The Founding of the Roman Catholic Church in Oceania

1825 to 1850

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The Founding of the Roman Catholic Church in Oceania

1825 to 1850

Ralph M. Wiltgen

Foreword by William R. Burrows

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THE FOUNDING OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN OCEANIA, 1825 TO 1850

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Manufactured in the U.S.A.

To
my nieces and nephews,
Kenny, Len, Don, Pat, Michael, Janet, Carol
Bill, Jim, Nancy, Susan
Tom, Ann, Larry, Barbara, Michael, Julie, Carolyn

CORRIGENDA

Pages	
xii	After 'The maps were drawn by' insert 'Manlio Pancino of'.
xix, 275-6, 279-84, 593 (under 'Fransoni'), 601 (under 'Philippines'), 605.	For 'Segni' read 'Seguí'.
23	For '180' read '1808'.
24	For '(S.Sp.S.)' read '(C.S.Sp.)'.
279-80, 587.	For 'Bocavi' read 'Bocaue'.
283	Add as a final paragraph the following text: What happened to Father Consuegra and Archbishop Segui? The priest died at Bocaue in the Province of Bulacan, Philippines, on 3 July 1844, less than three months after presenting his map. And the archbishop died on 4 July 1845.
334	In Frame Three for '8 kilometres' read '80 kilometres' and for '5 Miles' read '50 Miles'.
457	For 'nearly island' read 'nearby island'.
478	For 'Misison' read 'Mission'.
568	In Note 3 for 'vounteered' read 'volunteered'.
585	For 'archibishop', read 'archbishop'.
586	Under 'Benedictines' for 'except' read 'accept'.
588	For 'Carribbean Sea' read 'Caribbean Sea', and for 'Castelbridge' read 'Castlebridge'.
589	Under 'Colin, neglects Micronesia vicariate' for '498-9' read '298-9'.
590	For 'de Cröy' read 'de Croÿ' and under 'de Solages' for 'de Cröy' read 'de Croÿ'.
593	Under 'French francs' for 'Battaillon' read 'Bataillon', and for 'Gernetti Cardinal' read 'Gernetti, Cardinal'.
595	Under 'Jaussen' for 'Etienne' read 'Étienne'.
600	For 'Oceania, 46, 552 n.46' read 'Oceanica, 46, 552 n.46'.
602	For 'Poêbo' read 'Poébo', and for 'Polding, Archibishop' read 'Polding, Archbishop'.

‘Our missions here in Oceania
are difficult, but also possible,
and much good has already been done.
We also have reason to believe
that with time and with patience
more good will still be done.’

Bishop Pierre Bataillon, S.M.
Vicar Apostolic of Central Oceania
15 June 1852

Foreword to the 2010 Edition

William R. Burrows

All those interested in the history of the vast expanse of Oceania between Hawaii and the western tip of New Guinea and of the rise of Catholicism in it will welcome this new edition of *The Founding of the Catholic Church in Oceania 1825 – 1850* by Father Ralph M. Wiltgen, SVD. Originally published by the Australian National University Press in 1979 in a cloth edition, it has been out of print for a number of years. It is in print again, thanks to Wipf & Stock Publisher's digitizing program, which uses the latest technology to make available for scholars important books covering the full range of Christian biblical, historical, and theological topics.

In a review of this book in the April 1981 issue of *American Historical Review*, Colin Newbury of Oxford University notes the detail in which Wiltgen recounts the origins of the Vatican's division of the Pacific, the marshalling of French and Italian resources, and even the existence of "official intrigue," "divided jurisdiction," and the "clash of personalities and policies" among the founding generation of missionaries. That same month, writing in *Missiology: An International Review*, Charles Forman says that, "This book confirms Wiltgen's reputation of being a "master of a narrative style of historical writing…based on meticulous examination of the archives of [the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples] and of the missionary Orders which worked in the Pacific." And he notes with dismay the fact documented so well by Wiltgen, "how little preparation was provided for the missionaries themselves," including their relative lack of interest in indigenous cultures. Forman also calls attention to their refusal to countenance "any revenge when they suffered at the hands of the local peoples."

Father Wiltgen, a member of the Society of the Divine Word—known popularly as the Divine Word Missionaries or the "SVD" (after the initials of its official Latin name, *Societas Verbi Divini*)—worked off and on for twenty years on this book. The narrative begins in 1825 in Hawaii, 71 years before the SVD began work on the northern coast of the country now called Papua New Guinea. The assignment to write the history of the SVD's work there, which was to tell the story from the mission's origins down to the post-World War II reconstruction era, was given Wiltgen in 1959, the year after Johannes Schűtte took office as the sixth superior general of the Society.

The primary task that Wiltgen had been brought to Rome to accomplish, however, was to establish a professional news service and public relations department for his international missionary congregation. He was chosen for that work because superiors judged that his academic preparation as a scholar of mission and his abilities as a journalist and publicist would foster one of Father Schűtte's chief goals: helping American and European Catholics understand the work of mission and grasp that the missionary vocation was intrinsic to Christian identity, not an add-on.

Founded in 1875, the Society of the Divine undertook its first missions in 1879 in China. It began work in West Africa in1892 and northeast New Guinea in 1896. Born in 1921, Wiltgen was a Chicagoan who began training to become an SVD missionary in 1938, going through a twelve-year training period culminating in ordination to the priesthood in 1950. Imbibing the work ethic of the German SVDs who directed the Order's work in the United States from its foundation in 1897 through the 1940's, Wiltgen was legendary for intelligence, diligence, and the ability to carry on what we today call multi-tasking. Throughout his working life he always wore several hats and took on tasks that would challenge three normal men to do. From the beginning of his career till its end, he was simultaneously a priest who relished work in parishes, a journalist, a publicist, and an historian.

Instead of being assigned to missionary work overseas, as he had requested, Wiltgen went to the Gregorian University in Rome for doctoral studies in missiology (the history, theology, and theory of Christian mission) after ordination. The year he arrived at SVD headquarters in Rome, there were seventeen "student fathers" in residence in the Collegio del Verbo Divino. They came from around the world and introduced Wiltgen to the Society's internationality, an aspect of its identity that the SVD was emphasizing as it struggled to rebuild missions damaged and halted by the Second World War.

There were at least two important results of Wiltgen's assignment to doctoral studies in Rome. First, he developed an orientation that regarded missiology as primarily a study of mission history. Although, in the persons of such giants as Wilhelm Schmidt and Paul Schebesta, the SVD rightly lays claim to its members being among the principal founders of missionary anthropology, Wiltgen's bent was not toward the social anthropological nor to the theological dimensions of mission studies that became especially prominent during and after the Second Vatican Council. Having studied in Rome, he learned German (then the language of the house and of the Society as a whole) and Italian (the language of Church officialdom). And he came to the attention of superiors who needed native English-speakers in public positions to keep the Society from appearing to be a German-only organization. He would spend the rest of his life as a key person in the SVD generalate's ministry of helping members of many diverse nationalities work together harmoniously in the service of the gospel.

Wiltgen's dissertation on the history of West African Catholic missions was published in 1956 as *Gold Coast Mission History 1471–1880* (Techny, Illinois: Mission Press).

This is significant if one is to understand the grand plan for his New Guinea history. His research into African Catholic history spanned the four hundred years before the SVD began working in Togo. It showed him both how rich the archival resources were and how events recorded in them influenced what his relatively young Society's confreres met, how they adapted to it, and what they did.

When Father Schűtte and the New Guinea SVDs said yes to Wiltgen's proposal that he tell the story of their work, it was in his mind, necessary to follow the path laid down in his dissertation research by beginning at the beginning with the tale of the SVD's missionary forebears in the Pacific. Thus what he projected to be a five-volume work begins in 1825, starting with the background story in France, Italy, and the Vatican of how the Picpus Fathers (Missionaries of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary) began work in the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). He continues with the advent of the Marists in the South Pacific in 1836, and the foundation of the Church in New Zealand and Australia. This book, accordingly, centers on the beginnings of Catholicism in the far-flung islands of Micronesia, Polynesia, and eastern Melanesia, and includes Catholic beginnings in Australia and New Zealand.

The second book of Wiltgen's projected series narrows his focus to Melanesia and Micronesia. It was published by Wipf and Stock in January 2008, just after Father Wiltgen died (on 6 December 2007), as *The Founding of the Roman Catholic Church in Melanesia and Micronesia, 1850–1875*. You will note that Wiltgen ends the second book still twenty-one years short of 13 August 1896, the day when Divine Word Fathers Joseph Erdweg (1870–1925) and Franz Vormann (1868–1929) arrived in Friederich Wilhelmshafen, now known as Madang, as the first Divine Word Missionaries in Northeast New Guinea, which was then known as Kaiser Wilhelmsland.

In the SVD archives in Rome one finds evidence that Wiltgen intended to write at least three more volumes to tell the story of the founding of the church in Melanesia (i.e., the New Guinea main island and outlying islands to the east that run from the Bismarck Archipelago in the north through the Solomon Islands, which stretch hundreds of miles south). The center of his work would be the history of the SVD, on the northeast coast and the highlands. Nevertheless, whatever the understanding of his New Guinea confreres or Roman superiors, Wiltgen was committed to recounting the work of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in the Bismarck Archipelago and Papua, as well as the Marist missionaries in the Solomons and elsewhere from the 1870s through the post-World War II period. Although he was a publicist for his own order, he was also an admirer of the work of other communities.

Wiltgen, as I observe above, appears not to have had a great deal of interest in the anthropological or theological dimensions of mission studies. In addition, he pays scant attention to Protestant missions, although their work is just as significant, and in many areas virtually the only Christian presence. This book would have been far more valuable, for instance, if it had compared Catholic methods with the way in

which Protestant missionaries nurtured churches in Polynesia in the 1820s that sent hundreds of missionaries to Papua in the 1870s. Instead, this is Roman Catholic ecclesiastical and mission history, the story of what European missionaries did — mostly priests, brothers, and bishops. Alongside this band of ecclesiastical personae, however, appears a motley cast of sailors, traders, burgeoning convict colonies, administrators, and colorful, often alcoholic layabouts. They are all portrayed in detail, including the details that reveal some as scoundrels and scalawags, others as legalistic careerists, and many who, though often heroic, even saintly in their lives, are not the sort of person one would want to take on a long trip.

Above all, Wiltgen's book introduces us to the manners and mores of a bye-gone era, and he brings it alive with direct quotes of its principals from primary documents he has located in archives spread across three continents. His book is a treasure trove with pointers for future researchers to pursue leads that go in dozens of different directions, including the intercultural encounter of missionaries and indigenous peoples that is, unfortunately, missing from this volume. On the terms set by Ralph Wiltgen, nevertheless, there is great value in this book, primarily because it shows the way in which nineteenth-century Catholic leaders responded to and took part in shaping an intercultural network that extended across the largest geographical area on the planet. Through the work these pioneers initiated, Christianity became the primary social network that joined the peoples of a vast Pacific Island world that had been physically and systematically linked for the first time in the nineteen century through improved navigation and ship-building technologies. Anyone who has worked in the Pacific for even a short time realizes that their Christian faith today forms a bond like no other among these far-flung peoples.

I first met Ralph Wiltgen in 1958 and thereafter on numerous occasions. The most memorable was during a period of three years in Rome from 1969 through 1972 when we lived in the same house on via dei Verbiti near the Pyramid of Caius Celsius. I was then a member of the SVD and studying theology at the Gregorian University. He was working on the book you hold in your hands. When Ralph heard I was assigned to New Guinea, he came to my room, and gave me a warm *abbrazzo Romano*, despite the fact that we were on opposite ends of the theological spectrum in those years so soon after Vatican Council II. I still remember his words, "Bill, you will never work with better men than those you'll be with in New Guinea." He was right.

May this new edition of Ralph Wiltgen's contribution to telling their story bring the lives and work of the predecessors of yesterday's and today's Divine Word Missionaries to the attention of a new generation.

Most of all, may it help Melanesian Christians understand better the lives of their European forebears in faith as they proceed with the work of translating the Gospel into their cultures.

Cortlandt Manor, New York
Holy Week 2010

Foreword

This is a book that many of us have been hoping for since the days when mission history progressed from the level of apologetics and works intended for the edification of adherents to that of objective historiography, a transition affirmed by the opening to researchers of the archives of Catholic Church bodies, including the religious orders, in Rome.

The new dispensation in ecclesiastical literature has enabled Father Wiltgen to give us a definitive study of the inception and early development of the Catholic Church in Oceania, from the founding of a Prefecture Apostolic for Hawaii in 1825, to its successful establishment throughout most of Polynesia and Australia by 1850.

It is a work of major scholarship, written with a sympathetic understanding of the difficulties encountered, born of his personal knowledge of the region, but nonetheless pointing out without fear or favour where errors were made or statements show less than candour. There can be few indeed who possess the training, dedication, patience and linguistic equipment needed to locate the pertinent records and translate them from their original Latin, French, Spanish and Italian, let alone to incorporate the gist of these authoritative primary sources, connected by his own erudite commentary, into a convincing and eminently readable history.

I write readable deliberately, for one might be pardoned for thinking that the story of missionary progress from a single prefecture apostolic to an archdiocese and no less than sixteen dioceses and vicariates apostolic might make for tedious reading. This is emphatically not the case, however, for through these pages pass a procession of diverse and often colourful characters: visionaries, adventurers, bureaucrats, martyrs—the whole range of human nature from saints to sinners. All have their parts in a dramatic chronicle of dedicated striving to save souls in the ultimate frontier of missionary endeavour. The result is a book which I found to be completely absorbing.

Admittedly the locale of Father Wiltgen's narrative possesses a fascination of its own to add to the interest of the events portrayed, for to the Pacific Ocean and its islands, including New Zealand, comprising a third of the earth's surface, he has combined for good measure the continent of Australia, in itself a third larger than all Europe. Thus the setting includes not only the romantic and

salubrious islands of eastern Polynesia, where the main adversary was the would-be monopolistic Protestant missionary, but also inhospitable and unhealthy Melanesia, where missionary zeal alone proved unavailing against human intransigence and environmental dangers, as it did in the case of the peripatetic Australian Aborigine.

It is to be devoutly hoped that the success of this volume, which seems assured, will encourage Father Wiltgen to continue his story of the Catholic Church in the Pacific islands in a further study.

Research School of Pacific Studies
Australian National University
Canberra, Australia

H. E. Maude

Preface

Twenty-five years ago in my university studies of the historical method I was impressed by the words of the Greek historian Polybius: 'What does it profit the reader to wade through wars and battles and sieges of towns, and enslavements of peoples, if he is not to penetrate to the knowledge of the causes which have made one party succeed and the other fail in their respective situations?' Up to that time history seemed to me a mere collection of uninteresting names and dates, but penetrating to the knowledge of the causes did make it come alive. This I have tried to do, recounting events in such a way as to make the founders of the Roman Catholic Church in Oceania come alive. By their words and by their actions they should win your admiration, your pity, your scorn.

Seeking out the causes which made some men succeed and others fail required this researcher to wade through thousands of pages of handwritten documents in many different scripts 125 to 150 years old, some almost indecipherable, and most in Italian, Latin, French and Spanish. There were some printed sources in German and pitifully few in English, the language in which I had to tell my story. This research and study, supplemented by interviews and correspondence initiated by the author, led to the accumulation of additional information and uncovered further original documentation, including maps and photographs. From the ensemble it was possible to obtain new insights and to detect hidden causes that otherwise might have gone unnoticed. At this point it became possible to re-create the circumstances of time and place, so necessary to understand and to envision the often slow and always painful progress which took place in Oceania from 1825 to 1850.

Why did I begin with the year 1825? There were indeed numerous missionary efforts made in Oceania prior to that time, but these were sporadic and their unconnected histories are better adapted for a review than for a book. From the founding of the Prefecture Apostolic of the Sandwich Islands in 1825, however, Oceania saw continued and interrelated development expanding to one archdiocese, eight dioceses and eight vicariates apostolic by 1850. Telling how this came about, introducing you to the men responsible for founding them, showing you the friction, the suffering, the success and also the failure that accompanied their efforts, all this is the scope of my book.

In conclusion I must give thanks to all those who have assisted me in numberless ways to transform the writing up of this history from a dream to a

reality. I thank especially my family and my friends for their prayers, support and encouragement. Thanks to the Very Reverend John Musinsky, S.V.D., superior general of the Divine Word Missionaries, for freeing me for this task. Thanks to all archivists and librarians as well as so many others who have supplied me with information upon request. My very special thanks go to Father Josef Metzler, archivist of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelisation of Nations, to Father Amerigo Cools for his precision on matters concerning the Picpus Missions, and to Father Jean Coste, ever ready to locate Marist documents for me. I thank my publisher for his confidence in my work. My deepest thanks go to my faithful, efficient and self-sacrificing secretaries: Rosemarie Barto, Rose Marie Brown and Patricia O'Connell. I also wish to thank Ann Lahey for her thorough editing of the manuscript. And above all, thanks be to God for the health and the patience needed to bring this book to completion.

Special acknowledgment is due to the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelisation of Nations, to the Generalates of the Society of Mary (S.M.), Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (SS.CC.), and the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions (P.I.M.E.), as also to the *Catholic Weekly* (Sydney), for permission to reproduce in this book materials found in their files. The maps were drawn by the Cartographic Office, Department of Human Geography, Australian National University, based on sketches prepared by me from information in the archives consulted.

Generous subsidies to publication were given by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands; De Rance, Inc., Milwaukee, U.S.A.; MISSIO, International Catholic Missionary Organisation, Aachen, Federal Republic of Germany; Miss Rose Marie Brown; Mrs Emil J. Kochton; Mr and Mrs Jack M. Reich; Mrs Lucie Stock; Mrs Ellen M. Wayne; Mrs Martha Wiltgen; and the Society of the Divine Word in Rome, Australia, Papua New Guinea and the United States of America.

Ralph M. Wiltgen, S.V.D.
11 July 1979

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Introduction

Readers unacquainted with hierarchical structure will need the following explanation in order better to understand this history.

The pope, in governing the Roman Catholic Church, is assisted by Sacred Congregations composed of cardinals with a cardinal prefect as head. The Sacred Congregation *de Propaganda Fide* founded in 1622 and since 15 August 1967 also called the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelisation of Nations, supervises and directs missionary activity around the world. Mission territories under its jurisdiction in their ascending order of rank are Prefectures Apostolic headed by Prefects Apostolic (priests), Vicariates Apostolic headed by Vicars Apostolic (bishops), Dioceses headed by Diocesan Bishops, and Archdioceses headed by Archbishops. Some few missions, like Sydney, pass through all four stages. An Ecclesiastical Province, the highest form of hierarchical development, is made up of one Archdiocese and one or more Dioceses, Vicariates Apostolic and Prefectures Apostolic.

Although the personnel needed to staff these mission territories may be drawn from the secular (or diocesan) clergy anywhere in the world, the personnel for the most part comes from religious communities known as orders, societies, or congregations. Before individuals or groups may take up missionary work in a specific territory, however, they need authorisation from the pope and this is obtained through the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelisation of Nations. Subsequently these individuals or groups are accountable for their missionary activity to this Sacred Congregation and through it to the pope. As mission territories develop, they are nearly always divided thus allowing for the creation of new mission territories. At times the new territory is offered to the missionary group already in charge of the parent mission, but it is not obliged to accept. This process of dividing territories and reassigning them goes on indefinitely.

The official Latin title for the Sacred Congregation referred to above is 'Sacra Congregatio pro Gentium Evangelizatione seu de Propaganda Fide', that is, 'The Sacred Congregation for the Evangelisation of Nations or *de Propaganda Fide*'. ('De Propaganda Fide' means 'for Propagating the Faith'.) From the time Pope Gregory XV founded the Sacred Congregation on 6 January 1622, it has never translated into any vernacular the words, 'de Propaganda Fide', considering them equivalent to a proper name. The author respects this position and tradition and will not use the title in translation.

But this creates a problem for the author because the name, 'Sacred

Congregation *de Propaganda Fide*', as well as the shorter forms, 'Propaganda Fide' and 'Propaganda', which occur often in quotations, would be meaningless, confusing and even misleading for an English language reader if left untranslated. Consequently the author has taken the liberty of using, even in quotations, the modern name of this Sacred Congregation as a substitute, namely, the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelisation of Nations, shortening it to 'Evangelisation Congregation' in those quotations where 'Propaganda Fide' or 'Propaganda' is used. Such substitutions are not called to the reader's attention in notes, since the references would be so frequent as to be annoying. Apparently the Sacred Congregation appreciated the difficulty in which writers of modern languages find themselves and therefore gave itself an additional name. Because of the above considerations the author feels justified in using this anachronism and hopes that his readers will agree to its necessity, or at least to its practicality.

The author has taken still another liberty. 'Monsignore' is the honorary title in Italian for an ecclesiastical superior, no matter whether his rank be priest, bishop or archbishop. This title cannot be translated into English as 'Monsignor', because in English language usage 'Monsignor' is an honorary title only for a priest and is never used for a bishop or archbishop. Since Vatican correspondence repeatedly uses 'Monsignore' when referring to bishops and archbishops, and since a literal translation would be misleading, I have designated the persons in question, even in quotations, as priests, bishops or archbishops. One is called bishop from the date of his nomination by the pope, and not only from the date of his episcopal ordination (formerly called consecration).

I

The Prefecture Apostolic of the Sandwich Islands

24 OCTOBER 1825

Jean-Baptiste Rives (1793–1833), a French cabin boy from Bordeaux who arrived in Honolulu between 1803 and 1806, fell in love with the Sandwich (now Hawaiian) Islands and decided to settle there. He succeeded in winning the confidence of the royal family about 1810 and became their factotum, serving as interpreter, teacher, secretary and doctor of medicine. He likewise fell in love with a local maiden, took her to wife, and began raising a family. Eventually he received an invitation to accompany twenty-six-year-old King Kamehameha II (also known as Liholiho) and Queen Kamamalu on their voyage to London. He readily accepted the invitation and with them and their suite of chiefs and servants boarded the chartered British whaler *Aigle* on 27 November 1823. The London *Times* reported on 19 May 1824 that their ship had been sighted at Portsmouth. A formal audience with King George IV was arranged for 21 June; but it never took place because by then the royal couple had the measles. The queen died from them on 8 July and six days later the king died too.

Instead of returning directly to Honolulu, Rives sailed for France, hoping to realise his dream of becoming the first French consul for the Sandwich Islands. He was aged thirty-one and dwarfish, but did not allow this to deter him from approaching the highest officials. In Paris in December 1824 he presented the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Baron Anne-Hyacinthe-Maxence de Damas (1785-1862), with a memorandum outlining his proposals which included a commercial and religious expedition to the Pacific. He solicited additional support from the Minister of the Navy and the Minister of the Interior. In Le Havre he managed to persuade some businessmen to charter him a ship and he was promised a second ship by the French government.[1]

To obtain priests for the religious part of his program he called upon Father Charles-François Langlois (1767–1851), superior of the well-known Paris Foreign Mission Seminary founded in 1660, which later became the Paris Foreign Mission Society (M.E.P.). Rives told Langlois of the great possibilities for Catholicism in the Sandwich Islands. He was convinced that many of the islanders would readily become Catholics, if only there were priests to bring them the faith. The first missionaries could accompany him on his return voyage, he said, and in the islands none of the necessities of life would be lacking for them since he personally would look after them. There were no Methodists or Anabaptists in the islands, he added, but there were '40 or more Calvinist

ministers who have been sent there from North America'. In all of the islands these missionaries had only three churches, he said, but they did have a school on each island for teaching the children reading and writing. When Langlois asked if the Protestant missionaries might prove hostile to incoming Catholic missionaries, Rives assured him that the Catholics would be able to work in peace.

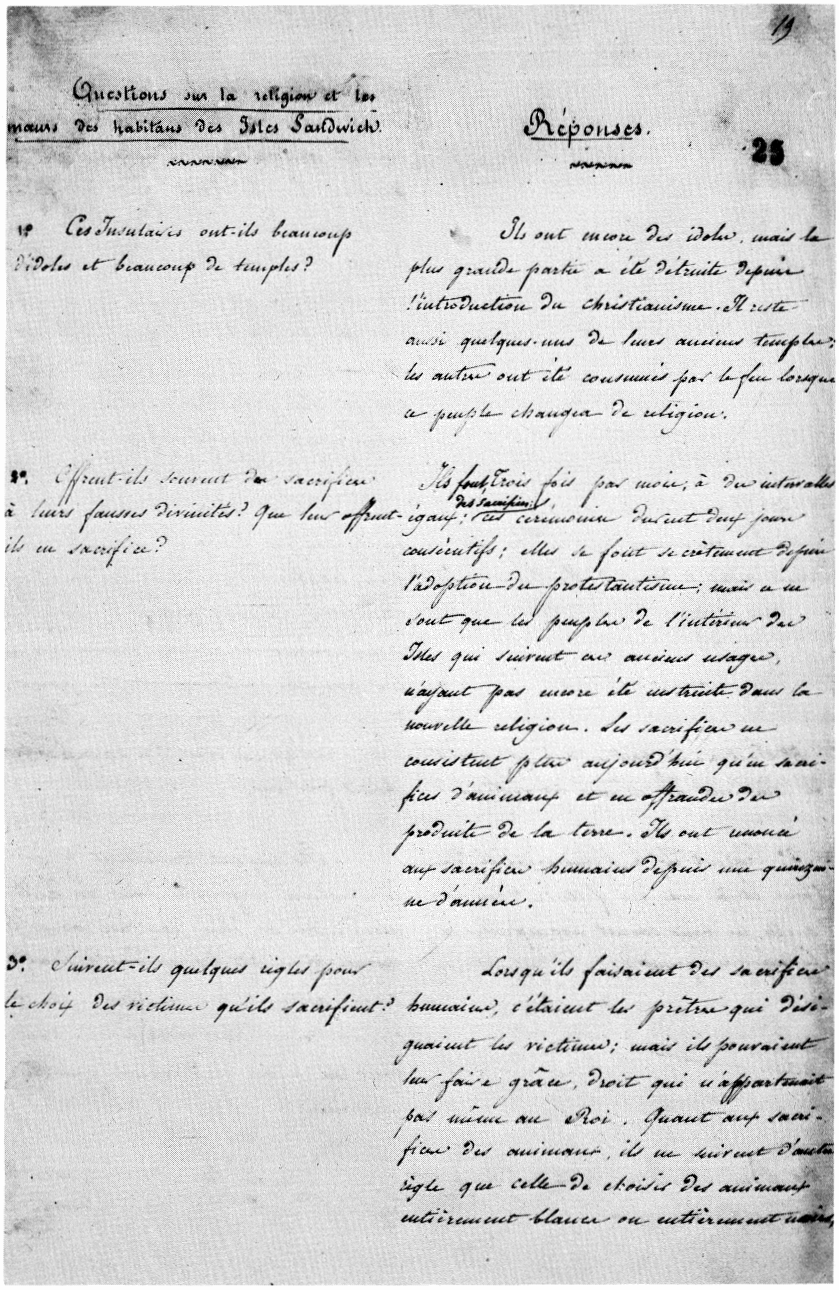
Rives also had a personal request. Since his wife had never been baptised, he wondered if Langlois could obtain for him a dispensation from the pope so that his marriage could be put in order.[2]

The Protestant missionaries referred to by Rives were actually Congregationalists sent out by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, which had been founded in 1810 at Bradford, Massachusetts. Its first missionaries to the Sandwich Islands arrived there in 1820 and numbered two ordained missionaries, two teachers, a physician, a printer, a farmer, their wives and children, and three young men from the Sandwich Islands who had been trained at the foreign mission school in Cornwall, Connecticut. By the end of 1824 according to their own statistics they had erected nine churches, had in their employ at least fifty indigene teachers on the various islands, and had 2,000 pupils who had learned to read.[3]

Langlois promised to write to Rome without delay for the marriage dispensation so earnestly desired by Rives. But he had no priests to offer for the Sandwich Islands. The French Revolution of 1789 and subsequently the Napoleonic era (1799–1815) had been disastrous for French missionary vocations, which had already been at a low ebb throughout the 1700s. The Paris Foreign Mission Seminary headed by Langlois had sent out only sixty missionaries from 1700 to 1822, and from 1792 onwards the seminary had been closed until the fall of Napoleon in 1815. In fact, Langlois had only six seminarians and a year would have to pass before any of them could be ordained. Besides, his seminary's missions in the Far East and in southern India were all suffering from a shortage of personnel and so it was impossible for him to think of taking up new work.

Nevertheless he assured Rives that he would contact mission authorities in Rome and would highly recommend the proposal that a Catholic mission be opened soon in the Sandwich Islands. He then drew up a list of twenty-nine questions for Rives to answer in writing, saying that Rome would surely want some detailed information on the area. He argued that submitting such a memorandum would save time by anticipating questions that Rome might otherwise ask. His questionnaire covered topics like the ancestral religion of the inhabitants, their customs, their attitudes toward Christianity, and the methods, successes and behaviour of the Protestant missionaries.

Langlois lost no time in contacting Rome. While Rives was still in Paris he wrote on 23 March 1825 to eighty-year-old Giulio Maria Cardinal della Somaglia (1744–1830) who, in addition to being the secretary of state to Pope Leo XII (1823–9), was serving provisionally as pro-prefect of the Sacred Congregation 'de Propaganda Fide'. This sacred congregation or commission



Questions sur la religion et les mœurs des habitans des Isles Sandwich.

Réponses.

1° Ces Insulaires ont-ils beaucoup d'idoles et beaucoup de temples?

Ils ont encore des idoles, mais la plus grande partie a été détruite depuis l'introduction du christianisme. Il reste aussi quelques-uns de leurs anciens temples; les autres ont été consumés par le feu lorsque le peuple changea de religion.

2°. Offrent-ils souvent des sacrifices à leurs fausses divinités? Que leur offrent-ils en sacrifice?

Ils font trois fois par mois; à des intervalles égaux; des sacrifices; ces cérémonies durent deux jours consécutifs; elles se font secrètement depuis l'adoption du protestantisme; mais on ne doute que les peuples de l'intérieur des Isles qui suivent les anciens usages, n'ayant pas encore été instruits dans la nouvelle religion. Les sacrifices ne consistent plus aujourd'hui qu'en sacrifices d'animaux et en offrandes de produits de la terre. Ils ont renoncé aux sacrifices humains depuis une quinzaine d'années.

3°. Suivent-ils quelques règles pour le choix des victimes qu'ils sacrifient?

Lorsqu'ils faisaient des sacrifices humains, c'étaient les prêtres qui désignaient les victimes; mais ils pouvaient leur faire grâce, droit qui n'appartenait pas même au Roi. Quant aux sacrifices des animaux, ils ne suivent d'autre règle que celle de choisir des animaux entièrement blancs ou entièrement noirs,

1 Page one of a seven-page questionnaire drawn up by Father Charles-François Langlois, superior of the Paris Foreign Mission Seminary, containing twenty-nine questions on the religion and customs of the Sandwich Islands inhabitants and answered by Jean-Baptiste Rives. Langlois sent the completed questionnaire to Rome on 23 March 1825. *Source: PF: SC Oceania vol. 1 (1816–41) f. 25r. (Chapter 1).*

of cardinals, today called also the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelisation of Nations (or the Evangelisation Congregation), had been founded by Pope Gregory XV on 6 January 1622. Its purpose and duty were to organise and direct the missionary activity of the Catholic Church throughout the world under the immediate supervision of the pope.

After giving what background he could about Rives, Langlois said that 'he holds strongly to the Catholic faith'. It was this attachment that now made him want to take along to the Sandwich Islands some Catholic missionaries, since he was convinced that very many of the people there could easily be won over to the Catholic faith. Langlois gave some details on the Protestant missionary work there and referred to the seven-page questionnaire filled out by Rives. The Sacred Congregation would surely be pleased with the information it contained, he said, and the cardinals would rejoice, because it showed 'how well disposed these people are for receiving the true faith'. But at the same time the report would deeply sadden the cardinals, because they would see how numerous and how ready to make every sacrifice in spreading their creed the Protestant missionaries were, whereas in fact Catholic missionaries were so few in number and none could be found who were 'animated with truly apostolic zeal'.

He wished that his own seminarians were numerous enough to take care of these needs, Langlois said, but he had so very few and the mission fields already entrusted to his society by Rome were suffering from a great shortage of personnel. 'So there is nothing else that we can do at the moment, but to make known to the Sacred Congregation what has become known to us, and to ask the Lord of the harvest earnestly to send forth labourers into his harvest, and to bewail vehemently the stubborn resistance of certain bishops who refuse to consent to the wishes of those in their dioceses who yearn to devote themselves to the missions.'

He also requested della Somaglia to obtain a disparity of cult dispensation from Pope Leo XII for Rives so that his marriage could be validated.[4]

The Rives-Langlois proposal on a new mission for the Sandwich Islands was handed over for action to Archbishop Pietro Caprano, secretary of the Evangelisation Congregation since 1823. He personally approached seventy-six-year-old Father Luigi Fortis, superior general of the Society of Jesus (S.J.), called also Company of Jesus or Jesuits, and offered him the mission. But Fortis said he needed more time and more information before making his decision. Caprano then on 19 May 1825 sent him the reports supplied earlier by Rives and Langlois and said in an accompanying letter that after Fortis had studied the reports, he and Fortis could meet again to settle the matter. He praised the Jesuit superior general for his 'ardent zeal', known far and wide, which guaranteed that he would make 'every effort to see the plan realised'. Fortis, however, returned the documentation by September and said that he could not accept the mission.[5]

The next one approached was fifty-seven-year-old Father Marie-Joseph-Pierre Coudrin (1768–1837). This priest had left Paris for Rome on 19 May, which curiously was the very day on which Caprano had sent the Rives-Langlois

2 The Very Reverend Marie-Joseph-Pierre Coudrin (1768–1837), founder of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (SS.CC.), known also as the Picpus Fathers. *Source: SSCC. (Chapter 1).*

report to Fortis. Coudrin was the founder and superior general of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (SS.CC.), known also as the Picpus Fathers, because their main house was on rue de Picpus in Paris.[6] This religious community was founded in 1800 and received papal approbation in 1817. Coudrin's chief aim in Rome, where he arrived on 8 June, was to obtain papal approbation for the rule which his community had perfected at its General Chapters of 1819 and 1824. During his six weeks in Rome he had a private audience with Pope Leo XII on 18 June, to whom he presented the new rule. Later he was received with great kindness by Cardinals della Somaglia, Pacca, Morozzo (who promised to expedite approbation of the rule), de Gregorio and Testaferrata.

On 15 July, six days before his return to France, Coudrin presented to Archbishop Caprano, secretary of the Evangelisation Congregation, a memorandum expressing his community's readiness and eagerness to serve in Oriental Rite missions in Europe or in foreign missions of the Latin Rite. It would be impossible to send men at once, however, because his members had had no missionary experience and there was no one to train them. But if the Evangelisation Congregation were interested, he said, he would send three members in vows to Rome 'as soon as permission is granted. The Sacred Congregation can then send them at once to whatever mission it considers best. We ask only that they be under no one but the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelisation of Nations and that their superior be named by the superior general of our community in accord with the wishes of the Sacred Congregation.'[7]

It was this memorandum which now prompted della Somaglia and Caprano to see if they could interest Coudrin in accepting the Sandwich Islands. But before approaching Coudrin they sought clearance from Pope Leo XII, since the Picpus Fathers up to this time had never been engaged in foreign missionary work.[8]

The pope had meanwhile reached a decision on 'the very complicated marriage case' of Rives and on 4 June the pertinent document had been sent by della Somaglia to Langlois. The pope had also given his approval to the Picpus rule on 26 August after it had been examined and approved by the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and Religious. News of this approbation reached Paris on 9 September and the very next day in Rome della Somaglia wrote to Coudrin inviting him to accept the Sandwich Islands. The timing was calculated to ensure acceptance by Coudrin, since he could hardly say no to a Vatican request coming hot on the heels of the approbation of his rule.[9]

Della Somaglia's letter said that 'a new evangelical harvest seems to be springing up which could well be entrusted for cultivation to the sacred labourers' of Coudrin's religious community. The cardinal mentioned how he had learned through Langlois of 'a certain Frenchman . . . based for about 20 years on the Sandwich Islands in the Pacific Ocean' who had been secretary to the king of those islands, was now in France, and wanted to take along some priests on his return. Prospects were good, he said, even though in the same islands there were 'forty and more ministers of the Calvinist sect sent there from

North America', who had persuaded a large majority of the islanders to give up their pagan superstition, destroy their temples, and embrace the Christian religion. 'But such is their inexperience, so reprehensible their way of life, and so great their concern for gain and for business, that they are held in contempt by many. And they make little progress with their disciples because they teach them the Christian religion according to the false principles of their sect.'[10]

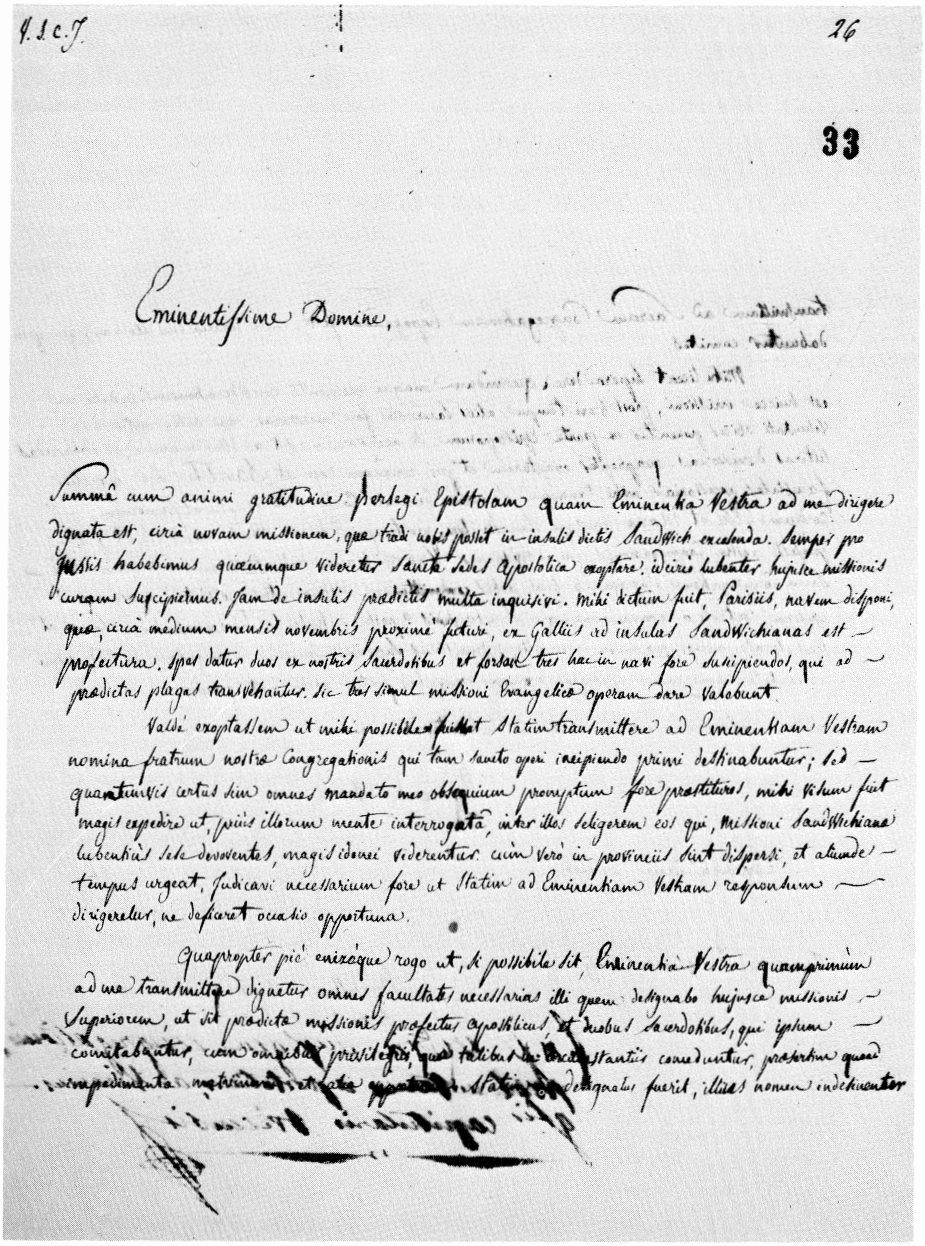
This harsh judgment on the missionaries who had been sent to the Sandwich Islands by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was based on the report of Rives. He as a Frenchman and a Catholic had precious little to say in favour of American Protestants. Unfortunately the animosity and prejudice already existing between Protestants and Catholics in America and Europe was being propagated at this early date throughout the Pacific islands where it would have a long and painful history. And although it would not colour every phase of missionary work, it would play a dominant role in determining where and when Catholic and Protestant missionary work would begin or end and how it would spread.

Della Somaglia near the end of his letter said that what he really needed were 'holy workers animated with true apostolic zeal'. It was this need that had prompted the Evangelisation Congregation when searching for personnel 'to fix its eyes and its thoughts' on Coudrin and on the members of his community. 'If in your ranks you have some members who are fit to launch this new mission, then let me know so that we can make the necessary arrangements.' It was Coudrin's 'ardent zeal for the propagation of the faith', the cardinal added, that *forced* him to hope for an affirmative answer.[11]

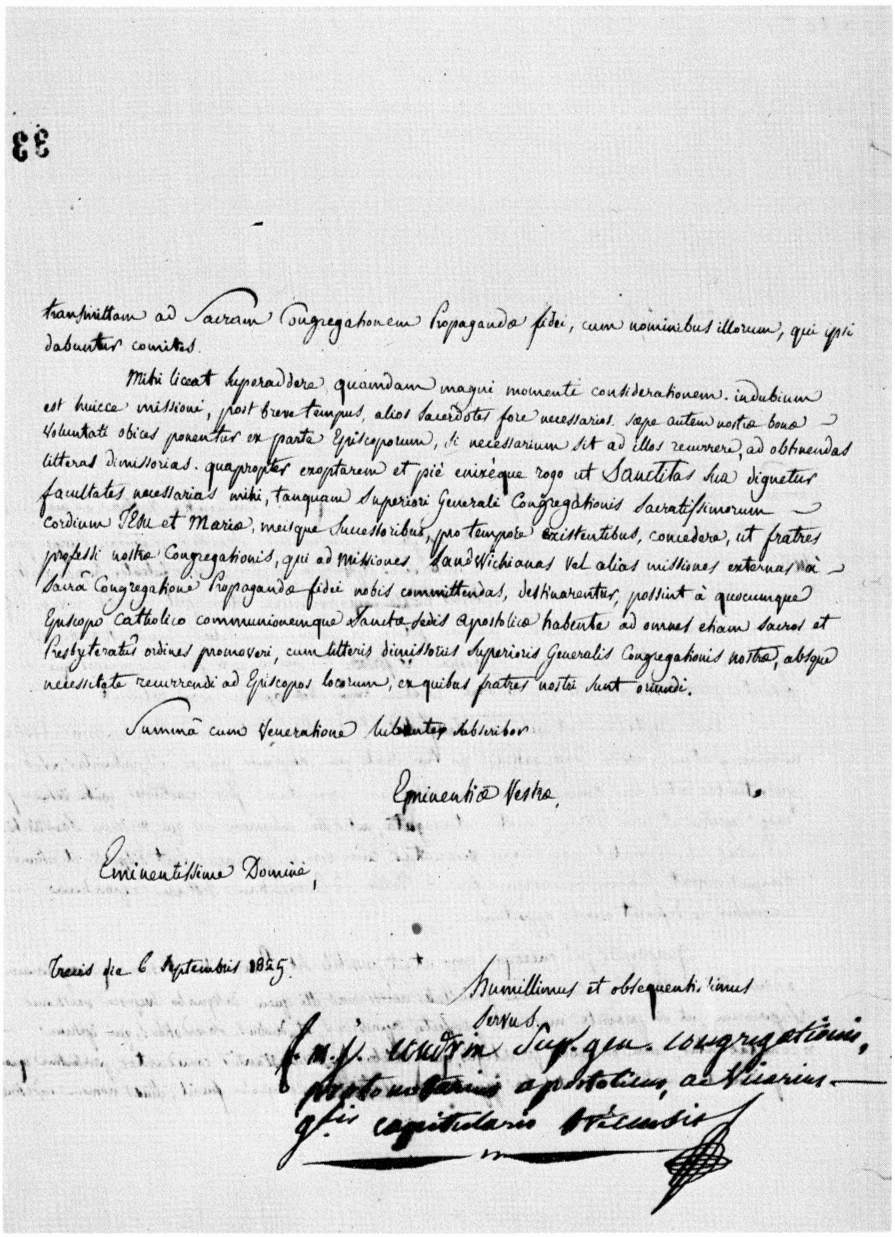
This letter reached Paris on 29 September and Coudrin set to work immediately reading books and contacting people. He wanted to find out all that he could about the Sandwich Islands and how his missionaries might get there. From Langlois, mentioned in the cardinal's letter, he learned that the 'certain Frenchman' so interested in getting priests was Rives, and he obtained a copy of the Langlois-Rives questionnaire that had been sent to Rome. From Rives in turn he learned that the bankers and shipowners Javal and Lafitte would be sending a ship to the Sandwich Islands in mid-November and that two or three of his priests could go along.[12]

Ten months earlier Rives, who wanted the French government to name him consul in the Sandwich Islands, had given a glowing report to Baron de Damas, Minister of Foreign Affairs, on how advantageous for French commerce it would be to have a trade route in the north Pacific from the west coast of North America via the Sandwich Islands to Canton, China. Rives then on his own initiative, but with approval from de Damas, had succeeded in stirring up the interest of Javal and Lafitte in this proposed French north Pacific trade route. Until this time it had been monopolised by British and American firms. Rives had also said in his report to the Minister of Foreign Affairs that French influence in the Sandwich Islands would be more lasting if French priests were to establish a mission there. This explains why he approached Langlois for personnel.[13]

Coudrin wrote back to della Somaglia on 6 October 1825, exactly one week



3 The Latin letter of Superior General Coudrin of the Picpus Fathers addressed to Cardinal della Somaglia, pro-prefect of the Evangelisation Congregation, accepting responsibility for the Prefecture Apostolic of the Sandwich Islands. (This reply to della Somaglia's letter of 10 September was inadvertently dated 6 September for 6 October 1825.) *Source: PF: SC Oceania vol. 1 (1816–41) f. 33r. (Chapter 1).*



4 Page two of Father Coudrin's letter dated 6 September 1825, as figure 3. *Source: PF: SC Oceania vol. 1 (1816–41) f. 33v. (Chapter 1).*

after the cardinal's letter had reached Paris. (In his haste and excitement he wrote September instead of October.)[14] 'We shall always consider as a command whatever seems to be the wish of the Holy Apostolic See,' he said, 'and therefore we shall gladly take charge of this mission.' Without going into details he pointed out that he had 'already done much research' on the Sandwich Islands and was told in Paris that a ship would be leaving for those islands in mid-November and that he could expect to get two and perhaps even three of his priests aboard. Since so few French ships sailed to those islands, it was necessary to act quickly in order not to lose this opportunity.

It was this very urgency of the matter, he explained, that made it impossible for him to submit with his letter the name of a candidate for the office of prefect apostolic and the names of the two priests who would accompany him. For although he was certain that his members 'would all give prompt obedience' to his orders, he considered it 'more expedient' to ask for volunteers. From among them he would then choose 'those who more willingly would want to devote themselves to the Sandwich mission and who would seem more suited for it'. But his priests were scattered throughout the various provinces of France and by the time he could get the names, send them on to Rome and get back the necessary faculties, the ship would already have sailed. Consequently he 'piously and earnestly' begged the cardinal, if at all possible, to send the faculties on to him at once and in such a way that he himself could give his missionaries their faculties and designate one of them as prefect apostolic. He would then forward their names without delay to Rome.

Was Coudrin asking for too much here? Designating the prefect apostolic of a mission was a long-standing prerogative of the cardinal prefect of the Evangelisation Congregation, and he might not want to surrender this right.

Coudrin went on to say that the mission without a doubt would soon need more priests. He therefore 'piously and earnestly' asked that the cardinal obtain for him as superior general and for his successors special faculties from the pope which would help remove 'the obstacles that are often placed in the way of our good will by bishops'. According to existing church law every member of his congregation wishing to be ordained to any of the seven minor or major orders—this included the priesthood—was obliged in each case to obtain beforehand from the bishop of his home diocese dimissorial letters, that is, official testimony of his suitability for ordination. The 'obstacles' created by bishops on these occasions would be eliminated completely, Coudrin declared, if the pope were to authorise 'any Catholic bishop in communion with the Holy Apostolic See to ordain . . . the professed members of our congregation who are assigned to the Sandwich missions or to other foreign missions that may be entrusted to us. . . .' At the same time he wished the pope to make it no longer necessary for these members to have recourse to the bishops of their home dioceses, 'provided only that they have dimissorial letters from the superior general of our congregation'.[15]

After posting his letter to della Somaglia on 6 October, Coudrin lost no time. He had Father Felix Cummins, Irish prior of his house in Paris, visit Baron de

Damas, Minister of Foreign Affairs, on 7 October in order to request free passage for his missionaries aboard a ship of the Royal Navy. On the following day Cummins formally submitted this request to the government in writing. Then Coudrin on 17 October wrote to Father Alexis-Jean-Augustin Bachelot, head of the major seminary at Tours, inviting him to become one of the three missionaries. 'Reflect on this before God,' he said, 'and answer me very promptly. These islands, which number about 500,000 souls, have not yet seen a Catholic priest. The Evangelisation Congregation is offering us this mission as if it were to be our congregation's very own. . . .'[16]

Cummins on 19 October was received at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss transportation and financial subsidies for the new mission. Comte Alexandre-Maurice d'Hauterive (1754–1830), who represented Baron de Damas at this meeting, told Cummins that France was interested in the north Pacific route and that it would be necessary for France to spread out from the Sandwich Islands and find suitable harbours in California and China.

On learning that Marquis Eugene de Montmorency was leaving for Rome, Coudrin penned a letter to Bartolomeo Cardinal Pacca (1756–1844) on 21 October, hoping that the cardinal's influence would make matters move more quickly in Rome. The French government ultimately promised free passage for the missionaries, and 4,000 francs as a subsidy for their first foundation, but stated that official government protection for the missionaries could not be guaranteed, because a liberal faction in the government was opposed to religious congregations like that of Father Coudrin, which had not been legally recognised. Giving such protection was also hampered by the fact that France had no political bonds with the Sandwich Islands.[17]

Coudrin's concern for a speedy decision was shared by Cardinal della Somaglia who took action in Rome long before the letter for Cardinal Pacca had arrived. Della Somaglia asked Archbishop Pietro Caprano, secretary of the Evangelisation Congregation, to see Pope Leo XII on 24 October 1825. At this audience Caprano requested the desired ecclesiastical privileges and powers—technically called faculties—for the new prefect apostolic and for the missionaries still to be chosen by Coudrin for the Sandwich Islands. The pope instructed Caprano 'to grant all the faculties that he would consider opportune, no matter how ample they might be'.[18] By granting these faculties the pope also created the Prefecture Apostolic of the Sandwich Islands.

Coudrin's haste, however, kept preying on Caprano's mind. Under normal circumstances the secretary would have considered this haste as zeal, but now it filled him with fear and suspicion because of a traumatic experience to which he had been subjected the year before. It had all begun with a series of fifteen letters coming to the Evangelisation Congregation in rapid succession in March and April 1824. They were from Mohamed Ali, Vice Regent of Egypt, and other personalities, and all insisted that the Catholic Coptic Patriarchate of Alexandria should be established, that Vicar Apostolic Massimo Giuaid of Egypt should be made Patriarch, and that Abramo Chasciur, a Coptic student from Egypt in Rome, should be made Archbishop of Memphis. This was all to happen within

fifty-five days and Chasciur was to be sent to Egypt to ordain Giuaid a bishop and patriarch. The result was to be reunion between the Coptic Church and Rome, something greatly hoped for by Caprano.

Chasciur, however, was only twenty years old and had not yet begun his theological studies. When Caprano wanted to confer with ecclesiastical authorities in Egypt, another letter came from the Vice Regent insisting that Chasciur had to be ordained a bishop 'within 24 days' of receipt of the letter, or the breach with Rome would continue. Caprano as secretary bore almost full responsibility for the direction of the Evangelisation Congregation at this time because della Somaglia, its pro-prefect, was also secretary of state for Pope Leo XII. In his haste not to lose this opportunity for bringing about reunion, Caprano convoked an extraordinary meeting of the Evangelisation Congregation on 13 July and it unanimously decided to carry out all requests contained in the various letters. He then obtained the necessary dispensations from the pope on 18 July and himself ordained Chasciur a subdeacon, deacon and priest on 18, 25 and 26 July. In the Sistine Chapel on Sunday, 1 August, in the presence of all the students of the Evangelisation Congregation's college and with Caprano as his assisting prelate, Pope Leo XII with much pomp ordained Chasciur a bishop and named him Archbishop of Memphis, handing over to him the pallium, which had been brought in procession from Saint Peter's tomb in the adjoining basilica.

But upon arrival in Alexandria on 28 September, the priest sent along with Chasciur to teach him theology was appalled to learn that all the letters had been forged. Enraged over what had happened, the Vice Regent on 14 October sent the archbishop-impostor back to Rome. Chasciur had done all the forging—or nearly all of it—himself! Tried by the Holy Office, he was found guilty, was degraded, laicised and sentenced to lifelong imprisonment. Prefect Apostolic Daniele di Procida of Egypt on 30 October that same year sent a blistering letter to Rome expressing surprise and indignation over the Evangelisation Congregation's having acted 'with such great speed', whereas in conducting its business and in making decisions 'it has always moved and still moves as if it had lead in its feet'.

Caprano's health and also his policies were understandably affected by this experience, in spite of the comfort and understanding that he received from the pope. Fearing that Coudrin because of his haste might be foisting on the Sandwich Islands some additional 'Chasciurs', he persuaded della Somaglia to postpone drawing up the faculties and forwarding them to Coudrin, even though they had been granted by the pope. Before taking further action Caprano wanted to have more specific information on the project in general and on the missionaries in particular.

To obtain the desired information della Somaglia on 29 October wrote to Coudrin, saying that he was most grateful for his acceptance of the mission. But he pointed out at the same time that 'this is a serious affair and must be given due consideration before it can be carried out'. In order that Coudrin might become better acquainted with the true state of religion in the Sandwich Islands, a copy of the Langlois-Rives questionnaire was enclosed for his personal study.

'Afterwards you will indicate to us,' the cardinal said, 'what you believe is needed, so that the proposed missionary expedition may be launched in a very mature and advantageous way.'[19]

The cardinal wrote a second letter that same day to Archbishop Vincenzo Macchi, nuncio apostolic in Paris, and explained that he was writing confidentially. After acquainting him in some detail with the new project that was destined 'to provide for the needs of religion in the Sandwich Islands', and after praising Coudrin for his 'piety, zeal and virtuous conduct', the cardinal asked the nuncio for his 'most wise view on the whole affair in general'. He also wanted to have his judgment in particular 'on the qualities of the subjects whom Father Coudrin intends to present as missionaries'. But the nuncio was 'to keep secret the present commission', and was to send his reply to Rome 'with all possible haste'.[20]

A speedy reply dated 12 November did come, not from the nuncio, but from a rather indignant Coudrin. 'While we were anxiously awaiting word from the Apostolic See on the Sandwich missions', he said, 'Your Eminence's letter of 29 October arrived. But after the arrival of your first letter we had already given serious consideration to what would be necessary and advantageous for this mission. And as for the *Report* which Your Eminence so kindly sent us, we had already received a copy of it.'

At first sight it might seem more expedient for us, he continued, simply 'to wait for the commands of the Sacred Congregation', prepare two or three priests, and then send them 'at the time and in the manner designated'. But a French ship was being readied for sailing to those shores, he said, and it would be most advantageous if the missionaries could make use of it. This was especially true since Rives would be travelling aboard the very same ship, and it was Rives according to the cardinal's own words who could assure them of a peaceful ministry. A further reason for not neglecting this opportunity, Coudrin insisted, was that Rives would be staying in the Sandwich Islands only a short time and then was to return permanently to France.

Coudrin explained further that after getting the first letter from the cardinal he had visited the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the king of France. This official had promised free passage for his missionaries aboard a French ship which had delayed its departure and was now scheduled to leave for the Sandwich Islands in December. His own congregation, he said, would take upon itself the burden of all other expenses.

Then Coudrin listed the names, birthplaces and birthdays of the three missionaries chosen for the Sandwich Islands. And he requested that Father Alexis-Jean-Augustin Bachelot, born 22 February 1796 at Saint Cyr-Orne, France, be named the prefect apostolic with the faculty of subdelegating a vice-prefect, if circumstances should require it. He also asked that the three missionaries 'be given all faculties and privileges that were given to the Jesuits when they were first assigned to the Indian missions in America, since the circumstances are the same'.

This long Latin letter was so eloquent and convincing a piece of writing that

della Somaglia decided to have Caprano make its entire contents known to Leo XII at the next weekly audience on Sunday, 27 November.

'Your Holiness certainly recalls', Caprano began, 'that it was with Your Beatitude's consent that an inquiry was made as to whether the Reverend Coudrin, superior and founder of the new Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and Vicar General of Troyes, would be prepared to take charge of the Sandwich Islands mission in the Pacific Ocean, a mission for which the Fathers of the Company of Jesus did not believe they could offer themselves. The response was even beyond what we desired! Not only did the Reverend Coudrin accept the offer, but he showed himself impatient to have some priests of his congregation depart for those islands, asking that they be furnished with suitable faculties, and insisting that haste be made in sending on to him everything that was needed.' This great haste, the archbishop explained, was due to the fact that a ship was about to leave for those islands, and a long period of time might elapse before a similar opportunity would present itself.

'In spite of all this pressure', he continued, 'it was thought best to delay the project. And so by letter of 29 October a *Report* describing with much accuracy the religious state of those islands was sent to the Reverend Coudrin; it had been sent to the Sacred Congregation by the Reverend Langlois, Superior of the [Paris] Foreign Mission Seminary.'

At this point Caprano read Coudrin's long Latin letter of 12 November to the pope, and then continued: 'This is the situation as it is at present, but it creates two difficulties for me. First I am reminded of what happened last year with regard to the Coptic Patriarch, and this makes me fear these affairs that are carried out with great haste. Secondly, the request that the missionaries be furnished with all the faculties and privileges received by the Jesuits when they undertook missions among the savages of America seems too indefinite, since these were granted at diverse times and under various popes.

'Nevertheless, it seems that my first difficulty ought to be silenced by the piety of the Reverend Coudrin, since all speak of him with the highest praise and since there is no reason for him to be deceitful in this matter. My second difficulty could easily disappear if one were to decide specifically what faculties should be given to the missionaries. Some norm could be established for determining this, like current practice and the most ample Briefs of the Supreme Pontiffs, principally those of Benedict XIV and Clement XIII, and also the Decrees of the Holy Office and of the Evangelisation Congregation.'

After hearing the above report Pope Leo XII once again gave his approval for the Sandwich Islands mission, and ordered that as quickly as possible the most ample faculties should be conferred on the priests of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, so that they could properly exercise the ministry that they were being sent to perform.[21]

The audience with the pope took place on 27 November, a Sunday. All week long Caprano watched the mail for a reply from the nuncio apostolic in Paris, but no answer came. So on Saturday, 3 December, feast of the Jesuit missionary Saint Francis Xavier, he ordered that all official documents should be drawn up

and signed. Bachelot was named the first Prefect Apostolic of the Sandwich Islands and letters patent were issued to his priest companions, Fathers Abraham Armand and Patrice Peter Short. Extraordinary faculties were also granted to the three missionaries in accord with the wishes previously expressed by the pope.[22]

That same day, 3 December, della Somaglia acknowledged the receipt of Coudrin's letter of 12 November, saying that 'the matter had been immediately referred to His Holiness, who highly approved of this expedition and graciously granted the faculties which you will find in the enclosed documents for the new workers going to this new harvest'. He wished the missionaries a good voyage and told Coudrin that it was his responsibility to inform the prefect apostolic that he should send a letter to the Sacred Congregation as quickly as possible after his arrival in the islands. It was to be a report on conditions affecting him and his fellow missionaries, as well as on other important matters touching the mission, 'so that by pooling our knowledge the Catholic cause may more easily be promoted'.[23]

Della Somaglia also wrote that same day to Macchi in Paris, complaining that his earlier request for information had not been answered. After telling the nuncio the latest developments, he said, 'It was thought well to conform without delay to the urgent requests of the excellent and zealous Reverend Coudrin in an affair of such great importance.' He enclosed his letter of 3 December for Coudrin together with a number of documents and asked the nuncio to pass these on to Coudrin 'immediately'. But if the 'accurate inquiries' made by the nuncio had meanwhile uncovered something of importance that was unfavourable to the mission in general or to the missionaries destined for it, the nuncio was to retain the documents in his possession and inform the cardinal of the reasons that had induced him not to pass them on to Coudrin. 'The delicacy of the charge entrusted to you is extreme', the cardinal said, 'but precisely for this reason we have confided in your well-known wisdom and prudence.'[24]

Actually the nuncio had sent a letter to della Somaglia dated 30 November, but this letter and the cardinal's second letter of 3 December crossed in the mail. The nuncio explained that he could have replied much sooner, and also at much more length, if he had not been instructed to keep his commission confidential. 'But the secret investigations, which I have not failed to make, did provide me with some definite information,' he said, 'and I hasten to send it on to you.'

In three large pages the nuncio attempted to show how inopportune it would be to start a Catholic mission in the Sandwich Islands at this time. 'The people still adore idols, and only a short while ago stopped sacrificing human blood', he said. In the entire population of 500,000 'there was not a single Catholic', although two men without being well instructed had been baptised by a French priest aboard a ship which had stopped there. He mentioned the Protestant mission from the United States, but said its ministers were 'little esteemed, being very ignorant and occupied with trade'.

Macchi said that Rives of Bordeaux was the only one behind the entire project and was stressing how urgent it was to have missionaries. 'While he was

in the service of the king, Rives certainly could have used his influence with the king in order to obtain protection and backing for the missionaries.' But since the king was now dead, Macchi pointed out, and since no one knew whether his son had succeeded him to the throne, or perhaps some new dynasty, Rives was unable to provide the missionaries with guarantees. They might well run the risk of not being admitted, or of being expelled, or of not finding there the necessities of life. 'This last reflection merits all the more attention', Macchi said, 'because we are here concerned with such a very distant place. And although the French government would not oppose the departure of the missionaries, neither would it provide them with the usual subsidies, since their missionary congregation is not incorporated in the Paris Foreign Mission Seminary and is not legally recognised here.'

The nuncio was of the opinion that the missionaries should not be sent at this time for several reasons. First, more information was needed on the attitude of those now governing the Sandwich Islands. Secondly, 'more guarantees were required than those of only one private individual' like Rives. And thirdly, more factual data were needed before there would be good reason to hope that the missionaries could subsist there. Rives after all was returning with other Frenchmen 'for commercial reasons and without any title', and so there was little guarantee that he could do what he had promised.

As for the personnel to be provided by Coudrin, he did not yet know who they were. 'It is difficult for me to have secret advance knowledge of them,' he said, 'since Father Coudrin resides in Troyes.[25] But I do know in general that the ecclesiastics of that congregation are furnished with profound doctrine, have sufficient instruction and are of praiseworthy conduct. I have already taken opportune steps to learn the names of the candidates and I shall make haste in procuring for myself and passing on to Your Eminence precise information about them.'[26]

Cardinal della Somaglia was impressed with the reasoning of Macchi, and so was Secretary Caprano perhaps because it confirmed his own fears. Caprano then hastily drafted a letter, had it signed by della Somaglia, and sent it off on 15 December by return mail. It instructed Macchi 'to make use of all means in order to suspend for the present the expedition in question'. As the cardinal explained to the nuncio, he had sent the faculties because Coudrin had stressed so much how necessary it was for the missionaries to get aboard the ship leaving France in December. And yet on the other hand the Evangelisation Congregation 'did not want to make its decision final regarding the expedition' before having from the nuncio the information that it had requested as early as 29 October.

It was precisely this dilemma which had prompted della Somaglia to send all documents for Coudrin directly to the nuncio. 'And since your attitude toward the whole affair is so clear from your precious letter of 30 November', the cardinal said, 'I am certain that the packet addressed to the Reverend Coudrin has not been forwarded to him. Nor will you hand it over to him until you have received further word from this Sacred Congregation.'[27]

Coudrin while in Paris on 26 December 1825 received from the Holy See the

decree approving the rule submitted by him for his religious community. Impatient with Rome's apparent delay in sending the necessary authorisation for the Sandwich Islands mission, Coudrin on the following day visited Nuncio Apostolic Macchi. It is not difficult to imagine that his enthusiasm made Macchi see many reasons which guaranteed the success of the Sandwich Islands mission.[28]

Three days later, on 30 December, Macchi wrote Cardinal della Somaglia that he had continued his investigations throughout the month of December and now had such good and certain news that it seemed the Sacred Congregation could 'confidently decide to go ahead as planned with the new mission for the Sandwich Islands'. He had learned that the prime minister of the government in those islands was a Catholic and that the missionaries could expect to receive protection and support from him. As for Rives, he was a most upright man and an excellent Catholic, enjoying not only the highest esteem and consideration in the islands, but also possessing there certain goods, all of which he had promised to hand over to the missionaries in order to assist them in their needs.

Macchi now also had information on the three priests chosen for the mission. Two were from France and one from Ireland; they spoke English well and had the necessary zeal and capacity for the ministry. Further, all three were skilled in mathematics, a talent that they could put to use in the schools that they would found. A highly skilled carpenter, one of the Brothers of the community, was also joining them. And Baron de Damas, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, had promised to provide the mission with sacred vessels and other furnishings by way of substitutes for the financial help which the French government could not grant because Coudrin's religious community was not legally recognised. Also, the Archbishop of Paris fully approved of the new mission and even encouraged it. As for funds, Coudrin had promised to provide his missionaries with a certain amount of money. And the French ship, which was to bring the missionaries to the Sandwich Islands free of charge, would also bring them back again, if for some unforeseen reason they should not succeed in establishing themselves there.

Consequently there was nothing more 'to fear', Macchi said, 'but on the contrary there was much to hope for'. The sailing date had once again been changed, however, and the ship was now to depart 'without fail on this coming 15 February'. He therefore asked Cardinal della Somaglia to let him know by return mail if the papers meant for Coudrin should now be turned over to him.[29]

The cardinal replied quickly and briefly on 17 January 1826, saying that this latest information 'gives us promise that the pious undertaking for the welfare of souls will happily succeed. I therefore hasten to ask you to consign without delay to the Reverend Coudrin the corresponding documents which I entrusted to your prudence on 3 December. Thus the priests chosen for the mission in question will be able to profit from the ship which very soon is to leave for the Sandwich Islands.'[30]

Coudrin, expecting the faculties for the Sandwich Islands mission to arrive in the offices of the nuncio apostolic at any time, paid him another visit on 1 February. As Macchi informed della Somaglia, the letter of 17 January from

Rome, authorising him to hand over the official documents to Coudrin, had arrived just prior to this visit. And so 'I gave him all those documents, which he was most happy to receive . . . , and he assured me that he would busy himself immediately with the necessary arrangements so that the missionaries can take advantage of the ship which will be sailing shortly to those islands.' When telling della Somaglia all of this on 8 February, Macchi ended his letter asking heaven to assist the missionaries with blessings on their long voyage, 'and crown their holy enterprise with happy success'.[31]

Returning to his house on rue de Picpus after seeing the nuncio, Coudrin had the community sing the Veni Creator in praise of the Holy Spirit and on that same day handed over to Bachelot his official appointment as Prefect Apostolic of the Sandwich Islands. Then on 11 February he sent a circular letter 'to all Brothers and Sisters of the congregation', announcing that the rule and community prayerbooks had been approved by Rome. At the same time he informed them that the Holy See had entrusted the Sandwich Islands to them as a mission field.[32]

Now that Coudrin had the official documents, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Baron de Damas, was approached again and on 13 February he renewed his promises to help the Sandwich Islands missionaries. But 15 February came and went and their ship still did not sail.[33]

Father Cummins, prior of the Picpus house in Paris, went on 1 March to see the shipowners with whom Rives was dealing, and was horrified to learn that Rives had not even mentioned the missionaries! So on that same day Cummins went to see the Jewish bankers, Messrs. Javal, who had the chief investment in the venture. They received him coolly at first and showed surprise when it was suggested that they should take aboard Catholic missionaries. But when he pointed out that a successful Catholic mission in the Sandwich Islands would also facilitate their commercial relations, they paid closer attention to what he had to say. They were not in contact with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, they said, but with the Minister of the Navy, whom Cummins would have to see. Whatever he should decide would be agreeable to them, they said. Their ship, *Héros*, was now expected to arrive at Le Havre on 4 March and would leave for the Sandwich Islands about Easter (26 March).

This gave Cummins little time and so on 4 March he had an audience with Comte André-Jean de Chabrol (1771–1836), Minister of the Navy and of the Colonies. He made many promises, assuring the priest that he would request Messrs. Javal to grant passage aboard their ship for three missionaries and one catechist. On the following day Cummins went back to see Messrs. Javal, and once again they gave assurance that they would do whatever was the good pleasure of the Minister of the Navy.

Then under date of 23 March the Minister of the Navy and of the Colonies sent startling news to the Picpus Fathers, informing them that 'these businessmen would very gladly like to go along with your wishes in this matter, but they know for certain that English missionaries have been established in the Sandwich Islands for a long time. It seems as though they have even been well received,

and it is feared that the steps which they might take to oppose a foundation of Catholic missionaries could endanger at the same time the very purpose for which their ship is being sent.' De Chabrol added that Messrs. Javal would later be sending other ships to the islands. Consequently the captain of their ship, *Héros*, had been ordered to obtain information on the advantages or difficulties that French missionaries might find there. 'If this information is favourable, as I hope, these businessmen would then be only too glad to provide passage. . . .'

Messrs. Lafitte, who together with Messrs. Javal were investing money in this venture, were the ones who most strongly opposed granting passage to the missionaries. Prefect Apostolic Bachelot then volunteered to go alone, feeling that it should be easier for one man to get passage aboard the ship. He would reconnoitre the place and make preparations for the others who would come after him. These ideas he sent to Coudrin on 25 March, but Coudrin did not like the idea of his going alone. Meanwhile Rives left for the Sandwich Islands aboard the *Héros* and the Picpus Fathers sought other means of getting to their mission.

Some days later they received word that a transport ship mounted with sixteen cannon was to leave Brest around the middle of May for the Pacific Ocean. It was a government ship and the missionaries felt that once aboard they could easily get to California; from there they would find their own way to the Sandwich Islands. They requested passage, but it was refused.

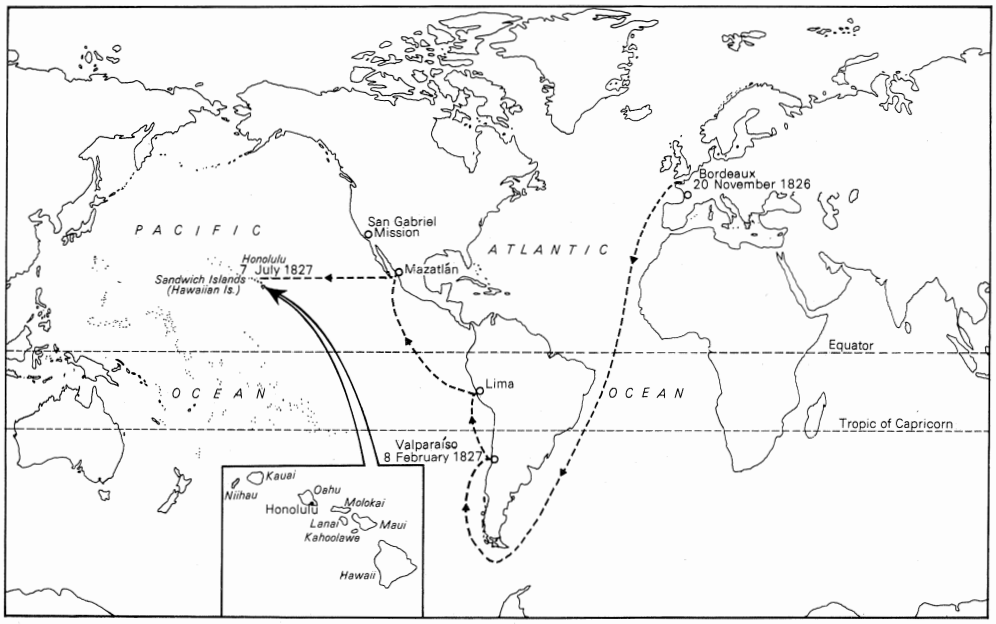
'We had almost lost hope of getting to the Sandwich Archipelago on a French vessel,' Coudrin's secretary later wrote, 'and were already thinking of going via England, when on 2 May 1826 M. Catineau de Laroche, department head in the Bureau of Commerce and of the Colonies, offered to send not only our [priest] missionaries, but also together with them a certain number of lay Brothers who could teach various crafts to the people living in the Sandwich Islands.'

De Laroche confirmed this in a letter to Cummins on 28 June. 'Recently I made an arrangement in the name of M. Rives,' he said, 'whereby it is possible for me to grant passage to a certain number of persons as far as the Sandwich Islands aboard a ship which will be sent from Bordeaux to China next October . . . I have particularly in mind providing this passage for the members of your community, without cost, so that they can preach the Catholic religion in these distant regions.'

But the letter was hardly posted when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent de Laroche an article on the Sandwich Islands published in *La revue britannique.* He was shocked on reading that the Protestant ministers there had gained the complete confidence of the people and enjoyed among them the greatest authority. He forwarded this article on 30 June to Cummins with some observations of his own, saying that he feared a confrontation would take place between the Catholic and Protestant missionaries. He therefore suggested that the French missionaries postpone going to the Sandwich Islands until the king of France was able to establish an agent there, who could then protect them. Meanwhile he would be at their service.

Anxious to destroy the unfavourable impression made on the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs and on de Laroche, Cummins on 15 July wrote a lengthy rebuttal and gave de Laroche and the Minister of Foreign Affairs each a copy. Far from discouraging the Picpus missionaries, he said, the detailed reports 'on the Anglo-American missions' only stimulated them the more. And Rives, who had been a companion of the late king from his youth, had gained his confidence and had almost won him over to Christianity. Even the prime minister currently in office in the islands had been baptised by a Catholic priest. 'Unless I am very much deceived', Cummins wrote, this official 'is an extraordinary man and is perhaps destined to play a great role in Oceania.'



5 The Prefecture Apostolic of the Sandwich Islands was founded on 24 October 1825. The map shows the route taken by the Picpus missionaries who arrived in Honolulu on 7 July 1827. *(Chapter 1).*

The rebuttal had its desired effect and two days later, 17 July, de Laroche saw Cummins and assured him that passage would be provided aboard the *Comète*, a commercial ship, for three priests and three Brothers as had been agreed upon earlier.[34]

Meanwhile Coudrin had been informed that the Archbishop of Rouen wished to have him as his first vicar general. Coudrin accepted the offer and the king of France approved the nomination on 27 August. Two days later Coudrin consulted with Baron de Damas on the Sandwich mission. There seemed to be no further difficulties and so on 8 September he named Bachelot, already prefect apostolic, to be also the religious superior over the missionaries, and gave him the power to name an assistant superior. On 13 September the three priests and three Brothers now assigned to the Sandwich Islands received their religious habit and renewed their vows.

The six missionaries left Paris on 25 September for Bordeaux where their ship was to sail in October. Brother Eustache Hurel fell ill at Bordeaux on 30 October and was replaced ten days later by Brother Leonard Portal. The missionaries finally embarked on 16 November 1826, which was exactly one full year after the original sailing date mentioned by Coudrin in his first letter. A good wind finally took them out to the open sea on 20 November 1826. Aboard were Fathers Alexis Bachelot, the prefect apostolic, Abraham Armand, and Patrice Short; Brothers Melchior Bondu and Leonard; and seminarian Théodose Boissier.[35]

Coudrin wrote to della Somaglia again on 3 December 1826, saying 'a complete year' had elapsed since the cardinal's important letter of 3 December 1825 entrusting to his community the Sandwich Islands. But he could now report that his six men had finally boarded a ship 'which, God willing, will bring them to the desired mission'.[36]

Their ship reached Valparaíso (Chile) on 8 February 1827 and made stopovers at Quilca and Lima (Peru) and also at Mazatlán (Mexico) before reaching Honolulu.[37] Father Patrice Short wrote from Honolulu on 27 July 1827, saying, 'We arrived here in good health on the 7th of this month, which was the 20th day after our departure from Mazatlán and the 230th day after our departure from the mouth of the Garonne at Bordeaux. We were under sail for 150 days and spent 80 days in the various ports. . . .' The difficulties initially caused for them by the Protestant missionaries there, he said, were overcome under God 'by the joint efforts of the American and English consuls'. He said that the English consul had been particularly civil toward him, 'promising me from the very beginning complete protection as an English subject, saying that it was his duty to protect me, no matter what religion I might have'.[38]

On 14 July the missionaries said Mass for the first time in the Sandwich Islands.[39]

Bachelot, the prefect apostolic, wrote to della Somaglia on 20 July saying that 'the Frenchman [Jean-Baptiste Rives], who from his youth lived in these islands and became powerful, and under whose wings we were to be protected, is not here. He has not yet been able to reach these islands, although he began his voyage seven months before we began ours. And so we are quite forsaken. Like orphans, though, we trust that God will be our helper and we have cast our cares upon him.'[40]

He also wrote to Coudrin and said that 'the Protestant Methodists' had known in advance of his coming and tried to prevent his group from disembarking, but without success. They then tried to chase away the newly arrived missionaries from the islands, he said, but this effort also failed.[41]

By this time the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelisation of Nations had a new cardinal prefect, the learned Mauro Cappellari, who since the age of eighteen had been a Camaldolese monk. Cappellari wrote to Bachelot on 26 April 1828, expressing happiness over his safe arrival and urging him to send further reports. 'In this way', he said, 'we can rejoice in the Lord over the

fruitfulness of your labours and we can provide those things, whatever they might be, which would seem conducive to the good of your mission.'[42]

What happened to Jean-Baptiste Rives, the man responsible for the first Roman Catholic missionaries being sent to the Sandwich Islands? He had left France for the Sandwich Islands aboard the *Héros*. But on reaching the Pacific coast of North America he became sidetracked, eager to win for himself a fortune by trading off part of the *Héros* cargo. After transferring to the Hawaiian schooner *Waverley*, he sailed up and down the California coast from Monterey as far as Mexico. But everywhere he was plagued by squandering and mismanagement, eventually losing all that he had. When the *Waverley* returned from Mexico in August 1828 to Monterey, where the *Héros* was to pick up Rives, he was not on board. He never did return to the Sandwich Islands, but died in Mexico on 18 August 1833 at the age of forty.[43]

2

The Prefecture Apostolic of the South Sea Islands

10 JANUARY 1830

Peter Dillon (1785?–1847), an Irishman and a Catholic born under the French flag, was in contact with the South Sea Islands, that is, those in the south Pacific, for twenty consecutive years, from 1809 to 1828. 'I speak numerous languages of these peoples fluently,' he could boast, 'and I have obtained more influence over their kings and princes than any other European who has yet visited these shores.' As captain of a ship he was in the service of England's East India Company.

In his travels he had noticed that in some islands the people were all becoming Methodists.[1] When asked by local leaders what he thought of the Methodist doctrines, he replied that he belonged to a different and much older religion, one that had been established by the apostles who had preached the word of God and converted the nations. He explained that 'all the sects established in the past three centuries are but branches separated from the trunk to which I belong'. His answer gave rise to other questions: 'Then why not send us some members of your religion to teach us what is right?' He promised to do so after he returned to Europe.[2]

Captain Dillon returned to Europe in 1828 as a famous man. The year before he had discovered the wreckage of the two ships, *Boussole* and *Astrolabe*, of the French navigator Jean-François De Galaup, Comte de La Pérouse (1741–88), who had disappeared in the South Seas on a scientific expedition around the world. D'Entrecasteaux, after whom some islands of New Guinea were later named, was commissioned in 1791 to search for the missing navigator but had no success. Nothing further was heard of La Pérouse until 1826 when Dillon at Tikopia in the Santa Cruz Islands north of New Hebrides discovered the silver hilt of a sword with semi-effaced initials, a definite clue. The next year he found the two ships on the reefs of Vanikoro Island nearby and brought parts of the wreckage to France where they were placed on exhibit in the Louvre maritime museum. On this occasion he was received in audience by King Charles X (2 March 1829). Dillon also published a two-volume work in London in 1829, his *Narrative and Successful Result of a Voyage in the South Seas . . . to Ascertain the Actual Fate of La Pérouse's Expedition.*

About the beginning of September that year Dillon visited the Séminaire des Irlandais in Paris, where young men had studied for the priesthood ever since the outbreak of religious persecution in Ireland. He sought out Father Patrick McSweeny (?–1865) of the diocese of Cork, Ireland, who the previous year had

been appointed rector and administrator of the Irish seminary. He explained to him the great need for priests in the South Sea Islands, and said that he would place himself at the service of any priests willing to go there. McSweeny expressed his regrets, saying that he had no priests to spare. But he added that coincidentally a French priest had come to see him just a few days earlier, also asking for missionaries for the South Sea Islands. You are just the man he needs, the superior told Dillon, and then introduced him to this priest who was residing at the nearby Holy Ghost Seminary conducted by the Holy Ghost Fathers (S.Sp.S.).[3]

The priest was Father Gabriel-Henri-Jérôme de Solages (1786–1832), born on 21 August 1786 at Rabastens near Albi in southern France, in the same general area where La Pérouse had been born. His father was the powerful Marquis de Solages; his mother was Dame Elisabeth Thompson, born in England. During the French Revolution (1789–99) his parents had emigrated to England and Henri lived there until he was nineteen. He spoke French and English equally well. Back in France in 1806 he decided to enter the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice and was ordained a priest in Carcassonne on 17 December 1814.

Besides belonging to a noble family, he had wealth and a strong temperament. He was handsome, holy, and 'filled with zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls', according to the testimony of a friend. Because of his part-English background and because his birthplace was so near to that of La Pérouse, his eyes and heart early turned toward that immense tract of islands stretched across the Pacific Ocean known as Oceania. 'I can say that one of the chief reasons why I became a priest', he said, 'was that I wanted to work among the savages of the South Sea Islands.'

After his ordination de Solages served as a parish priest at Saint Benoît de Carmaux until 1823 when he became Vicar General of the Diocese of Pamiers below Toulouse in southern France. But his mind gave him no rest. He knew that English merchants were sweeping through the Pacific islands south of the equator (known then as the South Sea Islands), and that Methodist ministers were accompanying them. But there were no Catholic missionaries, except in the Sandwich Islands.[4] Towards the end of May 1829 he put down his ideas in writing about a mission to the South Sea Islands, and sent the letter to the Reverend Pieau, a friend who was secretary general to the Grand Almonry of France at its Paris headquarters.

Pieau was asked to use his influence with the Association for the Propagation of the Faith so that funds and personnel might by allocated to de Solages for the realisation of his project. This organisation, called nowadays in the English-speaking world the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, had been founded at Lyon in France in 1819 by Marie-Pauline Jaricot who quickly established groups of 10, 100, and 1,000, whose members each contributed one sou a week for the missions. The organisation grew so quickly that by 1829 there was a Southern Central Council for Lyon and a Northern Central Council for Paris and these two central councils were under a Superior Council whose president was the Cardinal-Archbishop of Rouen, Prince de Croÿ, who at the same time

was Grand Almoner of France. Pieau, as secretary general to the Grand Almoner, consequently found no difficulty in bringing the letter of de Solages to the attention of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith.

The letter was read at a meeting of the Paris Central Council which happened to be attended also by Baron de Verna, president of the Lyon Central Council. Pieau informed de Solages on 6 June 1829 that the association had approved his plan and would give him whatever money he needed. But he himself would have to get the missionaries. And a preliminary condition for his receiving the money was that he obtain from Rome the spiritual jurisdiction over the countries which he wished 'to conquer for Jesus Christ', or that he join a missionary congregation. Upon the completion of this formality, he was to inform Pieau of the number of missionaries whom he had assembled and the association would then send him financial help.

The Paris Central Council on the following day officially informed the Lyon Central Council that de Solages had volunteered for mission work in the South Sea Islands.[5]

These plans were already in progress when de Solages in July was offered the position vacant for some months of Prefect Apostolic of Bourbon (now La Réunion), an island and French colony in the Indian Ocean, 21° south of the equator and 684 kilometres east of Madagascar. 'I hesitated a long time before accepting this office,' he said, 'fearing that it would prove to be an obstacle for the realisation of my plans.' But there were those who told him that the two missions were not incompatible, that in fact they could benefit one another, and so he decided to accept. It was at this stage that he left Pamiers for Paris and took up residence at the Holy Ghost Seminary. Rome quickly supplied him with spiritual faculties for Bourbon and the French government supplied letters patent entitling him to a salary and entrance to the colony. The royal ordinance naming him prefect apostolic was dated 17 August 1829.[6]

Father de Solages was already Prefect Apostolic of Bourbon when Captain Dillon was introduced to him by the superior of the Irish seminary. 'What was our surprise', de Solages wrote, 'when we learned that our ideas were identical, both for the plan to be followed as well as for the places where the missions were to be established.' Even the ages of the two men were practically the same; de Solages was forty-three years old and Dillon was hardly a year older.

Dillon too was struck by the coincidence. 'I find it impossible to express what I experienced upon seeing you for the first time', he told de Solages. This meeting with 'someone who had meditated for many years like myself on the same project' made it seem to me 'as if Divine Providence itself was at work'.[7]

One of the questions that they discussed in detail was the costly item of transportation for the missionaries. After several days of conversations, Dillon at the suggestion of de Solages put his ideas in writing on 7 September 1829. The most convenient and least expensive solution according to Dillon was to use the ship sent every year by the French government to bring provisions to its South American fleet based at Brazil, Valparaíso (Chile) and Lima (Peru). 'This ship after unloading its cargo at Peru or Chile returns empty', he said. 'Now if it were

to have missionaries aboard, it could sail to Pitcairn Island, let the missionaries destined for this island disembark, and then head for the Marquesas Islands, or some other place, and from there to Tahiti and other nearby islands.'

Dillon said he had lived for fourteen months on the island of Tahiti and had been adopted by one of the local chiefs. The young daughter of this chief was now queen and also head of the royal family, and Dillon was convinced that he could persuade the Tahitians 'to cast off the yoke of the Methodists . . . and declare themselves in favour of a French missionary'.

From Tahiti in the Society Islands the ship could then sail to the Friendly or Tonga Islands. 'Many of the inhabitants here are completely devoted to me', Dillon said, 'and have even sailed with me. The great chief of the Ma'ufanga District on Tongatapu Island is a particular friend of mine. Recently two of his sons and one of his nephews made a five-month sea voyage with me. They would be pleased to see me once again, and to learn that I was bringing them pious missionaries to teach them religion, arts and crafts.

'From the Friendly Islands', he continued, 'one goes to the Fiji Islands which are the principal and most fertile islands in the South Seas. The people living on these islands are the most civilised in the Pacific Ocean . . . Europeans up until now have had very little contact with these islands. I visited them for the first time in the year 1809, again in 1813, and also in the years 1824 and 1825. For a considerable amount of time I lived on the shore at Bou and I have had frequent dealings with Vallon, king of the largest of these islands.'

Chiefs of nearly all neighbouring islands paid an annual tribute to Vallon, who once told Dillon that if he had a hundred whites to help him, he could train his subjects to be just as skilful as the whites. 'He offered me his own daughter in marriage', Dillon said. 'Although I could not accept his offer, I did let him know that I would like to own some land in his country, since I planned to return there one day. The king and his brothers then gave me an island with its inhabitants and produce. It is there that I would like to see the missionaries become established. Not only would I conduct them there, but I would also see to it that they receive an excellent reception from the natives.'

From the Fiji Islands the ship could then continue on its course to New Zealand, 'going to the Schoracaï River where the Protestant ministers have not yet penetrated'. The chief in this area had a young son, Prince Brian Boru, evidently named (by Dillon?) after an Irish hero, who Dillon said was aboard his ship with a fellow nobleman on a voyage to Calcutta and then accompanied him on his search for La Pérouse. 'I brought this young prince back to his family in December 1827', said Dillon, 'and I would suggest that we leave some missionaries also at this place. As for the needs of the missionaries, I shall be able to obtain for them from the chief whatever they might want.'[8]

The ship could next cross the Indian Ocean, stop at Bourbon, round the Cape of Good Hope on the southern tip of Africa, and then return to France. 'I would also recommend', Dillon added, 'that a certain number of the most outstanding natives on each of the islands where the ship drops anchor should be taken either to France or to Bourbon. There they could be instructed more thoroughly in that

kind of knowledge which one feels would be most useful for advancing the work of civilisation in their respective countries.'

Although no more than seventy-four kilometres long, the oval-shaped island of Bourbon in the Indian Ocean was an important and well-developed French colony. It had been discovered in 1528, the French flag was hoisted over it in 1642, and colonisation began in 1654. Like the islands of the south Pacific it too lay in the torrid zone, and so the climate would prove agreeable for 'the most outstanding natives' who might be given special training there.

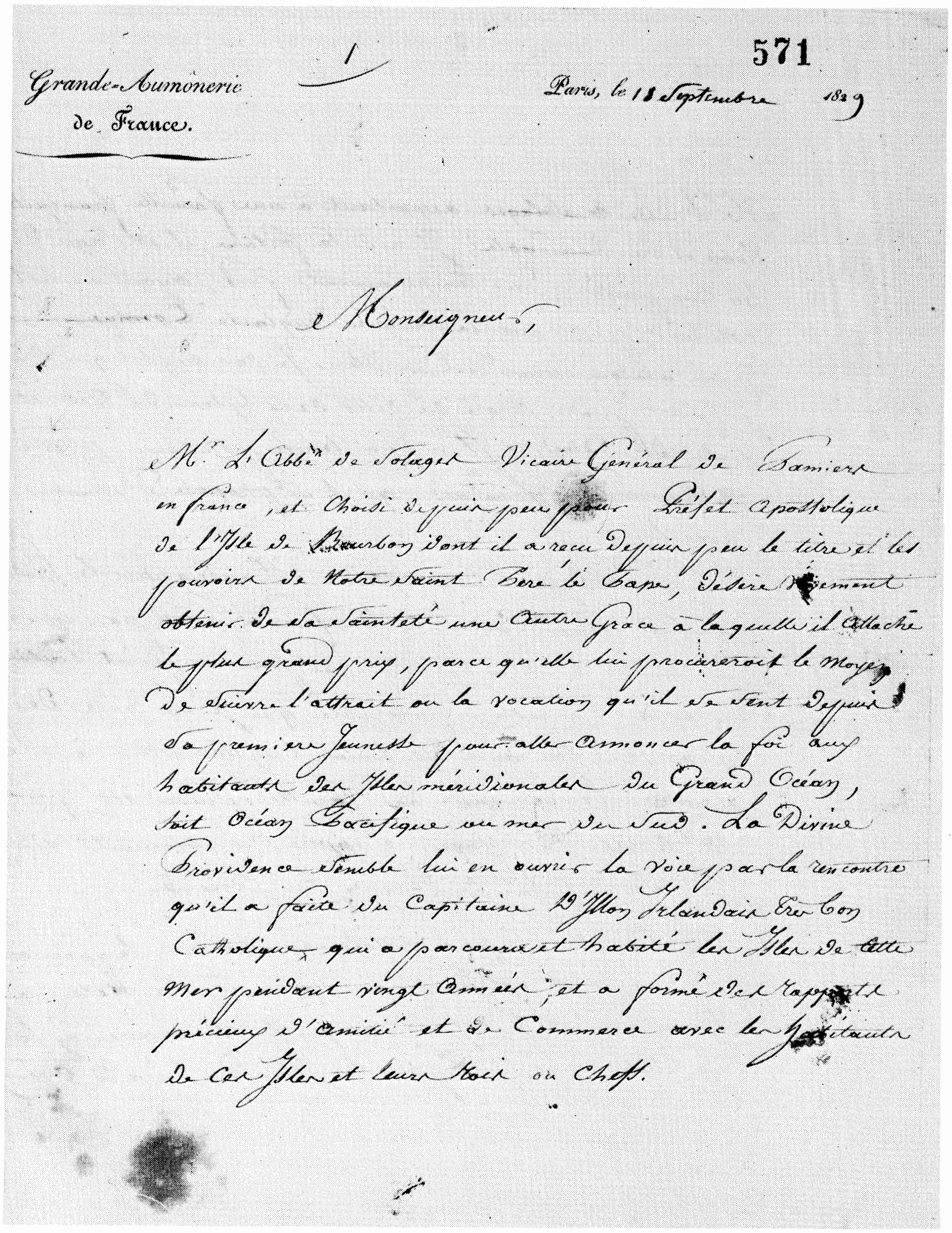
Dillon was personally convinced that there had never been 'a more favourable moment than the present for founding Catholic establishments in these countries'. Nor had the urgency to do so ever been as great. Delay in taking action, he said, would mean that the South Sea Islands 'later will be found to be completely overrun by the Protestant societies from England'.[9]

The letter by Pieau informing de Solages of the conditions that he had to fulfil in order to obtain financial aid for his project had been authorised by the Reverend L. Perreau. This priest was vicar general of the Grand Almoner, chaplain to the king, and simultaneously secretary and treasurer for the Superior Council of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith. De Solages had meanwhile established personal contact with Perreau and informed him that he had already found some priests who wished to accompany him to Oceania. He gave Perreau a copy of Dillon's letter of 7 September and asked that he send it to Rome to the cardinal prefect in charge of missions together with a request for jurisdiction and special spiritual faculties for the South Sea Islands.[10]

Perreau then wrote to Mauro Cardinal Cappellari, prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelisation of Nations, on 18 September. He said that Father de Solages, Vicar General of Pamiers, wanted 'another grace' in addition to the powers and title of Prefect Apostolic of Bourbon that he had received from the pope a short time before. He wanted to bring the Catholic faith to the south Pacific. 'Divine Providence seems to open the way to him through the acquaintance that he made of the Irish Captain Dillon, a very good Catholic . . . He has already found many French missionary priests whom he intends to take with him.'

Perreau told Cappellari that Cardinal Prince de Croÿ, the Grand Almoner of France, was away and so he was taking the liberty of writing in the cardinal's name. One of the ten special faculties that he requested was that 'the title of prefect apostolic with all the usual powers' be conferred by the pope on Father de Solages 'for the islands of the Pacific Ocean from Easter Island to New Zealand inclusive and from the equator on the north to the Antarctic Pole on the south'. This new office, Perreau suggested, was to be independent of the office of Prefect Apostolic of Bourbon, 'in such a way, that if he should come to renounce this latter title, he would still keep jurisdiction over the other islands designated in his request'.

He asked the cardinal to reply as quickly as possible if the proposal should prove pleasing to the pope. 'I wish to affirm again', he concluded, 'that the



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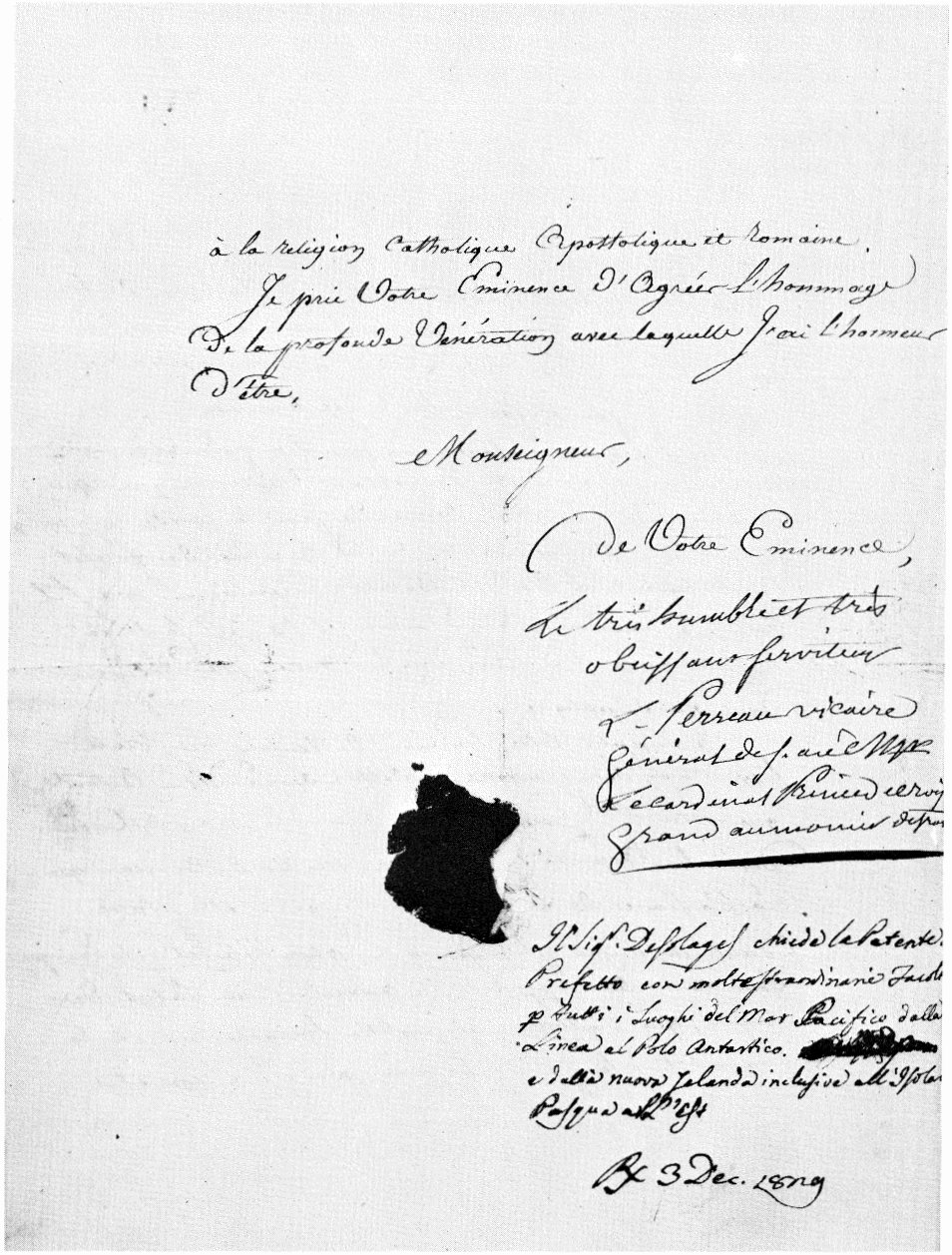
Grande-Aumônerie de France.

Paris, le 18 Septembre 1829

Monseigneur,

Mr. L'Abbé de Solages Vicaire Général de Pamiers en France, et choisi depuis peu pour Préfet apostolique de l'Isle de Bourbon dont il a reçu depuis peu le titre et les pouvoirs de Notre Saint Père le Pape, désire vivement obtenir de Sa Sainteté une autre grace à laquelle il attache le plus grand prix, parce qu'elle lui procureroit le moyen de suivre l'attrait ou la vocation qu'il se sent depuis sa première jeunesse pour aller annoncer la foi aux habitants des Isles méridionales du Grand Océan, soit Océan Pacifique ou mer du Sud. La Divine Providence semble lui en ouvrir la voie par la rencontre qu'il a faite du Capitaine Dillon Irlandais très bon Catholique, qui a parcouru et habité les Isles de cette Mer pendant vingt années, et a formé des rapports précieux d'amitié et de commerce avec les habitants de ces Isles et leurs Rois ou Chefs.

6 Letter of Vicar General L. Perreau of 18 September 1829 addressed to Cardinal Prefect Cappellari leading to the foundation of the Prefecture Apostolic of the South Sea Islands. *Source: PF: SOCG vol. 944 (1829) f. 571r. (Chapter 2).*



7 Sixth and last page of Vicar General Perreau's letter, as figure 6. *Source: PF: SOCG vol. 944 (1829) f. 573v. (Chapter 2).*

confidence of the Holy See could not be placed in a person more prudent, more zealous and more worthy on all scores for this task of saving souls.'[11]

Father Perreau certainly did not pause to calculate that he was requesting spiritual jurisdiction for Father de Solages over one-fourth of the Southern Hemisphere, that is, over nearly 65 million square kilometres. Added to this was his jurisdictional area in the Indian Ocean.

De Solages was anxious to take with him to Oceania as many priests as possible. It may well have been Perreau who suggested to him that he approach Father Marie-Joseph-Pierre Coudrin, founder of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, better known at this time as the Picpus Fathers. This congregation already had one mission in the north Pacific Ocean, the Prefecture Apostolic of the Sandwich Islands.

Perreau knew Coudrin very well and if necessary could act as intermediary. In fact, it had been Perreau who wrote to Coudrin as early as 2 July 1826 to inform him that the Cardinal-Archbishop of Rouen, Prince de Croÿ, wanted to have him as his first vicar general, an office that Coudrin immediately accepted. Since Cardinal Prince de Croÿ was also president of the Superior Council of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith and likewise Grand Almoner of France, this appointment placed Coudrin in a most enviable position for obtaining financial assistance for his foreign missions.[12]

Father de Solages and Captain Dillon in the first half of October paid a visit to Coudrin at the house on rue de Picpus to inform him of their plan and to ask for personnel. Coudrin had recently been absent from Paris for seven months because Cardinal Prince de Croÿ had taken him along to Rome in February as his conclavist for the conclave which on 31 March elected Pius VIII as successor to the late Leo XII. Like de Solages and Dillon, Coudrin too had some connection with the Irish seminary in Paris. He had been ordained a priest clandestinely in the library there on 4 March 1792 during the French Revolution. It now seemed as if this seminary was destined to become a symbolical link binding these three men together in a sacred pact on behalf of the Southern Hemisphere.

But Father Hilarion Lucas, the secretary general of the congregation, present at the meeting, was quite noncommittal about what happened. 'Our Very Reverend Father applauded their zeal', he said, 'and there the matter rested. . . .'[13]

Without government support de Solages knew that his south Pacific mission could never be realised. He knew too that the purely spiritual arguments that he had used for Rome would not suffice with officials of state. And so in approaching them for ship passage and other favours he had to use arguments which told of definite economical and political benefits that would accrue to France from the enterprise.

Through a relative in parliament de Solages presented the 7 September 1829 letter of Dillon to Baron Charles Lemercier de Longpré d'Haussez (1778–1854), Minister of the Navy and of the Colonies, and subsequently both Dillon and de Solages had a conference with the minister. Dillon pointed out that Fiji would make a safe port for French ships in case of war with the British. De Solages

added that in time of war it would be a simple matter for the French to take New Holland (now Australia) from the British, provided that there were French forces in New Zealand and in Fiji, since the many Irish settlers in New Holland 'are longing for the moment when they can shake off England's yoke'. After their conference de Solages wrote the minister on 5 October that he feared Dillon 'might offer his services to Russia, which doubtless will accept them', if the French government were not interested in the project, 'and then these beautiful countries of Oceania will be forever lost to France and the Catholic religion'.[14]

Later he had Captain Dillon write another letter, telling how the whaling and other industries in the Pacific were bringing great wealth to England and to the United States, wealth that could also be shared by France. Dillon explained in his letter that the same ship which transported the missionaries to their South Sea posts could furnish him the means of procuring territories and ports for France at the most important points in Oceania. It was this letter of Dillon that de Solages submitted to Prince Auguste-Jules-Armand-Marie de Polignac (1780–1847) when he requested free passage for himself and his missionaries aboard a government ship.[15]

De Polignac had become King Charles X's Minister of Foreign Affairs on 8 August 1829 and on 17 November that year would become President of the Council of Ministers. He had been ambassador to London from 1823 to 1829 and currently was one of the members of the Superior Council of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith. The association's 'Special Protector' was King Charles X himself. De Polignac answered de Solages on 16 October, saying that he had passed on the request to the Minister of the Navy and of the Colonies, who meanwhile had agreed to provide a ship for the venture. De Solages then went in person to confirm this offer with Baron d'Haussez and was advised to lose no time in making his preparations so that the ship could take advantage of the favourable season for rounding Cape Horn at the southern tip of South America.[16]

In a letter dated 25 October 1829, perhaps submitted during their meeting, the details of the missionary voyage were spelled out for Baron d'Haussez by de Solages. The ship would travel west from Valparaíso, he said, and go first to Pitcairn. This island of about five square kilometres had been uninhabited until 1790 when nine English mutineers of the *Bounty* fled there with six men and twelve women from Tahiti. The children of these first colonists spoke both English and Tahitian, and had been brought up as Christians by mutineer John Adams. Since there were no Protestant ministers on the island, de Solages believed that Catholic priests would be welcome.[17]

Since there were also some Europeans in the Marquesas Islands, he said, a priest would be dropped off there too.

Tahiti in the Society Islands would be the next stop, since Dillon was well known there. Some presents for the princes on the island, Dillon had said, were all that the Catholic missionaries needed in order to win the favour of the people and to get them to send away the Methodists. The Catholic mission would not be founded on Tahiti itself—lest the Catholic missionaries upon arrival immed-

iately came in contact with the preachers—but rather on a nearby island. It was on this island that Captain Dillon possessed property, and here too the Protestant ministers had been expelled by the indigenes who had joined Captain Dillon and had asked him to get them some Catholic priests.

Then from Tahiti the ship would go to the Tonga or Friendly Islands, visiting Vava'u, Tongatapu, etc. From there it would sail to the Fiji Islands and then on to New Zealand where the remaining missionaries would settle at the Schoracaï River. It was here that the chief was indebted to Captain Dillon for saving the life of his son when a neighbouring tribe attempted to kill him.

From New Zealand the ship would bring de Solages to Bourbon in the Indian Ocean, then round the Cape of Good Hope, and so return to France, thus completing its voyage around the world.

'If this enterprise is to be perfect', de Solages pointed out, 'we shall need a dozen missionary priests and in addition at least an equal number of pious laymen. These laymen must know those arts and crafts which will prove most useful for the islands that we are to visit, and they must have with them an assortment of tools and instruments so they can practise their individual professions. We should also take along from Europe various kinds of grain, grape-vine seedlings, as well as other types of plants and bushes in order to enrich the countries which we pass. Above all, we would like to plant these in the places where the missionaries will establish themselves.

'It is also my intention', he continued, 'to take along with me to Bourbon some of the most outstanding individuals from the islands visited by our ship, so that they can obtain a more thorough education. As catechists they will later be returned to their countries where with the help of the missionaries they will extend more and more the domain of the faith in these regions. There is no need for me to mention to Your Excellency how important it is that the ship's officers chosen for this enterprise as well as their subordinates should all be men highly regarded for their principles and their good conduct.'[18]

As a direct result of this diplomacy de Solages received three magnanimous promises from the French government. He had asked only for passage aboard a sailing vessel bringing supplies to French depots in South America; he received instead a sailing vessel which was to be at his complete disposal for the duration of the voyage. Further, some thirty persons destined for the mission—priests, catechists and craftsmen—were to receive free passage. And finally, the government agreed to purchase at its own expense the lands needed by the missionaries for establishing mission stations, and also agreed to furnish the missionaries from its own supply depots with the tools and other items needed for these foundations. Father de Solages had a perfect right to be pleased.[19]

Since the government had placed a ship at his disposal, he no longer had to go to the South Sea Islands first, as he originally intended. He now drew up a revised plan and submitted it to Perreau for approval. His Prefecture of Bourbon, besides including Île Sainte Marie, a small French colony off the east coast of Madagascar, also included Madagascar itself, the fourth largest island in the world, almost 240 times larger than Bourbon. Father Jean-Louis Pastre, Prefect

Apostolic of Bourbon before de Solages, had requested Pope Leo XII in February 1829 to incorporate Madagascar in the Bourbon Prefecture Apostolic, but the pope died a few days later. His successor, Pius VIII, then did the incorporating on 3 May 1829. Pastre, whose broken health had made it necessary to find a successor, informed de Solages that the Holy See was planning to establish a vicar apostolic (usually a bishop) in Madagascar and intended to give this vicar apostolic charge of the Bourbon Prefecture Apostolic as well.

But meanwhile Madagascar was de Solages's responsibility. There were many priests in Bourbon, but none in Madagascar. He consequently had to provide missionaries for Madagascar and also for the South Sea Islands.[20]

Bourbon was to be the headquarters for his vast mission undertaking and there he would establish a kind of social pastoral institute to provide new missionaries with particularised training before sending them to Madagascar and to the south Pacific. 'According to arrangements already made with the Grand Almonry,' his report said, 'the institute to be established on the Isle of Bourbon is to render equal service for the Madagascar mission and for the Pacific Ocean mission, and the priests destined for both missions are to be taken from the community of the Reverend Coudrin, since the Holy Ghost Seminary cannot at present furnish the personnel needed for Madagascar.'

He thought that the French government should be asked to provide an annual subsidy of 12,000 francs for four or six missionaries to be employed exclusively in Madagascar. Since Île Sainte Marie was a French possession, the missionaries being sent there would automatically be paid a salary by the French government. Those being sent to the South Sea Islands, an area which had no connection with France, would be supported by the Grand Almonry or by the Association for the Propagation of the Faith.

De Solages said in his report that he had learned from a priest assigned to Bourbon for many years that there were old abandoned sheds in Bourbon that could easily be acquired. 'And since the Picpus Congregation is versed in the arts and crafts', he said, 'its members will be able to make them fit for lodging. Those who are to be assigned to the islands in the Pacific Ocean can do this work. . . .' The others were to go with him to Île Sainte Marie, where some would be left behind, and from there to Tananarive, the inland capital of Madagascar. Here he hoped to win the necessary protection for his missionaries from the powerful Queen Ranavalona. So as to have a greater guarantee of success with her, he petitioned the French government to send along presents for her and even to designate him a Special Ambassador for the occasion.

After providing for Madagascar he would return to Bourbon, his plan said, and there make immediate preparations for departing with those missionaries destined for the islands of the Pacific Ocean. 'One must not lose sight of the fact', he said, 'that the house to be established for missionaries at Bourbon must also provide formation for the most outstanding indigenes in the field of religion and also in those arts best suited for the advancement of civilisation in their respective countries. Nor shall I fail during my lengthy voyage to recruit a goodly number of these same indigenes to bring back with me.'

The project is vast, he admitted, 'and I do not know to what point God will give me the strength and the grace to execute it. But I believe it is my duty to submit this plan to the wisdom and insights of the Reverend Perreau, so that he might kindly indicate to me any changes that are to be made. And in case he approves of the plan completely, and if Divine Providence should dispose of my days before the plan is completely executed, then he could be my successor.'

In conclusion, de Solages said it was urgent to request Rome 'immediately' to grant the various faculties and spiritual powers necessary to carry out the project. This meant faculties for his missionaries as well as for himself.[21]

It was about the beginning of November when Father Perreau received a reply to the first letter that he had sent to Cardinal Cappellari in Rome, and its contents gave de Solages added reasons to rejoice. The cardinal said that the South Sea Islands project definitely merited consideration, and he even stated that he could wish for nothing better but to entrust it to Father de Solages as Perreau had requested. But at the same time he wanted to do nothing that might prove detrimental to the Picpus Fathers. Before making a final decision, therefore, he requested Perreau to check with Father Coudrin on how far the jurisdiction of his Sandwich Islands mission in the north Pacific extended. Overlapping of jurisdiction had frequently given rise to quarrels among prelates over the centuries and the cardinal wanted to avoid this very thing here.[22]

This very favourable reaction by Cardinal Cappellari committed Perreau now more than ever to work for the success of the de Solages mission in the South Seas which he himself had called to Rome's attention. De Solages all this time had been held in suspense by Coudrin, who during their visit a month before did not refuse to collaborate and yet did not formally agree either. De Solages took it for granted, however, that the Picpus Fathers would accept his invitation to collaborate and therefore had worked them into his plan.[23]

This new plan of de Solages, according to Perreau's undersecretary, won the admiration and hearty approbation of the Paris Council of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith, 'and particularly of the Reverend Perreau'. The undersecretary wrote that de Solages would render 'great services to religion because, as everyone knows, there is no place left but Oceania where religion has not yet penetrated, and there are more than a hundred islands here to conquer for Jesus Christ'.[24]

Since Perreau had been designated in the plan as the future successor of de Solages, it is not surprising that he decided to press for a definite commitment of personnel while seeing Coudrin in Rouen on 7 November about the clarification requested by Cardinal Cappellari. He explained how ready Cappellari was to make de Solages the Prefect Apostolic of the South Sea Islands and how the French government had also promised a ship and other assistance. But when he requested personnel for the new mission, Coudrin balked and said that his men would have to learn English, since this was the European language most used in the islands. He also pointed out that the relationship which his men must have with their religious order superiors could not be reconciled with the relationship that they would need to have with the Reverend de Solages, a secular

priest, who would be the ecclesiastical superior. Perreau assured him, however, that these were no real obstacles and should not stand in the way of collaboration. Coudrin made no promise of personnel, but neither did he refuse. De Solages was again left in suspense.[25]

The visit by Perreau had proved somewhat embarrassing for Coudrin, because at Rouen he had no record of the jurisdiction granted by the Holy See to his missionaries in the Sandwich Islands. The next day, 8 November, he wrote to Father Raphaël Bonamie, prior of the house on rue de Picpus in Paris, and told him about the visit by Perreau. 'I see', he wrote, 'that the Reverend de Solages would like to have some of our members and ape the little bishop in their midst.'

He admitted to Father Raphaël that he had been 'too modest' in his replies to Father Perreau who, like himself, was one of the vicars general of Cardinal Prince de Croÿ of Rouen. He asked Raphaël to go and see Perreau with the pertinent excerpts from the decree that Father Hilarion Lucas, the secretary general, had on file. And if Hilarion could control his tongue, he said, the two men were to go together. They were to find out precisely what islands de Solages wanted to evangelise, and whether from them one could reach the Sandwich Islands.

As for the extent of jurisdiction, which was the original query of Cardinal Cappellari, it was clear from the documents that the jurisdiction of the Picpus Fathers covered only the Sandwich Islands in the north Pacific. There could consequently be no conflict of jurisdiction between this mission and one located completely in the south Pacific.

The two priests visited Perreau and reported back to Coudrin that there were islands below the equator which in fact did have contact with the Sandwich Islands. If some Picpus priests were to be sent there, de Solages could place one of them in charge as his vice-prefect. Coudrin agreed with this proposal of Raphaël and Hilarion, but insisted that their archipelago had to be 'independent' of de Solages.[26] In laying down this condition Coudrin was being consistent with the principle that he had expressed on 15 July 1825 when announcing to the Evangelisation Congregation that his community was prepared to undertake foreign missionary work. 'The only request we make,' he said, 'and one that we consider necessary, is that those who are sent should not depend upon anyone but the Evangelisation Congregation. And among those who are sent, there ought to be a superior, designated by the Superior General of our community and acceptable to the Sacred Congregation, who himself would see to it that the orders from the Sacred Congregation are carried out by the other members under his authority.'[27]

Raphaël and Hilarion correctly interpreted Father Coudrin's laconic reply as authorisation to seek an independent mission for the Picpus Fathers in some South Sea Islands which had contact with the Sandwich Islands. They learned that the two consuls from the United States and England based in the Sandwich Islands were also charged by their governments with the inspection of commerce in four South Seas archipelagoes below the Sandwich Islands, namely, the

Society Islands (with Tahiti), Marquesas Islands, Bad Sea Islands and Dangerous Islands. (The last two archipelagoes are the northwest and southeast island groups respectively in what is now called the Tuamotu Archipelago.) With this information in hand and with answers prepared beforehand for questions that might be asked, Hilarion and Raphaël on a day in mid-November went to pay a call on de Solages who was still waiting for a definite yes or no from Coudrin. Raphaël and Hilarion were now authorised to give him the answer.[28]

Hilarion minced no words in the condensed report of their visit that he sent to Coudrin. When de Solages asked for priests, they told him that the Picpus Fathers did not feel it was possible for them to give him any. 'This ecclesiastic has searched everywhere for priests who might accompany him,' Hilarion said, 'and we had reason to fear that this mixture of secular and independent priests with the members of our institute would be harmful for the common good. This was all the more true because just motives made one suspect that a number of priests not enjoying a very good reputation had succeeded in taking advantage of the good faith of the Reverend de Solages.'

They told him that the stretch of islands from the Friendly or Tonga Islands inclusive to New Zealand certainly would be a vast enough area to satisfy completely his own zeal and that of his collaborators. As for themselves, they would like to be entrusted by the pope with the four archipelagoes in the South Seas closest to the Sandwich Islands. And they would like him to agree to this division. These archipelagoes, they believed, could be created into an independent prefecture apostolic with one of their priests in charge as prefect apostolic.[29]

This Picpus proposal was disastrous for de Solages, because it would have split his plan for the evangelisation of Oceania right down the middle and would have removed from his competence Pitcairn Island, Marquesas Islands, and Tahiti in the Society Islands, three of the six areas in the South Seas where he had planned to set up missions. As for the island of Pitcairn, its tiny size and the small number of inhabitants were far surpassed by its religious importance. Since the inhabitants were bilingual and had been trained as Christians by John Adams, they were already 'half-formed' Catholics and 'lacked only Catholic teaching to become excellent catechists'. He believed that 'the small island of Pitcairn would furnish by itself the Christian teachers for all these archipelagoes'.[30]

As for the Picpus Fathers, 'they wanted to reserve for themselves alone', he said, 'the countries which were the more civilised, leaving the cannibals to us for our portion.' When de Solages said this he had perhaps forgotten that Dillon called the inhabitants of the Fiji Islands, which would have been in his portion, 'the most civilised people in the Pacific Ocean'.

He could not understand how the Picpus Fathers wanted more territory since 'they did not have enough priests for the Sandwich Islands of which they were in charge'. And so, being 'perfectly convinced that they were not able to send personnel' to the four archipelagoes which they wanted, he did not agree to the division that they requested. 'Why, not even the Jesuits would be big enough to take care of Oceania', he said, and therefore it was necessary 'to make an appeal

to all religious congregations and pious ecclesiastics disposed to devote themselves to this kind of ministry'.[31]

But Father Coudrin used against de Solages the very same argumentation that de Solages used against him. He knew, he said, 'that the Reverend de Solages could never hope to have enough missionaries to spread them throughout all the islands', and so he had decided to ask for jurisdiction over four archipelagoes. He picked the ones closest to the Sandwich Islands 'so that the priests established in these two missions, animated by the same views, guided by the same spirit of obedience, and united by the same bonds, can be of assistance to one another'.[32]

But all the days for de Solages in this month of November were not cloudy. In his letter of 25 October to d'Haussez, he had tried to wipe out any suspicions that the minister might have regarding Dillon, insisting that he had been born in Martinique, that his Irish family was of French origin, and that he 'does not love England and would gladly attach himself to France'. Since there was 'no European' who had 'as many contacts as he with the diverse peoples of Oceania', his participation in the expedition was indispensable. And since de Solages realised that he could request only 'with difficulty' that an Irishman be placed in charge of a vessel of the French Navy, he suggested 'by way of compromise that he be made consul in the Fiji Islands'. In this way his valuable knowledge could be used and officers of the French Navy would not be offended.

It was happily the first compromise of de Solages, but unhappily also his last.

D'Haussez wrote to de Solages on 7 November that he was on his way at that moment to get the orders of King Charles for the expedition, and said that he had just informed de Polignac of the proposal that Dillon be named a consul.

De Solages then wrote to de Polignac on 15 November, once again praising Dillon highly. Six days later de Polignac gave his approval that Dillon become an honorary vice-consul of France, underlining the word 'Honorary', and King Charles X on 29 November officially named him 'Honorary Vice-Consul in the Islands Composing the Pacific Ocean Archipelago'. Dillon was assigned an income of 3,000 francs counting from the day of his nomination until the end of the expedition, or until such time as his services would no longer be required. De Polignac 'with pleasure' informed Dillon under date of 7 December of his appointment and said: 'His Majesty, while preparing to send to these islands missionaries charged with preaching Christianity, has wished to attempt at the same time the establishment of commercial and maritime contacts between these islands and France. You, sir, more than anyone else, have seemed suitable for accomplishing this mission with some chance of success, since your devotion has been tested already and you possess a knowledge of the customs and languages of those islanders. I have no doubt that your efforts will fully justify the honourable choice of which you today are the object.'

By this time Dillon was in London, so the document was sent to Baron Seguin, French consul general there, and he had it by 16 December. Besides learning of this appointment Dillon also got word that the corvette, *Dordogne*, had been assigned to the expedition and would be leaving Brest for Oceania on 1 February 1830. He immediately began preparations for the voyage.

De Solages had good reason to be happy; everything was working out just as he wished![33]

Without priests, however, he was helpless. He turned to Father Pouget at the large Jesuit residence of Grand-Montrouge at the gates of Paris and gave him a memorandum on his project for presentation to the provincial superior. Pouget replied on 18 November that the provincial alone was not able to take action in the matter; it would first have to be presented to the superior general. 'And if the Reverend Superior General should ask the Provincial's views', Pouget added, 'he would have to answer—although praising and admiring your zeal—that he could not collaborate without depriving his establishments in France of personnel, for they are all filled to capacity.'[34]

The prospect of getting Jesuits did not look good, so de Solages appealed to his good friend Goubert, the undersecretary of Perreau at the Paris Council of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith. Goubert then wrote to the Lyon Council on 26 November 1829, complaining that a letter by de Solages addressed to them asking for help especially in finding priests for his mission had gone unanswered. Goubert urged the Council of Lyon to support de Solages because 'this affair, which will bring so much honour to the Society, is very important and very urgent'.

Goubert wrote again on 14 December in the name of the Council of Paris and again asked them to inquire where the Reverend Count de Solages might find some priests 'because his project has now been authorised by royal ordinance and he will leave in January with 12 priests and 12 catechists for the islands of Pitcairn, Fiji, Tahiti, Marquesas and New Zealand'. After a month or two of getting affairs in order at Bourbon, he said, de Solages would leave for the above islands to place his missionaries, and would then return to Bourbon and evangelise Madagascar. 'The corvette is waiting for them at Le Havre and will leave in February. It will be commanded by M. Mathieu, brother of the canon of Paris, and Captain Dillon will take part in the expedition as guide with the title of Vice-Consul . . . Kindly communicate this recent news to the gentlemen there and tell them to look for personnel, because we still need some. The Reverend Perreau is of the opinion that a considerable subsidy should be allocated.'

Goubert wrote once again on 23 December and asked, 'Have you found any personnel for the Reverend de Solages? This is a very important affair. He would like you to make requests in Savoie, Piémont, etc. . . . .'[35]

The Council of Lyon actually had considered the letter of de Solages and had taken action, negative action, at its meeting of 10 December 1829. 'This zealous missionary', the minutes for the day read, 'would like to establish missions in all the islands of the South Seas, and even the entire earth would not appear to be a theatre too vast for his extensive zeal. For this end he solicits assistance from the government, and has no doubt but that our Association will furnish him with money and missionaries. After deliberating on the contents of this letter, the Council does not feel that it can fulfil this request, in view of the fact that if its entire funds were applied to this purpose, they would not suffice for a work so