

Madame Superior General

I am very touched by the kindness of his Em. We could never acquit ourselves of the debt of gratitude we have contracted if we did not have prayer, that very powerful means of making up for all we lack.

(Dictated)

These lines, Madame Superior, are not written today. They already date from some time ago. I wanted to pour out my heart and communicate to you some of the sentiments I feel for our great benefactor. My eyes, no more than my hand, did not allow me to continue my letter. So I am addressing you in an unfamiliar hand, to charge you with being to his Eminence, the interpreter of the sentiments you have known me to have for more than a quarter of a century, towards the eminent Prelate who has deigned to admit us into his diocese. No one better than you is capable of satisfying this sacred debt. You will be happy, I am sure, to take advantage of the presence of his Eminence the Cardinal, in order to fulfill my commission on the first communion day of your happy children.

Now a word about myself. The improvement I was feeling at the beginning of the month of our Holy Patron was not sustained. I have again been deprived of offering the Holy Sacrifice for eight days, but the improvement which is at present manifesting itself, makes me hope I will be able to say the Holy Mass on Sunday, Easter day.

Do not forget, I beg you, to offer my good wishes for the solemnity, to Monsignor Lauwers, and Mr. Molder, as well as your dear sisters.

(In the Founder's hand)

I am praying St. Joseph to obtain for Mlle Flore in a high degree, faith, hope and charity, with humility and meekness. I am also commending your other postulant.

Your Father in Jesus Christ

C. G. Van Crombrughe

Ghent, 15th March 1864