Your Eminences, Dear Fathers, Brothers and Sisters and dear Friends of the Mission. In a few weeks, on the 23rd December 1888, it will be 124 years since Cardinal Charles Lavigerie, Archbishop of Algiers and of Tunis, Apostolic Delegate for the Sahara and the Sudan and Primate of Africa, spoke in this very church of the Gesù, here in Rome, in order to give a very important speech.

It was important because, first of all, it was given with the blessing of Pope Leo XIII and because of the personality of the speaker. However it was the subject treated by Cardinal Lavigerie that was especially serious because it concerned the fight against slavery which was ravaging the Great Lakes region up to the Indian Ocean coast, but with consequences stretching well beyond those regions.

I would like to present in this talk, at least in a general way, the genesis of this campaign against slavery and the stages that marked out it’s development over a period of two years and across a large part of Europe. This historical reminiscence would like to honour, on this 125th anniversary, the commitment of this brave Cardinal who was profoundly inspired by the Gospel. However much more, it would like to encourage those who, to-day, work for the dignity for all humanity and for justice in the name of the same Gospel.

1. The birth and the development of the campaign

1. Awareness of the challenge

Archbishop Charles Lavigerie, the new archbishop of Algiers, declared, on his arrival in his diocese in 1867, his desire to send his missionaries beyond the Algerian Maghreb towards the south, to the inland regions of Africa, as far as that was possible. A dozen years later, in 1879, there were priests and brothers of the missionaries of Africa – the sisters would arrive a little later – in the region called the Great Lakes, in Uganda and particularly in Tanzania. Yet, very quickly, the correspondence of the missionaries complemented other sources of information
from these areas to reveal a dramatic scenario that Europe was not aware of, namely the pillaging for slaves. This intelligence tied in, effectively, with what Lavigerie knew from reading the accounts of Stanley, Livingstone and others concerning the armed caravans, the assaults on villages, the long convoys towards the Indian Ocean coast with hundreds of slaves, etc.

All these reports were in agreement on how profitable this commerce in humans was and also they denounced the violence that accompanied it. Many thousands of victims suffered from it each year. The principle zones of activity were centred around the actual town of Tabora, which is in the centre of Tanzania. From there, the network extended to the north toward Uganda, to the west to the town of Ujiji (Kigoma) and Lake Tanganyika and finally toward the south west towards Zambia. The captives were then transported, some to the north toward North Africa, but mainly towards the coast of the Indian Ocean, then to Zanzibar, the Near East, and even as far as India. The English explorer Cameron who had already travelled all over these regions wrote: ‘Africa is losing it’s blood from all it’s pores.’

From the time of his arrival in North Africa, Lavigerie had tried several times to alert international opinion but without results. He tried to get others to intervene, such as the British Government, The Holy See, and even the Sultan of Zanzibar, but in vain. He had to wait until 1888, when a favourable opportunity presented itself which allowed him to raise international awareness about this tragedy of slavery.

2. Decision and Beginning

In the spring of 1888, Pope Leo XIII was preparing to publish an encyclical to celebrate the abolition of official slavery in Brazil. The Cardinal then wrote to the Holy Father to ask him to mention, in his text, the tragic situation in East and Central Africa and to encourage those who were considering fighting this scourge. In fact, the Pope did bring the matter up in his encyclical In Plurimis of the 5th May 1888. However another event gave Lavigerie the opportunity to come back to this serious question with the Holy Father. In that same year, 1888, Pope Leo XIII celebrated his Golden Jubilee of Priesthood. Among the events foreseen, Lavigerie had already announced that he would lead a pilgrimage of the African Church. In the middle of the month, he arrived with a group of pilgrims from the Diocese of Algiers but with this group there were a number of young Africans who had been liberated from slavery.

During the audience that Leo XIII gave to these pilgrims on the 21st May, there was an exchange of addresses between the Holy Father and Lavigerie. Both mentioned in detail the drama of slavery, and the Pope concluded his address saying:

‘We rely especially on you, Eminence, to ensure the success of the difficult works and missions in Africa. We know your dynamic and intelligent zeal; we know what you have done up to now and we are confident that you will not give up until you have successfully concluded your great undertakings.’

Then, referring more precisely to the fight against slavery, the Pope concluded by adding: ‘we rely on you to bring this great work to a successful end.’ In the following days Lavigerie met the Pope again in a private audience. The contents of their meeting have never been revealed, but historians speculate that it was there that the outline of the campaign was put together. It is also assumed that Lavigerie would never have undertaken such a campaign, with all the political implications involved, without the blessing of the Holy Father.

Lavigerie had a remarkable organisational ability and this led him to conceive a huge plan of action having a number of important elements such as: to give the enterprise a large geographical cover all over Europe. In the second place, to hold a series of public meetings
and giving talks on the subject of slavery as well as publishing articles in the press. He also foresaw the setting up of a network of associations, of committees with the intention of maintaining contacts and collecting funds. Finally, he wanted to set up a militia composed of armed religious who would serve in Africa in order to ensure the reception and the protection of liberated or fleeing slaves. One can see here, how, when, facing a challenge Lavigerie’s highly organised mind very quickly conceived of a plan to overcome it.

3. The great European conferences

The first part of his plan consisted of a programme of public lectures to be given in the capitals of Europe. This was not going to be easy. The rank of Cardinal Lavigerie gave his interventions a very important public dimension leading inevitably to political interpretations. The question of slavery in Africa was precisely a very sensitive subject on the political level. Effectively, the African regions concerned by this campaign were already, under the pretence of various agreements, commercial or otherwise, under the domination of many European powers, notably England, Germany and Belgium. How, then, was he to condemn what was happening without, at the same time, criticising their passivity or even their complicity with regard to slavery. Even more, he was advocating the intervention of an International force which would not be under their control.

Lavigerie was very well aware of these risks and as he wanted to have the collaboration of these governments, he prefaced all his interventions with two preliminary remarks. Firstly, he pointed out at each lecture that he had been given a direct mandate by the Pope to undertake this huge campaign against slavery. He repeatedly called on Leo XIII in the following months to confirm his patronage. Secondly, because of his long diplomatic experience, he took care in every country to meet at length, the political and religious authorities in order to explain the evangelical and humanitarian dimension of his campaign.

1. Paris, 1st July 1888: Lavigerie decided to inaugurate his project by beginning in his native country, France. He came from Rome to Paris on the 13th June and he asked for a meeting with the highest political authorities. He presented to them his plan and the outline of his speech. The authorities he consulted assured him of their benevolent neutrality. Assured of their approval, and after having taken the necessary contacts with the Apostolic Nuncio and the Archbishop of Paris, he announced the holding of a public conference in the imposing Church of St. Sulpice on the 1st July.

Articles in the press, which had already been informed, and the reputation of the speaker ensured a large audience. On the following day witnesses spoke of a considerable crowd. In his introduction, Lavigerie explained how this mission which he was beginning today was given to him by the Holy Father. He pointed out that he was ordained in this very church nearly a half century ago. He then began his exposé by explaining how the reports of travellers and missionaries had permitted, over the last few years, the discovery of the extent of the slavery business in Central Africa. However, today, the increasing presence of the European powers in these regions should lead to a common international action against this scourge. The situation was very serious and one could not continue to ignore it.

Then the Cardinal gave a long description of the organisation of the slavers and their methods. They had huge resources and they terrorised the population in the areas close to the caravan trails and in the remotest of villages. Then, a long ‘Way of the Cross’ for these men and women began, they were often accompanied by their children and they were transported for many weeks, towards the coast, in conditions that were scarcely suitable for animals.

He brought up the liability of Islam in this terrible situation because the caravaneers were, in fact, Muslims but he was quick to point out that he was not attacking the religion itself, saying
that he, himself, lived in the middle of a Muslim population and he loved all the members of his diocese as his sons. He, then, quoted from a long text of Livingstone who had also seen the same horrors and then he asked the essential question: “What can one do?”

“What are, my very dear brothers, the practical steps to fight against slavery in Africa?” This was the beginning of the second, shorter, part of his expose. The first step which he mentioned under the heading of ‘Charity’ was the redemption of slaves. However Lavigerie did not conceal the ambiguities of this action. To organise on a grand scale the redemption of slaves would only encourage the traffickers and redemption should only be envisaged in urgent situations and with great prudence. Then the Cardinal continues: "A quicker, more effective and more decisive remedy is necessary"

Lavigerie then went on to develop a plan, that was dear to his heart and it should be said, now, that it was never carried out. Relying on the observations of the missionaries on the spot, he proposed that the European powers get together to form an armed militia of about five or six hundred soldiers who would serve in Africa as an effective force to thwart the caravans looking for human prey. He took as an example the armed religious orders who, in the history of Christian Europe, contributed to the protection of the weak and maintained peace. He added some details about the possible organisation of such a militia, remarking that he had thought long and hard about such a project. He concluded his speech by saying that funds would, of course, be necessary but would not the generosity of those listening to him be up to the mark? To finish, he launched a final appeal: "That all unite, the audience here present, journalists, and all those who have the means of informing and influencing public opinion"; he added: “no matter what opinion you belong to, because I am appealing to all without distinction, the only condition being, that they love humanity, liberty and justice”

The impact of this vibrant appeal was immediate and positive. The French Catholic Press as well as republican and secular newspapers expressed their admiration for the courage and commitment of Lavigerie and invited their readers to consider his appeal and to respond. Soon afterwards, some young men came forward to enrol in this Liberty Brigade and others offered land to set up a base for this future group of soldiers. Lavigerie was encouraged by these favourable reactions and he wrote to the Holy Father giving an account of the conference and enclosing his text. He added: "I would be very grateful to your Holiness if he would be so good as to read this speech or at least make an exact copy so that I may know if your Holiness approves of the ideas and the standpoint I have taken."

In the same letter, he continues by presenting his plan to call for a giant conference where the Christian Governments of Europe would be represented and where one could challenge the Muslim sovereigns implicated in this traffic. He adds: "The principal (Muslim sovereigns) who could be expected to attend are: The Sultan of Morocco who has an ongoing relationship with Spain, the Sultan of Zanzibar on whom both Germany and England have an influence and the Sultan of Constantinople who could stop the passage of slaves by the Red Sea.” (Letter of 13th July 1888)

All during the campaign, we should note that the Cardinal had an ongoing correspondence with Pope Leo XIII. He gave him details of the work already done and how he saw the campaign developing. The Paris conference was the beginning, for Lavigerie, of a long series of journeys and contacts. After Paris the following stop will be Great Britain.

2. **London 31st July 1888:** London was an entirely different context from Paris, from two points of view. On the one hand, Lavigerie, a French Cardinal, makes an intervention in a foreign country which, historically, had often opposed France. In addition, at the end of the 19th century national pride was still very strong. On the
other hand, Great Britain was officially Anglican and an ecumenical spirit was not in vogue as it is nowadays between different Christian confessions.

However, a positive factor was going to play in favour of the Cardinal’s visit and to contribute to a warm welcome. British public opinion had for a long time been well informed of the tragedy of African slavery. This was due to the existence and influence of an association devoted to this problem: namely the Anti-Slavery Society founded in 1839. Besides, England had already intervened at the international level to exercise control and even forbidden the shipping of slaves in the zone around Zanzibar. This Society impressed by the success of the Paris conference, decided to invite Lavigerie to London. This time the venue is not a church but a theatre called the Prince’s Hall. The date is the 31st July and celebrities of high rank are there, notably Cardinal Manning, Archbishop of Westminster, as well as civil and religious leaders.

The Cardinal did not repeat exactly what he said in St. Sulpice. He began by giving homage to those, who in this country, had been engaged for nearly a century in the courageous fight against slavery. He made special mention of Livingstone, a prestigious figure and greatly admired in the country. He then went on to outline his own commitment in Africa for nearly 20 years by explaining how, from North Africa, he was able to send missionaries to the Sahara and Central Africa. He emphasised the development of his institute and the courage of his members. He, no doubt, thought it worthwhile to develop this point in a country which, contrary to the situation in France, knew very little about his personal history and that of his missionaries.

The Cardinal then gave a long description of slavery in Equatorial Africa and appealed to Great Britain, which, from now on, will govern large territories in this region, to take its responsibilities. He repeated the description he had already given in Paris, of the sufferings of the victims, and then went on to the question of possible courses of action. Certainly the maritime blockade put in place by Britain were important, and gifts of money were very welcome, but these are insufficient. It would be necessary to intervene on the continent itself. He gave the example of Captain Joubert, a lay collaborator of the missionaries and Stanley and asked that an armed group be set up. The Cardinal concluded his speech by supporting the Anti Slavery Society to which he expressed his admiration and his approval.

The conference had as great a success in the media as it had had in Paris and yet the outcome was muted. Neither the Press nor the Anti-Slavery Society took up the matter of an armed militia which was an essential part of Lavigerie’s thinking. In fact, the Anti-Slavery Society refused the idea of organising, directly, such an armed intervention by force. Lavigerie left England with lots of sympathy and a strong endorsement of his action but without anything practical to show for it except to have sown the seed of an idea that European Governments should consider a common action such as he had mentioned in his conference in the Prince’s Hall.

3. **Brussels 15th August 1888:** The third conference given by Cardinal Lavigerie in the context of this International campaign against the slave trade in Africa was delivered in Belgium, in the large Church of St. Gudule in Brussels on the 15th August 1888. On this occasion the context was much more delicate for Lavigerie. King Leopold II was already engaged in a great colonial adventure in Central Africa and one knows how this Sovereign, obsessed by the black continent, had made it known that the Congo was his own private fief, over which he personally exercised his watchful authority. Lavigerie and Leopold II knew one another and respected one another. However their thoughts with respect to the African continent were very different even if the King of the Belgians allowed a Catholic missionary presence in his Kingdom, which worked freely and with out conditions. Lavigerie had already contacted the
various Belgian authorities both religious and civil in order to prepare his journey. After the conference in London, he sent the text of his speech to the King and informed him officially of his intention to come to Brussels. At the same time, he expressed his desire to meet the King before speaking in public. In fact, the King met the Cardinal in Ostend on the 10th August 1888.

There were a certain number of political and economic elements that would have justified the reticence of Leopold with regard to the plans of the Cardinal. Essentially, in the administration of his vast territories in Africa, Leopold was meeting two important problems. The first was to establish the precise borders of his territory and to have them recognised by the European powers, already established, in the neighbouring territories. Secondly there was huge problem of administrating this vast land and the methods used under the authority of the King to govern and exploit the Congo were not above criticism. In this context, Leopold, who knew well Lavigerie’s forthrightness and determination, was afraid of two things: firstly that he would reveal too bluntly the extent of the slave trade in Congolese territory and how this traffic was sometimes tolerated and the second was that he would send an armed force, which would not be under his direct command.

The interview in Brussels (Ostend?) lasted a long time but we do not know exactly the contents. The subsequent events show that there were concessions on both sides and Belgium did not remain outside the solidarity movement that arose in Europe as a result of this campaign.

The St. Gudule conference, for its part, was a great success, at least in the Christian milieu because in the so called liberal or free thinkers’ milieu there still remained some fierce criticisms. In his intervention, Lavigerie developed in the broad sense the following argument. You, Christian people of Belgium, you have taken under your wing the Congo, in order to sow the Good News and to bring development. Unfortunately, weeds are also growing and this country is witness to inhuman behaviour due to the expansion of slavery. Christian people, you have given missionaries for the African continent, and ten of your countrymen, whom I have sent myself, have already died for the Gospel. Is it possible that this tragedy of slavery will leave you indifferent or apathetic? The huge regions of the Belgian Congo are among those who are most concerned by slavery. I appeal to your conscience to react.

Lavigerie then quoted a long passage from a letter written by a missionary describing the big slave market in Ujiji on the shore of Lake Tanganyika. This letter made a big impact on the audience. He, then, proceeded to outline a concrete course of action. He, first of all, asked the commitment of all men of good will and all other possible means, especially the press to condemn this tragic situation and to alert public opinion. It was also necessary that European governments get together for a common response. He, again, relaunched his appeal to generous and available young people to enrol in a small armed force, which, under the authority of the Congolese Government, would protect the victims and establish peace. This was an important clarification! Finally, he announced the creation, in Brussels, of a National Society against Slavery which would be able to take charge of the different projects and bring them to fruition, especially in the area of collecting funds.

Two new elements signal the evolution of Lavigerie’s thinking. The armed militia that he dreamed of is no longer an international force, but an armed group placed directly under the authorities of the Belgian Congo. On the other hand, the Antislavery Society will also have a national character without reference to any international dimension. On these two questions on can see that Lavigerie took into account the reluctance and sometimes the opposition which his initial plans aroused for a vast movement transcending national boundaries. He was not discouraged by this and he continued for several more months to launch his grand cry, as he said it himself in Europe. On the 20th August, he wrote to the Holy Father to give him an
account of his stay in Belgium. He attached a copy of his speech and repeated to Leo XIII how much he appreciated his support and encouragement.

4. **Germany August 1888:** Even while he was winding up his stay in Belgium, Lavigerie had already made contacts with another big neighbouring country, Germany. One also has to remember that this was also a very particular situation. Less than 20 years previously, Germany had humiliated France and annexed Alsace and Lorraine. In many areas contacts had been restored and friendly relations re-established. What concerns us here is that the Anti-Slavery campaign of Lavigerie had aroused a positive reaction by the Catholic Church in Germany. In fact, he received an invitation to speak at the Annual Congress of German Catholics at Fribourg-en-Brisgau in that same month of August. However Lavigerie hesitated, for one thing, he was very tired but he also realised that public opinion in France was still very sensitive with regard to the German question. After a long reflection, he decided not to go there. On the other hand, he wrote a long document to the Annual Congress of German Catholics. He warmly greeted the participants and expressed his regret at not being able to be with them. Then he repeated the same story and arguments that he had previously developed. He asked that an Anti-Slavery Committee be formed in Germany; a request that was well received. Lavigerie had, at this stage, spent two months on the campaign trail. He was very tired. It would be good to remember that, although he was a man with great energy, he had never enjoyed good health. He suffered, particularly, from very painful gout. He spent all the month of September in Paris and then went to his home region in the Pyrenees for the month of October. However, there remained one more country to visit, Italy.

5. **Italy:** Lavigerie knew this country well and he was faced with a double problem. As Primate of Africa and Archbishop of Tunis, he had encroached, in Africa, certain zones of the apostolate that Italy and its Church considered to be under their zone of influence. On this subject, he was often questioned by the press; so he did not have the sympathy of everyone. He also had to face some elements of anticlericalism in public opinion and in the press. A number of very strong criticisms had already been expressed with regard to his anti-slavery campaign. Paradoxically, it was in Italy that his campaign received the warmest welcome and was the most active in supporting his initiatives. Lavigerie arrived in December 1888. He thought it would be a bit risky to begin his journey in the capital, so he went to Naples whose Archbishop he knew very well. After the usual formalities, he spoke in the big church of the Ospedaletto on the 13th December. He spoke with simplicity and moved his audience to the points that even the majority of the press, up to that moment, very hostile, was won over by his arguments. He proposed that a guest house be founded in order to welcome liberated young African slaves. In the following days, he set up an Anti-Slavery Committee, a women’s organisation with the same aim and he launched an appeal for funds that the local newspaper *Corriere di Napoli* agreed to act as intermediary.

Encouraged by this success, echoes of which had already gone beyond the Napolitan area, Cardinal Lavigerie arrived in Rome. He had already made the necessary contacts and he gave his conference in the Church of the Gesù on the 23rd December 1888. I quote here from a commentary that was written by Francois Renault regarding this conference, which was part of his thesis devoted to this subject: “The commentaries sparked off by this conference were unanimous in describing the warmth of his tone, the deep conviction it revealed and the impression it made on the audience. The special invitations and the places reserved to the reporters of even the most radical newspapers were noted as representing a wider viewpoint that could not be previously hoped for in a country where confessional conflict was still very
bitter….. In one month a complete turn around had been effected.” (François Renault, Lavigerie, l’esclavage africain et l’Europe, tome II, p.182, de Boccard, Paris 1971).

The last part of this long journey of Lavigerie ended with the last conference in Milan, given in on the 6th January 1889 in the Church of San Stefano. Again, the welcome was very warm and the Anti-Slavery cause was taken up by the Milanese as it was in the south of the country as well as in Rome. This journey, around the big European cities as part of the Anti-Slavery campaign, shows us the courage of the man, and his faith as well, as he saw this commitment as an integral part of his episcopal mission in Africa. Equally important was his sense of humanity which pushed him incessantly to extend his public well beyond the frontiers of the Church and the faithful.

The campaign was not without its critics. Lavigerie was accused of exaggerating the facts, to meddle in politics, to stir up hatred of Muslims, even to exploit the situation and to make over the top declarations. As was his habit, he was well informed and replied directly to these attacks if he thought it necessary. A single story will be sufficient to show how the importance of his campaign was recognised. Cardinal Ledochowski, Prefect of the Propaganda of the Faith wrote to his niece on the 21st January 1889, as she was troubled by the widespread criticism:

“I am responding to your doubts and all your uncertainties concerning the great and admirable work of our Holy Father and carried out by Cardinal Lavigerie; the fight against African Slavery. It seems to me that if there is something that should be well known on earth, it ought to be that work in question which has inspired the Church and it’s Chief and the devotion shown by one who is the most noble apostle that the Church has in the present day”.

It remains now to sum up this campaign and to give a summary of the results.

II) A noteworthy campaign: What results?

The support of the press: One of the major successes of Lavigerie’s campaign was to get the press on his side. It has already been mentioned that he took great care to alert the press regarding his plans. He invited the journalists to his conferences, and even after his visit to such and such a country, he continued to send documents and articles to the more open minded newspapers. That is how, for the most part, the press in all the countries concerned largely supported his campaign. By so doing, they contributed to keeping their readers informed and raising public awareness. This was so rare at the time that it is worth pointing out.

An armed militia: One knows, however, that the aim of Lavigerie was to go far beyond a simple campaign to raise public awareness with the support of the press. The most important purpose was, for him, to organise, on a grand scale, intervention in Africa itself by setting up some sort of international militia that would be opposed to the raids and protect the freed slaves. On this point, the results were much more modest, even, one could say a failure. He realised, very quickly, the political and practical difficulties that this project faced. He ended up by asking each country to do what was possible on a national level and linking in with the Anti-Slavery Committee which was also on a national level. The vision of a grand alliance between nations leading to a common action faded away. Lavigerie had the courage and the perceptiveness to accept this compromise. However, he did not totally abandon this idea and he decided to take the initiative himself. In 1890, He set up a military force that was also religious in character, in the Sahara. They were the famous Armed Brothers of the Sahara. They were based at Biskra (Algeria) and officially inaugurated in April 1891. They were dissolved a few months later by Lavigerie himself, who was bombarded by many criticisms and the lack of enthusiasm of the Holy See.
The Anti-Slavery Committees: From the beginning, the Cardinal foresaw the setting up, at least in the capitals, of anti-slavery committees. They would ensure that initiatives would be followed up and public opinion keep informed. They would also be given the responsibility of collecting funds and welcoming candidates willing to make a personal commitment in Africa. In this area he was much more successful and active and well organised committees were set up in the summer of 1888 in Belgium, France and Germany; followed later on, as has been mentioned, Italy.

A Major result: Two International Congresses. During all of the campaign, Lavigerie wished to mobilise the energies of all, in an initiative that would transcend national boundaries. Despite the obstacles and disappointments, already mentioned, this objective was achieved. It is on this aspect of the campaign that I wish to finish this discussion.

Brussels (1889-1890): In all his conferences, he had appealed for Governments to unite in order to make an international response. In general, the first reactions to this unexpected appeal on the part of the Cardinal were favourable. In the course of the year of 1889, an outline project took shape little by little. It was supported, principally, by England then Germany and the other powers. In the mind of Lavigerie, as one remembers, this appeal was also addressed to Muslim governments who were geographically concerned by the slave trade such as Turkey, Zanzibar and Morocco, to take a few examples.

The initial talks took a long time but eventually the project took form. The governments decided that the best place to hold the conference would be Brussels. On the 18th November 1888, the International conference opened and brought together the representatives of 16 countries. Lavigerie understood that it would be preferable for him to take some distance and let the politicians get on with it. Therefore, he did not take part in this great assembly. However, the participants did send a message of greetings and thanks to Pope Leo XIII who was the initiator of this immense campaign. The Congress lasted several months and formally concluded on the 2nd July 1890. Despite the bickering, numerous rivalries and conflicts of interest, the Brussels congress was successful because a certain number of plans of action were agreed concerning principally the organisation of interventions on the continent itself and along the maritime coasts.

Paris (September 1890): By the end of 1888, Lavigerie had also foreseen a meeting of leaders of the national anti-slavery committees that he had been able to form. He had taken care to ensure that the majority of leaders were Catholic in order to ensure the Christian inspiration of these groups. He did not exclude anyone for all that. The first idea was to have the meeting in Switzerland, a neutral country, and the Congress of the Anti-Slavery Committees was fixed for Lucerne on the 3rd August 1889. However, only a few days before the opening, Lavigerie cancelled the meeting with the full approval of Bishop Mermillo, Bishop of Fribourg, who was the patron of the event. In fact, the German Protestants were becoming more and more critical of the initiatives of Lavigerie and it seemed that these criticisms would probably have surfaced at Lucerne and caused serious tensions.

In the face of such setbacks, Lavigerie's perseverance was remarkable. He began, immediately the process for a new congress which finally took place in Paris on the 22nd September 1890 under the presidency of the Cardinal himself. On the eve of the event, he gave his last public conference at St. Sulpice. This congress was a success, again hailed by the press, in the sense that some appropriate resolutions were formulated in order to coordinate the efforts, the collections, information and it was to meet once every two years. Lavigerie then left for Rome where he gave the Holy Father the text of his conference and the conclusions of the Paris Assembly. One could say that the Anti-Slavery Campaign as such, led by Lavigerie, came to an end with this last visit to the Pope.
Conclusion

The work undertaken by Lavigerie for the realisation of this huge campaign is remarkable on more than one aspect. Firstly, it confirms the openness of Leo XIII to the big problems of society of the time and his courage in facing these problems but also exercising a certain amount of prudence. Secondly, one can underline the unspoken agreement; indeed one could say the deep communion which united the Pope and Charles Lavigerie who had elevated him to the Cardinalate. One can also see how, in spite of a complex international situation and at the price of huge efforts, it was possible to induce a vast international unified movement in favour of a great humanitarian cause. One can conclude this historical journey by turning, once more, to the charming, grandiose, formidable, always passionate and profoundly missionary personality that Cardinal Charles Lavigerie, Primate of Africa, who was from beginning to end, the mission manager of this campaign.

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