**1815**

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*January 8: feast of the Childhood of Our Lord which fell on the day we celebrated the solemnity of the Epiphany*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

January 8, 1815

Patronal feast of the Congregation. It was celebrated with pomp. There was catechism at 3 o’clock and Vespers were postponed until the evening, they were followed by exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. We sang *Pange Lingua* and the litanies of the Blessed Virgin. The Rev. Director, kneeling, along with all the assistants, said a few fervent words in the form of a prayer, as he usually does whenever the Blessed Sacrament is exposed in the chapel of the Congregation. He then gave Benediction; when the Blessed Sacrament had been returned to the tabernacle, we recited two decades of the rosary and withdrew with that holy joy that it pleases the Lord to pour into our hearts on the days of our solemnities […]

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*January 22: admissions […]*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

January 22, 1815

The chevalier Paul de Magallon[[1]](#footnote-1), congregant of Paris, having arrived, was promptly admitted in this capacity.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*February 6: entertainment.*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

February 6, 1815

The former congregants having desired to spend in retreat the last day of carnival which is tomorrow, we decided to have today a little entertainment for the sake of the youngsters to whom it is only just to make some concessions. So we put on in the games’ room the farce entitled *M. Fresgurine*. Parents were allowed in.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*February 7: spiritual retreat on the last day of carnival.*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

February 7, 1815

The last day of carnival. At the urging of the former congregants, today was spent in retreat and consecrated to meditation on the great truths of religion. We met at the Enclos of the Reverend Director at 9 a.m., we heard Mass and returned to town only for the meal. We returned again after dinner to the Enclos where we stayed until evening. On returning to town we received Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in the church of the Madeleine. The two preceding days, a large number of congregants had lost no time in inscribing for the public adoration which is made before the Blessed Sacrament exposed during the last days of carnival.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*February 8: assembly of the Council of the Congregation. Expulsions, nominations.*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

February 8, 1815

The Council met, presided over by Master Tavernier, prefect of the Congregation. We examined the state of the Congregation. The result of this review was in general very consoling. However we could not ignore the fact that three members had failed to imitate the many good examples they had before their eyes. We voted to decide what to do with them, after the Master Zealot had set out the causes for complaint of which they were accused. The first of the accused was Master Jean Joseph Heyriés. It was proved that the frequent absences he was accused of were due to a complete neglect of the regulation of the Congregation and notably to his links with young rascals whom he had come to resemble in every way, that he had persisted in these breaches of regulation despite many charitable warnings, and the very pressing solicitations of the Master Vice-Prefect, Zealots and others who had pushed charity so far as to go to his home to offer him a generous pardon for the past, if he were willing to return to better dispositions. It was decided unanimously that the aforesaid Jean Joseph Heyriés was to be dishonourably expelled from the Congregation, that he be erased from the list of congregants, and that a note would be made in the margin of the page of this register where his reception is written, that he had been expelled by vote of today. The second member whom the Masters Zealots denounced to the Council is Master Casimir Pierre Jacques Topin. It was proved on his own admission that in defiance of Christian laws and of the regulation of the Congregation, he indulged in visits to the theatre. This single charge was enough for the aforesaid Casimir Jacques Topin to be unanimously expelled from the Congregation. His name will be erased from the list or catalogue of the congregants and the present vote for those whom it concerns will be reported or at least cited in the margin of this register in the place where his reception is found. The said Topin was likewise charged, and it was proved, that he had associated with bad companions who had lured him into their delinquencies. The third member against whom charges were made by the Master Zealot is Joseph Pierre François Lucien Coussin. It was proved that the aforesaid Coussin had never been able to bring himself wholly to give up the company of certain youngsters of very dubious character to say the least, that his scant regularity did not display a sufficient appreciation of the advantages that he could derive from the exercises of the Congregation; it was recalled that already on a previous occasion we had overlooked, for the sake of the pleas of his father and the tears of his mother, a fault that should have excluded him at that time from the Congregation. In consequence, the aforesaid Coussin was expelled by majority vote from the Congregation; and it was ordered that Master Secretary efface his name from the catalogue, and to cite the present vote in the margin of the page of this register where is found his reception. Finally, on the report of Master Zealot, who observed that Jean Denis Luc Thierrée not apparently believing himself capable of understanding the instructions that are given in Congregation, has been absenting himself for some time without a valid reason, the Council decided unanimously to erase him from the catalogue of congregants and to recall the present vote for those whom it concerns in the margin of the page where his reception is inscribed. The place of second Chorist being vacant because of the expulsion of the aforesaid Heyriés, expelled for misconduct, we named unanimously to fill this honourable function Master Joseph Olympe Bruno Marguery, and to that of Secretary, vacant through the absence of Master de Laboulie, Master Melchior François de Paule Bremond. The session ended with the *Sub Tuum Praesidium.*

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*February 20: the senior section. Day for their special assemblies*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

February 20, 1815

As the number of congregants (postulants) has considerably increased, among those who present themselves there are many older ones. The Rev. Director has decided therefore to form them into a separate section which as well as the general meetings for the whole Congregation will be summoned to a special meeting on the first and fifteenth of each month. Here now are the articles of this amendment to the regulation: Congregants who have reached the age of eighteen will form a special section called the premier section. As well as all the general meetings and exercises of whatever kind of the Congregation at which they will have the right to assist like all the others, they will have a special meeting on the first and fifteenth of each month at which no one other than those of their age and above may assist. The Prefect and Vice-Prefect of the Congregation will belong to this section whatever their age. The Prefects and Vice-Prefects who have left office will continue to belong to this section. These meetings will have a two-fold aim. They will serve to bring closer together the members who should make them up, to facilitate them with the means to know each other better and to form ties between them through a holy friendship, secondly they will be useful even under the heading of piety as they will always begin with a short conference that the Rev. Director will give on some topic of religion. If, because of the absence of the Rev. Director or for any other reason, the conference does not take place, its place will be taken by a half-hour’s reading in some pious book.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*February 26: dangerous illness of Master Chabot. His reception on his death-bed immediately before receiving the Viaticum which was his first communion.*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

February 26, 1815

Today will be memorable in the Congregation. It is the first time we have seen death threaten the days of a congregant. And unhappily it is all too certain that it will not let go of its prey. The illness that has seized our young colleague leaves no hope. It is terminal and within a few days he will be taken from us. The charity of the Congregation has in this sad circumstance been equal to its duties. Like a tender mother she has neglected nothing to help with all her power the dear son whom she formed in piety. The only consolation she can promise herself is the hope that this attention will not be without a happy outcome for the eternal salvation of the one she is going to lose. It is Master Victor Joseph Antoine Chabot of whom we speak. This young man, about 13 years of age, has been a postulant for some months, he was preparing himself to make his first communion this year when suddenly a mortal and incurable sickness came to warn him that his days were numbered and that he was reaching the end of his life. The Rev. Director immediately made himself responsible for preparing him to make very soon his first and what will unfortunately be in all likelihood his last communion. The young man having displayed excellent dispositions, we fixed today to minister to the sick man. The Rev. Director, in accordance with the authorization of the parish priest of the Madeleine, has been entrusted with this ministry. On emerging from the morning exercises of the Congregation, all the dignitaries accompanied by the received members and some probationary members to whom we had given permission to join the others, went to the parish sacristy. Master Sacristan distributed the lanterns to the gentlemen of the senior section, Master Vice-Prefect in the absence of the Prefect took one of the canopy poles, the sick man’s brother took the other. Thus we made our way with remarkable recollection to the home of the dear sick man. Before giving him holy Viaticum, the Reverend Director admitted and received him as a member of the Congregation, after which the sick man renewed his baptismal promises. In this way he had the advantage of gaining the plenary indulgence accorded by our holy Father the Pope to those who receive holy Viaticum after faithfully following the exercises of the Congregation. Already over a period of several days it had been enjoined on all the congregants to make each day a prayer for the sick man, it will be continued as long as the danger persists or until it pleases God to dispose of his life. The Rev. Director says a prayer for him every day at the Mass. We may not omit, for the edification of future congregants, that the sick man received the sacraments with a touching devotion; his resignation to God’s will and his patience in his sufferings are unfailing; he adorns the Congregation, he will be its first intercessor in heaven.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*March 9: first communion of Master Henrigues*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

March 9, 1815

Master Henrigues de Montvert[[2]](#footnote-2), when he was about to depart, made known his wish to make his first communion in the bosom of the Congregation. The Reverend Director agreed to this all the more readily as he saw in him the dispositions to do this great deed well. He therefore devoted all his efforts to prepare himself worthily. The Parish Priest of the Madeleine was asked to go to the chapel of the Congregation there to celebrate the holy Mysteries and give communion to Master Henrigues. This ceremony took place at 8 a.m., with all the pomp the circumstance required. The congregants went in the afternoon to the parish of the Madeleine where Master Henrigues came to renew his baptismal promises which the Parish Priest received at the baptismal font. Then they all went to implore the assistance and protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary singing before the altar consecrated to her the litanies and the *Sub tuum praesidium.*

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*March 12: the congregants’ Easter communion. Adoration of the Cross. Visit of the churches*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

March 12, 1815

It was decided that the congregants would follow this year the liturgy of Holy week in their respective parishes, and they would make there their Easter communion at the High Mass of Holy Thursday at the foot of the altar immediately after the trustees of the fabric if they made theirs on that day, or otherwise after the priests. They will likewise make together the adoration of the Cross on Good Friday after the trustees of the fabric. For the visit of the churches, those not making it with their parents will try to get together with some other of their colleagues. We will thus divide up into several groups, and during this holy journey we will be devote every moment to conversations only concerning the mysteries of the Passion of Our Saviour.

**To President de Mazenod, in Palermo.[[3]](#footnote-3)**

132:XV in Oblate Writings

*Napoleon’s return, backed by the army. Honour and religion have gone by the board. Eugene offers his services as chaplain to the royalist forces.*

L.J.C.

Mazenod C.A. de

Aix,

March 26, 1815

... However low my opinion of the human race, I would never have gone so far as to suppose it could sink so low as we see it now. What a nation we are! Along with faith, it has lost all sense of honour, probity, etc. One group openly betrays the most sacred of causes; they give their oath only the better to deceive an all too generous Prince who had heaped these traitors with favours and benefactions; the rest would almost be tempted to stand by as unruffled spectators of a struggle that scarcely seems to interest them, although their happiness depends on it. Egoism has lead to total aridity, national honour has gone by the board along with religion. What a despicable people! But we must be fair; it is the army who are guilty of this crime rather than the nation. You can see this clearly in these parts and in several other provinces.[[4]](#footnote-4)

I have only time to assure you we are well, that I am the calmest of men and the one least alarmed. My trust in Providence is unlimited. I have written His Grace the Duke of Angouléme to offer him my services for his troops. I have not heard a thing in reply, perhaps I never will; but I have done my duty, which required of me this act of allegiance. Not being able to serve my King with a sword, I must serve him with every means my ministry gives me.

Goodbye, I send you all my affectionate greetings. Within a month we shall have beaten and punished all our enemies, who are those too of honour, the common good, and religion.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*March 28: confirmation*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

March 28, 1815

His Lordship the Bishop of Digne[[5]](#footnote-5) being in Aix administered the sacrament of confirmation today to four congregants, namely, Masters Leblanc, Turcas, Henrigues and Chappuis in the church of the Holy Spirit.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*March 30: prayers for the dying for Master Chabot.*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

March 30, 1815

The congregant who made his first communion by way of Viaticum last month being on the point of death, the congregants gathered in the church of the Madeleine and when the death knell had sounded the Reverend Director, in conformity with the article of the regulation, himself led the prayers for the dying, and he did not forget the dying man but visited him five or six times a day[[6]](#footnote-6), often accompanied by some of the congregants who are very glad to carry out this act of charity.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*April 1: death and funeral of the late Master Chabot*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

April 1, 1815

God called Victor Joseph Antoine Chabot to himself yesterday at 6 p.m. All the congregants were immediately informed so that they might lose no time in according him their suffrages; they were all invited at the same time to go to the funeral which was to take place today. We assembled in the church of the Madeleine. The Reverend Director together with the Parish Priest and the Parish Curates led the Office. All then went together to the deceased’s house. The 13 candles that are placed around the corpse were returned to the dignitaries who were given places in the cortège during the procession immediately after the celebrant, close to the corpse, which was thus surrounded by them and followed by all the other members, probationers and postulants of the Congregation. The mortal remains of the deceased having been set down in the cemetery, the sprinkler was given to each congregant in turn and before this body, which should seemingly, seeing its youth, have been assured of a longer stay, had been covered with earth and made to disappear for ever from the surface of the earth, the Rev. Director said a few words inspired by the occasion. Finally all the congregants recited on their knees the *De Profundis*, and then immediately went back to the chapel of the Congregation there to recite Vespers for the Dead. We fixed the first free Thursday for the *Requiem* Mass and the Office which should be said in Congregation; that will be the 13th of this month. Meanwhile, in conformity with the regulation, each congregant will make a communion for the repose of the soul of the deceased and will apply for the same intention all the indulgences he may earn during the nine days following the date of his death.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*April 2: first communion of Master Chappuis*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

April 2, 1815

Father Gigou, capitular Vicar General, came to celebrate the holy Mysteries in the chapel of the Congregation. The Reverend Director had invited him to come and give first communion to Master Chappuis[[7]](#footnote-7), a zealous congregant who had been fortunate enough and sufficiently adroit to muster some specious reasons to persuade the superiors to allow him not to delay until the time of the general first communion. The way that Master Chappuis prepared himself for this great step persuaded the Rev. Director to rejoice over the success of his initiative which had been inspired mainly by his lively desire to be united the sooner to our beloved Saviour […]

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*April 6: feast of St. Joseph. Reception, admission […]*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

April 6, 1815

Feast of St. Joseph, patron of the Congregation. Before the Mass, immediately after the Office, Masters Benrigues, Leblanc[[8]](#footnote-8), David[[9]](#footnote-9), Chappuis and Lanselme were solemnly received according to the rite prescribed in the regulations […] Master Chappuis, candle in hand, made in the name of all the consecration and protestation registered at the end of this register[[10]](#footnote-10), which they all signed after the session. It is at the *Pater* of the Mass that Master Chappuis came forward with the other new members to the foot of the altar to make this act of consecration. We finished with the *Te Deum*. In the afternoon, catechism was had at the usual time, we then went to the games area. We did not sing Vespers until 6 o’clock, they were followed by exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, with the prayers ordained by the Vicars General, and others inspired by fervour. Before Benediction, the Rev. Director made a short colloquy in the name of all the congregants. This colloquy was followed by the act of consecration to the Blessed Virgin, made by the recently received members. There was noticeable today as on other days of our solemnities an extraordinary piety and fervour in the vast majority of the congregants. This same day were admitted Masters Gabriel Bernadin Théobald Barlatier de St-Julien, Pierre Joseph Marcellin Giraud[[11]](#footnote-11), Gaspard François Julien, Joseph Charles Matthias Jauffret, Pierre Etienne Augustin Pontier, Antoine Pierre Henry Pontier, who had all been postulants for several months.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*April 16: chapel of the Congregation transferred to the* Grandes Maries*.*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

April 16, 1815

As the owner had to have back the apartments the Congregation was using in the Valbelle mansion, the Congregation has transferred its sessions and meetings to the church of St. Sophie formerly the *Grandes Maries*. It took possession of it today with the consent of the Reverend Mother Superior.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*April 23: nomination of a treasurer. Establishment of a Finance Office*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

April 23, 1815

The change of locale having made an increase in daily expenses inevitable, it was decided that this expense should not be the responsibility of the Rev. Director like all those that had occurred up to the present in the Congregation. Each congregant will pay a *sol* per week for the cost of the seat he occupies the morning and evening on Sundays and Thursdays. The recovery of this money will be effected by Master Zealot weekly and he is to pay this over to the Treasurer who will be named at the same time as the other dignitaries: in the meantime, Master Vice-Prefect performs the functions of the Treasurer. There will be set up immediately a Finance Office to which all matters relating to the holding of money, the use of this money, the collection of funds etc. will be referred […].

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*April 27: Office and Service for the late V.J. A. Chabot*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

April 27, 1815

The congregants assembled in the chapel said the first Nocturn and Lauds of the Office for the Dead for the repose of the soul of the later Victor Joseph Antoine Chabot. After Lauds there was a solemn service. Mass was sung with the utmost solemnity[[12]](#footnote-12) by the Rev. Director. Clerical congregants, who are in the minor seminary, were summoned to serve at the altar. After the Mass absolution was given with the usual ceremonies.

**Petition of postulants and probationers**

The Council met to deliberate on the petitions presented by some individuals who desire to be admitted into the Congregation. On this occasion a like petition was required of all the congregants, even those previously admitted, dated as of their postulation and admission; we note this here because otherwise people would be puzzled by the anachronism which has these petitions signed by members admitted into the Congregation subsequently to the date borne by these acts. The new measures taken for postulants and the admitted, etc., will be set out elsewhere[[13]](#footnote-13).

**Special retreat for congregants who are to make their first communion.**

The insufficiency of the first communion retreats made in the parishes, and the abundant fruits that were derived last year from the special exercises that were given for the congregants by the Rev. Director in his apartments, have induced the Director to do the same this year. Only the congregants who are about to make their first communion are admitted to this exercise. They will begin the Wednesday evening after the opening has taken place in the parishes. The next day and the following days the congregants on retreat will go to breakfast with the Director after the parish instruction. We begin at 9 a.m. and finish only at midday. We begin again at 2.00 p.m. to conclude only at 5.30 which is the hour of the parish instruction. At 7.00 we allow ourselves a little walk together in a secluded and solitary spot. On Friday, after the parish benediction, the congregants on retreat go with the Rev. Director to the church of St. Sauveur to place themselves under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Rev. Director makes aloud an act of consecration, that each one ratifies interiorly. This is now the second year that this exercise is having a very good effect on these souls already prepared by two days of recollection and the very abundant graces that the Lord does not fail to pour out during this retreat. Trinity Sunday, the first communions did not prevent there being Mass and a short instruction in Congregation. In the afternoon, the congregants who had had the happiness of making their first communion in the morning went to their parishes to assist at Vespers and the other exercises that are done there on this day. In the evening, they went to walk in the Enclos of the Reverend Director by themselves, the other congregants went elsewhere for their recreation. The next day they made their customary visits as a group.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*June 11: admissions*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

June 11, 1815

The Council assembled to deliberate on the various petitions for admission or reception sent to it by the Rev. Director. There were admitted Masters Jean Jacques Joseph Tassy, Amédée Pierre de Saboulin, Auguste Barthélemy Bouron, Jean Baptiste Hyacinthe Bonnet, Joseph Antoine Leydet[[14]](#footnote-14) and Martial Ponsard.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*June 25: feast of St. Aloysius Gonzaga. Reception [of new members].*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

June 25, 1815

The feast of St. Aloysius Gonzaga having been transferred to this present Sunday, everyone was anxious to make it one of the most glorious, both in fervour and in exterior magnificence; never has this two-fold purpose been better fulfilled. The altar adorned in the most elegant fashion was heaped with flowers which by the variety of their colours and the sweetness of their smell simultaneously charmed the eye and the nose and contributed in their way to raise souls to God, but what constituted the finest adornment of this charming feast was the piety and recollection of the congregants which astonished all those who, drawn by the feast, were witnesses of it. Before the High Mass, which was sung by the Very Reverend Vicar General, with deacon, sub-deacon, priest assistant, master of ceremonies, chorists in cope, acolytes, thurifers, etc., the Rev. Director received with the prescribed ceremonies [a number of members…] Immediately after the Mass, we exposed the Blessed Sacrament. Before Benediction, the newly-received came to the foot of the altar to make aloud the act of consecration prescribed by the Constitutions which was followed by Benediction. The Very Reverend Vicar General descended to the foot of the altar to intone the *Te Deum laudamus*. Then we replaced the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle while there was sung in choir the psalm *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes*. The afternoon Office was also very solemn. Vespers were sung by one of the Reverend Canons with priest assistant, chorists in cope, etc. After Vespers which were said, the Blessed Sacrament being exposed, Father Maurel gave the panegyric of the saint which was followed by the litanies with musical accompaniment, the *Tantum ergo* and Benediction.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*July 2: nominations to posts of responsibility. Treasurer’s accounts, etc.*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

July 2, 1815

Today was convoked the general assembly of the Congregation; it met in the Enclos of the Rev. Director […]

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*August 26: prizes merited and won by the congregants on college prize day*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

August 26, 1815

The success the congregants had today will be forever an incontrovertible proof that the piety they profess, far from harming the progress of their studies, helps them enormously to acquit themselves well in all their duties. Already beforehand we had given assurance of this to any tempted to doubt it. It had already been evident within the family circle and in the congregants’ daily conduct, but today the proof was plain for the whole town to see and the whole town applauded it with joy when at the distribution of prizes, which took place solemnly in the college chapel, it was acknowledged that the congregants were the ones who had worked most constantly and best during the whole course of the year. They did in fact carry off the prize for excellence in all classes from rhetoric up to the sixth. Furthermore they were not satisfied with meriting this prize which is incomparably the most valued of all, since it is the reward for application and the success of the whole year’s work, but they added many others of a very honourable kind too. We cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of setting out the names of those who merited to be crowned by the hand of the first magistrate of this town, and who thus brought honour to the Congregation to which no doubt they owe in large measure their success and their triumphs[[15]](#footnote-15).

**To Léon-Jules de Saboulin, congregationist.[[16]](#footnote-16)**

133:XV in Oblate Writings

*Man must praise God in the name of every creature. Advice for the holidays.*

de Saboulin

Aix,

September 9, 1815

My dear friend, you are right, for a Christian the whole of nature comes alive; his attentive soul hearkens to the mute voice of even inanimate creatures, and he readily assumes responsibility for settling the debt of gratitude they are incapable of paying to the common master of all nature.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Take advantage of the little time you have to spend in the countryside to recreate yourself and build up your body, so that it can give you good service in the works you will soon be undertaking with fresh energy. Do not study during the holidays except by way of recreation. There is a time for everything. Now you must slacken the bow so it will carry the farther when you need to use it. The advice I am giving is not difficult to follow, but even if you find it hard to follow, I think you should make the effort.

Goodbye, very dear friend, affectionate greetings to you and your brothers, for I really love you all.

Our congregants send their thanks for the remembrance; they send their greetings. Everything is going well as usual, thanks to God who protects us. Pray for us as we pray for you and come back soon safe and holy. You know that I am your best friend for life.

Eugene de Mazenod

**To President de Mazenod, in Palermo.[[18]](#footnote-18)**

134:XV in Oblate Writings

*Eugene is trying to convert La Poire and is no longer insisting on the return of the Mazenods. He would have gone to see them in Palermo if he were less “tied up” by his ministry in Aix. Vocations to the clergy are coming from among the poor*

Mazenod C.A. de

Aix,

September 15, 1815[[19]](#footnote-19)

... What you say about La Poire[[20]](#footnote-20) is very true. So it is not just out of kindness I asked you for a letter for him, but because of your business relation with him. What you indicate to me for him is enough; I will tell him. He is known as a supreme egoist; I regret it, and even more that he pays little heed to his salvation. I am all the more concerned that he will in all probability be caught unawares by death, which he is afraid of in a way that is at once dreadful and laughable. I see him rarely as I am too busy to see him often. However, for the good of his soul, I regale him each time I meet him with the story of some sudden death; it is with the intention of getting him to come back sincerely to God, who will lose patience in the end with his holding back.

… You are right to think that after what has happened, I will change my tone a little concerning your coming back.... However it is hard to have to resign oneself at the expense of one’s heart and its deepest affections; to have to renounce seeing a father and relatives like you, because it is not the King’s pleasure to reward virtue, or his Ministers’ to inform him when virtue languishes. If I were less tied up by the commitments I have made for myself here, if I were not afraid that my absence would do harm to the good I have begun to do among the youth, I would not have turned down the invitation made me to go to Rome. You can well believe that from Rome to Naples would be just a step for me, and with a bound I would be in your arms. But apart from the expense, that I had to take into account, I would feel responsible for the consequences of my absence for more than a hundred young people who live in the practice of every virtue in the middle of a town that does not excel in piety, but who still need my support, while no one in my estimation would be able to stand in for me. One day I will be more free, at least I hope so.

I am not thinking of having any more books forwarded from Palermo; I can get them cheaper at Turin. The Bishop of Vannes, Ferdinand de Bausset, nephew of the Bishop of Fréjus, has just arrived in our town; there is talk that he could become archbishop of Aix. But when are we going to show an interest in religion? We seem to think there is all the time in the world. What clergy we are getting today! Not a man of note among them; we are reduced to the poorest, most wretched, most abject in society. One can only hope that they will make up by their virtue what they lack in other departments, but they will need a lot of it.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*September 17: reception of Brother Maur, Trappist religious*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

September 17, 1815

Mr. Martin Bardeau[[21]](#footnote-21), religious of the Trappist Order, being about to resume the habit which circumstances had obliged him to lay aside, before returning to the house of his Order which has just been reopened, did not want to say farewell to the Congregation all of whose exercises he has had the happiness of following since its establishment, that he had edified with his angelic fervour, that he had even served with remarkable zeal, without joining and becoming a member of it; if he has put it off until now to make this request, it is as a result of his profound humility. He was received by the Rev. Director with the usual ceremonies; in the talk that the Rev. Director gave at his reception, he did not forget to point out to the congregants, who had become his confreres, all the advantages they were going to derive from the communion of prayers and merits which was henceforth established between them and this holy religious, who from the depth of his solitude, and in the very silence of the night, would watch in a way over them, and will obtain them the grace of perseverance, an inestimable gift that one may not merit, and for which one could not have too many intercessors in heaven and on earth.

**Confirmation in the chapel of the Congregation by His Lordship the Bishop of Vannes.**

Bishop Ferdinand de Bausset, Bishop of Vannes, since he was in Aix[[22]](#footnote-22), had the kindness to give the sacrament of confirmation to the congregants who were qualified for it, in the church where the Congregation does its exercises. These gentlemen were prepared for the reception of this great sacrament by a series of instructions and some days of retreat. His Lordship the Bishop of Vannes, before confirming them, made a moving discourse in which he stressed the great advantages they might derive from their admission into the Congregation and of the thanks they owed to God for having given them the grace of calling them into such a society, setting out for them and having them note what the Rev. Director is striving to do for their happiness and sanctification. He strongly stressed that they should have an unlimited trust in him and a more than filial love. These touching words of the Prelate were especially relished by the Gentlemen congregants for they expressed marvelously the feelings they felt and of which they tried to give every day new signs to him whom they cherish indeed as their father and their best friend.

**To Monsieur Hilaire Aubert, priest and director of the Seminary of Limoges.[[23]](#footnote-23)**

3:VI in Oblate Writings

*Invitation to enter the future society of the Missionaries of Provence.*

Aubert Hilaire

[Aix,

1815].[[24]](#footnote-24)

No one is fonder than I of the holy Company of Jesus. Its re-establishment has always been to the fore in my wishes and I attach the greatest importance to its growth. However, I would better like to have you here, just now, than with the Jesuits. The good we intend to do ought to remedy the most pressing ills. Those who deal with them dwindle; there is nothing more urgent. It is a matter of some priests banding together and continually preaching missions in all sectors of this vast diocese and surroundings. We wish to do modestly, but not less effectively, what they are striving to do at Paris on a larger scale. We would want to act without commotion but what blows we would strike at hell! Oh, dear friend, if you would be one of us! We would begin in your part of the country where religion is practically extinct as in so many other places. I almost dare to say you would be necessary. Ah! if we could form a nucleus, there would soon cluster round it the most zealous elements in the diocese. Think a while about that before the good God. You know that we must have, in order to do any good in our regions, people of the country who know the language. Oh! do not doubt that we will become saints in our Congregation, free but united by bonds of the most tender charity, by exact submission to the Rule we would adopt, etc. We would live poorly, apostolically, etc.

**To M. l’abbé Tempier, at Arles.[[25]](#footnote-25)**

4:VI in Oblate Writings

*Miserable state of the inhabitants in the country. Foundation of a stable group which will provide missionaries. Purposes of the Society which comprises at the moment four members. At least six would be needed, ready to set forth in the footsteps of the apostles. The presence of Tempier is indispensable.*

Tempier

Aix,

October 9, 1815.

My dear friend, read this letter at the foot of your crucifix with a mind to heed only God and what is demanded in the interests of his glory and of the salvation of souls from a priest like yourself. Stifle the voice of cupidity, love of comfort and convenience; dwell deeply on the plight of our country people, their religious situation, the apostasy that daily spreads wider with dreadfully ravaging effects. Look at the feebleness of the means employed to date to oppose this flood of evil; ask your heart what it fain would do to counter these disasters and then reply to my letter.

Well, dear man, what I say to you, without going fully into details, is that you are necessary for the work which the Lord inspires us to undertake. Since the head of the Church is persuaded that, given the wretched state in which France finds herself, only missions can bring people back to the Faith which they have practically abandoned, good men of the Church from different dioceses are banding together in response to the views of our supreme Pastor. We likewise feel that it is utterly necessary to employ the same remedy in our regions and, full of confidence in the goodness of Providence, have laid down the foundations of an establishment which will steadily furnish our countryside with fervent missionaries. These will ceaselessly engage in destroying the empire of the demon, at the same time as providing the example of a life worthy of the Church in the community which they will form. Indeed, we will live together in one house, that which I have bought,[[26]](#footnote-26) under a Rule we shall adopt with common accord and for which we will draw the elements from the statutes of St. Ignatius, of St. Charles for his Oblates, of St. Philip Neri, of St. Vincent de Paul and of the Blessed Liguori.

Happiness awaits us in this holy Society which will have but one heart and soul. One part of the year will be devoted to the conversion of souls, the other to seclusion, study and our individual sanctification. I say no more for the moment; it suffices to give some intimation of the spiritual delights we will taste together. If, as I hope, you wish to be one of us, you will not find yourself in unknown terrain; you will have *four companions.[[27]](#footnote-27)* Ifpresently we are not more numerous, it means we wish to choose men who have the will and the courage to walk in the footsteps of the apostles. It is important to lay solid foundations. The greatest regularity must be planned and introduced in the house as soon as we enter it. And it is precisely for that reason that you are necessary to me because I know you to be capable of embracing an exemplary rule of life and of persevering in it. For the rest, we will not be bound by vows. But I hope that it will be the same with us as with the disciples of St. Philip Neri who, free as we shall remain, would die before thinking of leaving a congregation for which they have the same affection as for their mother.

When I shall have your reply, I will give you all the details you could wish for. But, dear friend, I conjure you, do not let yourself say no to the greatest good that may possibly be done in the Church. Vicars will easily be found to replace you but it is not so easy to come across men who are dedicated and wish to devote themselves to the glory of God and the salvation of souls with no more reward on earth than much sorrow and all else that the Saviour announced to his true disciples. Your refusal would be incalculably detrimental to our new-born enterprise. I speak with sincerity and reflection. Your modesty will suffer but no matter. I will not hesitate to add that, if I believed it necessary to make the journey to Arles to convince you, I would wing my way there. All depends on how we begin. We need perfect unanimity of sentiments, the same goodwill, the same disinterestedness, the same devotedness - that sums it up.

Keep this a secret. Be sure that confiding in anyone at Arles would only result in being dissuaded from a project of which you will never be able to appreciate the worth until you have begun to execute it. We will have a certain tactic to follow in respect of the vicars who approve so strongly our initiative that they have written to Paris to make it known through the press. We will have to plan the steps necessary to obtain your replacement. The least imprudence would thwart our plans. They would be tempted to think that four of us would be enough when it is certain that we need at least six. They have promised me this number of persons. Who will (not fail to) say that the difficulty is to find them? It is true that we are being difficult because we wish everything to go well and we will succeed if you are one of us. So quickly reply to me affirmatively and I shall be content. Adieu, well beloved brother.

**To Monsieur l’abbé de Forbin-Janson, Vicar General of Chambéry, rue Notre Dame des Champs, No. 8, at Paris.[[28]](#footnote-28)**

5:VI in Oblate Writings

*The diocesan authority of Aix approves the foundation of the Society of the Missionaries of Provence. Proceedings. Concern for the upkeep of the members and for repairing the Carmelite church of Aix.*

L.J.C.

Forbin Janson

Aix,

October 23, 1815.

Well did I see, my dear friend, that what decidedly cooled the ardour of our Grand Vicars for mission work was the fear of seeing themselves deprived of people truly needed in the diocese. All obstacles fell before the decision I took. The proposal that the missionaries I would band together would not go outside the diocese calmed them so well that they became avowed protectors of our enterprise. And I am all the more grateful to them in that not all their priests are of the same mind.

Now I ask you and I ask myself how I, hitherto unable to make up my mind in this matter, suddenly find myself setting wheels in motion, renouncing my comfort and risking my fortune by launching an enterprise of which I know the worth but for which I only have a liking negated by other and diametrically opposed views! This is a riddle to me and it is the second time in my life that I see myself moved to resolve something of the utmost seriousness as if by a strong impulse from without. When I reflect on it, I am convinced that it so pleases God to put an end to my irresolution. And in such a way that I am engaged to the hilt! I assure you that in such circumstances I am quite another man. You would no longer call me a stick-in-the mud if you were to see how I fly around. I am well nigh up to your standard in acting with so much authority I move carefully though I have not a moment of respite and yet proceed nonetheless with a will. It is nearly two months now that I fight on at my own expense, sometimes openly, sometimes discreetly. With trowel in one hand and sword in the other, I am like the good Israelites rebuilding the city of Jerusalem. And my pen is busy. I dare not tell you how much I have written since being involved in this affair, which you are right in calling ours. For I certainly intend that our two enterprises be but one. However at this moment, as we begin, we must appear to have in common only the name, so as not to frighten both our superiors and the missionaries themselves who, with the exception of Deluy[[29]](#footnote-29) do not want to travel or work outside the diocese or who at the most (would go) into neighbouring dioceses where they speak the Provençal tongue. Explain all that to M. Rauzan.

How do matters stand? Without going into the whole business - that would take too long *- Les Minimes* was for sale. This place suited us perfectly. I thought it should not slip through our fingers and considered my duty was to buy it. To this end, I braved enormous difficulties, but all for nothing. The Blessed Sacrament nuns politely whisked it from me by sleight of hand. In proceeding, I had broached the matter to some priests whom I believed suitable for the holy undertaking and who indeed are so. These did not think the cause was lost when my efforts failed. I would have been ashamed and upset to let their enthusiasm be quenched and tried to obtain the only other place in the city wherein we could set up our community. My overtures were unexpectedly successful. In a single interview the affair was settled and I found myself proprietor of the major part of the old Carmelite convent situated at the top of the Cours with a charming church attached, somewhat the worse for wear, to tell the truth, but which we could restore to use for less than a hundred sovereigns.

So much for my story. But the amusing thing is that all that was done without my being held back by the thought that I had not a single *sou*. To prove I was not mistaken, Providence immediately sent me twelve thousand francs, loaned to me without interest for this year. Now tell me how to reimburse them. I have made a golden deal since the whole establishment, including repairs to the church, will cost me only 20 000 francs. But where shall I find this sum? I have no idea. In the meantime the missionaries are on my back. They want to begin tomorrow. In vain I tell them we need time to fix the rooms and make the house inhabitable. They cannot wait that long. And then, what about means of livelihood when we set up the community? I think I will commend myself to St. Gaetan de Thiène. When he rang the bell, the people would come and bring him something to eat.

We are four at the moment, without counting Deluy whom they sent to a parish not more than fifteen days ago. For the four, I have my pension of a thousand francs; that will take care of two. A third tells me he would have enough to live. As for the fourth, God will see to it, no doubt. How do you manage at Paris? To which saint do you have recourse? If I remember aright, the house costs a thousand crowns to rent. There’s your pension *e poi e poi[[30]](#footnote-30)* for all the rest! Tell me what you think I ought to do to stay afloat and sail on with you, without upsetting people who have to be humoured. Write me twenty times if you wish but don’t practice your grand official script on me. Twelve lines per page is hardly fair; there are thirty in mine! How can you, even if you wish, delve into a question with all your curlyjigs? Behave yourself or I will be cross.

It would be a pity if, with so many friends in the regime, you obtained nothing for my relatives. I shall send you a résumé on each of them. You will manage all right, I hope. It is time these unfortunates saw the dawn of better days.

October 24.

I am at my wits end. Never has anything given me more trouble than this undertaking. Every moment some new difficulty crops up; it is the death of me. How shall we manage without the church? It is all right for you to say it would be fair to let the Carmelites reclaim it. Who will provide them the money to pay for it? The present occupant, who is yielding his tenancy to me, has never put in a claim to have the edifice repaired. The whole roof is dilapidated. The estimate I have obtained for urgent repairs increases the price to seventeen (thousand) and several hundred francs. The estimate will be sent to Paris and certainly the bureaucrats will shy away from it when it comes up for approval. In the meantime, can I take it upon myself to make considerable expenditures without knowing if the edifice will be ours? In the state in which it is, it can be of no use to us. We will, however, be able to have religious services in the chancel which is ours and which is very large. Here is what M. Guigou proposes: his idea is to ask for the church in order to put it at the service of the people and then hand it over to us afterwards. I do not see why this would be unjust. The Carmelites are presently with the Fathers of the Oratory. Three parochial churches of the city belong to religious orders. The Incurables and Blessed Sacrament nuns occupy the houses and churches of two other religious Orders. Why should we also not have charge of the Carmelite church? Would it not be better to hold divine services in it rather than see it used as a warehouse for all the circuses that come through and as barracks for soldiers of every nation? Busy yourself a little with this matter. I myself am at the end of my tether. If I had foreseen all the nuisance, worry, anxiety and disarray this establishment would throw me into, I believe I never would have had the zeal to undertake it. I ask God every day to sustain me in my anguish of heart and commend myself over this to all the holy missionaries in whose steps we wish to follow. Help me yourself and pray the good God for your best friend.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*November*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

November 1815

We overlooked mentioning in their place the solemnities of the Holy Guardian Angels and the feast of All Saints. They were celebrated with accustomed pomp. All Souls’ Day was spent with even more recollection that in past years.

**Mass for the dead**

The money spent last year on chestnuts has this year been assigned in its entirety to the relief of the holy souls in purgatory. The piety of the congregants went to the extent that we have put together enough to say thirty-three Masses for the dead.

**Change of locale**

Although the Congregation has nothing but bottomless praise for the consideration and politeness of the Ursuline Sisters and found in their Church every kind of facility, even so it was exposed on a daily basis to an inconvenience that has compelled it to look for another locale where the exercises can take place at less inconvenient times than in the Church of these Sisters. At the *Maries* one had to wait until a priest who used to say his Mass after eight o’clock had finished in order to begin the Office, which inevitably meant about nine o’clock. Those who had to make their devotions were thus obliged to fast on the day of their communion until their dinner time, or if they wanted to eat a snack, could not do so until about half-past eleven. This spoilt their dinner. In the afternoon, the same problem arose as to the Congregation’s Vespers which could not begin until after those of the Sisters which depended on the leisure or decision of their chaplain; then we had to move quickly to get the church empty, and then if one wanted to take advantage of the fine weather to get the youngsters playing, there could be no question of returning to the church at nightfall, since naturally it was closed at that time.

**Chapel of the Congregation in the choir of the former Carmelite Church**

All these reasons and some others influenced the Congregation to move elsewhere. Its choice fell on the former church of the Carmelites[[31]](#footnote-31) where it hopes to settle permanently. As this necessary change must entail some expense, the Council in its session today decided to provide for it by means of a voluntary subscription which has been fixed at one to six francs. This subscription must only be asked of the more well-off congregants […]

**To M. Charles Antoine de Mazenod, at Palermo.[[32]](#footnote-32)**

1:XIII in Oblate Writings

*Foundation of the Missionaries of Provence. Need of money.*

L.J.C.

Mazenod C.A. de

Aix,

November 8, 1815.

I am strongly inclined to write to François[[33]](#footnote-33) that he give me some money for an establishment that I am forming at Aix for Provence. It is a foundation of Missionaries whose duty it will be to cover the countryside and bring people back to the religious sense that they have lost. We will establish ourselves in the former Carmelite monastery and go out from there on our apostolic travels. The newspapers took the initiative of giving an account of it and have totally overlooked me as the leader of this establishment.[[34]](#footnote-34) What is good about it is that I am forming it without a penny. We must trust fully in divine Providence. If your rich people of Palermo would want to contribute to it, that would be the most wonderful work they have ever done.[[35]](#footnote-35) One has no idea of the peoples’ need. Farewell, I embrace you again...

**To M. l’abbé Tempier, at Arles.[[36]](#footnote-36)**

6:VI in Oblate Writings

*His joy at learning that the Abbé Tempier agrees to become a member of the future community of missionaries. Negotiations with the authorities of the diocese.*

Tempier

Aix,

November 15, 1815.

God be blessed, my very dear brother, for the dispositions he has put in your good heart. You would not believe the joy I felt on reading your letter.[[37]](#footnote-37) I opened it anxiously but soon was comforted. Be sure that I regard it as most important that you be one of us for the work of God. I count on you more than on myself for the regularity of a house which, in my mind and my hopes, must reproduce the perfection of the first disciples of the apostles. I base my hopes on that much more than on eloquent discourses. Have they ever converted anyone? Oh! how well will you do what must be done! Were you but close enough for me to press to my heart, give you a fraternal accolade, that would express better than any letter the sentiments with which the good God has inspired me in your regard. How sweet the bonds of perfect charity!

The manner in which I speak will prove to you that I regard it as certain that they will not put invincible obstacles to our coming together. M. Guigou, whom the Lord has made zealous for this great enterprise, is persuaded that our small number does not suffice; he agrees that we need to be six. So I have begun this morning to let him know in advance, saying that I know you love community life and that our project will offer all you can desire. He has not been adverse to the idea... I expect new difficulties but the good God protects us. I fear nothing. Adieu, I embrace you with all my heart.

Eugene de Mazenod

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*November 21: blessing of the choir*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

November 21, 1815

The choir that must serve as chapel for the Congregation was so profaned during the Revolution that it has been necessary to have it blessed. This blessing took place today very solemnly in the presence of the whole Congregation. Rev. Father Beylot, Capitular Vicar General, then celebrated the first Mass there at which a very large number of congregants had the happiness of receiving communion. The Blessed Sacrament remained the whole day in the tabernacle, and that will be the rule every Sunday. There was perpetual adoration all day long. The congregants changed places every half-hour before the Blessed Sacrament. In the evening we said solemn Vespers. Then the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, the litanies of the Blessed Virgin and some other prayers were sung. Before giving the blessing, the Rev. Director delivered a short colloquy in the name of the Congregation which had the customary effect of this pious exercise, a felt increase of fervour in every heart. It seems at these times, short as they always seem, that Our Lord Jesus Christ responds promptly with an abundance of graces and consolations that he pours out in the souls of those who address him by the mouth of his minister, to the requests they make him through his instrument. One always emerges from this exercise, and in general from all the solemnities which are held in Congregation, with a feeling of the truth of this word of Scripture: *melius est dies una in atriis tuis, Domine, super millia* (Ps. 83: 11).

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*December 8: [reception of new members]*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

December 8, 1815

There was High Mass in Congregation. Received with the customary formalities were Messrs. Maurand, Coulin[[38]](#footnote-38), Giraud, the elder Ponsard and Chaubet. They solemnly renewed their baptismal promises following the discourse addressed to them by the Rev. Director.

**To M. l’abbé Tempier, at Arles.[[39]](#footnote-39)**

7:VI in Oblate Writings

*Joy at knowing that l’abbé Tempier would soon join the community of missionaries who aspire to become “truly saints “ M. Guigou, Vicar General promises that he will free him as soon as possible from parochial ministry. They must begin the year 1816 together.*

Tempier

Aix,

December 13, 1815.

My heart felt a presentiment, my dear, good friend and brother, that you were the man the good God had set aside to be my consolation. How can I show you all the happiness conferred on me by the holy state of resolve at which you have arrived? How great the promise I have made to myself to do all that depends on me to contribute to yours! Let me say that as soon as I read your first letter, I surrendered to the sweetest of hopes: that I had found the man who lays hold of good, latches on thereto and consequently with the help of grace, succeeds perfectly in effecting it. Your second and third letters confirmed me in the opinion that I had formed and now the thought that we shall succeed, in spite of obstacles, in working together for the glory of God and for our sanctification, sustains me in the midst of all the sorrows that hell has brought upon me since I have positioned strong batteries to destroy its empire. Be as humble as you wish but know, just the same, that you are *necessary* for this mission work. I speak to you before God and openly from my heart. Were it a question of going out to preach more or less well the word of God, mingled with much alloy of self, of going far and wide for the purpose, if you wish, of winning souls for God without taking much trouble to be men of interior life, truly apostolic men, I think it would not be difficult to replace you. But can you believe I want merchandise of that sort?

We must be truly saints ourselves. In saying that, we include all that can possibly be said. Now are there many priests who thus wish to be saints? Only by not knowing them could we believe that they do. I myself know the contrary. Most wish to go to heaven by a road other than that of abnegation, renunciation, forgetfulness of self, poverty, fatigue, etc. Perhaps they are not obliged to do more or otherwise than they do but at least they should not be so obstructive if some, believing that more is demanded by the needs of the people, want to try to be more devoted in order to save them. The second reason, which made me regard it as a present from heaven the resolution to join us at which you have arrived, is the need we have of a priest who thinks as you do about the interior life of our community. I am so convinced of this that I said yesterday evening to the Grand Vicar that I would not undertake to form this community if you took no part in it. I am so assured that we will always agree that I would not fear to promise never to think otherwise than you on all that has to do with the interior life and its obligations, more extensive than one ordinarily believes, of the priest who wishes to live as his state requires.

It is time that I gave you an account of the conversation that I had about you with M. Guigou. You know that he is completely interested in mission work. I let him know my resolution not to continue the undertaking if I were not sure that you would be one of us. I told him what I think: that your dispositions and character guaranteed to me the constancy of your resolutions, that I regarded you as the one on whom I ought to count for the love of order and regularity, that I needed to have you as the confidant of my aspirations for good, that in advance we were of one mind; in a word, I repeated that without you I did not feel courageous enough to go further. The Grand Vicar most positively reiterated his assurance that you would be one of us, but he asked as a favour that it be not immediately. This delay was not entirely agreeable to me because I would wish, rather, that you would be one of the first to enter the house, which is quite ready to receive missionaries.[[40]](#footnote-40) This first step is, in my opinion, of the highest importance.

At this meeting we will draw up the Rule which we will have to follow. We will confer on the manner in which we will carry out our good work. We will help each other mutually with advice and with all that the good God will inspire in each of us for our common sanctification. We will then issue our first declaration for the edification of the Church and of the people. This will be a decisive step. I count on having you then. That is what I have not yet obtained.

Write to our Grand Vicars what your formal intentions are. In the meanwhile, do not undertake any task which may last beyond the Christmas festivities for it is following them that I would wish us to meet. We must begin together the year of 1816. We will begin by working on ourselves. After, we will rule on the kind of life we will adopt for the city and for the missions. Then we will become saints.

Even if we were twenty, we would not suffice for the work there is to do. We are requested on all sides. I refer the demands to the good God. Let us hope he will at last look upon these entreaties. Pray to him that he will give me the strength and patience I need. They are terribly overtaxed. Had I not got half this letter done during the night, it would still not be ready for the post. Adieu, very dear and good brother, I embrace you with all my heart and long for the happy moment of our reunion.

Eugene de Mazenod

**To l’abbé Charles de Forbin-Janson, at Paris.[[41]](#footnote-41)**

8:VI in Oblate Writings

*Difficulties in**founding the Mission of Provence. Dilly-dallying of first companions. Mission at Pignans. Opposition of priests of Aix. Inability to take part in the mission at Marseilles.*

L.J.C.

Forbin Janson

Aix,

December 19, 1815.

You will no doubt be surprised, my beloved brother and friend at not yet having received any letters from me. But to have something to write, I would have had to know what was going on and at times I have seen what I was building tottering from top to bottom. Everything has been put into motion to bring it down, and I cannot say that it is solidly on its feet. The house was bought a long time ago; the church leased and partly repaired. All is ready on the material side but my men dither, the few that they are. He on whom I was counting the most is letting himself be deterred by the cackling of the pious hens of his parish. He is convinced there is much good he can do his backyard. He hesitates to leave and I am dismayed by his indecision.[[42]](#footnote-42) Another who excels constantly in proclaiming the word of God to the people is only partially attached to our mission, being persuaded that he does enough good by himself on his travels to and fro.[[43]](#footnote-43) A third, who is too incensed and vexed with the slowness of the others, threatens to take off by himself if they do not promptly make up their minds.[[44]](#footnote-44) A fourth, who is an angel, and who seems destined to be the joy of a community, cannot obtain permission to leave his vicariate, although he protests that he cannot bear to stay and wants to work only in the mission field, etc.[[45]](#footnote-45) I myself, overwhelmed with worries and cares, wage war listlessly, supported in the midst of this bother only by the supernatural outlook which inspires me, but which does not prevent me feeling the whole weight of my situation and all the more woefully in that I am helped neither by my taste or inclination which indeed are quite contrary to the kind of life which I am leading. All this God sends my way for my embarking on such a difficult venture. How can I put up with a priest who pledges himself with words of absolute devotion and then comes to retract them for the reason that his mother, who has lived separately from him for ten years, cannot live without him - he would regard it as homicide were he not to give her the consolation of eating with her - and more twaddle of this sort?[[46]](#footnote-46) And the only reply of the Grand Vicars to this beautiful argument is: “That will grieve M. de Mazenod very much; take it up with him”, when what was needed was to repress such weakness, rather than do nothing other than go along with it on such terms. You will understand now why men of this type can hardly make the journey to Paris: “he would not have Mother at his side and be able to eat with her.”

I resume my letter in January. Decidedly we are flapping along on only one wing, although two of our missionaries have already done wonders in the town they have just evangelized[[47]](#footnote-47), where eighteen hundred people came to the sacraments. All the parish priests around were asking for them but we are upset just the same. The one who should have rendered us the greatest service went back on his word; he remains in his parish wherein he stirred up such a commotion with his ridiculous farewells and got the people so worked up that they opposed his departure.[[48]](#footnote-48) I am obliged to warn you not to count on us for the mission at Marseilles. The missionaries are unwilling and I myself am unable. I have had no time to write anything and have not a single sermon. I trust in my ability to preach to a small gathering or to country people but I will never take it upon myself to speak thus in a large city, especially at a mission. I know this decision will indispose you somewhat but no one is bound to do the impossible. I believe that if you were here you could persuade one of our men[[49]](#footnote-49) to follow you to Marseilles because I believe he is full of goodwill and quite resolute but he will not be very useful to you because he only has three or four sermons, at the most. However, he preached every day and sometimes twice a day during the mission at Pignans which he has just finished. Pignans is only a small town but preaching there is done in Provençal.

M. Guigou does not think it possible this season to have the priests’ retreat of which you speak. He thinks it can take place only in summer. I think he will write to you about that. And yet it should be arranged if only to teach priests[[50]](#footnote-50) that it is not permitted to calumniate and that it is hardly Christian to rage at and obstruct the good that others would wish to do. The yapping that goes on amongst them never ceases. Only my presence keeps down the complaints. When facing me, all is well but beware when I turn my back! Our people are a sorry lot, dear friend. I scarcely would have believed it possible![[51]](#footnote-51)

1. Paul de Magallon (1784-1859), captain of infantry. Eugene met him in Paris in 1809, cf. *Oblate Writings,* 14, n. 44. He stayed at the Mission in 1816-1817. In 1819, he decided to become a Brother of St, John of God. He made his novitiate in Rome in 1823 and later restored the French province of the Order. Cf. Paul Dreyfus, *Paul de Magallon,* Paris, Centurion, 1893, 232 pp. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Léopold Henrigues was leaving for Paris. On July 10, 1821, Father H. J. Leblanc (cf. n.29) wrote the Founder that Henrigues was behaving well in Paris. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Orig.: Aix, Bibl. Méjanes, B 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Allusion to the Hundred Days, Napoleon’s return from March 1 to June 18, 1815. Defeated at Waterloo by the English and the Prussians, he was forced to abdicate. The Duke of Angouléme at the head of some regular troops had tried to put up some opposition to the soldiers loyal to Napoleon; Eugene had offered him his services. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. His Lordship Bishop F.M.B. Miollis, Bishop of Digne from 1805 to 1838. He it was who in 1819 entrusted the sanctuary of N.-D. du Laus to the Missionaries of Provence. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. During his first years of priesthood, Eugene accompanied to the moment of death the terminally ill who asked for him. Fortuné de Mazenod wrote to the Founder’s father on April 1, 1819: “you know he does not leave for a moment the souls confided to his care when they are in danger of death” APR FB V 1-7 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Adrien Antoine Joseph Louis Constantin Polydore Chappuis, who out of devotion to the Founder added “Eugene” to his name, was presented to the Association at the end of 1813, admitted in 1814 and received after his first communion on April 6, 1815. He boarded at the Mission from 1816 or 1817, while he studied law at the University. He was planning on joining the Missionaries of Provence, but became a lawyer in Aix, then, in 1825, an employee at the Ministry of Finance in Paris, sub-Director at this same ministry in 1845, Inspector General of Finances in 1848. He always maintained very friendly relations with Bishop de Mazenod and, in 1844, he initiated a move for the latter to be named cardinal, cf. J. Leflon III, p. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. H. J. Leblanc was a frequent visitor at the house of the Mission and planned to become a Missionary of Provence. He became a priest of the diocese of Paris after studying theology in the St. Sulpice Seminary. We have 31 letters from him to Eugene de Mazenod. APR LM. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. E. L. A. David also wanted to be a Missionary of Provence. He was a priest in the diocese of Paris, after studying in the St. Sulpice Seminary. We have 5 letters of his to Eugene from 1816 to 1825. He was the first witness in the informative canonical process for the nomination of Bishop E. de Mazenod to the bishopric of Marseilles. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. This act of consecration is not found at the end of the Diary, but we have (APR DM VIII 3) four loose leaves, with the text of this consecration, signed by hundreds of congregants from 1813 to 1822. It is a consecration to the Most Holy Trinity “through the hands of the Blessed and Immaculate Virgin Mary our mother and patroness.” [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. P.J.M. Giraud entered the novitiate of the Missionaries of Provence on February 28, 1818, and left in August 1819. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. *A la cardinale:* the Founder uses here an expression unknown to liturgists! [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Other measures for the postulants, etc., cf. July 4, 1816 and February 9, 1817 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. J. A. Leydet was a postulant with the Missionaries of Provence at the beginning of 1820, but he did not persevere, cf. Leydet to the Founder, January 28, 1820 and Father Leblanc to the same, July 31, 1820. APR LM. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. There follows a whole page of names with the prize taken in various areas. Three future novices of the Missionaries of Provence figure in the list: Master Giraud, Léon de Saboulin, and J. B. G. de Bausset. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Copy in *Notices Necrologiques 11,* 203. L.-J. de Saboulin (1801-1871) was ordained priest in 1852 and entered the Congregation in 1853. We are publishing this letter by way of a sample of the small number of those we still have, written to various congregants. We have however over 200 letters written by some thirty of them to Eugene, especially from 1814 to 1821. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Léon-Jules had written from Beauplan on September 5, 1815: “Sir, I do not think I can better begin my letter than by giving praise to Him to whom all praise is due. I was thinking yesterday, as I gazed at the stars, the beauty and immensity of the heavens, what must be the power of their creator, for whom a single word sufficed to create them!... I cannot help but feel sad when I think I am so far from a director and a congregation so beneficial to me. How long my exile is! I think, Sir, you can rightly call the congregation, where I have begun to taste true happiness, my native land not of the flesh but of the spirit!...” [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Orig.: Aix, Bibliothèque Méjanes B 69. We leave out most of the paragraphs of this letter in which Eugene talks about the pension he must get for his father. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. An undated letter, following that of September 2. In his answer dated December 10, 1815, the President says he has received the letter dated “September 15.” [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. *La Poire*, nickname of the marquis Boniface de Périer, childhood friend of the President. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Pierre Martin Bardeau was a Camaldalese, accepted at the Trappist monastery of Grosbois south-east of Paris. When Napoleon expelled the monks from their monastery in 1811, Brother Maur entered the service of a Parisan priest. In 1812, when he was a Director at the Seminary St. Sulpice, Eugene engaged him as a domestic first in Paris then in Aix. After the fall of Napoleon, Brother Maur was able to return to his Order and left Aix on September 18, 1815, cf. J.-M.. Larose, *Etude sur l’origine des frères convers chez les Oblats* in *Etudes Oblates* 12 (1953) pp. 66-69, and J. Pielorz, *A propos du Frère Maur, Ibid.* 13 (1954), pp. 248-249. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Before being named Archbishop of Aix in 1817, Bishop Ferdinand de Bausset had been Bishop of Vannes from 1808 to 1817. As there was not at that time a bishop in Aix, passing bishops were made use of for the ceremonies of confirmation. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Orig.: Parish, arch. de la Sainte Enfance. L’abbé Aubert first joined the gentlemen of the Mission of France. He came to preach the retreat at the house of the Mission at Aix, at the end of October, 1816. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Undated letter. From the context, it appears to have been written shortly before the month of October, 1815. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Copy in T. RAMBERT, *Vie de* Mgr *C. -J -E. de Mazenod,* Tours, 1883, t. I, pp. 165-167; A. REY, *Histoire* de *Mgr* C.-J-E. de Mazenod.... Rome, 1928, t. I, pp. 181-182; *Circulaires administratives*.... no. 15, vol. I, pp. 133-134. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. On October 2, 1815, l’abbé de Mazenod bought from Madame Gontier the former Carmelite convent. He went to live there with l’abbé Tempier as from January 25, 1816. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. De Mazenod, Deblieu, Mye and Icard. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Orig.: Paris, arch. de la Ste-Enfance. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. This priest did not enter the Society. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. *Poi e poi* (Italian): then and then. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. During the year 1815, Eugene took the decision to found a community of missionaries. He bought, in the month of October, a part of the former Carmelite convent, “situated at the head of the Cours, with a charming Church attached” (Eugene to Charles de Forbin-Janson, 23-24 October, 1815). The contract was concluded on December 30, 1815, cf. J. Leflon, II, pp. 36-38. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Orig.:Aix, Méjanes library, Boisgelin section. We are publishing only the last paragraph of this letter. It starts with some details on the hundred days, praises Louis XVIII and treats of the plan for the de Mazenods’ return to France [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. François Cannizzaro, one of the sons of the Duke of Cannizzaro and the princess of Larderia, a family that Eugene knew intimately at Palermo, cf. J. Leflon, *Eugene de Mazenod,* vol. I, 1961, pp. 188, 191, 235. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. M. de Mazenod replied on February 27, 1816: “…In the degree that your followers increase, it will be necessary to increase also the number of your co-operators and since the public considers you as the leader of the good work you must act like a true founder, keeping for yourself the administration, direction and general supervision, leaving the details to your associates.

We have here a similar group of holy priests who have gathered to give missions in the surrounding area and are doing a lot of good. As well there is an almost similar institution called Missionaries of the Redeemer established *all’Uditore.* They recognize their Founder as Bishop Liguori of St-Agatha in the kingdom of Naples, who died in the odor of sanctity and whose beatification they are presently working on in Rome by the Pope’s command. I flatter myself that sometime in the future some Sovereign Pontiff will give the same orders in favor of Charles Joseph Eugene, but while waiting I would have liked you to send me the newspapers that speak of your Institute and of yourself…” [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. In the letter of February 27, 1816, Eugene’s father added: “... it matters little that you have formed your establishment without funds, since God who sees its usefulness and the purity of your intentions, will know how to gain them for you very well. But I am upset to let you know that you can expect nothing from those you call Palermo’s rich people, since, except for very few persons, I see only people who are loaded down with debts and taxes. Your idea of having François contribute something makes more sense. Born with a 600 pound pension and having a 600 thousand income, it would be natural that he acknowledge this gift of Providence by helping you in your religious works. But I am not happy with his conduct toward you. I can only blame him for spending several months with his brother at Paris without having looked you up to renew your former bonds of friendship. You will risk nothing by writing to him…” [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. REY, I, 184-185; RAMBERT, I, pp. 169 and 300; *Missions O.M.I.,* 1897, 173;

*Circulaires administratives,* No. 15, vol. I., pp. 135-136. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Fr. Tempier had delayed replying to the letter of October 9th as it was not signed. He willingly accepted the invitation. Tempier’s reply to this letter is dated 27 October, 1815:

“May the good God be blessed for having inspired you to prepare for the poor, for the inhabitants of our countryside, those who have the most need of instruction in our religion, a house of missionaries who will go and announce to them the truths of salvation.

I share your views completely, my dear brother, and far from needing any urging to enter this holy Society which satisfies my own desires so completely, I assure you that, had I known of your plans before you mentioned them to me, I would have been the first to speak of my joining your Society. Thus, I feel that I owe you a debt of gratitude for judging me worthy to work with you for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. True, I can make no claim to any talent for preaching, which is so essential in a missionary, but, *alius quidem sic, alius vero sic.* What I cannot do in eloquent sermons, I shall do in catechism classes, conferences, in hearing confessions, and by all other means which can establish the reign of Jesus Christ in souls

I find nothing lowly or inferior in that. Meanwhile, practice will make it easier for me than it is now. Besides, what you want most in those you choose as your collaborators is priests who will not get into a rut of routine and daily hum-drum, and, as Father Charles’ predecessor used to say, plod along day after day without accomplishing anything; you want priests who will be ready to follow in the footsteps of the Apostles and work for the salvation of souls with no other reward here on earth but hardship and fatigue. I think that God's grace has given me this desire. If not, then I wish with all my heart that I will have it, and working with you will make it all the easier to attain. You can, therefore, count entirely on me.” Cf. REY, *ibid.,* p. 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. François Xavier Alphonse Coulin entered the novitiate of N.-D. du Laus on June 21, 1819 and made his oblation on June 29, 1820. He left in October 1822, became priest in 1824 and exercised the priestly ministry in the diocese of Marseilles. We preserve 76 letters from him to Bishop de Mazenod from 1819 to 1859. APR LM. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. REY, I, 186-188; RAMBERT, I, *171-173; Circulaires administratives*, n. 15, vol. I, pp. 136-137. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Father Tempier arrived at Aix on December 27, 1815. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Orig.: Paris, arch. de la Sainte-Enfance. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Jean-François-Sébastien Deblieu ( 1789-1855), parish priest of Peynier. Cf.: J. PIELORZ, *Nouvelles recherches sur la fondation de notre Congrégaíion, in Missions* O.M.I., 1957, pp. 116-118. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Pierre-Nolasque Mye (1768-1841), missionary. Ibid, pp. 118-120. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Auguste Icard (1790.-1835), vicar at Lambesc. *Ibid,* p. 126. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. François de Paule-Henri Tempier (1788-1870), vicar at Arles. *Ibid* pp. 120-125. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. M. Deblieu [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. At Pignans, a small place in the department of the Var. Cf. *Missions O.M.I.,* 1955,p.550. This mission had been given, it seems, by Mye and Icard. Cf.: G. COSENTINO, *Un inconnu: le p. Icard* *in Études Oblates,* t. 16 (1957) pp. 337-338. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. M. Deblieu. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Icard (Cf: G. COSENTINO, *art cit,* p. 338) or Mye, who however had been preaching for a long tine cf.: J. PIELORZ, *art. cit.,* p. 120. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Especially Canon Rey and the abbé Florens, Gallicans and supporters of Napoleon. Cf: J. PIELORZ, *art. cit.,* pp. 115-116, 160. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. The end of this letter, concerning a priest of Marseilles and of the mission at Orleans, is omitted. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)