

3. STORY OF THE INSPIRATION OF JULY 19, 1790

Historical Documents, p. 7 Account A, FROM THE COMMENTARY ON THE APOCALYPSE, 1794

“His first thought was to try, through the good offices of several persons, to obtain the Holy Father’s permission for the Maryland missionaries, all of whom ex-Jesuits, to be restored to their former state.

This thought often returned to his mind. It was stronger than usual on the morning of the Feast of St Vincent de Paul, July 19. But at the same time, he heard interiorly, in a very clear manner, “Why not in France? Why not in the entire universe?”, as if he were being made to understand that what he was meditating would be desirable for the whole Christian world and that God willed him to undertake the task.

Also shown him, as in the twinkling of an eye, was the idea of a Plan which would be very useful to the Church and which would contribute to the good of infinity of souls. This was shown to him in a general manner, but in a manner so luminous that he imagined that everyone would have the same idea or at least that no person would fail to adopt the idea once it had been shown to him.

The impression, which this light made upon him, did not permit him a moment’s doubt but that the idea contained something of the super natural and that it came from God. He was astonished only that God seemed to cast his glance on so vile an instrument for so great an undertaking. However, full of confidence in God’s power and infinite goodness, he offered himself to God to do with him and through him everything conformable to His good pleasure.”