

Malines, 15th November 1807.

Pupil at Fr Sellier's boarding school in Montdidier.

My dear Nephew,

Your letter of the 24th October greatly consoled and edified me. You have not ceased to recognise the mercy of the Lord in what He reveals to you concerning your conduct of last year compared to the benefits which he has showered on you. Ah well! This is how to advance with courage: God's mercy is renewed each day and if we receive it each day with gratitude it will lead us to a true distrust of our self and the most perfect trust in His all-powerful grace. My daughters (nuns working in the hospital) have said they will pray for you as you wish, especially on Fridays, to support your pious intentions and I will, especially on those days, carry you in my heart.

I congratulate you on going into the second (class) and, although it is not necessary for you to become a great poet, you must nevertheless apply yourself as if you wished to become one. The Lord will work his good pleasure for you and you will be happy: Latin is often perfected through good Latin poetry.

I am edified by what you tell me about your brother Jean, and I hope that the Good Lord will accomplish His work. You are quite right in telling me that he has not had the joy of being in as good a boarding school as you and François. Both of you should learn from this to value your happiness and to profit from it as much as possible. It is God's favour towards you and you should not doubt that it will be a source of endless blessings if you remain faithful to Him. It is not the Lord that you should fear but your own will; He is too faithful to abandon those who give themselves to Him so long as they do not abandon Him. Non desinit nisi desiratur; have fear of offending the Lord; this fear comes from filial love, but as one cannot offend Him except through free will, fear your love of self, your self-will and all the corruption of sensual nature. On the contrary, you should love God's holy will as expressed in all your duties as a Christian and as a schoolboy, in school rules, even in the advice and counsel of your Superiors and teachers. Love the will of God in all He does within you and outside of you and in all that He allows to happen to you. Accept all this with resignation and never cease to bless His holy name. This, my dear nephew, is the source of true happiness and true holiness.

The number of seminarians has increased considerably since you were here and more arrive from time to time. The 5 scholarships with which His Majesty endowed this Seminary have contributed a lot and we truly hope that any recipient of a scholarship will be exempt from military service.

Please give my best wishes to Frs Sellier and Le Blanc¹ and commend me to their prayers. Pray for me, both of you, as I try and do for you, and believe me to be, in the union of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, my dear nephews,

Your very humble servant,

— JG Huleu

¹ Fathers of the Faith.