



**1870:** Lavigerie gathered all the missionaries at Maison-Carrée and established Father Finateu as superior of the community. The novitiate of the Missionaries of Africa is established in Maison-Carrée. The novitiate of the Agricultural Brothers also moved to Maison-Carrée. Maison-Carrée became the Mother House, with Fr. Finateu as Superior. The Arab junior seminary left the episcopal residence to settle in Kouba.

**1874:** The retreat of 8 full days, in complete silence, was practiced for the first time, from Thursday evening 15 to Friday evening 23 October, and prescribed for the future as an invariable law.

### Notes for the 1877 Retreat

3rd Conference: Duties of Missionaries towards Superiors

If we need to have charity for our confreres, we also need to have it for our Superiors, as well as a duty of respect. The role of superior is a burden, a point of service. When someone becomes a Superior, he becomes a target, the focal point of all those in his charge who judge, criticise his whole life and all his actions. This should not be. Let us beware of blaming our Superiors; Superiors hold their standing from God; we must never criticise, since ordinarily we do not know the motives that push them to act. Those in his charge do not see the reasons that oblige a Superior to take a given step; these reasons he cannot disclose most of the time.

On the contrary, let us try to make the fulfilling of their duties pleasant. They are servants, the slaves of others; let us not sadden them by our insubordination or lack of respect. Let us carefully avoid anything that could lower the esteem that others have for them. We must also respect minor Superiors as well as Major Superiors.

4th Conference: Zeal for non-believers

In our relations with non-believers, we must be filled with supernatural love towards them. We must love them as Our Lord loved his Apostles; we must be prepared to die for them, just as Jesus Christ dies for his Apostles. We need to love them, not on account of their customs or the warmth we feel for them but

because they have a soul to save, a soul that Jesus Christ redeemed by his blood. Without this, our zeal would only exist in our imaginations; otherwise, it will not endure, it will not be consistent and discouragement, the worst of temptations, will take us over.

In addition, our zeal must be teachable. We must not function on mission in our own way but follow the line of conduct indicated by our Superiors; we must follow step by step in the way marked out for us. Avoid imprudent undertakings that would compromise everything. We have to deal with a distinct people here. For now, we are preparing the future. We must be foundations and foundations should not appear. It is of little importance if the good we do is unnoticeable. We are building foundations that must support a substantial edifice.

Nevertheless, in the mission posts where we are, it could seem we are doing nothing, that the mission is not working, but we must not be discouraged. It is a temptation. We do not see the whole picture. Our Lord was able to convert the whole world, if he had wanted to. However, he only converted a few people and leaves the task of conversion to his Apostles. We would like to lay down our lives for the salvation of the Arabs. Let us therefore put up with their annoyances with patience; let us put ourselves out for them; let us preach by example, according to the advice Saint Peter gave to the converted wives in relation to their unfaithful husbands.

Likewise, *wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives when they see your respectful and pure conduct.* Let our zeal therefore be supernatural, docile, and constant.

