

Malines, 12th January 1810

Student at the Seminary, Ghent.

My very dear Nephew,

I always feel a renewed happiness when I find a moment of leisure to write to you. I hope that the new year will not bring you any misfortune. I even believe that we should not become alarmed, as you have done, for fear of the storm which rumbles over our heads and the result of which could be that the faithful will be abandoned without any spiritual help. What would happen to the elect in the worst case? Divine protection would enfold them with even greater strength. Which danger would be the worse for them? As for the outcast, they will not be saved any more when the Church is at peace and free than when she is oppressed and persecuted. All this is a matter of faith as is this sentence of Saint Paul: diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum.¹ Ah! How the true children of God advance towards Him at the most calamitous of times for the Church! Let us, then, do two things. 1) Let us pray ardently, frequently, with confidence and perseverance that the Lord will have mercy and save His Church from the tempest which is about to burst over her; but let us do so without fear of a final victory over her and any one of her elect by the Devil. 2) Let us be faithful to grace and try to be numbered among the elect by living like them. Let us not follow the torrent of corruption, the broad path, since this is certainly not the way of the elect. It is especially during storms that the Kingdom of God suffers violence and that those who make an effort delight in it. What shall I tell you about the Superior of my daughters!

Her unthinking charity had made me forbid her to continue her work in trying to persuade the sick soldiers to confession after she had caught their illness twice, and now she has caught it for a third time. She has received the last sacraments but I hope that she will escape death again. I commend her to your prayers. Her illness is as holy and edifying as her life has been: she is ready for heaven but is still needed by her small but growing family.

I am delighted by everything your father tells me about his children. He seems very happy with cousin Jean and his future wife. I am pleased that this matter has taken a good turn.

I leave you, my dear nephew, without really leaving you and only after assuring you that I love and esteem you.

Your very humble servant.

JG Huleu

PS My nephew Bernard has written me a long letter and I have replied at equal length.

¹ "God works with those who love him." Rom 8:28