1836

To M. Champsaur, goldsmith, for M. Aubert, priest, at Gap. Upper Alps.[[1]](#footnote-1)

554:VIII in Oblate Writings

Advice on the formation of novices and some young fathers. He mustn’t neglect the sciences. Work on the Rules. Brother Calmettes. Practical norms on the admission of novices.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Aubert M

Marseilles,

January 3, 1836.

My dear Son, the letter I’ve just received from you came as a great consolation. I was carried away in spirit to your shrine and thus I understood the full meaning of the inspiration that God’s Spirit bestowed on you on this occasion.[[2]](#footnote-2) It was right that you should be the one to offer to the Lord the men you had taken such pains to prepare for him. Praise the Lord[[3]](#footnote-3) for the confidence that their good dispositions give you. I’m happy to share it, and it’s my earnest desire that the man who is aspiring to the same happiness as his two brothers[[4]](#footnote-4) should give us the same guarantees and cause for joy. The details you go into concerning your interior life could not but be most pleasing to me. I have sincerely thanked God for the happiness he is giving you, and I can only applaud the resolution you have taken. But since the aptitude you received for the sciences is a gift from God, I judge it important that you don’t neglect them. Assign them a subordinate role, yes; shun and leave them in disuse, no. I urge you not to be selfish in savouring all alone God’s communications. Be generous with your riches, share them with others. Draw them, impel them if need be by the power given you by the light and grace you have received.[[5]](#footnote-5) I’m not asking this just for your handful of novices but for all those around you, especially those I’ve placed expressly under your direction. I knew you would be faithful and I was counting without hesitation on an overflowing abundance in which I wanted certain of our men to share. That’s why I directed young Father Reinaud[[6]](#footnote-6) amongst others towards Laus as I couldn’t bear to see him vegetating, with the sap he could furnish if the plant were given some care. I didn’t conceal my intention from him, I wrote to him again yesterday to this effect. I don’t think he is neglecting to open up to you. In any case don’t be afraid to break the ice; that would be precisely what I want. Keep me continuously informed of the steps he takes and of your approaches. He would be very culpable if he were to derive no profit from the grace of the imposition of our hands and the paternal solicitude that induced me to send him to you in our Mother’s sacred sanctuary on the morrow of his ordination. I say nothing about the other man.[[7]](#footnote-7) You can help him with gentleness. but you must be firm with them all. Go on with your work on our Rules, It’s never been a cause of concern to me what ideas you might have on that subject. Only men of superficial intelligence or proud men like some who have gone through could fail to understand their spirit and thrust. It would be good for you to say at large what you wrote to me about that, the professed as well as the novices could profit from it. to the shame of the former.

January 7.

I’ve seen Father Pons in the interval since writing the above. According to what he told me, Brother Calmettes should come here early in February. So you could have him leave on the 1st of that month which is Monday, he would inform himself straightaway about the school programme, and he could at the same time take advantage of the coaching session that is timed to begin then. I owe you a reply on several points from your last-but-one letter.

1. - The local council of the house where the novitiate is situated is not called to pass on the admission of candidates to the novitiate.

2.- The candidates for admission to the novitiate do not have to be presented to that council. But it is fitting to present them to the local superior who will normally be given advance notice on his part by the Superior General about a new candidate in the house of which he is superior. The master of novices will follow on each occasion in this respect the directions given him by the Superior General.

3.- As long as our sphere is circumscribed as it is, I should certainly receive advance warning of requests for admission before the master of novices gives his answer. the latter must put me in a position to make a judgment on the suitability of that admission,

4.- My authorization to the master of novices is likewise needed each time for the admission of a probationer to the novitiate, and consequently the master of novices must give me a report on the probationer’s conduct together with his judgment on the candidate he is presenting.

I am bringing my letter to a close, my dear son, so as not to miss the post again, the day has flown and someone is waiting for me, but I have sat down, on my return from the confirmation of a sick person, just to write you this last page which I bring to an end now with my warmest greetings, you know my affection for you, and I give you and all your community my blessing.

+ Ch. Jos. Eug. Bishop of Icosia.[[8]](#footnote-8)

To Brother Pierre Aubert[[9]](#footnote-9)

555:VIII in Oblate Writings

He must thank God for his cure and resume living the religious life along with his brothers.

Aubert P

[Marseilles.]

January 13, 1836.

My dear Son, I would have preferred anything rather than that you should be the author of a letter like that I received from you today. It betrays a weakness and an imperfection of which I had thought you incapable. In all truth, after the signal grace of your cure, I wasn’t expecting you to show so little generosity. Not only should you not have asked me for what you are so insistently soliciting, even after the reply you knew I had given to your brother, but the very idea shouldn’t have entered your head, so contrary is it to the spirit of your state and all that is fitting. Restrain your imagination and put a break on your fancies.[[10]](#footnote-10) The Lord who has deigned to hear your brother’s prayers and cured you will surely complete his work, if you don’t make yourself unworthy of it by your infidelities. What you should be doing is to begin repairing the breaks that are always made in the practice of piety by a long illness in the course of which a person is much preoccupied with the things of the body, and for that purpose the sight and example of your brothers will be a bigger help than anything else. They have been wonderful in their constant care, charity and patience. They have done their duty, you must do yours. As for me, I’m very unhappy to see that notwithstanding my every care and all the means I have employed to form good religious, a person is ignorant of the basic concepts of the spirit of that state after several years of profession. I say no more. I prefer to write and spare you the unpleasant experience of a talk with me on this subject that would perhaps bring a blush to your cheek.

You ask me for my blessing and I do not refuse it, but it is with the intention of winning for you from God such an acceptance of the refusal that I am obliged to give you that you will forget that you even thought of asking me for something so out of place in every respect.

*P.S.* There is one paragraph of your letter that hurt me even though you give expression there to some quite proper sentiments. How could you imagine that I would think you capable of so heinous an idea, any more than I would think you wanted to fly, blaspheme or....

To Father Tempier. at Marseilles[[11]](#footnote-11)

556:VIII in Oblate Writings

Arrival at Paris of the Bishop of Icosia who will take the oath in a personal capacity. Visit to the Minister of Worship and the King.

Tempier

 [Paris.]

January 20, 1836.[[12]](#footnote-12)

It is the literal truth, since the date of that letter it has been impossible for me to take my pen in my hand. Father Guibert, who has been just as busy as myself, has equally had no time for writing, for the incident that intervened[[13]](#footnote-13) gave us a lot of trouble because of the negotiations it entailed and the mediators who had to be brought in. It all ended with the resolution I took to overlook the difficulty in so far as it might have unpleasant repercussions for me, once I obtained the assurance that this would not reflect on the others. I don’t know whether the Minister and the King will appreciate the degree of delicacy and generosity contained in that decision, but I did not conceal from the former that I made the decision so as not to compromise him vis-à-vis the Council of State and even the Council of Ministers with whom I know he had been dealing in a very positive manner, for it is good that you should know that both the Council of State and that of the Ministers has put great difficulties in the way of what the King wanted out of fear of making a mistake by favouring a man as dangerous in their eyes as myself. M. Portalis. M. de Latour-Maubourg. and Father Guibert took part in this mediation, acting in my name before I appeared myself.

It all went off with a lot of thoughtfulness and nobility. The King was accurately informed both about the question that had been raised and about the discussion’s progress, and finally about the decision that I thought it necessary to take. I saw the Keeper of the Seals[[14]](#footnote-14) the next day. I had previously been with M. Schmit. The reception I got was as precious as can be, it gave the impression even of putting the blame for the orders that had been made against me on unfortunate circumstances and the shock of passion. The Minister informed me how much the King and his Government wanted the prosperity of religion, convinced that it is the basis of order, etc. He told me that the King would be very glad to see me; he was even sure that he had already set down a day for the audience, once he understood that I wanted to see him again before the day fixed to take the oath. That seemed reasonable to me, The Minister invited me not to delay in requesting that audience. On leaving him I wrote to the aide-de-camp who gave me a reply that same evening that the King would receive me on the next day, which was yesterday. at midday.

And so yesterday, the 22nd, the King who had already been so gracious as not to want to put off seeing me for a single day, sent me a new dispatch putting forward the audience by half-an-hour and he did this, as I was able to see at the Palace, so that I might be the first to go in. I took the splendid hired carriage and, accompanied by Father Guibert and my manservant, I headed towards the Tuileries where I arrived, actually, a quarter of an hour ahead of the Generals and Marshals of France who waited until I had passed through. At midday the door of the King’s chambers opened and my name was called. The King came to meet me, paying me a small and very gracious compliment, then he had me sit down opposite him, and after I had expressed a few words of thanks to him, he told me that he was enchanted that I had gone to him, and he went on from there to recount, very ably, the story of the events that had forced him, against his will, to accept the crown so as to save France from the anarchy into which it was on the point of falling. Every time the name of Charles X came up in his narrative, it was always in the acceptable way. Every now and then I interjected some words, more to avoid seeming dumb than to interrupt. I also brought the conversation around to the terrible incident that put the King’s life in grave peril: he spoke very strongly on that; he had a lot to say on his good intentions to do all he could for the advancement of religion; he hadn’t always done all he would have wished, but there were grave obstacles. He wishes to increase the bishops’ stipend, as he acknowledges it is inadequate.

In a word, how can I tell you everything he said to me in the course of a conversation that lasted three-quarters of an hour. I forgot that, at the outset of the audience, he asked me news of my uncle and reminded me of Palermo.

We talked a little about Marseilles, and he didn’t conceal the fact that the clergy had been represented as hostile to the Government. I told him the truth about that. I finished by asking permission to pay my homage to the Queen. So he loudly summoned his Chamberlain, and in such a way that all who were awaiting an audience could hear, he commanded that the Queen too be advised of my visit, and when on taking my leave I reminded him that it was on Monday that I was to return to him to take the oath, he very graciously replied: “Yes, my Lord Bishop, it is on Monday that I will have the pleasure of seeing you again, and it is with every confidence that I will receive your oath. I went to the Queen’s apartments who had me sit beside her; we spoke about my uncle, the Queen of Naples, the welcome the King had just given me, and several other matters, and I withdrew.

To Father Tempier, at Marseilles[[15]](#footnote-15)

557:VIII in Oblate Writings

Paris business concluded. The King’s ordinance. Opinion of Parisian priests. Father Casimir Aubert must not go on missions.

Tempier

 [Paris.]

January 29 & 30, 1836.

Here my business is finished. So I don’t expect to be here much longer. You know how bored I get at Paris doing this kind of thing: receiving and returning calls isn’t how I would choose to pass my time.

The King’s Ordinance was delivered to me yesterday. In all honesty, I ought to protest at its contents, for it does not content itself with saying what my letter and that of the Bishop of Marseilles said, but it expressly asserts that I acknowledged the irregularity in my acceptance of the title of Bishop of Icosia before obtaining the King’s authorization. I have never acknowledged that, we did nothing but petition the King to regularize, in other words to harmonize my perfectly legitimate advancement with the laws or usages of the realm. That isn’t the only thing I have to complain about. They have been as lacking in generosity as I have been noble in my initiatives and procedure. I didn’t put a single condition. I wanted to speak of nothing but my own case, but no one could have failed to be aware that, like my uncle, I too wanted to be placed conveniently close to his side, at least for his lifetime, for they weren’t to know my secret wish to return to private life as soon as I can conveniently do it. As for them, it has to be said, they are all delighted with me and they say it openly, no doubt they are thinking to reward all that those fine dispositions promise by reserving for me in their plans one of the leading sees as they fall vacant. I want none of their rewards, thank you very much! I haven’t been able to profit from any of the advantages that the King’s good-will gave me, expressed in very touching terms and a very striking likeable way, and the good opinion that the Queen and Madame Adelaide have formed of me too, as my delicacy and my conscience alike would refuse to let me say a word on that subject. M. Schmit thought he was obliged to tell me that it was nothing personal, but it had been necessary to make a general regulation to respond to so many requests. I let him see that it was distasteful for me to see the conversation turning on a subject that imposed silence on me and, in fact, while taking into account the good intention that had moved him to broach the subject, I did find it a little indelicate.

And so my business is finished, but Father Guibert’s has scarcely begun. I must say I’ve had enough of Paris and all it contains, not excluding priests and bishops. I can’t get used to the genre of these last survivors of the two orders. Nothing but endless back-biting about everybody’s doings and talk. Woe betide the preachers. M. Combalot included! Come the evening, they are tastefully stretched on the cross, and It’s a competition to see who will hit the hardest blows with the hammer to fix them to it. It’s great sport, I can tell you, and doesn’t cost a penny!

Father Mille’s idea of sending Father Aubert for a mission is inexcusably irresponsible. Father Aubert knows well enough what my mind was when I assigned him where he is not to believe himself authorized to obey any command that would separate him from the family I have confided to him and for which he answers. Help could have been given to Vif to complete the work that is being done there with every hope of success.

To M. Courtès, priest, place des Carmélites, top of the Cours, at Aix. Bouches-du-Rhone[[16]](#footnote-16)

558:VIII in Oblate Writings

Visits to the King. Interview with Archbishop Bernet, new archbishop of Aix, who seems well-disposed towards Father Courtès and the Bishop of Icosia

L.J.C. and M.I.

Courtès

Paris.

January 31, 1836.

My dear Father Courtès, although Tempier is charged with the duty of passing on my news to those entitled. I don’t want my stay here to be prolonged any further without writing to you directly myself. I have completed the business which dragged me to this capital city. Now I am properly and legally a French prelate. No longer need I fear expulsion from the borders of France, to return no more, at the hands of some moody minister suffering an attack of ill-temper. I have been twice to the Palace. In the first audience [the King] had me sit down beside him and kept me for a full three-quarters of an hour. He spoke to me very ably on all the topics he broached and took pains to give me reasons that I wouldn’t have dreamed or dared to ask for. The Queen and Madame Adelaide were also very gracious to me, but the King’s affection during the second audience passed imagination: for ten minutes he held my hands in his, and when I had to leave he again took my hands and told me yet again....

February 5th.

You’ll get some idea of what Paris is like from the time that has elapsed before I could resume this letter. I get up early, religious duties take up the first two hours of the day. When I get back to my room I find that there is already someone waiting to see me, as it is accepted in this part of the world that one has to call early if one really wants to meet people. Before midday lunch must be taken so as to go out in one’s turn, for the errands to be run are unending. Here comes someone now and that’s it for today. I take up my pen again for I want to finish it as I imagine you may be vexed at not getting any news from me. I have seen His Grace the Archbishop of Aix several times and am bringing him right up to date on what is happening at Aix. I have my doubts whether he will be going to his diocese much before Easter. He is very well known here and in high favour, and I got the impression that he wants to put his diocese on a good footing. I had the chance to put in a word for M. Boulard, but I didn’t feel able to do the same for M. Abel. He has a young priest with him who is his vicar general. He seems very talented. I hope to see you before the Archbishop arrives, he hasn’t asked me anything about the Mission. I restricted myself to giving him my opinion of you. He told me that you had corresponded on several occasions, he seemed satisfied with the contacts he had with you. We got on very well together, at least outwardly, as I don’t know what is going on inside of him. But he did say to his manservant, who passed it on to mine, that I was suited to him, that he liked my way of doing things. Goodbye, affectionate greetings to all.

+ Ch. Jos. Eug.. Bishop.

To Father Tempier, at Marseilles[[17]](#footnote-17)

559:VIII in Oblate Writings

Service rendered to a priest of Marseilles. Casimir Aubert mustn’t go on a mission.

Tempier

Paris,

February 17, 1836.

When the Promoter refused him a *celebret,* I took him to His Grace the Archbishop himself who did not want to take it on himself to make a decision in the case. He asked me to write to him and we haven’t yet received the reply. M. Jonjon will find there a case to add to his own which he thought to be unique.[[18]](#footnote-18) Here and elsewhere one does not normally stand on ceremony.

I say no more on the subject of Aubert’s saintly escapade. Whatever consolation he may have reaped in that fortuitous mission, I will hold him guilty none the less of abandoning his post, delivering the house into the keeping of the youngest priest in the Society, leaving his novices without a director, etc. It’s all very well for Mille to be guided by his impulses to which he subordinates every other consideration, but I didn’t expect the like from someone as shrewd, as reflective as Aubert. You’ll do well to let him know my way of thinking.

To Father Tempier, at Marseilles[[19]](#footnote-19)

560:VIII in Oblate Writings

Visits of Father Jonjon to Paris. He isn’t willing to give up his assistants.

Tempier

Paris.

February 19, 1836.

M. Jonjon’s visit has been a long one.[[20]](#footnote-20) He disclosed to me his determination to win a victory or perish beneath the ruins of Menpenti. Even so he did make me a proposal of a compromise. I replied coldly that I wasn’t empowered to do that, but that if I had to tell him what I thought of it myself, I believed that the Bishop of Marseilles would not listen to any proposition so long as he remained in association with his two friends. He replied that it was impossible for him to undertake to tell them such a thing. I retorted that he could easily entrust the task to a third person. “My honour would be compromised.” I reminded him of other obligations that he was regrettably relegating to second or third place. I explained what I thought clearly while at the same time making it clear that I was speaking only for myself and that he mustn’t on any account base himself on it. But I told him that the chief reason that had decided the Bishop of Marseilles to deter his flock from entering the house of Menpenti wasn’t, as he had calumniously asserted, to keep the pupils in his own minor seminary, since the University was constantly on our backs with its complaints about our numbers exceeding the legal limit, but because in his capacity as pastor he believed his conscience would be compromised if he did not object to the faithful whose souls were entrusted to him receiving their education in a house directed by two unworthy priests. So long as that position subsisted, the Bishop of Marseilles could not change his stance. I didn’t omit to give M. Jonjon his share of the blame, while saying at the same time that these faults were such that they could be absolved with suitable reparation, but that his colleagues’ infamy was irreparable and would always remain a factor, M. Jonjon went off little content with the success of his visit.

This morning he made a fresh appearance and spoke in a more assured tone. He brought with him a reply from the Sacred Penitentiary which decided that a confessor could give absolution to a young man who was present in an educational establishment, like many in France since the Revolution, where the principles professed were not reassuring, etc., provided that the child kept himself personally from error, etc. This case, submitted with some fantasy, gives him, he claims, victory in the case. It would remain to be seen however; if this decision gives jurisdiction to those who don’t have it. He makes use of the letter of M. Chaix. the vicar general, which declares that he would not hear the confession of or absolve his pupils who did not leave the establishment. I read his document very coldly and gave it back to him saying that the Bishop would not be surprised and would know what to do. I did ask him however what would be the competent tribunal to judge the case. - “The metropolitan.” I rejected that claim. “Well, the public one, I have a memorandum all ready that I am going to have printed.” Nothing disconcerted, I congratulated him on this new idea; since he was speaking about religion and catholicism, this kind of appeal was new to me, as I had always thought the Church was governed by the Bishops. “For the rest, Sir, you may do as you please. I will not myself undertake to pass on what you have said; you must write directly to his Lordship the Bishop if you judge it proper.”

That’s what he will do in all probability. I wanted to give you advance warning. If a reply is made, weigh your words well so that he can’t take advantage of anything. Yesterday I learnt from the lips of a priest some very distressing details about M. Jonjon’s two assistants. As if a Bishop who is obliged to forbid the reading of bad books for fear of the perversion of his flock, may not forbid his flock from going and placing itself under the direction of, and receiving the deadly formation that derives from a monster like that! The Sacred Penitentiary hasn’t given a response to *that* case.

To Father Tempier, at Marseilles[[21]](#footnote-21)

561:VIII in Oblate Writings

Activities of Father Jonjon at Paris. Founder’s visit to the new Minister of Worship. Purchase of a piano.

Tempier

 [Paris.]

February 26, 1836.

I haven’t seen M. Jonjon again since his second visit. I know he has written a long letter to His Grace the Archbishop of Aix[[22]](#footnote-22) who finds the matter tedious. He must be busy with his memorandum or working in the Ministry of Public Education to get some protectors. If I had the authority I would have gone and commended him to the Minister, but I’m not up to it. I’m sure that if you decided it wise to reply to the letter he was to write to the Bishop of Marseilles, you’ll have weighed your words and expressed yourself with dignity. When one reflects on it, this affair would really infuriate one.

... He spoke to me very courteously and wasn’t afraid to make profession of very catholic sentiments. This one[[23]](#footnote-23) at least understands the terminology, and doesn’t ask a bishop transferred to an archbishopric as the other one did: when would he be consecrated, astounded by the reply made him by the Prelate that one isn’t re-consecrated when one moves from an episcopal to an archiepiscopal see. Father Guibert was with me; I presented him to the new Keeper of the Seals who gave him a private audience for Monday the 29th.

... You moved very fast in the purchase of a piano and making a considerable outlay; it would have been wise to make inquiries at Paris and get an instrument here from one of the better masters which would not perhaps have been dearer than that bought at Marseilles.

... I heard about it here at the Embassy. I’m not going to say anything today about the family. I would like M.[[24]](#footnote-24) to moderate his tone at Ferney. He seems rather irritated with Voltaire. That’s fine but he must take care not to upset certain susceptibilities.

To Father Tempier, at Marseilles[[25]](#footnote-25)

562:VIII in Oblate Writings

Paris pursuits. Consecration of their Lordships Bishops Robiou and Gousset.

Tempier

 [Paris.]

March 8, 1836.

As I have no news on the matter you are interested in, I can hardly pluck up the courage to tell you what is filling in our time in Paris. You know that on Sunday, March 6, the Archbishop of Paris. the Bishop of Nancy and myself consecrated the Bishops of Coutances and Périgueux. Bishops Robiou of La Tréhonnais and Bishop Gousset. After the ceremony and lunch with the Carmelites, we bishops went to assist as a body at M. Lacordaire’s conference. His Grace the Archbishop had expressed this desire to us to make the occasion more solemn and make a protest in this way against the assertions of certain newspapers which had spoken badly of the preacher. And so at the centre of this immense assembly that filled the entire central nave of Notre-Dame and the nave facing the pulpit, there rose the seat of His Grace the Archbishop, and on his right the Archbishop of Aix, the Bishop of Coutances and the Bishop of Périgueux; at his left the Bishop of Nancy, the Bishop of Icosia and Bishop Garibaldi, representing the Pope; behind us, the entire Chapter of Notre-Dame and other ecclesiastics. M. Lacordaire showed himself worthy, by his eloquence and the content of his discourse, of the lofty mission he has received.

On coming out of Notre-Dame, His Lordship the Bishop of Nancy and I went to visit the Carmelites of Rue d’Enfer; after that we assisted at vespers and sermon at Saint-Jacques where the preacher was a nephew of the Father Desplaces you have at Marseilles at this moment. In the evening His Grace the Archbishop brought us together: the bishops, His Eminence the Cardinal[[26]](#footnote-26)  and several ecclesiastics, in the rooms he occupies at Sacré Coeur, for a dinner put on by those Madames who spare nothing when it is a question of honouring their pastor. Before sitting down to table, we went up to visit the aged Bishop of Sisteron[[27]](#footnote-27) to pay homage to his 91 years. It was a special joy to me to think that my uncle was set to imitate this example of graceful longevity.

What else will I say? Well, this evening another gathering of all the Bishops and Archbishops, the Cardinal, the Ablegate,[[28]](#footnote-28) who has arrived at last, Bishop Garibaldi, Messrs. Rauzan, Dubosc and Langlois and some other heads of Orders, etc., at the Bishop of Nancy’s place, who is solemnly entertaining us all to dinner. We shall have to repeat this same ceremony on Friday at Bishop Garibaldi’s place. Lent notwithstanding, which is thus being observed in a very mild way. And so I keep strictly to my small collations that I take only at midday and with the good resolution, if God preserves me, of observing this holy season a little more canonically next year. In these circumstances it would hardly be proper for me to hold forth to so many bishops, amongst whom I can say with more reason than St. Paul that I am but someone untimely born.

To Father Courtès, at Aix[[29]](#footnote-29)

563:VIII in Oblate Writings

Work of the Fathers at the Sacré Coeur boarding-school. Sermon preparation.

Courtès

[Marseilles.]

April 14, 1836.

My dear Courtès, I have just had a long chat with Father Magnan. Amongst the questions I put to him, some were intended to discover how they went about it at Sacré Coeur to replace you in the disagreeable service you were providing there. It came as no surprise to learn that these Madames didn’t veer from the method they usually use, even as regards yourself. What surprises me more is that Magnan was still engaged in giving an instruction every Sunday in the boarding-school. Thus the step that I thought it necessary to take has resulted only in depriving the house of the paltry stipend put up by these Madames. This state of affairs cannot continue. The Jesuits are the true and only directors of that house. I see no advantage in serving as their stand-ins.

It is absolutely essential that he[[30]](#footnote-30) prepare too some solid instructions on the great truths of religion. It is really pitiful to see missionaries who do not set about the task of preaching. If he needs time to compose, let him take it; but it is my intention that he and the others get down to work whatever it costs them. It is not a counsel that I’m giving here, but a formal command which each person must submit to as a conscientious duty.

To Father Casimir Aubert, at N,-D. du Laus[[31]](#footnote-31)

564:VIII in Oblate Writings

Scholastic brothers at the Major Seminary of Marseilles. Pélissier. The master of novices mustn’t go on a mission. Death of Bishop Arbaud of Gap.

Aubert C

[Marseilles.]

April 21, 1836.

I haven’t yet been able to establish full contact with our Oblates, but I see them from time to time and I assure you that my judgment on them isn’t as harsh as yours and especially not as harsh as Lagier’s. Certainly these children aren’t perfect, but they are good, full of goodwill; they listen readily to the minor strictures that they receive; they talk good sense when one enters into conversation with them. I told you that I wasn’t as anxious with regard to the Oblates as our good Father Lagier. I hope a little later to have the opportunity to follow them more closely. They claim that they receive little encouragement where they are. I give credence to this because of the superior’s many engagements and perhaps a little due to his character that they are not perhaps in a position to appreciate.[[32]](#footnote-32)

Pélissier has been pushed out. I don’t find much consistency in the way you treated him. You no doubt allowed yourself to be influenced by Father Mille who came down against him. It wasn’t for him to pass a judgment on what happened before his return, as I had expunged it from the record; can it be said that he was afforded every means to put right what was wrong in his relationship with the unworthy Roustan?[[33]](#footnote-33) He was pushed almost to the limit. There are trials too strong for our fragile humanity. Whatever about that, in future don’t let’s wait so long to come to a decision on our novices vocations. This man has left protesting his attachment to the Congregation and vowing that if he is ordained priest he will offer himself again to consecrate his life to it.

Praise the Lord for the good that you did while on the mission, but I repeat what I communicated to you through Father Tempier, that you are not to get involved even briefly in that ministry without my express authorization. I don’t hesitate to assert that it is something unique in the chronicles of novitiates to see a master of novices giving his flock the slip to go running here and there after lost sinners. Father Tempier has assured me that he gave no authorization in this regard and, in actual fact, he didn’t have the authority to do it. Don’t think from what I am saying that I am in a huff, that I’m annoyed with you for acting in a way directly contrary to what I had laid down. You oughtn’t to interpret my conscientiously-made remarks in that way. I am doing my duty, just that.

Once you have received the information you need on the postulant Armand,[[34]](#footnote-34) you can admit him as a novice, provided of course you have formed the judgement during his probation that he has super-naturalized his outlook and isn’t acting under a foreign impulse in joining our family.

It seems to me that we should take advantage of the vacancy of the see to admit those diocesans who want to come and held back solely through the iron will of the deceased prelate.[[35]](#footnote-35) We had several vocations in the neighbourhood that were already developing; your presence, now that the artillery has been silenced, will have a determining influence. Blow a little on the sails to help the ship to port, but with simplicity and without broadcasting the fact.

What I have just said about the novitiate mustn’t hinder you from sharing with me the remarks you mentioned. I’m avid to know them as soon as possible. Only too often it happens that, by delaying to speak, the right moment has passed when one does decide to do so. I insist too on your sending me without delay your comments on Fathers Reinaud and Marcellin[[36]](#footnote-36) as well as the other Fathers of the house, You ought to have done it already since the letter of the 7th when you promised it. Don’t be afraid of multiplying letters and making them long ones when something so important is in question.

I haven’t given approval to your project of sending the brother cobbler to Marseilles. If you judge him unfit, he must be sent away; if not, keep him at the novitiate for a full year. The novices, irrespective of who they are, must live under the care of the master of novices up to their oblation. What can this man do at Marseilles? Make slippers to sell to the shoe shops to make a profit for the house? I never heard anything more ridiculous. It isn’t a question of knowing if one can utilize them sufficiently in the novitiate house during the year of their testing, they have to learn what it is to be a religious and a year is not too much for that, but it is vital to take pains with them, the more uncouth they are the more unremitting the care they need. If they don’t shape up - then out, and that’s the end of the matter.

To Father Mille, at N.-D. du Laus[[37]](#footnote-37)

565:VIII in Oblate Writings

Paucity of vocations.

Mille

[Marseilles,]

April 23, 1836.

My praises to the Lord would be doubled if, as well as the conversions effected, you had succeeded in attracting some candidates to the house, It pains me to be able to reply only with refusals to the requests that come to me from all our houses, it is to wither on the vine.

To Father Guigues, at N.-D. de l’Osier[[38]](#footnote-38)

566:VIII in Oblate Writings

The parish of N. - D. de l’Osier.

Guigues

[Marseilles.]

April 27, 1836.

If the Bishop of Grenoble decides to give us the parish of l’Osier, we would have to choose someone who could perform this task in partnership with you. Father Magnan would probably be the one I would give preference to.

For heaven’s sake, no women’s convents alongside your house.

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

567:VIII in Oblate Writings

The Oblates mustn’t be chaplains to women religious. Collaboration with His Grace Archbishop Bernet of Aix. Bishop Bruillard of Grenoble confers on the Congregation the rectorship of l’Osier.

Courtès

[Marseilles.]

May 7, 1836.

The summing-up you have let me have is very sound. The Madames of the Sacred Heart have their rigid methods, it is of their essence to be directed by the Jesuits. They are polite, adroit, so they don’t reveal exteriorly the annoyance they feel but is it very nice to be imposed on them? I find this situation little to my liking. Only a real and unlimited trust can make up for the troublesomeness of permanent contacts with any religious women.

Only satisfactory stipends could[[40]](#footnote-40) for a period have induced us to grant a dispensation from an article of the Rule that all of us consider it important to keep and to which it isn’t wise to do violence for too long.

We have learnt from Bicheron, my dear son, that His Grace the Archbishop was satisfied with the reception you gave him the day he came to your church. As to His Grace the Archbishop and his Vicar General, it is essential that you keep up that attitude of respectful but intimate trust. Both the one and the other will be flattered by it and will find your views on many matters that they must have little information on as acceptable as they are useful.

His Lordship the Bishop of Grenoble has decided to confide to the Congregation the rectorship of l’Osier. He continues to be very satisfied with our Fathers and loves them dearly and holds them in high regard. He is requiring us to let him have one more man. It is impossible for us to refuse a Prelate who shows himself both by speech and in writing, as witness his ordinances and circulars, the protector and friend of our work. He has positively turned down the help offered him by the missionaries of the diocese of Belley, replying that he had his own and that they have been with him for only a year, while we have been at Aix for twenty years.

To M. Guigues, superior at N.-D. de l’Osier, Isère[[41]](#footnote-41)

568:VIII in Oblate Writings

Congratulations on the good work done by the Fathers in the shrine and on missions. He must write frequently. Father Guigues should himself compose a little work on N. - D. de l’Osier. Reprimand for Father Vincens who has disregarded the directives of the canonical visit.

Guigues

Marseilles,

May 13, 1836.

My dear Son, Dupuy catches me unprepared, he leaves tomorrow morning; I don’t have the time to gather my thoughts for a moment to write you. However I would like to congratulate you on all the good you have done on your missions this year and on the way devotion at Notre-Dame de l’Osier is going through your efforts. I would like to be able to say something to each of you; not only to Father Vincens who had the happy thought of writing to me, but also to the two others who see nothing wrong it seems in letting a whole year pass by without giving me any sign of life, I would like to go into the inmost details that would profit from discussion, but I can’t do it today. I will only say that I am seriously thinking of giving you another assistant at the expense of the other two houses who won’t take it lying down and whose needs are as great as yours. I don’t think however that you ought to give him the title of rector when the time comes to effect the transfer. You must yourself be invested with this office, the same as is done at N. -D. du Laus.

I urge you to keep things very orderly in the area of finances, and don’t lay out any expenditure that I have not approved. I require this strictly from you as well as from all the other local superiors. Adapt the practice of consulting rather than interpreting. I am not that far away that I should not be called upon to interpret things myself, if need be.

All things considered, I don’t like the idea of having an outsider compose the little book on N.-D. de l’Osier. It would be tantamount to admitting that there isn’t anyone in the Congregation up to such a trifling task. The dedication to the Bishop would be meaningless coming from anyone else but you. So you will have to set about this matter yourself. Clearly it isn’t a labour of Hercules. The thing is to get started. Let us have a look at it[[42]](#footnote-42) before it is published.

I gather from the letter that Father Vincens wrote me that he is more attached to his own way of seeing things than to the recommendations I expressed with such clarity in my act of visitation as to leave him no excuse for impeding their execution. We shall perhaps owe it to him if we have one day beneath our windows, and enclosed within our property, a kind of very noisy and highly scandalous nightclub. We will owe this burden to his wise direction. It would have been still wiser had he brought the matter to my notice.

You will be glad to know that the Bishop of Ajaccio has given me the gift of the convent of Vico. So here we have a second foundation in Corsica that will give its fruit in due season.

Do everything you can to get candidates for our novitiate which is in crying need of them.

Goodbye, dear son, I hope not to let the year go by without the pleasure of visiting you. Affectionate greetings and my blessing.

+ Ch. Jos. Eug.. Bishop of Icosia.

To M. Mille, superior at N.-D. du Laus.[[43]](#footnote-43)

569:VIII in Oblate Writings

Visit of the Secretary of the Bishop of Marseilles to N. - D. du Laus. Secondary high school at Manosque. Vocations. He must keep the Superior General up-to-date on all the community’s activities.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Mille

Marseilles,

May 16, 1836.

My very dear Son, instead of my visit you are going to have one from our dear friend Cailhol who is having a little trip by way of vacation. There’s no need for me to tell you to look after him. He is so much a part of my family that he should feel himself at home wherever we have a place. Tempier has with him the last letter you wrote me. So I can’t go over it again to take up each point separately as I usually do. I will only say that I see big difficulties in the teaching project at Manosque.[[44]](#footnote-44) We haven’t been lucky in our forays into this kind of work. I have but slight inclination in that direction as this institution does not come within our province and would once again divert some of our already scarce manpower from the principal ministry of the Congregation.

You don’t say anything anymore about all those men of good-will who were chafing at the delay imposed by the late Bishop on their wishes. Ne’er a one returns to the charge now that the way is made straight. We will see at the June ordinations if resolutions are as fickle[[45]](#footnote-45) at Grenoble as they are at Gap.

I hope that in future you won’t leave me to learn by chance of your exterior activities. I don’t like it when someone makes mysteries where I should rightly be informed and strangers are better informed than I am of what is going on in our houses and of what our men are doing. I trust you will have taken steps to see that the 10,000 francs of your fixed price doesn’t fall on us directly or indirectly.

I haven’t the time to write you at greater length. I have just come out of a meeting of pastors that only went on for three hours and darkness is falling. Goodbye dear son, my greetings and blessings to the whole community.

+ Ch. Jos. Eug.. Bishop of Icosia.

To M. Aubert, priest, at Notre-Dame du Laus[[46]](#footnote-46)

*Friendship. Regret at having to keep Father Aubert at a distance from Marseilles.*

L.J.C. and M.I.

Aubert C

Marseilles,

May 16, 1836.

My dear Son, although it is very late. I shall not go to bed without writing you a few lines. I don’t want to tell you that it seems to me that it is already too long a time since you wrote me, perhaps you would think[[47]](#footnote-47) me too demanding. The truth is that I get a lot of pleasure from your letters, I will go as far as to say that they do me a lot of good. And at the same time isn’t a man entitled rather to want to make use of what is his; now you know that you and I are one in heart and spirit, quite apart from the supernatural bonds that bind us so closely. You understand in that light that it is already a lot to be deprived of your presence and make the sacrifice of your pleasant company for the Congregation’s sake; so you mustn’t deprive me for too long of the sole compensation that my tenderness demands. And so I expect at the latest when Cailhol comes back a small or even a long letter from you. Don’t wait until the last moment to write to me, and, if it has to be that way, rather than stay up late, just write a few lines.

I had in mind to tell you something else too, but I must hand my letter to our traveller who is leaving tomorrow at 4.30, before I get up. With my most affectionate greetings.

+C.J.E. Bishop.

To Father Mille, at N.-D. du Laus[[48]](#footnote-48)

571:VIII in Oblate Writings

Uniform system of accounting and administration. The local council must be regularly convoked and the Superior General kept informed of its deliberations and decisions. Twice as much effort at regularity when the pilgrimage season is on.

Mille

[Marseilles.]

May 18, 1836.

I would like to establish in our houses a uniform system of accounting and administration which would put the Superior General in a position, as he should be, to know all that happens in each house, its moral and financial condition, just as if he were personally present. Nothing more would be needed for that than to observe the Rule. It would be necessary to insist that everyone persevere in the competencies of the charge entrusted to them, that councils be held punctually, that the superiors faithfully send me the minutes of these council meetings, with the details of what each assessor said and of the discussion, that accounts be always kept in order, that there be a serious discussion on them and that twice a year they be sent to the Superior General.

The embarrassing difficulties you have encountered in the building of the steeple of N. -D. du Laus lead me to seek a clear distinction and separation of the interests involved.

In Council meetings the superior must make it possible for the assessors to check everything, while listening to their observations and benefiting from them, for they have a real say in the Council and, in accordance with the Constitutions, everything that concerns a house, in any way whatsoever, must be dealt with in the Council. The superior must not merely consult, but he must take the advice of the assessors into consideration, especially when it is backed up by good reasons. I would like my remarks to be heeded, as explanatory norms, when the need arises, not only for the house of Laus. but for all the others, and for all time.

Now the feast of Pentecost is upon us, appeal to the whole community, in my name, to take twice as much care to see that the crowds of visitors don’t give rise to a kind of exterior dissipation which wouldn’t be edifying in men from whom one expects behaviour that is not only full of zeal but truly modest, grave and recollected as well. Please, insist a lot on this subject. Let it be demonstrated that, when a religious has to devote himself to external ministry, the habitual regularity that he should have acquired in the bosom of the community is a source of abundant graces and help, so that he isn’t found wanting and doesn’t disappoint the faithful’s expectations: more is required of him than of others in the wholly supernatural action of his demanding work,

To Father Casimir Aubert, at N.-D. du Laus[[49]](#footnote-49)

572:VIII in Oblate Writings

The superior must always consult his council. He mustn’t leave the novices to themselves when the crowds of pilgrims start coming.

Aubert C

[Marseilles.]

May 18, 1836.

... I presume that he will let the community know my mind as no doubt he will share with you and Father Gignoux my observations concerning the local administration of our houses. I have noticed that there is a lack of sufficient regularity in the handling of money, in particular that the intent of the Rule is not followed in the various meetings or councils that ought to be held in each house at fixed intervals. I don’t know if it’s the fault of superiors or of assessors but it is certainly true that these councils, which certainly ought to deal with everything that touches the moral no less than the material aspects of each community, leave no trace of their having been held behind them, since nothing is done in them which is worth the bother of communicating to the Superior General who is left in total ignorance of what was transacted. I would like things to be put on a regular basis everywhere and make a serious appeal on this point as on all others, for the observance of the Rules: it is not my intention to give anybody a dispensation.

It’s a queer thing; I am always amazed to see that as soon as one of our men is named superior in a particular community, he sets himself up as the sole master, he arranges everything, orders everything as he sees fit, without making the least effort to ask my advice or to consult the men the Rule appoints as his councillors. In this way our local superiors assert their independence far more than the Superior General who never acts without hearing the men around him. They don’t do this deliberately, rather they are letting themselves be influenced, imitating the fashion, I would nearly say, followed in other places, and that is how abuses set in. It’s about time to correct all this, and since this won’t come about of itself, as it ought. I am going to see to it myself.

There is no shortage of priests at Laus. So I urge you not to leave the novices to themselves when the crowds of pilgrims start coming. I know your zeal and understand what in particular drives you to exercise it in the circumstances. That is why I am taking the precaution of reminding you that your little family has more need than ever at such times for watchfulness and looking after.

To Father Mille, at N.-D. du Laus[[50]](#footnote-50)

573:VIII in Oblate Writings

Religious must obey and humbly accept their superior’s observations. Father Mille should inspire respect and confidence in his men by his attitude.

Mille

[Marseilles.]

May 21, 1836.

A virtuous religious must understand that all are bound to accept humbly their superior’s observations and even their criticisms. It’s odd that it should be necessary to take so many precautions for fear of going against your men’s likes and ideas and, if I may say so, their frequently bizarre ideas. Their pride has to be handled with kid gloves so as not to distress or discourage them. What kind of virtue is that, in all truth? A little more humility, a sounder idea of the indifference that is so much recommended, finding contentment in all things and a real happiness under the gentle yoke of obedience, these are the sure means to arrive at the practice of the rudiments of religious life; they should be inculcated in the novitiate and never laid aside.

Make an effort to win respect and trust; for this you must keep a close watch on yourself, for you don’t do enough to overcome the handicap of your youth by seriousness and self-assurance in your relationships with the men you are living with and whose superior you are in actual fact. It calls for application like everything else, that does not come naturally. You wouldn’t believe how much a man demeans himself by certain familiarities, by a kind of joking that may provoke laughter but always to the detriment of one’s esteem, especially when one is superior of one’s peers.

To Father Courtès, at Aix[[51]](#footnote-51)

574:VIII in Oblate Writings

Father Tempier is going to Aix to study the project for the purchase of the Couteron house and to see what attitude the Fathers should adopt vis-à-vis certain less well-disposed members of the diocesan administration.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Courtès

Marseilles.

May 23, 1836.

My dear Son, I’m sending Tempier to Aix not so much to terminate after some discussion the matter of the Couteron house, as to get together with you concerning the sinister rumours which have reached even my ears through Father Martin. This good father, who has no inkling of our longstanding disquietude, speaks indignantly to me of that malice that he attributes to the same clique that has already stirred up other problems, but I am myself far from being at ease and you know why. Talk this over with Tempier and he will report to me your thinking on the matter. I was expecting you to write about it, it quite escapes me to understand why you have not done so. You understand that I must be concerned. I’m not speaking of your last audience. It aroused all my feelings of honesty, justice, delicacy; even so I have just written to Father Martin to do nothing except under your guidance and not to talk openly except to you and Magnan on whom I have urged the same thing. A.[[52]](#footnote-52) is too imprudent, too much of a gossip, too lacking in judgment to riskin his presence the least murmur, the least complaint.

I think it is a favourable moment to buy that house that overlooks our courtyard, but I wouldn’t want to take on that life annuity that Tavernier mentions. It’s all very well to have the lady’s dowry of 7.200 fr. on deposit, but I would like to pay up and be free of the outstanding 2.800 fr. Talk all this over with Tempier to whom I am going to give a blank delegation for him to fill in with your name if he cannot conclude the matter in the course of tomorrow.

Tempier will bring you up to date on what is happening in Corsica and all the family’s affairs. I haven’t time to say more, but I give you my cordial greetings and bless you with all my heart.

+ Ch. Jos. Eug.. Bishop of Icosia.

To Father Mille, at N.-D. du Laus[[53]](#footnote-53)

575:VIII in Oblate Writings

He must see that the measures taken in the Act of Visitation are observed. He must not accept pilgrims in the kitchen. Firmness with Father Rossi.

Mille

[Marseilles.]

May 26, 1836.

With regard to your question, I frankly confess that I don’t like to nullify by letter the very wise stipulations of a Visitation. If some modification should be judged necessary, it will be laid down in a subsequent Act of Visitation; there you have my policy. The reasons that led me to take the measure that you are objecting to are very grave; they are what I felt when I was present on the spot, and the objections you put forward are nothing but a repetition of what was said then and turned down.

I completely rule out our house becoming a kind of restaurant and our bursar becoming the supplier for all the pilgrims who flock to Laus. Quite apart from the rapid destruction of all that belongs to the house, you can imagine the commotion in the kitchen, often to the detriment of the community! If you want to set up a separate kitchen, employ a servant to look after these rooms and furnish them with what is needed for the pilgrims. I raise no objection, provided the house’s purse doesn’t suffer in consequence.

I hope you weren’t weak in your interview with Father R[ossi]. You must indignantly brand the very idea of apostasy. It is such a serious crime that the only way is to rise up forcefully against the least suspicion of such a detestable prevarication. I am so convinced of this principle that it fills me with the resolve to use every means to win respect for vows and oaths that have been taken and that are ratified a hundredfold by the presence of Jesus Christ, the guarantor of these sacred and truly solemn promises, more awesome to my eyes precisely for that reason than the vows the Church calls solemn, made as they are in most religious orders in the privacy of a chapter house. Once you have rejected, censured, forcibly and even imperiously condemned what cannot be tolerated for a single moment of one’s life. I don’t object to your showing some interest in the position of this person’s relatives.

To M. Courtès, priest, place des Carmelites, top of the Cours, at Aix. Bouch[es]-du-Rhone[[54]](#footnote-54)

576:VIII in Oblate Writings

Patience and humility called for to hear with the difficulties caused by ecclesiastical authority at Aix.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Courtès

Marseilles,

June 8, 1836.

My dear Son, I was watching each post for one of your letters so as to write to you. I feel that in the position you find yourself, the least I can do is to offer you some consolation and encouragement if not by my presence at least by my words. Who would have said that after twenty-five years of hard work and devotion we would be reduced to the status of suppliants waiting on the grant of a favour or rather, asking just to be allowed to go on living? This violent situation cannot last for ever, but it means we must adopt the late M. Emery’s[[55]](#footnote-55) maxim: prepare for a long haul if you don’t want to go under, everyone has to move on eventually. This maxim that my former teacher constantly acted on is wise: somewhat opposed as it is to my temperament. I do urge you to adopt it, or rather, I congratulate you on following it. Providence wishes our growth to take place in the midst of tribulations. Hardly do we begin to draw breath on one side than we are fired on from the other side. Let us bide our time: you know quite well what we had to put up with for several years in the diocese of Gap. The Bishop,[[56]](#footnote-56) while professing all the while his esteem for each of the members of the Congregation which had done and was still doing so much good in his diocese, used every means to discredit and ruin it. He acknowledged the superior’s merit[[57]](#footnote-57) and wrote me letter after letter for his recall, because, he said, he was too brilliant for his mountains, and because he enjoyed the esteem of all, which made him all the more of a threat. At a loss how to make them lose their patience, he reduced their faculties in that shrine where the affluence of pilgrims and the reasons that brought many of their number to the feet of the Holy Virgin cried out for unlimited faculties. The Prelate cloaked the harm he was doing us so badly that he let slip the remarkone day that he would have several interesting pages devoted to him in our history. Anyway, through patience things had already begun to change before his death. Keep me constantly up to date on the smallest details. It is a waste of time to send me Pélissier, tell Father Martin from me to follow your line and to help you bear the very heavy burden that Providence has imposed on you. Don’t be anxious. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Contradictions must come. I am confident that they are heralds of some good news. But once again, call your little community together and ask them from me to redouble their prayers, to overcome evil by good, to rejoice to be humiliated a little, to renounce all arrogance, I don’t mean of a personal kind, as I’m sure that such a thing can’t be found amongst you, but as a group, choosing humility rather than glory when God wants to have us go that road. Make no mistake, any other course would be pure illusion.

Goodbye, my very dear son, my blessing is on you and your men if you but follow my counsel which is certainly from God in what I am bidding you do.

To M. Champsaur, goldsmith, place St. Etienne, for M. Aubert, priest, at Gap. Upper Alps[[58]](#footnote-58)

577:VIII in Oblate Writings

The Bishop of Icosia’s many engagements. Father Aubert should look after his health; his love and fidelity are a consolation to the Superior General in face of the ingratitude of some Oblates. He should take an interest in the young Fathers.

Aubert C

Marseilles.

June 13, 1836.

My dear Son, it seems that the good Brother Bellon didn’t tell you what he saw all the same with his own eyes, that it was physically impossible for me to have a moment to myself during his short stay at Marseilles. On top of everything I have had to entertain an Armenian prelate who came with the recommendation of the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda. I distinctly asked that good child to give you a full explanation so you wouldn’t be surprised at getting nothing from me on this occasion. It was my mistake not to tell you myself, even were it only in a couple of lines.

Despite the care you take to assure me that you didn’t go further than prudence would allow in your ministry at the church when the crowds came, I can read between the lines as to what actually happened, but I find it difficult to believe that you kept your promise to yourself and went to bed a little sooner to make up for the time taken from sleep. I can see you doing it once and making up for a spoilt night’s rest with a half-hour’s nap. That isn’t how I do arithmetic.

My dear son, you are spoiling me by the moving and affectionate tone of your letters. There really isn’t any great merit in giving one’s tender love to a child like you. I forestalled you, no more than that. Everything else follows naturally. Have you ever caused me a single moment’s pain since I’ve adopted you? Isn’t it rather that your soul and mine in some way mingled from the moment they met and since that first moment has there ever been the least interruption, the least cloud? Far from it. How could I not enjoy a friendship that hasn’t known a moment’s lapse when there have been so many ingrates to rend apart my paternal feelings and who still today after being loaded with so many favours give me small respite? Their hearts indeed are not like yours. And am I to be dead to that? It is already a lot that I forgive them and bend myself to accept men as the sin of Adam has made them, but if my affections turn with all the more tenderness and sweetness to your beautiful soul, if my heart rests on yours that so closely mirrors it, what’s surprising in that, how could it be any other way? I never intended to talk to you like this. But I’m not sorry that it has come out if it is only to repay you for your filial love and to bestow pleasure a soul like yours so richly deserves.

I’m pleased that you have a word of praise for Father Reinaud’s budding talent. Although he’s one of those I spoke about above, I am happy at his successes in the hope that they will prove to be of benefit to the Congregation to which he owes his existence. I’m sorry for him in so far as he has allowed suspicions [to hang][[59]](#footnote-59) over him that are to his discredit [both in my eyes] and in those of many others besides. At any rate it was [wrong of him not] to do anything at all to allay the fears that his questionable attitude could give rise to. He didn’t [even blush] and what efforts has he made to put an end to speculations that [could] rankle and that threaten his honour as much as [ours]. We shall see what will be the result of his visit home which I have given him permission for *obduritia[m] cordis,* though I did put limits on this concession, placing the responsibility on the loc[al] superior. Isn’t it over-trusting to send him off on his own? Try to bring your influence to bear on Gignoux to get him into the way of a sensible measure of regularity, the way to go about it is to set up some chats with him in which without any affectation you talk about what real perfection consists in. Don’t neglect this kind of fraternal and trusting sharing with the others as well, it always has good results and ends up forming a family spirit even amongst those who were not drawn to it at the outset. I understand that it can be more agreeable to stay in one’s cell, but that kind of apostolate is more advantageous and more in line with my ideas. Goodbye, very dear son, with my love and blessing.

+ Ch. Jos. Eug.. Bishop of Icosia.

To M. Guigues, superior at N.-D. de l’Osier, near Vinay. Isère[[60]](#footnote-60)

578:VIII in Oblate Writings

Canonical visit to N. - D. du Laus; imminent departure for l’Osier with Fathers Tempier, Mille and Guibert.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Guigues

Marseilles,

July 6, 1836.

My dear Son, notwithstanding the dreadful, suffocating heat, this is the only time I have free to make my visit to N.-D. du Laus and N. -D. de l’Osier. I have put off all the rural confirmations in the diocese until September, the pastors not being willing usually to present the children soonerthan that. Besides, I dread the thought of certain dinner engagements at this season. So I can’t ...

From Notre-Dame du Laus,

July 15.

I arrived at Notre-Dame three days ago accompanied by Father Tempier. I have begun my visitation and it won’t take long to complete; I shall not stay long in this house, as I would like to be back at Marseilles for the Assumption, as the pontifical liturgy is now too much for my uncle. I would really like to spend at least some ten days with you. So arrange things in such a wise that the community will all be there at the time of my stay at l’Osier. I am not going to fix the day of my departure until I get your reply. It couldn’t be until after Sunday the 24th. Now I have to know when His Lordship the Bishop of Grenoble will be passing by your house so that I don’t get there at the same time. That would make things too difficult for him and it would distractme too from the business that brings me to l’Osier. Even so, I would not want to enter the diocese without seeing its Bishop, so be so kind as to let me have his itinerary. I propose returning again by Grenoble. So if I don’t find him in his episcopal city on my outward journey, I will see him on my way back. Dupuy must surely be back in his parish by now. The journey from Lyon can’t have taken this long. However, if he is away, write and tell him to be there at the house so we can all be there together. We shall be quite a crowd as Father Mille is keen to pay you a visit, and perhaps Father Guibert will be in the group. It’s not definite, don’t take it as certain. As far as Tempier is concerned it is definite. If you have any special directions to give me concerning the carriage or the road I should take, put them in your reply. If we have to leave the main road before Vinay, you’ll have to tell me where. I would as soon avoid an exchange of courtesies with the parish priest of Vinay. On the other hand I would like to get to l’Osier as quickly as possible in the carriage, even if it is a country wagon, as the midday heat at this time of year is not very pleasant.

I have a letter from Father Guibert telling me he is leaving for l’Osier, he is in a bit of a hurry to get there, for I had a letter sent him from Gap on the very day of my arrival suggesting he follow the same route as myself, it would have been an opportunity to pass a little time together at Laus and we would have made the journey to you together. There’s always got to be some mix-up in this world to cause us annoyance in even the smallest things.

I will be all the more eager to join you at the time I indicated, namely Monday the 25th. So don’t waste a single day in sending me your reply.

I am going to receive into the novitiate a priest[[61]](#footnote-61) who has already received his formation and who will I hope persevere and be a useful acquisition. What about the men in your part of the world who were displaying a certain interest?

Affectionate greetings and my blessing to all the community.

+ Ch. Jos. Eug.. Bishop of Icosia.

To Father Mille, at N.-D. du Laus[[62]](#footnote-62)

579:VIII in Oblate Writings

Reflections on the communities of Laus and l’Osier after the canonical visitation of these houses. Youthful superiors have introduced abuses, such as “ridiculous profusion” at meals and pleasure trips. Certain Oblates’ lack of generosity.

Mille

[Marseilles.]

August 23-25, 1836.

The comparison between our own practice and the abuses permitted to enter our houses by our young superiors and encouraged by their own example only fills me with distress. Acting in accordance with their ideas, local superiors have just about managed to re-fashion the Congregation. I no longer recognize my spirit in the houses I have just visited, and indeed how could it be found when no one bothers any longer to consult me?

Haven’t I told you often enough, you young superiors, that necessity forced me to place you at the head of our communities long before you were fit to exercise authority, that your major defect has been to follow your own ideas, instead of taking your lead from what has been the practice prior to your arrival. If you had taken pains to follow in our footsteps, you would not have brought in all the abuses that I am having such trouble in rooting out.[[63]](#footnote-63)

In our time we were satisfied with the more than sufficient ordinary fare laid down by the Rule, and it never entered our heads to measure the worth of visitors by the number of courses being served up. It never occurred to us that anyone would object to being treated as we treat ourselves. Since then our houses have become *table d’hote* hotels! No one scruples to spend large sums of money, without any permission, for dishes that are superfluous. No one bothers about the scandal caused by a ridiculous profusion. There is such a reluctance to get straight on this point and to get back to our regular usages, that every year during my visits I have the distasteful task of keeping watch lest anyone exceed the Rule which people always have some excuse for evading. You are going to say that my letter is harsh, and it is. The truth is I’m tired of making these ineffective remonstrances.

We used to do as much work as you can do, but it never entered our heads that we needed a vacation. Our relaxation consisted in a change of work, in moving from the exhausting work of giving missions to working unremittingly as zealous ministers in the neighbourhood of our residence, systematic instructions, study, and so on. You find it necessary to make tourist trips, excursions etc. The superior leads the way, the rest follow. A man hasn’t made use of what he is entitled to if he hasn’t procured this innocent recreation. This practice dates only from you. I never permitted myself anything of the kind. It’s twenty years that I have been visiting Laus; how many times have I been to Switzerland as I passed by Grenoble? It took a special reason, at 55years of age, to get me, when I happened to be a few leagues away, to make the climb up to the Grande Chartreuse. What’s the point of these trips to admire the beauties of nature? And all these excuses for pleasure seeking of which men who are already but little given to inner recollection stand in no need? I don’t want any more of these abuses. From now on let no one absent himself from our houses without my special permission; and I’m warning you now in advance that I’m going to say no to all these pastimes that have come in behind my back. In line with this I thoroughly disapprove of Father Aubert’s indiscreet pilgrimage to the Grande Chartreuse. For the future let there be no more trips outside what your ministry requires. That is already more than enough; it is all that we had in our time.[[64]](#footnote-64)

But I’m easily upset when I’m faced with men who render themselves unavailable for various positions of trust that I would like to give them, whether because of a lack of virtue or because they don’t give a sufficient assurance of wisdom in their conduct. At the present moment you have two men who could give satisfaction in the most pressing of needs, but what are they like when it comes to regularity, are they living according to the spirit of their holy state of life? Are they detached, available for any task? I sent them to Laus as being an easier way to get them up to the level that every member of the Congregation should achieve. Where are my hopes now? Is it such a difficult thing to be equal to one’s duties? I am saddened in spite of myself when I consider how small some men’s generosity is.

Goodbye, my dear Father Mille, my blessing on you and all the community.[[65]](#footnote-65)

To Father Courtès, at Aix[[66]](#footnote-66)

580:VIII in Oblate Writings

Father Martin’s sickness. He may take a rest in an Oblate house, not with his family.

Courtès

[Marseilles.]

August 24, 1836.

Father Martin wrote for permission to take a little rest, he suggested going for treatments at his father’s. I had no intention of yielding to a suggestion that it should not enter anyone’s head to make, and I was going to reply as did Blessed Liguori in like circumstances that by God’s grace the Congregation has sufficient houses in various climates to be able, without going outside our own premises, to find the repose that one is looking for. Now you tell me he is in bed. I’ll wait until his strength has picked up and then I’ll suggest that he comes and spends some time in one of our houses in Marseilles in conditions of complete rest and where I can have the pleasure of many conversations with him. A change of air is all he needs to put him back on his feet after a sickness like the one he is suffering from.

To M. Guigues, superior at Notre-Dame de l’Osier, near Vinay, lsère.[[67]](#footnote-67)

581:VIII in Oblate Writings

N. - D. du Laus will once again cease to be the novitiate. Despatch of a sacristan brother for l’Osier. Take out a subscription for the newspaper “l’Ami de La Religion”. No unnecessary trips.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Guigues

Marseilles.

August 25, 1836.

My dear Son. I was waiting for a letter from you to write in my turn. Although very busy, I will even so do it today since, just having sent to Notre-Dame du Laus for Father Aubert to come down to Aix[[68]](#footnote-68) without delay together with his charges, it would be opportune for you to inform the former pastor of Chantes[[69]](#footnote-69) without delay that he can take the road for Aix at the beginning of September. I think it will be useful, not to say indispensable, for you to have a sacristan brother. The man[[70]](#footnote-70) I’m going to send you hasn’t quite finished his novitiate, but I don’t think it opportune to have him come to Aix just for two months. He will complete his time with you, it being understood that you will look after him carefully. I am giving Father Vincens the special charge of being his novice master; he will make his first oblation at the end of the annual retreat at All Saints.

I’m not going into particulars today as it’s quite impossible. I’m just snatching the opportunity to tell you that in my opinion the newspaper *l’Ami de la Religion* is everything a religious community could desire, so terminate your subscription to the one you have started to take in your house without consulting me and take out a subscription to *l’Ami de la Religion.* I’m sure M. Picot will give you a 5 franc discount if you explain that it’s for a missionary community that has no spare cash and is approaching him on my advice.

I authorize your trip to Vif in view of the useful purpose you foresee, but there are to be no other trips without my being informed, except when they are called for by your ministry.

There are people clamouring for my attention, It’s impossible to continue. Affectionate greetings.

+ Ch. Jos. Eug.. Bp.

To Madame de Mazenod at St-Laurent-les-Verdon, through Riez, Lower Alps.[[71]](#footnote-71)

89:XIII in Oblate Writings

Bishop Flaget’s visit. Illness of Father J.A. Martin.

Mazenod Madame de

Marseilles,

September 3, 1836.

Dear mother, you are totally right to complain about me. However, you are aware of my being usually interrupted, which is enough of an excuse and adequately explains my forced silence. Besides the ordinary business matters which already take up my time, there has been added the stay of Bishop Flaget[[72]](#footnote-72) at the Bishop’s house, one of the most respectable bishops that I know. You feel that you must be present to him, and so how can you get to your desk unless required by some urgent matter? Nevertheless, I feel guilty for having left you so long without direct news from me. I hope that they gave you some from St-Martin where I wrote several days ago about a sale of oats.

Everyone here is very well; that is something that I mustn’t forget to tell you. I add that Father Martin has even completed his convalescence. He owes his life to the excellent d’Astros who did not hesitate, in spite of what everyone said, to bleed him four times in one day, not counting the forty bloodsuckers that he placed on his stomach. Without that decisive act, a blood clot was forming in his brain and that would have finished our dear missionary. You can well see that d’Astros is a capable doctor, and he daily (fervently) invokes the good Lord who helps and enlightens him in the practice of his art, an art he carries out conscientiously. At his request, I am going to allow Martin to go to Notre-Dame du Laus for a change of air.

We are going to leave for the Cathedral where Bishop Flaget will pontificate on the occasion of our great solemnity of Saint Lazarus.

Dear mother, I embrace you with all the affection of my filial heart.

+ Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop of Icosia.

To Father Courtès, at Aix[[73]](#footnote-73)

582:VIII in Oblate Writings

Father Mouchel replaces Father Martin at Aix. Everyone must have seven hours sleep.

Courtès

[Marseilles.]

September 8, 1836.

I don’t want to let Father Mouchel go off without a brief word for your ear. In the first place I commend this Father to you, he is I think a dutiful man. He enjoys here the confidence of many men who go to him for confession; he also confesses a large number of women; in this way, although he is no preacher, he made himself very useful in this poor house of Calvaire where there is so much to do and so few men able to function.

...[The obligation of seven hours of sleep is imposed to remedy] the extravagant piety of certain men who want to serve God as they see fit in defiance of all reason, common sense, justice and enlightened religion. What can a man do, there’s no cure for crackpots. I urge you to order Father Aubert on my behalf never to take less than seven hours sleep. This young priest needs a lot of sleep, he isn’t willing to admit it but it is obviously so. I noticed it a long time ago and others too have made the same observation. I don’t permit any excuses. I positively insist that he submit to this ruling.

To Father Mille, at N.-D. du Laus[[74]](#footnote-74)

It is impossible to send a priest to replace Father Aubert. Departure of Father Pachiaudi. Father Pons’ imminent death.

Mille

[Marseilles.]

September 15, 1836.

Do not add, I beseech you all, to the difficulties of my position and my soul’s bitter distress, the painful experience of your complaints coming in all at the same time and from every direction. Is it my fault that there aren’t more of you and if amongst our small numbers there are so few men of ability? I would give my life to make your number grow, knowing the good works that you could achieve, that offer themselves in every quarter but which will remain undone for lack of workers. And now another blow, what can I do in the face of Providence’s severe decrees, what can I do even when faced with the cowardly folly and insensitivity of men? Let us speak no more of Pachiaudi[[75]](#footnote-75) who has so unworthily betrayed the Society and trodden underfoot so many duties. Even so his desertion does leave a gap that I cannot fill; but still more crushing, tearing at my soul and striking at my very existence, is the desperate condition in which our wonderful and irreplaceable Pons[[76]](#footnote-76) finds himself. For four days he has been betwixt life and death, and short of a miracle he cannot survive. The nature of his illness moreover keeps me in a state of continual anxiety for all these good young brothers who are nursing him with prodigal and heroic charity. He has no less than the most virulent form of typhus, and all those who are nursing him, which includes the whole community, feel in varying degrees the effects of the influence of this sickness that is carrying our dear and precious brother to the grave. And so, my dear friend, you understand how incapable I am, in the midst of the desolation this fearful misfortune throws me into, to endure the least discussion especially with regard to matters whose necessity is obvious, whatever complaints you make. And so I am just going to say in as many words that I had no choice but to summon Aubert to Aix; it followed of necessity that the two or three novices under his direction came along too. Heavens! I must even broach the subject of mission with you; there are two absolutely vital ones, the one at Carpentras, the other at Fontvieille in the diocese of Aix. I will probably need you for one of these missions, so that of the diocese of Gap will have to be suspended. The mission of Carpentras is asked for Advent; the one at Fontvieille for December or January. Hold yourself in readiness. It doesn’t disturb me at all to defer any of the missions in the Upper Alps; it is these two latter ones that are really important.

To M. Courtès, superior of the missionaries, place des Carmelites, top of the Cours, at Aix.[[77]](#footnote-77)

584:VIII in Oblate Writings

Grave illness of Father Pons. Dearth of members. Father Reinaud to go to Ajaccio.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Courtès

Marseilles.

September 16, 1836.

With our dear Pons in the desperate condition that he is, it is impossible for me to speak of any other topic, for I want it to be from my own lips that you come to know of our misfortune. Yesterday evening a feeble glimmer of reason gave birth to a flicker of hope only to be snatched away in the wretched night that followed. So we have to resign ourselves to the loss of one of our best men and it will be a long time before we find a replacement. It is God’s will, that is everything; but it goes to the heart and the gap will make itself felt.

This dreadful misfortune, which seems to me to be imminent, on top of Pachiaudi’s escapade, puts all my plans at sea. I need patience, all the more as requests for help pour in from all sides; I will end up not answering their letters any more if they persist in ignoring the situation Providence has placed us in. All the same I am giving you advance warning that Father Reinaud is assigned to go and teach dogma in our seminary at Ajaccio. He will leave together with our Father Guibert who is going to set off next week at the latest. I will tell you the day after seeing Guibert, against whose arrival I am keeping my letter open. In any case I shall write and tell you in the coming days. It wouldn’t be opportune for Reinaud to come to Marseilles before I summon him. I will in any case give him time to see his family as he passes and to tell me how I should employ the sum of money I promised him for his family.

Goodbye, affectionate greetings to you and my blessing on the whole community, please pray for our dear sick colleague so *benemerite[[78]](#footnote-78)* of the Congregation which he served so well and with such devotion.

+ Ch. Jos. Eug.. Bishop of Icosia.

To M. Champsaur, goldsmith, for M. Mille, at Gap. Upper Alps[[79]](#footnote-79)

585:VIII in Oblate Writings

Death of Father Pons. His virtues. Submission to God’s will. Suffrages.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Mille

Marseilles.

September 17, 1836.

The Lord has just taken away our excellent Father Alexandre Marie Pons, at 28 years of age, in the 8th year since his call. He died as one predestined, yesterday at 8.00 p.m., assisted by all his brothers, who had nursed him with heroic charity throughout his illness, fearless of its malign and contagious nature. My presence and words were so much of a comfort to our poor sick confrere that I made it my personal duty to console him until the end came. Although for four hours he could no longer speak, he remained conscious and fervently followed every edifying suggestion made. Following our custom his confessor, Father Tempier, frequently repeated the act of absolution which he received with joy. I think he had received an interior light warning him that his end was near, for since the holidays he has devoted himself to every practice of perfection, living out such an exact regularity that the whole community was edified. His conversation was only of God, and he did all things for him.

It is thus that the Lord is pleased to form his elect in our midst, he shapes them, brings them to perfection and when they are ripe for heaven, he takes them from us although we are counting on them to help us in carrying the heavy load he has imposed on us. His will be done. I bless him for the good that he pledges to my children and I pray that he will hearken to the petitions they certainly make in heaven both for me and for us all and for the Congregation that has given birth to them, fed them and formed them for his glory.

You know the rights the Rule accords our dear departed, pay your debt from the day you receive my letter, which I bring to an end at this point so as not to miss the post. Receive my blessing.

+ Ch. Jos. Eug.. Bishop of Icosia.

To Father Courtes, at Aix[[80]](#footnote-80)

586:VIII in Oblate Writings

Father Courtès should stop being confessor to the Madames of the Sacred Heart.

Courtès

[Marseilles.]

September 18, 1836.

The Jesuit Fathers could more suitably offer this service. Everyone knows that they are naturally the directors of these Ladies. Whoever may be their ordinary confessors, they are always the true and only directors, basically they are over the boarding establishments as well as the communities. It does not suit us to be their stand-ins. Your office makes it even more unsuitable in your case than might be the case for someone else. It’s fine for Figuières to play this role, ridiculous in the case of a man who is a canon. You are too highly placed to go on being the simple chaplain of a boarding establishment of the Madames of the Sacred Heart, in other words a bestower of absolution, for it is in the interest of these Ladies to reduce the chaplain to just that.

To Father Casimir Aubert, Master of Novices at Aix[[81]](#footnote-81)

587:VIII in Oblate Writings

Grief at Father Pons’ death. Too few vocations.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Aubert C

Marseilles,

September 20, 1836.

My dear Son, I was telling Father Courtès that your letter and his did me a lot of good, because in times of deep grief one needs the heart of someone one loves to lean on. God’s decrees are inscrutable. They bring to nought each and every scheme that a most pure zeal for the glory of his holy name could devise. God opens up a vast field before us, he summons us to harvest it because it is ripe, we hasten to obey his voice. He proceeds to take the scythefrom our hands, blessed be his holy name.

22nd

My visits to administer the sacrament of confirmation in various districts left me free to receive your letter of today. I am replying by return as time is short for Brother Pont.[[82]](#footnote-82) I am asking Father Courtès for his advice, as soon as I have it I shall call the council together to consider his admission. What you tell me about him is more than enough to convince me. He has got my vote. I don’t see any big problem in your deferring his oblation, especially if he needs further studies in philosophy. There would certainly be some advantage in his spending a few days with his brothers before the school year begins, but if you have stronger reasons for a postponement. I readily agree. As to the idea of coming here for the oblation, we will have time to think about it, perhaps from now on God will take pity on us. He is now sending us a priest.[[83]](#footnote-83) If it goes well for him he could bring in another one. The pastor of Chantes will surely be arriving soon. Probably the Bishop of Digne won’t refuse Fabre de Jouque the permission which I requested from him. Perhaps others are on the way. The one you mention, M. Allard, should get on with it and make up his mind without so much fuss. And what is stopping that cowardly fellow Calandre from dropping his resistance to God’s call? You know that there were some spare men at Gap, as M. Arnaud told me that the Bishop of Digne had helped them by taking one of their new ordinands. If Calandre were to make his departure without fuss, a replacement would be found for him, but no, you’ll see, he will become an assistant at Gap! A fine vocation.[[84]](#footnote-84)

To Father Courtès, at Aix[[85]](#footnote-85)

588:VIII in Oblate Writings

Father Courtès will preach the annual retreat at the major seminary of Marseilles.

Courtès

[Marseilles.]

September 22, 1836.

Now that you are rid of your convent. I want to use you for works more commensurate with our vocation. I know you are tireless when it is a question of preaching God’s Word and that you acquit yourself worthily in that great ministry. That is why I am asking you to preach the retreat at the start of the year at our seminary, some priests will be joining in too, for example the ones who staffed the parishes during the pastoral retreat. I had named our good Father Pons for this mission. No one is better qualified than yourself to take his place. I am giving you advance warning so that you can get your material ready. You know that this retreat takes place at Marseilles in the week leading up to All Saints’. It is an opportunity for the clergy to find out the services you are capable of rendering to the Church and that there isn’t any need to have recourse to outside talent to remind it of its duties.

To Father Courtès, at Aix[[86]](#footnote-86)

589:VIII in Oblate Writings

Submission to Providence. Being short-handed, each priest must do more.

Courtès

[Marseilles.]

September 25, 1836.

Pachiaudi’s departure reduces Calvaire to complete silence and even so the prayers must be conducted every evening and four sermons preached every Sunday, namely, to the men in the morning, the women before Vespers, after Vespers the sermon from the church pulpit, in the evening the Italian sermon.[[87]](#footnote-87)

As for myself, I humbly confess I am helpless in the face of the decrees of Providence. I had everything arranged, counting on the two men who have been snatched away from me; I must perforce fall back on our remaining resources to meet various sacred commitments, conformable moreover as they are to our vocation. I don’t conceal from myself the fact that many things are suffering in consequence; but I repeat, I’m not the master of events. Our duty to all is to do our best, each in his own sphere, with the means that remain to us. These trials should not be beyond our courage. Small wonder when a boat moves along with the wind behind it! The sailors can relax. But when the wind is contrary and the seas are rough, that is the moment for them to jump to work so as to reach land safely. So let’s show patience and be of good courage; don’t let’s allow ourselves to be beaten. How many times have we had the calm after the storm! So let there be no weakness but put a good face on things; men may pass, let us wait on God’s good time.

To Father Casimir Aubert, master of novices, at Aix[[88]](#footnote-88)

590:VIII in Oblate Writings

Father Aubert reproached for complaining about being moved to Aix. One should obey with a good heart especially when circumstances are difficult. The novitiate will be moved to Marseilles.

Aubert C

[Marseilles.]

September 26, 1836.

My dear Son, without beating about the bush I am going to tell you quite frankly that I strongly deplore the repugnance you showed for the place I assigned you and the people living there. I was far from edified to see that you felt no shame at confiding this to others. Also, your remarks about it not being opportune to have the novitiate at Aix impressed me very little. In this light your comments seemed to me to originate in stubborn prejudice, like the arguments good lawyers have no trouble in finding to defend even bad cases.

The sudden death of Father Pons, whose absence will always be felt, and the blameworthy departure of Father Pachiaudi, place me in the necessity of calling you to the major seminary at Marseilles. In consequence the novitiate will follow you to Marseilles. It is not through mere flightiness that I am changing the project in this way; but who can cope with completely unforeseeable events? Who can offer resistance to the very power of God? The ways of Providence are a deep mystery to me. Our part is to submit ourselves to whatever they bring that is hard or painful, without ever being disconcerted, even when they pitch us into situations of great difficulty. When we cannot proceed under full sail, then we must resort to tacking and make progress with sails trimmed, even down to the smallest sail that is raised on the mast-head and called the topgallant sail. All I ask in these painful and perplexing circumstances is that the pilot be in charge during the storm, that the crew obey in silence and that I be spared complaints that are out of place in a crisis when each one must carry out his task as best as he may in the post assigned to him.

To M. Courtès, superior of the Mission. Place des Carmelites, top of the Cours, at Aix.[[89]](#footnote-89)

591:VIII in Oblate Writings

Father Courtès can come and follow the sermons of the pastoral retreat. Obediences. Inquiries to be made of Madame de Régusse.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Courtès

Marseilles.

October 1, 1836.

Dear Son, I’m losing no time in giving you an answer so that you will be in time to carry out your plan if you still want to come and attend the conferences at our retreat. The man giving it, M. Bouet. has the reputation of being capable in this ministry. I can only pass on what I hear, but both in Dauphiné and here His Lordship the Bishop of Angouleme praisedhim highly to me. I don’t think it will be a pretentious affair. I won’t conceal the fact that your plan delighted me as I would be very keen for you to give some retreats of this sort yourself one day. So it’s fine that you want to find out how they are done, but I do really hope that eventually you’ll handle your material in your own way and as you know how. So come, don’t tie yourself down to the retreat exercises, just be satisfied with attending the conferences and meditations. Come from Calvaire with Honorat and Lagier who will be sleeping in that house because of lack of space at the seminary which is really packed, they have even made the classrooms into dormitories.

I am very open to granting the permission you are nudging André to ask me for. If you were afraid that a certain timidity or embarrassment would deter him from taking this step, you could write to him that you have asked me for it in his name and that I readily granted it. I leave it to your judgment.

Badly stuck as we are, I haven’t been able to make other arrangements than those I’ve indicated to you. It came to the point of my having to take a decision willy nilly after Tempier, Guibert and I had worn ourselves out for three days trying to find a workable solution. They accepted my plan on the spot as really it was the only option available. You didn’t notice that I am giving Martin the title of first assessor only. Perhaps this won’t go down too well, but it was my belief that it was better that he should replace the local superior only temporarily, this will give me a chance to see how he copes.

I asked you to find out what the customary offering is at Aix for retreat directors, don’t forget this please. Also I would like you to ask Madame Régusse if Madame de Castellane has any apartments to rent at Nice. We have here M. and Madame de Bourbon-Bussé, they are thinking of going in a few days time to that part of the world. I would be very happy if they could find a place to stay with people I know, for they are very pious. In any case ask Madame Régusse to give me a letter of introduction for her daughter for me to pass on to that splendid family.

Goodbye, my office is always crowded, I am writing this letter one piece at a time, which doesn’t stop me finishing up with my affectionate greetings.

+ Ch. Jos. Eug.. Bishop of Icosia.

The Couteron business is no concern of mother’s. It’s up to us to pay the expenses if there are any, but I would have liked Tavernier to tell us what we owe. I don’t think the costs of our adversary’s lawyer can be charged to us, it can only be a question of court costs.

To Father Guigues, at N.-D. de l’Osier[[90]](#footnote-90)

592:VIII in Oblate Writings

He must learn to regulate his commitments according to the number of missionaries available.

Guigues

[Marseilles.]

October 2, 1836.

I’m only too aware of the picture you paint for me of your situation but I can only repeat that God knows it better than we do and we must abide by his will.

Make your plans in function of the means available, don’t extend yourself beyond your capacity and don’t lose your peace of mind; That’s where wisdom lies.

To M. Champsaur, goldsmith, place St.-Etienne, for M. Mille, at Gap. Upper Alps[[91]](#footnote-91)

593:VIII in Oblate Writings

Preachers at forthcoming missions.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Mille

Marseilles.

October 9, 1836.

My dear Son, we are emerging from the pastoral retreat which was followed in a remarkably edifying fashion. My first preoccupation is to write and remind you that it will be necessary this year to suspend the missions in the Upper Alps because, as we can’t give them everywhere, we must give the preference for various reasons known to myself to other regions.

Amongst other calls it is essential to go to Carpentras in Advent, and to Fontvieille, in the Aix Diocese, in January.

Now here is my plan for the personnel. I am giving you advance notice so that if you have any observations to make I shall get them in time.

I would like to send Father Courtès to Carpentras, he is quite keen to try out his prowess, you would go with him and since I have to consider the possibility that he will not be able to do everything his courage inspires him to attempt, I will add Father Gignoux to the group, even though the parish priest is only asking for two missionaries. Hermitte and Marcellin[[92]](#footnote-92) would look after Laus during this mission. That of Fontvieille would be done by Honorat and yourself, but since Honorat cannot depend on his stomach, a third man would be necessary, namely Hermitte.

During that mission Gignoux would go back to look after Laus and Marcellin would go to l’Osier to lend a hand to the Fathers there who are no longer counting on getting any help this year.

Father Courtès would have been very anxious for us not to refuse the Castellanne mission that the pastor has just asked for. He would be up to volunteering, but how can we fit it in? The good pastor is asking for five or six missionaries.

Another thing, haven’t you promised something to Mane? In any case, you can understand that it is quite indispensable for you to go to Carpentras and Fontveielle. Should you have made a commitment for Mane, these two missions must even so receive preference.

Give me an immediate answer to all this and tell me too what Father Martin was trying to tell me when he spoke of the effervescent and exalted state enjoyed by all the members of your community.

I have willingly admitted the Trappist you recommended.[[93]](#footnote-93) He is delighted with everything we do in our houses and never tires of saying that our fervour far exceeds that at the Chartreuse where all that glitters is not gold. I had a glimpse of that myself.

Goodbye. I’m really busy and I can’t see a thing now, affectionate greetings and my blessing to all.

+ Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop of Icosia.

To Father Telmon, at the Major Seminary, Ajaccio[[94]](#footnote-94)

594:VIII in Oblate Writings

Father Telmon reproached for criticizing the Congregation and lack of respect towards Father Tempier.

Telmon

[Marseilles.]

October 14, 1836.

What was your intention, my dear fellow, in addressing to me this collection of impertinences that you are writing to Father Tempier? It seems that you intended to crown the work by associating me with the insult; that must be the way of it since, for fear lest I might misunderstand your intention, you end your letter by advising Father Tempier to show it to me. Well, would to God I were the only one to be insulted both in your thoughts and in your letter! My paternal heart would understand how to pardon you and it would suffice for me to pray over you the Lord so that an awesome word of the Holy Spirit, guaranteed by the Church to its pontiffs, might never be pronounced over you; but since perforce you require me to be the witness of the abuses you permit yourself against one who is an elder in the priesthood, against your superior in the hierarchical order of our Congregation, to whom you owe on other scores too both respect and gratitude, it is my duty to administer to you a rebuke and reprimand you in terms that are, alas, only too well-merited.

I leave on one side the lack of respect and the vulgarity that is no more seemly coming from the pen of a priest than from anyone else. But how can I excuse the evident malice and desire to wound that flows from each expression of this unhappy letter. Independently of the fact that there is something uncalled for in the role you arrogate to yourself, how could you fail to feel the absurdity of the role that you are playing at your age, and endowed with so few virtues, constitute yourself as teacher, distributing blame, from this elevated position where your pride has placed you above everyone and everything, according to your own way of seeing things? Come now, who made you your brother’s judge, especially of those to whom you owe deference on account of your respective positions in the Congregation, by what right do you make yourself the interpreter of our Rules? Doesn’t it contain, like every Society, a power to act at its discretion and a superior to whom alone it pertains to judge what actions, permissions or dispensations are opportune for the Church’s service and the greatest good of the Congregation? Imagine the disorder that would ensue were everyone to thus assume to themselves - following their caprices, moods, prejudices and. to speak plainly, their self-interest - the right to raise up their voices in criticism and abuse as they wish! Show me one well-ordered Society where such a reversal of roles would be tolerated. Show me the superior crazy enough to put up with it. In consequence, my dear son, I cannot find words to express adequately my condemnation of the way you have acted in this matter. Again, if a genuine, even if misplaced, zeal were discernible at back of this errant behaviour, it would be possible to pardon the intention, but no, there is no sign of that here. You want to inflict wounds, you are like a ravening beast, you pass rash judgments on your brothers, it seems as if you delight in blackening your mother’s name. None of our enemies ever showed us such scant respect. Great heavens, your black mood blinds you both to the virtues of the former and to the excellent qualities of the latter. You are completely in the wrong. Even Pachiaudi whom you praise without any sympathy for the Congregation that is losing in him a man well-able to fulfil the ministries that the Church has confided to her. - even Pachiaudi as he leaves is paying her a written homage that she deserves in the eyes of all balanced, religious-minded people with the grace to appreciate her nature and worth. He is careful too not to say that he is going in search of something better, he knows quite well that there’s nothing better than what Jesus Christ and the Apostles did, nothing better than what we have ourselves vowed on oath to do. But he lays stress on certain motives influenced by his personal weaknesses as a reason for withdrawing into solitude. I hope with all my heart that he finds there peace and happiness; there exist there, as everywhere where there are people, plenty of troubles and very big ones too, at all events we shall perhaps be making an exchange, for the Trappist General has just sent me one of his protégées for me to receive amongst us. He recommends him as an excellent religious, both virtuous and talented, but a person whom the solitude could drive mad, as has happened on a number of occasions; as for the rest, calm down, no-one wants to brand Pachiaudi as an apostate, which many of the others do deserve; we think he is mistaken, that his sick imagination, whose weakness he has himself many times acknowledged, has taken advantage of him and carried him outside his vocation, but we do sympathize with this psychological weakness and don’t withhold from him our esteem and love, and you are at fault in this regard as in several of the other assertions you make for the gratuitous and unjust calumny of your brothers and fathers. It is true that by way of making amends you are deeply troubled by all these elite souls who have betrayed their vows and oaths, whether in deserting the Society, or in forcing us to expel them for their bad conduct. To listen to you one would think we lavish every sort of praise on them when they are with us.... I cannot find words to express just how deplorable this whole letter of yours is and how blameworthy you are for having written it.

Ah! if one of your superiors set about telling you off for your very real faults in this way, what wouldn’t you have to say about the matter! What a screech you would let out! I have some experience, and he would have the right and duty to reprove you, even so he would be at fault for the method used, if indeed you could find a single one who would so far forget himself as to speak so harshly to you! As there cannot be a double standard, we would earn God’s condemnation, but let us rather be hard on ourselves, implacable in tracking down and correcting our own defects, let us bear with the imperfection of others and take special care to avoid judging them when they have been placed in our care. Let us devote ourselves to prayer and humility, and may the charity of Jesus Christ inspire us, without it we run the risk of becoming mere Pharisees, well able to see the speck of dust in our brothers’ eyes but unable to see the beam which afflicts our own.

Goodbye, dear son, your unhappy letter has affected me so much that I can’t speak to you of anything else. And I would have found a lot of consolation in conversing with you about the wonders the Lord is working in that land he has entrusted to our zeal, but affliction must needs prevail; my cup of troubles is never full, praise the Lord. I give you my blessing.

To the Bishop of Ajaccio[[95]](#footnote-95)

90:XIII in Oblate Writings

Father Mouchel will go the Major Seminary of Ajaccio; Fathers Albini and Telmon will preach missions.

Casanelli d’Istria

[Marseilles],

October 23, 1836.

Very dear Lord and friend,

You are always positively the first in the devotedness of father to sons when it is a matter of seconding you in the works that you have entrusted to their Congregation. I do not stop with stripping Switzerland of a man who knew how to win the esteem and affection not only of the holy Bishop of Lausanne[[96]](#footnote-96) who loves our men so much, but of all his clergy and people of the various cantons of Switzerland that he continually evangelized. Because I understand the importance of this great and truly marvelous seminary which is visibly growing under your protective mantle as though in your bosom, I am adding to it a charming man filled with good sense and piety, a most loveable character, of perfect deportment, good for everything, who will be able not only to help the Superior in his demanding administration, but because of the special study he had made of Hebrew and his knowledge of Scripture, will be able not only to teach Holy Scripture but if need be to teach Hebrew to those pupils who have a taste for that study.[[97]](#footnote-97)

I would also like to reinforce the Mission house at Vico immediately, but that will not be till a little later. In the meanwhile, Father Albini and his companion, Father Telmon, will preach the good news of salvation to the people who are reaching out for them. What marvellous events! I thank God for them every day and sincerely rejoice with you in the happiness that you experience from them.

May you rejoice in them for a long time and see grow to a hundredfold the divine seed that you, as a good Shepherd, have been sowing in that land which has lain waste too long.

I embrace you with all my heart’s affection.

+ Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop of Icosia.

To Father Courtès, at Aix[[98]](#footnote-98)

595:VIII in Oblate Writings

Loss of three members in the course of the year. Father Courtès’ difficulties with the Fathers of his community. Father Pélissier’s laziness, the virtues of Father Magnan and André. Memorandum for the Archbishop of Aix.

Courtès

[Marseilles.]

November 11, 1836.

So who could have expected disappointments like this year’s? Perhaps it would go unnoticed in a big Society, like the Jesuits for example; in 1529 they lost or dismissed a good third of the men they had admitted, but it was 200 out of 600. There still remained enough to tackle all that had to be done. While in a little family like our own the loss of three men[[99]](#footnote-99) in a few months constitutes an irreparable breach.

The zero character of the one you speak about is beyond compare. Father Pélissier’s preaching for thirteen minutes on a subject like purgatory, it leaves one speechless. Again, his laziness in other services is outrageous, as he can see with his own eyes the urgency of the need. I have decided therefore to have him go back up to Laus. He hasn’t come up to my expectations; he hasn’t taken advantage of his stay in the city to make something out of himself; he will take up again the direction of the devout at Gap in the shrine where his emptiness will be less evident. The worse problem is finding a replacement for him. It’s not easy. You have already got rid of a number of men in such a way as to close the door on recalling them to you. Even so one of their number could have been useful at Aix as at Marseilles where he is doing a lot of work, both in the prisons and at Calvaire. Couldn’t it be that you are too easily discouraged and don’t apply yourself sufficiently to the formation of the men who need it or whose talent is small? Certainly had I been in your place I would have been more exigent in the case of Pélissier whose laziness and lack of zeal I would never have let pass by. It pains me to hear what you tell me about Father Magnan after the praises he’d earned from you. You tell me he has lost the ability that he was beginning to acquire for the work of the locality. The conclusion must be that this work is not practical, for of all the Society’s members Magnan is the one who submits himself with the best grace and has even reached the point of doing willingly for a religious motive and out of duty things that everyone else finds repugnant and he baulks only at the impossible. What I’m saying is that if this fine man is not up to carrying out the ministries that the house of Aix has taken on, you’ll have to give up completely any further involvement in them. This judgment that you are passing on him is one of the things that grieves me the most for I was rejoicing up until then to have found someone who was able to play his part through virtue and who, when all is said and done, had enough ability to carry through with credit whatever his wholly sincere and very real zeal inspired him to undertake.

It was high time to call a halt to the deceptive show of a superficial and vacuous performance. Who could rest easy in his conscience faced with a performance like Father André’s? For my part, I have always believed him incapable of doing anything well. I kept silent until your talk of miracles. We mustn’t let ourselves be blinded any longer but come to the realization that the conscientious though less brilliant work of a really good man is not only worth more than all this din, but is the only really good and solid kind.

I have made up my mind, after several days worry over not being able to find any convincing solution for Aix to take a man from Laus who will leave a big gap behind him, seeing his suitability for the Alpine missions; but he is the only man who will do: it goes without saying that you must take pains to understand him, direct him, bring out the best in him while never rushing him.[[100]](#footnote-100) He likes the regular life, is zealous, but it must be faced that, like all missionaries, he prefers the ministry of missions to any other. So it would be good if he could be given some retreats similar to missions, in the jails, or for incurables. He is capable of moving people, for he has eloquence when he is really inspired. He has a superb voice and commands attention, but his manner isn’t always proper. In short, we have here a good man with deficiencies in some areas of style.

I’m not going to bother answering your suggestion about Father Dassy. It’s quite out of the question, don’t even dream of it.

I was pleased with your memorandum. I do find you a little over-modest however. For the rest, it is a shame that after so many services rendered and so constant a devotion, we are obliged to excuse ourselves in this fashion.

To Archbishop Dupont of Avignon[[101]](#footnote-101)

91:XIII in Oblate Writings

The Oblates will be established at Notre -Dame de Lumières.

Dupont Archbishop

Marseilles,

December 7, 1836.

Today, I met Father Gilles of the house of Aiguebelle.[[102]](#footnote-102) This religious proposed that I buy the convent and the church of Notre-Dame de Lumières as a future establishment for missionaries. I told him I would gladly agree to his plans if they were in accord with the views of Your Lordship. The project pleased me all the more because our missionaries have been specially called to work in the Southern diocese whose language they know and, placed by the Holy See under the protection of the Blessed Virgin, they have a special predilection to establish themselves in shrines that are dedicated to her. Thus, by disposition of divine Providence, they already serve several such shrines where they have happily succeeded in making hitherto neglected devotion flourish again. Good Father Gilles assured me that you would be pleased to see one of our communities established at Notre-Dame de Lumières, and that you had even commissioned him to speak to me about it. For my part, I foresee such great good in this work undertaken under the goodwill and secure protection of a Prelate such as Your Lordship, that I most ardently hope that the difficulties, which stand in the way because of the outlandish attitude of the person who has seized that property, can be straightened out.[[103]](#footnote-103) As soon as you consider it opportune, I shall send Father Tempier, the superior of the Major Seminary of Marseilles and a member of our Congregation, to Avignon, to receive your directives; for our rule is to accept the initiatives of the diocesan bishop, who is always the first father of our missionaries in his diocese. I would have been pleased and see it as a duty to come myself to you in this instance, happy to have an occasion to be united more closely with a prelate for whom I profess the greatest esteem; I am suffering so much from coughing blood, however, that I could not even write this letter by my own hand.

Please accept, etc. ...

+ Ch. Jos. Eug., Bishop of Icosia.

To Father Pélissier, at Aix[[104]](#footnote-104)

596:VIII in Oblate Writings

Father Pélissier reproached for threatening to leave the Congregation if not given another work.

Pélissier

[Marseilles.]

December 16, 1836.

To me your letter is a thorough scandal and I see it as a disregard of all the proprieties and every duty. Your threats of apostasy don’t frighten me at all. The crucifix you claim to consult ought to have told you that you are blinded by your pride. What did you commit yourself to when you vowed obedience? Was it just to do what you want? Your bishop would have had the power to despatch you to the most insignificant parish to spend your life with shepherds, who, deaf to your voice, would have left you to languish for weeks on end in enervating inactivity, but I do not have the right to oblige you to do a work of charity for poor sick folk, or even to instruct little children in the Gospel, and there will be no sin your trying to force me to give you a quite different ministry! This request accompanied by a threat of apostasy is inspired by a spirit of revolt. Don’t deceive yourself, the number of those guilty like yourself doesn’t make your case any better nor your perjury less sacrilegious. After such a misdemeanour if I do not expel you it is out of pity for your soul, and because of the plight that infidelity has in store for those you wish to imitate, I prefer the Judases to hang themselves by their own hand,

If you accept what I am saying. do penance for your crime, for you have sinned very grievously, and I am sorry for your confessor’s blindness, if he has passed a different judgment from mine, I will give you my blessing only when I have received news of your amendment.

To M. Guigue[s], superior at Notre-Dame de l’Osier, near Vinay. Isère[[105]](#footnote-105)

597:VIII in Oblate Writings

Founder’s illness. New foundation at N. - D. de Lumières. He should send Father Gignoux as soon as possible to N. - D. du Laus. Carpentras mission.

L.J.C. and M.I.

Guigues

Marseilles.

December 16, 1836.

My dear Friend, two days have passed without my coughing blood.[[106]](#footnote-106) But my chest is still not right and it is still a painful effort for me to speak a few words in a hoarse and husky voice, which goes to show that the irritation is still there. But I am better since I do have the strength to write to you in Father Tempier’s absence who hasn’t come back yet from his little trip in the Avignon diocese, where I sent him to acquire Notre-Dame de Lumières.[[107]](#footnote-107) His Grace the Archbishop[[108]](#footnote-108) set too much store on having a house of our Congregation for me to refuse to take the opportunity offered by Providence, but I have warned him that it is rather a pledge of our good will than an effective service, our small numbers not permitting us for the moment to take on new commitments.

I am certainly put out that Father Gignoux hasn’t made himself available; I needed him badly at N.-D. du Laus which has been left too long in the care of two men like Fathers H[ermitte] and M[arcellin Grognard]. Not that I don’t appreciate the good that can come from Father G[ignoux] by exercising our ministry with confreres who will have no intention of sparing him with their useful observations, but we are unfortunately in a position of having to do that which is the most urgent. Since Providence has permitted him to begin this new mission, I will wait in patience, but I feel bound to say that you should never in the future commit yourself like this to pass from one mission to another without giving any rest at all to the missionaries. There must always be an interval of at least eight days to let the workers recover their breath.

Your news of the mission you have just finished consoles me for the fears that the Carpentras missionaries arouse in me. I don’t understand how with such an audience they have yet produced so little fruit. Perhaps they placed too much reliance on the resources of human eloquence. So much the worse for those who do not steep themselves in the spirit of our Rules on this matter. They end up like mere Lenten preachers. But I want to believe that that isn’t how it is and that the sowing of the Word of God will begin to sprout before the end of the exercises. I haven’t been able to give them any encouragement and guidance in this situation as it has been impossible for me to write. Only today I’ve risked taking up the pen to put your mind at ease on the subject of Father Gignoux and that is tiring me out so much that I’m obliged to stop.

Accept my love by way of conclusion and my blessing.

+ Ch. Jos. Eug. Bishop of Icosia.

To M. Courtès, superior, c/o the Reverend Cure de lObservance at Carpentras. Vaucluse[[109]](#footnote-109)

598:VIII in Oblate Writings

Illness. Advice and encouragement.

Courtès

Marseilles,

December 18, 1836.

My dear Father Courtès, four days have gone by without my coughing blood, and today I really feel much better although my voice hasn’t come back completely. I’m taking advantage of this rest to pass on my news to you directly and to congratulate you on God’s sustaining hand in your unaccustomed travails. I read with interest what you sent me about your mission. I would have liked to be able to give you encouragement, it is already a lot that you attracted such a large audience. The same people who lack the courage to correspond with the grace you are offering them will derive profit from it later on when this sowing starts to sprout. I would really have liked you to give the retreat you intended to give to the men. On the mission especially one must act with faith and trust. After setting out the duties, make an appeal to the heart, don’t be afraid of letting go. It always worked for me, I don’t recall a single occasion of resistance when I used to exercise your holy ministry.

I won’t prolong my letter so as not to abuse my permission and draw down reproaches on myself. I am very anxious to celebrate Holy Mass on Christmas night, It’s five weeks now that I’ve been deprived of this happiness. I have had to be content with hearing it in my room, It is the only advantage I take of my position in this long trial.

Please pass on my very best wishes to your two companions, they really ought to have written me in the course of the mission, I forgive them this oversight and send them my love, and you too, and bestow my blessing on you all.

+ Ch. Jos. Eug.. Bishop of Icosia.

My affectionate greetings to your charming pastor. If I go one day to visit N. -D. de Lumières, it will be hard to resist the courtesy of going to renew[[110]](#footnote-110) my acquaintance with him.

1. Orig.: Rome. arch. de la Post.. L. M-Aubert Casimir. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Founder is alluding to the final vows of Brothers Lucien-Antoine Lagier and Antoine Calmettes on December 27. 1835 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ms.:bénit (blesses) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. There were at that time in the Congregation two Lagier brothers and two Aubert brothers, but no Lagier or Aubert took the habit at that time. The Founder doubtless intends to refer to the first of the novices who was due to make his oblation. They were at that time small in number: Honoré Pélissier who entered the novitiate on January 24, 1835 but did not make his oblation and Charles Bellon. who entered on August 14, 1835, and made his oblation on August 15, 1836. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ms.:a small error of spelling here [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Reinaud or Reynaud Jean-André-Valentin [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Perhaps he means Father Joseph Rossi or Marcellin Grognard (letter dated April 21,1836, to Father Aubert). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The page has been cut below the signature, where a few lines had been added. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. YENVEUX, VI. 131. Yenveux does not say to whom the letter was addressed. The Lagier and Aubert brothers were the only members of the Congregation so related at that time. The Lagiers had taken their vows on August 15 and December 27, 1835 and were not sick, it follows that it is Pierre Aubert who is referred to. There is no positive written evidence of Brother Pierre having a long illness, but the fact that he ended his novitiate in November 1831 and was not ordained deacon until June 26. 1836, suggests that he was ill. He was definitely at N.-D. du Laus in the summer of 1835 and again shortly before the date of this letter since he had already received a reply from the Founder through his brother, the master of novices at N.-D. du Laus. However, the end of the first paragraph of the letter suggests that Brother Pierre might have gone back to Aix or even to Marseilles, since otherwise the Founder could have spoken with him instead of writing [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. He had no doubt asked to spend some time with his family. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. REY, I.676-677; RAMBERT, I. 722-724. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Rambert writes: January 20. The letter’s opening indicates it was begun on the 20th, but the text copied by Rey and Rambert was written on the 23rd. the date given by Rey [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Bishop E. de Mazenod left for Paris on January 11 with Father Guibert. They stayed at the seminary of the Foreign Missions. On their arrival, Archbishop de Quélen of Paris and Bishop de Forbin-Janson of Nancy came to congratulate the Bishop of Icosia and were surprised to learn that he had not been named coadjutor at Marseilles: in this case he should not take the oath. He sought advice and, to surmount the difficulty, decided to take the oath not as Bishop of Icosia but as a private person, thus giving the lie to his accusers and affording a guarantee to the Government (RAMBERT, 1. 722). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. M. Persil, the Minister of Worship [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. REY, I. 679-680; RAMBERT, I. 725; YENVEUX, VII. 10 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Orig.: Rome. arch. de la Post.. L. M-Courtès. Father Yenveux (V. 84) cites an extract of a letter of the Founder to Father Courtès dated January 20. This is hardly likely in view of what is written in this letter. What the Founder is supposed to have written, on the theme of conformity to God’s will, goes as follows: “*Gratias tibi ago quod, ut validius me traheres ad te, aliquot mihi corporales aegritudines, angustias animi et adversitates immisisti; ac miserabili vicissitudine consolationum et desolationum erudiens, ne in prosperis extollar. aut in adversis deficiam*.” [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. YENVEUX, VII. 10’; REY, I.680-681. Rey (I. 680) copies some lines of a letter dated February 10 to Father Tempier where the Founder recounts his visit to Issy on the 9th. Father Rey put the first part of this text into the third person: “If he had had the time he would have loved to go all around Paris on the same omnibus, all for the price of 6 sous. Father Guibert and I had a good laugh about it - like myself he was very amused by this mode of transport. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. This priest’s name has not been ascertained. M. Jonjon was on bad terms with the diocesan authorities who disapproved of the two priests who were his collaborators in the boarding-school he was running. The Bishop of Icosia was trying to restore peace. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. REY, I. 681-682. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. A visit preceded by a letter in which Father Jonjon seems to have made up his mind to come to terms with the diocesan authorities and in which we can discern the conviction, fairly common at the time amongst the clergy of Marseilles, of the preponderant role of the Bishop of Icosia in diocesan affairs: “I know from my own experience, my Lord, that every failure in the administrative processes cannot be laid at your door. But you certainly have it in your power to take whatever initiative for good that you see fit and there is no one who can deny this.. .” (REY, I. 681). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. REY, I. 683. 684; YENVEUX, ill. 23; V. 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. The new archbishop of Aix. Archbishop J. Bernet, was also at Paris to take the oath [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. The visit of the Founder and Father Guibert to Paris was prolonged as Brogue’s government fell at the beginning of February. A new government was formed on February 22, under M. Thiers. M. Sauzet replaced M. Persil at the Ministry of Justice and Worship. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. The Oblates from Billens were preaching at Ferney. Voltaire’s country. The priest indicated by the letter “M” is Father Martin [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. REY, I. 684-685. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Cardinal de Cheverus. recently named. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Bishop François de Bovet. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Bishop Sisto Riario, papal ablegate. brought the letters apostolic for Cardinal de Cheverus: cf.: Archives S. Vaticanes. Le carte Macchi. doss. 29. n. 83 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. YENVEUX, II. 58; VII. 173 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. The person referred to here is not necessarily Father Magnan, since we are dealing with two separate and incomplete paragraphs of the letter dated the 14th. Father Magnan was however still a young priest, ordained November 1, 1834 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. YENVEUX, VII. 7’, 185. 219: VIII. 38. 84. 131. 194. 223. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. The Oblate scholastics were staying at the major seminary of Marseilles, where Father Tempier was superior. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Honoré Pélissier entered the novitiate on January 23, 1835. Brother Auguste Roustan was expelled from the Congregation on October 21, 1835. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. He did not enter the novitiate. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Bishop F.-A. Arbaud. Bishop of Gap, died March 27, 1836 [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Marcellin Grognard [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. YENVEUX, VIII. 131 [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. YENVEUX, A. 13; II. 138 [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. YENVEUX, II. 33; III. 147; REY, I. 692. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Ms. Yenveux: Yenveux has written “could have” over the words “ought to have”. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Orig.: Rome. arch. de la Post.. L. M-Guigues [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. It seems that the Founder first wrote “them” (referring to the book and the dedication) but changed it as in the text [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Orig.: Rome. arch. de la Post.. L. M-Mille. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. The priests from N.- D. du Laus had preached a mission at Manosque. They had been offered the direction of an institution of secondary education. (REY, I. 692). [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. A colloquial expression used in the French. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Orig.:Rome. arch. de La Postulation. L. M-Aubert Cas. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Ms.: “you will find”. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. YENVEUX, IV. 48: VII. 200. 244. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. YENVEUX, VII. 6’. 198. 200-201. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. YENVEUX, III. 64: VII. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Orig.: Rome. arch. de La Post.. L. M-Courtès. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Father André (Daniel-Valentin) or rather Father Antoine-André Pélissier [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. YENVEUX, III. 12: VII. 100. 102: VIII. 265. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Orig.: Rome. arch. de La Post.. L. M-Courtès [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Ms.: Emeri. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Bishop Arbaud [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Father Guibert [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Orig.: Rome. arch. de la Post.. L. M-Cas. Aubert. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. A part of the page has been torn off and lost. The bracketed words are a conjectural reconstruction. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Orig.: Rome. arch. de La Post.. L. M-Guigues [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Cyriaque Chauvet, born at Carpentras in 1804, entered the novitiate on July 15, 1836 [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. YENVEUX, VI. 49. 80: VII. 161. 162; VIII. 72; REY, I. 696 [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. These two paragraphs (VII. 161 dated August 23rd and 162 dated August 25th) are copied by Yenveux himself and summarize it seems in a different way the Founder’s text written on the 23rd or the 25th or perhaps, as often is the case, begun on the 23rd and finished on the 25th. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. YENVEUX, (VI. 80) and REY (I. 696) reproduce a text dated August 25 that is practically identical with this one (YENVEUX, VI. 80: 23 August): “People can criticize that I do not do all this sight-seeing and tourism that you have introduced and that were unknown among us. We certainly put in as much work as you are capable of. We had no other relaxation than a change of work, passing from the hard work of the missions to the constant preoccupations of zealous ministry. I therefore quite explicitly forbid for the future any journey by any member whosoever without my express permission, a permission that you will ask for in vain for a trip, pilgrimage or outing that is not required for the purposes of our ministry, because I would refuse it.” [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. This paragraph (YENVEUX, VIII. 72) bears the date July 23,. when the Founder was still at Laus. The text belongs rather to the letter dated August 23-25 in which precisely the Superior General makes some reflections on his visit, brought to a conclusion at Laus on July 24 and at l’Osier on August 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. YENVEUX, VI. 133 [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Orig.:Rome. arch. de la Post.. L. M-Guigues. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. The novitiate was transferred first to Aix, then in October to Calvaire, Marseilles, which had been partly empty since the scholastics went to live in the major seminary. After Father Pons death, Father Aubert had to take his place teaching in the major seminary, while still remaining master of novices. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. No doubt Jacques Cuynat, priest of the diocese of Grenoble, born 1797, who entered the novitiate on October 31, 1836. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Probably Brother J.-A.- Hippolythe Blanc who had begun his novitiate on October 31, 1835 [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Orig.: Rome, Postulation Archives. FB 1-9 [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Bishop B.J. Flaget of Bardstown, USA, a Sulpician [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. YENVEUX, II. 149: IV. 219: IX. 173 [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. YENVEUX, V. 90: IX. 184: REY, I. 693: RAMBERT, I. 728 [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Father Pachiaudi entered the monastery at La Grande Chartreuse where he later held important positions [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Father A.-M. Pons, professor at the major seminary of Marseilles, died on September 16, at the age of 28 [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Orig.: Rome. arch. de La Post.. L. M-Courtès [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. The Founder expresses himself here with an Italianism [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Orig.: Rome. arch. de la Post.. L. M-Mille. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. YENVEUX, V. 225 [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Orig.: Rome. arch. de la Post.. L. M-Aubert Cas. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Jérome Pont. who made his oblation on November 1, 1836. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Probably an allusion to Father C-Antoine Chauvet, born at Carpentras in 1804, who entered the novitiate on July 15. The pastor of Chantes was Jacques Cuynat. who entered the novitiate on October 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. The second page of this letter is lost. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. YENVEUX, I. 56 [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. YENVEUX, II. 149: VII. 175; REY, I.693, RAMBERT, I. 730. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. This extract is copied undated in Yenveux (II. 149). Father Pachiaudi left the Congregation on August 25. We link this extract and that of September 25 since they treat of Pachiaudi’s departure and the death of Father Pons. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. YENVEUX, III. 74; V. 84; REY, I. 694. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Orig.: Rome. arch. de La Post.. L. M-Courtès. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. YENVEUX, VII. 188 [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Orig.: Rome. arch. de la Post.. L. M-Mille. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Marcellin Grognard [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. There were three novitiate entrants at Marseilles on October 31, 1836: Father Jacques Cuynat. Auguste Bouveyron and Pierre Rouvière. a native of Cazillac (Montpelier diocese), the only one who persevered. It has not been possible to ascertain if one of them had been a Carthusian [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. YENVEUX, III. 104-107 [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Draft copy, Rome, Postulation Archives. Letter of Mazenod to Casanelli dIstria [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Bishop T. Yenni of Lausanne [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Father Frédéric Mouchel preached in Switzerland, but worked at Marseilles and Aix before being sent so Corsica (only in the autumn of 1837), cf. Mazenod diary, October 9 and 19, 1837. Father Reinaud left with Father Guibert in 1836, cf. Mazenod to Courtès, September 16, 1836 [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. YENVEUX, II. 58: VII. 14I. I53: VIII. 312: REY, I. 698 [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Fathers J.-A. Sicard (left in October 1836). Pons (deceased), and Pachiaudi (entered the Carthusians) [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. The reference is probably to Father Hermitte. The community at Laus consisted of Fathers Mille, Gignoux, Hermitte and Grognard [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Letter copied in the Founder’s Diary, January 26, 1837. Aut.: Rome, Postulation Archives, JM, pp. 12 & 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Gilles Pastoret [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. The tenant who would renounce any claim if given 4800 francs compensation, *cf.* JM,iv.,p. 13 [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. YENVEUX, 273. Father Yenveux writes: “to Father P.” Probably it refers to Father Pélissier who was at Aix. Father Courtès was not satisfied with him and the Founder wrote in his diary on January 11, 1837 that Father Pélissier’s vocation was unsteady and that he showed a disposition towards apostasy [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Orig.: Rome. arch. de la Postulation. L. M-Guigues [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. The Founder was ill from November 12 to the end of December; fever, coughing blood, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. The church and convent of N.- D. de Lumières (diocese of Avignon) belonged to the Trappists. Father Gilles proposed their purchase to Bishop de Mazenod [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Archbishop C. Dupont of Avignon [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Orig.: Rome, arch. de la Post.. L. M-Courtès. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Ms.: has an unusual spelling. Father Guérin was pastor of Carpentras. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)