

II. LETTERS TO MRS. JULIE LIBERMANN

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The two short letters that follow were addressed to the widow of Christopher Libermann, brother of Father Francis Libermann. She resided at that time in New Orleans, Louisiana.

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Regarding his brother's death and her return to France.

Letter One La Neuville, November, 1845 Vol. 7, p. 358

Dear Julie:

An indisposition has prevented me from writing you sooner. I am deeply touched by the painful situation in which you are placed as a result of the death of my poor brother. We are very grateful to you for all you have done for him during his life and especially during his last illness. He well deserved it for he was good and was sincerely devoted to you. It is unfortunate that he was so negligent in the matter of his religious duties; let us hope that God will nevertheless have mercy on him and let us pray for him.

I have preferred to take some steps to help you before writing to you. We are trying to find a place for you in Paris. All you have to worry about is the voyage. You will stop in Paris. I ask you to write me once more before you leave America to tell me approximately at what time you will embark so that we may be able to find something as soon as you arrive in Paris. I have been unable to find anything here. Moreover, Paris is a place of opportunities; it is better for you to be there. I shall see you rather frequently, for I often go to Paris. There also you will have my brother Felix and his wife, who are very good as you will find out. I feel

SPIRITUAL LETTERS OF FRANCIS LIBERMANN

sure that you will be very pleased with them, although Alphonse and even Marie-Joseph [Christopher] may have told you the contrary.

I would have sent you some money, but I don't know how to transmit it to you; I shall give it to you when you arrive.

I am unable to give you a letter to the bishop of New Orleans, for I never had any dealings with His Excellency. You realize that I would gladly have performed this service inasmuch as your good and Christian conduct deserves it, but it would be improper for me to do this. However, you could show my letter to the bishop, especially this latter part; it may serve as a recommendation for you. His Excellency will see by it that you are honest and good. Since I am at the head of a missionary congregation which labors for the Negroes, it is possible that he has heard some of the priests from Paris speak about me.

All the good things which my two brothers have said about you prompt me to do all that I can for you although I have not become acquainted with you until now. Have recourse to Mary in the midst of your pains. She will console you.

I hope to see you soon and I am, my good sister-in-law, in the charity of Jesus and Mary,

Your brother,

FATHER FRANCIS LIBERMANN

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He has found a place for her in a convent.

Letter Two Paris, January 19, 1851 Vol. 13, p. 12

My dear sister :

The request we made on your behalf has been accepted, so you can go immediately to the community of the charitable

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Sisters of Dinan. They are waiting for you and will receive you with open heart and arms.

I think you would do well not to postpone your departure. The town of Dinan is pleasant; the air is extremely pure and the good care you will receive there will no doubt make that place a most agreeable one for you.

Even if there are some mean persons among those who will be your companions, the majority will be good and, in compensation for everything, you will enjoy the company of the Sisters who are most edifying, for their entire life is one of complete abnegation, piety, and most tender charity.

I wonder, my dear sister, whether you yourself could not help them in some small way, in their admirable service of the poor of Jesus Christ? I think that your piety and your desire to gain many merits for Heaven will prompt you to occupy your old age with works of mercy. You will do your best to spread the "good odor of Jesus Christ" in that holy house, edifying the fervent, making the practice of virtue lovable in the eyes of those who have abandoned it, and gradually bringing them back to the right path.

I ask you to present the enclosed letter to the Reverend Mother Superior. Adieu, my good sister. May the holy love of Jesus and His peace always remain in the depths of your heart.

Your affectionate brother,

FRANCIS LIBERMANN, Superior

P.S. Adèle and her little family are well. Thanks be to God, work is not scarce!

Everyone is well also at my brother's in Strasbourg. And his dear children, Xavier and Henry, who are both at Notre-Dame-du-Gard, advance in virtue and in knowledge. Our nieces who are at Louvencourt have given Adèle's youngest daughter a taste for the religious life. I believe that the good Lord will grant her the favor of a [religious] vocation.