

Circular Letter.

TO SUPERIORS.

[CONFIDENTIAL.]

DEARLY BELOVED:

May God bless you more than anyone under your charge with His Holy Spirit, which is a spirit of charity, of patience, meekness and peace; of zeal, regularity, economy and fervor; a spirit of self-denial and sacrifice; in a word, of devotedness, making one all to all, in the sense of St. Paul.

Worthy Superiors will generally make a little paradise wherever they are. Directly or indirectly, we Superiors are the causes of the happiness or misery of our subjects; a terrible responsibility rests on us, "and a severe judgment awaits those who preside." My experience, as far back as my memory may carry me, brings up no case of exception, that each House is made before a year by its head.

In Europe as in the New World—regular, pious, edifying, happy,—or the very reverse in every respect,—one draws blessings, and everything seems to be sealed with the approval of Heaven; another, not endowed with the spirit of God, finds an up-hill work in everything. Superiors must daily and hourly bear in mind that they hold God's own place among their inferiors; hence the evenness of a subdued temper, and not the fits of devotion, bordering on extremes, that will not last; the meekness and moderation that

will direct their movements and their words, instead of such outbreaks as scandalize, and create impressions which time will scarcely remove.

Let everything be done orderly, according to Rules, and decisions of Councils; always in a spirit of faith, of truth and candor; never through passion or revenge or personal vanity. Alas! one may deceive; but in Religion, the end of it will unavoidably be a painful, humiliating self-deception.

What shall I say of Superiors who do not pray? Is the title a shield or a target? Poor, pitiful indeed, is the condition of the subjects who must obey Superiors entirely void of the spirit of God, and who but too often exhibit, in their persons, weaknesses they could not bear themselves in others. Till you see your House blessed, and everyone in peace and gladness around you, my dear Superior, show yourself a model of all virtues: seek God's honor and not your ease; smoothe the way for others in the painful discharge of duty; provoke none, but prevent every discord. God will love you and bless you, and others on your account.

You know the heart which thus addresses you from the abundance of its affection.

E. SORIN.

ROME, STA BRIGITTA, Jan. 15, 1870.