

Duquesne University

Duquesne Scholarship Collection

A Spiritan Anthology

Anthologie Spiritaine

1-1-2011

08. Extracts from the Memorandum of Fr. Tisserant: The Work for the Black People

Christian de Mare CSSp

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dsc.duq.edu/anthologie-spiritaine-english>



Part of the [Catholic Studies Commons](#)

Repository Citation

de Mare, C. (2011). 08. Extracts from the Memorandum of Fr. Tisserant: The Work for the Black People. Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/anthologie-spiritaine-english/27>

This Chapter I is brought to you for free and open access by the Anthologie Spiritaine at Duquesne Scholarship Collection. It has been accepted for inclusion in A Spiritan Anthology by an authorized administrator of Duquesne Scholarship Collection.

Extracts from the Memorandum of Fr. Tisserant: The Work for the Black People¹

When Fr Eugene Tisserant had to come back from Haiti in 1842, he was asked to draw up a Memorandum on the origins of the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Fr Libermann kept an eye on the work and corrected it where necessary, adding some of his own notes. As a result, this is a work of considerable importance for the origins of the Congregation.

13 October 1842

Here are some notes regarding the establishment of this poor little Congregation of missionaries. The intention of the author² writing these lines is not to give a history of the beginnings of the little Society, in which, in spite of his unworthiness, he had the privilege of playing a part, but to give proofs for those who will come after us that the founding of the Missionaries of the Holy Heart of Mary was indeed the work of Mary herself. What follows will undoubtedly show the truth of what I am saying.

The origins of the work

The Founders

How did Mary inspire the desire to start the work on the missions? I will try to give a brief explanation. I'm writing this journal very hurriedly as I have only six days to do it before going on retreat and then I setting out to spread the Good News in the neglected island of Haiti. So I will not be going

¹ N.D. I, pp. 589+

² Eugène Tisserant. See index for biographical details

into detail about the pioneers whom Mary chose to carry out her work of mercy for the unfortunate descendants of Cham. Amongst us, everyone knows who these people were, so I will concentrate on the providential circumstances which found each of them available when Mary decided to call them to an apostolate so dear to her heart.

M. le Vavasseur, whose family lived on the island of Bourbon, followed the custom of well-off families in our colonies and came to study in France. When he had finished his studies³ in Paris, he applied to the Polytechnic to prepare for the career his family intended for him. He was on the point of being admitted⁴ when a hidden desire to carry the yoke of the Lord led him to abandon the world and enter the ecclesiastical state.

He returned to his native land to try to improve his health. He was very devoted to his studies, but he committed himself so wholeheartedly to them that he was now completely worn out. This journey, which did nothing to improve his condition, nevertheless gave Providence the opportunity to show him the kind of work that he was called to do.

The state of degradation and neglect of the poor black slaves in Bourbon made him determined to help these poor people. He was able to see, once more, just how abandoned they were. But he knew that they were of infinite value in the eyes of God so he made up his mind to do something for them.

On his return to France, during the summer of 1836, he could not forget the plight of these men and his conviction that he

³ At the College of St. Stanislas in Paris, where he had also known Frederic Le Vavasseur

⁴ He had excellent results in the preliminary exam; he would have been granted admission, having gained second place in Maths and shone in all other subjects - apart from Latin, in which he "*could have done better*"!

must do something for them. Despite the absurdity of the idea, he believed that God wanted him to be their first missionary, but given his sorry state of health, how could he ever hope to become a priest? So he did not dare to apply to the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice

Enlightened by the Holy Spirit, the wise spiritual director of Le Vavasseur was able to see some of the plans of God for this young man, even though he seemed to be unsuitable for such a demanding ministry because of this health. He was worn out, his migraine was very severe, so how could he study philosophy or theology? His director told Frederic that God and Mary would look after him, so our dear confrere sought entrance to Saint-Sulpice and was accepted. He went to Issy to study philosophy on 19th August, 1836.

This is not the place to talk about Le Vavasseur's virtues in his new home; all his fellow students were very impressed by him. I will just mention his extraordinary humility when faced with the problems of study. He found it almost impossible to concentrate on anything, so that serious doubts were raised about his ability to complete the course. Things continued like this for the next two years, but despite his illnesses, he never lost sight of the poor slaves in their distress; this was the man whom Mary had chosen as the first to go to the help of those poor people....

At the same time that Le Vavasseur felt so strongly drawn towards the slaves in Bourbon (he was really only thinking of the blacks in his own country), Mary, who like God, chooses the most unlikely people to carry out her plans of mercy for men, placed a similar attraction in another of his fellow students.⁵ He also seemed to be most unsuitable for such a

⁵ The author of this memorandum, Eugène Tisserant, is now talking about himself.

great endeavour. He had entered the seminary of Issy in 1835, but he had such great difficulties with his philosophical studies that he was refused the tonsure.¹

On the order of the Archdiocesan Council, the scholarship that paid for the upkeep of this student was withdrawn. The directors, acting for his own good and the good of the Church, which was already suffering so much from the ignorance of its priests, strongly advised him to give up his dream of ordination. They also urged him not to take up the offers of a scholarship that were made to him by other seminaries in France which were very short of candidates. God's grace helped him to support this disappointment and humiliation. He did not want to return to the lay state, but fearing to go against the will of God by presenting himself to another seminary, against the advice of his superiors, he decided to join the Trappists.

After keeping him for a few months in this solitude, God took away the good health he had so far enjoyed, so once again he had to leave this peaceful home...In his distress, He turned to Mary. Then suddenly, the superiors and the Council of the Archdiocese changed their minds again and allowed him back. (He had been a seminarian again for a few months at Issy when Le Vavasseur joined it for the first time).

For a long time, he had been greatly concerned about the pitiable state of the black people on the island of Domenica. His own mother was Creole and he had often heard of the immorality of the inhabitants, partly their own fault and partly because of the terrible example given by a large number of priests. His great desire for this country was to form a group of priests living in community, but this seemed to be a pipe-

¹ The Sulpicians followed the practice of accepting candidates for the tonsure after one year of philosophy if their vocation appeared to be strong and they had the required intellectual ability.

dream! And yet this poor seminarian, who was powerless to do anything about it, was called to this work by Mary and eventually given the happiness of being part of such a community.

The third member whom Mary chose to join this project, would become its father and guide.⁷ He most certainly was not expecting to be called to lead this great enterprise; God had hidden his plans from him and from all around him. He had entered Saint-Sulpice in 1827, a year after the Lord had called him into his Church from his state of strong and ardent belief in Jewry. There was nothing outstanding about him as regards study, but his dedication and devotion was certainly remarkable. God did not allow Libermann to remain unknown; his superiors were very impressed and thanked God for the graces given him. Several fellow-students were equally aware of this from the early days and sought his spiritual advice.

It was during the four years he spent at the seminary in Paris that God sent him a terrible trial, an illness that prevented him from advancing further than the order of acolyte. He was stricken with epilepsy and he would have a relapse every time the days for ordination came round. This was how Libermann spent his first four years at Saint-Sulpice.

As the sickness continued, towards the end of his final year the Council of the Archbishop of Paris, in whose diocese he had been destined to serve, decided to end his scholarship. It fell to Fr. Carbon,⁸ a member of the Council, to inform him, with great regret, that as there was no hope of his ever being ordained, it was in his own interest to leave the seminary and use the remainder of his young years to start another career.

⁷ This refers to Francis Libermann, who, at that time, was in the Eudist Novitiate at Rennes.

⁸ Superior of the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice in Paris

This man, who loved him like a father and is presently one of the most zealous promoters of the work of the Society of the Heart of Mary, even offered to help him financially for his return to secular life.

Libermann accepted this decision peacefully as coming from Providence and thanked his charitable superior for his kindness and the great interest he had always shown in him. He just asked to be told the date when he should leave, calmly stating: *I can never go back into the world. I am sure that God will look after me.* These words so touched the heart of this good superior, that he hastened to assure Libermann that he would do all in his power to ensure that the seminary of Saint-Sulpice would take care of him until he died. So, Libermann left the seminary with the financial support of the Sulpicians until the time when Mary would take him from his obscurity to be the Father of the little family she would confide to him.

Towards the end of 1831, the Sulpicians sent him to Issy where he spent fifteen to eighteen months doing nothing but pray and look after the trees. He told me this recently. The following years were more fruitful. He was deeply moved each day, even to the point of tears, to see the unfortunate effect that cholera and the political crises of those days were having on the majority of the seminarians, both at Issy and Paris. He could no longer restrain himself: he was determined to do something for those with whom he was living. He managed to persuade the superiors at Issy and Paris to let him try to restore the spirit of Our Lord to these men who would be the channels for the grace of God to reach the people.¹

In this hidden obscurity, Libermann suffered greatly, above all from men who, in good faith, believed they were serving God

¹ This refers to the setting up of the "Bandes de Piétés" in the Seminary of Saint Sulpice. They were groups of students who wished to deepen their spiritual life under the guidance of Libermann.

by strongly opposing everything that he was trying to do to restore the spirit of the priesthood to this seminary. But there were some consolations for him. Several of the students were greatly helped by his efforts and Mary guided me to be part of that group. During the final five years of his stay with the Sulpicians, he fulfilled the modest role of assistant bursar of the seminary of Issy.

In the summer of 1837, he left Saint-Sulpice and went to Rennes to be with M. Louis, the Superior of the Eudists. In this Congregation he hoped to do something good for the salvation of souls. M. Louis himself had earnestly begged him to come there and he made him novice master two months after his arrival. He discovered that this Society, despite the dedication of its director, was in a state of deep disorder, but all his efforts to improve the situation came to nothing. He remained in this community for about six months, struggling with all sorts of difficulties and always weighed down by his own cruel infirmity, which seemed to close the door for ever on his desire for ordination.

It was then that Le Vavas seur, who had often talked to him of the misfortunes and abandonment of the poor black people in Bourbon, wrote him a letter in February or March of 1839, asking advice on how to give spiritual help to the slaves in this colony and the surrounding islands.

Here we omit two sections of Tisserant's Memorandum:

***One:** The plans Tisserant and Le Vavas seur made in Paris for work in the islands of Bourbon and St. Domenica, with the help of the Sulpicians and Fr. Desgenettes of Our Lady of Victories. This was the start of the project for the Work for the Black Peoples, coming to the aid of slaves in their respective islands (In fact,, slavery had long been abolished in Haiti). They submitted their project to Libermann who, by letter,*

encouraged them to unite their efforts, without giving any impression that he would be involved himself.

***Two:** The above was followed by the events in Rennes, which can be found in the following text (Chapter I, Text 9). It is an account of Libermann's missionary vocation.*

The Journey to Rome

Libermann made his way to Lyon, passing through Paris where, apart from M Pinault with whom he could forget his troubles for a moment, the Lord had another setback for him.¹⁰ He spent a brief time in the capital before arriving in Lyon, just before the vigil of the day¹¹ when this city shows its devotion to the privileges and prerogatives of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. By special favour of the Holy See, this town had publicly honoured Mary under this title for seven centuries. On this very day, the canonical erection of the Archconfraternity of the Holy and Immaculate Conception for the conversion of sinners took place in the church of Our Lady of Foyvières. Mary inspired our good Father to go to this place of grace and blessings and, on this day more than on any other, she showed him her great love. M. Libermann felt the strength of her prayer, united to those of many others praying with him and for him: He was cured of his sufferings in this Marian shrine. Strengthened by the Consoler of the afflicted, who poured balm on his wound, he would never again fear the evils of this world.

Whilst he was in Lyon, he went to see the superior of a religious house. He was received very badly and this superior

¹⁰ This was about his plan to go to Rome which was being opposed as imprudent by a virtuous woman in whom he had great confidence.

¹¹ Libermann confirmed this date himself in Tisserant's text.

burst into laughter on hearing the plans of M. Libermann; he then walked out of the parlour, without saying anything. There were various other minor things which added to Libermann's sufferings, but Mary kept him calm and helped him to see that God wanted him to persevere, despite the scorn of men.¹²

After three weeks in Lyon, where he was waiting the arrival of the sub-deacon who was going with him to Rome, he moved on to Marseille where his companion had already arrived. It seemed that Libermann had gone down in his estimation. He had had a deep veneration for Libermann because of his piety: he was convinced that he was immune from any kind of temptation. Now, he was scandalised that Libermann had been afflicted by so many setbacks and he put this down to his lack of experience in such matters; he could not believe that such things could happen to a man whom he regarded as a saint. It now became evident that he was likely to abandon the project completely. They sailed from Marseille and arrived in Rome, the capital of Christianity and stayed together for about two months. Finally they separated and the young man abandoned the thought of working for the salvation of the black people. This sub-deacon, who had various problems of his own, was passing through a period of spiritual depression. Finally, he found relief at one of the altars of Mary¹³ and went back to Paris where he joined the Missions Etrangères de Paris and went to China.¹⁴

¹² This is a note added by Libermann.

¹³ In the basilica of St. Mary Major.

¹⁴ M de la Brunière seems to have been drawn for a short time into our work by a providential intervention of Mary:

- to help in setting up the work of which, in principle, he was to be the superior;
- He was the one Mary used to persuade Libermann to leave Rennes and go to Rome;

Libermann often used to say that most of those who initially rushed to join their little society were not destined to stay in it.¹⁵ The departure of M. de la Brunière had the same effect on three other confreres who were equally talented. For this, let us praise the secret plans of Mary. No doubt these young men, full of eagerness to do good and so devoted to the salvation of their neighbours, were too brilliant and outstanding for the work that she had in mind; she wanted to pour out her blessings on our poor black people by choosing the unlikeliest of workmen to accomplish it!

Of Libermann's stay in Rome we are only giving that part of Tisserant's memorandum which talks of the draft of the Rule and explains the choice of the name, "Missionaries of the Most Holy Heart of Mary."

Draft of the Rule

M. Libermann, while no longer putting any hope in men but reluctant to depend on God alone, decided to wait quietly and unnoticed until Mary chose to give growth to the seed she had planted. He retired alone to the little garret which served as his home. He only went out to visit one or other of the churches in Rome, or to help and instruct some poor person, or go to the prison to teach and maybe convert some prisoner. He led a very frugal life, sometimes suffering from fevers or other sicknesses. Now that he had no close friend in Rome, apart from Jesus and Mary, he felt drawn to begin writing the

- He was the man who would cover Libermann's costs on his journey and during his stay in Rome.

¹⁵ "He told me this several times during the holiday he spent at Issy, without specifically naming anyone, nor giving any clue as to who it might be." (one of Tisserant's notes.)

Constitutions for the little work which had brought him to the Holy City. He felt strongly that God wanted him to do this, although his own inclination would have been to take care of his own soul in solitude. But every time he made a start, he found he had no idea how to go about it and abandoned his plans, even though he knew that God wanted him to do this work. In the midst of all this confusion, seeking enlightenment and blessing from God upon what he was undertaking, he decided to make a pilgrimage to the seven major basilicas of Rome. It was then that he got the idea of consecrating the work to the Heart of Mary and to give her name to our missionaries.¹⁶

Libermann himself had always had a very strong devotion to the Heart of Mary. It had developed especially during the time he spent with the Eudist Fathers, a Congregation consecrated to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Once he appreciated the marvels wrought by her Immaculate Heart through the Archconfraternity, the devotion became the centre of his spiritual life. But he had to take great care not to impose his own personal wishes over those of the good Lord or his confreres. He was determined to put great emphasis on devotion to the Heart of Mary, because we had all benefited so much from her help. But it was not yet clear enough that God and Mary wanted this to be the first and fundamental article of our Institute, making the Holy Heart of Mary our principle patron.

Several potential members of the future society had made it known, often by letter to M Libermann, that they would be very happy to see our community adopt the title of "Priests of the Holy Heart of Mary". But, with the exception of one, all the other confreres who had asked for this finally decided that God was not calling them to stay with us. Le Vavasasseur, who was

¹⁶ Cf. L S III p360, letter of 9 February, 1844, to M. Desgenettes

so devoted to Mary, had wanted us at one point to be called "The Fathers of the Cross".

Now it happened that at the time that this clear-cut idea came to Libermann, he had been unable to work on the Constitutions each time he took up his pen to do so. But inspired by the wish of the others, he decided to devote the society to the Holy Heart of Mary. Immediately, all his difficulties vanished. He wanted to honour her as the model for apostolic life. The more he fixed on this idea, the more Mary enlightened him, far beyond anything he had known until then. It was thus that he wrote the Rule, just as it is today. When it was finished,¹⁷ he realised, for the first time, that it was Mary herself who had inspired him when writing these regulations; the order and sequence that emerged was something that he had never even dreamt of.¹⁸

While he was doing this work, he received no news from the Vatican. He seemed to have been forgotten, almost as if a test was being made of his decision to leave everything in the hands of God. Even his conduct was vilified and his motives were questioned by some.¹⁹ Humanly speaking, everything was lost. He was running out of money and he began to think about hiding himself away, forgotten by all, so that he could live solely for God, in Jesus Christ. The moment when everything would blossom with regard to the poor blacks, was entirely in the hands of Mary.

¹⁷ " M. Libermann did not finish drawing up the draft of the rule until the beginning of 1840" (note by P. Tisserant)

¹⁸ "The order and sequence is not perfect and requires some serious correction; but it did in fact happen as if by itself, and when it was finished, M Libermann saw that the order was much better than anything he had hoped for." (This is a note added by Father Libermann).

¹⁹ "Libermann was accused of going to Rome to take advantage of the good faith of the Holy See and to get ordained, despite his illness". (Note from P. Tisserant.)

But first, let us cast our minds back, to see what Mary was doing to bring about this project which was so close to her heart. For the last three months, the Holy See had been collecting all the necessary information it needed about M. Libermann. The Papal Nuncio in France conducted the enquiry himself. From the Seminary in Paris, he received nothing but glowing testimonials. Encourage by this favourable response, the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda set about examining in detail the document that Libermann had submitted.

We are leaving out most of the material relating to Libermann's time in Rome, as well as his return to France, to the Major Seminary in Strasbourg. There he prepared himself for his ordination which took place at Amiens on the 18th September, 1841.

We take up the thread again at the Congregation's noviciate of La Neuville, with the temptation of Frederic Le Vasseur, who had left the noviciate in January, 1841. On the 2nd February, 1842, having overcome his temptation to leave the Congregation, he made his consecration to the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary at the church of Notre-Dame-des-Victoires and recognised Libermann as the superior of this infant Congregation.

On the feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple and the Purification of the Blessed Virgin, at the foot of the altar of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in the church of Notre-Dames-des-Victoires, M. Le Vasseur was granted victory over the temptation²⁰ which had been the longest and most violent he had ever experienced.

²⁰ The following is an explanatory note of Libermann himself: "What gave rise to this temptation of our good brother were the opinions of men, otherwise genuinely pious and capable. M. Le Vasseur consulted too many different people, receiving imprudent advice from some; as a result, he was thrown into

It had been a terrible trial,²¹ but the outcome was so beneficial to his soul that this more than made up for his enormous suffering. It was during the night of this feast, which Le Vavas seur spent entirely in the shrine of Mary that calm returned to him at the very moment he made his promises to her. He had asked our Superior for permission to make his consecration according to the rule of our little Society

doubt and confusion and made several serious mistakes. For the three months that this continued, the only way Le Vavas seur could escape was to take refuge with all speed in the Heart of Mary by going to the noviciate chapel.

What made me aware of his interior agony (which was the very crucible by which he would be purified during the retreat he made at Notre-Dame-des-Victoires before making his promises), was when I saw the suffering he was going through. He told me of this several times and it brought tears to my eyes when he said that what he had undergone was infinitely more painful and frightening than anything he could ever have imagined.

If what I have written falls into the hands of anyone with me in the noviciate, I beg them to lay no accusation of weakness against our brother. We are all so weak but God knows what we can take and what we cannot and He looks after us in his great mercy. Prayer and acknowledgement of our own weakness, supported by courage and patience, will build up our interior life and, with fidelity to grace, will lead to sanctity. Le Vavas seur knew this and earned the fruit of victory over himself which led to his own spiritual advance and that of the souls Mary destined him to direct. "Homo non tentatus, quid scit? Oportet per multas tribulationes intrare in regnum Dei".

When Le Vavas seur left us to go to Bourbon just a few days after making his promises, although the temptation I've spoken about had passed and a stronger desire to sacrifice himself for God had replaced his dreadful trial, nevertheless he still had a trace of the suffering which had hurt him so much. However, the letters he wrote us show that through the grace of Our Lord and his Blessed Mother, despite this lingering weakness, he had gained the victory as can be seen from the fruit of his work."

²¹ This temptation was nothing compared to the one he was to experience in Bourbon, which lasted for two years.

(although it was not yet completed) at the very altar at which Mary had already shown us so many favours.

Two days after the Superior had brought us all together again, the Heart of Mary appointed Le Vavas seur to be the instrument of her merciful love to the slaves on Bourbon. He set out, freed from the dreadful temptation which had tortured him for so long, full of confidence, love and hope in Our Lady, of whom he spoke so effusively in all his letters. For the sake of all my dear brothers in the Society of the Holy Heart of Mary, I am reproducing here the words of consecration used by him at the foot of the shrine. He offered himself to her, and through her to Jesus, as a priest-servant of the poor of Christ:

Paris. 2nd February, Feast of the Purification.

My dear father,

Here I am, entirely at your disposal for the sake of Mary. I have spent the whole of the night at the feet of our good Mother, as a victim begging her to receive me and offer me to the adorable Trinity and her Son. I implored her to let me know if she wants me to do more than I did this morning when I made the promises which I sent to you on 30th January. [...] I made these promises relying solely on the grace of our Master and the help of his Mother. I hope she will keep me faithful to them, to her glory and that of her Son....It seems that I have another heart for you. I would like you to read out these promises to our confreres at La Neuville. Perhaps you would prefer that I renew them in their presence next Sunday.

Here are the promises I made:

"Desirous of giving my soul and to consecrate myself for ever to the Most Holy Trinity and to our adorable Master, Our Lord Jesus Christ, so that all that I have and all that I know be used solely for their greater glory, and being completely unworthy of

offering myself and putting myself forward to their infinity holiness, I have had recourse to the Most Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary, who is all love and mercy, who receives those who turn to her with so much more tenderness because they are wretched sinners.

I give and consecrate myself without reserve to this divine Heart, the refuge of sinners and to Jesus Christ our adorable Master, so that he may use me for his own greater glory, according to his will and desire.

And I recognise that as M Libermann has been chosen and appointed Superior of this new-born Congregation by those who wish to be part of it, he is for me, on earth, Mary herself... It is through him that I will know the will of her holy Heart and be employed and directed according to her intentions. I want to respect and love him as I would Mary and to be just as open to his wishes as I would be to hers.

I would have liked to have consecrated myself to this holy Heart, through the person of my Superior, by vows of obedience and poverty, but since it seems that I must wait some time for this privilege, whilst still keeping this intention to thus make the vows, and because it is without any reservation that I want to give myself to the Heart of Mary, I promise at the feet of my good Mother, in the presence of my adorable Master and of his sacrament of love, obedience to M. Libermann whom I recognise as Superior of the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Most Holy Heart of Mary. I give myself to him to be used in the building up of this Congregation, in accordance with the rules drawn up at the end of 1841. I will take the appointment that he chooses to give me and I promise that I will never leave him or the Congregation without his permission.

I also cede to him, for the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Holy Heart of Mary, everything that I own or may possess

in the future, no longer keeping anything for myself. I give all to the most Holy Heart of Mary”.

M. Libermann answered this letter from our dear brother with the letter which follows; I ask all who read it to reflect on it in the presence of God. Let us always remember this: it is our unity in the love of Jesus that will give us strength and assure the future of our little Congregation. If I have put any obstacles in the way of building this unity between us, I beg pardon of God and of my confreres.

La Neuville, 4th February, 1842

Jesus, Mary, Joseph

My very dear brother,

I am most unworthy of the consolation that Our Lord gives me, because I deserve nothing of the sort and should rather receive troubles and sorrows. God knows I would never reject them. All I ask of him is that we may be united by his great love amongst us. I hope that he will grant me this favour, even at the cost of the greatest afflictions that he wishes to send me. Rest assured, I fear nothing, because I am confident that the Holy Heart of Mary will take pity on us and allow no enemy to disturb us, particularly at this time when we have the greatest need of peace and unity. Our Holy Mother has given you a tremendous grace; I hope that I too will profit by this for the good of our poor Society and the saving of many souls. I have done nothing myself, I have earned nothing. On the contrary, I offer myself to our Lord and our holy Mother, willing to suffer every sort of hardship that divine Providence finds proper to send me for the benefit of this poor, little work. By

the grace of God, I will be very happy, even in the midst of great hardships, as long as we retain our unity in the love of Jesus and Mary.

I often think of the Order for the Redemption of Captives. They had several founders, but those saintly men lived in perfect unity of mind and heart, in pursuit of the glory of God. We lack this unity, even though we are such poor men and seem to be incapable of doing anything for the glory of God. Our divisions are preventing us from carrying out the task that has been entrusted to us, even though we are children of Mary as these men were.

I will tell you something now that I have never shared with anybody before. I used to be completely crushed by the thought that the enemy still had some influence over us. But what consoled me, and even gave me great hope, was that in spite of everything, the protection of Mary, our dearest Mother, showed itself in so many ways. This led me to believe that it was her intention to destroy the power of this enemy. [...] Mary is here to help us; she will complete the destruction of this contemptible enemy and we will overcome his every ruse and strategy. Forget the past, my dear brother, and rejoice in the present. Give yourself entirely to Mary, who is so full of love for us, and live as her child.

Yours in the Holy Heart of Mary,

Libermann, priest