

J. M. J.

CIRCULAR LETTER NO. 9

OF THE

Very Rev. SUPERIOR GENERAL

OF THE

Congregation of the Holy Cross.

Oct. 16

NOTRE DAME, IND., FEAST OF THE PURITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN, 1886.
REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

It takes some time to read hundreds of letters, especially when every line conveys to the reader sentiments and expressions most pleasantly revealing the loving hearts of those who address him. Hence my delay in tendering you my grateful acknowledgments for so many fervent and touching filial wishes and prayers for my personal happiness on the occasion of my glorious Patron's Feast. I made it a duty, a joyful one, indeed, to read every line and every word of this festival correspondence before attempting any reply. Although my heart grew, moment after moment, more anxious to unload itself from the increasing sense of gratitude in simple and honest return to so many generous souls praying so piously for me, I waited until I had seen the last line. Never in my life did I feel so impressed by these admirable addresses, breathing, as most of them do not only the evidences of esteem and affection, but, above all, the unmistakable sentiments of noble hearts permeated with religious aspirations. This is what I value most on an occasion which otherwise might be availed of to express ordinary and meaningless courtesies.

A Religious spirit! Oh! how glad and happy it makes me feel to see it so manifestly develop in our dear Family, when the ever-increasing evils of society so imperiously require everywhere such a saving antidote! Nominal Religious never availed anything. But the time has come when every Religious should be a model, an embodiment of virtue and zeal,—of due respect for authority, of perfect devotedness to duty, and; above all, of unceasing exertions to acquire something more of the holy purity the Church celebrates to-day, in honor of Our Blessed Mother, the purest of all creatures.

You have all heard of the infamous and sacrilegious robbery recently perpetrated in our Church of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. It has created a universal indignation among persons of all creeds around us. To me personally it is a new revelation, namely, that the devil is incensed at the honors the Blessed Virgin receives here, day after day more amply. But this new outrage will only intensify our love and zeal towards her. We know *She will crush his head*; and if we cannot replace immediately the brilliant crowns he has broken to pieces, we will make up for the loss by erecting in every heart a crown of purer crystal, in imitation of the heavenly crown with which Our Blessed Mother shines to-day in the eyes of her loving children. What could please her more than to see us all resolved to purify our hearts and our senses, our whole being, in honor of her Immaculate purity? Here is the crown she values above all!

Painful as that awful burglary has been to us all, it will undoubtedly turn to the shame of the enemy. It will, as it were, electrify our love and devotedness to our glorious Queen. How could it be otherwise? We never felt under greater obligations to her maternal care and protection. In both hemispheres she reveals to us all the tenderest solicitude: our Houses this year are all filled as they never were before. Our first and greatest trouble is to find room and subjects.

Let everyone pray, through the beautiful exercises of the month, for an increase of vocations: *messis quidem multa, operarii autem pauci*. Our prospects are brighter than ever; but for want of subjects we have often to refuse magnificent offers. Let us all pray to the Lord *ut mittat operarios in messem Suam*.

One thing, however, is more important than the multiplication of new candidates: our strength does not rest upon the quantity, but in the quality of those enrolled under the standard of the Cross. While offering you my unfeigned and most heartfelt thanks for your pious and fervent prayers in my behalf, I beg leave to assure you all of my best wishes for your own happiness for time and eternity. Nothing can make me feel joyful under the weight of years as the knowledge of your own happiness. But, however much I may wish to see the Congregation of the Holy Cross increase in number, to meet the frequent and pressing demands made upon it, I wish much more ardently to be the daily witness of the progress of all its members in the perfection required by our holy calling. May Our Blessed Mother grant me before I die the supreme consolation to leave after me a Family of true Religious, devoted to their noble mission, ever ready to sacrifice ease and comfort, self-will and human inclinations, to the close observance of the rule, to the strict discharge of duty, to the exemplary practice of every virtue, to the heroic resolve of acquiring perfection at any cost, and to secure for the Congregation all possible blessings, from any post obedience may have assigned as a clear manifestation of God's holy will. Oh! the brilliant career opened to each and to all! onward and forward! an immortal crown awaits every generous heart. Who could hesitate a moment? Let everyone say: "It shall be mine!" Thus, the loss of a frail crown will be the gain of many incomparably more precious.

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,
SUPERIOR-GENERAL.