

VERY REV. SUPERIOR GENERAL

TO THE

Congregation of the Holy Cross.

Feb. 27

NOTRE DAME, Quinquagesima Sunday, 1882.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN
IN JESUS CHRIST:

The Gospel we read at Mass to-day has always been to me a subject of serious reflections. How is it, that when our Blessed Lord had spoken to the Apostles, so clearly, so emphatically, of the sufferings and death He was about to meet in Jerusalem, as the Sacred Text has it: "Then Jesus took unto Him the twelve and said to them: 'Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the Prophets concerning the Son of man; for He shall be delivered to the Gentiles and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon: and after they have scourged Him, they will put Him to death, and the third day He shall rise again.'"

How is it, I ask, that the next verse reads as follows: "And they understood none of these things, and this word was hid from them; and they understood not the things that were said"?

The Apostles often visited the temple; for three years they had been taught at the school of Jesus Himself; they could not ignore that all the ceremonies, all the sacrifices, all the figures, typified only the sacrifice of the Cross; and yet, "they understood none of these things." Oh, how weak and obscure is man's mind until the ways of Divine light shine upon it! The first woman, formed out of Adam's rib, while asleep, was the figure of the Church, to be drawn out of the side of Jesus, expired on the Cross on which the Jews had crucified Him: Abraham, lifting up his hand to sacrifice his only Son to God, typified the Eternal Father, delivering His own Son to the death of the Cross. Abel, slain by his brother Cain, represented Jesus Christ who was to be killed by the Jews, His brothers.

The scape goat, sent out, yearly, from the city, and afterwards to be killed, figured Jesus Christ, who was to suffer and to die outside of Jerusalem, *extra portam*.

Joseph himself, sold out by his own brothers, was another striking figure of the same. And yet, "they understood none of these things"! Isaias had spoken of Him so clearly that he seemed to have written more as an Evangelist than a Prophet

"We have seen Him—despised and the most abject of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity—Surely, He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows; but He was wounded for our iniquities—He was offered because it was His own will, and He opened not His mouth." Had not David spoken of His hands and of His feet, nailed to the Cross? "They have dug My hands and feet. They have numbered all My bones. They have parted my garments among them, and upon My vesture they cast lots." The Apostles knew all these prophecies and yet, "They understood none of these things." From such a wonderful ignorance let us learn, ourselves, how little we know, naturally, of the deep and elevated doctrine or science of the Cross. God alone can reveal its rich treasure and beauty.

The doctrine of the Cross is the most mysterious secret of Divine wisdom. It is a scan-

dal to the Jews, and a jolly to the Gentiles, or the wise of this world. In our nature, all is sensual. By nature, our faculties, our senses will never rise above the flesh.

The science of the Cross, which should be eminently our own, as Religious of the Holy Cross, is the science of the heart more properly than the science of the mind. To understand the Doctrine of the Cross, we must love the Cross after the manner St. Paul loved it when he said: "*absit mihi gloriari nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi*;" or as St. Terese loved it when she repeated her admirable motto: *aut pati, aut mori: to suffer or to die*.

What will it avail us, even to admire the beauty of our glorious standard, if we refuse to carry it generously, resolutely? What shall we gain from knowing and believing that Jesus Christ died for us upon the Cross, unless we are willing to suffer upon it with Him?

Let us show by our *deeds*, especially during this holy season of penance and prayer, that we *believe* in our crucified Redeemer and *hope* in Him. If we actually pride in being the soldiers of Christ, let us exhibit no ungenerous delicacy under a Leader who has borne so much for each of us. Let us join our prayers, our tears our mortifications to His own. Let us bear with everything as He did, and unite, if possible our blood with His Blood, our death even with His death, that we may share in His Resurrection, a favor to be granted only to those who shall have been associated with Him in the pains and torments of His Passion.

Ah! let us say, from our inmost hearts, with the blind man of this same Gospel: "Domine, ut videam"; "O Lord! that I may see." Once He found us on the road, He opened our eyes, and showed us the true, the beautiful light; and we followed Him, blessing Him. But how few are completely enlightened as St. Paul on the road to Damascus! Alas! many of us may yet say, in perfect truth: "O Lord, my eyes are shut by my passions, by the maxims of the world, by my personal inclinations and wicked desires. Do Thou open my eyes that I may see; that I may realize the beauty of my vocation; that I may glorify Thee as Thy follower, in time and forever. Do thou make me a real lover of Thy cross!"

Much as we desire to see the number of the true lovers of the Cross increase among us, we have reason to fear that there are some in our ranks who move under our glorious banner, since more than *three years*, even in closer relationship with Jesus than the Apostles did, of whom it might be said, concerning the requirements of *Obedience* and *Poverty*, that "they understand none of these things," although they have bound themselves by vows to observe them.

At the next general Retreat the Secretary shall present a strict account of the Boni of each establishment. It is sad to see how little some Religious bring home yearly.

Journeys have become an abuse. They must be restricted and allowed only when necessary.

The Rules for Lent as last year.

EDWARD SORIN, C. S. C.,
SUP. GEN'L.