



1872: Lavigerie's brother, Pierre Félix, an army captain, receives the cross of the Legion of Honor

1876: Foundation of Ouar'zen in Kabylia.

1890: Pope Leo XIII, in his encyclical *Catholicae Ecclesia*, praises Lavigerie's energy and notorious apostolic zeal.

Letter to the Propaganda (19th November 1881)

I have begun by convincing the French government to abandon the project they had proposed at first and to which I had agreed, and to accept another which could easily be carried out and which would be of great benefit in the east. This acceptance on their part has been formally given to me, as well as the promise of financial assistance. Here is the setting for the project. The Superior at Saint Anne's in Jerusalem has informed me that the Greek Melkite Patriarch, Mgr Gregorios, while on a visit to Jerusalem last year, had told him of his amazement at seeing an establishment such as this reduced to the most complete uselessness. He described the services our community could render if it agreed to take some local children into this house and bring them up and later train them either as priests or Catholic teachers.

Naturally, the Superior had to reply that, not having received any instructions from me about this, he could only refer the matter to me for me to decide whether this project could be followed up and, if that were the case, to settle the matter myself with the Holy See. The Superior at Saint Anne's did in fact communicate this to me. I attached even greater importance to this, since, in the east, the Greeks are the most numerous and the Greek Melkites, with their clergy, are in special need of being supported and strengthened here in their faith. This is what I had the honour to convey in person to our Holy Father the Pope and to Mgr Cretoni during my last visit to Rome, although adding that, on this topic, I had had for quite a long time some firm opinions concerning the education of children in the east who were destined to become priests in their rite. I also said that I was asking permission to express these opinions because it was possible that they might not convince the Holy See. I could go no further with the Sovereign Pontiff for the reason I have given above, but I did speak further about this with Mgr Cretoni and I ask Your Eminence's permission to do so with him today.

For almost thirty years I have been working for the oriental Christians. Your Eminence knows that I have even been the director of the *Oeuvre des Ecoles d'Orient*. For many long years, all I have seen and heard, either during my travels in the Orient or in my relations with the Orientals, has instilled this opinion in me, that one of the main obstacles to the advancement of Catholicism in the midst of Oriental schismatics and heretics is the fear of Latinism. There is no reason for this fear since the Holy See has always very openly supported the preservation of the oriental rites. It has no real basis other than the foolhardiness of a few over-enthusiastic or unenlightened Latin missionaries... and, it must be said, ill-disposed Orientals, some Catholics among them, who have a deplorable moral outlook. Whatever the case may be, the concerns I have spoken about exist and no good can be done until this situation is resolved. It is for the Catholic Church to take pity on the weakness of her children, just as any mother would.

Consequently, to bring up Greek Melkite children in Jerusalem in such a way that they will really help towards the conversion of the Orientals or help maintain the faith among those of their own rite, they must be brought up strictly within the rite to which they belong and, as far as possible, within the customs of their country, regarding what they drink, what they eat, how they dress, how they sleep, etc. These material things are secondary, perhaps, but nevertheless they have their importance.

So, if we open a minor seminary at Saint Anne's in Jerusalem to educate the Greek Melkites, it is according to these rules and these ideas that I should like to see it run. This would require at the very least the presence of Melkite priests at Saint Anne's who would be responsible for conducting the liturgical celebrations or, which I would much prefer, the authorisation for our missionaries to adopt and follow the Greek rite during the time of their stay at Saint Anne's in Jerusalem. Besides, this is the spirit of our Society everywhere.

