

Contained in this document are the poem "My Cell" written by Blessed Titus while in the concentration camp at Dachau and a few personal letters of Blessed Titus from "Essays on Titus Brandsma: Carmelite Educator Journalist Martyr" edited by Redemptus Maria Valabek, O.Carm. Carmel in the World Press, 1985.

"Before a Picture of Jesus in My Cell"

*by Titus Brandsma
February 12-13, 1942*

"A new awareness of Thy love
encompasses my heart:
Sweet Jesus, I in Thee and Thou
In me shall never part.

No grief shall fall my way but I
Shall see thy grief-filled eyes;
The lonely way that Thou once walked
Has made me sorrow-wise.

All trouble is a white-lit joy,
That lights my darkest day;
Thy love has turned to brightest light
This night-like way.

If I have Thee alone,
The hours will bless
With still, cold hands of love
My utter loneliness.

Stay with me, Jesus, only stay;
I shall not fear
If, reaching out my hand,
I feel thee near.

*Translation by Gervase Toelle, O.Carm. Portrait of Titus Brandsma by fellow Carmelite,
Berthold Plumm, drawn in 1922.*

This letter we print here was written by Father Brandsma in the hectic days before his arrest. It was sent to us by Mrs. Daniels of Croydon, N.S.W.

Carmel, Nijmegen
November 18, 1941

Dear Madam,

May I congratulate you most heartily on the happy news that your son will be released on December 20th. You will have a difficult month trying to wait patiently for his return, but at least there will be the happy anticipation of his being among you again in five weeks time.

I have thanked the Burgomaster for his cooperation. He informed me of the result by letter. I was very sorry that I was not here when you came to bring the glad tidings, but Father Prior told me as soon as I came in.

How successful all the efforts of yourself and your daughter have been! I rejoice with you that everything has gone so well.

With kind regards to yourself, Madam, your daughter and your son,

Yours faithfully in Christ, fr.
Titus Brandsma, O. Carm.

January 19, 1942: *Father Titus is Arrested*

Having spent the night in Arnhem, I was told that I must spend another night there. With these words I was brought into cell 577 on January 20. Next morning I had to be ready at half past eight to be tried at the Hague. This would probably be finished in the afternoon, and in view of my health I would probably be allowed home. On the night of January 21, I was told that my confinement was to be prolonged in order that more evidence might be obtained. Mr. Hardegen, who tried my case in a courteous way, said that this would not be difficult for me on account of my religious life. Indeed, it was not. I remember an old stanza of Longfellow which I have retained since my college years in Megen, and it is particularly appropriate in my present situation:

In his chamber all alone, Kneeling on a floor of stone,
Prayed a monk in deep contrition For his sins of indecision;
Prayed for greater self-denial In temptation and in trial.

As to that "trial," it was not so difficult as I had expected, though one has to get accustomed to many things in prison. Indeed, going to prison at the age of 60 is a strange experience. Jokingly I said so to Mr. Steffen who had arrested me, while entering the prison. His answer, however, comforted me: "It is your own fault, for you should not have taken the Archbishop's commission." Now I knew why I was here and I said to him fearlessly that I looked upon such a thing as an honor, and that I was not conscious of having done anything wrong by doing that. I said the same thing to Mr. Hardegen and I added: "On the contrary, it was an honest effort to relax the contrasts." On the one side this was accepted, on the other side it was looked upon as an organisation of resistance against the occupying power. I had to oppose this last opinion, and to stress the exclusive intention of communicating both to the press and to the Reichskommissariat the Catholic point of view about the propaganda of the National Socialist Movement, as it was pointed out by the Bishops. This point of view was to be communicated to the Reichskommissariat, even if the managers and editorial staffs of the Catholic dailies were not in agreement; but undoubtedly, they were.

The first day of my commission I asked Mr. Schlichting to go to the Reichskommissariat; on account of his journey to Rome this interview took place after mine with the Catholic press. Meanwhile I quite understand that the attitude of the Bishops and of the Catholic press is not considered agreeable, and that the commission of the Archbishop to me and carried out by me, is looked upon as some act of resistance. Our Catholic principles are at conflict with their principles; the contrast of principles is there. For this confession I joyfully suffer what is to be suffered.

My vocation to the Church and to the priesthood brought me so many grand and beautiful things that I willingly accept something unpleasant in return for it. I repeat in complete agreement with Job: We have received good things at the hand of God, why should we not receive the evil he sends us in his Providence? The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Apart from that, I have not had too bad a time. And although I do not know what will become of it, I know myself to be wholly in God's hands. Who will separate us from the love of God? I am thinking of my old motto:

Prenez les jours,
comme ils arrivent,
Les beaux d'un coeur reconnaissant
Et les mauvais pour ceux qui suivent,
Car le malheur n'est qu'un passant.

With Gezelle, I praise "my old breviary," which was luckily left to me and which I can say now as quietly as possible. Oh! in the morning Holy Mass and Holy Communion are missing, I know full well, but nevertheless God is near me, in me and with me. It is in him that we live, and move and have our being. "God, while so near and yet so far, is always present." The well-known couplet which was always in St. Teresa's breviary -- I sent it to my colleague Professor Brom when he was in prison -- is also a comfort and encouragement to me; "Let nothing disturb thee, let nothing frighten thee. All things are passing. God does not change. Who possesses God wants for nothing. God alone suffices."

Scheveningen Police-prison, January 23, 1942.

January 27, 1942

Celia continuata dulcescit." A cell becomes more sweet as it is more faithfully dwelt in.

Professor van Ginneken rather strongly propagated the opinion that the Imitation has a pessimistic out-look, but in regard to dwelling in the cell, the writer really has an optimistic view, and I myself, as an optimist by birth, have experienced here anew how gladly Thomas à Kempis, and those in whose spirit he wrote, have looked upon the solitary life in a silent cell, after having themselves lived like that.

Well, being brought into a prison cell late at night, the door being heavily closed behind you with locks and keys, you stand and feel rather strange for a moment. The comic side of this affair, my going to jail in my old age, urged me to laugh rather than to cry, but strange it was all the same. There I stood. I arrived rather late, at least for a prison; about half past seven. By then it was time for bed, and labor was finished. I was not expected. Actually no cell had been made ready for me. But then there is not so much to prepare. I was given a jar of water, a towel and also a piece of cloth, to clean something or for serviette, I do not know. As there had been a phone call that I still had to eat, I received a small loaf, which was also meant to do for next morning, and a tin cup of skim milk; on the table was a small pewter wash-bowl with some water; on the bed -- a straw mattress -- two blankets; I had to manage for myself. Though lights in other cells are switched off at eight o'clock, my light was kept on about half an hour longer.

It was not an Inferno, my small cell, number 577. And while entering there I did not read over the door: "Abandon hope all ye who enter here." It did not look ominous, and when the assistant warden pointed out to the soldier that the cell was not ready, the latter said: "It is only for one night."

I did not receive a sheet. I always happen to be unbearably irritated by the tickling of woollen blankets at my head. To arrange things I turned the clean towel down over the upper end of the blankets. On the bedstead were two straw mattresses, one upon the other. In most cells there are two prisoners, in some of them even three. In those cases one of the mattresses must be put on the floor, I think. I experienced that already in my cell at Arnhem where a bedstead was missing. To be quite honest, those straw mattresses and blankets disgust me a bit when they are to be used without any sheets. So for the first night I kept my stockings on. Next morning I received a sheet and a towel. I said to the young man -- he was also a prisoner but he was allowed or had to work a little -- that he was late in bringing the sheet, because I would leave that day. "I would take it,," he said kindly. "I was only going to be here for three days and it looks as though I'll be here three years." He foresaw things better than I did, and I am very glad to have my sheet and my second towel.

For a pillow I had nothing else but a straw bolster, which also causes some discomfort to my head. Having spent a sleepless night at Arnhem, and desiring to be as fresh as possible next day at the prolonged trial, I invented something in order to be more comfortable. I had taken a jersey undervest with me. I folded this around the pillow and put a new towel over it. It began to have the appearance of a soft pillow. It could have been worse. Every night now I make my bed in this way. Since I cannot go on wearing my socks for ever, I put my second towel over the foot of the mattress, stretch the sheet over myself, and then the two blankets and, for the first days, when it was pretty cold, my duffel greatcoat also. After all this, little fault could be found with my bed. In prison this matter is rather important, seeing that one has to go off to bed at eight o'clock and to rise about seven o'clock in the morning.

It is out of the question that I could sleep all that time, but the light is switched off at eight and switched on only at seven o'clock: where can one stay if not in bed?

My little cell itself is not so bad: a tiny bit of a room with the bed occupying the whole breadth. That defines the breadth of the cell, which may be about 1 m. 80, 1 m. 90: six times the length of this piece of paper and a small piece besides (till the mark). The length is nearly double, approximately twelve times this paper, plus a small piece besides (till the mark at the foot of this page). The height is nearly the same as the length. Two thirds of the side walls are made in clean brick work. I count sixty five bricks in the height with a rather thick seam; around the bed the wall is plastered; that is tidier. The walls are a light yellow up to the height of the door; above that they are white. They look rather neat. The door, in the middle of the front wall, is painted brown. Right in the centre is a little square iron shutter through which the food is handed.

Over that shutter is an iron peephole, but I have not seen it open yet. On the first night I thought there was no window, but the next day I perceived that this was to be found high over the door towards the ceiling, taking the whole breadth of the cell and being divided into three parts. The middle part is easily opened by means of a handle. So the light is abundant and the possibility for ventilation excellent. But the windows do not show me anything but the sky; now and then I see a sea gull skimming by. Till now the windows are full of the most beautiful frost decorations for the greater part of the day, although the sun and the central heating see to it that at least sometimes there are here and there free spots of light. Yes, there also is central heating. At some height over the bed run three heating pipes. They do not give very much warmth. On the coldest days I shiver a bit practically all day long, but they take away the worst cold, and it can very well be endured. At least I do not think it is cold enough to put on my coat, even when sitting.

There is a stone floor, made of fairly big blue tiles, but in front of the door was a good mat, which I put under the table during the day and beside my bed at night. "Table" is actually a grandiloquent name. It is a tip-up table on the wall at the left, a bit smaller than the opened newspaper which serves as a table cloth. I lay my table with the "Vaderland"; it shows its nice title ("Fatherland") on both sides. There has to be something appealing in such a bare cell! Before me I have a small altar, or whatever you may like to call it. I found a paper checkerboard in my cell with checkers. I don't think I shall start playing, but I also found a piece of packing-paper. I wrapped it around the board and using a nail from a cigar box -- one has to manage to get on, for I have been deprived of both knife and scissors -- I made three nicks in the packing-paper; in these nicks I put three holy pictures from my breviary. So in front of me I have the picture of Christ on the Cross, and although it is not full length, at least it is a nice bust with the wound of the Sacred Heart, and it is Fra Angelico, too! On one side of it I put St. Teresa with her motto: "To die or to suffer," and on the other side St. John of the Cross with his: "To suffer and to be contemned." I also found two pins and I used one for putting under the three pictures a paper with St. Teresa's motto, "Nada te turbe, etc." in the middle: "Gott so nah und ferne, Gott ist immer da;" and lastly my favourite maxim: "Prenez les jours comme ils arrivent." I had no stray picture of Our Lady in my breviary and surely her image ought to be in a Carmelite's cell. I managed this too. In the part of the breviary we are using now, and which was luckily left to me, is the beautiful picture of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. So now my breviary is standing wide open on the topmost of the two corner shelves, to the left of the bed. When sitting at my table I only have to look a bit to the right and I can see her beautiful picture; while lying in bed my eye is first-ly caught by that star-bearing Madonna, Hope of all Carmelites.

I have no chair, only a three-legged bench, which is rather comfortable. If I need a back-rest -- for one gets more tired here by doing nothing than by doing hard work at home -- I put my bench next to the table near the wall and then I have a most comfortable arm-chair. There is not much to be told about the rest of the furniture, and it is soon counted: a broom and dustpan for tidying up my cell, a small pail and a floor cloth, a wastepaper basket, a big pail with a useful lid which is carried away once daily, and a blue stone jar of water. Lastly, there is a tin soap dish and a row of three pegs. The lamp is put over the tip-up table on the wall. It is switched on and off from outside.

"Beata solitudo, blessed solitude." I am already quite at home in this small cell. I have not yet got bored here, just the contrary. I am alone, certainly, but never was Our Lord so near to me. I could shout for joy because he made me find him again entirely, without me being able to go to see people, nor people me. Now he is my only refuge, and I feel secure and happy. I would stay here for ever, if he so dis-posed. Seldom have I been so happy and content.

Scheveningen. January 27, 1942

January 31, 1942

"Now read, now pray, now work with fervor; so time will pass quickly and work will be easier."

On the first days I had some difficulty in fixing up a timetable; but now that I have been here for a week and know the order of things I have tried to follow a daily rule. It is difficult to do everything to time for, firstly, the ordinary things of the prison routine do not keep exactly to the clock and, secondly, it is not easy to know what time it is.

This was especially difficult in the first days because my watch, together with most things, had been taken away from me. Fortunately, I received it back last Wednesday night. I had to give a written answer to a question. I was allowed to smoke so I asked for my pipe, tobacco, etc., and at the same time for my watch. Of course it had stopped and I chose a time at random, more or less correct. There is no clock here and in things which are timed the hour is not reliable because one does not keep to it exactly. But my watch goes and so I have my own time, independent of Greenwich, Amsterdam or Berlin.

Between 6:30 and 7:00 o'clock in the morning the first sounds are heard. Then the wardens seem to awaken the young prisoners, who perform divers current jobs. About a quarter to seven a bell is rung, but very softly. Slowly further alarm is raised. Some time later people go around, the double locks seem to be opened, and the light is switched on. That is the time, at least for me, to rise. After all, it is about time to get up, having had such a long night's sleep. I make the Sign of the Cross, greet Our Lady of Mount Carmel on the shelf over my bed, and put on my stockings and slippers. Then I say three Hail Mary's and a short prayer. Then I start stripping my bed. I shake the blankets and fold them neatly and do the same with the sheet. Then I put my water jar outside the open door. Still in my pajamas, the folded blankets lying on the mat, I kneel down and in my own manner and supplying what I do not know by heart, I say Mass, make a spiritual Communion and say the prayers of thanksgiving. It goes more quickly, in more ways than one. It is a good start to the day. At home there is meditation first and after that the Office but here I prefer to say Mass first, even though I am in night attire.

Soon the jar is brought back with fresh water. The door opens for a moment. We say good morning to each other and I begin to wash myself. I would very much like to shave but this luxury has been reduced to Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. On those days the doors open for ten minutes and we receive a safety razor, if necessary soap and shaving brush also, with which we have to manage very quickly. If the razor is not sharp we are allowed to ask for another one. When I am washing myself in the morning -- about half past seven -- a man comes with coffee. All of us have a nice tin cup with a handle, a plate and a spoon. At night the plate and spoon are put outside but in the morning we receive them back when the water is brought around. I crumble my bread on the plate and pour the coffee over it making quite a full plate. Then I finish dressing and leave the bread soaking. By eight o'clock I am a gentleman again-except for my beard -- and dressed in black. I sit down on the stool at the table, say the Angelus, an Our Father and a Hail Mary, as in the convent, and partake of my breakfast with my spoon.

Oh, I used to do that in our Bavarian convents thirty five years ago. There, too, we crumbled the bread into the coffee and ate it with the spoon. Having cleaned the plate and spoon I commence my morning walk, enjoying my pipe as I do so, thinking of the past and the present, and repeating my Memento of Holy Mass more fully. I remember many who are remembering me and I try to live in the Communion of Saints. I do not walk far -- six paces there and back, and then the same again. This walk starts at half past eight and ends by

nine o'clock, by which time my pipe is empty. Then I say Matins and Lauds and Prime, often still walking. When I am tired I sit down quietly beside the table on my stool against the wall. By the time I have finished it is half past nine. Between nine o'clock and half past the light is switched off, sometimes so early that I have to stop saying my Office, although last Sunday it was kept on till ten o'clock. At half past nine I have my morning meditation, reading and meditating the life of Jesus by Cyril Verschaeve. I was able to take this book with me by permission of the officer who arrested me, and also the life of Saint Teresa in the Kwakman translation. At first they were not given to me but by later request I was permitted to have them in my cell.

At ten o'clock I start writing. During the first days I was occupied in writing an answer to the question Why do the Dutch people, especially the Catholics, resist the National Socialist Movement? I tried to give an answer in eight pages like this one. Now I am trying during my hours of writing, to fix my impressions of the time spent here; furthermore, I am writing the life of Saint Teresa, which I undertook for "The Spectrum." When I start writing I light a cigar. At half past eleven, walking again, I say Terce, Sext and None. My writing was interrupted on a few mornings by physical exercises. We have to do these every day, sometimes in the morning, sometimes in the afternoon. It is a comical affair. We are called for by loud shouts. The doors open and we stand erect at the other side of the corridor until all have left their cells, each one holding his numbered dust pail in his hand. We start moving, put our pails down at the end of the corridor, pass some corridors, and arrive at an open field behind the prison: a fairly long but narrow strip of ground surrounded by a high wall.

The gymnasium teacher stands in the center. We walk around him in a broad ellipse, now in ordinary step, now on the double, now taking high steps. Sometimes we have to stretch our arms forward or to the side in a certain rhythmical movement, at others we have to keep our hands on our hips.

I continue reading until four o'clock, now and then lighting my pipe. At four o'clock I kneel down for half an hour's meditation on the life of Jesus and on mine. About half past four bread is brought for supper, which also has to serve for next morning. Until Thursday it was the ordinary bread, a lump cut into four. On Thursday morning the doctor came to see me. I told him that my stomach was fairly delicate, that on four occasions I had had a serious hemorrhage of the stomach, and that I was suffering from a rather dangerous infection by Colibacilli. I told him briefly about the treatment by several doctors and pointed out to him that my abnormally light weight, added to my chronic disease, made extra food necessary, and that this had been allowed to me by the food office in Nijmegen. He said he would have me weighed and would see what he could do. I was weighed: one hundred and twenty-six pounds, from which four pounds were subtracted for clothes. As a result I now receive milk bread instead. I have not noticed very much difference, but I think there may be some milk in it. Furthermore, the slices are buttered. At supper I receive a large sized cup half filled with whole milk instead of a full cup of skim milk.

Nothing came of the other extra food allowance. As a consequence of the concession there is a card hanging on the door of my cell now marked "Milk" and another one marked "white bread." It seems more than it is, but I can do with it. As soon as the bread is brought I let it soak in the milk and eat that. One has not much time because cup and spoon must be given back very soon. Our supper is finished by quarter past five. Then it becomes very quiet. We do not receive anything, we do not have to give anything. After supper I say the Angelus and have adoration spiritually united with the convent. Then I light a cigar and have an evening walk up and down a stretch of twelve paces as in the morning. At six o'clock I start writing and continue until quarter to eight. Then I make my bed and say night prayers at

the side of my bed. It does not matter to me much when the light is switched off. I continue praying for some time and then I tuck myself under the blankets till next morning.

Scheveningen, January 28, 1942 T.B.

Saturday, January 31, 1942

I have to add something. I cannot say that I do not get any meat. Last Wednesday and Thursday there was meat in the soup and in the hotchpotch. It was mixed, ground into small pieces, and though not abundant, I did see meat again.

On Thursday morning, January 29, it was the feast day of St. Francis de Sales, gentle patron saint of journalists. I had cleaned my pipe and had lighted it for my morning walk when a German soldier entered with a new order. I had to hand over tobacco and cigars, pipe and matches. I was not allowed to smoke any more. Luckily I happened to think of the mild Francis de Sales, otherwise I might have said something unkind. I emptied my pipe and gave it up. The soldier said in pity that it was not his fault. I understood. To comfort me he said that I could keep the other things -- books, paper, and so on -- which is very fortunate. They will profit me more, though I miss my pipe and cigar. I deleted "smoking" from the daily timetable and the day went on. Now I take these things for granted. I was very fortunate that I was permitted to smoke on the first and most difficult days.

T.B.

Scheveningen
German Police Prison
February 12, 1942

Fr. Provincial, Fr. Prior, Reverendissime, Confreres, Brother, Sisters, Brother-in-law, children, friends,

Very best greetings from cell 577 Scheveningen. I am alone here. Two by four (meters) and the height is also four. A cell dwelt in becomes sweet, says Thomas à Kempis. I already feel at home here. I pray, read and write, the days are too short. From eight till seven it is night. I am quite all right in my solitude, although I miss the church, Mass, communion, and although no priest comes here. Yet God is near to me, now that I cannot go to people any more, nor people to me. I am very calm, happy and content, and I adapt myself. I will hold out very well.

My diet is looked after a bit: at night a quarter litre of whole milk and instead of the ordinary dry bread, four thick slices, buttered. In the morning, I put two of these in the coffee, at night two in the milk and I eat it with the spoon. At midday hotchpotch or soup, very well prepared, and for me abundant. Now and then there is some meat mixed with it, on Fridays some fish. Further also sugar; jam, butter and soft cheese, but in very moderate quantities. Would you be so kind as to inform Dr. de Jong that he should not worry or make himself reproaches about me. I suffer here with joy and I am quite all right. Say the same to Dr. Woltring. Send me, please, an Imitatio in Latin, a Missal of the Order, and rosary beads, the next part of the Breviary with the Kalendarium. Then, A. Hoornaert, Sainte Thérèse écrivain, Brugge, Desclée. It is on the table. Shallow, light blue cover, three fingers thick. If you can't go in maybe you can get it elsewhere, or order a new one. Further three writing pads, good ruled paper. Fortunately I am allowed to write. The first days I was also allowed to smoke. Further, pajamas, preferably the blue ones. Two shirts and two pairs of pants, stockings and handkerchiefs and a double sack with name, for the laundry, and finally somebody who every ten days exchanges the soiled laundry for the clean. Dr. Onings will be willing to find someone to do this. If you can get into my cell, send also the short jacket which is hanging behind the door or maybe better still the entire suit. If you wish to send some dessert with it, all right, but we have no knives and no tins, and are not allowed to have them either.

If Vos de Waeel has not received the doctorate yet, don't let him wait for me. Perhaps Professor Kors will want to take my place -- or Professor Post. Thanks in advance. Congratulate his mother and himself on my behalf. Let Stappers (Oldenzael) find a solution to the situation of Michel Polatian with the expert accountant Winters of Venlo, as we agreed. Ask Father Van Keulen and Wijnhoven, Boxtel, to look after Sister Feugen according to her need; tell him that she has put everything in my name. The will is in Wolters' hands, so don't be worried about the situation of the Apostolate. During April of last year Miss P. Verstraaten and someone else of the Social Theology Department did their preliminary exam with me. I forgot to give them a document of proof.

Get in contact with her; ask her for the name of the other person and let Professor Hoogveld know that they did the preliminary exam successfully.

A copy of the translation of the Dark Night of P. Mauritius, Geleen, is on the table in my cell. I will no longer be able to go over it. Tell Father Wijnhoven that the copy of Sloots' Eastern Heresies was also confiscated. Sloots will have a copy. I would be very pleased to see it divided into chapters and at the beginning and end of every chapter throw some light, in

each heresy, on the need for a correct description of the faith, the readiness to sacrifice, etc. It's all too much in a minor key. Let Rector Canisius know that the circular letter of the Willibrord Union for the election of members of the Council of Appeal was also confiscated, and so was not continued. And pray for me in the Communion of Saints.

Your Fr. Titus,
Carmelite

Scheveningen
German Police Prison
February 12, 1942

Fr. Provincial, Fr. Prior, Reverendissime, Confreres, Brother, Sisters, Brother-in-law, children, friends,

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Your Fr. Titus,
Carmelite

Scheveningen
March 5, 1942

Very Reverend Fr. Prov., Fr. Prior; Rev.me, Confreres, Brother, Sisters, Brother-in-law,
Children, Friends,

Once again, greetings from cell 577. Now I am here already over six weeks. But I hold out quite well. My health is all right. February 21, I had a little warning, a bit of fever and pains that made me fear that the kidney inflammation of December, 1939, would reappear. Also I asked for the doctor. But while I was afraid that it would turn worse, when the doctor arrived the next day, it had improved a lot so that the doctor saw no necessity for doing anything. For a couple of days some afterpains, less appetite, and it was over again. At the moment I am very well. Psychically I am not troubled in the least. I need neither to cry nor to sigh, sometimes I even sing a tune in my own way, not too loudly of course. I cannot manage the nights here. I cannot sleep from 8 till 7. So I am much awake at night, more than the nights exceed their normal length (sic).

I shall tell you my timetable, but you must not take it too punctually. That does not exist here. I rise at about 7 o'clock. Bell is rung, light is switched on. A short morning prayer. I strip my bed, fold blankets and sheets, receive water. Then I kneel down and say the prayers of Holy Mass, spiritual communion. Then the coffee is about to arrive, a tin half litre cup. I soak the bread in it. Angelus. Breakfast. After that, a few times weekly, cleaning up the cell. Sometimes we are given a newspaper in the morning, which I read after breakfast. Then wash and dress. Until then I live in pajamas, quite practical. Then it is about half past eight, nine. I say Matins, Lauds and Prime, and after that half an hour of meditation. They are different hours from the convent, but one has to adapt oneself. From ten to half past eleven I read, and when I have paper I also write. I am working on the Life of St. Teresa, for Spectrum. I have finished the first draft of six of the twelve chapters. After half past eleven I say the little hours. Then lunch. Angelus. Adoration in the spirit. I sing an Adoro Te. Then a walk in my room, three meters forward three meters back, and then the same again. Sometimes I have to laugh about it. At two o'clock Vespers and Compline. Then read or write. At four o'clock half an hour of meditation. At about 5 o'clock evening bread with milk. Angelus. Adoration. From six to half past seven read or write. 7.30 evening prayer. Rosary. At night, the light is not switched on any more. The timetable is sometimes interrupted by exercises on command, each day, except on Sundays, sport: we are about 70 from the same corridor in a small court, to walk around, to trot, to throw out arms and legs, it is fun. Ten minutes, a quarter of an hour. On our way out we take our dustbin with us and take it back, emptied, on our way back. Usually twice weekly we may shave and razors are distributed, sometimes after 2 days, sometimes after 4, and once even after 8 days. I started looking patriarchal. Sometimes there is an order to scrub the woodwork or to swab the cell, etc. I just take part in everything. Twice I have been taken to a bathing cell for a shower.

The day before yesterday I received from the laundry two sacks of underwear, and I gave along the soiled linen. Splendid. There was only one pair of socks, that is a bit little. I was very happy to receive Fr. Prior's letter of February 21, in reply to mine of 12. I received the letter on February 26. That was a joy. Mary thanks for letter; Holy Mass and prayers, and for carrying out all the instructions. It is the first and until now the only one I received. It will be best if Fr. Prior writes for all, as the Provincial does for Amandus. Much news in few words. He would also be the indicated person to apply for a visit. How is the family doing? Gatsche, best wishes on March 13. How are Hubert, Cyprian, the Pastor, P. Thomas, Ewald?

How are my colleagues? Did Vos de Wael get the doctorate? Has the Rochus home been furnished already?

Until now I haven't received any parcel. Maybe I'm not allowed to. I have started again at Septuagesima. Remember me, you all, I will remember you, reciprocally.

In Christ your p. Titus Brandsma, O. Carm.

Amersfoort, April 1st, 1942

Prisoner
Prof. Dr. Titus Brandsma
Block: 2 A N. 58

Dear Father Prior, etc.

At the beginning of each month we are allowed to write one letter and so today I can tell you again that I have been able to adapt myself very well, although the change from Scheveningen to here was a big one.

The many acquaintances to talk to, and the many new ones are a big contrast with the Scheveningen solitude. My state of health and age are taken in consideration here also fairly well, so that you need not worry about that. There are more possibilities for medical care here than in Scheveningen.

Here as well I will hold out as long as it is judged necessary to keep me. About the duration, nothing can be said. I was very happy to receive your letter of March 21. Just as well that you wrote again, because no letters have been forwarded to me from Scheveningen.

Thanks to Father Provincial for the greetings and the prayers on behalf of all. On my part, I am with all of you in spiritual communion. I am saying Breviary now in the same way as the brothers. I would like to ask whether the 15 Our Fathers for Laudes Vespertinae cover Vespers and Compline, or whether 7 Our Fathers are to be said for Compline also? What is usual? I hope and pray that Cyprian, Pacificus, Ewald, Vitalis and the others who are sick get better soon. Special greetings to Hubert. Don't be worried about me.

Gatsche's letter did me a lot of good. I understand very well that they are praying for me, and speak of me a lot. I thank every one, Henry and Barbara too.

I would like to know something more about my substitute at the University courses. I wish George every success. Also best wishes to Fra. Simon and Fra. Franco on their new appointments.

The news about Utilitas I read with divided heart. It was something to be feared. Greetings to Bodewes. I don't know why the doctorate of Vos de Wael has been delayed. But today there's a lot of things that we don't understand.

There's a reason for this too.

An Easter full of blessing to all. I jubilantly in-tone the Alleluja with you, you know. We remember each other.

In Christ yours, f. Titus Brandsma

The Hague, May 6, 1942

Dear Brother-in-law and Sister; etc.,

Now I am in Scheveningen again, but only for a short time, because it has been decided that I shall go to the concentration camp at Dachau near Munich, probably next Saturday. There also I will find acquaintances, and Our Dear Lord is everywhere. I am in good health. You need not worry about that, and fortunately I am able to let things come calmly. Kind regards to the children, Barbara and Henry, all the members of the family, the parish priest and curate. I understand that you are worried about me. You and the little ones pray for me and I am grateful to you for your love. In God Our Lord we remain united until we see each other again. From Dachau I will write again to Father Prior in Nijmegen and you can send him again an answer. I congratulate Helen on her birthday on April 25, Teresa on May 18, and am always with you.

Your brother in Christ

f. Titus Brandsma

Kleve, May 28, 1942

Dear Father Prior, etc.,

At the beginning of May you will have been expecting a letter from Amersfoort, because there I would have been allowed to write again on May 1st, but a few days before, on April 28, I was suddenly taken back to Scheveningen. There one writes every three weeks, but one has to be there at least three weeks before one is allowed to write. Before that term had passed, on May 16th, I was put on the way towards Dachau. Fortunately the voyage did not continue uninterruptedly, and for the time being we are in the prison of Kleve, to be transported from there in groups to different destinations in Germany. One always stays here one or two weeks. Each week about forty leave. Although usually one is allowed to write only from the place of destination, I got permission to write from here, because it is so long ago, and also because it is not yet determined when I am to go on.

In The Hague I have been tried more in detail about some letters. On my departure from Amersfoort I have also been informed that I will be kept prisoner because I am inimically disposed towards Germany and because it is to be feared that I will abuse my liberty against Germany.

Being sent to Dachau does mean that I'll be detained until the end of the war. Dachau near Munich is a camp with various branches. You will hear later on in which section I'll be, if anyhow they stick to this sentence. The Provincial could attempt to have it commuted to a transfer to a German monastery (Mainz, Vienna, Bamberg, Straubing), with eventual extensive restriction of freedom and of permission to work, with the obligation of remaining in that city or perhaps in the convent and of reporting in on a regular basis, of having no correspondence with Holland, etc. Pastor Bulters of The Hague was duly freed on condition that he transfer to Venray. In my opinion, the better thing would be to speak of this matter at The Hague with Mr. Hardegen, Provincial Dept. of the German Security Police, Binenhof 7, Room 137. It was he who always interrogated me and who also told me that Brandsma the lawyer from Zwolle had been there for me and that he gave him my large suitcase. He would not obtain anything else for me, but I feel I should be very grateful to him for his interest.

He could go for a talk even now, alone or with Fr. Provincial or someone named by him. This doesn't seem bad to me, but I leave the decision to you.

Of the more than six weeks in Amersfoort, I have been ill more or less for five. Providential. A rather light dysentery. Yet, this continual diarrhea weakened me. When it had gone, I got into trouble with my stomach, and these spasms rather bothered me. Little by little it has passed. Now I am all right again. My complaint, the kidney inflammation, although completely uncared for, bothers me next to nothing. In all those four months, it has caused me trouble and pain only three times, and then only slightly. In fact, considering the circumstances, I'm doing wonderfully well. I have a continuous appetite, as I have never known in my life before.

It was a great privilege that on May 17th, I could attend Holy Mass, and that on Pentecost Sunday and Monday, I also have been able to receive Holy Communion, after more than four months.

The suit you sent by express mail to Scheveningen, I fortunately received on May 16 on my departure from there. I already despaired of receiving it. Many thanks for everything. It

contained everything I had asked for, but in case you sent more, or sent a letter with it, I haven't received these. I was looking forward to it, and would be happy to hear something.

Here I was allowed to keep Breviary, Missal and rosary. How will it be in Dachau? I hear though that there is Holy Mass on Sundays. I hope eventually to meet colleague Regout, Galena the Pastor and various other priests.

Please pay a personal visit to Professor Hoogveld, von Genechten, Bellon and Sassen to thank them by taking my place. Extend my condolences to the former on the death of Scintilla. The family will be comforted to know that after such deep preparation in such a sublime frame of mind and with an expression of such great affection for her family members she went to face death. It's good that she joined the Third Order. Many greetings to all. It's better so. You should remain the Director. The other changes are also very good. Greetings and thanks to Mrs. Span. Tell Hubert that in my solitude I've decided first of all to finish the edition of St. Teresa. Today is Teresa's birthday. I am spiritually at Jongemastate. On leaving Amersfoort, Father Hetteema arrived. He thought they would free me. He is in good spirits and I heard he feels well.

Kindest regards to all. Pray for me.

In Christ, your Titus, Carmelite.

Dachau, July 12, 1942
From Brandsma Anno Dachau No 30492
translated from German

Dear Brother-in-law and Sister,

If until now I wrote to the Prior of Nijmegen, now it is better to write to you. You forward the letter to the Prior. He will take care for further expedition and also for the answer in your name. The answer must be written in German. No abbreviations that are not easily understandable. If not, the letter is not passed on. I have been allowed to read the letter the Prior sent to Kleve but not to keep it, as it was in Dutch.

Many thanks for all the kind words, from yourselves, the Prior and all the others. I am all right. One has to adapt oneself once more to new circumstances and with the help of God, I'll succeed here also. Our dear Lord will also continue helping. I may write once a month only. This is now for me the first occasion. Best greetings to all. I was pleased to receive information about the number of new novices, the new priests, the results of Oss and Oldenzaal, the health of Hubert, Cyprian, Vitalis and the other patients. Best wishes for a good recovery of Fr. Subprior. If one wishes, one can send me each month 40 Marks. The Prior will gladly look after that. As Henry wrote, Kaeter the pastor has been transferred to Ribergen. Congratulate him for me. Have any other pastors whom I know been transferred? I'm still waiting for news from Akke Kramer regarding his brother John.

Many greetings to the parish priest and curates at Bolsward, to Father Provincial and all the Confreres. Let us remain united, under the protection of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Not too much worrying about me.

In Christ yours

Anno