

10<sup>th</sup> September 1807

To Mr G Van Crombrugghe, Businessman in Grammont, Dept of Escaut.  
10<sup>th</sup> September 1807

Very dear Father and Mother.

The sad disaster that has just happened to us obliges me to write to you without knowing in what state my letter will find you; because indeed I don't know, dear Parents, why you didn't write to me. Velim, charissime Pater, si gravis casus acciderit, vel si aegrotas, quod commodo valetudinis (one illegible word) fiat, quam longissime poteris, mihi scribas. Si tu tamen, mater frater et sorores valetis, ego et franciscus valemus<sup>1</sup>. But here is what has happened to us: the Government, believing that our School was harmful to the (state) high schools etc. has just suppressed it, and give orders that the masters are to go back to their own Dioceses as soon as possible. This is to have happened by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. But yesterday we received a letter on behalf of the Emperor, who has allowed our teachers to remain here for a reasonable time so as to be able to return the children to their parents or to seek, jointly with the Bishop and the Sub-Prefect, other Priests to continue the work. His Eminence the Bishop of Gent, greatly desirous of having his junior<sup>2</sup> seminary continued, asks them in the same letter to write for this reason (probably it was the Bishop of Gent who got this favour).<sup>3</sup> However, dear Parents, we do not need to be too concerned: the Good Lord is with us, he knows what we need, and as soon as I have more to tell you, I will write immediately. His Eminence the Bishop is doing everything he can to provide us with Priests in order to continue the education that we receive here. A Vicar General will come to occupy the room of our... For the rest, even if it did not suit me, I would still have the advantage of the advice of the one that you know well<sup>4</sup>, and there will always be time to take another direction. In the meantime I put myself in the hands of our common Father, who does everything to His greater glory, and each day I apply this divine precept: "Sufficient unto the day", that it is not necessary to be worried about tomorrow, and so I enjoy the greatest peace of mind. I can't tell you more right now; the present circumstances permit me the liberty only of lifting a small corner of the curtain that has hidden many things from your eyes; things which have probably worried you a lot after having received the circular letter. I hope that shortly I will be able to give you more extended and more satisfactory information. Farewell; receive my tender respects and believe that I am

Your very devoted son

*C Van Crombrugghe*

PS: Please do not make much of this news, his Majesty the Emperor having just granted a delay to our teachers to avoid the reaction that a too sudden suppression could have caused. Please give my respects to all the dear family, especially to my Aunt Huleu, and recommend this business to the prayers of the devout. You would give me great pleasure if you were to do something in honour of the Holy Virgin of the mountain, in order to beg the Mother of Mercy that God's will might be done. Please do not mention all this in your letter.<sup>5</sup> Already we have with us, Fr Colen(?) (Vicar General), Fr De La Marche etc. If it were possible for you to send me a celestial (one illegible word), you would give me great pleasure, several of my companions want to have one.



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<sup>1</sup> This is, presumably, Van Crombrugghe showing off his mastery of Latin?

<sup>2</sup> Does "petit" here mean "small" or "junior"?

<sup>3</sup> This sentence is confused. "Monseigneur l'Evêque de Gand ayant fort à coeur que son petit seminaire continuât, les prie par la même lettre d'écrire pour cette raison (sans doute c'est M.r l'Evêque de Gand qui a obtenu cette grace)." Probably it means that the Bishop, who has already received the favour of a delay from the Emperor, should also write to the Emperor asking for a reprieve for the Junior Seminary.

<sup>4</sup> Who is this?

<sup>5</sup> This sentence was written in Flemish. To avoid censorship?