

J. M. J.

CIRCULAR LETTER NO. 29

OF THE

Very Rev. SUPERIOR GENERAL

OF THE

Congregation of the Holy Cross.

NOTRE DAME, INDIANA, DEC. 31, 1890.

REV. FATHERS and BELOVED CHILDREN in JESUS CHRIST:

This is the last day of the year 1890. What an occasion for reflection! Some of us may never see the end of the year that now dawns upon us. Alas! sad as it may appear, the year 1891, like all others since our dear religious family came into existence, will probably leave its impress in the same melancholy manner in our humble ranks. But who will be the victims or the victors of 1891? God alone knows! Not one of us but has serious reasons to fear to be already registered on the list of the dead of the coming year. Who among us has even a shadow of a guarantee against death? In vain do we look for it in youth, in health and vigor, in care and comfort or enjoyments! Now as ever death strikes in all directions, often most unexpectedly. "It is decreed for all men once to die." When is my turn to come? is the question of the day for each and all of us. Indeed, no other question equals it in importance and gravity. It is written: "Remember your last end and you shall never sin." This is the question which in all ages and all over the globe has made such an impression upon the greatest minds and noblest souls as to move them to sacrifice all the enjoyments of life as so many deceitful, transitory vanities.

Would to God that all the members of our dear Family of the Holy Cross would prove every day, and in every act, profoundly convinced of this divine and salutary truth! What an unspeakable consolation it will be for the best among us, through the beautiful month of the Holy Infancy, to come again and again in deed or in spirit, and kneel with lively faith and veneration before the holy crib in which the Divine Babe lies, waiting for them, smiling on them, and plainly revealing to each one and to all, that He has come for them from heaven to enrich them and to grant them even more than they are prepared to ask. Oh! what a precious moment for a faithful soul! Now is our time; here is the place to begin a new life with our new-born Saviour. Hitherto, even under the garb of Religion, we may have lived to some extent the life of nature. Now we must live by faith; by faith, I say, from morning to night, whatever our office or obedience may be. It is not enough to show ourselves models of regularity, submission and devotedness to duty; above all, we must try, with a will to *begin a new life of fervor*, more than ever before, and to create in our hearts the same love of humility, of poverty and self-sacrifice we admire so much in the crib. Here is our Model, our heavenly Teacher. Oh! let us all pray fervently to Our Blessed Mother and her holy spouse to obtain for us an abundant share in those dispositions that will make our hearts more like the Sacred Heart of the Child Jesus, our Lord and our God.

What a consolation, what a joy Christmas must be to us religious who have so much to learn at the crib, but especially to our devoted teachers of youth! When they look upon the lovely face of the new-born Babe, do they not hear Him repeatedly say: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for my delights are to be with them." Dear, innocent little children! What precious blessings a daily visit to the Divine Infant will bring to them and their homes! How gladly we should introduce them.

Every day brings me new joys by word and by mail. With all my heart I pray that all my devoted well-wishers may receive for themselves a hundredfold of the precious blessings they ask of God for me. Such are my warmest wishes for a happy New Year to the beloved members of our Congregation in return for their filial devotedness and fervent prayers in my behalf.

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,

Superior General.