

**Legal Recognition of  
The Society of Mary**  
March 1825 to January 1826

*In March of 1825, Father Chaminade decided to confide a second mission in the north to Father Caillet. He was to preside at the retreat of the schoolteachers at Saint-Remy and to negotiate, in Paris, the legal recognition of the Society of Mary. Father Chaminade announced this to Brother Clouzet.*

**326. To Bro. Dominique Clouzet, Saint-Remy**

March 29, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

[With inserts from S. 326]

My dear Son,

I am announcing Father Caillet to you. He will tell you himself, as the result of this letter, everything that especially concerns his travel to Saint-Remy.

When there is a question of some business matter, my dear Son, you must make an effort to place it clearly before me so that I may be definitely and fully informed. Regarding the promise you made to the banker in Vesoul for 6,000 francs, to be paid on the first of June, you told me nothing about the form of this promise. Is it in the form of a promissory note that the banker keeps on file? Or is it the type that may be put into circulation? What have you given as your address? Is the note to be paid in Vesoul, or are you to wait until it is presented to you for payment? I have asked Father Caillet several questions about the matter, but he was not able to give me any answers.

In your last letter, you say that M. Courselle had asked you for 3,000 francs. Had you given him any hope that they would be given him before June 1? If this was the case, why did you not tell me about it? I might have been able to give them to him, and you yourself would have done well to divide the capital sum of 6,000 francs into two or three notes—for example, one of 2,000 francs payable in 10 months, the other in a year, and the third in 14 months. The interest would have been the same. In your next letter, give me all the necessary information about this promissory note of 6,000 francs.

You had mentioned that at Saint-Remy you had found a suitable candidate who could be sent to Colmar. If my memory serves me, you said he was the son of a carpenter and that he knew both languages, French and German. However, you sent a cattle herder who looks sickly and who knows nothing! Can you not see that you are compromising me and your establishment?

I would be of the opinion not only that Brother Laugeay was to remain in Saint-Remy, but that he was there during the retreats to help Brother Gaussens with his conferences, in which case he would need to be carefully replaced. I will write about this to the pastor of Colmar.

I cannot send you any money, my dear Son, especially since you have done nothing to withdraw your promise for 6,000 francs and still less to diminish it. If I had been able at the time, I would not have let you borrow 3,000 francs to supply the necessary materials for the retreats. The little I will give Father Caillet for his journey will be like a sacrifice. How will the matter stand if we have to send a fifth Brother to Colmar, or when will I find myself able to send someone for the secondary school? Calculate! Economize! And all this in a spirit of faith. Have confidence in Providence! I hope that nothing essential will be lacking to you.

I have understood, my dear Son, that the pond I heard so highly praised is after all just a hole, and that consequently the poplars that border it are not much more than a very negligible ornament to the park. Arrange then with Father Caillet for a prudent way of selling them. Several times they were said to be worth, as they stood there, 6,000 francs. It seems to me it would be

better to sell them all at once, rather than one after the other. You will have to repay me my 6,000 francs, which I will try to use in withdrawing your promise. If you only knew what accounts I have to settle!

I would have been glad to talk to you about your interior, just as I would have wished to acknowledge the tokens of filial love that my dear Children in Saint-Remy gave me for my feastday as a sort of precious bouquet, but my eyes are heavy with sleep and tomorrow morning Father Caillet will hardly have time to write anything where I am leaving off, before the departure of the mail. Anyhow, he will be charged with being the interpreter of my sentiments toward you all and to each one in particular.

May the peace of the Lord be always with you, my dear Son!

At ten o'clock in the evening before the collation, March 29, 1825.

P.S. This letter was about to leave when our last, which was undated, arrived. I read it and also that of Father Rothéa, which was enclosed. I can find nothing to change or to add. I will try to write, or to have someone write, in a few days.

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*Here is a new obedience given to Father Caillet; it refers directly only to the visit to Saint-Remy.*

### **327. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Bordeaux**

April 7, 1825, Bordeaux

Original, Agmar

Obedience for my dear and respectable Son, Father Caillet, priest, professed religious of the Institute of Mary.

You know, my dear and respectable Son, how much I sigh over the small number of laborers I have to gather in the abundant harvest that has resulted from the blessings the Lord has deigned to shower upon the works of the Institute of Mary, and particularly upon the establishment of Saint-Remy.

Among the works which are being carried on by this large and numerous community, I have two particularly at heart: the annual retreats to be given to the schoolteachers of the departments of the Doubs and the Haute-Saône, and also to the normal school of both departments.

For the retreats to be given at this time, the priests who live in the establishment of Saint-Remy can take only a small part in them because the other works already take up all their time and energy. You know that all the other priests of the Institute are greatly occupied in the various posts where they happen to be placed, and so you are the only one I can send there. You will be able to get help from someone among the Missionaries of Beaupre<sup>1</sup> and perhaps also from one among the priests who seemed to desire to enter the Institute.

I would have desired to go myself. Just the two of us alone could have done this difficult but consoling work. If His Excellency the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs welcomes you and favorably receives the petitions you will present to him in my name, according to the procuration I am giving you, dated as this obedience is, it will be possible for me to go to make the visit of this establishment and that of Colmar, as well as several others being offered to us.

You will then leave for this new mission as soon as possible, my dear and respectable Son. I am not explaining to you its importance, for you have already realized it several times. The 200 schoolteachers to whom you are going to preach will carry into 200 parishes the spirit of

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<sup>1</sup> The Missionaries of the diocese of Besançon.

religion which they will have drawn from their retreat, and in their turn they will transmit it to their pupils. I can never think of the happy results of this enterprise without being profoundly moved and without blessing the Lord for having inspired it to you. This is one of the simplest means, one of the most direct and powerful, of cooperating in the renewal of France, so perverted both in its principles and in its morals.

You will not stay in Paris more than seven or eight days, unless His Excellency the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs and His Excellency the Archbishop of Besançon judge otherwise.

Listen with profound respect to the counsels that the venerable prelate of Besançon will deign to give you in regard to the mission you are going to accomplish in his vast diocese. In whatever place it will please Providence to call you to work, never lose sight of the great principle, *Posuit Episcopos regere Ecclesiam Dei*.<sup>2</sup> Whatever may be the direct object of your mission, my dear and respectable Son, whether to give the two retreats consecutively, each of two weeks, to the schoolteachers, I nevertheless understand that your presence in Saint-Remy will be useful to this establishment, whether in the temporal or spiritual order. You will prudently exercise the functions of Visitor. May all the members of the community, old and new, understand that in the manner of conducting yourself and in the choice I have made of you, they have in Bordeaux a good Father who bears them all, as dear Children, in the bosom of his tenderness.

May the Lord, my dear Son, deign to shower upon you and your labors his most abundant benedictions!

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*Nevertheless, the same day Father Chaminade rewrote his petition to the king and his letter to the Minister of Public Instruction and Ecclesiastical Affairs, Bishop Frayssinous, with whom he was closely enough connected for speaking as in this letter.*

### **328. Petition to King Charles X**

April 7, 1825, Bordeaux

Copy, Agmar

Your Royal Highness,

Guillaume-Joseph Chaminade, priest, Honorary Canon of the Metropolitan Church of Bordeaux, having formed a religious Society for primary instruction, humbly requests of Your Majesty to grant him the final authorization that is indispensable for the carrying out of his plan.

Before placing his request at the feet of Your Majesty, the suppliant has wanted to make a trial of his methods, and so today he is able to present something quite different from projects of doubtful value.

Since the year 1820, when his schools were established in the capitol city of the department of Lot-et-Garonne, they have developed rapidly. One was formed in Villeneuve in the same department, in Colmar in the Upper Rhine, and several cities in France have asked for some with most advantageous offers.

Everywhere, the schools have produced very great good. In and about them, childhood, instructed in its duties, brought back to better morals, subjected to a more exact discipline by the best methods of persuasion, has become the consolation of families and edified all ages, while the happiest changes in the morality of the people have won for the schools the protection of the magistrates and the esteem of all classes of society. The General Councils of the departments have voted funds, and the rectors of the academies have approved the methods of teaching. The

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<sup>2</sup> God has appointed the bishops to govern the Church of God.

suppliant joins to his requests the documents which will confirm all the facts he announces to Your Majesty.

At the present moment, more than 1,000 children of the working classes are receiving an education sufficient for their needs, and what is of far greater importance, one that is eminently Christian.

Our methods differ little from those of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Like the brothers, we are opposed to imprudent innovations and blind routine; we have put to profit the notions acquired by modern educators, while at the same time not setting aside the best principles, consecrated by experience.

However, what distinguishes our schools are the accessory institutions by which we try to have them accompanied everywhere in order to sustain in the children who leave the school the good habits and religious sentiments they have received during the years of their training. These institutions consist of schools for the arts and trades and of pious Sodalities.

Today there is no longer anything lacking to your very humble servant, Your Majesty, but your royal sanction. He is bold enough to ask for it, and he places before your eyes the Statutes of the Society which he has founded.

The good of your subjects and of religion is the sole motive which animates him and his most powerful recommendation. No others are needed for a wise and religious monarch who lives only for the welfare and happiness of his people.

I am with the most profound respect Your Majesty's most humble and most obedient servant and faithful subject. . . .

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**329. To Bishop Frayssinous of Hermopolis,  
Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs**

April 7, 1825, Bordeaux  
Rough Copy Autograph, Agmar

Your Excellency,

Heaven continues to shower its blessings upon the Institute of Mary, with which it has deigned to inspire me, in order to cooperate in the renewal of our beautiful homeland, which seemed lost by the triumphs of modern philosophy<sup>1</sup>. Various establishments have been formed during these past years as experiments under the protection of the Church and civil authorities, but especially for two years the civil authorities have been asking me to have it authorized by the Government. I have just learned that His Excellency the Minister of the Interior had refused to sanction an article in the budget of the Council General of the department of the Haute-Saône, which granted 3,000 francs this year to the establishment of Saint-Remy, whether for the retreat of the schoolteachers or for the normal school of this department. The only motive for this refusal is that the establishment in Saint-Remy is not authorized by the Government.

When I saw you raised to the dignity of Minister, I rejoiced several times at the thought of my delays in asking for your royal sanctions. However, today, full of confidence, I made up my mind to petition for the approbation of the Institute of Mary, under your powerful protection.

Not being able to travel to Paris, to this effect I gave my procuration to Father Caillet, one of the priests of this society. He is to stay in Paris only seven or eight days, unless Your Excellency determines otherwise. I provided him with all the documents that seemed to me necessary. I ask you to receive him with your usual kindness. I ask your kind indulgence for the lack of experience he has in the handling of temporal affairs.

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<sup>1</sup>This was the name given to the philosophism of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

I am receiving at this time the copy of a letter of the rector of the Academy of Besançon to the superior of the establishment in Saint-Remy. I am passing it on to Father Caillet to be communicated to Your Excellency. I have reason to believe you will not regret the time you will put into reading it for yourself.

You will also be spoken to about a secondary school, greatly desired in that vast and beautiful establishment of Saint-Remy. Possibly you have already been spoken to about the matter of the heads of an establishment in Bordeaux known under the name of the boarding school of Brother Auguste. I am taking the liberty of recommending these two institutions to your kind benevolence.

Your Excellency, help us in doing good. Our efforts will prove to you that we have found the means for doing it, but we have need of a high protection.

I am with the most profound respect Your Excellency's most humble and most obedient servant.

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**N.A. 329-2. To - - -**

April 7, 1825, Bordeaux

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I, the undersigned, Guillaume-Joseph Chaminade, Honorary Canon of the metropolitan church of Bordeaux, grant authority to Fr. Georges Caillet, priest, who will shortly be going to Paris to solicit in my name authorization for the establishment of a religious and charitable society. Its purpose is to form teachers for schools of primary instruction, to establish free schools for that level, and to join to them the instruction in the more usual arts and trades, or others which may usefully be added.

To this effect [I authorize him] to present, if there is a need, the statutes, regulations, and methodology; to agree to all fitting changes and modifications; to provide all petitions, memos, and requests; to make all statements and submissions; to sign all acts; to make substitutions in whole or in part; and generally to do whatever I might myself do if I were there in person, even if the authorization is not expressed or contained in the above.

Given at Bordeaux under my private seal, April 7, 1825, as delegation

G.-Joseph Chaminade  
Honorary Canon

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**S. 329b. To M. Perès**

April 10, 1825, Bordeaux

Original, Agmar

I am asking you, Monsieur, to be my surrogate in answering the summons on the part of M. de Gombaud. Should the matter have a sequel, I ask him to confer with M. Louis Brochon, whom I will consult when the time is ripe.

I have the honor of again expressing. . . .

G.-Joseph Chaminade

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<sup>1</sup> Original in the National Archives, Paris, F17.12460.

*Father Chaminade also gave Father Caillet a letter of recommendation for the Duke de Montmorency, a former sodalist.*

**330. To Duke de Montmorency, Paris**

April 11, 1825, Bordeaux  
Rough Copy Autograph, Agmar

Honorable Duke,

To save precious moments of time, all consecrated to the service of God and of the king, I express so rarely the sentiments of respectful affection for you with which you have inspired me.

Today, while addressing Father Caillet to you and asking of you to aid him with your influence and protection according to the need he may have of both, I am not changing the usual object of your solicitude. Father Caillet has the mission of discussing works with His Excellency the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs which seriously concern religion and the Government. You will soon see that this is not a man of the court that I am sending, but a good religious, filled with the apostolic zeal which must animate all the children of Mary.

Honorable Duke, you are the only one to whom I am recommending him. I have inspired him with all the confidence I have in you. If you judge necessary the intervention of some good sodalists, let it be some to whom I am particularly known, like the Count Alexis de Noailles, etc., or of all others who put zeal into the renewal of our beautiful but unhappy homeland. Please deign to make use of them according to the great prudence which characterizes you.

It may be, Honorable Duke, that I have too long delayed in presenting my humble request to the king, and I know that several prefects of departments are greatly astonished at my long delay, even if they do not blame me. I have as a principle not to risk anything when there is a question of attempts of this kind. Possibly I might have delayed still longer if I did not feel assured of the good dispositions of the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs.

Furthermore, Father Caillet will be in Paris only in passing, so to speak. In the diocese of Besançon he is going to fulfill a mission of great importance, and one which is closely linked with the authorization of the Institute of Mary which he is to request from the Government. When he is able to have a few moments of interview with you, for your edification he will inform you of the blessings which heaven is bestowing on the labors of this budding society. You will not be surprised at this, knowing that we never go into combat except under the banner of the august Mother of God.

I am, Honorable Duke, yours with a very respectful and a very real attachment, etc.

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*This letter refers to one of the many works of charity which were added during the life of Father Chaminade to the general solicitude of his Marian Sodalities and to his religious Institutes. The difficulties mentioned at the end of the letter and to which a later letter will return (letter 334) refer to the acquisition of the property on Rue de Mirail (see letters 289 and 290).*

**331. To Baron de Razac, Paris**

April 11, 1825, Bordeaux  
Rough Copy Autograph, Agmar

Honorable Baron,

M. Frédéric is one of those paupers on whom may particularly fall the charities which His Majesty grants through the agency of His Serene Highness the Grand Almoner. I am taking the

liberty of passing to you his petition in accordance with the permission you have given me to do so, whether for him or for others.

M. Frederic is little known in Bordeaux. He is a stranger who has lost everything in his business. It has already been almost two years since he was referred to me. He was a Protestant; I instructed him, and he made his renunciation. He edifies by his conduct and his patience. His infirmities, which grow worse with each day, prevent his being placed anywhere.

On April 6, the Chevalier de Gombaudo had Brother Auguste and me called before the Judge of the Peace of the 5<sup>th</sup> department. The hearing is taking place at the time when I have the honor of writing to you. To avoid the scandal of this trial, I did much more than I was supposed to do. It is vexing that you have given so little attention to this matter, however unimportant it may seem to be. You must know the character of your cousin.

All this unpleasantness does not prevent me from recommending Father Caillet to you, for I am sending him to Paris to discuss important matters which he will deem it an honor to make known to you, if you judge it appropriate.

I am with respectful consideration, Honorable Baron, etc.

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*Here is a family letter.*

### **332. To M. François de Lala, Sarlat**

April 19, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Arch. of the de Lala Family

My dear Nephew,

I am finally relieving myself of the painful memory that you were kind enough to write two letters to me, but to which I have not given an answer. Because of the overload of occupations that constantly harass me, I lose sight of certain letters, but that has not been the case with yours for already a few days ago, if even that many, I wanted to answer you. You will not believe this, but it is nonetheless true. I just could not do it without neglecting other really pressing affairs, and how many others are still waiting to be settled!

I received with thankfulness, my dear nephew, the stuffed turkey you had the goodness to send me. It reached me on the Monday before Lent, around noon. In all the houses of the Institute of Mary, the carnival is celebrated on the Thursday before Ash Wednesday, after which no more meat appears on the tables until Easter.<sup>1</sup>

I am somewhat acquainted, my dear nephew, with the Receiver General of the department of the Gironde, and I would have been glad to risk asking him a place for you as tax gatherer if you were in this department. But you belong to the department of the Dordogne, where I know no one of any influence. The establishments I am beginning in several places with some success somehow lead several people to believe that I myself enjoy great influence with the Government, or with those people as frequent it. They are mistaken, for as they say, I undertake nothing by myself. All I do is follow the directions of Providence when these become clear to me. Nevertheless, I would be very happy if I were able to oblige you.

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<sup>1</sup>This "Fat Thursday" is the Thursday before Quinquagesima Sunday. The Friday and Saturday following it were days of abstinence, according to the discipline of the time. Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday of Quinquagesima week, usually the days of the Forty Hours, were days of abstinence in the Institute and abstinence was the rule throughout Lent, including the Sundays, according to the discipline of the time. The turkey stuffed with truffles was a famous specialty of the Périgord region. It was doubtless sent to the pupils of the boarding school of Brother Auguste or given to the poor.

My dear nephew, please receive my apologies along with the token of my tender and sincere friendship. Express the same to Sophie; I embrace Firmin very affectionately. My respects to Mlle Mondesse.

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*This is a petition, with the intention of obtaining from the city of Bordeaux an increase of the property of the boarding school Sainte-Marie for its new location on Rue du Mirail.*

### **333. To Viscount de Hamel, Mayor of Bordeaux**

April 20, 1825, Bordeaux

Copy, Agmar

[With insert from S. 333]

Honorable Mayor,

I would like to make a bid for certain land belonging to the city, located behind the Hotel Razac. This building is destined to become a boarding school directed by Bro. Auguste Perrière, established a long time ago on Rue des Menus. The merit of this house of education, the importance it may have for the city, as well as the favorable conditions I am proposing have encouraged me, Honorable Mayor, to present a request to you, which may well turn to the interest of the general public.

The establishment of Bro. Auguste Perrière is today led by the confidence of the families to a measure of consideration, which makes of it one of the most distinguished houses of its kind. The zeal and ability of its teachers and the good spirit and the good morals of its pupils leave nothing to be desired, whether in regard to the teaching and studies or to the still more interesting subject of religion, discipline and the monarchical principles in which every Frenchman should be reared.

These are just so many titles, Honorable Mayor, which call upon this house your paternal benevolence and which inspire hearty wishes for its further development in all lovers of what is good and orderly.

I will add that this establishment is recommended even more particularly to the city of Bordeaux by a branch of teaching cultivated there and which is generally excluded from houses where complete studies are made. It is an education preparatory to business practice. It is given to children whose parents destine them to this profession. This is a considerable advantage which gives to the establishment of Brother Auguste a high degree of utility and renders it even more worthy of interest on the part of an administration as wise as it is well-intentioned.

The addition which I am requesting, a part of the property of the City Hall for the garden of the Hotel de Razac, would be of great advantage to this latter establishment and would give it all the expansion needed to contribute powerfully to public usefulness.

From another point of view, as far as I may be permitted to presume this, the city would not be depriving itself of any advantage in ceding this land to our establishment.

A considerable area would still be available for use by the prisons and the city hall. The lot between the prisons and the rear of the houses on Rue des Augustins measures about 120 meters by 60 meters. I am asking for ½ of that, the part behind the Razac garden—that is, 60 meters in every direction.

The plan which the city may entertain of extending Rue Candale through these grounds up to the law courts building would in no way prevent it from giving a favorable response to my request. On the contrary, these grounds will be sold sooner or later, and I promise to keep only provisional possession of the future street site with the obligation to yield to any requisition as soon as a road is opened to public use.



Finally, persuaded that an administration which seeks only the public good can only favor those who seek it, I am disposed, Honorable Mayor, to receive the conditions which you and your council will be pleased to offer us. If it were desired that I propose them myself, it would seem to me advantageous to the establishment, and even for the city, that the founding of a certain number of grants, for at least a part of the interest, would be a good idea. In any case, I would ask that the administration kindly divide the payments I would need to make over a certain number of years, with interest payable at the legal rate.

I am bold enough to believe, Honorable Mayor, that the favorable reception you will give my request will be one of the many good deeds for which the city already congratulates itself under your wise administration, and in this fond hope, I am with profound respect, Honorable Mayor, your very humble and very obedient servant. . . .

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*Father Caillet has arrived in Paris. The first letter Father Chaminade writes to him again discusses the Razac matter. His true and energetic way of proceeding in such instances will be noted. The lawsuit, to which reference has already been made (letter no. 331) had for its motive a claim on the part of M. de Gombaudo, a cousin of M. de Razac and his tenant in the mansion on Rue du Mirail at the time of the sale, relating to certain movables in the hotel to which he claimed to have rights.*

### **334. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

April 24, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

[With inserts from S.334]

My dear Son,

I have received your first two letters from Paris. The second came on April 23, your feastday, on which I prayed for you with a good heart. You begin it with the story of your interview with M. de Razac.

M. de Razac finds the lawsuit which M. de Gombaudo is bringing against me scandalous, and he is correct. I would reproach myself with the scandal if I had not done everything I could to avoid it. Thanks be to God, I have not forgotten what our Divine Master has said, "And to the one who strikes you on the one cheek, offer also the other; and to the one who takes away your cloak, do not forbid him to take your coat also." When I saw that M. de Razac avoided answering me directly regarding what he intended to do about the claims of his cousin M. de Gombaudo, which I believed just and which M. de Razac could see for himself because there was an insurance contract between them, following what M. de Gombaudo had told me, I then said I had him offered two things: the first, that we were convincing an honest and educated man; the second, that he could cause and that I would abide by everything he would decide: to be taken from the hotel everything he believed belonged to him, and that he would not meet with any opposition. As my only answer, the next day I received a summons to appear before the Justice of the Peace. He asks for 550 francs, for a sale, so he said, made to Brother Auguste. Because this sale was not made, that there was not even any idea of buying, there was no conciliation before the Justice of the Peace. There was a new call before a lower court. Things are this far at the present time. I believe that, as M. de Razac says, it would be better to talk the matter over together rather than use an intermediary, whom I would not refuse. I am refusing nothing. I have once tried this means. He did not tell me what he wanted to do. He let me do the talking. When we separated, there at least seemed to be a spirit of peace, etc. . . .

You tell me, my dear Son, that M. de Razac is deeply discontented with me, and with everything I have done in the entire matter. That may be. I have always acted according to my

firm conviction that the only thing to do was to give him notice of the claims of his cousin, and that he would make them right. He has left me in this persuasion. Is M. de Razac discontented with all those who have recourse to his uprightness and justice? And then, could he not answer Brother Auguste or me by explaining himself, for or against, in a clear and precise manner?

You add, my dear Son, that he told you that no one understood temporal matters as poorly as the priests—that is to say, me. If he believes me so deficient in intelligence regarding temporal matters, how is it that his charity did not lead him to give me advice in my dealings with him? I had believed, and I am still led to believe even contrary to my advisor in temporal matters, that there is an essential difference to be noted in the manner of dealing with Christian men and with other people. With the former, we always presuppose loyalty and honesty, the spirit of the thing, rather than the letter which kills. I will not carry this answer further, for there would be matter for a lengthy report, but it would serve no purpose. If you have occasion to pass in the quarter of M. de Razac you might read this letter to him; or if you are too busy for that, you might send him a copy. Furthermore, M. de Gombaud has arranged nothing with me. He told me he had accounts with his cousin, giving me a verbal summary of them, but I have forgotten most of it by now. M. de Razac would have done me a favor by giving me a note about them.

As I write, my dear Son, I am handed the exit permit of young George and two letters, one for you and one for him. In my next letter to you I will send you a summary of their contents. Tomorrow I will go to the novitiate of the Daughters of Mary, and I will see what can be done for the daughter of M. Luard, the shoemaker. I do not believe we should accept him at Saint-Remy, even if he seems to be willing to convert; at least his conversion would have to stand the test.

And now, my dear Son, I have no other observation to make to you about the important matters you need to discuss. Place all your confidence in the Lord and always preserve your peace of soul. Here you are being prayed for, and you on your part pray for me that I may always be preserved in the path of faith which I always try to point out to others.

I need not tell you how greatly I am pressed for time. In spite of that, I think I just have to find the time to take a physic this week. That is the intention of the doctor.

I embrace you tenderly, my dear Son, and I give you my fatherly blessing from the effusion of my heart.

P. S. I am not telling you how deeply I appreciate your tokens of kind remembrances. . . .

P.S. 2. M. Billecoc has written to M. Changeur that he should keep the promise he made to you of the offer of his services.

P.S. 3. I have just become aware that I have not dealt with a very serious matter for which an irate M. de Razac blames Brother Auguste. One of Brother Auguste's letters, which M. de Razac has shown to you, seems to have convinced you. You write the following. "M. de Razac declared formally to Brother Auguste that a contract existed between him and his cousin, and he is shocked at the claim that it was not generally known. He showed you a letter from Brother Auguste which states the reservations made by M. de Gombaud and which proves that M. de Razac had spoken of them with him from the very beginning."

M. de Razac could have been spared all his indignation if he had only reflected for a few minutes (1) that it was only later, after the least had been signed, that he informed Brother Auguste of his contract with M. de Gombaud. (2) Brother Auguste's letter which he showed you is dated October 2; that strikingly frank letter does really mention the terms of the lease which M. de Razac spoke of at the time I have just referred to. (3) I, and not Brother Auguste, claim to have become aware of the least about three months after the contract because M. de Gombaud only told me about it then, and Brother Auguste had had no opportunity to discuss it with me. I am limiting myself to a simple presentation of the facts without giving these men the benefit of any reflection or reasoning. If there is a court action, I want my lawyer to do the same, even if we were to lose.

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*Thorny negotiations begin for the legal recognition of the Society of Mary. Since the end of 1822 Father Chaminade had felt the need of moving away from the reserve in which the Society of Mary had remained during its first years and of taking the first steps to assure it a legal existence.*

*Bro. David Monier had prepared a plan of Statutes in 49 articles with this end in view, which had received the approbation of the Archbishop of Bordeaux (letter no. 263.) Father Caillet was now charged with presenting this plan to the authorities. It is reproduced here in document form. David Monier's heavy style will be easily recognized, although Father Chaminade seems to have retouched the original text in several passages.*

### **Statutes of the Society of Mary First Edition, April 7, 1825**

#### Name and Object of the Association

1. The Society will be known under the name of Society of Mary.
2. It has for its object the free education of all those who otherwise would not be able to obtain any.
3. The children in the schools are the principal objects of its labors.
4. It also forms Sodalties for people of all ages.

#### Concerning the Association

5. Admission on the part of each Society member includes everything he actually possesses at the time of his entry, the products to be derived from his work, and the use of his acquired immovable property or that to be acquired. Everything will be according to the rules of the universal Society and of all the goods foreseen by the Civil Code.

6. Each one of the associates keeps the pure ownership of all his immovables, to dispose of them as he will be able to determine. He keeps an absolute right to all the personal property that may come to him by way of succession, gift, or legacy.

7. However, all use of the personal property coming to him after his entry and by that fact relinquished to the General Administration of the Society will not give the right to a claim for the time of the surrender, but only after three months following the death of the person bequeathing the property or the act of dismissal from the Society.

8. It is clearly understood that in the above-mentioned cases of decease or dismissal, only those portions of the personal property will be redeemable which the subject himself has not disposed of.

9. To be admitted into the said Society, a person must be sound in body and mind and in the enjoyment of a stainless reputation, interested in education or at least capable of helping with the interior maintenance of the house, accustomed to mildness, humility, obedience, and to a great confidence in God.

10. Before being admitted, a person is subject to a period of probation lasting two years.

11. The first engagement taken after the first probation is for only three years and will not confer the title of full Society member.

12. The subject who is sent away or who withdraws before making any definite engagement must indemnify the house for his board, lodging, and the education he has received during his stay. Unless some other arrangement has been made, the person leaving gives up the use of his goods or the portion of them that is not indispensable to him.

13. There is cause for dismissal in the refusal of obedience to the orders of superiors and to established discipline, for any immoral acts and dissipated conduct, whether outside or in the

interior of the house, for the neglect of service in the post assigned, and for all acts of provocation or disorder, whether in the definite action or in purpose.

14. The subject who may want to withdraw on his own accord will not be permitted to do so, except after a six months' advance notice given to the superior and in the one case where his departure would in no way hamper the general work of the school year.

15. The subject who would be sent away, no more than the one who would retire on his own accord in the cases herewith foreseen, has no right to any indemnity for anything: services rendered, work, property brought, or for the use of his immovable property, all this having become part of the work undertaken, but he will recover his belongings for the future at the end of the scholastic year or after the six months mentioned above.

#### Register for the States of Persons

16. In the motherhouse a double register will be kept, both one and the other duly marked or signed, as may be ordered by the king. In this register will be inscribed, in order and without blanks, the entries on probation, the engagements for three years, and the perpetual engagements, just as the acts of leaving in the case such should happen. These acts will include the names, Christian names, place of birth, and age of the parties who will sign them with the superior, if they know how to sign, or they will be required to sign in the presence of two witnesses, who will also sign. One of the duplicates of the said register will be placed each year in a place available to the public, or as may be otherwise ordered.

#### Government

17. The government of the Society will be installed in a motherhouse. It will be composed of an Ecclesiastical Superior approved by the Ordinary, of three Assistants named Head of Zeal, Head of Instruction, and Head of Work, and of a fourth Assistant who will be the director of the schools adjoining the primary schools.

18. The entries on probation, the engagements for three years, the perpetual engagements and the withdrawals, whether dismissals or voluntary, will be registered only in the motherhouse unless because of the distances or the number of the institutions, the Superior General, with the advice of his council, authorizes other houses of probation, in which case the houses authorized must provide themselves with a register similar to the one prescribed in Article 16.

19. All the acts of the Society, inside or outside, are made in the name of the Superior. Those of the acts in which there is a question of sales, acquisition of properties, the exclusion of people already admitted and other similar matters, will be done in the name of the Superior upon the advice of his council, with the effect that decisions are arrived at regarding the acts mentioned above and accounted for in the register. When the council opposes a motion, definite action is postponed.

20. In the motherhouse and in those which would be authorized by virtue of Article 18, will be established a school of theory and of the exact application of the manner of teaching, as well as of the manner of maintaining discipline in the public schools. No one will be permitted to teach in the public schools who has not completed his course of theory.

21. Moreover, the motherhouse may have a college of priests and of young men destined for the priesthood, but all will take notice of the school of theory and exact application, independently of their ecclesiastical studies, in order later on to be prepared to assume direction of different houses where their ministry may be required.

22. In the same school of theory and exact application, all the subjects will take notice of the manner in which the Sodalities are to be conducted.

23. If the number of priests should become greater than the number of establishments to be served, the Society would destine them to the municipal colleges which might want their services.

24. The association is, moreover, governed by its rules of interior discipline.

## Elections

25. The Superior General and the Assistants are elected in the motherhouse by all the Society members present or who will be able to come there. Those who would be prevented from being present will be able to have themselves represented.

26. For the first time, M. - - - and the four Assistants designated by him are named for life or until they voluntarily resign.

27. The superiors of the houses established by affiliation, and the head and professors of the different schools, are always named or appointed by the Superior.

28. The elections and nominations are to be inscribed in the register for the status of persons (Article 16).

## The Sodalities

29. The Sodalities are established in order to sustain the good effects in the moral order obtained in the schools.

30. The Sodalities will be public. They will hold their meetings on feastdays and on Sundays at the hours not reserved for church services.

31. Only subjects of the moral order will be treated, the civil and religious virtues. The very thought of politics is to be banished.

32. Members making up the Sodality in each place will choose a head or lay prefect and two assistants who will maintain good order, and will oversee either the setting or the agenda for the meetings.

33. The sodality heads will hold office only temporarily.

34. The Ecclesiastical Director will be present at the meetings, he will contribute to make them interesting, and if circumstances require it, he will bring back the speeches and conversations to the matter in hand.

## Concerning the Schools

35. The schools will be of three degrees, according to the meaning of Article 11 of the royal ordinance of February 29, 1816. The lowest degree will be established only in places having a very small population.

36. Schools of the arts and crafts will be joined to all the schools where the teaching will be of a higher level.

37. The Society will establish the schools as much as possible at its own expense, and keep them free.

38. It will lend its service to foundations that the mayors, the commune councils or all other administrators or benefactors may want to make, providing them with teachers or training some for them, to begin the schools and to keep them in full activity.

39. Until the second degree of teaching inclusively, the Method is the same as that of the Brothers of Christian Doctrine or of Saint-Yon. It will be submitted for the approbation of His Excellency the Grand Master of the University, conformably to Article 36 of the ordinance already quoted.

## The Schools of Arts and Crafts

40. The combined schools of arts and crafts will be practical. They will be applied more particularly to farm work in general and gardening in particular, to the various types of husbandry and the arts that can be called rural because they refer to work in the fields and to the needs of those who do it.

41. In places where to judge by the nature of their products conditions are more favorable for certain kinds of arts and crafts, the local facilities and indications will be studied without,

however, hesitating to introduce a culture of industry either entirely unknown or at least only slightly developed.

42. As an effect of Article 40, an experimental farm will be established in the place deemed most favorable to be worked by one of the schools.

43. The King, his Minister of the Interior, and the Royal Council of Agriculture will be asked for the favor of sharing the seeds, plants, and works of which the Government makes the distribution in order to encourage agriculture.

#### Spirit of the Institution

44. The principal object of the teachers in the primary school and in the school joined to it will be to render fit for agriculture, industry, or business the children they have received for the schools, taking care not to give them any pretensions and desires in any way above their social level.

45. To this effect, all the pupils will constantly be given as a principle, what has been confirmed by long experience—namely, that it is better to excel in a trade practiced by their parents than painfully to follow a more elevated profession where a person does not have the same means to even begin, let alone to reach perfection.

46. Whatever works are undertaken by the second section of the school of arts and crafts, pupils will be busy with them only alternatively, and at certain hours or on certain days, in order that there may be for them a logical continuation of the instruction that strictly belongs to the primary schools.

47. Pupils who are kept busy with works of industry will not be associated with those who are not yet in the arts and crafts.

48. At the time of the entry of the young men in the arts and crafts, an agreement of special apprenticeship in one of the trades could be made by the head of the school with their parents in the terms and for the ordinary period of time, conformable to usage in the country.

49. In the schools of arts and crafts, all available means will be used to bring the pupils to as high a degree of perfection as possible, with due regard to their dispositions and to the measure of their intelligence. The present Statutes will be presented to the King at the same time as the request for the legal authorization of the Society.

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*In Paris, no doubt these Statutes were found to be too long and too explicit in regard to the works, other than those connected with primary education. In fact, we see Father Chaminade immediately reducing them to 23.*

\* \* \*

### **335. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

April 28, 1825, Bordeaux

[With insert from S. 335]

My dear Son,

I have just reduced the Statutes of the Society of Mary. Of the 49, there will now be only 23, but these seem to me to include all 49. I brought in the normal schools and the annual retreats of the schoolteachers.

Moreover, this work is so important that it makes us feel even more the need we have of priests and of capable subjects, and consequently of houses of formation and preparation, whether for students to the priesthood who while studying may already render great services even to the

teaching, or whether for brothers really capable of teaching in the primary schools, normal schools, and schools joined to the arts and crafts.

My dear Son, the day after your departure I received from Agen a large packet of letters addressed to you. I am sending you only the one in the first envelope; the others are for various people whom you are to meet on your trip or who would like to meet you.

The same house is at the same time a house of probation and preparation, but the houses of the students for the priesthood and those of subjects destined solely for primary teaching or that of the arts and crafts are distinct, because neither the education nor the order of the exercises are the same. Nevertheless, the spirit is the same. The union which must exist among members of the same Society is preserved in them. Just as the students for the priesthood must one day be the First Superiors, the directors of consciences, the Heads of Zeal among the lay members, it is good that they are not trained together. We have examples of all these differences in the three houses of preparation which Providence has had us establish, Saint-Laurent, the Madeleine, and Saint-Remy—Saint-Laurent for the schoolteachers with some workshops; the Madeleine for students to the priesthood, where they have a church, and accustom themselves to the sacred functions (you know this church is already authorized by the Government); and Saint-Remy, more especially for the artisans, although some schoolteachers are also prepared there because of the great distance from Bordeaux.<sup>1</sup>

While writing, or rather while again editing our Statutes, my dear Son, several times I have had the idea of naming the establishments already in existence, that they may be authorized at the same time as the Society of Mary. If His Excellency the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs found this acceptable, all you would have to do would be to insert a number in the Statutes, or even without increasing the number of articles just name the establishments in submitting them for royal approval. If His Excellency does not find any inconvenience, without recopying the Statutes you might add at the end of your request authorization for the schools of Agen, Villeneuve-sur-Lot, and Colmar, for the establishment in Saint-Remy and for those of Saint-Laurent and the Madeleine. I need not tell you that sufficient indications must be added in order to forestall any possibility of misunderstanding.

My dear Son, you do not need to fear that I will be blamed for having formed these establishments before having had the authorization of the Government (1) because these are only trials, necessary before the finished products are presented. The Government would not have deigned to occupy itself with a simple written project. (2) Father Praire, vicar general in Bordeaux, told the Minister of the Interior that I formed Sodality in Bordeaux, and the prefect of the department of Lot-et-Garonne, notified the Minister of the Interior that he was permitting the establishment of schools at Agen, etc. (3) I have never made any type of establishment without having had an understanding with the local competent authorities. . . .

I have not dared, my dear Son, to speak to you of some consequences to be foreseen that will follow the royal sanction—those for example (1) concerning our relationship with the university and the changes of the brothers of the schools; I have been in this employment<sup>2</sup> for four years without ever having experienced any contradiction, and sometimes these changes were urgent, even changes of principals and professors in the Latin schools, such as for example that at Villeneuve-sur-Lot, Saint-Remy, and Bordeaux. A great good could result, both for the teaching in itself as for the subjects, and for the Society of Mary in being able to make these changes without being obliged to give the reasons for them to the university. A government altogether paternal, as that of the Society of Mary should be, must not let family affairs, properly so-called, be known. What I am saying about them is not for the purpose of withdrawing any establishment from the inspection or jurisdiction of the university. I believe a great good can result from this

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<sup>1</sup> The union to the novitiate of the diverse elements of the Society, which had existed from the first, was reestablished in 1865, following the 11<sup>th</sup> adverse criticism of the Constitutions.

<sup>2</sup> Of making the changes himself without the intervention of the university.

subordination, for everything can be arranged. Instead of having the diplomas fall on the heads of the directors, it would be enough to have them fall on the head of the Superior of the Society, who in this way would be the responsible party. The boarding school of Brother Auguste, instead of being named after him, would be called the Sainte-Marie boarding school, etc. (2) What will henceforth need to be done for the brothers, servants of the Institute, for the brother artists, in proportion as they will reach the age of requisition?

My dear Son, I am dividing the two sheets of this letter in order to have a copy made of the first. In the meantime, I will continue speaking to you.

Look into the matter wisely to see if it is appropriate to propose these questions before, during, or after the authorization, or not at all, or some of them, or to wait for another occasion. We must avoid the possibility of blaming ourselves for not having proposed everything at the same time, etc.

Regarding the method of primary education or teaching, it is hardly to be presumed that we should want to read these minute details into which the editor, Brother Laugeay, has entered. These are the first fruits of his experience and that of his colleagues. The success of our schools, nevertheless, results from all these minute precautions. If we nevertheless want to read everything, so much the better. We will then see the interest which the Society puts in the attainment of the grand object of its institutions. You would, then, do well to reread this Method and very honestly to cross out what you might not like. You know that I was proposing to compare the same Method, edited by our brothers of Saint-Remy, also to see what more their experience has taught them and possibly to have the whole work edited again. It may be good to wait for the vacation time to add to it some chapters on the normal schools and the schools joined to those of the arts and crafts. . . .

May the Lord, my dear Son, shower upon you his most abundant benedictions! Prayers are being said for you on all sides. I embrace you tenderly.

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*Here is the text of the second edition of the Statutes in 23 articles, after the sketch written in Father Chaminade's handwriting.*

### **Statutes of the Society of Mary (Second Edition, April 28, 1825)**

1. The Society of Mary is especially devoted to primary education.
2. The principal object of its labors is to spread and preserve in children and youth the principles of the Catholic faith, of evangelical morality, and of a sincere attachment to the monarchy.
3. To be admitted into the said Society, a person must be of sound mind and body, in the enjoyment of a stainless reputation, have interest in education or be capable of rendering service in the interior of the houses or of exercising some art or trade, accustomed to or disposed to mildness, humility, obedience, and a great confidence in God.
4. No engagement is taken in it before a year of probation.
5. Only the definitive engagement will give the privilege of full membership.
6. At the time of the definitive engagement, the act which will have taken place between the receiver and the Society will be according to the spirit and rules of the "universal Society and of all goods" foreseen by the Civil Code, Title 9, chap. 2, sec. 1.
7. The subject who would wish to withdraw of his own accord could do so only after the notification he will have given the Superior General six months in advance, and in the sole case that his withdrawal would not in any way harm the school year.



8. The subject who would withdraw of his own accord could claim nothing for his service, industry, or property brought in or for the use of his movable property, all this being acquired by the work undertaken. However, he will recover his belongings for the future, at the end of the school term or after the six months mentioned above.

9. A register will be kept in the motherhouse in which will be inscribed in order and without blank those entering into probation, the temporary and definitive engagements, just as the withdrawals, should there be any. The said acts will contain the names, Christian names, the place of birth and age of the parties, who will sign with the Superior if they know how to sign, or they will be required to sign in the presence of two witnesses, who will also sign. The register will serve as proof in court, if in some circumstance it should there be asked for.

10. If because of distance or of the number of institutions the Superior General, upon the advice of his council, authorizes other houses of probation, then these authorized houses will have to provide themselves with a register similar to the one mentioned in the above article 9.

11. The government of the society will be composed of an Ecclesiastical Superior approved by the Ordinary, and three Assistants named Head of Zeal, Head of Instruction, and Head of Work.

12. All the acts of the Society, within it or outside, are done in the name of the Superior, Those of the acts in which there would be a question of sales, acquisition of properties, exclusion of people already admitted, and like matters will be done in the name of the Superior, upon the advice of his council, with the result that decisions would be reached in regard to these last-mentioned acts. If the council is opposed, definite action would be postponed.

13. The Association, furthermore, is governed by its rules of interior discipline.

14. The teaching in the schools will be in the three degrees announced in Article 2 of the Royal Ordinance of February 29, 1816. The Method will be submitted to the approbation of His Excellency the Minister of Public Instruction.

15. More promptly to attain the great object of its institution, the Society will respond more particularly to the requests which will be made by Their Lordships the Bishops and Archbishops, by the academies, and by the departments for the establishments of normal schools, near which retreats for the schoolteachers will be given each year according to what has been arranged with the civil and ecclesiastical authorities. These retreats will be of at least two weeks' duration. During the first week, work will be focused mainly on the manner of teaching and of controlling the pupils, and on the manner of instructing them in religion and its practice.

16. In order to be able to provide capable subjects, the Society has houses of training where it forms, according to its Method, the subjects it destines for teaching.

17. Furthermore, it has a house of priests and young men destined for the priesthood, to provide for the spiritual needs of the other establishments.

18. If the number of priests should become greater than that of the establishments requiring their ministry, the Society would grant them to the requests made to it for secondary education, whether in municipal *collèges* or in the particular boarding schools it may have organized.

19. To all the schools where the teaching will be of higher level will be joined practical schools of the arts and crafts.

20. With the same views, Sodalities will be formed as much as possible—that is to say, free and public meetings held where under the paternal direction of a priest-director, subjects of morals and piety will be treated.

21. The Society recognizes as its Founder and present Superior Guillaume-Joseph Chaminade, Honorary Canon of the Metropolitan Church of Bordeaux. He will name his assistants. The Superiors who will succeed him, just as their assistants, will be named by the Society through the plurality of votes.

22. The superiors of the houses established by affiliation and the heads and professors of the different schools will always be named by the Superior.

23. The present Statutes will be placed at the feet of His Majesty, and he will be very humbly requested to have them examined and approved, if necessary, for the good of religion and of his subjects.

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*This second edition of the Statutes was followed almost immediately by a third dated April 30, as announced and explained in the following letter.*

### **336. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

April 30, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

My dear Son,

I have received all your letters up to the present, but you do well always to remember them. I received the one sent to you with the archbishop's mail, only by sending for it to the palace. Through the intermediary of His Excellency the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, you will receive a third edition of the Statutes of the Society of Mary. It is leaving with the same mail as this letter. The second edition left before yesterday, also to the address of His Excellency, as recommended by the postmaster.

The observations of Father de la Chapelle<sup>1</sup> seemed to be just. I immediately acted upon them. Always be the interpreter of my respectful gratitude, as much with His Excellency as with those who have the honor of working with him.

Here is what Bro. Louis Rothéa tells me in the last mail from Colmar. "The Ordinary, the last Inspector of the Academy of Besançon, is actually the rector of the Academy of this province. Father Caillet would possibly do well to go and find him in Strasbourg. . . . Father Mertian, the Superior, wanted to take over the normal school in Strasbourg, but the prefect was against it because the schoolteachers and pupils of the normal school do not like Father Mertian too much." Bro. Benoît Geiger arrived in Colmar feeling pretty well . . .

I am receiving no news from Brother Clouzet, after the scare he gave me about the fall of Father Rothéa. What you tell me about it in your first letter from Paris, has quieted us a little.

Are we not too little for so great a protection as that of the Honorable Duke of Bordeaux?<sup>2</sup> *Noli altum sapere*. "Do not be high-minded" [Romans 21:20]. If there would be questions of making known my sentiments toward the royal family, you might say among other details that I gave counsel to the assembly which decided upon the entry of the Duke d'Angoulême into Bordeaux, etc. But we must speak of these things only when there is a call for it. You were able to notice that I hardly speak of the interest, nevertheless lively enough, that I put into the entire Revolution, in aiding at least by my counsel to prepare the events which gave us so much consolation, at the same time as so many causes for solicitude. Let us do all the good we can, both to the monarchy and to religion, but let us not seek to be seen and to make ourselves known any more than may be necessary for accomplishing the good we seek. Often renew to the Honorable Duke de Montmorency the tender and respectful sentiments I entertain for him.

Let M. Alègre<sup>3</sup> know from me all the pain his misconduct is causing me, and tell him that he is wrong to avail himself of my tenderness for him, whether to seem to belong to the Institute or to give himself some importance. Without discrediting him with the mayor of Villeneuve, to

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<sup>1</sup> Fr. de La Chapelle, Director of Ecclesiastical Affairs under Archbishop Frayssinous, rendered great service to the Society of Mary in the matter of its legal recognition.

<sup>2</sup> The Duke of Bordeaux, better known under the name Count de Chambord (1820-83), grandson of Charles X, by his father, the Duke de Berry assassinated on February 13, 1820, and last heir of the older branch of the Bourbons. He died in exile in the castle of Frohsdorf in Austria, where he called the Society of Mary to direct a school which still exists.

<sup>3</sup> A former postulant of the Society.

whom I ask of you to present the tokens of my remembrance and respectful devotedness, we must quietly induce the latter to decline all action in common with him, lest we compromise ourselves.

The 1,000 francs which the Duchess d'Angoulême is giving for each boarder are not only for board; they are also for maintenance and any expense throughout the year.<sup>4</sup>

May the peace of the Lord, my dear Son, be always with you!

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*The third edition of the Statutes which accompanied this letter differed from the preceding one only on the following points: it suppressed the parenthetical phrase in Article 3 relating to the arts and crafts; in Articles 7 and 10, it replaced the term Superior General with that of Superior of the Society; it suppressed Articles 19 and 20 regarding schools joined to those of arts and crafts and to the Sodalities. Finally, between Articles 10 and 11 it inserted a new article, becoming Article 11, as follows. "(11.) All the establishments of the Society recognize Our Lords the Bishops and Archbishops in the diocese where they are formed as their First Superiors, without prejudice, however, to the immediate action of the Superior of the Society and in following everywhere their rules and customs." The Statutes were thus reduced to the number of 22.*

### **337. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

May 2, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

My dear Son,

I received your last letter of April 28, and I have reread your last three letters to see if I had forgotten something important in my answers.

You must stay in Paris, my dear Son, until the final decision of the principal matter with which you are occupied, the royal ordinance.

Before yesterday, April 30, in the envelope of the Bishop of Hermopolis, I sent you a third edition of the Statutes of the Society of Mary in which I suppressed all mention both of the Sodalities and of the arts and crafts; I spoke of the normal schools and of the retreats for the schoolteachers, and I added, with pleasure, a Statute about the obedience of the various establishments towards the Ordinaries of the places involved. I hope you will no longer find any difficulty.

Regarding the Method of primary teaching, I doubt more and more that it will be authorized, only after the careful reading of the big copybook of this Method which you brought. This Method has nothing essentially different from that of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Slight improvements in each part of the teaching, numerous means of emulation, the zeal of the teachers, their dependence upon their First Superiors, and the active surveillance and inspections of these last—all these are the causes of their success. This Method may lead to the highest degree of perfection, especially by the union of the normal schools and the conferences to be given to the schoolteachers.

I am not speaking of another means proper to the Society of Mary which is to be seen in the meantime only in Bordeaux and in Saint-Remy, in the formation of the workshops. The Inspector of the Academy of Besançon seems to have taken notice of this himself, to judge from the circular letter he wrote last year to the schoolteachers of the department of the Doubs. I say I was not speaking to you of this at the present time because nothing is said about it in the Statutes. However, in the organization of the Society of Mary, everything announces a great devotedness

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<sup>4</sup> We do not know to which of the works of Fr. Chaminade this generosity on the part of the Duchess d'Angoulême was to be applied.

to primary teaching and that without it, it is, so to speak, impossible for it to attain its essential object as designated in the second Statute.

My dear Son, you must deeply penetrate yourself with these considerations so you may easily make use of them when the occasion presents itself.

I wanted to make a short plan of this Method for you in order to avoid, for those who might be charged with the task by the Bishop of Hermopolis, the making of the examination of it, when I recalled what he had thought of it when he had drawn up a report about our school in Agen for the Lot-et-Garonne paper. Although he does not say everything, nevertheless his sharp eye enabled him to see the matter pretty much as it is in reality. I am having the various articles of this paper sent on to you, as they can take the place of the work I would like to do but which at least for the time being I do not have the necessary leisure to complete. My dear Son, you know I had this project in mind before your departure for Paris and that consequently I had given Father Lalanne the Method you had brought; but I let myself be influenced by the consideration that, seeing the work itself edited by one of the brothers of the schools in which he included only what he was doing himself or what he was having his colleagues do, the Method with all its practical means would be more clearly understood, as well as the minds of those who were putting it into actual practice.

I do not believe, my dear Son, that you need a particular approbation of a method for the time being. By our very Statutes (no. 10), every method of teaching is and remains subject to the approval of the Minister of Public Instruction.

I am stopping with this letter here, my dear Son, to make use of this mail in sending you a copy of the articles about the school of Agen which appeared in the Lot-et-Garonne paper.

I hope the simplicity, the honesty, and the zeal with which we present ourselves will have greater success than all the fine phrases which we would apply ourselves to use.

May the Lord deign to shower his blessings upon you more and more, my dear Son, and on all your labors, for they have no other end than the glory of his holy Name.

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*For the first time Father Chaminade expresses his views about the religious apparel of members of the Society. He will return to this later on several occasions.*

### **338. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

May 3, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

My dear Son,

I prefer to multiply my letters rather than to delay in writing to you, for I am not able to answer everything by return mail.

You know with what insistence our brothers who are in the northeast of France have asked to be allowed to take a habit or religious apparel. I have often thought of this matter, and especially about a month before your last trip.

I am becoming more and more convinced that we have taken the right road of wisdom, in the modest apparel adopted for the lay members and the gold ring for the professed members. This great simplicity coincides perfectly with our way of presenting ourselves, whether to the Government or to the university. We have been able to notice that our brothers of the schools have edified much more, in general, by their manner of dress and their modesty than if they had apparel altogether religious, as it was understood before the Revolution. The former apparel appear to me hardly suitable to men like ourselves, destined only to multiply Christians.

Nevertheless, I would, nevertheless be of the opinion that the members of the Society, lay or clerical, have in their respective apparel some mark characteristic of their Society, and that this

mark would be nothing bizarre, nothing striking. It would be better for youth if it were attractive without having anything worldly. What might this distinctive mark be? Consult! Would permission be needed to wear it? Consult! Advise me, etc. . . .

I must stop here so this letter may leave with this mail.

May the peace of the Lord be ever with you!

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**S. 338-2. To Bro. Dominique Clouzet, Saint-Remy**

May 3, 1825, Bordeaux

Original, Agmar

My dear Son,

You are already aware through Father Caillet that our Brother Constant could not be dispensed from the draft by the Council for Public Instruction; the documents which could have obtained the dispensation according to law arrived too late at the university. Because according to law he was to be dispensed, I did not believe it proper to use any means other than those he has and which are evident, such as poor health, etc. When I noticed how slow they were at Agen to provide his father with his certificate, showing that he had consented and did in fact consent to a 10-year term with the university, I asked the prefect in Agen to have him transferred to the prefecture of Vesoul, where he could be examined and discharged as unfit for military duty. I hope the prefect of Vesoul will consent to an extraordinary review council if necessary. He is better placed than anyone else in authority to judge that it is no one's fault if the young man is so late in presenting himself; it is due to the poor communications over long distances. I do not doubt that he will find favor with the government by submitting to this procedure. All the university heads, especially the Minister of Public Instruction, expressed true concern because young Constant's papers arrived too late; I was told in a letter that the only alternative was a military discharge because this was possible and because we did not want to take advantage of the law.

Father Caillet writes from Paris that he fears the 3,000 francs granted by the General Council of the department of Haute-Saône will not be forthcoming this year. However, this is not yet certain; we will soon find out. You could refer to this when you see the prefect about young Constant. It is very likely that the Society of Mary will be approved shortly. Could these 3,000 francs not be placed in reserve and applied to the same purpose by the next council, without detriment to next year's grant? The house could then borrow and provide funds both for the normal school and for the teachers' retreat this year.

On this same trip to Vesoul, you could see the banker and ask him if he could take from my account the 6,000 francs you must pay him next June 1. It is a great bother and costly to have such a sum transferred either to Vesoul or to Saint-Remy. Last month I wrote to Brother Rothéa at Colmar asking him if he could easily transfer that sum to Vesoul. He said he thought he could and that he would let me know in a few days; I am still waiting for his answer. If the banker (I do not remember his name) prefers to divide the sum and make the necessary arrangements with his branch so I could pay it back in installments after June 1, you will of course pay the interest. Let me know immediately the results of your interview with him so that I can arrange to repay him. Brother David had already spoken to me of his honesty; I would like to commend him for it, for I consider s done to myself what is done to my administrators. I allow my banker to draw from my account on ten days' notice, at any time, a maximum of 6,000 francs, redeemable in at least three stages, with interest at 3.6%.

I suppose, my dear Son, that Father Caillet keeps you informed about his negotiations in Paris. It seems the Society of Mary will receive its approbation in a very few days, along with the establishment of Saint-Remy, the normal school, etc., etc.

May the peace of the Lord, my dear Son, be with you and with all my dear Children at Saint-Remy! I embrace you tenderly and ask you to give to everyone my fraternal greetings.

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*This is a letter about temporal matters.*

### **339. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

May 7, 1825, Bordeaux  
Autograph, Agmar

My dear Son,

I wrote to you on May 2 or May 3 through His Excellency the Minister, and I was going to continue my last letter when on May 6 I received yours of May 1. I am dropping all other matters to take up my pen for you.

Act with a holy liberty during your stay in Paris and throughout your travels, my dear Son. In everything you meet with that you might find troublesome to you, see what faith and the spirit of the Institute would order or permit you to do. Think of what I would advise you, if you were in a position to consult me. Thus the application you will make will determine your line of action without any anxiety.

I have just written a letter to Brother Clouzet which he was to show to the prefect of Vesoul. In it I discuss three things only: (1) our young Brother Constant, (2) the 3,000 francs, and (3) the 6,000 francs we owe the banker in Vesoul. If the 3,000 francs are not allocated by the Minister of the Interior this year, the prefect could reserve them and the General Council of the department could add them to the sum they would allocate next year for the same purpose. In this way there would be no interruption, the Saint-Remy establishment could proceed either by borrowing, etc. . . .

I would very much have liked to see the two retreats for the teachers take place a few days after your arrival in Saint-Remy, my dear Son. Apparently your main reason for not waiting until September, as the rector of the Academy of Besançon seemed to wish, is the normal school and the students who would be sent there in June, July, and August. But would it be very inconvenient to send them only between July 1 and October 1, or even, if two months are absolutely needed for the holidays, could we not split the 3-month period, 1½ or 2 months toward the end of the summer and before September 1, and the other around November 1? The young teachers would profit by the return. Other arrangements could be made, but I would like to see this one because it is to the advantage of our young teachers. It is not surprising, however, that in the beginning there should be some difficulty in arranging the schedule; I hope things will go more smoothly next year.

My dear Son, I have received a long letter from M. de Razac, dated April 27. I would have answered immediately, but you told me he had just written to M. de Gombaudo. I cannot understand why that letter is not signed or dated. What he writes to me does not go directly to the point; there are signs of astonishment about the degree of my blindness, for he insists that he sold me only what belonged to him; he gives the reasons for the slowness of his responses, etc. If only in reply to Brother Auguste's first warning he had said, "I will not pay the amount evaluated or presented by M. de Gombaudo for the partitions, doors, woodwork, etc., that he built in his apartment, although I sold you the mansion without informing you of the lease which gave him the right to claim compensation or to take with him all these items." I state that if M. de Razac had answered clearly either Brother Auguste or me, I do not doubt that given my temperament, I would have made the small sacrifice rather than have a dispute with two people I respect very highly. If I proposed two solutions of the problem with M. de Gombaudo, this was to keep the peace and to avoid a scandalous court case in which M. de Gombaudo claims Brother Auguste

bought the partitions and notified M. de Razac of their estimated value with no mention of the basis for his rights, etc.

M. de Razac claims that I suffer from illusions to the extent that I am blind! But why, in all charity, did he not tell me or others the cause of my blindness? Is it an answer to say, "You are under an illusion; I never did intend to sell what did not belong to me, I could not, should not, etc.," when I tell him honestly that I only found out nearly three months after the sale that M. de Gombaud had a lease, to become angry because he had told Brother Auguste less than three months. . . . Is that not to avoid the question, to skirt around it? The truth is that he sold the mansion just as it was upon my visit, with no reservations, either written or oral, before or during the signing of the contract. The number of days or months after which he made his revelation is not important. This wretched matter causes me to lose more time than I could redeem with 300 or 600 francs. I would not have said a word about this if I had not detected in an interview with this respectable Baron a tendency to believe his story. If I refuse to plead, if I am ready to let them have what they want, I will still believe I was forced to buy what has been taken away. To excuse M. de Razac, I will believe (1) that he never thought to tell me of the lease agreement with M. de Gombaud, (2) that he never wanted to sell something which did not belong to him, and (3) that he is under an illusion if he thinks he does not have to compensate an honest buyer to whom he has sold articles which he thought were his and pocketed the money. I will stop here.

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### 340. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris

May 9, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

[With insert from S. 340]

My dear Son,

I am beginning this letter with the proposal of a good work. Mlle de Noailan, having told me of the letter of Mlle de Galard, I invited her to send me a copy of the article of this letter which had for its object this good work and which I was going to send on to you. If the two young unfortunate women are as they are described by Mlle de Galard, you could perhaps arrange everything by sending both to Condom. The older one could be an assistant mistress and the younger one, a boarder. If you could find someone who could pay a part of the board money of the younger, with a part of this board money their poor parents could be relieved, and the other part of this could serve to support them. The convent would be receiving nothing for either, but it would find itself repaid by the labor of the older one and possibly by the acquisition of two good subjects.

The difficulty created for you, my dear Son, by the shortness of the distance from the boarding school to the royal *collège* cannot concern the boarding school of Brother Auguste because as you know, day pupils are not received in this boarding school at whatever price because of the inconvenience of communication<sup>1</sup> which cannot be entirely avoided, whatever precautions may be taken.

Imagine what would happen if we were not even more severe for the *philosophes*, since the danger would be still greater. The only exception there might be would be in favor of some poor ecclesiastic, whose virtue and ability would be well known.

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding the communications between boarders and non-boarders. In addition to the legal recognition of the Society of Mary, Fr. Caillet was negotiating for the authorization of Bro. Auguste's boarding school to receive pupils up to the class of philosophy. Fr. Chaminade sets aside the objection brought up against this authorization on the grounds that the boarding school, being close to the *collège*, would have taken away a portion of the pupils of the quarter.

I remarked in my last letter, my dear Son, how I had always considered the matter between M. de Razac and M. de Gombaud to be a simple one. I will see to it that the lawyer who will defend me, M. Louis Brochon, receives a brief account of it, only if M. de Gombaud persists in attacking me. The account will present to the court my sales contract, tell of the late appearance of the lease agreement between M. de Razac and M. de Gombaud, show how because of my many occupations I agreed to allow Brother Auguste to receive the estimates covering the material to be repossessed by M. de Gombaud with the consent of M. de Razac; how he immediately informed M. de Razac, the only person who should compensate him; how because of M. de Razac's long silence M. de Gombaud had imagined that Brother Auguste had bought the repossessed objects for 550 francs according to the estimates which had been sent to M. de Razac.

...

I could not finish this letter before the mail time, so I told young Brother Tissier to inform you that you could consult M. Bilcoq about the shabby and miserable case, and you will find out who is blindly laboring under illusions here.

You would do well to befriend M. de Vassal, to give him my best regards, and to suggest that he have nothing to do with M. Allègre—that the latter did wish to join the Society of Mary but never did and most probably never would have been admitted.

The law<sup>1</sup> concerning the religious must now be printed and for sale. Obtain a copy for me. If anything has been written for or against it, try to obtain that also, and in addition everything you can learn about it. I do not have to tell you that this has to be done prudently, just as if you have no interest in it whatsoever.

You will do well to return the notebook about the Institute of the Sodalties of young people. This copybook has little meaning for those who have no clue to its purpose and mode of action.

The novitiate of the Daughters of Mary is doing very well. They are very appreciative of the tokens of your remembrance and they are praying for you.

If you have occasion to pass in the street of Faubourg St. Jacques, you might see a deaf mute named Petit, a cook in a boarding house. M. Massiou is very interested in him. Is he a good cook? Is he pious? Does he have good manners, discretion, and thrift? Could we make a good cook out of him? Might he have great pretensions? This commission is one for you, so to speak, only insofar as you will have time to carry it out. *Pax Domini, Fili me carissime, sit semper tecum!*

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### **S. 340-2. To Bishop Jacoupy of Agen**

May 13, 1825, Bordeaux

Original, Agmar

Excellency,

Before permitting young Brunet to ask you for his exit permit, I have studied him and have tested him at some length. I hope we will not regret the considerable sums that will be spent on his education. He does not seem to be possessed of those vices which some rumors attribute to his parents.

I believed the time was ripe, Your Excellency, to ask the king to give his approbation to the Institute or the Society of Mary. Father Caillet is prolonging his stay in Paris for that purpose. This is a serious step, but it seems to be going favorably. As soon as a final decision is reached, I will inform you. The discussion of the Statutes and of related subjects in the offices of the

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<sup>1</sup> Fr. Chaminade wants to say "the project of law," because the law was voted only on May 24. He was then thinking of the approbation of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary, which was obtained only on May 23, 1828.



Minister keeps me so busy that I hardly have time to come and tell you what is happening. For the same reason, I have not written to you about Father Serre. Had he explained his situation more clearly, no matter how strapped for priests you may be, you would surely have allowed him to come to us.

I am with the most profound respect your very humble and very obedient servant.

G.-Joseph Chaminade

P.S. please give my regards to Father Trincaud and Father Liaubon. I am including, Monsignor, the baptismal certificate of Brother Brunet for authentication.

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*Here is a letter about the conditions of the development of the religious Orders and the importance of normal schools in the moral recovery of France.*

### **341. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

May 14, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

My dear Son,

Because you were not able to take upon yourself the changes desired by His Excellency, I have just made a fourth edition of the Statutes of the Society of Mary. I have not changed a syllable of everything you tell me in your letters of May 7 and May 9. Nevertheless, I am having this fourth edition recopied with the complete suppression of Article 19.<sup>2</sup>

The desires often manifested by our holy archbishop have been that we might be able to give several retreats and missions, when once we have members qualified to do so. This is sometimes even a necessity for the formation of large Sodalities or for their support, etc. His Excellency will readily understand that these functions, which ordinarily are only temporary and are undertaken by men of mature age, generally do not prevent Society members from being employed in primary education. Furthermore, His Excellency had spoken to you of the suppression, pure and simple, of Article 19.

I imagine, my dear Son, that every time you have the honor to approach His Excellency the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, you remember to offer him the tokens of my respect and gratitude. When once you have informed me that His Majesty has deigned to sanction our humble Society, called of Mary, in ordering prayers for the king in all of our establishments, I will not forget to have some said also for his worthy Minister.

The many kindnesses which Father de la Chapelle has shown you will always remain engraved on my heart, and I have in mind including them in the written report which will be the first item entered in our new register—I mean the written report about your present mission and its success. I desire to have my gratitude pass into the hearts of all those who will need or have occasion to read this register.

My dear Son, I ask you to thank Father de la Chapelle also for the excellent advice he has given you, or rather, that he gave us, to be on our guard against the desire of multiplying the establishments of the Society. Ordinarily speaking, multiplication weakens, and each establishment, becoming weaker than the one preceding it and not having sufficient or capable enough subjects to develop it, the body necessarily languishes, weakens, degenerates, becomes

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<sup>2</sup> Fr. Chaminade actually signed two copies of this fourth edition, one with 22 articles and the other with 21 articles and the suppression of Article 19, relating to the priests and their functions in the Society of Mary. He insisted on this Article 19 for reasons which he will develop in letter no. 360, but he was resigned to suppress it if necessary for the continuation of the negotiations; consequently, instead of 22 Statutes there were only 21.

corrupted, and finally fails completely. What examples we have of this! This is doubtless what the Pastor of the Foreign Missions<sup>1</sup> saw in considering the matter from other points of view.

The Order of Citeaux under Saint Bernard, nevertheless, increased very rapidly and extensively. Without ceasing to be, as it were, the oracle of Europe, Saint Bernard founded more than 150 monasteries. This is what I believe was called “the filiation of Clairvaux”; and at the same time, three other heads of the same Order made three other very numerous branches. The Order of Citeaux did not weaken itself by such a great multiplication of monasteries. But Saint Bernard had other principles than Dom Augustine, propagator of the Trappists, who are a reformed section of the Order of Citeaux. I will explain myself better, by saying that Dom Augustine is far from following the principles of Saint Bernard, even if he has nearly the same rule observed. The matter makes me sigh interiorly.<sup>2</sup>

Because Father de la Chapelle wishes to honor you with his confidence and to share with you his experience or his knowledge of such an important an article, let him know of the necessity, or at least the great utility there would be, of promptly multiplying the normal school establishments and the retreats for schoolteachers. I sincerely hope that with the grace of God, without great inconvenience and without the deterioration of the Society and an insignificant number of years, there will be as many establishments of this type as there will be of educational offices, or still better of departments; but for that the consent of the Government would be required and, as such, freely given.

My dear Son, we must not cease to make the importance of this work of the renewal of France felt, and that as promptly as possible. If you have not clearly understood the means that would need to be employed for obtaining this happy result, I could take up the matter by correspondence with Father de la Chapelle, and he, in his turn, could take it up with Bishop d’Hermopolis; I have so much confidence in His Excellency, as I proved to you before your departure, that I would willingly share with him the inmost sentiments of my soul. If there were anyone whom he thought it was his duty to correct or improve, I believe him incapable of ever wanting to compromise either me or the Society.

At present, my dear Son, there is the question of obtaining the royal sanction before the Anointing<sup>1</sup> and of leaving immediately to prepare for the retreats in Saint-Remy, etc. as we said or as I told you in one of my letters. After the Anointing, and when Father de la Chapelle wishes, I will give him some explanations. I will make known everything that the good God has placed in my heart for the good of my unhappy country.

Do not neglect the two petitions, one for the boarding school in Bordeaux and the other for the one in Saint-Remy. I have to stop now. May the peace of the Lord be ever with you!

P. S. Although written in a great hurry, and because I am unceasingly disturbed in my writing, you might be able to read this letter to Father de la Chapelle. He will better see your honesty and that we are doing our best under the circumstances. I do not have time to reread what I have written. You will easily be able to supply the words I may have possibly forgotten, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Fr. Desgenettes, later of Our Lady of Victories, where he established the celebrated Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Refuge of Sinners. He was entirely favorable to the establishment of sodalities of the type of those of Bordeaux and even offered his church for this purpose. “Fr. Desgenettes,” Fr. O’Lombel wrote to Fr. Chaminade, “had not limited his zeal to the seconding of your enterprise only with his counsels and good wishes; he offered to me to place at your disposition the basement of his church, the actual crypt of the Church of the Foreign Missions, Rue de Bac, at the hours which are not already destined for pious exercises. April 2, 1824.”

<sup>2</sup> This is criticism of the work of Dom Augustine of Lestrange, which Fr. Chaminade had seen at close range in the La Trappe of Santa Susanna in Spain, and of the principles of an excessive severity; these were far from being universally approved.

<sup>1</sup> Of the new King, Charles X

*The fourth edition of the Statutes, in 22 articles, announced in the preceding letter and drawn up by Father Chaminade as the result of the observations of Bishop Frayssinous, differed from the third (letter 336) only in some modifications in articles 5, 8, 11, 18, and 19. The text will be found in letter 360.*

**342. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

May 16, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

[With insert from S. 342]

My dear Son,

In spite of the little time I am able to have, I am returning to you with this mail. The day before yesterday, I sent you a duplicate copy of the fourth edition of the Statutes of the Society of Mary. . . .

In both copies Brother Tessier, the secretary, is afraid he may have omitted a word in the first Statute. He believes he wrote simply the "Society" instead of the "Society of Mary is," etc. If you can catch this in time, it will be easy to correct without needing another copy; it is not an important omission. If you do not receive it in time, the meaning is given by the title.

I am sure, my dear Son, that you are not forgetting that the time for the Anointing is approaching rapidly, and that you are in a hurry to arrive in Saint-Remy for your retreats. It would be highly desirable that you have the ordinance of the king before his departure, and this means before your own departure.

I am persisting in the views I have expressed to you regarding the apparel of the children of Mary, whether they are priests or lay members. I could even say that these are growing stronger, whether by reflection or by prayer. Nevertheless, a distinctive mark seems necessary. To begin with, there must be a great uniformity in one and the other apparel; then, that distinctive mark.

This mark must have two characteristic features: it must make the apparel modestly stand out, and by its very nature it must nourish piety toward Mary in ourselves and in others, especially in youth. I am saying that it must make the apparel modestly stand out, for it must attract and not repulse youth because certainly it is youth whom we want to win over to virtue. The ring was to have, in its principle, some distinction according to the offices which we would wish to fulfill.

You must already be aware, my dear Son, of what is being thought about our views regarding the apparel and if permission from the king is needed for this distinctive mark. Supposing this is the case and that the Statutes have not yet been presented at the time of the reception of this letter, you might add as a postscript a Statute in which the apparel of the members of the Society, whether ecclesiastical or lay, would have no other distinction than its uniformity and a mark which would be determined by His Excellency the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, etc. In this way, we would gain a little time to settle the matter definitely, after having come to an agreement with His Excellency.

I must stop here. I will not lose sight of your financial needs. If some unforeseen necessities arise, whether for your person or for the affairs you must see to, and you are not sufficiently equipped to meet them, borrow to the extent of your needs. I will meet your measures without delay, as soon as you have told me about them.

May the Lord and his august Mother, our Patroness, be always with you!

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*This letter shows the ideas of Father Chaminade regarding the relationships that are to exist between the Institute and other religious Societies.*

### **343. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

May 19, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

[With insert from S. 343]

My dear Son,

I have received your letter of May 13. I am ready to have an understanding with M. Ponton d'Amécourt and to enter as much as possible into all the ideas with which the Spirit of God inspires him for the renewal of our unhappy country. I have no doubts at all that the institution of normal schools for primary teaching, joined to the retreats given each year to the schoolteachers, all conducted and directed in the manner we think proper—I do not doubt that this institution is a powerful means for working at this renewal, which we are imploring from the Lord with so many fervent prayers.

M. d'Amécourt must recognize the finger of God in the connection and succession of the institutions of the Christian schools and the schools of the Society of Mary. He will admire it much more when he knows the secret ways of Providence through our correspondence, and perhaps also by some interview. The good Brothers of the Christian Schools have nothing to fear for the honorable and important mission which they fulfill. I have contributed too much to their spread in France and to their support to wish to hamper their work in any way. The Spirit of God does not contradict itself. We will never apply the sickle in anyone else's harvest, and by this I mean the harvest of the Lord given to others to reap. But my dear Son, how very abundant is the harvest of the Lord, how extensive it is and what different examples it has!

What I am saying in regard to the schools, I can and must say for the Sodalities. There will never be any contest with the Jesuits, never any rivalry, and still less never any of those underhanded dealings inspired by an unhappy jealousy! When I have explained myself to M. d'Amécourt, he will see that we have a different sickle than that of the Jesuits and of the Missionaries<sup>1</sup> and that we can also enter into the Lord's harvest without in any way interfering with the laborers who are already there. The Institute of Mary would not be of divine inspiration if it would not produce such miserable effects, and it would have to be stifled in its cradle!

The harvest of the Lord is made up of men and women, my dear Son, and you see at a glance the reason for the Daughters of Mary. The harvest which the mercies of the Lord have caused to grow is so abundant and ready to gather in that the Lord is sending to it several Orders of virgins. Are the Daughters of Mary also sent there, and do they have their distinct sickles? We have believed this, and we still think so. I saw with sorrow that two convents of two different Orders sought to harm two establishments of the Daughters of Mary, one in Bordeaux and the other in Agen. We said absolutely nothing and made no type of complaint. By his Holy Mother, the Lord made the underhanded persecution begun against them turn to the advantage of the Daughters of Mary. . . .

The civil authorities themselves saw the need for working for both men and women at the same time. The prefect of Lot-et-Garonne spoke to me about this several times, and of his own accord. He gave excellent proofs of this and loved and esteemed the Brothers of the Society of Mary still more when he had seen the plan for the work of the Daughters of Mary founded in Agen. In time, the Lord who has sent us will know how to give evidence of the object and manner of our mission. Let us not worry about this in any way!

Pay a visit for me to M. Ponton d'Amécourt and offer him the homage of my respect and gratitude. Tell him we still have all the weakness of childhood, but that our confidence in our

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<sup>1</sup> The Missionaries of France of Fr. Rauzan, and then of Bishop de Forbin-Janson.

august Mother is unshakable; that since our birth, she has helped us to gain astonishing victories; that we will try to second her views in primary education, in reforming the countryside; but that we are counting on him as well as on the commission<sup>1</sup> to allow us complete liberty to conduct ourselves and to work in our own manner.

From what I have been told, the normal school in Strasbourg has ceased to function. However little we might do, it could easily be turned over to us. Everything seems to lead in that direction. The Bishop of Strasbourg made the first move in bringing us to these distant Provinces. The Ordinary who has taken such an interest in the normal school of Saint-Remy is the rector of the Academy of Strasbourg. The two establishments of Saint-Remy and of Strasbourg could be of assistance to one another. Success in the departments of these two education offices would make an impression on other departments or education offices; while awaiting new requests, we would be preparing new subjects, etc., etc.

If you read this entire letter to M. d'Amécourt, I ask you to let him know that it was written in a great hurry, in the midst of other affairs and especially during the preparations for the solemnity of Pentecost. From start to finish, it has proceeded from my heart, as I have not had as much as two minutes to think it over and reread it. . . .

M. de Gombaud insists on suing. The case will be heard shortly in the Court of First Instance. This evening I will see M. Brochon, our defense counsel. I will let him know that M. de Razac is willing to come to an understanding, or rather that we are all willing. I will urge him to prolong the hearing as much as he can. I will let you know the outcome, if I can. The first mail delivery will be on the eve of Pentecost.

May the blessing of the Lord, my dear Son, come upon you with abundance and upon all your labors! May the Holy Spirit enlighten you, sanctify you, and fill you with strength and courage!

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*Here is a letter of direction intended for the convent in Agen.*

**344. To a Daughter of Mary,  
Probably Mother Saint-Vincent, Agen**

May 23, 1825, Bordeaux

Copy, Agmar

My dear Daughter,

You have done a good work in telling me of the indisposition of our Good Mother. I believe, as many others also have, that her condition, always unsettled, would soon improve if she consented to be taken care of with a certain consistency. She does little more than accept arrangements for a few days, and then grieves over the fact that she is not given the liberty of falling sick again. It is my intention to profit from the time of my visit to correct this abuse, for this is certainly one afflicting everyone of the Institute, as well as those who have some dealings with it. Prayers for her have not been lacking nor will they be wanting, but prayers must not be made ineffective by a conduct completely opposed to the intention being prayed for. Take care not to offend her, until I can order her more expressly to stay on whatever regimen the doctor may prescribe for her. For this Good Mother, this regimen is a matter of obedience.

You yourself, my dear daughter, have asked of God counsel and peace of soul. I do not believe it is suitable for you to have a less active life, even less one which is entirely sedentary. You may be certain that your hope to find yourself better would not be realized. While holding to this active life, you need to understand better how to possess yourself, and this will happen when

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<sup>1</sup> The work of the Christian schoolteachers which M. Ponton d'Amécourt directed.

you are completely possessed by God. Only then will you be able to pass over to a sedentary life without great inconvenience. Learn to possess yourself in little things, in occupying yourself with them only in God, and in doing them only for God. If you gain this point, at least for an hour each day and as a start, soon after you will gain everything. Then you will be neither troublesome to others, as you believe you are, nor irksome to yourself. As for the rest, I can no longer delay to console and to strengthen my dear Daughters in the good, and that by my actual presence. May the consolations of God sustain them in their temporal afflictions, and may they all receive the blessings I do not fail to ask for my dear Daughters in Jesus and Mary!

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### 345. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris

May 24, 1825, Bordeaux  
Autograph, Agmar

My dear Son,

The gifts of the Holy Spirit were drawn by lot last evening.<sup>1</sup> Mlle Seconde Lablancherie<sup>2</sup> drew for you. She drew the gift of counsel, its fruit, patience. I drew after everyone else. I drew the gift of counsel, its fruit, patience. Mrs. Dubroca<sup>3</sup> asked for a slip for Brother Auguste. I drew and I read, “gift of counsel, its fruit, patience.”

Your letter of May 18 made me assume that our matter of authorization must have been shelved until after the coronation of the king. I have nothing further to say but gathering the fruit of patience enclosed in the gift of counsel which is being offered to us. In the meantime, would you be able to leave for Saint-Remy and to continue to attend to this matter after your return? No, my dear Son, await the return of the king to Paris in order to make use of the first suitable moment.

I am not sending to you any other edition of the Statutes. The slight changes you were obliged to make are in no way harmful.

The observation made by Father de la Chapelle, that I would have done well not to speak of the 49 Statutes approved by the archbishop, is very wise. As far as possible, nothing must be put in them which might give rise to discussion; nevertheless, I believed it was proper to indicate it in all the editions, so the approbation of the Archbishop of Bordeaux would not seem to apply to some other type of Institute. However, because Father de la Chapelle is to prepare the report about it, it is completely sufficient that he announce the approbation in general, without speaking of the previous or the new edition. This observation, as all the others he has made, is tangible proof of the royal interest he is bringing to the success of this matter. The 19<sup>th</sup> Statute may be kept without great inconvenience, and because it is useful for the acceptance of the 18<sup>th</sup>, it may as well be allowed to stand as it is.

If you have not already done so, make your addition as you indicate it to be in your letter of May 18, and add your signature to it by way of authorization.

You will not forget the incident about the attire, which is serious enough, and about the precaution to be taken regarding the requisition<sup>4</sup> of the brothers who are not teachers. They form a necessary team with their teaching colleagues and, in their own way, work toward the same end in the Society.

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<sup>1</sup> Monday of Pentecost week. About this pious custom, see *Spirit of Our Foundation*, no. 979.

<sup>2</sup> One of the oldest and most fervent sodalists of the Madeleine. She became part of the “State” in 1812 and was chosen head of the Sodality in 1819.

<sup>3</sup> One of the Ladies of the Retreat, a nurse at the Auguste boarding school.

<sup>4</sup> Requisition for military service; teaching brothers were exempt from it, and Fr. Chaminade believed the Working Brothers should enjoy the same privilege.

I hope, my dear Son, you will have procured for yourself the royal ordinance of February 29, 1816, which determined in Article 11 the three degrees of primary education. On the same occasion, you would need to make for yourself a duplicate collection of all the laws, royal ordinances, or decrees of the university which concern primary education. It would also seem good to have a similar collection for secondary education. M. de Luigne may be able to give you information on this point. Without wishing to do so, we may find ourselves in contradiction to some of the laws or regulations. I said a duplicate collection; one would be for Bordeaux and the other for Saint-Remy.

At this moment, I am opening a letter from Brother Clouzet in which he tells me he has 23 candidates for the normal school at their own expense, and that in view of your delay he wrote to the rector to bring them together and to advise the candidates of Daubs to go to Saint-Remy for the month of June, to postpone the retreat of the schoolteachers to the month of September, and that they will soon have 60 candidates in their normal school. The haste of Brother Clouzet will have rendered all our calculations useless, or at least it seems so. If this is the case and if you are not able to give the retreats two weeks after you have completed your Paris mission, then you must return to Bordeaux, and we will be able to arrange for the September retreats.

Brother Clouzet is always requesting Brother Laugeay. I believe he needs him, but he would have done well not to ask Brother Rothéa for him, for he has been the occasion of disagreeable relationships with the pastor of Colmar. He cannot have him before the end of the school year; then I will leave him there for an indefinite time, for it is my intention to replace him in Colmar.

My dear Son, do not speak, even confidentially, about the Daughters of Mary<sup>1</sup> to anyone who may have dealings with the ministry. One thing at a time! I have to stop now because the mail is about to leave. Courage, my dear Son!

\* \* \*

*This letter goes into detail about what may be the distinctive mark of the attire of the Society of Mary, a plan which was only slightly followed. It also contains ideas about recruitment in the Society of Mary.*

### **346. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

May 30, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

[With insert from S. 346]

My dear Son,

The feasts and the occupations which precede and follow them prevent me from writing to you as much as I would like. . . .

Brother Moulinié, head of the Agen schools, is dangerously ill. I am having Brother Mémain leave today to replace him. Bro. Louis [Hunolt]<sup>1</sup> is pleased to accompany him to begin his own training as a teacher. Brother Tissier is going to Saint-Laurent but only temporarily, in

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<sup>1</sup> That is to say, about the legal recognition, which they will have to solicit.

<sup>1</sup> Louis Hunolt, born in 1805 in Soultzmat, Alsace, was then a postulant. He made his novitiate at Saint-Laurent, 1825-26, and after several years of teaching in Colmar, Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines, and Saint-Hippolyte, he was sent to Saint-Remy, where he spent 40 years as professor of music and writing. "The entire existence of Bro. Hunolt," wrote his director Bro. Guillegoz the day after his death, "was a life of the most effective attachment to the Society of Mary. Benevolent to excess toward everyone, happy to find good wherever it might be, saddened at every evidence of evil he might meet, charitable, discreet, prudent—on many points Bro. Hunolt was a man far above the ordinary, to whom I must pay a just but too feeble tribute of gratitude." Due to an excessive delicacy of conscience, for a long time he remained without vows, as a simple affiliate of the Society of Mary.

place of Brother Mémain. Although this inconveniences me I do not regret it, for such replacements will help him mature and will have him acquire enough experience and virtue to be employed in distant posts. I am taking Noguès as my secretary. If Brother Moulinié regains his health, I will have him come to Saint-Laurent for the remainder of the year. . . .

I have made a compromise with M. de Gombaud. We are appointing M. - - -, the president of the Royal Court and a member of parliament; he did not go to Reims, but he must now be back in Bordeaux. M. de Gombaud must have left for Paris; he will stay with M. de Razac and will ask him to sign. The president will pass judgment on any point which may be a bone of contention among the three of us. Please take care of any documents they may want to send me; send them along as you did the letter from the Duke de Montmorency, with the archbishop's mail. I informed Father Gignoux, the archbishop's secretary, the first time you followed this procedure, and I hope there will be no more delay in the mail delivery.

What may well be the distinctive mark of the Society of Mary? It is clearly understood that it must be common to the entire Society, to all rank and office. A small collar given to the brothers would not attain the end in view. A silver medal, on which would be engraved or in relief an image of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, suspended from the neck by a cord would seem to me to suffice. So the cord and the medal would better show the habit of the brothers, the upper part of their outer coat could be closed with large buttons or hooks, somewhat like our cassocks. We would soon come to the golden mean between decency and modesty, such as is suitable to the Children of Mary. There could be some difference in the medals and cords according to the classes of the Society members, at least as far as the main offices and principal heads are concerned.

The only inconvenience about this mark is that it would seem to be a small decoration. I saw the same inconvenience in prescribing the gold ring at the first profession. Nevertheless, some good came of it. Several times it has been a certain motive for emulation in the novitiate. If some temptation to vanity happened to come along, it was struggled with, the true interior spirit became stronger, and good was done both interiorly and exteriorly. I mean that some young men, already interns, went through their period of probation with greater ease, and others on the outside were induced to enter. The medal and the cord will produce still greater and still happier effects. It is up to us to know how to foresee small inconveniences which may arise, incompatible with the dispositions of youth. Human and natural elements all have held some danger for human beings since the day of our original fall.

If we wish to succeed, let us be careful not to admit anything repulsive, but on the contrary, let us have something which without wounding humility, decency, and modesty will be pleasing even to the eye of young people. For example, is it not suitable for the professors in normal schools to have something distinctive in their attire in order to make it stand out more advantageously?

It is to be presumed that in the schools there will always be some subjects presenting themselves to enter the Society. There also will be some in the normal school, even more than in the schools for ordinary children. These will be nurseries—or rather, many good plants will be found in them, with which to form nurseries.

It is easy to see that the more establishments the Society has, the more it will be in a position to form others. The multiplication of establishments, far from weakening the Society, will serve only to strengthen it. I suppose the spirit of wisdom always presides in the General Administration of the Society; we hope for it from the grace of the Lord and from the protection of the Blessed Virgin, for whose glory we wish to labor unto extinction. *Ad majorem Dei Gloriam Dei Virginisque Deiparae!* [For the greater glory of God and of the Virgin Mother of God!]

Take courage, my dear Son! Without importunity but with constancy, pursue the matter of the authorization. With mildness and humility, represent to Father de la Chapelle the need you will have to leave Paris, etc., etc. I had wanted to write to him to ask him to hasten the conclusion of the matter as far as he can, but from everything you have told me, I see that he would not be



able to proceed any faster without exposing himself to postponements which might cause even more time to be lost.

Now receive, my dear Son, the blessing which your Good Father is giving you from the effusion of his heart.

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*The above letter no longer found Father Caillet in Paris, for he could not conclude the authorization before the anointing on May 29; he is urged by Brother Clouzet to come to Saint-Remy to settle the question of the retreats and to occupy himself with the plans of foundations in Vesoul. Father Caillet had left for Franche-Comte, so Father Chaminade writes to him there.*

### **347. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Besançon**

June 7, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

My dear Son,

It is now nearly noon, and I have just received your letter of June 1. I am interrupting all my other correspondence and taking up my pen to answer you, for I still have three-quarters of an hour before the departure of today's mail.

With you, my dear Son, I render thanks to Divine Providence for the blessings it continues to shower upon Saint-Remy. Let us not forget the powerful Mediatrix who intercedes for us with so much goodness.

Regarding the 6,000 francs paid to Vesoul, I am glad you recognize how wrong you are to worry yourself and to bother me. You should have been able to settle this matter with me with more calm and simplicity.

It seems rather vexing to me that Brother Clouzet should have been in such a hurry to have the time of the retreats settled, even more so because there was no need for haste if they were to be placed at the end of August. It seems he wanted it so. We should at least take care that both retreats are over by the end of September, so you and those who could leave with you<sup>1</sup> may easily arrive in Bordeaux several days before the October retreat. . . . See if it is possible for you to find some good help in giving the retreats. I am saying "good" because there is no question here of doing something just for the sake of having done it.

Assure Father Breuillot of my sincere and respectful devotedness. Tell him not to decide on anything else regarding the house in Vesoul.<sup>2</sup> I still have in mind to establish the Daughters of Mary there, especially because it is so easy to travel from Saint-Remy to Vesoul, but it seems to me the moment determined by Providence has not yet arrived.

However far apart the dates for repaying the bills which make up the sum of 20,000 francs offered by Father Bardenet for the purchase of this house may be, it seems to me Father Breuillot would have done well to receive the bills, since Father Bardenet wanted to hand them over. I would have taken the means to indemnify the seminary . . . If Father Bardenet wants to give them to you, I authorize you to accept them in my name to be employed in the purchase of the said house.

Father Breuillot can personally dispose of 10,000 francs. It seems he wanted to do so in regard to the seminary, but the seminary of Besançon has no immediate need of it. Perhaps the offer he would make of it for the establishment in Vesoul would hasten the moment of Providence for its realization. Tell him to consult God before deciding one way or the other. The

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<sup>1</sup> Postulants, men and women, going to the novitiate of the Society of Mary and of the Institute of Bordeaux.

<sup>2</sup> The seminary in Besançon had a house in Vesoul, not far from Saint-Remy, which it was disposed to transfer to Fr. Chaminade as a convent for the Daughters of Mary.

establishment of the Daughters of Mary in Vesoul is more interesting than someone would at first think. I have the intention to make it in every way the counterpart of Saint-Remy for the renewal of the women.

I am stopping here. I will write soon to Brother Clouzet for Constant. Proceed without delay with the Paris matters; I will write to you there. May the Lord be always with you!

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*The first letter is a note addressed to Bro. David Monier concerning an annoyance occasioned by a postulant who has left the Madeleine; the second is a letter of direction and encouragement to the young superior of the Daughters of Mary at Condom.*

**348. To Bro. David Monier, Bordeaux**

June 7, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

My dear Son,

Here is another bit of annoyance to bother me. . In coming to the Madeleine, M. Tournier brought a piano which he had in his father's house. The young man remained for six months and some days at the Madeleine. His tuition and other small bills, for which his priest brother was to be responsible, were not paid and still are not paid.

At his departure, the piano stayed at the Madeleine, as much to make up for what he still owes as, even more, to meet the double opposition of the father that this instrument would be returned to him. . . .

Since then, several times the young man has asked me for this piano, offering me the supervisor of the inn where he is working as his guarantee. Just two hours ago I received a subpoena for this evening, but dated yesterday. I must go out after dinner. Would you send Brother Bidon to the Justice of the Peace and be certain to explain to him in writing or verbally what he is to say to him. If Brother Bidon really needs something in writing, I will write before going out. Friendly greetings to you!

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**349. To Mother de l'Incarnation, Superior at Condom**

June 10, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Arch. FMI

[With insert from S. 349]

My dear Daughter,

I received your last letter of May 27, and I always take a greater share in your worries.

What in my last letters has led you to believe I did not want to visit with you this year? I do not have time to verify what I may have written to you on this subject; however, what is certain is that I always have the intention to do so. It would not have been so bad if Mother Saint-Vincent would have gone to see you in the meantime, if the necessary changes could have been made.

You might already have had Sister Stanislas and Sister Joséphine if the latter had not been seriously ill. Her illness still continues, although she is much better than she was. It is a dispensation of Providence, the better to train little Mother Stanislas, and especially because today it seems we could more advantageously use her in Tonneins and give you Sister Séraphine in her place.

Your worries are great, my dear Daughter, especially at the beginning of a foundation and, as in your case, not having yet exercised the functions of superior; but do not be troubled. The temporal aspect of things must not preoccupy you because you have been trained for that already for years. You could thus very easily do without a Mother of Work. Whom would you want as Mother of Instruction? With the helpers we can send her, would Mother Emmanuel not be able to handle the functions of this office in great style, should the boarding school and the community become more numerous? Regarding zeal, could you have any Mother more zealous, more intelligent, and more conciliating than Mother Sainte-Foy? Would you prefer Mother Louis de Gonzage, our good Mistress of Novices? This is the first time I am allowing this idea to surface, but I have not yet seriously examined whether this change would actually be necessary. According to your Regulations, the Mother Superior must be Head of Zeal, Head of Instruction, and Head of Work. Even at that, we do not require that she be qualified to exercise all the functions of zeal, instruction, and work, but rather that she has the prudence necessary to direct them well, according to the views of the Institute of Mary.

I did not realize that to prepare a lodging for Father Lagutère in the former laundry would cost 1,500 francs. Perhaps if we gave him purely and simply this building with the adjacent grounds, he would slowly install himself according to his fancy. I would hope so, for his own good and that of the convent. If that is not possible we will need to rent it, but without a lease, because we may have the funds later; the building is very suitable for a chaplain like Father Lagutère.

In the beginning we accepted Sister Julie for school work, and she seemed humble and simple; how can she consider herself a servant today? If she cannot overcome her pride, she will need to be changed; is this perhaps because she is in her native country? Before we removed her from Tonneins, everyone was highly pleased with her.

You have done well in not lending your Constitutions and Regulations to the Mlles Silhères.<sup>1</sup> If these women of Montfort are strong enough to equip their house as a religious community, why do they not write to me? Etc. . . .

I have greater sorrow than your good Mother over the anxiety being caused her. It will not be my fault if I do not find some means of making amends to her for this. Give her the assurance of my sincere and respectful attachment, as also to your father.

May the Lord be with you and with all our dear Daughters!

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*Nevertheless, Father Caillet had returned to Paris; correspondence with him was resumed, rich in ideas on various matters.*

### **350. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

June 16, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

[With insert from S. 350]

My dear Son,

It was with joy that I received your letter dated in Saint-Remy but stamped in Paris. Yours of June 1 from Besançon was received on June 7, about 1½ hours before the mail was picked up. I took advantage of this to answer you immediately and sent the letter to the seminary of Besançon. I did not have time to have a copy made. You could write to Father Breuillot and ask him to read the letter and then to forward it to you in Paris in the mail pouch of His

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<sup>1</sup> Pious young women of the small city of Montfort, diocese of Auch, who desired to found a house for the education of young women. They later entered the Institute of the Daughters of Mary (letter no. 319).

Excellency the Minister, etc. In that letter I weighed the pros and cons of buying the establishment in Vesoul and discussed the 20,000 francs of Father Bardenet.

This brief letter has no other object than to inform you about the letter I wrote to you in Besançon and to express to you all my satisfaction with whatever you have told me about Saint-Remy and about your prompt return to Paris.

I believe the attire of the Society of Mary will be sufficiently distinctive, as you have indicated. Regarding the ring, I believe I have already spoken to you about it. It will also have its small and modest distinction, according to the ranks and offices.

I am having the teachers for the normal schools seriously prepared.

I am again taking up my pen, my dear Son, to show you my satisfaction over the sacrifices you have made, whether in Saint-Remy, in Besançon, or elsewhere, in order to travel to Paris as promptly as possible. Our labors have goodness and excellence only in their relationship to the will of God. The will of God for you is that you are to be in Paris, to work there with prudence, without undue haste but without negligence, to obtain the royal ordinance which will authorize the Society of Mary in the form it receives from its Statutes, to decide upon its attire, humble no doubt, modest and favoring modesty, without being in sharp contrast with the ideas and tastes of the century in which God has called us into existence. We are to attract others, and especially young people. We are to attract them in every way: by our mild, amicable, patient manners, by our attire which announces at a glance who we are, what we seek, what we claim to be, in the name of whom we are presenting ourselves, so to speak, etc. . . . You are to settle the matter of requisition. You know the manner of proceeding with regard to the brothers teaching in the schools, but I do not remember if you have said anything about the Working Brothers. The artisans<sup>1</sup> do not need to be mentioned, I believe, for they may be confounded with the first ones in regard to the requisition. Perhaps we should follow the same policy for all the brothers in order to conform more closely to the letter of the law. I do not believe the Brothers of the Christian Schools make any type of distinction.

I am thinking of sending you in Paris at the Foreign Missions a man of a certain distinction, more by his talents and reputation than by his birth. He is rich and has some decorations. He wants to make a General Confession. If he could lodge in the house of the Foreign Missions this would be fine for him, and possibly also even for the house of the Foreign Missions. In any case, he can be made to pay a fairly high board. With the object he has in mind, he cannot be anything but a source of edification. Furthermore, his honesty, his education, and his natural wisdom are safe guarantees. . . . Several times I had the idea that God wanted to make him my intermediate or immediate successor. He is 48 years old. We must not speak of this thought, but we may well put some interest in the subject. I will tell you more about this later, when the proper times comes. May the Lord, my dear Son, pour upon you his abundant benedictions!

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*This man was M. Louis de Saget (1778-1840), one of the most distinguished members of the bar of Bordeaux, who in 1825 was named president of the chamber of the Court of Bordeaux, resigned at the time of the revolution of 1830, and spent the rest of his life in retirement.*

### **351. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

June 20, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

[With inserts from S. 351]

My dear Son,

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<sup>1</sup> Brothers drawn to the arts and crafts.

You must have received a letter dated June 17, I believe, instead of June 16. I did not have a copy made, or of the one I sent to Besançon on June 7 or June 8.

In my letter of June 16, I said I was going to send you a distinguished person who wanted to make a General Confession and preferably in the Foreign Missions, if he found the confessor suited to his needs. He would willingly accept you, if you were to remain long enough in Paris to achieve what he has in mind.

This gentleman is leaving today with the same messenger who is to take this letter. I did not give him any type of note to identify himself; I simply told him I had already notified you of his coming. and that I was going to write to you again.

The desire for conversion does not seem doubtful to him, but for about two weeks the method of carrying it out has been undergoing great changes, occasioned by variations in his affairs, as well as in his condition of health. His desire for conversion goes back at last 18 months and precedes to the annoying events which have made of it a definite project. We have several times remarked between the two of us that the good God has thus permitted things to happen because he wished to draw him from the world and from temporal matters.

First he was to enter at Saint-Remy as a "*frère donné*."<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, there was always one difficulty, the small number of priests and educated people. We had found the remedy for this great inconvenience through a library of books on religion which I would have bought at his expense and by our correspondence, etc., etc.

Today, a matter of honor which was leading him to desire to disappear from the midst of the Society, has been arranged. In this arrangement he showed a generosity, a refinement and a grandeur of soul, which touched me and made me say to him, "The good God has seen this, and he will take care of you." His doctor told him he needed to travel, to recover his health shattered by his arduous labors and possibly also in those later times by his many worries. He advised him to travel for two or three months in Switzerland. In this new state of things, we agreed that it was best to begin by cleansing his soul, that a good Confession had to be made and that afterward we would be better able to see what was the next step to be taken. He has a brother in Paris whose son is sick at the present time. This brother lives a short distance from Paris, but nevertheless has a temporary lodging in Paris itself. He believes his brother is in Paris for at least a month. He has a close relationship with him, and he does not believe he could dispense himself from going to live with him. I do not think this is or should be a cause for delaying his Confession. I believe he has enough character to proceed, without failing in what decorum would require of him.

He would have desired to profit by his stay in Paris, to instruct himself in a grand and profound way in religion. I was not quite of this same opinion. I told him that at first, he should limit himself to the reading of a very small number of works which would place before him religion as a whole, as well as the ties which unite its various parts, and then have several talks with some truly educated ecclesiastic and study especially everything that relates to Confession, for everything in him should serve to prepare him for the worthy reception of the Sacrament of Penance. After that, there would be time enough to see which side grace would lead him toward, etc. . . . Whatever usefulness there may be in his study of religion, I believe under the present circumstances there may be illusion in not following this course of action. Let him learn that we must pray and pray humbly, that we must do penance, etc. These are the first things he must learn.

His is a manly soul, a strong and penetrating mind, a prompt and penetrating judgment, he is a wise mathematician, he is deeply versed in civil law, a good orator, etc. He is regarded in Bordeaux as one of the most able lawyers. His office has brought him as much as 30,000 to 35,000 francs a year. The sacrifice of this income does not seem to present any hardship to him.

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<sup>1</sup> There is no English equivalent for *frère donne*. It simply means someone who has given himself, as it were, to a religious community, offering it his services of work and prayer in return for board and lodging. He lives in the community and is practically a part of it, but he has no religious obligations.

Moreover, his regular income yields up to 12,000 francs in rent. His brother in Paris is very rich but has no regular employment.

Regarding the talks I have referred to a moment ago, you might propose Bishop d'Hermopolis to him, but this may not be prudent considering the point his conversion has reached by this time. The Guardian of the Seals had proposed him to the Council of Ministers for a place in the high magistrature. Bishop d'Hermopolis refused him his vote because of some fact of Christian morals that goes back possibly 20 years. He is not the person who spoke to me about it; I have this from another source.

If he comes to see you, as I believe he will, you will let him know with candor and simplicity that I have instructed you regarding what he is to do first; that you are all for him, with the same devotedness by which I was all for him myself, etc., etc.; and that I had not told you his name and you would not even ask him for it, but that nevertheless, you would be glad to have his address, etc.

I regret not to be able to speak to you about the good God, as the mail carrier is about to leave. I hardly had time to read your letter. I will try to write to you by tomorrow's mail. Very truly yours.

I have just received your letter of June 15 with the pamphlet and the law about the authorization of religious sisters.

It is too bad that M. de Gombaud and M. de Razac will not hear of a compromise. A long time ago, I set aside the funds needed to pay the interest owed to M. de Razac. I will not do this until we have a settlement. Is the matter not muddled enough without making it worse?

I am sorry I am not able to speak to you more about God, but the postman will be here soon. I hardly had time to read your letter. I will try to send you something by tomorrow's mail.

I am at your service.

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*There is a question of a legal recognition of the Institute of the Daughters of Mary; Father Chaminade gives Father Caillet valuable directions for his interior life.*

### **352. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

June 23, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

[With insert from S. 352]

My dear Son,

I wrote to you yesterday in a great hurry. I wanted to continue today, but this is a moral impossibility.

I have just read, somewhat rapidly to tell the truth, the law concerning the authorization of Congregations and religious communities of women. Then I read all Father de Lammenais<sup>1</sup> says about this project of law. It would seem to me possible to have the Daughters of Mary authorized without openly deviating from the letter of the law and without falling into great inconveniences pointed out, sometimes too vigorously, by Father de Lammenais; but an understanding with the Minister would be necessary. What would be better and perhaps easier would be to make an abstraction of this law, which has important defects, and not to present the Daughters of Mary as a "religious congregation" and their establishments not as "religious communities," but as something as in the Statutes of the Society of Mary. It would even be possible to shorten the Statutes and to propose them as a civil and, so to speak, a material organization. Nothing would be astonishing, once the Society of Mary would be authorized. I

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<sup>1</sup> There is a question here of the famous Felicité de Lammenais, who in fact actively opposed this project of law.

would not wish to bring for the discussion of the Council of State anything which would belong solely to the Church.

Bishop d'Hermopolis seems to me to know the ground upon which he is treading, but he has not drawn the consequences which are analogous to the understanding of his project. This is why he has had to endure so many discussions, even to modify several articles, and this is why the law is still so imperfect, whether from the temporal or from the spiritual point of view. Today the Government hardly wants any other Catholic legislation but that of Bonaparte, and it may even be good to wait until the Government itself is Catholic in spirit before offering for its consideration any law which only supposes it to be so. Would it be already doing a great deal to have it authorize the existence of Congregations whose object is to restore the true spirit of Christianity? . . .

My dear Son, I am not making these reflections so you will share them, whether with the Minister, those who surround him, or people who are in the Government, but only with enlightened and judicious Christians if you find any, but so you may have them ripen in your own mind and finally that you may have me share your own. If the authorization of the Society of Mary really takes place, we will be able to pursue our objectives more easily. It does seem vexing that this law has been passed so soon.

I thought it could be of some use to you to make the acquaintance of M. de Portets.<sup>2</sup> This is what made me decide to ask his sister for a letter for you.

M. de Saget, that lawyer I told you about in my last two letters, could be useful to you for advice, paperwork, etc., if you need any help for our concerns. He has only a general idea of the Society of Mary, and he knows why you are in Paris.

Before going further, I will read the last point of your letter in which you speak of your interior . . . . I have reread it, and here briefly are the ideas which come to my mind. You see, both because of your travels and often by certain occupations which need to be attended to, sometimes almost without interruption, how greatly the habit of interior silence is necessary. How to preserve recollection, the presence of God, the purity of intention, the attention to divine inspirations, if in us some faculty or power of the soul comes to break the silence? It is a very wise practice always to exercise one of the powers of the soul to maintain this silence. Each time during the day we hear it speaking in its own way, may we silence it by saying to it, for example, "*Audiam quid loquatur in me Dominus meus.*"<sup>1</sup> Let us permit our memory, for example, to recall for us only what is of God or for God. In the beginning of the spiritual life, this means an almost continual interior mortification, more difficult ordinarily than the exterior mortification of the senses. To soften it somewhat, and at the same time to rid ourselves more promptly of self-love, I see no better way than the almost continual exercise of the pure love of God. Oh, my dear Son, when will we so completely leave ourselves as to love only our God in himself and for himself? And is it loving him with purity, to love him only in ourselves and for ourselves? Does self-love not thus soil the purity of divine love? We have to return to business. May the holy name of God be glorified!

I have just received a letter from Father Rothéa in which he gives me a rapid account of what he calls his round of visits. It makes me sigh to notice how he lets himself be almost completely dominated by his imagination. Happily, he has the fear of God and an upright heart! I hardly know as yet just how I will answer him.

The young lady of Sainte-Clotilde reminded me of two commissions of Mlle de Noaillan which I had forgotten. I have just looked for the notes she had given me, and one is found outside its envelope and no doubt got mixed up with other papers. A new search would delay the departure of this letter. I am sending you the one referring to the sister governess. Might it be to the taste of Father Mertian to have this position duly filled?

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<sup>2</sup> Professor of law in the College of Paris and father of one of the Daughters of Mary.

<sup>1</sup> "I will listen to what the Lord says in me."

The rector of the academy of Bordeaux seems well enough disposed. He is still remaining in the country, for he has left the running of the academy to one of the Inspectors who, to bring about the request of Brother Auguste, would wish to bring together the academic council. Several members of this council are absent; several believe because there was a meeting a short time ago, it would hardly be worthwhile to have another just for the discussion of one matter. I advised Brother Auguste to go to see the rector at his place in the country, about seven miles from Bordeaux, or at least to write to him. I think he will go tomorrow, if he can find a place in a carriage. The professor of philosophy of the royal *collège*, a member of the academic council, is highly in favor of the teaching of philosophy in the boarding school. He sees many advantages in this—that is, for the pupils of the boarding school and no inconvenience for the *collège*. He is Fr. Toucas-Poyen, pastor of Saint Pierre, and very interested in everything which concerns the university.<sup>1</sup> If the Statutes of the Society of Mary were once approved, this would be one more reason to give, for the need of teaching philosophy in the boarding school. The pupils of the Society<sup>2</sup> who would be in philosophy, could go there, for the boarding school is run in such a way that ecclesiastical students are not out of place there. You know I have a professor of philosophy at the Madeleine for just one novice. The pastor of Saint Pierre was of the opinion that in asking for the secondary school in Saint-Remy, you were asking by this very fact for philosophy to be taught there, and that as a result, there is or there will be greater need for it than even in Bordeaux. You will see to it, if there is still time, and if the rector of the academy of Besançon judges it appropriate.

I have asked Brother Clouzet for a replacement for Brother Constant in case he is not exempted. I am surprised that Brother Clouzet, who certainly knows the means we had at our disposal for obtaining the exemption of young men of value to the Society, has had no success whatsoever in this case. One tactic we used was to send the young man to a prefecture other than the one where he was born. I had told M. Lacoste of this practice, and he will be surprised that it has not succeeded. Several young men now living in Bordeaux but natives of other departments were sent here, and all were exempted—at least all those I know. The prefects and the review boards were not strict with those of their departments. Write again to Brother Clouzet; perhaps he will be more bold and more industrious.

My dear Son, may the Lord grant you his mercy and his peace!

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### **353. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

June 28, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

My dear Son,

There you are, busy in Paris during the time you will need to remain there.<sup>3</sup> Let us bless Divine Providence without ceasing! God seems to make himself conspicuous to people by this attribute, to attract their hearts, but their ingratitude is inconceivable.

Try to find out what is the method of teaching of these good sisters, what degree of perfection it has reached, what are their Constitutions, what is their particular end, their origin, the extent of their labors, etc. You may take notes if there is occasion or reason for it.

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<sup>1</sup> Fr. Toucas-Poyen (1755-1835), former pastor of Saint Genes de Talence, had distinguished himself during the Revolution by his courageous refusal to take the oath of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy.

<sup>2</sup> The pupils of the little seminary of the Madeleine.

<sup>3</sup> We do not know what occupation is referred to here, but from what follows it seems Fr. Caillet had to busy himself with the affairs of a Congregation of teaching sisters.



Have you obtained for yourself the royal ordinance of February 29, 1816? Or do you perhaps believe it will form part of the double collection that you are making, or intend to make? I would be very glad to have it before me, even more so if there had to be further delay in your obtaining those collections.

You may assure anyone in need of this assurance that I will train young men in the first degree of primary education, for we will soon have some who will be able to run normal schools. I have joined to those of Saint-Laurent some from the Madeleine for mathematics and especially for land-surveying, and all are seriously studying the French language. I obtained two excellent teachers for them, one for mathematics and the other for French, etc. Those from the Madeleine will be able to teach with no inconvenience in the normal schools, although clothed in ecclesiastical garb.

It is permissible to give M. d'Amécourt all the satisfaction he may desire about the formation of the Society of Mary, although in general the work of the normal schools and of the annual retreats is what should particularly interest him. Let him have a clear idea, especially, of the end we propose to ourselves, that of multiplying Christians, of propagating everywhere the true principles of religion, of virtues, of the monarchy, and of lawfulness. If he wishes to take notice of it, he will see that this work of the normal schools is directly in opposition to the path traced out by d'Alembert, to introduce philosophism by means of schoolteachers into places even the farthest away from the cities. Our teachers, no doubt, must be able to teach what we have just learned, but what can be made known about the method only through actual practice is the wise and enlightened zeal of the teachers in winning hearts to the practice of virtue and religion.

You would please me, my dear Son, to see for yourself and also to consult others for the purpose of drawing up an outline of two or three short courses of religion and Christian morals for our young novices or our lay teachers. We are not entirely in want regarding this important point, as you yourself know, but we can always improve on what we already possess. There may be works of which I know nothing interesting, either in the order of subject matter or in the manner of presentation and development. I said "two or three courses." In fact, several are needed because there are such differences in ages, previous education, aptitudes, and so forth! The youngest who have the means can take them all successively, and this would really make them strong in the matter of the teaching of religion. . . .

I simply must stop now because of the mail which is about to leave. I will write to you as much as I can. Do not neglect the principal matter. Receive here the paternal blessing.

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*There is a question of a normal school to be established in the diocese of Nancy, and of the spiritual direction to be given to M. de Saget in regard to his retirement.*

### **354. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

July 5, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

[With inserts from S. 354]

My dear Son,

I was going to write to you when I received your letter of June 28. I will try to answer it, in proportion as I reread its various articles.

You found that the letter I wrote to you from Besançon lacked precision (June 7). I told you that I kept no copy. Therefore, I can explain only the paragraph which you quote. I reread your letter from Besançon in order to understand the paragraph in question, and I see now that I attributed to Father Breuillot what you said about Father Bardenet, that he was allocating to some other good work the 10,000 francs he wished to give personally. I supposed that the seminary of

Besançon had no pressing need, and that Father Breuillot was going to buy the house in Vesoul or would offer us the money to do so, thereby hastening the time when Providence would give us the means to purchase it.

You do not seem to find very clear, the letter I wrote to you in Besançon on June 7. I now recognize that I attributed to Father Breuillot what you said about Father Bardenet—namely, that he would employ for another good work the 10,000 francs he wished to give.

Since that time, there seems to be some means of obtaining funds in Alsace which could be applied to the house of Vesoul. . . . Let us be patient! You know how much I am against making establishments for sisters in places where there is not the assurance of finding priests to direct them. Perhaps the good God wants to make the acceptance of the *collège* coincide with this establishment of the Daughters of Mary.<sup>1</sup> This concurrence would be even more necessary because this establishment would be more important and destined to serve all the surrounding regions. . . . You can easily have Father Breuillot remain patient, and also see if it would not be suitable to write to Father Bardenet. . . . You have told me nothing about the establishments for the deaf; several young men of the Society are learning sign language and succeeding very well in it.

You have done well, my dear Son, to recall the letters of June 8, 11, and 12, for Father Bardenet's proposal had completely slipped my mind. As you can see from what I have said above, after greeting Father Bardenet for me you can tell him that I am disposed to accept the 20,000 francs which he is to pay to M. d'Argenson next November. It will make it easier for me to pay the 5% interest on the much larger sums we will borrow in Alsace. However, I cannot give him a final answer (1) until he gives me the 20,000 francs in promissory notes and (2) until I know exactly when I can convert them into cash. I suppose this would be some time in November, at a suitable date, at which time I could negotiate with the seminary of Besançon for the purchase of the building. Because these are long-term notes, further negotiations will be necessary. I imagine the 20,000 francs can be paid to M. d'Argenson from the sale of the property of Sisters Xavier and Ignace; the latter has reached her majority. After I receive a response from Father Bardenet, I will find the best way to pay the entire debt. Moreover, as he remarked, if we do not have the cash, we could still borrow.

When you have finished your work in Paris, will you go to Saint-Remy or are you returning to Bordeaux? It is not through forgetfulness that I have not answered this question, but the answer seemed to me premature. When will you have finished? If the matter of the authorization for the religious men ends happily, will there no longer be anything to do for our good Daughters of Mary? On the supposition that your presence in Paris will soon be no longer necessary, I have no uncertainty at all regarding your return to Bordeaux. Moreover, I would have great need of making my round of visits in the Haut-Pays, and I would want you to be here. It would be very useful, as you see, if the royal approval were known before the holding of the general councils of the departments, and especially that of Lot-et-Garonne.

I am very inclined, my dear Son, to affiliate M. O'Lombel to the Society of Mary, but it would be desirable for him to write me a short letter in which he would let me know of this desire on his part. Regarding the woman who would like to become a sodalist, I will also very willingly affiliate her with the Women's Sodality, but it would be equally desirable on her part to ask me for this favor. Possibly it might be preferable if she would be affiliated to the Daughters of Mary. You will judge by her character, etc. You would take charge of both, and send me under separate cover, etc. . . .

My dear Son, I do not doubt that if the Bishop of Nancy<sup>2</sup> undertakes the establishment of a normal school, he will easily make a success of it. It seems to me hardly suitable for me to be the first to write to His Excellency, both after what he had already said of me to M. O'Lombel

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<sup>1</sup> Fr. Chaminade nourished the hope of seeing the *collège* of Vesoul confided to the Society of Mary.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop de Forbin-Janson, acquainted with Fr. Chaminade (see letter no. 267).

and after the desire he made known to you only on the occasion of a visit you paid to him. M. O'Lombel could write to him in his own name and say to him, for example, that if he truly wants a normal school for the aspirants of primary teaching, to which we would join an annual retreat for the older schoolteachers, he would advise him to write to me himself about the matter. At the same time, he would talk to me at the same time about the buildings he might have in mind in order to receive, whether the aspirants to primary teaching or the older teachers coming for the retreats; that for the success of the reform he is considering for his entire diocese through this enterprise, he should have an understanding with the rector of the academy of the department in which his diocese is located; that if then he was not sufficiently informed concerning the nature of the academy and the real good it could do, to make this known to the rector of his academy, he could have him write about it to the rector of the Academy of Besançon; that in addition to regarding the enterprise as such, it could be seen at first glance that in a short while there would be a reform among all the schoolteachers, and if there might be some former teacher who was not susceptible to reform, one of the aspirants, capable and thoroughly Christian, could easily be found to replace him.

Would the establishment be diocesan? Doubtless, as a matter of propriety, if the diocese gave it. But regarding the management, this would belong to the Society, and this is everything that is needed for the accomplishment of the good. Things would be different if Saint-Remy were not a property.

I am a little astonished at the variations and the type of uncertainty harassing M. Saget, as shown by the manner in which his conversion is working out. Find him a good boarding place in which to stay, preferably near the Foreign Missions and see that in this place there will be no stumbling block. Perhaps he could pass the greater portion of the day in the very house of the Foreign Missions, where he would find a library, a garden, and a church, because in his state, he needs these three things. He needs a long retreat, and he must not need to go to find any one of these elsewhere. Moreover, you and Father Busson<sup>1</sup> can have talks with him and speak the language of faith. Is religion true, really true? Then, is there an eternity of supreme happiness? Is there one of supreme unhappiness?

If . . . then. . . Sometimes get down to proofs, give him some work in which these truths are well brought out; but if such works are dry, as is sometimes the case, then resort to particular interviews and have Father Busson spread the anointing of the faith . . . Perhaps Father Busson will see the necessity of occupying him with writings, in keeping with his own particular tastes. When Brother David was converted, he was just three years younger than M. de S[aget]. I made him work a great deal, but not to absorb him too much. If he begins to feel freer and in proper shape, you may have him write to me about his dispositions since you have a way of passing your letters on to me without expense, etc. Let us pray for him without ceasing. You may tell him I have written to you, and that I am always recommending him to you and am deeply devoted to him. Surely you will want it so.

Because the matter regarding the secondary school of Saint-Remy is being delayed, my dear Son, would there still be time to ask the rector of the academy of Besançon if the diploma granted to Brother Rothéa carries the permission to teach philosophy? I am mentioning this here because of an observation made by the professor of philosophy here at the royal *collège*; however, I do not believe there is a need to make a great fuss about it, if this cannot easily be done.

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<sup>1</sup> Fr. Claude-Ignatius Busson (1785-1859) son of a teacher of Franche-Comte put to death on the guillotine in 1793, was ordained a priest in 1811 and in 1814 was employed in teaching theology in the seminary of Besançon. In 1818 he entered the novitiate of the Jesuits in Paris, and after several months he moved to the seminary of the Foreign Missions. There he acquired a great reputation as catechist and confessor and had ongoing relationships with Châteaubriand, Montalembert, and de Lamennais. In 1828 he was named Secretary General of the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs and became chaplain to Charles X, whom he followed into exile. Returning to Besançon, he founded the work of the Daughters of Service, the Association of Calvary, and the Confraternity of a Happy Death.

You tell me, my dear Son, that all your papers have been sent to the Royal Council of Public Instruction. Doubtless this is a necessary formality in order to obtain its advice, but it may not render any decision. Nevertheless, although the State Council has no need of conforming to the advice of the Council of Public Instruction, it would be vexing if this advice were against us. I believe you will have taken care of informing yourself regarding the formalities to be observed—if, for example, it is customary to go and see the council members or only the head person or the reporter. I am not acquainted with the manner of proceeding. Obtain careful information, and be certain not to miss anything. Find out especially how the State Council is composed. See if you have some member of this council on your side, etc., etc. I had thought Father de la Chapelle was to be the reporter of this matter in one of the councils.

I was already this far with this long letter, my dear Son, when I received one from Brother Clouzet, which I am also sending on to you. You conferred about it with the Archbishop of Besançon. You know what I would have desired, for you are fairly well acquainted with the people and things concerned. Do the best you can. I am also sending you a copy of the letter I am writing to Father Rothéa and also his letter, so you may be better informed.

My dear Son, everything you tell me about Father Blanc interests me greatly. The association of secular priests which he proposes to found could do a great good, first for the priests themselves and then for the glory of God.<sup>1</sup> Ask him please to let me know his ideas, and everything the Lord may have inspired him to do, etc. . . . I will answer him. His mind will then be sooner and more firmly made up, and he will be able more easily to influence the young priests who might want to become members of this association. I am stopping now, as the mail carrier is about to leave. I wish you the peace of the Lord.

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*Here is the letter announced above.*

### **355. To Fr. Charles Rothéa, Saint-Remy**

July 5, 1825, Bordeaux

Copy, Agmar

My dear Son,

I have just received your letter of June 24, and I am answering it immediately because of the importance of certain points it touches upon. I also have one in which you give me the details about your journey in Alsace.

Regarding the first point, the one about the 16 candidates offered by the rector, I see with pleasure that in the discussion as to whether they should be accepted or refused, the affirmative vote won the day. They will still be at Saint-Remy during the retreat. Are you concerned that they will be any bother? But why would they not be following the exercises of one retreat and even the conferences about teaching during the second, if there happens to be one? The only thing needed would be a little special supervision when they would not be assisting at the spiritual exercises.

Regarding the retreat itself, the one to be given to the schoolteachers of the department of Haute-Saône in the manner decided upon for those of Doubs, I gave no orders that it should be given. In spite of the fact that we are not to receive the 3,114 francs,<sup>1</sup> I simply manifested a desire

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<sup>1</sup> There is no further information about Fr. Blanc, but the manuscript Statutes of the “Sacerdotal Administration” sent by him to Fr. Chaminade have been preserved in the archives of the Society of Mary. These Statutes, very developed and preceded by very edifying “General Considerations,” are similar to those of various associations organized in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the purpose of maintaining secular priests in the spirit of the holiness of their state by means of association and direction.

<sup>1</sup> Grant of money voted by the General Council of the Haute-Saône and dismissed by the Minister of the Interior because the Society of Mary was not yet authorized.

that it should take place, and I indicated some means which could be taken to ensure its success. Father Caillet, to whom I expressed the same desire, conferred about it with the Archbishop of Besançon. I hope that in one way or another, Providence will make provision for these retreats. I desire that they will take place, and I would be sorry if they did not, under the pretext that the expenses connected with them were not forthcoming. I am surprised Brother Clouzet did not come to any agreement with Father Caillet during his short stay in Saint-Remy. I am going to send your letter and its reply to Father Caillet in Paris, and perhaps the one written to Brother Clouzet in which there is question of the retreats. Father Caillet will finally decide what will be most suitable, write about it to Brother Clouzet, and give me an account of the entire matter.

My dear Son, I am not trying to forget about the need Saint-Remy has of subjects capable of teaching, but Saint-Remy must patiently wait until the Lord sends us some, just as I myself must wait. However, I am having some trained. Let us continue to work, for the Lord has his own views about the poverty in which we find ourselves at this time.

I believe, my dear Son, that frequent Communion is very salutary, but what is understood by "frequent Communion"? I have never permitted Communion every Sunday to young men who do not know their vocation in life, although in a state of fervor. At first every month, and after their virtue and piety have considerably increased, every two weeks. Then every week, when they have decided upon the ecclesiastical or the religious state and if their parents have consented to this. If some great solemnity comes along, then let one of the Communions be advanced or postponed according to the first arrangement. When fervor has become great and the desire for Communion is ardent and sustained, then Communion on these extra occasions is permitted without prejudice to the ordinary Communions already decided upon. This is the policy I have held to almost all throughout my life.<sup>2</sup> Father Alègre must not have introduced anything of this type in the boarding school, for he was not of the kind to inspire confidence.

Brother Langeay wrote all his thoughts to me at great length, and I answered him that I would take them into consideration. I am very glad he, you, and everyone else confidently share with me all your ideas, improvements, etc., etc., but I think it is hardly suitable that among yourselves you blame, you approve, you comment upon, etc., however good the intentions may be.

My dear Son, I have no idea at all of having ever said or written that all the establishments of the Institute would be governed by religious laymen, that the priests would be subject to the religious laymen, etc. I presume there will be a large number of establishments in which the laymen will be doing the main work, such as, for example at Saint-Remy. That one at the start seemed destined to be the first of its kind. Superiors are then to be chosen from among the laymen. Nevertheless, some priests are needed as Heads of Zeal, spiritual directors, chaplains, etc. These priests are not subject to lay religious in the same sense as are other lay religious; their place is more honorable, even from the standpoint of reason, than that of the superior, properly so-called. Doubtless they are subject to the Rule, but less, so to speak, than the superior.<sup>2</sup> Several times I have already had occasion to learn of the annoying interpretations which some minds had given to the nomination of superiors in Saint-Remy, which two years ago even obliged me to give a lengthy explanation before leaving Saint-Laurent; but this explanation was not put in writing, and several of those who were at the ceremony were not at the meeting. I will supply the need by

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<sup>2</sup> This conduct was inspired by the rules commonly in use at this time. "If it is good," declared the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, "to exhort the faithful to frequent Communions, those who would be inclined to practice this should nevertheless be warned not to make this more than once a week." And Saint Francis de Sales required for weekly Communion the absence of all affection to venial sin. For the religious, Fr. Chaminade was more open-minded, as can be seen in *Spirit of Our Foundation*, no. 1057.

<sup>2</sup> Fr. Chaminade's thought seems to be this. In the house directed by a lay religious of the Society, the priests, with the sacerdotal character and as members of the hierarchy, enjoy the privileges attached to the ecclesiastical state and depend on the Superior General or the provincial for everything regarding their personal conduct. See letter no. 294.

a very clear and sufficiently developed article, when once there is a question of interior Regulations.

In your correspondence with Brother Laugeay, my dear Son, you may well tell him as softly as you like that there was little prudence and humility in blaming along with you the boarding school in Bordeaux and the one which is being established in Saint-Remy, in making you part and parcel of his tastes, etc. . . .

I pity Brother Gaussens that he pities himself.<sup>3</sup> When Father Caillet returns to Saint-Remy, he will investigate the needs of the work to be done and the matter of available subjects, so the brother may have time to breathe and peacefully make his exercises of piety.

To blame austerities, penances, and acts of humility, would be to blame the conduct of the saints; it would be almost blaming the Gospel. . . . It must not be concluded that they must be resorted to indiscreetly and without counsel. . . . You must not make your *coulpe* to Brother Bousquet. If you know how to do things, you will not miss occasions to blame yourself for your faults before others, without doing it as a matter of *coulpe*.

I cannot authorize you to receive members into the Confraternity of the Scapular, but I could obtain for you an authorization from the pope for the entire house. We will return to this again later. I will come to a close, my dear Son, in exhorting you to work, however without too intense an application of mind, at the acquisition of the silence of the imagination. If your imagination had not spoken so much before your departure for Landser, you would have limited yourself to going to see your parents; you would have been the consolation of your mother, you would have done for her soul all the good possible, and perhaps through them you might also have been able to do some good for the Institute or for Saint-Remy. It does not seem you have gained greater mastery over your imagination from your rapid round of visits. Did you return back to Saint-Remy better than when you left? What good can we do in the places to which we travel, when our mission is no more than a matter of imagination?

May the Lord deign to shower upon you, my dear Son, and upon all my dear Children in Saint-Remy his most abundant blessings!

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Bro. Pierre Bousquet, mentioned in the preceding letter, was born in Bordeaux in 1795. He was a cooper by trade. In 1817 he joined the Sodality of the Madeleine and placed himself under the direction of Father Chaminade. He was the first novice of the Society on the day following its foundation and obtained permission from the Good Father as a special favor at the time of his entry into the novitiate (1818) to make private perpetual vows, which he changed the following year (1819) to the ordinary vows of religion. After having been employed in the Sainte-Marie boarding school in Bordeaux, he was part of the first group sent to Saint-Remy, where he was Head of Work. In 1830 he was named director of the Charity Orphanage of Besançon; in 1835 he returned to Saint-Remy, where the Good Father confided to him the charge of Master of Novice-workers because at this time, the novitiates of the various categories of religious were separated.

An episode in the life of Brother Bousquet contains a lesson. He was assailed by a violent temptation, that of leaving the Society to become a Trappist. "He asked me," Father Chaminade wrote, "to reveal his good reasons to a counsel foreign to the Society. There is in this manner of acting a specious illusion, for what other reason could the Society have in keeping him than that of having him fulfill all his duties toward God? Such ideas can only paralyze him in the accomplishment of the plans of God in his regard and prevent him from zealously fulfilling the duties with which he is charged. He does not understand that in admitting all these ideas and in cherishing them, he is acting

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<sup>3</sup> Bro. Gaussens, charged especially with teaching in Saint-Remy, complained about the overload of work imposed upon him.

contrary to his vow of stability. This state of mind is very dangerous for his salvation.” Brother Bousquet nevertheless left for the Trappist monastery, made an 8-day retreat there, and was disposing himself to take the habit when on the eve of the Feast of Saint Joseph he was seized with sorrow and worries such as he had never before experienced in his life. He later wrote to Father Chaminade, “I chose the part of placing the entire matter in the hands of the good Saint Joseph, while praying him to obtain for me the help I needed in such pressing danger. I made a vow of fasting every Wednesday for a year in his honor if he obtained peace of soul for me. Immediately the bandages fell from my eyes; I recognized all the imprudence of what I had done, and I saw clearly that the good God was asking me to return to your feet, my Good Father, to receive the penance you will be pleased to impose upon me.” Father Chaminade sent Brother Bousquet back to Saint-Remy to resume his former functions. He immediately returned to the performance of his duty, but he had to expiate his weakness because the former temptation returned, and it became necessary for Father Chaminade to protect him, with loving kindness, against the illusions of his old enemy. “I am not losing confidence,” wrote Father Chaminade. “He has too long been exemplary and too long faithful to the august Mary to fall again.” Actually, he continued to edify the Society of Mary at Saint-Remy and then at the charity orphanage, the direction of which was confided to him in 1840.

Nevertheless his health, which he had never spared, was getting the better of him. He fell seriously ill, and with great sorrow he was transferred to Courtefontaine. There his life was prolonged beyond all expectations. Given charge of the infirmary, he was ingenious in relieving the sufferings of others, without reckoning on his own. While giving his superiors an account of his average day, he could summarize everything in these words, “to suffer and to pray.” Thus he lived nearly 20 more years. Toward the end of his life, Father Lalanne came to preside at a retreat at Courtefontaine. When he saw Brother Bousquet again, tired by age and infirmities, he went to him in the midst of the assembled brothers, and the two men remained a long time in each other’s embrace. Those were the dearest memories of the foundation, which were relived in their persons, amid the deep emotion of all those present. Brother Bousquet died July 26, 1869, the feastday of Sainte Anne, and his death was as edifying as his life had been.

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*In view of the establishment of the Society of Mary in Paris, there is a question of the acquisition of the large Richelieu Hotel, located on the pier of Bethune, Isle of Saint Louis, behind Notre Dame Cathedral. M. O’Lombel is negotiating this matter. The hotel was for sale for 200,000 francs, of which 50,000 had to be paid in cash.*

### **356. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

July 10, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

[With insert from S. 356]

My dear Son,

I have just received your letter of July 7, and before answering it I will come back to the last point of yours of June 28, which I could not answer in my letter of July 5. My dear Son, I cannot see what we can do better for your parents than what Father Farine will decide. We will always consider as done and wisely settled what he has done and settled. Regarding your young niece, see for yourself, before God and without scruples what you believe is the most suitable thing to do. You know her, and you know the position of the four convents of the Daughters of Mary. I do not doubt they will do everything I will advise them to do. In addition, I will speak to them about this only when you deem it appropriate for me to do so. She seems to me still rather young to enter community life. Would you not believe there is a danger that she would acquire a

distaste for religious life, rather than learn its real spirit? If some establishment of the Daughters of Mary were begun in Alsace or near it, the project could be tried with at least some hope for success. Do whatever you can to having her given a solid and truly Christian education. If toward this end some expense is necessary, I am well disposed to help.

The large Hotel Richelieu would seem to me very suitable for a religious establishment such as would be needed in Paris.

The principal and immediate work or need should be a normal school for primary teaching, accompanied by annual two-week retreats for the schoolteachers. In this normal school, only young teachers of the department of the Seine would be received, but also all those from the province who would prefer this school to the closer ones they could find.

My dear Son, you tell me M. d'Amécourt would have in mind the formation near Paris of an establishment on a small scale which would be able to serve as a model and prove the great good of which its development would make it capable. This manner of proceeding is both correct and prudent for most new establishments, in general, but regarding the one of which there is a question here, the case is otherwise, and M. d'Amécourt will soon take notice of it if he deigns to fix his attention somewhat on this particular type of establishment.

1. This type of establishment is destined to form new teachers and to reform older ones, or if they are not to be reformed either in their morals or in their manner of treating or teaching their pupils, to replace them with new ones. By the reforming or replacement of the teachers, the establishment will attain the reform of the class which takes in the greatest number of people, and this is one of the objects of the Society of Mary. If an establishment is begun on a small scale, the good it will have done will not be noticed at all—or at any rate, too little to be of any use.

2. A reform in the ordinary class of people is desirable, and consequently in primary teaching. The university seems to be occupying itself with this; in line with these views, the Royal Council of Public Instruction has called for several royal ordinances. This happy effect has seemed to be made possible only partially through various means and various precautions. Here a unique cause is offered, which evidently alone will produce this effect.

3. People would wish to see trials made. But have they not been made? Has the establishment in Saint-Remy not brought about the reform among the schoolteachers who came there? Is it not forming new ones, ready to replace those for whom reform has no appeal? Is the reform of the present generation of people not being brought about by the religious teachers formed by the Society of Mary? Let anyone take the trouble of informing himself about the effects which have been produced by the schools in Agen, Villeneuve-sur-Lot, and Colmar. In all truth, the teachers in these schools are very zealous religious; but in general, the other teachers formed in the normal schools will not undergo as many difficulties because most will be teaching only in the country schools.

I say, my dear Son, that an establishment on a small scale which would serve only to show or prove what an establishment on a large scale could do would only employ, and without profit, subjects who are so greatly needed in establishments already formed or requested.

The acquisition of the large Richelieu Hotel is nerve-racking. What is to be done? Await the time indicated by an amiable Providence, as you say. We already have more work than we can do. I would have been pleased with this establishment in Paris only because it would have been under the eyes of the king, so to speak, and of the university and the Government, and also because it would have brought about strong emulation in the provinces.

My dear Son, I have read your letter of April 28 again,<sup>1</sup> and it has filled me with sentiments of respect and gratitude. I would have greatly desired that our first dealings with him<sup>2</sup> would have led to the forming in the commune where he is the mayor the small establishment he is proposing to us, but I do not believe the time for this has yet come. We have too few subjects,

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<sup>1</sup> Doubtless Fr. Chaminade meant to write June 28.

<sup>2</sup> Doubtless, with M. d'Amécourt.



and this establishment would be good to improve some people, but not to attract any. Later, if he has not achieved his plans, I will be the first to propose the matter to him. If we form the large establishment in Paris, this is not because we have an overabundance of available subjects; on the contrary, we would have a great deal to annoy us in the beginning, and we would postpone many which are asked of us. This seems good to me only because it would give a beneficial momentum to the very important work in question and also to that of our Sodalties, so useful everywhere but above all in Paris. If I were not fearing this large establishment as much as I desire it, and even more so, I would have been able to make various estimates which might have served to compensate the Association of Benevolence for at least a portion of the money it would have had to pay on this acquisition, but I have very willingly given up the idea. If the good God wants us in Paris, he will be anxious for ways to attract us there. On this score, we need not worry.

Thank the woman proprietor, and also M. O'Lombel and M. Quadrès. They can make their speculations regarding this large hotel. They would be able to buy it at first, only by an assurance policy and under private seal. Once it is approved, the Society of Mary would have little to pay for registration. Providence is very admirable in its manner of managing events!

Regarding M. Quadrès, if he did not take part in this speculation, which is not lacking in importance and which must naturally entail great cares, he could retire to Saint-Remy. In spite of his great age, he could still teach for a few years and continue to sanctify himself in retirement by the practice of the Christian and religious virtues.

My dear Son, I am sending you copies of the agreement which M. de Gombaude had asked for and of the letter Brother David had written to me when he had me review the agreement which M. de Gombaude refused to sign. M. de Razac is familiar with both documents from having discussed them with his lawyer who, in general, is not very conciliatory. With his love and disposition for peace, I am surprised that he will not sign.

You have done well in following the advice given to you not to buy the collection of laws and ordinances on public instruction. Nevertheless, try to have that of April 8, 1824—I believe at least that this is the date; the royal ordinance makes the schoolteachers dependent upon the bishops. This law has been accompanied by instructions to the bishops. There must be another law in practice which I know nothing about. These are to be found separately, especially when they are not old.

You must be finding great incorrectness of style in my letters, for while writing I am constantly disturbed and have no time to reread what I have written. About the only way I can find to consider matters is to discuss them. Ordinarily, however, it is without care, in the peace and in the presence of God. May the Lord deign to continue his blessing upon you!

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*Father Chaminade addresses this note to his niece.*

**357. To Mme Sophie de Lala, Sarlat**

July 11, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Arch. of the de Lala Family

My dear Child,

I think you would rather receive a few lines in answer to your letter of last May 21 than wait for a long letter later on at an uncertain time. I am setting aside the most serious matters to give you this small sign of life.

I would very willingly accept the same quantity of wool as last year, and even more, if you caused me to return to the small advance monetary payments you are obliged to make, either to buy it or to have it prepared.

I felt a real joy in learning about the change for the better in our dear Firmin. My influence for a marriage would be greater if it were proposed by another rather than by me. I have already had occasion to note this several times. Let him take great care in discovering his vocation and how to live as a real Christian, and let us hope the good God will let him know the one he destines for him. He is still so young to marry!

My sister joins me in expressing our love to all of you and in offering our respects to Mlle Mondesse.

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### 358. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris

July 15, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

[With inserts from S. 358]

My dear Son,

I have received your letter of July 6. The rector of the Academy of Bordeaux allowed his imagination to be impressed by the thought that if he should grant Brother Auguste the teaching of philosophy, other teachers in the boarding school might make the same request. He remained in the city too short a time, so anyone might have been able to convince him that there was no boarding school in the city able to give him the same guarantees and to show the same titles. Perhaps this trifling reason was alleged, for one had to be alleged—that it was suggested by the difficulty arising from the fact of his not having been consulted before speaking of it to His Excellency the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs and of Public Instruction? This is the first impression he allowed to be known when the request of Brother Auguste had been returned to him. If the Council of Public Instruction had been impressed by such a feeble reason, we simply must be patient, as in all other annoying contradictions. Nevertheless, it would be good if you had occasion to speak confidentially with Bishop d'Hermopolis or with some other outstanding member of the Royal Council of Public Instruction, to have it observed that the general good will be seriously hampered in the activity of certain academies if the recommendations of their rectors are followed without examination. The passions of human beings, their dispositions more or less favorable to the faith, to religion, and to the monarchy, play their game among these authorities as among others; all the more reason for great discretion, so the evil may not be increased.

If Father Poirier<sup>1</sup> or anyone else founds Societies of brothers, well and good; we should regard him neither with envy nor with jealousy. If the good God sends them, let us rejoice in the fact that the good will be multiplied, etc. Nevertheless, there would be two things especially to be feared in the multiplication of these institutions. The first is that where they are, they prevent the establishment of a true normal school and of retreats, in the sense that we understand these terms, and this means no uniformity in primary teaching and very little reform among the schoolteachers. Second, it is morally impossible for these institutions not to deteriorate, and even quickly enough, in the members who compose them. *Corruptio optimi pessima* [corruption of the best is the worst]. Let me know, nevertheless, everything that will happen in this regard. Send me their prospectus and everything you are able to learn about their organization and regulations. You tell me, my dear Son, that Father Poirier would not be opposed to some proposals for union, but who would make these proposals? We are always ready to hear some, but we are not making any. Proposals of mutual assistance? But of what assistance? In subjects? This is impractical because our subjects do not go anywhere alone. In money? What appearance is there of abundance, whether on the one side or on the other?

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<sup>1</sup> Founder of a Society, Brothers of the Cross, which seems not to have continued in existence.

I believe Father Lalanne will willingly adopt the idea of sending you the samples of his work<sup>1</sup> for the ends you have in mind. I will soon speak to him about this. A feast for the anointing of the king is being prepared in the boarding school on Rue du Mirail. We would have been very glad if we learned beforehand that the king had sanctioned, etc.

Once we know Father Bardenet's reaction to the last proposals which you put to him along the lines of what I wrote to you, I will see what can be done with Father Breuillot about the house in Vesoul, and at the same time about the other establishments. My dear Son, meet M. Vallet and his 13-year-old son; if you detect in them all the good that rumor confers on them, send them both to Saint-Remy.

I am taking and rereading the copy of the letter Bro. [Louis] Rothéa is writing to you. If once Vesoul is disposed of, we would be able to look after the convent of Lubbach in Alsace;<sup>2</sup> you could speak to me again about it, if you thought it was suitable. It seems to me we could occupy ourselves more seriously about some convents in Alsace if we had established a good one in Vesoul.

I do not see any difficulty in the reception of the two young men, 15 and 16 years old, offered by Father Juif, in the novitiate of Saint-Remy. If the brother of M. Mona, as well as his school friend Lachat, are good subjects, whether in rhetoric or in humanities, they may both come to our small seminary in Bordeaux.

We can only be thankful for the goodwill manifested by the pastor of Ildgenen and by M. Gasser; however, I do not see what I could base my decision upon. Do you see clearly in the Landser matter? I see no difficulty in accepting the nephew of Brother Griffon. Besides, I am at a loss to understand what Father Rothéa means when he adds, "Bernard Fischer, brother of the young novice, can hardly wait to be received into the novitiate." I have taken note of the wishes of Mme Wendling and of the Widow Waller.

If any establishment is made, either in Alsace or in Franche-Comte, the young women of Ottmarsheim may present themselves there. . . . Because you know the young women of Sainte-Marie [-aux-Mines], relatives of Brother Troffer, you may more easily come to a decision in their regard than I. . . .

Now that Bishop d'Hermopolis has not judged it suitable to make a statute regarding the apparel, I believe you did well in withdrawing the copy of my letter which spoke about it; if Father de la Chapelle did not speak of it in his report, this copy of my letter could only have hampered the admission of the Statutes. However, do not neglect to settle the matter of the apparel nearly as I have indicated. In truth this is only an secondary matter, but one of great importance. . . .

As long as the advice of the Royal Council of Public Instruction is not entirely favorable to us, the Council of State could easily pass it over. However, everything is in the hands of the Lord and of the Blessed Virgin!

When you notice that I have forgotten to answer you on some particular point, have the kindness to let me know about this by mentioning the letter in which it is given in detail.

It would be desirable for the boarding school named after Brother Auguste to henceforth be named the Sainte-Marie boarding school. Is there anything to be done about this?<sup>1</sup>

My dear Son, let us seek only the glory of the Lord and that of his august Mother! I am asking him to shower upon you and upon all your labors his holy benedictions.

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### 359. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris

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<sup>1</sup> There seems to be a question here of one of his works on entomology.

<sup>2</sup> Lutterback in Alsace.

<sup>1</sup> Is there some legal formality to fulfill with this in mind?

July 19, 1825, Bordeaux  
Autograph, Agmar

My dear Son,

I have not received from you any news since your letter of July 6, which I answered immediately. I am not doing anything definite about my journey to the Haut-Pays, always fearing to receive some letter from you calling for a prompt reply. I imagine there must be some type of impediment, whether in the Council of Public Instruction or in the Council of State. Your sister<sup>2</sup> has just had a letter given to me. It seems from this letter that the sister you met in Paris went to Agen instead of retiring to your place. I had not heard anything further about the matter. I am now receiving a letter from Brother Clouzet which among other things tells me that upon his arrival in Besançon Father Bardenet brought him the news from the archbishop that the 3,000 francs<sup>3</sup> had been granted. Father Lalanne will see to it with pleasure that you receive a sample copy of his work for Father Receveur.<sup>4</sup> He does not believe the ecclesiastical papers will wish to bother much about a work which does not seem to have any relationship to religion. See if you could find in some secondhand bookseller's shop, either bound or in paper covers, a work in two volumes which I do not know under any other title than *Christian and Spiritual Discourses on Various Subjects Relating to the Interior Life*. If you locate this, you could obtain two copies, if available. One would be for you, for I believe you would read it with profit. I have only the second volume in a paper cover and in poor condition. Nevertheless, I have read it with interest, in spite of my lack of time.

In the midst of all my occupations, my dear Son, let us not lose sight of God for whom we are working. *In omnibus respice finem!*<sup>5</sup> May the peace of the Lord be with you!

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*Negotiations regarding the legal recognition of the Society of Mary took an important step forward. The text submitted by Father Caillet to the Council of Public Instruction was discussed and modified by this assembly and then sent on for examination by the Council of State. Father Caillet communicates this modified text to Father Chaminade, which calls forth the following reply. Here are two parallel texts; that of Father Chaminade refers to the fourth edition.*

**Fourth Edition of the Statutes of the Society of Mary  
In 22 Articles,  
Following the Observations of Bishop Frayssinous  
May 14, 1825**

1. The Society of Mary is especially devoted to primary education.
2. The principal object of its labors is to spread and preserve in childhood and youth the principles of the Catholic faith, gospel morality, and a sincere attachment to the monarchy.
3. To be admitted into the said Society, a person must be of sound mind and body, enjoy a stainless reputation, and have an interest in education or be capable of rendering service in the interior of the houses; to be accustomed to or disposed to mildness, humility, obedience, and a great confidence in God.

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<sup>2</sup> Daughter of Mary under the name of Mother Saint-Sauveur.

<sup>3</sup> Voted by the General Council of Haute-Saône for the normal school at Saint-Remy.

<sup>4</sup> The Secretary of the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs

<sup>5</sup> In all things, look to the end!

4. No commitment is made in it before a year of probation.
5. The first commitment a person makes after the probation is only for three years, and only the definitive commitment will give the privilege of full membership.
6. At the time of the definitive commitment, the agreement between the new member and the Society will be in accord with the spirit and rules of the “universal Society and of all goods” foreseen by the Civil Code, Title 9, Chapter 2, Section 1.
7. The subject who would wish to withdraw of his own accord could do so only after notifying the Superior of the Society six months in advance, and only if his withdrawal would in no way disturb the school year.
8. The subject who would withdraw of his own accord, or whom the Society would dismiss, could claim nothing for his service, industry, the use of property brought in, or for the use of his movable property, all this being acquired by the work undertaken. However, he will reclaim his belongings for the future at the end of the school term or after the six months mentioned above. In every case he will owe an indemnity for the board and instruction received, unless it had been otherwise agreed.
9. A register will be kept in the motherhouse in which will be inscribed, in order and without blanks, those entering into probation, the temporary and definitive commitments, as well as the withdrawals if there would be any. The said acts will contain the names, Christian names, and the place of birth and age of the parties, who will sign with the Superior, if they know how to sign, or they will be required to sign in the presence of two witnesses, who will also sign. The register will serve as proof in court if in some circumstance proof should be demanded.
10. If because of distance or of the number of institutions the Superior of the Society authorizes other houses of probation upon the advice of his council, then these authorized houses will have to provide themselves with a register similar to the one mentioned in the above article 9.
11. All the establishments of the Society recognize Their Excellencies the Bishops and Archbishops in the dioceses where they are formed as their First Superiors in the spiritual order, and the Superior of the Society has immediate action over all the members who follow everywhere their Rule and their customs.
12. The government of the Society will be composed of an ecclesiastical Superior approved by the Ordinary and of three Assistants, named Head of Zeal, Head of Instruction, and Head of Work.
13. All the acts of the Society, internal or external, are done in the name of the Superior. Those acts in which there would be a question of sales, acquisition of properties, exclusion of people already admitted, and similar matters will be done in the name of the Superior, upon the advice of his council, with the result that decisions would be reached in regard to these last-mentioned acts. If the council is opposed, definite action will be postponed.
14. Furthermore, the association is governed by its rules of interior discipline.
15. The teaching in the schools will be in the three degrees announced in article 2 of the royal ordinance of February 29, 1816. The Methods will be submitted to the approbation of His Excellency the Minister of Public Instruction.
16. To more promptly attain the great object of its institution, the Society will respond more particularly to the requests made by Their Excellencies the Bishops and Archbishops, by the academies, and by the departments for the establishment of normal schools, near which each year retreats will be given each year for the schoolteachers according to what has been arranged with civil and ecclesiastical authorities. These retreats will be of at least two weeks in length. During the first week, work will be focused mainly on the manner of teaching and controlling the pupils and also on the manner of instructing them in religion and its practice.

17. In order to be able to furnish capable subjects, the Society has houses of preparation where it forms according to its Method the subjects whom it intends for education.
18. If in the principal house some young pupils manifest a vocation to the ecclesiastical state and outstanding talents, the Society may continue their education to dispose them for the priesthood and then to employ them in the various establishments.
19. The functions of the priests of the Society will be the instruction and spiritual direction of pupils of the primary schools and of those of the normal schools, and they will be employed in the annual retreats of the schoolteachers.
20. The Society recognizes as its Founder and present Superior for life or until his voluntary resignation Guillaume-Joseph Chaminade, Honorary Canon of the Metropolitan Church of Bordeaux. He will name his Assistants. Superiors who will succeed him, as well as his Assistants, will be named by the Society through a plurality of votes for the time fixed by the internal regulations of the Society.
21. The superiors of the houses established by affiliation and the heads and professors of the different schools will always be named by the Superior.
22. The present Statutes will be placed at the feet of His Majesty, and he will be very humbly requested to have them examined and approved, if this is necessary, for the good of religion and of his subjects.

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**Fifth Edition of the Statutes of the Society of Mary  
In 18 Articles,  
Following the Observations of the Council of Public Instruction  
July 12, 1825**

1. The Society of Mary is especially devoted to primary education.
2. The principal object of its labors is to spread and preserve in childhood and youth the principles of the Catholic faith, gospel morality, and a sincere attachment to the monarchy.
3. No commitment is made in it before a year of probation.
4. The first commitment a person makes after the probation is only for three years, after which, if there is cause, he will be admitted as full member.
5. When a subject is admitted as a full member, the agreement between him and the Society will be in accord with the spirit of the rules of the “universal Society and of all goods” foreseen by the Civil Code, Title 9, Chapter 2, Section 1.
6. The subject who would wish to withdraw of his own accord could do so only after the notification he will have given the Superior of the Society six months in advance, and in the sole case that his withdrawal would in no way disturb the school year.
7. The subject who would withdraw of his own accord, or whom the Society would dismiss, could claim nothing for his service, industry, the use of property brought in or for the use of his movable property, all this being acquired by the work undertaken. However, he will reclaim his belongings for the future at the end of the school term or after the six months mentioned above. In every case he will owe an indemnity for the board and instruction received, unless it had been otherwise agreed.
8. A register will be kept in the motherhouse in which will be inscribed, in order and without blanks, those entering into probation, the temporary and definitive engagements, as well as the withdrawals if there should be any. The said acts will contain the names, Christian names, and the place of birth and age of the parties, who will sign with the Superior if they know how to sign, or they will be required to sign before two witnesses,

- who will also sign. The register will serve as proof in court, if in some circumstance proof should be demanded.
9. If because of distances or of the number of institutions, the Superior of the Society, upon the advice of his council, authorizes other houses of probation, then these authorized houses will have to provide themselves with a register similar to the one mentioned in the above Article 8.
  10. All the establishments of the Society recognize Their Excellencies the Bishops and Archbishops in the dioceses where they are formed as their First Superiors in the spiritual order, and the Superior of the Society has immediate action over all the members who follow everywhere their Rule and their customs.
  11. The government of the Society will be composed of an ecclesiastical Superior approved by the Ordinary, and three Assistants.
  12. All the acts of the Society, in it or outside, are done in the name of the Superior. Those of the acts in which there would be a question of sales, acquisition of properties, exclusion of people already admitted, and like matters will be done in the name of the Superior, upon the advice of his council, with the result that decisions would be reached in regard to these last-mentioned acts. If the council is opposed, definite action would be postponed.
  13. The teaching in the schools will be in the three degrees announced in Article 2 of the royal ordinance of February 29, 1816. The Methods will be submitted to the approbation of His Excellency the Minister of Public Instruction.
  14. To attain the more promptly the great object of its institution, the Society will respond more particularly to the requests made by Their Excellencies the Bishops and Archbishops by the academies and by the departments for the establishment of normal schools.
  15. In order to be able to furnish capable subjects, the Society has houses of preparation where it forms according to its Method the subjects whom it intends for primary education.
  16. The Society recognizes as its Founder and present Superior for life or until his voluntary resignation Guillaume-Joseph Chaminade, Honorary Canon of the Metropolitan Church of Bordeaux. He will name his Assistants. The Superiors who will succeed him, as well as his Assistants, will be named by the Society through a plurality of votes for the time fixed by the internal regulations of the Society.
  17. The superiors of the houses established by affiliation and the heads and professors of the different schools will always be named by the Superior.
  18. The present Statutes will be placed at the feet of His Majesty, and he will be very humbly requested to have them examined and approved, if this is necessary, for the good of religion and of his subjects.

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**360. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

July 21, 1825, Bordeaux  
Autograph, Agmar

My dear Son,

Only today I received your letter of July 12. I examined almost immediately the copy of the Statutes approved by the Royal Council of Public Instruction. I am somewhat surprised at the suppressions, most of them important, which it has made. What surprises me is that M. de Clauzel does not present to the Council of State even the text of the Statutes which was first submitted to the Council of Public Instruction, with the amendments made by the said council. And the reason

for my astonishment is that the Council of Public Instruction does not give a final decision in this matter, which is to pass over to the Council of State; it simply gives its opinion. This is what the pastor of Saint Pierre, who here is a member of the council of the Academy, heard me remark when he noticed the fears I expressed in regard to the Council of Public Instruction.

But finally, the inconveniences of these suppressions must be prevented, for it is to be presumed that the Council of State will have pronounced itself before you receive this letter, and perhaps even with some new modifications.

Here are the first thoughts which came to my mind.

1. I will not speak of the third statute, which can easily pass into the interior regulation.

2. I thought I noticed a formal intention of not speaking of any definitive commitment.

This does not matter, for it seems to me this can be supplied.

However, may the new edition of the fifth statute permit a person to be admitted as a full member of the Society who has not finished the three years of his first commitment? Could he be dispensed from it and be received as a full member of the Society as soon as he has completed one year of trial? The duration of the trials and the commitment of three years that follow them are meant especially for youths, to have them prepare for their coming of age.

3. To the 17<sup>th</sup> statute, to the last word, "education," the new edition adds "primary." Rarely would we have good normal school professors if the subjects destined as such had not made some advanced studies. . . .

4. In the 16<sup>th</sup> statute, the indication of the spiritual retreats of two weeks is suppressed. This is doubtless because the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> statutes were also to be suppressed, truly so necessary to the Society of Mary in the attainment of its final end. . . . But the men of the Council of Public Instruction are perhaps afraid that it will attain the said end in even greater measure than they would wish. . . . Something must be added, and His Excellency the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs who had edited these two articles will have the goodness to suggest to you the means for doing so.

Would it be a means, for example, for you to write for me to His Excellency to ask him to settle some difficulties which lie in the letter of the law or in the Statutes? Or even better, if you place before him the desire we have of conforming to our Statutes, which we consider to have the force of law, you would tell him that the instruction and spiritual direction of the pupils of the primary schools and of the normal schools, as well as the annual retreats of the schoolteachers, oblige the Society to continue the education of a certain number of pupils who would show signs of a vocation to the ecclesiastical state and talents outstanding enough to dispose them for the priesthood, and then for employment in the various establishments. Furthermore, professors destined for the normal schools often need a particular training, one more elevated than that given to ordinary schoolteachers, etc.; we had taken for granted that near the motherhouse there could be one of the houses of preparation or training, etc. . . . I have hardly done more than copy the suppressed statutes 18 and 19.

In the same letter you might say to His Excellency that we had also understood that statute 5 did not oblige to the waiting for the expiration of the three years of the first commitment, in view of the reception of subjects as full members of the Society by a definitive commitment if they are of an age and maturity of character which leave nothing to be feared from the inconstancy attached to human nature.

Regarding the 14<sup>th</sup>, also suppressed, I believe nothing is to be said, but that it is to be included in the commitment of each one of the new members . . .

Perhaps in the same letter His Excellency will allow you to place before him the apparel of the Society, that of the lay religious as well as of the ecclesiastics. Written in conventional style, this letter would need only a short answer, which could even be put at the end of the letter.

If there happen to be other major difficulties arising from the context of the Statutes, in the way of the Society's attaining the end with which God has deigned to inspire us, these should be resolved at the same time, if prudence permits this. Before seeing His Excellency, you might



have a serious conversation with M. de Saget. He might see all the editions of the Statutes which have been made, read this letter, make for you a sketch of the one you would have to present to His Excellency, and bring it all to the first audience, should he approve of this means. Even if he would not approve of it and chose another, your work with M. de Saget would always have been useful if for no other reason than to express yourself more easily with His Excellency. You must not content yourself with mere words, promises, etc. For yet a long time there will be found in France rectors of academies, prefects of departments, and mayors of cities who have slight love for religion and who will be very glad to find in the text of the Statutes reasons to cause trouble.

I am adding one last reflection. On such an occasion, I believe the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs will follow the ordinary policy for showing the royal ordinance. In other words, to be given to me it will be sent to the prefect of the Gironde and to the archbishop, as well as to the department and dioceses where we have establishments: Lot-et-Garonne, Haute Saône, and Upper Rhine, in the dioceses of Agen, Besançon, and Strasbourg. If this is not so, what would I have to do?

The hour for the departure of the mail carrier is near at hand; I will continue to write to you on another sheet, while the first and longer part of my letter is being copied and which I will sign as if it were finished.

The incidental matter of the Richelieu Hotel, my dear Son, is not a matter of indifference in the views of Providence.

Because M. Quadrès and M. O'Lombel are now in a position to acquire it, as a matter of speculation and because they might have the desire for the Society of Mary to have an establishment in Paris, it would not seem to me too difficult to enter into these plans. Let us suppose the acquisition to be an accomplished fact. They would rent what would be needed for the establishment, because the entire place would be far too large for its initial needs. The establishment would pay for the portion it occupied. But how would it pay? This is what should be discussed with M. d'Amécourt. Even at that, the expense would be less than for a temporary or trial establishment at Paris.

This first beginning seems to offer many difficulties. The largest seem to me to result from the rights of registration and of transmission, and then from the uncertainty regarding the success of the establishment.

Would the first difficulties not be somewhat lightened if these men made the purchase in your name? The communities, societies, etc. authorized by the king pay next to nothing for registration, according to a law passed last year. The second type of difficulty would be removed if the Archbishop of Paris wanted the normal school and the spiritual retreats for the schoolteachers nearly as they exist in the diocese of Besançon. Here I am only indicating the means. These men have enough intelligence to make their own use of them. When everything would be nearly settled, I would transfer myself there and would hope somehow to attract all the material necessary to equip the establishment, even from its very beginning—sufficient space, furniture, personnel, everything. It is not to be doubted that the place properly equipped and producing its fruits would find in Paris sources of income to reimburse M. Quadrès and M. O'Lombel. If M. de Saget would come to settle there he could also help a great deal through his talents, reputation, and fortune. I have to stop now. Take care of your health, my dear Son. Always preserve your peace of soul. I bless you with all my heart, calling upon the sweet names of Jesus and Mary.

\* \* \*

*Two days later Father Chaminade made an important resolution, authorizing the acquisition of the Hotel Richelieu and of introducing the Society of Mary in Paris.*

### **361. To M. O'Lombel, Paris**

July 23, 1825, Bordeaux  
Copy, Agmar

My dear Son,

I would believe I am going against the designs of Providence if, in spite of my fears and the very small number of subjects we have, I did not accept the offer which your religious friendship has inspired you to make to the Society of Mary.

In my name, you will buy the Hotel Richelieu on the Isle of Saint Louis, if we are approved in time and if the approbation can exempt us from paying the enormous registration fee of 15,000 francs, and if the woman proprietor will accept you as guarantee and consent to have dealings with me just for form's sake. This way of doing things will not deceive the government, I mean the revenue officers, because like ours, your intention is to form of this hotel a real establishment for the Society of Mary. Will it possibly someday become the motherhouse?

If by next August 1 everything is not ready to draw up the official deed, I do not see any inconvenience in drawing up one—however, not before a notary public—with the promise of producing the official document at the first request of the parties involved. The woman selling the place may have the 50,000 francs promised, etc. About a month ago I had a place in Bordeaux bought in this way, a large house which the Society needed. It was all paid in cash by one of our friends. We are awaiting the royal authorization before drawing up the official contract.

A procuration in due form will also be necessary, and it is now July 22. This letter will leave only on July 23, but you may be able to send me the plan of this procuration by return mail.

In whatever name the acquisition of this hotel is made, for it will actually be yours until you declare that you have been reimbursed, my dear Son, I accept that this hotel will become a branch establishment of our house in Bordeaux. I consent to look after its spiritual direction.

I accept the two or three large rooms we will need to begin the works proper to us, as well as for the chapel. The Institute of Mary will keep its hands out of the material administration of this house and out of whatever may result from it, whether in gain or loss.

My dear Son, you understand that all these acceptances are nevertheless subject to the authority of the Archbishop of Paris or his representatives. It would be good if at the same time he would desire both the normal school for primary teaching and the spiritual retreats for the other schoolteachers of his diocese.

You also understand that we would not be doing much this year, I hardly see the possibility of paying you a visit before the beginning of winter. I need to know the dispositions of the Archbishop of Paris, to arrange for this first visit and for choosing some subjects suitable for the work they will be expected to do. Moreover, you need time to provide the material for your administration. You need great wisdom so that every suspicion of desire for wealth will be turned away, both from you and from us. The one who has inspired you with this plan also will inspire you, I hope and pray, for its successful execution. I will often ask it of God for you.

My dear Son, I cannot send you with this mail your Certificate of Affiliation to the Society of Mary, but it is already accorded to you in my heart. For this reason, in this letter I do not know any other title to give you than that of "Son." This feeling of tenderness does not in any way harm that of the consideration with which you have inspired me from the first, and with which I will be humbly at your service and disposition.

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**362. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

July 23, 1825, Bordeaux  
Autograph, Agmar

My dear Son,

My letter to M. O'Lombel may surprise you. Before taking up my pen, I wanted to ask for advice. There was some difficulty because of the approaching mail carrier. I got down on my knees; I felt everything that I said to M. O'Lombel. After having written, and without rereading I what I have written, I am in even greater peace and more satisfied.

Do I really desire an establishment in Paris? Here I could answer "yes" and "no" without tampering with the truth. "Yes," as First Superior of the Society of Mary. This establishment, above all, from the modest manner in which it is planned seems to me in the plans of Providence and very suitable to the development of our very small Society and to the rapid attainment of the excellent end for which the good God has called it into existence. I could say "no"; I fear it as distinctive. My laziness, my almost complete insufficiency in all things, the multitude of my defects of all kinds, would make me waive the very idea of it. I am now acting for Paris, as I have acted until now, in everything which relates to the Society of Mary. Convinced on the one hand that God wishes it, and on the other that I have neither the aptitude nor the ability for this work of the goodness and mercy of God, for the good of our unhappy country. I throw myself along all the paths Providence seems to open to me. I sometimes laugh at the idea that some good people attribute certain works to my intelligence and ability.

We must not depend too much on the archbishop's immediately taking to heart the normal school and the spiritual retreats. It is enough that he knows we desire them, just as we desire the Sodalities, and that in the meantime, on the other hand, he sees with pleasure the establishments of the Society of Mary in Paris.

Acquaint M. de Saget with this matter of the establishment. Let him look into it thoroughly, and let him have the kindness to be careful not to allow any imprudence to slip into the transaction. Let him take the trouble to prepare all the papers and carefully look over all those which will be prepared by others. I have great confidence in the shrewdness of his intelligence and in the honesty of his judgment. Always give him signs of my sincere friendship and of my entire devotedness. Let him take great care not to oppose the plans of God for him, and especially the movements and inspirations of his grace. If he is faithful, the good God will enlighten him about what he should do. Let him work even more at becoming better than at becoming expert in religion. Faith is a gift of God, and not something acquired by study. Study is nevertheless a good guide when it is made with uprightness of heart.

I am going to the altar, for the bell for my Mass has rung. There I will repeat the blessings I am giving you here, my dear Son.

\* \* \*

### **363. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

July 26, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

My dear Son,

You often sigh on the banks of the river of Babylon, and you long to return to the father's house or to go back to Saint-Remy to make known the mercies of the Lord and of the august Mediatrix of the human race. I understand; I even feel the sorrow you must have in discussing more worldly matters and of depending, so to speak, on people very far from favoring religion.

You are doubtless not mistaken, my dear Son, regarding a type of interest certain people seem to take in the requests for approval which are made to them. This is not so much for favoring the various institutions as to control their activities, to stop or hinder these or at least to direct them, as much as they can and in accord with their own views. As you know, this is what has so long delayed me in having the Society of Mary approved. Only by an interior impulse and because the political horizon seemed to brighten a little with the elevation of Bishop

d'Hermopolis to the rank of Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Instruction do we, even with great fear, finally presented our petition to the king.

I have been astonished that, having used such great circumspection and discretion with the ministry, you should at once surrender to the Council of Instruction one of the most important statutes<sup>1</sup>—a statute already so bare, so to speak. The Council of Public Instruction does not have the job of any final pronouncement. Why should we not have had recourse to His Excellency the Minister, who himself had had the kindness of studying statutes 18 and 19? On the whole, the Society of Mary would find itself completely misrepresented if the suppressions were taken seriously. I am willing to grant that in the beginning, the reasons for the suppressions are not glimpsed, but in the end, and perhaps a little. . . .

Following what I have learned about them, I would suggest to you a means to remedy the situation, one which will not cure all the evil of the suppressions but which still leaves some strength with which to defend ourselves. If you have not already done so, it would be necessary to try to have an audience with Bishop d'Hermopolis and to speak to him without reserve to determine if he does not consider practical the means I am suggesting, or if he may not know of better ones. However, as I believe I have already indicated to you, this means must not consist in mere promises of protection, etc. . . .

Perhaps you now obtain audiences with greater difficulty. Earlier, I had the same difficulty in Paris.<sup>1</sup> I used to write to these high dignitaries by the little post.<sup>2</sup> And I had information about an audience within 24 hours. Some of the secretaries could also take it upon themselves to let his Excellency know of your trouble. Patience, with care and firmness!

Flexibility is no doubt necessary, and I wonder if we have not been lacking in this in turning out so many editions of our Statutes! We have consented to everything which did not clearly alter the nature of the Society, but we cannot consent to not be that which we are.

You seem to fear new hindrances on the part of the State Council. If it were asking for new important suppressions, for some important changes, or if it were imposing heavy obligations you must not sign, but write to me immediately.

You would do well to have a discussion about everything with M. de Saget. He sees things correctly and justly. The Society of Mary would not have actually needed approbation. Its existence, its organization, and its works contain nothing contrary to the laws. On the whole, approbation would be desired for its works, rather than for itself. With regard to the large Richelieu Hotel, nothing must be settled with M. O'Lombel without consulting him.<sup>3</sup> we and M. O'Lombel might possibly do something not in conformity with the laws. If as a result of the approbation of the Society, the hotel bought in my name were free from the registration tax, would this not be looked upon as national property? In having ourselves approved, we have no intention of alienating any of our particular properties. Let us advance, my dear Son, with circumspection! *Timeo Danaos, et dona ferente* [beware of Greeks bearing gifts].

Enclosed here is a Diploma of Affiliation for my new son, M. O'Lombel . . . . I am leaving you with regret. The hour of the mail carrier is at hand. *Pax tecum!* [Peace be with you!]

\* \* \*

*The same day, Father Chaminade dated a letter to Saint-Remy.*

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<sup>1</sup> Number 19, relative to the priests.

<sup>2</sup> We do not know to what period of his life Fr. Chaminade alludes here. There is a question of the time he was a student in the *collège* of Lisieux, when he was called upon to defend the interests of the *collège* of Mussidan; or of the year 1809, at the end of which he had gone to the Government to plead the cause of the Sodality; or of a trip he had made to Paris under other circumstances. The available documents do not permit any definite conclusion.

<sup>3</sup> Special mail service for the city of Paris under the former government.

<sup>3</sup> Doubtless, M. de Saget.

### 364. To Bro. Dominique Clouzet

July 26, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

My dear Son,

I have just received your letter of July 11, and I am answering it right away. We cannot receive Mlle Généreuse Franchise because of her advanced age of 38 years, her defective health, and also because of the fact that she spent eight months in another community. Regarding Mlle Pauline Picard, I see nothing in the way of her admission to the Daughters of Mary. She is at that beautiful age in which to choose the heavenly Spouse and to devote herself entirely to him. At the age of 20, nothing is difficult; a person can submit to anything. However, before settling anything I am advising her to write to me herself about all her sentiments, all the good and even all the bad she believes to see in herself, the motives behind her desire for the religious state, etc. This is to be an entirely confidential letter she is to compose and write herself. She can also honestly tell me everything that may concern her health, her reputation, and the means of her parents. She may already take it for granted that our union is made, that she is my daughter and that I am her father.

I learn from Father Caillet that he wrote to you and has arranged everything regarding the retreats, as I had asked him to do. For my part, I gave him the news that Father Bardenet has brought to Saint-Remy about the 3,000 francs . . .<sup>1</sup>

My dear Son, I can easily imagine that the interior of the community must cause you worries, difficulties, and a solicitude perhaps more tiring than everything that may come to you from the outside. This is generally what comes to all superiors. What is to be done? Nothing else than what we can do, and adore the profound designs of Providence. There are precious few days in which I do not have to say, "God has permitted this. It is up to me to permit it and to submit to it."

Father Rothéa has written to me a short but very satisfying letter about the fatherly reproaches I had made to him concerning the flights of his imagination during his journey to Alsace. The discussion which arose in your little council surprises me. (1) In a council, there may easily be a type of discussion when there are divergent opinions and when the matters to be discussed present great difficulties regarding the stand to be taken in their regard; but religious modesty does not permit the heated and stubborn adherence to someone's own opinion. Tell Father Rothéa that I do not observe with pleasure that in your councils he places you in a position to sustain contests, even when he would believe he is proposing just and suitable things. Moderation always! Peace, union, and love among the Children of Mary, never any contests, etc. . . . (2) And now to make an application to this to the case in point. What type of charity would that be, to tell the truth, to make of the entrance of the community a type of tavern where truth would be free of charge, but which would nevertheless bring along most of the inconveniences peculiar to taverns? Nevertheless, this is not saying that something to eat and drink may never be given, for it is understood that on certain occasions charity, justice, and gratitude may call for it; but there must be reasons, and strong ones, too. If a head other than the regular superior is not able without going against established custom to go to the latter for permission to serve something to eat or drink at the entrance, he would inform him of this at his first meeting with him.

I received your last letter of July 16, my dear Son, with the copies of the letters of the Ministry of the Interior and of the prefect of the department of Haute-Saône. Although by this letter we can obtain the 3,114 francs granted by the General Council of the department and already refused with such great obstinacy by His Excellency, the concession seems to me worse than the refusal. . . . Whatever the case may be, we must profit by it to do good. We will be in a better position to judge by what will follow. I imagine the letter will have arrived in Vesoul

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<sup>1</sup> See letter no. 359.

before or during the holding of the General Council, to render its good thoughts without effect. Patience in everything!

This letter was begun already a week ago. Each time I took up my pen to continue it, other pressing matters intervened. . . . Brother Laugeay and Bro. [Louis] Rothéa wrote to me that you had given the former an order from me to go to Saint-Remy on a certain day in August; I no longer remember which day. Why do you write in this manner? Although I desire that Brother Laugeay will go to Saint-Remy for the vacation, and I suffer perhaps more than you at not being able to send you more of the help you need, I had no idea at all of abruptly removing subjects from the places they occupy . . . I learn at this time that Brother Olivier has just disappeared from Colmar. May the Lord be blessed!

I am stopping now, for the mail is about to leave. I hope not to forget anything of what you tell me. May the blessing of heaven fall upon you and the entire establishment of Saint-Remy!

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*Nevertheless, in Paris the legal recognition of the Society of Mary was meeting difficulties. The Council of State was formulating objections relative to the placing in common the goods of the members, according to the rules of the Code, concerning the universal society and all the goods. Father Chaminade answered with indignation, in terms which keep all their force in the present circumstances.*

### **365. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

July 28, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

My dear Son,

I am going to answer your letter of July 23. The Council of State—and it seems this was through the agency of M. Cuvier<sup>1</sup>—would wish to deprive us of at least a portion of our civil rights, rights granted to all Frenchmen, and this because we bring together our goods and our persons in the interests which are dearest to France, those concerning morals and education. In reading the Civil Code on the privation of civil rights, I saw there only two causes which might bring this about—the loss of French citizenship and court condemnations. If article 6 is suppressed or restricted, we find ourselves deprived of the finest rights which even the vilest Frenchmen may enjoy. Would this not be a kind of stigma attached to Frenchmen who are occupied with doing only good to their fellow countrymen? Would it be like telling them to be careful because the Government mistrusts them, even up to the point of not considering them as Frenchmen? If our Statutes contain article 6, is this not an act of sincerity on our part? By this article we show ourselves completely in the open, for what we are; with no underhandedness whatsoever, why then should we be feared?

But who is stirring up these fears? Could it be M. Cuvier? In fact, it must be within his principles to be fearful. His religion must let him see with concern, if not painfully, the rise of Societies which are clearly Catholic. But would there be many of the members of the Council of State who would espouse his views and his fears? M. de Clauzel has a good case to defend!

M. de la Chapelle was to make this report. Why is he being replaced by M. de Clauzel? Has this not been worked at by M. de la Chapelle? If difficulties continue, M. de Saget might see His Excellency the Guardian of the Seals, and the latter would reassure the council against the childish fears biased members would wish to bring up against the Society of Mary. I am saying

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<sup>1</sup> The famous geologist, president since 1819 of the Section of the Interior of the Council of State. He was a Protestant, and because of this Fr. Chaminade had reason to fear that he opposed the legal recognition of the Society of Mary.

“childish” because the motives and suppositions raised, such as the one which says we are Jesuits, that there is a Sodality in Bordeaux that I have formed, etc. What type of resemblance can be found between the Company of Jesus and the Society of Mary? I can see no other than the fact that both organizations profess the Catholic religion. Regarding the connection which is supposed to exist between the two, only our word in answer is needed. The Sodality of Bordeaux is older than the one in Paris.<sup>2</sup> The customs and practices of each are entirely different, there having been no previous communication at all among the directors. The name “sodality” may bring illusion, but would it not be trivial to stop at a common word and to draw from it conclusions in such a serious matter?

We are asking not so much the authorization to be what is mentioned in article 6, but rather the ability to carry on the works as mentioned in the totality of the Statutes. How could we ever have had the idea of asking for what the law grants? M. Cuvier must know better than anyone else the type of prudence in this regard his ancestors made use of and which his own party still uses to sustain the Protestant religion. And this between us—M. de Saget must know what has been happening since the beginning of our troubles. . . . That we should be punished for siding honestly with the Government!

Nevertheless, my dear Son, in spite of all our observations the Council of State does not approve purely and simply, do not give your consent without writing to me about it. Do, then, all you can so these poor Statutes, so taken to pieces, do not receive the royal sanction. And in the end, it would not be the Society of Mary as it truly is which would be approved. The few details you give me about the law relative to the religious sisters are valuable. Gather all the material you can which could enlighten our conduct in this regard.

I am not telling you, my dear Son, how much your long stay in Paris annoys me, but I suppose it is necessary; then, patience!

My young copyist has made me note that at the bottom of my letter to M. O’Lombel, I had put by mistake in the address “To M. O’Donnell.” If you did not correct the mistake. I ask you to offer him my excuses, while at the same time assuring him of my respectful attachment.

Do not be anxious, my dear Son. I am not worrying, for everything is in the hands of God. I embrace you tenderly and wish you everything that is in the benevolent views of the Lord.

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*[The archives of the Society of Mary preserve a first sketch of the preceding letter. Because it contains considerations which are not in the preceding edition, it is included here.]*  
My dear Son,

I have received your last letter dated July 23. I surmise, from what M. Cuvier says to M. de Clauzel that our Statutes will not be passed by the Council of State. Although we are asking by article 5 only to enjoy the rights accorded to all the French by the Civil Code, from the time that we ask it as a Society, they will fear the joining of the rights of a religious Society, made political by the Government approbation, with the rights of civil society.

You must remember that our Society, once approved, has what is called “a political existence.” M. Cuvier, perhaps better than anyone else in the council, feels what all this really means. The Protestants have maintained themselves in France only by having made good use of this distinction. “Why then,” you will say to me, “is political existence called for today?” (1) Because in the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs, no inconvenience was found in it. (2) Because there was no reason for believing the efforts of religion would be so greatly feared, and that a Society showing itself so thoroughly honest and whose labors were so useful in the renewal of morals, would be hampered. (3) The small extent which this Society will always have in itself.

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<sup>2</sup> The Sodality of Bordeaux goes back for its origin to December 8, 1800, and that of Paris dates back to February 2, 1801. On this same date the Act of Consecration of the first 12 sodalists was pronounced in Bordeaux.

And (4) I was not imagining that M. Cuvier would bother about speaking in a matter of this kind. You tell me man is a member of the Council of Public Instruction and of the Council of State. Doubtless, he has not deliberated in one or the other council, for the same member has a deliberative voice on the same matter in only one council. All these reflections are only for you so you may know our business better, and even more so you may be able to reason about it with M. de Saget. Whatever the case may be, if the Statutes pass through the blessing of heaven or by the influence of the Guardian of the Seals, provoked by M. de Saget, everything has been said. On the contrary, as I told you in my last letter, if you are asked to curtail or essentially change some article, you will say that your power does not extend that far and that in addition, you have orders to withdraw and confer with me. If M. de Clauzel assists at the deliberation and there are signs that in his quality as reporter he must be strongly asked not to consent that we would be approved only in part, and with conditions other than those contained in the Statutes themselves. If M. de Clauzel is not present at the deliberation, then Bishop d'Hermopolis would need to be asked to be present. In any case, if the Council of State gave its approval in its own way, as it sometimes does, then the royal sanction would need to be delayed. Bishop d'Hermopolis can do this easily. He could also get you all the papers you have already furnished; Mlle de Lamourous found herself in a case like this; perhaps Bishop d'Hermopolis still remembers it, for he was one of her protectors and counselors. . . .

Furthermore, my dear Son, prudence, discretion, and strength, nevertheless, and also activity. Speak little and blame no one. Know clearly how things are to be done, and know equally well the people with whom you have dealings.

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### **366. To Bro. David Monier, Bordeaux**

August 1, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

[With insert of S. 366]

My dear Son,

Every counsel from Paris wishes for the large Richelieu Hotel to be bought in my name and that I should have the principal direction of the establishment. M. O'Lombel, who is supplying the funds, seems to desire to act only as second in command.

M. d'Amécourt in particular is of this opinion, and he knows M. O'Lombel very well. With several other rich people of distinction, he seems disposed to come to my assistance. M. O'Lombel is to pay 50,000 francs in cash when the contract is to be drawn up, but he does seem to be taking this money from his own funds, for he seems to have only 25,000 francs in the bank and these are destined for the first expenses of the establishment.

I would not want to be responsible for any payments, acquisition, interest, registration, or large repairs, whether for the hotel or for the chapel. Regarding means for subsistence, I would willingly confide in M. d'Amécourt, or rather in Providence.

Can M. O'Lombel not be my security in such a way that no blame can be laid at my door? In accepting the acquisition in my name, I have already expressed my wish in this regard, and I have had M. de Saget take this matter in hand; he seems glad to do it. Nevertheless, I am afraid. M. de Saget, named President of the Royal Court of Bordeaux, is likely to leave soon for Paris.<sup>1</sup> Let me know, my dear Son, all the precautions I must take in order not to have any anxiety

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<sup>1</sup> The care Fr. Chaminade had given and caused to be given to M. de Saget was not in vain. Returning to Bordeaux, M. de Saget showed his gratitude by offering a magnificent copy of the New Testament in five volumes, richly bound, which Fr. Chaminade kept in his room until his death and which is preserved in the museum of the Society of Mary. This edition of the New Testament, published in 1793 when the Revolution was at its worst by the famous Parisian



regarding the payments which might be agreed upon in my name. I will write again by tomorrow's mail.

I am being sent the plan of procuration to be made out here by a notary. I have reason to believe it is from the hand of M. de Saget. If you believe it suitable, do what is necessary so this procuration may leave by tomorrow's mail.

I see that great pressure is being exerted to have me purchase. I would have desired that our Society would first have been approved. It seems difficulties appear to multiply instead of diminishing, at least, to approve it as it is. May the peace of the Lord, my dear Son, be always with you!

P.S. Father Conne's heir is exasperating with his insistence on seals; he is making me lose a great deal of time. Do the heirs have a legal right to immediate possession of their inheritance?

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### **367. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

August 2, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

My dear Son,

I have received your letter of July 28 with that of M. O'Lombel and the plan of procuration which accompanies it. I am not able to send the procuration, duly notarized, with this mail. It cannot be made exactly conformable to the plan, but it will give M. O'Lombel all the latitude necessary to complete all our plans regarding the large Richelieu Hotel. I will join to the procuration a short plan of security which M. O'Lombel will be kind enough to copy. We never know, as we say, who is dying and who is living. His intention is certainly not to leave me without security in regard to such large sums. All will leave, I hope, by the mail of the day after tomorrow, August 4. I will send along a letter to M. O'Lombel. In the meantime, I have the honor of greeting him very kindly.

The heart and good faith, even purity of views, have nothing uncertain with M. O'Lombel—but are things the same with regard to his fortune? Here then are 200,000 francs. They produce 10,000 francs a year at 5% interest. Then the registration would not come to 15,000 francs, as he believes, but rather to about 12,000, which is considerable. Do you happen to know what his fortune and his means amount to? It would be very annoying to go to Paris to form so important an establishment and to expose ourselves to a dazzling lawsuit and to an expropriation. It is very true, I hope, that we will have him recover his funds, but when? And who can know this? It is likewise very true that to reimburse him for the interest he will have to pay, we will facilitate for him as much as we can the use of the apartments of the hotel which we will not occupy. Still, it is true that we will make him a participant, as much as we can, in whatever assistance we may receive from other sources. I hope he will not surpass us in loyalty and sincerity.

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printer Didot, deserves special mention; in a very careful printing, it reproduces the translation of Sacy and is enriched by a number of drawings by Moreau, splendid composition, engraved on copper by the best artists of the time. It was offered to the National Assembly and bears on the first page this curious extract of the Verbal Process of January 17, 1791. "A member has offered the Assembly, on the part of M. Claude-Marin Saugrain, the dedication of a new edition of the Gospel, ornamented with engravings, the drawings of which are by M. Moreau the younger and the typographical part by M. Didot the younger. Although it had decreed that it would accept no dedication whatsoever, the Assembly received this by acclamation, desiring to give this new proof of its affection and respect for the Christian religion."

There is then no uncertainty in our sentiments and intentions, but could there not be some in the eventual risks as they affect us? Regarding M. O’Lombel and the obligation he is assuming, it is certain that he will have to furnish the funds at the times designated in the contract, and for this fortune and means are necessary. In the supposition of the death of this excellent colleague, what would we do? Who would replace him? In what condition would his family be? I must not forget, my dear Son, that in allowing this acquisition to be made in my name, I will have to be the first one responsible, and that for a long time, I cannot fall back on my own belongings or on those of the Society to meet our obligations for the Hotel Richelieu. We have no establishment, either of men or of women, which is not more or less in debt. Taken together, these debts would frighten me, if each time I borrowed money I had not believed I was not departing from the order of Providence in our regard. I hope M. O’Lombel will not be upset that I am taking all these precautions. It seems to me he should be taking some, in linking himself with a Society that would proceed inconsiderately.

Still a last consideration. If we should receive considerable help to sustain ourselves in Paris, and even more than we need, would it not be suitable to use it to obtain for ourselves the material needed for the institutions we will be able to found in this large place, unless M. O’Lombel is always able to advance the funds, until the establishment as such is ended. I honestly thought we should speak of this with all frankness with the one who sincerely calls himself a friend of the Society of Mary. . . .

Twelve o’clock noon is ringing, my dear Son, but I am continuing on another sheet while waiting for that first sheet to be copied.

You have clearly answered the Baron<sup>1</sup> Reporter of our affair to the Council of State. We are unable to change the order of Providence, which is having us fall into such a section of the Council of State, and in the absence of the Ministers. If upon the arrival of my letter no resolution has been taken, you must not fail to make all types of grateful acknowledgements to the baron. If you have learned with whom he is closely connected, this party might also be seen with benefit. With these men, each of the Statutes does not need to be greatly defended or need its truth and power for the good of religion to be made clear to them. But on the contrary, let them know what little importance this matter really has; that after all, this Society is something very small, both regarding the number and the quality of its subjects; that in its way of operation, everything leads to the belief that it will increase very slowly, if at all; moreover, that if some of the Statutes were modified this might cause trouble within the Society itself, and that already a small group of members of the Society have united in order the more surely not to do anything against the laws, and they could not imagine that it would ever be possible that they would be denied what the law had accorded them, etc., to each his own ideas, with patience and confidence in our heavenly protector! M. de Clauzel should make these observations himself, and to all others he may judge appropriate, for the support of the work of the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Instruction.

I am leaving you now, in wishing you the peace of the Lord.

P. S. The health of the archbishop is holding up well since his last illness which alarmed us so much a month ago.

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*Although 90 years old, Archbishop d’Aviau continued to spend himself for his diocese and in particular for the Society of Mary as the “adopted child of his old age.”*

### **368. To Archbishop d’Aviau of Bordeaux**

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<sup>1</sup> Baron Cuvier, president and not the reporter of the section of the Council of State occupied with the matter.

August 6, 1825, Bordeaux  
Autograph, Agmar

Your Excellency,

I have the honor of asking you to add the goodness you have in administering holy Communion to the pupils of Brother Auguste, that of giving the tonsure to two students of the Institute of Mary, Bro. Thomas-Marie Le Bihan<sup>1</sup> and Jean Brunet.

Their papers are already known to be in order. These two subjects are worthy of your favors. I am with the most profound respect, etc. . . .

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**369. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

August 4, 1825, Bordeaux  
Copy, Agmar

My dear Son,

I am sending on to you my procuration to M. O'Lombel, with a short letter which I have the honor of writing to him. I am joining to it an instruction in duplicate. Let him have one copy and send me the other by return mail, after he has signed it. If he finds any trouble in signing the procuration you understand that in this case, you should not give him the procuration. This is an enterprise of mutual confidence in which human wisdom cannot foresee everything, but in which everything should be done which it suggests, leaving all the rest to Providence.

My dear Son, your confidence seemed to waver somewhat in the face of the difficulties you are encountering. Perhaps you have had too much when you found yourself so well received in the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs? May all our confidence be in the Lord and in his august Mother, our powerful protectress. Without changing in any way the dispositions of those with whom we have necessary relationships, these dispositions may be putting blessings in their mouths, instead of the curses they would wish to utter against their work.<sup>1</sup> Whatever the case may be, let us not cease to adore the designs of Providence, even the impenetrable ones, in the contradictions which it permits. Let us pray, let us do everything we can and remain at peace! . . .

I am stopping here. It is noon and the notary has not yet sent the copy of the procuration. *Pax Christi, fili mi!* [The peace of Christ, my Son!]

\* \* \*

**S. 369-2. To M. O'Lombel, Paris**

August 3, 1825, Bordeaux

I had the most important topics of our correspondence condensed into recommendations. I have added what the nature of our business made necessary after advice from my Institute. To explain each item would be a long undertaking; I trust your sense of justice and your knowledge of the business world will compensate. However, if you have any question or need any additional information, your request will be given the usual consideration.

Now concerning the procuration, I have deleted the power to "purchase such lands, properties, and buildings as the proxy desires." Not that I do not trust you with this power, but its

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<sup>1</sup> Biographical note. Thomas-Marie Le Bihan, born in Quimper in 1801, entered the novitiate of the Madeleine in 1825, where he died the following year on July 26, the Feast of Saint Anne, "a death, peaceful and edifying," after having pronounced his perpetual vows.

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the Bible story of Balaam.

very vagueness would lead someone to suppose I had gigantic and ambitious projects in mind, which I do not, and which would be contrary to the edification and simplicity which the Institute expects from us all. Otherwise, the procuration is very like its first draft, and the few words of explanation change nothing of substance.

You realize, of course, that only my complete trust and confidence in you allow me to send you this procuration. The 14 points of instructions I am including, of which you will please send me a signed copy, only protect me against you or your heirs. However, I am completely at the mercy of third parties with whom you deal in my name. Any misfortune you might suffer would implicate me. Any unfavorable attitude among your heirs could be disastrous for me. On these two counts, my instructions are a possible guarantee, but I am aware that my interest in the project lures me on, and I am putting myself into the hands of Providence. May it protect your person and guide your actions, on which I rely because God wills it do.

\* \* \*

### **S. 369-3. To M. O'Lombel, Paris**

August 3, 1825, Bordeaux

Original, Agmar

1. M. O'Lombel, having promised to buy the large Richelieu mansion and its outbuildings situated on Ile Saint-Louis, Paris, is authorized by the procuration accompanying this instruction to make public this purchase under the name and responsibility of Father Chaminade, and therefore all costs pertaining to the said mansion and all obligations to the person or persons selling the same will be legally binding on Father Chaminade.

2. The purchase will be for the sum of 20,000 francs, payable as follows

50,000 as down payment the day the contract is signed

49,000 six months after the date of the signing

24,500 on August 6, 1826

28,000 on August 6, 1827 at the earliest

*Note.* This agreement may be held in abeyance until two annuities have run their course, one for 24,000 francs and the other for 4,000, for which the mansion is mortgaged. Payment will be made only 6 months after these annuities have been paid off.

24,500 on August 6, 1828

24,000 on August 6, 1829

200,000 Total

3. Interest on the 150,000 francs after the down payment of 50,000 will be 5% beginning on August 1, the present month.

4. The cost for registering the sale and making the necessary declarations has been estimated by M. O'Lombel to be of the order of 15,000 francs. Cost and commissions may amount to another 3,000 francs, making a total of about 18,000 francs.

5. M. O'Lombel assumes full personal responsibility for the above payments, at the specified times or when legal payment is required, none of which is the concern of Father Chaminade.

6. To make these payments, M. O'Lombel will be furnished sums from Paris to set up the Institute of Mary on the premises purchased to that end. He may also use the sums accruing from the material administration of the mansion, which would operate as a retreat house for ecclesiastics of all ranks and for worthy seculars. M. O'Lombel would assume the material administration according to the particular regulations yet to be outlined, so that everything favors the sanctification and salvation of both retreatants and directors.

7. If M. O'Lombel would be forced to obtain loans to provide temporarily for his needs, he may mortgage and give as special guarantee only the real estate he will have acquired in the name of Father Chaminade or that he will later acquire in the same name and under new powers, but in no case will there be a general mortgage on the whole.

8. No bids for repairs or construction which M. O'Lombel will consider necessary can be approved, promised, rendered obligatory, or granted until M. O'Lombel has discussed them with Father Chaminade, and the latter will authorize them only if the funds needed for payment are sufficiently guaranteed without prejudice to the payments on the sale price at the stated intervals.

9. Exempt from the previous authorization are the maintenance and the incidental repairs with total annual cost of less than 2,000 francs, except for those given on 3 months' notice from M. O'Lombel, who will explain the method of payment.

10. All incomes and expenditures will be entered into a ledger without blank spaces. All correspondence will be kept on file, and all letters received will be numbered and classified. A perpetual inventory of the furniture is to be kept. Every 3 months, or more often if necessary, damaged articles will be noted and surplus items will be duly inventoried.

Father Chaminade or a designate will inspect and sign these three books. The three registers will be kept up to date and will be open for inspection, and also the record of orders, current business, notebooks, and other documents. A general review will be made on August 6 of each year, and M. O'Lombel will send Father Chaminade a certified copy.

11. M. O'Lombel is responsible for the persons and actions of his substitutes and for any court action they may engage in without formal authorization.

12. The person charged with the spiritual administration under the authority of the archbishop will be provided by Father Chaminade, and under his orders, with large rooms for meetings and the retreat exercises. The chapel and lodging will be assigned according to a plan by Father Chaminade after he has explored the buildings or studied the plans of the same. All furniture to be used for chapel services, for meeting rooms, and for private rooms will be the responsibility of the administration, which will keep an inventory of the same. Father Chaminade is personally responsible for the support of the missionaries and their assistants. This is left to his judgment until new provisions are made.

13. If, God forbid, any difference of opinion arises in the implementation of the above articles, we will invoke the binding decision of one or three arbiters, one chosen by each party and the third acceptable to both parties.

14. The present directive is made in duplicate and signed, one for M. O'Lombel and the other for Father Chaminade.

G.-Joseph Chaminade, Bordeaux, August 3, 1825  
M. O'Lombel, Paris, August 8, 1825

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**S. 369-4. To M. Rauzan, Notary**

August 1825, Bordeaux

Rough Copy, Agmar)

Appeared before M. Rauzan, notary, G.-Joseph Chaminade, Honorary Canon of the church of Saint André in Bordeaux, residing at no. 3, Rue de Lalande, who by these presents has constituted as his special and general representative M. O'Lombel, proprietor, living in Paris, no. 7, Rue de Sèvres, whom he empowers for himself and in his name

- to purchase, according to price, charges, clauses, and conditions acceptable to him the large Richelieu mansion and its outbuildings located in Paris, Béthune dock, Ile Saint-Louis

- to include all conditions in the said contract
- to determine the down payment and the terms with or without interest and to be given a receipt
- to ask for a transfer of all titles and related documents
- to ask for the removal of all liens and to received from the sellers a report on this removal
- to oversee the payment in cash, to comply with the law for the settling of all mortgages and for registration
- to open all bidding or to waive all rights
- to obtain the loans necessary for the purchase, and to secure them with mortgages on the property or other goods designated by the buyer
- to specify the purpose of any loan
- to agree to any transfer of privileges from seller to lender
- to make all repairs, restorations, and constructions, and for this purpose to choose all contractors
- to deal, to compromise, to come to terms
- in case of a dispute, to apply to the courts when necessary
- to choose lawyers and arbiters, to obtain a judgment, and to see that it is carried out
- to ask for all orders and contributions, to agree to compensation, and to pay all creditors
- to forego all court action
- to sign all acts, to substitute in whole or in part the present powers
- to inhabit the house, and in general to do everything necessary to secure the interests of the buyer.

Promising. . .

Done and passed at. . . .

\* \* \*

*M. O'Lombel signed the Instruction and received the procuration, but as will be seen he was not able to have it duly notarized, for he lacked the necessary funds. Regarding the authorization Father Caillet had had an interview with Baron Cuvier, president of the section of the Council of State, who had asked him a series of questions, more or less insidious, which Father Caillet had answered as well as he could (letter no. 367). Here is the text as Father Caillet sent it to Father Chaminade.*

1. *What is the true object of the Society of Mary?*
2. *What do you mean by commitments, definitive commitments, and at what age are each taken?*
3. *How do you understand this Society and all its belongings to be universal?*
4. *What is this immediate action which the Superior General preserves over all the members of the Society?*
5. *This Superior General, being an ecclesiastic and preserving an immediate action over all the members, as this Society could become very widespread and very numerous in memberships is it not necessary for him to be named for each election by the king or that each election be subject to the approval of His Majesty?*
6. *What do you mean by these rules of interior discipline, and why not produce them for the Council of State?*
7. *Articles 18 and 19 of the Statutes presented to the Council of State, do they not form a type of little seminary, and do they not refer to members of the Society who are fathers and priests, with members who are only brothers and laymen?*
8. *Why would the actual Superior General be in office for life? Should he not be named temporarily, as are his successors? What is the time fixed by the interior regulations of*

*the Society for the duration of the functions of the heads, etc.? Do all the members of the Society have an equal say in the elections to be held?  
Several of these questions reveal mistrust, and it is easily seen why they provoked in Father Caillet a feeling of discouragement. Father Chaminade reassures and comforts him.*

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### **370. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

August 8, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

[With insert of S. 370]

My dear Son,

I received your letter of August 1, and I am delaying my answer only as much as will correspond with the departure of the next mail.

I do not doubt that your present position is very troubling. You might not be so embarrassed if from the beginning, you had not had so much confidence and if you had been better informed regarding all the channels through which you would have to pass. No matter, do not be disconcerted. As you say, let me know about the persons and the things. *Si Deus pro nobis, quis contra nos?*<sup>1</sup>

Your last two letters do not indicate clearly whether the draft of our Statutes which you presented to the State Council is the same as that shown to the Council of Public Instruction, or if you simply added to the former the articles 18 and 19 which were dropped from the latter. You know there were other deletions, such as the mention of the retreats to be given to the teachers. This retreat provision, along with articles 18 and 19, made it similar to the statutes of the normal schools. Even adding articles 18 and 19 to the draft would present to the council an incomplete picture of our normal schools, which are not houses of formation for our young teaching Brothers, but for the lay teachers in primary schools. Not surprisingly, M. le Baron, the reporter, thought he had detected something suspicious, underhanded. Reflect, my dear Son, but pray especially; then act in all confidence.

I am passing on to you, my dear Son, my answers to the questions asked of you by the baron. I have transcribed eight of them very precisely. If the baron had note of them, he would see that there is exactness in them. I permitted myself to change only one word in the eighth request. Instead of "Would he not be," I put, "Should he not be." I thought this was the meaning of the sentence, for there cannot be question of my will considered in itself, and out of all connection with the usefulness of the Institution.

My dear Son, are you keeping a copy of my answers? If you made a written copy of them for yourself, either they coincide with mine, in which case you are free to do as you please, and you call attention to the coincidence; or they have notable differences which are contrary to the natural meaning of the Statutes; then you would ask the reporter to substitute for the ones by the others. If there is any other difficulty, ask the reporter to give it to you in writing so you can send it on to me. I am referring to some difficulty which would seem real to you and to which you would have to give an answer in writing. All these writings remain in safekeeping with the Council of State, as in the other lower administrations.

My dear Son, do not give any signs of weariness in regard to the questions and requests which may be placed before you. On the contrary, you must seem to be edified by the attention and the rigorous examination the Council of State gives to the matter submitted to it. This is not at all a proof of bad will. You can truthfully say for me to the baron, the Counselor of State, that I am very glad the Council of State has a correct knowledge of the Institution being placed before

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<sup>1</sup> "If God is for us, who will be against us?"

it; that I am prepared to give him all the information about it he may require; that although I have at least 48 years of experience in this type of works,<sup>1</sup> I am thoroughly persuaded that a person can always do better; and that I would consider it a great act of kindness on his part if he were to give me the permission to consult him, whether on the development of the Society or on several questions which are to be proposed only confidentially to people of high rank and merit.

I am stopping here, my dear Son, so that this letter may not miss today's mail. *Dominus tecum!* [The Lord be with you!]

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### **S. 370-2. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

August 8, 1825, Bordeaux

Original, Agmar

My dear Son,

Let me continue while my replies and the letter I have just written to you are being copied. I believe that to attract the attention of the newspapers at this time would do more harm than good. You must have received the procuration I sent to M. O'Lombel for the purchase of the Richelieu mansion. I would not have sent it, had I know he wanted to use my name only if the Society of Mary would be authorized to act before the purchase. Because I do not know what is the best thing to do, I am allowing matters to take their course. Personally, I would prefer that he make the purchase in his name and that we plan to set up an establishment on the property.

Let me know when the purchase is made, so I can take all appropriate measures to follow through with this plan.

I will not forget the demand for affiliation of the woman who has written to me.

I have just received three letters from Saint-Remy, one from Brother Clouzet, one from Father Bardenet, and one from Father Rothéa. Brother Clouzet complains almost bitterly that you have not yet set the retreat dates. He informs me that the General Council of the department of Haute Saône has set aside 2,400 francs for the teachers' fund. Father Bardenet is willing to relinquish the 20,000 francs in notes and another 20,000 francs, but for only one year. I do not think you told him exactly what I said, or perhaps he did not understand you correctly. I will look into the matter and give you my decision. I have not yet opened Father Rothéa's letter in order as not to miss this mail. I will try to write to Saint-Remy tomorrow.

\* \* \*

### **S. 370-3. Answers to the Questions Posed by Baron Cuvier, [Reporter or Court Reporter]**

August 8, 1825, Bordeaux

1. What is the true purpose of the Society of Mary?

Response. Primary instruction (art. 1), including the principles of the Catholic faith, gospel morality, and a sincere attachment to the monarchy (art. 2). These two articles are so clear that the question is unwarranted. This is the only answer we can give to an explicit request for information.

2. What do you mean by a commitment? A permanent commitment? At what age are these made (art. 4, 5)?

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<sup>1</sup> Since the start in teaching, Mussidan in 1777.



Response. A commitment is a promise by a member to give his services to the Institution and to obey the orders of the superiors.

A permanent commitment is of the same nature, but is made for life. A reciprocal obligation is created, and the Society which recognizes him as a member promises to take care of his needs. Article 3 could be explained by adding “for life.” The rest is clear enough. Temporary commitments are made after 16 years have been completed, and permanent commitments after 21 years have been completed.

3. How do you explain a Society with all goods in common?

Response. Just as it is understood in the Civil Code, no more and no less.

4. What is this direct authority which the Superior General exercises over all the members of the Society (art. 11 of the first draft and art. 10 of the one presented to the State Council)?

Response. It is an authority exercised without means and without an intermediary (see the Dictionary of the Academy); it is delegated at will and when deemed necessary.

5. The Superior General is a priest and has direct authority over all the members; if this Society should develop, spread, and become numerous, should each newly-elected General not be confirmed by the king, or each election be approved by His Majesty (art. 11 and 12)?

Response. These questions would need to be examined seriously if the houses became numerous, but as long as they are small in number, the question is premature. The usual control is sufficient, exercised by a Minister of the King.

6. What are the rules governing internal discipline, and why not reveal them to the State Council (art. 14)?

Response. The rules deal with retiring, rising, prayers, pious exercises, the new school year, dress, and other necessary interior regulations. If it is a desire of the Council, a long and detailed list can be provided; this was not considered proper.

7. Articles 18 and 19 of the Statutes presented to the Council seem to set up a minor seminary with members of the Society who are priests along with the others who are lay?

Response. Our schools are not minor seminaries, although it does happen that some students have the vocation to the ecclesiastical state and that the principal and the chaplain continue to train them without drawing them away from the priesthood; they even try to make these young men better equipped to function in public schools. As to the question about the presence of priests and religious in the house, the Order as a whole provides an answer. Who, if not the priest, would teach the principles of the Catholic faith and of gospel morality (art. 2)? Who if not our young religious would give primary instruction (art. 1)?

8. Why is the tenure of the Superior General for life and not temporary, as in the case of his successors? According to your Rule, what is the director’s term of office? Do all the members have equal right to vote?

Response. The actual Superior’s mandate is for life because he is the Founder and, as such, is presumed to be best-equipped to maintain and develop the spirit of his Institute until it has attained steadiness. The common experience of all Orders proves the need for this. A new leader might alter or inconsiderately upset what he did not firmly establish and what time has not consolidated. In all other cases, superiors are appointed for a 3-year term. All perpetual professed members have the right to vote.

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### **371. To Bro. Dominique Clouzet, Saint-Remy**

August 9, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

[With insert from S. 371]

My dear Son,

I was writing to Father Caillet when I received your letter of July 30. I am astonished that by July 30 you had not received the letter he told me he wrote to you about the retreats. You must certainly have received it by now, as well as the one I wrote to you July 26.

The news you give me about the resolution of the General Council of the department of Haute-Saône<sup>2</sup> and of the repairs you have made at Saint-Remy sounds very agreeable to me.

I am always ready, my dear Son, to deal with the house in Vesoul for the Daughters of Mary, if sufficient means are on hand. I will write again to Besançon about this, following the offers Father Bardenet makes to me in his letter of July 28. I will answer him only after I have received word regarding the intentions of the Archbishop of Besançon, for the seminary may not be sold without his authorization. In the meantime, I am asking you please to offer Father Bardenet the assurance of my esteem and respectful affection, and to tell him that I am disposed to accept all the conditions he makes to me for the various sums which are to make up the price of the house in Vesoul, with the exception of the one regarding the reimbursement of the 20,000 francs in one year.

Sums for a similar amount will be available in Alsace, but the properties sold there may not be paid within the year. Given a 2-year time limit, the convent will be in full operation and possibly even self-supporting from the dowry of some of the sisters. If M. d'Argenson could obtain an earlier refund and if on the other hand we were not importuned too much, the banker in Vesoul could take care of the situation. I believe Father Bardenet would find it to his advantage if he had at least two years to repay; any sums we could accumulate during those years could be invested with the bank, etc. Father Bardenet knows this practice well.

A brother of mature age would be needed to be the first sacristan in Colmar. I have already written about this to Brother Rothéa. Both he and I have thought of Brother Bousquet. It is a fine place where a person can sanctify himself so easily, being constantly in the house of God and working directly in God's service! A person can also work at the edification of an entire people in comporting himself with the piety and the charity of a true religious. I would then think of giving you Bro. [Louis] Rothéa as Head of Work. However, if Brother Bousquet does not wish to conduct himself as a true religious, he must not be considered for Colmar.

Following the retreats and the return of Father Caillet, we will see about the subjects you may have ready to send us. Unless no earlier occasion should present itself, would it not be possible that a brother from Saint-Remy could make the journey to Bordeaux to lead the various people destined to come to us, and upon his return we would send with him those destined for that part of the country? In this manner of proceeding there would be both good and economy. Other Societies do the same thing.

I am embracing you tenderly, and I am wishing you, and all your brothers, my very dear Children, the peace of the Lord.

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*The end of the negotiations was in sight. In its session of August 3, the Council of State had studied the plan of the Statutes sent by the Council of Public Instruction and issued the statement that there was reason to approve it, after having introduced the following modifications.*

*Article 1. The word "especially" used in this article seems to indicate other destinations. All equivocation would disappear by suppressing this word and saying the Society of Mary devotes itself to primary education.*

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<sup>2</sup> Granting a subsidy of 2,400 francs for the new school year.

*Articles 3 and 4. It would be suitable to express that the commitment as a member of the Society of Mary will be made only at the age of 21, and that for commitments before that age, the consent of the parents would be necessary.*

*Article 5. The intention of the Society of Mary being to put goods to common use and not the ownership of immovables, this intention would be more explicitly expressed by saying, "according to the rules of universal fellowship" and suppressing the words "and all the goods," which would do away with all manner of doubt, according to Article 1839 of the Civil Code which says, "The simple agreement of universal fellowship, made without any other explanation, takes away only the general sharing of gains and profits."*

*Article 7. This article should settle upon a period of time after which there would no longer be place for a member who would withdraw to ask for an indemnity and who would have rendered enough service so there would be no reason for an indemnity. In all cases, the bases for the indemnity should be determined in advance and at the time of the engagements according to the nature and value of the goods the newly admitted person would bring to the Society of Mary.*

*Article 8. The last paragraph of this article must be suppressed, for only the law can declare that in courts of justice official registers will serve as final proofs.*

*Article 16. It is said at the end of this article that the Superiors who will succeed Father Chaminade will be named to office for the period of time determined by the internal Regulations. These Regulations not being in any way mentioned, it would be suitable to express in this article the time fixed and to mention that the Superior is or is not eligible again.*

*The committee finally believes it should call the attention of His Excellency to the general question of knowing whether or not there are inconveniences in authorizing associations which may spread throughout all of France and in which the authority and immediate action of the Superior on his subjects may give rise to difficulties with the Ordinaries of the dioceses.*

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*Father Chaminade resigned himself to the modifications and thus gave instructions to his representative.*

### **372. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

August 11, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

[With insert from S. 372]

My dear Son,

Upon receiving your letter of August 6, I clearly saw that we were to give up the idea of possibly seeing you before the end of October. I am saying "possibly"; in fact, would it not be possible if your principal business were finished by the end of this month that you would begin your retreats at the beginning of September, as Brother Clouzet seems to desire? Then you could be here for our retreat with those who should accompany you. It is true that a retreat must be given to the community of Saint-Remy, and that it could hardly come before that of the schoolteachers. Do everything for the best, but always in peace!

I have some hope of being able to send a priest of middle age to Saint-Remy sometime in September.<sup>1</sup> His schedule is in order. He is able to teach a fairly heavy class and can speak easily. However, it may be some time before he can be of any substantial help in the tribunal of Penance. I will come back to him if there is reason for it. The Bishop of Périgueux seems to want to offer a

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<sup>1</sup> Doubtless, Fr. Boutoey.

young priest whom I had a mind to send to Saint-Remy,<sup>2</sup> but if I can arrange matters with the first priest and if the second is free during the vacation, it is to be presumed that I will give him another destination. . . . From now on, I will often speak to you of Saint-Remy.

My dear Son, I reread attentively both your letters and the edition of the Statutes of the Society of Mary of last July 12, in 18 articles.

I consent that in the first article, the word “especially” will be suppressed.

I consent that Article 5 will read as follows. “When a subject is admitted as a member of the Society, the agreement which will be made between him and the Society will be in the spirit and according the rules of the worldwide Society foreseen in the Civil Code, Title 9, Chapter 2, Section 1, Numbers 1838 and following.”

I consent also that in Article 8 the words at the end will be removed. “The register will be final proof in a court of justice, if in certain circumstances it was called for.”

If you have received an official copy of these three changes and they happen to be like those you pointed out to me in the letter I am answering, my dear Son, you may draw up a new edition of the Statutes presented on July 12 with these three changes, or have it done for you. You may sign it in my name, as you did it last July 12, and this for speedier forwarding, even if upon the reception of this letter you would have already mailed the official answer you had been waiting for. Very possibly you have no other answer than the one you receive from the baron. If this is the case, you would go to him with your new edition, duly signed, etc. . . .

Now here are some observations which in no way affect the Statutes and which are meant only to give greater clarity to the latter.

To the end of Article 4, add “for life.” Member of the Society for life. The reason seems clear. There is a first commitment for three years, during which a person is truly a member of the Society, although with three years as a limit.

To the same Article 4, add “or during which if there is a reason for it.” I am going to recopy this entire article. “The first commitment made after the probation is for only three years, after which, or during which, if there is a reason for this, admission as a member of the Society may be granted for life.” The reason for this addition is that several subjects already older or soon to reach their full legal age may present themselves and give sufficient assurance of steadfastness so there may be nothing to fear regarding their admission as members for life. This three-year commitment has been adopted especially for younger members, as a new test to last until they reach their majority.

You could bring the editions to the reporter, the one literally conformable to the changes requested by the Council of State and the other with the above explanatory words added to Article 4.

I finally see, my dear Son, that you will soon be finished with this entire matter. *Deo Gratias!* [Thanks be to God!] Nevertheless, you must not remain indifferent regarding the edition of the royal ordinance. I believe it belongs to the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs and of Public Instruction. I am hoping from Bishop d’Hermopolis that it will be pure and simple, or that if there are additional expressions, it will be only to the honor of the Society of Mary with tokens of his royal and paternal goodness. . . .

My dear Son, you must have received my answers to the request which had been proposed to you by the Reporter of the Council of State. I read with great interest those drawn up by M. de Saget. Nevertheless, if the answers you supplied were to remain in the secretariat of the Council of State, I would prefer that my answers would be replaced by those you have already furnished. Everything being ended, I believe the baron who is reporter will accept them without any trouble. It is even possible that in consequence he will easily return them to you and without substituting other answers. Leave as few writings as possible, while taking note of those which may be still in the various offices, whether of the Council of State, the Council of Public

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<sup>2</sup> Fr. Brothier; see letter no. 380.

Instruction, or the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs. Try to learn those which are registered. I think you have kept duplicate copies of all of them. For my part, I have kept copies of all those I sent you. With our operations finished, we must now take an accounting of our true position. . . . You have spoken well when you mention “knowing the persons and things.” Everything, and always with prudence, discretion, and moderation.

Because in the petition to the Minister of Finance it was stated that the Richelieu mansion would become an establishment of the Society of Mary, you need not have asked for the recommendation of the Bishop of Hermopolis. I had told you and M. O’Lombel that my acceptance of all his pious and generous offers depended on whether the Archbishop of Paris would admit the Society into his diocese, etc. The Bishop of Hermopolis was right to refuse you, but you were in error to ask him for what he could not grant.

The day before yesterday I received the short enclosed letter, signed Victor, dated July 6. Please see what M. Bourgeois wants, and especially what is possible. Tell him I received his small pamphlet, and I will forward the two packets that came with it.

Take information about the medals,<sup>1</sup> or rather about the artists who are occupying themselves with this line of business. Silver medals on which would be engraved the Immaculate Virgin, or even set off in relief with or without a circle, etc., artistic forms, their price, whether cast or struck, etc. It seems to me it would be good for the medals to be of different sizes, even if the form is the same. You saw those of our prefects of the Sodality and those of our assistants. They are gilded, while the others are not. It would be the same with regard to the cords or ribbons upon which they would be suspended. Many difficulties would be removed if in signing his ordinance if the king would send one to me through the mediation of the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs. This is something which must be said or touched upon very lightly, and as coming from you. Under this supposition, it seems to me the Minister should be supplied with the medal, to present it to His Majesty. It should be sent to the Archbishop of Bordeaux so he may give it to me and at that time determine whether the white cord or a ribbon would be more suitable.

In ending this long letter, my dear Son, let us bless together the holy names of Jesus and Mary! *Sit nomen Jesu benedictum, sit nomen Mariae benedictum, in saecula saeculorum! In te, Domine, speravi non confundar in aeternum! In te Domine, spiravi; non confunder in aeternum. Pax Christi, fili mi!* [May the name of Jesus be blessed, may the name of Mary be blessed, for ages and ages! In you, O Lord, I have placed my hope; may you not confuse things throughout eternity! In you, O Lord, I have hoped; do not let me be confused throughout eternity. The peace of Christ be with you, my Son!]

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*A new letter to Father Caillet is written by Bro. David Monier. Here are some of the reflections from this letter, followed by the postscript of Father Chaminade.*

### **373. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

August 13, 1825, Bordeaux

Original, Autograph Postscript, Agmar

[With inserts from S. 373]

My dear Son,

In your letter of August 9, I was pleased to receive the details concerning the O’Lombel matter and that of the Statutes. I will use them when the time comes. Continue as you have been doing, but do not expect me to comment on each of your remarks, and do not interpret my silence

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<sup>1</sup> Destined for the religious of the Society of Mary.

as either approval or disapproval. If I am silent, this is because I lack sufficient information to pass judgment or I see no need to answer; this is all you must conclude.

This being understood, I will now answer your important questions, or those of some urgency. The deal with M. O'Lombel has been decided; it must be pursued without delay. But it must follow my guidelines. I believe M. O'Lombel is not inclined to stray from them. He sent me a signed copy of my instructions to him; I am satisfied, and I will acknowledge it. In few words, here are the essentials pertaining to the purchase.

1. The contract will state that 50,000 francs has been paid.
2. Incidental costs will be covered by a promise to pay in six months, or they will be paid immediately.

On Point 1. The procuration gives M. O'Lombel authority to make all arrangements and to take all precautions concerning the 50,000 francs, between the signing of the contract and the paying off of the mortgage. Although the contract mentions payment and receipt, the money will remain in the hands of the notary or other trustworthy person.

On Point 2. If time is not given for the payment, we would be subject to fiscal regulations and a double tax. Verbal promises or half measures will not do; the delay must be legal, or not at all.

On the validity of the purchase and the form of the contract.

I should have liked M. de S - - - to be consulted; in his absence, ordinary care by the notary, who is unknown to me, will have to do; his qualifications do inspire confidence. Read this part of my letter to M. O'Lombel, so I will not have to repeat these things to him. I would like to have a copy of the contract as soon as possible.

I may not and cannot give you a response on the Statutes until the official copy of the article arrives. Any other action would merely prolong the uncertainty, the variations, and the trial and error. You will have a prompt and decisive answer as soon as the State Council gives me its views and its principles, and this will happen after the reading of the official articles.

When you have consulted in Paris what the people think about the right we may have of doing under pretense of the Statutes what these would not permit, is very nearly neither just nor true. Ordinarily speaking, these encroachments lead to trouble. What is included in the principle of a Statute can be done, although this not expressly mentioned; but if we wish to extend this to a different thing, its utility must be proved and we must have it approved. The abuse into which some corporations have fallen, in a different sense, have brought about only insults and suspicions harmful to every type of good. Furthermore, do you know if some of these people who are making these idle remarks are doing little more than provoking you to explanations, in order to find out the correctness of your principles? It seems to me altogether suitable for us to speak in the name of the Institute of Mary, so that all suspicion of any mental reservation will be set aside and the civil administration may not believe that in requesting authorization to do one thing, we have in mind doing something entirely different. This confidence on the part of the civil authorities will come to us, step by step. I have every reason to believe this. In the meantime, let us at least try so that on our part, no obstacle may be in the way. Great successes have come to us from the observance of this principle. I believe God approves of it; let us hold to it!

As I told you, I will wait for the official notification by the State Council, after which you will be given a prompt answer.

You must not be either surprised or cast down if you sometimes make mistakes, for by this time you must know that everyone makes them. For example, take articles 18 and 19, which come neither from you nor from me. God permits these things, either for the good of his service or for our salvation. May God's providence watch over us, and may it protect us against greater mistakes. This is what I am asking God for all of us. May God's mercy be accorded to my Children and to me!

*[This continues in the handwriting of Father Chaminade.]*

P.S. This letter was written by Brother David. Regarding everything which concerns the Statutes, Father Caillet may hold to the last one, dated August 11, which his Good Father wrote to him and which he did not communicate to Brother David, while nevertheless drawing profit from the reflections he makes in this letter.

P.S. 2. That was a regrettable accident to the child at Saint-Remy. The only way to prevent the children from incurring risks is to supervise them constantly.

—Note of the Good Father, written in the sacristy.

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**S. 373-2. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

August 16, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

My dear Son,

Not having any further news from you (your last letter was dated August 9), today I wish to comment on your letters of August 6 and August 9, which received immediate answers because of their importance. In the first you point out that three articles will need to be deleted at the request of the State Council. To avoid any misunderstandings, I accepted. I asked you to have two copies made, one in strict compliance with what M. le Baron, the reporter, demanded, and the other with a few added words of explanation, etc. In your second, you bring up the word “primary” added to statute 17. Because the word merely obscures slightly the general meaning of the Statute, you may add what you suggested in your first letter.

I was in such a hurry when I received your letter of August 9 that, fearing some irregularity would slip into our negotiations with M. O’Lombel, I sent your letter to Brother David to obtain his reactions on this and on the suppression of *tous biens* in article 5. I received them just as I was sending off your letter of August 13; you must have it by now. In a postscript I said I was abiding by my letter of August 11 concerning the deletions requested by the State Council. Brother David did not know this; he quoted me as saying I would give the council an immediate response as soon as you had one for me. I did not have Brother David’s reaction to the suppression in article 5. The others in the July 12 draft are not important. *Une Société universelle de tous gains* [a non-profit organization with all goods held in common]—it is that, and the word *universelle*, while it puts us in this category of institutions, does not remove the difficulties created by the inclusion of buildings among the goods of its members. The heirs will be the ones to cause trouble, whatever precautions we take. . . . (I will continue on another sheet.)

How will the goods acquired by the Society in the name of the Superior be understood (article 12)? I do not know if it would be unwise to reveal the probable scope of the article or how article 5, with its deletion, could be interpreted. I know the council will insist on the notion of *main morte* [goods of religious Orders are inalienable]. I can think of two ways to come to terms if we have a friendly talk with the council or with the reporter: (1) to admit a *Société universelle* and even *de tous biens*, but considering only the establishments as goods; (2) simply and purely to admit *Société universelle*, but to satisfy fiscal regulations with a clause stating that the average age at which the members pooled their possessions was 33 years. My dear Son, I am not reasoning in this way to make you retract what you have already done under my orders, but simply so you will understand your assignment more clearly. I must stop; the mailman is almost here.

The peace of Christ be with you, my Son.

G.-Joseph Chaminade

P.S. You know, of course, that I almost never reread my letters.

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*Father Chaminade gives Father Caillet instructions in view of his coming journey to Saint-Remy; there is a question for the first time of a foundation at Courtefontaine, a name which will appear often in this correspondence and to which is attached some of the dearest memories of the Society of Mary.*

### **374. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

August 18, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

My dear Son,

I have just received the messages from Saint-Remy. Among them is a short letter from Brother Rothea.<sup>1</sup> So you may have it sooner, I am sending it on to you, just as it is. You will blame what is blamable; for what remains, you will decide with Brother Clouzet what will be suitable. Brother Clouzet is not wrong in giving way a little to the wearisome demands of Brother Rothéa, but on the other hand, Brother Rothéa should not be so persistent.

A copy of the letter of Father Rivière, the vicar general, has been sent to me, an original copy of which you must have received in Saint-Claude. I do not believe you know the place designated under the name of “Contrefontaine.”<sup>2</sup> Furnishings are not being spoken of. Would everything actually be ready for the first of November? Would the place be large enough to lodge the former schoolteachers who would be attracted there by the retreats? Before acceptance is definitively made, it seems to me we would need to go and see the Bishop of Saint-Claude. Only by inconveniencing ourselves a great deal would we open this establishment by November 1. Moreover, you would see about the four or five subjects the vicar general is offering as a beginning. What would be in the way of their being in Saint-Remy until next spring? You could write to him that you could have an agreement with him, if he is well enough informed about the plans of the Bishop of Saint-Claude and about the place he is offering. See for yourself whether it would not be proper to write to the respectable prelate at the same time you would answer Father Rivière.

My dear Son, handle this matter with prudence. All I can do now is to offer you some general reflections. If the bishop backs us up with zeal and loyalty, we must work with him, especially because this diocese is under the jurisdiction of the administration of the academy of Besançon. You would also see what advantages the designated place may offer for the formation of a Men’s Sodality. Would there be a large enough chapel? What is the population of the city? Etc. . . . What means of subsistence would there be for the religious? If the bishop can be persuaded to issue a short note, I will send you a procuration to discuss and sign, etc. . . .

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<sup>1</sup> Editor’s note. In the following letters Fr. Chaminade makes reference to one of the brothers Rothéa, Bro. Louis Rothéa or Fr. Charles Rothéa. It is often difficult to determine which is meant by the French “Monsieur.” An attempt has been made, as with all the names in the letters, to indicate the proper English title; if this is not possible, “Brother” has been used. Biographical data on Bro. Louis Rothéa may be found in volume one of the letters at letter no. 129 and for Fr. Charles Rothéa at letter no. 169.

<sup>2</sup> Fr. Chaminade wants to say “Courtefontaine,” and he supposes there is a question of a place in the city of Saint-Claude. Courtefontaine is the name of a small village in the diocese of Saint-Claude, located on the borders of three departments—the Jura, the Doubs, and Haute-Saône. It derives its name from an abundant fountain which springs from the rock, to disappear almost immediately into subterranean caves. Until the Revolution, it had been the seat of a friary of Canons Regular, whose church in the purest Roman style is an historic monument. Several years later in the remains of the cloister buildings, the foundation of the normal school referred to here was to be made. Courtefontaine became one of the most important establishments in the province of Franche-Comte. It united the school of the village, a boarding school of primary instruction, the postulate, the novitiate and the scholasticate of the province, the residence of the pastor of the parish, and the provincial seat. It was suppressed by the decrees of 1903.



I am also having the letter of Brother Clouzet sent on to you, although I imagine he wrote to you at the same time he wrote to me. If you have finished your business with the Council of State, I think His Excellency the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs will permit you to go to Saint-Remy, considering the urgency of this visit and that the matter of the royal ordinance will not be delayed because of it. If both you and His Excellency mutually promise, it will be good to leave to someone else the job of overseeing the royal ordinance as you would do yourself, if you were not obliged to be absent.

In this case, the person taking your place would need to be carefully instructed. The Missionaries of Beaupré are going to Saint-Remy for the two retreats, so you can give greater attention to everything so that these retreats produce the greatest amount of good possible . . . I see a great deal of crowding . . . It is not possible for Brother Laugeay to be present at the beginning of the first retreat; at best, he can be there only toward the end.

You will decide regarding the lame candidate. Is he thus as the result of an accident? Just to what extent is he lame? Does he make up for his physical defects by great qualities of mind, heart, and character?<sup>1</sup>

I will also await your advice regarding the coming of Bros. Pascal, Petitjean, and Mouillet. You will also see about the young Alsatian woman. Brother Clouzet had written to me about two other young women of the department of Haute-Saône. I had answered affirmatively regarding one, but she has not yet written to me as I believe I had asked her to do. It seems that Brother Rothéa, who answered the Alsatian woman that she would have to travel to Bordeaux alone, said nothing of this to Brother Clouzet. On the other hand, it seems that during this vacation there will be a great deal of movement due to changes in appointments and places.

The nephew of Brother Griffon, 9 years old, is rather young to be with the postulants; would it not be better to have him among the boarders? Are the postulants and novices of all ranks kept together? If they are, my dear Son, see what measures can be taken so this will not be so. . . . I will try not to lose sight of Brother Bousquet. . . . I will not answer Brother Clouzet or Brother Rothéa on the matters touched upon in their last letters; you will take care of that for me.

You may bring to the notice of His Excellency that the royal ordinance is greatly needed at a time when everything must be prepared and definitely settled for the school year about to begin. Try to forget nothing of the various observations I made to you at the time of drawing up this ordinance.

The health of our saintly prelate is holding up fairly well. The Bishop of La Rochelle, older than he by about two years, is in Bordeaux. He is less tired than the archbishop.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Biographical note. There is a question of Pierre Gobillot (1803-88), who was in fact admitted to the Society of Mary and fully realized Fr. Chaminade's hopes. He was born in Marast near Saint-Remy and entered the novitiate of Saint-Laurent on October 15, 1825. He was blessed with a great spirit of faith and a deep attachment to the Rule. At different times he was director and spent a great part of his life in the houses of formation. He was even placed at the head of the novitiate of Saint-Laurent for 1827-28, and this story refers to that time; it was written by Brother Silvain in his memoirs. "One day at a conference given by Fr. Chaminade, a superior knelt before him and asked to be relieved of his office, giving as his reason his bodily infirmity—he was lame—and also the infirmity of his mind. Fr. Chaminade then asked him if he had a high idea of the rhetoric of Saint Peter, the first of the apostles who converted the world. . . . Useless to add that the suppliant again took his place and continued to fulfill his office." Regarding his infirmity he said, "When I broke my leg, my parents said, 'What a misfortune.' And now I say, 'What happiness!' Because who knows what I might have become without this accident?" "Bro. Gobillot was a rugged Brother of Mary, leading a religious life after the manner of the Fathers of the Desert," writes a contemporary, "never having any fire in his room, practicing until extreme old age all the fasts of the Rule, with the most complete detachment from his family. . . . As he approached the end of his career, his ruggedness little by little gave place to the mildness of maturity." In a letter of August 29, 1843, Fr Chaminade pointed him out as a good teacher, "teaching with great clarity and order" and as a good religious, "gifted with an honest severity in all matters related to regularity and good example."

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Paillou was then 90 years of age. He had migrated to Spain, where he had met Louis Chaminade, who was living with the Bishop of Orense. He had been consecrated in Saint. Sulpice on February 2, 1805, by Pope Pius VII. He died in 1826 with the reputation of a saint.

My dear Son, I am wishing you the twofold peace which Our Lord wished to his Apostles on his first appearance to them. It seems to me that for many days I have felt that the Blessed Virgin is taking a deeper interest in her little Society.

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**375. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

August 22, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

My dear Son,

I am sending you by today's mail a Certificate of Affiliation for Mme O'Lombel.

I received your messages dated August 14 only August 20 in the morning. This delay was caused, it seems to me, by the absence of the archbishop.<sup>1</sup> On the eve, he was in the country with Fathers Barrès and Gignoux. It seemed suitable to me to give an answer to the opinion given by the State Council to his Excellency the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Instruction. I want to write directly to His Excellency in sending him my answer. There will be two letters, one in connection with my answer and the other one confidential. I hope to be able to send both by tomorrow's mail, as this seems impossible today. Uncertain as to whether you will not have obtained the permission of Bishop d'Hermopolis to leave for Saint-Remy, according to the letter I wrote to you last Thursday, I am writing to M. O'Lombel to withdraw the little package addressed to you, to take the certificate to his wife, and to have this letter sent to you if you happened to be gone. I think I will shortly receive from you advice regarding the choice you will have made of the one who was willing to replace you, to continue what you were doing regarding the royal ordinance. I presume this is M. O'Lombel. Whether it is he or someone else, you will have him made known to M. Receveur so that he may enjoy the advantage of the free postage. I will write also to M. de la Chapelle, either to tell him all about what I will write to His Excellency or to tell him everything that in my opinion might help this matter. You will also do well to once more interest M. Receveur and M. Trébuguet, and to have them meet M. O'Lombel or whoever may be the one to replace you. M. O'Lombel will be able to correspond directly in regard to the matter of the establishment and address his letters to me, just as you do.

Regarding the matter of Saint-Claude, I did not believe you to be so well informed as you actually are about both the places and the people concerned. Directly or indirectly through M. Rivière, give the bishop every kind of tokens of goodwill, but let there be no tenants on the place designated, that etc., etc. Let him be kind enough to supply this establishment with everything that is strictly necessary, etc. . . .

Mme - - - asks you to make a novena immediately for her daughter who is a boarder at the Reunion.<sup>2</sup> This child seems to her very unruly, and she fears for her first Communion. She gave me 100 francs for you as a stipend for the novena. I believe that if you do not happen to have what you need for your journey, you will need to borrow. Let me know.

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**S. 375-2. To M. O'Lombel, Paris**

August 22, 1825, Bordeaux

Rough Copy, Agmar

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<sup>1</sup> The correspondence of Fr. Chaminade with Fr. Caillet was carried on through the archbishop's palace.

<sup>2</sup> In the boarding school conducted by the Ladies of the Reunion of the Sacred Heart.

I, Guillaume, etc., for all the services which M. O'Lombel has rendered and is still rendering in Paris to the Society of Mary and in particular to our beloved son Father Caillet, a priest of the Society, and after the special request for affiliation which the said M. O'Lombel has just sent me in his letter of August 17, which letter contained on the part of the petitioner, etc.

*Note.* Instead of "by the reigning Sovereign Pontiff," by Pius VII.

For Mme Marie des Douleurs Rizo O'Lombel, on the special request for affiliation sent to me in a letter of August 10, 1825, by the said person, which letter expressed a sincere desire to share in the good works and the efficacious prayers of the Society of Mary, in view of the selfless devotedness of her spouse to the Society of Mary and according to the testimony given by our beloved son Father Caillet, a priest of the said Society, to the edifying life and conduct of the worthy woman, to her tender devotion to Mary, to the faithful practice of her religious duties, and to her charity toward her neighbor, by these presents. . . .

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**N.A. 375-3. To Minister Denis Frayssinous**

Bordeaux, August 25, 1825

Printed in Volume 9. Copy at Agmar 218.2.63<sup>2</sup>

Your Excellency,

I take the liberty of addressing directly to you my observations concerning the advice of the Council of State, given to Your Excellency on the matter of the statutes of the Society of Mary which have been submitted to it.

I agree to all the modifications Your Excellency may judge appropriate. However, I did not think you would disapprove if I frankly present to you the views and reasons which guided me in drawing up the statutes, which the Council of State would wish to see modified.

When I received word from Father Caillet that our statutes had been accepted by the Royal Council with three modifications, I answered him immediately. I told him that in order to conclude the matter, I was giving my consent and that if it were necessary, he could sign in my name. His memory was faulty—instead of three modifications, the Royal Council was proposing seven. This is what has obliged me immediately to take up my pen to send to you, Your Excellency, my humble and submissive observations. I have some hope that the Royal Council will reconsider its position, at least on the more important points such as that of a "universal society" and "of all goods" and "all commitments."

Your Excellency, I believe that by the time this letter will have had the good fortune of reaching you, Father Caillet will have already obtained from Your Excellency permission to go to Saint-Remy. It will be impossible to postpone the retreats to be given to the schoolteachers. The missionaries of Besançon, who have had the goodness to help us again this year, are to begin a mission on November 2. This retreat will last 15 days and will be for the two departments, Doubs and Haute-Saône. His Excellency the Bishop of Saint-Claude has just offered us a locale in which to work at the sanctification of the schoolteachers of his diocese.

With this same post, I am asking Father de La Chapelle to continue his kind concern for us, both with Your Excellency and with the Council of State, if Your Excellency judges that my observations might have some effect on the thinking of the Council of State. He is the reporter on this matter that is of great usefulness to the Society of Mary and is for the public good, which it has uniquely in view. [It is my hope] that this matter can be brought to a successful and prompt conclusion.

I am, with the most profound respect, Your Excellency, your most humble and obedient servant.

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<sup>2</sup> Original in the National Archives, Paris, F17.12460.

Bordeaux, August 25, 1825

G.-Joseph Chaminade  
Honorary Canon

\* \* \*

**N.A. 375-4. To Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs and  
Public Instruction, Denis Frayssinous**

September 5, 1825, Bordeaux

Printed in Volume 9. Copy at Agmar 218.2.66<sup>3</sup>

Your Excellency,

I have the honor of acknowledging receipt of a further extension of the royal Ordinance of August 16 authorizing the schools of the Society of the Brothers of Mary. The obvious protection which you have willingly given to this work is a consequence of your enlightened zeal for religion and for the service of the king, who so well merits our love and our veneration.

I promise to do my best to equal these views with which the government deigns to associate me.

I will ask for this strength from this God from whom all things flow. From his goodness, I will ask for Your Excellency, and from the bottom of my heart, a multitude of graces and long life.

Accept, Excellency, this renewed homage of profound respect with which I am the most humble and obedient servant of Your Excellency.

G.-Joseph Chaminade  
Honorary Canon  
Bordeaux, September 5, 1825

P.S. I cannot make a definitive move until the modified and approved statutes will have officially reached me.

\* \* \*

**N.A. 375-5. To Father de La Chapelle  
Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Instruction**

September 9, 1825, Bordeaux

Printed in Volume 9. Copy at Agmar 218.2.64<sup>4</sup>

Reverend Father,

Your letter of September 3 has aroused within me the deepest sentiments of gratitude in His Excellency's regard and yours. It has given my soul the consolation of hope. All that is needed for a successful and prompt resolution of this important affair is the interest you deign to give it.

If I permit myself once again to reflect on your enlightening observations, I remain nonetheless submissive to whatever His Excellency may decide. It seems you want me to tell you frankly all my thoughts on the four modifications you have taken the trouble to discuss yourself. I will be as brief as possible.

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<sup>3</sup> Original in the National Archives, Paris, F17.12460.

<sup>4</sup> Original in the National Archives, Paris, F17.12460.

1. Concerning articles 3 and 4 of the Statutes, you do me the honor of replying, Reverend Father, that “the Council of State asks only to have inserted textually that what is prescribed by the laws which govern France.”

If these were the words of the Council of State, there would be no further difficulty. I ask for nothing more. I will place the two texts in parallel, and you will be struck by the difference.

“As for the commitments, before [the age of] 21 the consent of the parents will be necessary” (text of the Council of State).

“As for the commitments before the age of 21 years, they will be made and regulated as is prescribed in the laws governing France in what concerns minors” (text in keeping with your letter).

Provisions concerning minors are numerous in our laws. To apply only one of these numerous articles to a particular statute is, rigorously speaking, to exclude all the others. I will not take the liberty of explaining this observation, even less to draw its consequences. Your wisdom will spot them at a glance.

Here, the “law as expressed” cannot be considered sufficient because it is reproduced only partially.

2. Concerning article 5 of the Statutes, or the third modification, you reply, Reverend Father, that “our legislation accepts as a principle that any transfer of ownership to an establishment of public usefulness may be made only in virtue of a special authorization given by the king. I therefore conclude that the act of affiliation to the Society may not include the transfer of ownership of the goods of an associate to the benefit of the Society, since this act of affiliation is not subject to the approbation of the king.”

Your answer, Reverend Father, leads me to believe that in reading my observations, your eye overlooked this insertion. “It could be required to include in the Statutes that the sharing of all goods, if it takes place, be submitted to the authorization of the king, as with donations and institutions in cases of death.”

In addition, my observations present motives which show that a “society of community of goods” would not render less service to religion than any other business. Abuse or fear of abuses would be avoided by submitting it to royal approbation; there should be no more difficulty on this point.

Royal authorization would have the same advantage of identifying the destination of the goods involved, as it does in matters of donations and testaments, for a society of community of goods can only receive the goods the associates own at the time of their incorporation into the society. Whatever else might come to them by inheritance, donation, or bequest cannot be included, according to the prohibition in article 1837 of the code on religion.

It seems to me that this society of community of goods has been permitted for religious associations of women, in view of past or future foundations [trust agreements], if they are approved within six months. In addition, it seems to me that the two commentaries on this law have in fact determined that most such societies arise merely from the coming together of several modest properties existing separately and which someone wanted to entrust to one superior or place under a single head.

Neither the Council of State nor the Minister would be departing from the laws presently in effect for authorizing such societies of community of goods if they are not departing from them when they deal with donations. Because the transfer by a society of common ownership is an attenuation or modification of an absolute donation, the royal authorization would apply in either case.

3. Concerning article 7 of the Statutes, the fourth modification proposes to “set a limit, etc.”

My observations have already pointed out some of the inconveniences which would result from the adoption of this modification. It would favor human inconstancy; it would sometimes arouse it; it would be harmful to a person who withdraws and who might become

aware of his fault only after having committed it; it exempts from the law an attribution the law thought should be reserved, if necessary, to the wise discretion of the courts.

You assure me that His Excellency will have an alternative list of the benefits and difficulties between my proposal and the modifications of the Council of State. I hope His Excellency sees that the withdrawal of certain members without indemnification could strike a fatal blow at the Institute. Such an eventuality not only is possible, but given the nature of human passions, it is among the probabilities.

Let us suppose the person who contributed the majority of the goods would like to be named the general; he prepares himself. But the Chapter judges him inadequate, incompetent, perhaps unworthy. Taken together, these three reasons lead to his exclusion. So he withdraws, taking back the goods transferred, which according to this supposition form the majority of those possessed by the Society. The Society is annihilated for having refused to deliver itself up to ambitious inadequacy, incompetence, and unworthiness. Should the Society consent to this intrigue and to his needs in a desire to preserve the status quo, at its very beginning the Institute would be diverted to an object opposed to its purpose and to the public good.

I would truly wish that the councilors of state, when they deliberate about large institutions, would themselves have had the experience of establishing similar institutions, or that they would have studied the subject matter of their deliberations.

4. Concerning article 16 of the Statutes, fourth modification, the sixth of the committee.

The issue here is to provide that the superior who will succeed me, and those who might be elected in the future, would be elected for only three years from the day of their installation, and that they could be successively reelected.

On this entire matter, Reverend Father, you have been kind enough to inform me that the issue is no longer in the discussion stage, the decision having been made in the Commission of the Council of State. This decision [you tell me] having been officially communicated, there is no longer a question of returning to the Council of State.

His Excellency, to whom I speak here through your mediation, Reverend Father, will deign to balance, as you say, the reasons for and against and to decide, I trust, on what he believes most beneficial for our holy religion, the wellbeing of the kingdom, and the means which might be granted to the Society of Mary.

Whatever His Excellency may decide, after having received my above reflections and my prior observations, even should his decision differ from my views and be contrary to my hopes, I will work within the limits of the articles approved. However, I would anticipate even greater fruits with concessions closer to my original request.

I place myself momentarily in the position of the public authorities. I pity them the inconveniences they experience in trying to do all the good they might desire. The oppositions they place before me, they have themselves already experienced. Nothing succeeds perfectly in this world. The lesser evil will long remain the sole good of societies. I leave it to His Excellency to inform me of what his religious views would have him desire for the Institute by conceding to the present circumstances only the most indispensable modifications.

My duty has obliged me to defend both my Institute and its future associates, and those dependent on it. Whatever may happen to them, I have a duty to show myself their father; I have done so only for the glory of God.

To you, Reverend Father, who have graciously granted your cooperation, I recommend one final concern for the fate of my own people and a prompt and final decision.

You must not doubt that I have very especially recommended you in my prayers. Do not doubt that I am, with confidence, gratitude, and truly profound respect,

Reverend Father, your most humble and truly devoted servant.

G.-Joseph Chaminade  
Honorary Canon  
Bordeaux, September 9, 1825

P. S. After His Excellency's final decision, would you be kind enough, Reverend Father, to write the final text of the Statutes? Or would it be more appropriate for me to do this according to the response you will kindly send me? Would not the first alternative expedite matters?

\* \* \*

*Father Caillet left Paris before being able to obtain the royal ordinance. At Saint-Remy he presided at two retreats for the schoolteachers, and their success was everything that could be desired, complete in every way. Only the following letter remains from September.*

### **376. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Saint-Remy**

September 15, 1825, Bordeaux

Original, Agmar

[With insert from S. 376]

My dear Son,

I have received your letter, as well as that of Brother Laugeay, both dated September 5. I have included a copy of Pastor Bader's letter to Father Rothéa, dated August 29. I will answer all three in this letter.

I am not surprised that the retreats which begin with the 8 days of preparation<sup>1</sup> succeed better than those which begin with the main exercises. When put in the last place, the exercises destined for the preparation can only weaken the strong impressions made by the main exercises.

All the good Brother Laugeay tells me about the normal schools is very deeply impressed in my heart. You know everything I have done since the purchase of the château of Saint-Remy in order to give them a first place in the departments of Doubs and Haute-Saône. I have thought a long while about the department of the Jura, as being under the jurisdiction of the same administration of Besançon, but then I was not thinking that the diocese of Saint-Claude was going to be detached from that of Besançon.<sup>2</sup> For the time being, I have nothing to add to what I wrote to you in Paris on the subject of the establishment of the normal school requested in Saint-Claude by its worthy bishop. Moreover, when this letter reaches you you will already have made your plans regarding this subject. No normal school is to be accepted unless the annual retreats of 15 days for the former schoolteachers can be joined to them and these schoolteachers can lodge in the establishment.

From everything you have already told me about the young lame man, I am very ready to receive him at Saint-Laurent. His deformity matters little, providing he can become an excellent religious who can teach the postulants and the novices and he is of a character equally firm, mild, and amiable.

I will receive the seven subjects Brother Laugeay names for me, and with all the more pleasure if you are at their head to lead them. The Saint-Laurent retreat will probably not begin before the evening of October 16.

From this you can see that I am consenting, even with pleasure, for Brother Bousquet to come to Colmar to be the first sacristan of the parish. That was my first idea when there was a question of replacing Olivier, but I feared being wedded to my own ideas, based on the representations Bros. Laugeay and Rothéa had made to me. I hope to be able to send Bros. Weber

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<sup>1</sup> In which the teachers assist morning and evening at a religious instruction, while receiving professional training during the day.

<sup>2</sup> The diocese of Saint-Claude, created in 1742 following the secularization of the abbey of the same name, had been suppressed by the Concordat of 1801 and its territory annexed to the diocese of Besançon. It had just been reestablished in 1817.

and Colin to the schools of Colmar, especially if they can be advantageously replaced at Villeneuve by two of those you will bring along.

I read with satisfaction the letter written to Father Rothéa by the pastor, Father Bader. It seems that a small establishment of brothers may be made in Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines; it would be too bad if it were not the Society of Mary that would rear the children of the town of Sainte-Marie.<sup>1</sup> Have Father Rothéa write then to the pastor, Father Bader, so that on his part he may persuade the mayor of the town to write to me officially to present his request and to make nearly the same offers, and in the same way as they are made in Father Rothéa's letter. It would need to be pointed out that four brothers would be needed, especially if the school is to serve the two parishes of the town. With only three brothers, it would not be possible to take the smallest children, those who had not yet begun to read. For such a town, what difference could an additional 300 francs make, considering the great advantage accorded to children from the earliest years in which they are susceptible to training? Father Rothéa will do well to consider this serious point.

Regarding the young women who desire to come to the novitiate of the Daughters of Mary, I am leaving the decision up to you. It seems to me that the sister of the postulant of the normal school whom you will bring along will be able to enter only as a lay Companion Sister, and we will send her to Agen.

Because I have a fairly bad headache, I am writing to you by the hand of Brother Tissior, about whom I think Brother Laugeay spoke to me. Nothing regarding him is yet decided for next year. We will speak more of this at another time. I am embracing you tenderly, and also all our dear Children in Saint-Remy *in osculo pacis* [by a kiss of peace].

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*At the beginning of October Father Caillet is expected in Paris, where a letter from Father Chaminade has preceded him.*

### **377. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

August 4, 1825, Bordeaux  
Original, Agmar

My dear Son,

I have received your letter of September 23. I am not making any comment or reflection upon its contents, since you are going to leave Saint-Remy and this letter is to find or wait for you in Paris. I am also not saying anything about our Paris matters because M. O'Lombel will bring you up to date on everything. He has copies of everything I have written, either to Bishop d'Hermopolis or to Father de la Chapelle. I was somewhat anxious over the lack of news from M. O'Lombel when I received some, and this makes me shorten the long letter I was going to write to you.

In my last one to M. O'Lombel, I invited him to come to Bordeaux to take part in the retreat, if the whole of our business may permit him an absence of about two weeks. He is accepting the invitation and profiting by this occasion to accompany his wife as far as Bordeaux. Explain clearly to him how these retreats are given and how they are made, the simplicity of the instructions or meditations, the smallness of the place and the resulting crowded quarters for the number of retreatants, the frugality of the meals, etc., etc., so that he may not be surprised at anything.

I believe that as you have said to me, you will have taken precautions so the small group of postulants you are bringing may not be endangered in any way during the two days you intend

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<sup>1</sup> The schools of Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines were confided to the Society of Mary, but only at the beginning of 1827.



to stay in Paris. Youth must always be supervised, however good they may be, just as a person watches the milk over the fire. . . .

Right now Brother Olivier is entering my room, unable to withstand the reproaches of his conscience, in order to be able to write to you and to M. O'Lombel. I am sending him to Saint-Laurent.

Offer my humble respects to Bishop d'Hermopolis and to Father de la Chapelle, but in such a way that they understand that these are really heartfelt and not just cold compliments with which they must be satisfied.<sup>1</sup>

If the new edition of the Statutes is made, you can sign it for me, as there would be less delay. For the editing of the royal ordinance, I am depending upon the interest and benevolence which his Excellency bears toward the Society of Mary.

May the Lord deign to shower his blessings on all our affairs, which are properly his own, and on you in particular and all your traveling companions. May all your Guardian Angels accompany you in peace and keep all danger from you. May I soon have the satisfaction of giving you the fatherly kiss!

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*Here, written in the hand of Father Chaminade, is a letter of affiliation sent to Mme de Milanges, a benefactor of the Society of Mary. She had taken active measures to assist the negotiations of Father Caillet and of M. O'Lombel and was then preparing to leave for New Orleans, where she had considerable interests to supervise.*

### **378. To Mme Marie-Anne Blanche Bruno de Milanges, Paris**

October 4, 1825, Bordeaux  
Rough Draft Autograph, Agmar

Upon a special request for affiliation addressed to us from Paris by our well beloved Son Father Caillet, a priest of the Society of Mary, in favor of Mme de Milanges, and also upon the earnest solicitation of the said person through our respectable Son, M. O'Lombel, a zealous affiliate of the Society of Mary;

in consideration of the zeal and devotedness Mme de Milanges shows for the support and propagation of the Society of Mary, and in consideration, furthermore, of the good and sufficient tokens of her good life and character given by our dear Sons, as well as of her tender devotion toward Mary, her exactitude in the accomplishment of her duties of religion and charity toward her neighbors, etc. We have by these present, etc.

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### **N.A. 378-2. From His Excellency Denis Frayssinous, Minister To King Charles X**

November 1, 1825, Paris

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<sup>1</sup> On their side, Bishop Frayssinous and Fr. de la Chapelle had for Fr. Chaminade sentiments of genuine respect and veneration. On September 3, Fr. de la Chapelle himself wrote a long letter to Fr. Chaminade which ended with the following declarations. "I saw M. O'Lombel twice, but I experience so much satisfaction in corresponding directly with you that I should ask him to send these reflections on to you. I far prefer to send them to you myself with as much confidence as you have kindly shown me your own. Please be assured of my eagerness to cooperate in everything which may hasten the conclusion of a matter which, in giving your Society a legal existence, assures the perpetuity of an establishment which will always be as valuable and useful to the Church as it is to the State, so much will it preserve the spirit of its Founder and his zeal for the greater glory of God. Please accept, I beg of you, the assurance of the veneration and respect with which I have the honor of being, Reverend Father, etc."

Report to the King  
Sire,

Father Chaminade, Canon of the church of Bordeaux, with a view to spreading and conserving among the newer generation the principles of religion and of evangelical morality and from a sincere devotedness to the monarchy, has planned an Institute destined to the formation of primary school instructors.

The members of this Institute, united into one Society under conditions conforming to the dispositions of the Civil Code, would take charge of the direction of schools which the competent authorities would confide to their care. They would be considered as forming a religious and charitable association for primary instruction, in keeping with article 36 of the Ordinance of February 29, 1816.

The association would have the name "Society of Mary." By some trials in the dioceses of Bordeaux and Besançon, it has already shown all the good that may be anticipated from its zeal. The prelates who head these two dioceses, witnesses of these first attempts, expect the most useful services from the Brothers of Mary. They join with Father Chaminade to ask that his Institute be legally authorized.

The Statutes of the Society have been examined and approved by the Royal Council of Public Instruction.

For these reasons, Sire, I have the honor of proposing to Your Majesty to accord, by the attached Ordinance, the requested authorization of the association of the Brothers of Mary.

With respect, I am, Sire, the most humble, devoted, and faithful subject of Your Majesty.

The Minister Secretary of State in the Department of  
Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Instruction

Approved at the château of the Tuileries, the - - - day of the month - - -  
of the - - - year of grace, one thousand eight hundred twenty-five, the second of  
our reign.

\* \* \*

*Father Caillet came to Bordeaux for the retreat at Saint- Laurent, and M. O'Lombel is following up alone the matter of the legal recognition. Letters of Father Chaminade during this period are rare. Here is an obedience given to a religious whom matters recall to his family.*

### **379. To Bro. Dominique Weissemburger, Bordeaux**

November 2, 1825, Bordeaux

Copy, Agmar

Our dear Son, Bro. Dominique Weissemburger, a tonsured cleric, professed in the Society of Mary, will be permitted as soon as possible to go to Ribeaupillé, the city of his birth, to fulfill the small mission upon which we have agreed. I have recommend to him recollection against unruliness, which is so common during long journeys, and Christian and religious vigilance over his heart against the inclinations of nature; these dispositions should be constantly renewed in the midst of his parents, relatives, and former friends. May he always be able to say truthfully, "*Ego non sum de hec munde; de supernis sum.*"<sup>1</sup> May he always recall that by his sacred commitments

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<sup>5</sup> Original in the National Archives, Paris, F17.12460.

<sup>1</sup> "I am no longer of this world; I am from above."

he is dead to the world, in order to lead a life hidden in God with Jesus Christ, *Mortui estis, et vita nostra abscondita est cum Christo in Deo.*<sup>2</sup>

I permit him to lodge with his parents in Ribeauvillé, and, although I exempt him from what is particular to the monastic regimen of the Society, whether while traveling or during his stay in Ribeauvillé, he will try to observe this as closely as possible, always remembering to carry in his body the mortification of Jesus Christ, as Saint Paul did.

At most, his stay in Ribeauvillé will last 7 or 8 days. Unless there is an accident of some kind or something unforeseen, he is to be back in Bordeaux on November 23.

To conclude, I want to recall to him once more the recommendation of Saint Paul to the Philippians, *Modestia vestra nota sit omnibus hominibus.*<sup>1</sup> And I wish him everything that fatherly tenderness can wish to a well-beloved Son from whom he is being separated with so much solicitude, although for so short a time. May our august Patroness, the most blessed Virgin Mary, deign to accord him a special protection until his happy return!

Bordeaux, November 2, 1825

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*This letter concerns the needs of personnel in the various houses.*

### **380. To Bro. Dominique Clouzet, Saint-Remy**

November 30, 1825, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

[With inserts from S. 380]

My dear Son,

Yesterday I received your undated letter, but it must have been written November 4, like that of Brother Rothéa. It strikes me now that the one I thought was from Father Rothéa was really from Mme Mouillet. I gather from both letters that the first was written on November 20.

The young theologian from Strasbourg whom you and Brother Rothéa sent to me has just arrived and in good health. Always send theologians who give promise of being good subjects, for we can always find a place for them. You know that Father Lalanne is superior of a type of small seminary we have here. At the same time, he is teaching the second year.

Father Brothier is always ready to leave for Saint-Remy; he has a great liking for teaching and is certainly able to handle the heaviest classes. Furthermore, he will be able to hear Confessions, give instructions, etc. He seems really to like work and especially that which is connected with retreats. The Bishop of Périgueux persists in refusing him his *exeat*. He has just left to go to cast himself at his bishop's feet to beg, etc. If he succeeds in obtaining what he desires, I will keep him only to have him make a new retreat before receiving him as a novice.

I feel all the need you have of some priests and professors, and I am hoping always that the Lord will send us the subjects we need. Saint-Laurent and the Madeleine are being staffed little by little, for in both houses there are several good subjects. Have patience, as I am saying always and everywhere, because everywhere subjects are lacking. If we do not allow subjects to mature before employing them, we are weakening instead of strengthening ourselves.

I am always more astonished, my dear Son, that you did not send Brother Constant to Colmar. As I had Father Caillet remark to you, the weaver you sent will not have much success in Colmar, and you should have left him at his own trade and not tried to make a professor of him. I do not believe our brothers in Colmar request from you other subjects than those which seem suitable to us, and they must not be more astonished than I that you have sent the brother weaver,

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<sup>2</sup> For you are dead and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

<sup>1</sup> "Let your modesty be known to all."

after having written to them and had others write that they were going to receive Brother Constant.

I am expecting an answer from Father Bardenet. Father Caillet had already written to him concerning both Gray and Father Agathange. I believe he wrote also concerning Brother Constant. You seem not to have received his letter, to judge by your last two; perhaps he has not received word from Father Caillet.

As to the Echenos establishment, we will see if it is feasible. In your reply, add that the Daughters of Mary are cloistered.

We do not yet happen to have a locksmith to send you; [at Saint-Laurent] we have only Séguin<sup>1</sup> and François. François cannot be released yet because he is not yet strong enough to work alone. Furthermore, although he is very good in the matter of religious life, and although I have promised to allow him to make his profession for one year, he is not sufficiently mature. We have already lost several subjects in employing them too soon. When you have some subjects suitable for the locksmith trade and the religious life, send them—one, two, or even three. We will see to it that they are properly trained.

My greatest care and worry is to train priests and teachers for the normal schools, without neglecting any of the other categories of people.

Brother Olivier is continuing his penance with generosity. His faults will be the cause of his sanctification. . . . Brother Benoît is also performing penance, but he is not doing so well. Already for some time he has recognized his faults, but his heart is hardly touched. Also, his character and his headaches are an additional obstacle to his improvement.

Tell Father Rothéa that if he wishes to be with me, I also wish to be able to have him come. Let him be patient and fulfill all his duties well as a good Head of Zeal; without preoccupation and without mental constraint, let him accustom himself to silence of the imagination. And you, my dear Son, take care of yourself. No doubt a superior must be firm, but if he wishes to save himself, he must have still greater humility.

May the Lord be with you!

P.S. I am very mindful of the memory of my Children in Saint-Remy. I have it always in my mind and heart to go to see them. I am very willing to grant Father Chevaux what he has requested through your mediation, but it is appropriate for him to write to me himself, and for me to send him a dispensation in proper form.

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*At the approach of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, two letters leave for Auch, addressed to the Sodality of the seminary. The first, written to the sodalists by Father Lalanne, is full of tender and strong piety and animated by a youthful ardor. The second, to Father Larrieu, their director, seems to have been written by Father Caillet.*

*The seminary of Auch, where the pupils of the major and the minor seminary were united, was then one of the most flourishing in France. In 1825 the minor seminary had more than 360 pupils. The Sodality was organized there in 1822 under the care of Father Fenasse, vicar general*

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<sup>1</sup> Biographical note. Jean Séguin (1797-1889), born in Latresne near Bordeaux, was a member of the Madeleine Sodality in 1818 and through it came to know the Little Society, which he joined in 1822. Head of the workshop in Saint-Laurent and a very clever carpenter, locksmith, and mechanic, in 1835 he was sent to Saint-Remy to organize the workshops of the Saint Joseph Community. In 1848 he was recalled near Bordeaux to the property of La Jalgue at Coubeyrac, where the Society of Mary had just founded an agricultural establishment; it later became an orphanage. He was there for 40 years and died at the age of 92. Bro. Séguin was a small man, very much alive, nervous, very clever with his hands, of a mild and agreeable character, jovial, of polite and distinguished manners, and he led a very edifying religious life.

*of the diocese and a friend of Father Chaminade, and its direction was confided to a young priest, Father Larrieu, who was to be its very soul for 60 years, until his death in 1881.*

*Father Larrieu had been able to meet Father Chaminade on his visit to Auch in 1819. He became very attached to him and would even have joined the Society of Mary, if he had been able to obtain authorization from his bishop.*

*At least, he visited Father Chaminade in Bordeaux, had the seminary Sodality incorporated into that of the Madeleine, February 21, 1826, and asked that connections would be established between the two groups. His request was granted, and on several occasions Father Chaminade wrote letters to the sodalists at the seminary of Auch; these were received with veneration, carefully transcribed into the Sodality registers, and “read and reread at the meetings,” as Father Laclavère wrote in 1909; he was vicar general of Auch and the successor to Father Larrieu in the direction of the Sodality. Father Chaminade did not begin but certainly developed the great devotion to Mary in the diocese of Auch.*

*Father Larrieu published two works which had great popularity in their time, Manual of the Pious Schoolboy and The Holy Lyre. He also left several manuscript volumes of hymns to the Blessed Virgin. He is the author of the hymn “O Beloved Cross, Receive my Faith,” among many others.*

### **381. To the Sodalists of the Seminary of Auch**

December 5, 1825, Bordeaux  
Copy, Arch. of Seminary of Auch

My dear Children,

You are not deceiving yourselves when you call me your Father. If I question my heart, I feel that I deserve this name of Father, so deeply do I love you! Yes, I have for all of you the sentiments of the most tender father, and these sentiments are very real, very sincere. Please take my word for this. Thus, my sweetest consolation will be to have engendered in Jesus Christ these children who will also be Children of Mary.

By the great mercy of God upon me and upon the others, for a long time I have breathed and lived only for the spread of the worship of this august Virgin, and thus to have her family always increase and multiply.

Among you, my dear and well-beloved Children, it has pleased God to pour the most abundant blessings upon my feeble and useless labors. Also, how would you not be dear to me? How would you not have a great share in my tenderness, and your director an equally great share in my confidence? He has not deceived you when he told you that I loved you and that above all I would desire your happiness and your progress in everything that is good. I here confirm everything he has said to you as coming from me, and you must have no doubt about the exactness with which I will hold to the promise I made to him. Yes, very willingly I will directly delegate to him all my powers, and I will send him for you letters of Affiliation, convinced as I am by all the reports I have received regarding your edifying and regular conduct that you will always uphold the honor of Mary, your good and tender Mother, and that you will always show yourselves worthy of the glorious title of Sodalists of the Immaculate Conception.

I insist on this last thought, which I believe may give rise to important reflection and salutary counsels.

Do you know, do you understand how glorious it is for you to be a Sodalists of the Immaculate Conception and how great the obligations are which this title imposes upon you? A person can be devoted to Mary in many ways; they are all good, for everything which is done for the honor of Mary is doubly agreeable to the Lord. But to be devoted to her under the title of the Immaculate Conception—this is an act of particular excellence, among all those that can have as object the worship of the Queen of Virgins. “Why then,” you will say to me, “is it not more glorious that the august Mary would be the Mother of God than the Virgin Immaculate?” Without

a doubt, but to honor in Mary the divine maternity is to acquit ourselves of a duty of strict obligation, a duty the practice of the faith requires of every Catholic, while to honor Mary under the title of her Immaculate Conception is to manifest toward her a more than ordinary devotion. It is to prove to her a love which is not limited to mere teaching; it is to express to her an admiration which believes everything that it is permitted to believe. In a word, it is a profession of the highest devotedness.<sup>1</sup>

I always take pleasure in recalling to young people some picture which they like, as I like to speak to them a language which they themselves like. Well then, my dear Children, do you remember those heroic times of ancient France when every good and valiant French knight used to hasten to the foot of the altars to offer his arms to the God of armies for the deliverance of the holy places, sprinkled with the blood of his Son? Do you still recall the zeal with which these warriors, in whom piety equaled bravery, consecrated their persons and their fortunes to the service of the Mother of the Son of God, to the service of the one they loudly acclaimed in their prayers as their Sovereign and their Lady? Do you still recall the war cry, so often repeated by them in the midst of the thickest of the fight, in the most pressing dangers, "God wills it! God wills it!" as well as, "Our Lady"? Do you recall how these cries which religion and confidence inspired to our gallant heroes always caused disorder in the ranks of their enemies, at the same time as they were for them an almost certain pledge of victory?

To these memories of our brave ancestors, my dear Children, it seems I see you smile with joy, with pleasure. In the face of these warlike pictures, it seems I already hear you say to me in transports of a holy impatience, "Well then, what is to be done? What enemy must be met and defeated? Here we are, ready! Long live Mary! Will hell withstand our efforts? Drawn up in the order of battle under the stainless banners of the Immaculate Virgin, we are invincible. Yes, long live Mary! Victory is ours!" My dear Children, how I love to see this holy enthusiasm in you! To me it is a sure pledge of your constancy and perseverance. Arm yourselves with a great courage, for you will have real battles to sustain, but combats difficult and full of dangers. . . . But again you add, "What are these combats? Who then could really stop us, when the cause is so beautiful? Where are our enemies? May they perish!" My good friends, Children very dear to my heart, this is not a question precisely of great heroic deeds, of blows given and received, of some vigorous outburst, for we do not escape that easily. We must give evidence of true bravery, not only once or twice, but often, but always! These are the battles of the Immaculate Conception which we must wage. Let me explain. This means that at whatever price, you must acquire and preserve that stainless purity which you have promised on the day of your entry into the Sodality, and to arrive at this end, what efforts will you not need to make! But fight, struggle always! Watch without ceasing and with so much constancy that you may never receive the slightest injury from their darts, the slightest wound! Mary will not abandon you in these battles. Jealous of the honor of her Children, of the dear sodalists of her Immaculate Conception, she will fight for you, she will sustain and defend you, and her help will aid in a victory otherwise impossible to your weakness. Now, then, courage, dear Children! You will be fighting under the livery of the Immaculate Conception. Indeed, what a happiness for you! Hear a heavenly voice which cries to you as it did long ago to Constantine, *In hoc signo vinces!* [By this sign you will overcome!] Yes, you will conquer, but I again recommend this to you, and I cannot recommend it enough to you. Watch over yourselves, watch always, and always preserve that purity which you owe to the one to whom you are consecrated under the title of her Immaculate Conception. If the livery of the Christian who marches under the standard of the Cross is a stainless robe, washed in the blood of the lamb, *Sanguine Agni quasi immaculate* [by the blood of the Lamb without blemish], what should be the livery of the person who, not content to march under the standards of the Lamb without blemish, enrolls under the banner of the most pure Virgin, under the banner and the colors of the Immaculate Conception!

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<sup>1</sup> The Immaculate Conception had not yet been defined as an article of faith.

How I congratulate you, my dear Children, upon your engagement in the Sodality of the Immaculate Conception! By this step you have committed yourselves to do more than the general run of Christian is obliged to do. How I bless, for you, the divine mercy which has inspired you with such a thought! But be faithful to your promises! No, without this vigilance, without this continual warfare, you will not be able to preserve the purity of your soul and body; no, it is not possible, especially at your age, in the times in which we live, to lead a truly Christian life and to assure our salvation. Every touch of the poisoned breath of the world, however light it may be, weakens purity. The smallest faults lead infallibly to greater ones. You have possibly had this experience. How many times, at least, have you not seen this exemplified in others! From this experience, make it a principle for your entire life, that in religion we never make our line of personal conduct easier and more certain except in proportion as we restrict and restrain it; while on the other hand, the more we attempt to broaden it, the greater risk we run in the matter of our salvation. Without noticing it, we enter upon this broad path, upon this way of death of which our divine Master speaks, that way that leads to eternal perdition. *Lata via est quae ducit ad mortem* [the wide road is the one which leads to death].

Dear Children, you the well-beloved of my heart, then be faithful to your commitments, whatever it may cost. Be grateful to your God for the graces of predilection which he has accorded to you until this day. In seeing himself clothed in the livery of the Immaculate Conception, each of you may say to himself, “Assuredly, God loves me and protects me in a special manner, for he has placed in my hands, a sign<sup>1</sup> which guarantees for me the love and protection of the woman who has destroyed the power of hell in crushing the head of Satan, of the woman who in her personal conduct gives me the most touching example of the most amiable virtues. With what transports of love, with what holy joy should you not always bear upon your person this exterior sign of blessing! Must you not kiss this badge with sentiments of the most tender affection which have attached you to the most tender and the most amiable of mothers!

How much greater must be your love for your Sodality! Love it always and never cease cherishing it! Let it be for your heart the object of the most tender love! Like your father’s house, let it be for you the dwelling place of your family, of everything that is dearest to you in this world. Yes, have your friends, bosom friends! All the sodalists are your friends, all are burning with sorrows, exhortation in your discouragements, counsels in your difficulties, prayers, assistance of all types in your necessities, in your needs. Yes, once more, love and cherish the Sodality, and this steady love will be for you the source of the purest joys, the reason for the sweetest enjoyment. You may be weeping at times, but may these tears have sweetness and charm! You must have already learned this from personal experience. Yes, love the Sodality, always remain in its bosom as in a place of security. Mary protects it, just as that tower which David caused to be built for the constant defense of the city of Jerusalem; or again, like this terrible army in battle array which resists all attacks, which triumphs over all enemies by the firmness of its position, the strength of its arms, as may the holy Scriptures.

My dear children, I have already spoken at length, but the pleasure of speaking to you has led me on; this has guided my pen and inspired everything I have written. In fact, I feel so much joy in writing to you that I imagine you will read this letter with joy, however long it has been, this letter which the most tender and the best of fathers is addressing to you.

Nevertheless, it is time for me to come to an end, but this will not be before having your good Mother speak to you. But what will she say to you? What sweet words will not her maternal lips pronounce! “Oh my children,” she says to you, “how I love you! You love me and my heart also loves you. *Ego diligentes me diligo* [I cherish those who cherish me]. Young men, and especially you, young children, come to me, come to the one who promises you her boundless affection. *Si quis est parvulus, veniat ad me!* [If anyone is little, let them come to me!] Ah! Those who come to me from the morning of their life, those who seek me from their earliest infancy, ah,

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<sup>1</sup> The medal of the Immaculate Conception.

these are certain of finding me and of finding in me the most loving of mothers. *Qui mane vigilant ad me, invenient me* [those who keep watch for me even into the morning hours will find me]. Yes, they will find me, and in finding me they will find the way that leads to life, because I am the way of salvation, *Ego sum via* [I am the way], the gate of heaven, *Janus coeli*. Oh, give myself to you, I will give you an unending happiness, a happiness that will last as long as God himself.”

I am now ending, my dear Children, well-beloved of my heart, in embracing you all and each of you in particular, with all the sentiments of love and affection I bear for you, which I owe to you. May the Lord deign always to continue his blessings upon you and have you grow in his love and in that of Mary! This is the wish that the most tender and the best of fathers expresses in your regard!

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**382. To Father Larrieu,  
Director of the Seminary at Auch**  
December 5, 1825, Bordeaux  
Copy, Arch. of the Seminary of Auch

My dear Son,

I am very mindful of all the marks of confidence and affection which your letter gives me. I will answer it to the best of my ability, and I will do this even more willingly because your sentiments are so greatly in conformity with mine. Yes, I assure you, and I repeat this, I am taking a very lively and active interest in these young men who are the object of your care. Thus there is little that I am not disposed to do to second your efforts and your labors in their regard. Make them for me, very wise, very pious, and very fervent. . . .

The letter I am sending them no doubt contains many things which you have already told them several times, and in a far better way than I could ever have done; nevertheless, you believed a letter from me would be useful and agreeable to them. This alone was enough to have me make up my mind to write to them. However busy I am, nothing will prevent me from showing to these good children how deeply I love them and with what consolation I regard them.

Regarding you, my dear Son, courage! Work with all your strength and without rest. Hasten to fill with good works the time you still have to pass on this earth. How short, after all, is this time! An eternity is to follow it, and this eternity is to must be its reward or its punishment. Ah! Let us work! As you know, my ambition is to enkindle the fire of divine love throughout France. The Lord has deigned to make choice of you to help me with your means and your strength in the part of our country you inhabit. Well then, work to enkindle this fire all around you; breathe upon it as you find it in the hearts of the young people who surround you. What a service you will be rendering them! In warming them with these heavenly flames, you will be saving them, these poor young people whom the Lord has purchased with his blood, whom our Mother has acquired for herself in sacrificing her own Son for them on the cross, the object of all her love and all her affection. Yes, breathe upon this divine fire in season and out of season, following the expression of the apostle, “opportune, importune.” Oh! How well your efforts will be repaid! How well your fatigue will be rewarded! For these efforts and these difficulties, Jesus and your good Mother will one day call you to eternal rest, in the home of eternal happiness. Oh! With what joy you will hear both addressing you these consoling words, “*Euge, serve bone et fidelis, intra in gaudium Domini tui!* [Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord.] In awaiting this loving invitation, work with constancy, with courage in forming for Jesus and Mary servants worthy of them.



Please receive the very sincere assurance of the most affectionate sentiments of my heart, and believe me always, in Jesus and in Mary conceived without sin, Father and dear Son, your very devoted servant and father.

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*In the meantime, the legal recognition of the Society of Mary had happily ended, and the royal ordinance had been signed on November 16. From the time Father Chaminade had news of this, he hurried to write to his representative in Paris. The letter is from the pen of Bro. David Monier.*

### **383. To M. O'Lombel, Paris**

December 6, 1825, Bordeaux

Rough Copy, Agmar

[With inserts from S. 383]

My dear Son,

I have just received the royal ordinance, bearing the authorization of my schools, with your letter of November 28. The time is now as fitting as it may ever be to thank you for all the diligent care you have given to this long endeavor. Your visits to M. de Courville and to Father de la Chapelle, about whom you speak to me in your letter of December 4 have produced their results. On the whole, everything has turned out as the good God wished; so we must be satisfied, glorifying God without end, for desiring to make use of us for arrangements which are entirely in his hands.

In my opinion, the review of the articles of the ordinance would be out of place, for this ordinance is law for us. We will be able to judge this only by its execution; unless some obstacle should arise because of some oversight, we will not doubt that the same favor which has given us life, so to speak, will accord us the means of maintaining this life. For this reason, I do not believe I should go into the considerations which one of the articles of the ordinance has suggested to you. Then it is the whole which must be accepted, and then we can try to carry it out in detail.

Without delay, I am going to acknowledge reception of the official package in which this act, emanating from the king, was sent to me. I will thank His Excellency the Minister for the definite protection he has been kind enough to grant us for this good work.

According to the letter of advice, His Excellency seems to desire that I should shortly give him information regarding the definite establishment of the Society, but this definite establishment can take place only conformably and in consideration of the Statutes. Now the Statutes, modified and definitely accepted, did not accompany the sending of the royal ordinance, and so here I am again forced to delay all further action. Well, the business of this world hardly proceed otherwise. See if by a visit to the forwarding bureau you cannot hasten the sending of the Statutes, as determined by the advice of the Council of State, for all this is at the same time the basis and the completion of the ordinance.

Under the same cover with both your letter of November 28 and the royal ordinance, I found a notice in which everything is not correct. You tell me you communicated this to the Count of Chabrol, the prefect of the Seine, upon the recommendation of Mme de Milanges, his sister-in-law.<sup>1</sup> The intention was good, and after all I would not wish to blame you; but this notice

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<sup>1</sup> This is instead his cousin, as M. O'Lombel writes in his letter of December 9. There is a question of a notice about the Society of Mary, edited by M. O'Lombel in view of having the Society of Mary known to the Count de Chabrol, to the Archbishop of Paris, and to the king, and thus of favoring its establishment in Paris. This is a small notebook of 5 manuscript pages in which the work of the Society of Mary is exalted in enthusiastic terms and with more zeal than discretion.

contains two things which neither you nor I could consider true, and which we consider to be only an error of the moment. It would be useless for us to wish to ignore them, for we are in the situation of being denied, either openly or in a way unknown to us. I am going to inform you about the two items, and you will try to repair the mistake as best you can.

The first mistake comes from the report you give about us to M. Lafon.<sup>1</sup> This person has certainly been in our external Sodalities and has given proof of merit at the time, and we have only praise to give him on this subject; however, he was far from us when the plan of the schools was conceived, considered, and produced. He has nothing to do with this matter. Furthermore, he was looking after works of his own, and this elsewhere than among us, so that in these we can have no share of any kind. Finally, for us to use this influence of his to our advantage, to which we had no claim, it would have been necessary for us to notify him in advance and for this to be suitable to us as well as agreeable to him. These three conditions are lacking and must be lacking, for they are other than the truth. This is to wish to live by borrowing, and even of a simple appearance of borrowing. Let us be before others what we are before God, poor in funds. I grant this, but let us not attempt to cover ourselves with the spoils of others.

The second mistake is in the comparison you make between us and respectable men in society, who have given proof of their ability and to whom great things are due because they have acted wisely.<sup>2</sup> I admire them, yes, for all the good they have lavished upon the earth, so to speak, but if I allow myself to be compared to them, I lie in what has reference to the past, and I am promising much more than I am able to do regarding the future.

All these, my dear Son, are only words which may be classified as ambitions, words aspiring to glory, aspiring to merit, vanity of vanities, temptations from which we must rid ourselves and against which we must especially defend ourselves.

I would like it to be stated to the Count de Chabrol that there is an error regarding these two things; that I disavow them; that we are only a charitable Society, one little known, which occupies itself with primary instruction and which finds itself only recently authorized by His Majesty. Let us do only what we are.

You must have some idea of how far I am from blaming you in these two circumstances, but the blame would fall to me before God if I said to you and if I had you believe that there is justice or truth in these two features of your notice.

Human beings fall often, but they rise again; this is how we must look upon this and be more careful in the future. I cannot urge you strongly enough to abide by the limitations of your written instructions as my proxy in the case of the proposed Paris house. No hardship or delay must make you deviate from them; the instructions, a copy of which you signed, were carefully considered; you must follow them. This should answer your latest request for guidance in the matters of the Society. You have the written directives, and one of its articles promises new instructions once the old have become outdated.

I have little to add to the inquiries contained in your letters of November 4, 13, 17, and 28. My dear Son, eventually I will deal with them all.

Only your letter makes mention of a 10-year generalship. This article must be part of official Statutes, which have not yet arrived. I wrote to His Excellency to send me the approved Statutes; I will wait until they arrive.

There have been so many delays in the purchase of the mansion that we must have patience. The will of God will be done, my dear Son; simply follow your written instructions.

What you tell me about Orléans can be summarized in two points: for the church, it is a most promising city, and Father Franchet, assistant to one of the parishes, is partly responsible for this circumstance. I will keep these two facts in mind, and I thank you for the edifying news contained in your letter.

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<sup>1</sup> He was a former prefect of the Sodality. He had been mentioned in several previous letters.

<sup>2</sup> Priests of the Society of Jesus.

I will send you the Manuals at the first opportunity. Brother Weber has arrived. I have already answered the rest of your letter.

The Marchioness de Renty has the answer to the letter with which she honored me. Her protégé, Monsieur Welten,<sup>3</sup> may come to his assigned place without delay.

M. Henri Roger, the protégé of Mme Prévost and M. Lemerle, has no doubt poorly explained his request, because I had understood that he could pay neither for his maintenance nor for his clothing. Today your letter represents him to me as blessed with an income of 600 francs, to some capital; but in this case his contract is his guarantee. See for yourself if this contract is valid. If there is a question only of the education of this young man, I will be very careful not to refuse this to him, for these are funds which come to us from Jesus Christ and which we owe to everyone.

I am happy to learn that Mme O'Lombel has arrived safely at her first destination; I am glad of this. I pray to God that she may have a happy journey.

Letter of the 17<sup>th</sup>. This contains the announcement of the royal ordinance which I later received.

Letter of the 28<sup>th</sup>. It came with the royal ordinance; it speaks of the word sent to the Count de Chabrol and of related matters. I have sent a reply. I am highly indebted to Mme de Milanges for her share in this exchange; it is not her fault that the notice contained two passages with which I disagree. This excellent lady may even correct the inaccuracies. Again, I trust in your prudent action.

The count's answer to his sister merely shows how convinced he is that in our Society, instruction is confided to competent people. This is the commitment I have made before God. The prefect's confidence is securely founded, and I have more faith in it than in any borrowed reputation to which I have no right. Please see M. Dufresne, my dear Son, and if you can remove this cause for complaint, however minor it may be; this bothers me.

The Archbishop of Paris may be in the situation of saying that he does not sufficiently know the Society of Mary to grant it favors, but in the meantime it is good—in waiting until I have the favorable opportunity of recommending it to his piety and benevolence—that he has heard it spoken about; it could even be that people attributed to the household of this worthy prelate would be willing to occupy themselves with the matter. I am to make the official request for an authorization, only when it will be useful to do so, when an establishment is once an accomplished fact or when once appears to be desired. The delay in the negotiations for the mansion disrupts our plans; we must exercise patience.

I believe this is the entire purpose of your past letters. The detail is long, at least in my answer, but I wished to have myself up to date, as we say, and I believe I have reached that point now.

Regarding my very fatherly sentiments towards you, my dear Son, they neither have nor can have an end. Entered into in Jesus and Mary, they will be obvious to me and will last in this world, as in the next. God will bless them. I am asking of God this grace.

P. S. My sister thanks you for your kind regards. She asks me to present hers to you and to thank you most obligingly for the picture of the Duke of Bordeaux which you had the kindness to send to her.

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*In reply to this letter, M. O'Lombel promised to make reparations for his excess of zeal. He has just made the acquaintance of a former follower of Father Chaminade, Brother Eloi, then*

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<sup>3</sup> There is a question of a postulant to the Society.

*assistant to the General Superior of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. "I procured for myself," he wrote on December 9, "the satisfaction of seeing Brother Eloi. This highly respectable religious, who has rendered and still renders every day such great services to religion and to society, loves you as a son. He recognizes you as his father and takes great pleasure in letting everyone know of this. All his religious are witnesses of it, for he takes great satisfaction in telling them of this fact. Furthermore, thanks to him, all know and love you. It seemed to me that for a long time he had been deprived of the happiness of receiving news from you, and this fact seemed to increase that of hearing what I had to tell him about you. He is summoning you [to Paris] with all the strength of his wishes, and far from fearing—as some people do and which I have never feared—that your two Societies will be in opposition, should they happen to come into contact, I am not only persuaded but entirely convinced that they would be only too glad to help one another, and that their mutual agreement would only increase their success and their power for good. What you write to me about him, and especially what you could write to him directly, would give him great satisfaction, for he certainly has the finest sentiments in your regard."*<sup>1</sup>

*The next letter is addressed to a religious tempted against his vocation; there is a rough draft in the hand of Brother David, to which Father Chaminade added, "Remitted on December 19." The addressee seems to have been Bro. Dominic Weissemburger, to whom several weeks earlier Father Chaminade had given the disquieting obedience referred to in letter no. 379. He gave in to the reasons presented with so much faith and emotion by Father Chaminade, but he left the Society of Mary during the troubles which followed the 1830 revolution.*

### **384. To A Religious of the Society of Mary**

December 18, 1825, Bordeaux

Rough Copy, Agmar

[With insert from S. 384]

My dear Son,

I have very carefully read your letter, dated today. It showed me that you are under the influence of a great temptation. You will not escape from this state with profit except with the help of divine grace, but you cannot flatter yourself that this grace will come to you if you do not ask for it from the bottom of your heart, and if you are not in a disposition to receive it. When the apostles were awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit, they were constant in prayer; so the first counsel my paternal affection suggests to me in your regard is that you turn to serious prayer. In the effusion of my heart, I will join my prayers to yours, and I have also asked others of our group to join us in the same intention.

After having shown you the way God has shown it to me, and this in the simplest manner, as your spiritual Father I owe you counsels and consolations. But where will all this lead if God has no part in it? I have the duty to tell you. In your case, there is no question of an indifferent matter, for it is inevitable that your final resolution considering the circumstances in

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<sup>1</sup> Biographical note. Louis-Arnaud Lafargue, in religion Brother Eloi (1777-1847), a native of Bordeaux and follower of Fr. Chaminade from the time of the Terror, had been commissioned by him upon his departure for Spain to continue to try to have his name removed from the list of emigrants. He was one of the first members of the Sodality, and when on February 3, 1801, he became its first prefect, in response to the honor which had just come to him he responded with the ejaculatory prayer, "The most just, the most high and the most amiable will of God be done, praised and eternally exalted in all things!" thus inaugurating a tradition which has passed from the Sodality to the Society of Mary. At the end of a retreat at Saint-Laurent under Fr. Chaminade's direction, he decided to consecrate his life to the Christian education of youth and in 1806 took the habit of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. After having successively directed the houses of his Institute in Bordeaux, Auch, and Montpellier, in 1816 he was named assistant to the General Superior. He died in Paris, leaving the reputation of a saintly religious.

which you find yourself will be of the greatest weight in the matter of your salvation or eternal loss. Think of this before your crucifix, and ask of God not to permit you to go astray.

I entreat you, my dear Son, to reread what I have just written and to carry it out to the letter. Begin by praying for a suitable time several times each day, with the sole intention of following the voice of God, so that when the moment for a calm and conscientious resolution comes, humble yourself before Jesus Christ crucified and from your heart ask him to tell you what you are to do.

What I have just said being well within your intention, or being already done at least in part, it will be useful to you to keep handy the advice you ask of me, and which I am only too glad to give you.

This counsel requested in your letter refers to three distinct points. First, am I able to commute your vows, and will I do this? Secondly, have your vows been indiscreet and lightly made? Thirdly, supposing new points of view and a greater perfection, would these authorize you to set aside your vows?

After having explained myself on these three points, which are only matters of counsel, I will come to the consolations, my dear Son, for which I see you have the greatest need by far. If you came to me, I would give them to you verbally, with an entirely paternal outpouring. In a letter, however, I can give you hardly more than the principles underlying them; but even at that, they will proceed from the heart. And now, to the counsels you request.

First, do I have the power to commute your vows, and would I consent to do so? I sincerely believe, my dear Son, that it is beyond my power to annul agreements conscientiously made by a person with God. This is a truth which it is enough merely to mention, and it has no need of proof. I am not above God. If I am unable to annul them for both parties in the contract, I am just as unable to do it for each of them separately. For one condition I must not substitute a different one, and one from which I could not dispense you. The agreement made with God is irrevocable.

Have there been examples of commutation? It is true there have been some; but the cases are very rare, and perhaps the only valid commutations have been those in which some physical impediment had made the observance of the vows impossible. Thus religious expelled from their cells and dispersed by persecution have commuted their vows in everything that concerned stability, which had become impossible for them; and in what depended upon imprisoned or massacred superiors, in the place of whom others could not be elected. It is also possible for the good of the Church, that the vows of a holy person are commuted if he should be called to the episcopate. Even at that, many religious, having become princes of the Church, have kept to the observance of the rules of their Order. At least, in many cases, this has been the safest line of conduct to follow.

God is not to be mocked; *Deus non irreditur*. We do not say “yes” and “no” to him. We do not change, at will, the first of these words for the second. I am congratulating myself, my dear Son, that I do not need to ask myself whether I wish to make such a commutation, for I am dead regarding this request. It is evident that I cannot authorize whoever it may be to lie to God. The person who in his heart would have already lied to God would draw all my compassion; I would shed tears to obtain his pardon, and he would be pardoned only on the condition that he would be contrite and have the firm purpose of not sinning again.

My dear Son, hold on to these counsels all your life, either to apply them to yourself or in case you have occasion to speak about them to someone else. May the fear of God always be with us.

Second, do your vows seem to have been indiscreet or lightly made? The age you were at the time, my dear Son, and the circumstances in which you were asked to make them cause me to believe that on your part they were maturely and freely made. The maturity of your judgment had reached such a degree and was so well known that you still tell us today that we had confided the

direction of class to you, as well as the supervision of the house. Where would maturity be found, if not in those in whom such a double and high confidence has been placed?

At the same time, you say you were following your course of studies in the class to which you were called. There is nothing unusual about this, as the ecclesiastics follow their courses at the same time as they are supervisors or assistant teachers in less advanced classes.

The death of your mother, which you accepted with deeply religious sentiments, the family matters which you have handed on by procuration to your father without too much worry—all these are things completely insignificant alongside your vows, and had these circumstances been in your mind at the time of your profession, even that would not be a cause of weakening the validity of such a serious commitment, and one maturely and freely requested by you.

I believe I see in your observations the spirit of nature, and possibly even more, that it is leading you to mistake pretexts for reasons. The spirit of God returned to you by prayer will make you see the matter otherwise. I am placing my confidence in the prayers I have counseled you to say. As I have said, you are in a state of temptation, and if you do not ask God to remove you from it, you will simply remain where you are.

Third. New points of view, and even views of greater perfection—do these authorize you to wish to be released from your vows? What greater perfection do you have in mind? According to you, it means making greater progress in your studies and finally becoming a priest. I have no idea of to what degree these desires are a settled matter with you, but if they are a settled matter, you could attain their double object without disregarding the vows. Breaking vows is an apostasy.<sup>1</sup> Apostatizing is a strange way of beginning to devote yourself to holy studies and to the sacerdotal state established by Jesus Christ. God forbid that I should give you such advice, or that I should smooth the way for you!

My dear Son, you must see that this the temptation under which you are laboring is opening a chasm before you. I who am your father, I call out to you with all my strength, “Hold back, beware of going that far!” Having fallen into such an abyss, a person no longer escapes. Pray, my dear Son, pray and watch, for this is your only anchor of salvation. Address yourself to our eminent protector, the Blessed Virgin; pray to her with all the fervor of your heart. You will not be the first person she has saved from shipwreck. Ask her to intercede for you, that her divine Son may grant you the strength to do only his holy will. With all my heart, I will join in this prayer.

In the meantime, I have promised you some consolations, and I certainly owe them to you because God has confided you to me, not that I should leave you in sorrow and desolation but to be, as much as it lies in my power, your support, your guide, and your friend.

Come into my arms, in the midst of your tears tell me all your afflictions. I will tell you their source and what will be their remedy.

How has it happened that this Institute which you have desired and embraced has become for you such a heavy burden? The idea of our commitments pursues you; the Rules annoy you; you see nothing but difficulties and troubles which disgust you; all changes displease you. See, at least, the confidence I am placing in your letter. Oh, my Son, must I tell you with the author of *The Imitation of Jesus Christ* that all this agitation is within you? Would you change yourself in changing your place of residence? Would this be leaving behind any one of the things which bother you? Would you not simply find others, perhaps even more cruel, without considering the remorse over those you would wish to flee? Is it not the very nature of human beings and that of the matters of the present life which subject us to such perplexities? Do we flee from them just by wishing to do so? Is there a place where our heart can find peace?

Yes, my dear Son, there exists a condition of peace, a place where it can be found; it is in loving God with all our souls, and in loving God alone. Temptation has come to trouble you; arm

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<sup>1</sup> This is what is affirmed by the Code of Canon Law, C. 664.

yourself with faith, resist strongly, ask for the love of God, knock and pray, and you will receive. God is for a strong defense, but we must wish to be defended! Your salvation and your peace are in his hands. Ask for them. The illusions of the world have seduced us; let us forget them. When we possess God, we possess everything, while in possessing everything without God, we possess nothing but trouble, bitterness, remorse, and despair.

My dear Son, choose the best part. Have faith in promises, for God awaits only this in order to give us peace of soul. I am asking God for all the blessings you need, all the assistance, all God's love. May Jesus and Mary be with you!

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*The sending of the Statutes approved by the royal ordinance of November 16 was still delayed, and at the beginning of January of 1826 Father Chaminade had not yet received them. He wrote about this to M. O'Lombel, who answered him.*

*The letter, dated January 10, which I had the honor of receiving from you tells me that the Statutes of your Society invested with the royal approval have not yet been received. Immediately I went to the Ministry and there I got the assurance that, finally, on the 7<sup>th</sup>, they have been sent on to you. Because clerks have been made more numerous, bureaucratic procedures have become complicated and the carrying out of the least important affairs results in the delays about which you complain. I know this delay has not been the effect of ill will, but rather of the extremely slow move of business in the various offices. The biggest nuisance which exists is that the same men who were employed under Bonaparte are still working for the king, whom they detest, and for a religion which they abhor.*

*The letter gives details about the political situation, which was becoming disquieting to the eyes of more than one observer. The next passage characterizes two of the people mentioned so often in earlier correspondence.*

*The scandalous, or rather, the seditious subscription for General Foy having given me the idea of proposing one of a religious and royalist character, I spoke about it to Father de la Chapelle. There was a question of making an appeal to all good Frenchmen to subscribe to the erection of a church consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to be erected on the spot where the Duke de Berry was assassinated. The building of such a monument by popular subscription would bring together several advantages, in addition to fulfilling the wish of the martyr king and finally expiating the crimes of the Revolution in a public manner. Father de la Chapelle told me that the time was not opportune. A subscription which would tend to separate the good from the bad must not even be suggested, on the policy that everything must be avoided that would place the opposition between one group and the other. The important thing is to stand firm, to give in to nothing that would mean the sacrificing of principles (January 20, 1826).*

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### **Ordinance of the King Charles, by the Grace of God, King of France and of Navarre**

To all those who will see these presents, Greetings!

On the report of our Minister Secretary of State to the Department of Ecclesiastical Affairs and of Public Instruction:

In view of the statutes of a charitable association destined to serve the primary schools of the communes to which its members would be called to this effect by the competent authorities;

in view of the ordinance of February 29, 1816, and of April 8, 1824, which regulate what concerns primary instruction in the entire kingdom;

in view of the law of March 10, 1806;  
in view of the approbation given by the Royal Council of Public Instruction to the Statutes of the said association;  
our Council of State consenting;

We have ordered and order what follows.

Article 1. The Society established in Bordeaux, department of the Gironde, by the gentleman Chaminade and designated under the name of Society of Mary, is authorized under the terms of Article 36 of the ordinance of February 29, 1816, as a charitable association in favor of primary instruction.

It will conform itself to the laws and regulations relative to public instruction, especially in what concerns the obligation of obtaining from the local bishop the special authorization to function, and from the rector of the Academy the certificate of legal capacity.

Article 2. The Royal Council of Public Instruction, in conforming itself to the laws and regulations of the public administration, will be permitted to receive legacies and donations made in favor of the said association and of its schools, on the condition of having either the association as a whole or each of its schools in particular reap the benefit, conformably to the intentions of the testators and donors.

Article 3. The certificate of legal capacity will be given to each brother of the Society of Mary upon seeing the particular letter of obedience which he will have received from the Superior General of the said Society.

Article 4. Our Minister the Secretary of State to the Department of Ecclesiastical Affairs and of Public Instruction is charged with the carrying out of the present ordinance.

Given in our Castle of the Tuileries, the 16<sup>th</sup> day of November  
in the year of grace 1825 and of our reign, the second.

Charles

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*As the first result of the legal recognition of the Society of Mary, Father Chaminade prepared to form the council of the General Administration, in conformity with Articles 12 and following of the Statutes.*

### **385. To Bro. David Monier, Bordeaux**

January 9, 1826, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

My dear Son,

It would seem to me there would not be great inconvenience in naming Brother Daguzan as assistant. The biggest one I see would be the fact of deriving so few advantages from his assistance. On the other hand, I presume that his family would be very glad about it and that in his appointment, a certain measure of justice would be seen. He is a child of Bordeaux, having been the third to enter<sup>1</sup> at a time when the most vexing reports about religion were circulating. If

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<sup>1</sup> Biographical note. Bruno Daguzan (1780-1831), born in Bordeaux of an honorable bourgeois family, joined the Sodality of the Madeleine in 1815, placed himself under the direction of Fr. Chaminade, and formed part of the State of sodalists living as religious in the world. He was one of the first to whom Fr. Chaminade made known his views about the Institute, and without hesitation he declared himself ready to cooperate. He took part in the Retreat of October 2, 1817, as a result of which the 5 first men decided upon the foundation of the Society of Mary; on December 11, 1817, with them he pronounced the private vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. During Lent of 1818, when the most disquieting reports about religion were circulating, he courageously left his family to go to the small house on Impasse Ségur, where M. Auguste and M. Clouzet had preceded him. This is the detail of his life to which Fr. Chaminade refers.



you are of the same opinion, then draw up the first list that I must consult for the nomination of the three Assistants, Father Lalanne, Brother Auguste, and Brother Daguzan, and also for the nomination of the Secretary General, Bro. David Monier.

On the same day, by a second list you would have me name as honorary counselors Father Collineau, Father Rothéa, Louis Rothéa the elder, Dominique Clouzet, Laugeay, and Caillet. I do not believe there is any difficulty in the nomination of Father Caillet as honorary counselor, and we will have sufficient time to resolve the larger question definitively.<sup>1</sup> You must be aware of the urgency which exists of going forward. If Brother Auguste has not procured for you the registers you need, as he promised me he would last Friday evening, have the kindness to look after this matter tomorrow.

Let us take courage! The Lord and his august Mother will be with us. Although the royal ordinance is a rather meager affair, and up to a certain point we are dependent on the Government and even on the university, I cannot look upon it as disadvantageous. On the contrary, I like to consider it as a favor God grants to religion in our unhappy country. It is up to us to know how to conduct ourselves according to God's views. Furthermore, the Statutes, however modified they may be, place no obstacle to whatever else we may ask for, whether in the civil or in the ecclesiastical order. I paid constant attention to this point from the time there was a question of approbation.

I am writing at greater length than I had intended and believed I had time for, but it seems my courage increases as I go on. *Omnia ad majorem Dei Gloriam Virginisque Deiparae* [everything for the greater glory of God and the Virgin Mother of God]. I am wishing you a good night.

Monday evening, January 9, 1826.

I answered M. de Saget. I have also written to the mayor.

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### **386. To Bro. David Monier, Bordeaux**

January 10, 1826, Bordeaux

Autograph, Agmar

[With insert from S. 386]

My dear Son,

I have just received the messages of the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs. I am opening the packet. It does not seem doubtful to me that the sender has made a mistake and that instead of his copy, he has sent mine. What is to be done? Speak of this error in a letter of gratitude to His Excellency that I owe him? Or send this copy to M. O'Lombel, so he may go the offices to make the exchange?

In several letters of correspondence, I had said that as soon as I received the ordinance of the king confirming the Society of Mary I would order in all our communities prayers for the king and for his worthy minister, Bishop d'Hermopolis. I have also said that at the top of the principal

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Finally on September 5, 1818, at the end of the Saint-Laurent retreat, he pronounced perpetual vows into the hands of Fr. Chaminade.

When the Little Society, having moved from Impasse Ségur to the house on Rue des Menuts, had opened its first house of education there, Bro. Daguzan was named Head of Work. Provider, linen-keeper, infirmarian, sacristan, organizer—he performed all these functions, in addition to having charge of the assistant brothers engaged in manual labor in the three houses of the Institute—the Madeleine, Saint-Laurent, and the house on Rue des Menuts. In these humble occupations, Bro. Daguzan sanctified himself. He was a man with an excellent education, a profoundly humble religious, a simple soul, honest and strong; he fulfilled his daily tasks with a great charity and complete devotedness. He died at Saint-Laurent of a lingering disease on November 5, 1831.

<sup>1</sup> In view of his Swiss nationality, the question of knowing if the Statutes permitted him to be named as assistant. On this point, Fr. Chaminade awaited the opinion of M. de Saget.

register of the Society there should be a mention of Father de la Chapelle for having put great interest into the negotiations on this matter. We can have no doubt that he worked at this with great zeal. Should I not write him a letter of gratitude? Would it not be good to join to the letter an extract from the register in which there would be a mention of him?

It now comes to my mind that it would be good to write an historical account of all the changes the Statutes have undergone, whether at the hands of the Ministry, the Royal Council of Public Instruction, or the Council of State, and of the principal difficulties we encountered, the answers given, etc. Father Caillet could make a report in which everything would be included in due form, and on the basis of this memorandum you would write up the historical account. Everything could be done quickly enough, as I have all the active and passive correspondence, a copy of the different editions, etc. . . .

The letters of thanks to Bishop d'Hermopolis and to Father de la Chapelle seem to me rather urgent. Write them, if you please, so that I will have only to sign them or have them copied and signed. I will also express my thanks to the two secretaries who have best served us, MM. Receveur and Trébuquet.

Tomorrow at noon I will have an audience with the mayor. Send me the ordinance we once sent to the archbishop's palace, in case the mayor would like to see it. The one that was sent to me directly is still with M. de Saget. I have some desire to be invited to dinner in the archbishop's palace to have a chance of speaking at leisure, as much with Father Barres as with the archbishop. From the mayor's office, I would go to the palace.

Nothing having been received from you opposing what I wrote to you yesterday evening, I believe you are of the same opinion as I am, and that consequently you may as well proceed as agreed. I believe it would be suitable to name Father Romain as honorary counselor. He is treated honorably at the archbishop's palace and has just received expressions of great confidence. Furthermore, he is one of our most fervent religious. *Pax Christi!*

P.S. However busy you may be, do not forget the Tonneins matter.

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### **S. 386-2. Excerpts from the Minutes of the Council**

January 16, 1826, Bordeaux

Copy, Agmar

On January 16, 1826, after the induction of the officers and the assembly having set itself up as a council, the Superior General said he thought it was fitting that the Society should have a religious and durable sign commemorating the public recognition. He asked the council to deliberate on the matter and to choose a suitable sign.

After discussion, the council is unanimous in its approval of a sign to commemorate the civil recognition of the Society. Many opinions were expressed on the appropriate sign, and the council found them all practicable and acceptable.

With the advice and in the presence of his Council, the Superior General has decided and declared as follows.

1. On November 16 a votive mass will be celebrated in every house of the Society, as long as it will exist.
2. After the Gospel the celebrant will read the following extract from article 2 of the Statutes of the Society. "The essential purpose of the work of the Society is to spread and preserve, in children and youth, the principles of the Catholic faith, of evangelical morality, and a sincere attachment to the monarchy."
3. After Holy Mass the choir will sing the *Exaudiat* and the celebrant will say the prayer for the king.

4. The timetable for November 16 in each house of the Society will make mention of the obligations noted above and will add, "that the solemnity of the day and the prescribed prayers are in commemoration of the public recognition of the Society of Mary, and this is due to the goodness and wisdom of His Majesty, Charles X our King, who gave us the letters patent on November 16, 1825."

5. The superior of each house of the Society will see to the implementation of this directive.

Signed in the register by the Superior General and by the Secretary, as also was this copy.

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*On January 15, 1826, Father Chaminade formed his council, naming Fr. Jean-Baptiste Collineau as First Assistant, Fr. Jean Lalanne as Second Assistant, and Bro. Auguste Brougnon-Perrière as Third Assistant. Bro. David Monier remained Secretary General. At the time of the foundation of the Society of Mary, these had been provisionally named to the various offices: Bro. Auguste Brougnon-Perrière, superior of the Little Society; Bro. Bernard Laugeay, Head of Work (Council of December 8, 1818); and to complete the list, Bro. Louis Rothéa as "Procurator of the Society" (September 2, 1819). On January 16 the new council met and adopted the following motions.*

*The Superior General, with the advice and in the presence of his assembled council, has decided and declared as follows.*

- 1. On November 16 of each year and as long as the Society of Mary will exist, a votive Mass will be celebrated in each of the houses of the Society.*
- 2. After the first Gospel of this Mass, the celebrant will read in a loud voice the following provision, taken from Article 2 of the Statutes of the Society. "The essential purpose of the labors of the Society is to spread and to preserve in childhood and youth, the principles of the Catholic faith, of evangelical morality and of a sincere attachment to the monarchy."*
- 3. After the holy Mass, the choir will sing the psalm Exaudiat and the celebrant will say the prayer for the king.*
- 4. The order for the day on November 16 in each one of the houses of the Society will mention the obligations mentioned herein, and it will be said "that the solemnity of the day and the prayers ordered are in commemoration of the public institution of the Society, which is due to the goodness and wisdom of His Majesty Charles X Our King, to which he has given letters patent, dated November 16, 1825."*

*The Superior General proposed*

*That in beginning the list of the founders and benefactors of the Society of Mary who will be recommended to the prayers of the members, the first place will be given to the name of Bishop d'Hermopolis, Minister and Secretary of State of the Department of Ecclesiastical Affairs and of Public Instruction, who, having brought the Institution of Mary to the knowledge of the king and having had its vows and labors accepted, truly procured for it its true foundation.*

*With a unanimous voice, the Council has adopted the proposition that, in consequence, Bishop d'Hermopolis will be inscribed as first on the list of the founders and of those recommended to community prayers.*

*The Superior General has said that he reserved to himself the designation of a particular list of benefactors of the Society, other than those whose names are to be expressly inscribed on the register of the Council, but that it is a matter of clear justice to name and to have inscribed on the said register Father de la Chapelle, Director of Ecclesiastical Affairs in Paris. He further says that the Society is to congratulate itself for having met in this worthy ecclesiastic all the benevolence of a protector, an ardent and enlightened zeal, and an efficacious cooperation in the obtaining of the royal institution.*

*The council has adopted unanimously the expression of gratitude meant for Father de la Chapelle.*

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*Man proposes and God disposes. . . . The decisions of the council did not remain in force for long. Hardly four years had passed, and already the Revolution had overthrown the Bourbons. And 70 years later, another government tore up the ordinance which had recognized the Society of Mary and dispersed its members. But “in each of the houses of the Society, as long as the Society of Mary will exist,” King Charles X, Bishop Frayssinous, and Father de la Chapelle will reap the benefits of the prayers assured to the benefactors of the Society of Mary.*

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## **New Growth of the Institute**

February 1826 to October 1829

*For the Society of Mary, legal recognition was the starting point of new developments. Fr. Ignace Mertian made new proposals to Father Chaminade in view of the union of his Congregation of brothers with the Society of Mary, and Father Chaminade gives Bro. Louis Rothéa a liberal authorization to this effect; the writing is the work of Bro. David Monier.*

### **387. To Fr. Ignace Mertian, Ribeauvillé**

February 9, 1826, Bordeaux  
Rough Copy, Agmar

Honorable Colleague,

Bro. Louis Rothéa has made known to me the great kindness with which you had him come to your home and the various proposals you made to him regarding subjects of common interest to us. I believe I should tell you that these proposals are agreeable to me, and that I will not hesitate to assume the continuation of your schools in Alsace, at least as far as the young men are concerned.

My schools were already in Colmar, engaged in nearly the same work as you had undertaken, and I was led to believe that from this city they would spread further. Yet a type of painful feeling would come over me when I thought that your Children and mine might find themselves inclined to a type of rivalry which, of course, sometimes has advantages for purposes of emulation, but which does not easily facilitate and does not always favor the maintenance of the love of Christian charity which your ministry and mine have as our most essential object. The idea of merging our two [institutions] into one is, I believe, an inspiration from God. It has come through you, my honorable colleague, and you are in this the angel of Providence.

I do not doubt that you will wish to continue your office in accepting becoming, as much as will depend on you, my collaborator in this part of France; it is better known to you than it is to me. In any case, you will be my counselor and guide, for it would be impossible for me to manage things from this distance if I did not count on finding my principal helpers in the very people whose direction I have. In the final analysis, both for you and for me, this is a work of God, and carried out in the sight of God. Our faith assures us that our intentions have power only in the one who has suggested them, and who will deign to maintain them for his greater glory and his holy service.

I am giving Bro. Louis Rothéa my authorization, with instructions to guide him in its use. In these you will gain an idea of the spirit which directs me. If you believe something is lacking, let me know. If something may be superfluous, simply do not make use of it; just so we keep on advancing toward the end we have in view, and this is to restore Christian morals among the masses of the people by devoting ourselves to the early instilling of the rules of our holy religion.

You must notice what great need I have of prayer, because of the extent of my responsibility. I am recommending myself very especially to yours. Mention of me in your holy Masses, so that God may deign to sustain me!

Please accept, my worthy and honored colleague, the assurance of my very respectful attachment.

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### **S. 387-2. To Bro. Louis Rothéa**

February 1826, Bordeaux  
Copy, Agmar

Before Jean-Baptiste-Mathurin Rauzan and his colleague, notaries royal, in Bordeaux appeared the undersigned Guillaume-Joseph Chaminade, priest, Honorary Canon of the Church of Bordeaux, Superior General of the Society of Mary based in the city of Bordeaux, where the said Chaminade resides at no. 2, Rue de Lalande.

Who by these presents has constituted as his special and general agent Bro. Louis Rothéa, a brother of the said Society of Mary, professor in the schools of Colmar, department of Haut-Rhin, whom he so constitutes in virtue of his aforementioned quality as Superior General of the Society of Mary so that he might accept in his name and in the name of the Society all donations and transfers which might be made by Father Mertian, Superior of the Institute of the Brothers of Christian Doctrine in the diocese of Strasbourg, either in virtue of his title as Superior, in his personal capacity, or conjointly with anyone having a claim thereto; particularly to accept in virtue of the said donation and transfer the château called of Saint-Hippolyte located between Colmar and Ribeauvillé, with the other buildings, yards, gardens, and detached lands.

Also to accept in virtue of one of these titles all other furnishings and real estate belonging to the schools under the direction of the said Brothers, disciples of the aforementioned Father Mertian, in the purviews of the said diocese of Strasbourg.

All according to the responsibility, pacts, clauses, and conditions agreed to between the said Father Mertian and the deputed proxy, either for the ulterior service of the schools which would be transferred or for the special allocation of all or of a part of the furniture and real estate for the purposes mutually agreed upon by both acting parties. To reserve specifically in the document in question the approbation and acceptance of the donation, the specification and the modifications on the part of the Council for Public Instruction, or of His Eminence the Minister Secretary of State to the Department of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Instruction.

For all these given reasons to sign all acts, to signify every consent, to establish residence, and generally to do whatever the said Father could do to insure the validity of the documents to be presented, promising, etc. . . . obliging, etc., . . . renouncing. . .

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*A very interesting letter is sent by Father Chaminade to Father Noailles in reply to his letter of consultation. Fr. Pierre-Bienvenu Noailles (1793-1861), whose cause for beatification is now beginning, was born in Bordeaux when the Terror was at its worst. After a youthful period of many ups and downs, he had given himself entirely to God and had been ordained a priest in Paris in 1819. Returning to Bordeaux, he was attached to the parish of Sainte Eulalie as assistant pastor, where he was known for his spirit of zeal, poverty, and mortification. From this time on, he was in relationship with Father Chaminade. In 1820 he was invited to cooperate in the works of the Sodality, and in 1823 he took part in the retreat at Saint-Laurent.*

*In 1820, Father Noailles had founded the Sisters of Loretto and in 1823, the Society of the Poor Priests. In 1826 he began to have doubts about himself and his work and confided his anguish of soul to Father Chaminade, in a long letter; here are the principal passages.*

*Compelled by force of circumstances to isolate myself from the priests who are associated with me, deprived of their knowledge and example, and burdened with two tasks that would require great virtue and great experience, this often causes me to become disheartened under the weight of my occupations, and still more under that of the responsibility which goes along with them. I would be carrying this cross without discouragement if I believed that it was imposed upon me by the one who strengthens the weak and who sometimes makes use of the weakest instruments to bring about the greatest good. But I fear I have gone contrary to the will of God in accepting a burden that I do not have the strength to carry, and so I would want my dear collaborators to find a Superior more worthy and more capable of seconding their zeal. In addition, I sigh after the rest and the happy security that a person finds in the ways of obedience.*

*Would this be a temptation, or rather would it be an inspiration that I owe to the Blessed Virgin? But every time I fall back into these troubles, my mind and heart go toward the Institute of Mary, as to the only one that can adequately meet the needs of my soul, with the ideas that I have had for the glory of God and with the indissoluble links that bind me to the works that I have already begun. This tendency seems to have been strengthened, especially because you have given me reason to hope we might be able to labor under the same banner, while at the same time remaining faithful to the vocation which is proper to us. . . .*

*Here is the work of the Poor Priests. They have as an end to imitate as closely as possible the poor and mortified life of the apostles, while devoting themselves to all types of good works, such as missions, retreats, sodalities, the direction of souls, of religious, etc. Their Rule forbid them to assume any works of education, such as collèges, seminaries, etc. They consider themselves as a group of helpers to the bishops, although subject to a regular Superior. They may not accept any dignity or any work for which there is any regular salary or which obliges them to any particular residence. They possess nothing, either as individuals or as a body, and do not own even the houses they live in. With the celebration of the holy sacrifice of the Mass, they receive no compensation for the functions they perform or exercise, and not only do they place themselves sincerely in the hands of Providence for everything, but it enters into their spirit to give the example of this disinterest and to set aside from their Society everything that might in the least suggest that they rely on any other basis than Providence for the very necessities of life.*

*Now, if they aggregated themselves to the Institute of Mary, would they be united to this Institute? Would they have a novitiate apart? Would they still keep their Rules and their name? And in case they would change some of these to take on that of the Institute, would they not be confounded with the priests who would be directing the houses of the Society and particularly the collèges, thus destroying wholly or in part the effect which the example of their isolation, poverty, and disinterest is to produce in the people? If the alms they receive as stipends for Masses were not sufficient for their subsistence, would the easy circumstances judged to exist in the houses of their Institute not close to them the channel of charity, on the part of the faithful or of the bishops? And if to make up for this the Institute came to their assistance, in whatever manner, as a result would they not enter into the ordinary way of life of every religious, and would this not help to destroy in them the spirit proper to them—that is to say, this blind confidence and complete abandonment into the hands of Divine Providence? . . .*

*Regarding the Sisters of Loretto, they devote themselves more particularly to the welfare of poor young women who are exposed in the world, through lack of a place to stay or of means of subsistence. They organize groups in the world to take care of the young women who live with them, and these groups second the designs of Providence in facilitating the vocation of subjects destined to increase the number of sisters.*

*Now, how could the Sisters of Loretto associate themselves to the Institute of Mary, the Daughters of Mary being cloistered and having different Rules? Would they have a separate novitiate? Would they be governed as they are today, by Superiors chosen from among themselves? Would their belongings be mixed with those of the Institute, and if there were the possibility of disposing of these for the benefit of other houses of the Institute of Mary, would these come to the help of the Loretto house to an equal degree? Would they have the same right to all the spiritual assistance, whether for their soul's perfection, for the conduct of their souls, or for the extension and perfection of their works?*

*You feel, Reverend Father, that the majority of the people of whom there is question, either priests or religious sisters, having assumed the obligation of remaining in the way of life they have chosen, I could not propose to them the renouncement of their wishes. I desire nothing else than the will of God, and if I am consulting you in this regard, it is because I am persuaded that you yourself desire nothing other than the accomplishment of this holy will. Then be kind enough to examine these requests in the presence of our divine Master and of his holy Mother, and not having the time to recopy*

*this letter, I would ask you to be kind enough to keep it so that I may submit it, with your answer, to the people with whom God has placed me in relationship and with whom I have decided to face whatever testing he will have in store for me. I will not cease to ask the Lord to pour down upon you his light and blessings, so that we may always walk in the way God has traced out for us, even if this way would not be the same for both of us. He knows the purity of our intentions, and in the hope that he will deign to make clear for all time what he asks of us all, I have the honor of being, etc. . . .*

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*Father Chaminade answered, bringing into focus some characteristic traits of the Society of Mary.*

### **388. To Fr. Pierre-Bienvenu Noailles, Bordeaux**

February 15, 1826, Bordeaux

Rough Copy, Agmar

My dear Son,

I have received your long, interesting, but undated letter. Due to my weakness<sup>1</sup> I will not answer it myself, but I hope that the hand I will employ will not be displeasing to you. It is that of Father Caillet. I hope for everything, through the assistance of the Holy Spirit and from the protection of the most Holy Virgin.

Although I find myself without strength, because there is a question of the glory of Mary, I am going to give an answer to the two important matters contained in your letter.

Could the religious called the Sisters of Loretto be united to the Institute of Mary in a general way, and depend absolutely, without giving up anything, neither their spirit nor their works, while at the same time, keeping their Constitutions and even their habit? The Order of Priests which you modestly call “poor” and of which you are the Superior—could it be incorporated in the Society of Mary, becoming an integral part of it, without losing any of the apostolic spirit which animates its members, and with which they always wish to be animated? Without any alteration in the constitutions of the Society of Mary, could they continue to apply themselves to the preaching of the Word of God and to the practice of mental prayer, in real poverty and an absolute renunciation of every type of ownership? I have not had your letter reread to me; nevertheless, I believe I have thoroughly grasped the subject matter, as well as the difficulties, contained in the two questions I have just had you ask me. I am going to answer both. If in my reply you do not find the solution of all the difficulties you place before me, I permit you to come back to me with still greater insistence, but I do hope this will not be necessary.

First answer, relative to the union of the religious sisters, called Sisters of Loretto, to the Institute of Mary.

The Sisters of Loretto can, in a general way, be united to the Institute of Mary and depend upon it in three ways while preserving their actual existence just as it is, or as you have formerly conceived it; by this I mean to say, without accessory works, which would hamper their principal work, change their spirit, slow the progress the sisters should make in the virtues of their state, diminish the edification and the interest of the public at large, and thus preventing the development of the primary work for which they were founded.

I have said that they can be united in three ways. The first would be a union with the Daughters of Mary, not by merging but by incorporation. The second, a union with the Miséricorde, not necessarily by merging or incorporation properly so-called, but only by a simple

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<sup>1</sup> Fr. Chaminade had to remain in bed for several days because of a severe cold.



alliance of similarity of Rule and government. The third would be a dependence, pure and simple, upon the Superior of the Society of Mary and upon his councils.

I will not explain the first two ways because I greatly prefer the third, for it is simpler and seems to me more in conformity with the views of Providence. By this third method, the Sisters of Loretto would be to the Society of Mary what the Miséricorde is to it, and at the same time they would enjoy all the favors and all the interest which a truly fraternal charity would inspire, whether toward the Daughters of Mary, the staff of the Miséricorde, or all the members of the Society of Mary. In speaking of the Miséricorde, I have said: to the staff of the Miséricorde and not to its religious directors, because this institution so closely links the directors with the women of the Miséricorde that together they form only one corporate whole, so there would be no Miséricorde if one of the parties were missing. I admit to you that I would have greatly desired the same close relationship to exist between the Sisters of Loretto and their main work, which is looking after poor women whose innocence has been exposed to ruin because of poverty or lack of work and education.

Answer to the difficulties relative to the union of the Order of Poor Priests to the Society of Mary.

I believe that the proposed union must take for granted the closest union possible, union by merger, in such a way that these priests would be true members of the Society of Mary, religious who are true Children of Mary, who have no other distinction but their priestly character and the degree of religious perfection to which they are called.

Can the Society of Mary receive into its bosom priests who desire to lead an entirely apostolic life, to work under the direction of obedience at the salvation of the neighbor, in complete disinterest and in an absolute renunciation of earthly goods? If the Society of Mary had some rule which would oppose such an admission, I would not hesitate to say that it should soon be suppressed. Such a rule, however good it might seem at first, would be entirely contrary to the main spirit of the Society, which is to present to the world the spectacle of a people of saints, and to prove by the fact that today, as in the early Church, the Gospel can be practiced in all the rigor of the spirit and of the letter. If there is any different way, without any prejudice to the gospel spirit, the Spirit of God can inspire it, and in fact has inspired it, according to the nature of the century in which it has inspired the Institutions.

They say the Society of Mary is an endowed Society. Each of its members is poor, but together they are rich. No single member has any type of property, but united to the others, he is an owner. As a member of the Society, he has rights even to the belongings of the Society. Without saying directly what the goods are which the Society as a whole may or could possess—without explaining here why the Society as a whole may possess or what use it is to make of goods actually acquired or that it could acquire, so that it may never be a rich or opulent body and may always more and more approach the ideal of evangelical poverty; without entering, as I said, into these explanations, unnecessary in this circumstance, what is there to prevent its priests, for the most part, not only from depriving themselves of all ownership, but also renouncing, and forever, whatever rights they might have as society members to all the belongings of the Society as to all of its revenues, and never receive anything from the Society except as pure charity or as an alms? Were the apostles not to receive from the charity of the faithful what they needed regarding food and clothing? Or did they receive what was necessary for them from the people of the world, Jews or idolaters, rather than from the Christians whom they had formed? Would then these priests cease to be poor and truly poor because a society of renewed faithful would charitably provide for their needs when it would be able to do so, either in the midst of their labors so that they might be totally independent of those for whom they would be working, or even in their communities which they would direct or in which they would devote themselves to study and prayer, or even in their decrepitude, their infirmities, or their illnesses? I will remark at this time that members of the Society, whoever they may be, priests or laymen, are always to be

treated as poor persons, whether in time of health or illness. With all the more reason would those be treated who would have given up all rights to the belongings and the revenues of the Society.

But will it not be said that the Society of Mary is necessarily a teaching organization? Yes, no doubt about this, and the apostles were also essentially a teaching body. *Euntes docete omnes gentes*, etc. [going forth, teach all the peoples]. Moreover, the Society of Mary has a fourth vow which its members, priests and laymen, make, the teaching of Christian doctrine and morals.

It will be said that this particular line of teaching is not talked about, but rather that of human knowledge and literature. This is true; the Society of Mary destines the majority of its members to the teaching of human knowledge and literature, but it gives them this work only as a necessary means for the renewal needed at the present time in all states and conditions. Is it then astonishing that it destines especially a certain number, above all among the priests, solely for the teaching of religion, for the work of preaching, for the giving of retreats, missions, and for all the various exercises of the holy ministry? This is so thoroughly the spirit of the Society of Mary that it is thus represented in the approbations, in the first place by the Archbishop of Bordeaux, then by several other archbishops and bishops, and that by the very fact of its institutions, it has an essential need of missionaries. This is not saying that the Society of Mary, being essentially missionary in the universality of its members and working for its grand object, the support of religion, the multiplication of Christians, the propagation of the faith, etc. And, as I say, working at all this, particularly by means of the teaching of human knowledge and literature, the members who would not be employed in this teaching would be indifferent to it and take no interest in it. On the contrary, according to the occasions provided by Providence, they must put a great interest into the formation and development of establishments of this type, and in the different exercises of their functions attract to the Society qualified subjects whom they would believe are called to religious life.

Regarding the spirit and the practice of poverty and the renunciation of property, taken intrinsically and in the evangelical sense, I believe I have sufficiently shown this to be possible in the Society of Mary; to speak truly, this is the great desire of my heart and it will be the object of my solicitude, to have it deeply rooted more and more in the Society of Mary until the end of my days.

But I feel I have not answered to the difficulty of some exterior practices of poverty which allow a great satisfaction to the poor, for it seems to them that their own poverty and their disregard for all goods is brought out in greater light. Without examining this satisfaction intrinsically and considering it good and pure, on the whole, why not give it up for the glory of God? Would we wish to sacrifice essentials for external forms? We believe it is our duty to adopt customs and a diet that would permit us to attack in every way the corruption of this century. Why then should we sacrifice the success of the enterprise with which God inspires us, for some practices which could be good only in certain circumstances or for certain particular individuals who would adopt them? Nevertheless, in exchange for this satisfaction the Society of Mary can give a much greater satisfaction and one more intrinsically religious, that of the complete abnegation of self, toward which the missionary priests must especially tend and which they would have endless chances to practice.

My dear Son, in closing this letter I would have greatly desired to correspond to your confidence and to give you a few practical counsels. Well, that may be the special object of another letter or of some special interview. I would have even more desired to speak to you of the august Protector and Mother of the Society, the divine Mary. Your love for her, your complete confidence, the habitual desire you have of forming part of her special family, of the Society that is so glorious in bearing her name, of this Society so feeble and so imperfect in the universality of its members and above all in its first Superior, but which believes itself so strong and so powerful in the possession of the Name of Mary in order to attack what is strongest and most powerful in this century; this desire, I say, which you have always had along with that of leading a truly religious life, are for me a proof of your vocation, and if you find in your colleagues this double

desire, I will place no obstacle to their admission among the number of my Children and of the Children of Mary. They need have no fear at all of finding any ambiguity, any subterfuge, any mystery—in a word, anything which might serve to change the views and sentiments with which the Spirit of God has inspired them. In entering into the Society of Mary, they will find no other change than a firm and constant direction toward the end they propose to themselves, a great number of means for perfecting themselves in the spirit of their state, and a better attainment of this great end, or at best only attaining it very feebly and imperfectly. Let them feel the power of this old saying, *Vis unita fit fortior*.<sup>1</sup> Have them feel more especially that Mary is to be glorified from century to century, but more particularly in these last centuries, by the visible and appreciable protection she will grant to God's Church and to the body which, to obtain it, will constantly show forth her greatness and the power of her protection.

I embrace you, my dear Son, very tenderly in the maternal Heart of Mary.

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*It seems Father Chaminade completed his thought in a later letter, from which a manuscript note of the Sisters of the Holy Family reports the following passage. "Take care," he says, "to end these meetings as promptly as Providence will permit, for delays could give rise to difficulties." Father Noailles answered in these terms, full of respect for Father Chaminade and for his religious families (September 23).*

*Having seen the beginning of your work, being closely associated since childhood with the first members of your Institute, and having very often found myself in a position to have recourse to your wise counsels, all leading me toward the Institute of Mary, I would perhaps have entered it a long while ago if ties of conscience had not kept me in the world. Thrown into a series of good works, I do not know how, I very often felt how advantageous it would have been for me to be directed by such a man as you, and I would have wished that my new position had been able to bring me close to you and to your pious Society; but this hope, seeming irreconcilable either with my interest in the works I had begun and for which I was responsible or with the commitments I had made with the priests who wished to associate themselves with me, had to be abandoned; I expressed to you my regret over this fact on every occasion we have had of discussing these matters. This link of charity, this enrollment under the banner of Mary, would cause me great joy, if it would contribute to the glory of God and to the salvation of souls. It would be sweet to me to work under your protection and with the aid of your wise counsels, and, furthermore, I believe my colleagues would share my way of thinking in this matter. However, if we were able to hope for some advantage from such a union, I do not see how you could expect any on your side, and this gives us reason to doubt that this is conformable to the will of God. Let us wait until God further explains what he expects of us, and whatever our position will be, we will always be happy if it ever gives us occasion to be of some service to your holy Institute.*

*In fact, the union never took place; the ends and means of the works of the two founders were too different. The Society of the Poor Priests could not continue and disappeared the following year. On the contrary, the Sisters of Loretto became the Sisters of the Holy Family and experienced great development. With their seven branches, governed by one central administration residing in Bordeaux, they are a unique creation in their own way and manifestly blessed by God. On February 16, 1830, a pious union was established between the Sisters of the Holy Family and the Society of Mary; thus were realized, in some manner, the wishes of the two Founders.*

*On November 23, 1837, Father Noailles, excusing himself to the Archbishop of Bordeaux, as not being able to undertake the foundation of an agricultural work in the former monastery of Saint Aubin, gave Father Chaminade and the Society of Mary a new token of*

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<sup>1</sup> In union there is strength.

*esteem, one precious to gather from the mouth of the Servant of God. "Your Excellency, you have much more light and experience in the venerable ecclesiastic . . . Father Chaminade, whose zeal you have welcomed with so much benevolence in your first diocese and who will not be less useful or less devoted to you in this one. He has resources I do not have, having already formed brothers who are destined for this type of work. The blessings God has bestowed upon his labors in the north of France are a guarantee of those he will obtain while working in our regions. Furthermore, what may we not expect when working under your auspices? This one thought would have been enough to induce me to undertake this good work with confidence, if you had deigned to accord me your protection and the aid of your wise counsels, but taking for granted that God would not have provided you with a better instrument in the person of Father Chaminade. . . . As for the rest, Your Excellency, I ask God to inspire you with the thought of compensating me in another way for this sacrifice my incapacity imposes upon me, and which calls for the preference so justly due to Father Chaminade."*

*The next letter shows Father Chaminade in contact with the Archbishop of Toulouse, Cardinal de Clermont-Tonnerre, for the establishment of a house of missionaries and a normal school in his diocese. Father Chaminade insists on the major importance of normal schools for the renewal of the country and asks the cardinal to come to his aid in the recruiting of members to the Society of Mary.*

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### **389. To a Priest in Toulouse**

February 17, 1826, Bordeaux

Rough Copy, Agmar

Reverend Father,

I have had information about the letter you took the trouble to write to Father Caillet on February 14, as well as about the note His Eminence wrote to you on February 9.

While answering this letter, I will first ask you please to offer to His Eminence the homage of my profound respect and gratitude. I also ask you to express to him the sincere regret I experience in not being able, purely and simply, to grant his request.

Granting that the ceding of the house of the Récollets and of the land dependent upon it has been made only on the condition of having country Missionaries there, it is acceptable that the establishment of the normal school will occupy only a secondary place on the same property, even if it is of a greater advantage for the reformation of the diocese and even more timely than the work of the Mission; I admit I was not aware of this important circumstance.

When in Paris you made the first propositions toward this double establishment, that of the Calvary Mission and of the normal school, Father Caillet had the honor of telling you he did not believe the Society of Mary would be able to give you more than one priest, but that others would be added little by little, in proportion as others entered the Society and especially in proportion as His Eminence would release some. Then, when you had the kindness of repeating the same request on the part of His Eminence, I did not fail to tell you that, at first I would not be able to give you more than one priest for the Mission, for whom we would temporarily provide aids and helps that would be available. Since then I have not become richer in priests, although I still have hopes in that direction. In fact, several have presented themselves, capable of setting to work immediately and even as missionaries. In the novitiate of Saint-Remy and at the Madeleine I have several theologians, of whom some may be suitable for the missions. I am not speaking of those who are in the lower classes. But all these advantages do not permit me to promise His Eminence to organize a body of missionaries for him; all I can do for the present is to promise him that I will seriously occupy myself with the matter.

In speaking of the normal school, I said that this establishment was perhaps an advantage, more prompt and more effective for the reformation of the diocese than the Mission itself. If you recall to yourself what you learned about this in Paris and what is happening in Saint-Remy, for the departments of the Doubs and the Haute-Saône, it will be easy for you to convince His Eminence that here there is no exaggeration at all. I had charged Father Caillet to draw up the prospectus about it very carefully, and also to note all the means to be taken to ensure its success.

A young priest of the diocese of Périgueux has been offering for more than 18 months to enter the Society of Mary. He has all the signs of a true religious vocation. Before receiving the imposition of hands, he had already given notice of his desire to Bishop de Lostanges of Périgueux. The young priest has persevered ineffectively, as up to the present he has not been able to obtain his *exeat*. I had destined him for an establishment where there is a novitiate<sup>1</sup> and which has desperate need of at least one more priest. Would there be any indiscretion in asking His Eminence to write to Bishop de Lostanges? There is no doubt that the young priest would then be free, and Toulouse would even gain indirectly. I am going to put into this same envelope the last letter this young priest wrote to me.

Several bishops, and in particular Their Excellencies of Saint-Claude and Nancy, are asking me for establishments and are offering me the necessary means to proceed with them. Since I began this letter I have received a new invitation regarding the one desired in the capital. I have not formally accepted any establishments since our correspondence about those of Toulouse. If His Eminence does not accept the offer I have the honor of making to him, and which I am truly making from the heart, I will be obliged to you to inform me of this it as soon as possible, so I may return to my original freedom of action. I am with respectful devotedness. . . .

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*At the end of March, Father Caillet received an obedience to go on a third mission to the north. He was charged at first with the task of reassuming the negotiations with Father Mertian in view of the merger of his Institute with the Society of Mary and of the transfer to the Society of the house in Saint-Hippolyte. These negotiations, confided at first to Bro. Louis Rothéa (letter no. 337), had ended in an act drawn up in Ribeaupillé on March 9, but which Father Chaminade had not been able to accept because of clauses believed by Bro. David Monier to be dangerous.*

*He was then to come to an understanding with Father Bardenet for the foundation of an establishment of the Daughters of Mary in Arbois, a small town in the Jura region, in a former Capuchin convent—the presbytery, barracks for mounted police, etc. which the city council had decided to give to religious sisters for the opening of schools.*

*Next, he had to intervene in the interviews with the Bishops of Saint-Claude and Nancy for the creation of normal schools in their dioceses, and with the rector of the academy of Besançon for the direction of the collège of Gray, Haute-Saône. These various matters called for a very active correspondence in the following months, but this came almost entirely from the pen of Brother David. Included here are only the passages which offer interest as the expression of the thought of Father Chaminade.*

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### **390. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Bordeaux**

March 28, 1826, Bordeaux

Original, Agmar

Letter of Obedience to My Respectable Son, Fr. Georges Caillet

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<sup>1</sup> Saint-Remy.

My respectable Son, Father G. Caillet wishes to take on a third mission, possibly as difficult as the first two, but more consoling, as far as the heart is concerned.

In the first two, there has been a question of sowing, while today there is an abundant harvest which must be gathered in. The reunion of an entire Institute must be consummated. An establishment of the Daughters of Mary for Arbois must be definitively decided upon. It is also a question of several establishments offered as normal schools, for the functioning of which ways and means must be studied.

I will not go here into any particular details, but I am joining to this letter some instructions which will direct him in the most essential and delicate points which he will need to examine. I leave the others to his zeal and prudence. In everything and everywhere, may he always have in mind the beautiful motto of the Society of Mary, *Ad majorem Dei gloriam Virginisque Deiparae* [for the greater glory of God and the Virgin Mother of God].

Given at Bordeaux, March 28, 1826, under our seal;  
sealed and countersigned by our Secretary-General.

David Monier, Secretary  
G.-Joseph Chaminade  
Superior General of the Society of Mary

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### **S. 390-2. To Fr. Georges Caillet**

March 28, 1826, Bordeaux

Rough Copy, Agmar

#### Instructions for Father Caillet Regarding Saint-Hippolyte

1. He will go to Colmar to be informed of the details of the negotiations undertaken by Brother Rothéa. Whatever the steps are already taken and whatever he learns of the matter, he will act and will have the brothers conduct themselves as if the matter had not been presented.

He will note that by the signing of the Ribeauvillé contract, Brother Rothéa's procuration was concluded.

It was beside the purpose and without authorization that a visit had been made to Strasbourg and an inventory had been made at Saint-Hippolyte.

Negotiations with the Brothers of Father Mertian, who had the option of joining us, were premature. Such relationships merely strengthened the chains already binding the Society of Mary by a document. We must never reopen any dialogue on the matter because the contract bound the Society in the same manner in which an employee is hired and then dismissed under any pretext when he is no longer needed. We will never found a house on that basis.

2. Nor must we blame Father Rothéa or Brother Laugeay. Their simplicity is preferable to the ruse they would have needed to defend themselves. Zeal and confidence led them into difficulties; they must be instructed to have less self-confidence. They say they are weak, but outside their schools they act as if they are strong. More harmony between words and actions is needed; great prudence will serve them well in the future.

3. Father Caillet will take with him to Strasbourg a copy of the Saint-Hippolyte contract and other documents and instructions pertaining to it. He must not have the contract registered at the mortgage bureau, nor must he act upon it.

4. If Father Caillet meets people who know of the Saint-Hippolyte operation, he will simply tell them that the council of the Society has not accepted. If Father Caillet would wish to give more details to persons of note, he will speak of some internal matter with which he is familiar: payment for services instead of a donation, exchange of favors with a third party, a change of people who donate, the nullity of conflicting regulations on the part of the two

institutions, legal irreversibility, or the propriety of giving the house to His Excellency, who along may freely dispose of it.

5. Father Caillet will not go to Saint-Hippolyte.

6. He will go to Ribeauvillé to see Father Mertian and give him the enclosed letter. Father Caillet will give no other explanation than that contained in article 4 above; if necessary, he will excuse himself for not discussing matters for which he has no mandate.

7. Father Caillet will go to Strasbourg and deliver into the hands of the bishop the letter from the Superior General of the Society of Mary.

8. He will then deliver the letters patent and the Statutes of the Society, along with any related documents, and he will ask that they be registered with the diocese in the following days. He will ask that the document witnessing to this registration, drawn up in the office of the secretary at the bishop's request, will be sent to me. Father Caillet will obtain all necessary documents to be used on the visit to the Archbishop of Besançon.

9. Father Caillet will give the Bishop of Strasbourg a copy of the letter written by the Superior General of the Society of Mary to Father Mertian, containing the refusal to accept Saint-Hippolyte. He will add a copy of the minutes of the council of the Society.

10. If Monsignor accepts them, we can forget Saint-Hippolyte. If the bishop wish to make any observations, Father Caillet will receive them respectfully and will ask his permission to send them to the Superior General in Bordeaux for a response.

11. Father Caillet will ask His Excellency of Strasbourg for permission to attend to some business while waiting for an answer.

12. Because Father Caillet will be traveling after sending the dispatches to Bordeaux, he will forward the addresses of confidants, people where he can be reached.

13. Father Caillet will act in such a way as to earn the goodwill and the protection of His Excellency, both toward the establishment of Colmar and toward any other present or future foundation.

14. Upon his return from Alsace, if he has not done so before, Father Caillet will pass through Besançon to give the archbishop the letters patent and the Statutes and ask that they be registered, as he did in Strasbourg, in conformity with article 8 above.

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#### Contingency Recommendations in the Saint-Hippolyte Matter

1. His Excellency of Strasbourg may not accept with pleasure that the Society of Mary is abandoning the idea of a foundation at Saint-Hippolyte. In this case, His Excellency must be told strongly that his power is supreme, and that if he exercises it, he will soon be convincing enough. But Father Caillet will take no additional action; he will make no promises and no commitments; he will merely write to me. His Excellency's secretaries should write down his intentions, if the bishop does not do so himself.

2. When speaking about Saint-Hippolyte, it should be maintained that the only important consideration for us was the merger of the two male institutes. Even if the building which is called the château and its small garden were much larger, this would not influence our decision. One property or another, we will always find one large enough. But two Institutes can hinder each other; it is better to have only one, at least where the population is not dense.

3. We must bear in mind that the downfall of even a small institution can harm the large one which survives; it is worse if they coexist. Those members who would be dutiful if there were one institution bargain to see where human nature would enjoy greater advantages, and by hesitating some members are lost.

4. Great wisdom is needed if a merger is to be achieved. In some ways, we have salt water which must be mixed with sweet, without spoiling the latter. But give the Society of Mary

freedom of action; it has more means and ore practice in the matter. Let us rely on God's help, for God cannot refuse us if our intention is right.

5. Now if in fact Father Mertian agreed to allow his members the right to keep some furnished house so that if they left their Institute and did not care to join ours, they could return to the world with a certain quantity of goods belonging to religion, this would be a temptation for such members and an obstacle to a possible merger.

6. A change of apparel is another problem, they claim. The man who is a religious only because of his apparel is no religious. The man who wants to be religious in his heart and wishes to show it by his apparel must be encouraged in his weakness. The complete religious will go to the heart of his state, which is everything, and the rest is nothing. If he prefers some clothing, this will be because it will have been worn by a greater number of saints. It is said, for instance, that Saint Paul the hermit wanted to have the cloak of Saint Athanasius and did receive it upon the owner's death. It is said that Saint Augustine, the father of the cenobites, wanted to have the cloak of Saint Paul the hermit, made of palm bark, and that he wore it on solemn occasions. Anyone wishing to tend to virtue in clothing with such an eminent history should so do; he will benefit greatly. It was decided at the discussion of a merger that any change in apparel would be granted only after repeated demands. It was seen that the objection was based on vanity, or a fantasy which for some was the cause of their downfall.

7. If this notion of donation is abandoned as an impracticable illusion, we must agree, as we did before the contract, to a transfer of all schools, statutes, and deeds and proceed regularly to a union.

8. Of course, Father Mertian's cooperation would help greatly. When he withdraws or claims to wish to withdraw, he is acting contrary to what is done in the case of a transfer or a merger. Those who are well-disposed to see the project succeed are united outwardly; only the person who is against the union will have nothing to do with it.

9. There can be no agreement without mutual respect. The love of Christ makes everything simple; without this full and absolute love, there is disunity. We accuse ourselves of not possessing this charity, but we believe that if we had it, we would have supported and created it in others. The virtue of Christ would have acted through us.

10. Before going any further, we should inquire whether Saint-Hippolyte is the result of a confiscation from immigrants or condemned people.

11. In the entire matter, Father Caillet must always keep in mind what is prescribed in article 1 above.

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### **S. 390-3. To Father Mertian, Saint-Hippolyte**

March 29, 1826, Bordeaux

Rough Copy, Agmar

I have just received a poor but, I imagine, a faithful copy of the agreement which you signed at Ribeaupillé with Brother Rothéa. I would be embarrassed to confess my emotions on this subject. The agreement seems to oppose everything we wanted to do, you and I, contrary to every understanding which I believed we had between us. I wonder what our intention was. To myself, I say that it certainly was to revive your Order of men, to give it stability, and as much as in us lies, to set up a stable administration. The document which came to my notice would produce the opposite, the reverse of the vision we had in common. The fourth condition eliminates every possibility of stability. In substance, this statute says that in the event the boarding house is not successful, the property or building would change hands legally and simply because of the situation. If my personnel and I spend years to establish and perhaps make the work flourish, how could we consent to see it slip out of our hands for some cause independent of



our actions and will? So many things could bring about a collapse: a fire, an invasion by an enemy (the border location), or a famine. In addition to events due to major causes, there are the passions and the intrigues within the Society. Enemies will react, the authority will make claims, one moment of frustration, and then the irreversible downfall.

An institution is doomed to instability if day in and day out it must depend on the seasons, on politics, and on all the passions rampant in the world. To allow this is to condemn the institute to instantaneous death. The contract says that if the Institute is attacked, it must feel despoiled—which is an invitation to attack. It is impossible to set up a wise administration.

It is not possible to keep the terms of our purchase a secret. It is difficult to keep this kind of mystery; there would be something underhanded about it. Moreover, information on properties for sale, entries in public registers, make a secret impossible. Just imagine a strike action by four teachers, or a dozen boarders, or by some disgruntled or seduced novice; the operation comes to a halt, and the Society has nothing for its pains. What could the protestors do? If their demands are not met, they will be vociferous in the extreme; they will cause the directors to abdicate in virtue of the contract and because of interrupted services.

I do not believe you realize how extremely vulnerable that article 4 makes us. The author should have realized that according to its terms, it would be just as possible after 200 years as on the first day to deprive of true ownership those whom you intended as owners of your property. This is giving with one hand and taking with the other; it is to make a mockery of a promise.

If a famine were to occur, can I guarantee food and the necessities if I have only the premises to furnish them? Your contract merely gives the occupation of the house and the right to use it until the day when that service would be accidentally interrupted.

I will not continue with these reflections. This is not the agreement we had accepted. The writer certainly missed our point. God who directs the mind and heart must have wanted it this way. I do not blame you personally. Let us love one another, and may the will of God be done.

Moreover, the contract which does us harm bears its own compensations. It will not give us the means to reestablish your Order, to guarantee lasting stability to your houses, or to introduce a wise government.

But this clause fostering instability, which was so unwisely introduced, foreshadows the consequences of this instability. It is your wish, the contract says, that if the domain of Saint-Hippolyte “falls”—that is the word in the document—it does so into the hands of the bishop to use as his wisdom sees fit. I agree with your purpose, the only one mentioned in the bill of sale, and without hesitation I will resign this into the hands of the bishop, convinced that he will find a use for this property with more wisdom than I could.

In the hope that I have complied with your wishes, I hope that you will hear my petition. I am, as usual, with profound respect. . . .

P.S. I also had to submit the contract to the government of my Order, as it is stipulated; then the council refused because (1) while specifying a donation is merely allowing a leasing of services, the contract is revocable at any time; (2) if we were to call this a gift, it would be null because a return to a third party is forbidden by law, and because a second receiver is substituted for the first, which annuls the gift to both; and (3) no reparation can be made for invalid acts. However serious these reasons may be, in my opinion they are not as important as the absence of stability and the impossibility of setting up an administration which is protected from every reasonable attack.

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#### **S. 390-4. To Bishop Tharin of Strasbourg**

March 29, 1826, Bordeaux

Rough Copy, Agmar

I am sending you one of the priests of my Society in all haste and with complete trust in Your Excellency. You will remember him, for he has met you on former occasions. He is the very faithful and obedient Father Caillet.

He has a double message to convey to you. The first is to show you the letters patent from the king dated November 16, the Constitutions of the Society of Mary, and the Statutes approved by the Royal Council. Our Constitutions place us under the jurisdiction of the Ordinary in the diocese where we have establishments. I am happy to place a portion of my Society under the authority of a prelate to whom the Society owes its finest house, that of Saint-Remy. I hope the protection you granted to us as Vicar General of Besançon will not be lacking now that the voice of the people and the wisdom of the king have given you the See of Strasbourg. You did not hesitate to give your approval to our schools in Colmar; today we are asking the same favor, plus another.

Your Excellency, in my petition I ask that our letters patent and our Statutes will be registered in your diocese and that you will look upon us as faithful members of your diocese.

The second part of Father Caillet's message deals with the dialogue between Father Mertian and me. Until a recent event, I had believed we were discussing a merger of his Institute of men with mine. A document emerged from all succeeding discussion mentioning a donation which a recently traced plan of the property does nothing to recommend. There are so many aspects to this so-called gift that I find it prudent not to go into details. But there are still two clauses in the contract that worry me. One says that the contract must be submitted to the government; the other, that if I do not make use of the donation, the domain will be subject to your wishes. By the use of the word "government," I believe it was intended to circumvent my formulation; mine stated that the gift would be accepted by the Council of Public Instruction—that is, by His Excellency the Minister who is Secretary of State of this department. The word "government" was to encompass everything. But when used by the Society of Mary, the word means its own government, as defined by article 12 of the Statutes. The government of the Society is composed of the Superior and of the three Assistants who form his council. The latter must approve every purchase; a refusal is a veto. The council met and rejected the acquisition, giving its reasons. Because this is the case, for me this acquisition is invalid.

There remains the second clause, to the effect that a non-use of the acquired domain would have it revert to you, to be disposed of as you wish. In this case, I give up any claim to the pretended acquisition, and in your wisdom, Monsignor, you will find some use which will profit religion.

I wrote to Father Mertian, asking his assent to my rejection and alleging that under his conditions, the house at Saint-Hippolyte would have neither stability nor good administration, and no guarantee of survival from one year to the next.

The council of the Society of Mary studied the case from other points of view. I must allow this regularly formed council its freedom. It is far from making a faulty judgment in this case, but even if I consider its opinions as mere remarks, I cannot assume responsibility for an establishment which might very well do some good, but which will be perpetually unstable and will have an administration that is powerless. Such an arrangement should never have been suggested and must be abandoned.

The answer I am giving Your Excellency concerning Saint-Hippolyte is from my council, which is an integral part of the administration. I enclose a copy of my letter to Father Mertian informing him of my refusal of Saint-Hippolyte. There will be other occasions when people dedicated to primary education will not have secretaries drawing up religious contracts as if they were dealing in mistrust as the world does, and opposing iniquity with iniquity.

In any case, let us steer clear of such examples and of the difficulties such contracts entail. I believe Father Mertian is innocent in all this, and that his secretary was unfamiliar with the simplicity necessary in all preliminary discussions and which has led to such poor realization.

I trust in God who has allowed this course of events so that, as I disassociate myself from this enterprise, it may be managed by a surer hand.

Monsignor, please accept my refraining from the possession of Saint-Hippolyte as a mark of the high esteem and the deep respect with which I am . . .

\* \* \*

**S. 390-5. To the King, Paris**

March 29, 1826, Bordeaux

Copy, Agmar

Sire,

You have graciously recognized the Society of Mary and given it a civil existence. Its purpose is to spread the benefits of education to the most populous sections of your people. I considered it a duty to have the occasion solemnized in the various establishments of which I am the Superior General.

But I have the obligation and the desire to present to Your Majesty the decree which will forever recall the anniversary of your graciousness and the gratitude of the members of the Society. In the name of all my members, I wish to render homage to you and to express those sentiments of love and veneration with which I am, Your Majesty. . . .

\* \* \*

**S. 390-6. To Countess d'Hanache**

March 31, 1826, Bordeaux

Rough Copy, Agmar

Madame Countess,

Your letter of February 26 was received with the consideration it deserves. It tells of your charitable works and of the Christian prudence you have exercised in their administration. It will be easy for me to observe the discretion you ask, but if I would fail in this, no harm could possibly come to our neighbor. You explain clearly why you wish to retain control of the work in which you are engaged and not to be remiss in the service Providence asks of you. The gentleman you refer to [M. O'Lombel] has great gifts and a solid piety which make him an invaluable ally. I almost said that these would entitle him to be found on the right side when the final separation between right and left takes place.

This Monsieur informs me that an establishment of my servants of Mary in Paris would find a fertile field to till, to sow, and to reap. I am not aware of his contributions in this field, but from various statements from high ecclesiastical and civil authorities, I learn that he was consulted advantageously. How could I not listen to him when he asks to do good? I was happy to receive this good Christian in my home. Everything about him confirmed the high opinion I had formed of him. I agreed to his wishes and authorized him to purchase a building and to make the modifications listed in my instruction.

Madame Countess, the high opinion you have of the religious sentiments expressed in his correspondence merely confirms my confidence in him. As long as his zeal is reported to me in letters like yours I will have no cause to worry, and yours proves that his zeal is above reproach. I should be most happy if one day your prudence tempered a zeal which may be too ardent; I do not believe he would be displeased if you did so.

It is a privilege to have this worthy correspondent be the reason for your modest and edifying letter, the opportunity for asking to be remembered in your prayers, and to tell you with what sentiments I am. . .

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### **S. 390-7. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

April 10, 1826, Bordeaux

After your departure, the idea occurred to me that in common courtesy the Bishop of Strasbourg should be advised by mail of your coming visit and of the two messages you were to bring to him. I did write to him on April 1. My letter merely repeated what I had said on March 29, and you have that. I could not guess that the prelate would be relieved of his see. If anyone mentions this second letter sent to Strasbourg and which should have preceded your arrival, simply say that I considered it a duty, and that you know it conforms on all points to that of March 29, which you have already delivered.

I have on my desk your letters of April 5 and April 6. I note with pleasure that you and your young companion made the journey to Paris without incident, save the one or two very cold nights you experienced. The psalms say, "Let ice and snow bless the Lord." We must be content with what blesses the Lord. These small happy or unhappy incidents must also be profitable to us in this world; you are well aware of these things.

So you did not meet our Sisters of Amance, even after your hasty departure. However, they did arrive safely. Please pass on the news to interested people. You can imagine that I had no idea that in Paris you would meet the two prelates you were going so far to see, or that Father Mertian would be there after your encounter with him in Alsace. God does arrange everything. However, none of this must change your itinerary or alter any item of your instructions. Your letter of April 6 seemed to show some hesitation; I believe a little rest will restore you.

The negotiations which the Bishop of Strasbourg would like to see resumed between us and Father Mertian should motivate you to reread the paper entitled "Contingency Recommendations in the Saint-Hippolyte Matter." Your line of conduct is indicated, but not the details which would be involved in the organization. It would be useless to plan before we are assured of the materiel and the personnel. The same thing would have happened if you had negotiated in Alsace, rather than in Paris. In either place you would have had (1) to propose the resignation of Father Mertian the delivery of his Statutes and constitutive documents, article 7 of your instructions, and (2) to listen to the proposals on the donation of Saint-Hippolyte if it is purely and simply article 1 of the same.

On these two points, you ask me what is the opinion of the Bishop of Strasbourg. He would like a transfer of the property and of Father Mertian's Institute, but will he agree? We cannot profit by his absence. You saw that even the minor restrictions to which Brother Rothéa had agreed were enough to block the project. However, I will add some explanations to your instructions so you can answer questions which may be put to you. I will touch on various points which you might find troublesome, as I see from your letters. I will have something to say on the location of Marast, etc.

You ask me if you are to go to Strasbourg, Arbois, and Saint-Claude in Alsace, points not indicated in your instructions. You also ask about Saint-Remy, Besançon, and Franche-Comté. You believe you are exceeding your instructions; in your mind you are separating instructions from obedience. I will repeat what I have said, and which some reflection on your part would have led you to conclude. I imagine the business you conducted in Paris and elsewhere is definitive. But after the Mertian matter, do you have nothing in view for Alsace or Franche-Comté? And if Father Mertian does not sever the relationship, will you not have more to do than before?

You want me to fix your itinerary from here. I wish I could, but I feel you may have to begin on the right rather than on the left, and my directives might stop you halfway. Consider your assignment in the light of obedience and of your instructions, and try not to cover any

territory a second time. Because you are traveling with Father Bardenet, I believe you should first agree with him. You would know when you were to meet, what roads to take, what to visit on your way down and what on your return. Unless I am mistaken, you were to go from Paris to Saint-Remy, then to the Jura, Arbois and other towns, then to the Doubs, Besançon, etc., then to Haut-Rhin, Colmar, Saint-Hippolyte if necessary (that is if we agree to accept the schools), then to Bas-Rhin. Your trip would look like this.



You could return to Paris via Nancy and Châlons. However, you may have to change this itinerary; secondary roads may be shortcuts. Obtain the advice of people who know the region. Father Bardenet will be your best guide.

I will continue to list your instructions tomorrow. I could not do so sooner. From my paternal heart I give you my blessing.

P.S. Obtain some information concerning M. Saint-Guy d'Izon.

\* \* \*

### **S. 390-8. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Paris**

April 11, 1826, Bordeaux

Rough Copy, Agmar

Today I am writing about what we have agreed to call your instructions. You ask for added instructions, and although I believe they are superfluous, I told you in yesterday's letter that I would send them on. I will do that now. If this causes you to reread and grasp the details thoroughly, some good will come of this task. However, a danger may threaten you here: the more you read, the more muddled you may become. I will not have you become the victim of indecision, to run the risk of regrettable consequences. You have instructions regarding

- (1) Paris, 4 articles
- (2) Saint-Hippolyte, Colmar, Ribeauvillé, Strasbourg, Besançon, 14 articles
- (3) the probable (then) and now actual negotiations with Father Mertian, 11 articles
- (4) your obedience in the case of Arbois for the Daughters of Mary and other establishments of normal schools, without explanatory details, these being left to your judgment.

I am linking these four directives to the contents of your letters. Some will be outdated because they refer to finished business or to projects impossible to carry through. Others may be fulfilled partially, and others you will fully attend to in time. Now if after this new wording of four of your instructions and after yesterday's letter some doubt should persist about the others, I will explain them latter. I still have the following to tell you.

Father Lalanne's books must be made available to M. O'Lombel until Father Lalanne revokes the permission.

Do not concern yourself with Hoffman or Dominique, unless you meet them accidentally; then show your compassion and ask them to behave.

At Saint-Remy, Colmar, and wherever you meet our religious note the good and the bad, and you can report to me on your return.

If the funds voted for Saint-Remy are available, good, but do not count on them; but it was good of you to look into the matter.

When you write to me, give me the number of the instruction which you have followed or neglected and whatever bothers you about each article.

I have commented on every word of your letters, but as I have already said, I fear that all this writing adds no light and does not make your conduct easier. I am expecting you to tell me how you have solved your many "ifs." If our gentlemen leave, if Father Mertian does not come, if he does not accept, if he submits new conditions. . . . I note many other "ifs," but they get us nowhere.

As I wait, I recommend you to the blessings of God who makes and who dissolves; may he do with us as he will.

Always your Good Father,

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*This letter discusses matters regarding the Richelieu hotel, which M. O'Lombel is still trying to acquire but for which there is no longer any chance of success.*

### **391. To M. O'Lombel, Paris**

April 11, 1826, Bordeaux

Rough Copy, Agmar

[With inserts from S. 391]

My dear Son,

Your letter, like that of Father Caillet, informed me of the mutual joy you experienced in seeing and meeting each other again. This is not the joy of the world that you have experienced, as I see the matter, but rather the joy of true Christians, that of being able to strengthen one another mutually in the faith, in the virtues, in the courage for doing good, and in procuring the glory of God, according to our weak forces. Let us try to continue on our way with perseverance, for this is what I ask of the Good God for all my Children, and at this moment, particularly for you, my dear Son.

After a brief moment of good recommendations, we must soon move to business and speak of current matters. Happy those who can pass from religious reflections to the requirements of business without losing the sense of the presence of God! This is what I hope God's grace will grant you. In any case, in not speaking too long about business matters you will sooner return to God.

I will then limit myself, without hesitation, to telling you that the borrowing plan which you submit to me as a project cannot be suitable to the Society of Mary. You tell me you would be borrowing a sum of 100,000 francs in shares, for which we would give a mortgage on the property and then we would find lenders for the surplus, which as you know is an additional 100,000 francs. In this plan, we can see little more than the purchase of a property, all on credit, without paying as much as the first cent, and in burdening ourselves with incidental expenses, repairs, furnishings and maintenance, and the privation of all manner of rent. Where and how would we stop, if we were once to find ourselves heading down a slope of this kind? In spite of ourselves, that would mean falling into a terrible financial mess.

And then, in the second place, what capitalists would come to lend 100,000 francs on a property burdened with a mortgage of 100,000 francs, which would always be given the first consideration? Again, what notary, what businessman would wish to advise these capitalists for such an investment? Even we ourselves, in proposing it, would be giving the impression that we are looking for fools of some kind. Let us be very careful about anything we do not have at heart, and which may not be there under any circumstance.

Reread your instructions, my dear Son, for you must constantly refer to them. You will find that if the mansion is to be purchased, you must be able to make a down payment of 50,000 francs. Then if the building is worth 200,000 francs and  $\frac{1}{4}$  of its value is paid, we can borrow the rest in a town where large sums are available. But I would not consider it honest and upright to say, "Nothing is paid; lend us the total amount." Please, my dear Son, reveal this project to no one; it would go against your instructions, and I would be forced to deny it. Happily, you have committed this fault in thought only, and the harm was avoided the moment I drew your attention to it.

If a charitable organization would wish to lend us 50,000 francs, so much the better. Then we could see how to find the rest. The Society of Mary must not operate on credit alone, and without guarantee.

Providence will provide for everything, if it is in the designs of God for us to lay the foundations of the Paris establishment. Let us know how to bide our time and not to rush in.

This trifling misunderstanding does not in any way alter my affection for you, my dear Son. The precaution you took to notify me before you acted serves only to confirm my esteem and my confidence in you. It is the case of a son in the arms of his father. The father warns him, and on the other hand he recommends him to God with all the ardor of his soul. In these sentiments, my dear Son, I love you in Jesus and Mary.

P.S. A thought occurs to me; it seems rather strange that the mansion which you were urged to buy on short notice should still be on the market after many months. Why were you pressured with the pretended competition? Why did none of these competing buyers purchase? Was it because the asking price was too high, or because the neighborhood makes it difficult to sell? I am merely speculating, asking questions; I see no answer.

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*Here are three letters addressed to Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon about difficulties arising from the admission of a benefactor, Mme de Clairefontaine, into the dependence upon the convent in Agen.*

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### **392. To Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon, Agen**

April 8, 1826, Bordeaux

Rough Copy, Agmar

[With inserts from S. 392]

My dear Child,

If the remarks of people are one hundred times more vexing, we must not give way to anxiety, providing we have not been the cause of them through our fault. It is not the wind of idle talk that must make us change our line of conduct; it is not upon the remarks of others that we will be judged before God; it is not the slander of others that is to determine our desires and our inclination towards the glory of God and his holy religion. You know all this, my dear Child, just as well and perhaps even better than I.

But you fear, you say, that the sins the world commits on this occasion are not very great. They afflict you. You would desire to diminish their number or halt them altogether, if that were possible. I neither blame nor forbid this emotion of your soul. You do very well in desiring that all evil in the world should cease, that God, this God so good, should reign upon earth as God reigns in heaven, and that God should be glorified by all people in everything and everywhere, without measure and without end. I approve your desire; I share it—but is it in your power to

bring this about, that the entire world thinks clearly, and that the reign of God is realized over the entire earth? It is good for the just person to formulate the wish, but the obstacle he meets is also a good, as far as he is concerned. In the pursuit of this ardent wish, we meet the strongest proof of our powerlessness. We would like to, and we cannot.

In spite of our will to the contrary, scandals will come and spring up again in the world. The just person will always be the object of its unjust criticism. There is still more; the censorship of the world will grant indulgence more easily to evil than to good, which it finds displeasing. In excusing evil the world assumes authority in such cases, while in blaming certain forms of good, it believes it is exonerating itself for not practicing them. The world is not inconsistent, either in what it blames or in what it praises; but in the designs of God it must not be believed that these remarks which come from the world, however vicious they may be, may never have good effects. God knows how to derive good from evil. This is God's secret. We see it by the results. These remarks or proposals of the world and its injustices are a trial to the Christian who is exposed to them, but they are trials which strengthen us in virtue. Very often, they serve to unite more loving hearts to the sufferings of Jesus Christ, and it not infrequently happens that those who carry these remarks become sincerely converted by being enlightened in regard to the truth.

We must pray from the bottom of our hearts for those who blame us. This is the only rule of conduct I have to give you in regard to the ill remarks which have not been provoked through any fault of ours.

But on the other hand, it would not suffice to pray for those who blame us when, in fact, we are at fault. If we have acted in any way to cause scandal, the scandal is ours and comes from us. In such a case, if we had an easy conscience this would be a great evil, for it would be the effect of a severe punishment on the part of God. Anxiety and remorse are graces in the soul who has sinned. The grumbling and the satirical remarks of the world are a salutary warning for us, as the call for a serious examination of ourselves and of all our intentions.

In this case, we must not despise the remarks of the world, as some say we should do. They must be listened to, and the evil must be remedied or at least lessened according to our power to do so.

My dear Child, here you have what is essential for you to observe because of the tribulations with which you are threatened by the world, and with which you are already afflicted. Evil reports in Tonneins; evil reports in Agen. Even if all this were more serious, more afflicting, let us maintain ourselves in the presence of God. In things in which we cannot consider ourselves guilty, let us thank God who has kept us from evil; in those things in which we may have been at fault, let us ask for mercy, let us seek the means of making reparation, and let us resolve to do better in the future. Now you are prepared, I hope.

The question remains: is there fault on your part, or is there not?

There is if you in the matter you had a bad intention or, at least, an intention which was not honestly directed toward God. There is, if you did not bring to the matter that Christian prudence which is recommended to you in all things.

Examine yourself to discover whether your intention was pure and whether everything you did or planned was for the glory of God. If necessary, make your *coulpe*. Beyond this, I refrain from judging.

The lack of Christian prudence, such as the Institute recommends to you, refers to questions which will follow. It was up to you to take counsel with the Administration and to do so in time, to present a sincere and complete report—have you done this? Have you misrepresented the circumstances while seeming to be asking for information? Were you asking for advice after you had acted on your own responsibility? In this case, was it not the most natural thing for you to present the matter in the light most favorable to you?

I am asking these questions because about certain remarks made by the world you add, "They are true." But when you consulted me, how could you expect me to guess something about



which you said nothing, which could not be suspected from this distance, and about which public reaction makes you say, "It is true"?

Mother Saint-Vincent's frankness may be praiseworthy, but her affirmation that the opinions of the world are to be despised would have value only if you, my dear Child, and she had never given cause for such criticism. She has no argument with you, it is true. How can she dismiss it and still despise the rumors?

You have not handled the situation wisely, or at least not prudently. If the world's criticism is just, greater harm must be avoided, and what has been caused must be repaired. What reassures me at the moment is that the worry you had and the desire to confess must have led to the "It is true." Both you and Mother Saint-Vincent must, separately, examine the situation before God and write your conclusions to me.

Mother Saint-Vincent believes her financial state is secure because she has a certain number of bank notes. Do not let her be fooled. If she does not have a just right to this money she will have to return it, whatever ill-advised expenses she may have made. It is best that she include one of those notes in her letter.

In the meantime, I still presume that your idea of having badly managed this matter may be false. I come to this conclusion from what M. F - - - has said to you about it. Basically he approves of this as a good work, but he would want the board of censors to be appeased. If matters are at that point, all consciences being satisfied, the vanities of the world will go wherever they care to go. Give me your report, and suspend all decision.

In giving shelter to a Christian woman, Mme de Clairefontaine, I have seen only a good work, for she seemed forsaken by all. I see that an effort was made to maintain her home conditions, her general well-being, and her personal habits, and that every human assistance and help of religion were placed within her reach.

Her intention of giving herself entirely to the interior life, which she has just confessed, did not seem appropriate in many aspects. But while I acquiesced, I made it understood that she would set up housekeeping in the new building and limit herself to that work.

Making the infirmary into a chapel was a poor decision. I thought the small building at the end of the terrace and opening onto the fields would have been chosen; you transformed the linen room into an infirmary. I do not know what you can do, but the superior's room must not be shared or used for some other purpose.

For what remains, I have a very strong desire of coming to see you, and this incident makes it stronger and almost necessary. Give me your reply in the sense I have just described, and when I have received it, I will tell you of my definite resolution regarding this matter and my projected journey.

Receive the blessing of a father who loves you in Jesus and Mary.

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### **393. To Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon, Agen**

April 18, 1826, Bordeaux

Rough Copy, Agmar

[With insert from S. 393]

My dear Child,

While regaining your composure before God, regarding the matter of Mme Clairefontaine, you contributed also to the peace of my soul. Your explanation seems sufficient to me. But why has this trouble bothered you so much? It cannot be that this trouble arose from the background of the matter itself. Could it not have arisen from the fact of not having accepted it as coming from God, and in the view of God? We sometimes mingle with our best thoughts human views or human satisfactions, and the matter becomes very simple because every human view is

variable and uncertain, and every human satisfaction is temporary and mixed with some bitterness. Is it then surprising that when God abandons us to our own hearts, we feel ourselves deprived of support?

My dear Child, we must purify our intentions, [and] use the favors which come to us as if not using them. God gives them to us. May God's holy will be done! God withdraws them from us. May God's holy will still be done! May our hearts be attached only to God, who is our final end. Then the changes that occur in the world will be indifferent to us, and the reports of others will be only more foreign to us. The book of the Imitation says that we are only what we are in the eyes of God. Praises do not make us more virtuous, and censures do not in any way detract from the uprightness and sincerity of the actions performed with God and for God alone.

To maintain all the simplicity of the work which concerns Mme Clairefontaine, let us begin by carrying out what has been said. Has the house which was destined for her been built? Is nothing being neglected to bring this about? Will her belongings be there in a short time? I do not wish anything to be taken from her of those things which were promised her in the first place.

But she would wish to move ahead more rapidly. You say His Excellency permits this to her, and I did not hesitate also to permit it to her. But be very careful, my dear Child, so this second favor is not a retraction of the first. Mme Clairefontaine is to have her home conditions in the new house, as has been promised to her, and moreover, into the bargain, once she has been received within, she will have to stay inside. She must then be granted the two things if she is to be favored, and there is no question of taking away from her what every fair-minded person may regard as the primary thing, in order to give her only the one which may indicate far less.

Choosing an upper room may be better for your health, but your office is needed for the administration.

Does that cottage near the fields, which from your letter I thought was reserved for the pious Mme de Clairefontaine, have no disadvantages?

The best in all this is, I believe, that I will come to Agen, and that on the strength of your verbal observations, I will come to a decision. In communication by letter, one difficulty succeeds another. In a thing that lasts for some time, we must not begin by giving a false notion to everyone, for soon they all will be displeased by the very fact that the service of God and God's greater glory would not have been sufficiently kept in mind.

Have the construction of the house move ahead. For the rest, I believe I will arrive in four weeks, and then everything can be easily arranged. In the meantime, pray to God and ask that in all things we may do his holy will. In addition, from the bottom of my heart, I am asking from God all his blessings.

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*[On a separate sheet.]*

My dear Child,

I am writing you this brief word separately about general matters, and you will see that you must not mix what I have said to you with many other things, more or less uncertain, and which may be delayed without any inconvenience. Here is the question: at the time of his visit, you had arranged with my dear Son, Brother David, that the two granddaughters of M. Lacoste would be received in Condom, where his youngest daughter already is. Since then you have made your report to me, and I sent it back to you, leaving you to your promises. The Mother Superior of Condom wrote to you about this, and I am told that you would have decided what had been promised would not be given; this is not what you wanted to say, I am certain, but the way things turned out indicated this cancellation of the promise.

I am adding here a copy of the letter I am writing to M. Lacoste, as this is one way of putting an end to the misunderstanding. Had we promised a great deal more, we would need to

stand by our promise. However, do not go to any further trouble; let us do what must be done. The good God will bless you.

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**S. 393-2. To Fr. Georges Caillet, Strausbourg**

April 21, 1826, Bordeaux

My dear Son,

I have your letter from Paris dated April 16, containing the report on your activities in the capital and your explanation of the three questions sent to you by Brother L. Rothéa of Colmar. I will answer both.

You were wise to adopt the advice of the Bishop of Strausbourg on your dealings in that town. I want Father Liebermann, the vicar general, to approve your plan for conciliation and to help you with Father Mertian. As I reread your letter, I feel you are not certain of the exact nature of your instructions, although you tell me you have received them. Article 6 gives you a model of the agreement which can be made. If it is not accepted no further discussions must take place, and everything must be left to the will of God.

You will need to postpone your petition to have the letters patent and the Statutes of the Institute of Mary registered until the bishop returns, but that will be 10 or 12 days after your departure. If the vicars general do not grant the registration, wait to obtain it from the bishop. I am writing for the official copies of the Statutes which you promised me. I hope they bear an official signature from the person in charge of that department. We must accept what we are given and try again later.

You did well to cease dealing with M. O'Lombel. I approve your action with respect to the Manuals.

I gather from your letter that you were unaware of the appointment of the Bishop of Strausbourg as tutor to the heir to the throne, the Duke of Bordeaux. It would have been appropriate to congratulate him. Do this as soon as possible. Now to the three petitions from Brother Rothéa.

For the first, I authorize M. Laugeay to take charge of the normal school at Saint-Remy; I am writing today to Brother Rothéa.

For the second, referring to the Mertian matter, I can only repeat what is contained in both your first and second series of instructions. No one is authorized to proceed in this matter. Louis Rothéa's procuration has expired. I do not approve of what he did when he exceeded his prerogatives, and I would strenuously disapprove if he continued to meddle. In turn, you must do nothing else but propose the little plan, no. 6 of your last instructions.

I come to your last question about grouping the novices left by Father Mertian and the conditions of their acceptance. Your instructions specify that when the time comes, the pros and cons will be weighed carefully and everything will be done with the prudence which should characterize the Institute of Mary.

But have we reached that stage? Are Father Mertian's Statutes and letters patent familiar to you? What can you do and say before being given these documents?

You have no grasp of your instructions; you speak as though you have never been given any. To avoid repeating myself, I must say, "Read your instructions." To all questions you must simply answer, "My instructions allow, forbid, or make no mention of it." If you do this and if you write to me faithfully about each transaction, our relationship will be simple and you will proceed with confidence.

Try to enter into the spirit and accept the blessings which my heart loves to give you in Jesus and Mary.

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**S. 393-3. To M. Becanne, Rector at Moncassin**

April 21, 1826, Bordeaux

Rough Copy, Agmar

Your desire is expressed again in your letter of April 14 as relayed to me by Brother David, and I intend to satisfy it as far as it lies in me. Therefore, I urge you to take the following means which will see your wish granted for the glory of God and of his holy Mother. You must

1. draw up a list of the sodalists who meet regularly and whom you wish to affiliate.
2. appoint a provisional leader, let us call her a prefect, and two assistants to share the work and to act as advisers and helpers for the prefect
3. give the title and patron of the church in which it is established
4. your special request must be voiced, and also your offer to be the local director of the group.

My intention to make a tour of your area may enable me to bring my answer to you. Things have happened in a very unexpected fashion. But I have finally decided that my trip will take place in four weeks or so. Meanwhile, if you can send me the required information, I will do my best to bring the requested affiliation to Tonneins along with the related instructions. I will announce my visit, and if I do not meet with you I will leave everything with the pastor of Tonneins or with M. Royère.

I am already bound to you with generous sentiments of affection in Jesus and Mary.

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**S. 393-4. To Bro. Louis Rothéa, Colmar**

April 27, 1826, Bordeaux

Rough Copy, Agmar

My dear Son,

Father Caillet writes to inform me from Paris of the three questions you asked him in your letter of April 13.

You were asking if Brother Laugeay should be authorized to direct the normal school at Saint-Remy. I do authorize this, and without offering explanations. He is to return to his post as soon as his mission is accomplished. Meanwhile, things will continue at Colmar as was explained to me by one of your staff. I cannot judge the usefulness of this temporary arrangement; see to it that nothing will be lacking in the interval.

Your second question deals with the repairs Father Mertian had promised to undertake at Saint-Hippolyte, and your third with the proposed fusion with the brothers and novices of Father Mertian's Institute.

These last two questions are none of your concern at the present time. The contract you signed at Ribeauvillé marked the end of your delegated powers. I disapproved of it because you exceeded your authority. Whoever took charge in Father Mertian's name did him and us a disservice; you have no authority in the matter. You had none after signing the contract, yet I am told that you have been very busy since then. I disapprove of those acts, and more so of what you might still do in this unhappy matter. You are powerless; do nothing more.

Father Caillet will read you the articles of his instructions which concern you. Your misguided zeal has carried you away; you seem to realize that you have been led into error. Please meddle no more in the Mertian matter, or with the Saint-Hippolyte problem. How they will turn out is God's will.

Do not let my insistence trouble your peace. God has willed that you would fail. May it profit you spiritually; resignation and humility are always profitable. I ask God to grant you both; if he does so, they will not be the least of his blessings.

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