

Malines, 24th October 1811.

Student at the seminary in Ghent.

My very dear Nephew,

Your letter found me in the same state that you saw at Grammont: I am mentally exhausted and in more or less constant pain to the degree that I can hardly do any serious thinking. I have only preached once since August and this one sermon meant that I had to put everything else aside and was unable to teach my courses. I told you when I arrived in Grammont and several times afterwards that I would be incapable of answering the various questions you put to me. My headaches were the reason for my somewhat terse style; more than once when I was answering you my pain got worse. Nevertheless it upset you, as you said in your letter, on more than one occasion that I could not satisfactorily answer any of your questions. It upsets me too because you interpreted my terse tone as the tone one would use to answer someone with a prejudiced mind. Alas! I was far from thinking that of you, but I did not want to get into an argument with you; that much is true and I have given you the reason. Be reassured, and ask the good Lord, if it be His will, to allow me at least the strength of mind to accomplish the duties of my state and of the burdensome functions which He has imposed on me. If it pleases Him to leave me in my current weak state then may His will be done.

The news is very good, and all has been arranged at Savona. Our Archbishop should have arrived in Paris yesterday according to the letter he wrote to me from Savona on the 11th of this month, the day of his departure. The nominated Bishops have sent to the Holy Father all that is required for their recognition and in a month or two they all hope to be ordained. The Bishop of Bois-le-Duc's secretary dined with me yesterday on his way from Paris.

Although my letter may seem terse I have had to have two attempts at it.

I have the honour to be, with sentiments of friendship, trust and affection as I have always been,

My very dear nephew,

Your very humble servant,

JG Huleu