

Lent July 17 1769

Dear Miss Catherine

As it is always a real pleasure to me to hear from you, I am much obliged to you for both your kind favours. In the first, there was enclosed your Note, I can't help saying, if I could be jealous at any thing you did in my regard, it would be at not acting in a more friendly manner, & be assured you may command any thing in my power, I could express how much I suffered on your account, as I was sure your uneasiness must be great at not hearing of the arrival of the young ladies I mentioned, they were to depart in the first vessel that sailed to Spain, when I wrote I thought every thing was settled, but it has pleased God to order things otherwise, which in all appearance has turned out a fortunate occurrence, for by the delay there are two subjects more. Such as one bright ambition in every respect, I shall say nothing of their merit, as that will speak for itself, I am not disappointed with Miss Coppington, I have seen her, but it is on the amiable character Mr Doran gives her, I depend and I am afraid I shall not have the pleasure of seeing her again before she goes, as the measles is like a plague here, tho' not mortal, yet as it is dangerous to grown persons, and Mr C told me it was the only disorder she dreaded as her daughter is subject to a wheezing in her chest. As she and her Father are greatly pleased at her choice of a state of life, they are so pious. I wish Mr Shea was so well pleased at his daughter's inclination, he has not as yet given consent, he says it is a sudden thought, he does not know it long, tho' she has ^{several} thoughts of becoming a Religious more than two months, she is a person of incomparable sense and very sedate, and of an age to know her mind, she is past twenty, so it is not very probable she will change. I believe Mr Mayton has so much influence over him, he will prevail. Miss Coppington's parents won't let her go until her Aunt Dutton approves of her resolution to which (by what you mention) of her good intentions to this foundation, she will immediately

you her consent - and it was thought proper not to press Mr
Shea for his consent to show him she still persists to his
knowledge longer than a few days, as he at first imagined, she
is this darling child, all this objection is to her going to France
for they are too good christians to hinder her from being a nun
There is one comfort I have in these two young ladies, which is
they seem so much attached to their families, they could
not think of being any where but here. I am sorry Miss
Coppinger cannot see the schools, as I think no one can
have an idea of their use unless an eyewitness; as you wish
to have a particular account of them, I shall tell you how
I began; I fancy I mentioned to you before that it was an
underslating, I thought I should never have the happiness of accom-
-plishing, nothing would have made me come home but the
decision of the Quorum, that I should run a great risk of
dejection, if I did not follow the inspiration, This made me accept
of a very kind invitation of my Sister-in-law, to live with her, when
I arrived I kept my design a profound secret, as I know if
it was spoken of, I should meet with opposition on every side
particularly from my immediate family, as in all appearance they
would suffer most from it. My Confessor was the only person
I told of it, and so I could not appear in the office I sent
my Maid to get a good mistress, and to take in thirty poor
girls. When this little school was settled I used to steal thro
in the morning, My brother thought I was at the Chapel;
this passed on very well until one day a poor man came
to him, begging of him to speak to me to take his child into
my school, on which he came in to his wife and me, laughing
at the conceit of the man who was mad, and thought I was
in the station of a school mistress, then I owned I had set
up a school, on which he fell into a violent passion
and said a vast deal on the bad consequences which may
follow, His wife ~~she~~ is very zealous (and so is he, but interest
blinded him at first, he was soon reconciled to it. He was not
the person I dreaded would be brought into trouble about it, it

was my Uncle Naylor - who is I think the most disliked by the
Protestants of any Catholic in the Kingdom, I expected a great
deal from him, the best part of the fortune I have. I received
from him, when he heard it, he was not angry at it, and in
a little time they were so good as to contribute largely to support
it, and by degrees I took in children not to make a noise about it
in the beginning, in about nine months, I had two hundred children
when the Catholics saw what service it did, they begged I would
set up schools at the other end of the town from those I had
for the convenience of the children, to be under my name and
direction, and they promised to contribute to the support of them
with which request I readily complied, the same number of children
that I had, ~~was~~ taken in. And at the death of my Uncle, I sup-
ported them all at my own expense, I did not intend to
take boys, but my sister-in-law made it a point, and said, she
would not permit any of my family to contribute to them unless
I did so, on which I got a master and took in only forty boys
they are in a house by themselves, and have no communication
with the girls, at present I have two schools, ^{for boys} and five for
girls, the former learn to read, and when they have the Dorey
Catechism by heart, they learn to write and cypher, There are
three schools, where the girls learn to read, and when they have
the catechism by heart, they learn to write, they all hear
Mass every day say their morning and night prayers, say the
Catechism in each school by question and answer all together
every Saturday, they all say the beads, the young girls every evening
they go to Confession every month, and to Communion when their Con-
fessors think proper. The schools are opened at eight, at 12
the children go to dinner, at five o'clock they leave school, the
workers do not begin their night prayers until 11, after the beads
I prepare a set for first Confession twice a year, and I may truly
say it is the only thing that gives me any trouble, in the first
place I think myself very incapable, and in the beginning
being obliged to speak four or upwards of four hours, and my chest not
not being as strong as it had been I spit blood, which I took care
to conceal, for fear of being prevented from instructing the poor

It has not the least bad effect now. When I have done preparing them
at each end of the town I think myself ^{the} an idle that has nothing to
do. You speak almost as much, when I prepare them for their first
Communion, I find not the least difficulty in it, I explain the cate-
chism as well as I can in one school or other every day, and
I fear, one thought a little of labor as I do, they would have little
spirit, I often think my schools will never bring me to Heaven, I only
take pleasure and delight in them: you see it has pleased the All-
mighty to make me succeed, when I had every thing as I may say
to fight against, I assure you I did not expect a farthering from any
partial towards the support of my schools, and I thought I should not
have more than 50 or 60 girls, until I got a fortune; now should
I have had a school in 1761, I began in a poor humble manner
and tho' it pleased the divine will to give me some trials in
this foundation, yet it is to show that it is his work and not
human means, and had I only a proper person to begin it, I
think it has the prospect of meeting with surprising success
I am charmed at the account you give me of the ladies you
are with. I hope the same spirit will be communicated here.
I think religious discipline would be too strict for this country and
I own I should not rejoice to see it kept up: I must say Miss May
and prejudice to take on here has made me see things in
a clearer light than I should have done, and makes me doubt
the disappointments I have met with as a degree of the divine correc-
tion; All her friends are torn she went abroad, and I must say
laying aside her own merit, this house would have a great
loss in her as she is a family deservedly loved, they are so
happy she is beginning to change. I wish it may be so, if she
has ^{so} much zeal she will never have ^{such} an opportunity of exerting it
as here, for I can assure you my schools are beginning to be of service
to a great many parts of the world, this is a place of such trade
they are heart of, and my views are not for one object alone, if I could
be of any service in saving souls in any part of the globe I would do all
in my power. I must look on it, as one of my crosses, that the two ladies
who were so good, as to patronize this foundation should be removed, but
the Almighty is all sufficient and will soon make up this loss to us. I beg
you will present them my compliments, Mr. Weylan desires to be
spectaculably remembered to you; so he gave you my account of the building
I shall say nothing of it, only to console myself as to the house I built first
I never intended it for ladies, at the time I was laid I should get
the ground at the end, to build on, and as it was on the street I was
obliged to land it to the parson it is - in order not to have it noticed