



1877: 4 novice Brothers enter the novitiate of the Missionaries of Africa in Maison-Carrée. The novitiate of the Agricultural Brothers was abolished. Of the novices Agricultural Brothers who remained, some were sent to St Laurent d'Olt to continue their studies, and others were placed in the vicinity of Algiers.

Notes for the 1877 Retreat

5th Conference: Zeal for non-believers (continued)

Our zeal for the non-believers must be supernatural in order to be constant. This is not enough. It must be all-consuming, especially in a mission like ours; it must be inflamed for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

A Society has just been founded in Belgium with the mission of bringing modern civilisation to the African continent, leaving faith aside. The Society is formed of freethinkers, freemasons and Protestants; they have banned the cross. It is a danger that threatens the Mission. Let us not be ashamed of arriving after these freemasons, of letting ourselves be overtaken by them. They do this for money, and should Catholics just remain bystanders? Should the Missionaries be idle?

What ought we to do as Catholic Missionaries for heaven, for God? We need to be ready to go anywhere we are sent not as tourists, but as apostles. We ought not to be Missionaries for the sake of liking it, but from the heart. Our Lord calls workers, working for God. For this, we need an all-consuming zeal, a supernatural zeal. If it is not supernatural, we would be travellers, amateurs or hunters. By exercising charity through the care of the sick, let us avoid becoming doctors or pharmacists; let us not try to be skilled practitioners. Through our charity and good example, we should have people say of us that we are men of God, not something else.

In the spirit of our Mission, let us always receive sick Arabs with kindness, just as we would re-

ceive Our Lord himself. Let us apply ourselves to rendering the service they ask of us; however, let them be aware that it is not by profession that we provide treatment for them; beware of having them call us doctors. We are not doctors, but men of prayer, servants of God. So that our charity may produce fruit, we need to see Our Lord himself in the person of the sick we care for and that our charity and patience impresses them. With the children that we could have in class, we must show great level-headedness. Although for them, goodness is not tangible, we must consider ourselves gratified to beat down prejudices they could have towards us; later, once they are parents, they will see, effortlessly, their children brought up in the religion of Jesus Christ.

Let us avoid giving the impression to Muslims that we are adopting part of their religion; this would be a regrettable accommodating attitude. For individuals, let us be tolerant and charitable, but for Islam let us not be so; error has no rights; their religion is false from all points of view. Consequently, it is not to be put on the same footing as Christianity on the pretext of winning over the good graces of the unbelievers; this would be apostasy. Although we may be able to meet individuals of good faith, let us never give way to lax subservience. There could be material apostasy. It is our duty to profess our faith openly as often as the opportunity arises. We are not allowed to say, 'God is God', etc., because Muslims exclude the Holy Trinity!

