



1887: Founding of Gafsa (Tunisia)

**Letter to Father Bresson, superior of Woluwé, Belgium (6 November 1885)**

My dear Friend,

I also regretted not going to see you all in Algiers. I would have liked to ask you in detail about the house in Woluwe and the arrangements in Belgium. Thank you for the long letter you have written to me and the useful information it contains. I see with joy that the Good Lord is blessing your work and that of your good confreres. Tell them and also your students that I bless them from afar, with a most paternal heart. What I wish above all is to see the bonds that unite the different nationalities in our little Society become closer. I hold more dearly to the union with the Belgians who came first and who are eminently gifted with qualities for the apostolate.

In this regard, and this is for you alone, the actions of Father Merlon in the Congo worry us greatly. Fr. Bridoux must have written to you or will do so soon. I am counting on your perspicacity and on your devotion to discover, in Belgium, all the threads of the fabric that the poor Father seems to want to weave, and to make them known to us exactly and promptly. It is in Mechelen and at Mr. Strauch's house that the centre should be. The results] of your missionary appeals (quêtes) are increasing, but the Congregation needs much more for its work [and its institutions]. So, they must be activated and expanded.

**Letter to his friend, Canon Gatheron (6 November 1886)**

Dear old wreck,

You will excuse me if I dictate this letter, for I am no less a wreck than you are: the only difference is that I am taken by the hand and you are taken by the foot, but we are no better one than the other, and God warns us every day, by demolishing us bit by bit, that the time is not far away when our whole poor hut will collapse. Let us try to finish well, my dear friend, and let us have no illusions about what we have been able to do in the past; almost always it has been wrong, and it is not by breaking ploughs to increase trade, that we have sufficiently prepared ourselves a beautiful place in Paradise. Let us compensate for this by practising penance during our last days.

You certainly edified me the last time I saw you by the love for meditation that you showed me and through your complete resignation to God's holy will. Ask for me, through St. Charles, a large share in those two graces; they are no less necessary for me than for you. And believe, my dear old wreck, that I love you even more with this wooden leg, with which you make "a new spring bloom", than if I saw you as sprightly as I once did, running up hill and down dale in the Cheliff, and without protective covering, necessary at least on days of the sirocco. Your Father and Friend in Our Lord.

