

## Letter 89

## L. 7 to Mother Barat

SS. C. J. et M.

[Bordeaux, February 28, 1818]<sup>1</sup>

Very Reverend Mother,

I have just received your fourth letter, which enclosed several from Grenoble. The kindness that moves you to write by every opportunity shows me that your heart understands how much mine needs this consolation. I often seek to know how things are with you and to imagine your troubles so as to share them. I realize how much I have need of more instruction from you.

I am uncertain about Communion. Father Barat told them, "Do whatever you are told;" and most of them expect to receive almost every day. Eugenie, in particular; she has not made a difference for the novena after her vows, which she made conscientiously; but at present and in the future it seems to me there should be a limit; she is the one who holds herself aloof; the others are candid and simple. Seeing her as the one most suited for serious responsibilities, I am troubled to see her strong sense of independence. Even though I said nothing to your brother, he himself said to me, "Be firm with that one; you must be both firm and motherly." Octavie is better, both in body and soul; her father [Louis Barat] takes care of both and had me buy some wine against scurvy for the trip. The other two are fine as to the soul, but somewhat less so materially. Mother Geoffroy did not tell me that Marguerite had had a rather unpleasant illness. She has bad body odor, which may be troublesome for the children. Catherine has had a cauterization.

Bishop Dubourg's nephew has come to suggest that we go aboard ship on Thursday when it leaves Bordeaux. I waited to answer until I had consulted Fathers Barat and Martial,<sup>2</sup> for if it is going to be several days in Pauillac<sup>3</sup> where it stops, it would be better to join it by boat. In any case, you will have a letter that day telling you the answer.

All our effects from Paris and Grenoble have arrived, but the costs are enormous; our travelling companion [X. Evremond-Harissart]<sup>4</sup> paid 300 francs for his baggage of one trunk and three cases by stagecoach or cart. I don't know the exact price for us, but I expect to pay about 900 francs; I have not seen the invoices, which are still with Mr. Caseaux. Another time it would be better to arrange things ourselves, including the cost. From Grenoble to Paris, express shipping is 15 francs per hundred and that cost us 25; the difference is enormous. In the future maybe we should buy as much as we can in the port of embarkation. It is too bad that we could not embark from Le Havre, as Mrs. de Rollin advised. Father Debrosse told me that in the future he wants to make all the purchases of books, that is to say, be our agent. He will have masses said for us on the day we depart. He has lent us Jean-François to make many purchases for us: trunks for the cabins, umbrella, alarm clock, etc., our beds including a mattress, pillow, two blankets, and a mosquito net costing 144 francs each. If we stay here a long time, there will be more and more ideas for things to buy; I am tired of it and more anxious to depart in the measure that we are depleting our purse, and we are here at Mother Vincent's expense. She was saying again yesterday that she was living from day to day. We are very well off, but that is not what we should be looking for. She, her sisters and Father Boyer are overwhelming us with kindness.

The holy archbishop [d'Aviau], at 82 years, did not hesitate to pay us a visit. I missed him, as I was at the prefecture when he came, at Father Martial's advice, to make several requests. I did not find the prefect; I

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<sup>1</sup> Original autograph, C-VII 2) c Duchesne to Barat, Box 2. Postmark: Bordeaux, February 28, 1818. Cf. J. de Charry, II, 1, L. 89; Sweetman, O'Leary, Coke, pp. 30-34; Ch. Paisant, pp. 86-88.

<sup>2</sup> Bertrand Martial, born in Bordeaux in 1770, accompanied the five religious from Bordeaux to New Orleans, where he exercised his ministry for several years. He was vicar general for Bishop Dubourg, traveled with him as far as Saint Louis, and afterwards was chaplain to the Ursulines in New Orleans, where he died in 1832.

<sup>3</sup> A port located on the left bank of the estuary of the Gironde. The religious were going to join the ship at Royan, the port on the right bank of the estuary.

<sup>4</sup> Born in Paris May 15, 1792, Xavier Evremond-Harissart later was called Xavier Evremond. Ordained by Bishop Dubourg in Missouri, he entered the Jesuits in 1831, in Bardstown. He worked in Kentucky as a teacher of astronomy and geography and in several other ministries. He returned to France in 1844 and died in Paris on April 13, 1859.

wrote to him to assure him that we are grateful for the eagerness he has shown to be helpful to us based on the recommendation of Mrs. de Drel and others; I don't know if she is the one to whom we owe the 150 francs that Father Debrosse gave us. I am thanking her or the Misses de la Myre;<sup>5</sup> that is what I suspect. Miss de Saluce's aunt wants to come to see us tomorrow.

Our places on the ship will cost 900 francs each. The food will be of good quality; there are live chickens, milk they have learned to preserve by a secret formula, etc. Mr. Marange has offered a supply of wine; your brother sent it to Father Martial who told him that it should be in a barrel; I have not seen it, however. Mrs. Marange and Miss Emeline were to come today, but bad weather deterred them. Propaganda is replacing Bishop Dubourg's missionaries who have died, and a wealthy person is giving a large sum for their voyage. All praise Bishop Dubourg and his priests with one voice. Father Barat admires Father Martial especially, as well as a young ecclesiastic whom he wishes to send; the problem is money for the voyage. I see that is lacking for our companion from Paris, and Father Martial cannot get paid; his pupils are leaving him since he is going away. I find him very much changed, and he admitted that he was ailing. In spite of so many troubles, I beg you not to send us anything at all until I ask you; it is agreed with your brother; I want to see how we can manage. For intermediary, we can have the fathers in Washington, which I have learned is the same city as Georgetown; only a river separates them.

I am still like a sister with Mother Vincent, but I am also still persuaded that she does not desire a merger. She has spoken to me about her sufferings with Mother Julie,<sup>6</sup> has repeated several times that she was *a worrier*, that she had deprived them of their rule without giving them another, that she took away adoration, which caused Mother Vincent to weep, etc. It seems that Mother Vincent did not like Maillard.<sup>7</sup> "I had one like that; I sent her away after twelve years," she said. I answered that she was much better. She said also that the archbishop was not willing that her house depend on a house in another diocese.

A thousand messages to all our sisters.

I am at your feet.

Philippine

[On the reverse:]

To Mother

Mother Barat

Superior of the Religious of the Sacred Heart

Rue des Postes n° 40

Paris

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<sup>5</sup> Relative of Cecile de Cassini (1777-1867) whose uncle, Bishop de la Myre of Le Mans, favored the foundation of a house of the Sacred Heart there in 1821.

<sup>6</sup> Saint Julie Billiart (1751-1816), founder of the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Namur. At the request of the Dames Vincent who desired to join her congregation, she went to Bordeaux, in 1807, but there was a misunderstanding, and the Dames Vincent took back their autonomy in 1811.

<sup>7</sup> Catherine Maillard seems to have made a trial of her vocation with the Dames Vincent, before entering the Sacred Heart.