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*Jean-Marie Odin, C.M.,  
Missionary Bishop Extraordinaire of Texas*

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On the morning of 13 July 1840, a warm summer day at Linnville on the Texas Gulf Coast, a small band of Roman Catholic missionaries disembarked the schooner *Henry*, a ship that had arrived the night before from New Orleans. Father Jean-Marie Odin, C. M., a forty-year-old Frenchman, headed up that company of three priests and one brother of the Congregation of the Mission (primarily known in America as Vincentians and throughout Europe as Lazarists) from Saint Mary of the Barrens Seminary at Perryville, Missouri. Odin, destined to be named the first Catholic bishop of Galveston in 1847, had volunteered for the American mission field eighteen years earlier while still a seminarian at Lyon. The arrival of the future bishop and his Vincentian colleagues in that vast land between the Rio Grande and the Red River, where a century and a half before Franciscan friars from the Valley of Mexico had planted the Catholic faith, marked the beginning of a new epoch in the historical evolution of Texas's Roman Catholic heritage.<sup>1</sup>

The selection of Odin to lead that renewed effort at the Roman Catholic evangelization of Texas proved to be a wise choice, as he became the bedrock upon which the endeavor was founded in the midnineteenth century. Bishop Odin emerges from the archival records as one of Roman Catholicism's most outstanding missionaries. If his story were known more widely, he might very well take his place in the history of missionaries alongside such revered frontier churchmen as the Jesuit father Pierre De Smet, the Sulpician bishop Benedict Joseph Flaget, the Dominican father Samuel Mazzuchelli, and Bishop Frederic Baraga of Marquette. Each of those figures has been the subject of at least one biography, but no major scholarly study of Bishop Odin has ever been published. He remains almost as ignored in the narrative of the Roman Catholic community in the United States as he does in the annals of Texas history.<sup>2</sup>

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Jean-Marie Odin, C.M., Vicar Apostolic of Texas from a daguerreotype portrait taken at Lyon, France by Chabrol photographers during Odin's return to France.



The birthplace of Jean-Marie Odin at Ambierle, France.

## Missionary From France

The future first bishop of Galveston came into the world at noon on 25 February 1800 at his parents' home in the tiny French hamlet of Hauteville, a dependency of the historical Benedictine priory church of St. Martin d' Ambierle. Situated in the western half of the ancient Archdiocese of Lyon, a few kilometers northwest of the city of Roanne, Ambierle traces its origin back to the latter decades of Roman Gaul, to 505. He was the seventh of ten children born to Jean and Claudine-Marie Odin, a religiously devout, financially comfortable, and respected couple. But the period in which Jean-Marie's birth occurred was a very difficult one for sincere Roman Catholics in France. The French Revolution had effected a devastating assault against religion in that traditionally Catholic country. The onset of Napoleonic rule had resulted in an intensified state assumption of control over church affairs in France, seriously aggravating tensions between Paris and Rome. Thus, while young Odin grew up in a family that nurtured his Roman Catholic piety, he did so in a nation where the Church existed under a literal state of siege.<sup>3</sup>

From his earliest years, Jean-Marie showed a deeply religious, charitable, and sensitive nature. Of those traits one author wrote:

He delights in helping the poor. He brings food to needy neighbors; his mother greatly encourages him; he becomes bold. One day on the road he meets a traveler rather miserably dressed; he questions him and learns that he is going to Roanne. It is a distance of about twenty kilometers. He sees heavy wooden shoes on the feet of the unfortunate man; his heart is touched. And without thinking about the strangeness of his request, he flies to his mother; 'mother, let me give my shoes to this poor man. He will not be able to reach Roanne in those poor shoes!' His mother smiles and makes him understand that the shoes of a child were scarcely made for a man. The impetuosity of charity had carried away young Odin, who was by nature timid and reserved.<sup>4</sup>

Jean-Marie's own letters written to various members of his family after he left home to pursue his vocation, attest to his devoutness. For example, writing to his sister (probably Benoîte, he sent along a copy of a biography of Saint Louis of Gonzaga and said to her:

I invite you to read carefully the life of Saint Louis of Gonzaga. The great penances and austerities of this saint will encourage you to bear with patience the little sufferings of this life. Think often of eternity and glory [*sic*] that the saints enjoy in heaven, and remember that it is only through suffering and poverty that they have arrived at this happy end. Offer your work carefully to God, that your least actions may be performed for his glory. In that way, you will be sure of pleasing him and his grace will sustain you always.<sup>5</sup>

On another occasion he concluded a letter to a female cousin who often sought his advice on spiritual matters, with these words:

The great religious truths are forgotten, and the important matter of salvation is neglected. Oh! My dear friend, let us think only of eternity, let us not loiter in this land of exile; we shall soon leave it, let us strive, therefore, to become worthy of entering into our true home, into the dwelling of God and of his saints.<sup>6</sup>

While no doubt exists about the sincerity of Jean-Marie's early Catholic spiritual development, it is also clear that his initial formal schooling was at best tenuous. Odin did, however, go on to ultimately acquire a fine seminary training. At the age of seven he began to study reading and writing under the watchful eye of a distant cousin, a former seminarian living in the nearby village of Tremières. Two years later, in 1809, he commenced instruction in Latin from his mother's Uncle Serol, *curé* of the parish of Neuilly. Sadly, the elderly pastor of Neuilly soon died, forcing Odin to return to Hauteville. Not long afterwards though, Jean-Marie received his First Communion and then resumed the pursuit of his seminary education, entering a Jesuit boarding school located at Roanne. In 1813 Cardinal Joseph Fesch, archbishop of Lyon since 1802, administered the sacrament of Confirmation to the future missionary to Texas. A year later Odin entered the small preparatory seminary of Verrières, situated in the mountains near Montbrison. After a lengthy stay there, he matriculated to L'Argentière to pursue his courses in philosophy. Moving on, in 1818, to the seminary college of Alix in the vicinity of Villefranche, Jean-Marie reached the apex of his French seminary career when the Priests of Saint Sulpice (Sulpicians) admitted him to their *grande séminaire* of St. Irenaeus at Lyon. There, in 1821, Odin became a subdeacon of the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>7</sup>

At this point some comment about Odin's spiritual formation up to that period of his life (1821) seems appropriate. During his tenure at St. Irenaeus Jean-Marie absorbed the Sulpician clerical spirit, the *esprit ecclésiastique de Saint Sulpice*, whose special focus was the molding of candidates for the sacerdotal state. One scholar of the Sulpicians recently wrote that "*excellence* is an appropriate descriptive term for the spirit of Saint Sulpice, to which thousands of alumni priests of Sulpician seminaries owe their religious formation." Continuing, the historian explained that:

the spirit of Saint Sulpice, derived from the charism of Olier [Jean-Jacques Olier (1608–1657), founder in 1641 of the Sulpicians], was manifested in a specific method of mental prayer, in the *haute culture* of the aristocratic concept of the priesthood, and in the Sulpician drive to model the interior and exterior ideal of the priesthood for those aspiring to the sacerdotal life.<sup>8</sup>

The author went on to explain that what made the Sulpician formation unique was its emphasis on the nobility of the priesthood, an identification that all graduates of Sulpician seminaries were expected to carry with them throughout their lives.

The original *esprit ecclésiastique*, which had become lax in some Sulpician institutions by the dawn of the eighteenth century, was revived under the auspices of the greatly admired Sulpician superior general from 1782 through 1808, Jacques-André Emery. The Sulpicians were one of the secular congregations suppressed in France during the Napoleonic era, but they had been restored in 1816 during the reign of King Louis XVIII. When Odin attended St. Irenaeus the memory of Emery remained vivid and his influence pervasive among the seminarians. Of great importance, Emery staunchly opposed Jansenism, an extremely harsh movement that had come to surface in the Church as a negative aspect of the religious renaissance of early seventeenth century France. While French history of that period witnessed a Roman Catholic spiritual awakening that produced a number of admirable outcomes—such as the foundation of the French Oratorians (1611); the Congregations of the Mission (1625); the Sisters of Charity (1633); the Order of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament (1634); and the Eudists (1643)—Jansenism proved to be a very destructive force within the Church.

Bishop Cornelius Otto Jansen (or Jansenius) of Ypres, conceptualized the views that came to be incorporated into the body of thought known as Jansenism into his book *Augustinus*, published in 1640. In its broadest purview, Jansenism contained a type of religious determinism that argued that humans need a special grace from God in order to carry out his commands but that infusion of grace from God is irresistible. Carried to its ultimate meaning, these ideas implied that people had a relationship with God similar to that which Calvinistic predestination claimed. Attracting a noticeable following, especially among influential clergy, religious and laity of France, with their nucleus situated at the convent of Port Royal, the Jansenists began to preach a rigid morality. In the long run, Jansenism aroused heated opposition from several quarters within the Roman Catholic world, most visibly from the Jesuits. Urged on by those “Spiritual Warriors of St. Ignatius,” Pope Innocent X, in 1653, condemned the vast majority of Jansenist beliefs.<sup>9</sup>

The attention given to the *esprit ecclésiastique* of the Sulpician seminaries and the emergence of Jansenism in French Catholic circles in an essay devoted to the life of a midnineteenth century missionary to Texas may at first glance appear to be superfluous. It should be remembered, however, that one popular perception of the French clergy working in Texas during those years is that many of them were elitists and Jansenists. The various clergy who labored in Texas were, as was usually the case with Roman Catholic missionaries all over the world, products of the formation they received in the seminaries they attended and the religious communities to which they belonged. The French churchmen in Texas who were alumni of a Sulpician *grande séminaire* made up a sort of spiritual and national brotherhood which manifested itself in their attitudes and conduct. The same must be said of course of each of the religious, male as well as female, who came to Texas during the era of the immigrants.<sup>10</sup>

### A Vincentian at the Barrens

With his French seminary training and priestly formation behind him, Jean-Marie Odin was in 1822 beckoned to the American mission field. There his priestly development would continue, but from then on under the Vincentians. Sulpician Bishop Louis William DuBourg of Louisiana and the Floridas had in the spring of that year sent one of his priests, Father Angelo Inglesi, to Europe for the purpose of seeking out help for his expansive American diocese.<sup>11</sup> Inglesi's appeal to the seminarians at St. Irenaeus inspired Odin, who already had begun to feel drawn toward joining a religious community and becoming a missionary. After consulting with his religious superiors at the seminary (who encouraged him to respond to Bishop DuBourg's call), Jean-Marie decided to volunteer. In a letter to his mother and father he poured out his heart:

My superiors announced to me that the Bishop of Louisiana wanted someone to establish some seminaries in his diocese. They were of the opinion that I should accept this post; it is a very great favor that heaven grants me and which my unworthiness would never have permitted me to hope for. However, the joy that this news should have caused me was very troubled by the apprehension that it was not at all pleasing to you. Your attachment for me is so great that a separation of several years is going to sadden you perhaps, and cause you chagrin and anxiety. But no, the will of God was always precious, and you always loved to accomplish it. This thought cheers me up, for my dear father and mother, if I have accepted this post it is only after the most serious deliberations.<sup>12</sup>

Shortly after writing to his parents, Jean-Marie, on 3 May 1822, composed a moving letter to his sister Benoîte, pleading that

Providence, my dear sister, deigns to associate me with the zealous missionaries of America, and that in spite of my unworthiness. It is willing to select me to go to the aid of the miserable savages of these [*sic*] unfortunate lands. Through the love that you have for your God and this affection that you always show me, permit your poor brother to solicit various services of your goodness. I again count on that tenderness that will always persuade you to oblige me. My departure will be, I hope for you, a new reason for praising God, if you look at it with the eyes of faith. But my poor father and my good mother, my brothers and sisters and the entire family, will find in my departure a great cause for sadness and chagrin. Ah! my [*sic*] dear sister it is upon you that all my hope rests; you will console them, you will make them face and understand the obligation under which I find myself, to support the designs of Providence for me.<sup>13</sup>

Odin departed the French port of Le Havre on 8 May 1822 for New Orleans, arriving at his American destination a little more than two months later, on 11 July. While the roots of Roman Catholic evangelization in the Lower Mississippi River Valley go back to the seventeenth century and involved different religious communities, including the Jesuits, Recollects, the Carmelite Fathers, the Capuchins, and the Ursuline Sisters, the diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas had been erected only in 1793. Within a month after his arrival at New Orleans, the young French subdeacon was on his way—with several seminarians—up the Mississippi River to the Vincentian seminary recently established at the Barrens settlement in Perry County, Missouri. There his priestly formation would be brought to maturity under the guidance of the Vincentians, a community he soon joined.<sup>14</sup>

St. Vincent de Paul (1581–1660), founder of the Vincentians, holds down a place in Roman Catholic history as one of the Faith's most revered religious reformers. Emerging in seventeenth century France as an important figure of the French school of Catholic spirituality, St. Vincent de Paul emphasized holy perfection for the clergy and laity alike. A contemporary of Cardinal Pierre de Berulle, founder of the French Oratorians; St. John Eudes, founder of the Eudists; and Jean-Jacques Olier, St. Vincent shared their passion for raising the spiritual, educational, and charitable level of Catholicism in France. Strongly influenced by those who had gone before him, especially the writings of the early Christian fathers and the Spanish Dominican Louis of Granada, St. Vincent formed a spiritual life that combined the religious austerity of the French Oratorians, a cheerfulness endemic to a true holy life, and a common-sense approach to apostolic work. His efforts centered on the administration of seminaries and parishes and conducting missions, where Vincentian spirituality could touch the aspiring priest as well as the layperson.<sup>15</sup>

It was such formation that Jean-Marie Odin absorbed at the Barrens seminary beginning in the fall of 1822. In the meanwhile, the French cleric was nearing ordination to the priesthood. On 12 October 1822 Bishop Dubourg traveled to the Barrens seminary and elevated Odin to the status of a deacon. Less than seven months later, on 4 May 1823, the bishop returned to the Barrens and ordained Jean-Marie a priest of the Roman Catholic Church. Having already determined that life in a religious community also was his vocation, Odin had entered the Congregation of the Mission. Subsequently, a mere six weeks before his twenty-fifth birthday, on 12 January 1825, he took his final vows as a Vincentian.<sup>16</sup>

Odin came on the scene at the Barrens as the United States had begun to experience the early stages of the trans-Mississippi westward movement, a historical development stimulated by less-stringent governmental land policies for the West after the War of 1812 and the economic depression known as the Panic of 1819. The panic pushed thousands of people away from the eastern regions of the country, over the Appalachians to the Mississippi River Valley and beyond. Combined with these conditions, the immigrant era in American history was in its formative stages when Odin stepped ashore at New Orleans in 1822. Thus, the young French

churchman immediately became a part of the frontier Catholic legacy of early nineteenth century America.

During the seventeen-year interval between his ordination to the priesthood and his assignment to Texas in 1840, Father Odin served the Roman Catholic population of Missouri and Arkansas, various Indian bands and tribes, and his own Congregation of the Mission with warmth and eager devotion. Soon after his becoming a priest Odin assumed the post of theology professor at the Barrens seminary, working in that capacity through 1828. Meanwhile, on 5 June 1824, he took on the responsibilities of secretary to the rector of the Barrens seminary, Father Joseph Rosati, C.M. When Rosati was consecrated first bishop of St. Louis in 1828—the diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas having been divided into two separate dioceses of New Orleans and St. Louis in that year—Father Odin administered the seminary by himself. In 1829 the Vincentians named him rector of the seminary and a year later appointed him president of the lay college associated with the seminary. The hardworking and zealous Odin stayed at the latter position through 1834, ultimately taking on the duties of procurator (treasurer) of the seminary in the late 1830s.<sup>17</sup>

Writing to one of his sisters back in France (though not identified, likely she was Josephine), Odin described his responsibilities as those of being a professor at the seminary, pastor of the church at the Barrens, and spiritual director of a religious community of nuns recently established in the vicinity of the Barrens. The nuns of whom he wrote were a small band of Sisters of Loretto who a short while before had settled at Bethlehem, Missouri, to operate a school for girls. At the same time Father Odin ministered to the Catholic population in several of the parishes and missions in Missouri and Arkansas, often laboring in tandem with his close friend and confrere, John Timon, C.M.<sup>18</sup>

Missouri became a state as a result of the Missouri Compromise of 1820; and Arkansas existed as a territory of the United States from 1819 to 1836, when it became the nation's twenty-fifth state. Ecclesiastically, both Missouri and Arkansas were assigned to the new Diocese of St. Louis when it was carved out of the former Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas in 1826. Father Odin and his colleague John Timon began periodic missionary jaunts from the Barrens seminary through Missouri and south into Arkansas as early as 1824, even though Timon was not ordained a priest until 1825. Concomitant with these activities, Odin ministered to some of the Indian peoples of Missouri and Arkansas, an endeavor that proved to be very rewarding for him.<sup>19</sup>

Odin's reputation as a professor of theology at the Barrens seminary earned him the confidence of Bishop Rosati, with the result that the bishop selected the French priest to accompany him as his official theologian to the Second Provincial Council of Baltimore in 1833. His performance there was, as Jesuit Father Stephen Dubuisson described it on 15 November 1833, "*au-dessus du commun*" (above the ordinary).<sup>20</sup> The council fathers in turn despatched him to Rome to report on their deliberations to Pope Gregory XVI (1831-1846). In the meantime, Odin played a key role in his own congregation's affairs, including the erection

in 1835 of the American province of the Congregation of the Mission (the only province outside of Europe). His report to the Vincentian superior general, Jean-Baptiste Nozo, C. M., laid the foundation for the new American province, with Father Timon as provincial superior (or visitor, as the Vincentians prefer to call their superiors). By the late 1830s, Odin was so well thought of in Catholic circles, his eventual elevation to the Roman Catholic hierarchy seemed a certainty.<sup>21</sup>

### Texas!

In spite of all of these accomplishments, the French priest from Hauteville is best known for his work as a missionary in Texas between 1840 and 1861. In the later 1830s the Holy See deemed it necessary to reinvigorate Roman Catholic evangelization in that region, a land where the Church's missionizing efforts had been deteriorating for years. Texas provided Roman Catholicism with some serious obstacles as well as encouraging possibilities. Immigrant Catholics, mainly from the United States, had been filtering into that land since the 1820s. A good number of these "Catholic" migrants could be considered of questionable sincerity in regards to the baptisms they claimed, many of them becoming Catholics primarily in order to satisfy the religious requirements of the Mexican government so that they would qualify for a land grant. Such was the case among a number of the settlers in the colonies of such entrepreneurs as Stephen F. Austin, Green DeWitt, and E.S.C. Robertson. Other Catholic migrants, like the Irish that such Irish colonial agents as John McMullen, James McGloin, James Powers, and James Hewitson brought to Texas, must have been more serious about their Catholicism. The same can be said of immigrants in the character of John Joseph Linn, a native of Ireland who moved to Texas in 1829 and became a leading citizen there.<sup>22</sup>

This immigration, however, came into a territory that already boasted of a Roman Catholic heritage: the Spanish-Mexican-Indian legacy of the Franciscan missions period that formally dated back to 1681. After somewhat more than a century of growth, the Spanish missions—and thus Catholic evangelization—suffered decline. There were understandable reasons for the degeneration of Catholic activity. Texas, from the late eighteenth century to 24 October 1839—when the land ecclesiastically became a prefecture apostolic—formed a part of a diocese of New Spain popularly referred to as Monterrey, but whose actual title was not at first clear. Any misunderstanding about the diocese's name can be traced back to the imprecise wording of the papal bull that erected the ecclesiastical region on 15 December 1777. King Charles III of Spain had asked Pope Pius VI to establish a new bishopric to be called Nuevo Reino de León, with the see city to be Villa de San Felipe de Linares. As the Holy See issued the papal bull, *Relata semper*, creating the new diocese, it employed descriptive wording identifying the region that set the see city at San Felipe de Linares in the same Tierra de Linares. There is little doubt that the see city was to be Linares, but what about the name of the new diocese? The Spanish royal government's solution to the dilemma was to identify the bishopric as that of Nuevo León. To complicate matters further, Bishop José María de Jesús Belaunzarán y Ureña, ordinary of the diocese in the 1830s, steadfastly called himself the bishop of Monterrey.<sup>23</sup>

More impressive difficulties existed for the Roman Catholics of Texas, however, difficulties that Odin, as the vice-prefect apostolic, would have to resolve. Most importantly, the territory suffered from a severe shortage of priests; and no communities of nuns operated there at all. When Odin stepped ashore at Linnville on 13 July 1840, only four Catholic clergy labored in Texas. Fathers George W. Haydon and Edward A. Clarke had ventured to the area from St. Joseph's College at Bardstown, Kentucky, in late December 1839. Two Mexican secular priests, Fathers Refugio de la Garza and José Antonio Valdéz, were situated in the vicinity of San Antonio de Bexar; De la Garza served as pastor of San Fernando church. These two clerics, however, were living in such a manner as to give scandal to their priestly calling.

A complexity of historical circumstances were at the root of these conditions for Catholicism in Texas. The long tradition of the Roman Catholic Church has shown that regular pastoral visits of the diocesan ordinary are vital to the spiritual health of diocesan clergy, religious, and laity. No such episcopal visit had taken place in Texas since 1805. Moreover, secularization of the Franciscan missions, begun in 1794 and completed in 1830, in most cases had not been followed up by the erection of a regular parish structure. This situation was in part the direct result of Catholic population growth having not caught up to the needs of frontier parish settlement. Equally significant, the early decades of the nineteenth century were full of traumatic political, economic, and social upheaval in New Spain—and, after 1821, Mexico. Coming to political power in Mexico in the latter 1820s, and asserting themselves against the Catholic Church with increasing boldness, were liberal regimes. With strong support of the Freemasons, these groups initiated an all-out assault against Roman Catholicism. As a consequence, beginning in the late 1820s normal administration of the Mexican Church broke down. Spanish bishops fled Mexico, most of them returning to Spain, where a similar type of liberal ascendancy commenced in January 1834. Between 1827 and 1831 Mexico could count no sitting ordinary in any of its numerous dioceses. In the 1830s, bishops once again being appointed to Mexican sees, it was still virtually impossible for bishops to initiate pastoral visits in their dioceses. That was certainly true of the Diocese of Linares.<sup>24</sup>

In the more remote regions of some bishoprics, such as Texas, Roman Catholics were seemingly left to fend for themselves in matters of religion. Making this situation even more precarious, by the time of Father Odin's arrival in Texas Protestants had become a noticeable presence in the territory. Methodists were the first to arrive, Reverend William Stevenson establishing Texas's original Methodist Society in 1815 near present-day Clarksville. Then came the Baptists. Reverend Joseph Bays founded a Baptist church in Austin's colony in 1830. Others followed. As early as 1831, German Lutherans could be counted among the settlers in the colony of Industry. That site formed the nucleus for subsequent expansion of German Lutherans into the surrounding areas of what were to become Austin, Colorado, Fayette, De Witt, and Victoria counties. The Episcopalians first came to Texas in 1849, and a Mormon group had appeared on the Texas Panhandle by the

mid-1850s. Added to this complement of Protestants (though Episcopalians are not considered Protestant) were members of the various Reform churches (Calvinists), Bretheren churches, Adventists, Presbyterians, Disciples of Christ, Church of Christ, and various Pietist groups.<sup>25</sup>

While their fear of Protestant proselytism had prompted a small band of Roman Catholic colonists in Texas to appeal to the Church hierarchy meeting at the 1837 Baltimore provincial council for English-speaking priests, the Holy See had already determined to strengthen the Faith there. Pope Gregory XVI was not only anxious for the spiritual welfare of the recent Catholic immigrants to Texas, but he also hoped to bolster the Faith among the Tejanos and Tejanas, people who had suffered perhaps the most from the stagnation of Catholic missionizing in early nineteenth century Texas.<sup>26</sup>

Pope Gregory XVI eventually settled on a solution to the Texas question for the Church—removing the area from the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Diocese of Linares and sending in missionaries under the episcopal authority of Bishop Antoine Blanc of New Orleans. Bishop Blanc (ironically his first parish assignment as a young priest back in France had been at St. Martin d'Ambierle, where he briefly met sixteen-year-old Jean-Marie Odin) turned to Father Timon for help. Blanc and Timon both agreed that the Vincentians could add Texas to their scope of missionary activity. At Bishop Blanc's request, Timon, accompanied by a young Spanish Vincentian, Father Juan Francisco Llebaría, made a whirlwind tour of the Galveston-Houston vicinity between 27 December 1838 and 12 January 1839. Having in the process met with several Texas leaders, including the Catholic senator Juan Seguin, but unfortunately bypassing San Antonio de Bexar, Texas's most populous Catholic settlement, Timon returned to New Orleans. There he wrote his reports on his observations about the Church in Texas to his superiors.<sup>27</sup>

After a delay of more than a year, movement on the Catholic situation in Texas began to materialize. The Holy See gave to Texas the ecclesiastical stature of a prefecture apostolic and named Timon prefect apostolic. Inasmuch as he could not move to Texas on a permanent basis, Timon named his friend and colleague Odin as vice-prefect apostolic and charged him with the future of the Church in Texas. Odin departed Saint Mary of the Barrens Seminary on 2 May 1840, proceeding to his immediate destination of New Orleans. From there, accompanied by three Spanish Vincentians, Fathers Eudald Estany and Miguel Calvo as well as Brother Raimundo Sala, he proceeded on to Texas.<sup>28</sup>

With his arrival in Texas, Odin was committed to rebuilding the Catholic faith in a frontier environment that was beginning to experience interaction between the earlier Mexican culture and immigrant Catholics more recently arrived from the United States and Europe. In addition, he had entered a region where Indian aggression was a constant source of danger. On a number of occasions, the vice-prefect's letters refer to the Indian threats as a common irritant in Texas. The French missionary wrote to Bishop Blanc at New Orleans, on 2 October 1840, complaining that "the Indians have committed so many thefts, have assassinated so many unfortunate inhabitants, that one feels obliged to annihilate all of them, if it is

possible."<sup>29</sup> In another lengthy letter, dated 13 December of the same year, to Father Jean-Baptiste Etienne, Vincentian procurator at Paris, Odin complained that the savages had already stolen two horses, and he had worn out one during his travels."<sup>30</sup> Recalling Father Odin's affection for the more peaceful Indians of Missouri and Arkansas and his frequent desire to go among them as a missionary, his attitude about Indians in Texas suggested the reality of the difference between living among nonaggressive natives and surviving in an environment populated by bellicose warriors, such as the Comanches.<sup>31</sup>

The tremendous distances that the missionary from Hauteville had to travel in Texas were often undertaken in the scorching heat of summer or the drenching rains of winter or spring. Such exhausting trips demanded from him an almost superhuman stamina and a deeply developed spiritual sense of his mission. Odin's many letters, written over slightly more than twenty years in Texas, recounted one instance after another where he was exposed in open terrain to the hot Texas sun or to heavy rains and flash flooding. On one occasion the vice-prefect described being forced to climb a tree and spend several hours in that aboreal haven to escape dangerous waters. His own health and that of his coworkers was an almost constant concern. For much of his life Odin had suffered from severe migraine headaches. In addition, his personal letters written during his years in Texas mentioned numerous attacks of the fever, which plagued him often for days on end. Furthermore, yellow fever, a malady that struck down any number of Catholic missionaries and other unfortunate immigrants, remained an ever-present threat. More than once Odin went on visits to Catholics in small villages, living on ranches (which the vice-prefect alternately called ranchos or *ranchios*) or among Mexican families inhabiting *jacales*, while he was very ill.<sup>32</sup>

In spite of these hinderances to Odin in his quest to revive Catholic evangelization in Texas, the most frustrating conditions to be overcome were the religious laxity and poverty that he found among so many Roman Catholics in that vast territory. It is hardly surprising that Odin and his fellow missionaries encountered widespread spiritual indifference, considering the decline of the missions and consequent scarcity of priests to administer the sacraments and engage in catechetics. Moreover, the religious apathy and ignorance that characterized the entrepreneurial period of the 1820s and 1830s remained a problem.

Fundamental to any appreciation of Odin's significance to the Church in Texas is the realization that in working to overcome these barriers to Catholic evangelization he, as the pastoral leader, led the way in laying a foundation for the modern era of Roman Catholic history in the region. Shortly after his arrival at Linnville, the vice-prefect began his survey of the Catholic population in the vicinity, a practice that he would repeat many times in other locations as the years passed. He had to assign his few available priests carefully, assessing from the very beginning what sites were most in need of help. Departing for San Antonio on 21 July, Odin stationed Father Estany at Victoria to serve the Catholics of that small settlement

and the Mexican families living in the surrounding farms and ranches.<sup>33</sup>

At San Antonio Odin relieved Fathers De la Garza and Valdéz of their priestly faculties and placed Father Calvo as the new pastor of San Fernando Church, with Brother Sala there to aid him. On 2 August Father Calvo preached in Spanish at the Mass that Odin celebrated at San Fernando Church. From that day on, and during all of Odin's tenure in Texas, Spanish Masses were the custom at San Fernando Church for the Mexican peoples in and around San Antonio de Bexar. With the tense political situation still existing between Texas and Mexico and the Holy See increasingly becoming involved in struggles with liberal regimes in Europe and Latin America, Odin could not obtain priests and nuns from Mexico for Texas. He therefore used Spanish clergy as much as possible.

The vice-prefect remained at San Antonio for more than three months, working with Father Calvo, Brother Sala, and many local Catholics to repair the state of religion there. He was especially sad at the condition of San Fernando Church. In a letter to Bishop Blanc on 24 August 1840, Odin lamented what he found there, complaining:

In what a sad state I found the matters of religion! The church is half exposed and the unfortunate haunt of a thousand swallows by day and thousands of bats at night. The ornaments that were once rich are all in such a state of filth and decay that it makes one sick. Never a word of instruction, no catechism. A Mass mumbled every Sunday and attended by half a dozen women and children; imagine the picture. I was unable to prevent myself from weeping.<sup>34</sup>

Having accomplished what he could for the time being at San Antonio, Odin turned his attention to other matters. In late November 1840 he traveled to the Texas capital, Austin, where he spent several weeks working to push through the senate a bill returning the San Antonio missions formally to the Catholic Church. Father Timon, who had returned to Texas for a brief sojourn in mid-December, helped considerably in that venture. During those weeks Odin served for a time as chaplain of the Texas senate, purchased several lots for the Church, accepted a gift of "two or three acres for a church and convent" from the French *chargé d'affaires*, Alphonse Dubois de Saligny, and began a subscription list for a church.<sup>35</sup>

From these beginnings, Odin expanded his apostolate to rebuild the Church in Texas. His daily journal and letters are filled with references to trips that he made, frequently journeying miles out of his planned route to bring the sacraments to Catholics long without them. Baptisms, confessions, marriages, extreme unctions, and first communions were administered regularly. The vice-prefect made his rounds with equal concern among the several different nationalities that made up the Catholic population. While the poverty that afflicted the Texans remained a serious obstacle to the construction of churches for years, Odin nonetheless oversaw the erection or rebuilding of more than forty churches during his two decades of missionary activity. Among the best known of those houses of worship were

St. Vincent de Paul Church at Houston, where Odin celebrated Mass for the first time on 17 July 1842, and St. Mary's Cathedral at Galveston, which grew from the ruins of a small St. Mary's Church that Odin had begun to construct in late 1841.

As the years passed, the French Vincentian worked hard to build up the number of clergy and nuns serving the Catholics of Texas. This part of Odin's labors was particularly important because not only were the numbers of Catholic immigrants steadily increasing, but old-stock southern Anglo-Americans (the majority of whom were Protestants) had greatly surpassed the Roman Catholics in population. Given the religious, ethnic-cultural, and social ambiance of the times, this mushrooming Anglo-Protestant presence was accompanied not only by proselytization, but also by nativism, the slavery-abolitionist struggle, and racism. While the majority of Catholic immigrants from Europe did not favor slavery, many who had emigrated from the United States owned slaves. In fact, the Vincentians themselves owned slaves at the Barrens seminary and college.<sup>36</sup>

Their search for priests and nuns often carried frontier missionary leaders far and wide. Odin was no exception. In the fall of 1845 he made a trek to Europe, returning to the United States in April 1846 with eighteen future clerics for Texas. Included in that group was another French priest from the Archdiocese of Lyon, Father Claude-Marie Dubuis, Odin's eventual successor as the second bishop of Galveston.<sup>37</sup> A similar trip to Canada in 1849 resulted in the first contingent of priests and brothers of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate coming to Texas.<sup>38</sup> So too were to appear Marianists, Jesuits, Franciscans, Benedictines, and others. Ursuline Sisters from New Orleans, under the supervision of Mother St. Arsène, followed Odin to Galveston in January 1847. The future first bishop of Galveston had finally been able to establish an order of nuns in Texas to lay the groundwork for Catholic education. Shortly thereafter, in 1852, Incarnate Word Sisters from Odin's own Archdiocese of Lyon arrived at Brownsville. The Church's institutional foundation also was formed under Odin: a seminary at Frelsburg in 1854, St. Mary's University established at San Antonio de Bexar in 1852, St. Mary's Cathedral in 1847, and so on.

It has already been pointed out that by the late 1830s Odin was considered a prime candidate for an episcopal office. On 16 September 1841 the vice-prefect arrived at New Orleans, on his way to Saint Mary of the Barrens Seminary for a visit. While concelebrating High Mass at St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans with Bishop Blanc, Odin learned of his appointment as coadjutor Bishop of Detroit. Supported in his decision by Father Timon, with whom he conferred at the seminary, Odin refused the Detroit mitre and returned to Texas. Soon thereafter Bishop Blanc received a letter from Father Hercule Brassac, written at Paris, France, on 30 July 1841, stating that on 16 July Pope Gregory XVI had elevated Texas to the status of a vicariate apostolic and appointed Odin as bishop of *Claudopolis in partibus infidelium* and vicar apostolic of Texas. Bishop Blanc, assisted by Bishops Michael Portier of Mobile and John Chance of Natchez, consecrated Odin on 6 March 1842 at St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans. Father Timon and several of Odin's Vincentians were in attendance, as was Alphonse Dubois de Saligny.<sup>39</sup>



The current bishops in the State of Texas visited the tomb of Jean-Marie Odin at Ambierle, France during their 1988 pilgrimage to the territory surrounding Lyon, the point of departure for many of the French missionaries who served in Texas during the nineteenth century.

In 1846 the Sixth Provincial Council of Baltimore recommended that Texas be elevated to the status of a diocese. Though delayed for almost a year because of the death of Pope Gregory XVI on 1 June 1846, the suggestion was realized in Pope Pius IX's Bull *Apostolicae sedis fastigio*, which created the Diocese of Galveston on 4 May 1847. Seventeen days later, on 21 May, Bishop Odin was named first ordinary of the new diocese. He remained bishop of Galveston until succeeding Archbishop Blanc of New Orleans when the latter died in 1861. One of the French bishop's most lasting contributions to the Church in Texas came in 1858, when on 13 June of that year he convened the First Synod of the Diocese of Galveston. Following the dictates of the councils of the archdioceses of Baltimore and New Orleans, that synod framed much of the future ecclesiastical configuration of the Church in Texas.<sup>40</sup>

He had come from a small French village to what would one day become one of the United States' largest Roman Catholic dioceses in terms of land size. Bishop Jean-Marie Odin, C. M., not only revived Catholic evangelization there, but also chartered the coming direction for the Church in that frontier region. After serving almost a decade as the second archbishop of New Orleans, the saintly Odin undertook a trip to Rome to participate in the First Vatican Council. While at Rome he became ill and returned to Hauteville, the hamlet where he had been born seventy years earlier. There he died at the Odin family home on 25 May 1870. He lies buried at the same St. Martin d'Ambierle Church where he had attended Mass as a youth more than fifty years earlier. In April 1988 a group of Catholic bishops from Texas visited the tomb of the missionary bishop whose heirs they are. They paid homage to the French priest who became one of the nineteenth century Catholic Church's most outstanding figures.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Odin to Etienne, 28 August 1840, Odin letters, Catholic Archives of Texas (hereafter to be cited as C.A.T.); Jean-Marie Odin, Daily Journal, 13 July 1840. The original Daily Journal is located at the Vincentian motherhouse at Paris, France. Several Catholic archives possess Xerox copies of the journal, including the C.A.T.: the De Andreis-Rosati Memorial Archives at Perryville, Missouri (Vincentian archives and headquarters of the Vincentian Studies Institute and publication location of the journal *Vincentian Heritage* (this archive hereafter will be cited as DRMA); Archives of the University of Notre Dame (hereafter to be cited as AUND); and the Archives of the Archdiocese of St. Louis (hereafter to be cited as AASL). The three Vincentians who accompanied Father Odin to Texas were Fathers Miguel Calvo and Eudald Estany and Brother Raimundo Sala. All were Spaniards. Jean-Marie Odin, one of six young Catholic clerics, arrived at New Orleans on 11 July 1822 to begin service in Bishop Louis William DuBourg's diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas. Father Angelo Inglesi, representing Bishop DuBourg recruited Odin from the Sulpician *grande seminaire* of St. Irenaeus at Lyon, France. On this event see Annabelle M. Melville, *Louis William DuBourg, Bishop of Louisiana and the Floridas, Bishop of Montauban, and Archbishop of Besançon, 1766-1833*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1986) 2:572-601. On Odin's arrival at New Orleans see 588. The Franciscans who built the Texas missions came from the two apostolic colleges of the Congregation de Propaganda de Fide, the Colegio de la Santa Cruz de Querétaro (founded in 1683) and the Colegio de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Zacatecas (founded in 1707). See Marion F. Habig, O. F. M., *The Alamo Chain of Missions: A History of San Antonio's Five Old Missions* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1968)

<sup>2</sup>No list of outstanding Roman Catholic missionaries could ever be a complete one. Certainly the following all would appear on any major compilation of pioneer churchmen and churchwomen: the Vincentians Father Felix De Andreis, Bishop Joseph Rosait of St. Louis, and Bishop John Timon of Buffalo; Sulpician Bishop Louis William DuBourg; Bishop Antoine Blanc of New Orleans (became archbishop in 1850); Mother Mary Agnes Magevny, foundress of the Dominican Sisters Congregation of the Sacred Heart (who came to Houston in 1882); Mother Henriette DeLille, foundress of the congregation of black religious known as the Sisters of the Holy Family (at New Orleans); and Oblate of Mary Immaculate Father Pierre F. Parisot, Texas missionary whom Bishop Odin brought over from France in 1852. A number of works have been written, and some published, on the Catholic Church in Texas during Odin's time. The only published biography of Odin himself is that of the French Abbé Bony, *Vie de Mgr. Jean-Marie Odin, Missionnaire Lazarist de la Nouvelle-Orleans par L'Auteur de L'Initiateur du Voeu National* (Paris: Imprimerie de D. Dumoulin, 1896). Abbé Bony's book must be studied with care, because while it is valuable when quoting Odin's letters, which the author did often, or when describing the French Vincentian's early life, it nonetheless contains errors of fact and interpretation. The Vincentian scholar, the late Father Ralph Bayard, C.M., wrote the classic study of the Vincentians in Texas from 1838 through 1848, his *Lone-Star Vanguard, The Catholic Re-Occupation of Texas (1838-1848)* (St. Louis: Vincentian Press, 1945.). Sister Mary Benignus Sheridan, C.C.V.I., "Bishop Odin and the Catholic Church in Texas" (Ph.D. dissertation, St. Louis University, 1937) consists mainly of quotations from letters written by Odin while he was in Texas intermixed with historical information and comments, but the study provides little analysis of Odin's work. A second dissertation is that of Sister Mary Angela Fitzmorris, C.D.P., *Four Decades of Catholicism in Texas, 1820-1860* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1926). In her dissertation, *The Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word of San Antonio, Texas* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1925), Sister Mary Helena Finck, C.C.V.I. devotes several pages to Bishop Odin. Although Odin's ecclesiastical contemporaries, and many Catholic laypeople as well, held him in high regard, he has not been the focus of much scholarship and is not well known in Catholic academic circles. The standard study of the Catholic Church in Texas from 1836 to 1950 remains Carlos Eduardo Castañeda's volume 7 in *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 1519-1936, with a supplement to 1950*, 7 vols. (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones, 1958). Castañeda's volume gives excellent coverage of Odin and is especially important on him from 40 to 122. None of the secular histories of Texas give Bishop Odin and his era more than a smattering of attention.

<sup>3</sup>"*Extrait du Registre des Actes de Baptême, Paroisse d'Ambierle, Diocèse de Lyon (Loire)*, 12 juillet 1949. FitzSimon (Bishop Lawrence of Amarillo) to Gerlier (Archbishop Peter of Lyon, France), n.d. (likely written in the fall of 1949 or winter-spring of 1950), FitzSimon papers, C.A.T. The Archdiocese of Lyon has a long and distinguished history, highlighted by the presence of Saint Irenaeus (c. 120-c. 202) as one of the province's first bishops. The site of two ecumenical councils, those of 1245 and 1274, and a center of activity for many male and female religious orders and congregations, as well as the birthplace of countless great churchmen and churchwomen, the Archdiocese of Lyon sent numerous missionaries and female religious to Texas. See, for example, Finck, *The Congregation of the Sisters of Charity*, 1-87.

<sup>4</sup>Bony, *Vie de Mgr. Jean-Marie Odin*, ch. 1, 10-11.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., ch. 3, 4.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., ch. 3, 5.

<sup>7</sup>Jean-Marie Jammes, "The Early Years of the French Catholics in Texas," a paper read at the annual convention of the Texas Catholic Historical Society, 4 March 1988, Austin, Texas. Cardinal Joseph Fesch was the half-brother of the Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte's mother. Originally a "juring" priest—that is, he swore loyalty to the 1791 Civil Constitution of the Clergy—Fesch, as archbishop of Lyon, took his episcopal status seriously and became a reformer of clergy and seminaries and a steadfast supporter of the American missions. On the Sulpician *grande séminaire* of St. Irenaeus see Christopher J. Kauffman, *Tradition and Transformation in Catholic Culture: The Priests of Saint Sulpice in the United States from 1791 to the Present* (New York: Macmillan, 1988), 33-38.

<sup>8</sup>On the Sulpician *esprit ecclésiastique* see Kauffman, *Tradition and Transformation*, 2-19.

<sup>9</sup>On Jansenism, *ibid.*, 19–20. See also Guillaume de Bertier de Sauvigny and David H. Pinckney, *History of France* (Arlington Heights, Ill.: Forum Press, 1983), 138–139.

<sup>10</sup>See for example Finck, *The Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word*; Mary Generosa Callahan, C.D.P., Sister, *The History of the Sisters of Divine Providence, San Antonio, Texas* (Milwaukee: Catholic Life Publications, Bruce Press, 1955); Sheila Hackett, O.P., *Dominican Women in Texas: From Ohio to Galveston and Beyond* (Houston: Sacred Heart Convent of Houston, Texas, 1986); and Bernard Doyon, O.M.I., *The Cavalry of Christ on the Rio Grande, 1849–1833* (Milwaukee: Catholic Life Publications, Bruce Press, 1956).

<sup>11</sup>On Father Angelo Inglesi see Melville, *Louis William DuBourg* 2:572–601.

<sup>12</sup>Bony, *Vie de Mgr. Jean-Marie Odin*, ch. 4, 4.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup>DuBourg to Rosati, 7 August 1822, AASL. On the early Catholic settlement of Louisiana see Roger Baudier, *The Catholic Church in Louisiana* (New Orleans: Roger Baudier, 1939; reprinted 1972 by Louisiana Library Association, Public Library Section). This source must be studied with care as it contains many historical errors.

<sup>15</sup>Martin P. Harney, S.J., *The Catholic Church through the Ages* (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1980, reprinted from a 1974 edition), 331. See also John E. Rybolt, C.M., ed., *The American Vincentians: A Popular History of the Congregation of the Mission in the United States, 1815–1987* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: New City Press, 1988), 5–8.

<sup>16</sup>“Odin, Joannes Maria, C.M., Rev., 1800 Febr. 25 Natus in Ambierle. Dioc. Lyons in France,” Vincentian papers, AASL.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>Bony, *Vie de Mgr. Jean-Marie Odin*, ch. 8, 1.

<sup>19</sup>On Father John Timon, C.M. see Rybolt, ed., *American Vincentians*, 41.

<sup>20</sup>Letter about Jean-Marie Odin, C.M., from Father Stephen Dubuisson, S.J., 15 November 1833, from Philadelphia, located in the Propagation of the Faith Archives, Folio 71, Lyon, France. The author thanks Father Jean-Marie Jammes of St. Martinville, Louisiana, for this source.

<sup>21</sup>Blanc to Purcell, 29 August 1838, Vincentian Collection, AUND; Eccleston to Blanc, 8 April 1839, Vincentian Collection, AUND; Rosati to Blanc, 16 March 1840, AUND, Vincentian Collection.

<sup>22</sup>John J. Linn, *Reminiscences of Fifty Years in Texas* (Austin: State House Press, 1986; facsimile reproduction of the original)

<sup>23</sup>*Creación del obispado del Nuevo Reino de León-La Bula ‘Relata Semper’ traducción oficial al español, Introducción y edición de Aureliano Tapia Méndez, Cronista de la Arquidiócesis de Monterrey* (Monterrey, N.L.: Producciones al Voléo-El Troquel, S.A., 1984), 11. The author of this essay thanks Richard Garay of San Antonio for this source.

<sup>24</sup>The issue of absenteeism of diocesan ordinaries and the ultimate effect of that situation upon the spiritual health of the diocese had long been a problem that the Church recognized and attempted to correct. Regardless of the cause of such absenteeism, the result regarding the spirituality of the diocesan population has always been deterioration. The Council of Trent addressed this point in its third session commencing on 15 July 1563, “Decree Concerning Reform,” chapter 1. See *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, trans. Rev. H. J. Schroeder, O.P. (Rockford, Ill.: Tan Books, 1978), 164–167. That the political turmoil and accompanying assault on the Church made pastoral visits in many areas of Mexico, including Texas, virtually impossible is attested to by Bishop Belaunzarán y Ureña in a letter to Bishop Blanc of New Orleans; Belaunzarán y Ureña to Blanc, 21 February 1839, Vincentian Collection, AUND.

<sup>25</sup>Adolphus Werry, *History of the First Methodist Church of Dallas, Texas, 1846–1946* (Dallas: Church History Committee, 1946); Joseph Martin Dawson, *A Century With Texas Baptists* (Nashville: Broadman, 1947); Fred W. Meuser, *The Formation of the American Lutheran Church: A Case Study in Lutheran Unity* (Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg, 1958, 18–22; Rudolph Leopold Bieseke, *The History of the German Settlements in Texas, 1831–1861* (San Marcos: German-Texan Heritage Society, Department of Modern Languages, Southwest Texas State University, 1930).

<sup>26</sup>Regarding the American episcopacy’s views on the condition of Roman Catholicism in Texas at that time see Bruté to Blanc [Bishop Simon Gabriel Bruté of Vincennes], 20 October 1838, Vincentian

Collection, AUND; Bruté to Blanc, 31 October 1838, Vincentian Collection AUND; Eccleston to Blanc [Archbishop Samuel Eccleston of Baltimore: the ranking prelate in the United States], 8 April 1839; Etienne to Blanc [Father Jean-Baptiste Etienne, C. M., procurator general of the Vincentians at the motherhouse in Paris], 15 March 1839, Vincentian Collection, AUND.

<sup>27</sup>Bayard, *Lone-Star Vanguard*, 64-65.

<sup>28</sup>Odin, Daily Journal, 13 July 1840, C.A.T., Prefect apostolic is a title conferred upon priests who by assignment and under direct authority of the Holy See, whether they enjoy episcopal consecration or not, govern a missionary district where the hierarchy has not been established. Their rights and faculties are governed by canon law. See *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor, 1976), 488.

<sup>29</sup>Odin to Blanc, 2 October 1840, Odin Letters, C.A.T.

<sup>30</sup>Odin to Etienne, 13 December 1840, Odin Letters, C.A.T.

<sup>31</sup>Odin identified the Indians as Comanches in a letter to Father Timon dated 8 July 1841; Odin to Timon, 8 July 1841, Odin Letters, C.A.T. The vice-prefect mentioned Indian difficulties in numerous other letters: for example, Odin to Blanc, 24 August 1840, Odin Letters, C.A.T.; Odin to Blanc, 2 October 1840, Odin Letters, C.A.T.

<sup>32</sup>Odin, Daily Journal, 8 August 1841, C.A.T. The vice-prefect recorded that on that date he began to suffer from "a severe billowy fever" which left him weakened for several days. In fact, this particular attack lasted until 25 August; Odin, Daily Journal, 25 August 1841, C.A.T. Similar assaults of fever are recorded throughout his Daily Journal and letters.

<sup>33</sup>Odin, Daily Journal, 21 July 1840, C.A.T.

<sup>34</sup>Odin to Blanc, 24 August 1840, Odin Letters, C.A.T.

<sup>35</sup>Odin's Daily Journal records these events between 29 November 1840 and 31 December 1840, C.A.T. On chargé d'affaire Alphonse Dubois de Saligny see Nancy Nicholas Barker, trans. and ed., *The French Legation in Texas*, 2 vols. (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1971).

<sup>36</sup>On the Vincentians owning slaves at the Barrens seminary and college see Rybolt, *American Vincentians*, 25, 34, 36-38.

<sup>37</sup>Odin to Frasoni, 6 July 1846, Odin Letters, C.A.T.

<sup>38</sup>William Watson, O.M.I., "The Oblates in Texas," forthcoming in "The Handbook of Texas" rev. ed.

<sup>39</sup>Brassac to Blanc, 30 July 1841, Vincentian Collection, AUND.

<sup>40</sup>"Galveston, Diocese of, Minutes of First Synod, June 13, 1858," Odin Papers, C.A.T.