

No. XIX.

NOTRE DAME, Sept. 19, 1878.

MY, DEAR DAUGHTERS:

You must know by this time how much I wish to see our Congregation everywhere and in every way respectable, and in nothing beneath other religious communities in the land.

While I take a special gratification in acknowledging the excellent dispositions of the vast majority of our pious and zealous *Religieuses*, I must say that in our ranks, as in all large bodies, there must be some exceptions of queer beings whose whims are their rule and their admiration. You know them as well as I do. We pity them, but should never allow ourselves to be influenced by their doings. They always ignore the rules or prohibitions that do not suit their fancies. For such I repeat here that, *playing the organ and singing in the church* is, and remains, absolutely forbidden to our Sisters. Nor are they allowed to attend any late exercises in the church.

E. SORIN, C. S. C.

No. XX.

TO SUPERIORS AND DIRECTRESSES.

Never, in our Religious existence in this New World, was it more important for the Superiors and Directresses to understand and feel that they hold in their hands the destinies of their Congregation. The Retreat, this year, has left you, as a Religious body, far more united in views and sentiments than ever before; while, at the same time, it must be evident to all, that everything around you has taken a shape, and given you a footing which as yet you had not seen. You now begin, at last, to perceive that you have here a home in which you may take a lively interest; and everyone seems happily determined to work for its development and its welfare.

We ourselves feel confident that your prospects this year are bright and that your future is really encouraging. But while we indulge the fond hope that our best wishes will be realized, we beg to repeat, what we have stated more than once during the Retreat, namely, that whatever success will be obtained in any establishment, we will chiefly assign it to the Head that presides; and, in the same spirit of justice, we must hold the same almost absolutely responsible for any failure or trouble or irregularity or disorder. Indeed experience teaches that whenever we have perfect and exemplary Religious at the head of anything, God blesses and all goes well. But it is so difficult ever to remember that whoever presides must be the servant of all! and yet no religious government can be success-

ful otherwise; for the declaration is as plain as it is unchangeable: "I came to serve, and not to be served." Whoever has been elevated to any charge must be able to say to all, at any time: "I have given you an example, that, as I have done, so also you may do."

To you, then, who preside, allow us to say with a sincerity equalled only by your affection for yourselves, and our common zeal for your beloved Congregation: "Be ye models of your little flock," and your little flock will follow you—nay more; will love and venerate you. Observe your Rules, and they will easily do the same; show yourselves respectful and devoted to your Superiors, and they will do as much even for yourselves; treat all under your charge with kindness, with patience and charity, they will, sooner or later, make ample returns; never despair of any one; but pray, and pray again for their amendment, and in His good time God will grant your request. Above all, my dearly-beloved, see that God be well served in your House by each and by all who live under your roof. Let His interests be first and paramount to everything else in your mind; preach Him well by word and example, in season and out of season. With Him you will always succeed; without Him you can do nothing. Walk, then, before Him and be perfect.

Next to God, live and move for His Blessed Mother. THE AVE MARIA this year affords you an occasion to show and exercise your best sentiments towards her. She will obtain for you and your House blessing and consolation proportionate to your zeal. Excitement in a right direction is indispensable for great success among children. You have the means in your hands to raise it, and keep it up from beginning to end. Let the emulation commence at home; it will soon gain and reach the class-room.

If you really love those given you for the present year, you will return them even better than they now are. May you say with our Blessed Lord, "Of those Thou hast given Me I have lost none!" Suffer none to neglect or violate either Rule or commands; but to render duty easy and sweet, be everything to all.

In your little trials and difficulties—for difficulties you will have—consult your Superiors, *and no one else*. Do not communicate the affairs of your House to anyone else. You must bear this in mind, it is serious. You must all take a religious care of the character of your Congregation; refer to your Superiors here what you cannot solve yourselves, and duly protect their decisions or counsels, as true Religious never fail to do. Your correspondence with your Superiors no one has a right to see; it should be kept to yourselves exclusively, unless you are permitted or requested to show it sometimes to other parties concerned or interested. Otherwise, pray consider your Superiors' letters as written *strictly for yourselves alone*.

You will not neglect to afford everyone in your House some means of advancing in science; if no time is lost in occupations not relevant to your vocation, there will be plenty leisure found every day for a class: all teachers shall be re-examined on their return home in July.

We cannot recommend too much economy in all its bearings; scrupulous attention to personal cleanliness, as well as to that of the House and premises. You will be expected to enforce the rule of three meals a day, with the requisite number of dishes for each; likewise to purchase no article of vestiary but from the Provincial House; nor to take or give any permission to travel, unless duly authorized from here; neither to accept any invitation to eat outside. The discipline of your House is entirely at your mercy; ten months are more than enough to establish it or kill it outright; your choice should be made from the beginning. If things are loose in your hands, there will be no vigor of discipline among your associates; their esteem for you will not rise high; but if they know you as a lover of the Rule, keeping everything straight, with zeal and charity, your claim on their respect and love will not fail you.

May the peace of God remain with you forever!

Your devoted, in J. M. J.,

E. SORIN.

