

XII. LETTER TO MR. LEVAVASSEUR

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Mr. Levavasseur of Argentan, in the diocese of Sées, was the father of Léon Levavasseur, a seminarian, already ordained a deacon, who wanted to join Libermann's Congregation.

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He pleads with the parents of Léon not to oppose the vocation of their son.

La Neuville, September 15, 1845

Vol. 7, p. 304

Dear Sir:

I was deeply touched by your letter of the first of this month which you so kindly addressed to me. I understand perfectly well what is felt by the hearts of a father and a mother when they contemplate the imminent dangers in which their child is placed. I hasten to reassure you and quiet your apprehensions. Let me tell you in a few words what has taken place.

It is true that your son has requested admission to our house and that I have granted him this request with great satisfaction. Your son did not tell me all that you so kindly reveal about his state of health. He merely mentioned the trouble with his knee and I did not attach much importance to that, for I thought that he would get rid of that trouble by means of a little exercise and suitable remedies. One of our young men was in an almost identical condition and he has been completely cured.

Hence I did not hesitate to accept your young deacon. However, I formally declared to him that I accept him, not in order to send him to the mission, but to keep him in Europe. We are on the point of establishing a house in Rome or in the south of France. It will receive young Africans who will later return to their native country to bring and spread the faith and civilization there.

SPIRITUAL LETTERS OF FRANCIS LIBERMANN

Your son pleaded with me to accept him, for he desired to go to the missions like our other confreres. I told him that his parents would find it hard to consent to it and that he ought to abandon himself to the guidance of the superiors of the house in which he wishes to enter. He agreed and seemed satisfied.

I would be glad, dear Sir, if you did not oppose his entrance with us, for I am convinced that I shall not find any one who is more capable than your son to do good in the establishment we have planned and that he would not do equally well in the work of the ministry. I intend to keep him with me a year to give him the proper training. However, if you are absolutely opposed to his entrance into our society, I am firmly resolved not to accept him, regardless of the great satisfaction his entrance would give me. This principle of never doing violence to things, is one want to follow. It is true that the Spirit of God acts strongly, but He always disposes things gently.

Since I have the pleasure of writing to a true Christian, I dare to ask you to examine this whole question in God's presence and after that follow your conscience. It is my hope, dear Sir, that you will always find in me, in such circumstances, the moderation which ought to animate the servants of God, in things that concern the service of their gentle Master.

Your most humble and obedient servant,

FATHER FRANCIS LIBERMANN,
Superior of the Missionaries
of the Holy Heart of Mary

Please give my sincere greeting to your son, who will always be dear to me whatever his choice may be.