

J. M. J.

CIRCULAR LETTER, No. 57,

OF THE

VERY REVEREND SUPERIOR-GENERAL

TO THE

Congregation of the Holy Cross.

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REGULATIONS FOR LENT.

NOTRE DAME, February 6, 1875.

REV. AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

I cannot change, even if I would, the prescriptions of the Church; therefore the fast and abstinence of the penitential season remain in full force for our Religious, as for other Catholics at large. In principle, anyone having reached twenty-one years of age is bound by the laws of the Church. While I am convinced that some of our Religious have brought on themselves not only sickness, but even death, by undue strict adherence to the fast of Lent, I have reason to fear that others fail, every year, in fulfilling their real obligations in regard to the same duty. In general, I am safe, I believe, in recommending abstinence from every lunch in Lent and fasting days through the Ecclesiastical year. Still, even there, some exceptions may be found, on which the heads of Houses may and must decide. Next come doubtful cases, which must be treated religiously and kindly by the same authority: delicate constitutions may require a half meal at breakfast and supper, and no more. None but immediate superiors can be judges in such cases, and they are hereby authorized to regulate, in prudence and charity, the mortifications of their subjects.

Whereas, in almost every House of the Congregation of the Holy Cross, there will be numerous exceptions to the general rule, I deem it my duty to prescribe the daily recital of the Litany of All Saints, as a substitute for the many deficiencies in the strict observance of the Lenten Regulations.

The fast of Lent is instituted for the wisest purpose, viz., to check vices, and raise the soul above the concupiscences of the body, to mortify and afflict, but not to disable and incapacitate any one from duty. While, then, every House in the Congregation should present before God a mortified and penitential Family, whose members may not all be able to fast strictly, yet all are able to show greater respect for their Rules and their Superiors.

Let all bear in mind that Lent is a season of mortification, to which we must pay a serious attention; and in proportion as we feel unable to observe the bodily penances and afflictions our Holy Mother the Church has ever intended for the benefit of her children, as a fit preparation for Easter, let us try to make up for the same, by whatever means are left in our power, viz., an exemplary fidelity to our Rules, whether for the day, the week, or the month; an increased devotedness to personal duty; a closer union with God; an earnest resolution to overcome evil dispositions; a faithful preparation for death with our Blessed Lord on Good Friday, with a grounded hope to rise with Him to a new life on Easter Sunday.

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,

Superior General.