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### 09. When a missionary can no longer work because of sickness

Christian de Mare CSSp

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## When a missionary can no longer work because of sickness

*To Father Pierre Logier<sup>1</sup>*

*Father Pierre Logier<sup>2</sup> entered the novitiate at Easter, 1849. He left for Guinea the following year, but had to return to France a little less than twelve months later due to some kind of mental illness. However, he improved sufficiently to be able to lead an almost normal life at Notre Dame du Gard where he taught theology. There was a long delay in sending him back to Guinea. He finally made it there but died soon after in 1859 at the age of thirty-three. How should one carry on with one's life during a time of inactivity caused by health problems?*

Paris 6<sup>th</sup> May 1851

My very dear Confrere,

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ fill your soul!

I have just been having another look at your letter of 13<sup>th</sup> February and I hope that my reply will encourage and help you to remain in the peace of Jesus and Mary. May it also help you to live in humility of heart and submission to the good pleasure of God, whatever the cost.

The goodness of Jesus has chosen you out of many other seminarians to offer up yourself for his glory and for the salvation of the poor and unfortunate people of Guinea. Let God decide for himself how he wishes to sacrifice his victim. For your part, keep your soul in peace and your heart in contentment because you are at the disposal of Our Lord who does what he wants with you.

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<sup>1</sup> N. D. XIII, pp. 138-139

<sup>2</sup> See Index of Names

What else can you do apart from leaving yourself in his hands in order to be all that seems good to him? The best and most perfect thing you can do is to remain completely submissive and abandoned to his will. You seem to be unhappy because your Superiors are making you do menial tasks; I know you would much rather that they used you for some great work in the service of other people.

But there are two ways of working for the salvation of souls, one active and the other passive. The active way consists in instructing people and performing the other outward functions of the sacred ministry. The passive way means suffering according to what God decides for us. I can assure you that the second way is infinitely more useful than the first. Look at the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the sufferings she endured for the salvation of the world! Mary never went about preaching the Gospel of her Son, but suffered in her heart; that was the personal apostolate given to Mary. But was she not the greatest of all the Apostles? And Jesus himself left the work and incomparable success to his apostles, while he suffered and died for the salvation of the world, showing us that the true apostolate consists in self-immolation. So accept your sufferings with peace and love.

Now you have no need to go searching for something to do for the glory of God. Never say to yourself that you are not as useful as another person. For the moment, God has given you an apostolate of suffering and later on, you will work for him as and when he sees fit.

Above all, have peace in your soul, happiness in your heart, and calm in your mind. Don't worry about anything, absolutely nothing! Be like a little child in the bosom of his loving family: he has no worries and spends his days full of happiness.

May you be filled with the peace of Jesus and Mary.

I remain yours in their holy love,

*F. Libermann, Superior*