

J. M. J.  
C I R C U L A R  
OF THE  
REV. SUPERIOR  
OF  
Notre Dame Du Lac.

TO ALL  
THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION IN THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

NO. 2.



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**NOTRE DAME DU LAC, All Saint's Day,  
1840.**

*This is my rest forever and ever; here will  
I dwell, for I have chosen it.*  
[Psalm 134th.]

**J. M. J.**

DEAR FATHERS, BROTHERS, AND SISTERS:—Who could have imagined a few years ago, that these sacred and consoling words, would ever find their proper application among us? Which of us would have indulged so soon in the hope of this extraordinary gratification? As you perceive, I intend to speak of the consecration of our new Church. Undoubtedly the character of sacredness, which this ceremony will confer on our humble chapel will make it in the estimation of our faith, an object of the deepest veneration, and of the warmest affections of our hearts.

When the temple of Jerusalem was dedicated, a fire came down from heaven and consumed the holocausts and the victims of the majesty of the Lord because the majesty of the Lord had filled the temple of the Lord.—Moreover all the children of Israel saw the fire coming down, and the glory of the Lord upon the house, and falling down with their faces to the ground, upon the stone pavement; they adored and praised the Lord.—And the Lord appeared to Solomon and said; I have heard thy prayer and I have chosen this place to myself for a house of sacrifice. My eyes shall be open and my ears attentive to the prayer of him that shall pray in this place. For I have chosen and I have sanctified this place; that my name may be there forever, and my eyes and my heart may remain there perpetually.

Such were the promises of God concerning the first temple. We know how dearly the children of Israel

loved it, and how cheerfully they repaired to its hallowed precincts, three times a year, from the remotest parts of Judea. For many years, the temple of Jerusalem was the only place in the Universe, in which God condescended to reveal himself to mankind. It was the pride and joy of the whole nation, as long as it existed; and when the Jews were driven away from their native land, their chief and most bitter sorrow seem to have arisen from their being deprived of the solemnities of Zion; and when permitted to return to the land of Jacob, *they rejoiced and their hearts were gladdened, because they had been told that they would go to the house of the Lord.*

However glorious the temple of Jerusalem may have been, every one knows that in point of divine riches, it was as inferior to our modern church, as the figure to the reality. If such, then, were the respect, veneration and love of the children of Israel for their temple, what must not ours be, for one in which, instead of the tables of the law, the manna of the desert and the rod of Aaron, we have Jesus Christ corporally present, ever ready to listen to our petitions, and even to feed our souls with his flesh and blood. Behold here, assembled in a small compass, all the mysterious dispensations of divine Charity.

Scarcely could you rest your inquiring looks on any point which does not show to your faith, a favor, a prodigy of the love of God towards you. On entering your eyes meet with the font of your spiritual regeneration; it reminds you of the first and greatest blessing which man can receive on earth and which opens the

door to all the treasures of divine mercy. Next, you see a second baptistery, a tribunal in which, innocence, peace and life have so often been restored to you. A few steps further, behold the chair of truth, from which the holy and consoling tidings of the saving Gospel, have been dispensed to you preferably to millions of others, still in the darkness of death. But what is this communion table? What is that altar? What do you receive there? What victim do you offer there? What mysteries do you commemorate, or what pledge do you speak of?—*Oh! if you knew the gift of God!* As often as you kneel at this heavenly banquet, you become one and the same substance, one body and blood with Jesus Christ, according to his own words: He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him; and I will raise him up at the last day. My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. There you behold every day Jesus Christ again dying for your sins and your eternal salvation. O Lord, how beautiful are thy tabernacles! Better is one day in thy courts above thousands. Yes, it is good for us to be here. — Whilst our native land is delivered over to all sorts of evils and miseries, we are permitted to spend, undisturbed, in our unspeakable enjoyments, whole hours in the presence of our divine Redeemer. And again, when nearly the whole country of our adoption remains under the thick cloud of infidelity, without any deserts of ours, but because God has loved us with an everlasting love, therefore he has drawn us; taking pity on us, we alone as yet have come to him and have been enlightened; and our faces shall not be confounded.

The consecration of our Church will crown one of our warmest desires. May God reward you all, beloved Fathers, Brothers and Sisters, for your great and persevering exertions in its erection, and for the laudable zeal which you so religiously evince for the various ceremonies and offices which you are called to perform therein. May this holy zeal increase in you daily, that you may say with the royal prophet: the zeal of the House of the Lord hath eaten me up. St. Teresa would have given her life for the least ceremony of the Church.— May you daily delight more and more in procuring directly or indirectly, the honor of God in all that concerns the decorations and ceremonies of his holy House.— Therefore, let us all bear in mind, never to speak in the Church, nor to disturb by the least unnecessary noise, that peace and silence which are so agreeable to those who wish to communicate with God, endeavoring to edify, or rather vying with the angels, in respect, modesty and charity.

To promote this excellent spirit among all the members of the Association, the following rules shall be observed: 1st In all chapters for one year, the first accusations or proclamations shall have reference to faults committed against the Rubrics of the Church; 2d There shall be a spiritual reading, every Saturday, totally consecrated to the explanation of the Rubrics or ceremonies; 3d The master of Ceremonies shall begin with this days solemnity, a regular *Contamier* for all the Sundays and festivals of the year.

In a few days we shall have one of the richest temples of the country, in which we will enjoy our solemnities.—

May it become the object of all our affections; like Daniel, turn to the savel sanctuary, frequently through the day. We may be left in poverty, in persecution, in suffering, but there is a remedy to all evils. There we may assist powerfully both the living and the dead. There we may consummate the great work of our salvation.— There our beloved is continually thinking of us. There is our treasure, there must our hearts be. In these dispositions let us all say with the holy king: 'If I forget thee, O, Jerusalem, let my right hand be forgotten; let my tongue cleave to my jaws, if I do not remember thee, if I make not Jerusalem the beginning of my joy.' There I will take delight in remembering your names daily to God, to the Blessed Virgin and to St. Joseph. There indeed I love to think of you. There also, dearly beloved friends, remember me; remember those whom God has called from our midst; remember your parents, your relations, your friends in the world, your neighbors and even your enemies. Pray for all; and thus you will make of *the House of the Lord, a House of Prayer*. Thus fervent prayer will sanctify your bodies which are the temples of the Holy Ghost that dwelleth in you; for the temple of God is holy which you are. Thus you will daily adorn with new merits these temples, *not made with hands*, daily renewing their consecration to the living God, that after presenting your bodies, a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, they may be made, by Jesus Christ, like to the body of his glory.

Every church must be dedicated to a special patron who is to be considered as a particular protector and model for all the faithful who meet therein to pray. Every

year the return of this patronal feast is marked with a great solemnity and thus a new tie binds heaven and earth together. To the sacred Heart of Jesus, already one of the Patrons of our Institution, this modest sanctuary has been humbly inscribed. Such is our refuge, such is our model. As often as you enter the Church, you enter as it were into the heart of Jesus there to learn how to pray, how to praise God, how to humble yourselves, and especially how to love and to sacrifice all the faculties of your being for his glory. O Jesus; thy heart is so holy, thou wilt sanctify mine. Thy heart is so pure, thou wilt purify mine. Thy heart is so humble; it is meekness itself, thou wilt form these virtues in mine. Thy divine heart is a burning furnace, and mine is so cold; thy heart is so rich and mine so poor. Thy heart is so much elevated in all its affections, and mine is so much entangled with the things of this world. At least, O divine Jesus, whilst I remain in thy presence in the Church, permit not that I should offend or in any way grieve thy holy heart. Impart thine own sentiments and inclinations to me that I may be worthy to dwell in thy temple all the days of my life. However imperfect this poor heart of mine may be, I presume to offer it to thee; may it breathe and rest in thee for ever!

Grace be with you all, in the holy hearts of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, amen.

E. SORIN.