

6th. The budget of expenses must be strictly adhered to; no change can be made in it without due authorization.

7th. No one should leave her House, without proper permission, to visit other establishments.

E. SORIN.

No. VIII.

ST. MARY'S, 1871.

FEAST OF THE PURITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

MY DEAR DAUGHTERS IN CHRIST:

You have sent me many beautiful congratulations on the occasion of my glorious Patron Saint's day. Each one deserves a special answer, and would have it did time permit. But it does not; and therefore I hasten to thank you all in general terms, none the less sincere, however, because applying to many.

Why I feel so much more affected this year by your letters than ever before is more than I can say, unless it be because I see more clearly my long efforts crowned with success, and the Community steadily progressing towards that perfection I have so often pointed out to you as the first and only thing for which you have been formed into a Religious body.

While I humbly return my thanks daily to God for the many and great blessings He has bestowed on your self-sacrificing dispositions, I pray that you may never cease to strive to acquire what is yet wanting; that you may love so well and so deeply your dear Congregation as to be willing to suffer much and long in order to advance its interests, or through fear of marring its fair name.

I pray that you may grow strong in humility and meekness, in obedience and respect for authority, in mutual kindness and charity, in scrupulous attention to regularity, in devotedness and piety.

Now let me come to something practical and personal to each and to all of you. The Religious life is made up not only of great observances, as those regarding the vows of obedience, chastity, and poverty, but also of a number of small things, the scrupulous and constant keeping of which goes far to show a true Religious. Experience proves that the former chiefly depend on the latter. Whoever is faithful in little things is true and faithful in great ones; while neglect in minor points gradually wears away all zeal and fervor towards perfection, and soon undermines the whole structure of Community life. The slightest wilful deviation from the Rules, without due permission, is a breach, a peril, a scandal, which sooner or later will work mischief.

To suppress or lengthen an exercise, to change the diet or the clothing, or to have personal dress made outside; to go unaccompanied by another Sister; to keep lights after 9 o'clock, p. m.; to

fail to take a recreation with the rest, to come late or unprepared to a class-room; to disregard regular silence; to speak or act unkindly; to exhibit unpleasant humor, to receive or give unauthorized little presents, are small things, but yet a model Religious will keep herself free from all of them. Mark it well: it is not the thing itself I blame so much, but I regret the disregard of the principle which underlies them all. Looseness once introduced into a Religious House, its discipline is gone; and with discipline goes submission, cheerful and prompt obedience, devotedness, contentment and happiness; very soon all this makes room for censorious criticising, murmuring and complaining dispositions. Divine grace is no longer sought and relied on; nature alone is consulted, and followed in its worst promptings. Thus, in less than six months, a little Community that rejoiced in its unexceptionable fidelity to little observances, and in which mutual edification, day by day, increased the happiness of all, becomes a sore spot on the face of the earth.

While I recommend delicate constitutions to the kind attention of those in office, I must equally impress on their minds to guard against the danger to which the spirit of holy poverty is thereby exposed.

With this Circular you will receive the first part of the method to be used henceforth in our schools. An oversight has caused a delay of three months in the forwarding of it to the various establishments. Brief as it is, it yet contains many valuable points, and, I may add, embodies most of the matters on which a rule has so long and so often been urgently asked. Let it be strictly observed, and there is reason to believe that it will soon show its beneficial effects.

Times are evil and threatening; God's anger is clearly manifested. We at least must profit by the warnings. Never, never, did we stand more in need of Heaven's protection.

May our Blessed Mother keep us all in the holy fear of the Lord!

E. SORIN.

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No. IX.

NOTRE DAME, INDIANA, November 27, 1871.

MY DEAR DAUGHTERS IN JESUS CHRIST:

This morning, at 6 o'clock, Sister Mary of the Holy Innocents calmly expired at St. Mary's, fortified by all the helps of religion, after a long illness (consumption) of several years. She was in her twenty-third year, and made her Profession on the 15th of August, 1870.

This death will probably mark an epoch at St. Mary's. Indeed, I look upon it myself as an event deserving no ordinary notice; not that a Sister of some exterior fame has been taken away from the

Community, but because a most unpretending and virtuous Religious has, unknown to herself, left the whole House perfumed with the sweet odor of her innocence and angelical purity.

She had been raised, I might say, in the Community. She always looked upon the things of the world as the world looks upon the things of God—with indifference and disgust.

When she entered religion, the new name she received—like the first names given in the origin of the world—seemed to reveal, in a surprising manner, her nature and qualities; and to her last moments she became more and more sensibly the complete embodiment of the same. It is no small consolation for me, while I write such a declaration, to know that it will not meet with a single opposition in the Community. Such is my own conviction, formed on no superficial knowledge of her dispositions.

I was called upon this morning to assist her in her last struggle, and, I must confess, I never was more edified and consoled. I left her at 3.30 a. m., after giving her the Holy Viaticum: The happiness it brought her seemed to impart to her new strength, and I thought I would see her again. "Father," she said, with an expression I can never forget, "I am going to heaven!" Precious last words! A little after six o'clock, while I was saying Mass, a new sinking spell came upon her,—it was the last. A moment only before she died, her countenance revived and beamed with an extraordinary brightness of joy; and, with an accent of ecstatic rapture, she said: "Oh, how beautiful heaven is!" and gave up her pure soul to God.

May she rest in peace, and may our last end be similar to hers!

E. SORIN, C. S. C

No. X.

ST. MARY'S, NOTRE DAME, INDIANA.

CHRISTMAS EVE, 1871.

MY DEAR DAUGHTERS IN CHRIST:

Our other saintly young victim of consumption, Sister Mary of Loreto, has just rendered her pure soul to her Divine Maker. Half an hour before, she had made her last confession with a grateful appreciation of God's infinite mercies towards her. She was in her 27th year, and one of the thirty-eight who made Profession in 1864.

What a spectacle she now presents to the Community! A sweet image, an embodiment, even in death, of a calm, innocent and touching serenity, reminding her weeping companions most hopefully of the heavenly choirs where her spirit has fled, rather than of the tomb to which her mortal remains shall have to be consigned to-morrow.

And again, what a rich record of virtues she leaves behind her, since her admission into the Community! As everyone knows at St. Mary's, she was eminently the one that all could esteem and love—a true model of whatever constitutes a Religious—modest and unpretending, and alike laborious, charitable, and devoted, ever pious and edifying.

Happy child! with a singleness of heart that endeared her to all, she preserved an innocence and purity of soul that fitted her, we trust, to go and celebrate her Christmas Day in heaven.

Three weeks since, immediately after receiving Extreme Unction, she made a remark in which her pure soul revealed itself: "Oh! Father, if I could only die now!" Again, and only two days ago, she asked me, with the simplicity of a child, why it was she could not die? I replied, as I thought, that probably she should be called with the fortunate shepherds to the Crib of the Saviour, and her countenance instantly brightened.

She suffered long and severe pains, but never was heard to complain. No sick person ever claimed less attention and care; and while none, perhaps, excited more genuine sympathy, she only wondered why others would make so much of her; the least service always elicited a warm expression of gratitude.

May this new and beautiful flower prove a pleasing offering at the Crib of the Infant Saviour, the Lover of pure innocent souls!

E. SORIN.

No. XI.

ST. MARY'S, June 13, 1872.

MY DEAR DAUGHTERS:

Although I lost no time to come at the first notice of danger, still I came too late to see our good Sister M. Angelica alive—she had gone to her eternal rest. Fortunately, our Rev. Father Demers was there hearing the weekly confessions; and however promptly and unexpectedly the good Sister was carried away, still she had full time and opportunity to make her confession, and receive the last Sacraments with perfect consciousness and great edification to all her Sisters present. She had been for some time lingering, when almost on a sudden a sinking chill brought to a close a long life of virtue and no ordinary merits.

She was in her fifty-fifth year; had received the holy Habit on the 23d of July, 1852, and made her Profession on the 18th of July, 1856. Through this long career of religious life she never gave me a momentary displeasure; I never heard any one blame her; nor did she ever complain of any one. She lived for God, and the Community had the full benefit of her simple and beautiful devotedness. May she rest in peace!

E. SORIN.