

ENGLISH

“It is difficult to remain a bystander in any situation of conflict.”

Your Eminence,

I hope you will forgive the timing of this letter. I pray it reaches you before you are to meet with His Holiness. I must inform you of a most pressing matter. A daughter of the convent has albeit unintendedly revealed to me Mr Galilei's character and his most alarmingly heretical theories, the same which I know to be troubling Your Eminence. I am certain her confession and her anger had not the intent to condemn, as Mr Galilei is one of “the dearest” in her life, however she felt it her duty to God and to our Church to consult myself, particularly after her engagement was broken. I pray that my Lord should forgive my sins in relaying this information onto you, Your Eminence, but I find that I cannot remain silent when my beloved Church is in danger. The man must be dealt with if your Church is to continue and the faith of the people to remain strong.

Mr Galilei's supposed theories are poisoning the faith of the people towards our beloved Church. You must convince His Holiness of such. She, the daughter of the convent, states that she understands “practically nothing of such things”, yet it is plainly evident to me. Why, just today my couriers have told me of the situation at the north Italian ports. The sailors there were clamouring that they must have Mr Galilei's star charts for their ships. Material goods, yes, may be given, but how soon will they too be clamouring for the doctrine of Mr Galilei? How quickly will the people band together to reject the great Copernicus or even demand that the Church be overthrown? A terrible restlessness has descended upon the world. It is this restlessness that the people have transferred onto the unmoving earth, sparked by a blind man who sees only his delusions in a tube. Are the people to be ruled by doubt, and no longer faith? I can see it all now, even without a confounded tube, stable boys gossiping about the phases of Venus, the apparent ‘spinning earth’ throwing even their own positions into doubt. Soon this doubt and disruption of order will see that stable boys neglect the horses, servants their masters, and the people their Church. What order is society to be based on then, without people like you to guide them, Your Eminence? One can imagine Mr Galilei saying, ‘This is your power, but I doubt if it shouldn't be mine.’ How the people will uprising! God is no longer necessary to them and the top and bottom will be abolished! You must persuade His Holiness immediately. He must see reason if society and social order is not to be thrown into chaos. His Holiness has had an interest in Mr Galilei's theories in the past, but you must convince him to come to our side. His own position and most definitely ours are in much danger otherwise.

With much sadness on behalf of the girl who has confessed this to me, despite her anger, of which she was later ashamed, she can notice little wrong in the man. My mind is much less clouded. Mr Galilei is a man of evil. He must be threatened. He certainly knows what he is up to when he writes his astronomical works not in Latin but in the idiom of fishwives and wool merchants! His numerous vices are also no secret; I have heard the rumours, which most often are truths. Chickens, quails, sent to him almost daily now, which he devours with a most terrible gluttony. Give him an old wine, and he cannot say no. One man of no compassion, he even knowingly kept a young boy with him during the frightening time of the plague. He has denied his daughter the only one whom she loved, for account of his own pride, the poor girl abandoned. Surely the devil himself can take on no better form! However, a solution may be suggested, Your Eminence. Show the man the instruments. He has always been about the sensual, a man of the flesh. Practically speaking one wouldn't have to push it very far with him. He would give in immediately. Perhaps his evil cannot be cleansed, oh, I do think of his poor child now, but you will be able to silence him easily.

Your Eminence, I hope you will act on what I have advised. I pray that you are able to convince His Holiness of all which I have discussed with you. Please excuse my impertinence, but I feel I cannot remain on the sidelines any longer. I cannot help but think of Virginia, the poor misguided girl, how she must be affected in all her father does! But she too is no longer a bystander, she has let her

voice be heard, and I cannot let that go to waste. One cannot forget that the earth is at a standstill, and the light of the Lord is on us both.

My prayers are with you,
Father Christophorus of Saint Ursula