

13. LETTER TO FATHER FRANÇOIS J. BAUD

François Joseph Baud (1820-1885) entered Libermann's novitiate in 1847, after his ordination to the priesthood. The following year he sailed for Mauritius, where he labored until his death in 1885.

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Father Libermann consoles him over the loss of his dearest friend. Regularity is essential.

Paris, February, 1851 Vol. 13, p. 52

Dear Confrere:

I am happy at the prospect of the pleasure you will have in seeing Father François once more. How you two are going to talk together! I wish I were in your place for at least a few hours, to be able to see again all my dear Mauritian missionaries. Father François himself was speechless with joy when he was told that his boat would stop at Mauritius. What news he will bring you!

Unfortunately it is not all good news and my heart feels deep sorrow when it reflects upon that sad loss. I almost hesitate to tell you about it but it has to be done and you are already guessing what it is. Your best friend¹ and one of my dearest sons has gone to God to receive his reward, almost before he had begun to put his hand to the task.

The thought of this dear friend causes my heart to bleed over and over again; but let us not sorrow to excess! God willed it and our friend also desired it. Even before he knew what his mission was to be, he had made the sacrifice

¹Father Claude Morel, who died soon after his arrival in Gambia.

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of his life to God; he had offered himself in a beautiful prayer (which Father François will show you) and this prayer was heard!

What reasons have we, really, to yield to so much grief? Our friend asked a favor from God and that favor was granted! Moreover, isn't a missionary always ready to make any sacrifice, even the sacrifice of himself, out of love for anything that his Heavenly Father might desire?

Let us be united in heart and desire with that dear confrere. He is secure while we are still in the condition of insecurity. Let us live so that some day we may be united with Him in glory.

The news of that loss was one of the most painful I've ever experienced. I made the sacrifice to God with all the love of which I am capable. God wounded my heart and I have kissed His Divine Hand. Do likewise. Father François will give more details about it.

And you, my dear confrere, how are you doing at Mauritius? Write me and give me details. Until now I have not been able to reply to the letters of my confreres, but "my chains" have been removed and I will write more frequently in the future. So I beg you to give me news.

Have you much work? Do the Negroes like you? Are you keeping well? Is your heart satisfied? Do you enjoy peace of soul? How are things going in your spiritual life? Are you pleased with your confreres? Have you experienced difficulties in your sacred ministry? Finally, tell me something about the character of the Mauritians: what are their dispositions and what hopes can we entertain for the future?

[*Regularity is Essential*]

There is one thing that is most dear to my heart: I recommend it as warmly to you as to all our beloved confreres, and

SPIRITUAL LETTERS OF FRANCIS LIBERMANN

I repeat it to all my correspondents—namely, that you must practice regularity. It is of the utmost importance that you should all be faithful. I fully realize that it is very hard to remain regular because of the absorbing works of the ministry. But the rules for the missions are not exacting. With a little care, with some effort to be orderly and to persevere in such conduct, you will be able to establish regularity, and you may feel certain that your ministry will not suffer in that account.

A similar situation existed in Bourbon, although there was a little less work there; but it was too much for the confreres. Well, they have been successful in maintaining perfect regularity and the work has not suffered from it. This regularity is more important than you imagine; the fervor of the missionaries depends on it. The evil consequences of negligence in the matter of regularity would reveal themselves especially in the future.

Try therefore on your part to foster that regularity among the confreres. You will then experience the outpouring of new graces upon you and will enjoy new fervor. Set to work then to assist your Superior by the care each one takes in fostering regularity. Live in peace and union of charity that binds you all to Jesus who dwells among you.

Entirely yours in Jesus and Mary,

FATHER FRANCIS LIBERMANN