

1864: Lavigerie institutes the canonical tribunal of officiality for the judgement of disciplinary causes of the diocese of Nancy. The Holy See approves the initiative.

1876: Massacre of the 3 missionaries of Lavigerie on their way to Timbuktu.

Letters to the Superior General on how to visit communities (20th January 1875)

Dear Father,

You are about to begin the visit of your houses for the first time. I would like to tell you what seems to me the most useful things to do during these visits and, moreover, what is being done in all well-ordered communities.

1) During your visit, you need to give each house all the time required and remain there overlong rather than not enough. Three days would seem the minimum, even for a single residence of three Fathers. For a residence where there would be several undertakings, as at the Attafs, a whole week would be required. You need, in fact, the time to see and take note of everything. If you only look in passing, you only see people and things prepared in advance, which only allows you to see what they want you to.

2) For the whole time of your stay in each house, you must lead all the exercises in common without exception, from Morning Prayer and petition until Evening Prayer.

3) You need to see each Father or Brother in private and firstly elicit his matters of conscience, if he has any to disclose; then his observations on the house as a whole, on its occupations, abuses, improvements to make, etc.

4) Before writing the log, matters need to be dealt with in discussion with the Father Superior, in private, so as to enable him to make the special observations he needs for his own sake.

5) Two copies are made of the log, in two ledgers. One remains in the hands of the Superior general or Visitor to be communicated to the Council. At the head of the Superior General's ledger, the present Letter I write to you will be copied as a directive for you and your successors. The second copy of the log will be transcribed on the special book specific to each house.

6) In his log, the Father Superior General must firstly state the good things he will have found in the community. He will then make all the observations he finds necessary to take precautions against abuses, destroying them and enable good to flourish.

7) This log will be read by the Father Superior General who will then prescribe in writing to have it read every month at Spiritual Reading until the next visit.

Here, dear Father, is the gist of it. For the rest, i.e., the development of the enterprise, the internal changes, etc., these will be pointed out to you by the very nature of things that you will see or that you will be told. The main thing is to be convinced that what you are doing during the visit is very specially God's work. As a result, you need to do it with a sprit of faith, wisdom and charity. Do not fail to look for the hardback ledgers required.

