

My dear daughter in Jesus Christ

You know that my occupations and the state of my eye do not allow me to write as often as I wish. However, as you know, I consider it important to keep in touch with my young protégés and to follow them up closely, although the confidence you deserve and I have in you, may allow me to rely on your care of them. To give these children a fresh proof of my feelings and to get them to understand how much I am concerned about their happiness, I am going to give them a brief reply to their letters with you as intermediary. You will be kind enough to inform each one of them of this privately. In this way, they will see the confidence I have in you.

You will read what precedes to all of them, but only to one at a time. What follows is for each one personally.

Marie Constance gives me the well-founded hope that my sentiments towards her will be understood, and will bring happiness to that person whom our good God loves with a very special love. Let her rely on those mercies of the Lord, and have great confidence in Mary and in St. Joseph. Let her not set too much store on getting letters from Mme Léontine. It is not the custom perhaps, to correspond with the Ladies who change convents. People are busy everywhere.

Flore wrote me a long letter containing her good sentiments and her happiness will go on increasing as soon as she is completely settled at Alost. I want her to have nothing in her heart that she does not tell you. It is to you that I have entrusted her. She can also write to me from time to time. But I do not want to take up too much of her time; her studies need it. It is with great pleasure that I have written to Mme Constance that I am pleased with Flore and that I cherish the hope that her Niece will come up to my expectations.

Sidonie also merits encouragement. She is finding some difficulty in getting used to her new mistresses. That is the means of practicing patience, and doing everything for our good God. It is easier for us to get used to the characters of others than to bring it about that others form themselves for us. That must be well explained to every person who aspires to community life. Tell Sidonie also that she must not be worried about what she wrote to me about her health; everything will sort itself out at the time decreed by divine Providence.

Eugenie is advancing more and more in my esteem and in my fatherly affection. I am pleased with the avowal she makes me of her faults and still more with the resolutions she has made to profit by all that happens in order to form herself to virtue, and make herself worthy to respond to the generous designs of our good God on her.

I give them all my blessing and you may tell them, Madame, that I am praying for them to our very meek Jesus, at the Holy Sacrifice especially; and for you, that you may direct them well.

I shall see whether it would not be useful for Mme Leontine to write a letter about the four subjects mentioned above. Their positions are exceptional. You may tell them so.

Receive, my dear daughter in Jesus Christ, for yourself and your children, the blessing of

Your spiritual Father

C. G. Van Crombrugghe

Ghent, 11th December 1861