



**1890:** The Toast of Algiers: Lavigerie calls on French Catholics to join the Republic.

### Circular Letter (November 1871)

Gentlemen and dear Co-workers,

Today, I fulfil a joyful duty in communicating to you the Brief whereby our Most Holy Father Pope Pius IX graciously replies to the Synod Letter in which all the clergy of this diocese renewed the homage of its dedication and obedience to His Holiness and its faith in the divine prerogatives of the Holy See. You will see with joy, Gentlemen, that this testimony to our filial piety consoled momentarily the heart of our Father in the midst of his painful heartache.

There you will find a pledge of hopefulness in his blessings, the fatherly tenderness which Pope Pius IX grants to our African Church re-emerging from its ruins and which, according to the words of this great and holy Pontiff, aspires to reinstate its former splendour. In truth, Gentlemen and dear Co-Workers, I can but join my feeble voice to his, to thank God and congratulate you all in the progress I see being accomplished in front of us, despite so many obstacles to our ecclesiastical and religious undertakings.

In these last four years, the diocesan clergy has almost doubled the number of its priests. In addition, four new men's Congregations have established themselves among us: the Norbertines, the Basilians, the Spanish Fathers of the Immaculate Conception, the priests of the African Missions. Something truly marvellous, two others have arisen from our own soil: the Fathers of the Mission and the Brothers of the Mission of the Venerable Geronimo.

Five new women's Congregations have come to bring us their valuable aid for the education of children and the direction of works of charity: the Sisters of Saint-Charles de Nancy, the Sisters of Saint-Joseph des Vans, the Little Sisters of the Poor, the

Sisters of the Assumption of Our Lady and the Virgins of Jesus and Mary. Another Congregation, founded at Algiers, is the Sisters of the Mission.

In all, today we can count in our Diocese ten men's Congregations, twelve women's Congregations, over two hundred priests who work together for the establishing of the faith and Christian life on this land that has been so long forsaken.

The diocesan establishments have multiplied satisfactorily in proportion. Threatened at one time by the separation of the three dioceses and the suppression of the greater part of their resources, they came through the storm without perishing. The Junior Seminary, in particular, stripped of any grant, deprived of two-thirds of its pupils, multiplied, so to say, in the midst of conflict. Instead of the single institute of Saint-Eugène, we now have four: a Junior Seminary as such, beside the Major Seminary at Kouba; two Church Colleges, one at Blida, the other at Algiers and finally, by God's blessing that none of us could expect, there is even a Junior Seminary with fifty local children, Arab and Kabyle, preparing for the Catholic priesthood.

