

29th April 1806

To Mr G Van Crombrugge, Brewer in Grammont, Dépt. Escaut.
Amiens, 29th April 1806

My very dear Father

I cannot express how glad I was to receive your letter yesterday. I understand that you would have wanted me to let you know directly my thoughts on my vocation. If I didn't do so, please believe, my dear Father, that this was not due to a lack of confidence in you; I know you how much want to procure for us the means to serve the Lord in the state to which he calls us, and thus to assure us an eternal happiness. You know, however, that until the moment of my departure I did not show any inclination for the ecclesiastical state, for fear that this sudden change might appear inconsistent, and might cause you concern. I took the liberty of sharing my thoughts with to my Uncle, the priest, so that he could judge them and inform you if he approved. This is, my very dear Father, why I did not write to you first. If I had written to you at Easter I could not have done otherwise than revealing my thoughts to you, but I had already written to my Uncle some time before and I was waiting every day for his answer. While waiting I saw more and more every day that I had been wrong not to write to you. It is true that in spite of all these reasons I should have offered you my good wishes on occasion of Easter, but, as you know, when one is in error one doesn't know how to extricate one's self and repair the original mistake.

You ask me, my dear Father, if I am persevering in the choice of the ecclesiastical state that I made with God's grace. Yes, my very dear Father, and it seems to me that my vocation gets stronger from day to day. Be persuaded that I did not take this decision lightly; I consulted a lot and prayed a lot, and I clearly believe that it was the Good Lord who inspired me with this intention. Every day I bless Him for having led me to a School where it was so easy to know my vocation. I do not discount all the difficulties that are attached to the holy Ministry in a time like the present: and this is precisely what gave me new courage. When one considers everything that our Lord Jesus Christ wanted to suffer for the love of us nothing should appear difficult to us if one does it for the love of Him. Thus, all things considered, I do not doubt that Divine Providence is calling me to this holy state, and for me to concur with the will of the Lord I only needed your consent; now that I have it I hope that all the other difficulties that I have with the study of the Latin will smooth themselves out with God's grace. But the reason for which I am studying this language cannot be too dearly bought, and therefore I am delighted to be able to do something for my Redeemer.

It is not without pain that I see myself deprived your presence, but if I am separated from you for some time in the flesh we will be very close in the heart of Jesus Christ and in a little time I hope we will be inseparable in the Heavens.

I will finish by assuring you that I never cease to pray to God for the protection of my Parents who take every opportunity to show the love that they have for their son. I ask you to present my respects to my very dear Mother. I would like to write something to her, but it is already late and I have to get my letter to the post office. Please, my very dear Father, embrace also my dear brothers and sisters.

Your very loving son

CG Van Crombrugge

