**1819**

**To M. Arbaud, Vicar General of Digne.[[1]](#footnote-1)**

22:XIII in Oblate Writings

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

Arbaud

[Aix],

January 1[[2]](#footnote-2) 1819.

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

The parish priest at Barjols tells me that during the past 18 years he had only ten men at Mass..., whereas, during the mission[[3]](#footnote-3) we heard more than 3000 general confessions and those who made the mission before Christmas came to the Holy Table again on New Year’s Day to prove they had made the firm resolution to carry out their Easter duties.

**To the parish priest at Rians[[4]](#footnote-4)**

23:XIII in Oblate Writings

*Regrets not being able to preach a mission at Rians.*

Parish Priest at Rians

[Aix],

January 4, 1819.

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

**To M. Viguier, priest.[[6]](#footnote-6)**

38:VI in Oblate Writings

*Virtues required to be a missionary.*

Viguier

[Aix],

January 6, 1819.

The missionary, being specifically called to the apostolic ministry, should aim at perfection. The Lord destines him to show forth anew, amongst those of his own time, the marvellous things that were done of old by the first preachers of the Gospel. He ought then to walk in their footsteps while being firmly persuaded that the miracles he must do are not the effect of his eloquence but of the grace of the Almighty who will communicate himself through him with all the more abundance if he is more virtuous, more humble, or, to say it all in one word, more holy. So he ought to do everything to arrive at this desirable holiness which is to produce such great effects. What we have found most apt to help us attain thereto is to come as close as we can to the evangelical counsels, faithfully observed by all those who have been employed by Jesus Christ in the great work of the redemption of souls. That is what has resolved us to despise honours and detest riches which are the obstacles which trip up too great a number of priests who thereby render their ministry unfruitful and endanger their salvation. We live in community under a mild Rule which fixes our duties and gives a very great value to the least of our actions. The spirit of charity and of the most perfect brotherhood reigns amongst us. Our ambition is to gain souls for Jesus Christ. All the wealth of the earth cannot satisfy our avarice, we must have heaven or nothing or, to say it better still, we wish to assure ourselves of heaven while earning nothing on earth but to be persecuted by men. If this prospect does not frighten you and if you are firmlyresolved to persevere all your life in our holy Society, come running - our arms and our hearts are open to you and we promise you the same happiness that the Lord deigns to let us enjoy.

The will of God manifests itself in a manner that is evident in your case. One cannot say that the decision concerning yourself was extorted from the Grand Vicars by importunate pleading since you and I had placed our wishes in the keeping of the Lord so that he might communicate his orders to us in due time and place.

**To Bishop Miollis of Digne.[[7]](#footnote-7)**

24:XIII in Oblate Writings

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

Miollis Bishop

[Remollon][[8]](#footnote-8)

February 13, 1819.

I don’t think I can give you any news more consoling than the great success of the mission at Remollon that you had entrusted to me. It was your prayers and pastoral blessing that we received when you passed through Manosque which brought on our work all the graces that resulted in so many conversions. May Your Lordship long enjoy the happiness that this sort of consolation gives to a heart like yours; for our part, may we often be in a position to obtain that kind of happiness for you. For that to happen, however, you must in your goodness be concerned about us and furnish us with the means to action. Up to now you have granted us only one of the most ordinary men[[9]](#footnote-9) from your diocese; nevertheless, we were four priests at Remollon. The diocese of Aix, with fewer men than that of Digne but which has given us eight priests and as many novices, will not accept that we wage war with its soldiers outside of its territory, as long as it does not see a real contingent furnished by the diocese of Digne in this offensive and defensive war alliance between the two dioceses against the forces of evil.

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

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

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

**To Father Tempier at Notre Dame du Laus.[[10]](#footnote-10)**

39:VI in Oblate Writings

*Behaviour while travelling.*

Tempier

[Eyguières],

February 14, 1819.

... Tell Father...[[11]](#footnote-11)to be extremely prudent while travelling; we are surrounded by enemies[[12]](#footnote-12); let him say absolutely nothing, let him pray to God and go to sleep; let him nor wear his cross in plain view...

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

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

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

February 21, 1819

The Council struck off Masters Carpentier and Frochot on the ground of their disedifying behaviour: Master de Laboulie junior suffered the same fate, but out of regard for his father, this decision was not made known to the Congregation in assembly[[13]](#footnote-13).

**To Father Tempier at Notre Dame du Laus.[[14]](#footnote-14)**

40:VI in Oblate Writings

*Prayers for a sick young man.**Recite the Office unhurriedly.*

Tempier

[Aix,

February 22nd, 1819].

I say to the good God during the Holy Sacrifice and during the adoration of the Forty Hours that, if this child[[15]](#footnote-15) were not to persevere in grace, I would not request his cure but the Lord is powerful enough to grant him both things: his cure and perseverance. As you see, I am not timid with the good God; it is at the moment of communion that I permit myself these indiscretions...

... Remember how much importance I give to the Office being said very unhurriedly; I lay it on your conscience because nothing seems more unedifying to me, more incongruous than precipitation in the psalmody. Whether we are in a hurry or not, we must go slowly with the psalms. I reiterate this to you, I much insist on it - it is my duty. Do not hesitate to impose a penance on whomever may infringe this indispensable rule of decency. Maintain in everything a most exact discipline; you are beginning to form a community in regularity[[16]](#footnote-16), do not let abuses creep in...

**To the community at the Mission House, Aix.[[17]](#footnote-17)**

41:VI in Oblate Writings

*Fatigue of the missionaries. Numerous confessions.*

Misionaries at Aix

[Eyguières],

March 7th, 1819.

You are too lazy, my dear friends and beloved brothers. We are nearly at the end of the mission and I can say that I have received practically nothing from you for can I take into account the four lines that my dear brother Moreau wrote to me before ascending the altar? Meanwhile I know nothing of what you are doing or how you are. However it is understandable not to be at ease when this solicitude of mine bears on a hospital such as yours. If you are the sick ones of our company, we have all the appearance of convalescents. Our pale, drawn features, our cracked voices and our languid mien give us quite a remarkable appearance. We pretty well resemble warriors returning from a long, hard battle who painfully drag along their weapons of victory and yet who retain the noble assurance that portends new success at the first onslaught of the enemy.

Our work is endlessly exorbitant and without the least respite. We daily and repeatedly have to send away men who present themselves in as great a number as the women whom we cannot abandon, because their needs are as pressing as those of the men to whom, as you know, we can grant an extra week. So we have to go beyond our strength, we are in the confessional until a quarter to midnight, and at that late hour when we have to go up for something to eat, we are obliged to send people away.

Yet you will hear that the mission is not bearing fruit at Eyguières. This opinion originates it seems from those who are not taking advantage of it because *the noble, high and mighty lords* of Eyguières, that is to say a few dozen bad burghers, do not deign to present themselves to the church to hear us, as long as they are quite indoctrinated by the *Minerve* which they read with avidity and wherein they learn all they are capable of learning because these gentlemen, apparently for good reasons that they whisper about and which they know better than us, are apprehensive of confession and all that it entails. It is nonetheless true that seven[[18]](#footnote-18) priests will have confessed from half past five in the morning until midnight for five weeks an enormous crowd of sinners who would not have budged without the mission, as they admit themselves and as it is easy to believe from the experience of the past, and these seven priests will leave at their departure a great number of penitents full of good will, whom they will not have been able to confess, to the pastor who will direct them in the ways of salvation. Pray that we can finish a task so difficult for the body, but so consoling for souls who have a spark of love for God, and try to be priestly enough.

I write you during the high mass. It is truly a rest for me, for I am happy when I betake myself in spirit into the midst of a family as interesting as ours. Be persuaded that the greatest sacrifice I can offer to the Lord is to be forcefully separated for so long a time, but it is for his greater glory. This thought must impose silence on all outcries of one’s nature, on all affection, on all sentiments, were they still more supernatural still.

Share my letter with my esteemed uncle, whose kindness for you ought to make him, should it be possible, as dear to you as to myself.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*April 13: a banner for the Congregation*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

April 13, 1819

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

**To Father Tempier at Notre Dame du Laus.[[19]](#footnote-19)**

42:VI in Oblate Writings

*Return mission to Barjols, in spite of the opposition**of the Mayor.*

Tempier

[Aix,

April 26th, 1819].

... Such an act[[20]](#footnote-20) could not stop us and we set out. The enthusiasm of the whole grateful population must have been at times quite unpleasant to the small number of ill-wishers who had hatched this plot. M. Guigou had in the meantime written to the Prefect who excused himself on the pretext that he had never given such an order. It is betimes marvellous to see what is happening in this region... If the vast field of the missions give us such great consolation, we have in return a lot of grief to put up with round about us.[[21]](#footnote-21)

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*May 5: death of Irenée Bouteil.*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

May 5 1819

As the languid state into which this young man had fallen became a just cause of alarm to his parents, they summoned him back to Varages, his home town, where he succumbed a few months later to the cruel illness that was visibly consuming him. He gave very good example and was outstanding for gentleness and goodness under every trial. His life was very innocent and his death edified all the people of Varages. If only his brother Marcellin Bouteil had died in his place or at the same time as he. At that time he was living in as Christian a fashion as he, like him he avoided evil companionship, frequented the sacraments like him. Today what a difference! The one is in heaven and the other, led astray by bad company which he refused to avoid despite my earnest remonstrance, wallows in sin and leaves little hope of his return to virtue.

**To Father Tempier at Notre Dame du Laus.[[22]](#footnote-22)**

43:VI in Oblate Writings

*Sorrow over the death of M Peix, parish priest of Gap.*

Tempier

[Aix,

May 19th, 1819].

I could not restrain my tears at the news of the death of M. Peix, parish priest of Gap, so worthy a friend[[23]](#footnote-23). I loved him as truly as you know I can love... but it did not suffice for me to weep over the death of such a good friend; I immediately had a Mass said for him and next Monday we will have a solemn Requiem. I am annoyed that you did not think of having his portrait done which would have been appropriate to have at Notre Dame du Laus.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*May 20: Masters Olivier, Mottet and Miaulan struck off*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

May 20, 1819

The Council struck off Masters Olivier senior, Mottet and Miaulan; at the suggestion of the Director it was decided to have a list drawn up on which would be inscribed the names of all the congregants[[24]](#footnote-24).

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*June 5: death of Paulin Castellas. His eulogy.*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

June 5 1819

This young man, very dissipated in his early childhood, had a conversion following the mission which we gave in Grans, his home town. He received his first communion with sentiments that testified to the efficacious working of grace in his soul, and he never reneged on the good resolutions he made then throughout the course of his life. Very much neglected by his mother, a woman of no judgment, it was he who felt the need in himself of work. The natural good sense with which he was endowed led him to prefer the salutary discipline of a house of formation to the complete freedom he enjoyed at home, and he made use of the dominion his mother had allowed him to have over her to insist that she let him enter the Mission where there was a great willingness to support his good will by supplying him the means to teach himself. It is beyond telling how this lovable child grew in esteem by his piety, docility, commitment and all the good qualities that he drew on without effort. He grew in virtue before our very eyes and was beginning to hold out wonderful promise when a coughing of blood came to warn us about his health. Remedies of every kind were lavished on him, but in vain. He withered from then on to such a degree as to remove all hope of a cure. His mother wanted to try if his native air would restore his health, but on the contrary his state worsened more rapidly than ever, and it was no longer possible to hide the fact that his end was drawing near. Far from being frightened by this news, he sincerely rejoiced over it and said in this regard some very moving things to his parish priest, to whom we had commended him. Again he received the sacraments that had several times been given him before leaving Aix. His last days were spent wholly in speaking of the good God. At the moment of death, quite conscious, addressing himself to the Parish Priest who was by his side, he cried out in ecstasy: do you not see heaven open before us? Oh, how beautiful it is! How beautiful it is! Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, oh, how beautiful it is! And stretching his arms towards these objects present to his sight, he breathed his last or rather his beautiful soul flew off to the heaven that had come close to him and of which I have no doubt he took possession at that very instant. What a beautiful death! Compare it with the deaths of all those who have been taken from this world after abandoning the Congregation. They have all died yes, up to the present they have all died in their sins!!! What a terrible judgment of God!! Who will dare say it is not deserved!…

**To Count Felix d’Albertas.[[25]](#footnote-25)**

25:XIII in Oblate Writings

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

d’Albertas

Aix,

June 21, 1819.

I am embarrassed, dear Felix, every time you address yourself to me for advice on matters that you understand as well or much better than I: you know that two years ago your good mind knew and anticipated the judgment that you wanted me to give.[[26]](#footnote-26) I assure you that it cost me to be obliged to give a decision that was not favorable to your interests, but you knew how to soften the somewhat painful position that you put me in by the noble sentiments you were careful to show me. I did not need this new proof of your loyalty to appreciate your worth. I really don’t know why I am telling you this, but I feel some pleasure in having you read my thought. It seems that I am afraid that you don’t sufficiently know how much love I bear you and the case I make for you. Forgive me this little aside: it compensates for what I cannot express when I am nearer to you and cannot reach you …[[27]](#footnote-27)

Your Bonald[[28]](#footnote-28) has done infinite good to my young philosophers, who, even though Christian, are not any less exposed to the contagion of this poisonous air that corrupts everything around us. Whenever you receive anything good along that line, political, moral, religious, once you have read it and had others read and reread it, pass it on to me; you will be doing great good. I am ever more dismayed at the tendency of all young heads to adopt all the systems that favor license. Should we then be surprised that so many old beards, even some among your class and mine, haven’t more sense, in spite of their experience. And so, if it were not for the duties of my vocation, I would become a misanthrope to the point of hiding myself in solitude and concern myself only with eternity. I am losing my life’s tranquillity in trying to do some good for people. Have pity on me, for from morning to night, I am obliged to sacrifice my tastes and inclinations to what I believe to be my duty.

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

E. de Mazenod

**To Father Tempier at Notre Dame du Laus.[[29]](#footnote-29)**

44:VI in Oblate Writings

*Procession on the Feast of the Sacred Heart.*

Tempier

[Aix,

June 25th, 1819].

I went to invite the pastor of...[[30]](#footnote-30) to carry the Blessed Sacrament during the procession of the Sacred Heart. He did not think he could acquiesce to this gesture because as he was in litigation with me and the case being in process, it would be a set-back for the body of the Pastors. I insisted on proving to him that it was not a simple formality on my part but a sincere desire to see him do something which seemed to me fitting. Our conversation lasted more than two hours and embraced all the contested points, not without supernatural moderation on the part of your very humble servant who could cite this interview as proof of the serenity of his mind on such occasions. One can both be lively and in control of himself, thanks to the peace of God, I mean. Monsieur the Grand Vicar Guigou, unafraid of the Pastors’ corporation, accepted as an honour and a pleasure to carry the Blessed Sacrament who as usual stayed in control for although for some days an impetuous wind prevailed which lasted until the day after the procession, He who commands the tempest relegated the Mistral to the rooftops and the upper part of the trees of the Cours, there raising a frightful disturbance while our candles remained lit in our hands.

The bell is ringing for the vespers of the last day of the Octave of the Sacred Heart so I must go. Adieu.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*June 26: reception[…]*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

June 26 1819

Master Bernard[[31]](#footnote-31) received definitively. Masters de Saboulin, Bouvier senior and Sumien admitted as probationer members […]

**To Father Tempier at Notre Dame du Laus.[[32]](#footnote-32)**

45:VI in Oblate Writings

*Helpfulness of the missionaries of Notre Dame du Laus on the occasion of the fire at St. Etienne.*

Tempier

[Aix,

June 29th, 1819].

If only I had been with you on the day of your noble behaviour at Saint-Etienne.[[33]](#footnote-33) From here, I behold you in the midst of the flames giving aid everywhere and intelligently which must have saved a great number of persons. I am not surprised that people do not cease to speak of this splendid devotedness. Four missionaries[[34]](#footnote-34) engaged in such an exercise of charity preach better still than in the pulpit, at least they are better understood.

**To Madame Roux-Bonnecorse at Marseilles.[[35]](#footnote-35)**

26:XIII in Oblate Writings

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

L.J.C.

Roux-Bonnecorse

Aix,

July 27, 1819.

Madame,

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

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

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

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

**To Marius Aubert.[[36]](#footnote-36)**

46:VI in Oblate Writings

*Inconstancy of Marius Aubert.*

Aubert Marius

[Aix,

October 6th, 1819].

My dear friend, I have already warned you about your inconstancy which consists in finding yourself ill at ease anywhere, in always seeking something better that you will never find, of today having urges to go back to the village while several months ago you had those which made you pine for the house...

**To Adolphe Tavernier, in La Bégude.[[37]](#footnote-37)**

151:XV in Oblate Writings

*Father de Mazenod is a slave in Aix: a visit that tests his patience. Love of nature.*

Tavernier

Aix,

October 12, 1819

You may extol, my dear Adolf, at your leisure the freedom of the countryside. I could enlarge much longer on the bondage of the town. Enjoy in peace the charming lot that is yours, but allow me to lament all the harshness of that which has fallen to me. So do not look for the smiling images which fill your imagination and which flow so to speak from your pen; I have only what is sombre and boring to give you, so much so it would be better to be silent. Why make people miserable? Yesterday, for example, I was going over your little letter again and was about to answer it when boredom personified came and ensconced himself in my presence rigged out in all his finery; he sat down on my poor sofa as if on his throne, and full of his brand of witticism he made himself so comfortable that he did not budge until nine o’clock. Blessed by that bell which came, alas, too late to rescue me from his terrible blows. Indeed, had it been permissible to let its natural effect to blossom from the cause, I would have fallen fast asleep at the very feet of the throne where I was slumped. But no: my grim task was to do violence to nature and entertain the personage who was slowly killing me. Actually, dear Adolf, is that not worth all the murmuring of your streams, the brilliant beauty of your stars, your fields, trees and birds, and even the beautiful evening under your friendly moon. You should have seen me, your letter in hand as a kind of placet, casting glances at it from time to time as if to beg as a favour that some allowance be made for its just entreaties. “Request denied,” replied the barbarian pitilessly, “To your task, O man of law, say something amusing.”

But let us leave his boring majesty and go back to your letter. Be sure of this, I am annoyed that I liked it; I cannot forgive myself for finding it charming; I must be careful not to speak, like other people; and now I regret those three lines which are lacking in common sense. There is nowhere, in fact, more genial than the countryside, richer than nature, especially when the soul, at once religious and sensitive, finds there, beneath each leaf and on every atom’s wing the great name of the Eternal One. And the Christian, going deeper, emerges from this kind of ravishment to yield himself to transports of love and thanksgiving, at the thought of this All Powerful God who created all these marvels, playfully, *ludens in orbe terrarum,* who draws near to man, man who is confounded and lost at the mere contemplation of the least of his works, to speak with him, instruct, direct him, join himself to him in the intimacy of the most incomprehensible of loves, to dissolve him as it were in his being, and lift him up to share his glory. God, God, and for the most part men live without thinking of this! Adolf, my Adolf, let us bless the Lord for giving us a heart able to understand and especially to perceive him.

Goodbye, dear Adolf, I love you in God with all my soul. Please convey my respects to your mother and sisters.

**To Father Tempier at Rognac.[[38]](#footnote-38)**

47:VI in Oblate Writings

*Exhortation to endure the destitution and poverty found at Rognac.*

Tempier

[Aix]

November 16th, 1819.

God be praised, my dear friends and true apostles! My heart is afflicted by your situation but rejoices at the same time to see you sharing the fate of our first fathers, disciples of the Cross.

Oh! how right you seem to me upon your pile of straw and how much your fare, which is more than frugal, excites my appetite! This to my mind is the first time we have had what we should. Finish the work while accepting nothing from anyone without paying for it. For once you will not be disowned by our holy patron, Saint Liguori. I dare to speak to you in this way because I envy your position and, were it only I who had to decide, I would share it[[39]](#footnote-39). I beg you nonetheless not to deprive yourselves of what is necessary. Have you brought sugar with you? Father Mye, who has such a strong cold, will not be able to go without it.

**To Father Tempier at Rognac.[[40]](#footnote-40)**

48:VI in Oblate Writings

*Sparse attendance of the faithful al the exercises of the mission. Words of encouragement*

Tempier

[Aix]

November 22nd1819. [[41]](#footnote-41)

Why so discouraged, dear friend, why the complaints? You do not realize enough all the advantages of your position. You naturally suffer, so much the better. Besides you are only beginning, you were not expected, you arrived when work is in full swing, people are caught up. Pray, preach, knock on the door, do not be discouraged[[42]](#footnote-42). Surely other set-backs have happened to our saintly models. If you read the advice of the Blessed Alphonse you would see that we must expect indifference from people, you would be surprised what could happen to saints of his kind and to those whom he directed when obliged to take such extraordinary means to get Christians to consent to come and listen to them. I have seen people of the region who have told me that practically everybody goes to your instructions; you must therefore appeal to God to make your words penetrate into hearts that are hardened but still accessible to holy truths. I do not disapprove your making your mission last only three weeks if this time seems sufficient to you to finish your task but take care that our good Father Mye does not suffer from the plan to leave him until Christmas. You know his zeal, he will want to continue preaching even with the cold which weakens him. This would be dangerous. I beg you to consider the strength of this dear brother and not his good will.

Adieu, all of you my dears, believe that I am very vexed to see you campaigning and me stagnating in my back-water. I have no time to breathe but my work has notthe worth of yours, however fruitless you thinkit is which is not what I think it is. We shall see, when it comes to putting the grain in thebarn who will be right... We pray for you and do not cease to love you with all our heart.

At Rougiers[[43]](#footnote-43) all goes well. The Sub-Prefect has written to the Mayor not to trouble the missionaries in the exercise of their ministry...

**To Father Tempier at Rognac.[[44]](#footnote-44)**

49:VI in Oblate Writings

*Do not worry over the slight success of the mission.*

Tempier

[Aix]

November 27th, 1819.

I am sorry, without doubt, my dear brother, that you have so little consolation at Rognac but as I am certain that your merit in the eyes of God is only the greater for that, I cannot feel too bad about it.

It is not we who chose the place and the time. It was the business of the good God. He views things better than we. So do not be disquieted any more and, when you come back, do not yield too much to your displeasure. Be very prudent in your descriptions.

The demon has not been very powerful at Rougiers according to what they report. There is not a single man left in the region who is not benefiting from the mission. The pastor who is a good priest is astonished over it.

**To Archbishop de Bausset of Aix.[[45]](#footnote-45)**

27:XIII in Oblate Writings

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

Bausset Bishop de

Aix,

December 16, 1819.

Your Grace,

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

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

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

From that time on I could reply to the gentlemen de Janson and Rauzan that it was impossible for me to accede to their invitation because the needs of my own diocese were claiming my services. With some zealous companions I was going to start immediately that same ministry to which they had wanted to recruit me, ministry among the poor abandoned souls all around us. These gentlemen made another attempt, for they thought that I could be of some use to their society. They have never given up asking me to join them, always presenting very good reasons. These reasons do not answer my main argument which is based on the extreme needs of a diocese destitute of priests and full of unlettered poor people who cannot be helped except by missionaries from their own people, who speak the same language and, if need be, are ready to return to them more than once a year to solidify the work of their conversion. So, I persisted in my first plan.

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

I took it upon myself to acquire at my own expense the locale which was to serve as a dwelling place for the new community. But the diocese would have to rightfully furnish the missionaries’ upkeep. It was determined that this payment would be taken from vacant rectories of vicarial posts, in default of other means, which could have been found in the funds from the revenue of chairs of which the surplus could not have been more fittingly used. The Vicars General preferred to promise me what the deceased M. de Cicé called a *custodi nos* for each missionary, that is, the salary destined for the rector of a vacant parish: but I don’t know by what chance, that arrangement was never carried out. I attribute this oversight to the conviction that the Vicars General possibly entertained that I could find the means to support the missionaries in some other way and that it would be that much of a saving for the diocese. At least I thought I understood it that way, and far from taking this in bad humor, I smiled at the thought and to reply to the secret intention that I attributed to them, I did in fact do all that I could to assist the diocese. But now our resources are all dried up; and it is not just now that such is the case. And how could it be otherwise? For the five years that we have been established, we have between all of us taken only 1162 francs from the diocese which, divided by and five and shared out to seven, the number of missionaries, comes to an annual income of thirty-three francs and a few pennies for each missionary, the only resource they have to feed and clothe themselves. I don’t think I am offending my co-workers when I say that they are as rich in virtue as they are poor in the goods of fortune. So, up to now I have been obliged to supplement what has not been done for them, whether by my own special means, or by the help I have procured in contributions from a very limited number of people of good will. These resources have dried up at the same time. The expenses of the establishment which cost me more than twenty thousand francs that I’ve not yet been able to finish paying, make it impossible for me to supply any longer from my own account the upkeep and food for my co-workers. My friends on their part have become tired in seeing no end to our needs; so the missionaries find themselves at the point of having nothing more to live on. Consequently, I am in the absolute necessity of having recourse to the Archbishop’s kindness, an Archbishop who is too just to allow priests who sacrifice themselves in such a demanding ministry as preaching missions, priests who are always ready to move quickly at all times and at the least sign to that place where obedience shows us that some good is to be done, to suffer from not having the necessities of life. They are certainly far removed from wanting to rake in money; and so I’m asking for them only a sufficient salary to pay for their food and upkeep which I estimate to be four hundred francs per person.[[46]](#footnote-46)

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

I have the honor of being, etc.

1. Yenveux VIII, 12 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Yenveux wrote: January 1st. This letter may have been started on January 1, but the last lines must be from at least the 3, the date of Father Tempier’s departure for N.-D. du Laus; in the meanwhile the Founder must have received a letter from Barjols, written on January 1 or 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The mission had closed on December 20, 1818. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Yenveux V, 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The Founder could not give the mission at Rians until November 11 to December 20, 1822. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. YENVEUX**,** IV, 132: VIII, 11-12. Joseph Augustin Viguier, born at Manosque, diocese of Digne, November 19th, 1790, entered at Notre Dame du Laus as postulant, November 10th, 1820. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Yenveux III, 158. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The mission at Remollon in the Upper Alps was preached from January 12 to February 14, 1819. According to a custom established very early by the Founder, the superior of the mission was to send a report to the Ordinary of the place right after each mission. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. In February 1819, there were two priests from the diocese of Digne in the Institute: Father Moreau, an Oblate since November 1, 1818, and Touche, still a novice, but who went along with the Fathers on mission. Father Moreau was born in the diocese of Aix but belonged to the diocese of Digne, cf. M. Arbaud to Mazenod, August 16, 1818. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. REY, I, 238. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. This concerns either Father Touche or Father Marius Aubert. According to Father Simonin *(Missions O.M.I,* 1897, p. 105) only Father Touche went to Eyguières. But according to Fortuné de Mazenod, Touche and Aubert were both expected there in order to help Fathers Mye and Maunier and take the place of the superior who had to go and spend a week at Aix (Fortuné to the President, February 4th and 14th). On February 24th, Fortuné again states that “the mission of Eyguières” has been reinforced with Aubert and Touche. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The new ministry Dessales-Decazes, installed on December 29th, 1818, had shown itself little favourable to the missions. On January 21st, 1819, it had dismissed sixty Prefects and Sub-Prefects for being too devoted to the King and to religion, amongst whom was the Sub-Prefect of Bouches-du-Rhône, M. de Foresta, a friend of the Founder. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. J. B. Gustave (1800-1867) was deputy from 1833 to 1848. He was the son of E. J. Balthazar de Laboulie (1779-1856), Advocate General at the Court of Aix in 1816, Procurator General in 1821, friend of Father de Mazenod and protector of the Missionaries of Provence. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. YENVEUX, 11, 134; IV, 80. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. YENVEUX (IV, 80) who cites this excerpt under date of February 22nd, 1819, says “a young child of the family” of Eugene was gravely ill. He is referring to his spiritual family, that is to say, to a young man of the Youth Sodality. None of the Boisgelin children were then ill. Fortuné would have mentioned it to his brother in his almost daily correspondence that we have in our keeping. In the Journal of the Youth Sodality, which however relates few events in the year 1819, there is found mention of Irénée Bouteuil and Paulin Castellas who died on May 5th and June 5th respectively, both after several months of illness. The latter even lived at the mission house. The remainder of the letter corresponds with events. Eugene who was present at the mission of Eyguières came to Aix from the 17th to the 25th of February for the Forty Hours (February 21st-23rd) held on the occasion of the Carnival. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. This directive seems quite strange at this date, at which Yenveux puts it (II, 134). At Notre Dame du Laus, on February 22nd, 1819, it seems there was only Father Tempier with Brother Bourrelier and a brother carpenter. It was however the beginning of a community since they had entered in January and in the course of the summer several Fathers came to help Father Tempier during the season of pilgrimages. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Excerpt copied by Fortuné de Mazenod in his letter to the President, March 10th, 1819. Rome. arch. de la Post., Fonds Boisgelin. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Mazenod, Deblieu, Mye, Touche, Aubert M., le Curé, etc.? *Missions O.M.I.,* 1955, p.556; Fortuné to the President February 24th, 1819. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. REY, I, 238. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. After the mission of Barjols, several citizens and even the Sub-Prefect of Embrun had denounced the missionaries to the Minister of the Interior. The Mayor had thought he should forbid Father de Mazenod the return mission unless he was provided with the authorization of the Prefect (REY, I, 238). Father de Mazenod left on April 15th with Fathers Maunier and Deblieu (Fortuné to the President, April 12th). He returned on the 20th and was replaced at Barjols by Father Moreau (Fortuné to the President, April 12th, 20th and 22nd). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. This grief came principally from disappointment with several Sodalists and from the opposition of the parish priests of Aix. Cf: REY, I, 238; Journal of the Youth Sodality, 1818-1821. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. YENVEUX, VI, 174. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. M. Peix had bought and restored the buildings of the Sanctuary with money subscribed by 76 priests of Gap. He fell ill in April. Fr. Tempier assisted him until the moment of his death which occurred on May 17th. Cf: *Missions O.M.I.,* 1897, pp. 94-95. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. We do not have in the archives a complete list of the congregants. Father Joseph Pielorz, putting together all the names found in the papers of the Youth Congregation, has drawn up a list of nearly 300 names, cf. J. Pielorz, *L’abbé de Mazenod et les Curés d’Aix*, Rome, 1953, 3 vol. typed mss. This list, which goes from 1813 to 1822 is found in vol. III, pp. 658-696. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Orig.: Aix, Albertas Archives. Felix d’Albertas (1789-1872) was Eugene de Mazenod’ s friend. His father had been President of the Court of Accounts with Charles Antoine, the Founder’s father. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Eugene’s letter of July 6,1817 had been sent to Gémenos where the Albertas had a chateau. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. There follows a paragraph, that we omit here, about a case of conscience concerning a financial matter. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Viscount Louis de Bonald (1754-1840), a writer and defender of monarchical and Catholic principles, published several works among which is *Recherches philosophiques sur les premiers objects des connaissances morales* [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. REY, I, 239. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. The chapel of the mission house was under the jurisdiction of the parish of St. Jean. The Founder had to invite the parish priest, M. Christine, who took part in the procession in 1818. Father de Mazenod was in good relations with M. Honorat, rector of the Cathedral, who sent his nephew to the mission. Cf. J. PIELORZ, *Rapports avec les curés d’Aix in Etudes Oblates,* t. 20 (1961), pp. 46-48. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Marius André Barthélemy Bernard (1802-1875) entered the novitiate of the Mission on November 1, 1822, and made his oblation on November 4, 1823. Ordained priest in 1825, he left a short time later and exercised his ministry in the diocese of Aix. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. REY, I, 239. In the pages following, 240-241, Father Rey cites two other brief excerpts from letters of the Founder to Father Tempier: “Could I but make a journey to Rome; I would thus get away from the continual annoyances of such a day” (July 2nd, 1819). “Ah! if only I could make a little journey to Rome! Would they could do without me for the missions this winter!" (August 11th, 1819). There is no question elsewhere in 1819 of a journey to Rome. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. The village of Saint-Etienne d’Avançon, birth-place of the shepherdess Benoite who played a role in the origins of the Shrine of Laus, was destroyed by fire in the course of the night. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. As a rule, at Laus in 1819, there were only Father Tempier, Brother Bourrelier and Ignace, a former soldier. Father Touche spent the summer there from April 1st to November (Fortuné to the President de Mazenod, April 1st, 1819). To cope with the needs of the pilgrims, Father Mye was also sent there from May 23rd to the end of July (Fortuné to the President, May 23rd; *Missions O.M.I,* 1897, pp. 104-105). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Orig.: Marseilles, Archives at the Bishop’s Palace. Madame Roux, née de Bonnecorse, came from a family at Aix and lived at Marseilles. She was a benefactress of the Congregation and worked to have it established at Le Calvaire. In 1975 family descendants gave to the Archbishop of Marseilles 18 letters written by the Founder to Madame Roux between 1817 and 1843. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. YENVEUX, VII, 24\*. Yenveux omits the name of the addressee. Without doubt he is Marius Victor Aubert. The Founder wrote in the Register for applications to the Novitiate, 1815-1850, No. 17: “... his natural inconstancy gaining control of him little by little, he began by being displeased because he was not considered as worthy as he believed... He left us after having lived two years with us...” He had entered in 1818. Fortuné wrote that “Aubert... who is perfectly unique... has a tendency to get the itch to preach” has left and “will spend over a month at Taverne, his home town...” (Letters to the President, July 16th, Sept. 8th. 1819). [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Extract from A.A. Tavemier, *Quelques souvenirs de Mgr C.E. de Mazenod, ev. de Marseille,* Aix, 1872, pp. 73-74. Adolf Tavernier was a member of the youth congregation; he became a lawyer. On holiday in La Bégude, he described, on October 11, a walk with his mother. We publish Father de Mazenod’s reply, one of the rare letters in which he speaks of nature, and also because we see how he is putting into practice a decision taken during his 1814 retreat: “I must above all be really persuaded that I am doing the will of God when I give myself to service of my neighbour... and then do my best, without concern if, working in this way, I cannot get other things done for which I would have more of an attraction....” [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. RAMBERT, I, 304; REY, I, 240. The mission of Rognac, preached by Fathers Tempier and Mye (November 14th to December 5th) was difficult. It had been imposed on the parish by the Archbishop and was badly prepared. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. The Founder was present at almost all the preceding missions. This time he remained at Aix. On October 14th, Fortuné wrote on this subject to the President de Mazenod: “... All these holy Missionaries will leave towards November 12th to bring the Word of the Gospel to two small parishes. Your son will not go, being reserved for the mission of Marseilles...” In reality, two other serious motives retained the Founder at Aix. He first wished to take in hand once more his Youth Sodality which for several years had been suffering from his absences. It was especially important to be present at the arrival of the new Archbishop who had been expected for the beginning of the month of November. Archbishop de Bausset-Roquefort arrived on the 8th. On the 9th he received Fortuné and Eugene; on the 10th the community and in the afternoon he went to the Mission House (Fortuné to the President, November 11th). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. RAMBERT, I, 305; REY, I, 240; YENVEUX, V, 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Father Yenveux (V, 61) quotes the same text under date of the 16th. According to the context, the date indicated by Rambert and Rey seems preferable. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. The Founder stimulates the courage of Father Tempier who was in a state of crisis. He suffered from being isolated at Laus. On July 20th, he had requested to come back to Aix (YENVEUX, VII, 216). He was temporarily recalled for the retreat at the end of October and for the mission, one of the first in which he took part, and of little success. In the course of the winter, he took part in the missions of Marseilles and Aix, his father then being ill. He is found back at Notre Dame du Laus in the month of May, 1820. Cf. *Missions O.M.I,* 1897, pp. 105, 174-175. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. While some missionaries were preaching at Rognac, another band conducted the mission of Rougiers (November 14th to December 12th, 1819). [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. RAMBERT, I, 305; REY, I, 240. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. A letter copied by Fortuné in his letter of December 30, 1819 to the President: Rome, Postulation Archives, fonds Boisgelin II, 2. Bishop de Bausset-Roquefort, transferred from Vannes on August 8, 1817, was not installed at Aix until November 13, 1819. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. On December 22, 1819, Fortuné wrote to the President: “[Your son’s] memorandum has been approved and gained for him an account of 1500 francs which he immediately withdrew.” [↑](#footnote-ref-46)