

J. M. J.

CIRCULAR LETTER NO. 7

OF THE

Very Rev. SUPERIOR GENERAL

OF THE

Congregation of the Holy Cross.

NOTRE DAME, IND., FEAST OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW, 1886.

REV. FATHERS AND DEAR BROTHERS IN JESUS CHRIST:

Never before, perhaps, did I experience so great a need of inviting you to thank God, with one heart and one soul, for the blessings and consolations which He has poured upon us. The ecclesiastical retreat of the Diocese, followed by an important synod which lasted two days, ended this morning with a solemn Pontifical Mass. Immediately afterwards, I had the honor of meeting His Lordship, who was kind enough to assure me that he was much pleased with the acts and decrees of the Chapter, and that all his excellent priests were about to depart full of gratitude for the warm reception extended them. And how much edification did they not give us all during their short stay in our midst!

Our General Chapter, which was solemnly opened on the Feast of the Assumption, closed its sessions yesterday morning, and nearly all our capitulants from abroad left us yesterday evening, on their way to Montreal. The happiness which they seemed to experience at Notre Dame must have tended to draw closer, if it were possible, the family ties which have always united the three provinces of the Congregation of Holy Cross. The harmony which reigned in our meetings and discussions was for the twenty-one members of the Chapter a source of abundant joy, and, without doubt also, of great blessings. Notwithstanding the unusual heat of the season, and the great length of the daily sessions, all the members were punctually present at the appointed time from the beginning till the end of the Chapter. No member of our dear Family will therefore be surprised to learn that it has pleased Heaven to bless so religious and devoted a spirit, seconded, as it undoubtedly was, by the fervent and unceasing prayers of the whole Congregation.

I am confident that each one did his duty on this solemn and important occasion, and the result will certainly prove to the world that we have not labored in vain. The decrees which follow—and to which will be added those that need the approbation of the Holy See, as soon as they have been examined and approved—will, I have full confidence, be received not only with religious submission, but with real joy. Their faithful observance in each of our houses will, I trust, be looked upon as a pledge and assurance of the blessing of Heaven. First of all, let us bear in mind that our life is in the observance of our Rules, not one or two, but all.

Let each one, therefore, consider it a duty, a pleasure and an honor, to observe, and to induce others to observe, faithfully what has been prescribed by the highest authority of the Congregation of Holy Cross for our greatest good. A new era of progress and blessings is opening before us; let us enter upon it with courage and energy, and success is assured.

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,

Superior General.

DECREES OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER OF 1886.

1. The Brothers are forbidden to wear the surplice.
2. Two Scholasticates — one for the Ecclesiastics, and the other for the Brothers — shall be established in each Province.
3. There shall be in each of these Scholasticates two of our ablest professors or teachers, who shall, if possible, never be removed.
4. If it be found impossible to carry these two decrees into effect at once, they shall be carried out within one year.
5. Three certificates, corresponding to the requirements of the State programmes of instruction, will be delivered to the teaching Brothers after the proper examinations.
6. The Religious Instruction to the children entrusted to our care shall be considered the most important duty of all our teachers.
7. The House of La Faye in France shall not be given up, but it must undergo a radical change.
8. The Chapter maintains the 26th decree of the Chapter of 1880, which reads as follows: "Henceforth, whoever enters the Congregation as a postulant Brother, renounces by the fact all right to become a priest in our Congregation."
9. In cold weather the aged and infirm Brothers shall be allowed to wear a skull cap in the church.
10. The reading of Protestant dailies is prohibited.
11. Members of our Congregation shall henceforth not be sent to replace secular priests, unless during the ecclesiastical retreats of the diocese.
12. Uniformity in wearing apparel is required, and the use of cuffs is forbidden.
13. There shall be but one Novitiate for both Priests and Brothers.
14. The prayers given in the Directory shall alone be recited in public. In rare cases, when there is some special and urgent reason, other prayers may be prescribed, but only for a short time.
15. A place shall be selected in each Province in which the religious may spend their vacation together under Community rules.
16. The College of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, at Watertown, Wis., shall be used as a House of studies for the postulant Brothers.
17. Provincials are advised to take a special and tender care of aged or infirm Religious.
18. Each province shall in future set apart a certain sum each year, which shall serve as an endowment fund for the leading educational institution. The Province of Indiana shall yearly lay aside the sum of \$5000; the Province of France, \$4000; and the Province of Canada, \$3000.

The following is the result of the elections:

GENERAL ASSISTANTS — Rev. Fathers Granger and Walsh, Bros. Edward and Ephrem.

PROVINCIALS — France, Rev. F. Lecoite; Indiana, Rev. F. Corby; Canada, Rev. F. Louage.

PROVINCIAL COUNCILORS — France, Rev. Fathers Reze and Steunou; Bros. Leontien and Cecilien

" " Indiana, " Letourneau and Hudson,

" " " Bros. Ephrem and Philip Neri.

" " Canada, Rev. Fathers Geoffrion and McGarry,

" " " Bros. Sosthenes and Alderic.

ASSISTANT PROVINCIALS — France, Rev. F. Reze.

" " Indiana, " Letourneau.

" " Canada, " Geoffrion.