

LETTERS TO HENRY WARLOP

19. LETTERS TO HENRY WARLOP

Henry Warlop was born in Watou, Belgium, December 20, 1812. He first served in the army before entering Liber-  
mann's novitiate in 1845. After receiving minor orders that  
same year, he was appointed for the mission of Guinea in  
December. He was ordained a priest in Gambia in 1849 and  
returned to France because of illness in 1851. Sent to Saint  
Pierre-et-Miquelon in the following year, he transferred  
later to Trinidad, where he died in 1887.

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*Your appointment does not mean that you'll not be ordained  
a priest. Reasons for my changed attitude toward you.  
Your most serious defects.*

*Letter One La Neuville, November 15, 1845 Vol. 7, p. 397*

Dear Confrere:

Never worry about my illness: "This infirmity is not unto  
death." Believe me, it is for me a gift of God.

It is a pity that you didn't tell me in your last letter what  
caused you trouble during the last part of your novitiate; I  
am thus forced to speak to you without precise knowledge  
of the case.

*[We Have Not Excluded You from the Priesthood]*

I want your heart to be at peace and your mind to enjoy  
rest, so that you may labor with joy in the vineyard of the  
Lord.

I repeat that the thought never occurred to me, not even  
for a single moment, that you should remain in the minor

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orders; on the contrary, my thought has always been that you ought to advance to the priesthood. Moreover, those who are soon to leave for Guinea will bring you your letters of ordination. Write me and tell me on what day you received the tonsure and on what day you received the minor orders. You are very wrong, therefore, putting the word "Catechist" after your name in the register of Consecrations [to the apostolate]. I have written to all our confreres that they must treat you as a confrere and not as a student of theology.

It is probable that you will have to act prudently and yet also with simplicity; it is probable also that you will experience some grief from time to time; but where could we find a man who never experiences any trouble?

*[Reasons for My Changed Attitude Toward You]*

You had undoubtedly thought that I had changed my dispositions toward you in recent times because I no longer talked with you as I did before. But I assure you that this is not so. I was a little more reserved because next year will be the year of your regular novitiate.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, I noted some jealousies [about my frequent talks with you] and I considered it useful to put an end to them. You know what was going on in Father Acker's mind in your regard. Erroneous thoughts would have bothered the minds of the novices if I had not been somewhat careful with respect to you, and I have often done things which you probably interpreted to mean that I had something against you. I assure you that this is not true. I did not think at the time that you would interpret those things as being directed against you, for I

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<sup>1</sup>Henry Warlop had architectural abilities and supervised the building of the new chapel—whence his frequent conversations with Father Libermann.

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thought that you would have recognized at least a part of my motives which I cannot now explain to you in detail.

There are two traits in your character that occasioned those jealousies and it will be difficult for you to get rid of them. You exhibit a certain boldness, or rather an energetic way of acting; and, secondly, you become easily absorbed in the things with which you are occupied. Hence without considering or noticing it, your behavior lends itself to provoke those sentiments. These traits were the reason why I did not explain to you my change in conduct toward you. I wanted to make you become more reserved, more moderate, and attentive to prepare you for a more tranquil year and make it easier for you to follow the ordinary routine.

I don't know whether you understand me properly, but it is certain that it was this way of dealing with you which enabled me to put to rest the jealousies toward you in the minds of others and to get you back into the ways of novices and return you to their rank.

I should not have given you these explanations, for you would then have had a little more merit before the Good Lord—but so much the worse for you! Why did you permit yourself to be thus tempted against me?

Moreover, I never imagined that you would let yourself be caught in this manner against me; I saw this clearly only toward the end. I noticed something peculiar in your way of acting but didn't know what it was.

### *[You Are Too Emotional]*

Now what have I had against you and against your conduct? I have mentioned them several times during the year and I have nothing to add to them: You allow yourself to be moved too violently by prejudice for or against certain things, and your reason is not sufficiently in control of the judgments you make. Before you have the time to weigh

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things, your emotions and imagination draw your mind willy-nilly after them. Don't become too enthusiastic about anything before you have given the matter a thorough consideration.

*[You are Carried Away by Your Own Energy]*

The second fault derives from the first. When you are carried away by some sentiment, you want to act on it without delay. It even happens sometimes that you are unable to do something that is contrary to your feelings, at least you are not able to execute it as well as it ought to be done. In this I have even sometimes noticed a phenomenon which I found astonishing; namely that you sometimes executed your own ideas, thinking that you were acting according to the view of those who were opposed to them and contrary to your own ideas. This will make you laugh and you will tell me that I am making fun of you. Yet it is true. It has actually happened, though very rarely. I've had to laugh more than once when I noticed this phenomenon.

All this, I believe, is due to the fact that you allow your imagination and your feelings to guide your judgment for or against certain things. Added to this, is the energy with which your character prompts you to become absorbed in things and to be carried away by them. Now, the best and only remedy for you is that you should weigh things well before making decisions and before allowing yourself to be carried away, in order to give your reason a chance to be the master and also to avoid clinging too much to your own sentiments.

In regard to the house that has to be built, I can say nothing. I was unable to decipher the questions you wrote regarding this matter. Your ink was too pale on that side of the paper and the ink on the opposite side was too black

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and soaked through the page blotting out the things you wanted to tell me! . . .

*Adieu.*

Entirely yours in Jesus and Mary,

FRANCIS LIBERMANN  
priest of the Holy Heart of Mary

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*Take care of your health. Moderate your first impressions and submit to decisions which go against your views.*

*Letter Two La Neuville, December 14, 1845 Vol. 7, p. 422*

Dear Confrere:

Your letter gave me great joy; it explains everything, so let us no longer refer to the past and to what happened between us.

Your latest letter to Father Schwindenhammer was read in the refectory. In turn, we trembled for you, or laughed or were edified. I recommend that you avoid exposing yourself so much to dangers. Take care also not to say anything in your letters that might make a bad impression; we shall then be able to read everything in the refectory. When you've something special to say, write it on a separate sheet. Don't exaggerate the dangers of the African climate. It is not as bad as you think; with the necessary precautions, we shall be able to cope with it. Soldiers are able to adjust themselves to it; so why couldn't we? You used a term that was too strong, so I corrected that part of your letter before having it read [in the refectory].

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### [*Care of Health*]

Take care of your health. I feel quite certain that you are going to kill yourself over there, which is not what God wants. You and your confreres must try to preserve your health for the salvation of souls.

### [*Moderate Your First Impressions*]

Remain faithful to a life of recollection and humility. Be moderate and peaceful. Don't act upon the first thoughts that present themselves to your mind. Weigh them before putting faith in them. Especially when some idea violently affects you and produces a certain trouble in your mind, distrust it and don't allow it to guide you. Suspend your activity as long as you are able and wait until you have regained complete composure. Then examine calmly the pro's and con's in God's presence.

When we wish to weigh some article and throw it violently into one scale, we make the pointer veer in that direction, even though the article may not have half the weight of the object placed in the other scale. This is due to the violent momentum that was given to the one side. Well, what do we do in such a case? We stop the pointer, give the scales time to settle, and only then are we able to see which side carries more weight. In a similar way, when some idea violently strikes your mind, it always causes the balance to go in that direction, even when contrary reasons are in themselves six times stronger. This is because our violence upsets our judgment. Well, we arrest this violent movement and when we have regained the necessary calm, we are then able to examine peacefully the reasons for both sides. You have to watch yourself on this point, otherwise you will make wrong judgments. Do your best to moderate the ardor which new ideas arouse in you.

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[*Don't Be Stubborn*]

In regard to matters that are brought up in Council meetings, don't cling too much to your own opinion; talk sensibly and avoid following your imagination. When the decision goes against your own ideas, submit calmly and peacefully; don't say that the others are wrong. And if you are appointed to execute a decision that has been made, do everything as if it were in accord with your own opinion.

May the peace of Jesus be with you.

Entirely yours in Jesus and Mary,

FRANCIS LIBERMANN

priest of the Holy Heart of Mary

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*Father Libermann expresses his appreciation of the sacrifices made by Mr. Warlop. Advice concerning his dealings with Africans and Europeans.*

*Letter Three*

{1846}

*Vol. 8, p. 73*

Dear Confrere:

I imagine that you have been longing for some news for quite a while. I'll begin by telling you not to worry regarding the observations I made about your accounts. I have found the source of the trouble. Everything is in order, so let your mind and heart be at ease and in peace.

I cannot refrain from telling you that very often, when I think of you, my heart is touched by the thought of the great sacrifices I have asked you to make. Don't think now that I am referring to them again for fear that you may be angry with me or displeased, or for some similar motive.



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No, dear friend, I assure you this is not the case, but I feel the need of pouring out my heart to you. I declare that your soul has become three times dearer to me since that time. So rest assured and be prudent, and you will give me great consolation.

Profit by the free time you will have, to study your theology. Don't say that you will never be a priest. I shall not rest until you are ordained. Write frequently and tell me all that is taking place in your soul.

Live with your confreres as a confrere and don't "go native." Observe more particularly the rules of moderation, humility, modesty, and gentleness, as is required of every member of our Congregation.

*[Time, Patience and Prayer Are the Missionary's  
Main Weapons]*

I feel certain that you are not disturbed by the rudeness of our poor Negroes and the difficulties that spring from their vices and superstitious ignorance. We ought not to look for quick results but expect them only later. In some places the fruits will abound; in others they will be few.

Take care not to become angry with Europeans who corrupt those poor natives and place obstacles in our efforts to do good for them. Don't ever be surprised at anything; be patient, and in due time, patience and prayer will enable you to overcome the difficulties; they are the great weapons of the missionaries and serve for both defense and offense.

You told me in one of your letters that Mr. Bouet [the local government officer] is not sincere in his intentions—that his conduct is dictated by ambition and the desire for advancement. This is a trait which you will frequently find in the French [officials]. He may nonetheless want to do good. In such cases, take care not to tell anyone what you think of them, lest this be reported to them. Since he is a



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capable man, well-known on the coast, and accustomed to command, it is important to keep his good will. You will find many other miseries among our Frenchmen who are on the coast. Be prudent and reserved toward them; you cannot imagine how terrible those impious men can be when they dislike the missionaries. They will do all they can to harm our work. . . .

Entirely yours in Jesus and Mary,

FRANCIS LIBERMANN  
priest of the Holy Heart of Mary