

9th May 1806

To Mr G Van Crombrugghe, Businessman in Grammont, Dept of the Escaut
Amiens, 9th May 1806

My very dear Father and Mother

The pain that I feel in reading your letter, and the concern which you have for me, would seem very weak if I could describe it to you; however I comfort myself when I think that probably the day that you wrote to me, or the following day, you will have received my answer: because it was April 28th that I received your letter and I answered it on the 29th or the 30th, and as letters sometimes take five days to arrive here I presume that mine won't have been taken less time to arrive in Grammont. Nevertheless, for fear that it might have gone astray I am going to tell you approximately what I wrote. I told my Father that if I had not written to him first it was in order to have my Uncle's approval about my vocation, as I considered him capable of judging; and I was waiting for him to let you know his feelings. You asked me in your letter, very dear Father, if I was persevering in the decision that I had taken; you can be sure that I didn't take this decision lightly, and only decided after having prayed to the Lord a great deal and consulted people who were in a position to guide me. Yes, my dear Parents, I am of the same opinion and I hope that with God's grace I will not change. I am quite aware that the ecclesiastical state is a state of holiness which requires much virtue; but I hope that the Good Lord who inspired this vocation in me will give me what will be necessary to fulfil it. Ah! my very dear Parents, if only I could persuade you of the signal goodness that the Lord has for me; without considering what He did for me before my birth, what has He not done since I came into the world! Firstly it was certainly not by chance that I didn't learn Latin when I was younger; the Good Lord wanted to lead me to a School where I would have every means of knowing Him and of sanctifying myself. It is also not by chance that I remained in this School, that I finally realised the danger which I had escaped in not going to one of these corrupt Schools of which there are so many, and in which, with the mentality that I already had, I would have been certainly lost. What praise should I give Him! After your consent I only want God's holy will to be done in me; if I have known so little of my Benefactor up to now I want nothing more henceforth than to seek to know Him and to serve Him in the best way possible.

I end, very dear Father and Mother, in recommending myself to your prayers, and in assuring you that I will never stop praying to God for your protection.

Your very loving and submissive son

C Van Crombrugghe

PS: I ask you to embrace my very dear brothers and sisters for me, and to tell my brother Jean that I will write to him at the first opportunity. Please present my good wishes to my Aunt Huleu

