

J. M. J.

CIRCULAR LETTER No. 95

OF THE

VERY REVEREND SUPERIOR-GENERAL

TO THE

Congregation of the Holy Cross!

NOTRE DAME, February 6, 1879.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

From the following document, you will learn, I trust, with pleasure, what has been done for the permanent benefit of each and of all, in our dear Religious Family. I intended at first to keep it a secret; but the thought that it would gratify your piety leads me to place it before you. Here is the text:

NOTRE DAME, Feb. 5, 1879.

After due consideration and prayer, I now lay aside five thousand dollars, to found here a perpetual daily Mass, for myself and the Congregation of the Holy Cross at large; to begin to-morrow, the Sixth day of February, A. D. 1879. This Foundation is made in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and of the Holy Names of Mary and Joseph, the chief Patrons of our Beloved Congregation. This act of faith has been prompted by a sincere desire: firstly, to atone for the sins of us all, and repair all our shortcomings before God, as also every injustice we might have committed towards our neighbor. Secondly, to propitiate Heaven, and draw from above upon the Congregation all the graces and blessings it needs to fulfil forever God's merciful designs. Thirdly, to preserve it from the dangers, both temporal and spiritual, of the critical present, and of a still more threatening no distant future; from all financial embarrassments, and from a worldly spirit even more. Fourthly, to obtain for all of us the fear of the Lord and the love of our sacred calling, with the true spirit and faithful observance of our vows, to the end of our lives. Fifthly, to secure to each of us and our successors forever, the all-important grace of dying in the friendship of God. Sixthly, that the Congregation may always be spared from giving scandals, and develop itself steadily for the glory of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and the salvation of souls in the various courses marked out by our Constitutions. Seventhly, that we may all and each of us, and every one of our successors and predecessors, find in this daily and perpetual Holy Sacrifice a prompt relief, after death, from our sufferings in Purgatory. Eighthly, that the infinite merits of this Holy Sacrifice may reach, according to their needs, all our dear kindred, relatives dead or alive, our benefactors, and all we may have wronged or to whom we may be indebted.

The above are the primary intentions for which this daily Holy Mass is founded forever here, comprising Fathers, Brothers, and Sisters.

E. SORIN, C.S.C.

Superior-General.

The above obligation of \$5,000 I intend to discharge honestly. I have already paid on it a first instalment of \$100, offered me as a present. I would feel pleased, if at the close of the scholastic year, some of the Heads of our Houses could send me a little contribution towards it, say one dollar for every Religious that would have proved *extra saving and devoted*. This would be like acquiring with me some share in the right to the daily Mass. But I would not accept it, unless the Council of the House could in conscience testify that it was well and richly deserved by the two above unquestioned qualifications.

There never was a time when all our surroundings preached to us so loudly the spirit of poverty. Thousands and thousands are actually suffering from want of almost everything. Some among us seem not even to suspect it; and others go on spending or causing money to be spent, as freely as rich worldly persons, travelling, dressing, gratifying whims, etc., as if they had abundant means of their own at their disposal. I will not even allude here to some particular indulgences and gratifications for which a few may feel a non-avowed craving; nor to the *sparing* dispositions of some few others, always afraid to ruin their health, and therefore wasting not a little of their time daily.

Fortunately, this is not the spirit of our Houses. Our best members are pained at such an exhibition of failure in the very elements of a Community life; and were it not for their extraordinary charity, those pitiable specimens of nominal Religious would have already lost all claims to the esteem and regard of their associates. Pray, read again the Rules on Journeys, Vestuary and Poverty. Let no one assume the responsibility of any unnecessary expense.

E. S.