



1889: Lavigerie gives a conference on anti-slavery in Genoa.

Letter to Father at Ouadhias (5th January 1874)

My dear Son,

The upsurge in applications you bring to my notice is very important, but you must act with great prudence. Above all, you must absolutely omit any religious propaganda. The Jesuit Fathers have been accused of distributing medals of Our Lady and Our Lord. If they have done so, they are desperately wrong. You and your confreres, I repeat, must abstain from taking a similar approach.

I agree with you, dear friend, that we need to build each post in stone; at least a little house. Now for that, you need to organise something and above all set yourselves up at Tizi-Ouzou. The only thing to prepare without delay is the stone, from both Beni-Arifs and Tagmount. No, my dear child, you must not leave Tagmount for now. We will teach the Kabyles what they need to do to expel us. Later, when we will be all over the place, we can withdraw without too much bother from a post, but not today. The less we succeed, the more we need to hold on. Now I would ask you to go immediately to Tagmount to settle affairs about the stone quarrying.

Farewell, my dear child, I bless you and your good confreres. Tell them I am very grateful about what they write to me as devoted and worthy. Recommend the observation of the Rule to them.

The Cardinal looking for seeds for the cultivation of good vegetables (5 January 1891)

Reverend Parish Priest,

I am writing to you in order to ask of you a service for the mission in the Sahara which I am setting up at this time, as you may have seen in some newspaper. It is very indiscrete of me to ask this service of you, but I count on your charity to render it. We would

like to cultivate asparagus, but above all we need seeds of choice for the seed-beds. The best in the country, which according to tradition give good promise of success, as you know better than I do, are to be found in Argenteuil, but there, like everywhere else, it is not possible to trust everyone. In order to have choice seeds for good sowing it is necessary to know personally the vendors and to obtain from them, because this undertaking is important and far away, the guarantee that they will only sell us a choice product and no mixture. I thought, Reverend Parish Priest, that enjoying as you do the confidence of all, it would be easy for you, either yourself or through a person of your choice, to obtain for my missionaries what they are looking for. This would be 500 grammes of seeds of the best and most beautiful asparagus of Argenteuil. It would be necessary to send this, by post, to my own address, Cardinal Lavigerie, Biskra (Algeria), in two separate packages, each of 250 grammes. With regard to payment, I would ask you to draw the money from my account or, if you prefer, to send me a telegram indicating the price and I shall send you immediately by post the amount together with your expenses.

This is a great liberty [that I am taking], but by way of excuse please note, my dear parish priest, that it comes from an old missionary little used, in his barbarous milieu, to worldly decorum. He will try to compensate by his poor prayers the trouble he is giving you and he will retain the lively gratitude with which he remains your most humble and obedient servant.

