

J. M. J.

CIRCULAR LETTER No. 117

OF THE

VERY REV. SUPERIOR GENERAL

OF THE

Congregation of the Holy Cross.

NOTRE DAME, IND., JUNE 1st, 1882,

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

Your welcoming congratulations on my speedy and joyous return to our dear home, intensify, almost to a state of suffering, the desire or, rather, the real want of my heart to see you all and each one in person, as soon as your schools shall have closed. Pray, then, do not delay one day, unnecessarily, your departure; come home without stopping anywhere on the road; but, like true religious, come after properly fixing everything in your respective Houses. If possible, try in due time to secure half-fare tickets.

True religious always return to their headquarters with something worth bringing home, viz., the general esteem of those they had been sent to; some precious vocations; some new boarders, etc., etc. Devoted religious do not forget the interests of their Order.

For some, this last month, consecrated as it is, to the Sacred Heart, may prove a most consoling crowning of their long and earnest efforts; and if nothing else, they will leave behind them an edifying record, the undying memory of their virtues and merits. But how should a school be closed? If you cannot make them successful, do not attempt any public closing exercises. Unless children can be trained up to such a degree of perfection, as to deserve admiration by their *standing*, their *bowing*, their manner of speaking, their motions and gestures, they will prove a mortification to their parents and a disgrace to the school. Be not deceived: The closing of a school is a trying occasion! Then and there you will be *judged*. It is not for me, but for yourselves, to foresee the verdict of the public. At all events, everything must go on in perfect order.

The latest recommendations I bring from the Eternal City, are to suffer among us no nominal religious, but rather to get rid of such if we have any, and that too, without leaving it in their power to deceive others. Which means, of course, no dispensation, or relief from vows, but *dismissal for cause*. Alas! we may be obliged in a short time to dismiss one or two from our ranks, unless they seriously amend and prove materially different from what they now appear to be. I beg, in their behalf, the earnest and sincere prayers of the religious family entrusted to my care, as I do also for a few dear souls who have more than well merited of the Community, and who are now lying in the agony of death. Oh! let us all pray for them if we wish to receive ourselves the same charitable help when we need it. This is the great boon in a Community; where else can it be found nowadays?

Before you start for home, I request you to send to the general quarters, your annual statistics, covering the entire scholastic year, up to the 15th inst., duly signed by the members of the local administration, and all mailed on the same day (June 15th). The report for the remainder of the month shall be added on your arrival. They shall receive prompt and careful examination; and if deficient in anything, they shall be returned at once, before you leave, for revision, correction, greater completeness or accuracy, etc. All accounts must be, as nearly as possible, perfect and worthy of every confidence.

This year, the fortieth anniversary of our arrival at Notre Dame, we must judge of every foundation we have made. As a rule, we shall find out that all of them have succeeded or failed according to the merit of the heads that presided over their destinies. When I came, in 1841, with my six beloved Brothers in the steerage, we expended very little money. In 1846, when I returned with 17 devoted members in the steerage as before, and in the emigrant cars from New York we again spent but little, and felt happy. Devotedness rejoices in saving money. Blessed are those who are imbued with the spirit of poverty!

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,
SUPERIOR GENERAL.