

JOHN NEPOMUCENE NEUMANN'S

SPIRITUAL JOURNAL

English translation by WILLIAM NAYDEN

Second Part: January 1 — February 28, 1835

INTRODUCTION

The first installment of John Nepomucene Neumann's *Spiritual Journal* appeared in *Spicilegium Historicum CSSR* 25 (1977) fascicle 2, pp. 321-418. In that first segment Neumann's original French text was accompanied by an English translation.

Because Neumann's French was rather rudimentary and often enough unidiomatic and ungrammatical, editing the original required a revision of the text to a degree that practically rendered Neumann's authorship debatable. Therefore it was decided to discontinue the publishing of the original and, beginning with this second installment, to give just the English translation. It is hoped that the fairly large sample of the original offered in the first installment will suffice for all but the most critical purposes.

In this second installment as in the first, the pagination of the original will be indicated at its proper place in the text of the translation by enclosure in brackets, thus: [18], [18-a], [18-b], [18-c], [19], etc.

The notes in the second installment of the series will be numbered in sequence, continuing from the first installment, i.e., the first footnote will be no. 70 in this second part.

[18-b] January 1, 1835 — Midnight

The year has gone, my God! I am one year closer to eternity. Dear Savior, grant me whatever grace I need. How I hope I shall not abuse Your grace in the future as I have in the past! Watch over me — increase my faith, hope and charity. Preserve Your holy Church and all Her children on earth. Show Your mercy to our brethren in Purgatory. As a New Year's gift I shall make an offering

to You. Dear Savior, do not spurn my gift, even though it is quite imperfect, for I have no other to give You. Accept me, then, my Creator, my Redeemer and Sanctifier. During this past year You have surely shown Your love for me. If Your grace which I so often ignored, has erased at least some sins from my heart, and overcome some bad habit of mine, then I am very grateful to You, my Lord.

Give Your peace to Holy Mother Church, to my parents and friends at Budweis and at home. Bless all my efforts in the work of piety and perfection — I resolve to devote myself to this work to the fullest of my ability.

Holy Mary in Heaven, accept my gratitude for the love you have shown me. I beg you to continue to show me your favor. You be our guide in our plan for spreading the faith. Our guardian angels, be ever with us! All you saints, pray for all the faithful, especially that there may be progress in true love and success in our undertaking if that should be God's will.

Sweet Jesus, You have been most kind to me. I know You will be equally so during this new year that has just begun. Save Your people Lord, and bless Your inheritance. So be it.

I talked with Laad until 12:30 a.m. about our prefect and his maxims. Forgive me, Lord, if I committed any fault in that. I also wrote a letter home. My God, watch over me! Holy Mary, and my holy patrons, pray for me. I can no longer pray tonight because I have but four and one half hours to sleep before the rising bell. Abidé always with me, my God. So be it.

[18-c] January 2, 1835

Today the professor of Bohemian language and literature, John Necedles, was buried. We also finished our course in homiletics at school. My God, it seems as if I am growing more and more tepid in the practice of the mortification of my passions. My spiritual energy is quite feeble, my sense of the supernatural is weak, pride pervades all I do. I'm beginning to succumb to envy and the old penchant for telling lies is asserting itself once more.

My prayers are cold and full of vain and worldly thoughts. My clerical duties and studies hold but little interest for me, while all I really want are special graces and the gift of tears. Within my soul God's grace is, if not dead, at least very faint. I ought to be weeping over my sins and yet my indifference grows with each passing moment. How difficult will it be for me to become more free of this sin? Poor

me who can do nothing to attain a true spirit of repentance for my sins! How ought I to begin? I do not know.

My beloved Savior, how can You forgive me, and without Your pardon, how can You possibly grant me Your grace? How can I approach the awesome banquet of the Eucharist in which You give Yourself as my food? I am so afraid of my condemnation to hell which will surely be my fate should You fail to take pity on me. I am so miserable, my God; after forsaking the fount of living water I am as though dead to eternal happiness. In my ignorance I often turned to You in prayer. In Your goodness You chose not to heed my pleas and so my confidence has been shaken. My Savior, how can I dare approach You whom I have offended through my repeated ingratitude? So often have I offered You my will — and so often have I proved faithless to You!

My Mother, bear with my boldness — how dare I ask for your intercession when I have offended your dearly beloved Son? Angel guardian of mine, how can I approach you — I who so frequently and stubbornly disregarded your inspiration? And you, my holy patrons, how I have offended you! I have dishonored you by my behavior so utterly different from yours!

[19] My Savior, You have indeed heard my prayer! You have granted me the gift of tears! You have given me the grace to comprehend at least to a small degree the enormity of my sins. You have stilled my fear. Sweetest Jesus, I would gladly offer You my heart but it is so filthy I fear to betray You anew, for I am still so sinful, more so than my companions. Take my heart, O Holy Spirit, my Sanctifier, my Lord and God. Make it holy, cleanse it tomorrow with the blood of the Innocent Lamb.

You ask me to be exact in confessing my sins while bathing. My Jesus, I shall do so but do give me strength! I am not yet quite humble enough. Let me know Your will more clearly so that this anxiety You have stirred up in my soul again today may cease to trouble me. Preserve my holy fear of You.

Mary, my Mother, pray for me. Your Son has heard my plea. Ask Him to bestow on me the virtues of humility and purity. My patron, St. John, ask God to give me the virtues I need to be a worthy priest. St. Francis Xavier, intercede with your Lord that He may grant me the strength of soul to be a missionary. St. Ignatius, pray for me that God may give me the wisdom I need. St. Aloysius, keep me from all sin. St. Theresa, intercede for me that I may receive from God the grace of true interior devotion, of recollection, of spiritual union and vision, if these are necessary for my salvation.

St. Joseph, earthly father and guardian of our Savior, obtain for me the gift of God's love. May all these graces descend also upon my parents, my friends in Budweis and upon all the faithful. Dear Lord, grant eternal rest to all our brethren and may they come to You as soon as possible! Graciously hear the prayers of Your Holy Church. So be it.

January 3, 1835

Dear Jesus I confessed the sin according to Your command. You gave me Your help and thus I was able to fulfill Your command despite my repugnance. I have been humiliated and for that I thank You.

[19-a] We have received the schedule for the examinations in sermon writing and delivery. Holy Spirit, stay with me! Today Laad brought me the disappointing news that the first volume of Allioli in the first edition is no longer in print; only the second volume is available. How unpleasant for me! Dear God, how will this irksome business turn out? St. Anthony, you who have loved the little Infant Jesus more than I have, ask Him to let me hear some comforting news about these books, if such be necessary for my salvation, and to lead me to a proper sense of gratitude to you.

After confession I engaged in a game of checkers which is why I am now so dry and cold of spirit. I ought not to have played. I accept the dryness, however, and in my heart I recognize the distraction and the unseemliness, the fault of my scant regard for that holy sacrament I had just received.

Dear Jesus, I wish to receive You tomorrow. Forgive my sins that I may not « eat my own condemnation ». If You will, stir my heart tomorrow — I must serve as acolyte and my cassock is so shabby.

Dear Mother of mine and all you angels and patrons, help me when I approach the awesome banquet of the Eucharist. Pray for me, a sinner; adore my Savior, for if this dryness of soul lasts much longer, I will not be able to evoke even a single good thought! I pray, dear Lord, for my parents, my friends and all the faithful, living and dead. So be it.

January 4, 1835

My beloved Jesus, You have come to me — You who created the Universe, the angels and me; You who redeemed me from my sins and who reign with the Father. You did not banish me from Your sacred banquet. Forgive me if I approached You unworthily, Most Holy Savior. Consider the sincerity of my desire for perfection rather than the multitude of my sins. To become ever more perfect I wish to give myself entirely to You. I yield my will to You. I desire only Your love, only to fulfill Your holy will. I renounce, dear Jesus, every comfort of soul, every consolation. Do with me what You will, for You are my Lord and Sovereign. I shall [19-b] no more allow myself to be disheartened over the adversity You have sent me in Your infinite love precisely to prove You still love me despite my many and great sins. Even as I endure the afflictions of the world which I hold to be but the precious punishment for my sins, I wish to sing Your praises and express my gratitude for them. I would gladly perform corporal penance as self-chastisement for those sins, but I beseech You, my Lord, to punish me Yourself. I wish to look to You always for the grace of true sorrow for my sins that I might be ever contrite. You be my guide! I promise to be perfectly obedient; I beg of You, let me hear Your voice clearly. Still, You are my Lord, so do with me what You will for Your own glory and my eternal salvation. I expect from You all the help I need to fulfill Your will at all times.

Jesus Christ, I implore You, seek out this lost sheep, and bring it safely into the fold of the elect. Secure it with the bonds of faith, of humility and resignation, of purity and especially of Your own divine love which it can no longer resist. Grant that this branch, broken by resistance to the bountiful currents of Your grace, may recoup its vigor, and bear good fruit once more.

Dear God, You established Your holy Roman Church to save Your creatures who wandered from You in their sins. Hear my pleas for them. Grant me the grace of a humble submission to the Church's definitions on faith and morals. Strengthen me through the worthy reception of the means of salvation. You, dear Jesus, be my Lord, and I shall be Your humble slave. This is my sole possession which I offer You. Look kindly upon it, cleanse it of all imperfection and make it holy.

Holy Mary, Mother of my Lord, intercede for me, a sinner, who has been so bold as to offer himself [19-c] to his Creator. My holy guardian angel, guide me towards a wholesome fear of my Lord.

He will reward your faithfulness, for I myself have nothing to offer you. My holy patrons, take pity on my weakness and when I fall under the weight of my sins, ask the Lord to be gracious to me. Grant the gift of Your love, dear God, to all my dear ones, i.e., my parents, my friends, my superiors and my confreres. To all the faithful, living and dead, grant eternal rest. My Lord, I give You thanks for inspiring these resolutions of mine. Help me! So be it.

January 5, 1835

O divine Savior, I renew my vow today to serve You in every way. I am prepared, dear Lord, to obey Your every command. Today I tried to say or do nothing without first consulting Your will. I could see my utter frailty in my tendency to vanity and anger, and were it not for the protection of Your grace, divine Master, I would surely have fallen into sin. So I must more closely guard my tongue which is so prone to lie.

Dear God, forgive the sins of my past life. If You will, grant me a true sorrow for them that matches their enormity. Pardon whatever sins I may have committed this day, of which in my blindness I am ignorant. Be my defense against the enemy. Give me at all times the strength I need to keep Your holy law. My beloved Jesus Christ, I renounce all earthly consolation though as you well know, it may be very painful for me to do so. Only give me the grace of faith, hope and love. I am grateful for all the crosses You have sent me to strengthen my patience, which I shall need if You ever deign to send me to the foreign missions. Your will be done! Should You call me, I am ready to obey. Should You choose not to do so, I must simply accept it and bless Your wisdom and Your goodness.

Dwell within me, Lord! Holy Mary and all you angels and saints, give praise to my God, my Sovereign, for my own praise is unworthy to be joined to that of the Blessed in heaven. I implore all of you to help me in my battle for our King, Jesus Christ. Pray for me and my parents, for my friends, my enemies and for all the faithful, living and dead. So be it.

[20] January 7, 1835

Yesterday (today) I was writing until 12:30 a.m. and so was unable to make an entry in this journal. I was rather well-disposed

yesterday and this morning until noon. We received by lot today the topics for the catechetical instructions, and I was somewhat over-eager about it. After dinner I wrote a letter to Schawel and I think I committed a sin in that I disclosed to him, though obliquely, the prefect's ineptitude. I sent him (Schawel) the third volume of Croisset<sup>70</sup>. Even though we still have a great deal of Pastoral Theology to study, I spent the after-dinner study period writing that letter. I was more devout through the evening than I had been in the afternoon; still I had to actually push myself to start preparing for the exam in sermon composition and delivery.

May the good Lord be praised! St. Teresa's *Confessions* has stirred me deeply. Dear Lord, today has been more unhappy than happy for me because I did not comport myself entirely in accord with Your inspiration. Bear with my faithlessness, all-powerful Lord!

My God, well do I realize that I have sinned, nevertheless my heart is as hard as steel. Is it possible for You to save me without tears of genuine sorrow for my sins? You do not want me to ask for the gift of tears and I, dear Jesus, surely do not deserve that gift. I await patiently the moment of Your entrance into my heart in Holy Communion, but do not delay too long in coming.

Forgive this prayer of Your servant who asks You for the gift of tears only that he may thus expiate his sins. Withdraw from that gift all comfort and sweetness for, my God, I desire to feel but the pain of true sorrow. However, O my Savior, You are all-wise and You know what I need to save my soul. Despite my failings today, take me into Your service.

My holy Mother Mary, Mother of divine grace, ask Your divine Son to receive me once again. Angel guardians, pray for me. And you, my holy patrons, especially St. John Nepomucene, St. Joseph, St. Francis Xavier, St. Ignatius, St. Aloysius, St. Peter Canisius and St. Teresa — intercede for me with Our God who has deigned to hear you when you pray for one of us, your fellow christians. Pray too for the souls of the faithful departed, for my parents and benefactors, my friends and my enemies. So be it.

[20-a] The eighth day of January

My Lord, I have apparently relapsed into my former tepidity in performing my duties here in the seminary. At any rate, I approach them with considerable distaste, which I seem to be able to overcome

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<sup>70</sup> See note 31 above.

only with Your special help. Discussing the prefect's behavior and attitude has become an occasion of sin for me. I join in the discussion and in this way commit sin both by speaking about and lending a willing ear to others' tales of his faults. For the future I resolve to neither think nor talk about him but simply to follow his orders.

The history of St. Teresa is definitely a visible grace for me<sup>71</sup>. My God, You be my spiritual guide; enlighten both my confessor and myself, I beg of You. Please grant me the grace of true sorrow for my sins and deign to cancel my hideous transgressions. Classwork is piling up on me. Do help me, my Savior. Forgive me for asking such favors of You, my all-wise, all-powerful God.

Today the prefect issued an order that we are to be in bed by 10 p.m. Thus I shall have to rise earlier in the morning. My God, strengthen my resolve to become perfect. I beseech You through the intercession of the Queen of Angels, and of all the saints. Protect my friends and all the faithful! So be it.

January 9, 1835

This was a truly exceptional day. I arose at 4 a.m. and after my morning prayers I studied English. Throughout the day, however, I was quite distracted in my studies and I don't really know why. Before class I bought some candied fruit which gave me excruciating cramps during the Catechetics period. Afterwards just when I was crossing the bridge it seemed that the moment I had dreaded had arrived. However, I remained calm and resigned to God's will. I said a prayer to St. Joseph that I might avoid an accident. Nevertheless I now believe quite strongly that the experience was good for me in that it gave me a chance to test the firmness of my resolution to serve God alone.

[20-b] St. Joseph, it is to you that I am indebted for the grace to endure that pain which was indeed formidable. I give you my thanks. Continue to obtain God's grace for me.

Today also, the prefect asked me if I had a copy of Luis de Grenada's *Memoirs of a Christian Life*. I said that I did have one.

Please come to my aid, dear God. Look upon my frailty and lend me Your powerful help in my temptations that I may fall into sin ever less often and thus grow more perfect. My God, I have

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<sup>71</sup> The *Confessions* of St. Theresa.



begun to walk in the way of perfection. Today, in my reading of *The Confessions* of St. Teresa whom You have enlightened, I see that such as seek perfection will enjoy Your aid provided they do not fail to ask You for it. My Lord, can I really hope for such help? Make me worthy to practice Your virtues, my Lord. For my own part I can do no more than repeat my resolution to accept and put into practice whatever I perceive to be Your will. Preserve and strengthen that resolve.

My holy Mother, Queen of Heaven, intercede for me together with the angels and saints — for my parents, my friends and enemies and in a word, for all the faithful and the unbelievers. So be it.

January 10, 1835

Today I made an effort to follow the promptings of God's grace. Still, dear Lord, I did betray You with a lie. I caused my classmate Bartosh' notes to fall to the floor. When he asked who had done it I said that I had not done it; two or three times I said so, quite deliberately. My infinitely good Lord, I sinned against You! I pray You, let me have true sorrow for that sin. Nevertheless I am Your servant, my will is no longer my own, for I have surrendered it to You. Do with me what You will. Chastise me — that will be best for I am still entirely too attached to the world. Despite my betrayal, I make bold to follow You, divine Master, for where else should I seek eternal life? If You approve, I shall pray for Your grace in order that I may not sin anew against Your law. [20-c] I ask this grace most humbly of You, my Lord. Look upon my weakness in Your pity, for it leads me to repeat the very sins I have learned to detest. My Jesus, enlighten me that I may the more clearly perceive Your footsteps in the way of perfection.

You are indeed so gracious to me! How often have I extinguished Your light within my heart and how often have You restored that light! Do not avert Your eyes from me, even though I am unworthy to tread this earth You have created, this earth You, dear God and Creator, have trod.

I beseech You, dear Jesus, be patient with me until Your divine love glows more intensely in my heart. Be my guide, for sometimes my conscience is unable to decide whether to do or to refrain from doing a certain thing. I suppose it is my self-love that keeps me from relinquishing all earthly attachments. I am not exactly sure of what I should be asking You for, but You well know the

gloom and darkness that pervade the soul of this Your creature. Hear then my humble prayer, O Lord. May You Yourself be my guide so that I can put into practice Your holy law, Your counsels, Your inspiration and Your own example.

Forgive me the grave sins I committed today. Apply the merits of Your death to me that I may grow more and more like You. My holy Mother and Mistress, Mary, and all you angels, you holy patrons, St. Francis Xavier, St. Ignatius, St. Teresa and St. Joseph — pray for my salvation which is still possible if through your prayers, the Lord will grant me His grace. I intend to renounce all earthly things, that I might more readily and surely give honor to Our Lord who has deigned to seek out my lost soul. Oh, may He find it and lead it safely back to the fold of His holy ones. Give this grace, dear Lord, to all the faithful! So be it.

[21] Prague, January 11, 1835

Most humbly do I thank You for having conformed me today with so many promptings of Your grace that I was able to avoid serious sin. My Lord, if the sweetness and consolation that accompany Your grace should not be helpful in my weakness, I shall continue to ask You to withdraw them. Nevertheless, You do with me as You will. I shall not ask for any particular person or thing, because You, my all-knowing and all-holy One, know far better what we most need. Sovereign Lord of mine, let my prayers be ever more pure and disinterested that they may give You greater glory. You alone, my Jesus, will be the object of my prayers. Graciously hear and answer them! Remain, O Lord, always at my side. Keep me from every sin that might cause You sorrow.

Mother of God and my Mother, you holy angels and saints, and You too, Holy Mother the Church, join your prayers to mine that God, the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier may be honored through all ages to come! So be it.

January 12, 1835

Today I seemed quite cold and distracted though I did try several times to recollect myself. Nonetheless my Lord, while I carried out Your commands as far as the externals are concerned, my intentions were governed rather by human respect and my own desires.

I arose at 2:30 and began to complete my reading of St. Teresa's *Confessions*. My Lord Jesus Christ, enlighten my spirit that I may never diverge from the path of right. Please come to my aid tomorrow!

It has just struck 10 p.m. and I must retire now. Holy Mary, Queen of Angels and Saints pray for all the faithful. So be it.

January 13, 1835

My Lord and my God, how poorly have I done my job today! I was lethargic in the performance of my obligations. How upset and disgusted I am! All day long I was cold at heart — more so than usual. Why is that? Is it due to the heavy work-load [21-a] I have at present, and which I have no idea how I shall accomplish? Lord Jesus, behold how little trust I have in Your help! Why am I so diffident? No longer do I try to see in whatever happens Your all-powerful hand which alone can enable me to fulfill Your will. My Lord, do not forsake me, Your thoroughly humbled servant. You well know my frailty and its source: my sins. Dear Jesus, I renew my resolution to serve You, to fulfill all Your command. Take pity on me. Let me not be dazzled by useless visions of honor and prestige. Do not permit me to be so ungrateful as that. Grant me perfect submission to Your will. Divine Master, abide with me! I have no one to teach me and counsel me. I am left to myself and my own devices. You therefore, my God and my Sanctifier, be my guide.

I am not yet certain of the sincerity of my repentance, for my sense of sorrow for my sins seems to have vanished. I shudder to even think of the project I have in mind, the realization of which depends entirely on You. I do not possess the art of conversation; nor do I have the linguistic or professional knowledge I need, and which correspond to such a high level of perfection as that to which I aspire.

Oh, all-powerful Jesus, forgive me my timidity, my diffidence. Dear Mother Mary, whose hand I should love to kiss in order to prove my filial love for you and whom I sometimes feel to be present in my heart — intercede for me together with your most chaste and beloved spouse, St. Joseph.

My angel guardian do not forsake me tomorrow or throughout the rest of my life. My holy patrons, stay close by my side. Purify my prayers and add them to your own powerful intercession. St.

Teresa, you who have been so devout, so on fire with love for Jesus, pray for me, a poor sinner, to Our Lord whom I have so often offended.

My Lord, bear with my boldness — that I should dare even address You after such disobedience! Take me back once more! With Your help, I would do all I can to please You tomorrow. Accept my prayers and answer them according to Your infinite goodness and wisdom. So be it.

January 14, 1835

My God, I am still so imperfect — the letter from Schawel today disturbed me very much. [21-b]. The joy I felt was mixed with a sort of envy, not that he was so humble but rather that I do not possess this virtue or his outlook and attitude. It looks to me, my Lord, as if You would chastise me all my life. I don't really want to complain, for You are infinitely good and You have called me to know You, and these occasional punishments show me You have not forgotten me. Would that my love for You were such that I could know for certain that You chastise me precisely because You love me!

I am quite depressed today because I feel so abandoned. I ought to have a fraternal disinterested trust in You for I see my colleague Schawel is already very close to You. Just what am I doing? I so long to be like him. Is my longing useless? O all-powerful Lord, is it spiritual pride, that serpent that destroys Your grace, which so disturbs me? Dear God, ten times I thought I had beaten down and almost destroyed that serpent and now it rears its head again without my even adverting to it! Take pity on me, then — rescue me from the morass of my sins. Give me to know what I ought to do to be worthy of such a grace. My life now is so unhappy, what with my uncertainty as to whether my conversion to You was really sincere or not. Most Holy God, I have no director. To whom shall I turn? Selfdirection by the book is dangerous for me since self-love defiles all I do. Graciously hear me, then, my God, my God, my all-holy, all-powerful Lord and Savior. Do not permit this soul You ransomed by Your precious blood to be lost and miserable for all eternity.

Forgive me, Lord, that I should address You so rashly. My heart yearns for Your love but my sins have driven You away. This heart has once savored the sweet comfort of contrition, howsoever imperfect.

The current situation of my friends (Schmidt, Schawel, etc.)

would lead me to fear that I shall be deserted by them too. Both are joining the Cistercians, to live entirely for You, while I remain alone in the world for which I have such a distaste. My faculties are crushed. Dear God, do not allow me to perish in my sins and in their consequences. My Jesus, I resolved to serve You as Your slave, and I am still full of sin. Ought I not begin with the fundamentals?

Holy Mother of my Lord, Refuge of sinners, Mother of God, intercede once more for me with your Son that He may pardon my sins and grant me light and strength. [21-c] Beg Him not to abandon me, for otherwise my faith will waver and up until now it has been so strong.

How difficult the way of salvation appears to me! Or is the true road some other than the one I have been following? Dear God, I kiss the hand that chastises me but I plead, be gracious to me.

Holy angel guardian, bear with me if I disregard your wisdom and sincerity. My holy patrons, beseech the Lord to be kind to me. So be it.

January 16, 1835

Yesterday I was writing a letter to my friends, Schmid and Schawel until 11 p.m. and so was unable to continue my journal. Since then and especially ever since I made the resolution to be Your slave, dear Jesus, I have been so inattentive and cold in my prayers, or rather the moments of sweetness and comfort in my devotions have been so few that I've begun to doubt whether perhaps such a resolution was not presumptuous of me. I am even more fearful of cancelling it now. Sweet Savior, take pity on me. The sins which assail my memory frighten me horribly. How will I ever overcome them? It always seems as though I ought to be confessing the sin of my youth.

Enlighten my spirit, O God. I do not wish to take any further account of the shame I feel when I acknowledge my grave faults. I must strive to move towards You in heaven, my Savior. Do not reject me.

It appears to me that my feebleness of heart is increasing. Come to my aid, Lord. You can see that the yoke that should be light for me seems very heavy. Why should this be except for the wicked habits that still enslave me. Earthly happiness gives me no great pleasure, but the petty misfortunes when they come upon me one after another, discourage me. Still, my Savior, I place my trust in You. You will

make me ever more worthy to serve You, but deepen my trust that it may never waver.

My most dear Mother, you too well know the pitiful condition of my soul. I do not look for earthly happiness but I do long for the love of my Lord. Your power is so great — plead for me that your beloved Son, your and my God, may bestow His love on me and grant me His sanctifying grace.

I shall go to confession tomorrow and I will be able to gain the indulgences. Help me to be properly disposed, Queen of Grace! My holy guardian angel and my holy patrons, pray for us. So be it.

[22] January 17, 1835

Today I was more fervent than yesterday. I believe I owe that grace to our blessed Mother whose help I sought. Dear God, today You gave me a spark of Your love — what can I give You in return? The more I consider myself, the more clearly I perceive my own worthlessness, and still, I desire to offer You something. Accept then, my divine Father, this will of mine. I confessed my sin once again to my confessor, with distaste, and he comforted me. Oh God, You are so boundlessly good! Grant me but the grace to avoid staining ever again the robe of innocence You have already so often cleansed for me. Grant it especially with regard to those more serious sins — I shall do my very best, if only You will not forsake me.

Please, hear my plea! Preserve me also from any venial sins since these also displease you and depress me while diminishing my love for You. I still find the fulfillment of my duties so difficult. My heavenly Father, I beg You, then, increase my love for You that I may be inclined to do Your will.

My Savior, may Your grace be ever so delightful! Today You have forgiven me my sins and tomorrow I am to approach Your holy table. Dearest Mother in heaven who have enabled me today to overcome false shame in my confession, help me to prepare my body to be worthy of receiving the Creator of the world, our most holy Redeemer, our God who in His exceeding justice, makes us holy.

Dear God, were it not that You Yourself invite me to Your banquet, how could I dare approach it? Give me to understand Your will at all times, and with Your aid I shall fulfill it as best I can. That is my desire but who really knows whether I shall actually do it? Be gracious towards me, Lord!

Holy guardian angel, I thank you most humbly. In your

kindness, you are leading me towards a genuine sense of humility. My holy patrons, plead my cause with our common Father, for myself, my parents and my friends that we may all become like you who are true friends of God. May the faithful departed rest in peace! So be it.

[22-a] January 18, 1835

God has showered me with gifts that I shall never be able to repay! Today He gave me His adorable body and blood for my nourishment. This is the prime and greatest gift of all. By way of thanks, I offer You, my God, all that I have, my whole life both spiritual and temporal. Dear Father, I am so poor that I can but make You such an imperfect gift. Because it is Your will, I shall try to perfect myself. Help me to know Your will better than I have in the past. Once again today You kindled in my heart the desire to devote myself to Your service among the infidels.

My God, if You will, accept my offering though it is so insignificant. Should it add to Your glory, let my wish be fulfilled. You have blessed me with sentiments of love and devotion towards Yourself and my fellowmen. You answered my prayers in that the business of the Dean's books turned out all right — I received a letter from him saying that he had received every one of the books I sent. My parents also sent me six silver florins. I intend to spend them according to the prompting of Your grace, for Your glory and that of the Church, and for my salvation.

Holy Mary, you who have been my refuge, and who have pleaded my cause — I thank you for having deepened my confidence in your divine Son, and for having convinced me of the great power you have for our welfare. Continue always to hear my cries; pray for me whenever you see me in peril even though I may not perceive it. Pray for me always because my own prayers are still so full of sin, tepidity, pride and self-love. Beseech Him, beloved Mother, who can make us holy, that He may lead me to true humility and purity of heart.

My holy guardian angel, it seems to me that today you have protected me from any serious fall. Do the same tomorrow and the next day and every day of my life! My holy patrons, O how I love you! You pray for me in my stead, for I have the right to ask this of you. St. Anthony, I wish to love the Infant Jesus as you have loved Him; continue to plead for me. [22-b] My holy patron, St.

John Nepomucene, govern my tongue which has so often received the Creator of the Universe, that it may never tell a lie. St. Francis, help me in my efforts to become a missionary, if such be God's will. St. Ignatius Loyola, be my guide in the interior life that I may grow to be capable of the grand and very important apostolate which I am about to enter. St. Joseph, pray that my dearest Jesus may increase His love in my heart. Assist me in my final struggle. St. Teresa, pray that He who alone can make me holy may bestow on me the grace I need to discard my bad habits and to grow in virtue.

All you saints in heaven, I implore your intercession, through your love of our common Father — pray for me and my parents and friends etc., for all christians and for those in authority over them. Pray too for my brothers and sisters in Purgatory. So be it.

January 19, 1835

Ah! My Lord, I have been careless! Good fortune seems to destroy my serenity, my whole attitude of resignation. Dear God, send me instead misfortune, for that will make me turn more often to You. I told a lie today because at the bookseller Naas', to whom I had gone to purchase some books for the Dean, I said that the volumes of Allioli were for a parish priest. In my sinfulness I thought my lie would be more powerful than You. Dear Lord, chastise me for my carelessness! No — do not do that, I beg You most humbly do with me what You will — it behooves me but to await and accept Your benevolent, fatherly hand.

I saw the student of Theology who was dying just an hour before his death<sup>72</sup>. With the prefect, we had prayed for him in the infirmary. His appearance moved me deeply.

I was so uninterested in the performance of my duties today that I accomplished very little. Several different projects were whirling around in my head at once. I wanted to purchase a copy of the second volume of *The Catholic Museum* for one florin, 30 kroner. My yearning to be a missionary was quite strong today. Dear God, everybody is displeased with me. How can I evoke their affection? I am so faint-hearted and timid! Forgive my lack of faith.

[22-c] Dear Lord of mine, I return to You once more. Cleanse me of my sin if it be but a venial one. But if it be serious,

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<sup>72</sup> Krakel. See *Journal*, January 21, 1835.



then take control of my soul and protect me until I can make my confession. Do not forsake me, Lord. I know my frailty — the world still bothers me considerably. I am still too tepid in the way I approach my obligations. Do not withdraw Your grace from my heart, for then I would fall into one sin after another and lose my soul, without a doubt.

Holy Mary, my patroness, plead the cause of this poor sinner with your Son, even though I have offended Him. Be patient with me. And may that be the last lie I ever tell! That sin has made me so miserable. You, beloved Lord, have deigned to visit me, and now I have lied with the very same tongue that but yesterday served as Your throne!

Dear Mother Mary, do not reject me for offending your beloved Son. I deserve only eternal punishment, but you are the Mother of mercy. Intercede for me.

My holy guardian angel, whom I have also offended by my sin, continue to guide me. My holy patrons, to whom I have shown such ingratitude, how can I dare ask your help? I, who have forsaken my Savior to follow that world from which your death delivered you. Wash away those sins of mine with the tears of my sorrow however superficial and imperfect.

My God, be merciful to our confrere who died today. Bring him before Your sacred throne that he may intercede for me. St. Joseph, may you and your immaculate spouse assist me in the final struggle. My sainted brethren in heaven, guide me through my life and do not forsake me when I must slough off this body and accept my reward or punishment. Dearest Jesus, do not abandon me! So be it.

January 20, 1835

My Lord, I am grateful to You for having directed me and kept me from committing any serious sin which would have deprived me of Your holy grace and of my proper trust in You. I often recalled Your presence today and that saved me from sin.

I gave the postman, Saale, two books for the [23] Dean, namely, *The Works of St. Climacus* and a volume on *Intemperance*. I included the pastoral letter from the Archbishop here. Tomorrow we shall have the funeral for our deceased confrere. I am supposed to attend it but my cassock is in hopeless condition. If I am not present, there will be scandal for sure, but dear God, You understand

the circumstances in my case. I shall not be upset if You choose not to help me in this.

Today I bought Part I of [*illegible*], because if I do desire to be a missionary, that sort of knowledge should produce a certain esteem for me among the people and a closer attachment to my religion.

Holy Spirit, bless this reading of mine that it may bear fruit. Sweet Jesus, increase ever more and more Your love in my heart so that all that I accomplish may be for Your glory. Take the task of my spiritual direction on Yourself when I want to try to mortify my passions. Kindle Your love in my heart should I waver or stumble on the way to Your throne.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for me, together with the angels and my patron saints. I commend the whole of mankind to your protection. Be merciful to them all. So be it.

January 21, 1835

We accompanied our deceased confrere Krakel to burial today. I was able to attend without causing any scandal. Thank you for that, my God! Grant me sufficient spiritual strength that I may never consider any achievement a result of my own merit. Then I shall be, thanks to You, always happy. You can see, my God, that You kept me from telling lies today. Only Your grace can accomplish that!

I was somewhat more conscientious than usual in performing my duties although my will power and attention were still quite imperfect. It is up to You, Lord, to strengthen and bless these. Have pity on my worthlessness, and do not ever forsake me. I tried several times to recall the presence of the Infant in the manger, for that is very beneficial for me. Would that this practice were more deeply rooted in my heart, then I wouldn't sin so frequently.

Holy Mother Mary, you who so treasure the honor given Your beloved Son, particularly when it derives from a holy life, incline me to such a spirit of recollection.

Holy Spirit, my God, do not permit [23-a] the grace I have possessed since my last Holy Communion to be extinguished in my heart. Increase God's love in me. Give me a knowledge, humble and reliable, of our holy faith and of God's law. I in my turn will share it with my fellowmen who do not possess it. You have inspired in me the desire to be a missionary, and God willing, I shall do so. Only purify my heart, detach me from the world and from all its desires

and pleasures. I wish only to love my Jesus all the days of my life.

Holy Mary when you see me in difficult circumstances, pray for me that I may not slip and perish. Holy guardian angel, help me in the struggle. My holy patron, St. John, instill in me sentiments befitting God's priest. St. Francis, deign to be my patron in my undertaking (to be a missionary). St. Aloysius protect and preserve my sense of spiritual balance. St. Ignatius, help me to know my sins and the remedies most suitable for my correction. St. Joseph, guide my soul in all the circumstances of my life so that I may be worthy of your assistance in my last hour. St. Teresa, ask God to give me the grace I need for my perfection. Pray for all the faithful, living and dead, you our sainted brothers and sisters in heaven! So be it.

January 22, 1835

Today I began to feel somewhat more tepid and out of sorts in the performance of my duties and in the practice of virtue. O God, my Judge, I beg You not to forsake me. Doubtlessly the tepidity arises from the fact that my health is good and I do not seem to want anything of a material nature. My spiritual needs are not as obvious as the material ones, and therefore I shall have to give more thought to them in the future than I have been accustomed to up until now. Dear God, assist me in my battle with this tepidity which still afflicts me. I hope You will do so, because You have so many times in the past helped me to break my bad habits.

I am quite distracted today. Mary, Mother of God, remain at my side together with all the angels and my holy patrons. So be it.

[23-b] January 23, 1835

You surely have been good to me, my dear Lord. I have begun again to perform my duties somewhat as I should. I am still not quite as careful as I ought to be but, dear Father of mine, I'm sure You will help me. I hope my desire is not a futile one. Each day I resolve to practice a certain virtue, but when the time comes to act on my resolution I grow weary and careless.

Dear God, my pride is still quite strong. I fail to maintain my recollection nor are my thoughts as humble as they ought to be. By myself I can do nothing and so when I fail in the practice of some virtue I become discouraged and faint-hearted. A frightful

aridity pervades my soul and I put off doing the work I ought to finish — all through my own fault! I am always looking for good in myself though I well know from past experience that I am capable only of evil.

Heavenly Father, grant me the grace of humility and perfect resignation to Your will. Of myself, I promise You nothing, since what I shall achieve with Your grace will actually be Your achievement. Nevertheless, You will not reject the instrument which has agreed to serve You. O God, You behold my whole life, my thoughts and words and actions rife with sin and imperfections; yet I would so gladly please You because You are my infinitely good God, my Lord and my Father.

Thus I pray You, have pity on me, help me proceed towards You with a faith that gleams with brilliance, a hope that is deep and solid and a perfect love of God. My Lord, well do I realize that I do not deserve such gifts as may make me more like the blessed spirits in heaven who are still my brothers. Nonetheless I beg You, consider my nothingness. If I am to become worthy through my own efforts, I know I will fail miserably. Only You, sweet Jesus, by Your precious blood, can make me virtuous and worthy! Pour it forth then upon my heart, stained as it is by my sins. Your merits can render me worthy of God's grace.

[23-c] Mother of God, and my Mother Mary, plead my cause, You who are full of grace and so powerful in heaven. My Queen, Mother of Mercy pray for me together with the angels and the saints, for my parents, my friends and for all the faithful and the unbelievers. So be it.

January 24, 1835

My dear Jesus, I tried today to live as You want me to live. There were some strong temptations but I overcame most of them with Your grace. Still so many imperfections mar my motives and my virtue. Forgive me. My God, it is still so difficult to carry out what You have shown me to be Your will. Had You not granted me Your grace so bountifully, I would surely have sinned more frequently and more shamefully today because the temptations of pride and the flesh by our common enemy were stronger than I ever remember them to have been from the time when I first became aware of such sins.

To you, my Mother Mary, I offer the battles I have waged this day. There must have been many failings. Remove all those stains in

them and offer the struggles I had to your divine Son. Give Him my will, weak as it may be. He will take pity on me and strengthen my soul.

Dear Father in heaven, by the death of Jesus Christ, I beseech You to enable me to know my sins and the correctives I need to come to You. I am now so close to my ordination, O my God, and still I am full of sin and bad habits. I place my knowledge and my ineptitude under Your protection. Correct them, please, dear Father. Make me a missionary, if such be for Your glory and my salvation. I am grateful to You, sweet Jesus, for the boundless kindness You have shown me this day.

All my holy angels and patrons, pray together with my Mother for us poor sinners here on earth and in Purgatory. So be it.

[24] January 25, 1835

The aridity I experienced yesterday lasted also through today. My temptations today were mostly against the faith. My God, my faith is my sole support — never permit it to falter! I would then be the most wretched person in the world.

As far as my desire is concerned, I shall always be disposed to receive the grace of faith if You will but deign to bestow it on me. I did not think of You as often as I did yesterday — I was more inattentive and rather indifferent in the practice of virtue. On the other hand, with the help of Your grace, it was easier than usual to fulfill my duties. After the conference, our Spiritual Director announced that from now on every day one member of each class must write out the meditation. I shall certainly have to pay attention, then, to the reading in the morning.

My God, sermon preparation has always been a distasteful task until now — You are the one who has made it pleasant for me. I am grateful for that.

So that I might be more fervent and virtuous tomorrow, I plan to recall frequently my patron, St. John Nepomucene, that I may become a good priest. Give me Your grace, dear Lord. My heavenly Mother, pray for me, together with the angels and all the blessed in heaven. Be gracious towards us. So be it.

January 26, 1835

My Lord, I come to You in sorrow because of my carelessness today. In eating more than I had resolved to do and so failing to follow Your inspiration, it seems to me that I have offended You. I am still so much a slave of my appetites; I fear that a little hunger may affect my studies.

Now, my soul, is not that pretext an empty one? Is it anything but sensual appetite that makes me eat four times a day? My Lord and my God, this weakness alarms me — so much so that it truly discourages me. Send me Your grace, then, that I may take heart again. To which saint ought I to turn? I have, by my laxity, offended my patron saint. And so, St. John, I would like to [24-a] renew my resolution of yesterday and I hope this new resolution will not prove so fruitless.

Dearest Infant Jesus in the manger, I have offended You by my coldness. My Lord, You can see that I do adore You and I would so gladly love You but I dare not even gaze upon Your face. I can't bear to see the tears I cause You through my sins. Oh Jesus, what must I do to earn Your forgiveness? Should I make some other good resolutions? I'm so weary already of making them since they last only as long as I have Your grace! However You are indeed long-suffering with me — You are aware of my worthlessness and You allow these falls in order to prove to me my utter helplessness and to teach me humility. I freely acknowledge, dear God that I am incapable of doing even the least good; I am, in all truth, nothing. Help me, then, and have pity on me!

Holy Mother Mary, pray that I may be more fervent tomorrow than I was today. Holy Guardian Angel, stay close to me. Pray for me and for all christians, all you saints in heaven! So be it.

January 27, 1835

I wonder to whom I should be grateful for the spiritual guidance I received today? First of all, to You, beloved Lord Jesus Christ, for in Your pity You gave me strength in my weakness which otherwise would certainly have led me to sin. So, my Jesus, accept this heart overflowing with gratitude. Oh, how I could talk about Your love! I trust, my infinitely kind Lord, that You will always guide me thus in the future, since I have no regular spiritual director to whom I might better disclose my spiritual condition than to You

who are now my Guide and who alone truly understand what transpires in my heart.

Today I learned Laad was told (by M. Klar) that Father Dichtl has received permission from the Bishop to hear the confessions of the Theology students, beginning eight days from now<sup>73</sup>. Also that some other seminarians have made general confessions! How lucky they are! They have a spiritual director who delights in their devotion and their progress in the love of God.

In view of this I too began to make my plans for a general confession. Holy Spirit, guide me that I may see its necessity [24-b] for me. Enlighten my confessor that he may make known to me Your will in this matter. Whatever that may be, I shall fulfill it.

My desire to become a Jesuit reasserted itself today, not so much because of my conversation with Warwink<sup>74</sup> as of the news from Budweis which indeed kindled a fire in my heart to dedicate myself entirely to God. Dear Lord, show me what You want me to do, guide my steps in this business of such importance.

I was more devout today, thanks to you, my Mother, Queen of Heaven! You interceded for me with our Son and He graciously heard my prayer. I give you my word that I shall remain always in total dedication to my Lord, with that perfect resignation He demands of His servants.

St. John, my patron, accept the gift and homage I now give you. Be kind enough to intercede for me that I may become a priest like yourself. To you, angel guardian, I turn now for you have watched over me today even more carefully than I realized. Never leave my side. St. Francis Xavier, I declare now that I intend to be very devout tomorrow in honor of you. I shall lead the austere life of a missionary so that you will plead my cause in that matter. Help me to keep your example always before me. Pray for me, all you saints.

Today there was the funeral of the police captain, Czech de Czechentz. Be merciful to him, Lord, and to all the faithful, living and dead — and likewise to me and my parents and to my friends. So be it.

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<sup>73</sup> M. Klar, Rosina, the widow of Prof. Alois Klar. The couple had founded a home for the blind in Prague and were close friends and collaborators of Fr. Dichtl who moved permanently to Prague in 1835 to take the post of spiritual director at a recently established house of penance for clerics at nearby Hradschin. See Dichtl-Huber, *art. cit.*, 16.

<sup>74</sup> Seminarian at Prague.

January 28, 1835

The fervor I felt this morning slackened off this evening in that I had intended to keep working on my sermon but I became so distracted I couldn't get my thoughts straight. For a whole hour I endured this anguish knowing full well that it was my wonted tepidity tempting me again. At six p.m. I dropped the sermon work and began writing the anthology<sup>75</sup>. The loss of all inclination to follow Your will, O Lord, led me to fear that I myself was responsible for that dissipation. And for that reason I am now upset over my lack of discipline.

For the rest, I did try to give honor to my patron, St. Francis Xavier. [24-c] Yesterday I resolved to make a general confession of all the sins of my life. That resolution which You, my God, inspired for my humiliation, was strengthened even more today. So I determined to inquire of my confessor next Saturday whether such a confession would be necessary or helpful for me, and if so, then I plan to make it two weeks later. I wish to obey You, my God. So whatever he says about the time when I should make the confession, I shall regard as Your will. O invisible Director of mine, enlighten the mind of my confessor that he may know what best suits my holiness and perfection.

Dear Father, You well know how ardently I long for a copy of *The Catholic Museum*<sup>76</sup>. If it will help strengthen my resolve to be a missionary, then I wish to purchase it. I have the money but I wonder if I shall need it rather for *The Roman Catechism*. I think the latter may be more necessary, but You do what You will — I wish only to obey You.

To win over Laad (to my plan to be a missionary) I shall show him the letter I received from my friend Schmid in which he relates what has happened recently in Strassburg<sup>77</sup>. I hope that gesture will be good for both of us. My Lord and my God, give Your approval to this, that I may have the courage to embrace the way of life I have set my heart on: (as a missionary) to convert my

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<sup>75</sup> Neumann's personal selections from various spiritual authors. See Curley, *Neumann*, 28; also, Ferrante, *S. Giov. Neumann*, 63.

<sup>76</sup> The title of a journal treating of contemporary Church developments.

<sup>77</sup> This refers possibly to Dichtl's recent meeting with Andreas Räss, the well-known Rector of the seminary at Strassburg. Räss was an active promoter of the North American Missions. See Dichtl-Huber, *art. cit.*, 33; also Curley, *Neumann*, 35 and Ferrante, *S. Giov. Neumann*, 87-88.



fellowmen to the faith through the most adorable blood of Our Savior, Jesus Christ!

Dear Lord, sometimes these ardent desires of mine upset my peace of soul. I often seem to desire what is good and worthy but I desire it to extremes. I actually fail against the very resolution I made a month ago to entertain no really strong desires for anything other than the love of Christ. My own frailty, however, induces me to express those unrestrained desires. Forgive me for that! I shall not do so again, for a child ought not make any request with excessive ardor. Therefore I pray You, my Jesus, increase Your love in me — that is the sole object of my prayer. Do with me what You will, for You are my Father, my Savior, my Judge, and my God.

St. Francis, whose intercession with our God was so manifest today, pray for me also tomorrow and every day of my life, that I may be able to become like you. I would like St. Joseph's intercession tomorrow that the Infant Jesus may bestow upon me the grace of His love.

Holy Mary, my guardian angel and all you saints, join your prayers to his for me, for my parents and friends and for all the world. So be it.

[25] January 29, 1835

Yesterday after writing my journal I told Laad I would let him read the letter with the news from Budweis. I had consulted You, dear God, to know what You wanted about that, for I wish to follow Your will in all things. So I gave him first Schmid's letter of December 13, 1834, which he read with considerable emotion. Then I gave him Schawel's to read. You, Lord, can attest I did that only to evoke greater love for You, to extend Your reign in the heart of this confrere, and to get for myself a sort of inspector that could scrutinize my own passions and feelings in this business. He was indeed moved at what he read, but it did not occur to him to make a similar resolution. If it meet with Your approval, I shall attempt to convert him to our plan (to become foreign missionaries). You help me in this! At the very least, after he himself has seen the example of outstanding seminarians, he will be more assiduous in the practice of virtue. He asked for my prayers — I hope they will be powerful enough to obtain for him the grace of true sorrow and amendment.

It was after midnight when we both went to bed. Today I arose at 4:30 a.m. I have in mind to make a daily meditation from

among those of St. Francis de Sales, in order to get a fresh start in this business of my future ministry. O that I may bring it to a successful conclusion for Your glory and my salvation, as well as for that of my parents and friends and all the faithful, living and dead.

May You, my God and Father, bless these first efforts of mine in the spiritual life! Do not forsake the soul You created for Your glory despite its unworthiness to even speak to You because of its heinous sins. My kind and loving Savior, only begotten Son of God, dearest Lord Jesus Christ, who were nailed to the cross to save me from the abyss of sin, do not deny me the help I need to begin, to continue and to complete the work I am going to undertake.

Holy Spirit, my God and Sanctifier, most humbly do I beseech You to enlighten this spirit of mine that is weakened and dim from the sins of my past life. Without Your help, anything I do is useless. I cannot even evoke a good or wholesome thought to please my God!

[25-a] Mother of my Lord, Jesus Christ, I come to you whom I so frequently dare address as my Mother, I revere you as the Mother of Grace and the Refuge of sinners. My love for you is still so imperfect, so marred by sin. Nonetheless I do ask for your intercession with your beloved Son, my Savior and Judge. Mother — *my* Mother, ask your Son to give me the grace to meditate well and to make a proper start in this business of saving my soul. O Immaculate Mother, you yourself be my guiding star. When I call upon you in my necessity, in my relapse into sin, in my periods of spiritual aridity, do not desert me even though I have so frequently sinned against your beloved Son. It is for His glory that I am undertaking this journey in the way of His commandments.

Dear guardian angel of mine, I look upon you reverently as my guide from heaven. Make me receptive to God's voice when He speaks to me. Keep me from every serious sin especially during these days before my general confession in which I beg you to help me as much as you can. Forgive me if at times I fall back into the mire of my passions which I detest. Make me strong in spirit that I may offer a worthy dwelling-place to the Holy Trinity. All my holy patrons, look with pity on my nothingness — you who stand in the presence of God, your friend. Bear with me if I dare call you my brethren, and pray for me.

St. John Nepomucene, my patron, I beg of you to aid me in developing a habit of silence which is pleasing to God and a spirit of detachment from the world and all its empty lures. St. Francis, I would ask you to obtain for me the grace of perfect humility and an ardent zeal for the glory of our all-powerful, all-holy God. St Joseph,

I beseech you to obtain for me a perfect love of that Infant Jesus for whom you yourself exercised such a fatherly care. St. Ignatius Loyola, obtain for me the help I need to discern spirits so that I may not be deceived regarding the inspirations I mean to follow. St. Teresa, you obtain for me the grace of fervor and recollection of spirit during the retreat I am about to make. All you saints, you blessed apostles, doctors, martyrs and virgins, intercede for me in my efforts to correct my life. So be it.

[25-b] O my soul, what exactly were we twenty-four years ago? Where were you then? No one in the whole world knew beforehand he would eventually be created in the image of God. Though all the stars in the sky had passed away or had reached their heavenly goal, you could not have caused yourself to be. Where were you in the beginning? You were not in heaven, nor in hell. You could not create yourself for you did not exist. As a matter of fact, the One who created you is your God who has existed through all eternity and who is all-powerful! Were you able to ask Him to bring you into being? Oh my soul, you were nothing, less than a drop of water or a grain of sand. Had God made you a leaf, a plant, a worm or a bird, you would have glorified Him accordingly for the brief duration of your existence. You would have contributed thereby to His glory and then disappeared from the world — you would have been turned back into nothing which is just what you were at first.

Thus, my soul, here you are, with a mind to address your Creator. Because you do actually exist, you can turn to your God and give Him glory. You can give Him glory for ever because you will exist forever. And who is the recipient of your praise? Is He not that very same Creator, the only true God, the Supreme Being?

Oh soul that is mine alone, your God must be exceedingly kind to create you for His glory. You are indeed most fortunate! One day you shall behold Him, you who will not pass away like the world or the vast stars in the sky. Because of His goodness to you, you will behold Him for all eternity. What have *you* given to Him — *you*, to our Creator and your God? You yourself are so poor — it is only His limitless mercy that has called You into being to give Him glory. Was it God, then, that made you? He made you for His glory and now, with what you wish to do, do you dare forsake Him to seek your own glory?

My soul, do not do that! God is good and you are nothing. Everyone looks toward the sun when it appears high and so God ought to be at all times the object of your consideration and your reflection. If you are to be able to praise and glorify Him, you must

get to know Him. So draw ever more closely to Him to know Him better. Speak, my soul! O my God and my Creator, I am almost nothing in comparison with You. Creator of the heavens and the stars so vast, and the great Milky Way, do not even cast a glance at this handful of dust that dares address You. A single glance from You with Your infinite wisdom and holiness would annihilate it immediately.

Oh, permit me to speak to You and acclaim Your mercy and Your power! I should like to praise and bless You in my own person for that is why You made me and that is my greatest happiness. I do thank You for having created me and called me to give You glory. Like the butterfly I would like to hover around You — I should really be happy just to skip and flutter about You! Let me sometimes « alight » on You to rest when I am weary.

My God and my Creator, point out to me how I can fulfill Your will. [25-c] I would gladly fulfill the purpose of my existence, so teach me to praise You. I wish to do what You teach me so that You may not wish to crush me, poor and ignorant that I am. You have endowed me with the power to know — and yet how miserable and sinful and ignorant I have been! I have scorned my Creator; I have forsaken my God! And how long has that sorry state of affairs lasted! Oh Creator of mine, have You already in Your plan destroyed me? Have you not already cancelled my call to eternal bliss? My soul, what have you done? You have deserted Your God and pursued self-praise and self-love. How could you leave Him? Will He then not reject your praise? Oh, you have been infinitely ungrateful, my poor, wretched soul! Never again forsake your God and your Creator. He would derive glory from your damnation and you would be miserable for all eternity. Turn back to Him and beg His mercy and He will in all likelihood accept you again, and He will certainly restore your heritage.

My God, do not reject me. I come to You now. You could destroy me and I could not gainsay it for I have sinned against You every day of my life. I promise never to leave You again, to love and glorify only You who are my only good. Receive me, then, with all that I have. I would be but Your servant for You have created me. You alone have been truly good to me. My almighty Creator, give me the strength to stand spotless before You always.

Holy Mary, intercede for me. My Lord, accept these the first fruits of my meditation which I have made in Your honor and glory and for my own eternal salvation.

Today I talked with Wawrik<sup>78</sup> and I was almost persuaded to abandon my desire to become a Jesuit. Dear God, I have sinned against You today by that rather irresponsible chit-chat. Wawrik was trying to praise me by saying I was knowledgeable in Botany, and I did not deny it. Do not deprive me of Your grace.

St. Joseph, let me offer this day's efforts to you even though they are full of sin and imperfection. I must purify my heart with a more efficacious love for God. Pray for me and for my parents and friends, and for all us christians who have been blessed with the love of Jesus Christ.

Tomorrow will be the feast of my patron, St. Ignatius Loyola. Pray for me, St. Ignatius, that God may enlighten me with the knowledge of things divine that I shall need in my vocation. My holy guardian angel, remain with me always. All you saints in heaven, pray for me. So be it.

[26] January 30, 1835

Dear God, help me to recollect myself so that I may be able to reflect on the end for which You made me. (Today is the feast of) St. Ignatius Loyola whose life I should call to mind often today and whom I asked to intercede for me that my God and Creator may forgive the sins that so disturb me. St. Ignatius, I am convinced of your affection for me and though I am unworthy of your regard, I know you are surely before the throne of my holy Judge. May He forgive my carelessness in the performance of my duties! Have pity on me. Holy Spirit, do not deny me Your help. Holy Mary, aid me.

My soul, the Creator has brought you out of your nothingness in order to crown you with His blessings. All that you have, all your faculties, you have received that you might acknowledge and recall Him, love Him and perceive His goodness, that you might reflect on Him and someday behold Him and praise Him. You have often opposed this wish of Your most kind Creator and while you have not thereby diminished His happiness, you surely have offended Him. He should, then, cast you off!

How utterly wretched are all who oppose God's will! Through the contempt they show by their disobedience they neither love God

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<sup>78</sup> Probably the same as the fellow seminarian mentioned in note 74: Wawri(n)k.

nor do they have a proper regard for their own welfare, inasmuch as only God's love can make them truly happy. My Lord, Jesus Christ, because of my sins You chastise me with aridity of soul. I ought to be meditating now but my spirit is so dried out I can scarcely sustain the thought of Your presence.

This morning I had wanted to purchase a copy of *The Catholic Museum*. God seemed to be opposed to this. After class I went to the bookstore but because one must pay in advance for each volume ordered, I came away empty-handed since I didn't have enough money with me.

I went to Dikubek<sup>79</sup> and inquired if volume IV bis of Canisius had arrived. I was told that it would cost 4 florins, 15 kroner and I didn't have that much. However, trusting in Your protection, my Lord, I returned home where Laad had brought me the 1834 volume of Carops, and so I spent the rest of the morning looking at that. All these frustrations leave me limp. I did not write a single word of my sermon and I studied my lessons quite carelessly. I intend to go to confession tomorrow. Holy Mary, pray for me. My guardian angel, do not forsake me. All you saints in heaven, pray for me. So be it.

[26-a] January 31, 1835

When I went to bed at 10:30 p.m. and said my usual night prayers to Our Blessed Mother and St. Ignatius, the good Lord stirred my soul and I wept! What feelings of contrition and humility accompanied my tears! Dear Mother Mary, I thank you for that. For the future I plan to be more exact in the performance of my duties. I intend to be as conscientious as possible in this in order to deserve your help, my Mother, in the task of saving my soul. I would like now to prove the sincerity of my resolution by immediately going to work at my sermon which I neglected yesterday.

Holy Mary, today it is up to you to guide and comfort me. So look upon me with your maternal pity and care. Pray for me together with my guardian angel, with our patrons, St. John Nepomucene, St. Joseph, St. Francis Xavier, St. Ignatius, St. Aloysius, St. Teresa and all the saints.

Most kind Lord, I am grateful for Your help, and I thank you

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<sup>79</sup> Bookseller in Prague.

too, you blessed spirits of heaven. After I complete my obligations, I intend to continue the meditation interrupted yesterday. Holy Spirit, descend upon me.

My dear soul, such devout thoughts will not occur to you ever! If they did, in the past, you rejected them. You have injured yourself by refusing to reflect on God our Creator, on your life's purpose which is to give glory to Him, on your final destiny which is the ultimate happiness, namely the blessed vision of God Himself. You certainly have been wretched, trying to exist without God, your Creator! What were you thinking of and on what did you set your heart? God alone is your highest good and you have not known Him. You sided with the world, that is with Satan, God's adversary. Where will you go? To God? You are sadly mistaken. My soul, turn back, then, to God who created you, for your own happiness in accord with His infinite goodness.

Do not consider the world any further. Its followers are most wretched. If God welcomes us in His mercy, we shall be most fortunate one day and we shall indeed glorify Him.

O God who created and sustain me, I shall reflect on nothing but Yourself. I wish to learn nothing but to know You better that I may glorify You for all eternity. Dear God, You are the sole object of my ardor and my longing. May Your love never die in my heart!

I wish to esteem vanity no longer, nor glory nor praise nor tepidity, nor lying, nor envy or improper or slanderous thoughts. [26-b] So, my God, accept the gratitude that wells up in my soul! You have created me to give You glory and I am so fortunate that You should really be so infinitely kind to me. You desire, dear Lord that I should be moved by the vision of Your perfection and love. Look not upon my sins, my God, for they surely condemn me. I wish I could always be devout and pious. That would certainly be pleasing to You. O my almighty Creator, my infinitely kind God, accept these thoughts of mine, stained and imperfect though they be, and these desires that draw me to Yourself. I actually have nothing worthwhile to offer You. Remain with me at all times especially today when I shall be confessing my sins.

Holy Mary, heavenly Mother of mine, whose feast we celebrate today, intercede for me. Angel guardian watch over me today. My holy patron saints, help me grow in the practice of those virtues which made you so dear to God. So be it.

In the evening

Ah, my God, You have in truth been gracious to me! You have given me my body that I might do good works — if only I had always used it for Your glory! I seem to enjoy good health as a rule now; I wonder if I am equally healthy of soul? Do what You will concerning my body and its frailty.

I still feel quite distracted, so that I can hardly think. I plan, then, to make my usual meditation tomorrow. Today I went to confession and asked my confessor if I might make a general confession in two weeks' time. He agreed, so dear God, help me in this task. Holy Mother Mary, pray for me.

February 1, 1835

You, my Lord, are my strength. I place all my hope in You, for You are all-powerful and I am so very weak. You are so good and I so imperfect. In the past You have so frequently come to my aid when I stood in need of Your grace. You have kindly invited me to approach Your awesome table. Though surely my sins have given You sufficient cause, You did not annihilate me. I now need Your help, dear God and Creator.

Heavenly Father, since it was You who inspired me to undertake a general confession, give me the courage to make it properly. I've been at loose ends for two days now, doubtlessly through my own fault. I can neither meditate nor even pray with the sort of fervor I would like to have. Would it be too much to ask You for a special grace of devotion in my prayers? I fear that [26-c] this anxiety of mine is growing and I will make an imperfect confession.

My soul, you are so weak! Humble yourself before God's throne. He will hear your pleas for He is infinitely kind. He truly loves those sinners who turn back to Him with a contrite heart.

My Lord, take pity on me. Soul of mine, you ought to be destroyed, you have sinned so often against your Benefactor Who may well be disgusted with you. Though He endowed you with many spiritual advantages, the deeds of your childhood still stand in accusation against you. You yourself wasted them, for your passions offended human nature. What sort of personal vitality have you shown? Where is that tenacious memory now? And that sharp



intellect? All you have now is worthless. How grievously indeed you have sinned!

How can you possibly give glory to God? And He will demand a strict account of those gifts you received in such abundance. How will you look when He finds you empty-handed, with no good works to show, when, if you had only wished to do so, you could have performed brilliantly? God has surely been most generous to you while you have been most ungrateful. You have wasted His gifts — where are the expected returns? And still you look for mercy from Him? Can you really approach Him with true sorrow of heart to beg His pardon?

It was God who sowed in our heart the seeds of all the virtue you possess — He sowed the seed of innocence and candor, of sincerity, humility and love for truth. What sort of trees and fruit have *you* produced? He will expect to see them. What do you have to show Him? My soul, you are truly poor and exceedingly wretched! God has prompted You to make so many good resolutions. How have you fulfilled them? Where can you show a conscientious performance of your duties as a seminarian? He created you for His own glory and that you might help your fellowmen. You have despised and neglected that purpose. You have given bad example to your companions. By dissipating the spiritual vitality the Lord bestowed on you, you have effectively deprived the world of the help it needs.

I ought indeed to acclaim Your kindness, my God and Creator. I should, in fact, rejoice over Your goodness to me, but all I can seem to do is to complain of how wretchedly I have sinned against You.

Now, dear soul, do you perceive how really poor you are? See if you can still find something worthwhile in yourself to give God in return. He is the Creator, the King of the angels and the blessed in heaven. You are the greatest of sinners and still you think you can find something worthy to give Him. He is a just judge, with a heart, a spirit so righteous no one can justly approach Him. You have fallen so deeply, who can possibly rescue you from the pit of your guilt? Your God, alone! He is your judge, the all-holy One. Though your hands are stained you have a powerful advocate in heaven who has also been a human being and who knows how easily man can fall. Turn also to your brethren in heaven. They love God and God loves them. [27] He will listen whenever they pray for you who are still members of the Church militant. Turn to them — your guardian angel will be at your side.

Mary, Mother of my God whom I have offended, overlook my

sins and intercede for me with my God and my Judge who is your beloved Son. I dare not even look up towards Him for He would surely hurl me from His throne as I deserve because of the sins of my childhood. Our holy Church, established on earth by your Son, calls you the Refuge of sinners, and She is infallible. She too intercedes for me and She is truly my mother for I firmly believe all that She teaches. O Mary, prove to me that you are indeed the one whose intercession the Lord received so affably at Cana.

I do hope my sins will not make you forsake me. You can see me, Mother — forgive my boldness in addressing you in this way. I intend to love you as a son should but I am unworthy that you even give me a thought. How can I truthfully say I love you when I contradict what I say by my sinful life. I do weep for my sins, but what good are such tears? Are they really tears of sorrow? How meager my sorrow in comparison with the gravity of my sins! Dearest Mother, I whose sins have nailed your Son to the cross, ask for your aid. You are the Mother of mercy; plead my cause with the child Jesus who has so often heard your prayers. Tears flow down my cheeks but the sorrow in my heart fails to match the gravity of my sins. It seems impossible for me to have a proper sorrow for my sins and yet without that there can be no forgiveness from your holy Son. Shall I then be lost for all eternity? What am I to do?

Intercede for me. How utterly forsaken am I now by the very world I so much loved until recently! Beg my Savior not to condemn me for all eternity. I would ask Him to send me any misfortune at all but I can no longer endure them.

My holy guardian angel and my patron saints whom I have offended, pray for me that the Mother of Mercy may intercede for me in this work of salvation I am soon to undertake, namely, my general confession. That will cleanse my soul of sin through the sacrament of penance instituted by my most merciful Lord. So be it.

February 2, 1835

Dearest Mother in heaven, were you a little happier with me today? I would like to disclose my needs to you for they disturb me deeply. First of all, I am indeed a sinner and yet I want to be perfect. I badly need an understanding, perceptive spiritual director. Ask God [27-a] to inspire my Spiritual Father, should He so will. My predominant passion is still the excessive distaste I feel in the performance of my obligations as a seminarian. By your intercession,

obtain for me the grace to be rid of that. I also still have an inordinate conceit. Ask the Holy Spirit to give me the grace of humility.

I am about to confess all the sins of my life. Do not deny me your help to enlighten my memory, to guide my soul, to stir my heart and to strengthen my ardent desire for God's love. Mother of Grace, look with pity on my extreme weakness. I would like to dedicate myself to the life of a foreign missionary if it would add to God's glory, your own honor and my salvation and the enlightenment of the infidel. I am disposed to sacrifice all I own. But I beg you to make me fit for such a vocation. I still lack many abilities of body and soul to be a priest according to the heart of our sovereign high priest Jesus Christ. Intercede for me. I could still mention other needs, but you well know my state and I trust you will not deny me your help.

Dear Jesus, my Lord, I want to repeat for You my resolutions and my plans. However, the inconstancy I have shown to date and my so sinful behavior discourage me. I am too impatient with the meager effects of my conversion, the scant results of my prayers and my repeated lapses. Are these not an indication of a delusive half-heartedness that would have me consider such matters as rather a sign of a sincere and genuine resolve to lead a devout life? The thought that I am so inept at public speaking and conversation, crushes me exceedingly. All this anxiety continually disturbs my peace of soul which is really all I want. Make me understand my worthlessness so that I may be more humble. My God, even though such knowledge may cause me great pain, I thank You for giving it to me.

My Jesus I dare not approach You with confidence. There are some things I badly want, so that I am over-anxious about them. I beg You to help me bring these wants under control, to wit, to receive soon the first volume of *Allioli* for the Dean; to acquire the fourth and fifth volume of *Canisius*; the journal *The Catholic Museum* and a copy of *Homo Apostolicus*<sup>80</sup>. Without a doubt it is wrong for me to want these things so anxiously and still my peace seems to devolve on placating such petty tyrannies. Be merciful, Lord! If it be Your will, dear God, satisfy my wants, but may Your will be done! Be gracious to me, to my parents and friends and all christians. You blessed spirits, pray for us. So be it.

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<sup>80</sup> By St. Alphonsus Liguori.

[27-b] February 3, 1835

My Savior, dare I approach You? The unruly desire to have a copy of *The Catholic Museum* led me to buy one, though I ought not have done so. If it was true that You really wished to help me, then surely I went against Your will. My Jesus, my Jesus, I have sinned against You who are all-powerful. How imperfect am I yet in mortifying my appetites! I had promised to submit to Your will and all I do is follow my own passions, my self-love. How shall I ever be worthy of Your help which I need all the more after spending those two florins and fifty kreuzer? How long shall I abuse Your patience.

Forgive me, my Jesus — I want to do all I can that You may restore Your grace to me; isn't that right, my Lord? But pardon this offense and I shall be happy, for Your grace will have replaced my sin. All you saints in heaven, pray for me.

Dear soul of mine, the body in which you dwell is mortal. You will have to abandon it before you know it. You cannot know where you must die, neither the place nor the time, nor whether you will die swiftly or only after a painful sickness. Will you be able to confess your sins and receive Holy Communion and Extreme Unction? You have no way of knowing anything about that. You will have to leave this world and all you see here below. Nor will you be able to have your parents or your friends come with you. How will you fare if you have to appear before the fearsome Judge? How would you then desire never to have sinned against Him in any way! Then the slightest fault will weigh upon you like the heaviest of burdens. Then too you will see that your avenging God, He who alone in all the world could comfort you, could quite justly condemn you for your sins. How much, then, would you desire to have mortified more generously your flesh and your passions! But such thoughts as these will be futile then. What will it be like to see that flesh of yours so pampered and so pleasurably indulged, now the food for worms? It will be buried deep in the bosom of mother earth, to gradually turn to dust. Those hands will be limp and lifeless because of their indifference and tepidity, those eyes blank, so that you will no longer be able to abuse them looking at vain, useless things. Those ears will no more hear of sickness and ill-health. And your tongue will never again receive your Savior in Holy Communion. After a few years [27-c] you will be completely forgotten. People may speak with indifference or even condemn you for your sins. « May he rest in peace », they will say of you, and

think nothing more about it. Everything you once loved will be scattered about among the people; they will make light of the things you used to enjoy; they will mock your empty pleasures. Oh death, how very important you are! We really ought to think only of you. My soul, are we then likewise so foolish? Don't you want to escape eternal punishment? You do, without a doubt; but you are only half-hearted about it.

My God and my Creator, all I can do now is fling myself in Your arms. Do not reject me as Your slave, and Your son! All this frailty of mine that induces me to sin can readily lead me to despair of my salvation. However, dear God of mine, I know You will not spurn my desire to please You even though it be weak and full of self-love and tepidity. I expect to make no progress in virtue. My Creator, shower Your grace on me that I may be able to withstand Your scrutiny when You please to judge me. Be merciful to me; else I will perish. What measures should I take to escape eternal death? I no longer wish to consider the world and its opinions, my God, for it will pass away while You will always be my Judge. I intend to try only to please You, to deserve Your love which alone can make me truly happy. O my Creator, welcome my soul then, when it comes to You.

Holy Mary, my Mother, assist me together with your holy spouse, in my final struggle. Ask your Son, then, to have pity on me. My holy guardian angel whom my Creator has given to help me, never forsake me especially in my last hour when my soul will have to depart this body and appear before the Judge. Accompany my soul in your kindness that it may not be lost forever. My holy patrons, intercede for me that my general confession may have the desired effect. By your prayers enable me to grow in every virtue. O my Jesus, be gracious to my parents and friends, to my benefactors and all christians. So be it.

[28] February 4, 1835

I thank you, Lord, for the graces You have bestowed on me. I was more exact in the performance of my duties today and You have blessed my work. The bitterness and anxiety in my heart subsided somewhat — I was more at peace today. Would that I were so fortunate as to have received Your forgiveness for my sin of yesterday! How I long, dear Jesus, to express the joy You have inspired in me. Today I had it in mind to persuade my sister Louise to enter the

Order of the Gray Sisters when they open their new foundation in Bohemia<sup>81</sup>. She is a good person, and innocent. She is happy to work and completely unaware of the world and its passions. It is quite apparent that she has an ardent love for Christ. May God bless my words this time! She could pray for me when I will be dealing with the infidel.

Dear Jesus, do with me what You wish. Holy Mother of God, and St. Aloysius, take Louise under your protection. Watch over her heart and soul! Make Yourself vividly present to me now, my Jesus, for I want to make my meditation on the last judgment. You see, my soul, once the billowing waters of the seas and the rivers rise and flood over the earth, the stars will fall from the sky and the sun, moon and stars will be no more. The earth will leave its appointed course and will be completely destroyed. Then you will be dead; your eternal bliss or misery will have arrived. Then you will know your state for all eternity. Jesus Christ, God, will come from Heaven to make known the justice and the mercy of God before all the world. There you will see the blessed with their everlasting crowns, clothed in raiment white as snow. There too you will find the damned, desperate beneath the iron-yoke of Satan.

My soul, where will you be? Will you be condemned forever or will you be eternally happy in the company of our God and our Blessed Virgin Mary, of all the angels and saints?

My Lord, how utterly glorious will Your radiance be then. You will come with the heavenly host for all the world to see. The Book of Life will be opened before you. How I hope my name is there! I cannot even imagine the splendor of Your majesty. [28-a] Will I quiver with sheer heavenly joy or rather with horrid fright when I glimpse Your holy cross, more brilliant than the sun?

O my Jesus; with Your almighty voice You will call me forward — to the right or to the left? That separation will last forever. My soul, your sins will be broadcast before the whole of mankind. All will see how grievous and frequent they were. And what will be the Judge's verdict? How frightening the countenance of that Christ whose grace you so often spurned or neglected! In which fold will you be? Will the Judge say to you, « Come, you blessed into heavenly glory », or not? Will you be in the company of the Blessed Virgin, of your guardian angel and your patrons and all the

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<sup>81</sup> Actually Louise remained at home to care for her father after Neumann's mother died. In her old age Louise joined a group of nuns in Prachatitz. See Curley, *Neumann*, 2-3.

saints or will you be condemned to dwell forever among the devil and his legions in inextinguishable fire? That still depends on you! If you do not choose to love Jesus Christ now, you will then never see Him anymore, nor experience His love and His grace.

Our blessed Mother will no longer plead your cause. She will rather despise you, as will your guardian angel who will praise and glorify the justice of God in your condemnation. And what company you shall have! Everyone will loathe and condemn you. Your former friends will be in heaven, and in their ecstasy will completely forget you. A burning envy will gnaw forever at your innards.

However if you really wish to mortify your passions and your flesh, if you will indeed humble yourself and submit to Him, He will be merciful to you and will place you in the fold of the blessed. You will behold Him and enjoy Him forever with the holy apostles and martyrs. You will have the eternal love of your Mother Mary and of Jesus Himself. In all truth, you will see Him!

Oh, how happy that will be for you! My soul, it depends on us. We want then to bend every effort to eliminate whatever displeases our God. The unpleasantness of confession and trying to be truly sorry for our sins before our fellowmen can only be wholesome and helpful for us. And ought not the practice of virtue be easy for us when we recall what great reward awaits us? Through the intercession of the blessed Virgin, of our guardian angel and our patrons, Jesus, our Judge, in His kindness, will surely grant us the grace we need. Dear God, be gracious to us when You come for the judgment. So be it.

[28-b] February 5, 1835

I was more tepid in spirit today than I was yesterday; I did not think of my Jesus very often or very ardently. I was quite careless in the fulfillment of my duties. I ate more than I actually needed. O my Lord, forgive the lapses of this past day. Beginning tomorrow morning I plan to recollect Your presence frequently, and stir up my devotion to my dear Mother Mary.

I turn to you with confidence, Mary, Refuge of Sinners — offer these resolutions of mine to your adorable Son. Blessed Virgin, I do not deserve to approach you to seek your intercession. Still, the fact that you have already heard my pleas so often, gives me the courage to choose you as my protectress. It is my urgent need that impels me to do so, because in this whole town I know of no one to whom

to go for advice in this so critical matter. I still waver between good and evil. Do show me by your own example what I ought to do.

Do not refuse me your help, particularly, in the examination of conscience I plan to make next Sunday. Beg the Holy Spirit to enlighten me. Because of their sins the damned are in the pit of hell, in the abode of such misery. They experience unspeakable torment in their senses and in their flesh. Just as they availed themselves of their senses and their bodies to commit sin, so now they suffer pain in both. The same eyes that sinned through lewd glances now must contemplate constantly the horrid demons and hell itself. Those ears hear only the wailing and grief of despair and resentment, because in life they listened only to the siren song of forbidden pleasure and lewd talk.

However, in hell there is an even greater torment: the loss of heavenly glory, which indeed will endure forever. O my soul, how longingly will you search then for your Creator! But you will know, too, that then you will never be able to find Him. Learn now, therefore, to please your Savior who will one day be your stern judge.

Tomorrow, St. Francis Xavier, I plan to ask for your help so that I may avoid any dissipation and aridity. Today Father Matusek died in the general hospital. Be gracious to him, my God! So be it.

[28-c] February 6, 1835

My Savior, infinitely kind Jesus, You have preserved me from all serious sin today. Because St. Francis Xavier watched over me, I was also more mortified today. I thank You with all my heart for that. You know, dear Jesus that with each passing day my desire to please You grows. Let Your love permeate me and inspire me to do all that You desire.

Forgive me, my God, if I address You as my Father. I am actually not worthy to be called Your son because of the frequency and heinousness of my sins. Nevertheless, Oh Holy One who alone can make me holy, I do wish to improve and to be a more obedient son than I have been in the past. However, I need Your grace. When I begin to ponder the stars shining in the sky and the vastness of the universe, then in truth I can perceive my own nothingness.

Dear God, You are the one who created those stars and this universe! And what am I but a worm, to even dare think of You? Your majesty is manifest in the splendor of Your works. Whatever I



see roundabout me gives praise to Your wisdom, Your goodness and Your omnipotence. How beautiful is the world and yet this beauty, what is it in comparison with that of the heavenly city that awaits us. Most Holy Trinity, You dwell and reign everywhere. The choirs of Seraphim praise You endlessly. They are vibrant with God's own joy for Your having created them. I give You my thanks!

Holy Mary, Mother of God's grace and mercy, I have to be grateful also for you. I wish I were worthy to call myself your servant. You will teach me to be humble and when I have died, show me your beloved Son; is that not true, dear Mother, Refuge of Sinners?

My holy patron saints, how happy I would be to be able to see you now! Pray for me, St. John, St. Joseph, St. Francis Xavier, St. Ignatius, St. Aloysius and all the apostles etc. My holy guardian angel, pray that I may attain the blessed vision of my Creator!

[29] What ineffable joy must reign in heaven where so many happy souls love one another and sing the praises of their God.

My Jesus, when I consider my frailty and my passions still so little mortified, my confidence begins to waver. Nonetheless my trust in Your help and intercession and in that of my holy Mother and my guardian angel, together with the prayers of all the saints of Your Church, of my parents and friends — all these indeed strengthen my confidence that You will not reject my efforts however imperfect! Take pity on me, dear Jesus, and help me.

Dear Mother, I want to be truly humble tomorrow, to try to cleanse my heart of every shred of pride. By your powerful intercession, come to my help, for without that I cannot advance in perfection. Pray too for my parents and my friends, Mother of Grace and Refuge of Sinners, Comfortress of the afflicted! So be it.

February 7, 1835

Dear Lord I feel very clearly the weight of Your hand upon me! Today I have been sorely afflicted with shame and sorrow and chagrin. I received the cassock I ordered — it fits very poorly around the neck and the other seminarians laugh at me. Kind Lord, my neck bothers me more than ever. In fact it has been very painful almost all day. My sweet Jesus, I thank You for this. You have given me a chance to mortify myself, particularly with regard to my vanity.

I ought always to turn to You with urgency for You are the only who can help me. Dear Jesus, You can see how utterly desolate

I am! I cannot become a foreign missionary unless You restore my health. So I place my trust in You. You have healed so many infirm who were also sinners though not as great a sinner as I. Still, my God, I pray You to show forth Your power and goodness by healing me. Forgive me for praying for temporal benefits. I can see the imperfections in my soul — if I were sound in body, it would give me the courage I need! Unless You come to my aid it could be I will not become a priest.

I know, most holy Jesus, that I am unworthy. Nonetheless, have pity on me and on those of my fellowmen You will save through my ministry. I know too that You could avail [29-a] Yourself of a thousand others more worthy than I. Behold me, at Your feet, my God! I am entirely Yours. I do not deserve Your pity because of my sins and yet I turn to You for apart from You, there is no salvation. Do with me what You will. I shall bear whatever punishment You inflict on me. But do not deny me Your aid — especially do not permit my faith to falter.

Dearest Mother, you have helped me to practice humility, patience and resignation. You have encouraged me in the performance of my duties. Accept my thanks now, and help me also in the future. My holy guardian angel, be my tireless guide. Forgive me should my lethargy induce me to disregard your help. My soul, always obey your angel's commands. Ask him to interest himself in guiding you away from sin into the heavenly kingdom. Pray without ceasing that the Savior may deign to accept the offering I make of myself, that He may not rebuke me for the thousands of offenses I have committed against Him. Offer Him that desire of mine!

Behold, guardian angel, my Jesus calls me to come to Him, but I am so weak! You lead me to Him. I cast myself in your arms. My beloved Mother invites me — how fortunate I am!

Beloved Mother of God, accept my sighs and tears in recompense for your mercy. All the saints in heaven exhort me to follow in their footsteps! Dear God, with all my heart I desire to attach myself to You. I want to lead a devout life that will bring me to You and that will enable me to glorify You for all eternity.

Holy guardian angel, never forsake me. Show me the proper path to follow, the safest way for me to reach the Supreme Good. Holy Mary, do offer to my God, the most holy Trinity, this promise of mine never to oppose His holy will again. Pray for me that I may receive the help I need. My holy patron saints, pray that the Holy Spirit may enlighten, strengthen and perfect me. Dear Lord Jesus, I am entirely Yours. Through the intercession of Your holy Mother

Mary I shall come to You. Be gracious to my parents and my friends.  
So be it.

[29-b] February 8, 1835

Father Mausek was buried today. I served as acolyte and I took the opportunity to visit Mr. Erben the lawyer who is sick. His condition is, in fact, rather grave. May the Lord heal both his body and his soul!

Today I was more distracted than yesterday or the day before. Whenever I failed to think of Jesus or one of the saints, my fervor slackened considerably. Tomorrow I propose to recall frequently my patron Saint John Nepomucene so that he may obtain for me the grace of truthfulness when I make my general confession.

Dear Jesus, pardon the faults I have committed today, especially that of tepidity. Dear Mother Mary, Queen of Angels, I now offer you my soul, sick and feeble as it is. Guide it during this coming week. Ask the Holy Spirit to deign to illumine it that I may know all the sins of my past. I have resolved, dear Jesus, to become Your obedient disciple in every possible way, with my whole mind and heart and will. Enlighten my spirit; raise Your voice and speak to it, for so many faults and sins have dulled its hearing. Control my heart that it may long but for You and think of but You. Guide my will that it may love but You who alone are the most lovable One.

Dear Jesus, that resolution I've made is still very difficult for me because this passionate flesh and proud spirit of mine revolt against the idea of total submission that I wish to make in order to serve You according to Your will. My sweet and amiable Lord, I beg You most humbly to give strength of both body and soul that I may make my general confession, to be able to receive Your pardon for all the sins of my past life. I shall also ask You to remove all my scruples concerning my confessions past and future. However You are most wise and You know whether or not that grace is necessary for my salvation. Do with me according to Your wisdom and mercy, O Lord! All I ask is that You grant me the grace to make this confession in such a way that I may obtain Your pardon. Abide with me at all times so that I may not fall back into the mire I so detest now.

[29-c] At this time my predominant passion is tepidity or indifference in the performance of my duties. I seem to fulfill them only because I fear the pangs of conscience that would ensue were I not to do so. Oh You who are the fount of holiness, I do trust that

I will overcome this indifference, because You are all-powerful. Send me more humiliations. My Jesus, I aspire to perfection. I wish to forsake whatever may hinder my progress towards You. Teach me what I must surrender in order to be perfect. O Jesus Christ, Son of Man, You be my teacher. Instruct me and I shall heed You with the sort of care Mary Magdalene showed You. I want to follow You alone and not the world or my own desires.

Dear God, Holy Spirit, make me holy. Give me the grace I need to become like my Jesus. He died for us men — bless me with the merits of His precious death. Shower them over my whole being that God's virtue may permeate my soul to the full. Grant me Your seven gifts which will lead me to God. Help me to know whatever I need to make ever greater progress. Give me that knowledge of God which alone can render men happy. Infuse into my soul the three theological virtues.

O heavenly Father, my Creator and Support, I turn back to You now after so many heinous sins. Like the prodigal son of the Gospels, I come back to You. Embrace me in Your kindness and forgive my sins. I resolve to try never to commit them again. Be merciful to me — I am still quite weak. Dearly beloved Father, accept the offering I am making. Of myself I have only my will to give You — I consecrate it to You. Accept it because Your only begotten Son died for me.

Holy Mary, Mother of my God, Spouse of the Holy Spirit, Daughter of the Heavenly Father, intercede for me. Your influence is powerful — obtain for me the help I need. Have pity on me. My holy patron saints, obtain for me and my parents and friends and for all men those virtues that will make us true friends of God. So be it.

[30] February 9, 1835

I behaved better today that I did yesterday even though I did not recall my patron St. John Nepomucene quite as frequently. Sweet Jesus, forgive that fault — I grievously offended You by forgetting Your beloved friend who has obtained so many graces for me. On one occasion I failed to heed the prompting of Your grace, and I was more lethargic today than I ought to have been.

I began to make the examination of conscience for my general confession. Oh my God, how unfervent it was! How shall I ever evoke sentiments of perfect sorrow? Dear Father, I know not how

to start so as to fare well in this so important work — I do not know even how to begin!

O divine Master, consider not the heinousness of my sins nor my ingratitude and indifference in the face of such wickedness. Be gracious to me and grant me the grace to confess anything I may ever have done to displease You from my childhood down to the present day. O my God, Fountain of my holiness, what memory could ever retain the infinite gravity and number of my sins? Holy Spirit, dispel the shadows that hide my sins from view that I may know them clearly and that the general absolution for them from my confessor may be ratified on high.

My Jesus, I renew my resolution to become Your follower but I entreat You, do not cast me off! I wish to please only You. Remove from me therefore, whatever displeases You. Help me in this task. Pour forth Your love in my heart which is so disconsolate in its worthlessness.

St. Joseph, foster father of my Jesus, teach me the proper way to love Our Savior. I still know nothing about this, and I will be docile towards you. O, hear my prayer! Tomorrow I shall devote my time mainly to prayer. You plead my cause with Christ. Your holy spouse, my Mother, will join you. How fortunate I am to be able to call upon you who on earth took care of Jesus despite His omnipotence. O hear my prayer from this vale of tears, for myself, my parents and friends, for all the faithful and for the unbelievers. Have pity on me. So be it.

[30-a] February 10, 1835

Today I felt more fervent and I was conscientious in performing my obligations. Still my heart was troubled almost all day long. Doubtlessly the reason for this was my intemperate eating this morning, because in doing so I failed to heed the Lord's voice.

My God, I have made but little progress in the examination of my conscience. Tomorrow I resolve to try to recall all the serious sins of my wretched past. I am so very weak, Holy Spirit. My understanding is inadequate to judge the gravity of my sins, my memory too weak to recall all my sins.

To make a sacramental confession without a suitable examination of conscience would be sacrilegious, my God. Help me that I may not add to my existing guilt. I want to conquer the shame I feel in confessing my sins, if You will but help me. Lord Jesus Christ,

You are my teacher. I resolve to accept every trial You may send me. So many of Your saints have endured great pain without ever committing the sins I have so often committed. Punish me, Lord, that Your glory may show forth in Your love, for You punish only those You love!

When I am afflicted I think of You with more fervor and I am more devout than when I possess those joys of this life which You send me at times to strengthen me in my temptations to pride. Dear Jesus, at times I believe I endure every pain for Your name's sake. However I must admit this is actually but an illusion of my pride. Dispel such ideas, Lord. Rather, do what You will!

Holy Mary, the state of my soul seems at times to me to be worse than before, in that my earnest desire to mortify myself has diminished considerably. I do not know whether this is good or bad. My beloved heavenly Mother, [30-b] I deserve not even a single look of pity from you because I have sinned against your divine Son. Still, because I have no one on earth to counsel me and because the thought of being lost forever is exceedingly fearful, have pity on me. You are my Mother; O Blessed Virgin, warn me if I should be treading the path of eternal damnation. It is true, dearest Mother, I cannot be certain of my sincerity of heart and I ought not lie to you. Nevertheless hear my prayer for I can do naught but implore you most humbly. Guide me. You can readily perceive the weakness of my soul and you know its cause. Oh, plead my cause with the Holy Spirit that He may make me virtuous and holy. What else can I long for but my eternal salvation that I may sing the praises of my heavenly benefactor forever? O holy Virgin, pray for me together with Your saintly husband, that God may forgive my sins despite the imperfections in my confession.

My holy guardian angel, do not grieve over my sins — Oh that I myself had a deep sorrow for them! My holy patron saints, intercede for me that I may receive the grace of faith, hope and charity, of true humility and purity of heart, and a solid knowledge of myself. Be close about me when I am tempted.

May the good Lord be gracious to me, to my parents and friends, my benefactors and all christians. May He show mercy to the infidel! So be it.

February 11, 1835

My dear heavenly Father, I am most happy to thank You for the grace You have given me. I almost regret not being richer so

that I might make a gift to You. Ah, my Jesus, You are indeed sweet. My Lord, You can see I have nothing and that I am the poorest of creatures when I come to think of showing my gratitude to You. O Jesus, accept my heart [30-c] and do with it as You please. I offer myself entirely to You, my Lord. Accept this worthless, contemptible offer of mine. Had I something better, I would give that to You with all my heart.

You are aware, dear Lord, of my resolve to offend You no more. However, I fear I may break my resolution. Still since You are so good to me who have deserved eternal punishment — because You have not destroyed me, I plan to make ever greater progress towards You if only You will not spurn me. Receive this submission on my part, however unreliable it may be. I would do even more were I able.

Forgive my pride, Lord, that makes bold to approach Your throne. Be gracious to me. I offer You, dear Jesus, all my desires and my most loving thoughts. Send me all the adversity in the world. I would bear it with joy if only You will bestow Your grace on me. My infinitely kind Father, I wish my sorrow were as vast as my sins. An acute sorrow for them would in fact be a great comfort to me. However, dear Lord, You have not bestowed this grace on me — and for that I am grateful. I aim, then, to follow Your sacred will, your counsels. I wish to obey the promptings of Your grace. From now on I wish only what You will. O my divine Master, show me Your will, for that shall be my guide.

Mary, my Mother, Queen of Heaven, you are most kind — intercede for me. Be always on my side. I promise to offend your beloved Son no more, especially by a mortal sin. Obtain for me the holy grace I need. Teach me every virtue that made you so lovely.

My holy guardian angel and my holy patron saints, plead my cause without fail, and that of my parents, my friends, my benefactors and all the faithful and the unbelievers. Dear Jesus, be gracious to me. So be it.

[31] Prague, February 12, 1835

I was upset almost all day. The reason for this was that our prefect declared that the infallibility of the Pope is a dogma of the Church. He offers no proof for this opinion and I happen to think it is very wrong to affirm one's belief in that way without first verifying the Church's approval. If it is indeed a defined truth then

I am, in a material sense, a heretic, dear God<sup>82</sup>.

Indifference is also a serious offense against God. Do not desert me, Lord. My faith would be shaken and then I would be most wretched of all. This anxiety distracted me thoroughly in my various tasks. For that reason and because of the high Mass and the afternoon walk, I was somewhat less fervent today, my Jesus. Have pity on me. When I assisted at the High Mass for the Emperor (at the Cathedral), out of human respect, I did not kneel after the Sanctus until time for Communion. Forgive me, I am still more concerned about men's opinion than Your honor, O my God. However for the future I promise to be more conscientious in that matter.

The aridity in my heart kept me from thinking of You today. I am sure that my playing checkers had something to do with that. I resolve not to play them again. My dearest Father, bless this resolution. My holy Mother, my Comfortress, intercede for me that God may deign to restore my peace of mind by helping me pay closer attention to my thoughts and words so that I may be alert to any passion that arises within me. Dear Mother of God, let me implore your aid. Be at all times a comfort in the difficulties that beset me. So be it.

February 13, 1835

My Jesus, the day of my general confession is fast approaching. I could look forward to it joyously were I worthy of the graces I need. My God and my Judge, that is Your supreme tribunal in which I must accuse myself of my sins. [31-a] Dear Jesus, all the efforts I have made up until this point seem so half-hearted and futile. It is true that I do propose never to repeat the sins of my past life. Still the enticement of perfection which Satan has set before my imagination kindles my pride, the root and fruit of all wickedness and sin. I look down on other people without even knowing that I do so, and such conceit is culpable because that pride of mine is its hateful source.

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<sup>82</sup> Huber gives considerable attention to this incident as indicative of the fact that Neumann, holding a «josephinistic» opinion against the prefect's «anti-josephinistic» view, was not quite the absolute exponent of the Catholic Restoration in Bohemia that his biographers portray. See Huber, *art. cit.*, 41, 50, 51 and also note 62 above.



And you, O envy — how you have tormented me all day! And tepidity and lethargy, how many countless sins have you caused me? Calumny and lying, when will you depart from me?

O my Jesus, I come to You because only You can cleanse me of my sins. On my own part, it seems I really want to be pure and pleasing to You, but I know from experience the futility and frailty of my will. Dear Jesus, have pity on me. This is a question of my eternal salvation. Do not reject me who would so gladly knock at the gate of the Kingdom of Heaven if only I had the strength to do so.

O Lord who lived here on earth in order to save us, can You, then reproach me? My God, I am all Yours, for I am Your creature. You can do with me whatever You please, but if my plea deserves to reach Your ears, O deign to answer me. Bear with me in my brashness, calling upon You in this fashion. The very fear of losing my soul for all eternity drives me to beg Your forgiveness for all the sins of my past life. Dear Lord, You do indeed hear me and You can see the ugliness and enormity of the sins by which I have offended You. This vast burden weighs me down and crushes me. It would mean my ruin for all ages were it not for the fact that You will show me mercy.

My dearest Mother, I have recourse to you. I propose to confess tomorrow all the sins of my whole life. Help me by [31-b] your intercession. And all you angels of heaven, I beseech you, and especially you great penitents in heaven, bow low before the throne of my Judge all through the morrow. Ask Him to look upon me with kind and merciful eye.

Dear God, receive the prayers Your holy Church makes for us sinners and be gracious to me. Jesus, Mary and Joseph and all you angels and saints of heaven, be with me always. So be it.

February 14, 1835

So, my God, I have finally begun to live as a true christian! I made a general confession of all the sins of my life. In the morning I was rather fervent, even more so before I made my confession. But then the old aridity and anxiety invaded my spirit once more. As far as I can tell, my intention to confess all my sins was genuine though I didn't expect much more than imperfection from my weakness. Dear Jesus, if indeed such imperfections in my confession should deter You from showering Your grace on me, I

shall be utterly miserable. However, I trust in Your kindness that You have heard the prayers of Your dear Mother and of all the Angels and Saints. I stand before You, my Savior; You have not spurned my sincere offer to become Your obedient disciple. I no longer look for comfort from either heaven or earth. You, divine Master, can judge whether such are necessary for me. I propose to worry no more over the aridity You send me. Only protect me from being presumptuous of Your grace. In this hope, which exists only in my mind for my heart can evoke nothing at this point — I wish to thank You for granting me the grace of Your forgiveness as You have done today. You have forgiven my sins and I shall think of them no more except to praise the infinite mercy [31-c] that forgave them.

Help me, divine Master, in the practice of virtue and the mortification of my inclination to sin which I have now come to despise. You can understand the sincerity of my resolve. Or rather help me to lead a more mortified life and thereby prove to me that You have indeed forgiven me and will bestow Your grace on me, that You will accept me as Your disciple, that You do indeed love me and will save me, and prove too that I will one day glorify you in heaven, my true home, for that is where You dwell.

Accept then, my Jesus, this gift I make of myself. Add to it my whole strength of mind and body. Jesus, divine Master, offer Your own merits to the Father that He may always show mercy to us. Send the Holy Spirit upon me that through His sevenfold gift He may guide me to holiness and eternal life where I shall praise You forever.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, I plead with You from the bottom of my heart, be my advocate with the divine Master. You yourself are aware of how I need God's grace. Be then my Refuge and my Defense. Pray for me even before I find myself obliged to call on you. Obtain for me all those virtues that make you so delightful in God's eyes. In particular obtain for me the grace of perfect humility and that purity of heart that is the foundation of a true love for God.

Holy guardian angel, trusting in your love which you have so often shown me, I beg you, remain ever at my side. Guide my every step that I may never lose my God again but may rather draw ever nearer to Him. My holy patron saints, and all you saints of heaven, obtain for me the help I need to acquire those virtues that made you so dear to God, our Father. So be it.

[32] Prague, February 15, 1835

The account of today's happenings seems quite remarkable to me. This morning I prepared with considerable fervor to receive Holy Communion. As I made my way to the altar rail I remembered a certain sin from my youth which I had not confessed. Nevertheless in order to avoid a scandal and also because I did recall that my intention was sincere to confess all my sins, and I did mention that sin in a general way, I went ahead and received Holy Communion. Afterwards I was very upset, almost on the edge of despair because of that misfortune. Weary with fretting over this and well aware of the sorry state of my soul, I resolved to confess the whole business in my next confession. That restored my serenity somewhat. I took up again the writings of St. Alphonsus Liguori and I read there that when one has made a general confession, he should be of good heart — and from that moment my own inner peace returned.

Dear Jesus, if this peace is indeed a gift of God, prove it to me by helping me lead a more fervent and conscientious life. But if it should be perchance the crafty work of Satan, impel me to make a new confession. I am Your disciple so give me to know Your will, but strengthen my weakness.

My soul, how have you comported yourself today? Did you carry out your good resolutions? Before every action did you try to ascertain your Savior's will? Did you banish every proud, vain thought as quickly as possible, particularly by mortifying your appetite thru fasting? Did you talk too much or spend too much time listening to others' idle talk? My soul, you have indeed been quite bad! What will He have to say to you, the Lord of the world who dwells within you? Your actions have scarcely shown you to be a true christian or one who aspires to perfection.

Dear Jesus, forgive the sins I have committed this day, and the irreverence I displayed in approaching the holy table. Remember that I am weak.

Holy Mary, [32-a] dearest Mother, remain near me at all times that I may avoid offending your beloved Son so often. If I should slip, you offer your own merits to my Judge, to Him who makes me holy, and He will forgive me. Give me the virtues of humility and purity of both mind and body.

Holy guardian angel, do not withdraw from me. Help me up again should I slip on the path of God's commandments. My holy patron saints, help me by your constant prayers. St. John Nepomucene, tomorrow I shall try to honor you particularly in the practice of

those virtues of the priesthood that adorned your soul, namely, silence, steadfastness, etc. Pray therefore without ceasing for me, a poor sinner. Beloved Jesus, remain always with me, with my parents and friends in Budweis and Prague. Keep all of us in Your love and help us to increase in Your love. So be it.

It was mentioned in the Bohemian newspaper today that William Herbst, our professor and my fellow countryman died on February 8, 1835 at Gentomischel. Be kind to him, Lord — I owe him a great deal and he was fond of me. May he rest in peace! So be it.

February 16, 1835

My good Master, Jesus Christ, today I made a resolution to combat my tendency to carelessness in the performance of my obligations. You well know how hard a struggle that is for me. However, my Savior, it was You who gave me to recognize my predominant passion and You will certainly come to my assistance if I ask it of You with my whole heart. Dear Lord, look with pity on the repugnance I experience in doing the things I am obliged to do. Divine Master, never allow this repugnance to deter me from fulfilling my duties. Your grace has delivered me from so many sins in the past. Continue to do so for this sinner who is so weak. Use every possible means, even the most painful to remove this defect from my heart. I readily admit to You that I am unworthy of the peace that would reign in my heart were that to come to pass, but I indeed would so love to avoid offending You further through my lethargy and repugnance. Have pity [32-b] on me.

Holy Spirit who are my God and fount of holiness, do not permit my anxiety to become a missionary to lead me to neglect my obligations. Show me how to distinguish what I must do from what is merely useful for me. Make it quite clear to me because I do not hear God's voice too well. Holy Spirit, guide my thoughts, words, and actions that I may quickly reach the state of christian perfection so necessary for a priest and a missionary. Make my spirit receptive to the knowledge of the things of God and of anything else that I ought to know in order to be of help to my fellowmen who have been ransomed by Christ's precious blood.

Dear God, my Father, my heavenly Creator and Support, pardon all my sins that I may attain Your blessed vision and praise You forever together with the angels and the saints.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, most beloved advocate with my

stern Judge, at every moment of my life, plead my cause with Him. I am still committing sin and unless you be my refuge, I shall be most wretched. Calm my spirit with the gift of humility. Cleanse it with purity of intention. Ah, my dearest Mother, I so wish to love you and to praise and adore forever your beloved Son. Be then a merciful Mother to me! Overlook the insults I have given you through my ingratitude. For the future I shall be more exact in your service.

Holy guardian angel, you know the anxiety in my heart; you know the gloom and frustration that still oppress me. Deign to bestow on me your brotherly love for I propose to obey all your commands.

My patron St. John, place this day's efforts before the throne of my God and beg Him to forgive my sins. I want to love and imitate you, St. Francis Xavier. Tomorrow I shall devote my efforts to the mortification of my passion. Help me by your prayers. All you saints, intercede unceasingly for me, for my parents and friends and for all men, both believers and non-believers. So be it.

[32-c] February 17, 1835

Today I learned that Father Dichtl was having printed a book translated from the French into German<sup>83</sup> and also that he had appointed Father Hosp from here to be confessor for the sisters at Krumau. This was what Father Dichtl wanted. Enlighten them, my God, and enlighten me too! My heart has often been troubled by various earthly concerns. Forgive this anxiety my God, which has perhaps alienated me from You. I really should not get depressed because I am determined to lead a truly spiritual life.

I was too distracted today also and a certain bitterness assailed me fairly often. In the performance of my duties I was scarcely any more careful than before, since I postponed work on the morning study assignment because of my distraction and also certain pains in my chest. Now however that study seems more pleasant. If only my memory and understanding were not so weak! Take pity on me, my Jesus, and forgive my sins. An indifference towards Jesus and the saints, and sometimes even a complete oblivion concerning them fills me with grief and causes me to fear often that I may again fall

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<sup>83</sup> *The Life of the Founder of the Sisters of Mercy, St. Vincent de Paul.* See Dichtl-Huber, *art. cit.*, 48. The author of the original is not given. Dichtl himself made the translation.

into sin. So many afflictions like this at times undermine my hopes of ever succeeding in my efforts. Oh, grace of the Holy Spirit, strengthen me.

Dear Mother of mine, holy Mary, I now understand more clearly my nothingness and my great need. I am neither devout nor wise, so how shall I ever succeed in teaching my fellowmen? You who are my advocate before the all-holy, all-wise God, obtain for me what I need. Compensate for my timidity and coldness with your own love for Jesus and your humility. I am aware that it is still my vainglory that makes me want to possess solid learning, but how can I persuade the unbeliever without it?

My divine Master, teach me, above all, the virtues. Give me, I beg You, the knowledge I need. I am Your obedient disciple. My angel guardian and my holy patron saints, pray Our Lord to give me the help I need, as well as that which my parents and friends need too. Preserve us, Jesus, in Your holy grace! So be it.

[33] Prague, February 18, 1835

My soul, this has truly been a miserable day! By our fickleness regarding our resolution we have offended our God who is so good. Father Prefect surprised me in bed this morning. Though I awoke at 4 a.m. I did not get out of bed but just drifted along in my negligence and love of ease. My despair at having failed in my duty since early morning affected even my prayers, and so I found little comfort in these.

O my soul, acknowledge your worthlessness, your ingratitude and your tepidity. Suppose your divine Master should decline to have you as His disciple any more because of your disobedience and timidity? You would be lost forever. How easy it would have been for you to fall back into the most grievous sins had it not been for His help?

My Jesus, my heart though quite upset at having offended You, is not really grieved at all. I still do not know what heartfelt sorrow and true repentance mean. My Jesus, what will You do with my soul? It is so completely alone and abandoned. It seems to want to come to You but who will show it the way, who will direct it to You and give it the strength it needs? As feeble as it is, it can take not a single step towards You. It can no longer please You because of the many sins that disfigure it — it is full of imperfections. In all likelihood the Nuptial Lamb has withdrawn from it forever. Its fate

then is eternal damnation! It has so often in the past turned to You and You have graciously comforted it. Now however, it has lost sight of You and is wandering lost in the corrupt world.

To whom will you go, my soul? You dare not face your rejection? Ah, but you are most wretched! Come then, my soul, let us go together to our merciful Mother, the Mother of our divine Master. She will pray for us for she is the refuge of sinners.

Holy Mary, deign to hear our prayer and answer us. We have wandered off the path and Your divine Son must be displeased with us. Obtain for us His love! [33-a] Oh kind Mother, show me your divine Child, for children love whoever is near and dear to them.

Do not destroy us, dear God. Little Jesus, we kneel before Your crib from which You gave Your first blessing to the world. Behold me at Your feet! Do not drive me from You for my ailing heart needs Your love to evoke true sorrow for my sins. I wish, my Jesus, that I could kiss You. If only I could touch the swaddling cloths in which Your Mother the blessed Virgin wrapped you so lovingly! Just touching them would surely heal my heart. But I am not worthy for I offended You today and I shall offend You many thousands of times more if You abandon me to my own ways! O my Jesus, if, as the Church teaches, You have died also for me, then take pity on me. Be gracious to me, my Lord.

Mary, my Mother, pray for me. My guardian angel and my patron saints, pray also for my parents, my friends and benefactors. So be it.

February 19, 1835

(John 8, 10) My Lord, I resolve to reflect every day on some verses of Holy Writ. Give me Your grace, Holy Spirit! My Lord Jesus, how powerful You are! And how all-powerful Your prayer! Five loaves of bread were so multiplied that a great flock of people had enough to eat and twelve basketfuls were left over! What must have been Your delight, my Jesus, when You saw those people who had followed You feeding themselves on the bread You provided! Surely then You were thinking of us poor christians. You saw the people chosen by Your Father feeding on the bread of heaven, the bread You gave from on high to strengthen those who would listen to Your word. You died but once for us but the merits of Your death are multiplied endlessly. The more they are applied to us, the more glorious they appear! My beloved Master, dearest Jesus, I would

gladly follow You to hear Your saving commandments. But, dear merciful God, this will of mine is still quite weak. So many desertions and falls [33-b] have weakened it that it is thoroughly weary. Still my will knows that You are the Savior. It follows You even though in its frailty it may well fail in the struggle.

Have pity on it, then! Give it the nourishment it needs, Intercede for it with Your heavenly Father. Deign to bless the bread from heaven, Your help, which it will receive from the hands of Your apostles. O Jesus, You come so often to give me strength, You must be infinitely good! And why then has this not satisfied me? How utterly ungrateful am I, having so often received You unworthily, with but scant preparation and without any intention of nourishing my soul so that I might obey Your commands more properly! And You have not deprived me of Your precious Body and Blood!

Dear Jesus, I am not worthy that You should come to me again. Yet I fervently hope You will forgive my sins if I resolve to amend. I truly wish to follow You.

These are the dogmas in which I shall place my belief if You give me the grace I need. I propose to make a spiritual communion each day in order to persuade You, my God, to pardon the sacrilegious communions I have made. Oh, give me, then, Your grace! Holy Spirit, increase in me the fruit of my communions. My Jesus and my Savior! So be it.

Tomorrow I shall serve as acolyte at the Bishop's palace. Today I was more attentive although my distractions were more frequent and longer. Holy Mary, Mother of God, I beg you to look upon me, a poor sinner. Intercede with your Son that I may not be lost. Holy guardian angel, help me remember the resolutions I have made. Holy patron saints, never leave my side! St. Ignatius, I shall try to be fervent tomorrow. Help me with your prayers. Jesus, be gracious towards me. Inspire with Your divine love both myself and my parents, my benefactors, friends and enemies and all the faithful, living and dead. Keep me from all sin. So be it.

February 20, 1835

(Ephesians 4, 4) My good Lord and Savior, my throat was sore today. I thank You for that because sufferings of this sort [33-c] do not let me forget that You alone are my highest good. Forgive me, my Jesus, if I brought this malady on myself and if I sinned today by accepting remedies that scarcely helped my fervor of



spirit, to wit, eating my fill so that I look back on myself with utter shame! Chastise me, but forgive me immediately. Your displeasure is the greatest misfortune to befall me. Have I not also sinned through my overweening grief? Was I not completely disturbed when the others scoffed at me? Was I not too careless in performing my duties today? Was my fervor sincere? Did I not fail through intemperance?

O my Jesus, I am not worthy to call You mine, for the countless sins I have committed reveal me as Your enemy. Jesus Savior, never permit me to leave the body or soul of the Church You established to save us. You have called us that we might be one body and one spirit. How often have I sinned against God's will in this? My failure to help others, my lack of love or my pride of motive has poisoned every act of charity I performed. Is it not my own likes and preferences that permeate all I do? Does not a spirit of antipathy rule my personality? How frequently do my chagrin and pride or indifference hinder me in the practice of kindness towards my fellows?

Oh my soul, you still have a long way to go to be truly a part of the christian body and spirit. We must then return to the path of salvation. My Jesus and my Hope, I resolve to begin to act worthily henceforth in the name of Your mystical Body, the Church. I resolve to be genuinely charitable with all my confreres. My God, You have endured death for all of us. Shall I then love but certain ones? O Holy Spirit, instill in me the spirit of Holy Mother the Church whose servant I shall soon be. Grant this grace to all who may follow the same vocation.

My Mother Mary, offer the resolution I made today to Your Son Jesus, namely, to be sincerely charitable in my actions for the sake of Him who has commanded it. Ask Him to give me strength to practice this virtue.

My holy guardian angel, remind me of this obligation in my moments of weakness. My holy patrons, particularly St. Aloysius, intercede for me, for my parents and my friends. Pray for all my confreres. So be it.

[34] Prague, February 21, 1835

(John 9, 21) My sweet Jesus, my neck was more painful today and I even began to think about death. Your will be done! You love me, dear Jesus, a thousand times more than I can love myself — may Your name be ever praised! Would that I could love You more! It is my sins and faults that keep You from kindling Your love in

my heart. So often have I offended You, my Jesus, that I am forced to question the sincerity of my repentance. What induces me to perform good deeds is not Your grace or Your love but rather the nice feeling it gives me and a fear that were I to omit them my conscience would bother me. Sometimes it is even pride that urges me on. My inattention at prayer; my tepidity in performing spiritual exercises, my carelessness and faintheartedness — how many sins derive from these? In spite of all this You have in Your mercy enabled me to perceive the abyss towards which I have been racing. You have graciously overlooked that and so I must now use what time is left to amend my ways. But, my Lord, how have I used this grace until now? My Savior, whose love for us was so great that You died for us, I am nothing by myself. I keep my resolutions only when my mood and temperament are so inclined. If my sensuality asserts itself then my virtue grows weak and I fall most shamefully, miserably and ungraciously. My Jesus, this will of mine is thoroughly wicked. If You want me to praise You in heaven, then overhaul it completely!

My Father, I do not deserve to address You because whatever I say is hypocritical. The very fact that I am so hardened in sin condemns me. Be merciful, my Jesus! What can I expect when I recall so many imperfect confessions without sorrow or purpose of amendment, and so many sacrilegious communions?

My soul, you have indeed been most ungrateful. You have betrayed your God and Savior who loved you enough to shed His precious blood for you. You have so often trampled the Sacred Mysteries underfoot. Holy [34-a] Mary, Mother of my God, overlook the offenses I have given your Son and intercede for me. You can see how utterly wretched I am. It is through works of penance that I must satisfy my God, and yet I can accomplish nothing without His grace. Ask Him to pardon my sins and strengthen me for the future. Refuge of Sinners and Comfort of the Afflicted, I beg you to intercede for me, that God may not be forced to condemn me forever because of my sins.

My holy guardian angel, all my patron saints, add your prayers too for me and my parents and friends and for all men. I resolve to praise Your mercy, my Jesus, before men whenever I can. Help me, my Jesus. So be it.

February 22, 1835

(Acts, 18, 20) Despite yesterday's good resolutions I was quite indifferent in mortifying my unruly desires today, particularly those of intemperance and carelessness. God the Holy Spirit, I have certainly afflicted You who have desired to dwell within me. How little have I appreciated the blessing of Your presence, in offending You so frequently! I was rather fervent until noon and even up until Vespers. However after our customary afternoon walk, I failed to consult Your Will as to what I ought to do. I refused to listen to God's voice inviting me to eat with moderation, and I slept all through the time for study until supper hour. Without a doubt this has been the most wretched day for me since my general confession. If only I could erase the record of my sins!

You chastise me, God, with this aridity of soul. My Father, do punish me that I may be sure that You still love me. My soul, your God has allowed you to fall; will you then despair? Will you return to the path of evil through your frequent relapses? Will you sulk because of your sins, as if Jesus did not want to help you? How miserable you are! Turn to Him and He will take you back once more. Do not lose heart! Your Jesus is all-powerful and He alone can save you from your sins. I wish you to do so. Accept this aridity. Jesus will come to you when you truly deserve to see Him.

What travail St. Paul endured to visit his christian flock! Despite the rigors of tempests at sea and the snares of his enemies, he made his journeys. Love for Jesus and His doctrine kindled his zeal constantly. He wanted to strengthen the new christians in the faith which he had [34-b] taught them. Oh St. Paul, I so want to follow your example! *I want to strengthen my fellowmen* in our saving faith and in the practice of devotion by my preaching as well as by my example. Obtain for me the help I need.

Holy Spirit, I beg You to grant me the grace of docility. Enlighten me that I may know well how to proceed in the practice of devotion. Soften this heart of mine so hardened in passion. Preserve me from scrupulosity. O my Jesus, forgive me my sins.

Holy Mary, my angel guardian and all you saints, pray for me, a poor sinner. My heavenly Father and my Jesus, be merciful to me. So be it.

February 23, 1835

My dear Jesus, I was more careful today to conform to Your divine will. Nevertheless, through inadvertence, perhaps culpably, I did commit a sin. I promised to do something improper in order to deceive the Superiors, and I didn't have the courage to revoke my promise. However I did not go through with it and there was no apparent harm done either to myself or my neighbor. My Jesus, pardon that sin.

My health is almost back to normal and tomorrow I plan to rise early to begin the translation of *Visits with Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar*. My Jesus, I am doing this for Your glory. Help me therefore, because I am doing this translation for the blind. I believe the book merits translation<sup>84</sup>.

For several days now I feel quite distracted throughout the day. My conscience seems rather lax and my spirit of devotion has waned. What resolutions I made had little effect, and doubtlessly my intemperance was the cause of this. So tomorrow I shall begin to fast again.

Dearest Jesus, my Master, it seems to me that the sin I overlooked in my general confession has deprived me of Your grace because I have since fallen more frequently and my lethargy has affected all my spiritual exercises. I know dear Lord, that I am still so lax in them. I am still entirely too worldly to be worthy of Your love. Nevertheless my Jesus, what would become of me if You choose [34-c] to abandon me? How I wish I were more receptive to the promptings of Your grace, my God! You would help me more often and more effectively than You have been able to do until now because of my disobedience and my pride.

Sometimes I am quite distraught over my unhappy state. I need a better spiritual director. But is not that desire opposed to Your divine Providence? To whom should I turn? To our Prefect? He does not seem to like me very much because of my rude and rather indevout manner. Dear Jesus, let him see what I have in mind, for without a doubt, he is a good priest.

Canisius' book, Allioli's interpretation of Holy Scripture, my sermon work and catechetical study are all running together through my mind. Nonetheless, in the coldness I am experiencing just now, I

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<sup>84</sup> Probably the *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament* by St. Alphonsus Liguori. This translation was, possibly, to be made from the Italian original into German so that the Klars could make the *Visits* available to the blind in Braille. See note 73 above.

do thank You! I would like, my Jesus, to ascertain Your will as to what I ought to do. Should I become a parish priest or should I join the Jesuits? Tell me what to do. In this, I shall be guided by Your will. O my Master, let me know Your will, and strengthen my will by Your grace, that I may know and follow it. Dear Jesus, the tiny flame of Your love in my heart is going out. Have pity on me and do not condemn me according to my deserts. Whatever feelings of devotion and piety I had, all my good resolutions have disappeared. Enlighten my mind and make me awake from this dangerous lethargy. Give me once more Your grace that I may not perish forever. (Luke 10, 21). *If I am to be Your brother, dear Jesus, I must do Your will. I resolve to obey the promptings of Your grace.*

Holy Mary, give me strength. Because my fervor has slackened and my zeal for perfection has grown faint, I turn to you. Graciously hear my prayer, holy Mother, despite my horrid coldness and my lack of affection.

Holy guardian angel, preserve me from dissipation. This loss of fervor is most damnable and I do not deserve any help from our heavenly Father. My holy patron saints, do not allow me to fall back into the abyss from which you have just rescued me. Pray for me, for my parents and friends and for all the faithful. So be it.

[35] February 24, 1835

(Mark 10, 39) My sweet Jesus, You have comforted me by permitting me to fulfill my obligations today with more care and by a more proper mortification of my intemperance. However I did depart from the truth in my speech at times. Occasionally I grow discouraged at how little progress I am making. Still I am grateful to You for You have bestowed on me much more grace than I ever deserved.

My Jesus, since You have been so kind to me, give me the grace of a deeper sorrow for my sins. Let me taste the bitterness of Your chalice. Pour some of Your own baptismal water on my head that it might feel something of the pain I have caused You by my sins. Bear with the pride that perhaps evokes this childish desire of mine. If You, my Jesus, should wish to heap me with adversity and trials, to make me realize the grandeur of my wickedness, then give me the strength I need to avoid falling into despair and losing my trust in God's providence.

My divine Master, I do indeed want to imitate You in all my

thoughts, words and actions. Bless this desire of mine, O fount of holiness, though it be tainted and shot through with vanity — make it more intense and bring it to realization. Divine Lord, I beg You to increase Your love in my heart that I may make a contribution to Your glory. For the future, I resolve to bear gladly whatever suffering You may send for my chastisement — only behold me at Your feet! I am the greatest sinner in the world. My God, let Your mercy shine down on me!

My dearest Mother, Holy Mary, Star of the Sea, shed your light upon my work, upon my efforts to become perfect. Guide me that I may attain true purity of heart and humility of spirit. Intercede for me, a poor sinner.

Holy guardian angel, do not permit that my tepidity and pride should cause any more sins against my God who is so good. St. Joseph, pray that my love for the Child Jesus may increase. Be a father to me! My holy patron saint (help me!).

Madam Klar has called for me. I have to go to her house. Help me so that I may not disgrace myself<sup>85</sup>. St. Teresa, be my advocate with our God in this matter of my devotion and piety. St. Francis, give me true devotion to the spread of our faith. St. Ignatius, St. Francis de Sales and all the saints, pray for me and my parents, for my friends and my enemies, for my benefactors and for all men. So be it.

[35-a] February 25, 1835

I was more distracted today than I was yesterday. Still I did succeed in various efforts at mortification. In the evening, however, I grew quite dispirited just thinking of all the qualities I lack of both body and soul. My sweet Jesus, You have heard my prayer for You punish me because of my defects. With all my heart I thank You! Nevertheless I beg You to grant me a solid faith for without

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<sup>85</sup> Neumann seems to have felt throughout his life a diffidence regarding his manners and conversation. That there was some cause for this diffidence is borne out by Neumann's own testimony and the opinions expressed in later years by those who were promoting his withdrawal from the «cosmopolitan» See of Philadelphia. See André Sampers, *Bischof Johann Nep. Neumanns Briefwechsel...*, *Spicilegium Historicum CSSR* 24 (1976), 298-299; also, Giuseppe Orlandi, *Giovanni N. Neumann e i Vescovi degli USA... 1852-1860*, *ibidem*, 315-437. This excellent treatise focuses specifically on the movement to achieve the withdrawal of Neumann from Philadelphia. See also *Journal*, February 26, 1835.

that I could not endure anything. Ah, my good Master who have died for love of me! I prostrate myself at the foot of the sacred Cross on which You suffered so cruelly. I would love to embrace and kiss that Cross my sins raised for You who so wanted to expiate them.

O my Jesus, if only I could be sure that You were still able to love me, I would ask for so many favors. But what can I expect after so many outrages against You, my sovereign benefactor? I am in truth so wretched! How sad I am, so much that I can scarcely feel Your presence! How desolate my soul would be in its anxiety should that tiny spark of contrition I feel, shallow and imperfect as it is, be insufficient to obtain pardon for my sins! Am I not just pipe-dreaming to think that You have forgiven me?

Yet, my soul, what is it that you are looking for, you who are but mud and slime. Oh Lord, forgive me, forgive me according to the multitude of Your mercy. Behold, my divine Master, I trust in Your infinite goodness and wisdom. I submit myself entirely to Your care. Do not expel me from Your throne. I wish to save my soul and You have said You will welcome all who wish to follow You. I surely wish to do that, my Lord and my God. But strengthen my will.

Should it be in accord with Your desires, I will visit Madam Klar tomorrow. Guide my steps in everything just as You did for Didius of Thyatira and St. Paul. Still if You should want that devout people look down on me, then Your will be done! I am resigned to whatever pleases You but help me in my weakness.

My holy Mother Mary, recommend me to the Infant Jesus that He may enlighten and stir my heart and urge me on by His grace. My guardian angel, come with me tomorrow. Keep me from telling any lies, watch over my every step. St. John, look out for my honor. St. Joseph, obtain for me the love of my Jesus. Pray for all of us. So be it.

[35-b] February 26, 1835

I visited the Institute for the Blind but Madame Klar was not home. That and the Prefect's scoldings put me in a bad humor all day. My Lord, this has indeed been a very unfortunate day for me because I rarely recalled Your presence, I performed my duties quite distractedly and I was in bed with a cold. I have so many desires that seem to me to be good and yet I cannot carry them out. I am frustrated on all sides — both my present and my future seem so desolate.

I wonder when I will receive the two volumes of Canisius that I ordered, and when will Schmid write to me? Will I ever finish my catechetical instruction and my sermon? How ashamed I am to be so inept at conversation — everyone is loathe to talk to me for fear I will bore them. The Dean's books have not arrived yet. This cold is hampering me in my work. My spirit is lifeless, my memory bad and unreliable. My knowledge is quite defective and the remembrance of sacrilegious confessions haunts me. I have the impression, because of my frequent relapses, that my repentance is futile. The moral weakness I feel deprives me of all peace and contentment. I still do not feel a genuine sorrow for my sins, no doubt because of my perverse heart.

O God, help me. If my faith wavers I shall be lost. Hear my cry, dear Jesus, increase and strengthen my faith! Do not lead me into temptation. I had thought that a general confession would put my conscience to rest but now I find I am more upset after it and perhaps a greater sinner than ever.

My Jesus and Master. You have said « My yoke is light », — have pity on me. On all sides, wherever I look I find trouble, obstacles and difficulties, and I know I in my sinfulness am the cause of them. O my God, forgive my impatience — these temptations to faith are so hard to bear. Creator of the Universe, don't permit me to fall back into my faintheartedness and despair, into betrayal and sin. [35-c] How utterly wretched should I be, my Jesus, were I to lose my faith in You — I who so desire to be Your priest!

To whom should I pray? To mother nature? She favors those who are already good, and I am a sinner. To no one? Oh what a horrid worthlessness I see in myself! Do not forsake me, my Jesus and my God. My soul, muster all your strength and fling yourself into the bosom of your merciful Mother.

Holy Mary, my angel guardian and my patron saints, am I no longer worthy of your help? Oh how miserable should I then be! Pray once more for me. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, help this weak, desolate creature. So be it.

February 27, 1835

The temptation to distrust God's providence lasted also through today. It was particularly strong from the time I awoke until noon. I rather think I sinned by offering it so little resistance. My lack of resignation and my ingratitude towards God were also improper. Dear



God and Master, my pride and impatience have brought on this wretched state I am in. Help me in my combat with the enemy of my salvation.

You have indeed assisted me in preparing a part of the catechetical instruction that I worked on today. Continue to help me. I lack confidence when I pray to You — make up for that for me! Since my last communion I have been looking forward eagerly to the next one which should have been the day after tomorrow but our spiritual prefect has postponed it for a whole week. I had been happily counting on that to strengthen my trust and confidence but that hope is dashed. How miserable I am!

But You are so kind, my Jesus, You want to console me and I am so grateful for that from the bottom of my heart. I am most assuredly convinced of Your existence, my Jesus, but without Your grace I would not have the strength to give You perfect faith.

How pitiable the infidel and the skeptic who do not believe in You! Enlighten them, I beg You by the anguish of my current pitiful state. My Jesus, I am considerably more sinful at present than [36], I was at the time of my former confessions. I so wish to make my confession in a way that would dispel the scruples that torment me. My Jesus, banish the demon of despair from my heart. My fervor has vanished, the rich fountain of my tears has run dry. I failed to recall the presence of my guardian angel and my patron saints (as I should do) since such thoughts would make me more devout. The memory of You, my God, and of the Blessed Virgin is like a haze before my eyes. I seem to practice virtue only at a natural level. Have pity on me. My Jesus, I shall not abandon my usual prayers. Accept them despite their brevity and coldness.

Holy Mother of God, You who have been my comfortress, be my intercessor and be a Mother to me once again. My holy guardian angel, my guide, do not permit me to fall into sin again. My holy patrons, do not move far from me. Pray for my soul. So be it.

February 28, 1835

(Acts, 20) The temptation against confidence has passed so that just a slight aridity of soul bothers me now. My Jesus, You did have pity on me for despite yesterday's report, we did have confessions today which restored my peace of heart. My Savior, You know how depressed I was to recall that sin I had forgotten when I made my general confession. You know too how I dread losing my soul and

Your love. Never forsake me again. I have recouped my former fervor in the practice of virtue — keep that under Your control, my Jesus. Once again I can feel Your love in my heart. How infinitely kind You are to me! How could I ever be so ungrateful to You as to be actually forlorn? My Savior, I promise never to offend You again by such defiance and lack of resignation. Forgive me.

*My Jesus, the thought of our prefect disturbs me. I resolve then to mortify myself by acts of love and trust, I will compliment him and defend him as much as I can.* Help me to do so. Help me also in my classwork. In order to develop more courage, I resolve to take every opportunity I can to mix with my fellows, to bear humbly any shame I may experience and to sing Your praises. Strengthen me. Do not let me fall back into the sins [36-a] I have just confessed, so that I may become more like You, my most holy Jesus, my God. May my beloved Mother, the Queen of all Saints, my Holy Guardian Angel and especially my Patron Saints, my devout friends and benefactors and my parents... may you all rejoice!

It strikes me, dear God, that I am much too inept to spread the Gospel. If You really wish to send me among the heathen, deign to send the Holy Spirit upon me to show me what I need to be holy and just. Then I shall shed my blood most gladly, provided always You strengthen me. O my soul, how fortunate you are! Tomorrow your Creator and Sanctifier shall come to visit you. Ah! Do not be afraid, for He is good and kind. He will enrich you and fill you with His immense grace. Humble yourself then. Show Him your love, for He will surely come to you. Oh, I am so unworthy to receive You in my heart, my divine Master. Know, my Lord and God Jesus, that You are most welcome in my heart which You Yourself have cleansed.

Holy Mary, Mother of the very God who is to come to visit me! Prepare my heart and my soul. Ask Him to come laden with grace and favors for me. Inspire me with the proper dispositions, my Guardian Angel, so that I may receive Him with as great a love as possible. My holy Patrons, help me when I receive the Most High God. Banish from my heart every thought, every feeling and every desire that is not of Him. Oh may His grace fill my heart tomorrow, and may it bear abundant fruit! Give Your grace, dear Jesus, to my parents, my friends and benefactors. Watch over all of them! So be it.