

Madame Superior

Your letter, or rather your report satisfied my curiosity to the least detail. I thank you for it, and urge you follow courageously the path you have adopted; it seems to me, in general, to conform to reason and to your particular commitments. Age brings experience and makes reason mature and rid itself little by little of the exaggerated influence of the imagination and of prejudices. That applies to the government of a community and to the ordering of one's own life. That is my reply to the two parts of your letter.

You would do well to examine prudently what might be the causes that brought about so different a result from the accounts of last year, and those of previous years. Have you had any expenses that you do not regularly have, or else, have the ordinary household expenses been increased? If everything is noted down, it will be easy to find out the causes of the differences.

Please tell Mlle Kostka that the motives that led her to write and ask that the stay of Clara at Coloma be extended, are good. But I think that it is not right to take the matter up again. The decision seemed final to me and firmly stated.

Here is a remark that I beg you to weigh up, and if you think good to talk about with Mme Superior General. I think that my nieces take at midday, a glass of wine, to give a better tone to their stomachs. Now, I have learned some years ago from a good source that the wine at Coloma is not all of suitable quality to produce the effect that the parents had been promised. If that is still true today, tell me so quite simply. Under good pretexts, wine of undoubted quality, as regards purity, can be sent in.

I will talk about the matter of Teresa V.C. with her guardian. But I think an irrevocable decision has been taken. Let us be full of confidence in St Joseph. our needs are great; those of the (effaced by seal) call urgently for our prayers. So let us pray and we will experience that our Holy Patron is powerful.

I bless you, my dear daughter in Jesus Christ, and wish you, as well as all your convent, a true and holy zeal for the honor of your Patron the blessed Spouse of Mary.

Your Father in Our Lord Jesus Christ  
C. G. Van Crombrugghe

Ghent, 28th February 1861

Be my interpreter to Mlle Adélaïde. My eyes prevent me from writing to her.