

SS. C. J. et M.

[Bordeaux February 28 1818]¹

Most Respected Mother,

I just received your fourth letter with the other letters from Grenoble. You are really too kind to write so often. My heart cherishes this consolation when I am so far away from you. I wish I could know about all your troubles and share them. I am now aware of how much longer I should have studied with you to be ready for this endeavor.

I am not so sure about Communion. I don't know what to do. Mr. Barat told the young ladies: "Do as you are told", but most expect to take Communion almost every day. Eugénie in particular; it happened again after she became a nun; in the future it seems to me, we need to set limits. Eugénie is the one who stays the most by herself. The rest of the group is doing quite well. These young ladies are honest, simple. Considering that Eugénie would be the best choice to lead the others, I am disappointed to see her so apt to be so very independent. Before I even spoke to your brother, Mr. Barat, himself he told me: "Be firm with this young lady you will need to be strict and also a mother for her." Otherwise, Octavie is doing better, spiritually as well as physically. Her father has taken good care of her and he made me buy some anti-scurvy wine to drink on this voyage. The two other girls are doing well spiritually, but their health is far from perfect. Mother Geoffroy did not mention that Marguerite had been very very sick and Catherine has a scar. The former smells bad and that could be trouble when working with children.

Mr. Dubourg's nephew came to visit and he suggested that we came on board on Thursday. He's leaving the harbor for Bordeaux. So, I wanted to wait to answer to get Misters Barat and Martial's approval and if Mr. Dubourg's nephew has to stay for several days at the harbor at the city of Pauillac it would be just as well to rejoin him by (rowing boat). I will write to you as soon as I know myself their answer.

All our luggage from Paris and Grenoble have arrived. The cost is tremendous! Our traveling companion paid 300 francs for his trunk and three large boxes. I'm not sure what will be the amount for all of us. I am expecting maybe 900 francs. It will be better to take care of one's luggage and or set a price ahead of time. From Grenoble to Paris the fastest shipping cost 15 francs for 100 kilos. This shipment cost us 25 francs for 100 kilos. The difference is huge. It would also behoove us to protest our necessities when in the city of the departure or when we are coming on board because it is a pity we are not able to do so in the city of Havre, as Madame de Rollin advised us to. Mr. Debrosse mentioned that he would prefer to do all the buying of books and be in charge of that. The day of our departure he will have Mass said for us. And he let us use his help, Mr. Jean-François, for our diverse little shopping: trunks for the bedrooms, a clock, umbrellas, etc. etc. Our beds are composed of a mattress, a pillow, two blankets and a mosquito net, and that comes to about 100 francs each. If we stay longer in this town we will encounter more and more spending. I am growing concerned about that. I cannot wait to start our voyage more so because we are becoming financially dependent on Madame Vincent; and she herself is admitting that she has to live on a very small means. We are living well enough, yet this is not our true purpose. Madame Vincent, her nuns and Mr. Boyer never cease to try and please us. This holy man, 82 years old, archbishop even came to pay us a visit. I missed his visit though I was gone to the city hall to make some requests following the advice of Mr. Martial. At the city hall, I was unable to meet with the Prefect though I know from Madame de Drel and others that he is more than willing to help us also. I wonder if Madame de Drel is the source of the 150 francs that Mr. Debrosse brought us; I sent her and the ladies of the Myre all my gratitude. Miss Saluce's aunt wishes to come and visit us tomorrow.

Our transport on the ship will come to 900 francs for each person. Food should be of high quality. There will be live hens, milk, etc. Mr. Maranage offered us a small barrel of wine. Your brother had it sent to Mr. Martial who in turn then explained that barrel needed to be put in another trunk (sic). Mrs. Maillucheu and Miss Emiline should have arrived today but the inclement weather has slowed them down.

The Roman congregation called Propagande is helping us with finding a replacement for the deceased missionaries of Mr. Dubourg and a wealthy person is providing us a large sum for the voyage. All agree that Mr. Dubourg and his priests are excellent. Mr. Barat greatly respects Mr. Martial and a young man whom he wishes to accompany him the former. The only problem is the fund for the travel expenses. I can see our companion from Paris is in the same situation as we are. The funds are getting difficult. Mr. Martial cannot get his students to pay. They are leaving since he will be departing soon enough. I found him, Mr. Martial, changed a lot and he told me that he was in a difficult situation. Despite so many monetary issues please do not send us anything until I do ask you. It has been agreed with your brother and I wish to see how things will go before I ask for help. In the mean time we will be able to find help with the priest from Washington which I have learned is the other side of Georgetown since that river runs between those two towns.

I get along with Mother Vincent as if we were sisters, yet I believe she does not wish to join our congregation. She mentioned her poor experiences with Mother Julie, and she explained that Mother Julie tended to be too difficult and that she had taken away the heart of the rules without replacing them. Mrs. Vincent cried quite a lot when Mother Julie had taken away the adoration. It seems she did not care for Maillard. I quote her: "I had a maid like that and I had to let her go after twelve years." I answered she was better off. Mrs. Vincent also said that the archbishop does not want us to be dependent from another house in another parish.

All my regards to the whole community of our sisters with my respect.

Philippine