

## Very Rev. SUPERIOR GENERAL

## Congregation of the Holy Cross.

NOTRE DAME, IND., Aug. 15

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN, 1889.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

A little more than twelve months ago we were the happy witnesses of an event which, no doubt, will make an epoch in the annals of Notre Dame and the entire Congregation. On the glorious Feast of the Assumption, in the presence of his Eminence the Cardinal and thirteen archbishops and bishops, our beautiful Church of the Sacred Heart, with the Chapel of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart just completed, was solemnly consecrated by our Rt. Rev. Bishop; while its large bell in the tower was blessed, as also the College and other buildings and all the premises—forever dedicated to the Blessed Mother of God as her own especial domain.

What a lovely first anniversary! Where is the soul here that could remain indifferent on its joyous return! God forbid that such an one should ever be found at Notre Dame! it would be such blindness that it might prove the reverse of a blessing! Lack of gratitude here would show such a heartless creature deserving to be ranked among those whose obdurate insensibility would drain the very source of Divine grace. Notre Dame on the 15th of August, 1888, certainly presented a wonderful sight to many. Since that memorable day nothing has been lost; on the contrary, improvements are continued as necessity requires. We acknowledge it the more readily as we credit it exclusively and lovingly to the true and undeniable source of such wonderful blessings. Folly alone could claim a share in what all admire.

What a change since our arrival in the forest November 25, 1842! In our little log cabin, in which, however, we spent the two happiest years of our life, what invaluable lessons we learned! It was a new Bethlehem! Oh with what feelings of unspeakable joy we remember that blessed birth-place of our Congregation in this New World! There it was we found the Divine Child and Mary His Mother! Did we regret our complete destitution? Never for a moment! There for full two years, falling down on our knees night and day, we adored the decrees of Divine Providence; we trusted in the love of our Blessed Mother. Has she not taken care of us? To her we owe everything. She never forgot us in any need. When trials came (and they were many indeed and heavy ones), then it was she showed us the most tender solicitude, and made us feel that each time it was a blessing in disguise.

What a series of delightful recollections this beautiful anniversary will bring to the minds and more to the hearts of the grateful family of the Holy Cross! But what important lessons for the future! The future! What will it be? Grateful, loving souls will mould it.

The name itself of the feast is for each and all of us admirably comprehensive. The solemn consecration of our church, and the blessing of the ground on which we move, naturally remind us of another consecration, even more absolutely required to complete our happiness on these privileged acres of Mary, namely: the consecration of our hearts—the living sanctuaries of God. At every step we are here reminded of the beneficent presence of our holy Mother. Is it not our duty to raise our eyes and the aspirations of our souls more and more lovingly and fervently to show that our first wish is to please and honor her?

Very soon we shall have an opportunity of testifying our grateful love to our Blessed Mother, not only on these sacred premises, but wherever obedience will call us to teach and implant her love in young hearts. The prospect of our schools never was brighter. Where will our teachers meet with greater success? Experience tells us emphatically that the happiest results will be the infallible reward of those who will know best how to interest the Blessed Virgin in their holy task; how to raise the innocent souls confided to their care to the knowledge and love of the Mother of God; how to bring them to depend upon her for success in their studies, and all through life. In every House and class-room where the Blessed Virgin will be duly honored there will be order, obedience, complete success.

As true devotion to Mary is a certain sign of predestination, so likewise the consecration to the Mother of God of any laudable undertaking—like an educational establishment or a class-room—is of all means of success the most reliable and efficient. Would to God that all Catholic educators understood this and tried it with a will! What a change would soon mark the first steps! Here is a proof no one of any sense can deny: Notre Dame, forty-seven years ago, commenced its existence without any human means of success—in absolute destitution. What then has made it what it is, here and wherever it has radiated? A boundless confidence in the Blessed Virgin,—a confidence which has continually increased with the daily new evidences of her motherly solicitude and queenly power. No greater blessing can be bestowed on any child at school than that of a fair knowledge and a tender love of the Mother of God.

This first anniversary of an event so replete with striking evidences of our Blessed Mother's solicitude and powerful protection should not fail to make a lasting and fruitful impression upon us all. For some of us it may prove the last as well as the first. Alas! even yesterday noon we received the sad news of our dear Bro. Robert's death in Texas. Who knows how many may return alive from the fields obedience now calls them to? This is God's secret. But whether we are destined to work for a long or a short period, let us all resolve, as never before, to labor and fight the good fight, under the banner of our glorious Queen. Let us live to spread her knowledge by our teaching and example, by propagating her admirable messenger, the *Ave Maria*.

May the Blessed Virgin find in every heart of her family such increasing gratitude that she may ever multiply her blessings upon our labors of love and boundless devotedness.

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,

Superior-General.