

The tender devotion of Mlle N. to our patron Saint Joseph is a subject of great consolation to me. You will try and foster that precious disposition in her. The status of Spouse of the Mother of God is the mainspring of the grandeur of Saint Joseph. It contains the most magnificent praises, since it presupposes the most sublime virtues in that saint; it is because of it that he is the head of the family of Jesus; that he has a type of authority over all it contains; that he is responsible for the education of the Son of God; that he cherishes that adorable flesh which is the victim for the world; that he is the witness of the actions of that God conversing with me. What motives for venerating that Holy Patron, for having confidence in him, and having recourse to him in our difficulties, etc.

Independently of what I have told you, of the necessity for Mme N. of that complete renunciation of all self-will, here are a few other truths that you will remind her of when the opportunity arises: good things in the natural order and in the order of grace, talents and acquired qualities, all these belong to God. It is much less to our work than to the liberality of the Lord that we owe them. God gives us the use of them but keeps the ownership. We can therefore dispose of these good things only according to his good pleasure and for his glory ... if these good things deteriorate in our hands through our fault, if they do not increase through our good administration, if we appropriate something from them for ourselves, we become unbelievers, neglectful and unfaithful servants...

As for you, my dear daughter in Jesus Christ, you may safely refer to what I have been telling you for a long time. Yes, I know you in depth and can make decisions with full knowledge of the facts. Without worrying, let go of all the thoughts that come to you, all the feelings you experience in spite of yourself. Love your divine Spouse tenderly and go forward, whatever happens. Remember that child who lets herself be guided by the powerful hand of Providence. That is your case, that is how you must let yourself be led. Who can harm you, when Jesus Christ leads you in his heart and loves you with all his powerful love? Interest yourself gently in the coming solemnity and urge all your children to nourish themselves also on the mystery of the birth of Jesus. Draw from that rich source of graces and consolation.

No one is more sincerely than I am

Your very devoted Father in Jesus Christ

Ghent, 12th December 1840