

No. V.

NOTRE DAME, IND., February, 1858.

REV. DEAR FRIENDS:

You are all aware that the history of our Congregation in this country, from beginning to end, is a long chain of providential interferences, where the effects of prayer are plainly printed on every link. Every year bears testimony to this fact; everything has been obtained, thus far, by prayer; of its efficacy we should never need further proofs. But, encouraged by so many astonishing marks of protection and solicitude, we should always pray with an unbounded confidence, however great and pressing our necessities may be.

With God's blessing, we are now finishing a new Novitiate, in keeping with our hopes and our wants. When entirely completed, with its semi-circular cloisters and its new Portiuncula (a chapel on the same model as that of St. Francis, near Assisium), it will form, undoubtedly, one of the most charming spots piety could wish for. But in vain should we have erected even a better house if God would not bless the undertaking and give us proper candidates to fill it up and meet the needs of the country; such is the object I have now in view in addressing you these few lines.

Numerous as well as pressing demands have been made upon us of late for new foundations of schools; indeed it grieves us exceedingly to be obliged so often to decline or postpone such demands of the most advantageous character, for want of efficient members. Our novitiates are the chief sources from which we hope to draw hereafter the subjects required for the development of the Congregation. We all know the Novitiate of a community forms and constitutes its chief treasure; and in the same proportion, precisely, as it is well or poorly supplied, you may judge of its flourishing or lingering state in the land. Hitherto but little has been accomplished for this, owing to circumstances unavoidable and beyond our control; want of room and want of sufficient number has prevented the Congregation from the rapid growth which, otherwise, it should have obtained. Now, thanks be to God, one of our difficulties is removed—we have the room we need; the number is the thing we must pray for. It is true, we have already here some excellent subjects to send to the new Novitiate, but it is no longer by individuals but by dozens, at least, we should count them; then, and then only we may expect to create and preserve emulation through their studies and exercises, a vigorous discipline and a thorough training in all virtues and sciences proper to a Novitiate. To fill up our new building with efficient young men must be the object of our most earnest exertions and prayers. Let no one imagine that it cannot be done: prayer has done things in our own midst more surprising than this. There are enough of such young men

standing idle in the market place, and who, even at this eleventh hour, if they could only hear the voice of the Householder, would, gladly enter the vineyard, and, by seriously endeavoring to redeem the time lost, might soon be first in humility, in obedience and devotedness. Such is the blessing for which our united supplications must ascend daily and hourly to the Throne of Mercy. The solemn opening of the year's Novitiate of the Brothers will take place, *D. v.*, on the 17th of March, and that of St. Aloysius on the 24th, to enable the Novices to make their Profession on the 19th and 25th of the following year. From the reception of this Circular to the end of March, we direct all the members of the Congregation to repeat, three times a day, the prayer "O St. Joseph." In every school, the children shall be asked to say daily one decade of the beads for the same intention. Directors are permitted to dispose of one dollar each to have two Masses offered by their Rev. pastors to the same effect: one immediately, if possible, and the other towards the end of March. At both Masses the Brothers should be prepared to receive Holy Communion. We feel confident, if all do their part well, that, before the end of next month, we shall have reason to admire the new blessings which our united efforts shall have drawn on the Province.

The Rev. F. J. Dillon has been sent to visit our establishments. One of his first objects, whilst making the regular visit, will be to promote the same object by every means in his power. Meanwhile, let every member of the Congregation bring his humble and earnest request to the serious notice of the clergy he may meet; let the attention of the schools be directed thereto; in a word, let the desire to obtain from Heaven good vocations be the universal and first object of the Congregation, at least until the end of March; by that time, we trust, we shall be able to show you by the list of entries in the Congregation that your prayers were not in vain.

May the grace of God be with you all!

E. SORIN,
Provincial.

No. VI.

NOTRE DAME, December 19, 1859.

REV. FATHERS, DEAR BROTHERS, AND SISTERS:

Once more, I have to call on every member of the Community for a new effort and particular prayers to secure again extraordinary helps from above. For two years past Divine Providence has listened so kindly to our supplications, and relieved us so promptly in all our necessities, that even now, when our wants are greater and our needs more urgent, we must still trust with the same