

Letters from Mother Margaret of Cortona Wiedemann to Mother Caroline Friess
Margaret was the successor to Mother Theresa who served as Superior General from 1879-1894

October 15, 1863 from Margaret of Cortona to Caroline

You write of a certain Celestine Casper, a candidate who says she believes in revelations and has apparitions, but sets aside the conventual obedience which was carefully thought out before hand, and lets it be known from which a spirit comes. Such a person is a dangerous member and should be dismissed. Of profession for such a person there should not be any discussion.

May 18, 1871

I ask you to greet all your dear Sisters, especially the old acquaintances. Oh, how I rejoice at the thought of being in heaven, where all of us will be reunited. We will - won't we - pray for each other that the Lord grant us perseverance and a happy hour of death.

Your Poor Companion,
Mar Margaretha Cort.

Pardon this hasty writing, dear Sister Caroline. I was interrupted too often.

April 16, 1875

Some other news, which probably has reached you already is the going home of your father. My God, the good father must have suffered a long time, because the Rev. Brother was called to Eichstatt several times, when it seemed he was dying. The Lord has surely received him kindly. We too pray for him -

November 15, 1878

(S. Theophila) is thinking of Sister Nonna, Militia, Jeanette and a treasurer - The latter we cannot find in the Directory and above all we wanted to know the ideas of the Sisters before we go further in this regard...Extend hearty greetings to all the Sisters.

Mary Marg. Cortona

May 26, 1879

Dear Venerable Sister M. Caroline,

By this time you have probably received detailed information about the last days and the passing away of our loved unforgettable Venerable Mother General. (Mother Theresa) It will soon be three weeks, but the grief is always new and the tears have not yet dried up.

Every step into her room, every memory of her love, her words, her motherly concern opens the wound anew, in spite of all our efforts to be resigned to the holy will of God...

Mar. Margarita Cortona

May 28, 1880 (refers to Mother Caroline choosing (?) not to go to General Chapter)

...we are doubting if the settlement of the affairs of the Order will satisfy you. Rev. P. spiritual is of the same opinion. Openly and point-blank I said it to the good Fr. Abbelen. He was somewhat hurt, it seemed. You won't have it easy, dear Sister Caroline, and I must repeat what I have expressed in a letter some time ago, that it would have been much better if you would have come over yourself instead of sending Rev. P. Spiritual. We could have counseled together and come to terms. The good man does not know enough about the needs of the Order...

August 5, 1880

What consoles me is the assurance you could give me that you found on your latest visitations that the Sisters work together in harmony and love. Where peace is present, the work proceeds doubly well and the health is better under the influence of this condition...

With love, Mary Margarita Cortona

April 20, 1881

After so many new congregations have emigrated and moved to America, the danger arises that the sisters will take on some of their customs or be encouraged by some clergy to do so. One has to firmly look for the staff of Holy Rule to find support in order to retain the original spirit of the Order. Only this way can we expect the support of God in our endeavors.

The assistance of God's grace and his richest fatherly blessing I wish you and the newly confirmed sisters especially, from the bottom of my heart. Your spiritual mother,

Mary Margarita Cortona

February 27, 1881

The flowering of an Order is exhibited not so much in the number of houses and sisters as in the good spirit prevailing among its members. The good Lord has a purpose in all things. If he is depriving you of missions [sisters replaced them who not only taught but also cared for the sick] it is perhaps in order to allow you time to gain inner strength...

December 6, 1882

Seventeen weeks of absence on trips is a long time and now you intend to pick up the travel cane soon again and visit the East...It is understandable that many nationalities with their own languages create a difficult situation. We get a little idea of it when we consider Gorizia and Hungary. I completely agree with the opinion of the Most Rev. Bishop of Green Bay who wants the schools to teach only one main language. Otherwise, nothing will be accomplished. The children will get confused...

February 9, 1884

To be sure, a third motherhouse in America will be necessary on account of the climate and the distances. But erecting a new motherhouse is a precarious matter. The unity and the connection with the order are affected. I know that many bishops in America are striving to form the Sisters according to their own opinion! You must face the demands of the bishop with the proposition that the new motherhouse be canonically established; that their capital should serve as the Sisters' livelihood and maintenance; and that the decisions and approval of our Cardinal Protector must be complied with as our Holy Rule entails. Then every bishop will gladly withdraw his demands!

We will procure Rome's help for you and seek to have them look into the matter. We know how necessary a third motherhouse is for you.

May 4, 1884

Since the beginning of March your three letters are lying here before me! I could answer them first today! You must not ascribe my silence to carelessness or indifference. I have set aside the time for traveling since March 2, with the exception of Holy Week.

September 1, 1884

That you are overburdened with double or triple work, due to prevailing circumstances, can be imagined. Keep your zeal within bounds. You must preserve yourself longer for the Order.

February 8, 1885

I hope October, 1885, will bring you to us. Arrange the duties of your office so that the designated sisters will arrive here by October 1. Let us pray that all of you remain well and will have a safe journey.

March 11, 1885

May God keep you well and give you light and strength to know His Holy Will and to carry it out in small as well as in great matters. Let us pray for one another for a favorable judgment. For me this is not far off. I am 70 years old.
Greetings and blessings to the dear Sisters!

Mary Margarita Cortona

(After Caroline's presence at 1885 Chapter at age 61)

December 6, 1885

Our fear concerning the sea voyage unfortunately was confirmed in the letters which arrived. How often I thought of you when a gust of wind or storm arose! How happy we were when the telegram announced to us that you landed safely. We also immediately announced the news to the Sisters who were awaiting it. That you experienced seasickness is conceivable. But I hope all those who were afflicted have again revived.

March 18, 1887

I am old. The Lord knocks and admonishes powerfully, to order all things to be put in order in my house.

If I do not ere, your six years are also at an end this April; you can be elected again, which, without doubt will happen, I think. We must carry our cross until we reach the heights of Calvary. The greatest cross-bearer goes before us, so we must follow faithfully and resolutely. Heaven is worth it all.

October 5, 1888

...Thank the Lord, if the Sisters conscientiously fulfill their duties. Let them also take their own continued education seriously...from the aged spiritual mother, M. of C.

April 28, 1890

...I wish to get to know you in the next world as holy Sisters in heaven.

April 18, 1891

In September of this year, it will be six years since the last General Chapter was held and the time has come for the election of new Chapter members. In America it has been decided that the Commissary General and the motherhouse superiors are ex officio members, and that the other Chapter delegates must be elected...I therefore ask you to request the Sisters to compile points for discussion at the General Chapter and to send remarks which they consider of importance.

Margarita Cortona to S. Ernesta Funke (assistant to Mother Caroline)

November 24, 1891

You could not, however, give as a consoling report about the Commissary General. Though I am convinced that the dear sisters who nurse her, do all in their power to save this life, so precious to the Order, I want you to carefully supervise all that is done for her.

Inform us month by month of her condition. We are very much concerned about her...

January 10, 1892

...I enclose a few lines for her (Mother Caroline) and I beg you to give them to her when her condition will allow it. Please inform us, even if it is short, from week to week about her illness...

The old spiritual mother.

March 30, 1892

...All the Sisters, particularly the older members take it most to heart, the suffering of good Mother Caroline and pray continually for her recovery. Jesus bless you.

Mar. Margarita Cort
The old frail mother

September 12, 1892 (no year)

Marg. To Ernesta

I can well imagine what a painful emptiness there is in the house after the death of the dear sick one! (Mother Caroline died July 22, 1892) I think you are helping to fill the void! Besides I think the dear Lord earlier prepared you for your work and I think you made good use of this time.

...America certainly has a faithful intercessor in her! We have received the photographs and the newspaper article and we thank you for them.

For today I can do no more than to send my motherly greetings and blessing and the assurance of my constant prayers. The Lord be with you and your poor Spiritual Mother
M. M.

August 1, 1893

Marg to Ernesta

The anniversary day of the death of blessed Mother Caroline will be celebrated with the profession of 100 Sisters and a Solemn Requiem by the Most Reverend Archbishop. We do not forget her in our prayers, in any way; the great responsible office she held for so many years, demands an exact account.

January 23, (?) 1894 Mar. Margarita died