A Life of Andrew Ferrari, C.M.

John E Rybolt, DePaul University
A LIFE OF ANDREW FERRARI, C.M.

Translated and Annotated by
John E. Rybolt, C.M.

INTRODUCTION

Andrew Ferrari, the first Vincentian missionary to America to die after Felix DeAndreis, deserves recognition for his holy life and virtues. Much is known of the two great pioneers, DeAndreis and Rosati, the first and second Superiors of the American mission respectively. After them, however, a curtain has descended, preventing us from recovering much of the flavor of early Vincentian life.

Accounts of his life have come down to us in two versions. The shorter English version is found in only one manuscript, “The Lives of Missionaries Deceased,” formerly in the possession of Saint Vincent’s Church, Saint Louis, Missouri (and now in the DeAndreis-Rosati Memorial Archives, Perryville, Missouri [transferred to DePaul University, Chicago]). Longer Italian versions are found in several locations: two in the Archives of the Roman Province, and another in the Archives of the Congregation of the Mission in Paris. The Italian versions are virtually identical with one another.*

The author appears to be Joseph Rosati, an indefatigable and accurate recordkeeper. His name is attached to only one of the Italian lives and that appears in a footnote. Yet, he himself attests to his familiarity with Ferrari in his Sketches of the Life of the Very Rev. Felix De Andreis, 1861, p. 165: “The compiler of this life remembers Messrs. Carretti and Ferrari, when in 1815, prompted by the ardor of faith, they left Porto Maurizio to accompany Bishop

Dubourg to America. They both belonged to very respectable families, and deservedly enjoyed, in their native place, the highest reputation. Their relations opposed their departure with tears; while their friends suggested, to the former, that his weak constitution would not be able to undergo the fatigue of the journey, and, to the latter, that he could do much more good in his own country. But no arguments, however powerful, could change their determination. Mr. Ferrari, having become a Missionary of St. Vincent, was truly an apostolic man; he ended his life, a victim of charity, in assisting those who were attacked by the yellow fever.”

The likelihood of Rosati’s authorship of the life of Ferrari is increased further by recognizing the parallels in construction of both lives. The author composed both of them on this basis of his own personal recollections, and also used letters and writings from his subjects. This is particularly evident in the arrangement (traditional, to be sure) of the life, followed by an account of the virtues practiced. Also, the Ferrari lives agree with Rosati’s own memoirs in terms of dates, places, and motivations.

The English version appears to be Rosati’s own English draft, probably prepared for American, and later Italian, confreres. The Italian versions show a number of additions and reworkings of the text designed to expand or clarify the English life. It is unknown whether Rosati revised the earlier work personally, but on the basis of the method which he employed in his life of DeAndreis, we might conclude that he left the revisions to someone else with more time and access to correspondence.

The text presented here is the English version, with its old-fashioned spelling and unusual turns of phrase. It has a charm of its own, but to make it easier to read, some light editing has taken place. The revisions from the Italian version are included in square brackets, and explanatory
materials appear in parentheses.

The appendix is a translation of the only printed life of Ferrari, prepared independently of the English or Italian accounts by Michael Portier, later the bishop of Mobile. This obituary notice appeared in “Recueil des Lettres des eveques et des Missionnaires des Missions des Deux Mondes, publie par l’Association de la Propagation de la Foi,” (Louvain, 1825), pp. 455-458. This publication was a popular effort, established to support foreign missions through spiritual and financial means.

**TEXT**

**A Short Account Of The Holy Life And Virtues Of The Rev. Andrew Ferrari Priest Of The Congregation Of The Mission, Deceased At New Orleans On The 3rd (2nd) Of November 1822.**

Andrew Ferrari was a native of Porto. Maurizio in the state of Genoa in Italy.¹ He belonged to a respectable family of the same town. Not long after he had been ordained Priest [and remaining in his native country], he conceived a strong desire of consecrating himself to the Mission of Louisiana on the occasion of the first expedition of some Missionaries of our Congregation made by the Right Rev. Bishop [Louis William] Dubourg to his Diocess. Having disclosed this design to the Rev. Joseph Carretti (a Canon of the same town who died a holy and edifying death at St. Louis, Missouri, in [December] 1818), they both wrote to the Missionaries then arrived at Marseilles from whom they received an answer, which encouraged them to execute the

---

¹ He was born probably on 26 June 1792, according to the testimony of his letters quoted in this account. The date and place of his ordination are not listed in Community records.
Divine inspiration, and increase their number in this holy undertaking. Superior to the voice of flesh and blood, to obey that of the great Father of the family who called them to work in one of the most abandoned portions of his vineyard, they triumphed with courage over that tenderness and affection which endeared them to their families, bade an eternal adieu to their friends, relations and parents, and left their country on the 22nd of February, 1816.

They went by land as far as Beziers, where they embarked on the canal of Languedoc, and arrived at Bordeaux the 12th [sic, 21st] of March of the same year. They were received [with transports of joy] and welcomed by the others, who had arrived some time before; and who from that moment conceived the greatest hopes of such accomplished young Priests. It was not long before they could discover united in a conspicuous degree in Mr. Ferrari all the qualities which are admired in persons preordained by providence to procure the eternal salvation of their Brethren.

An open but prudent behaviour, gaiety without dissipation, rendered his conversations amiable. Endowed with talents above the common, a lively imagination, happy memory and exquisite judgment, he had made great progress in Literature, and even poetry; he was well informed in the different branches of knowledge desirable in

---

2 Rosati’s “Memoire,” *Vincentian Heritage* 1 (1980), p. 76, expands on the original contacts between Ferrari, Carretti and the Community. Little factual information is known about Carretti. Du Bourg, in a letter dated 24 April 1816, wrote: “I am overjoyed with the acquisition of Fathers Carretti and Ferrari. Tell them how anxious I am to meet them.” In this same letter he announced the change of headquarters from Louisiana to Missouri.

3 The others arrived as follows: 30 January, DeAndreis group; 7 February, Rosati group.
a clergyman; and he was not wanting in the assemblage of all the qualities necessary to announce with fruit and Dignity the word of God. He soon met with an opportunity of shewing it.

The Archbishop of Bordeaux, one of the most learned and holy Prelates of France, having been so good as to find lodgings in different Communities of that city for the several Missionaries that from various parts of Italy had repaired thither to wait for embarkation, destined Mr. Ferrari to the Hospital of the Foundlings, directed by the Sisters of Charity; there, having in a short time acquired a perfect knowledge of the French language, he began to preach to the satisfaction of his hearers, and continued thus with several other functions of the Holy Ministry during his stay at Bordeaux.4

On the 12th of June 1816, the Right Rev. Bishop Dubourg had the satisfaction of seeing embarked for America the first company of Missionaries that he sent to the spiritual relief of his Diocess. It consisted of five Priests, four inferior clergymen, one Brother of our congregation and three postulants.5 Mr. Ferrari was in this number; during the sea journey he continued to edify his companions with the practice of the most solid virtues, which he was careful to cover with the veil of an amiable simplicity. After a forty-six [sic. seventy-six] days passage they safely landed at Baltimore [on August 26]. As the Rev. Mr. Moranville, Rector of St. Patrick’s at Fells-Point, would exercise hospitality, with some of the missionaries Mr. Ferrari had the happiness of

4 Charles-Francois d’ Aviau du Bois-Sanzay was Bishop of Bordeaux 1802-1826.
5 The priests were DeAndreis, Rosati, Acquaroni, with Carretti and Ferrari; the students in Minor Orders, Deys, Dahmen, Tichitoli and Gonzalez; the Brother, Blanka; and the Postulants, Boramvaski, de Lattre and Flegifont.
lodging with that most zealous Priest, always a great admirer of the virtues of our young Missionary, who consecrated the first essays of his Apostolic zeal in America to the instruction of a number of Frenchmen who frequented that Church, and to whom he often preached in their language. On the 10th of September, Mr. Ferrari set out from Baltimore to Pittsburgh in the company of those with whom he had come from Europe. Amidst the several inconveniences by which that difficult journey was attended, the virtue of our young Priest never belied itself: always equal, always joyful, always patient, he contributed not a little by his good example to inspire the others with courage, suffering not only without complaining but even with joy: cheerfully receiving everything from the hands of Providence.

In Pittsburgh whither they arrived on the 19th of the same month, Mr. Ferrari was obliged to change lodgings four times. The strictest Oeconomy that Providence required from the Missionaries during their extremely long and expensive journey obliged them to accept Hospitality wherever it was offered them for some one of their company. However, as they often perceived that the long stay they were obliged to make in that City rendered it burdensome, they thought it their duty not to trespass on the kindness of those Catholicks and to change their lodgings. Our humble priest far from shewing the least repugnance, readily went whither he was sent, and cheerfully sacrificed to obedience all the feelings of nature. But wherever he was his amiable virtue never failed to gain him

Jean-François Moranville, 1760-1824, came to the United States as a result of persecutions during the French Revolution. His parish at Fells-Point was a section of the city of Baltimore. Bro. de Lattre joined Ferrari in living there.
the affection and respect of those with whom he conversed. At last the impediments that had retarded the departure of the Missionaries having ceased on the 27th of October, Mr. Ferrari embarked with the rest of the Company on a flatboat to go down the Ohio as far as Louisville. They arrived at this town the 19th of November after a journey of nearly seven hundred miles. In this as well as in all the other voyages our Rev. Gentleman always shewed an admirable exactness and diligence in assisting at all the exercises of Devotion that were performed in common, being one of the most assiduous to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and to approach the Sacrament of Penance. His talents and penetration were likewise remarked in the Theological conferences that were made every day on matters of Controversy.\(^7\)

Mr. Ferrari with his companion stopped a fortnight at Louisville until it was resolved according to the advice and kind invitation of the Right Rev. Bishop Flaget [the worthy Bishop of Kentucky] to go to Bardstown, and spend the winter in his residence, in order to find the necessary conveniencies to pass to St. Louis, which town was the end of their journey.\(^8\) Therefore on the 3rd of December, they left Louisville and the next day he arrived at St. Thomas’s seminary four miles on the other side of Bardstown. There Mr. Ferrari began to enjoy some rest after the fatigues of his long journey. The most hearty hospitality exercised in the most obliging manner made him bless the Lord a thousand times for having conducted him to that asylum.

Bishop Flaget, one of the most holy Bishops now in the

\(^7\) The term Controversy was understood as referring to debates with non-Catholics, whose conversion was one of the goals of their mission.

\(^8\) Benedict Joseph Flaget, S. S., 1763-1850.
Church of God, who revives in his person the Apostolical virtues admired in the Pastors of the brightest times of the Church, kept with him in his seminary almost the whole company, sharing with them all that he was possessed of, and even his own chambers, a portion of which he yielded to Mr. Ferrari, who had the happiness of viewing closely the virtues of this truly Apostolical man, and of being encouraged by his example, to the exercise of the holy Ministry. He was not long in acquiring a sufficient knowledge of the English, so as to be able to render some spiritual services to his Catholic Brethren of that Diocess. Rapid was his progress under the direction of the Rev. J. B. David, Priest of St. Sulpicius and Superior of that seminary (afterward Bishop of Mauricastrum and coadjutor of Bardstown, and now dead) who notwithstanding the direction of the seminary and the Monastery of Nazareth the care of several parishes which entirely devolved upon him, and the affairs of that whole Diocess, of which he was Vicar-General, had the goodness to take upon himself to teach the English to the Missionaries. Even before he was able to preach and hear Confessions in English, Mr. Ferrari embraced with pleasure every opportunity of doing what was in his power, and on holy days he went to say Mass to several Congregations, making no account of what he had to suffer from riding fifteen or twenty miles, which must have been very painful to him on account of an habitual indisposition to which he was subject. No sooner was he able to understand

9 Rosati’s “Memoire,” *Vincentian Heritage* 2 (1981), p. 53, has Ferrari lodging with Fr. Badin; perhaps he did both at various times.
10 John Baptist David, S.S., 1761-1841, later Bishop of Bardstown, 1832-1835. The Sisters of Charity of Nazareth were founded in 1812. The first convent was a cabin on the grounds of Saint Thomas Seminary. By 1814 they had opened an academy, probably the monastery referred to here.
others and make himself understood than he was sent by Bishop Flaget to different Congregations, where he began to preach, hear confessions, catechise, gaining everywhere the heart and esteem of all those to the salvation of whom he consecrated himself without reserve.\textsuperscript{11} No one, however, better appreciated the merit of our young Missioner than the most zealous Prelate under the direction of whom he laboured, who did not hesitate to intrust him several times with the care of the choicest portion of his flock, notwithstanding his age, not ripe for such an employ, giving him the direction first of the Monastery of Loretto, then that of Gethsemani [where the memory of our departed is held in benediction].\textsuperscript{12}

Amidst all his occupations, journeys and distractions, inseparable from a Missionary life, notwithstanding the frequent visits he made to the sick day and night, at the distance of twenty, thirty, and more miles, Mr. Ferrari, knowing that to render oneself useful to ones neighbour, no one should forget the care of his own soul, whilst he laboured in the sanctification of others, never ceased to work promoting his own. Persuaded of the impossibility of shunning the dangers to which Priests are exposed in this Country more than in any other, because deprived of those spiritual succors by which only they can be fortified against the contagious commerce of the world and the temptations of the enemy, our Missionary thought it always one of his

\textsuperscript{11} This part of Kentucky, known popularly as the “Holy Land of Kentucky,” had many Catholic congregations, and several religious foundations, as is apparent from this account.

\textsuperscript{12} The Sisters of Loretto at the Foot of the Cross, founded by Fr. Charles Nerinckx in 1812, had their Motherhouse nearby, and another foundation near St. Thomas called Gethsemani. Trappist monks from France moved there, purchasing the property from the Sisters. This establishment is now the celebrated Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani.
most sacred duties never to omit his daily meditation and spiritual reading, and was very particular in frequenting the sacrament of Penance, never thinking it too burdensome to ride for this purpose fourteen and twenty miles, to go to the Seminary or elsewhere to find some Priest who could hear his Confession. To these ordinary means he knew how to add some other extraordinary ones to keep up his fervour, never failing to make every year an eight days retreat. Thus his conduct might always be proposed as a model to all his Companions, so much the more so as not yet belonging to any Community or Congregation, what he did could not be suspected to be the effect either of custom, or human respect. The only desire of that perfection and sanctity which is proper for a clergyman and especially of such as are employed in procuring the salvation of others was the motive and as it were the soul of all his actions.

The Company of three Priests and a Brother of our Congregation\(^\text{13}\) during his journey from Bordeaux to Bardstown, and his two years stay in Kentucky made him acquainted with the same Congregation, and the esteem and affection which he had conceived for our Institute inspired him with the desire of embracing it. He was contented at first to consult upon this affair with God in his private prayer, but discovering every day more evidently the voice of God in the vocation he spoke about it to the Rev. Mr. DeAndreis, [at that time the Superior] who after all the precautions suggested by prudence, and required by our holy founder in such cases, admitted him in the number of the postulants that were to be received into our interior seminary (Novitiate) as soon as circumstances should allow it to be opened. Being almost on the point of seeing this his

\(^{13}\) Frs. DeAndreis, Rosati and Acquaroni, and Bro. Blanka.
desire accomplished, Bishop Flaget manifested to him the intention he had of keeping him in his Diocess, where he had exercised with fruit the holy Ministry for the space of [almost] two years. Although our Missionary coming to America had made a complete sacrifice of himself to Almighty God in order to procure the salvation of his Brethren without preference or attachment for any place or country whatever, however he thought he could not condescend to the desire of that respectable Prelate without renouncing his vocation. Therefore on the 17th of September he left Kentucky, and set out with all the other Priests and Clergymen that were intended for the Diocess of Louisiana, and whom Bishop Du Bourg had left in Kentucky.

There is no need of relating here what has been said on occasion of similar journeys. Mr. Ferrari on such occasions has always been the same, exact and exemplary in the exercises of piety, humble and yielding with his companions, patient and content whenever there was any occasion of suffering, always sacrificing his own ease to that of others. This journey more than any others afforded him several occasions of it. The flatboat was not more than eighteen feet long and wide in proportion; therefore 26 [sic, 23] persons could hardly stand in it. Although the reparations that had been made, she leaked in such a manner that several times she was in danger of sinking. A very heavy rain that lasted several days, and wet beds, cloathes, and the whole baggage added to the proceeding inconveniencies several times. Being all obliged to remain several days with

---

14 That is, 21 priests, religious and seminarians and the husband and wife who guided the boat. The only Vincentians were Rosati and the two postulant brothers, the others having departed earlier for Missouri. Bishop DuBourg’s group, which had followed the same route as the Vincentians, arrived the previous December, and constituted the main body.
their wet clothes on without any means of drying themselves. However they had the benefit of a
considerable rising of the river, and so in a few days they arrived at the mouth of the Ohio.

Their joy was great at their landing at the right shore of the Mississippi, which was in the
Diocese of Louisiana.\footnote{The exact location is unknown. DuBourg had written, 29 July 1818, that they land at the mouth of the Ohio, and he gave careful instructions on their passage. Rosati’s “Memoire” locates their landing at 120 miles from the Barrens. \textit{Vincentian Heritage} 3 (1982), p. 156.} They immediately erected a large Cross on the highest part of the bank of the river, and kneeling down sung the Hymn \textit{Vexilla Regis Prodeunt}.\footnote{“The Royal Banners Forward Go,” the Vesper Hymn for Passion Sunday, here used for planting the Cross on the riverbank.} Here they had to leave the boat and continue their journey by land. The Right Revd. Bishop Du Bourg had written to them to wait there until he should send some horses and other conveniencies to go on. They (were) looking for them ten days; Mr. Ferrari’s zeal did not remain all this time idle. A poor family about twelve or thirteen individuals in number, in the hopes of bettering their condition had moved from Tennessee to Missouri with the intention of settling in the Country in which publick lands were sold very cheap. Two canoes were all their property \cite{Vincentian heritage}, large tree trunks carved out (according to the common use of those areas) into boats; by the means of them they had travelled several hundred miles in the greatest distress; they had not even rags enough to cover themselves \cite{Vincentian heritage} against bad weather. They had stopped not far from the place where the Missionaries had landed. Some of these, having by chance seen there that unfortunate family, came back to their Companions and inspired them with the same sentiments of compassion which they themselves had
felt at the sight of those distressed people some of whom attacked with fever were laying on the
ground.

Mr. Ferrari was one of the most zealous to afford some relief to those suffering members
of Christ. Not satisfied with seeing them assisted in their temporal wants, he endeavoured also to
succour them in their spiritual necessities. He was told that almost all of them had never received
Baptism; he obtained the Consent of their parents and with the assistance of some of his
companions he undertook to instruct them with such a zeal that in a few days they were thought
capable of being regenerated in the sacred laver [of baptism]. Therefore on the 27th of
September, a day memorable in our Congregation for the happy passage of St. Vincent of Paul to
the heavenly glory, after having solemnly celebrated Mass and vespers on an altar erected on the
shore of the Mississippi and shaded with green branches of different trees disposed in the form of
a chappel, our zealous Missionary had the pleasure of crowning this solemnity with the
administration of the holy sacrament of Baptism which was received by several individuals [five
boys] of this family who were truly happy in their misfortunes.¹⁷

Mr. Ferrari had been the first to share with them his linnen and his cloaths to put them in
a condition of coming more decently to receive this sacrament, and his example was followed by
his companions, who all contributed according to their power to provide for the wants of these
distressed people. These happy omens by which Mr. Ferrari and his companions, first coming in
the Diocess of Louisiana was attended, made them larger compensation for what

¹⁷ Due to Rosati’s indisposition, Ferrari celebrated the sacraments. The two accounts complement each other in
they (were) to suffer during their stay on those deserted shores of the Mississippi where all their provisions being out, having no possibility of finding others, they had already begun to suffer a general want of everything, when some men sent by the Right Revd. Bishop arrived and afforded them the means to continue their journey, partly on foot and partly on horseback. At last, on the 31st day of October they arrived at the Barrens [a place inhabited by a hundred or so Catholic families dispersed in a section of forest about twenty miles in extent and] where they had begun to make some preparations for the building of the Seminary. There they had the consolation of receiving the blessing of their genial Prelate. Mr. Ferrari with three other postulants was invited to his great satisfaction to repair to St. Louis, to begin there the Noviciate. Without losing any time, he set out with his companions, and went to join Mr. De Andreis who received them with a holy joy. After the customary retreat, the 3rd of December, under the auspices of the glorious Apostle of the Indies. Mr. Ferrari was at last received among the children of St. Vincent.

Although all new establishments are commonly attended with many difficulties, that of the Congregation of the

---

18 The date of their arrival is given as 1 October in the Italian versions, and 31 October in the English. The earlier date is preferable, since ordinations were held by Bishop DuBourg in Sainte Genevieve on 1 November. If 1 October is correct the missionaries would have had to cover distances of about 30 miles per day—difficult but not impossible. Problems exist with both figures.

19 Approximately two months elapsed between their arrival and the commencement of the Novitiate. Ferrari was in Saint Louis by 14 November, the date of a letter from DuBourg which mentions him. His other companions were Joseph Tichitoli and Francis Xavier Dahmen.

20 It was the feast of St. Francis Xavier. The author for some reason omits mentioning the death of Carretti that same day.
Mission in the Diocese of Louisiana met with great many which were inevitable. The most pressing spiritual wants of this extensive Diocese at that time almost entirely deprived of Priests could not absolutely permit the three Priests of our Congregation to live together in the same house. They were obliged to separate from one another. Mr. Acquaroni was intrusted in the care of three parishes 30 miles from St. Louis. Mr. Rosati with the direction of the seminary about 80 [ninety] miles south from the same town and Mr. De Andreis [with Brother Blanka, the only brother who was then in America,] was obliged to reside with the Bishop as vicar general and to attend the Parish of St. Louis, residence of the Right Revd. Bishop Du Bourg.

The house was small and the occupations many and continual. Notwithstanding this the particular affection that Bishop Du Bourg has always shewn for our Congregation, and the constant desire of seeing it permanently established in his Diocese, prompted him to make every sacrifice. He had a small house built within his yard. furnished it with every thing necessary, and assigned it to the use of the Novices. Every thing had been thus prepared according to our custom. Notwithstanding the great need of Clergymen, the novices were never disturbed from their regular exercises. They went to the Bishop’s house only for their meals, which they took with the Bishop, [Fr. De Andreis, the brother,] and the other Priests and Clergymen addicted to the service of the Parish, and the direction of the College

21 Namely, DeAndreis, Acquaroni and Rosati.
22 St. Charles, Portage des Sioux, and Dardenne, all in Missouri. John Baptist Acquaroni (born 1807) was, like Carretti and Ferrari, a native of Porto Maurizio. He entered the Community 3 June 1807, the same day as Rosati. He left the Congregation in 1827 and returned to Italy for his health and there took care of family matters. He had been in St. Louis since early 1818.
[where they studied Sacred Scripture or some other book of instruction].\textsuperscript{23} The Holy Scripture and some other pious book were always read at table.

However we must own that the situation in which the Novices were was not very favorable to Regularity. Many unavoidable distractions, the indispensable commerce with strangers, the very sight of their former companions with whom they had been at the same table, the necessary intercourse with the seculars whom they met at every step in going out of their room, in a word everything served to contribute to relax that fervour which is proper to Novices. But amidst so many occasions of distraction and dissipation, the exactness and regularity of the small and as it were infant noviciate was such, as to be a continual subject of admiration to Mr. De Andreis who in point of regularity was himself remarkably exact, [carrying exactness in the matter of observance to the \textit{non plus ultra} (nothing further)].

From the very beginning he thus wrote about it to a Priest of our Congregation, “Our seminary is very promising,” and in another letter written several weeks after the same, “Our Noviciate is for me a subject of confusion. Indeed I am ravished at their behaviour, exactness, diligence, ardour, and fervour that is to be seen in our good Novices, who need rather bridle than spur. I need not say twice the same thing; they guess my intentions. Their only fear is to commit the smallest fault against the Rule, to break silence, to omit a genuflection coming in or going out of the room. They behave as if they were old Novices. Once only I could go before them to the place where we make our

\textsuperscript{23} DuBourg had founded the Saint Louis Academy in the fall of 1818; its first president was Fr. Francis Neil. Some seminarians attended until the seminary at the Barrens was completed. It developed into Saint Louis University.
morning meditation. Before they began the Novitiate they had some difficulty in rising early in the morning, as it is customary amongst us, but soon after, their diligence was carried to the highest pitch. I cannot forbear to shew them my satisfaction, and this excites mutual tears. We are joyful in the Lord. I perceive that my spirit, although torpid, gains thereby a great deal. God and St. Vincent be forever blessed.” So far Mr. De Andreis who continued to render the same justice to the fervor of the Novices, and especially to Mr. Ferrari, of whom he entertained the highest esteem. Although a few weeks after it was reduced to the number of two individuals, the third one being obliged to do down into lower Louisiana on account of his health, however by reducing in number it, did not decrease in fervour nor in regularity. Mr. Ferrari could not enjoy long the happiness which he felt in the noviciate by which he improved so much. No sooner had six months elapsed from his first coming in it than he was obliged to quit that sacred retreat to resume the Apostolical career in which he was to end his life. No doubt this sacrifice cost him very dear. However, seeing in the will of his Superior that of God, he made it cheerfully. Having bid adieu to his brethren on the 22nd of June, he set out from St. Louis for Vincennes. We shall hear from himself the recital of his adventures in this difficult journey of about 180 miles, and here he was by Divine Providence preserved from the danger of losing his life.

“I set out on Friday morning accompanied by one of the inhabitants of Vincennes who was to be my Pilot and in the evening we arrived at a house about twenty miles from St. Louis at the beginning of the great Prairie.... The next day

24 Joseph Tichitoli (1793-1833) went to Donaldsonville, Louisiana, in May, 1819.
we left the house very early to cross the Prairie which is fifty miles in breadth before the flies should become more troublesome. But after having rode (sic) seventeen or eighteen miles, I perceived that I had left my saddlebags at the house where we had passed the night. My Pilot took my horse being stronger than his, went back to the house, and instructed me to go on, and to wait for him at a house four miles farther. Riding by myself on my Pilot’s horse, who was in a very bad condition [with a thoroughly broken saddle which hardly fit on its back, and with a bridle half leather and half tree bark,] I was afraid of falling in the hands of Robbers, who as I had been told a few days ago attacked some passengers. But I think that Providence by the means of my very poor trotting horse and attire delivered me from that danger.

Arrived at the place to which I had been directed, I stopped to look for my companion with great uneasiness, which grew still greater as his arrival retarded. The night came and I did not see him. My Landlord, who was a Baptist, made me a thousand questions about Catholicks. He was a good man and seemed to be satisfied with my answers. Next morning more anxious than ever I did not know what to do. Finally I resolved to go on; thinking that he had passed in the night. [At six I arrived at another habitation where they told me that many passengers had spent the night there, and probably that my guide was with them. I stayed there till ten, and not seeing him again I set out.] Thus during the rest of my journey always tormented by thirst, burnt by the sun which seemed to be as powerful in these Prairies as in the Wilderness of Arabia, always in motion to fight against the most importunate flies, that made the horses frantick, and more as he was not much exercised in patience once threw himself down, and turned on his back. Happily I had
time to jump down, but in mounting again, I fell on the ground.

At length I arrived at Vincennes, whither my Pilot had also arrived, a few hours before. He had alarmed the whole Parish thinking that I was lost. The cause why he had not come was that the horse had run away from him. Moreover, a few miles from the place where he had left me, while he was coming back he had been attacked by a man who asked the saddle bags; and while the Robber endeavoured to throw him down from his horse he had snatched the stick from his hands and gave him such a terrible blow in the head, that he laid him dead, or half dead, on the ground. Then at full gallop he escaped from two horsemen that followed him for several miles armed with rifles.” Thus Providence that disposes everything in behalf of those that abandon themselves to her conduct, made use of the first unpleasant accident to preserve our Missionary from the second which would have been undoubtedly more disagreeable, and more dangerous for him.

The Parish of Vincennes is composed of upwards of 150 families of French descent, and who speak the French language. The Bishop of Kentucky who has the spiritual care of it had obtained from our Right Revd. Bishop [DuBourg], two Priests and entrusted them with the direction of it. Those inhabitants for the space of more than fifteen years had no residing Priest amongst them, they had only received some short visits from a Priest, had lived more than 200 miles off. When Mr. Ferrari arrived there one of the above mentioned Priests had been sent somewhere else, and the other was to leave the place a few months after. Both

Ferrari’s name appears in parish records first 18 July 1819, and continues to 25 October 1820. The parish had been served in succession by Fathers Donatien Olivier, Stephen Badin, Charles Nerinckx, and Guy Ignatius Chabrat.
Bishops desired to make there an establishment of our Congregation. Mr. Ferrari began to exercise there the holy Ministry under the direction of the Revd. Antony Blanc, who acquainted him of the affairs of the parish, and lived with him in the greatest harmony. Besides these occupations, Mr. Ferrari took upon himself that of making a free school for the children of that Parish, devoting with pleasure to this work of Charity [which tended equally to the spiritual and temporal good of poor abandoned youth] the greatest part of his time in the course of the week.

But soon the principal care of this Parish devolved upon him. The Rev. Mr. Dahmen, a Priest of our Congregation, was sent to take the place of Mr. Blanc, and Mr. Ferrari was commissioned by Mr. De Andreis to exercise the function of Superior. Great was the joy he felt at the arrival of his companion, [with whom he had passed six months of novitiate] on account of the great convenience he would henceforward have of observing our rules, although he had always been very exact in complying with them as much as circumstances would allow. However, the company of a Priest of our Congregation made him redouble his zeal for regularity. The ardour with which he performed those of his duties that were immediately related to his own sanctification was never inferior to that with which he discharged his pastoral functions, perceiving every way the salvation of souls instructed to his care. Sermons, instructions, catechisms. nothing in a word was omitted by

---

26 Anthony Blanc (1792-1860) was later Bishop of New Orleans (1835-1860), succeeding Leon De Neckere in that See.
27 Francis Xavier Dahmen (1789-1866), a native of Germany, was ordained a priest in Saint Louis, 5 September 1819, and made his vows 21 June, 1822. His name appears in parish records 18 February 1820, and continues to 6 November 1821.
him to attain the grand object of all his desires, and the only motives that had brought him to America. The innocence of his life, the candour and modesty of his behaviour, the noble simplicity of his apostolical and eloquent sermons soon won him the esteem and affection of his Parishioners, notwithstanding the holy liberty with which he upbraided their faults, when he saw no other means of correcting them.

God who is used to try with tribulations the souls that are most dear to him did not fail to afford Mr. Ferrari this means of sanctification. His bodily constitution was delicate and sensible to the various and sudden changes of the weather which in these climates are more frequent than in others. Riding as well as any extraordinary exercise was very painful to him on account of a considerable incommmodity to which he was habitually subject. However, he suffered it with such cheerfulness and indifference that even those who have lived with him for a considerable time under the same roof could never discover it. During his stay at Vincennes he was attacked by fevers which are most common in those quarters, in summer and fall, and prove very troublesome to strangers [more than to those born in that area]. The narrow circumstances in which he was, the want of assistance and care, the continuation of his pastoral functions, which he would never suspend in the course of his malady, the sickness which his companion [Fr. Dahmen] suffered at the same time, were as many obstacles to his recovery and increased the occasions of suffering, patience and merit. To conceive an idea of this it is to be remarked that the poverty of the inhabitants of that parish, together with the difficulty of the times that every where else rendered money very scarce in those western parts of the United States, obliged the two priests that attended the Parish of Vincennes to confine themselves within the
strictest oeconomy, and even sometimes to deprive themselves of the necessaries of life.

This impossibility under which they were, of paying a servant, could not permit them to keep house. They went to take their meal day and night to a house situated at a certain distance from the Church, which certainly must have been very inconvenient to them in the time of their sickness, and very painful to Mr. Ferrari, who on account of a considerable swelling in his feet could not make on single step without suffering very sharp pains. Far from complaining he bore everything with patience and joy. Forgetting himself, he thought of nothing else than of procuring some relief and rendering every service to his companion, who was often in the heat of his fever, called from the next chamber in the night time Mr. Ferrari for some water, and Mr. Ferrari who was in the same time in an access of fever, arose, went as well as he could to the chamber of the patient and rendered him this charitable service, never failing to accompany it with the sincerest sentiments and expressions of affection and compassion. It some times happened that soon after having laid himself on his bed, he heard again the voice of his Brother calling again for assistance, and again he arose without the least sign of impatience, although he had sometimes occasion of doing it twelve or fifteen times in the same night. Notwithstanding the difficulty he experienced in walking, he went several times to the most distant corners of the town to buy something that might have afforded some relief to his companion.

In the course of this long sickness which kept him in a state of weakness and languor, our zealous Missionary, full of courage, seemed to drink from his zeal the strength necessary to continue his apostolical labours in behalf of his parishioners. Such were his exertions that sermons,
catechisms, and instructions were continued as usual. No wonder then if amidst such laborious occupations deprived of assistance and relief, his disease did not abate. On the contrary, growing still more considerable and obstinate it brought upon him several complaints that began to become habitual and incurable. A man less dead to himself than Mr. Ferrari would have been more sensible to so many inconveniences and to the loss of his health [which is precious to everyone] would not have failed to avail himself of so specious a motive to abandon his place, and to be sent to another [more pleasant location] more suitable to his bad state of health. But [our good priest] never opened his mouth, never wrote one single word on this subject [either] to his Superiors [in the Congregation or to the bishop]. But as the time of his Noviciate was drawing near to its end, he was invited by the Superior to go to the seminary, in order to make there a spiritual retreat and afterwards his vows.

Notwithstanding the low state to which at that time his health had been reduced, he immediately set out upon the journey. The desire of consecrating himself to God in a more particular manner by a irrevocable and perfect sacrifice of himself, and the wish of uniting himself to the Congregation with indissoluble bonds made him overlook all the difficulties of that long and disagreeable journey [of more than 180 miles]. About the end of November 1820 he arrived at St. Louis, and a few days after at the Seminary, but in such a pitiful condition with regard to his health that neither the Bishop nor his Superior thought it proper to send him back to Vincennes. He could be hardly known by those who had been acquainted with him. After having made

---

28 Only one manuscript reports the date of his vows as 26 November, 1820. This was a few days shy of the required two years, 3 December. Surprisingly, no mention is made of the death of DeAndreis, 15 October, 1820.
his vows [in the seminary chapel], he was sent to St. Louis to the end that he might have in the Bishop’s house the assistance of the Physicians of which he stood in particular need in the dangerous state in which he was being threatened with a dropsy; he could not have had any medical attendance in the Seminary.

Such dispositions of his Superiors were for him a subject of sacrifice. Very far from rejoicing in the hope of which he could now conceive of recovering, preferring the spiritual good of his neighbour to his personal concerns, he said and did all that was in his power to obtain the permission of returning to Vincennes. His remonstrances were not attended to. Therefore, respecting the will of God in that of his Superiors, he humbly submitted to the orders of Providence, and obeyed. Several letters of Bishop Flaget, who expressed the greatest desire of his return to Vincennes made him present new requests to his Superiors, but they all proved fruitless. He resigned then to their will to which he always shewed the most perfect submission.

Although the chief motive for which he had been sent (to) St. Louis was the recovering his health which, as it has been said, was extremely impaired, however he did not make of it his sole and principle occupation. On the contrary, he employed so profitably his time that it could be hardly discovered that he was sick. Besides what he allotted regularly to the exercises of devotion, to his studies, to the composition of his sermons both in English and French, to the hearing confessions, to visiting the sick, and to all the other functions of the Parish in the performance of which he never refused to assist the Clergymen intrusted with them, he knew also how to find some more to teach a class of Divinity every day, to preach on Sundays not only in St. Louis but also at Florissant, whether he went several times to attend that Parish in the absence of its Pastor, and to give
a retreat to the Religious Ladies of the Sacred Heart. God accompanied with his blessings the labours of his Minister indefatigable even amongst the incommodities of a tedious and long convalescence, as this was not for him a pretext to dispense himself from working for the salvation of souls, so neither did these occupations, joined with his indispositions, make him lose sight of his own sanctification. Being very sparing of his time, he found the means of avoiding useless conversations and retiring into his Chamber and there he applied himself to discharge his duties. Improving also every opportunity, he knew how to make them subservient to his spiritual profits. Thus he profited by his stay at Florissant to make his annual retreat.

Mr. Ferrari did not fail to employ his strength in promoting the glory of God and the salvation of his neighbor in proportion as he recovered them. Besides the more frequent exercise of the holy Ministry whilst at St. Louis, he did not refuse to take also upon himself the charge of teaching several classes in the college established there by the Bishop. Indifferent for any employment whatever, the Superiors always found him ready to accept those that they thought proper to intrust him with. This his perfect detachment from every employ and place was particularly seen in him when, having been told to leave St. Louis and go down to New Orleans, he readily obeyed, protesting that he did not feel the least difficulty to go whithersoever he should be sent by obedience.

29 The ancient parish of St. Ferdinand in Florissant, founded about 1788, was served at the time by Fr. Charles de la Croix (1792-1869), who had come with Bishop DuBourg from Europe and lived with the Vincentians at Bardstown. He designed the seminary building at Perryville on the basis of the building at Saint Thomas in Kentucky. He was put in charge of the group of Flemish brothers whom DuBourg had hoped would care for the diocese in various ways. The Society of the Sacred Heart opened its first American convent at St. Charles, Missouri, in 1818.
Therefore, about the beginning of August in 1821 he embarked [in Saint Louis] for New Orleans. Some relics of his last sickness together with the inconveniences of the journey and the [extraordinary heat of lower Louisiana] caused him a relapse. [But after a quick recovery, and free of fever, he was ready to take up his interrupted career in the functions of his sacred ministry.] He went to Oppolases (Opelousas) where he soon recovered, and remained until the sickly season was over.

No sooner was he apprised that the yellow fever [which exposed foreigners to an almost certain danger of death] had ceased at New Orleans than he set out for his destiny. [He had been designated to work there in the service of this vast parish as a Vicar, with Fr. Borgna, a priest of the Congregation who for some time exercised the same functions in that city.] All Fr. Ferrari’s travels were difficult and dangerous, such as the one which he made from Opelousas to New Orleans, about 200 miles, partly by water and partly by land, and continually exposed to a thousand pains and fatigues; those to which Fr. Ferrari was exposed were not few.] In this journey, which was of 200 miles as well as in almost all the others, he had much to suffer. Mr. Borgna, who had come for him, being in the necessity of returning immediately to New Orleans, they could not wait for a steamboat. [But since they were obliged to return to their post in a very short time, after the usual welcomes, they had to use the

30 Philip Borgna (1797-1856) entered the Congregation in Rome, pronouncing his vows there in 1817. His relationship with the Community was tenuous at best, and he ministered in the United States in various locations as needed. Living in New Orleans at the Cathedral, apart from the Community almost from the time of his ordination in 1820, did not help his membership.

31 The English text reads: They embarked then on a small boat and after many hardships arrived at New Orleans about the end of September 1822 [sic, 1821]. The Italian versions expand on it considerably.
first occasion to continue the trip. They spent an entire day waiting for a steamboat to pass, but not seeing any, they took passage on a small boat going down the Mississippi. Here without a bed and without any provisions except some bread and a bottle of wine, they had to make the trip. Mr. Ferrari was too used to suffering to lose his courage or his usual happiness in similar circumstances; he was the same on every occasion; the more he suffered the more content he appeared. He hoped in a short time to arrive at New Orleans, but this was not to be. After having passed an entire night and then a day on this small boat, bad weather did not permit them to continue their trip. The supplies were already used up and there was still another eighty miles before arriving at the city. After some discussion, they resolved to leave the boat and go on foot to the parish of St. Michael whose pastor was a worthy priest and, without doubt would offer them some means to continue their trip. The parish was about twelve miles away, the night was already advanced, and a heavy rain fell steadily. The rain grew heavier, and Mr. Ferrari judged it expedient to ask for hospitality at a home of some very rich person, but the door was closed. And so drenched from head to foot, they had to continue the trip to the house of the pastor of St. Michael, still some four miles off. They arrived there at daybreak, and the pastor’s goodness made them quickly forget the fatigues suffered up till then. There they were provided with a carriage to continue their trip. But God who foresaw that this would be the last trip on this earth of our good missionary did not want it to finish so easily. The roads were very poor, and the horse attached to the carriage was, after four or five miles, not able to go on, and it was

32 This is probably not the parish in Convent, Louisiana; the pastor was a Fr. Anselin.
impossible to find another. The one which could be had was a saddle horse; Mr. Ferrari borrowed it and in this way he arrived in the city on the 28th of October, 1821. Despite the inconvenience which he had had to suffer on this trip by horseback and in the humid and heavy climate, he never complained and was always able to hide the evil so well that only after his death was his infirmity realized. His reputation had preceded him into the city. He was received with great applause by the Clergymen who reside in that City, and soon began to exercise the holy Ministry in quality of Curate of the Parish Church. It was his greatest pleasure to lessen the burden of the others as much as it was in his power, and no sooner had he discovered in what he might have assisted them than he did it in the most obliging manner.

Always cheerful, always in a good humour, always even, he was no less admired and respected for his requisite prudence than for his unaffected simplicity. His zeal for the salvation of souls was likewise remarkable; in a very short time he gained the esteem and affection not only of all the Clergymen, but also of the whole city, obliging the very incredulous and irreligious to respect that Religion of which he proved so worthy a Minister. His sermons and instructions were no less admired and fruitful in that City than they had been at St. Louis and every where else. They were not embellished by a vain and flowery eloquence but grounded on solid reasonings and authorities; suitable to the understanding of his hearers of every description, directed to reform their manners, animated by the sincere desire of bringing them back to God, and what is more, conformed by his edifying example. He pleased equally the learned and the unlearned and they commonly said that Mr. Ferrari did what he preached; and that it was his heart that spoke in his sermons. And indeed they commonly were nothing else than
the spirit of the meditation he had made in the morning.

During the times that he resided in New Orleans says one of his companions who lived with him, which was a little more than a year, no change was ever seen in his temper, notwithstanding the necessity he was in of conversing with persons of different countries, manners and characters. In conversations, he was used to say his opinion on controverted points if requested, without pretending that others should adopt it. On the contrary, he was always the first to submit his opinion to that of others.

Although he had always been remarkably pious, and exact in his devotions, however, in the new situation in which he was at New Orleans, (he) seemed to have redoubled his endeavours to increase in the practice of this virtue. He well saw the distractions and dangers to which he was exposed in the intercourse which he was indispensably obliged to have with every kind of people in a city where irreligion and loose morals triumph. Amidst his many and various occupations Mr. Ferrari never neglected any of the spiritual exercises customary in our Congregation. [If he was sometimes forced to leave or to interrupt them, this was only to put into practice the saying “He had to leave God for God.”]

His virtue being now fruit ripe for heaven [and New Orleans did not deserve to keep him for long] he was to crown his apostolical life with a death that may rank him amongst the Martyrs of Charity. About the beginning of September 1822, the yellow fever was discovered in New Orleans where they thought that City safe from any danger for that year. The havoc it made amongst strangers was extraordinary:

33 Quoted loosely from Saint Vincent de Paul, Conference to Daughters of Charity, 30 May 1647, and used elsewhere.
forty and even fifty every day fell victim of that terrible disease.

Mr. Ferrari had reason to expect to become another in the number of them, having not resided long [one year had not passed] in that City. But the fear of death did not diminish in the least his zeal; on the contrary, the sight of so many unfortunates, who were snatched away by that contagion almost on a sudden, gave to it a new ardour to afford them that spiritual relief on which depended their eternal happiness, or their irreparable perdition. Prompted by charity and not caring for the danger to which he exposed his life, he went to visit the sick and administered to them the sacraments day and night without interruption and rest. Taken up by these continual exercises of an heroic charity he often forgot to allow the necessary repose to his body. [Night and day he was on foot and ready to run to the bed of the sick.] He found no time to recruit his strength, exhausted by labours. At last he fell a victim to charity; or rather the Sovereign Pastor of our souls who had laid down his life for the love of them was pleased to grant him the grace of ending his days in the service of his Brethren.

The yellow fever had already begun to abate in the City. His friends already congratulated Mr. Ferrari on having escaped from that dreadful scourge. But Providence had spared him so far only to afford his charity a greater exercise, and occasion of merit; and not to deprive so many unfortunate of the spiritual comforts they were to receive from the zeal of his charitable ministry. He was attacked by the contagious distemper on the 27th of October, and with such symptoms that from the first moment of his sickness the Physicians despaired of his life. However, this made no frightful impressions on his magnanimous soul. His amiable sanctity and cheerfulness did not abandon him in that terrible situation. He gave with a serene countenance some
disposition about several small presents which he desired to be made to his Brethren after his death, out of the very little he had to dispose of. [He had all of his belongings put in a box, and said with a sweet smile that he had no need of touching anything because everything was already infected with yellow fever.] His sickness lasted only four days, his agony was sweet, and his death that of the just.

He breathed his last with a smiling countenance [November 2, 1822], and we may confidently say in the language of the Scripture that he fell asleep in the Lord. “Death,” thus wrote the same day of his happy passage one of the priests that had been witness of it, “Death has struck the most holy of its victims.”

Mr. Ferrari saw his end approach with the courage of a true son of St. Vincent of Paul, he constantly smiled, he seemed to endeavour to conceal his suffering, he received the sacraments with faith, piety and love. His indefatigable zeal, his constant fervour, his unwearied application to procure the salvation of souls, his charitable intrepidity amidst the dying and the dead, his truly apostolical virtues must have certainly obtained him the crown of the martyrs and that of the missioners.

All the Clergy of the Diocess, but especially those that lived at New Orleans, and still more particularly the members of his Congregation, bewailed his death in the sentiments of the deepest affliction. The whole city of New Orleans seemed to feel with the greatest concern the great loss they sustained in the person of his holy priest. The funeral service was performed the third day of November with an extraordinary concourse of people, and the tokens of grief and affliction
given by them during the sacred ceremony were such as to disturb the divine service.  

It is wonderful how a young Priest who had resided in the City not yet quite a year and had no other intercourse with its inhabitants but what was necessary for the discharge of his Priestly duties, could be so high in the esteem of the publick, Soon after his death many persons would have something of what had belonged to him, desiring to keep them as precious relics.  

[To offer a more exact idea of the virtue of this good missionary, we add here some extracts from his letters which express candidly the sentiments of his heart and the lovely qualities which adorned him.]  

[A] Mr. Ferrari’s death, so precious before God and enviable in the sight of men, has been the fruit of a holy and virtuous life, during which he never lost sight of that awful moment on which depends our eternal welfare. Although he made it the basis of every day of his life to prepare himself for that passage, yet on some particular occurrences he seemed to be more deeply impressed with the consideration of death. “I am very sorry,” says he in one of his letters, “for the premature death of Mr. N. Great God. If the young and the good die in such manner, *quid mei erit* (what will happen to me?). [After what you tell me about the general assembly, I have given four *scudi* which I had to Mr. N. Nonetheless, I kept about

---

34 The famous Père Antoine, Antonio de Sedella, O.F.M. Cap., officiated at his funeral.

35 This final part of the Italian manuscript is greatly revised. The order of the English version is followed here. The Italian order was B,G,C,E,F,D,A; the manuscripts omitted much of the introductory materials, and introduced more texts.

36 The reference is unclear. The previous assembly was in 1788, the next would be in 1829. Ferrari used the Italian *scudo* probably as an equivalent of dollar for his Italian reader.
one scudo, because it often happens that I have to give some alms, and to go and look for money seems a waste of time. Also it often happens that many sick people whom we visit have to combat both illness and poverty. And I do not think it contrary to the spirit of our Congregation to give some temporal help together with the spiritual.

Towards the beginning of every new year he was sensibly affected at the reflection of the swiftness of our life, and as the mouth speaketh out of the abundance of the heart, notwithstanding the great circumspection he always used in manifesting such interior dispositions as might have gained to him the esteem of others, the letters written by him about that time are interspersed with the pious thoughts that entirely occupied his mind.

[B] [In one of these, dated December 31, 1820, he spoke about the end of the year.] “Tomorrow,” says he in one of them, “we shall begin the new year. Will it be as that which has passed? I do not know it; as for me, this is the twenty-eighth of my life, but unhappily I must own that a great part of so many years has vanished as smoke and the others God knows how they have been spent. May the present year be more fruitful for my soul. [I have no news to give you except that instead of becoming better, I have become much worse.]”

[C] [In another, written June 2, 1821 from New Orleans, he spoke of himself.] “My health is good,” says he in another, “I mean my bodily health, for as for that of the soul, I doubt very much. I am almost thirty, and God knows how I have spent them. But what is worse, I fear lest the others that shall succeed them, if God grant me any, will be no better employed. For I see in me more or less the same passions, and I feel them with the same strength, the same inclinations, and almost the same faults. [People wish each other a good year. Those who do so through simple ceremony are wrong and
hypocrites. Those who wish a happy new year out of love and accompany the congratulations which they make in their mouths with true desires in their hearts, practice charity and exercise a pious usage which does honor to Christians. I wish to be among these latter, desiring a thousand, thousand blessings and temporal and spiritual prosperity always accompanied by that true peace which is none other than the testimony of a good conscience.]”

[“I am busy at the college,” he wrote in another letter (July 20, 1821), “teaching French, English, and theology, and am preparing the boys for first communion. For the rest, then, I am always the same. Always guilty of the same vices, contenting myself with certain weak resolutions which I often make and which do not produce any effect. Sometimes I am embarrassed, but this is insufficient for it to be effective.”]

[D] [June 28, 1822] “Hitherto,” thus he wrote a few months before his death, “the City is healthy. Not yet any appearance of the yellow fever. I hope that our merciful God will spare us this year. However, his holy will be done. It is very useless to live any longer if we do not amend our life; as for me I do not see any amelioration in mind. The other day I began my thirtieth year and God knows how I have spent them. I am almost sure that if he grants me any others they will not be better, but on the contrary that they will be worse. *Forsan proficere est deficere.*” (Perhaps to advance is to regress.)[37] Those sincere expressions of his heart shew how careful he was to improve every opportunity for a spiritual advantage.

[E] “Yesterday,” says he in another letter, “they desired me

---

[37] The Italian text is more accurate: Not to profit is to grow worse. This is a commonplace expression, appearing in various forms in spiritual literature from the time of Augustine: PL 38, col. 926, “Remanet, qui non proficit, retro redit.”
to preach an English sermon. I did, but unhappily a great part of my auditors amongst whom the Right Revd. Bishop did not understand me, and the others I have ground to believe have not been much satisfied with my sermon. My self love repines at it but to acquire humility, we must love humiliations. What is said in the 12th chapter of our rules which I have read two days before has consoled and strengthened me."38 He seemed to have present to his mind on every circumstance that of the Apostle. “Everything turns to the advantage of those that love God” (Rom 8:28).

[F] [On the seventh of June] “Yesterday,” thus he wrote to his Director, “I was reprimanded [severely]. I was so much the more surprised at it as I did not expect it, and motive of it appeared to me less grounded. No matter if I had deserved it, as it is probably well done. It will provide amendment; if I had not merited it, so much the better it will serve to humble my pride.” Humility was his darling virtue, and not only the sight of his pretended health, and every mortifying occasion excited him to the practice of it; but he knew also how to find motives of exercising himself in that virtue almost from any other occurrences.

[G] [In another, six days later, he spoke on the subject of the news which had been received of the death of our confrere in China.] “The news of this martyrdom,” says he in a letter to the same, “of our Brother in China is very interesting.39 But Martyrdom is a recompense given only to true Missionaries. I do not hope to have such a happiness. If I find so many

38 Section 4 of Chapter 12: “... No one shall praise other confreres, especially in their presence, ... particularly for their eloquent and well-received sermons; nor, on the contrary, will we criticize any confrere because of his lack of knowledge or eloquence.”
39 Francis-Regis Clet (1748-1820) was martyred 18 February 1820, and beatified 27 May, 1900.
difficulties to sacrifice to God the least of my desires, how could I dare flatter myself to be so courageous as to make him a free sacrifice of my life. Alas should martyrdom consist in words alone or even in some transitory velleities, I would long ago have been honoured with its palm and crown. But 'non coronabitur nisi qui legitime certaverit'.” (2 Tim 2:5: ‘He cannot receive the winner’s crown unless he has kept the rules.’ NAB.)

[H] His constant practice of humility led him to that of the most perfect obedience; which was his leading stay in all the transactions of his life even before he was received in the Congregation. But after he had embraced this new state of life to which obedience is essential, he renounced entirely his will, and made of it a perfect and constant sacrifice to Almighty God. “I declare to you beforehand,” he wrote to his superior on a certain occasion, “that I will have no will of my own. Whatever you shall dispose about me that I shall look upon as the will of God. For I am sure that I shall never be satisfied, but when I shall perform the will of my superiors.” To this end he always consulted them by letter when he was absent, desiring to have the merit of obedience in everything, and, if sometimes he was urged by circumstances to do anything without having their express and formal consent, he never failed to write to them as soon as possible to know whether he would meet their approbation. It is edifying to hear him in one of such cases. “Such is my confusion that I do not know how to begin this letter.... I am in the necessity of taking this step without your previous permission, grounded on the following motives.... For God’s sake be pleased to approve my resolution. Nothing could afflict me more than to have taken it contrary to your will. I thought that in urgent cases there might be place for such interpretation. If I have been mistaken, I protest that I did not certainly intend to do anything contrary to obedience; and it has been the effect of a false supposition.... I am uneasy and I earnestly beseech you to give me a speedy answer. If I could fly, I would go myself to consult you.”
He was no less exact in directing himself after the prescription of his rules, and the
intention of his Superiors in whatever related to the vow of Poverty; never doing anything
without permission and whilst he lived at New Orleans with Mr. Borgna, having been
commanded to exercise the functions of Superior he gave up all the money that he had to Mr.
Borgna, who was the procurator, keeping, only not without permission, what he thought
necessary to make almost, when to go for it to the Procurator would have made him lose the
opportunity of giving a charitable relief to the suffering members of Christ. Great was likewise
his diligence in submitting the conduct of his conscience to the direction of obedience. He was
exact in giving a faithful account of his interior to the Superior, as it is ordered by the rules, that
when it was not possible to give it by word of mouth on account of living too far from them, he
had not the least difficulty not only to consult them by letters, but also to commit to writing the
whole state of his soul, and send them by mail, which he did in Latin.

In a word, the conduct of Mr. Ferrari has been such as it may be proposed as a pattern to
all his Brethren, and especially to those that are destined by providence to these American
missions, of which he has been a bright ornament. We hoped that he would be also their main
pillar and support for a long course of years, having in an eminent degree all the qualities that
ought to be found in a person interested with the direction of others. But Providence has disposed
otherwise. Submitting to her ever just and adorable decrees, we should endeavour to obtain with
our earnest prayers in compensation of this loss a new supply of such zealous and
fervent labourers in this needy portion of the vineyard of the Lord.

*Rogate Domim messis ut mittat operarios in messem suam.*

**APPENDIX**

Obituary Notice

*Of Father Andrew Ferrari, a young ecclesiastic who died at New Orleans, November 22 [sic], 1822; written by Fr. Portier, a missionary of the same country.*

*(Taken from the Annals of the Catholic Association, fascicle 2 page 56, and reported in the Gazzette in New Orleans at that period.)*

Andrew Ferrari, a native of Porto Maurizio in the state of Genoa, completed his career in this city on November 2, the year of grace 1822 [at age 31]. Educated by very virtuous parents, he delighted them with the sweetness of his own character, his filial piety, his progress in studies, and principally in his tender love for religion. The innocence of his young life caused to germinate in his heart sublime sentiments, which prepared the man for great actions and generous sacrifices. He undertook with distinction, and completed, courses in mathematics and philosophy [anatomy]. He was also able to speak Greek; he read [Greek and] Spanish authors without difficulty; he spoke...

---

40 (Luke 10:2: “Therefore ask the harvest-master to send workers to his harvest.” NAB.)

41 Michael Portier (1795-1858), one of the original DuBourg recruits, was consecrated a bishop by Rosati in 1826, and was Bishop of Mobile 1829-1859.

42 Materials in brackets are from a slightly different version, “Necrologe de M. Andre Ferrary... par M. Portier,” in *Recueil des Lettres des Evêques et des Missionnaires des Missions des Deux Mondes,* publié par l’Association de La Propagation de La Foi, Louvain, 1827, pp. 455-458.
fervently and eloquently Italian and Latin, English and French. He was a profound theologian, an enlightened moralist, a solid preacher; and he embraced the ecclesiastical state for the sole purpose of announcing the doctrine of Jesus Christ, of dedicating himself to the aid of suffering humanity, and of making men better and worthy of eternity. He was hardly consecrated to the altar when he foresaw that his zeal could have a vaster field in the new world, and that his fatigues would be more useful in the abandoned parts of America than in his native country where religion flourishes. A heavenly inspiration drew him toward that area where the religion of our fathers was almost abandoned due to lack of evangelical workers, and he followed the lead of the illustrious prelate to gather up the remains and to repair the ruins. Though he was torn painfully by his parents’ embraces, and still longing for his country where he left his friends and dear memories, religion called him, and he did not listen to any voice but that.

The faithful in Kentucky have admired his virtues, and given homage to his sweet and attractive eloquence. They have kept alive [for a long time] the memory of his noble simplicity and of exemplary fervor. Vincennes, St. Louis and Louisiana were successively the theater of his apostolic ministry. Everywhere he caused the word of God to be heard in all its strength, and he gave himself interiorly to the Suffering. He knew how to humiliate himself in view of the esteem and veneration of the people for him. It had only been four years since he became a member of the Congregation of St. Lazare, that society composed of priests worthy of the great centuries of Christianity, that society which had St. Vincent de Paul as its founder and father. This rule came from the very source of charity, and it did not recognize any other interest except those of the poor and the unfortunate. Would
anything else be needed to determine his heart and his vocation?

If this notice appears exaggerated, let me call on the testimony of an impartial man, both literate and of sound views. The St. Louis judge, Mr. Lucas, told his son, “Go to listen to this young orator, study in his familiar exhortations the art of reasoning, of moving and penetrating hearts.” This was how this former member of the Congress and profound jurist judged him.\footnote{John Baptiste Charles Lucas (1758-1842), Congressman from Pennsylvania, 1803-1805; U.S. judge with residence in Saint Louis, for the northern district of Louisiana, up to 1820.} But what purpose is there in recalling so many wonderful qualities of spirit? The tomb has swallowed him, and nothing remains for us except our lamentation and our tears. To what purpose should we fix our glances still on those fragile failing gifts? Is it insufficient to be immortal in the annals of religion? What reason more sublime is there than acquiring with the sacrifice of his life the fulfillment of the duties of his own state? Preserved at first from the scourge which plunged all the families of this city into grief, but foreseeing that he would be its victim [one day], in a short while, he did not appear less devoted to the bed of the sick and dying. Not even the terrifying disgust of wretched misery, the influence of a hot climate, or the fatigues of his difficult ministry caused him to lose his courage or to lessen his charity. He did not mind the sickening stench of those who were in their last agony. He sought death in its destruction, and he seemed to want to become familiar with it as it approached him. Finally it struck him. He looked at it without fear. A smile was on his lips at the moment when pain tore him internally. And up to his last breath he triumphed over human weaknesses. Religion made him one of its martyrs. He passed away full of faith in his own immortality and in hope in the promises of his God.