1838: Death of Elisabeth Lavigerie, Lavigerie's paternal aunt.

1873: Beginning of the Provincial Council at Notre Dame d'Afrique in Algiers. It lasts until June 8.

1881: Massacre of Deniaud, Augier and Brother Philippe Hoop in the post of Rumonge (in Urundi)

Letter to the parents of the missionaries murdered in the Sahara (4th May 1876)

Once the Te Deum was over, all of them swore to sacrifice themselves to a land that had soaked up the blood of their brothers; all of them asked to follow them into the fight. If the door were to be closed on one side, they would look for another one. They would not stop at all, until they had penetrated to the heart of this empire of death. It would no longer simply be the expression of the Doctor of Carthage, 'Blood of martyrs, seed of Christians'; the blood of your sons from then on was visibly the inexhaustible source of the African apostolate!

I hope that these elevated thoughts console and strengthen you. May faith, taking you on its wings, lift you above the feelings and failings of nature. Doubtless, they suffered and died. However, they have washed in their blood their venial faults that could still cling to their souls. Today, by their prayers, they obtain mercy for us. In addition, what is the life they have lost worth? Would it be peace and unalloyed happiness? It has to end. This is enough to demonstrate its vanity. Who could have guaranteed a single day extra to your sons, if they had lost the glory of martyrdom? If they had lived, what would their lives have been worth? In this world, there is raging and senseless hatred against the truth, even against God. Evildoers fabricate fiery plots. There is heedlessness, the comprehensive failings of the good, mud that rises and suffocates, as well as chasms that open up ahead. Do all these events lead us to hold in high esteem and regret this world? Are we not rather coming close to the times proclaimed by the Master, when the living would envy the dead?

However, you need to weep for yourselves, because you will see them no more, these sons that were to console and support your old age! It is true, you will no longer see them here below; you will no longer see their gentle and steady eyes, their quiet smile; you will no longer hear their rich voices; you will no longer hear these strong and pure hearts beating. Nevertheless, one day, in the not-too-distant future, you will meet them again, triumphant and shining with an eternal glow, carrying in their hands the palm of victory.

Even when they fell under the blows of their executioners, with the divine joy of forgiving them and dying for them, the glorious band of martyrs, their predecessors and models, prepared the crown they have now received. In company with the angelic host, today they sing their joy in the presence of the supreme King for whom they have given their all. They stand beside Stephen, the first of all the martyrs, just as they are the first martyrs of this new Mission. They take their places beside Paul who recalls for them what they have so well experienced themselves, 'a short spell of suffering is rewarded by a glory and happiness without end.' This is how we see them, from now on, in mind and heart, and nothing can ever take them from us anymore.

Now, dear mothers, whose hearts have been cruelly pierced by the sword because your love is deeper and more tender, remember the mother in the Maccabees, exhorting her sons to martyrdom, promising them victory. God did not wish you to exhort your sons to wage war; he did it for you invisibly. Nonetheless, your faith will enable you to apply to yourselves these touching and sublime references that our Sacred Scriptures safeguard. Your faith will enable you to understand and sample the joy of your sons as well as your own, holy mothers of these martyrs.

I must conclude and yet I would rather continue to speak to you, as I feel that these lines, which come to you from the land where they died for God and from a heart that loved them, will be balm to your grieving. However, God will make up for my powerlessness and give you, in his goodness, the only consolations that endure forever.