

# C I R C U L A R .

---

Suffragia,  
Pro Defunctis Sacerdotibus.

NOTRE-DAME, *June 13th*, 1861.

AN Ecclesiastical Association has lately been founded in France, by the Rev. Father Chaignon, S. J.; a Saintly man, whose life for the last thirty years has been exclusively devoted to giving Retreats, especially among the Clergy, for whom he has preached over two hundred. By his long and incessant labors, as well as by his writings for the benefit of his Brethren, he has deservedly won the title of "Apostle of the Clergy," which is universally given him throughout France. The name alone of the new Association, "Suffragia pro Defunctis Sacerdotibus," reveals at once its object and merits. The French Clergy have received it in a manner most gratifying to the pious Founder. Among the Rt. Rev. Prelates and the Clergy of the Second Order, there has been a unanimous concert of praise and thanks; an immense outburst of gratitude towards the humble Priest whom God has chosen to be the instrument of this great work of mercy: it is a canticle of hope intoned and repeated by the Sacerdotal tribe, as they behold in the dawning of the future life justice and peace reconciled, and giving each other the kiss of eternal union.

The following extracts from many similar documents will give an idea of the feelings of the Rev. Clergy on the subject:

"REV. AND DEAR FATHER:—It seems that your Foundation of Masses for Priests has originated in your Apostolic heart devoted to the Clergy, and I beg you to enrol me among your subscribers,

✱ FREDERIC, BISHOP OF AUTUN."

"V. REV. AND DEAR FATHER:—I learn with great delight, that God has blessed the new work of prayer for deceased Priests, which your zeal has inspired you to found. A similar work instituted by my predecessor, Bishop Jauffret, in 1821, already exists in the Diocese of Metz, but this does not prevent me from willingly, and with pleasure, sending my subscription to yours.

✱ PAUL, BISHOP OF METZ."

"V. REV. FATHER:—Your Foundation of Masses, *pro def.*, is visibly a thought that came down from Heaven. Pray insert my name among your subscribers: I will regulate the conditions of my subscription, and will patronise the work as it deserves.

✱ AUGUSTE, BISHOP OF PAMIERS."

"REV. FATHER:—I congratulate you upon the success God grants to your work, as well as to your words, and feel happy to join my recommendation to those of my Venerable Colleagues in behalf of the Association, pro Sacerd. Defunctis.

★ GEORGE, ARCHBISHOP OF AIX."

BOURDEAUX, Oct. 21st, 1859.

"REV. FATHER:—I received, last month, the notice headed "Perpetual Foundation," &c., with the accompanying letter. You cannot doubt of the particular interest I shall take in this pious undertaking, and shall be happy to propose it to the Clergy of my diocese. Among them, I am sure, you will obtain many subscribers. But your letter was received too late for the ecclesiastical Retreat. I deem it better to wait until the return of that annual reunion. Pray, Rev. Father, remind me of it at that time, and with all my heart I shall make an appeal to my Clergy, which will, I trust, be responded to by all.

★ FERDINAND, CARDINAL DONNET,  
ARCHBISHOP OF BOURDEAUX."

Among the almost numberless letters, we conclude with an extract from one received from the Bishop of Chalons, which seems to leave nothing unsaid:

"I admire, writes this Venerable Prelate, the Pious Association which you have created, to procure for the Priest after his death, an assistance so necessary, and of which unfortunately he is too often deprived. Thanks to the happy idea which you have conceived and executed, we may hope that we will not be abandoned at the moment when we will need the most powerful assistance. For a long time I have thought of procuring for the Priests of my Diocese, an assured means of obtaining a certain number of Masses after their death, but in all cases, the aid has been transitory, whereas your Institution secures us a perpetual assistance. I renounce then my former project, to adopt yours, and I shall propagate it by every means in my power.

★ J. H., BISHOP OF CHALONS."

#### WHAT IS THE OBJECT OF THIS ASSOCIATION?

It is to relieve the souls of deceased Priests from the sufferings of Purgatory; and by releasing the Sacerdotal tribe of the Church Suffering, to enrich and sanctify the Clergy of the Church Militant. For this work, independently of the happiness it will procure for our deceased *confreres*, will assuredly draw new graces upon the living Priests. This, then, is the double end of the "Association for deceased Priests," the *Sanctification of the Priesthood*—and as the Priest is the *Salt of the earth*, the *Sanctification of the entire Church* by the deliverance of those Priests detained in Purgatory.

#### THE MEANS ARE SIMPLE.

Whoever wishes to become a member, sends his donation to the Secretary. From one dollar to any amount shall entitle the subscriber to his share in the Masses, which will be offered for the repose of the souls of the Priests, who in this manner become regular subscribers.

The money collected will form a fund or capital, the interest of which will be yearly employed for as many

Masses, as the amount will command. The funds shall be administered by a Committee, presided over by the Rt. Rev. Bishop of the Diocese.

It is confidently expected, that the amount of donations will soon be sufficiently large, to secure for its subscribers, quite a number of Masses. As it increases, the intention will be to distribute to such Priests as may not have enough, or will apply for them.

What good is to be derived from the Association for deceased Priests?

It secures in perpetuity Masses "Pro Defunctis Sacerdotibus."

The following extract from a letter from one of the Clergy of the Diocese of Dic, replies satisfactorily to this question:

"I already belong to an Association which exists in this Diocese, for the same object, but in this, the Masses are merely said at the time specified; now I am afraid this is not sufficient; it will therefore be a consolation for me to think that I, every day, contribute to the relief of the souls of my departed *confreres*, who in their turn, will pray for me in heaven."

---

"I regard the within named association in the same light as the illustrious Prelates of France do, and therefore desire nothing more ardently than to see it introduced into this country, and exhort the Clergy of this Diocese, especially to avail themselves of it.

★ JOHN HENRY, BISHOP OF FORT WAYNE."

From a recent message addressed to Rev. Father Sorin by the Rev. Treasurer of the Association, and the Rev. F. Chaignon himself, we take the following extracts:

ANGERS, Aug. 3, 1861.

"REV FATHER:—I have received the good and kind letter with which you have favored me. I have communicated it to the various persons particularly concerned, and you will see how it was received at Calvary, and by the Committee of the Association Pro Defunctis Sacerdotibus. You may judge better by the two letters herein enclosed. Yes, my Rev. Father, your name is inscribed among the members of our pious work, which meets everywhere the warmest sympathies.

I herewith transmit you a little print which we have just issued. Very soon you will receive a new and detailed circular. I sincerely beg of your Reverence to commend and propagate to the utmost of your power this beautiful association, so beneficial both to the living and the dead of the sacred hierarchy.

Pray receive the assurance of the most respectful and most devoted sentiments, with which I have the honor to be,

Rev. Father, &c.,

J. CHARLES,

Almoner of Calvary, and Treasurer of the Association Pro. Def. Sacerd."

"REV. AND VERY DEAR FATHER:—The Rev. J. Charles has communicated to me your very kind favor. I must myself express to you the joy it has given me; and to speak only of our Association Pro. Def. Sacerd. I believe it is destined to produce immense results for God's glory, the consolation of His Church, and the salvation of souls; for the real object of this undertaking, its ultimate end, is the sanctification of the clergy. We wish to move the heart of God through this great mercy shown and extended to our deceased Brethren, and secure to ourselves before His throne zealous protectors. Be then yourself the propagator of this dear

Association in all your country. Before long we shall have all our most Rev. Archbishops and Bishops becoming our subscribers. Simple parish priests forward us offerings of 200, 300, 500 francs; we even have one of 2000 fr.

I commend myself to your holy sacrifices, in unison of which, I am, of your Reverence, the most devoted and affectionate serv't, &c.,

CHIAIGNON, S. J.

The little notice alluded to above is also subjoined here.

*Suffragia pro Defunctis Sacerdotibus.*

*Progress of the Work.*—In 1860, the Association had means enough to have 10 masses a week celebrated, that is, 520 a year.

This year 40 masses per week will be celebrated, that is, 2,080 per year. In June, 1860, there were 1550 subscribers. At the end of May, 1861, there were 3,800, among them 24 Cardinals, Archbishops, and Bishops.

*Advantages of this Association.*—1st. I contribute, all my life, to the relief of the suffering souls in Purgatory.

2d. After death, I shall have a share in all the masses that will be celebrated, and a special one in the masses that will be offered for the subscribers, during the year of their death.

3d. A share in those that are set aside for subscribers—and Masses will be said immediately after my death for my soul, by name, in number proportionate to my subscription.

*Amount of Subscription.*—The subscription cannot be less than one dollar. If additional sums are afterwards handed in, by the same individual, all are considered as forming one sum. The fund is perpetual; the interest alone on the fund is applied to procuring the Masses.

The above Ecclesiastical Association is now canonically and permanently established at Notre Dame, Ind. At the close of the late Ecclesiastical Retreat, preached here by the Rev. Father Smarins, S. J., most of the Rev. Clergy of the Diocese subscribed to it liberally, and since then, wherever it has been made known, it has met with the same approbation and sympathy.

The Committee of Administration is formed as follows:

RT. REV. BP. LUERS, *Pres't.*

VERY REV. J. BENOIT, V. G.,

REV. JOS. WENTZ,

“ E. SORIN, C. S. C.,

“ A. GRANGER, C. S. C., *Treasurer and*  
*Corresponding Secretary.*

} *Councillors.*

Address, “*Notre Dame, St. Joseph's Co., Ind.*”