**Letter from Franz to his father-in-law, Lorenz, in which Franz is responding to Lorenz’s asking for advice regarding a difficult family situation. Dated November 27, 1940.**

Dear father-in-law!

Thank you for your loving letter. I am saddened by your unfortunate situation. It is very hard to go on when there is disagreement in one’s family. Unfortunately, I do not have much time to write to you today.

Dear father-in-law, according to our human thinking and feeling it is always better in many cases to get a little revenge. But according to the Christian view this is not allowed. We must repay evil with good. Christ himself went ahead of us with this example.

And only love is capable of once again establishing peace. Read again the beautiful verses on love. Faith and hope will eventually pass away, but love continues forever.

Warm greetings from your son-in-law; do not be angry with me because of what I’ve written.

See you again.

**Letter from Franz to Franziska, written during his military training. Dated December 31, 1940.**

Much beloved wife!

Above all, receive my warm greetings. Almost all of my comrades have gone out to celebrate the start of the new year. So I can write to you in peace. I was already at a celebration, namely, in the church with a festive thanksgiving service. The chaplain gave a very meaningful sermon after which came the thanksgiving prayer. It was very beautiful.

Dearest wife, even though I must celebrate the end of the year far away from my loved ones, we still have much to thank God for. We had a blessed year, even though many difficult hours came upon us, especially upon you and mother. Still we can say that the Lord God has guided us for the best. We received God’s blessings in rich measure. If we resolve to begin the new year tomorrow morning with the aim of seeking to realize God’s will in our lives even more fully, then we need not be anxious for the future, even when it does not seem bright. And if this should be our last year in this world – which we, of course, do not wish but for which we must always be ready – then so be it. We also do not need to be anxious that the Lord God will withdraw his grace from us in the hour of our deaths.

Now, dear wife, be of good cheer in the new year!

I cannot tell you much that is new, for not much happened since I returned here. We have heard that we should not be here much longer. They are finding us quarters in Ried. I have nothing against this since the train connections for my leaves are at least better there than here. This is something that we must always have in mind. There are some men here who have not yet had a leave.

What is happening with the Besenbocks? Have they written to you? This evening it has begun to rain very hard. Perhaps we have gotten beyond the worst of the cold for now. You’ll surely not object to this.

Warm greetings to you from your husband, Franz.

Many warm greetings to Mother and the little ones and also to the housekeeper.

I look forward to our reunion!

**Letter from Franziska to Franz. Dated January 23, 1941.**

Dearly beloved husband!

I had hoped to receive a letter from you today. Unfortunately you must not have had time to write. Since I have some news for you, I’m writing you now.

Frau Besenbock has sent us 15 marks. One must accept such a generous gift. When convenient, you can thank her. Further, father has written that farm worker is now away, and that they are promising him a woman worker. On Sunday, the stork brought Zieher a baby girl. You can send congratulations. My sister will return to baking. Also, the poultry continue to lay eggs. One can always find something to do.

Poidl Grungassler and Peter Pleikner are here on leave. Toni Strohhofer must depart tomorrow. The good time of a leave always passes much too quickly. Hopefully, you will soon receive a longer leave. I am already looking forward to our reunion.

We had another holiday on Monday. It was the feast of St. Sebastian. You will have surely remembered this feast, though it is especially celebrated by women. One should not knit or darn on this day. So I looked for other work and made approximately forty bars of soap. Genuine, good soap is easy to make. You’ll see it when you come home. I’ve also saved some money. Now I do not need to buy soap, and my soap is less expensive to make than the soap that one buys.

I am entirely alone at my desk. Everyone is already asleep, and Lidwina has gone to say good-bye to her brother. So I’ve already written a letter to Frau Besenbock, thanking her for the money.

Now something about your little women. Loisl is crawling all around and moves very fast. Maridl is always having accidents. She is often falling off the bench. She did so yesterday and landed on her head. She did not breathe for such a long time that I became anxious and alarmed. One cannot be attentive enough. The three children are full of life. One must continually pray that nothing very unfortunate happens to them. Small mishaps occur every day.

Our well is always going on strike, and this is another cause of frustration. However, one can do nothing else other than patiently to carry water home from elsewhere. I hope that you’ll not be upset with me when you read this sentence. In any case, perhaps the pump will soon work again because the weather is warmer.

Please do not laugh at me today for my random thoughts. Although I have not written beautifully, my intention is a good one. “My hand shakes while my heart weeps.” This saying has just come to me. I am not in a lighthearted mood. Time passes quickly, thanks be to God!

Warm greetings from your faithful wife, Fani. Be well. See you again.

**Letter from Franz to Franziska, the first letter Franz wrote when he was preparing to declare his refusal to fight in the army. Dated March 1, 1943.**

Dear wife!

Warm greetings once again from me. Today I shall dare to take this difficult step. Yesterday and this morning, I stayed with the Krenn family, except for the time that I spent in church. I would have stayed another week at home so that I could have participated in many Masses. If I had no friends here in Enns, I would have found things easier. I did not say anything to them about what I intend to do. They will first learn about it through a letter. There would have been a quarrel. I would have found no understanding here. Do not lose heart. Even if one would speak in the spirit of penance and renunciation, one would not find much more understanding. Krenn now receives a civil service salary of 100 marks per month.

Dearest wife, I am once again grateful for all the love and faithfulness and sacrifice that you have shown me and the whole family – and that you are continuing to show me. It will also be a difficult sacrifice not to have someone with whom you can be angry and perhaps not to have anyone who will hurt you. Love requires it, always striving for more perfection. It will become easier for you. At least you know to whom you can entrust your hurts, the One who has understanding for this and can help you. Even Christ prayed on the Mount of Olives to the heavenly Father. He would have allowed the cup of suffering to pass from him, and we must never forget his request: Lord, not my will be done buy yours. Continue to help the poor for as long as you can. Care for the children and also for your father. Do not be angry with mother if even she does not understand us.

Should it be God’s will that I do not see you again in this world, then we hope that we shall see each other soon in heaven.

Your husband.

Greetings from me to the children. Speak with them often about the child Jesus and heaven.

***Another letter was attached to the first.***

To all my loved ones!

I would like to send all of you warm greetings while I am still free.

Become a family that loves one another and forgives one another, then come what will. Readily forgive everyone, including me if you undergo suffering because of me.

Be well. See you again.

Warm greetings from your husband, son, father, and son-in-law, Franz.

**Letter from Franz to Franziska, the last letter Franz would write. Dated August 9, 1943.**

Greetings in God! Dearest wife! And all my loved ones!

Your letters of July 13 and July 25 still bring me joy. I am very grateful for them. Four weeks ago today we saw each other on this earth for the last time. This morning, at approximately 5:30, I had to get dressed immediately for a car was waiting. I went with other condemned prisoners on the ride from Tegel to Brandenburg. We do not know what will happen to us. At noon someone told me that the verdict would be confirmed at 2:00 p.m., and that it would be fully enacted at 4:00 p.m.

I want to write all of you a few words of farewell. Dearest wife and mother, I am deeply grateful for everything that you have done for me in my life, for all of the love and sacrifices which you have shown me. And I ask you once again to forgive me for everything that I have made you suffer and feel hurt. You have surely been forgiven by me for everything. I ask everyone else, whom I at some time may have pained and hurt, to forgive me. Especially the pastor if I have perhaps hurt him with my words as he visited with me. I forgive everyone from my heart. May God accept my life as a sin offering not merely for my sins but also for others’ sins.

Dearest wife and mother, it was not possible for me to free both of you from the sorrows that you have suffered for me. How hard it must have been for our dear Lord that he had given his dear mother such great sorrow through his suffering and death! And she suffered everything out of love for us sinners. I thank our Savior that I could suffer for him and may die for him. I trust in his infinite compassion. I trust that God forgives me everything and will not abandon me in the last hour.

Dearest wife, consider what Jesus has promised to those who make the Nine First Fridays. Also, consider that Jesus will come to me in Holy Communion and strengthen me for the journey into eternity. In Tegel prison, I received the grace of the Blessed Sacrament four times.

Give my warm greetings to my dear children. If I am soon in heaven, I shall ask the loving God to prepare a place for all of you. Over the past weeks, I have prayed often to the heavenly Mother that if it is God’s will that I die soon, that I celebrate the feast of Mary’s Assumption in heaven.

Many greetings also to my parents-in-law, my sisters-in-law, and all relatives and friends. Give my greetings to Brother Mayer. I am grateful for his letter, which has brought me great joy. I am also thankful to Karobath for his letter.

And now all my loved ones, be well. And do not forget me in your prayers. Keep the Commandments and we shall see each other again soon in heaven!

Warm greetings to my godson.

Greetings to all of you before his last journey from your husband, son, and father, son-in-law, and brother-in-law.

Heart of Jesus, heart of Mary,

And my heart be one heart

Bound for time and eternity.

Mary, love us with your child,

Give us all of your blessings!