

9th August 1807

To Mr G Van Crombrughe, Businessman in Grammont, Dept of Escaut.
Mondidier, 9th August 1807

Very dear Father

I received with joy, my very dear Father, the letter that you wrote to me. I will strive, with the help of the Good Lord, to please you more with my character; as for the 9th place that I had in translation, I was most astonished; but Fr Leleu, my professor, soon made me see that it was a misunderstanding: it was in verse that I had this place. You tell me also, very dear Father, of the great grace that God gave you in inspiring in you the charitable thought of buying the Chapel on the Oudenberg. No doubt the Good Lord had His intentions in this business and certainly they were not an illusion; you could say that you have re-established the cult of the Queen of the Heavens, and this tender Mother will not let it go without reward; she will give many graces to your family. I hope it will not be too soon, dear Father, before we can go together to the Chapel to give thanks to the Virgin.

I told you in my last letter that I would enquire about the best route; I believe that the road from Roie to Peronne, Valenciennes etc. as far as Mons will be the best. I will leave here at the beginning of next month. There are still about three weeks to go, but these weeks seem like years to me. However, it seems to me sometimes that we are already united, that I speak to you; but these sort of short, delicious dreams quickly fade and leave me very far from you. But if I come to look at my situation as the result of Providence, if I pay attention to what my God has done for me in that soon I will see again the Parents whom He condescends to favour by His graces, I would quickly say that this God, who does so much for His creature is good; that I have obligations to Him! In short that I am happy although I certainly do not deserve it!

I do not know if it is raining as much at home as it is here today. You will have much difficulty with the ceremony of transfer of the miraculous picture; however the sky brightens occasionally, and sometimes a wind blows and chases away the thick clouds, and this gives me the same pleasure as the olive branch which told Noah, the patriarch, that the earth had been re-discovered.

As for my journey, it seems to me that it is time for me to ask what I am to pay for it with. I am not well provided with money and I have very little. I will wait, therefore, for you to tell me how you will send me some, and how much; you know better than I do how much I need.

I was talking, very dear Father, to one of the Fathers, Fr Le Conte, an old man whom my dear Mother met, about what you were doing to the chapel that you have just bought. This good old man, who especially honours me with his friendship, was so moved, and spoke to me so much about my parents, that certain passages of Holy Scripture, joined to what he said, would do well for your funeral oration.

I assure you of the tender affection of both myself and François; please believe me always to be

Your very obedient son

C Van Crombrughe

PS: Please present my respects, and those of François, to all the family, particularly to my Aunt Huleu, and be the messenger of my feelings to my brother Jean, and to my dear sisters; I embrace them cordially whilst looking forward to doing so in person. Farewell, dear Father; there are many crossings-out in my letter, but please understand that my pen, my ink and even my head are not really in a good state to write a careful letter.

