1814, June 17, 1820, July 8, 1821.

²⁹ Chabot (February 26, March 30, April 1 and 27, 1815); Archange (December 19, 1816); Dufrenelle (February 24, 1817); A. de Saboulin (March 16, 1817); Berton (December 17, 1817); Bouteuil (May 5, 1819); Castellás (June 5, 1819); Bouvier (April 13, 1821); Alexis (May 6, 1821).

Eugene stays close to each one until the last moment. The congregants come with him in procession when anointing of the sick is administered or communion is given as viaticum. It is always the parish priest or curates who conduct the funerals³⁰ but, in the Congregation's chapel there follows the office of the dead and a Mass is celebrated at which relatives assist. Eugene unfailingly sings the deceased's praises over several pages of the Diary, underlying his virtues and often his affection for the Director.³¹ At the time of the deaths of P. Castellás and M. Alexis, Father de Mazenod comes to a bitter conclusion. After describing the last moments of Paulin Castellás, a real saint, he writes: "What a beautiful death! Contrast it with the deaths of all those who have been taken from this world after quitting the Congregation. They all died, yes, right up to the present they all died in their sin!" (June 5, 1819). On May 6, 1821, at the death of M. Alexis, an ex-congregant who died without the last sacraments like others who left and died before him, the Director adds this reflection: "God is not mocked with impunity, and the frightful comparison that we are as it were compelled to make when considering on the one hand the happy end, the truly precious death of all those who died like the really predestined in the Congregation [...] and on the other hand the deplorable catastrophe that prematurely brings to an end a life of infidelity and sins and precipitates these guilty souls into the

³⁰ Only in the case of the first congregant to die (Chabot), did Father de Mazenod celebrate the funeral mass, cf. Diary entry April 13, 1821. On the topic of Eugene's attendance on the sick and the dead, one may read in a second anonymous letter, dated May 20, 1817 (APR DM VIII 3): "Immediately it was known that a congregationist was ill, Mr. de Mazenod and the infirmarians go to visit him. If he needs to be watched over at night, everyone volunteers, and the only problem is who to choose. When the parish brings him viaticum, all the congregationists are in accompaniment. If the sick person has need of anything during his illness (for this Congregation is made up of young people from all walks of life) it is provided, and if he dies Mr. de Mazenod is with him to the end, all the brethren accompany him to his last resting place, the altar of the Congregation is dressed in black, Mass is said and prayers are said for the repose of his soul, he is entered on the list of departed brethren, and he is prayed for daily. The Congregation's motto is: *Cor unum et anima una*. Indeed, one sees here a realization in miniature of the gatherings of the first faithful who had but one heart and one soul."

³¹ On the death of Vicary, Eugene notes that he loved the Director as much as his own parents, cf. Diary entry June 25, 1818.

depths of hell, there to burn for all eternity!..." A severe conclusion, coming from an undoubtedly severe theology and one that partly explains Eugene's ardent zeal to bring Aix's youth to live in the love of God and submission to His will. The *Nihil linquendum inausum* of the Rule's preface springs no doubt from this same conviction. In 1818, when the Youth Congregation was flourishing, Father de Mazenod composed the Constitutions and Rules of the Missionaries of Provence. It is no surprise to find in chapter three: *Other exterior exercises*, a paragraph on the Direction of Youth. Here is the text:

The direction of youth will be looked on as an essential duty in our Institute. The superior general will specially detail one or more missionaries to this work, which he will himself discharge as assiduously as the other duties within his sphere permit. He will ensure he keeps a check on the state of the Youth Congregation, which is to be set up in all our houses, with the same care and in the same detail as the novitiate itself. He will make it a point of duty to know all the congregationists by name. He will have frequent contacts with their families, and the missionaries whom he has detailed to work with him in the direction of the Congregation, will take no steps in the administrative area or in the direction of this work, without his consent.

The Missionaries of Provence ought then to look upon the direction of youth as an essential duty of their ministry, and to set up a Youth Congregation in all their houses.³² The Superior General would confide this work to collaborators, but he himself intended to know each con-

³² After Father de Mazenod's departure for Marseilles, in 1823, the Youth Congregation declined and disappeared around 1840. Father Aubert, S.J., founded another, continued on after him by Fathers Bonde and Tissot; in 1882 this work was confided to the Priests of the Sacred Heart of the Child Jesus of Timon-David, cf. A. Rampal, *La vie religieuse dans les Bouches-du-Rhône (1789-1920)*, in *Encyclopédie départementale des Bouches-du-Rhône*, vol. X, Marseilles, 1923, p. 42.

The Oblates never excelled in this ministry although they founded a youth work at Calvaire in Marseilles in 1821, in Montreal in 1848, in Liverpool in 1850 and in Leeds in 1856, cf. Y.B., *Le fondateur et les jeunes*, in *Vie Oblate Life*, 36 (1977), pp. 140-142.

gregant by name and to take as much interest in this work as in the novitiate.³³ The practically complete publication of this Diary of the Youth Congregation deserved then to take its due place in the collection of *Oblate Writings*.³⁴

Father Yvon Beaudoin, o.m.i.

³³ Such was his practice in Aix until his departure in 1823. Through this Congregation he exercised a profound influence over the youth of Aix. At his funeral in 1861, His Grace Archbishop Chalandon of Aix acknowledged that the fruits of this apostolate were still to be seen: "... it was for the Archbishop of Aix, as one who rejoiced every day in what the zeal of Bishop de Mazenod's first years still brought forth, to call to mind with gratitude this pious Congregation which safeguarded faith and morals in the town which gave him birth. The Christians in whom the ancient capital of Provence finds its glory are unanimous in attributing to him whom we mourn the merit of their religious fidelity and the happiness of escaping the disorders into which the inexperience of youth so often plunges." Oration given on May 27, 1861.

³⁴ We omit only, as said above (n. 4), the long lists of names of new members, nominations to posts of responsibility, and prizes received at the royal college by the congregationists.

TEXT

April 25, 1813

Jesus

Mary

Joseph

[1] It is not difficult to perceive that what an ungodly Napoleon and his infamous government are planning is the utter destruction of the Catholic religion in the States he has usurped. The attachment of the bulk of the oppressed peoples to the faith of their fathers has seemingly blocked the peremptory execution of the deplorable project he conceived as serving his devilish strategy and it seems he is reduced to awaiting the effects of time and of such methods as he might employ in the meantime to achieve his goals.

Of all his methods the one he counts on most is the demoralization of young people.

The success of his measures is frightening. Already the whole of France is bestrewn with lycées, military schools and other establishments where irreverence is encouraged, bad morals are to say the least tolerated, materialism promoted and applauded.

All these dreadful schools are filled with pupils sacrificed by parents' avarice to the lure of a free place or a half-scholarship, the hope of an advancement that is promised only to the adept. Empty places are filled with wretched victims whom the tyrant pitilessly snatches from the bosom of their families and forces to drink of this poisoned cup, wherein they are to find the seed of their inevitable corruption. Already the work is to a large measure accomplished. The 15-year-old pupil of a lycée, the pupil of a preparatory or military school or polytechnic, a page, etc., [2] all alike are become ungodly and depraved, and leave almost no hope of their return to good living, to good religious and civic principles. They are trained to know no other god than Napoleon. The

will of this new providence that promises them impunity for their vices and advancement for their ambitions is the only rule of their conduct, the only motivation for all their actions. And so one sees them fly at the least sign from their idol to wherever his voice calls them, ready to commit every crime that it pleases him to exact of their sacrilegious devotion. This is a terrifying picture but a true one and I could embellish it still more without fear of being accused of exaggeration. Apart from what is evident to everyone's eyes and is there for all to see, I have myself a thousand proofs of what I am saying.

The evil is at its height and we are moving forward swiftly towards total collapse if God does not come very quickly to our help. Force of example has won the day among the youth, even among those who live under the eyes of their parents and one sees only too often the frenetic irreverence of the son in frightening contrast with the principles of the father whose powerless authority or culpable weakness is obliged to give way to, and often even to connive at, his disorderly conduct and apostasy. And how can one find words to deplore the unpleasant encounter which every day becomes a more common occurrence with young fathers brought up during the Revolution who are no better than their sons brought up under Bonaparte!

Must one, a sad spectator of this torrent of evil, be content to bewail it in silence and offer no remedy? Certainly not. And if I am to be persecuted or destined to failure in the holy enterprise of raising a dike against this torrent of iniquity [3] at least I shall not have to reproach myself with not having made the attempt. What means are to be employed to attain success in so great an enterprise? None other than those employed by the seducer himself. He felt he could succeed in corrupting France only by perverting young people, it is towards them that he directs all his efforts. Very well, it will also be upon young people that I will work. I will strive, I will make the attempt to preserve them from the evils with which they are menaced, that they already partly endure, and inspire them early-on with the love of truth, respect for religion, taste for godliness, horror of vice.

That this method, however excellent it may be, will strike one as feeble and ineffective when considered in isolation, as put into practice by no one but myself, I agree, but what an effect it would have if it should be put into execution simultaneously over the whole face of our unhappy France!

The enterprise is difficult, I am not concealing that fact from myself, it is not without danger even since I am proposing nothing less than to oppose with all my power the sinister ways of a highly suspicious government which persecutes and destroys all who do not support it; but I am unafraid, for I place all my trust in God, because I seek only His glory and the salvation of the souls he has redeemed by His Son Our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom alone be honour and glory and power for ever and ever.

1813

April 25: establishment of the congregation. Admission [of the first members]

[4] On the 25 April, 1813, Low Sunday, were laid the foundations of the holy Association of Christian Youth. The Director of this nascent congregation called to his side Messrs. Louis Marie Maffée de Foresta, Joseph Gustave Balthasar de Laboulie, Joseph Mattieu Clément Olivier, Joseph Jacques Marcou,¹ Charles Dominique Gaëtan Guilelmy, Paul Laurent, Adrien Michel Elzéar Ginoux. After presenting them with his plan and showing them the advantages that would accrue to them from it, they began together the pious exercises of the Congregation to the great satisfaction of all. It was agreed seeing the unhappy circumstances of the times to keep to a small number of religious practices and be careful to disguise them as games. The first session took place in the garden called the Pavillon l'Enfant.² After a short prayer the group plunged happily into games. The day drawing to a close, we entered a salon of the Pavillon, and while the gentlemen rested, the Rev. Director gave them an instruction that was followed by a decade of the rosary. At

¹ J.J. Marcou (1799-1826) entered the novitiate of the Missionaries of Provence on December 21, 1822. He was ordained priest in 1823 and died on August 20, 1826. L.M. Maffée de Foresta and Gaëtan Guilelmy became diocesan priests.

² Pavillon l'Enfant: former promenade of the major Seminary at the gates of Aix. It was a park with fountain and a building of the 17th century, cf. J.P. Coste, *Aix-en-Provence*, 1960, p. 122.

nightfall we returned to town, sorry that the day had been so short and looking forward already to another meeting that would take place the following Sunday.

June 6: admissions

In the meeting of June 6 the following were admitted to form part of the association: Messrs. Jean Joseph Heyries, Hippolyte Joseph Courtès³ and Melchior Sébastien Lambert, Henry Anne Honoré Daime [...]

October 24: admissions

[5] Admission of Mr. Mattieu Dominique François André. During the major seminary's holidays meetings were held at the seminary. We played in the courtyards. Father de Janson⁴ had the kindness on one occasion of giving the instruction.

November 3

The meeting took place in the house where the Rev. Director⁵ lives. To conform to the usage of the country the Rev. Director regaled the youth with chestnuts and mulled wine; we did not break up until 8 o'clock. All the time that was not devoted to instruction and prayer was employed in games.

³ H. Courtès (1798-1863) entered the novitiate of the Missionaries of Provence on October 15, 1816. He was ordained priest July 30, 1820 and died June 3 1863, after having been superior of the house at Aix from 1823 until his death. Mr. Sébastien Lambert became a priest.

⁴ Charles de Forbin-Janson (1785-1844), a native of Aix and a great friend of Eugene was ordained priest like himself in 1811. Almost immediately he was named superior of the major seminary in Chambéry and acting vicar general. Named Bishop of Nancy in 1823 he remained as such until his death in 1844, but he never resided in his diocese after the revolution of July 1830.

⁵ Eugene was living at that time with his mother in the Joannis' house, rue Papassaudy, n. 2

December 5

The Misses Mille have had the kindness to offer the courtyard of the garden they occupy at the gate of the town for games, and the house itself when there is bad weather. The Rev. Director has gratefully accepted the kind offer of these ladies; consequently the association moved there today; the games, instruction and prayer took place in this agreeable locale.

December 12: expulsions

The following were expelled from the Association: Messrs, Pélissier and Mathieu Marius Ange Auguste Marin whose inscription was overlooked in its proper place. The motivation for this expulsion is the obstinacy that these gentlemen displayed in their wilful persistence in keeping bad company. Jean Baptiste Dubois who was admitted only after a long probation and reiterated promises to behave had similarly been expelled as incorrigible and better suited to delinquency on the streets than to profiting from the good example of the members of the Association.

1814**January 1: admissions**

[6] Admission of Messrs. Alexandre Joseph Tavernier,⁶ André Pontier, Marc Antoine Joseph Amédée Bouteille, Auguste Charles Fabry, René Nicolas Alexandre de La Tour du Pin.

January 3: expulsions

J.B. Dominique Claude Chaine and Marc Pierre Joseph Sallebant were expelled. These two gentlemen had been received a little casually at the time of their first communion on the recommendation of Father

⁶ Adolphe Tavernier (1799-1883) became an important lawyer and member of the Academy of Aix. He always remained a friend of Bishop de Mazenod and wrote one of his first biographies, cf. *Quelques souvenirs sur Mgr C.J.E. de Mazenod*, Aix, 1872.

Laty, the parish priest of St. Sauveur's. They gave little sign of promise when they made an appearance and the view that they were not at all suited to belong to an élite society like the Association has been confirmed. They have no one but themselves to blame for the shame that a dishonourable expulsion like this inevitably reflects on their persons.

February 2: adoption of a regulation

As the Association is purged of all its questionable members, and a daily-growing fervour continues to be displayed, the Rev. Director judged the time to be ripe for drawing up a regulation to include all the duties that they have to fulfil, both as Christians and as congregants and to furnish them with the means of sustaining their piety, to study as they should, in a word to achieve their salvation amidst all the dangers that surround them on every side. This regulation was read out to the assembled congregants and approved by them and with common accord was adopted and approved as the law of the Association which all the congregants present and future are and will be bound to obey. It will be copied in its entirety into this register to be consulted as needed.⁷ The same day as the congregants wished to consecrate themselves in a special manner to God and to the Blessed Virgin Mary, they assembled at 8 a.m. in the church of the *Dames de Sainte-Sophie, formerly Les Maries*.⁸ The Rev. Director in surplice and stole being seated in an arm-chair placed beside the high altar, gave a discourse suitable to the occasion, after which all the members present [7] came up to him two by two and renewed between his hands their baptismal promises, kneeling down; they then pronounced a formula of consecration to the BVM. The Rev. Director then offered the holy Sacrifice for all the members present, a large number of whom took part in the holy mysteries [...]

⁷ It was not copied in the Diary. We retain two copies of this regulation, one it seems is from the hand of congregant B. Pécoul (15 pages) and the other of Marius A. B. Bernard (14 pages). APR DM VIII 1 a. We also have a text of four pages of another undated regulation. *Ibid*.

⁸ *Dames de Sainte-Sophie aux Grandes-Maries*: a reference to the convent of the Ursulines, (cf. *Infra*, November 1815). The latter were reestablished in 1805 in the former chief monastery of the Visitation (Grandes Maries), rue Cardinale. Cf. M. Constantin, *Les paroisses du diocèse d'Aix*, 1890, pp. 234-238, and Roux-Alpheran, *Les Rues d'Aix ... Aix*, 1848, pp. 282-283.

February 13: adoration during the carnival Forty Hours.

It was decided in this session that the congregants would take turns to do adoration before the Blessed Sacrament during the Forty Hours of the final days of the carnival. They carried out this religious duty in an edifying way in the Churches of the Holy Spirit on Carnival Thursday, of the Madeleine and St. John in the final days. It was the Rev. Director's wish that they relieve one another every half-hour.

February 22: [Carnival Tuesday]

Extraordinary session at the house of the Rev. Director after benediction. We spent this evening which so many people consecrate to the devil in very candid jollity. The Rev. Director had seen to the preparation of a tasty little dish that was joyfully and gratefully received and we went away quite late, very content that we had had a very good time without giving offense to God in his goodness, and full of goodwill to begin Lent in a holy spirit.

[March, April, May]: an interruption occasioned by the Rev. Director's illness. Details of what happened during this illness.

Since the meeting held that day [March 6], there were no further ones until May 15. This long interruption was due to the very dangerous illness that brought the Rev. Director [8] to death's door. He was confined to his bed on March 10, having had a fever for some days; on the 14th he received holy viaticum and extreme unction. As he is the one drawing up these minutes, how could he resist setting down here the proofs of the tender feelings of concern that these dear children showed him at this time. Indeed they are indelibly engraved on his heart, and what they did for him will never be effaced from his memory. The affection he will always have for them, the prayers he will unfailingly make for their salvation, and all the care and attention he will continue to give them to see to their having the means to attain it, will be a proof of his gratitude. Dear children! Allow me also to set down in this register, which must serve for the instruction of those who have the happiness of following in your footsteps, the feelings of love, esteem, gratitude, admiration that you have inspired me with by your behaviour towards me. How could I fail to have a father's heart for you after you have proved that you love me as if you were my children? It is true that I loved you first, but isn't it a merit at your age to be able to appreciate a

feeling that was chiefly aimed at your souls for whose salvation I would gladly have contributed with the price of all my blood. As soon as I had arranged for the sacraments to be brought me that I believed would be the last I would receive in my life, the news was communicated to the college.⁹ At once all the congregants spontaneously asked if they might leave their classes and hurried to the church of St. John whence Holy Viaticum was to be brought me. They were given candles, the prefect and the vice-prefect got hold of lanterns and at the departure of the cortege they lined up two by two immediately in front of the priests. The whole town has told me that one could read on their faces what was passing in their hearts [9] at that moment when they realized they were in danger of losing the best and dearest of their friends. I attribute to their recollection and to the touching spectacle they displayed at that moment of their piety towards God and of their affection for me, as much as to the concern of my fellow-citizens, that extraordinary affluence of people that took place as I was ministered to. The state in which they saw me, the difficulty I had in saying a few words before receiving the body of Our Lord Jesus Christ, hurt them greatly. They were all the more sensible of my situation as in the few words I was able to utter my concern was all for them, but their unease reached its height when they were informed that I had lost consciousness two or three hours after receiving the sacraments. It is then that they exhibited those sentiments of faith and trust in God, that I pray the Lord will keep them in always. They were not content with coming several times a day to my door to get news of me which was every day more alarming. They were not slow to grasp that one must seek from God what men no longer trusted in themselves to obtain by their skill. They addressed themselves then to the supreme Moderator of everything, and relying on the powerful intercession of the B.V.M., of great St. Joseph, and the other saints to whom they had most devotion, they began some prayers, which, joined

⁹ There was at that time a lycée for every *département*, the one for Bouches-du-Rhône was situated in Marseilles. In the other towns secondary education was given in a college. The Aix Royal Bourbon College had about a 100 pupils in 1816 and in 1823 164 pupils of whom 64 were boarders. There were at that time in Aix three other less important secondary establishments: that of the *Pères de la Foi*, that of the *Frères Gris*, and the minor seminary. Cf. Charles Houdot, *L'enseignement secondaire: le collège d'Aix 1810-1883*, in *Encyclopédie des Bouches-du-Rhône*, vol. 6: *La vie intellectuelle*, Marseilles, 1914, pp. 73-76.

to the others charitable people made for me, snatched me from the arms of death whose prey I had nearly become. And how could the goodness of God have failed to be touched by the fervour, trust, perseverance with which these young people prayed the Lord to give them back their Father. All who witnessed it were in tears and could not refrain from joining with them in their exercise of charity and truly filial piety. [10] And why should I not add a circumstance that increases the merit of their action? We were in the month of March, the time when the rigor of the cold makes itself most felt. Dear children! if only you could read my heart as I write these lines!!! Well! So that the work of mercy which they wanted to do for me would not interfere with their studies, they got up before dawn, and went in early morning notwithstanding the frost to the Church where each day they assisted at the Sacrifice that was offered in their name at the expense of their little savings destined for their little pleasures. In the evening after class, they gathered again in the Church of the Madeleine to make there in common novenas that became in a kind of way public. Indeed it is only right that conduct so worthy of praise was the talk of the town, and that towards those who in this way had earned the approval of all honest folk there should have risen the most sincere esteem. But this first reward will be, I confidently hope, only the prelude to one most lasting that the Lord, the just rewarder of virtue, keeps for them in heaven. Finally, the Lord having given me back at the wishes of these dear young people, I was soon able to go in person to thank God at the foot of those same altars where he had been invoked on my behalf with so much fervour.¹⁰

May 3: meeting in the Madeleine Church to take part in a Thanksgiving Mass for the restoration of the Rev. Director's health.

On May 3, the day of the Finding of the True Cross, I convoked all the congregants in the Madeleine Church to assist at the Mass I owed it to them to say at the altar of the Cross. (I had been saying Mass at home since April 20). Before beginning the Sacrifice, I gave them a brief address from the heart which found its echo in theirs and stirred us at

¹⁰ When he got news in Palermo of this illness and recovery, Mr. de Mazenod expressed his joy in the beautiful letter dated July 24, 1814, cf. *Oblate Writings* 15, pp. 70-71, n. 37.

the same time to acquit ourselves in as holy a way as we were capable of, during the holy Mysteries, of the duties of love and thanksgiving which were due to God, Father of mercy, who is never deaf to the prayer of those who place all their trust in him: *non est oblitus clamores pauperum* (Ps. 9:13).

May 15: opening of the chapel of the Congregation. Public exercise carried out in common.

[11] On May 15, the Congregation met in the Rev. Director's Garden, just outside the town on the Avignon road.¹¹ In the interval between the last session and this one, many things had happened. The face of France had changed, and as our fathers' holy faith regained all its rights under the peaceful rule of our legitimate Sovereign,¹² the Congregation had no longer to fear suppression, nor the congregants and their Director persecution. Let us strive to thank the Lord for this mark of favor with a renewal of zeal and application in the fulfilment of our duties. The first benefit we derive from this happy and unexpected regeneration is being able to carry out our religious exercises without obstruction and in the open, and extend them and give them a more public character. We began today to profit from these advantages by celebrating the holy Mysteries in the chapel which will henceforth be the oratory of the Congregation, and by prefacing and following the Sacrifice with the recitation of the Office of the Blessed Virgin. Here is the order which was followed and which is to be adopted for the future. The congregants being gathered in the chapel at the time fixed by the regulation, the Prefect intones Matins after which the Rev. Director gives the instruction which is followed by Lauds. After Lauds comes Mass, then the Little Hours which crown the morning's exercises. In the

¹¹ The reference is to the Enclos, country house of the Joannis and at that time the property of Mrs. de Mazenod. While in the seminary Eugene was planning to live there after ordination, cf. *Oblate Writings* 14, pp. 205-6. It is there that many of the congregants did their retreat in preparation for first communion and confirmation. There was a chapel on the property and, close by, there was the church of N.-D. de la Seds, cf. E. Marbot, *Histoire de N.D. de la Seds*. Aix, 1904, p. 58.

¹² Declared fallen by the Senate and obliged to abdicate, Napoleon withdrew to the island of Elba on April 20, 1814. The Count of Provence, whom Eugene had known in Italy, then returned to Paris and ascended the throne of France with the title of Louis XVIII. That was the day, April 20, that Eugene had begun again to say Mass at home.

afternoon we come together again to say Vespers of the Blessed Virgin, and to assist at the reading and its explanation given by the Rev. Director. The rest of the time until nightfall was given up to games.

May 19: reestablishment of the Marseilles Congregation.

Ascension Day. The exercises were carried out as last Sunday. The Rev. Director announced the reestablishment of the Marseilles Congregation.¹³ This news was received with expressions of much joy on account of the good it should result in for the youth of that great city. We gave thanks to the Lord about this with a personal prayer.

May 29: admissions.

Pentecost. The usual exercises. Admission of Masters Louis de Gonzague Joachim d'Isoard, Léon Jules de Saboulin,¹⁴ Amédée Marius Claude Jonathan du Puget.

June 5: retreat and first communion of some congregationists. Prayers on their behalf.

The exercises were carried out as usual; in particular we prayed for those congregants who had made their first communion that day. The Rev. Director had prepared them for this great step with a three day retreat.

¹³ In Marseilles, the Youth Work, founded in 1799 by Father Allemand, had been dissolved by Napoleon. This work was later confided to the Oblates from 1857 to 1862 and from 1875 to 1886, cf. Y.B., *L'affiliation aux Oblats de l'Institut de l'Oeuvre de la Jeunesse, dite de M. Allemand, à Marseilles, 1857-1862*, in *Etudes Oblates* 22 (1963) pp. 145 and 168, and *Missions O.M.I., 1875-1886*.

¹⁴ Léon Jules de Saboulin (1801-1871) was ordained priest in Aix in December 1852. He entered the Oblate novitiate in May 1853 and made his oblation on June 15, 1854. We have eight letters addressed by him to Eugene de Mazenod from 1814 to 1821; the first is dated August 27, 1814, and is mentioned here in the Diary under the date November 6, 1814. Léon-Jules had three brothers in the Youth Congregation: Alphonse, died March 8, 1817, Amédée and Victor, died September 19 and October 7, 1821. Léon stayed single and, after his brothers' deaths, looked after his mother until her death. He divided his time between study and good works. He published some works, introduced into the Aix diocese the work of the Propagation of the Faith and St. Francis de Sales. He was also a member of the conferences of St. Vincent de Paul, gave his time to children's catechism in rural areas, the work of the Petits-Ramoneurs, etc. Cf. *Notices Nécrologique OMI*, II, pp. 201-210.

June 12: Corpus Christi procession.

Corpus Christi. The day's solemnity did not interfere with the morning's exercises in Congregation. We did not gather in the evening because of the principal procession. The Congregants had ruled with common accord that they would all take part in their parochial processions, and that they would gather again as a body to take part together in that of the *Charité* which will take place on Saturday, and at which the Rev. Director has to carry the Blessed Sacrament [...].

June 26: procession of the *Charité*¹⁵ in which all the congregants took part along with the Rev. Director.

The procession of Saturday the 18th took place; almost all the congregants took part in it, candles in hand, which did not stop them from reading in their prayer books. Their recollection was all that one would have expected of them. All the people before whom they passed were so enchanted by it that they could not help expressing their surprise and admiration at it quite openly. The young men walked two by two, immediately in front of the priests, in their order of precedence in the Congregation. They were separated from the family of the *Charité* by the Ladies of the town who were taking part like themselves in this [13] procession. They had taken part in Vespers in the sanctuary where they repositioned themselves to receive the blessing. After the ceremony, which they helped by their piety to make more moving, Messrs. D'Hotman, de Menc, de Portalis and other administrators of this hospice invited the congregants to go on into the salon where they found abundant refreshments offered by the Gentlemen with every possible show of kindness. The day after next the Rev. Director with the Prefect was at the house of Councilor d'Hotman to thank him in the name of the Congregation for the gracious welcome they had received from the Administrators to whom they begged him to convey their thanks.

¹⁵ The reference seems to be to the members in charge and benefactors of the *Dépot de Mendicité*, the former *Charité* or old persons home and orphanage.

June 26: reception of a number of members. Confirmation and the preparation preceding it.

This day the 26th, all the congregants who had made their first communion, and who had not taken part in the beautiful ceremony of February 2 last year, renewed their baptismal promises and made their act of consecration to the Blessed Virgin between the hands of the Rev. Director. Everything was done in conformity with the regulations, with solemnity, and especially with such piety that many shed tears of happiness. God had tangibly poured his grace into the well-disposed hearts of most of the congregants, who were beside themselves with joy and showed it in the most expressive way and in most touching terms when they came out of the chapel. This day was doubly precious for a number of them who had the happiness to receive in the morning the sacrament of confirmation, after being prepared for it by a series of daily instructions, and by a day of retreat that they spent entirely in the Garden of the Rev. Director. Others drew down the blessings of the Lord by their preference for the sweet consolations that one tastes in the tabernacles of the gentle Saviour of souls to the boisterous pleasures of Le Tholonet.¹⁶

July 10: admissions. Election to posts of responsibility and dignities.

[14] Admission of Masters Louis Peysse, Jean-Baptiste-Gabriel de Bausset,¹⁷ Louis Barban, Jean-Baptiste Antoine Martin Marcou. When the religious exercises were over, all the congregants were assembled in a salon to proceed to the election of the dignitaries of the Association in conformity with its regulations. Following the reading of Chapter 4, that

¹⁶ A place famous for its pleasant position, abundant supplies of water and beautiful shady spots. The Gallifet family had a park there with a mansion and theatre. Father de Mazenod is referring perhaps to this latter when he speaks of "boisterous pleasures." In the letters to his father in 1803 and 1804, Eugene often speaks of this Gallifet family and, in this connection, it is precisely a question of the theatre and amusements, cf. especially the letter dated January 27, 1804.

¹⁷ J. B. Gabriel de Bausset was the nephew of Bishop Ferdinand de Bausset who will become Archbishop of Aix from 1817 to 1829. He entered the Missionaries of Provence in April 1816, took the habit on November 4, 1816, and left in July 1818. He stayed on for a while at the Mission House while he studied law in the University of Aix, cf. letter from Father H. J. Leblanc to Eugene, October 29, 1820. APR LM.

was preceded by the *Veni Creator*, etc., and the *Ave Maria*, each congregant wrote on a piece of paper the names of those he thought most suitable to fill the different posts of responsibility. The duly-folded papers were gathered up by the Zealot who handed them over to the Director whose task it was to make the tally [...].

July 17: installation of the dignitaries.

Today were installed by the Rev. Director the new dignitaries named in the session of the 10th of this month. This ceremony took place in the chapel before the exercises were begun. The Rev. Director gave a short discourse in which he recalled the obligations of each dignitary; he had the consolation of being able to cite as a model those who had lately provisionally fulfilled these same functions which they had acquitted themselves of with a remarkable zeal and edification. [15] It was resolved to record in this register how it came about that the nominations reported on page 14 in the session of the 10th of the present month were effected in a way that hardly accords with what is laid down in the regulation; it was because that article was not in its fully finished form, so all the members without distinction between the *admitted* and the *received* met and voted, and three members who were only *admitted* were named to the places of lector, supply lector and pro-secretary. This dispensation proved the rule which in future will not be broken in any case on any pretext whatsoever.

Postulants

The Rev. Director allowed several youngsters to take part in the exercises of the Congregation in the guise of *postulants*. It is the first test to which one puts those who present themselves for entry into the Congregation. No one may be admitted, i.e., may be recognized as a *probationer* of the Association, who has not been a *postulant* for a certain period that it will be up the Rev. Director to shorten or prolong according to the behaviour of the said postulants.

Rules for admission and reception

As the chapter in the regulation concerning the qualities required for admission into the Association leaves open the faculty of admitting youngsters even before they have made their first communion, we will be all the more ready to follow it in that experience has proved that the

instructions that we receive in the Congregation are *more than useful* to those who are getting ready for that great event. But we will never depart from what is laid down for reception. No one ever will be, – and in consequence may not claim the advantages and prerogatives exclusively reserved for members received with the customary formalities and ceremonies, – who has not made his first communion.

July 24: authorization to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel of the Congregation. Ordering of adoration.

The Very Reverend Vicars General have authorized the Reverend Director to place and keep the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel of the Congregation. This special favour that Our Lord has seen fit to extend to the congregants has been received with the liveliest gratitude. This sentiment made itself tangibly evident with a show of sweetest emotion as the Reverend Director brought them to understand the inestimable advantages when he addressed them briefly before the distribution [16] of holy communion which the great majority of the congregants received on that memorable day with a tender devotion. Dating from that day, there will always be three congregants in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament on Sundays and Thursdays during such time as the chapel is not occupied by the Congregation. They will relieve each other every half-hour in the order prescribed by the list to be placed at the chapel door.

July 31: the Reverend Director's birthday and baptism anniversary.

The Reverend Director reminded the congregants that the next day would be his birthday, but that this commemoration had no value in his eyes. What is infinitely more precious for him is the anniversary of his baptism which took place on August 2, 1782. He begged all the congregants to help him thank God for so great a grace, for which he avers he can never be grateful enough and conjured them to join their prayers with his which stand in need of this support if he is to summon up the hope of seeing them accepted by God.

August 2

A number of congregants thought they could find no better way of following the Rev. Director's wishes than by coming and assisting and uniting themselves with the Holy Sacrifice he offered this morning in the chapel of the Congregation.

August 15: morning liturgy carried out by the V. Reverend Vicar General.

The Very Reverend Father Guigou, Vicar General of the diocese, came to celebrate holy Mass in the chapel of the Congregation. One of the Gentlemen Zealots had been to fetch him from his home and show him the way, and had arranged things so that he arrived towards the end of the Office. The Reverend Director received him at the chapel door, and he assisted him during the holy Sacrifice along with a deacon who had been invited for this purpose. Almost all the congregants had the happiness of making their communion. After the Mass, the V. Rev. Vicar General said a few words of congratulation to the congregants on the grace the Lord had shown them in procuring for them such an efficacious means of salvation as was the Congregation which was for them a refuge in the midst of the dangers that surround them on all sides, etc. In the evening, some congregants who had not renewed their baptismal promises nor consecrated themselves to the Blessed Virgin did it between the hands of the Reverend Director to whom they had been presented by the Prefect, the Vice-Prefect, etc., according to the ceremonial prescribed for receptions. The Reverend Director gave the address usual in that ceremony which ended with the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

[September]: petition to the Sovereign Pontiff for the approval of the Congregation and the grant of favours. The Holy Father's approval. Indulgences granted by him in an apostolic rescript.

As the number of congregants was increasing every day, and piety was making tangible progress among them, the Reverend Director had the idea of consolidating still more the good done in the Association, and encouraging those who belonged to it in the practice of virtue, by petitioning the Sovereign Pontiff to erect this worthy society by his apostolic authority into a Congregation, and to grant it a certain number of partial and even plenary indulgences. He therefore dispatched the following petition to Rome, in Italian:

Most Holy Father,

Charles Joseph Eugene de Mazenod, priest, having sorrowfully discerned that by a deplorable effect of the baneful influence of philosophism the Christian faith was in danger of perishing in France,

conceived the plan of combatting with all his strength such a frightful disorder.

To succeed in this enterprise, he formed a Congregation composed of young men to whom he gave the necessary means to keep themselves in the fear of the Lord, to know and practise virtue.

The Lord having deigned to bless the efforts of his zeal, and the number of congregants being on the increase as well as their piety, the aforesaid priest, to strengthen ever more the good that is done in the congregation, most humbly petitions His Holiness to approve this Congregation under the name of the Association of Christian Youth, under the direction for the present of the aforesaid Charles Joseph Eugene de Mazenod, and at the same time to deign to grant the following indulgences [...].¹⁸

[19] The rescript was placed before the eyes of our Holy Father the Pope in his audience of September 24 by His Eminence Cardinal Galleffi, and His Holiness deigned to grant without restriction the indulgences that were requested for a period of thirty years and authorized the Ordinary to erect the Congregation, granting him for this purpose all the necessary faculties [...].

The Holy Father acknowledged as the chief benefactor of the Congregation.

[The] rescript of His Holiness was read and explained in Congregation. Immediately the Holy Father was acknowledged as the chief benefactor of the Association. We gratefully received what he granted, and so as to be able to profit unceasingly from the indulgences, we resolved to have ourselves erected by the Ordinary according to the tenor of the rescript, [20] at least verbally, pending further steps to obtain erection by the Holy See directly and without intermediary.

¹⁸ Eugene transcribed the Italian text and the French translation. We omit the long list of indulgences (a whole page), the approval of the Vicars General and the rescript of the Holy See in Latin.

Registration of the apostolic rescript at the secretariat of the archdiocesan offices.

The petition and the rescript will be affixed to this register. The rescript and its contents have been registered at the secretariat of the archdiocesan offices.

October 9: feast of the Guardian Angels.

We celebrated today with great solemnity the feast of the Holy Guardian Angels, transferred to today because of the feast of the Holy Rosary. After Vespers there was Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament [...].

Chapel of the Congregation transferred to the Valbelle mansion¹⁹

Providence has just given us a fresh proof of its protection. We were at a loss to know how we would manage when the weather became more rigorous and we would be obliged to look for a large and spacious place in the town to hold our meetings. The rain and the shortening of the days were soon going to drive us out of the Garden, and make our meetings there impracticable, when Madame the Baroness de Valbelle, to whom by way of making conversation the Reverend Director was explaining his problem, offered him her mansion as a place of assembly for the Congregation. This generous offer was accepted with all the more gratitude in so far as it would have been impossible to find a more beautiful and more suitable place for the two-fold purpose of our meeting.

October 23: first meeting at the Valbelle mansion.

We met today at the Valbelle mansion, in the morning at 8 for the Office, instruction and holy Mass. In the evening for Vespers, games, reading and the exposition of Christian doctrine. We certainly did not

¹⁹ "... Between Rue de la Masse and Rue de Nazareth stands a magnificent mansion built, towards the middle of the seventeenth century, by Léon de Valbelle, Baron de Meyrargues, councilor to the Parliament. It was without doubt at that time the biggest and most sumptuous residence in Aix, apart from the building housing the royal courts and the Archbishop's palace," cf. Roux-Alpheran, *Les Rues d'Aix ...* Aix, 1848, I, p. 550, II, p. 141.

forget to say a special prayer for benefactors and in particular for Mrs. de Valbelle [...].

November 2: All Souls Day [...]

[21] We gathered at the usual time in the chapel to recite the Office of the Dead. After Matins, the Reverend Director said holy Mass which was followed by Lauds. We then withdrew, but as we passed through the courtyard we could not resist playing a few games of prisoners' base.²⁰ In the evening we gathered after the parish liturgies, we entered the chapel for the reading and the decades of the rosary. We then played until 9 p.m. The games were interrupted only for the eating of chestnuts according to the immemorial custom of these parts. The congregants were levied two *sols* per head, which came to a total too great to spend wholly on chestnuts. It was proposed to set aside a portion for the poor. The Reverend Director proposed another more profitable idea, which was adopted, namely, to deduct a sum for saying a Mass for the souls in purgatory. He will say this Mass, and as he never receives anything for himself by way of retribution, the money will remain for the poor.

November 6: various letters from absent congregants.

The Rev. Director read a letter Master de Laboulie had written him in which, addressing himself directly to his dear colleagues, he expressed his sentiments in their regard in a very touching way. The Reverend Director was asked to be so good as mention their gratitude in the reply. We recalled in this connection that Master de Saboulin (Léon) had testified to the same regard for the congregation from which he was temporarily obliged to absent himself. Master Lander in a similar situation had also proved that he shared these same sentiments, which do as much honour to those who express them as to the Congregation which is their object and has deserved to inspire them.

²⁰ *Parties de barres*: a game of racing between two areas marked out with a line drawn on the ground.

November 21: feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Installation and legal foundation of the Congregation. Reception [of new members].

This day, on which we celebrate in the diocese the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, has been chosen for the installation of the Congregation in conformity with the intention of the Holy Father, announced in his rescript of September 24 of the present year. The feast was brilliant and everything contributed to make it a touching occasion. As the Very Rev. Vicar General was impeded by an indisposition that confined him at home from coming to celebrate the holy Mysteries and carry out the ceremony, the Rev. Director stood in for him. Before the Mass, he reminded all the assistants of the duties that the state of being a congregant brings with it and the advantages it procures, etc. During the talk, they renewed by acclamation their baptismal promises and consecration to the Blessed Virgin. And this day has been all the more precious for those, almost all, who approached the holy Table and received the pledge of acceptance that Our Lord deigned to make of their offering and devotion. Masters Louis Hyacinthe Gasq, Jean Joseph Marius Diouloufet, Jean Joseph François Sylvestre Aymès, Alphonse Pierre de Saboulin, [Paulin] Bouvier were admitted and received, as well as Masters Bremond, Illy and Maurin²¹ who had not yet been received. All previously received members having today renewed their consecration, and their reception being legally in force only from today when it has been done in virtue of the pontifical rescript, they will date from this day their definitive entry into the Congregation and so as to conform to the regulation they will all sign the present minutes. In the evening the Blessed Sacrament was exposed in the chapel of the Congregation and the solemnity ended with Benediction²² [...].

²¹ Towards the end of 1818, this congregant, whose full name is Eugene Jean Claude Maurin (1799-1872), was studying at the Mission, under the direction of the brother J.A. Dupuy. He was ordained priest in 1825 and remained in the diocese of Aix.

²² Twenty-three congregants signed this page of the Diary. The director adds: "The others neglected to sign."

December 19: Fathers Maurel and Remuzat replace the Rev. Director during his retreat.

[23] Today the Rev. Director, being at the seminary where he is making his retreat²³, Father Maurel, director of the seminary, came to replace him in Congregation where he gave the instruction and said the holy Mass. Father Remuzat, seminary bursar, came on Thursday the 16th to say the Mass.

December 25: Office and midnight Mass.

We had planned to gather in Congregation during the night to assist at the Office and the holy Mysteries. A number of things changed our plans. A large number of congregants met in the church of the major seminary where they assisted at the Office, heard the midnight Mass which was said by the Rev. Director, at which they had the happiness of receiving their communion.

Christmas Day

This did not prevent us meeting this morning in Congregation. We did not indeed say the Office of the Blessed Virgin, as we had said the full night Office; before the two Masses that the Reverend Director said, he made a meditation which took the place of the instruction and served as preparation for those who, not having been at the midnight Mass, received communion at one of the two later Masses of the Rev. Director [...].

December 26: second day of Christmas.

[24] Today the Congregation gathered to recite the Office of the Blessed Virgin and to assist at the holy Sacrifice. The catechism that was omitted yesterday was held today. The instruction was given before the Mass as on ordinary Sundays.

²³ This is the important retreat made one year prior to the foundation of the Missionaries of Provence. Eugene had followed the work of Father F. Nepveu, S.J., *Retraite selon l'esprit et la méthode de saint Ignace pour les ecclésiastiques*. The founder's notes are published in *Oblate Writings* 15, pp. 77-108.

1815

January 8: feast of the Childhood of Our Lord which fell on the day we celebrated the solemnity of the Epiphany.

Patronal feast of the Congregation. It was celebrated with pomp. There was catechism at 3 o'clock and Vespers were postponed until the evening, they were followed by exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. We sang *Pange Lingua* and the litanies of the Blessed Virgin. The Rev. Director, kneeling, along with all the assistants, said a few fervent words in the form of a prayer, as he usually does whenever the Blessed Sacrament is exposed in the chapel of the Congregation. He then gave Benediction; when the Blessed Sacrament had been returned to the tabernacle, we recited two decades of the rosary and withdrew with that holy joy that it pleases the Lord to pour into our hearts on the days of our solemnities [...].

January 22: admissions [...]

The chevalier Paul de Magallon,²⁴ congregant of Paris, having arrived, was promptly admitted in this capacity.

February 6: entertainment

The former congregants having desired to spend in retreat the last day of carnival which is tomorrow, we decided to have today a little entertainment for the sake of the youngsters to whom it is only just to make some concessions. So we put on in the games' room the farce entitled *M. Fresgurine*. Parents were allowed in.

February 7: spiritual retreat on the last day of carnival.

[25] The last day of carnival. At the urging of the former congregants, today was spent in retreat and consecrated to meditation on the great truths of religion. We met at the Enclos of the Reverend Director

²⁴ Paul de Magallon (1784-1859), captain of infantry. Eugene met him in Paris in 1809, cf. *Oblate Writings*, 14, pp. 97, 100-101. He stayed at the Mission in 1816-1817. In 1819, he decided to become a Brother of St. John of God. He made his novitiate in Rome in 1823, and later restored the French province of the Order. Cf. Paul Dreyfus, *Paul de Magallon*, Paris, Centurion, 1993, 232 pp.

at 9 a.m., we heard Mass and returned to town only for the meal. We returned again after dinner to the Enclos where we stayed until evening. On returning to town we received Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in the church of the Madeleine. The two preceding days, a large number of congregants had lost no time in inscribing for the public adoration which is made before the Blessed Sacrament exposed during the last days of carnival.

February 8: assembly of the Council of the Congregation. Expulsions, nominations.

The Council met, presided over by Master Tavernier, prefect of the Congregation. We examined the state of the Congregation. The result of this review was in general very consoling. However we could not ignore the fact that three members had failed to imitate the many good examples they had before their eyes. We voted to decide what to do with them, after the Master Zealot had set out the causes for complaint of which they were accused. The first of the accused was Master Jean Joseph Heyriés. It was proved that the frequent absences he was accused of were due to a complete neglect of the regulation of the Congregation and notably to his links with young rascals whom he had come to resemble in every way, that he had persisted in these breaches of regulation despite many charitable warnings, and the very pressing solicitations of the Master Vice-Prefect, Zealots and others who had pushed charity so far as to go to his home to offer him a generous pardon for the past, if he were willing to return to better dispositions. It was decided unanimously that the aforesaid Jean Joseph Heyriés was to be dishonourably expelled from the Congregation, that he be erased from the list of congregants, and that a note would be made in the margin of the page of this register where his reception is written, that he had been expelled by vote of today. The second member whom the Masters Zealots denounced to the Council is Master Casimir Pierre Jacques Topin. It was proved on [26] his own admission that in defiance of Christian laws and of the regulation of the Congregation, he indulged in visits to the theatre. This single charge was enough for the aforesaid Casimir Jacques Topin to be unanimously expelled from the Congregation. His name will be erased from the list or catalogue of the congregants and the present vote for those whom it concerns will be reported or at least cited in the margin of this register in the place where his reception is found. The said Topin was likewise charged, and it was

proved, that he had associated with bad companions who had lured him into their delinquencies. The third member against whom charges were made by the Master Zealot is Joseph Pierre François Lucien Coussin. It was proved that the aforesaid Coussin had never been able to bring himself wholly to give up the company of certain youngsters of very dubious character to say the least, that his scant regularity did not display a sufficient appreciation of the advantages that he could derive from the exercises of the Congregation; it was recalled that already on a previous occasion we had overlooked, for the sake of the pleas of his father and the tears of his mother, a fault that should have excluded him at that time from the Congregation. In consequence, the aforesaid Coussin was expelled by majority vote from the Congregation; and it was ordered that Master Secretary delete his name from the catalogue, and to cite the present vote in the margin of the page of this register where is found his reception. Finally, on the report of Master Zealot, who observed that Jean Denis Luc Thierrée, not apparently believing himself capable of understanding the instructions that are given in Congregation, has been absenting himself for some time without a valid reason, the Council decided unanimously to erase him from the catalogue of congregants and to recall the present vote for those whom it concerns in the margin of the page where his reception is inscribed. The place of second Chorist being vacant because of the expulsion of the aforesaid Heyriés, expelled for misconduct, we named unanimously to fill this honourable function Master Joseph Olympe Bruno Marguery, and to that of Secretary, vacant through the absence of Master de Laboulie, Master Melchior François de Paule Bremond. The session ended with the *Sub Tuum Praesidium*.

February 20: the senior section. Day for their special assemblies.

[27] As the number of congregants (postulants) has considerably increased, among those who present themselves there are many older ones. The Rev. Director has decided therefore to form them into a separate section which as well as the general meetings for the whole Congregation will be summoned to a special meeting on the first and fifteenth of each month. Here now are the articles of this amendment to the regulation: Congregants who have reached the age of eighteen will form a special section called the premier section. As well as all the general meetings and exercises of whatever kind of the Congregation at which they will have the right to assist like all the others, they will have

a special meeting on the first and fifteenth of each month at which no one other than those of their age and above may assist. The Prefect and Vice-Prefect of the Congregation will belong to this section whatever their age. The Prefects and Vice-Prefects who have left office will continue to belong to this section. These meetings will have a two-fold aim. They will serve to bring closer together the members who should make them up, to facilitate them with the means to know each other better and to form ties between them through a holy friendship, secondly they will be useful even under the heading of piety as they will always begin with a short conference that the Rev. Director will give on some topic of religion. If, because of the absence of the Rev. Director or for any other reason, the conference does not take place, its place will be taken by a half-hour's reading in some pious book.

February 26: dangerous illness of Master Chabot. His reception on his death-bed immediately before receiving the Viaticum which was his first communion.

Today will be memorable in the Congregation. It is the first time we have seen death threaten the days of a congregant. And unhappily it is all too certain that it will not let go of its prey. The illness that has seized our young colleague leaves no hope. It is terminal and within a few days he will be taken from us. The charity of the Congregation has in this sad circumstance been equal to its duties. Like a tender mother she has neglected nothing to help with all her power the dear son whom she formed in piety. The only consolation she can promise herself is the hope that this attention will not be without [28] a happy outcome for the eternal salvation of the one she is going to lose. It is Master Victor Joseph Antoine Chabot of whom we speak. This young man, about 13 years of age, has been postulant for some months, he was preparing himself to make his first communion this year when suddenly a mortal and incurable sickness came to warn him that his days were numbered and that he was reaching the end of his life. The Rev. Director immediately made himself responsible for preparing him to make very soon his first and what will unfortunately be in all likelihood his last communion. The young man having displayed excellent dispositions, we fixed today to minister to the sick man. The Rev. Director, in accordance with the authorization of the parish priest of the Madeleine, has been entrusted with this ministry. On emerging from the morning exercise of the Congregation, all the dignitaries accompanied by the received mem-

bers and some probationary members to whom we had given permission to join the others, went to the parish sacristy. Master Sacristan distributed the lanterns to the gentlemen of the senior section, Master Vice-Prefect in the absence of the Prefect took one of the canopy poles, the sick man's brother took the other. Thus we made our way with remarkable recollection to the home of the dear sick man. Before giving him holy Viaticum, the Reverend Director admitted and received him as a member of the Congregation, after which the sick man renewed his baptismal promises. In this way he had the advantage of gaining the plenary indulgence according by our holy Father the Pope to those who receive holy Viaticum after faithfully following the exercises of the Congregation. Already over a period of several days it had been enjoined on all the congregants to make each day a prayer for the sick man, it will be continued as long as the danger persists or until it pleases God to dispose of his life. The Rev. Director says a prayer for him every day at the Mass. We may not omit, for the edification of future congregants, that the sick man received the sacraments with a touching devotion; his resignation to God's will and his patience in his sufferings are unfailing; he adorns the Congregation, he will be its first intercessor in heaven.

March 9: first communion of Master Henrigues²⁵

[29] Master Henrigues de Montvert, when he was about to depart, made known his wish to make his first communion in the bosom of the Congregation. The Reverend Director agreed to this all the more readily as he saw in him the dispositions to do this great deed well. He therefore devoted all his efforts to prepare himself worthily. The Parish Priest of the Madeleine was asked to go to the chapel of the Congregation there to celebrate the holy Mysteries and give communion to Master Henrigues. This ceremony took place at 8 a.m., with all the pomp the circumstance required. The congregants went in the afternoon to the parish of the Madeleine where Master Henrigues came to renew his baptismal promises which the Parish Priest received at the baptismal font. Then they all went to implore the assistance and protection of the

²⁵ Léopold Henrigues was leaving for Paris. On July 10, 1821, Father H. J. Leblanc (cf. n. 29) wrote the Founder that Henrigues was behaving well in Paris.

Blessed Virgin Mary singing before the altar consecrated to her the litanies and the *Sub tuum praesidium*.

March 12: the congregants' Easter communion. Adoration of the Cross. Visit of the churches.

It was decided that the congregants would follow this year the liturgy of Holy Week in their respective parishes, and they would make there their Easter communion at the High Mass of Holy Thursday at the foot of the altar immediately after the trustees of the fabric if they made theirs on that day, or otherwise after the priests. They will likewise make together the adoration of the Cross on Good Friday after the trustees of the fabric. For the visit of the churches, those not making it with their parents will try to get together with some other of their colleagues. We will thus divide up into several groups, and during this holy journey we will devote every moment solely to conversations concerning the mysteries of the Passion of Our Saviour.

March 28: confirmation

His Lordship the Bishop of Digne,²⁶ being in Aix, administered the sacrament of confirmation today to four congregants, namely, Masters Leblanc, Turcas, Henrigues and Chappuis in the church of the Holy Spirit.

March 30: prayers for the dying for Master Chabot.

The congregant who made his first communion by way of Viaticum last month being on the point of death, the congregants gathered in the church of the Madeleine and when the death knell had sounded [30] the Reverend Director, in conformity with the article of the regulation, himself led the prayers for the dying, and he did not forget the dying man but visited him five or six times a day,²⁷ often accompanied by some of the congregants who are very glad to carry out this act of charity.

²⁶ His Lordship Bishop F.M.B. Miollis, Bishop of Digne from 1805 to 1838. He was a native of Aix. In 1819 he entrusted the sanctuary of N.-D. du Laus to the Missionaries of Provence.

²⁷ During his first years of priesthood, Eugene accompanied to the moment of death the seriously ill who asked for him. Fortuné de Mazenod wrote to the Founder's father on April 1, 1819: "You know he does not leave for a moment the souls confided to his care when they are in danger of death." APR FB V 1-7.

April 1: death and funeral of the late Master Chabot

God called Victor Joseph Antoine Chabot to himself yesterday at 6 p.m. All the congregants were immediately informed so that they might lose no time in according him their suffrages; they were all invited at the same time to go to the funeral which was to take place today. We assembled in the church of the Madeleine. The Reverend Director together with the Parish Priest and the Parish Curates led the Office. All then went together to the deceased's house. The 13 candles placed around the remains were returned to the dignitaries who were given places in the cortège during the procession immediately after the celebrant, close to the remains, which were thus surrounded by them and followed by all the other members, probationers and postulants of the Congregation. The mortal remains of the deceased having been set down in the cemetery, the sprinkler was given to each congregant in turn and before this body, which should seemingly, seeing its youth, have been assured of a longer stay, had been covered with earth and made to disappear for ever from the surface of the earth, the Rev. Director said a few words inspired by the occasion. Finally all the congregants recited on their knees the *De Profundis*, and then immediately went back to the chapel of the Congregation there to recite Vespers for the Dead. We fixed the first free Thursday for the *Requiem* Mass and the Office which should be said in Congregation; that will be the 13th of this month. Meanwhile, in conformity with the regulation, each congregant will make a communion for the repose of the soul of the deceased and will apply for the same intention all the indulgences he may earn during the nine days following the date of his death.

April 2: first communion of Master Chappuis²⁸

[31] Father Gigou, capitular Vicar General, came to celebrate the holy Mysteries in the chapel of the Congregation. The Reverend

²⁸ Adrien Antoine Joseph Louis Constantin Polydore Chappuis, who out of devotion to the Founder added "Eugene" to his name, was presented to the Association at the end of 1813, admitted in 1814 and received after his first communion on April 6, 1815. He boarded at the Mission from 1816 or 1817, while he studied law at the University. He was planning on joining the Missionaries of Provence, but became a lawyer in Aix, then, in 1825, an employee at the Ministry of Finance in Paris, sub-Director at this same ministry in 1845, Inspector General of Finances in 1848. He always maintained very friendly relations with Bishop de Mazenod and, in 1844, he initiated a move for the latter to be named cardinal, cf. J. Leflon III, p. 405.

Director had invited him to come and give first communion to Master Chappuis, a zealous congregant who had been fortunate enough and sufficiently adroit to muster some specious reasons to persuade the superiors to allow him not to delay until the time of the general first communion. The way that Master Chappuis prepared himself for this great step persuaded the Rev. Director to rejoice over the success of his initiative which had been inspired mainly by his lively desire to be united the sooner to our beloved Saviour [...].

April 6: feast of St. Joseph. Reception, admission [...]

Feast of St. Joseph, patron of the Congregation. Before the Mass, immediately after the Office, Masters Henrigues, Leblanc,²⁹ David,³⁰ Chappuis and Lantelme were solemnly received according to the rite prescribed in the regulations [...]. Master Chappuis, candle in hand, made in the name of all the consecration and protestation registered at the end of the register,³¹ which they all signed after the session. It is at the *Pater* of the Mass that Master Chappuis came forward with the other new members to the foot of the altar to make the act of consecration. We finished with the *Te Deum*. In the afternoon, catechism was had at the usual time, we then went to the games area. We did not sing Vespers until 6 o'clock, they were followed by exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, with the prayers ordained by the Vicar General, and others inspired by fervour. Before Benediction, the Rev. Director made a short colloquy in the name of all the congregants. This colloquy was followed [32] by the act of consecration to the Blessed Virgin, made by the

²⁹ H. J. Leblanc was a frequent visitor at the house of the Mission and planned to become a Missionary of Provence. He became a priest of the diocese of Paris after studying theology in the St. Sulpice Seminary. We have 31 letters from him to Eugene de Mazenod. APR LM.

³⁰ E. L. A. David also wanted to be a Missionary of Provence. He was a priest in the diocese of Paris, after studying in the St. Sulpice Seminary. We have 5 letters of his to Eugene from 1816 to 1825. He was the first witness in the informative canonical process for the nomination of Bishop E. de Mazenod to the bishopric of Marseilles.

³¹ This act of consecration is not found at the end of the Diary, but we have (APR DM VIII 3) four loose leaves, with the text of this consecration, signed by hundreds of congregants from 1813 to 1822. It is a consecration to the Most Holy Trinity "through the hands of the Blessed and Immaculate Virgin Mary our mother and patroness."

recently received members. There was noticeable today as on other days of our solemnities an extraordinary piety and fervour in the vast majority of the congregants. This same day were admitted Masters Gabriel Bernadin Théobald Barlatier de St-Julien, Pierre Joseph Marcellin Giraud,³² Gaspard François Julien, Joseph Charles Matthias Jauffret, Pierre Etienne Augustin Pontier, Antoine Pierre Henry Pontier, who had all been postulants for several months.

April 16: chapel of the Congregation transferred to the *Grandes Maries*.

As the owner had to have back the apartments the Congregation was using in the Valbelle mansion, the Congregation has transferred its sessions and meetings to the church of St. Sophie formerly the *Grandes Maries*. It took possession of it today with the consent of the Reverend Mother Superior.

April 23: nomination of a treasurer. Establishment of a Finance Office.

The change of locale having made an increase in daily expenses inevitable, it was decided that this expense should not be the responsibility of the Rev. Director like all those that had occurred up to the present in the Congregation. Each congregant will pay a *sol* per week as the cost of the seat he occupies in the mornings and evenings on Sundays and Thursdays. The recovery of this money will be effected by Master Zealot weekly and he is to pay this over to the Treasurer who will be named at the same time as the other dignitaries: in the meantime, Master Vice-Prefect is to perform the functions of the Treasurer. There will be set up immediately a Finance Office to which all matters relating to the holding of money, the use of this money, the collection of funds etc. will be referred [...].

³² P.J.M. Giraud entered the novitiate of the Missionaries of Provence on February 28, 1818, and left in August 1819.

April 27: Office and Service for the late V.J.A. Chabot

[33] The congregants assembled in the chapel said the first Nocturn and Lauds of the Office for the Dead for the repose of the soul of the later Victor Joseph Antoine Chabot. After Lauds there was a solemn service. Mass was sung with the utmost solemnity³³ by the Rev. Director. Clerical congregants, who are in the minor seminary, were summoned to serve at the altar. After the Mass absolution was given with the usual ceremonies.

Petition of postulants and probationers

The Council met to deliberate on the petitions presented by some individuals who desire to be admitted into the Congregation. On this occasion [34] a like petition was required of all the congregants, even those previously admitted, dated as of their postulation and admission; we note this here because otherwise people would be puzzled by the anachronism which has these petitions signed by members admitted into the Congregation subsequently to the date borne by these acts. The new measures taken for postulants and the admitted, etc., will be set out elsewhere.³⁴

Special retreat for congregants who are to make their first communion.

The insufficiency of the first communion retreats made in the parishes, and the abundant fruits that were derived last year from the special exercises that were given for the congregants by the Rev. Director in his apartments, have induced the Director to do the same this year. Only the congregants who are about to make their first communion are admitted to this exercise. They will begin the Wednesday evening after the opening has taken place in the parishes. The next day and the following days the congregants on retreat will go to breakfast with the Director after the parish instruction. We begin at 9 a.m. and finish only at midday. We begin again at 2:00 p.m. to conclude only at 5:30 which

³³ *A la cardinale*: the Founder uses here an expression unknown to liturgists!

³⁴ Other measures for the postulants, etc., cf. July 4, 1816 and February 9, 1817.

is the hour of the parish instruction. At 7:00 we allow ourselves a little walk together in a secluded and solitary spot. On Friday, after the parish benediction, the congregants on retreat go with the Rev. Director to the church of St. Sauveur to place themselves under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Rev. Director makes aloud an act of consecration, that each one ratifies interiorly. This is now the second year that this exercise is having a very good effect on these souls already prepared by two days of recollection and the very abundant graces that the Lord does not fail to pour out during this retreat. Trinity Sunday, the first communions did not prevent there being Mass and a short instruction in Congregation. In the afternoon, the congregants who had had the happiness of making their first communion in the morning went to their parishes to assist at Vespers and the other exercises that are done there on this day. In the evening, they went to walk in the Enclos of the Reverend Director by themselves, the other congregants went elsewhere for their recreation. The next day they made their customary visits as a group.

June 4: Octave of Corpus Christi

[35] Today, after the instruction and mass, the Rev. Director exposed the Blessed Sacrament. After the *Pange lingua*, the prayer of the Blessed Sacrament and that of *pro reparatione: Gementes*, the Prefect took his place at the prie-dieu before the altar where, assisted by the Zealots, he made aloud, holding a candle, an act of amendment to the Blessed Sacrament for all the insults Our Lord has received and receives from so many impious, heretics, and bad Catholics, and particularly the faults congregants may be guilty of, in whose name the Prefect made this solemn reparation in conformity to the regulation article.

June 11: admissions.

The Council assembled to deliberate on the various petitions for admission or reception sent to it by the Rev. Director. There were admitted Masters Jean Jacques Joseph Tassy, Amédée Pierre de Saboulin, Auguste Barthélemy Bouron, Jean Baptiste Hyacinthe Bonnet, Joseph Antoine Leydet³⁵ and Martial Ponsard.

³⁵ J. A. Leydet was a postulant with the Missionaries of Provence at the beginning of 1820, but he did not persevere, cf. Leydet to the Founder, January 28, 1820 and Father Leblanc to the same, July 31, 1820. APR LM.

June 25: feast of St. Aloysius Gonzaga. Reception [of new members].

The feast of St. Aloysius Gonzaga having been transferred to this present Sunday, everyone was anxious to make it one of the most glorious, both in fervour and in exterior magnificence; never has this two-fold purpose been better fulfilled. The altar adorned in the most elegant fashion was heaped with flowers which by the variety of their colours and the sweetness of their smell simultaneously charmed the eye and the nose and contributed in their way to raise souls to God; but what constituted the finest adornment of this charming feast was the piety and recollection of the congregants which astonished all those who, drawn by the feast, were witnesses of it. Before the High Mass, which was sung by the Very Reverend Vicar General, with deacon, sub-deacon, priest assistant, master of ceremonies, chorists in cope, acolytes, thurifers, etc., the Rev. Director received with the prescribed ceremonies [a number of members...] [36] Immediately after the Mass, we exposed the Blessed Sacrament. Before Benediction, the newly-received came to the foot of the altar to make aloud the act of consecration prescribed by the Constitutions which was followed by Benediction. The Very Reverend Vicar General descended to the foot of the altar to intone the *Te Deum laudamus*. Then we replaced the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle while there was sung in choir the psalm *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes*. The afternoon Office was also very solemn. Vespers were sung by one of the Reverend Canons with priest assistant, chorists in cope, etc. After Vespers which were said, the Blessed Sacrament being exposed, Father Maurel gave the panegyric of the saint which was followed by the litanies with musical accompaniment, the *Tantum ergo* and Benediction.

July 2: nominations to posts of responsibility. Treasurer's accounts, etc.

Today was convoked the general assembly of the Congregation; it met in the Enclos of the Rev. Director [...]

August 26: prizes merited and won by the congregants on college prize day.

[38] The success the congregants had today will be forever an incontrovertible proof that the piety they profess, far from harming the progress of their studies, helps them enormously to acquit themselves

well in all their duties. Already beforehand we had given assurance of this to any tempted to doubt it. It had already been evident within the family circle and in the congregants' daily conduct, but today the proof was plain for the whole town to see and the whole town applauded it with joy when at the distribution of prizes, which took place solemnly in the college chapel, it was acknowledged that the congregants were the ones who had worked most constantly and best during the whole course of the year. They did in fact carry off the prize for excellence in all classes from rhetoric up to the sixth. Furthermore they were not satisfied with meriting this prize which is incomparably the most valued of all, since it is the reward for application and the success of the whole year's work, but they added many others of a very honourable kind too. We cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of setting out the names of those who merited to be crowned by the hand of the first magistrate of this town, and who thus brought honour to the Congregation to which no doubt they owe in large measure their success and their triumphs.³⁶

September 17: reception of Brother Maur, Trappist religious.³⁷

Mr. Martin Bardeau, religious of the Trappist Order, being about to resume the habit which circumstances had obliged him to lay aside, before returning to the house of his Order which has just been reopened, did not want to say farewell to the Congregation all of whose exercises he has the happiness of following since its establishment, that he had edified with his angelic fervour, that he had even served with remarkable zeal, without joining and becoming a member of it; if he has put it off [40] until now to make this request, a result of his profound humility. He was received by the Rev. Director with the usual ceremonies; in

³⁶ There follows a whole page of names with the prize taken in various areas. Three future novices of the Missionaries of Provence figure in the list: Master Giraud, Léon de Saboulin, and J. B. G. de Bausset.

³⁷ Pierre Martin Bardeau was a Camaldolese, accepted at the Trappist monastery of Grosbois south-east of Paris. When Napoleon expelled the monks from their monastery in 1811, Brother Maur entered the service of a Parisian priest. In 1812, when he was a Director at the Seminary St. Sulpice, Eugene engaged him as a domestic first in Paris then in Aix. After the fall of Napoleon, Brother Maur was able to return to his Order and left Aix on September 18, 1815, cf. J.-M. Larose, *Etude sur l'origine des frères convers chez les Oblats in Etudes Oblats* 12 (1953) pp. 66-69, and J. Pielorz, *A propos du Frère Maur*, *Ibid.* 13 (1954), pp. 248-249.

the talk that the Rev. Director gave at his reception, he did not forget to point out to the congregants, who had become his confreres, all the advantages they were going to derive from the communion of prayers and merits which was henceforth established between them and this holy religious, who from the depth of his solitude, and in the very silence of the night, would watch in a way over them, and will obtain them the grace of perseverance, an inestimable gift that one may not merit, and for which one could not have too many intercessors in heaven and on earth.

Confirmation in the chapel of the Congregation by His Lordship the Bishop of Vannes.

Bishop Ferdinand de Bausset, Bishop of Vannes, since he was in Aix,³⁸ had the kindness to give the sacrament of confirmation to the congregants who were qualified for it, in the church where the Congregation does its exercises. These gentlemen were prepared for the reception of this great sacrament by a series of instructions and some days of retreat. His Lordship the Bishop of Vannes, before confirming them, made a moving discourse in which he stressed the great advantages they might derive from their admission into the Congregation and of the thanks they owed to God for having given them the grace of calling them into such a society, setting out for them and having them note what the Rev. Director is striving to do for their happiness and sanctification. He strongly stressed that they should have an unlimited trust in him and a more than filial love. These touching words of the Prelate were especially relished by the Gentlemen congregants for they expressed marvelously the feelings they felt and of which they tried to give every day new signs to him whom they cherished indeed as their fathers and their best friend.

[November]

We overlooked mentioning in their place the solemnities of the Holy Guardian Angels and the feast of All Saints. They were celebrated

³⁸ Before being named Archbishop of Aix in 1817, Bishop Ferdinand de Bausset had been Bishop of Vannes from 1808 to 1817. As there was not at that time a bishop in Aix, passing bishops were made use of for the ceremonies of confirmation.

with accustomed pomp. All Souls' Day was spent with even more recollection than in past years.

Mass for the dead

[41] The money spent last year on chestnuts has this year been assigned in its entirety to the relief of the holy souls in purgatory. The piety of the congregants went to the extent that we have put together enough to say thirty-three Masses for the dead.

Change of locale

Although the Congregation has nothing but bottomless praise for the consideration and politeness of the Ursuline Sisters and found in their Church every kind of facility, even so it was exposed on a daily basis to an inconvenience that has compelled it to look for another locale where the exercises can take place at less inconvenient times than in the Church of these Sisters. At the *Maries* one had to wait until a priest who used to say his Mass after eight o'clock had finished in order to begin the Office, which inevitably meant about nine o'clock. Those who had to make their devotions were thus obliged to fast on the day of their communion until their dinner time, or if they wanted to eat a snack, could not do so until about half-past eleven. This spoilt their dinner. In the afternoon, the same problem arose as to the Congregation's Vespers which could not begin until after those of the Sisters which depended on the leisure or decision of their chaplain; then we had to move quickly to get the church empty, and then if one wanted to take advantage of the fine weather to get the youngsters playing, there could be no question of returning to the church at nightfall, since naturally it was closed at that time.

Chapel of the Congregation in the choir of the former Carmelite Church³⁹

All these reasons and some others influenced the Congregation to move elsewhere. Its choice fell on the former church of the Carmelites

³⁹ During the year 1815, Eugene took the decision to found a community of missionaries. He bought, in the month of October, a part of the former Carmelite convent, "situated at the head of the Cours, with a charming Church attached" (Eugene to Charles de Forbin-Janson, 23-24 October, 1815). The contract was concluded on December 30, 1815, cf. J. Leflon, II, pp. 36-38.

where it hopes to settle permanently. As this necessary change must entail some expense, the Council in its session today decided to provide for it by means of a voluntary subscription which has been fixed at one to six francs. This subscription must only be asked of the more well-off congregants [...]

November 21: blessing of the choir

[43] The choir that must serve as chapel for the Congregation was so profaned during the Revolution that it has been necessary to have it blessed. This blessing took place today very solemnly in the presence of the whole Congregation. Rev. Father Beylot, Capitular Vicar General, then celebrated the first mass there at which a very large number of congregants had the happiness of receiving communion. The Blessed Sacrament remained the whole day in the tabernacle, and that will be the rule every Sunday. There was perpetual adoration all day long. The congregants replaced each other every half-hour before the Blessed Sacrament. In the evening we said solemn Vespers. Then the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, the litanies of the Blessed Virgin and some other prayers were sung. Before giving the blessing, the Rev. Director delivered a short colloquy in the name of the Congregation which had the customary effect of this pious exercise, a felt increase of fervour in every heart. It seems at these times, short as they always seem, that Our Lord Jesus Christ responds promptly with an abundance of graces and consolations that he pours out in the souls of those who address him by the mouth of his minister, to the requests they make him through his instrument. One always emerges from this exercise, and in general from all the solemnities which are held in Congregation, with a feeling of the truth of this word of Scripture: *melius est una in atriis tuis, Domine, super millia* (Ps. 83: 11).

December 8: [reception of new members]

There was High Mass in Congregation. Received with the customary formalities were Messrs. Maurand, Coulin,⁴⁰ Giraud, the elder

⁴⁰ François Xavier Alphonse Coulin entered the novitiate of N.-D. du Laus on June 21, 1819 and made his oblation on June 29, 1820. He left in October 1822, became priest in 1824 and exercised the priestly ministry in the diocese of Marseilles. We retain 76 letters from him to Bishop de Mazenod from 1819 to 1859. APR LM.

Ponsard and Chaubet. They solemnly renewed their baptismal promises following the discourse addressed to them by the Rev. Director.

* * *

28-month gap⁴¹

Here a lacuna opens up which lasts up to June 18, 1818, when I resolved to recommence a work my task had obliged me to interrupt, in spite of my goodwill (see page [61] of the register). I assigned a congregant to make a note of the principal events so that at the first free moment I might write them up and transcribe them, but the notes were made very poorly, with the result that today, June 23, 1818, I have practically no documentation on all that has happened over the last two and a half years, and yet it is a time replete with interesting happenings. The Congregation took on [p. 44] so to speak a new form, at least its regulation and administration were considerably improved in the light experience, and of new helps I had to engage in good works.⁴² Obstacles and contradictions also increased in proportion, but the arm of the ever and infinitely merciful Lord has not grown shorter over those whose only end in all their endeavours, all their operations, is his greater glory, the building up of the Church and the salvation of the souls whom he redeemed with his blood, and the obstacles and contradictions served only to give more strength to a work he protects and which, on the face of it, should have had as its sole adversaries impious and bad Christians. Even so my patience was cruelly tried, and it took nothing short of the conviction of the good being done in the Congregation through a felt

⁴¹ After these pages [43-44], written on June 23, 1818, to explain the 28-month gap, Eugene leaves some fifteen pages blank and continues on page [61] the narration of the events beginning from June 18, 1818. In the Spring of 1821, he will fill in these pages [45-60] with the narration of some events that took place between July 4, 1816 and March, 1818.

⁴² We still have two copies of the regulation of 1816; a rough draft of 82 pages and the definitive text of 54 pages. APR DM 1b. This text was published in *Missions OMI* 1899, pp. 25-107. J. Leflon II, pp. 12-15, comments on this regulation. The new means Eugene speaks of were, beginning with the end of 1815, his collaborators, the Missionaries of Provence, especially Father Tempier who went on missions infrequently and busied himself with the congregants and the faithful who attended the church of the Mission.

and daily working of grace, and the certainty of the ravage that the enemy of our souls would have wrought in this chosen flock, if I had abandoned it, to restrain me from renouncing it permanently or even from never wanting to do the least good ever again in a town for which I had sacrificed myself and where I had been made to drink the cup of bitterness. The congregants should know that the only insult (see page [52]) I ever received in my life was on their account and as a result of trying to be of help to them, and that I have never had such sources of annoyance as over them. But they should know too, for their edification, that I promptly forgave the insult, and that I still endure the sources of annoyance with patience and resignation so as to please God, and expiate the faults I commit every day by not fulfilling perfectly enough the task the Lord imposed on me in their regard. So it is in order not to abandon them that I persevered with my ministry towards them despite the hindrances put in its way and persecutions aroused against me in this matter, and I derive too much consolation from being able to tell them I sacrificed for their benefit extremely advantageous and beguiling offers not to share this with them in the hope that they will compensate me with their perseverance in God's service and their attachment to the Congregation.⁴³

1816

July 4, 1816: [...] "Angels" to help new congregants.

[45] Among the notes which were taken I find the matter of nominating a certain number of congregants to serve as mentors for the newcomers. As their selections is very much to their credit, I consider it my

⁴³ The Founder is speaking here of the opposition of the parish priests of Aix and the incidents that took place in the cathedral at the time of the confirmations of May 18, 1817, cf. J. Leflon II, pp. 48-58, and J. Pielorz, *Les rapports du Fondateur avec les Curès d'Aix (1813-1826)* in *Etudes Oblates*, 19 (1960), pp. 147-171, 328-367 and 20 (1961), pp. 39-60. Father de Mazenod tells this incident as having happened on April 6, cf. *infra*, under that date. Here he also alludes to the reserve of Bishop Ferdinand de Bauset towards him when he met him in Paris, cf. letter to Father Tempier in October, 1817, in *Ecrits Oblats* 6, pp. 40-47. In the course of his stay in Paris in 1817, Father de Mazenod refused to be named as vicar general of Bishop de Latil in Chartres. This promotion would have preceded the episcopate for Bishop de Latil was at that time a member of the commission responsible for the informative process for the appointment of new bishops.

duty to record their names here. For the senior section those named were Messr. Tavernier, de Magallon and Mouranchon, and for the juniors Messr. Maurin, Lantelme and Chappuis. As the ministry they have to carry out with respect to their confreres has much in common with that exercised by the Angels, they were given their name. It can truly be said that this name fitted to perfection and could not have been applied to more suitable persons than those designated, so exemplary was their conduct and sincere their intentions [...].

Reception of Messrs. Maunier⁴⁴ and Palis (father).

It was resolved that Mr. Maunier, missionary priest, and Mr. Palis would be received, and also Mr. Cavalier, cleric.

July 6: admission [of a number of probationers...]

December 19: service for Casimir Archange, who died on December 17 last year

We commemorated our dear confrere Casimir Alexander Archange, who died in the night of December 17-18 last year 1815. I find nothing else in the notes which should have preserved for us the memory of this unhappy event, and today – May 19, 1821 – my memory no longer retains the precious details surrounding the edifying death of this congregant. The illness was quite prolonged and very painful, but his patience was unfailing. I witnessed his suffering and resignation, for the child made it clear to me that he did not want me to leave his bedside, and I spent several days and two nights at his side. He surrendered his

⁴⁴ Emmanuel Maunier (1769-1844), ordained priest on September 23, 1797, entered the Missionaries of Provence in March 1816 and left in October 1823. Father de Mazenod inscribed him among the congregants, as with some other missionaries marked out to help him with the youngsters and also to take his place as director during missions and his travels. Because of the 18-month gap, the name of Jean Baptiste André Pascal Honorat (1799-1862) does not appear in the Diary. We know, from a list of congregants, that he was received on March 26, 1816. He then entered the novitiate of the Missionaries of Provence on October 21, 1818 and made his oblation on May 30, 1819. Ordained priest on September 22, 1821, he was the first superior in Canada in 1841.

soul into the peace of the Lord after fervently receiving the Church's sacraments. His obsequies took place in [46] the church of the Madeleine. He was borne and accompanied by the congregants who gathered around his grave when we reached the cemetery and recited all together the *De Profundis*. The Director took advantage of the occasion to address them some words inspired by the event. We then said the Office of the Dead in Congregation. The deceased's parents were invited to the service and assisted at it in the choir.

December 25

The notes kept bear no other information under this date than that several probationary members, nearly all from the senior section, were received during the night before the Liturgy at which almost all the congregants assisted and that on Christmas Day itself a fairly large number of postulants were admitted as probationers. But no names are given.⁴⁵

December 26: assignment of responsibilities for the year 1817 [...]

1817

January 6: visit of Mr. de Vidaud. Place given him in Congregation.

[47] The Marquis de Vidaud, prefect of the Grenoble Congregation, having come to Aix to spend a few days, was admitted within the Congregation as if he were a member. He was placed in the choir during the exercises, at the Prefect's right. This deference was due to the place he occupies in the Congregation of Grenoble with whose prayers we are associated, and the Congregation at Aix eagerly seized this opportunity of testifying to the Marquis de Vidaud the admiration inspired by his personal virtues. Mr. de Vidaud received communion immediately after the Prefect.

⁴⁵ According to other documents concerning the Youth Congregation, on December 25 and 26, 1816, or a little prior, the following congregants were received: Hilarion Bourrellet, Jean François Sébastien Deblieu, Bernard Pécoul and François de Paule-Henry Tempier.

January 12: presentation of the accounts for the year 1816 [...]

February 2: Messrs. Margueri, Rastoin and Fabre expelled. Boileau and Florent struck off.

For a long time the Director had a feeling of disquiet over some of the young congregants who gave clear signs of slackness; after being warned with the utmost gentleness and tact, they made only token efforts at reform, and soon they fell back into the same state only worse even than before. Finally their scandalous conduct did not allow of further silence and the Director found himself compelled to expel them from the Congregation. But no one can tell how much this cruel pruning cost him; one would have to have been there at the discourse he made on this occasion to the Congregation assembled in the choir of the church of the Mission. He was so moved, when paraphrasing this passage from the psalm: *Si inimicus meus* [48] *maledixisset mihi, [sed] tu... qui dulces capiebas cibos, etc.*, that most of the congregants melted into tears and this was their way of showing how much they shared their common father's grief. In the end the names of the guilty ones had to be pronounced, the wretches who had so cruelly broken a heart that had been so good to them, and it was learned without surprise but with indignation that Mr. Margueri was the worst of the three who were expelled, and all the more guilty because of the special attention the Director had bestowed on him. Mr. Rastoin and Mr. Fabre were expelled at the same time. Messrs. Peisse, Boileau and Florent would also have deserved expulsion; various flimsy attenuating circumstances induced us to be satisfied with striking off their names. Were one to keep dwelling on the thoughts provoked by the conduct, both then and subsequently, of these individuals, one could not help but react strongly to their ingratitude which went beyond all bounds and was especially evident in the case of Mr. Margueri and Mr. Peisse who had received clear and continual signs of the Director's affection, who took pains to lead them in the right path, unfortunately with only temporary success.

February 9: nomination of heads of ranks.

The Messrs. Zealots of the third and fourth sections having brought it to the Rev. Director's attention that the number of postulants and probationers was much increased, and that in consequence it had become difficult for them to give direct supervision to every individual in their sections, the Rev. Director selected from among the postulants eight

heads of ranks each one of whom will supervise eight postulants at whose head they will be placed in choir. A similar measure was taken for the probationers.

February 18: expulsion of Messrs. Auger and Chauvet [...]

February 20: Mr. Dayme struck off [49...]

February 24: Mr. Dufrenelle received on his death bed.

During the Rev. Director's absence on the mission⁴⁶ the Council met to consider if, in view of the urgency of the case, it were possible to receive the youth Pierre François Dufrenelle, a postulant of the fourth section, as a member of the Congregation. This child was dangerously ill and about to receive Holy Viaticum. The Council, motivated by feelings of Christian charity and wanting to have Dufrenelle share in all the spiritual advantages our Holy Father the Pope has granted to members of the Congregation, unanimously decided that Mr. Dufrenelle should be received. The intention of the Council was praiseworthy, but it was overlooked that the Rev. Director's presence was necessary to validate this act of reception and apply the spiritual favours to the newly-received member.

March 8: death and burial of Mr. Dufrenelle [...]

March 16: illness and death of Mr. Alphonse de Saboulin. His eulogy.

The Congregation was summoned to accompany Holy Viaticum which was administered to our dearest confrère Alphonse de Saboulin. It was not the first time he had the happiness of receiving holy communion in the course of his long and very dangerous illness. Mass was offered a number of times in his rooms to satisfy the urgent longings of his heart, full of love for Jesus Christ. This was just reward owed to this young man who had always led an angelic life and been exemplary in

⁴⁶ Father de Mazenod was on the mission of Mouriès (February 9-March 15), with Fathers Tempier, Mie and Deblieu, cf. J. Pierlorz, *Premières missions des Missionnaires de Provence* in *Missions OMI* 82 (1955) pp. 549-561 and 641-655.

virtue in every situation he encountered, and especially during the three years of legal studies he followed with distinction. Up till now the Congregation has experienced the loss only of children and painful as this loss may have been, it was not perhaps equally felt by those who because of their age were somewhat distanced from them and had had only some general contacts with them such as arise among all the congregants. But at the news of the imminent danger Mr. de Saboulin was in, a man who had already reached youthful maturity, who added to his many virtues a vast fund of knowledge which made of him, in everyone's eyes, a man of great promise, already called⁴⁷ and about to take his place at the bar in the first course of the province, there was general consternation; everyone hastened to be present at the ceremony of his receiving the sacrament and to show him personally their feelings of cordial affection. If loving care and prayers could have saved him, he would not have been taken from us; but this fine young man, who had always kept himself pure in the midst of the world's corruption, a world that both marveled at and envied him, was already ripe for heaven and he was to take possession of it during the night of March 22-23 at 3:00 a.m., only 21 years old. The Congregation loses in him one of its pillars and a finished model of every virtue. The only eulogy I will give him is to recall, for the edification of these who survive him, that he did not forget [51] for a single moment throughout the course of his life the sentiments of piety he brought with him, so to speak from his birth, sentiments that owed no doubt their growth to the genuinely Christian formation he received from his revered mother, but which achieved their fullness from his fidelity to grace and the effort he always made to cooperate with it. I have enjoyed taking some time over this reflection as it shows that in youth as in childhood, in the midst of the world or in the shelter of the paternal roof, one can serve God with fervour and keep one's innocence. I was away on mission when Mr. Alphonse de Saboulin died, so I was deprived of the consolation that would have been mine as I lavished my care upon him, but although I was not witness to the acts of virtue he practised in his last moments, I have never forgotten the edifying traits I was led to admire in him in the time before I left. He was already in considerable pain, the doctors had pronounced his case terminal, and quite often he was overcome by his weaknesses.

⁴⁷ Already "called" to a position as advocate at the Court of Justice.

His patience equaled his resignation and exceeded his adversities, but he still blamed himself for the least murmur of complaint. One day among others he summoned me and while I was quite astonished at his unconquerable meekness and the heroic sentiments he expressed with a candour and simplicity that heightened their value, he asked me seriously if I thought he had lost the merit of his sufferings by the manner in which he bore them. Seraphic young man, if only you could have read my mind! There you would have glimpsed the sort of cultic reverence my admiration for so many virtues was according you beforehand!

March 28: visit of the Abbot of La Trappe

His Lordship the Abbot of La Trappe (Rev. de L'Estrange),⁴⁸ having come to spend some days in the house, the missionary who presided during the superior's absence asked him to say the Congregation's Mass and to officiate at Vespers. His Lordship the Abbot was very edified at the way the congregants conducted themselves and by their fervour. He was pleased to let them know this, in a discourse full of unction, in which he made a special point of recommending them to persevere. He left on April 12.

March 30: Reception of Mr. Dupuy. Mr. Dalmas takes the habit.

[52] Mr Dupuy,⁴⁹ missionary novice, was received as a congregant and Mr. Dalmas⁵⁰ received the soutane with dispositions and a fervour

⁴⁸ Dom Augustin de Lestrange (1754-1827) entered the Cistercian Abbey of *la Trappe* in 1780. When the Revolution began, he went with some monks to *la Valsainte* in Switzerland. He was elected abbot in 1794. He returned to France in 1815 and took possession of *la Trappe* that Dom de Laprade had been able to recover. He is regarded as the person who restored his Order in France after the Revolution.

⁴⁹ Jean Alexandre Dupuy (1798-1880) began the novitiate with the Missionaries of Provence on October 3, 1816 and made his oblation on November 1, 1818. He left in 1830, but always remained a friend and collaborator of the Founder and the Oblates of N.D. de l'Osier and of Marseilles.

⁵⁰ Louis Michel François Guillaume Dalmas had been received as a probationer in the Youth Congregation on July 6, 1816. He entered the novitiate of the Missionaries of Provence on March 30, 1817, made his oblation on November 1, 1819, and left in the Spring of 1820. On account of the gap of 28 months in 1816 and 1817, there is no mention in the Diary of a certain Lalande, received into the Youth Congregation on June 21, 1817. He entered the novitiate of the Missionaries of Provence on October 29, 1817. He left in January 1819.

that gave rise to sentiments of joy and hope in the hearts of every participant. His parents' piety was especially remarkable on this occasion.

March 31: Palm Sunday Procession.

The Palm Sunday procession left the confines of the church as in preceding years and made a turn around the *Place des Carmelites*.

April 6

Easter Day. The congregants went to fulfil the Easter precept in their respective parishes at the 6 o'clock Mass and then came back to take part in the High Mass "in Congregation" at 9.30.

April 6: a memorable confirmation service in St. Sauveur's

The young congregants who were to receive the sacrament of confirmation went on retreat in the house of the Mission three days previously, in the usual way. They were quite numerous and the Congregation deserved sufficient consideration to have His Lordship the Bishop of Digne come and confirm them in the Congregation's chapel, as he raised no difficulty over even going to the work house. Truly pitiful reasons,⁵¹ which I flinch from putting on paper out respect for his person, deterred this Prelate from accepting the invitation made to him by the Director with the agreement of the Rev. Capitular Vicar General. So we had to go to the metropolitan church where the parish priest of St. Jean so far forgot himself as to insult publicly the Director who happily managed to contain himself and not react to his insults so as not to give rise to a dreadful scandal on such an occasion. The grievance of the Rev. Parish Priest of St. Jean was the refusal of the Director to send the congregants to the parish to join up with the street-corner scamps hurriedly assembled not without a certain amount of difficulty on the occasion of the confirmation. The Director had refused only after consulting the Vicar General; he was therefore acting perfectly correctly and had

⁵¹ The opposition to Father de Mazenod and his works came especially from Father Christine, parish priest of St. Jean, the parish church of the Missionaries of Provence belonged to. The opposition extended also to some "aristocratic salons," cf. J. Leflon II, pp. 47-54.

no reason to expect to find himself rebuked in this shocking way right in the choir of St. Sauveur's packed with children from every parish who were waiting for the moment to be confirmed. The Director, after the good Parish Priest had said at the top of his voice that he would jolly well teach him his duty, [53] that he would summon him before the Promotor and other such pleasantries, – the Director, assisted by a special grace, made no reply and passed on, but as there was an oversight and no place was provided for the congregants although he had taken the precaution of giving advance notice the night before, he spoke directly to the Vicar General asking him to be so kind as to see to it. The Rev. Vicar General had them placed around the altar where these youngsters who had been prepared with such care presented an enchanting picture of piety that was in strong contrast with the scandalous dissipation of all the other children who could only be kept quiet with a few slaps and cuffs. This shocking behaviour went so far that half-way through the Prelate's Mass, the Rev. Vicar General who was assisting him turned round towards the priests and told them out loud to control their children and put an end to the noise. As soon as the congregants had received the sacrament of confirmation, they retired behind the High Altar and stayed there until the ceremony was over. The Director addressed them from time to time to raise their hearts to God and steer them away from the distractions the uproar in the church could have occasioned. But in fact this help was practically unnecessary, so intent were they on being recollected of their own accord, so attentive either in prayer or in reading the book we had taken the precaution of having them bring. I can affirm that on that day they surpassed themselves. The Director thanked the Lord for it as a compensation that helped him put out of his mind the unpleasantness the morning's events had brought him. We must not omit mentioning that the congregants were practically the only ones who had the happiness of taking communion at the Bishop's Mass [...].⁵² The Gentlemen came back to the Mission two by two accompanied by the Director and another missionary. Their retreat continued until the evening [...].⁵³

⁵² Twenty-six congregants were confirmed on that day.

⁵³ After this entry, Father de Mazenod gives [pp. 54-55] the names of 18 congregants whose qualities had been lauded on August 22 of the preceding year (1816) on prize day at the college. He adds that only some of the names are indicated.

June 17: procession of the Blessed Sacrament, on the Feast of the Sacred Heart.

[55] Procession of the Blessed Sacrament that takes place each year on the Feast of the Sacred Heart or on that of that feast's octave when it cannot be held on the feast day itself. This has always been the town's most edifying procession. It is made up of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart and the Youth Congregation who vie with one another, as it were, in piety and recollection.⁵⁴ The Blessed Sacrament is usually carried by the Bishop-elect of Marseilles⁵⁵ or the Very Rev. Vicars General. The town's most distinguished and respected citizens are invited to bear the canopy or candles behind the canopy. The company of *canonniers* has to all intents and purposes reserved for itself the honour of escorting Our Lord. Music with its harmony and fanfares is a constant feature that enhances the feast's impact. The women and girls sing canticles appropriate to the solemnity. The congregants repeat in choir the *Pange lingua*. The Clergy of every parish are invited and attend with the exception of the priests of the Madeleine who regularly keep their distance.⁵⁶ Care is taken to select the deacon and subdeacon from among the assisting priests out of deference to them. The priests of the Mission stand ready to keep the procession moving along, the superior takes his place behind the Congregation whose superior he is. He does not know if his thoughtfulness is noticed, the truth remains that he keeps to that position as much to show his affection and respect for the Congregation as out of sensitivity to the invited priests. The proces-

⁵⁴ Every year, after 1817, Father de Mazenod organized this procession that started at the church of the Mission. He himself had founded it on February 8, 1816, and was the Director of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart that accepted as members women and girls, cf. A. Rey, *Mgr de Mazenod*, I, p. 206 and the letter of A. Felici to Eugene de Mazenod, July 12, 1816, in Yenveux, *Les saintes Règles*, IV, p. 127.

⁵⁵ The Bishop-elect of Marseilles, Father Fortuné de Mazenod. Eugene is writing this in 1821. In the Spring of 1817 Fortuné was still in Palermo. He returned to France in December 1817.

⁵⁶ What Eugene says here went for 1817 only. In 1818 on the procession of Corpus Christi there were only the clergy of St. Jean and a priest from the Madeleine, cf. letter of Fortuné to the Founder's father, June 7, 1818. Father Isnardon (1744-1820), parish priest of the Madeliene, definitely no friend of the Founder, had a good excuse not to take part in the procession, he was already 73 years old.

sion always does the round of the *Cours* under the trees of the two lateral lanes. Since the erection of the mission Cross, it extends its walk as far as the foot of the Cross⁵⁷ from which spot benediction is given. The large rotunda is filled up wholly with people who have walked in the procession. The spectacle both of the procession and of its entry into the rotunda is splendid. It is night when we return, but the piety and deep recollection of all taking part, the sound of singing that echoes from one end of the *Cours* to the other, the majesty of the whole of this triumphal walk impresses the whole population that gathers to see it pass, in a way that not only does one never see the least disorder but on the contrary the curious, attracted by so fine an example, usually join in singing with the clergy or the Congregants and sing with them the hymns and holy canticles. Up to now (I write in 1821), in spite of the most sinister forebodings and threats of bad weather, come wind and come rain that has sometimes fallen in torrents until three in the afternoon, the weather has always, by God's special protection, lifted in time and left the necessary gap to undertake without fear and carry out with joy this fine and touching ceremony. This year the breeze that dropped just at the level of the candles not one of which was blown out although one could hear its strength up at the top of the trees, seemed to be paying its respects to the Sovereign Master of the elements and do homage to his omnipotence. Anyway, up to now there has not been a single year that the candles have been blown out. Without crying "miracle", even so we thank the Lord for it to whose goodness we attribute this favour, people as we are whose profession it is that nothing is chance, not even the smallest happenings that all depend on his will and which are all directed by Providence.

June 24: death of César Vicary. His funeral.

[57: page written in 1821]. The scraps of notes I have been able to assemble indicate this as the day of the untimely death of César Vicary whose eulogy I have summarized on page [67, written before 1821] of this book, and I will add nothing to what I said about him there. I will

⁵⁷ This Cross had been erected at the time of the great mission of 1820, cf. J. Leflon, II, pp. 118-128.

simply remark that the notes put together by a congregant record that this dear child “was regretted and , I even dare to say, venerated not only by our dear Director and the Congregation, but by every person who knew him. After his death everyone wanted to have something that had belonged to him.” The notes add that the Council decided unanimously on the definitive reception of the sick child who was only a probationer, and the Director did this on his death bed a few days before he expired, before giving him Holy Viaticum, which he only received through the vigilance and solicitude of the Director who took advantage of the single lucid moment, after which he lost the power of speech although he still remained conscious. The Director assisted him up to the end and left his side only after he had closed his eyes. The congregants who had been constant in their care throughout his sickness did not abandon him after his death; they took turns praying around his coffin right up the funeral. The Congregation assembled as the bell of the church of the Madeleine tolled and went as a body to the home of the deceased who was borne according to custom by his confreres. The Director followed the coffin dressed in his long cloak at the head of the Congregation whose members walked two by two behind the body. When he had been laid in his grave and the people of the parish had retired, the *De profundis* was said in a devout way and the Director said a few words appropriate to the occasion. Then we returned to the Chapel, there to say the Office according to custom. On the first free day we held the service to which his parents were invited (See page [67] [...]).

July 6: first communion of Messrs. Bouvier and Honorat.

[58] Messrs. Joseph A. Bouvier and Joseph Melchior Honorat made their first communion. They brought it forward by some days before the general first communion of their young confreres because of the imminent departure of the Rev. Director who was their confessor.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ This is the first time in this Diary that Father de Mazenod speaks of confession. This means that the other 21 congregants, who made their first communion on the following July 13, did not go to him for confession. Father de Mazenod left at that time for Paris where he hoped to obtain the Government's recognition of the Missionaries of Provence. He stayed in the capital from July to November 1817.

July 13: first communion of 21 others.

This general first communion took place today. As the Rev. Director had left for Paris, Father Maunier, priest of the Mission deputed to direct the Congregation during the absence of its superior, was in charge. The retreat took place, according to custom, during the three days prior to communion [...].

November 1st: death of Fortuné Sallier. His funeral. His eulogy.

Death of Mr. Fortuné Sallier [18] years old. The merit of this young man was not known sufficiently. I take it on myself to pay him a very justly merited testimony. And if perhaps in praising the dead I cast some disparagement on the living, it would not be difficult for me to show that his merit exceeded that of others in keeping himself constantly in a state of virtue and very great virtue, until his last breath. I have often gone out of my way to attract the confidence of young people and bring them to good works. How often the result has been that I had nothing for my pains. Sallier owed solely to his own good will and desire to act well in the advantage of belonging to the Congregation and being directed by a priest who consecrated the first years of his ministry almost exclusively to the sanctification of youth. I did not know him at all, he was at the college where I do not know that they took any great pains to inspire him with pious sentiments. Father Milliard was confessor to those youngsters and God knows what pains he took! Sallier had the good fortune to understand that that careless man was not for him; of his own accord he formed the idea of seeking from the Director of the Congregation the help the inept Milliard was not able to provide for this soul's piety. On the pretext of some errand or other, he came and frankly opened his heart telling me the plan he had of continuing to come to me for confession. My surprise equaled my admiration at the sight of this young man's candour and the innocence he had been able to preserve amid so many dangers, deprived of all helps. From that moment I revered him as one predestined, not thinking however that he was destined so soon to take possession of the Kingdom the Heavenly Father had prepared for him. Timid and cold in appearance, he was none the less constant in his resolutions, and his fidelity to the practices of piety his situation allowed of stood up to the strongest trials. He went on seeing me practically in secret the whole time he still remained in Aix. Lodged in Paris in an excellent boarding house, he established himself still more in the good sentiments which grace, much more than I,

inspired in him. He was a model of virtue in Mr. Liautard's house as he had been in the college of Aix. This experienced teacher, a good judge of merit, informed me of it on a number of occasions,⁵⁹ and he had to have a lot of virtue to be noticed in a house where it is practised by most of the pupils. There he fell ill and the Lord brought him back from the portals of the grave only to allow him the consolation of dying some months later in the bosom of his family. On his return to Aix it was impossible to hide from him that he was still ill. A deep melancholy which he could not rid himself of made visible the interior sickness that secretly threatened him. His parents who loved him tenderly grieved without being able to do anything about it. Mistaking the effect for the cause, they tried everything to amuse him, and their endless tenderness went so far as to invite him to accompany them to the theatre in the hope of cheering him up. That is when his piety revealed itself with all its energy. Going along up till then with everything arranged for him, he rose up forcefully against a proposition that rightly troubled his conscience, and by his firmness dispelled any question of his ever giving way, whatever pressure might be put on him in this regard. I do not know why, but this resistance was attributed to me while its merit belonged wholly to this admirable young man, aged already 18 and quite capable of taking a generous stand of his own accord. Under the influence of this false impression, they wanted him to place his trust in some counselor they supposed to be more accommodating, but they had no better success in detaching him from the faithful friend whose solicitude for the good of his soul he knew too well and whom he wished to keep until death. Dear child! Why did your hope have to be dashed! He continued to see me as long as I still stayed in Aix, but, forced to leave him to go to Paris where I had pressing business, my poor Fortuné succumbed in the interval, practically without warning, at least they were not in time to minister to him at his death. In all probability he would not have been deprived of this consolation if I had been there. Even so

⁵⁹ It was with Mr. Liautard, in the *college Stanislas*, 30 rue N.-D. des Champs au faubourg St. Germain, that Emile Dedons had studied in 1805-6, cf. Eugene to Emile Dedons, March 20, 1806. While he was a seminarian, Eugene made a number of visits to Mr. Liautard, cf. letters to his mother, February 23 and May 11, 1810, March 31, 1811. On July 26, 1817, the Founder wrote to Father Tempier that he was going to do his evening oraison in the college chapel, cf. *Oblate Writings* 6, p. 29.

I do not have [60] the least anxiety in view of what I know of the innocence of this life. As well as that he made his confession a few days previously to the priest he had chosen to direct him in my absence. Let there be no mistake about it, we have one more intercessor in heaven. The Congregation paid him its last respects in the accustomed manner. The service could not be held until November 27, but we did not wait for that too far distant day to perform the suffrages for him, for as we know as well as the indulgences and communions laid down in the regulation, the Congregation has six Masses celebrated for each of its members at the time of his death.

December 17: death of Victor Berton.

Death of Victor Berton, postulant. The end of this youngster was very edifying. He died as he said these words from the hymn of the Blessed Virgin: *Et Jesum benedictum... post hoc exilium ostende*. As he had not yet been received, only the postulants and the probationers accompanied him to the grave. As to everything else, the Congregation did for him what it does for all those who die in its bosom.

December 21

Lack of space compels me to cram into this last half-page everything else noted up to June 18: the expulsion of Mr. Martin, sculptor; admission as probationers of Messrs. Massé and Alexis for the senior section. Messrs. Suzanne,⁶⁰ Décard, Senchon, Serpolet received definitively into the senior section. Messrs. Bonnet junior and Leydet into the second, etc. [...]. The notes indicate that the feast of Christmas was celebrated with much fervour and almost all the congregants had the happiness of making their communion at the Midnight Mass at which the Gentlemen who had been received made their act of consecration. On the 26th, we proceeded according to custom with the nomination of the dignitaries [...].

⁶⁰ [Marius] Marie Jacques Antoine Suzanne (1799-1829) entered the Mission on October 14, 1816, and was received in the Aix Youth Congregation on December 21-25, 1817. He made his oblation on November 1, 1818, and died on January 31, 1829.

1818**January 29**

The Forty Hours adoration was done very exactly by the congregants on two kneelers in the sanctuary.

February 4

Blessing of the Ashes preceded by an instruction and the recitation of the seven penitential psalms in congregation.

March 15

Blessing of the Psalms. Procession on the *Place des Carmelites*. The Holy Week Services followed carefully by the congregants. Holy Thursday. The *Mandatum*. It will be described in another year's account.

March 26

His Lordship the Bishop of Digne came to say Holy Mass in the church of the Mission and conferred the sacrament of confirmation on several congregants who had been prepared for it according to our customs.

June 18: continuation of the Diary⁶¹

[61] As my engagements stood in the way of my keeping up this Diary, most facts of interest to the Congregation have not been recorded by anyone, and that lacuna often causes problems when there are decisions to be taken or a reference back to be made for what the practice was, etc... The congregants have made it known that they would like to see a continuation of the history, as one might call it, of the Congregation, and that it would be a disfavour to them not to consign to writing the memorable events, edifying traits, that might serve as a model

⁶¹ Father de Mazenod notes here, in the margin: "This was written before what precedes," i.e., before pages [45-61]: July 4, 1816 - March 26, 1818.

and be a means of persevering in good. These reasons, coupled with the need of preserving certain facts which fade from memory, and which should not however be forgotten for the benefit and good order of the Congregation, have decided me to try to resume a task that I only gave up involuntarily. But can I be sure that I will be punctilious in fulfilling this task? Well at least I have good intentions. So lets begin.

Extraordinary Council. Admission [of several members...]

On June 18, the extraordinary Council of the Congregation met in the ordinary meeting room [...]. After the *Veni Sancte*, the Rev. Director divulged the needs of a congregant and it was resolved to give him temporary help that would come out of voluntary offerings of congregants of the senior section. The Zealots then presented Messrs. Dalmas junior, Carron,⁶² Assenat, Boyer and Henricy for admission as probationers. Messrs. Michel and Sallier were left over, the latter because he did not put in his application in time. Mr. Mouans was likewise left over because of a formal deficiency. The others were admitted to this status. Mr. Gasq, zealot of the senior section, presented for reception: Messrs. Alexis, Dalmas senior, Masset, Journu and Father Aubert priest⁶³ and Mr. Moreau deacon.⁶⁴ The Council endorsed them all as such. Mr. Marcou, zealot of the second section, presented Messrs. DeGras, Guinet, Bouteuil senior and Bouteuil junior for reception. The Council likewise endorsed this presentation.

Expulsion [of several members...]

⁶² Antoine Gabriel Marie Carron (1804-1824), postulant in the Youth Congregation on February 16, 1817, entered the Mission on March 1, 1818, took the habit on October 2, 1819, and left in 1822.

⁶³ Marius Victor Jacques Claude Aubert was a priest who left the *Pères de la Retraite*. He was received into the Youth Congregation on June 18, 1818. He lived with the Missionaries of Provence in 1818 and 1819.

⁶⁴ Noel François Moreau (1794-1846), who entered the novitiate of the Missionaries of Provence on April 22, 1818, was received as a congregant on June 21. Ordained priest on September 19, 1818, he made his oblation on November 1 of the same year.

June 21: feast of Saint Aloysius Gonzaga.

[62] Today, feast of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, patron of the Congregation, there was an assembly at 6:30 in the choir that is used as a chapel to recite Matins and Lauds of the Blessed Virgin according to custom. Immediately afterwards, the Rev. Director reported on the Council meeting held on the 18th. Then the postulants who had been passed to become probationers were led to the foot of the altar by the Messrs. Vice-Prefect and First Assessor, Mr. Prefect being absent. The new probationers kneeling on the altar steps read out loud the act of consecration to the Blessed Virgin that begins with these words: "Holy Mary, mother of God and ever virgin, etc." After the act of consecration the Vice-Prefect, accompanied by a Zealot who acted as master of ceremonies, returned to his place, while the Rev. Director sang in alternation with all the congregants present and kneeling down the *Sub tuum praesidium*, etc. The Chorists said the verse: *Custodi nos Domine ut pupillum oculi*, etc., and the Vice-Prefect, from his place, the prayer *Deus qui in cruce moriens*, etc. Then the Zealots led the new probationers to the places assigned them among those of that class. And the first Assessor came to resume his rank, accompanied by a Zealot. After this admissions ceremony, the Rev. Director, who had not moved from the place he occupies at the back of the Choir throughout its duration, went to the altar steps from which position he addressed the whole Congregation both to bring out the moving aspect of the ceremony that had just taken place and to prepare them for the still more moving one that was to follow. Never perhaps had the Congregation presented so imposing a sight, all the ranks were filled, a profound silence, a respectful bearing, attention and recollection spoke of the proximity of a major step, expectation of an important event. The presence of God seemed almost tangible and to impart itself to everyone. When the Zealots had had the nine probationers come to the altar who had been accepted in the Council of June 18 to be received definitively as members of the Congregation, they knelt down a [63] short distance from the steps each with a lighted candle in his hand. The Vice-Prefect and the first Assessor were close by without candles, the Zealots behind them likewise with no candles. Then the Director, dressed in surplice and stole, knelt on the altar steps and intoned the *Veni Creator* which was sung by all the Congregants, in an unhurried manner and with the greatest fervour. After saying the prayer, the Rev. Director rose as did the Congregation. The Vice-Prefect and the first Assessor sat down near the altar, the elect

remained kneeling with the Zealots standing beside them. When all were thus in their places, Mr. Vice-Prefect rose and coming to the Rev. Director presented the elect to him by name, giving their family and forenames. The Rev. Director delivered an address from the altar that seemed to impress deeply all those assisting so well disposed were they. He finished by having the elect renew their baptismal promises according to what is prescribed by the ceremonial ritual for reception, and everyone could surely tell as they heard them reply to the five questions that the Director put at that point, that this was not the first day they would be faithful to them. That is what the Director said when he spoke again and prophesied the happiest outcome for the future conduct these edifying elect who will be the consolation of the Congregation which finds great promises in their zeal. Not to further delay the moment of their reception, the Rev. Director recited over the elect the prayers laid down for that and blessed them making over them the sign of the cross and sprinkling them with holy water, and to stress the charity and fraternal love that should reign among all members of this fortunate society, he gave each in turn the kiss of peace with these words: *Pax tecum*, to which they replied with these words: *et cum spiritu tuo*. The Zealots accompanied the Vice-Prefect and the first Assessor to their places, and installed the new members [64] in those which they were to occupy among the received among whom they had just been definitively enrolled. It is impossible to describe the impression this august and touching ceremony made, I will not even try for it is easier to feel it than express it. As soon as each had taken his place, the High Mass began. It was said by the Rev. Director, assisted by deacon and subdeacon, at the interior altar on which was exposed the relic of St. Aloysius Gonzaga. Communion was almost general although each is free to take it or not, and it is here again that one tries in vain to portray the whole edifying, ravishing, spectacle, one worthy of the Angels who surely were in transports of joy so great was the piety, modesty, spirit of faith animating and accompanying to the holy table all these fervent Christians who are worthy to be compared with the first faithful whose virtues they imitate perfectly. I have never seen the like, I must confess, not even in the seminary.

After Mass, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed on the altar and there was sung the *Te Deum* followed by the versicle *Benedicamus, etc.*, and the prayer *Pro gratiarum actione*. The newly-received were lined up before the altar, immediately behind the Priests, accompanied by the

Zealots. They had their candles in their hands. After the *Te Deum*, there was sung the *Pange Lingua*, etc., and at the moment when the Rev. Director took the Blessed Sacrament between his hands to give the blessing, while Our Lord Jesus Christ gazed out over this chosen family, the newly-received, candles in hand, pronounce aloud the act of consecration by which they gave themselves to him, acknowledging him as their God, Saviour, Sovereign, Lord and Master whose faithful disciples they profess it is their wish to be for the whole of their lives. What a rare moment! Only a heartless person could remain unmoved. May this precious memory never fade! Amen. Amen.

June 25: anniversary of the death of César Vicary. His eulogy.

[65] Anniversary of the untimely death of Joseph Louis César Vicary, a young congregant who died last year on June 24, at the age of 13. The memory of the virtue of this angelic child is still alive among us, and for as long as virtue continues to be cherished among us, we will wish to keep alive the memory of the examples that he never failed to give us, young as he was. He was one of the small number of those privileged ones of whom Holy Scripture speaks and one might with truth say of him what we read in the Book of Wisdom that he had received a soul endowed with goodness: *sortitus sum animam bonam*. His unvarying meekness never failed, and so he was constantly loved by all his comrades, who admired in him the lovable conjunction of the loveliest virtues with the most amiable qualities. His Teachers cherished him too, for he continually strove to fulfil all his duties well, and he succeeded in that, as the Lord endowed him with very good judgment and plenty of intelligence. What shall I say of his piety! It was in advance of his years. The attraction he had for it meant the religious exercises of the Congregation were too short for him. He liked to prolong them on his own, and he was never happier than when he adroitly brought the conversation round to some edifying subject. Then one saw clearly that he was in his element and if it was the Director he was talking to, he was full of questions one after the other so eager was he to fill his mind and nourish his soul with edifying things, solid instructions on the most important truths of religion. I leave you to surmise how, with dispositions of this kind, this child of benediction prepared for his first communion. If only I still possessed the resolutions he took at that memorable time, and which he wrote down following the advice I gave him, one would see there all that grace was working in that beautiful soul,

and his fidelity [66] in cooperating with heaven's favours. Soon the Holy Spirit came to bring to further perfection those happy dispositions by the abundance of his gifts which he communicated to him in the sacrament of confirmation that the young child received with feelings of fervour that were remarkable even when surrounded by his codisciples who all distinguished themselves by their piety especially in that encounter. All this I was able to observe during the three-day retreat we customarily have the confirmandi make in our house. God knows all the presages for the future we already had then! But alas we were coming close to the time of losing him, and he was suddenly taken in the flower of youth amid all these fine hopes, despite the prayers we continually made for this recovery once we learned of the danger threatening him. The Lord was deaf to these prayers only to crown the sooner the virtues of his faithful servant, and to pluck him from all dangers in calling him into his eternal bosom. The illness that snatched away our child lasted ... days and its suffering furnished him ample means to purify himself more and more in the exercise of the most difficult virtues of patience, resignation, conformity with God's will, etc. To all intents and purposes I did not leave his bedside and I had the consolation of soothing by my presence the horror of the last moments that are so abhorrent to nature. The burning pains he suffered elicited an involuntary groan that he forced himself to hold back and stifle for so long as I talked to him of God. If I stopped for a moment, fearing to tire him, only being able to move his eyes, he turned them towards me until I began again to offer him suggestions of dispositions adapted to his dreadful situation, that his soul, avid to merit, relished with delight. I do not exaggerate, I feel on the contrary that I am falling short of the reality, [67] I call on all those who were witnesses of it like myself. At last the moment for the end arrived and he expired gently in my arms, surrounded by a number of our congregants whom piety and charity had called to be by his deathbed, and who all exclaimed together: happy the just man who dies in the peace of the Lord. In expatiating as I have on the life of the angelic Vicary, I have felt I was fulfilling a duty I owed not so much to the deceased as towards the congregants who survived him and are to inherit his virtues. At the same time I have consoled my grief and satisfied, – nearly, I will say –, a duty of gratitude, for I should not hide the fact that this young man was so conscious of the advantages he found in the Congregation that at the same time he conceived towards me a filial tenderness that made him declare ingenuously to his real parents, who reported this to me, that he loved me as much as them. This feeling in

itself proclaims his virtues since he can only have been inspired with it by the love he had for piety that he thought he owed to the solicitude I had for him by inspiring him with a taste for it. Did I not fear to be too long, I would set out here some traits that would prove how much he was attached to the Congregation. Among those I have from his parents, who found pleasure in reporting them to me, I will pick out the two following: his father and mother urged him to go walking with them, but the child, although he loved his parents tenderly, politely answered that it would be better for him to spend this time in the Congregation. Someone broke the bell while I was away on the mission, and they badly wanted to buy a replacement before my return to spare me the annoyance they supposed this incident would give me, but this expense was beyond our means and they abandoned the project. Vicary was not prepared to give up so easily, he persuaded one of his aunts to place a bet in the lottery to be able to see to it all by himself if he had the good fortune to win. I feel I have not said enough of his love for God, his respect for the sanctuary, his zeal to fulfill all the obligations of a good congregant, the tender devotion he had for Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, the holy desires he nourished in his heart for the holy Eucharist which he had the happiness of receiving every Sunday and feast day, but limits must be set, and regretful though it be I must not go beyond them. The prayer I make as I finish writing these lines is that the Lord may always animate all the congregants with the same spirit that animated him continually for so long as he had breath in his body, and that they never forget that they can only count on dying as holy a death as he by living as he lived.

Service for Vicary

Today, June 25, the Congregation assembled at 6:30 a.m. to recite the Office of the Dead which preceded the service for the anniversary of the late J.L.C. Vicary. The deceased's father and mother were invited to the Office which was celebrated in the chapel of the Congregation by the Rev. Director. The altar was dressed in black and the catafalque was in the middle of the choir.

August 6: expulsion of Masters Casimir Vernet and Augustin Pontier.

The Council of the Congregation gathered for the approval of the accounts and to deal with a number of items of business. The Messrs.

Zealots reported that certain members who had been absent for some time deserved to have the Council examine their far from edifying behaviour, they concluded that they should be expelled or at least struck off the list. It was decided therefore to strike off the probationer Master Casimir Vernet and Master Augustin Pontier. The former is a child who has let himself be led by bad example, but who cannot even so be excused, in view of all the steps taken to bring him back to well-doing over the period of months; the other, by far more culpable, can be seen as a real apostate from piety and religion. His age, – he is 19 – , his status as a received member, the trust the Director had shown in him over more than two years, the posts the Congregation had entrusted him with, the supervision and correction that was his responsibility with regard to the youngsters [69], which by giving him the task of recalling others to their duties gave him too the chance to come to a better realization of their importance, – all tend to aggravate the inexcusable wrong of his scandalous defection. Before going to the length of rejecting and cutting off this gangrenous limb from the Congregation, the Director had bided patiently a whole year during which he on his part stopped at nothing in an effort to bring him back to his initial disposition. One can be sure in this respect of his tender solicitude for this children in Jesus Christ and of the just fears for the latter's salvation that the change of direction he was embarking on gave him. But all this attention was to come to naught confronted by the perversity of a corrupted heart, lured by the seduction of bad company, youngsters extraneous to the Congregation from whom it was impossible to detach him. So, of all those who at various times have had to be expelled and struck off from the Congregation, Mr. Augustine Pontier is without doubt the most culpable. Let there be no further mention of him and may God overlook his trespasses and show him mercy as we forgive him his ingratitude and all the grief he gave us. In the same meeting Master Louis de Maisoncelle and Bouvier senior were accepted to begin their postulation.

August 23: stern measures against [various congregants]

For some time now the Congregation has greatly grown. Charity, as the Apostle counsels, desiring to be all things to all men, every youngster who has shown some desire to learn to serve God has been allowed to follow in the capacity of postulant the Congregation's exercises, but not everyone profits from the graces the Lord only bestows on docile souls, ready to obey faithfully all the precepts of his divine law. So the

Congregation sees itself sometimes obliged to deal severely with a number of these misfits who are impervious to the gentle treatment which is always preferable, but which must give way to rigour when good order would be compromised were one deliberately to neglect it. [70] There is a regulation in the Congregation to which all who take part in it are subject. Over and over it has been reiterated that those who do not want to follow it are free to leave. But no, some would like to go on being part of this society as the behaviour of the majority of its members wins it general approval, but then they make little effort to imitate their example and fail on a daily basis to keep the most important articles of the regulation. This disorder finds no place among the members of the senior section, with possibly one very small exception, but it is common among the juniors. As this is definitely unacceptable, the Rev. Director has been compelled today to act with severity in respect of Masters Couteron, Reissolet and Boyer, probationers, and Masters Chauvet, Joseph Michel, Isnard, Pin and Giraud, postulants, who in defiance of the regulation that forbids going to those meetings commonly known as "romciragi",⁶⁵ missed Vespers last Sunday to go there and spent a part of the holy day in the most scandalous dissipation. The first three above are struck off the list of probationers and go back to the level of postulant, there to start their period of trial over again as if they were entering the Congregation for the first time. The rest are struck from the list of postulants, and placed outside the ranks, at the choir door, where they will remain until they have earned admission by their good behaviour to begin again their period of trial.

August 30: first communion [...]

Today the Congregation has been at once consoled and edified on the occasion of the first communion that the following have had the happiness of receiving in its bosom: Masters Amédée de Barret, 10 and a half years old; François Claude Aubert, 11 and a half years old; Adophe René Giraud and Claude Allard, 12 and a half years old. They got ready for this big step, following our custom, with three days on very strict retreat spent in the house itself. Parents were admitted to the choir. The youngest is not the least promising.

⁶⁵ Romciragi: a word not found in any dictionary.

October 18: first communion of Messrs. Raynaud, Bayle, Castres [71...]

Expulsion of Chauvet, postulant.

Master Chauvet was expelled as being incorrigible.

October 25: confirmation of Messrs. Aubert, Honorat, de Barret, Raynaud, Castres, Giraud, Castellás, Allard, Bayle, Gibert, Descomes, Maisoncelle, Hermitte [...]

November 1: Mr. Leblanc, zealot.

As Mr. Marcou, a zealot of the third section, has entered the clerical state, Mr. Leblanc has been named to replace him. He will begin to exercise his functions today with that zeal and piety that have so long distinguished him in the Congregation as one of its most exemplary members.

Gap of several months. Nominations to posts of responsibility.

No notes at all were taken of what happened during the Barjols mission and those of Remollon and Eyguières.⁶⁶ In the interval between that of Barjols and that of Remollon in the Dauphiné, the Congregation met for nominations of dignitaries [...] [72]. The Council took note that the tolerance it had shown towards some young congregants had not led to their improvement and expelled those named – Couteron, Isnard, Guibert and François Bougarel.

December 25: enrolment of Mgr. Charles Fortuné, Bishop-elect of Marseilles.

Reception of Messrs. Touche,⁶⁷ priest, Delmas, cleric, Anselme, councillor of the Court, Lecointe, law student, Christine and Giraud.

⁶⁶ Barjols mission: November 8 - December 20, 1818; Remollon mission: January 17 - February 14, 1819; Eyguières: February 14 - March 28, 1819.

⁶⁷ Jean Joseph Touche (1794-1874), ordained priest on September 19, 1818, entered the novitiate of the Missionaries of Provence on October 8 of the same year. He made his oblation on August 15, 1819 and left the Congregation in 1832.

Messr. Castellás,⁶⁸ Mouans, Honorat, Bouvier, Michel, Bourgarel Louis, de Barret and Sallier were admitted to the rank of probationer. The ceremony took place at the midnight Mass. Monsigneur Charles Fortuné de Mazenod, Bishop-elect of the diocese of Marseilles,⁶⁹ wished to be received as a member of the Congregation during this same Christmas night. The Congregation was no less flattered by the honour that Monsigneur did it in joining its body as edified by the profound piety he showed on this occasion which will become a [73] memorable date for us and one whose memory will serve to reawaken fervour among us and will make the Congregation yet more dear to each one of us.

Lacuna

As the person I made responsible for keeping some notes during my absences has not done a thing about it, and as my ever-increasing burdens do not allow myself to make up for his negligence, I can put down absolutely nothing of what happened in the years 1818, 1819, 1820 up to the present month of September 1821.⁷⁰ I know from the necrology that Irnée Bouteuil died on May 5, 1819, Paulin Castellás on June 5 of the same year and Paulin Bouvier on April 13 of this year 1821. I will say a brief word on their edifying lives and precious deaths, after I have put together various items scattered about in the minutes of the meetings that come first time-wise.⁷¹

December 26: nominations to posts of responsibility [...]

December 30: Messrs. Bremond and Bayle struck off and also Ponsard Martial [...]

⁶⁸ Paulin Castellás (1802-1819). Converted during the Grans mission in 1816, Paulin followed the missionaries as a postulant. He left because of sickness in 1819.

⁶⁹ Mgr Fortuné (1749-1840) was only officially named for the diocese of Marseilles in 1823, but from the time the question of the restoration of the see of Marseilles arose in 1817 his name was given as probable future bishop of that city; in Aix where he lived until 1823 he was referred to as: bishop-elect. During his stay at the Mission, from 1817 to 1823, he regularly heard confessions in the church of the Mission.

⁷⁰ What follows, from December 26, 1818 to July 8, 1821 was written from September 1821 onwards.

⁷¹ We have this register: *Minutes des délibérations prises par les divers Conseils de la Congrégation de la Jeunesse Chrétienne d'Aix, 1817-1837*, 118 manuscript pages. APR DM 2b.

1819**February 21: Masters Carpentier, Frochot and Laboulie junior struck off.**

The Council struck off Masters Carpentier and Frochot on the ground of their disedifying behaviour: Master de Laboulie junior suffered the same fate, but out of regard for his father, this decision was not announced to the Congregation in assembly.⁷²

April 13: a banner for the Congregation.

The Director pointed out to the Council that it was a humiliation for the Congregation to have to go every year to people outside for the loan of a banner. He proposed lending the sum required to have one made. The Council adopted this proposal and also the method suggested by the Director to secure the repayment of the funds advanced. The share [74] to be paid by those of the congregants who could afford it was fixed at nine francs. But so that the payment of this small sum should not be a burden on anyone, they are to sign three IOU's of three francs making a sum total of nine francs, the agreed share, the said IOU's to be payable in three instalments: the first in the course of the month, the second with a year, the third within two years. I am afraid to say that among the well-off congregants who left two years and more after this decision, there are some who lacked the decency to pay anything.

May 5: death of Irenée Bouteil.

As the languid state into which this young man had fallen became a just cause of alarm to his parents, they summoned him back to Varages, his home town, where he succumbed a few months later to the cruel illness that was visibly consuming him. He gave very good example and was outstanding for gentleness and goodness under every trial.

⁷² J. B. Gustave (1800-1867) was deputy from 1833 to 1848. He was the son of E. J. Balthazar de Laboulie (1779-1856), Advocate General at the Court of Aix in 1816, Procurator General in 1821, friend of Father de Mazenod and protector of the Missionaries of Provence.

His life was very innocent and his death edified all the people of Varages. If only his brother Marcellin Bouteil had died in his place or at the same time as he. At that time he was living in as Christian a fashion as he, like him he avoided evil companionship, frequented the sacraments like him. Today what a difference! The one is in heaven and the other, led astray by bad company which he refused to avoid despite my earnest remonstrance, wallows in sin and leaves little hope of his return to virtue.

May 20: Messrs. Olivier, Mottet and Miaulan struck off

The Council struck off Messrs. Olivier senior, Mottet and Miaulan; at the suggestion of the Director it was decided to have a list drawn up on which would be inscribed the names of all the congregants.⁷³

June 5: death of Paulin Castellas. His eulogy.

This young man, very dissipated in his early childhood, had a conversion following the mission which we gave in Grans, his home town. He received his first communion with sentiments that testified to the efficacious working of grace in his soul, and he never reneged on the good resolutions he made then throughout the course of his life. Very much [75] neglected by his mother, a woman of no judgment, it was he who felt the need in himself of work. The natural good sense with which he was endowed led him to prefer the salutary discipline of a house of formation to the complete freedom he enjoyed at home, and he made use of the dominion his mother had allowed him to have over her to insist that she let him enter the Mission where there was a great willingness to support his good will by supplying him the means to teach himself. It is beyond telling how this lovable child grew in esteem by his piety, docility, commitment and all the good qualities that he drew on without effort. He grew in virtue before our very eyes and was beginning to hold out wonderful promise when a coughing of blood came to

⁷³ We do not have in the archives a complete list of the congregants. Father Joseph Pielorz, putting together all the names found in the papers of the Youth Congregation, has drawn up a list of nearly 300 names, cf. J. Pielorz, *L'abbé de Mazenod et les Curés d'Aix*, Rome, 1953, 3 vol. typed mss. This list, which goes from 1813 to 1822 is found in vol. III, pp. 658-696.

warn us about his health. Remedies of every kind were lavished on him, but in vain. He faded away from then on to such a degree as to remove all hope of a cure. His mother wanted to try if his native air would restore his health, but on the contrary his state worsened more rapidly than ever, and it was no longer possible to hide the fact that his end was drawing near. Far from being frightened by this news, he sincerely rejoiced over it and said in this regard some very moving things to the parish priest of Grans, to whom we had commended him. Again he received the sacraments that had several times been given him before leaving Aix. His last days were spent wholly in speaking of the good God. At the moment of death, quite conscious, addressing himself to the Parish Priest who was by his side, he cried out in ecstasy: do you not see heaven open before us? Oh, how beautiful it is! How beautiful it is! Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, oh, how beautiful it is! And stretching his arms towards these objects present to his sight, he breathed his last or rather his beautiful soul flew off to the heaven that had come close to him and of which I have no doubt he took possession at that very instant. What a beautiful death! Compare it with the deaths of all those who have been taken from this world after abandoning the Congregation. They have all died yes, up to the present they have all died in their sins!!! What a terrible judgment of God!! Who will dare say it is not deserved!...

June 26: reception [...]

[76] Mr. Bernard⁷⁴ received definitively. Messrs. de Saboulin, Bouvier senior and Sumien admitted as probationer members [...]

December 23: reception [...]

December 26: nomination to posts of responsibility for 1820 [...]

⁷⁴ Marius André Barthélemy Bernard (1802-1875) entered the novitiate of the Mission on November 1, 1822, and made his oblation on November 4, 1823. Ordained priest in 1825, he left a short time later and exercised his ministry in the diocese of Aix.

1820

The mission procession.

Procession to open the mission in which the Congregation took part as a body and also in that for the planting of the Cross. The congregants shared with the law students in carrying the cross from the *place des Carmélites* to the middle of the *Cours*. The Congregation took part again as a body in the Blessed Sacrament procession that brought to an end the special exercises of the Provençal mission which went on some days longer after the planting of the cross and the end of the French mission.⁷⁵

May 7: prohibition on joining any other Congregation⁷⁶

The two senior sections of the Congregation met. The Council took the decision in their presence that the article in our regulations that expressly prohibits all members of the Congregation to join any other Society would be very strictly put into practice. In consequence [77] after the roll had been called, all the members being present, each one rose in turn and promised never to join any other Society or Congregation.

June 13, 14, 15, 16: admission, reception, expulsion, first communion [...]

⁷⁵ The Aix mission was preached from March 12 to April 24, 1820. The Missionaries of Provence preached in Provençale in the church of the Mission and in two parishes: the cathedral of St. Sauveur and St. Jean *extra muros*. The Missionaries of France preached in French in the other churches.

⁷⁶ This prohibition is surprising. We know that Pope Pius VII had re-established the Society of Jesus with the bull *Sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum* of August 7, 1814. Bishop de Bausset, a friend of the Jesuits, who arrived in Aix in 1819, confided the direction of the minor seminary to them in 1821. This must have already been known in 1820, whence the fear of competition: the Jesuits normally set up Youth Congregations in their institutions, cf. J. Burnichon, S.J., *La Congrégation des Jésuites en France, Histoire d'un siècle 1814-1914*, Paris, 1914, 3 vols.

Procession of the cross.

When the pedestal of the cross was ready, His Grace the Archbishop decided to go in procession to adore the sign of our redemption. To this intent he came to our church along with his Vicars General, – the Congregation of the Sacred Heart and that of Christian Youth had been convoked. The procession passed by the centre of the *Cours*. Arriving at the monument, His Grace the Archbishop bade the Director say a few edifying words to the people gathered in the rotunda. We went back to the church passing again by the centre of the *Cours*, singing all the while canticles in honour of the holy cross. His Grace the Archbishop gave benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and withdrew very edified by the ceremony.

November 1: inscription in the necrology of the late President de Mazenod. Sharing in the suffrages of the Congregation.

[78] At the request of the Director, the Council decided that the late President de Mazenod, father of the Rev. Director, would be entered in the necrology of the Congregation and admitted to share in all the prayers, suffrages and indulgences that the Congregation accorded to those of its members who are deceased, although President de Mazenod had not been a member of the Congregation during his lifetime.⁷⁷

December 26: nominations to posts of responsibility for 1821 [...]

1821

April 13: death of Paulin Bouvier: his eulogy.

Death of Paulin Bouvier. His simple life, tranquil and uneventful, discloses few facts of note. Even so he was angelic in virtue, as dear to God who poured out his graces on him as he was to his fellowmen he never ceased to edify. His piety was always fervent, his gentleness constant. It was written on his countenance, and to my knowledge none of his comrades ever had a quarrel with him, his modesty and regularity influencing them to the point that one can say he had their respect. No

⁷⁷ President Charles Antoine de Mazenod died in Marseilles on October 10, 1820. At that time Eugene was preaching a retreat in the parish of the Carmelites in Marseilles and was staying for those days in the house of his father who died in his son's arms.

one understood better than he the advantages a young man of good will can obtain from the rules and exercises of the Congregation. He was not only constant in attendance at meetings, but he made it a duty to practise all the counsels that are given to the congregants to avoid evil and make some progress in goodness. Nothing could ever deter him from frequenting the sacraments. He thought nothing at the height of summer of proving his love for Our Lord by heading off at the crack of dawn from his farm to arrive in time to go to confession before the Mass of the Congregation at which he would take communion every Sunday. Often the holy ardour of his beautiful soul remained unsatisfied and he had to be allowed to alleviate his hunger by going more frequently to the holy Table. I certainly did not hesitate to accede to such just desires. Who can tell the fruits he drew from this heavenly food!... His parents who never had anything to reproach him with, [79] his fellow disciples who more and more wondered at his commitment, kindness, modesty and fidelity in fulfilling all the different kinds of duties he had to fulfil, and lastly I myself, the confidant of his most intimate thoughts, the witness of his holy virtues, the admirer of his wholly supernatural and holy life. He was ripe for heaven, the Lord did not delay in summoning him, but wished to spare him the horrors of his imminent dissolution. He thought up to the last moment that we were making fuss over nothing on his account, and in the course of the most painful crises while we with all too good reason were fearful of losing him, he would smile and try to reassure us, surprised without being afraid that we did not share his sense of security that nothing could disturb. At that moment I was obliged to leave town to give the mission in St. Chamas,⁷⁸ I could not hold back my tears as I embraced this dear child for the last time. He had no idea of it, but I knew that he would not last the month. I entrusted him to that confrere who stayed on alone in the house during my absence and, in placing him in his care, I unburdened myself of all my anxieties. It was the best solution to fulfil the most exacting requirements of charity and zeal and guard against being surprised by a death that seemed every day more imminent, without depriving the dying boy of any of the spiritual helps at all of which he stood in need in his sad situation and which he put to such good use. He duly received the last sacraments, and the day after he had received this precious pledge of his blessed immortality, he fell asleep peacefully in the Lord, leaving to the congregants, who had cared for him during his illness with their usual

⁷⁸ Mission of St. Chamas: March 4 - April 8, 1821.

charity, both the example and the encouragement of serving God throughout one's life in such a way as to merit bringing it to an end with so holy a death. His funeral took place in accordance with the customs of the Congregation. And as it has only happened on one occasion (when Victor Chabot died, that is before the Mission was founded), that the Reverend Parish Priests have shown the Director of the Congregation the courtesy of offering him to perform the liturgy, he accompanied the coffin in soutane and long cloak up to the cemetery. Which is what was done by the Missionary who was standing in for the Director in his absence.

May 6: refusal to enter Mr. Alexis in the necrology.

[80] *Mr. Alexis informed the Council of the death of Mr. Paulin Alexis, his cousin, who passed away suddenly in Lyon: he requested that the usual suffrages be accorded to the deceased. The Director strongly insisted that the Council refuse, seeing that the late Mr. Alexis, although definitively received in the Congregation, had always acted as if he did not belong, and had even subsequently to his reception taken on commitments that were contrary to the obligations of congregants and had not attended its exercises for more than a year. The Council took a decision in accordance with the wish of the Rev. Director and firmly decided that Mr. Alexis would not be inscribed in the necrology and that no public liturgy would be held for him in Congregation: however, moved by a feeling of charity, on the proposal of the Reverend Director, it agreed to have three low Masses said for the repose of his soul.*

A Striking Thought

Mr. Alexis is not the first congregant to die after quitting the Congregation, and he came to the same end as the apostates who preceded him. A remarkable thing: they all died without being able to receive the final helps of religion. Surely one might say that in them is verified the terrible threat several times repeated in Holy Scripture. So what graces did they not spurn in renouncing the Congregation where God had called them to assure them of their salvation. No one has ever left it so as to become a better person. But one does not mock God with impunity, and the frightful comparison that we are, as it were, compelled to make in considering on the one hand the blessed end, the truly precious death of all those who die as truly of the predestined in the Congregation, laid by her so to speak in the very bosom of God, and on the other hand the dreadful catastrophe which prematurely terminates a

life of infidelity and sins and hurls these culpable souls into the depth of hell there to burn for ever, brings us to feel more and more and to emphasize that final perseverance in our case is linked with our fidelity and inseparable union with the Congregation.

June 17: ordination of Mr. Hippolyte Courtès in Gap [on July 30, 1820]. His first Mass in Notre Dame du Laus.

[81] On July 31 last year, the Congregation gave God's church the most precious present that it could make her,⁷⁹ in giving her a priest according to the heart of God, one eminently disposed to accomplish all the lofty destiny of a faithful minister, such a one, in a word, as one must be to please God, to edify and be of service to men. And it is with good reason that the Congregation can pride herself on the gift she made then to the Church as Mr. Hippolyte Courtès is one of the first of the congregants, one who was raised in her bosom, who grew up in her shade, one who was formed in her school. His confreres were deprived of the consolation of being present at his ordination and hearing his first Mass. He was ordained in Gap and offered the holy Sacrifice for the first time in the sanctuary of Notre Dame du Laus. The congregants could not then be witnesses of the signal favours and abundant gifts the Lord was pleased to shower on this new priest, genuine first fruits offered to God by the Congregation. They were not however strangers to all that passed on that happy day... I see that I have allowed myself to embark on praising a man who is still alive, against the counsel of Holy Writ. So I stop; no one will be offended if I forgot myself for a moment.

Ordination of Mr. Alexandre Dupuy. His first Mass.

I will be on the watch this time as I enter in this register the occasion of the ordination and the day of the first Mass of Mr. Alexandre Dupuy, priest of the Mission and a congregant for six years. He was ordained on June 16 in the seminary church and said his first Mass the next day in that of the Mission at eight o'clock. The congregants made it a duty to be there on that day in the Congregation and they certainly got a lot from the graces which from the new priest were poured out on the whole assembly. After the High Mass all those officiating entered the choir where the new priest imposed hands first on the priests and

⁷⁹ H. Courtès was the first congregant to be ordained priest for the Missionaries of Provence. As to the "signal favours and abundant gifts" the Founder mentions here, cf. Léon Balbeur, "*Le feu qui brûlait sur l'autel*" in *Etudes Oblates*, 14 (1955), pp. 261-268.

then on the other clerics, then on all the congregants who came forward two by two to his feet while the choir sang the psalm: *Credidi propter quod locutus sum* inserting after each verse the one that begins with the words: *quid retribuam Domino*. This ceremony reawakened fervour in all hearts; one really could not see anything more moving and at the same time more impressive.

July 8: procession of the Blessed Sacrament.

[82] The procession was postponed this year to the octave of the Sacred Heart because of the centenary feast that occurred in Marseilles on the actual feast day of the Sacred Heart.⁸⁰ This ceremony had emptied the town, and the retreat that preceded it in a number of the churches of Marseilles having occupied the services of a number of our priests, His Grace the Archbishop judged it right to allow us to have our procession eight days later. It was as always brilliant for its beauty and sanctity. The Blessed Sacrament was carried by the Very Reverend Vicar General Guigou.

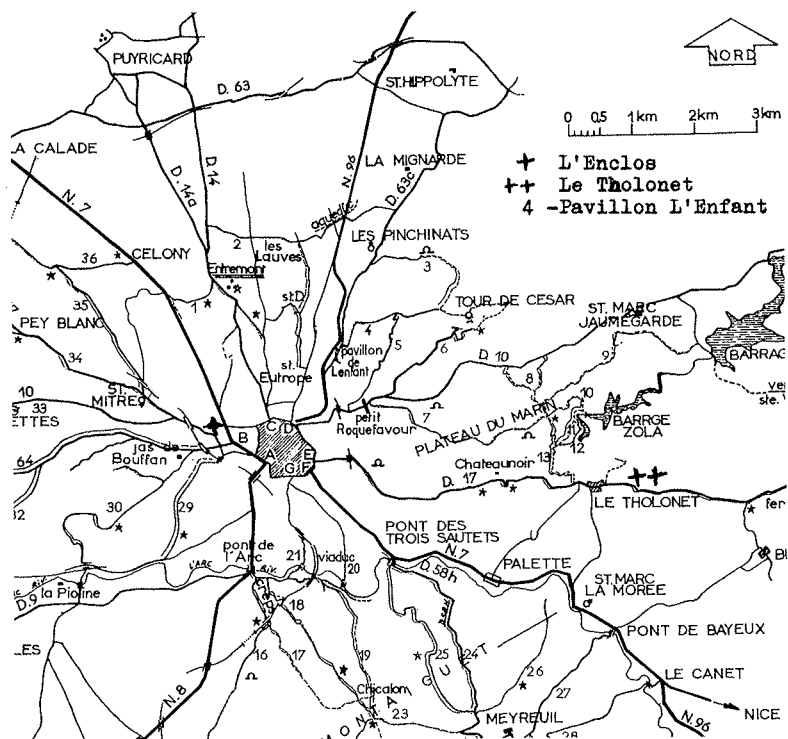
May 3: procession of the cross.

I forgot to put down, under the heading of May 3, that His Grace the Archbishop having decided to pay homage anew to the cross, went to our church where he had called to be present the major and minor seminaries, the Congregation of Christian Youth and that of the Sacred Heart. He went in procession with these elite groups to the mission cross singing canticles and hymns. Arrived at the foot of the cross, there was sung five times the Trisagion: *Sanctus Deus, Sanctus fortis, Sanctus et immortalis, miserere nobis*, followed each time by a *Pater* and an *Ave Maria*. His Grace the Archbishop then recited the prayer of the day and the procession made its way back again through the centre of the *Cours* to the church of the Mission where His Grace brought the ceremony to an end with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

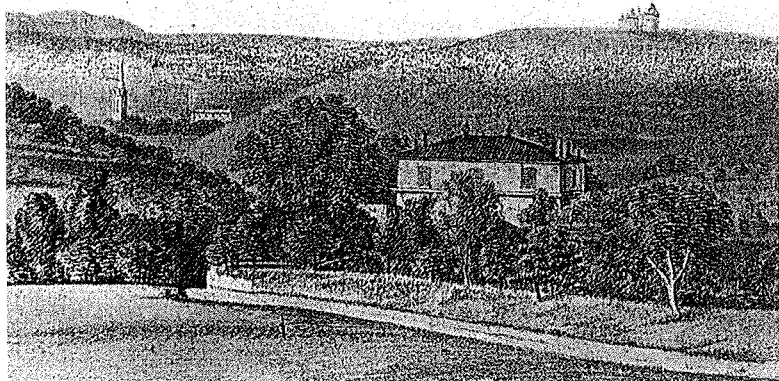
July 8.

The feast of St. Aloysius Gonzaga had been postponed to July 8 on account of the solemnities of Corpus Christi and St. Peter. It was celebrated with the usual pomp.

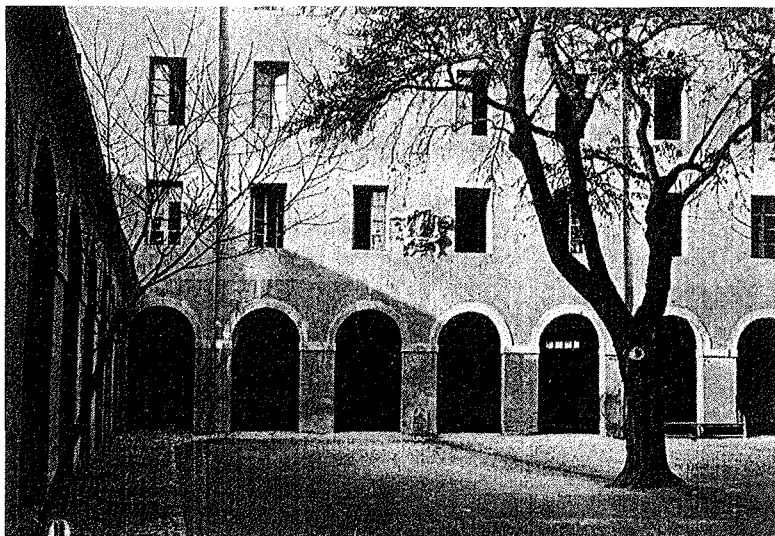
⁸⁰ Feast celebrated in fulfilment of the vow made by the municipal magistrates of Marseilles on May 28, 1722, on the occasion of deliverance from the plague, cf. M. de Regis de la Colombière, *Fêtes patronales et usages des corporations et associations ... à Marseille* ... Marseille, 1863, pp. 112-114.



Map of the Area around Aix

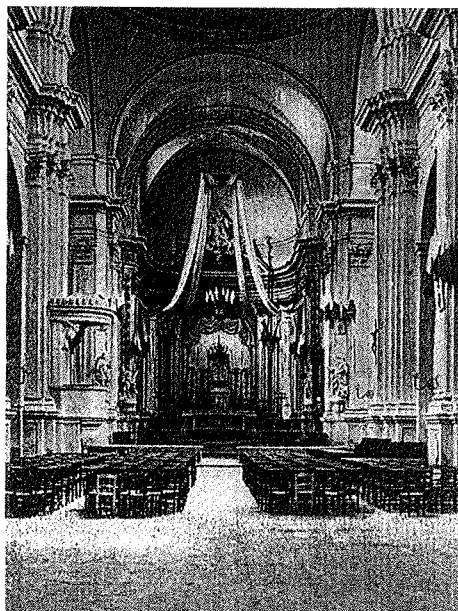


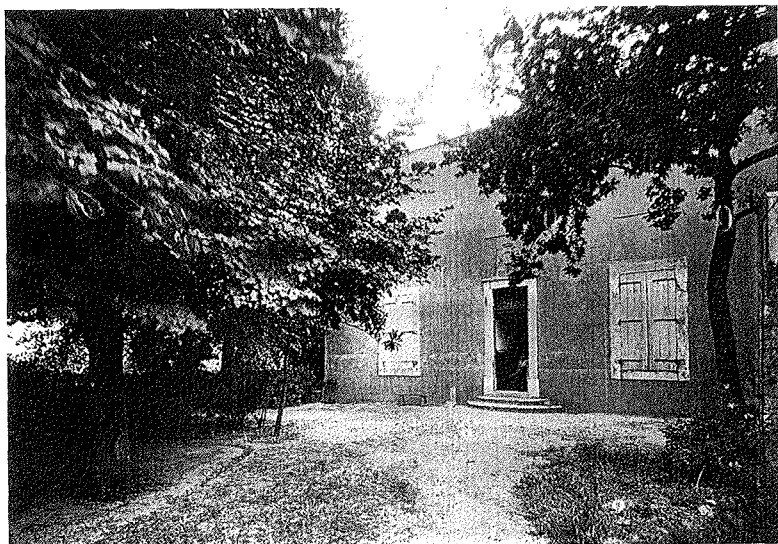
The Pavillon l'Enfant in 1813
cf. Diary, p. 135



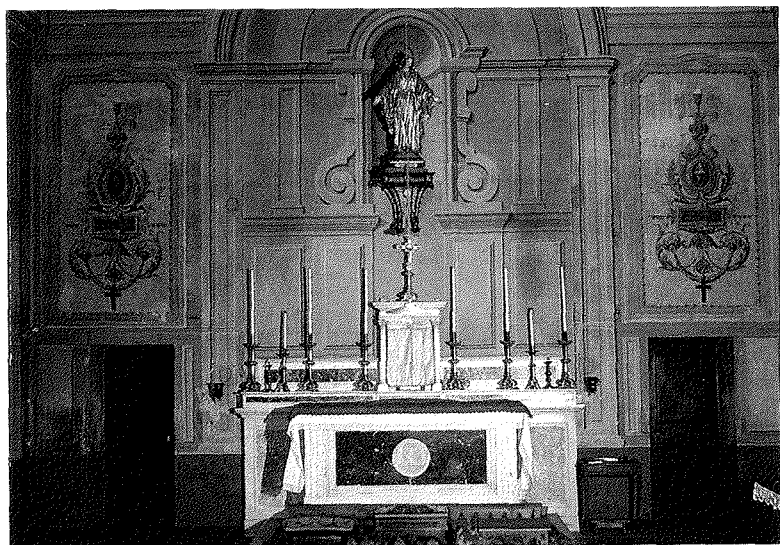
The Inner Courtyard of the Former Major Seminary
cf. Diary, p. 136

The Church of the Magdalene
cf. Diary, pp. 141





L'Enclos, the Joannis Country House
cf. Diary, pp. 142



The Choir of the Former Carmelite Monastery
cf. Diary, p. 169

D – DIARY OF THE MARIGNANE MISSION

November 17 - December 15, 1816 ¹

INTRODUCTION

In 1865 Father Achille Rey, editor of *Missions OMI*, published the *Diary of the Marignane Mission*, the original of which subsequently disappeared. He presented the text with these remarks:

“Diary of a mission. This Diary was written by our venerated Founder himself. He recounts for us day by day everything that transpired during the mission preached in Marignane, a parish in the diocese of Aix. It is the third mission given by the members of the Congregation;² the Founder directed it personally. Begun on November 17 it closed on December 15, 1816; it met with complete success. Let us leave the venerated Editor of this record to do the talking; he will describe for us all the customary ceremonies employed in the course of a mission and the accompanying blessings. May we faithfully preserve the deposit entrusted to our first Fathers!”

In Bishop de Mazenod’s Biography, published in 1883, Father Toussaint Rambert reproduces this text almost in its entirety and says the manuscript is in his possession (I, p. 226). He prefaces it with these words:

¹ Text published in *Missions OMI* 1865, pp. 276-286, 418-431. Rambert also published it (I, 208-226) leaving out a paragraph here and there.

² It is the third mission given by the Missionaries of Provence after the foundation on January 25, 1816, but in December 1815 - January 1816, Fathers Mie and Icard or Deblieu had evangelized the faithful of the community of Pignans. There followed the missions of Grans (February 11 - March 17, 1816), Fuveau (September 1 - September 29, 1816) and Marignane, cf. Joseph Pierlorz, *Premières Missions des Missionnaires de Provence (1816-1823)*, in *Missions OMI*, 1955, pp. 549-561, 641-655, cf. too: *Missions OMI* 1931, pp. 185-189.

"The Diary of this memorable mission, the third given by the new Missionaries of Provence, personally led by their zealous Founder, was written up daily by Father de Mazenod himself. Despite its length, we give it all. We could have no better initiation to understanding what a mission was at that time, what ceremonies they performed, the missionaries' exhaustion, trials and joys, the daily struggles, the conflicts they had to engage in; their difficulties, occasional defeats even, and finally their ultimate victory. Nothing could convey a better idea of the zeal, piety, prudence, consummate wisdom of the great missionary whose story we have the happiness of telling" (I, p. 208).

Father de Mazenod wrote at least two letters to Father Tempier during the mission, but the two brief extracts which have been preserved, by Yenveux and Rey respectively, do not touch on the mission.³

In the Founder's writings, presented to the Congregation of Rites in 1929, Father Fernand Thiry put together a few pages under the title: *Diary of the Grans Mission* (February 11 - March 17, 1816). They consisted of extracts of letters of Father de Mazenod on this mission,⁴ and of his *Diary* of September 5, 1857.⁵

Father de Mazenod also kept a *Diary* of the Mouriès mission (February 9 - March 15, 1817). Just one page remains, published by Rambert (I, 227). We reproduce it at the end of the *Diary of the Marignane Mission*.

Parish missions were "one of the principal ends of the Institute" and remained for more than a century the preferred ministry of Oblates. These pages of the *Diary of the Marignane Mission* are practically the only source the Oblates have had on the Founder's missionary method.⁶

³ cf. *Oblate Writings* 6, p. 25.

⁴ The Founder to his father, May 1, 1816 (orig. disappeared; copy in Yenveux I, 222-223; IV, 162; Rambert I, 186; Rey I, 193, 194, 197); Founder to Tempier, February 24 and March 1, 1816 in *Oblate Writings* 6, p. 18.

⁵ Original lost; copy in Rambert I, pp. 179-180, 182-183.

⁶ In Canon Leflon's biography of Bishop de Mazenod, the paragraphs on the Oblates' missionary method come from this *Diary*, cf. J. Leflon II, 90-102 (English translation).

The second chapter of the 1818 Rule concerning parish missions picks up only some aspects of this method (arrival in the parish to be evangelized, visits to the homes) and deals especially with the life or personal regulation of the Fathers during the mission.

The text published in *Missions OMI* ends with this editorial reflection:

"As it stands, we judged the Diary of the Mission worthy of reproduction. It is a souvenir of our beloved Father, a memorial of one of the first of the Congregation's missions. Traditions constitute the noblest of a family's riches, they stimulate emulation and delineate models for imitation. Our Father lives on in these pages: he is once more our teacher by word and by example."

P. Yvon Beaudoin, OMI

TEXT

On **November 17, 1816**, at 9:00 a.m., we left Grans where we had been to visit the faithful of that parish who had been asking for this favor for some time. It was our third to these fine people since the mission in February.¹ We were received and welcomed with that joy and eagerness that are such a good indicator of the heart's feelings.

We came in sight of Marignane at 4:00 p.m.² The faithful and their pastor, on being notified, came to meet us up to the chapel of St. Nicholas. Before reaching it, when we saw the people were coming close, we lay prostrate, following our custom, to adore Our Lord Jesus Christ, to pay him this first tribute of our homage and offer him the works of our ministry, directing our intention for the greater glory of his holy name. When the parish priest³ drew near, we directed our steps towards him, and right there where we met we again lay prostrate to adore the cross he bore in his hand. Before offering it to be kissed and placing it in the hands of the Superior of the mission, the Parish Priest gave a short address to the missionaries in which he expressed his joy at seeing them come among his people to show them the way of salvation.

¹ The mission of Grans, a village at that time of some eighteen hundred inhabitants in the diocese of Aix, was the first preached by the Missionaries of Provence after the foundation of the Congregation on January 25, 1816. It opened on February 11 and closed on March 17. The fathers subsequently made three visits there in the space of eight months. Articles 12 and 14 of the 1st paragraph on missions, in the Rule of 1818, call for a return mission, in the evangelized town, four or five months after the mission, so as to secure "the fruits that have been produced."

² The village of Marignane, situated on the shores of the Etang de Berre, thirty kilometres south of Grans, had at that time 1600 inhabitants. Leaving Grans at 9 o'clock, the missionaries arrived at Marignane at 4 in the afternoon. They probably went on foot. Article 7 of the 1st paragraph on missions, in the Rule of 1818, calls for a journey on foot or horseback and not in a vehicle. Father de Mazenod, the superior of the mission, was accompanied by Fathers Deblieu, Mie and Maunier. Father Tempier usually stayed in Aix to look after the Youth Congregation and the church of the Mission.

³ The parish priest of Marignane at that time was Father Brun.

When the Superior had received the holy cross from the hands of the Parish Priest, he got up and offered it to be kissed by the other missionaries who had remained kneeling; he then blessed the people turning successively to the four points of the compass. The procession then wound its way to the chapel of St. Nicholas that it had by-passed to go and meet the missionaries. The chapel was entered for the singing of the hymn *Iste Confessor*, the Antiphone and Prayer of St. Nicholas, patron of the chapel and the parish. It then made its way to the principal church singing the litanies of the Saints.

The remarkable thing about the reception was the eagerness, joy, rapture of the people who, despite the gusty wind, came in great numbers as far as St. Nicholas' and gave voice to their feelings in a most expressive way. People prostrated on every side as the missionaries passed by, uttering cries of joy and spontaneously singing, in a kind of explosion of emotion, the first verse of the canticle: *O missien tan désiderado!*⁴ People were to be seen lifting their arms aloft to heaven in a rapture, others opened them wide in welcome, shedding tears and showering blessings on the Lord's envoys.

No less remarkable and a good indication of the spirit of the burgesses of this village, was the fact that neither the Mayor, nor the trustees for the Church fabric thought it consonant with their dignity to come to meet the ambassadors of Jesus Christ. The Mayor was so inflated with the importance of his office as to assist neither at the opening address nor the subsequent benediction.

⁴ The Fathers published a *Collection of French and Provençal Hymns for the use of the Missionaries of Provence*, Avignon, 1818. On pages 215-217 there is this hymn with the title: "Per l'ouverturo de la Missien." It has ten verses, the first reads as follows:

O missien tan désirado!
 Sias arribado;
 O missien tan désirado!
 Sias vengudo enfin;
 Que Dieou que vous a mandado;
 Siegué béni senso fin.

Among the French hymns, there are two (on pp. 110, 112) for the opening of the mission, with a different text from that sung in provençal.

One of the reasons for this behavior is the lack of harmony prevailing between the Parish Priest and the Churchwardens,⁵ between the Parish Priest and the Mayor. The former has only to propose something for the others to oppose and reject it. For the simple reason that it was the Parish Priest's idea to have the mission, the Churchwardens saw in it insurmountable difficulties, and the Mayor disassociated himself from it. They have besides some bizarre pretensions which the Parish Priest does not think he should give in to, and that was all it took for them to seize this chance of hurting him. It was then because of the Parish Priest that these gentlemen behaved in this way towards the missionaries.

This did not prevent the church being full on the procession's return. The Blessed Sacrament was exposed, the *Veni Creator* sung. The Superior gave the opening address which was followed by benediction. After the *avis*^{5A} everyone went quietly away.

In the evening, the Parish Priest and missionaries began the visitation of homes. They had been forestalled by the trustees. Although the Mayor had behaved so rudely, we judged it good to begin our visit with him. He seemed embarrassed, whether because of his prior behavior or perhaps also because we were visiting him in an apartment and this fell short of the idea we should have had of his official position.

The 18th, the first Monday. The bell tolled at 4:00 for a 5 o'clock start. Morning prayer was said, a canticle sung, then the instruction took place; it was followed by Mass and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Finally the second Mass, at the beginning of which was sung the closing hymn.⁶

⁵ "Marguilliers": it bears the same meaning as "fabriciens" which is also used in the text: members of the fabric who saw to the administration of the property of a church.

^{5A} "Avis": English-speaking Oblate missionaries retained this French word to describe a talk that prepared the ground for the following day with a mixture of notices and exhortations, as will emerge from the way that the Founder uses the word in the text. (Translator).

⁶ A *lapsus calami* it seems for opening hymn, cf. *Supra* note 4. The Oblates brought out several editions of the *Collection of Hymns* which, in 1851, had reached its seventh edition. In that of 1837, we find for the first time 9 (p. 146), a "Recession Hymn" or "Hymn of Thanksgiving."

After breakfast, the missionaries went on with their visitation until midday. These visits are not very interesting, but they are very important, for they bring the missionaries close to the people they have come to evangelize. They let themselves be seen in all the affability of a charity which makes itself all things to all men, in this way they win over the most distant among them; they are able to give encouragement, to spur people on, to meet head-on some resistance, and, as they make progress, they end up discovering and setting in train remedies for disorders that have often escaped the watchful care even of a zealous pastor. Thus today we came across two persons who, under the semblance of a marriage they had never in fact contracted, had lived over a period of several years in concubinage without anyone knowing; they would perhaps have died in that condition had it not been for the visit we made to them.

On these visits, care must be taken to enter every house, even those where one foresees a hostile reception: were it only for the merit of enduring some insults for Our Lord Jesus Christ, one would always derive very great benefit from them, and these insults are not to be lightly passed over in the exercise of so sublime a ministry, which the people in general value so highly.

In the evening the crush was excessive; the church could not hold the crowds flocking in, and at the second call to prayer, everywhere it was packed. We preached on salvation. In the morning we had preached on prayer.

The 19th. The morning exercise as usual. The instruction was given on the first commandment of God.

After the Masses, the visits resumed. They were just as consoling as the evening before, and we were confirmed in the opinion we had formed of their great usefulness. We again came across a case of concubinage that we hope to bring to an end soon but which without this visit would have gone on for a long time still. We also came across a man who, seven years ago, became totally deaf and cannot even hear a canon going off. This man, on account of being unable to hear, had lapsed from the Church. We judged from his way of talking that he very much wanted to receive the sacraments, and we conveyed this to him by signs. Before losing his hearing, he had had excellent priests as directors; he is sufficiently instructed, had clarity of mind, very pious dispo-

sitions. When we showed him the crucifix, he threw himself upon it to kiss it joyfully.

We also came across a sixty-year old man who is feeble-minded and has not made his first communion. We were quite taken by surprise at the way he responded to our questions. With no hesitation he gave a perfect explanation of the mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation, eternal happiness or damnation as a reward or punishment for a man's deeds; in a word, we judged this poor man was able, after some helps he will be given now, to be admitted to the sacraments. We also came across a foreign schoolmaster, a man far superior to the normal village teachers, who on the occasion of the mission, separated from a woman he had lived with over a long period and by whom he even had children.

In the evening the crush was so great that many were obliged to turn away, unable to get into the church. We preached on mortal sin, and this topic, the résumé that was made after the prayer, led into the announcement that thoughts should turn to confession. The confessionals for each missionary have been assigned.

The 20th. The morning exercises as usual. The conference was a continuation on God's first commandment. There were even more people than yesterday morning; the church was full, but there was more breathing-space than the evening, when the crush does not permit any movement.

People are in no hurry to go to confession; only a few came.

In the evening, the same crush as the night before. The sermon topic was death. The exhortations took the form of a résumé of the points of the sermon and naturally led up to a new and more urgent invitation to confession. The men turned out to be as little in a hurry as the ladies; only a dozen came.

The 21st. In a conference, continuation on the first commandment, – virtue of hope. – Lots of people. A few more ladies than yesterday for confession but nothing near to what there ought to be. Of the four missionaries only one was kept going continuously until midday, when all retired to conform to the Rule.⁷

⁷ "To conform to the Rule." The Founder must have amended this text after 1818. There was still no Rule in 1816. In that of 1818, in the paragraph on "personal regulation for the missions," it is written: "Dinner is taken at midday," cf. Line 347 of the Duval edition, in *Missions OMI* 1951, p. 31.

Visitation continued during after-dinner recreation with the same success measured by the good effect produced. Fairly continuous stream of confessions. Sermon on salvation (2nd part).

The 22nd. Conference on love of God and neighbor, continuation of the first commandment. Continuous stream of confessions but no pressure. Visits during the after-dinner recreation.

Sermon on the judgment. Crush so great people had to be turned away. The vestibule of the church was full. Fairly continuous stream of men's confessions until 10 o'clock.

The 23rd. Conference on the third commandment, just a word on the second, as there will be a sermon on blasphemy. As to confession, like yesterday: private visits of the Superior to some people living in concubinage. We will have two come each day for instruction at one o'clock. One is thirty-six; he has not made his first communion.

Unbounded happiness of several of those who went to confession, a happiness whose effects are shared by their families.

Sermon on hell. After the prayer, usual résumé and forceful *avis* on keeping Sunday holy, which was being habitually violated by servile works by the majority of the inhabitants. Practically no men's confessions after the service. Perhaps it is because on Saturdays they go for a shave when they return from work, something they had not been able to do as they all came to the church straight after eating.

Father Mie, having learnt that his father was dying, was obliged to leave.

The 24th, second Sunday. Rose at six o'clock instead of four. First Mass at seven o'clock, during which one of the missionaries in the pulpit prayed aloud in the style of a meditation following the priest's actions.

At ten o'clock, High Mass. After the Gospel, sermon which should always be a résumé of the week's instructions. One must hold interest by being orderly and speedy. It is impossible to include all the morning and evening instruction; a choice has to be made according to greater importance and usefulness. We left the church after midday.

Vespers began at two o'clock. After vespers, sermon on delaying one's conversion.

After the sermon, the Superior went up into the pulpit to give the *avis* on the penitential procession that was going to take place. These *avis*, which were given likewise in the other missions we have given, were all the more necessary today when we had to prepare the faithful for an unusual sight that was going to unfold before their eyes.

It is only after the deepest thought, putting it before God and weighing the advantages and drawbacks of the event about to take place, that it was decided on, and the ensuing happy outcome was proof that the inspiration of trying it came from God, as was believed beforehand.

It was a question then of explaining that the missionaries having come in a sense to throw in their lot with that of the people of Marignane, wanted to take part in the penitential procession about to take place in such wise as to be able to draw down, both upon them and on the people, God's mercy, which they all needed so badly. It is to obtain this grace that the Superior, on whom rests principally responsibility for the mission, is offered on this day as a victim to God's justice, like the man of sin, the scapegoat loaded with everyone's sins, in the hope, through the humility of the deed done this day in union with Our Lord's humiliations, of turning away God's anger, appeasing his justice and imploring the graces of conversion necessary for so many hardened sinners who have wallowed so long in sin and show but little desire to extract themselves from the mess.

These are the feelings that motivated us in taking this step. The thought that the touching sight of this humiliation might make some impression had been quite secondary. That hope by itself would not have been enough to give the courage to defy the obstacles human wisdom suggested and which could yield only to the important considerations set out above.

So, the sermon over, the Superior went up into the pulpit to prepare and dispose minds to look upon what was going to take place with sentiments suitable to the occasion. He stressed the need for a generous expiation, following the example of Our Lord, of a number of saints, Saint Charles Borromeo among others, who, in less calamitous circumstances, since they sought to avert merely temporal scourges while we were seeking to destroy the hideous sickness that devours and damns the soul, had done what the missionaries were about to imitate... Finally, he invited the people to imitate the Jewish people and lay on him all their faults with sorrow in their hearts, comparing himself to the scape-

goat which was going to be driven into the desert, burdened with all the iniquities of the people, alone worthy of heaven's wrath which was to exhaust its vengeance upon him. However, correcting himself immediately, he turned towards the cross saying that, even in that abject state, he would place all his trust in it; that he would embrace it and never let it go, and that thus he ran no risk; on the contrary, he had every reason to hope for mercy and pardon. This gesture made an impression.

He declared he would divest himself of the surplice, symbol of innocence, since now he represented sinners. He took it off, indeed, and draped it over the pulpit, from which he descended to go to the foot of the altar to receive, from the hand of the Parish Priest in his cope a heavy rope which he knotted around his neck; then, slipping off his shoes and socks, he took the penitential cross, and, in this state, placed himself at the head of the procession, while all the people and clergy sang in alternation the *Parce Domine* and a verse of the *Miserere*. The tears of all taking part choked their voices, and the impression that grace was at work was felt; the most hardened were moved. Not all were thus docile to the Lord's inspirations; but enough were won by this act of expiation to give grounds for satisfaction for having offered it to the divine Majesty.

The procession traversed the village streets, which were flooded with water, mud and dung; but it seems that by trampling the filth underfoot, there were released the most abundant wellsprings of grace. What would there have been if any other of the missionaries than the wretched Superior, who had to assume for himself so large a part of this expiation, which should have been all for the people, had been able to offer himself as victim? But it was fitting it should be he who offered himself; it goes without saying that he was the least worthy of it, precisely because he was the one most in need of it.⁸

⁸ On his return to France at the end of 1817, Fortuné de Mazenod marvelled at the success of the missions and at Eugene's zeal, but the President was worried over his son's health and what he called his excesses of zeal. During the Eyguières mission, in Lent 1819, Fortuné wrote to the President on March 10: "Don't get upset if your son sometimes shows an excess of zeal for the salvation of souls beyond limits; it is in compensation for those like myself who have neither his virtues nor his talents. I was assured that the expiatory procession made barefoot was necessary in a town that was not religious to stir sleeping consciences. And in the outcome it produced wonderful fruits."

In any case that ceremony had a very profound effect and drew down most abundant graces on the mission.

When the procession, which was conducted in a remarkable spirit of recollection, had re-entered, the Superior handed the cross to an acolyte and prostrated himself at the foot of the altar, face down; he continued, in this position, to pray for the people's conversion: he did not rise until after the blessing. He then re-entered the sacristy, and the eagerness displayed towards him to wash his feet, which one of the missionaries in a spontaneous movement of humility could not refrain from kissing, produced an outpouring of feeling which it will be difficult to erase from the memories of those who witnessed it. Hearts could no longer contain the pent-up joy and consolation, and the sobs and abundance of tears manifested the beautiful feelings with which souls were filled.

After the blessing, the men were let go. The girls and some ladies congregated in the confession chapel.

We have made a practice in our missions of having this special meeting for girls so as to really reach out to them and convince them of the necessity of giving up dances and walking out with the young men. Experience has shown this to be the best and perhaps the only means to get them to re-think a preconception fostered by so many passions. Young girls who have not yet made their first communion are totally excluded from these meetings, for there is no beating about the bush, and the danger is exposed in the full light of day as to all that happens on these abominable occasions is recalled with horror and the wicked intentions of those who have no other purpose than to seduce them are exposed. One must speak with a lot of authority and much earnestness: it is one of the most important exercises of the mission.

On this occasion, success was total, and never was it less expected as up till then the girls had displayed sentiments so contrary to what would be asked of them that the missionaries were beginning to be alarmed. Along with a love for dancing, which is an unrestrained passion in this part of the country, a custom or, to be more accurate, a highly-pronounced determination not to give it up, went a practically invincible prejudice against the congregation⁹ and the tiny number of

⁹ Congregation or Association for young ladies or young people, etc., that was set up during the missions.

girls who belonged to it; we must add as well a virulent and deeply rooted spite towards the Parish Priest. So many passions to be prevailed over, and the grace of God in his goodness won the day.

The impression made was profound; tears did not cease from flowing, and the upshot was to get all to inscribe to be received by the congregation. When the exercise was over, these girls were beside themselves with joy, and they displayed it in mutual embraces from the bottom of their heart.

The missionaries went on from there to the confessional to hear the men, and, at eight o'clock, the bell went for evening prayer, to which very many people again betook themselves. The church was full. Some *avis* were added on the day's events.

The 25th, second Monday. Conference on the fourth commandment. All day in the confessional.

Sermon on the divine nature of the Christian religion. Men's confessions busy throughout up to the time fixed in this mission for closing, namely ten o'clock.

The 26th, second Tuesday. Conference on the fourth commandment, continuation. Sermon on the virtue of penance.

(It will be difficult to fill in this gap, for, having neglected to write down day by day the day's events during this week, I no longer remember a thing).¹⁰

(December 2,) third Monday. Solemn service for the dead of the parish, in the morning, at the time usually devoted to the exercises. High Mass was sung by the Superior, a missionary did deacon, the Parish Priest fulfilled the duties of the sub-deacon. At the offertory, a sermon

¹⁰ At this point in the narration the editor of Missions writes: "The gap that the Founder indicates is a whole week in extent: it is the second week of the mission. We are deprived of the account of ceremonies which must, during these eight days, have held the attention of the faithful and contributed to the goal the missionaries had in mind. They probably concerned the children of the parish, the first to be called, in our usage, to enjoy the blessing of reconciliation and other graces of which a mission is so fertile a source. The manuscript takes up the story on the third Monday."

suitied to the occasion. At dawn, we were ready to go in procession to the cemetery. All present in the church, men and women, went along. On the way were sung the *Miserere* and the *De Profundis*, inserting after each verse the *Requiem aeternam*, etc. Having reached the cemetery, a second absolution was given beside the grave that had been opened expressly for the ceremony. After the absolution, the Superior said some words suggested by the place and occasion. He ended by displaying for all to see a skull which he threw into the grave, which will remain open until such time as one of those who were present should come to fill it.

This little sermon should not last more than ten minutes. It is time for work, but the few words said must be animated and redolent of power and truth. The tears of all present were proof of the good effect had on them of so touching a ceremony. We withdrew only after kissing that clay which of itself would merit an eloquent sermon.

On returning to the church, we sang again the *De Profundis* and, without losing a moment, gave benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

In the evening, there was a sermon on the unworthy reception of communion. The *avis* turned on the morning's liturgy, with a reminder of the most striking aspects, and some thoughts were added with a view to reaching those who had been unable to be there.

The confessors were kept continuously at work up to ten o'clock, and they would have gone on longer if they had not stuck to that provision of the program.

(December 3,) third Tuesday. Conference on scandal-mongering and rash judgments. The original intention was just to add some further reflections on the preceding conference, but there proved to be still so much to say on the subject that we stayed with it and it was much to the point.

Sermon on forgiving one's enemies; the crucifix was displayed at the end. First *avis* on the procession of the Blessed Sacrament.

A momentary giddiness experienced by the Superior while giving these *avis* was proof to us of the people's attachment to and affection for the missionaries; they came flocking around beneath the pulpit, all flurried, and would not be reassured even when they saw the missionary, who was actually feeling fine, smiling and even talking.

Third Wednesday. Conference on the Church's commandments in general, and on the first in particular.

The Mayor, who, on being informed that the missionaries wanted to go to see him, had gone as early as the morning to the parish house, came at one o'clock to take us to go and choose the most suitable place for the mission cross.

Visit to a person living in concubinage, his promise to go to confession and get married.

Conference on restitution. We were not shy on the problem of the property sold by the state; we kept away only from mentioning the word "emigre"; a similar freedom over repayments in promissory notes.¹¹ *Avis* on the same topic and on the approach of the day for reconciliation for women.

Third Thursday. Conference on the third commandment of the Church.

A man who had not set foot in the church for twenty-two years, coming back with admirable sentiments. Expressions of fervor on the part of a number of women and girls. Admirable patience shown every day in waiting one's turn at the confessional, from morning to evening.

Visit to a ninety-year old to bring him to confession. It is claimed it is well over half-a-century since the last time.

A fine lesson not to go another time to the village carpenter to have mission crosses made. The one ordered by the Parish Priest turned out to be so huge, so out of proportion, so awful to put it bluntly, that there was nothing for it but to leave it with the workman and order another immediately, which may not turn out any better.

¹¹ The revolutionary governments had despoiled the Church and the nobility of their property which was then sold at a low price. Many of the burgesses got their wealth in this way. "Promissory notes" = "*Assignats*": paper money created on April 1, 1790, which remained in circulation until the end of 1796 and whose value was a charge on the State. There were issues for enormous amounts to the point that already in 1793 the *assignat* was worth no more than a sixth of its face value and less than 1% in 1796, cf. J. Leflon II, 130ff.

Sermon on blasphemy. *Avis* on the same topic. Announcement of the reparation to be made for this crime, addressing to oneself the words: *Jesus-Christ siegue lauzat*,¹² etc. Announcement of the feast of St. Nicholas, patron of the parish, for the next day. Pressing appeal to those who have not yet presented themselves to the tribunal of confession. A few words on the approach of reconciliation for women and announcement of a special exercise for them.

Third Friday. Solemn high mass at 5:00 o'clock sharp. Instruction on the Church's fourth commandment at the offertory.

Instead of the retreat,¹³ which was acknowledged as being of very little use, because of how it could be done, the women and young ladies were brought together at two o'clock in the afternoon, on the sounding of the big bell, and we spoke with them about what they were preparing for and how to do it well. The gathering was very numerous. These good people would spend their lives in church.

Vespers of St. Nicholas at 5 o'clock. Talk on the properties of contrition. Benediction, *avis* on the general fast for tomorrow. This *avis* has to be delivered adroitly; you must go at it in a roundabout way, speak about the Ninevites, etc. Don't make excessive demands so as to get more. *Avis* for the women's absolution: tomorrow there will be no men's confessions at all.

A big number of the residents from Saint-Victoret and even Gignac¹⁴ have attended the exercises very assiduously, morning and evening. The latter come a full three miles to be there. The women and girls arrive an hour before the church door is opened, to get their place at the confessionals, which are constantly hemmed-in by the crowd.

The Third Saturday. Talk on the fifth and sixth precepts, closing with the motives for contrition, for the sake of the women who are all to receive absolution today. The missionaries have moved the fast of the Rule from Friday to today so as to do this work of penance along with

¹² Praised be Jesus Christ.

¹³ The "retreat" was the day during which first the women, then the men, made their last confession before the general communion.

¹⁴ The two neighbouring parishes, very close to Marignane.

the people. In future it will be good to summon only the women to this exercise; they will come in greater numbers, no one will be missing. This exercise, plus that given the preceding day, may suffice for the women's retreat.

Women's confessions were heard all day, the missionaries got away at midnight. At six o'clock the bell went for rosary in common, a short instruction, benediction and *avis*. They dwelt on the happiness of those who had been reconciled, the desires the others should have, tomorrow's procession, etc.

It is not uncommon when hearing confessions to have tangible signs of the Lord's help. Today, on the point of giving absolution to someone, one of the missionaries whose only task, following our methods, in the final stage was to arouse contrition and give absolution, felt prompted to put a question, only to be dissatisfied with an initial response and to insist until a confession came that made it impossible for him to absolve the person. He found out later from another source that this woman was so ill-disposed that before entering the confessional she had had the impudence to have her mind on something which it would be difficult to excuse of mortal sin.

Fourth Sunday, December 8. First Mass at 6 o'clock. Mass with women's communion at 8 o'clock. When the women were in place in the church which they filled, we began by singing the *Veni Creator*, then a low Mass was celebrated by the Superior, assisted by the Parish Priest in stole and with acolytes. We overlooked the great incensing which should have been done as in the solemn low Masses of the Aix Congregation. During Mass, one of the missionaries in the pulpit, while kneeling down, uttered pious reflections up until the consecration touching on the sacrifice and on the communion in which all those assisted were to participate. After the consecration, he spoke out loud in an even tone all the "acts before communion."¹⁵ Before administering the holy mysteries the celebrant spoke some fervent words, what the Italians call a

¹⁵ The first 98 pages of the 1818 edition of the *Collection of Hymns* were prayers many of which could be read during the various parts of the Mass. The acts before communion were at pages 47-50.

fervorino. He then distributed the Body of Jesus Christ to over four hundred women or girls who came up to the Holy Table with remarkable devotion and recollection. While this was going on one of the missionaries made acts of faith, adoration, love, desire, etc. At the end of communion the choir intoned some canticles. After Mass there was exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on the altar and the ceremony was concluded with the *Te Deum laudamus* and benediction. We withdrew at half-past ten singing canticles that seemed to come from the bottom of the heart.

At half-past ten the bell went for High Mass, which began at eleven o'clock and during which there was no instruction.

Vespers at two. The Blessed Sacrament remained exposed during Vespers. Sermon on adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Immediately after the sermon, the procession left. The evening before, notice was given that all those who wished to join in were to procure for themselves a candle. Pains were taken to ensure that provision was made for them to be available in all sizes, even one ounce, so that everyone could provide themselves with one cheaply. We explained what was the Church's intention in this laudable custom. We invited everyone to go and join in at the triumph we wished to confer on O.L. Jesus Christ. Finally the expenditure should even be to the town's advantage, since the candles abandoned after the procession in the sacristy should serve to refurnish it in vestments which it needed.

It might seem that it would take little to arouse the zeal and enthusiasm of the inhabitants and induce them to take part in this procession. But that is not how it turned out, and avarice held back four-fifths of these unfeeling men; they were quite happy to watch the procession go by, as if it were a spectacle that was being offered to satisfy their curiosity. The missionaries' indignation soared, and the Superior was touched to the quick so that on the procession's return, when from the pulpit he stopped the Blessed Sacrament on the threshold of the church door, he felt he had first and foremost to have the act of reparation intoned that is customary in that situation for the insult that Our Lord had just received through the insouciance of a people who should on that day have been imploring his mercy and made reparation by their acts of homage for past irreverences.

Despite the incredible behavior of these heedless men, the church, filled with women and about one hundred and fifty men, all with lighted

candles in hand, presented a fine sight and one apt to move all but the miserly. There was no *avis*. It was necessary to demonstrate by this silence the chagrin we were feeling. Coming down from the pulpit, the Superior said only this: The most beautiful day of the mission has been the one of greatest suffering for my heart. This was more effective than reproaches; in any case it was right for the Superior to do nothing just then. When he had gone back into the sacristy, one of the missionaries said a few vehement words to make the point how justifiable the grief was that the Superior had suffered and all the other missionaries had shared on seeing the fresh insult Our Lord had received. However as it was necessary to acknowledge the satisfaction produced by the piety of the men present at the ceremony, the Superior went back out and spoke to them some encouraging words and to invite them to seek admission into the Congregation.

The young ladies were gathered on their side in the confession chapel, under the presidency of a missionary.

N.B. I think we went wrong in not assembling the men before Vespers. It was due to lack of time, since having exited from the church at one o'clock, Vespers had to be begun at two o'clock. I am persuaded that we would not have suffered this disagreeable experience had we been able to speak in familiar terms with these men for an hour, as we have done elsewhere. We must remember this when on another mission.

Fourth Monday. Conference on the sacraments. At two o'clock, meeting of the congregation of young women to consolidate this important work, name persons for responsibilities, etc. The exercise began with vespers of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Sermon on the death of the just person and the sinner. *Avis*, gentle reprimands for yesterday's fault. They had partly made up for it with their eagerness to come both this morning and this evening; but to acquit themselves of it entirely, a renewal of baptismal promises was announced for Thursday, to be made in the presence of the exposed Blessed Sacrament. A final *avis* was given on the general appeal to be made for the expenses of the cross and its pedestal.

Fourth Tuesday. Conference on baptism, continuation of that of yesterday and on confirmation. The bell ringer was an hour late; he only woke up at five o'clock. It had been judged necessary to begin with the

conference to leave the people free to leave afterwards and get on with their work. This precaution proved unnecessary; and although the conference lasted an hour; everyone stayed for Mass and benediction.

Confessions throughout the day, both of women who had not yet been able to come, and of men including some of these too who had not yet come and who came with excellent dispositions. We are more convinced every day that four missionaries are not nearly enough, even with the parish priest's help, for a population of sixteen hundred persons. It is true we are not falling down on the job. There is scarcely anyone who has not been four times to confession, some come even oftener. We are all convinced that it is better to do less and to do it well than to do a lot and badly. But the fact remains that we are in the confessionals all the time we are not in the pulpit or at the altar, we scarcely give ourselves time off to take our meals; it is only with difficulty that we take a half-hours' recreation after dinner, and indeed that time is always employed in the business that the mission involves, making the peace, negotiating, private instruction of those whom one has come across in the confessional, ignorant of the truths necessary for salvation, etc.

We have not, in this mission, judged it opportune to establish the peace office.¹⁶ The Parish Priest advised us ahead of time that none of the burgesses had the people's confidence, and that it would be useless for us to suggest this means of reconciliation. As it is only from the Parish Priest we can get the necessary information to set up this office, we had no choice but to follow his view of the matter. However, today I think that we would have very easily found a sufficient number of persons capable of achieving our goals in this family tribunal, but there is not sufficient time now to be thinking of it, and it is not our fault, if this town has been deprived of the advantages that usually result from the workings of this office.

This Tuesday evening, conference on the sacrifice of the Mass. *Avis* on the rule of life one ought to follow after the mission.

¹⁶ The peace offices were in existence already during the missions before the Revolution with the purpose of backing-up the preachers' work. Thanks to the moral authority and Christian spirit of the leading men who composed it, this office, while having no official standing, brought those who spontaneously had recourse to it to acknowledge their general reciprocal wrongs, cf. J. Leflon II, pp. 130-131, 139-140.

Fourth Wednesday. Conference on marriage, orders and extreme unction. Sermon on human respect. It would be a good idea to do this earlier. *Avis* on the rule of life, continuation of what one must do to live a Christian life.

Fourth Thursday. Conference on faith; we did not do it when we explained the first commandment of God, as we planned to do it in the evening; but not having been able to find a day for it, we decided to do it today. It is one of the most important.

Men keep on showing up who have not appeared before and whose sentiments are very consoling.

Sermon on heaven. Renewal of baptism vows. It is the first time we have done this ceremony. It was at the time of the Sunday lapse that we announced it to make reparation for the insult Our Lord had received on that day consecrated to his triumph. It is not that this was premeditated conduct or that it came from bad dispositions. We have come to see that in many cases it was fear of the cost of the candle; in others, it was that they were afraid to go out in the open air without a hat; in the great majority of cases it was a kind of timidity, human respect. *Que diran se me vesoun pourta de lou pegoun*,¹⁷ it is the insulting expression long in use among libertines to mock those who take part in processions. A table was prepared on which were placed an open missal, the holy oils, a lighted candle, some blessed salt and the small white robe with which one clothes the child after baptism.

The Superior, having ascended the pulpit, explained the ceremony that was about to take place. The Blessed Sacrament was exposed. The Superior went on with his talk, and after an introduction he had the faithful renew their baptismal promises out loud and as a responsory, and this led into a peroration that was very touching in the circumstances, and during which the sobbing almost drowned the preacher's voice and it required an effort on his part to make himself heard.

¹⁷ "Que diran ..." What will they say if they see me carrying the pegoun (the scone or torch).

Benediction was given and then, after prayer, some very lively *avis* followed concerning a flagrant abuse that has crept in among the other abominations the devil has introduced into the town: namely, that at baptisms the numerous crowd of young girls and boys who accompany the godfather hug each other shamelessly and go on to dance the whole day through.

Although these various instructions and all the exercises considerably prolonged the session, it was not thought possible to further defer getting the men together to urge them to inscribe their names in the catalogue of the Congregation; and to give them various private *avis*, etc. The women were accordingly dismissed, and a great number of the men alone remained. After addressing them some edifying words, we inscribed those who were better disposed: it came to one hundred and twenty five. We announced to them at the same time the setting up of a centre¹⁸ where the Congregants could meet for a chat and for honest recreation. This went down well. It should be done in all our missions.

Fourth Friday. Conference on the creed. Men's and women's confessions. All the women had not been able to come before Sunday. We calculate that there were five hundred and fifty women who went to communion between Sunday and the other days of the week.

This evening we preached on the Passion. Then we gave benediction. Then there followed the distribution of the *Jesus-Christ siegue lauzat*,¹⁹ after giving them a solemn blessing and explaining why the missionaries were making this gift to the faithful, etc. Announcement of the men's retreat for the morrow.

Fourth Saturday. Instead of the conference we preached on the motives for contrition: it is a practice that should always be followed, for the men begin to present themselves for absolution as soon as the morning exercise is over. This instruction seemed to make an impression as it had on the women on the Saturday before their communion. I merely make the observation that in future, only the men are to be

¹⁸ Centre = *chambrée*: a locale where the youth or people in general got together for healthy recreation.

¹⁹ Holy pictures as *souvenirs*?

admitted to this exercise as to that of this evening. It is what must be kept of the retreat for each sex. The evening before their respective communions will be reserved for each of them separately. When we only ask them for a single day, the men will make a point of leaving everything aside so as to be there, even in the morning. For the rest, in this mission, they are displaying an astonishing punctiliousness. The church is always full in the morning, and there are as many men as women.

Men's confessions until midday. After dinner, invitation from the Mayor to go and see the preparations being made to clear, fill in, and sand the place where the cross is to be planted. It is a quite a sight, thirty wagons and two hundred people were engaged in this work. The Mayor, at the head of the workers, is engaged in an activity that would be edifying, if that spot had not been previously designated by him to become the prettiest *cours* in the village. The eventuality of the planting of the cross aroused his zeal, which coincided with his intentions, and this has contributed in no small measure to the speeding up of the work. It is moreover at his request that the cross will be planted at the edge of this place which he wants to make a pretty *cours*.

While we are on the subject of the Mayor, we may remark that he has not missed a single one of the evening instructions, and that he is extremely courteous and helpful towards the missionaries, whom he has referred to as the ambassadors of Jesus Christ, in an ordinance he issued with the purpose of having the bars closed on the Sunday when the planting of the cross will take place. If he was not all he should have been on the first day of the mission, it is because he is at odds with the Parish Priest about whom he complains, while the Parish Priest for his part has his accusations, a quarrel it is no part of the missionaries' task to judge.

The evening, the exercise was for the men only. The church was full of them, it was a fine sight. There was perfect silence. Sermon on the Prodigal Son. Benediction. A long and difficult *avis* on the arrangements for tomorrow's communion, the happiness of being reconciled with God, etc.

The missionaries heard confessions until three o'clock in the morning when I am writing these notes.

During the day, we chose a site for the centre we spoke of above. While on the way, we learned that a dozen young people of twenty years

of age have already set one up to give each other mutual support and sustain each other in the good direction they have taken.

[December 15] fifth and last Sunday. First Mass at six o'clock, second at seven o'clock. The Mass at which the men were to communicate, at eight o'clock. The women were not allowed in. At seven o'clock, the men were already assembled, and proclaimed by their recollection the dispositions with which they were presenting themselves at the holy Table. At the Mass, there was a major incensing, although it was not a sung mass. The Parish Priest assisted at the altar, dressed in stole. The ceremony began with the *Veni Creator*. Before giving communion, the Superior who was saying the Mass, spoke for a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes. Those assisting who filled the entire church had been prepared by the pious reflections and prayers a missionary had made throughout the Mass, and certainly the Lord was greatly glorified on that beautiful day. It really was an imposing spectacle that assembly of so great a number of men who did not even let themselves so much as turn their heads, keeping their recollection and a silence in which you could have heard a fly, approaching the holy Table with angelic modesty, very many with tears in their eyes, without confusion of jostling, as if they had been doing all their lives what they were doing perhaps for the first or second time. For when the Spirit of God breathes, he makes men make a lot of progress in a short space of time. There were to be seen young people dissipate until that time, as they had always been ignorant of the strength of virtue's charms, dispute in fervour with old men of eighty who were blessing the Lord for having drawn them back from the precipice where they were on the point of being swallowed up. Among other aged people, there was one of eighty who received holy communion unable to hold back his tears. No one in the town recalled ever having seen him approaching the sacraments.

After the Mass, there was sung the *Te Deum*, then benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was given. Then we retired to return for High Mass that was sung after eleven o'clock.

We sang Vespers simultaneously, both in the church and on the square close by where the cross was, which the youth, dressed in penitential habits, with bare feet and the crown of thorns on their heads, had previously gone to seek, being accompanied by all the missionaries.

The square was filled with people, joining their voices to those of the missionaries who had stayed by the cross with the young people chosen to carry it.

After Vespers, all the faithful being assembled at the square where the cross was, we proceeded to bless it. Then the procession began to move singing the *Vexilla Regis* and some canticles. The Mayor and his deputy wearing sashes, accompanied by the municipal council which he had invited, followed the cross, immediately preceded by the clergy. Nothing disturbed the order and decorum of the procession. We arrived a little behind time at the place where the cross was to be planted.²⁰

Diary of the Mouriès mission

(February 9 - March 15, 1817)²¹

Monday, second day of the mission. The daytime, and likewise the evening of the vigil, were spent in visiting the inhabitants. We have been well received everywhere, even by the Protestants, whom we thought it our duty to visit like the others.

²⁰ The text in *Missions* adds the following note: "At this point the text of our venerated Founder comes to a halt. We have failed to trace the final page of his account: he stops at the point when the triumph of the cross was crowning four whole weeks of fatigue and apostolic labours perhaps his hand was stayed before the scene it had to describe to leave to God alone its merits and glory."

²¹ Copy in Rambert I, pp. 227-228. Mouriès was a place of some eighteen hundred people, formerly belonging to the diocese of Arles, and incorporated in that of Aix by the 1801 Concordat. This mission was preached by Fathers de Mazenod, Deblieu, Tempier and Mie. The name of the parish priest was Mr. Armand. Father Rambert published a letter of his, dated April 19, 1817 (Rambert I, pp. 228-229). Father Rambert is alone in reproducing a page of the Diary of this mission and introduces it with these words: "There still exists the start of a Diary of this mission, written by the venerated Superior; but this Diary recounts only the events of the first week. No doubt as the excessive work of the missions constantly grew, the Superior, who was more burdened than the others, could not keep up writing, which will be readily understood when one remembers that the missionaries went to bed after midnight to rise at three o'clock, and gave themselves scarcely enough time for meals. We will highlight from this unfinished Diary only the two following episodes: [there follows the text we reproduce]."

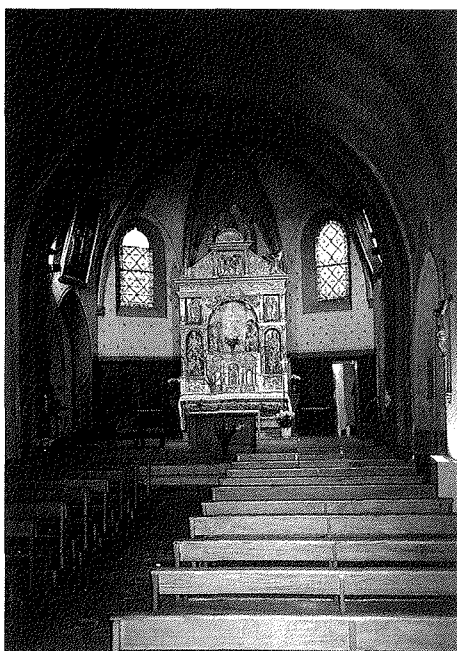
While making our visits we came across, in a Protestant house, the minister who comes to serve these poor Camisards²² in a country cottage at the entrance to the village. He seemed quite embarrassed at having to put a good countenance on it; he rose, as did the man of the house; he stayed cap in hand and standing the whole time our visit lasted, which, at that, was very short; after polite exchanges, we left. It is impossible to conceive how ignorant these Camisards are; they know absolutely nothing, except that they fulfil their religious exercises in a different place of worship than our own; we have not found a single one who could tell us if he were a Calvinist; they have not even heard of Calvin; their big argument is that they were born in this religion, which they think is as good as our own, and in which they all agree that they can be saved. In short, they imagine that at bottom it's practically the same thing, and that's the problem, for they would perhaps be less distant from the truth, and give greater hope of a return if they really grasped that the distance is enormous, and that the two ways cannot arrive at the same destination, as they are travelling in opposite directions.

Saturday. Last Tuesday it was announced that in the evening the great bell would sound for all to halt work at the same time, whatever it might be, and go down on their knees to recite three times the *Pater, Ave and Gloria Patri* for the conversion of sinners. This prayer was said punctiliously; one man, one of those who had not been to confession for a long time, was not put off by the presence of a hardened Camisard; at the first sound of the bell he went down on his knees and recited the three *Pater*, etc. with his whole family; on the spot he felt himself to be converted and resolved to come to confession, which he did as one of the first of the mission.

²² "Camisard": a name given to the Calvinists of Cévennes who fought against the armies of Louis XIV after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. This Edict, proclaimed by Henry IV in 1598, had given a large measure of freedom to the Protestants.

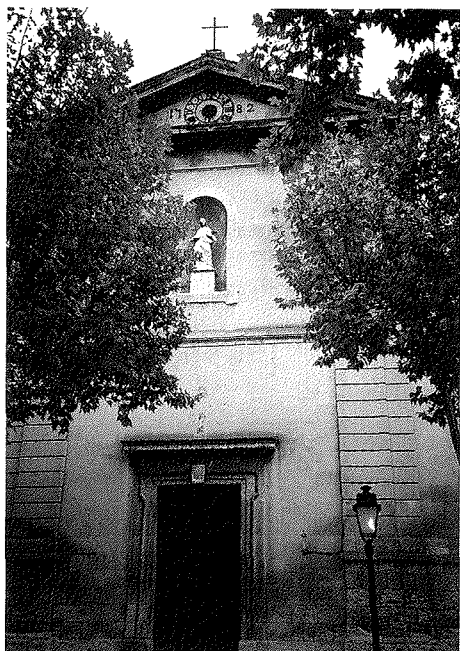


Marignane:
Church of St. Nicolas





Grans: St. Peter's Church



Facade of the Church
at Mourières

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