



**1879:** The General Council formed the project of sending a 3rd caravan of missionaries to Equatorial Africa by the Nile in October 1880.

### **Letter promulgating the decisions of the first General Chapter (11th November 1874)**

Under the terms of the Ruling above, I chose Rev. Fr. Deguerry, from among the three Assistants to give him the office of Superior General for a period of three years, with the title of Vicar of the Society. My dear sons, you know him as the worker of the first hour. He shared faithfully with me in the works, the hardships, and the problems of our emerging works. You freely chose him yourselves, for in appointing him, I only followed your own indication. After coming to love him and esteem him like a brother who gives you the example of apostolic virtue, you will obey him like a Superior, who from now on represents for you the authority of God. Indeed, he is legitimately charged, according to the provisions of your Rule, to govern you with the help of the Council the Chapter has elected.

In truth, the rule adds that it is under my authority that he governs you and I explained to you above in what sense it is to be understood. As Founder and your Bishop, I have the right to oversee, direct, withdraw, to love you, to protect you, and above all to help you. It is even to contribute in protecting and helping you in a more effective way that I appointed Father Gillard Vicar General of the Delegation. However, I must, for good order and the possibility of governance, stop dealing with ordinary details.

I am no longer obliged directly to make appointments or changes; it is up to the Father Superior and his Council. You should no longer address your regular correspondence to me, but to the Father Superior. Finally, I no longer administer the goods and provide for the expenses, but the Father Superior with those that the Rule gives him as assistants. In all this, I must and need only maintain a general overview, either when the Father Superior asks my opinions in the cases foreseen by the Rule, or where I believe it is my duty, to avoid any disadvantage or to avoid error, to give them myself. However, in fact and in law, authority may not and must not be divided. It is directly exercised in your regard through the Rev. Fr. Superior.

My dear Sons, I will suffer from not having daily contact with you, which was so dear to me, especially when I could show my dedication through my paternal encouragements. You will maybe also suffer sometimes, but we will all resign ourselves to this sacrifice, believing that it is necessary for your Work to strengthen and get used to standing on its own two feet.

Further to this thought, immediately after the appointment of the Rev. Fr. Superior and of his Council, I entrusted them with all the material administration of the Society and its works. I placed in their hands the title deeds of all the buildings and all the properties that I bought to endow them, for six years, with the immediate use of all incomes. These titles consist in shares to the bearer of the civil Society founded by me nearly two years ago, to ensure the perpetuity of our works. Moreover, through the Secretary General of the Archdiocese, I had them paid into the fund of what remained of what Catholic charity had given us. This amounted to 51,342.25 Fr., for which Father Livinhac, Procurator General, and Father Bresson, Secretary General, gave me a receipt. From this date, the interests of the Diocese and those of your Society are separate; you have your income, your own resources, you also have your responsibilities which are by far greater, but which your individual zeal will seek to lighten, each one taking his share, either by hardships that they will impose on themselves, or by embarrassments that they will undergo to acquire their needs.

My dear Sons, such are the notifications that canonically I had to give you so that all could take place regularly among you. It remains for you to learn the other detailed measures taken at the General Chapter and approved by me. However, it is up to the Rev. Fr. Deguerry, alone, in his capacity as Superior, according to my Ruling of the 1st October, to communicate them to you.

