

J. M. J.

CIRCULAR LETTER NO. 19.

OF THE

Very Rev. SUPERIOR GENERAL

OF THE

Congregation of the Holy Cross.

September 24

NOTRE DAME, IND., FEAST OF OUR LADY OF MERCY, 1888.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

The Feast of Our Lady of Mercy! How beautiful for Christians in general is this Festival now established for more than six hundred years! But how particularly delightful it must be to us Religious, the aim of whose life is to lead youth in the path of truth and virtue, and thus save immortal souls from a degrading slavery to vice and eternal ruin! Such was the object of God's Holy Mother in establishing the Order of Mercy. Her zeal for the salvation of souls, so admirably manifested in the early part of the 13th century, is undoubtedly the same to-day as then. What a consolation! What an encouragement for those engaged in the same noble work!

The unprecedented success attending everywhere the opening of our new scholastic year is undoubtedly very encouraging for all our devoted Religious. It is a new proof that the more we try to honor the holy Mother of God, the more we may expect to be blessed from above. Last month we did all we could to acknowledge our heartfelt gratitude for the great and boundless blessings she has bestowed upon us, during almost half a century. She seems to have been pleased to find in her children's breasts not stony, but faithful and loving hearts. Hence the tender, the motherly solicitude she now shows upon the reopening of our institutions, everywhere, visibly promising the happiest results ever known in our history.

It has been our good fortune, this year, to draw the attention of the country to the glorious Queen of Heaven, on the Feast of her Assumption. The devotion of our Religious Family to the Mother of God is now better known than ever; public confidence increases in the same proportion. This is most probably the dawning of a new era of greater successes in our labors. But we must bear in mind that the greater the blessings we receive, the more we shall have to account for. To meet God's merciful designs, and carry them into full execution, we must be, one and all, *real Religious*; strict observers of our holy Rules—every day, from morning to night, always, and everywhere. The fever of success is dangerous to weak minds. How many communities have found it a ruin! When the world smiles on man, he forgets to raise his hands and his heart to Heaven. To us let our present successes be a proof that we did not trust in vain in our Blessed Mother's tender solicitude. Ah! we must all know by this time that she blesses every loving heart, every house, every community in proportion to the honor and love in which she is held wherever she is known and acknowledged as the Mother of God.

Let all the Heads of our Houses often reflect upon their personal responsibilities, and consider it one of their first and most serious duties to maintain order and discipline, regularity and zeal, that God may bless them in all things. Above all, let us remember our vows, and live in strict conformity with their obligations: Models of purity, obedience and poverty; not in words alone, but in constant and manifest proofs of boundless love for the same.

If our teachers cannot find any vocations in their schools, at least they may call the attention of their respective reverend Pastors to our increasing needs of worthy candidates in the Congregation. Indeed, were all the reverend Pastors of parishes where we have schools made interested as they should be, they would soon find a supply for our Novitiates. Let them know that they could give us no better proof of their esteem for their school teachers.

Our missionaries who sailed last Wednesday, the 19th inst., from New York for Dacca, at the repeated and urgent request of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda, must be prayed for most fervently, until we hear of their safe arrival. Surely, their apostolic zeal will bring new blessings upon us, and find some imitators in their noble undertaking. The simple thought of it should prove a source of new fervor and devotedness in all our ranks.

The month of October, opening within a week, will give us a precious opportunity to testify, in all our Houses, our gratitude and our love towards our Blessed Mother. May it bring upon every member of our dear Family a sensible increase of devotion towards the Mother of Mercy. Let us try during those thirty-one happy days, to say daily the holy Rosary, not from routine, but more piously, more fervently, than we ever did before. Oh! what a shower of new blessings might thus be secured upon all our establishments, and especially upon our beloved Province of France, now so cruelly persecuted, remembering the hopeful motto: *Regnum Gallie regnum Mariae!*

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,
Superior General.