

J. M. J.

CIRCULAR LETTER No. 97

OF THE

VERY REVEREND SUPERIOR GENERAL

TO THE

Congregation of the Holy Cross.

NOTRE DAME, IND.,

16 October

FEAST OF THE PURITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN CHRIST:

I would have thanked you sooner for your beautiful and welcome expressions of filial respect and pious good wishes, on the return of my Patron Saint's Feast; but owing to the increased number of congratulations, and the special interest I found this year in the perusal of each letter, I spent more time with each one, and the pleasant task has only now been completed.

Great trials, like the one through which we have just passed, act as a crucible, in which souls are revealed and purified. The last six months have made known many a heart among us. This is what gave your recent messages such a special interest; now indeed, better than ever, I can read in a page before me the respective merits of my correspondents at a distance. Great as our late calamity was, some good has resulted from it: the dreadful conflagration that has reduced to ashes the fruit of so many years' labors and sacrifices has also lightened upon each member of our Family, and shown the inmost sentiments of every heart. Hence the charm attached to so many letters last week. With so many generous souls praying and acting with unbounded devotedness, it is scarcely a matter of surprise to me, although many around us may call it a wonder, that in such a short time our dear Notre Dame has risen again, phoenix-like, from its ashes, by far more beautiful than ever before.

To each and to all who by prayer, exertions and self-sacrifices, have taken an active part in the noble task, and whose heroic co-operation is recorded in our books, and especially in the Book of Life, I say with my whole heart: God bless them a hundredfold, in time and in eternity! No less ardently do I wish the same to be extended to the generous friends whose timely liberality will never be forgotten. When completed, the New Notre Dame will stand a splendid monument, immortalizing every generous donor's name, and showing to future generations, as well as to the present one, what true devotedness can accomplish even with moderate resources, when it has for its immediate object the honor and glory of the Immaculate Queen of Heaven.

In the merit of this speedy resurrection I claim no special share; all I have done is that I tried to make known to our friends our immense loss, and the merits they might acquire in aiding, according to their means, the prompt restoration of what had suddenly been destroyed. What I claim for myself personally is the pleasing and consoling duty of paying my debt of gratitude to all Benefactors, a duty which, I well know, will sweetly lay on my heart, as long as it beats in my breast.

Once more I thank you all, and commend to your prayers other urgent duties I have now to fulfil in Europe; I cannot delay these any longer. I must take the sea on the 29th instant.

Although the building is sufficiently finished to insure comfort to all its inmates, I am well aware there is nothing really finished. Six months more will be required to carry out the plan to completion. Then it will be something worth seeing. When the Dome shall have been erected; when the golden statue of the Blessed Virgin, 16 feet high, with its electric crown of light at night, shall have been raised on its pedestal, 186 feet above the ground, then I will call it a noble work, worthily finished, and crowned to the heartfelt content of all.

E. SORIN, C.S.C.,

Superior-General.