



Note concerning the opening of a junior seminary in Lille (France) (February 1883)

With the approval of His Eminence Cardinal Lavigerie and the authorisation of His Grace the Archbishop of Cambrai, the missionaries of Algiers have set up a minor seminary in annex to their community of Algerian students. This school is intended for poor children who might have a vocation to become missionaries in the mission in Africa which comes under the care of the cardinal-archbishop of Algiers or diocesan priests in the parishes of Algeria and Tunisia. They will be welcomed completely free of charge, the Mission taking on responsibility for their education, their food and even, after the first three months, their clothing, so that their parents or guardians will have nothing to pay until the end of their training and their ordination as priests. They will even spend holiday times in the house, again free of any charge.

To be admitted to the minor seminary, the children must be neither less than twelve years old nor more than eighteen. They must have an acceptable level of French sufficient to enable them to begin learning Latin when they enter the minor seminary in Algiers or in Tunis. The minor seminary in Lille will keep them for the time needed for their intellectual capacity and, more especially, their vocation to be assessed. This period will last between three months and one year. Thereafter, they will be sent to the minor seminaries in Algiers or in Tunis which are run by the same missionaries.

There, they will complete their education as happens normally in minor seminaries. With their basic, general education completed in this way, they will enter the noviciate of the missionaries, if, after all these trials, they still feel they have a missionary vocation; or they could be admitted to the major seminary if they simply have a vocation to become a secular priest. The only commitment their parents take is to desist from taking back their children before they have come of age. This commitment must be made in writing. For their part, the staff in charge of the seminary promise not to send the children away, except in cases when they do not show they have the necessary capability or do not show signs of having a religious vocation. After their ordination to the priesthood, the secular priests will be allowed to visit their families, but on condition that they will cover their travel expenses. Children will only be admitted at the request of and given favourable reports from their pastors and teachers who will have

already begun to train them.

Letter to Father Deguerry, Superior general (18th February 1882)

My dear Father,

Please find enclosed the report on Equatorial Africa for the Holy Childhood. Sign this, along with the accompanying chart, and send it without further delay to the director of the Holy Childhood office. This is very urgent. This week, I received the deposit from the Propaganda Fidei. I send you the advice note which you must take to Mr Pavard, so that he will pay you the eight thousand francs to which you are entitled. I have no news from Tripoli concerning the Fathers' journey from Ghadamès. Father Jamet has only sent me a letter from Father Kermabon dated 23 December which arrived eight days ago. In this letter, Father Kermabon twice states that Father Richard and his companions are the martyrs of obedience. This I find very strange and quite inexplicable! So, they were ordered to set out whatever the conditions. Who gave them that order?

I beg you, please look immediately in the Council minutes for any mention of this departure for Ghât, right from the beginning, and send me a copy. All I can remember is the formal order given by me forbidding this, some eighteen months ago after the Flatters massacre, and some advice from the Council which was inclined to authorise a later departure, given the unfortunate and untimely pleading of the Fathers. If an order to set out were given, I wish to know from whom – and how anyone can say that the three Fathers are martyrs of obedience. These are statements which must be verified very closely, since they could ruin our Society making its superiors out to be heartless men devoid of wisdom

