

J. M. J.

CIRCULAR LETTER NO. 130

OF THE

Very Rev. SUPERIOR GENERAL

OF THE

Congregation of the Holy Cross.

Dec. 8

NOTRE DAME, IND., OCT. OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, 1884.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

After an absence of five weeks from home, during which I have been obliged to suspend nearly all correspondence with you, I feel anxious to resume my communications with our dear Family.

The grand Plenary Council, in which I have represented our beloved Congregation for an entire month, I shall remember with delight as long as I live. It will undoubtedly make an epoch in the history of our Holy Church in the United States. Of its numerous and important Decrees, even regarding Religious Orders, I am not at liberty to speak before they are sanctioned by the Holy See. But that they all tend to make everything more perfect, must be obvious to all. Hence the natural result, for Religious in particular, *strictly to adhere to their Holy Rules more absolutely than ever*. Indeed, I rejoice at the immense blessings this venerable assembly of eminent dignitaries, Archbishops and Bishops, mitred Abbots, Religious, Theologians, etc., have endeavored to secure to the Catholic Church in the States; but I rejoice, especially, at the peculiar attention that has been paid to the Religious Families—to make them what they ought to be, the first and most efficient Soldiers of the Cross, by a devotedness to duty, exemplary to all. Therefore the spirit of obedience, of poverty, and purity, must shine in each of them more conspicuously than in any other class of Society. First of all, Religious must be in the front of all the standard-bearers of the sacred and saving Sign—close observers of their Rules even in the smallest things.

What I write here, I fully mean to carry out and enforce, as our best members will gladly expect. As a proof of it, I shall and do prescribe:

1° That the Rules be attentively read at the Spiritual Reading, until Easter.

2° That no Religious be dispensed from any one of them, but by higher authority. *The Rules must be observed.*

3° That the Vow of Poverty be carried out everywhere in its strictest sense, from the first to the last in each House.

4° That all visits necessitating an absence at night, all travels and journeys from home, be suppressed—unless allowed by the highest authority. Let every one stay at home—as a Religious, unless duly sent on a special mission or message.

Hard times visibly stare us in the face. Let us all strive to save something to help the suffering members of Christ the winter will send to us everywhere. Let every one of us try to save and to live economically. I say again: times are hard, and require from us all something more than a silent acknowledgement of the same; devotedness alone, with a sacrificing resolution, will enable us to keep our ground.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our beloved Religious, earnestly preparing themselves in prayer around the Crib, for a life of regularity, fervor and devotedness, in full accord with the universal expectations of greater efficiency than ever for the edification of all in the Church!

Let all pray for the rest of the good Brother whose obituary notice has just reached us.

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,

Superior General.