

J. M. J.

CIRCULAR LETTER NO. 123

OF THE

VERY REVEREND SUPERIOR GENERAL

OF THE

Congregation of the Holy Cross.

NOTRE DAME, OCTOBER 16, '83.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

How shall I express to you my grateful acknowledgments for such manifestations of filial love and devotedness, as I have seen and read since four or five days, here and at St. Mary's? More than ever, I am at a loss how to reveal the feelings of my heart. But in my inability to return you proper and adequate thanks in words or in writing, I find quite a relief, in looking through the window—from the chair to which I am bound yet for a week or ten days—to the only object I can see, when I raise my eyes up to the blue sky, viz., the image of Our Blessed Mother, recently elevated 200 feet from the ground, and enthroned, as we had so long wished to behold her, in all the splendor of a most glorious and lovely Queen; taking possession of her precious Domain. Our Holy Mother's magnificent statue is all my window admits from my seat—it is all I wish to see. What a happy captive a little accident has made me! Hundreds of times a day, my eyes, with my heart, move and fly up to the dear object, to the centre of all my admiration and my love. Where could I find a more delightful spot on earth to live on and to die? Here, as it were, under the royal mantle of the Queen of Heaven, I gather in spirit and in joy our little family of loving children, that she may bless each one of them and pay them, all I owe them, especially since a few days. Here they stand in my memory; incessantly urging me to present them for new blessings, new thanks to Her by whose brilliant throne I dwell so near, and so delighted that I would consider it a most precious favor to breathe my last where I now sit writing. Oh, what a joy! Never in my life did I feel as I do, under the golden rays of this grand and sacred image. This triumph of our Blessed Mother is, beyond expression, not only the realization of my long ambitious designs, but a prolific source of new hopes for the future, and an unspeakable cause of consolation and enjoyment to every child of Mary moving around. Who could say how many new salutations, how many thanks and praises, how many fervent aspirations and petitions will be sent forth, by day and by night, to this new throne of glory and mercy? *Ave, Maria! Alma Redemptoris Mater! Ave, Regina Caelorum! Regina Caeli, letare, alleluia! Salve, Regina! Magnificat!!!* and other like holy accents will constantly ascend as a fragrant incense from loving hearts, or as a perfume of delightful odor from so many pure souls to the new throne of our peerless Lady, our Holy Mother. Who cannot see the result? She will be honored and praised and loved here, as she never was before; and, very soon, her glory will extend beyond the limits of her modest premises of Notre Dame. Is this all? no! for it is written: *Qui elucidant me vitam eternam habebunt.*

While thanking you for your touching expressions of filial affection, on the return of my patron Saint's festival, I gladly profit by this pleasant opportunity, to assure you, that all your sentiments are faithfully echoed in my heart. Numerous as they were, I read attentively all the letters addressed to me, on the occasion, and will keep them all. Many of them would do honor to their authors, if published, the best hearts always winning in such contest. Indeed, it is not me but yourselves you honor, when you succeed in this little labor of love. Even in a crowd of strangers, a loving child showing its mother unmistakable signs of love, become an object of universal interest; while another, of cool indifference, turns out a disgusting sight. Hence the comment: "Honor to your parents is honor to yourself."

Therefore, the merit of your feast letters returns to yourselves tenfold; particularly at a time when all authority—parental, religious or divine—is nowadays becoming, sensibly and universally, an object of uneasiness—nay, an eye-sore, because it is a restraint, in a degrading society, from a general collapse. Let every House of ours be a school of respect for authority, civil or Divine. Such were the schools in which the saints were trained and moulded. When you look to the bright statue of our Holy Mother on her Dome, remember how she was rewarded for her profound sense of heaven born veneration: she saw the Son of God in person obey her: *Et erat subditus illis.*

But if a child honors himself when honoring his parents, how much more will they not honor themselves who strive with their whole heart to honor their Heavenly Mother, as did so many noble souls now reigning with her forever in glory! a true child of Mary, even in the humblest walks of life is an object of interest to the entire court of Heaven, and of a special love to his Guardian Angel, who sees in him a future prince of the celestial kingdom. What a consolation for us all, members of a teaching order! For, directly or indirectly, we all share in the merits of the great work for which the Church has approved our Religious Family—whether in the class-room, or in the kitchen, or in the field, we spend ourselves and are spent for the same glorious end. We are all the immediate, the visible assistants of the guardian angels, to whom this beautiful month of October is dedicated. To us and for each of the little ones entrusted to our care, Jesus Himself seems to say, more distinctly than ever, from on high: *Ecce Mater tua!* "Behold thy Mother." They may have their own mothers at home, full of love and devotedness, most anxious for their happiness; so had the Beloved Disciple; so ambitious was she for the advance of her two sons James and John that she came to Jesus, worshipping and saying to Him: "Say that these my two sons may sit one on Thy right hand and the other on Thy left, in Thy kingdom." Like many a mother of this world, "she did not know what she was asking." But Jesus who loved His Disciple, gave him another Mother "and he took her into his own." Oh, the treasure! At the foot of the Cross, St. John was our representative and our model. We, too, will take *Her* to our hearts, lovingly, joyously, strongly, and forever! Amen.

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,

Superior General.