

**1869:** Letter to the Sisters of St. Charles of Nancy on a project to found a Congregation of Sisters.

**Letter to Mother Euphémie Fervel, Superior General of the Sisters of Saint-Charles de Nancy (18th January 1869)**

I have therefore decided to train new Sisters who would be exclusively involved in farming activities they would carry out themselves. Candidates have applied and there are quite a lot of them, but what is lacking is already professed Sisters who could direct the novitiate. I would like to set this novitiate up in an annexe of the orphanage, far apart enough not to obstruct one another, but close enough for the farming Sisters to carry out their activities under your Sisters' direction. I thought that in these conditions, dear Mother, that among the new Sisters you would send, you would choose two who would be suited to direct a novitiate as Novice Mistress and Associate Novice Mistress. The new community would be quite distinct from the one of Saint Charles. It would have its own separate Rule.

Those of your Sisters who would direct the novitiate would be temporarily on loan. However, since the novitiate would be in the same enclosure as the orphanage, although apart, there would be the double advantage of leaving the two Sisters who direct the novitiate integrated with the community, enabling all the work of the property to be done by the farming novices. I earnestly request this service of you, Reverend Mother and be assured I am yours in Our Lord.

**Letter to Mother Marie Claver on Fidelity to Spiritual Combat (12 January 1888)**

My Dear Daughter in Our Lord,

I could not repeat to you too often that the essence of the spiritual life, and consequently of perfection, lies in belonging to God with the whole of one's will.

Impressions are nothing but trials if they are bad and courses of encouragement if they are good, and this is precisely because they are not willed. How would it be possible, my dear daughter, for your will to be-  
longing to other than Our Lord? Who has done anything for you effectively, and who one day could give you a worthy reward, if not he? How now! Have you done something that was difficult, almost heroic, in giving up everything in order to follow a vocation marked by abnegation and sacrifice, only to get lost in details which are almost always ridiculous? Have you escaped tempests in the ocean and arrived safely in the harbour, only to create storms in a tea-cup? This is because you did not know how to weigh properly the work of imagination and difficulties of no consequence.

Have you decided to remain attached to Our Lord, yes or no? Never, with the help of his grace, to offend him grievously, yes or no? To follow in the way of his disciples, in other words his Apostles, yes or no? Give me, I beg of you, a clear answer to these three questions, and do not speak about anything else in your next letter to me. Then I myself shall write to you. You do not speak to me about what you are reading. This is nevertheless important. I advise you to give a list of the spiritual books in the novitiate to the Father who is your spiritual director, and ask him to indicate which he considers is the most useful for you. I bless you, my dear daughter, in Our Lord.

