



Letter to Bishop Livinhac in Uganda (12 December 1886)

Dear Monsignor,

I have been anxiously following your Grace since the day you left us again up to today. Especially in the past two months, I, all of us, have been in a state of extreme anxiety on account of the reports Father Jamet has sent us from Zanzibar, or by those published in the bulletins of the Protestant missions. In particular, according to the latter, the situation of your Ugandan mission is apparently heartrending, as the lives of all their neophytes are said to be threatened by the cruelty of this savage tyrant, and neither are yours safe.

We do not cease to pray everywhere that God will put an end to such a trial and that He will deign to bring you out of it safe and sound, especially you, dear Monsignor, who seem to me so needed for the continuation of this difficult work.

Our present wish is twofold. First, it is to receive precise news about this situation which some people claim to be false, on the grounds that the Protestants must not be telling the truth - and it is obvious to me that this is the case regarding certain details that concern you - while others think the information to be at least exaggerated. In any case, we would like to know the true details of all this, and if your neophytes have really been martyred in such a horrific way, we would like to have the details of their martyrdom. So please be kind enough to send a complete account. There will certainly be, in more than one case, reason to admire the power of God's grace, thus confounding the Protestants who seem to attribute everything to their neophytes and to portray your missionaries and Christians in poor colours. This will be [a source of] edification which we owe to Catholics and especially to those who support your mission with their alms.

My second wish is to be reassured that you, personally and as soon as possible, are out of the reach of this Muanga. When I heard that he was sending boats to collect you, I was glad to think that he was returning to better or, at least, fairer feelings. But everything we are hearing now makes us tremble and regret that you went there without sufficient guarantees. The leader's place is not in the middle of the battlefield where he is exposed to all the deadly blows, thus leaving his entire army in disarray. His place is far from the blows of battle, precisely in order to be able to conduct it and prepare the victory. Prudens est, regat nos!

I do not blame you, dear Monsignor, for you probably had sufficient reason to act as you did; but now that the brute instinct of this poor black king has been so clearly revealed, my wish is that you should return to the south side of the lake. I hope that this will have already been done by the time you receive this letter.

At the same time, you will be pleased to learn that Monsignor Charbonnier has just received the title of Bishop of Utica from the Holy See. Consequently, if it is possible, he may come to ask you to consecrate him as a bishop. I would advise him, however, if he is unable to reach you because of some insurmountable difficulty, to go to Zanzibar as an easier way to be consecrated, and I give him this advice as a good way of dealing with the Holy Ghoste Fathers with whom we recently had serious difficulties which have brought about, as you will see, significant modifications in our vicariates in Nyanza and Tanganyika.

