*NOTE: as this is a file that was scanned, it is still being proof-read, notes converted to footnotes, and corrected. If you come across any obvious mistakes, I would be grateful if you would let me know.*

*The contents of the Diary for this period are still to be inserted according to the relevant dates.*

1840

707. To Father Mille, superior, parish priest at Notre-Dame du Laus, near Gap. Upper Alps.1

707:IX in Oblate Writings

Father Martin’s departure for the mission of Cotignac.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Mille

Marseilles,

Feb[ruary] 29, 1840.

You have preached enough missions for the diocese of Gap this year, so have no regrets if I take Father Martin away from you for the mission of Cotignac. In case he has promised to go somewhere else, let him back out of it. I cannot do without his assistance at Cotignac. The extreme fatigue to which the Lower Alps mission has subjected Father Telmon strictly forces me to take this measure; Father Telmon’s throat is so affected that he would be in imminent danger if he were not given a little rest. So let Father Martin leave at the beginning of the first week of Lent and come here. The mission at Cotignac starts the second Sunday. Don’t give me any argument, the matter is decided. If the situation did not require the presence of the parish priest at N.- D. du Laus on the spot, I would perhaps have called Father Mille, but he must remain at his post. Hence it is Father Martin who must come and I give him his obedience through the present letter.

I do not broach the subject of my sufferings.2  I know you share them and you ask God for the strength that I may bear them. On the other hand, I am filled with joy on learning of what the Lord has done in our missions. Don’t reserve anything for yourself except the consolation of having fulfilled your duty in a holy manner.

Good-bye. Lots of love to all. I embrace and bless you.

+ C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Original: Rome. Archives of the Postulation. L. M.-Mille.

2 “Sufferings”: the behaviour of Fr. Gignoux, the Bishop and a section of the Clergy of Gap towards the Oblates of Laus, cf.. J. M., January 10, 1840. Nevertheless, many priests of the diocese remained friends of the Oblates, cf. L. Martin-Mazenod, undated, end of 1839.

708. To Father Courtès, at Aix].1

708:IX in Oblate Writings

Illness of Fathers Telmon and Courtès. Impossibility of doing all the missions that have been promised.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Courtès

Marseilles,

March 14, 1840.

In conscience I have made up my mind, my dear Father Courtès, nothing in the world can make me change my decision because I would be sinning by acting differently. Father Telmon will not go to the mission of Cotignac or any other. I had to judge that you could do this mission because even after having spoken about what you call influenza, another name for a cold, you decided to go ahead provided Father Telmon was there with you. Then I retained the competence to judge that things would go equally well with Father Martin whom I had explicitly called, thereby sacrificing two missions which should have taken place in the Upper and Lower Alps. Now you say you have fever. Then there is no more question of undertaking this mission; but what baffles me is that you have allowed the two missionaries to start out: they will not suffice to undertake and bring such an important work to a good end. You should have written to the Parish Priest of Cotignac that since you were ill, the service he was expecting from you would have to be postponed. And since you are really ill, you had no responsibility before God. I needed nothing less than a reflection of this nature to calm myself when I see three missions fall through despite all the effort and changes I made to have this most important one succeed. You are sick. That says it all. If I could have foreseen this setback. I would have had Father Hermitte come down in time and Father Chauvet would not have left for Caderousse; with these two Fathers, Father Martin and Father Françon,2 the mission of Cotignac would still have been on a good basis.

I don’t say anything more; no one is bound to do the impossible. The good Lord will take our good will into consideration.3

1 Original: Rome. Archives of the Postulation. L. M. - Courtès.

2 Mss.: Franson.

3 The second page of this letter has been lost. It may have contained some reproaches to Father Courtès who did not want to go to Cotignac in accordance with the order he had received from Father Tempier. On this subject Father Martin writes: “Courtès had been deeply affected by Father Tem[pier]s letter. I believe that the influenza was not the only reason that made him want a rest. There must have been others, for his dislike for going to Cotignac seems to be very great,” cf. L. Martin-Mazenod, March 12, 1840.

709. To Father Courtès, super[io]r of the Miss[iona]ries, with the Parish Priest of Cotignac, at Cotignac, Var. 1

709:IX in Oblate Writings

Let Father Courtès take care of his health during the mission of Cotignac. Father Telmon is to stay at Aix.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Courtès

Marseilles,

March 19, 1840.

I am very grateful to you. my dear Courtès, for having given me news about yourself so soon. Having learnt about your decision from your penultimate letter, I would have been anxious. I thank God for the assistance he has given you, but I cannot refrain from recommending that you do not abuse it.2 You tell me that the church is far away from the rectory: hence you must take some precautions after you have preached lest you expose yourself, all perspiring, to the wind.

I am very happy to tell you for your peace of mind that I am leaving Father P[ier]re3 at Aix. It was enough for me that he reassured me about the reason that required calling him to me. Without that I would never have thought of withdrawing him from Aix where he was doing well and to your satisfaction. I hope that the improvement in the good Parish Priest’s health will continue. Tell him how much I sympathize with him on account of his being indisposed, a circumstance so awkward that one can’t but help see therein a blow, as it were, from the evil spirit.

With all my heart I greet and I embrace all our Fathers as well as yourself.

+ C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Original: Rome. Archives of the Postulation. L. M. - Courtès.

2 Only Fathers Martin and Françon left for Cotignac, but were soon joined by Father Courtès, who was sufficiently cured. Father Martin wrote to the Founder on March 31: “Father C[ourtès] is really a strange person ... just looking at him and listening to him you would say he is going to give up the ghost, but in the pulpit he makes more noise than all of us. For his welfare, I wish him this kind of influenza ... thus your Lordship can be reassured you did not send him off to martyrdom ...”

3 Pierre Telmon.

710. To Father Courtès, sup[erio]r of the Miss[iona]ries, Rectory, at Cotignac, Var.1

710:IX in Oblate Writings

Extend the mission of Cotignac by one week to leave enough time for the men to be converted.

Courtès

Marseilles,

April 6, 1840.

My dear Father Courtès, you must not hesitate to extend the mission by another week if this period is necessary to complete the work you have begun. The matter seems to me more essential than you tell me in your letter, for the reason that the men who did not say no have however held back till the last minute. Your mission will be incomplete and will have failed to some extent if you do not make this last effort to defeat the armed fortress which is tenaciously defending its prey. If all of you remain there, you have a greater chance of success and then you can leave without any regret. The plan of leaving Father Martin alone when you go away has several disadvantages. I have already urgent requests from Upper Alps where he was expected. They will have nothing to say if the mission is extended. On the other hand, to have chosen him to remain would be inexcusable in the eyes of this region which is so ill-disposed through the enemies’ instigations.

The poor Parish Priest’s illness has deprived you of a good worker who would have helped you much. I am not surprised that you could not take care of the earnest need of all the women, but those 300 women will still keep you busy during the week specially dedicated for men, which is one more reason for prolonging your stay at Cotignac and ending the mission a week later. These are needs from which you cannot turn aside. The good Lord will provide for what may not get done elsewhere. The essential thing is to do well what one does, *age quod agis.*

I beg of you to communicate my letter to Father Martin, it will serve as a reply to his which, as well as yours, has given me the greatest pleasure because of the interesting details you give. I am enchanted by what you tell me about Father Françon but I cannot understand Father De Veronico’s timidity: he should do a little more violence to himself.

I greet all of you affectionately.

+ C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

*P.S.* Father Bernard has just finished the retreat at Allauch, he has left to preach those of St-Mitre and Stes-Maries. Thus you can see that the Diocese of Aix is not neglected. We can’t do everything everywhere.

1 Original: Rome. Archives of the Postulation. L. M.-Courtès.

711.[To Father Guigues, at N.-D. de L’Osier].1

711:IX in Oblate Writings

Father Pélissier will go to N. - D. du Laus, Father Pont to the Major Seminary of Marseilles, Fathers Magnan and Martin will receive their obedience probably for N. - D. de L’Osier.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Guigues

Marseilles,

June 7, 1840.

My dear Father Guigue[s], I approve Father Pélissier going to give a helping hand to our Fathers at N. - D. du Laus during the time of the great crowds; I am inclined to agree to this act of charity all the more so because I intended to send this Father to that community as part of the transfers which the needs of our different houses require. I would very much like that he be not too adverse to coming to Marseilles and replace good Father Semeria whom I am obliged to send to Corsica along with another Father who, together with Father Gibelli, will constitute the house of Vico which we cannot leave vacant any more.

I would insist very much on the arrangement planned with Mrs. Gallois, it is undoubtedly the best for us. Do everything possible to accomplish it.2

Brother Antoine3 requests me to authorize him to make his final vows. Before deciding in Council about his request. I ask you for your opinion.

I think I can inform you that I shall give you Father Magnan. I would like to give you Father Martin also. I do not wholly commit myself to this. I shall definitely withdraw Father Pont, who will be sent to the Major Seminary of Marseilles.4 He will go down at the same time that the vacations begin, that is at the end of this month. I shall send you one more man who will remain in place.5

1 Original: Rome. Archives of the Postulation. L. M.- Guigues.

2 A home had been opened to receive the pilgrims at N.-D. de L’Osier. While waiting to find some women religious, they were planning to entrust it to some ladies. This Mrs. Gallois was evidently one of them. On this subject, Father Dassy writes to the Founder on March 21, 1840: “Our home is functioning ... but what an embarrassment for us when it comes to choosing the ladies who are to take charge of it...”

3 Probably Brother Antoine-Dominique Jouvent who had begun his novitiate on June 15, 1838. He made his perpetual vows on February 17, 1842.

4 The Founder’s plans were not to be disturbed. Nevertheless, in his letter of July 8, 1840, Father Dassy dared to write: “How sorry we are to see Father Pont leave; he is so edifying, so zealous, so humble, so ready to do anything. No doubt, Father Magnan will do very well, but three changes, one after another! Gignoux. Pélissier. and Father Pont also. Allow me, my dearly beloved Father, to request you to leave him a little longer… but my dearly beloved Father, I forgot that I did not have the grace of state to give you the slightest advice and you will forgive me these five lines which only the good of the Congregation and regret at seeing good Father Pont leave could induce me to write.”

5 The second page of this letter has been lost.

712.[To Father Pelissier, at Embrun].1

712:IX in Oblate Writings

Reproaches Father Pélissier who had left N. - D. du Laus without permission and who was asking for dispensation from his vows.

Pélissier

Marseilles.

July 29, 1840.

You are quite guilty, my dear Father Pél[issier]. in behaving the way you do. It is really quite inconceivable that, under the false pretexts your imagination conjures up, you should take the liberty of exempting yourself from the duties of obedience and that it be from Embrun that I receive your letter. I groan all the more before God for this disorder which establishes you in a permanent state of sin because I had called you to come and see me only to share your point of view. I had intended to explain myself to you in a friendly way and if I could not have rid your mind of the prejudices you have unfortunately entertained therein, which, as far as I am concerned, are obviously exaggerated, I would have come to an agreement with you in looking for a canonical means to end this state of affairs. You were already sufficiently to be pitied for nurturing in your heart blameworthy thoughts which had perverted your judgment to the point of making you approve Father Gig[noux]s wretched behaviour.2 Thereby you had made yourself. to some extent, an accomplice in his apostasy. You wanted to do more, you wanted to imitate him. It was precisely to turn you away from going to that extreme, that in an attitude of sincere charity, I had called you to my side. I was hoping, in communicating with you freely, to find a remedy for your ailment and put your mind at peace; or, if against my expectation I did not succeed in getting you back on the right path. I was intending as I have said above to provide you with a canonical means to end the matter. You preferred to take the law into your hands by disobeying a formal command of your legitimate superior, you have abandoned your post, and it is from the place you have chosen that you write me to justify your defection, doubly expressed both by the date and the signature in your letter.3 Take, then, the full responsibility for your damnable behaviour. I shall take counsel without delay about what is to be done. I greet you.

+ Ch. J. Eugene. Bishop of M[arseilles].

1 Copy made by Father Cas. Aubert in the *Registre des Expulsions et des dispenses*, Rome, AG., p. *57.* Father Mille had gone down to Marseilles at the end of July to give notice of his defection. He took along a letter of Father Martin to Bishop de Mazenod dated July 26 in which we read: “How heart-broken you must be, my dear Father, by this new disloyalty. I sympathize with you as much as I can and ask God that if he must test you some more, he send you crosses that are less painful and heavy.”

2 Father Pélissier, a native of Embrun in the diocese of Gap, had written two letters to Father Allard in which he justified Father Gignoux’s behaviour and laid the cause of his disloyalty upon his brothers and the Congregation.

3 This letter is dated July 22, the day, no doubt, on which the Founder had requested Father Gignoux to present himself at Marseilles; it came not from N.-D. du Laus, but from Embrun and it was signed: Father Pélissier. He had retired to his family. We have two other letters of the ex-Oblate Pélissier to the Founder, one of September 20, 1840, in which he thanks him for the dispensation from his vows, the other of January 9, 1858, in which he expresses his friendship and best wishes for the Congregation’s welfare.

713. To Father Semeria, superior of the Miss[iona]ries, at Vico, Corsica.1

713:IX in Oblate Writings

Even if he is rather young, Father Semeria is the superior and must behave as such. Gibelli will be his first assistant and admonitor. Father De Veronico has still to be trained in religious life.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Semeria

Marseilles.

July 30, 1840.

My dear Father Semeria. I am still waiting for a few words from you. My dear child, you must keep in touch with me. It is true that it was too much for your nascent superiorship to find yourself all of a sudden in charge of two combined communities.2 You may well be young. you may well be new, you are nevertheless the head who is responsible for all those who live under the roof of our house of Vico. It is useless to abase yourself: despite your humility such is the case, and I think that order is established according to the Rule. You are the superior of the community of Vico. Father Gibelli is your first assistant, your admonitor and the spiritual director of the house. I have not yet appointed your second assistant. I believe that Father De Veronico will do himself sufficient justice so as not to be surprised that I expect him to be more steady, that he become more regular and acquire a more correct conscience before he can be entrusted with any confidential position. You may read this section of my letter to him in all simplicity. You are his superior, so I must inform you of things that concern your men. You will note with regard to him that he needs to watch himself so as not to behave childishly and that his conscience is far too lax in the interpretation he gives to some of his duties or to the Rules. I shall quote to you but one very recent example which I would be happy if you were to recall to him so that he would come to know my disapproval and the reproach I would certainly have made to him, had I known the matter before his departure. It was the eve of the S[acred] Heart, a day of fasting. After having worked with one of his companions to adorn the church, they went down to the refectory where they found only breakfast leftovers. His confrere was wrong in showing his temper. De Veronico, in line with his character, gave the matter another turn, which was just as reprehensible. In the kitchen no one could have foreseen that they were so tired as to need a little more food. The confrere sulked because of his empty stomach but was satisfied with eating a piece of cheese. De Veronico, without being at all shy about it and in a very unbecoming tone, had some eggs prepared for him, deciding. with his normal sneer, that he felt his hunger sufficiently to declare that he was dispensed from fasting. Thus, a double fault with the aggravating circumstance of scandal and flightiness. He should certainly not have done these things even if he felt the need to eat something other than the breakfast food. His duty was to take the trouble of going to see the superior and ask for dispensation from the fast and permission to give orders to the cook, then everything would have been in order and he would have avoided talking like a fool. If he is still like this after so many years of vows, you understand that he cannot be put in charge of directing others. Since my remarks have been prompted only by the duty of seeing to his welfare. I am not afraid to have him know them. It will make him reflect on his need for self-reform and everything will proceed well. Good-bye. my dear Father Semeria. I bless you and all our Fathers. I embrace you.

+ C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

The position of Father Guibert in the diocese of Ajaccio requires that he be continually considered in the house of Vico as a visitor, since we have no provincials among us.3

1 Original: Rome. Archives of the Postulation. L. M.- Semeria.

2 The Seminarians of Ajaccio had gone to spend their vacation at Vico.

3 The letters of Father Semeria are preserved in a bound note-book. The last line of this letter is written in the margin and is covered by the threads of the binding. They cannot be read. The copy that was made in 1926 carried the following text: “as a visitor who had still to remain with us.” We have preferred the text written by the Founder in his *Diary,* July 31: “In the letter to Father Semeria ... I tell him that the position of Father Guibert in the diocese of Ajaccio requires that he be continually considered in the house of Vico as a visitor, since we have no provincials among us.”

714.[To Father Ancel, at Montgenèvre].1

714:IX in Oblate Writings

Invitation to return to the Congregation. Father Mille will receive him and help him. His accepting a position outside the Congregation renders him liable to expulsion.

Ancel

Marseilles.

October 17, 1840.

Sincerely, my dear friend, how can you expect that I in conscience can grant you the dispensation you request, if it rests on such futile reasons as you set before me. I thought I was dreaming when I received your letters.2 Could it not be said that you are ignorant of the primary principles of theology and that you consider as a joke the most sacred commitments that exist on earth? Though bound by the vows and an oath, you act independently of these formidable obligations. You look after your interests not only outside of but in formal opposition to the obedience you have vowed and which binds you to your lawful superiors. and it is after having settled on an illegitimate, illegal, anti-canonical measure that you inform me without embarrassment that you have accepted a post on your own authority outside of this Congregation which you call mine3 as if it were not as much yours as it is mine, as if you had not solemnly sworn in the presence of O.L. Jesus Christ to live and die in her bosom. I will not dwell on this, my dear friend. I would not know how to make sense of such aberration; I appeal instead to your reason, to your common sense, your heart, your religious conscience. No. in conscience I cannot without any legitimate reason grant you the dispensation you request.

Unfortunately you have placed yourself in a situation wherein you are liable to dismissal because, according to canonical principles, what the devil has induced you to do, that is, living outside the Congregation against obedience and accepting a post without your superior’s authorization, etc.. are things equivalent to apostasy. Who would have expected this? I who was thinking of you in view of soon entrusting you with the superiorship of one of the Congregation’s houses.4 I who esteemed you. who loved you, that I should be reduced to the extreme misfortune of seeing the Council impose on you the extreme penalty you have deserved, a penalty which S[ain]t Thomas compares with excommunication: *expulsio juxta D. Thomam comparatur excommunicationi.* What would I do to divert you from this misfortune? I have not laid your case before the Council. I shall submit it to the Council only when it will be clear that I cannot count on your return. I have only to have recourse to my affection for you to act with such kindness, but in case I need to. the decretals of Popes authorize me to act thus: *Superiores* ...*nihil intentatum relinquant ut lucrentur animas fratrum suorum fere in profundum malorum delapsas. ante quam gravissimum atque extremum expulsion is remedium experiantur.*5The evil has undoubtedly reached its highest point, for you are in a state of mortal sin and you disregard this in an attitude of dreadful confidence. For God’s sake, my dear friend, look within yourself and heed my voice, which is that of a father and a friend. Go to Notre-Dame du Laus. get in touch with the superior whom you trust. I shall give him all the powers he needs to re-instate you. Thereafter, if it is deemed opportune to grant you some special permissions temporarily, we shall try to arrange everything as best as we can, but once again, for God’s sake, for the sake of your soul, don’t continue to take the path which leads to perdition and thereby also afflict my heart and those who love you. Good-bye. I pray to God that he may make you docile to my voice and I affectionately greet you.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles,

1 Copy made by the Founder. Rome. Archives of the Postulation. L. M.-Ancel.

2 We still have some of Father Ancel’s letters to the Founder: November 11, 1838, September 13, November 2 and December 10, 1840, February 12, 1841. Due to some injustice done to him at Gap where he had been a priest for some years (cf. note 67 of letter no. 678). he joined our Congregation and made his vows on the first of November 1839. Having been sent to Ajaccio, he soon complained that Father Guibert and the Fathers treated him as an “old idle talker,” as “fat Jean.” In the Act of dismissal, where the reasons for his expulsion are stated, we find the following: “At the end of the academic year, during which he had given enough trouble to the superior and the Fathers of the Major Seminary of Ajaccio, due to his difficult character and certain ridiculous and erroneous opinions Yet in one of his letters to the Founder. Ancel writes that he had not thought that such a father could have such sons, sons who were ashamed to call themselves Oblates and to wear the cross, who do not live poorly, etc. While beseeching the Founder to grant him dispensation from vows because he had been appointed the director of the hospice royal du Montgenèvre. he begs him to forgive him and to maintain his friendship.

3 “mine”, that is Bishop de Mazenod’s Congregation.

4 “I, who was thinking of you ... of the Congregation’s houses” was erased by the Founder.

5 Decree of the S. Congregation of the Council. September 21. 1624.

715.[To Father Tempier, superior of the Major Seminary of Marseilles]1

715:IX in Oblate Writings

Though it is late, let Father Tempier come to hear his confession.

Tempier

Marseilles.

October 31, 1840.

One may sometimes be distracted, dearest Tempier, but to forget that today is Saturday. the usual day for confession; furthermore, that it is the eve of our great ceremony2 that should naturally be preceded by confession; *tertio,* that last evening, realizing that it was too late. I told you that we would meet again this morning at 7 o’clock. and it is already 8 p.m.

All these combined complaints force me to compel you mercilessly to make the pilgrimage to the bishop’s house this very evening. And so I pray God that he have you in his holy and worthy keeping and especially that he grant you a little more memory.

1 Original: Rome. Archives of the Postulation. L. M.-Tempier.

2 November First marked the end of the annual retreat and renewal of vows.

716.[To Father Ancel, at Montgenèvre].1

716:IX in Oblate Writings

Call to repentance. Refusal to grant the dispensation from his vows. Decision made in his regard.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Ancel

Marseilles.

November 12, 1840.

My dear friend, why are you obstinate in disavowing a title which you still hold and which you cannot give up without a great betrayal of trust?2 Believe me you who are still my dear friend, that your behaviour in this matter has both grieved and laid me low. I cannot, in the space of one letter bring you back to those principles which you have strangely disregarded. Moreover, what could I tell you that you do not know as well as I do? And yet it is despite this knowledge that you have blinded yourself to the point of becoming so guilty. What should have been done to keep you in the line of your duty? You could have been open with me during your transit to Marseilles. instead of….3 However. I don’t want to say anything which, by reminding you of your mistakes. may sadden you. I would have gone to great lengths in a frank and conscience-filled conversation to bring peace to your heart, regarding the things that most disturbed you. Even now I would be in a position to broach all these things verbally, in a private conversation with you, but there was nothing that I did not do to avoid an extreme position which, after all, would not calm your conscience because, as I have already written you, I cannot dispense you for the reasons you allege, and because you are obliged under pain of mortal sin to avoid all that could make you liable to being expelled. *Peccat mortaliter si non adhibet diligentiam in cavendis defectibus ob quas se dimittendum vel ejiciendum praevidet.4* But I shall not prolong this reasoning any further because I have decided not to invoke principles which obviously put you in such a deplorable situation.

While waiting for you to come and talk with me, here is what the Holy Spirit inspires me for your welfare. I think you will recognize therein the true charity I have for you and the sentiments of an affection which you will certainly blame yourself for not having sufficiently appreciated. Leaving aside a condemnation for all that is contrary to the sacred canons in your behaviour and wanting to provide you with the means to return to favour with God whom you have offended grievously by your unfaithfulness to the vows and the oath you have made, I shall give the necessary faculties for your reconciliation to the confessor of your choice, on condition that you, being repentant of the fault you have far too long maintained, be sincerely disposed to submit yourself, as it is your essential duty to do, to the decision which I will be in a position to take in your regard. Compliance of your will must be in some way prior to and independent of what I am going to inform you. for it is a strict obligation that cannot be conditional, and also because in matters of conscience we must act in good faith with God and those who represent him here below. Here, then, is the decision I am taking and God knows, only for your good, without cutting you off from the corps to which you belong and to which you are attached by bonds that are more indissoluble than you have seen fit to think. I would authorize you until further orders to remain in the post you now occupy. Such authorization will safeguard the vow of obedience and the oath of perseverance. To honour the vow of poverty, you will use with great moderation, the income from your position and any other income you may have, and you will give what is over and above your simple necessities to the poor or to the Church.

Finally, you will write me at least twice a year and give me a full account of your behaviour. And, in the meantime should you have a favourable occasion to come and talk with me, I would advise you to take it; surely in the view of the concession I have just made, independently of the sentiments you certainly know that I have for you, I don’t think you have any grounds to fear me very much.

I end this letter here. It should tell how much good I wish for you. but it cannot possibly make you understand the suffering you cause me.

In the name of the good Lord, take hold of the plank I hold out to you in your terrible ship-wreck. Your salvation is at stake.

Good-bye, my dear friend, I pray the Lord to enlighten you and to lead you by his grace into the arms of him who is reaching out to you and who embraces you.

1 Copy: Rome. Archives of the Postulation. L. M.-Ancel.

2 Father Ancel used to sign his letters: “Ancel, Canon”.

3 He had stopped at Marseilles during his trip from Ajaccio to Gap. to which place he had permission to go for some family matter. However he did not breathe a word about his plans. cf. *Registre des Expulsions et dispenses*, p. 61.

4 We do not know the source from which the Founder quotes this passage.

717.[To Father Vincens, at N.-D. de L’Osier].1

717:IX in Oblate Writings

Those from the diocese of Grenoble could make their novitiate at N.D. de L’Osier. Mrs. Val’s legacy.

Vincens

[Marseilles,]

November 12, 1840.

You know, my dear Father Vincens, that all we ask God is to send us priests after his heart, who, filled with the holy desire for the joy of living in conformity with the divine Master’s counsels, wish to travel the same path the Apostles and the favoured disciples who followed them had trod. The person you mention in your letter to Father Tempier seems to be of this calibre. The way you praise him places him totally in this category. Hence, I can only bless the Lord for inspiring him to associate himself to a Society of evangelical labourers whose number is not sufficient to reap the great harvest entrusted to it by the Father of the family. Since M[elchior] B[urfin]2 has the qualities fit to fulfil this great ministry, and his good character will make him appreciated in our communities where we love one another as brothers. I have no hesitation to agreeing that you give him a room where he can make a fire since this arrangement is necessary for his health: the latter is precious to us from the first moment he is a member of the family.

I maintain my decision of allowing those whom the diocese of Grenoble will send you to make their novitiate at Notre-Dame de L’Osier. When the good Lord will send you some, you may let me know of it so that I can advise you on what must be done in their regard.

I don’t know if Father Tempier has replied to you about the conditions proposed by Mrs. Val. They seem to me rather onerous. I wish that this lady had a little more trust in God’s mercy and that she would at least be satisfied that the Mass she asks for cease at the death of the priests who are now at L’Osier, and as long as one of them is at the shrine. Let me explain: I would not want this obligation to be transferable to those who may in the future replace3 those who are there at present; those actually there have no more obligation once they leave the shrine. Try to settle the matter as best as you can.

Good-bye. my dearest Father Vincens. the time I spent with you and your confreres was too short. I embrace you affectionately.

+ C.J.E.. Bi[shop] of M[arseilles].

1 Copy: Rome. Archives of the Postulation. L. M.-Vincens.

2 Melchior Burfin. a priest, began his novitiate at L’Osier on February 17. cf. L. Dassy-Mazenod, July 1841.

3 The one who copied this letter had read: “*et tant qu’il y en aura qu’un d’eux au sanctuaire. Je m’explique: je ne voudrais pas que cette obligation fut transmissible à ceux qui pourraient etre dans le cas de remplir les présents* ...etc.”

718. To Father Semeria, superior of the Miss[iona]ries, at Vico, Corsica.1

718:IX in Oblate Writings

Joy at learning that Father De Veronico is behaving well. Thanks Father Semeria and Gibelli who have never saddened their father’s heart. Obedience. Faculty to bless rosaries. Brother Luigi’s forthcoming ordination. Vocations.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Semeria

Marseilles.

November 19, 1840.

My dear Father Semeria. you could not have given me more interesting details than those contained in your letter of the second. So you have prefaced with a good retreat the exercises of the holy missions which were to follow immediately afterwards. I have no doubt the good Lord will bless your labours now that you have been so invigorated by the holy fire that enlightens and purifies. In particular. you have been very satisfied with Father De Veronico’s dispositions, what pleasure you give me! So it is true that the evil was not without remedy and it sufficed for this dear Father to get out of the atmosphere of Aix and then get back on his feet and to walk in step with the most fervent of his brothers. Tell him how happy I am. Now he will realize that he has regained the right place. I also congratulate Father Gibelli for the graces he received during your retreat and I rejoice over the satisfaction he experiences at now being in the midst of a community, which, though very small, provides nonetheless, all that is needed to live happily. I join all of you in spirit to enjoy a few moments of consolation in compensation for the immense sorrows I experience on the other hand. May you be blessed, my dearest Father Semeria. and you, my dearest Father Gibelli. Neither of you have ever saddened your father’s heart. May this witness be a first reward for your good behaviour and an additional title for what you are expecting from the supreme distributor of graces. the just judge who will reward each according to his deeds.

I cannot but approve what you did during the retreat. I think, however, that you could have exposed the Blessed Sacrament even though you were such a small number; why should you be deprived of a favour which the rest of your brothers enjoy? The prescription of the Chapter regarding the day’s obedience must be followed to the letter. It is always an impressive act of regularity to present oneself before the superior, disposed to receive an obedience. We must present ourselves before him with the biretta in hand, and if he has nothing to prescribe, he removes his own and then greets the community which respectfully retires in silence.

I don’t remember if I had granted you the faculty to bless rosaries, crosses and medals; it seems to me that you had asked for it. I grant it to you and your two confreres: two thousand for the rest of the year and 3000 for next year. I think you need this because of your missions. Brother Luigi, your future collaborator is indeed a real gem. I shall make him a deacon at the Christmas ordination. Don’t you find more of this calibre in the areas you evangelize? Pray to our saintly Morandini that from Heaven he choose someone for us. And so make our blessed Albini also work some miracle. What is the good of the pictures we have sent you? Don’t sleep on them. Good bye. dear children. I press you to my heart, embrace and bless you.

+ C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Original: Rome. Archives of the Postulation. L. M.-Semeria.

719. To Father Courtès, superior of the Miss[iona]ries, Carmelites’ Square, at Aix, B.d.R.1

719:IX in Oblate Writings

List of preachers for the forthcoming missions and retreats.

Courtès

Marseilles.

December 2, 1840.

It is never easy, my dear Courtès, that a person manages to make some arrangement in the midst of so many difficulties that arise everywhere from the moment one gets to work. The mission of St-Marcel is about to end. Sunday I am going for its closing. The two that are being preached at Digne are also ending, but a third one will immediately begin at Malijai: it will be followed by one more promised at St-Andre in the diocese of Gap. Father Telmon will go to give a retreat at Revest-du-Bion along with Father Chauvet. A few days later. Father Bernard will preach the mission of Vernègues, together with Father Perron, if possible. Due to certain local circumstances, the retreat of Revest will start on the 15th of this month. The mission of Vernègues has been arranged with the Parish Priest for the 28th. In the meantime you have sent Father Bise to Rognes and it seems that you yourself had been at La Fare. No other mission can be preached in the diocese of Fréjus except the one of Aups because we cannot exempt ourselves from giving the retreats of Cotignac and Istres.

The mission[ar]ies who are to give the mission of Aups are Fathers Courtès. Aubert, Telmon and Chauvet. You are the only one who can give the retreat at Cotignac.

Father Bernard is engaged for a major retreat at Allauch. Father Telmon will go to Istres.

After this campaign. I shall do what I can to form a house at Aix. In this I find some difficulties that are hard to overcome.

I end my letter here, otherwise it will not get off. Good-bye.

+ C.J. Eug[ene], Bish[op] of M[arsei]lles.

1 Original: Rome. Archives of the Postulation. L. M.-Courtès.

720. To Father Mille, miss[ion]ary, with the Parish Priest at Malijai, via... Lower Alps.1

720:IX in Oblate Writings

*Indifference of the Christians at Malijai. Founder’s encouragement.*

L.J.C. and M.I.

Mille

Marseilles.

December 13, 1840.

My dear friends, I share the pain brought to you by the indifference of the people whom you are evangelising. I do not, however, approve the discouragement into which I understand you have fallen, you who are accustomed to be the instruments of God’s mercy.2 You have lost sight of the fact that you can at times be. like the Master who has sent you, witnesses to his justice. Thanks to the Lord such cases are rare, but they do come into the line of your ministry. Hence this should not surprise you. Thus, far from dwelling on the thought of withdrawing as though you had been conquered, it is necessary that you stay there to accomplish your work. It is perhaps in this case a sentence of rejection which can be promulgated only after the normal course of your exercises; even in such a case you will have been God’s ambassadors who have fulfilled their mission faithfully. Discouragement is a weakness. If you analyse it well, you will find it is caused by self-love. The Lord, in giving you the lofty mission of sowing, planting and watering, has reserved to himself the granting of the growth and maturity when it pleases and as it pleases him. Do then, what you have been commissioned to do and leave to God that which belongs to him alone. At most, bring down his merciful action by your urgent prayers and turn him away from executing his justice.

The two positions you propose to me are good and acceptable if the case should arise, but I beg you to maintain the dignity of your ministry and not make any complaint. Be moderate especially with regard to what you say in the presence of the Parish Priest. I cannot recommend sufficient discretion always and everywhere with regard to these Gentlemen. Elsewhere we have made great and irreparable mistakes in this matter.

Good-bye, my dear friends. I unite my poor prayers to yours and I greet all of you affectionately.

+ C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Original: Rome. Archives of the Postulation. L. M.- Mille.

2 The Founder writes in his *Diary,* December 12: “Letter of Father Mille. In the mission of Malijal things are not going as well as in that of Brusquet. His confreres are discouraged. People didn’t come to listen to their instructions