VII. LETTERS TO MISS JENNY GUILLARME

Jenny Guillarme was a simple working girl who, for some good reason, had left the convent and returned to live an unworldly life in the world. She made a private vow of chastity and undertook many charitable and religious works. She became well-known in her time through her recovering and restoring the famous medieval relic known as Christ’s Holy Tunic of Argenteuil.

Father Eugene Dupont wrote the following in his Notes made in preparation for his deposition in favor of the Beatification of Venerable Francis Libermann (July 30, 1868):

It was, I believe, in 1843 or 1844 that this devout person frequently came to see me at the seminary of St. Sulpice. I was extremely embarrassed on account of the marvelous things that filled her life, her zeal for good works, her miraculous cure through the Holy Tunic of Our Lord, . . . the strangeness of her habitual life which was so diversely interpreted by men. I felt that that poor soul had a very special need for a director who would judge her state correctly and guide her according to God’s designs.

It was then that, while speaking with her in the parlor I mentioned Father Libermann who, at that time, was in La Neuville. She was startled when she heard the name and said, “So he has finally reached the priesthood!” I then gave her some details about his work; she had not even heard of it. I brought her in touch with Father Libermann who, realizing the seriousness of her condition, made her go to Amiens where he gave this sorely-tried soul a thorough examination during a fifteen day retreat.

Father Libermann sent me very beautiful letters on that occasion. In one of them he said: “Of all the miracles in the life of this person, the greatest is that which enabled her to escape from numerous dangers and even made her bring about the conversion of several who were intent on causing her ruin.”
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It was on the occasion of that retreat that Father Libermann ordered her to write her life in all its details up to the time of her cure at Argenteuil when she was twenty years old; but after that he made her burn those notes, or he burned them himself, to prevent her from all temptation to self-love. However, I had had the opportunity to copy those notes without her knowledge. Now, I learned later from Miss Guillarme herself that, fourteen years before that date, namely at the time when she pronounced her perpetual vows, Father Faillon (Sulpician Director of the Solitude) was saying Mass with Mr. Libermann acting as acolyte. At the Communion she saw a flame descending on the head of the humble mass server and then touching her so that she made a movement as if her clothes were on fire. She understood that that young acolyte was destined to be her director and guide at some future date. All this she would be able to explain much better than I. O holy and venerated Father! Pray for me! (N. D. vol. 2, pp. 166 f.)

Despite evident good-will, the spiritual life of Miss Guillarme at first developed along strange lines, for she was poorly educated and had lacked expert guidance. Her imprudence and indiscretion had frightened off several priests who had tried to direct her soul. When Father Libermann began to guide her he wrote: “I don’t think that she has acquired a single virtue. . . . Nevertheless, her will is totally directed toward God but she walks blindly, driven only by her likes, dislikes and aversions. (N. D. vol. 4, p. 336)

Father Libermann dealt firmly and prudently with this holy but strange woman. Gentle words of consolation quickly follow upon severe reprimands, to be followed in turn by exhortations to detachment from human beings and joyful surrender to God.
LETTERS TO JENNY GUILLARME

Letter One (June 24 or 25, 1843) Vol. 7, p. XI

J. M. J.

Dear Child of Mary:

I intended to pay you a visit to console you in the name of our good and Blessed Mother, since my words, whose meaning you have greatly exaggerated, seem to have caused you much pain. Try to calm yourself. I shall leave this note should I find you absent from home.

It would be very wrong for you to give in to anxiety. The hand of Jesus is guiding and protecting you. In answer to your question let me assure you that there was no mortal sin in anything you told me, nor was there even a serious venial fault. Your conduct, my dear child, was a little imperfect, and this is all I meant by my words.

I did not say those things in order that you might be troubled, but in order to inspire you with a little more fear of sin and more reserve, a fear that springs from love, and a reserve that is gentle and modest. Calm yourself, then, and pray constantly to our sweet Jesus, asking Him to guard your heart and to watch over your soul. Avoid dangers, and when you meet painful and unforeseen circumstances turn your eyes to our Lord Jesus, the lovable guardian of your heart, and ask Him earnestly for protection.

You must not be surprised to see that small fault which has caused you so much sorrow. I greatly regret even the smallest stain on your soul because I know that the good Master does not tolerate it since He wants you to be as pure as an angel. Hence do not be surprised that I should make much of a fault, which, in you, appeared serious to me. It
SPIRITUAL LETTERS OF FRANCIS LIBERMANNN

seemed serious because, in union with Jesus and your beloved Mother, I ardently desire to see you pure and holy. That is why I want you always to abhor the least stain on your soul, as much as I abhor it. But this horror must be rooted in a tender love for Jesus, your sweet and lovable Spouse. It ought not to spring from fear, trouble and anxiety.

You should hate sin since you are a true and beloved child of Jesus and Mary. You have the title and privilege of a beloved child of Mary and a spouse and beloved sister of Jesus, and yet, despite all that, you give in to discouragement and sadness. Be quickly ashamed, and tell Jesus that you do not want such to occur again. It is certainly not proper for you to yield thus to discouragement and sadness. Should a spouse of Jesus indulge in sadness when she rests in the arm and on the adorable Heart of her divine Spouse? Can a child of Mary yield to anxiety when she reposes on the most holy Heart of her beloved Mother? Therefore be at peace.

I told you that those faults have been forgiven long ago. Jesus bears no grudge against you for faults in which your will had no share and which were rather the faults of others than of yourself. Moreover, the graces you have since received prove clearly how very sweet and tender is His love for your soul.

Remain calm regarding the future. You will not lose your soul. Jesus is its guardian and who can then steal it? I spoke as I did in order to make you more vigilant, and you have taken it too seriously and have exaggerated it. Vigilance that is mild, holy, peaceful and loving in the presence of Jesus and Mary is very pleasing to the Divine Spouse. May He alone be your guardian, your love, your all. Belong entirely to Him, in Mary, through Mary, with Mary.

I shall try to see you for a moment in the afternoon around three o'clock.

FATHER FRANCIS LIBERMANNN

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May Jesus be all things in you!

My poor child:

I have made you wait a long time for a reply to the questions you asked me about the priest whose letters you entrusted to me. When I returned from Paris I had so much work waiting for me that I could not tackle your problem until now.

I do not know enough about the past life of that priest to enable me to penetrate into the recesses of his soul. His letters do not seem to justify our suspicion. Since I do not know why he moves from diocese to diocese after you, I cannot give you any positive advice, but I shall answer to the best of my ability.

I do not think that you should abandon him. He does not say why he is unable to remain in the hospital, in which, I presume, he is chaplain. If it is true that he cannot remain there, you should advise him to take charge of some parish. Tell him, however, that once he is established there, he should consider himself as placed there by Our Lord Himself, and he should not leave his post unless there are evident signs that God wants him elsewhere. Do not be astonished that this poor priest is anxious to get an appointment. This is not in harmony with perfect love of God, but we should remember that his present position will naturally tend to make him restless unless he is a very devoted man and perfectly abandoned to our good Master. If his dispositions are really those which he manifests, then he will make greater progress in divine love if he has some post other than his present one.

Keep up your interest, therefore, in that poor priest (if you
SPIRITUAL LETTERS OF FRANCIS LIBERMAN

have not noticed anything worse in his desire for an appointment), and give him the advice suggested by Our Divine Master for the glory and love of God.

All for Jesus, all through Jesus, all in and with Jesus! Our Lord must be the soul of your soul and the only motive force of all your actions. Let all your joy and repose be found in Him alone, and, when He asks it of you, act with love under His inspiration to procure His greater glory.

You know the words of the Wise Man: "All the rivers come from the sea and return to it; and after they have returned, new waters come back to the same rivers to return to the sea once more."

Our souls must rest in Jesus to be nourished by His divine grace, to be strengthened and built up by His divine substance, so that it is no longer our own natural life that dwells in us, but the life of our most sweet Jesus. His divine love must flow into our souls and vivify them as our blood flows through our bodies and gives them life.

Is it then for no good purpose that Jesus becomes the food of our souls? As material food is changed into blood and vivifies our bodies, so our divine food is changed into love in our souls and gives them life, a life which is wholly divine and is the very life of Jesus. When we thus rest in Jesus, Who is our love, and live in Him and through Him, He transmits to us, in accordance with His Father's will, all the various desires of His life and all His varied gifts. It is thus that He destines some to live a life of contemplation of divine truths, others He uses to save souls, and still others for some other purpose, each according to His Father's will. And, in view of His divine designs in our regard, He, by means of divine grace, gives to us the necessary impulses. In the meantime our souls, while remaining united to the source from which those impulses come like the rivers that remain united with the sea, follow the guidance of His divine hand and
surrender to His heavenly action. And as those rivers tend towards the sea from which they came and finally cast themselves into it, so do we tend to Him. If the rivers did not remain united with the source from which they come they would soon go dry. So it is with our souls that are so weak, so little, so vile, so empty. They must remain always united with that divine source in order to receive of its superabundance.

That is why you should remain always united to Jesus Christ while laboring for His glory. Like a beloved spouse, rest always on His divine Heart which is a boundless sea of love. Be nourished through that most pure and chaste union with divine Love, which will come forth in torrents from His Heart and flood your soul. Those torrents will then flow like rivers from your soul to fill the souls which, through you, your Beloved wants to draw to Himself. Listen to the words of the Beloved of our souls: “If any one thirst, let him come to Me and drink, and rivers will flow from his heart.” The Gospel adds: “The Savior was speaking about the Holy Spirit.”

Are you thirsty? Press your lips to that source of living waters and quench your thirst with that love. Rivers will flow from your soul to fill all those whom divine love will send you.

I returned your copybook through Father Dupont. If you can, send me those that follow, and do so as soon as possible so that I may not lose the sequence and be thus hindered in making a judgment about your interior life. I hope that Our Lord will help me to see what are His wishes, but this should not prevent you from using the ordinary means of revealing to me all you can about your state of soul. When speaking of the interior graces you have received and are actually receiving at present, try to say how they came about, that is, what took place in your soul, but do this without mental tension.
SPIRITUAL LETTERS OF FRANCIS LIBERMANN

If nothing occurs to you about them at first, attempt to describe them, then say nothing. To do this kind of thing well there must be a complete absence of constraint.

To return to the priest already mentioned. Though you remain interested in him, be a little more on your guard lest your relations with him should become improper. Do not deal with anything except the matter of his sanctification. Do not commit yourself in any way. Do not lend him money unless it be from funds set aside for alms. Give him a share of such money if you believe Our Lord expects it of you, but do not give him any of your personal money. Never undertake to pay his debts in case he becomes insolvent.

Be on your guard, therefore, against letting your relations with him degenerate into familiarity. Up to the present you have not been guilty in this respect. I wish he would refrain from calling you his friend, the "friend of his soul." Such terms are not proper. You are the friend, the dear friend, the beloved of Jesus. He is your only good, your only love. Woe to another who wishes to take what Jesus has reserved for Himself alone. Take care then, spouse of Jesus Christ; have no familiar relations with any one but Jesus. Let no one address you in familiar terms except Our Lord to whom you have consecrated yourself, and to whom you are united by sacred and unbreakable bonds which His divine love has welded between Himself and you. Woe to you if you take the least pleasure in, or encourage the least familiarity with any other than your most sweet Spouse. You would then no longer enjoy the familiarity of the divine Jesus.

Do not worry. There is at present nothing that beclouds your love for the divine Jesus. Your soul is free. I make these remarks only to inspire you with a prudent fear for the future. When that priest used such words, he merely made an unhappy choice of terms; he did nothing that was really wrong. Nevertheless, the delicacy of your love for

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Jesus, your desire to please Him alone and to have Him be pleased with you, should always prompt you to be on your guard against such things and to avoid them. I will always consider it a crime, a very great crime, if you are negligent on that point.

(no signature)

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Letter Three July 16 and 17, 1843 Vol. 4, p. 268

J. M. J.

My dear Child:

My poor child, may Jesus always be your consolation and your life. He wants to have your soul for Himself alone. That is why He takes away everything that might serve as a support for you. You are indeed blessed to have only your dear and divine Spouse for your consolation, and yet you seem to complain. Oh! don’t complain. Let men abandon you leaving you alone with your beloved Spouse; in the abandonment of your soul, His relations with you will then be so much more intimate and pure. Be satisfied when Jesus gives you someone to lead you to Him and place you in His arms. You, however, must seek and sigh only for that divine Spouse. The friend of the Spouse is meant only to guide your soul to Him; so do not attach yourself to that friend. The latter is there to contemplate the divine goodness of Jesus towards the souls He unites to Himself and to whom He wishes to communicate Himself more fully. This friend is filled with joy when he sees those great favors, and the reason for his joy is that he hears the pure, holy voice of Jesus. All his satisfaction and joy must be in Jesus alone, and in seeing
SPIRITUAL LETTERS OF FRANCIS LIBERMANN

His goodness towards the souls He has chosen to be united to His superabundant love. But, if the friend must strive to adorn and prepare those souls for their heavenly union with their Divine Spouse, how great must be the detachment of those souls destined for and directed to that union? They should not abandon their Divine Spouse in order to amuse themselves with the friend of the divine Jesus.

You, therefore, receive a great grace when you meet only with crosses and disregard from men. If it were otherwise, your heart might feel inclined to divert itself seeking their affection and gratitude. Hence you must surrender completely to the outpouring of divine love, and be ready to lose all things except His divine love for you and your love for Him. Don’t worry, then, and don’t be afraid that the two straw supports that remain might be taken away from you. When you feel sick at heart, repose on the Heart of Jesus. Even if you fall into His arms through weakness and exhaustion, you are not to be pitied. By this I mean that if your anguish were like a swoon or an agony, you would be very fortunate and your lot would be enviable so long as you abandon yourself lovingly into Jesus’ arms and let yourself fall so that you may repose on the divine Heart of your Spouse. Yes, your lot would be better than if you experienced all the delights of the spiritual life. It would, then, be a great blessing for you if the little that remains to console and encourage you here on earth were taken away. I hope, nevertheless, through the mercy of our good Master, that I will not abandon your poor soul no matter what men might say or do against me. I am the servant of all who belong or wish to belong to Jesus, my Lord. I will not commit the injustice of abandoning or refusing to help anyone in order to seek some personal advantage, or through fear of men.

You see, however, by all that is happening to you, how important it is to keep my direction secret. We should not
invite trouble without necessity; but, on the other hand, when, in spite of our precautions, men act against us to prevent us from doing our duty for the glory of our Lord, we must remain firm and say that we prefer to displease men rather than God.

Don’t be astonished when men constantly judge, condemn and contradict you. They do it for the glory of the great Lord. Esteem yourself blessed that, at your own expense, you provide men with an opportunity of manifesting their zeal for the Master’s glory. They are sometimes bad-tempered in the way they ill-treat you, but at heart they are striving for their Master’s glory, and it is better that you, rather than others, should be the victim of their bad temper. When they have vented their spite on you, they will be more gentle towards others and will procure the glory of Jesus Christ by their sincere desire to serve Him properly.

You should look on yourself as a dirty rag lying in the house of your good and divine Spouse, a filthy rag that disgusts all the children and servants in the house, and on which everyone wipes his hands. When you find yourself full of gall and bitterness, go and present yourself before Jesus, fall on His Heart and pour out your soul to Him. Do not fear. If men loathe you, and you accept all the dirt they throw at you in the spirit I suggested, then you are the more pleasing to the eyes of your heavenly Spouse. Be satisfied to be nothing but filth, the sweepings of the Church of God, which everybody casts out. Jesus Christ will place you like a diamond in His divine Heart.

Be on your guard against bearing ill-will towards any one. Esteem those who calumniate you, love those who hate you, and speak well about your calumniators, always of course, without telling untruths. Speak mildly, and with peace and love about all who oppose and act badly towards you. Do not speak about the evils you suffer from them. Re-
veal this only to him whom God has given you to guide you
in the ways of divine love, for he should know what opposi-
tion you meet with on the part of men. Accept all insults,
calumnies, contempt, contradictions, mockeries. Bury all such
things in the depths of your heart and prostrate yourself
before Jesus and Mary; remain in your poverty, resting
from your weariness and sorrow on those two heavenly and
admirable Hearts.

Do not set limits to the crosses you are willing to bear. Accept all that come as so many precious stones and be
afraid to let any escape from your grasp. What are you
afraid of? Haven’t you the Heart of Jesus on which to
rest where you will find the strength and love necessary to
bear them? Think of yourself as a target at which every-
body is allowed to throw his ball, and which has no right
to reject or avoid any of their casts.

You have only one right, namely, to remain at the foot of
the Cross, to embrace that Cross of your Beloved, to cling to
His divine wounds, to rest in His arms, to abandon yourself
to Him in your anguish, and feed on His divine love. What,
my poor friend, is more desirable than this? You desire to
be the spouse of Jesus Crucified; would you then want to
avoid the blows that are aimed at Him, and ought you not
accept to be struck and torn to pieces? You desire to rest on
the divine Heart of Jesus, you want to be the spouse of His
Heart, and would you refuse the bitterness with which His
Heart was filled?

Have courage, then, and be filled with divine love. Jesus
must triumph in your poor soul. He can do so only through
the Cross. He has to take you and break and crush you. He
must overwhelm and annihilate you. You ought to be able to
say to Jesus as Sephora said to Moses: “You are my spouse
of blood.” Yes, Jesus is a “spouse of blood” and especially
so in your regard. You will never be the spouse of His
LETTERS TO JENNY GUILLARME

Heart until you are torn by the most profound and constant sorrow.

If the Reverend Pastor offers to give you five hundred francs, unless, while giving it, he upbraids you then accept it. It would seem that Our Lord is sending that sum to you and there is no sufficient reason for refusing it.

Do not fear so much the ill-treatment of men. This fear will avail you nothing since they will not lessen their ill-treatment, whether you bear it in the right spirit or not. When you have made the last payment for the reliquary (of the Holy Tunic of Argenteuil) they will rid themselves of you in one way or another. If the Reverend Pastor does not spontaneously offer you that sum, do not take any steps to get it, but just drop the matter entirely.

I approve the way you acted in your interview with Father Icard. Go to the Seminary as rarely as possible and let your relations with Father Dupont be secret and pass unnoticed.

I am sorry that I can do nothing to lessen your sorrow in your relations with your mother. This is why I suggest that you should pay her a visit. Before you go, speak much with your good Mother in heaven so that She may be interested in the wicked mother you have on earth and cause that earthly mother to become good and to live in the love of Jesus through His grace. When you have prayed well and received Holy Communion fervently for her intention, try to find out her state and what she thinks and suffers. This will help you to speak wisely and properly handle the matter about which she is so sensitive. Do not propose to her immediately after the first meeting that she come to live with you, unless you see that she is thus disposed. I will remember her during the Holy Sacrifice. On the day that you propose to visit her, both Father Jerome and I will offer our Holy Masses for you. I do not forget you at the Memento in the Mass. You, on your part, must be a faithful spouse of Jesus. If I knew.
a good priest who was going to Paris, I would tell him about your poor mother, but at the moment I do not know of any. Be patient, for even if your mother were to go and live with your sister, she would not stay there very long, and then your turn would come. Place your confidence in Jesus and Mary, and let us pray and wait for God's own moment, for it will come.

I hope the matter regarding the Benedictines will be arranged alright. Work to that end, but in this as well as every other such matter I forbid you to use your own money, either for the establishing or supporting of the work, and do not promise anything without my permission. I should like to know first what Dom Guéranger thinks about it and whether you think you will be able to find the means for their support.

You say that you have no aptitude for mental prayer and that you are a poor girl who knows how to talk with men but not how to speak to God. Well, it doesn't matter; don't worry about that at all. Be content to remain united with the divine Jesus, to rest on the Heart of your Spouse. If you don't know what to say to Him, be content to listen. This will be much better than talking to Him. He will tell you nicer things than you could tell Him. Even if you are unable to listen to Him, which will not happen very frequently, content yourself with looking at Him and remaining at rest in His arms. At other times, when your heart is full, talk as long as your heart prompts you.

You are a child of Mary and, knowing yourself to be her child, you must love that good and holy Mother with all the affection and tenderness of your heart. Do not be afraid that the good Mother will reject you. Be patient, suffer with joy, peace and humility as she did. Remain at her side or in her arms, bearing the small straw crosses which Jesus places on
LETTERS TO JENNY GUILLARME

your shoulders, and she will be pleased to see the good things our Master is doing in your soul.

I would like that you should be always reserved in speaking about yourself, and especially about the favors the good Master bestows on you. Let me know in your next letter whether you are faithful to this rule. Tell me also how things stand with regard to the lawyer about whom you spoke to me, and whether you have thrown the rest of the letters of P. L. J. on the refuse heap.

Father Favreux is feeling very well and has asked me to express his thanks to you. He will not write to you and you must not write to him nor invite him to say anything more. He seems to be a very saintly religious. Do not worry about the afflictions that I may suffer on your account. Be prudent and do not worry if the good Lord sends me crosses. Do you want to be the only one to share in the glory of the crucified Jesus? Allow full freedom to your good Master, but at the same time, we must not, through our imprudence, be the cause of faults in pious souls.

What I said about your notes did not mean that you were not giving me enough details. What I wanted was an explanation of the way those interior graces were given to you. For example, you say that the Holy Spirit reposed in your heart. How? Was it in a way that affected your senses, or did it affect your intellect? What was the state of your soul at the time? What was the effect of the grace in your soul?

You give in too much to sorrow at the thought of losing the help of Father Dupont. This is foolish. The good Master gave you a broken straw as a support of your weakness, for every human support, no matter how holy the person may be, has only the strength of a broken straw; and when He takes him away and gives you His own arm instead, you complain! Try to sanctify the relations which the Jesuit Father wishes you to have with the Polish lady.

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Prepare yourself for a fervent renewal of your vow of chastity on the 23rd of this month. Do not renew any other vow but that. Surrender your soul to Mary, the Mother of fair love, in order that she may help your soul to rest on the Heart of Jesus. I will say Mass on that day for the intention I mentioned above.

(no signature)

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Letter Four August 9, 1843 Vol. 4, p. 298

J. M. J.

My child:

I am most grateful to Our Lord for the great grace He has given you of freeing you from the greatest danger you have ever encountered. You were suspended by a hair, as it were, over the horrible chasm of hell, but the goodness of Jesus rescued you. Yes, you are truly a child of His mercy since you were saved solely through His great goodness. Be on your guard henceforth, and make a report to Father Pierre on all your actions and your relations with men. I know that the divine Spouse is watching over you and that He will not allow you to be lost, since He has given so many proofs of this. That is why you must place all your confidence in Him; He alone is the one who will save you. You are constantly stepping over precipices and walking carelessly, and hence you very much need His guiding hand and His support. He is always ready to give you that guidance and support. Nevertheless be vigilant and as soon as you are troubled by anything, no matter how vague your feeling of anxiety, go immediately to the good Father or write to me.
as otherwise you run the risk of being very unfaithful to our good Master.

I confess that I consider it a miracle that you were able to escape from the clutches of the demon who had you almost in his grip. You were unfaithful, my poor child, to have remained in that state of doubt for so long and to have allowed yourself to be led by curiosity. You know very well that it was curiosity that led Eve astray and the whole human race after her. She listened to the demon and though at first she did not accept his views, the enemy crept into her heart little by little and led her astray. You have been more fortunate than Eve, since divine mercy has saved you from being led into error. You realize how great is the love of Jesus for you. Don't be sad now because God allowed you to run so great a risk. On the contrary, rejoice that He is so full of goodness and mercy towards you, and be more faithful still in loving Him as He deserves.

The Jansenists are most dangerous heretics. Don't try to reason out for yourself, my dear child, whether their doctrine is true or not. Be content to know that they are outside the Church of Jesus Christ, and that their doctrine was condemned and anathematized by that same Church. Be a docile child of this dear Church, outside of which no one ever finds Jesus Christ. How could you have had Jesus as your Spouse if you had the misfortune of no longer belonging to Holy Church? You would then have been divorced from that dear Spouse.

I confess, my dear child, that my soul is deeply grieved when I think of the imminent danger that threatened you. Refuse henceforth to receive those dangerous men in your home. They are hell-hounds who come clothed like lambs, intent on leading good and simple souls astray. They are truly ravening wolves, wearing the mask and using the language of piety, but there is not even a shadow of devotion in their hearts.
St. Paul spoke in similar terms of certain heretics of his time who used the same wiles as our hypocritical Jansenists. They feign great austerity and good morals, but they are full of overweening pride which makes them rebel against everything which is not in agreement with their false ideas. They rise up against the Church and against the one whom Jesus Christ has appointed to rule it in His name. They claim that the whole Church is in error and that they alone possess the truth. This is the height of stubborn pride, and is characteristic of stubborn heretics. They maintain that they are the elect few and that the entire Church of Jesus Christ is lost.

Remember, my dear good soul, that the small number of the elect is not found outside the Church, but that it is precisely for the small number of the elect that the divine Master founded His holy Church, so that they might be saved. Do you think that the Good Shepherd will take into his sheepfold sheep that are wicked and unworthy of Him and who do not belong to Him, and that He will leave the good sheep outside? The Jansenists in their craftiness tell you that they are in the Church. No one can be in the Church if he refuses to profess the true doctrine which Jesus Christ gave it. Moreover, the Church has rejected them from her bosom and, as long as they remain rebellious, form those coteries and refuse to accept the doctrine of the Church, they cannot be counted among the children of that Church. Anyone who holds that the Church errs when she establishes those devotions does not belong to the Church.

My dear child, love Jesus Christ and His holy Church! Believe only what she believes. These corrupt men tell you that you, like the entire Church, are in error. The Church never errs and neither will you err so long as you believe what she believes. Reject and cast out, then, those enemies of the Church of Jesus Christ, those workers of iniquity, those teachers of lies, and cling with all your soul to Jesus...
and His holy Church. Be ready to die a thousand deaths rather than separate yourself from her, for this would mean eternal death, the suicide of your soul.

Explain everything about your retreat to Father Pierre, and if he tells you to come before the end of that instruction, obey him absolutely and come. You can see the risks one runs when left to one’s own counsels. I have made the following arrangements for you. I shall obtain lodging for you in an orphanage, a good and pious house under the direction of good and religious Sisters. They will not make any special arrangements for you, but you will be treated like one of the girls and will sleep in the dormitory with the others. You will go by the name of Miss Jenny and no one will know your true name, Guillarme. I have very serious reasons for this. You will spend your time in silence and peace. After you have returned to Paris, I will send you a letter by Father de Regnier, one of our missionaries, which you will give to the good Father Pierre. In it I shall give him an account of the condition of your soul in so far as heaven will have helped me to know it. I have asked Father de Regnier to venerate the Sacred Tunic in your name. Unite your intentions to his, as he also desires to obtain certain favors. Please arrange for him to be able to say Mass at the altar where the Tunic is kept.

I would like to send you the good German lady at the end of this week or the beginning of next. She finds it difficult to leave her sister. The latter wants her to stay a few days longer, since the affairs of this sister, who is still a Protestant, require that she stay. Please look after her when she comes.

Tell her about the Sacred Heart Convent and the kind of life that is led by the Sisters. Do not tell her that they easily dismiss postulants. I told her that it was your mother who was the cause of your not remaining with them. Glory to Jesus and Mary!

(no signature)
My dear child:

It seems that the good Lord wants you on the Cross and I am glad that it is so. You will feel that I am abandoning you since it is fifteen days since you wrote and sent on your third copybook and I have not yet answered. This, I hope through the mercy of God, will never happen. I trust that Our Lord will always give me the courage to sustain all souls who are afflicted and need help.

In your first letter you seemed to invite a scolding, and after what you wrote in the second letter, you certainly deserve it. How can you have a perfect love for your divine Spouse, when you have such a great fondness for men? None of your pretexts for being attached to your directors stand up to scrutiny. My dear child, in the name of Our Lord, and in virtue of holy obedience, I forbid you to write even one word to Father L. J., unless you have my sanction beforehand as to the gravity of the reason. I forbid you, henceforth, to give him any order or charge, even with regard to the Sacred Tunic. If he writes to you, do not show the letter to any one but throw it, unopened, into the refuse heap or the fire. This will be part of your penance for not having obeyed my order to rid yourself of the things he sent you. A further penance, in virtue of the same obedience: I forbid you to write to Father Favreux and his Superior. That good Father is doing well and seems to have peace of mind. When I gave your letter to him, he replied: “She will never get an answer from me.” So don’t expect any answer and do nothing about it.
LETTERS TO JENNY GUILLARME

If you have trouble in the matter of the vow of which you spoke to me, explain the matter and I shall tell you what to do. Poor soul, stop being a slave of men and be a spouse of Jesus instead. Your heart leads you astray and this is why the good Master, since the time when you first decided to serve Him, has sent you all those trials. He wants your heart for Himself alone, and as long as you are unwilling to give yourself entirely to Him without reservation, He will crush and break you. You are a spouse of Jesus Christ. What would you think of a queen who is tenderly loved by her king, if she were to leave her husband and go and throw herself into the arms of a beggar, a tramp covered with rags and filth, and embrace and kiss him? What an insult to her King and spouse! You are the spouse of the King of Kings. You are but a wretched beggar whom He has taken from the dunghill and made His spouse. We are beggars, and you want to leave your divine Spouse, the King of glory, the most beautiful among the sons of men, and cast yourself into the arms of such vile beggars? Do you think of this, or are you out of your mind? All your mortifications are nothing! All your meditations are insignificant! All your good works are of no value; for they are not the things that the divine Spouse asks of you. He wants your heart, your whole heart without reserve.

I laugh at your good works and I don't care what mortifications you practice. I ask only one thing: Give your heart, not to me for I despise it, but to the divine Jesus Himself, for Whom I ask it, and Whom alone I desire, for He is sufficient for me. He wants your heart, He demands it without reserve, and you will not find rest nor have a truly interior life, until you have immolated, sacrificed and annihilated your poor heart.

My dear child, you will say that I am uncompromising. Yes, I am as hard as iron or marble, because I know that
you cannot expect any rest nor peace until you have sacrificed all your affection for creatures, all your desire to live for them and to find your joy in them. It should be clear to you that this is the reason why your divine Spouse has acted as He has with you. He takes away from you all creatures and leads them to oppose you. Think of the number of directors you have had in your life! I have never read of anyone, living or dead, who changed directors as often as you. Why was that? Because Jesus did not want you to become attached to creatures. I have never met anyone who had suffered more harm from his directors than you have. Why is this? Jesus wanted to show you that you must not attach yourself to a director but must cling to Him alone. I have never seen anyone who has been so completely abandoned by the men with whom he was acquainted and whom he sought to please. Why? Always the same reason, Jesus wants you for Himself alone.

If you do not surrender to Him, you will meet with many other difficulties, even worse than those you have already encountered, because Jesus wants to have you at any cost. He does not abandon you. Oh no, don’t be afraid of that. I do not fear that. But He will so overwhelm you interiorly, and will allow the friends of your heart to so ill-treat you, that He will blunt finally that natural affection that draws you to creatures.

You object: “Am I not allowed to have affection for persons who do good to me? There is no sin in that, it is but a natural sentiment of gratitude.” Well, Jesus does not want it! It is not fitting for a spouse, for one whom, in order to capture all her love, he has overwhelmed with His favors. He does not want it! I repeat, He does not want it! You owe yourself entirely to Him. That is what He wants and that should be enough.
LETTERS TO JENNY GUILLARME

You say: “But I love those persons for love of Him.” I reply: “Is it for love of Him?” He forbids it! He does not want you to have that sensible affection for them for love of Him. He wants you to love Him alone. All your sensible affection must be for Him.

“But this is painful, it hurts, it tears my heart asunder. It is very hard not to be able to yield to these sensible affections, and to reserve all for Jesus alone.” Well, it is necessary that you be overwhelmed and that there be no one but Jesus to console you, and that you find no consolation in creatures, nor attach yourself to them by sensible affection.

“But your words will plunge me into desolation and your reproaches will crush my heart.” Yes, I seem to extinguish a candle that is already half dead in that I overwhelm a heart already suffering intensely because so many have abandoned it. But the contrary is true. I am giving you a solid, earnest direction that will rescue you from your desolation and fix you in Jesus alone. In Him alone are your support, your love, your consolation, your life and your all.

Do not think that I am angry with you and that I hate you. The charity of Jesus Christ is in my heart. In the relations which the good Master permitted I should have with your soul, I value only one thing and have only one desire, namely, to help you so that you may be able to present yourself to the divine Master as a pure and stainless virgin, one who is worthy to be His holy spouse and to enjoy divine union with Him.

You see the weakness that results from the natural affection of your heart. I feel obliged to make excuses lest you become discouraged. Strengthen your heart. It will be strong only when Jesus, your divine Spouse is its one, peaceful guest. But as long as He is not the sole peaceful owner of that small tabernacle, as long as He has not changed that tabernacle of clay into one of gold and diamonds, you will
be miserable and will falter. Keep peace in your soul, then; be faithful and place your trust in Jesus, your divine Spouse. It is up to Him to make the law for His own house. You do not belong to yourself but to Jesus and hence, as Sovereign, He may order things to be done as He wills. That is exactly what He is doing, and you must, like a timid and affectionate spouse, act according to His orders and His will. What He wills He wills through love.

Why is He jealous and wish to possess even the smallest part of the affection of your heart? Because He has a special predilection for your soul. Allow Him then to have peaceful possession of your soul, and to be united with your soul to the full extent of His divine love for you. Do not grieve that dear Spouse. He does not deserve such treatment. On the contrary, He deserves all your love and all the sensible affections of your heart. When you have succeeded in restoring peace once more to your soul, do not fear to cast yourself into the arms of your divine Spouse. Approach Him with confidence, since this is what He expects from you.

Let me know on what days you would find it most convenient to get away. I want you to come soon and make a retreat here, so that you may find rest in God, and if it be His holy will, that I may be able to examine your condition thoroughly. Come as soon as possible and don’t be afraid that you might neglect something else by coming. The good Lord will know how to make up for anything that might be neglected because of your coming here. Reply as soon as you can, for I want to arrange things here so that they may be able to receive you. Here, again, the Master requires sacrifices, sacrifices of the heart, from you. You will not make your retreat at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, but at a poor, though edifying, religious house. Further, you will not even pay a visit to the Sacred Heart Convent, nor will they know that you are here. Neither will you visit Father
LETTERS TO JENNY GUILLARME

Favreux, nor let him know that you are here. Do not tell anyone, not even the Religious of the Sacred Heart in Paris, where you are going or what you intend to do. Be obedient, my child, and Jesus will sanctify you. But if you follow the dictates of your heart, you will not please Him.

Do not continue to write your copybooks (diary) since you say that this gives you headaches. I know enough about that matter, for I have seen the account of your entrance into the Sacred Heart Congregation, and your departure from there. You can tell me the rest orally during the retreat. I am very anxious that you should make this retreat, for without it I should find it very difficult to direct you. Do not decide on a permanent confessor before the retreat. I will help you to choose one later on.

If you have filled a copybook in the meantime, you can send it to me. If not, then, as I said above, do not write any more.

My poor Protestant lady has become a convert and she is in the very best of dispositions. If the good Lord had asked me to choose the dispositions I would like to see in her, I could not improve on those she manifests at present. I think that all her affairs will be in order at the end of next week and she will come then. Tell Mrs. de Gramont that, and if you think I ought myself to write to her, please let me know. I thought it was necessary to write in advance to let her know that the lady was coming, and I was going to give her a letter to take by hand to Mrs. de Gramont. Let me know what I ought to do.

(no signature)

P.S. I almost forgot a very important thing. I am absolutely opposed to your spending your own money to buy the house in Argenteuil. In the name of holy obedience, I forbid you to invest one penny of your money in it. Pray to the
good Lord that He may send you a wealthy person to found the house, but do not buy the property with your own money. I am quite satisfied with your decision of forgetting about the Benedictines for the moment. The ones of whom you spoke do not seem to be very edifying religious. If we cannot find good and fervent ones, it is better not to have any religious at all. You are wise in not taking any steps for establishing the Benedictines until you know what the Bishop of Versailles thinks about it. The same applies to the religious Sisters.

My child:

I have not the time to write a long letter as our good German girl is leaving and she will bring this letter to you. I ask you for the love of Jesus and Mary to take good care of her. She is a very good person who loves the good Lord with all her heart. Her dispositions are astonishing for one who was converted so recently. Grace is working visibly in her, and you must try to keep alive those good dispositions. If possible direct her to the nice things in Paris, at least to the holy things, such as Notre Dame, Invalides, Our Lady of Victories, etc. Please introduce her to Mrs. de Gramont.

Come then, while Father Dupont is here, and make your retreat. Don’t be afraid that you will be put with the children. It had already been arranged that you should have a room, even before Father de Regnier spoke to me about it. I must be a horrible monster, seeing that all good souls are afraid of me, even though I am not conscious of having harmed anybody. When I pay a visit to the orphanage the children
run away as soon as they see me. It is only in the confessional that they want to talk to me, and they come there with joy because the good Lord leads them . . . It seems to me that you are a child like them and that you are afraid of me. If you wish I will see you only in the confessional, and I will not frighten you there. I am convinced that you will be very happy after your retreat. Your conscience will be clear and you will, perhaps, return gradually to a sound method of mental prayer.

Thank you sincerely for all that you did for Father de Regnier and for your prayers at the shrine of the Holy Tunic. God alone must be your portion, and Mary, your Mother, should be your model in the art of loving Jesus, and your protection against your enemies.

A Rule for Your Daily Life
Jesus, Mary, Joseph

Appendix

5:30 Rising
6:30 Mental Prayer in your home
7:30 Little Hours, Holy Mass, Thanksgiving, Breakfast.
9:30 From time to time in the course of your morning occupations, take a little rest in the depths of your soul near Our Lord.

When you are not too busy in the morning at home, make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady. If you cannot do this then make aspirations to the Blessed Sacrament.

Whenever you pass a Church, enter and make a visit to Our Lord. If you cannot do this then adore Him as you pass.

Whenever you have the time in the morning, read part of the New Testament.

12:00 Lunch. Afternoon same as morning.
SPIRITUAL LETTERS OF FRANCIS LIBERMAN

3:00 Vespers and Compline
9:00—10:00 Exercises of piety, reading, and anything you might have omitted during the day.
10:00 Bed

Rule for Your Retreat

5:30 Rising. Fix up your room. Rest in God.
6:00 Mental Prayer
7:00 Holy Mass. Rest in God
8:00 Breakfast
8:15 Life of a Saint
8:45 Little Hours. Rest
9:15 Spiritual Catechism
9:45 Five decades of Beads
10:00 Mental Prayer
10:45 Rest
11:00 Spiritual Catechism
11:30 Rest
2:00 Visit to Our Lord.
2:30 Vespers and Compline. Rest
3:00 Beads. Life of a Saint. Rest
4:15 Third Mental Prayer. Rest
4:45 Beads. Rest
5:00 Catechism. Rest
6:00 Fourth Mental Prayer. Rest
7:00 Matins and Lauds. Life of a Saint.
8:00 Supper. Recreation. Prayers.
9:30 Bed
My dear child:

You have just left here and now I am asking you to do a good turn. I need your help very badly, and perhaps the good Lord will make use of you to render this small service which will be very pleasing to Him. It concerns one of the children of the orphanage of whom you once spoke very highly. It is the girl who brought you your dinner once or twice, and who seemed to interest you since she was so unassuming. Her name is Clemence Godrand (I don’t know if you already knew that) and she needs your charitable help, or rather, it is Our Lord who pleads with you on her behalf. You are probably wondering at this elaborate introduction. There is nothing really extraordinary in the case, but I am keenly interested in the spiritual good of that child, and if Our Lord does not send help now, she will be in danger later on. Here is the situation.

This eighteen year old child is truly good and pious. For a long time she has wanted to enter a convent. I can tell you in confidence that, in one of her fervent moments, she even made a vow of chastity without consulting any one. I am able to tell you this since I know that she would approve. She is gentle, good, and docile, but since she is an illegitimate child, it is difficult to find a convent that is suitable for her.

Convents in which the Rule is well observed are usually not in need of vocations and hence they refuse to accept her. We find it impossible, therefore, to find a place for her except in a convent that is lax. Now I should prefer to leave her at the orphanage than to send her to a lax convent. To make things worse, the mother of this poor child follows her and wants to have her so that she may cause her ruin. She in-
tends to come to Amiens and she has threatened several times to take the girl away. This would mean the child's ruin. If the mother should succeed this would be the worst thing that could happen to Clemence. Once already I snatched her from the clutches of the mother and sent her to a convent near Amiens where she was received as a religious. But this convent is on the downgrade and will be soon disbanded. Clemence has come back to the orphanage and her mother now wants her to return and stay for some time in Amiens. Clemence could not resist her mother's claims, since she has not yet reached her majority. Father de Brandt spoke to the Superior of the Sacred Heart Convent and they agreed to take her for a retreat of fifteen days in their convent. In the meantime I wrote to Mother Barrat to ask if she would take her as a lay sister but she refused. Besides, although Clemence found these ladies to be very good and pious she did not feel drawn to the Sacred Heart Congregation because they were socially above her and their life was too mild. She was too comfortable in their house and she received no spiritual direction there. The reasons she gave me for not wishing to enter there showed her good dispositions and were a source of joy to me. She does not know that they had refused to accept her. But although her good dispositions are a source of joy to me, this does not get me out of the awkward situation. I can't put her back in the orphanage for she would be there under false pretences; she would suffer much and be exposed to temptations which are known to me.

I feel inclined to put her with our “Negresses” (I mean those who will work for the Negro). I have not mentioned this to her but divine Providence seems to be directing her to that work. She told me a strange thing yesterday that seems to confirm my opinion. About eight months ago she was suffering from discouragement and interior desolation because she thought that she would never be able to become a religious Sister. I told her to have confidence in God, and
LETTERS TO JENNY GUILLARME

among other things said that: "If it be necessary to build a convent just for you, Our Lord is so good that He will do it." Now, this week, at the time when she felt that she would not like to join the Sacred Heart nuns, she eagerly begged Our Lord to do what He willed with her, and she heard an interior voice telling her: "Father Libermann will form a community, and it is there that you must enter." She was ashamed of that thought and that voice, since they reminded her of what I had told her eight months before. She continued to pray during the following days, and then heard the same voice once more. She decided not to speak to me about it because she was ashamed, but she remained anxious and troubled until she resolved to tell me. She came to tell me the story and I treated it as childishness, but I kept it in mind and now tell you of it in strict confidence, in the hope that you will take an interest in the child.

I ask you, therefore, to help in finding some place where I can send her in the meantime. If, later on, she feels attracted to some other convent, she can always apply for admission, but otherwise we shall consider that her decision is dictated by God’s will. If you are unable to find a convent for her, could you put her up for a few days? You could put a mattress on the floor and give her something that would serve as a pillow. She would be satisfied with that as she is accustomed to living the hard way. However, I do not wish to impose any obligation on you to do this, but simply to appeal to your charity. This is urgent. She cannot stay at the Sacred Heart Convent after next Saturday week.

Entirely yours in the charity of Jesus and Mary,

Francis Libermann

On October 18, 1843, Father Libermann wrote to Miss Guillarme: "Clemence has been placed in the convent of the
Ladies of Louvencourt and they are very pleased with her. I do not want her to come to Paris for the present."

Letter Eight  September 25, 1843  Vol. 4, p. 351  

J. M. J.

My child:

I am about to ask you, in the name of Our Lord, to render Him a service, and no matter what you say, you will have to do it. The poor German girl has left the Convent of the Sacred Heart and she is in a state of despair. We must follow that poor sheep. In all probability her pride is causing ravages in her poor soul that is torn to shreds by sorrow, and you must do your best to stop this evil. Try to help her and do your best to find a good place that will be suitable for her. She is walking on the brink of a precipice and despair may drive her far. Her present address is: c/o Mrs. Simonin, Rue des Postes, 21. We must not delay: go and console her in the name of Our Lord!

I shall reply soon to your last letter brought to me by Father Duquesnay.

Your poor servant in Jesus and Mary,

(no signature)

P. S. Remember that you are visiting a person who is not perfect. You are being asked to bear a burden, so don't be cowardly or squeamish. How can you expect Our Lord to carry the burdens of others, if you yourself refuse to do so? Miserable creatures that we are, we like others to support
us but we don’t want to support others when they are miserable. Take care, my dear child, not to be repelled by the unpleasant character, the imperfections, the pride, the violence of these poor, weak, sinful souls. If you wish to be a true spouse of Jesus, you must be willing to share everything with Jesus, even the pains and anguish of others.

Never forget that once you were disgusting in the sight of Jesus and yet He bore with you, and did so lovingly. Remember the time when you suffered and committed faults, when everyone rebuffed you; you were glad to find someone to console you. Those who rebuffed you considered more their own disgust with you than they did the pain you suffered.

You, on the contrary, must put yourself in the place of the poor people who suffer, and try to appreciate more what they suffer than the things that revolt you in their character. Do not reason about them or judge them, don’t say that they are wrong, or that they are full of faults. At a time when a soul is unhappy we must be on our guard not to condemn her in our own mind. Our tender compassion for her should soften our hard and narrow heart, curb our impatience, arouse our desire to support her, and blot out from our mind the unfavorable impression her unpleasant manners, her sadness and her agitation made on it.

Do you wish to be a more faithful handmaid? Do you want to participate more perfectly in the love of Jesus? If you do, then you must have a zeal and love for souls, especially for those who are unfortunate and are a burden to you. That zealous love surpasses all other affection and makes us forget all annoyance and disgust.
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Letter Nine

No date

Vol. 4, p. 374

J. M. J.

My dear child:

You are probably suffering because I have left you so long without a reply. I had almost finished my letter but I did not send it, because in it I was taking you to task. It occurred to me that, on account of your weakness and sensitiveness, Our Lord wished me to be more considerate. You will be more or less a child until you gain control over your sensitiveness, and children ought to be treated gently.

In my letter I was finding fault with you for several reasons. Firstly, because you have allowed yourself to be carried away by natural affection and have not adhered with sufficient love to your divine Spouse who wants all your affection. Be pure and holy, my dear child. Let your joy be in the voice, the look, the embrace and outpourings of your heavenly Spouse. Forget about the friend of the Spouse. He must not attract your tender affection and favors to himself, for these must be given entirely to your heavenly Bridegroom.

Secondly, you have formed a judgement on Clemence far too quickly. You have only seen this child once or twice and you think that you know her better than I who have been her confessor for a whole year. Do you think that I did not already know the things you said about her that were true? Don't be too hasty in forming a judgement about people. You know well how you are often upset when people judge you hastily. They see only evil, and often even take as evil what is good because they see imperfectly. Judge not and you shall not be judged. You should have learned from what you yourself experienced not to judge others easily. When I get new
LETTERS TO JENNY GUILLARME

novices, I hardly dare to make a definite judgement about them after three weeks; and you, child though you be, foolishly judge at first sight. Now see the consequences of this rash judgement. You do not want to have anything to do with that poor child. Well, the good Lord has helped me to find a home for her elsewhere.

With regard to my founding a community of religious Sisters, I will tell you, my dear child, exactly how I feel about that. The very thought of founding such a community frightens me and I will do so only if and when Our good Master obliges me to do so. Let me not hear any more, therefore, from you about this; try to give yourself entirely to Our Lord and our most holy Mother.

Don't be childish in the matter of your faith. Be strong and live by the life of Jesus who is in you and wants to be the one and only master of your soul. Be docile and flexible in His hands, so that your life may be your own no longer but may be that of Jesus who lives in you.

In the midst of your many occupations, always have your moments when you can withdraw into the small sanctuary of Jesus in the depths of your soul where He rests. Kiss the wounds of His hands and feet and sacred side. Look at Him with sweetness and affection, surrender your soul to Him, and remain for some moments resting quietly on His breast.

I leave you there. When you are there all is well!

I should have written at greater length but that I have to hurry. I am overwhelmed with work and still feel very ill. Our good Mother will help me to do everything, and Jesus will enable me to do all that is necessary. May His holy love increase in your soul, may it fill and envelop it.

Father Francis Libermann

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My dear child:

I am sorry that my delay in answering your letter has caused you to suffer, but it was not really my fault. It is God’s will that we must suffer such annoyances, but you should keep your soul in peace. Try to live always in humble and loving submission to God’s will. Remain prostrate before Him every time He sends you a cross, or afflicts you in any way whatsoever.

Clemence has been placed in the convent of the Ladies of Louvencourt. She acts as portress and helps out in the convent; the Sisters are very pleased with her. No, my dear child, I am not insisting on Clemence going to Paris, far from it. It was only that I did not know what to do with the poor child that caused me to mention it. You made a bit of a mess of this affair, but what does it matter now? This will not be your last mistake. When you have committed a fault you should humble yourself and then peacefully forget about it. Yes, I agree that you were very severe, you who need so much indulgence and who have to be treated with so much tact. Learn once for all to live by and through the love of Jesus Who dwells in your soul. Christ’s love is gentle and patient, and it is not jealous. It is not anxious to find the evil or defective thing. One who is animated by Christ’s love readily believes good of her neighbor. She confidently expects everything from him and rejoices in the good she sees in him.

You have not acted contrary to Christ’s way of acting in all things, but only in certain respects. You will need long, intimate, peaceful union with Him before you can attain the holy perfection of charity. Until such time as you will have
LETTERS TO JENNY GUILLARME

gained perfect command over your senses you will have your moments of failure. Be docile and respose sweetly and humbly on the Heart of Jesus who is in you, and bit by bit your soul will become docile, and you will get control over your passing emotions and imaginings.

Don’t torment yourself by thinking about the sorrow I may have felt on account of what you said, or did not say. It will cause me sorrow when you commit faults but it is not this that should occupy your mind. Think of your divine Spouse to Whom those faults are of much more concern than they are to me. Speaking humanly, one might often say that this great Lord must feel ashamed of having so poor a spouse. But the opposite is true, for He receives glory from the angels and saints, not because of the riches and beauty He sees in your soul, but because of the immense goodness and kindness with which He treats you.

I cannot remember when I used the words, “servant only”, but I do not think that I had anything in particular in mind when I used them. Things will continue as they were when you left Amiens. However, all your love and affection should be directed towards Jesus, your divine Spouse. Creatures are but rotten worms and wretched servants of our admirable Master, and you must refuse absolutely to be attached to them in any way.

I trust that through God’s mercy I shall never have a community of Sisters under me. This is my great desire. I have already enough trouble taking care of myself as God wants me to do. Pray fervently to Our Lord that He may fulfil His will and may sacrifice this poor servant.

I have already spoken to you about what you suffered from those men at Argenteuil. Consider yourself blessed to be treated like your divine Spouse. Let your intention be pure in all you do. Those blows are necessary to purify you more and more. What you suffered at Argenteuil may well
be one of the greatest favors God has bestowed on you. His goodness and tender love for your soul are shown by such afflictions. Hand yourself over to Him that He may crucify you as much as He pleases. May His Holy Name be blest, praised and adored! May you be despised, ill-treated and rejected by all men. Oh, how much I desire this, that your heart may once for all belong entirely and forever to Jesus.

It is hard to believe that an insignificant thing like that of the newspaper could have so aroused the anger of these men at Argenteuil. It is probably the fact that the Benedictines have established a house there that has annoyed them. You will meet great difficulties from now on. If the works of God are not done in secret they succeed only with difficulty. Our Lord hid Himself for thirty years. Even during His public life and preaching He hid His divinity, and even hid from many the manner in which He would accomplish our Redemption.

It is thus we must always remain hidden if we wish to do something for the glory of the Master. When we make known our plans beforehand, we nearly always fail. Do not give up the project on behalf of the Benedictines because of the opposition. The men at Argenteuil will get over it I hope. Place all your confidence in God and not in men.

I am leaving this letter unfinished as I have just got news that obliges me to leave for Paris this evening. You could come to see me on Thursday morning at my lodgings.

May Jesus be your only love.

(no signature)
My very dear child:

Would you please give the enclosed letter to Father Jerome and ask him to address it and post it to Father Pierre. I myself did not know the address. I did not have time to send this holy Father instructions about a matter that had to be seen to in Rome. Tell Father Jerome that the letter has to do with a Negro girl about whom he once spoke to me. I had completely forgotten who it was that had spoken to me about her and was therefore unable to reply. That is why I did not mention the matter to good Father Pierre. Tell him that my answer is in the affirmative and that I want the child.

I don't know what happened about the good person you know so well and who was expected to come to the Orphanage. I wrote to you the day I returned and have not got any further news about it since.

How are you yourself? Are you still nailed to the Cross? If so, so much the better. Remain there with Jesus, for there is nothing in all the world that will more surely sanctify you than the cross, and particularly the one you were carrying when I saw you in Paris.

Humble yourself under God's hand, subject yourself peacefully to Him. Allow Him to do what He pleases with you, and let Him deprive you of everything that might still give you satisfaction in this world, and make you an object of contempt in your own eyes and in the eyes of the world. In the midst of all these afflictions remain in the presence of Jesus Who is your only love, your Spouse, your All. Let Him strike and cut and wound you so that the old man that
is still in you may die. We know that we must die in order that we may rise again some day. So too must we die to nature so that we may rise to the life of Jesus in our soul. We know that dying involves great suffering. So also is it necessary to suffer much if we wish to die to our nature. This death to nature is sometimes preceded by great torments and dreadful agony. Suffer with peace, confidence, meekness, submission, humility and love. Jesus is with you, Jesus belongs to you, Jesus is in you. Place yourself in the arms of Mary and remain there.

(no signature)

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Letter Twelve

La Neuville, December 11, 1843

J. M. J.

My dear sister:

I apologize for having made you wait for a reply to your letter. That letter gave me great joy for it showed me that Our Lord is gradually purifying your heart and detaching it from creatures. Your pains and privations are thus bearing fruit. Divine goodness will give you solid virtue by and by. To be truly virtuous you must be completely detached from self and from all things, and completely abandoned in humility and peace into the hands of Jesus, your divine Spouse. True virtue does not consist in those natural feelings of love, and tender affections.

I do not mean by this that we should despise such natural feelings, but that solid devotion does not depend on them.
For you those natural affections are even a danger, since they render your relations with Our Lord imperfect. That is why the divine Spouse restores the balance by allowing you to experience spiritual dryness and even a certain amount of pain. These are more precious than gold for you. Submit to the good pleasure of Jesus and remain always humble, peaceful, confident, meek, and recollected.

Now that you are gradually becoming detached from creatures, you still need to learn to detach yourself from self, since, from now on, the more you detach yourself from those around you and with whom you come in contact, the more will you incline towards yourself. You will be attached to self, will love self, and will cling tenaciously to the things that appeal to your tastes and ideas. Purify yourself more and more from all attachments, tastes, desires and affections that are not directly aimed at Jesus. You will do this if your interior life is characterized by meekness, humility, peace and calm. Our Lord will help you if you accustom yourself to live in holy union with Him in all that you do.

Turn in love also very often to Mary. Look on yourself as her child and have recourse to her in the troubles, temptations and embarrassments that come from without, and in your interior anguish. Speak to her about your joys and your pleasures, not in lengthy speeches, but, glancing at her with gentleness and love, use from time to time some word of affection.

I sent on Mr. Buisson’s trunk, but I have not yet received the hundred francs, which would come in very useful. It seems that the poor child continues to live in a state of uncertainty in the midst of Babylon. Ask Mary to take care of this most unhappy soul.

I have ceased for quite some time to count upon the person you mentioned, not that I did ever count very much on her. I don't know what you have found out about that good
person, but I take the occasion to tell you that you should not easily believe the evil that is spoken about others. Never believe what is founded on nothing but suggestions, conjectures or even probabilities. Only believe the evil when the fact is evident and you cannot deny it, but then believe only what is evident and nothing more. Do not think any further on these things unless you are obliged to do so. When you must consider these things, do not yield to displeasure, coldness or disgust with the people concerned, and do not let your feelings lead you to despise or ignore them, but rather let your heart be filled with charity for them. Remain at peace and, no matter what evil they may have done either to yourself or those dear to you, try to be favorably disposed to them.

Even when you act thus, you will often fail in charity by judging your neighbor too severely. You will probably say that I exaggerate in what I say. Well, in my own case it is perfectly true as I know from experience. I hope that God, in His divine mercy, may pardon my faults, as I detest them with all the sincerity of my heart.

Still, I want to give you a further bit of advice. Although you must be always gentle and charitable of heart and not indulge in judging your neighbor unfavorably, still, at the same time, when you do see something evil, or have solid grounds for suspecting such evil, you must be prudent. At such times be watchful lest your too great trustfulness and credulity allow harm to result to yourself or others. But while being on your guard against such people, do not, however, entertain feelings of harshness and lack of sympathy towards them. Do not be stiff and forbidding but let your heart be filled with a real, tender, sincere, love, a love in which there is no bitterness. Act like those physicians who have to come close to patients who are suffering from a contagious disease. They, while being full of attention for
the sick, take the necessary precautions to avoid becoming contaminated.

Sometimes, as in the case of Jansenists, you should flee from the person who might cause you harm. But it must be for reasons of prudence that you flee from them and not because they disgust you or cause you pain. In this way we shall unite the prudence of the serpent with the simplicity of the dove.

I do not think that you were at fault on that particular occasion with regard to what you told me about the person in question. But I use the occasion to warn you, because I feel that in this matter you are somewhat wanting. I also warn you to watch over your heart so that, in the case of the men at Argenteuil, you should not be glad to hear of the trouble they are in, and that you should not take satisfaction from knowing that their number has decreased since the time they launched their attacks on you. God has a right to punish them, but it is not for you to take satisfaction from that. I am not saying that you have, in fact, taken satisfaction from their discomfiture, but I wish to warn you not to do so because I want your soul to be wholly pure and holy before God.

You did not mention whether you sent my letter to Father Pierre in Rome. Send it to him immediately and do not wait until he returns. Do I not owe you some money?

(no signature)

P.S. I am sending you a letter for Miss Reck. Don’t bring it to her yourself and don’t let her know through whom it was sent. Post it immediately as it is urgent.
My dear child:

Father Schwindenhammer forgot to give me the letters which he got for me in Paris, and yours was one of them. I received it only yesterday.

Don't worry about my health; I am doing very well. Frequent and sometimes tiresome journeys over muddy roads keep me alive and do me much good. The remedy is a little severe for a lazy fellow who would like to remain always in his shell, but what can we do? We must not neglect our poor body; if it suffers a little, so much the better. It must contribute something in return for all that we do for it. The bottle which Father Tisserant gave me has done my stomach much good. For quite a while I was content just to look at it, and this was already something. We should proceed slowly when we have to take medicine. Later on I took some of it whenever I felt discomfort and when it was finished I got rid of the bottle. Does that satisfy you?

I would not like to be always stationed in the same place as you, for you would torment me too much with regard to the care of this poor body. Don't you know that when you plead its cause you are acting on behalf of the devil? If we gave the body all it asks, it would become very troublesome and proud. It is good that it should be ill at ease from time to time, for this will make it a little less demanding. Nevertheless, I can assure you that, apart from attacks of migraine, I am feeling very well, and even for the migraine I have a remedy which I take. All this will put your mind at ease.
I think that you are right in your suggestions about the extension to our house. I was of the same opinion myself and things are already arranged. The architect is coming to-morrow with a more detailed plan. We will first complete part of the plan and will finish it according as our needs require and our resources allow. We must be sparing in the manner in which we go ahead, since before we put up beautiful buildings, we must be sure that we have enough money for bread and potatoes.

I shall follow what you suggested and pray for guidance as to whether we should build at La Neuville or not. I do not think that this is an unhealthy place. We have been here now for three winters and no one but myself has been ill, and my illness is due to my delicate constitution and not to the climate. The only thing which would prevent me from building at La Neuville is that divine Providence might want to direct us to Paris. Since, at the moment, I do not see any opening in that direction, I cannot leave the house as it is, as we have not enough room and have no chapel. Besides, the house will never go to loss.

Our plan to gather here young Negroes so as to form and instruct them (as Father Schwindenhammer has probably told you) will always require a suitable house and garden. Only God knows what He wishes to do with us. I wish for nothing. My projects resemble the progress of a blind man. I am ready for anything divine goodness wishes of me, ready to remain in my uselessness and in the disregard in which I deserve to remain, but ready also to go forward as if I did something. I personally will never take the initiative. Pray that the divine will may be accomplished and that I may never put myself forward, but also that my cowardice may not hold me back when Divine Mercy asks painful things of me and things beyond my strength and
ability. Keep this matter secret. A work that is made known before the proper time is often doomed to failure.

I know the Convent of the Adoration in Rome. I used to go there almost every evening for Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. They have Benediction there every day and it is most edifying.

I was delighted with the way you acted towards the Jansenist. Be faithful, my dear child. Be strong in faith and in your loyalty to the divine Spouse. Don't worry too much about the health of people. Monsieur Dupont will not die before the time appointed by God. I don't think that he is at present practicing extraordinary mortifications. A retired and cloistered life and his present function do not suit him at the moment, since his character is not yet formed, but that will come. I know that Our Lord has given him great graces but I do not know the nature of these graces. I hope that these graces will not lie dormant in his soul.

I see from your letter that you are now less talkative and more reserved. This gives me great joy. Be reserved, calm, peaceful, humble and abandoned to the divine Spouse. Do not indulge in self-love, do not esteem yourself nor seek the esteem of others, but be modest, meek, and retiring. When you suffer or when you meet difficulties place them like precious stones in the depths of your soul. Plant there the Cross of Jesus. In the atmosphere of a love, a generosity of heart, and a devotedness that are founded on humility, self-forgetfulness, and renunciation of your own satisfaction, this Tree of Life will grow.

Jesus and Jesus alone must live in your soul, and He must live there on His most holy Cross. Be crucified with Him on that holy Cross.

May peace fill your soul.

(no signature)
My dear child:

Divine Providence so arranged it that I have not yet replied to your two nice letters.

I have just read an article about you in the "Univers", and I am glad that I had not written before this, since I now have an opportunity to speak to you about that article. The article is favorable to you throughout and I am afraid that it might tempt you to vainglory. I would rather that you be criticized than praised. Watch yourself well, my dear child, lest the enemy find you unprepared for his wiles.

I feel quite certain that you realize in the depths of your heart that you are not deserving of praise for all that you have tried to do for the love of your divine Spouse and for His glory. You know what a great honor and joy it is for you to have been able, by means of the remarkable relic which divine Providence deigned to make known through you, one of His poorest and most unworthy servants, to spread a most fervent devotion towards the divine Master. You are convinced that you did not merit that heavenly favor and that it was purely through His goodness that you were chosen as His unworthy and useless instrument. I know that you are conscious of your unworthiness and uselessness. You realize that you have been very unfaithful in the work entrusted to you by divine goodness, and that all the success is simply the result of God’s mercy on the souls which He desired to sanctify by that means. However, my dear child, this knowledge and conviction you have of your poverty, weakness and uselessness are not enough to safeguard you against the
danger that lies hidden under the words of praise which, in order to further the glory of God and the salvation of souls, the good journalist uses about you.

You know that you are nothing, that you are worthless and incapable of doing anything worthwhile, and that all the good that you find in yourself comes from God and belongs to Him alone, as do the good results of your good work. Still, some feelings of self-complacency, some satisfaction at the thought that God chose you in preference to others, might creep into your heart. You might be tempted to feel satisfied that men have at last acknowledged your contribution, that they esteem you, and are pleased with your sentiments of piety and your work. How great then the danger and how easily evil suggestions could slip into your heart.

Hide yourself from men and from yourself. Don’t assume an air of humility before others, but be humble in the depths of your soul. Prostrate yourself before the divine Jesus as would a poor beggar covered with rags who dares to appear before His majesty and work in His divine service. Acknowledge that you are unworthy to live in His holy presence. Nevertheless, while thus abasing yourself, you must retain great peace in your soul, and have a great love for the Beloved of your soul Who allows you to lie prostrate at His feet and accepts you as His poor and feeble servant, but also as His dear child and beloved spouse.

Oh, how unworthy you are and how much I desire to make you realize fully that unworthiness. I want you, at the same time, to have great peace and love, perfect and humble confidence, and abandonment into the arms of your Well-beloved. Ask Him, and ask Mary your good Mother to give you the grace of keeping always in mind that you are wretched, that you are nothing. Ask them that your attitude be one of love for and abandonment to the divine Master, and that they give you a desire to be forgotten, ignored, neglected and
LETTERS TO JENNY GUILLARME

despised and ill-treated by men. To be thus treated by men is more precious than to earn their praises and affection. The contempt of men closes the gates of your soul, and holds therein all the treasures of divine grace which the divine Savior wishes to pour into it. The praise of men and their esteem for you open all the doors of your soul and the few graces that you have are in danger of running out. But when men persecute, ignore and despise you, you will receive treasures of grace in great abundance. When they love and praise you, your graces will be few and of little value.

I have no news for you about the young person in whom you have taken a charitable interest. I wrote to her a few days ago but have not got an answer. I again recommend her to your charity and ask you to continue to take an interest in her. I feel sure that she will be a consolation to you and it will be a very good work to help such a soul who is so good.

I received a letter, I think at the beginning of August, from the good person whom Father de Regnier met some time ago; it is dated 29 July. I have not answered it since she did not give any address, nor did she even sign her name. She must feel hurt that she did not get an answer, so would you please offer her my apology. Only that Father de Regnier had spoken to me about her, I should not have known even what part of the country she comes from, since she marks her letter “City of Mary.” This soul is devout and good but she needs consolation.

I leave you to Jesus and Mary, and am in their holy charity,

Your most devoted servant,

FRANCIS LIBLEMANN

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My child:

I am now able to give you some news. The Trappist brother whom Father Jerome sent to us is doing well. We are pleased with him and if he continues as he has begun he will soon acquire the spirit of our Congregation and will be able to render service for the glory of God.

You may always write to me and explain all that you have on your conscience, and ask all the advice which you consider useful for your soul. No one opens or sees my letters, especially letters of direction. I sometimes show letters regarding the administration to others, but I always open them myself.

It is fortunate that you have many external activities. A retired life and one solely occupied with mental prayer would not suit you, and therefore always accept, with peace and love, whatever divine Providence sends you. All that God does is done well. He knows better than anyone else what you need and He will give it to you. May His Holy Name be blest!

You need activity but you must at the same time remain recollected interiorly, but this without strain. Do all things calmly and, while remaining humbly at the feet of Our Lord Jesus Christ, serve Him peacefully through helping those who seek your aid. You have a natural aptitude for an active life and it is necessary that you keep yourself occupied, but you should try to do things calmly. When you notice that you have allowed yourself to be carried away by external activity, do not be angry with yourself. Humble yourself in
the presence of God and quietly restore calm in your soul and peace before God.

I am not surprised that you have crosses. The one of Argenteuil will be with you as long as you live, or at least as long as you are connected with the devotion to the Sacred Tunic.

I was not aware that you expected to inherit a fortune. For yourself personally it would be better if you possessed nothing, but this does not apply in the case of the works of charity you have undertaken. I am sure that if Divine Providence gives you wealth, you will use it for the glory of the divine Master.

May the peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ and His holy Mother be with you and may divine love fill your soul.

Your most humble servant in Jesus and Mary,

Francis Libermann
Priest of the Holy Heart of Mary

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Letter Sixteen
Feast of St. Bartholomew
Vol. 7, p. 278
August 24, 1845
J. M. J.

My dear sister:

I let you down during my last journey. I sent you word that I was in Paris and asked you to come and see me, and when you came I was absent. I found your letter at my door and had to leave that same evening and had no time to see you before I departed. Since I had arranged to return very
soon I did not send you an excuse, but I have been delayed longer than I expected, and you had to wait until Wednesday. However, I know that you will not hold this against me and will be kind enough to come to see me at 7:00 A.M., on either Monday or Tuesday. I will appreciate it greatly if you do this.

Further, by coming you will be doing an act of charity to a sick man for I am a little indisposed. It is possible that you will have an opportunity of doing an even greater act of charity, for, seeing me you will have compassion on a poor sinner and will pray the good Master not to let my soul perish with the wicked and my life with men of blood, as we read in the Psalm. This I have always deserved and even more so now on account of my unprofitableness and constant infidelity.

Finally, I shall pray that you may do God's will with regard to the thing which, according to your letter, you wish to discuss with me.

In the meantime, I remain in Jesus and Mary,

Your wholly devoted servant,

Father Francis Libermann