

J. M. J.

CIRCULAR LETTER NO. 22.

OF THE

Very Rev. SUPERIOR GENERAL

OF THE

Congregation of the Holy Cross.

NOTRE DAME, IND., April 30, 1889.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

Last evening, while reciting my Rosary at Loretto, I accidentally turned up my eyes to the picture of St. Joseph on the Epistle side, and a thought struck my mind, viz. : to ask of him a private audience, when I would be through with my beads. As soon as I finished my little exercise I raised up again my sight and asked him if he would grant me the favor. As he did not seem to object I took it for granted that he assented, and, at once, I resolved to fully open my mind to his benign attention.

"Dear Father," said I, with all possible humility, "you have not forgotten, I feel confident, the favor I asked of you just ten years ago, two weeks after the great fire which caused a loss of a quarter of a million of dollars and threatened a complete ruin on Notre Dame. At the end of two weeks, when the ruins were yet smoking and not a step had been taken to repair the immense fatality, I took upon myself to open my mind to you! 'Pray,' said I, 'listen to me: if a gentleman in our county of St. Joseph had, by any sad accident, lost his property, and unfortunately, and worse than all, his own loving wife as a victim of the accident, the universal sympathy of his friends would be, above all, for the loss of his precious half, etc.; but if the neighbors found out that he did not care even to recover her mortal remains, what would they think of him? . . . Now,' said I, 'it is two full weeks since the beautiful statue of your Holy Spouse first lay under the smoking ashes of the ruins of her glorious Dome; and to this moment you have done nothing to recover the object of such universal love!'

The following morning all was changed, and in six months the loss was repaired, even to advantage, as every one knows.

"This old remembrance, however, is only an introduction to my new request. Now then, my glorious Saint, pray listen to me once more. We are on the eve of a great celebration, the devotion of the month of Mary,—Will you not help us to celebrate it worthily?" St. Joseph seemed a little surprised, and almost ready to say that it was the first time I ever invited him to join in honoring his holy Spouse. I felt keenly the silent rebuke. I confessed my blindness, and promised earnestly to amend. Hitherto I have prayed but to her, to enable us to honor her worthily. But now, for the first time as it were in my life, I understood that, as he had loved the Blessed Virgin as none but her Divine Son had ever loved her on earth, he must certainly feel most desirous to see her honored and loved by all her devoted children on the globe. Therefore, I resolved to call on him for any assistance we would need to promote the precious and saving devotion of the beautiful month of May, not only here on her own premises, but, if possible, all over the land, and wherever her sweet messenger, the *Ave Maria*, is received. This last point was in reality the first and chief object of my request for an interview. Prosperous as the journal of our Blessed Mother is becoming more and more sensibly every day, yet it is scarcely anything compared to what it should, for the salvation of souls and the honor of God's Holy Mother. I now leave it in the hands of the glorious St. Joseph, as I did so gratifyingly the rebuilding of Notre Dame in 1879, to take under his loving protection the spreading of the dear magazine, so full of consolation for its pious readers and so rich in heavenly treasures for all Christian families. 22,000 should be changed into 100,000, for the benefit of society, and especially for the pure delight of all who love our Blessed Mother.

Let all who read those lines join with me in entreating St. Joseph to give her this new proof of his love, and to us all this delightful evidence that we never pray to him in vain.

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,

Superior-General.

May 2. P. S.—The above lines, written on the last day of April, were not intended for a circular to the Community; but, as it seems to be desired to have them communicated to our Religious Family, readily do I yield to the pious request. Indeed, I most sincerely wish and pray that our love for our Blessed Mother be increased sensibly, materially, and visibly, throughout this beautiful month; and my little experience of three days, short as it is, convinces me, more deeply than anything I ever tried before, that one of the best means to succeed in this laudable and most important task, is to *interest* our glorious Patron in its precious accomplishment. What a blessing for our dear Congregation, to secure a new, a greater love for the Mother of God, in every soul, in every heart! Let all try the proposed means seriously, earnestly and with a will to approach the Blessed Mother, each time they kneel at her throne of grace, in company with her loving Spouse, introduced and presented by him; as she is herself our mediatrix with her Divine Son, St. Joseph will cheerfully act as our mediator with her. What could be refused to him? Oh! what a joy for him to see her honored and glorified in heaven, and even upon earth, as she is, especially this holy month! what a new delight for him to help in increasing her glory! Yes, yes, *ite ad Joseph*. Let us go to Joseph! and with him and through him, to Mary herself, "the Mother of Divine grace," "the cause of our joy." Thus we shall share more and more abundantly, day after day, in the happiness and blessings of the Holy Family, our model, the delightful subject of our continual and ever increasing admiration.

E. S.