

My very dear Sister

I am delighted that I was so successful in obliging my children at the convent of the Holy Angels. I hope your pupils will obtain great benefit from that increase in staff, and the mistresses will find in it an extra means of getting instruction and being trained as teachers. The signs of that holy affection you have for each other are proofs to me that you are thriving in the school of your tender friend, your meek Spouse Jesus Christ; yet I suppose that these external signs conform to the expressions approved by politeness.

Mlle Hyacinthe does not inspire me with all possible confidence; and consequently, I prefer strangers to find in her a novice rather than an imperfect religious. So, I have canceled sending the cloak. I even admit that I regret the step you took in that respect. You acted rather thoughtlessly; and you have not reflected enough either on the matter of acquiring the piano. It is for doing better what the good of the pupils require, and not for doing anything new that Mlle Hyacinthe has come to your place. The frequent departure of pupils obviously proves there is some defect or lack, an absence of a certain perfection that would end by giving a harmful reputation to the convent of the Ladies of Mary at Brussels. Later, and when we see the evil I am indicating here totally corrected, we shall think about the piano and the music lessons. Mlle Hyacinthe will apply herself with zeal to writing: she will have an exercise book in which each page she writes will be dated so that I and the Rev. Madame Superior of Alost may judge her progress. Then, in the classes, she will render such services as you consider most capable of bringing about the progress of the pupils and attaching the latter to their Ladies and to the convent. I recommend you, my dear Sister, to supervise these things very carefully and immediately. You will be the first to draw sweet satisfaction from seeing the orderliness, and as a consequence, the contentment of the pupils and the Parents who confides them to us.

The anniversary of the departure to heaven of our beloved Madame Aloÿse is approaching; on Thursday it will be a year since that angel left us. Let that day be a day of pious rejoicing in your convent. Clothe yourselves with the virtues of that amiable sister, all of you make resolutions to walk in her footsteps; recall to mind her meekness, her faith, her generosity, her tender devotion to the interests of your religious family.

Here are some pictures for you to distribute as you judge fit. Do not give them out indiscriminately, but distribute them so well that they will achieve the objective I am aiming at of making your Institute known and loved. Give the most precious or the most ordinary ones out according to the status of the people concerned, and the nature of the interest they have in us, or are in a position to communicate to others. The young ladies you think capable of appreciating the happiness of the religious life and above all those of the Ladies of Mary must have a share in your generosity. You see our dear Angel is still employed in obtaining for us the means of doing good: pupils and postulants will be the fruit of these little presents, independently of the salutary thoughts they will arouse in us, and in the minds of others. I am relying more and more on the power that this fine soul has with Mary and Jesus Christ.

I always have much pleasure in calling myself,

Your devoted Father in Jesus Christ

C. G. Van Crombrugghe

Ghent, 14th February 1839

It is perhaps unnecessary to tell you that you not distribute all the pictures at this moment. You must keep some for suitable circumstances and for where they can be more immediately useful.