

My dear Sister in Jesus Christ

The importance of the office with which you have just been charged, is such that I feel impelled here to give you a few instructions suggested by the measures taken by the Sister N., and that the good of the novices has obliged me to take. First of all, you must recommend to our good God through the intercession of Mary, both yourself who are called to form these young plants in the garden of the heavenly Father, and the plants themselves which are destined not only to be adornments of the garden of the Lord, but to become objects of the special affection of the Son of God; you are to prepare them to become Spouses of Jesus Christ. No creature without even excepting the Angels, could find in itself that wisdom it would need to fulfill such an august ministry; no, my dear Sister, you cannot succeed in your new office without the powerful help of God. But do not let that powerlessness frighten you. Mistrust yourself, and hope in God. Obedience has imposed a fresh obligation on you, and grace from on high will come and prove to you that every-thing is possible to obedience. So, set your hand to the work in the name of God, and mistrust only yourself. I am uniting my prayers with yours and with full confidence expect heavenly help; I have not the least anxiety about your new office.

You will therefore apply yourself to forming the hearts, the minds and even the outward appearances of your novices. Their hearts must be meek and humble like that of their future Spouse. They must be burning with love, like that of Jesus. Their minds must be illuminated with practical knowledge; they must judge things as Jesus does, and their external appearances must be modest, polite, cheerful without being dissipated, composed without affectation.

You will teach them the wonders of the love of Jesus Christ, and make them feel that the best means of responding to the love of the Savior is to love him very much and to feed the fire of their love with the consideration of what Jesus has done, and is still doing at each moment for each one of them in particular. But make them fully understand that love is active, in that loving Jesus, is to live and act for Jesus Christ.

So I entreat you, my very dear Sister, by that love you have for Jesus Christ, form the novices well. Cut, prune, pull up; then plant, water, embellish - in working to prepare Spouses for the Son of God, you will be doing a work that is worthy of a soul consecrated herself to Jesus Christ; a work that cannot fail to make you yourself each day more perfect and more pleasing to that Sacred Heart in which I want you to be able to find the strength, and the lights and all that can be useful to you in the career to which Holy Obedience is introducing you.

Receive my blessing, and give it from me to all my dear children confided to your zeal. Tell them often that I bear them in my heart and do not cease commending them to our good God, because I continually feel for them and for you also, my dear Sister, what the heart of a father must feel for his children; for I am very sincerely and consider myself happy to be,

Your very devoted spiritual Father

C. G. Van Crombrugghe

(Not dated)

