

J. M. J.

CIRCULAR LETTER No. 93
OF THE
VERY REVEREND SUPERIOR-GENERAL.
TO THE
Congregation of the Holy Cross.

NOTRE DAME, Oct. 18th, 1878.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

Before replying to your kind and touching expressions of filial regard and affection on the occasion of my glorious Patron's Feast, I made it a duty to read every line that came to my address since a week or ten days. I have just finished my pleasant task and given it an attention that enables me to fully appreciate the feelings and pious wishes of each one of my correspondents, very nearly six hundred in number. I am thus particular in this declaration as I must necessarily content myself with a general acknowledgment, and offer to all in common my most heartfelt thanks for the precious blessings each one has so fervently solicited in my behalf. May God reward all my beloved well-wishers according to the sincerity of their hearts! Little as I deserve such an outpouring of good-will, I feel none the less, or even more, grateful for it.

This applies not only to my Rev. and dear correspondents from far and near, but equally to all who, at Notre Dame and St. Mary's, undertook, and so well succeeded, in making St. Edward's Celebration of 1878 every way superior to anything ever witnessed at these happy twin-sister institutions. Let each and all who had a hand in it receive here my warmest thanks as well as my unfeigned praise for their exquisite taste and complete success. In both places the entertainments were perfect; I enjoyed them the more as they seemed to fill so many dear souls with joy and happiness.

Many have adverted to the change Heaven has worked in our ranks since 1841 in this New World. I revert to it myself, not to claim any particular share in the progress of our Religious Family throughout the land, nor to assign a greater merit to one nation to the reproach of the others which compose here our Congregation, but to invite all to return glory to God, who alone can do His work with the poorest instruments, as He alone can give efficiency to the efforts of the noblest geniuses. It is not now for us to know who has contributed most to the establishment and development of the Congregation in America; it will remain God's secret until the Book of Life shall be opened to our eyes. To Him and to Him alone we must return our thanks, for He alone is the Author of all good gifts.

These thirty-seven years are full of instructions that should not be permitted to pass unheeded. Our personal experience shows us to evidence that God does not treat all Religious alike, but as *each one deserves*. Many more might be with us yet; but they left our ranks—not to our loss, but to their own ruin. The world smiled upon them, until they went to it; but what did they find in it? Contempt and misery. How different our true Religious! They have lived up to their Rules, contented and blessed in their devotedness.

They never dreamed of esteeming themselves better than their companions, because they were born in this or that corner of the globe, but rather believed themselves obliged by their holy state to be first in humility, obedience and charity. I bless God that I was not baptized under a French Saint's name. What makes my English St. Edward's Feast so pleasant to us all is the total absence of every vestige of nationality. Let me say it here, without any disguise: I feel a special comfort in the firm belief that I may absolutely depend upon the good sense and tact of our chief and best Religious never to countenance any such spirit in our midst; much as we may love and cherish the memories of the Saints we all have been first taught to honor and revere, let us keep these sentiments to ourselves, and unite, in our exterior and public homages, only for the celebration of those equally venerated all over the Christian world.

This important and apostolic lesson of making ourselves *all to all* must be learned and practised at home, in order to *gain all to Christ, in whom there is neither Jew nor Greek*, all having been equally redeemed in His precious Blood. We know *there is no respect of persons with God*. I dwell thus long on this subject with a view to warn against a danger rather than to reproach any one with having fallen into it.

Once more I heartily thank you all for your pious wishes, and pray to God to keep you, more than ever, strongly united in the holy bonds of charity.

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