

**1825:** Baptism of Lavigerie at the Church of the Holy Spirit.

**1870:** After the proclamation of the Republic, the Algerian press heaps insults on Lavigerie, Archbishop of Algiers. Without financial resources, Lavigerie, battered, moved away from Algiers.

**1874:** First students at Saint-Laurent d'Olt.

**1886:** Lavigerie's Historical Research Project. Lavigerie left for Biskra with Delattre, Toulotte, Thevenet and Palasse. They are working on a new edition of Morcelli's *Africa Christiana* (History of Christianity in Africa).

**1890:** Lavigerie installed Livinhac in Maison-Carrée for the government of the Society.

#### **Letter to his friend Mgr Foulon, Archbishop of Besançon in France (4 November 1886)**

Reverend and Dear Monsignor,

Your friendship with me is always faithful to me, and we have now reached an age where old friendships are becoming dearer as they become rarer. We represent the first group of runners. What your Grace tells me about the cardinals of Lyon and Rennes touches me all the more since Roman tradition and the most respectable historical monuments prove as being *fidei proximum*, that the princes of the Church always leave three together. Wise crackers say that this is in order to give themselves courage and mutual support when they are brought in judgment before God, as he reproaches them for not having done anything worthwhile in this world. But this certainly does not refer to French cardinals. It refers to those of Rome who indulge in the eternal sweetness of the siesta and *farniente*.

You would never guess, dear Monsignor, where I shall be going, tomorrow already, accompanied by three secretaries? I am going to the Sahara, to the oasis of Biskra, seeking a temperature of 25 degrees [Celsius] and solitude; the 25 degrees for my chronic rheumatism and the solitude in order to put the final touches to a major project I have been working on for several years. This is a translation of Morcelli's *Africa Christiana*, in three volumes, folio

edition - *quis leget haec?* [who will read this?] - with an introduction and notes that make it almost a new work.

I was annoyed to see that we have nothing on the beautiful history of the Church of Africa and while I was raising up once more the walls of Carthage I tried to recover her memories. But putting the finishing touch to a book is a terrible affair. I need six months of uninterrupted work, without pun intended and even without allusion to the hand of poor Raoul de Saint-Seine - fortunately his donkey was not as angry as I am! In exchange, you make my mouth water by telling me that he was a scholar: if he could have been here, he could have replaced one of those who have accompanied me. All three of them are archaeologists... at least budding (They are near my worktable, and I have just read them this sentence: they do not find it funny).

Do you know another of my projects? On 15th May 1888, if I am still alive, which is very doubtful given all my excesses, I shall celebrate the silver jubilee of my episcopate. It will be the 25th anniversary of my installation in Nancy. I shall celebrate it by consecrating the new cathedral of Carthage and then holding a council lasting two days to which I shall summon my Suffragan Bishops and our Honorary Canons. You will not refuse to be present; I am inviting you in advance. Reflect that in going via Rome and Sicily, you will only have ten hours of a sea journey from Marsala to Carthage! You will not regret coming.

But this is doubtless like the fable of Perrette and the milk pot. My grave has already been dug beneath the cathedral of Carthage and has even been blessed by me. *Venit nox in qua nemo potest operari*. And I do not think that I, like my colleagues in Rome, have stolen a bit of 'eternal' rest.

