



Letter to the Missionaries and Children of the Apostolic School of St Laurent d'Olt (29th December 1874)

My dear Father, my dear Children,

I wish to write today all at once to Missionaries and Children, Fathers and Brothers to tell you all how much I hope that the year which is due to begin will be for you a holy and happy one; happy because it will be holy! What use are the years that cannot be counted for heaven? They pass too quickly and leave only a bitter memory, when they have not been used for God!

Your best means to use them for him, and this year in particular, my dear Children, is to prepare yourselves for the African apostolate by the practice of virtue and by study. Saint-Laurent d'Olt is in France, no doubt, but you are only for Africa, to which the Fathers consecrate themselves by Oath and to which the children belong by heart, by blood, and by origin. Poor Africa! It thirsts for and needs truth and salvation as it thirsts for water and the dew under its sun. It is from you that Africa expects all this.

While I am writing this to you from my office, I hear the bells of Our Lady of Africa sound, announcing the evening Angelus. You are no longer here to recite it, my dear Children, but we will say it in union with you. When I am on my terrace, this awful terrace that sometimes scared you so much, and I see the yards deserted, I think of Saint-Laurent, and I wonder what you are doing. I hope you are doing what you should, for us and for the Good Lord!

I thank Father Doré and Brother Louail for the welcome letters they wrote. I hope that all will imitate them and above all will give me some details of what you are doing in France. I learned with great sadness that Father Charbonnier was taken ill, and with great joy that he is better.

Farewell, my dear Children, I love you very dearly. I bless you from the bottom of my fatherly heart. I am all yours in Our Lord.

Letter to Propaganda Fide about the martyrs in Uganda (29 December 1886)

Your Eminence,

We are in receipt from the Nyanza mission of sad news, yet interesting and important from all points of view. I therefore believe that I am fulfilling a duty by forwarding to you, without delay, a letter from Bishop Livinhac, Apostolic Vicar of Nyanza, and the excerpts from an earlier diary, written by Father Lourdel, a missionary in Rubaga, the residence of the King of Uganda. Your Eminence will see that God's arm is not shortened nor his grace diminished, since the early days of the Church, and that these poor Negroes of Uganda, soon after their conversion, have through divine help been as courageous and generous in faith as the most beautiful examples of former martyrs. Should not Mgr Livinhac, who is fortunately now safe in another part of his vast mission, be given the necessary instructions to make a canonical collection, ne pereant, of the testimonies relating to such admirable facts, especially when consideration is given to the state of barbarity in which these poor tribes find themselves? In this case, your Eminence, you would have to be kind enough to have the necessary instructions sent to me, so that I can pass them on to Mgr Livinhac. In closing, I would beg you to ask the Holy Father for a special blessing for this nascent Christianity, now so tried and tested, and to grant them the help of your own prayers to God.

