*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.*

1855

1257. [To Father Bellon, at Romans]1

1257:XI in Oblate Writings

Death of Father Chauvet and of several priests of Marseilles. Sending Father Nicolas to Romans.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Bellon

Marseilles,

January 13, 1855.

My dear and good son, when I set foot on the soil of our homeland upon my return from Rome,2 I did not expect to be overwhelmed, so to speak, with disastrous news. At Toulon I found a letter which told me, first of all, that Canon Monier3 died suddenly in his stall; this death was then followed by that of Canon Julien and of Henrion, the Assistant Priest of St-Cannat. At the same time I learned that our Father Chauvet4 had been given the last rites at Romans while the last Sacraments were given to our good Father de L’Hermite at Clermont. Trembling I made my way to Marseille afraid of some new catastrophe and my shattered soul dared during the holy Sacrifice to complain lovingly to the Lord for having sent such a heavy trial upon our little family. The decree has been passed for one of our men. Our prayers could not save him, but it does seem that the other one has been granted to us. Father de L’Hermite is better, but good Father Chauvet is no more, at least not amongst us here on earth, for the moving details you give me about his illness and death assure me that he still lives in heaven, our true homeland. But what a void his absence creates for us here below! Such is the holy will of God, we can only adore and submit ourselves to it. Immediately I thought of providing for your extreme need. I had no choice to make. Father Nicolas will be leaving. I had him cancel all the commitments he had undertaken for the Jubilee. We had to see to that which was more urgent. I am confident that you will get good help from him. You know this man. I have given him all appropriate instructions. I told him I am placing him at your disposition for the work he shall have to do. If it were possible for you yourself to take on the class of moral, that would be better. I am not judging according to my lights, but those who are the most outspoken about his real talent tell me here that he would not do very well in teaching that class. You know that he excels in Sacred Scripture, a subject in which he has worked a great deal.

I am being disturbed, I have to leave you. Goodbye. I send a thousand blessings to you and to all our Fathers and send you my heart’s affectionate greetings.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. I shall send your interesting account to the Oblate scholastics and novices, who will be much edified therefrom.

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

2 Landed at Toulon on January 3rd. entered Marseilles on January 4th.

3 Three priests of Marseilles: Canons J. Monier. B. Julien and the Abbé D. Henrion.

4 Casimir Chauvet died at Romans on January 9, t855.

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

157:V in Oblate Writings

Condolences for the death of Mr. de Jessé Request not to forget Bishop Taché’s allocation and to send an additional instalment on the 1854 grant.

Propagation of the Faith

Marseilles,

January 15*,* 1855.

Dear Sirs,

Upon my return from Rome at the beginning of this new year I received your letter informing me of the loss recently suffered by the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith in the person of Mr. de Jessé, the worthy president of your Council. I fully shared in your legitimate sorrow and offered prayers to God for the repose of the soul of the deceased to whom all the friends of the Missionary Society owe a debt of gratitude for the services he rendered to them. Moreover, I had a letter written to the superiors of our various missions so they would all have a Mass said and pray for the same intention.

While depriving you of a wise and zealous associate, the death of Mr. de Jessé does not create an irreplaceable void in your Council since fortunately you were able to replace him with Mr. Terret, whose experience already acquired in your Administration will make it easier for him to perform his duties as President. We are convinced that this twofold event will in no way alter our good relations with the Central Council of Lyon and that under the new President the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate will continue to experience nothing but full satisfaction with your kindness and generosity in favor of its foreign missions. Speaking of these missions, I must not forget to satisfy the request of Bishop Taché of St. Boniface in the territory of the Hudson Bay Company in North America.

This missionary-prelate, fearful that his request for a grant might not reach you if he addressed it directly to the Central Council due to the lack of security in the postal service between Europe and the practically unknown lands where he lives, wrote and asked me to address this request to you on his behalf. Unfortunately, however, his letter arrived very late. I received it in Rome at the end of last November while it should have reached me in May in order to be in time for the distribution of the Missionary Society funds for this year. Nonetheless, a delay for which no one is at fault should not mean that this poor bishop and his mission will be deprived of the ordinary assistance granted to him each year by the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith. Even though the titular of the See of St. Boniface is now an Oblate of Mary, there is no reason to withdraw from him that aim which the Missionary Society judged necessary for his predecessor, Bishop Provencher2, because he has the same expenses and even more. On the other hand, as a bishop, he receives nothing from the grant given to the Oblates of Mary for their missions in his diocese. The assistance he requests is therefore indispensable for his secular clergy, his sisters, and the other responsibilities for which he must provide. In the note he left you during his trip to France in 1852, he indicated the reasons why it is necessary to preserve the distinction between the aid granted to the bishop of St. Boniface and that extended to the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary in his diocese. In that same note he gave a detailed account of his budget and the figure alone for the support of his personnel and the ordinary expenses of the divine cult is around 20 000 francs every year. He then adds: “Bishop Taché also ventures to point out that the aforementioned figures are exactly what would be required, not to provide the missionaries with living conditions similar to those of *poor priests* in civilized countries, but simply to free them from work unfitting to their character and harmful to the success of their missions.”

After that, Gentlemen, I have nothing more to say. What remains is to find the way to provide the necessary aid to Bishop Taché on the funds of 1854. I know these funds have already been distributed. I do think, however, that you always keep a more or less high amount in reserve for contingencies such as the one under consideration at present. It is therefore still possible for you to take an additional vote and come to the aid of the poor bishop of St. Boniface who in all respects merits this sign of your charity as you can see by the interesting letter he wrote me, a copy of which I plan to send to you post-haste for the Annals.

Before closing, Gentlemen, I would ask you to please send us as soon as possible a further instalment on the total sum you granted to the missions of our Congregation for this year. Many of those missions have exhausted the resources for which they are indebted each year to the Missionary Society and would be in a very difficult position if prompt aid were not sent to them. In order to provide for the most urgent needs, the procurator of these missions insistently requests of us the sum of *25 000 francs.*

Gentlemen, please accept the renewed expression of our gratitude and high regard 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.

2 Ms.: Provenchère.

41. To Bishop Barnabo1

41:V in Oblate Writings

Overabundance of work for Bishop de Mazenod upon his return from Rome. Dispatch of a letter to Fr. Semeria. Rigorous climate in the diocese of St. Boniface. Gratitude to the Holy Father.

Propaganda Fide

Marseilles,

January 26, 1855.

Dearly beloved Monseigneur,

Since my return to Marseilles I can say that I have not had a moment’s respite. My dear subjects are making me pay the arrears of the services they were deprived of during my stay in Rome. I do not complain, for a long time I have had those words of St. Paul engraved in my mind: *Nos autem servos vestros per Jesum*.2 The Archbishop of Paris3 passed through Marseilles yesterday, came to the Bishopric, celebrated Mass in my chapel, had breakfast, and took his leave without my having a chance to see him because I was giving Confirmation at the Youth Reformatory where I also gave Communion to three hundred of these young inmates who are being instructed and transformed by religion.

I have received news from Ceylon. Bishop Bettachini has finally arrived. Our men are accomplishing miracles of charity in the epidemics which reign in that country. The goodly, excellent Fr. Semeria has sent me his report with his customary simplicity. I felt that it would please you, His Eminence The Cardinal Prefect, and Bishop Buratti, to know how things are going and that you would be as edified as I was by the zeal and the devotion of our good Oblates of Mary. I enclose a copy of the letter written by Fr. Semeria, and apologize for the ink spot I was not able to erase.

The news from our other missions is consoling because of the good being done, but God knows what it costs to nature. The letters written by Bishop Taché of St. Boniface, are terrifying when you consider what these missionaries have to endure because of the ice and the cold, 40° below zero. They do not complain, but I can guess what it is like and I admire them for it.

In your next audience, I would ask you to renew the expression of my sentiments of gratitude and love to the Holy Father. I repeat it here every day, but I would never tire of having it heard by the Pope himself because those sentiments are not a mere formality, but permanent in my heart along with those of my affectionate friendship for you, whose most devote servant and friend I remain forever.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Orig. Italian: Rome. Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. 15 (1855-1856), ff. 278, 281.

2 We are your servants through Jesus.

3 Bishop M. D. A. Sibour.

1258. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].1

1258:XI in Oblate Writings

The Congregation’s debts. Jubilee of Aix.

Courtès

[Marseilles],

January 28, 1855.

The general treasury is not only empty, but burdened with enormous debts. In the communities they have not yet understood that it is a strict duty to nourish this treasury, which must not only support the considerable interest on the sums we have borrowed, pay the pensions that the Congregation gives to a large number of relatives, but also provide for the sustenance and needs of 40 Oblate scholastics and almost as many novices. One’s arms fall in despair when deficits are declared in every corner. One has reason to be angry at the sight of such indifference and such poor economizing.

You are wrong in putting yourself out so much on account of the decisions taken by His Lordship the Archbishop of Aix in regard to the Jubilee of Aix and of Arles. Let him do what he wants and take good care not to exhaust yourself and the others in maintaining a competition. Before others have done as much for the diocese of Aix as our Congregation has done, a lot of time will have to elapse. To each his turn. Let us ask God to keep our men and let us employ them only in proportion to their strength.

Please thank Father for the letter which his good heart has prompted him to write. I am so busy, so behind in all affairs that, not being able to promise him an answer such as I would like, I give him this part of this letter that I have addressed to you.

1 YENVEUX VII, 90, 148: REY II. 562.

204. [To Fr. Ricard, in Oregon]1

204:II in Oblate Writings

Instructions on the regulations relating to the goods of the Oblates in Oregon.

Ricard

Marseilles,

February 20, 1855.

My very dear Fr. Ricard,

Your letter of October 12 last, and the letter of Fr. d’Herbomez which came with it did not impress me greatly at first, because, although it proved to me clearly enough that the Bishop of Nesqually is far from following the instructions that I had given in my letter of December 1853 concerning your relations with the Bishops of Oregon in temporal matters, nonetheless, since in fact he left you in free possession of all your goods, both in your principal establishment at Olympia and also in the other places where our Fathers have made acquisitions, I did not think it necessary to enter once more into these disagreeable questions. Also, I was waiting to receive, before replying, another letter from you that would tell me of the arrival at Saint Joseph of the two Fathers and the Brother whom we have sent you, and in which you would also have spoken to me of all that concerns our establishments and our Congregation in the country where you are living. That was how matters stood, when only the day before yesterday, I received your letter of the beginning of last December, together with the copy of the note that Mgr Brouillet had written to you on behalf of the Bishop of Nesqually. I must tell you that to read that letter produced in me a feeling of annoyance and distaste so great that I do not know how to express it. How is it possible that there be such a misunderstanding about the meaning of the arrangements that I had put forward in my letters in 1853? How then must one construct one’s sentences, if conditions expressed as clearly as those to which I refer can have been interpreted in a sense so opposed to that which I intended them to have when I wrote them? Surely at the very least such absurdities and contradictions should not have been attributed to a man to whom, granted that not much honor is shown to him, at least one might grant an ordinary measure of common sense and judgement? And what annoyed me even more, was that not only the Bishop of Nesqually and his Vicar General, but also you and the members of your Council could have allowed such an interpretation of my words and that in consequence you could have been ready to give over your properties to the diocese. That the bishop and his men should have tried to deceive you concerning my intentions with regard to the matters under discussion is understandable, for it is in their interest and it is easy to deceive oneself when one is convinced that one is acting for the best and even fulfilling a duty of conscience. But that you others, who should have been put on your guard by the need to defend the interests with which you have been entrusted, should have been so simple as to renounce your own judgement concerning the interpretation of arrangements that I had wished to establish as the rule to be followed from that time on in your relations regarding temporal matters with the Bishops of Oregon, and that in adopting their interpretation, or rather their pretensions, you should have been quite ready to sacrifice your rights - that is what is inconceivable. How could you possibly have imagined for one instant that I was obliging you by force, and in virtue of my high authority, to renounce that which belongs to you, when you know that in one of my letters I reproached you severely for having given up part of your land to the diocese, because one or two phrases in one of your letters had led me to imagine that that was what you had done on one occasion? Is it not clear, when one goes back to the very first letters that I wrote on the points at issue, that I have always clearly and formally maintained your rights to property, both to the land that you have received from the government as American citizens, and to the other goods, both real estate and furnishings which you have been able to acquire as a result of your savings? If, then, in the letters in which the arrangements in question were formulated, there was a distinction as regards proprietorial rights between the principal establishment in each diocese and the simple houses (missions or parishes) which are entrusted to our Fathers by the Bishops, this distinction could not have a retroactive effect, nor could it annul existing rights: it was to regulate the future, and the incontestable proof of this is that the verbs in the communications that I have in mind here are in the future, and that the words “in the future” and “from now on” are frequently employed there. But in order that there may no longer be room for misunderstanding or any mistake concerning my true intentions, I will formulate them again, and it is in the light of this present declaration that what I have written or caused to be written on this subject must be interpreted. 1 - The property that the Oblates of Mary have acquired in Oregon, both real estate and furnishings whether by concession of the American government or by their own industry, by their savings, or by any gift, belong to them and cannot be claimed by the diocesan authority, and even less by any individual, of whatever status he may be. 2 - The Oblates of Mary in Oregon must have the same rights in temporal matters as they have in the other foreign missions and in the countries of Europe where they are established; their proprietorial rights over the goods both real estate and furnishings that they have acquired by the methods indicated in no. 1 are everywhere recognised. 3 - Therefore, when it has been said that the lands, the buildings whether chapels or presbyteries and the objects with which they are furnished, in the mission-posts, do not belong to them but remain the property of the diocese, this was not intended to apply to missions other than those already set up by the Bishops, or those that it was intended to set up at the expense of the diocese, to which the Oblates will be called by the diocesan administration. 4 - The method adopted up to now for providing for the expenses of supporting and feeding the Oblates of Mary in Oregon, and for the expenses necessary to maintain the missions that they have already founded, will be continued, and the Bishops may make no alteration in it except by agreement with their Superior General or his legal representative. 5 - The Oblates of Mary are not *regulars* in the sense given to that term by Canon Law, but are simply religious, and do not form an *order* in the true sense, but only a Congregation; their vow of poverty is a simple vow which does not remove from them the right to property as individuals, and even more as a corporate body. In consequence the title *regular* cannot properly be invoked against them to curtail or annul their capacity or power of possessing and of performing the legal acts of one who owns property.

There, my dear Father, you have a series of quite clear articles which, I think, answer your needs as regards the bishops of Oregon. They must be informed of them so that they will not be able to plead ignorance. However, it is my view as it is yours that all you should do is remain on the defensive and that it is better for you to stay than to leave that poor country. I also gladly adopt the view that you and Fr. d’Herbomez have put forward in your last letters, that you should limit yourselves for the moment to the establishment of St. Joseph of Olympia and to the two missions of Yakima and the Cayouses distributing your personnel there according to the agreed plan. You will do there all the good that it is possible to do, and our Congregation will grow stronger and develop there while awaiting a more favorable time to expand further and undertake other missions. We will continue therefore to secure for you the necessary aid by means of the Propagation of the Faith. With this in mind I must remind you that although it is likely that the Councils will grant you the allocation that we have requested for you, so that you can count on having fifteen thousand francs, no money must be drawn from us as yet, but you must wait until we send you positive information on the matter when it will have been notified to us officially from Lyons, which will happen towards the end of next March.

Farewell, my dear Fr. Ricard; I have no space to say anything except that I embrace and bless you all from the bottom of my heart, including the new arrivals, of whom I am waiting for some news.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

Sup. Gen.

1 Copy: Register of copies and extracts of the most important letters from January 1855 onwards. Rome, Arch. Post.: DM 10. This register will be cited as: Reg. letters 1855-1863.

1259. [To Father de L’Hermite, at Clermont.1

1259:XI in Oblate Writings

After his convalescence, Father de L’Hermite will not return to Bordeaux; he is being assigned to a new post for the good of the Congregation.

L.J.C. et M.I.

L’Hermite

Marseilles,

February 24, 1855.

My beloved son, how could you possibly think I am vexed by the observations you thought well to present to me in regard to what I had made known to you about the plan to call you here to me for a rest! Far from it. My whole concern was before all else to prevent a relapse. That is what determines my wish that you do not move from where you are as long as you have not regained your strength. I see from your last letter that you are far from the state I would wish you to be. So look after yourself for some time yet at Clermont, you are in good hands, I rely on the friendship of your good aunt and on the charity of her sisters. Besides what natural tenderness inspires in them, they know that caring for a missionary means cooperating in the sanctification of souls.

Be assured that my intention was not to post you at Marseilles, no matter how much I would like to have you near me. But I will not be condemned by your bias against our magnificent climate. I know of none more beautiful and healthy in the world. Are you delighted by the foggy days and rain of Bordeaux, or the snow and ice of so many other localities? But for men like we are, it is not a matter of temperature and climate. All that matters is that you fully recover your health, and afterwards we will determine what corresponds the most and the best to the glory of God, the salvation of souls and the good benefit of our Congregation. It still remains that you are to come to me as soon as you are perfectly back in good health and also that the season allows it. I must not hide from you, however, that whatever good you did at Bordeaux, and no one is more convinced than I that you did good there, the proprieties of the Congregation which require your collaboration elsewhere,2 strongly demand that I take you away from there. If it were only a question of doing good in one place rather than another, I would not be considering such a thing. Bordeaux had you, I would leave you in Bordeaux; it is a matter, however, of the good and special benefit of the Congregation. Everything has to cede to the achievement of the latter because, when we serve the Congregation in a special way, we provide for the good of the whole Church, or at least in those parts of the world where the Congregation is fighting for the glory of God, the service of the Church and the salvation of souls.

Since you are not to remain at Bordeaux, we see some problems for you making an appearance at Talence. There are bonds fashioned even by charity which are easier to break than to untie. Besides, no one can object if we walk according to the voice of obedience. Though it may at times be painful to our nature, God will know how to reward us very well in return.

There, my dear son, you are informed about my further plans; I told you more than was necessary, but I am pleased to show you this mark of confidence, I know you will not abuse of it. I will add only that the decision I have mentioned to you was taken in Council and that after ripe consideration.

Goodbye, my dear son, again I urge you to act with much prudence so that you don’t risk a relapse. I send you affectionate greetings and I bless you with all my heart.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. I don’t want to forget to present my respects to Madame your aunt and to the charitable sisters who are looking after you.

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

2 He will replace Father Brun as Superior and parish priest at N.-D. de Cléry (Orleans).

160. To The Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.1

160:V in Oblate Writings

Dispatch of the table showing the distribution among the Oblate missions of the sum allocated to the Congregation in 1854. A letter from Ceylon for the Annals.

Propagation of the Faith

Marseilles,

February 25, 1855.

Dear Sirs,

In conformity with the wish expressed in your letter of the 19th of this month, please find enclosed the table showing the distribution among the foreign missions of the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary of the sum granted to it by your Councils for 1854. Taking as a basis the individual figure of the sum requested for these missions, we have the following results:

Total sum of the allocation 150000 f

Europe:

Missions in England. 42 000 f.

North America:

Missions in Oregon 21 000 f.

Missions of St. Boniface, Hudson Bay Territory 22 000 f

Missions in Texas 22000 f.

Mission and college in Buffalo 21 000 f.

Africa:

missions in the Apostolic Vicariate of Natal (Bishop Allard) 22000 f.

In response to another item in your letter, Gentlemen, I hasten to inform you that the 33 francs and 33 centimes, the Mass stipend you were charitable enough to offer us, were allotted to the mission of Oregon as well as the donation of *5* francs you granted to our missions of America.

Gentlemen, I must not forget to remind you of the request I forwarded to you a short time ago on behalf of Bishop Taché of St. Boniface in the territory of the Hudson Bay Company. I do not think I have to insist on this item. Now that you have made a final decision on the total sum of your grants for this year you can more easily judge and determine, according to your cash balance, which sum you would allocate out of these funds to Bishop Taché for the missions and other works of his diocese which are entrusted to others besides the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, and which are entirely his responsibility. His quality as a member of our Congregation should not deprive him of the advantages you extended to his predecessor Bishop Provencher2 since, far from decreasing, the reasons to aid the bishop of St. Boniface with your alms have become more numerous and urgent.

I also enclose the copy of a letter written by one of our missionaries in Ceylon. It seemed interesting to us and of such a nature as to edify the pious readers of the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith. You can include it when the time comes in one of the issues to be published during the year.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of the high regard 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.

2 Ms.: Provenchère.

205. [To Fr. Maisonneuve].1

205:XI in Oblate Writings

Thanks for his letter of September 23 which reassures the Founder on the good dispositions of Fr. Maisonneuve with regard to the Superior General and Mgr Taché.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Maisonneve

Marseilles,

March 1, 1855.

I have still a few minutes left, my dear Fr. Maisonneuve, and I use them to thank you for the letter you wrote to me on September 23 last year. That is a consolation of which I had been deprived for long enough to be able to appreciate it at its true value. Moreover, your letter contains so many satisfying things that I can only feel a real joy on reading it. How many times I had said that I had sent you too far away from me, that if I had left you the time to get to know me better you would have loved me enough to have spared me a good number of headaches? You would have had enough confidence in me to have consulted me when you had doubts, and to have looked to me for comfort in your troubles. For that to come about moreover, you would have had to keep in touch with him whom you should have recognised as your father even more than as your superior. But no, instead of having fostered in yourself that regard that was due to me for so many reasons, you preferred to seek your inspiration elsewhere. That was not the way to find peace for your soul, or to meet happiness. You have learnt that by experience. These are not reproaches that I am making to you, my dear son, but merely observations dictated to me by my heart, which can inspire in me nothing but thoughts of love and of tender affection for you. I was heart-broken to see you walking along a road that led you to lose all the merit of so many sacrifices, and a great part of that reward which God grants only on certain conditions. I have suffered a good deal, believe me; had you known me well you would have understood this better. So I repeat to you with joy that your letter has put all my fears to flight, and has filled me with joy as I read the sentiments that it expresses. That is how I desire you to be: God will bless you and your ministry will be fruitful. Write to me from time to time, or, rather, make use of every opportunity that you have to write to me. You know that I cannot remain a stranger to all the good that you are doing. If you knew how often I speak of you and of your brethren, and always with admiration for your devotion and compassion for the privations and the sufferings that you are enduring! Your mission is the one that touches my heart most, precisely because of the difficulty of your work. I did feel, it is true, that pain of which I spoke to you earlier, because it seemed to me that the charity that ought to reign among you had been wounded, but today I am entirely at peace: peace will be reborn because charity has regained her rights. Your letter, those of the Bishop, and others give me assurance of this. And since I have mentioned your Bishop, I must say that his letters contain not a single complaint, and that he could have read them to you before sending them to me. So let all your worries vanish; love one another with all your hearts, and do not lose sight of the fact that he is doubly your superior, which is enough to make him your father and mother and my representative. Farewell, my dear friend; I am doing a rash thing in writing to you, for my letter is being awaited for fear that it might miss the post. Believe that I am unable to express to you all the fatherly affection that I would like to express. Farewell: I embrace you and send you my blessing.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

s.g.

1 Copy: Rome. Arch. Post.

42. To His Eminence Cardinal Fransoni, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide)1

42:V in Oblate Writings

The diocese of Vancouver needs missionaries; difficult for the few Fathers in Oregon to go there. Letter from Propaganda Fide to Bishop Allard who has begun the evangelization of the Kafirs.

Propaganda Fide

Marseilles,

March 12, 1855.

Your Eminence,

I recently received your letter of February 6. Iwould not have delayed in sending an answer to you if unforeseen circumstances had not prevented it until now.

You can rest assured that nothing pleases me more than to comply with the wishes of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, especially when it is a matter of spreading the Gospel.

I was well aware of what Your Eminence told me about the diocese of Vancouver in the province of Oregon and in particular the insufficient number of missionaries to evangelize the many tribes which seem to be well disposed. Our missionaries as well as the bishop of Vancouver have spoken to me about the situation a number of times. In order to respond to the needs in the province of Oregon, I recently sent two workers to help their confreres already at work in that part of the Father’s field. However, since the harvest is so great, I fear their number is still less than actual needs and that none of them are able to go to the diocese of Vancouver. Moreover, I would not want Bishop Demers to harbour hope of aid from us.

With regard to the dispensation granted to Bishop François Allard, the Apostolic Vicar in the land of Natal, I will send it to the goodly prelate as soon as possible. I received a letter from him a few days ago in which he described the situation in the missions at length and told me that our men have already undertaken the conversion of the Kafirs to the Gospel. Fully aware of your zeal for the expansion of the faith, I recommend this very difficult work to your prayers.

Your Eminence, I pray God that He keep you at the service of His Church for a long time to come. Your most humble and devoted brother and servant.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1Orig. Latin: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide. Scrit. rif. nei Cong., America Centrale, V. 17 (1855-1857), ff. 220-221.

206. [To Fr. Baudre, superior at Galveston] 1

206:II in Oblate Writings

Deaths of several Fathers. Mgr Odin is too demanding. There is no Father available for the missions this year. Opening of the College. Aid from the Propagation of the Faith and charges for the upkeep of seminarians. Congratulations for his respect and firmness towards the Bishop. Bro. Bodard remains as a lay brother.

Baudre

Marseilles,

March 14, 1855.

My very dear Father Baudre,

If I have put off writing to you until now, it is because I was waiting to receive all the information I need to make a decision on our establishment at Galveston and to make a precise reply to the questions in your various letters which I have received from time to time. As I knew from elsewhere that in the interval you must have received a letter from Fr. Aubert which crossed with your last letter written in January, I thought that would enable you to be patient for a while in waiting for mine.

Before I reply to the various points in your letters, let me express to you, my dear Father Baudre, all the satisfaction that I felt on learning, first that you had arrived safely at your destination, and then that you, as well as our other Fathers and Brothers at Galveston, were continuing to enjoy good health in spite of the yellow fever which, it seems, makes fairly frequent visits to Texas. Would that it had pleased God that in Brownsville we had escaped the attacks of these cruel epidemics in the same way! Alas, it has not been so, and you know what a loss we have suffered in the person of Fr. Duperray, who has been taken from us by an early death, just when he had hardly begun a career which he would have followed so well for the greater glory of God! ... Sadly, that is not the only loss of this kind that we have sustained since the beginning of the year, for two of our fathers have already died, one a professor at the major seminary at Romans,2 and the other Fr. Pasqualini of the house at Vico in Corsica. We have another, Fr. Rossi of the same house, on whom the doctors have given up, and finally Fr. Amisse, Superior of Liverpool who has been sent here for a change of air and whose health does not give much ground for hope. With all this, how can one provide the establishments of the Congregation in foreign lands with the subjects whom they ask for, and above all how can one provide them with subjects who have this or that particular quality? For this reason, Mgr Odin seems very demanding in wishing not only that I should replace the subjects whom death takes away, but that I should give him subjects whom I do not have. To be sure, he was not so difficult when, three years ago when he came back from Rome, he was so insistent to have us in his diocese that I ended by giving him some of our men. I find his conduct with regard to you very tactless, to say the least, since you arrived at Galveston, and you have done well to hold to the orders that I gave you, without letting yourself be discouraged by the ungracious reception the bishop gave you, or by the unsuitable plans to which he wished personally, to turn you aside.

He would have liked a superior who knew the English language, and I do not disagree that that would have been preferable; but it was important also that this matter should be in my power; and in default of the man he wanted, he should have seen that the man I sent had enough other qualities to deserve being accepted with gratitude. But now at last you are on the road, your college is opened, your courses have begun, you have already more than sixty pupils all told. This is truly a good beginning, and I doubt whether even the most flourishing colleges of the United States were able to gather together a similar number of students when they began. To ensure the complete success of your work you ask me two things: 1. that I send you two subjects who know English well so that you might do without professors who do not belong to the Congregation. Doubtless it is in principle truly inconvenient to have these professors, and in consequence I should try to replace them by professors who belong to us. But where am I to find these subjects, especially if they must be English or Irish? We are having infinite difficulty in providing our English province with the fathers it needs if its foundations are to start working properly; would it be right to take subjects away from there when what they need is larger numbers to meet their own needs? So do not ask me for something that it is not in my power to grant you. I say this not only of English or Irish fathers, but of all other fathers, whoever they are. I cannot give you one this year. Try to set your college in motion with what you have in your hands, and let them be enough for you for the moment. However, I do realise that Fr. Parisot has too much work to do, and that a way must be found of unburdening him, and for that reason you have done well in insisting to Fr. Verdet that he send you Fr. Olivier, who was intended to form part of your community. I will say a word to him myself in the letter that I am going to write to him, so that he will set this father on the road to Galveston at once, assuming that he still has him with him.

2. As for the financial help that has been promised you, I have a more satisfactory reply to make, which is that your allocation for 1854 is twenty thousand francs, after deduction of your contribution to the general fund for the expenses of the education of Oblates and Novices. Five thousand francs of this sum are for Brownsville and fifteen thousand for Galveston. I think this is exactly what you are asking for. Since the Council at Lyons does not close its accounts until this month, and it only sends us the sum that the Propagation of the Faith has allocated for our foreign missions then, we must wait a few more days before we send you your share. When he is ready to do that, the Procurator General will send a letter of credit for you on the bank at New Orleans from which you can draw your fifteen thousand francs. I have also a few words to say to you regarding the living-expenses of the seminarians whom Mgr Odin would like you to take, and whom you have done well not to accept. A hundred dollars per pupil is plainly too little for a country like the United States where money has less value than in France. This is so well understood that Mgr Timon in his agreements with our Fathers for his college at Buffalo agreed to give 130 dollars for each seminarian, and then he recognised that this was not enough and raised the sum to 150, giving also permission for the seminarians to be employed in the work of the college. The Bishop of Galveston cannot object to your asking as much, or 125, for the pupils that he is going to entrust to you himself. Further, it seems to me very mean and small-minded of him to wish you to pay rebates to him for those seminarians of whose time you take a little for the service of the college. Abandon this system of an hour or two a day. It is better to employ only a few of the seminarians and to give them a more significant load of work, half their time for example, and then you could repay to Mgr Odin half of their fees. If any of the pupils remain with you during the vacation, all except those of the diocese must pay so much a month in proportion to the annual charge for living-expenses.

Finally, I must not end this long conversation with you, my dear Fr. Baudre, without expressing to you my approval of the line of conduct to which you have held in carrying out your mission and in particular in your relations with the Bishop of Galveston. I see with pleasure that you know how to join with that respect that is due to the episcopal character firmness in defending the interests of the Congregation which you represent. Your conduct in looking after these interests and in advancing your work prove to me also that I have made a good choice in making you Superior. Courage then, my dear Father, and do not be astonished if you meet with difficulties. That is the mark of enterprises which God blesses and which for that reason cannot fail to succeed sooner or later. I have space for no more except to say that I love you and bless all of you from the bottom of my heart.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. You must take care at once to make a note of your needs and of your extraordinary expenses, which you must send to us by the next post, and which will serve as a basis of the request that we must make for you at the Councils of the Propagation of the Faith, in the assessment of the current year (1855).

Brother Bodard must not insist on your consenting to his continuing his studies, against the decision that was made last year in my Council. This decision was made for reasons that were maturely examined and seriously discussed. This brother must accept that and be content to do the will of God in the state that was made his with his own consent.

1 Copy: Reg. letters 1855-1863. Rome, Arch. Post.: DM 10.

2 Fr. Casimir Chauvet died January 9. 1855.

1260. To Father Conrard, missionary priest, Oblate of Mary Immaculate, at N.-D. de Sion, via Vezelise. Meurthe.1

1260:XI in Oblate Writings

Sorrow on Father Dorey s death. Many deaths in the Congregation during these latter months. Illness of Father C. Aubert.

L.J.C. et MI.

Conrard

Marseilles,

March 19, 1855.

What news I have just learned, my dear son! I am overwhelmed. Before opening your letter, as I was holding it in my hands, I said to Father de L’Hermite who was alone with me, “I always open letters from our men with some apprehension.” Was I wrong! What a blow after so many others! I have to drink the chalice down to the dregs. May God give me the strength to put up with it. If I were more virtuous, I would rejoice to see our little family provide heaven with such a large number of elect; for all of our men die in the Lord’s peace in the midst of the most holy ministry, mostly the victims of their charity, true martyrs of this first of the virtues. But since the Lord has given me the heart of a father to an eminent degree, if I sense all the consolations, I also experience all the weaknesses. I most certainly love you with a supernatural love, but I also love you in the manner of, and I dare say more tenderly than earthly fathers love. That is why, even though I do rejoice in the Lord over the blessed predestination of all of my children whom the Lord calls to himself, my heart is nevertheless torn in a cruel way. That to the point where yesterday I marvelled that I could even resist. I had just received the news of the holy death of our dear Father Lacombe who in serving those ill with the cholera was infected and succumbed to the disease; and I had in mind Father Aubert who was suddenly struck down by a brain paralysis which robbed him of every physical and moral capacity. I spent the night near the bed of this dear Father in despair of ever seeing him regain life. Happily we were prompt to cry out to the Lord and we have been heard; the Father has regained consciousness and we have hopes of saving him. But I leave you to imagine my chagrin. When I came away from him, they gave me your letter and again I received a hammer blow which plunged me into a new sea of sorrow. You know that in a short time we have lost Father Chauvet and Father Pasqualini and Father Duperray, and now also Father Lacombe and Father Dorey. May I now say to our Master that that is too much!

I cannot finish my letter: they have come to disturb me. Besides, I am so affected that I don’t know how to console you. Let us prostrate ourselves before God and adore his holy will, no matter what it costs our nature and what disorder our ranks are thrown into by these repeated blows.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles,

s. g.

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

1261. [To Father Bellon, at Romans].1

1261:XI in Oblate Writings

Bishop de Mazenod does not approve the written work sent by Father Bellon.

Bellon

[Major Seminary of Marseilles],

March 28, 1855.

To speak frankly with you, I had been quite dissatisfied with a first letter you had written to me, no doubt under an impression that had been transmitted to you. You pretty well accuse me of a denial of justice. I do not see myself obligated to give an adequate explanation. You were all the more wrong to address this complaint to me in that I had already sent to Rome, to the theologian consultors of the Holy Office, the brochure that you wanted me to approve on the simple examination that you had been able to make of it. I found the matter too serious to be decided so quickly. Since it was not possible for me to study this question at leisure, I found it in conformity to good sense and the respect I profess for Rome to submit that work to those who, as the organ of the Sovereign Pontiff, decide and make declarations in this area. I am most fortunate in having adopted this way. The reply of the consultors of the Holy Office came promptly: “The author of this written work appears to be more a poet than a theologian; he lends himself more to the imagination than to precision.” After this preamble, they go into the subject and mention not only imprecise elements but also several grave errors; and they conclude: “You Most Reverend Excellency will understand that, because of these censures, it would not be to your honour to cover these errors and inaccuracies with the mantle of your authority.”

There was no need to suggest this conclusion to me: it flowed from its source. You yourself can see that I was not so wrong in not being rushed but in acting with caution and prudence in such a delicate matter.

1 REY II, 563-5 64*.* The original uses tu”, which Rey has replaced by “vous”.

1262. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].1

1262:XI in Oblate Writings

Day given over to correspondence

Courtès

[Marseilles,

March 28, 1855].

You don’t know how much I reproach myself for being so late in writing to you. You know how I live. My whole excuse is in that. Today I locked myself up in the seminary; what I did yesterday was a lost cause, they came to excavate me as soon as I had sat down. I took other precautions this time and, thanks to this extreme method, I am now at my tenth or twelfth letter.

1 REY, II, *562.* Rey says this letter is dated February 28th. We think it is of March 28th, for on that day the Founder wrote other letters from his desk at the seminary.

1263. [To Father Guinet, at N.-D. de l’Osier].1

1263:XI in Oblate Writings

Regrets not writing more often, due to lack of time. Know how to take a rest.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Guinet

Marseilles, From the Major Seminary,

March 28, 1855.

My dear Father Guinet, I have just learned that you are somewhat put out because I have not written to you for a long time; my dear son, forgive me for having thus saddened you. God knows how happy I would be, in default of the actual presence of those of my children who like yourself merit all my affection, if I could converse often and at length with them by letter; but everyone knows that is impossible and this is but one of my regrets. On the other hand, if I but told you how much I concern myself with you before the good Lord! Each day I have you pass in review in his holy presence and, believe this well, I do so as a father who loves his children, especially those who like you have so many titles to the affection of my heart. So do not concentrate on the lack of letters from me. That does not depend on my will. I can truly assure you that I have often said to myself: “I have to write a few lines to my Father Guinet”; but it was planned for the morrow and a thousand disturbances occur and I land up not doing it. But you, dear son, allow me to say it, why do you write to me so rarely? You know that it is not acceptable that you have to rigorously wait a reply before writing to me again. You would have so many things to tell me about your holy missions. Now in regard to the missions, I am told that you are taking so little care of yourself that we have to fear you will ruin your health. My dear son, I cannot approve of that. Beware of working beyond your strength. Get some help and never do the work of two men. I shall develop this theme with your Provincial when he passes through Marseilles. It is too serious a matter! We need moderation, even in doing good. Be docile, I beseech you, to this observation of mine. If you do not correct yourself, I will inflict on you the penance of coming to take a rest near me like poor Father de L’Hermite who can still only walk with the cane of an old man. Your activities would suffer thereby, but that would not matter: I would tie you down and you would not move.

Goodbye, my dear son. Let us make a family bargain before I conclude by sending you affectionate greetings and my blessing. I shall always answer your third letter! Goodbye.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles,

s. g.

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

135.[To the Abbe Sebaux, parish priest of Laval].1

135:XIII in Oblate Writings

Death of Bishop Bouvier. Proper Mass and Office of Mans. Praises Father Grandin and Brother Boisramé. Request to send some seminarians to the Oblates.

Sebaux

Marseilles,

March 28, 1855.

I am anxious, Reverend Sir and dear Abbé, to thank you for remembering me; you could give me no more pleasing proof than reminding me of the new title that the venerable Bishop whom we are mourning has to the gratitude of the diocese which he helped so much.2 I have read with interest and edification the proper that you had the kindness to send me: it is worthy of its author and those who worked with him in the research that needed to be done.

I know how interested you are in our good Father Grandin. You will be glad to learn that he is happy in the austere mission that is now his lot. He is a very excellent religious. I hope his brother, who should certainly resemble him, will carry out the plan that he has of coming to replace the one who is already applying his zeal and apostolate. May it please God that your diocese continue to provide us with many men. They are good and edifying. I have just ordained the excellent Boisramé, a model of virtue, to the diaconate. You will do a good thing if you were to whisper to the Superior of the seminary that he direct the vocations of those who aspire to religious life toward our Congregation. You can assure him that in it people serve the good Lord well and that they die therein like the predestined do when the good Lord calls.

Please accept, Reverend Sir and dear Abbé, the renewed assurance of my most affectionate sentiments.

+ C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

P.S. I beg you to remember me to Vicar General Vincent and Canon Mautouchet.

1 Orig.: Archives of the Laval Bishop’s residence. M. Sebaux had been Bishop Bouvier’s secretary. He was a great benefactor of Bishop Grandin.

2 Bishop Bouvier (1783-1854) of Mans, died in Rome on December 29, 1854. Bishop de Mazenod took care of him during his last moments.

43. To Bishop Barnabo, Secretary of Propaganda Fide.1

43:V in Oblate Writings

Bishop de Mazenod regrets that he did not take better advantage of his stay in Rome. The Oregon bishops boast that the Pope has decided in their favor against the Oblates as to title over the properties of the Congregation. Propaganda Fide should be increasingly wary of the Blanchet brothers. Ii will be difficult for the Oblates to remain in Oregon.

Propaganda Fide

Marseilles,

March 29, 1855.

My dearest Monseigneur,

When I was in Rome recently, I was moved to compassion by the ceaseless amount of work you were given by those bishops who had to discuss matters relative to their missions with you. Many were the times I deprived myself of the joy to go to Propaganda to visit you because I was afraid my presence would disturb you. I regret it now but it is too late. In fact, I too had important matters to discuss and I ask myself why I postponed them out of excessive discretion? It would have been necessary for me to know what the bishops from Oregon had made people believe and perhaps obtained with their plots. They should be well enough known in Rome for their gossip to make or be able to make much of an impression. Since their unfounded complaints concerned not only the Jesuits but perhaps even more so the Oblates of Mary, I should have done what was necessary to respond to their accusations and assert my own reasons. You know, Your Excellency, that I have wanted to leave that mission for a long time due to the detestable character of the two Blanchet prelates, especially that of the bishop of Nesqually. No one has ever been able to live with him. Our men remain in that mission because the Sacred Congregation asked me to do so. However, I can understand that it will no longer be possible to resist now that that bishop claims to have crushed the poor missionaries under his feet and wants to treat them like slaves.

Part of a letter written by one of the Blanchet brothers came into my possession by chance. I transcribe it for you exactly as it was written: “The bishops have won. Everything has vanished like smoke. *Facta evanescere* I am *told:facta excludi* (I do not understand what is meant by that *facta excludi)* the bishop of Nesqually is told with the letter from the Holy Father. The Holy See has settled the claims of the Oblate Fathers. They only have life and lodging. The rest is for the missions. Nothing like citizens.”2

I cannot believe that all these beautiful things had been decided without my having been questioned or even given a hearing; and I would have spent two long months in Rome without anyone even mentioning it to me! The consequences of these outlandish claims are too serious for anyone to believe that they correspond to the truth. In the meantime, the bishop of Nesqually has written me an insolent letter to which I should respond with moderation, certainly, but also as befits a bishop of my age and my personality. I do not know what the Blanchet bishops received from the Holy Father, but it is certain that if their claims were approved, it was done so on the basis of a false presentation of the facts. Rather than be confined under the tyranny of those prelates and reduced to the miserable state they wish to impose upon those tireless workers who have suffered so much in that mission, I am convinced they will ask me to return to Europe or leave the Congregation. I can well understand their indignation over the outrageous behaviour of the bishop of Nesqually, and I myself consider it an injustice, an unbearable act of ingratitude. That bishop complains about the lack of respect on the part of the Oblates, just like his brother complained about Fr. Accolti. Whose fault is it? These men whom you yourselves mistreat, whom you despise, and wish to despoil are to be pardoned for somewhat surpassing the limits of strict propriety in their defence. Whatever the case may be, things cannot continue in this way. With the support of the alleged decisions of Rome, the bishop is abusive and pitiless. As superior of the Oblates he no longer wants the person to whom I entrusted the office, nor does he want to deal with that other Oblate I had appointed vice-superior. As far as I am concerned, I think very highly of this Superior upon whom I imposed the sacrifice to consecrate himself to that mission which has cost him so many difficulties ever since the beginning and he has suffered them to the extent of compromising his health. I do not want to change him, all the more since I wouldn’t find anyone disposed to replace him and deal with a bishop like Bishop Blanchet. It could be that the superior, Fr. Ricard, does not have the good manners demanded by Bishop Blanchet and that he has often exposed himself to outright refusals. That father, however, is an excellent priest, one of the first of our men to go to Oregon 10 years ago, a man who practically created everything from nothing with great sacrifice, and who still enjoys the confidence and respect of all the missionaries. Were he to depart, everyone would leave and Bishop Blanchet would remain alone with his responsibility before God and men.

I do not intend to respond to that part of the letter I copied for you. I would probably have too much to say. This “nothing like citizens” leads me to imagine some sort of plot enacted by those bishops who yearn to enrich themselves at the expense of others. *“Nothing like citizens”* and with what right? The Oblates are neither monks, nor friars, nor members of an Order as such. They are, according to the text of the Rule - if their Excellencies the bishops didn’t know it - *Sacerdotes swculares coadunati sicut fratres habitantes in unum.* That is why the Rule, approved by the Church, adds: Q*uisque nostrum bonorum suorum jus retinebit. De his igitur disponere valet per testamentum,* etc.

It is therefore clear that the Oblates possess legitimately the right of ownership and no one has the right to despoil them of their possessions, which are truly their own property and of which they renounce the usufruct in favor of the Congregation. With that, the day an Oblate leaves the Congregation he does so with his possessions of “citizen” or others. There is no doubt of this except in the type of imbroglio perpetrated by those bishops who don’t have enough to do in their deserted dioceses and therefore fret over creating problems. I’m afraid Rome isn’t sufficiently cautious, even though it has more than enough reasons not to heed men who had grossly deceived it when they wanted to become bishops in their own little family and have an ecclesiastical Province erected with eight dioceses when an Apostolic Vicariate would have sufficed for all of Oregon for many years.

I practically become upset when I talk about these tyrants. It would be better for me to stop, all the more since I have no more paper and only enough space to renew my regards and the expression of my sincere and heartfelt friendship. Your most humble servant and friend.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., America Centrale, V. 17 (1855-1857), ff. 241-242.

2 The Founder copied this text in its original form in French.

1264. [To Father Casimir Aubert, at Montolivet].1

1264:XI in Oblate Writings

Complete rest for Father Aubert. Next session of the General Council at Montolivet.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Aubert C

Marseilles,

March 31, 1855.

My dear Father Aubert, as I rejoice in the fact that you are better, I am far from convinced that you do not need more care. I was deterred from going and giving you some directives on the spot, I can’t do that any more today than tomorrow. So it is in writing that I notify you that you are to suspend all the ministry you were doing in Marseilles until you will have fully recovered, a fact that I reserve to my own judgment.

I hope I will have the latitude of coming to see you on Monday. Father Fabre will come with me and Father Tempier will not come into the city and so we will treat of the more urgent affairs of the Congregation.

Goodbye my son. Most affectionate greetings. I bless you.

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

P.S. The persons who come to you will make other arrangements to do their Easter duties. I very seriously want you to give up the idea of hearing confessions when your leg is still in the state it is in. God worked a miracle to save you; he will not work a second one.

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

161. To the President of the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith, Lyon.1

161:V in Oblate Writings

Reception acknowledged of the letter notifying the balance of the grant for 1854. Impending dispatch of the report on the needs for 1855. Fr. Laverlochère is sick and will be replaced by Fr. Vincens in the round of preaching undertaken in favor of the Missionary Society.

Propagation of the Faith

Marseilles,

April 15, 1855.

Dear Mr. President,

I hasten to acknowledge reception of the letter containing the balance to my credit for the rest of the sum allocated by the Councils of the Propagation of the Faith to the missions of Mary Immaculate, and in relation to which the relative drafts will be sent to me. Within this week you will receive the report you requested on the needs of these missions so you can set the grant for 1855.

I also hasten to inform you that I have noted the sufferings endured by the good Fr. Laverlochère dealt such a strong blow to his constitution that he has not been able to recover his original strength in such a way as to be able to render the services to the holy Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith that we expected of him. I therefore asked him to end his preaching which would not have produced the desired results. Since it is so important, however, for the Missionary Society to be promoted, I suggested to Fr. Vincens, a missionary of distinguished merit endowed with considerable talent and above all a gentle and persuasive eloquence, that he replace Fr. Laverlochère in the mission entrusted to him by the Propagation of the Faith. Nothing flags the zeal of Fr. Vincens whose only respite from his countless missions is to preach the annual pastoral retreats which have earned him the trust of all the bishops who have called upon him. He has accepted my proposal, obviously subject to your approval. Therefore, Mr. President, you have only to let me know if you accept this replacement which will be, and you can take my word for it, entirely to the advantage of our holy Missionary Society and will produce, I venture to assure you, very good results to increase the number of associates to the Propagation of the Faith. Fr. Vincens is a man able to travel throughout France without any effect upon his health. His instructions are very solid and always enjoyed. I am sure he will draw up some very interesting ones on subjects he will be asked to treat, and that you will be fully satisfied with the choice I propose to you. Please let me know your wishes. I will keep Fr. Vincens here with me all week.

Mr. President, please accept the expression of the high regard wherewith I remain your most humble and obedient servant,

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

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

1265. For the Reverend Father Aubert, at Montolivet.1

1265:XI in Oblate Writings

Have courses of French given to two Italian postulants. Prepare the report on the needs of the Oblate missions for the Council of the Propagation of the Faith.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Aubert C

Marseilles,

April 16, 1855.

Dear Father Aubert, I advised Father Rolleri to send you the two Italian postulants who have arrived here.2 They don’t know a word of French. So I think it would be good to keep them here for a while and prepare them so that they will be able to follow the instructions given at the novitiate. Arrange something in this line. I know very well that difficulties will be voiced, but where does one not find difficulties? One must always settle for the lesser ones.

Yesterday I received a letter from the Propagation of the Faith who are asking me to send them the list of our requests as soon as possible. Their work begins, so they tell me, today, April 16th. So drop everything and finish this task. Goodbye.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

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

2 These two postulants did not enter the novitiate; one of them was Calvi. Cf. Letter no. 1266.

1266. [To Father Bellon, at the Major Seminary of Romans].1

1266:XI in Oblate Writings

The Bishop of Valence is not allowing an Assistant Priest to enter the novitiate.

Bellon

[Rome],

April 17, 1855.

My dear Father Bellon, I am more indignant than you can possibly be at the procedures of His Lordship the Bishop of Valence. One cannot be more unjust and ungrateful. This is a manifest abuse of power; all sorts of principles are against his pretensions. If he persists in this power-play, then I see no other way but we must use the right given to us by the holy Canons, that is to say, the man called to the religious life comes, without any ado, and presents himself, and, in conformity with what the present Pope prescribes in an encyclical, the Superior, before admitting him, writes to the bishopric not to ask for an authorization, which he does not need, but to request the information listed in the encyclical. This is an unfortunate extreme measure but we would be reduced to it. Father Vincens told me that the Bishop’s conduct is all the more odious in that at the time that he refused to allow an assistant priest to come to us,2 he allowed two others to leave and join the Jesuits.

I have thought of a means of persuasion to make the Prelate abandon his unjust claim. I am going to send your letter to the Bishop of Viviers with the request to use his credit that he may have with his colleague from the same ecclesiastical province. If this measure does not succeed, then we must not hesitate but direct the man concerned to the novitiate so that we can proceed according to the norms I have indicated.

I have Father Vincens here, who is making his retreat at Montolivet. He was furious when I told him about it and he will see the Bishop when he passes through Valence. Father Vincens is capable of speaking to him with a certain frankness. In one way or another, things will have to get properly settled, otherwise I will begin first of all to take out our men who are dedicating themselves to the missions in his diocese; the rest will come afterwards, as I have mentioned.

If you can count on the perseverance of the man for whom you are seeking the Bishop’s consent, let him simply leave for the novitiate and let this lesson teach us not to ask for permission any more. We will do what the Jesuits and Lazarists do.

1 YENVEUX III 157-158*.*

2 J.-B. Caille. Cf. General Council, June 1855. This is the first of a series of difficulties that arose between the Bishop and the Oblates; the latter were replaced by the Jesuits in 1857.

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

162:V in Oblate Writings

Dispatch of notes by the secretary of the Congregation on the needs of the Oblate missions for assistance. Observations on the grant requested for the new foundations of Plattsburg and the Isle of Man.

Propagation of the Faith

Marseilles,

April 17, 1855.

Dear Sirs,

I hasten to send you the notes which it is customarily the task of the Secretary General of the Congregation to compile and to which he was only able to dedicate his attention a short time ago, having been impeded from doing so earlier by ill health. These notes contain the needs of the missions directed by the Oblates of Mary in foreign countries and indicate the amount of each request for this or that mission in particular. They are intended to help you, at least with regard to our missions, in that major effort of distributing the funds of the Missionary Society of the Propagation of the Faith whose interests are entrusted to you. I do not have to insist and prove to you that these documents, compiled on the basis of the detailed reports submitted each year by the superiors of the various missions, merit your total trust and can be used as the basis for the amount of the grant which the Councils of the Missionary Society shall make to our Congregation for this year. Nonetheless I feel it necessary to present one or two observations, and in my recommendation support two of the requests contains in the enclosed documents.

The main remark refers to the total amount of our requests which is higher than usual and therefore would seem to require justification. It must be noted first of all that our requests for assistance only refer to strictly necessary elements and are intended to obviate pressing needs. When it is evident that one of our missions can do without the assistance of the Propagation of the Faith or a less substantial aid is sufficient, we ask for nothing better than to lighten the budget of the Missionary Society by that amount. This time, for example, the amount of the individual grants for many of our missions is already less than it was last year. This reduction will be even more in the future as the extraordinary expenses are met for the purchase of land, construction of houses and chapels, etc., and most of these foundations will only have to appeal to the Propagation of the Faith for their current expenses. We have not reached that point this year, but, even though our foreign missions are rather recent, we will soon be there if they continue to be assisted by the generous alms of the Missionary Society as they have been up to now, without being in a more favorable condition from a material point of view and able to survive and develop with less substantial grants. The increase in the total figure of the allocation we now request of you is due to two causes immediately evident in the enclosed documents: the introduction of a new mission in the number of requests and the acquisition of a new outpost for one of our most important foundations in England.

The new missions we ask you to add to those which your Councils have accepted to include in the distribution of the funds of the Missionary Society was founded last year in Plattsburgh2, one of the main cities of the diocese of Albany in the United States, along the border with Lower Canada. It was upon the request of His Excellency the bishop of Albany3 and the entreaties of the bishop of Montreal that our fathers accepted the mission of this city. It is a place where there is an immense amount of good to be accomplished as much among the very large Canadian population as among the Americans. How is it possible, however, to give them the religious assistance which both beg for without a fitting place in which they can be gathered together for religious exercises? Faced with such an imperative need, the Oblates of Mary in Plattsburgh felt it necessary to summon up their courage. They began to construct a church, but it would be impossible for them to meet the costs of this construction without the assistance of the Propagation of the Faith. With confidence, therefore, they appeal to the Councils of the Missionary Society, and I add my entreaties to their requests, in order that you kindly agree to grant them, Gentlemen, the rather modest grant they earnestly request of your charity.

I express the same recommendation for the request submitted to you by the Oblates in England for a foundation to which we attach the greatest importance not only for the immediate advantages it is to procure to our missions in Great Britain but also because we consider it indispensable for the success of our foreign missions where it is necessary to speak English almost everywhere. This foundation is the house destined to prepare English men or those who speak that language for these missions. It is a matter of opening this foundation in a place where it will enjoy the most favorable conditions in all respects. The place is a small island4 equally distant from Liverpool, Dublin, and Glasgow. With the sum we request of you, it will be possible as of this first year to construct a rather suitable building for the community which is to live there and found on a solid basis a work whose services for religion are of the utmost importance. Gentlemen, I need say no more to obtain your favorable reception of this request from the Oblates of Mary in England.

I am unable to close my letter without renewing the expression of the gratitude of our Congregation for the kindness you show it every time the occasion arises, and in particular for the favourable reception encountered each year in your Councils by the requests for assistance in favour of the foreign missions which it directs through its sons.

Gentlemen, please accept the expression of the highest regards wherewith I remain your most humble and devoted 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. A similar text, dated April 18, is on file in Paris.

2 Ms.: Platzburg, always spelled this way in this letter.

3 Bishop Jean MacCloskey, bishop of Albany.

4 Isle of Man, cf. report of April 16.

1267. [To Father Vandenberghe, at N.-D. de l’Osier].1

1267:XI in Oblate Writings

Father Caille. Accept Italian novices since few Frenchmen are coming forward. Everywhere we need many missionaries.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Vandenberghe

Marseilles,

April 21, 1855.

My dear son, good Father Caille seemed to me to be so affected by the information you gave him of the responsibility that you wanted to lay on him, that I thought it good to write him a letter to reassure him. His letter was perfect in terms of propriety and reasoning. In no way at all do I want this excellent priest to be overly troubled. Frankly, I see greater value in him than in the entire convent which has always seemed to me to be a community that offers little consolation. I shall be speaking of this with Father Vincens who is at this time making his retreat at Montolivet.

You can admit to profession all the men whom you have presented to me. At Montolivet we have the brother of your Calvi and another postulant. I am keeping them there to initiate them into knowledge of the French language. These young people have the mark of wise youngsters. I will have them go up to your place only when they will be able to understand your instructions. We have to admit these young Italians because Frenchmen are not appearing on the scene. They will, moreover, be needed by us for our missions in Corsica and for the missions in Ceylon, etc. I am quite happy with our Oblate scholastics. I have already seen 16 for individual direction and I am delighted. Provide us with new ones, for our needs are extreme. I am bombarded from all sides. There isn’t a mission that is not clamouring for help, everywhere the field is vast and zeal is untiring. I was hoping that our Saints, upon their arrival in heaven, would obtain from the Father of the Family other workers who will cultivate his vineyard. God apparently wants to arouse our fervour through making us feel our need and testing our trust in his goodness. So we are not discouraged and we keep on praying that we be granted what we desire so justly. Let us invoke the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph to help us in our great need. I have not as yet personally seen the novice whom you have sent to us. I shall be meeting him on my next visit to Montolivet. You were not asked to have the youngest make the trip.

I have to close my little letter. I bless and greet you with affection.

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

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

1268. [To Father Mouchette, at Montolivet].1

1268:XI in Oblate Writings

Father Mouchette must always count on the Founder’s affection.

Mouchette

[Marseilles],

April 24, 1855.

I am writing in order to dispel promptly every concern you may have. In short, my dear son, count a little more on the tender affection of your father and don’t entertain the idea that it can ever be changed. What hurts me is that you do not know to what an extent my heart loves you. I would be very happy in this world if I received back the hundredth part of what I give. I accept with resignation, but not without pain, all misunderstandings of this kind, as a great penance that I offer to the Lord in expiation for my sins.

I love my sons immeasurably more than any human person could love them. That is a gift that I have received from God, for which I do not cease to thank him, because it flows from one of his most beautiful attributes and because I have reason to believe that he may perhaps not have granted it to anyone else in the same proportion as he has to me. That is no doubt because of the position that he has deigned to give me in his Church. I am certain that other fathers of many families, quite certainly more holy than I, have not, however, received this gift to the same degree.

1 YENVEUX V. 157. Father Yenveux introduces the first paragraph as follows: “Through a misunderstanding, Reverend Father Mouchette thought that inadequate reports had vexed the Bishop de Mazenod against him.” Yenveux dates the second paragraph as of July 19, 1854; we have the original of a letter of July 19, 1854 to Father Mouchette and the above text is not included therein. It therefore is most probably a part of the April 24, 1855 letter of which an excerpt is copied on the same page 157 of Yenveux’s fifth volume.

1269. [To Father Bellon, at Romans].1

1269:XI in Oblate Writings

Father Bellon will be named Provincial of France-Nord.

L.J.C. et MI.

Bellon

Marseilles,

May 17, 1855.

My dear Father Bellon, the external ministries to which Reverend Father Vincens is dedicated make the duties of the post of Provincial that he occupied impossible for him. To many serious drawbacks have resulted therefrom and these have led me to feel obliged to apply a remedy thereto. Thus we have agreed with Father Vincens himself that he would be relieved of this post and that I would promptly choose another Provincial who is more able to fulfil properly the important functions of this post. We have all felt that you would be the man fit for that and thus I have appointed you Provincial of our Second Province in France. This appointment will be communicated to all the houses of this Province so that the relationships prescribed by the Rule are established from henceforth amongst yourselves. I am waiting for the holidays to reconstitute the personnel of the Province. Until then, things stay as they are, especially in regard to the consultors. One month will be quickly over. Right from our first meeting we will settle all the concerns the interests of the Province and you will then visit the communities with the instructions that I shall be giving you.

I have written to the Bishop of Viviers asking him to look for an occasion to induce his colleague to desist from the pretentious claims he entertains and from the error into which he has fallen in regard to religious vocations. I hope that the good spirit of our excellent Prelate will lead the Bishop of Valence back to sentiments that are more just. As we wait, we must pray to our Lord and to the Blessed Virgin that the latter does not close his eyes to the light.

I have scarcely come in from my pastoral visitations and I find so many things that need doing in the city that I am not free to sit down at my desk and expedite the business of the Congregation. Everywhere they are getting to be more complicated and I am even deprived of a secretary,2 the latter being too busy in his tasks that he fulfils at Montolivet and elsewhere to have the time to be at my service. Next year, if God gives me life, I shall try to organize things differently than the way necessity has forced me to do this year.

You know the concern he has given me about his health. I had already wept for him as though he had died during that fatal night that I stayed up with him. Our great patron St. Joseph came to our help. Without him, that would have been it. During the time that we were praying here for the life of Father Casimir his brother Peter was struggling against death at Bytown. Today he is fully convalescing. But our good Father Dorey, our good Father Lacombe, each as useful as the other, had to be ceded to heaven where they arrived at pretty well the same time as our other Fathers Rossi, Pasqualini and Duperray, and I also hope Father Chauvet of whose edifying death you informed me. But what losses these are for our little family! Six in a few months! Oh! how that weighs upon my heart!

Since I am on the topic of this mournful necrology, I want to inform you something that people may have forgotten to tell you: a lay brother died last week at Montolivet; Father Telmon had sent him from Lumières when he was already dying. It seems to me that his name was Joseph.3

Goodbye, my dear Father Bellon, I send you my heart’s affectionate greetings and bless you as well as our Fathers.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

s. g.

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

2 Father Casimir Aubert.

3 Brother Joseph Chambard, deceased May 8th.

136.[To the Abbé Lusso].1

136:XIII in Oblate Writings

Qualities required for admission to novitiate.

Lusso

Marseilles,

May 17, 1855.

Your letter, dear Abbé Lusso, greatly pleased me, from its content, yes, but even more from the sentiments you express to me. I am sensitive to gratitude; it is a counter-balance to the ingratitude of so many others. I congratulate you on the good position that you have attained and the good use you are making of it.2

As for the young man of whom you speak to me, you know what our novitiate is like. It is true that, considering your dispositions when you were there and since you lived there like an outsider, I might say, you were not able to savour its quality; but, among the Oblate scholastics who have come down to be near me, I see the effects of the fervour which animates their minds and hearts. I have about forty of them. I couldn’t say who is the holiest. I count on them very much. Besides, you know what dispositions are required for admittance. One must have a true base of solid virtue, great zeal for one’s own sanctification and the salvation of souls, sufficient capacity for study and preaching, great detachment from relatives and all worldly things, the spirit of mortification, indifference so as to accept whatever ministry is proposed by obedience. What more can I say that you do not already know? This will suffice.

I wish you happiness and bless you with all my heart.

+ C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Copy of the original Italian, Rome, Postulation Archives, DM, X: Register of Letters 1855-1861. p.14.

2 The Abbé Louis Lusso, born in 1808 in Castelrosso in Italy, began his novitiate on February 9, 1853.

1270. For Reverend Father Vandenberghe, [at N.-D. de l’Osier].1

1270:XI in Oblate Writings

Brother Avignon. Send Father Guinet to Marseilles. Faculty of indulgences for rosaries, etc.; Permission to visit his family.

Vandenberghe

[Marseilles,

May 20, 1855].2

So as not to increase the postage on letters and to profit from the occasion, I acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 16th, dear Father Vandenberghe.

There is no problem in you following your idea in regard to Brother Avignon, since you are satisfied with him. I rejoice at the consolations your novices give you, I share them with all my soul.

You must not wait too long in sending me our good Father Guinet. I would be very glad if he were here for our great solemnity of Pentecost and for our fine processions. This child needs rest and holy distraction. He certainly earned this through excessive work. I would like him to come down to me first; we will arrange everything together.

I have just been in church from seven-thirty o’clock to half past twelve noon. I gave Holy Communion for over one hour, I carried the Blessed Sacrament in procession after the Mass. My hand is numb, but my heart is most content. Goodbye.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

In reply to your petition, I grant you for ten years the faculty to bless and grant indulgences on crosses, rosaries, etc, in virtue of the privileges that our Congregation enjoys. At our first interview, we will put that in writing.

Begin by making out the proxy for the family affairs that you mentioned to me. As soon as you can be freed a little, we will try to arrange the time for a short or long trip that you will be pleased to make.

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

2 Undated letter, but found together with that to Father Vincens. which is dated May 20th.

1271. [To Father Vincens, at N.-D. de l’Osier].1

1271:XI in Oblate Writings

Father Vincens is to leave as soon as possible for a recruiting tour in seminaries. Bishop of Valence. Death of Father Vincens’ brother.

L.J.C. et MI.

Vincens

Marseilles,

May 20, 1855.

Dear Father Vincens, please get going; even if you wait only a little while longer you will find all the seminaries closed and we will then miss out on our purpose. You do understand how important it is for us to try this method to build up our forces. Father Vandenberghe tells me that his novitiate will be down to 19. This is like a threat to dying a beautiful death. From all sides I receive letters crying for help. Father Jeanmaire complains of being alone at Nancy to do the work of four men. So why do they commit themselves to doing more than they can? Why is he all alone? What happened to all the others? It is no small matter to select the men that they need, and especially men that can get along together. We had said that Father Séjalon was to be sent to serve the prisons, but this Father will not get along with a given Superior who may be appointed over him.

It seems that you did not see the Bishop of Valence, and yet it would be important to have him draw back from his false ideas concerning vocations. I have written to the Bishop of Viviers who is planning to talk to him. Father Bellon writes me that our missionaries have worked a lot and very well in his diocese. What an injustice it is to accept the services and to refuse the means of maintaining the necessary number of workers.

I truly share in the grief you experience at the loss of your respectable brother. He will have received the reward for the good he has done and especially for having contributed to giving to the Church a worker such as you.

I have literally spent the whole day in church. Upon coming in, I am writing you these few lines, but I say again to you in finishing what I said in the beginning: get going, get going, start your work. You have no time to lose. I think I gave you some fact sheets on the Congregation which it would be good to spread around as you make your way. I still have a few which I can pass on to you, should you need them. Don’t leave me uninformed of your itinerary. I must know where I am to write to you once your are en route. Goodbye.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

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

1272. [To Father Courtès, at Aix].1

1272:XI in Oblate Writings

The Founder is transferring to Marseilles the books which were at l’Enclos. Work on the graves of the Oblates at Aix is to be completed. Difficulties in Buffalo.

L.J.C. et MI.

Courtès

Marseilles,

May 25, 1855.

I am writing a couple of lines, dear Courtès, before the coach driver2 returns. We will have to arrange with him on what day he can transport in the buggy of my nephew the books that I have prepared at l’Enclos. You will have to tell the man you put in charge of this operation to add to the books which are already packed in the big trunk and those which are piled on the floor, all the in-folio manuscripts which are still on the shelves.

My trip to Aix brought me the greatest pleasure for it gave me the opportunity of seeing you several times. Once the railway is in, I shall grant myself this pleasure from time to time. Then I will be able to take place among the first seats, which I cannot do on the stage coach. Really, it is little more than an outing. Yesterday I spent less than three hours to return to Marseilles without forcing the horses at all.

You will tell me if the people were satisfied with Father Baret. I am especially asking for your own assessment, for I know only too well how few persons are able to judge well in such an issue.

I also charge you to urge Mr. Tassy to finish that interminable chapel as soon as possible. Let them at least put it into a state where it can serve for something on which I insist so much that we do there, namely, offer the holy Sacrifice on the relics of our saints.

I am planning to transfer there shortly the bodies of our holy Fathers Mie and Gibelli which are deposited here in the tomb of my uncle the Chevalier, whose remains I also want to transfer. Should we not obtain beforehand the authorization of the Mayor of Aix? Ask Tassy and arrange that together. As soon as these preliminaries are done, I shall proceed to make the transfer.

I went and quickly made myself safe at the seminary. On my arrival yesterday I found an enormous stack of letters which, added to those which were already on my desk, would require eight full days of retreat to be answered, and here we are on the day before the vigil of Pentecost, that is to say, before a week of excessive work. Buffalo is ruining us without saving itself; there is reason to be up in arms. In spite of all the immense sacrifices we have made, they are perhaps expropriated by this time. Goodbye. Affectionate greetings. I bless you.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

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

2 Ms.: coche. In the next line, the Founder wrote: charriot.

1273. [To Father Jeanmaire, at Nancy].1

1273:XI in Oblate Writings

The Founder’s good health. Sorrow at the news of the deaths of several Oblates. Too much work is done at Nancy.

Jeanmaire

[Marseilles],

May 25, 1855.

The preoccupations I have would overwhelm those who are younger and less strong that I am. Fortunately, the proverb “the blade wears out the honing strap” does not apply in my case. Everybody is astonished at the vigour that the good Lord grants me. But what would it take for this fine appearance to vanish? A grain of sand or a drop of water! I therefore do not count on the longevity that everyone is entertaining enough to accord to me, but I use that good health that the Lord grants me to fulfil as best as I can the responsibilities laid upon me, acknowledging all the while that I am powerless to be adequate therein according to my wish and the need.

The loss of our men is the only cross that my poor heart cannot bear to support. These are always open bleeding wounds that will heal only with my own death. Never will others understand the hearth of love God has located in this heart which may perhaps give too much to its own of what should belong more to God. But I am not going to be scrupulous about that.

We must never agree to take on more work than we can do. You have not understood that at Nancy, for I see that you are really overloaded. It is not possible for five or six men to respond to the needs of a whole diocese.

1 YENVEUX IV, 192, 224; V. 170.

1274. [To Father Vincens].1

1274:XI in Oblate Writings

Several houses are asking for Father de L’Hermite.

Vincens

[Marseilles],

May 25, 1855.

From all sides they are calling for Father de L’Hermite. They are asking for him again in Bordeaux, they want him badly in Limoges. They also want him elsewhere. Nothing puts me out as much as when they ask me for a man by name. That is a detestable approach. Let them make known their needs, that is well and good, but let them leave us the choice of the men who are to be sent.

1 YENVEUX VII. 259. in the *Registre de lettres 1855-1863* we find a letter, written in Latin. dated June 4, 1855, in which the Founder recommends Father Vincens to the Bishops on the occasion of his recruiting tour in the seminaries, etc.

207. [To Fr. Chevalier, Superior at Buffalo] 1

207:II in Oblate Writings

Reproaches to Fr. Chevalier who has not been honest in ceaselessly asking for money from the general administration for his establishment at Buffalo, which will have to be abandoned.

Chevalier

Marseilles,

May 28, 1855.

Reverend Father,

Your two letters of the end of April which were brought to us by the last post from America have made a very distressing impression on us, not so much because of the sad news of the imminent collapse of our establishment at Buffalo as because of the reflections to which the letters have inevitably given rise and the painful conclusion to which they have led us. It is evident that your conduct towards us in this whole business of the purchase made at Buffalo has not been frank, and still less has it been in conformity with the true spirit of religious life; it is clear that you have deceived us and that we have been duped in reposing too great confidence in you. This is the conviction to which we have been forced, in examining closely the path you have followed ever since the beginning of this unhappy affair. In fact, you only asked at the beginning for a loan of money in order to meet the payments of the first year, with a formal promise to pay the interest. But when the time drew near for the payments of the second year, it was necessary again to find you the means of meeting them, and in order to secure a deeper commitment in the matter from us, you assured us once more that this was the last time, and mentioned the possibility of losing by compulsory expropriation all the advantages that had already been acquired from this establishment, together with the sum spent on the land. The third year arrived, and you employed the same tactics, pleading with particular insistence that you would not be abandoned in the difficult position that you were in, as you said, only as a result of circumstances quite outside your own control. The matter began to become serious, and it was going rather far to oblige us in this way once more to make ourselves responsible for the payment in question, in order not to lose the money we had already provided. Nonetheless, rather than risk everything, we ended by agreeing to come to your aid once more, But Fr. Tempier, who has special responsibility for remaining in touch with you, took care to recommend you not to use the credit that he made available to you, if you could find the necessary sum on the spot or elsewhere. And you, in spite of a wish so clearly expressed, on one hand take the money that our fathers in Montreal had borrowed to rescue you from embarrassment, and on the other put into your own funds the sum for which Fr. Tempier had granted you credit. The difficulty that you had had in obtaining this aid both from Montreal and from Marseilles must have made you realise that you could no longer count on the one or the other for the payments that you would have to make from that time on. You should have taken care from that time on to take the necessary steps yourselves to protect yourselves from the terrible fate of expropriation, if you were unable to pay at the due time. That is what simple common sense required from you. But no, the tactics you had followed so far had succeeded quite well, and so you have found it easier to try it once again. You had been asleep all the rest of last year and the first months of this in perfect security with regard to your obligations to the owner of the land at Buffalo, when all of a sudden a cry of alarm like that caused by a terrible accident that one could have avoided, arises from you and is transmitted to us by a letter that allows us no time to get a reply to you until almost the day before your payment is due. It is plain that you were wishing to pursue your system of deception and to oblige us once more to provide the sum necessary for fear of what would follow if you could not pay. But we had been duped long enough and too long by these tactics, so disloyal and above all so unworthy of a religious. That is why Fr. Tempier told you in my name and in that of my Council not to count on us for your payments in the future and to rescue yourselves from your own embarrassment. Whose fault is it if this reply was made too close to the time when your payment was due on May 1 of this year, and whose fault is it if, finding yourselves without the necessary means, you have been reduced to extreme measures, to ruinous expedients in order at least to reduce the effects of the terrible catastrophe that has struck our establishment at Buffalo? In order to save something from this great disaster and to avoid for the Congregation the total loss of the advances that have been made to you, we have decided to make a last effort. Fr. Santoni will be accredited with the sum that you need at the present moment, he will go in person to release the property by means of payment on the spot, he will discuss with you what needs to be done for next July and at the same time will concern himself with all the arrangements that need to be made and all the measures that need to be taken both for the interests of the Congregation and for the good of your community at Buffalo in particular, as well as for the future fate of the establishment itself. I end by blessing you all, for I cannot forget that I am your father.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Copy: Reg. letters 1855-1863, Rome. Arch. Post.: DM 10.

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

208:II in Oblate Writings

Money sent to settle “the desperate situation of our establishment at Buffalo”.

Santoni

Marseilles,

May 29, 1855.

Reverend Father,

You no doubt already know of the desperate situation of our establishment at Buffalo, whose superior has not been able to find the means to make the payment due in the month of May. In this cruel extremity we hope nevertheless that he will have been able to sustain a legally valid opposition to compulsory expropriation and will have obtained the delay of execution that the law allows in such a circumstance. In order to spare your Province so great a misfortune there is no sacrifice that we should not resign ourselves to. For this reason we have borrowed the eleven thousand francs necessary to satisfy the creditor. I charge you with the duty of drawing this sum and taking it to its destination. Fr. Tempier is having a credit opened for you for this purpose, by the agency of M. Dromel of our town, on the house of Jazigi and Goddard at Boston. All that you have to do is to write to these gentlemen on receipt of my letter to request that, M. Tempier having authorised you to draw on them for the sum of eleven thousand francs of the credit opened for you by M. Dromel their correspondent in Marseilles, who has notified them of this, they inform you of the most simple way of drawing this sum. Once you have this money at your disposal you are to go to Buffalo to set to rights the sad affairs of that house. You are to make the payment demanded by the creditor, raise the morale of the community of our fathers a little and try to set everything in the best order possible in order that they may be able to survive until the vacation. Between now and then we will have all the time necessary to see what must be done further and to make a final decision on our establishment at Buffalo.

I end this letter by blessing you all with all my heart, as I love you.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Copy: Reg. letters 1855-1863, Rome, Arch. Post.: DM 10.

1275. [To Father Jeanmaire, at Nancy].1

1275:XI in Oblate Writings

Father Jeanmaire can count on the Founder’s affection.

Jeanmaire

[Marseilles],

May 29, 1855.

How did you ever get the idea that we are dissatisfied with you? Your conscience and your heart should have assured you to the contrary. How can I be dissatisfied with you at a time when I am so put out to know you are overwhelmed by the enormous amount of work you laid upon yourself? Oh, my dear son, the devil, to take revenge because of the good you have done, has decided to trouble the peace of your heart. If I have any reproach to address to you, my dear son, it is that you don’t know your Father well enough and that you don’t count on the affection he lavishes on you. I am writing you these few lines in order to reassure you completely, my dear son. And I bless you with all my soul.

1 YENVEUX V, 170.

209. [To Mgr Guigues]1

209:II in Oblate Writings

Establishment of an Oblate house and parish at Bytown. Project for a foundation on Hudson Bay. Two Fathers sent to Red River. Fr. Bermond wrongs Mgr Taché.

Guigues

Montolivet near Marseilles,

June 2, 1855.

My dear friend,

I was waiting to write to you until I had a decision to communicate to you on the great matter of the establishment of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in your diocese. The question has been discussed several times and examined from every point of view. The most embarrassing aspect of the matter was the absolute divergence of the opinions of the Bishop and of the Oblates. It was necessary to safeguard the just rights of the Pastor while at the same time not forgetting that, the diocese having in fact been created by the Oblates, they deserved some consideration so that their position did not become impossible. This I think is what we have managed to achieve. You will be able to judge for yourself from the copy which I enclose with this letter of the letter that I have written to the Provincial. As my decision is not in accord with their desires, I do not expect that the Fathers will be happy with it. It will be for you to soften the pain that it will cause by the opportunities and help that you will give them for building their church and their house, and by arranging matters in such a way that not all the Canadians will be taken away from them. I give thanks to God for all the blessings that he pours down on you and on your diocese. You have done much good, but there is too much left for you to do for you to look forward to a rest which you will not find until you reach heaven.

When the ever-growing prosperity of your clergy allows you to send the Oblates back to their central house at Bytown, they will be able to devote themselves more particularly to missions, continue to have sole responsibility for the docks, and later on to provide a colony to promote the project you mention of settling them in a house in the direction of Hudson Bay to make their ministry more useful to the Indians whom they evangelise. I was happy to learn that Fr. G[renier]2 has had success in replacing Fr. Laverlochère, who is nearly cured of the illnesses that he had contracted in those regions that are so cold and damp.

I am going to send two more subjects to Mgr Taché in order to avoid the serious disadvantage of leaving our fathers isolated at such great distances from one another. I have already remedied this unhappy state of affairs in Oregon; I am most anxious that such isolation should not happen anywhere. But the zeal of this good bishop makes him push ever further afield his conquests for the faith, and so, by multiplying the number of missionary posts he can only with difficulty provide our missionaries with companions. The letters that he writes me are utterly charming. I have done everything I can to bring our missionaries into contact with him to inspire in them the confidence that he deserves. It is amazing how far they had allowed themselves to go in making criticisms against him that could only do great harm. I will not hide from you the fact that I consider Fr. Bermond incurable. The last Father I sent, who is a perfect religious, wrote to me to say that if I had forewarned him as I had done against all that might be said to him in the way of insinuations directed against the respect and the confidence that he ought to feel for his first Superior and his Bishop, he would have allowed himself to fall into the trap. On this subject I will tell you that I consider this state of affairs so serious that if it does not change I will be obliged to withdraw Fr. Bermond from that mission in spite of all the experience that he has gained and his knowledge of languages. What do you think? Give me your opinion on that, and on everything that can concern the glory of God, the good of souls and the honor of the Congregation, in every place where you can fix your gaze. Do not be afraid of being indiscreet. I will profit by your opinion, and I will never compromise you.

We did not hear of Fr. Aubert’s serious illness until after his recovery. That news was all I needed to overcome me with misery. I had here his brother in great danger, and death was knocking loudly all around us. Farewell, my dear friend; at least today I have had leisure to write you a few lines. I have come to Montolivet to conduct a small ordination of three of our Oblates whom I wish to raise higher in the general ordination at the end of the year. I have stopped in this new central house of our Congregation to catch up with my correspondence with our various missions. There is not one that is not crying for help: what am I to do? We need time to form subjects. There are plenty of them at the moment, but they are not far advanced in their theological studies. For the rest, all goes well at Marseilles, and it is edifying and touching to see these young men at work.

There is a bell calling me, and so I leave you in order to obey it, but first I want to renew the assurance of my most respectful feelings towards you and to embrace you with all my heart.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Copy: Reg. letters 1855-1863, Rome. Arch. Post.: DM 10.

2 The copyist has written only “G” The letter is perhaps speaking of Fr. Grenier who had been a missionary in the Saguenay area.

210. [To Mgr Taché].1

210:II in Oblate Writings

Happiness that the Fathers are understanding and following their Bishop better. Two Fathers sent. Aid from the Council of the Propagation of the Faith.

Taché

Montolivet near Marseilles,

June 2, 1855.

My dear friend,

I am desolated to see from all your letters that you have received no reply from me. I do not know how to explain this piece of bad luck, but I feel truly distressed by it when I think how much you must have been afflicted by this apparent forgetfulness on my part. I would be truly to blame, my dear friend, I do not say for forgetting you, which is impossible, but if I were to allow even the smallest delay in replying to your touching expressions of friendship. Far from it. I have been moved by them to the bottom of my heart, and I could never give you sufficient proof of my gratitude or express the feelings which your affection for me in return for my tenderness towards you inspires. This will show you how much importance I attach to everything that touches you. I am happy to learn of the blessings that the Lord showers down, so to say, on your every step, and nothing gives me more pleasure than to learn of the good effect that your presence has on the majority of those who had misunderstood the rightness of your intentions and the noble feelings that have always inspired you. I admire your gentleness, your generosity in circumstances which would have given you just cause for complaint and of which you have had the charity to leave me in ignorance. This generous attitude of yours has not escaped the notice of the young Father whom I sent you last. I wish I had many men of his quality.2 I hope that his example will have some influence on some of the men older than himself who have had a change of heart in the way in which they envisage their duties to you. Your last letter consoled me greatly on this subject. I dare to hope that all the clouds will vanish little by little, and that from now on everything will proceed smoothly. However, do not leave me ignorant of anything. I wish I could satisfy all your needs, but I lack the means to do so. I can see that your zeal leads you to make continually new conquests, but how is one to provide adequate resources for so many new establishments? We have few subjects available, and your mission is considered so difficult, as in fact it is, that we have to wait until a generous devotion inspired by the grace of God leads some of our subjects to offer themselves to be sent to you. Another difficulty that we have to face is that of the studies which those who show an attraction for the most difficult missions must nevertheless be made to do. You know that there are few priests in the novitiate. We have three at the most. So the men we will have at our disposal are young Oblates little advanced in orders who are only just beginning their theology. This is what is holding matters up and causes the Superiors of all our missions to reiterate their requests. I have come today to Montolivet where we have our community of Oblates to ordain to the diaconate a subject who is intended for you, whom I will ordain to the priesthood at the end of the academic year, which will be on the 24th of this month. He is no longer a child, for he is over 30 years of age, and he has good health and is not afraid of the cold. Among his qualities must be counted an excellent voice, which I cannot help regretting losing for our French missions. I intend to give him a companion, also a mature man and of a good will. When I confessed to him a fear I had that his health was not strong enough for enduring the fatigues of a mission so difficult as that of Red River, he replied to me that since he has been at l’Osier, he had never had to call the doctor or had recourse to the infirmarian. He has been a priest for two years. These are the two I intend to send you if nothing stands in the way.3 I wrote to you from Rome to say that it would be a good idea for you to decide on your request to the Propagation of the Faith, independently of that which we were making for our part on behalf of the Oblates who are working in your diocese. However, in the fear that my letter might not reach you in time for you to make your request early enough, we have taken it on ourselves to make a request in your name; supposing that you have written yourself, there will be no disadvantage in the request having come from two sides, for that will prove better the need you have for aid. We have presumed to request for you a little more than twenty thousand francs, having in mind that the Council of the Propagation of the Faith always makes some deduction.

The two missionaries whom we will be sending you must certainly take no other route than that of the prairies. We must write to Fr. Bermond for him to make arrangements for meeting them. This father has advised us to do this so that the Fathers whom we send to St. Boniface do not run the risk of being assassinated by the savage Indians who roam those prairies. You understand as well as I do how inconvenient it is to have made arrangements for the arrival of these newcomers at Saint Boniface when you are not there, but what is one to do? If there is another direction that they should be told to travel in, let me know it; for this occasion we have no time left.

I will do for them as I did for Fr. Grandin, by which I mean that I will give them a lecture to forewarn them against any unjust criticism they may hear. I have good hopes that this precaution will succeed as it has succeeded in the case of Fr. Grandin. I would have liked to fill the rest of this paper with writing, but the Oblates are waiting in their room to hear a few words from me. So with regret I leave you and end abruptly, embracing you with all my heart. I bless all our fathers to whom I would very much like to have written, but I have no time, as the post leaves tomorrow.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Copy: Reg. letters 1855-1863. Rome. Arch. Post.: DM 10.

2 Fr. Grandin

3 Fr. Lestanc left alone. Another man was to be sent by the Provincial of Canada, but he did not obey the orders of the Founder. Cf. Mazenod to Santoni, October 9, 1855.

1276. [To Father Pianelli, in Corsica].1

1276:XI in Oblate Writings

Dispensation from vows.

Pianelli

Marseilles,

June 6, 1855.

The insults you allowed yourself to address to me would dispense me from going into any explanations with you. I had wanted to save you, in spite of yourself, to spare you belated remorse, and you show me your gratitude with insults. I leave it up to God to judge you. Up to this point I have fulfilled my duty for it was my task to weigh the reasons that you present for breaking the ties that you have contracted before God by vow and oath; and these reasons do not seem valid to me, especially when I placed you in a position which, while it respected the substance of your obligations, left you the faculty of obtaining the things that you seemed to be searching for.

Your persistence in a determination that is guilty in my eyes and your unacceptable procedures relieve me of the responsibilities that I never wanted to assume. I had only to consult my Council which decided unanimously that you placed yourself by the ensemble of your conduct into the category foreseen by Chapter 3 of our Constitutions, and, consequently, you cease to be a member of the Congregation. With such a declared sentence, nothing remains for me but to give you the dispensation, which I am doing, though regretfully, for there is a paternity which you cannot take away from me and which you have too much forgotten. This is to tell you that in spite of the excessively grave wrongs you must reproach yourself with in my regard, I will never cease to love and pray for you.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Copy: Reg. des lettres 1855-1863, Postulation Archives. DM X, p. 21.

23.[To Bishop Allard, in Pietermaritzhurg].

23:IV (Africa)

Congratulations on his resolve to found a mission in the middle of the Kaffir district. Disappointment over the conduct of Frs. Sabon and Logegaray. A missionary to be leaving shortly. Regards to Frs. Barret and Gérard. The need for gentleness and gracious condescension with the Fathers.

Allard

Marseilles,

June 11, 1855.

No business is too pressing, my dear Lord and friend, and I allow the storm of demands from all those who are besieging me to carry on round me. I must, however, make use of the only moment I have left so as not to miss the post. I had made Fr. Aubert responsible for writing to you on business matters and he must have written to you about this. I wanted however, to reserve myself for writing a letter of congratulation to you over your resolve to undertake the conversion of the Kaffirs.2 I understand that this is no easy matter, but this mission has been entrusted to you, and you must be the apostle of these poor idolaters. Let us have confidence that the Gospel seed will produce its fruit in that region as it has in others which have been conquered by the Faith. I do not doubt that you are powerfully assisted by those of our Fathers who have been called to evangelise with you that nation which is still without the Faith. They must have measured beforehand the degree of virtue they must acquire if they are to become ministers of the mercy of God, and real apostles of Jesus Christ. I am sorry to see that Fr. Sabon has given in to his weakness. He has always shown so little generosity, so little zeal, so little devotion that one ought to have expected this sort of defection.

It is a deplorable thing. He calls to my mind the picture of the pagan confessor of the faith who lost the courage for martyrdom which his 39 companions obtained by their constancy. What is there to do about it? I authorise him to leave your mission and go to Canada where he will put himself at the disposal of the Father Provincial of that Province.3 He will go to one of the ports in the United States and will easily be able to get to Canada from there. You will recommend him to look after his belongings very carefully because there is a great deal of stealing in America; there are no more skilful rogues. I will give you in exchange a priest of another type from whom you will get quite different results.4 He will travel by way of England since all our ships here are leaving for the Orient. He will leave forthwith and while he is waiting for a ship to take him to the Cape he will work on his knowledge of English, particularly conversational English.

I cannot tell you how distressed I was when I read your account of the eccentricities of Fr. Logegaray. We thought that that young missionary would turn out quite differently. He must have allowed himself to be led astray by thoughts of pride and self-satisfaction to have fallen so low. I intend to write to him when the priest whom I have decided to send in place of Fr. Sabon leaves for Africa. I shall write also to the good Fr. Barret and to Fr. Gérard who must both be a consolation to you. I flatter myself that their charity will inspire them to give Fr. Logegaray good advice which will bring him back to the way of obedience and simplicity. For your part, temper your natural severity which is a result of your love for regularity, with a great deal of gentleness and gracious condescension.

Farewell, my dear Lord and friend, I embrace you and bless and embrace all the Fathers with all my heart.

1 Copy: Rome, Archive of the Postulation, DM X, Reg. Letters 1855-1863, p. 23.

2 Frs. Barret and Gerard founded the mission of Saint-Michel among the Zulus 30 km from Pietermaritzburg. The mission was abandoned on July 23, 1856, since the Zulus had to leave the valley.

3 Fr. Vincens, assistant general, had written to Fr. Sabon on June 6, 1855, to give him permission to go to Canada without passing through Europe. Fr. Sabon in fact stayed in Africa where he died at Durban in 1885.

4 This refers to Fr. Bompart who did not leave until 1856.

1277. To Reverend Father Caille, priest of the Congregation of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, at N.-D. de l’Osier.1

1277:XI in Oblate Writings

Congratulations on his religious profession.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Caille

Marseilles,

June 25, 1855.

My most dear Father Caille, there is nothing that holds me back. I have hardly left my bed, which I was forced to keep to for twelve days, I do not resist the need I feel to manifest to you how completely satisfied I am to count you among our men in the holy family of Mary. My little letter, or rather these few lines will reach you just in time to congratulate you on the day of your consecration. Thereby I shall be present as though in person, which does not exclude that from here I am accompanying you with my most fervent wishes.

It is hard for me to hold a pen, and so I will not say more to you. Your heart will supplement thereto by understanding mine which is already also your own. I bless you.

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

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

1278. To Reverend Father Vandenberghe, Superior of the house of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, at N.-D. de l’Osier.1

1278:XI in Oblate Writings

Departure of Father Guinet, along with two postulants.

L.J.C. et MI.

Guinet

Marseilles,

June 25, 1855.

It isn’t for the purpose of writing you, my most dear Father Vandenberghe, that I am taking up my pen. Father Guinet will tell you how it is that I am still so weak. But I want to at least give you some sign of life and to express to you again my most affectionate sentiments.

I am giving our good Father Guinet back to you. I did what I could to make his stay in Marseilles pleasant and conducive to his health. I think he is quite well on account of it. I am happy to find him quite satisfied. You know how dear he is to me. He will arrive with two acolytes, one of whom can be admitted to the novitiate without the least delay.2 You can give him the holy habit already on the 1st of the month. The other one will have to make the customary retreat. Two others are announced from Fréjus. If for your part you are able to haul in the net, your novitiate will be full again. Goodbye, I bless all of you.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles,

s. g.

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

2 Three postulants took the habit on June 30: Bruno Peillon, Victor Vallet and Germain Alba.

211. [To the Fathers of Red River].1

211:II in Oblate Writings

Congratulations on their generosity, and invitation to fraternal charity and collaboration with the Bishop. The qualities of Fr. Lestanc.

Oblates of Red River

Marseilles,

June 28, 1855.

My very dear sons,

I allowed Fr. Lestanc to leave without giving him the letter that I wished to write to you, but he left so quickly, and I had had so much trouble in the days before his departure that it was impossible to carry out my intention. Today somebody has mentioned to me that if I make haste and write a letter to follow him, my letter might still reach him at Le Havre before he embarks. So without hesitation I am taking my pen in hand, but, not having time to write to each one of you, which is what I would like, I shall content myself with expressing my feelings to you in a circular which I ask you to pass round. I hope the same will not happen to this as happened to the last letter I sent you, which, to my great regret, I learn has not arrived. I have too good an opinion of you to doubt that you are always ready to receive gladly whatever my soul, which is joined to you by so many ties and which loves you so dearly, inspires me to say to you, whether to congratulate you on the good that you are doing or to give you such advice as it is right that you should expect from me, however great the distance that separates us. God knows what it costs my heart to live far away from you! I am so happy when I can see my children around me! This is a natural feeling which God gives me in order to make more meritorious the sacrifice of separating myself from them which has been imposed on me. But is it not I who bring you up as children in the Church through the imposition of my hands? In a way, I set a seal on your apostolic vocation.2 You go out from my embrace to fly to the conquest of souls and, one can truly say, of the most abandoned of souls, for is it possible to find souls that are more lost than those of these poor Indians whom God has called us to evangelize, a priceless privilege? I am well aware of the sacrifices, the privations, the torments that you have to pass through to obtain the results that you seek, and it is this that weighs so heavily on my heart, but what will your merit be before God if, faithful to your vocation, you become the instruments of his mercies towards these poor infidels whom you are rescuing from the grasp of the devil who had made them his prey, and if in this way you extend the Kingdom of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth! I am not surprised that the consolations that the Lord allows you to taste in the exercise of your sublime ministry fill your souls with joy and make all pains seem light to you. The story alone which you have told me fills me with thankfulness to God and softens the pains that I endure because of you, who are ceaselessly present to my thoughts, and whose labours I appreciate so greatly.

To comfort you, I wish that I could send you a great company of workers, but since I cannot I am glad to be sending a small number who are worthy in every way of walking in your footsteps. He who brings you this letter deserves all your confidence, just like those who have preceded him. He is a perfect religious, full of zeal and fervour. He understands that it would be foolishness to devote himself to a ministry that is so cruel to human nature and to expose himself to the danger of losing all its fruit and merit by not living as a holy religious. For that, all that is necessary is to become penetrated with the spirit of the sacred code which the Church has put into our hands to guide our conduct. Let everybody make it the subject of his habitual study and meditation, and in this way peace, union and charity will be the delight of your lives. I cannot urge you strongly enough, my beloved sons, to respect the authority of him whom God has put in charge of the spiritual government of the region where you are carrying out your zealous work: you should congratulate yourselves on the fact that he is also your regular superior: you are therefore doubly bound to obey him. Let us hear no more of these little clashes which achieve nothing except to compromise seriously the good that you should be doing in a perfect accord of views and feelings. If you were to read the Bishop’s letters, you would admire the beauty of character that they reveal in him. There is not a word of complaint on matters which, some time ago, would have had a greater effect on him. He praises each one of you to me, and it seems that he is convinced that the past has entirely disappeared and that you are all moving forward along a good road, full of good will and devotion. You will realize that there is nothing in the world that could give me greater pleasure. I cannot urge you strongly enough to remain in this state of mind. This is the only way to success in the fulfilment of your holy mission.

Fr. Lestanc will give you information about everything that concerns our dear Congregation. I have written to the Provincial of Canada telling him to add a subject chosen from among those who left Europe for the missions among the heathen; whatever his choice, it will be in accord with my will. You know that I am a tender and affectionate father to you, who never ceases to call down on you all the blessings of heaven and who blesses you, pressing you all to his heart.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Copy: Reg. letters 1855-1863, Rome, Arch. Post.: DM 10.

2 This sentence has been poorly copied in the Register.

1279. [To Father Casimir Aubert, Provincial, at Montolivet].1

1279:XI in Oblate Writings

Sends a Father who will be making a week-long retreat.

Aubert C

[Marseilles],

July 6,1855.

I didn’t want the caper of Father M[ichelier]1 to pass by without hearing you on the subject. It seems that this Father has never understood the duties of the religious state. I am told that in his trunk there are a thousand little items that do not square with the poverty he has professed. He serves notice that he doesn’t like it in the community of a house. He would like to spend two or three years preaching, outside, Lenten series, etc. From all that I conclude that this Father has a dire need to make a good retreat; that will do him more good than to put in an appearance in his hometown.

I see no need for him to make this trip, but eight days of retreat will be very good for him. He will have to make these exercises at Montolivet under your direction and under that of Father Mouchette, if you cannot take on this responsibility yourself.

I ask you to ask Father Mouchette what reasons for complaint he has against Father M[ichelier] and not to spare this Father the reprimands he merits, and also to refuse him to go and put in an appearance in his hometown. He has certainly shown far too little virtue.

1 YENVEUX IV, 39.

2 It would seem that the Founder speaks of the same Father that Yenveux first designates as M and then as L. This Father could be Michelier who, after having conducted himself badly in Corsica, was sent to Aix where he withdrew to his own family. Cf. General Council, December 3. 1855*.* Father Piot was accused of the same failings: cf. letter no. 1297.

1280. [To Father Vincens].1

1280:XI in Oblate Writings

Distraction of Father Vincens. The Founder’s illness.

Vincens

[Marseilles],

July 7, 1855.

... For that, you will have to be less distracted. Console yourself, there is an angel who is especially in charge of people who are distracted. I have just had new proof of this and that will decide you to invoke him every day. The night bag, over which you undoubtedly must have grieved, has not been stolen. The angel I mentioned had it stored away in a warehouse of the railways and they have just delivered it to us with all the letters that you left pell-mell therein, which letters - except for the indiscretion of those who may have thought it good to read them - at least served to reveal who the owner of the bag was.

I was very ill with an unexpected rheumatic pain that kept me eight or ten days in bed, but I came out of it to make a fine ordination of sixty candidates in the large hall of the bishopric on the day of St. John the Baptist and, since then, I have been saying holy Mass every day and I don’t feel anything of this illness anymore. Thanks be to God, it did not degenerate into sciatica as it was feared it might do.

1 YENVEUX VI, 85*;* REY II. 566.

1281. To Reverend Father Martinet, Oblate of Mary Immaculate, Director at the Major Seminary, Marseilles.1

1281:XI in Oblate Writings

Father Martinet will temporarily replace Father Mouchette who needs to take a rest.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Martinet

St-Louis near Marseilles,

July 9, 1855.

My dear Father Martinet.

Since Father Mouchette’s health obliges me to send him to l’Osier to rest for a few weeks, we were thinking that you would have the charity to take his place at Montolivet. The Father Superior of the Seminary has been advised of this and so tomorrow you can already take on the position I have just indicated to you. The consolations that our Oblate scholastics will give you will be the first recompense that the good Lord will grant you in this new work. As a pledge of that, I give you my fatherly blessing.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

sup. gen.

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

1282. [To Father Casimir Aubert, at Montolivet].1

1282:XI in Oblate Writings

Canonical visitation of the community a tN.-D. de la Garde.

Aubert C

[Marseilles],

July 10, 1855.

Now how are you going to make this visit of La Garde if the Superior2 of this community does not manage to sacrifice one day of his customary session in the confessional at Le Calvaire?

Everything ought to cede to what is internally appropriate. No one understands this. What will matter, during the visit, the presence of this or that Father of Montolivet? During the visit, the door has to be closed and you are to be occupied only with this important matter. If the visit is not going to be made as strictly as it should be, then I would prefer that it not be made or at least postponed.

1 YENVEUX VII, 98.

2 Father Bernard.

40. [To Fr. Etienne Semeria, at Jaffna]1

40:IV (Ceylon) in Oblate Writings

Fr. Semeria’s letters still bring only bad news. At the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, people are promising that they will entrust the island of Ceylon to the Oblates, but they must wait patiently. Complaints against Bishop Bettachini. Bishop Bravi and Fr. Mola. False accusations against Fr. Duffo. Privilege of the Via Crucis given to the Oblate crosses.

Semeria

Marseilles,

July 10, 1855.

It is only too true, my very dear Fr. Semeria, that all your letters are stamped with the same character, and that I never receive one which does not contain something sad and painful. This could not temper, my dear son, the pleasure I get from regularly receiving your news. I consider you still good, still wise, still worthy of the confidence and love I have accorded you. If men are wicked, if they are deceitful, if they do not stop bothering and, as far as they can, persecuting you, this does not in any way diminish your merit nor that of your brothers who are to act only according to your inspiration and the rules of conduct that it is your job to give them. If Propaganda had been in more of a hurry to act according to its convictions, we would long ago have seen an end to all these conspiracies which manage to slow down its pace and not only allow the continuation but also the increase of the jealousies, dissensions and a deplorable state of things, which is extremely harmful to the advancement of God’s work, which becomes essentially compromised. I can do nothing. I said when I was in Rome all I could possibly say. Everywhere in Propaganda I met men who were quite convinced. They went so far as to tell me what I communicated to you, namely that the matter was already decided, since they understood the fittingness of it and indeed the necessity for it. I repeat: not being able to disagree that the Congregation needed a guarantee that it would remain on the island and that you were the man who inspired the most confidence, it was decided that you would be named coadjutor, *cum futura successione,* to the Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna, and that if your elevation to the episcopate were to be deferred, it was simply in order to placate the small-mindedness of Bishop Bettachini who was offended that there should be a mitre so near to his own. I was even led to believe that some arrangement could be made which would modify this prudent plan which I would more readily call timidity. For the twentieth time I was told to be patient, and that the island would eventually be ours. What more do you want? Since my return from Rome, I think I have sent you a copy of a letter from Cardinal Fransoni dated April 13 or 23, which begins like this: “Il particolare interesse, etc...

In a later letter from Bishop Barnabo, secretary of his Sacred Congregation, this Prelate writes: “Mi vedo seriamente etc...” This letter is dated May 28. I have received nothing more since then. It seems to me, my dear son, that there was something in that to be satisfied with. I was, therefore, waiting for the result of these well founded hopes without getting too impatient, knowing the slowness of operations in all the Roman Congregations when your letter arrived and caused me much anxiety, since it spoke of the new plot by the enemies of the good and consequently of the Congregation in your island. The wretched Fr. Mola2 must, however, have considerable skill to change decisions that were so firmly taken and in some respects already announced. I hesitated to know what to do when I received your letter. It was a very serious thing to find so much malice involved and apparently to have to defend it against charges such as those brought against [Fr. Duffo.] However, I have made a decision and in order to attenuate the impression left by the false reports of the wretched Fr. Mola, I am going to send a copy of the letter you wrote to him to complain of his disloyalty. Why do these people force us to defend ourselves with such violent means? So much the worse for them if they are shown up for what they are *intus et in cute3.* You can see, however, from the two letters I have transcribed for you that there is nothing to be discouraged about. What should one say about the statement attributed to Bishop Bettachini? It is cruel to say this, but if he allowed himself to make it then he has quite simply lied. Furthermore, he is known in Propaganda as a virtuous man undoubtedly, but as an extremely mediocre one. It is the opinion that people have of his virtues that makes him seem so pleasant in the eyes of the good Cardinal Fransoni, who has always been very much in favour of him. As for Bishop Bravi, he is well known for what he is, but this prelate is so shrewd that he knows how to make the most of everything. The calumny levelled against Fr. [Duffo] is, however, too vulgar and too serious for me not to take it up. That is what I am going to do in my letter to Propaganda. I do not accuse him of it, but he was wrong not to be the first to deny it. I would like our young priests to practise their Latin in their free time. I was sad to see that they are obliged to write to Bishop Bravi in French while he replies to them in Latin. However it is better that they do this than be unsure of whether they were making a mistake. In expectation of a requisition from Propaganda I am reserving you two good subjects4 one of whom is an Irishman, who consequently speaks English which he is teaching at the moment to all our Oblates gathered together in our new house at Montolivet near Marseilles. This large family group is today gathered with me at my country house of Saint-Louis. They left Montolivet at four o’clock this morning and came to my Mass at six. I remembered in my prayers all of you, both living and dead, that is to say I wanted to say a Requiem Mass at which all our young students communicated. Among the Oblates there are two who have the same name as yourself. I pray to God that they may resemble you. Give my warmest greetings to each of our Fathers. I do not pity them for suffering a little persecution. This does some good; one keeps greater watch over oneself. And being persecuted by men one draws closer to God who is our only support and true force. May they always walk in the ways of perfection which are indicated to them in their holy Rule, and may they wait for the great moments the Lord gives, by working ceaselessly for their own sanctification and for the salvation of the souls which Divine Providence has sent them so far to seek. I embrace and bless you all.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

Sup. Gen.

P.S. The Holy Father has accorded the privilege of the Via Crucis to our missionaries’ crosses. Do not forget in your letters to acknowledge receipt of mine by giving their dates. The last which I received from you and to which I am now replying is dated May 1-16. A seventh Brother has been taken from us this year. He is Bro. Caix, a simple Oblate, who died in England like the angel he was. Fr. Rey who is here at the moment wishes me to send you his affectionate greetings.

1 Copy: Reg. Letters 1855-1863, pp. 24-25, Rome. Archive of the Postulation. DM 10.

2 The names which follow are scratched out in the Register. This Fr. Mola was a Lombard priest of the vicariate of Colombo. He later entered the Oblates.

3 Inside and under the skin.

4 It is not easy to know which Fathers the Founder is alluding to here. No missionary left for Ceylon in 1855. In 1856 Frs. J-J. Pouzin, F-J. Gourret and A. Laclau-Pussacq who knew English very well were chosen. They left with Bishop Semeria in 1857.

44. [To Bishop Barnabo, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].1

44:V in Oblate Writings

The slanderous statements of Bishop Bravi against the Oblates. The inquiry of Fr. Semeria. Fr. Mola’s trip to Europe. Bishop Bettachini’s shortcomings; he still refuses the aid of a Coadjutor.

Propaganda Fide

Marseilles,

July 12, 1855*.*

Monseigneur and very dear friend,

If I could travel to Rome by rail in 24 hours as I can from Marseilles to Paris in 18, you can be sure that I would not hesitate to undertake the trip to talk with you about matters in Ceylon.

It is very difficult to write on certain matters, especially when it entails complaints about important people who in a certain sense merit respect and consideration. There is always a fear of going beyond acceptable limits, and yet it is necessary at times to explain things which are disagreeable and often dishonourable. So, what is to be done?

I would be remiss in my duty were I not to inform you about the obstinate and unjust opposition of Bishop Bravi against our missionaries whom he does not forgive for entering the Vicariate of Colombo in spite of him. In addition to all the earlier vexations he has caused our men, he now lends an ear to all sorts of calumnies spread by jealous persons because of the good done by the Oblates which others haven’t been able or wanted to do. Fr. Semeria has written me an eight page letter which illustrates the falsity of the facts. Bishop Bravi should have referred to Fr. Semeria rather than spread them without having ascertained their foundation. In keeping with the wisdom that distinguishes him, Fr. Semeria took all necessary measures to ascertain the truth and is firmly convinced as to the complete innocence of the accused. Just think that one of the accusations, among others, involved a missionary who was supposed to have gotten drunk on a certain native drink. What did Fr. Semeria discover in his investigation on this subject? The poor missionary had travelled for an entire day without eating and when he arrived, exhausted and half dead, he accepted a small glass of that drink to which he was not accustomed and suffered a fit of vomiting. There you have the supposed drunkenness.

That good missionary felt under the obligation of conscience to inform the Coadjutor about certain immoral actions committed by a Sylvestrian. *Inde Irae!2* Then there is the letter received by Propaganda Fide on the censure applied to the Oblates for having given Communion to *pueris et puellis,3* which infuriated Bishop Bravi even more. He would like to avoid the reprimand by throwing it on the Goan bishop. What is even worse is that, in order to make his apologies and prove his worth in Rome, with his customary shrewdness that Bishop indoctrinated a discontented individual returning to Italy so that he would speak in his favor. That is something he has already done other times and I have reason to believe that this time a certain Fr. Mola has received this task from the prelate. This is where a conversation would be necessary and not the stark characters of a letter. For many years this Fr. Mola was treated with the best of manners by Fr. Semeria and the other Oblates. He was so grateful and edified that he had felt the desire to join the Congregation.4 At that time he reproved the policy of Bishop Bravi, etc. Certain altercations with Bishop Bettachini led Fr. Mola to return to Europe. He stopped in Colombo and Bishop Bravi was talented enough to infuse his own prejudices into the man’s spirit. That Fr. Mola then forgets all the edification received during his period with the Oblates and writes to one of his comrades, a very worthy missionary and close friend of the Oblates for whom he bears the most respect, to dissuade him from the thought he harboured of entering the Congregation. Such unfair behaviour made it necessary for Fr. Semeria to write a letter to Fr. Mola which was very charitable but in which he made the necessary reprimands and punished him in a certain sense by reminding him of his own letters written to Fr. Semeria full of respect for the Congregation and the Oblate Missionaries. I am telling you this in order that you be on your guard in case that Fr. Mola undertakes the commission of Bishop Bravi.

Incredible as it is, but injustice has reached the point of wanting to convince people that our missionaries in Colombo know nothing, not even how to say Mass. Let it be well known that in France we do not ordain a priest if he has not studied moral and dogmatic theology for at least three years and after repeated examinations on all the subjects. It is true that our men do not know how to say Mass in 15 minutes. If it takes them 25 or 30 minutes, it is not due to hesitation, but to accomplish that great act with suitable respect and composure.

There are still so many things I would have to say. That is enough for now. And the fact that Bishop Bettachini was called in an insolent fashion “Ragazzaccio” by a certain missionary, i.e. a child lacking in practical judgement and in many other qualities. He is really fortunate, however, to have a helper like Fr. Semeria. What heroic patience that good father must have, a true saint! It seems unbelievable that this goodly Bishop Bettachini, forgetful of what he had written me on that subject and what he undoubtedly had to say to Propaganda Fide, had the courage to affirm that he was not the one who didn’t want a coadjutor, but the Sacred Congregation which had even forbidden him to come to France in order to avoid a meeting with me since it was taken for granted that I would have insisted that he request the Coadjutor that the Sacred Congregation did not want to grant. What type of men are these?

Your Excellency knows that the prelate who declared he did not have the money to call one or two more missionaries, did have enough to bring two music teachers with him. The surprising fact is that, once they reached Ceylon, these teachers wanted to leave Bishop Bettachini and go with Bishop Bravi. Not knowing whom to be upset with, Bishop Bettachini accused one of our fathers of having given them that suggestion. It is absolutely false. I am telling you about all these troubles in order to help you better understand how important it is to strengthen authority on that island with a prompt and efficient measure.

Nothing less than the duty imposed by my responsibility impels me to disturb you with such a long letter.

In conclusion, please accept the expression of the heartfelt affection wherewith, Your Excellency, I remain your most humble servant and friend.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, V. IS (1855-1856), ff. 543-544.

2 Hence the anger.

3 To boys and girls.

4 He entered the novitiate in 1857 and took his vows at Notre-Dame de l‘Osier on Sept. 11, 1858.

70. [To Fr. Casimir Aubert]1

70:III in Oblate Writings

Mandate as Visitor to the Oblates of England.

Aubert C

Marseilles

15 July 1855

Charles Joseph Eugene de Mazenod

Bishop of Marseilles

and Superior General of the Congregation of Oblates of the most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary

To our beloved son in Christ

Rev. Father Casimir Aubert priest of the same Congregation

Greetings in the Lord

Given that the English province of our Congregation, founded by your most particular care, has, thanks to the mercy of God, made such progress as to make evident from day to day its aptness to promote the glory of God and procure the salvation of souls, especially by their conversion from error, we deem it fitting this day to send you to England in order to visit with the utmost profit houses of the said province. Therefore do we give you plenary faculties to visit these houses, together with each and all the prerogatives which, according to paragraph VI of Chapter One of the Third Part of our Rules and Constitutions, are within the competence of Visitors. Moreover, you have power to organize the said houses and to designate for diverse functions therein those whom you will judge suitable to fulfil them.

As the purpose which we have in mind in sending you to Great Britain is also that you pronounce yourself on the subject of foundations to abandon or accept, in this likewise we delegate our authority, approving all that you have concluded therein and declaring such valid for the future.

In consequence, we recommend you to our Most Reverend Catholic Prelates of England, that they may kindly consider you as the worthy Delegate of our Congregation and that they will deign to deal with you in a benevolent and favorable manner concerning all affairs of your mission. We pray them earnestly in the Lord to permit you the celebration of mass and, if circumstances require, to accomplish other sacerdotal functions, it being recognized that you are not only above all suspicion and entirely free of ecclesiastical censure, but also that you show forth brightness of virtue and enjoy a reputation that no one can reproach. Whereof we can truly and indeed we do give witness before all whom the matter can rightfully concern.

Receive then, beloved son, with our benediction, the mission that it is our will to confide to you. May all the holy patrons of England come to your aid. May the Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary ever keep you under her protection. For our part, we shall not cease to implore from Heaven an abundant rain of graces for you and those of our Society placed under your direction.

Given at Marseilles in our episcopal residence, under our sign and seal and the countersign of the pro-secretary of our Institute, the year of the Lord 1855*,* the fifteenth day of the month of July.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

Sup. Gen.

By mandate of the Most Illustrious and Reverend Father General

Fabre, O.M.I.

Pro-Secy.

1 Orig. Latin - Rome, Postulation arch. - L. M. Aubert C.

1283. For Reverend Father Rey or any other Father, at the Seminary.1

1283:XI in Oblate Writings

Empty the boxes of books.

Rey

[Marseilles],

Tuesday [July-August 1855] 2

I request Father Rey to look after my books today out in the country. All I ask him to do today is to empty the boxes and the little trunk in the room that is adjacent to the library. For that, the peasant and one of the men from the farm will have to be brought in. I urge you to watch these men when they carry the boxes upstairs so that they do no damage on the corners of the wall or the library. Father Rey will then give the empty boxes and trunk back to the peasant who will send them back to me so that I can fill them again.

I wish Father Rey and the whole gang a fine day out in the country.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop.

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

2 Undated sheet, written on the back of a letter received by the Founder and written on March 16, 1855. This note was most likely sent in July or August; Father Rey sometimes went to St-Louis with a group of seminarians for a holiday.

45. [To Bishop Barnabo, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].1

45:V in Oblate Writings

The Oblate Congregation cannot send missionaries to Vancouver. The needs of the other Oblate missions. The conversion of schismatic Goans at the mission of Mantotte.

Propaganda Fide

Marseilles,

August 2, 1855*.*

My dearest Monseigneur,

While awaiting a heartily expected response on our missions in Ceylon by way of a letter from Yourself or His Eminence the Prefect, a response which I flattered myself to be favourable, I received your dispatch dated July 23 in which Your Excellency asks me for new missionaries for Vancouver. I would like to be able to respond to the immense charity of the Sacred Congregation, but the little family of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate is not large enough to satisfy so many needs.

It is absolutely impossible to provide missionaries for Vancouver. His Excellency the Bishop must know this in order to look elsewhere. Enough and perhaps too much is being done for Oregon. The Vicar of Natal asks for aid now that work has begun among the Kafirs. The bishop of St. Boniface is not satisfied with those we send him from time to time. Ceylon would like at least those whom the Lord has called to Him to be replaced,2 but Bishop Bettachini insists on not wanting to pay anything for their trip and uses the money of the Propagation of the Faith to buy candelabras and I don’t know what else. Our seminaries and other houses in France and England give me no respite in their requests for men. *Ad impossible nemo tenetur3* I have no other answer to give to His Excellency the bishop of Vancouver.

After once again grieving one of our missionaries who passed away at the service of the cholera victims, I received very consoling news from Ceylon. Fr. Semeria has forwarded me a letter from our missionary Oblate Fr. Vivier in which he states that, with the grace of God, in his mission of Mantotte, the center of schism, he has obtained the conversion of 100 schismatic families in the Cadeier caste,4 and harbours the hope of soon bringing all the other members of this numerous caste into the fold of the Holy Church.

These are the answers which our good, our very good missionaries give to the calumnies and jealousy of certain people who perhaps send their poison to Rome under the form of honey.

Please accept, Monseigneur, the sentiments wherewith I am your devoted servant,

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., America Centrale, V. 17 (1855-1857), f. 393.

2 Three fathers had already died in Ceylon: Felix Leydier on June 16, 1851 (cholera), Joseph Ciamin on Nov. 10, 1853 (fever) and Victor Lacombe on Jan. 22, 1855 who died at the service of cholera victims.

3 No one is held to the impossible.

4 Cf. Th. ORTOLAN, *Les Oblats de Marie Immaculée,* t. 1, p. 409.

46. [To Bishop Barnabo, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].1

46:V in Oblate Writings

Warning apropos of Bishop Bravi on a visit to Rome. Excerpts from letters from Ceylon on the negative frame of mind towards the Oblates. Bishop Bettachini is in convalescence. Fr. Semeria, in charge of the vicariate, should be appointed coadjutor.

CONFIDENTIAL

Propaganda Fide

Marseilles,

August 2, 1855*.*

My dearest Monseigneur,

I wish to add this confidential letter to the official dispatch. Bishop Bravi is now in Rome. What should one expect from that shrewd and unfriendly prelate, and more ... His behaviour with regard to our missionaries is well known to you. It could be said that despite the glowing compliments for me at the outset, he has never forgiven nor forgotten that the Oblates of Mary were imposed upon him and his constant fear has been to witness the arrival of others so that he would lose the hope of calling someone else, whoever they may be, as long as they aren’t Oblates. God alone knows the subterfuges he is about to unleash in Propaganda Fide to achieve his ends! I know that you will be able to distinguish the truth. However, the good Cardinal Prefect will listen to his gossip, without being on his guard against his shrewdness. All the deceits this man is capable of are unbelievable. It would be possible to write an entire volume. One of our missionaries in Colombo recently wrote the following to Fr. Semeria … When I was in Colombo recently to visit the old bishop who is ill, Bishop Bravi embraced me very warmly and said to me: Fr. Lallemant, let us always be good friends! Monseigneur, I responded, I see no reason why we should become enemies... Bishop Bravi then told me that one of his very close friends had written him that some missionaries were about to leave Rome for the Vicariate of Colombo. After having said that, Monseigneur stood up, and slapped me on the shoulder saying, Fr. Lallemant, I have finally won.

Another Missionary from Colombo, Fr. Duffo, also writes that Bishop Bravi, always placing hope in the arrival of other missionaries, said at the very beginning when the Oblates were sent to Colombo “They will be the first and the last even if I have to go look for missionaries in the heart of China.”

After these disclosures, the excellent Fr. Semeria wrote “Well, Monseigneur, that is where we are. With all that is it really surprising if our fathers are more or less disturbed and burn with the desire to see their position improved? If they do complain at times about the way they are treated, despite the illusion of certain external demonstrations, in my heart I cannot always condemn them entirely, even though I never cease to exhort them to be patient and prudent, and inspire them to trust always in the Lord who, I hope, will not delay in coming strongly to our aid.”

There you can clearly see the good character of Fr. Semeria. If that father were in Rome to respond to Bishop Bravi and inform the Sacred Congregation as to the truth of matters and the real needs of the island I would feel at ease. However, when I imagine the shrewd Bravi all by himself with the authority of this episcopal character and the firm determination to achieve success at all costs, I cannot help but get upset, in the French and Italian sense of the expression.2

In the meantime, our poor missionaries are at their wit’s end with all the work there is to do. I don’t know how the good Fr. Semeria stands it. Just think that since his return from Rome, Bishop Bettachini has not been seen in Jaffna. He fell ill and has gone to the mountains of Kandy to recuperate. Who bears the burden in the meantime? The poor and humble Fr. Semeria. I seek justice, not a favour. If everyone in Propaganda Fide could understand as well as you do I would not remain in that state of anxiety which torments my mind and my heart. For the love of God, give one last push and put an end to this whole affair.

I wanted to give you this confidential news in a personal letter and thereby we can avoid any indiscretion. It only remains for me to beg your forgiveness for the tediousness of my remarks, but you can well understand that it is important for you to know everything.

Please accept the expression of my most affectionate sentiments.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Orig. Italian: Rome, Arch. of Pr. Fide, Scrit. rif. nei Cong., Indie Orientali, ‘V. IS (1855-1856), ff. 599-600.

2The Founder used the verb ‘inquietare” in the Italian text. In French it corresponds to “etre inquiet,” and in English it literally means “to be upset”.

1284. [To Father Mouchette, at N.-D. de l’Osier1

1284:XI in Oblate Writings

Admission of some novices at Montolivet. Imminent trip of the Founder to Viviers, N.-D. de Bon Secours and N.-D. de l’Osier.

L.J.C. et MI.

Mouchette

Marseilles,

August 5, 1855.

My dear Father Mouchette, I would not have written you if there were no risk that, on account of my silence, you might give up an idea of which I approve. It is so important to promote as much as possible the far too neglected studies of our young people that it is appropriate to take the initiative that you proposed to me in favour of those whom you deem fit to profit thereby. The house where the Oblate scholastics are is a real novitiate by its regularity and the care that our Brothers receive there. Thus I see no problem in admitting some novices there who would be given special attention befitting their condition. I therefore leave it up to you to decide what would be opportune in this matter.

I can’t understand why your letter was given to me so late. I could only answer it upon my return from Aix where I had gone to consecrate the altar of our funeral chapel. It seemed to me that I was offering the holy Sacrifice over the bodies of so many saints. Our magnificent chapel should be considered as a true shrine.

The day after tomorrow I am leaving at seven o’clock in the morning on my way to Viviers. From there I shall go to La Blachère where I shall consecrate the church next Sunday. I will be back in Viviers on the Blessed Virgin’s feast day. I shall leave again the next day for a short excursion to St-Etienne,2 and from there I shall go to l’Osier. I figure that I can hardly arrive there before eight or nine o’clock in the evening. En route I shall let you know more exactly. Thus, if my trip to St-Etienne is cancelled, I will arrive earlier at l’Osier for I would go there directly from Viviers.

I only have time to ask you to convey a thousand friendly greetings to our dear Father Vandenberghe and to the other Fathers. I also affectionately greet all our novices and I bless all of you.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

s. g.

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

2 Bishop de Mazenod was planning to stay with a relative of his, Count de Mazenod, in his chateau of St-Marcellin, near St-Etienne. Loire. Cf. L. M.-Comte de Mazenod, August 7, 1855.

1285. [To Father Tempier, at Montolivet].1

1285:XI in Oblate Writings

The parish priest of St-Martin. Assistant priests are to live in community with their parish priests.

Tempier

[Viviers],

August 7,1855.

The more I think about Father V[itagliano]’s reply,2 the more I am convinced that he has shown himself unworthy of the favour I wanted to grant him. Let him therefore stay where he is.3 In my mind I have appointed a pastor whom I am putting in the place of which the other has shown himself to be unworthy. I will let you know tomorrow or the day after. In the meantime, be so good and tell the assistant priests at St-Martin and at La Major that it is my will that they live in community with their parish priests. I have spoken of business before telling you that my trip was a very good one. I found the Bishop of Viviers in good health. My travelling companion3 does not feel any road weariness.

1 REY II, 567.

2 Rey does not mention the name of this parish priest. We think it is Father Vitagliano. Bishop de Mazenod wanted to appoint him Archpriest of St-Martin which had become a provisional cathedral while the construction of the new cathedral was in progress. Cf. L. Jeancard-Vitagliano, August 2. 1855*;* Mazenod-Administration of St-Martin. September 9. 1855.

3 He was pastor of the cathedral, La Major.

4 Father Fabre.

71. [To Fr. Casimir Aubert, Visitor in England].1

71:III in Oblate Writings

Advice and directives.

L.J.C. et MI.

Aubert C

Viviers,2

August 9, 1855.

While waiting, my dear Fr. Aubert, for the second letter that you promise, I take advantage of my brief stay with our good Bishop of Viviers to converse a little while with you. I acknowledge receipt of your letter under date of August 1st written from Liverpool. I need not thank you for the good wishes you expressed for me on that day which brought me into my 74th year. You know how much I am in some way united to you in thought from morning until evening. I am not less affected by the expression of your affectionate sentiments and in no wise have to reproach myself for not responding to them.

You are scarcely arrived in England and have already visited all our residences? Well do I know you in that respect - you quickly get down to work. What seems to me still more marvellous is that in so little time and, at your first interview so to speak, you have persuaded Fathers Cooke and Richard not to pronounce themselves before you have seen with your own eyes on the spot how things are. Seen at first hand and according to what you have observed at Sicklinghall, there would be cause for satisfaction with this establishment that is now underway. Firmly keep your own counsel; do not let yourself be circumvented by Fr. Noble who would soon turn it into a matter of self-esteem. However it may seem that we should leave the Maxwell place,3 we could never do it because we ought not to do it. To me this community of Sicklinghall already represents a considerable personnel: three fathers, four Oblates and six novices. That indeed is quite a few. And it is good to see those five youngsters in the juniorate. Decide nothing at Pontasaph before informing me fully about the question and the attitudes and feelings of the most thoughtful Fathers. If in due course you could bring back poor Grey to his duties - perhaps it is weakness on my part to be sorry for him a few months at Montolivet would restore him. And that is enough for today. I await your second letter. In the meantime we are going to Bon Secours via Aubenas and we must leave here tomorrow early in the morning.

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

2 Bishop de Mazenod went to Viviers in the month of August, 1855, on the invitation of Bishop Guibert, to consecrate the church of Notre Dame de Bon Secours.

3 At the General Council of May 25, it was decided to abandon Everingham even if the Founder feared that the gesture would appear ungrateful. The account of this meeting reads as follows: “Most Reverend Father General then communicated to the Council a resolution taken by the Provincial Council of England which, before being executed, needed to be confirmed by an express authorization; it concerns the abandonment of the establishment at Everingham in the diocese of York. This establishment, set up in the early days when the Congregation in England needed to be supported by some rich family of old Catholics and which effectively helped her in this respect to traverse the difficult periods by which she had to pass, has no longer a reason to exist in the present circumstances, unless by a sentiment of gratitude towards the family of the patron of the mission of Everingham. because of services rendered. This is the reason for having continued the serving of this post which our Fathers of England would have wished to abandon at least two years ago. But this concession made in consideration for Mr. Maxwell cannot be prolonged indefinitely. it is thought that the time has come to withdraw. The Council of the province has therefore decided to abandon Everingham in order to be able to concentrate its strength on places more important that the Congregation occupies especially in the large cities. The reasons on which this decision is founded being incontestable, the Council has opted for the confirmation of this decision, while sharing the repugnance felt by our Most Reverend Superior General over adopting a measure apt to make us thought of as somewhat insensible to what is owing in gratitude”.

1286. [To Father Tempier, at Montolivet].1

1286:XI in Oblate Writings

Surprise to find Father Nicolas at N.-D. de Bon Secours. Bishop Guibert will take part on the consecration of the Church.

Tempier

Notre-Dame de Bon Secours,

August 11, 1855.

I was not a little surprised to find Father Nicolas here. My welcome was cold as it will always be for all who put themselves above the Rule. I didn’t want to say anything because it is possible that Father Vincens, using his powers as Provincial, had authorized him to come here. Then it would be the latter who would be in default for not having told me beforehand.

... I have already inscribed him in the text on the parchment that will be enclosed in the box with the relics. I gladly agree to do the greater part, but I want him to take part also, for that seems very fitting to me.

P.S. August 12 ... I have to go down to attend Vespers and the sermon after the ceremony of this morning: the latter lasted five hours.

1 YENVEUX A, 8; REY 11, 567.

1287. [To Father Vincens, at Bordeaux].1

1287:XI in Oblate Writings

Measures Father Vincens is to take in his visitation of N.-D. de Clèry.

L.J.C. et MI.

Vincens

N.-D. de l’Osier,

August 28, 1855.

I have only a few hours more to spend at l’Osier and lots of things remain to be done. I can therefore write you only in the style of the ecclesiastical administration of Grenoble.

1° A thousand thanks to the Lord for the blessings showered on your retreat.

2° I gave you all authority to regulate what needs to be done at Cléry.

3° See the Cardinal2 on my behalf so that he may be kind enough to communicate to you in all confidence what he has written to me.

4° His Eminence’s communications confirm me in the decision I have taken to recall Father Brun. He would have already received my orders if I had not been concerned that his departure before the feast may create a bad impression. I let you be the judge of the step to be taken, not on the recalling which is irrevocable, but on the moment, that is to say, whether he leaves before or after the feast.

5°, Father Burfin has been named to replace him; inform the diocesan authority of this.

6° Direct Father Brun to l’Osier. Goodbye.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

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

2 To what Cardinal does the Founder refer? Bishop Dupanloup of Orleans where Father Brun was working was never a Cardinal. This must refer to Cardinal Donnet of Bordeaux and the problems related to N.-D. de Talence, which had nothing directly to do with Father Brun. Father Vincens was most likely in Bordeaux where he often preached. Cardinal Donnet valued him very much. Cf. L. M-Vincens, March 1. 1856.

1288. To the Reverend Father Aubert, Provincial of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, at Le Calvaire.1

1288:XI in Oblate Writings

Imminent ordination of Brother Pian. The Founder’s work.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Aubert C

Marseilles,

August 30, 1855.

My dear Father Aubert, I would have gladly seen you yesterday from 10 o’clock until noon when I was at the bishopric. I would have had you called if I didn’t think that you would be coming in at any moment.

Today I shall be in Diocesan Council from 9 o’clock onwards; I shall take my buggy at noon to make a few errands in the city and then I shall go to St-Louis.

I received a very short letter from your brother which brings me the good news that Father Rouge has left on his way to see me.

I request you to send, today, a Brother to Montolivet to tell Father Mouchette that I cannot do the ordination of good Brother Pian on Sunday because I remembered that on that day I have to officiate pontifically. He can choose whether he wants to be ordained tomorrow on the feast of Saint Lazarus, or the day after tomorrow which is a double class day in my diocese, or on Friday at the latest, which is another double class. Monday the 6th and even more Tuesday the 7th would be too close to Wednesday the 8th, the day set aside for the ordination of priests. Don’t delay sending this messenger. Goodbye.

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

1289. [To Father Tempier, at Montolivet].1

1289:XI in Oblate Writings

Father Tempier is commissioned to make some repairs at the bishopric.

Tempier

Marseilles,

September 24,1855.

I have just sent up a meeting, my dear Tempier, with Mr. Talon tomorrow from 11.00 o’clock to noon at the bishopric to come to an understanding with you about the minor repairs that, as I pointed out to you, had to be done on the second floor in order to arrange a room for Bruno. Make him understand that this repair work is urgent, and that it has to be undertaken while things have to be cleaned up, which will certainly be approved.

You will come a bit to my assistance in this operation to lessen at least the bad effects I foresee. You will have taken out of this room all the stuff that clutters it up at present. I don’t really know where you can put all that junk. The windows can be put in the attic, the other items in the little dark room.

I would also like the bed which is in the little dark room, next to the apartment of Carbonnel, to be placed into the room you have had whitewashed and that Philippe is to occupy. That is the *hic* to get him out of my brother-in-law’s room wherein he is very comfortable and will certainly give good reasons why he should remain there. It is, however, a master room which I may need from one day to the next. A cot will be placed in the dark room. That’s where the horseman of my nephew sleeps and we can give it on occasion to some servant of the persons who temporarily stay with me.

There is a large shelf in the room set aside for Philippe wherein he can put his chattels. If a commode is strictly needed, we can get one.

Take this business to heart. I would like you to get it done promptly. The only thing I ask is that I be as much as possible spared every bother. You know that when I run into unreasonable, unjust resistance, etc., I take it quite intensely and that upsets me. Those who care for me should protect me from that.

I am planning to come back only on Thursday. I have an enormous desk job that I cannot undertake here.

Goodbye and heartfelt affection.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

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

1290. [To Father Tempier, at Montolivet].1

1290:XI in Oblate Writings

Father Baret must be sent to preach at Bordeaux. Obediences. News. Father Magnan at Marseilles.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Tempier

Marseilles,

September 25, 1855.

Now, my dear Tempier, why did you not wait for me? Do we see each other too often to treat of the Congregation’s business? You were to give me your impressions of the letters from Buffalo. I think you have read them. I have to answer because this house, deprived of two men whom the Provincial has taken from it, will have some trouble to maintain itself. How many other things you must have to tell me and I to you? So I shall write to you, that is to say, in returning from St-Joseph I have to hole up in my office, which is not very interesting. If I had met you at St-Louis, I would have reminded you that Father Merlin was urging me to send him Father Baret to preach at Talence the retreat that precedes the shrine’s patron feast. He sees it most important that this retreat be given by one of our better men and insists that it has to be Father Baret. So I have granted him this favour, convinced as I myself am that this is important for the honour of our Congregation. Now Father Baret himself insists very much on receiving some good advice from the respectable churchman and most distinguished preacher who has already rendered him outstanding service, and, on account of that, I have authorized him to stop at Limoges on his way to Bordeaux. On the other hand, Father Baret must have told you that he considered it necessary that he accompany his nephew to Avignon to defend him against the first shock that the youngster may receive from his family when he gets there and to consolidate the reality of his vocation. It would be good if Father de L’Hermite had a travelling companion when he is making his way to his post. In fact, it is better that these two young Fathers travel together. Considering all these things, I thought it would be best if Father Baret left tomorrow for Avignon, that he stay there for two or three days, and that he then went on to l’Osier to pick up Father de L’Hermite and without delaying too much go on to Limoges. That is for the two things. In third place, you know that I wanted Father Magnan to use his stay in Marseilles and give a class of diaconal to the Brothers at Montolivet. Father Mouchette convinced him that it would be best if he came to stay in the house and give this class every day and thus finish sooner this course from which several would probably not benefit if it were protracted too much by staggering the classes. Besides, Father Magnan would find it too tiring to make the trip from N.-D. de la Garde to Montolivet and he would regret the loss of too much time in his situation, for he wants to use his time to give several retreats to religious houses, something I strongly approve and would like to see imitated by all our other Fathers.

What else do I have to say to you? To communicate some things from Father Vincens’ last letter and from several others who have written me to aggravate me further. So long, I have enough of this for today. Affectionate greetings with all my heart.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

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

137. To M. Sebaux, parish priest of Laval.1

137:XIII in Oblate Writings

Gratitude for the information about the Abbé Grandin who is to enter novitiate.

Sebaux

Marseilles,

September 29,1855.

My very dear Abbé, thank you for the information that you have given me in the report on M. Grandin.2 I have no difficulty granting him the assurance that he requests for the relief of his father and sister. Whatever the post he will be given after his religious profession, we will make sure that his poor parents will receive the three hundred francs that he believes they need.

I do not think that M. Grandin should wait for the new Bishop’s3 arrival to go to the novitiate. That would mean new delays which must be taken into account when we consider this good priest’s age. Rather he should leave as soon as he receives my letter; he needs no other authorization, I beg you to let him know that on my behalf. He would shorten the trip and lessen the expense by going directly to Notre-Dame de l’Osier near Vinay in the diocese of Grenoble where the novitiate is located. If he prefers to come all the way to Marseilles, he will certainly be welcome. Because of the effects he will bring along, I would prefer the other alternative. It would be good if he were to bring, besides his wearing apparel and linen undergarments, a few pairs of bed sheets. As for books, should he have some good ones, it would be best if he left them in storage somewhere until the time of his profession, which can take place only one year after his entry to novitiate. That is why I would like him to start novitiate as soon as possible.

I will speak to those concerned about the person mentioned in the confidential part of your letter. I hope that you do not cast doubt on the dedication I will apply to draw attention to the qualities that I admired in him. They are too rare to be left unappreciated. They will be stopping at my place when they pass through Marseilles, which will be soon.

Farewell, my dear Abbé, I am somewhat in a hurry, but will not close without renewing the assurance of my warmest affection.

+ C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Orig.:Archives at Bishop’s house of Laval.

2 The Abbe Jean Louis Grandin, the older brother of Father Vital Grandin, began his novitiate on November 20, 1855.

3 Bishop J. Wicart, first Bishop of the Laval diocese, made his solemn entrance on November 28, 1855.

41. [To Fr. Etienne Semeria, in Jaffna].1

41:IV (Ceylon) in Oblate Writings

Bishop Bravi is in Rome. The behaviour of the Fathers in Colombo is not beyond reproach. The letter from Fr. Semeria to Propaganda. The Bishop of Vancouver is asking for Oblates. The scholastics in Marseilles are learning English. Death of Fr. Rossi.

Semeria

[Marseilles,

October 1, 1855].

In case I forget, my dear Fr. Semeria, I repeat to you what I think I have already said, namely that you are authorised not only to receive Fr. Vistarini as a novice2, but also to admit him to profession in our Congregation when his novitiate is finished. Now I must acknowledge receipt of the various letters you have had the consideration to write to me. I have them all before me, but there are some to which I have already replied on June 12, July 15, and July 18 with the copies of your letter to the Cardinal Prefect, to Bishop Bettachini etc. I do not need to tell you that I always read and reread your letters with renewed pleasure every time. This is not because they are generally consoling; on the contrary, they always contain something rather disagreeable. I prepare myself for this in advance. But I find that you are always the same, wise, prudent, zealous, directing your boat with marvellous skill among the reefs you encounter at every turn. You do well to tell me things just as they are; I can then act with more knowledge of the case, especially in my correspondence with Rome. I neglected nothing in order to parry the thrusts which I could see had to come. People have been well warned. Thus it is that in the last letter I received from Propaganda in Rome I was told in a postscript that: *Mgr Bravi è giunto in Roma. Ella non tema che io mi varò delle di Lei osservazioni7.* And I can assure you that “le mie osservazioni” were well worth reading. It is certain that Propaganda must have waited for this Prelate to arrive in order to take a decision on all the matters pending. Unfortunately I must conclude from the letter that I received from Fr. Pulicani that our Fathers are not as white as I tried to paint them when I wrote to the Sacred Congregation. Fr. Pulicani’s letter condemns them. If I had received it earlier, I would not have written as I did. It is all the more annoying that these Fathers have given cause for people to think badly of them since this could lead the Sacred Congregation to alter its resolution to give us eventual charge of the island. Therefore I consider them very guilty for not having been more concerned with their conduct. Fortunately you are in an admirable *concetto.4* You can see where this leads - to consulting you about the conduct of your Vicar Apostolic. Really, one cannot put a man in a more embarrassing position! What did they want you to reply. You could not say all you thought. You acquitted yourself with modesty and moderation; but from what you say one could never form an exact judgement of this character. Mola appears to have taken upon himself to paint the black side of the picture. Fr. Lallemant has sent me, as you know, an account of the death of this Goan missionary. He certainly said a lot, but he did not explain whether he was really a schismatic. I feel that a sinner of that sort should not have been left alone for a single instant. What is the explanation for leaving him alone, apparently to go and hear confessions? They should not have left the bedside; they behaved like men without experience. They ought to have profited from the sermons and instructions and been ready to give them when the time came. It is not mentioned either whether he was given Holy Viaticum. This account, then, leaves much to be desired. But I repeat that Fr. Pulicani’s letter is most upsetting.

I must say, however, that Fr. Lallemant has written to me and that he rejects all the accusations made against him and his companions. He does not mention the money that was lent. We shall now see what is decided in Rome. I have nothing further to add to what I have said in my letters. I shall remain silent until a conclusion is reached, and this would certainly have been very satisfactory had not our Fathers given rise to accusations against them.

October 2. I have just received your letter of August 18 which enclosed the letter you wrote to Cardinal Fransoni. To start with this, I must tell you that this letter seems to me to confuse things a little. Your second reply to Bishop Bettachini is that of a timid man who is frightened to say what he thinks. Since he was provoking you, you should have spoken frankly. You should have avoided making too strong a denial of the claims of Fr. Mola, who may certainly have exaggerated but who also probably spoke some truth. It was also important for you not to contradict yourself. One would have to conclude from your second letter to Bishop Bettachini that all is going wonderfully in his Vicariate and yet your first letter did not suggest that. This first letter, then, of which you sent a copy to Propaganda, will not seem to them to be in accord with the second. However, I think I shall eventually have your letter sent on to the Cardinal. For my part, I am waiting for a letter which will tell me the result of their talks with Bishop Bravi. They are writing letter after letter asking me to send missionaries to Oregon to the Lord Bishop of Vancouver who has no priests; despite my refusal, they are insistent. I really cannot accede to this request unless I forget all thought of sending you new subjects. We are after all a very small family; we cannot provide for all needs. Let them come to a decision about Ceylon; we shall see after that. Our Oblates are almost all young and not far advanced in their studies. I am having them all taught English. It is not a very difficult thing. If you had wanted to, you would have learned it. The Bishop of Bytown did not know a word of it; he resolutely set himself to learn it and he now speaks it very fluently. However this may be, we are learning English at Montolivet. What is this Montolivet, do you say? I shall tell you nothing of it since you will be coming to see it for the General Chapter which will be held within its walls next year. Make your plans accordingly. If they keep their word to me at Propaganda we should be able to sort out many things; but I tend to think that things are not progressing too quickly in this area and it is not for want of pushing them. We shall see in the end. But what can one say about the actions of Bishop Bettachini? This good man would make us out to be thieves when he writes as he does to Propagation of the Faith. And he, of course, makes such good use of the money he is given! He prefers to use it to pay for the visit of musicians rather than for the transport of missionaries. And the nuns! he was so attached to the idea of having them at the time of his first journey! And really, this would be a luxury given the pitiful state of his Vicariate.

It remains for me to reply to the question that you asked me. It is in fact Fr. Rossi who has gone to join in heaven those of our number who have preceded him. As for masses for the dead, do not worry about them. When we have the sorrow to lose one of the members of our family, we direct your intention to this matter. Thus you have only to direct your intentions for the intercessions you wish to apply independently of masses. Dio ti benedica, io t’abbraccio.5

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Copy: Reg. Letters 1855-1863, pp. 28-29, Rome. Archive of the Postulation, DM 10.

2 Fr. Vistarini was a secular priest from Lombardy.

3 Mgr Bravi has arrived in Rome. Never fear that I shall use your observations.

4 Essere in concetto to be esteemed, to be regarded as. i.e. Fr. Semeria is highly regarded.

5 May God bless you; I embrace you.

1291. [Circular letter to the Superiors of the Province of France-Nord].1

1291:XI in Oblate Writings

Father Bellon is appointed Provincial of France-Nord.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Circular letter to the superiors of France-Nord

Marseilles,

October 1, 1855.

My Reverend Father,

I have just recalled to my side Reverend Father Vincens where he is to carry out his duties as Assistant General. Since this Father is from henceforth to reside at Marseilles, it is necessary to give him a successor in the administration of our second Province of France. Consequently, I have seen fit to entrust this responsibility to Reverend Father Bellon, one of my Assistants who is obliged to reside at Romans, one of the houses that makes up your Province. As ordinary consultors he will have Fathers Cumin and Berne and as extraordinary consultors Fathers Vandenberghe and Guinet. Reverend Father Berthuel will serve as Provincial Procurator.

As soon as you have received the present notification, you will bring together your community and communicate it to them officially and from that day forth you as well as all the other members of your house will have to correspond with Father Bellon concerning all matters that our Rules and Constitutions have laid down for a Provincial and the men who are members of his Province.

It goes without saying that you will continue to correspond directly with me and my assistants, according as duty and propriety may require.

I conclude by giving all of you my blessing.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles,

sup. gen.

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

1292. [To Father Tamburini, at Vico].1

1292:XI in Oblate Writings

Faculties. Importance of formation received in minor seminaries. Vocation. Regularity

Tamburini

Marseilles,

October 2, 1855.

Can one possibly believe it, my dear Father Tamburini, that I have allowed the Fathers of the seminary to depart without having them bring to you my reply to your letter in which you request the usual faculties? That is the case, however, and one more proof of my embarrassing situation. To my letter I append the faculties, such as you have requested them. Use them for the greater glory of God.

What you tell me of your present attitude pleases me very much. Isn’t a person happy when he is assured of doing God’s will by conforming himself to what obedience prescribes? The Lord takes it upon himself to reward such fidelity to one of our most sacred commitments.

I was interested to receive some details about the kind of good work we have agreed to undertake. Children taken in when they are still quite young, well supervised and instructed, can easily take on the habit of being virtuous and can present themselves to the seminary with advance preparation in the practice of chastity: it is unfortunately too late when it is a matter of acquiring this virtue during the immediate preparation for holy Orders. This priceless advantage was something I considered when we had to decide to undertake the new work that was being offered to us. So give yourself with all the zeal that is in you to prepare these souls to practice all the Christian virtues, but especially chastity, a virtue so necessary and indispensable for every man who wishes to enter the sanctuary. Well prepared youngsters will hear God’s voice and their vocation, often defective in the beginning, will through God’s mercy become supernatural. Only on this condition can they promise themselves that they will do some good during the course of their ministry.

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I am receiving precise information from all of our missions. We really need the find some vocations among your students. We do not suffice for the work that is to be done. Everywhere vast fields are open to be tilled; but there are no workers. Arouse zeal in these young hearts. I was only twelve years old when God aroused in my heart the first and very efficacious desires to dedicate myself to the mission, to work for the salvation of souls. Don’t lose sight of that. We have to speak of things if we want them to be known. *Ignoti nulla cupido.*

Be all at one in the exact observance of our holy Rules. We distinguish ourselves from ordinary priests by this fidelity. Say this clearly for me to all your confreres. No doubt, the Superior must have things in hand; but he is absent for a large part of the year:2 it is then up to you to maintain regular discipline. No consideration should deter you from accomplishing this task. The conferences will serve you admirably for this purpose. When ordinary means do not suffice, then *dic Ecclesiae,* that is to say, inform the Superior General about the laxity of a given man who remains obstinate in not profiting from the means God gives him in the holy Rule to advance in perfection. It would seem that this measure would have been applicable to Father M.3: no one ever drew my attention to him and yet, according to what I hear today, he had never edified any of you. An appropriate advice given by myself may have held him back from the slope of laxity and have spared us the bother and regret that they told me about only yesterday.

I await with even more anxiety than impatience some information on the letters that they say everyone in your area is talking about. Those are dagger wounds. Fortunately, from elsewhere I receive, as compensation, great consolation...

1 Copy: Postulation Archives, Reg. des lettres 1855-1863, DM X; YENVEUX IV, 39.

2 Father Luigi, preacher.

3 The copyist wrote M. This certainly refers to Michelier. whose conduct left much to be desired. Cf. General Council. December 3. 1855.

212. [To Fr. Santoni, Provincial of Canada].1

212:II in Oblate Writings

Decision to abandon the college of Buffalo. Debts of the Province caused by the building of the house beside the church of Saint Peter at Montreal. Regrets that the Provincial has not given a companion to Fr. Lestanc. All the Fathers must give to the general fund a third of their Mass-stipends.

Santoni

Marseilles,

October 9, 1855.

My Reverend and very dear Father,

Before replying to your letter of the end of July, I wanted to wait to assemble the Council of my assistants in order to inform them of the critical situation in which our establishment at Buffalo finds itself and to take their advice on the course that seemed most suitable to take. It is true that the matter is as good as decided already, and even closed, because of the decision that you believed yourself obliged to take to give up your work in the College, and above all because you have already notified Mgr Timon on one hand and Fr. Chevalier on the other of this decision. You must have considered the difficulties very serious indeed and the need to resolve the matter very urgent to have ended the matter in this way. Now, with things as they are and after the Bishop of Bytown has pronounced himself in favour of the decision of the Provincial Council in reply to your consultation of him, what view can we who are here take? Plainly, we must accept what has been done, at least so long as it is not proved to us that your decision needs in any way to be approved by us. It remains to be seen whether the Bishop of Buffalo will share your views regarding the separation of the seminary from the college which you are abandoning, and whether, with no resources other than those which the seminary, and perhaps the church served by the community, will provide, our Fathers at Buffalo will not be reduced to living at least in part on their own money. So this establishment is still far from seeming to me to be based on solid foundations. And you have not told me what steps will be taken to meet the other payments which our Fathers still have to make to the man who sold them the land. Are they thinking of selling at least a part of this land, in order to be able to meet the payments of which I have spoken with the money they will make from that land, and so to avoid the regrettable and extreme measures to which we have been reduced this year? In your next letter, then, give me some information on this subject, and let me know who at present are the members of that house. I see from a passage in your letter, and also from the fact that the Bishop of Bytown tells me so in his, that you have the responsibility for his college. So I presume that you do not regard this as the fulfilment of the plan that has been in view for so long of making an establishment at Bytown that would be properly speaking ours. We here have not been able to understand how and why it is that you have not obeyed the decision I communicated to you, having discussed it with my Council, on the most suitable area in the town to choose for setting up the establishment in question. As regards Bytown, the Bishop has just written to tell me that you have claimed from him the sums owed by him or by his church to the Congregation of Oblates. He was obliged to leave no stone unturned in order to pay you a portion of these debts. As for that of 1600 louis, representing the money provided by the Congregation for the construction of the Cathedral, he declares that he cannot accede to your request, firstly because he does not know where to find such a sum by the time when he would have to pay it to you, and also because of the particular purpose for which this money was earmarked, having been given at one time for the establishment of the Oblates at Bytown itself, with the result that it would not be just to use it for another purpose. I can appreciate that in the problematic position into which you had been thrown by the building of your house, immediately after the building of the beautiful church of Saint Peter, you were trying to find money everywhere; but that is no reason to exhaust the resources of every other house in the Province. Even less were you justified in returning to the attack in order to seek exemption from a general measure whose application has been accepted everywhere else in the Congregation, in view of the just and serious reasons that made it necessary. So, my Reverend Father, I ask you to cease pressing for such an exemption, which cannot be granted to you, and from now on do not try to do anything other than to submit with a good grace when the Procurator General has occasion to request your Provincial fund for a third of your Mass-stipends, which you are still obliged to pay.

So the excellent Fr. Lestanc is the only one of our men who has left for Red River. Happily, he has met M. Thibault, a Canadian priest who was going back into that wild country, with whom he will have the advantage of being able to travel as far as Saint Boniface. Was it so difficult for you to find him a companion from among our Fathers on the spot, during this year when the abandonment of one or two missions in the diocese of Bytown and the reduction of numbers at Buffalo would seem to have left in your hands a few available subjects? Furthermore, it was only an exchange and not a sacrifice that I was asking from your Province, since Fr. Sabon has received orders to go to Canada as a replacement for the missionary whom I was taking from you for Mgr Taché. Judge for yourself whether he will be happy when instead of the two priests of the Congregation that I had promised him he receives only one, when he had wanted to have four. You would have done well to have borne in mind all these considerations and to have tried to have entered a little better into my ideas and my desires; then you might perhaps not have found it impossible to carry out the plan that I had informed you of with regard to the sending of apostolic workers for Red River. As for Fr. Sabon, there was no longer time to send him a counter-order; I presume therefore that he will reach you by the first boat that sets sail from the coasts of Africa for the United States.

I see that I am now at the end of my paper, and I have not given you any news on what we are doing. You will receive as soon as possible the printed bulletin on the Congregation for the current year, and there you will find a good deal of interesting news. Fr. Bellon has been put in charge of the second French province in place of Fr. Vincens, whom I have recalled to Marseilles to perform his functions as Assistant General.

Farewell, my dear Fr. Santoni, and I bless you all from the bottom of my heart.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Copy: Reg. letters 1855-1863. Rome, Arch. Post.: DM 10.

1293. [To Father Soullier, at Nancy].1

1293:XI in Oblate Writings

Father Soullier will have the graces he needs to be Superior. Tasks of Fathers Jeanmaire and Sigaud.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Soullier

Marseilles,

October 16, 1855.

My dear Father Soullier, the letter that I have just received from you brought me so much pleasure that I must reply to it myself.

Now you have reached the place to which you were sent. The sentiments so full of modesty that you express on the occasion of the responsibilities laid upon you do not surprise me. If you were to bear the burden all alone, I would heartily agree with you, but God is there to help you, for you must not doubt that it is his will that was made manifest to you through your Superiors. And so I am fully confident that you will succeed in your task to procure the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls, and that to my satisfaction and to the edification and honour of the Congregation. In view of that, you will always have to act under the impulse of the Holy Spirit in God’s presence, keeping in mind only the good of the interests entrusted to you and always being in conformity to the spirit and even the letter of the Rule from which you must try never to stray. No one will have anything to say or to complain about when you regulate things according to the code that all are to know and to observe.

I have approved Father Jeanmaire as director of the novitiate of the Sisters of the Christian Doctrine. That is a derogation to the Rule that I thought it good to make in view of the good that is to be done. This exception should prove to Father Jeanmaire that I have confidence in him and it lays on him the obligation of taking great care to conduct himself with prudence and discretion in so delicate a ministry.

It is clear that Father Jeanmaire will not be able to serve the prisons at the same time. This service is entrusted to Father Sigaud2 who should give himself thereto with zeal, leaving aside the puerile reluctance for which I would be ashamed for him were he to repeat it at Nancy. Tell him on my behalf that unless he is agreeable to be taken for an imbecile or a fool, I will consider this claimed reluctance as a lack of zeal and as an excuse for not doing work that he perceives to be difficult. So, from my point of view, I do not agree that he should be exempt from this ministry in which I have myself received so many consolations during the first years of my priesthood.

With joy I learn of the good that our Fathers are doing in the shrine of Sion, but I do not at all regret that I didn’t make the purchase that you mention to me. It is already enough and much too much that we took on the costs of acquiring our house at Nancy. We still feel that burden, and whatever good we may be doing at Nancy, it is not done without regret but certainly with the firm resolution not to relearn that lesson. We know what it is all about.3

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

2 Word erased. One can read Sigaud. it seems. This Father did belong to the community at Nancy. Cf. L. Mazenod (Aubert)-Soullier. October 1. 1855.

3 We have only the first sheet of this letter.

1294. [To Father Bellon, Provincial, at Romans].1

1294:XI in Oblate Writings

Financial administration of the seminary. Difficulty with several Fathers of the Province.

Bellon

[Marseilles],

October 18, 1855.

It is all due to him,2 who has been so niggardly with the salary of the Superior and the directors and who provided them with infinitely less than everywhere else, to come and complain about your diminished finances. Those are things I cannot put up with, they wound all my sentiments of justice and tact. I admire your patience, that is a grace of state, we must thank God for it.

Nothing has been changed in your Province. It is true one has to deal with men who are so individualistic that one has to be ready for anything; in any case, I would have informed you of it. Father Bise3 has made an effort to accept his appointment even though he had sworn that he would not be caught again. You well find these expressions to be little in line with the religious spirit, but that is how some understand their duty. Father Marchal wrote me a letter which netted him a bit of a severe reply on my part. It is not in the same category; he is a better religious, but he wrote me to paint Father Brun whiter than snow, he who didn’t want to spend one more week in the house, he who felt obliged to say so many things to me, too late to be sure. He manages to say that this Father was the victim of the measure taken in his regard. You can imagine how I had to bring out all these incongruities. But this is a sorry business which I would gladly see others share.

We have Father Piot here who is suprised that we have chosen him to teach history and Sacred Scripture; he admits that he doesn’t know enough Latin to understand the commentators. What a pitiful situation! He should have understood that it was so as not to throw him out that we have placed him where he is. But men of this stamp understand nothing that could be beneficial for their souls. And Father Burfin, where does Father Vandenberghe want us to place him? Should we use him a little for preaching in the diocese of Grenoble? The Superior has only to mould him by means of his authority. I don’t know how he can have a bad influence on the women religious? I had forbidden every other Father except the one I had put in charge of this community to get mixed into their affairs. I beg you to hold them to that. I am going to renew that order by writing to Father Vandenberghe whom I shall urge to maintain his authority as Superior and as such ought not to bend before a single man resident in his house. The one who is not pleased with that has only to withdraw. That would be a relief. At Nancy, Father Sigaud has given us his trouble: he didn’t want to serve in the prison because he was afraid that the prisoners would notice he was a bit bow-legged. This is a fixed idea in that poor man. He is in no way so bow-legged that he has to hide that pretended deformity. That was the reason for his great aversion against Father Rouviére, who, as he said, joked about it. I wrote to the Superior that he is not to be held up with this folly but that this Father was sent to serve the prisons. I would rather attribute this repugnance to his lack of zeal and I do not think I am mistaken. The misfortune is that all these men who weary us have grown up under local Superiors who were incapable of giving them good direction. I accuse the local Superiors of being the cause of all our miseries. For a long time now I have wanted to say this in a circular letter; the reality is so manifest.

1 YENVEUX III, 131-133; V. 77.

2 The Bishop of Valence.

3 Appointed Superior at Limoges.

1295. [To Father de L’Hermite, at N.-D. de Cléry].1

1295:XI in Oblate Writings

Father de L’Hermite is appointed Superior of the community of Cléry, but not parish priest. Confidence and affection.

L.J.C. et M.I.

L’Hermite

Marseilles,

October 18, 1855.

Dear son, even though Father Aubert must have written to you in my name at a time when I was too busy to write myself, I have always reserved it to myself to say a brief word to you.

You were surprised at the unforeseen mission that has been given to you. It had to be thus. We did not overlook the obstacle, more apparent than real, of your youth; but since your attitudes are so well known and I appreciate your religious virtues and your good common sense, I took my decision without any worry and with the advice of my Council.

In your area people must continue to know that Father Brun is still the parish priest, that he has been recalled for some business, and that you have been sent to be the Superior of the community, which is something totally independent of the parish. Father Marchal who knows the country and is assistant priest should, in the eyes of the public, govern the parish, but he has to know that he must always come to an understanding with yourself so that everything is done in unison. You will be obliged to act with a great deal of prudence. You must appear to be ignorant of the fact that Father Brun had compromised himself either through bonhomie or otherwise. This ought not be the topic of conversation in your community, nor, with greater reason, on the outside. It suffices that you speak with Father Marchal who will make you aware of the delicate nature of the situation on account of the respectable families that are all around you.

As for your quality as Superior, you are that in good and due form, and each one is to acknowledge that fact. Nothing ought to hinder you from exercising the functions of a Superior. You have in hand the code which ought to rule you. Enter into your duties without delay. Let the Rule be properly observed and I am to receive reports on everything.

Take much care of your health. Do not suffer cold. Don’t worry about anything. Always be polite with the people from outside, but let them see you as a man of reflection who thinks before he answers and who reserves certain things for himself. Don’t let yourself get overwhelmed by outside activities; program yourself always for a moderate work, of course, but also so that you are able to cultivate your talent. I insist very much on this point on which you will edify me as you will in all other matters. I am stopping, my dear son, because I have a great lot of writing to do today. I will not conclude, however, without expressing to you all the sensitivity and all the sentiments that the lovely words of your moving letter aroused in my heart. Believe it, my dear son, there are fibres in this heart which respond to every sympathy, to all that is tender and affectionate, to all that is loving, to all that is good. Dear son, you know, furthermore, how dear you are to me, I give you a new pledge thereof in my affection and fatherly blessing.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles,

sup. gen.

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

213. [To Mgr Guigues].1

213:II in Oblate Writings

It is absolutely essential that the Oblates have a house and a church at Bytown. He is to work to pacify the spirits of the Fathers of the Province with regard to the Bishop, who is too insistent on the interests of his diocese. Should Fr. Bermond not be withdrawn from Saint Boniface? Mgr Taché wishes for an Oblate as coadjutor.

Guigues

Montolivet,

November 8, 1855.

I would never have believed, my dear Bishop, that I could have encountered so many difficulties in bringing about the most just, the most reasonable, the most desirable of plans, by which I mean the establishment at Bytown of the Missionary Oblates of Mary. Astonished by a delay for which I could think of no reason, I wrote to the Bishop and to the Missionaries. This resulted in the putting forward of several plans. I discussed these various plans in my Council and we decided on the one that seemed the most advantageous and the most in conformity with justice. We rejected the upper town because the missionaries were certain that there was no good to be hoped for there; we thought we should not come too close to the cathedral, lest such closeness might prove troublesome; and so the only option open to us was that of building a church a little lower down, but still in the inhabited part of the town. As for the intention of the missionaries to divide the languages among these two churches so that only English would be used for preaching in the cathedral, the missionaries alone using French in their church, this was impossible to adopt because we found that it was contrary to the inalienable rights of the first Pastor, whom one can not prevent from instructing his people as he wishes.

By acting thus we have displeased both the Bishop and the missionaries. The missionaries were so distressed as to let out loud cries and declare that it was better to leave altogether than to consent to this truly impractical and disastrous project, or at least that things should be left as they stood rather than run the risk of never being established in a diocese founded by the missionaries, whose services and devotion are too often forgotten. One of them wrote to us in these terms: “The Bishop of Bytown must realise that after we have yielded all our revenues to him for three years, created for him the best parishes in his diocese, and formed for him all his clergy, with a very few exceptions, honour and gratitude make it a duty for him to appear to be concerned about us.” In order to reject our decision, the reply is made: “I very much doubt whether letters can enable you to understand our position. Two hours of conversation would have made it as clear as the day that ours was the only workable plan. We did not therefore think we should adopt the middle course, for it would be better to maintain the *status quo* than to throw ourselves into a risky, or rather ruinous enterprise, which moreover would have made us the laughing-stock of Canada

What answer can one make to persons with convictions such as these? It is better to await the time, not far distant, when we shall be able to speak face to face, I mean the time of the Chapter, at which I invite you to be present in person.

As for the disagreement that has arisen over the 1600 louis, we have made known our view that this sum should be reserved for the establishment of the Missionary Oblates at Bytown, for I cannot accept that the setting-up of this establishment be adjourned indefinitely. I must apologise for the nuisance that the good Fr. Honorat has caused you in the ardour of his preoccupations, and I laughed a good deal at the large umbrella that you use in times of storm, but nonetheless I cannot help being displeased to see this disagreement, and mistrust of this kind persisting among these good Fathers who persist in not recognising and therefore in not doing justice to your good intentions. One knows that you are very skilful, very refined, and that in the past there has seemed to be just cause of complaint against you, and there are those who have believed you to be playing with the Congregation and with its members, etc., etc. That is the frame of mind in which they have remained, and I note with pain that they act always with these thoughts in mind, with circumspection and a kind of defiance. Do all that you can, my dear friend, to heal this wound in their heart, to clear their minds of this error. I do not share these prejudices of theirs, and I am afflicted by this state of affairs, so I beg you to do for your part everything that you can to bring it to an end. It has seemed in the past that since you became Bishop you have been too preoccupied by, or rather you have too much insisted on, what you regarded as strict justice, while the Oblates believed that they had reason to expect some favours from you. So be generous to them and show yourself to be their true protector.

I receive letters from Mgr Taché that could not be more pleasing. I believe that I have not worked in vain to bring back to him the minds of those who had been estranged from him through an unforgivable manoeuvre of Fr. Bermond’s. I have indoctrinated so well the last missionaries that I have sent to Red River that they were proof against the insinuations that that Father did not scruple to make to them from the very first moment they arrived. I wish to consult you on this subject as I have already done before with regard to this mission. Do you not think that it would be advisable to recall this Fr. Bermond, whom I regard as a real stumbling-block? In my view, his conduct towards that excellent Bishop has been unworthy. All the criticisms he makes seem to me to have the character of calumny. Mgr Taché has shown admirable wisdom, moderation and generosity, and I regard his conduct as heroic. Is it advisable to leave right in the capital, of his diocese a man who is making himself into the centre of an opposition, criticising without restraint the actions and even the supposed intentions of a prelate who is more missionary than himself, and, I am not afraid to say it, more attached than he to the Congregation and to its head?

I suppose you are aware of what is happening in that mission, and that is why I wish you to let me know your view before I put my own proposals to the Bishop of Saint Boniface. He is accused of being more a Canadian than an Oblate, but, leaving aside the fact that all his letters show the falsity of this unjust accusation, this generous Bishop is pressing me to present him with an Oblate so that he can make him his Coadjutor, while being ready to take on for him the most difficult part of his very difficult mission. I need your advice on this delicate problem. If we are to retain the mission, which I regard as decided, I would be entirely in agreement with the Bishop’s idea of choosing a Coadjutor among his brethren. This seems to me the more necessary because, as it is impossible for the Congregation to meet all the needs of that vast area, the Bishop will otherwise be obliged to call on the Jesuits or others for help. He has consulted me about this, and I cannot in any way discover how to turn him from this plan, in spite of all the inconveniences that I see in it. So now we are faced with the possibility of seeing a Bishop arise chosen from outside the Congregation, and our experience in Oregon, and in Canada itself, proves to us how difficult it is for the members of a Congregation to work with a Bishop chosen from outside. It was these difficulties that made the Jesuits decide, in spite of the letter and the spirit of their Rule, to agree that the Vicars Apostolic of the countries where they carry on missionary work should be chosen from within their Order. That is the case with all the Congregations: the Foreign Missions, the Marists, and the other Societies to whom missions are entrusted in general have as superiors of these missions bishops who belong to them. The necessity of this is recognised at Rome, and that is why our Fr. Semeria was designated Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna, and why Propaganda follows the same policy for 1856 all the missions....

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

sup. G.

1 Copy: Reg. letters 1855-1863, Rome. Arch. Post.: DM 10.

24.[To Bishop Allard, in Pietermaritzburg].5

24:IV (Africa) in Oblate Writings

Montolivet. The allocation from the Work for the Propagation of the Faith. Fr. Gérard’s illness. His sorrow on finding out that Fr. Logegaray is unfaithful to his missionary vocation. The difficulties in finding replacements because of deaths and people leaving the Congregation. Bishop Allard should give him details of the mission to the Kaffirs.

Allard

[Montolivet]

November 8, 1855.

If, my dear Lord Bishop, you have received the newsletters that have been sent to you, you will know what Montolivet,1 from where I am writing this letter, in fact is. It is the Earthly Paradise in which are carefully cultivated the plants of our garden. It is here where about forty fervent religious are gathered together and are trying to put into practice, while continuing their studies, the virtues of their holy state. From time to time, I come to be edified in their company and give them a few indications of my interest in them in a spiritual way. Thus it is that this morning I made several of them give an account of their morning meditation in the presence of the whole community and I was very satisfied with it. I then addressed a few words to them before saying Holy Mass. I come away here also to expedite my affairs a little, since I am far away from the inevitable disturbance which I experience in town where I have scarcely time to breathe.

It seems, my dear Lord Bishop, that I receive your letters more punctually than you receive mine. I am replying today to the one that you wrote to me on July 6. 1 delayed replying in order to be in a position to tell you of the new allocation of funds by the Council of the Propagation of the Faith. Although their resources have diminished, they give me to hope that our share will not be less than last year. I informed you of that allocation and in March the Father Procurator General sent you, through the bank of England, as you requested, the sum of 15,000 francs. I am therefore very surprised that in your last letter of July 6 you said that you had received nothing and that no help has reached you for as much as two years. Did not the last missionaries to be sent to you have some money to give you or had they lost it on their journey?

On the subject of these missionaries I am extremely worried to hear of the serious illness of the good Fr. Gerard. I very much need to learn that he has been cured. They should have used balms and compresses on the lower abdomen and if necessary have had him sounded. A man can die if the urine is retained for twenty four hours. If it is only a question of having some urinary difficulties you just need to be patient. But what is the use of advice when we are so far apart?

I hope that Fr. Logegaray is not continuing to belie all our hopes with any further misconduct. He owes you complete obedience on two counts and must conduct himself only according to your directions. I could not tell you how distressed I was to learn that he had been unfaithful to the immutable principles which must be the rule of conduct for every priest of the Church, particularly one who is a religious, and this is eminently the case for one who is a missionary, especially in a pagan country... Inform this young priest that I conjure him to search his conscience and abandon himself entirely to holy obedience: outside these norms there is no merit to hope for and salvation itself is put in danger. I hope you have received on time the funds that we sent to you in order to keep the Dutch priest you were so pleased with working with you.2 We are in no position to send you any more priests. And indeed it is the most we can do to replace the wretched Fr. Sabon. You are doubtless not unaware that the Lord has called to himself seven of our priests or brothers since the beginning of the year and that the devil has suborned several more to his side. All this makes our forces less and thus makes any increase in missionaries sent from here all the more difficult.

I will give you no news now. You will find everything of interest to the Congregation in the second newsletter which is sent to you by way of England.

Do not tire of giving me details about your mission among the Kaffirs. All I know is what you told me in your last letter: all about the first steps which had been frustrated, as we must expect, by the devil. Give my fondest regards to Fr. Barret. If I have the time I will write a few friendly lines to him. I would like him to write me a long letter. I send greetings and blessings to all the Fathers and Brothers.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles,

Sup. Gen.

1 Copy: Rome, Archive of the Postulation. DM X, Reg. Letters 1855-1863, pp. 33-34.

2 Montolivet was situated about 4 km to the south-east of the town. On the scholasticate house cf. Le scolasticat de Montolivet 1854-1862 in Etudes Oblates no. 27 (1968) pp. 133-175, 238-270.

3 Fr. Hoendervangers, allowed to remain at Bloemfontein by Bishop Devereux until 1860.

1296. [To Father Baret, at Bordeaux].1

1296:XI in Oblate Writings

Fathers Aubry and Piot have been dispensed from their vows. The Founder’s grief

Baret

[Marseilles],

November 8, 1855.

My dear son, our feast and the octave of the dead have made it impossible for me to reply sooner to the letter you addressed to me. At the same time, I received another letter from the unfortunate Aubry who asked me to leave the Congregation. I am mistaken, I had already received that letter, and the decision in his regard had already been taken. There was no more way to use the means you suggested, which was to recall him and sent him to Bordeaux. This unfortunate man turned justice against himself. He was always a bad religious and the letter that answers his request points this out to him in very explicit terms.

I agree that it is uncomfortable to have such a being before one’s eyes, but one doesn’t have to become a monster because of that. We were able to see at Bordeaux itself some Jesuits who had left the Company stay there in the sight and knowledge of everybody. Only he must not be left to brag that he himself provoked his departure; people must know that it was his conduct that didn’t suit us and that we have sent him away. In this state of things, it is out of the question to see you leaving your post. You see it yourself, we have on the contrary to make an act of presence in those places. That is your mission, God will bless it. Let each one tell himself that you need to heal the wounds that so many unworthy men inflict on their Mother, to make reparation by renewed zeal and regularity. Little by little all that is not worthy of you is put into the situation of being expelled like an impure vapour of which the body has to be purged. They leave us only with one regret, that of having been patient for too long, in the hope of an amendment that experience has proven is almost impossible to obtain.

The wound in their soul is so deep, so purulent, that one can hardly believe it, even if one touches it with one’s finger. One could come out with a whole volume on the unworthiness of their conduct. In these degraded souls there is no honor, delicacy, sentiment; they are consciences that have been cauterised and swallow camels like flies. Thus, they all more or less compromise our Congregation, before we are forced to expel them. This is what Aubry has done, this is what so many others have done, this is what Piot has also done, who, having merited it countless times, has just been sent away too late, much much too late for the Congregation’s honour. For the latter I had poured out the full measure of mercy, and he abused of it to the point of scandal. He did not measure up and ask on his own and by his conduct for the house to which I had called him only to withdraw him from the occasions to which his weakness succumbed elsewhere. I went to l’Osier with the intention of sending him away; for the hundredth time I believed his repentance and I was taken again for a ride. This is too much sorrow. I am closing.

Goodbye. God bless you. Affectionate greetings.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 YENVEUX VIII. 303.

1297. [To Father Bellon, Provincial, at Romans].1

1297:XI in Oblate Writings

Father Piot has been dispensed from his vows; Father Sigaud will also be unless he changes his conduct.

Bellon

[Marseilles],

November 8, 1855.

I take this occasion to tell you that we have had to carry out the decision taken in our last Council in regard to the incorrigible Father Piot. I had called him to this house2 first of all to withdraw him from l’Osier and that in his own interest and to remove the sight of his miserable conduct from the novices, and then in the hope that the sight of a community as fervent as this one is would inspire in him the hope of taking hold of himself and improving.

His conduct was as detestable as it has been everywhere else. We noticed that he was beginning to do much harm by his unworthy positions, murmuring, unjust and impertinent assessments of Superiors and the government of the entire Congregation. He addressed his confidences, that flowed forth from a perverse heart, without reserve and indiscriminately to the Fathers, scholastic Brothers and even to the lay Brothers.

Imagine, he always travelled with a supply of good wine, he ate out so often that he was taken for a glutton, and he always kept for himself everything he received from his sermons so that he could travel as he liked without ever asking for permission. We are not going to stop there in wholly purging the Congregation of the sinful vapors that tear it asunder. I am going to write to Father Sigaud to tell him that if he does not change his ways we will throw him out without mercy. This mad man could not stay at Aix because Father Rouvière was not sympathetic to him. He could not be sent to Limoges because he could not stand Father Bise. So he had to be sent to Nancy, but he didn’t like this city and his aversions, which to this point had centred upon persons, are today directed against certain kinds of ministries he is being asked to do. He has a bitter disgust to serve the prisons which became his lot, he has to have more activity, as he says, etc. You know that we have to put an end to this kind of caprice which in him takes on the form of an insupportable moodiness. My letter will either wake him up or chase him away.

1 YENVEUX VIII. 300-301.

2 The house of Montolivet.

1298. [To Father Merlin, at N.-D. de Talence].1

1298:XI in Oblate Writings

Father Aubert will send Father Aubry the dispensation from his vows. Father Baret is to remain at Bordeaux.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Merlin

Marseilles,

November 9, 1855.

My dear Father Merlin, I have just now received your letter of the 6th. I shall not delay a minute to tell you that Father Aubry’s expulsion is well and duly accomplished and that he does not have to wait for the forced dispensation which is a consequence of it. The Secretary General will not delay in sending you the same, but I am not certain I will be able to see him before the mail service leaves.

Father Baret should have received a letter from me. How could he retain the idea of going to preach in Paris in the situation in which your house is at present and at a time when a catastrophe like this happens to you? If I had been asked to authorize that trip, I would have found it difficult to do so, and now I find it impossible; let us not come back on that, that would be to bother me uselessly. Father Baret’s mission is to work in Bordeaux and in the diocese served by your community; we have nothing to do in Paris and I am quite vexed at Canon Gay for deterring our young Father from his mission and casting him into useless preaching in the capital city. I have stayed in Paris long enough to know what it really means.

I am being called to a superior official who is to be prepared for confession, for he has only a few hours yet to live. I leave you therefore, I have said enough. We will see what we can do for St-Eloi, we will speak of it later. Goodbye.

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

47. [To Bishop Barnabo, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].1

47:V in Oblate Writings

Request for a 15 month dispensation for the ordination of J.J .Mauran. There is an external delay in Rome on the decision relative to the situation of the Oblates in Ceylon. Bishop Bettachini now wants to relegate them to the depths of the Vicariate. Temptation to abandon Ceylon in the face of the lack of recognition and even opposition on the part of the bishops.

Propaganda Fide

Marseilles,

November 15, 1855*.*

My dear Monseigneur,

I would please ask you to obtain a fifteen month dispensation from the Holy Father in order that the deacon, Jacques Joseph Mauran, a missionary religious of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, can be ordained priest at the December ordination. The needs of the Congregation require this dispensation, and since the faculties granted the bishop of Marseilles do not surpass twelve months, I need to turn to your goodness to obtain the additional period required.

I would no longer talk to you about the Ceylon question after the many promises made to me over the last four years, if I did not realize that the situation is worsening due to that truly eternal slowness in carrying out a just and reasonable decision. Undoubtedly informed as to the favourable disposition of the Sacred Congregation in favor of Fr. Semeria and perhaps instigated by a Spanish missionary named Garcia, Bishop Bettachini gives in to a sentiment of jealousy and dismisses Fr. Semeria, whom he had used thus far for all sorts of services. He also advances the ridiculous proposal to relegate the Oblates to the hinterland of the Vicariate and reserve the mission of Chilaw and the best of the Vicariate to himself and two or three other missionaries. Moreover he proposes to take half of the grants from the Propagation of the Faith for himself and the three or four unattached missionaries, and leave the other half to the Oblates who are more than twice as numerous and charged with the missions that are the poorest, the most distant one from another, and the most expensive in terms of the long, fatiguing, and costly trips. Fr. Semeria did not wish to accept this proposal without first consulting me, and it seems strange to me that, considering the actual situation with the Sacred Congregation at work on the system to be established on the island. Bishop Bettachini decides on the distribution of areas as he sees fit.

If I add to these loathsome episodes the enmity of Bishop Bravi, his shrewdness in achieving his ends, and his influence with the Cardinal Prefect and others whom he will know how to persuade with his verbal art without the adverse party being able to respond to him, I feel almost oppressed and the idea comes to mind to abandon the field to these gentlemen who bear so little respect for the services and sacrifices of the Oblates, three of whom have already left this life in the martyrdom of charity while they, more sagacious and prudent, have maintained their good health. Our missionaries would not remain idle upon their return to Europe. I cannot satisfy the requests I receive from our bishops in France who would like to have them in their dioceses where there are so many unbelievers, even though baptized, to be converted.

Your Excellency, please bear with my truly unbearable suffering and never cease to believe that, with all my heart, I am your most devoted servant and friend.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Authenticated copy in Italian: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation, Registre des copies et extraits des lettres les plus importantes..., 1855-1863, p. 37.

1299. To Reverend Father Dassy, Superior of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, at Le Calvaire.1

1299:XI in Oblate Writings

Father Dassy is to preach a retreat at Aix, in spite of his commitments in Marseilles.

L.J.C. et M.I.

Dassy

Marseilles,

November 21, 1855.

My dear Father Dassy, we absolutely must go ahead full sails. We cannot go back. You must, you must, yes, you must in the full force of the term go and give at Aix the four days of retreat which Father Courtès had pledged to give to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. No matter how difficult it may be, this work can easily be combined with what you are to do at l’Etoile,2 since at Aix they celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception on the second Sunday of Advent which is on December 4th. You will be free on that day, you can finish Saturday at Aix, at l’Etoile they celebrate the feast only the following Sunday.

I deem this matter so serious that if it were really impossible to do these two things, which is not the case, I would not hesitate to relieve you of the retreat at Marseilles so that you can do the one at Aix. You have to start at Aix on November 30th. I wanted to alert you about this forced decision because I have to write to Father Courtès today who is urging the issue with me. So I have committed you to this work, of paramount importance for the Congregation’s honour.

I bless you. Goodbye.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

S.G.

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

2 Work of the Children of Providence, on l’Etoile Square.

1300. To Father [M.A.A.] Roux, Assistant Priest at St-Ferreol, in Marseilles.7

:XI in Oblate Writings

Condolences for the death of his sister.

Roux

Marseilles,

November 21, 1855.

My dear son,2 I have been informed of the misfortune that has befallen you and I mourn at the more than just grief that is yours. I know what you have lost by the death of this sister, a model of virtue, and I understand that it is only the thought of the holy life she has led which can console you and soften the wound in your heart. Gladly I join my poor prayers to yours so as to pay my debt as pastor and father. Pray also for me and receive, together with my condolences, my fatherly blessing.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

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

2 This priest took the habit of an Oblate novice in the bishopric chapel on February 23, 1856.

1301. [To Father Bellon, Provincial at Romans].1

1301:XI in Oblate Writings

Pardon granted to Father Piot. Father de L’Hermite is succeeding well at Orleans. The Congregation’s money is not to be used to make repairs at the seminary of Romans.

Bellon

[Marseilles],

November 22, 1855.

Since my last letter, dear son, a remarkable event has occurred which I must report to you. You know that we had deliberated on expelling Father Piot, who had come to the height of extravagance and become a dangerous and intolerable person. The sentence was passed and carried out. This thunderbolt hit him so hard that he almost became insane. Instead of accepting his lot and taking his leave, he threw himself at the feet of Father Vincens and a strange thing occurred: Father Vandenberghe, who had to suffer so much from this man’s presence, and Father Guinet united themselves to Father Vincens to ask as a favour an amnesty from the penalty or rather pardon for the guilty man. The latter on his part wrote me a letter in such terms that I would have considered it failing in my duty if I did not submit it to the assessment of my Council. I would have called you to this Council meeting if I thought that I could pry you loose from your tasks. You were the only one of my assistants whom I had to replace.

This question, again on the docket, was much debated, and the majority of the voices were for a pardon. This resolution was based on very serious reasons, it was communicated to Father Piot who returned to take up his post and who protested to conduct himself in such a way that we would not repent that we had shown mercy in his regard. I am far from replying for the future, but I maintain that, even in the perspective of a new infidelity, the present state of the man, his repentance and his determination demanded that a pardon be granted him. This is the way that almighty God gives his grace again to a truly repentant sinner, even though he may foresee and know that this sinner will fall into sin again.

Father de L’Hermite has been quite successful at Cléry. I do not have any other man to present to the Bishop for the position of parish priest. I don’t think we ought to be thinking of establishing ourselves elsewhere in the diocese. The city is cluttered with other communities and Congregations and elsewhere we would not have a shrine to make up for the exception we have to make in order to accept a parish. I therefore find our establishment very well located in the context of a shrine to the Blessed Virgin, but I agree that the monetary conditions for our existence are not acceptable and we have to provide otherwise thereto.

And, in regard to finances, I cannot approve, my dear son, the fact that you used funds of the Congregation for repairing or building either on the seminary or the missionaries’ house. I have just learned that your house has contributed nothing to the general treasury ... because you made this illicit use of funds that you should have sent in. Can you possibly be ignorant of the Congregation’s obligations and distress? I cannot resist strenuously forbidding the withholding of the slightest sum that is due to this miserable general treasury which has only debts and exorbitant obligations.

When you deem that some expenses should be made in regard to the seminary, you have to inform the Bishop of Valence and await from him the order to proceed and the means to do so; but never, never use the Congregation’s funds, no matter how urgent the needs may be. The latter is money that ought to be sacred and as though for you it did not exist. Now it is a matter of finding a way which repays the loan to us, for I cannot but consider these expenses as a loan which must be repaid. You know that in finances we have to be exact.

1 YENVEUX II, 37; VII. 192; VIII, 301-302.

1302. [To Father Jean-Louis Grandin, at N.-D. de l’Osier].1

1302:XI in Oblate Writings

Answers Father Grandin’s objections regarding his vocation.

Grandin J.L

[Marseilles],

December 4, 1855.

My dear Father Grandin,2 I had wanted to reply sooner to the letter that you addressed to me a little while after you had arrived at l’Osier. It grieved me but did not at all surprise me. It is quite usual that the devil plays such tricks on generous souls who want to consecrate themselves to God in a more perfect manner. Foreseeing all the good that can flow both for the man who dedicates himself to the Lord and for the salvation of the souls he is called to evangelize or care for in some way, the spirit of evil stirs up countless thoughts within ourselves in order to deter us from a decision whose consequences he measures very accurately.

A moment’s reflection suffices to assess your concerns. How can you reasonably call into question the temporary peaceful life of a novitiate by pitting it against the activity of serving a parish? This temporary rest should be looked upon as a great gift of God’s mercy. During this far too short period of time a person works on himself, for his own sanctification, after having exhausted all the resources of his soul for the benefit of others during many many years. *Ducam eum in solitudinem,* etc.3 Note that you did not enter the Carthusians who make a novitiate in order to accustom themselves to a perpetual solitude. On the contrary, you have been admitted amongst those who, in imitation of the Apostles in whose footsteps they are called to walk, spend only a few months in retreat and that to become more fitting for the very active life of a missionary, for the most varied ministry, fruitful in blessings that are truly miraculous. And even these few months dedicated to retreat and holy exercises of fervour are often for the priest tempered by collaboration with some missions as an initiation to this great ministry.

The second objection you formulate against yourself and against carrying out the plan you may have to dedicate yourself to the conversion of the unbelievers doesn’t seem to me to be any more solid than the other. First of all, it is not your entering the novitiate which ushered in the fear that you are unfit for this kind of life. You had to tell yourself this just as much when you were still elsewhere. Well, I want to think that you do indeed acknowledge that this ministry exceeds your present strength; would you not have the same merit in God’s eyes if you were in close association with, in a communion of action and merit with those who dedicate themselves to these difficult works as does your brother and so many others? And then, is it so sure that you won’t find sufficient strength to dare and ask to cooperate in such a work according to the measure of your abilities? It would always be inasmuch as you wanted and felt were able to carry out such a plan. It still remains that the reasons you present to justify your discouragement are only suggestions from the devil. Thus, I cannot do better than to exhort you to take courage and pursue the career to which God’s goodness has called you. You have before your eyes the example of good Father Caille and Father Bérengier; walk in their footsteps and you will succeed as they did, be sure of that. Goodbye, my dear Father Grandin, I now greet you affectionately and give you my blessing.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Copy: Reg. des lettres 1855-1863, Postulation Archives, DM X. p. 38.

2 Brother of Vital Grandin. born in 1821. The Abbé Grandin entered novitiate on November 23. 1855. but did not make profession.

3 Hosea 2,14.

138.[To Bishop Dupanloup of Orleans].1

138:XIII in Oblate Writings

Father Brun will return to N.-D. de Cléry. The Missionaries’ salary must be raised.

Dupanloup Bishop

Marseilles

December 1855.

My Lord,

I was getting ready to write you a long letter about our dear foundation at N.-D. de Cléry when your good letter arrived. So I will start by replying to what concerns Father Brun.

Since I wanted to give a competent Superior to N.-D. de Cléry, I felt that I had to recall Father Brun for a bit of time who, even though he didn’t have the title of Superior, had until then to carry the main duties of one. I found in that measure the double advantage of allowing Father Brun some time to renew himself in a perfectly regular house by taking part in the general retreat and of giving the new Superior more ease to establish his authority.2

I suspect somewhat that the people who claim to know that Father Brun will no longer return gave his letter a meaning that it did not have; I would be very surprised if he wrote something that he himself did not know. The fact is, Your Lordship, that I would perhaps have had sufficient reasons to change his post: but if I had taken such a line of thought, Your Lordship would have been the first person I would have informed.

I admit that in these circumstances I am not very accustomed to the protests that I receive from the local people. However, besides the fact that the Mayor of Cléry has shown himself too kind in regard to our Fathers that I should want to trouble him, Your Lordship’s wishes are my command; for the time being there will no longer be any question of this change.

Another item does give me trouble and concern about this dear establishment and it is on that that I had decided to write to you. It was with distinct pleasure that I perceived the arrival of our Fathers at Cléry as marking a kind of resurrection. They accomplished in the parish all the good that one could hope from their zeal and good will; yet, I must admit to Your Lordship, that in spite of such happy beginnings, we find ourselves somewhat disappointed in our hopes. To be sure, I do not want to blame Your Lordship. Allow me to say that, not only have you kept your promises, but to restore this pilgrimage place you have put forth efforts that only your genuine zeal as a bishop for God’s glory and the salvation of souls could have inspired in you. It is I who had hoped for too much. When to support your good intent I accepted this work, I had as an encouragement thereto the vision of what has taken place in our other pilgrimage places.

At Notre-Dame de l’Osier in Dauphiné, at Notre-Dame de Bon Secours in Vivarais, at Notre-Dame de Talence at Bordeaux, we very quickly brought about a situation in which we could nearly make ends meet. This experience prompted me to request from Your Lordship only that which was strictly necessary for our Fathers, and I have come to the sad certitude that they will never receive this minimum that is strictly necessary.

During the year the pilgrimage brought in absolutely nothing; and the feast day of the Patron Saint, instead of being an income as it is in the other houses, became a heavy expense. Our Missionaries have only their modest salary of six hundred francs each and with that they have to provide their food, clothes, food and clothes for two lay Brothers who are indispensable to them, for the trips needed for changes of men and for almsgiving to which they are obliged both as pastors and as a religious house. Evidently this is an impossible situation. In our Major Seminaries our men receive only six hundred francs, but they are fed, heated, given light, cared for in sickness and all the domestic help are paid besides, etc.

The matter is too obvious: we shall not be able to carry on. Your Lordship will probably wonder how then we could accept? As I have said, we had counted on the pilgrimage and since we understand all the sacrifices that Your Lordship has taken on yourself for the good of your diocese, we did not want to lack in generosity. But, in the end, our men must live if they are to work. If Your Lordship wants to continue this work, it is indispensable that we can agree on an increase in salary. I don’t think we can go on unless we are allotted eight hundred francs per man or, what will amount to the same, for the time being, that it be stipulated that two men are necessary for parish service, and since they then have to shoulder all duties, they will also receive all the income, salary and casual entries, while the other four Missionaries will continue to receive only six hundred francs.

I most deeply regret, My Lord, that I come to request new sacrifices from Your Lordship ... If our houses were not quite so poor ... but each one can scarcely manage to meet its own obligations.

Receive, My Lord, etc.

+ C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Copy:Rome, Postulation Archives, DM, X: Register Letters, 1855-1861, pp. 40-41.

2 Father de l’Hermite, cf. *Oblate Writings,* II, p. 289.

139.[To Bishop Dupanloup of Orleans].1

139:XIII in Oblate Writings

Father Brun will not return to Cléry as parish priest

Dupanloup Bishop

Marseilles,

December 13, 1855.

Your Lordship,

Your little note is quite sad since it is open to misgivings; the more nuanced letter of Father de L’Hermite is no less so and yet I assure you that I find myself relieved of an overwhelming burden. What you have just learned had been made known to me and it cost me infinitely not to share with Your Lordship the sadness which burdened me alone and which I knew perfectly well you would have agreed to share with me. But I was bound to secrecy in such a way that I found it impossible to speak and almost to act. I immediately did what it was in my power to do: I sent a visitor with the directive to probe the wound and put everything in motion to heal it. We had to use a great deal of prudence: we didn’t know exactly how great the evil was and in those circumstances one has everything to fear from human weakness; the man was called to make a retreat from which he knew how to benefit.

The wound, I must tell Your Lordship, was not as serious as we had suspected. There were imprudences, very serious imprudences about which illusions were born but for which we could still hope for a remedy.

In the impossibility of acting as I would have wanted, I had planned to send this man back to Cléry without removing his title so as to avoid all notoriety, but with instructions to the Superior not to use him any more as a Missionary; I would have taken from him every faculty for Cléry.

What you have written me yourself, Your Lordship, and what you have communicated with Father L’Hermite has put an end to all embarrassment. I am sending you the Father’s resignation. I will need a little time to determine the choice of the man fit to present to you as his successor.

Alas, Your Lordship, the laborers are already so rare, why must the evil one find means to render ineffectual those who give promise of good hope. I am deeply grieved, Your Lordship, and recommend myself to your holy sacrifices and renew the assurance of my respectful and very affectionate dedication.

+ C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Copy: Rome. Postulation Archives DM X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, pp. 41-42.

48. [To Bishop Barnabo, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fidel.1

48:V in Oblate Writings

Acknowledgement for the dispatch of the requested rescript and for the notification of an imminent decision on Ceylon. Trust in the friendship of Bishop Barnabo and the hope that he will be named a Cardinal.

Propaganda Fide

Marseilles,

December 13, 1855*.*

My dearest Monseigneur,

A thousand million thanks for the rescript obtained from the Holy Father and for the good news Your Excellency gives me on the imminent provision relative to the great matter in Ceylon.

If I were younger and did not have a diocese which does not leave me a day of rest, I would have gone to Rome to pit my answers against all the affirmations which I can well imagine were advanced by him who knows how to twist the truth at times. I placed my trust in the goodness of God and the perspicacious benevolence demonstrated by Your Excellency, whom I have always considered a sincere as well as a just friend. I therefore peacefully await the long desired result for the good of a mission which has cost me too much not to hold it very dear.

Do you know what my apprehension was when I saw things prolonged in time? That my friend Barnabo would become a cardinal before they were decided. It seems impossible that, at each consistory, so many services rendered to the Church are always deferred for due reward.

My dearest friend, please accept the constant sentiments of my heartfelt affection and consider me your most devoted servant and friend.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Authenticated copy in Italian: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation. Registre..., 1855-1863, p. 39.

49. [To Bishop Barnabo, Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide].1

49:V in Oblate Writings

Reception extended to the bishop of Nesqually during his stay in Marseilles. Bishop Blanchet appeared completely different from what is seen in his letters.

Propaganda Fide

Marseilles,

December 18, 1855.

…2 Your Excellency will perhaps laugh upon hearing that Bishop Blanchet received hospitality in my house. I assure you that I treated him as I was inspired by charity, as a brother. I myself took him in my carriage and tried to be as amiable as possible as if nothing had happened. In all truth and in order to be just, I must tell you that I was pleased with him. He was very reserved when talking to me about current affairs and the disputes which have arisen between him and the missionaries.

I had well understood that the excerpt of a letter I mentioned to Your Excellency in my last letter had been written by him or by his brother, but I refrained from reproaching him for it and limited myself to thwarting the application of principles. In brief, Bishop Blanchet revealed himself to be quite different from what his letters indicated. It is quite certain that if we want things to be done for the glory of God, everyone will have to do their own part and that it be possible to say that the bishops are the fathers of the missionaries and not their adversaries. I have the impression that the bishop of Nesqually has understood that.

That is all I wanted to tell you dear Monseigneur so that you would know that, if in the defense of the missionaries at times I have protested against what I considered unjust pretences, charity nontheless reigns in my heart and I have given proof of it in this circumstance.

Please accept ...

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Authenticated copy, in Italian: Rome, Arch. of the Postulation. Registre . 1855-1863, p. 39.

2 The first part of this letter was not copied into the Registry and the original has been found in Propaganda Fide.

140.[To Bishop Dupanloup of Orleans].1

140:XIII in Oblate Writings

Father Brun will not return to Cléry. Father de L’Hermite will be the parish priest.

Dupanloup Bishop

Marseilles,

December 20, 1855.

Your Lordship,

According to the wish expressed by Your Lordship, Father Brun is definitely withdrawn from Cléry and will return there no more. Last week I sent you his act of resignation as parish priest. Now you are asking that I designate the successor whom you might present to the government in his place. I admit to Your Lordship that this appointment places me in some embarrassment in choosing the man. Only two means of solving it are open to me: either to take someone from among the Fathers of our other houses or choose for this post the present Superior of the community. After having well considered everything, I think that I must settle on the second alternative. Father de L’Hermite is young, it is true, but he abundantly makes up for that shortcoming, if it is one, by incontestable qualities in the areas of zeal, talent and skill. Besides, he is already well settled in the locale and what is more his appointment to the first place in the Church at Cléry will remove certain difficulties which could have arisen from his position as Superior vis-à-vis to that of another member of the community who would have occupied the post of parish priest.

I will immediately send Your Lordship a 5th Father to strengthen the community of Cléry and thus render it apt to fulfil its double purpose which is to take care of the parish and to work in the missions in the diocese. As to the 6th man of which Your Lordship speaks, because the campaign plan for the work of Missionaries for this winter has already been drawn up since All Saints Day, it is hardly possible to change it by taking some Father from another house and giving him to Cléry, and so we must wait till after Easter.

I think there is no need to speak here again of the new conditions which ought to exist from now on between the community of our Fathers and the diocese in regard to material concerns. What Your Lordship has told me about this in your last letters and even the sole fact of your request for one of our Missionaries as the new parish priest for Cléry, show me that you are quite willing to fulfil our requests in that regard.

Please accept, Your Lordship, etc.,

+ C.J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

1 Copy: Rome, Postulation Archives, DM, X: Register of Letters 1855-1861, p.42.

1303. [To Father de L’Hermite, at N.-D. de Clery].1

1303:XI in Oblate Writings

Father de L’Hermite will be named parish priest of Cléry. The Founder’s anniversary of priestly ordination.

L.J.C. et M.I.

L’Hermite

Marseilles,

December 20, 1855.

How does it happen, my dear son, that I, who wanted to lighten your burden even at my own expense, if possible, am forced by circumstances to make it still heavier? If I were not accustomed to count on the help of God who always assists us in need with a goodness for which we can never be sufficiently grateful, I would not dare tell you, dear son, that, besides the responsibility of Superior you already bear, you must also take that of parish priest. Be quite convinced, my dear friend, that I would have wanted to spare you this additional work, but neither I nor my Council were able to find the means thereto. So accept with resignation this title which will most likely be offered to you by His Lord, the Bishop of Orleans, for it is you whom I have presented to him as a replacement for the one who ended up by no longer wanting what he had at first requested.

Nevertheless, my intention is that for the greater part of the work you bank on Father Marchal who, as assistant priest, has the grace of state for that. Remember that I absolutely insist that you take great care of your health which is priceless to me. I ask you to make my intention known to dear Father Marchal: he is too charitable not to respond therefore with all his heart. Share the work also with others in such a way that you have time to dedicate to composition as well as to take a rest. No efforts beyond your powers; you will have done enough when you remain below that which could tire you out.

21.

I could not finish my letter yesterday, and today I foresee that it will be difficult to complete it, and that is why I come to give you my affectionate greetings before going to the Capuchin nuns where you know I go on this day to say Mass inside their community. I go to celebrate in the recollection of this shrine the anniversary of my priestly ordination and to have the fervent prayers of these angels on earth help me in giving thanks to the Lord. I shall remain on retreat for the remainder of the day as a preparation for the ordination that I must do tomorrow. You will be pleased to learn that I will ordain two of our men priests, Brothers Mauran and one other whose name escapes me now,2 as well as seven deacons.

Goodbye, goodbye, I have to go. I bless you as well as all our other

Fathers.

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles.

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

2 V. Bompart and J. J. César Mauran.