



BLESSED LETTERS OF SAINT MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE
THE HISTORY

The heart felt struggling of revealing the Words of God

St. Margaret Mary Alacoque

HISTORY

Margaret Alacoque, the fifth of seven children of Claude Alacoque and Philiberte Lamyn, was born at Lhautecour in old Burgandy, now East Central France, on July 22, 1647.

She was baptized Margaret, adding the name Mary only at the time of her Confirmation in 1669. At the age of four she took a vow of chastity, though "I did not then understand what I had done, nor what was meant by the words 'vow' and 'chastity'" From her earliest years she was tenderly devoted to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin.

Her father died when she was eight. When she was eight and a half, she was sent to the school of the Urbanist Nuns at Charolles, where she received the only two years of formal education she ever had.

At the then early age of nine, she made her first Holy Communion.

"This Communion shed such bitterness over all my little pleasures and amusements that I was no longer able to enjoy any of them, although I sought them eagerly." Shortly after this she succumbed to long illness.

"But I fell into so pitiable a state of ill health that for about four years I was unable to walk. My bones pierced my skin.

Consequently I was removed from the convent at the end of two years. since no remedy could be found for my illness, I was consecrated to the Blessed Virgin with the promise that, if she cured me, I should one day be one of Her daughters. Scarcely had I made this vow, when I was cured and taken anew under the protection of Our Lady."

Though her father, a royal notary, had been in good financial circumstances, Margaret and her mother were after his death subjected to domestic persecution and captivity in their home by some of their relatives.

This drew the girl more to mental prayer, and brought her closer to Christ in His suffering. Eventually, her mother again became mistress in her own house and prevailed upon her now seventeen-year-old daughter to consider marriage.

This brought about an inner conflict and a struggle began in her soul between the devil and the world on one hand and Our Lord and her vow on the other. Satan: "Poor fool, what do you mean by wishing to be a nun? You will become the laughing stock of the world, for you will never be able to persevere." Her Savior after the scrouging: "Would you take this pleasure, whereas I never had any and delivered Myself up to every kind of bitterness for love of you and to win your heart? Nevertheless, you would still dispute with Me!"

"I had indeed committed great crimes," she writes, "for once during the days of Carnival, together with other young girls, I disguised myself through vain complacency.

This has been to me a cause of bitter tears and sorrow during my whole life, together with the fault I committed in adorning myself in worldly attire through the same motive of complacency towards the persons above mentioned."

She was induced against her better judgement to apply for admission into the Ursuline Order at Macon, but was suddenly called home just "as they were ready to open the convent door to me".

On May 25, 1671, she paid her first visit to her "dear Paray," where as soon as I entered the parlor, I heard interiorly these words: 'It is here that I would have you be'" She took the habit August 25, 1671, and made her profession November 6, 1672, as the first daughter, of the new superior, Mother de Saumaise, who was to figure so largely in her later life.

Christ had carefully prepared His servant for her great mission, through suffering, prayer and special guidance.

Her sufferings were to continue to the end, her prayer would become ecstatic, the Savior Himself would be her personal spiritual director till death.

In this way she would be able to present to the world the Devotion to the Sacred Heart in its modern form.

Our Lord made many revelations to Margaret Mary-perhaps forty. The most striking of these began on December 27, 1673; they ended with the greatest of them all, "Behold this Heart," in June 1675.

It was during this year that Claude de la Colombiere, a saintly young priest of the Society of Jesus, was providentially sent to Paray-le-Monial and appointed extraordinary confessor to the Visitandine community of which Margaret Mary was a member.

He encouraged and reassured her, and himself became an apostle of the Devotion of the Sacred Heart for the few years of life that remained to him. The notes of His Retreat made in London in 1677, where he was sent after only eighteen months in Paray, were to be a great instrument in promoting devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Margaret Mary was mistress of novices from 1685 to 1686. Her death came on October 17, 1690. Her body still rests at Paray-le-Monial. The process with a view to her canonization was begun in 1715.

She was declared Venerable in 1824, Blessed in 1864, and became St. Margaret Mary on May 13, 1920.

This brief sketch of her life is continued and expanded in detail in the letters here presented.

C.A. Herbst,S.J.

THE LETTERS

To Mother Marie-Francoise de Saumaise, at Dijon

(1) (End of June 1678)

Most Honored And Dear Mother,

It was not without mortification nor from lack of friendship that I chose to deprive myself of the sweet consolation of writing to you and telling you that I shall always have the same esteem for Your Charity. Since you are well aware that Our Good Master has intimately united my heart and yours, I am not at all afraid that they will ever be separated except by Himself. Since words fail me to express the gratitude I feel for your motherly tenderness, it must suffice to say that I shall continue to remember it in quite a special way before Our Lord.

I beg Him to bestow on you His most precious graces and loving caresses during this wonderful time of retreat. I am sharing its delights with you. A word about the blessings with which His goodness is favoring me at present. I can only describe them by saying that my whole life, body and soul, is nothing but a cross. Yet I cannot complain, nor do I desire any consolation than that of not having any in this world and of living hidden away in Jesus Christ crucified, suffering and unknown, so that no one will have any compassion on me nor remember me except to increase my suffering.

I flatter myself, dear Mother, that you are too interested in me not to rejoice at this. Thank Our Lord who, after Himself, has nothing more precious than His love and His cross. By His Mercy He shares them with me. I know I am most unworthy, too, of the one He has given us in the person of our most honored Mother. I cannot sufficiently express my esteem and affection for her charity. I have already experienced this charity many times, and can assure you that I think Our Lord will fulfill His promise through her. I beg Him with all my heart to do so in order that He may draw from this all the glory He desires.

It was this dear Mother who told me to write at this time. Because of a slight indisposition, and also because you will be overwhelmed with letters just now, I would have put it off. do not hurry to answer; for no matter how you treat me, I will not doubt your affection for me. In time and eternity, in the Sacred Love of Jesus, I shall be Sister Margaret Mary
Blessed be God!

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon

(2) July 10, 1678

Most Honored Mother,

May the sacred fire consume our hearts unhindered and make of them thrones worthy of a holy love. I have too often experienced your goodness to think that my silence makes you doubt the affection and respectful friendship I have for Your Charity.

You have drawn me to love you in more ways than I can express. You have drawn me to love you in more ways than I can express. My silence will speak better, dear Mother than my words. I think you already know the occupation to which obedience has put me. May Our Lord be blessed in everything, since nothing can stop us from becoming wholly His.

Yes, dear Mother, the Lord is indeed good in continuing always to show the same kindness and mercy towards me, His unworthy slave, regardless of my infidelities and weaknesses so well known to you. Help me to thank Him for these and for all His other gifts. The one I cherish most, after Himself, is the precious treasure of His cross.

It is the only consolation I have in this life, a life too long and desirable only for the occasion that it gives one to suffer, especially those precious humiliations which cause us to be forgotten and despised by men. Happy the souls thus blessed in the service of the Lord! I beg Him to accomplish His designs in you. When before Him I do not forget you, nor the very honorable Mother Boulier either. I have a very special esteem for her.

Please recommend to Our Lord the Misses Bisfrand. They are much put out by not getting any more news of Reverend Father de la Colombiere, I do not know whether you have forgotten to tell us in your letters what you promised you would or whether you simply thought it better not to do so.

I shall always be satisfied and feel the same towards You Charity no matter how you treat me. Rest assured of this and believe me entirely yours in His holy love.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon

(3) May, 1679

I assure you dear Mother, that I was very consoled at the pleasure you have given the Lord by embracing His cross with joy and submission. he has completely covered it with roses, it is true lest you be frightened by it. But what really ought to give you the greatest joy is to feel the pricks of the thorns hidden beneath the roses. Then it will please the Lord to make you like unto Himself. Then He will make you see that He is not less lovable in the bitterness of Calvary than in the sweetness of Thabor.

To Sister Louise-Henriette de Soudeilles, at Moulins

(4) (1679 or 1680)

Most Honored Sister,

I beg the Sacred Heart of Jesus to deign to consume ours in the flames of His holy love. This love I think it is that induced you to honor with your acquaintanceship one whose great wretchedness constantly urges her to live unknown and forgotten by men. But if Our Sovereign Master wills it otherwise, I consider it a great privilege to have a little remembrance from you before Our Lord. He grants me the favor of returning in a very special way the affection which Your Charity shows me, though I am very unworthy of it.

God can, however, draw glory from our least actions when He so wishes, and I trust He will obtain glory from the desire His goodness has given you that we share in a special way each others spiritual goods, I can assure you that I never do anything good, but God in His Goodness lets me appropriate the treasure of the truly poor, that is, the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Its infinite riches can amply satisfy our great indigence. We must associate ourselves with this precious Good, placing in this Sacred Heart all the good we can do with the help of His Grace, then exchange our hearts for His and offer His to the Eternal Father in place of our own.

This adorable Heart, then, beloved Sister, must be the center of our true friendship and our place of retreat. There we can live safe from all storms, and will see and learn to know each other. I assure you that I have already paid you some visits there. I think love has already given you a place of preference in It.

I myself am aspiring to one surely, but I have not yet fulfilled the conditions required for entering. These are: A heart that is pure, free from all desire and affection, humble and completely given over to doing perfectly what pure love demands. This love wants to be in full possession so that it can dispose of a heart at will. I beg Him never to let us resist Him, and that our friendship be completely in Him and for Him.

I hope, most honored Sister, that you will be so good as to excuse me for talking to you this way. I cannot but tell you frankly what I think. I have the greatest esteem and affection for Your Charity, and am completely and unreservedly yours, most honored Sister, in His holy love.

As for what you asked me to recommend to Our Lord, I trust He will be glorified by it in proportion as you are submissive and abandoned to His good pleasure, which should strip us of all self interest if we really want to do His will. If God is satisfied, we ought to be content. I am sure you desire nothing else. Neither do I. So let us love Our Lord and give Him everything without reserve. By this same love I conjure you, beloved Sister, to undeceive yourself in my regard and not to think me to be what I am not.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Moulins.

(5) Around 1680

I am afraid, dear Mother, that because of my continual resistance to grace I am an obstacle to the glory of the Sacred Heart. I think He gave me to understand how much I shall have to suffer for this same love, and that the graces He has given me were not so much for myself as for those He will send to me. These I must tell simply what He inspires me to. He will add to my words the unction of His grace and draw many hearts to His love. I am always conscious of this when I resist Him.

I am not forgetting you before the Lord. He takes from me the power of writing as I would wish, so that, when I take up my pen, I do not know what to write. I therefore let Him do it and abandon myself to Him. Life is such a heavy cross for me that I have no consolation but that of seeing the Heart of my Savior reign. He gives me the pleasure of suffering something special whenever this Devotion makes some new advance.

But there is nothing that I would not be willing to suffer for that. Even the most bitter sufferings are sweet in this adorable Heart, where everything is changed into love. I would like to be able to avenge on myself all the injuries done my Savior Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. I am, as you know, wholly yours in the Sacred heart of Jesus.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon

(6) 1680

Most Honored Mother,

To me it is a sweet consolation to receive news of you, though I seem to be indifferent to news from others. You are always my good Mother, for whom the Lord gives me and inexpressibly great affection. Neither can I forget you before God. I beg Him to see to it that all His designs on us are carried out. May it be the same with regard to Madame de N., who is now with us with the view of becoming a religious in accord with her earnest desire for doing God's will.

I recommend her to your holy prayers, together with Reverend Father de la Colombiere, of whom you ask news from us. He informs Madam de L. that his health is not yet restored. I myself, though, have had no letter from him. It is not that I have not given myself the privilege of writing to him; he simply has not judged fit to answer me. But no matter how he treats me I am always satisfied, because I know we wish only the will of God, to which he is very submissive. This is all the news I can give you of him for the present.

With regard to Communion, I shall under obedience do what Your Charity asks. would that I could show you my concern in everything that concerns you, for the interests of Our Lord. I know these are dearer to you than anything else.

I leave to others the consolation of sending you the news. I am not good at that. Beg the Lord to make me worthy of accomplishing His will in everything, and that we may be able to love Him above all things. In this love I am completely yours.

To Sister Louise-Henriette de Soudeilles at Moulins

(7) From our monastery in Paray, June 6, 1680

Most Honored and Beloved Sister,

I pray the divine Spirit of love to fill your dear soul with His most precious graces, and our hearts with the most ardent flames of His love, so that we may act only according to His inspirations. He would give me an especially strong impulse to respond to your kind attentions, beloved Sister, if my unworthiness did not always dishearten me. I cannot understand how anyone can continue to remember such a wicked creature.

I do, none the less cherish you and love you in the Sacred Heart of Jesus more than I can say. Since I can do you no good, I thought that you would not think of me anymore. I do not forget you before Our Lord. I complain to Him lovingly about your coming from so far away to visit me every day between the two elevations of holy Mass.

I then find you present to my spirit, and after we have told our divine Master what you want, you gently disappear again, saying as you did in your cherished letter: do not be angry with me". But how can I be angry with you, beloved Sister? You know so well how to win hearts that, if I was not sure it was to make them wholly God's, I would certainly beg Him to defend me against you. But there is nothing to fear in this union of our hearts, for the Lord is the author of it. May He ever be glorified by it!

I have commended to his mercy this dear Sister Your Charity mentions. Do not worry about her. I hope that, if you pray over her to our Sovereign Master, He will not allow this plant to take root in His garden, that is, in the religious life, unless His Heavenly Father has planted it there. It is true that the responsibility of leading souls to God is an inexpressibly fearful and important one.

But why are you afraid, since He who has given it to you has all power to make you act according to His holy will? There is never any resistance in us against it, no matter in what way He wishes to dispose of us. We must give all in order to possess all. Divine Love admits of no alloy. Come to my aid, then, in this regard.

Since Your Charity honors me with her friendship, let her show this friendship by procuring for me the love of my God through her holy prayers. For this end, let us visit each other often, dear Sister, in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ. When you do not find me there, importune Him until His mercy brings me there.

There we will make our little spiritual visits without fear, and express most tenderly our true love for this adorable Heart, in which I am respectfully and wholly yours. My dear Sister Marie Aimee and Sister de Lyonne send you their most cordial respects and sincere affection.-O, I was mistaken! It is to your most honored Mother (Mother de Saumaise) that they send them.

Good-bye, beloved Sister. I would think that I had said nothing if the cross of Our Lord had found no place

in our conversation. O, how to cherish and love it for the love of Him who has so loved it for love of you as to wish to die in its arms. Let us not try to do anything any more except love and suffer in this love. After we had learned to do this perfectly, we shall know and do all that God wants us.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Moulins

(8) 1680

Most Honored Mother,

I can no longer refuse my heart the sweet satisfaction it finds in conversing with Your Charity. You assure me that Our Lord wants that. Nor do I doubt it, since it induces you constantly to manifest the same kindness and charity towards me which you have shown in my regard ever since I had the honor of becoming your unworthy daughter. I want to satisfy the desire of your maternal heart to have news of me.

Never has God shown His love and mercy towards me more, and never have I been more ungrateful, unfaithful and wicked. I am just a combination of pride and malice and constantly oppose His goodness. I resist His will, show coldness in return for His love. That coldness makes me so tepid in His holy service that I am simply horrified when I consider the life I lead, a life altogether sensual and sinful.

Ah, dear Mother, how much I need your prayers, in order that His goodness may not grow weary for me to repent, but still more that He may not deprive me of loving Him for all eternity because I did not love Him during life! This is a severe punishment I fear. Everything else makes no impression on me. How good God is, though, dear Mother, for not depriving me of the precious treasure of His cross, although I lead a life so offensive to Him.

Although the cross is my just lot as a great sinner, still it is the cross which makes bearable the length of my exile, in which there can be no pleasure for me but to love God and suffer for this love. What, alas, would I do if the cross were taken from me, since it is that which makes me hope in His mercy! That is my whole treasure in the adorable Heart of Jesus Christ. In it consists all my pleasure, all my delight, all my joy.

But if you only knew what poor use I make of it, especially of those precious humiliations and embarrassments, and of the heartaches and anguish of almost every kind that go with them. Sometimes my heart seems to be in agony and reduced to the last extremities, and that notwithstanding the pleasure it takes in being submerged in this ocean of bitterness, which I consider to be the most tender proof of the love of my Divine Spouse.

That is why I feel myself so very unworthy of these inestimable favors. Pray that I may profit by them in the future, that I may put no obstacle in the way of the Divine good pleasure. I need strength from God to bear with myself.

Write a few words to this unworthy daughter of yours, dear Mother, when God inspires you to. I do not know what to say to those I love. All I can do is speak to them of the cross of Jesus Christ.

And when anyone asks me what favors Our Lord grants me, an unworthy sinner, I can speak only of the happiness of suffering with Jesus Christ. I know of nothing more precious than to suffer for His love, in which I am wholly yours.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Moulins

(9) July 10, 1680

I assure you, most honored Mother,

that I am glad to comply with our beloved Mother's order and give you news on the state of my health. I must tell you, then, that Our Lord, on the Feast of Corpus Christi (June 20, 1680), did me the favor of removing all of a sudden the great weakness to which I had been reduced. For after Holy Communion I found myself as strong and healthy as I had been before I had taken to my bed a month earlier. Since then I have had the happiness of following the exercises of the community.

I wanted to tell you this dear Mother, to induce you to make reparation to Our Lord for my ingratitude, which is greater than ever. His dealings are so full of love and tenderness with so unworthy a sinner who has offended Him so much that I must admit He would but be treating me justly were He to abandon me to the full rigor of His Divine Justice.

But He wants to leave me here for yet sometime in order that our Sisters may exercise their Charity in my regard, and to give me the opportunity of bewailing my sins and beginning a new to suffer-if indeed one may speak of the happiness of sharing in the cross of Our Savior as suffering.

Ah! how precious to me is the state of infirmity and humiliation! I think there is nothing more useful or nor necessary for me. This is the one thing that sweetens the tedium of of a life shadowed by the haunting desire to depart from it. Yet I am truly ready to put up with it as long as my Savior wants it to last. I wish only to fulfill in all things His holy will, which is no less lovable in affliction than in consolation.

It will be a great relief to me, dear Mother, if Your Charity reassures me that she is going to keep the promise she made of burning my letters so that nothing may be seen or known of them here. For I am eager to remain buried in contempt and oblivion as well after my death as during my life.

I have such great confidence in your friendship that I cannot believe you would refuse me this favor any more than you would doubt our union in the Sacred Heart of our adorable Jesus. I beg Him to continue granting us this favor in eternity. If I ever forgot you before His Divine Goodness, I would have to forget what is dearest to me.

I tell you as my good Mother that just now I have very great need of your prayers in order to gain strength to continue on to the end in the perfect fulfillment of the designs God has on me. In the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary I am devotedly yours.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Moulins

(10) November, 1680

You are ever the dear mother of my heart, which cherishes you in the Heart of Our Loving Savior with all the love of which it is capable. I flatter myself that you do not doubt this, since I keep nothing secret from you. I take special pleasure in recounting to you the mercies of Our Sovereign towards the most ungrateful of all His creatures.

His generosity to me is so great that it is impossible for me to find words to describe it to Your Charity. But this I will say: He deals with me like a father enraptured with His little child. During my retreat especially He seems to take pleasure in overwhelming me with His sweet consolations. But I cannot make up my mind to relish them in this life, finding my happiness only in the pleasure He takes in doing good to us.

Crosses, contempt, suffering, afflictions: these are the true treasures of the lovers of Jesus Christ crucified. Pray, dear Mother, that He may not leave me for a moment without these in the accomplishment of His holy will which is so manifest in the sufferings of Reverend Father de la Colombiere. For when I was once recommended him to God's goodness, I heard these words "The servant is not greater than his Master.

There is nothing more profitable than conformity with his dear Master. Although according to the human way of thinking his health would be more for the glory of God, his sufferings have given God incomparably more glory. For there is a time for everything: a time for suffering and a time for action, a time for sowing and a time for watering and cultivating." This is what he is doing at present.

For the Lord is pleased to give an inestimable value to his sufferings because they are so closely joined with His own. Later on He will let their merits fall as a heavenly dew upon this harvest which he has sown in so many places, and make it grow and bring forth fruit in His holy love.

Let us obey, then, dear Mother, the orders of our Sovereign, and admit that, although what He does seems to us harsh and severe, He is good and just in all He does and always merits our praise and love. If you only knew how much He is urging me to love Him with a love of conformity to His suffering life! He wants me to make sacrifices continually.

He Himself furnishes me with occasions for making them in the employment He has given me. I note with pleasure that each act is a new sacrifice for me because of the repugnance He gives me the grace of feeling in this employment. That repugnance gives such satisfaction to this Spirit, Master of mine, that He often compels me to say, in spite of my lower nature, that it is good to go on, by the strength of His love, contrary to our own inclinations, without any pleasure or satisfaction except that of not having any.

For it must suffice for us that Our Lord is satisfied in any manner that pleases Him. I would find it a far greater joy to speak to you than write to you; it seems to me I would express the sentiments of my heart

better orally. I am getting much consolation from reading your letters and, although I am very glad no one thinks of me any more, I believe Our Lord wants you to think of me and wishes me never to forget you. For the love of the Sacred Heart, look sometimes at the little note you are keeping, for He takes pleasure in that.

How much obliged I should be, good Mother, were you to do me the favor of burning everything you have received from me! Let us do all we can to procure honor and love for the Sacred Heart of Our Spouse, Who makes me entirely yours forever in His holy love.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Moulins

(11) February 16, 1681

Dear Mother,

After wishing you, at the beginning of this new year, the fullness of pure divine love which could by its ardor transform us into itself, I must tell you it is against my will that I have been deprived so long of the consolation Our Lord gives me in writing to you, although it still causes me the same difficulty. My headaches do not permit me to write much.

I still flatter myself that Your Charity will always continue to show me the same kindness and affection. It seems to me that, even if I could, I should not be able to forget my beloved Mother before Our Lord. He continues to show me His mercy by favoring me with His cross.

That, indeed, is the lot of chosen souls in this life, but I have good reason to fear that, rejected because of the poor use I make of it, I accept it more as a sinner might do. Yet I know it is the greatest good we can wish for, this being conformed to Jesus in His suffering. We ought to wish to live only to have the happiness of suffering through love, but never in the way we choose for ourselves.

Ah, dear Mother, how much I need the help of your prayers to get me to abandon myself entirely to His holy will in all that He wants to do with me! For me, life is a martyrdom, although I can assure you at the present I have everything that can make it sweet to me, namely, staying in my dear cell. There I find such delight that I have good reason to fear Our Lord is reserving only punishment for me in eternity, where all I am afraid of is to be deprived of loving Him. I beg this of Him with all my heart.

For you I ask that you may acquit yourself well of the charge He has committed to you. Gladly would I grant what you ask of me in your last letter. But, alas, what can you expect of a wicked and miserable sinner like myself? You would be horrified, yet pity me, too, as if you knew me as I really am, and you would say that God is truly outdoing Himself in His mercy to me. I beg you beloved Mother, to thank Him and to ask Him to forgive my infidelities.

I trust that His goodness will not refuse you what you wish for His glory, provided only that you seek it with confidence and expect everything from Him alone.

I must tell you for your consolation, because I think you love me, that God has given me a true Mother, full of goodness and charity towards me (Mother Greyfie). If I had time, it would give me great satisfaction to tell you my thoughts on this matter and on the graces God is giving me by plunging me into the humiliations so dear to my soul.

I would consider it a severe punishment to be deprived of them or to be without suffering for a moment, for it seems to me that every hour passed without suffering is lost as far as I am concerned. I can assure you that I want to go on living only that I may have the happiness of suffering. That, and to converse with those I love, is the only thing that can give joy to my heart and soul. I have no other news.

Any other topic of conversation is painful to me and any other grace cannot be compared with that of carrying the cross lovingly with Jesus Christ. Let me know for my consolation whether His goodness is favoring you with this blessing at present.

But do not think that because I speak of suffering this way I am suffering very much. Alas it seems to me that I have not yet suffered anything, and consequently have done nothing for my God. In His holy love I am and shall always be respectfully yours.

To Sister Marie-Bernarde Payelle, at Charolles
(12) From our monastery in Paray. July 22, 1681

Most Honored And Beloved Sister,

Only love can produce in us the desire to be conformed with Our Sovereign Master. We cannot therefore, attain this conformity except by loving Him above all things and despising everything else. His true and perfect lover Mary Magdalene, did that. I ask her to be so good as to inflame our hearts with the same fire that consumed hers at the Feet of her Savior so that, no matter in what circumstances it may please Him to put us, He may not find in us any longer any obstacle to the accomplishment of His most adorable will.

For affliction or consolation, health or sickness, are all one to a heart that loves Him. As long as Our Lord is satisfied, that must suffice for us. We only want to please Him. You know far better than I do, dear friend, that since He can find nothing great outside of Himself, He takes pleasure in stooping to our lowliness in order to glorify Himself in our infirmities. I must confess that when I pray to God for Your Charity, as I usually do at Holy Mass, I cannot bring myself to ask that you be freed from your cross, because it seems to me that would be asking that you be deprived of the greatest good you can have in this life-conformity with Jesus Christ in His suffering.

Neither can I ask that He free you from the repugnance you feel for your sickness, because I believe it is just this which constitutes our merit. The less there is of self in it the more there is of God. I must tell you frankly as my intimate friend the thought that occurs to me when I offer you to His adorable Heart-blind submission no matter in what circumstances He places you, blind submission in everything it may please Him to do with you. If I am not mistaken, that sums up His whole will in your regard.

I feel the greatest confusion in speaking to Your Charity in this way. I would be able to speak thus only to a soul His goodness has made dear to me as yours, and which I am more interested than you think. Pray in turn for me when in the presence of Our good Master. He knows I have the greatest need of your holy prayers, for I am completely devoid of all good.

I do not at all mind our dear Sister Marie Therese showing you our letters. That pleases me. I am happy also that she shows Your Charity a special respect and gratitude for the great kindness you have always shown her. I shall be indebted to you if you continue to do so.

As to the desire you express of obtaining from Our Lord true submission and abandonment to the ways of divine providence I promise, if our beloved Mother agrees, to say the litany of the Blessed Sacrament for a month for that intention, and I shall begin on the first of August by offering Holy Communion, I beg you though, to cooperate. We shall obtain nothing unless you have confidence. Believe me, loving friend, that in this project and in every other, it will be a pleasure to me to be able to prove how truly I love you in the Sacred Heart of our adorable Jesus. May He, by His holy love, make us one with Himself in time and eternity.

Beloved Sister

I am doubly indebted to you for the esteem and affection you tell me you have for our most beloved Mother even more than if you showed it to myself. I dare say that my silence in regard may express better what I feel than my words could. She greets you with sincere affection. I beg you to be so good as to extend to your most honored Mother my most affectionate and respectful greetings, and to tell her that I love her with a true and sincere affection.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Moulins

(13) 1682

Dearest Mother,

It would give me great satisfaction to be able to tell you my miseries, for they would make you understand better Our Sovereign Master's great mercies to me. One of the most precious and useful of these is my illness. Yes, I assure you the cross of infirmity and humiliation is so necessary for me that my Sovereign told me that without it, I should not have been able to avoid another which, I think would have been very dangerous.

I need not think about myself anymore, nor about what it may please my Savior to do concerning me or in me. He said He would never fail to take care of me except when I insisted on meddling in my own affairs. I have often found this out through my infidelity which has brought about the upsetting of my plans. All I wish to do now is what He has so often told me. "Let Me act", He said.

Moreover, He has turned loose in me three persecutors. They torment me continually. The first one calls up the other two. That first one is such a great desire to love Him that it seems everything I see ought to be changed into flames of pure love so that He may be loved in the Blessed Sacrament. It is a martyrdom to me to think He is so little loved there, and that there are so many hearts that reject His pure love, forget it, and spurn it. If only I myself at least would love Him my heart would be consoled with its sorrow. But I am the most ungrateful and faithless of creatures and lead a life wholly unmortified and filled with self love.

I feel myself continually urged to suffer, but with what terrible repugnance on the part of my low nature! This makes my crosses so heavy that I would be crushed many a time if the Heart of my adorable Jesus did not sustain me and assist me in all my needs. And all the while in the midst of my constant sufferings my heart continues to thirst after suffering. My soul suffers great agony at not yet being able to be separated from the body. I can think of no greater sacrifice than that of having to continue to live. Yet I would go on living from now until Judgment Day if God wanted me to, although the thought of being separated so long from my Lord would be harder for me to bear than a thousands deaths. Everything conspires to afflict and torment me because I cannot give my whole affection to my Divine Love, who favors me continually with His Holy Presence and Himself instructs me to describe it to you as follows.

Suppose that a powerful monarch, feeling urged to exercise his charity, should cast his eyes about over his subjects in order to select the poorest, most miserable and utterly destitute among them. Then, having found her, with overflowing liberality he poured out upon her his riches, of which the greatest would be that this great monarch would want so to humble himself as to walk constantly at the side of this poor outcast, carrying a torch and all gleaming in his royal purple. And, after allowing himself to be seen, he hid this light in the darkness of night, so as to give this poor outcast courage to approach him, and to listen to and speak to him with confidence, to receive his embraces and to return them on her part. He always looked out for her needs and took care of everything that concerned her. But if, after all that, this person should come to withdraw herself from her benefactor and to be unfaithful to him, and if, to punish her, he

did nothing else than let the light he had hidden shine forth, so that she could see what he is and what she is, he all resplendent with beauty, she all covered with dirt, wounds and all sorts of filth...and if she saw at the same time the enormity of her malice and ingratitude, in contrast with the goodness of this Sovereign.. I do not know whether I put it clearly enough to make you see what I mean.

This is something like the way in which my Sovereign has dealt with His unworthy slave. Indeed, this Divine Presence makes diverse impressions on me. Sometimes He raises me to the height of all bliss from which I draw inexpressible delight. Then all I can exclaim is: 'My Life, my Love, and my All! You are mine and I am all Yours!' At other times He plunges me into the depths of my own nothingness where I suffer inexplicable confusion at seeing this abyss of every misery close to the abyss of all perfection. At still other times He so enters into me that He seems to leave me with no other being or life than Himself. He does this in so painful a manner that I have to repeat incessantly: 'I want to suffer everything without complaint, since my pure love prevents me from being afraid of anything.'

But I would weary you if I recounted all these things in detail, for God is an unfathomable abyss of every good. All my glory ought to consist, as He has taught me, in considering myself but a play thing to give pleasure to His adorable Heart, which is my whole treasure. I must confess that I have nothing but my Savior Jesus Christ. He often says to me: 'What would you do without Me? You would certainly be very poor!'

As for the other graces and gifts I receive from His bounty, I must confess that they are very great. But the Giver is more Precious than all His gifts. My heart cannot love or be attached to anything but Him alone. All else is nothing and often serves only to contaminate pure love, and to separate the soul from its Well-Beloved, Who wants to be loved solely and without self interest. I beg you to thank the Lord for His great mercies to me.

To Mother Louise- Henriette de Soudeilles, at Moulins

(14) From our monastery in Paray, July 1, 1682

If, most honored Mother,

I really was before God what your goodness makes you believe, I would be glad to prove to you the great affection and esteem I have for Your Charity, for I cherish you quite especially. But all that I am good for is to stop the flow of God's mercy. Be deceived no longer. For to tell you the truth briefly, I am a composite of every misery, powerless to do any good and most unworthy of the grace of God.

Yet I hope that in His Goodness He will not refuse us the grace necessary to fulfill our obligations. Your's are now very great indeed, and your burden can be lightened only by Him Who has promised to make His burden light. It goes without saying that that becomes the case especially when He Himself imposes the burden on us. Then He Himself sustains the one who carries it, He Himself is our strength and our support. Like an indulgent father, He often excuses our weaknesses. We need fear nothing in His Sacred Arms provided that we are diffident of ourselves and look to Him for everything. We ought to fear whatever comes from human nature. We must not trust it.

I am glad our Divine Master makes you see the circumstances that makes the burdens of your office even heavier. He wants them to be an occasion for having recourse to His Goodness more frequently. He will turn all things to His Glory and your good if only you carry out His plans, as I think you do. This is all the more true since your work, as Your Charity knows, imposes a heavier obligation on you. It seems to me that the title 'superior' requires that the one who bears it be a living image of Jesus Christ, and must represent Him in everything.

When He raises anyone to this dignity, He wants of her complete surrender of all self-interest. We must leave ourselves to His care, think only of doing His work well, look only to His greater glory in everything, love only through love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, and act only in His Spirit, letting Him live, reign and act in so far as we can. For it seems to me there is nothing so much to be feared, or more difficult, than to render an account for others.

I do not know dear Mother, why your humility offers my pride this opportunity of pushing itself to the fore. Alas, of what service can I be to you? Or my letters either, in which I say through ignorance or thoughtlessness whatever comes into my mind without being able to do otherwise. The Lord knows how much I love you, and that I desire Him to fill your heart with an abundance of His grace and pure love.

I think He will be very generous in granting you these after you have, by following the lights He gives, sweetened the bitterness which His adorable Heart has suffered. He will show you clearly what He wants. Do in peace what He inspires you to do. Pardon my too great liberty with you, beloved Mother. It is the reason why I never want to write. Help me by your holy prayers. I can assure you that I shall never forget you before Him, Whom I beg to be good enough to unite our hearts forever in His own most loving Heart.

To Mother Louise-Henriette de Soudeilles at Moulins,
From our monastery in Paray, July 7, 1682 (15)

I cannot most honored Mother,

get over the confusion caused by the honor you have done me, though I so little deserve it. One would, indeed, have to be as good and humble as Your Charity is to grant me the favor of your friendship. I wish I were able to repay you as you deserve. But at least I shall repay you as much as Our Lord Jesus Christ enables me to, since such a friendship tends only to unite us with His adorable Heart.

I often recommend you to Him in order that He Himself may be your strength and support and to help you to bare up bravely under the responsibilities of your office. For this intention, I shall make a novena for you, with the permission of superiors, saying each day the Litany of the Blessed Sacrament. But you must join your prayers with mine, for mine are quite powerless because of the little love I have for God. Ask of Him for me, dearest Mother that He may teach me to love Him by forgetting myself. He has given me an ardent desire for this, but I do not respond.

You have good reason to fear when you have to decide on the vocation of girls. That is indeed so difficult a task that, unless Our Lord Himself does it, there is great danger of being deceived. We must let Him act in the souls of those who present themselves, contributing on our part only what he shows us to be necessary for His glory. We must not be disturbed by any difficulties.

For when there is question of a true call from God, He knows how to make them overcome all difficulties. It is necessary to pray fervently for that. And it seems to me that when we have only God, in view and seek only His glory, we need fear nothing, because He regards only the good disposition of a heart that loves Him. I hope that yours, which I cherish very much in His adorable Heart, may be constantly consumed in the flames of this love which makes me completely and respectfully, most honored Mother: your very humble and obedient daughter and servant in Our Lord.

I had the pleasure of speaking for a very short time with Your dear Sister. She brought all your greetings and good wishes. I do not know how to express my gratitude to you, beloved Mother, for these as well as for the part you played in giving me the joy of seeing our most honored Sister and former superior (Mother de Saumaise).

But, alas, what is there to the joys of this life? There is nothing solid in them, and they pass away like a dream. I cannot understand how a heart that seeks its God and wants to love Him can relish any pleasure outside of Him. There must be no more of this thing called self. I can see no other happiness in this life than to remain always hidden away in ones own nothingness, suffering and loving in silence, embracing our crosses and praising and thanking Him Who sends them.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon

(16) August 25 1682.

It gives me real pleasure, dear Mother,

to take advantage of this occasion to reassure you of the genuine affection and respect of my heart, which is more than ever yours in the Heart of Jesus Christ. He wishes Your Charity to continue to show towards me all her love and maternal kindness. I can assure you that I do not forget you in His Holy Presence, where I make a thousand of petitions of blessings for you in the sweet retirement which I think you are now enjoying, and where at your leisure in the company and endearments of Our Divine Spouse. Oh, how good it is to love Him purely for the love of Himself!

I assure you dear Mother, that my poor heart burns incessantly this desire without my having yet succeeded in attaining its fulfillment. That is what makes life so bitter for me. Without this love it is but a heart death. Jesus Christ is the true friend of our hearts, and they are made for Him alone. They cannot find rest, joy or satisfaction except in Him. Let us love Him then, with all our might and show it by suffering everything in silence for His love. This love it is that sweetens all the bitterness of life and gives us great strength in the struggle we have to keep up continually against our enemies, and of these, we ourselves are the greatest.

Ah, how fortunate those souls who have so completely forgotten themselves that all their thoughts, love and attention are centered on this unique Friend of our hearts! Ask of Jesus Christ this grace for me. I have much confidence in your holy prayers and have very great need of them in the state of suffering in which His goodness continually keeps me. But I do not want to be freed from them, because the cross is the throne of the true lovers of Jesus Christ. I am not one of these, it is true. These sufferings are for my sins. But that does not matter. As long as we suffer with Jesus Christ, for love of Him and according to His designs that is sufficient.

You exercise the greatest influence over my wretched self. That is why I am going to tell you quite plainly what God wants from this soul you mention. He wants from her greater perfection than from most people. Those who direct her need have no fear of being an obstacle to Gods design on her, but simply pray to Him before they gave her advice.

Then she must follow that advice quite simply and forget about her own ideas. These she often confuses with the inspirations of grace. She must submit to the judgement of those who direct her. False inspirations do much harm, greatly retard progress toward perfection, and are obstacles to the designs of God, Who demands complete resignation and perfect submission from this soul. I am wholly yours.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon

(17) 1682

I have this complaint to make,

by loving me to much you do not love me well. You say you are vexed at one of the most precious gifts I have received from Our Good God's liberality. He has designed to give me a small share in His Crown of Thorns. It is all the more precious in that it is continual and frequently prevents me from lying down. So I pass the night most delightfully in the company of my Jesus, suffering through love. I tell you this so that Your Charity may share in my happiness and help me to thank Our Lord for ever continuing to show His mercy and generosity towards me.

To Mother Louise-Henriette de Soudelles, at Moulins.

(18) October 1682

I did not want to go into retreat without first answering your kind letter and begging at the same time, most honored Mother, the help of your holy prayers. I have the greatest need of them, I assure you. Would that Our Lord made you understand that, or at least what Your Charity considers me to be, which is anything but the reality.

I wish I could tell you how truly I love and esteem you in the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ. I beg Him to shower His Blessings on your government more and more, so that it may be in His Spirit and according to His designs. I know that He does not fail to enlighten you because He wants you to go straight to Him. If you want to win Him over so that He will take special care of you, abandon yourself completely to His adorable Heart.

Put off all self interest and work most earnestly and lovingly at the task He has given you to do. This is what I beg of Him with all my heart, beloved Mother. And I ask Him too, that He may give us His pure and Holy Love. May it unite us in time and eternity!

Especially, beloved Mother, never doubt the sincerity of my affection nor the share you have in my unworthy prayers.

To Mother Louise-Henriette de Soudeilles at Moulins.

(19) November, 1682

May the peace of the adorable Heart of Jesus be ever ours in all its fullness, most honored Mother, so that nothing can disturb the tranquility of our hearts. I am, then, writing to answer the letter with which Your Charity honored me. I gather from it that the one I gave myself the honor of writing you cause you worry.

Please, I beg in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, remain at peace all this. Do not take any stock in what I write you; for I put down with neither prudence nor reflection whatever comes into my mind. So do not worry about it any more, beloved Mother, and do not ask any further clarification of me. Suffice it to say that the Lord is pleased with the good will of our hearts.

I trust that His Heart will never refuse you the graces necessary for the perfect fulfillment of all the obligations He imposes on you. This beloved Mother is what I ask of Him for Your Charity. When I am in His Divine Presence, I beg countless blessings for you. You are very dear to me there, and your interests are uppermost in my poor heart when I am with Him.

I shall ever have for Your Charity all the esteem and respect of which a sincere affection is capable. Rest assured of this, beloved Mother, and do not forget my miseries in the presence of Our Lord. I am eager that our hearts remain united in His through His Divine Love in time and eternity. It is this same love which makes me wholly and respectfully yours.

To Mother Louise de Soudailles at Moulins

(20) From our monastery in Paray, January 6, 1683

Most Beloved And Honored Mother,

Both my sense of duty and the respectful attention Our Lord gives me for Your Charity, prompt me not to let any more of this new year go by without expressing to you my wish that it be filled with all the graces and blessings necessary for the perfect fulfillment of the most holy will of God in everything He asks of Your Charity.

For it seems to me that the true happiness of a soul consists of conformity with this most adorable will. It is in this our hearts finds its peace, our soul its joy and repose. He who clings to God is made of one spirit with God. This, I believe, is the true way of doing our own will. God in His loving goodness is pleased to make happy the soul in which He encounters no resistance.

On the contrary, things never go right with those who resist Him. He closes His ears to their requests, He looks on them without compassion, His Sacred Heart is irresponsive to their needs. I do not know why I am telling you all this, except perhaps because the Lord wants us to find all our pleasure in Him alone, so that He may give us all our hearts desires.

Alas dear Mother, what confusion I feel at talking to Your Charity in this way! But it all comes from a heart that wants to show its esteem for you and that wants to make some return for so many loving kindnesses. These cause me great confusion. But what causes me the greatest confusion of all is that Your Charity says she gets consolation from my letters.

It is really the Lord that gives you that, for I can assure Your Charity that very often I would not dare to write did I not hope that from my letters people would come to know me for the wretched and wicked creature sinner that I am. But may the Lord's Will, and not mine, be done! In His Holy Love, most honored Mother I am respectfully yours.

To Mother Louise Henriette de Soudelles

From Paray, March 28 1683 (21)

Truly, most honored Mother,

you cover me with confusion by doing me such honor: me, a wretched and miserable sinner. I left the world only to bury myself in eternal oblivion, to do penance for my so many sins and for the criminal life I have led. The fact that you do not know this is no reason why I should be justified or exempt from punishment.

The most rigorous punishment Divine Justice is making me feel just now is that so many saintly souls, animated by holy charity imagine that I really am what I ought to be. But the truth is rather that I am composite of every misery, defect, and imperfection, and merit all contempt.

Because I honor and esteem you immeasurably, I am sorry that one of your merit should be deceived and among the number of those who know me so little. Help me dear Mother, by your holy prayers, to become truly converted, and Your Charity shall not be the last either in my remembrance or in my prayers. Rest assured of this, for you are very dear to me in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon

(22) April 1683.

Dearest Mother,

May Jesus Christ risen from the dead always remain triumphant in our hearts! My heart finds consolation in binding itself to pay its debt to you. I must tell you under obedience that the Lord continues to shower His mercies on my infidelities only by an excess of His Love. May everything contribute to His greater glory!

On the feast of St Thomas (December 21, 1682) our most honored Mother ordered me in virtue of holy obedience to ask Our Lord to restore my health. It was getting so much worse that I thought I could hardly live much longer as I was.

He who willed to die through obedience gave me to understand how dear it is to Him. I was then in bed in the infirmary but got up to go to the choir to make my request of Him, though my sins rendered me unworthy of obtaining it. But He made me see that obedience could do anything. Since that time I have always been in such perfect health that it seems nothing can change it.

My cross now became an interior one so heavy that I could not have carried it for very long if the Hand, that sent it had not held me up. I thought His sanctity of Justice was showing me what hell is like, or rather Purgatory, since I did not loose the desire of loving God. I felt such great agony at having to go the round of daily exercises, that I thought I would have to be dragged to them with ropes.

I thought I no longer had mind or will or imagination or memory. Everything was gone. I had no ambition at all. All these afflictions caused me such keen suffering that I thought they had sunk into the very marrow of my bones. Everything in me suffered. Yet I felt perfectly resigned to the Holy Will of God, Whose ways I adore.

I must tell you that this indisposition of mine was shown me to be but a tiny reflection and participation in the suffering of Our Lord in the Garden of Olives. How great my dear Mother, are the mercies He has shown so great a sinner! Praise the Lord for not having plunged me into the very depths of hell for my countless sins.

While I was making the prayer you know I make on the night between Thursday and Friday, I was shown a holy soul from Purgatory for whom I had been favored with these sufferings.

Our Mother gave me to the souls in Purgatory Holy Thursday night, allowing me to spend it before the Blessed Sacrament. Part of that time I was as though surrounded by these poor suffering souls with whom I have contracted a close friendship. Our Lord told me that He was giving me to them this year so that I might do for them all the good I could. They are often with me. I call them simply my suffering friends.

There is one of them especially that causes me much suffering, although I cannot bring her as much relief as I would wish. I am not allowed to give her name but I do ask you to help her. She will not be ungrateful.

You knew her at least by name but I do ask you to help her by performing for her nine acts each day from now to the feast of the Ascension, four of charity and five of humility.

Offer the four acts of charity in honor of the ardent charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the five acts of humility in reparation for the humiliations He suffered in His Passion. How grateful I shall be to you if you get some other members of your community to help her in this same way.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon

May 2, 1683 (23)

My soul is filled with such great consolation, dear Mother, that I can hardly stand it. Let me pour some of it into your heart so that mine, which hardly ever leaves the Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ, may be relieved. This morning, Good Shepherd Sunday (May 2nd, 1683), when I awoke, two of my good friends suffering in Purgatory came to bid me goodbye.

This was to be the day on which the Sovereign Shepherd would receive them into His eternal fold and, accompanied by more than a million others, they were taken up midst songs of inexpressible joy.

One of them is good Mother Monthoux (died February 5, 1683), the other my dear Sister Jeanne Catherine Gacon (died January 18th, 1683) who repeated to me over and over again these words: "Love triumphs, love enjoys, love rejoices in her God." The other said "How happy are the dead who die in the Lord, and religious who live and die in the exact observance of their rule!"

They want me to tell you for them death can indeed separate friends but not destroy their union. This message is from good Mother Monthoux. Sister Jeanne Catherine will be as good a daughter to you in Heaven as you have been a good Mother to her on earth.

If only you knew how my soul was transported with joy! While I was still speaking to them I saw them gradually lost and as it were swallowed up in glory. They wish you to say in thanksgiving to the Blessed Trinity, A Te Deum, a Laudate, and a Gloria Patri five times. As I was begging them not to forget us they said to me these parting words: "Ingratitude has never yet entered Heaven."

If you only knew the suffering that other one has caused me (See the proceeding letter). It is simply inexpressible. Give me a few drops of water with which to refresh her, for I am in the flames with her.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon

(24) October or November 1683

Dearest Mother,

I think I ought to rejoice with you at your good fortune in having in Heaven so powerful an advocate in the person of the most honored Mother Boulier (superior at Dijon, died September 7, 1683) rather than share the grief you feel at the loss of so holy a friend, I must say that, although I never had the pleasure of meeting her, I loved and esteemed her beyond words. I cannot bring myself to grieve over losing her because I feel sure she is enjoying her sovereign Good. He makes her all powerful to show us the marks of true friendship.

The friendship our Lord gives me for Your Charity makes me find consolation in pouring out my heart to you, notwithstanding the repugnance you know I feel in speaking of myself. I tell you sincerely that my life and actions are so little in conformity with the graces God gives me that I shudder when I think of them, and still more when I write of them, so that I am hardly able to bring myself to do so.

It seems to me that everything I say is an illusion. I think I ought to bury everything in oblivion in so far as I can without failing in that holy simplicity and sincerity a soul should have that wants to belong wholly to God, to be attached to Him and live for Him alone.

He is more precious than all His gifts. But of these gifts that of His pure love surpasses all others. It alone should take possession of us, make us work and make us suffer. For it never lets a heart rest. Let us surrender ourselves to its ardor, so that we may love Him with our whole being. Everything must be subservient to that, everything bend and yield before His Holy Love.

This is the greatest desire He gave me during the retreat in the course of which His Goodness often made me say to Him: "If Your consolation in pouring out my heart to you, notwithstanding the repugnance you know I feel in speaking of myself. I tell you sincerely that my life and actions are so little in conformity with the graces God gives me that I shudder when I think of them, and still more when I write of them, so that I am hardly able to bring myself to do so.

It seems to me that everything I say is an illusion. I think I ought to bury everything in oblivion in so far as I can without failing in that holy simplicity and sincerity a soul should have that wants to belong wholly to God, to be attached to Him alone.

He is more precious than all His gifts. But of these gifts that of His pure love surpasses all others. It alone should take possession of us, make us work and make us suffer. For it never lets a heart rest. Let us surrender ourselves to its ador, so that we may Him with our whole being. Everything must be subservient to that, everything bend and yield before this holy love.

This is the greatest desire He gave me He gave me during the retreat in the course of which His goodness often made me say to Him: "If Your consolations and liberality are so great towards those poor miserable

creatures who merely have a desire to love You, what will You not do for them who, with a heart completely divested of all things, love You purely of Yourself!"

I think you belong to this class. I desire to be in it too. By that love which unites us in His adorable Heart, ask this grace of Him for me and for all hearts capable of loving Him. I am not forgetting you in His holy presence. There your interests are mine.

That is why I am glad the Lord left you in peace (she was not re-elected superior.) Now you will have more leisure to be with this Well-Beloved of our souls and rest more sweetly on His loving breast. I hope you will be consumed with the flames of His purest love. May we be so firmly united by them as never to be separated from His divine love. Amen.

To the Elder Miss Chamberland, at Moulons

(25) February 8, 1684

I pray that the Lord Himself will be your strength and bring you to perfection of His spouses truly crucified. To arrive at this they must offer Him their heart and affection without reserve, they must become His handmaids truly crucified. Would you like to know the full import of these words, my dear sister? If you did, would you have enough courage to put them into practice? Can you die continually to your own inclinations, passions, pleasures, in a word to everything that belongs to unmortified human nature, so as to make Jesus Christ live in you by His grace and love? Nor is even all this enough. He is not content with the crucifixion you inflict upon yourself.

Much more pleasing to Him will be that which others inflict upon you. Often, too, He is pleased to do this Himself by afflicting you interiorly and exteriorly. But what difference does it make to you who seem so eager to belong wholly to God, whatever the way and whatever the road He leads you? As long as He is satisfied, that should be enough for us.

Let us not be disturbed by little disagreeable things we have to suffer, which usually come only because we do not work hard enough at mortifying ourselves and simplifying our lives by controlling the repetitions and reflections of self-love. That makes us want to suffer only what we ourselves desire instead of profiting by the occasions divine providence furnishes us without our having sought or foreseen them.

You want me to tell you, my dear sister, what vocation I think you ought to choose. All I can say is that you should follow the advice of your spiritual director. You say he does not know you. I am very surprised at that because we show how efficacious our good desires really are by our works rather than our words. Words are suspect unless our actions match them.

Think this over carefully. Where there is question of taking vows there is question of salvation. Vows add new merit or demerit to our actions, as you well know. Honestly, I cannot reconcile with a soul that wants to belong Wholly to God these two things: being frequently and deliberately wanting in sincerity and true simplicity, and at the same time not being aware of it. I do not see how a sincere soul can make use of subterfuges and circumvention in word and action.

It must travel along the straight road of those who always have God in view in everything. Without more ado they must take for their motto: "Whether alone or with others, I shall do neither more nor less, since God sees me everywhere and knows the recesses of my heart."

I cannot believe, my dear sister, that you are guilty of these defects. They seem to me so horrible and so incompatible with the Spirit of God and His love that a soul guilty of them can never make any progress in perfection or acquire any true virtue. Not only that. By being wanting in simplicity one gives oneself over to the enemy and makes oneself his plaything. Such a soul he deceives at will. He dominates us provided we keep his secret for him.

On the contrary nothing causes him greater confusion or renders him more powerless than sincere avowal of our faults. We must manifest simply the good and the bad to those who direct us, neither dissimulating nor exaggerating. Then they will come to know us well and lead us to that perfection God demands of us. We must listen with humility and submission to what they say and carry it out in all simplicity, no matter it is-where,, of course, there is no offense against God.

This, my dear friend, is what occurs to me just now. I do not know why God should allow me to talk to you so much about simplicity unless it is because He so abhors any insincerity.

When I see in a soul all the other virtues but not sincerity, when even it is favored with all the other graces Our Lord showers upon His dearest friends, even then I say, without sincerity all these other virtues and graces seem to me but a delusion and a snare. But I have written enough. Do whatever this good Father tells you, for he desires your true welfare for the glory of God.

To Mother Peronne-Rosalie Greyfie, at Semur

(26) July, 1684

How can it be, most honored Mother,

that, with so many faults and shortcomings, my soul should so hunger for suffering and mortification? When I recall that you were so charitable as to nourish it with this bread, so delicious though bitter to nature, and that now I am deprived of it, no doubt because of the poor use I made of it, I am overcome with grief.

Nothing has bound me so closely to Your Charity as the way you treated me.

I cannot think of it without feeling deep gratitude to you. You could not have given me truer proofs of perfect friendship than by humbling and mortifying me. Although you did this very little considering the reasons I gave you for doing so, even this little was consoling and sweetened the bitterness of life, whereas the privation of it makes life unbearable. I could not live without suffering. Yet ever since I began to suffer, ever since the Lord blessed me with so greater good, I have not known how to make good use of it.

There is nothing that I so earnestly wish to do well and still do so poorly. That is because I am so much lacking in love for God through being so much given to loving myself. O my dear Mother, how it is to live without loving the sovereign Good, without suffering for this love! Love demands works. Yet only my words are good, whereas my works are evil. I felt as though I was living in safety under your direction because you always made me go contrary to my natural inclinations. That was pleasing to the Spirit I thought was leading me.

He always wants to see me overwhelmed with every kind of humiliation, suffering and contradiction. Other wise He gives me no rest. Nature does not like all that, but this Spirit which governs mine cannot suffer me to have any pleasure except that of having none.

Sometimes it seems everything conspires to torment me. Yet I am not worried. My longing to die is greater than ever. I cannot bring myself to ask of God the added years of life you told me to, except on the condition that they all be employed in loving the Sacred Heart of my Jesus in silence and penance and that I may never offend Him any more, living day and night before the blessed Sacrament. This Divine Heart ever present there is all my consolation here below.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon

(27) August 10, 1684

My Dear Mother,

God is urging me more than ever to love Him and to suffer, and to abandon myself completely to Him. Yet, alas, my heart seems irresponsive to every movement of grace. What I value the most after Himself is the gift of His Precious Cross. Ah, dear Mother, if people only knew its worth, they would not so flee from it and cast it from them but rather so cherish and love it that they would not be able to find any pleasure except in the Cross, no rest but on the Cross.

Neither would they have any other desire but to die in its arms, condemned and despised by all. For that however, pure love must offer our hearts as a sacrifice and consume them, as it did the Heart of our good Master. I must confess that life for me is a continuous martyrdom. I want to die, yet I have not lived one single moment for God. We must begin in earnest to live only for Him and in Him.

If you only knew how much merit and glory there is in honoring this loving Heart of the adorable Jesus and how great will be the recompense for those who, having consecrated themselves to It, strive only to honor It! Yes it seems to me that this intention alone will gain for them more merit, will make their actions more pleasing before God, than everything else they can do without this intention.

To Mother Louise Henriette de Soudeilles, at Moulins

(28) From our monastery in Paray, November 3, 1684

Blessed and loved be the Lord forever, most esteemed and beloved Mother, Who has not given us the consolation of answering you sooner. He did not fail, however, to keep you in my poor heart, and in such away that I rarely forget you in His Holy Presence.

But I must say I am afraid I may be the reason why He does not make your dear soul feel the effects of His Holy love to the extent you desire. For alas, my dear Mother, it is but too true that I am only an obstacle to every good and a compound of every kind of wretchedness of body and soul. My support in my weakness, however, is the realization that Our Lord is pleased to show forth His infinite mercies through His most wretched creatures.

But to return to Your Charity I shall simply tell you, as a true friend in the adorable Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that when I pray to Him for you this thought occurs to me: if you want to live wholly for Him and attain that perfection He desires of you, you must make a complete sacrifice of yourself and all that you have without reserve, to His Sacred Heart. You must no longer will anything but with the will of this most loving Heart, love nothing except with His love, act only according to the lights he gives you, undertake nothing without first asking His council and help.

All the glory must be His. You must thank Him for the ill as well as for the good success of your undertakings, always satisfied, never worrying about anything. As long as this divine Heart is satisfied, loved and glorified, that must be enough for us. If you wish, then, to be numbered among His friends, you will offer Him this sacrifice of yourself some first Friday after Communion. This Communion you will offer for this intention and then consecrate yourself entirely to Him, in order that you may render Him and procure for Him all the love, honor, and glory you can. In all this you must follow His inspirations.

After that you will not regard yourself in any other way than as belonging to and dependent upon the adorable Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ. You must have recourse to It in all your necessities and take up your abode there in so far as you can. He will make up for what is wanting in your imperfect actions and sanctify your good ones if only you conform yourself in everything to His holy will. He has great plans in store for you. He will procure much glory for Himself through you if you will only let Him do so.

Pardon, dear Mother, this proud woman who tells you so freely what she thinks. Do not be displeased. All this comes from a heart that has for Your Charity nothing but friendship, esteem and respect. But I am hurt by your thinking so often that I forget you. Can one forget what Our Lord has made so dear? So put away that thought, and always keep a little place in your memory for the one who is wholly yours in the love of the Sacred Heart, which unites and transforms ours into Itself for time and eternity.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon

(29) 1685

O dear Mother

How wonderful it is to love this Lord so lovable! Should He give a heart to understand ever so little how good and lovable He is, could such a heart help but love Him and quit everything in order to abandon itself to the power of this love? I assure you I have never before felt such a burning desire to love Him.

But ineffectually, alas, for this accursed love of self ruins everything. We must love this only Love of our hearts no matter what it costs us. All our joy and happiness are bound up in this. It seems to me that all other thoughts and occupations are only a waste of time. I have never before better understood the value of time. It seems to me that each moment is going to be my last. I have wasted my whole life, I have not yet begun to love my God.

Ah, dear Mother, what suffering this causes me! And to think that I may have let myself serve this miserable body, my bitterest enemy, which wages continual war against me! If only I could tell you of my infidelities and ingratitude... (a sentence is missing). This loving Heart, I assure you, is at present my whole occupation, not only during prayer but always. I find in It a paradise of peace which makes me indifferent to everything else. Everything else seems contemptible in comparison.

It would give me the greatest pleasure to have a heart to heart talk with you. But that is not to be any longer in this life of privation. We must not have any pleasure except that of not having any for the love of Him Who, during the whole course of His mortal life, willed to be deprived of it for love of us.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon or To Mother Greyfie, at Semur

(30) April 20, 1685

Dearest Mother,

During this holy time of Our divine Master's loving visits (Eastertide) I pray His sacred Heart to consume ours in the flames of His holy love, and that not only in time but for eternity. The confidence your friendship inspires in me makes it easy to open my heart to you and beg your help in a matter that is causing me a great deal of trouble. It is with regard to our poor Sister J.F. who, I think has appeared to me twice now.

The first time she gave me some particulars about herself and spoke of some other people I cannot mention. About her though, I can tell you this much: she almost lost her soul and was saved only by the Blessed Virgin. During her last agony Satan assaulted her so furiously on three different occasions that for a while she did not know if she was lost or saved.

Then the Blessed Virgin came and snatched her from the very clutches of the devil. God permitted that I should be on duty at the time because the assistant infirmarian was sick. You would have pitied her had you had seen the terrible struggle she was going through: she trembled in every limb. Three times she cast herself from her bed onto the floor, and once one could hear her say: "I am damned!" But she was always conscious and her mind on God.

The first time I saw her after her death she said to me: "Ah, what cruel pains I suffer! Five years will be a very long time in such rigorous torments." I asked her what she wanted. She asked for Masses and several other things our most honored Mother kindly granted. I offered for her everything I would do and suffer for six months.

Since that time, you may be sure, sufferings have not been wanting. Our Lord has sent me as much as I could bear, and in every form. During this time I have had a sore finger. That was at the beginning of Lent (March 7). It had to be lanced to the bone with a razor and it is not yet healed. But blessed be the Lord Who has deigned to favor me with His cross. It is my glory.

The second time this good Sister made me see the pitiable state she was in. She said "Oh, my poor Sister, what terrible torments I suffer! Although I suffer for many things, there are three especially for which I suffer more than all the rest. The first is my vow of obedience, which I so poorly observed. I only obeyed when I liked, and such obedience merits only condemnation in God's sight. The second is my vow of poverty.

I was not willing to feel privation and allowed my body many superfluous creature comforts. Ah, how I am paying now for pampering it! How hateful in the eyes of God are those religious who want to have more than is truly necessary and are not perfectly detached! The third thing for which I suffer especially is my lack of charity, for having caused discord between others and being involved in it myself. For this the prayers

offered for me are not applied to me here. The Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ sees me suffer without compassion because I had none for others when I saw them suffering."

She asked me to write to you and beg you to have three Masses said for her. She also asked that for nine days you offer your Rosary and all your acts of fidelity in the observance of the rule, and a Communion. This will give her much relief, in her suffering, she says. She will not be ungrateful. This my dear Mother, is all I can tell you about it.

As for our poor Sister M.F., I think she will not have more than six months in purgatory. Then she will go to enjoy her sovereign Good.

With regard to what Your good Charity asks about good Mother Boulier, deceased. She no longer needs our help, it seems to me. I think she is high in glory, among the ranks of those Seraphim destined to render perpetual homage to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ in reparation for the terrible outrages He has suffered in the Blessed Sacrament from our ingratitude and coldness. She is very powerful to help you. And now that is all I can say about her.

Ah, dear Mother, how much obliged I should be to you if you would help me comfort my dear friends suffering in purgatory. That is what I call these poor souls: my friends. There is nothing I would not be willing to do and suffer to console them. Rest assured that they will not be ungrateful.

A word about myself. Our Lord keeps on doing me many favors, altogether unworthy though I be. The one I consider most precious is conformity with Him in His life of suffering and humiliation. He keeps me in a state of such perfect submission to His good pleasure that I no longer care in what condition He places me. As long as He is satisfied and I can love Him, that is enough. This is what He suggests for me to dwell upon: "The cross do I glory to bear, and love for it leadeth me e'er; love divine my whole being doth own, and for me love sufficient alone."

I beg you to burn this letter after you have read it, and that it be seen only by you.

I do not know whether or not I am being deceived in everything I mention to you in this letter. I beg the Lord to enlighten you. I am sure I could not have been dreaming because I was not asleep, nor was I in bed. But I distrust myself.

To Mother Louise-Henriette de Soudeilles at Moulins

(31) From our monastery in Paray, June 30, 1685

I though most honored Mother,

that Your Charity had completely forgotten me. But your kindness shown through your letter to our dear Sister Marie Anne Cordier tells me the opposite. You must rest assured that Our Lord has given me so strong an inclination to love and esteem you in His Sacred Heart that I would never forget you in His divine presence even though you completely forgot me as unworthy of any remembrance.

I was pleased to hear of your re-election. I do not see beloved Mother, why you are so grieved at it, since it is the Will of God. His arm is not shortened nor His power diminished, so He can be your strength in the future as he has been in the past. What, then, have you to fear? All He asks is that have confidence in His goodness. Then you will experience His gentle strength to help you in your needs. This, however, will always be in proportion to your confidence in Him.

My confidence is that Your Charity will obtain for me by your holy prayers pardon for the poor use I have made of my holy vocation up till now and the grace to be faithful to it and to everything it demands of me. You would feel the effects of my prayers for you, too, I can assure you, if I were not so wicked. But alas, they are too tepid to get to the source of love. I hope you will be completely buried and consumed in it, and that we shall never cease to love Our Lord with all our hearts. With sincere respect I am wholly and cordially yours.

To Mother Louise-Henriette de Soudeilles at Moulins

(32) From our monastery in Paray, August 17, 1685

I cannot express most honored Mother, the pleasure I felt when reading your last letter, I saw your desire of belonging wholly to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ. For I think that it is the way to make sure of our salvation, which is so much in peril in this life of misery and corruption. But when we are completely consecrated and pledged to this adorable Heart, to love and honor It as much as we can, abandoning ourselves entirely to It, Our Lord takes care of us and sees to it that, in spite of all storms, we come safely into the harbor of salvation.

Dear Mother, do pray the Lord that I may save my soul and not be deprived forever of loving Him! Yes, I want to love Him no matter what it costs, and I hope that you will love Him so ardently that your heart will be consumed. Since He who loves is all powerful, let us love Him and nothing will seem difficult to us.

But this love does not reign except in suffering. It does not triumph except in true humility. One cannot enjoy it except through union with Him. We shall find it in the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and in His Heart we shall help each other to attain it. Your Charity may be sure that I shall not forget her there. In It I feel especially drawn to love and esteem you. All for His glory and love, in which I am completely and most affectionately yours.

Note sent by the Saint to Sister Marie-Madeleine des Escures, religious in the same community with her in Paray.

(33) (Probable date: towards end of August 1685)

Do not be surprised that I address you as my dear friend in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ.

He wants me to write to you in this way in order to tell you of the great pain I am suffering on account of my Sister V. (Sr. Françoise Rosalie Verchère) The point is this. This morning on rising I thought I clearly heard these words: "Tell your superior that she has displeased me very much because in order to please others, she did not hesitate to offend Me by refusing to let you make the Communion I had ordered you to make each first Friday of the month.

By offering Me to My eternal Father in that Holy Communion you were to make satisfaction to His Divine Justice through the merits of My Sacred Heart should any fault be committed against Charity. For I have chosen you as a victim for this. Because she has forbidden you to do My Will in this matter, I am determined to demand sacrifice of this victim who is now suffering."

This my dear Sister, torments and haunts me continuously. I cannot put it out of my mind because I feel that I must tell our Mother. Quite naturally, I am afraid to do so, because I think all this is but a ruse of the devil, who wants to make me singular by this Communion. Or maybe the whole thing is just my imagination, or an illusion, because it is not to so miserable a hypocrite as myself that the Lord would give such a grace as this.

I beg you, my dear friend to tell me what you think and thus free me from this anguish, since Our Lord wants me to ask you. Do me this favor, all flattery aside. I am afraid I am resisting God. I cannot tell you how much I am suffering on this score. Ask Him to let you see this thing in its true light and to let you know what He wants you to tell me. After that I will try not to think of it anymore.

I ask another favor of you: keep this secret and burn this letter. If you knew how wicked I am, you would not have difficulty in telling me that all this is not from God. That is what I think. One has to love another as much as I love you in order to be able to write to her like this.

But I do so in secret sanctuary of the Sacred Heart. He will reward you, I hope, for the charity you show me. I do not have sufficient good judgment or discernment in my own case. In what concerns myself, I prefer to follow the will of another rather than my own. I find no difficulty in believing what another says about me, unless she says something good. For I am wicked and full of defects.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon

(34) 1685

I can scarcely recognize myself in the state of suffering in which I find myself overwhelmed and annihilated. I am powerless to do any good. The only thing I am still free to do, dear Mother, is to speak of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

When I feel my sufferings increase I experience the same joy the avaricious ambitious do on seeing their treasures increase. It seems to me I sometimes suffer for the poor souls in purgatory. Ah, dear Mother, how grateful I should be if you would help me by your prayers to alleviate the pains of my dear friends suffering in purgatory. Dear friends: that is what I call them. There is nothing I would not be willing to do and suffer to relieve them. I assure you they are not ungrateful.

I do not know whether I am deceiving myself in this, but I no longer take any pleasure in anything in this miserable life except the interests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Often He nails me to the cross despoiled of everything.

This is what came into my mind with regard to our institute. Our Father, Saint Francis of de sales, that great friend of God, fearing the foundations of his edifice might crumble, asked for something that would sustain it. The Sacred Heart of Jesus was given Him for that. This Sacred Heart would raise it up again, be its place of refuge against the attacks of its enemies, support it in the future so that it would not fall.

It is through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin that he has obtained this Powerful Protector. Through the unction of his Charity and the sweetness of His divine love He will shower abundantly the treasures of His sanctifying grace on those who accept Him and place themselves under His protection.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon

(35) August 24, 1685

I assure you, beloved Mother,

that the state of suffering in which I find myself overwhelmed and annihilated makes it impossible for me to recognize myself and powerless to do any good. The only thing I can still do is speak of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ. This unworthy creature will now write you a few words about It, a few words concerning some special graces she thinks she has received.

He gave her again to understand that He takes great pleasure in being honored by His creatures. He then seemed to promise her "that all those who are devoted to this Sacred Heart will never perish and that, since He is the source of all blessings, He will shower them in abundance where on every place where an image of this loving Heart shall be exposed to be loved and honored.

By this means He will reunite broken families and assist and protect those in any necessity. He will spread the soothing unction of His ardent charity on every religious community in which this Divine Image is honored. He will turn aside the blows of the Just Wrath of God by restoring them to His Grace when through sin they have fallen from it. He will bestow a special grace of salvation and sanctification on the first person who gives Him the pleasure of having this holy image made."

But the slight reliance which this poor weak sinner ought to and in fact does place, because of her great unworthiness, on all that happens in her gives her no assurance that anything will be accomplished except through obedience. However, while she felt a strong compulsion in this matter but yet did not know what excuse to give for herself except her own impotence, Our Lord inspired a young man just from Paris, a relative of one of the novice Sisters.

When the novice presented the matter to him, he offered with admirable zeal to have this picture made, and as beautifully as should be desired. It is only necessary now to give him the design. I commend all this to your holy prayers so that it may succeed for His glory. For there is no end of obstacles, and all this miserable sinner has to do is get herself mixed up in it and they will multiply on all sides.

Here, my dear Mother, are a few passing words that my heart, which loves you tenderly, casts into the secret interior of yours. I tell you plainly that I think you will do a thing very pleasing to God if you consecrate and sacrifice yourself to this Sacred Heart, if you have not already done so.

You must receive Holy Communion on some first Friday of the month and, after it, offer Him the sacrifice of yourself by dedicating to Him your whole being to be employed in His service and to procure for Him all the glory, love, and praise you can. This, my good Mother, is what I think the divine Heart demands to perfect and consummate the work of your sanctification.

As for my poor suffering souls in purgatory, I am truly more obliged to you for the good you have done

them than if you had done it to myself. Do not think that they will be ungrateful. No, never. Although poor Sister N, still suffers much, she will not forget the good you have done her.

I have commended to the Sacred Heart of Jesus the person you have mentioned. I think that if she is able to take the generous step of surrendering herself to God by a complete consecration to Him, she will accomplish what He is asking of her and make her salvation sure.

If you only knew, my good Mother, how difficult it is for me to say all this. The thought that I am nothing but a hypocrite deceiving people by a false show of piety makes me suffer much. Believe me, I see myself so far removed from that disinterestedness God expects of me that I think all my actions condemn me. That is why I so earnestly beg you to burn all my letters. I do not want anything so miserable a sinner has written to remain behind to recall her memory after death. I wish to remain blotted out and buried in eternal oblivion.

Since I am opening my heart to you I may as well honestly admit that this urgent desire I feel to see myself forgotten and contemned by creatures makes it a continual martyrdom for me to have to perform the daily duties of the religious life and write letters and go to the parlor. This seems a very hell to me.

What makes it even more painful is that I think I can no longer express the repugnance I feel for these things without offending Our Lord because of a promise I made in connection with one of our little Sisters. When she lay dangerously ill and in a coma and, what grieved our dear Mother very much, not able to receive the last sacraments, Our dear Mother had me receive Holy Communion for this intention.

Then when I earnestly asked for this favor it seemed I distinctly heard these words: "She will have the consolation of receiving all the sacraments necessary at the hour of death if you are willing to make the sacrifice of not showing repugnance any more to your duties, nor at having to answer those whom I will direct to you at having to go to the parlor." I at once made the sacrifice of all that because I wanted what we were asking for to be granted.

At the same time I made a promise to my Sovereign not even to show the repugnance I might feel on this score. But it has become so violent since that promise that I am at fault every time. I feel interior reproach at having received what I asked for and yet not keeping my promise. You judge, my dear Mother, whether that ought not cause me great distress.

O, how fortunate I should consider myself if I were unknown to everyone and buried in eternal oblivion, yet without ever forgetting you before Our Lord. By His love I beg you to tell me what you think about what I have told you. Give me a few words of encouragement, too, to help me travel along this road on which I have no natural support or consolation. But that is not because I do not have a good Mother, as good and charitable a Mother as anyone could wish. God simply wills it so. May His holy name be blessed eternally!

To Mother Greyfie, at Semur

(36) 1685

If only you knew how much I feel drawn to the love of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ! It seems to me life has been given me only for that. And yet I do just the opposite! He does me favors constantly and I repay Him only with ingratitude. He favored me with a visit which was wonderfully fruitful by reason of the holy sentiments it left in my heart.

He has strengthened me in the conviction that He takes great pleasure in being loved, known and honored by His creatures. This pleasure is so great that, if I am not mistaken, He promised me that all those who are devoted and consecrated to Him will never be lost.

Since He is the source of all blessings, He will shower them in abundance on every place where a picture of His divine Heart shall be set up and honored. He will reunite broken families, will protect and help those who are in necessity and those who approach Him with confidence. He will pour out the sweet unction of His ardent Charity on every religious community that honors Him and places itself under His special protection. He will turn aside the blows of divine Justice so as to restore to grace those who have fallen from it.

He has given me to understand that His Sacred Heart is the Holy of Holies, the very sanctuary of love. He wishes that It be now recognized as the Mediator between God and men. He is all powerful to bring them peace, turning aside the just punishments our sins have drawn upon us and obtaining mercy for us.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon

(37) 1685

Truly, dearest Mother,

I feel great confusion at your thinking that a poor wicked sinner like myself can know the science of the saints and speak their language. You are letting yourself be deceived, and letting me be deceived also, by giving credence to anything I say. I tell you everything quite simply as Your Charity says she wants me to do.

This is what I think on the subject you asked me about: If the person you mention accepts what is offered her and does her best to make good use of it, she will glorify God and sanctify her soul. But she must do everything only with the aim of pleasing God. I am not forgetting to pray, either, for the other person about whom you wrote.

But the Sacred Heart of Our Lord will reign with difficulty over hers because she lets pleasure rule over it too much. We most hope for everything from the goodness of our God, in Whose love, dearest Mother, I am yours.

To Mother Greyfie, at Semur

(38)

I can no longer occupy myself with anything but the Sacred Heart of my Savior.

I would die content if I had but procured for Him some honor, even though I should reap eternal punishment as a reward. Provided I can love Him and He reigns, that is enough for me.

Because of contradictions, I have often been on the point of ceasing to speak of It, but I was so severely reprimanded for the empty fears by which satan was trying to intimidate me, and afterwards so encouraged and strengthened, that I resolved, no matter what it might cost me, to persevere to the end, as long as obedience did not forbid it. In that case I would drop everything because I always yield my views and sentiments to it.

To Mother Greyfie, at Semur

(39) January, 1686

I thought you were going to tell me not to think any more about introducing this devotion to the Sacred Heart,

just as if it were an empty figment of my imagination. And I was ready to submit, so little credence do I give to what takes place in me. But when my eyes rested upon the picture you sent of this only object of our love, I think I can say I took on a new life. I had been plunged in a sea of bitterness and suffering, but all this was changed into such great peace and submission to all the dispositions of divine Providence in my regard that since then it seemed nothing could disturb me.

My only desire now is to procure glory for this Sacred Heart. How happy I should consider myself if, before I die, I could give Him some pleasure! You can be of great service to me in bolstering up my poor failing courage. It is always a new death to me when I must show myself and make myself known. Now it is worse than ever.

The more I try to bury myself in my nothingness and live in that abyss, poor and quite unknown to everybody, the more new acquaintances He brings me. But, ah, why have I deceived people so much! I have no heavier cross. Yet if Our Lord, in His sweet bounty, would not send me humiliations and contradictions, which are my just due, I should be disconsolate.

But I am talking beside the point and not sticking to what I was saying to you about the devotion to the Sacred Heart and the plan of having it honored. I think He showed me the names of several people written there because of their desire to cause It to be honored. For that reason He will never allow them to be effaced.

But He did not tell me that His friends would have nothing to suffer. Rather, He wants them to make their greatest happiness consist in tasting the bitterness He suffered. I say these few words in passing to explain to you the goodness and desires of Our Sovereign Master.

Ah, how could it be possible for us not to want to love Him with all our might and strength, in spite of all opposition! It is not wanting, as you well know. But I am determined either to overcome these obstacles with the help of this adorable Heart of Jesus Christ, or to die.

I cannot tell you the consolation you have given me in sending the picture of this loving Heart. I was very much consoled also at your being willing, together with your whole community, to help us honor It. That caused me transports of joy a thousand times greater than if you had put me in possession of all the treasures of earth!

To Mother Greyfie, at Semur
(40) (Around February, 1686)

I cannot sufficiently express my joy at the growth of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of my Savior. I seem to live only for that. He sometimes enkindles me in my heart so ardent a desire to make Him reign in all hearts that there is nothing I would not be willing to do and suffer for that. Even the pains of hell would be sweet, if I could suffer them without sin.

One day when I was inflamed with this ardent desire in the presence of the Blessed sacrament, He showed me, if I am not deceiving myself, the intense love and joy of the Seraphim, and I heard these words: "Would you not prefer to rejoice with them than to suffer and be humiliated and despised, so as to contribute to the establishment of my reign in the hearts of men?"

At that, without a moment's hesitation, I embraced the Cross all bristling with thorns and nails which was presented to me, and exclaimed over and over again, "O, my only Love! O, I would find it much more sweet and desirable, and would far prefer to suffer in order to make you known and loved, if only You honor me with this grace, than to be deprived of these things and become one of these glowing Seraphs!" This disposition has remained with me ever since, and I have enjoyed such tender manifestations of love on the part of this adorable Heart that it is impossible for me to describe them.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon

(41) March 2, 1686.

Dearest Mother,

I would be glad to know whether you will be able to have a copper-plate made for printing pictures of the Sacred Heart of Our good Master. I think He has chosen you for that. He has made this very clear to me, for others have offered themselves and tried to do what they could to make a success of it but have gotten nowhere.

That is why I must approach Your Charity and tell you what I think to be the will of this Divine Heart. He manifested it to me in this way: you were the first He wanted me to tell of His ardent desire to be known, loved, and glorified by His creatures. I do not know whether I am deceiving myself or whether you remember what I told you or not, but I do know this: I feel myself strongly urged to tell you for Him that it would be a great piece of good fortune for you if you could procure Him this honor.

The reward shall not be wanting. It is purely for His Glory and it seems to me dear Mother, that He will increase your own glory if you do this. Moreover, your name will be written indelibly in this Sacred Heart. But since He wishes that you give Him this pleasure disinterestedly, purely out of love for Him, He does not allow me to tell you other nice things He has in store for you if you give him this consolation.

We shall take no further action till after you have refused. Let us know whether you are in a position to do anything. I am told that it will certainly cost two louis d'or (about ten dollars). I have been ordered to approach someone else if you refuse. Do not let what I am telling you worry you. I am simply saying what I think. You can give it some consideration and then do what ever Our Lord inspires you to do.

You well know, my good Mother, that you have a great share in this holy devotion, and that you ought to interest yourself in it as much as you can. I assure you that I would die content if only I could see this Sacred Heart known, loved, and honored. But I am only an obstacle. How fortunate are those souls who are wholly His; who love only in Him and for Him!

On the feast of our holy founder (St. Francis de Sales, January 29) it seemed to me he showed me very clearly his ardent desire that the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ be known, loved and honored by all the members of his Institute.

He said that this was the most efficacious means he had been able to obtain to raise it up after its falls and to prevent it from succumbing to a spirit foreign to it, a spirit full of pride and ambition, which seeks only to ruin the spirit of humility and simplicity on which the edifice rests. Satan is eager to destroy this but he will not be able to do so if this Sacred Heart be its defense and support....

To Mother Greyfie, at Semur

(42) Lent, 1686

Of the many ways in which I am tormented and persecuted one of the worst is to feel that I am a plaything of satan, that he has always led me on and deceived me by his false illusions. And I see nothing in myself which is not worthy of eternal chastisement, since I not only have deceived myself, but have been so unfortunate as to deceive others by my hypocrisy, though I do not mean to.

What confirms me in this stand against myself is that it is the same one taken by this good servant of God, N. I have ample reason to bless the goodness of the Lord a thousand times over for having brought him across my path to blot out the false opinions other have of me.

Nothing gives me more happiness than to see others undeceived in this way, and to see myself placed in a position to satisfy in some way the Divine Justice. My own miserable self is exposed to the light of day. Now I am seen for what I really am, and so henceforth can remain forever forgotten in the world.

This thought fills me with a sweet complacency. I feel a great need of being humiliated: but I do not know how to bring this about, seeing that there is nothing lower than myself, sinful nothingness that I am. Ask the Sacred Heart of our loving Savior for my perfect conversion.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon

(43) March, 1686

Dear Mother,

It makes me happy even now in anticipation to think how delighted you will be to have some of the relics of our saintly Father de la Colombiere, whose body the Reverend Jesuits Fathers have had transferred to their new Church. We were presented, in deepest secrecy, with a small bone from the ribs, and with his cincture. I want to share them with you, knowing that you will cherish them in away commensurate with your esteem for this great servant of God.

I cannot tell you how much consolation it gives me to see the zeal you show for the Sacred Heart of our divine Spouse. If you are taking the place of this holy priest here on earth, he is, as I believe, taking your place in heaven in loving and honoring It.

I trust this divine Heart will reign in spite of all opposition. As for myself, I can do nothing but suffer and be silent. For I must confess to you as my good Mother that never before have I been reduced to such a state of humiliation and contradiction from creatures. I am afraid I may succumb at any moment under the weight of this cross His good deigns to send me.

Yet I must assure you that I have never found my God so good to me. Despite my great wretchedness He never abandons me. I have no other refuge but His adorable Heart, which always answers for me and is my defender. Pray much for me, and rest assured that I do not forget you in His Presence.

If I do not tell you everything in detail, it is because I cannot, wishing as I do to suffer in silence. I am sending these few passing words only to make you realize the need I have of your holy prayers. Since you are so interested in me, bless our Sovereign Master for sharing His cross with me.

O my dear Mother, how good it is to live and die crushed under its weight, deprived of all consolation! This is pure love's great ambition. It never gives the soul handed over to its power any rest. I want indeed to be one of these souls. It seems to me I would like to have a thousand bodies with which to suffer, a million hearts with which to love Him and a million souls with which to adore Him. Ask His goodness not to permit me to waste these precious moments He is giving me for doing penance, so that I may not be deprived of Him forever.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon

(44) March 20, 1686.

I am afraid, beloved Mother,

that I have not sufficiently explained myself with regard to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ. I think I told you that the picture He wanted Your Charity to have made for His glory and your good should be nicely engraved, so that each one might buy it according to his own devotion. They should have in view nothing but His glory, for which He earnestly desires that this devotion take root in all hearts so that He may hold undisputed sway there. This, then my dear Mother is what I thought He was asking of you.

For this He will abundantly reward you, I think with graces of sanctification and salvation: and not only you but all who contribute to bringing Him this pleasure. I assure you that I never would have spoken of it to you had I had not felt myself strongly urged to do so. For other persons had already given us money for this project. But even so I did not dare to do anything else until after you had refused to act.

Then, too, perhaps the money for your fervent community intends to furnish is for hiring an artist to paint one and frame it, as the superior at Semur has done for her community. They have great devotion to this Sacred Heart there. They have erected an altar and pay Him much homage, and that with great fruit, too. They adopted this devotion on hearing read the Retreat of Reverend Father de la Colombiere.

Our very honored Mother wants our community to have a chapel built later on, in which it is to be placed a beautiful picture of the Sacred Heart. That is why she did not want to be hurried into accepting the generous offer of the young man I mentioned. Since the very honorable Mother at Semur has sent her a little sketch of their picture, our dear Sister Marie Louise has done her best to copy it so as to send it to you.

However there are some things in theirs which do not appear in ours: as, for instance, the four heads of Cherubim in the four corners, and the hearts intertwined in the crown of thorns. These latter represent those who love Him in suffering. The hearts that appear in the liens d'amour are those who love Him in joy.

I beg you, my good and dear Mother, to let me know as soon as possible what you are able to do, and what you want to do, before the good Father has anything done. I want you to feel that you are not obliged to do anything because of what I say. I am only taking the liberty to tell you what I think as you say you wish me to do. I have little to say about myself, dear Mother, except our Lord is pleased to keep me in a state of continual suffering.

I hardly know myself anymore. My strength is so failed that I have the greatest difficulty in dragging about this miserable carrion of sin. Yet when I see my suffering increase I seem to experience joy nearly comparable to that which the most avaricious and ambitious experience at seeing their treasures increase. I think these sufferings are sometimes for one of the holy souls in Purgatory, but maybe I am deceiving myself in this, as in everything else.

I should like to stay a moment longer with you, but not being able to do as I like I cannot. May the Lord be blessed in everything! He leaves me no other pleasure in this miserable life except that of not having any. I find no consolation, nor can I even speak, except when there is question of His most Sacred and lovable Heart. My whole occupation and conversation is with Him.

With regard to your role in our devotion, you must not doubt but that you will be its benefactress if you are able to do what we proposed above. I await your reply, begging the while a special remembrance for this poor wretched sinner in your holy prayers, for she will never forget you in her most unworthy and halting prayers. I beg the divine Consoler to consume us in His holy love.

To Mother Greyfie, at Semur

(45) March, 1686.

Yes, the Sacred Heart of my Jesus continues always to show me His mercy, notwithstanding His wretched slave's continual ingratitude and infidelity. These will be atoned for in some measure, I hope, by the devotedness of your dear community in honoring Him. He takes special pleasure in this.

If He has not allowed you, in introducing this devotion, to encounter the cross for which His love has deigned to destine, it is because He wishes me to carry it for both of us. He made me for this, and I can serve Him in no other way. He is always causing me to find new consolation among the scourges and thorns, midst which He is now keeping me fixed to the cross. Beg of Him that I may not abuse so great a good, but make use of it as He intends.

I ask you to do me the favor of telling me secretly whether I ought to worry about all the annoying consequences which this cross has brought me. The only thing I feel sorry about in this whole affair is that God has been much offended. All the rest does not disturb my peace of soul at least, even though I seem to be shut up in a dark prison and surrounded by crosses which I embrace one after.

That is all I do at present. The Sacred Heart of my Jesus deigned meanwhile to send me help I did not expect. A great servant of God (Father Gette, S.J.) wrote me recently saying that while saying Holy Mass he felt himself strongly moved to say it every Saturday this year for me, or for my intentions, so that I could dispose of them as I wished. So now you shall have it one Saturday and I the next. And we shall also have a share in all the other holy sacrifices he will celebrate.

This is the gift I give you, and I am sure you will not be displeased with it. But do you not marvel with me the mercies of the Lord and the wonderful sweetness of His adorable Heart to His wretched slave for having sent me this strong support since the first Saturday in Lent (March 2,)? It was then He began to redouble the many crosses He deigned to send me.

I should have been crushed by their weight had He Himself not strengthened me because of the intercession of holy souls who pray for me. The good religious who has done me this charity does not know me nor I him, except by name. I have never felt more at peace. Bless the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ for this.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon

(46) April 23, 1686

Most Honored Sister And Beloved Mother,

I feel very mortified at not having been able to answer your last letter. I kept hoping I would be able to speak with this good Father, who had promised me this copper plate would be ready after Easter. But he is kept so busy by the heretics, that he has neither time nor leisure to carry out this work which the adorable Heart of our divine Master so ardently desires.

You have no idea, beloved Mother, how much this delay grieves me and how much suffering it causes me. I must tell you confidentially that I think it for this reason that so few infidels are converted in this town. I seem continually to be hearing these words "If only this good Father had first fulfilled the promise he had made to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, he would have changed the hearts of those infidels and converted them.

The pleasure this Divine Heart would have had at seeing Itself honored by the picture It desired would have effected this. But since other things, although for His glory, are being preferred to giving Him this satisfaction, He will harden the hearts of these infidels and the work in their behalf will not bear much fruit".

This, dear Mother, is what torments me more than I can say. It is a thing I must suffer without being able to apply a remedy. I cannot make it known to him (the good Father) who could relieve it. I hope, nonetheless, that the plate will be made as soon as possible; as soon, that is, as this good Father has a little more leisure. Then we shall send you as many copies as you wish.

It is indeed a great consolation to me to see you so prompt to do what you think the Sacred Heart wants of you. I proposed it to you little thinking you would pay any attention to it because of my unworthiness so well known to you. How fortunate you are to have given the two louis d'or! We have received them and our most honored Mother will keep them until the picture is finished.

I think, I can assure you, and indeed I feel urged to, that money never has been more richly repaid than it will be in this case. I think you have given more pleasure to the Sacred Heart by this liberality you have shown directly to Him than you have in anything else you have to do in your whole life.

Let me say in closing, dear Mother, that we should indeed be blessed could we but give our lives to procure honor for this lovable Heart. In It, I am wholly yours.

As soon as the plate for this holy picture is finished I shall let you know at once. That will be at the earliest possible date, for I shall have no rest until it is finished.

To Her Novices

(47) (Around the Feast of the finding of the Holy Cross) 1686.

My Very Dear and Beloved Sisters In The Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus.

I cannot tell you the sorrow I feel at the bad use we are making of such a wonderful opportunity to give Him proofs of our love and fidelity. It is He Himself Who has allowed us to find this Cross in preparation for Its feast. But we, instead of embracing it lovingly, are trying to shake it off and be rid of it. Not being able to do that we are committing a thousand faults which fill this Divine Heart with sorrow and bitterness against us.

Whence comes this, if not from a too great love of self which makes us fear losing our reputation and the good opinion we want others to have of us? This makes us seek to justify ourselves and always think we are innocent and others guilty; we are always right and others all wrong. But believe me, dear sisters, humble souls are far removed from such thoughts and think themselves more guilty than anyone can make them appear to be by accusing them.

Oh, dear Sisters, if we only knew how much we lost by not profiting by occasions of suffering we would be much more careful not to lose a moment of it. Let us not deceive ourselves; if we do not make better use of the occasions offered us for suffering, humiliations, and contradictions, we shall lose favor with the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ.

He wishes us to love and to consider as our dearest friends and benefactors all those who make us suffer or furnish us with an occasion for it. So let us be sorry for having given this displeasure to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ by frustrating His designs on us.

To ask His pardon, all of you together must take a discipline next Tuesday for the length of time required to say an Ave Maris Stella. Each day from now until the Feast of the Sacred Heart each one in turn will continue to do so, so that one will be taking it each day. Moreover, in honor of the terrible sufferings of Jesus on the Cross, each one will wear the chain for three hours. each day one will say the Miserere prostrate before her crucifix, and hear a Mass. All this to ask God's mercy through the merits of the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Moreover, you will refrain from speaking about.... and from making any mention all of this matter to another. Take up again your former practices. She who loves the most will do the most. You must commit no willful fault.

Between yourselves say nine offices of the dead for the souls in purgatory that they may obtain for us the grace of being reinstated in the friendship of the Sacred Heart and of being able to establish His devotion in this community. For this same intention, as well as to ask for the spirit of union and fraternal charity for one another, you will say every day the Ave Maria Filia Dei Patris, plus the Sanctus Deus three times.

In the name of the Sacred Heart of my Lord Jesus Christ, no more brooding or self-excuse. Let us refrain carefully from saying anything, especially on occasions when we are humiliated. Let us be charitable and humble in thought and in word. I firmly believe that if you show yourselves faithful in all this, the adorable Heart of Jesus will be more liberal with His graces to you than He ever has been before, and will love you tenderly.

If on the contrary, you fail in this, I myself will ask Him to avenge Himself for it. Then you shall have no place in my heart, which can love you only as much as it sees you are loved by the Heart of Jesus Christ, in which I hope to love you forever as His dear children.

If I did not love you so much I should not feel so grieved over your faults which so painfully wound this Sacred Heart. That is why I am so disconsolate. I have your perfection so much at heart that there is nothing I would not be willing to do and suffer, sin apart, for your progress in divine love.

Good bye my good children. All for God. Carry the Cross joyously and bravely for otherwise you will have to render a very strict account.

Second note to Sister Marie-Madeleine des Escures

(48) June 21, 1686

It is out of obedience to the adorable Heart of Jesus Christ, my dear Sister, that I write to tell you how fortunate you are having been chosen to render this service to the Heart of our good Master. Because of your courage you bravely wanted to be the first to make Him loved, honored, and known in a place that seemed almost inaccessible to Him. He wants the love and homage of men to be given freely, lovingly, generously, without stint or dissimulation.

It seems to me that Our Lord greatly desires His Sacred Heart to be honored in some special way, so that the effects of the Redemption may be renewed in souls. He wishes to make this Sacred Heart, as it were, a second Mediator between God and men, whose sins have so multiplied that it takes all His power to obtain mercy and the grace salvation and sanctification which He longs to impart abundantly to them.

He wishes to impart them especially to our Institute, which has such great need of His help. I think His Sacred Heart is one of the most efficacious means for raising it up after it has fallen. It will be an impregnable fortress for the Institute against the attacks the enemy will continually level against it.

Satan will try to overthrow it by false spirit of pride and ambition which He wants to introduce in place of the spirit of humility and simplicity, which are the foundation of the whole edifice. I am sure our holy founder desires and asks that this devotion be introduced into the Institute, for he knows how efficacious it will be. These are just a few words I am sending you as my dear friend in the adorable Heart.

To Mother Greyfie, at Semur

(49) End of June or beginning of July 1686.

Very Honored and Dear Mother,

Now I can die content, for the Sacred Heart of my Savior is beginning to become known. Also because it seems to me that, through His mercy, I am nearly destroyed and annihilated as far as my reputation and the esteem of men is concerned. This consoles me more than I can say.

I must again remind you of your promise: namely, that you will prevent, as much as you can, any mention being made of me after my death, except to ask prayers for the most needy and wicked religious in the Institute and in the community I have had the honor of living, where everyone has helped me and shown me every kind of charity. I shall never forget this in the presence of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Neither shall I forget what I owe you.

N. greets you and asks me to assure you of her most sincere friendship. She was sorry, she said, to be of no use to the Sacred Heart, but He has assigned to her own proper work, making her His mediatrix. She is to ask the Eternal Father to make the Sacred Heart known, the Holy Spirit to make It loved, and the Blessed Virgin to use Her influence to have Him make the effects of His power felt by all who turn to Him.

He wishes that there be someone in your house, too, to render Him this service. He wants her to be chosen by lot, saying that blessed indeed shall she be upon that lot shall fall, for He Himself will be her Mediator. You can change her each year.

He asks, moreover, for a reparatrix, one who most humbly ask pardon of God for all the offenses committed against Him in the Holy Sacrament of the altar. She can in all humility rest assured that she will obtain grace and pardon for herself. You will change her every year as in the former case.

As for yourself, your office shall be to offer this loving Heart everything done for His honor and according to His designs. He wants me to tell you that your community has so won His friendship by rendering Him these first honors, that it has made itself an object of His complacency. He wants me, when praying for it, to call it simply the well beloved community of His Sacred Heart. He takes such great pleasure in the honor He receives from it that it makes Him forget all the bitterness He receives from others.

I cannot help adding a word about what happened on the Feast of our Holy Founder. He gave me to understand that there was no more efficacious means of making reparation for the faults committed in His Institute than to introduce the devotion to the Sacred Heart, and in it He wants this remedy applied

To Mother Louise-Henriette de Soudeilles, at Moulins
(50) From our monastery at Paray, July 4, 1686

I beg the Sacred Heart of our adorable Savior to vouchsafe to unite our hearts so intimately by the bonds of His pure love that they may never be separated for a single moment. I assure you, beloved Mother, that He has given me so great an esteem and friendship for Your Charity that I think you are doing me a great injury when you cast any doubt on it by thinking I forget you.

How could I ever do that, since you are so dear to the loving Heart of Jesus, love Him and want to be entirely His so as to give Him and to win for Him, all the honor, love and glory you can. It is this I think He most of all desires of you, so that later on He may make you feel abundantly the effects of His liberality.

I do not know, dear Mother, whether you understand the nature of this devotion to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ of which I am speaking. The devotion produces rich fruit and makes a great change in those who are devoted to it and earnestly practice it. I can earnestly hope that the members of your community may be among this number. Perhaps this desire and my too great liberty with you displease you; but it is the love of my poor heart that makes me treat in this way one who, I flatter myself, loves me.

I have even taken the liberty of sending you a little picture of this Sacred Heart to wear over your own. We found this devotion in the retreat book of Reverend Father La Colombiere, who is venerated as a Saint. I do not know whether you have heard of it, or have the book of which I am speaking.

But it would give me great pleasure to send it to you. So do me the favor, beloved Mother, of telling, me what you think simply and frankly, so that I may do the same and talk to you openly of the devotion and love of this Divine Heart. It is all I desire and aspire to for myself and for those who do me the honor of loving me. In Him I am completely and respectfully yours.

Most dearly beloved Mother, I beg the help of your holy prayers, so that our Lord may convert me and not abandon me to my own devices, as I might oblige Him to do because of a life which is criminal and full of sin. All unworthy though I be, I shall not forget you in His Holy Presence. One does not forget what one loves.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon

(51) July 20. 1686

It is with the greatest sorrow, dearest Mother, that I have to put up with delay in carrying out what I think to be the desire of the Sacred Heart of our good Master. Yet I do not see how the picture can be made this year. For when we thought the matter was about settled, this good Father was told that it could not be done, for what reason it would be difficult to say.

He was so disappointed at this that he dared not come to visit me anymore. But finally after waiting a very long time, he did come to see me again yesterday, the vigil of the feast of St Margaret, and told me how sorry he was. He said that if we were willing to wait till next year he himself would have it made in the way I said I wanted it.

But since he added that he had been assigned to Alix and that it would be better done there than anywhere else, I do not know what to say. I beg you to tell me frankly what you think, since you are so interested in this matter. I promise to do as you wish. If you prefer to wait and let the picture remain unfinished, we shall send you back the money rather than run the risk of losing it by sending it so far.

In any case, I believe the Sacred Heart will richly reward you for your good will and for your original desire of wishing to do His. I must confess that I honestly think no one is at fault but myself for my sins, make me unworthy of doing any good. No matter how little I have to do with a thing, that is enough to make it bristle with difficulties.

For Satan threatened to raise difficulties to every- thing I took in hand and to try to harm me at every turn. But all that does not discourage me. The more difficulties I see the more determined I am to keep on thinking that God will only be more glorified, for His work is accomplished only amidst contradictions.

A word about myself. His loving goodness has never been more gracious to me in sending so many different kinds of crosses. If only I could explain them to you, my good Mother, you would understand how much I would need the help of your holy prayers! I beg them of you with all my heart, so that He may not abandon me to the power of my enemies, as my sins constantly force Him to do.

For I see nothing in myself but what is capable of drawing His wrath upon me. although in His mercy He makes me feel an imperturbable peace. He never ceases to shower His graces abundantly on one so poor and miserable. Help me to thank Him, for I am powerless to do any good.

It is true, dear Mother, that I always feel a great desire to love Him, but I well know that I do not love Him because I love myself too much. I am determined, nevertheless to give up everything to acquire this love. His Sacred Heart is constantly urging me to do that, and often nails me to the cross, stripped of everything. It gives me great pleasure to open my heart to you a little.

I respect and honor you very tenderly and sincerely in the Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Our dear novices and myself do not forget to intercede with Him for you and for your intentions. If only I were holy you would surely feel the results, for there is no one who is more completely, respectfully, and affectionately yours in the Divine Love.

To Mother Louise-Henriette de Soudeilles, at Moulins
(52) September 15, 1686

It gives me great pleasure, dearest Mother, to be able to make this little sacrifice for you and send, with the consent of our holy Mother, the book with the Retreat of Reverend Father La Colombiere and the two pictures of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ someone gave to us as a present. The larger one you can put at the foot of your crucifix, or in some other place where you may honor it.

The smaller one you can carry on your person, together with the little consecration I take the liberty of sending you. I assure you dear Mother, that I must love you very much and be very much impressed by your goodness, to be able to act thus with you. But I cannot help doing so, thinking as I do that this Divine Heart wishes to be absolute Master of yours, in order that you may have It honored, loved, and glorified in your community. I trust He intends by this means to pour with greater abundance His graces, and the blessings of love and union into your hearts, and sanctification into your souls.

For He is the inexhaustible source of every good, which wants to diffuse and communicate Itself, especially to faithful souls like those in your community. Moreover, I assure you that I am convinced that persons consecrated to this Sacred Heart will never perish. Neither will they fall under Satan's dominion by mortal sin if, after having given themselves completely to the Sacred Heart, they strive to honor, love and glorify Him as much as they can, by conforming themselves to His holy maxims in everything.

You would not believe the good results It produces in souls who have the happiness of knowing Him through the medium of this Holy man (Father de la Colombiere). He himself was completely dedicated to Him and lived only to make Him loved, honored and glorified. I think it is this indeed which brought him to such high perfection in so short a time. O my dear Mother! How happy you make me by wanting to render special homage to this loving Heart. It has loved men so much that It utterly spent Itself on the tree of the Cross to prove Its love, and continues to do so in the Blessed Sacrament.

But Your Charity knows all this better than I. I confess sincerely that I am very much wanting in humility to speak to you this way. I am really such a wicked and poor sinner, a mere composite of every kind of misery, capable only of drawing down the wrath of God and of stopping the flow of His mercy. See, then how much I am in need of the help of your holy prayers with this adorable Heart.

He is my only hope. Do not refuse them to me, I earnestly beg, and I assure you that I shall not forget you when in His Presence. If you wish our union and friendship in Him to continue, do not think of sending me any money for the book or the pictures. That would simply spoil everything as far as I am concerned. It is a great enough reward to know that you want to love and belong completely to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ.

As for those small pictures I spoke of, and of which an engraving is to be made on paper only: if this comes

out well and you want some copies you can buy them then, for I am completely destitute, thank God, and want to be rich only with the pure love of His suffering contempt, and humiliations. In short, Jesus, His love, and His Cross are all my happiness in this life. I feel so great a desire that my life remains buried in eternal oblivion that I have earnestly begged our dear Mother not to have to write any more to anyone except now and then to Your Charity. I can almost say that you are almost the only one I bother with letters.

I must tell you something that causes me great joy: our community has devoutly determined to place itself in a special manner under the protection of the adorable Heart of Jesus. A Chapel dedicated to Its honor is being built. You would not believe how great devotion our Sisters at Semuren l'Auxois are showing after having read this book (Father de la Colombiere's Retreat). They had a picture of the Sacred Heart painted by an artist and have erected an altar for it.

The very honored Mother Superior (Greyfie) of that monastery informed us that their community has experienced wonderful results from this. Those who delight in honoring the Sacred Heart choose the first Friday of the month to show Him some special honor, each one according to her own devotion.

I think, my dear Mother, you will not be displeased if we send on to you some of the prayers given us: just some, not all, lest we weary you. I think, my dear Mother, and I cannot help telling you, that those communities which render Him some special homage will enjoy special protection, love and fraternal charity. I must say I feel ashamed to tell you my thoughts so simply. You must give credence only to what Our Lord inspires you to do.

I do not know whether you have the sermons of this good Father de la Colombiere. They are in four volumes. All who read them are charmed with them.

In closing I pray that all of us may belong completely to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to live only with His life, love only with His Heart, act and suffer only according to His holy designs, letting Him act in us as He chooses. I know I am taking advantage of your kindness, but that will not happen very often. And then, too I know that you will pardon anything to a heart that loves you as much as my poor heart does in that of Our loving Jesus. I hope you may be completely consumed in His love.

I cannot help thinking that the longing I felt to send you this picture of the Sacred Heart came from His desire to establish His kingdom in your community and His reign of love in our hearts. The hearts, my dear Mother, which are in the crown of thorns which encircle this loving Heart are the ones that love It and follow It in suffering. Those in the crown of love-knots (Lacs d'amour) are the ones that love It with joyous love.

Our most honored Mother (Marie Christine Melin) presents her respects.

To Sister Felice-Madeleine de la Barge, at Moulins.

(53) short Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus.

I, N.N., give and consecrate to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ my person and my life, my actions, trials and sufferings, so that I may no longer wish to make use of any part of my being except to honor, love, and glorify Him. This is my irrevocable will, to belong entirely to Him and to do everything for His love, and I renounce with all my heart anything that can be displeasing to Him. I take Thee, then, O Sacred Heart, as the sole object of my love, the protector of my life, the pledge of my salvation, the remedy for my infirmities, the reparation for all the sins of my life and my sure refuge at the hour of my death.

Be, then, O Heart of Goodness, my justification with God the Father, and turn aside the blows of His Just wrath. O Heart of Love, I place all my confidence in Thee. I fear everything from my malice but hope everything from Thy goodness. Consume in me everything that can displease or resist Thee. May Thy pure love impress Thee ever so deeply in my heart that I can never forget Thee, nor ever be separated from Thee. I conjure Thee by Thy boundless goodness to write my name in Thy Sacred Heart, for I wish to live and die as Thy slave. Amen.

1686.

You could find no surer bond, beloved Sister, to draw me into a more intimate union with Your Charity than to love the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ. I do not doubt that the sacrifice which you want to make of yourself to Him so that you may be wholly His, to do and suffer everything for His love, so that you may be able to live completely unto Him according to His desires-I do not doubt, I say, that this sacrifice is very pleasing to Him. It is a life of sacrifice, of abandonment, and of love. Of sacrifice of all that is most dear to you and of what will cost you the most.

Of complete abandonment of yourself to His loving care, taking Him as your guide on the way to salvation. You will do nothing unless you ask Him for the help of His grace. And this I am sure He will give you to the measure in which you trust Him. Moreover, we must live the life of love. By our humble submission and complete self-effacement it will unite us with Him and make us altogether like Him in His life of Sacrifice, abandonment and love in the Blessed Sacrament.

Love keeps Him there as a victim completely and perpetually delivered over to sacrifice for the glory of His Father and for our salvation. Unite yourself with Him, then, in all that you do: Refer everything to His Glory. Set up your abode in this loving Heart of Jesus and you will there find lasting peace and the strength both to fruition all the good desires He inspires in you, and to avoid every deliberate fault. Place in this Heart all of your sufferings and difficulties. Everything that comes from the Sacred Heart is sweet. He changes everything into love.

Let us love Him, then dear Sister, with all our might and strength. Let us belong to Him without reserve,

because He wants all or nothing. And after we have once given Him everything, let us take nothing back. He will be sure to sanctify us in proportion as we are careful to glorify Him.

It is for love of Him, beloved Sister, that I beg you to pardon this proud and wicked sinner the liberty your humility has asked her to take, in your letter to our dear Sister Cordier. That is why I have said quite frankly what I think. I have said it simply too, asking this adorable Heart of Jesus to consume you in His pure love and to grant you my complete conversion. I beg you with all my heart to ask this of Him.

To Sister Marie-Gabrielle Morant, at Moulins
(54) 1686. Most Honored Sister,

I beg the adorable Heart of Jesus to sanctify and perfect our hearts in the holy flames of His pure love. My heart finds it difficult, beloved Sister, to forgive your heart for all the sentiments of esteem which Your Charity has fostered without reason, for such a wretched, a wicked sinner as myself.

I neither desire nor ought I want to be known except to be humiliated and despised by everybody. But I pardon you this because you do not know that I am a mere lump of misery. I beg you to ask Our Sovereign Master to continue to show His mercies to me. His Sacred Heart is an inexhaustible fountain of mercy.

It seeks only to fill humble hearts, hearts emptied of self and bound down by nothing so that they may be ever ready to sacrifice themselves to His good pleasure, no matter how much it may cost nature. For one cannot love without suffering. He showed us this very clearly upon the cross, where He was consumed for love of us. And it is still the same every day in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar.

There He ardently desires that we conform our lives to His, completely effaced and hidden away from the eyes of man. Since love makes man one in likeness, if we love, let us model our lives on His. This is what I ask of Him for you. I wish to belong completely to the loving Heart of Jesus, to live no longer but in Him, for Him and through Him. In His love I am wholly yours with sincere affection.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon
(55) 1686.

I did not want to write to you, dearest Mother, until I could send you everything necessary for the design for our engraving. I have already written several times to the good Father in charge, but he is so put out at having failed to finish it that he always puts off sending us everything we need for it. But I hope to send you the completed design soon and you can use it as the Sacred Heart shall direct you.

That is to say, you can have it made or not, as you wish, though you would give me great pleasure by having it done. Still, since He well knows that the matter did not rest with you, He is satisfied, I think, and will be, too, with whatever you judge fit to do so about it. As for myself, it has been a profitable undertaking because all the humiliations I got from it.

And as for you, my good Mother, I see realized in you a thought He gave me long ago: that He has substituted you for our good Father La Colombiere to establish the devotion to His Sacred Heart. This is one of the greatest graces He could give you. I see in this fulfillment of what Your Charity once said to me when people were first beginning to talk about this devotion.

You said you would consider yourself very fortunate if the Sacred Heart would deign to choose you as His promoter in this matter. But you are even more than this. And you are carrying out this charge so well, according to His will, that I assure you I feel consolation at the very thought of it. The pleasure you give Him will win a great reward for you in eternity.

I shall not fail earnestly to recommend to Him everything Your Charity asks.

I have to hurry, so I shall close. I assure you that you are to me, in this loving Heart, everything one can be to a heart that loves Him as tenderly as I do. I very often need encouragement in the work of which we have been speaking, for my share in it brings me only suffering, contradictions, and humiliations. For this, bless His goodness, which ever shows me great mercy.

Do all you can to obtain that this Mass of the Sacred Heart be said in His honor. If you could get some indulgences for His feast it would help our work very much. I beg you to keep up your interest in it. Let us work with all our might. As for myself, I admit with sorrow that I am simply in the way because of the criminal life I have always led. That makes me sometimes wish to depart from this life so that this divine Heart may be the most loved, known, and glorified.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon
(56) 1686. Most Honored Mother,

If I am not mistaken, I can see all these little contradictions our lovable devotion meets with surprise you and cause you much suffering. But why? I think you have already been warned that it is satan who is causing them, enraged as he is at seeing that even now this salutary means has already snatched many souls from him and is going to take many more.

That is because of the omnipotence of Him, Who, in His own good time, will turn all this opposition and all these contradictions to His own glory and the confusion of the enemy, using them as a solid foundation upon which to establish this holy devotion to this Divine Heart has already been forbidden. Moreover, the publishers are going to be forbidden to print anything on this subject. Still other things too are being said against this devotion.

But I am not surprised at all that, I have such great confidence that He will bring to completion what He has begun, that I can not even begin to doubt it. Yet should He pleased that this devotion advance no further, we shall be content and submissive to His holy will.

We wish only to do his holy will in all this. For the rest, we must be completely resigned. As for myself. I feel quite carried away by this devotion. Yet, though there seems to be nothing in the world dearer to me, nothing who's failure would cause me more pain, still I am resigned to anything and say to Our Lord: "I know that if you wish it, it will succeed in spite of all opposition.

But if you do not want it, we will labor in vain. It is your work. Do with it as you please."

As for this good religious at Lyons (Father Croiset) who is working for the glory of this Sacred Heart, I have had no news from him for a long time. He wrote three times but I did not answer him. Then, under obedience, I wrote once more but I do not know whether he will have received the letter.

I admit that you are right in not approving of my attitude towards letter writing and going to the parlor. But if you knew my reason for acting as I do, I think you would advise me to continue as I am doing. May God be blessed above all! Let us pray always. Work unceasingly for the interests of the loving Heart of Jesus Christ and believe me wholly yours.

To Sister Felice-Madeleine de la Barge, at Moulins.

(57) From Paray, January, 2, 1687

You must no longer doubt, dearest Sister, that you are very dear to my poor heart. I cannot help but believe that if Our Lord makes you persevere in the good desires He gives you of loving and honoring His Sacred Heart, you will have a special place in It. He will take care to perfect you in proportion as you show your love for Him by practicing Its virtues.

I was very consoled on reading your letter to see the fine dispositions He gives you. That you have such a favorable attitude towards this devotion is a good sign. Continue in this, beloved Sister, so that all of you may be true disciples of this loving Heart. He will never let anyone truly consecrated and devoted to Him perish. I can not tell you the joy I feel at the pleasure I think He takes at the honor your fervent community gives Him. I have not time to say more.

Good-bye, dear Sister, so wholly devoted to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ! May you be wholly consumed in His love.

To Her Brother. the Parish Priest at Bois-Sainte-Marie.

(58) January 22, 1687.

It is a sweet consolation to me, dearest brother, that the goodness of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ deigns to make His will agree with ours in keeping you here below a little while longer, in this vale of misery and tears, where one must confess with the Apostle, all is vanity and affliction of spirit, except only to love and serve God alone. Here is what I promised Him you would do should He let you live for sometime still.

You see, my dear brother, I had to make some promises to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord in order to be able to obtain this, knowing that you would carry them out and not give me the lie. Otherwise it would be better not to recover, for God is not mocked. I shall tell you quite simply what I have obliged you to, making the use of the liberty you gave me in your letter, so that you may do what I think Our Lord wants of you.

This I have on the word of a person much favored with the gifts of God, and who loves you very much. This person was asking Our Lord, if it were His will, to allow you to live some years longer so that you might fulfill the great desire He gave you of belonging wholly to Him by consecrating to Him every moment of your life and by employing yourself unreservedly in His service with that purity of heart and sanctity of life your calling demands. Then this person seemed to hear the answer: "Yes, I grant you this, on the conditions you yourself propose. I would make him a saint, if only He would cooperate with My plans and with the graces I shall give him for this."

Now it is absolutely necessary to eliminate three things. The first, attachment to earthly things, especially the love of pleasure. Gambling is including in this. The second every superfluous in your dress and in your personal habits. What you save in this way you must give to the poor.

Thirdly, be as little mixed up in the things of the world as you can, not allowing yourself any wilful self-indulgence. All this has been promised to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, provided you agree and consecrate yourself entirely to this adorable Heart to give and obtain for It all the love, honor, and glory in your power. And this not only from yourself but also from all those who will come under your care.

I think I have already spoken to you about this devotion so very recently introduced. But since you did not answer I do not know whether you liked what I told you about it. I am convinced there is no shorter way to perfection, no surer way to salvation, than to be consecrated to this divine Heart and to render It all the homage of love, honor and praise which we are capable. This is what you have been pledged to do. I hope to speak to you about it more in detail when I have the pleasure of seeing you, should God will to give me that consolation.

Furthermore, we have promised, that for a period of nine days you would swallow the little written notes I

am sending you. Take one each day, fasting. Also you will say or have said nine Masses on nine Saturdays in honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and the same number of Masses of the Passion on the nine Fridays in honor of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

This, my dear brother, is the sum of your obligations. I leave out of account the promises I myself have made, not only to ask Our Lord to restore you to health, but also to do a years penance if He had taken you out of this life before you had fulfilled what you promised during your illness. See to what lengths the union of holy friendship, with which the Sacred Heart of Jesus has joined our hearts, has gone, since, forgetting the sins of so criminal a life as I have always led, I thought of doing penance for your sins. See how good Our dear Master is!

Knowing full well that I am in much greater need of penance than you, He has spared you in order to help me make satisfaction for my sins. They are so great I tremble at the very thought of them. Yet I hope for everything from the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ. He loves you so tenderly that He wants you to make yourself a saint at any cost. That is why He leaves you in this world, that is why He sent you this sickness, in order to rouse you and to make you redouble your fervor. O, how grieved I shall be if you nullify the plans this Sacred Heart has made for you, if you do not do what He has clearly showed you to be His will!

Love Him, then, if you want me to love you, for I can only love what He loves. O, if you could only understand how wonderful it is to love Him and to be loved by Him in return! I am convinced that not one of those especially devoted and consecrated to Him will perish. I could talk to you about this forever. Finally, belong wholly to God. do everything for Him, in Him. Remember that He wants you to lead and exemplary life, a life pure and altogether angelic. If today we hear the voice of the Lord, let us not harden our hearts, let us not hesitate a moment longer to remove every obstacle to grace.

Pardon me, my dear brother, for saying all this. It comes from a heart that loves you and earnestly wants you to become holy. I ask this of the Sacred Heart of our good Master. May He consume us in the most ardent flames of that pure love of His which makes me devotedly yours.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon
(59) February 17, 1687.

I must confess dear Mother, that Our Lord wants to mortify me very much by delaying our pictures of His Sacred Heart. I feel I have done everything I possibly could, but I am weak and powerless. I am getting nowhere at all, since the good Father who was taking charge of this matter has been sent to Riom. The plate is being made at Lyons and I am very much afraid it will be put aside while he is away.

Yet he writes me that he is taking care of the matter and will see that it is done as soon as possible. We must be patient. All the while this has been going on I do not know to what to attribute the delay except to my sins. They make me an obstacle and a stumbling-block to every good undertaking.

It seems to me too, that the devil is very afraid of seeing this good work accomplished because of the glory it will give the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ. For the souls of many who consecrate themselves completely to Him, and love, honor and glorify Him, will be saved by their devotion to this loving Heart.

Ah, dear Mother, may His mercy come most opportunely to all those poor ungrateful and unfaithful hearts who will perish without Him! I hope His burning Charity will save them, and spread abroad the sweetness of His pure love. He wishes me to speak to you simply and frankly, like a daughter to her good Mother.

This Mother, I think has known well how to win over the sacred tenderness of this Divine Heart by her ardent zeal in procuring honor for it. For, in reading your precious letter, I felt my heart fill with tender sentiments for you in proportion as you spoke of Him.

To Mother Louise-Henriette de Soudeilles, at Moulins
(60) February 28, 1687.

I am glad to make use of the opportunity our dear Sister Cordier gives me of using this blank page to assure you of the continuance of my sincere and respectful friendship for you. It makes you very present to me in spirit before the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ. It seems to me He considers you an object of complacency because of your burning zeal to love Him and belong wholly to Him by obtaining all the honor and glory for Him you can. This gives me great consolation.

I delayed telling you this until we could send the books of Reverend Father La Colombiere's sermons. We received them through the courtesy of a good lady in this town who was eager to give us this pleasure. I think they will cost six livres ten sols (\$1.30) without postage, all four volumes. I hope you are pleased with them as we are. Believe me, most honored Mother, that it gives me the greatest satisfaction to do you this favor, and that I am wholly yours in the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon
(61) March 1687.

I am taking advantage, dearest Mother, of the freedom you give me to open my heart to you, since I have this opportunity. I hope you will not refuse me the sweetest consolation of answering when Our Lord inspires you to write and that you will tell me your thoughts frankly. I found your last letter very useful in this pitiable state to which I have been reduced since about the Feast of the Epiphany. I seemed to be nailed to a very painful cross.

What I suffered on it would be very difficult to express. I scarcely knew who I was, especially the last three days of the carnival. At that time I thought I was going to die. But the thought kept coming back to me that my sufferings would be lessened during Lent, so I abandoned myself to the will of my Savoir, who wanted me to keep Him company on the cross, He remained alone there during this time during this time of dissipation.

But there was no diversion for me, nor consolation nor alleviation of my sufferings. I could not sleep, nor eat, nor even speak without the greatest effort. But O, my dear Mother, never has the Sacred Heart shown me greater mercy and goodness. He thus gave me greater unalterable peace, though never had I been more slothful, nor opposed Him so strongly in what He showed me clearly to be His Will: for instance, writing letters.

He gave me to understand that writing was for His glory; that I should answer those who write to His wretched slave about the devotion to the Sacred Heart. Also that I should go to the parlor when any one asks to see me. I find this so painful that I often find show much repugnance. But afterwards I feel great remorse at not doing what I think God demands of me, for by not answering people, under the pretext that I want to remain unknown, I put the greatest obstacles possible in the way of His designs of doing them good through these feeble means. That deprives people of His graces.

This makes me suffer more than I can say, since people write very often. If I answered them I would continually be making new acquaintances. Then myself love makes me miserable at the thought of having so deceived people, since they think me quite different from what I am. What increases my suffering is that when Our Lord gave me a special commitment to love His Sacred Heart, I think He gave me to understand that He would show me how much I would have to suffer for this same love, and that the graces He would give me would not be so much for myself as for those He would send me.

To these I am to answer simply whatever He puts into my mind. He would attach to these answers the unction of His grace and in this way draw many hearts to love Him. These thoughts are present in my mind all the while I am resisting. So I am doubly guilty. Judge accordingly of my unfaithfulness and whether it were not better that I should be dead rather than lead a criminal life.

I beg you, dear Mother, to tell me what you think and what I ought to do, for my life is sort of a continual martyrdom. I make very poor use of my crosses, yet they seem so precious to me that I cannot be without suffering for a moment without beginning to think I am lost. Pray the Sacred Heart that He will take away from me the power of resisting Him. I do not forget you...

To Her Brother, the Parish Priest at Bois-Sainte-Marie
(62) March, 1687

I could not dearest brother, mortify myself to the extent of passing up this happy chance to let you know that I am sure the Lord is going to strengthen and increase more and more the real affection He has given me for you-especially after your last letter.

You have so completely won my heart by opening yours to me that I think there is nothing I would not be willing to do for your advancement in holy love and to make you correspond perfectly with the designs God has on you. He intends, if I am not mistaken, to bring you to a high degree of perfection. You see, my dear brother, that is the reason why you cannot be complacent. He will not be satisfied with ordinary virtue in you, because He has many graces to give to you and to others through you.

Do not disappoint Him, then, in what He expects of you: a life corresponding to the holiness of your ministry. O, how sorry you would be at the hour of your death to see yourself deprived of the crown prepared as a reward for your fidelity in following generously the lights the Lord is giving you! I know well that you cannot do without great violence to yourself.

But it is precisely in this, and in the victory over these repugnance's, so violent at times that God has placed the greatest value for your crown. Rich too, is the reward for the despoiling yourself of all these empty pleasures which only leave behind a thousand pangs of conscience.

To tell you the truth, you will never find peace or repose until you have made a complete sacrifice of everything to God. This very grace is what I am asking for you because of my ardent desire that you belong wholly to Him and despise everything else. You will have to suffer much to achieve this, but grace will not be wanting, nor strength and help from the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

If only you knew, my dear brother, the consolation I feel at the change I think He shows me has taken place in you in so short a time! I cannot tell you how happy I am about this, for I think He is beginning to be pleased with you. I beg Him with all my heart to complete what He has begun and to grant you holy perseverance.

Perhaps I speak too freely, but blame this on the tenderness of my heart which would be less concerned over your true good if it loved you less. Yet I cannot act otherwise towards you when I now consider another self. I beg you to act the same toward me and not hide from me what the Lord may make known to you as necessary for my perfect conversion.

I have a great desire for it but an altogether inefficacious one. I am very far from being what God wants me to be. As yet I have done nothing for Him. Help me by your Holy Sacrifices, so that I may at least learn how to suffer properly, I think this is what He wants of me, just this: that I may love Him in suffering, and even so I never weary of it.

Through His mercy He makes me thirst for the cross more and more. Beg of Him, my dear brother, that I may not abuse so great a blessing, for the cross is a priceless treasure. Just recently I had to have a finger lanced to the bone. The pain seems to me a precious proof of the love of Our Lord, In His Love I am wholly yours.....

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon
(63) 1687

It seemed, dearest Mother, that something of what our sovereign Master wanted of His unworthy slave would have been missing if I did not add the sacrifice of breaking my silence with Your Charity. I did not dare write you again because of the great embarrassment I feel at the delay in getting the engraving for the pictures of His adorable Heart. You can not believe how much this has made me suffer, and still does.

I lay it all to my sins, which make me unworthy to do any service for the Divine Heart, Author of all sanctity. I do not know what more I can say to you about this matter except perhaps that He not only wants you to pay for the pictures, but also have them made yourself, if He shall so inspire you. This idea came to me while I was being able to get any news on the matter, for the Father who had promised to have the work is so far away.

Please let me know what you think, and whether you can have them made. We shall reimburse you. How happy I would be if you could do this! I assure you there is no trouble or suffering I would not be willing to undergo to bring about His reign in the hearts of all, as He desires. For that I would welcome with all my heart the sufferings of hell: all but the privation of loving Him.

I find it a great consolation to speak to a heart that loves Him, and that He loves so tenderly in return. I can not help looking on you as one of His most faithful friends. We are presenting you with a copy of this little book which Mother de Soudeilles had printed, after some people of note, whom I do not know, had presented her with the litanies of this Sacred Heart and an act of reparation.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon
(64) 1687.

I hope, dear Mother, that, since you share my interests, you will bless Our Lord for the share He gives me in His cross. O, how good it is to live and die crushed under its weight, deprived of all consolation! The characteristic of pure love is that it leaves no rest to the soul completely abandoned to its power.

I am sending you the litanies of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and those other things that have brought upon me what is my due: humiliation or confusion. You well know to what I refer, and that I have ample cause to blame you for it. But may the will of God be done! My heart is indifferent to humiliation or consolation.

It pays no attention to them nor does it dwell on them. I am satisfied if He is pleased with my continual self-abasement. Have I not joy enough amidst my sufferings, at seeing this holy devotion hold its own and spread in spite of the opposition Satan is raising to stop it? The Sacred Heart will reign in spite of His enemies: He will make Himself the Master of the hearts He wants to possess. For the chief aim of this devotion is to bring hearts to His love.

Here is what He has given me to ponder over: "The cross is my glory, love guides me to it, love possesses me, love is enough for me." Please burn my letters after you have read them and let no one else see them but yourself. I do not know but that I am deceiving myself in all this I am telling you. I pray the Lord to give you light in this matter.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon

(65) 1687

Here, my dear Mother, is the money and the sketch this good Father has sent back to us, very disappointed at not having been able to finish the work. But God, who does everything for the best, will see to it that a better picture will be made, for the drawing he has sent us the sketch is not a good one nor to my liking.

So you would oblige me enormously by changing it, following the inspiration Our Lord will give you. I leave everything to your judgment. Continue, my good Mother, in your zeal for procuring honor for this Sacred Heart, you yourself and all these good souls you mention as being interested in it. I shall speak to you about them at the first opportunity.

Just at present I can not say anymore on this subject except that they are indeed fortunate, and you, too, in being employed in so glorious an undertaking. do not be surprised at encountering opposition. That is one of the most infallible signs that God will be glorified by the reign of the Sacred Heart of His Divine Son. I shall write you more some other time.

To Sister Jeanne-Madeleine Joly, at Dijon (cf. n.32)

(1687) I cannot sufficiently express the sweet transport of joy I experienced on receiving your picture. It is just what I wanted. The consolation I feel at your zeal for the Sacred Heart is beyond all expression.

Continue in that zeal, my dear Sister. I hope this Divine Heart will reign in spite of all opposition. As for myself, I can only suffer and be silent.

To Her Brother, the Parish Priest at Bois-Sante Marie.

(66) About April, 1687.

I beg the adorable Heart of Jesus, dearest brother, to establish forever in our hearts the reign of His love and peace. Your interest in my health causes me confusion. My health is so useless for the glory of God. Up till now my life has been so injurious to Him that I consider His making me suffer here below one of the greatest mercies He shows my soul.

In doing this He makes me somewhat conformed to His suffering life, by the merits of which I hope to pay off some of the great debt I have incurred by my sins, if only you will help me by your Holy Sacrifices. I rely heavily upon them. Continue doing me this charity. All my hope is based on this. I assure you I shall not forget you when I have the happiness of assisting at Mass.

I have earnestly thanked the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ for the favors He is giving you. I beg Him to continue them and to give you the grace of corresponding faithfully with them, persevering in the holy desires He gives you of loving and glorifying Him by making Him known.

You could do nothing that would give me greater pleasure. Neither could you do anything more beneficial to your own dear soul, in which of course I am very interested. You are right in saying that it is truly one with mine in the Sacred Heart. That is why I take the liberty of telling you so frankly what I think. I would not do this if I loved you less.

I am consoled to hear that you are living in conformity with your vocation and state in life and are keeping the promises you made Our Lord. Meditate often on these things, dear brother. we must not receive the grace of God in vain, for it is as terrible to fall into the hands of the living God as it is now sweet to cast oneself into the arms of a God dying for love of us, Who wants only to show us His mercy. Beg Him to shower His mercies on my poor soul, which has such great need of them. We must trust in His goodness and try to carry out His plans.

To Her Brother, the Mayor
(67) About April, 1687.

Nothing could have pleased me more, dearest brother, than the happy news that the Sacred Heart fills you with such good dispositions. I feared that yours might have grown cold towards Him. That would have pained me very much and I would not have dared speak to you about the Sacred Heart any more because piety is never really solid unless it comes spontaneously from the movements of grace.

Yours, I am sure, does, because it produces such good results. I had even hoped that things would turn out as you propose. But not believing that your love for this adorable Heart would make you want to sustain so great an expense as the one you speak of, I did not dare mention it to you. So I approached the people I had mentioned, thinking that if a greater number were involved the deficit could easily be supplied. But we clearly see now that we must carry out the plan as you proposed it.

We shall not refuse you this. By this you will give me one of the greatest consolations I can have in this mortal life. For nothing can make me happy here except to see this Divine Heart of my Lord Jesus Christ loved, honored, and glorified, and to have the good fortune of being able to be consumed in suffering for His love. O my dear brother, how fortunate shall you be if He gives you so greater grace as to enable you to go through with your undertaking!

I beg you, then, to be firm in following out the inspirations He gives you, so as not to frustrate His designs for making you holy. His grace shall not be wanting. But He expects faithful cooperation from you and me in return for His great love for us.

I cannot tell you my full sentiments on this matter just now. I hope my brother (the priest) will not fail to do everything in his power to further a plan so much for the glory of this Divine Heart as yours is, and which will draw down upon you and your family many graces.

To Mother Louise-Henriette de Soudeilles, at Moulins.
(68) From our Monastery in Paray, April, 8, 1687.

Most Honored Mother,

Though I am very happy to send you the books you want, I am no less happy to know how much you value them. Your Charity will not esteem them less, I am sure, once you have seen them. I hope that you will draw more profit from them, than I, for I am so ungrateful to grace that I do not see why the goodness of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ does not weary of my ingratitude.

I confess to you my dear Mother, that I feel a sensible joy in knowing that this Divine Heart is loved and honored in your community and I shall be happy to have a share in their remembrance to this Sacred Heart. I am much obliged to Your Charity for assuring me that you are not forgetting me, and for being willing to continue in this union of hearts He has made of our hearts. I am wholly and cordially yours in His Holy love.

Be so good as to let us know how many copies of Reverend Father La Colombiere's Retreat you want. I think the amount of money you mention will not fall far short of paying for three.

If I do not give myself the honor of answering dear Sister de la Barge's letter now, I shall do so at the first opportunity. (But she answered it the same day by sending the following Letter 69.)

To Sister Felice-Madeleine de la Barge, at Moulins.

(69) From our Convent in Paray, April 8, 1687.

On reading your letter I blessed God, my beloved Sister, for giving you tangible proofs of His true love by leading you along this way of self-effacement. Since He has shown you this way, follow it fearlessly. Then I think you will be doing what He requires of you for establishing His reign in your heart.

I think, He wants to expel from it creatures first and then yourself. That is why you should be glad when you are in any way forgotten or despised. Remember that these things come to you in order that you may banish creatures from your heart, from a heart that must no longer go out to exterior things, but rather cut off affection for them, in order to apply itself without reserve to loving God Who dwells within it.

I think He will give you great graces if only you have the courage to follow Him by an entire forgetfulness of self, abandonment to His providence, and great purity of intention, uniting yourself continually to that of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord, loving with His love and willing with His Will. Finally, choose the Sacred Heart as your sacred oratory where you will offer your prayers and petitions to God, so that they may be pleasing to Him.

It seems to me that one of the best means for advancing in perfection is the use of the particular examen on the fault we have resolved to rule out, and on the contrary virtue we wish to acquire. We must mark our faults in a little book so that we can impose on ourselves some penance for them at the end of each day.

I beg your pardon, beloved Sister, for taking the liberty of so simply telling you what I think, but I do it because your humility wants it so. It is not that I do not know you are doing more than all that, but I think God wants you to advance more and more in the ways of His pure love, following the inspirations He gives you. Be satisfied, though with the occasions He furnishes, be they humiliations or contradictions. Do not seek them but profit by them in silence. This is the wish of your unworthy Sister.

Our dear Sister Cordier presents her most humble respects to your most honored Mother (de Soudeilles) and to yourself my dear Sister, whom she loves very sincerely. As for myself, I beg you to ask of God my true conversion, assuring you that you are not being forgotten in my poor prayers. You will not be angry with me perhaps for sending you this little note (now lost) with an aspiration a pious soul gave us.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon.

(70) Beginning of April 1687.

Ah, my dear Mother, what shall we say about our most lovable Jesus! Never before have I so much experienced His wonderful goodness and mercy nor felt so incapable of describing them. The same is true of my joy at seeing these precious books which I hope, will contribute not a little to spreading His Kingdom.

I congratulate you on the happy success of your undertaking for His glory. In this way He is letting you know the pleasure He takes in it and His desire that you continue to work at so grand an enterprise till it is finished. Do not let up. It seems to me that it is in this way He wishes to save many souls from eternal damnation, for this Divine Heart is a fortress and a sure refuge for those fleeing from Divine Justice.

God's wrath would otherwise overwhelm sinners in their sins because of the great number they are now committing. These stir up the Divine anger of this Sacred Heart. It is an abyss of every kind of blessing. There we must loose ourselves so as to relish no longer the things on earth.

I cannot help telling you, my dear Mother, the grace I received Good Friday (March 28, 1687). Having a great longing to receive Our Lord, with many tears I spoke these words to Him: "Loving Jesus, I want to be consumed in desiring You." Thereupon He came to console me with His sweet Presence, saying to me: "My daughter, your desire has pierced My Heart so deeply that if I had not already instituted this Sacrament of Love, I would do so now to become your food.

I take such great pleasure in this longing that, as often as a heart forms this desire for Me, I look upon it lovingly to draw it Myself." This vision impressed me so deeply that I felt great pain at seeing my Jesus so little desired in this august Sacrament. I found it especially hard to bear when anyone spoke with coldness and indifference about it.

Once He said to me with a voice full of authority: "I am going to make you so poor, so despicable, so abject in your own eyes, I am going to destroy your self-esteem so completely that upon your nothingness I shall be able to establish Myself". These words left so deep an impression on me that I could not think of them except with horror. Please pray for me, and rest assured that I am wholly yours.

To Her Brother, the Parish Priest at Bois- Sainte-Marie
(71) April 14, 1687

Since you wish it, dear brother, I shall not let slip this fine opportunity of giving myself the pleasure of doing something that will please you. You say you are relying upon this frail reed for your salvation.

How sorry I should be, indeed, if that were true! You would be exposing yourself to the dangers of losing your soul, seeing that no one I think, has more cause for fear of her own than I have, so wicked and unfaithful to God do I see myself. Both of us must work unceasingly for our salvation. For, as you know, the crown of glory is given only to the victor who perseveres to the end. I pray Our Divine Master that we may be numbered among these.

You say nothing about the foundation of which my brother spoke to me. You have no idea how much pleasure you give me by being so zealous for the glory of the Sacred Heart of Our Divine Savior. That way lies, I think one of the shortest roads to our sanctification. I am as eager for yours as for my own, you may be sure.

But, dear brother, we must do ourselves violence if we are to arrive at the perfection God asks of us. This is no small degree of perfection for He wishes to make a saint of you if only you are willing to cooperate with His plans and follow the lights He gives you. I am confident He will not refuse you the graces necessary for that. Do not think that working for the souls confided to your care will be a hindrance to sanctifying your own.

Rather it is by this means that you will induce His goodness to give you all the greater help so that you can work for that with less danger. So watch carefully over your little flock. Be a kind Father to them, providing for all their spiritual needs.

Most of all, be sure that your life is for them an example of virtue and an odor of sweetness. Then the Lord will shower His blessings on you. Do not be interested in nor attached to the things of the earth. Keep your heart as free from them as you possibly can. There must be no human respect either where there is a question of God's glory.

Be gentle and patient towards all but especially towards the poor, so as to inspire confidence in each one. Then they will come to you in their needs. Be everybody's friend and have no enemies in so far as that is possible in God.

But above all else, dear brother, keep your soul always free from every sin, and flee from every occasion of sin. Excuse the liberty I take in speaking to you this way. You must be convinced that this come from a heart that cherishes you tenderly in that of Our Lord.

He makes me feel as much joy at your progress in His holy love as at my own. My consolation shall be complete when I learn that you omit nothing whatever that is conducive to your progress in perfection. This is my wish.....

To Mother Louise-Henriette de Soudeilles, at Moulins
(72) From our Monastery in Paray, May 1, 1687

Most Honored Mother,

You could not make me happier than by sending me news of the spread of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ. I am sure this devotion will prove no less useful to this fine gentleman than it will to all those who practice it with confidence. I shall beg Our adorable Jesus with all my heart to shower His grace and love upon them.

We are sending you the five volumes of the works of Reverend Father de la Colombiere, and when we have received his Retreats we shall send them to you, too. I hope your heart will be filled more and more with the love of this loving Heart, in which I am wholly yours.

Our most honored Mother sends you her respects. Our dearest Sister Cordier sends Your Charity the same.

Mary was conceived without sin.

To Mother Greyfie, at Semur
(73) May, 1687.

I tell you sincerely that I never experience greater pleasure than when you speak to me of suffering purely for the love of God. I consider myself unfortunate only in not yet having been able to suffer anything out of pure love. I think it must be in punishment for my sins that I cannot have even the smallest cross without everybody knowing about it.

God is very often offended in this. This causes me grief and leads me to think that all creatures should have a great horror of me. All have the right to avenge themselves on me of the sins I commit and cause others to commit. Thus I can say that I am happy to receive no other marks of affection or consolations from creatures than crosses and humiliations. Never have I been richer than in these.

I just mention this in passing so as to invite you to give thanks for me to the Sacred Heart and to ask Him to give me the grace of profiting from so precious a treasure. Were it in my power to make things different I would do away with only what can offend God, and keep all else He permits for my humiliation and in this find all my joy in the adorable Heart of my Jesus.

Believe me dear Mother, nature is so self satisfied at being flattered and sympathized with that I cannot count my sore finger a suffering at all, because people are always telling me how much I am suffering. I think they must be saying this to make fun of me for being so sensitive to a little pain, anyhow their saying it has given me a taste of how pleasing to nature it is to be sympathized with.

Nature cannot bring itself to suffer humiliation, contempt, and abandonment by creatures without some support. Yet pure love asks for just that. Otherwise our sufferings are not worthy of the name.

I shall always be wholly yours in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, no matter how He inspires you to treat me. The same holds true for our most honored Mother (Melin). I assure you I feel toward her all the respect, esteem, and confidence one can have for a Mother as good and charitable as she is.

I am continually experiencing her kindness and loving care. I think she out does herself in these things in my regard. The only complaint I have against her is that she does not want to think me as bad as I really am, always weak and tepid, yet ever wholly yours in the adorable Heart of Our Divine Master.

To Mother Louise-Henriette de Soudeilles, at Moulins.

(74) From our Monastery in Paray July 25 1687.

I beg the loving Heart of Jesus to consume our hearts in the pure flames of His Holy Love, so that they may live and breathe only to love, honor, and glorify Him.

I am happy to be able to take advantage of this occasion, most honored Mother, both to assure you of my continued sincere, and respectful friendship, and to send you two copies of the Retreat of Reverend Father La Colombiere. They were sent to us from Lyons with the notification that now all your money has been used up.

I assure you, dear Mother, that I have nothing but pleasure in thinking of the ardent zeal this Sacred Heart gives you to make Him known and loved. I see in that a great sign of His love for Your Charity.

You must never let up in this holy work which will, I think, bring you a rich reward from God. In His Presence I do not forget you in my unworthy prayers and beg you not to refuse the help of your prayers to one who is wholly yours in the Sacred heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

To Sister (Francoise-Lucrece) de Thelis, at Lyons.
(75) September, 1687.

I beg the adorable Heart of Jesus, most honored Sister, to make you feel the powerful effects of His merciful charity and to give you Himself what you are seeking and cannot find in me, the most wicked and unworthy sinner imaginable.

That is why I did not answer you, and why I would not answer anyone else, an inviolable law with me did not order you to tell me simply what I think, this is what I am going to do quite plainly, since you wish it.

In all that Your Charity tells us I find that the best most important sign is the strong impotency of grace even in spite of so many relapses. This shows God's burning desire to save your soul. But He will not save it without our cooperation. So we must not be presumptuous. For if we think we can go on resisting grace, it will at length tire of pursuing us and leave us so imperceptibly that we will not even be aware of our loss. That is why if today you hear the voice of the Lord, harden not your heart.

Try to profit by this retreat which you are going to make for this purpose by a strong and efficacious determination to conquer yourself by doing violence to yourself, whether it be by detachment or by removing the other stumbling blocks you well know to be in your path.

There must be no more deliberate faults if you wish to enter again into the good graces of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Otherwise you will seek Him in vain, for He will treat us even as we have treated His Grace. May His Goodness preserve us from this unspeakable great evil! For what good can a soul possess that has lost its God?

I have no doubt that it was by the spirit of God that this virtuous priest dealt with you as he did, for I consider him a holy man. There is no use, of course, in calling a physician if we do not want to be cured or use the remedies he prescribes or if we are not willing to abstain from the things that make us sick. Since a disease once known is already half cured, all one needs is a firm "I will" and everything will be alright.

After all, there is question here of the salvation of your soul, so very dear to Our Lord Jesus Christ. I can assure you there is nothing I would not be willing to do or suffer for it, sin apart, in order to make it wholly devoted to Him Who created it for His Glory. No one, however, can work more efficaciously for this end than you yourself. This you will do by following the lights He gives you and to do good and to avoid evil. Do not, then, I urge you by the love of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ, resist grace any longer.

When I spoke to you of devotion to this Heart I meant rather the devotion of perfect conformity with His perfect virtues, and not prayers only. As for your Communion, they must produce in you such good effects that you will no longer commit deliberate sins. If they do not, you must follow in this matter, the advice given you. With regard to your being afraid, I think Our Lord will be pleased with you if you go to Him

with the dispositions of the prodigal son, not letting fear destroy your confidence.

It is not said however that this boy, once returned to His father! left Him a second time! But forgive me, what will you say of the liberty your humility is causing my pride to take? I beg you not to be angry. I can add nothing more now, except to say that you will have a big share in my unworthy and feeble prayers. But because I am so wicked, my prayers will be useless for you.

I hope this good priest will be willing to hear your retreat confession. I think perhaps he would if you follow his advice carefully. It will be a great loss to you not to have it. Although I do not have the honor of knowing him, I think I can safely say: follow his counsel without fear.

These then are my thoughts simply presented. You do not have to agree with them, much less follow them. Follow them only in so far as Our Lord inspires you to do so. With all my heart I beg Him to make you ever faithful in doing the good He asks of you and in offering Him the sacrifice of everything that costs you the most, as He shall make it known to you.

There is no middle way. He wants everything or nothing. If only you knew the graces you are going to receive from Him you would not refuse Him what He asks of you. For your whole peace of soul and all your happiness consists simply in this. Enter upon your retreat in the spirit of repentance. Suffer and be patient.

O my dear Sister, if only we could appreciate the great wrong we do our poor soul in depriving it of so many graces and by exposing it to such evident peril by our frequent voluntary faults! These make it loose the friendship of its God. He cannot hear it, nor even those who pray for it, as long as it itself refuses to listen to Him and to be completely converted to Him.

He closes to it the entrance of His Sacred Heart because it casts Him out of its own heart. Let us make good use of the time He gives us. Let us delay no longer. And yet we ought not to worry, for all our worrying serves only to increase the difficulty. The Spirit of God does everything peacefully. Let us have recourse to Him with love and confidence. He will receive us mercifully and with open arms. But after that, let us try not to leave Him any more, for so many voluntary relapses are very dangerous, especially to a soul of a religious.

To Sister de Thelis, at Lyons

(76) From our Monastery in Paray, October 11, 1687.

Truly, most honored Sister, if the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ had given me less affection for your dear soul, I would not feel so strongly about its slow progress in the way of perfection. Since you have asked me to tell you freely what I think, I am going to do so quite frankly, for I do not know how to flatter anyone, or how to dissimulate.

You know there is no middle way. One must either save one's soul or lose it for all eternity. Which we do depends on us. We can either choose to love God eternally in heaven with the Saints, after having done violence to ourselves, and mortified and crucified ourselves here on earth as they have done; or we can renounce their happiness by granting nature everything it craves.

Why are so many reasons and arguments necessary to get you to observe the resolutions which seem to me so useless for your perfection? Unless you carry them out you will not make much progress. But they constrain and cramp nature, you say. For that very reason you must carry them out the more faithfully. Nature and grace can not exist together in the same heart. One must always give way to the other.

Of what use is it my dear Sister, to make resolutions during retreat if afterwards we do not want to put them into practice when occasion offers? By so acting are we not really writing out our own condemnation to be shown us on Judgment Day? Then we shall be told: Here is what she wrote and here is what she did.- But I have said enough about this.

In a word, I think you ought simply to hold inviolably to the resolutions you have made, no matter how repugnant to nature they may be, and make no others. I have expressed my opinion to you clearly enough. You do not have to follow it, however. You are not a wretched sinner as I am.

As for your going and telling your superior the voluntary faults you commit, I think that would be a most efficacious means of preventing you from committing them. Yet divine love should suffice to prevent us from deliberately doing anything that might displease the Well-Beloved of our souls.

Indeed I cannot understand how a heart that belongs to God and truly wishes to love Him can deliberately offend Him. I must confess I find voluntary faults unbearable because they wound the Heart of God. I conjure you therefore, my dear Sister, to guard against committing them. They deprive you of many graces. The loss of these diminishes love in your heart and slows down a good deal the progress of your soul on the road to perfection.

Go bravely to God, then, along the way He has traced out for you, using perseveringly the means He offers you. No matter how difficult they may seem to nature, never exchange them for others of your own choosing. Courageously seek your support in God with complete confidence in His goodness. He never abandons those who trust in Him and distrust in themselves.

Never leave off doing a good once begun except under obedience to those who are guiding you. But you know all this well enough. Only let us try my beloved Sister, to do what we know we should. Pardon me the liberty your humility causes my pride to take in speaking to you in this way. I cannot do otherwise unless I give no answer at all to many things Your Charity asks.

By that I know that the Lord loves you and wants to see you make great strides in the ways of His Love, no matter how crucifying they may be. So do not haggle with Him any longer. Give Him everything. He will see to it that you find it all again in His Divine Heart. It is a good sign when grace pursues us and leaves us no rest. Let us fear lest it let us alone and abandon us.

A word with regard to that novice...(three lines erased, apparently by someone else)... of all the reasons of telling what you know... (Part of a line erased). we must always distrust ourselves in such important decisions lest we betray our conscience and the interest of religion. You must have recourse to the Blessed Virgin Mary, our good Mother and advocate. I trust that She in Her goodness will not refuse you Her help.

For this end you must offer Her the Thirty Days Prayer for a month and ask of Her that, if it is not the right thing, she will prevent this girl from being received and making her holy profession. And you should also have the girl herself say these prayers for the same intention, yet without letting her know what they are for. I can assure you that here, in our own community this prayer has produced truly marvelous results in cases like this.

For twelve or thirteen years now, it has obtained for us from this Mother of Goodness, that not a single girl has ever made her profession who was not fitted for our manner of life. It always comes about that, when the time comes for admitting candidates, either they themselves ask to be dismissed when not fitted for the life or some obstacle turns up that prevents them from being received.

This matter is more important than one might think. Your responsibility before God would indeed be heavy if you did not acquit yourself of the task according to His spirit. But I know you will do your best to acquit yourself of it well.

Finally, beloved Sister, let us work courageously. I have as great a desire for your salvation as for my own, and I can assure you that, sin apart, there is nothing I would not be willing to do and suffer for it. Yet, alas, the creature proposes, but it is for the Creator to furnish the strength to carry on. Do give me the consolation, the first time you honor me with a letter, of assuring me of your determination and constancy in following the movements of grace and of not having committed deliberate fault. In this way you will give the greatest joy to her who is wholly yours in the Love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

I have not failed to offer Communion and the other prayers you desired. But, alas, I am too sinful for you to feel the effects. Please ask God incessantly that He may convert me completely to Himself! For I have great need and a great desire for that.

To Sister Felice-Madeleine de la Barge, at Moulins.
(77) From our Monastery in Paray, October 15, 1687.

This adorable Heart of Jesus, Which disposes everything gently and sweetly, yet firmly and powerfully, did not permit me to satisfy your desire sooner, either because He reserved it to Himself to give you clearer lights than this poor wretched creature could, or for some other reason. We must be content to do His most Holy Will blindly. Since you make me believe I am doing just that in telling my thoughts to you simply, I am going to do it frankly in His Holy Presence.

In the first place, with regard to the lights and feelings you tell me you got about treating your soul like a statue that must be prepared and made worthy of a niche in the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ. These thoughts are all the better, in that He gave you to understand by them that you cannot achieve this without traveling the road of the love of your own abjection. That is the sure way for you. I think He is doing you a very special favor in letting you see and desire this.

There is no more efficacious means of winning and keeping the friendship of the Sacred Heart. It is a cordial capable of giving the life of grace to your soul, and the life of pure love to your heart and to all your good actions. In short, we can sum it all up by saying that it is characteristic of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to lower Himself to us when He finds us prostrate in the love of our own littleness.

He will be careful to raise you up to union with Him when this holy virtue detaches you from any love of what appears to be great in the eyes of men and in your own, so as to treasure lovingly the occasions for humiliation that present themselves, whether they come from others or from yourself, without, however seeking them. Profit from all these occasions divine Providence sends you, without indulging in introspection. That, I think displeases Him.

It should be enough for you that you have given yourself into His care. In so far as you forget yourself He will take special care to make you perfect, purify you, sanctify you. Too much introspection is a hindrance to His fulfilling His designs on us. Forgetfulness and silence, then about ourselves and all that concerns us. Love and cherish everything that will make you little in your own eyes and in the eyes of men.

Tear out of your heart every other desire. Cling to this till His Goodness draws you onto something else. Ah my dear Sister, what a great treasure the love of our own lowliness and abjection is! What ought we not do and suffer to possess it! The soul that does can, I dare say, feel secure. It can want nothing, for the Almighty finds His delight and repose in it. I tell you sincerely that I would consider myself rich enough and think I had profited enough if, in these sixteen or seventeen years this unworthy sinner has labored, she had acquired the least degree of it.

So ask this for me without ceasing from the Sacred Heart of our good Master. I put you under His direction so that He Himself may be your director and guide. He is most experienced. When we abandon ourselves to Him and leave Him free to act, He sees to it that we make great progress in a short time without noticing

it, except by the attacks His grace makes continually on our immortalized nature. That is by way of answer to your reference to the word direction.

God forbid though, dear Sister, that I should ever want to get mixed up in this. I do not even know what it is. I content myself with telling you simply my thoughts about what you ask, without order or method, just as they come into my mind, without my being able to record what I said or wrote. So I can not go back and see whether it is good or bad. Accept with a good heart what Our Lord shows you to be applicable to yourself and do not bother about the rest.

I am sharing the afflictions Our Lord sends so often to your most honored Mother (de Soudeilles). They are the surest marks of His Love. I beg His divine Goodness to give her the grace to make as good use of them as she can by submission and conformity to His good pleasure and most holy will. Assure this most honored Mother that I shall always have for Her Charity all the esteem, affection and respect of which my poor heart is capable in that of our good Master, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

He, I think, is very pleased with the love and burning zeal she has for making Him known, loved and glorified. Her trouble and suffering shall not be lost. I cannot tell you how much consolation she gives me by thus advancing herself forward in the good graces and friendship of this loving Heart. I do not forget her in His presence, nor Your Charity, either beloved Sister.

I would like to give myself the honor of writing to this dear Mother to thank her for the six little books on the Sacred Heart she has already sent us. I am much obliged to her for them and beg you to thank her for giving me this great pleasure. I know she will be so kind as to accept my most humble thanks through you, for I fear I bother her by writing too often.

As for yourself, dear Sister, cherish and try to draw much profit from the good desires God in His sovereign goodness gives you. Be on the alert for them, for the Holy Spirit breatheth where He willeth. Graces comes and never returns. Let us profit by it. When the Lord inspires us to good He also gives us the strength to do it, but it is not that way with creatures. so follow His lights without fail until you have made Him the absolute Master of your heart.

Do not worry about your letters. I shall keep their contents entirely secret. In your visits to the Blessed Sacrament let your prayer be for love of your own abjection in honor of the self effacement of a God hidden away and humiliated for love of us.

In your other prayers and in your Holy Communions, which you ought to make as often as possible, you should pray for the same thing. During your retreat, which you ought to point to obtaining forgetfulness and contempt of self, you ought again to ask for the same thing, so that you may be completely lost in God, forget yourself, and seek and see only God and His good pleasure in all things, to the complete extinction of your own desires.

To Mother Louise-Henriette de Soudeilles, at Moulins.

(78) Towards the end of 1687.

Truly, most honored Mother, you renew and increase my joy every time you send me news of fresh progress in the devotion to the Sacred Heart of our good Master. He will not, I am confident, let your zeal in making Him known, loved and honored go unrewarded. I think we are well enough recompensed when He judges us worthy of doing Him some service. For He is the inexhaustible source of all good, and in Him love lets us find everything we need.

I think, beloved Mother, that He often lets you draw on the treasury of the Cross by the painful visitations He sends you so as to unite you ever more intimately with Himself. This is all we ought to desire in time and eternity. Ah dear Mother, what happiness it is to suffer lovingly here below! Still, I never cease asking Him to restore your health, if that be His will, and that you may live longer, since He has made you useful for His glory.

Keep on spreading His Kingdom, dear Mother, and do not forget me in His Presence. I really have great need of your prayers: yet needy though I be, I continue to preserve for Your Charity all the sentiments of esteem, respect, and affection of which I am capable in the Sacred Heart of our good Master, in Whose love I am wholly yours.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon.

(79) January 17, 1688.

No excuse. my dear Mother could justify my silence with you if our Sovereign Master had not furnished the excuse Himself. As I deal informally with Your Charity and tell you my thoughts frankly, I urge you not to place any stock in them. I myself do not. Please keep them secret, too, so that no one may be deceived any more by so miserable a sinner as myself.

Anticipating this favor from your goodness, I shall proceed to speak to you confidentially about the Sacred Heart. He is continually showing His mercy to me notwithstanding my infidelities. I cannot sufficiently express the sweet transport of joy I feel and seeing these pictures. My soul cannot help blessing you a thousand times over for sending them. I consider you fortunate in obtaining so happy a result. It was reserved for you, together with all the graces it will bring your dear soul.

As for this good Sister (Joly), I think she has given Him more pleasure by doing this for His honor than she had ever done before by all the other actions of her life. I am sure she will never fall into disfavor with the Sacred Heart, and I think He will make her a happy object of His mercies forever. I think He loves her tenderly and that He in turn wants to be loved by her exclusively and always. How good it is to be pleasing to this divine Heart! He will reward our sufferings with eternal joy that surpasses all understanding.

I did not fail to pray for N., as you asked. But I really am so wicked that I was afraid I would only prevent the holy souls who pray for him from being heard. At the very beginning I felt my request being firmly rejected. It seemed to me I even had to fight with this divine Heart. But His love, it seems, let me win the victory, and finally I heard these words: "Be at peace.

I promise you that if he is willing to cooperate with My grace and promises to render My Heart special homage by practicing the virtues of patience and charity, I will always have mercy on his soul." Every first Friday of the month he must have a Mass said or hear one, with the intention of placing Himself and everything that pertains to Him under My protection. He must also recite each day the short act of consecration."

I think though, it is for your sake that He has looked with favor upon this person. So do not fail to further the honor of the Sacred Heart and to commend my miseries to Him.

To Sister Felice-Madeleine de la Barge, at Moulins.

(80) March 1688

I beg the Sacred Heart of our loving Jesus to establish the reign of His love and peace in our hearts forever. Mine, beloved Sister, blessed Him with all its might when, on reading your dear letter, He showed me how much mercy and grace He grants your precious soul. Far from seeing anything bad in all you tell me, I find in it only cause to praise His goodness for His loving watchfulness over you.

He wants to bring you to the end He has in mind for you which is, if I am not mistaken to establish in your heart the reign of His pure love, so that you may reign, I fondly hope, forever in Heaven. This can be attained only by traveling the humble, selfless, lowly way.

You should consider immeasurably precious all the opportunities He offers you. These are but the blows of a friend, blows inflicted by a Heart truly in love with yours, of which He is extremely jealous. That is why He is eager to destroy everything earthly and purely natural in you. And He will, if only you let Him follow His lights, and cooperate to carry out His adorable Will.

Ah, my beloved Sister, if only you realized the honor and partiality the King of Heaven is showing you in so lowering Himself as to come down into your heart! Perhaps you would let Him often remain alone there if He did not make you hesitate in your speech and make you succeed poorly in your undertakings. He is trying to show you that you should no longer seek pleasure or consolation in transient things but in Him alone.

He wishes to mean everything to you, wishes you to take these humiliations as a sign that He is waiting for you in the depths of your heart. You must leave everything and go and keep Him company in the way that pleases Him, whether that be by rendering homage to His omnipotence by your powerlessness and thus letting Him act in you and for you, or by new humiliations He will make you find within yourself.

These are like so many stairs by which you can go down into the depths of your own nothingness, there to find your pleasure with Him. For this Sovereign of our souls takes pleasure only in souls empty of itself....To belong entirely to Him one must no longer retain anything of self. Look, then my dear friend, upon this humble way as the true way He has traced out for you, and as the surest way to bring you to Him. Go straight along it, in peace, with gratitude, not caring to see what you are doing there or whether you are advancing or not.

Abandon yourself blindly, full of faith and confidence, to the care of His loving providence. Never turn back. For by taking too much care of yourself will you prevent Him from taking care of you as He wishes. Without your being aware of it, He will cause you to make more progress in a month than you would ever be able to make in the ordinary way. What have you to fear in away as safe as that of humiliations? The best humiliations are those we do not recognize as such. For humility has this peculiarity: it disappears as soon as

one notices it in oneself.

As for the temptations against faith you speak of, all you have to do is try your best to overcome them by contrary acts. Then they will serve to strengthen your faith. And now my dear friend, must I tell you the one thing that bothers me in all that you write? It is that I do not see enough abandonment and confidence in you, and it is just that, I think that Our good Master asks of you the most. Let Him guide you. Often recall that a child can never perish in the arms of an omnipotent Father.

You must not stop visiting the Blessed Sacrament on account of repugnance you feel on that score. You must offer it to Our Lord in honor of the repugnance He chose to feel in the Garden of Olives. In this way you will frustrate the enemy who is trying to turn you away from doing good.

In the same way, when he incites you to worry and stir up interior storms in you, go to the Sacred Heart and seek your peace there by making acts of love and abandonment, even bothering to pay any attention to what is taking place within you. You must always refuse consent to these things and never worry about anything.

Now I have told you in all simplicity, dearest Sister, the thoughts that have occurred to me here before the picture of the Sacred Heart in answer to what your heart has spoken to me. But what pains me, I must tell you confidentially, is that I am afraid that I always say the same thing over and over again. I forget what I write but I am not allowed to re-read my letters because then I would be tempted to burn them.

So obedience has forbidden me to re-read them. If I always repeat myself you have only yourself to blame for insisting on these all too frequent letters. If there is anything useful for you in them, give thanks to the Sacred Heart, who gives you the humility to speak to and confide in the most miserable and unworthy of all sinners, who herself does none of the good things she advises. So I tell you as a friend, do not put any stock in anything I say, lest you be deceived. Beg the Lord to convert me, and rest assured that I do not forget you in His presence.

I must confess, my dear friend, that even had I carefully studied how to express my liking for that little picture, I would still say I had never seen any I like better. I was so taken with it I showed it to all our Sisters. They were eager to have it, but I got permission to keep it. This is quite against my ordinary way of acting, since my fondest wish is to have nothing at all. I thank you with all my heart, but that is all you must expect for it.

As for those letters Your Charity speaks of, I did not receive them. I have been allowed to write to you twice but do not know whether you have received my letters. Goodbye, most dear and beloved Sister. Surrender everything to God without reserve. May everything in us be purified by His crucified Love, in which I remain wholly yours with my heart's most sincere affection. It truly cherishes you in that of our good Master.

To Her Brother, the Parish Priest at Bois- Sante-Marie.

(81) 1688

You could not have given me greater joy, dearest brother, than by telling me of the zeal with which the adorable Heart of Jesus spurs you on to love Him and to make Him known, loved and honored, and by trying with all your might to establish the reign of His pure love in souls.

Yes, you really have hit upon just what is most capable of touching my poor heart, which is responsive only to that, which lives and longs only to see Our Good Master reign in hearts capable of loving Him. Now I can no longer doubt the holy union with which His pure Love has united our hearts. The Sacred Heart has given you a desire for that which I have never dared propose to you.

He never allowed me to. You have taken the initiative of your own free will. In this way He wants me to give Him, through you as through another self, what He desires to receive from both you and me. It is only now, when it is beginning to give me the proofs I wanted to see, that I recognize your love as genuine. What consolation it gives me to see you so generous towards this loving Heart of Jesus!

This seems to me a sure proof that He wants your heart to be entirely detached from the things of the earth because He wants you to become holy. Yes, my dear brother, this is what I hope for. It is up to you to make yourself holy by cooperating with the great graces He gives you and following faithfully His holy impulses and inspirations.

It will cost nature very much, of course, and nature fears its own destruction and everything that can make it suffer. Yet I do not see how one could put it to death without suffering a great deal, since everything in us is contrary. Our passions revolt continually and often cause us to fall.

But we must not worry about that, nor let ourselves be downcast or discouraged. Rather we must do violence to ourselves and draw profit from our own falls. These should but spur us on to the combat after the example of the saints. They felt their weaknesses just as we do ours. We must then, like them, fight against ourselves to the end, and die arms in hand. For the crown is given only to the victorious.

You well understand, my dear brother, that I do not mean by all this that you should take on great austerities, but rather wholehearted mortification of your passions and evil inclinations. We must free our hearts of attachments and empty it of everything earthly; be charitable towards our neighbor, liberal towards the poor. Look only to God in everything you do and seek Him in all sincerity, in purity and humility of heart.

Strive only to please Him and attribute to Him the glory of everything without being at all solicitous about acquiring any esteem or reputation among men. Ah, my dear brother, let us see to it that our life cast no dishonor on the holy vocation to which we are called! It demands that we live an altogether angelic life. You

see what liberty our holy union gives me, how I say simply what comes to mind, knowing that true affection in the Sacred Heart excuses everything.

Courage, then, my dear brother! Finish what you have begun in honor of this divine Heart, and rest assured that He will reward you a hundred fold for all you do for love of Him.....

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon

(82) 1688

Thank you, dearest Mother, for the picture you were so kind to send us. I cannot express the sweet transport of joy my heart feels on looking at our picture. I find it so beautiful that I cannot stop looking at it. I bless you again and again.

Let us beg this loving Heart, good Mother, to prosper this devotion and to fill with the unction of His grace and with His ardent charity all those with whom He may put us in contact. It would be a sweet pleasure to me to be annihilated in order to bring about His reign. Do not cease working for that, I conjure you.

To Sister Felice-Madeleine de la Barge, at Moulins
(83) March or April, 1688

The loss of those letters is surely annoying. Our most honored Mother (Melin) has been quite put out at the package being lost on the Bourdon Road. For myself, I have resolved to write as little as possible in future. Since I think this holy Lenton season will be over when you receive this, I invite you to keep your heart open and ready to receive the visits of Our Lord during these next forty days.

For this we must keep our senses in solitude by a holy and interior recollection, banishing all thoughts and introspection. These only serve to disturb and destroy our peace of soul. Without this peace our soul can never be the sanctuary of Our Lord. We must take as from His hand whatever comes to us, our occupations and every- thing else, asking for nothing and refusing nothing.

with regard to occupations, I dare say you would scarcely believe how keenly I feel my weakness in the struggle I have to put up because of my lack of submission in this matter. It has caused me to put on many a scene in order to be rid of mine, but in vain. So we must be resigned and, through perfect forgetfulness of self, neither will nor desire anything. Then we shall find all in God. May He be blessed!

Mary was conceived without sin.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon.
(84) Toward the end of April, 1688

There is no reason, dear Mother, why I should not write to you in spite of all my repugnance. This, I must confess, is very great. I earnestly wish to leave no means untried to completely efface myself from the minds of men, to bury myself, if I can, in oblivion and their contempt, which is all that is due to me. But, alas, God often permits just the contrary.

This I accept as a chastisement for my sins. I must admit that it is one of my greatest sufferings, even though I feel myself quite indifferent to all the dispositions of divine providence. I console myself with the thoughts that it is a cross, and the cross is good at all times and all places. It matters little of what wood is made. It should be enough for us that it comes from the Sacred Heart of Our Lord. Here is if I am not mistaken, making you happy with His cross even now. And your niece, too, who I think is a chosen soul. I do not fail to pray for her, so that if it be not the will of the Lord to deliver her from suffering. He will at least grant her perfect conformity to His most Holy will. I think He is making use of this means to purify and sanctify her. But she must put it to good use. I consider you fortunate, dear Mother, in that He is giving you in this a proof of His love.

I must tell you we have another picture of the Sacred Heart. One of our Sisters had it made. It has at the bottom the Blessed Virgin on one side and Saint Joseph on the other. In the center is a soul in prayer. It is just what I wanted for our little chapel, the first to be erected in honor of this Divine Heart. Our dear Sister des Escures takes care of it. She greets you and has a great love and esteem for you.

I am not forgetting you before the Lord. He is making life so bitter for me that my only consolation is to see the Heart of my adorable Savior reign. Whenever this devotion makes some new advance He gives me the pleasure of suffering something special. But there is nothing I would not be willing to do and suffer for that. Even the greatest bitterness is changed into sweetness in this adorable Heart.

There everything is changed into love. My greatest grief is to think that I am in the way, and this often makes me desire death. I even think it is my infidelities which cause all the calamities I see happening around me. And what makes me suffer still more is that I cannot avenge on myself the injuries committed against my Divine Savior in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. You see, dear Mother, how much I stand in need of your holy prayers to help me persevere in doing the things God asks of me. I am yours.....

To Mother Louise-Henriette de Soudeilles, at Moulins.

(85) April or May, 1688

You are too good, most honored Mother, to one so unworthy of the honor of being remembered. Yet I beg you to continue to remember me in the presence of Our Divine Master. He alone can know how eagerly I desire to give you true proofs of the sincere affection He has given me for Your Charity.

I should be even more obliged to you if you would do me the favor of giving up those sentiments of esteem Your Charity so unjustly has conceived for one so miserable as I am, I shall not forget you in my poor prayers. You shall always have the greatest share in them and I shall ever be mindful before Our Lord of your true worth.

I have had the honor of seeing the worthy gentleman Your Charity spoke of in her letter, though it was for a very short time. But even at that I was deeply impressed by his virtue and real merit. The very fact that you sent him made him quite acceptable to me. So please do not again do me the injury of thinking I forget you.

I have no time to write more, except to thank you for the scissors Your Charity sent. May Our Lord reward you! For I receive everything given us as alms coming from His hand. I beg the divine goodness to shower His most precious graces on you and to consume you in the ardent love of His Sacred Heart in which I am, with profound respect, more completely yours than anyone else's

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon
(86) May 1688

Dearest Mother,

Although the Sacred Heart of our good Master gives me consolation on receiving your letters and in writing to you, still He does not leave me free to do so much as I would like. So I must snatch these few free moments to tell you frankly what I think on the subject of devotion to the Sacred Heart as you said you wanted me to.

This seems difficult enough to me since, though so wicked and miserable, I feel myself quite buried in this Divine Heart. If I am not deceiving myself, I am as though in a bottomless abyss, where He shows me treasures of love and grace for those who consecrate themselves to Him and work unstintingly to render Him and procure for Him all the honor, love, and glory they can.

On receiving Holy Communion, I wanted to acquit myself of the charge you entrusted to me of offering all three of you (Mother de Saumaise herself, Father Charollais, her confessor, and Mother Desbarres) to this loving Heart. I thought I distinctly heard Him answer me in these words: "Yes, I receive all three of them united in My Love forever." This filled my soul with such sweet consolation that it was quite transported with joy at the thought that you were numbered among His beloved favorites.

On another occasion when He deigned to converse with His unworthy slave He showed her and gave her to understand that He was going to make for Himself a crown of twelve of His dearest friends, of those who should have procured Him the most glory on earth, and place them like twelve brilliant stars around His Sacred Heart.

It seemed to me that you were one of these. But I shall not go more into detail, for as soon as I catch myself thinking that I have any part in what I am speaking of, I fall into an abyss of confusion where I suffer a kind of martyrdom. What more can I say then, my dear Mother, except that you should not let up, for your work is pleasing to Him. Just to please Him is recompense enough.

It seems to me that He is living in your community as in a place of delights to dispense His love generously and give His salutary and sanctifying graces. It is this ardent desire of His to give His grace to souls and to hearts well disposed that makes Him want to be known, loved, and glorified by His creatures. He wishes to establish His rule over them as the source of all good so that He may take care of their needs. That is why He wants everyone to approach with great confidence.

One of the most efficacious means of obtaining what we ask is through the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We should have three, or even five, said on Friday in honor of the five wounds of Our Lord. Several persons who were dying were cured miraculously in this way. My brother, the priest is one of them.

One gives the sick person five small slips of paper and has him swallow one of them each morning. On one side is written: "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus cure you!" On the other side: "May the most pure " and Immaculate Conception of Mary, the Mother of God, be praised forever!" All this may be abbreviated if one wishes.

One Friday during Holy Communion, if she is not deceiving herself, He spoke these words to His unworthy slave: "I promise you, in the excessive mercy of My Heart, that Its all powerful love will grant all those who communicate on nine consecutive first Fridays of the month the grace of final repentance.

They will not die in My disfavor nor without receiving their sacraments. My Divine Heart shall be their sure refuge in their last moments." He has, moreover, promised His unworthy slave that, if she gives herself over completely to loving Him, He Himself will pray to His Father for those who recommend themselves to her prayers.

How can I ever enumerate, my dear Mother, all the mercies of this loving Heart? Notwithstanding my ingratitude, He has never shown me greater or more wonderful ones. I consider myself nothing but an obstacle to the furthering of His glory and the imparting of His Grace to souls because of the tepid life I lead. This often makes me the object of His just wrath.

I ask you to help our poor Sister N., for whom I have been offering to Our Lord, since the beginning of this year, all I can do and suffer. Until I made this promise to do penance for her she gave me no rest. She told me she was suffering very much, especially for three things. The first is the too great care and softness she showed her body. The second for tale bearing and lack of charity.

The third, for some petty ambition of hers. So I want to enlist your charity also in her behalf. I confide to you that I do not remember ever having passed a year like this one as far as suffering is concerned. It seems that everything serves as an instrument to divine Justice to torment me. Nothing makes me suffer more than His sanctity of justice. The only remedy for this interior torture is crosses, pains, sufferings, and all kinds of humiliations.

Under these I should give way a thousand times over did not His merciful goodness sustain me in an extraordinary way. I have abandoned myself completely to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ and have chosen Him for my director. He has been willing to do me this charity. He does not spare me, you may be sure. For on correcting me He imposes a penance to think that anyone wrongs me in making me suffer; He imposes strict silence on me in this matter.

I can say nothing more than this: no matter what contradictions you meet up with in working to establish the reign of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, I beg you never to abandon your holy undertaking. All these difficulties are but a sure sign that this is from God and that He is being much glorified by it. I am all yours in His love.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon
(87) June 6, 1688.

I received your letter, most honored Mother, and on reading it thanked Our Lord for His having given you to understand my sinfulness and ingratitude towards Him. I earnestly wish that were the case with everybody else, so that they might forget about this miserable creature except for giving her due: contempt and humiliations.

Buried in these I wish to live and die, begging God with all my heart that no one will ever get a good religious whom God has inspired with such charity towards me. Please excuse me from giving the name for the time being. I shall simply say that he will be a second Father de la Colombiere (Father Gette was his name) He sent us a little office of the Sacred Heart which he composed, thinking this Divine Heart wanted that of him.

We are sending it to you to see whether you would like to have it printed. As we are sending the original, both in order to please you and so that you may examine it, send it back to us if you think proper. I think it comes from a saint towards whom I have great obligations because of the spiritual help I have received from him through his holy sacrifices and prayers.

Ah, dear Mother, how good and merciful God is to me! But that is about all I can say. I do not feel myself capable of giving you satisfaction on what you ask of me, assuring you sincerely that I love my Savior and occupy myself more with Him than with His gift and favors.

These I esteem only in Him and because they come from Him. Unless obedience orders me, I scarcely think of them at all and speak of them even less, since I cannot do so without the greatest effort. God. I do not fail to commend Him those you wish me to pray for. But I am afraid some of them are hardening their hearts against the movements of grace. You have no idea how cold and unapproachable the Sacred Heart of Jesus is when one goes to it for such people. But we must hope and pray.

As for the favors granted through the intercession of the saintly Father de la Colombiere, one of our Sisters have promised to write them down to send them to you. I can testify that, through His intercession, I myself was cured of the same infection in a finger that I had last year when the finger was lanced in several places.

But, my dear Mother, what shall we say about the lovable and ever adorable Heart of Jesus? We must love this Sacred Heart with all our strength and as much as we possibly can. Yes, we must love Him. He will establish His rule and will reign in spite of all His enemies and all their opposition.

I cannot tell you how very much I appreciate all the trouble and care you put yourself to for that. The same holds for your most honored Mother (Desbarres), your confessor (Father Charollais) and some others of

your Sisters. It seems to me this Divine Heart takes such great pleasure in this that He is destining you to enjoy treasures of infinite delights.

I wonder whether you would think proper to insert this little office after the litanies you want to have printed. But if you do not, never mind. I am satisfied with everything, though it would give me great pleasure to have some news from Rome. Meanwhile, I am wholly yours in this Divine Heart.

To Sister Felice-Madeleine de la Barge, at Moulins
(88) June 11, 1688.

You want me, beloved Sister, to write you a long answer when we are so busy and so pressed for time. Even at an ordinary time that would be difficult enough. But now you want me to write to you confidentially as my dear friend in the loving Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ during the holy octave of the feast of this Divine Love Who reposes on our altars.

He speaks to us only of love, wants us to be filled only with love, so that through Himself we may be able to show Him all the love He expects of us. He expects a strong love that will not let itself be disheartened; a pure love, which loves disinterestedly and without self interest; a crucified love, who's only joy lies in suffering in order to be conformed to its Well-Beloved; a love of preference, of forgetfulness and abandonment of self, in order that the Well-Beloved may act freely, cut, burn, and annihilate in us everything that displeases Him; a love that follows Him blindly, without stopping to consider or reflect on ourselves to see what we are doing.

I received your letter before the Blessed Sacrament and, on presenting it to my Sovereign Master, this is what it occurred to me to say to you: love, forgetfulness of self and self-effacement in your own heart and simplicity, if I am not deceiving myself, which is the loving simplicity of a child. That is what He asks of us.

I trust He will make you understand all this gradually as you think it over. But, honestly dear friend, how could I ever write a letter like this to anyone but you? I find it extremely difficult to write it. My Sovereign Master does not leave me free to write it as you wish. Just to please you I am sending you this messy thing. Please burn it.

Go blindly, forget yourself, let Him act in you, for He loves you. If you try to do too much you will only prevent Him from furthering the work of your perfection.

Good-bye dear friend. I can say no more except before the Sacred Heart. It is there I shall do the rest for you. I do not forget you in His Presence. To work, to suffer for love of Him, and to be silent: here lies the true secret of the lovers of the Well-Beloved, in whose Sacred Heart I am wholly yours.

A thousand respectful remembrances and greetings to your most honored Mother (Dubuysson) and to your dear former superior (Sister de Soudeilles) Please offer my apologies to Miss Chamberland for not being able to write to her but assure her that I shall try to do what she asks. I am writing this after matins on the Feast of Saint Barnabas.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon
(89) July, 1688

It is out of obedience to my Sovereign, dear Mother, that I shall try, when He permits it, to satisfy in all simplicity the request you make that I tell you of His continued mercies and generosity to me. They are so great that often they make me simply exclaim: Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo! Alas, what else could I say, when my heart is so full I cannot express myself?

I am surrounded by His blessings on every side, I am so buried in them I cannot escape. I feel myself to be a little drop of water in this ocean of the Sacred Heart. It is an abyss of every good, an inexhaustible source of every delight. The more one draws from it the more abundantly it flows. It is a hidden and infinite treasure which asks only to show itself to us, to diffuse and to distribute itself to enrich our poverty.

I value it and love it more than all His gifts, graces, and benefactions. I let Him act in me, with me, for me, according to His good pleasure. I take no notice of anything but Him. He is worth a million times more than all else besides. If you did not oblige me to write you something about this I should leave everything in Him Who makes me powerless to say anything except to those He wishes me to. You are one of these.

I must tell you that I had the good fortune of spending all day on the feast of the Visitation before the Blessed Sacrament. My Sovereign deigned to favor His wretched slave with several special graces from His loving Heart. He drew me into Himself and made me experience things I cannot express.

He showed me a very high place, spacious and wonderfully beautiful, in the midst of which was set up a throne of flames and within it the lovable Heart of Jesus with Its wound. From this shot forth flames so luminous and glowing that the whole place was lighted up and warmed by them. The Blessed Virgin was on one side and Saint Francis de Sales and the Saintly Father de la Colombiere on the other. The Daughters of the Visitation were there with their guardian angels beside them, each one holding a heart in his hand.

The Blessed Virgin invited us with these words: "Come my well beloved daughters, draw near, for I want to make you the trusted guardians of this precious treasure which the divine Sun of justice formed within the virginal soil of my heart, where It lay hidden nine months. After that It was manifested to men. But they did not recognize Its value and condemned It because they saw It mixed and covered with the clay of their humanity. Onto It the eternal Father had cast all the filth and corruption of our sins.

These He caused to be purified away for thirty three years by the burning flames of Its charity. But seeing that men, far from enriching themselves and making use of so precious a treasure for the purpose for which It was given them, but rather to set It at naught and exterminate It, if possible, from the face of the earth, the eternal Father, by an excess of mercy, made use of their malice only to render yet more useful this precious Gold, by the blows they gave It in His Passion they have made of It priceless money, stamped with the image of divinity, so that with It they might pay their debts and carry on the great business of their

eternal salvation."

The Queen of Goodness continued to speak: She said to them, pointing to this Divine Heart: "This is the Precious Treasure especially revealed to you because of the tender love My Son has for your Institute. He loves it and considers it His dear Benjamin, and for that reason wants you to have a greater share in this inheritance than all others.

They must not only enrich themselves with this treasure but do all they can to put this precious money in circulation. They must distribute it lavishly, trying to enrich the whole world with it without fear of depleting it. For the more of it they take the more of it there will be left to take."

Then turning to the good Father de la Colombiere this Mother of Goodness said: "As for you, faithful servant of My divine Son, you have a great share in this Precious Treasure. For if It is given the Daughters of Visitation to know and describe to others, it is reserved to the Father's of your Society to show and make known Its utility and value so that people may profit from It by receiving It with the respect and gratitude due so great a benefit.

In proportion as they give Him this pleasure, this Divine Heart, source of blessings and graces, will shower them so abundantly on the works of their ministry that they will produce fruits far beyond their labors and expectations. And, this, too, for their own personal salvation and perfection."

Our holy founder speaking to his daughters, said to them: "Esteemed daughters, come and draw from the source of all blessings the waters of salvation. From it a little rivulet, your Constitutions, has already flowed forth into your souls. In this divine Heart you will find an easy way of acquitting yourselves perfectly of what is enjoined you in the first article of your Directory.

This contains in substance the whole perfection of your Institute, and reads: 'Let their whole life and endeavor tend to unite them with God'. For that end let this Sacred Heart be the life that animates us with God, help holy Church by prayer and good example, and further the salvation of our neighborhood.

With this in view, let us pray in the Heart and through the Heart of Jesus. Which wishes henceforth to make Itself the Mediator between God and man. Our good example shall consist in living in conformity with the holy maxim and virtues of this divine Heart and we shall further the salvation of our neighbor by spreading among them this holy devotion. Let us try to diffuse the good odor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ into the hearts of the faithful, so that we may become the joy and crown of this lovable Heart."

Thereupon all the guardian angels drew near to present Him with what they held in their hands. As soon as these hearts touched the Sacred Wound they became beautiful and shone like stars. Some of them did not shine as brightly as others.

The names of several remained written in letters of gold in the Sacred Heart, into Which some of those I

speaking of eagerly disappeared and were buried with mutual pleasure. These words were spoken: "In this abyss of love is your dwelling place and repose forever." These were the hearts of those who labored the most to make Him known and loved. Yours, I think, dear Mother, was among them.

I shall not explain what I heard about the others for this letter is already too long, and besides I think you understand well enough. I shall simply add that the divine Heart will reward not only you personally but your relatives as well. He looks upon them with an eye of mercy and will help them in all their needs provided only they approach Him with confidence.

He will remember forever all they do for His glory. I trust you will not refuse me the favor of having fifteen Masses said for the repose of the soul of Mr. de la Michaudiere in honor of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ. If you do this, I think He will be a powerful advocate in heaven, close to this divine Heart, for you and for your whole family.

To Sister Felice-Madeleine de la Barge, at Moulins.
(90) From our Monastery in Paray, August 12, 1688

I admit, dearest Sister, that you have just cause for complaint at my responding so poorly to so many proofs of your goodness to me, and to so sincere a friendship which I have not merited. I am very shamed. Yet I think my poor heart is doing its best to make you every return it possibly can in the Heart of our good Master. He knows how dear He has made your soul to me. Without wanting to excuse myself I must say I think you would not blame me quite so much for not writing if you knew the real reasons.

The first is that, since I am overwhelmed with letters as a result of having unfortunately deceived others (and you are one of them), I see no other way out but to keep silence. So I am not going to write to anybody anymore. One can be of no help to others until after one has first reformed oneself. If only you knew how far I am from what a true daughter of Holy Mary ought to be! She ought to center all her attention on making herself a true copy of her Crucified Spouse. I see that everything can help us onto that.

What difference does it make of what wood our cross is made provided it is a cross and the love of Him, Who died on it, for love of us keeps us nailed to it? That ought to be enough for us. I consider you fortunate in that your employments furnish you with the means of doing this by making you go contrary to your natural inclinations. All this is good, but you must put far from you all impatience and worry. The Lord takes up His dwelling only in a soul that is at peace, in a soul that dearly loves to see itself destroyed and annihilated, so that it may remain completely lost in the love of its own abjection.

I become more and more convinced, on reading your letters, that this is the way that the Lord has marked out for you. You must find your pleasure in advancing along it. Whether He Himself leads you this way, or whether He makes use of some other person or even of yourself, does not matter. As long as He is satisfied, that is enough. Leave Him free to act as He wishes. Let your occupation be to love Him. You should be careful not to resist Him nor place any obstacles in the way of His designs. You will find that He will cause you to make great progress in a short time without your perceiving it.

As for your entering into His Sacred Heart: enter in! What should you fear, since He invites you to come in and rest there? Is it not the throne of mercy, where the most miserable are the most graciously received, provided love presents them in the abyss of their mercy? And if we are tepid, cold, sinful and imperfect and purified like gold in the crucible, so that we may become living victims completely immolated and sacrificed to His adorable designs? Do not be afraid, then, to abandon yourself without reserve to His loving providence.

A child can not perish in the arms of an omnipotent Father. I think I told you before that He is not pleased with your fears. He wants a child like confidence. Since He loves you, there is nothing you ought to fear so much as not to make Him that full return of love He wants of you. This consists, if I am not mistaken, in your perfect abandonment and self forgetfulness.

Forsake yourself and He will think for you. Bury yourself in your nothingness and you shall possess Him. But what will bring all this about? The love which you will find in the Sacred Heart. You must try to make it your place of retreat. You must also take Him as your guide and chief director, in order that He may teach you what He wants from you, and that He may give you the strength to do perfectly. This, if I am not mistaken, is, in a few words, what I consider to be the chief thing: He wants you to learn to live there without support, without friends, without pleasure. As you think over these words more and more He will help you to understand them.

Once more, then, my dear friend, do not worry about your faults, but when you have committed one, say quite confidently to the most loving Heart of Jesus: "O my only Love, pay your poor slaves debts and make good the evil I have just done. Turn it to your glory, the edification of the neighbor, and the salvation of my soul." In this way our falls sometimes help us very much to humble us and to remain hidden in the depths of our nothingness. Self love on the other hand always wants to show off, be praised and loved and welcomed everywhere.

It does not want to listen to, nor understand this lesson. We must not reason with it for it feeds and grows fat on arguments. Finally, beloved Sister, let us try to have none of it, but rather learn to carry our cross well and in loving silence. For the cross is a precious treasure and we must keep it hidden away so that nobody will steal it away from us. I know of nothing that so takes the sting out of a long life as always to suffer lovingly. So let us suffer lovingly, without complaint, and count as lost the moments spent without suffering. We have no time to lose.

Think, then, only of the present moment so we may use it well, as though it were the last one of our life and we had to appear before the tribunal of divine justice to render an account of ourselves. But honestly, now, dear friend, are you not getting tired of my repeating myself? Why am I talking so long, since you know from experience everything I am saying better than I can tell you in words. But you wanted it from a heart that can refuse you nothing in that of our good Master, before Whom I conjure you not to forget my special needs. They are greater than I can say because of my great sins, ingratitude, and infidelity.

I do not forget you in my unworthy prayers, nor your most honored Mother (Dubuysson), for whom I have conceived the deepest sentiments of respect, esteem, and affection of which my poor heart is capable in that of our good Savior. I think He regards her with complacency in the position she holds in your regard because she is there by His choice. That is why I am sure He will take care of her, provided she places all her confidence in Him.

I am much obliged to her for the honor of remembering me and would do myself the honor of writing her. As for your dear former superior (Sister de Soudeilles), God knows how much I love her. That sometimes makes me want to help her carry her cross. No, not that I would want to decrease her merit. I love her too much for that and it is too precious. I only want to make her cross lighter. I did myself the honor of writing to her sometime ago but I do not know whether she received the letter. Assure her of my most sincere affection, and believe me wholly yours in the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon
(91) August 1688.

Now dear Mother, your good heart is much saddened by the refusal you have received from Rome concerning the Heart of our adorable Savior. It seems to me, if I am not deceiving myself, that He wants me to console you for Him on this score by telling you how I myself have been consoled. After I heard this sad news, which was a sword that pierced my heart with deep grief, I went and threw myself on my knees before His picture and complained to Him. Here is the answer I received: "Why are you grieved about what will be for My glory? For now I am honored and loved together disinterestedly and solely because divine providence wishes it. This pleases Me very much.

But should this fervor begin to grow cold-and this would be very painful to My Divine Heart Which, burning furnace of pure love that It is, cannot stand that-then it will be that I will re-enkindle this fire in the hearts of men with all these privileges and still greater ones. But I will not let go unrewarded the trouble taken in this matter. Be at peace." And that is just what I have done since then, without worrying about it at all, no matter what I hear and even though I am not sure I will ever have the consolation of seeing it come to pass. That does not matter. As long as He is satisfied I shall be satisfied, too, together with Him, deprived though I be of all other consolations.

This, dear Mother I could not refrain from telling you. May it all be for His glory.

It is very consoling to see the progress this devotion is making in these parts because of you. Do not become discouraged. It seems to me He wishes you to make this your life work. It will for the most part make up your crown.

I must say a few words about this poor daughter of yours, who cherishes more tenderly than I can say. She is overwhelmed with suffering and attacked on all sides by her enemies. They make her undergo great sufferings for which there is no relief or remedy except from this divine Heart, of Whose favors I have made myself unworthy by ingratitude and infidelities. Yet He does not cease being as generous as ever to me.

This but increases my anguish. For I do not know whether or not it may be my enemy who often attacks my poor heart with this terrifying thought that these favors will cause my perdition. The thought also comes to me that God does not give such great graces to so wicked a creature as I am, to one who has led such a criminal life, to one who, by her futile hypocrisy, has deceived others, especially those who direct me.

Amidst all these disturbing thoughts my life represented to me as it were in a picture so abdominal that, although I cannot clearly discern anything in it, it seems to me that I should die of grief did I not at the same time feel myself surrounded and strengthened by an invincible power which drives away these infernal demons. If I am not mistaken, Our Lord has given me to understand that they are only trying to destroy my peace of soul. Then again at other times the thought comes to me that this is a false peace which comes only from a hardness of heart that simply makes it insensible to my own sad state.

Alas, dear Mother, could it be possible that this lovable Heart would want to deprive that of His unworthy slave of loving Him forever? I implore you to tell me what you think. You know what confidence I have in Your Charity. It is so great that I give full credence to whatever you say. Please do not flatter me, for it seems to me that I am going to drag down others to hell with me because they rely too much on what I tell them.

I am always overwhelmed with letters and obedience makes me answer them. I abandon myself to everything without reserve. The Sacred Heart continues to give me to certain souls in purgatory to help them satisfy the divine Justice. It is at such times that I suffer pain very much like theirs and find no rest day or night.

This is all I can write you for the present. I am wholly yours.

To Mother Marie-Felice Dubuysson, at Moulins.
(92) October 1688.

I would not have waited for Your Charity to remind me of my duty, most honored and dear Mother, had I not been afraid of those being a burden to you and of making you one of those who are letting themselves be deceived and made sport of by a miserable sinner and hypocrite like myself. You must be on your guard against me. I assure you that if you knew me for what I am, your charitable heart could not help but take compassion on my misery and earnestly ask the Sacred Heart of our good Master for my conversion. I do not fail to present to Him your desires and intentions.

I ask that He Himself rather than creatures be your strength and support in the office in which He has placed you. I hope He will not refuse you the necessary help to acquit yourself of it well and to fulfill His designs on you. But you must entrust yourself to the care of His loving providence, and your whole desire must be to love, honor and glorify this divine and most lovable Heart.

Spare neither care nor trouble for that, for this is the most efficacious means of gaining His friendship and drawing upon yourself and your fervent community His sanctifying grace in abundance and the reign of His ardent charity. He will instill into your hearts the unction of this charity by the purity of His Holy Love. This is the wish of your most humble and obedient servant.

I have taken the liberty, beloved Mother, of presenting you with a copy of the office of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ. I do not know whether you have yet received it, or even if you can read it-it is so poorly written. I also asked Your Charity to let us know whether the booklets on the Sacred Heart are still in print. If you would do us the favor of sending us some and telling us honestly what they cost, we would send you the money at the first opportunity. I should be extremely grateful to you, for you have no idea how eagerly people are asking for them. Pardon me, dear Mother, for dealing with you so freely.

To Sister Felice-Madeleine de la Barge, at Moulins.

(93) October, 1688.

After finishing the preceding letter, I thought you would not be satisfied if I did not add a few words of farewell before entering on our welcome retreat. I hope, my dear friend, that during it we may be able to quit ourselves so entirely that we may hereafter see and possess only our One and All. That is what He desires of us.

For that reason we must try our very best to enter into His adorable Heart by making ourselves very small, by humbly acknowledging our nothingness in which we must always remain completely buried. We must, moreover, establish a reign of peace for ourselves in this Sacred Heart. This we shall do by conforming ourselves to His good pleasure. To this we must so abandon ourselves as to always take special care to eliminate everything that can be an obstacle to it. We must let Him do in us, with us, and for us whatever He wills, in order that He may perfect us in His own way and fashion us according to His will.

In order that we may always live in this divine Heart, we must love Him with a love of preference as the only One necessary to our heart and gradually train ourselves to contemn and forget all else. If we could but understand what progress souls who are called to this perfect despoilment and abandonment of self make when they are faithful to grace!

This fidelity consists in complete death to all desire, self satisfaction, curiosity, and introspection, so that we let ourselves be carried along by this divine Pilot in the strong ship of His lovable Heart. I advise you to make Him a complete donation of your whole self, body and soul, and of all you can do and have done, so that after He has cleaned and consumed in you all that displeases Him. He may dispose of you as He wishes. That is what He usually demands of His dearest friends. I think you are one of them. After they have given Him everything without reserve He may be able to enrich them with His precious treasures.

This, dear friend, should be our occupation not only during our retreat but all during our whole life as well. Our whole life should tend to this union, by a pure and simple act; to a union of our will with that of our Sovereign Well Beloved, to will only what He wills; to a union of heart, of spirit, of action, by uniting yourself only to what He does in you. But alas, I believe I am just repeating over and over again what perhaps is very tiresome to you. This will prevent you from asking for any more long letters. Anyhow, this is the last one for this year.

To Mother Marie-Felice Dubuysson, at Moulins
(94) January, 1689.

I beg the Sacred Heart of our Sovereign Master, most honored and dear Mother, to thank you Himself for me for all your heartfelt kindness. I feel the greatest confusion at seeing you deign, in spite of all your work, to remember a wretched creature like me, who am fit only to suffer in the Sacred Heart of our loving Savior.

Oh, how happy I am that you love Him and want to belong entirely to Him! You ask for a short prayer that will express your love for Him. I myself know no other, nor do I find any better, than this love itself. For everything speaks when one loves. Even the most engrossing occupations are proofs of our love. So, as Saint Augustine says, love, and then do what you will. And since we cannot love without suffering, let us both love and suffer and not lose a moment of this. For every cross is so precious to a heart that loves its God and wants to be loved by Him. Let us strive, then, to make ourselves true copies of our crucified Love.

I did not fail to pray much to the adorable Heart of Jesus for you and your holy community. I think He will always keep your house under His special protection, and am sure that His loving goodness will always take care of it because of your ardent zeal to make Him known, honored, and loved as much by means of these booklets as in other ways. There is always such a demand for them here that one cannot find half enough to satisfy everybody's devotion. Continue dear Mother, to love Him and cause Him to be loved. Do not be afraid that He will forget anything that you do for Him. Ask of Him my perfect conversion and that He may consume our hearts in His pure love, in which I am wholly yours.

Thank you very much, most honored Mother, for the books you had the goodness to send us. I wish I could show my gratitude. You could not have done me a greater favor. I shall not forget you before the Sacred Heart of Our Lord, Whom I beg to repay you.

To Sister Felice-Madeleine de la Barge, at Moulins.

(95) January 5, 1689.

I am satisfied, most beloved dear Sister, that we should write to each other, provided we speak only of love and the cross. For the only thing I can say to you is that we must strive with all our strength to make ourselves living copies of our Crucified Spouse and show Him forth in all our actions.

Ah, my dear friend, how good it is to suffer always and finally die on the cross, overwhelmed by the weight of every kind of suffering, misery, and contempt, abandonment and humiliations! The cross is a precious balm which loses its sweet odor before God when it is exposed. That is why we must hide it and carry it in silence in so far as we can. Let us not lose a moment of suffering, for one cannot love without it.

Ah, how good the cross is, always everywhere! So let us embrace it lovingly, without caring what kind of wood it is made of, or what tool has fashioned it. It alone should suffice for us, since nothing unites us so intimately to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ as does the cross. It is the most precious gauge of His love.

Thank Him for me dear friend, for having at times blessed me with it, but at the same time ask His pardon for having used it so badly. That is why I always remain poor, in spite of possessing this precious treasure without which I should find life insupportable. Not that we must ask for suffering. The greatest perfection is to ask for nothing, refuse nothing, but give ourselves up to pure love to let ourselves be crucified and consumed according to His will.

I am very consoled at the happy progress this divine love is making in your heart. I am sure all these holy inspirations are coming from Him, since they give you peace of soul and keep you in a state of precious annihilation.

How fortunate are they who live together lost and annihilated in this divine love by a perfect forgetfulness of self! Love for our own abjection is a perfect remedy for healing the wounds self love makes in our hearts. Mine is languishing very much by reason of this accursed self love. Let us ask the lovable Heart of our good Master that He consume it in the Sacred Fire He came to bring upon the earth so as to ever inflame well-disposed hearts.

Finally dear friend, we must love Him, no matter what it costs. Pure love wants everything or nothing. So let us keep nothing back from Him. Let us abandon to Him all that we are without worrying about the future or thinking about ourselves or our weaknesses. He will be sure to take care of everything, provided only we leave ourselves to Him. Why are you afraid and argue with Him over the complete sacrifice of your heart? It is already His but He wants undisputed possession of it, free from any danger of returning to itself and detached from absolutely everything, no matter how holy it may seem to us to be.

From the moment He divests us from everything we must rest content and be conformed to His most holy will, completely despoiled of all pleasure, friends, consolation, talent, and even of merit. We must remain submissive and conformed to His most holy will at prayer as at all other times, rejoicing when we find His good pleasure in the annihilation of all that we are and of all self satisfaction. Our heart is so small that it cannot contain two loves. Being made for the divine, it finds no rest when there is admixture of any other.

I would have to love you as much as I do, dearest Sister, in order to write Your Charity at such great length. I would be afraid of wearying anyone else. But your kind heart will excuse everything and will not complain any longer of the silence of one who cherishes you tenderly in His holy Love.

It is true that my dear Sister Saumaise has sent the litany you mention. It is very beautiful. I am most grateful to you for having remembered me during this your retreat. Continue showing me this charity. I have the greatest need of it. My retreat was spent on the cross. You have had a share in what I have had the good fortune of suffering.

A thousand greetings, expressions of respect and love to our dear Sister the former Superior (Sister de Soudeilles). The Sacred heart makes her ever dear to my poor heart. And you, too, dear friend. I hope you may be completely consumed in the flames of pure love.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon
(96) January 1689.

My Dear Mother, How fortunate we are that the Sacred Heart should do us the favor of using us to make Himself known and loved! I thought I would be overwhelmed with confusion and gratitude when, on the feast of the beloved disciple of Our Well Beloved (probably the feast of St. John the Evangelist, December 27, 1688) I happened to recall that it was on this very day that I had the incomparable happiness, together with that beloved disciple, of resting on the breast of this Divine Spouse, of whom I am so unworthy, and that He gave me His Heart, His cross, and His love.

He gave me His Heart to be my refuge, my help in all my needs, and my haven of repose amidst the storms and tempests on this sea of life. There the cross must be my throne of glory. On it alone I must find my joy. Nothing means anything to me any more but Jesus, His love, and the cross- most of all His Holy Love, to purify me, consume me, and transform me into Him.

Ah, dear Mother, how poorly I have corresponded with so many wonderful graces! They ought to have sanctified me but perhaps will serve only for my condemnation. Yet I hope for everything from the goodness of this loving Heart.

I should die content could I but get the Mass of this adorable Heart approved by the Holy See. Yet I am resigned always to the divine good pleasure and sacrifice to it all my desires and all my happiness. Do not be discouraged, my good Mother, and do not give up in spite of all the difficulties you encounter. For I am sure we shall succeed and satan be confounded. In spite of him, this Divine Heart will establish Its reign and Its empire. I am delighted with the burning zeal you have to make It known and loved. That is all I desire. That is all that can give me any pleasure in this miserable life where everything afflicts and torments me.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon.

(97) End of February, 1689.

What can I say to you dear Mother, of the wonderful operations of this Divine Love in our hearts? I can no more find words to express these than I can to express the joy He makes me feel at the happy successes you have had in making Him known and loved. I cannot doubt but that He has divinely destined you for that because of the ardent zeal He gives you for doing it. Oh, how fortunate are those who can help with this work! They are thus drawing to themselves the friendship and eternal blessings of this lovable Heart.

As for you, you are gaining a powerful protector for your country. A lesser soul would not be strong enough to turn aside the just wrath of God, so great are the crimes committed. I hope the Divine Heart will be an inexhaustible source of mercy for it. That, I think, is what He promised the good Father de la Colombiere. On the anniversary of his death (February 15) which, through a great concession of superiors, I had celebrated in our chapel from ten in the morning till about four in the afternoon, I was overwhelmed with suffering. This has not ceased for about five weeks now: I have suffered so much that I thought I might have succumbed at any moment even though I had been warned of them beforehand by this loving Heart.

I thought He asked of me that I keep Him company on the Cross at this time when He is so abandoned and everyone is bent upon dissipation (it was carnival time). By the bitterness He would make me taste, I could in some way lesson that which sinners poured into His Sacred Heart. He said I ought to plead unceasingly with Him for mercy so that the measure of sin would not be filled up and that God might pardon sinners because of the love He bears this lovable Heart.

It never ceases to be consumed with love for men. He wants to establish His reign among us anew only to impart more abundantly His graces of sanctification and salvation. But He will not impart them to those who will not profit by them, who will not let grace be victorious in them. His Sacred Heart is a precious inheritance given us by our good heavenly Father as the final remedy for our ills. This is what He told me.

Continue courageously, dear Mother, what you have undertaken for His glory by establishing the reign of this divine Heart. It shall reign in spite of satan and all those who oppose it. Now is the time to work and suffer in silence, as He did for love of us. You may be sure that He will remember and be pleased for all eternity by what you and these other five persons have done for Him. Some day you will say that had you suffered all the torments of the martyrs you would have been well recompensed, and that the great number of souls this Divine Heart wants to save by this means is well worth all your trouble.

It ought to be a great consolation to you to enjoy so intimate a union with the good Father de la Colombiere, because he is bringing about by his intercession in heaven what is being done here on earth for the glory of this Sacred Heart. Bear bravely, then, every little contradiction, since you are taking his place in so noble a work. As for me, the Cross is my portion. For He has given me to understand that this Sacred Heart wants to establish His reign on my destruction and annihilation. He knows well how to do His work.

I am not a moment without suffering. Often His Sanctity puts so many people to work at making me suffer that, if I were not so wicked as I am in resisting Him, His purpose would soon be accomplished.

I tell you confidentially, that, if His goodness did not send me the charitable help of those saintly souls who pray for me, I could not carry on. In His bounty He lets me want for nothing. He has inspired some saintly religious to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for my intention every Friday, and that without my knowing it.

So now I have four Masses a month during my life time; that is, if they do not die before I do. Some of these men I have never seen. They have written me that they have never before received so many graces as they now receive because of doing me this charity; and I, too, receive extraordinary help. The name of the one who has composed the Office is Father Gette.

You see with what confidence I write to you in the assurance you give me that you will burn my letters. For dear Mother, my life is so criminal that it is only right that I desire to be buried in the eternal forgetfulness and contempt of men, since I have deceived them, though without wanting to. I am not forgetting that we are one in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ. If I am not mistaken, He is making our holy founder feel wonderfully pleased He is that this devotion is being established in our Institute.

He Himself wishes to be our defense and support provided only we put no obstacles in the way of our infidelities. What great blessings and graces He intends to shower on this dear Institute, especially on the houses that procure greater honor and glory for Him, if we be faithful in removing what He gives us to understand is impeding the pleasure He wants to take in pouring forth sweet unction of His Charity in all these communities in general, and on each one in particular.

To Sister Felice-Madeleine de la Barge, at Moulins
(98) About March, 1689.

Love, glory and praise forever to the Heart of our adorable Savior, which is all love, all loving, and all lovable, for all the good He will produce and work in souls by establishing the reign of His pure Love in well disposed hearts. I think yours is one of them, very dear and beloved Sister, because of the ready desire I see in you to follow courageously the way He has marked out for you. I was consoled on reading your letter.

It confirms me more and more in the sentiments I think this Divine Heart has always given me in your regard. I have repeated them so often I am afraid I am wearying you. Pardon me, dear friend, but I can say nothing else, except that your self effacement will elevate you to union with your sovereign Good. By forgetting yourself you will possess Him, and by abandoning yourself to Him He will possess you.

Go forward, then, full of faith and loving confidence, and deliver yourself into the hands of His divine providence. Be to Him a field that He may cultivate as He pleases without any resistance on your part. Remain humbly and peacefully clinging to His good pleasure, altogether hidden away in the blessed darkness of the love of your own abjection.

I cannot help thinking more and more that it is there He wants you to be, that it is there He looks upon you with complacency especially when these precious humiliations bring bitterness to your poor heart. Be brave! Medicines the most conducive to health are often the most bitter to the taste. In a word, God wishing to possess our hearts completely, will not let it taste anything but bitter to the taste.

In a word, God, wishing to possess our hearts completely, will not let anything but bitterness in creatures and all things here below, so that in drawing all its affections away from them, it may remain quite buried in Him and united with Him by the love of its own abjection. So the bitterness you are experiencing gives me joy because it will furnish you material for a greater victory.

Wishing to satisfy your desire that I suggested to you some practice, I made a visit to our chapel of the Sacred Heart for you. But my sins made me unworthy of hearing His dear voice. The only thought I got was that He cherishes your dear soul tenderly and that He will be pleased if every day during this holy Lenten season you make three visits, either to a picture of Him or to the Blessed Sacrament.

The first will be to ask that this Divine Heart will be a channel through which the eternal Father will continually pour forth His mercy into the hardened hearts of sinners, so that they may be drawn to knowledge and love of Him. The second visit will be to beg that He establish His reign of love and charity in our Institute. And the third, to offer yourself to Him as a holocaust, a victim to be wholly consumed on the Cross of your own abjection by the flames of His pure love. You can do all that in spirit.

In order that His goodness may accomplish in you what It desires and may give you the graces He intends, I felt myself urged, on returning from the little pilgrimage I made for you, to put at your disposal one of the Masses He has inspired holy religious to say every Friday for my intention. You may take the Mass offered on the first Friday after you receive this letter.

Thank You dear friend, for the two precious books. I sent them to my brother, the Priest as soon as I received them. He was so insistently asking me for some that I felt obliged to send him the book I would liked to keep for myself. I copied it first. I knew your dear Mother (Dubuysson) did not receive the letter I gave myself the honor of writing her.

I was a little put out at that, and if I had not been afraid of imposing on her I would have written her another. I beg you to supply for this defect by assuring her that I shall always entertain for Her Charity all the sentiments of esteem, respect, and love which the Sacred Heart of our Divine Master gives me for her and for your very dear former Superior (Sister de Soudeilles) Please offer them my most humble obedience, and many thanks to your most honored Mother for the booklets.

To Her Brother, the Parish Priest at Bois-Sainte-Marie
(99) March, 1689.

I am glad to make use of this fine opportunity to assure you of my great esteem and to tell you that I have received your letter. But you did not say whether you received the three booklets on the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ which I sent you. I am afraid they have been lost.

I am now sending you one of those recently printed at Dijon. You will find it in the Mass of the Sacred Heart, but so far the Holy Apostolic See has granted permission for the Mass to be said only in the diocese of Langres, on the Friday after the octave of the Feast of Corpus Christi.

You complain dear brother, that I say nothing about good Mr. Desholmes (a relative). Alas, what could I say about him, except that you must exhort him to patience in his illness, since it is not God's will to free him from it just now. He must try to make good use of it, since I think Our Lord does not keep him in this condition except for the sanctification of his soul.

So he must submit to God's will and kiss the hand that afflicts him, always remembering that it is much better to suffer in this life than in the next. A happy eternity, as you know, is well worth the price of a moment of suffering, taken well for the love of God. Finally, dear brother, life is given us only that we may suffer. Eternity is for joy.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon

(100) After the Feast of the Sacred Heart. June 1689

Well, dear Mother, we are not yet entirely consumed by the ardor of this Divine Heart of our adorable Savior, after having received many graces which are like so many flames of His pure love. They ought ever to set us on fire with the desire for perfect acceptance and faithful cooperation with His designs. This Sacred Heart shall reign in spite of satan.

These words fill me with joy and are my only consolation. I cannot tell you the wonderful graces and blessings this reign will bring down upon our Institute, especially on those houses which obtain for Him the most honor and glory. Here is the way He gave me to understand it.

He showed me this devotion to His adorable Heart as a beautiful tree which He had destined from all eternity to sprout and take root in the midst of our Institute. Then it would stretch out its branches to all our houses, so that each one could gather its fruits at will and according to its taste, but unequally in proportion to its work. In the same way each one would profit from these fruits of life and eternal salvation in proportion to the good disposition of those who partake of them. These fruits should renew in us the primitive spirit of our holy vocation.

It seems to me the accidental glory of Our holy Father and founder was never so much increased as by this means. This Divine Heart wants the Daughters of the Visitation to distribute generously the fruits of this sacred tree to all who wish to partake of them, without fear of their ever being exhausted. He gave His unworthy slave to understand that He intends to restore life to many by this means by withdrawing many from the road to perdition and destroying the empire of satan in souls, in order to establish there the empire of His love.

He will not allow any to perish who are consecrated to Him, and who give him all their homage and love with a sincere good will, and get others to do the same in so far as they can. Nor does He intend to stop with that. He has even greater plans, which can be carried out only by His omnipotence. It can do anything it wishes.

He desires, then, it seems to me, to enter with pomp and splendor into the palaces of princes and kings. He wants to be honored there as much as He was outraged, contemned, and humiliated in His Passion, and to receive as much pleasure at seeing the great ones of the earth abased and humiliated before Him as He felt bitterness at seeing Himself spurned at their feet.

Here are the words I heard with regard to our King (Louis XIV): "Make known to the eldest son of My Sacred Heart that, as his temporal birth was obtained by devotion to My Holy Infancy, so will he obtain his birth into grace and eternal glory by consecrating himself to My adorable Heart. It wants to triumph over his and through him, over the hearts of the great ones of the earth. It wants to reign in his palace, be painted

on his standards, and engraved on his arms, so that they might be victorious over all his enemies. It wants to bring low these proud and stubborn heads and make him triumphant over all the enemies of the holy Church."

You may well smile, good Mother, at my simplicity in telling you all this, but I am following the inspiration being given me at this very moment.

Our good Father de la Colombiere has obtained that the Holy Society of Jesus be blessed, after our dear Institute, with all the graces and special privileges of this devotion to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ. He promises that He will bless abundantly, even profusely, their labors for souls and the works of charity in which they are engaged.

This Divine Heart ardently desires to be especially known, loved and honored by these good Fathers. He promises, if I am not deceiving myself, so to spread the unction of His love over their words and to give such great and powerful graces, that their words will be like a two-edged sword and penetrate the most hardened of hearts of the most obdurate sinners. From these hearts will then come that true repentance which purifies and sanctifies souls. But they must try to draw all their lights from the Sacred Heart. There is much more I could say to you about this, for there are some friends of God in this holy Society.

Ah, what great graces of sanctification this Divine Heart has dispensed on this day of His Feast! How earnestly He repeats the promises He has made in their favor of not letting them be lost!

As for your confessor (Father Charollais), I think He is one of Our Lord's dearest friends. So much so that when I asked of this Divine Heart the grace that he be associated with us in this holy union about which Your Charity spoke, I received while going to Holy Communion, this response in his favor: "Assure him that My pure love unites you in Me forever." And I seemed to see many graces that were destined for him.

I must confess I feel incapable of expressing what the Sacred Heart gave me to understand with regard to the graces and superabundance of blessings He wants to shower on our Institute. He wants to make it the special object of His Love.

But, alas, is there not some Community that shows only coldness towards Him, where He can scarcely make an entrance into hearts? That is His complaint. He can with even greater justice complain about me and all my ingratitude towards His great goodness, which continually gives me so many graces that I simply cannot enumerate them. I content myself with possessing them in this unfathomable abyss whence they come and beg of you to bless Him for me for giving them to me.

To Sister Felice-Madeleine de la Barge, at Moulins.
(101) June 1689.

Yes, dearly beloved Sister, I did answer, and quite at length the letter you mention. But you are not the only one who complains about letters getting lost. I can see clearly that the best thing is not to write any more, since I think perhaps the Lord may be letting them get lost only because they are not pleasing to Him on account of my sins.

Moreover, I must confess I feel repugnance in writing, seeing myself so far removed from practicing what I advise. Though your soul is becoming more and more dear to me in the Sacred Heart of our adorable Savior. I simply cannot repeat here what I said in my last letters. So I shall merely say a word on what you remark with regard to the love of your own abjection.

It is what I think I have already said: accept and suffer in silence everything our Divine Master sends you and never say it is enough, no matter how great a repugnance nature may feel. That is all. Only one thing is necessary: pure love of God combined with the love of our own abjection. We must abandon ourselves to the loving providence of the Sacred and lovable Heart of Jesus and let Him guide and rule us as He wishes. He will be sure to furnish us with all that is necessary for our sanctification if only we are careful to receive it according to His designs. That is sufficient.

Love, then of our own abjection in the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ is sufficient for us, in order to honor the mysteries of His Holy Passion and death. These He wishes us to honor. And we must observe a holy silence, as He did, in all humiliations and sufferings. I assure you that nothing appeals to me so strongly as the silence He kept so perfectly during the whole course of His Passion. In imitation of Him, we should not open our lips except to pray for those who cause suffering.

You ask me which of the mysteries of His Holy Passion I like the best. Bearing in mind what I have just told you I would say that it is the Crucifixion. I like to stand with the Blessed Virgin at the foot of the Cross, in order to attach myself to it and unite myself to all He did for us.

But right now, dear friend, we must always find a place for ourselves in His adorable Heart and never leave It no matter what happens. It is a strong fortress and our place of refuge. He will not abandon us, as I hope and beseech Him with all my heart. How indebted we are to this most loving Heart of Jesus for conducting us a long a road as safe as that of humiliations and the love of our own abjection! Let us neither look for nor desire any other, for none is more conducive to our sanctification. In love of this Sacred heart I am wholly yours.

Respectful greetings to your most honored Mother (Mother Dubuysson) and your dear Sister the former Superior (Sister de Soudeilles).

To Her Brother, the Mayor
(102) End of June, 1689

Would that time permitted me, beloved brother, to express my sentiments in your regard. You would see that the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ gives you these holy inspirations only because of the ardent love He bears you, which makes Him want to possess your heart unreservedly and completely. See to it that He can, in so far as your calling permits it. He asks no more. But although you are unable to carry out all these good desires, He is going to reward you just as though you had put them into effect.

O, how this Divine Heart loves you, my dear brother! And how far removed He is from what you say! I think He wants me to assure you of that. You must never lose confidence in His goodness until you have exhausted His mercy. He is surrounding you with it on every side. What should you fear, then, except the loss of this confidence in Him, which constrains and follows Him even to the throne of His omnipotence, and gets it to bow down and help our weakness?

You would not believe what consolation you give me by having celebrated so well the feast of this adorable Heart. It is marvelous how people everywhere are celebrating it. The Reverend Jesuit Fathers had exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and a sermon. We, too, did our very best, all we could in our little way. Truly, dear brother, it seems to me that this feast (of the Sacred Heart) is a day of salvation and eternal blessings for all those who honor It with a sincere and humble heart. So let us love this Divine Heart, and try to conform ours to It in everything.

As for the books, there is such a demand for them that I do not know whether we can get any. We shall do everything we can to satisfy your devotion, both with regard to the books and the pictures. The pictures, I think, cost six sols. (six cents) a dozen. I think the books cost one stamped sol (15 deniers), and those with the office three sols. You can let me know which ones you want. As for the bouquets, I am very sorry that we cannot satisfy you on that score. Our Sisters are so taken up with decorating our chapel of the Sacred Heart that we have to refuse them to many people, because there are not many left for sale.

Yes, my dear brother, all those who go to Confession and Communion in the churches of the religious of Holy Mary on the feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin can gain a plenary indulgence.

With regard to the girl you speak of, we will take her out of charity and on the conditions you and my other brother name. We shall have to refuse another who would have double the dowry. Considering the circumstances of her family, it has been decided to accept her, provided she furnishes her religious habits, a silver cross worth nine or ten francs, a fork and a silver spoon, and a reasonable outfit of linen. But, in God's name, tell her firmly that she must be determined to make a go of it, so that you may not have the discomfort of seeing her leave. Bring her as soon as possible lest other arrangements be made.

Many greetings and expressions of affection to my beloved sister, whom I embrace and love tenderly in the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ. I do not forget her when in His Presence. The desire the Sacred

Heart gives her of taking care of His chapel fills me with great joy. I urge her not to spare herself. She, herself and my dear nieces should always be sacristans there. She should consider herself very fortunate in this burden because she will be rewarded a hundredfold. I beg her to accept a booklet on the Blessed Virgin which we received from Lyons.

As for you, dearest brother, you will do me a great favor if you have mounted (the relic) of this venerable (Father de la Colombiere) You have very serious obligations to him for the graces you receive through His intercession. But devotion to him is not like devotion to the Sacred Heart. Devotion to the Sacred Heart must be public, this other private, for it is not yet approved by holy Church. If you wish to have his litany we shall send it to you, but you must not let anyone else have it.

Ah, dear brother, what return shall we make to the Lord for the great blessings He gives us! It is not His fault that you are not a saint and that our family is not holy. I dare say He wishes it and we should spare no efforts on our part to second His designs. That is why He has revealed to us the devotion to His Sacred Heart. It contains treasures beyond comprehension which He wishes to communicate to all well disposed hearts.

For this is a last effort of the Savior to draw sinners to repentance and to give them abundantly efficacious and sanctifying graces to work out their salvation. By this means many will be saved from eternal damnation. Woe to those who do not want to profit by it! Let us constantly pray that His reign be established in all hearts. Let us contribute to that as much as we can. Let us spare neither our goods nor our energies.

I do not know how to bring this to an end, although I can tell you confidentially that I am overwhelmed with correspondence. Even though I write as seldom as possible, it goes without saying that I pray for you, since this Divine Heart has united us in Himself by His holy love, in which I am completely yours.

A note addressed by the Saint to an unknown person, and which seems to have been joined to the letter which follows.

(103)

If you recall the fact that a prophet was instructed by a she-ass, you will have no difficulty in believing that God makes use of the vilest and most miserable of all sinners to tell you to not put off any longer the sacrifice He has been asking of you since the moment of your promotion. If you do not do this you will feel bitter, but useless remorse at the hour of your death. Do not consider who is speaking these words to you, but accept them as God inspires you.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon
(104) August 12, 1689

I have done what Your Charity wished me to, dearest Mother, with regard to the person you mention. But I think his hardness of heart towards the other person will make the Sacred Heart of Our Lord so hardened against her that not only will He refuse to give her the graces He has planned to give her to unite her with Himself and perfect her, but He will even withdraw those conducive to her eternal salvation and leave her to her own devices.

To head off this evil, she must strive with might and main to come to an understanding with this other who, on her part must do all she can to bring about this reconciliation so necessary for the salvation of them both. Each must make a serious effort. Then the Divine Heart will, by the grace, give them all the necessary help. But they will not obtain anything without paying the price. This is all I can tell you on this matter, but I shall not fail to continue my unworthy prayer for this intention.

I must admit dear Mother, that your silence after the two long letters I gave myself the honor of writing you grieved me a little. I do not know what to attribute to it, unless it be perhaps to the fact that I have expressed my thoughts too freely and frankly. Perhaps I would have done better to hide them under a humble silence. All you have to do is tell me to, and I can assure you that in doing it I shall very much satisfy my inclination of never speaking of these things. I would rather keep them hidden away in the secret recess of the Sacred Heart of my Divine Master. He is my witness to the violence I must do myself to speak of these things.

I would not be able to do so at all if He did not give me to understand that it is in His interest and for His glory. For that, and because of the great desire I have to make Him known, loved and glorified, I would gladly sacrifice a million lives if I had them. But, maybe you did not even receive the letters. That would grieve me very much more, for I assure you I should be greatly mortified if they fell into any other hands but yours and had been read by anyone besides Your Charity. The assurance you gave me that this would never happen made me speak openly to you.

Please do let me know whether you have received them, unless my Sovereign Master inspires you to let me suffer this anxiety for love of Him. In that case I submit willingly, for I ardently desire only the accomplishment of His holy will. (Mother de Saumaise had already answered on July 19, but the letter was long delayed in reaching the Saint).

Allow me, dear Mother, to present you with a booklet on devotion to the Sacred Heart. Almost too soon as it was presented to us, I resolved to deprive myself of it in your favor, hoping that, since you take such great interest in the Sacred Heart of Our Divine Master, you would get great consolation from it. A great servant of His divine majesty, one who has taken very much to heart the glory and interests of our sovereign Master, sent it to us.

He wants to sacrifice his own interests completely to Him, but just now does not want to be known nor even have his name disclosed. For your consolation, which I have more at heart than my own, I am sending you an excerpt from his letter. It will give you, as it did me, ample cause for continual thanks to the Sovereign Goodness. We were told that these books are priced at seven sols each. The whole first edition was sold out in less than no time. This is already the second, and I do not think it will stop there.

But we must go on with all this quietly and discreetly though courageously and zealously, using the means He furnishes us. We must carry on the work of God without ceasing and without letting up, dear Mother, no matter what obstacles or contradictions we meet with. He is strong enough and powerful enough to overcome them and confound His enemies. Yet this Divine Heart is all sweetness, humility and patience.

So we must bide our time. He knows how to take care of each thing in its own good time. Let us know what you think about the books. Rest assured, dear Mother, that nothing increases more the sentiments of grateful recognition I owe you for all your kindness than your burning zeal to make this Divine Heart of Our Good Master known, loved and honored. He Himself, I trust, will be your reward. In His love I am wholly yours.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon
(105) August 28, 1689

The eternal Father, wishing to have reparation made for the bitter anguish the adorable Heart of His Divine Son suffered in the palaces of the princes of this world from the humiliations and outrages of His Passion, wants to establish His empire in the court of our great monarch. He wants to make use of him to carry out a certain design He has in mind. He wants to have it done in this way.

He wants to have a church built and a picture of this Divine Heart placed in it, and there receive the consecration and homage of the king and his whole court. This divine Heart wishes too, to be the protector and defender of his sacred person against all his enemies visible and invisible. By means of this devotion He wants to defend him and make his salvation sure.

He has chosen our king as His faithful friend so that He might have the Mass in honor of the Sacred Heart approved by the Holy Apostolic See and obtain all the other privileges this devotion should have. Through this devotion He wants to dispense to him the treasures of His graces of sanctification and salvation, and to shower His blessings on all his undertakings. He will make them redound to His glory by granting happy success to his armies so as to make him triumphant over the malice of his enemies. Happy, then, shall he be if he takes to this devotion.

It will set up for him an eternal reign of honor and glory in this Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ. He Himself will assume the responsibility of raising him up and making him glorious in heaven before God, His Father, in proportion as this great monarch is careful to make reparation for the insults and humiliations this Divine Heart has suffered from men. This will be effected by rendering and procuring for Him the honor, love and glory which He expects.

Now since God has chosen the Reverend Father de la Chaise (Jesuit confessor to the king) for the execution of this design because of the influence He has given him over the heart of our great king, success in this matter rests with him. He will have to procure this glory for the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ. He must second Its desire of making Itself known and manifesting Itself to men, so that It may be loved by them and receive a quite special honor and homage.

If, then, His goodness inspires the great servant of His divine Majesty to use the influence he has given him to procure Him this pleasure He so ardently desires, he may rest assured that he has never before done anything so useful for the glory of God and the salvation of his own soul. Nor has he ever done anything for which he and his whole holy Society will be more richly rewarded. By this means he will prove himself its honor and glory, and because of him this Sacred Heart will shower upon it grace and blessings in abundance.

These He has given first to the Daughters of the Visitation. To them He has given the commission of

revealing His Heart and making it known by establishing the devotion to this all lovable Heart. He wants the Reverend Jesuit Fathers to make known its utility and worth. This is reserved for them. So you will do well to get any of them you find willing to work for this end. In this way success will more readily be secured even though everything appears difficult because of the great obstacles Satan is going to put in the way and because of all the other difficulties. But God is supreme.

Often He takes pleasure in making use of the smallest and most despicable things for the execution of His greatest designs. This He does as much to dazzle and confound human reason as to show forth His power. He does not always act in this way, however, because He does not want to do violence to the human heart. He prefers to let it free, so that He may with better reason reward or punish it.

It seems to me, dear Mother, that it will be very pleasing to this Divine Heart if you put into effect the inspiration He has given you of writing to my very honored Sister, the superior at Chaillot, for the purpose Your Charity mentioned. After that we must pray and get others to pray. I think you will do well to send her one of the Moulins booklets together with one of your own.

This is all I can say for the time being, since I know only what He makes known to me, a poor sinner, the unworthy slave and victim of the adorable Heart of my Savior. She is a more apt means for destroying so grand a design than for making it a success. But in this way all the glory can be given to the Sovereign Master and not to the instrument He is using.

This instrument is like the clay the Divine Savior made use of to put on the eyes of the man born blind. Follow courageously, then, the lights He gives you. I myself can add nothing more, nor can I give any explanation of what I tell you under obedience as coming from this Sacred Heart. He wants me to tell you quite simply whatever He dictates.

If I did otherwise He would, by withdrawing His grace, render useless anything I might be able to say. Moreover, He makes me ignorant I cannot add anything of my own. Make up then for my ignorance. Remain always at peace, no matter what results He may bring out of all the trouble you take. I beg Him with all my heart to bless your holy undertakings and to give you courage to meet generously all difficulties. How fortunate we should be, dear Mother, were we able to sacrifice our lives for this! Amen.

To Mother de Saumaise, at Dijon
(106) After August 12, 1689

Dearest Mother, On reading your letter of July 19 I was filled with a transport of in expressible joy at seeing that you spare yourself nothing in order to satisfy the desires this Divine Heart makes known to you. You have satisfied Him even in those things I saw no way of doing when I told you of them.

Yes, beloved Mother, it is my brother the layman who is having the Chapel, of which I spoke to you, built at Bois-Sainte-Marie. He has ordered a picture like ours to put in it. And my brother the Priest has founded there a Mass in perpetuity for every Friday of the year, and a Solemn Mass for the every first Friday of the month. I am telling you this in answer to your inquiry, and so that you may thank the Sacred Heart Who has inspired them to do these things.

Though I was very eager to do so, I did not say a word to them about it, preferring that it should come spontaneously from themselves. You would not believe how great the Divine Heart has made in this family. They have assured me that they are willing to give the very last drop of their blood to sustain and spread this holy devotion. I am wholly yours in the Sacred Heart.

To Sister Felice-Madeleine de la Barge, at Moulins.
(107) From our convent in Paray. August 21, 1689

If our letter to you has well satisfied your need, yours, beloved Sister, has given me much consolation and good cause to thank the Sovereign Master, Who has caused you to take so good away of finally arriving, with the help of His good grace at the desired end. I hope He will never refuse you that grace and that all the more since your letter has convinced me still more that it is He Himself Who is giving you this work and not myself. I only spoil everything.

But we must not stop with that. The work is not yet finished; we must keep on to the end, without letting up or being discouraged by the trouble it causes us. For the work is for the glory of God and the sanctification of your soul which the Sacred Heart of our Divine Master is making ever dearer to mine. I assure you that I love you sincerely in Him. Outside of Him nothing is of any account.

You complain, dear friend, that I do not speak to you confidentially enough. I am mistaken then, because I thought I had gone too far in that direction. If I have not been frank, it is not from lack of good will. But to be honest with you, I do not always do what I want to do in this because my adorable Master, in the excessive goodness of His mercy restrains me. For I am so overwhelmed in spirit at the sight of a spiritual edifice so utterly in ruins and destitute of every spiritual good that I pity myself and stand in horror of myself.

I cannot help but be astounded that anyone should deign to believe what so a wicked a creature says, let alone that anyone should remember her. That makes it very painful for me to answer when people write, but obedience has commanded me to do so. Often I answer without thinking or being careful of what I say, so I sometimes say more than I would like to. This causes me great confusion because I fear that I am deceiving people who often esteem what God condemns and rejects. Beg of His Infinite Goodness that I may not be of this number, and that He may bury me in an eternal contempt and forgetfulness by all creatures. I felt an urgent desire for this. But may the will of my God, and not mine, be done.

Now to return to yourself. Oh how indebted you are to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ for having drawn you to Himself by so sure away as that of humble self effacement! Be strongly attached to it, beloved Sister, without fear and without any desire to seek or know anything but what is conducive to leading you along this path and to so firmly keeping you there that you will never be able to wander from it nor leave it.

For this end, make use of the means He offers you. Make good use of every opportunity, for He is pleased only with souls that are reduced to nothingness, souls that are all in Him and find everything in Him, since they are nothing in themselves. So let us seek this single and pure Love of our souls in the love of our own abjection. If we only knew how precious this is in the eyes of our sovereign Master, we would not pass up a single occasion, no matter how repugnant or difficult to nature it might appear, for nature fears all self

effacement.

So, no matter how repugnant it may be to us, we must often regale the adorable Heart of Jesus with these dishes so delightful to His taste, that is, with these precious humiliations, slights, and low esteem of self, with which He nourishes His most faithful friends here below. It is not necessary to seek them, but simply to make good use of those He sends us. No matter what means He uses for this, we must rest assured that all these things come from His most loving Heart, and that He sends them to us only because He ardently desires to unite us with Himself by this quick and certain means. Let us work diligently, then but without worry and without strain. We must love this Sovereign Good and forget ourselves, and then all will be well. But this is saying a great deal.

Now why do you always want to do me new favors? Do you not know that I am a miserable pauper who can give you in return only a hearty thanks? Beware lest our sovereign Master reproach you for having made me too rich, since you always tell me to keep for myself for love of you all you give me. I do this. I still have the little picture. And now there is this little Rosary. I thank you for it with all my heart.

Would indeed, that I could express the sentiments of gratitude I feel for all your kindness and courtesy. I really feel confusion. But I beg the Sacred Heart of our loving Jesus which is my whole treasure, to reward you with abundance of His pure love. It is the inexhaustible source from which the more one takes the more there is left to take. Tell me dear friend do you not belong wholly to this Divine Heart? Do you not feel great consolation at seeing His reign extended? O, I am sure you do! And now I must tell you something that redounds to His glory and will make you bless Him.

This is what it is. I gave a person in Lyons one of the books from Dijon. This person showed it to a young priest who in turn, showed it to his students in Lyons. They took such a liking to it that they made a great number of copies, litany and prayers a like, which they recite with great devotion. Now when these youngsters showed their copies still to others they took to the devotion with such enthusiasm that, since the supply ran short, they approached the one who had the book and asked him to teach them the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

They wanted, they said, to have these books printed, and vied with one another to pay the expenses. A young artisan took to the project so enthusiastically that everyone had to yield. He approached one of the best known printers in Lyons. This man was so touched with love for this Divine Heart that he at once undertook to do the work at his own expense.

So there was a pious battle between him and the young artisan. But the latter one out, asked for the book on the Sacred Heart and went to find a friend of his to have him make some additions to it. He insisted so strongly that this friend could not refuse. The religious who made this addition (Father Croiset) is a very holy man. The new edition was beautifully printed and nicely bound. It sold so fast that although this is the second time it has been printed since June 19 there are no copies left and it is going to be printed for the third time. It is in the love of this Divine Heart that I am wholly yours.

I trust dear friend, that this Divine Heart will reign in spite of satan and all those who want to oppose It. I invite you to make a retreat upon which we are about to enter in the Heart of Our Lord. I hope to see you there and have the pleasure of being very close to you, for His love is ever uniting us more intimately. Please offer our most humble respects to your very honored former Superior, whom I ever esteem and cherish most sincerely in the Heart of our good Master.

To Sister Jeanne-Madeleine Joly, at Dijon
(108) August 28, 1689

The letter from you I just received in the presence of the blessed Sacrament makes me think more than ever that you are among the number of the true friends of the Sacred Heart of our lovable Jesus. And that not only because of the humility you show towards me, the most unworthy of His slaves, but also because of the ardent and self effacing zeal you have for the advancement of His glory. Happy self-forgetfulness! It will cause this lovable Heart never to forget you: no, neither you nor what you do for Him.

So do not let up, but consider yourself very fortunate when your work becomes heavier and brings with it some humiliation and mortification. These are sure signs that He is pleased with it. We must thank Him equally for ill success and good, remaining content and submissive to His Will as well when our undertakings do not succeed and all our endeavors seem fruitless as when they succeed according to our desires. He is more pleased with our submissiveness and conformity to His holy will than with anything else we can do. He knows very well those He has destined to establish His Reign. I think you are one of them. It will be futile for others to try. They will not succeed, for He will not pour out the unction of His grace on them.

I must confess my heart is susceptible to no other joy or consolation than that which comes from advancing the glory of this Divine Heart. It is hard for me to tell you how great the joy sometimes becomes. I am very much consoled at what you tell me, but above all at the glad news that this good Capuchin Father is working so devotedly at spreading the devotion. For Our Lord takes special pleasure in the efforts of the unimportant and humble of heart and abundantly blesses their work.

I hope what you mention will come to pass in time, but we must patiently await help from the Sacred Heart. His grace works powerfully though gently and imperceptibly. We must be faithful and prompt in following His inspirations but not too eager. Ah, my dear Sister, how indebted we are to this Divine Heart for deigning to make use of us to carry out His plans! He reserves treasures of grace for all those who work for this end as much as He enables them to. You would not believe what great blessings this devotion draws down upon us.

You ought to consider yourself fortunate at being employed to this holy work. Do not be afraid to forget self for its sake. Complete absence of self-interest is the true disposition required in those who promote this devotion.

He will not forget you in your work. He looks upon you with pleasure and applies Himself to the task of purifying and sanctifying you in order to unite you perfectly with Himself while you are working for His glory. He loves you and you must do all in your power to make Him some return.

Do not complain of my silence. It does not come from forgetfulness nor indifference but from the ardent

desire I have of living poor and unknown to everybody. I hope no one will take any notice of this wretched sinner except to condemn and humiliate her, as much to give me my just due as to thrust me down into my nothingness through the love of my own abjection.

This I have good cause to love in everything but especially in the consoling thought that this lovable Heart, not being able to find a more miserable wretched, and unworthy subject than myself to whom to show His mercy, is giving me a share in this work which will procure so much glory for Him. I firmly hope He will be careful to furnish all the means and all the help necessary. And when satan was stirring up all kinds of difficulties and opposition, which in the beginning was in inexpressibly great, Our Lord in His goodness restored my courage and gave me unshakable confidence, reassuring me with these loving words: "What are you afraid of? I shall reign in spite of satan and all opposition."

Alas, my dear Sister, what just grounds I have for fearing that because of my ingratitude and infidelity I am an obstacle to the establishment of His reign! I should rather die a thousand deaths and be exterminated from the face of the earth than to be the least hindrance to it. But I am convinced that He wants to establish His reign through gentleness and sweetness of His love rather than by the rigor of His justice.

That is why, not wishing me to be lost, He has, out of sheer love made me share in the spiritual goods of His dearest friends, so that by their love they might make reparation for the infidelities of which I am guilty in His holy service. If these holy souls knew me for the wicked person I am, they would never consent to this union for fear that I would draw down on them the wrath of this Sacred Heart. Yet without Him my life would be an unbearable torture.

We must love Him with all our might and strength, no matter what it costs. We should indeed be fortunate if He judged us worthy to suffer something for His love. I hope your heart will become so inflamed with this love that it will transform you into Him and become one with His Heart. Only He knows how dear He has made your soul to me. I am not forgetting you in His Holy Presence, nor all those holy undertakings you are engaged in for His glory.

Let us then love this Sacred Heart on the cross, since it gives Him delight to find in a heart love, suffering, and silence.

I hope this rough draft will make you stop complaining about my not writing. You have found out the secret of how to make me write: by speaking to me of the loving Heart of our good Master. For Him my love knows no bounds, no moderation. But these, alas, are but empty words. Beg Him not to cast me off. I am very consoled to hear that your most honored Mother (Mother Desbarres) and your whole devoted community are intensely interested in the glory of this Divine Heart. I beg Him, in return, to enrich you with His most precious graces and blessings and to shower them upon all of you in general and on each one in particular.

Our dear Mother readily granted us permission for a general Communion for your Father Confessor. He

has a share as I promised, in all the Holy Communion I have the happiness of receiving. I hope He will remember me in His holy Masses. I am sure he will do me this charity and that he has much influence with the Sacred Heart, in whose love I remain.....

Letters 109 to 129 have been omitted. These letters are similar to those already written. Letter 130 begins a series of letters to Father Croiset who is thought to have been the Saints Spiritual Director towards the end of her life. The letters number 12 in all, some being quite lengthy, but very informative.

To Reverend Father Jean Croiset, of the Society of Jesus, at Lyons
(130) April 14, 1689.

Reverend Father and most dear brother in the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Unless I knew He wanted it, I would not answer you at all. And notwithstanding the great esteem He gives me for you and for all you tell me. But since I think He wants it, I shall tell you in a quite simple and informal way whatever He inspires me to say. But all, please, within the sanctuary of this lovable Heart. he alone has wrought this sharing of spiritual goods between us two. In Him I confirm it forever, so advantageous is it to me.

Perhaps I have not told you, but I have given everything without reserve to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ, reserving nothing for myself. Now I can only share with you His infinite treasures. For it seems to me that when He gave me to understand that He wanted this offering of me, His miserable slave, He promised that I would be able to dispose of this divine treasure as my own, though always according to His holy will. I know what His holy will is by my repugnance and powerlessness to do anything displeasing to Him.

I can assure you that I did not feel this in your case. On the contrary, I am filled with consolation by which He gives me to know that this union is pleasing to Him. This indicates too, the love He bears you, and His ardent desire to shower upon you the inexhaustible riches of this adorable Heart not only for yourself, but that you may dispense them to souls He wants to gain through you.

All the favor the intensity of His love makes you feel is, I think a predisposition for the accomplishment of the designs He has on you. Preserve this, I beg you by this same love, by perfect fidelity and full surrender of yourself and of all self interest. No more introspection. Forget yourself, so that He may act towards you and through you according to His desires. These He will make known to you in His own good time.

See now whether you are willing to accept union with Him on the conditions I have described. If you wish to continue, on the day you offer your holy Mass, that mystery of His love, you must make the same act of self surrender, I made to the Sacred Heart of my Jesus consecrating yourself and giving all to this Divine Heart of Love, in order to love and glorify It, and to obtain for It all the love and glory he will make you capable of rendering to Him in word and writing. By these means He will make you share His infinite treasures, through which I trust He will cause you to say eternally: "Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo. (I shall sing the mercies of the Lord forever")

I cannot tell you how pleased I am that you offered your Rosary and Holy Communion for me. I am glad, too, that you are going to offer Holy Mass once every month for my intention, which is none other than that of the Sacred Heart of my lovable Jesus Who, I hope will reward you abundantly for this great charity. I have given Him everything to use as He wishes. In this way, those who pray for this poor sinner draws

down upon themselves many graces. I hope He will shower them abundantly on your dear soul too, when you come to offer Him this divine sacrifice of love. It is the richest present you can make me. In it lies all my happiness, all my pleasure and consolation and joy in this vale of tears.

Oh how fortunate you will be to be able to receive every day this divine Sacrament, to hold this God of Love in your hands and place Him in your own heart! I desire but this one grace, and long to be consumed like a burning candle in His holy presence every moment of the life that remains to me. For that I would be willing, I think to surrender all the pains imaginable till judgment day, if only I should not have to leave His Sacred Presence. My only motive would be to be consumed in honoring Him and to acknowledge the burning love He shows us in this wonderful Sacrament. Here, His Love holds Him captive till the end of time. It is of this one can truly say " Love triumphs, love enjoys, Love finds in God its joys".

In order that I may do this also in Him, let me know the day He inspires you to offer Mass for me, as also the Communion, so that with the permission of superiors I may receive Him on that day for you. Every Thursday too, I shall say the Litany of the Sacred Heart for you. Moreover, almost ever since, I have had the happiness of being a religious, obedience has allowed me to keep an hour's vigil on the night between Thursday and Friday, prostrate with my Jesus in remembrance of that Hour of which He complained that His disciples were not able to watch with Him ; I shall make it once a month for you, or I shall do something else obedience allows when superiors think proper that I exchange this for some other more difficult work. How much obliged I am to you for the charity you have shown me and have promised to show! I thank you for it in the name of the Sacred Heart of my Sovereign, to Whom everything belongs. He will be careful to reward you.

If you only knew how eager I am that He be known, loved, and glorified, you would not fail to work for that.

For, if I am not mistaken, I think He wants that of you, and He wishes too that when He gives you the inspiration and the leisure, you will apply yourself to write on so worthy a subject, putting together especially some meditations covering some ten or twelve days according to His inspiration. It seems to me this desire to make Him known and loved would make me willing to bear gladly the most cruel torments, even those of hell, hatred of God excepted.

How happy I should consider myself were I able to establish His reign in souls and the empire of His love in all Hearts! But how sorry I am, that even in this I am only an obstacle. If I could but make clear to you how wicked I am, how ungrateful and unfaithful to His love, you would never have the courage to our pooling our spiritual goods. Through this I hope to obtain mercy. I see myself so poor and miserable that I think I have never preformed an act that does not rather merit punishment than reward.

But my greatest sorrow is that I fear that I am just a hypocrite deceiving people without wanting to. Beware lest you be one of these! Beg the adorable Heart of Jesus to bury me in an eternal contempt and forgetfulness on the part of creatures, in perfect oblivion of self and perfect humility of heart. I am very

much lacking in this, even though I am persuaded that my God takes pleasure only in souls empty of self, and that to be wholly in Him we must be nothing in ourselves.

So strive earnestly to obtain for me from our good Master the great gift of His pure love. This comprises all the rest. I shall not fail to ask this for you too, together with the other things you indicated. Yet I see clearly, from all you have told me, that I have no love for God at all. My consolation lies in the hope that you will love Him for me. My only aim in life is to love Him. My wretched self-love is the poison that ruins everything.

I have, Indeed, had at times three desires so ardent that I considered them three tyrants making me suffer continual martyrdom and leaving me no rest. They were; to love my God, to suffer, and to die in this love.

But just now it seems that my heart is drawn by its infidelities into a state of reprobation and insensibility. Although no longer to be able to will or desire anything, still I well know that I am wanting in every virtue. At times I want to grieve over this, but I cannot. Since I no longer belong to myself, I no longer have any liberty or power over myself. What consoles me is the thought that the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ will do everything for me and make up for all my powerlessness and defects. Please beg this of Him for me.

It is certainly true, as you say, that one who loves thinks he suffers nothing, even when he is in the midst of the greatest suffering. But you will surely agree, too, that one cannot love without suffering. The love of my God is a pitiless tyrant and never says: it is enough! Yet it is good to live and die in His power.

As for your desire to give your life to the conversion of infidels in foreign lands, I think that when you feel this desire you can express it and then resign yourself to whatever Our Lord sees fit to do with you under obedience. But, Good heavens, I am taking advantage of your patience by writing so long a letter. My little leisure forces me to snatch such short intervals for writing that I am afraid I have said the same thing many times.

But the charity of the Sacred Heart of our sovereign Master, which reigns in yours, will surely excuse everything. I do not know whether you will approve my following the impulse which urges me to give you in His name a booklet given to us. A person on fire with zeal for His glory has had it printed. I think He wishes me to part with it and give it to you. In conclusion, I beg Him to consume you in the ardent flames of His pure love.

Since I think that God is giving you extraordinary gifts in order to make you a great saint, I do not fail to thank Him. I beg Him to give you the grace of corresponding with them to the full according to His designs. Please ask the same for me, for His mercies to me are great and incomprehensible. Beg pardon of Him, at the same time, for my ingratitude and infidelity. The Little Office in this book was composed by a Father of your society [Father Gette].

Mary [was] conceived without sin.

To Father Croiset
(131) August 10, 1689

I have asked my divine Master, since He did not allow me to answer your former letter, to be so good as to answer you Himself by giving you many graces and the fervor of His pure love. May our hearts be ever inflamed and consumed by this love in time and eternity!

I think, if I am not deceived, that He has postponed the consolation I would get from answering you only to give me greater consolation when you have given Him the pleasure He asks of you by writing that little book. It will be but a beginning. He expects more of you later. You did well not putting it off too long under pretext of more urgent occupations. This Sacred Heart would not have considered such things a sufficient excuse after having given you such convincing proofs of what His will is in this matter. These ought to relieve you of any doubts that might give you pause in the future.

You ask me to answer at length. I assure you, my very dear brother in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ (He wants me to address you in this way), that I am going to say in His holy presence whatever He inspires me to say for His glory. It is impossible for me otherwise. I cannot foresee what I am going to write, but shall say quite simply what He puts into my mind, without worrying about the results.

Its success I leave to His omnipotence. His almighty power effects what is pleasing to Him even by means which, according to a human way of thinking, seem rather to hinder than further His designs. I consider myself in this matter like the clay He put on the eyes of the blind man. One would think that a means quite contrary to the end He had in view of restoring his sight.

I must tell you that the letter and the books you were so good as to send so transported me with joy that I could not restrain my tears. I prostrated myself before the infinite grandeur of our sovereign Master and thanked Him for the grace He had given you in choosing you to further a design which will bring Him so much glory. For this devotion to His divine Heart will save from hell a great number of souls and put them on the way on salvation. That is why He has such an ardent desire to be known, loved and honored by men. He wants by this devotion to establish in their hearts the reign of His pure love. This He promises as the great reward to all those who work for the establishment of His reign.

How fortunate you are to be of this number! I think He wants me to assure you for Him that this beginning you have made gives Him so much pleasure that He has decided to give you the graces destined for another. This other asked to be excused because of other work from doing what you have done.

Our Lord wishes, I think, that you continue what you have begun, provided you have courage enough, in the face of obstacles and contradictions Satan will rise against the carrying out of what He asks of you. He will be your strength. You shall lack nothing that is necessary as long as you entrust all in Him, with humble and loving confidence in His goodness and perfect diffidence and forgetfulness of self. He has made me see clearly the magnitude of His goodness in this encounter. I think it a miracle that these hearts should have

such holy dispositions, and that they should have been so open to the devotion and love of the Heart of our adorable Master.

Oh, what wonderful graces He has given these favored souls in letting them relish so soon a devotion so conducive to their sanctification! I consider them all as souls chosen by this Sacred Heart and predestined for His eternal love. This good publisher especially, who has shown himself of such fine good will, has by incurring this expense acquired a place in this adorable Heart. There he will find a safe refuge at the hour of death.

Nothing He has ever done will be more richly rewarded. You have made me very happy by setting out all these things for me in detail. It is simply incredible what great consolation this lovable Heart has made me feel, and that in spite of the fact that I find myself in an abyss of confusion at the continual sight of my nothingness. Here His omnipotence keeps me so annihilated that it seems impossible for me to come forth from it for a moment.

It is there that I want to pour forth acts of thanksgiving and acknowledgment to the goodness of this divine Heart for the great favors He has given us, for having deigned to use us to help make Him known, loved, and honored. He has promised infinite blessings to those who, under His inspiration, work with all their might for this end. Carry out courageously the plan you tell me He has inspired you to carry out.

It is quite the same I intended by asking you in my previous letter to write those meditations. Perhaps I did not then know how to express well that it was this set of retreat meditations that the divine Heart was asking for so earnestly. Through them He will draw souls to live according to His holy maxims by conformity with Him through love. Do without delay what He desires of you, for I cannot help telling you that He is urgently asking me for this. More and more He is disclosing to His unworthy slave His great longing to be known, loved, and honored by men in reparation for the great bitterness and many humiliations they have made Him suffer He wishes to apply to them the merits of His sufferings in this way.

To Father Croiset
(131a) August 10, 1689

He shows how great is this longing of His by promising that all those who consecrate themselves to Him and are devoted to Him in order to give Him this pleasure, who do all in their power to give Him and cause others to give Him all the love, glory, and honor they can by the means He provides, will never be lost. He will be their secure refuge against all the snares of their enemies. Especially at the hour of death this divine Heart will receive them lovingly and make their salvation sure.

He will take care to sanctify them and make them great before His heavenly Father in proportion as they work earnestly to extend the reign of His love in the hearts of men. Since He is the source of all blessings, He will shower them in every place where an image of this Sacred Heart shall be honored, because His love urges Him to dispense the inexhaustible treasures of His sanctifying and salutary graces to all souls of good will. He is looking for empty hearts devoid of self-love to fill with the sweet unction of His ardent charity, to consume and transform completely unto Himself.

He is seeking humble and submissive souls that want nothing but the accomplishment of His good pleasure. Moreover, by this means He will restore broken families and protect those that are in any difficulty. He will spread the sweet unction of His charity over every religious community where He is honored and which places itself under His special protection. He will unite their hearts and make them one with His. He will turn aside the wrath of divine justice. He will restore souls to grace when they have fallen from it.

O my dear brother in this divine Heart, would that it were possible for me to reveal the infinite riches hidden away in this precious treasure! He bestows them upon His faithful friends and makes them enjoy them. Could we but understand their value we should spare no pains to obtain for Him the pleasure He so ardently desires. As for myself, I wish I had a million lives to sacrifice amidst the most terrible torments imaginable, even all those in hell if that could be done without having to hate this all loving and all lovable Heart. For it would be a pleasure for me to suffer all the rest in order to spread His reign. I think I would put up with everything except the privation of His love. This evil I could not bear. I shudder even to think of it.

But should even this perchance be necessary for the accomplishment of His designs, I would sacrifice even that. For my heart desires nothing anymore, it seems to me, but the interests of this divine Heart. Since He has been so merciful to me as to let me consecrate myself to His love and glory, I do not care anymore how He treats me. As long as He is satisfied I am content. He can raise me up or cast me down console or afflict me: it is all one to me as long as it pleases Him. Apart from that there is nothing in life that can make my heart glad now that I have completely surrendered it to that of my sovereign Master. I leave it to Him to make it still more perfect in His own way, desiring nothing but what He wants to give. If only finally I want to come to love Him, that is enough for me.

If only you knew how I fear that this dryness which I mentioned may be that deplorable hardness of heart of

which the Apostle speaks! I tell you honestly that I see nothing either in me or in my actions that is not worthy of punishment. To speak frankly, as you say you want me to, I have, among other things I just spoke of, a continual fear of having deceived people. They think me better than I am. For if they only really knew me, not for what I truly am (for then they would not be able to stand me), but even as I know and continually see myself, they would be as horrified as I myself am. I can scarcely put up with myself.

That is why I feel so humiliated when this divine Heart allows people to give any credence to what such a miserable creature says. He keeps her forever submerged in a sea of bitterness, in an abyss of humiliation and confusion, so that through conformity I may render homage to that in which divine justice has ever kept Him for the interests of His divine Father. The great joy that the establishment of the reign of this Sacred Heart sometimes gives mine passes like a flash of lightening, and straightway I fall back into that great bitterness in which I find unalterable peace. This makes me indifferent to the praise and blame of men, for I know that nothing can make me any different from what I am before God. By Him and by all the love you bear His divine Heart I conjure you to ask Him to make you see all that is wicked in my interior, everything in me that displeases Him. And then have pity on me and tell me frankly.

For I am poor and blind in everything touching myself. The fear I have of being an obstacle in the designs this Sacred Heart has of making Himself known and loved often makes me wish to quit this miserable life in which I find no other pleasure than that of suffering continually in conformity with this Well-Beloved of our souls. He gives my soul so great a hunger for suffering that a poor hungry starving person could not take food with greater avidity than that which my heart longs to be nourished with the delicious bread of sorrow, contempt, and humiliation, contemned and forgotten by creatures. This is my saving cure for my ills. It alone is capable of giving some relief to the burning thirst that consumes me.

To Father Croiset
(131b) August 10, 1689

The Bishop of Langres has permitted the feast of this Sacred Heart to be celebrated everywhere in his diocese and a Mass to be said in Its honor. The choir of the Sainte-Chapelle sang the Mass in the Church of our Sisters in Dijon. I am telling you this to let you know the happy progress His Infinite Goodness is causing this devotion to make, so that you may thank Him. I hope you will not mind my sending you one of the first books printed in honor of this Divine Heart.

If you think fit, you can take out of it the litany of the Most Holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin and add it to your own. Since I notice that short fervent prayers are more effective and more acceptable than others, I hope the whole book you want to have re-printed will be gotten up in this way. I hope too, that especially the meditations, prayers and practices will be short and devotional so that the poor weak human spirit may draw from them rather spiritual sweetness and pleasure than boredom. In other words, you must continue as you have begun, because we like and enjoy very much the books you have sent us. As for keeping it secret, you do not have to worry that I will fail you. But alas! I am afraid that will not be the case for all the others. That would really bother me.

If we could get together a group to practice this devotion, of which the members would share their spiritual goods with one another, I think it would give much pleasure to the Sacred Heart. I think too, He would want them to practice special devotion to the Holy Angels. Their special task is to love and honor and praise Him in this divine Sacrament of love. If we were closely associated with them, they might plead for us in His Divine Presence. They would offer Him our homage, love Him for us and for those who do not love Him, and make reparation for the irreverence's we commit against Him in the Holy Eucharist.

I am telling you many things, partly because you have inspired me with the confidence to do so, or rather because I cannot do otherwise, feeling myself urged on as I do by this Sovereign of my soul. Perhaps He wishes to be glorified in this way. But because I do not know how to express myself, I do not know if you can understand what I mean. Perhaps even you cannot read this letter. It surely is very long and a conglomeration of many things. It will discourage you, I think from asking me to write anymore long ones. But you must pardon the bounty of this inexhaustible Source which takes good pleasure in pouring Himself out abundantly for the good of His friends.

I know this Divine Heart has great things in store for you because He expects much of you. You say you will not believe that I am interceding with Him for you till you have acquired charity and humility. As for the first, I have no misgivings. It is enough that He know what He is going to do for you in this matter. As for the second, from what He has given me to understand, I think He does not want you to be free from temptations against this virtue of humility. He wants to leave you something to fight against so that He can reward you for your victories and in order that you may be continually on your guard and have great diffidence in yourself.

So do not doubt any longer that I pray for you, since you know that you share, in the adorable Heart of our Master, in all the good I can do and in all that, with His grace I can suffer. For He has joined us in an equality of spiritual goods as brother and sister, and He Himself supplies for what is wanting in me. This is what makes me call you my brother in this Sacred Heart.

In addition to all the things I have already told you I do for you, I also offer a Communion each month for your intention. And yet, what does all that amount to, considering the one who does it, in comparison to all you do for me! I cannot express the great gratitude my Master makes my poor miserable heart feel for that. I am continually urged to make the Heart of our Divine Master known and loved. This causes me to suffer a constant martyrdom.

Our spiritual treasures are growing. A saintly priest has spontaneously offered to say a Mass for us each first Friday of the month. I shall offer Holy Communion for Him. Perhaps you are not aware that what gives me so much consolation in the interchange of prayers with holy souls over and above the fact that I make it a source in which I draw for my sanctification and eternal salvation, is the circumstance that since I am consecrated to my Sovereign as His wretched slave, together with everything that belongs to me and that anyone might do for me, He has for this reason, if I am not mistaken, promised to recompense out of His treasures of His Divine Heart any good that may be done to me. This is why I believe they shall lose nothing who give me or make over to me some spiritual gift, since it is no longer to me but to this loving Heart that they give it.

I almost gave in to the temptation of sending you a little manuscript version of the Office of the Sacred Heart in verse, but then I thought the postage would be too high and you might find it useless anyway. I eagerly anticipate seeing the picture of this Holy Heart in the other books you hope to have printed. You may rest assured that I will do all I can to make them known. I am sending you one of the booklets printed when the devotion began. And since you say that we must pray to Blessed Aloysius Gonzaga to get what we want, please be so good as to send us a copper plate picture of him as splendid as that of Reverend Father La Colombiere. It is for our chapel dedicated to the Sacred Heart.

You see now how I take advantage of you. Your letter consoled me very much. But I must confess I feel a great repugnance at having to send you any because, not being allowed to re-read my letters and forgetting what I write as soon as I write it, I do not know what I put in them. Not knowing whether I say the same thing over and over again, I feel very humiliated and never want to write. But I hope in your goodness you will excuse everything for the love of the Sacred Heart. I beg Him to see to it that you get this, for I do not know your address.

To Father Croiset

(132) September 15, 1689.

Dear Father, If you only knew how powerless I am to say any more than He wishes you would tell me to keep quiet rather than show Him the least resistance. To speak frankly, I am very afraid, in spite of all the graces I receive from His mercy, of deceiving myself and others who's charity induces them to think well of me and to have a much higher opinion of me than I deserve. Do not be one of these.

And do not be too much influenced by what you oblige me to say to you, either. For I think the Sacred Heart will manifest His secrets and His Holy Will more readily to you than to a poor wretched and unworthy sinner like me. I would wish to have no other occupation than loving, working, suffering, and keeping silence.

To make you better understand that you must not rely on what I say and that I always have reason to fear, I must assure you that I have never had any director but my sovereign Master. For from the time I really began to know myself, He took such complete charge of my will that I had to obey Him in everything. I could not help it. He reprehended and corrected me with great severity for the slightest willful fault.

He gave me so great a horror of sin by letting me see how much it displeased Him that I hid myself and wept after I had allowed myself to pursue my petty vanities. I wanted only to find a place where I could live poor, unknown, and contemned, so that there I might be able to converse with my sovereign Master and come to love and know Him. I lived in a village and had no instruction in spiritual things.

I did not know what it meant to meditate except for what He taught me. He fashioned me according to His good pleasure and continued thus taking good care of me until He brought me into the religious life. Here I thought is that hidden place in which I so ardently longed to do penance.

After that though He changed His manner of dealing with me. He did not leave me. He made me understand that He would so accommodate the graces He continually gave me to the spirit of the rule and the obedience due my superior that there would be no conflict. Notwithstanding this, I did not cease doing all I could to withdraw myself from this spirit and to get away from His direction. For I was ordered to do this and had much to suffer on this account. But this sovereign of my soul, who worked in me independently of me, rendered all my efforts vain, yet without ever keeping me from obeying.

Yet the more I resisted Him and tried to get Him to leave me, the more He was present to me. I was filled with such terrible fears that I wished that He would withdraw from me and I asked Him to do so. He promised He would and that He would send me His faithful servant and perfect friend who would teach me to know Him and to abandon myself to Him without further resistance. So He sent me Reverend Father de la Colombiere.

From Him I came readily to understand that He had been sent by God so that I might disclose to Him the

innermost secrets of my soul. I found it so easy to open my heart to him that without any further thought I told him all that had been taking place in me and of all the favors I had received from my sovereign. This I did quite simply as He had taught me to do without adverting to the fact that I was speaking about myself.

But, I still had such a horror of speaking about myself, that had I thought twice, I should not be able to do it. What showed me clearly the will of God at this meeting was the good father asked for me quite spontaneously without our having known each other, and at the same time I heard these words spoken quite clearly within me "This is he whom I send you".

After several interviews, not at all discouraged by the brusque manner with which I treated him, he reassured me in the difficult way all strewn with crosses and thorns in which I was walking. In the midst of these I have always walked, notwithstanding the continual and inexpressibly wonderful graces I have been receiving from this sovereign of my soul.

After this good father had come to know all that had taken place in me, he forbade me ever to resist this spirit. I must abandon myself absolutely to his good pleasure and let Him act in me to the full extent of His power. This brought me unalterable peace of soul.

There seems to be no point in my telling you all this. I do not know why I do it unless it be so that you may praise Our Lord and Savior and thank Him for me for not having already buried me in hell for all the resistance I have put up and all the graces I have abused. This causes me such great sorrow that I should like to do penance for it forever. Yet all I do is offend Him. So I beg of you, by the holy charity that unites us in this adorable Heart, to ask pardon of Him for me and to interest yourself in my salvation. For I think He wants this.

But to return to devotion to the Sacred Heart. It is true I assure you, that it was to this good Father I first made known the devotion. My Sovereign ordered me to do so. He imparted to Father de la Colombiere at this time more graces than He had ever given him before. But to tell you how He gave the first grace of this devotion to His unworthy slave: ah, this He has not permitted me to explain since that first time!

Nor the manner in which it was given, either, the very remembrance of which is still ever producing new affects of grace in my soul. For the depths of its nothingness it plunges into and loses itself in the abyss of the mercies of its Savior and makes me cry out with Saint Theresa: *Misericordias Domini*, ect.

Although the desire of the adorable Heart of our Divine Master to be especially known, loved and honored had been made known to this good Father, still it remained a secret for more than eight or nine years, till the day when His unworthy slave, to whom He had made known His desire, was made directress of nine to ten young novices. Having heard me speak of it, they were drawn with such ardor to honor this divine Heart, I which I gave them a sketch traced on a little piece of paper with a pen, that they made great progress in perfection in a short time.

Although this brought on them many humiliations they were not discouraged but rather animated all the more to honor this Sacred Heart. They erected a little altar in His honor and tried to make reparation by their penances for the injuries and outrages committed against Him in the Blessed Sacrament. Some received money from their relatives to have a little picture painted but this was not permitted for fear that they might be introducing some new devotion. We dared speak of it now only in secret for, a word of it having gotten abroad, a certain great servant of God strongly opposed the devotion.

Everybody blamed me for it, but I did not mind that at all, rejoicing rather that He should honor me with His cross in these little persecutions and contradictions. They gave this poor sinner the consolation of suffering without any support or consolation except from this Divine Heart. He strengthened me with these words, which I heard within the depth of my heart with unbounded joy: "I shall reign in spite of My enemies and of all those who would oppose Me."

But since the cross is a precious treasure which cannot be preserved unless it is buried in humble silence, it is well for me to keep quiet about this. I shall say only that after two or three years that this state of affairs persisted He so changed the hearts of those who opposed that a very beautiful chapel was built in our enclosure in His honor, with a very large and beautiful picture of this Sacred Heart.

Each of the sisters worked so diligently at the project that it was soon finished. It is now the most favored devotion in our Community. I am the only obstacle that stands in the way of His establishing His reign in hearts. This is the cause of great sorrow to me.

Here are a few words in answer to what you asked me. I am not allowed to explain it more in detail, but I must tell you this one thing, which would stop me from writing anymore if obedience did not order otherwise. It is that when I write, having thrown myself on my knees like a disciple before his Master, I write as He dictates, without noticing or thinking about what I write. This brings me great humiliations, because I am afraid I say what I would rather keep hushed up and hidden and because I think I say over and over again the same thing. I am forbidden to re-read the letters I write. For if I did, I could not refrain from tearing them up or burning them.

I was surprised on reading your letter to see that what I thought I told you about this state of indifference, coldness, rejection and condemnation which I thought I was, was said in such away as to make you interpret it in so favorable a light. I see in myself none of those acts and dispositions of which you speak, and this indifference in me is nothing but a lack of responsiveness to grace.

What you say about the love of my Lord Jesus Christ would have made me die of grief had I understood it in this sense. What I meant was that the pains of hell would have seemed sweet to me if by suffering them I could establish the reign of this loving Heart: saving always the privation of His Love. And even that, I saw in it His good pleasure-which of course is impossible.

You ask me to pray for you. Indeed I do, more than for any other. But can you feel the effects of the prayers

of such a wicked creature, when all she can do is draw down the wrath of God and stop the flow of His Mercy? But I do offer for you and for the success of your work for the glory of the Sacred Heart the Holy Masses which saintly religious and priests say for my intention every Friday. Also Holy Communion two or three times a month, to say nothing of many other things.

Since you want me to tell you what I think about the projects you have undertaken for the honor of this Divine Heart, I must say that I think they are very pleasing to Him. I hope they will be one of the means he will make use of in this devotion to save many souls from hell, destroy the empire of satan, and bring back souls by His saving grace to the way of eternal salvation. So it seems to me, He has promised His unworthy slave, making her see this devotion as one of the last efforts of His Love to save men.

He showed this clearly in a special vision showing His Divine Heart pierced with love for men. He will make their salvation sure, He will not allow anyone consecrated to Him to be lost. He has a great desire to be known, loved and honored by His creatures. In this way He can satisfy to some extent the ardent desire to spread His love. He will shower graces upon them for their salvation and sanctification. He will be their sure refuge at the hour of death. He will take them under His protection and defend them their enemies. To obtain all this of course they must lead lives in conformity with His Divine Maxims.

To Father Croiset

(132a) September 15, 1689.

O, if only I could, and if only it were permitted me to reveal what He has given me to know of the reward those who labor to make Him known and loved will receive from this adorable Heart, you would agree as to how fortunate are those He makes use of to carry out His designs!

You, rest assured, have the good fortune of being one of these. And since I can no longer doubt that He has wholly destined you for that, follow without fear the lights He gives you. Do not surrender this privilege to another as you have received it through another refusal. That other preferred to choose his own way of glorifying God rather than accept the means God Himself had chosen for him for making His Sacred Heart known, loved and honored.

In this way He deprived he deprived Himself of countless graces. Our Lord now offers them to you. All you have to do is take them, following faithfully the inspirations and lights He gives you. He has not allowed me to speak of the reward He promises those He makes use of to carry out this holy work in order that they may labor disinterestedly for His glory, having in view only His pure love.

You see how freely I have spoken my thoughts to you. He has permitted me to. For when my Sovereign Master does not want me to say anything, He takes away all memory and understanding of what I would like to say so that it is impossible for me to do so. In much the same way He makes it impossible for me to present to Him certain intentions and persons not pleasing to Him, either because they question what He wishes or for some other reason. On such occasions He makes me suffer terribly. For I do not give up even though He does not answer my prayers but go on fighting so to speak, with Him.

Sometimes I even go as far as to say I will answer for these people and frequently offer myself to undergo long and terrible sufferings for them. These sufferings are my constant occupation, for He has destined me, if I am not mistaken, to be a victim of His Sacred Heart and a holocaust offered to His good pleasure and immolated to all His desires. I think He has destined me to be continually consumed on this sacred altar by the flames of pure suffering love. For I cannot live a moment without suffering, pain, humiliations, poverty, contempt and contradictions, with no other support or consolation than love and privation.

Oh, what a blessing to be able to share here below in anguish, bitterness, and abandonment of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ! But I see that I am satisfying my self love in speaking of the cross which is like a precious perfume; it loses its sweet scent before God and is dissipated by too much talking. It is my portion to always suffer in silence.

But to answer what you ask, to tell you the graces I have received from this adorable Heart: this I, His poor unworthy slave cannot do. And that all the more because He often forces and constrains me, so to speak, to make them known to those whom they are destined and then forthwith erases them from my memory, so

that I may be occupied with Him alone. He is ten million times more precious than all His gifts. They should be taken no notice of at all except for love of Him.

Yet I think I can tell you that if I were allowed to enumerate the graces and mercies of this all lovable Heart, they would fill a book twice the size of yours. So you see I have merited hell a thousand times over by constant infidelity and ingratitude. He has given me to understand, too that these favors were granted me only for the good of others, for the glory of the Sacred Heart.

So I am not appropriate or attribute anything to myself. All that remains to me is my sinful nothingness, which I see continually as in a picture this sovereign of my soul holds before my eyes. There He makes me see myself a composite of every kind of misery which He wants to change into a composite of His infinite mercies.

If you only knew what anguish my soul suffers at the sight of its sinfulness, exposed before the sanctity of a God Who cannot suffer the least stain on a soul that converses with Him! This sanctity is like a devouring fire, which penetrates and burns to the very marrow of my bones. It would annihilate sinners a thousand times over did not this loving mercy intervene.

His sanctity is inexorable, and it seems to me there is no suffering more exquisite than that through which He makes a soul pass when He wants to purify it in order to communicate Himself to it. I assure you that the graces He has given me are always preceded and followed by sufferings of this kind, or by a purgatory of humiliations. Were I not strengthened and sustained by the One Who Himself afflicts me I should not be able to bear this torture.

But, alas, what good is there in delaying over all this, so foreign to our subject! Yet I think His goodness permits it in order that you may come to learn from what kind of spirit the things I say come and by what spirit I am led, so that you may be undeceived and help me withdraw from this way if it is a false one. I will pray Our Lord to give you light, in order that you may tell me what you think about everything I say to you here in strict confidence in the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

By His love I ask you to do me the favor of burning this letter after you have read it and let me know what you think about all this. Let no one else see the letter since, without rhyme or reason, I have put into it more than I thought I would. I do not even know whether you will be able to read it, much less understand what I say, because I do not know how to express myself. But in God's name, do not disclose who I am. For to be known is for me an inexpressibly cruel martyrdom.

As for all the meditations and indulgences you propose in your letter, it seems clear and certain to me that it is Our Lord Himself Who has inspired you to them in this form. He has given me to know that your work is so pleasing to Him, that no one but Himself could have so satisfied His wishes. I think He will be much glorified by this and I myself even in advance feel great consolation and am very happy. Would not the application for the indulgences furnish a good occasion for asking the Holy See to approve a Mass in

honor of the Sacred Heart? This is an important point and, although I have not given up hope, I do not know whom He intends to make use of for this. Several have already failed to obtain it.

There is another thing I feel to be very urgent because He has told me to His great desire to have it done. It is this: He wants this devotion to be practiced in the palaces of kings and princes, so that the pleasure He receives from being loved and honored by the almighty may be as great as the bitterness and anguish He suffered from contempt, outrage, and humiliation in His Passion. I assure you that it seems to me this devotion would afford great protection to the person of the king. It could well be that it would bring success to his arms and win great victories for him. But it is not my place to say anything about this. We must let the power of this adorable Heart take care of it.

You were so good as to send us some books about the Sacred Heart. You surely could not have done anything to make me happier. But I am filled with confusion at your liberality towards one whom He Himself has so despoiled of everything that she has nothing left but Him.

That is why those He inspires to do me favors like this must not expect any other recompense than the one He Himself will make for me. I think He has assured me that He will be careful to take note of and reward every favor done this poor slave of His. I shall ask Him with all my heart to do this in your case. If you would not mind I would ask you to put into your next book the Litany of the Heart of the Blessed Virgin.

I must tell you that a religious of the Visitation who died about forty years ago in the odor of sanctity had a revelation to the effect that the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ would take its origin in the Visitation. If this is true, I think it is because of our holy founder, the great saint Francis de Sales, who wanted all his daughters to render continual homage to this Divine Heart by conforming their whole life to His sacred maxims.

As for myself I cannot help but think that, if it is true that the most attractive devotion is to take its origin in the Visitation, it will be spread through the efforts of the Reverend Jesuits Fathers. I think this is why He has chosen this sainted friend of His Heart (Father de la Colombiere) for the accomplishment of this great design. It will

I hope bring much glory to God, because of the great desire He has of communicating His love and grace by this means. If only we realized the great favors, graces, and blessings it will bring on these two congregations, if only we understood the richness of this treasure, how ardently we should work to promote this devotion! We must go to His faithful friend the good Father de la Colombiere to whom He has given great power and His whose hands He has placed so to speak everything that concerns this devotion.

I tell you confidentially that I have received great help from him, more now than even when he was here on earth. For this devotion to the Sacred Heart, if I am not mistaken, has made him very powerful in heaven and has brought him a higher degree of glory than anything else he could have done during his whole life.

To Father Croiset
(132b) September 15, 1689.

I am sure the same will be true of you if only you are willing to correspond faithfully with the holy inspirations of grace. Do not forget to let me know when you will have the happiness of offering the great sacrifice of love (Father Croiset's first Mass). For I am living in the hope of that day, and of the promise you made me. Perhaps now you are sorry that you made that promise because of my unworthiness and spiritual poverty. But I trust the Sacred Heart will make up for everything that is lacking. I hope too, that you will re-double your prayers and ask Him to convert me completely to His pure love. He may give me this grace during my retreat which begins three weeks from now.

During this time I shall especially need your help with my Lord. It seems He has made and destined me just for His all lovable Heart. For He alone is all my joy, my consolation, my treasure, and my happiness. Everything else means nothing to me. It seems to me too, that there is nothing I would not do or suffer to give Him the pleasure He so ardently desires. And this first of all in order to re-ignite love for God, which is burning so low and is almost distinguished in the hearts of most Christians.

He wants to give them a new means, by this devotion, of loving God through this Sacred Heart; of loving God as much as He wishes and merits to be loved, and to make reparation for their ingratitude. This divine Heart is the treasury of Heaven from which precious gold has already been given us in many ways to pay off our debt and purchase Heaven. It is the last recourse of His love which He holds out to us only that we may profit from it. Woe to them that will not or do not make use of it!

He wishes that in sanctifying ourselves we glorify this most loving Heart which has suffered more than all the rest of the human nature of Our Lord Jesus Christ. For from the very first moment of the Incarnation, this Sacred Heart was engulfed in a sea of bitterness. It suffered from the very first moment of His existence until His last breath on the Cross. Everything this Sacred Humanity suffered interiorly during the cruel torments on the Cross this Divine Heart felt continuously. That is why God wishes it to be honored with special devotion. In this way men will give Him as much joy and pleasure by their love and homage as they did bitterness and anguish by the pain they inflicted on Him.

There is nothing sweeter or more gentle and at the same time stronger or more efficacious than the unction of the most ardent charity of this lovable Heart. To convert the more hardened sinners and penetrate the coldest hearts He will make the word of His preachers and of His faithful friends like a flaming sword. It will melt by His love the coldest hearts.

This applies especially to the Holy Society of Jesus, to which He offers His graces in order to give its members some favorable means for worthily and perfectly fulfilling the duties of their ministry for charity, for the glory of God in the conversion of souls. The members of the Society ought frequently to exhort souls to avail themselves of the great treasures contained in this devotion to the Sacred heart. By its means, it is entirely in our power to satisfy the divine justice.

In the first place we must do as He wishes and strive to make Him known and loved with a very pure love free of all self interest. Secondly, He wishes us to approach Him with all our needs with a humble and respectful and yet altogether filial confidence, abandoning ourselves completely to His loving providence like children to their good father. For He has begotten us in great pain and will not fail most lovingly to provide for all our needs. Thirdly He wants us to have great love for Our neighbor. praying for him as for ourselves. For one of the principle aims of this devotion is to reconcile hearts that have been estranged and and bring peace to souls.

When we commit some fault, we must hasten to this Divine Heart to have Him put us back in the good graces of God the Father. To Him we must offer one of the virtues opposed to our fault, as His humility for our pride and so on. By doing this lovingly we will satisfy our debt to this divine justice as He has promised.

This Divine Heart is an inexhaustible fountain from which three streams are continually flowing. The first is the stream of mercy, which flows down upon sinners and brings the spirit of sorrow and repentance. The second is a stream of charity which brings relief to all those who are suffering under some need, and especially those who are striving for perfection.

These will find through the help of the Holy Angels the means of overcoming their difficulties. The third is the stream of love and light for perfect friends whom He wills to unite with Himself. To these He will communicate His knowledge and way of life, in order that they may give themselves up completely to furthering His glory, each one in His own way. The Blessed Virgin will be the special patron of these. She will bring them to a perfect life. Moreover, this divine Heart will be a sure refuge and a harbor of safety at the hour of death for all those who have honored It during life. It will protect and defend them.

I must mention something that occurred to me while writing to you. It is that this Divine Heart is like a beautiful tree that has sent its roots down deep into the Order of Visitation because of its lowliness. There Its power and grandeur will appear more strikingly. The tree bears good and wholesome fruit of every kind which will counteract the poison of sin and give back life to the soul. Since He wishes that such wonderful fruit should not remain hidden and wasted, He has chosen he Jesuit Fathers to distribute it and make everyone taste its sweetness and flavor by showing them how useful and profitable it will be to souls properly disposed who nourish themselves. with it.

In a word, this Divine Heart is an abyss of all good, into which the poor must plunge their necessities. It is an abyss of joy, into which we must cast all our sorrows. It is an abyss of humiliation for our pride, an abyss of mercy for the miserable, and an abyss of love into which we must cast all our troubles.

But should this Divine Heart wish to show its power in these calamitous and troublous times by maintaining the faith and restoring peace by making our king triumph over his enemies, what a blessing that would be! But for this it is necessary that He be made known in high places, and how can this be done? Somehow or other, I feel myself overwhelmed with strange confusion in telling you all this. Perhaps alas, it is because what I have said is sheer nonsense.

I assure you I did not intend to say all this when I began this letter. I hope you will burn it after you have discovered what spirit is leading me. Tell me undeceive me if you can. For if it is an evil spirit, I shall certainly be lost because of the firm hold he has on both my body and soul. This he has to such an extent that it seems to me he has made me now for himself. My heart does not seem to respond to another movement than those he incites at will, be it joy or sorrow, consolation or distress ect.

Well, here are the two rough drafts of the letter you asked for, but I think perhaps you will not find there what you wanted. That, I think is because Our Lord wants to give you everything Himself, wants to do everything in you, because He loves you. I want to tell you especially that, according to what He gave me to understand, the treasures of His Sacred Heart lie open to you.

I know He will make you draw abundantly from them, will even shower these upon you, for the accomplishment of this great work for which without doubt He has destined for you. But, if I am not mistaken, He asks that you work at it in perfect forgetfulness and diffidence in self and perfect confidence in Him. This He has already given you abundantly. Further more you should work only for pure love of Him.

I shall not fail to present to Him these two holy religious (Father Gette and Villette, S.J.) I think He has great plans for them, for the glory of His Divine Heart, which loves pure and humble souls. Commend me to their charity for poor sinners and let them not forget me in their holy sacrifices. Blessed be God forever! May He deign to consume us in the flames of His pure love!

I think I should urge in closing that, in your meditations and in every- thing else, you be as fervent as you can. Let them be short and compact: I think you know what I mean. I forgot to tell you that many people earnestly desire to see the Mass of the Sacred Heart approved, if not yet by the Pope at least by the Bishops.

They are continually urging me to ask the one who wrote the Lyons booklet to see whether he could get the Archbishop of Lyons to approve it as the Bishop of Langres approved it for his diocese. You have seen this approbation. I am think I am trying as much as I can to make your books known. See what you can do about what I have mentioned....

To Father Croiset. From our Monastery.
(133) November 3, 1689

Our hearts must now certainly be consumed incessantly in the burning furnace of the Sacred Heart of Our lovable Jesus! Not being able to contain Its flames any longer. It shoots them forth ardently into the hearts It finds ready to be inflamed. How we ought ever to be inflamed with them!

What consolation your letters bring by telling me of the happy progress of this lovable devotion which constitutes all my joy and satisfaction in this valley of tears! You did well in telling me you received our last letter. I really should have felt very badly had it been seen by anyone other than yourself, because I know that in spite of myself, I reveal more about myself than I want to. I can assure you though that I do so only under obedience for the glory of my Divine Master. For this I have completely sacrificed myself.

I must tell you two things which have troubled me very much in speaking of the special favors this Sovereign has done for His unworthy slave. The first is that, I am afraid that after being deceived myself, I deceive others of who I have been speaking of these things, I am afraid that they are attributing to the creature what is due only to the Creator and His pure mercy. For it is He who is doing everything in this matter.

I cannot say that I have been anything but an obstacle to Him by my great poverty and ignorance. These make me a composite of every kind of stupidity and misery. I think that is one of the reasons why He makes use of so weak an instrument as myself, much as He used clay to put on the eyes of the man born blind. Indeed, had He been able to find a more miserable and unworthy subject out of which to make a composite of His great mercies. He would have chosen it. I warn you then, not to be deceived by what I tell you.

The second thing is that you give me the assurance that everything I have told you or will tell you shall be kept inviolably secret. You must never speak of me in such away as to reveal my identity either while I am alive or after my death. I want to remain annihilated and unknown, buried in eternal oblivion. So you will do me the favor of burning all my letters in order that in so far as the glory of my Divine Master permits, there shall remain behind no remembrance of so wicked a creature.

I am saying this once for all. The assurance that you will grant me what I ask, and that you will do all in your power, while making known the Sacred Heart of our good Master, to let me remain unknown, will keep my soul in peace and make me consider this one of the greatest favors I could have from you. You order me to speak simply and confidentially; or rather, my Divine Master wishes it, for other wise I will try in vain to force myself to do it. I cannot answer what you ask without telling you many things that I should prefer to have buried in eternal silence unless the glory of my Lord demanded otherwise.

Tell me what you think of what I have just said. he has given me to understand that I should believe what you should tell me as though it came from Him. And I have felt the effects. When you assured me in your letter that it is the spirit of God that leads me, I was reassured somewhat, but not relieved of the great pain I

suffer in having to speak of myself and of the singular favors I receive. I make such poor use of them that they will only lead to my great condemnation. For I lead a life quite unworthy of such favors. All my works condemn me. But, after all, since you assure me that my Lord wants that of me, ought I be so worried about myself?

I must tell you, therefore, that my Lord appearing one day to His unworthy slave said to me: "I am looking for a victim for My Heart, one who is willing to offer herself as a holocaust for the accomplishment of My designs."

Feeling myself altogether overcome by the splendor of this Sovereign Majesty before Whom I had prostrated myself, I mentioned to Him several holy souls who would co-operate with His plans. But He said: "I want you and no one else, and I want you to consent to My desire."

Quite overcome and in tears, I replied that He knew I was a criminal, that victims ought to be innocent, and that I would do only what my superior ordered. He agreed to this but kept on insisting, and I kept on resisting, because of the great fear that these extraordinary ways might withdraw me from the pure spirit of my vocation. I resisted Him in vain however, for He gave me no rest until under obedience He made me immolate myself to all His desires.

He wanted me to hand myself over as a victim sacrificed to every kind of suffering, humiliation, contradiction, pain, and contempt, with no other purpose than the accomplishment of His designs. I did so. He told me He knew my fears and promised as I think I have already told you, to so accommodate His graces to the spirit of my rule, to the obedience due my superiors and to my own weakness and infirmity that there should be no conflict in anything.

After that He so showered His graces on me that I did not know myself any more. This only served to increase my fears and forced me to insist that He would never allow to appear in me anything but what would make me more vile, abject, and contemptible in the eyes of men. He promised.

I made a retreat sometime afterwards, during which I received many graces from His wonderful liberality and mercy. Of these I need not speak. I shall say only that it was then His goodness showed me most of the graces He had determined to give me, especially those connected with His lovable Heart.

Thereupon, I prostrated myself and asked Him to be so good as to give these graces to some faithful soul who would know how to correspond with them. He knew well, I told Him that I would only be an obstacle to His designs. But He gave me to understand that it was for that very reason He had chosen me, so that I may not be able to attribute anything to myself. He Himself would make up for what was wanting in me.

Once when this Sovereign of my soul favored me with a visit, He said: "I am going to show you how much you will suffer for My love and for the accomplishment of My designs." Then He showed me so vividly what I was going to be doing for the rest of my life that it was as though I was actually enduring all those

sufferings at that very moment. He added that I need fear nothing and promised me one of the greatest graces He had ever given to one of His friends; to let me enjoy His actual physical presence. Like a faithful and perfect friend, He takes delight in being with His unworthy slave, favoring with His loving converse.

"When you commit some fault I shall purge it away with suffering if you do not do it yourself with penance. I shall never deprive you of My presence on that account, but I will make it so painful for you that it will take the place of every other torment."

At that very moment He began to fulfill His promise of always being present to me. I felt Him always near me, as one feels oneself at night without being able to see Him because of the darkness. The penetrating eyes of love made me see and feel Him in a most loving and certain way, and under various aspects.

This Divine presence evokes from me such great reverence that when I am alone it gives me no rest unless I am prostrate or on my knees, like a little bit of nothingness before this Omnipotent One. This Infinite grandeur encompasses me with Its power and so takes possession of mine and of my whole body and soul that I can think

I can say that I no longer have any power over myself, for He acts in me independently of me. I am powerless to resist Him, although the fear of being deceived often makes me do all in my power to do so. It is all in vain. He leaves me no liberty at all whenever it so pleases Him. But He does give me profound peace and joy, a satisfaction, an ardent desire to be conformed to the suffering, humble, hidden, and lowly life of my Savior.

And that in such away that contempt, poverty, sorrow and humiliations are the delicious meats which He continually nourishes my soul. It no longer has a taste for another. All my pleasure in this land of exile is that of having every kind of suffering on the cross, deprived of every other consolation except that of the Sacred heart.

I tell you, earnestly that this Sovereign of my soul has so taken possession of me that, if instead of Him it was an evil spirit, I should certainly be condemned to the lowest pit of hell. I present all this to you as I see it. Alas I do not know whether I am deceiving myself, having neither good judgment nor discernment in what pertains to myself. Tell me what you think about it.

But to return to what you want to know touching the Sacred Heart. The first special grace I think I received in this regard was on the feast of St John the Evangelist. Our Lord made me rest for several hours on His Sacred Breast and from this lovable Heart I received graces whose very memory carries me out of myself. I do not think it is necessary to say what they are, although the remembrance of them and the impression they made will remain all my life.

After that I saw this Divine Heart as on a throne of flames, more brilliant than the sun and transparent as crystal. It had its adorable wound and was encircled with a crown of thorns, which signified the pricks our

sins caused Him. It was surmounted by a Cross, which signified that from the first moment of His incarnation, that is from the time the Sacred Heart was formed, the Cross was planted in It; that It was filled, from the very first moment, with all the bitterness, humiliations, poverty, sorrow, and contempt His Sacred Humanity would have to suffer during the whole course of His life and His Holy Passion.

To Father Croiset. From our Monastery.
(133a) November 3, 1689

He made me understand that the ardent desire He had of being loved by men and of drawing them from the path of perdition into which Satan was hurrying them in great numbers, had caused Him to fix upon this plan of manifesting His Heart to men, together with all Its treasures of love, mercy, grace and sanctification and salvation.

This He did in order that those who were willing to do all in their power to render and procure for Him honor, love and glory might be enriched abundantly, even profusely, with these Divine Treasures of the Heart of God, which is their source. It must be honored under the symbol of this Heart of flesh, Whose Image He wished to be publicly exposed. He wanted me to carry it on my person, over my heart, that He might imprint His Heart there, fill my heart with all the gifts with which His own is filled, and destroy all inordinate affection.

Where ever this Sacred Image would be exposed for veneration He would pour forth His graces and blessings. This devotion was as a last effort of His love which wished to favor men in these last centuries with this loving redemption, in order to withdraw them from the empire of satan, which He intended to destroy, and in order to put us under the sweet liberty of the empire of His love. This He would establish in the hearts of all those who would embrace this devotion.

After this, the Sovereign of my soul said to me: "These are the designs for which I have chosen you. That is why I have given you so many graces and have taken quite special care of you from your very cradle. I Myself have been your teacher and your director only that I might prepare you for the accomplishment of this great design and confide to you this great treasure which I am displaying to you here." Then prostrating myself on the ground, I exclaimed with St Thomas, "My Lord and my God". I find it impossible to express what I felt on that occasion. I did not know whether I was in heaven or on earth.

From that time on the graces of my Sovereign became more continual. Not being able to restrain the reverent raptures of love they caused me, I tried to spread them by word and writing in the hope that others would receive the same graces and experience the same sentiments. But I was undeceived in this, both by the Reverend Father de la Colombiere and by the humiliations and persecution it brought to me.

Since the time He had fixed upon had not yet come, He Himself was careful to prepare me according to His desires as He had promised me. For I never had any other director. Here are some of the ways in which he prepared me. The first was after a general confession of my whole very sinful and wicked life, right after the absolution, He showed me a robe which He called the robe of innocence. It was whiter than snow. He put it on me saying: "With this I am taking from you forever all ill will, so that hereafter the faults you commit will but humble you, and not offend Me."

Then opening to me again His adorable Heart and putting me within It, He said; "This will be the place of your present and continual dwelling. Here you can preserve without stain the robe of innocence with which I have clothed your soul." Since then I have always seen and found myself in this lovable Heart in away i do not know how to explain, unless by saying that sometimes it was as though I were in a beautiful garden, with flowers growing all around; at other times like a minnow in a vast ocean, or like gold being purified in a crucible. But usually it is like an abyss and furnace of pure love.

Once He asked me to make a will in His favor in the manner He should teach me. My superior would act as notary. He would repay her for her pains. We did as He asked. Then when I presented it to Him, He made me sign it on my heart in the painful way He wanted me to. After that He said: "Now you are completely mine, to do all that pleases Me, as My daughter, My Spouse, My slave, My victim, a play thing to give pleasure to My Heart."

In this Heart He made me read, and later write down what was there written for me. Here are some of the words He spoke to me, with a testament made in my favor: " I make you heiress to the treasures of My Sacred Heart. You may dispose of them at will in favor of those properly disposed. This Heart will be your security. It will be responsible for you and pay your debts. It will make reparation for all your faults. It will take care of all your duties and obligations. It will fail to help you only when It loses Its power. Since you have given and sacrificed yourself completely to Its love and good pleasure, you ought no longer have any care or occupation but to love It and to let yourself be sacrificed and immolated."

He promised He would take care to punish or reward all that should be done to me or for me. Since all the good works that anyone should do for me are at the disposal of His Sacred Heart by reason of my having given them all to Him, all those who pray for me will please Him so much that He will enrich them for the abundant treasures of His Sacred Heart. For He took special pleasure in disposing of the prayers and holy sacrifices of the Mass people offered for my intention, which is really only His own. He has given me to understand, too, that He will inspire many of these souls to pray for me so that I may be the means of giving Him something precious.

Although these things really belonged to Him, He wanted the pleasure of distributing them as will as though He had received them from another. This is why my spiritual benefactors not only share in the immense riches of this divine Heart but also give it great pleasure.

This Sovereign of my soul once ordered me to keep vigil for one hour with Him every Thursday night and Friday, prostrate on the ground. He said He would tell me what He wanted of me, which was, in part, reparation for that hour in the Garden of Olives when complained that His apostles could not watch one hour with Him.

Obedience having permitted me to do this, I cannot tell you how much I suffered. For it seemed to me that this Divine Heart poured into mine all Its bitterness, reducing my soul to such a state of agony and anguish that I sometimes thought I would die. It was during this time that He made me see that my life would be

one of continual suffering.

It would be spent on a cross made up of many different kinds of wood, because He wanted to establish His reign and the empire of His Sacred Heart upon the complete destruction of myself. And so it happened. I was not without suffering for a moment, and that almost always to the full extent of my powers of body and soul.

This is how He makes me suffer a continual martyrdom: One day He caused me to see in this adorable Heart two kinds of holiness, the holiness of love and the holiness of justice. With this latter He surrounds the impenitent sinner who has ignored all the means of salvation given him. This sanctity of justice thereupon rejects Him from the Heart of Jesus Christ, abandoning him to himself and rendering him insensible to his own sad state.

It is for this sanctity that He makes me suffer, especially when He wants to abandon some soul consecrated to Him. He makes me bare the weight of it in so painful a manner that there is no suffering in this life comparable to it. I should willingly cast myself into a red hot furnace to avoid it. But it would take too long to tell you all I experience. Suffice it to say that this justice cannot suffer the least on a strain on a soul that is in intimate converse with God: it would annihilate the sinner a thousand times over if the mercy did not intervene.

But, in its own way, the sanctity of love is scarcely less painful. It suffers to make reparation to some extent for the ingratitude of so many hearts who make no return for the burning love of the Heart of Jesus Christ in the sacrament of His love. This sanctity of love causes one to suffer from not being able to suffer enough. It brings on such ardent desires to love God and make Him loved that there is no torture one would not be willing to undergo to bring this about.

He showed me, therefore, that these two sanctities would always be at work to make me suffer. Also that there is nothing better for me but to live and die on the cross, overwhelmed with every kind of suffering. It seems to me that I could not live without suffering, though I should often succumb did He not sustain me with His powerful grace. This is one reason why He commanded me to receive Holy Communion every first Friday of the month. Or rather it was to make reparation for the outrages He received during the month during the Blessed Sacrament.

But one of my greatest sufferings was caused by this Divine Heart addressing to me these words: "I thirst with such a terrible thirst to be loved by men in the Blessed Sacrament that this thirst consumes Me. Yet I find no one trying to quench it according to My desire by some return of My love."

Sometimes this adorable Heart is like a sun shooting forth its rays in every direction and into every heart. But how different the responses It receives! For reprobate souls are like mud that becomes yet more hard, while just souls are purified and sanctified.

I felt myself ever urged and importuned to make known this Divine Heart, yet without being able to find means for doing so until Father de la Colombiere was sent here. Then within the Octave of Corpus Christi I could not resist any longer, I finally had to surrender, I had to tell him in spite of myself, what I had always kept secret so carefully, because he was sent for the execution of this great design.

I must confess that I neither know how nor am I able to express what He has made known to me about it, for it is a profound mystery. But I believe He knows enough about it and will supply for what is wanting in me. If you but knew the terrible martyrdom I am suffering in writing this!

But I must do it because you told me that it was necessary for the glory of the Sacred Heart of my sovereign Master, to whom I am completely dedicated and sacrificed. Still an express command under obedience was necessary to get me to do violence to myself and tell you all this as it seems to me to have taken place. Alas I do not know whether I am being deceived. Perhaps my whole life is but an illusion. Tell me what you think. What consoles me in all this is that I shall at least always have the happiness of suffering in conformity with my crucified Spouse.

To Father Croiset. From our Monastery.
(133b) November 3, 1689

The graces which I am recounting to you He has given me not only for myself, but to distribute to others. I receive everyone He sends me. He will let me know those who are chosen and destined to make known, loved and honored His Sacred Heart. It seems to me you need not doubt any longer that you are one of these and, indeed, one chosen in quite a special manner....

If I am not mistaken, He has brought all of you (Fathers Croiset, Gette, and Villette) together only to further this work according to the lights He will give you. I think you ought not to refuse Him this, for all three of you have received sufficient proofs of the love of this Divine Heart to make Him this return of love which I think He expects of you. You will make it by not sparing yourselves, by leaving nothing undone to accomplish the design He has of giving this devotion to men as means of their sanctification and salvation.

But how dare I, a wicked and miserable sinner say that? Are my words going to perform miracles, or are they oracles to which you must give credence? Ah, Father how I blush at talking to you this way! What an abyss of confusion and humiliation I am going to be buried. But it does not matter what happens to me, provided the Heart of my loving Jesus be known and loved. If His reign be established then that is sufficient for me.

The favor I ask of you for the love of the Sacred Heart and what I beg of you by all the love you bear Him, is that all that I have told you be kept an inviolable secret. Burn these last two letters after you have read them. Never quote me, either in word or in your writings. I beg you not to refuse me this favor. Otherwise I shall not answer you anymore, nor anyone else, so earnestly do I wish to live and die unknown. I hope you will be so good as to give me your assurance on the first possible occasion. As I always do as you ask, I expect the same from you.

Thank you a thousand times for the present you have given me. I consider it a treasure of which this Divine Heart despoils me sometimes more than I would wish. I assure you that, as I see it books as well as subjects for meditation helps to make Him known. I think he takes great pleasure in them. I have no doubt but that He Himself has inspired you to write your book. But you must, I think, finish it without delay if you do not want another to get ahead of you. Already in advance this work gives me great consolation.

I shall not fail to make that visit to the Blessed Sacrament for your intention. It will be a double pleasure for me. I shall say the Pater and the Ave you asked of me, too and offer the Holy Communion I promised. Even after all that I shall still be indebted to you, but I trust the Sacred Heart will repay all since He has reduced me to complete poverty. Thank you again for the devotional pictures you sent us. I wish I could sufficiently express my gratitude, but alas I have only good will and nothing more.

There is another point in your letter I forgot to answer. You ask me to tell you what the obstacles are that

are opposed to this devotion. Ah, dear God, would that I could answer this without wounding the charity of this divine Heart! The least injury or coldness It is more intensely painful to me than all the torments imaginable anyone could make me suffer.

This is a long a wearisome letter. Reading it will at least make you practice patience and preventing you from ever wanting to have any- more like it. Perhaps your answer will give me some consolation and alleviate the pain I suffer in writing it. I trust it is for the glory of Our Divine Master in Whose love I hope you may be wholly consumed. May He be blessed, loved and glorified eternally! Amen.

I forgot to say that I cannot tell you just when it seems to me all these things took place, never thinking I should ever be obliged to speak of them, although He often told me the contrary. The ardent desire I have always had of remaining hidden makes me regard as a punishment due to my great sins the impotence in which the glory and the interests of my Lord place me.

Although I have spoken to you only of some of the generousities of His mercy, and in so far as I could not of myself, nor of the impressions these graces made in me and are still making, do not fail to tell me what you think of them and from what spirit you think all this comes. Notwithstanding the effects which they produce, which are always peace, love and confusion at the sight of my nothingness, I shall allow myself to judge of them only as you say.

If you were to give me to understand that all this is nothing but deception and illusion, I think I should not be troubled at all. I have never been attached to it but only to Him Whom I thought to be the author, my Lord Jesus Christ. Him, I think, no one can take from me, nor can anyone separate me from Him. That is enough for me.

I am convinced that nothing will be accomplished in this work except at my expense. My pains and sufferings, my humiliations, annihilation, contempt, annoyance, and contradictions will increase in proportion as the reign and empire of this loving Heart is spread through this devotion. It suffices if we do what He lets us know to do in our power. After we have sown the seed we must let the grace of this divine Heart work.

He will take care to cultivate it and make it bear fruit by the loving unction of His burning charity. He wants to make known by this means those he has predestined to be his true friends. These will love Him and glorify Him forever in Heaven as they did here on earth, hoping as we have said, that He will not let anyone perish who is consecrated to Him.

Before Closing I must tell you what I feel urged to say, namely, that I thin the Sacred Heart would be very pleased if there were a very close holy union between the three of you, between you and these two other holy religious He loves so much. Then you could glorify Him together according as Our Lord should give each one to understand He wanted it. But if this is not possible, do not worry about it. For, you see, I am simply telling you what I think, as you asked me. It seems to me the Sacred Heart will impart to them

abundantly His graces and secrets.

For the rest, I do not know how I can ever express the gratitude He makes me feel for all the acts of charity you have done for me. May He be you eternal reward! I do not think all the reasons you give are sufficient to delay the plans for your meditations (for each Friday of the year). I do not see how they could be better, and I was very consoled at seeing the subject you chose. I beg the Sacred Heart to inflame you more and more with His pure and Holy Love.

Finally, I must tell you, or rather ask, whether you would like to make the acquaintance of a holy religious (Sister Joly) the one who had these booklets printed at Dijon. Not that she has said anything to me to that effect, but because she is so zealous for the glory of the Sacred Heart and never spares herself in promoting it. I am proposing this of my own accord, but I do not want to cause you any displeasure.

Mary was conceived without sin.

End of the Letters.