

J. M. J.

CIRCULAR LETTER NO. 25

OF THE

Very Rev. SUPERIOR GENERAL

OF THE

Congregation of the Holy Cross.

ON BOARD LA NORMANDIE, FEB. 2, 1890,

FEAST OF THE PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

Finally we are approaching again the dear land of our adoption. What joy! what delight, after such a long and perilous voyage, to be about to realize the unspeakable enjoyment of meeting once more so many loving souls to whose incessant and fervent prayers we feel so deeply indebted for our safe and happy return! Be sure that on our part we have not forgotten you before God. Our daily and continual consolation has been to remember our dearest friends, from morning to night, in our holy rosaries and Way of the Cross, for which we never had such an abundance of time. This morning, as yesterday morning, everything was ready for the celebration of Holy Mass; but we had to bear with a painful disappointment: the sea was not calm enough. How happy we would have been to present you, each and all, with the Divine Child, to the Eternal Father, through the heavenly mediation of His Blessed Mother! But what was denied at the altar was made up to some extent; by the earnest solicitude with which we appealed again and again to her motherly love to join in the offering of the Divine Infant, every member of our dear family. This has been our absorbing preoccupation of mind and heart the whole day. That She has done it, that She has made it for us all a day of precious favors, no one can doubt. Again and again we have all been presented to God, with our Divine Infant Brother, through the Immaculate hands of Mary! Who can tell the priceless blessings secured and bestowed upon each of us on this glorious solemnity!

But among the millions of fervent Christian souls who celebrate with boundless piety this double Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin and of the Presentation of her Divine Son, who should be more sensibly affected than the children of the Holy Cross, by the sudden and unexpected change with which this grand and glorious scene was to close? The solemn declaration of holy Simeon, holding the Divine Babe in his arms, must have especially rejoiced the heart of Mary. But after completing, as no other prophet had ever done, the eulogy of his great mission, to the admiration of all present, turning suddenly to the Blessed Mother, on whom all eyes were fixed, naturally expecting due praises and congratulations: "As to thee," said the inspired prophet, "a sword shall pierce thy soul." Here closes the scene, and Mary retires from the temple with the sword tearing unsparingly her tender and loving heart. Here begins her martyrdom, which is to end only with her life. She will be the Queen of martyrs on earth as she is to be forever the Queen of angels in heaven. In proportion as God loves, He tries those He loves. "Because you were acceptable to God," do we read in the first lesson for the feast of to-morrow, "it was necessary that temptation should try you." Thus the whole life of our Blessed Mother will be a long martyrdom; She will return to Jerusalem, but each time to suffer the more. Is it a wonder to see a city thus sanctified by the death on the Cross of Jesus Christ, and the incomprehensible sufferings of His Mother standing by, becoming ever since for every Christian heart an object of the greatest interest.

Oh! what a consolation it would be for us, the children of the Holy Cross—especially when the bitterest persecutions threaten our very existence in France and in Rome—what a consolation it would be to possess a house in Jerusalem! It is now twenty-two years since I began my negotiations for it. But since I visited in person the sacred spot, I have no peace until I see the dear family established in it permanently. What a joy, if I could myself end my life in its holy precincts! Would not some pious member of our beloved family joyfully follow me to the holy place?

Your devoted

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