

I had to say a few words to you in answer to your second last letter, my dear daughter; here they are: it is fairly ordinary behavior on the part of the Lord to hide himself, so to speak, sometimes from us, by depriving us of his sensible presence. It is not always to punish us; it is often to try us, to purify us, revive the ardor of our desires, instruct us, make us live by pure faith. Jesus Christ behaves thus towards the persons dearest to him. Were not Mary and Joseph themselves left a prey to their alarm for three days during their pious journey to Jerusalem? So let us not be frightened if we happen to be treated with apparent harshness by the divine Spouse. Let us live for the God of consolations, without attaching too much to his consolations. Let us know how to await his sensible visits but let us realize that we are unworthy of demanding them. That, my dear child, is what I had to say to you; accept it for yourself and the souls you have to guide.

Your devoted Father in Jesus Christ

Ghent, 29th January 1841

I do not know whether I am mistaken; but it seems to me that the handwriting of our St. Joseph's girl has not become better since that pupil has been at Alost.

I must warn you that it is not permitted to add to the litanies of the Blessed Virgin anything that has not been authorized by Holy Church. The Bishop of Ghent has obtained permission to add after 'Queen of all the saints' - Queen conceived without sin. Please tell that to Madame Superior General; I think I remember that we used to add 'Mary our Mother', or something similar. It must be left out. You must remember that at the end of Lent we have to take a collection for the Catholic University in all the chapels of educational establishments as they do in the churches. It is decreed thus for the diocese of Ghent.