**1818**

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*January 29*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

January 29, 1818

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

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*February 4*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

February 4, 1818

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

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*March 15*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

March 15, 1818

Blessing of Palms. 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.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*March 26*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

March 26, 1818

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.

**Retreat, [made in Aix,] in May 1818.[[1]](#footnote-1)**

145:XV in Oblate Writings

*Need for a retreat in a life overcrowded with tasks. Desire for holiness by making the religious vows. Service of neighbour does not exempt from obligations towards God. Eugene has more attraction to prayer than to action; he will ask his Director if he may lead a more penitential life. Necessity of mortifying one’s own will, natural vivacity, the overly-sensitive affections of his heart. Bodily mortifications. Resolutions.*

Retreat

Aix

May 1818

It was high time I thought of extricating myself from that innumerable throng of tasks of every kind that overwhelms me spiritually and physically and came on retreat to apply myself seriously in the matter of my salvation by carefully going over all my actions and passing severe judgment on them on the scales of the sanctuary before I must render my account to the Sovereign Judge. The need was pressing as my spirit is so confined, my heart so empty of God that the exterior cares of my ministry, which throw me into continual dependence on others, preoccupy me to such an extent that I have come to the point of no longer having any of that interiority which previously constituted my consolation and happiness, although I have never possessed it other than very imperfectly because of my infidelities and constant imperfection. I function as a mere machine in everything that concerns me personally. It seems I am no longer capable of thinking once it touches me personally. In that case what good can I do for others? This way a thousand imperfections creep into my regular relations with my neighbour and make me lose perhaps all the merit of a life entirely consecrated to his service.

I have good reason to be alarmed at this state of affairs; I’ve been aware of it for some time without being able yet to do anything about it. Today with God’s help I am going to work carefully at it and put such order into my actions that each item may reassume its place and love of neighbour may not be a reason for me to fail in the love I owe myself, all the more since the best means of being really useful to one’s neighbour is without doubt to work much on oneself.

I am horrified at the state I am in. It seems I only love God by fits and starts. For the rest, I pray badly, meditate badly, prepare to say holy Mass badly, say it badly, make my thanksgiving badly; in everything I have a sense of repugnance to recollecting myself although my experience is that once I have surmounted this first difficulty I rejoice in the presence of God. All these disorders proceed, I think, from the fact that I am overly-involved in exterior works, and also from the fact that I am not careful enough to do them with great purity of heart.

I have just read over the reflections I made in July 1816. I was surprised at their accuracy, and I dare say edified by the sentiments they contain, but if I did not amount to much then, I am now worth a lot less still.

Affairs, difficulties, far from diminishing have just gone on multiplying since then, and thanks to failing to read over these fine resolutions grace inspired me with, I have not carried them out. So I do not find any more within me that sweet sense of security that is so well expressed in those reflections, which I have read over twice with genuine pleasure.

The state I find myself in is an extraordinary one and calls for prompt treatment. It consists in an absolute apathy to all that concerns me directly; it seems that when I ought to move on from service of neighbour to consideration of myself, it seems I say that I have no more energy, I am completely exhausted, dried up, unable even to think.

I repent of this fatal disposition even at this moment and never have I suffered such difficulties, such distress in recollecting myself, in entering into myself, in thinking of the eternal truths, etc.

However, for some time now, the thought of death has become more familiar to me than ever, but I have not gone more deeply into it, drawn any practical conclusion. In all truth I can almost say I have simply not had the time. Which is why I must regulate in a way that is definitive, firm, efficacious the principal actions from which I must no longer dispense myself on any pretext whatsoever. So, for example, why should I any longer put up with person after person making me take up all my prayer time for confessions, etc.

My God! Who can doubt you are the master of hearts? Just see! I feel I am so different today from what I was yesterday! and this without my making the least effort, with no spiritual tussle, etc. The thought that engaged and beguiled me throughout my thanksgiving, is that I must be a saint, and what is surprising, this seemed so easy to me that I did not doubt that it had to be; a glance at the saints of our time like Blessed Leonard of Port Maurice and Blessed Alphonsus Liguori, seemed to give me encouragement and strength. The means one must take to achieve this, far from frightening me, confirmed me in this confidence, so easy were they. I saw the life of religious perfection, the observance of the evangelical counsels free from the difficulties I had hitherto found in them. I asked myself why, to the vows of chastity and obedience that I have made up to now, I did not add that of poverty, and running through my mind the various obligations that evangelical poverty would entail, there are none that make me draw back....

I felt the need of leading a still more mortified life and I ardently desired to do it. One thing alone distressed me and that is the fear that it will meet with opposition and my Director will take advantage of the vow of obedience I have made to him to put obstacles to what seems to me evidently God’s will. I cast about seriously for the means to escape the too pressing attentions that charity suggests to some who are overly-afraid I will fall ill once again. I was indignant to have such a fuss made over me while I know full well that I am good for nothing, and that the little good I have done, I have done because God in his goodness was pushing me by the shoulders.

All these feelings were not fleeting, I retain them and adopt them afresh at the moment I am recounting them and writing them down. So what is all this? Have I not saddened the Holy Spirit hitherto by not responding to what he wished of me? May it be so no longer: speak Lord, your servant heareth: show me, I beg you, the way that I should go, enlighten me with your light, give me the understanding to know your will and walk in the ways of your commandments. This attraction towards a perfection of which I see no models around me, in a country which no longer knows the meaning of perfection but takes fright at anything, etc., this attraction which leads me to find such charm in the stories of the saints’ actions, which gives me such lively desires to imitate them, which gives me a sense of being confined, which makes me feel very frustrated because I cannot do all the Lord inspires me to, this attraction deserves my attention, a closer examination, in short for me to pursue it without further ado.

To be clear, the lights God gives me in his goodness today are no proof I was mistaken yesterday, quite the contrary. The one confirms the other.

God forbid that I would want to give up the service of neighbour! Far from it! I would like, if it were possible, to do still more for him than I have done hitherto, since without doubt the Lord is glorified by it, precisely as it pleases Him to be more so, but I will be better advised, and in serving my neighbour I will no longer forget myself as I have done; I will not persuade myself so easily that the exercise of charity towards him can take the place of everything, serve as my meditation, preparation, thanksgiving, visit to the Blessed Sacrament, prayer, etc. That is an excess that threw me into the state I saw myself in yesterday. It will not be an easy thing to change. God knows that if I give myself up to exterior works, there is more of duty than of liking in it, it is obeying what I believe the Master demands of me; that is so true that I always do it with an extreme repugnance from my lower nature. If I followed my taste, I would attend solely to myself and content myself with praying for others. I would spend my life in study and prayer. But who am I to have a will of my own in this respect? It belongs to the Father of the Family to fix the kind of work it pleases him to have his workers do. They are always too honoured and too happy to be chosen to cultivate his vineyard.

The essential thing is to combine things in such wise that nothing suffers, and that in service of neighbour I do not forget myself to the point of becoming tepid.

I could not prescribe myself anything better for avoiding that setback than what I wrote in my Bonneveine resolutions in 1816. I will bring my conduct into line with that, and so as to have them always before me I will go over them in the day’s retreat each month which I make the resolution once again to observe scrupulously.

Only, since I remark that my health is better since Holy Week, that my chest is not hurting any longer, etc., I will plead with my Director to let me follow the attraction that pulls me strongly to lead a penitential life. I believe it would be to go against the spirit of God to try to resist this any longer, on the pretext that my health needs attention.

I must do penance because I am a very great sinner, I must do penance to draw upon myself and those under my direction the blessings of the Lord, to keep me in the spirit of compunction, etc., to give others an example of mortification, to offer God some feeble compensation for the penance due to the sins of those I reconciled without requiring of them a satisfaction in proportion to their crimes. Finally, a thousand other reasons aside, to subdue my body in this happy servitude which should bring it into subjection to the spirit, etc.

This penance should consist in the first place in the interior mortification of the will by obliging it to conform itself in everything to God’s good pleasure, cost what it will to that rebel who is ever casting about for the opportunity to evade it. So, when some unforeseen accident or, which amounts to the same thing, man’s malice places some obstacle to my conscientious plans, calumniates my intentions, etc., my will - perceiving in these obstacles, persecutions, God’s permission, - after I have done everything prudence and wisdom demand for success - this will will peacefully submit and be quiet, without me permitting myself the least murmur, nor the least recrimination.[[2]](#footnote-2)

I will be on guard against my natural vivacity, and I will do everything on my part to stifle the indignation that certain types of behaviour arouse in me which wound my sensitivity or are repugnant to natural equity, of which the Lord has given me a heightened sense. Mortification shall be all the more meritorious therefrom.

If I must be vigilant over feelings which do not emanate from an evil source, all the more must I repress those that find their source in pride or some other insufficiently curbed passions so, when someone treats me with indifference, is lacking in the respect I might think, in worldly terms, to be my due, even if it extends to insulting behaviour, etc., it is essential, indispensable, that I endure it meekly. It would be desirable if it actually became an occasion for rejoicing. It is not enough to have no rancour, to pardon freely, to forget offences, even to make approaches to those who have been the most insulting towards me, dispositions that are habitual to me and that I follow at the moment of testing; but one must repress too that first movement aroused by pride; one must not yield for a single moment to the indignation that those types of behaviour awaken in the depths of my heart, the scorn they inspire towards those who cause them.

I must also regulate and master more the all-too-feeling and loving affections of my heart; at least I have to succeed in making less display of the feelings that the well-known friendship of a small number of persons inspires me with and who really deserve to be repaid in the same coin. I am speaking here only of men, for as to women, the reserve that the holiness of my state of life demands of me, and the rules of strictest modesty that I am not aware of having ever violated, do not leave me any uneasiness, and in consequence there is no call for rules in this area, otherwise than to continue to act always with the same circumspection and purity of thought and deed as I have done up to the present.

It is not the same where men are concerned; I am too readily effusive with those who love me and since I cannot prevent myself loving them in return, and although to be frank, I love only those who are virtuous and in proportion to what virtues they have, even so I cannot pretend otherwise than that this feeling. although founded on virtue, is too human a thing on my side, too conformed to that natural attraction which has always led me both to bestow love in good measure on people by whom I believe I am loved, and to be happy to inspire and to see others share this feeling which is very highly instinctual in me.

And although this affection is, as it ought to be, subordinated to the love I owe God, am I not stealing from this sovereign Master of hearts, who has given me mine of this temper only to love him the more with, a portion of that perfect love which is due only to him?

What I find reassuring is that I am certain God is the chief bond of that union, since what consoles me the most in my friendships is seeing my friends virtuous, as my great joy is to see them do some fine thing, and also that the mere thought that they could be untrue to themselves and stray the least bit from the good road they are following, would deeply wound me. In that same love it is true I am happy too to see them succeed in their endeavours, earning the esteem and praise of worthy men, etc.

I should add that most of them owe their success to my efforts, and their love of virtue to my solicitude. But never the less, I believe my fault is that of a father who loves his children too much, all things considered, since for the youngest of my friends, I think that is the kind of love I bear towards them.

It would without a doubt be more prefect to love absolutely no one but God; but to reach that state, I believe I would have to love no longer among men.

I believe I must be satisfied with being vigilant over myself so as to love only for God, and in dependence on God, those who are worthy of being loved on account of their virtues and good qualities, paying the strictest attention lest anything too human come in to spoil a feeling that, contained within just limits, can certainly receive the approval of piety, the most scrupulous piety.

The essential thing is to yield nothing to sense or to nature; so I must stay strictly clear of all familiarity, rarely permitting an embrace from anyone, still without carrying this reserve to the point of affectation in anyone’s regard, as there are so many with access to me.

That is enough of that, I have already said too much even as it is.

As to bodily mortifications, I should get permission to fast now and again over and above Friday, to use the discipline as I used to formerly, to wear an iron chain as I notice the hair shirt tires me and in particular greatly heats up my blood when I keep it on all day. Besides, it is a great bother to take it off during the course of the day.

But what I would really like would be to sleep on a pallet still clothed in my soutane. I have always felt great repugnance to taking it off to go to bed. Why should I not do what is prescribed in so many religious orders?

I believe the rigorous observance of our Rule concerning meals can be counted in the list of bodily mortifications. Never eat outside mealtimes, eat only dry bread at breakfast, be satisfied with the frugal fare of the community, taking care never to correct the oversights of the cook when the soup or vegetables are tasteless for want of salt, etc., keep on giving the example I want observed of never permitting oneself to eat outside the house except under obedience at the Archbishop’s table.

**Summary of the resolutions made during the week I spent on retreat in Bonneveine, for health reasons, in July 1816.**

Retreat Resolutions

Aix

[May 1818][[3]](#footnote-3)

In my private life

*Prayer*

Apply myself more to oraison. Never eliminate it, be very slow to postpone it, shorten it but rarely.

On the contrary, try if possible to add to the morning period a private one after dinner before the Blessed Sacrament.

Prepare for each of these prayer periods, and dwell a lot on humility, the spirit of faith and interiority in all I do, on meekness, charity and service of neighbour; on patience in contradictions, perfect dependence on God; on the example of the saints, something that makes a big impression on me and brings me so forcibly to God; on the example I am bound to give others, the account God will ask of me for the regularity and fervour that I do not win by my example; on mistrust of self, my virtues - I haven’t any - my lights - they are very short-lived; on trust in God - it should be boundless, on abandonment to his way and spirit; on love of the hidden life, the means I must take for my salvation while working for that of others, on purity of heart, freedom of spirit, detachment from creatures.

*Mass*

Keep on saying Mass every day but do not delay in correcting the abuse that has crept into my preparations and thanksgivings.

Too often I judge myself obliged to dispense myself or to shorten them out of charity to neighbour. If it were once in a while, well and good, but it is happening too frequently to be any longer excusable. Outside unforeseen and abnormal situations, I will no longer dispense myself from doing either of these important things on which depends normally the fruit one derives from the holy Sacrifice.

Let my neighbour be patient, if he wishes, but he does not have the right to demand my service at the price of so great a loss to my soul.

I will make my thanksgiving before the Blessed Sacrament after changing into my surplice.

And I will be very attentive not to allow myself to be stopped in the sacristy. It must be established practice not to address me, outside an urgent case, before I have made my thanksgiving; I must stick to my regulation on this matter as well as on the rest. We will get there in the end and be edified.

*Visits to the Blessed Sacrament*

My needs have increased in proportion to my duties, to whom shall I go to perform my responsibilities as I should? To no one else than the divine Master who imposed them on me; so, over and above the visit required by rule to which I will be most faithful, and which I will anticipate if I foresee I will not be able to make it with the community, I will present myself frequently at the feet of J.C., even if it is only for a few moments, but I will never appear in his presence without the greatest respect, even exterior, in such wise that at times the church is empty, both on arrival and on departure, I will prostrate myself face to the ground; I will try to introduce this solid practice to others, etc.

*Divine Office*

I will be more regular as to my Office and say it better. I will do my best to anticipate Matins and Lauds and say them before the Blessed Sacrament. I will never begin without a moment’s recollection to direct my intention and fix my mind. I will say it with more composure, and especially more prayerfully. I will place in my breviary the Ordo page so as not to risk leaving out any part of what is prescribed.

After finishing each part, I will be still for a moment in silence and, in a state of recollection, I will offer this prayer to God; I will briefly examine where I have been lax, abase myself and ask God’s pardon, with a purpose of amendment. I will be watchful to say the Office at the proper times.

*Confession*

I will go to confession at least every eight days, and I will prepare, watch in hand, for 20 minutes at most, not less than a quarter-hour. As to method I will go by the regulation.

*Examination of conscience*

A little more fidelity to my examination of conscience. Without it, it is impossible to keep my accounts in order. The first before dinner, the second at the visit to the Blessed Sacrament, the third, in the evening, all according to the method in my regulation.

*Actions in general*

In all my actions in general, less impulse, more interiority less anxiety.

*Penance*

So am I reduced to not doing any? Let’s have another try with my Director, at least to sleep on boards on Fridays.

*Retreat*

One day a month, over and above the annual one, i.e., I will use this day, which comes on the first free day of the month, for meditation, examen, and prayer whenever the obligations of my office leave me free.

In my community life

*Community exercises*

Since all outside business ends up in my lap, my plans are often upset, and I find I cannot always follow the community exercises at the time fixed. I must pay particular attention to be absent from these exercises only when it cannot be helped. Cut down on the conversations, speed them up, put them off. Examine myself every day to see if I have been at fault or negligent. Big efforts to make these infractions of the Rules as rare as possible. Far from looking for opportunities, avoid them with the greatest care.

*Silence*

Keep the silence as to time and place, make it my duty to set an example. Break it only by necessity.

With my brothers

*Meekness*

Accord infinite respect to my confreres. Address them in a very meek and forbearing way.

*Tolerance*

Repress absolutely and totally those first movements of impatience, petty acts of bluntness occasioned, it is true, very often by others’ faults, but which all the same should be corrected with very great care. Put up with the faults of others with charity.

*Firmness*

At the same time assume responsibility for picking up on them when necessary and at the right moment. I accuse myself of weakness in this matter, the forbearance I have shown up to now is not of God; it is all too human, and inspired by an all too natural prudence, at least not supernatural enough. Why be afraid of offending. One must act for God and under God. Whatever happens.

*With the congregationists*

Put up more resistance to their attentions, be always amiable and kind towards them. These are the ways I win them over to God, but still avoid too much familiarity.

Scold them rarely and never be brusque with them. Pray much for them. Offer God the good they do. Do a lot of reflection on how to behave with them and on where they are at.

Every day, for them and for the house, say:

*Custodi nos Domine ut pupillam oculi, etc.*

*Visita quaesumus Domine*

*Dignare me laudare te Virgo Sacrata, etc.*

*Defende, et Deus qui in Cruce moriens*

*Angele Die, Gloria Patri.*

I will say these prayers at thanksgiving for Mass.

My rigour as to the house regulation must go to the point of scrupulosity when I can follow it, it is the law, the penance God lays on me.

It must extend to body-care since it must be fit for work.

So I will always retire at ten o’clock. I will take my meals like everybody else. As I am often disturbed, it is absolutely vital there should be certain times in the day when no one may see me.

I see hardly any alternative for this than from 3 to 6:30, the time for spiritual reading, but alas, will I not be often obliged to go out at those times?

In my relations with neighbour, apart from the community.

They must always be subordinate to obligations I have to fulfil as head of the house of the Mission and responsible for youth.

I am primarily my brothers’ servant, and my children’s, then everyone’s.

So I will no longer allow myself to give way to that extreme repugnance that I have to go to the confessional. I will make it an object of special care not to let it be so apparent. Women too have to go to confession and have need of help to work out their salvation. Keep to the days I have fixed, but on those days go with the same joy as to my other exercises, for such is the will of God.

It would perhaps be more perfect to welcome all those ladies who present themselves.

The youth congregation could suffer because I do not attend sufficiently to administration. I will devote to this occupation all the free time left after the congregationists’ confessions on Thursdays.

Mondays I will work on missions.

Tuesdays the temporal affairs of the house, either with the bursar or with people from outside.

Wednesday mornings, women’s confessions.

Thursdays for the confessions and instruction of the youth.

Fridays correspondence.

Saturday mornings, women’s confession. After dinner, confessions of young people.

Sunday mornings, confessions, youth gatherings, church service.

Less severity towards my mother, more considerate to do everything I can not to upset her provided order, regularity, the spirit of mortification do not suffer. I must try to dissuade her from the idea that I want to kill myself.

Supplement to the rules I approved in May 1818 *Every day:*

Over and above what is said opposite, apart from days set aside for the congregation or confessions, I will make myself invisible the whole morning by going to the top room in the house where I am for this retreat, from my Mass until particular examen. I will do the same after dinner for at least two hours. I will try to observe the silence during all these times.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mass  Holy Scripture  Prime, tierce  Breakfast  Sext, None  Theology  Reading, notes etc.  Available in my room  Partic. exam.  Rosary | 6 o’clock  7 “  7:30 “  8 “  8:15 “  10 “  11 “  11:45 “  2 “ | Vespers, compline  Correspondence, Congreg. or house business  Reading, theology notes, etc.  Matins, lauds  Adoration  and spir. reading with the community  When I have to go out I will try to do it after dinner. | 2:15 o’clock  2:30 “  4 “  6 “  6:30 “  7 “ |

*Every week:*

Friday fast

Confession twice

Discipline Friday

*Every month:*

Retreat first free day of the month

*Every year.*-

Retreat of eight or ten days. Day’s retreat before and after each mission.

**To the Pastor at Salernes.[[4]](#footnote-4)**

13:XIII in Oblate Writings

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

Pastor at Salernes

Aix,

June 15, 1818.

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

The funds you have seem sufficient to me since we receive no personal salaries at all and follow to the letter the Master’s words: *Gratis accepistis, gratis datei*[[6]](#footnote-6)It is enough to cover the missionaries’ travelling expenses and that they are given hospitality where the mission takes place. That is the rule of our little Society.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*June 23: a 28-month gap[[7]](#footnote-7)*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

June 18, 1818

Here a lacuna opens up which lasts up to June 18, 1818, when I resolved to recommence a work my tasks 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 so to speak a new form, at least its regulation and administration were considerably improved in the light of experience, and of new helps I had to engage in good works[[8]](#footnote-8). 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 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 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.[[9]](#footnote-9)

**June 18: continuation of the Diary[[10]](#footnote-10)**

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, so to speak, 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 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 sake 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 let's 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 premier section. The Zealots then presented Messrs. Dalmas junior, Carron[[11]](#footnote-11), 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 premier section, presented for reception: Messrs. Alexis, Dalmas senior, Masset, Journu and Father Aubert priest[[12]](#footnote-12) and Mr. Moreau deacon[[13]](#footnote-13). The Council endorsed them all as such. Mr. Marcou, zealot of the second section, presented Messrs. De Goas, Guinet, Bouteuil senior and Bouteuil junior for reception. The Council likewise endorsed this presentation.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*June 21: feast of Saint Aloysius Gonzaga.*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

June 21, 1818

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. Zealots, accompanied 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 bottom 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 to 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 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 besides them. When all were thus in their places, Mr. the 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 of these edifying elect who will be the consolation of the Congregation which finds great promise 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 the 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 in those which they were to occupy among the received among whom they had just been definitively aggregated. 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, pronounced 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.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

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

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

June 25, 1818

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 to your 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 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 co-disciples 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 his 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, 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 survive 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 brought him 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 clock 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 regretfully 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.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

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

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

August 6, 1818

The Council of the Congregation gathered for the approval of the accounts and 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, 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 his 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 whom 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.

**To the Pastor of Barjols[[14]](#footnote-14)**

14:XIII in Oblate Writings

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

Pastor of Barjols

[Aix],

August 20, 1818.

More than fifty pastors are asking insistently for a mission. To be somewhat fair in choosing, I think it necessary to consider the date of the request. However, I am inclined to give you preference. It seems to me that our duty is to rush to where there is the most urgent need.[[15]](#footnote-15) They asked for us at Marseilles;[[16]](#footnote-16) we could expect consolation there, whereas at Barjols we must await only contradictions and difficulty; but we will at least have the happiness of coming to help a good pastor’s solicitude for his lost sheep. If we were to gain from our mission nothing else than having struggled against hell with and under the direction of such a capable veteran as you, we would still have to congratulate ourselves on having done so.

All expenses amount only to frugal meals for the missionaries; we do not receive any salaries at all for our fatigue and work which can be repaid only by the Lord.[[17]](#footnote-17)

**To Madame de Servan at Saint-Remy.[[18]](#footnote-18)**

15:XIII in Oblate Writings

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

Servan Madame de

Aix,

August 20, 1818.

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

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

Somewhere in Holy Scripture it says that whoever receives a prophet, as a prophet, will receive a prophet’s reward;[[19]](#footnote-19) I have always felt that those consoling words should apply with even greater reason to those who furnish ministers with the means of exercising their ministry. They will receive the reward of a minister; the more sublime the ministry, the more its results are of greater significance, the more the work is laborious, the greater will be the reward not only for the minister who zealously fulfills his duties but also for the one who provided the means for him to accomplish the same.

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

Accept...

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*August 23: stern measures against [various congregants]*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

August 23, 1818

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. 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 premier 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”[[20]](#footnote-20), 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.

**To M. Arbaud, Vicar General of Digne.[[21]](#footnote-21)**

16:XIII in Oblate Writings

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

Arbaud

Aix,

August 23, 1818.

Sir,

I have no other desire than to do a little good; thus, if you think that the plan you have thought of[[22]](#footnote-22) might gain some glory for God and contribute to the salvation of souls, I am totally disposed to offer myself for all the arrangements which are compatible with my commitments in this diocese and the duties of my position in our little Society. In matters like this things do not go well by letter. I was undecided whether I should accompany our deacon[[23]](#footnote-23) to his ordination but your letter resolved my uncertainty; I will go with him to Digne, where I will have the honor of seeing you and discussing this matter with you. We will put our ideas together; thus, I will have the double pleasure of renewing your acquaintance,[[24]](#footnote-24) and of showing you my good will in support of your truly untiring zeal.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*August 30: first communion […]*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

August 30, 1818

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.

**To Bishop de Mazenod, appointed to the See of Marseilles, Mission House, place des Carmélites, at Aix, Bouches-du-Rhone.[[25]](#footnote-25)**

17:XIII in Oblate Writings

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

L.J.C.

Mazenod Fortuné de

St-Laurent,

September 4, 1818.

Our trip, very dear uncle, was very agreeable, very happy and not at all tiring. We arrived at St-Paul with enough time to make our adoration at the church, while our dear family[[26]](#footnote-26) took a refreshing walk; we said our rosary walking on the main road while they ate supper and the day after we were already on the road while they were still sleeping, so that they could have said *ego dormio et cor meum vigilat[[27]](#footnote-27)* since they had been very much present and part of our feeble prayers. We arrived at Gréoux at 8 o’clock; I had the joy of saying Holy Mass, and we left again at 11 o’clock; we were only three in the carriage which dropped us off at Allemagne where our horses had been waiting since morning. It was full daylight when we arrived at St-Laurent. Mama came to meet us. I found her in good health.

First of all, our good Moreau[[28]](#footnote-28) wants me to remind you to pray for him to the good Lord; he expects the same service from the community and the congregation; though I assured him that this would not be forgotten he finds it better to take extra precautions. So, you are all well and duly notified: for your part, be assured that he will do the same for you.

We must not neglect our two items of business with M. G[uigou]. It is essential that the ordonnance mention the approval given to our *Statutes and regulations.[[29]](#footnote-29)*

Nathalie[[30]](#footnote-30) was very grateful for your kind remembrance. She is very sensible and will not abuse it. Her father has just come in; both recall your remembrance; our two Fathers[[31]](#footnote-31) and I present our respects and, what is more, I embrace you with all my heart.

Eugene.

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

**To Father Mye.[[32]](#footnote-32)**

31:VI in Oblate Writings

*The Society opens a second house: the sanctuary of Notre Dame du Laus.*

Mye

[Aix]

October, 1818.

We have formed an establishment at Notre Dame du Laus[[33]](#footnote-33) thus bringing ourselves into direct relations with the dioceses of Gap, Digne, Embrun and Sisteron. We have become the guardians of one of the most celebrated shrines of the Blessed Virgin where the good God is pleased to manifest the power that he has granted to this dear Mother of the Mission. More than 20 000 souls flock there every year to renew themselves in spiritual fervour in the shelter of this truly impressive shrine and which inspires one with something indefinable but which marvellously draws one up to God. From there, after having preached penance to these good and faithful people and after having shown them the grandeur and glory of Mary, we will spread throughout the mountains to proclaim the word of God to these simple souls, better disposed to receive this divine seed than those who live around us, corrupted as they are.

**To the Parish Priest of Rougiers.[[34]](#footnote-34)**

18:XIII in Oblate Writings

*They cannot go to Rougiers this year.*

Parish Priest of Rougiers

[Aix],

October 30, 1818.

Alas! How it costs me to refuse you:[[35]](#footnote-35) this year we can scarcely fulfill the promises we made three years ago, and requests have continued to come in since them. Next year, if the Gentlemen Vicars General do not take it on themselves to determine the parishes which should have preference, we will be obliged to cast lots, for there are so many requests and so little means to respond to them. Let’s recommend the matter to God who will perhaps be pleased to send workers to labor in such an abundant harvest that is ripening on all sides.

**To M. Rauzan, Superior General of the Missionaries of France.[[36]](#footnote-36)**

19:XIII in Oblate Writings

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

Rauzan

[Aix,

October 30, 1818].

Sir and dear friend,

We are so happy to be able to lend a hand to your work in our area that we will not hesitate to leave everything and follow you to Marseilles.[[37]](#footnote-37) Because of that we will have to go back on our word to the parish priest where we were to go at the time set for your mission; I will try, however, to have a directive given me by our Vicars General who will certainly not refuse to lend themselves to an arrangement that seems to suit you and which can contribute to the greater glory of God. You can therefore count on us, but we must not hide the fact that we shall be of very feeble help; fortunately, your zeal and talents will supply for our insufficiency. If you are willing, we shall take charge, as we did at Arles,[[38]](#footnote-38) of that part of the city inhabited by the lower classes; thus we will not be going against the Rules of our Institute which require us to devote ourselves to that portion of the flock of Jesus Christ. To tell you now that I feel the sweetest consolation from the realization that I am about to work together with you would be to repeat what you already know, for I hope that you have never had any doubts regarding the sentiments you have able to inspire in me and which I beg you to accept, as well as the respectful attachment with which I am, etc.

**Day’s Retreat, during the community retreat.[[39]](#footnote-39)**

148:XV in Oblate Writings

*Preparation for oblation. The fervour and holiness of his community and the faithful depend on his personal holiness. God’s will is clear Eugene cannot renounce ministering to others and live in solitude. Fear of death. Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Examination of conscience. Resolutions: presence of God, prayer mortification of his sensitivity, etc.*

Retreat notes

Aix

October 30, 1818

On the eve of engaging myself in a great commitment for the rest of my days, I enter into myself to humble myself before God for the small progress I have made in the ways of perfection, bitterly to lament the difficulty I am experiencing in getting out of the habitual state of tepidity I have fallen into since my duty has obliged me to focus my attention on others and I have been almost entirely forgetful of myself.

In the forefront of my mind is the thought of death and the awesome account to be rendered to God for so many graces he has given me and which I have abused and still do so every day.

It is not without fear that I consider the enormous obligations the Lord imposed on me when he assigned me so extensive and important a ministry.

To think of it! on my fidelity in responding to God’s grace, - for this help is always in proportion to needs, - depends perhaps the salvation of a multitude of souls. If I am fervent the community at whose head I am placed will grow in fervour and whole populations will feel the influence of this growth in zeal and love. If on the contrary I am lazy, the community will thereby suffer a great loss, and the people will be the victims, and since it was my duty to bring down on both the former and the latter an infinity of graces of perfection or conversions on the day of judgment they will all rise up against me to ask for an account of the treasure I deprived them of by my fault.

I confess that this thought is so terrifying that I would have been tempted to succumb to discouragement and renounce working for others’ salvation. But I became convinced that this was not the surest approach, since as the Lord has shown me his will both through the voice of superiors and by the successful results with which, notwithstanding so many obstacles and oppositions, he crowned all the works be assigned me, I would not escape the condemnation I fear by fleeing the field and returning to the peace and quiet I yearn for.

So what is the alternative? I must go on entirely renouncing my preferences which would lead me to a life of retreat, devoted principally to study and like pursuits of a solitary life; let me devote myself anew and forever to my neighbour’s service, but with less neglect of myself, let me be more watchful over my inner self, and not let myself get entirely absorbed by works of exterior zeal, i.e., in a word, let me work at one and the same time both for the salvation of others and for my own sanctification.

I have often asked myself, whence the block to my correcting myself, to my improvement? My God, the fault is mine alone, for your grace never ceases to go before me, to stimulate me, and is ever my companion. Lord, make me more docile to following its promptings, more attentive to hearing its inspirations, more faithful in putting into practice the resolutions it dictates. Virgin Mary, my darling Mother, if I invoked you more often, I would not have so much cause for lament. Be my help, O my Mother, by your powerful intercession, to perform all the duties your dear Son has imposed on me in a different way than I have up to now, so that by your help I may find my reward in carrying them out as I should and, after their accomplishment, a greater reward still in heaven whither I beg you to draw me when I am less unworthy of entering in there.

I put the question to myself today, what is it gives me most interior pain?

1. There seems to be within my conscience a certain obscurity which could be a problem for me at the hour of my death. I go to confession often. It seems that although I accuse myself of what matter I have for reproach, and despite that, one would say I have a fear that all my faults, infidelities, etc., stay in my heart and form there a kind of dross that is always weighing me down.

2. I cannot explain why I am afraid of death, whether it is simply the natural horror that the thought of our destruction inspires, or rather whether it is fear that God’s judgment will not be favourable to me. How often I have left the bedside of the sick whom I have visited confounded. That perfect resignation, peaceful assurance with which they saw their end approaching, those holy desires which make them impatient even of the few moments that remain to them to live, all that both astonishes and humiliates me at the same time.

So what is my attachment to life? I simply do not know. It is true I am too fond of creatures, too sensitive to their love for me, that I love them over-much in return for their feelings towards me; even so I recognize that it is not in that lies my fear of death to the point of avoiding thinking deeply about it.

So what is it? I simply do not know, I say again. It is always true that I do not love God enough, for if I loved him more, I would suffer from not being able to possess him. It is true also that I do not often enough raise my thoughts to heaven. I usually stop at, and try to show love for, Jesus Christ dwelling among us in his Sacrament, and I do not leave this place, I do not raise myself up higher; he is there, that is enough for my weakness, - I do not say for my love because, although I would really like to love him, I do not love him much, I love him little. So coarse am I that I do not form for myself any idea of heaven, nor of God. I stop always at Jesus Christ who is there and I make no effort at all to seek him out elsewhere, were it even in his Father’s bosom. That’s where I am at. My God, give me more light. But I do not want to stop loving, blessing, thanking, conversing with Jesus Christ in his Sacrament dwelling in our midst. The rest will be extra, if God wills it, but that I must have, I know my needs, at least that one.

But let me put these ideas aside for a moment. Today I want to dig deeper into the inmost depths of my heart to seek out all my sins, confessed or not, I want to accuse myself of them again with feelings of sincere regret for committing them. Simply, to acknowledge my faults as if I must die this very evening, and everything else that follows. Lord, enlighten me in this search, but especially make me feel my ingratitude, the baneful consequences of my blindness and laxity, convert me, yes, Lord, convert me and give me the grace, so little merited, to persevere until death in your love, and to possess you eternally in heaven.

I will conduct a thorough search for all my faults, accuse myself of them humbly and in confusion, I will ask God to fill me with regret for committing so many sins despite his infinite kindnesses towards me, detest my ingratitude, but then I must not stop there. I will take the greatest care not to fall again into the same faults. To reach this point:

1. I will renew myself in the practice of the exercise of the presence of God that I have forgotten all too often. Being busy is not a valid excuse.

2. I will devote myself to oraison and not let myself be interrupted any more be it for confessing or anything else. I will prepare the subject attentively, and be on the lookout for distractions, etc.

3. Having acknowledged that my heart is for ever reproaching itself for its over-sensitivity to the love shown me by men who have the greatest right to my affection and thanks, I will be ever watchful over myself so as not to yield anything excessive to nature, to go against it even and do battle with it and the attraction that leads it always to reveal in external acts the sensitivity of my over-loving soul. The cost to me is enormous when I bring grief in this way to those who love me and restrain the expression of the feelings which move me and for which I would be even sometimes tempted to pride, but the sacrifice will consequently be all the more meritorious, and God will make himself responsible for compensating me.

4. I will make it a rule never to be disturbed during my thanksgiving, which up to now is happening all too often.

5*.* I will make it an invariable rule to come and visit the Blessed Sacrament in the afternoon or evening independently of the visit prescribed by the Rule.

**Oblation Formula[[40]](#footnote-40)**

149:XV in Oblate Writings

*Vows of chastity, obedience, and perseverance in the society of Missionaries of Provence.*

Oblation formula

Aix,

November 1, 1818

In the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the presence of the Most Holy Trinity, the Blessed Virgin Mary, all the Angels and all the Saints, all my brothers here assembled, I, Charles Joseph Eugene de Mazenod, profess, promise to God and vow perpetual chastity and obedience; I swear and likewise vow to persevere until death in the holy institute and society of the Missionaries known as Missionaries of Provence. So help me God.

Eugene de Mazenod missionary priest

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*November 1: Master Leblanc, zealot.*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

November 1, 1818

As Mr. Marcou, a zealot of the third section, has entered the clerical state, Master 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[[41]](#footnote-41). In the interval between that of Barjols and that of Remollon in the Dauphiné, the Congregation met for nominations of dignitaries […]. The Council took note that the tolerance it had shown towards some young congregants had not lead to their improvement and expelled those named - Couteron, Isnard, Guibert and François Bougarel.

**To Father Tempier at Aix.[[42]](#footnote-42)**

32:VI in Oblate Writings

*Opening of the mission. The Founder suffers from loss of voice and can no longer preach.*

Tempier

Barjols,

November 10, 1818.

I am decidedly immobilized, my dear friend; my wretched chest absolutely refuses to render service and I have the sorrow of not being able to force this carcass to fulfil its functions. it is mulish and when I want to force it to preach, it refuses to speak; if I do not wish to become dumb, I must needs humour its caprice and remain a spectator and simply listen to the good things that the others say.[[43]](#footnote-43)

You realize how diverting that can be in a mission and especially in a mission like this one when the church is not big enough to contain those who wish to profit therefrom. One must be patient, since the good God wishes this to be so.

Our journey has been a happy one; only, in my opinion, it was not apostolic enough. In future, we must take precautions not to be treated so delicately and so dearly.

Our reception seemed like a triumphant march. Vespers had finished when we arrived; the whole population rushed pell-mell to meet us before the procession started. The principal townspeople, the mayor and his colleagues in full dress followed the clergy.

When we arrived at the church, we found it crammed and as many people remained outside as there were inside. Unfortunately too much had been said to me about the church being unresonant, which is untrue. On seeing this immense crowd, I overstrained my voice in my opening discourse, which I made in French. I strained it again in the announcements in Provençal which I prolonged still more because I had spoken French in the discourse. The result of all that is that I cannot preach any more. I gave the announcements yesterday evening quite softly without in the least sounding forth; I was heard well enough because of the great silence; but, as for preaching, I must not think of it.

In the meantime, the root juices[[44]](#footnote-44) flow and the barley water and all the rest of it. Both my body and mind are sick of it.

**To Father Tempier at Aix.[[45]](#footnote-45)**

33:VI in Oblate Writings

*Confessions during the mission.*

Tempier

[Barjols,

November 11-13, 1818].[[46]](#footnote-46)

Dear friend,

I was able yesterday evening to give the important announcement about the confessionals. I write you this so that you will not worry. All is going marvellously well here. I am now letting the others speak but I insist on hearing confessions because many of the people are inclined to come to me.

Take care of yourself so as not to become a crock similar to what I am. Adieu.

**To Father Tempier at Aix.[[47]](#footnote-47)**

34:VI in Oblate Writings

*Confessions. The Founder only gives announcements because of his hoarseness.*

Tempier

[Barjols,

November 14-15, 1818].

Here we are in the confessional, without stirring, from morning until evening.

The men came flocking at the firstannouncement and God knows they needed to do so! What we have here, for them and the women alike, are (lapses) of thirty, forty and fifty years. People are astonished at the success of the mission. They are kind enough to accept the little that I give. I hold on to the announcements which, in conscience, can only be given by myself. They are so attentive, the silence they keep is so great, that they hear me everywhere although I speak in a low voice. Also I am better; I gulp down goat’s milk, donkey’s milk and fresh eggs. That does me good.

**To Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod at Aix.[[48]](#footnote-48)**

20:XIII in Oblate Writings

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

Mazenod Fortuné de

Barjols[[49]](#footnote-49)

November 22, 1818.

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

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

Farewell, I embrace you.

**To Brother Honorat at Aix.[[50]](#footnote-50)**

35:VI in Oblate Writings

*He can receive the habit from the hands of Father Tempier.*

Honorat

Barjols,

End of November, 1818.

What would you say, my dear friend, if I did not reply to the urgent letter you have written to me. It is too bad that the occupations which absorb us permit me to say only two words of thanks for your devotedness which touches me greatly. I am vexed at delaying the happiness for which you long by prolonging my stay in this city but if you knew all that the good God is doing here through our ministry, you would make us remain still longer. If your holy desires cannot bear to wait, you can receive the habit from the hands of M. Tempier. I consent very readily.

Adieu, very dear friend, I embrace you.

**To Father Tempier at Aix.[[51]](#footnote-51)**

36:VI in Oblate Writings

*Ceremony at the cemetery.*

Tempier

[Barjols]

End of November, 1818.

I cannot enter into details about what is happening here. The work is ever increasing each day. We are back from the cemetery. There were as many men as women. The weather was splendid. In full voice, sobs and, I hope, compunction.

Adieu, pray for me. All goes well but I miss you. Let us offer to God this sacrifice.

**To Father Tempier at Aix.[[52]](#footnote-52)**

37:VI in Oblate Writings

*Father de Mazenod only gives announcements and hears confessions.*

Tempier

[Barjols]

December, 1818,

My health is better, I am sincere in telling you this. So I beg you to give me a little more scope. The announcements have not tired me, nor has the confessional, which is besieged. I confess only at the time of the evening instruction (that is to say, eight o’clock) the people who wait from three o’clock in the morning and no one complains. The trades-people set the example and up until now, I have been their man; this is not what interests me most but I cannot decline the *laborem*

As for the announcements, they are indispensable; they have more effect than all the rest... So I hope you will leave me free to give them and all the more because, given the situation, it seems necessary. Yesterday evening I abstained from giving them and they were displeased. You know I twine things together[[53]](#footnote-53) somewhat. This way of going into matters has pleased them extraordinarily here. Do not think I preen myself because of it. I am affected only by the grief of seeing myself unable to do more.

**To Bishop Fortune de Mazenod at Aix.[[54]](#footnote-54)**

21:XIII in Oblate Writings

*Greetings. Success of the mission.*

Mazenod Fortuné de

Barjols,

December 9, 1818.

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

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

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

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

December 25, 1818

Reception of Messrs. Touche[[55]](#footnote-55), priest, Delmas, cleric, Anselme, judge of the Court, Lecointe, law student, Christine and Giraud. Masters Castellas[[56]](#footnote-56), Mouans, Honarat, 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[[57]](#footnote-57), 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 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.

**Gap**

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 me 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[[58]](#footnote-58). I know from the necrology that Irenée Bouteuil died on May 5, 1819, Paulin Castellas 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 meetings that come first time-wise[[59]](#footnote-59).

**Evangelical Poverty.[[60]](#footnote-60)**

150:XV in Oblate Writings

*Meaning of evangelical poverty according to St. Clement of Alexandria; demands of religious poverty; some saintly examples.*

Notes on evangelical poverty

Aix

[1818-1821].[[61]](#footnote-61)

It is more important than many realize to have exact and sensible ideas, to examine carefully propositions that have more than one sense, reflect on a passage to ascertain the author’s intention above all when it is a question of a precept to be observed or a counsel to follow, so as not to fall into the mistake St. Paul warns us about of following more the letter that kills than the spirit that gives life. Scorn or desire for riches has often been the subject of my conversations with certain of my acquaintances and every time my opinions on the topic have been not just different from but entirely opposed to theirs. The only basis for their continual opposition were certain texts from the Gospel which I held should be understood in a sense different from that which they present at first to the mind. I remember citing them in proof of my position that one had often to rise above the letter (clearly when the Church or tradition authorize it), the passage from the Gospel where it says to hate your father, for certainly J.C. did not mean us to hate our father; so one has to look for another meaning.

But since it often happens that the best of arguments make little impression when they are not put forward by some respectable authority, which should not be the case, I find very apt the treatment of this same topic by Father Fleury in his 8th Discourse on Church History and I make use of it to convince those who will not yield before the evidence:

“This would be the place, he says (P. XIII, t. XX.), to treat in depth the question of evangelical poverty, and we could not in this research follow a better guide than St. Clement of Alexandria, who was taught by the Disciples of the Apostles. He wrote a tract on this question: Who is the rich man who will be saved? in which he reasons in this fashion (combf. auct. bibl. P P. p. 163). Riches are in themselves neutral, like strength and bodily beauty, they are instruments that can be used well or ill, and a kind of property. Temporal goods, the abundance of which constitutes riches, are the necessary material for many of the good works prescribed by J.C. If he ordered all the faithful to abandon them, he would be contradicting himself; and in fact he gives no such order to Zaccheus (Luke 19:5), he is happy enough that he keeps back a half. Contrary to this, extreme poverty is an evil in itself rather than a good: it is an obstacle to virtue and a source of many violent temptations, injustice, corruption, impudence, laziness, discouragement, despair. This is why Scripture says: Give me neither riches nor poverty (Prov. 30:8). One must not therefore understand crudely the precept to sell all one’s goods, no more than that to hate one’s father. How could J.C. order us to positively hate him, when he is the one who tells us to love even our enemies? He only wants us to understand by this very strong expression that we must not prefer the persons who are most dear to us to God, but leave them when need arises, to join ourselves to him. So when he tells us to renounce riches, he is obliging us only to do battle with the passions that they naturally excite, pride, contempt of the poor, love of sensual pleasures, desire to enrich oneself endlessly (which degenerates into avarice) and other like things. A rich person who uses well his riches and is always ready to lose them like Job, without a murmur, is one truly poor in spirit. Such are the maxims of this great Doctor of the Church’s second century, far above the sophistries of modem scholasticism.”

These ideas of St. Clement on poverty and riches, adopted by Fleury, have always been my own. I have always believed that the anathema laid by J.C. on riches is to be understood only of those who do not possess riches but are possessed by them, who make an idol of their money and place in it all their hopes and who use them only abusively, denying the poor man the help he has a right to demand, and making criminal use of what should be poured into the bosom of the indigent, or...

*Poverty*

A religious should not keep anything without the knowledge of his superior.

St. Ignatius called holy poverty the highway of religion. St. Francis of Assisi, according to the testimony of St. Bonaventure, called it sometimes his mother, sometimes his mistress and queen; he bore it so deeply graven on his heart, that when he was invited to some meal, first he would go and beg some pieces of bread and place them on the table to season his meal with them; he used to say that without the seasoning of poverty he found all food insipid. It is believed that the holy Apostles made a vow of poverty and at their example the first faithful did likewise; selling their goods, they brought the money to the Apostles to have everything in common.

In general poverty is a virtue that brings a person to despise riches and temporal goods as things vain and empty by comparison with supernatural and eternal goods. Poverty so considered befits every Christian since the Gospel forbids one to attach oneself affectively or factually to riches in such a way that those who possess them, if they prefer them to the observance of the commandments, are excluded from the Kingdom of heaven. But religious poverty goes further, for it does not only despise transitory goods but it gives them up as well so as to deprive itself of them even as regards the hope itself of having any in the future, making itself incapable of acquiring any ownership and property by a special vow. In this way it casts off impediments and obstacles to salvation, like a traveller who wishing to journey more quickly lays aside the load which was serving only to slow him down on his journey.

But why does the Sage ask God for the middle state between poverty and riches? I reply that this was the request proportionate to the men of that time, carnal still and earthly under the law of fear, but under the law of grace we do not fear to ask for holy poverty. So the first means to acquire holy religious poverty is a continual and fervent prayer. The second means is to consider attentively Our Lord J.C. as model and reward of poverty. And first as our model in his birth, in his life, and in his death. The stable of Bethlehem - could it be more poor, deprived, bereft of all furniture?...

In his life the work of his hands provided his sustenance and when, in the last three years of his life, he was taken up with preaching, the alms of the faithful sustained him. Isn’t it he who tells the young man who wanted to come and follow him, for fear that the hope of temporal gain were what was attracting him to follow: foxes have their lairs and the birds of heaven their nests, but the son of man does not own a single place to lay down his head. Jesus began his first sermon on the Mount of Beatitudes with poverty: “Blessed are the poor in spirit for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.” He said “is” not “will be” to show that it already belongs to them, having paid the price by the abandonment of everything, like the one who buying some merchandise pays for it while it stays with the seller.[[62]](#footnote-62)

It was for the sake of holy poverty that St. Aloysius Gonzaga was quite unwilling to lend a piece of paper to one of his companions, without having first asked for the superior’s permission; and to practice poverty and obedience the better, was not satisfied with a general permission but asked each time the need arose.

Rinaldo, abbot of the convent of St. Dominic in Bologna, having learnt that a lay brother had taken without permission a piece of woollen cloth to repair his habit, confronted him before the whole chapter, reprimanded him severely, and after imposing a severe penance, like one guilty of larceny, burnt the stolen object. It was likewise for the sake of holy poverty that St. Teresa examined from time to time her cell to see that there was nothing superfluous there and to get rid of it. She added even that every time she kept something unnecessary in her cell it gave rise to many distractions during her prayer.

1. Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post. DM IV-3. This retreat was made at the end of April and first days of May, cf. Eugene to Madame Roux-Bonnecorse, May 2, 1818. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Eugene wrote in the margin: St. Francis Xavier used to say to everybody: *Vince te* *ipsum.* St. Bernard: *Cesset propria voluntas et infernus non erit.* The same saint: *Grande malum propria voluntas, qua fit ut* *bona tua tibi bona non sint.* The same saint: *Unde turbatio nisi quia propriam voluntatem sequimur* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This summary, according to the context of the notes that precede and follow, was probably made during the May 1818 Retreat. Eugene was writing on a smaller sheet of paper but, it seems, with the same fine-nibbed pen. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Yenveux V.31. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The Founder never did go there. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Matt. 10: 8. “Freely you have received, freely give.” [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 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 26, 1818 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 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., comments on this regulation. The new methods 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 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., and J. Pielorz, *Les rapports du Fondateur avec les Curés 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 Bausset 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 preconisation of new bishops. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Yenveux 1, 97 and 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The mission at Barjols was preached from November 8 to December 20, 1818. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. The mission at Marseilles took place only in 1820, from January 2 to February 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. In Yenveux I, 97, these few lines are dated July 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Yenveux VI. 177-178. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Matt. 10: 41 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Romciragi: a word not found in any dictionary. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Rambert I, 281; Rey 1,229; Yenveux V, 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. In a letter of August 16, M. Arbaud had proposed to the Missionaries of Provence that they establish themselves at Laus. One of the arguments he invoked was of a kind to impress Father de Mazenod whose relations with the parish priests of Aix were not getting better: “Besides it seems to me,” said M. Arbaud, “that it is in your interest to have two houses under your direction so that you can make some changes that certain circumstances may demand. It is not something indifferent to have places in two dioceses; thus when the weather is bad in relations with one of the administrations, you can take refuge in the safety of the other.” [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Brother Moreau, from the diocese of Digne, had recently entered the noviciate. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. We don’t know when or where the Founder had met M. Arbaud; no doubt the latter had several times accompanied Bishop Miollis, his bishop, who had several times come to give Confirmation at Aix, his birthplace. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Orig.: Aix. Méjanes library. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. The fellow-Oblates at the Aix house. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Song of Songs 5: 2 “I was sleeping but my heart kept vigil”. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. N.E. Moreau, a novice from April 22 to November 1, 1818, was ordained to the priesthood at Digne on September 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. On November 13, 1818, M. Guigou signed an ordonnance by which he definitively approved the Missionaries of Provence. The other matter concerned Fortuné to whom M. Guigou granted a pension of 1200 francs per year. cf. Fortune to the President, September 3, 1818. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Nathalie de Boisgelin, daughter of Armand and Eugenie de Mazenod. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. The deacon Moreau and the acolyte Suzanne, both novices, whom the Founder here calls *Fathers.* In general, at that time everyone was referred to as *Mister;* at the General Chapter of 1826 they decided to replace *Mister* with *Father;* it was decided at the General Chapter of 1826 that simple Oblates who were not priests, were to be called *Brothers.* [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. REY**,** I, 232. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. The Founder and Father Tempier went to visit Notre Dame du Laus on September 24th. Shortly before they had agreed to serve this shrine and preach missions in the diocese of Digne, in response to the desire of the bishop, Bishop Bienvenu de Miollis, a native of Aix. The first community, however, did not enter the house until January, 1819. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Yenveux V, 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Fathers Deblieu, Touche and Moreau preached a mission at Rougiers from November 14 to December 12, 1819. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Rambert I, 306-307; Yenveux 1. 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. The mission at Marseilles took place from January 2 to February 27, 1820. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. From November 2 to December 16, 1817, Fathers Deblieu and Mie had preached a mission at Arles in collaboration with the Missionaries of France. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post. DM IV-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Orig,: Rome, arch. de la Post. DM IX- I; we still have as well the original oblation formula made November 1, 1824, and which includes the vow of poverty. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Barjols mission:November 8-December 20, 1818; Remollon mission: January 17 - Febraury 14, 1819; Eyguières: February 14 - March 28, 1819. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. RAMBERT, I, 294. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Fortunately the missionaries were numerous: Fathers Deblieu, Maunier, Mye, Marius Aubert and Moreau. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Concoction of roots of various plants, containing starch, gum and liquorice. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. RAMBERT, I, 295. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. This letter and the following are given by Rambert without dates. From the context, they were sent between that of the 10th to Father Tempier and that of the 22nd to Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod. On November 16th, Fortuné wrote to his brother, the president: “Although [Eugene] has already written several times to Abbé Tempier...” [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. RAMBERT, I, 295. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Manuscript copy from Fortuné in his letter of November 26 to the President: Rome, Postulation Archives, Boisgelin Collection. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Mission preached from November 8 to December 20, 1818 by Fathers de Mazenod, Deblieu, Maunier, Mie, Maurius Aubert and Moreau. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. YENVEUX, VIII, 39. Father Yenveux does not indicate to whom this letter was addressed but adds the detail: Barjols, 7 bre, 1818. The mission of Barjols took place from November 8th to December 20th, 1818. We should therefore read “9 bre” instead of “7 bre”. According to the register of admissions to the novitiate, compiled only in 1820, Brother Honorat was the only one to begin his novitiate in the autumn of the year 1818, but he might have been authorized to begin it on October 21st. The context of the letter indicates that it was written when the mission was quite advanced, hence at the end of November. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. RAMBERT, I, 295. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. RAMBERT, I, 295 – 296 [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. The verb used by the Founder is *radouber* which means “to repair”, say a fishing net. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Handwritten copy from Fortuné in his letters of December 9 and 10, 1818 to the President: Rome, Postulation Archives, Boisgelin Collection. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Paulin Castellas (1802-1819). Converted during the Grans mission in 1816, Paulin followed the missionaries as a postulant. He left through sickness in 1819. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. What follows, from December 26 1818 to July 8 1821 was written from September 1821 onwards. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. We have this register: *Minutes des déliberations prises par les divers Conseils de la Congrégation de la Jeunesse Chrétienne d’Aix, 1817-1837,* 118 manuscript pages. APR DM 2b. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Orig.: arch. de la Post. DM IV-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Two undated sheets, written no doubt at different times as the handwriting changes three times. We suggest 1818-1821, when Father de Mazenod introduced vows into the Congregation. They seem to be notes taken while reading. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. The following four lines are written in Italian: *“Gesù Cristo ha cominciato la sua prima predica sul monte della povertà. ‘Beati pauperes spiritu, quoniam ipsorum est’*... *dice ‘est’e non ‘erit’ per dinotare, che loro già appartiene avendone sborsato it prezzo mediante l’abondono di tutti, come chi comprando una mercanzia dona it prezzo abbenchè la roba rimanga presso it venditore.”* [↑](#footnote-ref-62)