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Unedited Letter of Father Libermann to M. Antoine Daveluy

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SPIRITAN PROFILES



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+ Ilkitch 629 Août 1836

Mon Bien Cher Frère.

Prejoignant nous de toute notre âme en d. S. J. Tous de ce qu'il lui a plu
de nous attirer à lui et de nous rendre tant aimés dans son amour
à dans les choses unique. De lui être agréables et de ne vivre que
pour lui et en lui. Tout que vous avez le désir, mon très cher,
vous n'avez qu'à vous résigner à rendre de très grandes actions de
grâce à notre bon et bien aimé Seigneur car c'est un espace
surprenante que la persévérance continuée dans le bonheur de le servir
L'objet de félicité au de nous holocauste sans nous plaindre n'est
pas de qu'on nous inquiète; Le S. on Dieu veut établir dans votre
âme une vertu solide et fondamentale, il ne faut pas vous inquiéter
ni vous avec les apparences ou la visibilité de son amour, contentez
vous d'un avoir la réalité. A je suis persuadé à la plus grande
gloire de Dieu et la plus grande joie de mon cœur, qu'il existe en
votre âme un véritable et durable amour, et cela vous
paraîtra dans le désir sincère et véritable au vous vivre, d'être parfaitement
agréable à Dieu de vous consacrer en toute chose (de lui rendre)
plus qu'un lui et pour lui; je suis même persuadé que dans les moments
les plus faibles de votre âme qui sont les plus, vous avez toujours
travaillé à travailler consciencieusement à y arriver. Quant à cette vertu
de félicité qui est en vous, dont je me fais une idée très claire. Je ne
sais pas cependant en définir. Elle réside simple uniquement
dans les sens et est tout simplement un effet de votre caractère.
C'est pour vous un signe de grâce et de peine et de travaux, mais
elle ne vous rend point du tout capable devant Dieu et n'influe
aucunement sur le fait de votre intérieur. Il faut tenir ferme
dans votre amour véritable et unique pour Dieu seul et sans distraction
de ne vivre que pour lui et de lui être uniquement agréable. Il
faut vous maintenir fortement dans la chose que vous avez
entrepris dans votre intérieur pour la sanctification de votre âme.
A posséder un union intime la plus parfaite possible avec son Seigneur
Je ne puis grand vain de ne pas vous l'absorber au désespoir
quand la félicité et l'insensibilité, visible des sens ne veulent vous
persuader que vous allez en arrière que vous n'avez pas l'amour de
Dieu dans l'âme. Que votre volonté molle dans le moment
Il faut négocier toutes les grâces comme des trésors de

LETTER OF FATHER LIBERMANN TO FATHER ANTHONY DAVELUY

N.B. We add a part of an unedited letter of Fr Libermann's found in the archives of Amiens, addressed to M. Daveluy, seminarian, who was later to become Vicar Apostolic in Korea and to be martyred there; he was canonized recently by Pope John Paul II with a group of Korean martyrs.

Illkirch, 29 August 1836

My dear Friend,

We should be thoroughly happy in our Lord Jesus Christ. He has been pleased to draw us to himself and uphold us all this time in his love and in the longing to please him, to live only in him and for him. As long as this desire stays with you, dear friend, you can be happy; be thankful to our good and well-beloved Lord, since continual perseverance in this blessed desire is a special grace. Do not let the sort of coldness or carelessness you complain of disturb you. God is trying to establish your soul in solid and fundamental virtue. Do not worry about not having the signs or feelings of his love, be satisfied to have the reality. And I am quite convinced that a spark of this aimable love does exist in your soul, to the greater glory of God and the greatest joy of my own heart. It will make its appearance in the sincere, genuine desire you experience to be fully pleasing to God, exercising self-denial in everything and living from now on only in him and for him. I am even sure that in the most upsetting moments of the past year you have always tried seriously to reach that stage.

As for that kind of coldness you experience, I can understand it quite clearly but I cannot define it for all that. It is a thing of the senses only, simply a consequence of your char-

acter. It is a source of trial for you, of trouble and concern, but it makes you in no way blameworthy before God and in no way does it influence the heart of your interior life. Hold firm in genuine and pure love for God alone and in your desire to live for him alone and be pleasing to him. Maintain with vigour what you have undertaken in your interior life for the sanctification of your soul and for a more intimate union with its well-beloved Jesus, indeed the most perfect possible. Be careful not to give into discouragement when the coldness and deadness of your senses try to tell you that you are going backwards, that you do not have God's love in your soul, that your will is softening in self-denial. Regard all these thoughts as temptations and keep pressing forward. Our Lord is with you, and the Blessed Virgin protects you. Count on that. Just take precautions not to fall into habits and routine, but accept those thoughts in gentleness and meekness of heart and place all your trust in Jesus and Mary. It gave me great joy, my dear friend, to hear you are in peace in the midst of these little attacks; seeing the trust in God that fills you I gave thanks for it to our well-beloved Lord and the Blessed Virgin.

The director you have chosen will be helpful, and the circumstances that detain you at Amiens are apt for keeping the love of God in you throughout your vacation. They make it more easy for you to live in peace and recollection and they enable you to have a good director all this time, who will, I hope, prove of good use to you. Take good care of your interior life, my dear friend. I believe God has merciful plans for you. If you persevere thus during your vacation, you will return with your heart full of courage and your will more decided than ever. Since everything in you will be well prepared, God will meet no obstacle, at least he will meet nothing very grave or numerous. Then his grace will act fully, he will shape and mould you according to his good pleasure and the loving plans he has for you.

In the end you will bring back to the seminary in Paris that touch of interior firmness and that stability in which your soul will not stumble on the holy ways along which our dear Lord is leading you . . .

EXTRACT FROM BISHOP DAVELUY'S LETTER
on the occasion of Father Libermann's death

I had close connections with M. Libermann for many years. . . . I always regarded him whom you mourn as favoured with special graces, and I still bless the providence that gave him to me for tutelary angel, for direction in spiritual affairs. At that time his words did not fall to the ground, and he was even kind enough to put many things in writing, over and above a number of letters he wrote to me with an altogether fatherly solicitude. But when I was called by God to leave France and come to this country, where we can bring next to nothing with us, these precious letters went the way of my other papers that I did not think I could keep.

A. Daveluy

Editor's Note...- 18 of those letters were recently given to the Congregation by the family, at the time of the canonization.

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