

LES FEUILLETS D'HERMOPOLIS

- V -

April 2002

Monsignor Joseph René VILATTE **Paris 1924 – 1929**

Mgr. Vilatte is, so to speak, the « father » of the Apostolic Succession of the Gallican Church of Mgr. Giraud and the Gnostic Church, in its apostolic branch, of Mgr. Bricaud and Mgr. Chevillon.

His life and his work in Europe and in the United States are well-known from many books and articles, but there is a period that the historians seem to neglect: his return to Paris in 1924, his retirement in Versailles and his death.

Let us look at some dates:

Joseph - René VILATTE was born on 24 January 1855 in Paris – and died 1 July 1929 in Versailles. (Some biographies indicate 2 July?)

Mgr. Herzog, Old Catholic Bishop of Bern conferred upon him Minor Orders, the Sub-Deaconate, the Deaconate and the Priesthood in three days, 5–6–7 June 1885.

Mgr. Antoine François Xavier Alvarez (Julius 1st) consecrated him a bishop in the cathedral of Notre Dame de la Bonne Morte in Colombo (Ceylon), 29 May 1892, under the name of Mar Timotheus 1st.

Louis Marie - François GIRAUD, was born in Pouzauges (Vendée), 6 May 1876 – and died in 1951.

Mgr. Vilatte ordained him a Priest 21 June 1907 in Paris; having transmitted to him the Sub-Deaconate on 14 October 1906 and the Deaconate on 19 March 1907.

He received the episcopate from Mgr. Jules Houssay (Julio), in the Vilatte lineage, in Aire, close to Geneva, 21 June 1911.

Jean BRICAUD, was born in Neuville-sur-Ain on 11 February 1881 – and died in Lyon on 21 February 1934.

He was ordained a Priest 25 July 25 1912 by Mgr. Giraud, after having received (also from Mgr. Giraud) the Deaconate.

Consecrated a bishop on 21 July 1913 by the same Mgr. Giraud, the two ceremonies took place in Mines-Saint-Amand-Roche-Savine (Puy de Dôme). Unfortunately his certificate of ordination disappeared after a search of his widow's domicile during the occupation (1941). Because of this, the priesthood of Jean Bricaud was

contested; in 1946, Robert Amadou edited a « Notice on the Priesthood and Episcopacy of Mgr. Victor Blanchard » (out of print), endeavoring to justify the validity of Bricaud's episcopacy.

After his consecration Jean Bricaud remained in contact with Mgr. Vilatte, as this letter dated 1916, preserved in the Municipal Library of Lyon, attests:



ARCHIEPISCOPAL RESIDENCE
Most Rev. Archbishop J. R. Vilatte, D. D., B.C.
METROPOLITAN AND PRIMATE OF ALL THE AMERICAS
Old Roman Catholic Church
4427 NORTH MULLIGAN AVENUE
JEFFERSON STATION CHICAGO, U. S.

de J. Vilatte 1916

Monsignor.

In answer to your letter of 19 October I inform you that all the American newspapers have published that Monsignor Miraglia never made «full and complete submission» to the schismatic Roman church. For six months bishop Miraglia has been at my home, paralyzed, but with God's help we hope by next spring to see him in perfect health again. All the news that you have shared with me on this topic is a lie and a Roman fabrication.

Imploring your prayers for this dear Bishop Miraglia. I remain in Jesus Christ.

Your humble servant.

+ J. R. Vilatte Catholic Archbishop

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In 1924, Mgr. Vilatte came back to France, hoping, with a new 'leftist' government, to reactivate his religious associations, but a wave of anticlericalism antagonized his plans. A religious Frenchman, Father Eugene Prévost, with the approbation of Pope Pious XI and Cardinal Gaspari, his secretary of State, attempted to obtain the abjuration of Vilatte. He succeeded, and on the 1st of June 1925, Vilatte abjured to the Apostolic Nuncio in Paris, Mgr. Céretti.

The newspaper *The Cross* gave the text of this on 23 June 1925:

« I express my regrets at having taught errors and having misrepresented the Holy Church. I repent at having received Holy Orders and having conferred them upon others. I deplore the past, I ask for forgiveness for the scandal and I invite those who followed my errors to now follow my example. I make this declaration freely and spontaneously, to rectify the ills that I have caused and the scandals to which I have given rise. »

Another longer text exists:

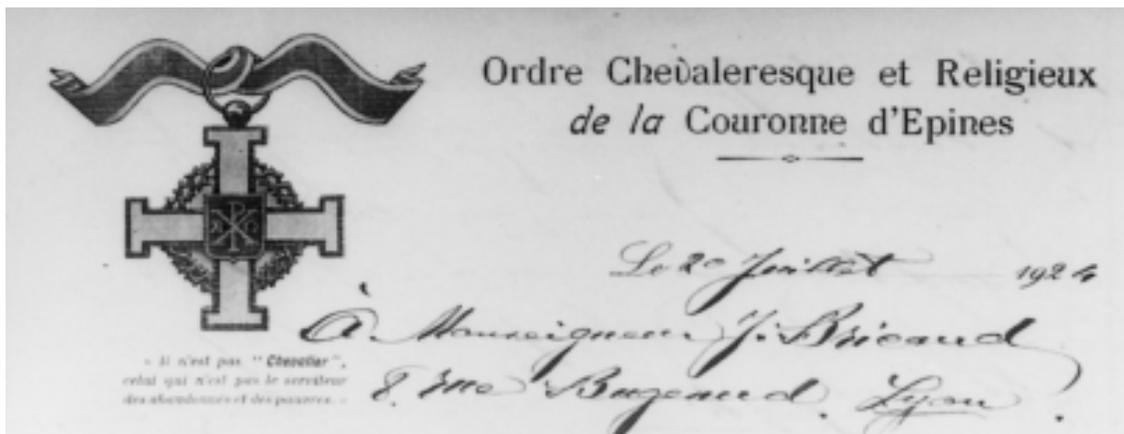
« I, Joseph René Vilatte, wish to express my most sincere regrets at having erred in my teaching and at having attacked and presented in a false light the Holy Roman Church. Unreservedly, I withdraw all similar teaching. I believe in and profess the Holy Roman Church and I submit wholly and without condition to her authority,

recognizing and confessing that she is Christ's only true Church, outside of which there is no salvation. In submitting myself, I regret and repent having received Holy Orders and having conferred them to others outside the Holy Roman Church into which, by the grace of God, I hope soon to be received. In giving this solemn declaration, by which I deplore the past, I ask for forgiveness for the many scandals to which I have given rise and I promise to rectify them by the good example of my new life and I invite all those that followed my errors to imitate my example. I make this declaration freely and spontaneously to rectify all the wrongs I have done and the scandals I have caused. »

Following this declaration, Vilatte thought that the ecclesiastical authorities would recognize his quality as bishop. He retired to the Cistercian abbey of Pont – Colbert, close to Versailles. He would remain there four years until his death, without the church examining the validity of his Episcopal consecration. We will see, by the letters that he sent to Mgr. Bricaud, the conditions of his retirement. Living in relative liberty, but not allowed to celebrate Mass, he suffered greatly. Mgr. Bricaud would make several trips to Versailles, and will we learn that the brochure that he had printed in 1927: ‘*Notice on the Priesthood and Episcopacy of Monsignor Vilatte*’, which bore his name and title: Mgr. Bricaud – Gallican Catholic Bishop (not Gnostic?) had actually been written by Mgr. Vilatte. And finally we will have the certainty that before dying suddenly, Mgr. Vilatte had the desire to once again taste freedom.

It is certain that from the moment of his return to France (1924), Mgr. Vilatte maintained constant relations with Mgr. Bricaud.

Some letters, certainly unpublished, preserved in the Municipal Library of Lyon will permit us to follow the prelate's progress. The first, dated July 1924, being one year before his abjuration:



Dear Monsignor,

I just received your agreeable letter and the booklets. Thank you for your good wishes and fervid prayers because I once again need to live for the restoration of the Orthodox Catholic faith in France.

The next time you visit Gargan you should prepare a list of Questions so as not to waste time, then study and see my work in America after the religious activities poisoned by the apostle Briand.

You should come early in the morning and after an hour or two of work, George will serve us lunch, then you will consult several of my newspaper clippings and with patience you will listen to my commentaries in my abominable French.

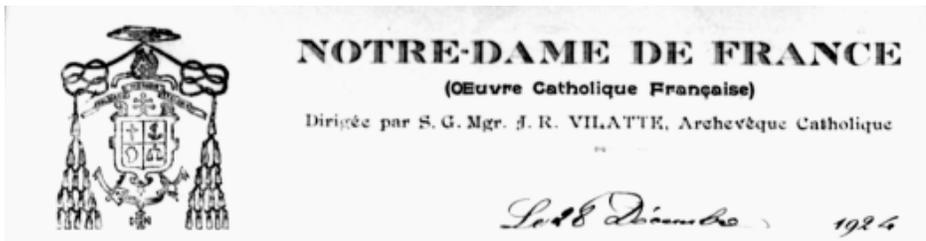
Once again, Thank you for your good wishes, let us pray for one another and may God guide our steps for His glory and His truth.



*Your very devoted,
+ Rénatus Archbishop Vilatte
Metropolitan and Primate*

P.S. If you have any old literature that is no longer of use to, let me recommend myself to your generosity.

In the month of December, he wished Mgr Bricaud a Happy New Year:



28 December 1924

Monsignor,

In answer to your letter and your heart's desire I ask you to receive my humble prayers and my most sincere wishes that the year 1925 be a year of blessing, light and peace. In a word, may the communion of the Holy Spirit guide your conduct in the knowledge of the salvation of Christ for the happiness of all our brothers.

In the hope of seeing you one day again, God willing, I ask your prayers for myself and ask you to accept, Eminence, my respectful homage and sincere regards.

+ *Timotheus Vilatte, Catholic Archbishop*

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Mgr Vilatte announced his departure from Gargan, near Livry (Seine - St. Denis), he resided at 48 Avenue Vauban. We are a couple weeks before his abjuration:

[same letterhead as the previous]

Malakoff
21 April 1925

My dear Friend.

I left Gargan three weeks ago and am being hosted by one priest but unable to stay at any other's home. I am no longer free in the company of foreigners....

In any case, let us pray for France, and to God to do the rest for his holy Church.

Your devoted friend.

+ *J. R. Vilatte Archbishop*

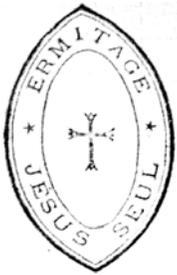
P. S. George, asked me to send you his respectful greetings, and to get well soon (ed. Note: a literal translation would be 'to discontinue your relations with Mme. Flu).

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Mgr Bricaud didn't preserve any letters during the year 1926. Some in 1927 illuminate us as to the life of Mgr Vilatte, in residence with the Cistercians of Versailles, after his abjuration, and give us some precisions on the project of Mgr Vilatte to write a booklet retracing the stages of his ecclesiastical progress, a project that Mgr Bricaud would lead well.

[All these letters are written on unstamped paper and bear his address by wet ink stamp]

Monsignor J. R. Vilatte
19, Rue de Pont Colbert, 19,
VERSAILLES
(Seine - Et - Oise)
(France)



15 February 1927

Very dear and Venerable Friend.

These first days of sunlight made me think of you.

If you visit Versailles this spring, I ask you to luncheon with me. I am in a modest residence which is completely independent of the good monks, allowing the most perfect liberty for me to receive whom I want, not a soul would ask you who you want to visit, or anything at all.

Let me know of the date of your arrival in Versailles and, I will be at my window to greet you, and George will open the door of our pavilion for you.

Yours, with all my heart in the love of the Lord Jesus.

+ *Renatus Archbishop Vilatte*

Please excuse my haste.

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We don't have the precise date of the visit of Mgr. Bricaud, it can be estimated to have been near the beginning of August; they put it in the context of the publication of the « Notice... ».

[This letter bears, on the left, his Episcopal seal - see the reproduction at the beginning.]

16 August 1927

Very Honorable Friend,

At your last visit, which pleased me greatly, you made me an offer to take charge of all the pieces of this printing project and, by your loving kindness, to even put your name on these pieces. I have in hand 2 notebooks relating the official information on my ministry and my episcopate and this information occupies about twenty pages of the aforementioned notebooks.

I inquired of different printing houses about the price for these impressions concerning my ministry and my episcopate and it would cost between 116 & 176 Francs for 500 copies.

My goal in printing these pages is to defend myself, and others, against the malice of those that want to negate these sacred acts or to blaspheme me in the eyes of the Holy Spirit.

If you want, I will give you full liberty to sign these articles with your own name, as you have proposed.

In hope that your health is excellent and that you returned home safely, I ask you to pay homage to your venerated mother and all my best to you.

+ J. René Archbishop Vilatte

P. S. I would like, if it is possible this format instead. It is useless to dress it up with frames and other superfluous things.

The printing is good, the paper a bit mediocre and the whole document will be, I believe about 10 pages. Permit me to suggest to you that, in all simplicity, it would be better if the document carried the mark of a press in Lyon, since I am supposed to be ignorant of that which you are editing and publishing.

With all my heart, thank you and I am counting on your well-known discretion.

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Several letters followed concerning the publication and the distribution of the « Notice... »

It is good to note that only the following letter is written on paper with the headline bearing the title « *Catholic Archbishop* » allowing us to think that his mail was not controlled by his hosts.

Monseigneur J. R. Vilatte.
ARCHEVÊQUE CATHOLIQUE.
19, Rue du Pont-Colbert, 19
VERSAILLES.
Seine-et-Oise,
FRANCE.

20 August 1927

Monsignor,

En route for Corbeil. I received your agreeable and generous answer. thank you for the work of the Lord Jesus.

It seems to me that you have perfectly understood the whole situation. What you want to do and which you mention in your letter is fine. But 500 copies are obligatory.

Excuse me, the car is at my door, it is an extraordinary opportunity which hasn't taken place in two and a half years.

Yours with all my heart and profound gratitude.

[Episcopal seal] + Renatus Archbishop Vilatte

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[Stamps: seal and address in the center]



12 September 1927

Very Dear Monsignor and Friend.

I have in my hands your honored of the 8th of this month. I would indeed be happy to read the booklet in question and would like to express to you again all my recognition for occupying yourself with it.

As you mentioned, it would be preferable for the printer to ship them directly to me at 19 rue du Pont Colbert. Suggest to him that he wrap the package well so that no booklets are lost or stolen before the packet destined for me arrives.

It is preferable that you keep a few brochures for yourself, as well. I suggest that you not distribute them to anyone before 20 October – else, from my financial viewpoint, this could do me a great disservice. Above all, do not send it to the editor or owner of the «Gallican» before the date above.

Waiting for the school year to start is also wise and practical.

I ask God in my feeble prayers, that He be generous to you as well as to all those who are dear to you. I pray, Eminence, to accept my deep gratitude and respectful greetings.

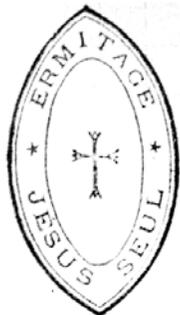


+ Renatus Archbishop Vilatte

[Glued newspaper clipping]

The 23rd of this month he leaves us for Rome. I am saddened by it, he was a friend and a real brother to me. He will remain at the Pont Colbert Abbey, but as General of the Order he will be in Rome more than in Versailles. Much to my regret.

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Monsignor,

According to the newspapers, it would seem that the events advance and I believe that the moment has come to distribute the booklets.

I have not received any notice from the printer. Have you, perhaps? I hope that you will soon let me know about this.

I read that the present Nuncio would not come back from Rome where he is to take his station, that the auditor of the Office of the Nuncio would be named as a delegate. Doesn't all this seem to be another rupture? The French ambassador to Vatican himself would wait for such an assignment. What do you make of all this?

I hope that I will receive the booklets soon. I thank you for them, and with this hope, I send you my best wishes for happiness and health.

Renewing my deep gratitude for you, I declare myself

Your very devoted
+ Rénatus Archbishop Vilatte

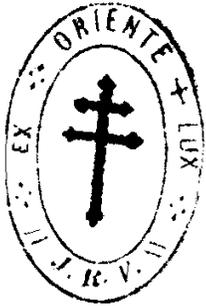
If you send some booklets to any Bishops, do be kind and tell me their names.

Also send me one, I pray you, so that I can show that this booklet comes from Lyon and divert some unhealthy curiosity.

Versailles, 5 October 1927

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The booklets arrived and Mgr. Vilatte is satisfied; he also announces an increase of his allocated honoraria by Rome:



[Stamps: Episcopal seal and address in the center] 26 October 1927

Monsignor and Friend

I am in possession of the booklets that your kindness wanted to have printed and sent to me.

I am deeply grateful and thank you for them.

In all consideration, I have only to congratulate you for your charitable work on this. The booklets are beautifully printed and of good quality paper. I recognize your clever hand.

I give you free reign to distribute the booklets as you will. They will be sent by your good graces to the right addresses.

I also wish to inform you that since the month of October the Pope has increased my honoraria by 4000 francs. From 12,000, indeed they have been raised to 16,000. Man, says the Holy Scriptures, does not live by bread alone but by all the words issued forth from the mouth of God and not of another

Receive, Eminence, with the expression of my most fervent recognition, all my best.

+ Rénatus Archbishop Vilatte

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[Stamp: address in the center] 14 November 1927

Very Dear Monsignor,

I must tell you that the booklet on Mgr. Vilatte has made a sensation in the region. I received several different visits from the religious authority, the professor of dogma from the Seminary of Versailles. Last visit, during our conversation, he affirmed me that the professor of history of the Seminary, had found this booklet very lucid and convincing from both a dogmatic and historical viewpoint. The booklet is already very widespread. It is bearing its fruit, thanks to you.

Do you know if the newspaper «The Gallican» spoke of it. I would be anxious to know.

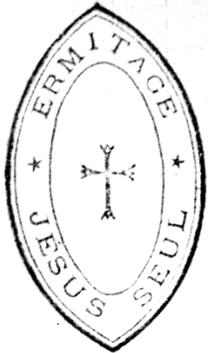
With my wishes for happiness and health and the insurance of my recognition of your kindness, I ask you to accept, Eminence, all my best.

+ *Renatus Archbishop Vilatte*

P .S. Forgive this hasty letter. I have been quite busy for the past two days.

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November 22, Mgr Vilatte sends the copy of a letter that he has just sent à the Général où Abbé he announces his/her/its weariness:



[Stamp: address in the center] COPY

19 November 1927

Dear and Most Reverend Abbey General,

It greatly pleased me to receive your letter and your pious devotion for my consideration touches me beyond all expression. With all my heart I thank you.

1. – You make note that my holy orders were not given by men of the Church? Very well, but before submitting myself to re-ordination, I want to know logically and theologically where the flaws are in the succession of my ordination as a priest and consecration as a bishop. Since, according to the observations made by his Eminence the Cardinal Merry - Del - Valley, all Orthodox priests and Bishops such as the Russians, the Armenians, the Syrians, the Rumanians, the Serbians, the Bulgarians, the Jansenists and the Old Catholics of all nations would not have to be ordained or consecrated.

2. - In the act of my recantation in 1925, I was made to say, on the order of Mgr Ceretti, then Nuncio of the Pope in Paris, the following words: «I invite all those who followed my mistakes to imitate my example.»

However today, I am being grieved because some of my priests went Rome to be reconciled with the Holy See thereby submitting to the wishes of the Holy Father. This move on their part is causing a lot of problems for the Holy Office, says Cardinal Merry - Del - Valley, who answers not knowing what to do with them. However the sincere return of several stray sheep from different nations should be a joy, a consolation and not a topic of annoyance or an impassable obstacle to taking their place under the crook of the Good Shepherd. This is my most sincere conviction.

Asking your acceptance, Most Reverend Father General, with all my religious respect, I assure you than very humbly prostrated at the feet of Notre Dame de la Bonne Morte, I will await the 8th of December, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, the recognition of my divine rights still placing me at the heights of the Apostolic succession, according to the traditions of the Universal Church.

+*Renatus Archbishop Vilatte*

Today, the 22nd of November 1927

I received from Rome, word from Father Prévost telling me that archbishop Valéri must maintain some of the right etc, etc. He finishes his letter thus « I remain yours, lovingly united in heart and soul and I beseech your

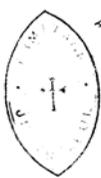
prayers so that I, too, may live in the love and abandon of the holy and adorable wishes of Jesus. Please ble
me and accept the assurance of my religious devotion in the love of Jesus and Mary.

Eugène Prévost »

Your Eminence Bricaud, it is in friendship that I address you with this scribbling. I am so nervous from the 2
years and 10 months spent in Versailles, and so many other emotions, that I tremble and shake continually.

With all my heart + J. R. Vilatte

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43 Montagne du Perray
par Corbeil
Seine et Oise

At the end of the year 1927, Mgr. Vilatte changes lodging and sends his
wishes to Bricaud:

[on the back]

Monsieur Vilatte présente
à Monsieur Bricaud ses
respectueux hommages et
ses vœux bien sincères
pour Noël et la nouvelle
année.

P.S. By order of the Doctor of the Monastery. I left this place because of
health. I have, for 12 days, been in a small pavilion of 5 rooms.

43, Montagne du Perray 43

by Corbeil

(Seine and Oise)

One hour from Paris.



1927. — 1928.

Respectful greetings and good wishes from Georges.

In the beginning of the year 1928 Mgr. Vilatte is sick, he is driven to
hospital St. Joseph in Paris, then to the « American Hospital » of Neuilly, it
is from there that he writes to Mgr. Bricaud in March.

[At the top : the American Hospital of Paris, 63 Boulevard Victor Hugo, Neuilly - sur - Seine]

Very Dear Monsignor,

The abbot Maës paid a visit to me and I ask him to please answer the letter that you sent to me.

As you know, I was, in the beginning of my illness, treated at the hospital St. Joseph, in Paris, but what
difference with the American Hospital where I am!!

Life is different here. The charity and goodness abound and the least of my desires is satisfied, while at St.
Joseph, I was confined to my little room, devoid of joy, and nearly of light. Here, I am in the open air!

I was hardly fed at St. Joseph and I felt my strength abandon me. At the American Hospital, it is the exact
opposite. I am served food in abundance - they even served me an excellent Bx [Bordeaux]. You will judge for
yourself by these small details and what importance they have how much more pleasant it is to live here.

My health is improving and soon I will return to Versailles, near the end of March probably. It will be a pleasure as always to receive you there.

I hope that you are well. I truly wish it.

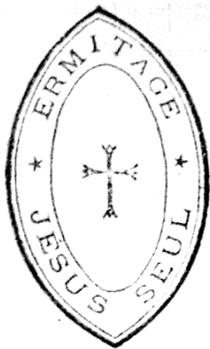
Believe it, very dear Eminence, with all my best.

+ *Renatus Archbishop Vilatte*

Neuilly s/Seine March 10, 1928

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In May, Mgr. Bricaud returned to visit Mgr. Vilatte, in Versailles.



[Stamps : seal and address in the center]

Monsignor,

Just a word to tell you that after your departure, I remained quite sad. I felt that I had parted with a real friend, but I comforted myself knowing that while we cannot be together materially, we can spiritually morning and evening.

Please do not forget to send me the printer's address.

When I have this address, I will send you the documents of the two witnesses.

Receive, you Eminence, all my best thoughts and my gratitude for your generosity.

+ *Rénatus Archbishop Vilatte.*

Versailles May 27, 1928

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*À Monsieur Bricaud.
Joyeux Noël et bonne
Année dans le Seigneur Jésus.
Recevez mes hommages et ma
gratitude, et que Dieu
vous donne votre joyeux de bonheurs
et santé pendant tout 1929.
Bonne nuit dans la communion
de votre Seigneur Jésus.
+ Renatus. Vilatte*

At the end of year, he sent his wishes to Mgr. Bricaud, then on December 29, he sent a very important letter announcing his desire to leave « Babylon » to recover his liberty.

[Headline addresses printed]

Very dear Monsignor and Friend

I was very happy upon the receipt of your agreeable letter and your good wishes for the year 1929. I would like to believe that you will not delay making a visit in the future. There are so many things to discuss that I dare not put on paper...In any case, when you come, remember that my home is your and that you will always be welcome, day or

night.

You know that I have documents that I want to have printed for the general welfare of France and America. I am waiting for the necessary funds to be sent from the United States without delay, but especially and above all I await the thawing of the snows, you understand?

Said nothing to anyone, but I am actively in search of a property. The liberty, justice and fraternity of God's children are far from Babylon.

With Reverence and respect, I remain your servant in the Christ – our only hope.

*+ Renatus «Archbishop» Vilatte
of the French observance.*

December 29, 1928

P .S. Georges very respectfully sends you good wishes and good health for 1929.

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Versailles February 16, 1929

*To Mgr. Bricau
Lyon*

Very dear Monsignor and Friend

Quickly sending you my respectful greetings. I ask if you can procure for me «The Gallican» of the month of August 1925.

It is to the interest of us all and not only for me.

Yours with all my heart.

+ J. P. Vilatte, Archbishop

When will you come to Versailles?

[Stamps: seal and address in the center] *February 24, 1929*

Very dear Monsignor,

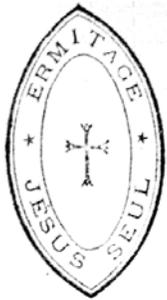
Twelve days ago I addressed a letter to you.

Not receiving an answer, I suppose you are sick. Knowing your promptness in answering, I am greatly concerned for your health, especially as the city of Lyon has succumbed to several epidemics this winter.

Awaiting you word, dear Friend, receive my respect and deep reverence.

+ Renatus Archbishop Vilatte.

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[Stamps: seal and address in the center] [Undated]

Very dear Monsignor,

Thank you with all my heart for « Le Gallican » which I have just received.

I am happy to know you are in convalescence. God be with you.

I have acquired, since your last visit, all sorts of documentation from Rome for the next booklet.

Forgive me, for about 24 hours I have had a lot of problems with my eyes. It is impossible to continue this letter. But what things I have to tell you viva voce. . . .

Thank you with all my heart and fraternal salutations.

+ J. R. Vilatte

One of my eyes is causing me great pain.

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A note in different handwriting is adjoined to these last two letters.

VILATTE

Excerpt from the 'Gallican' (August 1925)

The Pope's Nuncio imposed upon Mar Timotheus a formula of retraction an extraction of which followings:

« In submitting myself, I regret and I repent having received Holy Orders and having conferred them to others, contrary to the teachings and laws of the Holy Roman Church in which I hope soon to be received by the grace of God. »

Excerpt of the letter that the Pope's Nuncio addressed to the Courier of Bavaria in Munich and that it published in its n° of July 11, 1925.

« Mar Timotheus received Minor Orders and the Sub - Deaconate June 5, 1885, the Deaconate June 6 of the same year and the priesthood June 7, 1885. The different orders were conferred upon him by Mgr. Herzog (Old Catholic bishop, in the Old Catholic Church of Bern.) The documents that witness this bear the signature and seal of Mgr. Herzog.

« As for the Episcopal Consecration, it took place May 25, 1892. Mar Timotheus was consecrated by three Jacobite bishops in the Cathedral of archbishop Alvarez (Julius I) in the church of N. D. de la Bonne Morte in Colombo (Ceylon). Mar Timotheus is in possession of a bull of consecration signed by the three bishops and by the American Consul who attended the ceremony. »

This letter is dated of July 6, 1925 and is signed:

+ B. Ceretti
Archbishop of Corinth, Apostolic Nuncio

Finally May 25, Mgr. Vilatte hoped for the arrival of Mgr. Bricaud in June or July. It would be his last letter.

[Stamps: address in the center] May 25, 1929

Very dear Monsignor and Friend

A word of sincere friendship and a great desire to be honored with your good news. So much to tell you that I cannot entrust to paper.

Can you come in June or July now that the month of May has passed?

We will make up a small room for you, where you will be able to stay for three or four days.

Your sincere friend. Hurried Salutes.

+ J. R. Vilatte

Come without ceremony in all religious and brotherly simplicity.

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Contrary to all expectations, Mgr. Vilatte died July 1st, 1929. (According to some biographies 2 July (?))

In the archives of Mgr. Bricaud, a small business card is preserved, could this be the one by which he learned of the death of his friend?

M. E. Monseigneur J. R. Vilatte
Aveugle Catholique
est decede le samedi
Lundi 1er Juillet 1929 et
inhume a Versailles le 4

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Few people attended the burial of Mgr. Vilatte, his remains were exposed, donned with pontifical ornaments with a miter on his head on the order of abbot Dom Janssens, general of the Cistercians. According to a note: *on behalf of researchers and the curious* : « *Les funeral took place in the presence of a few rare persons: Dom Janssens ; a civilian, in black, wearing a pastoral cross around the neck; another civilian—a perfume maker from Paris, we believe -, who wept heavily.* »

There is another testimony, still preserved in the Library of Lyon, a letter dated January 12, 1930 is addressed to Mgr. Bricaud (Certainly of one of the above-mentioned « civilians »)

[Two ink stamps at the top]

JOUANNY
PUBLICIST
19, Rue Gabrielle, 19,
PARIS-18th

REMOVABLE CONSTRUCTIONS
for All occasions
A. JOUANNY
19, rue Gabrielle, 19
PARIS-18th

Paris, Jan. 12, 1930

Monsignor,

It is from Mgr. Giraud that I received your address. I sympathize with his Church, and he honors me with his friendship. But here is the object of this letter.

I was one of the few friends of Mgr. Vilatte, and was one of a small number who accompanied him to the cemetery 'Gonars' in Versailles. His sudden death was a detriment to his memory. I could only tell you in person what his frame of mind was and what moral pains he endured since his union with Rome. He was on the verge of reclaiming his liberty. After his quasi exile to the Pit of Versailles, his death has been kept as secret as possible, and his funeral was that of a layman. Of course, all his papers and documents disappeared. In short, it was an order to extinguish coming from the Nuncio. On his tomb is a simple cross of wood.

His communion was an insult and calumny during his long ministry, a brimade during his retirement and a black silence after his death.

It is in an attempt to react against all that that I took the initiative to group together some of his few intimates (because at the end especially he mistrusted nearly everybody) into a modest association, «THE FRIENDS OF MGR. VILATTE». Each would assist, according to his means, in providing and maintaining his modest burial, and defending his memory.

Do I dare to solicit the help of your encouragement and advice to this end? And tell me if there is not a duty of charity and justice to fulfill towards this Archbishop who was good, of a truly apostolic spirit, and who fought so long for the Independent Catholic Faith against the Roman empire.

Please accept, Eminence, the assurance of my respectful sentiments.

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Upon reading these few letters we can conclude with certainty that Mgr. Vilatte, residing at the monastery of Versailles for four years, wanted to leave it to regain his **full liberty**. Several reasons incited him to this departure: if the Roman authorities provided him lodging and a pension, they refused to recognize the validity of his consecrations and forbade to him to say Mass, this last is evoked in a letter, not dated, and which lack the conclusion:



Very dear Monsignor,

*I have to thank
small booklet.
very sincerely.*

*you for the information that in your goodness you sought to give me about this
Without a doubt, in Paris or in Lyon, printing is unapproachable. Thank you*

I shall take

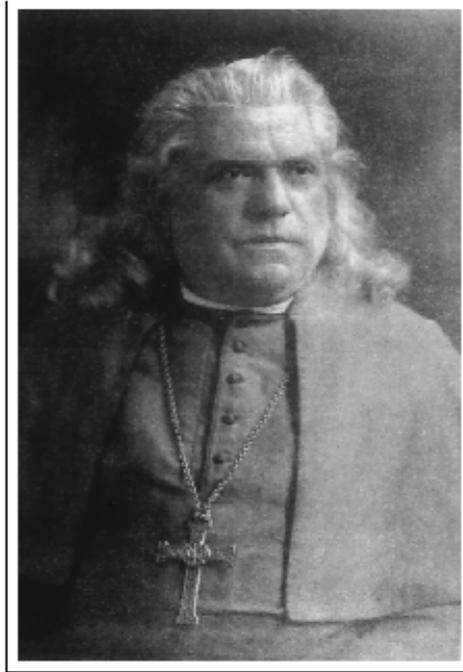
advantage of this letter to share with you an response I sent a few days ago, it

may be too late to be useful. Here it is «Eminence, in answer to your letter about my celebration of the «Mass. I am happy to make know you that I have every divine right to do so and that neither the Pope nor the Roman Curia have anything to do with it. I simply asked the Holy Father to authorize saying Mass in properties rented by the Republic or owned by the Roman Catholic Church.

Considering that this divine right seems to be continually postponed, I have my own Church, my room and the nonconformist chapels which I am offered with all Christian charity. But I have too much confidence in my benefactor in Rome to speak any longer of this. Is it a material question, of n inhabitable construction...[?]

A question enters the mind of all readers; why didn't Vilatte, who conferred the priesthood upon Mgr. Giraud, address him directly to obtain a copy of the journal « Le Gallican »?

We recalled, at beginning of this article, the doubts concerning the authenticity of the episcopate of Mgr. Bricaud, his ordination in 1912 having been cast in doubt after the last war. If these letters don't bring material evidence of this ordination, they permit some « intimate conviction ». Indeed, how could Vilatte have carried on such a friendship, of very deference, with a «false» bishop, if he had had any incertitude of his validity, while he was engaged in proving his own?



Cher Monsieur
+ Revenez M. de laogue E. de laogue
M. de laogue E. de laogue