

Malines, 9th November 1808

At Fr de Sambucy's house, 1, Petite Rue des Augustins, Amiens.

My very dear Nephew,

At last I have found a moment of leisure to reply to your letter of the 19th October, but it will be short. I am happy with the administration of the Diocese by Monseigneur Forgeur¹ and my other occupations are no less. Our Archbishop left in September and his successor has had to follow SMJ² in Spain.

I am happy that you are established in Amiens near your sister Rosalie.³ You can be useful to her in more ways than one. I pray for you both before saying Mass each day, and I hope that both of you give yourselves wholeheartedly to the Good Lord. Ah, my dear nephew, is there anything more reasonable, honourable, advantageous or attractive. Banish the world from your hearts with all its vanities, its frivolities, its maxims, its conventions, its human respect etc. It has seduced us long enough; let us leave space for Jesus Christ to reign in our hearts.

I praise Providence which has led you to your first promotion⁴ so that he may bring to perfection what he has started in your heart. Fr de Sambucy is assured of my respects and my gratitude and I commend to his care your progress in virtue and in knowledge in your Rhetoric.

I am delighted that your brother is at the good school in Roulers:⁵ I hope he will profit from it. I always wish, my dear nephew, that you could be incorporated into this Diocese, and we must start to pray to God to this end. It would be a great consolation to me in my old age; but my sins make me fear that I will not be worthy of it; may God's will be done.

I commend myself to your prayers and ask you believe that I am, with the most sincere affection,

My very dear nephew,

Your very humble and very obedient servant,

JG Huleu

¹ Joseph Forgeur, former professor at Louvain University, a friend of Huleu and one of the Vicars General of the Archdiocese. According to the "Histoire de l'Archidiocèse de Malines-Bruxelles" published by KADOC – Halewijn in 2009, it was Huleu and Forgeur who administered the Archdiocese together at this point.

²?

³ Fr de Sambucy's house was very near to the former Fathers of the Faith College in the Rue de l'Oratoire which had been taken over by the Sisters of the Sacred Heart. He was a Father of the Faith 1801 - 1807. We do not know why Van Crombrugghe was there, nor what the function of the house was.

⁴ In 1809 he refers to himself in a letter to his parents as wearing a cassock. Perhaps he has received the tonsure in order to avoid military conscription?

⁵ Of the Fathers of the Faith.