

Very dear Sister Clothilde

To ask for nothing, to refuse nothing; in the last analysis this was the grace-filled inspiration of your recent retreat. It is also the main resolution you made during those holy exercises. I thank the good God who inspired these beautiful sentiments and who has helped you continually to keep them vividly before you. You must understand, dear Child, that it is a consolation for the Superiors who urges you in Jesus our common Master, to find in you these dispositions, favorable also to their point of view and to the needs of the humble family of Mary and Joseph. The convent, which we will have the happiness of opening at Malines, will be dedicated to Mary Queen of Angels. Our good Mother Mary will deign to take it under her special protection. I am convinced that much good will be done there; abundant graces will be given to our Institute through this new channel which divine goodness is about to open for us. So that you may enter into the merciful designs of God, and that you may participate in a special way in the blessings to be bestowed on the Convent of Mary Queen of Angels, your very Reverend Mother and I have decided to name you Superior of this new convent. We delegate our dear Child Olympiade, Mother of the convent of St. Joseph, to install you in the function with which we are going to invest you.

Thus, Reverend Mother, is the will of God made known to you. He who has imposed the yoke upon you, will give you the strength to carry it. The unction of his grace will lighten its weight. His light will direct your steps; his divine love will carry you through the difficulties that may come your way and your generous surrender to the good pleasure of your Spouse will make you understand, as did St. Paul and St. Francis Xavier, that the Lord will reward with much liberality, all that one has the honor of doing for him. You will recognize that the only talent that you will need for governing will be a great desire to constantly obey your Sovereign Master. This disposition will lead you to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit so as to obtain in everything, the glory of him whom you represent in your House. Offer in advance and renew it occasionally all the duties and obligations of a Superior and a Mother.

Distrust of your own power will produce that prudence and exterior modesty which will win the affection of your sisters who will be edified by your humility and self-forgetfulness in their service. Another very real advantage of the Superiority, and one which you must pledge to accept gratefully because God confides it to you, is that in it you will have a greater opportunity of practicing several virtues more perfectly than before: you will have more occasions and more means of exercising charity; of communicating sentiments of zeal for the glory of God; you will multiply yourself in some way working through the hands of your sisters to extend the kingdom of your divine Spouse, praising God through their lips, and above all, through each of their hearts you will love him. Does this not give evidence that in spite of the difficulties which it offers, your position is one to be envied? I realize that your piety will be sometimes less consoling because of the multiple concerns of government, but your love for your divine Spouse will evidently be more true and more solid; it will be of the same caliber which Christ demanded of St. Peter when he asked: Do you love me, Peter? and told him, Feed my lambs. Well! if you love Jesus Christ, love his Spouses; form them for their sublime functions; feed the lambs of this tender Shepherd; watch over them, defend them from the snares of the wolf and the attacks which he plans against both the sheep and the lambs. How honorable, how beautiful and how meritorious is this task which is imposed upon you! Instead of being frightened by this burden, rejoice at seeing it being laid upon you by the one who loves you more than you love yourself and put your full confidence in this good Master. This is the advice, in the name of God, of one whom you know is devoted to you, and who will always consider it a pleasant duty to prove to you, that he is in very truth, Reverend Mother

Your Father in Our Lord Jesus Christ

C. G. Van Crombrughe

Ghent, 2nd December 1837

Among the things which I shall send you, you will find a silver-gilt chalice, my offering to Mary, Queen of Angels.

