Nicholas Floris (Goudanus) was a zealous apostolic Jesuit from Gouda in the Low Countries. To Rome, Floris lamented his spiritual dryness, specifically how he lacked the gift of tears. Juan Alfonso de Polanco, writing on behalf of Ignatius, relays to Floris the superior general’s assurance that sensible consolations are not essential to Christian holiness. “Keep your will strong and good and show it in your actions,” Polanco writes for Ignatius, “and that will suffice for your own perfection, the help of others, and the service of God.”

The peace of Christ.

My dear Father in Jesus Christ:

I received Your Reverence’s letter of October 12 and am much edified to see your longing to help souls in Germany not only by preaching and other external means but also with your tears, the gift of which you desire to receive from the Giver of all good.

As to the first part—being of practical help to the neighbor by the external means of preaching and so forth—we may unconditionally beg Christ our Lord to deign to “give to his voice the voice of power” and to confer on the administration of the sacraments the wished-for efficacy. As for the gift of tears, one may not pray for it unconditionally, since it is neither necessary nor unconditionally good and suitable for everyone. However, I have brought the matter before Our Father Master Ignatius, and for my own part have asked and will continue to ask God our Lord to grant it in the measure that it is suitable for the purpose that Your Reverence seeks it, namely, the help of souls—your own and your neighbors’. Dear father, “it will go badly in the end for a hard heart;” but a heart like your own, full of longing to help souls and serve God, cannot be called hard. When someone feels compassion for the miseries of the neighbor in the will and the higher part of his soul, desires to do what he can to relieve them, and performs the offices of a person who has this active will for taking the necessary means, he needs no further tears or sensible feelings in the heart. While some people may have tears because their nature is such that the affections in the higher parts of their souls easily overflow into the lower, or because God our Lord, seeing that it would be good for them, grants them to melt into tears, this still does not mean that they have greater charity or accomplish more than other persons who are without tears but have no less strong affections in the higher part of the soul, that is, a strong and efficacious willing (which is the proper act of charity) of God’s service and the good of souls, just like that of persons who have abundant tears. Moreover, I would tell Your Reverence something of which I am convinced: There are persons to whom I would not give the gift of tears even if it were in my power to do so, because it does not help their charity and damages their heads and bodies, and consequently hinders any practice of charity. So Your Reverence ought not to be distressed over the lack of external tears; keep your will strong and good and show it in your actions, and that will suffice for your own...
perfection, the help of others, and the service of God. And remember that the good angels do all that they can to preserve human beings from sin and to ensure God’s honor, but do not grieve when the contrary happens. Our Father frequently commends our own men's imitating the angels' manner in this.

That is all, except to commend myself earnestly to Your Reverence’s prayers.

Rome, November 22, 1553