

J. M. J.

2 July

CIRCULAR LETTER NO. 128

OF THE

Very Rev. SUPERIOR GENERAL

OF THE

Congregation of the Holy Cross.

NOTRE DAME, IND., FEAST OF THE VISITATION, 1884.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

Oh! the beautiful Feast! From my earliest infancy, the lovely Feast of the Visitation always made upon me the deepest impression,—an impression I never could express in any word or language. No mystery of our Holy Faith filled my mind and my heart with greater admiration and veneration for our Blessed Mother. Her glorious *Magnificat* affects my whole being as no other text of the Gospel ever did.

This year, in particular, the Blessed Virgin has so visibly visited our little Religious Family, wherever it exists, and so abundantly blessed her devoted children in every clime, that, more than ever before, I feel at a loss how to manifest my unbounded gratitude. Our Colleges and Schools have closed with unprecedented success and general satisfaction. As a rule, our students have gone home better pleased than ever. Thanks to our Blessed Mother's protection, public opinion is more than ever setting in our favor. Here, in particular, with renewed exertions and prayer, we may confidently hope to see, next year, 500 boarders. Our parishes, also, have sensibly increased. At South Bend where I found only 7 Catholic families in 1842, we have now over 5,000 Catholics and 4 churches.

Our Annual Retreats, I trust, will afford every one of us an opportunity, dear to all, to show their gratefulness to our glorious Queen. They will open here, on the 2d prox., and on the 9th at St Mary's, immediately followed by the Chapter. Meanwhile, classes will be strictly attended to, in all the principal Houses, every forenoon, until the yearly Retreat. Let no one be scandalized at the number of those who have obtained leave of absence this vacation; they all pledged their word to prove on their return that it paid well for the Congregation. As a consequence, however, of the unavoidable absence of some of our principal men here, we have now to postpone to another year the solemnity of the crowning of the Statue, which had been announced for the 14th of Sept.

Much as I would personally like to visit every one of our Establishments and all our beloved Religious, I find it impossible, and I beg to offer to each and to all a consolation that will more than repay for our common little sacrifice, viz.: to humbly and fervently beg of our Holy Mother to come and visit all our Houses as she did that of Sts. Zachary and Elizabeth. Oh! during these days of peace and rest, let everyone say daily—sincerely, earnestly, lovingly and fervently: "Do thou arise, my beloved Mother, and hasten to come and *visit* me! Show thou to me thy precious face, my dove, my love! Let thy voice sound unto my ear! For thy voice is sweet indeed, and thy face is all beauty to me." To secure the effect of our request, let us go often and kneel down before her beautiful altar, and pray that she may see that we are her children. Oh, how richly she will return every one of our visits! Our needs are simply immense; but, knowing, as we do, that she is not only able, but even solicitous, to supply all our wants, why not go to visit her again and again, with boundless confidence, with loving and grateful hearts? Oh, beloved Mother! should we even forget to visit thee, forget not to visit us!

Visits from on high are not always of gladness and of joy, but much oftener of pain and sorrow; we must be prepared to receive them all with faith and merit. A child never turns more quickly to his mother than when in danger or in suffering. When does she receive and press him to her loving heart more tenderly than in his fright and pain? That she is the best of mothers is well known to us all. May then our souls be with her in continual communication to the end; and when the last visit of Divine Providence shall come upon us, she will assist us and soothe our pains as no human mother could ever do. Oh! the precious visit we expect from her at that last solemn moment!

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,

Superior General.