



1874: The foundation of the Paris Procure is decided. Lavigerie wants to set up the Society's headquarters in Paris.

1874: Opening of a postulancy for the Brothers in St Laurent d'Olt (Aveyron).

Letter to the Holy Father (4 November 1891)

This prelate [Mgr Livinhac], Most Holy Father, has already had long years of experience in the mission in the heart of Africa. He has given there an example of heroic courage, faith, devotion and self-denial. I recognize in him only one fault which can be overcome only by obedience: that is extreme humility which gives him a horror of all high office, and he would refuse, as he has himself declared to me several times, the title of Coadjutor of Carthage. The authority of Your Holiness, however, would easily remove this obstacle, if you would consent to give him, as I beg you to do, a strict order, following the decision of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide. Moreover, he has, in the difficult times that we have been going through, rendered great service to different European expeditions that have followed into these far-off countries, and he has won the esteem of all through the practice of the most admirable apostolic and episcopal virtues. He would therefore seem, Most Holy Father, to be naturally designated after me for the See of Carthage, with the title of Archbishop of this new Church which your apostolic authority has gloriously resurrected.

There would be for him a double advantage in the exercise of this responsibility: the first would be quite naturally to find support for the Society of Missionaries of Algiers, of which he would be the Superior as I have been myself; the second would be to give satisfaction to this new diocese which is still lacking important institutions. It would be easy for Mgr Livinhac to create these with the help of his missionaries. These have already the cathedral of Carthage, the major seminary, the minor seminary, an orphanage for young boys, several parishes and a military chaplaincy; they could be entrusted with the development and multiplication of these institutes. They would even have, from the French point of view, a real advantage in establishing themselves outside French territory strictly speaking, at this time when the religious congregations in France are threatened with undergoing a new persecution in their Mother-Country, through what is ironically

called "the right to growth", in other words the right of spoliation with regard to each of them.

Finally, the universal reputation that Mgr Livinhac has of gentleness and holiness, in Tunisia as in the whole of Africa, and the absence of any reason whatsoever to oppose him on the part of the Italians and Maltese, provides us with the assurance that there is nothing to be feared from this quarter, no opposition such as that which faced me. I have naturally had to be concerned with regard to the choice of Mgr Livinhac, if your Holiness deigns to give him to me as coadjutor before my death, to have him accepted by the authorities of France and of the Bey. I am assured that the authorities of the Bey will not make any sort of objection. I can say more or less the same of the French authorities, particularly the authority at their highest level, Mr Massicault, the Resident General. I had a long conversation with him on this delicate subject, and I have led him to sense the advantages of it from the French point of view.

In such conditions it is with complete confidence that I charge with presenting my request to Your Holiness our Procurator in Rome, Reverend Father Burtin. He has a thorough knowledge both of the prelate I have the honour to present and the situation of the diocese of Tunis, and of the good which will result from such a choice, for the diocese, for the missions of Africa and for the congregation to which he belongs. He could therefore easily treat this affair with the Eminent Prefect of Propaganda Fide presenting to him a terna for the appointment of my coadjutor. The members of this Sacred Congregation would then naturally be called to choose which of the three candidates should be my successor.

This is the last favour, Most Holy Father, that I shall solicit from Your Holiness with all the humility and all the confidence that a communion of interests gives me. I shall add nothing more, relying in such a question on the great wisdom and the pastoral solicitude of which I am only the humble representative.

