**1820**

**To Brother Marius Suzanne at Aix.[[1]](#footnote-1)**

50:VI in Oblate Writings

*Words of affection. When will Suzanne receive the subdiaconate? The Mission of Marseilles.*

Suzanne

Marseilles,

February 2nd, 1820.

I had resolved, my dear friend, not to write to you because your letters and the sentiments they express gave me too much pleasure. My heart is so responsive, so loving, that I need to be careful when it meets in those it loves certain tendernesses which reveal a reciprocity too close to its liking. I love you extremely and my affection is so lively that I am always fearful of taking away from God something of what he ought[[2]](#footnote-2) to reserve for himself Whatever may be the case, I wished to punish myself for being too pleased with the reproach you made to me for having addressed you grandiosely as *vous,* etc. However, I am remiss in my resolution and it is almost by way of complaining at having received three letters from the Mission House and none from you. But no, I am writing to you to ask why you say nothing to me about the subdiaconate, about which nevertheless you must be thinking. Is it because you would not be of age? I do not have at hand the time of your birth. I had calculated that you ought to receive it in the first week of Lent; your silence makes me fear I am mistaken.

Adieu, it is midnight. When else could I have written you if I had not taken time from sleep? I am not sorry for this theft. It is a little present that I give you too willingly to complain about it. Adieu, I embrace you with all my heart.

P.S. Have Chapuis tell you about the magnificent ceremony that took place today[[3]](#footnote-3). It seemed to me I was seeing with my eyes of flesh Our Lord Jesus Christ when, from the top of the fort of Notre Dame de la Garde, we presented him to the adoration of the fifty thousand prostrate people covering the mountain. I have never seen a more beautiful scene and have rarely experienced such sweet emotion. I had the happiness to touch the Monstrance at the moment that the Sun of justice eclipsed the daystar. There cannot have been a finer day in the mission from the point of view of the religious effect.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*The mission procession.*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

April 1820

Procession to open the mission in which the Congregation took part as a body and also in that for the Planting of the Cross. The congregants shared along with the law students in carrying the cross from the *place des Carmélites* to the middle of the C*ours*. The Congregation took part again as a body in the Blessed Sacrament procession that brought to an end the special exercises of the Provençal mission which went on some days longer after the planting of the cross and the end of the French mission[[4]](#footnote-4).

**To Archbishop de Bausset of Aix, at Toulon.[[5]](#footnote-5)**

28:XIII in Oblate Writings

*Events which took place at the cathedral on the closing day of the mission.*

Bausset Archbishop de

[Aix,

May 1, 1820].

Sunday was the day set to close the mission.[[6]](#footnote-6) We had prepared the remaining men and a few women for Communion. There was a very great number of these fervent, converted people: there were more than *nine hundred.* According to our custom, we were supposed to have a procession with the Blessed Sacrament on the same day.

The Gentlemen of the Chapter were not concerned about this and, with the intent to oppose it indirectly, changed the time of their Vespers to five o’clock.

I went to see M. Beylet, the Vicar General; I suggested that we put off the procession to the next day; such was not the view of the Vicar General who advised me to have it at noon.

Even though it was not a good time because of the heat, I counted enough on the zeal of the faithful to expose them to full heat of the burning sun. The procession took place; but since the Gentlemen of the Chapter had decided to supply nothing, when we were ready to start, we found no vestments, not even candlesticks for the acolytes. We were obliged to send someone successively to bring the dais, copes, chasubles, dalmatics, large candles, candlesticks, albs, censor, etc. from the poor church of the Missionaries. The delay brought on by this disorder kept the procession from starting until two o’clock. The route it was supposed to follow was rather long and there was a considerable number of faithful; in short, we returned rather late, all tired out from the heat. Since I would not have time to finish the closing talk before the Office of the Chapter, I preferred to send the faithful away to rest and I announced that the talk and the directives which were to follow would be at the usual time of our exercises.

That arrangement did not please them. Without telling me, M. Rey[[7]](#footnote-7) wanted to force the people to leave after the blessing that closed the Office of the Canons. M. Beylet commanded the parish priest to announce from the pulpit that the mission was closed and that there was nothing further to be said. The crowd did not budge, waiting for what I had announced shortly before. M. Rey took the liberty of scolding them: they murmured rather loudly; then he wanted them to say a *Pater* and an *Ave* to make up for what he called a scandal; they did not make an effort to reply, or to put it better, many people gave him definite signs of disapproval. After this exchange, Father Deblieu[[8]](#footnote-8) came up to have them sing hymns. No sooner had the people seen a Missionary appear than they applauded, shouting out: “Long live the Missionaries”. Father Deblieu announced that, since the mission would end only with the closing talk, they were going to start singing till I arrived. That announcement brought on new transports of joy, which he quietened by intoning the hymns. I arrived not suspecting anything; I entered the church and found that calm had been perfectly restored. I prepared to go into the pulpit when they alerted me that M. Beylet had forbidden me to preach. I went to the parish priest to find out if this strange news was true.[[9]](#footnote-9) M. Honorat assured me that the Grand Vicar had commanded him expressly to notify me that I was forbidden to preach. I shuddered at the consequences of such an untimely contradiction; but, believing that in God’s eyes it was more perfect to obey, I climbed up on a chair to prepare this crowd for the news that I hesitated so much to give.

Though I chose my words carefully they were filled with indignation. Shouting, they threw themselves on me. I escaped but they did not leave me. When I got out of the church, the shouts redoubled with, everyone hurrying to embrace me; the men lifted me up, shouting: “Long live Father de Mazenod, long live the Missionaries!” The crowd kept getting larger every moment and it was with great difficulty that I was able to start on the way to our house, accompanied all the way by that crowd which filled our church, our house and Carmelite square. Unfortunately the anger against the authors of the disorder which had just taken place was mixed in with affectionate shouts about us. In the midst of all this tumult, I succeeded in making myself heard from the steps of our church.

I beseeched the people to calm down, to respect authority and keep the peace. I asked this of them as an expression of their attachment to me. Apparently they were touched by my words and promised to leave, all the while shouting out again: “Long live the Missionaries, etc.” The most eager ones had entered the house and did not leave until far into the night in spite of my insistence. This morning the crowd has gathered again.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*May 7: prohibition on joining any other Congregation*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

May 7, 1820

The two senior sections of the Congregation met. The Council took the decision in their presence that the article in our regulations that expressly prohibits all members of the Congregation to join any other Society would be very strictly put into practice[[10]](#footnote-10). In consequence after the roll had been called, all the members being present, each one rose in turn and promised never to join any other Society or Congregation.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*Procession of the cross*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

June 1820

When the pedestal of the cross was ready, His Grace the Archbishop decided to go in procession to adore the sign of our redemption. To this intent he came to our church along with his Vicars General, - the Congregation of the Sacred Heart and that of Christian Youth had been convoked. The procession passed by the centre of the *Cours*. Arriving at the monument, His Grace the Archbishop bade the Director say a few edifying words to the people gathered in the rotunda. We went back to the church passing again by the centre of the *Cours*, singing all the while canticles in honour of the holy cross. His Grace the Archbishop gave benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and withdrew very edified by the ceremony.

**To Madame de Mazenod, Papassaudy Street, no. 2, at Aix, B.-du-Rhone.[[11]](#footnote-11)**

29:XIII in Oblate Writings

*Peace and solitude at N.-D. du Laus.*

L.J.C.

Mazenod Madame de

Notre-Dame du Laus,

[June 29, 1820] Feast of St. Peter

Dear mother, if everyone who is dear to me were here, I would be quite glad never to leave, so delightful is my stay. You would have to be here to grasp that. Separated from the whole world, we see in this solitude only fervent Christians concerned only with their salvation and because of their example one is not tempted to be involved in anything else. The life I am leading is so peaceful and I taste its charms so strongly that I cannot think without a feeling of aversion that I must soon leave it[[12]](#footnote-12) and go back into that tiresome situation[[13]](#footnote-13) that I detest so much and to which I am dedicated almost like a victim. If it weren’t so difficult to travel at this season, I would invite you to make this pilgrimage…[[14]](#footnote-14)

**To M. Adolphe Tavernier, at Aix.[[15]](#footnote-15)**

30:XIII in Oblate Writings

*Father de Mazenod’s apostolate with pilgrims. Friendship.*

Tavernier

Notre-Dame-du-Laus,

July 2, 1820.

I am really caught, dear Adolphe; I had reserved today to write to you and to chat a little longer after having taken care of all my little business and it so happens that I haven’t a single minute. Since early morning an immense crowd has gathered in this desert and told us that two processions were near, that means two entire populations were coming here to pay their homage to the Blessed Virgin, according to their custom. We had to go immediately and hear the confessions of these fervent pilgrims and then to preach in order to satisfy their ardor.

I am stopping since it is impossible for me to continue; my hand is trembling to the point of not being able to hold the pen; don’t be alarmed at this phenomenon, I know the reason for it. The nerves of my arm are tired out from a gruelling exercise that it had to carry on for two hours. All the faithful gathered here would not go away satisfied without having kissed the relic of the true cross and the reliquary is too heavy. In short, I cannot go on and I prefer to send you this scribbling rather than have you think that I neglected writing to you. Farewell, I embrace you a thousand times and am for you what you know.

The evening Office has just ended. The church was not able to hold the crowd of faithful any more than it did this morning. Hymns are echoing all over; everyone is leaving; it is six o’clock; most of them still have four hours to walk, and they will continue to sing their praises of the Lord like that all the way home. You have to see what is going on here to get an idea of it. Farewell, good evening, good night. I embrace you once more...

**To Brother Marius Suzanne at Aix.[[16]](#footnote-16)**

51:VI in Oblate Writings

*Reproaches Brother Suzanne for his way of writing, his affected style and sentimentality*

Suzanne

At Notre Dame du Laus[[17]](#footnote-17),

July 16th, 1820.

There is no use your picking an insignificant quarrel with me, my dear little brother, over an expression in my letter to M.M., which you have wrongly interpreted on purpose in attempt to ward off the blow which I had warned you about; you will not get away with it. I shall not even waste time objecting to your suppositions and in scorning your pretended generosity which prompts you to make the effort to love me still after this imaginary offence against friendship of which you are tempted to believe me culpable. You know too well what to believe to have ever conceived the slightest anxiety on this subject and you will never push me to the point of forcing me to convince you that a single beat of my heart expresses more love for you than that for me contained in all your sentiments, past and present; and I will add, if you press me further, in future too. This you know and also that your last letter has been badly received.

But now I come to the criticism to be made; I was wrong to warn you in advance about it, because you were capable of believing that I wish to jest when I certainly intended to speak to you seriously. However do not worry regarding the matter which is of little importance in some respects but, as my ambition would be to see you perfect, I cannot overlook anything unseemly, especially when I perceive that the quality which is lacking in you is lacking only through your fault, and because you are not attentive enough to avoid a fault which derives from a detestable vice which hides all its forms but which must be unmasked and pursued. What I am going to tell you will make this enigma clear to you.

The first letter that you wrote gave me, you can well believe, the greatest pleasure. I had been so afflicted at leaving you and found myself so far from you that simply seeing your handwriting was a joy. I should have all the more been consoled by the sentiments which the letter contained. Only I was surprised that in expressing what seemingly ought to flow from the heart quite naturally and unawares, you had used affected expressions and studied repetitions which seemed to be there only to round out the phrase and sound musical to the ear. I did not dwell overmuch on this thought, attributing this slight fault of style to the habit you had contracted with writing of another kind. But soon after, Coulin brought me the letter which you had written to him on the same occasion. Oh! that did upset me, not because its style was ridiculous - I would have been untroubled, knowing that you can do better - but because in each line, so to speak, one saw a pretentiousness of mind, a studied expression, an affected way of being picturesque so badly or so little dissimulated that reading it was disgusting. These numerous faults do not escape the perceptive eyes of certain persons whom I do not name; but as for myself who looked further, who went to the principle and who plainly saw love of self, judge for yourself if I was pleased. Quite the contrary.

He would not have given himself so much trouble, I told myself, if he had written to anyone else and certainly he would have done better. In writing to this particular person, he wanted to show what he could do, being too mindful of being censured by a mind somewhat caustic, and he has well and duly deserved to be criticized by any man of good sense and who knows what a letter ought to be. Let us be patient this time, the next one will be better. Not at all. What arrived was your famous description of your journey to Saint-Cerf, wretched pages in which you seem to accumulate all the faults that I have reproached you with above. It was as bad as it could possibly be in any literary style whatever; but what is really insufferable is this pretension of not wanting to let anyone believe that you are unaware of a term, an expression more suitable for the thing you wish to say. The result of this pitiful pettiness is that your letters are overloaded with erasures which makes them sometimes indecipherable, because after having erased a word in order to substitute one which pleases you more, and which any reader could easily have substituted as well as you could, you revert to the first one, which obliges you to erase again that which had taken its place; you do the same thing to put your adjectives in accordance with your nouns, and to leave nothing to be desired, you go to work likewise on epithets which you place and displace before deciding if you will have them precede or follow the nouns with which it pleases you to associate them. I have already said quite a lot, have I not? But I have not finished and the reproach that remains for me to make is perhaps still more serious. It is another letter to Coulin which gives me occasion. It is one thing or the other, either the words you send to him in your last letter are sincere, or they are not. If they are your sentiments, they sin by excess. You do not have affection, outpourings, depth of union for him to this degree. It is at the most what you could have said to Courtès or to me. If you do not think this way, although your intentions may be good, for I know you too well to be mistaken, you are wrong to profane somewhat what in a man is most sacred after the supernatural gifts produced by grace. To exaggerate in this manner is to deceive oneself. And is there not a danger of being no longer believed when one would want to persuade others to whom such sentiments are due and for whom you really do nourish the same, that one is sincere in giving them such tribute? Besides you miss the target for each one knows what is due him and when there is a feeling of not deserving what is flung in one’s face, one reacts with disbelief or distrust or simply laughs.

Now it remains to know if I shall send you this letter. Yes, I do not hesitate. You are strong enough, you have enough virtue to bear it and I have too much love for you to spare you the unpleasantness of reading it. If I loved you sparingly, I would tear it up. You know my heart and how loath I am to give the slightest pain to those I love, so you have in your hand the greatest proof that I can give you of the temper of my affection for you whom I love as myself

**To Brother Marius Suzanne at Aix.[[18]](#footnote-18)**

52:VI in Oblate Writings

*Fears having caused Brother Suzanne to suffer by his letter of July 16th.*

Suzanne

Notre Dame du Laus,

July 21st, 1820.

My good friend, my dear son, am I in time to assuage somewhat the wound I inflicted on you in my last letter? If you knew how much I have suffered from it, the violence that I did to myself, you would perhaps have been inclined to write to console me and for my part, I write to you today only to say that never, no never have I given you a greater proof of my love. You understand a little but you cannot know to what extent that is true. To knowingly cause pain to you who deserves all my affection, to measure in advance, so to speak, the depth of the wound I would give you and to persist in my will not to spare you, this approaches heroism! So much so that several times I was on the point of tearing up my letter but I did not do so: what a victory!

**To Brother Marius Suzanne at Aix.[[19]](#footnote-19)**

53:VI in Oblate Writings

*Joy on knowing that Suzanne has well accepted the reproaches made in the letter of July 16th.*

Suzanne

[Notre Dame du Laus]

July 23rd, 1820.

If I had not been prevented, I would have replied immediately to your letter which brought me so much pleasure because it shows you to my eyes such as I wish you to be. I could have wished that you be a witness of my emotion on reading it; you would have heard the sound of my heart in these words that my mouth uttered: Oh! how right I am to love him! Yes, you are worthy of all my affection and I shall love you all my life more than myself. This is all that I am given time to say.

Adieu, I embrace you.

**To Président de Mazenod, rue des Petites Maries, n.13, Marseilles[[20]](#footnote-20)**

152:XV in Oblate Writings

*Eugene’s love for his sick father The community of N.D. du Laus is making a novena for him to get well.*

L.J.C.

Mazenod C.A. de

Notre Dame du Laus,

July 28, [1820]

I am longing, dear good papa, to be able to return to Provence and go and give you a hug as soon as I can in Marseilles. I only heard recently how ill you have been, and when I finally got the news about your condition it was that you were on the mend....

This morning I offered the holy sacrifice to ask God, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, for your speedy return to health. We will keep up this prayer for this intention over nine days, and on the ninth day I will say Mass for you again. Please join with us and be ready to make your devotions the same day, I say Mass. If you are still not fit to go out to the church, M. Bonnefoy,[[21]](#footnote-21) who understands the value of this prayerful union and knows that it is the mind of the Church that the sick should participate frequently in the divine Eucharist to help them put up with their woes and make them more meritorious, M. Bonnefoy will be only too glad to bring you communion at home. The Ritual authorizes this to be done every eight days; so no difficulty on the side of the Church’s rules. I am very confident we will obtain in this way what we are all asking for earnestly and fervently....

If you are tired, do not go to the trouble of replying. It is enough for me to get news of you, and my Aix sources will be so kind as to see I am not without it. Making up for my uncle, absorbed in his flock, mother has already been in touch, as well as Madame de Régusse and our men....[[22]](#footnote-22)

**To M. Adrien Chappuis at Aix.[[23]](#footnote-23)**

31:XIII in Oblate Writings

*An account of Father Courtès’ first Mass. The Community’s emotions. Regret at seeing Adrien resisting grace.*

Chappuis

[N.-D. du Laus],

July 31, 1820.

I have just come down from the altar where I assisted our angelic Courtès who offered the Holy Sacrifice for the first time. O friend, if only you had been there! You would have shared in the happiness, the delightful joy, a kind of ecstasy on the part of all those whom devotion had attracted to our shrine.[[24]](#footnote-24)

I will certainly not undertake to repeat what has taken place among us, such things cannot be described. All I want to say is that I regret that you were not there, because I am sure that at least in this moment when heaven opened to us to lavish on our souls a superabundance of unutterable external consolations, your soul would have been lifted up to God, absorbed in him as ours were, and you would have loved, yes, dear Adrien, you would have loved the infinitely lovable[[25]](#footnote-25).

Mass lasted for an hour and a half and I don’t say enough; but everyone found it too short. Imagine a cherubim filled with the purest love of God, imbued with the grandeur of the action working in his favor and through his ministry, whose soul was visibly acting on that weak body that you know and transforming it; no, that cannot be described. That mixture of recollection, sweetness, piety, love, and possession visible on his face, evident in every bodily expression; the tears, sobs, that kind of faintness at the formidable moment when Jesus Christ was going to obey for the first time the suppliant voice of his new minister, once again, that cannot be described, you must experience it, and you would have felt it as we did if you had been present. It’s not a matter of faith at those happy moments, you don’t think about it, you see, feel, and touch; Oh! No. You no longer touch earth, you find yourself without knowing how in full communication with heaven. We are, in a word, in God as we will be when, after being freed from this wrapping of flesh, we will be able to contemplate him face to face. And so how delighted we all were! It was a kind of ecstasy. Tears were running or better streaming from every eye. Even Ignace[[26]](#footnote-26) who had never been able to cry in his life was all wet and suppressing his sobs. The holy fire which was burning on the altar, aided so efficaciously by the love and fervor of the new priest, the angel who was offering the Holy Sacrifice, was circulating and enveloping all of us. I am not concocting formulas, I’m looking for a way to express what I see myself incapable of saying but which I feel very deeply. My emotion did not last only during this memorable Mass of Courtès, my soul was as though insatiable for the happiness that it had just tasted; I assisted at the Mass of Thanksgiving that M. Touche offered for us; I remained kneeling all the while it lasted, and the impression of what had just happened was so strong and profound that I stayed in the same state right to the end, and it would have lasted longer had they not disturbed me.

Dear Adrien, would you believe it? During the most precious moments, you never ceased being present to me; in truth, it was not, as often happens, with a predominant feeling of bitterness and chagrin; no, you were present to me as I understand we are to the Saints who enjoy in heaven a happiness which cannot be troubled by the sight and knowledge of our miseries which they nevertheless want to remedy very effectively; but that state regarding you lasted only during the Mass of Courtès. I did not cease praying very much for you and offering for this same intention the powerful mediation of the new priest who had placed his own intention at my disposal; for you will never grasp the immensity of my love for you.

After the Mass and during the one that followed, my soul, which was constantly permeated with the intimate presence of God who just manifested himself to us, gave into a feeling of sadness it had never experienced before. First of all, the sight of my sins covered me with great confusion, especially when I weighed God’s goodness against my ingratitude, I groaned bitterly and begged pardon with tears; immediately you were once again present in my thoughts, but then I felt the full weight of my care and an ardent desire for your true happiness, contradicted and compromised by the obstacles that you always put in the way. Knowing the superabundant graces that the Lord has granted you since he confided you to me, and the experience of the carelessness, not to say contempt, with which you rejected them... Courtès, your childhood companion, your fellow disciple, filled with consolation, lifted up to heaven, because he was docile to my counsel, faithful to grace; and you who, even though in another state, could proportionately feel the same happiness, given over to dissipation, lacking in good works and merits, having sown only wind, able to harvest only tempests, because, forever refusing my kind advice, the counsels of my friendship, you have wanted to follow another route than the one I traced out for you. This striking contrast threw me once again into a kind of inner desolation which made me offer even more ardent prayers for your salvation, to the point of offering to God, as I did several times, my own life in exchange for your perseverance and sanctification. I find some consolation in that thought, for *majorem charitatem nemo habet ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis.[[27]](#footnote-27)*

Farewell. May you one day understand my heart and console it!

Eugene.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*Ordination of Mr. Hippolyte Courtès in Gap [on July 30, 1820]. His first Mass in Notre Dame du Laus.*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

July 31, 1820

On July 31 last year, the Congregation gave God’s church the most precious present that it could make her[[28]](#footnote-28), in giving her a priest according to the heart of God, one eminently disposed to accomplish all the lofty destiny of a faithful minister, such a one in a word as one must be to please God, to edify and be of service to men. And it is with good reason that Congregation can pride herself on the gift she made then to the Church as Mr. Hippolyte Courtès is one of the first of the congregants, one who was raised in her bosom, who grew up in her shade, one who was formed in her school. His confreres were deprived of the consolation of being present at his ordination and hearing his first Mass. He was ordained in Gap and offered the holy Sacrifice for the first time in the sanctuary of Notre Dame du Laus. The congregants could not then be witnesses of the signal favours and abundant gifts the Lord was pleased to shower on this new priest, genuine first fruits offered to God by the Congregation. They were not however strangers to all that passed on that happy day… I see that I have allowed myself to embark on praising a man who is still alive, against the counsel of Holy Writ. So I stop; no one will be offended if I forgot myself for a moment.

**To Count Felix d’Albertas, in Gemenos.[[29]](#footnote-29)**

153:XV in Oblate Writings

*He encourages and counsels Felix who feels he is too imperfect. He must count on the grace of Jesus Christ and make use of the necessary means for him to work out his salvation.*

L.J.C.

d’Albertas

Aix,

September 14, 1820

One sentence of your last-but-one letter, dear Felix, really upset me. I cannot bear to think you are not perfectly happy and I would do anything in the world to dispel all your distresses and perplexities.

If I were there beside you, my friendship, I almost said my tenderness, would lavish such care on you that the anxiety and restlessness you speak of would give way to the most complete tranquillity. There could be no reasonable ground for resistance. You sincerely want to achieve your salvation; you are trying in an upright way to take the means that seem to you proper to achieve it; you are not relying on your own strength but place all your trust in God whom you love as a good father; how can there be any anxiety after that? It does injury in a way to the grace of Jesus Christ who has so lovingly gone before you. If I may say so, I have no hesitation in assuring you that, while no doubt you are not yourself aware of it, you have been making very real progress in virtue for some time. I need no further proof of this than those very anxieties I would like to dispel, for they take their origin precisely in the more exact knowledge you have acquired of your duties, and this knowledge that shows you your imperfections in an effect of the supernatural light that the Lord communicates precisely in proportion to the efforts made to draw near to him.

So be of good courage, my dear friend; continue to serve God with love and gratitude; this is the shortest way, it is right on target.

Do not forget to buy Father de Ligny’s life of J.C. I am familiar with hardly any of the books on your list. Everything obscene must be burnt, and I usually consign to the same fate all novels likely to awaken the passions. Goodbye, dear, really dear friend. With my warm and affectionate greetings,

Eugene.

**To Father Tempier at Notre Dame du Laus.[[30]](#footnote-30)**

54:VI in Oblate Writings

*Grieves the death of President de Mazenod*

Tempier

[Aix]

October 20, 1820.

You know, my dear friend, the grief which has come to me lately and the circumstances pertaining to it. I will not speak to you thereof so as not to be tempted to expatiate on such a subject, which would be inexhaustible. My sole consolation is to think that it is not possible to have on earth greater assurance of the salvation of a soul. I nurture this thought, while praying from the depths of my heart for this excellent father[[31]](#footnote-31) who left us an heroic example of faith, patience, humility, resignation, confidence in God, devotion to the Blessed Virgin, fortitude, etc. What a fineend to his life! But what martyrdom for the poor son whom God called to be with him to exhort him to face death! Such suffering is unspeakable and it took nothing less than the sight of so many virtues, and confidence in the recompense and the glory which would follow immediately after this cruel and searing separation to be able to bear it.

**To Madame Roux, nee Bonnecorse, Marseilles.[[32]](#footnote-32)**

154:XV in Oblate Writings

*Father de Mazenod deplores the existence of a group opposing the establishment of the Missionaries of Provence in Marseilles. He will take no steps to defend himself he is now used to the “insults and injustice of men.”*

L.S.J.C.

Roux

Aix,

October 23, 1820

I have received, Madam, with very real gratitude the letter you have done me the honour of writing. I truly discerned already in the first few lines the goodness of your heart and the Christian solicitude you show toward our house,[[33]](#footnote-33) I thank you from the bottom of my heart. However while I would be grateful if you would go on keeping me informed about everything touching on the matter in question, I am letting you know in advance that I shall not be making use of what you are so good as to pass on to me. I leave everything to Providence, not only my work which is his, but my own person too. Let them do what they will. I think things are too far advanced to be blocked. It is no doubt more than ridiculous that four women should set themselves up as interpreters for a whole town.[[34]](#footnote-34) But the behaviour of people whose duty it is to judge objectively is even more inconceivable. God in his goodness draws his glory even from men’s stupidities. Perhaps he would have inspired those with the right to speak to express their opinion more loudly as with the one from M. Nicolas,[[35]](#footnote-35) if our elimination would really be a loss. Whatever about that, I will be silent as I have been up to now unless someone asks me my opinion. Then I will let it be known, as I did in Marseilles to the small number of those who have spoken to me about the affair. But it would always be without taking any action, making the least move in the direction of sending these Gentlemen away and keeping us on. These are not the colours I am being depicted in in Paris, and I do not doubt that there they judge me really harshly, but it does not bother me much. I am getting used to the insults and injustice of men. As long as I am not doing anything displeasing to God, that is my only ambition.

I said holy Mass for you again today, never forget me in your prayers and please accept my respectful good wishes.

Eugene de Mazenod

**To the students and novices at Notre Dame du Laus.[[36]](#footnote-36)**

55:VI in Oblate Writings

*Thanks for their letters of condolence on the death of President de Mazenod.*

Students and novices at Laus

Aix,

October 24, 1820.

How touched I have been, my dear friends, by the concern that you have manifested for me in the sorrowful circumstance of the death of my venerable father. I would have wished to reply to each of you in particular but that has been absolutely impossible. I am reduced to this collective letter from which I pray you, my dear children, to draw the sentiments that I have put into it. It would have been soothing to me in such searing grief to be able to seek some consolation in your tenderness, to be surrounded by you all whom I love so much in Our Lord, but this too was a sacrifice I had to make. I recommend my dear father to your holy prayers. His was a most edifying death. Please God I can hope to terminate my life in such beautiful sentiments. What consolations religion brings in this supreme moment to the man who lives by faith! Itis quite evidently beyond nature. What peace, what holy security, what sweet confidence, but also what avidity to hear words about God, what gratitude for his benefactions, what humility! It was ravishing and rending at one and the same time. He is asleep in the Lord who will take into account his many virtues.

**Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation**

Oblate Writings XVI

*November 1: inscription in the necrology of the late President de Mazenod. Sharing in the suffrages of the Congregation.*

Diary of the Aix Christian Youth Congregation

Aix

November 1, 1820

At the request of the Director, the Council decided that the late President de Mazenod, father of the Rev. Director, would be entered in the necrology of the Congregation and admitted to share in all the prayers, suffrages and indulgences that the Congregation accorded to those of its members who are deceased, although President de Mazenod had not been a member of the Congregation during his lifetime[[37]](#footnote-37).

**To the students and novices at Notre Dame du Laus.[[38]](#footnote-38)**

56:VI in Oblate Writings

*Fervour of the community at Laus. Departure of one of them*

Students and novices at Laus

[Cháteau-Gombert,

November 29], Vigil of St. Andrew, 1820.

It was impossible for me, my dear friends and beloved sons in Jesus Christ, not to shed tears of consolation on reading and rereading your touching and very edifying letters. I only wish that the work of this mission[[39]](#footnote-39), which gives me no respite, would leave me time to write to each of you to prove particularly the sentiments inspired in me by your piety and your tender attachment. I thank the good God for all that he has inspired in you during this memorable retreat[[40]](#footnote-40) and on the occasion of the execrable apostasy of the wretch[[41]](#footnote-41) who could not be brought back to his duty by the example of conduct as edifying as yours and you know beforehand what my heart feels in sensing you to be in so intimate a relationship with all its affections. Although I loved you first, I am as grateful also for what you grant me in return as if you owed me nothing in this respect. Yes, my dear children, it is by redoubling my holy love for you that I wish to prove my gratitude; for your part, continue to regard me as your best friend, as truly your father.

I say nothing of the son of perdition. The Spirit of God has spoken to you better than I could do so and you have understood his language too well for me to add anything of mine. Happy community! Holy family! Keep as precious the gifts that the Lord has shared with you so abundantly, walk in the path into which you have been thrust, so to speak, at the sight of the precipice which has claimed the infidel.

The more you are holy, the greater will be my happiness. Ah! I would say it already overflows if I could witness the marvels that the good God works in your midst, if it were given to me to press you to my heart. It takes nothing less than the emphatic will of God to keep me where I am; my spirit is at Laus, it follows you, accompanies you; and what of my heart? It loves you.

May you be filled, my dear children with all the graces and benedictions that I desire for you in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Ego Eugenius, scripsi mea manu.

**To the Oblate students at Aix.[[42]](#footnote-42)**

57:VI in Oblate Writings

*Read the letters of the novices. Grow in grace and virtue.*

Oblate students at Aix

[Cháteau Gombert]

November 29, 1820.

I am passing on to you, my dear friends, the last letters I have received from Laus so that you can read them all together and be edified as we have ourselves been edified by them. This word does not express the effect that was produced on us and particularly on me by the heroic sentiments which are so well and in such a Christian manner articulated in these letters. How happy we are to have such brothers! I have only one regret, that of not being able to be present with them to enjoy their virtues and to be stimulated by their example to become better and more perfect ourselves. If a certain superior of a certain community[[43]](#footnote-43) could form an idea of what the Lord is thus working amongst us, perhaps he would go to less trouble to steer his students away from a Society of which the majority are as exemplary as this. As for myself, I am abashed and humbled as much as I can be consoled and elated. Since this is so, our work will go forward. You are destined, my dear children, to perfect it, so make yourself more and more worthy of your great destiny. I will never be grateful enough for the grace the good God grants me in giving me children such as you all are; I feel it keenly, quite deeply and I thank him for it every minute of the day. Grow, my dear friends, in grace and virtue, in the love of Jesus Christ, in union, in the most intimate charity. Pray for me and return me a little of the love that I bear for you and which could only increase in Heaven. I embrace you *in osculo sancto.*

1. JEANCARD, 372; REY, I, 244 footnote, 455-456; YENVEUX, IV, 80, 210. Marius Suzanne was born at Aix on February 2nd, 1799. Member of the Youth Sodality, he began his novitiate on January 21st, 1817. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ms. YENVEUX, IV, 210, has *prétend* (claims) instead of *doit* (ought). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The mission of Marseilles was preached from January 2nd to February 27th, by twenty missionaries of France and six missionaries of Provence: Mazenod, Maunier, Mye, Deblieu, Tempier and M. Aubert. Father Moreau remained at Aix where he was aided by Fortuné de Mazenod and Marius Suzanne. “Our church has been extremely full during the four days of the Forty Hours... Moreau gave two good meditations. Suzanne took the others and delighted his audience. He is a young man full of talent and virtue who will be of great help to your son...” (Fortuné to the President). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The Aix mission was preached from March 12 to April 24 1820. The Missionaries of Provence preached in Provencal in the church of the Mission and in two parishes: the cathedral of St. Sauveur and St. Jean *extra muros.* The Missionaries of France preached in French in the other churches. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Rambert 1,317-319. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The closing of the mission was planned for April 24. In order to hear the confessions of late-comers, the Missionaries of Provence prolonged another week the exercises which ended on Sunday, April 30. The Founder wrote on the next morning. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. M. Claude Rey whom Louis-Philippe named Bishop of Dijon on July 9, 1831. He was not approved till February 24, 1832. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Fathers de Mazenod and Deblieu preached at the Cathedral, Maunier and Mie at St-Jean *extra muros,* Tempier and Moreau at the church of the Mission. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Yenveux (111.156) quotes from this letter; his text differs from that of Rambert: “At this strange news, I shuddered at the consequences... I even hesitated to make a decision; I was tempted to disobey in order to avoid the horrible scandal that I foresaw... but believing that in God’s eyes it was more perfect to obey.. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. This prohibition is surprising. We know that Pope Pius VII had re-established the Society of Jesus with the bull *Sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum* of August 7, 1814. Bishop de Bausset, a friend of the Jesuits, who arrived in Aix in 1819, confided the direction of the minor seminary to them in 1821. This must have already been known in 1820, whence the fear of competition: the Jesuits normally set up Youth Congregations in their institutions, cf. J. Burnichon, S.J., *La Congrégation des Jésuites en France, Histoire d’un siècle 1814-1914*, Paris, 1914, 3 vols. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Orig.:Rome, Postulation Archives, Boisgelin Collection I, 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Father de Mazenod arrived at Laus with the novices on June 21,1821; he had to stay there till the middle of August to replace Father Tempier, detained at Aix by the illness and death of his father. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. That is the only way that this word oulvari can be read: it is not French, Italian or Provencal; did the Founder want to write: charivari? [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Further on in the letter, the Founder invites his mother to take care of her health. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Copy in A. Tavernier, Quelques souvenirs sur Mgr C.-E, de Mazenod, Aix, 1872, p.76. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. JEANCARD, 373-376; REY, I, 456; YENVEUX, VI, 57-59. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Father de Mazenod spent nearly two months at Notre Dame du Laus: from June 19th to mid-August (Fortuné to the President, June 11th, August 3rd, 10th and 17th). The novices and postulants had gone up to Laus with him. His sojourn was prolonged because Father Tempier had to leave towards July 15th to be with his father who died at the beginning of the month of August. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. JEANCARD 376; REY, I, 456-457. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. JEANCARD, 377 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post. FB I-1. The President and his two brothers returned to France in December 1817. Totally absorbed in his ministry in Aix and the missions, Eugene made few visits to Marseilles where his father and uncle Louis were living-, he did however write a few letters, especially when be heard his father was ill. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Father François Bonnefoy, parish priest of St. Theodore’s in Marseilles and friend of the President. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Fortuné was living at the house of the Mission in Aix with “our men,” i.e., the Missionaries of Provence. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Yenveux IV, 77; V, 45; Rambert 1, 324-3 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Father Courtès was ordained on July 30 at Gap. Father Rambert wrote in this regard: “It was a great event in the humble Society of the Missionaries of Provence, the ordination and first Mass of a new priest. The family was so few in numbers, vocations so rare, formation of men so slow and difficult! Furthermore, we were so united in this little family; so well we are only one body and one spirit, that one’s joy was everyone’s joy, and the grace received by the new priest was a grace received by all his brothers…” [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Adrien Chappuis, born in 1820, was a member of the youth congregation and had thought about being a missionary. In 1820 his conduct caused Father de Mazenod some concern: so, the latter made use of this good occasion to try and touch the heart of one of his beloved sons. Adrien, a lawyer, became the inspector general of finances at Paris and always maintained excellent relations with Bishop de Mazenod. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Ignace Voitot. a former soldier, entered novitiate on May 30, 1822 as a Brother. He left in 1823. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. John 15:13. “There is no greater love than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. The Founder had forgotten to enter this in the Diary at the appropriate time, and included it under the entry of June 17, 1821.

    H. Courtès was the first congregant to be ordained priest for the Missionaries of Provence. As to the “signal favours and abundant gifts” the Founder mentions here, cf. Léon Balbeur, *“Le feu qui brûlait sur l’autel”* in *Etudes Oblates*, 14 (1955), pp. 261-268. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Orig.: Marseilles, arch. d’Albertas, Felix (1789-1872) was a friend of Eugene. President de Mazenod and Felix’s father had been presidents together of the Court of Accounts. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. RAMBERT, I, 327. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. The President Charles-Antoine, died at Marseilles on October 10th. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Orig.: Marseilles, arch. de l’archevéché. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Allusion to the plan for a foundation of the Missionaries of Provence in Marseilles, opposed by friends of the Missionaries of France. Cf. Leflon, *Eugene de Mazenod* (Tr. F.D. Flanagan, OMI), Fordham U.P. New York, H, pp. 170-184. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. We know a Madame Emérigon was one of them: ibid. pp. 172, 175. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Father A.B. Nicolas, parish priest of St. Cannat and well-disposed towards the Missionaries of Provence. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. REY, I, 257-258. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. . President Charles Antoine de Mazenod died in Marseilles on October 10, 1820. At that time Eugene was preaching a retreat in the parish of the Carmelites in Marseilles and was staying for those days in the house of his father who died in his son’s arms. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. YENVEUX, V, 175; REY, I, 258-259; RAMBERT, I, 336. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Mission of Cháteau-Gombert (November 12 - December 17, 1820). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. The retreat took place in November after the return of Father Tempier from the mission of Champoléon (October 1-29) in the upper Alps. Father Tempier and the novices had written a request to the Founder to let them make the vow of poverty. The Chapter of 1818 had only imposed the vows of chastity, obedience and perseverance. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. He apparently refers to F. M. Dalmas who made his profession on November 1, 1819. His name is no longer found in the letters of Coulin to the Founder at the end of the year 1820. The Founder wrote, under this name, in the Register of entries to the Novitiate: “The first to give us the example of the most shameful apostasy.” Father de Mazenod habitually designated as an apostate any Oblate who left, without sufficient motives, after having pronounced his vows. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. YENVEUX, VIII, 78-79. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. The major seminary was entrusted to the Sulpicians. The Fathers of the Retreat had to send them some students. Some students of the Mission House also attended and were not viewed favourably by all. Fortuné wrote to the President on June 1, 1820: “The few persons who have read (the brochure of Brother Suzanne on the mission of Aix) were extremely satisfied with it, even at the seminary where the Mission House is the target of jealous individuals and even has enemies amongst the young people who judge everything while often knowing nothing and who think of themselves as Bossuets or Fenelons.” [↑](#footnote-ref-43)