

JOHN NEPOMUCENE NEUMANN'S

SPIRITUAL JOURNAL

English translation by WILLIAM NAYDEN

Fourth Part: May 5, 1835 — July 21, 1838

INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth and last installment of the so-called French part of the Journal. It differs somewhat from the previous sections in that while it is written predominantly in French, Neumann uses some English and German towards the end of the period. These latter are identified in the text as they appear: (Eng.) or (Ger.). Otherwise the reader may assume the original N. text is French. N.'s English is expectedly rudimentary and therefore it has been corrected and edited for publication here... just as the French in the first installment.

Neumann's German offers difficulties of its own. Since it was N.'s first language he could write it with considerable speed, using many abbreviations and symbols that at times resist interpretation. Such instances are indicated either by a question mark at the pertinent point in the text or by an explanatory note. As in previous installments the footnotes are numbered in sequence from the first section. Thus the first note here is n. 112. Once again the pagination of the original is indicated in brackets at the proper place in the translation, thus: [54], [54-a], [54b-], [54-c], corresponding to the four sides of the separate folios N. used for his Journal.

Towards the end of this installment there are long intervals between some of the entries. This is especially the case after N. leaves the seminary and returns to his hometown of Prachatitz. We suggest the reader refer to one of the Saint's biographies, e.g., *Curley's Life of Ven. John Nepomucene Neumann*, CSSR, Crusader Press, N.Y. 1952. Chapters III and IV cover these intervals in detail. The Journal too provides much information... in the so-called German part which *Spicilegium Historicum* hopes to make available in the near future.

The entries of this section reveal the mounting tension and anxiety Neumann experienced as he drew closer to the day when he would nor-

mally have been ordained to the priesthood. The relatively few entries in this part pertaining to his extra-seminary existence in Prachatitz show him struggling to live a cleric's life in the midst of his family and friends. Finally, the intense pathos that transpires from the last entries... in the lonely outposts of upstate N.Y.... help us perceive the rich humanity as well as the genuine heroicity of this young priest who was even in weakness... on the edge of despair... a *man of God*.

[53-c, contin.] May 5, 1835

Today I visited the National Museum, that is, the library, the minerology and zoology sections, and afterwards, the tomb of our seminary classmate Alexander Jüttner who died on June 29, 1830. Finally, I went to the Children's Asylum, and enjoyed that very much. After dinner I served as acolyte for a procession at Sts. Philip and James<sup>112</sup> where I saw the tombs of Bishop Kourdalec<sup>113</sup> and Abbé Pfeiffer<sup>114</sup>. After that I went with Laad to the Institute for the Blind where we chatted for quite a while with Madame Klar about a certain Tick family in Dresden.

My dearest Jesus, with so much happening I am thoroughly excited. My thoughts are whirling about so that I am sure it will be hard to focus my attention properly on You. My Lord, whatever desolation befalls me, whether as punishment for my sins or as a temptation, I intend to endure it patiently. I see more clearly all the time that I have very little ability to perform my duties as I should. For my memory, my spirit, my understanding and my reason have all been ruined by my sins in my youth. Forgive me, my Jesus, ...I have wasted or misused the talents You have given me. I didn't even « bury » them; I actually wasted them instead of using them wisely.

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<sup>112</sup> Neumann had visited this church earlier. See *Journal*, Oct. 26, 1834.

<sup>113</sup> Though N. spells the name thus, he is doubtlessly referring to Josef Franz *Hurdalek* (1747-1833), Rector of the General Seminary in Prague from 1785-1790. His administration is described as exemplary. Appointed to the See of Leitmeritz in 1815, he resigned in 1822 because of a controversy related to Bolzanism and lived quietly in Prague until his death in 1833. In all probability his death revived memories of his somewhat checkered career and occasioned a spectacular funeral which understandably impressed the youthful seminarian N. Cf. Hermann Zschokke, *Die Theologischen Studien u. Anstalten der katholischen Kirche Oesterreichs*, Wien u. Leipzig, 1894, pp. 862-865.

<sup>114</sup> Benedict John Nepomucene Pfeiffer (1783-1834), elected abbot of the Norbertine Strahov monastery in Prague. He was renowned for his learning and good works. Named professor of religion on the faculty of Philosophy at the Univ. of Prague... Rector there in 1825. Again, a controversial figure because of his Bolzanist leanings.

Lord, I am so powerless! How can I make recompense for my past? You, my Jesus, are all-powerful, so have pity on me. So be it.

[54] Prague, May 6, 1835

My beloved Lord Jesus, You have been boundlessly good to me! You gave me Your grace to preserve me from at least the more serious sins so that I might realize the grandeur and limitless power of Your love. Dear Lord, this poor heart of mine longs to converse with You, its Creator, but it simply doesn't know how to voice its sentiments. Jesus, my Lord and my God, give me the sort of heart and prophetic, heavenly eloquence I need to proclaim Your infinite love and mercy towards me.

Ah! Eternal love, for so very long I have been so wretched and poor, so careless about trying to please You. For so long I lay mired in sin and horror with nary a thought for eternity. Such thoughts never entered my callous heart! You finally prevailed over this adamant heart of mine and I shall be forever grateful for Your patience. O Lord, the sins of my youth have deprived me of so many graces and favors both spiritual and temporal<sup>115</sup>. You offered them to me and I scorned them. At that time even to talk about You seemed utterly hypocritical to me. I frittered away so very many opportunities.

How sadly I abused sacred things! What a mockery I made of holy ceremonies! How scornfully I behaved towards Your ministers! Ah! Lord, those sins of mine weakened me even more than I ever realized. Oh if I could but shed endless tears and weep over my sins in a monastery as strict and austere as any cloister of old! Behold me here, Lord, utterly willing to suffer any punishment You may deign to send me. I really deserve only to be cast into Hell.

Holy Mary, my Mother and Patroness, my holy Guardian Angel and all my holy Patrons, intercede for me, a poor sinner, before the throne of God's majesty. My God, accept me body and soul, without reserve. I am Yours and You are and shall henceforward always be mine. Abide with me at all times.

Today I received a letter from my parents. Dear God, bless

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<sup>115</sup> The enduring effects of earlier sins... of unspecified nature... beset N. throughout most of his life, as reflected *passim* in the *Journal*. Cf., e.g., the entry for Oct. 1, 1834 and also note n. 13.

them and friends and benefactors and all Christians on this earth!  
So be it.

[54-a] May 7, 1835

In the welter of all that occurred today my fervor for perfection seemed to wane somewhat. Then too the Prefect's sermon irked me considerably and so I am now more wary of him than ever. Today I could not help but conclude that I am overly vain and conceited. I lack humility, the foundation of all the other virtues. No matter how I try, I cannot seem to achieve it.

Gentle Jesus, You well know my miserable state... I have no one to guide or counsel me. You alone are my Lord and unseen guide! My Jesus, St. Francis de Sales says that God will infallibly send a good confessor to anyone who prays for such with a pure heart, even if that means He must send down an Angel from Heaven. How disconsolate such a thought leaves me! Lord, teach me how to pray properly, for I desperately need a good director. I have no one to encourage me when I fall, no one to rekindle my fervor when I revert to my old weakness and frailty. I need someone who can show me what to do in order to be more pleasing to You, someone who can advise me as to whether 'tis right for me to join some Order or Congregation whose Rule would lead me to practice perfect obedience and resignation to Your holy will and to learn the true path of humility.

Sweet Jesus, utterly desolate as I am, I beg You most humbly to heed my cry at long last and deign to send me a confessor. Dearest Lord, I who am the most heinous of sinners dare to seek this grace from You! Still, You are the all-just and all-wise One. Let Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven! I accept from Your hand whatever You may choose to send me. For I know You are infinitely good even if on account of my sins You should annihilate me with a bolt of lightning.

Oh Lord, do not permit me to return to my past vileness which I have but lately escaped. You alone are infinitely patient and merciful; let these qualities of Your majesty shine forth once more in my soul. Just now my heart feels hardly any desire to possess You... it is thoroughly worn out with all that has happened today. I beg You to give it strength this night!

Holy Mother Mary, my Patroness, pray for me together with St. Francis that God may deign to grant me a good confessor. Inter-

cede for me and my parents and my friends who may well have been unfaithful<sup>116</sup>. My Jesus, You are my help and my consolation! Never forsake me. So be it.

[54-b] May 8, 1835

I was very depressed today because I had spent the whole day doing nothing. The resolutions I made in the morning were quite good, but then, why haven't I fulfilled them? The various difficulties that arose led first to carelessness, then to indifference and discouragement. My situation is certainly disheartening, I feel completely desolate. There is no fervor to my prayer due to my diffidence and timidity. My friends have all forsaken me. And most likely, when the Prefect talks about confession he has me in mind... he says that those who are not conscientious about the minor exercises of devotion such as receiving the sacraments frequently, will not be able to undertake the more demanding ones<sup>117</sup>.

My God, You well know how much I regret my inability to receive the Most Blessed Sacrament more often. If that is my own fault... and no doubt it is!... forgive me, my Lord! O my Jesus, my faith is so weak that this desolation and despair fairly persuade me to forsake You. I am indeed utterly without strength. My heart is so devoid of love for You! I don't seem to love anything at all, even myself since I am the cause of all this misery. My Jesus, I shall never forsake You, if only You will not cast me off forever in my desolation. I have deserved a thousand times over the most cruel of punishments. I beg You to accept as my sacrifice the fact that all my plans have come to nought. And forgive my present sulkiness. O Jesus, take pity on this miserable creature of Yours.

Holy Virgin Mary, I have recourse to you, my Mother and Patroness. Though faithless and utterly cold of heart, I make bold to ask you to obtain for me from your divine Son the gift of gentleness, of resignation, obedience and true humility. You pray for me, for my own prayers are too conceited and vain. They have such weak faith. Help me that I may not perish. My holy Guardian Angel,

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<sup>116</sup> An allusion to their failure to reply to N.'s letters and possibly, to their dropping the joint project regarding the foreign missions. See entry for May 8, 1835, par. 1.

<sup>117</sup> I.e., practices and devotions of the priesthood proper, e.g., the celebration of Mass, administration of the sacraments, recitation of the breviary, etc.

never permit me to lose true, solid faith! That is the foundation of the Good News proclaimed by our divine Master. My holy Patrons, obtain for me the grace to be so careful in the performance of my duties that I may deserve to receive new graces and favors. Pray too for my parents, for my friends and benefactors and also for my enemies, etc. So be it.

[54-c] May 9, 1835

Jesus, Divine Master, forgive me! Today I have offended You by so often running the risk of consenting to impure thoughts. I found that the mortification I performed with the cross is harmful to me and so I must stop that. Your will be done, my Jesus<sup>118</sup>! It will be better for me to apply myself more earnestly to fulfilling the various duties which I find more and more burdensome.

My Divine Lord, You deign to come to dwell in my heart... and I shall be delighted to welcome You, my greatest good! But what sort of dispositions should I have? What do You require of me if I am to be genuinely worthy of Your visit? And, as a matter of fact, what are my dispositions now? Do not reject me, my Jesus, for I am the most miserable creature in the world. I have sinned against You a thousand times over without ever being truly contrite!

Holy Virgin Mary, be in truth my most beloved Mother! By your intercession preserve me in God's grace. O most blessed among women, turn the eyes of your mercy upon me, a sinner who dares address you, most holy Mary. I would not dare to do so were it not that our beloved Church, the spouse of your most lovable Son, commands me to do so. You are the Refuge of Sinners... and I am the greatest sinner of all! Give glory to your Son by your all-powerful prayers. Holy Mother, I place all my affairs in your hands. Guide my spirit and my heart and will according to your wisdom that I may never again do anything contrary to the designs of God's mercy towards me or to the welfare of my neighbor. Obtain for me the grace of humility, of obedience and purity of heart that I may become more pleasing to Our Lord.

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<sup>118</sup> Though no further explanation is offered, N. probably refers to wearing the cross inside his shirt or while abed... practices of mortification not unknown in former years. Its pressure against the body would only have aggravated the chest pains N. seems to have had on and off during his life, as mentioned both in the *Journal* and the N. biographies.

My Guardian Angel, watch over me! Offer all my sufferings to the divine majesty. My holy Patrons and Intercessors, St. John, St. Francis, St. Joseph, St. Ignatius, St. Aloysius and St. Teresa, obtain for me the virtues that made you dear to God. Obtain them also for my parents, friends and benefactors and enemies. So be it.

[55] Prague, May 11, 1835 <sup>119</sup>

The depression that assailed me all day meant that it was nearly profitless for me. Professor Millauer gave some strong corrections to Hron Praemonstr.(?) <sup>120</sup> today. Since I made practically the same mistakes in writing my own theme I've been upset and fretful all day. It must be that I am still so vain and eager for praise because there is nothing I fear as much as reproaches of this sort. On account of this fear I am quite impervious to any inspirations of love or hope... all I seem to feel is an overpowering sense of diffidence and timidity.

Yes, my Lord, all I deserve is reproach because my sluggishness and indifference regarding my class-work is indeed outrageous. Dear Jesus, I have placed myself entirely in Your hands. If You choose to punish me, do give me the strength I need so that I may not lose my health through sheer despair. O Jesus, consider my weakness and carelessness, my unfaithfulness to You! Do not let me perish in that slough of sin and habitual wickedness. I want to dedicate my every effort to Your glory, to spread Your Kingdom over the face of this earth which You have loved enough to become the God-Man. Oh how gladly I love You with my whole heart! But there seems to be a kind of wall that separates me from You. I would fain embrace You but my arms just flail about without ever reaching You. O eternal beauty, my heavenly treasure! When will You deign to come to me? My heart seeks and yearns for You without any satisfaction at all. Would that I were already cleansed of every stain of sin, and that I were now enlightened by the Holy Spirit! Then I would scorn my aridity of heart, my repugnance for spiritual things which afflict me constantly.

Still, You are my Lord. May Your will be done! I am the

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<sup>119</sup> No entry for May 10.

<sup>120</sup> This name appears only once in the *Journal*. . . possibly, « Jerome », a Praemonstratensian studying at the diocesan seminary with N.

least of Your servants whom You graciously endure even though I have long since deserved to die a thousand times over.

Holy Mary, my Mother and my Refuge, intercede for me together with the Angels and my holy Patrons that I may become more fervent, more detached from the world, more willing to fulfill the will of my God. So be it.

[55-a] May 13, 1835 <sup>121</sup>

Yesterday I made the final copy of my catechetical instruction on the Gospel... I was working on it until two a.m. The grief that tormented me so yesterday eased up a bit today... at least there were a few brief moments of happiness! Still my heart is so unhappy and even despondent lately that I could readily have slipped back into that deplorable state... a torment I don't even want to think about!

My financial straits worsen with each passing day. Our Dean returned some books but sent no money to defray the cost of the post so that now I owe two florins and very shortly I shall have to lay out quite a bit for a dozen different items. Still, off and on I do derive at least some comfort from the acts of resignation I make. I at times even experience a real joy at being in such straitened circumstances. Then all of a sudden it occurs to me that this situation has endured far too long without any letup... despite all the prayers I have said.

Today during Vespers (Forty Hours devotions) I recited the Litany of the Saints that through their intercession God might deliver me from my anxiety. However, my faith and trust in this sort of prayer for temporal favors has always been rather scant.

Laad's sister, who came with a group of pilgrims to Prague, told us of one of the travellers who had been killed somewhere between Pisek and Chrastitz (?). It was probably our Pipota's brother.

As far as my spiritual life is concerned, at present I am so listless that all my devotions are dry and quite monotonous. I seem to perform them just out of rote. The wretchedness I felt yesterday and to some degree even today has surely cost me much grace... I should not have indulged my self-pity so! Dear Jesus, I have not lost my trust and faith in You, my God, but I am indeed so miserable

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<sup>121</sup> No entry for May 12, doubtlessly because of the extra work mentioned at the beginning of this entry.



that I might well collapse 'neath the weight of these temptations to despair! Would that my misery might help me in my quest for perfection, but I no longer feel that I can muster the firm will to resist temptation with all my strength. O Jesus Christ! strengthen me... do not forsake Your disciple in his struggles! I praise You, my Lord, with my whole heart and soul. I love You and I shall always do so. But do not abandon me in my despair! Have pity on me, sweet Jesus! Holy Mother Mary, abide with me that I may not fall into sin. So be it.

[55-b] May 14, 1835

Today I suffered less than yesterday, although my pain was still acute enough to draw tears of anguish at God's Providence in my regard! Towards evening I began to feel a greater sense of love towards my Jesus despite the fact that very little fervor or unction filled my heart. Sweetest Jesus, if You really want to test me by these misfortunes, I wish I were much stronger of soul. Oh, please do not lay to my charge all those blasphemous thoughts and desires, my Jesus! Blessed Infant, I love You with all my heart, but I beg You, never forsake me again. Tomorrow I would like to visit one of the nearby churches in order to go to confession and to receive Holy Communion. Dear Jesus, grant me the grace to do so. If such should be in accord with Your holy will, I would like tomorrow to receive the sacraments in honor of my holy patron, St. John Nepomucene whose feastday is almost upon us. Help me to have the proper dispositions of soul, my Lord, and, if You wish to grant me this grace, arrange everything so that it will truly happen.

Do know that You are most welcome in my heart, gentle Jesus. Come, with Your very own peace, to dwell within me, I beg of You. Give me an ever greater share of Your love so that I may advance in the way of perfection as I so ardently desire. O my God, I offer You all my pain and sufferings. Even though I am still a trifle upset, I submit myself entirely to Your holy will. I am all Yours in life and in death. Oh how very imperfect am I while countless pious virgins in their cloisters honor and adore You with complete devotion and resignation! Sweet Spouse of my soul, Divine Master, You have indeed given me a share of Your love... how ardently I hope that it will comfort my aching heart. I would gladly forget the sufferings I have endured so that I might not lose my sense of trust and hope in You since that is beginning to grow strong once more.

How wretched is our life here on earth! What with sins and faults following hard upon each other, I have no joy untinged with the memory of all the evil I have wrought. O my Jesus, take pity on my weakness which leads me into all sorts of carelessness without any sense of remorse. How utterly happy I would be if tomorrow I could make my confession in one of these neighboring churches! Help me, my Jesus. If it be in accord with Your holy will, give me the courage I need.

Holy Mary, my Mother, you have protected me from sin today. Do the same tomorrow! My Guardian Angel, obtain for me the light and grace I need. My holy Patron Saints, pray for this miserable sinner, and for my parents, my friends at Budweiss and for the whole Christian world. So be it.

[55-c] May 15, 1835

O my God, what shall I do to escape eternal damnation? All the tears I shed, all the pain that pierces my heart, of what value are these in expiating even the slightest offense against You? You, my God, require deeds of us, good deeds... and all I can offer are my sins. O Jesus, my divine Judge, do not condemn me on the last day when You come to judge mankind. Of what good is my bitter sorrow if my behavior continues to be wicked? And how can I be more conscientious in following Your commandments, my Lord, unless I have the sort of hope without which all my efforts are useless? O my soul, what can you do to elicit the mercy of your just God? Alas! you are completely wretched... your Creator will cast you from His throne! O Jesus, hear my cry! In my desolation I have no one in the whole wide world to comfort me. I well know that this desolation is one of the fruits of the sins of my youth. O just Judge, have pity on me, for the grief over my sins is so great I can scarcely bear it. I have wasted all the strength of my body and soul without a thought for the future. I shall be but a burden on mankind and on myself! Where in heaven shall I find some consolation? I have not yet atoned for those sins by a sincere contrition. Men will shun me because of my insufferable character. Within my soul I find only a conscience that constantly bemoans my indifference towards God and His commandments... and my carelessness! O dear God, I so fear eternal damnation... when shall I have the joy of seeing myself rid of these devilish stains of sin?

Ah Lord! my prayers seem to me to be useless because I have

failed to live in accord with Your will. Give me the virtue of hope for at this point I feel I can do nothing at all without it. O all-wise God, forgive me for telling You what I need... You already know that! The gift of tears, the sensible consolation I experience at times and the sweet sense of fervor and devotion... these are all Your gifts and I am most grateful for them. Still, I beg You not to deprive me any more of that living faith and trust which shows itself in deeds and actions.

Tomorrow will be your feastday, my holy Patron, St. John Nepomucene. How can I make you happy? Alas! I have nothing to give you. God is your friend... what can I possibly offer you more than Him? Oh, intercede for me that God, whose countenance you behold, may grant me some special grace. Pray also for my parents, my friends and the whole Christian world. Amen.

[56] Prague, May 16, 1835

I spent almost the whole day bemoaning the protracted desolation I have endured. Dear Lord, it is without a doubt most ungrateful of me to yield so readily to the temptation to despair. When the fervor of my meditation wanes, I soon advert to this fault of mine, but then all of a sudden I forget all about it. Sweet Jesus, forgive me... do not permit me to lose what I have attained at the cost of so much pain and effort. Oh, how utterly miserable I have been today! I was actually sulky in Your regard, my God, and I failed to try to dispel that mood straightaway. Another misfortune that impelled me to turn to You was the profanation of our church that occurred during Vespers. While the Blessed Sacrament was exposed on the altar, Count Lévêbrun (De Lébrun?), that monster of debauchery, committed a sacrilege in full sight of the devout pilgrims!<sup>122</sup> Several of the theology students saw it and one of them, named Hrabek (?), called the Prefect's attention to it. The Prefect then fetched two policemen into the church to haul the man off to the Chief of Police<sup>123</sup>. We still don't know how this business will turn out.

<sup>122</sup> The nature of the sacrilege is unspecified. Since the incident occurred outside the time for the distribution of Holy Communion, we can but speculate on the possibility of some sort of improper behavior in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament exposed for 40 hrs.

<sup>123</sup> N. uses the terms « grenadiers » and « chief sentinel ».

O my Jesus, does this mean we shall be deprived of Your help? All the reverence and devotion we owe You will simply be ignored by the people now. Have pity on us... You send these misfortunes to us so that we will be aware of our sins and conceive genuine sorrow for them. Just now I am quite at loose ends! My Jesus, I desire to be more perfect in order to be able to honor You more. But at present I seem to have no warmth, no fervor at all; I'm unable to focus my thoughts either for good or ill, so that I shall have to finish this chore with a prayer to my Mother Mary: intercede for me and for the city of Prague. Help my parents and my friends!

Holy Guardian Angel, I am surely in your debt for having kept me from serious sin several times today. My Patron, St. John Nepomucene, whose feast we are celebrating today, obtain for me the grace to become a priest according to the will of our common Master. Dear Jesus Christ, have pity on me... pardon the sins I have committed this day, especially those of despair. Do not withdraw Your Holy Spirit from me. Do deign to hear the prayers I offer for my corporal and spiritual health. So be it.

[56-a] May 17, 1835

I was less upset today than yesterday; it comforted me to see that I had accomplished what I wanted to do although it also caused me a certain remorse at having so offended my God by my sulkiness and lack of courage. O gentle Jesus, how much more must You endure even after having loved me so much! In token of my desire for reconciliation, my Jesus, I offer You my firm resolution nevermore to yield to despair. O divine Master, deign to accept my resolution! Just forgive all I have committed against You over these last days of pain and sorrow. My Jesus, I will be most happy to make a vow to risk my life for Your teachings<sup>124</sup>, but I'm not sure that is what You want. Do with me what You will. My Lord, I furthermore propose to perform all my duties more conscientiously, to follow Your counsel more carefully and to listen more attentively to the voice of Your inspirations.

Yes, my God, I from this moment on intend to obey Your law perfectly so that I may please You forever in Heaven with

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<sup>124</sup> Probably a reference to his patron St. John Nepomucene whose feast N. had just celebrated the previous day.

which You will reward me after I have battled manfully and courageously with the enemies of the Cross and of Your Holy Name. O Sweet Spouse of my soul, come back to me! Give me once again the great joy of Your company.

The coldness and dryness of heart that You allow me to suffer when I set about writing this journal, I gladly offer to You, dear Lord, in memory of the desolation You endured on the Cross, forsaken by all the world... You, the sole object of all my desires and aspirations! Oh how I long to be able to express adequately my love for You which You Yourself have wrought within my heart! <sup>125</sup>. All I can do is to try to show that love by enduring whatever misfortune befalls me. O Jesus, should such a desire on my part be too vain and proud, forgive me, for You well know the extent of my sinfulness.

Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of my God, and my Guardian Angel and all You Saints of Heaven, pray for me, for my parents and my friends and enemies. Grant to all of us God's holy peace that we may enjoy a holy and a happy death! So be it.

[56-b] May 18, 1835

I was rather distracted all day today because of the welter of chores and errands I had to do outside the seminary. I didn't give too much thought at all to You, my dear Jesus! Thus my resolution to correct my behavior bore little fruit. Still, my Jesus, I do not intend to yield to despair over this; rather I propose to start over once more and to invoke Your Holy Name frequently so that You will come to my aid.

O my Jesus, today I prayed in church to St. John Nepomucene that I might advance in the path of perfection. Do deign to hear my prayer! And accept the intercession of my holy Patron. Gentle Jesus, I really do not want to remain so lax and careless... I want to lead a more austere, strict sort of life. Guide and direct me, for You are the only Director I have, my Divine Master, Jesus Christ! In my heart I know that I do love You... grant that I may also show my love by my deeds and behavior. You who have given me the one, can surely also give me the other!

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<sup>125</sup> One can't help but marvel... given the obvious intensity of N.'s sentiments as reflected so often in the *Journal*... at how ardent his feelings and desires must have been in fact, if he himself believed the expression thereof to be «cold and dry».

Tomorrow I want to rise quite early... at 4 a.m. so that I can write this journal and begin reviewing my classwork. O Holy Spirit, You who have enlightened the Apostles and so many Doctors of the Church, instill in me too the knowledge of God and salvation once You have made me worthy of Your special aid! I ask for this that together with those blessed souls I might spread the Kingdom You have created on this earth. However, I beg You first of all to banish all pride and conceit from my heart since these would surely deceive me in my efforts to know Your holy will.

Ah my Jesus and my God! You know perfectly well all my faults and failings... You so well know just what medicine I need to correct them. Direct all my thoughts, my desires, my whole understanding and being. May Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven! I offer myself body and soul to You. I want nothing for myself; do with me what You will. I am Your disciple and You are my Teacher and Guide.

Holy Mary, Mother of my Infant Jesus, tell Your Son that I love Him with all my heart and that I long to see Him face to face. Obtain for me from my Jesus the grace to persevere in the devout life. My Guardian Angel, never forsake me... do not leave me in peril of eternal damnation! Most revered Patrons of mine, pray for my salvation and for that of my parents, friends and benefactors. So be it.

[56-c] May 19, 1835

Jesus, my love, my only treasure! Oh why can I not love You more completely? I seek You wherever I turn my eyes and in every perception and sensation I experience, but still, You seem inaccessible to me! O Jesus, Sweet Spouse of my soul, my Lord... why have You filled my heart with such a great love for You? I do love You and I shall try to continue to do so until my last breath. How deliriously happy I should be, dearest Lord, were I able to show my confreres how utterly delightful is Your love. I unite my will to Yours, O my Jesus. I wish only what You will. You are my Lord and I am the slave of Your handmaid, Mary. Command me, my Jesus, and I shall obey Your every order! I really want to love my neighbor since You have died for him... Oh give me even enemies that I might love and praise them! Jesus, my love, You have showered me with consolations. Do now come into this heart of mine which has for so long yearned for Your company.

My heavenly Gardener, sow within my heart the virtues that will be pleasing to You... water them with Your divine grace that they may grow from day to day. I give myself wholeheartedly to You, my God. I shall always belong to You! Oh why, my Jesus, my Comforter, can I not have the happiness of knowing now that I shall never sin again. My God, my Love, You have loved me so much! How can I possibly offend You? Lord Jesus, who so kindly offer me Your grace, let me know if I should become a Jesuit in order to serve You better. Ah! I shall be happy to bear any suffering for Your glory, O Jesus Christ, Soul of my whole being, Life of my soul! The love You have kindled in my heart shows me clearly the vast gap between my present state and true perfection. Dearest Jesus, strength of the martyrs, I would bend every effort to draw near to You. Give me Your help for I can lose heart very quickly in the face of difficulties that arise in my progress towards You. Would that I were privileged to kiss You, divine Infant Jesus! I would love to press You to my bosom for I love You almost more than I can bear. Dear Lord Jesus, abide with me.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, I love you too with this heart of mine all afire with love for my God. I beg you to kiss your divine and all-gracious Son for me. Tell Him I want to do whatever will be pleasing to Him. My Angel Guardian, help me to heed the inspirations of God's grace. My holy Patrons, pray for me, for my parents, friends and benefactors. Comfort Your Holy Church! So be it.

[57] Prague, May 20, 1835

My Jesus, I have the deepest love for You! I love You with a boundless love, and yet I know 'tis far too little. I fear, O my God, that You may condemn me for my carelessness and indifference regarding Your commandments. However, the remorse I feel over my ingratitude to You is truly painful for me. I would gladly die for Your sake, Sweet Spouse of my soul! For I wish for nothing but to be with You, my Lord Jesus, my Love, my All! How can You possibly give me so great a grace when I have so very often offended You? I would fain suffer hunger and thirst, nakedness, cold and heat, if only I could be with You in the most Blessed Sacrament. I would prostrate myself before You, O my God, and bewail my sins without restraint for it is they that have kept me from You for so very long, You, the sole object of my desire! Would that I could eat Your

whole body and drink all Your precious blood! I would need no other nourishment.

My dearest Jesus, such is precisely the grace You deign to grant me by making me Your priest! You are indeed infinitely good to me while I... I am but a poor sinner whose conduct has all the hallmarks of indifference and carelessness. My Jesus, I want to correct every single fault I have... I intend and resolve to become perfect, if only You will give me the grace to do so. Then my faith and trust will be indeed strong, my sense of hope solid. A spirit of true love will permeate all my conduct. O Jesus, it is true... and perhaps mainly through my own fault... that I have no spiritual director. However, since You have so kindly roused me from that frightful torpor in which I languished without guidance of any sort, I pray You to be my director and lead me to perfection. Do guide me, dearest Jesus. It is from You that I wish to learn the art of directing souls in the devout life.

From this day forth I resolve to focus all my energies on performing my duties with perfect love and care so as to please You and promote my own salvation. My Jesus, I am truly Your disciple; have pity on me and teach me the virtues that give You the greatest pleasure... I am more than ready to try to make them my own! Holy Mary, Mother of God, you too have pity on me and pray for me. So be it.

[57-a] May 21, 1835

My dearest Savior You well know how I have suffered today! This morning Your love made me quite happy but then later I was tempted by impure thoughts followed by my wonted despondency and lack of faith. These horrible torments seem to occur mainly when I am walking in the garden. Even Your love seems to vanish then and I become quite depressed. Besides all that I had those constant pains in my arm!

Lord, You know me inside and out... why do You send so much suffering to me? O my Jesus, forgive me for saying that! My faith is so weak it threatens to disappear altogether. What sense of hope I had no longer comforts me, nor does the spirit of love ease my chores. I am in truth a source of shame to all who love You. O my God, they have their spiritual directors and I have none! Is that because I have strayed from You and Your holy will? They all laugh at me... and I try to endure that so that I may learn to be



humble. Do You really love the sort of humility born of this pain... enduring the scorn of others... or should I repulse them with reproaches of my own? Who will tell me what to do?

You have heard the pleas of so many sinners... will You not grant such a grace to me? Once again, my Jesus, I declare to You that I am the greatest of sinners... but can I hope that Your infinite mercy will also extend to me? O my God, I so desire to maintain my trust and confidence in Your fatherly love despite the fact that the effort to do so strains my capability. My needs grow each day and yet there seems to be no comfort... no ray of hope to brighten my prospects.

My Savior, I do indeed belong entirely to You. However, You seem to have rejected me. I have placed myself completely in Your hands ...I acknowledge no other norm of conduct. O my Jesus, be gracious to me in my wretched state. I do love You even though my love may seem to be very aloof and cold. Alas! my sulky nature turns even the pleasant thoughts of You and eternal bliss bleak and bitter. I was quite careless in the performance of my chores today. Ill-disposed as I was, I thought I could do them satisfactorily anyway!

Holy Mary, my Mother and Patroness, plead with your Divine Son to heed the prayers I say so earnestly and often. My Guardian Angel, protect me in every temptation. All you Saints in Heaven, pray for my eternal salvation. Intercede for my parents, my enemies, benefactors and for the whole Church Militant and Suffering. So be it.

[57-b] May 22, 1835

Do not be disappointed with me, my Lord Jesus! I resolve to give myself to You entirely and nevermore forsake You. In my excessive diffidence I was rather upset with You! I yielded to sullenness and let myself be swept along in a torrent of impure thoughts. Forgive me for doubting the infinite mercy You show to all us creatures. How much merit I would have had if only I had been more amenable, more concerned with loving You! Your love, however, is beginning to stir within me little by little so that I was quite sorry today that I had ignored the graces You offered me to submit graciously to the inspirations of Your holy will. O my Jesus, I do regret that I failed to keep my promise to You.

I myself am the cause of these difficulties that will eventually leave me despondent and depressed. When I consider the vast dignity and honor You wish to confer on me by making me Your

priest, I actually do not feel any great joy. And why is that? It's doubtlessly because I am afraid it won't really come to pass... the whole business of my ordination may simply fall through!<sup>126</sup>

I am still much too indifferent in the face of all the joys and sorrows that confront me. O my Jesus, I submit myself completely to Your will. Do with me whatever You wish.

Tomorrow it is my turn to explain the Gospel for Pentecost. It was fairly easy for me this time to prepare the talk although I shall still have to rise very early tomorrow. Dear Jesus, help me to be properly disposed for the Confession I shall make tomorrow in Your honor and for my salvation.

Blessed Virgin Mary, I ask you too, with the holy Angels and my Patron Saints, to intercede for me that my heart may be a fitting abode for the Most High God Whom I have offended more during these past three weeks than ever before. Right now I am still rather poorly disposed but, my Jesus, I do hope that tomorrow You Yourself will help me so that from then on I may always receive Holy Communion as a Christian should.

I ask for help also in solving my financial problems so that with my mind at rest, I can serve You better in matters of the spirit. O Refuge of the disconsolate, come quickly to my aid! O my Jesus, I beg You to have pity on me. So be it.

[57-c] May 23, 1835

O Jesus, my delight! Now indeed You have my heart after so many struggles and so much anxiety. The Holy Sacrament has obliterated all my troubles which had so disturbed my faith, hope and charity. I am reconciled with You once again and I feel I have the courage to follow You anywhere, to suffer any pain that You may deign to send me. Reading St. Augustine's *Confessions*, IX, 9, 10 and 11, has given me considerable help in submitting to Your holy will, for I know now how long St. Monica prayed for the conversion of her son and that You answered her prayers only after many years. What a great thing to pray for... the conversion of her son! And I...

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<sup>126</sup> The abundance of clergy in the area at the time made ordination doubtful for all seminarians... the bishops simply had no parishes or chaplaincies in which to put more priests. Thus N.'s and others' interest in joining a religious order or in going to the foreign missions. The situation was further complicated by the local Ordinary's taking sick around this time. As matters turned out, N. was not ordained until he reached America. See *Journal*, June, 18, 1835.

what do I seek of You? material things that will be of no great comfort to me at the hour of my death.

O my God! I am ashamed of having been so obtuse for so long. My dearest Lord, Jesus Christ, I have spent far too much of my life in laxity and indifference, in conceit and concupiscence, in all sorts of faults that can be imagined. However, from this moment on, O God, I promise You I shall lead a truly Christian life, mortified and humble just as Augustine did after his conversion. My Jesus, You can see how earnest I am about this resolution and I confidently expect to receive whatever help I need to fulfill it.

Above all I intend to check my distaste for my various duties and chores, to mortify my vanity, intemperance and human respect concerning the public practice of my faith. My whole life shall be devoted to Your service. I no longer belong to myself but to You alone. I shall do only what I recognize to be Your holy will. During the week I shall rise as soon as I awaken and recite my prayers. Then I shall set about my studies until time for chapel. As far as the evenings are concerned, I intend to keep my former schedule. Every quarter-hour I will renew my act of self-offering, even while I'm at work. O Jesus, help me! I know You will infallibly help me for now I find it easy to pray to You with confidence and trust. I am positive that You have heard my prayer. I feel like a new man!

Jesus, my God, accept my gratitude. Preserve me from every sin during this wretched life on earth so that I may gaze upon You forever in eternity, my sole and greatest good! Holy Mary, my mother, pray for me, for my parents and friends and all Christians on earth and in Purgatory. Holy Angels, intercede for me... during the night prepare a worthy abode in my heart for our Savior and Lord Who will be coming to visit me tomorrow. My holy Patron Saints, intercede for me. So be it.

[58] May 24, 1835

I received a letter from my friend Schmid today! O my Jesus, You do indeed hear my prayers to strengthen me in Your love and in my trust in Your Providence and to restore my hope. I do indeed thank You, Gentle Jesus, for today You have actually granted the main things I asked for. You gave me Yourself in the most holy Sacrament of the altar. O my Savior, I love You with all my heart! Still, I am sorry I was not more careful to sustain my fervor... I was too

lighthearted and talked too much. For a while there I forgot all about the business of trying to be perfect.

I was more than usually conscientious in performing my duties today. However, in my excessive happiness I neglect to devote all my thoughts to You. In the garden again today I spoke with one of the workers at the spool factory who promised to teach me how to pronounce English<sup>127</sup>. My Jesus, You know what I stand most in need of... hear my humble prayer and give me whatever I need in order to fulfill Your holy will.

Sweet Spouse of my soul, Jesus Christ, abide with me, forgive me all the sins I have committed against You until this day. Grant me the grace of sincere sorrow for my sins and that I may be truly humble, chaste, conscientious, obedient and resigned.

I talked very long today with Laad about Schmid. It seems my dream about Wildson came true<sup>128</sup>. My friend made a convert! May God prosper their work! God be with them!

Holy Mother of God, accept the praise I offer you. In your hands I place this whole project regarding the Missions. Protect us, guide us, help us... we are your servants. Intercede for us, for our parents, our friends and all Christians. Holy Angel in Heaven, All you Saints of God, intercede for us and protect us.

May 25, 1835

The new method<sup>129</sup> I've adopted for stirring up God's love in my heart and thereby stifling any unruly passion that arises, worked quite well today. I used it particularly to overcome my unhappiness regarding the business of the Dean's books and also for the exam I had with Prof. Millauer. I made an effort, my Jesus, to rouse my love for You and You did relieve my [58-a] anxiety completely!

Today I noticed another weakness in my character... I take

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<sup>127</sup> Evidently the seminary property was enclosed by buildings rented out as shops, stores, etc., which opened at the rear onto the garden and so allowed of intercourse between the occupants and the seminarians. This arrangement, with some variation, endures to this day in certain European areas, e.g., Sant'Alfonso in Rome.

<sup>128</sup> The name « Wildson » is not explained here or elsewhere in the *Journal*. Again, « convert » is unspecified. It may refer to Schmid's persuading Laad to give thought to joining the Trappists. See *Journal* for Oct. 12, 1834, note 22.

<sup>129</sup> Alas! the new method is unspecified. Regarding the Dean's books, see *Journal* for May 13, 1835. The method is mentioned a second time in par. 3 of the entry.

quite a bit of pleasure in seeing my humility noted by others. On the other hand I am upset whenever I experience a slight. My humility should be more perfect. I must conceal my virtues and strong points which, after all, You have actually given me. My Jesus, do come to my aid!

I didn't find doing my chores so difficult today... as I had yesterday and on previous occasions, since the method I mentioned earlier seems to have helped me whenever I needed it. Still I was entirely too talkative and lighthearted today. I spent quite some time conversing with my companions... about unimportant things, at that! I didn't speak much about God at all. O my dear Jesus, forgive me! I was thoughtless at times in my actions and also in my speech. I also failed several times to some degree against sincerity and truthfulness.

For someone as sensual as I am, conversation can be dangerous. I frequently fall into sin thereby and occasionally I am ashamed to reveal what I am thinking about lest I be considered over-pious! Dear Jesus, teach me when I ought to acknowledge You before men so that You may acknowledge me on the day of Judgment. Just now I feel cold and dry of heart... but I love You, my God, with all my heart.

Holy Mother of God, pray for me in union with the Angels and the Blessed in Heaven. Intercede also for my parents, friends and benefactors and for all Christians in the Church both Militant and Suffering. O my Jesus, abide with me at all times. So be it.

May 26, 1835

Today I really tried hard to resist anything that might have upset or discouraged me, though I must say this constant struggle is very painful for me. I did not experience so much grace or sensible love of Jesus today. At one point in which I did begin to feel something of the sort, I asked You, my Savior, not to grant me that consolation but rather the grace I needed to avoid sin. Did I do wrong to act in that fashion? In my case, since I really should check my unruly tendency to foster such sensible consolations, I feel Your grace is more urgently needed if I am to make any headway in virtue. Forgive me, then, if I sinned through thoughtlessness and an inordinate zeal for mortification. O my sweetest Jesus, I am all Yours, my Savior and Heavenly Master! May Your holy will be accomplished in me!

The longing for supernatural grace... so often and so persistently [58-b] felt... proves that I am still entirely too vain and that my reasons for wanting to do Your holy will are quite suspect. O gentle Jesus, help me so that the mortification of this sort of vanity may be more effective than it has been up until now. Today You promised to help me soon in my temporal problems. Hear my prayer, then, for I shall never cease to turn to You for help since You Yourself have taught us to pray with confidence. I know for sure that You will keep Your word!

Today I read two letters the Carmelite Sisters sent Madame Klar. One was from a Sister Aloise who has just had a painful operation. The other from Fr. Dichtl's sister, Sr. Teresa of the Heart of Jesus. My Lord, Your love is all-powerful! You reveal Your heavenly wisdom to souls that will never engage in scholarly pursuits! O Holy Spirit, come also into my heart! Fill me with the fire of divine love that I might be able to direct such pious souls on the way of perfection, i.e., to love and adore You. Bless all the pain and effort I put into the study of theology. You are the Good Shepherd of all Christians. Teach me also! Be my model, my Jesus! I place all my trust in You, O Lord, for You have shown me the infinite power You have in the example of so many repentant sinners whom You have reconciled and sanctified. If anyone needs wisdom, he has but to ask You for it and he will surely receive it. Isn't that right, my Jesus? You have given Your word!

Hear my cry, then, and if there should be some spark of vanity or indifference in my prayer, smother it by the power of Your holy will! O my Jesus, will I ever be able to love You as much as these pious, devout Carmelites do? I beg You, strengthen them and make them truly holy for they have given up all things to follow You. On the day of Judgment welcome them as Your heavenly brides! Holy Spirit, inspire them to pray also for this poor sinner who still lives in the world but who longs to take up his abode in the wilderness so that he may no longer have to busy himself with the cares of that world. My Jesus, I know You will deliver me... come! come, sweet Spouse of my soul! Purify, justify and sanctify my life!

[58-c] My dearest Mother Mary, Immaculate Virgin, I have recourse to You in all my spiritual and temporal needs. Intercede for me. I place all my problems in the bosom of your mercy. Obtain for me a strong faith, solid hope and ardent love. Teach me the sort of perfect humility that you yourself possessed. Obtain for me purity of heart so that I may never again commit a serious sin. Beloved

Mother, I would love to be able to receive Holy Communion more often... even every day. But you know the circumstances of my life... my weakness and laxness and my wickedness. Help me! Enlighten me! You are my protectress and advocate in this business of the Missions. Guide me in accord with the will of your Divine Son.

My holy Angel Guardian, help me to recognize anything mistaken or out of line in my thinking so that I can deal with it immediately. My holy Patron Saints, take pity on this miserable creature! Pray for me constantly that I might acquire the virtues that made you so pleasing to my God. Pray also for my parents, friends, benefactors and the whole Christian world. So be it.

May 27, 1835

I was more careful in following the inspirations of Your grace today, my God, although I did become bored for a while with my devotions. I am beginning to remember more frequently that I am indeed Your disciple and that my demeanor ought to be rather dignified and not lighthearted and frivolous. I was also more than usually conscientious in performing my duties. At times I even felt some interior joy while doing them, though at one point I came close to deciding to do nothing at all!

Today Laad had to give his talk for Prof. Millauer and he delivered it with considerable feeling. However, he didn't seem to know about the Scripture text « He shall be the expectation of all the nations ». I am now quite happy because I am finding it much easier to go about my various chores... which formerly was nearly impossible for me. However, my dearest Lord, I well know that this is the result of the graces You have given for my encouragement. Withal, this experience proves to me without a doubt that You want to help me so that I can consecrate myself to You entirely.

O my Jesus, I love You so! Your love has permeated my whole being ...it even causes me pain! For how can I learn to show my love for You through my deeds? [59] O Jesus, send Your Holy Spirit upon me, a poor sinner, that He may teach me the wisdom of the Saints. My longing grows every moment to direct others on the path of perfection. Shower Your grace upon me, pour Your precious blood over me to wipe away all the stains of sin that have defiled me from my childhood. I implore You, Good Shepherd, by the infinite mercy You have shown in rescuing me from the pit of sin. Instill in my heart humility, a love for poverty, gentleness, purity

and a perfect love for You and my neighbor so that You may deign to make it Your lasting abode.

I could fairly weep for joy when I realize how good You are to me!<sup>130</sup> O Lord, how have I possibly deserved such a blessing as that of Your love? You love me so, and I? What can I do to show my love except to express my longing for You? Sweet Spouse of my soul, protect me from my enemies who seek my eternal ruin: concupiscence, envy, pride, vanity and indifference... these assail me constantly on all sides. But I cling to You, my only Good! Do not forsake me. Take me under Your almighty protection. Preserve me from every danger. O Jesus, Who receive the praise of the Blessed in Heaven, save me from the flood of sin that threatens to engulf me. Raise my soul to Yourself in heaven that it may remain always near You, to devote all my thoughts to You, my only Good!

My beloved Mother Mary, most pure Virgin, beseech your divine Son Whom you have so often held in your arms, that He may grant me the grace to persist in my good resolutions, and that He may cleanse me of all my sins and be lenient with me. Most Holy Virgin, you know my frailty and my worthlessness. You know me better than I know myself! Have pity on me and intercede for me. I am still in this valley of tears where every joy is tainted with the gall of sin. Oh! how wretched I feel at having so often and so grievously offended Your Son! How many countless graces have I lost through my wickedness! And I am still so mean and ungrateful!

My holy Guardian Angel, protect and guide me. My holy Patrons, offer to my Jesus the desolation I feel at this moment. Pray for this miserable sinner, and for my parents, friends and benefactors and my enemies. Be merciful to me, my Jesus. Have pity on me! Amen.

[59-a]. May 28, 1835

It has been a long time since I have spent a day so little mortified, so unfervently as today. From early this morning all my zeal for perfection seemed to have vanished. My prayer was so erratic that I hardly gave any thought at all to You, my God. My soul, what a frightful risk you take by such carelessness! Could you have resisted the lure of sensuality had your God allowed you to be thus tempted? How very many good deeds did you forego today? You gave no

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<sup>130</sup> There are tearstains on the ms. at this point.



thought to your Creator Who has preserved you from your infancy until this day. Nor did you even remember the Savior Who gave His life to redeem you from eternal death. In your bitterness yesterday you wept, and yet today you did not keep your word! How much you lost by neglecting the opportunities for mortifying yourself, for correcting your faults and rousing your love for God, for practicing humility and the other Christian virtues! Rather than pursuing the path of progress in perfection you let yourself indulge in laxity and indifference. You forgot about your God from Whom you have received all that you have from your earliest years. Has it not been, in truth, a wasted day... one that will add to your ruin on the day of judgment? Is that the way to give glory to Jesus Christ?

O my Jesus, do not judge me in Your wrath, I beg of You, my heavenly Master, have mercy on me! I have wasted Your gifts... Oh how utterly miserable I am! You are that only one who can save me and I fail to give You even a single thought! Scorning that grace today has made me lose all the others You planned to give me in order to make me more like Yourself. O vile ingratitude of mine! You have wronged my Jesus, my gracious Lord. In my weakened condition, having lost Your love, how shall I be able to endure the suffering? Jesus, my God, I am the most ungrateful of all creatures on this earth. Still, I make bold to pray to You and to implore You by Your love for my soul, do not abandon me to my passions. Rescue me from the pit of vice which I had left so recently. Heal my soul... its frailty surpasses all imagination! What with this coldness of heart... the predictable result of my indifference... how readily I shall be led to fritter away all the gifts and graces You have deigned to give me!

And, indeed, how shall I ever be able to regain Your paternal approval and love? Instill the necessary sorrow in my heart together with a firm purpose of amendment and satisfaction. Holy Mary, pray for me! Amen.

[59-b] May 29, 1835

Dearest Jesus, I was much more aware of Your love today than yesterday. I didn't seem to have so many temptations or disappointments, so many distractions from empty pleasures. Maybe that is why I failed to recall Your presence very often so that I could reassure You of my love. That is one of Satan's tricks to make me forget You, my beloved Lord, ... he ceases to tempt me for a while!

The fool! How could I ever forget You when You have made me so deliriously happy by Your presence? O dearest Jesus, You have permitted me to suffer some corrections from Prof. Millauer. Perhaps in a way I was to blame for that. However, no matter what I had to swallow, it was still far too little!

O that I might be able to prove my love for You through even more arduous works that would give greater glory to Your holy name! My Jesus, my All, I give myself entirely to You for what is there in this world more gracious, more holy or more merciful than You, my divine Master? Oh I am so happy that I have found You... or rather that You have found me. I prostrate myself before You, divine Teacher. Your word is my delight! Help me to understand it and to obey it as carefully as possible on this earth. I know You will give me the grace of perseverance and progress in the way of perfection. You are indeed infinitely good! How have I ever deserved to receive such bountiful graces? I who am the greatest sinner on this earth!

O Jesus, I shall love You until the end of the world for You are the eternal God, the sole desire of my poor heart! O Mother of my God, without a doubt it is due to your intercession that I have received so many graces... how shall I ever thank you? By keeping the commandments of your dearly beloved Son! O my Mother, that will be my great joy and happiness, for He has surely deserved as much. His love for me is truly [59-c] boundless!

My holy Guardian Angel, protect me tonight and tomorrow from every transgression of God's holy will. Stifle every unruly desire I may conceive, every disorder and empty pleasure I may indulge so that I may the more clearly hear His voice. All you Saints in Heaven, equip my soul with all sorts of virtue that my Jesus may dwell there forever. O dearest Lord, grant the same consolations and graces to my parents, my friends and my unknown enemies and to everyone on the earth. Do not forsake me nor let me relapse into any sin, even a venial sin. Make my conscience more sensitive that I might notice immediately the appearance of anything that might disturb the repose of the heavenly Infant in my breast. My Jesus, You are the crown of all Virgins... give me the grace to be chaste that my body and soul may be always pure so as to deserve to be called in truth the abode of the Holy Spirit. I love You with all my heart and strength and soul. Oh, how unspeakably happy I am! Dear Jesus, Divine One, I am indeed grateful for Your excessive kindness. Remain within my heart forever so that I may never again offend You by sin. Through the intercession of the most blessed

Virgin, of all the Angels and Saints, give me purity of heart. Forgive me all my sins, O Jesus! So be it.

May 30, 1835

My dearest Jesus, how are You faring in my heart... is it peaceful there? Isn't it true that occasionally I was somewhat upset because of some distracting conversation. I am not entirely sure that I behaved properly in that case. What upsets me often enough are the indifference and coldness that seem to envelop me even when I am praying. Beloved Jesus, my Divine Master, teach me some spiritual practice that will correct this for such lapses lead me all too frequently to disregard Your holy will. You well know how much I desire to avoid every least sin in the future... it is the single greatest desire I have! Most Holy One, do deign to grant me this grace and all the graces I may need to please You.

[60] Is not this love that I'm beginning to feel a very special grace? Shall I not have to answer for my correspondence with it? What am I to say, beloved Jesus, ...I, a poor sinner, all covered with the ulcers of sin? If I should ask You to give me even more grace, am I not asking in effect for my damnation? Oh, what a fool am I! You are the all-powerful physician; will You not show Your mercy to this weak, frail soul? My whole being is diseased with sin... not a single member of my body that does not bear the gaping wound of disobedience.

Nonetheless, my Jesus, I ask You to be patient still with me... I shall bend every effort to rid myself of every bad habit, to requite my egregious sins by Your grace and merits. I have cherished those sins for so very long! Lead me to know what is good and right and teach me to do both for my own experience in the practice of prayer and piety is so scant that I am actually incapable of producing a truly good work. My Jesus, lend a favorable ear to the prayer of my beloved Mother Mary, my Advocate. Heed the intercession of the Angels and Saints in Heaven, my Patrons, who urge You to help me in my needs, both spiritual and material. Help also my parents and friends and all Christians. So be it.

May 31, 1835

I was rather out of sorts all day today, but especially in the morning. However I did recall the presence of my Jesus and I was

consoled at the thought that I did fulfill Your holy will, my God. I am thankful to You for having given me the chance to prove my love for You by deeds even though these were less than perfect. Accept then, dearest Lord, the acts of mortification I performed today through Your grace.

The misfortunes of this life are the best school of love of God. They offer us so many opportunities for practicing and strengthening this virtue, as well as that of patience, trust and long-suffering. They are usually followed by some very special grace... somewhat like the Angel the Father sent to comfort His Son in the Garden of Olives, that He might be able to endure His passion and even death itself!

I take great joy then, my Savior, in the fact that I was able to prove my love for You. O Lord, You are well aware of how much I have suffered here in Prague...<sup>131</sup> I endured that for Your glory and for the same motive I intend to suffer even death [60-a] if such should be my fate.

The letter I received from my brother today increased rather than lessened my financial difficulties. However, I have placed myself completely in Your hands, dear Jesus. I know You will protect me in any adversity. My Lord, deign to accept my will and all my actions. I have nothing else to give You. Purify my soul and all my plans of every trace of pride, vanity, sensuality and indifference that I may the better sing Your praises in heaven. My Jesus, lend a favorable ear to my prayer in all my needs, temporal and spiritual. I would not importune You so were it not for the fact that You Yourself have taught us to do so.

So very often I feel a strong desire to be with You in heaven, for I realize that as long as I remain on this earth I shall commit more sin. Nevertheless, I also know that I have done nothing to merit such a grace. Withal, I beg You to grant it to me; call me from this world which is but an exile for me. O Heavenly Father, I long to behold You face to face. Would that some day I might have such bliss!

O my Jesus, have pity on me and make me holy. Help me to know myself and the true condition of my soul so that I may not be disappointed in my hopes for eternity. Oh how the uncertainty of

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<sup>131</sup> This is a reference to his chronic unease, being a small-town boy confronted constantly with fellow seminarians of big-city background and customs. One might see an allusion here also to N.'s poor rapport with the Prefect, his loneliness and shyness in dealing with others, and his oft-bewailed lack of a spiritual director.

it all torments me! Jesus, You well know that I love You with all my heart. Give me the grace to continue to love You from this day forth!

Blessed Mother of God, holy Virgin Mary, this week I am to preach for the first time and officiate at a service. Second my feeble efforts; strengthen me so that I will have the confidence and courage I now lack. I know that I need both to preach properly the message of salvation. Intercede for me with Your Infant Son Whom you so often held in your motherly arms. Beg Him to grant me the grace of perseverance, zeal, gentleness, humility and purity of heart. Implore Him to help me advance in the way of perfection. Tell Him not to condemn me on the day of judgment.

Holy Guardian Angel, watch over me! Offer all my longings to Jesus. Do not ever permit me to fall into sin either through wickedness or inadvertence. All you holy Patrons, St. John, St. Joseph, St. Francis Xavier, St. Ignatius, St. Charles Borromeo, St. Joseph Calasantius, St. Augustine, St. Teresa and St. Francis de Sales... intercede for this poor sinner! And for my parents, friends, benefactors and for all Christians everywhere. O my Jesus, remain with me always! So be it.

[60-b] June 1, 1835

After so much toil and struggle I turn back to You, my Jesus! How very delightful it is to talk with You! My heart fairly leaps with joy at the thought of You, the sole object of my desire. How utterly happy I would be if I could focus all my thoughts on You forever! But I am still living on this earth and I have to engage in all kinds of worldly matters. I must converse with sinful, unbelieving men. Still, I am happy to suffer all that for Your sake because it is Your holy will. And that will of Yours is my law. Your holy faith is my beacon in this life! My financial situation grieves me sorely but I am absolutely sure that You will soon come to my aid to relieve my worries. O Jesus, You are the joy of my heart, my Lord and Master, my God and my All... I love You with all my heart and my strength!

Will You cast me off on account of the sins of my youth? Alas! my tears have been so bitter they could not serve to cleanse me of my sins. Would that they were sufficiently intense for such! O Jesus, deign to heed my cry... I resolve to endure even a hundred tortures that I may advance in the path of virtue, in the way of that

perfection I long to attain from the bottom of my heart. However, dear Jesus, I find myself unable to move... You be my Director. Forgive me for not being more conscientious when I was in Budweis at the seminary. Then there were so many good confessors at hand.

O my heart, your Jesus will gladly teach you the way of salvation and then, how happy you will be! Speak, my Jesus, my heart awaits Your voice with eager attention. Speak, O Spouse of my soul, speak to my heart and enlighten it. O heart of mine, cleave to my Jesus, your Creator and Savior Who truly wishes to make you holy.

O Blessed Mother of my Jesus, who have so graciously interceded for me... O Heavenly Mother, I promise you that I will be faithful to the commandments of your Son, my God. Reign absolutely over my heart! Burn, consume, annihilate it... I shall always bless you, if you will only give me the precious grace of perseverance! O Lord, how can I ever thank You properly for the grace [60-c] of having called me to Your service? What must I do to show my gratitude? I treasure Your commandments... help me to fulfill them to the letter as far as I can. Accept the gift of my will, of my body and soul, of my entire physical and spiritual being! Dispose of me as You will... I am Your most willing slave! Only let me know and understand Your divine word!

Gentle Jesus, give me the grace to avoid offending You in any way, seriously or venially, whether thru malice or inadvertence. Oh, have pity on me! Holy Mary, my Advocate, intercede for me. My holy Guardian Angel, lead me to a perfect love of my dearest Jesus! All you Saints, intercede for me, a miserable creature to whom God has so kindly shown His mercy. Ask Him to forgive my sins which I still have always before me.

Beseech Him to come to my assistance in these material difficulties so that I may love and thank Him from the bottom of my heart. St. John, all you holy Confessors and Priests, ask the Lord to help me become a fitting preacher of His word and a devout minister of His holy mysteries. St. Joseph, ask the Divine Infant, to kindle ever more intensely the fire of His love in my heart. St. Francis Xavier, pray that God may aid me in this business of the Missions. St. Ignatius and St. Francis de Sales and St. Teresa, intercede for me that I may reach that level of holiness I need to see my Jesus face to face in heaven. All you holy Virgins, pray for me that I may obtain the grace of perfect continence and chastity. You holy penitents, pray for this wretched sinner that he may have a greater sorrow for his sins, that his purpose of amendment may be firm and

sincere... proper effects of genuine contrition. St. Peter, obtain for me the grace of an unwavering faith. St. Paul, pray that I may have true zeal for religion. St. John the Evangelist, obtain for me Christian love for my neighbor. St. Joseph Calasanctius, obtain for me a love for little children, for I must become like them if I am to be worthy to enter the kingdom of heaven.

All you Blessed Spirits, pray to the Lord for me! O my Jesus, hear their prayers through the intercession of the most holy Virgin Mary. Come to the aid of my parents, friends, benefactors and all Christians on earth. O Lord, remain with me tomorrow and forever after! So be it.

[61] Prague, June 2, 1835

O my Jesus, it is to You I must turn in my affliction. But it is so hard for me to know just what You want of me and to understand that it is Your infinite love that permits me to suffer in order to purify and perfect me. Yet I resist that with all my strength. I beg You from the bottom of my heart to relieve me of this pain. However, I want only what You will! You deign to humble me and all I want is to be exalted and to be at peace! How grievously that thought torments me! My dearest Jesus, I am Your disciple or at least that is what I want to be. Do with me then what You will... give the orders and I shall obey them. Overlook this resistance to Your grace. Disregard this conceited, proud, unhappy heart of mine.

Dear Jesus, Your will shall be my norm! Is it proper for me to pray to be relieved of my suffering? At any rate, I should pray with a spirit of resignation. So I do submit to Your holy will, my Jesus, in this painful situation and I offer it all in praise to You. I wish to endure patiently whatever affliction You choose to send me. I want to be Yours in pain as well as in comfort, in sorrow as well as in joy. O sweet Spouse of my soul, rain down Your grace upon me to comfort me in whatever I shall have to bear. However, do heed my cry... I beg You not to permit me to languish in this desolation for any length of time.

Dearest Lord, I so want to lead a devout, secluded life. It is my desire to abandon myself entirely to You that I might gain all. Do unite Yourself to me, sweet Spouse. My patience, my gentleness and resignation will be the proof of my love for You which You so kindly have stirred in my heart. Jesus, my God and my Redeemer, lend a favorable ear to my plea as I beseech You to lead me on the

path of perfection. That is what I yearn for most of all for I well know by the light of faith You have shed on me that I am in truth nothing without that perfection and holiness of thought, desire and action. O Jesus, please help me... through the intercession of all the Angels and Saints give me the grace of perfect resignation. Holy Patrons, and Holy Mother of God, Mary Immaculate, pray for me and my parents, friends and enemies. So be it.

[61-a] June 3, 1835

My Savior, You kept me from disgracing myself today by giving me courage and confidence when I was preaching Your holy word. How shall I ever be able to thank You? Did You really intend to let me know by this that You have chosen me to preach Your word to the nations? O merciful Father, may Your almighty name be blessed over all the earth! Today I had my test in preaching with Prof. Millauer. He was quite gentle in the criticism afterwards... there were some remarks concerning my reading of the last part of the Gospel, my gestures and certain points of phrasing towards the end of the talk. He also criticized my referring to the « Carnival »<sup>132</sup>, because of my youth and inexperience. However he did commend my composition and delivery.

Dear Jesus, give me true humility of heart so that I won't lose the regard and affection of my fellows who might be tempted to be envious of me now. Lord, I place myself completely in Your hands, for You are the all-mighty, all-holy and all-merciful One! Preserve me from all sin; make me holy through the gift of Your grace. Forgive me my sins! I love You, my Jesus, with all my heart. You surely answered my prayers today concerning that test. Dare I ask Your help again for deliverance from this difficulty regarding the Dean's books?

Lord, I approach Your throne full of confidence in Your mercy. Give me the grace of seeing this other prayer answered soon too. You are all-powerful... You can help me in a hundred different ways, even though just now I see no solution to my problem. Still, my gentle Jesus, sole object of my love and all my desires, should You

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<sup>132</sup> Apparently N. had alluded to the customary roistering at Carnival time with its frequently negative consequences for the spirit. P. Millauer doubtlessly felt N. was a trifle inexperienced, nay, secluded and sheltered to speak convincingly of such seamy matters.



choose to leave me in this embarrassing situation, I will suffer the shame patiently and accept gladly the displeasure and disapproval of those who may think I am careless. Dearest Jesus, You had to endure the scorn of Your creatures... why should I not be able to bear some pain from my superiors, I who am the greatest of sinners?

Holy Mary, Immaculate Virgin, intercede once more now for this poor sinner. Yesterday we had a tour of the Imperial residence here in Prague. Some of the paintings there could easily have roused my imagination with their diabolical scenes... but in your goodness, Blessed Mother, you preserved me from sin. Holy Guardian Angel and my holy Patron Saints, pray for me. So be it.

[61-b] June 4, 1835

Today I went to practice my English with the Britisher Owens from Nottingham<sup>133</sup>. Though from one standpoint I was delighted with what I was able to do, it also caused me to fall into serious sin! My Jesus, I hadn't been so vain and deceitful in a long time. Is that the sort of humility I was hoping to acquire yesterday? You gave me the opportunity to mortify my pride by not mentioning my achievement but I had to brag about my ability to speak with the Englishman and also lie by exaggerating my knowledge of his language.

O my Jesus, I am so wretched! Dare I appear before You, most holy Lord? I, the faithless one, the liar, full of vanity and conceit. Oh, how much pain I have caused You today! My heavenly Mother, what must be your disappointment at my having so gravely and so often offended your Son! My Angel Guardian, how sadly I have disobeyed your inspiration and guidance! My holy Patron Saints, how utterly careless have I been in following your example! My soul, today you have sinned before the whole court of Heaven. The whole world shall know of your sins unless you sincerely repent of them. Oh, what a misfortune for me!

Nevertheless, my dearest Jesus, I turn to You as my Savior. Forgive me for I shall make a sincere confession of all these sins to Your representative. Alas! how miserable shall I be if You withdraw Your love from me! O Lord, tomorrow I shall try very hard to be more alert for Satan's wily suggestions so that I can banish them

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<sup>133</sup> One of the men in the spool factory.

immediately. I do want to become truly humble and to mortify my vanity and pride. That is my firm resolve, O Jesus! Give me Your holy grace. So be it.

June 5, 1835

I kept the resolution I made yesterday to mortify myself and to suppress my vanity... but I did so without any great fervor. And I must say, it was not I who achieved that but rather the good Lord who kept me from sin despite the fact that throughout the day I felt as if I had lost His love. I found myself in a very awkward situation... I had an opportunity to visit the imperial library but You seemed to speak to me during the instruction period to dissuade me from going there.

[61-c] My Jesus, how very painful it is to lose Your love! Yesterday I lost it because of my conceit and my lies and carelessness. But tomorrow I plan to have recourse to Your holy tribunal and I hope to recoup Your grace. My beloved Savior, I hope never again to yield to such ingratitude and infidelity. O my gracious Lord, I promise You I will do my best. Otherwise, how will I ever be able to achieve the perfection I should attain if You are to take me as Your disciple?

Alas! those sins have wrought much damage to my soul. My Jesus, I am genuinely sorry for having offended You who have loved me from my earliest years and have called me to Your service and showered me with Your grace. Forgive me, my Jesus! And you, O diabolical sin! How I detest you for depriving me of my Savior's love, for separating me from Him whom I love with all my heart! I shall not cease to ask Your pardon, Lord... forgive my wickedness. I kept resolving to love only Your holy will... and what happens? I fall into sin and do the work of Your enemies!

Ah, my soul, what have you done? You have denied your God, you have abandoned His service! Who can save you then? Who can possibly make you as happy as He can? My Jesus, I am sorry I offended You so easily ...what must I do to regain Your holy grace? I desire Your love more than I can ever say, O Spouse whom in my faithlessness I have driven from my heart! Come back to me! Do come back! Comfort me in this great grief of mine. Do not leave me to Your enemies who seek but to ruin me.

O heavenly Father, how much more can I do to offend You? Day by day I grow more sinful. While my knowledge increases, my

will seems to grow weary of Your love... and yet I resist Your inspirations and the impulses of Your grace.

O dearest Mother of my Jesus, I prostrate myself at your feet, my refuge and my advocate. Obtain for me a sincere sorrow for my sins. My holy Guardian Angel, do not let Satan deceive me ever again, for I indeed want to cooperate with God's grace which I pray you to obtain for me. All you holy Penitents, intercede for this poor sinner now and at the hour of his death.

(I lost my penknife today because of my carelessness). O Jesus, do grant me Your forgiveness and remain with me always. So be it.

[62] Prague, June 6, 1835

Tomorrow I shall receive You in Holy Communion, dearest Jesus. I shall receive You together with the Holy Spirit and His grace. How my heart longs for You, my Jesus! You have created it and from You it looks for its redemption and salvation. Would that this Holy Communion which I would love to receive every day might produce in me the fruits You intended, O my heavenly Sanctifier! But I am still so unresponsive to Your love, so tepid in any exercise of devotion. Nevertheless, I really would like to be able to yearn for You with all the intensity one might muster in this vale of tears. O my God, You have made this whole universe out of nothing, You have created the realm of Heaven with its myriad Angels and its countless stars, You have made the earth and all its creatures here below... and now You wish to come to me, the least of Your creatures!

O my Jesus, You who were born of the immaculate Virgin, ...You now deign to enter this heart of mine, so utterly wicked? You have shown us how to act and live from the podium of the Cross 'midst excruciating suffering, and now You wish to visit me tomorrow, ...me, the most wretched of sinners! You who have died for our sake... do You still want to offer Yourself as a thanksgiving and propitiation for us? You, who have said 'He who eats this bread will have life eternal', ...do You actually wish to come into my heart? Oh, what fear and joy! What horror and consolation!

Withal, I remain indifferent to Your concern and interest. It's as if You had put my soul to sleep... all my devout thoughts are dormant, my meditations are vague and empty. O my Jesus, hear my voice! I thank You for these sufferings, this desolation for I know

that tomorrow You will grant me very special graces. Do with me what You wish!

Holy Mary, Blessed Virgin, You indeed love my Lord Jesus Christ more than I shall ever be able to love Him. Prepare for Him, then, in my heart a suitable dwelling for His Sacred Majesty. Provide for my sanctification, O Mother of the Afflicted, for what can I possibly do for myself? If when He comes, He does not find my heart properly disposed to receive Him, He will have to punish me. O dear Jesus, do be lenient with me! I cannot actually feel any [62-a] great love for You; yet I assure You that I do want to love You for all eternity. What else can I do since You Yourself inspire this love in me?

Dear Jesus, You have been so merciful to me! Ah! then, come quickly into my heart... or rather take me from this earth if You should so wish, that I may enjoy the unending bliss of Heaven. My faith is sorely tried just now, but I do love You, O Lord, with all my heart. I even rejoice that You deign to permit me to be tempted in this fashion for that increases my happiness all the more! I give You my thanks.

Holy Guardian Angel and my Holy Patron Saints, pray for me and my parents and friends and for all Christians. My dearest Jesus, remain with me always! So be it.

June 7, 1835

O Holy Spirit, my God and my Sanctifier, enlighten me that I may know myself and so perceive all the wrinkles and folds of my heart. I would spread them out before my Lord Jesus Christ whose precious blood would smooth them all out for me. O Heavenly Light, enable me to know my passions, bad habits... the whole range of my wickedness and the sins I have committed against You, my God. I am aware that I do not get up promptly when I awaken; I habitually strive for comfort and consolation and I am always concerned about appearing less than devout in front of other fervent souls. Several times during Holy Communion I was distracted... I failed to shield my Jesus from my tepidity and vanity, my discouragement and worldliness. I was upset at seeing others more conscientious and mortified who actually began to pursue perfection after I did. I failed to recall the presence of my God as often as I had resolved to do. During our dinner I was overly concerned with my appetite. During Vespers I was quite distracted and even hypocritical.

When the Bishop was administering the sacrament of Confirmation in our church I was somewhat undevout and I talked once unnecessarily.

Dear Jesus, vanity and tepidity are my main enemies at present. Give me Your grace that I may be truly humble and encouraged to perform all my chores and assignments carefully. Just now I am in a very awkward position... my honor is in peril! I don't want to complain but rather to humble myself before You, [62-b] O my God and Savior. I want to stir up Your love within me whenever I feel any reluctance to do my work. O my Jesus, You have called me to perfection... help me now with regard to my health for I cannot succeed by myself. My God, You have brought me to know Your holy will... help me to fulfill it with all the carefulness You require of Your disciples. My Jesus, I love You and all those who love You.

My confrere L. A. has truly devoted himself to obeying Your laws now<sup>134</sup>. Accept my thanks, dear Jesus, ...his soul will be a shoal on which many an effort of Satan will founder!

Holy Mother Mary, intercede for us, for our parents, friends, enemies and benefactors. Be kind to us! My holy Angels and Patrons, pray for us. So be it.

June 9, 1835<sup>135</sup>

The temptations I have had yesterday and today were so intense that I have been utterly disconsolate. Often enough I was on the point of yielding to them but God's grace saved me. I was generally careless throughout the day because I felt so miserable. After dinner I had a talk with Simon Hartmann<sup>136</sup> from Hannover and that helped me recover my peace of mind, or at least dispel my gloom and discouragement for I was quite upset over my lack of interest in my various devotions and spiritual exercises. And what can I do after all but try to be truly repentant of my tepidity and carelessness? What can I do but try to correct myself and beg the Lord to deliver me from all the sins I have committed during these last two wretched days?

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<sup>134</sup> Though the initials are reversed, N. is in all probability referring to Anton Laad, his close friend in the seminary, often designated in the *Journal* simply as « Laad ». Cf. *Journal*, Oct. 3, 1834, n. 17.

<sup>135</sup> No entry for June 8 in either the French or the German part of the *Journal*.

<sup>136</sup> A fellow seminarian.

O my Jesus, I have been so thoroughly wicked and ungrateful toward You! You... my God, who have shielded me from so much evil and harm! It is You, my dearest Jesus, whom I have scorned, whose love I have discarded, whose mercy I have doubted! Oh! What punishments have I not brought upon myself now! How can I possibly expect Your mercy after I have spurned it? Why is it, Lord, that Your creatures make You suffer so much? Dear Jesus, I distrust my own strength entirely. [62-c] Do be lenient with me... help me escape this wretched condition I find myself in since yesterday. How much grace have I lost through this vile timidity and weakness of mine! Imagine, I, the most miserable of creatures, dare to decline God's help!

Alas! my faith and hope are so weak! I am afraid, my Jesus, that I may have yielded to those temptations of the flesh, as well as to those of faith, hope and charity. Oh! how deeply these things trouble me! My lack of trust deserves such painful remorse a thousand times over! O gentle Jesus, keep me from all sin... I want to renew our pact and follow Your every commandment. My Holy Patron, my Guardian Angel and especially, my most beloved Mother Mary, pray for me that these pangs of conscience may grow no worse. My Jesus, is this sudden peace of heart from You? Oh! do be gracious to me. So be it.

June 10, 1835

I was worse than lax most of the day, for I often actually took delight in the impure thoughts that occurred to me. I was glad that I had them and maybe I even coddled them! I also let myself be roused to anger once, though briefly, and I was lazy and careless about my work. I no longer value humility or make any effort to acquire it because of my tepidity, lack of love, wavering faith and my despair of recovering God's grace. Indeed, the condition of my soul is simply astonishing. I do not have the courage to undertake any mortification on my own. I am becoming worse and worse... God's grace is slowly receding from my heart and I shall soon be more deserving of God's wrath than I was when my conversion occurred.

Where have the happy times or at least happy moments gone when I enjoyed God's love, when I was full of zeal and perfect resignation? I bemoan my fate in vain... my prayers are so cold I can't expect anything from Heaven. I don't even ask for God's help! O what a foul wretch I am!

[63] Prague, June 10, 1835<sup>137</sup>

The long prayers<sup>138</sup> I have kept saying in the evening have become unbearable for me. I no longer feel any special longing for God during the day and I have forgotten my act of resignation most days. I don't even feel like continuing to keep this journal... it only reminds me of all the efforts I made to become perfect. I shall be so wretched ...even in the midst of joy I will remember the bouts of despair that usually follow those brief respites of consolation which in fact may well be one of Satan's ruses! Right now I would gladly quit this particular path of salvation I have trod for so long! Oh! that I could die soon and put an end to all this uncertainty! Jesus, is it possible that You may still comfort and console me? Come to me! I am all Yours! Do come to me, my Jesus! So be it.

Prague, June 11, 1835

With so many impure thoughts assailing me I must have sinned grievously several times. God's grace is so faint within me that I am no longer ready to die! I seem to have lost all sense of sorrow and amendment, all desire for eternity. I nigh despair of my salvation. Alas! who would have thought it would come to this? So many prayers and sighs, so many mortifications of soul and body... all in vain! O dear God, forgive the rage that impels me to such blasphemy! Within little more than a day I have become worse than I was two years ago! So much hard work gone for nothing!

O miserable soul of mine, weep and lament, for you have been cast off from the throne of God's mercy. How can your God bestow His grace on you when He turns a deaf ear to even the most fervent pleas? All the nerves of my soul are frayed... I have a horror of these pious devotions that seem to bring me only despair! How is it possible, my soul, that you were at one time so happy in your knowledge of the true God? There are so many people and countries who have no knowledge of Him... and you really believe you are adoring the true God? Is there actually one such?

[63-a] My Jesus, if You really do dwell in the heavens, tell me what I must do to return to You. You don't seem to heed me

<sup>137</sup> N. seems to have made two distinct entries... both in French... for June 10. The reason is not evident.

<sup>138</sup> For an idea of his « long prayers » see the *Journal*, April 16, 1835.

any more! Have I been damned then... without hope of pardon? I'm afraid to live and also to die... Oh! where are You, the God of mercy? I who purport to be a disciple of Jesus Christ... now I am His enemy! How did it happen that I strayed so far from the fount of living water? Where have I been? I must be deluding myself. My soul, what will happen to us? Where is the courage we used to have to follow Christ anywhere and everywhere? Where is that vast yearning to see Him face to face? To hear His voice? Of what avail now are all those ardent desires? I shall return to the dust from which I came and my soul shall be most miserable for all eternity!

Oh! Who will take pity on me, if not You, my God and my Creator?

June 12, 1835

Today I was more careful to avoid the occasions of sin. I also tried very hard to commit no sin at all and my efforts seemed to be successful. Still, I was more than usually diffident even though I did turn my thoughts several times to the Lord to ask for mercy. I was unhappy over certain trifles and that tendency of mine to sulkiness with the Lord reasserted itself. But I banished the thought as a proof of my sincerity in mending my ways and trying to follow His precepts to be patient. My lack of poise in conversation and the aftereffects of those sins depressed me almost all day. How will I ever become a proper priest for the people if everyone shuns me because of my shyness and awkwardness? Will my rather superficial learning be of any help to me then? Will I ever enjoy some sort of esteem? That all depends on me... and I have besought the Lord so many times! He seems deaf to my pleas.

O Lord God in Heaven, I am utterly discouraged over my faults and sins, and over my present and future state... how can I return to the conscientious performance of my duties and fulfillment of Your commandments? I seem to have wandered so far from You, my God, that I no longer have the strength to try to follow You!

The Rev. Prefect is quite aloof towards me... [63-b] sometimes it seems as if he acts unjustly and that alienates me from him. Today, in view of his feastday tomorrow he went on a pilgrimage to Old Bunzlau<sup>139</sup>. I am quite discouraged and diffident... everyone

<sup>139</sup> The feast of St. Anthony. Cf. *Journal* for Oct. 16, 1834, note 16. Old Bunzlau, now called Boleslaviek, is a town about 100 mi. NE of Prague.



seems to have forsaken me! Jesus Himself is against me... the Almighty against the miserable creature! I suspect my miseries will increase; I shall no longer have any comfort either from Heaven or this earth. Oh! I am indeed most unfortunate! My heart seems turned away from God completely. I must love Him and yet, how am I to do this? I no longer expect to get a kind and lenient confessor who will be able to reconcile me with God... when it comes to my situation the whole business of morality seems to come a cropper.

How can the intercession of our Blessed Virgin Mary obtain forgiveness for me if Christ no longer wants to heed my prayers? Surely Mary does not want anything but what Her Son wants! Every prayer I'm inclined to say seems but to be tempting God for in the back of my mind I'm thinking « the Lord will show me by His response to my prayer whether I can be saved or not ». My prayers, cold and infrequent as they are, have so far had very little effect. Oh! I am in truth a most unfortunate man! I know my God... and He will not recognize me on the day of judgment! O wretched me!

Or is it that there really isn't a God after all? Is the Gospel truly inspired? Yes! there is indeed a God, but He has rejected me. I am lost for all eternity. Oh that I could withdraw from the whole human race and live all alone, unknown and forgotten by the world of which I am but the offscouring! When shall I be rescued from this earthly prison that I might enjoy the life and bliss that shall never end? Oh how utterly miserable I am! Lord, will You not save me after all? Hear my plea!

June 13, 1835

When I reflect today on the misfortune of losing my Jesus, my whole being is wracked with pain. I do feel, however, a spark of love once again in my heart and I am sorry from the bottom of my heart for being so ungrateful to God. O Jesus, I am the most miserable of all! Have You not withdrawn Your grace from me because of my sins? I am truly repentant for having offended Your love and You Yourself.

[63-c] May Your love fill my whole being... for I am indeed thoroughly sinful! Will I have the chance to go to confession tomorrow? O Most Holy Trinity, grant that grace to this poor sinner. I am full of good resolutions... I hope You will accept them, my Lord and my God! Behold, my Jesus, as soon as I sense a return of Your love, my zeal for perfection revives and I take heart! I am

full of confidence in Your loving mercy, my dearest Jesus. Yes, You are the sole treasure of my life! Will You not come back to me today? Oh how foul and wretched is sin... driving You from my heart as it does! O my Jesus, how much have You already suffered because of me! I pout as soon as You refuse me some sensible grace... I stop praying when You want to teach me through misfortune and desolation. If I begin to seek You in my discouragement You come to meet me with open arms.

O Jesus, my most holy Lord, I am certainly ungrateful and sinful and still, You want to pardon me! Ah! Your love is all-powerful! Never let me fall into such temptations as I have just escaped! Do strengthen my extreme frailty for I am not yet as convinced as I should be that I can do nothing at all without Your grace. My Jesus, You have comforted me today with Your grace and help in the exam I had on the Mass... as well as in the slight pain I had in my throat, mouth and head. You enabled me to be patient so that I could show my sincerity in my conversion to Your holy will. O sweetest Jesus, teach me what means I must use to avoid ever again leaving the path of Your commandments. Oh, teach me, for I am indeed ready to obey You in all things! I place myself under Your protection, O most Holy Mother of God, Immaculate Virgin Mary! Lead me to the throne of God's mercy.

My holy Guardian Angel, forgive the pain I have caused you by my stubbornness... I was so opinionated! I promise to be more obedient to your inspirations. Holy Patron Saints, I am ashamed I did not follow your example more closely... I promise to do so in the future. Pray for me, for my parents and friends and all those who are destined to share eternal glory. So be it.

[64] Prague, June 14, 1835<sup>140</sup>

(English entry) Yesterday's tears had no effect on my behavior today. Impure thoughts were still floating around in my mind. I struggled against them but not too hard! Moreover, I failed to perform all my duties and assignments. I really was lazier than usual. O my God, I am indeed a sinner! You were kind enough to comfort me when I was upset over my misdeeds. I resolved to fulfill Your

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<sup>140</sup> This is N.'s first entry in English! The text has been edited for this publication. Hereafter English entries will be indicated at the beginning of the text: (Eng.).

will as carefully as I ought to do but then I spent my time moaning and sighing without making any special effort to do what I promised.

My God, how very indulgent You are with me! Oh my soul! Will you continue to abuse God's goodness. O Jesus, my Lord and my God, break my will that I might overcome my stubbornness. I have lost all confidence in myself. O Mary, my Mother in Heaven, and my Guardian Angel and Patron Saints, help me with your prayers! Amen.

June 15, 1835

(Eng.) The temptation to impure thoughts lasted continually today. I lack steadfastness and earnestness in carrying out my resolutions. Moreover, my sense of trust grows gradually weaker. Amidst the battle with my passions I remain cold and indifferent regarding the practice of virtue. The latter seems to have lost all her charm for me since I feel it is useless to exert all my efforts to attain it. Would that I could feel as ecstatic about prayer and devotion as I do about sensuality and impurity! O my God, how utterly have I abused this most gracious gift of Yours!<sup>141</sup> It no longer serves its Master but merely seeks its own ruin. Who will deliver me from this slavery? It is my own fault that I am so miserable.

Thoughts of despair arise within my soul like dark clouds in a storm. My Lord, will You not come to deliver me? My faith in Your existence is still steady... tears will flow from my eyes! Be merciful, O my Lord, and help me! I am bound with the chains of my former habits... I know nothing but sin! My divine Master, Jesus Christ, save me from my sins! My Good God, [64-a] have pity on me! Redeem me from my enemies<sup>142</sup>. If You do not take pity, I shall surely fall into sin. I am just now very unhappy, to tell the truth. I have no one on earth or in heaven to help or comfort me! Thousands of people have attained eternal glory despite the fact that they too were miserable here on earth... am I then the only one who will be damned?

My Lord, I am indeed afraid of Your justice. Alas! my tears... would they were tears of honest repentance for my sins and not just of grief over my own distress! O Mother in Heaven, will not Your Son still come to help me?

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<sup>141</sup> I.e., the faculty of the imagination.

<sup>142</sup> I.e., my passions.

June 16, 1835

(Eng.) Today I performed my duties better than yesterday; I was more disposed to meditation and prayer. All that without doubt resulted from the sensible contrition I experienced last evening. O God, I begged You to clean, refine and hallow my imagination which was wholly alienated from its Creator thus oftentimes leading me to sin. The Lord heard my cry! The figure of my dead Master lying in the lap of His Mother was so graphic before my eyes that I did not want to stop reflecting on it.

That mercy of God's has made my heart wholesome again. I banished instantly all thoughts that would arise in my mind... with very good results. The tears that flowed so bitterly and plentifully yesterday were very helpful for my soul. I enjoyed the peace and quiet today. The love I felt for our Lord, the trust and confidence in my Master taught me that I was much mistaken in thinking He might have forsaken me. O would to God my sins may be forgiven me! O my dearest Lord Jesus Christ who have been so gracious towards me as to grant the requests of this Your most pitiful creature, I shall never again forsake Your service. Give me the grace of steadfastness. Pardon me my sins with which I have offended You so often. My Savior, do not withdraw from my heart the spirit of sorrow and repentance, for I am incapable of doing any good work, such as weeping over my sins. O my Lord and Master, remain with me, with my parents and my friends. Amen.

[64-b] June 17, 1835

(Eng.) The warmth of my devotion has grown pretty cold today. Therefore I think it is but a temptation... the Lord wants to test the sincerity of my amendment. My wishes to be delivered from those difficulties regarding the Dean's money and books became quite frequent and intense so that several times I begged the Lord to grant them. I yearn so for God's grace because I think I committed a mortal sin since my last confession. That is the chastisement for my haughtiness... I was so proud of not having sinned seriously since my general confession on the 14th of February. This past fortnight has in truth been the most unfortunate of this whole last year in Prague. If God does not give me a special grace of repentance, it will be many weeks before this damage is repaired.

O my dearest Lord and All-holy God Jesus Christ, adopt me

anew! Else I shall perish without mercy. Alas! I am the greatest sinner that ever trod this earth but You are all-powerful, Lord, Your arm will rescue me from this distress and from the enemies that surround me on all sides. O my God, I have left Your love and therefore I am so extremely weak and cold in the performance of my exercises of devotion, so fainthearted in my hope for Your mercy. I fear always that I am not on the right path that leads to You and for that reason I am so miserable and unsuccessful in my prayers.

You, O Lord, can see the violent battle I have with myself. You know my strength and my desires. Ah! Come then! Come to help me! Take me from this earth which cannot satisfy my desires. I am disgusted at the continual relapses into sins I thought I had forsaken. If, my Lord, You cannot yet accept my prayers because I am still imperfect and sinful, then cleanse me, ignore my cries, disregard my tears, even beat me! But have compassion on me and my flinty heart and do not damn me to Hell.

I yield myself up to You; do with me what You please, O Lord, but be not angry because of my sins. O my Jesus, I am the most miserable creature on earth, for I knew You and knew that You gave me Your love and still, I have sinned! [64-c] I feel it very deeply, Lord, that You are no longer in my heart. You are far from me. But tell me, should I give up because of this? Come then and renew all that has been damaged by these anxieties of mine. Henceforward I must love You and I should promise to do so but it seems impossible for me because of my sins. Deliver me from them and I shall praise You eternally.

My good Mother Mary, I conjure you by the enormous affliction you suffered looking upon your Son on the Cross... ask Him to have compassion on my poor soul. My Guardian Angel and my Patron Saints, pray for me, for my parents and my friends and benefactors. Give me, Lord, the grace to be more devout tomorrow, the feast of Corpus Christi. Amen.

June 18, 1835

(Eng.) The ceremonies today made but little impression on me...<sup>143</sup> the procession along the Smichow was too long to have any profound effect. Thus for almost the whole day I was poorly disposed

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<sup>143</sup> A reference to the procession and benedictions involved in the Corpus Christi celebration.

to check my passions. I yielded when I should have struggled against certain slight temptations... and that happened fairly often. I frequently lacked the courage to resist the occasions of sin. I made little effort to guard my eyes and several times I even despaired of ever improving in virtue.

I heard also today that our Bishop is not any worse. Still my hopes for ordination are slim; my expectations regarding my own improvement are so weak I hardly even want to be a priest right now. For what sort of a priest would I be with all the sins I have, with all my bad habits, my inflexibility and stubbornness, with my host of spiritual and bodily frailties? O Lord, I am beginning to feel that awful state of depression coming over me again! I lose all yen for prayer because You seem to have turned a deaf ear to my cries. My distress grows from day to day. Why indeed are the feasts and holy days so difficult for me? The days of the Lord seem to be my foes! O Jesus, why have You left me all alone when my enemies have me completely surrounded? What a strange one am I! God has forsaken me and those who dislike me laugh at my distress. O God, why are You not more gracious towards me? Please, do not forsake me!

[65] Prague, June 20, 1835<sup>144</sup>

(Eng.) Grief and despair tormented my soul continually today. When I indulged that grief I did find some small relief. I am astonished that with all this affliction that overwhelms me, I still feel any love for Jesus... which I surmise only because I still fear to lose Him through my sins. At times today I was able to pray with some fervor and confidence... though it was probably my wretched plight that produced those sighs and groans in my heart!

The sight of the replica of the dead Christ stirred my soul several times during the day and filled my troubled heart with peace. O my Jesus, this anguish has afflicted me for five months now... will You still delay to come to my aid? My Master, You well know that even in the thick of temptation I have loved You with all my strength and when I fell into sin it was most often through weakness. Thus I shall never cease to trust in You. I know You will soon come to help me! Dearest Jesus, my heart is sad and troubled

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<sup>144</sup> No entry for June 19. There is no apparent reason except possibly that suggested by a similar circumstance occurring shortly thereafter. See *Journal*, June 24.

because You have withdrawn from me. Come then, sweet bridegroom, my soul longs for You. She will love You with all her might. Come back and bless her, remain with her, she will embrace and love You!

My merciful Mother Mary, intercede for me in my misery and my necessity. My Guardian Angel and my Patron Saints, help me with your prayers. Amen.

June 24, 1835

(Eng.) For some days now I have made no entries in this journal... for lack of spiritual guidance I got involved in other matters. On the 21st of this month I received a letter from my friend Schmid in which he states that the Rev. Fr. Dichtl is going to Nancy and kindly offers to take himself and one other along on the trip. My friend chose me to be his companion... and so I agreed to go and wrote him as much in my reply of the same date. Yesterday however our Prefect said to me that Fr. Dichtl had also written to him and said that our departure would not take place as soon as Schmid indicated. But that cannot be true because both our letters arrived at the same time. Is not the Prefect's version a lie? He seems to want to meddle [65-a] in our plans for he frequently speaks disapprovingly of this project<sup>145</sup>. He still wants me to join the Jesuits but I no longer want to do that. Thus I explained all this to Schawel and he will without doubt communicate it to our director.

O my God, keep me from sin which is so hard to avoid in these circumstances. My faith, hope and love for God are greater than they have been for several days now... it seems that the news from Schmid had a good effect on me! O Heavenly Mother, our plans are under your protection... I have commended to your care all these efforts we are going to make. Be patient with us and protect us for you are all-powerful with God. You defended me yesterday from all harm... I thank you for that kindness!

June 25, 1835

(Eng.) Today I took the letter for Mr. Schawel as well as that for my parents to the postman. I hope both arrive safely. I spent

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<sup>145</sup> I.e., to go off to the foreign missions.

this past day in great dissipation... I was entirely too worldly! My ill humor with our Prefect has increased so that I am afraid I may be unjust in his regard. I should have given good example during supper but I was very loath to do so because of the broth we were served which was a bit rancid. My zeal grows less for I am no longer sure my letters will be successful.

O my Jesus, my Lord and my God, watch over my heart! I am more wicked than I used to be... everyone else performs some mortification while I alone am lukewarm. My God, do not condemn me; assist me in these great difficulties I have at present. I fear very much relapsing into that despair which fills my thoughts. Hear the prayers I lift on high... accept them, O my God, that I may overcome this languor. Have mercy on me!

June 26, 1835

I am so happy, my sweet Jesus, that I will be able to go to confession tomorrow and I will make it as sincerely as possible if You will only help me, O my Lord. It is only a few days ago, O my Lord, [65-b] that I made the resolution never again to commit a mortal sin. Oh! but these sins are so ugly! I simply cannot understand how we humans can offend God so often and so grievously. You are indeed infinitely good, my God, for having led me to know the sad state of my soul. Would that I were already perfect! However, my zeal for perfection has slackened considerably because of my difficulties, those letters from Budweis and the exam I still have to take. Right now I feel strong and confident enough to handle my classwork. My memory seems to be sharp once again, O my God, and I am grateful to You for that.

My Creator, I dedicate all my faculties to You, my God and my All. My thoughts take me very often to Strassburg...<sup>146</sup> I can already see myself there but the thought of my parents gives me pause. Today I got the idea of exchanging the Dean's books at the bookstore for the ones I need<sup>147</sup>. That will be fine, my God, if You

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<sup>146</sup> In all likelihood a reference to an interview with the directors of the mission society from which he hoped to obtain aid in getting to America.

<sup>147</sup> The books mentioned were those N. had sent on request to the Dean who was now returning them to the bookseller for refund. Playing book-broker for the Dean of his home-town of Prachatitz was certainly the source of constant frustration and anxiety for N. during his years in Prague. Cf. the *Journal*, *passim*. For the solution to this particular problem, see next entry (June 27).



give Your approval! I am quite eager to learn what came of the business of those two conflicting letters. O my God, forgive me if I sinned by revealing what happened<sup>148</sup>.

Sometimes my conscience is ill at ease... my motives are not always the best. My Jesus, I promise You that from this moment on I shall be entirely Yours. Do not be angry at my faithlessness. I have made so many promises to You in the past... but You are so sweet and kind! O my Sanctifier, I do so want to be good and to be Your obedient disciple... do not let me fall back into the faults I commit so often. What vast joy for me to know that I shall be able to be reconciled with You, my gentle Jesus! You will come to me and then I shall be Yours and You shall be mine! What utter happiness! I place my whole destiny in our hands, O Jesus, Mary and Joseph! Protect me, shield me and guide me tomorrow, my holy Guardian Angel. Pray for me, for my parents and friends, my benefactors and for those who dislike me.

O Blessed Savior of the world, be gracious to me. My holy Patrons, intercede for me. So be it.

[65-c] June 27, 1835

(Eng.) O my Lord, You have been so good to me... my heart is strong and confident once more and full of love for You. How shall I ever thank You for Your mercy? Jesus Christ, my sweet Jesus, my Savior... I am completely Yours. Accept then my body with all its strength, my soul with all its faculties. Ah! let me show You my affection! I clearly have great affection for You, but I am a sinner and I am always weak. What do I have to give You, being the poorest of all Your creatures? O Father, how gracious and bounteous You are to me! You have forgiven my mistakes and faults, You have replenished me with Your grace. I think continually of You, my Lord, for You are my Redeemer. I will serve You, my God, all the days of my life, but do fill me with Your grace for without it I should soon again be worse than I was a few years ago. The transaction with the bookseller Hall will be acceptable. He promised me that he would take back the Dean's books... and he did that. Actually I would be glad to exchange them for any other books he agrees to.

O Lord, who would ever have thought this problem would be

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<sup>148</sup> Cf. *Journal* for June 24, 1835.

solved in this fashion? You alone are the most wise person in this world, and for that reason I shall continue to obey You. Tomorrow morning, my Jesus, You, my God and my Creator will come to me! Oh! Why am I not yet free of all sin? You would then be even more gracious to me. But I love You, Lord... I shall be Your servant through all eternity. O my heart, take hope! Rejoice! Your bridegroom comes to remain with you. O, love Him for His kindness! My God, You have created the heavens and the earth, the sun with the immensity of the stars... and You will come to me? What shall I do? If I had the heavens and earth filled with Angels and Blessed Spirits, I would give them all to You!

My Jesus, I give You these tears of my repentance...<sup>149</sup> I am indeed weeping at my great need! And at the thought of Your great wealth! Come! Mother of Heaven, pray for this poor sinner that the Judge may not condemn me on the last day. My Guardian Angel and my holy Patrons, teach this soul how to love her bridegroom! Jesus, I am Yours; I beg You to be mine! Amen.

[66] Prague, June 28, 1835

(Eng.) My dearest Jesus, today I recalled Your presence almost continually. This particular practice of devotion seems to come readily to me and therefore I am very happy. I was more fervent than usual when I received You in holy Communion. It is a fact that You have been with me in my heart, my Lord and my God! Nevertheless, I feel I have been too lazy today... I too seldom stirred up within me the grace of union with my Lord although it would have been very easy to do so. Therefore tomorrow I resolve to rouse myself frequently from my torpor. I shall do that every quarter-hour.

(French) I behaved badly towards You in some minor matters... I withdrew from some of the others whose fanaticism rather alienates me. O Jesus, how much longer shall I continue to be so proud? Humble me, my Jesus, ...that virtue is most necessary for me. O my heavenly Savior, I am Yours forever. You have come to me today in Holy Communion... Oh! perfect me that I may be more like You and that the world may know that I am Your disciple. I have dedicated myself entirely to You, my God, and I do not intend to renege

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<sup>149</sup> Ms. bears several tear stains at this point.

on that for then I would drive You from my heart... You who are my sole treasure in heaven and on earth!

Make me humble of heart just as You were on this earth. I fully expect to receive this grace from You since You have already purified my heart of so many sins which I thought I would never be able to get rid of. Your love, my Jesus, is growing within me... I can actually feel it! Oh, how can I ever thank You enough for that most gracious gift? By a life perfectly conformed to Your holy will! O my Jesus, in the presence of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul whose feast we shall celebrate tomorrow, I renew my resolution to be ready to endure any suffering You may deign to send me.

Concerning our ordination, today we heard from Fr. Prinz that in the seminary at Budweis they doubt that we shall be ordained. In the letter we received regarding minor orders nothing at all was mentioned about it. May Your will be done, my Jesus! I am ready to obey You in all things. Be lenient with me, Holy Spirit, and give me the strength I need. So be it.

[66-a] July 2, 1835<sup>150</sup>

(Eng.) The state of my soul grows even more critical... I am much too lighthearted, I talk without end, I laugh at all sorts of trifles and my loathing for our Fr. Rost grows every day! O my Lord and my God, what shall I do if You will not assist me? I shall perish in my impenitence. O Jesus Christ, You have been so good to me... You enabled me to get the books I have wanted for so long! In Your kindness You have given me the Roman Catechism and that stirs my soul to thank You for the infinite love You have shown us through Your Incarnation.

Oh, why am I not more perfect so as to be able to spread Your doctrine among my brethren? O my dearest Jesus, my heart longs for You... You alone can comfort it in its desolation and need. O my great Teacher and Master, my most holy Redeemer, I would be so happy to be a missionary but I shall find in You all my pleasure. Lord, I am still too weak! How can I grow more perfect? O my Jesus, I have so little courage... how shall I weather the storm of my passions and my hypocrisy, of my pride and envy and laziness?

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<sup>150</sup> This is the last entry N. made in the *Journal* while at the seminary in Prague. The next (July 23, 1835) is made after his return to Prachatitz.

Jesus, Savior of the world, come to help me! Otherwise I shall perish in my sins. The business of our trip to Strasbourg is now doubtful. I waited today for a letter from my friend Schmid, but I have not received any. O Heavenly Mother, I confide in your protection even though I seem to be careless about it. Dearest Mother, do I not offend you through my indifference? Has my behavior towards Fr. Rost been improper? I would have despaired today at seeing myself so imperfect in comparison with my dear friend Schmid.

O my Jesus, shall I always remain as sinful as I am at present? Holy Ghost, give me the spirit of true repentance that I may be more devout, more perfect and worthy to carry out my plans. Father who are in Heaven, I shall be weeping to You all the days of my life for my sins!

[66-b] Prachatitz, July 23, 1835

(Eng.) The excessive desolation I felt during these last days has passed; thus I am more calm, my heart is peaceful once again and the best resolutions fill my mind. I began to say the Breviary and I am determined to do so every day. I will conform to the rules of life as indicated in the *Règlement de vie proposé etc.*<sup>150 a</sup>, as far as it is possible for me in my present condition.

O my dearest Jesus, my Savior, I have spent many days in desolation and low spirits. I was dejected, ungrateful, unreasonable and unchristian. What must I do to reconcile myself with You? O trespasses without number, who will deliver me from you? Sacred Blood of my Heavenly Lord, stream down upon my sinful heart!

July 25, 1835

(French) On the 20th of this month I received a letter in French from my friend Schmid in which he states that Fr. Dichtl's letter has had the desired result<sup>151</sup>. I am no longer in a condition to undertake anything... i.e., to study or read etc. No matter what I try to do, my thoughts keep returning to our project. On July 20th also, I told my dear mother about our plans! She was less shocked

<sup>150a</sup> Curley gives the details of the *Rule of Life* in *Neumann*, p. 40.

<sup>151</sup> Presumably, Dichtl was trying to arrange N.'s trip to America.

and upset than I thought she would be. My sisters... full of anxious solicitude... tried to encourage me. My mother pointed out to me the unfortunate consequences of projects that were not carefully thought out. In general, I do not think I shall have anything to fear from my mother. Moreover, I feel my Father already knows about my plans although I haven't had the chance to tell him about them yet.

My God, I can see Your hand guiding this whole business. Therefore, Holy Spirit, I am content to leave everything in Your care. Do supply the knowledge I require, for that still worries me. O my beloved Jesus, it is for Your glory that I have decided to risk so much and run the dangers involved in preaching the Gospel. O my Savior, draw me wholly unto Yourself that I may no longer be upset at the prospect of humiliation, that I might accept whatever misfortune You may deign to send me with childlike resignation to Your holy will. My Jesus, lone treasure of my heart, I am a Christian, and that means I am Your disciple... You have called me to a deeper knowledge of Your holy law. Perfect that knowledge that I may be able to preach effectively to all those You place under my care. O Jesus, give me strength and heavenly wisdom. I am still a child [66-c] unable to distinguish right from wrong. You once heeded the prayer of the young Solomon when he asked You for wisdom... grant me my prayer also, my Jesus. By Your goodness and mercy, I am a Christian. Grant me Christian wisdom which I need to guide souls on the path of peace.

July 29, 1835

Just now I feel quite different than I have ever felt before. Close as I am to the realization of my plans that I have cherished for so long, I am quaking with fear. Leaving my poor parents and my loved ones seems to be more than I can bear. I used to think it wouldn't be very difficult to be a missionary! My heart at present is quite beside itself. O Jesus, You have inspired me to undertake this project... give me the strength I need to fulfill it. My Jesus, I am all Yours... nothing can separate me from You any more.

Lately I haven't had too much opportunity to talk with You but I hope You will not forsake me for that, my Jesus! If the realization of this plan is not in accord with Your will, stop it, and I shall be thoroughly grateful to You since right now it seems to me to be very difficult. But if it really is according to Your wishes in my regard, I give myself entirely over to You. I will be happy

to leave my parents and friends and the joy of their company as well as all the comforts of this miserable earthly life. O my sweet Savior, accept this sacrifice if it so please You. Lord, You overwhelm me with suffering... indeed my pain is considerable... but I want to endure it patiently if only You will keep me safe in the faith. Do teach me this heavenly virtue!

Mother of my God, and my holy Guardian Angel and my most beloved Patron Saints, pray for us poor sinners. So be it.

Prachatitz, October 8, 1835

It was yesterday, my God, that You stirred my heart with the painful thought of my estrangement from You, beloved Master of my spirit, Heavenly Proprietor of my heart, most holy Redeemer and Sanctifier of my will! For several weeks now I have been sorely tempted to my former sin. If Your infinite mercy had not deterred me from the abyss, I seem to approach so easily, I would certainly be already in hell! However, my devotion to the Most Holy Virgin Mary has induced her to intercede for me constantly, blind and wretched sinner that I am... by my sinful behavior I seem to have forsaken God's grace entirely. Dearest Jesus, lying in the crib for my salvation, I no longer seem to seek after You with the usual affection and love.

[67] October 8, 1835

I wonder how many times I will still renew my resolutions regarding Your service, my God, with perfect resignation to Your will? O my Jesus, help me as I take up the struggle once more... the very thought of that battle makes me tremble with fear! Yes, my Lord, I want to come back to You in spirit and in practice. Inspire me with Your grace without which I shall surely fall prey to Satan. I resolved yesterday to go to confession in Strunkowitz<sup>152</sup> but You kept me from doing so because I was not properly prepared to receive the two sacraments. I thank You for that, my Lord, and I trust that the fact that I spent the time well will prove to You the sincerity of my resolution. I intend to battle against my enemy, i.e.,

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<sup>152</sup> Strunkowitz... a small village of southern Bohemia, near Prachatitz.

intemperance, by a continual fast, to wit, at home I shall not eat anything outside the regular meals of breakfast, dinner and supper every day. On Fridays I will observe a strict fast until midday. Besides that, I shall recite the canonical hours conscientiously in order to set a proper spiritual tone for my soul which has been rather lax lately. I seem to have lost the idea of protecting myself from the lures of the world, the flesh and Satan.

I shall keep on with the work of translating the reflections on the mercy of God which I started<sup>153</sup>. Each day I plan to do two chapters. I also want to read a few chapters from the Gospels each day as well as the catechism of Canisius and, if there is time, some Church history. If I fulfill these resolutions which I have taken in a spirit of penance, I will prove how earnest I am about recovering Your sanctifying grace. O Heavenly Father, adopt me anew... I come back to You after having learned, to my sorrow, that nothing can really give man happiness, solid joy and peace but the fulfillment of Your commandments. Have pity on me, O Jesus! All my holy Patron Saints, pray for me. So be it.

The resolutions I made yesterday and today worked out all right until I failed a few times against the temperance I had promised to observe, i.e., I did take something to eat outside of mealtimes. My old temptations returned but God's grace was so powerful that I was able to overcome them quite easily. Forgive then, my God, the lack of zeal I showed in regard to those faults. O my sweet Lord, [67-a] You have called me to Your service... what can I offer You in recognition of that grace? A heart more faithful and more abandoned to Your will, less proud and vain!

All-powerful Jesus, I beg You not to let me fall back ever into those bad habits of mine which I have finally escaped. You know, my heavenly Master, how great is my desire for reconciliation with You in the holy sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. I rejoice even now at the thought of the peace I shall find in You and You in me! Cleanse my heart and my soul of every sinful thought, of every desire against Your most amiable law. I shall be so very happy when You take up Your abode again within me. I am full of faults and sins and not worthy to even talk to You, O Most Holy One! But even if I had sinned a thousand times more, I shall not let our common enemy drag me to the depths of despair. O my heavenly Father,

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<sup>153</sup> Unfortunately the original of this tr. is not specified in the *Journal*. Curley mentions it but gives no details other than the Fr. title. p. 39.

You alone are infinitely merciful. You will forgive me if I continue to be truly sorry for my sins.

My God, I quake with fear at the thought that I might be deceived by a false repentance and conversion. I place myself entirely in Your hands. You are my most wise Guide and Teacher... I turn myself over to You completely. Take my heart and do with it what You will. I fear nothing for You are my God who wills not the death of the sinner but rather will show him mercy if only he will obey Your will. You are the most holy One... You can then make my soul holy even though it is covered with the stains of sin. My heavenly Father, perhaps You allowed me to fall into those sins of intemperance. I'll have to be more careful. If it be in accord with Your will, I want to go to confession next Tuesday in Budweiss. Your will be done! All You Blessed Spirits, pray for me. O my Jesus, I am all Yours and You shall soon be all mine! So be it.

October 9, 1835

I kept my resolutions better today. The Lord also gave me the grace of receiving a letter from my friend Krbeczek<sup>154</sup>. That made me very happy. I also felt it might rekindle my zeal a bit. In the future I must devote several hours each day to instructing [67-b] my nephew Charles and my niece Anne. May God bless my efforts!<sup>155</sup>

For a brief while today I was terribly upset without knowing just why. Perhaps my friend's letter is prophesying something in my regard. Come to my aid then, my Lord! I am determined to go to confession in Budweiss next Tuesday at the Piarist Fathers.

Holy Mary, Comfortress of the Afflicted, intercede for me that I may purify my conscience entirely so that your divine Son may be pleased to come and dwell in my heart. I am surprised that I am not more depressed over this pitiful situation I am enduring at present<sup>156</sup>. Maybe the Lord will grant me His mercy after all, though my whole behavior has been contrary to His law. My beloved Jesus, accept then my gratitude for Your exceedingly great kindness

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<sup>154</sup> A companion of N.'s while at Prague... who would later become the pastor of Strunkowitz.

<sup>155</sup> So far we have been unable to identify the parents of these two children. Possibly, N. uses the terms «nephew» and «niece» somewhat loosely to designate the children of his more distant cousins, etc.

<sup>156</sup> The pitiful condition refers, one would surmise, to his anxiety over his future as well as his inability to get to confession.



towards me. My desire at present to be scorned and insulted by my fellowmen is greater than usual. My God, may Your holy will be fulfilled in me! So be it.

October 10, 1835

(Eng.) I was more than usually careful to follow the inspirations of grace today. However, in reading the works of Shakespeare I failed to stop as soon as I came upon some indecency. For that reason the joy and inner happiness I had felt almost all day has now left me.

My dearest Mother whose Motherhood we celebrate today, pray for me, the poorest of all sinners on earth, that your divine Son may grant me His pardon of these faults. You are my only comfort, holy Virgin... I believe that I would not be as courageous as I am now if your concern for me had not made you pray to your Son for this wretched sinner.

Still, my dear Lord, when will You permit me to approach the throne of Your mercy. I wish to be rid of every sin that stains my sinful heart. Thus I beg You to have pity on me. You know very well how feeble and inconstant I am in fulfilling all I have resolved to do for Your glory. Hear then my prayers, most merciful God, and vouchsafe that I may love You more and more. Grant my desires by Your most powerful grace which will lead me [67-c] on the road to Your blessed vision.

My Lord, I lie prostrate before Your face. I bewail my sinful life with a bitter flow of tears. O Lord, rebuke me not nor cast me off. I have no one on earth to protect me from my most cruel enemy, sin, except You! Be kind to me in my misery and protect me in my present dereliction. Be mine, O Lord and God, whom I have so often offended. O God, have mercy on me, else I shall certainly perish. O sweetest Jesus, look upon these tears I am now shedding over my sins. I will no more be ungrateful to You. Come to me, deliver me from the power of the devil that holds me fast. Be mine! Amen.

October 11, 1835

(Eng.) Yesterday Our Lord was very close to me for, after finishing my common prayers on my knees, I experienced a sort of

sweet abandon I had never felt before. That, together with the meditation, must have brought me much grace. My sin was very much before my eyes and I so longed to be delivered from it. I was determined to be shrived in Budweis at the church of the Piarist Fathers but being ashamed of making the same confession to Fr. Dichtl made me aware of my selflove and of my inordinate desire for esteem. I thought I could hear the Lord telling me to go to him to confession because He would reward the mortification of my pride with a special grace. However, my whole soul rose up in rebellion at such a thought. I just didn't have the presence of mind to ask the Lord for more light regarding His will in this matter and for more courage to endure the humiliation which I felt would be more than I had ever had to suffer before.

I pleaded with Him to show me what He wanted of me, whether it would be for my good to go to confession to Fr. D., and I asked too for a greater love for Himself which would then make such a confession easy for me. All this is very troublesome for me because I do not yet feel strong enough to carry it off without some special help from the Lord. I will do it but not quite in the way the Lord might want. Thus my heart is very feeble... I waver ceaselessly especially if, as it sometimes seems to me, those thoughts are just temptations of the Lord.

I believe it is not absolutely required that we make our confession always to a certain confessor... but I admit, it would be very good for me! My Lord, strengthen me and then tell me what You want! Amen.

[68]Prachatitz, October 13, 1835

Today my actions were rather sensual... several times I felt a distaste for prayer, spiritual reading and for my translation work. However, I didn't neglect either except for the translation of one chapter. It rained last night and that kept me from going to Budweis today to reconcile myself with my God. The thoughts that upset me so yesterday have disappeared today though I can't figure why. Perhaps it was that God withdrew His grace from me yesterday since I failed to correspond properly with it. So He left me to grope in the dark. Or maybe the whole business of the other night was just a temptation or that I didn't resist as well as I could my inordinate ambition.

It strikes me that reading Shakespeare is not too helpful for

me... it causes me fairly constant thoughts of worldliness and impurity. Besides, the continual study I require makes me depressed and brings on very painful headaches. Also my eyes appear to be getting weaker and weaker.

O my gentle Jesus, I hope I am worthy soon to be reconciled with You in the holy sacraments You have denied me until now. I promise once more to struggle against my bad habits and inclinations with greater sincerity, and contempt for the world and myself. When I adverted just today to the lessening of my devotion towards the Blessed Mother, I became frightened... St. Bernard says that devotion to Her is a sign of predestination and I seem to have lost my devotion or is it just that I have lost the sensible devotion I used to have? I said the usual prayers in her honor and did not omit any of them. Perhaps Our Lord will restore the devotion I have lost through my callousness if I continue and even increase the devotions I am already practising.

I was especially consoled today at the sight of the Little Infant Jesus as I was reciting the Office. Dear Lord, if yesterday's callousness offended You, do forgive me! If You were irked by the little love I showed by my stubbornness and carelessness in keeping my resolutions, please forgive me! I am weak and obstinate too. Moreover, I need Your mercy and [68-a] Your all-powerful help. Despite my wickedness I beg You to accomplish the work of my conversion. Overlook the ingratitude of this poor wretch who is still full of self-love, sensuality and attachment to creatures. Have pity on this miserable condition in which I find myself just now.

O my God, increase the humiliations You send me so that I might prove my love by my patience. But if You insist that I humble myself, then give me more than my usual strength! You well know my nothingness and the eagerness with which Your grace draws me to Yourself. Oh, help me then in this perilous frailty of mine and in my sinfulness! Do not allow me to offer You useless... though quite bitter... tears instead of deeds. Whatever I have received from You I offer You gladly but I seem to be awkward and inept when it comes to doing things for You, my Jesus... my love for You is still quite tainted with human respect.

My Jesus, You look at me with such seriousness! Forgive me, and do not punish me in Your anger even though my many sins fairly compel You to do so. Oh! I am so miserable! I want Heaven so very much but I don't want to do what I have to to attain it. My Savior, take my soul, humble it, punish it in Your mercy since Your justice and holiness will invigorate and strengthen it. For it is better

for it to fall into Your hands rather than into those of the world or of my own. Forgive me, my Jesus!

Alas! My trust in Your mercy is so faint and feeble and my callousness causes me considerable anxiety. Thus I pray You, O Jesus, shatter the chains that bind me to the world, that fetter me to myself. You alone have begun the work of my salvation... You alone can bring it to completion. However, since I must also cooperate with You, increase my suffering so that I may prove my love for my Savior by my patience. He has loved me on the Cross! My suffering Jesus, I am ashamed to approach my brothers and sisters who have already been sanctified and glorified by Your grace, for I am indeed most unworthy. O Lord, I am the greatest sinner in the world but You are the all-powerful God. Convert me to Yourself that I may someday see You, sweetest Jesus, in Your heavenly glory. So be it.

[68-b] Prachatitz, October 23, 1835

After straying much too far from You, I finally returned when You called me. During these last five weeks I was thoroughly miserable five times. On the 15th of this month I went to Budweis. The next day at 6 a.m. I went to the Piarist Fathers' Church to go to Confession so that I could rid myself of the burden I was carrying. Twice I asked one of the priests to hear my confession and a little later I repeated my request. They all said « No ». In despair I left, thinking that it just wasn't God's will I be cleansed of my sins<sup>157</sup>.

At Fr. Dichtl's place I read some English because the mission organization requires that I know the language. I ate there too. Twice Fr. Dichtl made me read a passage in which he shows he knows just what my life is like. On Saturday I wanted to go to confession at the Cathedral but I wasn't able to do so. I returned home then, having obtained a copy of Catherine Emmerich's *Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*.

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<sup>157</sup> In all probability N. was asking to go to confession outside the scheduled times. In the past it was not unusual for such request to be declined. It reflects the customs of the era rather than any particular negligence on the part of the local priests.

Krbeczek seems as though he is in ecstasy every time I see him<sup>158</sup>. His innocence, compared with my sinfulness, infuriates me. O my God, I am worse now than I was two years ago! What has happened to the work and the mortification I used to do two years ago? Must I simply give up or will I eventually find help? O decency and goodness of heart, where are you? O love so tender for my Jesus, what has happened to you? Where is all that pious devotion to the Blessed Mother? O Lord, You are hanging on the cross and here am I, committing sin!

Lord, if You were still living on this earth, what would You say to me? How would You regard me? O Jesus, it is becoming difficult for me to focus my thoughts on You... on You whom I have always had right before my eyes. O Lord, do not let me die! O what a wretch am I! How am I going to return to You? To my all-holy God? O Jesus, what good are these tears when by my actions I have offended You? Would that by my weeping I might ease my pain and expiate my sins! O my crucified Jesus, hear my plaintive cries. Ah! so often and so shamefully have I crucified You! Forgive me, Almighty God!

My Jesus, I see no way out of all this... my callousness is unique! I don't want to do anything I should but I ask for everything, even for You Yourself, my God. Oh, if I could but escape eternal doom! O my Jesus, how do I stand in Your sight? O Cross of Jesus, how I shudder before you! O Heavenly Child, I would rather kneel at Your crib if only I were not so full of sin. I bring You only my thoughts and my feeling... but no good works! So how can I hope for Your forgiveness? My tears fell on Your heart... Oh, soften *my* heart, my Infant Jesus! Oh! I would rather be dead than hurt You, my divine Infant. How often have I tortured You! If only I knew that tears appeased You, I would gladly cry my eyes out! But what good are they without deeds? Tear my heart to shreds, my God, for it is full of sin. Then, however, create a new one for me!

Oh, I have never really begun to live properly because I always fall back so shamefully into my sins. O Jesus, all-powerful Teacher, lead me along the right path. But do not count on me... I am more than helpless! I am but a hardened sinner whom You must draw towards what is good and right if he is not to come to grief. Is it not I who have forced out these tears just to deceive myself and You? O Lord Jesus Christ, draw me to Yourself! [68-c] I have lost

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<sup>158</sup> K.'s evident happiness in the exercise of his « new » priesthood must have made Neumann's situation all the more difficult.

all my courage because I have fallen so often. Who will help me up? The heavy cross under which *You* fell so often! O my soul, « hang in there! ».

October 26, 1835

All day today I was more recollected than I usually am. However, from time to time I did have some temptations to despair but I was determined to battle against them. My oldest sister brought me a greeting from a priest at whose house I had once slept. I went then to Chrobold<sup>159</sup> right away but I did not find him, i.e., Fr. Dichtl. He had been there from Friday evening until Saturday noon. On my return I decided to go tomorrow to Strunkowitz to be reconciled with my God and to receive my beloved Jesus. I have an unusually strong desire to receive Him after such a long and miserable time. My gentle Jesus, if it is all right with You (I shall go to Holy Communion)... if I can do so without risk of committing a sacrilege, then grant me this grace which I long for with all my heart. For I have been utterly wretched in this miserable condition I have lived in of late. O beloved Physician of my soul, heal me and overlook all these sins of mine, my sole treasure, my crucified Lord!

O Jesus, show me Your infinite mercy for without it I shall surely be lost. Reconcile me with Yourself, O Jesus Christ... I so much want to live in accord with Your Gospel. Dear Jesus, my resolutions are worthless... I am so weak that without Your grace I cannot avoid even the least sin! Take me then, my Heavenly Master, not as a son freeborn but as the last and least of Your servants. Bind me with bonds that will never break. Oh, would that I had never had these deceitful tears which only serve to increase the grief of my sinfulness! Jesus, I am the greatest sinner of all; I beg You to show me Your infinite mercy. Do not let me commit a sacrilege tomorrow! Dearest Jesus, draw me to the cross... overlook my reluctance and stubbornness. O Jesus Christ, my sole salvation, I am so very far away from You. Have pity on me! O Heavenly Cross, eloquent testimony to my sins, with these tears of contrition I would wash the cross clean and so purify my soul. Oh, what a sight! Sweet wood on which my Love was crucified, cleanse my heart on the morrow! Dear Jesus, come to my aid! Mary, Refuge of sinners, do not suffer me to be lost! All you Blessed Spirits, pray for me. So be it.

<sup>159</sup> Another small village near Prachatitz.

[69] Prachatitz, October 29, 1835

I have come back to You after straying off for two miserable days. I sinned twice! That was because my plan to go to Strunkowitz for confession fell through. My Jesus, up until now I had been free of that sin for more than a year. Now I've committed it again with the same sort of indifference as before and without doubt, with my heart much more aloof from You. It seemed to happen when I was so depressed and despondent... I'm bored with this inactivity and I see myself foiled and tricked wherever I look. The longing to have a heart free of all sin, simple, humble and resigned torments me constantly during these lapses into sin and therefore I want to get to confession as soon as possible.

O Jesus Christ, even though I am not worthy to call You My Lord, because I have so often offended You by my sins, still, I beg You to rescue me from this situation which will always be dangerous for me. I myself can do nothing other than go to confession and determine to correct myself as befits a son of Yours. Lord, I am simply filled with sin... the greatest misfortune of all! You desire my conversion and so do I though perhaps in an improper way. I don't want to belong to the world anymore... to this vast sea of filth and rottenness where all sorts of lures and tricks deceive us although they never really produce the happiness they seem to promise in the beginning.

O Lord, I am weary of this vain and empty world. My heart yearns to possess You. Will You leave me in this mire? I deserve it but if I had sinned a thousand times more than I have, Your merits and Your all-powerful grace could still sanctify me! Cleave me to Your bosom; nail my passions to the Cross that I might become worthy to be Your disciple. Oh, I am so utterly wretched right now! I feel so much like weeping... but my tears are deceitful! Jesus, I place myself in Your hands. I resolve to go to confession again tomorrow for I consider that to be the beginning of my true conversion to You. I pray You, my Jesus, console me in my extreme weakness. Grant me that grace. Help me for without Your aid I will be lost. Behold me here, my Jesus, I resolve to be all Yours! Punish me for without suffering and pain there is no salvation for me. Have pity on me!

I heard [69-a] today that Fr. Dichtl is sure to be the Spiritual Director there in Prague... that is Your doing, my Jesus! But how will we fare here in Budweis with no one to intercede with His Excellency for us? May Your will be done! Things are no doubt

going badly because I have been so sinful. I am in the greatest difficulties both of soul and body. Help me, my Jesus, in Your mercy! So be it.

October 31, 1835

My sweet Jesus, You have surely been good to me. I shall never seek any other friend but You, my Heavenly Infant! It was just today that the Lord gave me the grace of receiving the sacraments of Penance, and Holy Communion in Strunkowitz. I asked You, my God, to annihilate me rather than that I should commit a sacrilege. You did bestow Your grace on me and I was able to receive Holy Communion in peace of heart. The holy joy of possessing You once again surpasses belief! Nevertheless, the thought that I do not always seek what is better rather than what is simply good, upsets me terribly. I hope that the patience and resignation with which I accept this anxiety will requite You for my disobedience. I resolve to bear the shame of my sins humbly... as though the loss of my prestige can be compared to the possession of my God!

Today You gave me the gift of genuine tears... I was meditating at the time on Your being crowned with thorns... Surely that was both humiliating and most painful for You! O my Jesus, how can I please You? By enduring patiently the doubts and anxieties that torment me! I also asked You today, albeit with considerable submission to Your own holy will, to bless our project so that it may promote my conversion to You... provided always that it be not another one of Satan's tricks! Oh! I just know You will grant me this grace. I deeply regret my failure to follow the inspirations I received from Heaven in this matter. Forgive my disobedience.

Alas! I am still so hardened in sin. Jesus, my stubbornness really frightens me. As if I could cure myself of that! Punish me, O Heavenly Physician, without quarter, but not without mercy for unless I have that I shall certainly perish. Oh how Your eyes pierce me through! I love You, heavenly Infant, but what good does it do? O my Jesus, my God, in Your mercy do not allow me to die in this callous condition.

St. Mary Magdalen, model of repentant sinners, pray for me that if I, whose sins surpass your own, imitate your contrition, the Lord may truly forgive me. So be it.

Today my father left for Aigen with his brother.



[69-b] November 2, 1835

This morning I was somewhat hampered in the fulfillment of the resolutions I made yesterday. For that reason and also on account of today's feast I was rather less conscientious about them than I should have been. Actually I was often quite careless today... I did my reading from Shakespeare without paying too much attention to the matter of purity. It must have been a special grace from God that I did not sin against that virtue by impure thoughts. However, tomorrow I must begin to be more careful in this. My Lord, I am still bursting with joy over the fact that I have been reconciled with You. This joy inspires me to make good resolutions but do not let me promise more than I can handle!

Today I experienced a certain distaste for prayer but when I did pray Our Lord was most gracious to me. Oh! when shall I ever learn to pray without expecting special favors? Give me strength, my Jesus, I shall never leave You again.

I am beginning to feel more encouraged about the success of our trip to America. Maybe I shall be disappointed... but I am Your servant, Lord, do with me what You will if I should not deserve such a grace. My beloved Jesus, I often feel a sort of shame in performing Your work... I am afraid people will think I am a fanatic and so I sometimes omit certain devotional practices that might well be able to show You that I am indeed resigned to Your holy will. For the future I resolve not to omit those devotions. Let people think what they want; I do not belong to the world! My heritage is the Lord who has shown such great mercy to me.

I was also quite remiss in keeping the fast I had decided upon. O my Jesus, convert my heart entirely to Yourself so that the world's allurements may not keep me from fulfilling my pledges to You. My Heavenly Teacher, I need wisdom to succeed in this business that will affect my whole future. O Holy Spirit, You are the all-wise God; help me with the studies I am pursuing for Your glory. Cleanse me of all vanity for that often impels me to try to learn more. I shall declare war on all my passions, for Your sake, my heavenly King. Such is Your most lovable will which shall be my constant law and guide. For much too long I have given Satan the joy of seeing me in his power. But from now on, Lord, I am completely Yours, for ever! All You Blessed Spirits, pray for me. So be it.

[69-c] November 4, 1835

These last two days I have been entirely too lax... my love for God is not as it was at first. The daily schedule of work and devotions I made for myself didn't allow for all the circumstances that arose so I shall have to draw up another. I am not reciting the Office with complete observance of the hours and proper sequence. I was rather out of sorts and had a headache too. However, the influence of that holy virgin, Teresa of Jesus' writings roused my soul from its torpor. Once again now I am eager for the pursuit of perfection.

Nevertheless, dearest Jesus, my confidence in You is excessive...it leads me to commit sin, presuming on Your mercy! These sins, even though they are not serious, still they make me lose my courage and my fervor; they lead me to laxity and indifference. Whatever seems hard I put off from hour to hour. Unless I receive a special grace I just let them ride. My conscience is too lax and my love is quite indifferent... which is why I feel so out of sorts.

When will this indifference of mine stop? When shall I be able to say in all truth that I am Yours? In my zeal I want You to fulfill my requests right away... I want to be devout without ever experiencing aridity, without any struggle or humiliations etc. My entire devotion to You consists in those prayers which however, I say without any spirit of penance. Imagine! Me, the greatest of sinners and all I want to feel is consolation. Because of my false sense of contrition I regard consolations as a sort of reward or present from You, my God.

Thus I turn in prayer to You with my arms outstretched... does the discomfort I feel at doing this please You, my Lord? O my beloved Savior, I am so far removed from You! I give myself to You, heart and soul. Lead me to Yourself by punishing me since consolations just make me ungrateful and unworthy of further graces. Pay no heed to my cries and my laments. Punish me and thus show me that You do indeed love me!

Tomorrow I shall go to Budweis, if such be Your holy will. I know that humiliation awaits me there, but I belong to You and I certainly have deserved humiliations<sup>160</sup>. Therefore, I shall try to bear them with patience and in a spirit of penance. My dearest Jesus, shield me from all sin by the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary,

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<sup>160</sup> It must have been awkward for N. to seek help from the mission society without being able as yet to adduce a bishop who would ordain him.

of my holy Guardian Angel and all my holy Patrons. Have pity on me! So be it<sup>161</sup>.

[70] Northbush, July 26, 1837

(Ger.) My Lord and Savior! How shall I end up? Sin and nothing but sin! O Lord, do not bring me to judgment now. O Jesus, ought I offer You these tears that are flowing from my eyes? How I dread the first essential steps! O Lord Jesus, how much good I should be able to achieve and yet I commit the most shameful sins! O my Lord, Almighty God, how long will things go on like this? Hurry! Hurry to help me! The pious Sisters in Lancaster put me to shame<sup>162</sup>. O would that I were as holy as they are! How frightfully my head aches! If only I were Yours alone, Heavenly Master! Oh! Give me Your hand, otherwise I shall go under!

Northbush, July 19, 1838<sup>163</sup>

So it's been almost a year since I have jotted down my thoughts about my soul, my circumstances and so on. The main reason for that is doubtlessly my excessive carelessness and the sad state of my conscience. Yesterday I couldn't fall asleep as much on account of the intense heat as of thinking about my wretched situation at present. Everything seems to be going backwards! My spirit is nigh entirely alienated from God because of my innumerable sins and the welter of worldly affairs that have busied me over the past year. Up until now I have been following my bent for the natural sciences and my ambition to pass for an expert in these matters in my own country has taken such a strong hold on me that I have become almost

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<sup>161</sup> This was the last entry in the French part of the *Journal* to be written in Europe. The next entry, in German, is dated July 26, 1837, from Northbush, N.Y., USA.

The French part of the *Journal* is blank for the next year and seven months. Details of N.'s leave-taking from Prachatitz, his rather arduous journey across Europe to Le Havre, the 40-day passage to New York, his ordination and assignment to upstate N.Y. will be found in the German part of his *Journal* which we hope to make available in the near future. A very complete account is given by Fr. Michael Curley in *Venerable John Neumann, CSSR*, Crusader Press, N.Y. 1952, Chapters III and IV.

<sup>162</sup> Lancaster, N.Y., a small village which along with North Bush and Williamsville formed N.'s main outmissions.

<sup>163</sup> This entry was made nearly a year later... in French.

a slave to these studies. Therefore I must sanctify whatever I do in this area by saying a prayer at the start of each inquiry and by keeping in mind the virtuous purpose of it all as planned, namely, to help my dear parents and my sister, the nun in Bohemia. « Dixi, nunc coepi, haec mutatio dexteræ Excelsi! »<sup>164</sup>. My heavenly Master, after such a protracted and unfortunate estrangement, can I still become Your disciple?

[70-a] Northbush, July 20, 1838

The fervor the Lord endowed me with yesterday has slackened off today. I had resolved to recite the breviary at certain times during the day but in my indifference and carelessness I find doing that is more trouble than I care to take. However, my battle against my sinful tendency has been successful mainly because the Lord, in His mercy, sent me an unexpected chill and also because my Guardian Angel led me inexorably and immediately to renew my good resolution. O my God, I do thank You for Your kindness which You have shown me this day. You did not permit me to follow my wicked inclination. I well know that one's reward for the struggle depends on the latter's intensity. However in my case it is not a question of reward but of the sheer suffering the struggle involves. By rescuing me from danger You have certainly lessened Your just anger against me.

Forgive me, Lord, for crying out to You even from the depths of this frightful abyss. I love You, my beloved Lord, because You so patiently await my correction. But Lord, I beg You with all my heart, always keep in mind that my spiritual strength is gone... the least occasion of sin is most dangerous for me. Even though I have the necessary weapons at hand, if I see my enemy attack, I lose all my courage. I wish to surrender all my liberty and will to You in the hopes that I may never offend You again. Oh how wretched of me to have failed to obey Your commandments all my life! Sometimes it seems as if I were destined to be damned. I contracted the habit of giving You serious offense in my very early years before I realized how much that displeased Your divine Majesty. The circumstances surrounding my first Confession, Communion and Confirmation lead me to question the truth of my ignorance however. I was assailed

<sup>164</sup> The verse is from Ps. 76, i, 10 (or acc. to some versions: Ps. 77, v. 11). Because of the many variants for this text I cite N.'s latin text as found in the ms. It might be translated: « And I said 'this is my sorrow: God has withdrawn His strength from me' ».

by all sorts of doubts when I received Holy Orders too. Was my first day's recitation of the Office complete? The first Baptism I administered gave me [70-b] an awful lot of trouble and although I do not have any further doubts about the validity of the Sacraments I administered, I do see everywhere I look things that seem to be telling me I should never have become a priest!

Still, my God, what can I do about that now? « Si non es vocatus, fac ut voceris »<sup>165</sup>. I tremble with fear at the thought of having to account for my administration. I am a sinful Christian... when will I ever be a priest in accord with Your holy will? To become just that is my only road to salvation. So far it has seemed to serve only to lead me away from You... my priesthood has been nothing but one long sin! O Lord God of mercy, have pity on me! My numerous relapses into sin have stripped me of all my courage. It seems too much even to make the simple resolution to check my evil tendency and try to live at least as a good Christian!

At present I feel no great zeal for anything. The wounds my soul has incurred seem to me, if not incurable, at least so serious that even thinking about healing them makes me shudder! Still, my God, do I have to despair of Your mercy when even now as I write these lines I have a proof that You still want to care for me?<sup>166</sup> That's it then, my Lord, ...I shall try to be more faithful to You in the future. I resolve to begin to expiate my sins which moreover would be horrid witnesses against me on the day of judgment.

I commend myself to your care, holy Mother of God, Help of us sinners, intercede for me that I may not be damned forever. Have pity on me, my beloved Jesus. Amen<sup>167</sup>.

[70-c] Northbush, July 21, 1838

Today was very much like yesterday... I was quite casual concerning my resolutions although I did pay more attention to the

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<sup>165</sup> The sense of this unidentified latin quotation is, of course, « If you feel you do not have a true vocation and yet are now committed to the priesthood, conduct yourself in such fashion that God will give you a vocation! ».

<sup>166</sup> Ms. is quite tear-stained. As we have seen from previous entries, N. regarded the « gift of tears » as a special sign of God's favor and of the sincerity of one's sorrow.

<sup>167</sup> N. finished writing this entry over a list of botanical terms, i.e., technical names of plants he had presumably identified in his travels thru upper N.Y. state. Cf. *Journal* for July 19, 1838.

avoidance of impure thoughts. I was thoroughly distracted while saying Mass because one of the candles had burned down almost completely. In the future I shall have to be more careful about that. Yesterday one of my parishioner's servants drowned while bathing in the canal. As far as one can judge, he was a good Christian. May God grant him eternal rest! I shall bury him tomorrow after the first Mass.

Today in also the sixth anniversary of my reception of minor Orders. Time passes so swiftly while my progress in virtue is so slow. In fact, I really believe that, astonishingly enough, I have sinned much more frequently since that time than I had before. O my God, will I ever receive the grace to stand before Your altar with a clean heart and a clear conscience? How I long to get a new start with a general confession covering these last two years! But where shall I find the physician of souls with the sort of spiritual dedication that will inspire my total confidence? That is why I find it hard to believe the statement that whoever prays for a suitable spiritual director will certainly find one.

When I think back over the first impulses I felt to walk in the path of perfection, I find that after each relapse into sin I have greater difficulty than before in confessing my sins. Now it is nearly two years that [71] I am living in this deplorable condition<sup>168</sup>. Yesterday the thought came to me to be a Jesuit or a Dominican ...then I would have an unparalleled opportunity to pursue perfection. However, it seems to me that I should wait to see what sort of success we have with the seminary<sup>169</sup>.

Thus I want to make the best possible use of my time to correct my faults, withdrawing from the world and its pleasures as far as possible. Is it not true, divine Master, that once I have shown You greater love and fidelity You will favor me once again with a good conscience and genuine progress in virtue? Oh how I yearn for that moment of grace and salvation! My heart bursts with joy at the very thought of dedicating myself to You absolutely and undertaking every possible good work! O Jesus, my God and my Sovereign

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<sup>168</sup> A reference to his loneliness and isolation from other priests... a situation which must have been particularly hard on Neumann in view of his family background and years of association with others in the seminary.

<sup>169</sup> N. was so distraught over the spiritual plight of the German Catholics of the upstate N.Y. area that he thought seriously of opening a seminary there for the training of German-speaking priests. He wrote to both Canon Räss and Fr. Dichtl for help in this project. However, circumstances conspired to frustrate these plans. See Curley, *op. cit.*, 73.

Lord, have pity on my wretched state! Help me to find a truly holy, compassionate director who will assure me of Your merciful judgment.

Tears come to these eyes of mine when I recall the days when I had such loving trust and confidence... when my sole joy was zeal for God who enabled me to overcome any difficulty. Now I have no friends, no spiritual director... I am on my own, left to my own sinful inclinations. O Jesus, help me find rest for my weary soul! Show Your mercy to this poor sinner, to this incomparably miserable soul! I would pay any price for Your mercy! But, my God, do show me that mercy soon! Enlighten me! Come to my aid! O Jesus, my dearest, gentle Heavenly Child, I have lost You! My heart longs to find You but when shall I find You? Jesus, Good Shepherd, seek out this stray sheep, lift it to Your sacred shoulders and bring it back to Your fold! Amen.

*[No date given on this last entry page.]*

[71-a] My sweet Jesus, when I think of the progress I might have made with Your help if I hadn't failed to serve You with all my heart as I did in the beginning, how I regret these years lost through folly and sin! O my Lord, how can I ever appear before the throne of judgment? You can see, Lord, that I would gladly revert to being as I was three years ago. Oh what sinful folly on my part! My God, behold these tears, I beg You. Accept them as an offering in token of my sincere repentance. Dear God, Your arms open on the cross invite me to return to You; I can see from Your half-opened lips that You want to tell me that You are always ready to welcome me just as You promised.

Have pity on my lack of faith and trust and especially on my utter unworthiness to even look upon Your face! You want me to be sorry for my sins, to detest them, confess them and make satisfaction to Your Majesty. O Holy Spirit who enlightens and sanctifies us, strengthen with Your all-powerful grace my wretched, miserable soul! For in this state of sin what can I achieve by myself? Let me see clearly what God's justice is really like that I might begin to have once more a holy and wholesome fear of it. Cleanse my eyes that they may be able to discern the extent and enormity of my sins. But, what is it I am asking for? I, the most wretched of all! How could I ever stand the sight of God's wrath without plunging to my

eternal doom? How can I help despairing of my salvation and His mercy?

O my God, give me the grace I most need to walk in the path You have traced for us. Above all, grant me the grace of perseverance, for I fear that tomorrow I may well revert to my misery such as I must endure at this moment. St. John and St. Vincent, pray for me. Amen.