



### Letter to Monsignor Livinhac (15 July 1888)

I come now to the questions you have put to me concerning the interpretation of some points of the Rule. The superior is free, while acting prudently, to prevent a missionary from going out, if he judges that the nature and the purpose of the journey could cause some serious inconvenience. Accordingly, it is not sufficient for a missionary simply to inform his superior that he is going out; it is necessary that the superior himself should not be opposed to the journey for motives of which he alone is the judge.

That once in a while a missionary could go alone, accompanied by a trustworthy neophyte, can be tolerated, but not as a general rule and not to other villages, a thousand times no. It would be better to give up the idea altogether. The missionaries, having taken the commitment to observe poverty, need the authorization of their superior for the expenses they incur, except for their own upkeep and for assistance to their families. So, if it is observed that they are spending their money and wasting it for other purposes they should be kindly corrected and, if necessary, an order forbidding this should be given them.

There is no doubt that on the missions spiritual reading should be done, even on those days when there is Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. This is necessary to nourish the interior life. When necessary, as in the instance that you put forward, in order to preserve the health of the missionaries, it is perfectly legitimate to have the orphans sweeping the huts. Permission to smoke, and even more so the use of spirits, was granted during the journey only if it was necessary for the health of the missionary, as protection against miasma and the consequent fever. This applies even more strictly in the posts where the danger is less great. So permission for the use of tobacco and of spirits is to be granted only when the missionary really in conscience feels the need to use them as a remedy. In this case, moreover, recourse to them should be taken individually and privately, as one does for medicine.

### To the Sisters, after the retreat and the General Chapter (14 September 1886)

You must find me harsh and severe, my dear Daughters; you would have liked me to pay you compliments; but what would be the point of that, if not to make you proud? I don't want you to say: 'How good our Father is! How gently he treats us! What I want is for you to become good nuns, people of duty, pious and edifying... Later, you will think of your old bishop who had only your good in mind when he scolded you; who judged you severely, but who, too, is coming closer and closer to his judgement... I am old now, I need your prayers, my children; say to God for me: 'My God, be merciful to our Father; he judged us harshly on earth, it is true; but it was for our good, for the salvation of our souls and for your greater glory.' And I, my children, will say to God on your behalf: 'My God, have mercy on these poor daughters whom you have entrusted to me for a time on this earth; keep them pure and holy, make them worthy of you, and do not allow any of them to be lacking, when we shall all one day be reunited at the foot of your throne.'

