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15. On the evening of his Ordination

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On the evening of his Ordination

To Samson Libermann¹

Francis Libermann has just been ordained priest. He had thought that this would never take place because his epilepsy was a canonical impediment to ordination. In this letter, he wants to share the great joy of the event with his brother Samson, his wife and all his family.

"Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo"

Amiens, 18th September, 1841

My dear brother and sister,

I want to tell you about the great mercy and goodness of our Lord Jesus Christ towards an unworthy servant, who does not even deserve to pronounce his holy Name. This morning, I was ordained a priest. God alone knows what he has granted me on this wonderful day, for it is not possible for man or angel to conceive it. You must all pray that it may be for his greater glory, for the salvation and sanctification of souls and the building up of the Church that I have been raised to the priesthood. Ask the Lord that he may sacrifice me for his glory, for it is to this that I must consecrate myself from now on.

I shall say my first Mass next Tuesday at seven, so please join your intentions to mine at that time; I shall offer you all to the Blessed Trinity as part of this wonderful sacrifice. At seven on Saturday, I will celebrate Mass at Our Lady of Victories in Paris, at the altar of the Archconfraternity. Unite your intentions with mine; I will remember you all. Let us also think of our non-Christian relatives and all lukewarm Christians. On Sunday, the Mass will be for you alone. It will be sometime between 7 and 8 o'clock and I shall celebrate it in a chapel that is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. Will Marie please pass

¹ N.D. II, pp. 497-500

on this news to Mr and Mrs Halé and ask them which will be a suitable day for me to say Mass for their intentions. I'll write to them in a week or two.

The bishop of Amiens received me with great love and kindness. I had dinner with him yesterday and he will give us all possible assistance.

I have visited our house which is very beautiful. It will be large enough for fourteen or fifteen people. A Brother is already installed there to keep watch over the furniture. We will also have a small chapel. Some good nuns have given us a beautiful statue of the Blessed Virgin; it is made of wood and is gilded and painted in natural colours. We also have some candelabra. The nuns are making vestments for us and have got us some furniture, some of which was free and some we paid for. The good Lord is very kind to us and has provided things beyond our expectations. I must put all my confidence in his goodness.

I forgot to tell you that we shall have a piece of land that will serve as a vegetable garden and access to some woods where we will be able to stroll. The air is very healthy.

This will have to suffice for the time being because I have to finish now. May the love of Our Lord and his Holy Mother be with you all.

Yours in their love,

Francis Libermann, priest

My address is La Neuville, near Amiens. It is about twenty minutes from Amiens and is a very small, isolated village.

Pauline, Caroline and Marie will have to be patient for a bit longer. I can't write to them now, but I will do so later, or

rather, I will wait for them to write to me, as we have agreed amongst ourselves. Adding a few words to a letter written to their papa would not mean very much – it would merely show that I have remembered them and I hope that I don't have to prove such a thing, especially if my proof consists of just a little word! However, I won't be satisfied with one small word from them! I want a proper letter because I want to help them as much as I can as they are all very dear to me, as they well know.

So never be satisfied with just a little compliment or remembrance. I want letters! Don't let them think they will disturb or annoy me, but let them write to their hearts' content. This was the oral arrangement with Marie and Caroline – they made a promise to write. I didn't have the chance to speak about it to Pauline, so, I do so now and urge her to promise the same thing! Francis and Elisa are too young (and so is Henri) to write a letter all by themselves. I hope they can write something in the letters of their papa. I'll not forget them and always love them! I promised Elisa to pray for her and to offer the Holy Sacrifice once for her intention, that she might obtain the grace of overcoming her faults and may learn to love the good Lord greatly. As for Leo, if he is very good, I will bring him something nice when I return. But he must be obedient to his papa, his mama, and must also listen to his little godmother and Caroline.

May the peace of the Lord be with you all.