

CORRESPONDENCE

of St Michael Garicoïts

(third period: 1847 - 1849)

Third period:

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE CROSS

Much happened in this period. Since St Michael was at Betharram, he was Chaplain and Director of the Daughters of the Cross. After the foundation of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart, it went through a quiet period of consolidation. Mgr Lacroix, the new bishop, was not very favourable to the Society and transferred previous financial help and the best priests to the Society of the Holy Cross for Higher Studies. Much of the correspondence is lost except small references relating to special events such as the start of secondary education at Notre Dame, the religious profession of St Michael, the nomination of Fr Chirou as Bursar and Barbe as novice master after the death of Fr Cassou, and the decoration of the Sanctuary at Betharram.

Most letters of this period are to the Daughters of the Cross who had 45 novices at Igon and were at this time making many foundations. He interested himself in the day to day concerns and affairs of the Sisters, particularly those who were head teachers and superiors.

41. - To a To a superior of the Daughters of the Cross

1847

.....
 The Church is the first among all States¹; the model and support for all others. Jesus founded it on love when he said 'Peter, do you love me... feed my lambs'².

Oh! if people would not meddle in their brothers' affairs; if they are so inclined they should stifle their wish to intrude at once with a sense of proper shame and fear. But if God's will genuinely obliges you to interfere, simply follow it, take comfort in what you do and be brave. There is often more good in accepting the task of showing authority than in refusing to do what you feel is right. There is sometimes as little humility in believing oneself importance enough to be able to hinder the work of God, as there is in giving yourself the credit for its success.

If God is with you, all will be well; yet not without effort, difficulty and suffering.

To rule, that is through love, is to bear children. The head and Father of the Church is the Pope, that means the father of the Church; religious superiors are mothers. Children do not come without suffering; here pain³ is more than a felt condition, it might be seen as the enabler. In any case it is inevitable; but in all other respects, I repeat that if God is with you, all will be well.

God will be all the more with you who are in charge, so that you will be a more true, clear, confident and dedicated child. You ought to be prudent which is essential in a position of responsibility, but be quite certain that you will always be competent⁴ in dealing with God's creatures if you are always absolutely honest with Him.

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42. - To a Daughter of the Cross

Betharram 7 Jan 1847

LSNSJC

My Dear Sister,⁵

Before answering your letter; I will give you some news of your family; as things are dragging on, I am not sure how or when they will work out. Therese⁶ is still at the Barbe's⁷ home as undecided as a bird on a branch; Donatien has gone to live close by. She has been looking after him for some days while he was unwell. That was quite all right in the circumstances, but he is better today. So long as his behaviour remains unacceptable, I would prefer her not to see him and let him rely entirely on his guardian for the necessary care and attention (they are about to appoint M Cassou,⁸ Parish Priest of Andoins to that office). I am utterly convinced that she is doing him harm by being too kind to him. Go and try to restrain this poor soul. One of my companions has just told me that she is trying to find him a

wife... that she gives him money, etc... God alone knows where her poor heart, so blind to her brothers real needs, will lead her.

In regard to Lezin⁹ his vocation is in the air. After the death of his saintly mother he has become bored at Betharram just as he was at Saint-Pe. Therese wants to be forever visiting him in the parlour to alleviate his boredom. I have forbidden him to see her. When I see her, I will not be able to restrain myself from giving her a piece of my mind. I shall make every effort to keep him here, but I am afraid that he will end up by leaving. Lezin has some very good qualities; he would be an excellent subject, if he had some piety; but to put it mildly he has very little.

I realise the pain that this news may give you, but I believe that you should know so that you can pray and be united with us in our efforts and prayers. God alone can create some sense out of all this. You yourself will be happy as a Daughter of the Cross.

Your devoted servant

Garicoits Priest.

P-S I will write again in a few days.

43. - To Sr Reine-Agnès, DC

4 Feb 1847

LS N-S J-C

Poor Sister Reine-Agnes

I am taking this opportunity to send you my good wishes and regards. I pray everyday for the full recovery of your health, but may I invariably remind you that my most fervent and unceasing prayer is that you should never experience inner loneliness, but know that Jesus lives in you.¹⁰

I am sorry I cannot for the present design any rules of conduct adapted to your varying condition of health. I emphasise again, let Jesus always live in you. Nothing has any value to Jesus except doing God's Will; this was his food¹¹ May the Spirit of Christ in you ensure that the only thing that matters to you is pleasing God. May God's good pleasure always nourish you. So be it.

Your very devoted....

PS You need not worry as long as you are serving God without conditions and without going back. So serve God unreservedly through Jesus and in Jesus.

44. - To Sr Saint-Jerome, DC

18 Feb 1847

My dear Sister,

I am forwarding you the letter of someone, who, it seems, is acquainted with your **seraphic prayers**¹² etc and knows better than my **holiness** - and who is so much like you in this **well known practice**¹³ which I view with only limited approval when I look at it as a natural longing for the Mother House of your dear congregation, but which practice I always deplore when I suspect it has become an obsession or a sign of your distaste for your **present location**....See the beginning of my letter¹⁴.

Oh, I can well believe it may be so, now you are there; relieved of the concerns of Martha and free to enjoy the occupations of Mary. Time will tell. Yet whatever may happen I suggest once more the following practices; 1 to say **'through my fault.'** 2 redouble your effort in carrying out the duties of your actual position, had it only lasted a day; 3 be self-sacrificing; 4 pray; 5 examine your behaviour; 6 obey.

Never give up these practices and I promise that you will be happy now and for eternity. It is the best and most effective way to be happy and to create happiness. It is what your devoted servant wishes for you.

Garicoits

PS My kind regards to all. Pray for me so that the good God will say the word, and my soul shall be healed, and for his blessings on my community and myself...I was forgetting to tell you who was asking for a **transfer**. Here goes! **Dear Sr Madeleine! Dear Sr Marthe! Father take me from here and take me with you!**¹⁵

How many times have we not said that! Well, there you are now; make the most of it and I shall be content.

45. - To Jean Pedebearn¹⁶, Parish Priest of Bougarber

7 April 1847

My Dear friend,

I do not know how to thank you for your help. I was intending to come and see you to discuss all our business.¹⁷ hope in one way or another to do this. In the mean time a thousand thanks.

In regard to buying wheat I believe we will have to wait and be content to purchase day by day, sack by sack, relying on what I receive and on what the good God sends. In a month from now I will either see or write to you. In the meantime if you find some hectolitres at a reasonable price, see about it.

All yours in the Lord

Garicoits

46. - To Sr Jeanne-Sophie, DC¹⁸

9th April 1847

L S N-S J-C

My Dear Sister,

The celebrations of the Jubilee¹⁹ and those of Holy Week have prevented me writing to you before today, although I have wanted to write earlier. Here I am at last, and I hope I can help you.

I must say, first of all that you should not do me the injustice of thinking that I am forgetting the Daughters of the Cross, once Providence has taken them from Igon. No, I do not forget them. On the contrary I follow them in spirit on their travels and visit them all especially those I may no longer see again by asking with all my heart for the Lord's blessing on each one; particularly on dear Sr J-Sophie and Theodore²⁰ in their work and trials.

Now to your questions;

1. The Sister you mention need not worry about what has been said already and any ensuing mutterings provided that she does her best to explain the matter and that she hears and accepts at least in a general way that of her Superior. If she has not heard the outline of the matter, she should tell her story on the same occasion as the superior gave hers, or she should put forward her case in a way which would not provoke disharmony in the community.
2. It seems to me that it would be better to accept the arrangement and receive the Sacrament of reconciliation every 2 weeks when the superior prefers this and for the sake of keeping to some form of uniformity.
3. When the confessor and superior want you to receive communion 4 times (a week), do you have to accept this? Yes, without doubt and cheerfully.²¹
4. You ask me how to make yourself **feared and loved**. Let us speak rather of how to be loved and respected. Yes, my dear Sister; **respectful affection and respectful love**. What does this mean? Respectful love is maintaining a balance between the false and often destructive worldly love and the heretical and cruel charity of the Jansenists, both infinitely removed from respectful affection which is a precious quality; equally valued by those with faith and those without it.²²

This is the disposition that underlies all the behaviour of Our Lord in his mortal life. Why did he come into the world with these words; **Here I am**, and without any reservations remained faithful to it? It is because he loves us and respects us so much. And why has he so much respect and love? Because he wants to be loved and respected by us and to be served by this respectful love which we will bring to life within us and then our hearts will be effectively won for God.

You should have a genuine desire to create a lasting and affectionate respect in your children so that through their respect for you they will receive an invaluable disposition in helping them turn their hearts to God. This is so true. But how does one become respected and loved by the children? In four words; love them and

respect them greatly; exert yourself on their behalf constantly; love and respect them personally; speak to them; instruct them, reward them, even correct them as one who loves and respects them. This is what Our Lord does who is our model.

Have a respectful affection for all sisters of the Congregation, for all who are in our care. May this always be a feature in that same beloved congregation the bond which may unite all sisters. May it be the spirit of all their actions, the means used for achieving the congregation's aims.

Here is a little thought which may help you keep this sentiment in your heart. (Good Lord! this short letter has become an epistle!). All that I will do for this sister, this child, this sick person, will be done to Jesus.

Here is another way of coming simply before God; look upon yourself as a useless servant, without any trust in yourself, not able to carry our anything alone etc, etc,...; but also knowing the tender heart and loving arms of Him who has chosen to call you, never refusing you anything and always ready to help you, even to death.etc....Keep these words on your lips and these sentiments in your heart. ' O Lord, I am not able, I am not worthy, yet even though I am not capable and I am unworthy; say but the word and I will be capable and worthy²³.

May you live and die with these 2 dispositions of humility and trust, inspired by love and total dedication. Amen!

Your devoted servant

G.

PS My kind regards to your dear companions; pray for all at Betharram. Please give a copy of the end of my letter on the 2 thoughts to Sr Marcel from 4 to the end.

47. - To a Parish Priest²⁴

1 June 1847

My Dear Friend

Since you believe that it is for the greater glory of God, send means of transporting MM Casau and Bellocq.

All yours in J-C

48. - To a Lady

7 Oct 1847

My Dear Sister in J-C

I am using this moment of leisure to reply to the letter that I have had the pleasure to receive from you. God has said in Holy Scripture; ' My Son, when you are entering my service prepare for temptation.' Yes, my dear Sister, everyone who

wishes to really give themselves to God ought to expect to be tempted and tempted considerably. It stands to reason; 1 in his hatred you would not expect the devil to tempt his own but rather the children of God. 2 it is sign of the God's mercy; by permitting temptation he makes us feel our powerlessness, our unworthiness, and our need to turn to Him through whom we can do all things. He teaches us to have a distrust of ourselves, to escape from our-selves, from our spirit, from our heart, our fantasies, and our senses as from a plague, and give ourselves to the Spirit of God and to God's Will which is made known to us through those who are responsible for our direction. In short to say like Our Lord; 'Father, I am here.' and with Our Lady; Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be done to me according to your word.' This is undeniable.

This said, I believe; 1 that you should reject with loathing any ideas of going back. 2. that you ought not to leave your ordinary confessor. See Jesus in him, simply obey him, and consider the troubles you experience as leading nowhere. God is never more pleased with you than when you carry out his duties with as much care as possible, particularly when you do not experience the least consolation and fervour from them. You can only have an extraordinary confessor from time to time.

Think about this letter; put it into practice. Do not go back. It will not be easy, but hard going; after the pain there will be joy, after the effort, rest. Jesus Christ did not want faint-hearted soldiers, but fighters and conquerors. On the other hand I am afraid that you have too much free time and reliance on fervent feelings; you would only rest easy if everything were going according to desires prompted by a feel-good factor. Remember that when Lucifer was in heaven, and Adam and Eve were in their earthly paradise they forgot and went to sleep full of pious fervour where to their misfortune they mixed their own desires and their own will.

Believe me, my good Sister in Jesus Christ the assurance of my sincere regards²⁵.

49. - To Sr Saint- Jerome, DC.

Betharram 7 Oct 1847

L S N-S J-C

My Dear Sister

At last your long awaited letter has arrived. Make no mistake, it gives me great pleasure. It is true that I was beginning to complain that you were not writing, but even then I consoled myself with the thought that you must have good reasons for such a long silence. The idea that you had forgotten or were unconcerned never crossed my mind.

No, our sentiments are too close for that and will not alter by the grace of God. Today I like to think as I always do that through that same grace they will endure. I am not saying as you do, for all our lives, but in life, in death and for all eternity!

Poor Sr Saint Jerome! How happy and honoured you are that God is always

looking at you with such special affection, that he has chosen and called you to this dear and very precious family, a visible sign of his power, wisdom and love, and that he has chosen to be served by you, for so long, for such great things in the important house at Igon! and after having taken you to the most important theatre of the congregation, after having prepared you there for many months, he wishes to be served by you for even greater things! I can only say or rather I must say; I can only admire, adore and love the ways of Divine Providence.

My dear Sister, this position is so important. How well you, Poor Instrument,²⁶ are doing. Yes, in following so faithfully the movements of the hand that employs you without rushing ahead, only having trust without limits in Him, you have gone forward in a way worthy of your vocation and your mission, which is to be and be seen always **humble, gentle, patient in all situations** while supporting very difficult characters with charity, and working with infinite care to **preserve unity** in a similar spirit **by the bonds of peace. Work for the truth with charity** and you and your Sisters will grow in Christ Jesus Our Lord joined and united as one and in true proportion according to the role of each member which will enable all the congregation to develop and create a building through love. So may it be. Look at St Paul's letter chapter 4 to the Ephesians. Read and reread this chapter, live by it; relish it, savour it, especially verses 15-16²⁷; **live by the truth in charity.**

Work for the truth in charity and you will live and enable others to live by it. Yet in charity be wise as a serpent and simple and friendly as a dove²⁸. Love the congregation more and more; love those who are confided to you, neglect nothing to gain their affection and to keep it, and for that you will not reveal anything about anyone except from necessity and only to those who have a right to know, and only if they will not affect your relationship with them. Remember this or you will lose their trust.

I would like to say this to Sr Zepherin Saint Blaise²⁹. Be good enough to let her read this. I shall tell her.

Besides chapter 4 of the Ephesians I recommend that you both read a very good book by Fr Acquaviva entitled; Industries pour traiter les malades de l'ame ³⁰

This book has been translated into French under the title; 'Superiors manual.'³¹ One of the chaplains at La Puye will have it; M Taury³² also has it.

Moun Diu de you³³! I have not finished yet... However I must tell you that Fr Cassou³⁴ has been replaced by Fr Chirou³⁵ and by ³⁶Fr Barbe³⁷ in Lestelle

Fr Chirou is dealing with material affairs and Fr Barbe with the novices. We have some room for the brothers but everything is so shaky. We are all very well; may we all be equally well in our vocation. Please pray and ask others to pray especially this year and especially for me. The community is growing, we are going to open a small boarding school for secondary pupils in Lestelle at Latisnere's, I am giving lessons in theology regularly to the novices etc. etc. All this requires ... a great and abundant communication with the Holy Spirit.

Ask again and get others to ask...Help me to have this poor letter copied ...and even reread; I ask you to take note of all that I have said at all costs.

I am, my dear Sister, with much gratitude and kind regards your devoted servant.

50. - To Sr Zepherin Saint Blaise, DC

8 Oct 1847

My Dear Sister

It is already 10 pm but I will not close my letter to Sr Saint Jerome without a word for you. I owe you a letter since you have been kind enough to write to me twice and I have not shown you any sign of life. If there was silence it was because I had trouble finding time, but your letters have put my mind at rest about the way you are feeling about things and makes me think to my great satisfaction and to the glory of God that peace and courage reign in your heart...

There is neither forgetfulness nor indifference on my part... Everyday I think about Sr Jerome and yourself especially as I know you have both taken new positions of responsibility³⁸. It is impossible to express how very much these posts have increased and inspired my interest in you which has always been there ever since I have known you. So what I say to one I say to both of you. To spare me repeating myself please ask Sr Saint Jerome to let you have some practical suggestions what I have written; among others: work for the truth with love, with trust and with unshakable peace. So be it.

Your most humble and devoted servant.

G.

PS Pray and get your novices to pray sometimes for Betharram. I have met your sister recently at Betharram. What will become of her?³⁹

51. - Act of Religious Profession

I Michael Garicoits promise Almighty God before the Blessed Virgin and the whole heavenly court poverty, chastity and obedience according to the constitutions of the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus⁴⁰

Betharram 1st Nov 1847

Garicoïts, Priest

52. - To a Daughter of the Cross

4 Oct 1847

Poor Sister,

Without doubt you can do nothing by yourself , but you can do all things

through Jesus Christ.

You are very happy, but do not wait too long in making the most of your joy....

Glory to God in the highest and peace to all men of good will, whatever sins they have committed.

With most sincere wishes and regards, I remain your servant

G.

PS I believe you have already seen Fr Fradin or at least you will not hesitate to see him.

May God have mercy on you⁴¹.

53. - To a Daughter of the Cross

Betharram 12 Mar 1848

L S N-S J-C

My Dear Sister

Here is my answer in four points;

1. Why?

2. You have permission to touch purificators, corporals etc..when they need washing.

3. Do not watch who goes to communion, but if it happens deliberately tell your confessor; if not, do not.

4. Yes, Sister. 'Come,' says the Lord, 'come and you will always be welcome'...I certainly believe that this invitation which God offers you and continues through himself and his ministers, ought not, I say, reanimate you a little, but sweep you off your feet and win you to himself for ever. What do you not have? Absolutely nothing. You have at your disposal; 1 the mercy of God which brings you his favours and forgiveness, 2 his absolute power which has in store for you most helpful graces for doing good, since they unfailingly convert those who use them and certainly are available since God always gives them to those who ask for them. 3 his patience⁴² which is awaiting you. Can you wish for anything more? Nothing is wanting. So take advantage of your happiness, poor Sister...

Your very humble and devoted servant.

G.

PS A thousand things.... to your dear companions, especially to the good Sister...

54. - To a Father of Garaison⁴³
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My very dear Confrere and Friend,

Ever since I received your letter you kindly sent me, I have been fully occupied at Igon.⁴⁴ I am making the most of the first relatively free moments to say that everything makes me believe that God wishes you to consecrate yourself to the work of Garaison⁴⁵ It is so important. It seems to require only men with staunch hearts. Has God not shown you this? Having given you enthusiasm which seemed to take you forward, has he not allowed you to take every opportunity to follow this call which has most clearly led you to Garaison, to devote yourself with your companions to found a family with a spirituality similar to the Society of Jesus? It is quite clear to me that if I do not tell you to devote yourself to this work without reservation, I would be going against my conscience.

Friendly regards to yourself and all your dear companions.

All yours in J-C

Garicoits Priest.

7 Sept 1848

(Orate pro nobis.)

55. - To M Jean- Dominique Miegerville⁴⁶
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29 Oct 1848

My Dear Friend⁴⁷

The same reasons which prevented me from replying promptly to your first letter, namely my many tasks and duties, has been the reason for my delay to your second one. The second retreat at Igon finished yesterday on the 28th Oct. Ever since the sisters first assembled on the 8th until today I have been overwhelmed with work....

You have understood very well what I wrote. I would consider certain things you have recently done in your present situation as misguided. Put into practice where you are all the charity in the world⁴⁸ and dedicate yourself without reserve to the work of Garaison

I think you should not forget the sudden enlightenment that you mention. Personally I would consider it a duty to study and follow it up as much as you possibly can. Your conclusions on this matter would be exactly the same as mine, having regard to the circumstances within a given situation...

What shall I say to you on particular points about directing the exercises? ⁴⁹It is just in practicing them according to the Directory which enables you to learn that there is something special in using the method. For the rest, the correct method is

not to be inflexible and repetitive;⁵⁰ I believe in adapting the exercises and methods according to a person's needs and circumstances.

I think St Ignatius distinguishes the experience of how to discern spirits from those of consolation. The former would take longer than the latter. It would be recognised by applying the rules, not only from the degree of the consolation and desolation but also according to one's insights while reading the rules...Would it not contain within this experience certain insights which could enable one to discern the workings of spirits? For the rest of your questions, this will demand a fuller knowledge of the original text.⁵¹

I am not sure who could obtain the works you are asking for. Fr Fradin obtained mine. If you would like me to ask him, let me know.. I will tell him next time I see him.

Friendly regards to you and all your community
All yours in the Lord

Garicoits.

56. - To Sr Marie-Sidonie, DC⁵²

27 Feb 1849

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The temptations that you experience must neither worry nor discourage you. On the contrary they should be a reason for encouragement. This is the devil who is attacking you because he believes that you are a friend of Jesus, a person truly holy. He would like to make you his accomplice in disobedience; for this reason he is using all the skills of his wickedness. Sometimes he paints your life as tedious, and difficult to bear, while conveying the world that you have left behind as full of attractions and as something to be envied. Sometimes he puts before your eyes the cloistered life as the bliss of Mount Tabor. So it is in different ways he persists through his evil intent in drawing before your eyes the fantasies that please him so that gradually they will seduce you or at least upset you and paralyse everything. That is what he does. He will always be seen in the end as a liar and murderer⁵³.

From his persistent activity towards you his object is quite evident which is to seduce you, or at least to make you feel discouraged, so that he can turn you into his accomplice and lead you into his own misfortune. That is the evil plan of your eternal enemy. He would move heaven, earth and hell, and especially your deepest desires, all your inner feelings⁵⁴ in order to achieve his dark purposes.

Have you become unhappier up to now? No, a thousand times no. On the contrary I think that you are happier. Why? Firstly because all these storms, all this rage, on the devil's part should make you see very clearly that it is God who is calling you to be a Daughter of the Cross. Indeed if you were not called the devil would have left you alone, or at least he would not torment you so much. That is evident. Secondly be-cause you have here wonderful opportunities to become

more and more faithful to your vocation; to continually demonstrate that you are a true Daughter of the Cross who knows how to follow Jesus and show love not only on Tabor, but also even better in the Garden of Olives and on Calvary, by humbling yourself and by being obedient, by Him, through Him and with Him, up to death on the Cross with these dispositions in your heart and by doing what He willed. Go forward then, God wishes it... Whatever temptations you experience, redouble your determination to follow your holy rules and do what your Superiors engage you in as a respected and reliable Daughter of the Cross.

For yourself, the more you are tempted, the more you must show yourself at peace, devoted to your vocation, and receive communion more often or at least you should ask for it. This is a way of scorning the devil's rage and all your evil passions, and by never speaking of these things in detail outside the confessional; and even in the confessional, the less you speak of them the better, provided that you always are going forward.

Do what I say and you will be able to tell me shortly that by the grace of God you are content. Amen.

In the meantime accept my sincere regards and support to yourself and all your dear companions. Pray for Betharram and Igon.

Gts

Please let me know how you are getting on fairly soon.

57. - To Sr Saint Regis, DC⁵⁵

Betharram 24 Mar. 1849

LSN-S J-C

My Dear Sister,

I have been united with your dear family in their sorrow. One cannot hide such things; she has been an immense loss, humanly speaking. One can only have a broken heart from this; nothing is more natural than the deep distress you feel. No one could think there was anything strange about the strength of your grief; indeed whatever emotion it may be, one must cherish it out of respect for the hand which created it.

It is God who has taken your dear and much loved mother; God has called her to himself we have no doubt, after all the graces which He gave her during her life. Yes, God helped your mother to live such a saintly and inspiring life so that she would die the death of a saint. Personally I have no doubt at all that your mother was the very model of what a woman should be during her life; it follows that she is now with God⁵⁶.

So out of respect and from your love of God who has been so good to you and your family imitate Mary at the foot of the Cross. She suffered but she accepted her pain, she wished the death of her Son because God willed it. Do the same; so this may be the opportunity for drawing closer to God with a new ardour and of showing your love by redoubling your zeal in order to fulfil the duties of

your calling. Do not be too overwhelmed,⁵⁷ poor Sister. Be brave. Go ahead. This is what God wants.

Please convey this to your dear Sister Thertulie⁵⁸ from me.

Your father came to confession last Monday, your 4 sisters yes-terday for the last time. Anna has asked for a place at Igon for her little daughter... Is not this a blessing from God on your family?

Kind regards, Dear Sister, and my support for you and your family.

Your humble servant

Garicoits Priest.

58. - To Sr Marie-Sidonie, DC⁵⁹

24 May 1849

LSN-SJ-C

My Dear Sister,

I see or at least I think I am seeing with extreme satisfaction that you have placed yourself in God's hands. Believe me nothing could give me greater joy than the conviction that you have achieved perfect conversion; I am quite certain that I can say to myself; she has given herself to God and given herself without reserve or wanting anything in return.

So it would be for God's glory and your own happiness if you are careful to neglect nothing in being faithful to the advice I have given you over and over again; which is to be unassuming and to devote yourself to the discipline of the rule and without being concerned for yourself. So be it.

You know that I am at your service.

Your humble servant

Garicoits Priest

59. - To Sr Saint-Jerome, DC⁶⁰

Igon 31 May 1849

My Dear Sister

I am, like yourself extremely busy. However I do not want to let dear Sr Marthe leave without writing a few words to you in response to your letter.

I hope you will not mind this short reply based on your letter. Begin by referring to my references on your letter and then read below;

1 Without doubt, for everyone, but also very dear to the Heart of God...if it is worthy of your respect, love, time and effort.

2. Poor Sister! you do not realise what you are saying....Replace this nonsense of the 'old mad woman' with your mother tongue which so full of grace and truth⁶¹.

The Lord is my shepherd there is nothing I shall want etc... (Ps 22.) Indeed God has placed me in this position; by myself I can do little, in Him who strengthens me I can do far more⁶².

3. As though you did not know that God is pleased to choose the weak to confound the strong; the folly of the cross brings to nothing the wisdom of the wise and the prudence of the prudent⁶³.

4. This is an error which has been refuted a thousand times.

5. Say rather; by taking it to its highest level, you owe God a thousand thanks for drawing you out of this mess. Do you follow me?

6. This is correct; it also cancels out what you said earlier.

7. Even though you may walk in the shadow of death, you shall not fear⁶⁴.

8. Continue to follow them and all will be well.

9. Wonderful! Continue to use similar prayers yourself and encourage your community to do the same; we have great need of prayer.

10. Very good, but keep on keeping on, and always practicing holy indifference whatever the task involved, consecrate yourself to whatever is entrusted to you, always with joy, considering yourself privileged, in fact very privileged.

11. This is always a serious mistake.

12. They are nothing more than suggestions of the devil.

13. Do this to keep humble.

14. When you realise that you have done something well and feel good about it, say; 'Amen.' If you are criticised for something that goes wrong, say; 'I did my best.' Then go ahead! In reality do your best to do the right thing.

15. This is sometimes true, but quite naughty. This applies when you persist in listening to quite the opposite to what I have proposed so often, which is to only think and believe that 'the Lord is my shepherd there is nothing I shall want...'⁶⁵

16. You are not giving me too much trouble because I hope that you will finally believe yourself to be happy and privileged in this resemblance to your Saviour.

17. No. Be careful; this is not your business.

18. A thousand times no.

19. Where can you be better saved than where God wishes you to be? Wait until He withdraws you from it, follow Him, but never forestall Him⁶⁶.

20. I do not think that this is really in order. Sr Sigismund⁶⁷ is a sister who is full of zeal... The poor soul! she is always in poor health.

21. You should be very happy. After God, no one has done me so much good as he⁶⁸. I have the utmost respect for him and feel the greatest sense of obligation to him also. How glad I should be to have the chance of spending a few days with him. But I am tied up here more than ever. God be praised.

Please convey my kind regards to Sr Madeleine⁶⁹, Zepherine-Sainte Blaise⁷⁰ etc, etc...

I am not going to read over this letter. If you find it difficult to make out what I have said you will be able to grasp what I mean to say.

With kindest regards and much gratitude for all the help you have given to Betharram⁷¹, Dear Sister, I am your devoted servant

Garicoits Priest.

PS They do not want me to think of replacing the wooden altar with a marble one⁷²; they say it would be out of place.⁷³ ..as you enter from the right by the Calvary.

Please let me know your opinion about it. Goodbye⁷⁴. Please remember me to M M Fradin etc. etc.

Be brave! by the grace of God you are doing well and you will do even better if you have more courage.

60. - To Sr Saint Sabinien DC⁷⁵

Igon 3 Aug 1849

LSNSJC

My Dear Sister,

You are quite right to respect and love the Congregation to which God has called you and where you say you are finding happiness and peace which is a special sign of God's favour to you. Respect and love the Congregation and find there happiness and peace which is almost an assurance of predestination. To put the finishing touches to it, it is for you to follow your star of happiness. So go forward! Without thinking of making a general confession even to the end of your life; while you are waiting you should be satisfied that you have done enough to rouse in yourself general feelings of contrition by simply mentioning after your ordinary confession, at choice any one sin from your past life and then receive absolution. So do not retain for a minute the idea of making a general confession under any pretext whatever, nor even think of exposing yourself to those doubts which would surface about sins from your past life whatever those might be. I strongly advise that these somewhat anxious reflections into your past life are dangerous for you, so be advised.

Now what can I say to you about ways of strengthening your vocation? You know them as well as I do. 1 in regard to God you can never ask in vain for wisdom and goodness. 2 in regard to yourself the law of love which God has en-graved on the hearts of all the faithful must be the principle motive of all your behaviour. 3 As the means of cooperating with grace use your vows, the rule, and the customs of the congregation⁷⁶. Make the most of these means and you will grow more perfect in your vocation.

All yours in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Garicoits.

61. - To a daughter of the Cross

Igon 3 Sept 1849

LSNSJC

My dear Sister,

God be praised! What happiness there is for you in having been in the Congregation! What would have become of you in moments of temptation if you were out in the world; in the world which conceals so much deception and spitefulness under the most attractive and enticing appearances? Yes, apart from faith, experience should teach you to say all your life while thinking of your dear Congregation;

The Lord is my Shepherd there is nothing I shall want. Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose. Near restful waters he leads me to revive my drooping spirit. In great trials when I am the butt of the Deceiver's and Murderer's rage my good shepherd will revive my spirit with his power. He guides me along the right path for the glory of his name. If I should walk in the valley of darkness no evil will I fear, no evil for you are with me O Jesus.' Whatever the trials I will have to endure 'I know that I will find my strength and even my comfort there. You have prepared a banquet for me in the sight of my foes who revile me. My head you have anointed with oil. My cup is overflowing! Your mercy and goodness shall follow me all the days of my life until paradise. Amen!'

There you are, my dear Sister, the sentiments that I wish you to have all your life. To be confirmed in the truth, you must recognise that such is your place in the Congregation and in view of this position which is a place of predestination you should exult in feelings of gratitude, crying without ceasing; *The Lord is my Shepherd there is nothing I shall want...My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour. I will not be afraid of anything. Jesus is with me..'*

I have already said almost everything, but how can I fail to repeat the importance of never losing sight of this.

I will all the more willingly come back to this as I know from your letters that by the grace of God you already have these sentiments within your heart. Continue to respond faithfully more and more to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit and do not listen to the evil spirit; believe me your temptations will even contribute to your success and to your victories.

I am, with deepest respect, my dear Sister, your humble servant.

Garicoits Priest.

PS If ever you have any difficulties do not be afraid to write. You may have to wait sometimes for my reply but it will never fail to arrive.

62. - To the Very Reverend Sister St Sabinien, DC⁷⁷

Betharram 13 Oct 1849

LSNSJC

My Dear Sister

You are not mistaken in thinking that I do not forget the Daughters of the Cross, even though they are so far away and I have not seen them for a long time. One cannot think otherwise, if you understand the respect and devotion I have for your Congregation.

Yes, my dear Sister, I have followed their cart⁷⁸ in spirit from district to district, the cart that finally put you down at Ustaritz. When I learnt the important post that you had to take up there I said as you did; God be praised. I am so pleased to think that you were so well disposed to undertake the responsibilities of this new position, relying only on the special graces that the good Lord has reserved for you⁷⁹.

I hear that in thanking God I have not been mistaken. What you told me of your perfect tranquillity in the previous situation, your conduct in the Sacrament of reconciliation, and how very helpful the Parish Priest's ⁸⁰ programme was for you, leaves me in no doubt that divine providence is taking very special care of your poor self. May your trust in God never fail, and I promise that his blessings will be always with you.

Continue also to love your Sisters and always behave towards them in such a way as to inspire their affection for you, using this only as a means of bringing them more effectively to God. In this way you will bring about your own salvation along with that of many others. Amen.

Last Thursday I visited the Sisters at Benejacq⁸¹. It is a new residence which they have founded. They are loved there very much. Particularly my dear Sister Theodora⁸² is so changed, learned etc... But what is better in my eyes is that this dear Sister is no longer sad⁸³, takes things cheerfully, and I think, is in good spirits....I hope that she will be a very good Daughter of the Cross. Write to encourage her, speak to her from the fullness of your heart, the heart of a warrior with confidence in God and in the graces of the Congregation, which considers as being of very, very small account the crosses allowed by providence.

All yours in the Lord Jesus

G

PS My kind regards to Sr S Roger⁸⁴ to Sr Theodosie,⁸⁵
etc, etc

Pray and ask others to pray for me that God will help me in the difficulties⁸⁶ I am in at present. This is between ourselves.

¹ St Michael writing before the fall of the Papal States in 1870 saw the Church in medieval terms, a view current among Catholics well into the 20th century. The Pope was seen not only as a spiritual ruler, but as a model of temporal rulers. The gift of the Papal States was received from Pepin King of the Franks in 756. The doctrine of temporal rule was proclaimed by Pope Boniface VIII's Bull *Unam Sanctam* in the 13th century. This temporal power was symbolised by the Papal Tiara, the triple crown, symbolised supremacy over temporal, spiritual and universal powers. The Second Vatican Council discarded this imperial conception of the Church and established its original and evangelical ideals based on the Gospels as proclaimed in *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*. The Popes Imperial trapping such as the Papal Tiara and the *Sedia Gestatoria* and others were abandoned by Paul VI in the 1970's. In spite of this, St Michael's advice does not lose its profound wisdom and power.

² Jn 21;15-16

³ Prudence and discretion was a quality he looked for in those who held positions of responsibility; qualities that would inspire trust and confidence.

'Pain is an enabler' Here is a very important aspect of his understanding of the Cross. He believed that this, besides being inevitable, should be a means of spiritual growth. His positive view arises from his faith; if God is for us who can be against us. It becomes a condition of growth in understanding one's own human nature, one's own inner resources and weaknesses, another step in clear-sightedness when judging situations and when dealing with people. Today one would pray for a consciousness of one's motives and feelings in such situations. St Michael letters always encouraged growth in confidence and dedication to God. St Michael's point on the supremacy of love in relationships, especially in the use of authority or power applies to parents or teachers in regard to their children. His choice of the Pope as their model would strike a sensitive chord in the hearts of Catholics at that time in a particular way. French Catholics would remember the violence and abuse suffered at the hands of Napoleon that brought about the exile and death at Valence in France of Pope Pius VI and similar treatment at Fontainebleau of Pius VII that forced him, an ill and broken man to sign away his temporal and spiritual authority.

⁴ St Michael implies that one cannot be competent in dealing with people without being absolutely honest with God and honest with oneself. A task that requires daily appraisal; a goal which he strove for up to his dying breath. His wisdom in discerning true humility is a very useful guide. True humility is not found in timidity, cowardice or pride.

⁵ This letter seems addressed to a Sister from a respected family known to St Michael, possibly the Bourdilas of Lestelle.

⁶ See letter 71

⁷ Barbe family of Lestelle whose son Pierre was in the Society. Letter 71

⁸ Jean Matheiu Cassou born 24th of January 1810 at Espechede, ordained 20th December 1834, ministered at Narp, at Andoins from 1839 to 1861 the date of his death.

⁹ Lezin. see letter 71

¹⁰ Gal 2;20

¹¹ 11 Jn 4;34

¹² L. S.N.S.J.C.

Pau 18 February 1847

My dear sister,

I'm happy to say hello! And to recommend myself to your seraphic prayers! I hope they will be granted now that you are in the land of promise where the divine consolations of milk and honey flow in abundance. You ought to be able to think about these beautiful things and especially with such a divine conversation with the holy and solitary Lord Jesus in the Tabernacle! Oh! I beg you ask him something for me, especially that I practice three things: that I have a child's heart for God, and mother's heart for my neighbour, and a judgemental heart for myself.

I always think of you. I always love you, recalling to my dear sister Madeleine the promise that she made me that I would go to La Puye. Tell them that I ought to go there to search for the serviettes that you brought. You may remember. Were they not my last words? I ask you to think about this. The sisters will tell you a thousand things but I myself have left you to work out the truth.

Sister Maria

It is necessary that I tell you that I owe the pleasure of writing to you to the good Fr Garicoits who is always good, always holy, always fervent and works always for my conversion. But you well know that my soul is difficult and how many blows of the mattock it needs to break into it. One has a fine job pulling up the weeds and sowing when it always produces weeds. But I'm going to try during lent to be converted so that it happens when I see you. Do not forget especially the spiritual almsgiving that I have asked you for higher up.

My kindest regards to your good superiors.

Letter published in Bourdenne, *Vie et Oeuvres*, page 492 Sister Marie was the niece of a member of the Society of Betharram, Fr Nabarra, from Coarraze. She died prematurely. St Michael celebrated the Requiem Mass. See letters 76, 113, 118.

¹³ These are quotes used ironically from an enclosed letter of a Sr Maria, written in obsequious and affected style and was asking for a change of residence.

¹⁴ St Michael used 'tournure' with a special meaning, referring to individuals who request a change of residence. He seems to have accidentally omitted this information which he adds in the postscript...

¹⁵ This is a quote from Sr Maria's letter.

¹⁶ Fr Jean Pedebearn born at Pau, 5 December 1802, pupil of St Michael Garicoits at the seminary of Betharram, ordained 22 December 1827, curate at Bruges in 1828, Labastide-Clairence 1 June 1829, serving at Espiute 1 July 1829, at Jurancon 15th of May 1830, at Bougarber 21st of July 1831, in 1857 he left his parish to become chaplain at the nursing home of St Luke, Pau where he remained until 1868, died in 1878. See letters 305, 315, etc.

¹⁷ He kept contact with St Michael and always showed an interest in his work. He helped him financially, especially when he wanted to buy the farm of Sainte Marie and the farm Matheou. On the first occasion he had some difficulties. St Michael who was seeking agricultural land perhaps at the request of the master of novices, Fr Cassou, to acquire the small farm Esquerre at Montaut which was where the brothers later worked and prayed when it became the farm of Sainte Marie. In the community at that time certain members disagreed with this project. "An idea of Fr Cassou," they said. To obtain funds Saint Michael addressed himself to Fr Pedebearn. He had promised 10,000 francs which he made known publicly. "Scarcely had he opened his mouth, reported Saint Michael, than they began without any authority, and against the rule of humility obedience, and prudence to make objections. He was mortified and withdrew his offer. " Bourdenne Life and Works page 338. On the second occasion, Fr Pedebearn proved equally inconsistent. "The same ecclesiastic, added Saint Michael, had offered me money to make a purchase on behalf of the congregation. Then when the time came to pay, he informed me that he no longer had the money which he promised. Far from showing him the least displeasure on my part, I limited myself by replying: Praise the Lord! These words instead of displeasing him, made a good impression on him. A little later the same hand offered us a very important sum of money". 1846-1847 was financially hard for the new community, The potato blight ravaged France as in Ireland and caused a million deaths. Wheat was scarce and too expensive for the poor. Some priests like Fr Garat of Hasparren begged those with wheat to help the starving. St Michael had to find food for 30 priests and 20 brothers as well as the boarders at Notre Dame. From 1840-1845 he put aside 20,000fr for the restoration of the Calvary, 10,000fr for the purchase of the farm of St Marie, and paid for the opening of the secondary school at Notre Dame in Nov 1847. A great act of faith. He relied on the generosity of benefactors and even more on Divine Providence. His faith never waned. In one of these most difficult moments he is recorded to have said; 'God has not abandoned us. Not only have we passed through this dreadful winter, but even the money that we thought lost, had tided us over.' (Bourdenne p 145)

¹⁸ She was Superior at Colomiers, a girls school near Toulouse.

¹⁹ Proclaimed by Pope Pius IX after his enthronement, which took place in the diocese of Bayonne in from the 28th of February the second Sunday of Lent to the 21st of March, Passion Sunday.

²⁰ Sister Theodore Jacomet was the younger sister of sister Jeanne-Sophie.

²¹ One presumed that he meant 'a week.' The Jansenist heresy deterred people from receiving communion frequently from the misplaced belief that one had to be worthy to receive communion. When St Michael began at the Seminary, the custom was for them to receive at the most once a month; no one presuming to go more often. St Michael in the firm belief that Jesus came for sinners, encouraged them to receive at began at the Seminary, the custom was for them to receive at the most once a month; no one presuming to go more often. St Michael in the firm belief that Jesus came for sinners, encouraged them to receive at least every Sunday. Sisters never received daily in any convent. The custom in more progressive convents was to receive on Sundays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. St Michael encouraged daily communion among religious and devout layfolk.

²² St Michael refers to those who believe in God and those who only accept reason. The French Revolution proclaimed 'reason' as the only God and initiated atheism as we know it today. St Michael presents the Christian message and life in a way that draws on human values common to all people whatever their ideology.

²³ Mt 8;8

²⁴ Unedited copy. It seems that this is an answer to a request for a Parish Mission. It is not easy to convey his mild humour and sometimes his Gallic irony.

²⁵ There are 2 copies of this letter in Bourdenne; one in Vie et Oeuvres, one in Vie et lettres. The tone of this letter seems more severe and less human than those to religious.

²⁶ This is drawn from the spirituality of St Ignatius. "To conserve and enable the spirit of the Company to grow and to attain the end that is proposed, that is to say to help souls to gain their supernatural end, the special means which would unite the apostle to God, as an instrument, and which dispose him to be directed in all righteousness by the divine hand are more effective than merely human qualities." Constitutions 10th part, part 2.

²⁷ The essence of this chapter is in these verses. " let us be more than babbling children, carried by every wind of doctrine like the malice of men with their propensity to create error. But work for truth in charity. May we grow in him who is our head, Christ. It is through him that the entire body, joined in every part by all the parts which serve him, each member guarding its own function realises its organic growth and rises up as an edifice of charity.

²⁸ Saint Matthew 10: 16. Be cunning as serpents and innocent as doves.

²⁹ Sr Zephirin Saint Blaise see letter 31.

³⁰ Ways of treating sick souls.

³¹ See letter 22

³² See letter 17

³³ Dialect from her home in the Pyrennees, a common expression translated as 'My God' which seems to have been used by Sister Saint Jerome.

³⁴ Pierre Cassou born at Igon in 1812, receive the four minor orders 18 June 1835, subdiaconate 28 May 1836, diaconate 17th December and ordained priest on the 22nd September 1838, the same day he entered the Society at the same time as Fr Barbe in 1838, he was elected assistant 10 September 1841, he was re-elected 10 June 1845, during this time he was novice master and bursar. He was well liked by all the priests. This young priests was a man of deep interior life and was intelligent and wise, and an outstanding missionary. He taught for a year at Notre Dame when Elizabeth was headmaster who regarded him highly. He visited Elizabeth in prison at Bordeaux after he had been arrested for three murders and read a letter to him from St Michael. He would say with tears in his eyes; "A Saint had written it, an Angel has dictated it". He made his vows in the Sanctuary with the whole community on the 10th of September 1841 in the presence of Mgr Lacroix in 1841 when he brought his Constitutions and formally approved the society of the Sacred Heart. At the assembly which followed Saint Michael Garicoits was appointed superior and in virtue of article 10 was elected one of three members of the council with Frs Guimon and Perguilhem. He was scarcely 29 when he was appointed assistant by St Michael. As master of novices he organised the noviciate of the brothers. It was his idea to buy the 2 farms for them. He negotiated the purchase of the farm of Sainte Marie. In 1844 Fr Segalas who was thinking of joining the Society asked Saint Michael for an assistant teacher at Sainte Palais. He was sent to teach there by Saint Michael for that year, but returned to Betharram quite unwell and became a very successful missionary and novice master. He preached at Luc, Uzan, Andoins. But his health had declined. They bought him a horse as he still continued to join the missionary team, preaching in the surrounding villages. He seems to have undertaken far more work than his health would allow as he was also headmaster of the school in Lestelle 1845-1846 unto his health gave way. After this he engaged himself in missionary work at Sarrance. It seems that the Bishop had forbidden him to preach at missions. He wrote to him and gave permission to preach with moderation. This came to the ears of Saint Michael who wasn't pleased. As he had already forbidden him to preach at missions because of his failing health, he ordered him to return to Betharram immediately. He was then already very unwell. On 2nd November 1846 in the morning he struggled through Mass and then became very ill, he received extreme unction and two hours later died, aged 34.

Crowds came to his funeral and touched his coffin as though he were a Saint. "What a beautiful sight," said one priest, "but is it right to do this?" St Michael replied: "I have no doubt, I remember his dead mother who brought her wonderful son here and thanked me for everything that I'd done for him..."

In 1847-52.

³⁵ He was appointed bursar in place of Fr Cassou.

³⁶ Pierre Barbe was made novice master.

³⁷ Now I can pray to him as Saint Maison de Bourg in Lestelle was loaned by a family in Nay for the secondary school of Notre Dame.

³⁸ Sr Zephirin had been appointed novice mistress at the Mother House.

³⁹ Her sister Mlle Penin came to Betharram with pilgrims from Ossun for the feast in September of the Exaltation of the Cross.

⁴⁰ At this period perpetual vows were taken after 6 years of annual vows, during the Mass celebrated in the Chapel of Notre Dame and in public. According to Canon Law Saint Michael Garicoits would've made his perpetual profession six years after his first annual profession exactly on the 10th September 1847 and not the 1st November.

⁴¹ Seems to be a letter to an unprofessed Sister who was thinking of leaving.

⁴² Not sure whether he means long-suffering.

⁴³ It seems to be sent to Fr Jean-Dominique Miegerville before he joined the Missionaries of Our Lady of Garaison. See letter 55.

⁴⁴ When Notre Dame at Betharram went on holiday, St Michael had to be with the Sisters who returned from the Parishes for their retreat at Igon.

⁴⁵ The shrines of Betharram and Garaison have been related from early times. After the Religious Wars, the Superior of the chaplains of Garaison, Pierre Geoffroy, reopened the shrine at Betharram. In 1616 Leonard de Trapes, Archbishop of Auch, came from Garaison with a statue of our Lady to replace the Statue of Our Lady at Betharram which had disappeared in the wars of religion.

⁴⁶ Monsignor Bertrand Severe Laurence then Vicar General of Tarbes and later Bishop of Lourdes bought back and re-established the shrine after the Revolution and revived the pilgrimages in the three valley influence by three apparitions of our Lady to the little shepherdess Angleze de Sagazan. He established a new society of missionaries, the Society of Notre Dame de Garaison. In St Michael's time contacts increased. The Bishop sent their first priests to St Michael at Betharram to be formed in the religious life between 1834-36. Frs Louis Peydessus and Louis Miquet went to him in October 1834, Fr Lalanne joined them in 1835 and others followed later. In 1836 they left Betharram and on the 31st of May were solemnly installed at Garaison.

Saint Michael took an interest in their formation and sent his best missionary, Fr Guimon to accompany them three months after they had left Betharram. He was happy that the Fathers of Betharram worked with these missionaries up to about 1850. St Michael with Fr Vignau gave them a retreat on the 26th August 1848 after which Bishop Lawrence received the Fathers of Garaison's vows of religious life. Saint Michael was in close contact concerning their religious development and he never ceased to send very good candidates to this community: Frs Secail, Miegerville, Fitau and especially Fr Sempe who interviewed St Bernadette of Lourdes, wrote an account of the apparitions and did so much to make the sanctuary of Lourdes known.

⁴⁷Jean Dominique Miegeville born at Saint Laurent de Neste(H-P) in 1840, did his studies at minus seminary of Saint Pe de Bigorre 1829 to 1834; he met Saint Michael Garicoits who came to hear confessions and give courses in theology to the seminarians and the professors: he entered the seminary at Tarbes, then was appointed teacher of mathematics at Saint Pe. He then made a retreat at Betharram and St Michael directed him towards the Society of the Missionaries of Garaison. He became a member after his ordination 21st December 1839; he was a well-known preacher and spiritual director; professor of theology; died at Garaison 22nd of March 1901. He became a distinguished botanist and belonged to the botanical Society of France and Belgium. He was a witness at the process of St Michael's beatification.

⁴⁸He was recognized as the holy and austere religious in himself and very understanding and good to others specially in the confessional. St Michael called upon him to give retreat to the daughters of the cross at Igon. At himself he never hid his esteem and veneration for the founder of Betharram from whom we said "I've never found a director of the exercises of St Ignatius like him."

⁴⁹ A saying of St Michael found in many of his letters: letter 85, 163, 215, 251 etc.

⁵⁰ This letter shows St Michael's insights and how he uses the Exercises of St Ignatius in direction. He had close contacts with the Jesuits of Toulouse and supported their foundation at Pau. He corresponded with Frs Secail, Pichon and Ramiere who directed the Apostleship of prayer.

⁵¹ St Michael was well read in French spiritual writers. St John Eudes wrote; 'Mark well. The best procedure, the secret of secrets, the devotion of devotions, is not to attach yourself just to one practice or exercise of devotion, but give yourself to the Holy Spirit of Jesus.' This passage is based on his direction according to the Exercises of St Ignatius and current practice in interpreting them besides his own extensive experience. He believed in going to the source, the original text and even studied Hebrew Grammar so that he could read the original text of the Scriptures.

⁵² Sister Marie-Sidonie born Pauline Jourdanet at Ibos (H-P) in 1828, entered the boarding school at Igon, then into the novitiate which was suddenly interrupted. She returned three years later; died at Bagnères de Bigorre in 1892. St Michael supported her in a crisis over her a vocation. In 1842 she arrived at Igon as a pupil; the year after on the 10th of September 1843 she began her postulancy. A dreadful worry seized her, she began to cry and begged to be returned to her home. Her mother came to find her on the eighth of December. Before leaving at the request of sister Marthe, the superior, and sister Saint Edouard, her sister who was mistress of novices, she went to confession to Saint Michael. This is her account: *Father, I am leaving; I ask you to give me some advice. What advice do you want me to give to a daughter who is let herself led by the claws of Satan? Having said that he firmly shut the slide of the confessional. Its impact resonated as a reproach in Pauline's heart and led her back to the convent of Igon three years later. As soon as she presented herself in confession to St Michael, he exclaimed: "So! There you are! I knew you would change your mind and return, so that you should be a religious sister. I never doubted although Fr Carrere, the parish priest of Ibos told me that you were on the point of losing your vocation." She entered the novitiate. She was once more tempted and became very worried. Each time Saint Michael supported her with these words: "God wants you to be a religious. Go-ahead. Do not pay attention to these temptations. They will pass and you will be happy as a religious sister."* (process for canonisation).

⁵³ Jn 8:44 You have the devil for your father... he has been a murderer since the beginning of time. He is a liar and the father of lies.

⁵⁴ Activite sensible could imply a lack of sensitivity within oneself which could be an obstacle in relating to others.

⁵⁵ Sister Regina, Clotilde Camus, born the 17 December 1821 from Nay entered the Daughters of the Cross in 1845. Died at Lasseube (B-P) 1 January 1892.

⁵⁶ Madame Camus wife of the Chemist was directed by St Michael when he regularly came to Nay as confessor of the Dominicans, she confided to him the direction of her five daughters. Out of 5, 3 entered Religious Life, Clotilde, Eugene, and Anne, directed by St Michael. He had a close association with this family and when Madam Camus died he sang the Requiem Mass. Even though the Parish Priest invited him after the Mass to stay to lunch, he said that he had to go to the Convent at Igon; 'I am expected at my post; I have no time to lose'.

⁵⁷ Ne soyez pas trop naturelle; seems a bit insensitive... giving way to emotions... but possibly he means to accept her loss with faith and not outside grace.

⁵⁸ Eugenie Camus, her sister, entered the Daughters of the Cross in 1848 as Sr Thertulie. Died at Igon 12 November 1881.

⁵⁹ Sr Marie-Sidonie See letter 56.

⁶⁰ Sr Saint-Jérôme, her original name was Dominique Pedechar from Bagnere de Bigorre one of the first postulants from this area to enter on 1st November 1825 six months after the foundation by St Elizabeth Bichier Des Ages at Igon. She began as a postulant in February 1826 and her novitiate in February 1827, after taking the habit in the presence of Monsignor d'Astros. She was one of 29 sisters who on the 27th of July 1829 left Igon with sister Elizabeth to found the house at Ustaritz. She made her profession on the 20th of October that same year. She returned to Igon, where the novitiate reopened with a large number of postulants. In 1836 she returned to Ustaritz where sister Marie Madeleine called her to put some order into the house. In 1846 she was sent to organise the convent of Colomiers, then called to the mother house of the daughters of the cross at La Puye. In 1847 she was appointed superior of Paizay le Sec. In 1849 she was at La Puye. She was sent as superior to Bethines in 1850 and remained there to 1857. She died at La Puye at the age of 80 on the 28th of May 1883. She was a Sister of 'outstanding calibre'; a great administrator, organizer, solver of difficulties; she was a woman of great faith and ability. St Michael appreciated her exceptional gifts. His esteem and friendship for her are revealed in his letters in their tone, informality, and frequency. They are written in a relaxed and familiar style. When she was at Igon he enjoyed to speak with her; both she and he confided in each other, both seemed kindred spirits. St Michael appreciated and sought her advice on many occasions, even in matters that were secret and delicate such as the possible amalgamation of the Society of the Holy Cross with Betharram. Although she was very involved in temporal affairs, deep down in her heart she sought a life of recollection and prayer. St Michael knew this and had similar feelings himself from his own situation. In spite of her remarkable talents, she was beset with scruples as a result of prevailing Jansenist attitudes and upbringing in her childhood. Being on friendly terms St Michael occasionally wrote humorously to help her come to terms with her fears by referring to them as the 'old madwoman'. She was wise enough to know what he meant. See letters 39,49, 69, 76, 92, 109, 113, 119, 155.

⁶¹ Phil 4:13

⁶² St Michael appreciated her exceptional gifts. His esteem and friendship for her are revealed in his letters in their tone, informality, and frequency. They are written in a relaxed and familiar style. When she was at Igon he enjoyed to speak with her; both she and he confided in each other, both seemed kindred spirits. St Michael appreciated and sought her advice on many occasions, even in matters that were secret and delicate such as the possible amalgamation of the Society of the Holy Cross with Betharram. Although she was very involved in temporal affairs, deep down in her heart she sought a life of recollection and prayer. St Michael knew this and had similar feelings himself from his own situation. In spite of her remarkable talents, she was beset with scruples as a result of prevailing Jansenist attitudes and upbringing in her childhood. Being on friendly terms St Michael occasionally wrote humorously to help her come to terms with her fears by referring to them as the 'old madwoman'. She was wise enough to know what he meant. See letters 39,49, 69, 76, 92, 109, 113, 119,155.

⁶³ Cor 1:27. Is 29:14.

⁶⁴ Ps 22:4

⁶⁵ St Michael's principle in counselling was to follow grace which he learnt from St Vincent de Paul who accepted those who followed Providence and did not block it. L 10. he also found it in Fr Aquaviva who wrote in the directory of the spiritual exercises. those who conduct the exercises in this particular case to co-operate with the divine impulses, and not to proceed them, but to follow them. Chapter 34 verse 1. This direction occurs frequently in his letters. This is a principle in his direction. He learnt it from St Vincent de Paul 'follow providence and do not obstruct it (Letter 10) and in Fr Acquaviva, 'non praeire, sed sequi' do not go before but follow.(Directory of the Spiritual Exercises Ch24).

⁶⁶ Principle of St Michael's direction.

⁶⁷ Sister Sigismund born Catherine Roland from Guchon (HP) 17th Sept 1818 entered the Daughters of the Cross 1st Sept 1839, died at Igon 23 June 1892.

⁶⁸ letter 17.

⁶⁹ letter 105.

⁷⁰ letter 31.

⁷¹ An allusion to our advice in the restoration the sacristy, and the sanctuary which were the work of sister St Jerome, at the suggestion of sister Elizabeth.

⁷² Canon Palleres. In 1845 he commissioned Alexandre Renoir to sculpt the statue of Our Lady of Betharram which is now seen above the main altar. In 1849 as this letter indicates he wanted the main altar in marble. In 1860 he commissioned the artist Dauvergne. To paint the Sanctuary. Unfortunately this was not realised because of his death.

⁷³ A line has disappeared by accident.

⁷⁴ Letter 116

⁷⁵ Sister Sabinien, formerly Marie Peyrou, born at Ossun in 1825 owed her vocation to St Michael whom she consulted at 19 and remained under his direction in her novitiate 1846-8 and from 1859 to 1863 at Igon. She became Superior General 1859-98. She opened 31 houses and took the number from 2,599 religious into the order to 2,773. At the process of St Michael's canonization she said 'It is incredible how Fr Garicoits in spite of so many other commitments had worked for so many years to form our novices, to instruct and support our professed in the practice of virtue and to engender among them a deep love for the Lord and the poor, a spirit of zeal, of simplicity, of self-sacrifice, detachment from the world, which our own founders sought to instil. She died at La Puye in 1898 7th June.

⁷⁶ Here are central elements of St Michael's spiritual direction which are focussed on God; his goodness and wisdom, based on love: the principal motive for action and on fidelity to vows and the rule.

⁷⁷ She had been appointed to an important post at Ustaritz.

⁷⁸ Carriole is a light cart, a poor person's mode of transport used by the Sisters when moving to new residences. It also means the will of God, the order of obedience which assigned a Sister to a new post or duty.

⁷⁹ Here are central elements of St Michael's spiritual direction which are focussed on God; his goodness and wisdom, based on love; the principal motive for action and on fidelity to vows and the rule.

⁸⁰ Jean-Baptiste Etcheberry, cousin of St Michael and Chaplain to the Convent.

⁸¹ Parish of 1640 faithful in the Lower Pyrenees.

⁸² Sister Theodora born Jeanne-Marie Lubie at Azereix(H-P)26th of March 1827, professed 1851, died at Igon 31st of August 1896.

⁸³ St Michael uses the word 'noire' which meaning dark or even as we might say depressed.

⁸⁴ Sister Saint Roger born Marie-Anne Laulhe at Puyoo first June 1806, entered the novitiate of the Daughters of the Cross 24th of January, took the habit 27 September 1834, professed 18th of October 1835: founder and first superior of the continent of Colomiers in 1836, then provincial Superior of the Ustaritz, then assistance and in 23rd May 1858 Superior General of the daughters of the cross; died 25th of January 1879. She built the Chapel at Lapuye and unmasked with the help of St Michael a false visionary in that community. See letter 258. founded 73 houses and increase the number of sisters from 2026 to 2599.

⁸⁵ Sister Theodosie born Marie Chirou at Pontac 11th of December 1811, entered the the Daughters of the Cross 30 November 1832. Appointed superior of Ustaritz in 1845 she remained there 40 years up to her death June 21, 1885. She was the sister of Fr Chirou, one of the first companions of St Michael and later 2nd General. See letter 10.

⁸⁶ He is referring to the difficulties in founding schools at Orthez and Mauleon. He had 30 priests and about the same number of Brothers and students from which to find teachers.