

J. M. J.

CIRCULAR LETTER NO. 14

OF THE

Very Rev. SUPERIOR GENERAL

OF THE

Congregation of the Holy Cross.

NOTRE DAME, IND., AUGUST 17, 1887.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

Another scholastic year is soon to open a new field to your zeal and devotedness. It will be a test of the resolutions of our last retreat. May God grant us all to enter again upon our noble career with a will that assures victory. What a blessing for the thousand precious and innocent souls to be entrusted to our hands! Who has ever read the first verses of the 18th Chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew and forgotten the divine lesson they contain? *The Disciples came to Jesus, saying: "Who, thinkest Thou, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And Jesus, calling unto Him a little child, set him in the midst of them, and said: "Amen, I say unto you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself, as this little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven; and he that shall receive one such little child in My name receiveth Me."*

What more can be required to create in our hearts a burning desire to bravely fulfil our heavenly mission? Whether our school is a palace or a modest cabin, we are in it surrounded with precious, immortal souls, whose eternal salvation will be credited to our energetic and heroic efforts. What a mission! who has faith and does not feel under due obligation for such a call from God?

The scholastic year just ended has been a success through the whole Congregation, as is clearly shown by the catalogues, recently received from all our Institutions. God be praised for such an unprecedented blessing! Hence the many urgent demands for new foundations, far and near, which unfortunately our limited number cannot permit us to accept, much as we would desire to do so. Oh! let us all fervently pray: *"Messis quidem multa, operarii autem pauci"*—Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth laborers into His harvest." (St. Matthew c. ix, 38.) It is true, this glorious Assumption has brought us encouragements and consolations never known before to such an extent. In the Province of Indiana alone, at Notre Dame and St. Mary's, two new Priests ordained; 20 Professions, and 65 Postulants receiving the Holy Habit! and all so happy, so promising! We sincerely hope the other Provinces of the Congregation shared in the same increase and delights.

One of my first joys, at this time of the year, is to receive from Rt. Rev. Bishops and Rev. clergy or pastors, letters expressing satisfaction, and requesting that no change be made in the *personnel* of their school teachers. Sometimes, however, it happens that a change is desired. What a humiliation! Let devotedness and regularity be the rule everywhere! Let all our teachers prove daily more and more efficient. Let none dare to raise a hand against a child on any account whatever! An able teacher need never have recourse to the slightest corporal punishment. Discipline and piety will secure success and peace everywhere.

Before closing this circular, I make it a pleasing duty to state that, chiefly owing to the excellent retreat all seem to have made this summer, I never saw the Community in a better spirit. We have every reason to hope for a new year of unusual edification in the strict observance of the Rules everywhere; of greater happiness for every Religious of the Holy Cross; of new and increasing success in our undertakings, together with a new fervor in our daily consecration to Our Blessed Mother. Who will repay her for all she has done for the Family of the Holy Cross? Nothing but an increase of gratitude and love. We never needed more visibly her maternal solicitude and protection.

More than once, of late years, I have called the attention of the Congregation to the fearful and daily growing evils of society, making it an increasing necessity for us Religious, mixed as we are among the people of the world, to watch our every step and act more cautiously, and show ourselves real and true models of every virtue: models of the three vows by which we have bound ourselves; models of regularity, punctuality, zeal and piety; models of temperance and economy; models of charity and humility. Are the times now better, and our obligations less stringent as Religious? All know how to answer this double question. Never, perhaps, before was the state of society more alarming. Ruinous strikes, appalling catastrophes, fatal accidents and unheard-of crimes in all parts; all speaking of peace when and where there is no peace, nor even any security. Add to this, a summer such as no one ever saw before, injurious in the extreme for all; spreading sufferings and miseries universal and most serious. Indeed, more than ever, we need the protection of the Queen of heaven and earth!

The debts of the Congregation, owing to the energy of the Heads of our Houses, have been considerably reduced. Within a few years, with the same laudable spirit, all debts, we hope, will disappear. What an immense relief, especially in such uncertain times!

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,

Superior General.