

1st January 1810 (date added later by a confrère)

To Mr G Van Crombrugghe, Brewer in Grammont, Dept of the Escaut

My very dear Father and Mother

The New Year provides me with the opportunity of witnessing to the sentiments of gratitude which I bear towards you, my worthy Parents, who are so deserving of the most tender love of their children. I pour out my heart to you today and show you the wishes that it never stops making, but rather redoubles at this time through a trust inspired by the mystery of a God Child through His love for us. May you therefore spend many happy days of heavenly blessings which alleviate the inevitable pains of man's life, and enjoy the happiness of the Saints in the next life! May we above all join together in admiring for all eternity the extraordinary love of our God for His poor creatures! This, probably, is the most ardent of my desires; may the Good Lord grant a wish that His goodness made me form, and give us the necessary graces to arrive at this hoped-for goal, a goal which is the unique object of my cares and the summit of my ambitions.

I received the sheet that you were kind enough to send me. I thank you with all my heart; I was ashamed to ask you for it, but I really believe that I cannot do without it, as it is a great comfort against the cold weather, and in short it is very nice for me. I will strive more and more to show you my gratitude by my application to my duties. May the Good Lord bless my efforts.

Rosalie progresses normally; Annette De Bakker surpasses all her companions in study and Religion. She can hardly express her contentment at being in so good a School. It is true that one does not love Religion and its practices because one does not know them, because one does not think about them as the Holy Spirit teaches us. I do not cease to give thanks the all-powerful and merciful God for the kindness that he has done to my brother Jean. His Religion must show his gratitude, because he must believe that the change that has occurred in himself comes from the free goodness of our Saviour, and there was never any attempt, as is the case in so many others young people, to persevere in their unhappy state. Ah! how many of this type, without committing serious crimes, spend their lives in this ignorance of their salvation and when they appear before God they will be empty handed and will regret, but in vain, their past blindness! May he disregard nothing therefore to maintain and to feed his worthy sentiments.

May my Aunt Huleu, Jean, my Aunt De Backer and my cousin Lauwers etc. find in this letter my good wishes of the season and the assurance of my devotion. Please, dear Parents, believe in my sentiments and give your blessing to the one that will always call himself with a tender satisfaction,

Your very devoted and very submissive son

C Van Crombrugghe

