

Letter to Propaganda on various current questions (5th January 1878)

Monsignor,

I am sending Rev. Fr. Charmetant, Procurator General of the Society of Missionaries of Algiers to Rome to deliver the Secret Memorandum which I have prepared and have had printed concerning the African Association of Brussels and on the evangelisation of the up to now unknown part of Africa. I believe this matter is extremely important and urgent and I think Your Excellency will be as convinced as I am when you have read my Memorandum.

The Rev. Fr. Charmetant will also have the honour to present for the approval of the Sacred Congregation the rules of his little community, which has already ten years of existence, having been founded by me in 1868. It numbers 150 members, including 68 priests. Finally, he will also speak with you on the matter of Saint Anne's at Jerusalem, which seems to have entered into eternity since we no longer see its end. If I may be so bold as to recommend to your kindness all these various interests. I am pleased to find the timing apt to present my best wishes for the New Year to Your Excellency and to sign myself, with the most respectful devotedness, your most humble and obedient servant.

Letter to the Councils of the Work of the Propagation of the Faith (30 January 1887)

Gentlemen,

As I informed you three months ago, I have entrusted Reverend Father Deguerry, superior of the Society of Missionaries of Algiers, with the care of all the details concerning our missions, reserving for myself only the higher jurisdiction and direction. Accordingly, I wished to prepare in a practical way a peaceful future for our missionary endeavours for the day when I will be taken away from them by death, a day that can no longer be far away. Having witnessed the serious difficulties in which other communities founded by bishops have found themselves at the time of the disappearance of their Founders, I wished that of the Missions of Algiers gradually to get used to governing itself and to be self-sufficient

without me. I have therefore accredited to you and recommended to your kind attention Reverend Father Deguerry who will go first to Lyons, and then to Paris, to make known to your councils the urgent needs of the missions (oeuvres) of his Society, particularly those of Equatorial Africa.

Since I have today no longer any personal interest in these administrative matters, allow me to share with you that I have always thought that you were not sufficiently informed about these missions. Otherwise, I have no doubt that you would have maintained your allocations at the level which was necessary at least to enable them to survive. Following the recent modifications made by the sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide with regard to the Vicariates of Equatorial Africa, after the constitution of the Belgian State in the Congo, you will have seen through our communications that the boundaries of the four Vicariates or Pro-vicariates entrusted to us have been altered and that one of the Upper Congo Pro-vicariates has been replaced by the new Pro-vicariate of Unyanyembe.

This means that we still have four distinct major territories to provide for. Each one needs its own budget, and this must be in proportion to the requirements of missions which are still at the first stages, which are so extensive, and which have already been so seriously tried. I am therefore confident that you will no longer place them, in terms of your allocations, in a markedly inferior position with regard to less important missions which have been entrusted to other missionary congregations in Africa. Father Deguerry will enlighten you on this point.

For my part, Gentlemen, while recommending him to you again, I have the honour of professing myself to be your most humble and obedient servant in our Lord.

