



1878: The Dicastery for Evangelization approves the agreement between the French government and Lavigerie.

1881: Death of the White Sister, Mary of the Cross, in Panama. Her death no longer allowed the MSOLA to rely on the resources collected in America. The Congregation plan to send Sisters to Europe to beg in order for the work to survive.

1885: Lavigerie receives the pallium of Archbishop of Carthage in the cathedral of Algiers.

Letter to the Clergy of Algiers (17 January 1885)

Reverend Father,

I beg of you to announce to your parishioners that on Sunday, 25 January, in the cathedral of Algiers, there will take place a solemn ceremony during which the pallium will be conferred on me as Archbishop of Carthage. You are aware that, for the Church, the pallium is the sign of metropolitan jurisdiction. As its name indicates it was, in the past, an outer garment; today it consists of a strip of white wool decorated with black crosses, blessed by the Holy Father and placed afterwards on the tomb of Saint Peter. From there it is sent to the Patriarchs, Primate and Metropolitan Archbishops, as a sign of their jurisdiction and of the fact that this is transmitted to them on the very authority of the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

This pallium is given by the Pope to the procurator of the recently elected Metropolitan, but this Metropolitan must wait to receive it personally from the hands of bishop of his choice, after having pronounced an oath of fidelity to the Holy See. I could hardly hesitate in my choice. This fell naturally on my beloved and revered coadjutor, the Archbishop of Damascus, who is like a replica of myself. It is here, in fact, that everything began for the resurrection of the ancient see of Carthage; it is here that Divine Providence has made its choice of me, through the ministry of the Vicar of Christ and the intervention of the Government of France; it is here that I have found my most helpful and devoted auxiliaries and, in part at least, the means necessary for such an undertaking. It is only right then that I should receive here the insignia of my new jurisdiction, and in putting them on should, as it were, cover the Church, the clergy and the faithful of Algiers with a mantle of honour.

I would like to extend this honour further, even to France, for it is this country, its troops, its Protectorate, its authority, that have prepared everything. And it is not only the France of the present-day, but also the France of the past which seems to want to take part in the resurrection of the Church of Carthage. You will doubtless have noticed, Reverend Father, how our Holy Father Pope Leo XIII, in his apostolic letter *Materna Ecclesiae caritas*, insisted on recalling with honour the words of Saint Leo IX, his illustrious predecessor, on the occasion of [renewing] the ancient privileges of the see of Saint Cyprian. Now Saint Leo IX was French before he was Pope; he was bishop of Toul, as I had the honour of being myself, eight centuries after him. This is what he wrote to two bishops of Africa who were his contemporaries, as if through prophetic inspiration which was to be fulfilled in our time: « It is beyond doubt that the first archbishop and the great Metropolitan of the whole of Africa, after the Roman Pontiff, is the bishop of Carthage. The holder of this title cannot therefore be divested of this privilege that he has received from the Holy Apostolic Roman See in favour of any bishop of Africa whatsoever. He will keep it till the end of time and as long as the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ is invoked in Africa, whether Carthage should lie abandoned or should rise again one day in her glory. This is shown most clearly by the texts of the Council of Blessed Cyprian, as by those of the Councils of Aurelius, and of all the Councils of Africa, and even more decisively by the decrees of our venerable predecessors, the Roman Pontiffs. »

Now, I repeat this, it is a French bishop, the successor of Saint Leo IX on the same episcopal see of France, who is coming to the cathedral of Algiers to receive from the Holy See, by the hands of His Excellency the Archbishop of Damascus, the insignia of this glorious resurrection and the privileges which are to endure until the end of time.

