

CIRCULAR LETTER. No 22, (No. 19.)

OF THE

VERY REVEREND SUPERIOR-GENERAL

OF THE

Congregation of the Holy Cross.

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NOTRE DAME, Indiana, May 27, 1871.

REV. FATHERS AND DEAR BROTHERS IN CHRIST:

Yesterday the Chicago daily brought us the following telegram:

"MURDERS OF THE CLERGY.—*Night*—Archbishop Darboy, ten hostages, and nearly fifty priests were murdered in cold blood at Mazas prison on Tuesday night."

The conclusion painfully forced itself upon us all that our dear Fathers and Brothers must have been among the victims of Tuesday night last, for the correspondent of the *Herald*, on the 27th inst., stated they had been taken to Mazas prison. At six o'clock this morning, however, we received the following letter from our Rev. F. Champeau himself, changing our tears of sorrow into tears of joy:

"LE MANS, May 9, 1871.—*My dear Rev. Father*: At last I have recovered my liberty. After being hidden in our own cellars, under or beneath the bombs of the two armies, which had suddenly blockaded Neuilly, I was made prisoner, with five Brothers, by the National Guards, and immured in the Conciergerie, together with a number of the Clergy, Regular and Secular, of Paris. Our Father Le Cointe (the Director of Studies) being then hidden in the cellar of an adjoining Establishment, they seized with me but Bros. Gregory, Bernard, Heliodore, Mary-David, and Ernest; the other Rev. Fathers had not yet returned from the Provinces, although we had already commenced to receive our old boarders. We were about fifteen days in prison, each one in a cell—without knowing why, without seeing a judge, but free from every other violence. We were liberated by the influence of some of our Republican personal friends, and especially by one of our own lay-Professors.

"Neuilly is half destroyed by the projectiles of the two armies, and our House is seriously damaged from the top—but we know not what may become of it when the assault takes place."

The sad intelligence had reached us yesterday in the afternoon, and early this morning come the happy tidings. *Ad vesperum fletus et ad matutinum latitia*. Let every Father of the Congregation say one Mass in thanksgiving, and every Religious offer one Communion.

For my part, I look upon this happy issue as a special mark of protection from heaven. The Blessed Virgin could hardly do less for one who has written so many beautiful things of herself and such a splendid Life of Saint Joseph. The other six are equally devoted to her and her holy Spouse. No wonder they were not forsaken. Praise be to God.

E. SORIN.