

J. M. J.

CIRCULAR LETTER No. 112

OF THE

VERY REV. SUPERIOR GENERAL

TO THE

Congregation of the Holy Cross.

NOTRE DAME, October 14th, 1881.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

After all I have seen and heard and read, since twenty-four hours, I cannot deny what has been repeatedly declared here, viz., that St. Edward's Feast had never been celebrated at Notre Dame and St. Mary's as it was yesterday. The numerous letters pouring in by mail, testify to the same.

Much as I protest against being made the hero of this glorious anniversary, the return of which never fails to humble me profoundly, as it brings in clearer contrast the poor, unsightly copy I am making of such a splendid original—still, I shall not conceal that I feel deeply moved with the kind manifestations and expressions of filial sentiments, to the utterance of which the Feast of my Patron Saint gives, as it were, a natural occasion, not only because they please me, but also because they are more creditable to you than to myself. Let me then assure you, one and all, that not a word or a line has been indifferently received. On this joyous occasion, especially, I realize that your affectionate regards are more than reciprocated.

The peculiar charm of the Feast, yesterday, was visibly due to the special and unprecedented success of our Congregation of the Holy Cross, in this New World; while the horizon over the waters is becoming from day to day, darker and more threatening, Our Blessed Lord consoles us here by a greater abundance of blessings on this Continent! May He find in our hearts the grateful acknowledgments with which we should receive all His favors!

Let it be well understood that every new gift from above, obliges us to a greater devotedness. I cannot express in words how much I fear ingratitude to God. I fear it for myself; I apprehend it for every soul I may have to answer for in the Congregation. Ungrateful hearts are in abomination, as we know, before men as well as before God. Ungrateful hearts remind us of that wicked servant Our Lord declared condemned from his own mouth: "Serve nequam: ex ore tuo te judico!" I leave out the two first categories, of the five and two talents, doubled by the industrious recipients. I take the 3d one, of a single talent, to which most of us belong. But, little as we may have received, we shall all have, some day, to account for it. Whoever has received an obedience, however insignificant it may appear; a common employment, were it only to wash the dishes, or sweep the floor, has to fulfil it in a religious manner, not indifferently, or loosely, or carelessly; for in it, Angels see the will of God; and whoever does the work of God negligently is cursed for that alone. Here is the source among us of incalculable mischief, disedification, annoyance, scandals, losses and miseries. O! what a change in the actual state of each House and in the destinies of the Congregation, if every member of it could understand and learn how to be strict and diligent in carrying out fully and absolutely what is contained in an obedience, whether of a Superior or of an assistant cook!

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,

Superior-General.