**1817**

**To his Worship the Mayor of Aix.[[1]](#footnote-1)**

141:XV in Oblate Writings

*Eugene is not in expectation of mans gratitude but solely heaven’s reward.*

Mayor of Aix

Aix

January 1817

A moment’s thought was enough to assuage and even heal the wound completely. The idea of expecting man’s gratitude was too imperfect. The more my heart were satisfied with receiving this kind of compensation, the more this human consolation would diminish the merit of my actions and lessen perhaps the reward I look to in heaven. My hope on the contrary is that the latter recompense which is my sole goal will increase in proportion to man’s ingratitude. It is my sweetest consolation amid the annoyances I am experiencing and one which, it seems to me, I should have been spared. All the same, my dear friend, be persuaded that what is happening to me through a source close to you does not diminish in any way the esteem due you and the special affection I have expressed in your regard; but it squared with the well-known frankness of my character to open my heart to you in this situation. I trust you will not take it badly... I remain Sir ready to offer you unequivocal proofs of my constant friendship.

**To M. Duclaux, Superior General of St-Sulpice, Pot de fer Street, No. 17 at Paris.[[2]](#footnote-2)**

5:XIII in Oblate Writings

*Numerous occupations. Consolations in the ministry. Opposition of several priests.*

L.J.C.

Duclaux

Aix,

January 1, 1817.

Oh! How this New Year’s Day comes at the right time, my dear Father, to help me out of my embarrassment; I no longer knew how to write to you, being so greatly ashamed of having not done it for so long, and what is comical is that I only kept putting off this duty from day to day in order to better fulfill it; I wanted to write you at length, going into details which would interest you very much, and never having the time before me (that is the literal truth) that I needed for it, I kept putting it off to the morrow without succeeding any better on that day. Today, I am changing my system, taking up my pen even if only for five minutes, to take it up again as many times as I will be forced to lay it down. Yesterday I could only put on the date, it’s always like that, you will at least see that today’s coming and going did not stop me from thinking of that good Father whom I will never forget and will always love wholeheartedly.

I don’t know where to start to bring you somewhat up to date on the marvels that the good Lord is working here through our ministry. We truly see repeated before our eyes the prodigies of Christianity’s early times and God shows us at every moment that we are nothing but the trumpet he uses to awaken and bring souls back to life, so evident and direct, I’ll say even miraculous, is his working.

April 21.

I am still obliged to put off the details which it would have been a pleasure for me to give you about the works that it has pleased God to confide to me; but since days would have to have more than 24 hours for me, I cannot at this moment do otherwise than remind my dear Father of myself and ask very insistently for his prayers. This letter will be remitted to you by one of our Congregation members who is going to Paris on some business, a military man, a good Christian whom I recommend to you. If his departure had not been so hurried, I think I would have made the trip with him, since I feel I will be obliged to such a measure; I am terrified by the thought of it as it is so difficult to detach myself from here where my presence still seems necessary, because you will scarcely believe that, having only good in view, I will say more, really doing good with God’s grace, I must nevertheless struggle against a continuous persecution on the part of a certain number of priests whose efforts are however rendered ineffective by the position in which it has pleased God to place me; I pretend to ignore their underhanded dealings and, strictly speaking, I defend myself only by my good bearing and by the continuation of all that the good Lord wants me to do in spite of them. It seems to me that the saints would do the same in my place and my whole ambition will be to try to be like them; I do their works while waiting to acquire a small share of their virtues. We believed to have recognized that the Lord is protecting us by the very abundant blessings that he is showering on what we are undertaking for his glory. That more than compensates us for all the pain that these false prophets would like to inflict on us, all the while pretending to be unconcerned.

At this time as I have the pleasure of talking with you, I feel how much I regret not being able to do so more often or as long as I would like to; but to give you some idea of my life, imagine that having gone to bed at midnight as usual and gotten up at 5 o’clock, at this moment of writing to you I have not finished my meditation from which they drew me out this morning and that I have not finished Matins even though it is almost 9 o’clock. If I did not continually recall that passage from Saint Paul *nos autem servos vestros per Jesum*,[[3]](#footnote-3)I could not hold on, but that thought seems to lighten everything. However, I experience great loss in not being able to spend enough time on myself... So pray that the good Lord might grant me the means to think more about my poor soul.

My ambassador is going to leave, so I close by pressing you to my heart which is yours in Our L[ord].

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

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*January 6: visit of Mr. de Vidaud. Place given him in Congregation.*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

January 6, 1817

The Marquis de Vidaud, prefect of the Grenoble Congregation, having come to Aix to spend a few days, was admitted within the Congregation as if he were a member. He was placed in the choir during the exercises, at the Prefect’s right. This deference was due to the place he occupies in the Congregation of Grenoble with whose prayers we are associated, and the Congregation of Aix eagerly seized this opportunity of testifying to the Marquis of Vidaud the admiration inspired by his personal virtues. Mr. de Vidaud took communion immediately after the Prefect.

**To the Abbe de Forbin-Janson, priest of the Missionaries of France, Notre-Dame des Champs Street, n. [8], at Paris[[4]](#footnote-4)**

6:XIII in Oblate Writings

*Numerous occupations. Charles writes too little and is not looking after the business of Eugene who must go to Paris.*

L.J.C.

Forbin Janson

Aix,

January 16, 1817.

Were I to write you only two lines, very dear friend and good brother, I would do it so that no unfitting norm be established, something that would be inexcusable from both sides. I am starting even though I certainly do not have more free time; but, by hastening my lunch, I will get it done; it has not yet happened since my return from our last mission,[[5]](#footnote-5) that I ate even once with the community. And today, the time I steal is for you and Collegno. I am leaving a letter to my father on my desk begun on the 3rd of this month, one for M. Duclaux, begun on the 1st and others which I will probably never finish. I know, very dear friend, that you are not dead, because the newspapers keep us up to date on your doings and activities, but you are not aware that I am still alive, I, a miserable, obscure missionary, who preaches [to] people who don’t know how to read and write.

January 21. - Before going to bed, and while everyone else in the house is sleeping, and even before saying Vespers, for which I scarcely have time anymore, I will again speak briefly with you, very dear friend. I am grieved by your silence and your brevity when you do break it. I had no sweeter pleasure than to receive your letters. Soon they will be reduced to an Easter duty, once a year. If your missions were like ours, that is to say that you were always in the confessional when you were not in the pulpit, I would understand it. But, according to what Hilaire[[6]](#footnote-6) told me, that is not quite the case. Why then don’t you write me in the intervals? I am numbering this deprivation among my sacrifices. Myself, I have no time for anything. My work in preaching is almost as [great] in the city as on mission. I am sometimes tempted to think that people abuse my good will somewhat. But I do not give in to that thought which is contrary to a sentiment which seems to be deeply engraved in my heart, namely that we must be servants of all. I was confirmed in that resolution in meditation today. It is a painful obedience for nature, but if we know how to do [it], it will be very meritorious. What costs me most at this time is that this forced and constant service hinders me from going to Paris, where family matters and those of our house call me; but how can I abandon so many neophytes, poor young people of 20 to 25 years who daily come to throw themselves into my arms to reconcile them with God and return them to the right road. The hours which must be spent with them set back my work and throw me into desperation. You could have spared me half my cares if, being on the spot, you had been willing to budge a little for me. But you have never followed up on any beginning. And so you also have gained nothing. You had told me however, at the outset, that everyone was in your favour.

Ourselves, we are still five in all, really killing ourselves; especially myself, for whom the stay in the city is never a rest, far from it! When I die, they will say: *What a pity! He killed himself’* while the assassins are those who refuse us indispensable help.

Goodbye, dear friend, pray hard to the good Lord that I have time to merit heaven before I die.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*February 2: Messrs. Margueri, Rastoin and Fabre expelled. Boileau and Florent struck off.*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

February 2, 1817

For a long time the Director had a feeling of disquiet over some of the young congregants who gave clear signs of slackness; after being warned with the utmost gentleness and tact, they made only token efforts at reform, and soon they fell back into the same state only worse even than before. Finally their scandalous conduct did not allow of further silence and the Director found himself compelled to expel them from within the Congregation. But no one can tell how much this cruel pruning cost him; one would have to have been there at the discourse he made on this occasion to the Congregation assembled in the choir of the church of the Mission. He was so moved, when paraphrasing this passage from the psalm: *Si inimicus meus maledixisset mihi, [sed] tu…qui dulces capiebas cibos, etc.,* that most of the congregants melted into tears and this was their way of showing how much they shared their common father’s grief. In the end the names of the guilty ones had to be pronounced, the wretches who had so cruelly broken a heart that had been so good to them, and it was learned without surprise but with indignation that Mr. Margueri was the worst of the three who were expelled, and all the more guilty because of the special attention the Director had bestowed on him. Mr. Rastoin and Mr. Fabre were expelled at the same time. Messrs. Peisse, Boileau and Florent would also have deserved expulsion; various flimsy attenuating circumstances induced us to be satisfied with striking off their names. Were one to keep dwelling on the thoughts provoked by the conduct, both then and subsequently, of these various individuals, one could not help but react strongly to their ingratitude which went beyond all bounds and was especially evident in the case of Mr. Margueri and Mr. Peisse who had received clear and continual signs of the Director’s affection, who took pains to lead them in the right path, unfortunately with only temporary success.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*February 9: nomination of heads of ranks*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

February 9, 1817

The Messrs. Zealots of the third and fourth sections having brought it to the Rev. Director’s attention that the number of postulants and probationers was much increased, and that in consequence it had become difficult for them to give direct supervision to every individual in their sections, the Rev. Director selected from among the postulants eight heads of ranks each one of whom will supervise eight postulants at whose head they will be placed in choir. A similar measure was taken for the probationers.

**Diary of the Mouriès mission**

In Oblate Writings XVI

Diary of the Mouriès mission

Mouriès

(February 9 - March 15, 1817)[[7]](#footnote-7)

**Monday, second day of the mission.** The daytime, and likewise the evening of the vigil, were spent in visiting the inhabitants. We have been well received everywhere, even by the Protestants, whom we thought it our duty to visit like the others.

While making our visits we came across, in a Protestant house, the minister who comes to serve these poor Camisards[[8]](#footnote-8) in a country cottage at the entrance to the village. He seemed quite embarrassed at having to put a good countenance on it; he rose, as did the man of the house; he stayed cap in hand and standing the whole time our visit lasted, which, at that, was very short; after polite exchanges, we left. It is impossible to conceive how ignorant these Camisards are; they know absolutely nothing, except that they fulfil their religious exercises in a different place of worship than our own; we have not found a single one who could tell us if he were a Calvinist; they have not even heard of Calvin; their big argument is that they were born in this religion, which they think is as good as our own, and in which they all agree that they can be saved. In short, they imagine that at bottom it’s practically the same thing, and that’s the problem, for they would perhaps be less distant from the truth, and give greater hope of a return if they really grasped that the distance is enormous, and that the two ways cannot arrive at the same destination, as they are travelling in opposite directions.

**Saturday.** Last Tuesday it was announced that in the evening the great bell would sound for all to halt work at the same time, whatever it might be, and go down on their knees to recite three times the *Pater, Ave* and *Gloria Patri* for the conversion of sinners. This prayer was said punctiliously; one man, one of those who had not been to confession for a long time, was not put off by the presence of a hardened Camisard; at the first sound of the bell he went down on his knees and recited the three *Pater,* etc. with his whole family; on the spot he felt himself to be converted and resolved to come to confession, which he did as one of the first of the mission.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*February 24: Mr. Dufrenelle received on his death bed*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

February 24, 1817

During the Rev. Director’s absence on the mission[[9]](#footnote-9) the Council met to consider if, in view of the urgency of the case, it were possible to receive the youth Pierre François Dufrenelle, a postulant of the fourth section, as a member of the Congregation. This child was dangerously ill and about to receive Holy Viaticum. The Council, motivated by feelings of Christian charity and wanting to have Dufrenelle share in all the spiritual advantages our Holy Father the Pope has granted to members of the Congregation, unanimously decided that Mr. Dufrenelle should be received. The intention of the Council was praiseworthy, but it was overlooked that the Rev. Director’s presence was necessary to validate this act of reception and apply the spiritual favours to the newly-received member.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*March 16: illness and death of Mr. Alphonse de Saboulin. His eulogy.*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

March 16, 1817

The Congregation was summoned to accompany Holy Viaticum which was administered to our dearest confrère Alphonse de Saboulin. It was not the first time he had the happiness of receiving holy communion in the course of his long and very dangerous illness. Mass was offered a number of times in his rooms to satisfy the urgent longings of his heart, full of love for Jesus Christ. This was a just reward owed to this young man who had always led an angelic life and been exemplary in virtue in every situation he encountered, and especially during the three years of legal studies he followed with distinction. Up till now the Congregation has experienced the loss only of children and painful as this loss may have been, it was not perhaps equally felt by those who because of their age were somewhat distanced from them and had had only some general contacts with them such as arise among all the congregants. But at the news of the imminent danger Mr. de Saboulin was in, a man who had already reached youthful maturity, who added to his many virtues a vast fund of knowledge which made of him, in everyone’s eyes, a man of great promise, already called[[10]](#footnote-10) and about to take his place at the bar in the first court of the province, there was general consternation; everyone hastened to be present at the ceremony of his receiving the sacrament and to show him personally their feelings of cordial affection. If loving care and prayers could have saved him, he would not have been taken from us; but this fine young man, who had always kept himself pure in the midst of the world’s corruption, a world that both marveled at and envied him, was already ripe for heaven and he was to take possession of it during the night March 22-23 at 3.00 a.m., only 21 years’ old. The Congregation loses in him one of its pillars and a finished model of every virtue. The only eulogy I will give him is to recall, for the edification of these who survive him, that he did not forget for a single moment throughout the course of his life the sentiments of piety he brought forth so to speak from his birth, sentiments that owed no doubt their growth to the genuinely Christian formation he received from his revered mother, but which achieved their fullness from his fidelity to grace and the effort he always made to cooperate with it. I have enjoyed taking some time over this reflection as it shows that in youth as in childhood, in the midst of the world or in the shelter of the paternal roof, one can serve God with fervor and keep one’s innocence. I was away on mission when Mr. Alphonse de Saboulin died, so I was deprived of the consolation that would have been mine as I lavished my care upon him, but although I was not witness to the acts of virtue he practised in his last moments, I have never forgotten the edifying traits I was led to admire in him in the time before I left. He was already in considerable pain, the doctors had pronounced his case terminal, and quite often he was overcome by his weaknesses. His patience equalled his resignation and exceeded his adversities, but he still blamed himself for the least murmur of complaint. One day among others he summoned me and while I was quite astonished at his unconquerable meekness and the heroic sentiments he expressed with a candour and simplicity that heightened their value, he asked me seriously if I thought he had lost the merit of his sufferings by the manner in which he bore them. Seraphic young man, if only could have read my mind! There you would have glimpsed the sort of cultic reverence my admiration for so many virtues was according you beforehand!

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*March 28: visit of the Abbot of La Trappe*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

March 28, 1817

His Lordship the Abbot of La Trappe (Rev. de L’Estrange)[[11]](#footnote-11), having come to spend some days in the house, the missionary who presided during the superior’s absence asked him to say the Congregation’s Mass and to officiate at Vespers. His Lordship the Abbot was very edified at the way the congregants conducted themselves and by their fervour. He was pleased to let them know this, in a discourse full of unction, in which he made a special point of recommending them to persevere. He left on April 12.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*March 30: Reception of Mr. Dupuy. Mr. Dalmas takes the habit*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

March 30 1817

Mr Dupuy[[12]](#footnote-12), missionary novice, was received as a congregant and Mr. Dalmas[[13]](#footnote-13) received the soutane with dispositions and a fervor that gave rise to sentiments of joy and hope in the hearts of every participant. His parents’ piety was especially remarkable on this occasion.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*March 31: Palm Sunday Procession.*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

March 31, 1817

The Palm Sunday procession left the confines of the church as in preceding years and made a turn around the *Place des Carmelites*.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*April 6*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

April 6, 1817

Easter Day. The congregants went to fulfil the Easter precept in their respective parishes at the 6 o’clock Mass and then came back to take part in the High Mass “in Congregation” at 9.30.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*April 6: a memorable confirmation service in St. Sauveur’s*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

April 6, 1817

The young congregants who were to receive the sacrament of confirmation went on retreat in the house of the Mission three days previously, in the usual way. They were quite numerous and the Congregation deserved sufficient consideration to have His Lordship the Bishop of Digne come and confirm them in the Congregation’s chapel, as he raised no difficulty over going indeed to the workhouse. Truly pitiful reasons[[14]](#footnote-14), which I flinch from putting on paper out respect for his person, deterred this Prelate from accepting the invitation made him by the Director with the agreement of the Rev. Capitular Vicar General. So we had to go to the metropolitan church where the parish priest of St. Jean so far forgot himself as to insult publicly the Director who happily managed to contain himself and not react to his insults so as not to give rise to a dreadful scandal on such an occasion. The grievance of the Rev. Parish Priest of St. Jean was the refusal of the Director to send the congregants to the parish to join up with the street-corner scamps hurriedly assembled not without a certain amount of difficulty on the occasion of the confirmation. The Director had refused only after consulting the Vicar General; he was therefore acting perfectly correctly and had no reason to expect to find himself accosted in this shocking way right in the choir of St. Sauveur’s packed with children from every parish who were waiting for the moment to be confirmed. The Director, after the good Parish Priest had said at the top of his voice that he would jolly well teach him his duty, that he would summon him before the Promotor and other such pleasantries, - the Director, assisted by a special grace, made no reply and passed on, but as there was an oversight and no place was provided for the congregants although he had taken the precaution of giving advance notice the night before, he spoke directly to the Vicar General asking him to be so kind as to see to it. The Rev. Vicar General had them placed around the altar where these youngsters who had been prepared with such care presented an enchanting picture of piety that was in strong contrast with the scandalous dissipation of all the other children who could only kept quiet with a few slaps and cuffs. This shocking behaviour went so far that half-way through the Prelate’s Mass, the Rev. Vicar General who was assisting him turned round towards the priests and told them out loud to control their children and put an end to the noise. As soon as the congregants had received the sacrament of confirmation, they retired behind the High Altar and stayed there until the ceremony was over. The Director addressed them from time to timer to raise their hearts to God and steer them away from the distractions the uproar in the church could have occasioned. But it can be said that this help was practically unnecessary, so intent were they on being recollected of their own accord, so attentive either in prayer or in reading the book we had taken the precaution of having them bring. I can affirm that on that day they surpassed themselves. The Director thanked the Lord for it as a compensation that helped him put out of his mind the unpleasantness the morning’s events had brought him. We must not omit mentioning that the congregants were practically the only ones who had the happiness of taking communion at the Bishop’s Mass […][[15]](#footnote-15). The Gentlemen came back to the Mission two by two accompanied by the Director and another missionary. Their retreat continued until the evening […][[16]](#footnote-16)

**To Madame Roux [-Bonnecourse], daughter-in-law, rue des Dominicaines, n. 34, Marseilles.[[17]](#footnote-17)**

142:XV in Oblate Writings

*He asks Madame Roux to do some tailoring for the Mission in a spirit of faith, as if she were making Our Lord’s tunic.*

L.S.J.C.

Roux-Bonnecourse

Aix,

May 16, 1817

Madame,

I was about to leave for Mouriès[[18]](#footnote-18) when I received the letter you did me the honour of writing; I asked your mother to convey my apologies for the delay in answering, and I was waiting until my arrival back in Aix to thank you and send you the measurements you request.

The small cord is the measure of the over-all height and the long one is the measure of the circumference. Whatever about your claiming to be clumsy, I would be glad if you were to work at least a little at this work with that holy joy, that commitment you would have displayed if you had lived while O.L.J.C. was on earth, and you had been allowed to work on the tunic or cloak that he was to wear. Oh! how admirably the spirit of faith serves to animate, bring to life our every action! With its help everything achieves greatness, even a few stitches with the needle, and eternal rewards are awarded for these little things as for the most heroic of actions.

Be pleased, Madame, etc....

Eugene de Mazenod, Missionary Priest

**To M. Chabert, parish priest at Fuveau[[19]](#footnote-19)**

7:XIII in Oblate Writings

*Joy at knowing the parishioners’ fervor is continuing. Plan to respond to the invitation of the faithful and to visit soon.*

L.J.C.

Cabert

Aix,

May 23, 1817.

I was going to leave for Mouriés,[[20]](#footnote-20) very dear Sir, when I received your charming letter of April 25 and all the edifying things you tell me in it about the fervor of your good parishioners was a great source of consolation to me. I bless the Lord for giving you the strength to endure the excessive work that you had to do,[[21]](#footnote-21) and I congratulated myself on seeing the ground we tilled in hands as capable and faithful as yours. That recompense was due to your zeal for the salvation of your flock, all the more so because that was what we had been uniquely striving for; may God grant you the grace to experience that joy for a long time for only the Good Shepherd can measure and evaluate things.

I will do all that depends on me to respond to your invitation:[[22]](#footnote-22) all kinds of reasons attract me to you and your people; I have not at all forgotten your goodness and the value you seemed to place on the devotedness with which we worked for their salvation. The difficulty, however, is to tear myself away from here

Farewell, very dear pastor, do not forget me in your good prayers and believe in the respect with which I have the honor to be your very humble servant.

Eugene de Mazenod, missionary priest.

**Madame Roux, née de Bonnecorse, Street of the Dominicans, No. 34, at Marseilles.[[23]](#footnote-23)**

8:XIII in Oblate Writings

*Thanks for a gift in favor of a subdeacon who entered the Mission of Provence. Promise of prayers.*

L.J.C.

Roux Madame

Aix,

June 15, 1817.

Before thanking you, Madame, I must bless Divine Providence which just gave me new proof that one must never weary of trusting in it. I see now that it was the good Lord who inspired me not to reject this young subdeacon who, as rich in virtue as he was poor in this world’s goods, offered himself to me to serve God in the work of the missions.[[24]](#footnote-24) I received him with open arms without considering the distressed condition of our house; I thought of sharing my portion with him, happy as I was to assure with some sacrifice to the Church a faithful minister and an apostle to the abandoned faithful, when behold the good Lord charged you to supply me with what is needed to sustain him this year. Isn’t that admirable? How fortunate you are to have contributed to such a good work! Your reward and that of your charitable relatives and friends who helped you with such good intentions will be proportionate not at all to the amount of money or to the merit of ordinary corporal works of mercy, but to the price of souls for whose salvation the efforts of our missionaries solely strive.

Now, I thank you for the promptness and grace that you put forth to give us help. God will take it upon himself to return you a hundredfold for these 425 francs which came exactly at a moment they were least expected, but I assure you that we will ask in our weak prayers with even greater promptness, for you and yours, that the Lord enrich you with a great many virtues and spiritual blessings. On the feast of the Sacred Heart I offered the holy sacrifice for that intention; so you see that you were not mistaken when you counted on a special remembrance on that day. Besides, you know that you and your whole family will be from now on participants in all the prayers, fastings, sacrifices and whatever good works that are done by all the members of our little society, with the condition that you pray for us too, and I willingly add especially for me who have more need than anyone.

Accept, Madame, the assurance of respect with which I have the honor of being your very humble servant.

Eug[è]ne de Mazenod, m[ission]ary priest.

I beg you to remember me to all your good family and to thank them in the name of our work for what the good Lord has inspired them to do for it.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*June 17: procession of the Blessed Sacrament, on the Feast of the Sacred Heart.*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

June 17, 1817

Procession of the Blessed Sacrament that takes place each year on the Feast of the Sacred Heart or on that of that feast’s octave when it cannot be held on the feast day itself. This has always been the town’s most edifying procession. It is made up of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart and the Youth Congregation who vie with one another, as it were, in piety and recollection[[25]](#footnote-25). The Blessed Sacrament is usually carried by the Bishop-elect of Marseilles[[26]](#footnote-26) or the Very Rev. Vicars General. The town’s most distinguished and respected citizens are invited to bear the canopy or candles behind the canopy. The company of *canonniers* has as it were reserved for itself the honour of escorting Our Lord. Music with its harmony and fanfares is a constant feature that enhances the feast’s impact. The women and girls sing canticles appropriate to the solemnity. The congregants repeat in choir the *Pange lingua*. The Clergy of every parish are invited and attend with the exception of the priests of the Madeleine who regularly keep their distance[[27]](#footnote-27). Care is taken to select the deacon and subdeacon from among the assisting priests out of deference to them. The priests of the Mission stand ready to keep the procession moving along, the superior takes his place behind the Congregation whose superior he is. He does not know if his thoughtfulness is noticed, it remains that he keeps to that position as much to show his affection and respect for the Congregation as out of sensitivity to the invited priests. The procession always does the round of the *Cours* under the trees of the two lateral lanes. Since the erection of the mission Cross, it extends its walk as far as the foot of the Cross[[28]](#footnote-28) from which spot benediction is given. The large rotunda is filled up wholly with people who have walked in the procession. The spectacle both of the procession and of its entry into the rotunda is splendid. It is night when we return, but the piety and deep recollection of all taking part, the sound of singing that echoes from one end of the *Cours* to the other, the majesty of the whole of this triumphal walk impresses the whole population that gathers to see it pass, in a way that not only does one never see the least disorder but on the contrary the curious, attracted by so fine an example, usually join in singing with the clergy or the Congregants and sing along with them the hymns and holy canticles. Up to now (I write in 1821), in spite of the most sinister foreboding and threat of bad weather, come wind and come rain that has sometimes fallen in torrents until three in the afternoon, the weather has always, by God’s special protection, lifted in time and left the necessary gap to undertake without fear and carry out with joy this fine and touching ceremony. This year the breeze that dropped just at the level of the candles not one of which was blown out although one could hear its strength up at the top of the trees, seemed to be paying its respects to the Sovereign Master of the elements and do homage to his omnipotence. Anyway, up to now there has not been a single years that the candles have been blown out. Without crying “miracle”, even so we thank the Lord for it to whose goodness we attribute this favour, people as we are whose profession it is that nothing is chance, not even the smallest happenings that all depend on his will and which are all directed by Providence.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*June 24: death of César Vicary. His funeral.*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

June 24, 1817

[page written in 1821]. The scraps of notes I have been able to assemble indicate this as the day of the untimely death of César Vicary whose eulogy I have summarized on page [67, written before 1821] of this book, and I will add nothing to what I said about him there. I will simply remark that the notes put together by a congregant record that this dear child “was regretted and, I even dare to say, venerated not only by our dear Director and the Congregation, but by every person who knew him. After his death everyone wanted to have something that had belonged to him.” The notes add that the Council decided unanimously on the definitive reception of the sick child who was only a probationer, and the Director did this on his death bed a few days before he expired, before giving him Holy Viaticum, which he only received through the vigilance and solicitude of the Director who took advantage of the single lucid moment, after which he lost the power of speech although he still remained conscious. The Director assisted him up to the end and left his side only after he had closed his eyes. The congregants who had been constant in their care throughout his sickness did not abandon him after his death; they took turns praying around his coffin right up to the funeral. The Congregation assembled as the bell of the church of the Madeleine tolled and went as a body to the home of the deceased who was borne according to custom by his confreres. The Director followed the coffin dressed in his long cloak at the head of the Congregation whose members walked two by two behind the body. When he had been laid in his grave and the people of the parish had retired, the *De profundis* was said in a devout way and the Director said a few words appropriate to the occasion. The we returned to the Chapel, there to say the Office according to custom. On the first free day we held the service to which his parents were invited (See page [67] […].

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*July 6: first communion of Messrs. Bouvier and Honorat*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

July 6 1817

Messrs. Joseph A. Bouvier and Joseph Melchior Honorat made their first communion. They brought it forward by some days before the general first communion of their young confreres because of the imminent departure of the Rev. Director who was their confessor[[29]](#footnote-29).

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*July 13: first communion of 21 others*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

July 13, 1817

This first general first communion took place today. As the Rev. Director had left for Paris, Father Maunier, priest of the Mission deputed to direct the Congregation during the absence of its superior, was in charge. The retreat took place, according to custom, during the three days prior to communion […].

**To my beloved brothers.[[30]](#footnote-30)**

17:VI in Oblate Writings

*Arrival at Paris. Forthcoming visit to the Minister of the Interior.*

Missionaries at Aix

Paris,

July 19th, 1817, Feast of our holy Patron.[[31]](#footnote-31)

I write only these two words, my dear and good brothers, to give you news of my happy arrival at Paris[[32]](#footnote-32) without mishap other than having shivered all the way from Lyons to here, while from Aix to Lyons, we could not breathe because of the heat. For the rest, my appetite was good and I slept soundly if not peacefully; the company was passable but not able to arouse me from a kind of musing which brought me back ceaselessly to you whom I had left so regretfully. It is to be hoped that it will not be long; I have already requested an audience from the Minister who will write me one of these days.

I believe, from what the person who took my letter to him said to me, that he has Corsica on his mind more than anything else;[[33]](#footnote-33) we will see what will come of it. The King dealt in Council yesterday with the missions in general; he spoke well of them. On Wednesday, the same question will be taken up. I hope I shall have seen the Minister by then.

I am only inclined to speak of you, of our good novices. Tell them many a thing on my behalf; let them not forget me in their prayers. I celebrate today our Feast with you, at least in spirit. May our holy Patron communicate to us something of his spirit. Let us love one another in God and for God and for ever.

Eugene

**To Father Tempier at Aix.[[34]](#footnote-34)**

18:VI in Oblate Writings

*Visit to Mont Valérien. The Society of the Missionaries of Provence can only be approved by a law voted in both Chambers (of Parliament). Watch over the health and regularity of the novices and the Oblate students. Is united with them in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament*

Tempier

*Le Calvaire* near Paris,

July 25th, 1817.

I have come to spend half the day at Mont Valérien[[35]](#footnote-35), my very dear friend, and as I enjoy no Feast unless you are part of it, I come to speak with you for a while. I am sad indeed to find myself two hundred leagues from my dear, my very dear friends, from my family, my children, my brothers and especially from you who are unique to me; but one must bear one’s exile with patience and resignation. It will be prolonged until I have met and seen our new archbishop[[36]](#footnote-36); it is with him that I must deal regarding our affairs. There is nothing to do at the moment with the Government. The Minister has convinced himself that we can only be approved by a law. I leave it to you to judge if we should try it! I asked him for an interview which he granted; he received me very well but kept on insisting on his procedure: “Keep on until the opening of Parliament” he told me. On my making the remark that it would be funny to take up the time of both Houses with so small an enterprise as ours, he replied that not a few less important ones would end up there...

July 26th.

I call attention to your health and to that of the whole of our dear family. Observe indispositions from the moment they begin. Watch out for the lungs of our young men. Give me news of each one in particular. Let them get lots of rest; be willing to let them remain an extra hour in bed. During vacations, when they no longer have the daily exercise of going to and from the seminary, have them go for a walk two or even three times a week if necessary but do not allow them to go until the sun is declining; the midday heat will be more harmful to them than useful. But after having cared for their bodies, see that they do not neglect their souls. Let fervour be sustained, interior life, love of abnegation, of mortification, solitude, assiduity for study. All that is necessary. Tell them they are ever before my eyes, that I think of them, that I love them. Almost every evening I am with you before the Blessed Sacrament when you are saying your evening prayers. I delight in this thought in the chapel of M. Liautard[[37]](#footnote-37) where I go at that hour to adore our divine Master. Think of me at that moment. It is my only consolation for I pine far from you; nothing assuages our separation. Pray for the blind or the wicked who are vexing us.

Adieu, my dear, my very dear friend; I love you as myself, pray for me.

Adieu.

**To M. Lainé, Minister of the Interior, at Paris.[[38]](#footnote-38)**

9:XIII in Oblate Writings

*Father de Mazenod requests government authorization for the Missionaries of Provence.*

Lainé

Paris,

July 31, 1817.

Your Lordship,

The kindness that Your Lordship showed me in the audience which you granted me the other day encourages me to open my heart completely to you concerning the matter which led me to see you.

I view the little known ministry which I have undertaken as being of the greatest importance in the present circumstances, not only for the good of religion but for the service of the King and public order; and I must truly be imbued with this thought for I willingly sacrifice for it every advantage that other available and possibly enticing careers offered me.[[39]](#footnote-39)

The testimonies of the Division General, the Inspector of the National Guard and the Subprefect are proof of what I am asserting.[[40]](#footnote-40)

But I do not want to hide from Your Lordship that, in order to bring about the immense good assured us by the first success Providence has granted us, I must be invested not only with the confidence of ecclesiastical superiors, such as they have granted me without restriction up to the present, but also with the approval of the Government for which I have been working as efficaciously as I have been for the Church.

Everyone knows that I have come to Paris to obtain approval for our establishment, which is nothing other than the gathering of several priests who devote themselves principally to the service of country people whom the lack of pastors has caused to fall unwittingly into degradation, and to the instruction of the city’s youth in the sole aspect of morals and religion.

If I return to my diocese without bringing back some little sign of Government approval, I will have lost half of my effectiveness and even run the risk of seeing the priests united around me become discouraged, return to their homes and some may even leave the kingdom as they had considered doing before I attracted them to myself; and then we would have to forsake all the benefits that religion, society and the State could expect from their zeal.

Your Lordship believes that a law is necessary to render our little society capable of receiving the gift that I want to give it and the bequests which may be left to it by people who are already convinced of its usefulness because of all the good that they have seen it accomplishing under their very eyes.

I respect Your Lordship’s thoughts too much to argue about that, but at least, and to that I will limit my request at this time, what, I almost dare to say, I claim as a recompense for my zeal, is that the King can at least, by a provisional ordnance and until a law definitively determines the manner of this establishment’s existence, authorize the Abbé de Mazenod to join with several priests of good will in the former house of the Carmelites at Aix in order to devote themselves to the religious instruction of youth and to travel from there into the parishes of cities and especially of the countryside which are calling to their ministry for help.

If I have cause to regret not being better known to Your Lordship, it is especially in this circumstance for it seems that I need to inspire some confidence in your religious outlook so that you could truly weigh the reasons that I take the liberty to propose to you; but independently of what opinion people may have of me, Your Lordship has too much zeal for good and too much wisdom not to realize the happy results that this testimony of approval would bring about; it would possibly be less necessary if people did not know that I had asked for it, but now it has become indispensable because of the efforts I have made to obtain it.

I hope, My Lord, that I am not addressing myself to Your Lordship in vain with this confidence and openness of heart which enable you to read my thoughts; and that you will gladly grant the request that I make to you solely in view of the good you will always promote and to which I would like to contribute with all my power.

Accept, My Lord, the homage of profound respect by which I have the honor to be Your Lordship’s very humble and obedient servant,

the Abbé Eugene de Mazenod.

**To Father Tempier at Aix.[[41]](#footnote-41)**

19:VI in Oblate Writings

*The Society of Missionaries of Provence is recognized by the Government. Anonymous memorandum against Father de Mazenod The new concordat.*

Tempier

Paris,

August 5, 1817.

You can let it be known throughout the city, my dear friend for the consolation of worthy people and to the despair of the wicked, that we are recognized by the Government and authorized to continue *the functions that* we have *so happily begun[[42]](#footnote-42)* These are the very terms of the letter which the Minister has just addressed to *M de Mazenod, superior of the Missions of Aix.* You will note that M. de Mazenod had never assumed this title in speaking or in writing to the Minister. Apparently it is to belie the author of the anonymous letter which denounced me to the Minister while designating me, such is the regard he has for my person, as *a certain Sieur de Mazenod, priest of this diocese, calling himself a missionary.*

Yes, my dear, will you believe it, in the midst of the unanimous chorus, as the Minister says further, of ecclesiastical, civil and military authorities who hasten to give him the most flattering tributes about me and our work, has been raised the voice of an anonymous wretch who has denounced the Sieur de Mazenod, who calls himself a missionary, as a man whose principles in respect to the hierarchy are most dangerous, who has dared to teach publicly in catechetical instructions that the Pope is infallible, who is at open war with all the parish priests of the city, against whom these same parish priests have brought a judicial complaint before the Vicars General over a grave insult that he took the liberty of perpetrating against them, etc., etc. His Excellency was indignant over the foulness of this man for whom he has the utmost disdain. Instead, he holds this Sieur de Mazenod in real esteem, is well pleased with him and has not judged him anything like as dangerous as M. Anonymous.

The noble[[43]](#footnote-43) courrier has brought three cardinals’ birettas for the Périgord, de Bausset and de la Luzerne. The concordat is abrogated, that of Leo X is re-established.[[44]](#footnote-44) The organic articles are destroyed. Seven more archdioceses, 35 dioceses. The present dioceses are reduced. Aix will bear also the title of Archdiocese of Embrun but is reduced to the *arrondissement.* Marseilles is re-established, Arles also, and Fréjus. We will have as suffragans only Fréjus, Digne and Gap. Bishoprics, chapters, pastors and seminaries will be endowed. Five bishops, not having resigned, have written a letter of excuse to the Pope; some, still obstinate, will be put aside. The King has explained the oath that is made to the Charter. The whole of it has been printed, following the agreement with the Pope, We will know the bishops within two days. It is certain that ours is Archbishop de Bausset. He will not have a vast diocese.

All that I report to you is certain, with the exception of the nomination of Archbishop de Bausset which is certain but with a lesser degree of certitude. All that has to do with our affairs is before my eyes...

**To Father Tempier at Aix.[[45]](#footnote-45)**

20:VI in Oblate Writings

*Grieves over living far from the community. Virtues on which religious Congregations are founded. Regularity. Opposition. Let the novices go frequently to the L’Enclos. Be attached to ones house. List of new bishops.*

Tempier

[Paris,

August 12, 1817].

My very dear friend and brother,

If my letters give you as much pleasure as that which I experience on receiving your letters, I imagine that you wish to receive them oftener. As for myself, I would wish to have such happiness every day. I am bored when separated from you and pine for my return. Nothing on earth is worth being kept from dwelling pleasantly in our holy house with such good brothers as yourselves. Never have I appreciated so much *quam dolce et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum[[46]](#footnote-46)* This strikes me all the more in that I see with my own eyes that it is not given to all communities to taste this happiness, harder to find than one thinks in this world below. Let us pray God to preserve for us this precious blessing that men cannot snatch from us except by our own fault...

For the love of God never cease to inculcate and preach humility, abnegation, forgetfulness of self, disdain for worldly esteem. May these be ever the foundations of our little Society which, combined with a truly disinterested zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, and the most tender, affectionate and sincere charity amongst ourselves, will make of our house an earthly paradise and will establish it in more solid a manner than all possible orders and laws. Hold firmly the reins of discipline, for this is the way to ensure perseverance. Slackness, as I see it, is the beginning of destruction. Insist that dissipation not enter by all the doors and windows that our ministry prevents us from closing. It will be more virtuous to be faithful to the rules when observed in spite of the obstacles that ceaselessly occur...

Venerable Paul of the Cross, founder of the Congregation of discalced Clerks of the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ, whose life I am presently reading, said *le fondazioni devono essere parto della orazione,[[47]](#footnote-47)* which is to say that it is by prayer that foundations are laid. And thus with nothing he accomplished many things. If we knew how to pray better, we would have more courage. I cannot express how much I would wish that our little community might raise up in full view of the Church the fervour of the religious Orders and regular Congregations from which sprang such shining virtue in the first days of their establishment.

It seems to me that, although few in number, we could do still more good, console the Church for so many plagues that consume her on all sides, and sanctify ourselves in the most consoling and happy manner. I would prefer to show forth and practice this than to write about it but the good God has exiled me in punishment for not having availed myself enough of the means of salvation that his mercy provided in our holy house, in the midst of such good brothers as yourselves...

Dissolute or bad priests are the great plague of the Church. Let us wholly exert ourselves to mitigate this cancerous growth by keeping ourselves aloof both in conversation and conduct; we must not be afraid to be thought singular in that respect. Were we to behave like them, they would be our friends. On those terms, I prefer to have them as adversaries and calumniators. Saints have had to put up with this before our time. Let us imitate them and rejoice to be treated like them.

Venerable Paul, of whom I spoke a little while ago, wrote one day to one of his friends, at a time when he was much opposed: “Oh God! how the demons rage and what a tumult is raised by evil tongues! I do not know which side to turn and God knows in what a state I am... Patience, we must pray hard because storms arise on all sides and contrary winds blow from all quarters. May God be blessed!” He said moreover: “The ship is far at sea without sails or oars but is steered by the great Pilot who will guide it unfailingly to port. Although battered by the storm, it is thus that the great power and wisdom of the great Pilot at the helm will be more evident. Long live Jesus Christ who gives us strength to suffer all manner of grief for his love! The works of God have always been opposed so that divine magnificence may shine more brightly. When matters seem the most desperate is when they are on the point of succeeding. *Dominus mortificat*... *deducit an iniferos et reducit[[48]](#footnote-48)* and may God give us the victory through *Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum.* So speak the saints, so they behave. On they went and prayed, letting others say what they would. Let us do the same!

... We must be sure that our good novices enjoy themselves three days of the week at *L’Enclos[[49]](#footnote-49).* Iwould not want them to go running in the fields or on the highways but that they go and breathe the excellent air at *L’Enclos* when it is no longer hot. One could delay supper an hour so that they might have time to profit from the coolness. They should not go late to bed but thus have recreation before supper. They would have adoration before leaving and the reading in a room or on a bench of *L’Enclos.* Onreturning they would only have to sit at table and dine and have evening prayers so that they would always be in bed at half past nine. This routine would be important for the health of our young people. For the rest, one should arrange everything in daylight for it would not be well for the community to come in after nightfall. I prefer *L’Enclos* because it is closer and the air is better there.

If some priest wished to join us, he should do so at this time... However we ought never to decide to receive doubtful candidates whose virtue has not been well tried.

One must moreover be greatly attached to the house. He who only looks on it as a hotel where he only passes through would do not good therein. One must be able to say like St. Thomas: *haec requies mea[[50]](#footnote-50)* for the whole of one’s life. I see that communities where this spirit reigns the most are those which do the most good and where one lives the most happily. May God give us the grace to be imbued with this truth and let us neglect nothing to instil it in our young people.

The list of bishops is not yet public. I could have been included if I had not preferred the obscure life of our holy community and the kind of ministry to which the Lord has called me in favour of youth and the poor.

**To Madame de Mazenod, Papassaudy Street, at Aix, B.-du Rhone.[[51]](#footnote-51)**

10:XIII in Oblate Writings

*The life Eugene is leading at Paris is far from being in line with his vocation, but he will refuse any post that would take him away from Aix.*

L.J.C.

Mazenod Madame

Paris,

August 21, 1817.

Dear mama, you did not tell me when you plan to return to St. Laurent. Still I think that it would be too long to wait for your return before writing to you. So, I am risking this letter, which may take more than a month to reach you; it will bring you more pleasure than indirect news that you will receive about me.

You are quite mistaken to worry yourself on my account. I am leading a life very suited to putting on weight and giving rest to my body from all its fatigue, but my poor soul is also feeling its effects. But you have taken the attitude not to bother yourself by this last item, which however is well worth that we think of it a little. When I return to Aix, I will no longer know how to preach or hear confessions; I do nothing of that here. I busy myself from morning to night only in drawing up memoranda, making visits, petitioning, etc. Confidentially, I was flattered, but I steadfastly refused everything that would have taken me away from Aix.[[52]](#footnote-52) By doing so, I have, as the world expresses it, sacrificed my career. I don’t know if those at home would approve of my preferring to work in obscure places for the spiritual welfare of my fellow-men rather than in the places of prestige which were offered to me and which could have led me to the very top.[[53]](#footnote-53) Too bad if they cannot appreciate my devotion to duty. As long as others profit from it, that is all that matters and I am content

**To Father Tempier at Aix.[[54]](#footnote-54)**

21:VI in Oblate Writings

*Regrets being far from the family. A notable grace received from God The spirit that is proper to the Congregation.*

Tempier

[Paris]

August 22, 1817.

I begin my letter today, my very dear friend and brother, by indulging in the pleasure of scolding you. Keep in mind that since your letter of the 7th I have received nothing from you. Do you not know that I regard myself as exiled in Paris, that I cannot live long separated from my dear family, and that my sole consolation is to converse with you and about all of you. Yet you wish to deprive me of this under the pretext of a greater good!

Oh I fear not to sacrifice the happiness of living with her whom they call in the world good fortune; I consider myself happy, on the contrary, to be able to credit myself for having known how to appreciate and prefer this family of my choice, to everything the world can offer...

... You want me to speak of something edifying, because that does good to the community but explain to me how it can happen that I may say something which can produce such an effect, preoccupied as I am with a thousand matters extraneous to piety...

We must admit however that we serve a great master and that one never loses anything on his account. I have just been more than ever confirmed in this conviction; so have I told myself, no later than this very day, in the Church of the Assumption where I went to thank him for a notable and unexpected grace[[55]](#footnote-55) which he had just granted me, and of which the consequences will be so felicitous for our holy house, that I wish to abandon myself to Him without ever being anxious about anything, doing everything for his glory and leaving him to care of the rest. Itis truly inconceivable how he makes everything accord with his designs by ways we never would have thought of.

All that is very enigmatic for you. This is not yet the time for me to explain. I shall not delay in associating you with my gratitude, and all the more because I feel incapable of making any return by myself for all that I owe to this good Master, who truly arranges everything *suaviter et fortiter.* He has only to decide and kings themselves are obliged to obey. It is astonishing; it is stunning. I cannot say more to you; only let the community pray for my intention.

But who are we indeed that the good God should listen to our pleas? We are, or we ought to be, holy priests who consider themselves happy and very happy to devote their fortune, their health, their life in the service and for the glory of our God. We are put on earth, particularly those of our house, to sanctify ourselves while helping each other by our example, our words and our prayers. Our Lord Jesus Christ has left to us the task of continuing the great work of the redemption of mankind. It is towards this unique end that all our efforts must tend; as long as we will not have spent our whole life and given all our blood to achieve this, we having nothing to say; especially when as yet we have given only a few drops of sweat and a few spells of fatigue. This spirit of being wholly devoted to the glory of God, the service of the Church and the salvation of souls, is the spirit that is proper to our Congregation, a small one, to be sure, but which will always be powerful as long as she is holy. Our novices must steep themselves in these thoughts, which must sink deep in them and be often meditated. Each Society in the Church has a spirit which is its own; which is inspired by God according to the circumstances and needs of the times wherein it pleases God to raise these supporting bodies or rather it would be better to say these elite bodies which precede the main army on the march, which excel it in bravery and which thus obtains the more brilliant victories.

**To the Missionaries of Provence at Aix.[[56]](#footnote-56)**

22:VI in Oblate Writings

*In order to remain faithful to his missionary vocation, the Founder has refused important posts. However, he will possibly agree to become Vicar General of the new archbishop of Aix.*

Missionaries at Aix

Paris,

August 22, 1817.

Has it now been proved that I love you more than anything, my dear friends of the city of my birth? No, nothing has been able to seduce me. I have sacrificed for you what is called in the world one’s fortune and I am well pleased. I am not referring to the two positions of Grand Vicar in the provinces for they were not worth counting or comparing with our holy mission and our dear Congregation, but to something more.[[57]](#footnote-57) And how could I consent to live two hundred leagues away from what is most dear in the world? I did not have the strength to acquiesce to that idea. The refusal might have seemed surprising but was not displeasing, such was the respect for my motive. So much so that I shall still have the happiness of living amongst all that I love. Let us pray God that this will always be for his greater glory and for our salvation. I shall never regret what I have just done because I believed myself obliged to be more interested in the spiritual good of my fellow citizens than in my fortune, this being the term we have to use. Nevertheless, it can happen that this devotedness on my part be quite detrimental to all. The Archbishop will give you the solution of this problem for, whatever disdain I profess for all possible honours, I could not, without lacking in my duty to my ministry, reappear at Aix without having previously received an authentic sign of the approbation and confidence of the new pastor that Providence has granted us. There are proprieties that I have neglected too much until now but in regard to which sad experience has taught me only too well that one must be more strict than I have been until the present...

**To his father and uncles, at Palermo.[[58]](#footnote-58)**

11:XIII in Oblate Writings

*Return to France immediately: Fortuné is named Bishop of Marseilles. He will be the protector of the Missionaries of Provence.*

L.J.C.

Mazenod C.A. de and his brothers

[Paris,]

August 28 [1817].

I am reopening my letter, my very dear friends; I was too late in getting it off to you yesterday.[[59]](#footnote-59) The reason I’ve re-opened it is to tell you, but under the strictest secrecy, that the king has just appointed my uncle, Charles Fortuné, to the bishopric of Marseilles.[[60]](#footnote-60) I am still filled to overflowing with gratitude to God. Without my uncle’s having even thought of desiring it, the Lord has given him the most coveted bishopric in all France. Its location, resources, perfectly disposed people and excellent clergy all make it so

What enormous good we are going to do! Provence will be regenerated. All the Bishops of the province will be of but one mind; I know them all. The Society which the Good Lord has confided to me is becoming astonishingly strong; I am preparing choice troops for the Bishop of Marseilles. There are beautiful days ahead for the Church. But, enough

September 6

You have possibly left already, my dear friends.[[61]](#footnote-61) If that were so, I would be very pleased, since I can’t wait till you have set foot in France.

It doesn’t matter which way you come from now. However, I would like you to avoid landing at Marseilles; I would prefer that you enter through Toulon or Nice.

Since my last letter, I have gathered the opinion of certain others who are most qualified to give such a decision and also to assess our obligations in regard to the Church; M. Duclaux for one, and there are others besides. All of them agree that my uncle is obliged in conscience to accept the bishopric of Marseilles. Besides, the King does not want to accept refusals, he would even be irritated by them since, as he says, when a soldier is called to the flag, honor demands that he hasten to respond, in the same way religion enjoins a cleric to respond with all his might for the good to be done in the post to which he is assigned.

I think my Uncle is convinced of this outlook; and that he will consider as a call from Providence an appointment to which neither he himself nor those close to him contributed, about which we weren’t even thinking, and which is so designed by Providence, by the Master of hearts and events that it is perfectly appropriate to consolidate, nay, to put it better, to save the work to which God has linked France’s salvation.[[62]](#footnote-62)

But if I were able to imagine that he could hesitate somewhat, I would throw myself at his feet and charge him by all that is most sacred to reject totally every pusillanimous thought under whatever plausible exterior it might disguise itself. How many compelling reasons there are! The very first is that if ever the will of God was evident in human events it is surely now. My uncle, completely forgotten, was living in far away Sicily, as far removed from thinking of the episcopacy as that island is from our capital. His nephew, the only person who could prompt anyone to think of him, was detained by the duties of the ministry that Providence had entrusted to him in the countryside of Provence, which he was evangelizing with his respectable co-workers; and while he was wearing himself out in those demanding works (I spat up blood), he said: people blame me surely for forgetting my family in order to live among these poor people, but, for my part, I know that one must first of all fulfil the task that the Father of the household assigns to his servants; my presence is needed here to avoid the ruin of the infant work against which Hell is stirring up every kind of enemy; I will stay there, and God, who knows the purity of my intentions and what everyone needs, will see to everything.

What has happened? All this while, the steps that I had taken f[o]r my father, always weak when done from a distance, resulted in nothing. The King appointed people to French bishoprics; my uncle was not included. Everything was lost for us. Because of that there were reproaches for not having acted according to rules of human prudence, etc. But God, forever just, had not forgotten that it was for the glory of his name and filled with confidence in him that I had sacrificed everything for him, brought about an event that obliged me to come to Paris to defend his work under attack from evil influence. To fulfill the law of courtesy and justice, I was obliged first to present myself to the Minister, and then to a Bishop whom I knew no more than he knew me;[[63]](#footnote-63) we spoke briefly about my uncle, I put on his desk a half-sheet of paper outlining an account of his service; the following day he was named Bishop of Marseilles. This means that at the very moment when I was seeking earthly support, the Lord, the proven Protector of our great work of instructing and converting poor country people, chose with his own hand the most suitable instrument for sustaining our Society in the very province where our sublime ministry must be carried on: I need not point out to you what it will mean to this Society to have the uncle of its Superior as bishop of one of the principal dioceses in which it exercises its salutary influence. No matter how little we may heed the ways of Divine Providence, what reflections could not be made on this matter! Let me point out only one which shows sufficiently that God wisely directs all things here on earth. If I had neglected to labor for his glory and left Provence to come to Paris in order to solicit a bishopric for my uncle, I would have acted contrary to my conscience. Even though I might have succeeded, one thing is sure; my uncle would not have been appointed to the See of Marseilles and we would have had to reproach ourselves for having acted humanly in a matter where everything must be motivated by the supernatural. Thank God, I acted as a good priest should: *quaerite primum regnum Dei.[[64]](#footnote-64)* I had only God in mind and God has now worked what is almost a miracle in my favor: for, note well, my dear uncle, I am not thinking of the honor that may come to you from it, etc. Not at all! And that is what makes my reasoning invincible. I have in mind only the welfare of the Church, the glory of God, and the salvation of souls. I consider you only as being chosen to contribute to these great things and consequently as obliged, and obliged under pain of sin, yes sin (I say it in all seriousness, and I have a fair enough reputation as a theologian), to give yourself, to submit and to sacrifice yourself. Refusal, even a delay would go contrary to the unfolding and designs of Providence in a most unfortunate way. It would bring about the greatest evil and would make your views, since the King sees it as a crime, an outrage against his concern for the Church’s well-being, and he does not want to hear of it. You would thus put yourself in full revolt against your King, sadden all those good people and even contribute to a considerable disorder that you undoubtedly want to avoid with all your strength, for I know your principles.

Now, what objections could you make? There are no general admissible ones whatsoever. You are not wiser than the Church... What personal and special objections could you be tempted to offer? Would it be your age? Half of those named are as old as you are; several are older. Besides, they knew your age, and far from being an obstacle, it seemed to be an advantage. Your infirmities? They would be an extra merit. Your diocese is not large, it will not be difficult to visit it; according to the new boundaries, it scarcely includes more than the city and suburbs of Marseilles. I will be with you, and others as well, as zealous as I can be; and if, later on, your infirmities increase, no one would cause any difficulty to giving you a coadjutor and the choice would most likely not fall on anyone you don’t know. And here I must again tell you that of all the dioceses of France Marseilles is the most favored by God. The population is the opposite to what it was at the beginning of the Revolution. Everyone, rich and poor alike, ardently want a bishop. You will be welcomed there like an angel of God. All the authorities are good and friends of ours. Villeneuve is Prefect, Montgrand is Mayor, Panisse is Commander of the National Guard; he is my friend, as well as the Division Commander, Baron de Damas, who receives Communion every week. The clergy is perfect; the principal pastors are graduates of the Sacred Heart, full of zeal and good will; they would all be like soft wax in your hands. The semin[a]ry has the same spirit; I know all those gentlemen. I must add that in my community you will have true Oblates who are ready for all good things and who will renew your villages. In a word, I will say it a thousand times, there is no diocese in France which presents fewer difficulties and more consolations and hope. You would possibly want to tell us of your unworthiness for such a great dignity. It is good for you to think so, but either we have to burn books or you must not be your own judge in this matter.

To all these undeniable reasons I have put before you, I could add many others, but it would take too much space to go into them. However, there is one especially which takes first place in my heart because I know its full importance. It alone would be sufficient to persuade you, if you appreciated it well, namely, your acceptance is necessary for the future of our work. If I know anything of the workings of Divine Providence, the good Lord reserved Marseilles for you with the view towards giving us special protection. Ah, this fervent community which relives in our day all the virtues of the most beautiful times of Christianity was worthy of the Lord’s consideration! Shame on you if, not recognizing your calling, you were to reject that noble protectorate on which depends the salvation of so many souls

Before concluding, I should complain somewhat to all of you for having absolutely lost the habit of writing to me. I don’t know if I have received any news from you in six months. I don’t understand in truth what that means. If there are no ships, are you afraid to write to me by post? Why leave me thus in distress? It is certainly enough to be separated from you for nearly twenty years. What is more, we may not recognize each other when we see each other again; let’s at least keep up some way of finding each other. I say that without pretending to make the least complaint, but it is sure that it would be easy for me to set the exact time when our contacts ceased to be what they were up to then.[[65]](#footnote-65) I saw no more trust; reserve had taken its place, and it could also be that tenderness gave in to some other cooler feeling I cannot name. It is true that on my part, at times tired out by a resistance that seemed unreasonable to me, I wrote in lively terms. But since when is such vivacity a crime among sensible people? Come soon and put all that in order

**To Father Tempier at Aix.[[66]](#footnote-66)**

23:VI in Oblate Writings

*Fortuné de Mazenod has been named bishop of Marseilles. This will be advantageous for the Congregation. Pray that the bishop elect will return from Sicily and accept the nomination.*

Tempier

[Paris]

September 7, 1817.

I have sent word to M. Maunier that my uncle is named bishop of Marseilles... With regard to all this, I assure you I consider only the greater good of our work, and that I am not thinking merely of the honour that can accrue thereby for my uncle; and that is so true that I would not stir an inch to have him named elsewhere. My rejoicing over his nomination was only because of the great advantages that our undertaking would derive from it. I regard them as incalculable. So have prayers said lest, if I do succeed at this end, I fail with my uncle who could be quite unwilling.[[67]](#footnote-67) I have written volumes on that aspect, I have elaborated excellent reasons *ad infinitum,* God alone can dispose hearts persuasively...

If my uncle ends up as bishop of Marseilles, I think that you will believe that I have employed my time well enough for our work, for it is the happiest thing that could happen in its favour. We will be assured of being able to do good in the diocese of Marseilles.

**To the Abbé Fortune de Mazenod, at Palermo.[[68]](#footnote-68)**

12:XIII in Oblate Writings

*Fortuné is named bishop of Marseilles. This appointment is providential for the Missionaries of Provence.*

Mazenod Fortuné de

[Aix],

September l6,[[69]](#footnote-69) 1817.

All the newspapers have informed the whole of France and Europe of what you, on your island removed from this world, may still not know.

The King has named you Bishop of Marseilles, and everyone approves of this appointment. I announced it to you in a thousand letters written from every direction and I am writing this one without attempting to repeat all that I said in previous ones. God alone is the author of this appointment; men have been involved in it only in as much as that was needed to obey and follow the direction indicated by Divine Providence. It chose Marseilles for you, which in my opinion is the most valuable See in France because there you will be able to support and protect all the good that my fervent community has done unceasingly since it began. It needs such support and God, in whom alone it has always placed its hopes, has provided it. You see that I consider things with a faith-vision; that is the only thing that I have in mind when I feel obliged to tell you, in line with the opinion of all who are the most reliable here, that you are obliged in conscience to respond to the King’s confidence and to consecrate yourself with absolute devotion to the service of the Church in the post being assigned to you... As for myself and my work, which are the salvation of youth and the poor countryside people, that is all that I could ask from God.

Come right away by the shortest route. Farewell.

P.S. Take courage, I will be your other-self.

**To Father Tempier at Aix.[[70]](#footnote-70)**

24:VI in Oblate Writings

*Visits to the newly named Archbishop of Aix. A cordial first interview in the course of which Archbishop de Bausset announced that he will name Father de Mazenod as Vicar General. Subsequently the attitude of the prelate is more reserved*

Tempier

[Paris]

October 9, 1817.

I am well aware, my dear friend and good brother, that the prolongation of my stay at Paris demands some explanation. It would seem strange to me to find myself still here if I did not know my position better than anyone. Providence evidently had its intentions when it inspired me to come to Paris. The principal affair which brought me was finished in eight days. Moreover, my presence here having evoked the memory of my uncle, he was named in twenty-four hours to the bishopric of Marseilles. I have regarded this nomination as the greatest proof of the protection of God and I shall not change my opinion, even if my uncle were to stand firmin refusing a see that I believe him, in conscience, obliged to accept, were it only for our sake. There now remains one last thing for me to do: Archbishop de Bausset, named Archbishop of Aix, arrived while I was on retreat. He had written to me himself to congratulate me over the nomination of my uncle. He told me in this letter that he had written to his nephew, the Prefect of Marseilles, to felicitate him. He added that he considered my uncle as infinitely more suitable for the archbishopric of Aix than himself, etc. I go to see him and he receives me with open arms, goes into a thousand details with me about the diocese and finishes by telling me that he proposes to make a clean sweep and name me as his grand vicar together with another person whom he indicated to me.

That was something to be glad about, I believe, for that was all we needed, not that I want to be a grand vicar; for me that is of little moment and would even be burdensome; but the advantage for our work was incalculable and I only envisaged it from that point of view. Apparently since then our enemies have set in motion all their machinations and must have succeeded in changing the mind of the archbishop; I am at least constrained to think so, judging by his subsequent attitude towards me. In the fiveor six times that I have been to sec him, I have met him only once. We came together in fact at Issy but not the least little sign of confidence, not a word about the diocese, about his projects and I came to the conclusion that I am irksome to him personally for, after he has made so many overtures to me, he dares not overcome the opposition that they have shown to him. There, my dear friend, is where we stand.

I shall wait a little while longer and, if he continues to act in this manner, I shall really see to it that I have an explanation.

**To Fathers Tempier and Maunier at Aix.[[71]](#footnote-71)**

25:VI in Oblate Writings

*Bishop de Bausset, fearful of the parish priests of Aix, will not name Fr. de Mazenod as Vicar general. Is reproachful about his behaviour. Must he continue the work of the missions?*

Tempier and Maunier

[Paris]

October 19, 1817.

Imust not leave you ignorant, my very dear friends and unfailingly good brothers, that our cause... I needed a very special grace not to quarrel openly with the Prelate for letting himself be influenced to the point of being drawn into the maelstrom of the passions of men who for a long time now have impeded and persecuted us**...[[72]](#footnote-72)** This is perhaps the greatest sacrifice of my self-love I have made. Twenty times in my discussion with the Prelate, I was tempted to jump up... But the Mission, the Congregation, and allthose souls who have yet to be saved through our ministry held me back, nailed me to the hard cross which my nature could scarcely put up with... He gave me all the blame and vindicated the parish priests... If I showed the Prelate some surprise at being so badly rewarded for my unstinting devotedness, his Lordship interjected Scriptural passages to prove to me that one must count solely on eternal reward, that one must sincerely say, like the prophet: *elegi abjectus esse in domo Dei[[73]](#footnote-73),* that I must beware of pharisaic pride which loves to be saluted in public places, take the first seat, be adorned with beautiful stoles, that he was free to make or not make me his Vicar General... In all this, I certainly find only this last assertion reasonable but it was a quarrel about nothing since it was not I who had asked him to make me his Grand Vicar, that it was he who had broached the matter to me and if I had not refused, it was because I was inclined to believe that this title would be useful to gain more respect for our holy work...

We parted good friends, that is to say, he embraced me two or three times as if the wounds which rent my heart could be healed by passing a sponge over my face.

I beg you, my dear friends, to join in finding out before God what we must do. Put aside all that is human, consider only God, the Church and the souls to be saved. I will go by what you decide. I am ready to drink the chalice to the dregs. Note that the humiliations are for me; there never was any question about yourselves in all the words exchanged. The Archbishop seems fairly favourable towards the missions but we will have to expect that he will harass us from all sides. He will only let himself be advised by our enemies of whom he is afraid.

My first natural impulse was to leave him in the lurch, but I shall, with the help of God, do exactly the opposite. I have refused to be Grand Vicar and theological advisor of the bishop who is most influential[[74]](#footnote-74), who in a few years would have made me bishop and I refused new offers made to me the day after I received this cruel setback... The fact is my conscience forces me not to consider my personal interest in the policy I have to follow... God will be our judge; I am not afraid to appeal in his court against all the injustices of men. That is the extent to which my intentions are pure and my views are upright. So now, see for yourselves and decide. I feel courageous enough if supported by your virtue, encouraged by your resignation to endure all the outrages which are still in store for me. You will be my strength and we will mutually console each other when the wicked have their way. The piety of the young plants which grow about us will compensate us for our sorrows. I will be very humiliated, myself, because it is supposed that I take much to heart what I have undertaken; this humiliation will be useful to me otherwise for I am so little attached to what I have undertaken that in this moment the greatest act of virtue that I can do, the greatest victory that grace can gain over nature is to be steadfast and bear the brunt.

Certainly, one’s unregenerate nature that has to be crucified would revel in this circumstance if, with a haughty tone proportionate to the outrages that I endure, I went and notified His Grace the Archbishop that I want nothing more from his diocese, that I will take back my house to do what I like with it, that I let the youths go free and that I let fall all the bane of the measures that the indignity of this business determines me to take, on those who are the authors thereof and that, in order that there be no mistake about it, I am going to publish all that I have done for the good of my country and the obstacles that self-interest and jealousy have never ceased to oppose to it, etc... But God would hold me to account. I shall not do it unless you do not wish to put up with it anymore. In this case, it would not be my choice so I would no longer have to give an account before God. So there you are, in possession of the facts and positions. Reply to me immediately. Your response will be the rule of my conduct. But you must lose no time. Adieu, dear friends; when I wish consolation, I think of you whom I love with all my heart.

**To Fathers Tempier and Maunier at Aix.[[75]](#footnote-75)**

26:VI in Oblate Writings

*Hopes to be able to continue working at Aix, unless it be impossible to come to an agreement with Archbishop de Bausset.*

Tempier and Maunier

[Paris]

October 22, 1817.

Although I wrote you at some length the other day, my dear friends and good brothers, I take up my pen today once more to speak to you about my dispositions and reassure you properly concerning myself. I am perfectly at peace and disposed with all my heart to continue the good work begun. I am disposed not to leave the *Midi* where our ministry can be most fruitful and I entirely refuse Chartres whose bishop I have avoided seeing, precisely not to be impeded in my determination.

If it is absolutely impossible to reach an agreement at Aix and if the Archbishop deludes himself to the point of depriving his diocese of all the good we could do there, we will go elsewhere. It would cost me dearly to abandon Aix but the sacrifice would not be in vain. Nevertheless I think that we ought not to decide this except as a last resort; the Archbishop will decide. M. Duclaux, whose saintliness you well know, is much inclined to think that we should do our best to remain at Aix; but does not wish them to leave us short of any amenities that we have a right to demand. I assure you on this score that I will not be difficult; I will never ask for anything beyond what is necessary for us to be able to do good. I believe, for that matter, that it would be better to practice patience and bide our time while things work out for the best. Let us stand together, let us be for God alone, and we will be strong.

You will have received my letter of the 19th which perhaps disquieted you somewhat; take heart; I will say to you as Saint Paul did to the Ephesians: *Peto ne deficiatis in tribulationibus meis pro vobis, quae est gloria vestra.[[76]](#footnote-76)* It is quite simple, the devil wishes to do us evil because we are doing it to him. Please God we will do him still more by snatching away from him, if possible, all the souls he is dragging into hell. He would certainly want to seize back those of our youths at Aix; ought we to deliver them to him? God would hold as to account for them.

**To Brother H. Courtès at Aix.[[77]](#footnote-77)**

27:VI in Oblate Writings

*Sorry for not having written sooner. Be prudent in regard to health and give a good example.*

Courtès

Paris,

October 22, 1817.

The missionaries who are going to Arles[[78]](#footnote-78) will bring you, my dear friend, this tardy response to the letter which you had the goodness to write to me on August 29th. I think, my child, that I would not have dared to face you on my return had I not been preceded by this letter. What did you think of me? That I was lazy, nothing else, is that not so my Courtès? Take care for I would not forgive your coming to any other conclusion. As for idleness, I’ll let it go although I may still be able to defend myself on that score. Anyway my heart is free from reproach. That is all I need.

You say nothing to me about your health as if I must be indifferent about the condition in which you find yourself. I clearly see that I will have to go and find out for myself on the spot. I could well wish to press you against my heart to give you warmth. What I would not give to see you well! So help yourself a little, do not leave it all to the doctor to do. Must it be that we shall never live under the same roof? You do not wish to close my eyes? It would nevertheless be a consolation for me; but who can read what is at the back of your mind? If you desire health, it is only to escape more quickly from me... Become well just the same whatever it must cost me when I shall lose you for ever.

Word reaches me that your pupils are making an astonishing progress. I hope that you do not tire yourself too much.

I believe you follow the exercises of the house. Continue, my dear child, to give the good example of regularity, of modesty, of obedience and of all the religious virtues. It is only by such means that we will be able to overcome the efforts of the enemy of all good; we will be invincible as long as we are virtuous. So be it ever increasingly, that is the best reply that we can make to those who do us evil; also pray for them; give them in all circumstances good for evil.

Adieu, dear friend, I embrace and love you with all my heart.

Eug[ene] de Mazenod, missionary priest.

**To Fathers Tempier and Maunier, at Aix.[[79]](#footnote-79)**

28:VI in Oblate Writings

*Father de Mazenod will show himself worthy of his co-workers. Together, in spite of difficulties, they will strive like good soldiers of Jesus Christ.*

Tempier and Maunier

[Paris]

October 31, 1817.

Well do I recognize you, dear and good brothers of mine, from the letter you wrote me on the 23rd.[[80]](#footnote-80) Very well! I shall be worthy of you. It is God for whom we suffer; we shall not let ourselves be disheartened: Ob *quam causam eliam haec patior sed non confundor[[81]](#footnote-81)* The demon would triumph were we to fail since souls redeemed by our Lord would be abandoned. So let us continue to strive like good soldiers of Jesus Christ: *Labora sicut bonus miles Christi Jesu.[[82]](#footnote-82)* What does it matter after all if some individuals may have revolted against us? Saint Paul the Apostle was treated worse than us for not only was he abandoned by Demas, but he met an Alexander who did him much evil and all those who were in Asia went away and left him: *Demas me reliquit, diligens hoc saeculum. Alexander multa mala mihi ostendit, reddet illi Dominus secundum opera ejus. Aversi sunt a me omnes qui in Asia sunt.[[83]](#footnote-83)* And when he had to defend his case before the Emperor, no one stood by him; they all abandoned him: *in prima mea defensione nemo mihi affuit, sed omnes me dereliquerunt.[[84]](#footnote-84)* Nonetheless he did not lose courage and with the powerful help of God he accomplished his allotted mission and was delivered from the jaws of the lion[[85]](#footnote-85) *Dominus autem mihi astitit et confortavil me ut per me praedicatio impleatur et audieni omnes gentes; et liberalus sum de ore leonis.* It would indeed be foolish for anyone to desire to do good but not experience opposition: *omnes qui pie voluni vivere in Christo Jesu persecutionem palientur.[[86]](#footnote-86)* Saint Paul was subjected to it everywhere but nevertheless was helped through it by the Lord. Let us be firm in our confidence that it will be the same for us: *persecutiones, passiones: qualia mihi facta sunt Antiochiae, Iconii et Lystris; quales persecutiones sustinui, et ex omnibus eripuit me Dominus.[[87]](#footnote-87)*

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*November 1st: death of Fortuné Sallier. His funeral. His eulogy*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

November 1, 1817

Death of Mr. Fortuné Sallier (18) years old. The merit of this young man was not known sufficiently. I take it on myself to pay him a very justly merited testimony. And if perhaps in praising the dead I cast some shadows on the living, it would not be difficult for me to show that his merit exceeded that of others in keeping himself constantly in a state of virtue and very great virtue, until his last breath. I have often gone out of my way to attract the confidence of young people and bring them to the good. How often has it resulted that I had nothing for my pains. Sallier owed solely to his own good will and desire to do more good the advantage of belonging to the Congregation and being directed by a priest who consecrated the first years of his ministry almost exclusively to the sanctification of youth. I did not know him at all, he was at the college where I do not know that they took any great pains to inspire him with pious sentiments. Father Milliard was confessor to those youngsters and God knows what pains he took! Allier had the good fortune to understand that that negligent man was not for him; of his own accord he formed the idea of seeking from the Director of the Congregation the helps the inept Milliard was not able to provide for his soul’s piety. On the pretext of some errand or other, he came to me and frankly opened his heart to me telling me the plan he had of continuing to make his confession to me. My surprise equaled my admiration at the sight of this young man’s candour and the innocence he had been able to preserve amid so many dangers, deprived of all helps. From that moment I revered him as one predestined, not thinking however that he was destined so soon to take possession of the Kingdom the Heavenly Father had prepared for him. Timid and cold in appearance, he was none the less constant in his resolutions, and his fidelity to the practices of piety his situation allowed stood up to the strongest trials. He went on seeing me so to speak in secret the whole time he still remained in Aix. Lodged in Paris in an excellent boarding house, he established himself still more in the good sentiments which grace, much more than I, inspired in him. He was a model of virtue in Mr. Liautard’s house as he had been in the college of Aix. This experienced teacher, a good judge of merit, informed me of it on a number of occasions[[88]](#footnote-88), and he had to have a lot of virtue to be remarked upon in a house where it is practised by most of the pupils. There he fell ill and the Lord brought him back from the portals of the grave only to allow him the consolation of dying some months later in the bosom of his family. On his return to Aix it was impossible to hide from him that he was still ill. A deep melancholy which he could not rid himself of made visible the interior sickness that secretly threatened him. His parents who loved him tenderly grieved without being able to do anything about it. Mistaking the effect for the cause, they tried everything to amuse him, and their endless tenderness went so far as to invite him to accompany them to the theatre in the hope of cheering him up. That is when his piety revealed itself with all its energy. Going along up till then with everything arranged for him, he rose up forcefully against a proposition that rightly troubled his conscience, and by his firmness dispelled any question of his ever giving way, whatever pressure might be put on him in this regard. I do not know why, but this resistance was attributed to me while its merit belonged wholly to this admirable young man, aged already 18 and quite capable of taking a generous stand of his own accord. Under the influence of this false impression, they wanted him to place his trust in some counselor they supposed to be more accommodating, but they had no better success in detaching him from the faithful friend whose solicitude for the good of his soul he knew too well and whom he wished to keep until death. Dear child! Why did your hope have to be dashed! He continued to see me as long as I still stayed in Aix, but, forced to leave him to go to Paris where I had pressing business, my poor Fortuné succumbed in the interval, practically without warning, at least they were not in time to minister to him at his death. In all probability he would not have been deprived of this consolation if I had been there. Even so I do not have the least anxiety in view of what I know of the innocence of his life. As well as that he made his confession a few days previously to the priest he had chosen to direct him in my absence. Let there be no mistake about it, we have one more intercessor in heaven. The Congregation paid him its last respects in the accustomed manner. The service could not be held until November 27, but we did not wait for that too far distant day to perform the suffrages for him, for as we know as well as the indulgences and communions laid down in the regulation, the Congregation gets six Masses celebrated for each of its members at the time of his death.

**To Father Tempier at Aix.[[89]](#footnote-89)**

29:VI in Oblate Writings

*Father de Mazenod preferred not to be superior. Virtues which novices and students ought to have. Rules to follow when leaving and on the way to the seminary.*

Tempier

Paris,

November 4, 1817.

God is my witness that it is not my ambition to be in command. That is so true that I cannot take it upon myself to give orders and just the word ‘superior’ upsets a certain interior feeling which resists every time it is pronounced, but I quite insist on order which cannot exist where there is no subordination. Let them give me a superior and I swear to him in advance to be entirely submitted to him and promise him to act only by his will which will be, in my eyes, that of God whose instrument he will be in regard to me. Please God you would wish to grant me this favour! That will come about, I hope.

As the number of young people who belong to the house has increased[[90]](#footnote-90)**,** exactness and regularity must grow in proportion. This is the time to form the spirit of the house which I have discussed with you in another letter. You have to beware of frivolity, of self-sufficiency, indiscipline independence... I quite insist that all give a good example at the seminary... They ought not to forget that we are a Congregation of regular clerics, that we ought in consequence to be more fervent than simple seminarians, that we are called to replace in the Church the piety and all the virtues of the religious Orders, that all their actions ought to be done with the dispositions in which the apostles were when they were in the Cenacle waiting for the Holy Spirit to come and enflame them with his love and give them the signal to go forth swiftly and conquer the world, etc. They ought to be more holy than the pupils of the Fathers of the Retreat[[91]](#footnote-91) who have only their own sanctification to think of while ours must make provision thereof doubly, both for themselves and for those whom they will have to lead to the knowledge of the true God and to the practice of virtue.

In the meanwhile, until we decide what must be added to the Rules, as soon as the bell for departure has been rung, the student novices[[92]](#footnote-92) must present themselves before the superior to receive his blessing; they will thence proceed to the church to adore Our Lord; after that they will leave and go in silence to the seminary, two by two or three by three, but not in a group. They can however break silence to speak in a low voice and without gesticulating, only with their companion and about class subjects. Once arrived at the seminary, if it is not time to enter into class, they will go into the church to adore the most holy Sacrament. If they are obliged to wait, they will study their lesson and continue to observe the strictest silence. In class they will follow the seminary rules exactly and will leave as soon as it is ended, again entering the church to thank Our Lord. They can never penetrate within the seminary to speak even with a director without having obtained permission before leaving the house and when they are in the superior’s presence. He will give such permission only reluctantly because the others would be obliged to wait for whomever had gone into the seminary so that all can always return together in silence. In the case of not having foreseen the need to speak with someone at the seminary and this being truly indispensable, permission should be asked from the most senior who would be obliged to refer the matter to the superior on reaching the house; it is to him that they present themselves after having adored the Blessed Sacrament. If anyone commits some fault against the Rule during the walk or at the seminary, he will accuse such to the superior on returning.

**To Father Fortuné de Mazenod, in Palermo.[[93]](#footnote-93)**

143:XV in Oblate Writings

*Eugene will help his uncle, named to the see of Marseilles, and outlines for him a plan for an exemplary life.*

Mazenod Fortuné de

[Paris]

November 17, 1817

Yes, yes, my dearest uncle, I take all the responsibility on myself, and I beg the Lord not to be harder on me, so far as concerns the personal account that I have to render him, than I have to fear from his justice for this new “endorsement.” I wish you could begin tomorrow to exercise this great ministry, as your merits would begin all the sooner. Would to God there were many bishops of your quality! But, though in general the choices are good ones, still they will not all be up to your standard. We will take St. Charles, St. Francis de Sales as patrons and models; our house will be a seminary in its regularity; your life, an example to your priests. Every moment of the day will be spent in doing good, guiding and sanctifying your flock. Horror of pomp, love of simplicity, economy so as to have more for the needs of the poor... and all else that can serve to inspire your goodness of spirit, your excellent heart. How many marvels will flow from such an admirable way of life! The devil has already measured, weighed the extent and effect of all this good; which explains why he sought to place obstacles, and the difficulties he raised which, I hope, will soon be dissipated.

**To Father Tempier at Aix.[[94]](#footnote-94)**

30:VI in Oblate Writings

*Is sorry to learn that the priests of Aix are adamant and continue to speak ill of Father de Mazenod. Is glad to decline honours in order to stay with the community.*

Tempier

[Paris]

November 24, 1817.

Is it possible that our patience has failed to soften the anger of these worthy parish priests? The only thing that afflicts me in all this is that these people, with dispositions so contrary to charity, do not refrain from ascending to the altar. If I had the misfortune to do a hundredth of what they permit themselves to do, I would celebrate the sacred mysteries only after having done penance, while not only asking God’s pardon but also making reparation to my neighbour. And these are men who have one foot in the grave! I pity them with all my heart yet, apart from the offence against God which I regard as very grave, I am little concerned about their wrath.

As for the unbecoming remarks they let fall in my regard, how I laugh for pity’s sake. If I had as little fear of God as they, I would have tricked them. But far be it from me to render them evil for evil; on the contrary, I would well wish to do them all the good they could desire for themselves.

As for the honours that it amuses them to say I am soliciting without being able to obtain them, they must know that I had only to stoop in order to make them mine; but if they knew all the strength and extent of the affection I have primarily for yourselves, who are my brothers, my friends, my other selves and moreover my concern for the souls of the young so cruelly forsaken as long as I had not undertaken to lead them in the right path by the same means that are in the power of the parish priests to use and which, in consequence, they ought to use as I have done by the grace of God, and just as you have done who concert your efforts with mine; if they knew, I say, my sentiments in this matter, they would cease to be surprised at my renouncing the honours offered to me and returning as a simple priest to this cherished family in order to undergo once more all the perfidiousness of which I have already experienced such cruel attacks. When one prefers eternity to temporality, poverty to riches, work to repose, when one is more concerned with the sanctification of a soul than with all the kingdoms of the earth, one returns with joy to a community where reigns peace, union and all sorts of virtues and one does not pine for the princely house, canonries, grand vicariates, etc., and one cares so little for all these things that one refuses them as I insist I have done, without effort, without regret; on the contrary, with joy and satisfaction...

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*December 17: death of Victor Berton.*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

December 17, 1817

Death of Victor Berton, postulant. He died as he said these words from the hymn of the Blessed Virgin: *Et Jesum benedictum…post hoc exilium ostende.* As he had not yet been received, only the postulants and the probationers accompanied him to the grave. As to everything else, the Congregation did for him what it does for all those who die in its bosom.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*December 21*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

December 21, 1817

Lack of space compels me to cram into this last half-page everything else noted up to June 18: the expulsion of Mr. Martin, sculptor; admission as probationers of Messrs. Massé and Alexis for the premier section. Messrs. Suzanne[[95]](#footnote-95), Décard, Senchon, Serpolet received definitively into the premier section. Messrs. Bonnet junior and Leydet into the second, etc. […]. The notes indicate that the feast of Christmas was celebrated with much fervour and almost all the congregants had the happiness of making their communion at the Midnight Mass at which the Gentlemen who had been received made their act of consecration. On the 26th, we proceeded according to custom with the nomination of the dignitaries […].

**Retreat Notes.[[96]](#footnote-96)**

144:XV in Oblate Writings

*Despite contradictions Eugene must do good in accordance with God’s will, while all the time being watchful as to his own progress in the spiritual life. Resolutions.*

Retreat Notes

Aix

1817[[97]](#footnote-97)

If I want to achieve some good, I must see myself as one sent by God on earth to do there all the good it is in my power to do during the time allotted me, and then death will summon me to him who sent me and who will judge me severely on my works. Woe is me if I am found not to have fulfilled my task!

With this thought in mind, I must make haste and get to work, having always God alone in view, and disdaining any notice of human contradictions which, far from discouraging me, should on the contrary stimulate me all the more to pursue my path, since these contradictions were foretold and are the hall-mark of God’s works.

So, far from believing that I am over-doing it just because there are some who criticize and label things falsely, dubbing as “excessive zeal” what is no more than the simple fulfilment of a duty, I will acknowledge I fall short of my obligations and will do more if I can.

But I must not forget that to work efficaciously for others’ salvation, I must apply myself very seriously to my own perfection, and I must take care not to dissipate myself while consecrating myself to the service of my neighbour. I will make it an irrevocable rule of conduct that nothing on this earth shall constitute a habitual threat to my own progress in the spiritual life.

For this I must establish some key points as pivots of the rest of my life.

1. To live in great dependence on God and follow in everything I can the rule of the house so as to set an example and subjugate my will.

2. Since my outside affairs often deflect me and made it impossible for me to follow this rule in every detail, I must make it a special obligation never to dispense myself, on any pretext, from certain of the most essential points of this rule. So, rise with the community, oraison, prepare for and make thanksgiving after Mass. Adore the Blessed Sacrament for at least a quarter of an hour in the afternoon; at least one hour’s study during the day, etc., read Holy Scripture.

To this end, there is absolutely no time to waste, and what is left over after the day’s business must be well used.

I will never come near it unless I vanish for a few hours during the day.

Rise at 5 o’clock or 4 1/2.

Oraison finishes at 6; from 6 to 10 I must vanish.

In the week I am on the last Mass, enter the church at ten o’clock, prepare, etc.

It ought to be possible to put off all interviews until after dinner. Then read, Holy Scripture until 7 o’clock, theology until 8, correspondence or write until 10.

Perform all of my actions before God without losing for an instant his holy presence, be very careful to offer him all the upset plans my service of neighbour occasions.

But in imitation of the saints, have a love of mortification and the spirit of mortification. Be guided in this matter by my director and do not fall into any extreme either of excess or deficiency.

Sundays, all for the congregation. If there is a moment, reading of Holy Scripture.

1. Copy: Ms. Yenveux V, 256. The addressee, date and motivation of this letter are uncertain. The Mayor of Aix at that time was M. Dubourguet whom the Founder knew (Rey I, 175) but not as somebody he could address familiarly as in this letter. In 1816-1817 Father de Mazenod and the Vicars capitular made efforts to obtain authorization from the government for the Missionaries of Provence, cf. Pierlorz, *Demarches du Fondateur pour obtenir l’autorisation du Gouvernement,* in *Mission OMI* 1958, 87-119. The municipal Council was invited to give its view only in August 1817. It was favourable, but the Mayor’s deputy, Dominique Montagne, the father of one of the congregationists, undoubtedly an ally of the Parish Priests of Aix, sent a long personal letter to the Minister of the Interior on September 1, 1817, in which he asked him not to support the Institute which was the cause of division among the Clergy. The Founder seems to allude to this when he writes: “what is happening to me through a source close to you does not diminish in any way the esteem due you...” On this hypothesis the letter would be dated to the end of 1817 or January 1818. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Orig.: Paris, St-Sulpice archives. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 2 Cor. 4: 5 “Ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake”. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Orig.: Paris, Archives of the Holy Childhood. “Paris” had been erased and replaced by “at the Bishop’s house in Tours”. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Arles Mission (November 2-December 16, 1817). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Hilaire Aubert, a missionary of France who had preached at Aix at the end of October 1816. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Copy in Rambert I, pp. 227-228. Mouriès was a place of some eighteen hundred people, formerly belonging to the diocese of Arles, and incorporated in that of Aix by the 1801 Concordat. This mission was preached by Fathers de Mazenod, Deblieu, Tempier and Mie. The name of the parish priest was M. Armand. Father Rambert published a letter of his, dated April 19, 1817 (Rambert I, pp. 228-229). Father Rambert is alone in reproducing a page of the Diary of this mission and introduces it with these words: “There still exists the start of a Diary of this mission, written by the venerated Superior; but this Diary recounts only the events of the first week. No doubt as the excessive work of the missions constantly grew, the Superior, who was more burdened than the others, could not keep up writing, which will be readily understood when one remembers that the missionaries went to bed after midnight to rise at three o’clock, and gave themselves scarcely enough time for meals. We will highlight from this unfinished Diary only the two following episodes: [there follows the text we reproduce]. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. “Camisard”: a name given to the Calvinists of Cevennes who fought against the armies of Louis XIV after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. This Edict, proclaimed by Henry IV in 1598, had given a large measure of freedom to the Protestants. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Father de Mazenod was on the mission of Mouriès (February 9-March 15), with Fathers Tempier, Mie and Deblieu, cf. J. Pierlorz, *Premières missions des Missionnaires de Province* in *Missions OMI* 82(1955) pp. 549-561 and 641-655. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Already “called” to a place as advocate at the Court of Justice. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Dom Augustin de Lestrange (1754-1827) entered the Cistercian Abbey of *la Trappe* in 1780. When the Revolution began, he went with some monks to *la Valsainte* in Switzerland. He was elected abbot in 1794. He returned to France in 1815 and took possession of *la Trappe* that Dom de Laprade had been able to recover. He is regarded as the person who restored his Order in France after the Revolution. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Jean Alexandre Dupuy (1798-1880) began the novitiate with the Missionaries of Provence on October 3, 1816 and made his oblation on November 1, 1818. He left in 1830, but always remained a friend and collaborator of the Founder and the Oblates of N.D. de l’Osier and of Marseilles. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Louis Michel François Guilliaume Dalmas had been received as a probationer in the Youth Congregation on July 6, 1816. He entered the novitiate of the Missionaries of Provence on March 30, 1817, made his oblation on November 1, 1819, and left in the spring of 1820. On account of the gap of 28 months in 1816 and 1817, there is no mention in the Diary of a certain Lalande, received into the Youth Congregation on June 21, 1817. He entered the novitiate of the Missionaries of Provence on October 29, 1817. He left in January 1819. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The opposition to Father de Mazenod and his works came especially from Father Christine, parish priest of St. Jean, the parish the church of the Missionaries of Provence belonged to. The opposition extended also to some “aristocratic salons”, cf. J. Leflon II, pp. 47-54. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Twenty six congregants were confirmed on that day. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. After this entry, Father de Mazenod gives [pp.54-55] the names of 18 congregants whose qualities had been lauded on August 22 of the preceding year (1816) on prize day at the college. He adds that some only of the names indicated are in question. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Orig.: Marseilles, arch. de l’archevéché. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Mission preached at Mouriès from February 9 to March 15, 1817. The missionaries made a practice of returning to help the parish priests, occasionally, so as to keep up the fervour of the faithful. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Copy in M.J. MOISAN, *Paroisse de Fuveau, Serviteur de Dieu C.J.E, de Mazenod* Marseilles, 1936, pp. 125-126. The mission of Fuveau took place September 1-29, 1816. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. The Founder was going to pay a simple visit to Mouriés since he had just given a mission there from February 9 to March 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. The parish priest had written that 750 parishioners out of about 1300 had made their Easter duty. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. The return of this mission took place only in September 1822 by the Founder, assisted by Fathers Honorat and Suzanne; the parish was without a pastor at that time, cf. Moisan, *op.cit.,* pp. 20, 30-32. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Orig.: Marseilles, Archbishop’s Archives. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Only one novice took the habit in 1817, U*.* Dalmas, but he was not a subdeacon. N.F. Moreau, ordained a priest on September 19, 1818 was certainly a subdeacon in 1817, but we cannot say that he is meant here since he only started noviciate on April 22, 1818. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Every year, after 1817, Father de Mazenod organized this procession that started at the church of the Mission. He himself had founded, on February 8 1816, and was the Director of, the Congregation of the Sacred Heart that accepted as members women and girls, cf. A. Rey, *Mgr de Mazenod*, I, p.206 and the letter of A. Felici to Eugene de Mazenod, July 12, 1816, in Yenveux, *Les saintes Règles*, IV, p.127. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. The Bishop-elect of Marseilles, Father Fortuné de Mazenod. Eugene is writing this in 1821. In the Spring of 1817 Fortuné was still in Palermo. He returned to France in December 1817. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. What Eugene says here went for 1817 only. In 1818 on the procession of Corpus Christi there were only the clergy of St. Jean and a priest from the Madeleine, cf. letter of Fortuné to the Founder’s father, June 7, 1818. Father Isnardon (1744-1820), parish priest of the Madeleine, definitely no friend of the Founder, had a good excuse not to take part in the procession, he was already 73 years old. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. This Cross had been erected at the time of the great mission of 1820, cf. J. Leflon, II, pp. 118-128. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. This is the first time in this Diary that Father de Mazenod speaks of confession. This means that the other 21 congregants, who made their first communion on the following July 13, did not go to him for confession. Father de Mazenod left at that time for Paris where he hoped to obtain the Government’s recognition of the Missionaries of Provence. He stayed in the capital from July to November 1817. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. RAMBERT, I, 232-233; REY, I, 209. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. At the beginning of the Mission of Provence, St. Vincent de Paul was chosen as patron of the missionaries; later he was replaced with St. Alphonsus Liguori after the latter was canonized (May 26, 1839). [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. The Founder remained at Paris from July to November, 1817, in the hope of obtaining official recognition from the Government for his Society which was quite opposed at Aix. He also sought to obtain favours for his father and uncles. Cf.: J. LEFLON, *Eugene de Mazenod,* Vol. 11, 61-86. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. The Minister of the Interior had sent to the Capitular Vicars of Aix on April 15th, 1817, a pressing request for missionaries for Corsica. They replied to him that de Mazenod and some other priests could perhaps go there. See letter of May 16 from the Vicars to the Minister; and that of May 31 from the Minister to the Prefect of Corsica. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. RAMBERT, I, 233-234; REY, I, 211, 222; YENVEUX, V, 181; VIII, 171. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. The Founder lodged at Paris with the Missionaries of France. He visited the Calvary of Mont Valérien with Forbin-Janson. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Archbishop Ferdinand de Bausset-Roquefort, transferred from Vannes to Aix, August 8th 1817. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Founder of Stanislas College. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Orig.: Paris, National archives F 19 5556. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. To avoid any promotion, Father de Mazenod did not visit influential people at Paris that he knew, such as the Duke de Berry and especially Cardinal Talleyrand, Head Chaplain to the King, who held the portfolio for benefices, cf. J. Leflon, *Mgr de Mazenod,* II, 65-68. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Baron Damas, Division General, Count de Panisse, Inspector of the National Guard and the Marquis de Foresta, Subprefect of Aix. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Authenticated copy sent by Father Tempier to Madame de Mazenod. Rome, arch. of the Postulation: DM IX, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Father de Mazenod could not hope to obtain shortly the recognition of his Society by a law voted in the Houses. Hence he requested from the Minister a royal ordinance which “provisorily and until a law will have definitely stipulated the mode of being of this establishment” would authorise “the reverend de Mazenod to join with several priests of good will... in order to devote themselves to the religious instruction of the youth (of Aix) and thence to go forth into the parishes of cities and especially of the countryside.” He added: “If I return to my diocese without bringing the least sign of the approbation of the Government, I have lost half my strength and even run the risk of seeing the priests who have joined me being discouraged and returning home...” Letter to the Minister, July 31st 1817, National Archives, Paris, F 19 5556.

The Minister could not obtain this Ordinance but replied by declaring, in his own name: “You can, while waiting for the day which cannot be far away, continue with your worthy collaborators in the functions which you have so happily begun” (August 4, 1817, I b.) For want of something better, the Founder was satisfied with this token and, in order to amplify its effect, wrote the enthusiastic letter of the 5th of August. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. *Ms. nobile* (Italian): noble. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Allusion to the Concordat of June 1st, 1817, which re-established the Concordat of 1516 and abrogated that of 1801 [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. RAMBERT, I, 234-235, 265; REY, I, 213-214, 222, 223; YENVEUX, I, 35, 50; V, 26 a, 26 b, 142, 181, 211, 235; VIII, 9, 171. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Ps. 132: *Ecce quam* *bonum,* etc. How good, how agreeable it is for brothers to dwell together. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. An Italian phrase which literally means: the foundations ought to spring from prayer. The Founder was no doubt reading the life of the Venerable Paul of the Cross (d 1775) written and published in 1786 by the Venerable Vincent Marie Strambi, Passionist, Bishop of Macerata and Tolentino. A second biography of Paul of the Cross was not published until 1821. Paul of the Cross was beatified in 1853 and canonized in 1867. Vincent M. Strambi was beatified in 1925 and canonised in 1950. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. I Sam. 2, 6: The Lord puts to death [and gives life]; he casts down into the dwelling of the dead and he raises up again. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. *L’Enclos* is what it was called in French. It was the country house of Madame de Mazenod and was close to Aix. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Ps. 131, 14: It is ever my place of rest; I will dwell there... [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Orig.: Chateau des Boisgelin, at St-Martin-des-Pallières. Further on in this letter, Father de Mazenod said that it was too late to obtain pensions and posts for his father and uncles, and consequently, it will be difficult to have them return to France. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. See *supra.* note 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. According to Jeancard *(Mélanges historiques,* p. 165) Bishop de Latil had proposed to him the post of Vicar General of Chartres, before having him named Bishop, cf. also Mazenod to Tempier, October 22, 1817 and Bishop de Latil to Father de Mazenod, March 25, 1826. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. RAMBERT, I, 236-237; YENVEUX, V, 87, 142, 261; VIII, 9-10.. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. He alludes to the unexpected nomination of Fortuné de Mazenod to the bishopric of Marseilles. Cf.: J. LEFLON, *Eugene de Mazenod, Vol.* 11, pp. 73-79 [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. YENVEUX, V, 261. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. He is probably alluding to his refusal to be named Vicar General of Amiens in 1811 and of Chartres in 1817. Cf.: Journal, August 31, 1847. The latter promotion would have prepared him soon to become bishop for Bishop de Latil was chaplain of Count d’Artois, brother of the King, and member of the commission in charge of inquiries relative to the nomination of new bishops. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. The Founder’s manuscript copy: Aix, Méjanes archives. An eight-page letter. We are publishing only those paragraphs where the Missionaries of Provence are concerned. Among the reasons given for Fortuné to accept the bishopric is this one: he could gradually pay back his debts and those of the de Mazenods with the 15,000 francs in salary that he would receive from the Government. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. The first part of the letter has not come down to us. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. We know that this appointment did not take effect until 1823, c.f J. Leflon, *Mgr de Mazenod.* II. 65-79, 84-86, 184-194. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. They left Sicily at the beginning of December. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. The parish priests at Aix made life difficult for the Missionaries; Father de Mazenod went to Paris to defend his work and obtain Government approval which was refused him. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Bishop de Latil. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Luke 12: 31. “Seek first the kingdom of God.” [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Correspondence between Eugene and his father, quite limited in 1806 and 1807, discontinued from 1808 to 1812, because of the Napoleonic wars which made communication with Sicily difficult, but also because the de Mazenods did not want to return to France and certainly because M. de Mazenod did not approve of his son’s vocation. cf. J. Morabito, in *Etudes Oblates* 13 (1954), 115-116. We have one letter from Eugene to his father in 1813 in which he speaks of his priestly vocation, then from 1814 on he wrote several letters each year, always begging him to return. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. RAMBERT, I, 238-239. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Fortuné de Mazenod returned to France at the end of December with his two brothers, Chevalier Charles-Eugene and the president, Charles-Antoine, *father of the Founder. However, Fortuné did not become bishop of Marseilles until 1823*. In the meantime, he lived with his nephew at the house of the Mission of Aix. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Copy: Rambert I, 239-240 (November 16); Rey 1, 215 (September 17); Jeancard 170-172 (September 18). This letter summarizes the previous ones of August 28 and September 6. Here we are publishing only what concerns the Missionaries of Provence. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. The exact date of this letter seems to be September 16, cf. Charles Antoine de Mazenod to his son. October 27, 1817. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. RAMBERT, I, 246-247. REY, I, 216-217 [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. RAMBERT, I, 247-248; REY, I, 217; YENVEUX, V, 71-72. Text written by Yenveux himself. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Archbishop de Bausset had by then become cognizant of the complaints of the parish priests of Aix against Father de Mazenod and the missions. Moreover, his nephew, Vilieneuve-Bargemon, prefect of the Bouches-du-Rhóne, had counselled him, it seems, to be very prudent and not to indispose his clergy. Cf.: J. LEFLON, *Eugene de Mazenod, Vol.* II, p. 82. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Ps. 83, 11: “Willingly would I reach but the threshold of God’s house, so I might dwell no more in the abode of sinners!” [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Bishop de Latil of Chartres. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. RAMBERT, I, 249; REY, I, 217. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Ephes. 3, 13: “So I beg you, never lose confidence just because of the trials that I go through on your account: they are your glory.” [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. RAMBERT, I, 257-258. Hippolyte Courtès, in minor orders, 19 years, had been a novice with the Jesuits in Paris. Illness obliged him to return to Aix. He asked Father de Mazenod to let him stay at the house of the Mission which he well knew as he had been a Sodalist. He decided to remain with the Missionaries of Provence and became professed on November 1, 1818. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Missionaries of France who preached, in company with the Missionaries of Provence, the mission of Arles from November 2nd to mid-December. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. RAMBERT, I, 250-251; YENVEUX, V, 67-68. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Father Tempier had replied to his letter of October 19th: “One must admit that God treats us with great goodness since he shares with us gifts that he has made to his own Son... You will (we trust) not permit us to be dissociated from you, although seemingly these humiliations may be personal to you. Whatever we may have done, how have we deserved this grace thus to share in the precious cross of the Son of God? Truly, as regards myself personally, I am quite abashed and feel that I am far from deserving this favour. It is a grace of predilection which God gives only to his saints; how could we then complain? Please God that his Providence might always treat us thus and above all that we respond well thereto! Our poor family, so humiliated and so despised would soon become quite holy and then what fruits...” (RAMBERT, I, 250).

Father Maunier added: “In God alone we place our confidence and, in consequence, we could not be blamed. To endure being reproached for having wished to do good, such glory is too much for us, let us admit, at least for me who am only a midget in the Church. But since it is God alone for whom we act and for whom we ought to act, let us always do what we can, let us not flinch from this hard road which lies before us, let us not lose sight of our divine Master who goes before us, carrying his cross and who deigns to invite us to follow him...” (YENVEUX, V, 231). [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. 2 Tim. I, 12: Therefore I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. 2 Tim, 3: Sharein suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. 2 Tim. 4, 10, 14; 1, 15: For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me... Alexander... did me great harm; the Lord will requite him for his deeds... All who are in Asia turned away from me. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. 2 Tim. 4, 16: At my first defense no one took my part; all deserted me. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. 2 Tim. 4, 17: But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength to proclaim the message fully, that the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion’s mouth. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. 2 Tim. 3, 12: Indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be

persecuted. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. 2 Tim. 3, 11:... my persecutions, my sufferings, what befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra, what persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. It was with Mr. Liautard, in the *college Stanislas*, *30* *rue N. -D. des Champs au faubourg St. Germain,* that Emile Dedons had studied in 1805-6, cf. Eugene to Emile Dedons, March 20, 1806. While he was a seminarian, Eugene made a number of visits to Mr. Liautard, cf. letters to his mother, February 23 and May 11 1810, March 31 1811. On July 26, 1817, the Founder wrote to Father Tempier that he was going to do his evening oraison in the college chapel, cf. *Oblate Writings 6,* p. 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. RAMBERT, I, 268-269; REY, I, 222-223; YENVEUX, III, 110; VIII, 170, 195. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Several young men had entered the novitiate: Jean Baptiste de Bausset (April 1816), Alexandre Dupuy (October 3, 1816), H. Courtès (October 15, 1816), H. Bourrelier (November 4, 1816), Marius Suzanne (January 21, 1817), G. Dairnas (March 30, 1817) and Lalande (October 29, 1817). [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. YENVEUX, VIII, p. 195, states: “as the pupils of Father Charles who are not called to do such great things, and who have only...” Father Charles was the superior of the boarding school of the Fathers of Christian Retreat or Grey Brothers, founded by Father Receveur, and established at Aix after the Concordat of 1801. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. YENVEUX, VIII, p. 170, states: “These gentlemen” instead of “the student novices.” [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Rambert I, 241 and Rey I, 215. During his trip to Paris, from July to November 1817, Eugene succeeded in having his uncle named to the see of Marseilles and wrote him this news on August 28 and September 16. Bishop Fortuné replied on October 9: “So, my dear nephew, all is consummated. I will obey, since I must, but throwing myself first into the arms of divine Providence, whom I implore to have pity on my extreme need.... So why, on the brink of my grave, have you snatched me from my solitude, where I was sheltered from so many dangers, to launch me onto a stormy sea and one littered with shipwrecks? Did you really reflect on the awesome responsibility you were taking on yourself before both God and the Church, and before the King and men? I repeat, I submit albeit in fear and trembling; and if I have the happiness to do some good in the diocese of Marseilles, I will be the most convincing of proofs that the Lord has no need of any of his creatures’ talents and can make use, when he likes, of the weakest and vilest instruments to do his holy work and manifest his glory.... Remember that after God you are my guide and right arm...”

The President added in his letter of October 27: “It is well for you to know that Fortuné wants to be guided in everything... by his vicar general Charles Joseph Eugene, to whose instructions he will conform himself... He will need all your attentions. He is counting on them absolutely, unreservedly. Already you can see that in his pastoral he has quite definitely not forgotten to mention some dear and respectable rural missionaries, and how they will be sustained, encouraged and defended by him. Their leader will be in a position to do still more good than in the past...” [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. YENVEUX, I, 50-51; V, 65, 255. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. [Marius] Marie Jacques Antoine Suzanne (1799-1829) entered the Mission on October 14, 1816, and was received in the Aix Youth Congregation on December 21-25, 1817. He made his oblation on November 1, 1818, and died on January 31, 1829. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post. DM IV-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Undated notes. We propose 1817 since, according to the text, Eugene is living in community (so after 1815) and is exposed to contradictions. Now it is in 1817 that the difficulties with the parish priests of Aix were at their height. Lastly we find the substance of the reflections and resolutions in the two retreats of 1818. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)