



1887: Lavigerie is in Lyon for the blessing of the chapel of the postulancy of the White Sisters.

Letter to the Missionaries of the first caravan (21st June 1879).

My dear children,

I do not want to let the Fathers go to join you without addressing a few lines to you to give you a proof of my paternal tenderness from afar. I cannot write myself because of the bad state of my eyes, but you will at least see my signature and you will know that I thought of you.

As for the details, which I could give you on all that concerns you, the Fathers will give them to you much better than I. They are a living letter, much more comprehensive and more beautiful than any I could write to you. Besides, I have given them to them, and they will communicate very long instructions to you that were suggested to me, either through reading your letters and your diary, or reading the books on Equatorial Africa that have appeared since your departure. I urge you to read these Instructions carefully and to comply with them.

I am asking you for them in particular for the writing up and sending of your diary. I cannot tell you how much I have been worried and filled with anxiety without hearing from you for so long. It is now seven months that we do not know what is happening to you, for your last letters were dated from the beginning of December, and we are now at the end of June. It is for me and for all your brothers a great cause of pain. We have sympathized with all your sufferings and all your pains more than I can tell you, and we would have liked to know how you arrived at the end of your journey.

We do not regret this silence any the less for your mission, because only your diary and your letters can maintain the interest and charity of the Catholics who support it with their contributions. You risk completely draining your resources, if you continue in this way. You must therefore take all the means in your power to send us regular reports and news, and you must not hesitate when faced with the cost of special messengers if necessary. Even if you should have to spend five hundred, a thousand or even two thousand francs on important occasions, you should not hesitate. I said it explicitly to the Fathers who will join you; but I want to repeat it to you here, in writing, because this matter is paramount.

My dear children, I am with you heart and soul. Not a day passes when I do not think of you, when I do not urge Our Lord to assist you, to alleviate your sorrows, to smooth out your difficulties and above all to give success to your apostolic works. Also, think sometimes of your Father and of your charity do not forget him in your prayers.

