

Malines, 1st January 1811

Theology student at the seminary in Ghent.

My dear great-Nephew,

Your good wishes are very dear to me, as I feel that they have come from a good heart and they are strengthened by holy prayer. Ah well! You can be assured of your great-uncle's prayers for your sanctification. The tonsure which you have just received imposes a new obligation on you, and your faithfulness to all the duties of your state, about which I heard with great happiness from your Bishop, is a sure sign to me that this holy ceremony will redouble your zeal for close friendship with your divine Saviour. Your worthy Prelate also told me of the plans he has for you and I beg you to regard him as your good father in Jesus Christ. He filled me with respect and gratitude and has showed me that you have lost nothing by remaining in his Diocese.

I am delighted by the return of my great-nephew Van Den Hende. I hope he will be happier now and will become useful to the Church.

I am annoyed by the situation of Mimie Van Crombrugghe: may God's will be done. I am delighted that Mr Spitaels is in better health and even more pleased that he is thinking of going on retreat. Having known him when he was a young religious and full of fervour I am hopeful that his early attitude will return. The Lord is rich in mercy.

Please accept, my dear nephew, the assurance of my sincere devotion and the particular affection with which I have the honour to be,

My very dear nephew,

Your very humble servant,

JG Huleu