

J. M. J.

CIRCULAR LETTER No. 90

OF THE

VERY REVEREND SUPERIOR-GENERAL

TO THE

Congregation of the Holy Cross.

June 24

PARIS, FEAST OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST, 1878.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

Man proposes, but God alone disposes as He pleases. Happy those whose will is always ready to bend under the will of Heaven, without a complaint or a murmur, however ardent and burning the wishes of their hearts may be, even for what they consider purely aiming at God's own glory. Who could for a moment question the sincerity and fervor of the sentiments, so beautifully expressed by St. Paul in his admirable Epistle to the Romans, Chap. 1? And yet, he had to sacrifice, in obedience to God's holy will, the brightest hopes of doing them an immense good by his presence among them; and in patience, in a spirit of faith, he waited until Divine Providence opened him the way to return to those beloved children, under whose eyes he was designed to suffer his glorious martyrdom. You may read again that touching and stirring chapter, and you will see that we are not the first to suffer from a painful separation.

Judging from my own heart, I often imagine that the cross thus laid upon us weighs more heavily on me than on any other; but hitherto I have been able, with God's holy grace, to carry it, and I hope the same Divine help will assist us all to the end.

I was ready to take the sea again on Saturday, the 29th inst., and I rejoiced, as you may well fancy, at the thought of meeting again so many dear faces. But a long sitting of the General Council this forenoon convinced me that I had better resign myself to stay here a few months longer. Indeed the absolute necessity of my presence in France for sixty days was so clearly proved that I could not refuse my consent without exposing the Congregation to serious troubles and dangers.

For the rest, I trust to your well and long-tried fidelity. I love to remember your well-known devotedness. This unexpected additional delay will only increase your attention to duty; and if anyone fails in the accomplishment of his charge, alas! my presence, instead of preventing the evil, would have simply resulted in increasing the number of those grieved by it.

My most precious consolation in reaching our dear home will be, as you may readily understand, to hear a good report of each member of our beloved family. Anything to the contrary would at once mar and poison the happiness of my return.

Let, therefore, everyone take a new resolution to leave nothing undone to please and propitiate God, that no new obstacle may prevent our long-wished for reunion in two months. No new prescription is needed to secure among you the sanctification and improvement of your vacations. I feel confident that the good will everybody will bring to the Annual Retreat shall multiply, this year more than ever, the fruits of the Holy Exercises. If I am not then with you to edify myself by your pious examples, my regret is somewhat soothed by the consideration of such a large number of stout hearts, so deeply rooted in religion as to leave no fear to their founder in the New World for the carrying out of his designs and the fulfilment of his fondest hopes. Thirty-seven years should have sufficed to make a foundation; my years will soon unfit me for anything else but the enjoyment of the sweet fruits of my labors.

Your devoted in J. M. J.,

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,
Superior-General.