

28th July 1809

To Mr G Van Crombrughe, Brewer in Grammont, Department of the Escaut

Very dear Father

Your letter gave me in general the greatest pleasure; the restoration of your health pleased both Charlotte and me, and we give thanks to the Lord. I really did not know that my dear Uncle¹ had been named President of the Seminary of Malines. This news does not have greatly surprise me, since he had for some time been performing all the functions of the position. You are right when you said that it is a second sacrifice for me. The reasons that you propose are too flattering for me to hesitate even one instant in following your orders. I will think more about it therefore; Providence will bring things to pass in such a way that I can spend some time with this worthy Ecclesiastic whose praises are heard throughout these regions where there are few good priests who don't know him. Perhaps more justice is done to his merit here than in certain parts of Flanders.

May I say that I was delighted with your post scriptum? But do you accuse me of indifference towards a sister whom I would have had the satisfaction of seeing close to me in Gent? If it was thus, dear Father, please see that this is not the case; it would have been wonderful to see my dear and agreeable Cecile as much as I saw Charlotte, but considering the advantages that will result for Cécile and even for Rosalie, who was pained to see that her little sister (or rather youngest of her sisters) was overtaking her, I happily sacrifice a natural pleasure to the greater good. Charlotte and Cecile will be a powerful spur one for the other which will constantly nourish the competition between them. At Gent the opposite would have happened: Cécile would probably have disconcerted and entirely discouraged her eldest sister, while the latter would not have been much help to the former. Where does all this reasoning lead? To repeat your own reflections, if I am not mistaken; but forgive me, I pray you, because my intention is to prove to you that my joy is excusable. I have learned that Rosalie is well and applies herself as best she can. I want my arrival in Gent to give her pleasure and hope that my cassock will not frighten her. In Amiens she heard it said one day that I was wearing a black habit and she didn't want to see me again until I had taken it off.

I received recently a letter from François which pleased me; I have not seen him for a long time and might not know him well because I imagine that he will be changed in different ways.

I pray you, dear Father, to assure my very dear Mother, whom I see with great joy to be well, of my respect and my filial love. Please also assure Jean, Cecile, our cousin Lauwers of my friendship.

The effect on Mr. Richier(?) arrived here on the 27th.²

Receive, my very dear Father, my respectful and very sincere feelings, and please give me your paternal blessing. I await eagerly the achievement of your "postea latius".

Your very submissive and very devoted son

Amiens, 28th July 1809.

C Van Crombrughe



¹ Huleu

² Meaning unclear