

OF THE

Very Rev. SUPERIOR GENERAL

OF THE

Congregation of the Holy Cross.

NOTRE DAME, IND., OCTOBER 16, 1888.

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

I have finished my serious but delightful task of reading, as attentively as joyfully, every letter received, from far and near, during the past week, on the occasion of St. Edward's Feast. They were more numerous than ever before, and their contents surpassed their number in beauty of expression and sentiments, to a degree that fills my heart with unspeakable feelings of gratitude and paternal love for each and all the members of our beloved Family. May God reward all my dear well-wishers according to the sincerity and fervor of their prayers in my behalf, on the return of the glorious Feast of my royal Patron Saint! May I at length profit by so many loving recommendations, and commence in earnest to walk in the footsteps of my admirable model of all virtues! What a wonderful Saint! What a blessing St. Edward was to the unfortunate kingdom of England! What a complete change he made in the entire nation, from misery to happiness, by his extraordinary merits and imperishable examples of faith, of purity, of charity, and zeal for God's glory! Oh! what a blessing a saintly king is for a kingdom! But here is the point I thus purposely illustrate, that you may clearly and fully comprehend, as I do myself, what a treasure and delight it must be for us all to meet on such a blessed occasion, in spirit and in heart, before the Author of all good gifts, assisted by a powerful advocate, the Queen of all Saints, to plead in behalf of one whose cause is the cause of us all, and all know, that the more abundant blessings they, by their united efforts, will draw from Heaven upon him, the more richly each one will participate in the radiation of the same precious gifts. Hence the wisdom to pray for him who presides. This is true everywhere.

The prosperity of a nation chiefly depends on the personal merits of its head, as the glorious achievements of an army centre on and spring chiefly from its able leader. The same holds equally good and undeniable when applied to a Religious Congregation. With a sound and capable head, the body will feel healthy, vigorous, and promising; while a poor and unfit superior will soon bring to ruin even what was prosperous and bidding fair for the future. If to the above self-evident fact, or truism, we add the declaration of God Himself: *Sine Me, nihil potestis facere*—"Without Me, you can do nothing"—which, to a Christian heart, is the strongest of all arguments and proofs, doubtless I shall be justified in rejoicing at the new and loving assurances from so many candid and noble souls that they will pray for me so fervently that they will secure from above all the blessings I need, even against the increasing demands of declining years. Such honest assurances, coming to me by the thousand, from hearts so well known and so deeply esteemed and loved, make me happy and give me a new life, conveying as they do the precious confidence that, if I may, less now than ever before, rely for success on any natural ability or human means, I may, supported as I feel to be by a host of heroic souls, truly rely on the accomplishment of the counterpart of the solemn declaration quoted above: *Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat*—"I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." Therefore, you are all interested in the fulfilment of your pious promises; with your aid before God, I trust I will, for a while at least, do justice to my weighty obligations, to your own serious advantages. Without such an assistance from your prayers I would fail, and you would be the first to suffer from it. A superior either of a Congregation or of an establishment, or even of a special department, must look for success through, not only the devotedness but also the religious dispositions, the daily prayers of all interested in the same.

From the beginning of our Congregation to this day, experience continues to teach us that want of success or failure in our undertakings is due to the inefficiency of the heading factor. Wherever an able and truly religious superior has infused a proper spirit of strict regularity, devotedness and self-sacrifice, the blessing of God has been manifest, overcoming all difficulties. But to secure such a result, superiors must be assisted by the good will, and daily, fervent, and incessant prayers of all and every one associated to carry out Heaven's design.

This very moment, I hear from Paris that our college there has opened with more than 500 students—an attendance such as they never had before. But by the same mail the Very Rev. Father Louage, Provincial, informs me that our dear Religious there are seriously threatened and may see their flourishing and admirable Institution closed up any day by order of the Government, and every one of them expelled! They urge me to go to them at once. Shall we not hasten to their assistance by redoubling our prayers in their behalf? Here is a case of distress: a threat of ruin for our entire dear Province of France! Shall we not avail ourselves of the precious opportunity the Month of the Holy Rosary affords us to supplicate, to entreat our Blessed Mother not to permit such a calamity, but to thwart such impious designs? Now is our time to repeat to her again and again: "Monstra te esse Matrem." Should I learn to-morrow or next day that such a threat has been carried out I scarcely know what would become of me. But I cannot admit of such a disaster, as the Blessed Virgin can prevent it. Let us pray, but pray so fervently that we may secure her assistance, and a new victory.

Once more I thank you, with all my heart, for your beautiful festal letters, which I will keep, as a precious treasure to myself, and a living testimony of your religious spirit, the best guarantee we can have of the blessings of God on the dear Family.

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,
Superior-General.