aboard they were so afraid that they were shaking and trembling all over their body. They could hardly stand on their feet, they must have thought that their last hour had come and that they would all be killed. In the meantime it was completely dark and one of the sailors brought a lamp and the natives calmed down after a while, as obviously nobody was thinking of killing them, and they became even quite jolly when some of the officers gave them presents and poured out cups of tea for them, which they drank with great relish. After this they departed quickly and rowed swiftly towards their village.

21 SEPTEMBER 1871

... On this day a Church Service was to be held, and the usual Salute from the cannon of the 'Vitiav' was part of this service. I decided to return to the village and to stay there whilst this salute was fired in order to prevent the natives from getting scared. As there was still a short time before the Salute was fired, I had a look around in the village, to find a spot for my future house. I did not want to live right in the village, as I could not speak the native tongue and therefore could not ask permission from the natives to build my house in the village. Secondly, I was not known to any neighbouring tribes and would not like to be the dispute between two tribes, and thirdly, I do hate loud noise and to live in the village would mean to be disturbed by loud cries of the natives and their children and on top of this by the constant barking and howling of dogs.

So I went a bit outside the village and found a small path that led me to a small peninsula where a little river ran past an opening in the wood and plenty of large trees offered shade. I thought that this would be the most suitable place for me to occupy as the path would connect me with the village but the place was still far enough from the village to be quiet. I now had to hurry back to the village as it was time for the Salute to be fired. When it occurred the natives showed more bewilderment than actual fright. They lunged towards the nearest shelter and also tried to escape the sounds of the Salute. They trembled over their whole body as if they had an attack of fever.

This behaviour was so funny to look at, that I could not do anything else but laugh, this must have been the right medicine. They looked at me and as nobody got hurt by the sound of the firing, they too started to laugh. Having conquered this situation successfully, I went back to the ship. At 3 p.m. a crew went with me to make a start on clearing the spot I had chosen for my future home and the carpenters made a start in erecting the hut.

**Source**: D. Fischer, *Unter Südsee-Inselnern (Das Leben des Forschers Miklouho-Maclay)*, Leipzig, 1956, extracts as shown, pp. 43-53. Translated from the German by Valli Shipmaker.

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### C14 The Return of Miklouho-Maclay to the Maclay Coast, Astrolabe Bay, 1876

#### 27 JUNE 1876

The 'Seabird' came to anchor. I had arrived for the second time on the Maclay Coast. The high ranges on the horizon somehow looked different from the first time 4 years ago. The natives were pleased to see me again and remembered my name. Some of the Papuans had tears in their eyes when they saw me. I missed some old people that had died in the meantime and recognized in some of the young women, the little girls that I had left before. I refused again the offers of the natives to settle in their villages and searched for a secluded place for my house. Having found it the carpenters set out to build it. It took five days to be completed and to be reasonably comfortable.

#### 4 JULY 1876

The 'Seabird' is on her way again. The natives told me a lot about the Earthquakes that have happened during those four years and which were the cause of the different mountain formations. Also high seas and spring tides, as well as a huge tidal wave after the last earthquake, left their marks in the landscape. The tidal wave took one of the villages with it and many of the natives got killed.

**Source**: D. Fischer, *Unter Südsee-Inselnern (das Leben des Forschers Miklouho-Maclay)*, Leipzig, 1956, pp. 319-20, extracts as shown. Translated from the German by Valli Shipmaker.

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### THE VICARIATE APOSTOLIC OF MELANESIA AND MICRONESIA:
#### DOCUMENTS C15 to C31

By Papal Brief, Ex debito pastoralis officii, of 19 July 1844, Pope Gregory XVI erected the Vicariate Apostolic of Melanesia and Micronesia.

Baptiste Epalle of the Society of Mary, Pro Vicar and Procurator for the Vicariate Apostolic of Western Oceania, had first suggested the creation of this new field for Catholic evangelisation. While visiting Rome in August 1843, he had submitted a plan, through
Cardinal Fransoni, to the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda, which urged the inclusion of New Guinea and adjacent islands in a new mission field. This plan quoted M. du Bouzet of Dumont D'Urville's expedition in describing the opportunities for evangelisation in the New Guinea islands. (B45) Father Epalle's plan was adopted by the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda in July 1844, and he was consecrated as Titular Bishop of Sion and Vicar Apostolic of Melanesia and Micronesia in the same month.

A Marist mission party under Bishop Epalle's leadership arrived in the Solomon Islands at the end of 1845. A provisional headquarters was established on the southernmost island, San Cristoval. While looking for a suitable mission site on San Isabel Island on 16th December, Bishop Epalle was mortally injured by local tribesmen. He had been in the mission field for only 19 days when he died of his wounds.

Within 18 months of Bishop Epalle's death three other members of the party had been killed and one had died of sickness. The mission was maintained by the surviving missionaries under difficult circumstances until the arrival on 28 August 1847, of Bishop Collomb who had succeeded Bishop Epalle.

It was decided to abandon San Christoval and to advance towards New Guinea by establishing a station on Woodlark Island. On 15th September, 1847, the missionaries landed at Woodlark Island and established 'Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows' mission at Guasup. After the arrival of a new missionary, Father Villien, in April 1848, Bishop Collomb decided to advance to Rooke Island and from there investigate areas in New Guinea, New Britain and New Ireland for suitable mission sites.

The mission at Rooke Island was established at Nurua village. Sickness prevented Bishop Collomb from carrying out his intention to look for suitable mission sites on New Guinea, New Britain and New Ireland. He died on 16 July 1848, and in November of the same year Father Villien died also. The two missionaries who survived returned to Woodlark Island in May 1849.

In October 1852, the Marist mission on Woodlark Island was relieved by a party of seven missionaries of the Foreign Missions of Milan. The mission on Rooke Island was resumed by four of these and three others remained on Woodlark Island. The Italian missionaries carried on in very difficult circumstances until 1855 when it was decided to relinquish the mission. The withdrawal took place from Rooke and Woodlark Islands in June and July, 1855. Meanwhile, in January 1855, a Father Mazzucconi had left Rooke Island and had gone to Sydney in order to recover his health. In August 1855, not knowing that his brethren had abandoned the mission he returned to Woodlark Island. The ship taking him back was wrecked on Woodlark and Mazzucconi and others on board the vessel were killed by islanders.

Thereafter the Vicariate was left vacant for a period of 25 years until 1880, when a French priest, Father Lannuzel, arrived at Port Breton in southern New Ireland as chaplain to the colony established there by the Marquis de Rays. Father Lannuzel was accredited by the Sacred Congregation as Apostolic Missionary to the Vicariate of Melanesia. He stayed at Port Breton for only 5 weeks and then went to Sydney. Returning to the colony in February, 1881, he found it virtually abandoned and he thereupon went to Matupit on Blanche Bay and then to Nordup and commenced missionary work amongst the people there. He continued this work for some months.

Meanwhile the Society of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart was asked by the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda to assume responsibility for the mission field as a whole. A Father Jouet, Procurator General of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in Rome, was an influential person in the negotiations which led to the acceptance by the Society of the Vicariate as its field of work but with initial responsibility for the pastoral care of the Catholic colonists of New France.

The first party of missionaries of the Sacred Heart sailed from Barcelona in September 1881, and after many delays en route reached Port Breton in September 1882. The colony had been abandoned finally in February of the same year. The mission party thereupon went to Father Lannuzel's former station at Matupit and commenced mission work amongst the people there.

The documents in this section illustrate the foregoing and trace the subsequent history of the Sacred Heart mission in New Britain and in Papua up to 1886.

C15 Bishop Epalle’s First Plan for the Evangelization of New Guinea and Micronesia, Rome, 1843

Jean-Baptiste Epalle was born 8 March 1808 at Marilhes in France. He entered the Noviciate of the Society of Mary and was ordained in July 1838. He went to New Zealand in the same year and served as Pro-Vicar and Procurator for the missions of Western Oceania. In 1842 Epalle was appointed Coadjutor Bishop to Bishop Pompallier, Vicar Apostolic of Western Oceania, and as such was sent to Europe to act as his agent. In August, 1843 Epalle submitted to the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith a comprehensive plan for the evangelization of Melanesia and Micronesia. This plan was accepted and the Vicariate Apostolic of Melanesia and Micronesia was erected by Pope Gregory XVI. (C16) Epalle was consecrated Titular Bishop of Sion and Vicar Apostolic of Melanesia and Micronesia in July 1844. While still in Europe organizing for the mission Epalle gathered information about the new field and wrote of motives, plans and hopes. The plan, the Papal Brief and a selection of Epalle’s writings follow here. (C15 to C18). See also A. Dupeyrat, *Papouasie Histoire de la Mission 1885-1935*, Paris, n.d., pp. 22-4; R. Wiltgen, *A Difficult Mission*, pp. 5-6. On the sources see Kevin J. Roach, *The Historical Archives of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, The Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 3, 1968, pp. 171-74.

Your Eminence,

In establishing the Vicariate of Central Oceania, the Holy See without doubt saved a great number of souls, but imagine how many people there are in the fifth part of the world who are still in the shadow of death! However, these people hope for an abundant and rich harvest. I would deem myself guilty of a sin of conscience and omission of duty if I did not reveal to Your Eminence their pressing needs. As I realise that Your Eminence has to share precious time among so many missions, I shall submit only a few brief observations on the geographical position and the population of the islands which I recommend to the charity of Your Eminence and the reasons why it is urgent to establish a mission there.

In the area bounded to the east by the 125th parallel of longitude and to the west by the 160th (where the Vicariate of Central Oceania begins), in the north by the Equator and in the south by the 12th parallel of latitude, a distance of 700 marine leagues by 240 marine leagues, there are at least 208 islands. The most important of these are New Guinea, Waigiu, the two Vestes, Eimorlant, Le arrou, the Admiralties, New Hanover, New Ireland, New Britain, the Louisiades, Bougainville, Choiseul, Isabel, Guadalcanal and Christoval. Although this part of Oceania is much smaller, it contains considerably more land than any of the other three already established Vicariates. From the reports of the navigators who discovered these islands at the end of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the eighteenth century, they are densely populated. Modern day sailors confirm this fact. I have heard a great many say so of those who have landed on these islands. A very worthy French Commander, M. de Bouzet, who was part of M. Dumont D’Urville’s expedition which went around the world, after having visited these islands urged me to take up with Your Eminence the cause of these poor people and especially those of the Solomon Archipelago. According to observations these islands would be as densely populated as those where Catholic missionaries are already working but because of their greater size they would contain a larger population. I would hesitate to give even an approximate estimate of the size (of their population) and I think most of the navigators I spoke to exaggerated somewhat. For example, the population of Waigiu was estimated at 100,000 which would be extraordinary judging by the relative smallness of the island and by comparison of it with other places where missionaries are.

The islands in question have not been invaded by heresy. They do not offer a big field to the ambitious. On the contrary they are not well known and what was known of the customs of the inhabitants was scarcely encouraging to adventurers who prefer life and flee at the first sign of danger. Today it is known that Europeans have been able to live on these islands for a long time without any great danger from the natives of New Guinea who were so much feared. We know that the inhabitants of New Ireland are sociable and that the Louisiades and the Solomons do not give grounds for fear. It is therefore highly likely Eminence, that the worst enemy of Catholicism is going to try to realize the project that it has conceived of dominating these latitudes. Now that God has made use of the glory and ambition of men to show them the evangeli, Protestantism is going to impose itself again and make sacrifices and become heroic in fighting against evil. Attracted by the bait of considerable gain, Protestant preachers without vocation who falsely bear the name of missionaries will hasten to these vast and beautiful lands. Would it not be desirable for the Catholic religion to be able to boast of having penetrated this part of Oceania first and thus avoid the reproach that has been often made against it in this country, of having arrived last. Oceania is quite well disposed towards Catholicism. To conquer it is only a matter of being constant and not dreading the hardships and especially the hunger. But to have influence over the ideas of the people it is essential to arrive first.

There is another consideration, Eminence, which urges an immediate occupation. Several governments have their eyes on these islands. Holland has claimed (without putting this into effect up to now) a certain part of New Guinea as a
Dutch possession. England claims to have exclusive rights over it, but because she fears that the European powers do not respect her claims, she will hasten to occupy this vast and fertile land and thus confirm her claimed right by doing this. Once this government takes possession of these isles it will be no easy matter for Catholic missionaries to penetrate them especially if they are not English. We have no doubt that after 1840 there will no longer be room for us in New Zealand. France is considering the Solomon Archipelago I know for certain but she wants to begin with New Caledonia which is part of the Central Vicariate. The Catholic missionary who knows the quality of the majority of French immigrants is far from rejoicing in such projects. Since it is not possible to prevent this the only thing the Catholic religion can do is to take the first initiative in gaining the hearts of these people and prevent them from passing from infidelity to disbelief and impiety. A strongly Christian education might fortify these unfortunate people against the bad example of the scandalous émigrés. If the field of the Lord is well prepared the tares would die of suffocation in the midst of the good seed.

As the islands in the above-mentioned area (which I have had the honour of making known to your Grace) are much larger and nearer together than in any other Vicariate the founding of a new Vicariate would have the advantage of requiring fewer evangelical workers and much less expense than in the other Vicariates where journeys are so costly and where there are an infinite number of small islands where one must nevertheless send two priests however few the number of inhabitants.

If Your Eminence thought it suitable to establish an Apostolic Vicariate in this part of Melanesia I think that the Society of Mary could supply the necessary missionaries for this enterprise, but it would be impossible for me to designate anyone without the opinion of the Reverend Father Colin to whom I have already written concerning the subject, in accordance with orders I received from His Excellency, Monsignor Brunelli.

I should also speak to Your Eminence about another part of Oceania where it is even more urgent to establish an Apostolic Vicariate. I mean Micronesia or N. W. Oceania. It seems to me that success would be certain as even now the largest island groups are not only ready to receive the evangel, but are also making insistent demands for missionaries.

This area lies between the 125th longitude and the 180th longitude west and between the 13th degree of latitude and the Equator and contains at least 200 islands and 3 large archipelagoes, the Caroline, Marshal and Gilbert Islands. Several of the Gilberts come within the limits of the Central Vicariate but it seems to me that it would be better to attach them to the new Vicariate in accordance with the plan I have proposed.

What I said before concerning the advantages to be gained from forestalling heresy applies equally here. I hope that heresy has not yet penetrated these countries. We were very worried about this possibility on departure from New Zealand.

It seems to me that it is imperative to go to Ascension (or Poompet) without delay and it deserves from its size, population and position to become a central point. The first Apostolic Prefect of Eastern Oceania, Father Becholot, is buried there. He died as a result of bad treatment due to persecution by the Sandwich Islanders. An iron cross found by an American warship in a place where the ruins of the town were believed to be, seems to indicate if this fact is true that Christianity was formerly introduced to the island or that a Christian population migrated there.

Several Europeans have settled there attracted by the fertility of the soil as well as by the gentle and sociable customs of the inhabitants. For several years they have done everything to prevent the entry of missionaries, either Catholic or Protestant. A single Presbyterian Scot beggled the favour of 1840 in the benefits of Christianity to the people of Ascension. He determined to make this proposal to the most influential people on the island by means of a French officer he had interested in religion. His proposal was rejected for some time. After a fairly long absence from the island he found on his return that the French officer was ready to implement his beliefs. Without loss of time, eight people were assembled, all Protestants, with the exception of the Frenchman. It was unanimously decided that one of them should set out without delay to find Catholic missionaries and the task fell to the Scots Presbyterian who had a sailing boat. He arrived in New Zealand after six months and presented his proposal to M. Pompallier. The bishop welcomed him all the more as he had proposed to send priests to Ascension and had thought much about it since leaving Rome.

Unfortunately adverse circumstances prevented His Grace from carrying out his promise. The Presbyterian waited for nine months and was obliged to return without missionaries. During his stay with us he was converted and we consoled him to the best of our ability. If this man, who had left his family in a foreign land to achieve the salvation of the people he loved and who loved him, is still in the same frame of mind, the introduction of missionaries to Ascension would be very easy. I will even say that this is because of such noble sacrifices. It is impossible to suspect that this Presbyterian acted in his own self interest. Instead of profit and advantage he only expected sacrifices and difficulties. The failure of his pious projects must expose this convert to serious temptations. So would it not be more expedient to hasten to confirm this new convert in his faith and take advantage of his influence over the people of Ascension.

If the provision of missionaries for this Vicariate is an obstacle in its formation which to me seems urgent, the Rev. Father Colin might consent, if Your Eminence demanded, to settle this affair the best way he may, as he was profoundly moved by the efforts of the Protestants to bring Catholic missionaries to the people of Ascension and by their failure to do so.

For the time being we could erect a single Vicariate which would cover the two parts of Oceania of which I have spoken. Then a sufficient number of missionaries could be sent out immediately to found two establishments, one at Ascension and the other on New Ireland, two places which are not very far from each other. Two years could be taken to build a mission centre at each of these two islands and when the condition of the people was known in more detail we could with full knowledge of the facts inform Your Eminence who would pronounce the division at once and send out a new bishop and missionaries.

I have the honour to be your most humble and obedient servant Monsignor,

J. B. Epalle, pro-vicar- apostolic.
Rome, 1 August, 1843.

POPE GREGORY XVI
For Perpetual Memory

None of the responsibilities of Our pastoral office should seem more important to Us than that We seek those things which seem opportune for the care and extension of the Catholic faith.

Recently, indeed, after we constituted the Central Vicariate in the Western part of Oceania in the year 1842, We realized that for the greatest possible advancement of Catholic affairs We should establish new and distinct missions because of the separation of some existing missions by too great distances, and the growing number of Bishops and missionaries.

And so, since We knew that in the hitherto overlarge Western mission there was room for new divisions to be made, We felt that henceforth, two separate new Vicariates should be established by this cutting off of areas referred to.

Accordingly, having taken counsel with Our Venerable Brothers, their Eminences the Cardinals charged with the affairs of the Propagation of the Faith, We, on Our own behalf, with mature deliberation, and acting with the fulness of Apostolic power, divide off completely, and separate the regions and islands listed below from the Western Vicariate. We erect and constitute a new apostolic vicariate in MELANESIA. This is bounded by the 125th and 160th degrees of Longitude East, where the Central Mission begins, and between the Equator and the 12th degree of Latitude South. In this region, besides others of lesser moment, We notice the following islands: New Guinea, Tobia, William Shouten, Waigon, two Vesset, Timollant, Arriou, Amirante, New Hanover, New Ireland

1Aeneid viii, 641 '...Caesa junegant foedera porca.' ('...and made a covenant over a sacrifice of swine.') and New Britain, Luixiada, Bougainville, Choiseul, Isabel, Guadalcanal, Christoval.

In MICRONESIA, where We erect and constitute the other Apostolic vicariate, the boundaries will be from the 125th degree of Longitude East to 180° West, and from the 13th degree of Latitude North to the Equator in the South. We wish and decree it to contain, besides other islands of lesser importance, the entire archipelagoes of the Carolines, the Marshalls and the Gilberts.

Moreover, We wish and decree that both missions or vicariates shall for the present be governed by one and the same Vicar Apostolic, until the opportunity shall arise of choosing another Bishop for the other vicariate.

We also wish the administration of the temporarily united Vicariates to be entrusted to the Priests of the well-deserving Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to whom the Central and Western missions have been given, until it may be decided otherwise for either of them. We wish and declare that a Vicar Apostolic is to be chosen from the same priests. We declare these letters to be firm, valid and efficacious, and their full and plenary effects are to obtain and be achieved etc.

Given at Rome at S. Mary Major's, under the Fisherman's Seal, the 19th July 1844, the 14th year of our Pontificate.

A. Card. Lambruschini

C17 Some Thoughts on the Evangelization of New Guinea, New Britain, New Ireland and the Solomons, Paris, 1845

The preparations for my departure and an indisposition of nearly a week obliged me to remain a month in Paris. I profited in this time by obtaining more and fuller information on the islands of Melanesia and I am more and more convinced that it is urgent that Catholicism should hasten, if it wishes to have the glory of being the first to arrive in this country which until this period has been so little known. The announcement of my departure brought to light several projects of the Government and Trade. The English Government is about to take possession of New Guinea or Papua. Several societies are being formed with the aim of exploiting this area. One of them appears to have, it is true, religious aims and I believe it to be worthy of encouragement, but another is spreading itself on a larger scale, and appearing under the denomination of the Cosmopolitan Society, is recruited mainly in England, Holland and France and is found to be composed of men born in the Protestant Faith or of merchants who are Catholic in name only. This throws me into the greatest alarm. These areas Monsignor will certainly excite greed, as the fear of the ferocity of the inhabitants, with which one begins to grow familiar, no longer acts as a deterrent. These areas are New Guinea, New Ireland and New Britain, finally the Archipelago of the Solomons, which by their importance deserve no less to arouse the noble ambition of Catholicism, than the greed of nations. Therefore, if Europeans once penetrate these islands, conversion of their inhabitants will present great difficulties, since we will have to defeat not only lack of faith, but also heresy and unbelief. I therefore believe, Monsignor, it is of the greatest importance to institute as promptly as possible, a strong establishment in the Solomons, a second in New Ireland, and another in New Britain, and four others in New Guinea. I have submitted these plans to Reverend Father Colin who being more involved than I with the means of implanting Catholicism, firmly and without delay, in the countries of Oceania,
which the Holy See has designed to entrust to the Society of Mary, has taken them into consideration. I even hope that he will be able to carry it out, thanks to the Seminary, for supporting the missions which he has opened at Belley, where by dint of sacrifices he provides for a large number of young people, favoured it is true with virtue and talent but deprived of worldly wealth, obliged as he has been scarcely to depend any longer on the large number of priests who would feel an attraction for the Apostolate, but who, once engaged in the Holy Ministry despite their urgent requests, cannot obtain the freedom to follow their vocations. Once these establishments are instituted, I think Monsignor, that it would be opportune, not to delay in setting up Apostolic Vicariates. This would be, I believe, the means of implanting the faith more firmly, or dispelling heresy more certainly, of avoiding the isolation of the missions, and of increasing the formations which establish a Church and ensure its perpetuity. Moreover Monsignor, it is quite impossible for a sole Bishop to be sufficient to the needs of such vast countries, New Guinea alone being one-third larger than France.

Thus I have dared to entreat his Eminence not to wait to relieve me in the functions of the Episcopate, whether it is a question of division or of giving me a co-adjutor for the more restricted part, who would be assigned to me. For my part, I say we should not wait for any correspondence, the delays associated with which could put an obstacle in the way of Evangelism in this locality. I have begged likewise Reverend Father Colin to wish for an understanding by his Eminence approving in the islands the development of the faith. I am with deepest respect, Monsignor, of your Eminence, the very humble and obedient servant.

Signed; G. Bte Bishop of Sion, Paris, 2 January, 1845.
Copy of the letter from Monsignor the Bishop of Sion to his Eminence the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda, Paris, 2 January, 1845.


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The Society of Mary Enters New Guinea, 1847

C19

When the disasters at New Caledonia forced us to leave this island, some of our colleagues went to try to found a mission at Anatenie, and others went to Sydney to await new orders from their Vicar Apostolic. As for me, I set out alone for San Christoval where I had for so long been anxious to rejoin the little band left destitute by the death of Mgr Epalle.

On Saturday 28th August at midday we were within sight of Saint-Marie Harbour, but a head wind and an unhappy sense of foreboding which we could not help feeling prevented us from even entering the harbour channel that night. Both the Captain and I knew that it is the practice of the Christovalians, as soon as they see a ship, to hasten to meet it in their numerous elegant canoes; each of us, at different times, had witnessed this general eagerness. This time we were very close to shore and we could see no boats appearing. Finally two or three light canoes from bays near Saint-Marie came out to us. I found out later that a chief named Jassi had died a few days beforehand, and the mourning of his compatriots was the main reason which bound them to the shore. I entrusted two letters for our Fathers to our first visitors, but neither of them was carried to its destination.

When it was almost nightfall we saw another canoe drawing alongside of us. The native who was steering the boat came on board and gave me the following letter from Reverend Father Fremont.

‘Monseigneur,

We greatly desire your return and it would overjoy us if we did not have to tell you news which will sadden you. You are going to find the number of your children greatly reduced; one of them, good Father Crey, died quietly and peacefully in his bed, three others, Fathers Paget and Jacquet, with Brother Hyacinthe, died as martyrs. They were killed by the unbelievers, if not through hatred of our religion, then at least because of the zeal with which they tried to spread it. There is yet another painful subject for your Grace. God permitted it! We cannot come to meet you; our whale-boats are not in good repair.’
I leave you to judge, gentlemen, my grief on reading this letter.

After pouring out my feelings to the Lord, I summoned the ship's company one by one; I asked them if, should the need arise, they would be willing to go ashore the next day to help rescue some missionaries. I had reason to feel satisfied as to their willingness, and five of them, so as to prepare themselves better for any emergency, made their confession that very night, or early the next day. Consequently we allowed the boat to make its way into the channel and about midday we stepped ashore.

This was my entry into the first country of my mission. A blessing for the dear missionaries who were left, the partaking of the holy sacrament, a prayer at the feet of the pictures of the Holy Virgin and Saint Joseph, a 'De Profundis' over the grave of Reverend Father Créy; such was the sum total of my reception.

We spent part of the afternoon telling each other news of interest. My God! How sad this was in one way or another. My colleagues were appalled at the disasters of Ballade and Poobo; for my part, it seemed to me that the losses experienced in New Caledonia and the dangers I had faced there were simply tests by which God had wanted to prepare me for such greater sacrifices upon my arrival in Melanesia. Reverend Father Créy, who had come from Europe at the same time as I did on the Arche d'Alliance only lived about three weeks in San-Christoval. Barely twenty-four years old, he had been a priest for seventeen months, having been ordained before the usual age by virtue of a pontifical dispensation. I venture to say of him that into such a short life he packed a long career; at secondary school, during his novitiate, everywhere—I admired him as a model for his friends. God, who had inspired him great sacrifices, was gracious enough to allow him to accomplish them, and when the young missionary arrived at his far-away destination, the Lord, pleased with his willingness, called him immediately to the Crown of the Apostolate, without letting him run the risks of the Missions.

Reverend Father Jacquet was from the diocese of Lyon. The parishioners of Notre-Dame at Montlerions saw him for eight years carrying out amongst them the duties of vicar with a zeal, wisdom and gentleness which they would not soon forget. He left behind amongst us a reputation for priestly saintliness and apostolic devotion which cause him to be regarded as a perfect missionary.

Born in the diocese of Chambéry, in Savoy, Father Paget, held such a faith that it swept away every obstacle before it. His trust in God sustained him in a burning zeal to work for the glory of the divine master and for the salvation of souls. Anything which was not relevant to this double aim was of no value for him.

His willingness, his religious obedience, the way he applied himself to his duties, made Father Hyacinthe an excellent temporal coadjuter: this worthy Father was from the diocese of Autun.

From the very day I arrived at San-Christoval we debated whether we would stay there. Three or four days were spent thinking about such an important matter and asking God to guide us. We reached the conclusion that we could not remain any longer on the island without exposing ourselves to almost certain massacre. One must be faced with the necessity of reaching similar decisions to really understand how they trouble one's mind and grieve one's heart. My heart bleeds when I think of the unfortunate Christovalians whom we have perhaps sentenced to eternal reprobation by deciding that we should leave them; let us hope, however, that this retreat will be only temporary and that the victims, also so numerous, who have been sacrificed in the Solomon Archipelago, will shortly cause the blessings of salvation to be sent there.

On 3rd September we left Sainte-Marie harbour. The natives made no hostile demonstration; some of them even showed sorrow at seeing us all leave. We set sail to the west, in search of the Woodlark Islands, about which I had been given favourable information in Sydney; on 15th, which was the octave of the Nativity of Mary, we entered a lovely, excellent harbour which we wanted to call the Port of the Nativity out of a feeling of religious gratitude to our good Mother and powerful Protector.

The first days were devoted to visiting the coastal region. We found four main villages and several other small ones. We chose that of Dabakana as our place of residence as it was the biggest, and because it was in the centre of all the others. On the 18th we gave our gifts to the chiefs, and thus obtained the land we needed to build a hut. The natives even built us two in their own way. They took less than a day's work for each of them; so they are the most wretched things you could imagine. Nowhere have I seen poorer huts than those at Woodlark; they are quite simply lean-to's made of leaves, and so badly constructed that in them one is only well sheltered against the heat of the sun.

Fever is already worrying us here as it did at San-Christoval. Father Fremont has it regularly; Father Montouzier is very often attacked by it, Father Thomassin and the Brothers sometimes also have bouts of it which fortunately are not serious. As for me, I too am paying my tribute to the climate. If this letter is written in a disorderly manner, my continuous suffering has something to do with it.

Gentlemen, shall I become discouraged at the sight of the prostrated state to which a mission has been reduced, after two years of effort, a mission for which so many men and so much money have been given? Of course not; our zeal must not diminish.

Besides, we will finally become acclimatised, and the Melanesians will become more gentle. However, I can say that suffering is my food, that my days pass in groaning. But also I know who the person is who sent me and in whom I have put my trust: he is powerful enough to recall from the shadows of death those whom his hand led there, to give new life to dry bones, to cause that which is at first nothing to reach the most glorious end. Ah! When I consider our mission with the eyes of faith I hope for everything from it. I feel quite determined, through God's grace, to sacrifice myself if necessary for the salvation of the countless peoples which have been entrusted to me. We owe them all the more care, we must be all the more zealous on their behalf, because of the fact that they seem more unworthy of the happiness which we come to offer them, and less capable of understanding.

This same thought will also sustain your charity to us. Up until now it has been unreservedly generous. Even if the disasters we have suffered have prevented us from making use of it as we would have liked, may our misfortunes not be doubly as bad for us, which would be the case if they caused your generosity to us to decrease.

Rooke (Umboi) Island was named Sir George Rook’s Island by Dampier. Sir George Rooke was a Lord of the Admiralty at time of Dampier’s Voyage. The spelling Rooke Island has been used throughout this work in other than original source material.

On 6th January, 1848, I left Rotuma on board the ‘Arche d’Alliance’, hoping to find my colleagues at San Christoval. Alas, when I reached this island they were no longer there; the cruel treachery of the natives had sacrificed some, and the others, on returning to Monseigneur Collomb, had been forced to evacuate this inhospitable, fever-ridden land. I had to go and search for them, but while on the way to find them we were buffeted for more than a fortnight by a dreadful wind, which several times almost engulfed us in the waves. The ship suffered great damage and even lost its rudder. Thanks to its solid construction, or rather to divine Providence which watches over the ‘Arche d’Alliance’ in a miraculous manner, we were saved from shipwreck. In spite of great sorrow felt by M. Moreau, our worthy captain, at abandoning the search for our colleagues, we had to go back, and we reached Sydney without further incident, after two months of arduous sailing. I spent a month in this capital of New Holland, then I left again on the brig ‘Anonymous’, the other ship belonging to the Oceania Society.

This time I was more fortunate, and in less than twenty days I reached instead of the Mission, the new residence of Monseigneur the Bishop d’Antiphelles and of the fellow-workers he still had left. But how depleted this little group was. And how weakened those still living were by persistent fever which had taken some of them right to death’s door.

Mgr. Collomb profited from the presence of the brig ‘Anonymous’ to go and found a new mission in his immense curacy, which includes not less than fifteen hundred islands. I was destined for this second station with Father Fremont and Father Opat. Mgr. Collomb was with us and we set sail towards the north. We stopped opposite Rook Island, sixty leagues north-west of Woodlark, and we first circled it to look for the most favourable position for a settlement and to see if there might be, as far as the natives were concerned, the possibility of settling amongst them. We decided on the northern part of the island where there is a little harbour which is perfectly sheltered and which we called Saint-Isidore, because of the saint whose day we were celebrating when we arrived, the 15th May, 1848.

It was there we set up camp, on the seashore, very close to a large village of four or five hundred people. In all probability it is here that I will finish my career, that I will leave my earthly skin, hoc requies mee; here I am finally settled, hic habitatus, while waiting for something better from God’s divine mercy.

In reply to the interest which you take in everything concerning me, I will give you some details of my new country, as many as least as my short stay here will permit me to without saying anything inaccurate or injudicious.

Rook is an oval-shaped island running from south-east to north-west, and measuring twenty to twenty-five nautical leagues in circumference. It is situated 5°30 south latitude and 145°30 east longitude. Its position could not be better for the mission. Located in Dampier Strait, it has New Guinea seven leagues to the south, there are three quite large, well-populated islands a short way away. If Rook becomes Catholic, the way to the large islands will be open to us, or at least it will become easier. You cannot prevent yourself from feeling inexpressibly sad when every day you have before your eyes such vast, beautiful lands inhabited by cannibalistic people whose master and tyrant is the devil.

We are not only the first missionaries but the first white men who have landed on this island. So the natives have received us with excessive defiance and anxiety. They were far from suspecting the motives which brought us to them; they imagined that we came to kill them and doubtless eat them afterwards. Immediately the old men, the children and the women fled into the forests, taking with them their domestic animals and all their most precious belongings, while the young men and the warriors got ready to fight us. They tried to make us understand by signs and shouts that we had to go away from their land. Poor blind people. They did not know that we were bringing them enlightenment and peace. May they soon enjoy with us the comforts of the Christian religion and give thanks to God who sent us to them for their salvation. Finally some presents we gave them and our peaceful ways reassured them; they agreed to let the sailors from the ‘Anonymous’ build us a little wooden house. At the time of writing this letter to you, we have been living in this new dwelling for four days.

Rook offers all the richness of vegetation which one would expect from volcanic soil and from an intertropical region. Even though it is so close to the Equator, you nevertheless do not experience the excessive heat that you might expect from such a latitude; the air here is continually cooled, now by the trade winds, now by the monsoon, which blows in the opposite direction to the former. The large number of volcanic rocks which one finds on the shores and on the hill-sides, the shape of mountains which have been roughly torn apart, leave not the slightest doubt as to the volcanic origin of this island. Moreover, we have before our eyes a living proof of this phenomenon, on a small island barely one league away from Rook there is a full active volcano, which from the cone-shaped summit of this reef throws up numerous thick columns of smoke through several craters.

Rook is generally attractive on the whole; but the northern and eastern parts are the most magnificent places one could see. They are watered by innumerable streams, and towards the south there is a beautiful river, which, at its mouth, forms an excellent anchorage site. If the surrounding district had not been marshy we would have set up quarters there. The mountains and the hill-sides are covered with dense forests extending right down to the shoreline, except for clearings cut out by the natives to plant things in. A good number of trees, some of which bear excellent fruit, reach considerable heights; the bread-fruit tree, the coconut tree, the palm tree from which comes the betel-nut. Another tree called Kangzrom by the natives, which produces a very nourishing almond, and the wild fig-tree are very plentiful there; a host of birds also lives there; pigeons, turtle-doves, shrill-voiced parrots, hens and wild guinea fowl.

One also finds in these forests a kind of pig with little ears and two enormous crescent-shaped tusks jutting out from
his lower jaw. On the seashores and in the marshy places
the cayman appears during the night; this is a kind of lizard-
shaped crocodile the size of a man; it is greatly feared by
the natives. In a tame state our natives have some little
dogs which cannot bark and whose cries sound exactly like
the long wails of a person crying; on the other hand, in the
woods there are birds which imitate the barking of a dog.

There seemed to us to be a large number of natives; they
are robust, and tall of stature; their woolly, curly hair is
short and shaved on the back of their heads. Hanging from
their neck, from between their nostrils and from the lobes
of their ears they wear ornaments made of shells. Their
smooth skin is dark-brown in colour. An excessive defiance
is the basic trait of their character. Dancing to the sound of
a drum, accompanied by a monotonous chant, is their
nightly form of entertainment. Their weapons are the spear,
the bow and sling-shot; their houses are built on piles on
the seashores. That is all I can tell you about these people.
We have not yet been able to discover if, like their neigh-
bours from New Guinea, they eat human flesh. From all
these characteristics I can see that we have to deal with a
Malaysian people.

This island of Rook, situated almost right on the Equator,
drenched suddenly by showers of rain which a blazing sun
evaporates almost immediately, and covered with dense
forests, must be ridden with fevers. I hope that by taking
precautions we will manage to protect ourselves from them
by choosing the most favourable sites.

Monseigneur Collomb is more and more experiencing
continuous acute suffering which, with the worries of his
new position, has exhausted his strength, and we are very
much afraid of being deprived too soon of his knowledge
and his charity. Father Fremont is inured to the fever, he
regards it as a companion whom God has given him. Father
Optat is full of vigour and as for me, I am at least as well as
I was in Europe.

When I see myself so close to New Guinea and New Bri-
tain, where the Gospel has not yet been proclaimed, it seems
to me that I would be inclined to make a new sacrifice in
order to go and sow the seeds of religion in these vast coun-
tries. Your prayers, and those of the members of the Admir-
able Work of the Propagation of the Faith will hasten that
happy day and will obtain this good fortune at least for
others, if not me.

Source: Letter, Father Villien to his cousin, dated Port of
Saint-Isidore, Rook Island, 10 July, 1848, Annales de
Translated from the French by Ann Miller.

C21  The Lambs and the Wolves of Woodlark Island, 1851

... I will tell you nothing of their religion. It is a confused
accumulation, mishapen with superstition, where one
finds nothing worthy. There is no arguing with our un-
happy pagans in order to demonstrate to them the truth of
our holy religion. They will say, without hesitation, we are
in the wrong but do not try to go any further or they will
reply, 'We at Mouiou are made like that, our ancestors are
made the same.' But what?' you will say, 'do you wish to
live on a fallacy?' They will say to you, 'We like that and we
are happy. If we give up our prayers the world will collapse;
famine, plague and the leprous will leave you no rest'. If you
argue with them they laugh in your face. Our great occu-
ipation is prayer. Placed in the midst of wolves we beat like
lambs, and our voices rise upmoaning toward the Lord.
Ah! when will they leave off their savagery, their super-
stitions and their depraved customs, to adore and bless
us the God of pure souls and charitable hearts. You will
procure this comfort by your prayers. We have tried every-
thing to lead these poor blind people to the light of evan-
gelism and nothing has succeeded. God doubtless wishes
to convince us of our powerlessness and worthlessness. He
wishes to do everything alone to make us wonder later at
the riches and power of His grace. Let us pray and await
with patience the hour of His mercy, for it is written, 'Fruc-
tum Abberatis in Patientia'.

A ship came to visit us last June. We profited on this oc-
casion by sending eight young people to spend some time
in Sydney. We hoped that the view of this great city, the
comfort which civilization produces, the blessings of reli-
gion, would bring about happy impressions and that com-
paring their position with the state which has given us
Christianity they would resolve to embrace the faith. The
results have been next to nothing. We had much trouble in
finding five young people to set out with Father Montrou-
zier. The other three were from the Langland (Laughlin)
Islands.

The view of Sydney delighted them. The least thing sent
them into raptures but soon boredom got hold of them to
such an extent that to our great regret they set off for Wood-
lark. The poor young people have just arrived. They had
nice enough dispositions but scarcely had they left the ship,
than they again took up their former ways. Their tale has
made much talk. Everyone has been of the opinion that we
speak the truth and that they must listen to us, adopt our
prayer and turn Mouiou into another Sydney, for material
comfort is always their end. But no one wishes to begin. A
sole young man gives us some hope.

Source: Archivio Padri Maristi, Rome, extract from a letter of
P. Thomassin to his family, dated, Woodlark, 12 Octo-
ber, 1851, MS. APM, OSM 208. Translated from the
French by Cynthia Robinson.

C22  The Holy See Authorizes Priests for the Free Colony, Rome, 1880

In reply to your esteemed communication of the 12th of
this month which enclosed a copy of another letter dated
the 9th August, I am losing no time in conveying to you
both as enclosures and under separate cover the authori-
sations you have requested for Reverend Fathers Richard
and Lannuzel who are about to leave as missionaries for
the free colony of Port-Breton which falls under the currently vacant Apostolic Vicariate of Melanesia and Micronesia.

I am delighted to see that you are as interested as the Marquis de Rays in the spiritual well-being of the colonists and the inhabitants of these distant islands. I hope that in the Lord’s blessing the new mission will find the source of its steadfastness and that in this way the colony’s head will be plentifully rewarded for the eagerness with which he has endeavoured to provide for the spiritual support indispensable for his work.


C23 A Request from Rome for Renewal of Mission, Rome, 1881

For a number of years now the Vicariate of New Guinea has been left vacant for the want of a religious community willing to assume its care. The Holy See would be very pleased if the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart would take over the evangelisation of that immense field. The Holy See is very interested in that huge country where at present no Catholic mission exists and yet where more than one Protestant minister is sowing the seed of error. The Holy See is aware of the zeal with which the members of your congregation are interested in the spread of our holy religion and hence this request to you.

It is certain that much time and patience will be needed in order to attain the proposed object. For the time being all that will be required is that a few priests of your congregation be sent and these while attending to the spiritual needs of the colonists of New France already established could at the same time look out for the means to establish a mission and provide for the Vicariate which has been left unattended for so many years as I have already said.

I feel confident that your Paternity will accept this proposition and while awaiting your reply I wish you all good things in the Lord.


C24 Background to the Sacred Heart Mission to New Guinea, Rome, 1881

These distant countries contain millions of savages who live and die in idolatry. Since their discovery, which goes back to the 16th Century, several Catholic priests have tried to approach them but without success. In 1845 Marist priests accepted this great mission. But hardly had a few years elapsed, when the cruelty of the natives and the intemperance of the climate had completely annihilated them. In 1852 some Italian monks from Milan offered their services to Holy See, to take to these people the evangelical light. After two years of unsuccessful missionary activities, they abandoned this inhospitable land.

Since then not a single Catholic priest has set foot in this place. Several Protestant ministers, lured by the attraction of gain, have established themselves on the western shores of New Guinea. They tried to spread their erroneous faith; although really interested in indulging in commerce. This island, the largest in the world, is densely populated, it alone contains 8–10 million inhabitants, and the other islands of the Archipelago contain an equally large number of inhabitants. Nowadays it seems these oceanic people are quite amenable to the approach of foreigners, and are prepared to accept the mysteries of our faith.

A certain Frenchman, the Marquis de Rays, a native of Brittany and an ardent Catholic visited these distant countries several years ago. Struck by the warm welcome accorded to him by the natives, the fertility of the soil, the richness of the countryside and the beauty of the climate (the temperature does not rise above 29 degrees) he decided to set up a Christian colony there. He chose the Solomon Islands, New Irelaand and New Britain for the realization of this project, and the south-east part of Papua (or New Guinea) which he called New France. On returning to his country, he made known his plans. Some noble souls embraced the cause fervently. There were many replies to his appeal, and after many set-backs a departure was organized; two others followed soon afterwards and several hundred colonists are today at work successfully exploiting the immense riches of the country.

On Sunday 4th of July, 1880, the India, which was the name of the vessel was in the port of Barcelona (Spain) and was preparing to depart for New France. There were numerous passengers and a Catholic Priest was required to follow these Christians on their 7000 league journey away from their Fatherland. Divine Providence provided one by inspiring the abbot Lannuzel from Finistere to offer himself as chaplain to the Colony. His services were accepted ... He blessed the vessel, and solemnly consecrated all the regions which he would convert to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He thought, correctly, that only the Sacred Heart could make his mission fruitful and successful. The Christians united their voices to that of the priest and cried out in unison:
The Sacred Heart Mission

'O adorable heart of the Redeemer, protect your children, further their efforts, have pity on the poor Savages of Melanesia and give them missionaries to convert them.' To the accompaniment of beseeching and hopeful prayers the boat weighed anchor and set off for Oceania. On the 14th of October they set foot on those distant shores, and on the 1st of November the apostle of Jesus Christ offered the holy sacrifice of mass for the first time and publicly read the act of consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus; he proclaimed him as King of these barbaric countries, and placed beneath his all powerful Patronage the savages who live there, tearfully begging Him to send them new apostles to replace the ones who had left those shores years before.

O God how unfathomable are your plans! How admirable are you in your ways! In the very year that the last Italian missionaries abandoned these islands washed in the blood of their brethren, in the diocese of Bourges at Issoudun a new religious order came into being. Its members took the title of ‘Missionaries of the Sacred Heart’. The Holy See blessed their formation and first works. After 20 years of struggles and trials he consecrated their fraternity, sanctioned their constitutions and recognized them as the official Propagators of the devotion of the Sacred Heart. He gave them as maxim these significant words: ‘Amour absolu à Dieu et à l’ennemi, terrarum Cor Jesu Sacratissimum’ — Max. the Sacred Heart of Jesus be venerated everywhere.’ Pius IX called them to Rome, gave them the habit and himself placed on their chest a Sacred Heart as the symbol of their apostleship. Leo XIII overwhelmed them with his favours, established a large number of their scholars in the place Navone, and gave to their Order a new function: he established within the Brotherhood for the whole world the Admirable Association in honour of our Lady of the Sacred Heart for the furtherance of desperate causes. America, Holland, Spain were already witness to their work. This new Order was armed for battle, her children true knights of the Sacred Heart. But hell let loose her fury against the Order and plotted its ruin. The Prefects of the provinces of l'Indre, Cher, l'Allier and Bouches-du-Rhone pronounced its dissolution in the name of the famous Decree of March 29th. Its members were expelled from their homes and thrown into the street; some supported by charity continued their ministry in France, others took the road of exile. Several went to Barcelona. Hardly had these persecuted glorious men installed themselves there, when the fourth boat of the Colony was about to depart for New-France with a considerable number of migrants. The passengers learning that there were Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in the town, went to their chapel sought their most holy benedictions of the Heart of Jesus.

This touching ceremony took place at the beginning of this year; and on the 8th of last March, the boat set out towards its new destination.

In the meantime Leo XIII; whose mission was to obtain the salvation of all peoples without exception, anxiously considered the numerous abandoned archipelagos and millions of savages without Priests, who abandoned themselves to the most degrading superstitions. 'However their souls are made in the image of God, they were created for Heaven, and Jesus Christ shed his blood to redeem them as well as us. Who will cross the seas to take them the light of the Gospels and make the light of truth shine in their eyes? To whom can we confer this immense and dangerous Apostleship?' The Vicar of Jesus Christ ran down the list of religious Orders, devoted by vocation to the conversion of heathens. The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart attracted his attention. He knew they were the favorite children of his immortal predecessor who had witnessed their origin and growth and who had declared himself their true found- er, their effective and real Superior, in a piece of writing signed by his own hand, promising them his protection during his life, and his prayers after his death; he knew that they had been charged by virtue of their maxim to work zealously for the solemn consecration of all the peoples to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The above considerations led Leo XIII to grant them the important Diocese of Melanesia. He sent for the highest Prefect of Propaganda and told him his plans. The Cardinal Simeoni approved them all the more zealously because he knew personally the Order in question as several of them had successfully passed through the Latin College which was under his control.

His Holiness said 'I'm going to ask of them a heroic sacri-fice by sending them amongst these savage peoples. Some of them no doubt will shed their blood for the faith, but these glorious martyrs, if they ever occur, will become the germs of conversion for the unfortunate idolaters and the seeds of benediction for the Order of the Sacred Heart. I have noticed that religious Orders do not perish, and their ranks are not greatly fortified with serious vocations unless they accept missions among the heathen. It will be the same for the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart whom I like very much and to whom I wish all success.'

Cardinal Simeoni summoned urgently the Procurator-General of this Order, to communicate to him the desire of the Holy Father. At this first meeting Father Jouet brought up serious difficulties. 'What can you say,' replied the Cardinal: 'The Pope has chosen your Order. Tell this to your Superior-General and ask him to bring at the same time the documents on New Guinea which are in the archives of the Office of Propaganda which he will be able to consult. Then he can tell us what he thinks.' The Superior-General, was informed immediately. After having thanked the Holy See for his extreme benevolence, he begged the Pope to grant him a little time, as He had done two years previously when the Diocese of the Auckland Islands had been offered to him.

The reply was 'On the contrary, the moment is extremely fortuitous, because of the persecution of the Order and besides it is the wish of the Holy Father. In any case you will be officially notified in a few days.' In effect on the 25th March on the feast of the Annunciation, the Cardinal Simeoni sent him the letter o’ command. Following Mary’s example, the Father Superior of the Sacred Heart bowed respectfully before the Holy Messenger and said: 'Our small Order being the humble servant of the Holy See, it shall be done according to your wish: “Ecc ancilli Domini, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.”' Then he wrote to Leo XIII: 'In verbo tuo laxabo rete. Mox Holy Father you can count on our blind obedience and our absolute devotion.'

So be it! Henceforth the savages of Melanesia will have their missionaries and these missionaries will be called 'The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus'. It is a good sign.

Permit me Reverend Fathers to send you herewith the expression of my admiration. Rome demands of you a generous and super-human sacrifice; you make it without hesitation. In accepting it you will march down the road of a hard Apostleship where several of you will find martyrdom; you know that you will have to struggle not only against the climate and privations of all kinds, but also against a savage people of whom Satan is the absolute
master. You know that you are leaving a Homeland which is dear to you, friends who are devoted to you, parents to whom you owe everything, of whom you are the pride, and who are depending on you for the comfort of their old age and the consolation of their hearts. And here you are giving up everything to 7000 leagues from France to win souls for Jesus Christ. O the sublime devotion of a Catholic priest. And it is simply on the word of the venerable Old Man in the Vatican, on his hardly expressed desire; that you are breaking so many links, risking so many misfortunes and exposing yourselves to so many dangers. This fact alone is enough to prove to me the divinity of the religion that you preach and that this man we call Pope is the living image of Christ on this earth, and the representative of his sovereign authority... Valiant knights of the Sacred Heart you are setting out on a divine expedition, but you do not go alone... Our sacrifices and prayers will accompany you everywhere; we will ask God to bless your works. With the help of His grace you will raise the standard of the Heart of Jesus on these distant shores, you will raise altars to Him and give Him worshippers.

Don't take with you yet 'Our Lady of the Sacred Heart', this divine Treasury of the gifts of Heaven, this Mother of all peoples, this distinguished Benefactress, this Dispenser of all graces, the holy Patroness of desperate causes, this first and true Missionary of the Heart of Jesus. It's to you that Mary is going to give this glorious title. You are therefore assured in advance of her maternal protection.

In the beautiful mission you are undertaking you will have followers. I would be surprised if your work didn't bring to your Order several vocations. How many young people; how many generous Levites, how many holy priests would not desire this Apostleship amongst the heathen. The vast field which is opened by your zeal will gain many workers and serious recruits. You shall also have if my wishes are granted, a special seminary for your immense and important oceanic mission which you can call the New Guinea Seminary. This will be in addition to the apostolic school of the Sacred Heart in which the eldest students of your brotherhood are studying the course of Philosophy and Theology with so much edification. Set up this Melanesian Novitiate in the beautiful sunshine of Italy or better still perhaps in Catholic Spain. Barcelona, where you already have a house, and from where the boats of the colony set out for New France will suit you admirably I think. You will find generous souls to help you with their might, for it is a matter of a most important Mission which concerns civilization, the glory of God and the Saviour of souls.


C25 The Organization of the Sacred Heart Mission, Rome, 1881

I rejoice to tell you that the Holy Father has heard with great pleasure that you have accepted the mission of New Guinea and that you will soon send some missionaries to evangelize the Vicariate of Melanesia and Micronesia. His Holiness praising your zeal sends His Apostolic Benediction as well as to the other fathers of your Congregation. When you send me the names of the missionaries who are about to undertake the mission, I will give them the necessary documents and appointments. I will name a superior, to whom all the priests will be subject and even those who may be at present in New France. Later on, as the mission advances, some of the Fathers will be appointed Vicars Apostolic and the Episcopate will be re-established. Meanwhile, I pray our Lord to recompense you with his most abundant graces, you and your society so full of zeal for the salvation of souls, and to bless with a special blessing the labours and toils of the new missionaries, who are giving their lives to evangelize this vast Vicariate so long deprived of missionary zeal.


C26 Towards the Goal, Sydney, 1882

By Rescript of the Holy See dated 12 June 1881, three priests, the Rev. Fathers Durin, Navarre and Cramaille, were appointed to the new mission. They sailed from Barcelona on 1 September 1881 on board the Barcelona, a ship carrying colonists to the Marquis de Rays' settlement in New Ireland, and arrived at Manila in the Philippine Islands in October 1881. There the missionaries were prevented from proceeding direct to the Bismarck Archipelago by the Spanish authorities who arrested one of the Marquis de Rays' ships. The missionaries then went to Macasar in the Celebes where Father Durin suffered a breakdown in health and returned to Europe. The Rev. L. Navarre became superior in his place. It was not until August 1882 that the missionaries reached Sydney. Thus the journey towards their mission-field had taken them about one year. They sailed from Sydney on 26 August 1882 on board the Chandernagor for Port Breton.

Louis André Navarre who succeeded to the leader-
The Sacred Heart Mission, New Britain

ship of the party and was thus the founder of the Sacred Heart missions in New Britain (1882) and Papua (Yule Island, 1885) was born at Auxerre, France, 3 February 1836, the son of a wine grower. After following a number of occupations in his youth he entered a seminary for five years and was ordained priest in 1872. Parish work for 5 years followed and then he joined the congregation of the Sacred Heart and worked for this in France and Spain until in 1881 he answered the call to Melanesia.

Fathers Navarre and Cramaille landed at Port Breton to find the colony abandoned and then moved to Blanche Bay to commence mission work at a place near Nordup. At the end of 1882 a site was chosen at Kiningunan as the head-station for the mission.

Following a fire at Kiningunan, Navarre went to Sydney to make arrangements for the future of the mission and upon his return to New Britain in March 1884 Father Cramaille's station at Vlavolo was consolidated and a new station at Malaguna was established. By the end of 1884 the Sacred Heart mission in New Britain was firmly established and this in an area where the Wesleyan Methodist mission had been working for some years.

Meanwhile Cardinal Prefect Simeoni of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in Rome acting upon the advice of Archbishop Moran of Sydney urged an extension of mission work into Papua. Father Cani, Vicar-General of Brisbane, had previously reported to Cardinal Simeoni on the area and his recommendation influenced the decision to evangelize in Papua.

In February, 1885 Father Navarre was joined at Thursday Island by Father Henry Verjus and it was this missionary who was chosen by Navarre to lead the advance towards Yule Island on the south coast of Papua about 65 miles west of Port Moresby.

Verjus succeeded in this venture but difficulties with government, and rivalry with the London Missionary Society were hindrances. The Sacred Heart missionaries were expelled from Yule Island from September 1885, to February 1886. Sir Peter Scratchley tried to influence Navarre to concentrate on the area at the south-eastern end of the peninsula and the Louisiade Archipelago. Navarre would not accept this and the Sacred Heart missioners moved back to Yule Island in 1886.

It was largely due to Navarre's leadership that the Sacred Heart mission in a period of five years overcame many difficulties and succeeded in establishing itself in two important areas of the New Guinea Islands. It was in recognition of this that in May 1887 he was consecrated Vicar Apostolic of Melanesia and the Administrator of Micronesia.


Good news: Dear Rev. Father, we sail tomorrow for our beloved mission. The difficulty of procuring sailors has detained us for some time but at length the crew is complete and we lift anchor tomorrow. As soon as we arrive and take possession of our dear mission in the name of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and of St. Joseph the friend of the Sacred Heart, I will write to you and give you my impression of the country. We recommend ourselves to your holy prayers, and to those of our dear Society; we feel more than ever the necessity of help from on high for the success of the great work before us. Oh, how feeble and weak we are in comparison with the difficulties, that await us; but if the Divine Heart of Jesus accompanies us, and we have full confidence that it will be with us, fortified by the prayers of the Associates of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and of other good souls, we need not fear; each of us will be able to say with the Apostle, 'I can do all things in Him who strengthens me'.


C27 A Trader Observes the Beginnings of the Sacred Heart Mission, New Britain, 1882

For J.B.O. Mouton, the writer of the following, see introduction to C106.

With the Chandernagor came the Sacred Heart Mission, Father Navarre, Father Cramail and Brother Vatant, who landed at Nodup where Father Lannuzel, one of the first missionaries of the Sacred Heart Mission had built a hut. Father Lannuzel had come with the Marquis de Rays' former expedition by the India. I think he went away to Sydney by the Genil when she left.

Nodup was not a very large piece of land and after a little while Father Navarre bought a piece of land at Kokopo from the natives and shifted to that place. The hut they
built was made of grass, just a roof over the ground, two
long bamboo as a frame spaced two feet apart and bound
together by strips of bamboo lattice and fastened with ratan
or kanda. On this grass was attached up to the pointed head.
It must have been about forty or fifty feet long. It was only
a make-shift. I think that they had trouble at Nodup with
the weather. One day in a heavy storm they were nearly
washed out. Nodup is at the foot of the Mother and where
they were situated was just on the side of the mountain so
that the heavy storm brought a torrent of water running
down and taking everything with it. Fortunately they were
installed on a little knoll and that saved them. But this was
enough to warn the priests that the Nodup site was not a
place suitable for the Mission. It was impossible to make any
progress there.

Here again Farrell showed himself, not against us this
time but against the mission. He informed Father Navarre
that the land was his property, that he had bought it from
the natives some time ago. On information this was proved
to be false and Father Navarre was quite satisfied that he
was right and that Farrell was wrong.

About a month after the mission was installed at Kokopolo
and thinking about making arrangements to get material
from Sydney, and happy that they had made a start, a
catastrophe occurred one night. The place caught fire.
From our place Father and I heard the explosion of
baamboos and sure enough we saw the mission on fire.

We rushed to the place which was only fifteen minutes
walk away and there we found the missionaries moving all
they could from the fire. They saved very little but for the
fires at one end and the most important things, documents etc were saved.

By the statement of the natives which I investigated (it
was proved) that the cause of the fire was Farrell’s doing.
He did not want anyone installed on the land and he made
provision that it could not be done. However, in those days
there was no way to get justice and this matter had to
remain as it was for the present.

The fathers stayed with us for a while then they bought
a piece of land at Malaguna on Blanche Bay and shifted
there when their house was built out of native material. But
this time they were wise and made their house with proper
walls and roof forming a shed with partitions as required.

It was the best move they could make. It was no use for
the Mission to fight Farrell. For one thing they could not

prove that Farrell had paid a gun to a native to do it. Fancy
a grass hut reaching to the ground on each side. What fuel
for a fire. The native set fire (to it) by throwing a charcoal
which caught fire in the wind. At night there is a land breeze
blowing as a rule. The native knew that and used this
method for two reasons. First it was quite simple to carry
a piece of charcoal which could not be noticed whereas a
fire torch would be seen. Second, the escape would occur
before the fire started, very clever for an alibi. But in this
case it was not the aim. The aim was to get away undetected.

Of course I found out this much later after having made
enquiries. It must have been some months before I got the
truth. But what was the use? As Father Navarre said there
was only proof for them that it was done intentionally but
(it would be) very difficult to act on these indications and
because there was no court, that settled it. The best con-
viction on earth would have been of no use.

The missionaries were very well supplied with provisions
and all church ornaments (were) in silver and other metal.
They had divided the hut in two portions. One part they
lived in and the other they used as a store. As the fire started
from the living part they saved all the church ornaments which we found were melted. It was by accident
that the fire was detected in time to save their lives. I think
that Father Cramer was the first to notice it and gave the
alarm. At that moment it was just starting so they moved
what they had time to move before the big blaze started.
This lasted only a few minutes. When Father Cramer
noticed the fire his first move was to get the chest which
contained the documents. Among them was the title made
by Father Navarre with the natives confirming the pur-
chase of the land.

In those days it was the only way to make an agreement
stating the lay of the land to the best knowledge as stated
by the native proprietor who showed the boundary. (The
agreement) was signed by the native with a cross and wit-
nessed by a white man. The witness was my father. Such
a document constituted a legal title of purchase and no
doubt if it was lost would be rather hard to duplicate the
original native perhaps being informed (orally) to keep to
the transaction by the party concerned.

Source: The Mouton Papers, extract from the Memories of
J.B.O. Mouton, pp. 48-51; typescript in the possession
(1968) of Mrs W. D. Sturrock, Sydney.

C28 Archishop Moran Advises a Move into Port Moresby, Rome, 1884

Recently when the new Archbishop of Sydney was jour-
neying by sea to his diocese he stopped at Naples for a short
time. I advised Rev. Father Jouet to go down there and
discuss the New Guinea mission with him, for I knew that
the Archbishop could provide helpful knowledge on the
subject, and certainly the most Rev. Dr. Moran explained
to Father Jouet, who went down there at once, that the most
suitable place for a mission in that large island is the port
called Moresby, where it was necessary that missionaries
should establish a residence as quickly as possible, that is
to say before the Protestants establish themselves more
firmly. So I ask you Very Rev. Father that you may send
some from your congregation, to whom the missions of
Melanesia and Micronesia are entrusted, and increase the
number of missionaries so that it can be arranged for some
to be transferred to the said port, and since it is well known
that among the others at the Vicariate, Fathers Verjus and
Coupe are considered outstandingly suitable for the
Apostolic ministry, I propose them to you for selection for
this duty. To them, and also the others whom you Very
Rev. Father, may wish to add as suitable, appropriate
facilities will be given after you reply.

Meantime I ask God to keep and sustain you as long as
possible.

Source: Archivio Missionari Del S. Cuore, Rome, letter, Card-
dinal Simeoni to Rev Father Jules Chevalier, dated,
Rome, 7th August, 1894; MS. translated from the
Latin by John Hosie.
C29  The 'Dear Promised Land' is Reached, Yule Island, 1885

On the 27th (of June, 1885) at 5 a.m. we took a final start for New Guinea. We are now on the open sea, far away from any island whereon to seek for shelter; there was no alternative, we must move forward, confident that what ever happened would conduce to the greater glory of God. For two consecutive days the weather was terrific, the surging waves rose twice again as high as the masts of our vessel, and three different times we came near being washed away on the tremendous billows. How keenly one realises the insignificance of man at times such as these!

The affrighted Brothers scanned me anxiously, striving as it were to read my thoughts and learn what was to be their fate. June 28th, the sky suddenly cleared off in the direction of New Guinea; a little black dove brought us the glad tidings that land was close by. We were all impressed by the unexpected appearance of this bird, and inclined to view it as a favourable omen. Before dark just as we were preparing to say our evening prayers, Brother Gaspard shouted: 'New Guinea! New Guinea! I see the mountains of New Guinea!' And in truth there was the dear Promised Land! Tears of joy and gratitude filled our eyes, and we reproached ourselves for having entertained any fear or apprehension. It seemed as though Our Lady of the Sacred Heart were beckoning us to draw nigh to the land we had so longed to reach, and said: 'Come my children, I am waiting for you here. Men of little faith, wherefore were you afraid?' With thoughts like these, which buoyed us up with inexpressible happiness, we dropped anchor in sight of New Guinea.

There was little sleep for me that night, my eyes were riveted upon New Guinea most of the time, and in fancy I pictured it to myself as a land of wonders. In the first place I had blessed it in the name of the Sovereign Pontiff, in your name and our beloved Society, whose mission it was to evangelize this island.

We were two days reconnoitring and surveying the coast. Whilst tacking about along the coast we saw two villages and anchored near one of them. The natives came on board immediately, and brought cocoaanuts which they bartered for tobacco. In the evening of June 30th, the last day of the month of the Sacre Heart, and Feast of St. Paul, Apostle of the Gentiles, we entered Hall Sound and stopped in sight of Yule Island, and thus came to the end of our voyage. The station we are going to establish here will be, so to speak, the corner stone of all the stations erected in the future in New Guinea.

The following morning, July 1st, we sailed into a beautiful bay south of the island, and were about to land when the captain said to me: 'I see cabins and fields. I see a savage! Two! Three!' I enjoined him at once to steer towards the centre of the bay, which in my opinion, seemed the spot designated by God. 'This,' I said, 'shall be known hereafter as Port Leo, in perpetual memory of His Holiness Leo XIII, who has commissioned us to evangelize New Guinea, and yonder hill will be our future residence.'


C30  The Yule Island Mission of the Sacred Heart, Yule Island, 1886

It consoles me to state that the first communication that I am writing to you from New Guinea bears the same date as the day when he left Issoudun for this distant land two years ago. If we look back on the difficulties we have survived and our achievements, we can see that God has blessed his missionaries.

The Devil indeed spared us no suffering. Right at the beginning of the journey an attack of typhoid struck both Father Verius and me simultaneously, forcing us to stay two months at Reunion along with three Brother Coadjutors and five Notre Dame nuns who had left with us. Father Verius and two of the Brothers left Thursday Island six months later to try to reach New Guinea. However, the crossing which normally only takes about four days lasted nine during which time the Pius IX which was carrying them whirled round and round caught in currents and cross winds.

The three missionaries had only been at Yule for a few months when the fever and the lack of food as well as the malevolence of the Protestants forced them to leave their post.

When Father Verius had recovered from fatigue, he left again for Yule with a Brother. This second journey was even worse than the first since it lasted eighteen days! When he arrived, he found the house ransacked and the natives unenthusiastic about his visit.

Three months later Reverend Father Navarre who wanted to join him at Yule, left with two Brothers. His journey was rather similar to the two others in its duration and dangers. He was overcome by fever and after two months' illness was persuaded to return to Thursday Island and he arrived there dying.

I was summoned from Sydney to go to Yule to share Father Verius's work load. On the 21st August last year I embarked on the Victory together with Reverend Father Navarre who had scarcely recovered from his illness. Even this time the crossing from Thursday to Yule was so terrible that the captain who had been navigating these seas for twenty years declared that he had never known it so bad. On a few occasions he was even afraid that the ship would be shattered.

All these tribulations bear witness to the devil's spite against our undertaking but, God be a thousand times praised!, their purpose was to make His power more brilliant. The hut which had formerly been established at Yule had been replaced by an even more squalid one, it is true,
but at least it was better situated, more spacious and healthier. We had won the natives' sympathy more completely than ever thanks to the daily recital of the catechism, and the adjacent villages are demanding our attention. So, in a word, our New Guinea establishment is an accomplished fact.

C31 A Missioner of the Sacred Heart States his Object, Yule Island, 1887

Our objects, as you know, are the conversion and civilization of savages. The former regards their eternal destiny, the latter is concerned with their temporal well-being. The conversion at which we aim is change of habits, so that he who formerly lived without law, without restraint, guided only by caprice, follows henceforward a law which regulates and directs the actions of his life. It is also a change of intentions, so that he who formerly confined his desires to material things henceforward aspires to and labours for the attainment of the eternal reward of his fidelity in fulfilling the will of God—a change which raises him above the brute, and enables him to endure with patience the miseries of this life.

Civilization consists of social and industrial training. Social training should regulate the relations of men between themselves on this principle of Christian charity: 'Do not to others what you would not wish should be done unto you;' and this other which is its complement, 'whateover you would that men should do unto you even so do ye also to them.'

Industrial training consists in giving savages, who are generally indolent and lazy, habits of labour proportioned to their strength and to the exigencies of the climate, especially agricultural labour so favourable to the establishment of homes, to morality and even to health, and which would be the source of a well-being with which they are at present unacquainted—labour which I may say is so necessary to the prosperity of this Colony. For in the Climate of New Guinea it is very difficult for the white race to work in the sun either for the cultivation of the soil, the exploitation of the forests, or even of the mines which may be found hereafter.

The native when broken-in to work will be the necessary aid to the white man who will bring to him the benefits of civilization. For this reason the first white people who settle amongst our aboriginals in New Guinea should conduct themselves so as to be good examples of our social life and not patterns of its vices. This is at least what we for our part shall endeavour to do and teach.

THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY: DOCUMENTS C32 to C51

The Missionary Society, or the London Missionary Society, as it was named later, was established in London in 1795. From the first it was regarded as a missionary society of all Protestant religious denominations but as time passed it was regarded more and more as a society of the Independent or Congregationalist churches. The purpose of the London Missionary Society was the evangelisation of non-Christian peoples overseas. Its foundation and aims have to be considered within the Evangelical Revival of the second half of the 18th century in Britain.

The Pacific Ocean region was the first chosen field of the London Missionary Society. In 1796 the mission ship Duff sailed to Tahiti in the Society Islands and early in 1797 a mission station was successfully established. Other missionaries from the Duff were landed in the Friendly Islands at Tongatabu and in the Marquesas. These sites were abandoned after a short time, however. On Tahiti it was not until 1813 that the mission met with any notable success. This was the conversion of King Pomare to Christianity and the conversions of his people which followed.

From Tahiti the work of the London Missionary Society extended westwards. By 1840 the Cook Islands, Samoa and Fiji had been entered. Success in these places resulted from the work of John Williams and it was he who instituted the policy of using native teachers to spread the Gospel in new places.

In the 1840s New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands were entered and Niue or Savage Island also became an important site of mission activity. The assumption by the French of political control over