

To Thomas Jefferson
President of the United States of America

Dear Sir:

The Ursuline Religious of New Orleans, encouraged by the honorable mention which you so kindly made of their order, take the liberty of having recourse to you in regard to some business which is of great concern to their Institute.

Although no express mention has been made of it, they think that the Treaty of Cession and still more the spirit of justice which characterizes the United States of America, will certainly guarantee to those seeking your help the continued enjoyment of their present property. But, keeping in mind that this same property is a sacred trust which has been confided to them, they believe that they would certainly fail in one of their principal obligations were they to neglect to see to it that this right to their property be put officially in writing, confirming their rights to this property not only for themselves but also for those of their Sisters who will succeed them; and, for this reason, to beg you, dear Sir, to present our petition to the Congress in the manner and form which you will judge the most suitable.

This request of the Ursulines of New Orleans is not dictated by personal interest nor ambitious aims. Separated from the world and its pomps and vanities, and, in a word, from all that is called its advantages, they have scarcely any ambition for earthly goods; but, bound by a solemn vow to use their time in the formation of youth, they cannot help but be anxious to know if they will be able with certainty to count on the continued enjoyment of their revenues which will enable them to fulfill their obligations. It is, then, less their own interests which they plead than it is that of the public good. In reality, it is the cause of the orphan and the abandoned child, of unfortunates brought up in the midst of the horrors of vice and infamy who come to be reared by us in the ways of Religion and virtue, and be given a formation which will enable them one day to become happy and useful citizens. Finally, it is in the interest of this country which can but reap for itself honor and glory in encouraging and protecting an establishment as useful, and, we might even say, as necessary as ours. Dear Sir, we who seek your help dare to believe that these considerations will make an impression on you. Even more, we dare to count in advance on your protection.

We end by begging Heaven most fervently for your personal prosperity and for the happiness of the country whose great interests have been confided to you.

With the most profound respect, "Monsieur le Président", we have the honor of being

Your very humble and very obedient servants

The Ursulines of New Orleans

Sr. Marie Therese Farjon of St. Xavier
Superior

March 21, 1804