

J. M. J.

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OF THE

VERY REV. SUPERIOR-GENERAL

OF THE

CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY CROSS.

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REV. FATHERS AND DEARLY-BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

The above date may seem late to offer you my grateful acknowledgments, when so many honest and devoted hearts have a right to be thanked for the touching expression of their affectionate sentiments. Indeed, for five or six days I have felt, perhaps more keenly than ever before, the urgency of returning something like adequate thanks for such a tribute of filial utterances of love and devotedness; but I could not begin my pleasing though arduous task until I had opened and read, to the last, the huge mass of letters which every mail has brought to me. With attention and pleasure, I perused every line of the voluminous correspondence; but when I read, a moment ago, that one of those I love most tenderly had received from me but one answer in six years, I felt ashamed. I could not delay another moment thanking from my inmost heart, not every one individually (it would take a month), but all *in globo*, and humbly, but earnestly, begging of God to bless all my pious and sincere well-wishers according to the depth and fervor of their prayers for my personal happiness.

I have no recollection of such a bountiful harvest of blessings invoked upon me, and, therefore, never felt, as I do to day, the weight of obligations under which it places me to the Congregation of the Holy Cross and its many friends in both hemispheres. It is true, the very word *harvest* brings home to me the thought of the autumn of my life; but I turn it into a consoling expectation of the rich and abundant fruits and crops for which a faithful husbandman looks from the day he begins to sow. I confess (I should be the last to deny it) that our good God has blessed me, through the mediation of His Holy Mother and St. Joseph, far beyond what, forty years ago, I could have anticipated. But the merit of our success I cheerfully ascribe to your generous and unfaltering devotedness. What could I have done, were I not supported by your heroic good-will, which has ever sustained me amid trials and sufferings? May God in His infinite mercy be mindful of the noble soldiers of the Cross who have already fallen on the glorious battle-field; and may He bless, especially and above all, the dear veterans whose fidelity entitles them to my esteem and gratitude in proportion to the length and importance of their services! Long life to our first pioneers! Time passes swiftly away; very soon everyone will share, I trust, in this precious blessing.

It is not in my power to reply individually to more than eight hundred well-wishers who have done me the honor and pleasure to express, in their admirable style, their truly honorable sentiments of affection and respect; and yet I feel so grateful to each and to all that I can scarcely rest in peace until they know that their congratulations, either in person, or in writings or presents, have been received with an appreciative heart.

The celebration of St. Edward's Feast, here and at St. Mary's, calls for my unbounded thanks to all who took part in it; only one thing deprives me of the intended honor and gratification, and that is, the consciousness of not deserving it. We are blessed, now, more than ever before, thanks to your general devotedness and religious spirit. But, at the same time, and above all, let us not forget to pray for *la povera Francia!*

Before closing this address of thanks, as I am growing old, I must be permitted to disburden my heart of a load daily becoming heavier, and now well-nigh unendurable, owing to recent remarks of many of our best friends. They had expected to see the Dome; and in its place they saw but a big smoking chimney. They were pained. But, more than any of them, I am grieved. I wish you all to know that my first and greatest desire is to see our Blessed Mother's statue on its fitting pedestal, the magnificent Dome, which alone will justly crown her monument, and delight every Christian soul that feels an interest in the Institution, and in the cause of its glorious Queen.

It seems to me that our Blessed Mother will bless everyone who will take a hand in placing her on her glorious throne. "She shall exalt thee; she shall glorify thee; she shall give to thy head increase of graces, and protect thee with a noble crown." (*Prov.*, iv, 8-9.) Hence my desire to extend this precious privilege even to the poorest children of good-will. All our schools must share in this honor: the contribution, were it only one cent, will entitle every scholar to the inscription of his or her name on the list of the "Loving Children of Mary," now to be opened in all our establishments, and to be forwarded to me during this month of the Angels. These lists shall be carefully preserved, in the order of their respective amounts, and will remain a lasting monument of the devotedness of our beloved pupils throughout a land dedicated to the Blessed and Immaculate Virgin.

Since writing the above I feel relieved, and even rejoiced. The Dome will rise in its majestic splendor, 195 feet from the ground, conspicuous and visible far and wide through the day, and changing the darkness of night into bright light by means of its electric crown of twelve brilliant stars.

Such is the monument we intend raising to the Mother of God: a monument I should like to call mine, were it not to be the monument of every donor, no matter how small the gift. It will cost \$25,000. It must be strong enough to resist any storm; besides, *it shall be gilt*, like the Dome of the *Invalides* in Paris. To meet the above expense, I have already received two donations—one of \$1,000 and another of \$10. The rest will come in due season. Our Holy Mother, resting upon this monumental Dome, will make it, I trust, a *life-insurance* for every loving soul who shall have invested however little in its erection. Thus shall be verified once more the Divine declaration: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself." Indeed she will; and with our eyes, surely she will draw all our hearts. On Assumption Day she was carried to heaven on the wings of a legion of angels. Here, on her own lovely domain, she will be lifted up on high, chiefly by the loving hands of beautiful little, innocent children, whose affection for their dear mothers at home will be increased each time they will look up to see their heavenly Mother raised to draw all hearts from the earth.

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,

Superior General.