

SAMUEL J. BOLAND

FATHER DE BUGGENOMS AND THE REVOLUTIONARY  
GOVERNMENT IN SANTO DOMINGO (1866-1868)

SUMMARY

1. *The revolutionary government.* 2. *Father de Buggenoms in Santo Domingo.* 3. *Father de Buggenoms as Vicar Apostolic.* 4. *The revolutionary government and the Holy See.* 5. *The end of the Cabral regime.* 6. *Troubles in St. Thomas.*

During the sixties of last century the Belgian Redemptorist, Father Louis de Buggenoms, found himself caught up in the politics of the emerging Dominican Republic. The new nation, with a population of barely a quarter of a million and desperately impoverished, was a prey to factions and such devious politics as made it well nigh impossible for distant authorities in Rome to be sufficiently informed about the Church's condition. In 1866 Father de Buggenoms was entrusted by the Secretariat of State with a fact-finding mission aimed especially at discovering the most suitable means of providing for the vacant archiepiscopal see of Santo Domingo. This mission was the subject of a previous article<sup>1</sup>.

Partly as a result of his report on the state of the Church Father de Buggenoms was sent back to the republic fortified with jurisdic-

---

<sup>1</sup> *Spic. hist.*, 35 (1987) 97-135, The bibliography suggested there has been used also in the present article. In particular we draw attention to the archives consulted:

ASV: The Secret Archives of the Vatican

SS: Secretariat of State

ACAP: The archives of the Consiglio degli Affari Pubblici della Chiesa (formerly the Sacred Congregation for Extraordinary Affairs).

AGR: The general archives of the Redemptorists, Rome.

tion. It is the intention of the present article to describe how he fared in his new office. It was not by any means a pleasant experience for the Father. He met with frustration as he encountered the extreme sensitiveness of the local authorities to foreigners, especially if they came from Europe.

He had to deal with a new government, the one he had previously met having been replaced only a few weeks after his first visit. We have called this new government of General Cabral revolutionary to distinguish it from the more durable but no less revolutionary regime of Buenaventura Baëz. Really, there was little enough to choose between the two, politicians of both factions being equally staunch in professing their Catholic faith and attending their masonic lodges. Father de Buggenoms was prevented from exercising the jurisdiction conferred on him by Rome when the constitution of the republic was invoked against him. The government, if not the people, would not tolerate ecclesiastical authority in the hands of a foreigner. Given the poor standard of education and even morality among the clergy, this suspicious attitude was to make it extremely difficult to bring peace and good order to the long-suffering archdiocese of Santo Domingo.

### 1. *The revolutionary government*

The revolution that unseated President Baëz towards the middle of 1866 had been led by General José Cabral. He had been the real leader of the movement that a couple of years earlier had expelled the heartily disliked Spanish government. Cabral was a patriot and a soldier and little interested in politics<sup>2</sup>. He had been at most lukewarm in support of Baëz, bowing to the pressure of the president's formidable family; but he was soon angered by the devious politics of the regime and readily put himself at the head of the opposition. By 7th June, less than three weeks since de Buggenoms had reported to the Holy See of his dealings with Baëz the government had fallen and the abashed ex-president was seeking refuge on the island of St. Thomas with the Redemptorist superior, his recent guest<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Information about Cabral was provided by de Buggenoms in his report to the Secretary of State after his first visit to Santo Domingo. Cf. de Buggenoms to Antonelli, 21st May 1866. Copy in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10.

<sup>3</sup> de Buggenoms to Mauron, 20th July 1866, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10.

It seems that Cabral, popular leader though he was, showed himself as unwilling as ever to assume responsibility for the government. Baëz was replaced immediately by a triumvirate, Pimental, Garcia and Luperon<sup>4</sup>, all generals no doubt, there being according to de Buggenoms hundreds of them in the republic<sup>5</sup>. It was a compromise regime which nobody expected to last in the country where faction fighting had long been a fact of life. By the time de Buggenoms found himself back in Santo Domingo at the end of August the triumvirate had been dissolved and Cabral was president.

The new regime was somewhat different from the previous one. Baëz had been very much the autocrat. Most would have preferred to call him straight out a tyrant. He kept things firmly in his own hands, whereas Cabral preferred to have the decisions made by his cabinet. With that the contrast ended: attitudes towards religion were the same among all who played at politics in the republic, no matter which leader they followed. Few, if any, of the revolutionary government would have hesitated about subscribing to the peculiar creed of the ex-president. Though they never attended Mass or received the Sacraments, they stoutly declared themselves good Catholics who would not dream of renouncing their faith<sup>6</sup>. In Santo Domingo politicians came from a class in which freemasonry was organised to a degree that amazed at least one visitor, with lodges even for women and children<sup>7</sup>. In the long run the Cabral regime was every bit as likely to be as devious as Baëz himself, especially when there was question of Church authority. Father de Buggenoms had assured Cardinal Antonelli, Secretary of State, that the hope of the Church was in the simple faith of the loyal people, who would not tolerate any suggestion of a breach with the Holy See<sup>8</sup>. Whatever their own beliefs and religious attitudes, no government was going to risk alienating the people. After all, they were the ones who made revolutions.

Just a few months after the change of regime Father de Buggenoms reported a development which boded ill for future dealings

---

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> de Buggenoms to Mauron, 13th November 1866, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10.

<sup>6</sup> Leopoldo d'Acquasanta to Pius IX, 26th June 1870, ACAP, A III, Santo Domingo, fasc. 504 (1867-1871) f. 52-81.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> de Buggenoms to Antonelli, 21st May 1866. Copy in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10.

with the Cabral government. Calixto Pina, the ambitious young priest whom Baëz had wanted at the head of the Church in Santo Domingo, had sought refuge in Curaçao and from there had gathered a band of forty supporters whom he despatched to the republic to start the counter-revolution. The rising was crushed at its beginning, and Father de Buggenoms was expecting to learn that the « invaders » had been executed<sup>9</sup>. It is quite likely, of course, that reprisals of this sort were far from being solely characteristic of the Cabral regime. It was rather the condition of life which had far too long tried the patience and loyalties of the unhappy population. Father de Buggenoms concluded the account of the abortive coup by saying that a large number of Dominicans had begged the United States to annex the island, but without success<sup>10</sup>.

## 2. *Father de Buggenoms in Santo Domingo.*

After his first visit to Santo Domingo Father de Buggenoms sent to Rome a meticulous report of his investigations<sup>11</sup>. It was far from encouraging, detailing as it did the extremely eccentric behaviour of Benito Paez, the administrator of the archdiocese left in charge by the exiled archbishop, and offering little hope of finding a better choice among the local clergy. It was a sorry picture that he presented of the people, impoverished and dispirited after years of revolutionary struggles and preyed on by greedy and ambitious politicians. The hope for the future lay in the unshaken faith of these long-suffering people; but they were receiving far too little help from their clergy. These latter were for the most part far too busy with the fashionable pastime of the republic, playing at politics.

The reply of Cardinal Antonelli showed the disappointment of the Holy See at discovering the unhappy state of the vacant archdiocese<sup>12</sup>. Most of the long letter expressed dismay at the incompetence of Paez, whom the Secretary of State had been inclined to regard as a champion of the Church's rights. The obvious expedient, which

---

<sup>9</sup> de Buggenoms to Mauron, 13th November 1866, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> de Buggenoms to Antonelli, 21st May 1866. Copy in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10.

<sup>12</sup> Antonelli to Buggenoms, 22nd June 1866. Copy in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 12.

surely must have been foreseen, was to appoint de Buggenoms himself in his place. He was informed accordingly that His Holiness had named him Vicar Apostolic *ad beneplacitum Sanctae Sedis*, as had in fact been suggested by President Baëz. He was to return as soon as possible to Santo Domingo, where he was to present the Brief of his appointment to the president and to the priests, Paez and Pina, both of whom had at one time or another exercised jurisdiction over the archdiocese. It was evident that Rome had not yet been made aware of the change of government and the flight of Baëz and Pina and that it was with Cabral and his cabinet that the Father should have to treat.

The nomination was still little more than tentative. Father de Buggenoms was told that the Holy Father was prepared to confer on him the episcopal dignity, provided the government should give him sufficient assurance that he could put in order the tangled affairs of the archdiocese. Such assurances « one had the right to expect from a Catholic government and people like that of Santo Domingo ». The Papal Brief, dated 19th June, was forwarded with the instructions of the Secretary of State together with authorisation for the new Vicar Apostolic to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation<sup>13</sup>.

The letter ended on an encouraging note. « You will be glad to know that His Holiness has already ordered that arrangements be made with the Most Reverend Father Rector Major of the Congregation to prepare for the despatch from Europe of some members of the Congregation, who are to go to Santo Domingo, as soon as you can be sure they can fruitfully exercise their ministry ».

These communications from the Holy See reached Father de Buggenoms on 16th July, coming as usual by way of his Superior General<sup>14</sup>. There was much in them that seemed to him to need explanation. In particular, what was his status as a Vicar Apostolic without episcopal character, and that indeed in the most venerable see of the Americas? And since the Holy See, too, seemed to be ill informed, he sent through his Superior General a brief resume of recent events in Santo Domingo: Baëz and Pina were in exile, and Paez had returned in triumph, having taken care that his arrival be greeted by the

<sup>13</sup> Copies of both documents are in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 12.

<sup>14</sup> de Buggenoms to Antonelli, 6th September 1866. Copy in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10.

pealing of the church bells<sup>15</sup>. The promptness of the Holy See in sending himself back made him hopeful of « putting some order into the confusion caused by Father Paez ». Since he would have to wait in any case for the steamer for Santo Domingo, he gladly seized the opportunity of answering his own immediate questions. He visited Puerto Rico in order to seek the advice of competent persons concerning his own duties and the best way to meet them.

In particular, he wished to discuss his charge with the administrator of the diocese, who had previously been Vicar General to Archbishop Monzón y Martín of Santo Domingo<sup>16</sup>. He intended also to spend some time in the seminary with a view to arranging for the expected reinforcements from Europe to be trained for pastoral work in Spanish. His time with the Jesuits in the seminary was especially profitable, as he explained on a later occasion<sup>17</sup>. He had access, for one thing, to a much better library than was available on St. Thomas, and he had the unexpected advantage of gaining most useful information about the Jesuit Vicar Apostolic of Jamaica, also without episcopal orders. Father de Buggenoms had already proved himself a man of more than ordinary ability, and he made the most of his opportunities to make careful plans for his coming task. He needed to be well fortified, as he had misgivings as to what awaited him, and on the eve of his leaving St. Thomas he had voiced them to Father Mauron<sup>18</sup>.

« What shall I find in Santo Domingo? Thirty or so parishes served by ignorant and discontented priests, and in the city itself 10,000 Catholics, and what is more, the eyes of thirty or so priests will be on me — most of them anarchists. The position I am to occupy seems even to be the *ne plus ultra*, either of the sublime or the ridiculous, for both meet. I shall do my best and leave the rest to God ».

Those who were most closely acquainted with Father de Buggenoms knew that he did not suffer fools gladly<sup>19</sup>. And it must be said that he entered on his charge fully expecting to find his patience thoroughly tested. He prepared himself, however, as much as seemed

<sup>15</sup> de Buggenoms to Mauron, 20th July 1866, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> de Buggenoms to Mauron, 13th November 1866, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10.

<sup>18</sup> de Buggenoms to Mauron, 9th August 1866, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *Spic. hist.*, 35 (1987) 106.

humanly possible, even to the extent of writing a pastoral letter to introduce himself and his aims to the people for whom he was to be responsible<sup>20</sup>.

He arrived in Puerto Rico on 1st August, and his stay there was delayed longer than he had expected, as the steamer had been ordered by the Spanish government to transport a group of prisoners directly to Havana in Cuba without calling at Santo Domingo<sup>21</sup>. During the time he had to wait he learned, without surprise one may be sure, that Paez, true to past performance, had made himself « guilty of a thousand indiscretions ». His most startling imprudence was the suspension of Francisco Xavier Billini, « the only solidly pious and zealous priest in the city ». It appeared that the grounds for the censure were the very uncanonical ones that his church services were attracting the people from the cathedral and Paez. Billini, according to de Buggenoms, was a young man of twenty-eight, of no great ability but full of good will. During the two years since his ordination he had undertaken one scheme after another, but usually without even thinking to apply for due authorisation. He was a man of excellent will but without judgment and extremely headstrong. One might suspect, de Buggenoms suggested, that his firm adherence to priestly ideals was due at least in part to his obstinacy. Whatever about his shortcomings, Billini was a man to be reckoned with for his enterprise and because he was rather more edifying than the general run of the clergy of the archdiocese, and that made him the more acceptable to the people. When his church was closed on account of his suspension, he opened a school for boys, taking good care to protect himself from reprisals from Paez by obtaining government authorisation. It was incidents of this kind that made Father de Buggenoms impatient to come to grips with the challenge of his appointment.

Together with five other stranded travellers de Buggenoms secured a passage on what he described as a bad sailing ship with an inexperienced captain, which eventually landed him in Santo Domingo on 25th August, which was a Saturday. He lost no time in presen-

---

<sup>20</sup> de Buggenoms to Antonelli, 6th September 1866. Copy in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10.

<sup>21</sup> The account we offer of de Buggenoms' visit to Santo Domingo is taken from his report to the Secretary of State unless otherwise indicated. A copy of the report is to be seen in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10. The report is in two parts, one written in Santo Domingo, the other in St. Thomas. The former is dated 6th September, but reports on incidents which occurred on 7th and 8th of the month. The second part is dated 13th September.

ting himself the same day at the residence of the president, General Cabral, to explain his office and to ask that the Brief of his appointment be promulgated. The president, « a man who seems unable to say or do anything by himself », summoned his secretary and another general, who gave him his answer. They agreed that the Church of Santo Domingo lacked the means it needed to put its house in order; but they considered the appointment of a Vicar Apostolic a matter serious enough to require consideration by the cabinet or Council of State. The Father was requested to come back in two days' time, that is on the Monday morning, for a definite answer.

On the Monday, however, he was given no more satisfaction than the promise that a reply would soon be sent to him. The weekend had seen much scurrying about the city with what de Buggenoms called *conciliabula* between ministers and clergy. Some of the priests called on him with words of welcome and protestations of loyalty to the Holy See, but warning him at the same time to expect trouble from the cabinet, since he was not a *Creole and a Dominican*. In order to answer this objection de Buggenoms asked the president to allow him to address the cabinet and explain as fully as was necessary the nature of the office given him by the Holy See.

He appeared before the ministers on Wednesday 29th August. He spoke for about half an hour, presenting himself as discharging a twofold mission, as a Redemptorist as well as Vicar Apostolic, both being for the welfare of the Church and State in the republic. He reminded the ministers that the president himself had admitted that they lacked the resources for their spiritual renewal. He stressed the fact that the temporary regime of a Vicar Apostolic was cheaper than the chapter and canons they had known in the past and that it would give place to a more normal administration as soon as a suitable candidate should be found and trained for the task. When that came to pass, he declared, he himself would be happy to stand down and become a simple missionary, leaving the local clergy to care for their own people. He gave examples, no doubt from countries under Propaganda like England as he had known it, where the regime of Vicars Apostolic had given place to a regular hierarchy. And that, he concluded, was the aim of the Holy See in his own appointment.

Father de Buggenoms had often proved himself a persuasive speaker, and his arguments on this occasion were excellent. Rumour once more become busy throughout the city as the ministers and the clergy returned to their *conciliabula*. And the priests of Santo Do-



mingo did not fail to bring their new reports to the Vicar Apostolic. The gossip had an ominous sound when there was word that Don Nepomuceno Tejera, the minister handling the business of the Brief, had suddenly resigned from the cabinet. This man had been pointed out to de Buggenoms as « the only honest man among the ministers and the most competent ». His place was taken by the advocate, Don Apolinar de Castro<sup>22</sup>, « a young man whose only merit seemed to me self assurance so much the more obstinate as it was without either knowledge or good manners »<sup>23</sup>.

On the Saturday 1st September de Buggenoms was summoned to the presence of the brash young minister to hear the decision, whose terms he had long since accurately guessed. He was informed « with a superabundance of words » that the measures adopted by Rome were deserving of the very highest praise, but that unfortunately there was danger that they would offend the people's national pride. For this reason the cabinet reluctantly found itself compelled to forbid promulgation of the Brief. The minister offered as a compromise that de Buggenoms remain as Apostolic Legate without jurisdiction; and the Vicar Apostolic in his turn offered to refrain from exercising his authority until he had received from Rome a reply to the report he would make immediately. This suggestion de Castro took back to his fellow ministers.

At this point there occurred an incident that complicated the situation. The curé of the cathedral announced that Father de Buggenoms, Vicar Apostolic of the Archdiocese of Santo Domingo, would celebrate High Mass on the feast of Our Lady's Nativity and preach. The premature announcement occasioned general rejoicing among the people, whose national pride appeared to be anything but offended. The ministers, on the other hand, were so chagrined that their response to de Buggenoms was communicated at once by de Castro. The Vicar Apostolic was told he must delegate his faculties at once to a Creole Dominican; and when he refused he was informed by letter that he must leave the republic with the least possible delay. This letter, the final answer from the government, was couched in language, that with little skill mingled protestations of loyalty to the Holy See with what de Buggenoms described as downright rudeness<sup>24</sup>.

---

<sup>22</sup> A. BONI, *In den Westindischen Archipel*, Bruges, 1944, 212.

<sup>23</sup> de Buggenoms to Antonelli, 6th September. Copy in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. A. BONI, 214. The letter, signed by Apollinar de Castro, Minister of foreign Affairs, was dated 1st September.

Whether or not it had been the imprudent indirect promulgation of the Brief that occasioned the peremptory sentence of banishment, de Buggenoms had to prepare for his departure, which could not be for another week, when the regular steamer should arrive on 9th September. The most important task was to provide for a suitable subdelegation of his faculties, as he had been authorised to do in the Brief of his appointment. He had rejected de Castro's suggestion of a Creole as limiting his freedom, and now he chose as his subdelegate Don José de Jesus Ayala y Garcia O.P., Parish Priest of San Cristobal. He had been mentioned by the ex-archbishop, Monzón y Martín as the most reputable priest of the archdiocese for his piety and learning. He was also eighty years old<sup>25</sup>. This subdelegation, de Buggenoms took care to add, had not been made with complete freedom, since he had been unjustly compelled to leave the country, adding that this protestation did not in any way prejudice the validity of the subdelegation. The Vicar Apostolic took care to notify the clergy of his action in a letter written in Latin in order to keep its contents from the knowledge of the government. He was, in fact, in some danger, as the authorities needed only to spread a rumour to the effect that he was a secret agent of the deposed Baëz to justify their putting him in prison out of hand.

The government was indeed quite embarrassed, as was abundantly evidenced by certain statements in *El Monitor*, the official newspaper. In the first place it was necessary to explain the sudden retirement of the highly respected Tejera. He was in need of rest, the paper declared, as it spoke fulsomely of his outstanding merits. The leading article expounded at length the principle that only native-born Creoles should be entrusted with public office, in either the State or the Church, because in this consisted the security of the republic. A separate article dealt with the case of de Buggenoms and the Papal Brief appointing him Vicar Apostolic. It was a delicate topic on account of the people's Catholic sense. The government expressed deep regret at finding itself under the necessity of refusing to accept the Brief *in order to safeguard the national identity of the republic*. The indignant Vicar Apostolic emphasised the reason advanced. The article went on to say that Father de Buggenoms had decided (they were afraid to confess that they had compelled him, he declared) to leave Santo Domingo and had subdelegated his jurisdic-

---

<sup>25</sup> A. BONI, 214.

tion to a priest suggested by the government itself, « which was quite false », added de Buggenoms.

The need to woo the sympathy of the people became more apparent when de Buggenoms celebrated High Mass on 8th September as had been advertised. He preached to a large crowd in the cathedral a *ferverino*, which pleased the good people but greatly disappointed the malcontents, who included five members of the cabinet. They had come along in the hope of finding some pretext to justify the unpopular decision they had already taken. When they found themselves being exhorted to practise true devotion to Mary after the example of the saints, they left the cathedral in disgust.

The days before de Buggenoms' departure were busy for « those gentlemen » of the government. One of them called on Don Domingo de la Rocha, the devout and wealthy gentlemen whose praises de Buggenoms had sung in his earlier report. The visitor tried hard to convince the good old man who was highly respected in the city that the government had come to its decision unwillingly, being persuaded by the clergy to block the Papal Brief. This was part of a campaign to shift the blame for an unpopular measure on to the perhaps not entirely innocent shoulders of the priests. As soon as these latter got wind of what was afoot they hastened to make their excuses, « like the apostles at the Supper, with this difference that instead of one Judas there were many ».

The former administrator of the archdiocese, Don Benito Paez, who liked to consider himself in favour with Rome, was particularly disturbed. He gathered a small group of clerics, who called on de Buggenoms and presented him with a written declaration of loyalty to the Holy See. Unfortunately, in their statement they gave the subdelegate, Don José de Jesus Ayala the title of Vicar Apostolic. Father de Buggenoms pointed out the error, if such it was which he doubted, and let it be known that he would not accept their declaration for transmission to the Holy See unless it was corrected. The document in its final form was accordingly brought to him on the morning of his departure, 9th September, bearing the signatures of Paez and five others. In a further statement Paez and two other priests expressed their regret at the action of the government in refusing to accept the Brief. In an independent and personal declaration Billini made his own protestation that he accepted de Buggenoms as Vicar Apostolic<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> Copies of the three documents are to be found in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10.

It may well have been his doubts about the clergy that made de Buggenoms take his own steps to promulgate the Brief in a rather left-handed fashion. When the priests brought him their amended declaration, he informed them that he had instructed his subdelegate to recite the prayer « *Deus, cui omne cor patet...* » according to the rubrics<sup>27</sup> and to mention his own name in the canon of the Mass: « *et pro antistite nostro Ludovico* »<sup>28</sup>. To justify himself when his conduct was challenged by his Superior General, he appealed to the practice he had known in England, where he had been under a regime of Vicars Apostolic<sup>29</sup>. He really did have excellent reasons for seizing on the expedient in order to protect his authority. He well knew from past experience that he was dealing with wily characters. The statement presented by Paez and his associates naming the eighty-year-old Ayala Vicar Apostolic had clearly put him on his guard.

The clergy, of course, were by no means the only masters of double talk. That letter of de Castro, Minister of Foreign Affairs, combining rudeness with protestations of respect, was quite typical. There is ample reason for being cautious about taking at face value the claim made in *El Monitor* that the cabinet acted as it did so as not to offend the people's national pride. On the contrary, it rather looks, especially from the eager attendance to the Vicar Apostolic's preaching on 8th September, that their national pride in no way prevented their ready acceptance of Church authority. One must wonder, therefore, who was it who was so insistent that nobody but a locally born Creole might safely exercise ecclesiastical authority in Santo Domingo. And one would not be far wrong in suspecting that the *conciliabula* of clergy and ministers which preceded the final decision of the cabinet were concerned principally with that very matter. And it is at least probable that there would have been a similar attitude under the Baëz government.

Father de Buggenoms was a match for his opponents in finesse. He was probably correct in seeing a danger of summary arrest and imprisonment, but he succeeded none the less in having his authority

---

<sup>27</sup> The prayer *Deus cui omnes cor* is found in the *Breviarium Romanum* in the Preparation for Mass.

<sup>28</sup> A note in the margin of the copy of the report in AGR states that the Father General deleted the phrase about naming the Vicar Apostolic in the canon and administered a reprimand to Father de Buggenoms in a letter dated 7th October 1866.

<sup>29</sup> de Buggenoms to Mauron, 13th November 1866, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10.

published. The Mass and sermon on 8th September disarmed those who came in the hope of finding him out in some indiscretion so as to accuse him of defying the government, and his instruction to the clergy on the following day immediately preceded his embarkation for St. Thomas. His detailed report to Cardinal Antonelli, begun on 6th September, was continued on the following days while so much was happening, and it was completed on 13th, after he had returned to St. Thomas.

### 3. *Father de Buggenoms as Vicar Apostolic*

In the business of refusing to promulgate the Papal Brief the Cabral government made a sorry spectacle of itself. The notices and leading article in *El Monitor* were extraordinarily inept, making it perfectly clear that de Buggenoms had been appointed to exercise authority over the archdiocese and had been prevented in most cavalier fashion. And the Vicar Apostolic himself lost no opportunity of making his position known as publicly as possible. Whatever about the qualms expressed by his Superior General, his requiring the clergy to name him in the Mass must have had the effect he desired. His officiating in the cathedral on Sundays and feast days kept his presence before the people; and one may be sure he did not at all regret the imprudence of the announcement of himself with the title given him by Rome.

The pastoral letter he had prepared before his arrival could scarcely have been published on the occasion of this visit. It was certainly published with a second pastoral two years later but bearing the date of 8th September 1866<sup>30</sup>. It is an excellent introduction of himself, tracing briefly his already distinguished career in England and Ireland, the Redemptorist life he hoped to introduce into the archdiocese, the authority with which he was vested and his intention to exercise it, « preaching by example more than by words ». It is interesting to notice that when it was published the pastoral bore the seal of the Vicar Apostolic, of which a few other impressions are to be seen in the Redemptorist general archives<sup>31</sup>.

---

<sup>30</sup> The two pastorals as published by Bartolomé Pinelli, secretary of de Buggenoms, appeared in 1868. Copies are to be seen in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vive-prov. Antilles, I,B, 14.

<sup>31</sup> There is an authentication of a miracle at the intercession of Our Lady

Writing to Father Mauron, de Buggenoms said with apparent satisfaction that his office had not remained entirely a dead letter<sup>32</sup>. « I exercised all my faculties, that is to say I preached, heard confessions and confirmed in a private oratory a young man, brother-in-law of the merchant who was my host, and two married persons about sixty years of age. I also forbade the ordination of three clerics ». He had actually been preparing as his residence the large building that had served as the seminary when word came for him to leave the republic. Obviously, he had chosen a house to receive the expected Redemptorist foundation.

Of these activities of special significance was the case of the three clerics whose ordination he had prevented. They were a sad case of the unsatisfactory preparation too long taken for granted and a recurring theme in letters of others besides himself. The three were Minorites, brought to him to obtain dimissorial letters for ordination in Havana. They had no training at all in dogmatic theology, he told his Superior General, and their entire preparation had consisted of two years' study of moral theology under the guidance of a priest who had been living in retirement since the departure of the Spaniards. The three candidates had never heard of St. Alphonsus; and since they had no Latin they depended on « Larraga, a Spanish author unknown to me »<sup>33</sup>. Forewarned, it would seem, of the Vicar Apostolic's displeasure the candidates did not present themselves for examination. In their place de Buggenoms, « according to the practice of St. Alphonsus », questioned their unhappy teacher informally in conversation<sup>34</sup>. The investigation showed that the old man had little theology indeed. « I discovered », said de Buggenoms, « that he did not know what Protestantism was nor the differences between Lutheran, Calvinist, Methodist, Evangelical, Presbyterian and Moravian, sects very common in these parts ».

The refusal of the dimissorial letters, like so much Church bu-

---

of Perpetual Help confirmed by the seal. It is circular in shape with the arms of the Redemptorists in the upper half. Around the inside of the circle is the motto: *Adiutorium nostrum in nom. Domini* and around the outside is inscribed *Vicariatus Apostolicus Eccae. S. Dominici*.

<sup>32</sup> de Buggenoms to Mauron, 6th September 1866, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Viceprov. Antilles, I,B, 10.

<sup>33</sup> The manual referred to seems to be *Compendio Breve... de Teologia Moral* by Francisco Larraga O.P. who died in 1715. The work was edited by Francisco Santos y Gossin O.P. and published in Madrid in two volumes in 1804 and 1805.

<sup>34</sup> It is hard to see what practice of St. Alphonsus was invoked as offering some justification for the interrogation as conducted by the Vicar Apostolic.

siness in the republic, had political overtones. Archbishop du Cosquer of Port-au-Prince had pleaded the cause of the candidates in vain. In some way or other hard for one to discern at a distance, he hoped to use the ordination of the Minorites to improve relations between Cabral and the Haïtian government. Cabral, too, had his heart set on the ordination so that when he was foiled by de Buggenoms his attitude hardened<sup>35</sup>. He busied himself with renewed energy to have his own candidate, Fernando Arturo Meriño, at the head of the archdiocese. And there he was to meet with further opposition from a man every bit as determined as himself.

There is reason to believe that Father de Buggenoms would not have been impressed by an appeal from Haïti in favour of the ordinands. He did not think favourably about ecclesiastical affairs in the neighbouring republic, as he wrote at some length in his report to Cardinal Antonelli. What troubled him was the problem of freemasonry in Haïti. The priests, he complained, were given no lead by their ecclesiastical superior in Port-au-Prince, with the result that they readily admitted masons to the Sacraments without requiring that they renounce the sect. He quoted « among many others » the case of General Salomon, who had been Secretary of State to the Emperor Soulouque<sup>36</sup> and who during his exile in St. Thomas had become a close friend of the Redemptorist superior. The general was an exceptionally good man but much confused in conscience by the virtual tolerance of masonry in his own country. The Vicar Apostolic of Santo Domingo thought it his duty to bring this state of affairs to the notice of the Holy See in order that due measures be taken.

It is not surprising that Father de Buggenoms was discouraged by the series of frustrations he encountered in his attempts to improve the condition of the Church entrusted to him. He said as much to Father Mauron, asking him to do his best to have him released of his charge or at least allowed to come to Rome and explain by word of mouth the complicated politics of Santo Domingo, something he could not do adequately by letter<sup>37</sup>. In that hope he was to be disap-

---

<sup>35</sup> A. BONI, 216-217, speaks of the political aspects of the ordination of the three candidates.

<sup>36</sup> The Emperor Soulouque of Haïti, also known as Faustus I, had been deposed by President Geffrard in 1859, and the latter was a supporter of the Cabral regime in the Dominican Republic until 1867, when a revolution brought Salnave to power in Haïti, smoothing the way for the return of Baëz. For the exiles and their intrigues St. Thomas usually provided a haven.

<sup>37</sup> de Buggenoms to Mauron, 6th September 1866, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica; Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10.

pointed, as he discovered early in the new year. Writing once more to his Superior General, he announced that Cardinal Antonelli had written in the name of the Holy Father to tell him to remain Vicar Apostolic until times should prove favourable for a final solution<sup>38</sup>.

It seems probable that the Secretary of State was confident that the final solution was not too far off. Almost as soon as de Buggenoms had been compelled to leave the government began to push the claims of its favourite, Meriño. In November notice of its intentions came to Rome by way of the nuncio in Madrid<sup>39</sup>. The nuncio spoke of the « presentation » General Cabral intended to make of the priest Meriño for the archbishopric, adding that the right of presentation was merely usurped, a caution that had been sounded some months before by de Buggenoms<sup>40</sup>. The report went on to say of Meriño that in Puerto Rico he had the reputation of being a good and efficient ecclesiastic, a view that had been confirmed by the former archbishop, Mgr. Monzón y Martín. For Rome it would have been an easy way out of a dilemma that had already proved an interminable preoccupation, but de Buggenoms stood in the way. Knowing that he most emphatically did not share the good opinion others had of Cabral's candidate, Father Mauron sent him a warning about the negotiations already in motion concerning the vacant archbishopric<sup>41</sup>.

« I must tell you in confidence that I believe I have discovered that here one would be happy if they could grant the request of the president; but it would be unseemly to do so without your having given a favourable opinion. Your report concerning the priest Meriño has been examined, but it is remembered that this same priest was once administrator of Santo Domingo, delegated by the Apostolic Nuncio of Caracas, to whom the Holy See had entrusted the island before the coming of the Spaniards. Previous reports of this priest, as far as I can make out, were not too bad. Just now the Holy See is suffering a very great embarrassment, even without this extra bur-

---

<sup>38</sup> de Buggenoms to Mauron, 26th February 1867, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 11.

<sup>39</sup> Archbishop Lorenzo Barili, Nuncio in Madrid, to Antonelli, 25th November 1866, ASV, SS, 1866, 249, fasc. 2, f. 148.

<sup>40</sup> de Buggenoms to Antonelli, 21st May 1866. Copy in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10.

<sup>41</sup> Mauron to de Buggenoms, 7th December 1866, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10.



den on its shoulders. That is as much as I can tell you with regard to this business ».

Father de Buggenoms was not the man to take alarm at finding himself supporting an unpopular opinion, especially should he see his own view as a matter of conscience. On his side, the Secretary of State was understandably annoyed at seeing himself foiled in his easy escape from the long-standing embarrassment of the vacant archbishopric. There was a stubborn, even intolerant strain in de Buggenoms<sup>42</sup>, and that no doubt did not make for smooth dealings with Antonelli. It is not reading too much between the lines to discover a marked coolness in the correspondence after 1866.

However unwillingly, de Buggenoms had to retain his thankless office of Vicar Apostolic; and one of his earliest duties was to find a substitute for his subdelegate in Santo Domingo. The elderly Ayala could hardly be expected to continue for long in the duties added to the care of his large parish. Accordingly, when he asked to be replaced the Vicar Apostolic was sympathetic<sup>43</sup>. As the new subdelegate he suggested the impetuous Francisco Xavier Billini, and on 22nd January word came from Rome approving the appointment but suggesting that de Buggenoms keep a watchful eye on the inexperienced subdelegate<sup>44</sup>.

Father de Buggenoms had expressed some reservations about Billini, not yet thirty years of age, describing him as full of zeal but obstinate and lacking in judgment. Father Boni in his account of the events in Santo Domingo suggests that the Holy See had good reason for telling the Vicar Apostolic to beware of the unpredictable young priest<sup>45</sup>. In that he had the benefit of hindsight. He was reading between the lines of a pastoral letter issued by Billini on 28th April 1867, in which he seemed to say that he had been appointed administrator of the archdiocese by the Pope, implying that he was independent of the Vicar Apostolic<sup>46</sup>. On his part de Buggenoms had no such misgivings. On the contrary, he read the copy of the pastoral sent him by the subdelegate with considerable satisfaction and sent it on to Cardinal Antonelli<sup>47</sup>. He suggested that an Apostolic Legate

---

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Adriaan Bossers to Mauron, 23rd August 1866, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica,

<sup>43</sup> A. BONI, 215.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.* Cf. de Buggenoms to Mauron, 26th February 1867, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 11.

<sup>45</sup> A. BONI, 216.

<sup>46</sup> Father Boni was able to read a copy of the letter in the archives of the Belgian province.

with episcopal character be appointed and sent out principally to assist the young administrator. In this way the provisional regime could be continued indefinitely, allowing all the time needed for the solution of what was proving such a difficult problem. By the end of the year he was ready to recommend that his own office be suppressed and the Holy See simply put off indefinitely the appointment of an archbishop, continuing the present administration in Santo Domingo<sup>48</sup>. As time went on, he was to become more and more determined that this *status quo* not be disturbed.

It is probable that the greatest disappointment Father de Buggenoms experienced in the failure of his mission was the collapse of the projected Redemptorist foundation in Santo Domingo. In correspondence with the Superior General there had been at first frequent mention of the hopes entertained for the new community. « Suppose we could go there with a few Fathers », said de Buggenoms, « to preach and hear confessions even for no more than six months, we could never be made to move, for the people would be for us »<sup>49</sup>. In September the Superior General announced that three Fathers and a Brother were ready to depart for Santo Domingo<sup>50</sup>. Father de Buggenoms in the meantime had already begun to prepare a home for the newcomers when his hopes were dashed. When he received word of what had happened in Santo Domingo during those hectic early days of September Father Mauron cancelled the party that was ready to embark<sup>51</sup>. He had handed on the report of the developments to the Sacred Congregation for Extraordinary Affairs. And this was the last mention for the time of a Redemptorist foundation.

#### 4. *The revolutionary government and the Holy See.*

President Cabral and his government during the brief time of their power were in acute embarrassment; and the occasion, if not

---

<sup>47</sup> de Buggenoms to Mauron, 23rd May 1867, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 11.

<sup>48</sup> de Buggenoms to Mauron, 27th December 1867, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 11.

<sup>49</sup> de Buggenoms to Mauron, 23rd July 1866, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10.

<sup>50</sup> Mauron to Bossers, 23rd September 1866, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10.

<sup>51</sup> Mauron to de Buggenoms, 7th October 1866, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10.

the cause, was Father de Buggenoms, and he was so to a greater degree than he was to the Holy See. The people were of a simple faith and unquestioning devotion to Church authority. The clumsy statements in *El Monitor* were a desperate attempt to explain away the resistance offered to the Papal Brief, but nobody could consider them sufficient. It was urgent that good relations be established with the Holy See and a more accomodating prelate be set over the Church of Santo Domingo. The man for that, in the eyes of the government, could only be Meriño, and that for the very reason that de Buggenoms was most opposed to him, his political astuteness.

As we have seen, the nuncio in Madrid was able at an early stage to give some notion of what was afoot in the republic. The president made his approach to Rome in April with a letter addressed to the Pope himself<sup>52</sup> and introducing Meriño as plenipotentiary<sup>53</sup>. Cabral spoke in passing and rather vaguely of the « grave circumstances » which had prevented his government from accepting the Papal appointment of « Rev. Luis Bugenon (sic) as Vicar General (sic) of the archdiocese ».

Most likely the principal business Meriño had in hand as plenipotentiary was his own appointment as archbishop. And it is also probable, as Father Mauron had suggested, that the Roman authorities would have been content to accept and so get the whole messy business of Santo Domingo off its books; but there remained the problem of the strong objections being raised by the Vicar Apostolic.

Father de Buggenoms, in fact, was far from being distressed by the trouble he was causing. He was quite pleased, he assured his Superior General, that he had been of service to the Holy See in preventing the appointment of a man who was « one of those most likely to cause disaster »<sup>54</sup>. He quoted a statement made by Meriño in *El Monitor*, describing it as « a masterpiece of that double talk, that popular eloquence, which makes error become fashionable ». When he heard of Meriño's diplomatic mission to Rome, he hastened to inform the president that his nomination as archbishop would never be confirmed by the Holy See<sup>55</sup>. « Besides being a mason, there are other grave reasons against his being accepted ».

<sup>52</sup> Cabral to Pius IX, 8th April 1867, ACAP, A III, Santo Domingo, 504 (1867-1871) f. 7.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.* f. 5.

<sup>54</sup> de Buggenoms to Mauron, 12th April 1867. AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Viceprov. Antilles, I,B, 11.

<sup>55</sup> de Buggenoms to Mauron, 23rd May 1867, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Viceprov. Antilles, I,B, 11.

Meriño himself found his position in Rome anything but comfortable, as Father Mauron confided to de Buggenoms<sup>56</sup>. He seems to have been given no official recognition. In his first interview with the Pope he had to listen to some « hard truths », as the Holy Father « demanded an apology for the insult offered to the Holy See in your being deported ». The Secretary of State, too, was in a condition of indecision. « I really do not know which line they are taking », said Father Mauron. The rejection of the Papal Brief, however, and Cabral's offhand explanation were definite issues, which provided a convenient pretext for deferment, and they continued to make difficulties for poor Meriño. As late as November Mauron wrote of the Holy Father's determination to insist on an apology<sup>57</sup>. It was desirable, therefore, that de Buggenoms hold himself ready to depart for Santo Domingo.

By the middle of the year it had become evident that Rome did not incline to Meriño's candidacy. He proposed instead the names of three Creole priests, suggesting that one of them be chosen as archbishop. The names were sent on to Father de Buggenoms by Cardinal Antonelli on 3rd August 1867 with the request that he comment on their suitability<sup>58</sup>. The Vicar Apostolic had more than once plainly expressed his views of the native born Dominican clergy and their lack of adequate preparation for the priesthood. He had in the past insisted on the urgent need for a seminary. For the present, therefore, he contented himself with merely underlining the one of the three least involved in politics. For the time being that ended the likelihood of Meriño's being appointed archbishop: his time was to come some twenty years later, when we find him Archbishop of Santo Domingo from 1885 to 1906. At the time of the Cabral regime he was still a young man in his early thirties.

As representative of the Dominican government Meriño was also empowered to treat with the Holy See as regards the affairs of the Church in the republic. He duly presented the draft of a concordat in September<sup>59</sup>. Concordats were very much in fashion in Cen-

---

<sup>56</sup> Mauron to de Buggenoms, 21st July 1867, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Viceprov. Antilles, I,B, 11.

<sup>57</sup> Mauron to de Buggenoms, 1st November 1867, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Viceprov. Antilles, I,B, 11.

<sup>58</sup> The account of the three names proposed by Meriño and their treatment by de Buggenoms is in A. BONI, 217.

<sup>59</sup> The draft of the concordat as proposed by Meriño is in ACAP, A III, Santo Domingo, 504 (1867-1871) f. 13-17.

tral America at the middle of the century. In 1852 Guatemala under the conservative president Rafael Carrera made a concordat with Rome which served as a model for those made with Honduras in 1861, El Salvador and Nicaragua in 1862. All told, seven concordats were concluded with Spanish American republics between 1852 and 1862<sup>60</sup>. The negotiations initiated by Meriño, however, had very little chance of being taken seriously, particularly with Rome insisting on an apology by Cabral.

By November it seems that the president was in a chastened mood. Two letters from Cardinal Antonelli reached St. Thomas early in December<sup>61</sup>. Father de Buggenoms was instructed to go as soon as possible to Santo Domingo, where he was assured of a courteous welcome. Once arrived, he was to prepare a recommendation for filling the vacant archdiocese. With the second of Antonelli's letters Meriño arrived in St. Thomas, from which base he negotiated with the Dominican president, being careful to show the correspondence to the Vicar Apostolic, who remained far from hopeful of its producing any result. For one thing, Baéz was preparing his counterrevolution, even attempting to enlist the collaboration of de Buggenoms himself. For the troubled republic, it seemed to him, the best thing that could happen would be that it simply be annexed by the United States, a thought that had already been expressed more than once in his letters to Rome. As regards his returning to Santo Domingo, he said, he would go as he had been directed, provided he received an explicit invitation from Cabral. Circumstances in St. Thomas, however, had changed dramatically, making his own absence « as inopportune as could be »<sup>62</sup>. As far as Santo Domingo was concerned, there was no end in view, and the best thing for the Holy See was « to postpone indefinitely the election of the archbishop or even the plan of a concordat ». It was to remain his firm policy, to retain the *status quo*.

---

<sup>60</sup> R. AUBERT, *The Church in a Secularised Society (The Christian Centuries, V)*, London, 1978, 331-332.

<sup>61</sup> de Buggenoms to Mauron, 27th December 1867, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Viceprov. Antilles, I, B, 11; de Buggenoms to Antonelli, 14th January 1868. Copy *ibid.*; A. BONI, 217-218.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*

### 5. *The end of the Cabral regime.*

President Cabral's government was probably shaky from the start. As early as May de Buggenoms noted the resignation of another member of the cabinet, this time « the strongest supporter of Meriño »<sup>63</sup>. The cool reception accorded his representative in Rome must have been particularly disheartening to Cabral. The issue of relations with the Holy See and the refusal to accept the Brief assumed critical significance, it seems, among the people. The inaugural address pronounced when Baëz eventually replaced Cabral stressed at some length his being a champion of the Church, unlike the man who had sent into exile the representative of the Holy Father. Cabral and his supporters, meanwhile, were endeavouring to enlist a following by declaring loudly how much they regretted their treatment of the Vicar Apostolic<sup>64</sup>.

About the time Cardinal Antonelli was assuring de Buggenoms that there was reason to believe he would be well received should he return to Santo Domingo civil war had once more broken out, as usual in Puerto Plata in the north. From the beginning it went badly for the government. The general sent against the rebels was routed, and the president had to change his entire cabinet<sup>65</sup>.

When Meriño arrived in St. Thomas at the beginning of December Cabral was still in control, even though under threat. With him his former representative had to treat, now on behalf of the Holy See. It all seems to have been very open, Meriño letting de Buggenoms see the communications that passed back and forth. After some weeks, towards the end of the month, a member of the cabinet arrived in St. Thomas with the assurance that the requirements of Rome could be met; and Meriño announced that he would return at once to Santo Domingo to prepare the way for the Vicar Apostolic's reception<sup>66</sup>. When the steamer left, however, Merriño was not on board, pleading an indisposition, even though de Buggenoms did not think him all that ill<sup>67</sup>. As it happened, about a week after de Bugge-

---

<sup>63</sup> de Buggenoms to Mauron, 23rd May 1867, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 11.

<sup>64</sup> de Buggenoms to Mauron, 13th July 1868, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 14.

<sup>65</sup> There is a brief but vivid account of the beginning of the revolution in the report of de Buggenoms to Antonelli, 14th January 1868. Copy in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 14.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*

noms sent off his report to Rome Meriño, abandoning all hope of being able to return safely to Santo Domingo, took ship for Venezuela<sup>68</sup>.

By the time Cabral was making these overtures to de Buggenoms through Meriño he was already close to defeat. Baëz had been thorough in preparing his campaign. He even wrote twice to the Vicar Apostolic and sent representatives to cajole him into giving his support<sup>69</sup>. This is indication in itself of the damage done to the Cabral cause in the public eye by its opposition to the Holy See. In any case, the approach to de Buggenoms achieved nothing beyond a statement made orally to the messengers of Baëz that he had nothing whatever to do with politics, concerned as he was solely with the duties assigned him by the Holy Father<sup>70</sup>. By the end of January Baëz had gained control of the capital, « assisted by the men who are at the head of the government of Haïti »<sup>71</sup>. It had been apparent for some time that the two parts of the island were mutually dependent. Just as Cabral had come to power assisted by Geffrard of Haïti, so now it was the help of Salnave that ensured the victory of Baëz<sup>72</sup>. The two presidents were a formidable pair, alike in many ways, including their harshness in dealing with opposition<sup>73</sup>. Both republics had now greater stability, however it may have been achieved, than ever before.

## 6. Troubles in St. Thomas.

While the Cabral regime was trying to maintain itself in Santo Domingo, Father de Buggenoms had other cares to claim his attention. The year 1867 was a bad one for St. Thomas. In April the island was devastated by a hurricane. When it was reported in Europe, one newspaper put the toll as five hundred dead and 20,000,000 piastres in damage<sup>74</sup>. This was no more than the beginning of a dreadful catalogue of disasters.

---

<sup>68</sup> de Buggenoms to Antonelli, 28th February 1868. Copy in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I, B, 14.

<sup>69</sup> de Buggenoms to Mauron, 27th December 1867, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I, B, 11.

<sup>71</sup> de Buggenoms to Antonelli, 28th February 1868. Copy in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I, B, 14.

<sup>72</sup> de Buggenoms to Mauron, 22nd August 1868, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I, B, 14.

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> A. BONI, 195.

On 29th October there was another hurricane, if anything more violent. In the harbour sixty-four ships were wrecked, including at least one large steamer, an English liner, and another ocean-going vessel. While the stricken island was still assessing the frightful loss, on 18th November there occurred an earthquake to topple the few buildings that remained standing. And then the terrified populace saw further horror approaching; a tidal wave some metres high and crested with foam came sweeping down on the island. The people found refuge on what high land there was while the sea completed the destruction<sup>75</sup>. Then began the heartbreaking task of searching out and burying the dead. It was an unforgettable introduction to the mission for two Fathers newly arrived from Belgium, Joseph Didier<sup>76</sup> and Felix Kips<sup>77</sup>. But there was even worse to follow.

The new year brought the usual grim companion of natural disasters in those waters, an epidemic of cholera<sup>78</sup>. While it raged through January and February the Redemptorists laboured unceasingly, caring for the sick, assisting the dying and burying the dead, as many as four or five a day. At an early stage Father Philippe Noël succumbed<sup>79</sup>. Those who remained continued to perform deeds of real heroism until at last the bad days were over.

Of these labours the superior had to bear the heaviest burdens. The constant problem was that of language: one needed the gift of tongues in order to attend to the ordinary care of the people of St. Thomas. Most commonly English was used, but for the care of the Catholics one needed French and Spanish as well and in addition the peculiar dialect called *papiamento*, a sort of pidgin, it seems, originating in Curaçao but widely used in the Indies<sup>80</sup>. Father Bossers,

---

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Father Joseph Didier was thirty-one years old when he arrived in St. Thomas. Of the Belgian province, he had been teaching Church History in the Dutch studentate in Wittem when he was appointed to the mission. He was credited with some knowledge of English, which no doubt prompted his appointment. He died in 1907.

<sup>77</sup> Felix Kips, ordained priest for the diocese of Malines in 1852, had taken his vows as a Redemptorist five years later. In 1867 when he arrived in St. Thomas he was forty-five years old. Worn out by the rough introduction to his new mission, he died in 1869. Cf. A. BONI, 312.

<sup>78</sup> A. BONI, 197.

<sup>79</sup> A priest of the diocese of Tournai, Father Noël took his vows as a Redemptorist in 1845. He was provincial in Belgium from 1856 to 1859 and then had led an unfortunate attempt to make a foundation in Chile. He was in his fifty-third year when he died. Cf. *Spic. hist.*, 30 (1982) 369-399.



who had been able to sustain the mission during the superior's absence in Santo Domingo, had been transferred to the new Dutch foundation in Surinam just before the troubles began in the previous April<sup>81</sup>. Since Father Noël was never at ease in English and the two newcomers had arrived in the midst of the turmoil, that left de Buggenoms constantly on call, especially as long as the cholera raged.

The demands on the missionaries were to be increased in ways which were most consoling, even though exacting a heavy toll on men already exhausted. After the first hurricane in April de Buggenoms, moved by a strange foreboding as he said, preached to his people about the chastisements their sins deserved<sup>82</sup>. He had no need to search for examples, since the island was notorious enough for its easy morality. His words had apparently little immediate effect; but when disaster struck again later in the year, the entire population was moved.

It seems to have made a great impression that after the hurricane, the earthquake and the flood the Catholic church remained standing, while the Anglican church, « served by an apostate Catholic », was destroyed<sup>83</sup>. The Fathers found themselves « besieged by poor sinners seeking to be reconciled to God ». The work was all the harder because there were so many non-Catholics among the penitents and such a great number of people living in irregular unions, a common feature of life on St. Thomas. All of these needed instruction. In the closing weeks of the year forty non-Catholics were received into the Church and an equal number of marriages were rectified<sup>84</sup>. At the time his report to Rome Father de Buggenoms had sixty persons coming every day for instructions. In addition there was such a renewal of fervour among the Catholics that the church could no longer cope with the crowds. The people begged for a second church; and the Fathers, seeing the Finger of God in what was happening, had already taken the work in hand by January<sup>85</sup>. The conversions showed no sign of slackening by the time

---

<sup>80</sup> de Buggenoms to Antonelli, 14th January 1868. Copy in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 14.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> A. BONI, 196.

<sup>83</sup> de Buggenoms to Antonelli, 14th January 1868. Copy in AGR, VI., Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 14.

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*

de Buggenoms was again reporting to Rome. During the early weeks of 1868 forty-eight non-Catholics were received into the Church and forty-six marriages were rectified. And now he had to admit that the continuing success was exacting its toll on the missionaries<sup>86</sup>.

The growth of Catholicism in St. Thomas was really something that called for comment. The Bishop of Roseau, Dominica, in whose diocese the island lay, Mgr. Poirier, paid a well deserved tribute to the Redemptorists, mentioning Father de Buggenoms in particular. « Since the mission of St. Thomas has been entrusted to him and his confrères the number of Catholics has grown from 7000 to 10,000 »<sup>87</sup>. The Redemptorists had come to St. Thomas to find the Church in a sad state, disheartened and divided by a petty schism. In a single decade the scene had been changed. Needless to say, the little community was delighted with its achievement, as is evident in their frequent letters to their Superior General. They are full of news of conversions, scenes of fervour, building in progress and constant pleas for reinforcements to meet the flood of pastoral duties. The affairs of Santo Domingo receded more and more into the background. Father de Buggenoms still bore the title of Vicar Apostolic, but he was obviously engrossed by the exciting and vastly more rewarding activity closer to hand.

One can hardly doubt his sincerity as he asked to be relieved of his charge. He had already told Father Mauron in December that he considered it most inopportune for him to leave St. Thomas<sup>88</sup>. In his reports to Antonelli he was respectfully insistent on the need for him to remain in St. Thomas. Writing in January before the collapse of the Cabral regime, he argued that as long as things remained in a state of uncertainty it would not be wise to deprive the people of St. Thomas of the material as well as spiritual help he could certainly offer for the sake of the extremely dubious advantage of a visit to Santo Domingo<sup>89</sup>. A month later he offered his resignation, protesting there was little he could hope to achieve as Vicar Apostolic, whereas

---

<sup>86</sup> de Buggenoms to Antonelli, 28th February 1868. Copy in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 14.

<sup>87</sup> Circular letter of Mgr. René Marie Charles Poirier, 5th June 1870. The text of the letter is given in A. BONI, 232.

<sup>88</sup> de Buggenoms to Mauron, 27th December 1867, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 11.

<sup>89</sup> de Buggenoms to Antonelli, 14th January 1868. Copy in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 14.

since the death of Father Noël the work in St. Thomas was even more exhausting<sup>90</sup>.

By May he had received an answer to his two reports<sup>91</sup>. He was to retain his office, but was allowed to act through a vicar, visiting the archdiocese from time to time as his duties in St. Thomas allowed. With this far from satisfactory compromise de Buggenoms had to be content. There had been little consolation indeed for him in the experience of his authority as Vicar Apostolic of the archdiocese, a resounding title and precious little achievement.

With the return of Baëz a new phase was beginning in the dealings of Father de Buggenoms with the republic. He was plainly sincere in protesting willingness to undertake whatever was asked of him by the Holy See, but he was far less ready for the inevitable strife and deception than he had been a year earlier. The succession of calamities on St. Thomas must have sapped his resources and well as tried his patience. He was far from tolerant even when he was well. It is only natural that he should look on his work in Santo Domingo as offering little beyond further frustration and loss of precious time. At best it was a poor enough alternative to the rewarding labours on St. Thomas, where his efforts were winning such tangible results. There can be no doubt where he had set his heart.

---

<sup>90</sup> de Buggenoms to Antonelli, 28th February 1868. Copy in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 14.

<sup>91</sup> de Buggenoms to Mauron, 12th May 1868, AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 14.

## DOCUMENTS

1. - Brief of Pius IX appointing Father de Buggenoms Vicar Apostolic, 19th June 1866. Copy in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I, B, 12.

## PIUS PP. IX

Dilecte Fili, Salutem et Benedictionem apostolicam. Quum ex hac apostolica Sede ad quam Nos, licet immeritos evexit Altissimus tamquam ex cruce aliqua Catholicum orbem circumspeciamus, paternas Nostras curas ad eas Dioceses pro Nostro munere intendimus, quae careant pastoris auxilio, earumque regimini studiose providimus, ne Dominicus grex sine custodia manens frementium belluarum patiatur incursum. Quae cum ita sint, apostolicam Nostram exquirat providentiam Archiepiscopalis Ecclesia S. Dominici, quae per translationem Ven. Fratris Benvenuti Monzon y Martins ad Archiepiscopalem Ecclesiam Granatensem pastore suo viduata existit, ac proinde deliberandum Nobis putavimus de eligenda idonea persona cui praedictae Ecclesiae regimen committamus. In hac porro deliberatione quum de tua religione, consilio, doctrina, Dilecte Fili, gravia acceperimus testimonia, te in Vicarium Apostolicum praedictae Ecclesiae ad Nostrum et Sanctae Sedis beneplacitum censuimus eligendum. Te igitur a quibusvis excommunicationis, suspensionis et interdicti aliisque ecclesiasticis sententiis, censuris et poenis quovis modo vel quavis de causa latis, si quas forte incurreris, hujus tantum rei gratia absolventes et absolutum fore censentes, hisce litteris in Vicarium Apostolicum Archiepiscopalis Ecclesiae S. Dominici in spiritualibus et temporalibus quoad Nobis Nostris successoribus visum fuerit eligimus, constituimus ac deputamus cum omnibus et singulis honoribus, facultatibus, juribus quae vel ex privilegio vel ex usu et consuetudine huius muneris propria sunt; tibi que facultatem concedimus ut si aliqua ex causa in hujusmodi Vicarii Apostolici munere perstare nequiveris, ad ejusdem muneris exercitium subdelegare Ecclesiasticum virum possis quem pietate, doctrina, prudentia ad idem officium exercendum magis idoneum in Domino judicaveris. Mandamus proinde dilectis filiis clero universo ac populo memoratae Archiepiscopalis Ecclesiae S. Dominici ut te in Vicarium Apostolicum juxta presentes litteras recipiant et admittant tibi que plenam reverentiam atque obedientiam exhibeant. Non obstantibus quatenus opus est Cancellariae Apostolicae regula de Jure quaesito non tollendo, ac dictae Archiepiscopalis Ecclesiae Statutis et Constitutionibus, etiam juramento, confirmatione Apostolica vel quavis firmitate alia roboratis, atque in universalibus, Provincialibus et Synodalibus Conciliis editis generalibus vel specialibus constitutionibus et ordinationibus aliisque specialibus quamvis mentione dignis in contrarium facientibus quibuscunque. Datum Romae apud S. Petrum sub anulo Piscatoris die XIX Junii MDCCCLXVI, Pontificatus Nostri Anno Vigesimo.

N. Card. Paracciani Clarelli <sup>92</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Nicola Cardinal Clarelli - Paracciani was Secretary of Briefs.

Dilecto filio Ludovico Buggenoms, Praeposito seu Superiori Presbiterorum  
Cognis SSmi Redemptoris in Insula S. Thomas

2. - Antonelli to de Buggenoms, 22nd June 1866. Copy in AGR; VI, Prov.  
Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 12.

Mto Rdo Padre,

Sua Santità ha appreso con vera soddisfazione le notizie che la P.V. mi partecipava col di Lei foglio dei 21 maggio scorso relativamente all'esito della officiosa missione di cui era stata incaricata presso il Sig. Presidente della Repubblica di Santo Domingo, e allo stato religioso di quella archidiocesi. Nel tributarnele i dovuti elogi, io non posso a meno esprimerle la dispiacevole impressione che ha dovuto cagionare la condotta strana tenuta dal P. Paez, che Ella così esattamente mi descrive, dopo aver ricevuto la lettera colla quale il medesimo veniva dalla S. Sede confermato nell'incarico di Amministratore apostolico dell'archidiocesi. E qui gioverà che la P.V. conosca che la lettera menzionata era in risposta ad altra del Sacerdote Paez con che comunicava alla S. Sede di essere entrato nell'esercizio della giurisdizione ecclesiastica di Santo Domingo in forza delle facoltà conferitegli dal proprio Arcivescovo Monsig. Monzon, il quale aveva dovuto allontanarsi dall'isola per le sopraggiunte circostanze politiche: facoltà che il P. Paez era stato autorizzato dallo stesso Prelato di poter suddelegare; come difatti fece poco dopo. Ora il S. Padre non trovò difficoltà in vista delle informazioni avute sulle qualità del P. Paez che venne rappresentato l'ecclesiastico più idoneo dell'Archidiocesi, e su cui potesse aversi confidenza di confermare la nomina e le facoltà che aveagli conferito Mgr. Monzon; tanto più che questo Prelato traslato alla Sede di Granata nella Penisola veniva con ciò stesso a perdere ogni giurisdizione sulla chiesa di S. Domingo. Ma dalla relazione che Ella mi fo io non iscorgo che il Paez abbia indicato alla P.V. che passati appena alcuni giorni dopo l'invio della sua prima lettera a Roma tornò a scrivere altra (che giungeva dopo spedita la suddetta conferma apostolica) significando di aver suddelegato l'incarico insieme colle facoltà al sacerdote Pina propostogli dal Sig. Presidente Baéz. A questa seconda lettera non si credette di dar riscontro sul momento, perché erasi già a tutto provveduto dalla S. Sede colla risposta alla prima partecipazione del Paez, la quale risposta avendo sofferto del ritardo nel cammino e trovandosi nelle mani di Mgr. Vescovo di Portorico, fu precisamente quella da detto Prelato alla P.V. consegnata per l'opportuno ricapito. Nessuno ha potuto scorgere che il P. Paez Le abbia fatto conoscere di aver in seguito trasmesso a Roma per mezzo del menzionato Sacerdote Pina il certificato dei medici di Santo Domingo che lo dichiararono per la debolezza di sua salute inabile ad esercitare l'esercizio dell'incarico affidatogli. Non si sa quindi comprendere come egli al ricevere dalla di Lei mani la suespressa risposta o la conferma della S. Sede, non abbia ricordato questi fatti ed abbia po-

tuto suddelegare ad altro ecclesiastico come la P.V. mi annunzia quelle facultà che il Sacerdote Pina già esercitava per l'atto di suddelegazione dello stesso P. Paez; con fondato timore di perturbare in tal guisa l'esercizio della giurisdizione ecclesiastica e di formare uno scisma nella Archidiocesi.

A prevenire pertanto ogni male e disordine nell'amministrazione diocesana di Santo Domingo e in deferenza alle insinuazioni espresse dal Sig. Presidente Baëz nella lettera a Lei diretta, che la P.V. mi ha trasmessa nel suo originale, Sua Santità è venuto nella determinazione di nominarla Vicario Apostolico *ad beneplacitum S. Sedis* ed a tal effetto ha ordinato che si spedisse il Breve che qui unito Le rimetto. E mente perciò della stessa Santità Sua che la P.V. si rechi nuovamente quanto prima Le sarà possibile a Santo Domingo, e dopo aver fatto conoscere il Breve menzionato al Sig. Presidente non che ai sacerdoti Paez e Pina, perché sia loro noto l'incarico commessole dalla S. Sede, assuma senza ritardo l'amministrazione di quella Archidiocesi. Affinché poi nulla manchi per parte della stessa S. Sede a rendere più fruttuose le fatiche e i vantaggi del di Lei ministero, il S. Padre si è degnato di autorizzarla a conferire il sacramento della Cresima. Le aggiunge pure due lettere pei menzionati ecclesiastici, rilasciando però alla di Lei prudenza di farne l'uso che meglio crederà. La preverrà solo che colle lettere medesime si partecipa ai medesimi Paez e Pina l'ordine di Sua Santità che debbono cessare da qualunque atto di amministrazione ecclesiastica e si esortano a contribuire in tutto ciò che la P.V. crederà conveniente al buon esito della di Lei missione per vantaggio di cotesti fedeli e per l'esaltazione della nostra religione, che il S. Padre ha unicamente in vista colle misure adottate. Nella lettera poi diretta al P. Paez non si è mancato com'ella vedrà di aver in vista le savie di Lei riflessioni perché possa il medesimo servire di utilità alla buona causa, godendo nel pubblico e specialmente tra gli ecclesiastici dell'isola, non ostante i suoi difetti, di molta riputazione.

Rimane poi la P.V. autorizzata a far conoscere al governo di Santo Domingo che il S. Padre è dispositissimo a conferirle il carattere vescovile, appena potrà apprendere il buon risultato della di Lei missione, non che ad accogliere quelle basi per un accomodamento degli affari religiosi dell'isola, che potranno essere concertate fra Lei ed il Presidente e che ha diritto di ripromettersi da un governo e da un popolo cattolico qual'è quello di Santo Domingo.

Finalmente, Le sarà grato sapere che Sua Santità ha già ordinato che si prendano con questo Rmo P. Rettore Maggiore della Congregazione le opportune disposizioni affine di preparare l'invio dall'Europa di alcuni individui della Congregazione stessa, i quali dovranno portarsi a Santo Domingo appena si avrà la sicurezza che vi possono esercitare con frutto il loro ministero.

In attesa dei di Lei riscontri, Le confermo i sensi della mia più sentita stima

Roma 22 giugno 1866

Di V.P.R. servitor vero  
G.C. Antonelli.

3. - De Buggenoms to Antonelli, 6th - 13th September 1866. Copy in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10.

Eminence,

C'est de Santo Domingo que je commence du moins cette lettre afin d'informer le St. Siège des circonstances qui ont signalé les 12 premiers jours de ma résidence dans la capitale de cette République en ma qualité de Vicaire Apost. de l'Archidiocèse. Lorsque la lettre de V.E. m'arriva le 16 juillet dernier avec le Bref de ma nomination à la charge de Vic. Ap. de l'Eglise de Santo Domingo l'ex président Baëz était en fuite et j'ignorais la réception que me ferait le gouvernement tel quel qui lui avait succédé, mais ces paroles de votre lettre « E mente perciò della Stessa Santità Sua che la P.V. si rechi nuovamente quanto prima le sarà possibile a Santo Domingo etc » me firent sans hésiter prendre la résolution d'exécuter les ordres du S. Père, vu surtout l'urgence d'apporter promptement remède aux désordres des affaires ecclésiastiques de S. Domingo et l'impossibilité de m'assurer des dispositions du gouvernement actuel de la République, à moins de m'y rendre personnellement. Je ne le pouvais avant le milieu du mois d'août, parce que durant le saison d'hivernage, qui dure jusqu'au 25 octobre, il n'y a de service régulier entre St. Thomas et S. Domingo que le vapeur paquebot, une fois par mois. Je me hâtai de mettre ordre aux affaires de la maison de St. Thomas et dès le 1er août je me rendis à Porto-Rico, afin de profiter des renseignements que je désirais obtenir de la part du R. P. Proviseur ou Administrateur de l'Evêché qui avait accompagné l'Archevêque Monzón y Martín en qualité de curé de la cathédrale et de Vicaire Générale de l'Eglise de S. Domingo. C'est ce que je réussis à faire profitant aussi de l'obligeance du Supérieur du Séminaire, le R. P. Iloch S.J. Pendant mon séjour à Porto-Rico je rédigeai même une lettre pastorale ou circulaire que j'y fis imprimer afin de tenir tout prêt dès mon arrivée à S. Domingo pour informer le clergé et les fidèles de la décision du St. Siège et de ce qu'il leur importait de savoir touchant ma personne, les sentiments dans lesquels j'avais cru devoir accepter la charge de Vicaire Ap. et la manière dont j'exercerais cette charge. Cette circulaire fut fortement approuvée des ecclésiastiques le plus à même de l'apprécier à Porto-Rico.

J'appris dans l'entretemps que le P. Benito Paez continuait d'exercer les fonctions d'administrateur *titulo colorato* et de bonne foi, vu que l'acceptation de la renonciation ainsi que la nomination du P. Pina pour le remplacer ayant été envoyées à Porto-Rico par le Nonce de Madrid, y avaient été sagement détenues par l'administrateur du Diocèse (l'evêque étant en Espagne). En effet le P. Pina ayant du s'enfuir avec l'ex-président Baëz, l'Archidiocèse de S. Domingo se serait trouvé sans administrateur quelconque. Mais le P. Benito Paez se rendait coupable de mille indiscretions en irritant mal à propos les franc-maçons par les sorties qu'il faisait contre eux dans ses sermons et à contre-temps sans provocation légitime; et surtout il avait poussé la violence jusqu'à interdire pour dix jours le Prêtre Francisco Xav. Billini, le seul solidement pieux et zélé

de la ville et obligé la fermeture avec éclat de l'église qu'il desservait, et cela pourquoi? Parce que la foule des personnes les plus pieuses se portait à cette église et laissait la cathédrale comparativement vide à cause du peu de popularité et autres défauts du curé de la cathédrale et du P. Paez. Je dois à la vérité de dire que le P. Fr. Xav. Billini avait entrepris toutes sortes de bonnes oeuvres, avec une bonne intention, sans assez se pouvoir des permissions requises, son église dépendant de la cathédrale. Fr. Xav. Billini est âgé de 28 ans et Prêtre depuis deux ans; il est faible de santé, peu instruit faute de dons naturels, mais très studieux et un vrai modèle de piété. Il est très obstiné, et c'est grâce à son obstination qu'il a persévéré à mener une vie véritablement sacerdotale. Il manque de jugement, de direction, faute d'expérience plutôt que par mauvaise volonté. Il m'a promis de suivre le plan de conduite que je lui ai tracé, et il s'est humilié en avouant ses torts. Ce Prêtre Fr. X. Billini, se voyant donc privé de son église, a établi une école d'externes et d'internes qu'il dirige et fait pour cela de grands sacrifices. Dans l'établissement de cette école il a aussi comme forcé le P. Paez de ne plus le contrecarrer, en s'adressant au gouvernement qui l'a pleinement autorisé. Il a fait imprimer des prospectus avec cette patente du gouv't. Je crains que son projet ne réussisse pas faute d'élèves capables de l'aider payer les frais de son petit collège ou pensionnat. Je vois en cela de la bonne volonté mais un défaut de patience, de discrétion et surtout d'expérience plutôt d'autre chose. C'est un Prêtre qui serait impayable si l'Eglise était sagement organisée. Son église, qui n'est que succursale, reste fermée.

Je comptais pourvoir m'embarquer à Porto-Rico pour S. Domingo par le vapeur-paquebot qui, partant de St. Thomas au milieu d'août, touche à tous les ports de mer jusqu'à la Havane, mais contrairement à toute attente le gouvernement Espagnol obligea cette fois le capitaine de se charger d'un grand nombre de prisonniers politiques détenus à Porto-Rico avec ordre de les transporter directement à Cuba sans s'arrêter à S. Domingo. Il me fallait attendre tout un mois de plus, mais heureusement cinq autres voyageurs se trouvant dans le même embarras que moi, nous fîmes une petite goëlette qui devait nous transporter expressément à S. Domingo. La goëlette étant mauvaise, le capitaine inexpérimenté et le vent contraire ou nul, nous souffrîmes beaucoup pendant la traversée, qui dura trois fois au moins plus que nous ne nous y étions attendus, et nous arrivâmes enfin le samedi 25 août en rade devant S. Domingo. Je me rendis le jour même chez le Général Cabral, chargé du pouvoir exécutif, afin de lui faire part de mon élection à la charge de Vicaire Ap. et le prier de permettre la promulgation du Bref Apostolique. Il me reçut très amicalement, mais c'est un homme qui semble ne pouvoir parler ni rien faire par lui-même. Il appela son secrétaire et un autre générale, et ils me firent entendre que je venais bien à propos que l'Eglise ne possédait pas les éléments nécessaires pour se réorganiser etc... Mais qu'il était nécessaire de faire part de ma nomination de Vicaire Ap. au conseil d'Etat, et on me pria de revenir le surlendemain matin chercher l'autorisation requise.

Je me presentai au Palais Ministériel au jour et à l'heure indiqués, mais sans autre résultat qu'une nouvelle promesse d'une réponse prompte



qui me serait envoyée. Dans l'entretemps il y eut des conciliabules entre les secrétaires d'Etat et les Prêtres de la capitale: plusieurs d'entre ces Prêtres vinrent même me dire tout en me faisant tous des protestations de soumission aux ordres du S. Siège et de leur désir de me voir venir en qualité de Vicaire Ap., qu'ils craignaient une opposition de la part du conseil d'Etat parceque je n'étais pas *Créole Dominicain*. Ne voulant rien négliger de ma part pour empêcher que les secrétaires d'Etat fussent mal instruits par les Prêtres touchant la nature et l'objet de ma mission, j'écrivis au Général Cabral que je désirais qu'il me procurât le plus tôt possible une audience vis-à-vis de tous les secrétaires d'Etat avant qu'ils prononçassent sur la question du Bref ap. Ceci me fut accordé la veille de la fête de Sainte Rose de Lima (le 29 août) grande patronne des Indes et de cette Ile. Je parlai pendant environ une demi-heure devant le conseil des ministres sans être interrompu, leur remontrant que ma double mission de missionnaire rédemptoriste et de Vicaire Ap. était toute en faveur de l'Eglise Dominicaine, et par contrecoup du gouvernement; que de l'aveu même du Général Président l'Archidiocèse manquait des éléments nécessaires pour se réorganiser; qu'étant placé sous la Propaganda, les frais qu'entraînait une hiérarchie ordinaire avec chapitre de chanoines etc. seraient diminués, et le tout simplifié de la manière la plus efficace pour amener les résultats désirables pour l'établissement de séminaires; le remplacement des Prêtres surannés ou autrement inhabiles, pour la réforme même du clergé ou la formation d'un clergé nouveau à l'aide des exercices spirituels et la réforme du peuple à l'aide des missions. Je leur remontrai surtout que la mesure adoptée par le Pape ne pouvait rien avoir d'offensant pour la nationalité Dominicaine puisque cette mesure n'était qu'un remède pour un mal autrement irréparable, et que cette mesure étant d'un caractère extraordinaire, elle ne durerait qu'autant que cela serait indispensable pour amener une organisation ordinaire de l'Eglise; et que ce bout ayant été atteint, rien n'empêcherait que le clergé Dominicain, après que le gouvernement aurait conclu un concordat avec le St. Siège ne présentât ceux d'entre ses membres qui seraient jugés les plus propres pour mettre le S. Père à même de choisir un Evêque ou Archevêque dominicain; et qu'alors les missionnaires pourraient continuer à servir l'Eglise comme ils le font dans les divers diocèses d'Europe, et que le Vicaire Ap., ayant accompli sa mission, se retirerait ou resterait simple supérieur des missionnaires. Je leur citai les exemples des autres pays qui, se trouvant comme se trouvait actuellement le République de S. Domingo, incapables de trouver dans leur sein les éléments nécessaires pour organiser son clergé, avaient reçu des Vicaires Ap. et des missionnaires à l'aide desquels ils s'étaient enfin parvenus à établir une hiérarchie ordinaire, et que ce n'était que pour hâter ce même résultat ou plutôt *pour le rendre possible* que le S. Siège m'avait député vers eux, Je dis beaucoup d'autres choses dans le même sens et tout ce que je m'imaginai être propre à résoudre d'avance d'une manière péremptoire les objections qu'on pourrait me faire. Je conclus en disant que si le conseil avait encore quelques difficultés à résoudre qui étaient de nature à réclamer

l'autorité du St. Siège je m'affrais à en faire part au S. Père et à solliciter une réponse.

Je sus bientôt par les rumeurs des habitants et des Prêtres que le discours que j'avais adressé au conseil d'Etat avait fait une vive sensation. Il y eut de nouveau des consultations entre les secrétaires d'Etat et les Prêtres, et j'appris que le secrétaire d'Etat Tejéra, qui avait été chargé de faire l'office de rapporteur de la cause, s'étant prononcé en ma faveur, et voyant que tous les autres membres du cabinet s'opiniâtraient à ne pas vouloir permettre la promulgation du Bref, il avait demandé sa démission du conseil, qui lui fut accordée. Ce Tejéra m'avait été indiqué comme le seul honnête homme et le plus capable du conseil d'Etat. Il est petit et borgne, a étudié la théologie, croyant devoir embrasser l'état ecclésiastique, auquel il renonça avant avoir reçu aucun ordre majeur. Il est maintenant âgé.

Enfin samedi, 1er Septembre je fus appelé au Palais ministériel pour avoir une entrevue avec le nouveau ministre rapporteur de la cause, jeune homme dont tout le mérite me parut consister dans un aplomb d'assurance d'autant plus obstinée qu'il était dépourvu de science et d'éducation. Il me fit entendre dans une surabondance de paroles que le conseil avait bien pesé tout ce que j'avais dit en faveur du Bref ap. et que tous avouaient que la mesure adoptée par le Pape serait bien le meilleur remède à apporter à l'état actuel de l'Eglise de S. Domingo; mais que les intérêts de l'Etat étaient intimement liés avec l'opinion de la majorité et que sachant que la majorité serait offensée dans sa nationalité si le gouvernement autorisait la promulgation du Bref qui établissait un étranger chef de l'Eglise, le conseil se trouvait dans la nécessité de passer outre toute autre considération et défendre la promulgation du Bref ainsi que l'exercice de ma charge de Vicaire Ap. Il m'insinua alors que si je pouvais rester comme Légat Apost. tandis que le Pape nommerait un Evêque Créole Dominicain, le gouvernement le permettrait avec plaisir. Je lui montrai que l'Eglise ne pouvait avoir deux chefs dans ce même archidiocèse, la chose n'étant pas praticable, vu que les mesures du Vicaire Ap. Missionnaire seraient inefficaces pour l'organisation de cet archidiocèse etc. Je lui offris du reste (afin de temporiser et de donner le temps à la véritable majorité, non du clergé, mais du peuple, de se prononcer en faveur du Bref) d'en écrire au S. Siège et que dans l'entretemps je resterais ici comme simple Prêtre sans faire publiquement allusion au Bref. Il eut du moins l'air d'approuver et me promit une réponse prompte et définitive. C'était la veille du Dimanche, et je fus chez le curé de la cathédrale pour lui ordonner d'annoncer le lendemain au prône de la Grand'Messe que je chantais depuis mon arrivée chaque Dimanche et jours de fête, à partir du 8, fête de la Nativité de la S. Vierge. Ceci fut fait en me donnant le titre de Vicaire Ap. de l'archidiocèse et il s'ensuivit une manifestation générale de contentement parmi tout le peuple, qui depuis mon arrivée affluait à la cathédrale. La réponse définitive arriva et c'était le refus positif de la promulgation du Bref et de l'exercice de ma charge, avec l'invitation de subdéléguer mes facultés. Je refusai de le faire

autrement qu'en laissant les choses dans l'état dans lequel je les avais trouvées, en donnant les facultés nécessaires à l'exadministrateur pour me remplacer valablement. Ceci ne fut pas agréé et je reçus le lendemain une lettre du conseil signée par ce ministre rapporteur, spécifiant dans un mélange de termes incivils et d'expressions de haute vénération et de profond respect à l'égard du S. Père et de ma personne, que, vu mon refus de subdéléguer simplement et sans réserve mes facultés de Vicaire Ap. j'avais l'ordre d'évacuer le territoire de la République sans le plus bref délai. (Hereusement, il n'y aura d'occasion avant l'arrivée du vapeur paquebot du 9 courant).

Me voyant placé dans l'alternative de m'en aller sans subdéléguer mes facultés ou de les subdéléguer à un Prêtre tel quel, je crus devoir adopter l'expédient suivant. Je subdéléguai mes facultés de Vicaire Ap. au Prêtre qu'on m'a toujours dit être le plus vertueux et instruit, le curé de St. Christophe à 16 lieues de la capitale, D. José de Jesu Ayala de l'ordre de S. Dominique; mais je le fis en protestant que c'était par force et parceque je me voyais condamné par le gouvernement actuel de la République à évacuer le territoire, ajoutant que j'entendais faire cette protestation sans préjudice de la validité de l'acte de subdélégation. J'écrivis ceci en latin afin que les Prêtres seuls le comprissent; et en effet le gouvernement n'a pu lire cet acte, qui l'aurait peut-être trop irrité, et s'est satisfait de savoir que la subdélégation était faite. J'avais une raison pour ne pas surirriter ces messieurs du gouv. parcequ'ils ont fait malicieusement, ou leurs partisans, circuler le bruit que j'étais un agent secret de l'ex-président Baéz, et cela suffirait pour qu'ils me fissent incontinent et sans forme de procès mettre en prison, ce que je ne veux pas m'attirer par imprudence. Avec la grâce de Dieu j'ai réussi autant que le pouvais réussir, c'est-à-dire que tous les Prêtres se sont trouvés très embarrassés et tous les habitants en émoi. Les Prêtres eux-mêmes m'ont dit que le peuple les accuse d'être la cause du refus du gouvernement à l'égard du Bref. Le gouvernement lui-même a été allarmé et a cru devoir dans le prochain journal officiel *El Monitor* faire insérer un article de fond « ad captivandam benevolentiam populi » amplifiant sur l'importance de favoriser les Créoles Dominicains et de leur donner toutes les charges, toutes les dignités, tous les privilèges, à l'exclusion des étrangers, puisqu'en cela consiste le salut de la République! Plus loin se trouve l'annonce de la démission du ministre Tejera que l'on fait entendre avoir été motivée par le désir qu'il avait de se reposer, et on le comble d'éloges — sachant que le ministre étant le plus apprécié par le peuple, il est important de l'empêcher de croire qu'il s'est retiré parce qu'il n'a pas voulu tromper dans la conspiration des autres contre le Bref. Enfin un troisième article parle de ma personne, de la présentation que j'ai faite de ma nomination à la charge de Vicaire Ap. etc. et du refus que le gouvernement a été contraint de donner à la promulgation de ce Bref afin de *sauvegarder la nationalité* de la République Dominicaine — et on ajouta sans commentaire qu'étant résolu (on a craint de dire qu'on m'avait forcé) de quitter le territoire, j'avais subdélégué mes pouvoirs en faveur d'un Prêtre présenté par le gouvernement (ce qui est faux.) de D. José de

Jesu Ayala, Prêtre très connu, étant âgé de 80 ans, dont une grande partie a été dans l'Île de S. Domingo. Tout ceci n'empêche pas que le peuple sache le vérité et que les Prêtres en sont bien gênés. Aussi se sont réunis hier (5 septembre) en conseil à l'invitation du P. Benito Paez afin de rédiger une protestation de soumission aux ordres du S. Siège et de bonne volonté à l'égard du Vicaire Ap. qui leur a été envoyé. J'insérerai cette pièce dans cette lettre: elle n'est pas encore en ma possession. Il y avait sept Prêtres à cette réunion que j'ai voulu ignorer, six de la capitale et un curé de S. Carlos, le village le plus proche, et ami de Baëz. Tous les Prêtres viennent demander des pouvoirs pour bénir des chapelets etc. et me protester de leur soumission. Le P. Benito Paez lui-même vient de me dire que si les Prêtres avaient voulu faire cete protestation à temps (et je l'avais suggérée à B. Paez lui-même dès le commencement) le gouvernement n'aurait pas osé adopter la mesure qu'il a prise; mais cette protestation d'hier ces Prêtres, la plupart du moins, ne l'auraient pas encore faite, s'ils avaient pu soupçonner qu'en la faisant, le Bref du Pape serait promulgué. Afin d'éviter autant que possible des abus en attendant que le S. Siège me donne de nouveaux ordres ou me décharge de la responsabilité inhérente à mon office de Vicaire Ap. j'écrirai en particulier au Prêtre subdélégué pour lui signifier que ce n'est pas mon intention, parceque ce n'est pas celle du S. Siège, qu'il donne les facultés de prêcher etc. à certains Prêtres qui n'exercent leurs fonctions que pour faire de la politique, comme est un certain Meriño, Dominicain, que l'ex-président Baëz a exilé, celui que le gouvernement m'a présenté et qui s'était fait le président d'une assemblée constituante etc.

Il y a ici trois clerics Minorites qui allaient être envoyés à Cuba pour y être ce mois même ordonnés sousdiacres, diacres et prêtres; or je m'y suis opposé et je m'y oppose encore parcequ'ils n'ont jamais étudié une seule page de théologie dogmatique et ne connaissent pas même le nom de la Théologie Morale de St. Alphonse. je ne cesse de recevoir des compliments de condoléance de la part du peuple et après ma Messe chaque jour j'en vois beaucoup qui versent des larmes, jusqu'au sacristain et au chanter qui m'ont dit que j'aurais dû partir sans subdéléguer. Tous disent que mon départ est un châtiment que Dieu infligé à ce pays. Il est presque certain que si le pouvoir de subdéléguer mes facultés ne m'avait pas été accordé et spécifié dans le Bref, le gouvernement aurait été empêché par les Prêtres de me faire évacuer le territoire; mais je suis très content d'avoir pu subdéléguer, puisque de la manière que je l'ai fait, cela m'a aidé d'achever en peu de temps plus de bien peut-être que je n'aurais fait en plusieurs mois; et enfin de tout, le résultat, vu les circonstances, ne pouvait être meilleur que celui que j'ai obtenu.

Plusiers Prêtres m'ont promis de m'écrire par chaque occasion à St. Thomas jusqu'à ce que j'eusse reçu des nouvelles du S. Siège. Je prêcherai samedi prochain, 8 septembre, et chanterai la Grand'Messe comme cela a été annoncé, car tous les Prêtres m'y convient; mais je ne prêcherai que très familièrement sur la fête du jour, et cela suffira pour mon but. Je suis sûr qu'il y aura foule. Tous les Prêtres ont promis spontanément de venir m'accompagner au port le jour de mon départ. Le gou-

vernement est devenu unpopulaire. Ceux qui s'y entendent le mieux disent que la République actuelle de Santo Domingo va se diviser en trois républiques, ou qu'une annexion aura lieu entre S. Domingo et Haïty (partie française) ou, ce qui est encore plus vraisemblable, que les Yankees (Américains) prendront possession de l'Île toute entière. L'avenir est une énigme, mais ce serait un moindre mal de voir les Yankees dominer dans cette ou ces malheureuses républiques de semi-sauvages que de le voir (le gouvernement) dans les mains de Catholiques franc-maçons, qui prétendent mieux entendre les intérêts que non pas le S. Père. Je suis porté à croire que si l'exprésident Baëz avait pu se maintenir jusqu'à présent, le Bref Ap. qui me nomme Vic. Ap. de l'Archidiocèse n'aurait pas éprouvé un meilleur sort, car le mensonge est à l'ordre du jour dans tous les gouvernements où les franc-maçons dominent. Baëz a fait mettre dans la réponse que j'ai eu l'honneur d'envoyer expressément dans son texte original à votre Em. que le titre qui me conviendrait le mieux était celui de *Déléгат Apostolique* et je me trompe fort s'il ne voulait pas signifier par là un *Nonce Ap.* qui n'aurait eu qu'un caractère d'envoyé extraordinaire distinct du caractère d'Evêque ordinaire, et il aurait présenté pour cette dernière charge son favori, le P. Pina, qui n'a d'autre mérite à ses yeux que son dévouement à sa cause, dévouement dont le secret est l'ambition et l'espoir de réussir à devenir le chef de l'Archidiocèse.

A propos de la francmaçonnerie, je crois de mon devoir de porter à la connaissance du S. Siège que dans toute la partie française de l'Île nommée Haïty tous les Prêtres absolvent les franc-maçons sans les interroger, quoiqu'ils sachent qu'ils le sont; et quand ils les interrogent, ils se contentent d'une simple promesse, qu'ils savent être inefficace. Plusieurs de ces Prêtres ont interrogé là-dessus leur supérieur ecclésiastique, qui reside à Port-au-Prince, et jamais ils n'ont reçu de réponse ni d'avis touchant la conduite qu'ils devaient tenir. Ils reçoivent de la part des franc-maçons après leurs festins, sans protester, des dons de vin et de comestibles. Les chaises dans les églises sont ornées de signes maçonniques, les quêtes en forme triangulaire etc. Je tiens ces renseignements de bons Prêtres qui m'ont consulté et qui m'ont prié de faire connaître la chose au S. Siège, sans cependant mentionner leurs noms. Je le fais indépendamment de cela, pour ma propre satisfaction, afin d'exposer les cas qui se sont présentés à moi à St. Thomas, et même ici. A St. Thomas j'ai eu l'occasion d'assister pendant plusieurs mois dans la maladie dont elle est morte la femme du Général Salomon, ex-secrétaire d'Etat de l'ex-empereur Soulouque. Ce Général Salomon m'est devenu très attaché, et il a voulu plusieurs fois s'approcher des sacrements; mais il possède tous les grades de la franc-maçonnerie. C'est en vain que je lui ai fait lire l'allocution du St. Père et les livres les plus propres à le convaincre qu'il doit cesser d'être franc-maçon; il ne peut surmonter deux arguments qu'il oppose: 1° qu'il ne voit aucun mal, qu'il n'a jamais fait de mal dans la franc-maçonnerie; et si cette société est condamnée ce ne peut être celle de Haïty ou de St. Thomas qu'il connaît 2° il connaît une foule de personnes qui reçoivent l'absolution et la communion et qui cependant sont franc-maçons

comme lui. Ce dernier argument surtout le touche le plus. C'est un honnête homme à part cette erreur; il fréquente l'église, fait le chemin de la croix avec piété et sans ombre de respect humain; et il a toujours été fidèle à sa femme avec laquelle il a vécu de longues années et de la mort de laquelle il est inconsolable. Il a promis de venir résider à S. Domingo, si j'y restais établi, et il espère toujours pouvoir se confesser sans cesser d'être franc-maçon. Je cite ce fait entre beaucoup d'autres pour montrer l'immense abus qui est la conséquence de la tolérance, apparente du moins, de la franc-maçonnerie par un certain clergé; d'autant plus que ces Prêtres de Haïty m'ont assuré que si *tout le clergé* était uni pour refuser absolument les sacraments aux franc-maçons le peuple obéirait plutôt à l'Eglise que le consentir à être privé des sacraments.

Je m'en vais donc retourner à St. Thomas où je me tiendrai dans la disposition de faire tout ce que l'obéissance me dictera. Quoique apparemment je n'ai pas réussi, je me suis rempli de reconnaissance envers Dieu et convaincu que les prières qui ont été et sont offertes pour le succès de ma mission ont été exaucées de la meilleure manière qu'elles pouvaient l'être jusqu'à le présent. Je serai du reste trop heureux si après avoir témoigné ma bonne volonté de servir le S. Siège il m'est permis de rentrer dans l'état de simple missionnaire Rédemptoriste et d'achever mes jours comme j'ai toujours désiré, et le désire plus que jamais dans l'obscurité et sujet à l'obéissance prescrite par mes vœux de religion, dans le sens ordinaire de la Règle que j'ai eu le bonheur d'embrasser, et qui résume tout ce qui peut être pour moi un sujet d'ambition dans ce monde. C'est dans ces sentiments que j'ai l'honneur de me dire avec le plus profond respect de Votre Eminence

Santo Domingo le 6 septembre 1866

le très humble serviteur  
L. de Buggenoms C.SS.R., V.A.

Appendice à la lettre adressée à S.E. le Card. Antonelli

7 et 8 septembre

Un des ministres du gouvernement, non celui qui a été chargé de rapporter sur la question du Bref, est allé visiter contre sa coutume Don Domingo de la Rocha, ce vieillard qui jouit justement de la meilleure réputation dans toute l'île, étant d'ailleurs riche et très instruit mais refusant depuis longtemps de prendre une part active aux affaires de gouvernement, qui lui a cependant offert tout récemment encore de le nommer président. L'objet de cette visite était de lui faire part de la rumeur publique qui accuse le gouvernement et de lui dire positivement que la mesure adoptée *était le résultat des conseils d'une partie du clergé*. Ensuite d'insinuer que je parlais de S. Domingo *motu proprio* et sans coaction de la part du gouvernement, donc je tiens néanmoins la lettre bien explicite m'ordonnant d'évacuer le territoire le plus tôt possible — et cette lettre n'a pas été retractée par aucun document officiel. Cette dé-

marche de ce secrétaire d'Etat, qui est le ministre des Finances (hacienda) prouve que le gouvernement voudrait maintenant se justifier et de se disculper vis-à-vis de la vraie majorité et faire tomber sur quelques Prêtres l'odieux de leur conduite. Les Prêtres de leur côté cherchent aussi à se justifier et disculper vis à vis le peuple en rejetant la faute sur le gouvernement, et c'est pourquoi ils se sont réunis pour faire cette protestation de soumission aux ordres du S. Père. Ils sont venus me la présenter ce matin (8 septembre) en me priant de la bien lire afin que je leur dise si je la trouvais bien conçue. Or je vis qu'ils protestaient entr'autres choses, après avoir parlé de la subdélégation faite en faveur du R. Juan de Jesus Ayala y Garcia qu'ils reconnaissaient maintenant *comme étant actuellement Vicaire Apostolique etc.* le Prêtre subdélégué. Je leur fis observer que je n'avais pas le pouvoir de constituer un nouveau Vic. Ap. mais seulement de subdéléguer mes facultés et que je ne l'avais fait que par force et parce qu'on m'avait forcé à évacuer sans retard le territoire de la république. Que je resterais Vic. Ap. jusqu'à ce que le S. Siège en ordonne autrement. Je leur fis en même temps observer que l'expression dont ils s'étaient servie en disant qu'ils reconnaissaient comme étant actuellement Vic. Ap. de S. Domingo le P. Juan de Jesus Ayala semblait avoir été adoptée expressément pour mettre le gouvernement en erreur et lui faire penser qu'un Prêtre Dominicain était maintenant Vic. Ap. tout autant que s'il avait été nommé par le S. Siège. Je leur fis enfin observer que le conseil d'Etat semblait maintenant insinuer que la mesure adoptée contre le Bref était le résultat des conseils qu'ils avaient reçus du clergé. Tous alors commencèrent à s'excuser comme les apôtres à la cène, avec cette différence qu'au lieu d'un Judas il s'en trouvait ici plusieurs. Ils reprirent néanmoins la protestation, en me promettant de me rapporter dûment corrigée avec la copie également modifiée laquelle resterait dans les archives. Plusieurs Prêtres sont venus en particulier me dire combien ils regrettaient mon départ et pour me demander *si je reviendrais*. Cela leur tient à coeur. Je leur ai toujours répondu que je me tiendrais aux ordres du S. Père. Je leur ai fait aussi savoir à tous que j'avais écrit au P. Juan de Jesus Ayala de reciter *usque ad revoc.* l'oraison « *Deus cui omne cor patet etc.* » et de me nommer au canon de la Messe, *et pro Antistite Ludovico*. Je veux de cette manière que le Bref soit effectivement quoique indirectement promulgué. Je veux aussi prouver par des arguments palpables et irrécusables que le clergé ne peut pas s'organiser par lui-même, car le Prêtre subdélégué n'est ni l'ami du gouvernement ni l'ami des mauvais Prêtres, et ils le savent. Il gênera le gouvernement et le clergé tout à la fois et demandera probablement sa dimission, car je n'ai pas même encore reçu son acceptation. Tous les mauvais Prêtres le haïssent, parceque sa conduite est ferme et sans reproche. J'ai dit à quiconque voulait l'entendre que le clergé et le gouvernement n'ayant pas voulu adopter la mesure prise par le S. Siège pour organiser les affaires de l'Archidiocèse, on en serait puni comme un malade qui ne peut guérir sans prendre le remède que les meilleurs médecins ont jugé indispensable, et tous les Prêtres surtout n'ont pu dire que j'avais tort. Je l'ai dit aussi au sec. d'Etat rapporteur et lui aussi

a dit qu'il regrettait qu'il lui fut impossible d'accéder aux sages mesures du Pape, parceque j'étais étranger.

Ce matin, fête de la Nativité de la S. Vierge, j'ai donc chanté la Messe et prêché comme il avait été annoncé. Je me suis borné à parler des conditions de la vraie dévotion à Marie d'après la pratique des Saints, en concluant par les exhorter à demander l'humilité des petits enfants que N.S. benit en disant etc... en faisant ressortir que cette humilité se prouvait par l'obéissance et enfin je leur ai promis de ne pas cesser de demander cette grace pour tous. Ce sermon a trompé l'attente des malintentionnés, qui étaient venus pour censure et trouver de quoi mordre, aussi cinq de ces messieurs qui formaient un groupe s'en sont allés avant le fin du sermon, dont les braves gens ont été très satisfaits.

En résumé je suis de plus en plus sous l'impression que ma sortie forcée de S. Domingo équivaut à une victoire, car je laisse le gouvernement et le clergé dans un profond embarras, et j'ai bon gré mal gré maintenu la dignité dont le S. Siège m'a revêtu et même promulgué, quoiqu'indirectement, le Bref Ap., promulgué d'ailleurs par le *Monitor*, ou journal officiel. La Providence m'a accordé précieusement assez de jours pour faire tout cela et pour le faire avec plus d'éclat et d'efficacité que je ne l'aurais probablement pu faire en six mois, vu les circonstances de l'indifférence de quelques Prêtres. Le mal qu'ils se sont fait leur sera plus sensible et plus décisif que s'ils avaient eu le temps de murmurer plus longtemps et ainsi de ne pas s'attirer l'animadversion du peuple par la fuite forcée et odieuse à laquelle ils ont contraint celui par le S. Père leur avait député pour leur bien.

Si quelque chose peut leur faire ouvrir les yeux ou les forcer à se soumettre ce sera cela. Aussi ai-je offert ce matin de tout mon coeur le S. Sacrifice de la Messe en actions de grâces. Dieu m'a du reste donné une confiance qui n'a pas fléchi pendant tous ces jours d'orage, et je l'attribue au fait que je suis simplement disposé à être un instrument passif dans les mains de Dieu, plus prêt naturellement à rentrer dans la retraite qu'à continuer d'agir, et c'est ce que Dieu a lit en grandes lettres dans le fond de mon coeur. Je dirai cependant pour l'acquit de ma conscience que si je ne suis immédiatement déchargé de mon poste il conviendrait que dès que j'aurai reçu une réposte du S. Siège aux lettres que je vais lui expédier je me rendisse à Rome, parceque j'ai beaucoup plus de choses à dire que je n'en puis confier au papier et parceque je serai mieux à même d'y répondre selon les instructions du S. Siège aux lettres qui me seront adressées du subdélégué ou d'autres ecclésiastiques de S. Domingo. A St. Thomas je suis maintenant de trop et je n'y puis consulter personne. Ce qui m'embarasserait le plus serait le cas où le Prêtre que j'ai chargé de l'office de subdélégué n'acceptât pas ou fut obligé de cesser l'exercice de ses fonctions par suite de vexations du gouvernement. Je ne connais *pas un seul* Prêtre digne ou capable à le remplacer parmi le clergé créole. C'est surtout sur ceci que j'ai besoin de faire part au S. Siège de tout ce que je sais afin de savoir ma responsabilité.

*St. Thomas, 13 Sept. 1866. Me voici de nouveau à St. Thomas. Les*



Prêtres m'ont accompagné Dimanche matin jusqu'au vapeur qui m'a ramené ici. Ils m'ont remis trois protestations dûment conçues dont j'inclus les copies exactes. Le Rev. P. Don Juan de Jesus Ayala a accepté la subdélégation, tout en disant qu'il ne le ferait que pour le bien de l'Eglise et pour le temps, se trouvant trop infirme etc.

Ma conviction reste la même. A cause des Prêtres Créoles, qui tous à peu près si pas tous sans exception, ont le coeur double et la tête américaine, et à cause des hommes qui disputent le gouvernement et n'ont pas de religion, il me sera impossible de retourner à S. Domingo jusqu'à ce que ce malheureux pays ait un gouvernement fixe, ce qui n'aura guère lieu à moins qu'il ne tombe sous le joug des Américains du Nord, ce qui reste bien incertain. La masse du peuple est Catholique et vénère le S. Siège et les Prêtres ne veulent pas être schismatiques, et c'est le seul élément de salut qui reste à ce pauvre peuple.

St. Thomas 13 Septembre 1866

L. de Buggenoms C.S.S.R., V.A.

4. - Statement of F.X. Billini, 6th September 1866. Copy in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10.

Francisco Xavier Billini y Hernández, Presbítero y Rector del Colegio de San Luis Gonzaga, con el más profundo respeto y humildad y lleno de amor hacia el Jefe Supremo de la Iglesia, declara solemnemente que ha aceptado y acepta como Vicario Apostolico al Reverendísimo Padre D. Luis Nicolás José De Buggenoms a quien S.S. ha elegido y deputado para regir y gobernar esta Arzobispal Iglesia de Sto. Domingo, y se adhiere como siempre se ha adherido a todas las disposiciones que emanen de la Silla Apostólica como hijo sumiso y obediente de la Iglesia Católica Apostólica Romana y adicto de todo corazón a Nuestro Santo Padre Pío IX, a quien Dios guarde.

Y mientras tanto S.S. otra cosa no determine reconozco al referido S.D.L.N.J. De Buggenoms como Superior de esta Iglesia.

Sto. Domingo 6 de Setiembre de 1866

Francisco X. Billini.

5. - Statement by clergy of Santo Domingo, 9th September 1866. Copy in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 10.

Los abajo firmados curas y sacerdotes de este Arzobispado de Sto. Domingo nos hemos reunidos a las once de esta mañana por llamamiento del exadministrador Apostólico Señor Presbítero Ldo. D. Benito Díaz Páez a fin de darnos cuenta de la situación en que queda esta Iglesia con motivo de la proxima ida del Reverendísimo Pbro. L.N.J. De Buggenoms actual Vicario Apostólico de ésta. Se nos pasó en conocimiento que el R. Pbro. L.N.J. De Buggenoms hacía sustitución de su cargo en el Padre Cura de

San Cristóbal, Señor Pbtero. Juan de Jusús Ayala y García, desde esta fecha porque esto Gobierno le obligaba a marcharse. En consecuencia y por lo que pueda importar en el porvenir queremos dejar consignado que hemos obedecido y mandado obedecer al R.L.N.J. De Buggenoms, guardándole las consideraciones debidas a Su alto puesto; que asimismo reconocemos al Pbtero. Don Juan de Jesús Ayala y García como subdelegado Vicario de esto y por último obedeceremos y acataremos todo lo que S.S. se sirva ordenar y mandar como hijos sumisos que somos.

Leída que fué esta carta, se acordó firmarla y se dispuso ponerla en manos del Reverendísimo L.N.J. De Buggenoms dejando archivada copia para lo que mejor convenga.

Santo Domingo 9 Setiembre de 1866                      El cura de S. Carlos, Carlos  
en el Colegio Seminario de Santo Tomás              M. Jeñegro Benito Díaz Páez

Gabriel B. Marino del Cristo, canónigo.  
Bernardo Pichardo, cura de la catedral

El cura de la Victoria Franc. de Páez                      Francisco X. Billini.

6. - de Buggenoms to Antonelli, 14th January 1868. Copy in AGR, VI, Prov Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 14.

Prince Eminentissime,

Les Lettres dont Votre Eminence m'a honoré en date du 5 et du 16 Novembre dernier me sont arrivées presque en même temps au commencement de Décembre. Le Rev. P. Meriño est aussi arrivé le 5 Décembre, et j'ai eu soin de lui remettre la lettre que V. Em. lui a adressée par mon entremise. Il s'est déterminé à fixer ses quartiers à St. Thomas en attendant une réponse satisfaisante aux propositions que le S. Siège l'a chargé de transmettre à son gouvernement, mais à l'époque qu'il est, cette réponse n'est pas encore venue. Il faut dire que la République de S. Domingo est de nouveau depuis deux mois en proie à une guerre civile qui a obligé le Président Cabral de changer tous son ministère, tandis que le général qu'il a envoyé à Porto-Plata, qui a toujours été le point de départ des soulèvements contre les gouvernements précédents, a été obligé de s'enfuir.

A la fin de Décembre, lorsque le P. Meriño comptait sûrement recevoir une réponse quelconque aux dépêches qu'il avait expédiées à son gouvernement, il eut la visite d'un affidé de Cabral nommé le Conseiller Fiallo, qui lui fit entendre, quoique d'une manière non officielle, que le gouvernement paraissait maintenant disposé à accéder aux ordres du S. Siège, et il engagea le P. Meriño à s'en retourner avec lui à S. Domingo afin d'y accélérer l'affaire de mon rappel dans les termes prescrits par le S. Siège. Le P. Meriño me fit donc savoir qu'il avait résolu de suivre l'avis du Conseiller Fiallo et de s'embarquer avec lui le 3 Janvier, et nous nous dîmes adieu.

Le lendemain j'appris que le Conseiller Fiallo était parti et que le P. Meriño avait resté à l'hôtel; il me le fit lui-même savoir en donnant pour raison qu'il était indisposé, ce qui peut être vrai, quoiqu'il eût dû dire qu'ayant eu l'occasion de l'entretenir une heure avant le départ du paquebot, il ne me paraissait pas malade.

J'ai cru ne devoir pas tarder d'informer le S. Siège de ce qui précède au sujet des affaires de S. Domingo et de l'informer en même temps de la position dans laquelle je me trouve à St. Thomas. Cette mission où l'on ne peut bien exercer le ministère sans avoir l'usage des quatre langues, l'anglais, le français, l'espagnol et le papiamento, a été de nouveau confiée à ma charge après mon retour de S. Domingo, et le Père qui était le seul capable de me remplacer sous le rapport des langues a été transféré depuis dix mois à Paramaribo, Guiane Hollandaise. Un surcroît extraordinaire de soucis et de travaux a suivi l'ouragan du 29 Octobre et le tremblement de terre du 18 Novembre que personne n'ignore. Depuis ce dernier désastre surtout la grâce a tellement touché les coeurs de la masse du peuple que nous sommes comme assiégés de pauvres pécheurs qui demandent à se réconcilier avec Dieu. Parmi ce nombre se trouvent beaucoup de protestants et beaucoup de personnes qui, ayant vécu en concubinage, s'offrent à tout faire pour recevoir dignement le sacrement de mariage; c'est ainsi que pendant les dernières semaines de l'année qui vient de s'écouler nous avons pu recevoir l'abjuration de 40 protestants et administrer le sacrement de mariage à un nombre égal de concubinaires. Nous avons encore maintenant 60 hommes appartenants à diverses sectes protestantes qui se disposent à devenir enfants de l'Eglise en assistant tous les jours à une instruction préparatoire. Notre église est restée, on dirait miraculeusement, intacte lors du tremblement de terre, tandis qu l'église anglaise, desservie par un Catholique apostat, a été détruite et reste abandonnée. Ceci a été en partie cause que notre église, déjà trop petite, ne peut plus guère contenir qu'un tiers des personnes qui voudraient y trouver place. Il y a donc eu comme un cri général réclamant la bâtisse d'une seconde église, et nous avons trouvé le terrain qu'il nous fallait comme montré par le doigt de Dieu dans le quartier le plus populeux et le plus distant de notre église actuelle, dans un emplacement où l'on pensait ériger un théâtre et que l'ouragan semble avoir tout exprès balayé, en faisant disparaître deux vieilles maisons qui l'occupaient. Nous avons déjà fait l'acquisition de ce terrain et on est occupé à y creuser les fondaments de la nouvelle église, dont S. G. l'Evêque de Roseau viendra bientôt bénir la première pierre. Tous nos braves catholiques sans exception contribuent chaque semaine aux collectes qu'ils font entr'eux pour subvenir aux frais de la nouvelle bâtisse.

L'annexion de l'Ile de St. Thomas aux Etats-Unis consommée par le suffrage général des habitants qui a eu lieu le 9 ct. fait présager pour St. Thomas une ère nouvelle très avantageuse pour la prospérité de l'Eglise dans ce point central si important pour sa position favorable dans les Antilles. Dans l'entretemps je n'éprouve pas un petit embarras en cherchant à suffire aux soins que tout ce que je viens de mentionner a surajouté à mes occupations ordinaires toujours onéreuses à cause du

grand nombre de malades qu'il faut visiter; la mortalité parmi nos catholiques ayant été depuis le 1 Janvier de trois à quatre par jour. Aussi bien que je me suis prêt à me rendre à S. Domingo si j'y eusse été appelé, et que je ne cesserai d'être disposé à me conformer toujours aveuglément aux volontés du S. Père, je ne puis dissimuler que mon absence de St. Thomas dans les circonstances présentes serait humainement parlant préjudiciable aux intérêts tant matériels que spirituels de cette mission. Je tiens néanmoins à ajouter que mon unique but dans l'observation que je viens de faire est de mettre le S. Père à même de juger dans sa sagesse s'il est à propos de m'exempter de l'éventualité d'un voyage à S. Domingo, vu d'un coté la chute prochaine du gouvernement Cabral, et de l'autre les circonstances qui réclament toute mon énergie à St. Thomas.

C'est dans les sentiments d'un dévouement et d'une soumission sans réserve que humblement prosterné aux pieds du S. Père j'implore Sa Bénédiction pour Sa petite vigne de l'Ile de St. Thomas devenue si intéressante et pour les ouvriers qui la cultivent.

J'ai l'honneur de me dire avec le plus profond respect, Prince Eminentissime

St. Thomas 14 Janvier 1868

de Votre Eminence le très humble  
et dévoué serviteur, L. De Buggenoms

7. - de Buggenoms to Antonelli, 28th February 1868. Copy in AGR, VI, Prov. Belgica, Vice-prov. Antilles, I,B, 14.

Prince Eminentissime,

Ce que j'ai fait pressentir à Votre Eminence dans la lettre que j'ai eu l'honneur de Lui adresser le 14 Janvier m.p. touchant la chute prochaine du gouvernement Cabral est maintenant un fait accompli. Dès le 22 Janvier du gouvernement Cabral est maintenant un fait accompli. Dès le 22 Janvier le R.P. Meriño ayant perdu tout espoir de retourner à S. Domingo, s'est embarqué pour Venezuela. L'ex-président Bonaventure Baëz est le principal auteur du renversement du Général Cabral, et il a été secondé en cela par les hommes qui sont à la tête du gouvernement Haïtien. Ce qui a lieu à l'égard de Cabral et du P. Meriño ne confirme que trop les considérations que je me suis fait un devoir de présenter au S. Siège dans ma lettre du 10 Octobre 1867, et comme je n'entrevois pas d'espoir prochain d'une amélioration radicale dans l'état anormal des affaires de cette république, je crois qu'il n'y a guère de meilleure mesure à adopter pour l'administration de l'Archidiocèse que de confirmer le R.P. Francisco Billini dans la charge que je lui ai confiée et de le requérir de faire lui-même en temps opportun la choix du Prêtre qu'il jugera le mieux qualifié pour exercer définitivement les fonctions de premier Pasteur de cette Eglise. Quelle que soit l'opinion que le P. Meriño ait émise à l'égard du R.P. Billini, je ne cesse de le croire en somme le plus propre pour le présent et le plus fidèlement désintéressé pour correspondre aux intentions du

S. Siège et indiquer au besoin le Prêtre qui conviendrait le mieux pour gouverner l'Archidiocèse d'une manière permanente.

Qu'il me soit donc permis de supplier Votre Eminence de me obtenir du S. Père qu'Il daigne accepter ma résignation à la charge de Vicaire Apostolique de l'Archidiocèse de S. Domingo, car outre que je sens l'impossibilité pour moi de pouvoir désormais ajouter à ce que j'ai pu faire pour le service de cette Eglise selon les intentions du S. Siège, je dois répéter ce que j'ai déjà mentionné dans ma lettre du 14 Janvier m.p. touchant le surcroît de travaux et de soucis qu'entraîne de plus en plus ma charge de Supérieur de St. Thomas. En effet, le 18 de ce mois j'ai eu la douleur de perdre mon compagnon le plus ancien et le plus utile dans la personne du R. Père Noël, qui a succombé aux fatigues que nous avons tous à endurer depuis longtemps à cause des malades du choléra et d'autres épidémies qui ne cessent de sévir. Il est cependant vrai de dire que nous continuons à être grandement consolés par le nombre extraordinaire des conversions qui ne cessent de s'opérer parmi le peuple, vu que dans l'espace des sept dernières semaines nous avons reçu l'abujuration de 48 protestants et fait 46 mariages entre concubinaires convertis qui se préparent tous à faire leur première communion; mais ce sont des conquêtes qui nous coûtent cher, et il y a maintenant plus d'impossibilité que jamais de m'absenter de St. Thomas, jusqu'à ce que l'état des choses soit considérablement amélioré.

Dans l'entretemps je ne puis que réitérer l'assurance de ma soumission sans réserve aux volontés du S. Père, et solliciter Sa Bénédiction toute spéciale afin que les épreuves qui sont maintenant mon partage aboutissent à ma sanctification aussi bien qu'à l'exaltation de la Foi dans la mission qui m'est confiée.

C'est dans ces sentiments qu'humblement prosterné aux pieds du S. Père je me dis de Votre Eminence avec le plus profond respect, Prince Eminentissime,

St. Thomas 28 Février 1868

le très humble et obéissant serviteur,  
L. De Buggenoms C.S.S.R.