

1866



2016



**Bonté**

Congregation of Our Lady of the Cenacle



# Goodness

What a wonderful coincidence of dates, when, during this year, 2016, we celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the text on *Goodness* of our Foundress St. Thérèse Couderc, the 30th General Chapter of the Congregation and the *Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy*.

This vision of the *Goodness* of God, that Mother Thérèse had at a time when, the community in Montpellier, the Cenacle house in Paris and the European political and ecclesial situations, were all in the midst of great difficulties, invites us to a new way of seeing the *Goodness* of God in our daily lives, the Church and the world today.

My sincerest gratitude to Mr. Wandrille, the Archivist of the Generalate, for the research he has done to illuminate the context in which Mother Thérèse wrote her letter (Montpellier 10 August 1866), thus giving a rich background to this very precious spiritual text.

As we continue to reflect and pray, through the intercession of Mother Thérèse, on her *Vision of Goodness*, may the *Source of all Goodness* enlighten and deepen our Faith amidst of the turbulence of our world today and the transformations happening in her/our Congregation.

*God is Good, God is more than Good, God is Goodness*

Sister Patricia Byrne  
Superior General

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# Introduction

The text of Goodness is a writing of St. Thérèse Couderc, Foundress of the Sisters of the Cenacle. In the letter dated 10 August 1866, she describes to the Superior General of the Congregation, a mystical experience she lived: through the vision of the word Goodness she understands the scope of the Goodness of God.

This text is familiar to everyone that lives the spirituality of the Congregation. However, it is inserted in a letter whose content is less understandable than 150 years ago.

The organization of this letter is faithful to the practice of Mother Therese. It first gives news of her community of Montpellier before confiding her spiritual life. In the first part, the concerns of Mother Thérèse, the news that she gives and receives, that which considers useful to report to Mother de Laroche-négly, provide the framework within which she wrote the letter. Knowing all these parameters gives a better appreciation of the strength of the message of Goodness in order to evaluate differently its relevance for our everyday life.

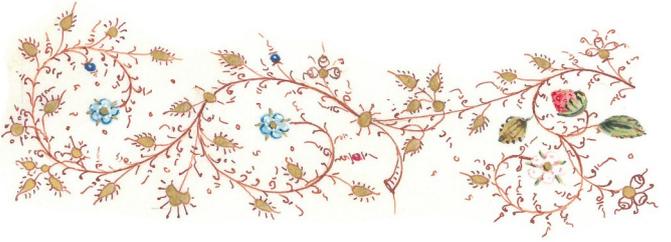
This booklet proposes some perspectives to situate the letter in its context. In the first part, the text of the letter is accompanied by a reading guide to illuminate the different points raised by Mother Thérèse on 10 August 1866. The second part seeks to place them in a wider chronology, in the political history, in the life of the Church, the Congregation and Mother Thérèse.

This booklet will have served its purpose if it allows each Sister and each Cenacle Family member to read the text of Goodness from a renewed perspective.

Wandrille de Floris, Archivist of the Generalate

# Guide to reading the letter

## Text of the letter



### Note on the transcript of the text

This transcript is taken from the *Anthology of Congregation Documents*. The spelling of the name of Father Fessard has been changed. To remain faithful to the original text "these" was retained – identified by an asterisk (\*).



Montpellier, August 10, 1866

**My very Reverend Mother,**

The letter was addressed to Mother de Laroche ngly who was Superior General from 1852 to 1877.

### 1. Mother de Laroche ngly

*She was 62 years in 1866.*

Mother de Laroche ngly was on Retreat from 4 to 13 August. During this time of quiet she did not read her mail.

As you come out of retreat you will have to read, I am sure, news of all your children whom you left for some days to speak to our good Master, but whom you did not forget. On our part, we carefully accompanied you in your dear solitude and it seems to me that we have never perhaps been so united to you in heart and soul,

all will tell you this, I do not doubt; as for what concerns myself, Our Lord knows how often I besought Him to be your light, your wisdom and your strength to bear all the weight of the work which He has confided to your care and to which you give yourself with so much love and generosity. I hope that after the labors and sufferings there will also be some consolations. It would be a great good for you, my Reverend Mother, and for us all, if what we have been told lately is true, that the architects of Paris have changed their plan and that we no longer need to be concerned about our dear house of the rue du

Read "The modernization of Paris threatened the house of the Congregation" in Readers Guide p. 10

Regard. For it would not be easy to transfer that elsewhere. Let us hope that God will stretch forth His hand and that we shall be heard. The little southern foundation had fears of the same kind, now it is peaceful in that regard but God is subjecting it to other trials

Read "The apostolate and difficulties of Montpellier house" in Readers Guide p. 11

not less painful: not having retreatants is a very great one and one that keeps it in a suffering much felt by us all. This means, my very Reverend Mother, that our retreat of the 3rd is not large. On the

day set for the opening, not a single person came; we had taken a great deal of trouble to prepare everything. The preacher was engaged: he was a Father who had just arrived at the residence and he was very eager to preach the retreat but there was no one to listen.

# of 10 August 1866

Title given to the Superior of the house, in this case Mother Félicie Chartier, 30 years, Superior of Montpellier from 1865 to 1867 .

**Our Mother** explained matters to him as best she could and he seemed to understand that it was not easy to gather together worldly people in large numbers on a given day. But imagine our humiliation! Personally I had a very heavy heart and wondered if it were a trial or a chastisement, but I gave myself this response: that whether it be one or the other, we should accept it with the same submission to the will of God who knows better than we do what is useful and necessary for us, and who permits and orders all things for our greatest good. Thereupon I said my *Laudate* in thanksgiving, humbling myself all the while and asking His pardon for my sins, which have possibly put an obstacle in the way of the good the house might have done.

Our ten retreatants finished their retreat this morning, it is **Mother de Echeverria** who gave it to them; **Mother Caroline** read in the refectory as though they had been numerous. They seemed satisfied and this consoled us somewhat: we would be consoled very quickly at not having general retreats if we had any private ones; but it is only God who can send us these; though we ask Him for them by prayer, we must wait patiently for the time appointed by Providence: if it be His work, He will make it prosper in spite of obstacles.

In the midst of all our anguish of heart, we record one little consolation on the feast of the Assumption: it was **the baptism and the first Communion of a poor Savoyard boy** who, having spent his life traveling around the world, did not even know how to make the sign of the cross; I was appointed to take charge of his instruction and was very happy to do so. This poor boy (he is 16 years old) went at it with such good will that he was able to learn the essential in order to be admitted to First Communion during the two months that he came here regularly. He was baptized conditionally since we were not sure whether he had been. One of **our Christian mothers** offered to be his godmother and has taken him under her protection. So he is no longer an abandoned child. **Father de Coma** also works with him. He is a truly interesting boy.

We have had **Madame de Mercier** with us for a few days, she left us Tuesday, the day on which her children were to arrive from Paris, she always shows us much kindness and affection. She is a crucified soul who bears her cross with much patience and generosity.

We have a summer such as I have never seen since I have been here, no great heat but almost a continual spring, hence healths are not too bad. **Mother Petit** is



**Mother Elisabeth de Echeverria, 52 years**

**Mother Caroline de Saint-Privat, 42 years**

She was called by her first name to distinguish her from her sisters Sophie and Anaïs.

**Examples of the apostolate in the Montpellier house**

**Jesuit priest in Montpellier, 44 years**

**Madame de Mercier was someone from Montpellier for whose conversion the entire community had prayed and who became a Catholic in 1864<sup>1</sup>.**



**2. Mother Pauline Petit. She was 33 years old in 1866. In Montpellier, she was councilor and admonitrix (1865-1867) and treasurer (1866-1867) .**

**Reference** : 1. Annual Report of the Montpellier House, 1864 .

as well as when you were here; **Mother de Roubin, Mother Cécile de Roubin, 35 years**

**This was Mother Louise de Boussairrolles, 42 years**

**For more details read "The apostolate and the difficulties of Montpellier house" in Readers Guide p. 11**

while always feeble, is a little better lately. And **our invalid in spirit and imagination** is just the same. This week we had two or three tolerable days which we paid for by three weeks' silence and withdrawal. She has two confessors. First she falls out with the one, then with the other, because she will never give in. All the means taken up to now to moderate her character a little have failed and we can

expect nothing except for a miracle. The Good God will work one when He wishes or rather when we have merited it and asked for it in the right way. While waiting we must carry the cross He has given us, for it is truly one which weighs down everyone in community, but most heavily yet on the Superior who has more contacts with her. Happily, Our Mother plays her role very generously and is not afraid of her, then too, the Good God is there to help her, this is evident.

**Father Pitron** has been absent for three weeks, he had two retreats to give in the neighborhood of Toulouse. This morning Mass was said by **Father Fessard**, who has just returned from China, extremely happy at the success of this long and painful journey; he also gave us a conference in which he told us many edifying stories about his dear mission.

**Father Léopold Pitron, 65 years, Superior of the Jesuits in Montpellier**

**Father Fessard SJ. 44 yrs**

**The Countess Rampon<sup>1</sup> lived in the Ardèche region. She was a friend of the La Louvesc community and knew Fr. Pascaline who was the Superior of the Jesuit residence in La Louvesc.**

We also recently saw **Madame Rampon** who came from the Waters where she had been cured she said, but the Count continues to suffer. This good lady gave us many details of the illness and holy death of **Father Pascaline** and all that we have

heard about him proves him to have been a martyr of his charity and his zeal, it is this which makes saints. I am covered with confusion when I meditate upon their lives and I never do anything to imitate them. **I dare not say anything of myself, my very Reverend Mother,**

**Read "The blossoming of Mother Thérèse's spiritual life in Montpellier" in Reader's guide p. 12**

**except that the good God continues to spoil me a little by making me taste the happiness of His service, although I do not merit it, but happily He does not consider our merits in order to give us His graces but solely His great mercy.**



Text on Goodness

I had, **a few days ago**, an insight which consoled me very much. It was during my thanksgiving, when I was making a few reflections upon the goodness of God, and how should one not

**This experience is dated 5 or 6 August<sup>3</sup>.**

think of this at such a time, of that infinite goodness, uncreated goodness, the source of all goodness! And without this there would be no goodness whatsoever, whether in man or in other creatures. I was extremely touched by these reflections when I saw written as in letters of gold this word *Goodness*, which I repeated for a long time with an indescribable sweetness. I beheld it, I say, written upon all creatures, animate and inanimate, rational or not, all bore this name of goodness, I saw it even upon the chair that served as a prie-dieu. I understood then that all that these creatures have of good and all the services and assistance that we receive from each of them is a benefit which we owe to the goodness of our God who has communicated to them something of His infinite goodness so that we may meet it

in everything and everywhere. Yet all that I am here describing is nothing; if I could but tell you something of what I experienced in that moment, what a joy it would be, but it is impossible to describe it: that which is divine cannot be described. Only I am no longer surprised that the saints were enraptured at the sight of the goodness of which so many souls know so little; this impression stayed with me for several days, during which I could find no pleasure in anything save only in what I had seen and experienced. Please, my very Reverend Mother, thank this divine Goodness for me and beg Him that I may no longer be so unworthy, for I find myself no better.



3. Mother Dambuent.

Pardon me for having written at such length, do not feel obliged to write to me nor ask anyone else to do so, you have other things to occupy you. I was distressed to hear that our **Mother Dambuent** is ill, please tell her, I beg you, how much we should like to take care of her here for two months so that she might recover a little of the strength which would dominate the fever, let her take a little care of herself!

**Mother Stéphanie Dambuent, 44 years in 1866 ; she was Assistant General from 1862 to 1882.**

And you too, my very Reverend Mother, do accept the care your health requires and remember that you are still necessary to your children. **You will have a large number taking the habit on the day of the Assumption**, we are very glad about it and shall be very much united to the Paris house on that day to felicitate its good Mother and to thank Our Lord for those who are putting on His livery. Those we know have the right to a special remembrance. Bless me and believe me ever with profound respect, my very Reverend Mother, your very dutiful child.

**15 August 1866, 5 Sisters took the habit<sup>3</sup> in the Paris house which was also the Novitiate house.**

Thérèse

P.S. My affectionate respect, I beg you, to those to whom it is due and a very cordial remembrance to all without forgetting **Mother Mistress** and her much loved flock.



4. Mother Marie-Aimée

**Mother Marie-Aimée Lautier, 31 years in 1866. She was Novice Directress from 1864 to 1871.**

**References : 2.** The Rampon family is of the nobility of the Empire, originally from the Ardèche region. The husband of the Countess, Joachim Rampon (1805-1883), was a deputy of the Ardèche and he had other political positions in the Department. Then he became a Senator. [Natalie Petiteau, « Les lignages de la noblesse d'Empire entre partis et pouvoirs locaux au XIXe siècle », *Rives nord-méditerranéennes*, 1 (1998) [online] URL : <http://rives.revues.org/144> ; « Joachim Rampon », in A. Robert et G. (dir.), *Dictionnaire des parlementaires français depuis le 1er mai 1789 jusqu'au 1er mai 1889*, éd. Edgar Bourloton, 1889-1891 [online] URL : <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb31224546x>].

**3.** Cf. *Mother Thérèse in the Framework of Her Daily Life*.

**4.** Three took the habit as Choir Sisters: Madeleine de Chessel (born in 1841, left in 1882), Brigitte Lemonnier (1843-1923), and Béatrix de Montaigu (1838-1913) ; and two took the habit as Coadjutor Sisters: Eugénie Billet (1836-1922) and Marie Coulet called Sr Elisabeth (who, it seems, left without pronouncing vows).

# The main themes addressed by Mother

## The modernization of Paris threatened the house of the Congregation

The house of Rue du Regard that Mother Thérèse talked about was the house that Mother Contenet bought in Paris in 1850. Three groups of Sisters lived in this house: the Superior General (Mother de Larocheégly) and the Sisters of the Generalate, the Novitiate, and the Sisters engaged in the apostolate (of retreats etc.). Now, at that time, there was great work to embellish and modernize the city of Paris and to adapt to the development of its population and the traffic: the management of sewage, of water supply, railway stations, and the creation of new streets ... One of the streets to be created was Rue de Rennes. At the beginning of 1866, it was anticipated that the project for the new street would pass through the location of the house and hence, result in its demolition. When Mother Thérèse wrote on 10 August 1866, it was said that the threat was over. The Congregation was able to stay in the house. It was a relief. Now two streets were to pass through part of the garden.

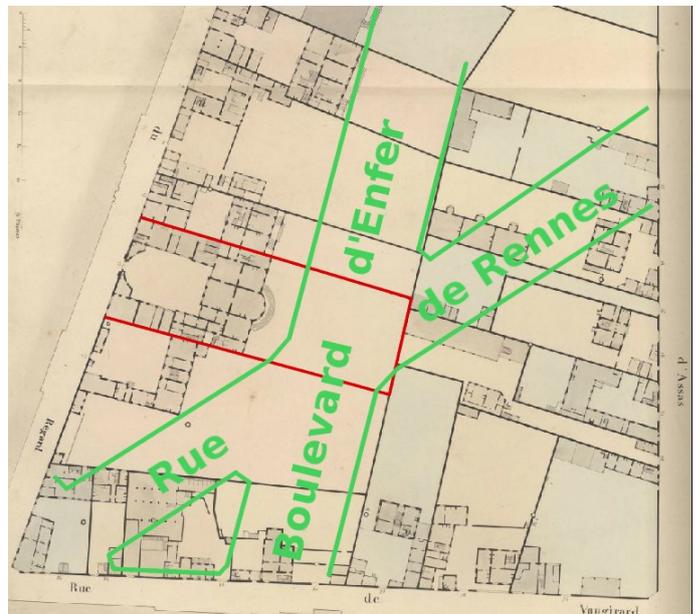
*... The little southern foundation had fears of the same kind, now it is peaceful in that regard ...*

During the same period, other cities were doing the same work of modernization. Mother Thérèse reminded Mother de Larocheégly that the Montpellier house had been threatened also. In fact, throughout 1863, the construction project for a train station foresaw the demolition of the house. Finally, after a year of fear, in February 1864 the station was relocated in the final project, so the house was spared<sup>5</sup>.

*... if what we have been told lately is true, that the architects of Paris have changed their plan and that we no longer need to be concerned about our dear house of the rue du Regard ...*



5. Sisters in the garden of the Paris house, Rue du Regard in 1867 before the works.

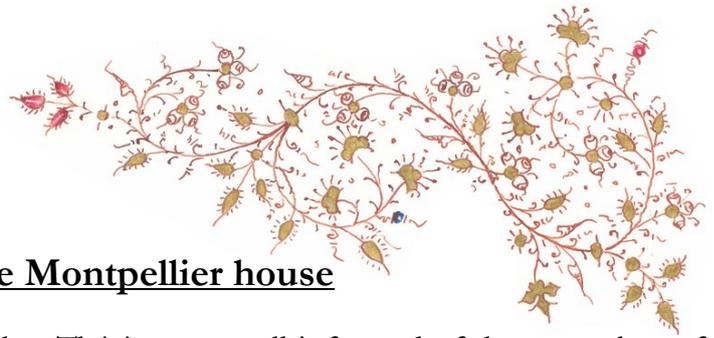


6. Diagram showing the layout of Rue de Rennes and Boulevard d'Enfer in the vicinity of the house.

In red, the property of the Congregation. In green, the layout of future streets.

**References** : 5. Montpellier House Journal, 8 and 13 February, 27 April, 30 September, 30 October and 25 November 1863, and 18 February 1864. Letter of Mother Thérèse to Mother Chartier, 21 May 1863: "Here we are continually threatened with eviction through human manoeuvring".

# Thérèse



## The apostolate and the difficulties of the Montpellier house

As Assistant of the Superior of the house, Mother Thérèse was well informed of the apostolate of the Montpellier community and its difficulties. She shared regularly about these with Mother de Laroche-négly, the Superior General. This, she did with simplicity in the first part of the letter.

### The apostolic activity in the house

*... our Christian mothers ...*

The house in Montpellier had diverse apostolic activities. The Sisters welcomed and animated the retreats. They also organized meetings for women's groups, such as the group of women teachers or the group of Christian Mothers. Finally, they prepared some people for Baptism and First Communion.

Hence, Father de Coma entrusted to the community a young boy that he could not prepare himself to First Communion. Mother Thérèse was responsible for this preparation. He was a young boy from Savoie named Pierre<sup>6</sup>. As it was not known if he had been baptized, he was baptized "conditionally" on 11 August 1866 before making his First Communion on the day of the Assumption<sup>7</sup>. His Godmother was Madame Pujol, a lady who was part of the Christian Mothers group.

*... the baptism and the first Communion of a poor Savoyard boy ...*

### The problems of the house

*... not having retreatants is a very great one ...*

However, the Sisters suffered from not having a lot of retreatants. The activity of the house had begun well, but it had not continued to develop as hoped. The Sisters simply said that the Catholics of Montpellier were not attracted to the retreats. This made the financial situation difficult.

Another problem for the community was the fact that many Sisters had fragile health, like Mother Thérèse, Mother Petit and Mother de Roubin. The doctor came frequently to see the Sisters when they were sick. In these moments, they were not able to help in the house, thus making the apostolate more difficult.

*... hence healths are not too bad ...*

### The difficulties with one Sister

*...our invalid in spirit and imagination ...*

Above all, there was a Sister who created problems, Mother Louise de Boussairolles. She was not sure of her vocation. She alternated between periods of calm during which she helped in the house, and periods of bad humour; sometimes she locked herself in her room for days or even weeks. She also asked to leave the Congregation. Her principal confessor was Fr. Pitron, but because of her bad humour she sometimes got angry with him and confessed to another priest.



7. General View of Montpellier

**References :** 6. Mother Thérèse did not fail to emphasize the origins of the boy. Indeed, the Savoie had recently become part of France (1860) during the unification of Italy. The people from Savoie had always emigrated to the South East of France . [Gaston Letonnelier, « L'émigration des Savoyards », *Revue de géographie alpine*, 1920, volume 8, numéro 4, p. 541-584 [online : [http://www.persee.fr/doc/rga\\_0035-1121\\_1920\\_num\\_8\\_4\\_2809](http://www.persee.fr/doc/rga_0035-1121_1920_num_8_4_2809)]. 7. Montpellier House Journal, 14-15 May, 11-12 and 15 August 1866.

It was not possible to allow her to make her final vows in these conditions. So in October 1866 she was asked to return to her family. This decision was taken very badly by Louise and in particular by her father, who was the greatest benefactor of the house and owned part of the garden. Therefore, he demanded money from the Congregation. He also spoke ill of the Community among the people and the clergy of Montpellier, which resulted in the diminished apostolic activity of the house. The situation becoming difficult, the Sisters closed the house in the Spring of 1867, a few months after the letter of Goodness.

## The blossoming of Mother Thérèse's spiritual life in Montpellier

The problems of the house did not prevent the spiritual life of Mother Thérèse from blossoming. It was in Montpellier that she lived the two important experiences recounted in the texts of *Se Livrer* (26 June 1864) and *Goodness* (10 August 1866).

At the end of her letters to Mother de Laroche­négly, Mother Thérèse always spoke of her spiritual life, even if humble, she was reluctant. However she had to do it with her Superior General. Her letters have enabled us to understand her spirituality of the time and to glimpse the graces she received.

While she was in Montpellier, Mother Thérèse often repeated the same themes. She did not feel worthy to face the Goodness and Mercy of God. She was attracted to God to whom she "surrendered herself." Finally, Mother Thérèse felt the presence of God, which consoled her and made her happy. In the letter of 10 August 1866, we find some of these themes.

*... the good God continues to spoil me a little by making me taste the happiness of His service, although I do not merit it, but happily He does not consider our merits in order to give us His graces but solely His great mercy...*

## Jesuit friends of the Congregation

*... Father Pitron...*

*... Father de Coma...*

Since late 1858, the Jesuit residence was very close to the house. This easily permitted the priests to become confessors and animators of the retreats. Two priests were particularly important and they helped a lot. The first was the Superior of the Jesuit residence, Father Leopold Pitron. The second was Father Gabriel Desjardins, who was the spiritual guide of the community. Father Louis de Coma was another priest in the Jesuit residence, who arrived in 1863, and left Montpellier at the end of 1866.

*... Father Fessard, who has just returned from China ...*

*... he also gave us a conference ...*

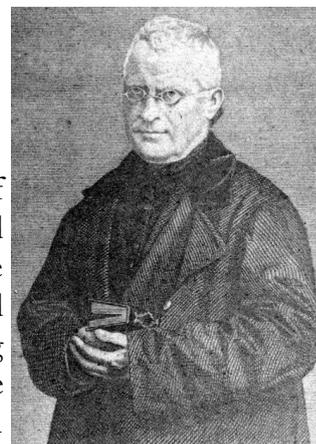


8. Father Fessard.  
© Jesuit Archives

In August 1866, Father Fessard was visiting Montpellier for a few days. He was Provincial of the Jesuits in Paris for almost ten years, and he returned from a six-month journey to China where he had the role of visitor of the Missions of Kiang-Nang and Tche-Li. On Friday 10, he celebrated Mass in the Chapel of the house at six o'clock in the morning, and then at ten o'clock, he gave a conference to the Sisters on the Jesuit mission in China, he continued the following day, in the afternoon. Sisters were keenly interested in his story<sup>8</sup>. Furthermore, having read the news of Mother Thérèse in her letter, the Sisters in Paris also asked him for a conference<sup>9</sup>.

... of the illness and holy death of Father Pascalin ...

On the 17 May 1866, the Montpellier community learned of the death of Father Etienne Pascalin. He was the Superior of the La Louvesc residence, and above all he was "for many years the protector, the devoted friend of our little Society that loses much in losing him"<sup>10</sup>. The same day, the Paris house heard the news. Mother de Larocheégly "is totally distressed and we spend a long time consoling her in a sorrow that we share with her"<sup>11</sup>. Mother de Larocheégly had indeed a great spiritual intimacy with Father Pascalin, whom he had considered as his spiritual daughter<sup>12</sup>.



9. Père Pascalin.

### Brief Biographies of the Priests quoted

**Father Léopold Pitron (1801-1885)** entered the *Company of Jesus* novitiate of Montrouge in November 1820. He was sent to Aix in 1836 as treasurer. In 1839, he was appointed the Superior of the Marseille residence. He was Superior of the Montpellier residence from 1859 to 1869.

**Father Gabriel Desjardins (1823-1899)** entered the Jesuit novitiate in Toulouse on 18 September 1843. He was ordained priest in the seminary of Aire, established in Dax, in 1851. He was subsequently sent to the Roman College to study Theology. In 1855, he became Professor of Philosophy at *collège Sainte-Marie* in Toulouse for a year. During his 36 years as a Professor, he taught Philosophy for two years to the scholastics of the *Society* in Vals; Dogmatic Theology in the same community for 14 years, and Canon Law at the Theology Faculty of the Catholic Institute of Toulouse for 20 years. From 1875 to 1877, he was involved in writing for *Etudes*. He resided in Montpellier from 1858 to 1867.

**Father Louis de Coma (1822-1911)** entered the Jesuit seminary of Saint-Acheul, in Amiens, on 18 October 1844. He taught Grammar and Humanities in Amiens and Poitiers. He resided in Montpellier from 1863 to 1866. He left the Society in 1879.

**Father Michel Fessard (1812-1893)** entered the novitiate in 1833. He was Provincial of Paris from 1857 to 1866. Then he held roles in Blois, Poitiers, Slough (England), and again in Poitiers.

**Father Etienne Pascalin (1804-1866)** entered the novitiate 13 August 1825 in the Province of Lyons. He was admitted to final vows on 8 February 1839. He dedicated himself mostly to the apostolic ministry. He lived in the La Louvesc residence from 1858, and was the Superior from 1863 until his death on 15 May 1866.

Sources : Jesuit Archives in France and H. Beylard, « Fessard (Michel) » in *Dictionnaire de biographie française*.

**Références** : 8. Journal de la maison de Montpellier, 9-13 août 1866. 9. Journal de la maison de Paris, 13, 22 et 23 août 1866. 10. Journal de la maison de Montpellier, 17 mai 1866 ; voir aussi au 19 mai. 11. Journal de la maison de Paris, 17 mai 1866 ; voir aussi au 13 mai. 12. Lettre de Mère Thérèse à Mère de Laroche., 17 mai 1866, in T.C.Q. p. 557 et la note de bas de page de Mère Saglio.

# General context of the letter

*To understand the text of Goodness and the elements given by Mother Thérèse at the beginning of her letter, it must be considered within the context of the wide-ranging period from 1850 to 1870.*

## The political background and

*Even if the Sisters lived a cloistered life where most of them did not go out, they were not ignorant of the political events in France and in the Church. They held in their prayer, in particular the misfortunes of Pope Pius IX.*

### 1848, “The Springtime of the Peoples”

In the XIX Century, France experienced several political regime changes since the Revolution of 1789. In 1848, a revolution in Paris replaced the Monarchy with a Republic. Then the revolutionary contagion spread all over Europe. The peoples demanded from the monarchies (Austria-Hungary, Italy, Germany)

more freedom and Constitutions. It was “the springtime of the peoples”.

In France, Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte was elected President of the Republic (10 December 1848). He was the nephew of the Emperor Napoleon I, and he did not delay in restoring the Empire (2 December 1852), becoming Napoleon III. His foreign policy in Italy would have an impact on the life of the Church.

In Rome, overwhelmed by the events, Pope Pius IX had to flee (24 November 1848), and the revolutionaries proclaimed the Roman Republic (February 1849). He returned 12 April 1850, after the French army had driven the revolutionaries out of Rome (July 1849).

### The Italian Unification and the Church State

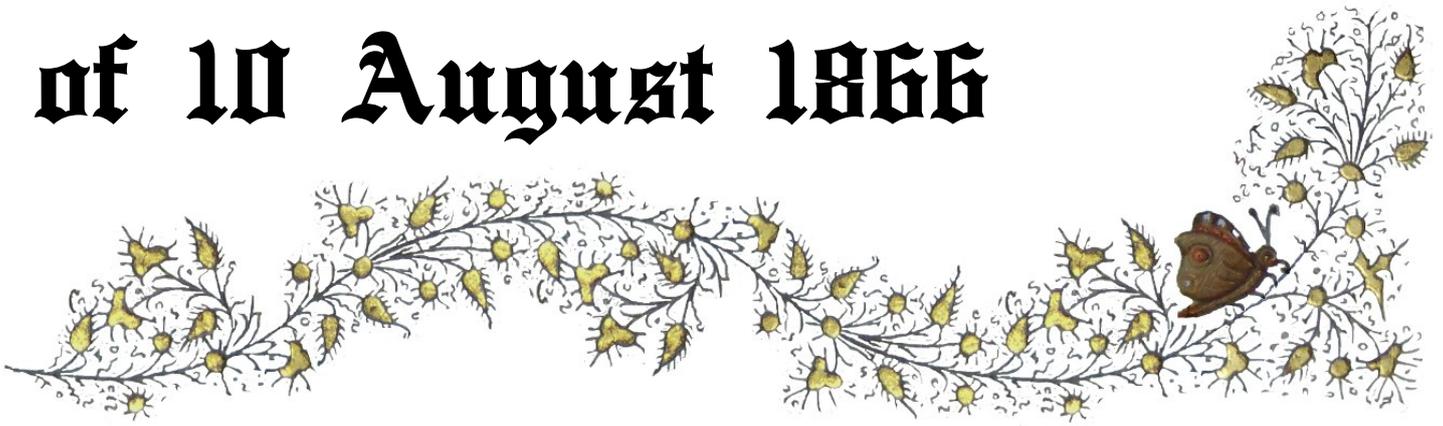
Italy was divided into several States. From 1848 a process of unification began, the *Risorgimento*. Napoleon III helped the Piedmontese in their attempt to unify Italy. However Napoleon III had not forgotten that the majority of the French were Catholics and so at that same he protected the Papacy. From 1849 to December 1866, French soldiers defended Rome, which was the capital of the Papal States, or States of the Church.

The Kingdom of Italy was born on 17 March 1861. The capital was Turin and then Florence (1865). Although, for the supporters of Italian unification the capital should have been Rome, which was already the capital of the Papal States reduced then to Lazio (the Region of Rome).



10. Map of Italy in 1848 .

# of 10 August 1866



## trials of Pius IX



11. Pius IX.

Since the origin of the Papal States in the VIII century, the Church was convinced that the spiritual independence of the Papacy depended on its temporal autonomy. Therefore, Pius IX did not accept the Italian unification that threatened his territory. Especially since the threat was real: Garibaldi, one of the principal leaders of the *Risorgimento*, tried twice to take Rome, in 1862 and in 1867. In response, Pius IX defended the temporal power which were necessary for the Holy See and condemned successively the attacks in the Encyclicals: *Qui Nuper* (1859), *Nullis Certe Verbis* (1860), in a part of *Quanta Cura* and its annex (*Syllabus of Errors*), and *Levate* (1867).

In September 1870 in France, the war with Prussia led to the fall of Napoleon III and the Republic was proclaimed. Rome was no longer protected by French soldiers, the Italian army entered the city. The First Vatican Council, which was held there for almost a year, was interrupted. Pius IX enclosed himself in the Vatican and considered himself as a prisoner. A political solution would not be found until 1929 by the creation of the Vatican City State (Lateran Treaty).

This long struggle for the role of Rome was called the "Roman question". It determined the life of the Church throughout the entire second half of the XIX Century.

### Pius IX and the French Catholics

Owing to the role of France, the French Catholics were very involved in the debate. The question of the temporal power of the Pope

divided Catholics, but those who defended it were in the majority. At the height of the threat, the Bishops asked for prayers in their Dioceses<sup>13</sup>.

Clergy and faithful shared the suffering of Pius IX. His misfortunes and his warm personality earned him a great sympathy which had never before been seen in the history of the Papacy. This was the beginning of an emotional attachment to the person of the Pope, a true devotion to the Papacy. Many faithful, especially after 1870, went on pilgrimage to Rome, and some brought back souvenirs of Pius IX that became relics.



12. Some souvenirs of Pius IX conserved in the Generalate Archives: skullcaps, a shoe and fragments of clothing.

Meanwhile, French Catholicism was becoming Romanised from the Middle of the XIX century: the Roman Liturgy was adopted in the Dioceses, the *ad limina* visits of the Bishops multiplied and Rome considered and approved the Rules of new Religious Congregations.

**References :** 13. In Montpellier: Pastoral Letter dated 1 November 1859, Pastoral Instruction dated 19 January 1860, and Pastoral Letters dated 10 November 1860, 29 January 1861 and 4 November 1861 [B. Horaist, *La dévotion au pape et les catholiques français sous le pontificat de Pie IX (1846-1878)*, d'après les archives de la Bibliothèque apostolique vaticane, Rome, collection de l'Ecole française de Rome, 1995, p. 23-24 and 34].

## Echoes in the Congregation

The trials of Pius IX and the vicissitudes of the Church did not leave the Congregation insensible, which, since the time of Father Terme, had a great affection for the Church and the Pope. Some examples are enough to demonstrate that the plight of the Papacy must have been very present in the minds and prayer of the Sisters.

Accordingly, in Montpellier, on 5 November 1859, “by order of his Lordship the Bishop, the Very Blessed Sacrament is exposed all day. It will be thus so for three days to pray for the Church, our Holy Father, the Pope, and the political and religious affairs of Italy”. On 24 May 1862, the reception of Holy Communion by the

community was for the three Mothers who made their final vows in Paris “and for the Holy Church whose tribulations are indeed at this moment the concern of her children of the Retreat”. On 14 May 1865, Father Superior of the residence came for a conference and “earnestly recommends us to join in the novena being made at this time” in a Church in Montpellier “for the needs of the Church”. Shortly after, a visiting lady who returned from Rome “recounts to us at recreation some interesting details on Our Holy Father, the Pope, whom she has had the joy of meeting twice, intimately, in a private audience”<sup>14</sup>.

At the end of the year, 1866, Mother de Laroche­négly had included a prayer intention for

# The expansion and consolidation of the

*In 1852, at the time of the death of Mother Contenet and the election of Mother de Laroche­négly (1804-1900) it could be considered that the foundation period of the Congregation is ending and the consolidation period is beginning. During the 25 years with Mother of Laroche­négly as Superior General (1852-1877), the organization of the Congregation is being structured, foreshadowing the aspects of its contemporary form.*

## A crisis in Paris enfeebled the Congregation

The beginning of the period when Mother Laroche­négly was Superior General was marked by the crisis around Mother Anaïs de Saint-Privat, in Paris. Already for some years, Mother Contenet mistrusted Mother Anaïs. Upset at not having been elected as her successor, Mother Anaïs acted like the superior general, supported by Father Fouillot, while Mother de Laroche­négly withdrew to Lyon. The crisis truly erupted in 1854 -1855.

If the dissidents had left in 1855<sup>15</sup>, Madame Anaïs continued for several more years to torment the Congregation, whose name and habit she claimed. It may be noted that in 1860, in relation to this matter, Mother de Laroche­négly asked for forty days of prayer to begin on the 30 November<sup>16</sup>.

It must be considered that this crisis was a moral test for which some time was needed to recover because it was a combination of bad example, mistrust on the part of the Jesuits, decline of the apostolate in Paris and bitterness towards Father Fouillot.

## A strengthening because of Bishop Guibert

In reaction to this crisis, the Congregation was strengthened through the decisive role of Bishop Guibert. It was he who had printed the 1844 Constitutions and Rules, which he had had approved.

Thus, all the houses were able to have the Constitutions, while Madame Anaïs had been claiming to be the guardian of the authentic Congregation. Also, under Bishop Guibert’s influence, the Novitiate returned to Paris (October 1855). To ensure the stability of vocations, the annual vows were replaced by a first profession made for five years.



13. Cardinal Guibert.

**Joseph Hippolyte Guibert** (1802-1886), O.M.I., ordained priest in 1825. Appointed Bishop of Viviers in 1841, he was consequently the Ecclesiastical Superior of the Congregation until his appointment to Tours in 1857, where he called the Congregation (to open a foundation). In 1871, he was Archbishop of Paris and undertook the construction of the Basilica called *du Vœu National*, which became *Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre*. It was he who asked the Congregation to open a foundation in Montmartre. Created Cardinal in 1873, he inaugurated the Catholic University of Paris two years later .

the Church in a letter to the Congregation (24 Dec.) to be read to all in the dining room:

[...] We are so much the children of the Holy Roman Church to not also take a special part in the ills that afflict it at this moment. So, I do not need to stimulate you to intensify the fervour to touch the Heart of God, and through generous sacrifices, to plead with Him to divert the ills that threaten his Vicar and his representative on earth, and in him and with him all true Christians. This year has been full of suffering for the Church, hard learnings for all, and yet it ends to make way for another year which will also rapidly pass: symbolic of our life that hastens towards Eternity. May this thought revive our faith, inspiring new resolutions, and may it awaken in our souls feelings of deep gratitude to

the Divine Goodness. [The Divine Goodness] has not ceased to surround us with her maternal care, and provided our small Society with all the graces and favors she needed. If painful trials are felt, accept them as the lessons of a Father full of Mercy; and, adoring the design of God, we ask Him earnestly, for each of us, a greater fidelity, a more complete dedication to His service [...].

Evoking the Goodness and Mercy of God, Mother de Laroche­né­g­ly recalled that the Congregation had also experienced in its history the trials, but also the graces .

**Reference : 14.** Montpellier House Journal, 20 June 1865.

## Congregation

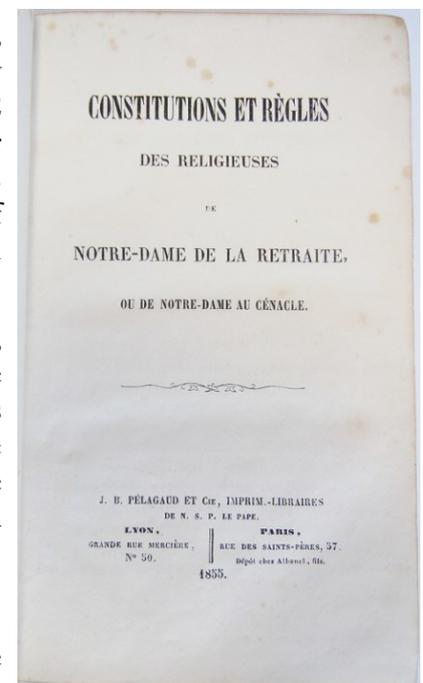


On the other hand, having felt the need to reunite the professed Sisters, the first General Chapter was held in November 1856, under the Presidency of Bishop Guibert. It was followed by other Chapters in 1862, 1867, 1872 and 1877. In 1856, the Rules were considered too long to be read four times a year, so an abridged version was requested. A Directory of Retreats was also to be written. In addition, the Mothers decided on the closure of the house of Tournon “that is unfit for the purpose of our vocation and whose maintenance is a costly burden on the Community”<sup>17</sup>.

It must also be noted that after the 1855 crisis, a number of elite women, who had a role in the future development of the Congregation, entered the Novitiate: Mothers Chartier, Bertier, de Grandry, de Gaudin, etc. It was also at this time that the Countess Migeon had her first sojourn in a house (1856), and on 21 November 1861, that she, who was still called Madame Marie, entered in Paris. She assumed responsibilities very quickly and then became the Very Reverend Mother Marie-Aimée.

### Pontifical Recognition

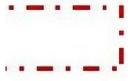
To consolidate the Congregation, Bishop Guibert also had the inspiration from the crisis of 1855, of revising the Constitutions to conform to Canon Law. Father Renault was charged to work on this. On the occasion of his death in 1860, Mother Thérèse described him then as “Father” and “Founder”<sup>18</sup> of the Congregation. Thus, the modified Constitutions were presented to the Pope by a friend of Bishop Guibert, Father Lavigerie. These steps resulted in a temporary authorization from the



**14. Constitutions and Rules of 1844-1855.**

**References : 15.** They were reintegrated in the following years, except for Madame Anaïs. **16.** Cf. *Mother Thérèse in the Framework of Her Daily Life*. **17.** Decree of the 1st General Chapter of the Society .

<u>FONDATIONS</u>	<u>CONSOLIDATION OF THE CONGREGATION</u>	<u>CHURCH</u>	<u>FRANCE</u>
1850 PARIS (15 rue du Regard)		9 Roman Republic, The flight of Pius IX (he returns in 1850)	Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte President
	1850	1	
1852 : † M. Contenet, election of M. de Larochehéglý		2	
1st Consecration of the Congregation to Our Lady of the Cenacle (OLC)		3	2 Dec. 1852 : EMPIRE
1854 : 1st celebration of the Feast of OLC		4	
1855 : printing of the Rules and Constitutions	Dogma of Immaculate Conception	1855	
1856 : 1st General Chapter	ANÀIS DE ST-PRIVAT CRISIS	6	Rome protected by the French soldiers
1857 : Mother-House in Paris		7	1848-1870 Italian unification
1858 Tournon closed		8	
1858 MONTPELLIER		9	Napoléon III supports the Italian unification in spite of the French Catholics' fear that the papacy loses its autonomy
	VICTIM OF HOLOCAUSTE	9	Qui Nuper



† *Father Renault*

1862 : General Chapter [2 Gen. Assistants]

1862 TOURS

1863 : Brief of Praise (Congregation of Pontifical Right)

1863 : organization of General Treasurer's Office and Secretary

1864 NANCY



14 Oct. 1864

1852-69 : Haussmann's urbanistic renovation of Paris

9 March 1953 : Decree of opening of Rue de Rennes  
28 July 1866 : Decree of prolongation of Rue de Rennes  
1867 : expropriation of the garden; novitiate transferred to Versailles

1867 **Montpellier closed**

1867 **VERSAILLES**

1867 : General Chapter [4 Gen. Assistants]

1874 **PARAY-LM** 1870 : Decree of Approbation

1860

30 August

1

1861 : proclamation of the Kingdom of Italy

**THE ROMAN QUESTION**

2

March on Rome

24 May 1862 in Montpellier, communion « for the Holy Church whose tribulations are indeed at this moment the concern of her children of the Retreat »

3

*Quanta Cura and Syllabus of Errors*

4

Letter of Mother de Larochenégly, 24 Dec. 1866

[...] We are so much the children of the Holy Roman Church to not also take a special part in the ills that afflict it at this moment [...] that threaten his Vicar and his representative on earth, and in him and with him all true Christians. [...] That this new year] awakens in our souls feelings of deep gratitude to the Divine Goodness. [...] If painful trials are felt, accept them as the lessons of a Father full of Mercy [...]

1865

6

**GOODNESS**

10 August 1866

† *Claude Couderc*

7

19 March

Rome attacked

8

9

**FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR**

**FIRST VATICAN COUNCIL**

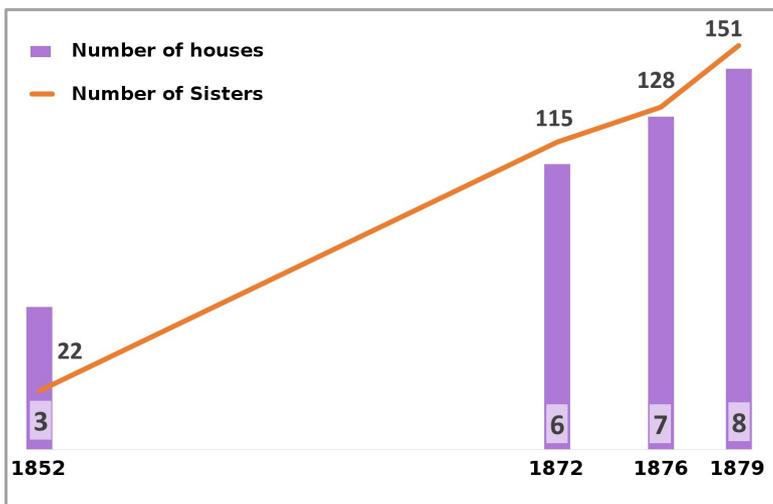
1870

Holy See (Brief of Praise, 1863) and then a definitive approval (Decree of 1870). The Congregation then passed from Diocesan Right to Pontifical Right. No longer under the authority of the Bishop of a Diocese, the Congregation acquired greater apostolic mobility.

**Charles Lavigerie** (1825-1892) : Bishop of Nancy in 1863; he called the Congregation there. Then, Archbishop of Alger and Carthage (1867-1892), he founded the Society of the Missionaries of Africa or White Fathers (1868) and in 1869 the Sisters of our Lady of Africa or White Sisters .

## Geographical and numerical Expansion

During the period when Mother de Laroche ngly was Superior General, the Congregation expanded geographically. It was in an ‘‘almost permanent state of foundation’’<sup>19</sup>. By opening a house in Lyon (1842) and then in Paris (1850), Mother Contenet had moved the Congregation from a Diocesan level to a National level. Mother de Laroche ngly expanded the Congregation in France. The Foundations evolved quickly: first Montpellier (1858), then Tours (1862), Nancy (1864) and Versailles (1867 when the Montpellier house closed). During the 1870s Paray-le-Monial (1873), and then Lille (1877). It was Mother Marie-Aim e who moved to the International level by announcing a foundation in Rome (8 December 1879).



This geographical expansion of the Congregation was enabled by the increased number of entrants to the Congregation. After the death of Mother Contenet, on the night of February 24 to 25, 1852, the Congregation had 22 professed in 3 houses<sup>20</sup>; in 1872 there were 115 in 6 houses; in 1876 there were 128 in 7 houses; in 1879 there were 151 (and 25 novices) in 8 houses<sup>21</sup>.

15. Evolution of the number of Sisters and houses from 1852 to 1879 .

## The establishment of an organized General Government

To address the needs of the expansion of the Congregation, the General Government was gradually organized. Already, in 1857, its place of residence was transferred to the Paris house, which became the Mother House. It was the intuition of Bishop Guibert that the Generalate would better serve the Congregation in this city rather than from La Louvesc. The Major Superior (that is to say, the Ecclesiastical Superior) of the Congregation was then the Bishop of Paris.

The council of the Superior General developed. Mother Ana s was appointed Assistant General by Mother Contenet and after her departure, Mother Ursula Payan was appointed to this function. In 1862, they were two Assistants and two Councillors<sup>22</sup>, then they were four Assistants (1867)<sup>23</sup>. To help the Sisters communicate in a confidential manner with them, the Admonitrix of each house received a stamp to seal the letters written by the Sisters.

With the growing number of houses the work of writing increased. It was necessary for example to hand copy each letter of the Superior General of the Congregation to be sent to all the houses. So, Mother de Laroche ngly appointed a Secretary General, Mother Pauline Ringard (1863)<sup>24</sup>. Then she was succeeded by Mothers Lucie de Beaupr e (1864-1871) and F elicie Chartier (1872-1875). The work of the Secretary General was also to gather the Reports on the apostolic activities of the houses and then to write a General Report on the



16. **Mother Caroline Ponchon de Saint Andr e** (1834-1915), Assistant General from 1867 to 1898 .

*1865 Comptes de la Maison de Montpellier*

Date.	Folio.		Doit.	Avoir.
3 Janvier	17	Pote remis	200 ..	
	17	Costumes religieux	180 ..	
2 Fevrier	17	Vêtements religieux	268 75	
15 Mars	18	Pote remis	568 50	
	25	Pote remis	280 ..	
20 Mai	20	Pote remis	100 ..	
	20	Pote remis	566 45	
15 Juin	20	Pote envoi	500 ..	
Juillet	21	Pote remis	600 ..	
Octobre	23	Pote remis	80 ..	
"	25	Vêtements religieux	71 05	
"	26	Pote remis	480 ..	
"	31	Pote envoi	500 ..	
Novembre	24	Stoffes pour vêtements religieux	936 50	
Décembre	25	Pote remis (réparations)	1500 ..	
"	28	Pote remis	861 ..	
			6896 25	

17. The General Fund Ledger, page from 1865 Montpellier house (General Treasurer's office) .

apostolic activities of the Congregation which was sent to each house. "This work, full of interest, is intended to strengthen our bonds by putting in common all the labors of the Society..."<sup>25</sup>. Consequently, even if each community knew the apostolic work of the other houses, the correspondence between the houses and the regular visits of Mother de Larothenégly and her Assistants allowed the Sisters to know and assure a community of their prayer, for example, for a successful retreat. The good done by the Congregation was considered in a global manner by the sisters as revealed in a letter from Mother Larothenégly to Mother Chartier, 26 August 1866: "The Pilgrimage and our retreats will be more numerous this year [in Louvesc]; it is a compensation for your little success in this moment, because everything is in common".

At the same time she established a General Secretariat, Mother de Larothenégly appointed a General Treasurer<sup>26</sup>, Mother Gabrielle de La Chapelle<sup>27</sup>, and in a letter to the Superiors she explained the function of the General Treasurer. All income of the houses and the Sisters had to be paid into the General Fund from which finances were then redistributed according to the needs of each house. Ledgers and quarterly accounting sheets of identical form were created for all the houses, and four times a year the local treasurers had to send the accounts of the houses to the General Treasurer who verified them<sup>28</sup>. When a house did not receive a sufficient amount of income from its apostolate the General Treasurer compensated for it<sup>29</sup>.

During these years we saw the birthing and structuring of a true Generalate in service of the mission of the Congregation.

**Références** : 18. "Not only does it lose its most faithful and most devoted friend [...], but its Father and its Founder. It seems to me that this title is due to him more than to any other since it is he who has conducted it to where it is. For if it is true that another shared with him the first thought of this work, it is he who had the inspiration, who understood it, and who accomplished it. One may say that when the Congregation was handed over to him nothing had been done." [Letter of Mother Thérèse to Mother de Larothenégly, 11 December 1860]. 19. Register of Letters and Ordinances (1863-1884), letter of Mother de Laroch., 8 Nov. 1864. 20. Catalogue of the Congregation, Vol. I.; La Louvesc -Tournon counted as one house. 21. Register of "Documents sent to Rome", 2D11. 22. The Assistants were Mothers Ursule Payan and Dambuent ; the councillors : Mothers Virginie Payan and Rouzeau. 23. Mothers S. Dambuent, C. Ponchon de Saint-André, G. de La Chapelle, C. de Grandry. 24. Register of Letters and Ordinances (1863-1884), 12 June 1863. 25. Journal of Montpellier, 1st and 8 Feb. 1864. 26. Register of Letters and Ordinances (1863-1884), 12 June 1863. 27. Mother Christine de Hennezel succeeded her after 1872. 28. Register of Letters and Ordinances (1863-1884), 7 July 1863. This organization complied with the Constitutions of 1844-1855, p.118-119 and 130. 29. Acts of the Chapter of 1867.

## The wavering deepening of the Cenacle identity

Father Fouillot who had devotion to Our Lady of the Cenacle introduced it in the title of the Congregation<sup>30</sup>. His attitude during the crisis of Paris and his support for Mother Anaïs probably restrained the enthusiasm in adopting some of his contributions, even if the Sisters were grateful to him for the role he played in the Congregation before the crisis.

Remember that we are children of the Cenacle, that this blessed name had been given to us to honor, by a special devotion of love and confidence, your maternity of graces, grant to us the first-fruits of those which are included in this mystery .

First Consecration of the Congregation to Our Lady of the Cenacle (1852) (extract)



Mother de Larochenégly accepted the legacy of this devotion which was fully developed under the impulse of Mother Marie-Aimée when she was Superior General.

On 25 March 1852, the Feast of the Annunciation, she dedicated the Congregation to Our Lady of the Cenacle for the first time. Each year, Our Lady of the Cenacle was celebrated in the houses. Then, at the General Chapter of 1856, “It was decided that a special stamp would be made for the use of the Congregation. This stamp will bear the image of Our Lady of the Cenacle with the inscription: Our Lady of the Retreat”<sup>31</sup>. Thus, the Congregation acquired a unique insignia, common to all the houses.

Nevertheless, even if this devotion was accepted, the Congregation in defining itself did

# The transformations of Paris and their

*During this period of expansion of the Congregation, when the houses multiplied, the communities shared their news, joys and sorrows. In 1866-1867, the property of Paris gave some anxiety .*

## The urban works of Haussmann in Paris

Fearing that the events of 1848 could be repeated , the office of the mayor was suppressed and it was the Prefect of the Department of the Seine who fulfilled the role. In 1853, Napoleon III, named Georges Eugène Haussman to hold the position. major work of Haussmann was going to be the transformation of Paris. In the middle of the XIX century, Paris still had narrow, chaotic and unsanitary streets. The Emperor wanted to make the capital a modern city where the circulation of traffic would be facilitated and a sewerage network (sewers, drinkable water) would improve sanitation. It was implicit that in creating wider and straight streets would also prevent the occurrence of a new insurrection, like that of 1848.

## The problematic location of the house

The Congregation was located in Paris since 1850. After hesitating to make a foundation here for fear of another riot, Mother Contenet bought the *la Guiche* mansion, built in the early XVIII

century, in the Luxembourg quarter, No.15 Rue du Regard. As in Lyon, almost ten years earlier, she resisted the pressure to buy another property. However in Paris, her discernment on the location of the foundation did not seem to be as good as it was for Lyon.

In 1840, the Paris-Versailles railway line was opened. The line was extended in 1848 to the Boulevard of Montparnasse, where a station was built. From 1846 there was an idea to link this station to the center of Paris, particularly to the Halles quarter in order to facilitate the movement of supplies within Paris itself. By the decree, dated 27 February 1848, the State decided to open a street up to the crossroads of Rue du Regard, Rue de Notre-Dame-des-Champs and Rue de Vaugirard. The route of the street passed about 100 meters from the house, and Mother Contenet could not ignore this. On 9 March 1853, the decree for opening Rue de Rennes was signed. The future street was named after the proposed destination of the railway line. Work was carried out the following year, while at the

Let us pray that all our houses may be so many Cenacles upon which the Spirit of God may rest in order to animate each one and to dispose it to accomplish, in all its perfection, the works entrusted to it, after that of its own sanctification which should always be first. Let us ardently desire the Holy Spirit, where the Spirit of God reigns, holiness reigns also.

Letter of Mother Thérèse to Mother Chartier, 21 May 1863



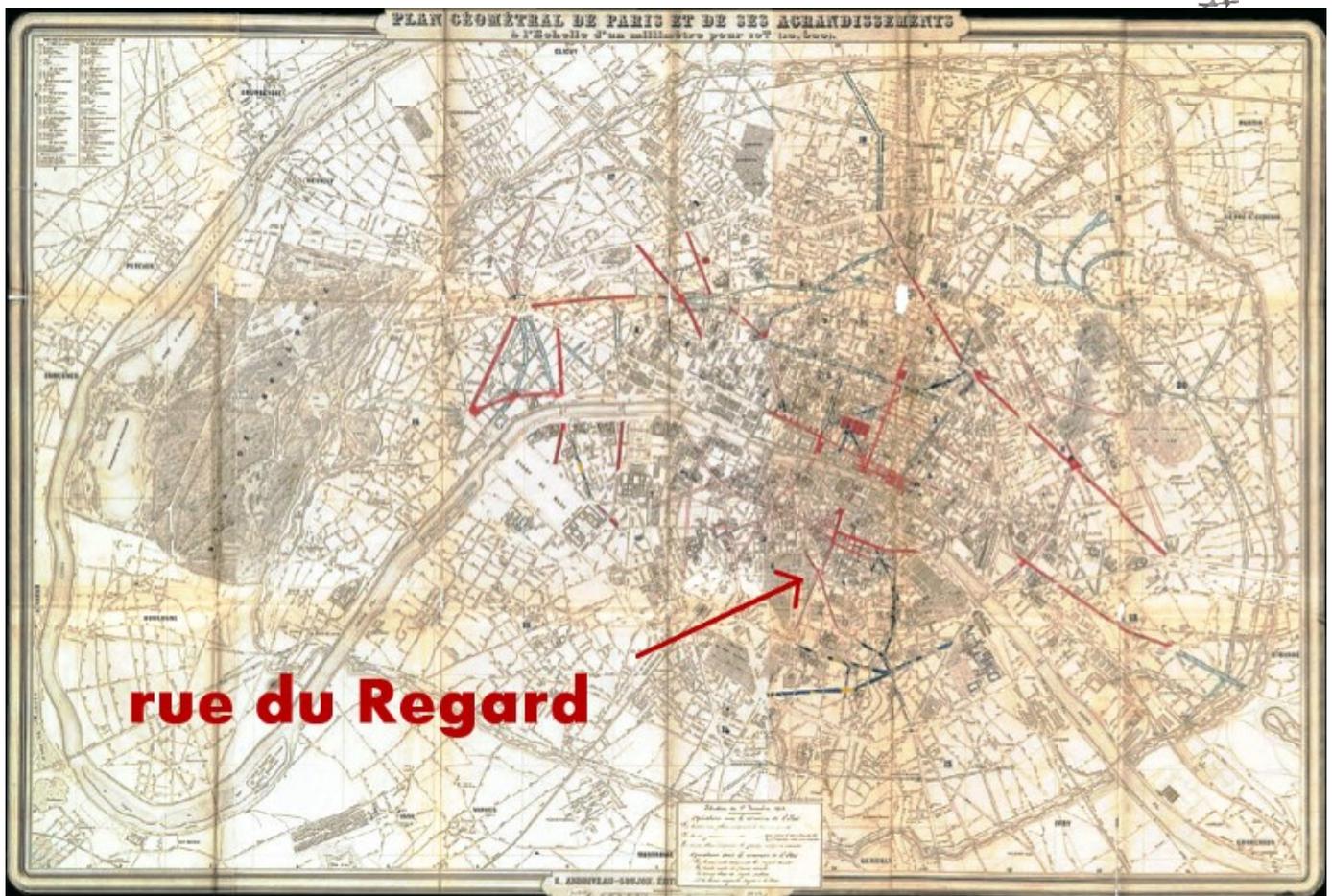
18. Stamp of the Congregation .

not give prominence to this title which was present in the Constitutions<sup>32</sup>. In the documents the title used was “The Society of Our Lady of the Retreat”. It was the same title that was used for signing letters<sup>33</sup>.

This consolidation phase allowed the Congregation to fully develop during the long period when Mother Marie-Aimée was Superior

**References :** 30. It was explained in the Constitutions of 1844 [print edition (1855), p. 10-12]. 31. Decree of the 1st General Chapter of the Society. 32. The title was *Constitutions et Règles des religieuses de Notre-Dame de la Retraite, ou de Notre-Dame au Cénacle* (published in 1855). 33. “Make a small cross on the letterhead when the paper is not marked with the stamp of the Society and add the signature: R<sup>se</sup> de la R<sup>te</sup>” [“Practices to observe”, 30 Nov. 1872, a document sent with the Acts of the General Chapter of 1872 and to be read to the Sisters].

## consequences for the Congregation



19. Location of Rue du Regard in Paris on the urban plan of the opening routes completed between 1848 and 1864 (1864) .



20. Sisters in front of the interior facade of the Rue du Regard house (Paris).

south end of the house Rue Saint-Placide was extended (Decree of 1859).

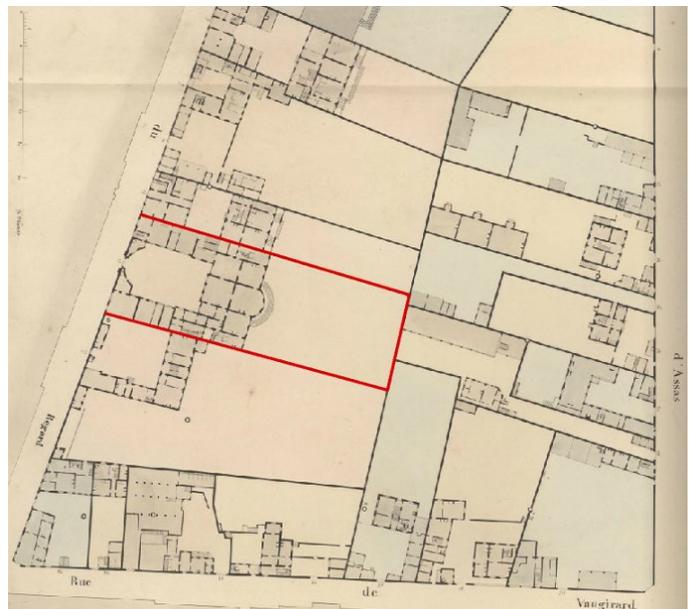
### The loss of part of the property

From 1853, many project plans for Rue de Rennes were studied and presented to the public. Finally, the decree extending Rue de Rennes to the Seine was signed on 28 July 1866. However, the project was already known and the friends of the house were anxious; the matter occupied the Mothers during 1866 as revealed in the Paris House Journal. On 21 May 1866, a “cause for concern is the threat, more and more powerful, from the opening of Rue de Rennes. Every day the most ‘serious people’ come to talk with us about it; the plan is posted at the City Hall. Our garden will be divided and it is not sure that it could not end with a total expropriation”.

The plan of Rue de Rennes was brought to them on 1 June. On the 5 June, a civil engineer came to bring the bad news to them: “he told us about a new plan that will take the second half of our garden for the continuation of Boulevard d’Enfer. Let us trust in God and wait! 34”. This time, the property was directly implicated. Boulevard d’Enfer (today, Boulevard Raspail) was to be extended, and its route was to pass through the garden.

The works were entrusted to the society *Thome et Compagnie*, who first had to buy the buildings that were to be destroyed. On 8 July 1866, the designated properties for expropriation were published. For some it was a partial expropriation, as it was for the house of the Congregation. When Mother Thérèse wrote on 10 August 1866 it was known that the house would be saved. So it was a relief. However, the garden would be sacrificed.

In January 1867, Mother de Laroche négy announced to Mother Chartier, superior of Montpellier, that a jury would determine the price of the expropriation of the garden: “How will we be treated? In fact, no indemnity can compensate for the loss of our beautiful and useful garden<sup>35</sup>”. On the 12 January the Montpellier community was informed of this news. The Sisters were asked for “prayers for an indemnity which [...] allows for the compensation of this loss<sup>36</sup>”. On the 31 January, the jury fixed the indemnity at 350 000 Francs, which was paid on the 29 April. Hence, the house lost “the greatest part of its garden”, which was 1, 500.68 square meters<sup>37</sup>. For comparison, in January the house and garden



21. The property of 15 Rue du Regard (in red) on the Land Registry of 1810-1836.

**Rue du Regard n° 15.**— A large mansion formerly known as hôtel de la Guische, consisting of a large courtyard of honour, with two wing buildings to the right and left joined by a double depth main building at the end of the said courtyard, consisting of a ground floor and two other floors, a garden behind the main building.

Register of the Buildings of the Congregation [end of XIX century], General Treasurer’s Office

## The problem from the perspective of Mer Thérèse

[...] We are living through a phase of events in which the need to have news is doubly felt. So, thank you for the news you give me about the dear house of Paris which has moved concurrently with that of Montpellier this year, each one carrying the cross, a little different, it is true, but also very heavy, I understand, since it is forced to divide in two, and despite itself, that little corner of the garden, so useful and so necessary, is snatched away. One would say that the devil is raging against our houses, but let us hope that he will see himself conquered one day and obliged to leave them in peace.

Letter of Mother Thérèse to Mother Chartier, 13 May 1867

had been estimated at 700,000 Francs when all houses of the Congregation had been valued<sup>38</sup>. It might therefore seem that the sale conditions were good, which was not the case for all.

## Transformation of the garden

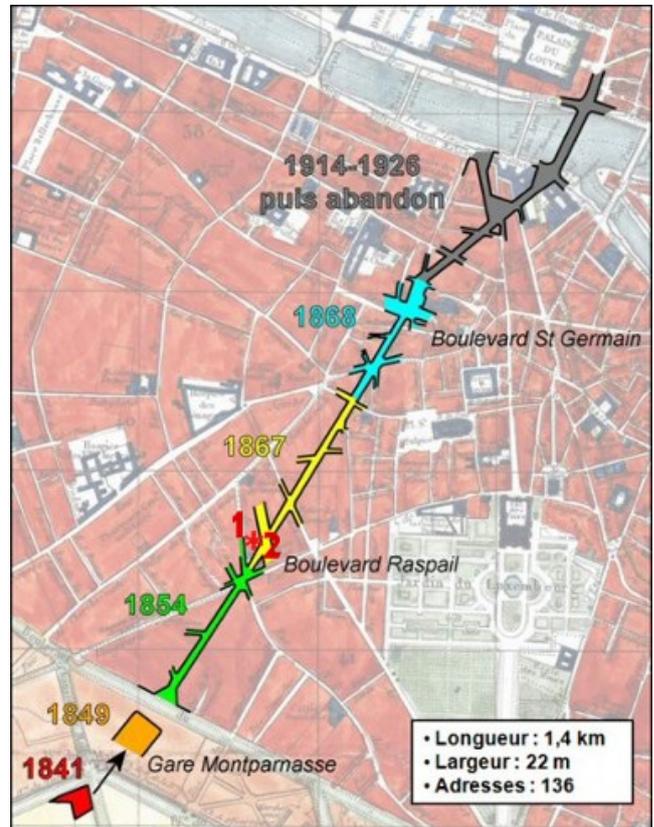
The neighbouring property at No. 17 was occupied by the Devillas hospice, a home for the elderly and infirm people without resources. To facilitate the work on Rue de Rennes and Boulevard d'Enfer, the property was purchased by *Thome* and the hospice was moved to Issy. To compensate for the loss of part of the garden, the Sisters had the idea to exchange the land they were letting go of with a portion of the neighbouring plot<sup>39</sup>. In 1868 a property site of 694 square metres was purchased from *Société Thome et Compagnie* and a new wall was built in the garden<sup>40</sup>.

## Foundation in Montreuil (Versailles)

From April 1866 a friend of the house, Father Bourret, “has made up his mind to find for us a house in the countryside close to Paris, in order, as of this year, to install the novitiate and to

resolve the problem caused by the inconveniences that the questionable construction of Rue de Rennes will give us”<sup>41</sup>.

Indeed, three groups of Sisters shared the house: the Generalate, the Novitiate and a Community of active Sisters for the Retreats. The house was well suited for the Novitiate because the garden was large. Since it was to be reduced it was appropriate to move the Novitiate elsewhere, to the



## 22. The stages of construction of Rue de Rennes.

© Baptiste Essevaz-Roulet

\* house ; 1. Rue du Regard ; 2. Boulevard d'Enfer (today, Boulevard Raspail)



## 23. Cardinal Bourret

**Joseph Bourret** (1827-1896): born in Saint-Etienne-de-Lugdarès, native village of Father Terme, ordained priest in 1851, he was appointed Bishop of Rodez in 1871 and Cardinal in 1893.

**References :** 34. Paris House Journal. 35. Letter of Mother de Laroche. [to Mother Chartier], undated [January 1867]. 36. Journal of Montpellier house, 12 Jan. 1867. 37. Register of the Buildings of the Congregation, General Treasurer's Office; General Ledger (1863-1878) p. 157 ; National Archives (France), (notarised agreements of the study CXII, batch 1317, 29 April 1867). 38. General Ledger (1863-1878) p. 157. 39. The idea appears in the Paris House Journal of 22 Oct. 1866. 40. Register of the Buildings of the Congregation, General Treasurer's Office; General Ledger (1863-1878) p. 79 and p. 159. 41. Paris House Journal, 30 April 1866.



24. Drawing representing the Novitiate house in Montreuil (Versailles) in March 1868.

countryside. Frequently, people presented properties but they were not suitable. Steps were taken to acquire a property in Clamart, but the price was too high<sup>42</sup>.

Finally, in March 1867 a place was found in Montreuil a neighbourhood outside of the centre of Versailles. It was a mansion with a park of more than 10 hectares. This property had been built by King Louis XVI for his sister or his sister-in-law<sup>43</sup>.

Mother Marie-Aimée was its first superior. She was the one who did the construction. It was here in this "Grand Versailles" where generations of Sisters had been formed. For a long time this house remained the ideal of a Cenacle house. It was heart wrenching when

the Congregation was forced out of it after the Dispersion.

## Epilogue

The house in Rue du Regard saw its existence marked by a succession of urban development projects which directly threatened or concerned its neighbourhood. Many times the Sisters had to suffer the inconvenience of the works in the area because the Paris urban works took time. The final modifications of Rue de Rennes were not completed until 1926. The opening of Boulevard d'Enfer, decided in 1866, was done in sections and therefore was spread over a period of more than 40 years.

This house of Rue du Regard was sold in 1881 and the Sisters finally left it in 1883 to settle in No. 7 Rue de la Chaise.

# The short life of the Montpellier house

*Founded by Mother de Larothenégly the Montpellier house had a very short life (1858-1867). However, it has a special place in the history of the Congregation because it was the place where Mother Thérèse lived from 1860 until its closure.*

## The Foundation

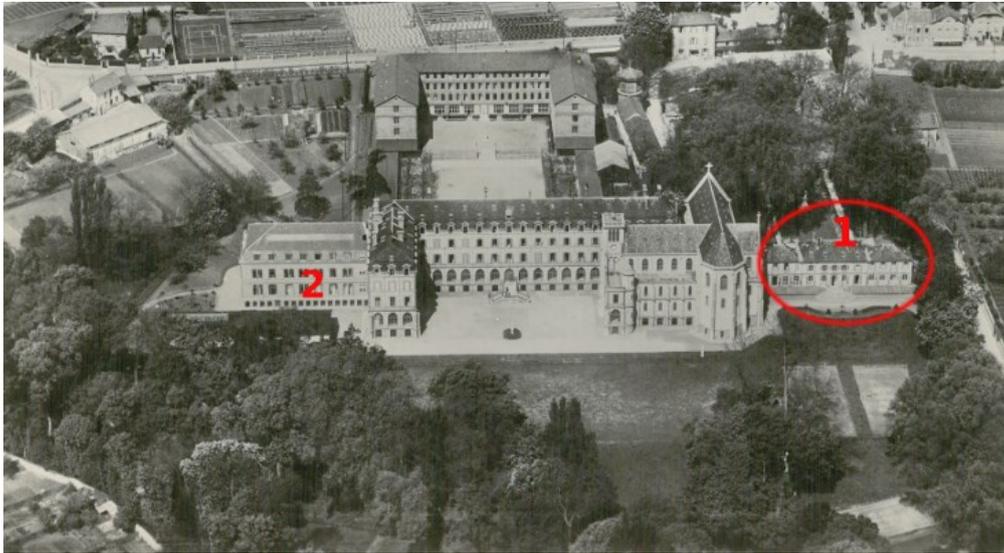
Ms. Deydé, a regular retreatant and friend of the Fourvière house (Lyon), had expressed from 1847 the desire for a foundation in her city, Montpellier<sup>44</sup>. At her death in 1855<sup>45</sup>, the Congregation inherited her house in Montpellier, Rue Rondelet. With the lack of personnel and the Paris crisis barely over, it was not the moment! For three years, the house was entrusted to the care of a trustworthy person.

Finally, the time was deemed favourable for a foundation which took place in October 1858<sup>46</sup>. Much of the furniture and sacristy objects of Tournon were transported there. The first

community (1858-1859) was composed of Sisters Julie<sup>47</sup>, Louise, Marguerite and Rosine, of Mothers de Charrin, de La Chapelle, Petit, Sophie de Saint-Privat, Lysie Adam and Louise de Boussairolles (who had not yet pronounced her vows). The superior was Mother Zoé de Chamon<sup>48</sup>. She was replaced by Mother Chartier in 1865. Mother Thérèse arrived there on 30 August 1860.

## Promising beginnings

The retreatants arrived from the first months. The chaplain was the former parish priest, Father Jourdan. The close proximity of the Jesuit residence enabled them to come as confessor and



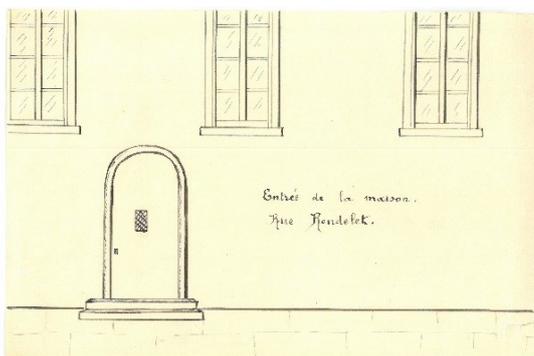
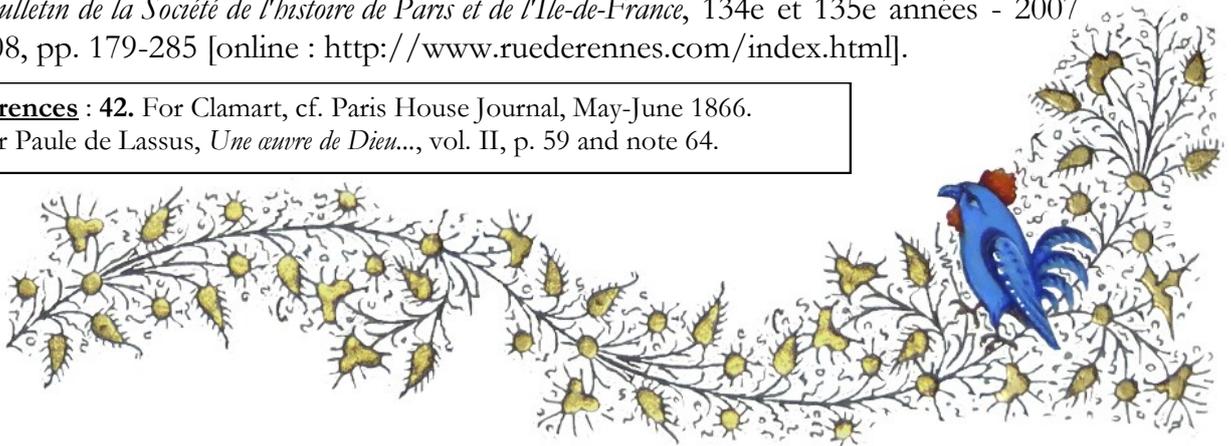
25. Aerial photo of « Grand Versailles » [1935 ?].

1. The Original main building.
2. Building constructed in 1930 when the Congregation was no longer the owner.

### For more details on the history of Rue de Rennes:

Yoann Brault, Baptiste Essevaz-Roulet, « La rue de Rennes, un siècle d'hésitations », *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Ile-de-France*, 134e et 135e années - 2007 -2008, pp. 179-285 [online : <http://www.ruederennes.com/index.html>].

**References :** 42. For Clamart, cf. Paris House Journal, May-June 1866.  
43. Sr Paule de Lassus, *Une œuvre de Dieu...*, vol. II, p. 59 and note 64.



26. A Drawing representing the entrance to the Rue Rondelet house.

preacher and in particular, Father Desjardins, Nègre and Pitron. The Sisters were delighted with the good relations they had with the Jesuits and with their dedication.

With its success, the house was too small. In 1861-1862 it was enlarged and a Chapel was built. The enclosure was finally established at the end of 1861. Up until then the house had been “in a state of foundation” so the Sisters lived ‘the enclosure’ as an interior disposition. They “rarely used the permission to go out”<sup>49</sup>

The new construction allowed for the first general retreat to be given in 1862, which was a success. At the end of this

**References :** 44. *Mother Therese in the Framework...*, 19 Sept. 1847. 45. Marie Elisabeth Alexandrine Deydé, born in Lyon, died on 7 Oct. 1855, at the age of 63 yrs., in Montpellier (Departmental Archives of Hérault, 5 MI 1/124). Before her death, a donation contract was made; it was announced on 24 August 1854. 46. The foundation of Montpellier is recounted in *Mother Therese in the Framework...*, at the end of year 1858. 47. Sister Julie Velay, (1802-1863) the oldest of the coadjutor Sisters, who were still present. She entered in 1832 in La Louvesc and took the habit in 1836 48. Since 26 October 1858, because Mother Dambuent was the Superior for the first weeks until her departure. 49. Annual Report of 1861 (B/MTP).

retreat Mother Thérèse expressed relief: “For a long time I ask Our Lord to give me a sign of his love for the house by making this retreat successful. I feel He has granted beyond my expectations<sup>50</sup>”. In addition to the retreats, the Sisters also prepare some people for First

Communion or Abjurations (Montpellier is a city where there were many Protestants). One of their apostolic activities is meetings of women teachers, of young people and the Christian Mothers<sup>51</sup>.

Year	Abjurations	Preparations for First communion	Retreatants of the month	Number of general retreats	Retreatants of several days
1862	1	12	209	5	271*
1863	3	many	160	5	259
1864	3	6	263	7	307
1865	3	1	312	–	307

27. Report Chart on the House Apostolate.

\* Particular and General Retreats

### A slowing down of the Retreat Apostolate

In 1865, the apostolic activity was already well established, but external circumstances hindered its growth. The rampant diseases in the Region<sup>52</sup> and the very strong summer heat prevented some of the retreatants from coming<sup>53</sup>. Mother Thérèse noted this slowdown:

I don't know why I'm sadly preoccupied about this little foundation; for some time now it seems that it's not progressing at all. The retreatants were fewer this year, there is less enthusiasm and eagerness in the works and finally less movement in the house. [...] I don't know if it comes from the house personnel or the local people, but it seems to me that retreats are less appreciated than in the early years. This may be the moment of trial for this house.<sup>54</sup>

On reading the House Journal and correspondence, we can understand that the slowdown in the Apostolate from 1865 was due to several factors. Firstly, it should be noted that the personnel had fragile health, at least for the

### Louise de Boussairolles: a difficult and unstable character

Louise de Boussairolles was the niece of Ms Deydé<sup>58</sup> the benefactor of the house. She accompanied her aunt to the Lyon house and believed herself called to religious life in the Congregation<sup>59</sup>. She entered in Paris on 16 July 1854 where Mother Anaïs was exercising her authority. Her Novitiate was prolonged and she was sent to Montpellier in October 1858 without having made vows. Perhaps one hoped that community life and apostolic activity would confirm her religious vocation<sup>60</sup>. She pronounced

her first vows there in 1859. However, the instability of her temperament and her behaviour remained the same. She alternated between periods of calm and of apostolic zeal and periods of doubt, of bad-temperedness and of isolation. In the difficult times she sometimes confessed daily wearing the goodwill of Father Pitron her confessor<sup>61</sup>. The community, even with all its patience, suffered from it; but more seriously, her behaviour also affected the retreatants.

In 1865 she was not admitted to final profession and she was refused to be relieved from her vows. A proposal was then made for her to live in the community with these conditions while keeping her order of seniority, but she refused this<sup>62</sup>. By not deciding to leave, she tried the patience of the Sisters, hoping to be dismissed<sup>63</sup>. In the midst of these circumstances the departure of Mother Rouzeau <sup>64</sup>, in 1866, after 16 years spent in the Congregation, was a great pain, particularly in Montpellier with the impending departure of Mother de Boussairolles who had just asked for the third time to be relieved of her vows<sup>65</sup>.

### The rapid closure of the house

In October 1866, Mother de Larothenégly decided to stop this cavalry. On 11 October, Mother Chartier, the Superior of the house, warned Mother de Boussairolles that she absolutely refused to accept her for perpetual profession and that she had to return to her family, which she did immediately. In the following weeks her father, unhappy with this situation, then embarked on a campaign of denigration of the Congregation in Montpellier and reclaimed all he had given in the previous years, and even more! The predictable consequences for the community were many: limitation of the apostolate, increased financial difficulties and the risk of a lawsuit contesting the ownership of the house. From November these issues were discussed in order to envisage the future<sup>66</sup>. A few months later the decision to close the house was finally taken and the Sisters left Montpellier in March-April.



28. View of Montpellier and its Cathedral.

**References :** 50. Journal of Montpellier, 13 August 1862. 51. In a way, perhaps less important, other groups also met in the house. For example, in 1865 the Filles du Saint Cœur de Marie and the Associées du Rosaire Perpétuel. 52. See, for example, T.C.Q. 21 Sept. 1865 : a retreatant had to leave a retreat because she had cholera. 53. Annual Report of 1865. 54. Letter to Mother de Laroch., 27 Nov. 1865. 55. Letter of Mother Thérèse to Mother Chartier, 21 May 1863. 56. Letter of Mother Thérèse to Mother Dambuent, 8 Sept. 1866. 57. Mother Thérèse also spoke of the "jealousy" of which they were the object, and which undermined the work of the community [Letter of Mother Thérèse to Mother Dambuent, 13 March 1864]. 58. The family link seems distant; this link is through the grandmother of Mr de Boussairolles, Anne Deydé. 59. Lassus, *Une œuvre de Dieu...*, vol. II, p. 59. 60. *Idem*. 61. Letter of Mother Thérèse to Mother de Laroch., 8 Nov. 1863 ; Letter of Mother Chartier to Mother Dambuent [undated, seems to be a response to the letter of Mother Dambuent on 1 Dec. 1865]. 62. Letter of Mother Thérèse to Mother de Larothenégly, 7 September 1865 ; Letter de Mother de Larothenégly to Mother Chartier, 4 December 1865 ; Letter of Mother de Larothenégly to Mother Chartier, 10 Feb. 1866. 63. Letter of Mother Chartier to Mother Dambuent [undated, seems to be a response to the letter of Mother Dambuent on 1 Dec. 1865.] ; Letter of Mother de Larothenégly to Mother Chartier, 4 December 1865. 64. Mother Virginie Rouzeau born in 1811, entered in 1850 and left at the beginning of 1866. 65. *Mother Therese in the Framework...*, after March 2, 1866. 66. House Council Journal.

## The forebodings and judgment of Mother Thérèse

Mother Thérèse had foreseen the difficulties that the house would have to undergo and she was relieved when it closed. This is what Mother Chartier described in a letter to Mother Dambuent:

In January 1867 Mother Thérèse, speaking to me of all the shocks suffered by the Montpellier house, explained the indefinable feeling she had experienced throughout the entire previous summer. She had the continual anguish of a common cross without seeing the cause and as if crushed by a storm hanging over our heads, she implored the

Divine Mercy. The holy Mother had suffered more than us from this such disagreeable contact of Mademoiselle de Boussairrolles; she kept asking God incessantly for her conversion or her departure; the latter seemed a deliverance to her; the ensuing great outcry caused by the family evoked an ardent desire in the good Mother for the departure of all; she feared that our actions on the souls would be compromised by everything that was done against us. There was there perhaps, like at that time in the whole Community, a little too much human dependency, but later, when that feeling disappeared before the trust that was given to us, even so, in the religious reports of our vocation, she did not remain less convinced that the situation would always be difficult and onerous on the Congregation.

# Mother Thérèse in Montpellier : mystic

*In spite of its unfortunate fate, the Montpellier house was the place of an intense spiritual life for Mother Thérèse who lived significant mystical experiences there.*

## A stage of life for Mother Thérèse

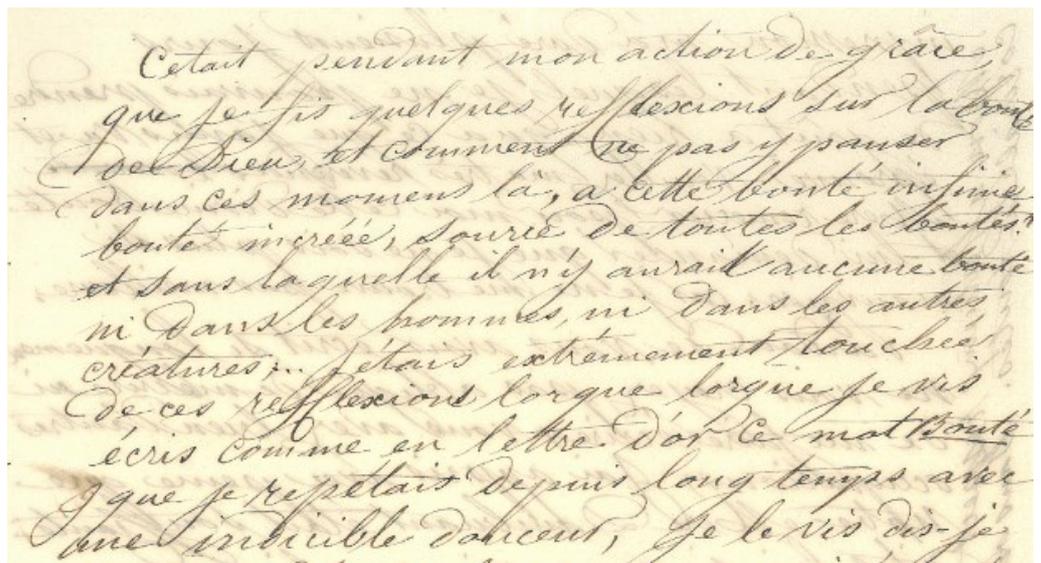
In 1855-1856, Mother Thérèse was in Paris at the height of the Saint-Privat crisis. Then, from 1856 to 1858 she alternated between La Louvesc and Tournon before going to Lyon on 30 September 1858. From Lyon she moved to Montpellier on 30 August 1860. The house was already established since 1858. When she left Montpellier in 1867 it was to return to Lyon, where she remained until her death.

In Montpellier, she was Assistant from October 1861 until her departure in 1867. Thanks to the position she held, we know more about her interior dispositions, because she wrote more frequently to Mother de Larothenégly to give her news of the community, and at the end of these letters she gave news of herself, opening her soul. We know indeed, that the two women had a great spiritual intimacy born in Lyon from 1844 to 1852. It was also in Montpellier that she developed a

relationship with Mother Marie-Aimée, who would later gather her spiritual confidences.

## Blossoming of her Mystical Life

The Montpellier period was spiritually intense for Mother Thérèse. In fact, it is from 1859 in particular that we have the most numerous and most accurate sources on the subject. During this period the same themes were repeated in letter

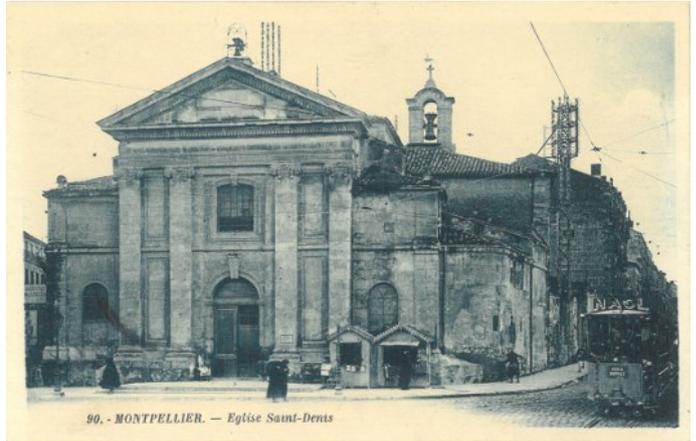


30. Extract on Goodness from the original letter of 10 August 1866.

after letter. Mother Thérèse felt her weakness and her misery but was peaceful. At this point in her life God was a God of Goodness and Mercy. She felt irresistibly "attracted" to Him and she

When I told her of the suppression of the house Mother Thérèse simply said to me: it is a conclusion that I awaited. I never counted on the solidity of this foundation that I have seen done with regrets.<sup>67</sup>

Mother Thérèse had understood that establishing the foundation of Montpellier on the generosity of one family, the Congregation was exposed to problems. The experience of Montpellier was a lesson for future foundations<sup>68</sup>.



**29. Church of Saint-Denis, in Montpellier.**

It was the nearest Church; the bell tower could be seen from the house of Rue Rondelet.



and grace

abandoned herself to Him, she “surrendered” herself. At this time she was also a mystic favoured with "consolations": she lived a spiritual happiness nourished by the regular Presence of God who seemed rarely absent except on a few occasions<sup>69</sup>. Her spiritual revelations came from a dialogue with God<sup>70</sup>.

Already, Mother Thérèse had lived a significant experience: following a Conference of Father Maréchal in the Lyon community “on the spirit of sacrifice and of immolation that the Religious soul must practice following the example of Our Lord “(20 October 1859) she received the call to offer herself as a “victim of holocaust <sup>71</sup>”. During the period of 1860-1867 both texts emerged: *Se Livrer* (26 June 1864) and the account of the experience on the Goodness of God (10 August 1866). These two texts were not born from nothingness: during this period the themes were present in the earlier letters to Mother de Laroche négly<sup>72</sup>.

In any case, Mother de Laroche négly seemed receptive. Four months after receiving the letter from Mother Thérèse on Goodness, she wished that the Sisters would experience “a profound gratitude towards the Divine Goodness”<sup>73</sup>

At around this time Mother Thérèse spoke to a Carthusian "of spiritual things and of the love of God," and he relieved her of the worries she had<sup>74</sup>.

**References** : **67.** *Mother Thérèse in the Framework...*, 18 January 1867. **68.** Letter of Mother Chartier to Mère de Laroche négly after a discussion with Mother Thérèse [*Mother Thérèse in...*, 17-18 Feb. 1867]. **69.** Letter to Mother de Laroche négly, 22 January 1863. **70.** Cf., for example, the revelations on the “victim of holocaust” and “Se Livrer”. She asked a question; then she received a response. **71.** This experience was known in a writing of Mother Marie-Aimée Lautier in 1878, in whom, Mother Thérèse confided. **72.** For *Se Livrer* one remembers for example, the dispositions of Mother Thérèse during her retreat in February 1864 (Letter to Mother de Laroche négly, 13 February 1864). Concerning this, it is surprising that Mother Thérèse did not share this experience in writing with Mother de Laroche négly. She used to write to her about her spiritual experiences, but she did not do it for this one. She wrote only on a paper that was found after her death. It must be said that Mother Thérèse did not need to write to Mother de Laroche négly to confide her experiences. The Superior General was in Montpellier from 21 to 27 June for an official visit. Perhaps it was even this Mother who advised her or insisted that she writes it. With this one cannot understand fully why Mother Thérèse wrote this experience without naming the recipient of this description. It was not really the way Mother Thérèse did things because the style is not one that would be used for a personal note (see the use of the pronoun "one"). **73.** Letter of Mother de Laroche négly, 24 Dec. 1866, “To be read in the Refectory”. An extract can be found in is in this booklet, in the section entitled, The political background and trials of Pius IX « L’arrière-plan politique et les épreuves de Pie IX ». **74.** The episode is recounted by Mother Thérèse in a letter to Mother de Laroche négly that Mother Françoise Saglio, in T.C.Q. p. 554-556, dated 23 April 1865. The episode might have occurred during the summer of 1863 or 1864. **75.** The existence of this vow appeared in the letter of Mother Thérèse to Mother Laroche négly 26 July 1865. It has been dated to the period 1862-1865.

Mother Thérèse's vow not to accept the role of superior<sup>75</sup> also dates from this period.

Finally, Mother Chartier, her superior in Montpellier, dated, from 1866, two confidences<sup>76</sup> of Mother Thérèse on her Eucharistic fervour at this time and her continual need to pray, and on the two subjects that occupied her meditations: "The Holiness of God" and the sin which is its opposite<sup>77</sup>.

### **Mother Thérèse recognized as Foundress**

The time of Montpellier was probably the beginning of the recognition of Mother Thérèse as Foundress. It seemed at that time that the leaders of the Congregation shared this knowledge<sup>78</sup>. One indication of this was in the attention that was given to her on 15 October, Feast of Saint Thérèse of Avila: she was specially honoured during recreation and began to receive more written greetings on this occasion.

The first reference to her role in the history of the Congregation seemed to be in the Montpellier house journal, 15 October 1862, where she was described as "the first and venerated Superior and Foundress." However, this was still ignored by the majority of the Sisters.

From this period also dates the first photograph of Mother Thérèse. From the beginning of 1864 Mother Thérèse was weary. In late August her weakness is such that she goes to bed and the superior of the house, Mother de Chamon, wrote to Mother de Larochenégly to notify her and ask her to insist that Mother



**31. Mother Thérèse, 14 October 1864.**

Thérèse be photographed in spite of her humility.<sup>79</sup> The Superior General wanted this to be done so that the portrait of Mother Thérèse could be conserved by the Congregation. On 14 October Mother Thérèse was taken to the photographer.<sup>80</sup> Mother Thérèse shows a slightly closed face in this photograph which is explained by her reluctance to be photographed. At this time, it was still something rare and reserved for people of importance. In the Congregation, only Mothers Contenet and de Larochenégly had that honour. Mother Thérèse was concerned that the exception of which she was the subject of would be a bad example for all. In a letter to Mother Dambuent, Assistant General, she expressed this without hiding her exasperation.<sup>81</sup>

### **Mother Thérèse continued to act in Montpellier**

In Montpellier Mother Thérèse was favoured with great graces. Years after her death, she acted as an intermediary of the Divine Goodness.

The closure of the Montpellier house in 1867 was dictated by the hardships and it was regretted by both the Congregation and the Diocese. Also, the new Bishop, Bishop de Cabrières, requested that the Congregation return. A new house was established in 1892<sup>82</sup> at another location because the previous house had been sold. Later, the Rue Rondelet house was destroyed because of the urban development projects. This left nothing of the house where Mother Thérèse lived.



**32. Mother Delattre.**

It was in this second house that Mother Madeleine Delattre was miraculously cured through the intercession of Mother Thérèse, which allowed the cause of her canonization to advance.

Mother Delattre suffered from serious health problems since 1931<sup>83</sup>. In 1951, suffering from Pott's disease (tuberculosis), the doctor prescribed a surgical collar and a sojourn in the South (le Midi). She arrived in Montpellier house at the end

### 33. Chapel of the second Montpellier house

The upper arrow indicates where Mother Delattre was in the Tribune. The lower one shows the location of the portrait of Mother Thérèse by the painter Joseph Aubert.



of the year.

In late January 1952 she had a significant deterioration and she put a relic of Mother Thérèse in her surgical collar. The Sisters had already been praying to Mother Thérèse since the summer for her recovery. She said that on 4 February 1952 she lived a special experience:

I went to the Tribune for my adoration before the Benediction; I was sad and downcast after this drawback that would further delay the permissions, as I was hoping to enter a little more into the common life. I spoke to Our Lord and as my eyes left the monstrance, at the moment where, between two bars of the railing of the Tribune, they passed before the painting of our B[lessed] MOTHER THÉRÈSE, a part of which I saw from my place, I heard very clearly in me, and the voice came from the picture, "BUT YOU ARE HEALED". At the same time, something calming, unifying in my whole being, I felt seized, seized by someone very strong and very good<sup>84</sup>.

That same evening and the following days, she noticed that the pain had finally and miraculously disappeared.

Thus, Mother Thérèse had suffered in Montpellier because of the difficulties of the community, but here too, she was favoured by great spiritual consolations. Having received many in this city, she is the intermediary of the Divine Goodness in redistributing these graces.

**References** : 76. These confidences were expressed by Mother Chartier during her testimony for the Canonization process. They can be read in *La Bienheureuse Thérèse Couderc...* (abbé Combes, 1956), p. 325 and 329-330. 77. Later, Mother Thérèse also addressed this subject in a letter to Mother de Laroche négy after she had she left Montpellier (7 August 1867) 78. Sr Paule de Lassus rc, "Thérèse Couderc, Woman and Saint, 1805-1885. A Few Essays on Her Personality and Her Spirituality", translation by Sr Mary Louise Powell rc, St. Vincent Press, 1988, p. 182-185. 79. Montpellier House Journal, 2 Sept. 1864. 80. Montpellier House Journal, 14 Oct. 1864. 81. Letter of 14 Nov. 1864. 82. Only closed in 1963. 83. Mother Madeleine Delattre (1905-1968) had a life marked by physical suffering. She had a leg amputated (mid-thigh) when she was 26 yrs. She could not be completely anaesthetized; beside her Mother Majoux was distressed and was of no help; then to give herself courage, Mother Delattre sang the Magnificat during the operation. Then, she suffered with tuberculosis and migraines. In 1951, her mandible joint is replaced by plastic one. A few years after her recovery from tuberculosis, a car accident crushed her arm. Etc. [Menology of Mother Delattre]. 84. Typed copy of the testimony of Mother Delattre for the canonization cause of Mother Thérèse.



## For more informations

Sr Paule de Lassus rc, *Notre Dame du Cénacle. Une « œuvre de Dieu » tissées de grâces et de contradictions*, vol. 2 : *Deuxième partie : Mère de Laroche négy (1804-1900)*, 2010 (internal document of the Congregation) French only.

*Mother Thérèse in the Framework of Her Daily Life*, 3 volumes and a Supplement), translation of *La Mère Thérèse dans son Cadre de vie Quotidien* (T.C.Q.), internal document of the Congregation completed by Mother Saglio and printed around 1960, 6 volumes

Ms. Sarah Elbisser, Generalate archivist (2008-2010): **The Cenacle during the Franco-Prussian war and the Commune**, May 2009 (available on the Generalate website)

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18. Stamp of the Congregation on a letter of Mother de Larochenégly to the Congregation. Photo by Gh. Pauquet rc.
19. Location of Rue du Regard in Paris on the urban plan of the opening routes completed between 1848 and 1864 (1864). Base map: Map modified with watercolours.

## Mother Parchappe and the

The decorative elements that adorn this booklet are excerpts of the illuminations made by the Sisters of the Congregation, in particular by Mother Parchappe. For example, the cover was made from a copy of a manuscript from the 13th or 14th century.

In Rome, some Mothers (Parchappe, Mellier, Hill, Lejeune ...) did this remunerative work of decorating the requests for the apostolic blessings of the Holy Father, for family souvenir books, prayers, etc. The models that were presented to customers are conserved in the General Archives. The documents of the Congregation also benefited from this expertise in illumination and calligraphy, as in the Ceremonial manuscripts proper to the Congregation.

Signature of Mother Parchappe on a 1905 manuscript.

**Mother Joséphe Parchappe** was born in Buenos Aires in 1829. She entered the Congregation in 1863. After living in several houses, she was sent to Rome in 1892, then to Monte Mario house where she died in 1908. She lived in the Lyon community at the same time as Mother Thérèse, in 1867-1868 and 1873-1879.

# illustrations

Surveyor's map AN, F21 908-1 © National Archives / Éric Guillot, published in Pierre Pinon and Bertrand Le Boudec *Les Plans de Paris, Histoire d'une capitale*, Bibliothèque nationale de France / Le Passage / Atelier parisien d'urbanisme / Paris librairies, 2014.

20. Sisters in front of the interior façade of the Rue du Regard house, Paris. Photograph, [1867 (dating: General Fund Ledger (1863-1878), p. 7)]. [3S3/ large formats]

21. The property of 15 Rue du Regard (in red) on the land registry of 1810-1836. Base map: Paris Land Registry by blocks (1810-1836), 11th ancient 11e arr., Luxembourg, block No 46. F / 31/93/40 (Paris Archives) (detail).

22. The stages of construction of Rue de Rennes. © Diagram by Baptiste Essevaz-Roulet (base map: plan of Paris in 1839 by Tardieu) [<http://www.ruederennes.com>].

23. Cardinal Bourret. Photograph, Pierre Petit photograph (Paris), undated [1893-1896]. [3S/D]

24. Novitiate house in Montreuil (Versailles). Drawing, Title: "Noviciate of Montreuil, March 1868", Anonymous. [3S3/ large formats]

25. "Grand Versailles", Aerial Photograph (detail), Compagnie aérienne française, Série A337 n° 1212, undated [1935 ?]. [3S3/6]

26. « Entrée de la maison. Rue Rondelet. » [Entrance to the House. Rue Rondelet.] Sketch by Mother Didier, from the recollections of Mothers Fevez and Rochette, 1933. [B/MTP]

27. Apostolic Report of Montpellier house completed from the annual accounts of the house from 1862 to 1865 [B/MTP].

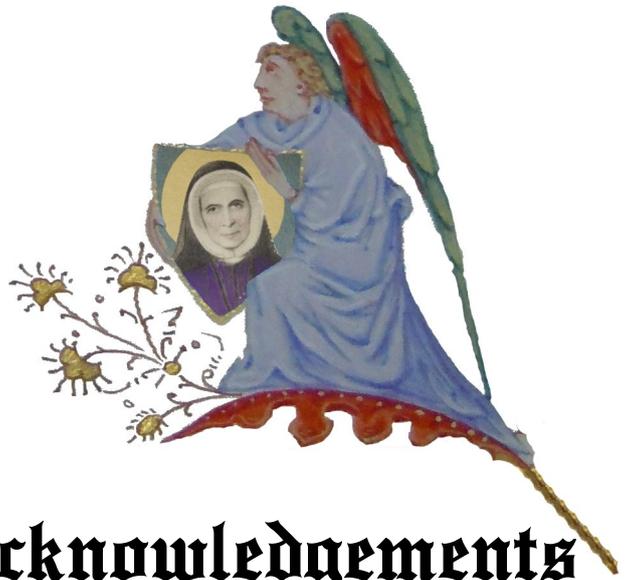
28. Postcard, "2.020. Montpellier (Hérault). Vue Générale et tours de la cathédrale Saint-Pierre" [General view and towers of the Cathedral], Rella publisher, undated. [B/MTP]

29. Saint-Denis Church, Montpellier. Postcard, G. Artaud publisher (Nantes). Sent in 1858 by Mother Jeanne Dehin. [B/MTP]

30. Letter of Mother Therese to Mother de Larocheégly, 10 August 1866 (extract on Goodness). Scanned [FT9]

31. Mother Therese Couderc, 14 Oct. 1864. [FT4]

32. Postcard, « Cénacle de Montpellier. L'église consacrée », [The Cenacle in Montpellier. The dedicated Church], publisher Chateaufort (Montpellier). Sent by Mother Coirard 23 Oct. 1957. [FT 25]



# illuminations

## Menology of Mother Parchappe (extract).

Mother Parchappe was very artistic and had a good talent for painting. She cultivated it, perfected it, she excelled in it. She excelled especially in ornamental painting and all kinds of illuminations. It was like she had the genius of antiquity. As a young religious she had the honour of helping Reverend Mother Marie Aimée to do the illuminations in the *Livre d'Or des Bienfaiteurs de la Basilique de St Martin de Tours*. In her later years her consummate talent made her presence a true blessing for the house she was in, and painting became like a second vocation for her.

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