

VERY REVEREND SUPERIOR-GENERAL

OF THE

Congregation of the Holy Cross.

May 3

NOTRE DAME, Feast of the Invention of the Cross.

REV. FATHERS AND DEAR BROTHERS IN CHRIST:

In a Christian sense, the Invention of the Cross is always that of a precious treasure. In the sense of the flesh, however, the sight of the Cross, in any view it may present itself, is ever frightful, painful and unwelcomed.

When, after long labors and researches, the saintly mother of Constantine, found the precious Cross on which the salvation of the world had been accomplished, she must have found in this crowning of her noble efforts, an immense and unspeakable consolation. This third of May, then, commemorates a joyful, a most happy event. Ever since I was permitted to celebrate my first Mass in this New World, on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and again, fifteen months later, my first Mass here at Notre Dame, on the Feast of St. Andrew, the Apostle of the Cross, I was led to believe that the Sacred Standard of man's Redemption should be constantly kept up in my mind; not as a sign of affliction and sorrow, but as one of success and triumph: "*In hoc signo vinces.*"

In this long conviction that the Holy Cross means salvation, it has become, as it were, natural for me to look for a consolation of no ordinary character on the return of every Feast of the Holy Mystery of the Cross.

Nor have I been disappointed in my expectations. For more than thirty years, my faith in the virtue of the Cross has gone on increasing, until it has become almost a natural disposition of my mind. Neither will this glorious day be an exception on the list of its joyful previous anniversaries of the Finding of the Holy Cross. Early this morning the mail brought me from Europe the refreshing official news that all our financial embarrassments in France had been finally and forever settled (on the 15th ult.) to the unanimous satisfaction of all parties concerned. Nearly four full years had been employed in preparing this consoling result, or repairing the fearful consequences of two large legacies, amounting in the aggregate to over half a million of francs, left to the Congregation in the most equitable and positive manner and form, and subsequently reclaimed by unscrupulous heirs whose consciences are now charged not only with the iniquity of the act but with all the untold trials it has caused us ever since.

However, the cross I have personally found in the above task has been like the cross found by St. Helena; a cross of joys, compared to that which weighed on my venerable predecessors, like the one that crushed down the shoulders of the Redeemer when ascending Golgotha's heights. To them indeed it was a heavy cross to behold the embarrassments caused by iniquitous men to our dear Religious Family, without seeing the means to extricate it from an impending ruin.

But as to me, the case has been very different; if the trouble has lasted long, at least I have seen the end of it; and now it is my great consolation to hear and immediately convey to you the happy tidings that our dear Congregation has come out from its pecuniary difficulties in France with a stainless character and the unfeigned thanks of all parties concerned.

Among the members of the Congregation in France there is one who has helped me to bring about the present result in a manner so generous and so edifying that I cannot pass here the deed in silence. I will respect his modesty and leave out the name.

It is indeed with more than ordinary gratification I state the fact that last year, when I returned to France, one of our Rev. Fathers of Paris, who had been several times through his captivity at Mazas prison, on the point of receiving the crown of martyrdom, begged of me to accept what had been left him by his own parents, to aid me a little, as he said modestly, to come sooner out of my difficulties. The offer was a magnanimous act, a donation of over twenty thousand dollars, at the very moment he should have prized it the more as a means to repair his College, partly destroyed by the Communists; for this, however, he would rather trust to Providence, and have the merit of filial devotedness to the Congregation in extending to it a helping hand at the moment of its real need. God has already rewarded the sacrifice; the ruins of the College are repaired and new students fill up its halls in larger numbers than ever before.

Thus have passed away the gloomy days of our family financial trials, the memory of which will recall to our minds, not so much the iniquitous deeds that brought them on us, as the bright ones which they elicited in the dear Family, and the Divine protection they revealed. Whether He afflicts or consoles, whether He leads to the gates of death or brings back therefrom, let us praise the Lord forever.

Thanks and honor to the brave-hearted Religious who in the darkest hours of our trials, far from despairing of the Congregation, revived and cheered up the spirits of the weak-minded—of those of "little faith" to be met everywhere. Let them find here the expression of my personal gratitude, as also the assurance of my confidence in their devotedness. Such are the true friends of the Congregation; they are known by their acts and their words as the tree by its fruit. On such you may rely; trying circumstances will only reveal what sterling good there is in their souls, precisely as they will show the shallowness of nominal, half Religious, who almost rejoicing in the secret of their hearts, predict the worst under a badly disguised air of sympathy, while, in fact, they would very soon be consoled to find in the ruin of their Congregation, the end of obligations and duties long burdensome because wretchedly observed. We come out from the crucible, if not all equally purified, at least all now known to each other; each one has been tried in the same furnace, and we start again, as it were, with a reciprocal appreciation scarcely overrated by its cost. Now is the time for me to exhort our dear Religious in the words of the Apostle: "discern the spirits." Let all profit by the costly lesson which has been taught us—forced on us. Let the best ones, now so well known, receive the respect, the esteem, the affection

and honor they have won so deservedly; let them be imitated and upheld as worthy models, while the poor, would-be prophets of evil hide their faces and be accounted as men whose hearts made their heads ache.

For this fortunate issue of our past difficulties we must return our heartfelt thanks to Our Blessed Lord, to His Immaculate Mother, and to our glorious Patron, St. Joseph.

I am happy to name here M. Jolivet, M. Rubillard and M. Latouche, of LeMans, whose efficient attention to our interests is beyond praises, and who have the best claims to the prayers of the Congregation.

E. SORIN, Superior-General.

P.S.—It is by oversight that our *Ordo*, this year, does not qualify St. Joseph as Patron of our Congregation.

I must call the attention of our Religious to the Rule XXXVIII, on "Correspondence," the reading of which shall accompany that of the above Circular.

E. S.