

LETTER TO BROTHER AUGUSTE PAGNIER

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AUGUSTE PAGNIER

Auguste Pagnier (1830-1851) entered Libermann's novitiate in 1849. He took his first vows on March 19, 1851 and died of tuberculosis five months later, on August 4th, 1851.

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Libermann prepares him for death and points out how he can sanctify himself on his sickbed.

Paris, July 26, 1851 Vol. 13, p. 243

Dear Brother:

I heard that you are eager to get a short letter from me and I hasten to satisfy your wishes.

A little more patience, dear Brother. The moment of eternal bliss is coming closer. The nuptials with the Lamb without stain are approaching, but the preparations for the feast demand labor and pain. The nearer you approach the great day, the more you must expect to suffer. Prepare your soul for it in all humility, recollection, love of God, gentleness, and mortification in sufferings.

Let me explain what I mean.

[*Humility*]

Consider your soul in its lowliness before your God who is infinitely good and merciful. Consider your sins, your weakness, and your faults. Remain little before Him, full of gratitude for His boundless goodness toward you. Be full of confidence: He loves you and wants to take you to Himself—to place you in the assembly of His angels and saints that you may sing, praise, bless, and adore for all eternity His infinite mercy toward you.

SPIRITUAL LETTERS OF FRANCIS LIBERMANN

[*Recollection*]

I know, dear Brother, that your soul cannot remain in mental prayer all day long. You should not try it, but frequently raise the eyes of your mind to Him. Often repeat ejaculatory prayers, and if you lack the energy to do so, do it with your heart; merely sacrifice your whole being to God and do it wholeheartedly.

[*Love of God*]

You are probably incapable of feeling sentiments of love at this time. They are not necessary in any way. Love consists in being perfectly submissive to God's holy will, not only in regard to illness and the sufferings which accompany it, but also concerning the annoyances, the forgetfulness, the neglect on the part of those who serve you. Bear all these things for the love of God and with the desire of pleasing Him. It is of this that love consists.

[*Gentleness*]

Imitate Our Lord Jesus, your Father and Sovereign Master, with whom you are going to be united for all eternity. He was gentle as a lamb toward all who tormented Him so horribly and with so much malice.

You are His well-beloved child; you must resemble Him in His lovable gentleness and patience in your relations with your beloved confreres. You have this advantage over your good Father and Master: He was tormented by people who hated Him, but you suffer only slight annoyances on the part of the persons who love you tenderly and desire to please you.

I insist on this point because I have learned from experience that the sick who have been weakened by illness are inclined to yield to impatience. Watch, then, beloved Brother, so that your soul may be agreeable to Jesus and Mary. When

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you feel vexed, look at your dear Savior, and at your gentle and lovable Mother. Your eyes will meet her eyes and she will encourage and strengthen you.

[*Mortification*]

Poor son! You will no doubt be surprised that I speak about mortifications. But I do not mean that you ought to impose mortifications upon yourself other than those which the Good Lord now gives you. Although your sufferings are not severe, you need much strength of soul to bear them when they are so continuous. Place yourself in mind and heart on Calvary, and God will give you the energy you need. When you are tired of lying in bed, consider Jesus, whose body was torn, covered with blood, stretched on the wood of the Cross and nailed to it.

When you are thirsty, think of Jesus who suffered from thirst. When you find it hard to breathe, when you feel disheartened, look at Jesus hanging on the gibbet with swollen breast and weakened heart and reflect that He suffered all this for you.

Finally, dear Brother, watch over yourself in regard to desires that are too natural: preoccupations about food and all earthly satisfactions. You no longer belong to this world but you belong to Jesus. You are the child of Jesus, an angel of Jesus. You are called to accompany the Lamb wherever He goes.

Adieu, dear son. Wait for me; I shall return and visit you on the 9th of this month or, at least, at the latest, on the 10th. You can surely wait until then, although I know this is asking a lot. So if you want to depart before that time, tell the Good Lord to take you. I do not forget you before God.

Entirely yours in Jesus and Mary,

FRANCIS LIBERMANN, Superior