

No. VI.

NOTRE DAME, INDIANA, 1863.

FEAST OF THE PURITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

MY DEAR SISTERS:

After eighteen months of the most bloody war peace seems to be as far from us as it was ever since the beginning of the strife. The country is going to ruin; and desolation is spread in every direction. Immense armies have been raised, battles have been fought, and thousands of precious lives have been sacrificed; and yet we see no end to the scourge; all human means, on the contrary, are fast proving a failure. But when the world refuses to give us peace, we should seek for it before the Throne of God, who alone rules at His will all human hearts. He often permits His children to be thus forced by a total destitution of all human hopes to raise their eyes to Him above.

In this view, we have opened here on this auspicious Feast an Association of Prayer for Peace, and we wish to see it established in all our schools, and commend it most earnestly to the zeal and piety of every Directress. It simply consists in the recital of the beads, daily, till the end of the war. With a good will on the part of our own teachers, we shall have within a week an organization of between four and five thousand innocent little children praying, in a most pleasing manner; for one of the greatest blessings that can be bestowed on earth. You will, however, submit the request to your venerated Pastors to obtain their sanction. We leave to your own discretion the mode and the time most convenient to recite the beads: As soon as your Association is fully organized, you will please to inform us of the exact number of beads thus recited every day through your exertions. You will mention, from time to time, to the children of your school the object of this Association, namely, to pray for the peace of our beloved country, and also for the peace of the Holy Father. The above prayer will be offered to the Blessed Mother of God in behalf of the souls in purgatory, that they may join with us in praying for peace.

May the Almighty God keep us all in His holy peace!

E. SORIN, *Provincial.*

No. VII.

MY DEAR DAUGHTERS:

When you receive these few parting words I shall likely be gone again, and on my way to Europe. I must leave New York on next Saturday, the 30th inst.

Need I say that now, more than ever, I expect you all to pray

for the safety of my journey, for the blessings of God upon the important affairs which once more force me to leave you, and for the final triumph of our beloved Congregation over all the trials which have disturbed it for some time past.

I feel confident that you will give me this precious consolation; it will soothe the pains of our separation. I feel no less certain that, while I am gone, each and all will make it a duty to guard against the various attacks of Satan, by a renewed and abiding fervor, an exemplary spirit of obedience and humility, an unfeigned devotedness and charity, and, in a word, by the real practice of all virtues. How far you will have shown yourselves *religious* in the detail of every day's duties more than one thing will tell on my return. Among other evidences I shall always reckon the success with which Houses and individual members shall have been attended; for, after all, you may take it for granted you will succeed as you deserve. If anything begins to go wrong with you, look upon it as a warning, if not a direct punishment for some infidelity or abated zeal. Renew the spirit of your faith and piety, and trust in the goodness of God, who abandons only those who first abandon Him.

I would have been pleased to see the new Constitutions and the new Directory distributed among you before my departure; but what has been postponed against our will, will finally be realized within a few weeks. I trust you will receive both with a spirit of faith and obedience: for the true Religious the one and the other will prove rich sources of merits.

For the present I deem it expedient to send you the following prescriptions:

1st. Instead of the fast, when prescribed by the Church, all the Sisters shall recite in common, at night prayer, the Litany of All Saints.

2d. From the first of November to the first of May, in the establishments not immediately connected with the church, the Sisters shall go to Mass at the parochial church, besides Sundays and festivals of obligation, only once a week. They shall not attend to any evening offices.

3d. None but the heads of Houses should be the object of a celebration on their feast; teachers, however, may receive in the classroom the compliments (nothing more) of their pupils, and spend that hour with them in some manner interesting to all.

4th. Letters should never be a waste of paper and time among Religious: there should always be an object, and pains should be taken to make them worth sending.

5th. Postulants may be tried in private establishments before being sent to the Novitiate; in a regular House, the trial is even advisable.

6th. The budget of expenses must be strictly adhered to; no change can be made in it without due authorization.

7th. No one should leave her House, without proper permission, to visit other establishments.

E. SORIN.

No. VIII.

ST. MARY'S, 1871.

FEAST OF THE PURITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

MY DEAR DAUGHTERS IN CHRIST:

You have sent me many beautiful congratulations on the occasion of my glorious Patron Saint's day. Each one deserves a special answer, and would have it did time permit. But it does not; and therefore I hasten to thank you all in general terms, none the less sincere, however, because applying to many.

Why I feel so much more affected this year by your letters than ever before is more than I can say, unless it be because I see more clearly my long efforts crowned with success, and the Community steadily progressing towards that perfection I have so often pointed out to you as the first and only thing for which you have been formed into a Religious body.

While I humbly return my thanks daily to God for the many and great blessings He has bestowed on your self-sacrificing dispositions, I pray that you may never cease to strive to acquire what is yet wanting; that you may love so well and so deeply your dear Congregation as to be willing to suffer much and long in order to advance its interests, or through fear of marring its fair name.

I pray that you may grow strong in humility and meekness, in obedience and respect for authority, in mutual kindness and charity, in scrupulous attention to regularity, in devotedness and piety.

Now let me come to something practical and personal to each and to all of you. The Religious life is made up not only of great observances, as those regarding the vows of obedience, chastity, and poverty, but also of a number of small things, the scrupulous and constant keeping of which goes far to show a true Religious. Experience proves that the former chiefly depend on the latter. Whoever is faithful in little things is true and faithful in great ones; while neglect in minor points gradually wears away all zeal and fervor towards perfection, and soon undermines the whole structure of Community life. The slightest wilful deviation from the Rules, without due permission, is a breach, a peril, a scandal, which sooner or later will work mischief.

To suppress or lengthen an exercise, to change the diet or the clothing, or to have personal dress made outside; to go unaccompanied by another Sister; to keep lights after 9 o'clock, p. m.; to