*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.*

1854

132.[To Bishop Dupanloup of Orleans].1

132:XIII in Oblate Writings

Departure of several Fathers shortly for N. -D. de Cléry.

Dupanloup Bishop

Marseilles,

January 5, 1854.

Your Lordship,

On receiving your letter I wrote to Limoges so that Father Brun may prepare to go to you at Orleans as soon as possible. The person who will be his companion I will free from here and the Superior of the Marseilles community will go with them to determine their position and receive your directives in their regard and for those who will join them a little sooner or later.2 The Missionaries are not demanding men, but they will nevertheless need what is strictly necessary, a place to live, some rough furniture as beds, tables, chairs, some bedding, some common towels, a few common plates and dishes, kitchen utensils, etc. The expenses of a first establishment are not very high, but they [should] be the responsibility of the dioceses in which the Missionaries are to serve.

As soon as I have received the reply I am waiting for from Limoges, I will be honored to let you know about it. If Father Brun is not committed to some mission, he will leave immediately; if he is on mission, he will set out as soon as he is finished.

Please accept, Your Lordship, the homage of my respectful and affectionate sentiments.

+ C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Orig.: Paris, National Library, Manuscript Department, Correspondence Dupanloup, vol. 27.

2 The first Missionaries at Cléry were Fathers Brun and Marchal, accompanied by Father Dassy, cf. Mazenod to Bellon, January 28, 1854.

1191. [To Father Bellon, at the major seminary of Romans]1

1191:XI in Oblate Writings

Thanks Father Bellon for his good wishes. Visits made by Bishop de Mazenod in Marseille on New Year’s day. Nevertheless, he does not forget his sons.

Bellon

[Marseilles],

January 11, 1854.

Thank you, my dear son, for the kind words you addressed to me. Since I lacked the pleasure of your presence, they were helpful and did my heart good. Yes, I sense it. God gives us too many consolations for us to attribute too much importance to the suffering which is part and parcel of life, especially when one has to deal with so many different people, so many people in all countries of the world. We must accept what God permits no matter how certain events, which we cannot help but find regretful, rend our hearts.

Here I am swept into the whirl of New Year’s day visits, return visits which I must make to 200 people of the perhaps 2,000 who came to visit me on New Year’s day. That is one of the tortures of my position, but it is something from which I cannot be excused. Hence, I must reserve my spare time for business affairs, while counting rather heavily on the friendship of my children, that they pardon my silence in their regard, a silence which I certainly do not keep before God, since they are present to me every day, each by name, at least twice a day in the presence of the Lord.

1 REY IL 490-491.

1192. [To Father Vincens, at Notre-Dame de l’Osier].1

1192:XI in Oblate Writings

Good health of the Founder in spite of his numerous activities.

Vincens

[Marseilles],

January 11, 1854.

The amount of writing I must do and send letters off in every direction because of the demands of our very religious population, etc., is phenomenal. This energy which surprises everyone is due to the prayers of the family. It is a gift that God grants me so that I can be used up in the service of the Church. Therefore, we will carry on as long as we have the energy to do so.

1 REY II. 497.

150. To Mr. Meynis, Secretary of the Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.1

150:V in Oblate Writings

Communications with Red River are possible only during the summer. Complaints lodged against those in charge of the Annals who do not publish anything on the Oblates.

Propagation of the Faith

Marseilles,

January 17, 1854.

Dear Sir,

I have received the letter you sent me for Bishop Taché. I will forward it intact to His Excellency but I must inform you that communications are not easy. Only in the month of August will the letter be able to be sent on to its destination.

Bishop Taché was very intent on having the letter he sent you published in the Annals. It expresses the homage of his gratitude for his predecessor. It is a question of what is fitting and proper.

As far as I am concerned, I would have liked mention of the names of the missionaries who leave for the missions not to have been forgotten. The dioceses which provide us with them are surprised when they are not mentioned. I will say nothing more about the insertion of the letters which, on numerous occasions, I have forwarded to Lyon. I read some which are less interesting. I feel that for the honor of the different Orders known as carrying on the ministry of the missions, their correspondence should be published in turn, if only to prove that they are not idle.

Please accept, sir, the expression of my distinct regards.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P.

1193. [To Father Dorey, at Nancy].1

1193:XI in Oblate Writings

Expresses his affection for all the Oblates.

Dorey

[Marseilles],

January 23, 1854.

One must not think that the modifications introduced into the Rule on the heading of administration should change in any way the relations of the members of the Congregation with the Superior General no matter what their position is. He always remains the only genuine father of the whole family and his heart only loves his children the more their number grows.

1 YENVEUX. 186.

35. [To Fr. Etienne Semeria in Jaffna].1

35:IV (Ceylon) in Oblate Writings

Fr. Semeria’s letters are a delight to the Founder. Propaganda is sending a Visitor Apostolic to Ceylon. Extravagant behaviour of Fr. Keating. Two religious sisters may go to Jaffna.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Semeria

Marseilles,

January 26, 1854.

My dear, beloved Fr. Semeria, I have allowed myself to be caught napping. The post leaves today, and I have only a few moments in which to write, and who knows whether somebody will, as usual, come and, so to say, snatch the pen from my hands in order to embroil me in other business? I am sorry also that I have to take a small piece of paper; be sure that you do not follow my example. Your letters are a delight to me, and they are never too long. True, they too often contain disagreeable things, but it is always you whose words I am reading, with you that I am speaking, and in a way I see you in the letters that come from your pen, written with your hand but, more importantly, inspired by your heart which has so good an understanding of my own, to which it is linked by the most intimate mutual affection that could ever be. Whenever you have bad news to give me, my dear son, I always send you good news in return. You remember the letter from Propaganda that I told you of, which must have been a great reassurance to you in the difficulties that had sprung up around you? Well, today I have another to tell you of which will give you the greatest pleasure and prove to you that I am still being vigilant over here concerning the needs of your mission. To be frank, I was not ashamed, in writing to the supreme judge, to speak my mind fully about things and persons, and at whatever cost to your humility, I return continually to my great plan, which has never been rejected, but certainly delayed. You will see whether my letters make a good impression or not. There has never been such explicit criticism of those who behave so badly towards you and our men, and as for the rest, had there already been other letters expressing agreement even more clearly, this one contains enough to recall what has already been said. You can see from the confidence expressed in you the opinion of your character that I have managed to communicate without any difficulty. I hope that you will have fully adopted the manner of conducting yourself that you had to take on at the moment when you became the natural defender of the Vicariate of Jaffna. You are too well aware of the subtlety and deviousness of your adversaries not to make every effort to foil them. You had to strip yourself of your natural kindness, gentleness and agreeableness, as I hope you have not failed to do, in order to stand up for the rights that you were called to defend before the arbitrator whom the Sacred Congregation sent to gain information on the delicate questions that were dividing the two Vicariates.2 It seems to have been providential that poor Bishop Bettachini fell ill and was kept in Sicily until now. He had to ask pardon for his journey and to gain sympathy for his justified complaints. I did not fail to prepare the way for him.

Shall I speak to you now of the extravagances of that poor Keating? If his malaise is incurable and he is wearing you out too much, you have the power to dismiss him, for it is better that such mischief-makers should be outside the Congregation than in it. Let it be said that the Irish are sent to trouble us. I have lost count of the number of apostates from that country, and the other Congregations are having the same trouble with them.

I was waiting rather impatiently to hear from Bishop Bettachini. I was going to offer him two Sisters for your schools at Jaffna, one of whom, an excellent woman with a perfect command of English, is already in the Indies. They belong to a Congregation that I have received into my diocese which provides subjects for the seaports in the Levant and as far as the Indies, for they have an establishment in Pegu. We only need to know whether Bishop Bettachini will have enough money to pay for their travel and establish them. It must be easy to find out how much the journey from Pegu to Ceylon will cost, but I cannot say from here. I wish I could write to each of our dear missionaries individually, but apart from the high cost of postage, I am so busy from morning to night that it would be very hard for me to find the time to do it. However, I cannot but write a few words of consolation to our good Fr. Ciamin whom the good God is purifying in the crucible of sickness and suffering. You know that one member cannot suffer without pain being felt by the whole body, especially by the head and the heart; and so I pray the Lord to make his faithful servant more holy every day.

I have no need to tell you to keep to yourself the letter of which I am sending you a copy.3 This is confidential, and must remain secret. You can encourage our Fathers in general terms and let them know that the Sacred Congregation approves of their conduct, while exhorting them to patience and to undiminished zeal.

Farewell, dear son; I embrace you and send you my blessing.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles,

S. G.

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

2 The sense of this passage is not easy to grasp. The two vicariates were disputing about who the missions of Sainte-Anne of Talavila and Kandy belonged to. Two Oblates in Colombo did not support Bishop Bravi, while Fr. Semeria defended the rights of Jaffna. The Founder wrote to Propaganda about this and received a letter dated January 10, 1854, in which Cardinal Fransoni announced that a visitor Apostolic would be sent to Ceylon and that Fr. Semeria, in the absence of Bishop Bettachini, would act as the representative of Jaffna in the discussions that were to take place.

3 The letter from Propaganda was copied by Fr. Casimir Aubert after the letter of January 26 to Fr. Ciamin.

36. [To Fr. J.-A. Ciamin at Jaffna].1

36:IV (Ceylon) in Oblate Writings

Encouragement to Fr. Ciamin who, in his grave sickness, is undergoing “the martyrdom of charity”.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Ciamin

Marseilles,

January 26, 1854.

My dear Fr. Ciamin, I am in a great hurry, since the post is about to leave, but I quickly seize this half-sheet of blank paper to express to you my tender fatherly feelings which are constantly moved when I think of the suffering that you are enduring in the loss of your health. My heart shares in your suffering and feels it keenly, but when I think that it is for the service of God and the salvation of souls that you have been reduced to the state you are in, my soul is elevated in contemplation of the reward that you will receive for your sacrifice. If the good Lord calls you to himself, what does it matter whether it is through the arrows of the infidel, death inflicted by a torturer, or the little fire of a sickness contracted in the exercise of the great ministry of preaching the gospel and calling souls to sanctity? The martyr who dies for charity will be rewarded no less than he who dies for the faith. So courage, my dear son: you have fought well, your crown is assured, for the word of the Master cannot fail. If the Lord prolongs your pilgrimage on this earth and you recover your health, this will make you only more zealous to fulfil your task, for you will have seen at close quarters the eternal dwellings and the glory in store for you.

Farewell, my very dear son: do not forget me in your prayers, and receive from me the blessing that I send you in the full outpouring of my fatherly heart.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

Sup. Gen.

1 Original: Rome. Archive of the Postulation, L. M-Semeria. When he wrote this letter, the Founder still did not know that Fr. Ciamin had been dead since November 10, 1853.

1194. [To Father Bellon, at the major seminary of Romans]1

1194:XI in Oblate Writings

Reprimands Father Bellon who does not write. Father Rambert resting up at Marseilles. Foundation of Notre-Dame de Cléry by Fathers Brun, Marchal and Dassy. Death of Father Ciamin in Ceylon.

L.J.C. et MI.

Bellon

[Marseilles]

January 28, 1854.

That is beginning to go beyond the limits of what is permissible, my dear Father Bellon. Do you believe that I am so easily able to resign myself to this situation and to look upon you as if you were poles apart from me. It certainly suffices that you are at Romans and that I am continually deprived of your kind and gentle presence. Write to me from time to time! It seems to me that I have not heard from you in a century.

One day’s interruption ... which shows you, my dear friend, my good will so often rendered ineffective. You know it; I do not need to tell you how.

I will give you some of Father Rambert’s news. It seems to me that he is in good health and I am tempted to believe that you allowed yourself to become a little too concerned that the climate where he had been sick would be a hindrance to his recovery. From the day of his unforeseen arrival, I have been telling him that he will return to his post when he has regained his strength. It would perhaps mean exposing him to a situation of concern to send him back there before the end of winter, but when I think of the overload of work which is weighing on all of you, I would not want to wait until Easter to send him off once again on the road to Romans. What is your opinion on this?

What an immense amount of labour to set up the establishment of Orleans, an establishment promised for such a long time and for which Bishop Dupanloup acquitted himself so graciously. He had to obtain three resignations and he already had obtained them when he was urging me through six successive letters to not delay carrying out the project, a project not only decided upon, but already underway. I do not know whether I told you that I had decided to send him Father Brun as the man in charge of the parish; we had to present a mature man and one who could give him moral support and encouragement when needed. He asked as a favour that we do not give him as a companion one of our young Fathers. I was compelled to make a further sacrifice and give him Father Marchal, who is such a good religious and so full of zeal. Tempier wanted to keep him for Galveston to replace Father Baudrand, but I wanted to deal with what was most urgent and Father Marchal received his obedience for Orleans. I sent Father Dassy to negotiate with the Bishop and to give them some hope of seeing him give a mission of some kind. When things are well underway, the latter, Father Dassy, will come back to Marseilles and I will see to it that a third Father, from our young Fathers, is added to Fathers Brun and Marchal.

I had written a humble, very accommodating letter to Father Cumin2 to parry the lightning bolt of his anger; I succeeded in part. He asked me for the impossible in exchange. He will just have to be satisfied with the young father whom I will send him. I cannot simply jettison them because they are young.

There, dear friend, you have a few of our affairs that it would be so pleasant to treat with you; but we have to want what God wants. This good Master also wants me to love you. That is why I take pleasure in saying it to you again while sending you my heartfelt greetings.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S.: Before the circular is sent out, I am notifying you that I have received word of the h[ol]y death of our Father Ciamin. You will be edified in reading what Father Semeria has written to me. Do not delay any longer in granting him the suffrages which are prescribed, namely, a Mass from each one of you and the rest.

1 Orig.: Rome. Postulation Archives, L. M.-Bellon.

2 Father Cumin, superior of the house at Limoges. would have liked to keep Father Brun who was an able preacher.

1195. To Father Tortel, director of the major seminary at Frejus. Var.1

1195:XI in Oblate Writings

Gratitude and greetings. Activities, joys and suffering of the Bishop of Marseilles.

L.J.C. et MI.

Tortel

[Marseilles]

January 31, 1854.

For some time now, my dear son, I am so taken up with external activities that I spend entire days without being able to sit down at my desk. I have told myself a hundred times that I needed to write to you and a hundred times I was prevented from doing so. Today, I am about to go out to receive someone’s vows as a religious, and already they have come to tell me that several people are waiting for me in my chapel, but I am writing to you by torch light and even if I were to write you a couple of words to thank you for remembering me and to assure you of my enduring paternal affection, I would do it before leaving here. I don’t need to tell you how much pleasure your letter gave to me. Write me from time to time without taking offence at the delay in my responses. You have often seen with your own eyes how I am pulled a thousand ways at once. My diocese, or more properly speaking, the immense city in which I dwell requires of me an incessant labour; the growth of the Congregation demands an endless amount of correspondence. There are, no doubt, some things that run rather smoothly, but there are others that are very difficult, and when one has to try to reconcile differences, it is an insuperable task. Thank God you are no source of worry at Fréjus. But what a host of worries America has provided for me! We had to expel from the Congregat[ion] that wretched Carthusian2 that we accepted, putting too much confidence in his label of contents. How could one be suspicious of a religious who had spent ten years among the Carthusians? Did we not also have to expel Mondini? Those are the thorny trials that draw blood as we gather the roses that the Lord wants to grant us.

Goodbye, goodbye, dear son. They are calling for me from all sides. No matter, I have had the pleasure of conversing for a minute with you and my heart tells me that you will forgive my very involuntary delay. Greet all our Fathers and tell Father Berne that he too should have3 a little patience. I acknowledge my debt and will pay it.

I bless you all. Goodbye.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles,

s.g.

1 Original: Lowell, Provincial Archives, OMI., L. M.-Tortel.

2 Father Lempfrit.

3 Ms.: est.

1196. [To Father Berne, at the major seminary in Frejus].1

1196:XI in Oblate Writings

Thanks for the New Year’s wishes and the news from the seminary. Expresses his affection.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Berne

Marseilles,

February 5, 1854.

I had sent you word, my dear son, via Father Tortel, that I would not delay in writing you a few lines as soon as they would give me a moment’s respite. Since I had to preside the ceremonies three days running at the Jesuits on the occasion of the beatification of the servants of God de Brito and Bobola,2 I allowed myself the privilege of missing vespers in the hope that no one would come to disturb me in this short time span. I am not sure of having won this short rest; already someone comes to disturb me. No matter, you enjoy all my attention and I hop over a pile of other letters which are clamoring for their turn on my overburdened desk.

First of all, I begin by thanking you for your good wishes; I appreciate them because they are the expression of the prayers that you have the charity [to offer on behalf of]2 your old father whose affection for you you know.

Next, I cannot tell you the pleasure that you gave me in communicating the good information on your community and seminary. I know of no other sweeter reward in this world for the efforts of your zeal and devotion. The diocese will feel the benefit of your good teaching and of your edifying example, and God will bless you for the good that you have done for souls. So it is that each one in his own field competes with the others among us to spread the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

It was with great earnestness, my dear son, that I gave you the responsibility which you felt was so strange to have assigned to you. I knew that you would keep order and regularity, and I harbored the hope that you would bring to the exercise of your responsibility a rather delicate one, I agree much restraint and decorum.3 What you tell me confirms that I was not deceived in my expectations. Moreover, you acted most correctly in referring this matter to me as you have done. Be at peace, I will never betray your confidence. When the occasion arises, I will use the means that you point out to me to obtain what is your very reasonable desire.

I was quite right in saying that they would not leave me in peace. Here is someone coming into my study. Oh! If I had a room at the seminary, how I would run away to hide in it! But you know the icebox that is set aside for me in that wretched house. Perish the thought of ever entering it during the entire winter season.

A very abrupt goodbye, then. May God bless those without tact. I have to forgive them today for having torn me away from an interchange which was balm to my heart, that heart which is very much yours, my dear son whom I love tenderly.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles,

S.G.

1 Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives, L. M.-Beme.

2 Jean de Brito (1647-1693), beatified August 21. 1853 and Andre Bobola (15911657), beatified October 30. 1853.

3 Ms.: ...“l’expression des prières que vous avez la charité de votre vieux père dont” ...

4 Father Berne had said that the community was suffering from “certain kinds of neglect very prejudicial to the common good. The Founder had asked Father Berne to make these known to him and, no doubt, asked him to work to reform whatever he could. cf. Letter M.-Berne. September 8, 1852. It was probably a case, among other irregularities. of the way the seminary directors spent their summer vacations, *cf.* letters nos. 1156 and 1163.

1197. [To Father Charles Baret, at Limogesj.1

1197:XI in Oblate Writings

Thanks him for his New Year’s wishes.

L.J.C. et MI.

Baret

Marseilles,

February 6, 1854.

What a happy thought you had, dear son, in writing to me! For me, it was like receiving genuine New Year’s gifts. I do not know if it is rarity which makes me prize it all the more. Nonetheless, the fact is that your letter gave me inexpressible pleasure. And I read it twice so much my heart found it sweet to savour the filial sentiments that you expressed so freely.2

1 Orig.: Rome. Postulation Archives. L. M.-Baret.

2 This letter, hardly begun, was taken up again July 17. cf. letter no. 1220.

1198. [To Father Dassy, at Orleans].1

1198:XI in Oblate Writings

The joy of knowing that the Oblates are taking possession of Notre Dame de Cléry. Gratitude on the part of Bishop Dupanloup, his Vicars General and the Sulpicians. The community, to be completed as soon as possible, will be made up of four Fathers.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Dassy

[Marseilles],

February 11,1854.

My dear Dassy, I was waiting to write you so you could send me the final word on your negotiations with the very fine Bishop to whom I had sent you. Your letter of yesterday tells me that you have finished your negotiations and on Sunday, our Fathers will be installed in their new home.

First of all, I must express my gratitude for the goodness and the paternal welcome given us by the Bishop of Orleans and I am deeply touched by the warm-hearted response of the Vicars General and the priests of St-Sulpice.2 I do not have the privilege of knowing personally the Vicars G[enera]l. I am not speaking of l’abbé Gaduel, but I am not surprised, although I am deeply touched, that the Sulpician priests recognized in you the children of the man who is the most attached to their precious Congregation and who considers it a privilege to demonstrate this on every possible occasion.

It is my very firm intention to assign four missionaries to this new foundation, but we have to have a little patience and we have to take into consideration the fact that we are still only a small family, perhaps too spread out for its resources. Consequently, I have been intractable in regards to the requests which have been addressed to me, no matter how insistent they were. Immediately after Easter, and a little earlier if it is absolutely necessary, I will send the third man. To begin forming a community, that is an essential requirement. When the first attempt is made to launch a mission or to put on a retreat in the form of a mission, my idea would be that you should be the one to give it; you could remain on the spot waging your campaign right up to the time set for the pilgrimage of which you spoke to me. You would prepare yourself to bear the burden of preaching: it seems to me that this solemn action falls to your lot. As for the plan afoot to call me there, I am really very old to allow myself that kind of an excursion. No doubt it would be a great joy for me to see the Congreg[atio]n installed in the shrine with the happy assurance of reviving and restoring devotion to our good Mother there, but Orleans is a great distance away from Marseilles!

You have made no further mention of the hope that the Bishop of Orleans entertained of settling us in the former cloister. We must keep that in view. What a difference there is between being crammed into a tiny rectory and in occupying the ample living space of former religious. I assume that after tomorrow, when you will be on the spot, you will stir up the courage of those who can contribute to the success of this fine project.

I ask you, dear son, to pass on my warmest regards to the Bishop of Orleans, my thanks to the Vicars General and my affection, in particular, to l’abbé Gaduel. I will include with your letter a few lines to dear Fathers Brun and Marchal. I am still expecting some kind of a letter from you before your return and I send you my heartfelt greetings.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles,

SG.

1 Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives, L. M.-Dassy.

2 The Vicars General of Orleans were twelve in number, among whom was l’abbé Gaduel, a priest from Marseilles. The Sulpicians were in charge of the major seminary.

151. To the Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.1

151:V in Oblate Writings

Fr. Laverlochère has begun his round of preaching in Southern France. He will then follow what is suggested by the Council of Lyon.

Propagation of the Faith

Marseilles,

February 18, 1854.

Dear Sirs,

I would like to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated the 3rd of this month which contained a draft for 1 000 francs for the travelling expenses of Fr. Laverlochère as well as another letter addressed directly to this zealous missionary of the savages.

Gentlemen, I thank you for the generous fashion in which you will provide for the expenses to be met by Fr. Laverlochère in preaching for the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith in the various dioceses of France and for the tactful attention regarding his health. Even though he has made progress since his return from America, he is still far from total recovery. Rest assured that this good Father is prepared to devote all his ardour and his strength to the admirable Missionary Society whose importance for the missions he fully understands. We will therefore have to moderate his zeal and it is a wise measure to limit his preaching to the dioceses closest to us until the health of Fr. Laverlochère enables him to go farther afield. He has already begun his first attempts at preaching close to Marseilles and is now in the diocese of Fréjus where he was called for the same purpose. As soon as he has returned I will give him your letter and have him submit to me the campaign programme he will have established according to your instructions.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of the my high regard and gratitude wherewith I remain your most humble servant.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Orig.: Rome. Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder.

133.[To Bishop Dupanloup of Orleans].1

133:XIII in Oblate Writings

Gratitude. The Oblates have the grace of state for ministry among the poor.

Dupanloup Bishop

Marseilles,

February 28, 1854.

Your Lordship,

I was awaiting Father Dassy’s return to thank you for all the kindness that you have shown him and his companions. I am pleased that they will be established in your diocese. I hope they will accomplish the good that you expect of them. I request you only to remember that they belong to a newborn family and that you must be satisfied with seeing them engaged, in all humility, in the conversion of the most abandoned souls. Reserve the poor for them. Their gift of grace is for this kind of ministry.

Accept, Your Lordship, the renewed assurance of my respect and most affectionate sentiments.

+ C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Orig.: Paris, National Library, Manuscript Department, Correspondence Dupanloup, Vol. 27.

1199. [To Father Pianelli, at Ajaccio]1

1199:XI in Oblate Writings

Refusal to grant a dispensation from vows.

Pianelli

[Marseilles],

March 6, 1854.

Your letter deeply distressed me. It is impossible for me not to tell you that you have allowed to weaken in you the grace of your vocation and that in your heart of hearts you are unfaithful to it. Too intensely preoccupied with the worldly interests of your family, you are losing sight of your own salvation, a salvation gravely prejudiced by the course of action you are suggesting to me. You are carrying too far the obligations one has toward one’s parents. To care for the needs of a father or a mother is all that a religious is obliged to do - and again, he must see to their needs without sacrificing his vocation when he is offered the means to do so. All that I can grant you, without betraying my conscience and yours, is to authorize you to accept temporarily a gainful employment outside of our communities. But to break your sacred bonds, never would I lend my ministry to such a profanation, never would I be a party to such spiritual assassination. They will perhaps advise you to address your request to Rome directly. Be careful: *Deus non irridetur.* Remember, my dear child, that if you adopt these extreme means, the responsibility of which I will allow to rest with you, you will be obliged to admit to Rome that I refused to grant you this fatal dispensation. Alas! I know that in Rome when this dispensation is granted, it is usually to rid a congregation of a discontented member. *Ipse viderit.*

1 YENVEUX VIIt. 321. Yenveux does not give us the name of the person to whom this letter is written. None of the Fathers in France left the Congregation in 1854*.* but Father Pianelli was preparing to do so. He did, in fact, leave in 1855. Also, his family was in need. cf. letters Magnan to Mazenod February 7 and March 12, 1854.

188. [Reverend Fr. Ricard, St Joseph’s House, Olympia, Washington Territory, North America, via Liverpool and New York]1

188:II in Oblate Writings

Visit to Marseilles of Fr. M. Accolti, S.J. Two Fathers to be sent. Fr. Ricard to go to California to found a mission there: Fr. d’Herbomez to take his place in Oregon.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Ricard

Marseilles,

March 7, 1854.

My dear Fr. Ricard, I was waiting for the visit of Fr. Accolti, so eagerly expected, before writing to you. Now at last he has arrived. He has spent only two days at Marseilles, and today he goes to Rome, but I have made it a duty for myself to show him every possible courtesy. I cannot tell you how much this father has given me pleasure. I could not prevent myself from expressing this to him, while expressing to him at the same time my warmest gratitude for the friendship of which he has given you so many proofs. I invited him to dine with some of our Fathers and we spoke for a long time together on everything that concerns you. He has brought me up to date with everything, but he was indignant at the proposal that M. Brouillet has made to you. He intends to reproach him for it next time he sees him. He would not have thought him capable of lending himself to such trickery. On this matter he said to me that he could not even imagine why some time ago you agreed to cede half of your claim2 because it was all yours, as Valamet3 is theirs, and he proved this to them by selling it. I was going to send you the two subjects whom I have been able to procure for your mission with so much difficulty.4 I am holding an ordination for them on Saturday, but Fr. Accolti has assured me that he intends to return in May, and so I have preferred to wait so that they can make the journey with him by way of Nicaragua, for the route round Cape Horn is too long.

This is what we have agreed with regard to our missions with Fr. Accolti. His view is that we must not delay any longer going into California, which makes me greatly regret that you did not decide to go to that region with him when he suggested it to you. By now we would have been well established in the area, and the Bishop5 would not have had cause to form bad impressions because of the folly of the infamous Fr. Lempfrit who has brought dishonor on us all over that part of the world. But Fr. Accolti says that we are still in time, and he has taken it on himself to dissipate all the clouds that may have formed in the mind of the Bishop. After that, this is what we must do. When Fr. Accolti comes back, you will go down with him to California to establish yourself there with one of the fathers whom I will send you and whom Fr. Accolti can leave in San Francisco while he goes on to Oregon to conclude some business. You will still be Superior over all the missions, but you will hand over to Fr. d’Herbomez the superiorship of Oregon as a Vice-Vicar, always subject to your government. I hope, and so does Fr. Accolti, that your health will improve in the climate of California, which is much milder.6

1 Orig. - Ottawa, Arch. Deschâtelets. The address was written in English by Fr. Casimir Aubert.

2 A “claim” was an option or right of development on a plot of land.

3 Valamet or ‘Walamet was a locality.

4 The following were designated for Oregon: Fr. P. Durieu, Bro. P. Richard and Fr. Molloy of Bytown, replaced in Canada by Fr. N. Burtin, who came from France.

5 Mgr Alemany, Bishop of San Francisco.

6 The rest of the letter is by Fr. C. Aubert.

1200. [To Father Vandenberghe, at Notre-Dame de L’Osierj.1

1200:XI in Oblate Writings

Father Vandenberghe, novice master, will be superior of the community as well. Brothers working in the kitchen. Apostates.

Vandenberghe

[Marseilles]

March 10, 1854.

Your appointment as Superior of the house was not made to lighten your load. Thus it is, my dear son, that we are always the servants of the servants of God. For, if in one sense, it is said that to serve is to reign, here to reign is to serve.

Everywhere they are asking for brothers to work in the kitchen. See to it that our lay brothers learn how to cook. That is more useful to us than having them work out in the fields.

In the name of God, in your lectures, do not fear to threaten with damnation the wretch who for any excuse whatever betrays his sacred commitments. There is not one among those wretches who left us whom I do not consider an apostate. The dispensation that they extort from us is a kind of violence for which they will without fail have to render an account before the judgment seat of God.

1 YENVEUX VII. 135; VIII. 232. 265.

1201. [To Reverend Father Fabre, director of the major seminary, Marseilles].1

1201:XI in Oblate Writings

Business: letter to the gardener, stocks on the pump for extinguishing fires.

L.J.C. et MI.

Fabre

[Marseilles]

March 14, 1854.

My dear son, I am sending you the letter which I wrote to Gras, the gardener. You will seal it after having read it and you will communicate it to him. Really, it is frustrating never being able to come to terms with that blessed man.

I fear that Tempier may have forgotten to tell you that I needs must send in as soon as possible my bonds on the fire pump. The newspaper is notifying us of a definite deadline to exchange them for a permanent title. Since these good people have given me this gift, I must not allow it to expire through my own fault. The office is at Quai de Canal no. 3. You must go there from ten in the morning to noon or from three o’clock in the afternoon until five.

Goodbye.

1 Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives. L. M.-Fabre. Father Fabre had been appointed procurator general in the Chapter of 1850.

1202. [To Father de L’Hermite, at N.-D. de Talence].1

1202:XI in Oblate Writings

Regrets that he cannot write to the Oblates more often. Fewer pilgrimages since Father Dassy’s departure. Report on missions. Cardinal Donnet will close the missions. Data on N.-D. de Talence. Look after his health.

L.J.C. et M.I.

L’Hermite

Marseilles,

March 20, 1854.

I am quite sure, my dear son, that you are expecting nothing less

March 21.

than a letter from me. You must have been thinking that I am a bankrupt debtor and that nothing could be expected from me except a little goodwill without practical effect. I admit that someone who does not know the kind of life that people constrain me to lead here could indulge in whispered murmurings; but you, my dear son, who have seen things at close quarters, you no doubt pity me and do not hold it against me. You know that nothing could please me more than to converse at length and often with my children, whom I love with such a tender affection; but that I am not at all free to follow the impulse of my heart and that I am too often reduced to aspire to them as I do to God with short, swift prayers, with this difference, however: whereas God knows these aspirations and accepts them, my children do not comprehend them and do not give me any credit for them. Yet, that is the way things are, and since receiving your letter to which I am so late in replying, I cannot count the arrows that I have shot off in your direction and which, unfortunately, have fallen before reaching you. But today I am going to go ahead and, even though I have been disturbed three times already since I have taken up my pen, I am going to the very end, unless prevented by force majeure.

I want to start by asking how you are. I have been told that you have been ill and tired out. Please give me a precise and honest answer on this point. Next, you will tell me how things are going at Talence. I have to tell you, but confidentially, that I received here the visit of a young gentleman, a proprietor and resident of Talence, whose name is Desiré Tolentin. This young gentleman felt obliged to tell me that since Father Dassy left, the pilgrimage has fallen flat; that during the time this Father was there, the whole city of Bordeaux would come, with the Congregations carrying their banners high, and crowds of organized groups; the shrine was then alive and always in celebration; but that everything has come to a standstill since his departure, that the centre of devotion is moving elsewhere, that Verdelais is prospering to the detriment of Talence. I didn’t conceal from this gentleman the fact that I found his account a bit exaggerated and definitely inspired by too exclusive an attachment to the former Superior. Nevertheless, I also decided to write to one of you in view of being better informed about these realities. When you answer, start your letter on top of the page. The overly respectful blank space that you leave is larceny committed against myself. Write to me in two sittings, if you will, but darken the whole of your paper sheet with your words which are so welcome to my heart. Take care among all else to retain the memory of your missions by means of reports filled with sufficient detail. Let it not be the case with you as it is with us: we have buried in oblivion marvels of grace comparable to the most beautiful things we read about in the first centuries of Christianity.

With great pleasure I notice that the Cardinal of Bordeaux has adopted my method of closing the missions that we give in his diocese. I look upon it as a duty, but what a consolation it is for a Pastor to see himself surrounded by so many converted souls and to administer the sacrament of confirmation and give the Holy Spirit to all those adults who otherwise would never receive him. I have not been able to have such a clear and striking practice appreciated elsewhere.

You will have been waiting, my dear son, for my consent that you busy yourself in studying the documents which could furnish material for the brochure you would like to publish on the shrine of Talence. I would have liked to tell you much sooner that, far from being opposed, I am rather pleased to see you wanting thus to promote the honour of your shrine. So give yourself to this work with zeal and devotedness, thereby increasing the faithful’s devotion to our good Mother whose power we must exalt. What I do recommend, though, is that you do not tire yourself too much and to husband your strength. In a few years’ time you will not need to be so cautious, but you are still quite young and you need to become more strong; take special care of your chest, avoid exposing yourself to catching colds. As soon as you feel the least trouble in your chest, stop immediately. These measures will not be needed for too long anymore, but, at present, do take care.

I would have liked to give you some details of our little events here, but I have to get ready to attend a charity sermon being preached in the church that you built by your discourses on Mary, our Mother.

Now tell me, will the major seminary of Bordeaux not provide us with a single member? That is beginning to amaze me. It is true that the Superior, Sulpician that he is, has hardly shown himself to be one of our friends. But we do have to respond to so many needs! God will provide thereto. Let us be faithful to the Code of Rules he has given us, and he will send us men who will imitate us. Goodbye, dear son, I bless and embrace you.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

S.G.

1 Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives, L. M.-L’Hermite.

1203. [To Father Bellon, at Romans].1

1203:XI in Oblate Writings

The Congregation will grant a pension to Father Bellon’s parents.

Bellon

[Marseilles],

March 22, 1854.

... I had, however, to express to you the pain I experienced because of the bad news you gave me in regard to your father. I don’t think you are in any doubt about how interested I am in regard to the position that his condition puts you in. You are definitely not capable of giving him back his health; but you can soften a bit his suffering through the means you point out to me. I wholeheartedly agree to that. You will share with him and your mother the salary that you are receiving from the diocese of Valence. You will arrange this with the Reverend Father Procurator General, who will probably have more facility to set up this pension from here than you can do it in Romans.

1 YENVEUX III, 35.

1204. To Mister Baret, priest, Missionary Oblate of Mary, Montet Street, at Limoges, Haute Vienne.1

1204:XI in Oblate Writings

Reproaches Father Baret for lack of gratitude. Archbishop Mosquera.

L.J.C. et MI.

[Marseilles], March 25, 1854.

I am put out, my dear Father Baret, at finding you in default, and for having given me reason to reproach you, a friendly reproach, to be sure, but a reproach just the same. I thought I had given you enough marks of friendship during your stay in Marseilles to flatter myself that you would have paid me back in kind and that my heart could count on your affection to which I hold as a mother does to the love of her child; now when one really loves one’s mother - you know I am more a mother than a father - one expresses this love to her, one invents occasions to prove one’s tenderness to her. Is that your case, dear son? You know my concern when you are travelling. So many accidents can happen! Now then! Have you as yet written me a single line to tell me that you arrived safe and sound? Who knows! Perhaps someone other than I knows something about that! I did not want to seek out information on this point. Such an aberration would have caused me too much pain. You were nevertheless able to understand that I had agreed to this trip of yours only to please you. The alleged motives were in my eyes only little pretexts which by themselves would never have sufficed to authorize such a considerable journey. You would have been working for others, you would have been working for yourself according to our Rules which are well known to you. Is it really demanding too much to ask for a little gratitude for the attentiveness I have shown in meeting your desires in some way?

The mail has just now brought me the answer I was awaiting from Rome. Archbishop Barnabo writes to me: “I hasten to inform you that His Holiness of our Lord has no problem in regard to communicating, as requested by the relatives of Archbishop Mosquera, the public Brief addressed to Your Illustrious Lordship concerning that Prelate. That being the case, you can without any concern give a copy of it to the above mentioned relatives of the deceased Archbishop of Bogota.”2

I think you will be pleased by this news, and with it I end this little letter which people won’t allow me to continue. I bless and embrace you with all my heart.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

S.G.

1 Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives. L. M.-Baret.

2 Archbishop Mosquera died during his stay in Marseille on December 10, 1853*.* Pius IX replied with a Brief to the Founders letter announcing the death and the solemn funeral for the deceased. Father Baret had preached the funeral eulogy (REY II. 482). In the Ms. the above quotation is in Italian.

189. [To Fr. Pierre Aubert].1

189:II in Oblate Writings

The sentence of expulsion of Fr. Mac Donagh has been sent to the Father Provincial. Fr. Molloy will be withdrawn from the Province to go and help Fr. Ricard in California. How is it that there are no vocations in Canada?

Aubert P

[Marseilles]

March 28, 1854.

So you have had no success with the poor Mac Donagh? There is something about that nation that can fill one with horror. I could not in conscience grant him a dispensation,2 or rather, to speak more precisely, I should say that I could not give way to the poor reasons that he gave me for ruining him with a dispensation, the greatest evil that can happen to an unworthy religious who wishes to break the ties by which he has bound himself for life on oath. It seems that you have all agreed with your Provincial, that he was behaving in such a way that he deserved to be expelled. Now that this sentence has been passed, I no longer have any difficulty, but always the regret of administering the final blow which, to all appearances, will assure his disgrace. I am sending the fatal document to the Provincial. Thus he will be free to join the college of Judas. You will have four of them from that nation in America who, with the four other Irishmen and an Englishman in England, will make a round total of nine who have committed apostasy or the equivalent. It is horrible!3

I am writing to the Provincial to warn him that I am sending Fr. Molloy to California, where Fr. Ricard will be going. This mission is linked with that of Oregon. It is absolutely necessary that Fr. Ricard have an Englishman to go with him; this is settled, and there is no more to be said about it. One of the two Fathers who were destined for Oregon will stay in Canada in Fr. Molloy’s place. I beg you most urgently never to impede the arrangements that I am obliged to make for the general good of the Congregation; you understand their value, even if they cause a little inconvenience here and there. For the moment I could not add more than one subject to the one who is to replace Fr. Molloy. But one notices that in a Catholic country like Canada it is always necessary to send subjects from elsewhere. How is it that there are no vocations among so many good Christians? Each Province in a Catholic country should be self-sufficient. And in your college of Bytown, directed by our own men, not a single pupil makes his way towards us! It is incredible! Even Oregon has provided us with a priest. From Texas we have two.4 We have only just appeared in Scotland, and an excellent priest has left his diocese to come to our novitiate at Sicklinghall.5 In Canada nobody, absolutely nobody moves; on the contrary, our subjects establish themselves there and then apostatise. So pray with a little more fervor at the midday litanies and above all at Mass....

1 Ms. Yenveux VII, 258; VIII, 133 and 267.

2 This letter has been poorly transcribed in Yenveux, and several phrases are unclear.

3 1850-1856 was a sad period for the Founder; there were 27 deaths and 30 departures, not counting the scholastics.

4 B. Duperry and J. P. de Lustrac entered the Congregation in Texas, and Fr. Jayol in Oregon.

5 William Bennett, who made his vows on September 21, 1854.

190. [To Fr. Santoni, Provincial of Canada].1

190:II in Oblate Writings

Sadness caused by Oblates who are unfaithful to their vocation.

Santoni

[Marseilles]

March 28, 1854.

Another traitor who must be expelled! This is the heaviest cross that I could have to carry, the sorest wound, which bleeds continually. I cannot accustom myself to such infidelity.... I call all these unworthy men to the tribunal of God, who will know how to reverse the sentence which has been torn from us by force here below.... But it is a terrible thing to have consciences of such a temper! I could never deplore sufficiently this calamity that has come upon him. He is to be pitied above all because he has not understood it.... So he is already of the society of Judas.

1 Ms. Yenveux VIII, 267. This letter was written at the end of March, after the General Council meeting of March 20 at which Fr. F. Mac Donagh was expelled from the house at Bytown; already on January 3 Bro. H. T. Clement had been expelled from the house at Montreal. We have dated the letter March 28, like the letter to Fr. Pierre Aubert on the same matter.

1205. [To Father Chaine, at N.-D. de L’Osier].1

1205:XI in Oblate Writings

Joy at learning that the ex-Oblate A. Chaine is asking to return to the Congregation.

Chaine

[Marseilles],

April 1, 1854.

How good it would be, my very dear son, if you were near to witness the impression your good, touching and excellent letter made on me! How I would have liked to hold you to my heart so that you could sense its beating as a result of the fine sentiments you express! I would have liked to shake your hand, embrace you with affection, to tell you again and again that all is forgotten, that your return, inspired by such generous and religious thoughts, made me experience an inexpressible happiness which compensated me for the keen chagrin, the sorrow - I must not conceal this from you - that infidelity brought me, an infidelity so well made up for by your present step. I love seeing you set out so courageously on the paths of humility. Oh! How a person is truly great when he lowers himself before God! And the men whose esteem one should covet, namely, the men who feed only on supernatural things, how greatly they admire a measure that is so in conformity to duty and atones so well for all the errors of the past!

And so I assure you, my dear son, that throughout the entire family there will be nothing else but a sole cry of joy at the news of your resolution, a resolution to which the family contributed by its prayer. You will be welcome among your brothers, as you are to your father who has never stopped loving you and who at this moment blesses you from the fullness of his heart and deepest affection.

1 RAMBERT II. 615: YENVEUX VIII, 315. Father Chaine re-entered the novitiate on March 22.

69. To Fr. Richard, priest and Oblate of M.I., Novice Master at Sicklinghall, England.1

69:III in Oblate Writings

Words of affection. Take care of his bad cough.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Richard

Marseilles,

April 2, 1854.

Only a word will this be, my dear son, hastily written in the presence of some who have come to take me to say mass in their confraternity. But I would wish with this word to express all my affection and tenderness for you, whom I love more than you could think possible. It is true that we have seen little of each other but I know you not one whit less than if you were near me. Distance is nothing to the soul; our hearts are united, our sentiments fuse as if there were no land or sea to separate us. Thus your letters affect me as balm for my soul. You afford me this happiness too rarely! In the name of God, take care of your health. Do not let it worsen, this cough which fatigues you. Suspend all activity if you are needful of rest. How many things I still have to tell you but I cannot make them wait any longer for me. Adieu, I bless and embrace you with all my heart.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Orig. - Rome, Postulation arch. - L. M. Richard.

1206. [To Father Chaine, at N.-D. de l’Osier].1

1206:XI in Oblate Writings

The Founder’s joy at Father Chaine’s return is not exaggerated; it corresponds to his suffering caused by the gravity of infidelity to one’s vows.

Chaine

[Marseilles],

April 24, 1854.

My dear son, you would never have been able to measure the depth of a father’s heart such as mine is. There, perhaps, you have the reason for your astonishment at finding me so affected in your regard. To be sure, I don’t want to water down your fault which I consider, in my soul and conscience, as the greatest that can be committed after apostasy from the faith; but the greater the fault, the greater my rejoicing has to be when I see it atoned. And so I can state to you that when I expressed myself as I did, it was well below the joy and happiness that I felt. Yes, you would have had to be present when the news came of your return; how tenderly I would have held you close in my arms. Perhaps when you would have felt my heart beating against yours and felt your face becoming wet with my tears, you might have grasped the sentiment that dominated me and you would have really told yourself that everything was forgiven, everything forgotten. Oh, my son! Let there be no more any question between ourselves concerning the errant time. I don’t want to hear anything said about it. I am nevertheless vividly moved by the good sentiments that God’s grace inspires in you. Daily I thank his mercy and I count the months of penance you have laid upon yourself and which had to be endured, according to the canonical laws, to restore you with honour to the rank that you have regained through your fidelity to the grace and the edification of your conduct.

I have left all else to write you hastily these few lines. My desire is, my dear son, that you read what is going on in the depths of my soul and that you love me in return as much as I love you. I bless you with all my heart.

1 RAMBERT II, 617: YENVEUX VIII, 3l6.

155. To the Members of the Central Council for Southern France of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.1

155:V in Oblate Writings

Dispatch of a report on the needs of the Oblate Missions. Galveston, Buffalo, and Leeds are in need of special aid.

Propagation of the Faith

Marseilles,

April 30, 1854.

Dear Sirs,

Please find enclosed the documents which contain our requests for assistance for the foreign missions of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate with the indication of the relative amounts, the addition of which represents the total grant we hope to obtain for them in 1854 from the admirable Missionary Society whose temporal interests you administer with such wisdom and zeal.

Gentlemen, you know that these documents are drawn up on the basis of the annual reports sent in to the Secretary General of the Congregation by the superiors of each mission, and therefore it is not necessary to accompany them with any justification as to their truthfulness. It is sufficient for me to submit them to you. They thereby receive a complete guarantee as to exactitude and authenticity.

Nonetheless, I wish to make a few comments relative to the total amount of expenses in our missions. I would first of all like to state that, even though it may seem quite high, it is not much beyond that of last year which was limited to the strictly necessary in terms of the ordinary expenses for the nourishment and support of the missionaries as well as the extraordinary expenses for the purchase of land, construction of buildings, etc. As in the case of last year, the increase in the total amount of the expenses in our missions is principally due to this last item of expenditure. The sums requested for this item, however, are absolutely indispensable since the three missions for which this extraordinary assistance is requested are in such need that their very existence depends upon it and if they receive nothing they will be completely ruined.

The Galveston mission in Texas requests it urgently to complete the building which is to serve as a lodging for the Fathers and a college-seminary for the diocese. The completion of the building is one of the conditions set by the Company which sold the land. Buffalo is more or less in the same situation because, if the person who sold the land does not receive the amount promised this year, he will be able to repossess his property by forced expropriation without having to return the money already received. Lastly, the mission of Leeds is also compelled to turn to the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith in order to be able to pay for the land they had purchased and to construct on it the church which corresponds to the needs of the area. In particular, Gentlemen, I would ask you to consider the importance of this foundation which is like the center of our operations in Great Britain, where our missionaries work with such zeal and devotion for the good of religion and where their efforts have already produced such happy fruits of salvation and conversion. They merit your encouragement all the more since they have thus far completely forgotten their temporal interests, and after a sufficiently long number of years they still do not have a suitable house which, as you can well understand, a community should have when it already has enough foundations in a country to form a regular province.

The third item of expenditure is represented by the travelling expenses of the new apostolic workers sent by the Congregation to its various missions in the foreign countries. These journeys are long and difficult and ordinarily cross territories where the means of transportation are very expensive. The number of departures this year will easily amount to a dozen and that will consequently entail considerable costs.

Therefore, Gentlemen, you can see that our requests for assistance only involve absolutely necessary expenses and, once again, I have no hesitations in affirming a fact which can be easily verified in your annual report of the month of May. I am referring to the fact that, among all the religious Institutes, the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary, with due consideration for the number and importance of the missions, is the most moderate in terms of the amount of grants requested and the most economic in the use of the alms received from the charity of the Missionary Society whose supreme administration is entrusted to you.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of the highest regards wherewith I remain your most humble and obedient servant,

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

S.G.

1 Orig.: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, L. M.P. This letter was only signed by the Founder. A similar text dated May I is on file in Paris.

134.[To Cardinal Archbishop Dupont of Bourges].1

134:XIII in Oblate Writings

Oblates do not accept the direction of Minor Seminaries.

Dupont Bishop

Marseilles,

May 3, 1854.

Your Lordship,

A short trip undertaken after Easter obliged me to delay replying to the letter that Your Eminence did me the honor of writing. The proposal you made to me recalled the propitious time when such friendly relations were established between us on the occasion of your adopting the Oblates of Mary for your diocese of Avignon, Oblates whom you placed at Notre Dame de Lumières and entrusted with the Missions to preach the gospel to your people. You can assess, Your Lordship, how dear to my heart it would be once again to place my sons under your high protection and in the service of the flock under your pastoral care. But, as they are dedicated essentially to the Missions and to the direction of Major Seminaries, the Oblates are explicitly forbidden by their Rules to take on the direction of Minor Seminaries and houses of education ... Possibly some day the Congregation of the Missionaries of Mary Immaculate will be able to render other services to your diocese in the realm of its competencies. I desire it with all my wishes, recalling to Your Eminence, the homage of respectful attachment with which I remain, etc.

1 Rey II. 497 in a note; Yenveux II, 23.

1207. [To Father Baret, at St-Dizier].1

1207:XI in Oblate Writings

Father Baret’s lack of openness: he is preaching a Month of Mary without having informed the Founder. Mr. Mosquera’s address in Paris. Gift of the Cathedral Chapter of Bogota.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Baret

Marseilles,

May 3, 1854.

Who would have ever imagined, my dear son, that in allowing you to make a small pleasure trip to Limoges, you would take off from there to preach the Month of Mary at the other end of France! I don’t want to develop this idea, for it might lead me to reproach you for not being as I desire all my sons to be in my regard, namely, with no half-truths, frank, direct and to the point, incapable of surprising me by underhandedness, convinced that I will always very gladly align myself with what is just and reasonable, in a word, with what is feasible.

In any case, you are now at St-Dizier, and it is there that I must write to you in order to know Mr. Mosquera’s address which you forgot to give me when you forwarded to me his interesting letter to which it must have occurred to you that I must answer.2 You did indeed tell me that you had sought his hospitality when you were passing through Paris, but how am I to know to what number of the Champs-Elysees I have to address my letter? So please, my dear son, send me this address without delay, so that I don’t give the impression of neglecting to carry out a duty of gratitude toward the Chapter of Bogota, to whom I am addressing my thanks and civil respects in response to the kindness of Mr. Mosquera himself.

In your letter you do not mention the permission I told you about which the Holy Father had given me to communicate the Brief that His Holiness had the goodness to send to me on the occasion of the news I had given him of the death of the venerable confessor of the faith. I was all set to send you a copy as a consequence of this kind authorization, but I was deterred therefrom by Fathers Aubert and Nicolas who seemed to be sure that you already had a copy of this Brief, which copy you will certainly have used to respond to the legitimate desires of the excellent Mr. Mosquera.

I don’t need to tell you how touched I was by the fine initiative of the Chapter of Bogota. I hope they will be happy with the epistle I have addressed to them in reply to their letter. I shall receive this crozier with gratitude and respect and with devotion I will support myself therewith on our most solemn feast days.

Goodbye, my dear son, take all the care needed lest your chest suffer from your daily preaching. With affection I greet you with all the tenderness of my fatherly heart. You know how much I love you. I also bless you. Goodbye.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Orig.: Rome. Postulation Archives, L. M.-Baret.

2 On May 1. the Founder had written to General Mosquera. the brother of the deceased Archbishop of Bogota. to thank him for the letter he had received.

38. To His Eminence Cardinal Fransoni.1

38:V in Oblate Writings

Upon the orders of the Prefect of Propaganda two fathers will leave as soon as possible for Jaffna. The success of the Oblate apostolate in Ceylon.

Propaganda Fide

Marseilles,

May 4, 1854*.*

Your Eminence,

In conformity with Your Eminence’s orders I have made arrangements for two missionaries to leave as soon as possible for the vicariate of Jaffna in Ceylon. They will most likely leave before Bishop Bettachini has decided to write to me, but it suffices for me to have received orders from Your Eminence. I will pay the travel expenses out of the share of the Propagation of the Faith grant which I have in hand.

I recently received a report on the immense good accomplished by our missionaries in Ceylon last year and up until the recent months. There is reason to thank the Lord. Just think that in our missions where the atrocious cholera epidemic was rampant, all of the schismatics, one after another, wished to die in the bosom of the true Church and received the sacraments from our missionaries. I cannot tell you how happy I am with the regularity and fervor of these good fathers. They truly live like angels and the Lord recompenses them by blessing their ministry beyond all limits. Those in Colombo never tire from the difficulties they encounter and progress with the help of God.

Please accept the sentiments of respect wherewith I am your most humble and devoted servant.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 14 (1853-1854), f. 1033.

191. [To Fr. Verdet, superior at Brownsville].1

191:II in Oblate Writings

He is to consult his Council often. Regularity. Powers of Fr. Verdet as Superior and master of novices.

Verdet

[Marseilles]

May 4, 1854.

You cannot leave your brethren outside your making decisions, on whatever matter. Nobody in the Congregation has the power to act on his own ideas, without taking the advice of those who form his Council. It is not always necessary to follow the advice of others, but they must always be consulted; and when one is not in agreement it is suitable, even on matters that fall within the proper competence of a superior, to consult with the major superior, for fear of being too full of one’s own ideas and deceiving oneself as to what is opportune or suitable.

Follow the prescriptions of the Rule so that regular discipline does not suffer through your fault. Be the first to give an example of faithfulness and regularity in everything.

The more you have my confidence, the more your manner of government must be gentle and kindly so that peace of soul and contentment may be preserved in all things.

You may receive novices without my prior authorisation; when the time for their oblation has arrived, you will present them to me in good time.... In any case, once you have consulted your Council, and are satisfied that the subject is one whom I will accept, you may receive their vows before you have had my reply, and the novice will be fully committed to the Congregation; but in such a case he must realise that the Congregation is not committed to him except by the consent of the Superior General; this will make matters easier for you.

1 Ms. Yenveux VII, 141, 165. 202; VIII, 104.

192. [To Fr. Bermond, at Saint Boniface].1

192:II in Oblate Writings

Sending of Fr. Grandin. Respect, charity and good relations with Mgr Taché. Fr. Rey continues the letter, giving news of the Congregation. Mgr de Mazenod lives “only by the heart.”

Bermond

[Marseilles]

May 26, 1854.

I am sending you the excellent Fr. Grandin; he has all the virtues and qualities necessary for a good missionary, and he is leaving with so much devotion and good will that it is impossible that God will not use him to do good in the mission to which his goodness is calling him.... For such difficult and dangerous missions, I would not send a subject who was not interested in going; that would not be wise; I propose these posts to the zeal of our Fathers, and I wait for somebody to ask to go. This time, only Fr. Grandin has presented himself, without fear for the difficulties of the cold.

I regard your mission as the most difficult of all.... As a result it is you who are closest to my heart. I suffer through your privations more than you could possibly imagine. I wish I could help you in every possible way. I admire the heroism of your sacrifices with all the more reason because it is you, who endure so much suffering, who have urged me not to withdraw you from a country where you struggle along against the demons of infidelity and heresy. I hope that the demon of discord who also had come to join you will have been repelled totally. How could one not fear the judgement of the Lord, *omnis domus contra se divisa?....* Everybody must do his own part.

I assure you that one could not have better feelings than those that Mgr Taché expresses in all his letters. He replies victoriously to all the reproaches that have been made against him with too little moderation, and he does this in terms of wonderful humility and charity. It is not possible for me not to recognise that he has been seriously wronged. You must warmly recommend our fathers to lay aside all prejudice, and to live in perfect harmony with their superior, who has a double right to their respect. For you to persist in an estrangement of the heart which would no longer be excusable before God would cause me great unhappiness.

The appointment of Mgr Taché to the episcopate was providential because I was on the point of abandoning that mission..., the nomination of one of our men has in a way affiliated this mission to the Congregation.... It is only with a difficulty that is almost insurmountable that one can do good in missions that are governed by bishops whom the missionaries do not know. The Jesuits had to leave Oregon for this reason..., and without the insistence of Propaganda we would have done the same. Also, the Jesuits do not refuse these days that the Vicars Apostolic of their missions should be chosen from among themselves. In an episcopate of this kind there is nothing to fear.

Fr. Rey will not omit to amuse his Saint Thomas by giving you some interesting news about the Congregation, of which he would make a good historian. He works very hard; I could not be more satisfied with his entire conduct; I am glad to tell you this, because I have not forgotten that it was you whom God used to enrich the Congregation with him.

I often speak about you with Fr. Rey; he will be able to tell you that I love you; and I can repeat it. But will you one day be so good as to say the same to me? That would bring too much happiness to me, who live only by the heart.

1 Ms. Yenveux I, supplement 95; V, 159; IX, 98, 186, 203.

193. [To the Oblates of the diocese of Saint Boniface] ,1

193:II in Oblate Writings

Complaint because the missionaries write too little. The Founder will not live long, but his life will be continued in his sons. Counsels of charity, faithfulness to the Rules, etc.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Oblates of St. Boniface

Marseilles,

May 26, 1854.

To my dear sons the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in the diocese of Saint Boniface.

I wish I had four hands so that I could write at the same time to all my dear Fathers to whom I would be glad to give a sign of my fatherly love, at least now and again. They know how much I love them and that they are always present to my memory as they live in my heart, which age will never cause to grow cold. I pray for them twice a day, not counting the *pro fratribus nostris absentibus* of the litanies which we also recite every day. Oh no! Distance only separates bodies: the spirit and the heart leap over it easily. But I do beg you, do not leave me without letters from you. Often the post arrives and brings me nothing. In the last post I received nothing but a letter from Fr. Rémas: can it be that the others were not able to make use of that post? Twice a year is very little; why then do people allow years to go by? Do you realise what a torment they are for me? Every first day of August I receive an incurable wound.2 It does not matter, I will have the consolation of leaving behind me a phalanx of good missionaries who spend their lives in extending the kingdom of Jesus Christ and weaving a crown for themselves to wear in glory. You would not believe the joy that this thought gives me. I feel that I will continue to live through you, that I will continue to gain merit by your works. Death, which is approaching, will be sweet for me. You are all young, and others will walk in your footsteps; and so receive my blessing, my dear children whom I love with so tender an affection. Live for God and for the Church, for the sanctification of the poor heathen, for the Congregation to which you give honor, in return for the favor that she does you in welcoming you into her bosom. Be united, *cor unum et anima una.* Constantly re-read your holy Rules. By being faithful to them you will become holy. Be full of the respect that you owe to your superior, who represents in two ways the person of Jesus Christ our Master. Put aside every thought that could lead you to loosen the bonds that should unite you. Remember that *Deus charitas est.*

I would love to continue my conversation with you, but I must leave for I have to sleep at Allauch and so to continue my pastoral visitation, and he who must bring my letter to you sets off the day after tomorrow. No matter, you will find in these few lines the expression of my fatherly tenderness and my sincere wishes for your sanctification, your happiness, and also your health, in which I am more interested than in my own. I press you all close to my heart and bless you with all my soul.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

Superior General

P.S. My dear children, please accept this letter to all of you, since it has been impossible for me to write to you individually.

1 Original: Winnipeg, Provincial Archives. This letter was published in *Les Cloches de Saint-Boniface,* December 18, 1915.

2 The rest of this letter is dated “May 28, from S. Eugene d’Endoume, on pastoral visitation”.

194. [To Mgr Taché].1

194:II in Oblate Writings

Thanks for his last letter. Affection, Sending of “an angel in the person of Fr. Grandin”.

Taché

[Marseilles]

May 28, 1854.

Your last letter did me so much good.... I would like to receive a letter like that every month, if it were possible. If only you knew how happy I am that mine have given satisfaction to your heart. Be well assured that there is no affection like that which unites me to you, to whom I am bound by so many bonds. Many times a day I pass before the portrait that reminds me so well of your features, and each time I greet it with an act of love towards him whom it represents. And thus you are always present to me, as also at the holy sacrifice and at my evening meditation.

I am sending you an angel in the person of Fr. Grandin; you may know him; you saw him in the novitiate and your choice fell on him. He is delighted to consecrate himself to your difficult mission; he is a generous soul, just what you need. I would very much have liked to send with him a companion of the same calibre, but the one on whom I had set my mind has a terrible fear of the cold. To have sent him would have meant doing violence to him, while he is going willingly to Ceylon. You know that for distant and difficult missions I make it my duty to take our subjects’ desires into account; to do otherwise would expose me to many disappointments.

1 Ms. Yenveux I, supplement. 96; IX, 98, 202.

1208. For Father Fabre [at the Major Seminary of Marseilles].1

1208:XI in Oblate Writings

Maintenance of the country house of St-Louis. Letter to Bishop Taché.

L.J.C. et MI.

Fabre

Allauch,

May 29, 1854.

My dear son, I am sending you a letter for Bishop Taché. At the same time, I request you to send out here into the country the wall-paper merchant, Borelly by name, to take the measurements of the rooms we have to cover: he is to specify each salon or room so that we know what we have to choose. On the ground floor, he will have to measure the reception salon, the large and smaller dining room; on the first, all the rooms except the one on the side of the fountain; on the second, the two rooms and the larger room which still has to serve as a chapel. You would do well to have the merchant go to St-Louis on the day that you yourself will be there.

Goodbye. Don’t forget to inform Marc Cailhol that two missionaries are about to leave and that they expect the contributions of his charity for their missions.2

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

It would be a good thing to copy my letter to Bishop Taché into our register.3 It is always good to be able to recall what one has written when letters have to go so far and when they can, as has happened to us, be interpreted otherwise than they were intended to be. The register should be in my office. Josephine has the key.

If you think that it would be better to see first if the wall-paper merchant has materials that suit us before sending him to take the measurements, you can wait for my return. Speed up the work on the vestibule: two workers will definitely have to be assigned there.

1 Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives, L. M.-Fabre.

2 Fathers A. Saint-Genays and J.-E. Flurin, who were being sent to Jaffna.

3 We have only a brief excerpt, found in Yenveux, from this letter written to Bishop Taché on May 28. 1854. Cf. *Oblate Writings.* II. 76-77.

1209. [To Father Fabre, at the Major Seminary of Marseilles].1

1209:XI in Oblate Writings

Pastoral visit. Departure of missionaries. Crozier of Archbishop Mosquera. Work at St-Louis.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Fabre

Aubagne,

June 1,1854.

My dear son, they handed me your letter when I arrived at Aubagne yesterday evening. Our ceremony this morning was very long: we came out of the church at eleven o’clock, and so I have time to say only two words to you before dinner.

Marc Cailhol has been quite miserly, it seems to me. How could he consider that he was giving enough with the small contribution he gave to our latest departing men? In any case, I don’t think it is worth postponing the departure of our missionaries in order to wait for some miserable hand-outs he may yet give them. We will always have the occasion to use these even if he gives them after the missionaries have left. The need in Ceylon is urgent enough that we hasten a bit to come to the aid of that mission.

It’s not worth the trouble to send you the things that relate to you in the letter I have just received from the land of Natal; God willing, I shall be back in Marseilles on Saturday.

I would be quite put out if my letter to Bishop Taché missed the departure of Father Grandin. Shouldn’t we address our missives to him? It seems to me that Father Aubert, who is informed about the departures, told me that we would be on time until Wednesday. Isn’t it on the same day that the Brother who will be Father Grandin’s travelling companion was to leave Marseilles?

I am concerned that no one is saying anything about the crozier which was put on the carriage ten days before the letter I have received from Mr. Mosquera. How come it has not yet arrived? Inquire a bit at the bishopric and, if they have not received it, we will have to inquire at the stage coach office about the reason for this delay. The Archbishop’s brother’s letter advising us of this shipment is on my desk. I would have gladly used (this crozier) for the celebration of Pentecost.

I hope a second worker has been sent to stucco the vestibule of the country house. You will have been able to verify that in the visit you must have made there today. I was threatened to have this lone worker who was busy there around for another three weeks at my door. That would have amounted to giving up the idea of going to the country this year.

Midday has rung and we are going to dinner. That is not too soon for me, for I haven’t eaten since this time yesterday. I feel fine when I don’t eat anything in the evenings when I am making a tour.

Goodbye, my dear son. Affectionate greetings. I bless you.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Orig.: Rome. Postulation Archives, L. M.-Fabre.

37. [To Fr. Etienne Semeria in Jaffna].1

37:IV (Ceylon) in Oblate Writings

Departure for Jaffna of Frs. Adrien Saint- Geneys and Jean-Emile Flurin. Bishop Bonnand, Visitor Apostolic in Ceylon. A copy of some extracts from a letter of Cardinal Fransoni. Propaganda is offering the Oblates a mission in Senegambia.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Semeria

Marseilles,

June 5, 1854.

This time, my dear son, my letter will be a lively one. I will only be able to write a few lines to you. I have just come back from a pastoral visit, yesterday I passed Pentecost Sunday in the Church, and today I must go back there, while tomorrow I shall confirm half the children in my city, that is to say, between a thousand and 1200. And while I am at work, the two missionaries whom I am sending you will set sail for Ceylon. They are a precious letter to you, and will express to you all that my pen cannot. If these Fathers really do carry out my commission, how many times they will tell you of the love I have for you, my beloved son!

Bishop Bettachini was asking me for two subjects, and the Cardinal Prefect asked for three. Had I had three available I would not have hesitated to give you them, but it has been difficult enough for me to choose two. At the same time I have had to send two to Oregon and one each to Red River and Montreal, and God knows whether people will be content with this unequal sharing.2

Frs. Saint-Geneys and Flurin, who are to come to Ceylon, are two delightful subjects. I could not say too much good of them. They have shown an admirable generosity in their faithfulness to the call of their vocation. They are setting out happy and full of good will, and I am quite certain that they will never give you any anxiety.

Yesterday I received your last letter, dated April 18. I am glad to see that you have been able to warn Bishop Bonnand3 against the subtleties, not to say the wiles, of the enemy. I do not think you will fail to show him the copy of Propaganda’s letter which I sent you. That was necessary in order to put the opposite case to what others, in bad faith, have told him. I congratulate myself on being in time to warn you against your excessive modesty and against the disposition to sacrifice part of the rights of your Vicariate, which I could see was in your mind. It was only too obvious that those wicked Fathers were harbouring unjust ambitions. There was no reason to yield anything at all. Press your claim with all the excellent arguments that you have on your side, and that is all.

I do not know whether I have cited to you the passage in the Cardinal Prefect’s letter that asked me for three missionaries. It impressed me: “... also A. Cassinelli, the Missionary Apostolic, has told me that you will soon be in a position to send to Jaffna three more able evangelical workers, members of your admirable Congregation of Oblates, in accord with my request. I cannot but tell you once more how pleased I am about this, and all the more so since, with these reinforcements which increase the number of Oblate missionaries, I shall be able to send elsewhere some of the secular priests who are in your Vicariate*”*4*.*

The words I have underlined made an impression on me. Is this not proof that he wants to entrust the Vicariate of Jaffna to the Oblates? It is high time! But does not the arrival of the Silvestrines also mean that what the first *minutante,* Mgr Buratti, said to me positively in Rome, that in time the whole island will be given to the Oblates, will not come true?

The rest of the Cardinal’s letter is as always: “I must finally tell you that the reply of the Vicar Apostolic of Pondicherry has not yet reached me, nor the report of the result of the mission, which is well known, that I had entrusted to him in order eventually to be able to take suitable decisions about the missionaries in Colombo. And so I will wait until I have received the reply I am waiting for, before I give you the full picture, etc.”5

Now Propaganda is offering me another Vicariate Apostolic, the third that I shall have refused. This one would be in Senegambia, but honestly, apart from the fact that I have not enough subjects to man it, I am not anxious to accept unhealthy countries which eat up those who live in them. I shall keep to the beautiful countries of Ceylon and Natal. The Kaffirs are not wicked, but they would not be easy to convert, because of polygamy which is rife on an alarming scale among that brutalised race. Red River, with its perpetual ice, is a difficult mission, and Oregon too is a rough part of the world. And so we already have our share of difficulty. I presume that if poor Keating has a grain of common sense left he will find in the Papal Brief that I am sending you something to reassure him.

Farewell, dear son; I bless you and embrace you with all my heart.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Original: Rome, Archive of the Postulation. L. M-Semeria. Yenveux I supplement 77 cites some lines from a letter that must have been written on March 10: ‘My dearest son, if you knew how distressed I am at not having been able to write to you by the last post... If you knew how busy I am... Everything conspires, certainly not to make me forget, but to make me seem to neglect my good son Semeria. the object of my tenderest affection.”

2 Fr. Paul Durieu and Bro. Richard to Oregon, Fr. Vital Grandin to Red River. and Fr. Nicholas Burtin to Montreal.

3 Bishop Bonnand. Vicar Apostolic of Pondicherry, sent by Propaganda to decide which Vicariate the missions of Sainte-Anne of Talavila and Kandy should belong to.

4 Original in Italian.

5 Original in Italian.

38. To our dear Fathers Mouchel, Keating, Vivier, Mauroit, Lebescou, Chounavel, Pélissier, Pulicani, Perréard, Duffo, Lallemant, Lacombe, Rouffiac and to our dear Brother De Steffanis’1.

38:IV (Ceylon) in Oblate Writings

Greetings and encouragement for the missionaries in Ceylon. The Founder’s heart “redoubles with energy and sensibility at the same time as it must become enlarged to feed a greater number of children with tenderness and love”. The sending of a Brief from the Pope and of a printed document with the litanies and prayers particular to the Order.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Oblates in Ceylon

Marseilles,

June 5, 1854.

There are so many of you in Ceylon, my very dear sons, that it would be impossible for me to write to each of you even if I had some time at my disposal. What then can it be when I can manage to snatch but a few short moments? I would not like, however, to allow those I have sent to help you to leave without at least saying that you are always present in my thoughts and occupy a prominent position in my heart. Let each of you individually accept this expression of my most affectionate feelings. Frs. Saint-Geneys and Flurin will tell you whether I have aged in my heart. In fact it redoubles with energy and sensibility at the same time as it must become enlarged to feed a greater number of children with tenderness and love. Could it be otherwise with the children that God gives me? Allow me this explosion of feeling; you are all worthy of my love and I thank God that he has chosen you to exercise the sublime apostolic ministry in which, through his help, you acquit yourselves so well. Continue my dear sons to honour your vocation and may the difficulties, troubles and contradictions not discourage you. These tribulations serve but to render your devotion the more meritorious. Be united among yourselves, live in perfect obedience to the man who represents me, or rather who holds the place of God among you. Do not stray from the wise direction he gives you. I know that you do not find it hard to follow that path which brings upon you the blessings of God.

I am sending to each of you the Brief which the Sovereign Pontiff deigned to address to me on the occasion of my sending a report to him. You will be touched, as we all were here, by the extreme benevolence of his touching words. There is not one of them that does not deserve to be well considered and which is not matter for encouragement. You will also receive a printed document which you will place in your breviaries in order that you will not run the risk of forgetting to recite each day the litanies and prayers which follow [and which]” are particular to the Order. I am most concerned that they be said exactly as prescribed.

Farewell my dear sons, I am forced to interrupt my talk with you.

Accept with my paternal blessing the fresh assurance of my most affectionate feelings.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles, Sup. Gen.

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

2 The original Ms. is torn at this point.

39. To His Eminence the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda Fide.1

39:V in Oblate Writings

The Oblate Congregation cannot accept new mission fields at present. Recent departure of a number of fathers for Canada, England, Natal, and Ceylon. Shouldn’t the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith provide the missionaries with liturgical vestments, sacred vessels, etc?

Propaganda Fide

Marseilles,

June 8, 1854.

Your Eminence,

My answer to your most welcome letter of May 16 has been somewhat delayed due to a pastoral visit I was making when the letter reached Marseilles.

I am most grateful for the intention expressed by Your Eminence to turn to our tiny Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate when there is a need to propagate our holy faith in infidel lands, and I would like to be able to adhere to your wishes.2 At present, however, it is impossible for the Congregation to accept any service other than the numerous ones it is already providing with the greatest possible zeal. It is of the utmost importance to supply those places with sufficient reinforcements to satisfy all the needs and that is what I have always tried to do. I recently sent three missionaries to St. Boniface and to Canada. Shortly before that, I sent two missionaries and a lay brother to Natal. Four have left for the missions of England, and two are ready to leave for Oregon even though Bishop Blanchet, the bishop of Nesqually, took the liberty of distributing a document through Canada, his country, which was insulting for the Missionary Oblates in his diocese. Two excellent men, priests in the Congregation, left this week for Ceylon. I had to be satisfied with sending two because Bishop Bettachini didn’t ask for more. In fact, he advised that not more than three thousand francs be spent for their trip. That was an impossible feat. Even though one of the two missionaries accepted to pass himself off as the manservant of the other in order to save half of the cost, the trip from Suez to Galle alone costs three thousand francs. The English have a monopoly over the Red Sea. They charge 80 pounds sterling in first class and 40 in second class which is available only to the servants of those in first class. Otherwise, there would have been no difficulty for the two missionaries to travel in second class. And what about the rest of the trip and food from Marseilles to Alexandria, from Alexandria to Cairo, and from Galle to Jaffna. How can you pay without money?

In this regard, Your Eminence, I feel you should decide that it would be more than fitting for the expenses relative to the vestments, sacred vessels, etc. which each missionary must bring along to be taken from the grants given by the Propagation of the Faith to the Apostolic Vicar of Jaffna. Thus far the Congregation, with great sacrifice, has taken care of supplying the Oblate Missionaries who are sent, but this is an unjust and unbearable burden. Don’t the missionaries who leave from Rome receive these necessary vestments from Propaganda Fide? Why should this expense be imposed upon the Congregation when the fact of providing its members should suffice?

Please accept the respectful sentiments wherewith I am your most humble and obedient servant.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide. Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 14 (1853-1854), ff. 1087-1088.

2 The Founder had refused the mission of Senegambie offered by Propaganda Fide in May 1954. Cf. A. PERBAL, “Missions acceptées de 1841 - 1861” in *Etudes Oblates,* t. 23 (1964), pp. 142-144.

1210. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].1

1210:XI in Oblate Writings

Invitation to come to Marseilles for the profession of Father de Saboulin.

Courtès

[Marseilles],

June 11, 1854.

I am really hoping that your convalescence will allow you to carry out the plan to come and see me on the occasion of Father de Saboulin’s profession,2 whom I have indeed found to be in a state of extraordinary joy and happiness. We will certainly not have to regret for having first of all urged this beautiful soul to the priesthood and then for having facilitated his entry into the Congregation. Independently of his virtues, which will benefit everyone, he will be able to render many small services which others, who enjoy better health than he, would not be capable of doing. I am therefore in full agreement with everything you tell me on this topic.

1 YENVEUX VtII. 130.

2 Leon Jules de Saboulin. born September 14, 1801, at Aix, priest on December 28, 1852, and Oblate on June 15. 1854.

195. [To Mgr Guigues].1

195:II in Oblate Writings

Mgr Taché has good principles and good feelings, and his missionaries must follow him. Complaints to Mgr Guigues, who writes too little.

Guigues

[Marseilles]

June 15, 1854.

Mgr Taché’s last letters are admirable in the principles and the sentiments that they express. I can only fear that our missionaries have been too biased against him, and even unjust.... I know that Mgr Taché& is very impressionable; perhaps at one time he was upset with all of us; but if he has modified his ideas, if he is showing himself to be a worthy son of the Congregation, as it is impossible to doubt, why do our Fathers hesitate to attach themselves to him in his double role as bishop and as superior?

Without doubt, my dear Bishop, the post has been delayed between Northern Canada and Marseilles. Who could remember the date of your last letter? Mine are clamouring in vain for a reply. We must be content with thanking God at least for the fact that you are well, which I learn by hearing echoes of your news. It is not to make you ashamed that I am writing today. I wished to take advantage of a few hours of solitude which I have found for myself in the seminary to prove to you that my heart is as firm as my hand, which, as you see, is not yet trembling. However, in two months’ time I will have completed 72 years. Nonetheless, I carry this burden on my shoulders, although I do not feel it, for God has preserved me until now from all illness. But if you acquire the habit of writing to me only once a year, I fear that it will take me a long time to receive letters from you. I would not like to be forced to mention the great difference between the correspondence of the Bishop of Viviers and your own, both of you in exactly the same position with regard to myself....

1 Ms. Yenveux IX, 202; Rey II, 501-502.

1211. [To Father J. Lagier, at the Major Seminary of Fréjus].1

1211:XI in Oblate Writings

Permission to visit his mother. The seminary directors are to spend their holidays in community.

Lagier

[Marseilles],

June 16, 1854.

I agree that you go and bring your mother the help she needs but I insist that it does not become an established principle that, in our seminary communities, once classes are ended, each one is free to start travelling. That is an abuse that I cannot tolerate. We are community men and not highway runners. The religious community subsists as always, even if the seminarians are gone. Even though the professors’ work is not more difficult than the preaching of missions, I nevertheless am of the view that they too need some rest, but this rest is to be taken in community; the community can, if need be, move to the country estate that belongs to the house. Except for this latter concession, the Jesuits, Lazarists, Picpus people and all the other religious Orders who serve in seminaries have the same outlook.

On another occasion I told you that we were not Sulpicians; and so it is to no avail that we inquire as to what their practice is; moreover, I can assure you that during the five years that I stayed at Saint-Sulpice in Paris, I never saw a single director leave the place during the holidays.

Therefore, I want to stress this principle so that all our seminary communities are aware of it. And so, let this be well known, it is useless asking me for permission to leave one’s community during the school holidays, unless I am given a reason that is so well founded that I could rightly invoke it in favour of any other member of the Congregation who belongs to a community other than that of the seminaries. This equality is required by justice for the good discipline of religious regularity.

The doctors are sending Father Picus to take a water cure. Father Chauviré, whom I did not allow last year to go and visit his father, is at my door again. God knows how reluctantly I am granting him this permission! It is somewhat forced and by constraint to the point that I am asking myself whether one should not make the sacrifice and give him a companion. Who knows if Father Chauvet will not ask me to go and see his sister, his reasons are as valid as those of the others are. There you have the community reduced to two men and these will be justified in complaining about their solitude.

Arrange these things so that these absences do not all take place at the same time and also that they be not too prolonged. You appreciate frankness: so, my dear Father, allow me to tell you for the common good that in past years people were not edified by the length of your stay outside the community. People expect something else from a religious of your stamp. My dear good Father, let us scrupulously avoid giving bad example. That is one of the major duties of someone who is placed in charge of others.

1 YENVEUX II, 18, 19.

196. [To Fr. Pierre Aubert, Superior at Bytown].1

196:II in Oblate Writings

Complaints against sons who do not write to their father, like Fr. Gaudet. Weakness of the Fathers at Buffalo.

Aubert P

[Marseilles]

June 17, 1854.

What can one say of others like Fr. Gaudet who let several years go by without giving me a sign of life? Should I draw from this the sad conclusion that one can only count on the affection and gratitude of a very small number of people? This is not something that should be assumed to be true in a Congregation like ours, especially during the life of the Father who has brought you all up to the life of perfection in the holy family whose ornament you are, and who has handed on the priesthood to most of you by the imposition of hands, which means that it is from me that you have that which is your glory and assures your happiness. I feel things like this, and that is why I am more sensitive than another would be to forgetfulness of them, which happens too often.

As for the discouragement of the Fathers who compose the house at Buffalo, this is due to a slackness which I wish I could pretend was not there. It is precisely when we meet difficulties that we must strengthen our resolve to bring to a successful outcome the task with which we have been entrusted. What do people think of soldiers who run away in face of the enemy? One dies at one’s post; such are the laws of honor. Should the laws of religion be any less obliging?

1 Ms. Yenveux V. 60, 182. Another brief extract of this letter was recopied in Yenveux (VII, 165), but unintelligibly.

1212. [To Father Vincens, at N.-D. de l’Osier].1

1212:XI in Oblate Writings

He is sending two lay brothers. Vows of Father de Saboulin and of Brother Mauran.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Vincens

Marseilles,

June 21, 1854.

Dear Father Vincens, I started a letter to you which has stayed behind on my desk at the seminary. I presume Father Tempier will be writing you also. However, since the two Brothers who are going to leave for l’Osier like to have a line from me, it is my pleasure to write and tell you that these brave children are coming to you as lay brothers. They took this decision with an exemplary attitude. Brother Abric will remain in our houses of Europe, Brother Bodard has expressed the desire that he be sent to the foreign missions. He would serve well at Galveston where they need a Brother on whom they can rely.

On the holy day of Corpus Domini, I received Father de Saboulin’s vows; and today those of Brother Mauran.2

I hasten to inform you that you are not yet to admit to the novitiate the postulant Lacroix whom Father Aubert out of over-confidence directed to you. I have received information which requires us to act with circumspection. In a few days’ time I shall tell you precisely what our attitude should be. Goodbye, dear Father Vincens. I have received your letter, the letter that I had begun to answer this morning.

Our two travellers are bidding me to hurry.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. I don’t have to urge you to treat these poor children with care. The demarcation line must nevertheless be established, but that as gently as possible.

1 Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives. L. M.-Vincens.

2 Ms. Maurand.

1213. [To Father Ch. Baret, at N.-D. de Cléry].1

1213:XI in Oblate Writings

Plans to keep Father Baret at Cléry for a short time. Reaction to his request to spend some time at the novitiate.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Baret

Marseilles,

June 22, 1854.

Pity me, my dearly loved son, but do not be cross with me. When Father Aubert said to you that I wanted to write you, that was indeed my intention, but who can list all the things that deterred me therefrom?

Among other things, I must have done what I am doing today in your regard. I had gone to the seminary with my briefcase full. From the mail they gave me your letter of the 19th written from Cléry. And so, I left aside my bundle and got myself busy only with you, because your letter is urgent and you need a prompt reply.

If I had written when I had first intended to do so, you would now know that I did not intend to leave you at Cléry. I simply wanted to show you an item of my treasure. It was a matter of a famous pilgrimage that one had to pay for with one’s personal ability. You yourself understand that it was not possible to let the two Fathers who are on the spot do the honours of the Congregation. I certainly do justice to all their eminent qualities in terms of virtue, of knowledge that sufficiently well befits an ordinary situation, etc., but, for an outstanding solemnity for which not only the good company of Orleans was announced but also a part of the St-Germain suburb, they themselves would not have been agreeable to foot the bill by themselves. You were at hand to provide this service and so I made you responsible for it. You could also have made a few appearances in the diocese, to do some good, to be sure, but also to establish the Congregation’s reputation. Then you would have come back to take up other tasks which you would have carried out with your usual zeal. There you have my whole plan. Things being as you tell me they are, I understand that your presence there is not that necessary. Still I am a bit put out that you didn’t have the chance of making an appearance in Orleans for the reason I mentioned above. It is not forbidden to take advantage of the means God puts into our hands for the benefit of the work that in his goodness he has entrusted to us; all that is quite in order and I have no scruples in this line, even though no one less than I wants to count on purely natural means. My whole trust is in God, and that is an added reason for using his gifts. Each one must then look into himself and not appropriate to himself anything he has received. All glory ought to rebound to its source: *soli Deo honor et gloria.*

I was tempted, my dear good son, to reproach you somewhat for having told me nothing either about the blessings granted to your mission of St-Dizier or of your appearance at Nancy where you must have had a talk with Father Audruger. I have just written to him in reply to his letter wherein he shows himself so little corrected in regard to his unjust claims and so very weak in his resolutions. But how can one complain of such a dear son who, moved by grace, confides such edifying things to me? I am really moved thereat and rejoice at your generous influence in this fine inspiration, but I see some difficulties against carrying out your plan. Do you merely want to spend some time in the house of l’Osier that is so close to the novitiate in order to derive some edification from the fidelity of those fervent men? The idea is indeed good, but experience has proven that the temporary stay of Fathers from outside the house has never edified the novices; to the contrary, this respite given to our veterans, who most probably are less reserved than they ought to be, has always had a bad effect, so much so that I have been asked to give no more permissions allowing men to come and take a rest in the shadow of this shrine. You will perhaps say to me that that is not what you are asking for, since, as you put it, you would like to redo a bit of the novitiate. That means living as a novice for some time on the premises of the novitiate itself and separated from the community as the novices are. This idea I perfectly understand, I find it praiseworthy, and I don’t doubt at all that you and everyone else would reap great benefits therefrom. But how could a person explain such an unusual measure? If this became a practice so that one would see the Fathers from time to time coming to renew themselves in the storehouse of the gold of God’s love, of pure charity, I wouldn’t ask for anything better nor be more in favour. But this very first example, which I would gladly see imitated, should, it seems to me, be buttressed by a second reason that is apparent. In your case, I would find such a reason in certain services that you could render to the novices with whom you would be living. Such would be, for example, giving a class of English, something that is so necessary and which I cry aloud for at l’Osier as at Marseilles and which we have always found a way to get out of, at least at Marseilles, to the great detriment of those whom I send to missions outside of France. Everywhere a person has to know how to speak English. Before leaving, one should at least know enough to make oneself understood. Or perhaps a class of composition, but you won’t have the time to do very much in this line. Besides, if one wants to live regularly as a good religious, one can do that in our communities by following the Rule and getting imbued with its spirit. Goodbye.

Now I have to find room to send you my affection and to bless you. I am waiting for Father Brun’s letter that you mentioned before deciding your departure from Cléry. I also have to find out if Father Richard is on mission or not. Fathers Brun and Marchal must have changed their original idea; they are the ones who asked me for a man who is already fully experienced and formed.

1: Rome. Postulation Archives, L. M.-Baret.

197. [To Fr. Santoni, Provincial of Canada].1

197:II in Oblate Writings

The Congregation is not governed by a parliamentary regime. The Founder proposes changing the Provincials and Superiors according to the terms of the Rule.

Santoni

[Marseilles]

June 26, 1854.

I wish to say something to you about the way in which you inform me of your business, and in which, it seems, you deal with it in the Council. It resembles a little too much the parliamentary way of proceeding. This is not the manner of government that I have established in the Congregation. I ask you not to forget what I have said.

Once more you ask me insistently to be replaced in your position as Provincial.... The reason for the term of three years for the duration of a Provincialate which our Rules prescribe has a real value which merits your consideration. Also, I assure you that I desire sincerely to be able to renew regularly in this way both Provincials and local Superiors in the Congregation; but you know that this is not easy, granted the state that our provinces and our houses are in.

1 Ms. Yenveux VII, 23, 234.

1214. [To Father Bellon, at Romans].1

1214:XI in Oblate Writings

Seminary directors are to spend their holidays in community. Retreats. The Founder’s next visit.

Bellon

[Marseilles],

July 3, 1854.

My dear Father Bellon, I am stunned when I see you emptying your house as though it were an established policy that our communities in seminaries are to melt away during the time of the students’ holidays. That, however, is not at all the case: I have explicitly expressed myself on this matter both at Fréjus and at Ajaccio. What reason could one give as to why the missionaries of our other communities should not also go travelling and running around at given periods of the year? That is intolerable. And so I ask you to retract all these permissions that you have given. When the seminarians have gone, the community of the missionaries remains in place. The directors take a rest, if they need to, in their community where the observance of the Rule ought to remain in force, with the sole modifications that such and such a community member’s health may require. If a trip has to be made, it is first of all arranged in such a way that it will not last long nor harm the good order and regularity of the house. This is to tell you that, should on occasion the absence of two members of the community be deemed necessary, they are to leave only one after the other, so as not to reduce the community to such an extent that it can no longer fulfill the duties prescribed by the holy Rule.

... Before all else, I declare that I will never allow, under whatever pretext, that we go and make our retreats in other communities that are not ours. Tell this to good Father B(erthuel) so that he gets that idea out of his head.

So don’t hesitate to keep all your people together until I come to Romans. Here is my itinerary. Except for force majeure, I shall leave here on the 18th, I will go to N.-D. de Lumières whose community I shall visit, now enlarged by all the Oblate scholastics who have gone there since the holidays began. From there I shall leave for Valence, Romans, etc.

I strongly approve Father Chauvet2 exercising his zeal by giving the odd retreat; that is a legitimate reason to make an excursion outside his community.

1 YENVEUX II. 17: IV. 189; REY II, 502.

2 Casimir Chauvet. Father Cyr Chauvet was at the Major Seminary of Fréjus.

1215. [To Father Charles Baret, at N.-D. de Cléry].45

1215:XI in Oblate Writings

Permission to leave Cléry and to go to the novitiate at N.-D. de l’Osier for renewal.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Bellon

Marseilles.

July 6,1854.

Why be troubled, my dear son, for having to write me and have me take up your affairs again? Is there anything I like more than to busy myself with my children? I do this daily and several times each day before the Lord to thank him for all the gifts he has showered upon you and to rejoice in his holy presence at being the father of such children. Yes, to have especially you as a son and to love you as I do. I know that, humanly speaking, this may cause me some pain at times on account of the fact that, because you do not understand this sufficiently, you do not respond as I would want you to this sentiment that is so deeply in my soul; but no, thanks be to God, I place myself above this far too human outlook, and I love you in God because you deserve it and that independently of every response on your part, no matter how delightful the thought of receiving the same might be for me.

When you express surprise, my dear son, that you have not received a second letter from me in regard to the request you addressed to me, you overlooked that fact that for the last 15 days I am on a pastoral visitation, which means that I leave at six o’clock in the morning and return home only in the evening or at night. Besides, I have sufficiently explained this, I feel. I did not send you to Cléry to remain there; it was so that you would make an appearance there and, because of some instruction that you might have given, that the diocese becomes aware that in our Congregation we have different kinds of men. Both you and Father Brun have written to tell me that there would be some difficulty in manifesting yourself there as I had intended: and thus your presence is no longer needed at Cléry.

There is still the second question which you bring up again in the letter to which I am replying, in regard to which you do not respond to the objections that I presented against this project of yours. These objections were weighty enough to merit a reaction on your part in writing to me. They remain in place. And so I tell you again that experience has proven that the presence of Fathers from outside the novitiate in the novitiate house is not good for the novices; I therefore had to take the stand not to give any more permissions for reasons of rest or other that people go to l’Osier from the Congregation’s various houses. I said that it would be a different situation if a given Father wanted to renew himself in the fervour of the novitiate and asked to enter therein again for some weeks with the disposition of wanting to edify, by his regularity, spirit of recollection, silence, etc., all the novices and the other Fathers of the house. The problem, as I envisaged it, is not strictly speaking a real problem, because it will always be easy to have people understand that one is motivated in this initiative only by the desire to spend some days at the novitiate to refresh one’s soul and to renew it in fervour in the company of so many good novices. If such a practice could be established, that would be an excellent thing. There would then be no more need to ask me something that I always refuse, namely, to go and spend two weeks with the Trappists or the Carthusians in search of what can easily be found right in our own midst. A bit of courage is needed, however, and a strong determination to remain totally separated from the local community at l’Osier, for the Fathers that make it up are so close by and yet one should not in that context have any more contact with them than those who are only novices have. In a word, one has to consent to live in the novitiate solitude that those who are preparing themselves for their holy profession live. Is that the way you understand things? Then you can direct your feet to this shrine. If not, then come peacefully back to Marseilles where you will sanctify yourself by simply observing the Rule, giving good example and receiving the same, as should always be the case in our houses.

Goodbye, my son. Affectionate greetings and my heartfelt blessing.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

S.G.

1 Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives. L. M.-Baret.

1216. [To Father Bellon, at Romans].1

1216:XI in Oblate Writings

Regulations regarding vacations of seminary directors. Father Bellon has permission to come to Marseilles via La Salette and Manosque.

Bellon

[Marseilles],

July 9, 1854.

I had intended to settle the question when I was on the spot, thereby establishing in full community the principles that ought to be recognized and followed. I owe it to you to tell you in advance what I would have definitively laid down, namely, in a case where I could accept that it was proper for a given person to be away for a short time, I would have determined the length of time and I would not have allowed more than two to be away at the same time, unless it be to fulfil some duty of the holy ministry, such as would be the giving of a spiritual retreat to religious communities or to parishes, for this would enter into the responsibilities of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. I would even like us to obtain this kind of work, in moderation, of course, but one that is useful both to the preacher and to those whom he is evangelizing.

... It is therefore perfectly in order that, relieved of the responsibility of your seminary as you are, you come to see me. I gladly agree that you come here the longer way. If your devotion inclines you to climb to La Salette, well and good; but I do not consider it fitting to allow you to go as far as N.-D. du Laus. You are authorized to pass by Manosque so that you may greet your parents, but do things in such a way that this trip is brief and can be admitted in public within the Congregation: for people may ask why each one does not have the privilege of going about here and there, as some permit themselves to do without any more reason than what they can give for their own self-interest. That would be so subversive of all regular discipline that it would be better to send everybody home.

Goodbye, my dear Father Bellon. Someone who is more strict than I am sees your detour to be rather long and quite costly; no matter, *quod scripsi, scripsi.* Affectionate greetings. I bless you.

Ch. J. E., Bishop of Marseilles.

1 YENVEUX II, 17; VI, 106.

1217. [To Father Vincens, at N.-D. de l’Osier].1

1217:XI in Oblate Writings

Father Fabre will check the financial state of our houses. Father Vincens preaching tour.

L.J.C. et MI.

Vincens

Marseilles,

July 9,1854.

Dear Father Vincens, I hoped to be in time to give you my affectionate greetings before you left l’Osier; since the cholera has come to Marseilles, however, I ought not leave my post here. Still, we would have had a good number of issues to settle during the few days we would have spent together at l’Osier. Since the good Lord does not allow it, I am deciding here what is to be done. To begin with, I am sending Father Fabre, who was supposed to accompany me, with the explicit mandate to verify the financial state of all the houses that he will pass through. 2° I assign as his travelling companion the excellent Father Génin who will replace Father Fayette in the post of procurator and bursar. Brother Audric will assist him in the area that requires bodily fatigue, etc. 3° I am sending to Father Fayette an obedience to go to Cléry as soon as he will have given his financial report to the General Procurator.

I am sending Father Baudre the dispensation he is waiting for: I advise him to start using it from next Sunday onwards, the solemnity of the feast of our Lady of Mount Carmel.

I am impatiently waiting for news from Brest and Quimper. Father Baudre’s change of direction will cast us into a tangle that cannot be unravelled, but that is a necessity if his presence is a condition *sine qua non* for the planned establishment.2

Wrack your brains as we have been doing in view of finding a good professor for the six or seven novices who not only have done no rhetoric but have had a very bad or very incomplete first education.

Do not kill yourself in the huge amount of work you are about to undertake and don’t forget to write to me from the various places where you will be stopping.

Goodbye, a good trip, good health, and no excess in your work which is already so heavy. Goodbye. I bless you and send you affectionate greetings.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

S.G.

1 Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives, L. M.-Vincens.

2 Though still a novice, Baudre had been appointed Superior of the house in Galveston. Texas. Cf. General Council. May 22, 1854.

1218. [To Father Fabre, at N.-D. de l’Osier]1

1218:XI in Oblate Writings

Cholera at Marseilles. Dispensation from abstinence. Father Fabre is to examine the financial books of the houses and is not to return to Marseilles until after the epidemic.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Fabre

Marseilles,

July 12, 1854.

My good and dear son, I wanted to write you today in order to give you an account of the health situation here. Before taking up my pen, I received your fine letter of the 10th. I begin by thanking you.

July 15, 1854.

I resume the letter I began a few days ago. I wrote to you since from another work-station, but it is proper that I give you an account of our health situation. Alas, things are not any better. We had 116 deaths yesterday, ten more than the day before yesterday, out of a population that has diminished by some sixty thousand people. Nothing indicates that the emigration will stop. At the Prefecture, they cannot cope with the requests for passports, and the greater number doesn’t even ask for them. There is general panic. People are fleeing rather than simply going away. Until now, no priest has been struck down. I cannot say, however, the there are none who have been afraid. Ours are not of this group, thanks be to God; several times a night people knock at the doors of Le Calvaire. The Italians especially are not spared. All who are infected perish.

I have finally given in to the current trend. Against my own personal convictions, I have granted the dispensation from abstinence on Fridays and Saturdays until Our Lady in August. This was awaited as an effective remedy for survival. I did this against my grain. At the same time I prescribed an opening prayer, prayer over the offerings and an after-communion prayer at Mass and a prayer at Benediction. This will seem rather meagre to the people of Aix who are making extraordinary manifestations, novenas, processions to be preserved from the bad influence of us, their close neighbours. That is fine for them, for they have nothing; for us, however, who are in the fire, the prayers I have requested are quite enough to draw down God’s mercy on us without frightening even more a population that is already so horrified. As for myself, I experience no fear at all and I am always on my regular routine. The day before yesterday I went to bless the schools of St-Barnabé. Tomorrow I shall be going to consecrate the church at La Capelette, on Monday I shall certainly accept to say Mass at the Carmelites, and so forth.

You understand that in this situation, I must not even think of going elsewhere. I shall stay at my post until the plague has run its course completely. Thus I have to renounce the trip that I would so gladly have made to l’Osier. I have written to the Bishop of Viviers not to count on me any more. For yourself, do not rush. Do your work slowly. You must not want, in one way or another, to return to Marseilles as long as the cholera is raging there. You are away on mission, prolong it at your convenience. Go from l’Osier to Romans, from Romans to l’Osier, then to Lumières and to La Blachère, if necessary, but don’t even think of returning to Marseilles. To be sure, I feel greatly deprived for not having you at my side. But I make this sacrifice quite willingly so as not to expose you, especially because you are not sufficiently capable of totally repelling certain moral impressions which may cause harm to your health. Make it your duty to pray for us and for our poor afflicted people: that is the only service that I agree you ought to give us.

Once you are well launched in your verification, you will tell me something about it. Be intransigent in your examining, go to where the trouble lies, the wound must be exposed bare and it must be healed with fire and iron, without pity or arrangements.2

Goodbye, my dear son, I greet you with all my fatherly affection for you and I bless you with all my heart.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

Sup. Gen.

1 Orig.: Rome. Postulation Archives, L. M.-Fabre.

2 It was a matter of verifying the bookkeeping only.

1219. [To Father Fabre, at N.-D. de l’Osier].1

1219:XI in Oblate Writings

The Founder and the Oblates are in good health in spite of the cholera.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Fabre

Marseilles,

July 13, 1854.

Dear and good son, I began a letter to you in my workroom at the seminary. It stayed on the desk. Today I have to leave for St-Barnabé: for this whole day I will not be able to take up my pen, the postal services will leave without my having written to you. This will upset you and so in haste I jot down these few lines before getting into my carriage to tell you I received your letter and to give you some news of ourselves. The bad situation here has not grown worse but has not receded either. We still count one hundred dead of the sickness, both adults and little ones. We are all well and above all I am not afraid. I didn’t change anything in my diet to the great astonishment of those who are frightened and think they will die if they eat an egg or a ladle of beans. Yesterday I went up to Montolivet and on the street of the Carthusians alone we encountered six different groups who were leaving. Some shops are already closing. Some are surprised that I don’t proclaim a sort of martial law by dispensing from abstinence. I refer these people to Doctor Roux who will tell them that far from eating meat on Friday and Saturday, it would be better to fast the whole week long.

Peter is calling to me that we have to leave. It doesn’t matter, I have been able to reassure you with these few words. I still wanted to tell you how put out I was because of the had night you spent on the train on the way to Valence. I hope you will amply restore yourself as you rest at l’Osier. As much as you I regret that I was not part of the group, but you can appreciate why not and I fear I shall have to give up totally on making a visit that I really counted on very much. Goodbye. Greet all the Fathers and Brothers.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives, L. M.-Fabre.

1220. [To Father Charles Baret, at N.-D. de L’Osier ].1

1220:XI in Oblate Writings

Advice regarding Father Baret’s retreat. Give good example to the novices. Cholera epidemic.

L.J.C. et MI.

Baret

[Marseilles],

July 17, 1854.

I have discovered this bit of a letter that I had started and that had remained on my desk until now. I am using this same paper to answer the letter sent from l’Osier that I have received from you. So you have finally made up your mind to go and reflect in the solitude of our novitiate! May the Lord grant you all the consolations that you came to find there. Do not prolong your stay in this holy place beyond, I do not say your courage, but beyond your strength. Follow God’s inspiration and show that it really comes from him by living a truly edifying life there. You understand how important your attitude is when seen by many novices. Take good care that Father C[haine]s2 presence that you will encounter there be not a temptation to the least lack of regularity to either of you. That would be an irreparable harm. I don’t doubt that you have accepted in advance all the consequences of the edifying measure you have decided to undertake. Hence, you will give the example of the greatest respect for the Father Master who is also the Superior of the whole community. Soon you will write to me about your kind of life and about everything that your fervour has inspired you to do for the common edification and your own perfection. You have opened the door to an excellent practice which I would be happy to see taken up by others.

I would perhaps have been more embarrassed at replying to Madame the Marquise de Poterat if you had been at Cléry, but, since you have returned to our region, I am quite comfortable to make her understand that it is quite impossible to make such a considerable breach to the Rules of our Institute and that in the sight of a Province of our Congregation our men would wonder how one of its members can make a trip of 200 leagues to spend one month in a chateau. What would have gone unnoticed several leagues away from one of our residences would become a topic of amazement and near scandal at the distance where we are. We must therefore completely reject this idea and leave it up to God to protect our Fathers and the ministry they have to fulfil.

Tell the Reverend Father Fabre that our health situation is about the same. Daily we have more than one hundred deaths, many children among them. The plague is making its way. Yesterday we didn’t have a single case in the parish of La Major; but we did bury 12 bodies, 10 of them children.

Thanks be to God, we are all well. Our Fathers at Le Calvaire are constantly with the sick. People knock at their door as many as four times a night. Though tired, they are well. Your brother is at Notre Dame de la Garde. For myself, I am carrying on as though there were nothing out of the ordinary. I am not in the least bit anxious, and this is already something good in the midst of this epidemic. Those who are afraid do well to leave the area. Over 60,000 people have taken this measure, but is the cholera only in Marseilles! This morning I went to celebrate holy Mass in the church of the Carmelites, yesterday I consecrated that of La Capelette and, as if that were not enough for a young bishop of my age, in the afternoon I confirmed the children of five parishes who were gathered together in the temple that had just been consecrated. I noted that I found not a single transportation piece between the entry to the city to the bishopric.

Goodbye, dear son, this letter will serve to give our news to all our Fathers. Affectionate greetings; I bless you with all my heart.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

S.G.

1 Orig.: Rome. Postulation Archives. L. M.-Baret, February 6. 1854.

2 Erased word. He is referring to Father Chaine who left the Congregation in 1852: he was re-admitted and made a second novitiate in 1854.

1221. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].1

1221:XI in Oblate Writings

Cholera epidemic in Marseilles. The Fathers and the Founder have lots of work but they are well. Business items.

L.J.C. et MI.

Courtès

Marseilles,

July 17,1854.

I understand, my dear Courtès, that you are put out as you consider how we are caught up with the cruel disease that has installed itself here with us. I hasten to reassure you about ourselves. First I want to tell you that I am as little afraid as I would be if there were no plague. I don’t see that our Fathers are any more affected than I am. Only those of Le Calvaire are tired out because of the excessive work that the confidence of the people brings them. There isn’t a night when they do not ring three or four times to call them to attend the sick. The Italians especially have been hit very hard, and so a great number of them have fled and they are not the only ones. I am convinced that the city has now a population that is less by some 60,000 people. It is a raging storm. The disease is in a sort of stagnation point right now: it is true that the number of deaths goes beyond one hundred per day, but 60 to 65 of these have been children. Oh! these innocent souls are peopling heaven. To further reassure you, I will tell you that yesterday there wasn’t a single case in La Major. The plague therefore moves from one quarter to the other. I pray God that you will be spared from it.

I shall not write to my sister today, and I ask you to give her news of me. I am the strongest of all who are in my entourage. Yesterday I consecrated the church of La Capelette. You know what this ceremony requires. I did it as ordinarily as I say Mass, as though I consecrated a church every day, and so I did the service in three hours whereas Bishops who are not used to it take four and even five hours. But that was not enough for a Prelate of my age. After dinner I had to confirm the children of five parishes who were gathered in the newly consecrated temple, and the good Lord gave me sufficient voice to preach for over an hour so that I could be heard from the steps of the sanctuary to the entire church filled with faithful. You see the cholera is not stopping us from being active and we are attacking the devil who is the author of all these disasters.

I don’t know that story well enough that you narrate to take a position on the attitude, perhaps a little too political, that you have seen fit to adopt. To elude quality was clever and good; but to opine for a total absolution of a guilty person such as you give me the impression that the man concerned was would not have been my advice. Authority is only too prone to swallow bagatelles and to leave unpunished crimes that would merit strong penalties.

I think I have already told you that I have appointed Father Andrieux Assessor in the place of Father Bonnard, and Father de Saboulin is appointed Bursar. The latter should be good in management. He has seen things firsthand in your house.

You will tell my sister that I did not dare to suggest that she call in Fanny Amyot. I have just read the letter my sister wrote to her. She is so insistent that I cannot doubt that this is a matter agreed upon together with her daughter-in-law. Miss Amyot didn’t ask for anything better, she will catch the ball on first bounce and leave immediately in response to the invitation of her cousin.

With affection I greet all our Fathers and bless them and you with all my heart.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Orig.: Rome. Postulation Archives. L. M.-Courtès.

1222. [To Father Marchal at N.-D. de Cléry].1

1222:XI in Oblate Writings

Patience is necessary at the beginning of a work. Sends Father Fayette. Cholera at Marseilles. Condition of the scholasticate and the novitiate.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Marchal

Marseilles,

July 19,1854.

Whose fault is it, my dear son, if you do not receive letters from me as often as you would like? Don’t you know the task I have to accomplish here? Can I follow the impulse of my heart as I would like to? When I take up the pen to do one thing, I have to do something else, and then some other things, and then something else after that. And so I must always be somewhat in a rush and nothing is better in that situation than a second letter, on the supposition that I did not manage to reply to the first one. Admit, dear son, that you did not push me in this way. Don’t think because of that that I forget you. Rather than not concern myself with you, I speak of you all alone, with only the walls of my room as an echo. How often do I not thank God aloud for having given me such children as you are. My heart overflows with gratitude towards God and love for you and for those who are like you. Why are you shy in writing to me? You must always do so with great openness. We must praise God, my very dear son, for the good that he grants us to do and we must not be put out about the good that we cannot do. Everything has to have a beginning. I certainly did not expect to see you so soon and so well settled in the new field that divine Providence has called you to till. Let us congratulate ourselves on this and wait with patience and in peace for that which lies ahead. I thought it good to send you the Reverend Father Baret2 who is to bring some radiance into your area. You felt that it would be better if he did not come. I felt otherwise, but you, who are on the spot, were in a situation to know your terrain better. I easily gave in to your point of view. Now I am sending you Father Fayette. He will be a help to you, and the holy work he will undertake in the regularity of a small community of workers will benefit him more than the temporal work I had to confide to him at l’Osier, work in which he did not do well at all and which was harmful to his progress in the perfection of his state. I hope he will now settle in perfectly, since he will no longer have to strive to nourish and look after the needs of a very large community. I recommend him to your charity, that you help him regain the fervour which declined somewhat under the worries of his temporal administration. I shall write to him as soon as I know that he has arrived at his post. He has only received his obedience from me; I was deterred from writing him and giving him some instructions before his leaving l’Osier. You know our situation here. Cholera is making off with 100 to 150 people a day. You can imagine how much extra work this terrible plague is bringing us. I have had to cancel the visit I had announced to Lumières and l’Osier. I wouldn’t even allow myself to sleep one night out in the country. The good Lord gives me the grace not to be at all apprehensive and I see that our Fathers are no more afraid than I am. I don’t spare them, however. Le Calvaire looks after the dying whenever someone asks them for this care. Our Oblate scholastics are all at Lumières; you will be pleased to learn that each is more edifying than the other. It’s a marvellous family, and to it corresponds perfectly that of the novitiate which last Sunday had up to 34 novices. On Sunday, three oblations reduced it to 31, but others are announced. You can see that the good Lord is not abandoning us. It is less the number than the quality that matters to me. I will not speak to you about our young priests, they are all perfect; some are already en route to their destination, the others are waiting with holy impatience. Fathers Saint-Geneys and Flurin should have arrived in Ceylon. Father Grandin is going to the Red River and Father Burtin to Canada. Fathers Ricard and Durieu are expecting the arrival of the Jesuit Father Accolti and will leave with him for Oregon. I am retaining good Father Fouquet for the seminary of Ajaccio. Father Victor Baret is at N.D. de la Garde: tomorrow I will go there to bless our house and to consecrate the altar of our private chapel. Goodbye, my dear son. Please communicate my letter to Father Brun. To him and you my affectionate greetings and blessing.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

Father Tempier greets you; he has just admitted to me that he has found a letter he wrote to you a century ago, a letter that has remained unfinished on his desk; he will address it to you in a few days. He is well and so are our other Fathers.

1 Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives. L. M.-Marcal.

2 Father Charles Baret; his brother. Victor. was stationed at N.-D. de La Garde.

1223. [To Father Mouchette, at N.-D. de Lumières].1

1223:XI in Oblate Writings

Affection. Regret at not having been able to visit the scholastics. St. Eugene’s feast. Consecration of the altar at the Oblate house of N.-D. de la Garde. Cholera.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Mouchette

Marseilles,

July 19, 1854.

My dear son, If only my hands were quick enough to keep up with the dictates of my heart. Then I would not be reduced to writing one letter after the other and delaying the expression of my affection for all those whom I love so tenderly and who live together in this veritable hearth of paternal love. But how can a single pen suffice? On this occasion I would like, while both thanking you for your splendid letter and thanking also charming little Father Martinet who was so good to me during your absence, to address myself simultaneously to all our dear children, the scholastics living at Lumières. My purpose to is give them proof how sorry I am to have been so summarily turned aside from the visit that I always so look forward to enjoying as a big feast thanks to them. I was looking forward to the really happy experience of holding them close to my heart, embracing them tenderly like the good and aged father that I am. I am so happy when I am among them. I enjoy their happiness. I savour, if one can use such an expression of what one sees, the virtues that I recognize in them. I thank God for it in my rejoicing, and do not cease to ask for each one of them a growth in grace which would enable them to take giant strides in the ways of perfection and render them ever more worthy of those who have preceded them in the saintly career which they follow, while walking in their footsteps.

I was very moved by the family recreation that the feast of St. Eugene inspired them with. I understand these dear children, led by Father Martinet, wanted to feast the Eugene who is still a poor sinner alive on this earth, at the same time as they intended to honour his heavenly patron. If only I could have been there! I would have responded to their well-wishes with my heart’s liveliest benisons. Let us meet often, my dear and well-beloved children, in the presence of the adorable Sacrament, our hearts all converging there together and often at the self-same moment. There are other times too when I am mindful of you. Tomorrow, for example, you will all be with me in our house *de la Garde* that I am going to bless. I am going to consecrate the altar and afterwards I will offer the holy sacrifice for the whole family God has given me. My *memento* will be a long one. I want you all to be there by name. In that way I will send you my triple blessing from the top of the holy mountain, my Angel will pass it on to yours, and you will make your response with a good and fervent *memorare* which you are going to say in your sanctuary. Pray too for my poor people who are decimated by the scourge of cholera and above all for our Fathers who are acquitting themselves so worthily of their ministry of charity. Not a night passes but they are summoned more than once to the bedside of some sick person whom they help to a happy death. Up to the present none of our men has been taken ill, it is the same with the other priests who are there doing their duty as they must. Although you are outside the danger zone, be sure, my dear children, the moment you feel unwell, to desist immediately from eating, in that way one cuts short an ailment that one cannot afford to neglect by delay. I do not want to molly-coddle you, the Lord preserve us, I have no patience with that nonsense of being always afraid of being ill, but at the time of an epidemic it is licit to take a few precautions which one would not ordinarily take. When someone feels unwell, he must inform the moderator and report to him.

Goodbye, my dear children, affectionate and heartfelt greetings to you all and a blessing that comes from the depths of my soul.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles,

Sup. Gen.

1 Orig.: Rome. Postulation Archives. L. M.-Mouchette.

1224. [To Father Martinet, at N.-D., de Lumières].1

1224:XI in Oblate Writings

Affection and gratitude. Cholera. Father Rey’s visit to Lumières. Father Mouchette’s retreat.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Martinet

Marseilles,

July 21, 1854.

You could well imagine, my dear son, that I would be too much moved by gratitude for the attention you have shown in writing to me, and especially too sensitive to everything that your good heart prompted you to tell me, and thus I cannot forego manifesting to you the wonderful impression I have derived therefrom. It is true that that is not new to me, I know that you love your father who loves you so much, but there is a particular delight in hearing it said, in reading how it is expressed in a charming letter.

With pleasure I see that your stay is a good thing for everyone. The good Lord did not want me to witness your happiness, as I told you in my letter of yesterday, and so I try to make up for it by uniting myself constantly to you in thought and especially in the Lord’s presence. I need to thank him so much for having given me such children as you are. Accept this completely: that is a duty that I do not forget. Yesterday we were a considerable number gathered at N.-D. de la Garde for the blessing of the house and the chapel and for the consecration of the altar. Oh! How much you were present there! It was as though I saw you there before my very eyes!

Yesterday we counted a small drop in the number of deaths. There were 15 less than the day before. The number is still over one hundred, yesterday it was 130. Half of these, however, are still children. Thus heaven is being populated.

All of our Fathers are well, even though those at Le Calvaire do not spare themselves. They carry out this duty of pure charity with as much zeal as the priests in parishes do the duties they have out of justice. I am glad and pleased by all this.

What have you to say of the visit that Father Rey has paid you? That was a good thing for him. He will bring me news of you, perhaps still today. I know about it from the letter that Father Mouchette has just written to Father Tempier. Be prepared to be2 in charge again soon, I cannot refuse this Father a few days retreat during which he can be busy only with himself. As soon as he will have rested up from his trip, he will go into retreat, if he wants to, but completely, that is to say, he is not to be approached for anything, no more than if he were absent. And so it will be again you, my dear son, who will take his place among the Oblate scholastics.

Read this item of my letter to Father Mouchette. That is my reply to the request he addressed to Father Tempier. But I only grant him one small week.

They have just come for me, what can I say more, for dinner. One has to give in to this gross occupation all the more so because today is Friday and yesterday evening I forgot to eat supper: that means my stomach had a holiday of 24 hours.

Goodbye, dear son, many friendly things to all our Fathers and Brothers. I bless all of you.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Orig.: Rome. Postulation Archives. L. M.-Martinet.

2 Ms. en.

1225. [To Father Fabre, at N.-D. de L’Osier].1

1225:XI in Oblate Writings

Cholera. Give instructions to Father Fayette before he leaves for N.-D. de Ckry.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Fabre

Marseilles,

July 22, 1854.

My good son, they leave me very little time, I am trying to cope at the secretariat to reply to all the needs, which seem to be ever multiplying. I do want to keep you informed about our deplorable condition.

Yesterday we had 163 deaths, whereas the day before we had only 132, the latter being 15 less than the day before. What is even more (here I continue again) painful, is (now another interruption) that good women religious have not been spared. Two died at the hospital, two in the house for poor girls; two from among the Ladies of St. Thomas; three others are gravely ill and I am being called to console and strengthen them.

I simply wanted to tell you that we are all well, but since I am doing so much else besides writing to you, I cannot refrain from expressing to you my surprise at what good Father Vincens replied to your remarks about the *“*riff”*.* He was certainly dreaming when he managed to tell you that not only had I approved the construction going on at this country place but that I put such store in them that I had promised to contribute from my own money to the costs. In fact, my entire desire has been that we get rid of a property which we have learned to be ruinous for us. Therefore, not only will I give nothing from my own resources, but I do not feel at all disposed to use the least sum from the general coffers of the Congregation. So do not be shy in making your remarks and in your criticism.

Please give some good advice to Father Fayette. You will find the test thereof in the obedience letter. He must firmly convince himself to live at Cléry as a good religious, disposed to repair the damage his stint as bursar inflicted on his piety. Since it may well be that I won’t be seeing Father Baret for a long time, it would be good if he were to tell me in writing whatever he has to tell me about this new establishment and those in charge of it. The plan that you…

1Orig.: Rome. Postulation Archives, L. M.-Fabre. We have only the first sheet of this letter.

1226. [To Father Sumien, at Aix].1

1226:XI in Oblate Writings

Father Sumien is to replace a parish priest who is ill

Sumien

Marseilles,

July 22, 1854.

The Parish Priest of St-Cassien has been forced to take to his bed, and I direct Reverend Father Sumien to go to this parish and do the parish services there from this Saturday evening on and throughout the days following, until Father Bouquier is well again.

I invited Reverend Father Sumien to go and see Father Bouquier for the necessary information.

With affection I greet Father Sumien.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. It goes without saying that by the present letter I give you all the curial powers as well as the right to binate as long as you will carry out this service, a service that I hope will not be required a long time.

1 Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives. L. M.-Sumien.

1227. [To Father Bellon, at Romans].1

1227:XI in Oblate Writings

Plan to bring all the Oblate Superiors of major seminaries together. Irregularity of the Fathers of the missionary community at Romans.

Bellon

[Marseilles],

July 24, 1854.

As much as I learn with pleasure the satisfaction that your community gives you, in the same measure I am disgusted when I see the Fathers, under the strange direction of Father B(urfin),2 take on a very inappropriate attitude as though they wanted to be emancipated. I have gone beyond the proper measure of being understanding with this good Father; in order to avoid breaking with him, I have, in a sense, lent myself to all his weaknesses. In the process, I have lost my credibility. He is an exceptional man who is difficult to tackle. One thinks one has calmed him down with concessions which one nearly reproaches oneself for having granted and then he eludes a person with new arguments. He is bad enough, but when one has to put up with the imperfections of the other two Fathers, that is not possible. So you did well to ask the Provincial to set things right and to mention it to me in the meantime. Let them be brought back to the strictest obedience; let them be totally dependent on yourself since they don’t know how to conduct themselves and are imperceptibly losing the religious spirit. They haven’t written to me once since they are at Romans. That does no honour to the quality of their heart, but it also indicates a sort of bad shame that is quite reprehensible. They are afraid of reaping some reprimands of which they are only too much in need. So they stay out of sight so that I will not concern myself with them and, in such a context, I ought to leave it to others to stir up their lethargy. Now they are more directly placed under your governance: bring them back to the notion of regularity, demand that they observe what is prescribed by the Rule, if need be, let them know how dissatisfied I am with them.

I insist very much in bringing together our Superiors of the major seminaries in order to bring uniformity into certain things, be it in the area of teaching, be it in that of the exercises in their communities.

I don’t want to miss the postal service again today, and so I conclude by blessing you with all my heart.

C. J. E., Bishop.

I greet and bless all our Fathers at Romans.

1 YENVEUX II, 5: ttl. 53; IV. 38.

2 Yenveux writes B. The Founder is speaking of Father Burfin, director of the house of missionaries. Cf. L. M.-Bishop of Valence. September 28, 1853. With him were Fathers Chavard and Eymère.

1228. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].1

1228:XI in Oblate Writings

Father Sumien did not do his duty when he left his post out of fear of the cholera.

Marseilles, July 30, 1854.

I became red in the face, my dear Courtès, when Father Aubert read me the passage in your letter which concerned Father S(umien). What a shame! How can a priest, a missionary, a religious be afraid! No, he does not have any other illness. Never would a doctor, who only sees things from the human, earthly, gross point of view, have advised him to leave his post if he had not seen him while he was impelled by fear.

So what does he have? An upset stomach which we want to call a touch of the cholera. Well! Let the appropriate remedies be applied. Who hasn’t experienced such an inconvenience? On account of that, did we right away think of running away for twenty-four hours? One has to do what I did right from the start: for I was one of the first to experience this attack, if you want to call it that. Well! I immediately stopped taking food: four days of dieting restored me. But I also state that even if it had not, I would never have considered leaving my post, no more than the others of our group and of our priests who have had the same indisposition. And just at a time when anyone who has a sense of duty hands himself over to unceasing work that one could term excessive, we discover a coward in our ranks who deserts his post! Doesn’t he see that he thereby reaps a ruined reputation and accepts to be pilloried in the sight of a whole diocese whose eyes are fixed on you and which rightfully expects from you something else than a shameful flight?

Doctors are to be consulted only in order to ask them for the assistance of their skill in regard to the indispositions a person may have; but let us beware of listening to them when they advise something that is low, cowardice, in a word, a real prevarication. If there were a real danger that existed only in the sick imagination of those who are afraid, one does not ransom his life at the price of infamy in the eyes of men and of the Church and of forgetfulness of one’s duty in the eyes of God, who is the sovereign Judge and the Giver of just reward.

I dare to hope that you will not have much difficulty to have this position understood: it should be the inflexible rule of our conduct. Thanks be to God, I don’t have to inculcate this here. Everyone here has directly faced what duty, of justice for some and of charity for others, requires from everyone in public calamities.Goodbye, my dear son, take heart. The good Lord will keep and reward you.

1 YENVEUX II. 130: RAMBERT II. 413-414; REY II, 506.

1229. [To Father Fabre, at L’Osier].1

1229:XI in Oblate Writings

The cholera epidemic is receding. Restore regularity in the financial administration of the house before returning to Marseilles.

Fabre

[Marseilles],

July 30, 1854.

Your good heart, my dear son, deceives you when it gives you the idea that I can actually do what you would like me to. Whatever my joy would be that I would experience were I in the midst of our interesting family, I would be lacking in the first duties of my position if I were to leave my post, even if it were at a time when the epidemic is declining. As long as there is even one case of cholera, it is out of the question that I move from here. You understand this.

As for yourself, there is no question: you are to remain fast at l’Osier until our plague is over. You will not be losing your time during your stay in this community. First of all, you will give them good example, and then good advice to whoever may need some. You will restore perfect regularity in their finances which have been so badly managed up to now. Lay down, in spite of difficulties and in my name, if need be, the reforms that you deem necessary: you know me well enough to perceive what reforms I would myself bring in if I were on the spot.

1 YENVEUX VII, 79.

191. Extract from his will.1

191:XV in Oblate Writings

Thanksgiving. He invokes the intercession of the saints and asks for prayers.

Extract from his will

Marseilles,

August 1, 1854,

72nd birthday.

I the undersigned Charles Joseph Eugene de Mazenod, Bishop of Marseilles, see fit to make my will in my own hand as follows. My first thought, when thinking on death, which must fill my thoughts as I pen these lines of my last will, is to lose myself in thanksgiving before God for having called me to the knowledge of the truth in the bosom of the holy, apostolic, Roman Catholic Church, in which I have the happiness to be living and in which I wish to die.

I implore God’s mercy, by the merits of our divine Saviour Jesus Christ in whom I place all my trust, to obtain pardon for my sins and the grace of my soul being received in holy paradise.

With this in mind I invoke the intercession of the most holy and immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of God, daring to remind her in all humility, but with the consolation too, of the filial devotion of my whole life and the desire I have always had to make her known and loved and to spread her cult in every place by the ministry of those the Church has given me as children and who are united with me in my desires.

I also invoke the intercession of all the holy Angels and in particular my holy Guardian Angel, who has preserved me during my life from so many dangers to soul and body.

Again, I invoke all the Saints in paradise, men and women, and especially the Holy Patrons given me at baptism, St. Charles, St. Joseph, and St. Eugene. I trust that at the hour of my death St. Joseph, my favourite Patron and the Patron given by the Church to those at the point of death, will deign to help me in that moment of extreme need. I take comfort in the memory of having honoured him with a profound sense of his greatness and all the prerogatives that raise him above every creature after the most holy Virgin, his true wife. I am happy to be leaving behind me some indications of my just devotion to this great Saint in the Proper I obtained from the Holy See for my diocese, which will perpetuate his cult in a special way among my dear diocesans.

Could I forget to recommend myself to the holy souls in purgatory, I who during my whole episcopate have never neglected to procure for them the relief they have the right to expect from the charity of their brothers who make up the Church militant on earth. Clearly they can no longer win merit in their present state, which is why the Church comes constantly to their aid. But I hold it as certain that dear as they are to God they can obtain much from our common Father in favour of those for whom they pray. So it is with full confidence that I invoke them, not fearing to remind them of the titles that all I have ceaselessly done for them gives me to their remembrance.

Now I turn my thoughts to those who will survive me and it is in virtue of all the bonds that unite us that I claim the aid of their charity for the relief of my soul. I have indeed complete trust that God in his goodness, in virtue of his infinite mercy, will grant me his holy paradise. Ah yes! that hope which is obligatory on us all is as lively in my heart as faith, and would I could say as charity. But it is precisely the knowledge of the imperfection of this charity in me and the countless infidelities I have to reproach myself with and which have made it grow cold in my soul, despite the graces with which I have been blessed all my life, that make me fear the length and severity of my purgatory. Acknowledging that I deserved hell, I cannot but acquiesce unreservedly in the sentence of temporal suffering that God’s justice, tempered by his mercy, will pronounce for me, should I be condemned to purify myself and expiate my faults until the end of the world in that place of suffering. It is this persuasion that, to shorten the desirable term, has me cry out to the friends I leave behind me, to borrow the words of the Church’s prayers: *miseremini mei saltem vos amici mei.*

It is on this ground that I address myself first to you, my beloved cooperators, priests of my diocese. As God is my witness I have always loved you with a fatherly love. Those among you who know me the best know the extent this feeling governs my soul. It is to the extent of so identifying myself with you that your sorrows are mine, I rejoice at your joys and I take on myself in a way your virtues and exult before God and men for having received as my lot, as my spiritual children priests such as you. I say it in all truth for your consolation, my dear sons in Jesus Christ, in the course of my lengthy episcopate, I have never had cause to do other than congratulate myself on the goodwill and behaviour of my clergy. The exceptions are so rare and few in number that I mention them only to confirm my assertion in the honourable and touching witness I bear to practically every one of the others.

I hope that the rest of the flock God has given me to govern will imitate the example of my priests and that all my lambs will make it a duty to pray God for my soul. I have tried to be a good shepherd for them, both by the prayers I have never ceased to address to God for their sanctification and especially by the holy Sacrifice of the mass offered daily for this intention, and by utilizing on their behalf all the services of my great ministry, and finally by having myself represented among them by good cooperators.

I have no need to remind my dear daughters, the religious of the various Orders who edify my diocese with their virtues and devotion what they have all promised me. So I count too on their powerful suffrages as on those of the religious family of which I am more especially the father, and which a just reserve restrains me from praising here.

Before moving on to the dispositions I must make in this testament, I wish to insist strongly that I forgive with all my heart all those who, in the course of my life, have done themselves the wrong of making themselves my enemies, have calumniated or offended against me. I have never been able to understand how it could come about that there should be people in the world who wish me ill. I could sometimes have caused someone pain in the exercise of the demanding duties of my holy ministry; but I affirm that I have never wished ill to anyone at all nor have I ever had the intention wilfully to harm anyone at all. I disclaim not simply the feeling of hatred, but rancour too has also been inimical to my nature and I have often been heard to say in all truth that there is no merit for me in forgiveness. Even so I ask pardon from all those who believe they have a bone to pick with me, those I may have offended or merely saddened, protesting again that it is really in spite of myself and without having intended it that I have given them displeasure. If a guarantee were needed of my habitual dispositions with regard In all those I have just listed in this latter paragraph, and I flatter myself that they must be but few, I copy out here the prayer I make each day on descending from the altar after offering the Holy Sacrifice and in the presence of the living God I have just had the happiness to receive: *Ignosco et dimitto ex toto corde omnibus inimicis meis, omnibus me calumniantibus, omnibus mihi detrahentibus, omnibus quocumque modo mihi nocentibus, tel volentibus mala;* and this one too, after praying for the Church, sinners, heretics and schismatics, non-believers, those in tribulation or oppressed by misfortune, my neighbours and friends, those who ask for my prayers and the souls in purgatory, I add these very words: *miserere omnium adversantium mihi, vel qui me aliqua molestia me affecerunt.* That is how a Christian, how a bishop exacts revenge....

I would not like to end this solemn act of my last will without expressing to my vicars general, my secretary general and the other priests who have constantly surrounded me with their affectionate concern, the tender sense of attachment, esteem and gratitude I hold in their regard until my last breath. They have faithfully helped me in my long administration, sustained and encouraged me in the sorrows inseparable from my ministry. They have been real friends to me, able to appreciate my heart which loves them so much. In a word they have made smooth my existence with their tender affection and filial devotion. May God give them all the happiness they procured for me. Although I count on them remembering me before the Lord, independently of every external token that reminds them of me, I beseech those I designate by name as my heirs to choose among my things the most precious, the chasuble or cope that suits them, and one of the engravings decorating my apartments.

It would be my wish that the poor form part of the cortege that is customarily summoned for the burial of bishops. They will be represented by two of their number chosen by the parish priest in each parish of my episcopal city. These thirty two poor people will be dressed out at the expense of my heirs. The dress given them will consist in jacket, waistcoat, trousers, a pair of socks, a pair of shoes and hat. Whatever time of year it is I die, these garments must be good for the winter.

While I do not doubt the charity of my heirs, who will certainly not overlook anything to procure the relief of my soul after my death, even so I see fit to lay down that over and above all the aid their hearts will inspire them to grant me, they will have three thousand masses said for the repose of my soul. A thousand of these masses will be said by the priests of my diocese, and two thousand by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, distributed in the various countries of the world.

I would have been really happy if after my death my heart were placed in the sanctuary of Notre Dame de la Garde at the feet of our good Mother whose temple I have had the happiness of rebuilding, but just objections, inspired by the filial love of those I have so loved on earth, are opposed to this resolution.

My corpse will be disposed of as seen fit. I surrender it to the earth that it may undergo the condemnation pronounced against sin. Even so, I firmly hope that after this deserved dissolution, it will rise again to glory, and reunited once more with my soul, they will sing for all Eternity the praises of God’s mercy: *misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo* [...]

1 Orig.: Rome. arch. de la Post. DM XVI- I. We have a first will dated July 7, 1845 (2 pages) and a codicil made January 20. 1861 (10 pages). Only the present document, dated August 1. 1854 (57pages) includes spiritual considerations which we publish here.

1230. For Reverend Father Mouchette, [at N.-D. de Lumières].1

1230:XI in Oblate Writings

What to do to avoid catching the cholera.

L.J.C. et MI.

Mouchette

Marseilles,

August 2, 1854.

I can no longer hold the pen, so much have I been writing. But can I let one of our men leave without at least saying a swift good day to you? I know that Father Tempier is supposed to write you at length; he has the time for that. I even think that as a man who has been converted to homeopathy, he will be sending you all the poisons of this faculty branch which are to preserve one from cholera. I am not opposed thereto because, in fact, these honest doctors don’t use doses which might kill people but rather they want to save them. Nevertheless, I insist that we do not place our trust so much in this preservatives that we neglect all the appropriate care not to expose ourselves to catching the disease. Thus, lots of moderation in eating, especially in the evening. Watch oneself so as not to get diarrhoea, and, if one has it, to remedy it immediately by taking no more food at all.

I give up in my wish to continue this letter. A forced interruption has led me to the point of not having time any more to say sext, etc., before going to the church to assist at our prayers, my sole resource in this great calamity. So goodbye. May God bless you and keep you from all ills. Affectionately I greet and bless all of you.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives, L. M.-Mouchette.

1231. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].1

1231:XI in Oblate Writings

Prayers that the epidemic may end. The situation is improved. Advises prudence for the cholera at Aix.

Courtès

Marseilles,

August 4,1854.

Our situation is considerably better. Without any hesitation, I attribute this improvement to the solemn prayers that I had laid down, prayers that were taken up with fervour. On the day that I requested them, our deaths stood at one hundred and ninety-two. Far from foreseeing a decline, the doctors on the contrary feared a gradual increase of the plague. All of a sudden, on the very day itself, the plague was halted and so we have during the course of this prayer come to the point where yesterday we counted no more than twenty-five cholera deaths in spite of the fact that ten thousand who had fled had returned. This is a great act of mercy God has bestowed on us, despite the perversity of a large number of ungrateful people who owe their safety to the intercession of the just who drew down blessing upon those who deserved it so little.

I am put out because you have not read my letter to Father S(umien) and I am quite upset that you have sent him to Lumières. First, he should not have left without my authorization. Leaving one’s post in a time of epidemic is no laughing matter! Then he should have been rather sent to Romans than to Lumières, and that for several reasons.

Don’t forget to write me for each postal courier as long as the plague lasts. You understand in what a state I am in regard to all of you.

Goodbye, my dear son, do your duty, but do not be imprudent, no excessive zeal. Remember that you are liable for your life before God, the Church and the Congregation. God forbid that we should want to deter you from doing your duty; all I ask is that we do not veer away from the very wise prescriptions of the ecclesiastical authority.

Goodbye. A thousand friendly things to the Bishop and to all our men. Here people know that I love you.

1 YENVEUX II. 130: RAMBERT II, 413.

1232. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].1

1232:XI in Oblate Writings

The Founder’s anxiety for the Fathers at Aix during the cholera epidemic. Legacy of Miss Roman.

L.J.C. et MI.

Courtès

Marseilles,

August 6, 1854.

You can well imagine, my dear son, how anxious I am in regard to yourself and to the others, and so, from your number one must write me every second day, even if it is only a couple of lines. With sorrow I learned what you sent me concerning poor Miss Roman. It’s always with felt grief that one loses persons who have given us so many proofs of their attachment. It is so rare to meet true friends in this world so peopled with egotists. Certainly we must be submitted to God’s will, that is our first duty, but the good Lord has not given us a heart such as we have for nothing. You did not tell me that this good person was dead, but I considered her as lost according what you did indicate.

I am assuming that we are getting an exaggerated number of the deaths in your city; but even if they’re only half of what we are told that would still be quite excessive.

Be convinced, my dear children, that I associate you to all the prayerful wishes that we daily address to God. But in the good Lord’s name, give me some news about yourselves, if you don’t have the time to acquaint me in detail with the facts of your devotedness.

They just brought in the mail and therein I saw a letter from you which I read immediately and greedily. You are not the man to neglect anything, even in moments when you are most rushed. Thank you for your care: you noticed how much I needed the same.

At the same time they brought me a letter from my sister in St-Martin. They are all in good health, though surrounded by towns that have been infected. May the good Lord thus keep them and all of you, my dear children. Do not be imprudent even as you fulfil your duties of priestly charity, as you are in fact doing. Eat little, but healthy things which do not load the stomach, especially in the evening. Always carry with you the light cloak to cover yourselves when you are warm and then go out into the fresh chill of the air. Especially take care of every ailment to the stomach. Goodbye. I still want my letter to leave by the noon postal service. Affectionately I greet you and bless you all from the depths of my soul.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

The poor Miss Roman has left me a sad succession. I thought you had had her change heirs. I don’t see why we do not take the inheritance by benefice of inventory. Who knows what she could have done? What a ridiculous legacy in such a succession, so much better it would have been if she had made the granddaughter her heir. 400 francs pension when 10,000 francs are left as an inheritance! I didn’t want any on such a condition. We will have our difficulties and the expenses to begin with. And then perhaps a court case for the remaining goods of the grand-father!

1 Rome. Postulation Archives, L. M.-Courtès.

1233. [To Father Fabre, at N.-D. de l’Osier].1

1233:XI in Oblate Writings

Cholera et Marseilles and Aix. Give advice to Father Vandenberghe regarding the administration of the house. Doubts about Father Chaine’s vocation. Death of Miss Roman at Aix.

L.J.C. et MI.

Fabre

Marseilles,

August 8, 1854.

My dear son, it seems to me that it is my turn to write you. I did not keep track of the date of my last letter, but, as a generous man, I gave authority of proxy to Father Tempier and Father Rey to represent me in your presence and to derive the pleasure of giving you news about the family. I am tempted to believe that they have not resisted to the pleasure of abusing a little of my permission and to relegate me completely to the slavery of work. I have restored order today by indicating that I intend to exercise my rights and, putting all other business on hold, I am going to write to you no matter what. My letter will not be as delightful as that of our poetic young Father, nor as systematic as that of good Father Tempier, but, when all is said and done, it will have its merit in the heart more than in the eye of the cherished son whom I am addressing.

First, to give you cause for rejoicing, I shall begin by telling you that we are almost rid of the terrible cholera that threatened to do even more damage than it did in fact do. We now count only some fifteen cases when we had reached up to 192 at the time I prescribed the prayers which God in his mercy heard. At that time, all the doctors were predicting a frightful increase. God has seen to it. The very day itself his powerful hand stopped the plague and the Lord seemed to say to us: You are being heard, continue to pray with fervour and full trust, and I shall deliver you. That is what the adorable Saviour has done. Each day prayer neutralized the blows and, as I have said, we have now only isolated cases to deplore. We shall keep on praying for two more days in the hope of being completely freed.

Nevertheless, I still don’t want you to think of returning. I shall tell you when the time for that is here. I see in your last letter to Father Tempier that you are still waiting for your obedience; but it seems to me that in my last letter I manifested to you the same will that I recall here again today. It isn’t that I didn’t have the greatest desire to see you again and to hold you against my heart. It seems like a century since I have seen you and I hunger and thirst to show you my affection; but I insist even more on your preservation and I am afraid of endangering your life or at least your health were I to allow you to return too soon to an area which has been for such a long time infected. So, stay a little longer at l’Osier. Didn’t I tell you to dedicate a good look at all sides of administration. Not only are the regulations that you will lay down for the bursars absolutely necessary, but you will also be in a position to give helpful advice to good Father Vandenberghe who will be particularly strengthened by your advice regarding his governance, something that is quite difficult for a Father of his age and position. Gentleness, goodness, but without weakness and wishy-washiness. Courageous firmness towards everyone, and especially towards those who would arrogate to themselves the right of being exempt, etc. What you told me, and even more what Father Baret told me about Father Chaine is a thorn that I cannot pluck out. Keep an even sharper lookout so that I am able to take a definitive decision. I know that for him it will probably mean his eternal salvation is at stake, but he can apply the *perdito ex te* to himself, etc. We, for our part, we must concern ourselves with the good and honour of our Congregation; and, if it is true that he esteems it so little, what is the good of joining it again? You will have to weigh things thus before the sacred altar; it is a great matter, and I request you to concern yourself very seriously with it so that you can enable me to assess things with full knowledge of cause. Father Vandenberghe is less explicit than Father Baret, but I have the impression that he is not at all satisfied, indeed, he would like to rid his novitiate of this man.

My paper is running out, but I still want to tell you that I have not given up the idea of going to see you at l’Osier; but for that to come about, there must not be any trace of cholera left in Marseilles. Didn’t someone tell the Archbishop of Aix that I have disappeared? The monsters! At Aix, the cholera created greater havoc than here. It is frightful. The city was reduced to one fourth of its population by the hasty emigration of its residents and still it lost 50 persons a day, 40, 35, yesterday still as many as 37. Our Fathers are doing their duty. Good Miss Roman died. She left me as heir to her little fortune. She was supposed to have had one hundred pounds of revenue that she could have left me. She is nevertheless an outstanding benefactress of the Congregation. She is to have a share in all the family’s spiritual riches. We must especially apply to her all the indulgences, etc., during the week that follows the information I am giving you. Goodbye. Affectionate greetings.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Rome. Postulation Archives, L. M.-Fabre.

1234. [To Father Martinet, at N.D. de Lumieres].1

1234:XI in Oblate Writings

Thanks for the letters received. Take care of the scholastics’ health, but for men who are mortified. Beauty of the prayers for the cessation of the cholera.

L.J.C. et MI.

Martinet

Marseilles,

August 9, 1854.

My dear son, I am happy when for whatever reason you take the occasion to write to me. Your letters always bring me the greatest pleasure; they are inspired by such a good heart and express such moving sentiments! Do you think it is a small joy for me when I become aware of being so well understood by one of the youngest of my children? That is so comforting to my heart that I sometimes fear that that is already my reward. However, to understand it properly, I would rather convince myself it is a compensation for the ingratitude of so many others who do not have an attitude of filial affection and, consequently, cannot understand what fatherly love is.

My dear son, very gladly I see you taking on temporarily the succession to our dear Father Mouchette. You will acquit yourself very well of your responsibilities and your ministry will be helpful to our dear Oblate scholastics. I have no doubt that they will be most docile to your good instructions and that they will bring you much consolation. I also most gladly agree that afterwards you will replace Father Mouchette in his solitude. You will find there an atmosphere of fervour and that will favour all the more your own sentiments of piety. But do take care of yourself, don’t force yourself in any way. We need you to stay in good health and, on this point, I urge you to watch dear Father Mouchette: indeed, I even give you an explicit mandate thereto. He is thin to the extreme and that troubles me; his cough in the morning also needs to be attended to.

I insist greatly that we look after the health of our Oblate scholastics, but I also greatly insist that the spirit of mortification be not lost among us. We have to take care that we don’t make into dainty and sensual men those whom God is perhaps calling to all the renunciations of the apostolic life. What I want to say is that at the novitiate they may have forgotten this line of conduct. The ideas on this heading have to be set straight during the scholasticate. As much as Superiors are to watch over the health of their men, in the same measure the men should be little preoccupied about it, unless a person is ill. What I am saying does not apply to the precautions that the present moment requires. And so people should speak up as soon as they feel indisposed. In other times it may be ridiculous to pay heed thereto; today it is a duty, but that should be done without anxiety, without being troubled in spirit.

I shall not conclude without giving you some news about ourselves. The Lord has manifestly been pleased to hear your prayers. From the moment that we have addressed them to him, he ordained that the plague cease, and that was certainly not at all what our doctors were predicting. All of them without exception were convinced that we were on the way to a frightening increase. But it was not so: on the day itself the decline began and it has continued in the measure that prayer was kept up. I have never witnessed a more tangible result of the effectiveness of prayer. And what a prayer that is addressed to God by an entire people, prostrate at the feet of Jesus Christ, invoking his powerful mediation through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, the angels and all the Saints, beseeching the Saviour under all the titles by which he lays claim to our gratitude, by all that his love inspired him to do for us. Through his coming, birth, baptism, passion, cross, death, etc. we ask him to hear us, and that with limitless confidence *ut nos exaudire digneris;* and the last cry of our supplication and the expression of our faith (...) sums up our whole prayer: *Fili Dei te rogamus audi nos!* Never before this have I understood the sublimity of this marvellous prayer, truly inspired by the Holy Spirit for the Church, and so I don’t hesitate to say that I have never said it with greater fervour and confidence.

Goodbye, my dear son, I greet you with all the affection that you know so well I nourish for you and I bless you and bless all my dear children as well: I always count on their prayer at the shrine of our good Mother.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Orig.: Rome. Postulation Archives. L. M.-Martinet.

1235*.* [To Father Bellon, at Romans].1

1235:XI in Oblate Writings

As soon as the epidemic is over, there will be the meeting of the Superiors of seminaries in the charge of the Oblates. Thanks the Fathers of Romans for their letters.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Bellon

Marseilles,

August 12, 1854.

I don’t know any more where I am in your regard, my dear Father Bellon. I only have the impression that it is now a long time since I have written to you and that it is I who am late in this regard. I shall refrain from trying to justify my silence by giving excuses for it. I shall instead use the little time I have today to give you news of myself. I am going to the Poor Claires to say Holy Mass inside their monastery. When I come out of there, I have to go to the authorities; but I don’t know what is waiting for me afterwards. It could well happen, as it too often does, that I shall have to put off things until tomorrow, which is usually not more free than was the day before. I have left you until now because I feared that our infected atmosphere might be fatal to you. It would have been supremely imprudent to leave a healthy region and enter into an air filled with the plague. Our situation is much better now, but still we are not yet fully rid of it. Yesterday we still had four people die of the cholera, among them the older brother of our young Father Sardou who was suddenly struck down without any warning beforehand. So I am still going to wait a bit before lifting my embargo, all the more so because you are not the only one thus kept away: I am also keeping at a distance from here Father Fabre who is supposed to attend the meeting I want to convoke of representatives of our different seminaries in order to arrive at a united approach in the area of teaching as well as in that of the regulations and practice that pertain in these institutions. I considered it proper to add Father Fabre to the Superior of the major seminary of Marseilles; Father Tempier would have had too great a challenge to defend the teaching in his seminary, should it happen that the Superiors of the other three seminaries come together to attack2 I want to stay neutral in this discussion which ought to be based on experience especially. I am referring to the choice of authors. For the remainder, it is different. I have reason to suspect that good Father Tempier, who is excessively addicted to the method he has landed up choosing for himself and to which he hangs on as to the anchor of salvation, is a little put out because I am calling for this discussion. I wouldn’t be surprised that he has requested Father Fabre to win you over to his point of view. For myself, I think we ought not to get set on positions we passionately hold, but that we ought to seek what is truly good for our students; on that point I have to call on your experience of your men’s ideas and capacities. Here comes Tempier to take me away. Before going, I want to ask you to offer my excuses to our good Fathers who showed their friendship in writing to me. My intention was to respond to their loving attention, but I was always deterred therefrom by the countless disturbances to which I am liable and which have rained down on me especially in the period that has just elapsed. I beg them to accept this expression of my regrets as some repayment of the debt I owe to their attentiveness. You all know that you are always present in my memory and heart. I would still have many things to tell you, but I have to go, it is half past six o’clock. So goodbye, good friend, affectionate greetings from the bottom of my heart. I bless all of you.

*+* C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives. L. M.-Bellon.

2 Fathers Tempier (Marseilles), Magnan (Ajaccio). Lagier (Fréjus) and Bellon (Romans).

1236. [To Father Fabre, at N.-D. de l’Osier].1

1236:XI in Oblate Writings

End of the cholera epidemic. Father Fabre to return to Marseilles as soon as possible.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Fabre

Marseilles,

August 20, 1854.

My dear son, I see and regret that it is quite impossible for us to meet at l’Osier. I will be able to leave Marseilles only much later. The honour of my ministry requires this. And so I lift the veto I have levied and, on the other hand, thanks be to God we are completely rid of the plague, I no longer place any obstacles to your returning. Even yesterday Father Tempier asked me whether I had written to you. I understand his impatience. He is no longer abreast of everything and people come at him from every direction. So, my dear son, come back, there is no problem. My original intention was that you determine with me the visit to La Blachère. We will put that off until later. Even that of Lumières would delay your return too much. We will postpone that too. The only thing you may allow yourself is to say good day while passing through to our Fathers at Romans, but come back directly by the railways, that will be a matter of a few hours. To me it seems as though we separated from each other a century ago, my dear son. When I go to the seminary you are a void there that saddens me. Oh! I will make you pay for these arrears. If upon your return two days pass and you have not come to see me, I am determined to be angry to the point of seeing red. I am warning you in advance so that you can make your program. You will carefully bring me your notes on the observations I had asked you to make. I would have preferred that those you were able to make on the topic of the Italian novices and the direction we could give them had come to me directly and that for several reasons. I will gladly adopt them in the great embarrassment in which I presently find myself as to how to respond to the requests of the Bishop of Ajaccio. The stance to be taken seems so serious to Father Luigi that he told me he was coming to visit me, after the mission he is presently giving, to plead with me the cause of the establishment at Vico which, in his eyes, is the cause of the Congregation in Corsica.

I would also like to know what Father Baret plans on doing. Does he want to prolong his stay at the novitiate? It seems to me that it has been long enough. He has not written me any further on this topic.

I was pleased to learn that you finished the Riff affair. It is already a lot that we are not selling this burdensome property, at least it should be shored up. I presume that you also reformed the stable of this community of which they would soon have made an abbey of rich Benedictines and all the while operating on our capital. Having one horse is already a lot, but feeding two of them is foolishness. One could concede a cow that would provide milk for the community, but that is all they should have.

They have come to get me for the high Mass. I conclude by telling you that all are well. Goodbye.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Rome. Postulation Archives, L. M.-Fabre.

1237. [To Father Mouchette, at N.D. de Lumieres].1

1237:XI in Oblate Writings

Thanks for sending the portrait of each scholastic. Father Mouchette is to look after his health.

L.J.C. et MI.

Mouchette

Marseilles,

August 20, 1854.

My dear son, you could not give me a more beautiful gift than the bouquet of the finest flowers that you are nurturing in the Congregation’s garden. With delight I examined each of these lovely flowers as they gave forth each their particular perfume: my eyes first and then my heart savoured them immediately with an indescribable delight. Only the Holy Spirit could have inspired you with such a gentle thought. I look upon it as one of the fruits of your retreat. And so I thank God, all the while being infinitely grateful to you for having carried it out and that in so perfect a manner. I didn’t need your extra touch of writing the name of these dear persons on the back of their facial portrait which you have made in such a skilful manner that there isn’t a single one whom I could not have named at the first glance. And good Father Martinet! That portrait is a master-piece. How much that look says to me, even though it is not fixed on myself. He knows very well that there is no need to look at me, that he has only to appear and thus arouse in my heart a sentiment of the most vivid affection. And so today I will be content with what I said and expressed to his image before witnesses. I shall not write to him. I had to choose between the two of you, for I had time to write to one only. And so I have chosen my lot, all the more so because I had some reproaches to address to you as the reverse side of the medal: to you, my dear Father Mouchette. What! You know how concerned I am about your health, and I don’t see you a single time without, so to speak, sounding all the depths of your being, and you expose me to the great chagrin of knowing that you are ill and far away from me! If there is one thing that is delicate in your makeup and that I endlessly insist you are to take care of, it is your chest; and, after the inevitable fatigue of a long journey, after the imprudent things that you may perhaps have done during your retreat, you went ahead and gave yourself over to singing at the top of your voice to the point where you are spitting blood. But that, my dear son, is tempting God. Do you see what you gained thereby? Now you are forced to take a total rest and you certainly have to hold to it strictly; and, instead of the improvement we had counted on, you have relapsed, God knows for how long. Knowing that you are suffering, I don’t have the courage to scold you; but admit that you do merit it!

If writing tires you out, have Father Martinet write under your dictation the report, which ought not to be that long. I urge you to follow very carefully Brother de Lacour.2 I don’t have much faith in his perseverance. One does not become a good religious when piety is lacking or if one allows oneself to live according to the defects that he is reproached about. Will a beautiful voice that everyone admits without question compensate for a lack of indispensable virtues? Let us not be taken in my purely external qualities. A serious examination, scrupulously carried out, that looks at everything. That is what I require from you regarding this person. Goodbye, I bless all of you.

1 Orig.: Rome. Postulation Archives, L. M.-Mouchette.

2 De Lacour. a novice: cf. letter no. 1239.

1238. [To Father Fayette, at N.-D. de Cléry].1

1238:XI in Oblate Writings

We must submit to God’s will. Study as a way to live one’s solitude.

Fayette

[Marseilles],

August 22, 1854.

I am taking the occasion of your letter to recall to you the main principles concerning your vocation. In the holy religious state, you are not called to do such and such a good work, to undertake such and such a ministry. The one that you prefer might be the very one wherein you will encounter most danger, the one that might be the occasion of your being lost. If you acted according to the choice you would like to make, you would let a terrible responsibility weigh upon you, whereas if you are directed by obedience you are assured of doing God’s will and of being always aided by the grace that is promised you. If you walk in this way, what does it matter that you find things more or less to your taste; in religion it is not a matter of taste or natural satisfaction. If under the virtue of holy obedience we do what is most painful to us, most against our own feelings, that is precisely what will be the most meritorious.

No doubt you have become accustomed a bit too much to a kind of dissipation in the tasks that your Superiors gave you out of necessity and so now calm and solitude weigh heavy on you. You should, to the contrary, thank God for having provided you this solitude so that you can re-enter into interior ways and dedicate your time to study. Can you convince yourself that at your age you can be dispensed from study? What did you know when you came out of the seminary? You have everything to learn. As for everyone else, that is a duty for you; without it, you will make your ministry forever fruitless. Meditate on your Rules and you will see that that is the spirit that ought to animate you. Attentively reread the second chapter and so many other passages with which one must be imbued, for that is the code that the Church has given us as a rule for our conduct. So take courage, my dear son. In the future you will be called to a more active ministry. The transition that your present mission in a shrine of the Blessed Virgin offers you is indispensable to you. It is good and necessary that they give you time to study; and for that one does not need a considerable library at one’s disposal.

1 YENVEUX II. 66; III. 91.

198. [To Fr. Baudre].1

198:II in Oblate Writings

Fr. Baudre is nominated Superior of the community of Galveston.

Baudre

[Marseilles]

August 23, 1854.

My dear Fr. Baudre, in appointing you Superior of our community of Galveston as you leave your novitiate, at the very moment when you make your oblation, I am giving you an important sign of my confidence. This confidence is based on the testimony that others have given me to your virtues, your zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, your attachment to the Congregation, your respect and deference towards your superiors, your charity towards your brethren, and your desire to devote yourself entirely to the works that will be entrusted to you by obedience.

1 Ms. Yenveux IX, 43.

199. [To Fr. Vignole, at Galveston] 1

199:II in Oblate Writings

Fr. Baudre sent to Galveston as Superior. Who can be bursar of the house?

Vignole

[Marseilles]

August 23, 1854.

Once again I come to your aid in sending you Fr. Baudre as Superior. This dear Father has not been in the Congregation long, but he has been a priest for many years, and is experienced in the exercise of the sacred ministry. Moreover, he is full of zeal and devotion; he is leaving with the desire of living with you in the most intimate possible union of fraternal charity. This is the man you have been needing. With him I am sending an excellent Brother, who will be of great use in your establishment.2

To constitute your house, I name Fr. Baudre as local Superior of our community of Galveston, you as first assessor and Fr. Parisot as second assessor. The first assessor will be the admonitor of the superior. I do not appoint a spiritual Father, since as you are only three you will be able to be confessors to each other. However if, as I hope, Fr. Verdet will allow you to have one of the Fathers who are at Brownsville, the oldest of you is then to be spiritual Father. I need to consult you to know which of you should be procurator or bursar. I would like to appoint the man whom you consider to be most precise and most economical. I am asking you a serious question, and I ask you to reply to it categorically as soon as possible, that is to say, by return of post. Frankly, I do not know what you think about this, and so I need to rely on your conscience. Tell me at the same time whom you judge to be more suitable for this delicate office among those of our men who live at Brownsville.

1 Ms. Yenveux VII, 237.

2 Brother Lucian Bodard; Cf. Mazenod to Fr. Baudre, March 14, 1855.

200. [To Fr. Verdet, superior at Brownsville] 1

200:II in Oblate Writings

Fidelity to the Rules. Formation of aspirants.

Verdet

[Marseilles]

August 24, 1854.

Once again I recommend you to be the first to give an example of the most precise discipline and of fidelity to all the prescriptions of the Rule. Re-read attentively the chapter on local Superiors and conform your own conduct to it, both as regards what you do yourself, and as regards your relations with others. Also, do not neglect the theological conferences, and be meticulous in the way in which you hold your Councils. Do not lose sight of the fact that, although you are a superior, you must not undertake or decide anything without taking the advice of your assessors and that, in the accounts which you send me, you must explain why on any occasion you thought it your duty to act against their advice, having been obliged to make up your mind without an opportunity to consult me. These are the rules of wise administration, which, moreover, have the force of law among us.

I greatly desire that you should see the number of your aspirants increasing; I recommend you to give them a good initiation into the principles and practice of religious life; self-denial, indifference in all things, abnegation, obedience, interior life, regularity, love of one’s vocation, etc.

1 Ms. Yenveux VII, 161; VII, supplement, 18.

1239. [To Father Vandenberghe, at N.-D. de L’Osier].1

1239:XI in Oblate Writings

Cannot leave Marseilles even though the epidemic is over. The novices Trévelot and Lacour are to be sent away. Advice for the direction of the novitiate. Regularity.

L.J.C. et MI.

Vandenberghe

Marseilles,

August 24,1854.

Believe me, my dear Father Vandenberghe, that I am as much put out as you are that the unfortunate circumstances in which we found ourselves here absolutely delayed my trip to l’Osier. I still don’t know when I can promise myself to make it. If you only knew what the situation is like for a Bishop who is in the midst of a large population that does not totally consist of children who are docile to the Church! Since the epidemic, I did not allow myself to spend one night away from the bishopric wherein I stayed as though besieged in my command post; I did not even go out into the country. I showed myself everywhere, be it in the churches, be it with the sick, and, what do you think! there were unworthy persons who asked where I was! I leave it up to you to think what it would be like were I to absent myself now when we have no more than three or four deaths from cholera per day.

Let us therefore treat of our affairs in writing. I am not going to wait for your report to decide that Father Trévelot is not made for us. He has to be politely sent away without delay. Since this is decided, it is not proper that he remain in the house to voice his complaints and murmurings. I find that you have waited too long. As soon as he allows himself such capers as not saying Mass, we must not wait, we must recognize he is not meant for us and we have to send him away immediately.

When he has left, he must not have the notion that he left on his own initiative. While being attentive to his reputation, you will make it known that it is we who did not find him suited for our Congregation.

It seems to me that we don’t have to hesitate too much either to decide that de Lacour is not made for us. He has been induced to make a quite useless trip. What happened? He was forgotten for some time at Le Calvaire. Taking a closer look at him now at Lumières, we don’t have the courage to admit it. I had to settle the question and have had them write that he is to be sent away. But here too, we should not have hesitated.

Nor should there have been any more doubt as to whether we should keep the Brother whose name doesn’t come to me now, the one whom you also sent down to me so that I may decide his vocation.2 I needed only to see and chat with him, however, to perceive that he is perfectly made for us. He knows his theology very well, he talks like a man of good common sense, he is full of zeal and good will, he will be most acceptable to the people: what more do we want? that he preach like Massillon? It suffices that he can instruct the ignorant. Besides, if he did not succeed in the discourse he was asked to make, is it all that sure he was given enough time to prepare it? I therefore entrusted this good Brother to one of the directors of my seminary who will have him study the few treatises that he has not yet seen so that, during the course of next year, I can have him pass through all the Orders and then assign him to the work for which he will be judged fit.

Don’t be in a hurry for Brother Le Floc’h;3 give him time to overcome himself. In your outlook, date his novitiate from the period in which you will perceive that he has corrected himself. I say nothing about Brother Mazeaud, you will decide that in your wisdom. As for Brother Avignon, we must take care that we don’t weigh in the balance the fact that he is Father Vincens’ nephew.

I was thinking that Father Baret’s fervor would cool down. I am waiting for the letter that Father Fabre told me was coming before deciding what stance I am going to take in his regard.

Why do we still need time for Father Chaine to finish his novitiate? Please send him to me. I shall take up his case after your reply. The letter that I have just received from him has not left me unhappy and requires this.

Always take good courage, my dear Father Vandenberghe. In short, your novitiate is going well: let us thank God for that and let that be consolation and encouragement for yourself. For the rest, be a Superior without any airs, but with dignity, and keep everything in its proper place, with the Rules as your norm. I am always disposed to support authority in regard to and against everyone. I greet you with affection and bless you.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles,

s. g.

1 Orig.: Rome. Postulation Archives. L. M.-Vandenberghe.

2 In his July 15 report, Father Vandenberghe spoke of a novice who was discouraged because he had little talent, namely, Brother Berjou, born in 1816, who had entered the novitiate on November 20. 1853, He had made two years of theology at Tulle and spent the school year of 1854-1855 at Montolivet.

3 Ms.: Floc’h.

1240. To Father Baret, missionary priest, at Notre-Dame de L’Osier, near Vinay, Isere.1

1240:XI in Oblate Writings

Return to Marseilles as soon as possible.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Baret

Marseilles,

August 30, 1854.

I have delayed somewhat in writing you, my dear Father Baret, because each day I was waiting for some letter from you. I needed to know how you were and I was late in moderating the fervour which urged you to go and withdraw from some time to the novitiate. It seems to me that it is enough now for your own good, first of all, and then for the edification of the many novices who have admired your piety and who were certainly encouraged when they saw your regularity. It is time now to bring your edifying capacity into our own midst. Moreover, I have to discuss a number of things with you. So, my good friend, come back to your post, I am impatiently waiting for you. I did not manifest this desire to you as long as we were under the pressure of the plague which is taking its course all over; we are now, thanks be to God, completely delivered therefrom, we are better than ever at Marseilles. I think that you can come here so that you can celebrate with us on Sunday the great feast of our patron, St. Lazarus, unless you would like to stop at Romans and greet our Fathers there.

They leave me so little time that I am obliged to leave you, promising myself that I will make up for it when I shall have the consolation of having you with me. Affectionate greetings. I bless you.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles,

s. g.

P.S. Please greet on my behalf all our Fathers. I owe several of them and will pay my debts little by little. God knows how put out I am for having so little freedom.

1 Orig.: Rome. Postulation Archives. L. M.-Baret.

1241. To Father Bellon, Superior of the Major Seminary, at Romans, Drome.1

1241:XI in Oblate Writings

Come to Marseilles as soon as possible for a brief business visit.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Bellon

Marseilles,

August 30, 1854.

My dear Father Bellon, I have just learned that there will be no clergy retreat at Valence this year, and so you are free to be away for a few days. Could you not come here as soon as possible so that we can treat of matters with the Fathers who are still here, one of whom cannot remain here any longer. You will have to decide immediately, either to come or to write me that you cannot. But it is so easy today to make the stretch from Valence to Marseilles that I dare hope nothing will hinder this necessary encounter. I am in such a rush in writing you that you will excuse me if today I fail to keep the advice I give others never to leave any space blank in correspondence. I want you to receive my letter promptly. Affectionate greetings. I bless you as well as all our men.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles,

s. g.

1 Rome. Postulation Archives, L. M.-Bellon.

1242. To Father Mouchette, missionary priest at Notre-Dame de Lumières, by Avignon, Vaucluse1

1242:XI in Oblate Writings

Come for a rest at Marseilles.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Mouchette

Marseilles,

August 30, 1854.

My dear Father Mouchette, today *sermo brevis.* I will say but one word: pack your bag and chattels, leave Lumières and come immediately to Marseilles. You need a good long rest and such a rest you will never find in the midst of our Oblate scholastics. So you have to leave them behind, without hesitating to do so. Good Father Martinet will replace you in their regard. For this purpose I give him all the powers that you have. I don’t have time to write him, he will read it in this present letter, and the pleasure he will have in relieving you will make the burden I lay upon him lighter. I will write to him once he is in office. I greet him in the meantime, as well as all our Oblate scholastics, not omitting dear little Charles2 whom I bless as well as all of you. That is all the more right because he did not forget me in the lovely little letter he has addressed to Father Tempier.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

S. G.

1 Orig.: Rome. Postulation Archives, L. M.-Mouchette.

2 A visitor. According to the report on the scholastics for the month of July, there was no one among the Fathers and Brothers at Lumières who had Charles as a Christian name.

1243. [To Father Vincens, at N.-D. de Cléry].1

1243:XI in Oblate Writings

One has to intervene with men who are not observing regularity. Cholera at Viviers.

Vincens

[Marseilles],

August 31, 1854.

... We must also admit that we have some men who haven’t got the first notions of the virtues, I say more, of the duties of the religious life. Where do we see that one must endlessly come to terms with men so as not to go against their caprice or things they are adverse to? It is time that this unfortunate system is terminated. Whatever the usefulness of some men might be in certain areas, I find that there is a real danger for the future of the Congregation to keep them in these conditions. We will cut back on our numbers, if necessary, but it is important and necessary that all men are so available to the dispositions of the Superior that they have no word to say when he assigns them to a given task. I would be taken too far afield were I to go into detail; I stay with this general observation which ought to serve as a rule. Take it or leave it. Let each one walk in the way of obedience with all simplicity.

Strongly urge Father Fayette to get to work, that is to say, in study and composition. He got rusty at l’Osier. We must not lose sight of the fact that we are missionaries.

Here we don’t have to fight against the terrible plague, it has disappeared; but just now our poor Bishop of Viviers is locked into battle with it. God grant that his frail constitution does not expose him to these fatal influences. I am upset about our Fathers at La Blachère who were called to replace two parish priests who died of this disease; they are the parish priests of Vals and Vogue. The plague went around Lumières to l’Is1e2 and to Apt, but did not appear at the shrine itself. That certainly gives me an good amount of worry. It would seem that at l’Osier they do not fear it.

1 YENVEUX II. 125: III. 63: IV. 229.

2 Probably Ilsie-sur-Sorges.

1244. [To Father Dorey, at Nancy].1

1244:XI in Oblate Writings

The Fathers serving cholera victims are to be prudent.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Dorey

Marseilles,

September 1, 1854.

My dear Father Dorey, I very much approve your conduct in the difficult circumstance in which you found yourself. I cannot explain to you this late reply except by admitting that your letter, mixed into a pile of many others, had not been read. I have just found it again and immediately I have left off everything else to tell you that you did very well in answering the invitation you received from the bishopric and that there was no need for the slightest hesitation to give the permission not only for the two you have sent but also for others, if they were available. Only you must urge those whom you have sent to help the people struck down by the plague not to indulge in the slightest apprehension, to place their confidence in God, which ought not to hinder them from taking certain precautions that are a propos, such as not overloading their stomach, to stop eating if there should be even slight symptoms of diarrhoea, to take in these cases half stomach washes, adding a few drops of laudanum, to the wash, I mean to say. You see that there and also in Aix we haven’t lost a single priest. The essential thing is not to allow oneself to be gripped by fear. The disease is not contagious, strictly speaking. However, while those infected with the cholera have to be kept warm, the room where they are is to be aired out. In short, good courage: we are carrying out our duty, God is with you.

I cannot possibly see my way clear to provide the slightest help for the establishment in Sion. We have already done too much for Nancy. The expenditure for Sion has to be the diocese’s responsibility, which is obviously exploiting our slipshod way of administration. That is seen nowhere else nor ought to be. Let us back away from these onerous conditions.

I authorize you to accept the post of ... 2

1 Orig.: Rome. Postulation Archives. L. M.-Dorey.

2 We no longer have the second sheet of this letter.

1245. To Father Berne, director of the Major Seminary, at Frejus, Var.53

1245:XI in Oblate Writings

Permission to come to Marseilles and to go to Romans for a rest.

L.J.C. et MI.

Berne

Marseilles,

September 3, 1854.

Just now, my dear Father Beme, I receive the letter that you address to me to let me know about the state of your health. I leave everything aside in order to answer you. Today we celebrate the solemnity of our great patron, the friend of Jesus; it doesn’t matter, I am stealing a brief moment to tell you that I gladly consent to your coming to consult the faculty at Marseilles and that from here you go and try out the good air of Romans where the Reverend Father Bellon and your other confreres will welcome you with all the charity on which you have a right to count.

I didn’t at all doubt that the portion of our dear family which was outside of the combat zone was praying very much for the rest of us who were on the front lines. Our Fathers did not spare themselves and the good Lord kept all of them safe. It is all over today and so I am not afraid to see you pass through here. So come when you wish, sooner or later, for you must be well rested for when it is time to take up your work again. No matter how difficult it may be, it is less than the service our armies courageously provide in the midst of all renunciations, unhealthy locations and all the disasters that are found in the camps.

Goodbye, the procession is starting to move, I leave you, but first I bless you as well as our Fathers and I greet you with affection.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles, s.g.

1 Orig.: Rome. Postulation Archives, L. M.-Berne.

1246. [To Father Martinet, at N.-D. de Lumières].1

1246:XI in Oblate Writings

Business of Brother Isidore Jeancolas. The workers are hurrying to finish the scholasticate of Montolivet. Next ordination.

L.J.C. et MI.

Martinet

Marseilles,

September 8, 1854.

Hurriedly I am sending you, my dear Father Martinet, the letter I have just received from the parish priest of Xaronval. You will communicate it to Brother Jeancolas and he will see if I had been well inspired to write to this good parish priest who has so perfectly fulfilled my commission and who delights me with the details he has given me on good Brother Jeancolas. It is clear that everything that they wrote to our dear Brother bore the mark of exaggeration and even of lies. And this will show you how imprudent it was to hand this Brother letters which were apt to depress him and have him lose peace of heart. What is the use of opening letters, as the Rule requires, if letters of this kind are not held back? Let that be a lesson to you. I don’t know who is to blame but I cannot refrain from holding him blameworthy.

You will also tell Brother Jeancolas that I agree wholeheartedly that he follow the advice of the parish priest of Xaronval, that I would have given the same advice, that he relinquish his own share of revenue to his father, and no one has the right to complain about that.

Since our Oblate Brothers did not benefit from the holidays to restore their well-being, we are hastening preparations to receive them as soon as possible at Montolivet; but what a chore it is to get the workers to move. We doubled the number of carpenters, doors were missing and many other things too, and be sure we will not be responsible for delaying the happiness of our dear children who put such a price at taking possession of their manor.

They must have told you to alert Brother Bonnefoy to prepare himself to receive the Order of the deaconate at the Quarter Tense of this month. Do the same for Brother Lagrue whom I want to ordain deacon also, but urge him not to weary himself with this thought which will surely give him great pleasure.

We have a fine gathering here of Fathers from all over. I profit from the occasion to treat of certain matters with my Council and that is what forces me to leave you because the hour set for this is about to strike.

Goodbye my dear little Father Martinet, sustain with dignity your fatherhood. Here are two novices whom you had the privilege of introducing into our holy family. I gladly send them my compliments and bless them as well as yourself and your whole community.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Rome, Postulation Archives. L. M.-Martinet.

201. [To Mgr Blanchet, Bishop of Nesqually].1

201:II in Oblate Writings

Fr. d’Herbomez to be Vice-Superior of the mission and to keep in contact with the Bishop.

Blanchet Bishop

Marseilles,

September 12, 1854.

... I will not return again to the question about which we are now in agreement. I had never doubted the correctness of your feelings and the fairness of all your decisions. Now that the various claims have been perfectly and finally answered, there is no longer any need to fear the slightest misunderstanding between you and Fr. Ricard. You will not therefore be displeased that I am leaving this good Father in his post. After all that has happened it would not be easy for me to find among our older members somebody willing to replace him, and I have made it a law for myself not to send to distant and difficult missions any but men of good will who have asked me as a favour to be sent. However, I have found a way of accepting your views in part without recalling Fr. Ricard, who is so weakened that he would die on the journey. I will nominate a Vice-Superior who will relieve him of some of his responsibility, and who will correspond with you if you wish. This Father is already in the area. He is full of virtues, and has experience of missions. It is Fr. d’Herbomez, of whose merits you have already had occasion to hear. Soon two other missionaries will join their brethren, accompanied by a Brother. That is all that I have been able to do this year for Oregon. I was unable to satisfy the wishes of Mgr Demers. The relations that he has had during his long stay in Europe with various religious congregations will enable him to find himself some subjects from one of them.

Accept, Monseigneur....

1 Copy: Chancery of Seattle, Washington, register of letters written by the Bishop of Walla Walla from September 29, 1846 to September 25, 1859, p. 256.

1247. [To Father Vincens, at N.-D. de l’Osier]1

1247:XI in Oblate Writings

Father Telmon to return to his community. Invite the Fathers to be discreet.

Vincens

[Marseilles],

September 21, 1854.

Things had to be explained to Father Telmon and that is what I have done through Father Aubert. He was to tell him on my behalf that it was time to change his way of doing things, that three years of fruitless effort was enough, that I could no longer tolerate this stay outside our houses. He was to tell him at the same time that, to give him an honorable way out, I was thinking of naming him Superior of the community of Lumières. Father Telmon is convinced that it is appropriate that he return to one of our houses, that he was ready to go to wherever I would send him, but that the numerous proofs given to him of the little confidence we placed in him made it impossible for him to accept being Superior anywhere. That is where we are at. I shall have to intervene directly and I expect some more difficulties which I am not at all disposed to admit. I will rather propose that he leave the Congregation. That is what I would like to suggest to all who trouble good harmony with their eccentricities. There must be but one spirit in our ranks as there must also be but one heart. At times one meets persons who have no heart and then they have a spirit all their own too.

In your remarks to the community, insist, I beg you, on discretion in speech. This excessive prattling during which one speaks of everything, assesses everything without due consideration, etc., is being pushed to the extreme and produces very bad results. I have received a letter from England which tells me about the following untoward fact: the last missionaries to pass through Liverpool2 were those who came from l’Osier and they sowed trouble among the Fathers of Liverpool. Imagine them saying such absurd things in passing that the Congregation was being threatened with extinction, that the Pope wanted to unite it to other Congregations and that a great debate on this matter was in course between the Pope and myself. What can you say to that? Should we draw the ladder after ourselves? If they go on publishing stupidities like that everywhere they go, that will be nice indeed.3

1 YENVEUX III 127; V.218.

2 Fathers Baudre and Durieu passed through Liverpool during the summer of 1854. Cf. L. Durieu-Tempier, October 3, 1854.

3 To draw the ladder after oneself means: to recognize that there is nothing better or comparable.

1248. [To Father Vandenberghe, at N.-D. de l’Osier].88

1248:XI in Oblate Writings

Form the novices well. Those who will soon make their profession will go either to Vico or to Montolivet for their studies.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Vandenberghe

Marseilles,

September 22, 1854.

My dear Father Vandenberghe, I am quite late in your regard and I cannot explain that, because such is not my habitual practice in your case. I think that in a rushed moment I asked Father Aubert to write to you and I let it go at that, for I had nothing to add to what he was supposed to tell you. Today, however, I shall write to you at l’Osier on a topic that is not at all minor. Your last report contains an overview that is less consoling than the others have been. There are good things, to be sure, but the *buts* were quite disturbing. Those who are about to complete their novitiate have not yet passed through the Council. I am afraid that what you say about them will make us hesitate to admit them. People should not be falling short of the mark on the eve of their profession. Are you considering the proposition of having those who are ending their novitiate at the beginning of or mid-October to wait for the profession which is scheduled for All Saints? You will have been told that the Italian Brothers admitted to profession are supposed to go to Vico and finish their literary studies under Reverend Father Michelier and that they are at the same time responsible to help in the lower primary classes the students who are there and under the direction of our Fathers. That is why you will send them on to us as soon as they have made their vows. The other newly professed2 will be received in the new house we have built in the environs of Marseilles, where our young Oblates will do their philosophical and theological studies. Father Tempier will be the Superior of this community and Fathers Aubert and Baret will be professors of moral and dogma. People will be trained in composition there, and English, a language that one must absolutely know in our Congregation, will be learned there. I will have definite days when I shall visit this interesting youth and, with God’s grace, everything will go well. And so the great separation that has been so much desired will in fact exist. I am told that this news will create no difficulty for your novices. So you can announce it to them not only as something that is decided but as something that is already being implemented. Concern yourself very much, dear Father, with your novitiate. That is a great matter. Let all else be quite secondary, be concerned with other things only inasmuch as you are certain that your main obligation does not suffer. It is so important that you form good religious; you will not achieve this, even with God’s grace on which we must count before all else, unless through assiduous and constant care. It is not enough to instruct in general through common instructions, but you have to work on each one in particular as though you had only that one person to form. You will be greatly rewarded for your trouble by the success that your care will certainly achieve. I insist on a masculine formation: they have to tell themselves that they are liable to be called to undertake difficult work; no softness, the spirit of mortification is not an accommodating one; let them think of what our missionaries in Oregon and the Red River must endure. Let them get used at an early date to a life of renunciation.

Goodbye, dear son, I bless you and all your children.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles, S.G..

1 Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives, L. M.-Vandenberghe.

2 Were then admitted to vows Brothers Le Stanc, Camper, Eynard. Manuel, J.-B. Semeria. Clut, Visidari; several others were refused. Cf. General Council. October 22, 1854*.*

1249. To Father Soullier, at Nancy.1

1249:XI in Oblate Writings

Father Soullier, as newly appointed Superior at Limoges, is to have piety and regularity reign there.

L.J.C. et MI.

Soullier

Marseilles,

September 23, 1854.

My dear Father Soullier, I cannot resign myself to writing you only in the formal document which will reach you via the Reverend Father Provincial. You have spoiled me so little with your letters that, in truth, I would be dispensed from writing to you after observing the forms of politeness. But thanks be to God, there exist other relationships between a father and his son, and in my heart an affection for someone on whom I have laid on my hands that is too vivid and thus it requires no great effort to forgive you for having completely neglected me for so many years. This grave wrong against a father rather than a Superior does not prevent me from acknowledging and appreciating your good qualities. This knowledge and appreciation has decided me to name you Superior of our community at Limoges. You will take possession of your post when Father Ciamin leaves: the latter is assigned to other work. You will have to gather together your community to have them hear the reading of your letter of obedience: you will not read it out yourself because it includes certain expressions that your modesty would have difficulty proclaiming. By these letters your house is constituted in conformity to the Rule. From that moment on, the whole responsibility for regularity in the house rests on you. You will be imbued with the importance of your obligations, and you will meditate in view of that not only what refers to all the Institute’s members in the Code that the Church has given us, but very especially what is contained therein for local Superiors. I am counting quite a lot on the good spirit of our Fathers and thus I am convinced that you will find in them all that is required so that you can carry out well your responsibilities. I am going to write to the Bishop of Limoges to acquaint him of your appointment; thereafter you will go and see him in your new capacity. It is simply a matter of letting him know in what capacity you are in our community of Limoges. Among the recommendations that I have to make to you is that I insist that you do not overload yourself with work. Before God calculate what you can do among all without harming your health, and don’t commit yourself to do more no matter how much one may insist. I am aware that people have not taken too much care of you up to now.

Though your ordinary relationships are to be entertained with the Provincial, you won’t forget to write me several times during the course of the year to give me a firsthand report on persons and things. You will also have to consult me when it is a matter of importance or some grave difficulty that may arise under your governance. Also, put great regularity into your financial reports; watch that the procurator of your house is not forgetful on this point. In short, let all the gears of your administration function so well that never will any remarks have to be addressed to you about it. Have piety especially reign in your midst. It is monstrous to see religious who dispose of so many means of sanctification and perfection huddling in indifference and laxness. Your spiritual conferences will provide you with the occasion to recall principles and to maintain the exact observance of regular discipline. Without that, we damn ourselves, and all the while we preach conversion to the people. In the Rule you will find the confirmation of all the words that you can draw forth from books which treat of the duties of the religious life. It is not enough to read Rodriguez or others; we have to put into practice what they teach.

Goodbye, my dear son, I bless you as well as all our Fathers and Brothers.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

S. G.

1 Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives, L. M.-Soullier.

1250. [To Father A. Rey, at Briançon].1

1250:XI in Oblate Writings

Congratulates his zeal. Seminary books transported to Montolivet.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Rey

Major Seminary of Marseilles,

September 27, 1854.

I don’t want it said, my dear son, that you wrote me two letters which remained without a reply. It is not a matter that I don’t want to write to you very much, but you know how things happen here. Today again I have come to five o’clock without having had one moment to myself. A certain matter has brought me to the seminary and, during the session, at Father Fabre’s own desk, I am writing these few lines to thank you for your remembrance and to congratulate myself on the conquests of your zeal; it is grain, however, that is not yet gathered into the barns of the father of the family. I must even admit that I have little hope of ever seeing it gathered in. Two years residence in enemy territory!

How can one withdraw victorious therefrom? God will reward you for your good will and the Congregation will be grateful for your zeal.2 I presume you will not be long in returning to us. You will tear your beard out when you see how many books over which you had the rights of a prelate are flying away without you to the holy mountain3 where others than you will page through them and fall asleep over them. Goodbye, it is night and I still have visits to make in the city. Affectionate greetings and blessing.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Orig.: Rome. Postulation Archives, L. M.-Rey.

2 We have two letters (September 15 and 22) of Father Rey to Fabre to which, it would seem, the Founder is replying but they contain no reference to the conquests’ of Father Rey’s zeal.

3 The scholasticate of Montolivet.

1251. [To Father Vincens, Provincial].1

1251:XI in Oblate Writings

Advice for Father Brun, Superior at N.-D. de Clèry.

Vincens

[Marseilles],

September 28, 1854.

But what shall I tell you about Father Marchal’s letter? You will understand him better than I, for you have just put in an appearance in that place. I can see enough, however, to be quite uneasy about such an administration. So indicate to Father Brun the line of conduct to be followed. He must not veer away from what you have laid down in regard to renouncing the salary of the parish priest and the assistant and in regard to stole fees. His is not the prerogative of playing a generous role and why should all this money be withheld from the bursar? That is quite irregular. Put order into this and into all else. This good man is too much of a mother and quite without energy. It was our miserable lack of superiorship material which forced us to lay this burden on him, one that exceeds his powers. At least oblige him to come to an agreement with his assessors as the Rule requires. I charge you with all commissions because you are in correspondence with him.

1 Yenveux VII, 193.

1252. [To Father Bellon, at Romans].1

1252:XI in Oblate Writings

Reproach for not writing. Bishop de Mazenod remakes his testament before leaving for Rome.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Bellon

Marseilles,

October 16, 1854.

Bravo, my dear Father Bellon! I am writing to you only to make you aware that you haven’t thought of giving me any news of yourself since you have left Marseilles. I want to tell you, however, how mystified I was lately because I couldn’t believe that you were capable of such forgetfulness. Father Magnan had returned from Romans and I was told he had a letter to give me. I asked him for it a first time, impatient as I was to receive something from you. He had left the letter in his room. A second time I asked for the letter, still thinking that it was from you. This time he had gone up to N.-D. de la Garde where he was staying. I landed up asking him whether he was planning on taking my letter to Corsica. He was to embark the next morning. On the verge of leaving the continent, he sent me this famous letter that had been so much awaited, for which I sighed so much. What was my surprise: the letter was not from you! What will it be like now that the holidays are over. How many good reasons you will have to remain in your mute condition. Well, my dear man, I, for my part, to reproach you thus, I came out into the country and locked myself into my office, all doors closed, letting the wind blow at will. I am going to spend the whole day in this solitude in order to withdraw from all the disturbances of the city and get ahead a bit in my work.

Today I won’t say any more, that is how angry I am with you. To distract me from that concern, I am going to work on my testament which I have to remake. It’s like drinking the sea: I am on the tenth page and it is not finished. And that is still only a draft; but I don’t want to leave for Rome without having put it into perfect order; the Congregation and my diocese are too much at stake therein.

Goodbye, my dear Father Bellon; I greet you affectionately in spite of your wrongs.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles, s.g.

1 Orig.: Rome. Postulation Archives, L. M.-Bellon.

1253. [To Father Mouchette, at N.-D. de Lumières].1

1253:XI in Oblate Writings

Ordination of Father Lagrue. Father Aubert is named Provincial of Midi. The Founder’s imminent departure for Rome. The workers are late in completing Montolivet. Some missionary news.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Mouchette

Marseilles,

October 16, 1854.

The sun is beginning to go down, my dear Father Mouchette, and I still have many things to do in this solitude into which I entered this morning. You are, however, one of those to whom I wanted to write, for I have been deterred so long from enjoying this consolation. I will be satisfied even if I am brief, if possible, for when I am with you I am so happy that it costs me a great deal to separate myself from you. But how does one manage when one sees this enormous pile of papers heaped high on my desk. There is even my testament which has to be redone and is awaiting a last revision. So I shall tell you in a few words that I have ordained Father Lagrue priest to send him into paradise bearing this sacred character so that he may be glorified therein for all eternity. I took this resolution as soon as I was informed that the doctor in charge didn’t want to indicate the least bit of medication and, at the same time, saying to the Brother who accompanied Lagrue that he, the doctor, would be willing to cure him, the Brother. Now he is priest and a holy priest. God will do the rest. I have appointed Reverend Father Aubert Provincial and you provincial procurator. Thus you will conclude that the house of Montolivet will be illustrious among all the houses of the Congregation for its Superior is an assistant to the Superior General, its moral professor is the Father Provincial, and the moderator of the Oblate scholastics is the Provincial Procurator.2 Father Fabre is installed or will be installed today as local Superior and Superior of the Major Seminary of Marseilles.

Father Tempier absolutely wants to go and sleep at Montolivet this evening. Nothing is ready in that house: expect to camp out there. Even though we rushed the workers, there is still a lot to be done. Father Tempier, however, is insisting that we hold the preparatory retreat for All Saints there, but I fear you will have a lot to put up with. Now I am late in seeing this Brother Pentevinck who is giving us concern and to speak to you about all the others. Oh! how much young men have to be tested. The best of them show themselves to be weak when the occasion is right. Would you believe that Father Barret of Natal has lost his courage. This mission that he wanted so much now seems too difficult for him. That is a good lesson to be remembered.

I received news from Father Baudre. He wrote me a long and nice letter from Philadelphia from where each left for his mission. But this Father will find the yellow fever at Galveston. That is something to be afraid about. Father Verdet is not too well. Let us ask God for patience and submission.

I forget what else I am to do, and it is impossible for me to finish, a fact I regret, for it is not easy for me to escape as I have done today. So goodbye, my dear son, affectionate greetings. I bless you as well as all our Fathers and Brothers.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

s.g.

1 Orig.: Rome. Postulation Archives. L. M.-Mouchette.

2 Fathers Tempier. Aubert and Mouchette.

40. [To Cardinal Fransoni, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].1

40:V in Oblate Writings

The blessings of God upon the Oblate Missions in Ceylon, particularly in Colombo.

Propaganda Fide

Marseilles,

October 18, 1854.

Your Eminence,

The news I receive from our Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Ceylon is more and more consoling and edifying. Among others, the missionaries in the Vicariate of Colombo are doing an immense amount of good even though they are not held in high esteem by those who are not willing to imitate them. The graces with which the Most Blessed God accompanies their painful ministry are truly prodigious in my opinion. I would readily compare them to the tangible assistance of the Holy Spirit during the early life of the Church. It would take too long to give you an exact report. I do feel, however, that it would please you to read an excerpt of the latest letter written by Fr. Pulicani to his father. It is true that our missionaries are angels of virtue, especially the one I mentioned who is called “the saint” by all; even by Bishop Bravi. It would therefore be a real misfortune to deter those good workers of the missions where they are doing so much good and where, in all confidence, things were going badly before the missions were assigned to them.

Please accept, Your Eminence, the expression of affectionate respect wherewith I am your most devoted servant.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali,

V. 14 (1853-1854), f. 1369.

This letter begins with Bishop de Mazenod’s response to the Prefect that he does not think a certain Giambattisia Gova was born in Marseilles.

202. [To the Bishop of Montreal, at the Minerva, Rome] 1

202:II in Oblate Writings

Joy at being able to see Mgr Bourget again soon. Letters from the Oblates in Canada to be given to Mgr de Mazenod’s valet.

Bourget

Rome, from the Quirinal,

November 17, 1854.

My dear Monseigneur, I would have come eagerly to find you this morning had I not been prevented by the terrible weather. However, I will not delay in seeking the pleasure of a long conversation with you. It will not be this afternoon because I have been invited to go and officiate at the pontifical first Vespers of the Dedication at Saint Peter’s.

However, I very much desire to receive news of my dear spiritual family. So I am sending you my valet de chambre, and I ask you to hand to him the letters which you have been kind enough to bring to Rome.

My dear Monseigneur, accept the expression of my joy, which I feel at the thought of seeing you again after so many years of separation, and a renewed assurance of my respectful attachment to you.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Orig., Montreal, Archiepiscopal Arch.: Oblates. The two prelates had gone to Rome for the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

1254. [To Father Tempier, at Marseilles].98

1254:XI in Oblate Writings

Roman engagements. The Founder is among the oldest of the Bishops present at Rome.

Tempier

[Rome,]2

November 22, 1854.

I am using this small size notepaper to write as, contrary to my expectations, I have not been able to take advantage of the day off from our meetings and of the driving rain that has been pouring down all day to catch up on my correspondence. It is night-fall and I have not been able to take my pen in hand. Its been one visitor after another, without a break. It seems the Romans are not so put off by the rain as we are. Even so, the Bishop of Blois was one of the ones who called. I wish to register with you my complaint against those fine fellows at Marseilles for not making more use of his passing through, as well as that of the Archbishop of Avignon, the Bishop of Amiens and Monsignor Caire.3 It works out that I get no letters either by post or by hand. Even so my own duty has not been neglected despite the pressures there are on my time ... participation in the liturgy, the meetings at the Vatican, visitors to receive, business to attend to, etc., until night-fall. I do not know how many times after missing the hour prior to benediction at our neighbours’ the Sacramentines, I have been obliged to go and knock at the door of Saint Sylvester’s to enter the church by way of the house. It never really bothered me. You know how many reasons there are for making this church special to me. Its there I was consecrated bishop and say my prayers over the tomb of blessed Zinelli who gave me so much love and to whom I owe so much.

Everybody is complimentary over how well I am and will not credit my age. Nevertheless I am almost the oldest of the hundred or so bishops who make up our assembly. Among the archbishops, there is only Archbishop Cardelli and the Patriarch Foscolo, and among the bishops there is only the Bishop of Policastro.4 You can understand that in light of this I am rather happy to have made my will, were it only to calm the fears of good Father Tempier as he adds it to his funerary collection. But joking apart, it must bring one up sharply to find that one is the senior of such a large group of one’s confreres. It is not only the death of so many of one’s contemporaries that creates a repugnance for all that is ephemeral in this world, but the whole garish spectacle fills me with utter contempt. Thoughts like this came to my mind that time when all those people were milling around in the rooms where the *ricevimento* for the conferral of the red hat on the Cardinal Primate of Hungary5 was being held. How many others had been the cause of a like commotion in the same place and have now disappeared out of this world. The very same day I had been to visit the cell where Blessed Leonard of Port-Maurice lived and from where he went up to heaven. How much at home I felt in that narrow sanctuary, I had to tear myself away, I was so much at home there. When I left that place and made my way again into the church to revere the Blessed’s saintly remains, I reflected to myself: soon you will have to put in an appearance in the fine rooms at the Quirinal and see all that human greatness has to show. What does it amount to in comparison with what I taste here? Such were my sentiments in fact when the moment came.

1 YENVEUX V.262: REY II. 516.

2 The Founder left Marseilles on October 23 to take part in the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

3 Bishop L. T. Pallu du Parc, Bishop of Blois, Archbishop J. M. M. Debelay. Archbishop of Avignon. Bishop A. de Salinis, Bishop of Amiens, Monsignor A. A. Caire, apostolic protonotary, honorary canon of Marseilles, etc.

4 Bishop L. M. Cardelli, Bishop of Achrida, born in 1777, Bishop D. A. Foscolo. patriarch of Jerusalem. born in 1778, Bishop M. Laudisio. Bishop of Policastro. born in 1779.

5 Cardinal Jean Scitovszky, Primate of Hungary.

1255. [To Father Casimir Aubert, at Marseilles].103

1255:XI in Oblate Writings

On the occasion of the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, the Oblates should celebrate with pomp the feast of December 8th.

Aubert C

[Rome],

November 28, 1854.

I want that in all our houses we sing, on the eve of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, before the Blessed Sacrament exposed, the *Veni Creator* with the response verse and prayer, the *Tota pulchra es* with the response verse and prayer of the Immaculate Conception, the *Tantum ergo* and that benediction of the Blessed Sacrament is given.

On the feast day itself, we must expose the Blessed Sacrament at eleven o’clock of the morning, which will be the hour during which the Pope will proclaim the announced dogmatic definition and, after the prayer *pro gratiarum actione,* we shall sing with a holy enthusiasm the *Tota pulchra es,* etc. This is the least we can do to express our joy and gratitude on the occasion of this great event over which no one ought to rejoice more than we, who are children of Mary Immaculate, we, the members of a Congregation which does battle under this beautiful name, a truly personal prerogative through the intervention of the very Head of the Church, the great Pope Leo XII.

In advance I approve everything that you will do to make the feast of the Immaculate more solemn than ever. Let the holy mountain be lit up2 twice as much as what is done for the feast in August. Fires of rejoicing are to be organized, not to forget that there be one at Montolivet, we have to light up all the windows of our house at La Garde, the facade of Le Calvaire. In a word, do all that you can to express the enthusiastic joy that all true sons of Mary are experiencing.

1 REY II, *5* 19-520.

2 Here the Founder seems to be speaking of Notre-Dame de la Garde, even though in letter no. 1250 he also referred to Montolivet as the holy mountain”.

203. [To Mgr Taché].1

203:II in Oblate Writings

Joy at receiving Mgr Taché’s letters. Frs. Remas and Grandin. Only subjects who ask for it are sent on missions.

Taché

[Rome]

November 29, 1854.

My good, dear Monseigneur, son, brother and friend, I have received your letter. How could I express the emotion that your admirable letters produce in me? You would need to witness it to believe it. I do not know which feeling is uppermost in my heart at such a time; what I feel is a mixture of the most sweet, affectionate and consoling feelings that can exist in the heart of a father. In order to arouse apostolic zeal, we have had your letter copied so that it may be read in the novitiate.

Do not stop writing, dear friend, and do not ever be afraid of writing too much. When I have finished reading your letters, I begin again.

What you tell me of Fr. Rémas has consoled me greatly. He is so virtuous; it would indeed have been a pity if the difficulty of learning languages, which in the end one overcomes, had deprived you of so devoted a missionary. I am therefore very glad that you have reconsidered a first judgement which it would have given me a great deal of pain to concur with.

The excellent Fr. Grandin must be with you; he is a true saint and a totally devoted man, just what you need.

The practice of the Jesuits for the foreign missions is not to send anybody who does not ask to be sent, and even then true will has to be distinguished from a mere velleity. It is so difficult when one makes a mistake in this matter. We have discovered this in Natal, an infinitely less difficult mission than your own. We have had to expel one of the companions of Mgr Allard, and another is pestering me to recall him. These are indolent souls, unfaithful to grace; but that does not mean that they cause less disorder in our ranks. While I have been edified to learn of the work you are doing, I was distressed to see that your missionaries are not always in pairs as I have so often recommended; in such a situation it is always better to have fewer missions.

1 Ms. Yenveux I, supplement, 96; IX, 98, 186. 202.

1256. [To Father Mouchette, at Montolivet].1

1256:XI in Oblate Writings

Joy on learning of the scholastics’ fervour. Advice on their formation: holiness, obedience, detachment, family spirit, etc.

Mouchette

Rome, The Quirinal,

December 2, 1854.

I find your splendid letters of great interest, as you must be well aware. Our whole hope for the future is under your watchful eyes: I would go so far as to say, within your hands. For this reason, I am all the time praying, dear son, that God will give you his help. I remain full of confidence in your zeal and piety, I might add in your experience, for you have now had our scholastics in your care for quite a long time.

Our young family’s religious formation should of course be altogether paternal, but it must be manly too. It is a question of forming men of God, and in your position you are well able to say if such men are the kind who spare themselves. I find a lot of consolation in everything you put into your report on our scholastic brothers. I thank God and the holy Virgin for it.

My prayer is that the scholastics be really imbued with what the Church expects of them; a mediocre virtue will not be an adequate response to the demands of their holy vocation. Should they turn out like the common run of cleric, they would not be achieving their goal, it would fall short. They are called to a quite different perfection, they must strive towards it, or rather I go further, they have to be actually walking this path so as to become in God’s hands instruments of his mercy. They have to realize that their ministry is the continuation of the apostolic ministry, and that it is a question of going to the length of performing miracles. The news that reaches us from the foreign missions is proof of this. What encouragement for our young scholastics to read the marvels worked by their confreres in far away countries! So let them lose no time in becoming saints, if they have not done so already to the height called for in response to the Sovereign Pontiff’s appeal.

As well as the other virtues, there is need above all of great abnegation, lofty indifference to all that obedience can demand, willing compliance with all its demands, in such a way as to count oneself happy to do what it commands.

It has been striking to me that it is not sufficiently appreciated that on entering religion one dies to the world. There is too much attachment to relatives. Clearly they must be loved, and this love is shown by having them share in all the merits that one has the happiness of acquiring in religion, but if one does not let them go their own way, if one keeps up contacts which mean keeping abreast of their concerns, of the vicissitudes of their fortunes and a thousand other trifles, then goodbye to peace, interior recollection, supernatural thoughts, religious perfection. One might as well have stayed in the world. It has not been understood that religious vocation is a real death to the world. Let us remember the infallible word of God: *Inimici hominis domestici ejus.* There is nothing to be hoped for from a religious who allows himself to live out a too natural affection for his family. How could one cross the seas and fly to the conversion of souls with a weakness of that kind? Instil these things deeply into our scholastics. The groundwork would have been laid in the novitiate, but that is not enough, you must come back to it again.

I would want all the scholastic brothers to be imbued with the family spirit which ought to exist among us. I have seen many religious orders, I am in very intimate relations with those that are most regular. Well, apart from their virtues I also give them credit for a great *esprit de corps;* however, this more than paternal love that the head has for the members of the family, this cordial affinity of the members for their head which establishes between them a relationship springing from the heart and which forms true family ties between us - father to son, son to father - this, I have not come across anywhere else. I have always thanked God for it as a particular gift which he has deigned to grant me; for it is the temper of heart that he has given me, this expansive love which is my own gift and which pours itself out on each one of them without taking anything from the others, just like, I make bold to say, God’s love for men. I am saying that it is this sentiment, which I know comes from Him who is the source of all charity, which has evoked in the hearts of my children this reciprocity of love which forms the distinctive character of our beloved family. May this help us mutually to appreciate the beauty of our vocation and may it all be attributed to God for his greater glory. This is the most ardent wish of my heart.

It *is* necessary to watch over their health very carefully, but it is necessary that the individuals themselves should *not* be over-preoccupied with it. We have seen the harm done by this weakness at the novitiate on occasions when it has not worked out.

As to the tendency you think you have spotted in one of the scholastics, do not give an inch. Let him drink nothing but water, show no mercy. Don’t let’s forget what depths Brothers R and C sank to. The Bishop of Bruges2 was saying to me recently that he can do absolutely nothing with the former and you know what has happened to the other. I would not simply dismiss this brother, as I believe that he could be brought to go to one of our difficult missions, but he must be corrected of his tendency and be told that that is a prerequisite for his admission among us.

1 YENVEUX I. 36: III. 114: V. 209; VI. 103-104, 124; VIII, 72, 157: IX, 175.

2 Bishop J. -B. Malou. Bishop of Bruges. It has not been possible to identify with certitude the scholastics the founder is referring to.