

Montfort Press

The Letters of St. Louis Marie de Montfort

“The Letters of St. Louis Marie de Montfort”

Text copyright © Montfort Publications 1987

This version for Internet publication
© Copyright Montfort Missionaries 2002

THE LETTERS OF ST. LOUIS MARIE DE MONTFORT

LETTER 1

(Fragment) [To his parents or Fr. Alain Robert, date uncertain]

Tell my brother Joseph that I beg him to work hard at his studies and he will be one of the best in his class. Tell him that to achieve this he must seek the help of the Blessed Virgin, who is his good mother. If he continues to show devotion to her she will not fail to supply all his needs. I recommend my sisters to do the same.

LETTER 2

[To Fr. Alain Robert, 20 September 1694]

May the perfect love of God reign in our hearts!

It was with great pleasure that I received your letter, coming as it did from one who has great affection for me.

Your letter brought me news of a death and in return I too have to tell you of a death. It is that of Fr. de la Barmondière, my superior and director, who has done so much for me here. He was buried last Sunday, mourned by the whole parish and by everyone who knew him. He lived a saintly life and died a holy death. It was he who founded the seminary here and had the kindness to receive me for nothing. I do not know yet how things will go, whether I shall stay or leave, as his will has not yet been made known. Whatever happens I shall not be worried. I have a Father in heaven who will never fail me. He brought me here, he has kept me here until now and he will continue to treat me with his usual kindness. Although I deserve only punishment for my sins, I never stop praying to him and rely completely on his providence.

I was not able to reply to your letter as soon as I wished because I was making a retreat at St. Sulpice in preparation for the reception of minor orders which, thanks be to God, I have now received.

LETTER 3

[To Fr. Alain Robert, 11 July 1695]

11th of July, 1695

My dear uncle,

May the perfect love of God reign in our hearts!

This letter brings you my very best wishes and is to let you know that Providence has placed me in the Little Seminary of St. Sulpice through the kindness of Madame d'Alègre. She is the lady Mademoiselle de Montigny told you about, and Mademoiselle Le Breton lives with her.

This lady has given 160 livres a year for the maintenance of a student for the priesthood. After the death of Fr. de la Barmondière the sum was passed on to the Little Seminary of St. Sulpice where, however, the fee is 260 livres. Madame d'Alègre told Mademoiselle Le Breton and the superior of the Little Seminary that she wanted me to have the place she was helping to provide. Madame d'Alègre heard Mademoiselle Le Breton talking about you and asks you to offer Mass for her at our Lady's altar. I would heartily beg you to do so.

As this money is not enough to cover the fees at the Little Seminary, God in his loving Providence, without my ever having thought of it, has provided me with a benefice of about 100 livres, a few miles from Nantes, from which I will also be provided with a title.

Please in my name thank almighty God for the graces he has given me, not just for the temporal blessings, which are not important, but for the eternal ones. May he not enter into judgement with me, for I do not do justice to his graces; I do nothing but offend him day after day.

LETTER 4

[To Fr. Alain Robert, 6 March 1699]

Please be kind enough to tell Madame B. that I have received her packet of letters for the Bishop of St. Malo.

I must admit, my dear uncle, that these various errands distress me and make me feel that I am still living in the world. Would to God that I could be left in peace as the dead are left in their tombs, or the snail in its shell, which, when it is hidden, seems to be something of value, but when it comes out is wretched and disgusting, - which is what I am. Indeed I am worse, for I only spoil things whenever I get involved in them.

So, please, uncle, I beg you to remember me only in your prayers to God. "Let man not prevail against me; from the unjust and deceitful man deliver me."

Ever yours in our Lord and in our holy Mother, in time and in eternity.

LETTER 5

[To Fr. Leschassier, 6 December 1700]

To Reverend Fr. Leschassier, Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, Paris.

6th of December, 1700

Dear Reverend Father,

May the perfect love of God reign in our hearts!

I cannot tell you how much pleasure your short letter gave me. It shows the bond of charity which unites you and my unworthy self, a bond God has established and wishes to maintain. It is with this in mind that I am writing to tell you briefly about my state of mind at the moment. I have not found here what I had hoped for and what led me to leave such a holy place as St. Sulpice, almost against my better judgement.

My intention was, as yours was too, to prepare for mission-work and especially for teaching catechism to the poor, since this is what attracts me most. But I am not doing that at all and I do not think that I shall ever do it here, for there are very few people in the house and no one has any experience except Fr. Lévêque. He is unable to undertake missions now because of his age and even if his great zeal impelled him to undertake them, Fr. Desjonchères would not allow it as he told me himself. There is not even half the organisation and observance here as there was at St. Sulpice and it seems that as things are, there could never be any improvement. It seems to me that there are four types of people here, whose aims and intentions are quite different:-

- (1) There are five people in the community proper of whom two are incapable of any active work.
- (2) There are the parish priests, curates, ordinary priests and laymen who come occasionally for retreats.
- (3) There are a few priests and canons who reside here just for a quiet life.
- (4) There are some priests and a great number of young students who go out for theology and philosophy courses - most of them are dressed in lay clothes or without full clerical dress.

All these different people have their own rule which they have made up by taking what suits them from the common rule. I must admit that it is not Fr. Lévêque's fault that the rule is not kept. He does what he can and not what he would like to do, especially with regard to certain members of the community who dislike his simple, saintly ways.

With conditions as they are, I find myself, as time goes on, torn by two apparently contradictory feelings. On one hand, I feel a secret attraction for a hidden life in which I can efface myself and combat my natural tendency to show off. On the other hand, I feel a tremendous urge to make our Lord and his holy Mother loved, to go in a humble and simple way to teach catechism to the poor in country places and to arouse in sinners a devotion to our Blessed Lady. This was the work done by a good priest who died a holy death here recently. He used to go about from parish to parish teaching the people catechism and relying only on what Providence provided for him. I know very well, my dear Father, that I am not worthy to do such honourable work, but when I see the needs of the Church I cannot help pleading continually for a small and poor band of good priests to do this work under the banner and protection of the Blessed Virgin. Though I find it difficult, I try to suppress these desires, good and persistent though they may be. I strive to forget them and self-effacingly place myself in the hands of divine Providence and submit entirely to your advice which will always have the force of law for me.

I still harbour the desire I had in Paris to join Fr. Leuduger, a student of Fr. de St. Briec. He is a great missionary and a man of wide experience. Another of my wishes would be to go to Rennes and, with a good priest I know there, work in seclusion at the general hospital, performing charitable services for the poor. But I put aside all these ideas, and always in submission to God's good pleasure I await your advice on whether I should stay here, in spite of having no inclination to do so, or go elsewhere. In the peace of Christ and his holy Mother I am completely at your command.

I take the liberty of asking you to greet Fr. Brenier for me. If you think it useful, I will tell him what I have told you.

Grignon, priest and unworthy slave of Jesus in Mary.

LETTER 6

[To Fr. Leschassier, 4 May 1701]

To Reverend Fr. Leschassier, Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, Paris.

Poitiers, 4th of May, 1701

May the perfect love of God reign in our hearts!

His Lordship the Bishop of Poitiers has ordered me to write to you as follows.

On the fourth Sunday in April, I received a letter written at the request of Madame de Montespan, from my sister at Fontevault, inviting me to be present when she received the Religious habit which was to take place the following Tuesday. I left the same day on foot and arrived at Fontevault on Wednesday morning, the day after the ceremony.

During the two days I spent at Fontevault I was privileged to have several private conversations with Madame de Montespan. She asked me about many things, especially about myself. She asked me what I wanted to do. I answered very simply telling her about the attraction you know I feel to work for my brothers, the poor. She told me that she very much approved of my plans, the more so that she knew from her own experience that instruction of the poor on the personal level was much neglected. She was prepared to give me, if I would accept it, a canonry which was under her authority. I thanked her humbly but promptly assured her that I would never exchange divine providence for a canonry or a benefice. On my refusal, she told me to go and see the Bishop of Poitiers and tell him my plans. Although I had no inclination whatever to satisfy Madame de Montespan's wishes, as much because of the twenty-eight leagues that I should have to travel as for many other reasons, I obeyed her blindly believing this was God's holy will, which was all I wanted.

I arrived at Poitiers the day before the feast of SS. Philip and James and I had to wait four days to see the bishop who was due to return from Niort.

During this time I made a short retreat in a little room where I enclosed myself, in the middle of a large town where I knew nobody. I took it into my head however to go to the poorhouse [the general

hospital] where I could serve the poor physically even if I could not serve them spiritually. I went into their little church to pray and the four hours I spent there waiting for the evening meal-time seemed all too short. However it seemed so long to some of the poor, who saw me kneeling there dressed in clothes very much like their own, that they went off to tell the others and they all agreed to take up a collection for me. Some gave more, some gave less; the poorer ones a denier, the richer ones a sou. All this went on without my knowing anything about it. Eventually I left the church to ask the time of supper and at the same time to ask permission to serve the poor at table. But I misconceived the situation for I discovered that they did not eat together and I was surprised to find out that they wanted to make me an offering and had told the doorkeeper not to let me go away. I blessed God that I had been taken for a poor man wearing the glorious livery of the poor and I thanked my brothers and sisters for their kindness.

Since then they have become so attached to me that they are going about saying openly that I am to be their priest, that is, their director, for there has not been a regular director in the poorhouse for a considerable time, so abandoned has it become.

When the bishop of Poitiers returned, I went to greet him, and I told him briefly what Madame had ordered me to say. He listened to me and thanked me rather coldly, which was all I asked.

But the poorhouse authorities, in the name of all the inmates, presented a petition to Reverend Fr. de la Bournat, the bishop's brother, which impressed both him and the bishop.

So when the bishop spoke to me again, more cordially this time, he ordered me to write telling you this before I returned to Nantes, so that you can judge what I ought to do. I must tell you, Father, that I do wish most sincerely to work for the spiritual welfare of the poor in general but I am not particularly anxious to settle down and be attached to a poorhouse. However I will remain quite open-minded as I only want to do God's holy will. I am ready to sacrifice my time, my health and my life for the souls of the poor in this neglected house, if you think it the right thing for me to do.

I leave tomorrow, the feast of the Ascension, for Nantes, and trust that I shall never act without your guidance nor ever be without your friendship in Jesus and his holy Mother. In their name I am completely at your disposition.

Grignon, priest and unworthy slave of Jesus in Mary.

P.S. Please allow me to greet Fr. Brenier, Fr. Lefèvre, Fr. Repars and the whole seminary. I have several times been urged to ask your leave to apply for approval for confessions, but I have been most unwilling to do so, because this difficult and dangerous work requires a special calling.

LETTER 7

[To Guyonne-Jeanne Grignon, 1701]

My dear sister in Jesus Christ,

May the perfect love of God reign in our hearts!

Even though we are far from each other, we are together in spirit because you are so close to Jesus Christ and his holy Mother, and both you and I are children of divine Providence though I am unworthy to be so called. It would be better to call you a novice of divine Providence because you are just beginning to practise the trust and perfect abandonment which God asks of you. You will be a professed Daughter of Providence only when your abandonment is perfect and your sacrifice complete. God wants you, my dear sister, he wants you to be separated from everything that is not himself, even if it means being deserted by everyone. But be glad and rejoice, you who are the servant and the spouse of Jesus, when you resemble your master and spouse. Jesus is poor; Jesus is abandoned; Jesus is despised and rejected as the refuse of the world. You are indeed happy, Louise Grignon, if you are poor in spirit, abandoned, despised and like refuse cast out from the house of St. Joseph. It is then that you will be truly the servant and spouse of Christ and a truly professed daughter of divine Providence, even if not professed as a religious. What God wants of you, my dear sister, is that you should live each day as it comes, like a bird in the trees, without worrying about tomorrow. Be at peace and trust in divine Providence and the Blessed Virgin, and do not seek anything else

but to please God and love him. There is an unshakeable truth, a divine and eternal axiom, as true as the existence of one God (would to God I could engrave it on your mind and heart!): "Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice and all the rest will be added unto you." If you fulfil the first part of this declaration, God, who is infinitely faithful, will carry out the second; i.e. if you serve God and his holy Mother faithfully you will want for nothing in this world or the next. You will not even lack a brother-priest for I will always be with you in my sacrifices so that you may more fully belong to Christ in your sacrifice.

I greet your Guardian Angel. 1701

LETTER 8

[To Fr. Leschassier, 5 July 1701]

5th July 1701

To Reverend Father Leschassier, Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, Paris.

Dear Reverend Father,

May the perfect love of God reign in our hearts!

As I must be faithful in telling you everything if you are to arrive at a definite decision, you must know that Fr. (René) Lévêque and Fr. des Jonchères sent me to a very neglected parish in the country. I stayed there for ten days taking the children for catechism twice a day and giving three sermons. God in his goodness and his holy Mother blessed my work.

Because of this work, Fr. des Jonchères and Fr. Lévêque who know of the Poitiers affair told me to write to you and they have offered to give me material help and use their influence to have me sent to the most neglected parishes of the diocese to carry on the work I began so well at Grandchamps (that is the name of the parish) or rather, to carry on the work that divine Providence and the Blessed Virgin began despite my weakness. Dear Father, I find so much wealth in Providence and so much strength in the Blessed Virgin that my poverty is amply enriched and my weakness strengthened. Without these two supports I could do nothing.

Obediently yours in Jesus and Mary,

Grignon, priest and unworthy slave of Jesus in Mary.

LETTER 9

[To Fr. Leschassier, 16 September 1701]

16th of September, 1701

To Reverend Father Leschassier, Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, Paris.

Reverend and dear Father in Jesus Christ,

May the perfect love of God reign in our hearts!

The pressing and the repeated requests of the inmates of the poorhouse in Poitiers and the wishes of the Bishop of Poitiers and of Madame de Montespan, upon whom my sisters depend so much, oblige me to trouble you again and express my feelings to you in all simplicity and without any prejudice, as I wish to remain completely impartial to everything except what obedience requires of me.

I have been working without a break for the last three months in the parishes to which Fr. Lévêque and Fr. des Jonchères sent me. At the moment I am writing to you from the parish of Le Pellerin. God and his holy Mother have condescended to use my ministry to do some good. There is a lot to be done here, as indeed there is everywhere, but there are also plenty of workers, besides two retreat houses, one for men and one for women, and three, if not four, missionary societies.

As you know, I have not the slightest inclination to stay in the St. Clément community. Only obedience keeps me here. Fr. (René) Lévêque, who knows this very well for after you I follow his guidance in all I do, has pointed out to me that since God in his goodness has not called me to be a permanent member of a community which works for priests, I should look for a little place to which I can retire from time to time after the short missions which are assigned to me by obedience. He said at the time that he would willingly give me a small room, but I doubt whether this comes from the heart.

Meanwhile the Bishop, like the poor of Poitiers, has written to ask me to work in his poorhouse. But I have no inclination at all to lead an enclosed life.

The diocese of Poitiers needs workers much more than this one does. I have seen this for myself and it has surprised me. But I am not being asked to help in general ministry but only to do a specific work. The only thing that would make me want to go to the poorhouse at all would be the hope of being able to extend my work later into the town and the countryside and so be able to help more people. When I am teaching catechism to the poor in town and country, I am in my element.

Since I have been here, divine Providence has asked me to find a place for another of my poor sisters and has established spiritual ties between me and several other persons who are sinners like myself, as well as with a number of devout souls. This then is the state of my affairs but I consider blind obedience to your wishes as my greatest duty and my greatest desire.

May I assure you, dear Father in Jesus Christ, that I am completely at your command, and entirely yours.

Grignon, priest and unworthy slave of Jesus in Mary.

LETTER 10

[To Fr. Leschassier, 3 November 1701]

Poitiers, 3rd of November, 1701.

To Reverend Father Leschassier, Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, Paris.

Reverend and dear Father in Jesus Christ,

May the perfect love of God reign in our hearts!

I am in the junior seminary at Poitiers where the Bishop has found me a place while waiting for the poorhouse authorities to receive me. For almost a fortnight I have been teaching catechism to the beggars of the town with the approval and help of the Bishop. I visit the inmates of the prisons and the sick in the hospitals preaching to them as well as sharing with them the alms I receive.

The poorhouse for which I am destined is a house of discord where there is no peace whatever. It is also a house of privations, lacking temporal and spiritual goods. But I trust that our Lord, through the intercession of my good Mother Mary, will turn it into a holy place, one that will become rich and peaceful. So you see I am in great need of your help.

The matrons of the poorhouse want me to have my meals with them as some of my predecessors did. But I won't hear of it. Am I doing the right thing?

I explained to the Bishop that even in the poorhouse I do not want to be separated from my mother, divine Providence, and with this in mind I am happy to share the meals of the poor and to have no fixed salary. The Bishop agreed heartily to this and offered to act as a father to me. Have I done the right thing?

I am continuing here several things I did at Nantes. I am sleeping on straw; I do not have any lunch and I do not eat much in the evening. I am keeping very well. Am I doing the right thing? May I take an extra discipline once a week besides the usual three times, or alternatively, may I wear a horsehair belt one or twice?

I take the liberty of greeting Fr. Brenier and humbly thank him. Only God knows all the good he has done for me, and all you have done for me too. I am always your obedient servant in Jesus and Mary.

Grignion, priest and unworthy slave of Jesus in Mary.

I greet your Guardian Angel.

LETTER 11

[To Fr. Leschassier, 4 July 1702]

To Fr. Leschassier, Superior of the Seminary of St. Sulpice, Paris.

General Hospital, Poitiers, 4th of July, 1702.

Dear Reverend Father in Jesus Christ,

May the perfect love of God reign in our hearts!

If I have not written to you for such a long time, it is not because I have forgotten how good you have always been to me nor is it through lack of obedience to the advice I am given here by the priest who takes your place as my spiritual director. The reason is that I was afraid of troubling you, dear Father. I now want to let you know about some of the difficulties and disagreements which are a daily occurrence since I arrived here. Here is a short but truthful account of my conduct and actions. Fr. Lévêque, who is a spiritual father to me, second only to yourself, had given me some extra money to cover the expenses of my journey to Poitiers. This I gave away to the poor before I left Saumur where I stayed to make a novena, and consequently I arrived at Poitiers without a penny. The late Bishop gave me a hearty welcome and arranged board and lodging for me in the seminary until he could get me admitted into the poorhouse. In the meantime, for about two months, I gave instructions to the beggars that I encountered in the town and lived entirely at his Lordship's expense. First I taught them in the church of St. Nicholas and then, as their numbers increased, I gathered them every day in the market hall and heard the confessions of many of them in the church of St. Porchaire.

The bishop, unable to resist the insistent appeals of the poor any longer, allowed me to go to them shortly after All Saints Day. I entered this poorhouse, or rather this poor Babylon, quite determined to bear in union with Jesus Christ my Saviour the cross that would not fail to fall to me if this work was really God's work. All that I had been told by a number of experienced priests of the town to dissuade me from going to this ill-regulated house only increased my determination to undertake this work despite my own inclinations which have always been and still are for mission work.

When I got there, all those connected with the house from the director down to the most humble worker and the entire town rejoiced and looked upon me as a man sent by God to put an end to the prevailing abuses. The directors with whom I was working, not indeed as an equal but as an inferior, gave me full liberty in the drawing up and the observance of the rules I wanted to introduce. Even the Bishop and the committee allowed me to serve the poor in the refectory and to go round the town begging for something extra for them to eat with the dry bread they were usually given. I did this for three months, enduring opposition and snubs, which went on increasing day after day to such an extent that ultimately through the disapproval of a certain gentleman and the matron of the workhouse I was obliged to give up providing food for the dining-room of the poor. In giving this up, I acted in obedience to my director (the one replacing you) although the re-organisation of the dining-room had been a great help to the administrators of the establishment. This particular gentleman, embittered against me without any legitimate reason as far as I know, used to snub me and insult me in the house and discredit my behaviour in the eyes of the administration and even of the townsfolk. His actions drew upon him the resentment of the poor, who all loved me with the exception of a few perverted ones who backed him against me. During this painful period, I kept silent and lived in retirement putting my cause into the hands of God and relying on his help, in spite of opposite advice given to me. To this end I went for a week's retreat to the Jesuits, confident that our Lord and his holy Mother would take my cause in hand. I was not wrong in my expectation: when I came back I found this gentleman ill and he died a few days later. The matron, a young and sturdy person, also died a short time afterwards. More than eighty of the poor inmates fell ill and some of them died, and the whole town began to say that there was a plague in the poorhouse and that the place was cursed.

Through all this period of sickness, and in spite of my involvement with the dying, I was the only one not to be affected by the disease.

Since the death of these two people I have still been subjected to cruel persecution. One of the poor inmates, haughty and full of arrogance, placed himself at the head of a few perverted characters and set himself up in opposition to me, pleading his case with the administrators against me, condemning my behaviour because I spoke my mind openly but always kindly to them, concerning their drunkenness and quarrelling and the scandal they were giving.

Though I do not receive anything for my sustenance, not even a piece of bread, being fed by the charity of strangers, scarcely any one among the administrators takes the trouble to correct the vices and disorders in the place. Most of the administrators think of nothing except providing for the temporal state of the house and are quite unconcerned about the spiritual welfare of the inmates.

Yet, to tell the truth, in spite of all these difficulties that I am briefly outlining to you, God has deigned to work wonderful conversions through me both inside and outside the house. Times set for rising and retiring, for prayer together, for Rosary in common, for eating together, for singing hymns, even for mental prayer for those wanting it: all these still subsist in spite of opposition. Since I arrived here it has been like preaching a mission every day. From morning till night I am hearing confessions and giving advice to a constant stream of people. Almighty God, my Father, whom I am serving in spite of my great unworthiness, has enlightened me to a degree I have never experienced before. He has given me the gift of making myself clear, a facility for speaking without preparation, a good health and a great capacity for sympathizing with everyone. This is why I am so highly praised by nearly everyone in the town, which, incidentally, can be a very great danger for my own salvation. I do not allow any woman to enter my room, not even the lady administrators of the poorhouse.

I nearly forgot to tell you that I give a talk to 13 or 14 schoolboys every week for an hour. These boys are the elite of their college. The late bishop approved of this.

In the poorhouse there is a quick-witted girl who is the craftiest and proudest girl I have ever met. She it is who has caused all the trouble. I am afraid that Msgr. de la Poype, like his predecessor, has been greatly deceived by her, because he was too credulous. If you judged it proper you could warn him about this.

Dear Father, I beg you to honour me with a letter. I remain always submissive to you. If I am deprived of your advice, it is only by force of circumstances.

I remain,

Yours very obediently,

L. Grignon, priest and

unworthy slave of Jesus in Mary.

P.S. I greet Fr. Brenier and thank him. I greet Frs. Repars, Lefèvre and everyone in the seminary, especially Fr. Lévêque for whom I have the same sentiments as I have for you.

LETTER 12

[To Guyonne-Jeanne Grignon, Autumn 1702]

My dear sister in Jesus Christ,

May the perfect love of God reign in our hearts!

Permit my heart to join yours in a flood of joy and my eyes to shed tears of gratitude and my hands to describe on paper the happiness which transports me.

My last visit to Paris was not fruitless and the crosses and rejection you suffered in the past were not in vain for the Lord has been merciful to you. You prayed to him and he has heard you. You are now

immolated, truly, deeply and for ever. Let no day pass without offering yourself in sacrifice as a victim. Spend more time before the altar praying than in resting and eating, and be brave, my dear.

Continue asking pardon of God and of Jesus, the eternal High Priest, for the offences I have committed against his divine majesty in the Blessed Sacrament.

I greet your Guardian Angel who is the only one who has stood by you all the way. I am as entirely yours as there are letters in the words I write provided you are just as often sacrificed and crucified with Jesus Christ, your only love, and with Mary, our good Mother.

De Montfort, priest and slave of Jesus in Mary.

LETTER 13

[To a Sister of the Blessed Sacrament, Autumn 1702?]

What an inspiring letter! It speaks only of happening marked with the cross. Whatever human nature and reason may say, without the cross there will never be any real happiness nor any lasting good here below until judgement day.

You are having to bear a large, weighty cross. But what a great happiness for you! Have confidence. For if God, who is all goodness, continues to make you suffer he will not test you more than you can bear. The cross is a sure sign that he loves you. I can assure you of this, that the greatest proof that we are loved by God is when we are despised by the world and burdened with crosses, i.e., when we are made to endure the privation of things we could rightly claim; when our holiest wishes meet with opposition; when we are afflicted with distressing and hurtful insults; when we are subjected to persecution, to having our actions misinterpreted by good people and by those who are our best friends; and when we suffer illnesses which are particularly repugnant, etc.

But why should I tell you things which you know better than I, for you understand and experience all of them.

If Christians only knew the value of the cross, they would walk a hundred miles to obtain it, because enclosed in the beloved cross is true wisdom and that is what I am looking for night and day more eagerly than ever.

O good Cross, come to us for God's greater glory! This is my frequent prayer dictated by my heart in spite of my weakness and my many infidelities. After Jesus, our only love, I place all my trust in the cross.

Please tell N. that I adore Christ crucified in her, and I pray God that she will think of herself only to offer herself for more painful sacrifices.

LETTER 14

[To a religious Sister, date unknown]

What can I say to you, my dear mother, in reply to your letter except to repeat what the Holy Spirit tells you every day. Love to be humbled and being given scant respect, love the hidden life, love silence, be the silent one who offers Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, love divine Wisdom, love the Cross. I am opposed and restricted in everything I do. Thank God in my name for the crosses he has given me and which he keeps within limits to suit my weakness, etc.

LETTER 15

[To Marie-Louise Trichet, April/May 1703?]

My dear daughter in our Lord Jesus Christ,

May the perfect love of God reign in our hearts with divine Wisdom.

I know from what I am experiencing more than from your letter that you are continuing to pray to Jesus, your spouse, for this wretched sinner. I can only show my thanks by praying for you in return, especially when I hold the Holy of Holies in my unworthy hands each day at the altar. Keep on praying, even increase your prayers for me; ask for extreme poverty, the weightiest cross, abjection and humiliations. I accept them all if only you will beg God to remain with me and not leave me for a moment because I am so weak. What wealth, what glory, what happiness would be mine if from all this I obtained divine Wisdom, which I long for day and night!

I will never cease asking for this boundless treasure and I firmly believe that I shall obtain it even were angels, men and demons to deny it to me. I believe strongly in the efficacy of your prayers, in the loving kindness of our God, in the protection of the Blessed Virgin, our good Mother; I believe too that the needs of the poor are too urgent and the promises of God too explicit for me to be making a mistake in seeking Wisdom. For even if the possession of divine Wisdom were impossible, according to the ordinary workings of divine grace, which is not the case, it would become possible because of the insistence with which we ask for it. Is it not an unchangeable truth that everything is possible to him who believes?

Another thing that makes me say that I shall possess Wisdom is the fact that I have encountered and still encounter so much persecution night and day.

So, my dear daughter, I ask you to enlist some good souls among your friends into a campaign of prayer especially from now until Pentecost, and to pray together for an hour on Mondays from one to two o'clock. I will be praying at the same time. Write and send me their names.

I am at the General Hospital where there are five thousand poor people. I have to make them live for God and I have to die to myself. Do not think that I have become indifferent or grown cold towards the poor of Poitiers, for my Master led me there in spite of myself. He has his plan in all this and I adore his plan, though I do not understand it. Do not think either that material plans or any particular person keep me here; no, my only friend here is God. Those friends I once had in Paris have deserted me.

I have not counted on the goods that were to come to me from Madame de Saint André, nor shall I count on them. I do not even know whether she is in Paris, nor where she lives. I am as happy to die to myself here as I am happy to die in the minds of some people in Poitiers, as long as I find God alone there. I repeat, God alone.

I firmly believe that you will be a religious. Trust and pray.

LETTER 16

[To Marie-Louise Trichet, 24 October 1703?]

24th October 1703

My dear daughter,

May the perfect love of God reign in our hearts!

Please do not think that the distance between us and my apparent silence mean that I have forgotten your charity towards me and the charity I owe you. Your letter tells me that your wishes are just as strong and eager and as persistent as ever. This is a sure sign that they are from God. So you must put your trust in God. Be sure of this, that you will obtain from him even more than you think. Heaven and earth would pass away before God would break his promises and allow anyone who hoped in him to be frustrated in their hopes.

I feel that you are still asking God that by crosses, humiliations and poverty I may acquire divine Wisdom. Be brave, my dear daughter, be brave. I am grateful to you; I feel the effects of your prayers for I am infinitely more impoverished, crucified and humiliated than ever. Both men and demons in this great city of Paris are waging against me a war that I find sweet and welcome. Let them slander me, scoff at me, destroy my good name, put me into prison; these are precious gifts, tasty morsels, great and wonderful things. They form the accoutrements and retinue of divine Wisdom which he brings into the lives of those in

whom he dwells. When shall I possess this lovable and mysterious Wisdom? When will Wisdom come to live in me? When shall I be sufficiently equipped to serve as a place of rest for Wisdom in a world where he is rejected and without a home?

Who will give me this bread of understanding with which Wisdom nourishes great souls? Who will give to drink of the chalice from which Wisdom quenches the thirst of those who serve him? When shall I be crucified and lost to the world?

My dear child in Jesus Christ, do not fail to reply to my requests and fulfil my wishes. You can do it, yes, you can do it, along with some of your chosen friends. Nothing can resist your prayers. Even God himself, great though he be, cannot resist. Fortunately for us, he has shown that he can be moved by a lively faith and a firm hope. So pray, entreat God, plead for me to obtain divine Wisdom. You will obtain it completely for me; of this I am quite convinced.

LETTER 17

[To Sr. Catherine of St. Bernard (Guyonne-Jeanne), 1703?]

My dear sister,

May the perfect love of God reign in our hearts!

I am delighted to hear about the illness which God has sent you to purify you like gold in a furnace. You are to become a victim, offered on the altar of the King of Kings for his eternal glory.

What a sublime destiny! What a noble calling! I almost envy you your good fortune.

Now how can this victim be entirely acceptable if it is not completely free from every stain, even the smallest? The most Holy One sees stains where creatures only see beauty. His mercy forestalls his justice for he purifies us by sickness which acts as a furnace in which he purifies his chosen ones. You are indeed blessed if God decides to purify you himself, preparing his victim as he himself wishes. Think of the many he leaves to themselves or to others to be cleansed. Think of the many who are accepted as victims without passing through God's trials and his purifying siftings. Be brave then and take courage. Don't be afraid of the devil who will often tell you while you are ill that you will never be professed because of your indisposition, that you will have to leave the monastery and go back to your parents, that you will be left without a home and you will be a burden to everyone. Let your body suffer but let your heart be firm, for nothing is better for you at the moment than sickness. Pray that I may receive divine wisdom and get others to pray.

I am all yours in Jesus and Mary. Your brother etc.

LETTER 18

[To Sr. Catherine of St. Bernard (Guyonne-Jeanne), 27 October 1703]

My dear sister in Jesus Christ,

May the perfect love of God reign in our hearts!

I thank God every day for the mercy he shows you. Try to respond to him by accepting faithfully what he asks of you. If God does not open the door of the convent for you, then you must not go in, for even if you were given a golden key made especially to open the door, it would become for you the door of hell.

To be a Daughter of the Blessed Sacrament is a special vocation for her ideals are very high. The true Sister of the Blessed Sacrament is a real victim, body and soul. Continual and total self-sacrifice is her food; her body is sacrificed by fasting and watching before the Blessed Sacrament and her soul by obedience and self-abandonment. In a word, she dies daily as she lives this life, but by dying she acquires true life. Do all you are asked to do in this house.

All yours. De Montfort.

LETTER 19

[To Sr. Catherine of St. Bernard (Guyonne-Jeanne), mid-March 1704]

Dear Victim in Jesus Christ,

May the perfect love of God reign in our hearts!

I cannot thank God enough for the grace he has given you in making you a perfect victim of Jesus Christ, an adorer of the Blessed Sacrament and one who is called to atone for so many bad Christians and unfaithful priests.

What an honour it is for your body to be spiritually sacrificed in the hour of your adoration before the Blessed Sacrament! What a privilege for your soul to do here below what the angels and saints are doing in heaven so sweetly and gloriously although you have not their understanding nor their light of glory but only the feeble light of faith. Faithful adorers give so much glory to God here on earth but they are so few, for even the very spiritual want to taste and see, otherwise they lose interest and slacken off. But "faith alone suffices."

But you, faithful child of the Blessed Sacrament, what profit, what wealth, what pleasure is yours kneeling at the feet of this generous and inestimable Lord of Lords! Be brave, take courage, enrich yourself and rejoice as you burn yourself out each day like a lamp. The more you give yourself, the more God will give of himself to you. Now that I have congratulated you, don't you think that I ought to congratulate myself too - if not because I am your brother, then at least because I am your priest? It is a source of happiness and a great honour for me to have someone so near to me offering loving sacrifices to make up for the faults I have, alas, so often committed against Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, by half-hearted communions and the times I have forgotten him or neglected him. You and all the good mothers are a source of great rejoicing for me because you have obtained graces for me and for so many other unworthy priests who through their lack of faith have become unworthy to approach the altar.

I am leaving at once for the poorhouse at Poitiers. I beg you, my dear sister, love Jesus in Mary and love God in Jesus through Mary.

Always yours.

LETTER 20

[To his mother, 28 August 1704]

You must prepare for death which is closing in upon you through all your trials. Continue to accept them in a Christian spirit, as you are doing. You must suffer and bear your cross every day - this is essential. If it is God's will for you to become so poor that you have to enter the poorhouse, it will be for your greater good to be so despised and to be cast aside by everyone and so to die while still living in the body.

Although I do not write to you, I never forget you in my prayers and sacrifices. I love you and I honour you all the more as flesh and blood have no part in it.

Please do not burden me with my brothers' and sisters' affairs. I have done all God asked me to do for them in a spirit of love. For the moment, I have no worldly goods to give them for I am poorer than all of them. I place them all and all the family into the hands of him who created them. Let them think of me as dead. Again I say it, so that they will remember, - let them think of me as dead. I want to receive nothing at all from the family into which God caused me to be born. I give up my right to everything except my patrimony which the Church does not allow me to renounce. My property, home, father and mother are up above. I no longer regard anyone on earth as my kinsfolk.

I know that I owe you and my father a great debt of gratitude for bringing me into the world, for looking after me, bringing me up in the fear of God, and for all the other good things you have done for me. For these I thank you over and over again and pray every day for your salvation and I will go on doing so all

during your life and after your death. But I will do nothing else for you and that applies to the rest of the family.

In my new family - the one I belong to now - I have chosen to be wedded to Wisdom and the Cross for in these I find every good, both earthly and heavenly. So precious are these possessions that, if they were but known, Montfort would be the envy of the richest and most powerful kings on earth.

No one knows the secrets I am talking about, or at least very few people do. You will understand them in eternity if you have the happiness to be saved. It could happen that you will not, so fear and love God all the more.

Please tell my father, on behalf of my heavenly Father, not to touch pitch or else he will be defiled; tell him not to indulge in earthly pleasures, for they will suffocate him; and not to be engrossed in worldly affairs, for he will be choked by them. Flee the world and hold it in contempt; love the Blessed virgin with whom I am all in all to you and my father.

I greet your Guardian Angel and I am all yours in Jesus and Mary.

Montfort, priest and unworthy slave of Jesus living in Mary.

LETTER 21

[To Fr. Hindré, Parish-priest of Br,al, 17 February 1708]

My dear Father and friend,

I am very sorry that I cannot do what both you and I would desire. I am already booked for three different places on each of these three days and I must keep to my commitments. However, I will send Mathurin to you on Tuesday to say the Rosary in public and sing hymns and he will bring sixty little crosses of St. Michael for our soldiers. I trust you will have the kindness to distribute them after you have told them on Sunday to meet on Tuesday. This may help a great deal to restrain them from the excesses so frequent during these days. Please remember me to them on Sunday and tell them that I earnestly beg them to be faithful to their rule of life, especially next Monday. Tell them I shall come and see them on one of the Sundays of Lent.

Yours devotedly in Jesus and Mary,

L. Marie de Montfort, priest.

LETTER 22

[To Fr. de la Carrière, 29 January 1711]

To Fr. de la Carrière, most worthy priest, Pontchâteau.

Nantes, 29th January 1711

Dear Reverend Father,

May the perfect love of God reign in our hearts!

Please be kind enough to deliver my statues to the bearer of this letter and to Brother Nicholas. It is necessary to move them, both to relieve me of anxiety and to show obedience because it is God's will. If God did not want them to be moved, he would work a miracle to prevent it. Even when they are brought here, it will only be to await the time when they can be returned to the Calvary with even greater solemnity when the chapel is built. Letters have been sent to Paris about their return and I am more hopeful than ever. But ahead of us there lies still a great deal of work and patient waiting, and much prayer and crosses, for this is destined to be a great work.

With heartfelt regards to you and our good friend,

I remain your in Jesus and Mary,

L.M. de Montfort, priest.

LETTER 23

[To the Master-General of the Dominicans, May (?) 1712]

To the Very Reverend Father General of the Dominican Order, Minerva, Rome.

Very Reverend Father,

May the perfect love of God reign in our hearts!

May I, as the least of your children, ask you for a written permission to preach the Holy Rosary wherever the Lord calls me and to enrol into the Rosary confraternity, with the usual indulgences, as many people as I can. I have already been doing this with the permission of the local Priors and Provincials, inscribing the names of brothers and sisters in the confraternity registers of the places where I have preached missions.

With deepest respect, this is my request.

Your most humble and obedient servant,

Louis Marie de Montfort Grignon,

priest and Apostolic Missionary.

LETTER 24

[To Sr. Catherine of St. Bernard (Guyonne-Jeanne), 1 January 1713]

God takes pleasure, my dear sister, in seeing us both struggle and in making us both victorious, you in secret and I in public. Your struggles take place within you and are not seen outside your community, whereas mine ring out through the whole of France, as I fight against the demons of hell or make war on the world and the worldly, the enemies of truth. You would be surprised if you knew all the details of the precious cross which has been sent to me from heaven at the intercession of our good Mother. Please thank my good Lord Jesus and ask your dear community, to whom I send my greetings, to obtain from Jesus the grace for me to carry the roughest and heaviest crosses as I would the light-as-straw ones and to resist with unyielding courage the powers of hell.

LETTER 25

[To Marie-Louise of Jesus (M-L Trichet), July/August 1713]

My daughter,

Providence has recently found a place for a poor girl by providing a dowry for her. His time has not yet come for you. Wait patiently for his time and stay at the hospital.

LETTER 26

[To Sr. Catherine of St. Bernard (Guyonne-Jeanne), 15 August 1713]

May Jesus and his Cross reign for ever!

If only you knew the half of the crosses and humiliations I have to bear, I don't think you would be so eager to see me; for I never seem to go anywhere without bringing something of the Cross to my dearest friends without any fault of mine or theirs. Those who befriend me or support me suffer for doing so, and sometimes draw down upon themselves the wrath of the devil I am fighting against, as well as the world I am protesting against and the flesh I am chastising. This veritable ants' nest of sinners against whom my preaching is directed cannot leave me or my friends in peace. I have forever to be on the alert, treading warily as though on thorns or sharp stones. I am like a ball in a game of tennis; no sooner am I hurled to one

side than I am sent back to the other, and the players strike me hard. This is the fate of the poor sinner that I am and I have been like this without rest or respite all the thirteen years since leaving St. Sulpice.

However, my dear sister, thank God for me for I am content and happy in all my troubles. I think there is nothing in the whole world so welcome as the most bitter cross, when it is steeped in the blood of Christ crucified and in the milk of his holy Mother. Besides this inward happiness, there is the great merit of carrying the crosses. I wish you could see mine. I have never had more conversions than after the most painful and unjust prohibitions. Be brave, my dear sister, all three of us must carry our cross to the extreme limits of the kingdom. Carry yours well and I will carry mine well too, with the help of God. Let us not complain or put the burden aside or make excuses or cry like a child who weeps because he is given a load of gold to carry, or a farmer who loses heart when his fields are strewn with pieces of gold by people wanting to make him rich.

LETTER 27

[To Mother Marie-Louise de Jésus & Sr. Conception (Catherine Brunet), beginning of 1715]

My dear daughters in Jesus Christ, Marie Trichet and Catherine Brunet,

May Jesus and his Cross reign forever!

You have not answered my last letter and I wonder why. I have spoken several times to his Lordship, the Bishop of La Rochelle, about you and about our plans and he thinks you ought to come here and begin the work we want so much. He has rented a house for the purpose until another house can be bought and suitably furnished.

I know you are doing a great deal of good where you are, but you will do infinitely more away from home and we know that since the time of Abraham right up to the time of our Lord and even to our own day, God sends his greatest servants out of their own country because, as our Lord himself says, no prophet is accepted among his own people.

I know you will have many difficulties to overcome but an enterprise which is going to do so much for the glory of God and the salvation of men will have its way strewn with thorns and crosses. If you don't take risks for God, you won't give anything worthwhile. I am writing to you on behalf of the Bishop, so keep this confidential.

I will send you Brother John with some money and a horse to accompany you. Travel as best you can; take a coach or hire a horse. If you have no money, we will try to cover the cost for you.

Please reply as soon as you can as I am leaving here to preach a mission at La Rochelle.

Totally yours in God alone,

God alone.

LETTER 28

(Fragment) [To Marie-Louise of Jesus, March 1715]

Leave as soon as possible, my daughter. The day for the establishment of the Daughters of Wisdom has at last arrived. I only wish you were already at La Rochelle, where I am at the moment; but if you delay you will not find me here as I am in a hurry to leave for a mission.

LETTER 29

[To Mother Marie-Louise of Jesus & Sr. Conception, 4 April 1715]

May Jesus and his Cross reign forever!

My dear daughters,

1. I think that instead of having a poor sinner like myself as your confessor you should choose the senior Canon, provided you keep your rules and the others I will give you and that he does not ask you to do anything contrary to them.
2. From now on, follow all the little rules I have given you and, provided you do not fall into deliberate venial sin, receive holy Communion every day for you both need holy Communion very much.
3. I have been told that you have been going around the town. I find it hard to believe that Daughters of Wisdom should be guilty of such vain curiosity. You ought to be an example of modesty, recollection and humble charity to everyone.
4. Call yourselves the "Community of the Daughters of Wisdom for the education of children and the care of the poor".
5. I would very much like to go and see you but I do not think I shall manage to do so after this mission as the Bishop is anxious for me to go on to give another.
6. You may allow the little Geoffroy girl, if she wishes, to follow your rule in what concerns getting up, going to bed, meditation, and the recitation of the Rosary.
7. Learn good handwriting and anything else that is needful for you. Buy some handwriting copy-books to help you.
8. Send me news by Brother John if you cannot manage to come here yourselves.
9. The good God wishes Marie Trichet to be the Mother Superior for three years at least. She is to be both firm and kind.
10. Marie Reine is not to come into the house right away with her apprentices, for they are not at all accustomed to the silence that must be observed.
11. From the beginning you can't be too firm about keeping the silence and seeing that it is kept in the community and in the school, because if you allow talking to go on uncorrected, all will be lost.

God alone. This 4th of April, 1715.

LETTER 30

[Marie-Anne Régnier, 12 August 1715]

La Rochelle, 12th of August, 1715

Feast of St. Clare.

My dear daughter,

May Jesus and his Cross reign forever!

The grace of the Holy Spirit does not permit of delay. When God is asking his creatures for anything, he asks gently leaving them entirely free. But the longer we delay in responding to his gentle request the less we hear his voice, and the longer his voice goes unheeded the more his justice is asserted. You must be careful! I spoke to the Bishop a few days ago and he wants you to come here and join the Daughters of Wisdom. I also want you here and I entreat you to come. I am sending this letter by a special messenger who has a means of conveyance for you so that nothing can prevent you from following the call of the most high God. Bring only what you need and enough material to supply yourself with a habit as poor as St. Clare's, or rather as poor as that of Christ. The Daughters of Wisdom love you and they are asking for you. A thousand and one reasons, both of grace and nature, which I will not go into now, make it necessary for you to be here tomorrow. I am obliged to leave for a long mission before the feast of the Assumption, and I would like to see you here before I leave. The Bishop would like to see you and he too is going away, so come quickly. The more you delay, the less pleasing your sacrifice and your victory are to God. I assure you that if you do not take advantage of this mark of esteem and affection which I have shown you and no other, I never want to see you again. Your troubles will increase every day and this may well lead to the loss

of your soul. Don't say: "I will obey the Lord after the grape-gathering," because you will offend this great Lord very much. You will be like the young man in the Gospel who lost his vocation because he wanted to go and bury his father before coming to follow Christ.

I am all yours.

The following note is for your father:

Dear Mr. Régnier,

I greet you in the name of the Lord. Please do not oppose God's will concerning the daughter he has confided to you. She was only given to you for you to keep her in baptismal innocence for him and you have done that well. But you cannot hold on to her. She belongs to God and you cannot deprive him of her without suffering for it. If you are ready to offer her to God like those parents we read of in history who sacrificed their only child to God as Abraham did, many blessings will be showered upon you and yours and I forecast that you will receive a glorious crown of honour in eternity. But...!!

LETTER 31

[To Sr. Conception (Catherine Brunet), 24 October 1715]

May Jesus and his Cross reign forever!

Take heed, my dear daughter, that you do not lose your vocation and allow yourself to be tempted into leaving the hospital. If you do, I never want to see you again.

If you do not wish to go to confession to Fr. Le Tellier, I give you permission to go to the hospital chaplain for three months.

Be faithful to the general and particular rules which your dear spouse Jesus has given you through me. I ask you again to be careful and not to let yourself be led by your own feelings. On my knees I ask Jesus to strengthen you against all evil, for the devil is afraid of any reform in the hospital.

I am all yours, my dear daughter, as long as you remain obedient.

This 24th of October, 1715.

LETTER 32

[To the community of La Sagesse at La Rochelle, 31 December 1715]

This last day of the year.

My dear daughters in Jesus Christ,

I am sending you a book written especially for you. Read it both in public and in private. What it says is what I have to say to you.

Do not lose your patience in my absence. My wicked self-will, though it may appear good, and my own person spoil everything. I am quite sure that the less I have to do with your foundation, the better it will succeed.

However, I would like each of you to write to me every month and tell me: 1. the main temptations you have had during the month; 2. the main crosses you have been able to accept well; 3. your main victories over yourselves. I would also like to be informed of the principal changes which take place.

You are always in my thoughts. Open your hearts to the Mother Superior, my dear daughters, and to your confessor, if God inspires you to do so.

All yours in God alone.

I wish you a year full of struggles, victories, crosses, poverty and contempt.

LETTER 33

[To Mlle Dauvaise, directress of the house for incurables at Nantes, 4 April 1716]

From the mission at Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre

4th of April, 1716

May Jesus and his Cross reign forever!

I count on the inexhaustible wealth of the motherly divine Providence which has never failed us in all we have undertaken for the glory of God and I reply quite frankly that I think you ought to obtain the lease for the house in question provided that the persons who are going to care for the poor incurables have the following qualities:

1. They must rely entirely on the unknown and invisible help of divine Providence whether they are rich or poor or whether they have any learning or not. They must not rely on any human help or their own natural talents.
2. They must all follow the same rule in its totality and punctually and have the same spiritual director. If any of the ladies has money and special qualifications she must not expect any privileges, say, exemption from community life or the rule, or the right to choose another director.
3. Finally, if this is God's work, they must be ready to suffer all kinds of crosses cheerfully. For this is the house of the Cross and it must not be given any other name. The first thing you must do is to erect a cross, with the Bishop's permission, so that the name, the grace and the glory of the Cross will always be associated with this house. Erect a very simple cross in the middle of the garden or the courtyard until funds can be found to provide a better one. This cross is the first item to be taken into the new house. Ask our good priest friend to bless it or to send someone to bless it.

When I heard about this new foundation at Nantes, I considered sending you two Daughters of Wisdom who are working among the poor in this diocese. One is about forty years of age, I believe, and both are suitable for this work. Let us pray that God may make his holy will clear to us.

Dear Lord, how very few really obedient, prudent and self-sacrificing young ladies are to be found today! They are all so self-sufficient, or rather each one feels that she is, even if she does not say so openly.

I think young women who present themselves to join the two already mentioned and have the above-mentioned qualities, should be accepted even if they come from other parts of the country. They would be more suitable for the beginning of this new foundation, if it is to be founded on "living stones".

I greet with great respect Monsieur Du Portail and those good people who have joined us in this charitable work so dear to the Heart of Jesus who suffered more than any of us.

If the Bishop of Nantes agrees (and I would not arrive without his permission) I will be in Nantes on the evening of the 5th of May. I am enclosing a short letter to his Lordship. I send respectful greetings to Fr. Barrin and ask him to take my letter to Fr. de Vertamont to present it to the Bishop. If the latter refuses to allow me to stay in Nantes for two weeks resting from my missionary work - and I will go there only if I receive permission to say Mass - then I will know for certain that it is not God's holy will that I go. In submitting to a prohibition, I truly and firmly believe, as if it were an article of faith, that everything will go even better with you than if I were present.

I beg the prayers of all the "Friends of the Cross" so that God will not punish my sins and refuse true conversion of heart to all the poor who listen to my preaching.

Sincerely yours in Jesus and his holy Mother. I greet all the Guardian Angels of the city of Nantes and yours in particular.

Humility! Humiliations! Humiliations! Thanks be to God for them.

L.M. Grignon

LETTER 34

[To Mother Marie-Louise of Jesus, about Easter 1716]

My dear daughter in Jesus Christ,

May Jesus and his Cross reign forever!

I worship the justice and love with which divine Wisdom is treating his little flock, allowing you to live in cramped quarters here on earth so that later you may find spacious dwelling in his divine heart which was pierced for you to enter. How pleasant and safe is this sacred refuge for a soul truly possessing Wisdom! Such a soul came forth with the blood and water which flowed when the lance pierced the divine heart, and it is here that it finds a refuge when persecuted by its enemies. Here it can remain hidden with Jesus Christ in God, more victorious than any hero, crowned with more laurels than any king, shining with greater splendour than the sun and raised higher than the very heavens.

If you truly seek to be a disciple of divine Wisdom and one chosen among so many, then this unkind treatment you are suffering, the contempt, the poverty, the restrictions, all these should be pleasing to you since they are the price you have to pay to obtain Wisdom and true freedom and become partakers of the divinity of the heart of Jesus crucified.

If I were to look at these setbacks from a human standpoint, I would be tempted, like the foolish people of this corrupt world, to complain and be anxious and worried, but that is not how I look at things. Let me tell you that I expect more serious setbacks, more painful ones to test your faith and confidence. We will then found our community of the Daughters of Wisdom, not on quicksands of gold and silver which the devil is always using to adorn his house, nor indeed on the strength and influence of any human being, for no matter how holy and powerful man may be he will always be no more than a wisp of straw. We want to found our congregation on the Wisdom of the Cross of Calvary. This adorable Cross has been stained with the blood of a God and chosen by Jesus to be the spouse of his heart, his heart's only desire and inspiration, the only object worth his toil, his only arm in combat, his only crown of glory, his only guide in his judgements. It is hard to understand that this great Cross was lost, scorned and hidden in the earth for more than four hundred years.

My dear daughters, apply this to the state in which you find yourselves. I think of you always, especially during Holy Mass. I will never forget you, provided you love the precious Cross. I am united with you in bearing the cross as long as you follow the holy will of God and not your own. In this holy will I am all yours...