

Philippine's Packing List From Her Letters

Callan, Louise. Philippine Duchesne: Frontier Missionary of the Sacred Heart. Maryland:Newman, 1957. Print.

In an August 29, 1817 letter from Philippine to her cousin, Josephine, about her upcoming journey to the New World: **“So we must prepare what is needed for a sacristy.** Furthermore, the vicar-general [of Bishop Du Bourg], who is remaining at Bordeaux as agent for the mission, writes to our Mother General, begging her **to procure material, muslin, linen, galloon, all that can be used to make vestments and all that can impress the savages in the pomp of liturgical ceremonies.”** (Callan, p. 200)

“Preparations for the voyage were, however, under way. News of the Superior General’s promise to Bishop Du Bourg has traveled to Amiens, Poitiers, Grenoble, Niort, and Quimper. In all the convents **contributions for the mission** were being collected and packed for shipment.” (Callan, p. 203)

“She packed the trunks, cases, satchels, without the least anxiety or trouble.” “The passports gave most anxiety, for it was feared they would not be obtained in time. But a relative of Mother Duchesne took the matter in hand, battled with the difficulties, and brought the papers a few hours before the party left us. All was arranged with so much speed and success that even those most opposed to the enterprise as an extraordinary adventure just at this time, recognized the finger of God in all and His plans for making the adorable Heart of Jesus known in the New World by means of our little Society.” “The menfolk, too, were busy with notes and bills of exchange amounting to **nearly 20,000 francs—their own money or Philippine’s—to finance the missionary venture** of this middle-aged cousin whom they loved so sincerely.” (Callan, p. 204)

In a January 24, 1818 letter from Philippine to her Cousin Josephine: “My brother sent me a note for 7000 francs, which I am not eager to cash until there is an actual need. But I do not want the several sums of money to be decreased by the rate of exchange or by delay. **The religious who are going with me have nothing to contribute except their good will. The Bishop warned us not to count on him for financial aid. The expense of the voyage and the necessity of providing a dwelling place will use up all the money.** That is why I must collect as much as possible.” (Page 205)

In a February 1, 1818 letter to her sisters Philippine writes: “I wish you **would send me a supply of seed of all kinds you have, labeled and marked with the time for sowing.** The land is so fertile in the area where we shall live that the cattle are entirely hidden in the prairie grass. (Page 207)

February 8, 1818: “A crowd of curious onlookers gathered around the stagecoach before the nuns climbed in with their **satchels and packages. The trunks and packing cases had gone ahead in a wagon.**” (Page 211)

February 15, 1818 Philippine writes to her family from Bordeaux: “Monsieur Morange has been so thoughtful as to supply us with **wine for the sea voyage.**” “After waiting several days I had the pleasure of greeting Madame Morange and Mademoiselle Emiline. They are wonderfully kind. I have never had a more cordial welcome. **They are going to supply us with preserves and apples—they say apples are the best fruit to quench thirst.**” (Page 216)

February 18, 1818 Philippine writes to Mother Barat: “I have been to the home of Madame Fournier, Bishop Du Bourg’s sister.” “She has reserved our sleeping quarters on shipboard and is now talking about comforts, that is, **things to take with us for the sake of the body—mostly food.** As to the wine, Monsieur Morange has kindly taken care of that.” “Father Boyer paid us a long visit yesterday, showing great interest and speaking of the consolation we shall enjoy. **He is going to give me some relics.**” (Page 217)

“Our baggage, sent off from Paris on Quinquagesima Sunday [February 1], has not reached us yet.” (Page 218)

February 18, 1818 Philippine wrote to Josephine and her sister: “So far our journey has been pleasant. As the vessel is not yet ready to sail, we are making a retreat for a few days. I have gone out only to call on the Archbishop and the sister of my future Bishop. **She has made this ocean voyage six times, so she knows exactly all that we need.** As she is very zealous about her brother’s mission, she has arranged about the making up of our berths and is directing our embarkation, conjointly with her brother. **I learned from them that the piaster is now very high, being the medium of exchange most used in the India trade. So they will draw only a small sum from us and convert our notes into bills of exchange in Baltimore and New Orleans.** They assure me that navigation on the Mississippi becomes easier every day. There are always about a dozen steamboats traveling up and down, and they are almost as large and convenient as a seagoing vessel. They have informed the Ursulines in New Orleans of our coming, and we shall lodge with them or relatives of our Bishop.” (Page 219)

Our furnishings arrived in good condition. Monseigneur was very well pleased with all the **chapel equipment.** **The statue of our Lady** over the tabernacle touches the ceiling of our tiny chapel, which is about the size of the sanctuary of our chapel in Paris, but all is very devotional in this little corner. There is a **beautiful picture of the Sacred Heart with more than fifty figures.** This came from Rome. **The picture of our Lord showing His Sacred Heart** is also from the Eternal City. **The paintings of the Nativity and of the Adoration of the Magi** are ravishing. There is a **reliquary containing small fragments of the True Cross...relics of many saints, including St. Ignatius and St. Francis Regis**—more, all told, than you have, and finally that **picture of St. Regis** which I found in the garret of the church in Grenoble, and which I promised to have honored if he should bring us to America. We placed it above the tabernacle the day it was framed, and the Mass in honor of St. Regis was said. (Page 278-279)

Philippine's letter dated February 28, 1818 from Bordeaux, France to Mother Barat:

All our effects from Paris and Grenoble have arrived, but the costs are enormous; our travelling companion [X. Evremond-Harissart]¹ 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....**

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.

¹ 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.