

CIRCULAR LETTER, No. 48,
OF THE
VERY REVEREND SUPERIOR-GENERAL
TO THE
Congregation of the Holy Cross.

J. M. J.

REV. FATHERS AND DEAR BROTHERS IN JESUS CHRIST: NOTRE DAME, March 20, 1874.

Since nearly a month I have read attentively every day the cable dispatches from Europe, hoping each time to find therein some intelligence concerning the health of his Eminence the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda. But strange to say, the submarine telegraph, which so often brings us false and invented news from Rome never made a single report either of the sickness or of the death of the Eminent Cardinal than whom, after the Holy Father himself, no prelate in the Church was more widely known and venerated in this country.

It is only at this late hour that we learn, by a letter from our Very Rev. Father Ferdinando Battista, our General Procurator in Rome, that our Eminent Prefect and most beloved Protector died on the 24th of February, carrying with him the heartfelt regrets of the whole city and of all who ever approached him. We sincerely deplore his death, which we consider a severe blow to the heart of our Holy Father, who esteemed and loved him, as is well known, in a special manner, and a great loss for all foreign Missions, and particularly for our young Church of the United States, in which he took such a lively interest, and which he knew so perfectly even in its particulars and details; but above all, we take it as an irreparable loss to our own Congregation. As a Religious Body in the Church of God, we owe him all the privileges we ever received of the Holy See; more than once we have heard him say that there was not another Religious Family in which he had taken, from its origin, such pains and such an abiding interest. Personally we deeply feel this sad event; we can never expect to find in Rome another Superior whose power and affection we could rely on as we did on the influence and love of the illustrious dead. Since the day, 23 years ago, we received from him our first privilege, viz: the title of Apost. Missionary, until 1868, when he presided in person over our General Chapter at St. Bridget's, our acquaintance with his Eminence has been an uninterrupted series of kind acts which we can never forget. Since then our relations with the Eminent Prefect have been more serious, more frequent, and certainly not of a smooth character; but he never forgot that it was in deference to his wish we had accepted the charge, and if hitherto we have not sunk under its weight, we beg honestly to confess that it is chiefly due to his uncommon, affectionate indulgence. The only consolation left us in our bereavement is in our confidence that he has received or will soon receive the reward of his great virtue, and especially of his devotedness to foreign Missions, and that from above he will continue to look down upon us all with the same fatherly interest which he undoubtedly felt for the Congregation of the Holy Cross. As a token of our gratitude, we direct that a solemn Mass be celebrated in each Province of the Congregation; that five Masses be offered for the rest of his soul by every priest of the Holy Cross, and five Communions by every member of the Community.

We likewise direct that a copy of this Circular be respectfully presented by our General Procurator, with the expression of our unfeigned sympathies, to His Excellency Monsignor Siméoni, and another copy to the future Eminent Prefect of the S. C. of the Propaganda, as soon as His Holiness shall have named one to succeed our lamented and long to be regretted Cardinal Barnabo.

From the depth of our hearts let us frequently say: *Requiescat in pace.*

E. SORIN, Superior General.