

14th November 1806

To Mr G Van Crombrughe, Businessman in Grammont, Dept of the Escaut.
Mondidier, the 14th November 1806

Very dear Father and Mother,

The recent feast of All Saints provides me with a new opportunity to give you signs of my filial love, and to tell you that the prayer that I have addressed to them, however poor, is to prepare a room for you close to our ancestors, and as near to Jesus our Divine Master as possible.

The joy that I experienced through my sister's letter is beyond all expression. What a good heart Rosalie has! Although it was only with difficulty that I made out the sense of her letter it didn't make any the less impression on my heart, and I could hardly contain my tears on reading it.

A saint has just died here; yes, dear Parents, a saint. It was the man, dear Mother, whom I showed you. He had been bed-ridden for some time, and became so weak that he could not receive the Good Lord anymore except lying down (he received communion every day). For some days we have awaited his last moment. Last Wednesday night they didn't even dare take him Holy Communion; however, towards midnight he asked for a drink, and immediately we could see his strength return, so it was decided that it was necessary to give him Communion. The Sacrament was brought, and this man, who only the previous day had only received Him lying down, and further, only a few moments previously could hardly move his body, at God's entry rose up on his bed, removed his cap and received his Best Friend with wonderfully radiant face. Towards four o'clock in the morning he gave up his soul, but it was with an inexpressible joy on his face. This man never complained in his illness, and we noticed that after his death his body preserved its natural suppleness. One of his last words was these; "Charity, humility, love of the Sacred Heart." Ah! this man was loveable! One must give very favorable testimony to religion when one has known Jean-Baptiste (the name of the one of whom I speak). It would be hard to find anywhere else a man who loved his fellow man as much. He was the nurse of the house, and how great was the goodness with which he relieved, comforted and acted with patients! I will end there because I could never express what my heart feels at the very mention of Jean-Baptiste's name. No- one cried over his death; everybody looks on him as an intercessor close to God.

I regret not being able to write to my Aunt Huleu; this is not for lack of good will. Please, very dear Father and Mother, tell her that I will supplement the letter that I should have written her at All Saints by addressing my prayers, poor though they may be, to the All Powerful for her protection.

Please, very dear Parents, in the first letter that you write to Rosalie, thank her for the love that she has for me; tell her that I didn't find the time to write to her. Maybe I should have written in Flemish, but at present I am not very familiar with written Flemish. If I only I could tell her directly what I feel in my heart. I would tell her - dear sister, benefit from the lessons you learn in the School where you are; time passes and it will not come back anymore, it is now that you need to sow what you will want to reap. A wise girl must always serve God, and where, dear sister, will you learn to serve Him better than in the School where you are? Soon you will be back with your Parents who will help you more with their wise lessons, it is true; but once on your own you will have many trials to bear; fortify yourself, therefore, in virtue while it is the right time and apply yourself so that that soon you can be useful to your dear Parents, because they are waiting for the happy moment when you will be able to render them service.

I end by embracing you with all my heart; François says that he always loves you and his dear sisters; please tell to them that I also love them; and that they should pray for us because we need it.

Your very devoted son

C Van Crombrughe

