

CHAPTER II

Belley: 1839 - Nov. 1844

Marist Novitiate

Spiritual Director of Marist Boarding School

TO MILES. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 4/145 VI 10)

Praise to Mary!

Grenoble, August 19, 1839

My dear sisters,

I paid Miss Marsallat the 19 francs for the carriage; you can keep for yourselves what you would have paid. - I saw the Bishop and, just as he encouraged you to trust completely in God and his Blessed Mother, I feel obliged to speak to you along the same lines. Our Lord knows the sacrifice I am making, but it would be wrong to think that you would be its first victims. You will not be abandoned. I tell you in the name of Jesus Christ: God would rather perform a miracle to come to your help. So then, have total trust, and surrender into the hands of God - this is my prayer for you.

The Bishop encouraged me to leave from here so as not to upset you again, and that I might not have to witness the tears of my parishioners. You know how deeply I feel things! I hid it from you...but if I were to return to Monteynard, either I would fall sick, or I would run the risk of losing my vocation. May the holy will of God be done! If I should die, we would each have the same merits. It was necessary that you share my sacrifice as Mary shared that of Jesus Christ. God be praised! Please stop crying. You are losing me for a time in order to find me more conformed to Jesus Christ; you also will be more conformed to our Lady of Seven Sorrows. I hope also that Our Lord will graciously accept the small sacrifice that I am making of my whole being. I am not worth very much, but even were I worth less, I still would offer myself completely to God.

I'm happy to reach the goal I desired. It is very difficult for you. Look toward heaven - one day we shall all be there forever, all three of us.

I leave you in the arms of Mary.

Your brother,
J. Eymard

P.S. You may leave my personal belongings at my successor's, the Pastor. I will have them picked up in three or four weeks. Please don't condemn me. I had already sent a small package ahead before I left. I took everything else I needed with me.

I suggest that you both spend a week at St. Marcellin with Fr. Brun, who will receive you like two sisters.

I will write to you soon. I hope that my letters won't renew your sadness.

TO FR. JEAN-VICTOR BARET
(V 1/6)

Lyons, August 21, 1839

My dear friend,

Finally I arrived here,¹ happy, content and quite well. I was welcomed as you will be, with fondness, like a brother. They were expecting you and felt sorry not to see you. "But you shall see him soon!" This hope consoled them. Hurry up, my dear, we are in Paradise here in every way. We had to suffer a great deal to get here; but once we have entered, we are so happy! I spoke about you to Fr. Chatrousse and to the Bishop. You will have your replacement soon. Be ready: as soon as Fr. Jardin is free, you will be. Alas! How unhappy we are when we are separated from what we desire! But don't worry. These Gentlemen² wanted me to write to tell you to come before the 28th; but we will make this sacrifice. I'm writing to Sayetat to come. Try to see him as soon as possible, even if you have to go especially for that. These Gentlemen have an extreme need. One of their brothers is leaving, and it would be providential if Sayetat came.

Try to sell my books to pay Mr. Format and to pay the 4 francs 80 which I owe to Mr. Gallet, the road-constructor. If you can, sell my Repertory on Scripture. It cost me 28 francs. Give it for 20 to 22 francs. Also sell Bourdaloue to Fr. Guignier, at least 20 cents a volume. Also sell the "*Thesaurus Patrum*" for about 20 francs; but don't sell any of my folios. Hold on to your valuable books, especially Bossuet. Bring your Rendant or mine.

If you could also make some money to ship my things, that would be fine; but now I believe that Fr. Dumolard won't delay in finding someone. Mr. Format, etc. "*Vir, esto fortis.*"³ Your goal deserves and requires it.

Your friend,
Eymard

Fr. Baret
Pastor at la Motte d'Aveillans
via La Mure (Isere)

Aug. 27 - To Belley for the annual retreat of the Marist Society.

¹ At the Marist novitiate.

² Gentlemen: refers to the Marist Priests.

³ Man, be strong.

TO MILES. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 5/145 VI 10)

Lyons, September 6, 1839

My dear sisters,

As I return from our retreat at Belley, I am writing to tell you that you still have a brother in this world and he is not so ungrateful as to forget you. On the contrary, his love for you becomes even stronger since it draws its strength from God. I'm beside myself with joy and I can't thank the Blessed Virgin enough for having called me into a Society that bears her name and imitates her virtues. I have surely felt all the pain my coming here has caused you. My sacrifice seemed small in proportion to yours; yet Jesus Christ was calling me; could I disobey Him? He was calling me for my greater good; could I refuse His grace? So, I urge you to love our Lord. Do not sadden him with useless tears. Become strong in order to rise above natural feelings. And, as I told you so often, place all your confidence in God and God will be your Father.

Now to speak about myself, I am feeling fine and I hope that my health will continue to improve. When the soul is content, the body often feels the effects of it.

Concerning my personal belongings, I sometimes wonder; what if nothing were sent me, what would I do? The same as the poor do. Surely my trust in God is too great for me to give in to despair. If nothing were sent to me, I believe I would even rejoice in God's sight rather than become sad.

But that is all pointless. Please send my underwear and the rest of my clothing, except the two used cassocks. You can do what you want with those.

I had put a few devotional books in the same trunk as the flowers. You may keep them. If you should like some of them, you may take them, but only for yourself and not to be given away.

I had put a few devotional books in the trunk where there were flowers. You may leave them there, or if Father Bard should want them, give them to him with the two large volumes entitled *Dictionnaire du Droit Canon* [Dictionary of Canon Law].

Don't forget my two books of hymns as well as my new biretta.

Keep the fine silk stockings which you wanted to give me; they are too thin and too fancy.

Please send me some towels and a few sheets, not those that are so big, but a few of each, five or six pairs. I would also like at least one blanket.

I suggest that you sell all that is not useful to you. Use whatever furnishings you can and get rid of the rest.

If you need anything, I will send you my small money order of 100 francs which I expect to receive in October.

Address my belongings to: Mr. LeBorgne⁴, Rue Roulage, Saint Louis, Grenoble, and put my address on each package. My address is Fr. Eymard, Marist, Montee Saint Barthelemy #4, Lyons.

Please write as soon as possible to give me news about yourselves.

All yours in our Lord,

Your brother,
J. Eymard, p. [priest]

P.S. Don't send me any pictures, nor cane, nor coverings, but do send me my syringe.

Miss Marianne Julian-Eymard
rue du Breuil
at La Mure [Isere]

⁴ Unclear whether he is a Marist priest.

TO FR. JEAN-VICTOR BARET

(v 2/6)

Lyons, September 6, 1839

My very dear friend,

As I return from our retreat, I am writing you a few words to get twice as many in return. You would have been so happy to attend this very fatherly and touching retreat! Forty Marists were there. Oh! my dear, what a difference between these retreats and ours! If you knew how they love one another in this Society of Mary! I heard wonderful things, I will share them with you personally. Besides, it's impossible to write them, they are worthy of Heaven. I am still very happy. They are expecting several novices these days, and novices, my dear, who will put us to shame. I saw four of them; a Superior of a Seminary, a notary, and 2 heads of boarding houses in Lyons. They even mention others. It's wonderful to see how they tell one another the trials each one has passed through. We aren't the only ones for whom it cost a lot to come here. This grace comes at a cost.

The Superior General is coming to Lyons to settle here. What a joy it will be for us to have him here!

Write me a little, I want to know what you are doing and what is happening with my things. Tell me something about Fr. Dumolard. Share my letter with him.

I don't know where my sister is. Since my arrival I haven't received any letter. It isn't that I am lonely, no; but I would like to know, in order to console her.

If you had the opportunity to see a child from Majeuil, named Severin Ravet, try to take him in. Tell him that I found a place for him to be a Marist brother. On my request they would be willing to receive him. They would even make great sacrifices, because instead of 600 francs, they would ask him only 25 francs, which would be used to buy paper and books. I know that this modest sum will be difficult for them. Ask him if he could have it; otherwise, I will arrange it, but he could enter only on All Saints Day.

Write to me, I'm longing for news about you.

All yours,
J. Eymard

Fr. Baret
Pastor at La Motte d'Aveillans
at La Mure (Isere)

TO MILES. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 6/145 VI 10)

V.M.⁵

Lyons, October 16, 1839

My dear sisters,

I received your letter. I was quite worried about your trip to Saint-Marcellin, but a letter I received from Miss Melanie reassured me that you had left Chatte in good health.

I was told that you had been well received. I thank God for that. I was also informed that you had gone to Notre Dame de l'Ozier. Well, I pray that the Blessed Virgin, into whose hands I entrust you, will obtain many important graces for you: especially that you will want only what God wills, since that is where all perfection lies.

Now to speak about my health: I can assure you that I have not been sick one moment. On the contrary, I have an excellent appetite. As for the climate of Lyons, I am accustomed to it now. Besides, it's much warmer in Lyons than in La Mure. Also, this more active life that I am living is better for me. It is often said that contentment brings happiness. I can assure you that I am very happy that I can sanctify myself more perfectly in this way. If you love me, do let me continue to live a life of obedience. That is the state for me. To leave it would be to prepare my bier, or to lose all happiness on earth.

I entrusted Monteynard into the hands of God. Do as I did and do not worry. The Good Lord does not want you to do so.

I can assure you that all those regrets which are causing harm to religion and making people abandon it cause me great remorse. I am afraid that I was building on shifting sands. If it is as if people loved me more than the Good Lord. So it was necessary for me to leave.

You can be sure that no one loves you more than I do. The world may call me ungrateful, but surely the Good Lord judges otherwise. You will always make me very happy with news about yourselves and I will always respond in the same way.

Your brother,
J. Eymard

P.S. Please send my coat by mail because I will need it. Don't forget my sheepskin jacket.

Miss Marianne Julian-Eymard
rue du Breuil
at La Mure [Isere]

⁵ Abbreviation for Vive Marie: Praised be Mary. Tr.

TO FR. DUMOLARD

(V 2/2)

V.J.⁶

Lyons, October 16, 1839

My dear friend,

It is high time I write to you! I have been wanting to for such a long time, but I did not dare, for fear that my letter would be intercepted. I knew the rumors which were circulating and how you were being watched. So now, may God take care of it. I have been here two months. It's as if it were two days. I was happy when I entered, I was at home, the will of God was fulfilled. Eight days after I entered, I had the joy of making my retreat with the community. I cannot tell you what this retreat was like, the brotherhood that reigned there, the holy joy which gave life to all the meetings, the constant edification of the elders. How they love one another in the Society of Mary!

In that retreat, I had the advantage of meeting most of the Marists. Since then, a Marist has died in the diocese of Belley. He died blessed and surrounded by his brothers. At that time, I remembered then what you had told me several times: we must prepare for death!

I tell myself that every day, as you do. It's true that when dying in the bosom of a Community, we don't have the useless hope of being grieved as [one would be] in a Parish; but there are consolations, encouragement, supports that it would be futile to seek in the world.

I heard about the obstacles they created for Fr. Baret and the beautiful colors they used to paint a picture for him: genuine zeal, fidelity to his Post, [the possibility] to do good wherever we are, to prefer a certain good to an uncertain good and then to let the Bishop act. So, they say so much that the one who is the subject of it is sometimes persuaded that such is the will of God.

When I learned all that, I couldn't help thanking the Lord most sincerely for having delivered me from all those traps, and I said: Alas! Perhaps, of the three, I will be the only one chosen to be a Marist. I didn't deserve such a preferential treatment.

They are writing to me to reproach me. They are trying to draw me away from my place of rest, but God has begun and Mary will obtain my perseverance, and if it is necessary to free me completely from my laziness, the apostolic grace of Oceania.

At this time, the novitiate is increasing in numbers. We will have the advantage of being greatly inspired by the example of several Gentlemen who made great sacrifices to get here.

Since we came last year, many repairs have been made. We now have the whole house; we have two, not to say three chapels in our house.

I was very surprised to learn through letters that I had been sick. I didn't know it yet! No, my dear friend, in a Parish we never have the temporal advantages that are found in a Community.

I hope that you will give me news about yourself right away, because I long for it very much.

I learned that your esteemed uncle had died. What a beautiful life!

I am and I will always be,

Your friend,
J. Eymard

Fr. Dumolard
Rector of Villard-St. Christophe
via La Mure (Isere)

⁶ Abbreviation for Vive Jesus, or Praise [be] Jesus!

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CO 10

TO MILES. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 7/145 VI 10)

V.M.

Lyons, November 9, 1839

My dear sisters,

I'm taking advantage of the same messenger who brought my coat to thank you for it and give you some news about myself. I'm doing well, and I am still very happy about the beautiful vocation to which the Blessed Virgin has called me. At present, I desire only one thing: that you should share in my happiness. First, by urging you to adore God's will and then, by imitating the hidden life of the Blessed Virgin as much as possible. After all, if we are separated from each other for a few days in this life, that is not such a great loss. What we should deeply desire is to find each other in heaven. That is why we should try to detach ourselves from all that is not in harmony with the love of God in order to love only Jesus Christ crucified and hidden in the Blessed Sacrament.

It seems to me that people in the country are much happier than city people. Here we see all classes of people as well as the whole gamut of human misery.

I would also like to throw some light on a suffering of yours. You thought that my purpose was to go to the foreign missions. If I had the necessary health, I would cry for joy. But I don't have that ambition. I will remain in Lyons.

With all my brotherly love, I beg you to take good care of yourselves and to rejoice in the Lord. This is what I often ask Mary on your behalf.

Your brother,
J. Eymard

P.S. Remember me to Joseph Desmoulins. Although I am in Lyons, I think of him daily, please God I will still be able to help him in the Lord!

Miss Marianne Julian-Eymard
rue du Breuil
La Mure (Isere)

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CO 11

TO MILES. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 8/145 VI 10)

V+M

Lyons, November 21, 1839

My dear sisters,

Today, on the beautiful feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin in the Temple, I was happy to offer you along with myself to Mary at Notre Dame de Fourviere. Each time that I visit Fourviere, and I go twice a week, I always pray to our good Mother for you. Surely, if these prayers of mine were as efficacious as they are frequent, you would be as happy as a spouse of Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ crucified, can be in this world.

Belley: 1839 - Nov. 1844

I saw Fr. Faure and I became increasingly aware of how great this good friend's attachment to you really is, since he didn't mind making such a long trip. Certainly, if it were human motives that had guided me in the choice of a more perfect life, Fr. Faure's presence and his opinions would have influenced me. But since I am not placing my confidence in my own strength nor in any human qualifications, I put all my trust in Mary. I surrender my destiny to her and I hope to persevere in this wonderful vocation: to bear her name, to serve her, and to make her loved.

Although I don't bring you any glory, nonetheless it seems to me that your devotion to Mary ought to increase your happiness in having a Marist as a brother. If I am no help to you, then you can address yourselves more confidently to Mary and as if by right.

Find your consolation then in the Blessed Virgin, your patroness, and remember that Mary was greater at the foot of the Cross than when she had the joy of living with our Lord.

Oh, if I were worthy to be heard in prayer, you wouldn't be troubled by the fear of future failure and unhappiness. And there would be no need for my heart to be torn by learning that you are still crying. God has tested you and, if you have great trust, the trial will disappear. Do you realize that your sadness might afflict the hearts of Jesus Christ and his Blessed Mother, and that by shortening your own days in this way, you will surely shorten mine as well? See here! Although you may have been told that I am hardhearted and ungrateful, that I no longer wanted you, God will be my Judge. He knows how attached I am to you and that no human motive brought me here. I am sad that you have let yourselves be taken in by malicious and lying words. That is how you will know what the world is really like. Yes, God alone is lovable.

I am sending you my money order since Fr. Faure wasn't able to bring it. Because the gift will cost more than 100 francs, I hesitate to take on such a large expense. Be consoled. Never has the thought ever entered my mind to cheat you out of it. Such a thought has never come to me and never will. I have a will here in your favor. It will be the first and the last because I know that, if you should outlive me, your intention is to do good works with what is left over. So, I am giving you everything, persuaded that you will not forget that I am your brother. Don't let the devil tempt you any longer on this matter!

Thank Mme. Reynier for her prayerful remembrance. She can be sure that I will always keep her close to you in my poor prayers. Ordinarily, I say Mass at six-thirty.

When you see Fr. Ripert, please tell him that my feelings for him are always the same.

I feel well and I pray that you do, too. It is with that intention that I began a novena for you at Fourviere yesterday, offering all that I could do to obtain what you need.

Your brother in our Lord,
J. Eymard,⁷

Please write to me right away to let me know that you received my letter so that I won't worry. I am afraid that it might get lost.

Miss Marianne Julian-Eymard
rue du Breuil
at La Mure (Isere)

As early as December 1839, Father Eymard was named Spiritual Director of the College (high school) of Belley by Father Colin S.M., the Founder of the Marists. Father Eymard had not yet completed his novitiate.

⁷ Julian Eymard, Priest.

TO MR. GAY (FR. GAY, S.M.)
(VI 1/1)

Belley, August 3, 1840

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE⁸

WHOEVER LIVES BY THE RULE, LIVES BY GOD. (St. Paul)

It is time to warm my cold heart. It is for lack of heavenly food that my soul is reduced to this state of mediocrity which is ruining me. To come out of it, I will use the following means.

DEVOTIONS

Full morning and evening prayer in a peaceful place. The more suffering there is in our prayer, the more we touch the heart of God.

Two decades of the rosary. Mary will always be the object of my most tender love.

Devout reading. I will read the life of a saint, etc....but I will continue with the same book in order to avoid inconstancy which is so harmful to piety.

I will approach the Sacraments on the Feast of the Assumption and the Nativity.

I will make a daily examen with my schedule as guide.

My work will not exceed two hours a day as my strength allows.

Should anyone proclaim that he is an unbeliever or immoral, he will be like a devil to me. - If necessity obliges me to be in his company, I will reply negatively.

If I am questioned, I will proclaim my faith openly. If it is ridiculed, I will leave his company or win a double victory by my silence.

I will try to remain calm, avoiding the passion of violent desires. I will train myself to holy detachment, waiting for God's will. All my prayers will tend in this direction.

Oh my good Angel, remind me of my promise, present it to Mary and you, oh Mother, to Jesus. Let it be one of the flowers in my crown to begin and to persevere.

Belley
August 3, 1840

⁸ Holiday Schedule outlined by Father Eymard for Mr. Gay when he was a student at the minor seminary of Belley. He later became a Marist.

TO MILES. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 9/145 VI 10)

V.J.L.M.⁹

Belley, August 9, 1840

My dear sisters,

It's time that I write to you. I've been waiting and worrying a long time to receive news from you. If you wanted to break my heart by not answering my last two letters, then you succeeded. You ought to know that by a farewell to the world we don't say goodbye to brotherly love. I certainly deserve that you should no longer be attached to me. I realize how much I made you suffer all my life, but what can I say! If the Good Lord wants me to be your cross, he also wants you to love that cross. My dear sisters, it is better that you should cry over my body than if I had had the misfortune of making you cry over my soul.

It is true that I am of no use to you in a material sense, but the Blessed Virgin, to whom I recommend you each day, will take care of everything. Therefore, I ask you only one thing: that you write to let me know how you are. If I can't console you, at least I will sympathize with your suffering and pray with greater fervor...

As for myself, I am well. The holidays have begun and now we are resting a little. I was sorry to learn about the large bankruptcies that happened in Grenoble. How I thank the Good Lord now that I did not sell the little we have with your consent. At the moment everyone is talking about bankruptcy. No one can invest money except for a mortgage.

My dear sisters, be strong and confident, please. I will not go to see you this year. My presence would only renew your grief. Besides, the Good Lord wants this sacrifice because I could not go to La Mure without visiting Monteynard, and I would not have the strength to go mourn at the tomb of the people whom I loved so much.

Please do write to me. You know that I never delay in answering you. I experience a real joy in writing to you.

I will offer Mass for you on Assumption Day. Please unite your intention to mine.

I will probably make a trip to Saint Francis Regis. There, to be sure, you will have the lion's share of my prayers!

All yours in our Lord,
J. Eymard

Miss Julian-Eymard
rue du Breuil
at La Mure (Isere)

(Express Mail)

⁹ Abbreviation: Praise be Jesus and Mary.

TO MILES. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 10/145 VI 10)

Belley, September 27, 1840

My dear sisters,

Continue to learn how to write. I am pleased to see your progress. I can read you very well. When you are reading, study closely how the words are written, in order to be able to write them correctly. You need to learn how to count the letters.

Your letter pleased me very much. May the Good Lord and his holy Mother bless you, for you are always present to me before God. I ask nothing from heaven without asking a share for you.

Concerning the money that you mention, about the 8 francs, I had not taken care of the eight masses. You know that when the novenas were unpaid I was doing only the first and the last [days], in order not to lose everything. If you would keep the money, I will take care of the eight masses as soon as possible. Always join your intentions with mine on the principal feasts of our Lord and the Blessed Virgin, because I am saying the Mass in part for you.

I have to give up the trip to La Mure, first of all because my trip to La Louvesc tired me, though I am better now. And then, it's time for the students' arrival and we must prepare everything. Then I will be absent during five or six days for business, to see our professors.

If the pastor is so kind as to mention me, please thank him. Oh, I do still love the good Pastor! He wished me well.

As for our friend Fr. Baret, he always has a place in my heart.

I thank the Good Lord for his fatherly providence toward his children. I was told that the harvest had been good.

I must leave you now, we are on retreat. I had to ask for a dispensation to see good Benvenin and answer you.

Always your beloved brother in Jesus Christ,

J. Eymard

Miss Julian-Eymard
rue du Breuil
at La Mure (Isere)

(Express Mail)

TO MILES. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 11/145 VI 10)

*M. Imm.*¹⁰

Belley, December 8, 1840

My very dear sisters,

For almost a month I have been wanting to write to you and I don't know how it happened that your letter found me so lazy. I am very ashamed. I cannot use my numerous occupations as a pretext, because I should rather have shortened my sleep to do it. So then, forgive my delay. Another time I will be more prompt. At the beginning of the school year there is so much to do that one really could be excused. I kept looking for a free moment to be able to converse with you. But my desire was always unfulfilled.

Finally, I'm writing to you today, on the beautiful day of the Immaculate Conception. You are the first ones. I have at least six letters to write. For two months now, I have lived somewhat as a recluse, without any contact with my friends. I am quite well, thanks to the Blessed Virgin, I have not been sick. It seems that my present work is well suited to my temperament. There is always much to do without too much pressure.

There were no tragedies here. Belley is slightly elevated, there is nothing to fear. But in the department¹¹ there was incalculable damage. It comes from God. People forget him too much, that is why we are being afflicted.

My good sister, you are still angry with me for not visiting you during my holidays. You can be sure that it was a great sacrifice for me. I thought of writing to you from Chatte saying that I would wait for both of you there. But I said to myself: I am not worth having my good sisters run so far; then I will have to console them, dry their tears, I whose heart will already be so heavy because of their sadness. As far as going to La Mure: a religious is under obedience. Then to tell the truth, I would not have had the strength to bear going there and receive a thousand complaints, a thousand reproaches from my friends. So then, please forgive me again for this fault, if it is one.

You give me no details about your health, nor about your affairs. Well, I also forgive you. Well, I'm going to say something naughty, but without a grudge. The one who addressed the letter advised you to finish your letter in this way: "You are right not to love us as much as your friends." First of all, I say it is a big lie and then that it was an idiotic thing to do to me. I can tell that the letter was dictated, for you would have been more gentle in reproaching me for this fault and for my laziness.

On the contrary, see how considerate I am: I pray more for you than for myself. Every morning, at 7:00, half of my Mass is for you and when I make the Stations of the Cross, you have half of everything that I ask for. Do the same for me. We are not eating at the same table, but we have the same heavenly Father and one day we shall be on the same throne.

J. Eymard, P.S.M.D.¹²

Miss Marianne Eymard
rue du Breuil
at La Mure (Isere)

¹⁰ Mary Immaculate.

¹¹ Geographic sector in France.

¹² Priest-Director, Society of Mary.

TO MILES. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 12/145 VI 10)

Praise Jesus!

Belley, January 2, 1841

Very dear sisters,

Yesterday I received your New Year's letter, wishing me a happy New Year. Thank you and I wish both of you the same: may it count as a good year for heaven. That is also your thought, I presume, because there has never been any happiness on earth since God said to Adam, the sinner: "You will eat your bread at the sweat of your brow." There will never be happiness on this earth for the disciples of Jesus Christ, but persecutions, the cross to carry, and continual sacrifices to be done. This is what Jesus Christ reserves for us in this world. This is how he has been nourishing you for a long time. But, my good sisters, when we wish to sculpture a stone and make it into a beautiful decoration for a palace, we don't choose a damaged stone, that would be useless. It would break under the first strokes of the sculptor. So, when we want to choose a friend, we test him before offering him our heart. Don't be surprised, then, if the Good Lord acts this way toward us. It is neither I nor others who are the cause of your sacrifices... we are only the occasion for them. It is Jesus Christ who wills it, who even uses your brother to make you suffer. What should you do? Consider yourself fortunate to have something to offer to God. It is not given to everyone to follow our Lord so closely.

You may study and consult as much as you want. The final answer to everything is that in order to enter into heaven one must suffer much on this earth. What I wish for you, my dear sisters, is the patience of the Gospel and the generosity of a spouse of the Lord. That is what I ask the Blessed Virgin for you, twice a day.

You can be sure that I have never prayed so much for you as I have since I became a religious. You are all that I love in this world and the only object of my desires in Jesus Christ.

I felt terrible about the accident that happened to you these past few days, but we must be consoled and put all our confidence in Jesus and Mary. Nothing will happen to you that Jesus Christ does not will and desire.

It might be well for you to insure your house with Mr. Clavel or, even better, take the Blessed Virgin as your insurance. Each year give her a small sum for this purpose and she will keep you well protected.

Tomorrow, on the feast of St. Joseph, I will offer Mass for you. Continue to improve your writing. I always like to see dear Nanette's signature. I don't understand why I don't see it any more... I hope she isn't sick.

In your letter I would like [to find] some details about the village. I was told that one of the Assistants had left because of some speculations. That is too bad! Please, my dear sisters, take my advice: show much respect toward priests. Show them great honor. Be happy to prove to them your esteem and confidence. But where all these speculations are concerned - whether to take one side rather than another - be very much on your guard. However, I know that in such matters you are prudent.

Please give me some news about Mr. Lesbros, mother Cros, of Mr. Fayolle's distinguished family. If you should have the opportunity, please extend to them all my very best wishes.

There's nothing new here. I am well enough. I love you always. Let me know your sufferings and I will carry half of them with you. I am your brother. I embrace you in the hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Your brother,
J. Eymard, p.¹³

¹³ Priest.

Belley: 1839 - Nov. 1844

Miss Marianne Eymard
rue du Breuil
La Mure (Isere)

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CO 17

TO MILES. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 13/145 VI 10)

V.M.

Belley, February 5, 1841

My very dear sisters,

This is a beautiful day for me. This is the day you became my godmother. You know that I called you by that sweet name a million times. When I entered the clerical state, I called you sister, but my feelings of godson will continue even in heaven. I owe you so much, especially for having kept me far from occasions of sin in my youth. I can say that you are partly responsible for my vocation to the clerical state. At that time I was surrounded by too many bad companions. I could have become quite evil. I beg our Lord to remember that on the great day of reward. I have always kept a great devotion for Saint Agatha, the patron saint of the anniversary of my baptism..

I also feel the need to write and ask you for news about yourselves. I've been worried ever since your accident which I referred to only briefly. I'm afraid that surprise and worry have made both of you sick. If you want to make me happy, just send me some news about yourselves.

Hardly had I sent my last letter than I was sorry that I had written you about the cross, rather than send words of consolation. I encouraged you to love the cross, and perhaps you were already carrying it. But then, since I couldn't console you in person, the only thing left for me to do was to point to Jesus Christ on the cross, the sight of heaven and the double crown awaiting you.

I am quite well. My great wish is to become a saint quickly so as to go to heaven and be with the Blessed Virgin, our poor father and my good mother. I am beginning to be bored on earth. I love you always; but don't hold it against me if all my love for you is aimed at your perfection and reaching heaven.

However, I pray our Lord to leave you a little longer on earth. I prefer to see you do your purgatory on earth. In your letter, give me news about Mme. Lesbros and give my best wishes to her, to Father Second, to Joseph Desmoulins. If anyone has died, do give me their names. I love so much to pray to God for those I have known!

All yours in our Lord,
J. Eymard, p.m. (Marist priest)

Miss Marianne Eymard
rue du Breuil
La Mure (Isere)

TO MILES. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 14/145 VI 10)

V.M.¹⁴

Belley, April 19, 1841

My good sister,

I had hoped to see you after Easter, but I have been prevented until now by a cold and a sore throat. I am doing better. In ten days or so we will have our First Communions. Since I am in charge of it, I cannot see you before that. So, at the beginning of May I will make a short visit to see you, please God.

The letters that I received about your state of health have made me very sad to be sure. They lead me to really pray for you. It is both a duty and a consolation for me to do so. Know how to benefit from this purgatory, this Calvary, this Cross. I know that nature does not like suffering, but that is how your faith will become more generous and your piety purer, uniting you more and more with our good Jesus. All you need to do is to be lovingly surrendered to the holy Will of our Lord.

For our part, we will ask God to leave you longer with us here¹⁵. The hope of seeing things improve consoles me. Please send me some news about yourself often.

I beg Nanette to take better care of herself. Her great heart leads her to forget her own needs, but one must take care of oneself. You have some friends who would without a doubt make it a pleasure to help her.

In your suffering, pray for me.

Your brother,
J. Eymard, p.m.

Miss Marianne Julian-Eymard
rue du Breuil
at La Mure (Isere)

TO MR. ANTONY MAYET
(VII 1/6)

Belley, May 17, 1841

Dear Sir,¹⁶

I want to be true to my word and transmit some contraband. I hope you will find the merchandise in good taste. Your sisters will be the judge. The loom is yours but the skilled labor raises the price, and this labor is highly skilled! It carries its heart, and a warm heart at that, for its dear Tonny. When it wants to be happy, it [tells] me about your adventures. When it needs to relax, it speaks about you. Oh! How your dear brother loves you!¹⁷ I have never yet found anyone whose friendship is so sensitive, so gentle.

¹⁴ Praised be Mary.

¹⁵ On earth.

¹⁶ In his letters to Antony Mayet, Fr. Eymard usually adopts a playful tone.

¹⁷ His brother, Fr. Mayet S.M., was a close and lifelong friend of Fr. Eymard.

Belley: 1839 - Nov. 1844

Your sister made him unbelievably happy by the painting she sent recently.

His health is mediocre. How sad that we cannot pass on strength just as we exchange friendship! He expects to go to Uriage¹⁸ immediately when the holidays [begin]. I wish I could go with him. If I can be free, I will be happy to do so.

Your brief visit has made your memory present and respected here. All our professors love you. A second visit would also be very good for us. You know that both brothers are like one to us, and believe me to be the third.

Eymard, Director

For the congregation, (a hymn) composed in Jan. 1841 by Mme. Mayet. Melody: Song of the South or: You Are Witnesses, (Canticle of Amiens)¹⁹

To Mr. A. Mayet
at Mr. Menthe & Co., brokers
Rue des Capucines
Lyons

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CO 21

TO MLES. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 15/145 VI 10)

V.M.

Belley, July 7, 1841

My dear sisters,

I am quite worried about your state of health. I was waiting for news from you every day and I see that you have forgotten me. I don't know if I hurt you in some way. It would certainly have been involuntary because you know very well that I love you. My two visits must have shown you that. Please write a few words. I hope that you are getting better and better. It's the only reason I can think of for your silence. I had a very good trip, but I didn't stop anywhere, not even in Grenoble where I felt greatly needed.

I am quite well. Take heart, my good sisters! With God's help, all will go well.

I returned from La Mure with a deep sense of gratitude toward our good friends who show you so much affection: Mme. Lesbros, the good and esteemed Fayolle family, joyful Victorine, etc.

My letter is short, but my heart is saying a great deal. Love our Lord Jesus Christ and his holy Mother.

Your brother,
J. Eymard, p.m.²⁰

Miss Marianne J-Eymard
rue du Breuil
at La Mure (Isere)

¹⁸ The mineral springs.

¹⁹ Here followed the text of a hymn of six strophes and one refrain. The refrain was composed of 4 lines of 12 meters each. At the end of this hymn, Fr. Eymard added: Goodbye dear friend, until next time; now it's your turn.

²⁰ Marist Priest.

TO MLLS. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 16/145 VI 10)

Belley, November 30, 1841

My dear sisters,

I am a little late in writing to you. Since I have nothing very interesting to tell you, it leads me to put off writing from one day to the next. However, because you love me, you may be worried.

I heard that you are doing well. I like to think that you are enjoying good health and that Nanette is recovering a little from so many nightly vigils and cares.

Yes, our Lord will have written these sufferings, sacrifices and devotedness into his book of love and life. My dear sisters, that is how God treats his own. He leaves them on Calvary a long time; but this good Father was on the cross before us and his holy Mother is at our side to encourage us. How beautiful your crown will be since the suffering Jesus shared so many bitter chalices with you. But excuse me, I notice that I am giving a sermon and I only wanted to recommend myself to your prayers, counsel you to be careful during your convalescence and also to let you know that I am well.

I was afraid that the return of the boys from La Mure might have saddened you. Don't let it bother you. I showed them as much affection as possible. But what could I do? Those poor children were too weak in their studies and I couldn't teach them everything in one day. They left in spite of me, especially Gaillard... Father Baret may possibly be angry, but they are the ones who should ask forgiveness rather than I. I had reason to be angry. Try to find out if Father Baret is unhappy about it, because then I would write to him...

I am in our Lord,

Your brother,
J. Eymard, p.m.

Miss Marianne Eymard
rue du Breuil
at La Mure (Isere)

TO MLLS. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 22/145 VI 10)

Grenoble, Thursday

My dear sister,

Yesterday a letter arrived from your Pastor telling me about your illness. This sad news really upset and troubled me. I left Belley immediately to come to be with you. To get there more swiftly, I took the more direct route. However, I cannot leave Grenoble today because there is no place available in the stagecoach. I can't leave until tomorrow. I will arrive at eight o'clock in the evening.

Belley: 1839 - Nov. 1844

Oh, my poor sister, I had set aside my holiday time to come to see you, that was settled. But since the Good Lord is trying you now I want to come to suffer with you.

Your poor brother who is deeply afflicted,

J. Eymard

Miss Marianne Eymard
rue du Breuil
at La Mure (Isere)

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CO 23

TO MLLS. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 17/145 VI 10)

*L.J.C. et M. Imm.*²¹

Belley, January 19, 1842

My dear sisters,

I notice that it has been a long time now since I've written to you. I wanted to write to you on New Year's day and then on two other occasions. But I was so busy that I put it off from day to day. Now I find myself surprised at the date. I learned that you were not too well. It's true that winter must make things harder, particularly with this changeable weather. That is enough of a reason to keep you more to your room. With nicer weather your strength will return. My good sisters, when we are suffering we often need all the virtue we can muster to be able to throw ourselves into the arms of God's Providence and resign ourselves lovingly to his adorable Will. But you are already doing this and, in any case, it's the only means of consolation.

So you saw one of my colleagues, Fr. Dubreuil. I was very happy that this kind man had visited both of you. You must have been very happy to see him because he is so gracious! I will thank him for it.

I learned that Fr. Cat was appreciated and that the fine Fr. Verdun does well. That really pleased me. And good Fr. Rabilloux is still zealous and delightful²². So much the better! I kept wanting to write to them, but my letters wouldn't be interesting for them.

For myself, I am still [here] with my large family of children. Therefore, what interests me can hardly interest them. Their ministry is altogether different from mine.

Please offer them my apologies. It's also true that I am lazy about writing. I believe that this is the first or second letter of New Year's greetings that I have written. I received a letter from my dear friend Fr. Fayolle. He is well. He makes me laugh so much when he talks about a job change that was offered to him: Chaplain at Mont-Fleury. Surely if those women thought that he would seek to flatter them or please them, they were sadly mistaken. He mentioned to me that the women thought he was too mean, too impolite, too inflexible. They were afraid of him. Yet, Fr. Fayolle is kind, very forthright, though without courtly manners or flattery. They would have needed to know him better in order to appreciate him more. But to conclude, he is quite happy about his experience...

My respects, please, to the fine family. I am well. Besides, I don't have time to become ill. Next time I will be more punctual.

²¹ Praised be Jesus Christ and Mary Immaculate.

²² The parish priests at La Mure.

Belley: 1839 - Nov. 1844

Please pray for me and know that you are always present in my prayers.

Your brother,
J. Eymard, p.m.

Miss Marianne Eymard
rue du Breuil
at La Mure (Isere)

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CO 24

TO MME. EMMA PERROUD (NEE MAYET)
(U1 VII 2)²³

January 29, 1842

Our good friend²⁴ is leaving me a little space. It makes me happy as it allows me to show my gratitude, and to congratulate you for the solitude of the chapel, of the house of Nazareth at Pomiers. I can only think of it with a tender heart; we are happy everywhere when we know how to find Jesus, Mary and Joseph there, to live with them and like them. We often speak about Pomiers with good Father Mayet, about good papa Perroud, the most blessed of men because he has found and protected a great treasure; long life to the Joseph of the family, because he will have time to rest in Heaven, and about you, Madame, mother of such a large family. The life of faith lets you find your happiness exactly where so many others would only find a sad and depressing solitude; with Jesus, Mary and Joseph we have everything: less noise, fewer distractions, fewer noisy celebrations, but peace of soul, love for one's state in life, heaven on earth.

We also like to speak together about the little family. Oh! how I do praise you! that you are seeing to their initial training yourselves; at your side these fine children will absorb the family spirit, love for their parents, the initial impression of Religion, an impression which is never lost. They will also be instructed and better behaved. I deeply pity parents who are without experience or prudence, who break away from their children before the age of reason. That is the greatest loss they could experience. They will become children without love and without joy.

We are praying a great deal for Tony, Oceania. Storm heaven, we need a great victory now. Beautiful family! you have so much [illegible]. We continue to hope, as Fr. Mayet, our dear brother, is better. As for me, I am also counting on it.²⁵ If we need a miracle, Jesus Christ is God, and Mary is his divine mother, and Fr. Mayet their child.

But I only wanted to say a few brief words. This is too long; forgive me. However, it's true that in winter we read more. Finally, union of prayers and good works. Everything is shared in half. Strength is found in unity.

All yours in our Lord,
J. Eymard
Marist Priest - Director

Perroud Family
Pomiers (Rhône)
Jan. 29, 1842

²³ This letter was written as a post-script to a letter from Fr. Claude Mayet to his sister Mme. Emma Perroud.

²⁴ Fr. Claude Mayet.

²⁵ Healing for a chronic laryngitis.

TO MILES. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 18/145 VI 10)

V.J.²⁶

Belley, March 19, 1842

My dear sisters,

I was about to write to you when I received your welcome letter. I was worried about your health. I was afraid that such severe weather would affect your health even more. But it seems, according to your letter, that you are relatively well. Since you are so weak, avoid worrisome thoughts as much as you can because they will affect you too much. Try to maintain that holy joy that Saint Paul so often recommended. It makes the soul stronger and happier.

At the end of your letter you remind me about the trips I took last year. No, my sister, those were not pleasure trips for me. The fear I felt and the thought of your sufferings, all combined to sadden my heart. My only consolation was to know that you were devout, adoring as I did the designs of God and kissing his crucifying hand with love.

When I thought of the kindness and charity of the good priests of the parish in coming to visit and console you, my gratitude grew in proportion to their kindness. But, my sister, God alone is eternal and his goodness has no end. He will always be your Father and Consoler. How fortunate we are to love him as his children!

For myself here, I am well, thanks be to God. My occupations, as numerous as they are, suit my taste and my health. I am happy to be able to work in the youthful vineyard of the Lord.

As to your proposal that we allow Mr. Lesbros to make a passage for his house, I would really like to please this good man. We owe him a great deal. However, I see that we would be giving a right of way that would greatly diminish the value of our own house should we ever want to sell it. And it would also involve some expenses on our part.

Young Auguste is well²⁷. I would like to see him succeed. Take heart, my sisters, let us always love our Lord Jesus Christ and his divine Mother. Let us make Saint Joseph the Foster-Father and protector of our family.

Your devoted brother,
J. Eymard, Director

Miss Marianne Eymard
rue du Breuil
at La Mure (Isere)

April 17-24 - General Meeting of the Marists.

²⁶ Praised be Jesus!

²⁷ Auguste Artaud, son of a family friend studying at Belley.

TO MME. EMMA PERROUD (NEE MAYET)
(U2 VII 2)²⁸

June 5, 1842

Madame,

I am taking advantage of this wonderful opportunity which our good Father and friend is offering me to recommend myself to your prayers, because prayer which springs²⁹ toward heaven from solitude is more ardent because it is more calm and pure. Wonderful family! which continues the life of Nazareth in a small out-of-the-way place, for whom the world is nothing and cannot even have access to you. Heaven looks at you with pleasure and the Angels have placed the mysterious ladder of Jacob there.

I also am interested in everything that concerns you. I have a great love for them [your concerns] and I trust. I owed you a visit of thanks for your offer to rest at Pomiers, but I was much too weak. My gratitude is none the less for it.

My respects to your husband.

All yours in Jesus and Mary,
J. Eymard, p.m.

To Mme. Emma Perroud
Pomiers, (Rhone)

TO MLLES. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 19/145 VI 10)

V.J. et M. Imm.

Belley, June 25, 1842

My very dear sisters,

I am answering your welcome and interesting letter. I like to reread it because its details remind me of my duties. You are going to Notre Dame du Laus. How nice! I envy your happiness because I always remember with joy the happy days I spent there during the wonderful pilgrimages. I've seen many shrines of devotion, but I have never seen any like Laus. There is something so devotional, so touching there! First of all the beautiful solitude we enter into when leaving Gap, the desert, the woods. The oratories scattered along the way like pious stations already prepare the soul to break away from the world. It's like the desert was for the Hebrews.

Oh, I will always remember how on arriving at the mountain, I used to feel my heart beat with joy and longing when I would catch sight of that church of miracles and graces. On one occasion I even began to run until I reached the feet of the Blessed Virgin.

If it should be God's will that I visit you during the holidays, I also hope to see and kiss the feet of the Good Mother³⁰ if there is time. That is where I received my vocation from the hands of the Blessed Virgin.

²⁸ Written as a post-script to a letter from Fr. Mayet to his sister.

²⁹ Probable allusion to the location of the Perroud property at Pomiers, which Fr. Eymard must have visited.

³⁰ The "Good Mother" is the popular title for Our Lady at Laus.

Belley: 1839 - Nov. 1844

May this Good Mother be with you and accompany you there, my dear sisters. May she answer your prayers. May you obtain good health if it is in the plans of Providence, and may you also obtain graces and divine love which make it possible to find heaven on earth. On the feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin, I will join my intention to yours, and I will celebrate Mass for you.

If you see Mme. Amiel, please offer my deepest respects to that fine and virtuous woman. She surely had her [share of] crosses. That daughter of Mary may perhaps already be in heaven. Give my regards to Magdalon as well.

Mme. Lesbros is still sick it seems! Too bad! What a good woman! Unfortunately, God has sown her life with many sorrows. On earth, Calvary is everywhere and in all life situations. Happy are those who know how to find Jesus and Mary there.

About the saint you mentioned, I think it is the same one to whom I was praying for her intentions two years ago. That is, Saint Francis Regis. But I have great confidence in the Blessed Virgin, and I will offer one Mass for her, for that intention on the first Friday of the month of July.

Someone mentioned an exceptionally good syrup to me. It is the "Rob". It renews the blood. From Mr. Giraudeau of Saint-Gervais, Richer Street, #6 bis, in Paris. Let her know about this syrup. It's a little expensive: it costs 12 francs... One is free to write gratis to the author and to consult him. But take care for it is not effective for one of the illnesses mentioned on the directions. I think this syrup would not be good for you because your illness comes from a nervous condition.

Please extend my best wishes to dear Mme. Lesbros. You can tell her that I place her along side of you in my poor prayers.

So good mother Bonnier has died! She is a saint in heaven. I'm convinced that she was the holiest person in all of La Mure. Her simplicity, her humility, her charity, her sacrifices, her crosses... she had so many, even if it had been only the one of knowing her children's worldliness.

What I liked about Mr. Bonnier was his great respect for her. He had a sort of veneration for her. She was also so considerate and gentle! I certainly envy her reward. It must be a great one.

So poor Germain has also died. He was more fortunate than his brother, he had a happy death. Nothing matters when the end is good. And all those possessions and plans for the future: see how they all pass away? Poor people, who kill themselves in order to have a more expensive burial, or a better coffin!

Now I notice that I am becoming a gossip. Auguste is well. I had a shirt made for him for his walks so that he wouldn't get so warm... he is succeeding well; he is behaving well.

Please give my best wishes to Fr. Rabilloux³¹. I kept planning to write to him and then time ran out. So you will have to take my letter to him.

In your next letter, tell me about Fr. Faure. I'm longing to have news about him.

Your brother,
J. Eymard, Marist priest

Miss Marianne Eymard
rue du Breuil
La Mure (Isere)

³¹ Parish priest.

TO MR. ANTONY MAYET
(VII 2/6)

Belley, September 6, 1842

Sir and dear friend,

I am keeping my word, but not to sadden you with any bad news; our good Father³² is no worse than usual. On the contrary, I find him very joyful. The essential thing for him is silence, and he cannot be too strict about that. I had to travel to my village³³ and, to my great regret, I had to be separated from this good friend. I would have liked to have him with me to distract him a little, but the trip and the stay would have been too frustrating for him, so I did not insist. When I returned I found him the same as usual.

Here, we relax as much as we can. If you were here, we would surely spend beautiful moments. But it seems that you are still the captive of that bad flu. I think that the busy pace of Lyons doesn't leave you the time you need to get better. If I were your doctor, I would tell you: a bit of time in the country, Belley, common sense, distance from worries, and then good health will return.

I expect to go to Lyons and my first visit will be to your fine family.

In the meantime, receive my sincere and heartfelt sentiments.

Your ever devoted servant and friend,
Eymard, P.M.

Please offer my sentiments of esteem and love to your father (we cannot help loving such a father) and my respects to Mademoiselle.

TO MILES. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 20/145 VI 10)

Belley, October 7, 1842

My dear sisters,

It's time to give you a sign of life and also to thank you for all your kindnesses toward me during my recent stay at La Mure. I was so happy about my visit, especially since I saw that your health was improving. Do take care of yourselves and I hope that you will be getting better and better. Take care not to go out into the cold. Avoid sudden changes from a very hot temperature to a very cold one. That often happens in La Mure.

My trip to Grenoble was a bit difficult. Unaware that the coach I took would pass by Monteynard, I immediately decided to stay until evening. While in a hurry to leave, yet not wanting to repeat my goodbyes which would have made you sad, I went as far as Cerf de la Motte and from there to Pierre-Chatel. I was reassured that I would not be seen by anyone at Monteynard, that I would be well hidden. I could not decide on it because the sight of this place and its good people would have moved me too much.

³² Father Gabriel Mayet, his brother.

³³ La Mure.

Belley: 1839 - Nov. 1844

Then, I learned that Mr. de Pelissiere was in La Mure. Trusting in God, I decided to wait for the five o'clock coach for Pierre-Chatel; but there was no vacant place. I waited for the midnight coach, still no empty place except for the one above. It didn't matter. I placed myself next to the driver and we rolled right along to Grenoble in the cold air.

I stayed three days at Voreppe, but the person I had wished to see was not there. There was ample time to speak with Fr. Fayolle. He is delightful. His trip to Rome will not materialize, so much the better!

In Lyons I visited Mme. Reynier. I think very highly of that woman. She told me that she was going to La Mure.

I also visited and consoled Miss Fribourg's sister. She felt very deeply about the loss of her child. I was pleased with myself that I had gone. A letter alone would have surprised them too much.

I also saw several boys from La Mure; Mr. Cotte's son, who is doing very well. I saw the son of Ramus who is not doing so well but we do have hopes.

I was pleased with the two children of Mme. Balme from Breuil who are very fine and responsible. They are well.

Fr. Desmoulins who went to La Mure strikes me as an angel of piety.

Have courage, my sisters! Let us always love the Good Lord and the Blessed Virgin; that is the way to be happy in this world.

Please be so kind as to send with dear papa Artaud a book which I loaned to Miss Cesarine Reynier. You could advise papa Artaud that the coach from Cordon is now in service. He will still have to travel two hours from Abrets to Cordon. The coach doesn't reach Cordon until five or six o'clock in the evening. It would be better if he could find a coach from Grenoble to Morestel. At least he wouldn't have to walk.

I forgot a black scarf again in La Mure. If you should find it, please forward it to me.

Ever all yours in our Lord,
J. Eymard, Marist priest

Miss Marianne Julian-Eymard
rue du Breuil
at La Mure (Isere)

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CO 30

TO MLES. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 21/145 VI 10)

Belley, December 6, 1842

My dear sisters,

Every day I chide myself for my silence and I resolve to write to you. Then a thousand and one things happen that prevent me from doing so. This doesn't mean that my love for you isn't still as great as ever. My thoughts are often with you. My heart is at Mary's feet so that she may bless and love you.

I am still quite well. For some time now, we have had very changeable weather. One day is just ideal, then the next is excessively cold. However, good weather has persisted for a few days now. Yet this marvelous weather has given some people here sore throats and headaches. Please don't catch these because they are really bad.

We haven't had any snow yet.

Little Auguste is well³⁴; he hasn't been sick.

³⁴ Auguste Artaud, son of a family friend at La Mure.

Belley: 1839 - Nov. 1844

I would have sent you the clogs you requested in your last letter, but I didn't receive your letter until after dear papa Artaud left. Then it was impossible to fulfill your request. Hopefully I will have better luck another time.

Papa Artaud told me that the Superior had promised him a discount of 50 (fifty) francs, but he left before the matter had been settled. He can rest assured that I will request the same favor myself from the Vicar General. But he doesn't grant it easily.

Take good care of yourself during the winter and pray in your room when it's too cold. Above all, don't work too much. Death follows life, and heaven, I hope.

I enjoy reading the details in your letters. So don't forget to tell me about the sick and the deceased. I especially like to pray for those whom I have known.

All yours *in Christo*,

Your brother,
J. Eymard, Marist priest

P.S. My best wishes to Fr. Rabilloux and his colleague³⁵. A very special remembrance to the Fayolle family.

Miss Marianne Eymard
rue du Breuil
at La Mure (Isere)

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CO 31

TO MILES. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 23/145 VI 10)

*J.M.J.*³⁶

Belley, January 23, 1843

My very dear sisters,

Indifference is not the reason for my delay in writing to you. It is a little laziness. To write a letter is a sacrifice for me. So I am often reproached for my negligence. I have at least a dozen letters to write and only God knows when they will get done! Since Charles told me that you had given him a letter for me, I was waiting for it to answer you. I still haven't received it because his package was delayed en route.

Through different people I received news about you, and I thank the Good Lord that you are doing fairly well. May God keep you both well and peaceful.

I sang the Midnight Mass and I offered it for you, my dear sisters. The three of us were around the crib of the Child Jesus³⁷ and as celebrant, I held him in my hands. I presented you to him as my dear sisters. This divine Master was crying and suffering and seemed to say to me: "Your sisters are also suffering and crying. But tell them from me, that one day I will wipe away their tears and I will be their reward. Love them because they resemble me and because I love them."

Those were my feelings at the Midnight Mass. I presume that you were also thinking of me and that we met at the feet of the Child Jesus.

On New Year's day, the Blessed Virgin received my wishes for you. Presented by her, they will be heard. She is our common Mother.

³⁵ the parish priests.

³⁶ Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

³⁷ in spirit.

Belley: 1839 - Nov. 1844

My good sisters, this will be a good year if we progress more and more in the love of Jesus and Mary. If our souls would often rise toward heaven to learn the path it must travel one day and only once, for all eternity, it would be an excellent year.

I often say to myself: my only concern is "To go to heaven, close to Mary." It's so true. Whoever knows the world sees there is nothing to gain from it. Rather, one is constantly exposed to lose everything. The world is nothing since it cannot make us happy. So let us leave it behind and lose ourselves in the hearts of Jesus and Mary until the day we die. Death will break our chains and tear away the veil that prevents us from seeing the face of God.

Now I am giving you a sermon, my dear sisters, but I know that you like that. As for news, it is so meaningless that it isn't worth repeating.

I'm doing well. Auguste Artaud is also well.

My regards and best wishes for New Year's to Mme. Dumoulins, the Fayolle family, good Mme. Cros whom I highly esteem, without forgetting Mr. Fribourg, Miss Fribourg and Mr. Juvin.

All yours,
J. Eymard, Director

Miss Marianne Eymard
rue du Breuil
at La Mure (Isere)

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CO 32

TO MLES. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 25/145 VI 10)

Belley, March 9, 1843

My dear sisters,

I received your most welcome letter. It's always with great pleasure that I receive news from you. It's only right since you are all I have in this world. If I don't write as often as your heart wishes or as I would like, it's only that I am too busy.

I urge you to take care of your health especially during Lent. Eat meat because you absolutely need it. Surely your Pastor would oblige you to it. So, I don't think that your timidity or fear should prevent you from asking him. He is kind though a bit cold; his character is like that. Then my dear sisters, let us be humble like the Blessed Virgin.

If no one pays attention to us in the world, if we seem to be forgotten, let us bless the Good Lord for it. We will love him all the more purely. This is how the Saints acted and wished it to be.

I thanked Miss Marsallat for her nice visit with you. That lady is so kind and proper!

I am well... Little Auguste is also well and is doing well. We are very pleased with him.

Please offer my best wishes to the two excellent Assistants³⁸ whom I love and esteem with all my heart.

Please don't forget Mme. Dumoulins and recommend me to her prayers; to good Mme. Cros, whom I consider as my mother; to Mme. Didier about whom I would like to receive news; to all the wonderful Fayolle family.

For yourself, do take care of yourself. Love the Lord and his holy Mother.

Your brother,
Eymard, Director

³⁸ parish priests.

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TO MLES. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD³⁹
(III 24/145 VI 10)

Don't let those difficulties crush you. Such are the adversities of life. Place this problem in God's care, then act. Write and tell me what you have done. I am enclosing a letter for Miss Fribourg. If you think it might do her some good, give it to her. If not, burn it.

Take courage! Fix the house in order to find more suitable tenants. You would do well to sell all the tools of the oil press. It is really giving you too much trouble. May God come to your aid!

All yours,
Your brother,
Eymard

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CO 33

TO MISS ELIZABETH MAYET
(VII 1/17)

(Belley), April 18, 1843

Mademoiselle,

How kind you were to have remembered my dear Sodality⁴⁰ and so spontaneously. So we can offer you only a modest but very sincere thank you, and if you will, a prayer on the part of all the members. Your flowers decorated the altar of the Blessed Virgin, and are also a loving tribute of your zeal for her honor.

We saw Mr. Tonny⁴¹. He is still as charming as he is endearing. It is too bad we don't see him more often.

He will convey to you personally our best wishes and feelings for you and your whole family, which I consider as my own.

I have the honor of being, Mademoiselle,

Your ever devoted,
Eymard, PM

Miss Elizabeth Mayet
Lyons

In the following letter, St. Peter Julian describes how busy he is as Director of a boarding school.

³⁹ Fragment ending the Doc. #198 in Volume I (CO 195).

⁴⁰ Sodality of Mary, a lay association.

⁴¹ her brother.

TO MILES. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 26/145 VI 10)

V.M.⁴²

Belley, May 19, 1843

My very dear sisters,

I was expecting some news from you every day. You probably are making the same complaint against me. You see, I am writing first, hoping to find out how you spent the Lenten season, how you are doing and if you are well. Also send me some detailed news about the people in whom I am interested - especially Mme. Lesbros. Please offer her my most sincere regards and, if she is feeling better, tell her how happy I am about it. Don't forget Mr. Dumoulins and good Mme. Cros, that kind mother whom I love so dearly.

It seems to me that you had a very consoling Jubilee⁴³ filled as it was with success and conversions. Now, with the month of Mary everything will be renewed and rekindled with love for the most Blessed Virgin.

I must include a word about myself – I'm the same as usual, thanks be to God. From morning till night I am as busy as a mother nursing her children. It's not a difficult work. It's accompanied with great consolations, especially when we witness continual conversions among these young people. Surely my position could be envied and seen as really desirable because we can hope to do a lot of solid good, having these young children continually with us to be nurtured. Believe me, some of them are very intelligent and generous.

Auguste is very well. The only drawback is that he doesn't have much talent. However, he does have enough to be a good student, but not enough to be one of the first. He works well just the same.

I must include some news. The frost did a great deal of damage in many places but especially here on the nut trees and the vines.

The weather is inconsistent. There is a lot of rain and humidity. Please keep your feet dry with the horsehair soles.

We have just sent a dozen missionaries with a Bishop to China. They will convert the natives who have never heard of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Religion is taking hold and is reawakening everywhere, especially in the large cities. I pray that, before we die, we may see it flourish with a faith similar to that of the first centuries. The Blessed Virgin is especially being recognized in this century. Let us not lag behind. Let us love this good mother with our whole heart.

Take courage, my good sisters. Have patience and love God! Write soon.

Your most affectionate brother,
J. Eymard, Director

Miss Marianne Eymard
rue du Breuil
La Mure (Isere)

⁴² Abbreviation for Praised be Mary.

⁴³ parish mission in a Jubilee year.

TO MR. ANTONY MAYET
(VII 3/6)

Belley, July 24, 1843

Very dear friend,⁴⁴

I am borrowing someone else's hand to answer you about your good brother who still loves you dearly, as I do, needless to say. It's in his name that I have come to express our love.

You are really too kind to remember my short trip, you who know only too well that nowadays people go to America, or China, or New Zealand at the drop of a hat, either as fishstockers⁴⁵ (which is more lucrative) or as missionaries.

A little further and you would have been here with us. Yes, if you had fallen asleep for one instant, you would have had dinner with us at Belley, instead of dining at St. Clair at about the same time. Our mail-coach burned the road. Eight hours to Meximeux, 1-1/4 hours to Belley, wouldn't you say that was very good? So then, you see, we had a good trip: no [incident] of a brother killed, sick or dead, as you can see. Always silent though,⁴⁶ excused from conversation, unless it be with the Good Lord, the Blessed Virgin, or the Saints of the triumphant Church. He speaks often with them, however, and constantly about you. He does so with genuine outbursts from the heart which bear no counterfeit, and with a sweeping ambition of spiritual wishes, with a lively prayer and endless loquacity. That, he says, does not hurt his throat, but only his heart and the strange thing is, that it relieves his heart at the same time. I certainly wouldn't understand it except for our two meetings...if I loved you less, and if I were not a priest...but on to something else.

I am quite sad that your father isn't well and I strongly urge him, as well as the Abbe, to take good care of themselves. As strong as he is, he will be able to overcome this little discomfort with some medicine. Father wants me to add that you shouldn't disturb [your father] with your dizzying confusion when it upsets him. I really don't know what he is making me write here, but he is really insisting... "We must do the will of those who are ill!" you told him once, when you had no other answer to give..so now, you yourself are the victim of that saying.

He received that dear fatherly letter from your fine papa Mayet and thanks him. It was like the quintessence of a father's heart entirely preoccupied with his children. Somehow, even the Good Lord would be embarrassed (if I may use this expression) were he to refuse this good father what he petitions for his children... Father Mayet's health is still mediocre, but who knows what is best? But how could he not bless his other requests...Father is here telling me to implore your father to continue to pray for you because, he says, you have an immense need for it, more than you think. Come now, Sir, you know what we were telling you as we ran ahead of the coach of Belley⁴⁷ at Easter. You must get your own weapons, for it will be useless for us to draw a sword to defend you. The efforts of all the other fighters to save you will guarantee your loss, if you yourself remain a spectator to the struggle. You must really accept these words from poor Father Eymard. No, rather, no permissions asked. Certainly Sir, if we must wear white gloves to tell you: don't go to hell forever, you are among the...

Your brother was waiting for you to give him fresh news, to write to you about that business and he doesn't want to do so sooner. He is being stubborn.. He can't make sense out of the silence from that family... He adds that it hasn't been very long since he has seen or written to you, not to complain about you or write to you, but because he doesn't like people to worry... So then, he says he won't write.

⁴⁴ For an explanation of the tone of this letter, see letter 4 to Antony Mayet, July 26, 1843.

⁴⁵ Empoisonneur: difficult to translate.

⁴⁶ Fr. Mayet had a speech problem due to the larynx.

⁴⁷ Passengers often dismounted the coaches when the horses were going uphill.

Belley: 1839 - Nov. 1844

You mentioned Spain. Let me tell you about Spain, since I am just as close to it as you are. Espartera, whom God is pursuing, is in flight, seeking refuge in a colony. If God wills, he will get him.

We are ending on August 2.⁴⁸ Our children are very fervent and by means of a good retreat they have just pouched many cartridges for their two-month campaign.

Goodbye, regards, greetings, love. I offer my respects to the whole family, and I am, for life, and if you will, for eternity,

Your good friend,
Eymard

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CO 36

TO MR. ANTONY MAYET
(VII 4/6)

Belley, July 26, 1843

Dear friend,

Thank you for your kind letter. I was very surprised when I read it. If you wanted to play a trick on us, you really succeeded. Weren't you able to see that it was a playful letter?⁴⁹ That my thoughts were flowing from the pen of your dear and beloved priest-brother? That he put so much humor into it that in the end, he was becoming vague. This dear friend was saying: My brother will laugh to think that I would be silent and speak for Father Eymard. So, no more mysteries, we were both together with these thoughts.

Father is better. He is very reflective. The news about that sad affair did not affect him; he was expecting it. His soul is really strong yet very loving. These two qualities, which are so rare, are also found in his dear Tonny.

Your letter really made me sad, dear friend. It seems to me that the blows falling upon all of you hurt me more deeply. I would like to see you all happy and peaceful. Poor family! What trials have already befallen you! This recent blow must hurt very much again, especially now. Really, my dear Tonny, I seem to need more comfort than you do.

Your efforts to go to Fr. X thrilled your dear brother. He told me: "My good brother was true to himself. I would have expected that from that heart of his."

He has also just written him a lovely letter, if we can use that word (lovely) when we offer sympathy.

Regarding that business situation, don't get discouraged dear one. This is my thought: everything is frustrating and seems hopeless; [yet] it will succeed, the Good Lord will get involved. I like the phrase: "I trust in God." It's a prophecy.

Dear friend, please thank your sisters in my name for the lovely flowers they so thoughtfully donated for my Sodality.⁵⁰ I am late with my thanks but my heart has never been.

Goodbye, dear friend. We will meet again, I hope.

All yours,
Eymard

⁴⁸ The school year.

⁴⁹ C.F. letter to Anthony Mayet, July 24, 1843.

⁵⁰ Sodality of Mary, a lay association.

TO FR. JEAN-CLAUDE COLIN, S.M.
(VI 1/6)

V. J. Marie⁵¹

St. Marcellin, August 11, 1843

My very Reverend Father,

I am writing to report to you about my mission. God blessed it, and the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph clearly protected me.

First, I want to congratulate you for not sending a letter. It could have caused you problems later, and a thousand other things which could not be foreseen.

The house will be adequate. It is in a good location. There is space for expansion on either side. Some rooms are not finished yet; they will be completed during the holidays. To conclude, with some money this establishment could become very lovely, but especially very flourishing. It is [located] at the hub of five regions. It lacks a chapel.

Here is the result of my visit: I found the priests⁵² quite discouraged; worried about the professors they lack; troubled as a result of an administration which is constantly hampered by the three who are at the head and do not get along, who contradict one another in spite of their good intentions. There can be no unity with such leadership. Their institution could only destroy itself. The death of one of the three would destroy everything. They agreed that the status quo was equivalent to agony and death.

They accepted your offer, Father, as a life-saver, but they absolutely need new members. I promised I would ask you in their names; that is, a Director, Professor of Humanities, one for the third level and one for French. They also wanted a Prefect, but I opposed it (unless you advise otherwise) because, 1. if the Prefect were not to succeed, it could harm the Society, since this position is so difficult; and for the first year, it's better not to have any animosity toward us; 2. that it would be better to train one on the spot, with the spirit of the house, etc...

They asked me for a Professor of Rhetoric. My feeling was to refuse it; 1. so as not to cause too much commotion and create too much of a stir; 2. the person who has been doing it is familiar with all the customs; because of all the comments and compliments received, etc., it was necessary that Mr. Boirayon should continue another year; 3. it would upset his sense of pride to remove Mr. Boirayon as Professor of Rhetoric. The result was that Mr. Boirayon, who wanted to give it up, would continue to take charge of the Rhetoric.

But, the big issue was the administration of business matters. We spent a day and a half debating this important question. We had to be sensitive about Mr. Crozat. It was necessary that he have some distance from everything, be absolutely out of everything without its seeming to come from you. Finally, we succeeded. Fr. Chovin is in charge of everything, as you will see in the minutes and Mr. Crozat will be the Professor of Mathematics.

Mr. Crozat was asking for security. We named you as guarantor, to satisfy Mr. Crozat, who, it would seem was always afraid to sign. Fr. Chovin and Mr. Boirayon told me to let you know that it was only a matter of form because at the end of the school year, they would get reimbursed for many notes. I told them I would submit that clause to you; that my mission was not that extensive. However, Father, I think there is nothing to fear.

They are asking me for a Treasurer. I refused it so that the Society would not seem to be immediately in charge. I am convinced that for the first year we should not engage in any employment which is too burdensome, risky or notable.

⁵¹ Long live Jesus and Mary.

⁵² It may be that all the men discussed in this letter are priests. However the title "Fr." was given only when this was certain.

Belley: 1839 - Nov. 1844

Now, if you agree, we would need to write to the Bishop about the request made by these Gentlemen. He may be somewhat upset and frightened because the Vicar General is pushing him; but he is in an awkward position. Once your letter is sent, these Gentlemen will act upon it. Perhaps we should speak to him openly; he sees clearly and it would flatter him.

If you could write to him as soon as possible, these Gentlemen will not act until they get your answer. Besides, the Bishop knows that we were invited.

Fr. Gay, the Vicar at Peage, is [alone] at this moment. The Bishop has just changed the second Associate, so he is afraid he cannot leave at the moment. He asks you to allow him to make his novitiate with the new Novices in the Institute. Besides, that will be very easy⁵³. Fr. Chovin would have two excellent members for the Society. He would like to keep them and have them study their Philosophy in his house, while using one at the Prefecture and the other for a lower class. He asked me to share that with you and to ask your opinion.

So, Father, this is the result of my visit. [I am] pleased if I served as an instrument for the will of God in everything.

Your obedient son,
Eymard, S.M.

P.S. The clergy will be happy to see us come. They were telling me, even now, that the Bishop should ask for us, etc... - As for Father Touche, I learned very painful and distressful things. Please, Father, try to cut things short with him, so clearly that he can no longer boast of belonging to the Society. He has harmed the Society here, and his actions betray a very imprudent and dangerous man. People are astonished at how we receive him. He almost destroyed all the good that Fr. Chovin had done. He stirred up the students against Mr. Crozat. He campaigned to be named Superior instead of Fr. Chovin in case of death... Finally, Father, he complained that the Society obliged him to pay for his own trip to Paris for the Irish College. That is how he obtains money for his plans. He offered a Professor to Fr. Chovin. I believe it is his nephew. That is how he proceeds. He has lost all respect in the diocese of Valence.

If you should need me, I am leaving for La Mure to be with my sister (Isere). A word from you and I will fly wherever you want.

Please forgive me for sending you a letter which is so badly written. I couldn't do better and it is urgent.

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OC 38

TO MR. ANTONY MAYET
(VII 5/6)

Oct. 13, 1843

Dear friend,

Two words! I saw and spoke to the gentleman from Grenoble, as we had said. He knows Mr. P. well; they see each other, they own neighboring properties. He told me that he would speak diplomatically about the matter without jeopardizing anything.

A million,⁵⁴ head merchant of Grenoble, a good reputation, no usury, ready to retire; a merchant son-in-law planning on this fortune. Many people are stepping forward, either without a head or without a heart. People don't want them. I was told that in that business everything is done by the

⁵³ Some words are missing because the letter was torn open.

⁵⁴ Francs?

Belley: 1839 - Nov. 1844

mother. So, be confident, I welcome this hope for your happiness. In the meantime, my dear friend, Fourviere and everything else you were describing would be difficult. That's too bad, but it must be.

I like the son-in-law, he is direct and generous.

Your priest-brother is well, he is happy here. He has his routine and a lot of variety.

My respects and greetings to your good sisters please, and to Mme. Emma and Mme. Aline.

All yours,
Eymard

P.S. I know a fine young man who needs a position. - Can something be found? His education is average.

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CO 39

TO M^{LES}. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 27/145 VI 10)

Belley, October 22, 1843

My very dear sisters,

Thank you for your kind letter. My heart wanted to answer immediately; but so many matters took my time. I didn't want to answer you hastily, but waited for a more leisurely moment.

The news of Nanette's sickness made me sad. Since she is often ill, she should spare herself. I firmly hope that your situation will improve so that you will have fewer worries and concerns. Knowing your energy for work, I see that you will always do more than you can. So, if you should find a good price for the house and invest the money well, you would be able to live more peacefully.

As for what you told me, I would have been very hurt if you hadn't added that you didn't believe what was said. As if I would not care whether you were in poverty and claim part of the money from the house. On that subject you know what I told you during my holidays, my word should be enough for you and Nanette. I am upset with only one thing. It is that when I am at La Mure I don't know who the persons are who judge me in this manner. My answer would be ready for them. They say it comes from a good heart; but I, I see it otherwise. It's an outrage and the most bitter insult. I wish you had been silent about it and spared me that sorrow, because that would help me to avoid making rash judgements. Let there be no further question about it. If I didn't love you, would I be so happy to go see you? You know very well that when I go to La Mure, it isn't for the village nor for my acquaintances, but only for you.

It seems that the sale of Mr. Didier's garden will go through. They wrote to [tell] me about it.

Six thousand francs for the house would not be enough. We need a higher price.

Let us count a great deal on Providence, which takes care of those who trust.

As for you, my dear sisters, work for heaven always. Love our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Visit him often. Dedicate yourselves entirely to love the Blessed Virgin and to the interior life.

Each day we must buy heaven by some sacrifice.

United in the love of our Lord and in prayer, I am

Your brother,
J. Eymard

P.S. Auguste is well

Miss Marianne Eymard
rue du Breuil
at La Mure (Isere)

TO FR. BRAMEREL
(V 1/5)

Belley, December 26, 1843

Very dear friend,

For a long time now I have been looking for a sufficient amount of time to reply to so many signs of friendship from you. So, among the many letters I have to write, yours will be the first.

Your two letters touched me deeply. I was expecting them, because I know your heart. You could surely reproach me because I made you wait so long. If there is some laziness, there has never been any forgetfulness. I would say to myself every day: Come on! You must pay your debts today.

What good news can I give you? You are now in your Cenacle, happy, pleased, settled, so much the better! When we like our situation, it's Paradise on earth.

I imagine that a few clouds pass over your head from time to time but they pass quickly. However, we need to have the patience [necessary] to wait for the Sun of Justice, because human life is only temporary, tested and changeable. The happiest man is the one whose virtue resides above the storms and tempests which burst at his feet.

You miss the Sodality, and we also miss you! Your departure left a great void; but the thought of you is still alive here. It's a beautiful and touching thing when, on Sundays and Thursdays we pray for our absent brothers. And then each one names his friends and consecrates them to our good Mother. I am deeply touched to learn that you all love this gentle Virgin very much and that you speak about her often. Continue, dear friends, she is looking at you and smiling at your desires for her glory.

Here, we do all we can, but not all that we owe her. The Sodality has about 50 members and seems to be going well.

Nothing new here; everyone is hard at work, and all are feeling well.

Don't forget us, especially me. Next time I won't delay so long! Thank you for your offer of 5 francs for the Sodality. But they told me that you had already been inscribed and they didn't want to give me anything. You should tell me if you have begun the lessons.

I embrace you with all my heart.

All yours *in Maria*,
J. Eymard

P.S. My best wishes, my regards to all our good hermits, silent like St. John of, dead to the world. However, Mr. Delacourt, Mr. Turnier, Mr. Bernardy⁵⁵, have all given me signs of life; Please express my gratitude to them.

Rev. Bramerel
1st Course
Major Seminary of Brou
At Bourg (Ain)

⁵⁵ Perhaps other seminarians.

TO MILES. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 28/145 VI 10)

*J.M.J.*⁵⁶

Belley, January 13, 1844

My dear sisters,

Thank you for your kind letter. It made me feel good. I was beginning to find the time long and I was going to write to you when I received your letter. I also wish you a happy New Year. Alas! My sister, if our Lord had not led a life of poverty and suffering, if he had not left his cross as a heritage to his children, I would wish you happiness in this world. But, all I can ask for you is patience, love for Jesus crucified, the joy of a soul [which] serves God fervently, a hope which sighs for that beautiful heaven of the Elect and yearns for it with its whole soul. That is my wish for you, it's the one you were expecting from me and which you like [to receive].

Take heart, my good sisters, let us go toward Paradise. Let us see life as a crucible where gold is purified, as a difficult but heavenly path, which leads towards the Blessed Virgin, to our Lord. They are opening their arms to us saying: Yet a little while and I shall be your reward.

You may know that Rose, the housekeeper of the pastor of Chatte, died on Christmas day. Pray for her, I owe her a debt of gratitude.

The death of papa Darier deeply affected me. But his holy life makes me envy his lot, for he is a saint. Offer my condolences to that fine family.

I have no news [to give] about myself, except that I am well, and that my great desire is to become a saint so as to help others become saints and so procure the glory of God.

Present my New Year wishes to Mme. Cros, to Mme. Dumoulins, to the excellent Fayolle family.

Your brother,
J. Eymard

Miss Marianne Eymard
rue du Breuil
La Mure (Isere)

TO MILES. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 29/145 VI 10)

Belley, June 4, 1844

My very dear sisters,

I have been wanting to write to you for a long time. I thought that you might even write first, but it was my turn. I am always happy to fulfill this fraternal duty with joy; but you know that I am a little lazy about writing.

I am well. We are all working as much as we can. Life is so short and heaven is so worthy of being earned by every possible means! I often thank our Lord for having given me the grace of

⁵⁶ Abbreviation for Jesus, Mary and Joseph

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sacred ministry to boys and children. It is a most meritorious and consoling ministry. We are preparing priests for the Church and watching over children with a mother's care.

Pray so that the Good Lord may bless my efforts. It is to your advantage since we share everything.⁵⁷

Auguste is well, we are still happy with him.

I've just visited the Bishop of Gap, Bishop Depery, the Canon of Belley. Surely, Gap shall be pleased with this choice. He loves the Blessed Virgin very much.

Write to me and give me a lot of news. I am longing to receive news about you, since you are all I have on this earth. It's only right that I should think about my sister who loves me more than I deserve, and about Nanette whom I call my Nanny and my nurse. So, be sure that if my prayer has any value in God's eyes, you have a great share in it.

I am, in the love of Jesus and Mary,

Your brother,
J. Eymard

P.S. My affectionate regards to Fr. Rabilloux and Fr. Verdun⁵⁸, and also the good Fayolle family and Mme. Cros.

Miss Eymard
at La Mure (express mail)

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CO 43

TO MR. ANTONY MAYET
(VII 6/6)

Belley, June 5, 1844

Dear friend,

Thank you for your fine friendly letter. I wasn't expecting it for a while with so much to be done, but in your friendship you put me first. I am proud of that and I am repaying you [the honor] because you know my affection for you. This news really pleased me, especially such a choice. May God bless you always.

Every time I think of the commandment: "Honor your Father and Mother and you shall live a long life," my thought turns naturally to #4 St. Clair and I say: They shall live a long life there, and be happy in this world. - They deserve it. They earned it. I have never seen a family where there is so much love, where there has been so much dedication. That is at the source of my esteem. The last part: "and be happy in the next," I draw as a consequence, because saints are praised only after their death.

I said Holy Mass for you on the predetermined day. May heaven pour out all its blessings upon you. When you see your dear brother, hug him for me... It was so hard for me to see him leave⁵⁹. I can hardly get used to it. I have to chase the thought away, it makes me sad. Please ask him if he received his package.

Goodbye, my dear friend, my sincere wishes to your whole family.

All yours,
Eymard

⁵⁷ Spiritual benefits.

⁵⁸ Parish priests.

⁵⁹ Fr. Mayet was transferred to Hyeres.

Belley: 1839 - Nov. 1844

P.S. Thouin is fine.
Address: Mr. Mayet, Broker
Hemmerline and Mayet
Lyons

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CO 44

TO FR. BRAMEREL
(V 2/5)

Belley, July 7, 1844

Very dear friend,

Your good letters always bring me great pleasure. I always find that same simplicity, honesty, and generous heart which God loves so much. I ask him to help you keep these fine qualities.

So now you are ready to take the first step in an apostolic career: do it, my dear, like a giant *a summo coelo*.⁶⁰ We lose nothing by consecrating ourselves to God, leaving everything to follow him. And then, what are we in fact giving up for him? Problems, burdens; a selfish, wicked, unbelieving world; a vanity whose only reality is remorse, the torments of an unfaithful conscience. - No, no, let's not feel any regrets over what we leave to follow our Lord. If we have any, it should be that we sacrifice so little to the love of Jesus Christ! - They say that the success of a thing depends on its beginning. Take this first step well: let it indeed be a farewell, a step which liberates the mind from the world. What can you do to prepare yourself well for it? The *Imitation* says: "Give everything and you will receive everything."

The Gospel says, "*Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum, tollat crucem suam quotidie, et sequatur me.*"⁶¹ That is the sum of the sacrifice.

But you have a treasure within yourself to exploit! Here it is; perhaps you never noticed it.

I noticed and I still notice in you a tender devotion toward the Sacred Heart of Jesus. My dear, that is one of those choice graces which God gives to a few special souls. So, cultivate this grace carefully. Give it your full attention. It is sufficient to satisfy you during your whole life and for all eternity. Try to get some reading matter on it.

Now, you are right to scold me about our silence about the first letter addressed to the Sodality. It's surely not through coldness, even less because of indifference for such lovely flowers, but I was waiting to have some major news to tell you. The Bishop was due to make his consecration in a few days, and we wanted to describe it to you; but waiting made us lazy, since the Bishop didn't make his consecration until the feast of St. Louis of Gonzaga. Then, to make up for everything, we gave a general report to everyone, to the whole family; and I imagine that Fr. Gallet must have received it and shared it with everyone.

I won't tell you any details about our feast for the reception of the Bishop. It was very touching; and several cried when they heard the loving and heartfelt consecration of this holy Bishop. We now feel very glorious and proud to have three Bishops at our Head, the Superior General of an Order, a Martyr, and holy missionaries. That should encourage us!

Try to reawaken the zeal of the members of the Sodality. Remind them of the Association we established which is always growing. I am sending you 50 certificates for this purpose to distribute to those who hope to find associates during their holidays. When school opens or sooner, they should send the names here, to inscribe them in our lovely register. You may know that I wrote to Rome, in order that the associates could enjoy all the indulgences of the Sodality. During the holidays, I plan to prepare a little manual for the members of the Sodality and the Associates.

⁶⁰ "from highest heavens." Tr.

⁶¹ "If you want to follow me, deny your very self, take up your cross daily and follow me."

Belley: 1839 - Nov. 1844

In order to help the Sodality a little, request the small amount of 5 cents from the priests to whom you give the certificates. It is meant to cover our expenses and to have our little manual printed. However, if you don't find a use for them, please return them to me by means of a priest from Belley.

We must also give a Miraculous Medal to those we enroll or one from the Archconfraternity. I am sending you a few.

Goodbye, dear friend, this time you will be pleased with me. Embrace for me Fr. Tournier, Fr. Buridon, Fr. Delacourt, the whole family, all the brethren, because *cor nostrum patet ad vos*.⁶²

All yours in Corde J.C. et Mariae,
J. Eymard

Fr. Bramere
At the Major Seminary
At Bourg (Ain)

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CO 45

TO MILES. MARIANNE EYMARD AND NANETTE BERNARD
(III 30/145 VI 10)

*Belley, July 9, 1844*⁶³

My very dear sisters,

I am writing these few words to answer your kind letter, while waiting to do so in person. Yes, my good sisters, just as I am still the subject of your brotherly love, so I do not forget you either. Every day, I think about you at the holy Altar and during the day.

I am always happy to go to see you. I would have liked to share the first part of my holidays with you, but I can only give you the last part. I may take a trip to Avignon, to visit the Trappists and find some edification. It is said that they are Angels on earth.

I will also see Avignon, the ancient city of the Popes, where there are still such beautiful ruins. Perhaps I will go as far as the sea, for during our holidays we need to travel to shake off all the worries of the year. It's a real need.

Please, tell papa Artaud to go to Miss Marsallat in Grenoble, to get the reliquary that I ordered for him and to pay for it. It should cost 20 francs. It is for a pastor here.

Once again offer my fond regards to the Pastor and to my friends, his two fine curates. Ever yours in Jesus Christ,

Your brother,
J. Eymard

Miss M. Eymard
rue du Breuil
at La Mure (Isere)

⁶² "our heart sympathizes with yours."Tr.

⁶³ May be the 19th.

TO MR. PERROUD
(VII 1/2)

Belley, October 15, 1844

My dear friend,

Since I didn't have the pleasure of seeing you at home, I will console myself with a letter. I saw your Wife, her modesty is charming, she has the Mayet spirit. Heaven made her especially for you. May He be blessed!

You had a perfect visit this time. I am told that you are becoming inseparable with the Bishop of Amiens, like Father and Son. Certainly, my dear friend, people envy you and I am not surprised if so many blessings have borne such blessed fruit.

Mme. Aline arrived with her son and returned the same day. I think that he will develop more this year and will especially overcome his laziness, and that his headaches will not bother him so.

And so you see our dear brother often. Give him a thousand and one expressions of friendship and reproaches from me. Poor priest! what a heart-breaker, a good miracle would suit very well in his case⁶⁴.

Goodbye, dear friend. Be ever kind, joyful, and happy, and do not forget your friends.

Always and ever yours,
Eymard, Director

P.S. I was asked to look for a position for a promising young man who would be a good bookkeeper. Do you know of one? He would need to be paid even the first year, because he couldn't cover [the cost of] his own meals.

⁶⁴ Fr. Mayet suffered from a larynx problem.