

I am very touched by the signs of your filial piety and of that which animates all my dear children at the Convent of St. Joseph. I thank you from the depths of my heart for the good wishes you sent me for the feast day of my patron. We must hope that our good God will answer the prayers we offer to him for our mutual happiness. He is himself that heavenly Father, the source from which emanates our reciprocal love and it is towards him that our desires and the wishes we sent each other go up. Yes, it is grace that has formed the bonds that unite us; and it is his glory that is the object of our efforts. May that grace grow in us and daily produce fresh fruits of salvation in conformity with the designs of our common master who has admitted us into his vineyard and whose interests we have the happiness of looking after.

I thought it would be useful, my dear daughter in Jesus Christ, for you to make a novena in honor of Mary and Joseph. We should ask God for the continuation of the good spirit that reigns in your convent and an increase in the number of pupils, after the holidays. We would begin that novena on the 1st of August and it would end on the 9th. Each day we will say one Our Father and one Hail Mary in honor of our two great patrons and, on the last day, we would receive Holy Communion. As I am sure that you agree to my proposal, I will not await an answer; I will join you and your dear community from the 1st of next month. God is so good, Mary and Joseph are so favorable to us, and they are so powerful in heaven! So let us count on the success of our pious undertaking; we will not be disappointed in our expectations.

Receive, very dear Child, my blessing and the assurance of my sincere devotedness.

Your Father in Jesus Christ

Ghent, 28th July 1840