

Very Rev. SUPERIOR GENERAL

OF THE

Congregation of the Holy Cross.

NOTRE DAME, IND., HOLY SATURDAY, April 9, 1887.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

At this solemn period of the ecclesiastical year, at the close of the holy season of Lent, on the eve of the glorious Resurrection of Our Blessed Lord, when the joyous *alleluia* is re-echoing around us on all sides, a new life is, doubtless, infused into every heart of our Religious Family. A new zeal for our personal sanctification, with an intense and lasting desire for the advancement and extension of our Congregation should now be the proof of our spiritual resurrection. To the best among us it will easily appear that they have been hitherto comparatively well-nigh dead and useless. Now we must all rise again with Our Divine Saviour—rise from the tomb of indifference and lukewarmness; from the love of comfort and ease; from our unfortunate aspirations after natural enjoyments; from the love of poor, degrading nature to the noble dictates of faith; from the servile gratification of the senses to the elevating contemplation of eternal joys. We must begin a new life, and prove that we appreciate what our Blessed Redeemer has suffered, in order to open our eyes and move our hearts. God has blessed us; but every new blessing should tell upon each and all of us, and make us fear what is threatening upon ungrateful souls.

Here is a test of our real dispositions: do we feel as we ought not only for our own sanctification, but towards the increase and success of our beloved Community? What proof have we given of it hitherto? Should I die this last day of Lent, one may say, under what obligation would I leave the Congregation? What have I done for it worth mentioning that can never be forgotten? A noble soul should leave a record of such examples that their memory could never be obliterated: *In memoriam æternam erit justus*; and again: *The just shall be praised forever!* It seems to me that more than one, reading these lines and pausing awhile, will say, with a firm resolve: Yes, from this moment I will live for God and my Community; I will observe my vows better than ever before. With God's grace, I will be a religious, not only in name and habit, but in reality; in the full discharge of my duties, in the strict observance of the Rules; I will be humble, charitable, and devoted. May God give me grace to carry out these resolutions!

In connection with these resolutions, let me remind you all of the important service you could render by procuring vocations. Heaven blesses our little Congregation everywhere more and more visibly than, perhaps, ever before, notwithstanding the ever-increasing evils of society. Here, especially, we rejoice to see the notable increase of subjects—seventy-four (74) in number—in our Novitiate, House of Studies for Brothers, and Ecclesiastical Scholasticate. With a serious effort on the part of all our professed, the number might soon rise to one hundred, and more. This appeal has been made already more than once. But, alas! those who should have minded it, first and above all, let it pass unheeded. Now, I extend it to anyone that has left in the world a good name, a respected character. Such a Religious will find vocations which may prove real acquisitions to the Congregation, whether in the classroom or at manual labor.

A new life! This is, indeed, a noble resolve—one that has brought many a soul from the brink of ruin to eternal happiness. But to carry it out to its end requires a heart; not a common, self-seeking, sensual heart, but a generous, loving heart, ready to repeat after a saint: "I was not born for transitory enjoyments." A new life—what does it mean? It means to repair the past, to atone for the past; to take up our cross and to follow Christ to the end of His journey—to Calvary. It means an exchange—that of hell for heaven. Can anyone ever pay too much to secure it? To consummate it, a few days, at most a few years, may be granted to us. Alas! before another Lent closes upon us, some of us shall probably have made the experiment of this awful problem: *Si vocem Domini hodie audieritis, nolite obdurare corda vestra!* However much it may seem to cost, none should delay a moment; to-morrow may be too late, and the chance of securing an endless reward lost forever. My God, in His infinite mercy, grant us all a new life, a real, complete resurrection!

If we wish for a proof of our spiritual resurrection, we find it in the Divine Office of the season. Here is the text: *Si consurrexistis cum Christo, quæ sursum sunt querite, ubi Christus est in dextera Dei sedens: quæ sursum sunt sapite, non quæ super terram.* "If you are risen again with Christ (show it), seek for the things from above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of His Father; relish only what is on high, and not the things of the earth." What an admirable direction! Away, away with the deceitful gratifications of the flesh! My angel guardian repeats to me what Mary Magdalene heard at the sepulchre: *non est hic*; my treasure, my happiness, the real object of my love is not here in a momentary gratification, to be punished by endless remorse. all I now wish to live for is a new life, a life of faith and merit.

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