

Madame Superior

I have just been offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; in it you have been the object of my special commendations. What, indeed, can we do of ourselves? Nothing in the order of grace. So, we shall have recourse to the source of that grace and I shall lead you there every day until the beginning of the school year. Join with me, my dear daughter, and let us count on the munificence of our good Master Jesus, the loving Spouse who is entrusting to you the family of the children of Mary and Joseph.

I think it will not be inappropriate to make you some recommendations. You will apply them and conform to them with that wise and prudent zeal God has accorded to you.

1. As soon as possible get rid of the traces of the miseries caused by the soldiers.
2. Without delay, and before the cold weather arrives, make a ruling about when and in what places the little winter coats will be worn. It is an important matter and causes a lot of chatter.
3. Call to mind the recommendation I made about the care to grant the religious the means of keeping up their knowledge, exercising their memories, writing with a steady hand, forming their style, etc.
4. Require the proprieties to be observed everywhere. Let the dress, bearing, gait, tone of voice and gestures be in conformity with the prescriptions of our Rules and the requirements of our position. See to this carefully. These points are very important.
5. Arrange the tables in the refectory of the religious, in the way they are placed in the convents.
6. Do not allow any food or drink to be taken outside the refectory or, in the case of the sick, the infirmary.
7. Have more exercises set in the study of English, German, and in handwriting.
8. Require a greater uniformity in religious exercises and practices of piety.
9. Examine whether all the points of the Rules and Constitutions are being observed and whether each convent has a copy of the Constitutions.
10. To obtain uniformity, it would be fitting for all the materials for clothes to be furnished for the Institute at the price of (?)
11. I recommend the lay Sisters. Like the Ladies, they are spouses of Jesus Christ. They must not be given work to do in the garden that is beyond their strength, or is not suitable for religious.

I have just received at this moment the letter you sent yesterday. It is a fresh subject of consolation and hope to me. I bless the Lord for it and thank you, my dear daughter in Jesus Christ, for all you tell me. Since your entry with us, I have known the sentiments that have constantly animated you. You have acted with prudence, and necessity has reduced me, forced me to a silence that has cost me a great deal; but our good God is allowing us to breathe, as Mme Angèlique was saying to me last Tuesday.

As for the classes for the poor, do as you find good. See separate notes.

I shall examine the plan for the dress of the postulant.

I give you, very dear child, and your dear councilors, the blessing, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Your very devoted Father in Jesus Christ

C. G. Van Crombrughe

Ghent, 26th September 1853