REV. FATHERS and DEAR CHILDREN in CHRIST:

What a beautiful Festival! It is only since a very few years St. Joseph was declared the Patron of the Universal Church; but in reality from the very beginning, from the Stable in Bethlehem to our own times, he always was the protector of the Church. The Shepherds, and our guide to the First搜 the Child and His Mother, and find both, according to the angelical announcement: but the Protecter of both was there, admirably fulfilling His Divine Mission for both the Child and His Mother, first of all, in what was to both more precious than life, their common honor; and next, for the necessities of life. The was the Church, with its recondite and indispensable Protector, who was to us seated in Heaven; and the arsolute need of such a Protector will soon appear more evident and palpable. How different, the designs of God from the designs of men! What more Divine, more innocent and harmless—what more worthy of the universal welcome of the whole world, than that admirable Holy Family, that sacred nascent and saving Church! But in God's design, that heavenly Church was to meet, even from its cradle, with nothing but opposition and persecution, from those it was intended to save. Who could have guessed, that sweet Divine Babe and the countenance of His modest and celestial Mother, and concile, for a moment, the least apprehension of any fearful design? And yes, scarcely had the Divine Infant been lying there a few days in a manger, when the angelic gotherds and the hometoads there was a great tumult, because of a few fears from taking away His life. 'At once, soldiers are sent to Bethlehem with one view and purpose, to kill the Child, even if a whole hec tomb has to be sacrificed to insure ! His slaughter!" Already they are on the road; 'they will soon reach Bethlehem, and mercilessly carry out their impious and cruel orders. 'Poor Jesus, so sweet! Dear Lord, why will you give your innocent life, to this monster of cruelty? 'How swift the feet of the tigers thirsting for blood! They are already hearing the doomed spot. O Haven again, who will protect the Child and His Mother! In the grotto, all are asleep, but a thought of the imminent danger. 'God Himself has been waiting to the last hour, the more clearly to manifest the needful protection of His illustrious Son in the enowmous and indispensable Protector, who was to us seated in Heaven. But the angel of protection awakened the Protector and says to him: 'Arise, and take the Child and His Mother, and fly into Egypt. For it will come to pass that Heced will destroy Him.' The order admits no delay; the following instant Mary and Jesus; under the protection of Joseph, were on their journey, directing their steps, as Joseph himself leads, towards Egypt. 'Strange and unlooked for is the flight that appears, the young Mother, with her precious arte in her arms, and her dear child, whom she frowns in her heart, for apprehension escapes her lips; she trusts in him and fears no evil. Possibly, before they had gone any distance, they hear in the dead stillness of the night the screams and wailing of the poor desolate mothers whose children are cruelly snatched from their bosoms, to be killed under their eyes to the Child! "Dear Mother, how can we sink enough that the divinely instituted protector who saved the sacred infant; His Holy Mother, from a slaughter so visibly directed against the one alone escaped from the deadly blow, because of the protection so timely extended? This paternal protection he will continue to both through their dreary, long and painful journey to Egypt, and for the seven years they will remain in exile he will devote all his thoughts and energies to support and childish the precious lives Heaven has entrusted to his care and protection. When he returns to Nazareth he will continue still to his last breath to work and spend himself for the same. Who will tell our happiness, knowing, as we do, that the same Protector who so admirably protected our Blessed Eaviour and His Holy Mother, and in their sacred persons the Church itself, for so thirty years, still remains, and will forever remain the same willing and loving Protector of the Church, whenever and wherever his services will be ac cepted and his name invoked with confidence and grateful love!

But how much greater should our happiness be, when we reflect that we, Religious of the Holy Cross, have such a special claim to St. Joseph's particular protection, from the well-known fact that our Congregation originated exclusively for the propagation of St. Joseph, and that if, in course of time, we add to the protection of the Sacred Heart and that of Our Lady of the Seven Dolors, still never did we for a moment repudiate our first allegiance, nor allow our boundless confidence in his powerful protection to slack or weaken at any time? Why? If two such glorious and greater names were thus added, and formed for us a list of Protectors in Heaven, with a decided preference to the two recently given, what else shall we see in this mysterious but beautiful first and only original Protector, who, in his unbrowned humble love for us, has procured to our infant Congregation two greater and superior Protectors, rejoicing to be last where he was first, and giving us, as the best proof of his interest in our little family, his wonderful success in obtaining for us, in Heaven, two such Protectors, so much above himself? But where did he find them? In his own Family; and here again see the strategies of his love and his humility!

Like the shepherds of old and the Kings from the East, you may come in search of Jesus and Mary and find both; but will you not see with them the glorious Protector, Master and head of the House? Oh! we know how things go in a well-regulated Family. In the Eastern No. What the Holy Family was a double key to it. You may imagine who held the two precious instruments, naming only the Child and His Mother, may pass in silence the name of Joseph; but he is none the less present there, by Divine appointment, the representative of the Godhead, and as such receiving daily and hourly the homage and cures of both the Child and His Mother. For the Holy Family is regulated in its every movement by the same head. Not only the Blessed Mother, to whom not a living creature could compare on earth or in heaven, obeys him, calling him, acknowledging him as her lord and master, but His Himself, the Creator of Heaven and earth, obeys him in humble submission. Both tell us, later on: "We have given you an example, that as we have done so you might do." Here are our models, our authorized models. What more shall we need to curb our vain pride and laughter self-conceits? Here is the Family after which Religious Communities must be formed; and in proportion, literally and precisely, as they resemble and reproduce it, they infallibly measure their own happiness, usefulness and their glorious destinies. There every soul lives by Faith. Human comfort may be wanting, but an enjoyment that exceeds all earthly joys reigns supreme and undisturbed among their fortunate inmates.
If, by way of contrast, you turn your eyes from that lovely sight, and examine those poor nominal Religious, self-relying spirits, fault-finders, censurers of authority, always wiser than those over them, you will find little to edify, but much calculated to ruin the spirit of Nazareth: they deceive many in making themselves important if not indispensable. Mind what I say, and forget it not: Whoever has not the spirit of the Holy Family will benefit a Community only in one way, viz., by going out of it. Look not to the number, but to the quality. Twelve men sufficed, in God's own mind, to convert the world. The Apostolic College was far better after Judas had left it than before. May God free us—yes, such is my most earnest prayer,—may Heaven free us from all such as have not, and likely will never have, the spirit of the Holy Family.

The Encyclical of our new Holy Father has lately told the world, in magnificent language, the evils of our present time and the unprecedented sufferings of the Church. Hence, we must conclude that such a state of things cannot be met successfully by common virtue. To maintain their ground, Religious Institutions absolutely require God's Blessings. These blessings shall not be wanting to us if we are not wanting to them.

As far as I am concerned, I am not in the least disturbed by the consideration of the evils afflicting society at large. If God is with us, who can be against us? But the sudden disappearance of most of these afflictions, on one side, and an additional increase of prosperity on the other, would give us no security unless we show ourselves Religious, living up to our Rules, and drawing down new blessings continually on our ranks by a close imitation of the model Family, brought once more before our eyes by the glorious solemnity we this day celebrate.

I have been officiating here on the occasion, and must say that the day has been one of great edification and consolation to me. I am preparing to start with Mgr. Dufail, Mgr. Dubuis, and Mgr. Lamy, all desirous to visit Notre Dame.

To letters just received, I may say in reply that never did I enjoy a day more to my satisfaction, in praying undisturbed for my numerous friends beyond the sea. I am delighted to hear that Easter Sunday made so many souls happy. May our glorious Patron keep you all in the newness of life proper to this joyous Paschal time.

E. Sorin, O. S. C.,
Superior-General.