

**Brother André Mottais letters  
recently gifted to the Congregation of Holy Cross  
by the Mottais family**

*The Letters were translated by Brother George Klawitter, C.S.C.  
February 2021*

**1. Brother André to his parents**

December 5, 1820 from Ruillé

My very dear family,

I have taken the liberty of writing to you because I have the time to: our house servant came to Laval the 6<sup>th</sup>. I am still in terrific health and I want nothing more than to learn that the same is true for you.

I hope that you received a letter not long ago which should have been dated November 27, but which I forgot to date. You know that the letter told you to respond as quickly as possible because I am anxious to know about everyone's health. You're no longer in the dark about mine. As I write this letter, I am also writing one to the curé in Larchamp, who is aware of my situation. I am well-suited to Ruillé. I already have five confreres and many more are supposed to come. I'm not saying hello to our relatives since I told you to do so in a previous letter. I believe that I will be exempt [from military service], but I'm not yet sure. I urge you not to worry about it. I hope that I will be able to teach little Joseph, my dear brother, when the time comes. I have great plans for him, if the good God wishes. I have similar fondness for the others, and I will always be faithful to you all, my very dear family.

Papa, Mama, Jean, François, Joseph, Jeannette, and Marie, my sister-in-law, I wish all of you a blessed year, perfect health, peace, unity, harmony, calm hearts, joy in God, prosperity in all your affairs, and all that you could desire. I wish you the blessings of heaven, the fruitfulness of earth, and paradise at the end of our days. I wish the same for my godmother and her husband. All that we could possibly desire rests in God. It is heaven, my dear family, that we should desire. All blessings are promised to us, and it is up to us to get them. God so wills it. So let us work at acquiring them for the glory of God.

Amen.

*André Mottais*

André Mottais, pupil at Ruillé

P.S. I will write you in February.

## 2. Brother André to his father

To my father Mottais at Pontperrin, to read privately

July 25, 1821 Le Mans

To the greater glory of God.

My dear Papa, my dear Mama,

Read both to my brothers and sister.

Thank you for sending me everything I need. I wish you hadn't sent me money - I'm past needing it, and you probably need it more than I do! These gentlemen are obliged to give me some since it's they who direct me - a result of their goodness.

Up to now I haven't said much to you about my vocation. I want your advice. Soon I will be received. You've known for a long time that it seems that Divine Providence has destined me to instruct souls. We've already sensed in this regard the good effects of my being exempted [from military service]. It's God who gives us this rare grace. Only little Joseph remains [not exempt]. I believe that Providence will give us the means to have him avoid this danger when it comes.

This foundation is new, and consequently they've picked me out to be the first teacher, i.e., to instruct the young brothers and perhaps superiors for a later time. Don't believe that I've merited this, but it is what it is. We'll take three vows: chastity, obedience, poverty. Our clothing will be a religious habit, but I don't know what else. It hasn't been decided yet. That'll happen in August at the priests' retreat.

I can't give you temporal help: the curé [Dujarié] told me that would depend upon the command of the superior. But if I can't help you with material goods, I can help you with my prayers at the foot of the altar where I will never forget you. Remember, my dear family, that these spiritual gifts are more valuable than material gifts. Jesus always loved the poor and gave us good example. Let's say, "Lord, bless the little that we have, and we will be happier wearing our poor clothes than kings under their purple." I will be able, I believe, to get education for my brothers and sisters. When a Brother gets to Larchamp, you'll have to put Joseph under his care, because as soon as you'll get a Brother, you'll see good results. I will tell the Brother to take good care of the little one [Joseph].

You'll be happy to see me serving God and staying in the diocese; then if I get sick, the Community will take care of me. If I were simply a teacher at Larchamp, would I be able to help you? I would only have to fall sick to be dependent on you with no help from Ruillé.

I'll write to you and visit now and then. After I've gotten the religious habit, I'll give you the clothes I have now if Rev. Dujarié permits it clothes that wouldn't be useful to me anymore. Don't give this letter to anyone and write me later on. The other letter is no secret. Well, my family, let's hug tenderly. I'm praying for you; pray that God will fulfill his plans for me.

Amen.

### 3. Brother André to his parents

August 28, 1821 From Mayenne

My very dear father, my very dear mother,

If I seem in a hurry to write to you, it's to get some information on the state of your health and that of my brothers and sister. As far as mine goes, it's good at present; my eyes are a little sore, but that didn't come from lack of medicine; they don't hurt any more.

I miss your good judgment, but alas, I'm feeling your pain. But, as you know, God gives us all the good things we have so why not accept the bad things He sends us? Let's endure patiently as did the saintly man Job; let pain just reinforce virtue in us. Let's be like sea rocks that can't be shaken by winds, storms, and waves. But when we see afflicted people, let's think that God has plans for us and is still thinking about us. My dear father and mother, I assure you of my respect and most tender obedience. Blessings on my brother John and his wife, on my brother Francis and my sister Jeanette, and my brother Joseph. This last one, I hope, is not being naughty but rather obeying Papa and Mama, his godfather, and others.

My dear brothers and sister, always obey our father and mother; let nothing prevent you from following their orders lest God be offended. Oh my dear children, obedience is a beautiful virtue especially in children who obey their father and mother. Alas! how sorry I am that I didn't obey them even more in my youth; don't forget this very important obligation. Stick to it.

Please give my best to my godmother and her husband Marin and to Julian Hameau, to everyone in their house, and to our Labbé relatives and to Francis Fournier and others.

I don't need anything right now as I might visit on September 8 because Mr. Lefoulon will perhaps be going to Larchamp and will take my singing teacher. But that's not definite.

My dear father and my dear mother, I'm finished talking to you right now. I love you with all my heart as well as my brothers and sister. I wish you the best of health and send you my best wishes. I wish heavenly blessings for you and a good harvest.

*André Mottaiss*

André Mottaiss Mayenne school

#### **4. Brother André to his parents**

December 23, 1821 Ruillé

To the greatest glory of Jesus and Mary

My very dear parents,

I can't convey the joy I got from your letter. I read it and then reread it with new pleasure. I'm delighted to see that you're in good health and God has repaid your hard work. I hope He will repay mine too because I'm now getting big blessings, but I greatly fear I'm not worthy of them. I'm in charge of seven novices, and it soon could be a burden. You're looking at the third brother in the Congregation. I can't send you my clothes.

My dear parents, it's with new satisfaction that the new year will reiterate the hopes and vows I made to Heaven for your good health. I hope the year be for you, as for me, a year of blessings. I wish the same to our Labbé relatives, my godmother, her husband, and her son Julian.

Please know the sincere attachment and deep respect with which I have the honor of hugging you with all my heart, my very dear parents.

Your very humble and very obedient son,



A.M. (brother)

P.S. Please offer my very humble respect to Mr. Loro. I ask for your prayers as well as those of my relatives. Little Joseph will be taught for free

#### **5. Brother André to his parents**

May 29, 18922 Paris

My very dear parents,

With great sadness I heard about the death of my sister-in-law. I understand the pain that you are going to feel surely because of the little children she left behind. But no matter, you have to let go of the sadness because it's only what God wanted. Take it as coming from His all-powerful hand and bless it when it hits because it's a sign that the Savior still has plans to give us mercy. Be assured of it.

You ask me what I think about my brother John leaving his farm to become a carpenter. My dear parents, make of it what you want, but as I have said to you before, I considered before God that you already had enough trouble and worries, and you in some way exhausted yourself in making him self-sufficient and that didn't work, as they say. But that's not all.

You would not be satisfied if he wanted to leave his farm and, since it was always his idea to learn this trade, I believe it's the wisest decision you could take.

Oh, my dear brother, be careful to be an honest man all the days of your life. Know that there is nothing more important than your own health and that of your children. So check out the obstacles that will come up in the trade because if you see yourself falling in with bad company, you'd be better to try a trade with less danger in it. What I'm saying is don't stop doing what you believe will be good for you, but I believe you will overwhelm yourself with a burden that would weigh you down. You've surely seen that I wasn't aware of this matter when I wrote to you.

Please offer my respects to my uncle from Andouillé. Tell him please that I'm embarrassed not to have thanked him for his generous gift.

Father [Dujarié] has sent me for awhile to the Christian Brothers' novitiate. You ask if I will soon see you. I don't know if I will because I have to practice mortification. But if Father [Dujarié] wishes, I would go.

Let's join together in fervent prayer. I am sincerely with the deepest respect, my dear parents, your very humble and obedient son,

*Brother André*

Brother André

P.S. My respects please to the parish priest and his vicar.

## **6. Brother André to his parents**

December 23, 1825 St. Denis-D'Orques

My very dear parents,

The moment we've been long waiting for is very near. In one month I hope you'll have me with you; my joy grows the closer I get to Larchamp.

M. Dujarié, our venerable father, sent me out on my feast day as a school inspector to visit classes in the places where we have Brothers; a week ago I went through Le Mans. I'm at Saint-Denis d'Orques, eight leagues from Le Mans, right now. I'll spend the Christmas holidays here. This job in which Providence has put me is important, but at the same time difficult and painful. Pray to God to come to my aid because I really need it. What bothers me most in this mission is my frail health, that I have to fight against continually.

I had planned to write to the Larchamp parish priest, but I don't have time. Offer him my very humble respect, and give Brother Vincent my best wishes. I will console my brother Francis when I get there. Tell him I'm really feeling his pain, which is also yours. Tell him that the Lord, who sent it to him, can heal it and He will, I'm sure.

May he have great faith in God, and God will not leave him in this state. I've prayed a long time for his healing, that he will commend himself to the Holy Virgin three times a day, to St. Louis Gonzaga and to St. Stanislaus Kostka.

Good by—I love you with all my heart.

*Brother André*

Brother André

## **7. Brother André to his parents**

March 13, 1826 Ruillé

My dear parents,

I finally got back to Ruillé on March 10. I'm anxious to let you know that. I'm fine and my trip was much better at the end than it was at the beginning. Our dear Brothers waited anxiously for my return, and I hurried to get back. I can say I saw Ruillé with much joy. This joy was no less than what I experienced when I saw Larchamp again.

I offer my best to my brothers and sister and sister-in-law as well as my two Mérienne cousins. Don't forget, please, to mention me to the Larchamp priests, especially the pastor whom I thank and offer my deepest respect.

I saw our good Father Dujarié with a joy I can't express.

Accept my deep respect by which I am, my dear parents, your very humble and obedient son,

*Brother André*

Brother André

## **8. Brother André to his father**

June 25, 1827 Ruillé-sur-Loir

To Mr. Mottais at Pontperrin, in the Larchamp parish, near Ernée, Mayenne

Papa, mama,

You're worried at not receiving any news from me, according to Brother Vincent who told me so. I told you in my New Year's letter last December that I was going to be around Larchamp soon after Easter.

But as you know man proposes and God disposes—I found myself forced to spend Easter at Ruillé for many reasons too numerous to mention. I set out after Lent to visit our dear Brothers in the diocese of Blois and Tours. A month after I left, I came down with a sore foot that I had to cure by bed-rest. At first I didn't want to stay in bed, but if I hadn't my cure could have taken longer.

Now retreat approaches, and in two months or rather after two months we'll have the time of our greatest workload. You see there's hardly any time to travel to our foundations. Nevertheless, I believe I can probably soon leave for Mayenne and Larchamp. But it's impossible to count on that because I don't know if it'll happen. So if I don't write you, I think I'll see you before the feast of St. John [June 24].

I'm well aware of the boy Marin Mérienne's accident. I'm consoled only by the thought that everything that happens is in God's plan. So Providence destined him to be a soldier—it's his duty and the Lord will be with him.

My brother Joseph isn't writing to me any more, to me who takes so much pleasure in reading his letters. I think constantly about my brothers and sister. As far as my sister goes, I'll tell you what I think about her when I see you. What I'll tell you will scarcely please her, no more than it pleases me. To end, I tell you that those who serve God will live happily and not much fear being surprised by death.

I greet you with much respect and love you in Jesus-Christ our Savior.

*Brother André*

Brother André

P.S. Yesterday, on the feast of St. John, I received communion thinking about Papa and Mama and those who bear their name in our family. I learned of the death of our Mottais cousin. My respect and best wishes to everyone as usual. I hug all my brothers and sister, etc.

## **9. Brother André to his parents**

September 1, 1828 Ruillé-sur-Loir

My dear Papa and my dear Mama,

I got back to Ruillé in good health, thanks be to God. On August 9 I was a bit tired because I had covered the diocese on foot and I got as far as Saumur after being with you. But I was made to bathe my whole body on my return so that I felt as healthy and happy as a fish in the river. Retreat started eleven days later, giving me much work to do, but it's finally over and life returns to normal in our establishments.

Our superior asked me for news before I had given him yours; I gave him your best wishes and he was happy to get them. You gave me such a welcome that I often think happily about it, and I love you more than ever, nor will I forget you in my prayers, and my thoughts turn often to you.

Government affairs aren't going well and haven't for a month; and I think they're going to get worse. We always are afraid because of our religious beliefs. The government tells us nothing—no more than usual.

Bother Joseph Bourdon came back to Ruillé for the retreat. He's definitely staying with us and no longer wants to leave his vocation. He's destined for the Ruillé boarding-school that we're going to open.

I'm still resolved to give up my life for Jesus-Christ, if given the chance, I hope that God will give me the grace to go to heaven soon.

I hug all of you with my whole heart and ask God to preserve you for eternal life.

*Brother André*

Brother André

## **10. Brother André to his parents**

September 15, 1829 Ruillé-sur-Loir

My dear parents,

I received your letter last Wednesday. I recognized the handwriting as that of Brother Flavian Manceau. We were in the middle of our retreat which just ended. Father Thomas preached with another missionary. They were new to the ten priests who preach to us and hear our confessions, and we had three Masses a day in our St. Joseph Chapel. I think God really blessed us during those prayerful days, and I never have seen our Brothers so happy as they appeared to be with us. I learned sadly that Papa is not feeling well, and I pray to God for his recovery. I'm sending you some books for the fifty francs you gave me for this purpose. Brother Morice left them at my godfather's in Andouillé, returning what he had to leave for you at St. Germain. I still believe that you won't refuse the small amount I've asked for and that you promised me 30 to 36 francs. I won't tell you what I've used them for because I hope you already know. I love you with all my heart.

I really want Papa to get better, and I wish good things for all of you. I'm going to give Brother Flavian his clothes, and when you write to tell me that he got them, you can ask him to give me the news you have. When I write a letter, as soon as it's finished, I start to write thirty-six more per day.

Your totally loving son,

*André*

André

P.S. My best to everybody, especially to the soldier on leave, Marin Merienne. I'm really happy that he got this break because it will make his parents happy.

## **11. Brother Andre to his parents**

May 12, 1832 Ruillé-sur-Loir

My dear papa and my dear mama,

I had begun a letter to you when yours arrived. So I'm not forgetting you any more than you are forgetting me. The time of God's anger that we are entering obliges me more than ever to remember you and the good of your souls. Yes, your complete conversion and a firm determination to do good works to gain heaven are in my prayers every day. My love for your souls and the real fear I have that one of you or one in your house may lose his soul. It seems to me that I'll be ready to suffer all kinds of torments rather than see you damned. Moreover, I am firmly convinced that I'll get from my good Mother the Holy Virgin and St. Joseph what I ask so ardently for the six of you.

On your part, pray and everything will go well with fervent prayer repeated frequently when times get toughest. The Holy Spirit, who knows how to help in secret, will tell you everything you have to do.

I wrote to you on February 13 for many reasons: the first being to warn you about the trouble that the thing would have brought you regarding my little brother. I think that after the advice I gave you that you will have set aside your concerns and leave this affair in God's hands. We won't talk about the thing that took place this year.

We're rightly concerned about cholera. You aren't unaware, no doubt, of the havoc it's brought already to twenty Departments. They tell me it's in Tours and many people have died. Apparently this information is true. Tours is ten leagues from Ruillé and about forty-three leagues from Larchamp.

This cruel sickness came into France at the end of March. It started in Paris in the middle of a big hoopla, I mean in the middle of a profane celebration like a comic play or a ball where there were lots of people. One guy collapsed and had to be carried home. Thus God often punishes those who wish to take part in wild parties that He abhors. There were days when six or seven hundred people died every day in Paris, but now only sixty are dying per day, which is more than enough.

There are about 700,000 people in Paris. The papers are saying there are 15,000 dead from cholera, making one in every forty-six. There are 2400 people in Larchamp—if fifty die, it would be comparable to the number in Paris. They are saying that more have died in Paris than the newspapers are reporting. Some folks writing from Paris say more than 22,000 have died. But you know how people exaggerate.

There are two kinds of cholera—severe and light. The light variety does not bring death. One of our Brothers here at Ruillé had it. He had a fever. He was contorted. He had a sour stomach and vomited. But he got better after three days.

The severe kind of cholera that causes death generally starts with weakness throughout the body, then vomiting, stomach pains, and cold feet. With the sick stomach, dizziness and a ravaging thirst. As soon as the sickness appears, one has to go to bed, wrapped up in linen sheets or something else to warm you up as much as possible. You also have to put a hot brick or bottle of hot water on the feet making the sick man so hot that his shirt becomes drenched in sweat quickly—if possible. It's a good idea to rub the sick man's feet rapidly without baring them. Some make a poultice of curly mint, thyme, and sage boiled together in water, and apply it to the belly as hot as possible. The poultice should be put between two pieces of linen the size of a pewter dish. You must not give cold water to the patient to drink, which could cause a quick death. If he's thirsty, you must boil for one minute a handful of pennyroyal or chamomile blossoms, which is called carmomire, in a pint of water, and give him a glass or two of this very hot herbal tea to drink. It takes four people to cure a cholera patient—note this carefully—two to give the treatment I just indicated for the sick man, one to find a priest, and one to find the doctor.

There are many remedies I could point out to you, but you may know them already. The good Sisters, especially Sister Felicity, will help you.

To preserve yourself from cholera, take care not to get cold too quickly when you go out, don't drink cool water when you're hot, not even right now in summer. Water a little hot and not cool won't hurt you. Don't put your bare feet on cool wet ground, especially in the morning when you're getting up, and don't drink cold milk. Put your feet in hot water now and then, but never in cold water, and after eating don't bathe for at least three hours.

Take care to wear white and clean linen, and don't have fertilizer or manure at the stable door nor in your courtyard. At Ruillé they take the greatest precautions about that so as not to let sickness get into the wrong places.

Use the doctors, medicines, and precautions indicated. But we also have to pray to the Lord who holds everything in His hands and who is both doctor and medicine. This sickness is the scourge of God. The French are devouring each other like wolves. God comes with his flail to separate them. The French have put water in their wine so it's proper they drink it such as it is. The Lord is only beginning to punish them, and already they are being caught off guard. They've worked on Sundays, blasphemed the name of the Lord, decried religion, priests, so now they have to pay up, and it's really about time. Now let's talk about other things.

You undoubtedly know that Abbé Simon Fournier was just about killed by a bullet from a soldier who fired at him and at our Brother Stephen at St. Denis d'Orques. There were three bullets in the gun. One pierced the back of our cousin's habit—God punished him as a result.

In the Duchy of Moderna in Italy there were so many earthquakes that many towns were swallowed up and disappeared. The Moderna Grand Duke told the people to see God's hand in these catastrophes because God was mad at them.

The person who writes for you to me doesn't know how to write a long letter or doesn't take the time. That's why when you wish to write to me give her the enclosed bank-note and she will respond to me without your having to let her see my letter.

Remember that there are two kinds of cholera, severe which makes you cold and is dangerous, and the gentler kind which makes you hot rather than cold.

I end my letter by wishing all of you good health, and you can send me your good wishes too. I continue to pray for you. I love you and hug you, father, mother, brothers, sister, nephew, and niece, and send my regards as is customary.

Your totally devoted son,

*André*

André

## **12. Brother André to his parents**

September 9, 1832

My dear parents,

I'm using our Brother Ansène, who is visiting our Mayenne Brothers, to write you a few words. I wrote in July to let you know your letter made me happy, but I still have some concern about my brother Joseph: I don't know if he has been definitely exempted [from military service] by his [lottery] number. This year, last month we had a general retreat which was perfect, since we hadn't had one since 1829 because of the fear we live in.

Missionaries from Laval did it for use. We're left, thank God, with resolve to serve the Savior more faithfully than ever, even to death. Oh, if you only knew how much grace we've received and how much I wish the same for you. I believe that if you receive as much as I, you will be better off than I.

Since Easter God has given me very great blessings, such as I've never had. He blessed me more in a short time than I've ever been blessed in my whole life. I dare not say longer. I'm ashamed of these favors. Help me in sincerely thanking God for the grace of being born in a Christian country and of Catholic parents, and of being instructed by good priests for my First Communion. It's true that at that time I was bad and still am. But not to worry? If I don't cooperate with God, I won't gain anything. Yes, I think Him above all, and I want to thank Him always for the many favors I don't know about, having heard Father Richard's sermons at Larchamp in 1818 and being inspired to change my life to save my soul, to finally leave the world and consecrate myself to Him in the religious life.

Oh, happy state where He put me in His great mercy and where He fills me with grace so I can fulfill my obligations perfectly and become a man like to the heart of his bounteous God.

Then let's serve the Lord, my dear parents—when we serve well, there are no longer pains and afflictions. All becomes peaceful because He mellows all that seems rough and disagreeable. I hope you will always be very faithful in putting yourselves under the protection of the Very Holy Virgin, St. Joseph, and the Holy Angels, and to honor them by good deeds. Then you will be assured of getting their help. You have already undoubtedly had this experience. I know I have.

My little cousin Blot from Andouillé just wrote me a letter in his own handwriting, and I'll respond. It seems his parents are fine. The summer was very dry, and I myself saw on my trip that rain didn't fall in some areas and that many rural parts were ravaged by hail. At St. Denis-d'Anjou the grape vines especially were stripped of their grapes, fruit was ripped off trees, windows in houses were broken, birds were killed. Losses were great, and I believe up to more than 200,000 francs. I wish you all good health.

I hug you tenderly, and I am your devoted son and brother,

*André*

André

I'm not telling you anything about political affairs because I don't know anything, and I'm not following them, so that's that. I'm really sorry my little nephew Jean couldn't come to the boarding school at Ruillé. You haven't spoken to me about Michel Rimbart. I ask for your prayers. I pray for you every day.

There's lots of rye and wheat all over here, as well as apples, but there won't be much wine around Ruillé because of the frost and hail. I think it was pretty dry around Sarazin and you didn't get much rain. Nevertheless, accept it all. I'll be happy to get news from you when you can send it

### **13. Brother André to his parents**

JMJ

Community of the Brothers of St. Joseph  
Le Mans

September 16, 1837

My dear parents,

I'm responding without delay to your lovely letter of September 10. I didn't receive the one that Mister de Montaudain should have brought to Le Mans. Our Father Superior had given me permission to spend a week with you, and I had already planned to leave on August 12, two days after our students leave, when I got hit by sickness with horrible headaches and terrible vomiting. The doctor was consulted and concluded that I was worn out by too much work, and he made me rest. Our Father Superior told me that since it was so, I had to give up my trip and could only concentrate on regaining my health before the retreat. I figured that God had done this to give you and me a chance for sacrifice, that it would be more pleasing to Him and more meritorious to us by not having the satisfaction of being together. I'm happy that God thus showed His wishes, and I have the same joy now as if I were going to see you.

You will say that I can undertake my plan later since the boarders are not returning until October 6. I swear that my health wouldn't be an obstacle because all will be well. I just asked Father Moreau about this and he persuaded me that since special duties he is assigning me in the house are necessary for good order to get ready for the students at our new building on October 6, it would be best to postpone my trip to see you until next year. Let's accept this and not lose the Lord's blessing.

Our Superior is truly a man of God, inspired in great works that he's doing for the glory and support of religion. This year we built a new building. Every day there is a horde of all kinds of workers. The task is huge.

I have the honor to give my respect to the parish priest and the vicar at Larchamp and beg them to come see everything happening at Le Mans.

I ask the same of Father Lory. These priests will admire a pump which brings water throughout the building from the cellar to the roof, furnishes water to the corridors and runs into the cooking pots, the boilers, and pans in the kitchen, all done by turning a wheel in the cellar. They will also see stoves for five great cooking pots, each holding a half busse, two ovens for roasting meat, fruit, a slab on which one can fricassee eggs or lots of other things, all heated at one time by a single fire hidden in the middle of this economical cooking stove. Thus we can cook for four hundred people at once.

I thank Mister Laury for the trouble he takes to do your letters, and I send good wishes to his wife and his mother. I wish that all of my relatives continue to pray to God for me. I believe their prayers are a great source of help to me.

I'm also sure to pray that we will be united in God with one heart, each praying for each other, praying for all. That'll give us courage for the moment of death when it comes, frightening away all sin. We regret before God and for God everything we've done wrong. Let's place our joy in God and do our jobs. Let's love everyone, even those who do evil to us. Let's do everything in the sight of God and frequent the sacraments to purify ourselves of faults. Let's believe that in being this way, we'll be happy in this life and the next.

I'm not saying this to preach to anyone in particular but to encourage us to serve God and to work for our salvation. I speak from conviction and according to heart-felt feelings, because I don't think you can fault what I'm saying here, which I feel deeply. Thinking about my parents' welfare occupies my thoughts almost all day and all night. I absolutely wish to see you all sanctified and avoid hell. I would be inconsolable if I knew that any of them marched to his doom, and I would like to give all my blood to have him avoid such a fate.

I have to end this long letter and tell you your health concerns me much, and if I weren't afraid of postage, which costs you a lot, I would have news from you more often.

I respect you and love you with all my heart and am your son and brother,

*Brother André*

Brother André

You're telling me about fruit. There isn't much here, but wine will be abundant. I'm happy about your good harvest, and I hope that God will give you good weather to gather it.

Our old superior Father Dujarie, whom we call our Father Founder, is with us. He's doing well, but he can't walk and sometimes he slips into second childhood. He's content and happy. You couldn't ask for more.

#### **14. Brother André to his parents**

JMJ

May 6, 1838

Community of the Brothers of St. Joseph  
Notre-Dame de Ste-Croix  
Le Mans

May 6, 1838

My very dear parents,

After my return to Mayenne, I went to Alexain, and from there I returned to Le Mans on Tuesday. On my arrival my dear boarders came out to throw themselves around my neck. I swear that I was touched by their friendly gestures that they gave me at the time. I returned their affection.

I needed to return to Sainte-Croix to renew my piety because my trip dissipated my soul. To recapture what I had lost, I got up at 4 AM and went to bed at 10 PM.

Being in the big dormitory in the middle of these young students who sleep happily in deep silence, I find time to pray, to read, and to meditate on eternal truths.

It's then that I realize again the need to pray for myself, for all of you, and for all people on earth because Jesus Christ died for us, and everyone can enter the ranks of the saints and praise God in eternity. Let me recall continually that I am always near the guardian angels of our dear boarders and enter like them into the presence of God with the praise they give Him constantly.

Let's serve God with humility and lowly feelings ourselves because God accepts the humble and rejects the proud and the mighty.

With sweetness, patience, and resignation let's endure injuries, mockery, jokes, and unjust treatment. Let's endure fatigue from our jobs and in general what's inconvenient, in union with Jesus Christ for the remission of pain merited by our sins.

Mama told me she lost her rosary. I'm sending her one made from nuts and which is specially blessed. Our Father Moreau is giving it to her as a present. The indulgences attached to the rosary are many—100 on each bead. But in order to earn such you have to say three rosaries—one for the pope, one for the Church, and one for the one who blessed it.

Please give my regards to the pastor and vicar, whom I revere more and more...I hug all of you and ask for your prayers.

Your son and brother,

*André*

André

### **15. Brother André to his parents**

Le Mans

October 3, 1842

My dearest parents,

Since Mr. Chardon has sent his son to our boarding school, I'm taking advantage of his return to tell you that I've come back from Algeria as of August 20 after two weeks by sea and land. I've been sick a few days since getting here.

I don't know how much time we'll spend at Le Mans before returning to Algeria. Meanwhile, I'll continue my former duties at Notre Dame de Sainte-Croix, thanks to Father Moreau. Father Drouelle has also come back.

I was in Mayenne the other day, but I was in such a hurry it was impossible to see you. I very much want to tell you what you don't already know.

The number of boarders here will soon reach almost 140 this year. God blesses this work, thanks be to God. I hope you are living in peace and grace. Let's pray often, offering Him our feeble attempts together with Jesus-Christ, and you will gain new graces.

We're building a beautiful church which will be as big or nearly so as the one at Ernée. It's a work done for the glory of God, that He may be forever praised.

I'll never forget any of my family members or my friends.

With all due respect and all possible affection, my very dear parents, I am your devoted son in Jesus-Christ,

*Brother André*

Brother André

## 16. Brother André to his parents

JMJ  
Le Mans

October 14, 1842

My very dear parents,

I received your letter yesterday. I had much joy reading it, but when I found out about my good and dear mother's suffering, I was filled with pain: I am praying to God and the Holy Virgin for her, and I hope that I learn soon she is better.

I understand that you were surprised that I wasn't at Larchamp the other day when I was in Mayenne. But I can assure you that the imminent return of our boarders was an obstacle because of the work I do for them—I can't absent myself for half a day without causing considerable unrest.

There are a dozen prefects in the house. You have no idea of the exactitude each needs for his job, and we have to be there all the time, right on time, at the first ring of the bell.

Our reverend Father Moreau told me to tell you that I'm going to Africa before vacation. I'll see you before I leave. And if I don't, as may happen, I'm going to see you later next August when the boarding school closes for vacation. How can I not wish to see all my relatives, particularly my good mother and dear father? Ah! When the moment comes, I will hurry there. Meanwhile let's pray to God for each other and above all for the one of us who will first appear for God's judgement.

I didn't get the letter you told me about—I wrote you one from Algiers in June.

My regards to the pastor and vicar at Larchamp. My best to Mister Laury and his son, etc., etc.

I am forever, my very dear parents,

Your affectionate and very devoted one in Our Savior Jesus Christ,

*Brother André*

Brother André

See how busy I am—I began this letter three days ago without being able to work on it or finish it.

All my dear relatives—let us work unceasingly for the glory of God and our well-being without discouragement [...] in heaven