

I have been reflecting, my child, on the trial that God has allowed and have recognized the trap the enemy is laying for you. You must see the order of the Lord in the affections you are to allow yourself. Your divine Spouse must have the first place; he must, in one sense, occupy your heart entirely. In that sole friend, you must love your spiritual Father, Superiors, Sisters and pupils and you must make your affections conform with the degree of respect you owe them and with faith. Fear is depriving you of a part of the help that confidence obtains; it takes away that freedom in your affections and the enemy, knowing what good a holy friendship can do you, disturbs you and prevents you from drawing the advantages that attachments, in the order of grace, must produce in your soul. You remember how your dear sister N. behaved; what simplicity, what naivety there was in her affections! What sincerity in her sentiments! She loved Jesus more than anything else, and in Jesus, she loved her Superiors truly and very cordially. Look at her and imitate her.

So leave aside those childish fears; go on in all simplicity, and to punish yourself for your hesitation and lack of openness, say for eight days beginning on Saturday, Sub tuum praesidium to our divine Mother, and in order to obtain (also) a pure heart and an upright spirit. I will ask for with for you. You know how sincerely I want to see you perfect and to prove to you that I am

Your very devoted Father in Jesus Christ

Ghent, 17th August 1838