

Praise be J.M.J.  
To Mme Clothilde

17-28

My dear daughter in Jesus Christ

Your letter has given me some details that pleased me very much: you have put me in a position to see your convent in the way I was hoping to have it for my direction and the individual good of your dear sisters.

I flatter myself with the hope that before long, you will have gotten rid even of the traces of the causes of catastrophes with which I foresaw your classes threatened, as a result above all of your being unwell.

The cause of extraordinary expenses that arises from the visits and sojourns made by strangers staying with you from time to time, especially engaged my attention. The capital draws many parents and friends of our religious, and if one does not take a few precautionary measures, your convent will become a hostelry, where recollection and money matters will be in question at every moment.

So as to take these measures, one must know the cause; I am asking you for a note that is as exact as possible on all the persons that you have been obliged: 1) to feed, 2) to give lodging to, for several months.

As for the young Protestant lady, it is true that, in the hope of bringing back to the faith a person about whom the Mme Superior at Malines told me so much good about, I had allowed her to come to your convent to be entertained there out of charity, for some time. But I certainly had never thought that another young lady would come with her. This is what you will do: 1) You will ask Rev. Father Boone if he thinks that the expenses this Protestant is causing you to incur, must or can be continued; in other words, if the hope of a good conversion is well enough founded to support these expenses for an establishment whose aim is solely the education of the young. 2) You will write to Mme Superior at Malines to inform her that you are putting on her account at 1 franc per day, the support of the person she has sent you as the companion of the Protestant. As your convent cannot make such generous gifts, you must not indulge in them, and the Mme Superior at Malines, knowing the state of the Institute, will not, I think, have authorized the said companion to stay with you, without receiving the assurance that the extra expenses will be reimbursed that are occasioned by the sojourn of certain strangers whom she send to your convent.

For the rest, my dear daughter, I again recommend you to take care of your health. Your house has only the very bare necessities as regards personnel, for it to function. Do not expose yourself to any imprudence that could stop the progress of your pupils as regards either instruction or education.

Also ask the Mme Superior at Malines what she thinks of your wish as regards (words obliterated by the seal) communion.

Be assured of my sincere desire to be useful to you. I will recommend you often to the divine Child and his Holy Mother during these days when you will be occupied so piously. In saying you, I am speaking of all the community.

Your very devoted Father in Jesus Christ  
C. G. Van Crombrugghe

Ghent, 23rd December 1939

I am very pleased also with the letter of Mme Théodosie. When you write to the Mme Superior at Alost, you will do well to send her this letter, so that she may know my opinion about the matters of which I am speaking.