1832

To Father Courtès, at Aix[[1]](#footnote-1)

413:in Oblate Writings

Letter from Pope Gregory XVI. One of the Fathers from N. - D. du Laus is sent to Aix.

Courtès

[Marseilles.]

January 7, 1832.

The Sovereign Pontiff has replied to the letter I wrote him from Fribourg,[[2]](#footnote-2) in the same moving and really paternal style as his predecessor; at the first opportunity I will have a copy of this document sent to you, precious as it is to our Congregation. Read it out to the community. I know you will be as moved as we were. The Pope saw fit to put his own signature to the brief, a signal mark of protection and a favour rarely accorded: I draw it to your attention for our consolation.

I know none greater here below than to receive praise, approval and encouragement from the mouth of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, as he gives his personal guidance to the family whose head he is, as he is of the whole Church, laying down for it the road that it must follow and in a certain way placing the seal of infallibility on its existence and its works.

In acknowledgement of this, as is our duty, and in response to the wishes of the Head of the Church, have the community recite for nine days one *pater* and one *ave,* followed by the prayer *pro Papa.* Thereafter this prayer will continue to be said always at evening prayer.

... I am quite aware, my dear friend, that you will not get much out of the man[[3]](#footnote-3) I have recently sent you: I was not really thinking of him as an addition to your strength. He had to leave N.-D. [du Laus] as his health was suffering from the acute cold that is found in that part of the world. Before that he had persuaded himself that the climate of Marseilles was no longer doing his chest any good at all. Thus we had no choice left and he had to be called to Aix. He has arrived there, and if I am to judge by his letter he is ready to do his best there. I hope he keeps his word, but this wretched nature of ours, when it gets too much attention, leaves weak people open to strong temptations. I think it then my duty to tell you for your guidance that our dear Brother is prone to excess in this matter. It is unbelievable how far in the past he has carried his precautions in this regard. Death must have been in his eyes a really great evil and he must have quite lost sight of the fact that it opens the gates of heaven to us, seeing he could impose so many sacrifices on himself for its avoidance. Such great precautions cannot be taken without notable loss to the interior life. At the same time there is a serious weakening of personal virtue. I do not know if he had held on to even the least vestige of religious life, at any rate he was far from understanding the value of perfection as affirmed by all who serve as models in this field. It was inevitable that his behaviour would be affected by an outlook so little in accord with the spirit of Jesus Christ ... The sense of belonging to a single family was allowed to grow dim, at any rate he let months and years go by without writing to me. Perhaps he considered I was already informed, a common excuse with the wayward, while as an open-minded and lenient judge I merely bemoaned ....

You know the man is sound at bottom but over-much esteem for learning to which perhaps he gave preference over sanctity caused a withdrawal of grace and light; then, over-much care of his health led him to neglect even things that can never be abandoned with impunity. From that results a state of imperfection from which it is vital that he emerge [if he] does not want to leave himself open to complete collapse.[[4]](#footnote-4)

To Father Courtès, at Aix.[[5]](#footnote-5)

414:VIII in Oblate Writings

The Vicar General’s heavy commitments.

Courtès

[Marseilles,]

February 3, 1832.

...You must not conclude from my silence that I am not getting on with the matter that you are concerned with, but when one has a string of meetings often going on for three hours at a time and all the subsequent business that arises, when one has to organize, negotiate, reply, carry out, conciliate so many different interests, to say nothing of ordinary administration which is necessarily very complex with our dense population, etc., one really has no time left to breathe, much less to write ....

To Father Courtès, at Aix[[6]](#footnote-6)

415:VIII in Oblate Writings

Detachment from the world. Duty of state.

Courtès

[Marseilles,]

February 18, 1832.

I give it no further thought as, thanks be to God, without being a St. Francis de Sales or a St. Teresa, there is little that I desire, and the little I desire I desire but little. It is not only in recent days that the world’s show has seemed but a passing shadow to me; I live in habitual awareness that I have only a limited number of days to live, and obliged as I am to work from dawn to dusk, I do it only as a duty, like a man who has been given one of the most painful of penances by the Master to whom all obedience is due.

To Father Mille, at Billens[[7]](#footnote-7)

416:VIII in Oblate Writings

Submission to the decisions of the Holy Father.

Mille

[Marseilles,]

February 18, 1832.

... With us one must have enough simplicity to renounce one’s own opinions when they do not conform, I do not say to the decisions of the Holy See, but even to its viewpoint. We acknowledge none other as our teacher and we adopt its judgment even before it has been made a dogmatic pronouncement .... [[8]](#footnote-8)

To Father Courtès, at Aix[[9]](#footnote-9)

417:VIII in Oblate Writings

New French bishops. Father Courtès cannot accept to be Bishop Rey’s Vicar General at Dijon.

Courtès

[Marseilles,]

March 11, 1832.

I had a letter from Rome in these terms: “Three Churches of France put an end to their widowhood yesterday”.[[10]](#footnote-10) Some will emit deep sighs, for others it is murmuring and bitterness; as for you, I know, you will bend in adoration before God’s judgment on these unhappy Churches and you will give yourselves to prayer. The very evening of the day of the consistory, a messenger came and announced the taking of Ancona by the French.[[11]](#footnote-11) The details which have come to us are horrifying; you have to go back to the time of the barbarians to find like examples of cowardly betrayal or rather of so revolting a treachery

... The proposal made to you by Bishop Rey would arouse my gratitude, if his only purpose were to show you his esteem. I am a little less impressed in the view of the position he is in and the advantages he would hope to derive from your services. You are right to conclude that his proposal is unacceptable. First because of your health .... I see no less difficulty on the moral side. Bishop Rey has been installed by the Sovereign Pontiff, but is there anyone who does not know that this installation was extracted by force? Has not Bishop Rey allowed himself to be used by a government that is hostile to the Church? To receive his patronage would be in everyone’s eyes a frank admission of complicity. The very idea fills me with horror[[12]](#footnote-12)....

To Father Courtès, at Aix[[13]](#footnote-13)

418:VIII in Oblate Writings

Refusal of a postulant who lacks sound judgment. The superior of a major seminary is normally a vicar general

Courtès

[Marseilles,]

March 23, 1832.

... Sound judgment is an indispensable quality, so much so that we have no right to overlook its absence in presenting candidates. What price any good quality when the intellect is damaged? A doubt would be sufficient reason for us to decline to assent to the request of our good M. Poét,[[14]](#footnote-14) all the more so after what Father Jerome[[15]](#footnote-15) told you. So convey to this excellent young man my regrets, but tell him at the same time the reason motivating our non-acceptance.

It is quite normal that a Bishop, whoever he may be, who has been in position to get to know a Congregation throughout the many years it has been active, one might say before his own eyes, should be keen to strengthen his diocese by confiding to it the direction of his seminary.[[16]](#footnote-16) Nothing could be more natural afterwards than that he should give a more particular sign of confidence to the man whom he has placed at the head of his seminary and make him his vicar general. I would see in this step a sufficient reason for a dispensation, taking into consideration both the good of the diocese and the advantage to the Congregation. I would be left only with the difficulty consisting in the state of your health. You give me reassurance on this score ....

To Father Guigues, at N.-D. du Laus[[17]](#footnote-17)

419:VIII in Oblate Writings

Devotion to St. Joseph. Collection on behalf of the Brothers’ schools at Marseilles and for the construction of the church of St. Lazarus.

Guigues

[Marseilles,]

March 23, 1832.

My dear Father Guigues, it is very kind of you to have remembered that I live under the patronage of great St. Joseph and not to have forgotten me in your prayers to this saint on the day of his feast. You will not be surprised in your turn that I have not forgotten that, you have the happiness to bear the name and that you have been aware of its worth.

I believe his soul more excellent than all the celestial intelligences, above which it is indubitably placed in heaven.

In that blessed abode Jesus Christ, Mary and Joseph are just as inseparable as they were on earth. I believe in these things with the most certain faith, that is to say, just as certainly as I believe in the Immaculate Conception of Mary and for the same reasons, due proportion being observed. I am going to tell you too another thought that is dear to me: I am quite persuaded as well that the body of St. Joseph is already in glory and that is where it is meant to be for all time. Speaking of his soul close to Jesus and Mary I said it was: *super choros Angelorum.* And so you would search in vain for his relics over the face of the earth. You will no more find his relics than any of his holy spouse. Of neither the one nor the other do we possess anything except articles, while the world is filled with the relics of the Apostles, and of saints who were the Saviour’s contemporaries: St. John the Baptist, etc. No one has ever presumed to produce even false ones of these two eminent personages, and I consider this as due to a special divine disposition. I simply record the fact, you will give it what value you please. For myself, it is but a confirmation[[18]](#footnote-18) of my strongly held view and I make bold to profess it. If it attracts your piety, meditate on it and I have no doubt that you will accept it, I mean the whole body of my teaching on the arch-saint whom we venerate with all our hearts.

... I hope that the collection for our schools will be sufficient. I had ten thousand francs, nearly double that will be needed again. The rent of the house alone will cost more than four thousand.

Providence will come to our help but what a body-blow for our church of St. Lazarus.[[19]](#footnote-19) When we were laying our plans, we had no thought of the Brothers’ misfortune.[[20]](#footnote-20) No matter, there is no shortage of courage, we gave them priority because the living members of Christ, which all these poor abandoned children are, ought to have preference over the temple even of Jesus Christ. This good Master, who inspires us and who judges our intention, will not abandon us. I am pledged for thirty thousand francs. He would send down a shower of gold from the skies sooner than see our trust betrayed.

To Cardinal Pedicini: Prefect of the S. C. of Propaganda Fide[[21]](#footnote-21)

1:V in Oblate Writings

Steps taken with the Government to send Oblates to Algeria. The priests who had left since 1830 were too few in number and ill prepared. Fr. de Mazenod once again offers the services of his missionaries who will always be grateful for the role played by Cardinal Pedicini in the approval of the Rules of the Congregation.

Propaganda Fide

Marseilles,

April 10, 1832.

Bishopric of Marseilles

Your Eminence

As soon as Algers had fallen to the arms of good King Charles X,[[22]](#footnote-22) I set to work in an attempt to provide the Catholics in the colony with the assistance of our religion. Ever nourishing the hope of one day seeing many infidels open their eyes to the light of the Faith, I wrote to my uncle, the bishop of Marseille[[23]](#footnote-23) and asked him to write both to the Prime Minister[[24]](#footnote-24) at that time and to the Cardinal Chaplain[[25]](#footnote-25) for aid and protection to that effect. The project was very warmly received and we were informed that this very important subject would be immediately broached and our Congregation given the protection and aid as requested. I was about to write to the Supreme Pontiff, our dear and ever magnanimous protector,[[26]](#footnote-26) when all of a sudden the disastrous revolution befell us.[[27]](#footnote-27) We waited to see what was going to happen and whether or not France would keep its conquest.

The news we later received from those territories revealed the insufficiency, considering the number of Catholics flocking to those regions, of the assistance that the few priests who are unaccustomed to the sacred ministry can give them. That was when I felt a renewed desire to step forward and offer anew the services of our Congregation, not to the Government which no longer harbours the same zeal for the faith, but to Rome, which by right and disposition, entertains the *sollicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum*.[[28]](#footnote-28) I therefore wrote to my friend, His Eminence de Rohan,[[29]](#footnote-29) and asked him to speak with your Eminence. In the meantime Propaganda sent two priests into the area. I hope they will be able to accomplish something, but I cannot help but feel that they will not suffice since there is so much to do, all the more so since they both seem very young to me and one of them not in the best of health.[[30]](#footnote-30)

In any case, should your Eminence wish to increase the size of the Mission, I again offer our tiny Congregation which, I would dare to venture, was in some way the very creation of your doing. Your Eminence will remember being our benevolent Ponens when His Holiness Pope Leo XII deigned to approve it as he did *in forma specifica.[[31]](#footnote-31)* My recognition and that of the entire congregation is very much alive in our hearts and is a duty that will always remain with us, even after my death. In fact, the following words appear printed in the introduction to our Rules *ad perpetuam rei memoriam,* and it is truly a joy for me to reproduce them here: “The eminent, pious Cardinal Pedicini, having accepted the task of *Ponens* for our cause, showed himself tireless in all the work required for a careful - and, for us, successful - study of our Constitutions.”[[32]](#footnote-32)

The person who will deliver this letter, the superior of the major seminary of Marseilles and one of the first members of the Congregation,[[33]](#footnote-33) will provide Your Eminence with all further details should you wish to use the Oblates of the Immaculate Conception in the Algerian Mission.

Your Eminence, I remain your most humble and grateful servant,

Mazenod, sup. gen. O.M.I., Vicar General of Marseilles.

To Father Mille, at Billens[[34]](#footnote-34)

420:VIII in Oblate Writings

Danger of cholera in Switzerland. Prudence. Father Mille, a good missionary but a poor superior. His work is with the novices and scholastics not preaching. Lack of charity amongst the brothers.

Mille

[Marseilles,]

April 21, 1832.

... The first thing I want to speak to you about is the *cholera-morbus* that the papers tell us has penetrated Switzerland; it makes me very worried to know that you are so close to a danger-zone and so far away from me. We are under the same threat as yourselves, and it is beyond my understanding how it has not yet got within our walls, seeing the total absence of precautions that simple prudence would demand. God is giving me the grace not to be afraid of it, but I am afraid for you, as you have demonstrated that your wisdom is not always equal to your zeal. A great responsibility rests on your shoulders and you must not forget that the least imprudence that compromises the community in your charge would be imputed to you. In the event of its coming, those who are not priests must be put in a place of safety and the priests themselves must carry out the charitable duties required of their holy ministry, taking suitable precautions.

You will take care to consult me on the steps you have a mind to take. Do supply for the shortage of priests in the countryside round about you, within a given distance, but to widen the area over-much would be as unreasonable as if you took it into your head to go and offer your services in Paris. I exhort you in advance to moderation and prudence... for you need both.

While I am on the subject, I will say a word in passing about your zealous works during the Forty Hours. Do you want to know the conclusion that I have come to from your account? It is that you are as good a missionary as you are a poor superior. Did you ever hear of the priests from Estavayer leaving their house - a house of priests and former religious - to go off preaching as you have done? Does conscience require one to forsake one’s special task to embrace another, however better it be in appearance? What can one say of your facility in interpreting your superior’s intentions in a sense exactly contrary to his precise words and to his perfectly well-known intention - and he certainly *has* an intention! No my dear friend, that is not the way to go about things. It is a poor concept of obedience to be always doing the opposite of what is prescribed. You cut a dash, you earn men’s plaudits, you may even do some good, but you fail to do your duty - and what profit can one expect in such circumstances from even the most brilliant of deeds? It really hurts me to make these observations to you, but they are the fruit of meditation in the Lord’s presence. *There* values are reduced to their simplest form of expression: what counts for more in worldly terms often counts for nothing on *its* scales with its enormous counterweights. As a simple missionary everything you did would have been admirable provided it were done under obedience. But as superior charged with the care of the élite of our family and with the duty of caring for it like the apple of your eye, you have not done well, and those whom you consulted made the mistake (their youth excuses them) of leaving out of consideration your personal obligations and taking into consideration only the act itself, under the influence of the same zeal that led you yourself astray.

Once and for all impress this upon yourself. I have not sent you to Switzerland to exercise the exterior ministry but to direct, instruct and look after the community that is entrusted to you; this has been repeated and explained too often for there to be the least shadow of doubt about the course that you must follow in your situation. Apply yourself unreservedly to giving edification by your regularity to those at whose perfection it is your duty to labour. They will repay what you have done for them when, come to the end of their studies, they begin to work in our Father’s vineyard; it is then you will harvest what you are now sowing. You will have a double portion in all their works and it will amply repay you for the sacrifice you are making for them. God will reward you precisely for what you omit, or better, for what you do not do, in virtue of holy obedience. He alone can assign a value to your actions ....

How these petty quarrels amongst the Brothers distress me! I know that they do their best to quickly heal these wounds to charity, but they should not fall into these faults which inevitably damage a virtue they ought to have in the highest degree. I strongly exhort them to take pains to uproot this kind of petty antipathy that does them injury in their hearts .... It will cost me a lot to be deprived of seeing you this year, but how can a person leave his post when cholera threatens?

In your letter of the 19th you begin by speaking of *cholera-morbus*. I hope the Lord will spare your countryside, but if this catastrophe must make its appearance there, I will never give advice that is unworthy of your holy profession and, in this as in everything else, we will always fall in with the Bishop of Lausanne’s position.

To Father Tempier, at Rome[[35]](#footnote-35)

421:VIII in Oblate Writings

Disturbances at Marseilles on the occasion of the Duchess de Berry’s passage.

Tempier

[Marseilles.]

May 6, 1832.

... Now everything is in a turmoil, mutual suspicions disrupt the peace. At every turn the troops make hostile demonstrations. The reason behind this state of affairs is a very bizarre call to arms. Three men thought they could create a big impression by hoisting a white flag on the top of the steeple of Saint-Laurent.[[36]](#footnote-36) I am still asking myself if those responsible for such a ridiculous plot oughtn’t to be sent to the madhouse rather than to prison where they are now held in close custody.

To Father Tempier, at Rome[[37]](#footnote-37)

422:VIII in Oblate Writings

Human fragility and the brevity of life.

Tempier

[Marseilles.]

May 14. 1832.

... All things pass away, everything contains the seed of its own destruction. Even man himself does not have time to take stock of his gradual deterioration, he is whisked off before he can learn the lesson of his own fragility. So when I see so many making such ado to make a little noise, their weakness fills me with pity, and although I have only just reached the age of fifty, I would discover within myself an insurmountable aversion to making any plan at all which went beyond, so to speak, the day that I track out in space while revolving with the earth where we live. But where have my reflections brought me? Let us come back to our situation. You really are in Rome, and I see you ensconced there, how I do not know exactly; it is in a way a magical effect ....

To Father Mille, at Billens[[38]](#footnote-38)

423:VIII in Oblate Writings

Chapel of the Oblate house at Billens. Oblates may make their desires known, but obedience has the last word. Dangers of disobedience.

Mille

[Marseilles,]

May 30, 1832.

... Don’t be anxious about the chapel. It is quite unnecessary for you to approach the Apostolic Nuncio for that. We have the privilege of setting one up in the interior of our houses. Set it up where you had planned it and celebrate Mass without further formalities.

I don’t find Father Bernard’s observations out of place if they go no further than you indicate in your letter. Nothing could be more legitimate than to make one’s desires known, but there is also the aspect that it is proper to put one’s confidence in the wisdom and lights that the good God gives to superiors. It would be a grave disorder to cherish so exclusive a love for one kind of ministry that one could not be placed elsewhere, even for a short period, without getting upset about it. A superior cannot be tied down by any conditions. He might need someone to answer the door or to sweep up and that person must then be convinced that he is more agreeable to God answering the door and sweeping up than he would be if on his own account he were to preach or hear confessions. St. Anthony of Padua spent many years in the kitchen without thinking of complaining. There is no serving the good God without renunciation. Unfortunately only too often, and I shudder as I say it, we find great sinners amongst the preachers, confessors and all those ministers who are slaves to their caprices. The saints are found amongst the obedient, modestly accepting their missions in a quite different way. In God’s name, ponder on these reflections. Whoever we are, we are unprofitable servants in Our Father’s house. Our actions and the services we render have value only to the extent that we do what the Master asks of us. It will go hard with anyone who turns up his nose at the least important tasks because he believes himself suitable for more lofty ones. His reckoning will be swift. Not only that, before long he will find himself with a new master: Lucifer for Jesus Christ. Believe me. I speak from experience. I could cite more examples than I can count on the fingers of my hand.

I was very happy to learn of the success of your first sermon at Fribourg. At the same time don’t attach too much importance to this kind of praise. Goodbye dear friend and all you dear friends. My prayer is that your love will never cease to grow and overflow. I give you my blessing.

To Father Courtès, at Aix[[39]](#footnote-39)

424:VIII in Oblate Writings

Mutual respect that should exist amongst the members of the same community. State of Oblate houses.

Courtès

[Marseilles,]

June 12, 1832.

... If experience had not taught me that even the holiest and most fervent of communities are not exempt from some kinds of affliction, it would have amazed me that one could come across conflicts even of a merely fleeting character amongst ourselves originating in pride. Unfortunately, it is our nature’s sad lot that pride is very difficult to subjugate completely. In this regard you will do well to stress the duty of mutual respect we owe each other and you must make war on that sneering manner that does not suit men like ourselves. I admire the way you have turned this factor to good use to avoid the danger of meeting certain people. It is accepted that they cannot be admitted. It is one more difficulty in the task of serving.

... The Calvaire community is excellent, the progress of the Fathers could not be bettered, Billens goes from strength to strength and N.-D. du Laus as well is exemplary in its regularity. This latter house has become quite important. Father Guibert is equal to the task which, thanks to a certain Bishop,[[40]](#footnote-40) is a very difficult one.

To Father Tempier, at Rome[[41]](#footnote-41)

425:VIII in Oblate Writings

Project for an Oblate foundation at Rome.

Tempier

[Marseilles,]

June 18, 1832.

I told you in my last letter that in Rome as everywhere else you have to prepare the ground if you want to achieve your goal, basing myself on that passage of St. Ignatius that in all things you must put your trust in God as if human effort availed for naught and then apply yourself to the task making use of every human artifice as if God did not enter into the matter. However that may be, if you have hopes of getting the house that you are seeking,[[42]](#footnote-42) you may defer your departure from Rome. That would be splendid but my hopes are dim. It would seem that although the project has not been rejected out of hand, they would like to see some Italians involved. You know our limits here. There is only Albini, for Rossi will never be presentable especially as a witness to exterior regularity, as all his virtues are interior ones. In my opinion, the only chance of success is to envisage the thing in relation to seminaries. Leo XII understood, but the present Pope, never having been in France, has no means of knowing the superiority of our methods in comparison with all those used elsewhere. You might want to try it out to start with in one of the dioceses of the papal states, at Civitavecchia, for example, which is I think in Cardinal Pacca’s diocese! If Cardinal Odescalchi were still Bishop of Ferrara, he would be one to appreciate the project, but now he has no diocese. I repeat, it is a fine project, but very difficult as it entails overcoming national prejudice and making use of new methods whose results will be immense for the regularity of the secular clergy but which would be so much in contrast with some established practices that you would have to anticipate powerful opposition. This would not trouble me if I saw the least opening. What we have to fear most is a curt refusal leaving no room for negotiation.

To Father Tempier, at Rome.[[43]](#footnote-43)

426:VIII in Oblate Writings

The civil authorities at Marseilles no longer allow processions.

Tempier

[Marseilles.]

June 25, 1832.

I stood in need of your consolation in my distress over the arbitrary prohibition on processions after everything was set to pay honour to Our Lord in a fitting manner. When you read *La Gazette* you will see our notice; it will give you some idea of our anger. They simply forgot to underline the quotation from the Prefect’s letter and left out the last paragraph announcing what the Bishop would provide to make up for the forcible suppression of Friday’s procession, the Feast of the Sacred Heart. That day he will say a low Mass at the Cathedral and all the faithful are invited to come and to go to Communion. We will have the Bishop of Nancy[[44]](#footnote-44) preside; he has been here for several weeks and he devotes himself without stint to every work of preaching or ministry he is offered.

Bring me the large life of the Venerable Paul of the Cross,[[45]](#footnote-45) I have only a small and very unsatisfactory one. If you find a life of Blessed Leonard of Port Maurice, get it for me.

To Father Tempier, at Rome[[46]](#footnote-46)

427:VIII in Oblate Writings

Danger of making concessions over fasting. Feast of the Sacred Heart at Marseilles.

Tempier

[Marseilles.]

July 9, 1832.

... As for me, I see in each of these concessions, which are not called for in any way by a real necessity,[[47]](#footnote-47) an act of weakness, a veritable sacrifice offered in this anti-christian world to pacify the tiger. I will tell you frankly my opinion: they want to seem gentle and compassionate and now that the thing has started it is a question of who will give the most dispensations so as not to be left behind by the others. That isn’t how St. Charles would have acted, and neither I who am no St. Charles but just plain Charles.

You know how things went here but you could never get any idea from the papers of the beauty, emotion and divine quality of our celebration of the Feast of the Sacred Heart that took place on the day you celebrated the Feast of St. Peter at Rome. The Bishop was distributing communion for two and a quarter hours. Everyone in the Cathedral, and it was packed, went up for communion. It was a magnificent evening. Ah well, we did our best to make it up to Our Saviour for the insult offered him. Goodbye, dear friend, I will not write again unless you advise me to the contrary.[[48]](#footnote-48)

To Bishop Fortune de Mazenod, at Marseilles[[49]](#footnote-49)

79:XIII in Oblate Writings

Visit to N. -D. du Laus. Leaving soon for Turin and Rome.

Mazenod Fortuné de

[Notre-Dame du Laus,

August 1, 1832].

This holy place is ever more delightful. Those who live here inspire almost as much devotion as does the shrine. The house is clean, silence and recollection dominate it, there is joy on every face; oh! it is good to live here. I will only pass through however. I leave tomorrow to get to Briançon on Friday in the early morning and will continue immediately and be at my friend Collegno’s place on Sunday.

To Father Courtès, at Aix[[50]](#footnote-50)

428:VIII in Oblate Writings

Holy Father’s audience. Lamennais.

Courtès

[Rome.]

August 29. 1832.

My very dear friend, you ought to have received details of my news from Marseilles. I asked for that in all my letters.[[51]](#footnote-51) I delayed writing until I was ensconced in this capital and brought up to date concerning *certain matters* which touch the people you know.

Even before seeing the Holy Father. I was informed of his intentions: they correspond to what I told you. It is what he thinks, what he wants, he confirmed it personally in the audience he gave me yesterday that lasted nearly three-quarters of an hour and to which, as a special mark of distinction, he summoned me himself, informing his Chamberlain that I was to be in his antechamber and that he should have me enter. And that is how it happened, to the great astonishment of all who had arrived before me and who had difficulty getting in in the course of the morning. The Holy Father spoke first and disclosed his intentions to me about the person in whom you take such interest, in the kindest way. He told me plainly that he was busy finding the best means to achieve the end proposed. He added some flattering words to what he had to say in which one can lawfully take some pleasure as coming from the mouth of the Head of the Church and when the recipient has the spirit of faith and sees Jesus Christ in his Vicar. You see that I did not have to open my mouth, although I understood that patience is going to be called for in the matter as in everything that goes on here.

... The Holy Father was not slow to let me know his judgment on the latest teaching of M. de Lamennais. There is cause for satisfaction in having come down on the same side as the Head of the Church.

To the Fathers and Brothers at Billens[[52]](#footnote-52)

429:VIII in Oblate Writings

The Holy Father’s audience. Condemnation of Lamennais.

Oblates at Billens

[Rome.]

September 11, 1832.

You will be curious to know if I have seen the Holy Father. It is only to be expected since it was he who summoned me to Rome. The audience he gave me lasted three quarters of an hour. He was very well disposed towards me and opened his mind to me with kindness and precision. I may say, for your guidance, that he spoke in a surprisingly strong way against M. de Lamennais. He could not have displayed more power and conviction in his condemnation of him. I count myself fortunate to have followed so faithfully the line of thought of the Church’s head in banning, as I did two years ago, the detestable newspaper in which that dangerous man and his lunatic disciples pour out the venom of their pernicious teachings. If the encyclical is not enough to constrain them, the Pope told me he would go further. I hope that they will submit. Our Holy Father the Pope has instructed Cardinal Pacca to write to M. de Lamennais and to send him a copy of the encyclical. This cardinal who overwhelms me with kindness and with whom I dine today, September 11, with our Father Tempier, has told him in the Pope’s name that out of respect he was not named in the Encyclical, but that he should be quite clear on the point that it was the Holy Father’s intention in it to condemn his principles. All we know to date is that he has received the communication; he will no doubt reply soon: I pray God that it will be in an acceptable way.

What I am glad of is that it was I who enabled M. de Lamennais to establish contact with the illustrious dean of the Sacred College, by means of a letter of recommendation that I gave him at Marseilles for this important personage. He owes it to my recommendation that he had a mediator of such weight. All the same while recommending the celebrated writer to the most distinguished Prince of the Church and while pointing out the real basis of his worth, you will understand that I took care to say that I was far from sharing all his teaching. M. de Lamennais was free to read this qualification, one that was necessary for my conscience. No doubt it confirmed what he already knew about my aversion to the execrable principles of *L’Avenir.* The French Bishops went further, for you must have learned that a considerate number of them censured more than fifty propositions taken not only from *L’Avenir* but from *l’Essai,[[53]](#footnote-53)* from a work of M. Gerbet[[54]](#footnote-54) and from the *Catéchisme du sens commun de M. Rohrbacher.[[55]](#footnote-55)* Thisinformation must put you on your guard against adopting anything emanating from these authors prior to a pronouncement of the Holy See. I do not know if it will condemn all the propositions censured by the Bishops, but I can vouch for the fact that the censure in general was a source of satisfaction to the Holy Father. It is significant that when the Cardinal Chief Penitentiary[[56]](#footnote-56) was giving himan account of the adhesion of a number of bishops and said that the Bishop of Marseilles had replied that he would excuse himself from judging the propositions that were already condemned since the censure had already been sent here to the Holy See, the Pope said to him: Oh! I know through his nephew that he is of the same opinion.

I finish with what I wrote last year to M. de Montalembert, who protested against my banning the reading of *L’Avenir* in our Congregation. For us, even before the Head of the Church makes a dogmatic pronouncement in an apostolic constitution *ex cathedra,* his opinion as teacher of this Church, which he instructs by means of his daily decisions on all points of morality and dogma, is the greatest and leading authority here on earth. We adhere to it in heart and spirit, without waiting for the solemn promulgations that a variety of circumstances can often delay or even block. I repeat this to you, dear children, for you to make of this principle the habitual norm of your conduct and for you to transmit it to those who come after you, as you receive it from me.

To Father Courtès, at Aix[[57]](#footnote-57)

430:VIII in Oblate Writings

Many defections amongst religious, even at Rome.

Courtès

[Rome,]

September 15, 1832.

In the meantime for your consolation let me remind you that in the days of Blessed Alphonse Mary de Liguori a large number of candidates entered his Congregation to receive the priesthood and went off as soon as they had laid their hands on it. I may add that the other day a Prelate, that is how I render the title he receives in Latin, was saying to me that in his experience he never kept more than a third of his pupils and that they took their departure often after being ten years with him. This morning again the person I stayed with six years ago[[58]](#footnote-58) was telling me a whole lot of stories of this kind. Several of those I knew had gone off either *insalutato hospite[[59]](#footnote-59)* or on the flimsiest of pretexts, and he assured me that some of those who stay wear him out and are a frightful burden to him. From all this I come to the conclusion that a considerable number of pitiful characters are to be found everywhere and that it would be foolish to seek exemption from the common lot. You can read over these remarks and facts to your friends to give them some consolation in the sorrow that such like infamous acts always give rise to in good men, convinced of the holiness of their obligations. But even while I am speaking to you in this fashion, I still tremble at the prospect of God’s judgment on such guilty men.[[60]](#footnote-60)

To Father Tempier, at Marseilles[[61]](#footnote-61)

431:VIII in Oblate Writings

Sadness and isolation at Rome.

Tempier

[Rome,]

September 21, 1832.

My dear friend, I am sure you are just waiting to hear my groans. What else can you expect in my dreadful isolation? I am deprived all at once of your gentle presence, far removed from all I love, alone in a city where I have nothing to see and, I may say, nothing to do, left to my own sad thoughts, weary of delays, even more bored with all the fussy details I wouldn’t even want to think about; that’s my position: do you judge that pleasant? You will reply that I am doing God’s will and that that must be enough for me. I agree as to submission of will and spirit; but that attitude (which I hope I have) is not incompatible with my feeling very vividly all the difficulties that go with my position. Perhaps somebody else would put up with them without difficulty at the thought of what is going to happen in a few weeks time. First of all, that idea does not enter into my head; I am quite apathetic about that event,[[62]](#footnote-62) and even if it should come to mind, as I shall be quite alone and deprived of the comfort and support that my usual circle of friends would have given me, I see it only as a thing of grandeur, severe, wrapped in silence, offering me [nothing] at least in my present mood but food for contemplation and profound wonder.

To Father Courtès, at Aix.[[63]](#footnote-63)

432:VIII in Oblate Writings

Few good members in the Congregation; many are ungrateful and unfaithful to their vocation. Billens.

Courtès

[Rome]

September 25,[[64]](#footnote-64) 1832.

You are in a position now to understand what is my daily fare in my relations with certain members, men with no heart, no honour, no delicacy, no feelings, no conscience, for whom apostasy is a game, perjury a mere trifle, who care nothing for their reputations, traitors, ingrates ... but upon whom even so I have not ceased to lavish without stint kindnesses of every sort and a quite excessive amount of good will. If it were permissible to be sorry that one has striven to do good, it would be easy for me to regret the waste of my best years and the sorry outcome of so many fine plans that the Lord inspired me with, no doubt in expectation of deeper understanding and a different kind of reception. What a state of degradation have we thus fallen into! If St. Ignatius had met up only with men of that sort his work would remain to be done; but what athletes were abroad in those days! Each soldier was an army in himself! I won’t pursue these thoughts further, they would take me further than I intend and I would not have allowed myself even to go so far as I have were I writing to anyone other than yourself.

There is no obstacle to your calling Mille to Notre Dame and informing Guibert that you are placing him at his disposition. I am not annoyed at your exercising everywhere your authority as Vicar-General of the Congregation, in this way we become accustomed to seeing God alone in obedience. This is the right way to bolster discipline. So I will do no more here than publish what you decide in the matter. Here those who are in the same position as myself do as I was obliged to do sometimes, but they have all told me that they leave in God’s hands the judgment of the grave crime of apostasy *a religione:* perpetuity, synallagmatic contract accepted by both parties, solemn oath for life, etc., there is injustice, sacrilege, wickedness ....

To Mr. Cailhol, canon secretary of the diocese of Marseilles[[65]](#footnote-65)

164:XV in Oblate Writings

Alone in Rome, Father de Mazenod awaits in prayer his appointment to the episcopate; it is slow in coming.

Cailhol

[Rome,]

September 27, 1832

Since the day M. Tempier left, I have been at home at my old lodgings, here I am more recollected and tranquil. You know I greatly appreciate the pleasure of dwelling under the same roof as Our Lord. I can find consolation with him for the tedious aspects of my position; as they get worse each day, I am always in need of fresh consolation and, in truth, I have only this good master for confidant. I find it hard to explain a delay at once so prolonged and so futile;[[66]](#footnote-66) I am sometimes tempted to think there has been a change of mind and, as far as that goes, it is not the basic point that bothers me. If at least there were some explanation, but no, one must wait and be patient as if one had nothing else to do elsewhere. If you only knew how many times the thought has occurred to me to withdraw! So as not to succumb to this temptation, I have at times been obliged to give myself a good talking to; even so I do not dare to promise I will hold on much longer.

To Father Courtès, at Aix[[67]](#footnote-67)

433:VIII in Oblate Writings

Resignation and obedience while awaiting his nomination to the episcopate.

Courtès

[Rome.]

September 27, 1832.

... Believe me, my obedience and resignation are undergoing a stiff test. How many times I have been tempted to go away; I could almost persuade myself that it is the right thing to do. But my respect for the person concerned, deference to the will of Him to whom we must all submit, the merit inherent in this sacrifice and the opportunity it affords of offering God each day the homage of one’s own will, soon prevail over these impulses which take their origin in the lower part of the soul as it rebels ....

To Father Courtès, at Aix[[68]](#footnote-68)

434:VIII in Oblate Writings

Relations with Archbishop Raillon, newly appointed to Aix.

Courtès

[Rome,]

September 30, 1832.

Remember that your appearance and manner of discourse create a rather severe impression that could lead those who do not know you to believe that you intend to indicate in this way your opposition and dissatisfaction; so you must compensate for this fault, if fault it be, by yourself making some overtures; one can guess that in the Prelate’s present position he will be a little susceptible ....

To Father Tempier, at Marseilles[[69]](#footnote-69)

435:VIII in Oblate Writings

Patience and prayer while waiting to be ordained Bishop of Icosia on October 14.

Tempier

[Rome,]

October 1, 1832.[[70]](#footnote-70)

... However, I must tell you that patience and resignation have won the day and that our friend[[71]](#footnote-71) has found spiritual consolation and true interior joy in his solitude. He revels in the silence and peace that surround him. He fills in his time as piously as he can; he hardly ever goes out except when he must, finding everything he needs at home for the nourishment of his piety. He gladly makes use especially, quite frequently and for long periods of time, of a little gallery that opens out onto the altar of the Blessed Sacrament and, in fact, if God’s will were not that he should be otherwise engaged, he would abandon himself wholeheartedly to spending the days of his pilgrimage here below in this way. St. Michael Archangel, to whose care he particularly commended himself on the day the Church celebrates his feastday, brought him on that day to the home of M. Cartra and he talked with him for quite a long time. In the course of their conversation this gentleman told him that he was really distressed that he had not spoken at all on the preceding Sunday of the matter he had been charged with but that the next day it would be the first thing he would attend to and that he was proposing to make a particular suggestion: that is to say, precisely the one contained in a certain letter during the period you were here. So true it is that one must always follow the maxim I read yesterday in the life of Father Paul: that the Servant of God, and we all meet this description but some more than others, must follow the inspirations that the Lord gives them.

The day before yesterday in the evening the Pope made the nomination; yesterday the minute was placed before him and he signed it; this morning the two briefs were transcribed on parchment.

If you have an interest in Icosia, put this in your notebook; it is in Africa, as I told you; your friend’s mission is for Tripoli, with Tunis added on. The sensitivity of the French Government is no doubt the reason for not including Algiers. Cardinal Odescalchi was delighted with the proposition;[[72]](#footnote-72) the day has been set for the 14th of the month, the day on which in Rome they celebrate the feast of the Maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the meantime, pray and have others pray for me; do not forget to have my mother and sister and all the religious go to communion. To be absolutely sure, I am going to write to Billens and Notre Dame du Laus.

To M. Martin de Loirlieu, chaplain at St. Louis-des-Français, Rome[[73]](#footnote-73)

165:XV in Oblate Writings

Father de Mazenod’s feelings after his appointment as Bishop of Icosia. Lofty idea of the episcopate.

Loirlieu

[Rome,]

October 4, 1832

If you knew the depth of my feelings of friendship towards you, you would conceive some idea of the chagrin I am experiencing at not seeing you, and above all in my present circumstances. It is not yet known in Rome, but the Pope has just named me Bishop of Icosia and apostolic visitor of Tripoli and Tunis. I shall be consecrated, unless some unforeseen obstacle arises, on Sunday the 14th of this month. My thought was that my first blessing would fall on you, as a long time ago you received the first absolution I ever gave in my priestly ministry. My best wishes will reach you wherever you are; but, my dear friend, do not forget me in your prayers, and, on the day of my consecration, say Holy Mass for me; you will readily understand my need. I am all alone here, and I assure you that poor human nature will be well and truly crucified; but I am not counting in vain on God in his goodness making up for all the heart will suffer by way of privations with the most abundant spiritual graces.

I have always viewed the episcopate with a different eye to most; and, now that I am elected and am so close to being invested with the plenitude of the priesthood of Jesus Christ, this profound feeling of veneration, this lofty idea that faith has established in my soul for this great dignity, would crush me and deprive me of all courage, all strength to carry on, if the Lord did not fill me with the sweetest hope and bring me to envisage this new coming of the Holy Spirit in myself as a time of renewal and mercy. It seems to me that this divine Spirit whom I have so grieved since it was communicated to me by the imposition of hands, at the time of my priesthood, is going to put everything right in my soul, establish his dwelling with such power that it will be impossible henceforth to escape from his inspirations. What will I say to you dear friend? I am speaking with you as if I were thinking to myself. For these ideas are familiar to me and I do not feel embarrassed with you. Goodbye, goodbye, I leave you to go and pray a little, for I must learn to acquit myself better of this great duty, the chief one of my future ministry.

Retreat for the episcopate.[[74]](#footnote-74)

166:XV in Oblate Writings

He recalls his retreat for ordination to the priesthood and his first years of ministry in Aix. He was better then than he is today. Trust in God’s mercy; he promises to do His Will in everything. Powers he will receive from the Holy Spirit; obligations that will be imposed on him. Extracts from the Pontificale romanum with commentary.

Retreat notes

Rome, house of St. Sylvester at Montecavallo,

October 7-14, 1832.

My first thought as I begin these days of retreat to prepare myself for the episcopate, to which I am called by the will of our Holy Father Pope Gregory XVI, goes back to the happy time of my preparation for the priesthood. That is already a long time ago; a large part of my life has gone by in that long interval between December 1811 and October 1832, but I still remember vividly both the graces it pleased the Lord to give me and my dispositions at the time, and the resolutions God inspired in me. I set aside a month to prepare myself to receive the imposition of hands and the great priestly character, I will have only eight days to dispose myself to receive the plenitude of the priesthood of Jesus Christ. That long retreat was preceded by several years of seminary life solely employed in the pursuit of knowledge of the divine science and the acquisition of the clerical virtues in the exact practice of a regular life. These eight days come after the highly active exercise of the apostolic ministry, the constant work of a twofold administration carrying with it a frightening load of responsibility. Strictly speaking a year’s recollection would not suffice and I have only a week. May God give me the grace to make good use of it!

In these first moments of my retreat, I come up against an altogether singular obstacle to devoting myself seriously before God to the great topic that calls for my complete attention, namely, an involuntary mental state that persists in seeing as a dream everything that has happened up to now with regard to my election to the episcopate, and all the preparation that has gone into accomplishing this great work of the Holy Spirit in me. I have in my hands the apostolic Briefs of my canonical institution, I have before my eyes the various dress items of my new estate, I devote myself seriously to the consideration of the lofty dignity to which, all unworthy as I am, I am elevated, the duties this dignity imposes on me, etc., but even so, it still seems as if it were all happening to someone else.

As I make myself more familiar with the idea of what I already am by my election and what I am to become by my consecration, it will be advantageous to examine attentively the Holy Spirit’s way of acting towards me both at the time of my ordination and during the course of my priestly ministry, and my cooperation on the one hand and my infidelities on the other hand, with the abundant communications of his grace. Thus I will ascertain the loss attributable to my fault, shed bitter tears before God, and full of trust in his mercy, I will dare hope that this living Spirit who is to come down into my soul will restore all I have let deteriorate, strengthen, consolidate, bring to perfection everything in me for me to become truly his right-hand man, the Elias of the Church, the anointed of the Lord, the priest according to the order of Melchisedech who has naught else in view but to please God by fulfilling all the duties of my ministry for the building up of the Church, the salvation of souls and my own sanctification. So may I be able to say with the apostle St. Paul: *Gratias ago ei qui me confortavit, Christo Jesu Domino nostro, quia fidelem me existimavit, ponens in ministerio, qui prius blasphemus fui.* ... *Superabundavit autem gratia Domini nostri, cum fide et dilectione, quae est in Christo Jesu Regi autem soeculorum immortali, invisibili, soli Deo, honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum. Amen* (1 Tim. 1:12-17).

I have been a priest for 21 years. I cannot presume that there is as much time left me to live as I have spent in the priesthood. I must look and see what the grace communicated me by the imposition of hands has yielded. The cooperation I have brought to it, the duration of the blessed consolations of the Holy Spirit, the cause of my infidelities and their baneful effects.

What beautiful years were those first years of my holy ministry. One year spent in the seminary as a priest, charged with inspiring in the others love for the clerical virtues and called to cooperate with holy collaborators to conserve and maintain the good traditions of our former Directors, the Emerys, Duclaux, Garniers, Montagnes, expelled from their house, that we had to keep going in their absence. What beautiful years were those first two years I spent in Aix in the exercise of a ministry that was all charity, living within my house, with the help of my servant the good Trappist Brother Maur, in recollection, prayer and study; every moment I stole from external ministry, and the attention I gave to the youth and prisoners. If I had died then, the very death I had asked God to grant me from the time I became a priest, every day at the elevation of the chalice, I would have died a martyr of charity, and I would not have to reproach myself with so many faults, infidelities, I would not have to weep over this state of lukewarmness into which I have been thrown by the innumerable occupations with which I have been overburdened, whether in the ministry of the holy missions, the foundation and direction of our Congregation, or in the administration of the diocese of Marseilles, in such difficult times and in the midst of such opposition. I have achieved a lot, it is true, overcome big obstacles, conquered insurmountable difficulties, good and very much good came of it. Yes, I cannot deny it, but it is at my own expense. I was better, or to phrase it better, incomparably less evil at the beginning of my ministry when I had still achieved practically nothing, than now when I have achieved much. What to conclude fromthis reasoning? That not only am I an unprofitable servant, but an unfaithful servant, that I may have done what I was obliged to do, but did not do it as I ought, since certainly the first condition of the work the head of the household imposed on me was that in carrying out his work I should pursue my own sanctification which one does not attain in our holy state otherwise than by advancing in perfection. So here I am arrived at my fiftieth year with empty hands, since I have been unable to enrich myself in my regular management of the treasures, even as I increased their value to the head of the household, but not with good interest as it should have been since, once again, as I look closely at myself, I find myself poorer today than the first day of my administration, *villicationis meae.*

And even so it is in this state of affairs I am called suddenly to receive the plenitude of the priesthood, elevated to the sublime episcopal dignity. My good God! If you had not accustomed me to the traits of your infinite mercy, if already you had not inspired in my heart a gentle trust, there would be every reason to draw back with horror. But no, you are my Father, it is you who since the tenderest days of my infancy have led me as it were by the hand. Everything you have done for me in the course of my life is too present to my memory, I feel again still today too vividly the effects not to count on your infinite goodness, not to throw myself with total abandon into your paternal bosom, fully resolved to do this time and always everything you demand of me, were it to cost me my life. Too happy to devote the few days left me to spend on earth to do your holy Will in bad times as in good, with the world’s approval or condemnation, amidst consolations or overwhelmed with griefs. For I do not know what is awaiting me in the new ministry I am about to begin. As always, nothing happens to me that you have not willed, and my happiness and my joy will be always to do your Will.

That is where things stand, it is the feeling that predominates in my soul, an unlimited trust in the goodness of my God. I am a sinner, a very great sinner. After 21 years of ministry preceded by three years’ preparation, after working more than many another, both myself and through a great number of co-operators whom I have set in motion, after succeeding in many undertakings conceived and carried out for God and the Church, I acknowledge myself to be without virtues and merits, and notwithstanding that I do not despair of my God’s goodness, and I count always on his mercy, and I hope that I will finish by becoming better, that is, by dint of supernatural helps and habitual assistance of grace, I will acquit myself better of my duties and cooperate with the plans of the heavenly Father and his Son Jesus Christ, my most lovable Saviour, and the Holy Spirit who hovers over my soul prior to invading it again in a few days time. Amen, Amen, Amen.

That is enough reflecting on the past. The best thing is to abandon myself to God to apply myself specially to consider what is going to be done in me by virtue of the Most High, and the obligations I am going to contract on receiving the plenitude of the priesthood of J.C. *Quis sicut Dominus Deus noster qui* ... *humilia respicit in coelo et in terra, suscitans a terra inopem et de stercore erigens pauperem ut**collocet eum cum principibus* ... *populi sui* [Ps. 112:5-8]. There you have precisely what the Lord has done. These words will be engraved on my mind and I will keep them before my eyes all the days of my life: *suscitans a terra imopem et de stercore elevans pauperein ut**collocet eum cum principibus populi tui.* Dust and ashes as I am, I am really going to be lifted up among the Princes of God’s People, as I am going to be aggregated to the apostolic College, re-clothed with the character they were clothed with, succeed to and participate in a share of their power: *Accipe Spiritum Sanctum. Episcopum oportet judicare, interpretari, consecrare, ordinare, offerre, baptizare, et confirmnare.*

*Accipe Spiritum Sanctum,* here you see the incomparable grace, the great character, the lofty dignity of the pontiff of Jesus Christ ... *Accipe Spiritum Sanctum* ... meditate on these words and try to understand as little imperfectly as you can what they mean. It is not like the first time in the diaconate simply *ad robur,* it is not again simply as in the priesthood for the remission of sins or their retention *quorum remiseris peccata, remittuntur eis; et quantum retinueritis retenta sunt* [John 20:23]. That was already a lot, too much. But this time it is to be raised to the Order of pontiffs *ad Summi Sacerdotis ministerium,* to be anointed and consecrated *in ordine Pontificali,* to enter into participation in the solicitude for all the Churches, to pass on in my turn the Holy Spirit to work towards the perpetuation of the priesthood in the Church of Jesus Christ, to judge, interpret, conserve, ordain, offer, baptize, and confirm, *Episcopum oportet judicare, interpretari, consecrare, ordinare, offerre, baptizare, et confirmare.*

Well may the Consecrating Bishop invite all the faithful to pray that God’s infinite goodness may grant me the abundance of his graces! *Oremus, fratres carissimi, ut huic Electo, utilitati Ecclesiae providens, benignitas omnipotentis Dei gratiae suae tribuat largitatem.*

As for me is it excessive to abase myself with the thought of my own nothingness, prostrate myself face downwards to the ground, send up groans towards the Lord, implore his mercy, his almighty grace, the help of his right-hand, to invoke, hands joined, tears in the eyes, the Blessed Virgin my Mother, the holy Angels, my holy Patrons and all the saints of paradise and all the just on earth and even the holy souls in purgatory, for I am sure that even though they cannot merit, they can obtain by intercession.

*Accipe spiritum Sanctum: Episcopum oportet judicare, interpretari, consecrare, ordinare, offerre, baptizare, et confirmare.*

O All-Holy God, grant me the grace to penetrate this great mystery …*de stercore erigens pauperem ut collocet eum cum principibus populi sui.*

But this *oportet, etc.* does not teach me only what I am to become, the great privileges of my election, the dignity and the powers that will be conferred on me by the imposition of hands, in the pontifical order; it contains too all the obligations which are imposed on me. And even though one may fail to grasp that there is not a single one of the great powers conferred on the new bishop that do not relate, that are not correlative to several very important duties, it would suffice to listen to the Church who speaks through the mouth of the consecrating Prelate: *Et idcirco huic famulo, tuo, quem ad Summi Sacerdoti ministerium elegisti, hanc, quaesumus,* ... *gratiam largiamrisus; ut quidquid illa velamina in fulgore auri, in nitore gemmarum, et in multimodi opens varietate signabant (apud veteres), hoc in ejus moribus, actibusque clarescat. Comple in sacerdote tuo ministerii tui summam, et ornamentis totius glorificationis instructum, coelestis unguenti rore sanctifica.*

Holiness in conduct, works shining forth with virtue, *hoc in ejus moribus, actibusque clarescat. Comple* ... *ministerii tui summam, et …coelestis* ... *rore sanctifica.* Here you see what the Church asks for her Pontiffs: brilliant holiness.

That the sacred anointing run down over all his person: *ut**tui spiritus virtus et interiora ejus repleat, et exteriora circumtegat.* That he be *filled* interiorly with the virtue of the Holy Spirit, that he be in some manner as it were re-clothed in it and enfolded in it as in a cloak. Could it be put more strongly? Let us go on and meditate on each word of this precious and solemn invocation:

*Abundet in eo constantia fidei, puritas dilectionis, sinceritas pacis. Sint speciosi munere tuo pedes ejus ad evangelizandum pacem, ad evangelizandum bona tua. Da ei, Domine, ministerium reconciliationis in verbo et in factis, in virtute signorum, et prodigiorum.* That is self-evident, O my God! When one has had the happiness of exercising the evangelical ministry in the missions, even in the sacerdotal order!

*Sit sermo ejus, et praedicatio, non in persuasibilibus humanae sapientiae verbis, sed in ostensione Spiritus et virtutis.* An admirable lesson that I love to find again here after meditating on it in St. Paul and set down in another book dear to me under a variety of titles.

*Da ei, Domine, claves regni caelorum, ut**utatur non glorietur potestate, quam tribuis in aedificationem, non in destructionem.*

*Utatur non glorietur.* No, I told myself this too long ago and have driven it too far home for me to need to dwell on it today.

*Quodcumque ligaverit super terram, sit legatum et in coelis; et quodcumque solverit super terrain, sit solutum et in coelis. Quorum retinuerit peccata, retenta sint, et quorum remiserit, fu remittas.*

It is not without reason that these two texts are juxtaposed and recalled. He is priest and pontiff.

*Qui maledixerit ei, sit ille maledictus; et qui benedixerit ei, benedictionibus repleatur.*

The Church sides with her pontiff. She identifies herself with him.

*Sit fidelis servus et prudens, quem constituas tu, Domine, super familiam tuam, ut**det illis cibum in tempore opportuno; et exhibeat omnem hominem perfectum. Sit sollicitudine impiger; sit spiritu fervens, oderit superbiam, humilitatem ac veritatem diligat, neque eam umquam deserat, aut laudibus, aut timore superatus.*

*Veritatem diligat, etc.* Yes, my God, I understand, you have given me a sense of this truth, give me the grace of always keeping its imprint and to be faithful to it.

*Non ponat lucem tenebras, nec tenebras lucem, non dicat malum bonum, nec bonum malum.*

No, may I never be dominated by an individualistic, proud or opinionated attitude, always simple in my faith, always united in doctrine, even opinion, and teaching with the Church and her visible Head the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

*Sit sapientibus et insipientibus debitor, ut fructum de profectu omnium consequatur.*

Poor, rough, ignorant people, dear children, object of my first concern in my priestly ministry, the Church commends you to me now I am a pontiff. Ah! you will by no means be forgotten, you will always be the most precious portion, I do not say of my flock, I do not have one as such, but that my care will embrace in every place where I may be summoned to exercise my ministry.

*Tribuas ei, Domine, cathedram episcopalem, ad regendam Ecclesiam tuam et plebem sibi commissam.*

What can such words mean, addressed to a bishop of Icosia? Icosia is Mauretania Caesariensis. This province is inhabited by Turks.

But what if Icosia is Algiers as the geographers claim? Ah, hearken Lord to the wishes of the Church, and grant me this episcopal see, give me especially this people which has aroused so much interest in me since their city was conquered and I have entertained the hope of carrying there myself and in the person of our missionaries the cross of Jesus Christ. Since then I have not ceased to offer prayers for this people. Today I have become their pastor, at least in name as jurisdiction is still reserved to the Head of the Church. Could it be in view of a special plan of your Providence that this circumstance has come about? I am quite unable to say. All I know is, that be it how it may, I would like to be of use to this people.

*Sis ei auctoritas, sis ei potestas, sis ei firmitas. Multiplica super eum benedictionem, et gratiam tuam; ut adexorandam semper misericordiam tuam, tuo munere idoneus, et tua gratia possit esse devotus. Per Dominum Nostrum Jesum Christum, etc.*

Yes, be everything in me, be everything for me, and may your blessing as well as your grace multiply itself to the point of infinity so I may become ready to fulfil worthily my great ministry of which the Church has just made me understand the responsibility precisely through what she asks of God for me in this prayer.

Let us end by hearing out the Church’s lessons and then make our resolutions.

*Accipe baculum pastoralis officii, Ut sis in corrigendis vitiis pie saeviens, judicium sine ira tenens, in fovendis virtutibus auditorum animos demulcens, in tranquillitate severitatis censuram non deserens. Amen.*

*Accipe annulum, fidei scilicet signaculum, quatenus sponsam Dei, sanctam vice licet Ecclesiam, intemerata fide ornatus, illibate custodias. Amen.*

*Accipe Evangelium, et vade, praedica populo tibi commisso; potens est enim Deus, ut augeat tibi gratiam suam, qui vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.*

*Imponimus, Domine, capiti hujus Antistitis et agonistae tui, galeam munitionis, et salutis; quatenus decorata facie, et armato capite, cornibus utriusque Testamenti terribilis appareat adversariis veritatis; et te ei largiente gratiam, impugnator eorum robustus existat, qui Moysifamuli tui faciem ex tui sermonis consortio decoratam lucidissimis tuae claritatis, ac verifatis cornibus insigniisti, et capiti Aaron Pontificis tui tiaram imponi jussisti. Per Christum Dominum Nostrum.*

*Circumda, Domine, manus hujus ministri tui munditia novi hominis, qui de coelo descendit, ut quemadmodum Jacob dilectus tuus, pelliculis haedorum opertis manibus, paternam benedictionem, oblato patri cibo, potuque gratissimo, impetravit, sic et iste, oblata per manus suas hostia salutari, gratiae tuae benedictionem impetrare mereatur. Per Dom. etc.*

*Oremus. Deus, omniumfidelium pastor, et rector; hunc famulum tuum, quem Ecclesiae tuae praeesse voluisti, propitius respice, da ei, quaesumus, serbo et exemplo, quibus praeest, proficere, [p. 14] ut ad vitam, una cum grege sibi credito, perveniat sempiternam. Per Christum, etc.*

This cross, this crozier is given me as the sign of spiritual power for me to chase out vice with a severity tempered with gentleness, to judge with equity, rousing this man’s virtues and reprimanding that one s trespasses.

This ring is placed on my finger as the seal of the faith I must profess and the fidelity I must observe towards the Church, Jesus Christ’s holy Spouse.

This book of the holy Gospels is confided to me so that in conformity with my vocation or rather with the mission given me, I go out and preach the good news of salvation to the people with whom I am charged.

This mitre is placed on my head as a helmet of salvation, so that with my face adorned with this ornament, and my head armed with the power of the two Testaments, I may become terrible and formidable in the eyes of the adversaries of truth, and that by the help of grace I may always give them battle with both strength and success.

Lastly my hands are clothed with these gloves, image of the purity of the new man who has come down from heaven that the gifts, oblations and sacrifices which will be offered by me, may find favour and acceptance with God and that I may draw down on myself and the Church the most abundant blessings through the virtues of Jesus Christ Our Lord who, having taken the form of sin, offered himself for us to his heavenly Father.

How can I have got to the end of these lines, without the pen dropping from my fingers a thousand times. My God, who could everattain just the virtues one ought to possess to respond worthily to the Church’s designs? *Num parum vobis videtur esse generum regis* said David with less reason than I, *ego autem sum vir pauper et tenuis* (1 Sam.:23). *Ego autem sum mendicus et pauper* (Ps. 39:18) I repeat ... The Lord will have pity on me *Dominus sollicitus est mei:* I turn to him with the utmost confidence, for he is my help, my strength and all my hope; *adjutor* ... *et protector meus es tu, Domine, ne moreris* (Ps. 69:6). I am going for my part to set my hand to the task, and so that divine grace may stimulate my will and stir up my courage, I hope of his infinite goodness that having sown by an impulse of his mercy this seed in my soul, having thus begun the work he will deign to see it through to the end. *Ipse perficiat.* I want to cooperate seriously with all my power by a continual application and an assiduous effort to the advances I receive; I will neglect neither suffering nor sacrifices to acquire the virtues which I lack, and I will not put off until tomorrow to begin to lay the foundations for this new edifice, *ubi enim amor ibi non est labor.* God is doing me the favour of being so penetrated with my obligations in this regard, I am so resolved to make a good beginning, to continue on well, to make a success with the help of grace of this last phase of my life that I take up the challenge with confidence as this retreat comes to an end. I know that the priesthood I have been honoured with for 21 years is a state of perfection, and that the Church in elevating me to the episcopate must have believed me to be abundantly endowed with those virtues of which I can scarcely catch a glimpse in my soul or in which perhaps to my shame I am totally lacking, but what can I do except cite the words of the debtor in the Gospel: *patientiam habe in me et omnia reddam tibi* (Mt. 18, 26). Help me, Lord, and give me time, and I will try to become what you want me to be. *Facile est* ... *in oculis [Domini] subito honestare pauperem* (Eccl. 11:23). You my God are my only hope and I know by experience that you are not lacking in case of need, *Adjutor in opportunitatibus* (Ps. 9). The glory of your holy name, your Church’s honour are engaged, I must be worthy of my vocation, I must make certain of it by my works, that is to say may your grace make me equal to my duties, may it so uphold me until death, that in giving me eternal Life and so liberally rewarding me you might crown your own gifts. Amen.

**Rule of Life**

laid down during the retreat preceding my consecration.

*Oportet ergo episcopum irreprehensibilem esse* ... *sobrium, prudentem, ornatum, pudicum, hospitalem, doctorem* ... *I Tim. 3:2.*

*Hoc pracceptum commendo tibi, fili Timothee, ... ut milites ... bonam militiam, habens fidem, et bonam conscientiam, quam quidam repellentes, circa fidem naufragaverunt ...* 1 Thes. 1:18-19.

*Praecipe haec et doce. Nemo adolescentiam tuam contemnat. sed exemplum esto fidelium, in verbo, in conversatione, in caritate, in fide, in castitate.... Attende lectioni, exhortationi, et doctrinae. Noli negligere gratiam quae in te est, quae data est tibi per prophetiam, cum impositione manuum presbyterii. Haec meditare, in his esto, ut profectus tuus manifestus sit omnibus. Attende tibi, et doctrinae; insta in illis: hoc enim faciens, et teipsum salvum facies, et eos qui te audiunt. Seniorem ne increpaverms: sed obsecra ut patrem; juvenes ut fratres, anus, ut**matres; juvenculas, ut sorores, in omni castitate. Viduas honora, quae vere viduae sunt.* ... *Qui bene praesunt presbyteri, duplici honore digni habeantur maxime qui laborant in verbo et doctrina… Adversus presbyterum accusationem noli recipere, nisi sub duobus vel tribus testibus. Peccantes coram omnibus argue, ut et caeteri timorem habeant. Testor coram Deo, et Christo Jesu, et electis angelis, ut**haec custodias sine praejudicio, nihil faciens in alteram partem declinando. Manus cito nemini imposueris, neque communicaveris peccatis alienis. Te ipsum castum custodi. Noli adhuc aquam bibere, sed modico vino utere, propter stomachum tuum et frequentes tuas infirmitates…Radix enim omnium malorum est cupiditas.* ... *Tu autem o homo Dei, haec fuge: sectare vero justitiam, pietatem, fidem, charitatem, patientiam, mansuetudinem. Certa bonum certamen fidei; apprehende vitam aeternam, in qua vocatus es, et confessus bonam confessionem [coram] multis testibus; praecipio tibi coram Deo qui vivificat omnia, et Christo Jesu qui testimonium reddidit sub Pontio Pilato, bonam confessionem: ut serves mandatum sine macula, irreprehensibile, usque in adventum Domini nostri Jesu Christi, quem suis temporibus ostendet beatus et solus potens, Rex regum, et Dominus dominantium.... O Timothee, depositum custodi, devitans profanas vocum novitates, et oppositiones falsi nominis scientiae, quam quidam promittentes* ... *exiderunt. Gratia tecum. Amen (1 Tim. 4:11-16; 5:1-3, 17, 19-23; 6:10-15, 20-21).*

One would have to copy out in their entirety St. Paul’s letters to Timothy and Titus. One might as well read them in the Scriptures.

To Father Tempier, at Marseilles[[75]](#footnote-75)

436:VIII in Oblate Writings

Interior dispositions on the eve of ordination. Icosia said to be the present Algiers.

Tempier

Rome,

October 10, 1832.

My dear friend, I continued to be undecided for some time whether I ought to allow myself to interrupt my retreat to write to you. I have come down on the side of doing so by applying the method I use which you are familiar with, that it is good to mortify oneself but better still not to impose sacrifices or privations on others that they have not asked you for. I know with what anxiety you must be waiting for my news; it would be cruel to leave you in that state. So I believe I am making the right decision in spending some free moments of my retreat to converse with you. Besides, what we have to say to one another could not be a distraction. It is not that I wish to enter into the details of my spiritual exercises, we are too far apart and there is too little space in a letter to broach such a topic. It is enough for you to know that God in his goodness is helping me as usual, that is to say, he is revealing himself as he is, infinitely good, infinitely merciful, every time I approach him; that he is purifying my heart, illuminating my feeble understanding, stirring up my will and bringing it to perfection; that I am happy in his presence, whatever my feelings may be like when he communicates his divine Spirit to me. I invoke that Spirit as you can imagine in my present situation, with assiduity and persistence, I dare not say with fervour. Thus, whether my thoughts go to the immensity of God’s goodness that he has accompanied me from childhood and led me to perform the various tasks that he has confided to me in the course of my life, or whether I meditate on the interior workings of grace, all of a kind to arouse my gratitude and love, or whether I reflect on my sins, my innumerable infidelities, which would make the very stones cry out against me and make me the first of my accusers, I know all the time that it is my Father who is in heaven I am dealing with, who has at his right hand his Son Jesus Christ, our Saviour, who is our advocate, our mediator, who never ceases to make intercession for us, with that powerful prayer which has the right to be heard and which is in actual fact always heard if we put no obstacle in its way. It is precisely on this point that the power of the Holy Spirit draws me to dwell and it is the fruit that I want and hope for from my retreat. In other words in this last phase of my life I think I can say that I am firmly resolved, through the overflowing abundance of graces that I will receive, to try, by assiduous application, so to conform myself to God’s will that not a single fibre of my being will knowingly swerve from it. I am telling you this quite frankly as you are my director and also for you as my admonitor to remind me of it, if needs be, every day of my life; for you know me too well not to understand that the greatness of the dignity to which I am going to be elevated, all unworthy as I am, will change nothing of my interior dispositions nor in my ties of trust and of religious simplicity, with you in the first place and also with everyone else, due proportion being observed. That is enough on that topic.

[Thursday, October 11]

If you knew what Icosia is your heart would beat a little faster. Its origins go back to the time of the fables; it is claimed that it was built by Hercules’ twelve companions who settled there at the time of the famous expedition to horizons *nec plus ultra,* in other words to the Straits.[[76]](#footnote-76) Its Greek name means: twenty. What is more certain is that it was the episcopal city in the heyday of the African Church and that Laurentius, its bishop, took part in the Council of Carthage held in 419, as legate of Mauretania Caesariensis, its province: *Laurentius Icositanus, Legatus Mauritaniae Caesariensis,* which serves to fix pretty well its location, and - pay careful attention, Father Hardouin[[77]](#footnote-77) claims that it is today’s Algiers. For my own part too I do not question it any more than he, and you will doubtless follow my opinion. I shall not fail to point it out to the Holy Father, on the day I go to receive his blessing. Goodbye. Accept my fond affection. My health is first rate. I am able to fast and observe the house regulation. Thursday has come, Sunday is nearly on us. I place all my trust in God.

To Mrs. de Mazenod, rue Papassaudy, n. 2, in Aix, Bouches-du-Rh6ne, France.[[78]](#footnote-78)

167:XV in Oblate Writings

His regret at being consecrated bishop far from his mother and family. United in prayer

Mazenod Madame de

Rome,

October 13, 1832.

I leave to your imagination, my darling beloved mother, the chagrin I experience at being separated from you in such an important event in my life, when it would be so consoling for me to receive your blessings and then pour out on you the first and most abundant of those it will be in my power to bestow in the sublime order to which I am going to be raised tomorrow. It is the greatest sacrifice that could be imposed on me, and I offer it to the Lord in compensation for what I lack in virtue to be worthy of the lofty vocation to which I am called by the wholly gratuitous mercy of God. However, my dear mother, you must know that, although you are very far away from me, you are always present to me, and that tomorrow especially there will be no distance at all in my mind, surrounded as I shall be by all those who have the right to my affection and on whose concern I am counting. So, abstracting itself from the crowd of curious onlookers my eyes may see, my soul absorbed in God will see you in him, you, my darling sister, her children, my venerable uncle and the whole family, my children in Jesus Christ, my friends worthy of that title that it is not my wont to bestow lightly. If, as I hope, my letter of the 4th arrived in time, tomorrow morning we shall all be united in Jesus Christ in the most intimate way, as you will all be united with the Sacrifice during which I shall be consecrated, by communion and by the Masses that will be said for my intention. And this is how I shall find consolation for my isolation from all I love.

It is only nature that suffers. I feel it perhaps more than most; but there is profit for the soul, it is always so much gained. Goodbye, my most dear and beloved mother. I am taking advantage of today’s post, Saturday, so as not to have to defer writing you until Tuesday. I go on my knees to ask your maternal blessing, and hug you with all the tenderness that you know I have for you. Hugs too for Eugenie and her children, I am too making a big sacrifice in depriving myself of seeing Louis this year. I do not advise you to write as in all probability there will not be time for me to receive your letter here. Goodbye.

To Bishop Fortune de Mazenod, bishop of Marseilles[[79]](#footnote-79)

168:XV in Oblate Writings

Gratitude towards his uncle and regret at not having been consecrated by him. The ceremony was “dignified, majestic, edifying”. Resolve to seek only God’s will.

Mazenod Fortuné de

Rome,

October 14, 1832.

If I had been at liberty to follow my heart’s desire, the moment I descended from the altar I would have taken up my pen to render you my first act of homage and say again the words I had just addressed to the consecrating Bishop[[80]](#footnote-80) who represented your person to me: *ad multos annos.* It was high time too I expressed my gratitude towards you, and gave expression to my feelings of filial affection which, while admitting no increase, I experienced in a very lively way even in the midst of the abundant spiritual consolations it pleased the Lord to pour out in my soul on this memorable day. Really it was a great chagrin for me and the occasion, I hope, of much merit to have been deprived of the happiness of being consecrated by you and surrounded by my whole family and our dear friends. In your very real absence, I tried to make up for it in spirit by being united with you in the prayers you must all have been offering for me. This great privation apart, which could not but be felt by me, everything went wonderfully well. It even seems that thanks to the tangible and wholly gratuitous outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit this ceremony will live on in the memory, it was so dignified, majestic, edifying: the poor elect was under the influence or impression of the superabundant grace of God, so good, so generous; and when his emotion which it was impossible for him to hide was perceived, both by the consecrating bishops and those assisting, they shared the same feeling and tears flowed from all eyes in the midst of this general recollection which I was assured prevailed far more than it does usually.

You would have been touched to see the Archbishop of Ravenna,[[81]](#footnote-81) first assistant, not only give me an embrace, as did too the other assistant, his Grace the Archbishop of Chalcedon,[[82]](#footnote-82) each time he had to give the kiss of peace, but show me too a wholly tender sign of affection by planting a kiss on both cheeks so as to give me a double kiss, the sentiment behind which I wholly appreciated. The impression, so it seems, was so profound that the priests and even the Cardinal’s retinue, who are well-used to the Church’s beautiful ceremonies, as they emerged from this one, came to kiss my hand several times, not just as a formality, as it is usually done, but with a really evident expression of a profoundly felt emotion. There, then, my dear uncle, you have the consolations that God in his goodness deigned to grant me along with others of a more hidden nature, to strengthen me no doubt against the tribulations that are reserved for me. I face them without defiance or fear. The Lord gave me the grace during my retreat to make a very firm resolve to will only what he wills in times of prosperity and adversity alike. I am penetrated to the depths of my soul with the sublimity of the character and the grandeur of the dignity conferred on me; I have established myself, with the help of grace, in the disposition to fulfil always all the resulting duties, for the glory of God, the honour of the Church, the service of neighbour and my own sanctification. Armed in this fashion one is strong, especially when one looks to God for everything and for nothing from oneself whose nullity and powerlessness have more than ever come home to me. Please continue, my dear uncle, to come to my aid with the help of your prayers; my own, quite feeble as they are, are due you by too many titles for you not to feel you can count on them.

Affectionate greetings with all the tenderness of a nephew and a wholly devoted son.

+ Ch. Jos. Eugene, Bishop of Icosia

To Father Tempier, at Marseilles[[83]](#footnote-83)

437:VIII in Oblate Writings

Greatness of the episcopate. Aspirations for holiness.

Tempier

[Rome,]

October 20, 1832.

The Holy Spirit, the object of so many saintly people’s prayers, made his appearance on the great day,[[84]](#footnote-84) and I assure you that not a day has passed since then, and I could even say an hour, that he has not imparted ineffable spiritual experiences to that person whom he deigned to choose and sanctify. I did not count in vain on his powerful help for my whole retreat was made in a spirit of trust. I feel renewed and am in a spiritual state that I cannot put into words. All my life I had been filled with respect for the episcopate, I had always considered it in a great spirit of faith; it was, so to speak, an instinctive reflex of my soul. If I had not held myself back, I would many times have been carried away and fallen prostrate at the feet of some good bishop, as one does before the Pope. I wanted everyone to think as I did and to render noble acts of homage to these successors of the apostles. I was ready to let them walk right over me so as to exalt them the more, and now the Lord raises me myself to the summit of this greatness and what is more, now he is making me understand that I still fell short in my estimate of this plenitude of the priesthood of Jesus Christ. This profound conviction of my soul sits very well with the feeling of my own lowliness, personal poverty and unworthiness; but none the less I am sure that, through God’s mercy, I have completely changed. I have a clearer knowledge of my duties and I think I have obtained, with the Holy Spirit, the resolve to discharge them faithfully. To offer offence to God - but what am I saying, the very thought of consciously saddening the Holy Spirit seems to me a monstrosity henceforth impossible. Life means nothing to me; I had asked God to have me die beneath the hands of the consecrating Bishops at the moment of my receiving the Holy Spirit if I must needs cause it offence by any deliberate fault. No doubt I will still have much to grieve over in the course of a life already full of miseries, but really I look forward with confidence to not offending God deliberately any more, be it ever so slightly, if indeed in a way one can call “slight” anything that gives displeasure to so good a Father and so great a majesty.

For the Most Reverend Canon Del Bufalo.[[85]](#footnote-85)

80:XIII in Oblate Writings

Regrets not being able to unite the two Societies.

Bufalo Del

[Rome,

September-October 1832[[86]](#footnote-86)

I have attentively read the authentic copy and the other papers that the Most Reverend Canon Del Bufalo had the kindness to send me, and I was truly edified by them. Seeing so many good priests dedicated to such a holy life and lofty ministry, I regret all the more that my views were not acceptable.

When I proposed to the venerable Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood to unite with our little Congregation of the Immaculate Conception, I was moved by a sincere desire to multiply good in God’s Church; and if on the one hand I considered acquiring a great number of excellent priests as a blessing for our Congregation, be assured that in the sincerity of the zeal that God gives me to see his holy work accomplished, I deemed it would be to the advantage of the pious union of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood to amalgamate with a Society that had been raised to the rank of a Religious Congregation in the Church and in which the pious union would have found the same spirit and ministry, almost the same rule, and wherein it would have immediately made up the major and more interesting part. I thought that the Archconfraternity would gain in perfection and stability; and if through the proposed union the Congregation would acquire a new splendor and greater extension, the good Lord would thereby be much more glorified, the Church better served and souls given more help in their spiritual needs.

Such were my ideas. I still think the same, and I leave it to God to make known to all those very worthy priests who make up the pious union of the Archconfraternity of the Most Precious Blood the great merit of vows which mistakenly frighten some of them. Besides, in taking these steps I obeyed the Lord’s inspiration who indicated that it was for his glory, so I leave the discernment and responsibility to someone with more enlightenment and grace than I, and I rest in the peace of a heart which will always confidently say, no matter what happens, *particeps ego sum omnium timentium te.[[87]](#footnote-87)*

+ Charles-Joseph Eugene, Bishop of Icosia.

To Father Tempier, at Marseilles[[88]](#footnote-88)

438:VIII in Oblate Writings

Last audience with the Pope. Privileges of the Redemptorists given to the Oblates.

Tempier

[Rome,]

October 24, 1832.

... He has been very kind and, without giving me a chance to thank him, he spoke to me about my matter and of everything pertaining to my title as vicar or visitor apostolic for Tunis and Tripoli with no obligation of residence. That matter once disposed of, I spoke with him about the dispensation from the fast which we need because of the cholera; he readily agreed, but told me to come to an understanding concerning that with Cardinal Lambruschini to whom he had given the responsibility of giving the same dispensations to the Archbishop of Paris and the other French Bishops. He is so well-disposed towards our Bishops that he himself found excuses for those Prelates for keeping quiet about his granting the concession to avoid compromising themselves by giving the impression, in the eyes of all the carping critics, of being in touch with him. I admired the Pope’s goodness ... I had my crucifix blessed for the *Via Crucis.* Ispoke to him about our requests for the Office. I explained the matter to him very clearly and asked him to confirm the grant made by his predecessor Leo XII. While I was explaining explicitly the communication of Offices, he did not raise the least difficulty, and he would not have done so later on if he had not restricted this communication to the Liguorians. He told me to speak to the Prelate of the Congregation for Bishops and Regulars about it to put the matter in order. When I showed him the petition I had ready, he read it from first to last and, without making any comment[[89]](#footnote-89) he took his pen and wrote at the bottom, with his own hand: *die 24 octobris 1832, annuimus juxta petita. Gregorius PP. XVI.* So that’s that matter brought to the desired conclusion. I will make sure to get a written document, with Father Moffa’s signature, setting out what are the votive Masses said by the Redemptorist Fathers. You have the others in their proper. Now my business is finished here, so I intend to leave as soon as I can; as it is all the same to me whether I live or die, I will take advantage of the first steam-packet available.

To the Fathers and Brothers, at Billens[[90]](#footnote-90)

439:VIII in Oblate Writings

The Founder accepted being named bishop with a view especially to protecting the Congregation on the death of Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod.

Oblates at Billens

[Rome,]

October 24, 1832.

... you will readily understand that this high dignity, this great character that has been bestowed upon me, does not relax a single one of the bonds that bind me to our Congregation, since, rather, the overriding reason for the submission of my will has been the consciousness of the good that would flow from it for the Congregation when the moment comes (and may God leave us undisturbed for many a long year yet!) when we shall have the misfortune to lose the protector whom the Lord has preserved for us amongst the ranks of the chief pastors, in the person of my venerable uncle, the Bishop of Marseilles. Confined as we are, and still little known, it is my opinion, and those other Oblates whom I was bound to consult thought the same, that it would be very advantageous if we could when need arose indicate that the representative of this small and unknown family, but newly-born, and which has had to begin its growth in the midst of thorns, is a bishop, and a bishop chosen, elected by the Supreme Head of the Church, consecrated under his eyes and at his command, in the capital of the Christian world, by a Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops and Regular Clergy, who represented him in this sublime function.

To Father Tempier, at Marseilles[[91]](#footnote-91)

440:VIII in Oblate Writings

Visit to the French Ambassador.

Tempier

[Rome,]

October 28, 1832.

... As I make my departure I am sorry I didn’t bring his lack of civility home to him.[[92]](#footnote-92) It calls for an act of virtue on my part to hold myself back, for I do not forgive his insolent lack of respect for my status as Bishop; the four fruitless visits I made him as a priest I overlook; but on the last occasion he saw what I am.

To Father Tempier, at Marseilles[[93]](#footnote-93)

441:VIII in Oblate Writings

Jesuit hospitality at Genoa.

Tempier

[Genoa,]

November 10, 1832.

I confess I am a little ashamed to be here in this condition; but they have the good sense to understand and accept me as they find me ...[[94]](#footnote-94)

1. YENVEUX. lll. 174; IV. 201; VIII. 194; REY, I, 532; RAMBERT. I. 596-597. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Founder had written to Gregory XVI in September on the occasion of his election. The Holy Father replied on December 10, 1831. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The reference is probably to Father J. L. Richaud or to Father Telmon. Father Richaud had been practically continuously at Aix and had only recently come to N.-D. du Laus. He could have replaced Father Martin at Calvaire, Marseilles, at the beginning of the summer. Father Telmon taught at the major seminary at Marseilles in the academic years of 1829-1830, 1830-1831. Both are officially listed amongst the Fathers of N.-D. du Laus until 1835. The words “over-estimates learning” could apply to each of them. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. A letter that is probably badly copied. The founder switches from ‘il” to “on” several times. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. REY. I. 531 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. YENVEUX. V. 254; REY. I. 531 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. REY. I. 532, RAMBERT. I. 597. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The Founder was inviting Father Mille to dismiss a postulant who was too attached to the teaching of Lamennais. The errors published in *L’Avenir* were condemned by the Pope only on August 15 by the encyclical “Mirari vos”. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. REY. I. 537. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Aix. Avignon. and Dijon. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. After 1830 there were revolutionary upheavals in the whole of Europe: Belgium, Poland, Germany, Switzerland and the Papal States. With a view to helping the Pope, Austrian troops had just occupied the Romagna at the beginning of 1832. As a counter-weight to this intervention Louis-Philippe ordered the occupation of Ancona, against the wishes of the Sovereign Pontiff. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Bishop Rey supported Louis-Philippe and the government, hostile though ít was to the Church. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. YENVEUX. II. 7; VIII. 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. This M. Poét will not enter the novitiate. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Father Jerome, superior of the *Retraite Chrétienne* at Aix. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. No doubt Bishop Rey, vicar capitular of Aix. Recently named Bishop of Dijon, offered the Oblates the direction of the major seminary of his diocese. The Founder seems to want to accept it, notwithstanding his adverse judgment on the Bishop in the preceding letter. It is more than likely that he wished to please Father Courtès, knowing well that the latter would never decide to leave Aix. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. YENVEUX. IV. 153; V. 41. At the beginning of the extract (V. 41). Yenveux writes: “To Father Guigues, at Aix”. Father Guigues however belonged to the house of N.-D. du Laus. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Yenveux’s copyist (IV, 153) wrote: ‘conformateur”, but the correct reading is probably: Aconfirmatur”. According to Larousse the reference is to an instrument used by hatters to measure the size and exact shape of a client’s head. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. At the time he was proceeding with the construction of the church of St. Lazarus to serve the new neighbourhoods near the Aix Gate. (REY. I. 530. 531). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. The municipal council had withdrawn the stipend and premises of the Christian Brothers (*Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes*). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Original, Italian: Rome, archives of Pr. Fide. Scrit. rif. nei Congressi, Barbaria, v. 13(1828-1832), ff. 292-293. Cardinal Pedicini took this letter very seriously since he wrote to the Nuncio in Paris on the matter. The latter answered, on June 29, 1832, that the Government would not accept the Oblates because the Congregation was not officially recognized, and because Fr, de Mazenod and his missionaries were not held in favour. *Ibid,* ff. 340-342. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Algiers was taken on July 4, 1830. The news reached Marseilles on July 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Bishop Charles-Fortune de Mazenod. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Bishop Fortune de Mazenod to Prince de Polignac, July 12, 1830. Archives of Archdiocese of Marseilles, admin. letters, v. 11, p. 296. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Bishop Fortune de Mazenod to the Great Chaplain, Cardinal Prince de Croi, archbishop of Rouen, July 11, 1830. *Ibid.,* v. II. pp. 295-296. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Leo XII. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Revolution of July 1830. Charles X had to seek refuge in England. Louis-Philippe of Orleans was proclaimed king. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. The concern of all the churches. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. L.F. Auguste de Rohan-Chabot, archbishop of Besançon. Eugene de Mazenod met him during his stay in Paris (1808-1811) when the Duke de Rohan-Chabot, still a layman (he entered the seminary in 1815), was a member of the Knights of the Faith. Cf. J. LEFLON, *Mgr de Mazenod,* v. II. p. 78, note I. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. A report of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide to the Pope (Sept. 21, 1833), gave the names of three priests working in Algeria (Collin, Muller, Montera) and added that two more priests had been sent. Fr. F. PIONEAU, in his book *Vie de Mgr Dupuch* (Bordeaux, 1866. 485 pp.), indicated some other priests, most of them rather old (pp. 189, 203, 204). One of them, Fr. Banvoy, arrived in 1831. *ibid.,* p. 171. The other priest could have been Fr. de Pieri, the chaplain of the Expeditionary Corps to Bone. Cf. Teobaldo FILESI: L’attenzione della S. Congregazione per l’Africa settentrionale. in *Sacrae* *Congregationis de Propaganda Fide memorio rerum.1622-1972,* v. III / I, Herder, 1975, p. 173. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Cf. G. COSENTINO: “La forme d’approbation de nos Règles en 1826”, in *Etudes Oblates,* v. 12 (1953),pp. 234-265. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Text quoted in Latin by the Founder. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Fr. Tempier had been sent to Rome by Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod to ask the Pope to raise Fr. Eugene de Mazenod to the episcopacy. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. YENVEUX. 11. 119; V. 215; VIII. 156. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. REY, I. 543. Father Rey does not indicate the person to whom the letter is addressed. The person in question is without doubt Father Tempier who had been at Rome since May 3.

    The municipal council of Marseilles, at the beginning of 1831, had passed a resolution voting for the suppression of the episcopal see on the death of the incumbent. Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod, already 84 years of age, wrote to the Pope on March 11. 1832: “I am now exceedingly old, Holy Father, and I do not entertain the vain hope that God will keep me alive much longer .... It is not the closeness of death that causes me pain: my pilgrimage has lasted quite long enough.... But what will become of my poor diocese of Marseilles, so recently restored from its ruinous state by your predecessor Pius VII? … In the preoccupation that ensues from this thought. God has given me an inspiration: that Your Holiness might give me, not a coadjutor - that is impossible, and besides I do not want the Government to get involved in this matter in any way - but a bishop *in partibus*, someone who would enjoy my confidence and that of my clergy and people. For the little time that is left to me, such a bishop would be a solace in the exercise of my ministry, while on my death he would become the stay of my flock, the hope of my clergy, the mainstay of all my institutions. I have in mind a man who is already my vicar general and who on my death will undoubtedly be named vicar capitular by my Chapter, all of whose members esteem and respect him highly. In this way he will govern the diocese with the powers of an ordinary. He will animate everyone by his zeal, his presence will sustain all the good that he has already achieved, he will administer the sacrament of order and so ensure the unbroken continuity of the priesthood, in expectation of the moment when better times permit Your Holiness to provide my church with the successor of your choice.....”

    To ensure the success of this project. Bishop Fortuné sent Father Tempier to Rome. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. This white flag, symbol of the legitimate monarchy overthrown in 1830, had been hoisted on the church tower when the Duchess de Berry disembarked at Marseilles. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. YENVEUX V. 254 [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. YENVEUX. II, 55; III. 75-76; IV, 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. YENVEUX, V. 245; IX. 104; REY. I. 533-534. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Bishop Arbaud of Gap. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. YENVEUX, VII. 23. 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Father Tempier’s journey to Rome had two motives: to obtain Father de Mazenod’s elevation to the episcopate and to prepare the way for an Oblate foundation. In the Holy Father’s audience on June 19. Father Tempier openly asked the Pope for permission to establish the Oblates at Rome, in a house furnished by the generosity of the Holy Father. Gregory XVI replied that he had received two similar requests and that be was experiencing difficulty in their implementation. Cf.: REY, I. 542. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. YENVEUX. IV. 172. 174; REY. I. 543-544. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Bishop de Forbin-Janson. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Father Tempier stayed with the Passionists. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. YENVEUX. IV. 136.203; REY. I, 544. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Through fear of cholera, some bishops had dispensed their subjects from the fast. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Father Tempier sent the news that his mission had succeeded. Father de Mazenod was to leave for Rome where he would be ordained bishop. The latter left Aix on July 30, after naming Father Courtès as vicar general of the Congregation (REY, I. 544; letter to Mrs. de Mazenod. July 28). He arrived in Rome soon after August 15 [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Rey I, 544. Sent to Rome by Bishop Fortune, Father Tempier had obtained from Pope Gregory XVI the elevation of the Founder to the Episcopate. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. YENVEUX. III. 207-208; RAMBERT, I. 605-606; REY. I. 545. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Father de Mazenod arrived in Rome a little after August 15 (REY. I. 544). He wrote a letter addressed to Marseilles on August 18, probably to M. Cailhol, the bishop’s secretary, to whom he wrote again on September 13 and 27 (YENVEUX. III, 201, writes: “to X. August 18”). [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. YENVEUX. III. 171-172; REY. I. 545, RAMBERT. I. 607. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. The reference is to Lamennais’s *L’essai sur l’indifférence.* [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Father Gerbet’s work bore the title: *Doctrines philosophiques sur la certitude* [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Yenveux’s copyist wrote: Rabachet. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. The Grand Penitentiary: Card. Di Gregorio. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. YENVEUX, VIII, 275. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. The reference is no doubt to the superior of the Lazarists at San Silvestro al Quirinale. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. To leave “insalutato hospite”: to leave in a great hurry, without time even to say goodbye. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. It is not clear of whom precisely the Founder is speaking. The context suggests that these reflections, like those of September 21-25, are occasioned by difficulties occurring at Billens and by his diminished confidence in Father Mille. But a number of Oblates in France were guilty of misconduct and were dispensed from their vows in 1832, 1833 and 1834: Vincent Dumazert, L. S. Mazet, Barthélemy Bernard and even Father Jacques Jeancard. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. RAMBERT, I. 608. Father Tempier left Rome on September 20, going by sea. He arrived at Marseilles on the 27th. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Episcopal consecration. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. YENVEUX. 111. 99; VIII. 14; REY. I, 545-546. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Yenveux’s extracts are dated from September 25; Rey’s from the 21st. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Ms. Yenveux IV, 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. The Government was proposing to suppress once again the see of Marseilles, after the July 1830 revolution. So as to assure the administration of the sacrament of confirmation and the conferment of sacred orders after his death. Bishop Fortune had sent Father Tempier to Rome in the Spring of 1832, to have the first vicar general named bishop *in* *partibus.* The Pope agreed to this request. Leaving Marseilles on July 30, the future bishop arrived in Rome a little after August 15,but he was named Bishop of Icosia only on October 1. Father Tempier left Rome on September 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. RAMBERT. I. 608-609; REY. I. 545. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. YENVEUX. V. 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. YENVEUX. IV. 61; RAMBERT. I. 609-610; REY. I. 546-547. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. RAMBERT, 609-610, writes: September 27. The date given by Rey and Yenveux is preferable: October 1, after the feast of St. Michael, September 29. The Founder was named Bishop of Icosia on October 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Father de Mazenod refers to himself in the third person to avoid the suspicions of the French Government. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. In the absence of Cardinal Pacca, the Founder asked the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars to be the ordaining prelate. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Copy: Rambert 1. 610-611 [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post. DM IV-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. YENVEUX. III, 231; REY. I. 546-547; RAMBERT. I. 611. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Gibraltar. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Hardouin Jean, Jesuit and scholar (Quimper 1646 - Paris 1729). [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post. FB t-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Ms. Yenveux III. 229: Rambert I. 613-614; Rey I. 548. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Cardinal Odescalchi, Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. The episcopal ordination took place on October 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Bishop C. Falconieri. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Bishop L. Frezza, Secretary of the Congregation for Extraordinary Affairs. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. REY. I. 548; RAMBERT, I. 615-616. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. The rite took place in the Church of San Silvestro al Quirinale. The ordaining prelates were Cardinal Odescalchi, Archbishop Falconieri of Ravenna and Bishop Frezza, secretary of the Congregation for Ecclesiastical Affairs. The new bishop wrote that same day to his uncle Bishop Fortuné de Mazenod. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Original Italian: Rome, General Archives of the Congregation of Missionaries of the Precious Blood.

    Gaspar Del Bufalo (1786-1837), canonized on June 12, 1954, had founded the Archconfratemity of the Most Precious Blood in 1815. The Role was approved by Gregory XVI in 1841. Father de Mazenod met him in Rome in 1826 and had an interview with Don G. Merlini, the saint’s collaborator, in 1832. The question of vows was the main obstacle to this union, cf. Fabio Ciardi, *Un projet de fusion avec les Missionaires du Précieux Sang,* in *Vie Oblate Life,* Vol.37(1978), pp. 65-71. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Undated letter. Don Merlini had written on the original: “This Institution exists in France and in 1832 has 6 houses.” Thus, the Founder met Don Merlini and wrote this letter during his stay in Rome from the middle of August to the beginning of November, 1832 [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Ps. 119: 63. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. YENVEUX, 11, 136; REY, I, 549. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. We have followed here Yenveux’s text rather than Rey’s, which is shorter and better composed but certainly less faithful to the manuscript, except for a few words whose sense in Yenveux is difficult to grasp: *A...sans en perdre aucune ... abréviation? ou observation*?..”. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. YENVEUX, III, 233; RAMBERT. I, 602. Here we follow Rambert’s text. Yenveux himself copied a part of this letter, making a summary of it. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. REY. I, 548. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Bishop de Mazenod left Rome on November 4. He had made four visits to M. de Saint-Aulaire, the French ambassador, without being able to meet him. On the fifth visit, the ambassador received him courteously, but without any apology and without making a return visit. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. REY, I. 549. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. After leaving Civitavecchia on the 6th on the *Henri-IV*, the Founder had to change to another boat at Livorno. He made the passage from Livorno to Genoa on the *Colombo* and from Genoa to Marseilles, November 14-1, on the *Sully*. While waiting for the boat at Genoa he stayed with the Jesuits. There had been very rough seas and he had had a very severe dose of sea-sickness. It is probably of his pitiful condition that he speaks in this letter. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)