

26. In sickness

To Adelaide

"I would, if it were in my power, give you better health; I pray the Lord to give it to you, but he is the Master, and we should rest entirely on his fatherly goodness. I am convinced that, if it were to your true advantage, he would soon restore your health, but he knows better than we do what is best for us. Let us adore the depth of his designs, without wanting to fathom them. What we know is that He wants us to make whatever happens to us, good or bad, even the smallest things, turn to His greater glory and our greater good. Let us be careful to do this; it is sometimes difficult in a time of infirmity; but this difficulty increases its merit, and God comes to our help. Let us constantly unite our hearts to those of Jesus and Mary; we shall find there in abundance whatever we need to make up for all our miseries. How good it is at all times and especially in this holy time (of Lent!) to think about all that they have suffered, and how they have suffered. " Letter 2a381, March 4, 1806.

"I sympathize very much with your physical weakness; but we have learned from Saint Paul that this bodily weakness is not prejudicial to spiritual strength of the soul. Keep yourself closely united to Our Lord; withdraw into His divine Heart, as into an impregnable fortress. He will communicate his strength to you, and nothing will disturb you. "

Letter 2a384, March 14, 1806.

About his own health problems

Most often he says his health is very good. Sometimes he speaks of the nails (boils) which afflict him, including one on his chest which makes him think of the pierced side of the Lord. But there is this excerpt about a "malaise", which could have been cardiac ...

"I have just written to Mme de Montjoye and Mlle le Gault. That is about all I can do as I felt uncomfortable all night. My chest, shoulders, and the upper part of my body feel as if bruised, my head is heavy. I think it is a kind of rheumatism, caused by the change of weather: a natural effect of spring. This will, I hope, only be a passing ailment. I take a little marshmallow water.... »

Letter 2a386, March 21, 1806.

Then the next day, in front of Adelaide's worry about bringing him some remedies:

“I am sorry to have alarmed you so much; I am wonderfully well. I had a very good night's sleep which perfectly restored me, and all of a sudden all my pains disappeared. »

Letter 2a387, March 22, 1806.

And a little later ...

“Don't worry about my health. It is not worth it. When we grow older and when we approach the tomb, we must have some infirmity, which warns us. It is a grace of God that detaches us from the present life and makes us long for the other. It can be of great benefit to us. Ask God for me to know how to take advantage of it. Besides, so far, my infirmity has been little. All I must worry about is becoming helpless, not being able to serve myself, and being dependent on others. After all, I only want what God wants, and I am resigned to everything. However, nothing tells me yet that this is going to happen anytime soon; it even seems to me that, for some time now, I have experienced considerable improvement, I sometimes go a long time without thinking about my illness, so much I move freely with my arm, which was affected. I would say in turn to you to take care of your health, but without any concern, and only because the Will of God demands it, and because the moderate care taken of it is something which pleases Him. Moreover, let us forget ourselves, and our own interests, to take care of His own, which are also ours. I am in Him all yours. P.J”.

Letter 2a447.