

J. M. J.

CIRCULAR LETTER No. 110

OF THE

VERY REV. SUPERIOR GENERAL

TO THE

Congregation of the Holy Cross.

NOTRE DAME, IND., June 20th, 1881.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

Within a few weeks, the scholastic year shall have closed, and most of the children of the Holy Cross will once more enjoy the delights of a happy home, where their labors, their unceasing devotedness and their consoling success are already known and duly appreciated. Well, indeed, may they fancy to hear already the glad welcoming voices of a loving parent and entire family thus made happy by the joyful return of beloved ones whose absence has only doubled the affection in which they were held before. Happy those, in particular, whose conscience bears them testimony that they have fulfilled their obedience in a manner truly deserving the approval and blessing of God, and the gratitude of their Superiors! If I judge right, such precious and beloved children will find on their joyous return home an anticipation of what is promised in the Gospel: *Euge, serve bone; quia super pauca fuisti fidelis, . . . intra in gaudium Domini tui.*

And yet, well-merited and encouraging as it may, this gladness will be but a feeble image of what awaits us all in heaven, provided the word of the Sacred text *Fidelis* may apply to our labors and secure a reward. *Faithful* Religious are models of all virtues, and especially of obedience and devotedness. How easily they are made happy! Their humility endears them to all. They find God's holy will in their Obedience, in their Rules, in their Superiors' orders or directions. Their faith reveals to them the secret of happiness in life and forever. Oh, with such we love to associate! We feel safe in their company; they love their Community; they cheerfully spend themselves for it. Would to God that a Congregation had none but such members! What a delight would such an association prove to all its happy members!

But, alas! we may be doomed sometimes to see the very reverse of what we had a right to expect. We may even see some, who owe all to their Community, repay it with ingratitude, insolence, open contempt of their associates and superiors, and claim for themselves superior wisdom, ability, etc.; arrogant, nominal Religious, leaving behind them neither blessings nor fame or confidence, but rather increased debts, and a poor name to the Congregation which they have lowered in public esteem; Religious whom God does not bless for the well known reason that "He resists the proud:" *Deus superbis resistit.* We have all seen such members, living for themselves, and caring for little else; finding fault with everything, respecting no living authority, and ever complaining of injustice. Even to common observers, such dispositions can never appear but as visible signs of non vocation. Whatever were the reasons why such members were kept, deep regrets always followed. Such members receive no benefit from a community life, to which they are a perpetual threat and undermining corrosive. Charity may dictate a trial; but when it is evident that no amendment can be reasonably expected, charity ceases to be a virtue, and takes the name of an unpardonable weakness.

Had I not seen with my own eyes, letters I cannot qualify, I would perhaps express my convictions in milder terms. But after such evidences, I feel in duty bound to say to each and to all: Beware of irreligious spirits, if you care at all for the fundamental principles of a community life, for your own happiness in time and in eternity. Compare them with the glorious Saint Aloysius of to-morrow, the living model of modesty, of purity, and obedience; but, alas! how can we compare the personification of humility and mortification with embodiments of vanity in search of personal ease and comfort! Or, rather, read attentively the Lesson we had at Mass this morning from St. Jude: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. For, certain men are entered in, ungodly men feasting together, feeding themselves, clouds without water, trees of the autumn, unfruitful. These are murmurers, full of complaints, walking according to their own desires; and their mouth speaketh proud things." Read the whole chapter 1st; it will be no waste of time for any one of us.

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