



Circular Letter (November 1871)

I leave aside the Mission Seminary, the retirement home for our elderly and even our orphanages. Nonetheless, they have already given us a priceless harvest, since they have saved over eight hundred children for heaven. Eight hundred others, mainly Christian, are today growing and learning how to work and live morally. What I tell you, Gentlemen, is not to make you prideful. I tell you this to give you the courage required in the midst of hardships, trials, contradictions, persecutions and calumnies with which our ministry is assailed from every corner in these sad times. It reminds you that our services, which often we believe sterile, are not in fact so, thanks to the hand of God that sustains us and rectifies our mistakes by his kindness. Therefore, take courage! Gentlemen and dear Co-workers, whatever may be the present problems, there are better days that are coming here for the apostolate. A sensible policy, truly, colonial, truly French and truly Christian is at last taking shape and promises us a time of true freedom, the only attribute that the Church requests of earthly powers to accomplish its divine mission.

Bear in mind that the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth blesses us and exhorts us to the good fight. Take courage and no matter the trials that still await us, let us recall the words of the Master: 'Take courage, I have overcome the world.' Now, Gentlemen, here is the Brief of the Sovereign Pontiff that I have preceded with this Address, so that you may keep it together in the archives of your parishes like a sacred souvenir of our latest Synod. Let us ask God daily to make us worthy of it and above all to make it a truth. Yours affectionately and devotedly in the Lord,

Letter to Father Toulotte (26th November 1881)

My dear Son,

It was through an unfortunate indiscretion that Les Missions Catholiques published your name and your destination! I only gave this information to the Council for Propagation to provide them with a precise statement so as to persuade them that our missions had not been destroyed, as people were saying. They published it like the rest. This is not normal practice, but it is surely an intervention of divine providence which sought to make His will known. It only remains for you, therefore, my dear Son, to prepare yourself.

I can see the wisdom of your observations regarding the choice of missionaries. Since you are already appointed, get the Council to look at the measures you consider useful. The Council will submit them to me, and I shall decide after that whether to approve or not. This is the only right way to go about it.

I have stated my reasons why I think it would be very difficult to set up a mission at Mpouapoua. I think your caravan should go to Tabora or Mdabourou. It is for the Council to decide. The time for your departure is clearly fixed for next October. This is the best season from every point of view. The funds made available for the three or four missionaries amount to twenty thousand francs. You should carry weapons on the journey for any wild animals. But under no circumstances should you use them against people.

There are my precise answers to your questions. I am very happy to answer any further questions you may have, on condition that you will not get too impatient if you have to wait some time for me to answer. I have been overwhelmed with work since I have been in Tunis.

May God bless and reward a hundredfold, my dear Son, your willingness and your spirit of obedience and sacrifice. This is a comfort to me and it enlightens me and, from a distance, I give you my blessing.

