



1878: The missionaries of Africa, except 3, sign a petition for the mission in Equatorial Africa. Fr. Charmetant delivers the petition to Pope Pius IX.

1889: Anti-slavery speech at St. Stephen's Basilica in Milan. 83 cardinals, archbishops, and bishops have publicly expressed their support for Lavigerie's anti-slavery campaign.

1890: Father Deguerry definitively leaves the Society of the Missionaries of Africa.

Letter to Father Toulotte (6th January 1883)

Dear Father,

As I have already told you, the Council of your Society has decided, because of the very great number of pilgrims and visitors who go to Saint Anne's, to adopt a measure for your house like the one adopted at Saint Louis of Carthage, namely, to attach to your community in the minor seminary a Father whose exclusive duties would be to welcome pilgrims.

It is Father Besson who has himself asked for this duty when he knew that the post was being created and he thinks that you will be doubly happy to welcome him. He has everything it takes to fulfil the delicate and important functions which he has been given: tact, perfect manners and intelligence. I shall not speak about his qualities as a missionary which you know as well as I do.

This new arrangement is sure to lead to some modifications in your current way of operating. If you are given a Father whose work is to be exclusively that of welcoming pilgrims, it is to enable you and your confreres in the minor seminary to devote yourselves exclusively to running the important task which has been assigned to you and to remove any excuse you might have, even a legitimate one, to turn away from that task and carry out other ministries.

In fact, I must not hide from you the fact that all the reports coming to me, directly or indirectly, from Jerusalem make me fear that the great comings and goings in your house and the need for you to move away from your work and your exercises, so as not to be lacking in your charitable duties or in the rules of propriety, might hinder the perfect regularity which must reign among you. Without this absolute regularity, without this perfect fidelity to all the rules, the

little ones as well as the big ones, you will never be able to bring about the good the Church expects of you.

Perhaps you might even end up eventually with scandals! Haven't some of these already occurred? For I can only attribute the sad tales of the past to failings in regularity and in community spirit. So I call upon you, dear Father, and I beg you to insist on this with your confreres, to benefit from the new sacrifice your Society is making for Saint Anne's by sending a Father whose special responsibility will be the work of relations with pilgrims, you must seize this opportunity and commit yourselves resolutely, completely, to the Rule.

The presence of a Father for the pilgrims might lead to some questions which it seems important to answer in advance in order to avoid any confusion: 1) The Father for pilgrims will not take any part in the running of the minor seminary; he can fulfil no function whatsoever, even temporarily, and he will therefore not appear in the ranking among the staff members. 2) He will, however, take part as a missionary in all the exercises of the Rule and he will simply have his place in the ranking of seniority; after the superior and the director of the minor seminary. 3) He alone will be responsible for welcoming all the pilgrims who come to Saint Anne's for any reason at all other than a matter concerning the minor seminary. It will be forbidden for the Brothers to inform any person other than him of the arrival of pilgrims. 4) Besides his functions concerning the pilgrims, Father Besson will be responsible for all that concerns biblical archaeology of which he will have to undertake a serious study. He will seek to collect at Saint Anne's, as has been done at Saint Louis, items to include in a small museum of which he will be the director. 5) As a missionary, the Father in charge of pilgrims comes under the authority of the superior of Saint Anne's and he can change nothing in the house without his agreement; nor can he go out without telling the superior. 6) Lastly, he can also take his turn in saying the Mass at the Pater, if he is needed; but no more often than the other Fathers. He will not hear confessions or direct Sisters.

