CIRCULAR LETTER No. 118
OF THE
VERY REV. SUPERIOR-GENERAL
OF THE
CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY CROSS.

NOTRE DAME, IND., Oct. 17, 1882.

REV. FATHERS and DEARLY-BELoved CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

The above date may seem late to offer you my grateful acknowledgments, when so many honest and devoted hearts have a right to be thanked for the touching expression of their affectionate sentiments. Indeed, for five or six days I have felt, perhaps more keenly than ever before, the urgency of returning something like adequate thanks for the streams of filial utterances of love and devotedness: but I could not begin my pleasure though arduous task until I had opened and read, to the last, the huge mass of letters which every mail has brought to me. With attention and pleasure, I perused every line of the voluminous correspondence; but when I read, a moment ago, that one of those I love most tenderly had received from me but one answer in six years, I felt ashamed. I could not delay another moment thanking from my inner heart, not every one individually (it would take a month), but all in globo, and humbly, but earnestly, begging of God to bless all my pious and sincere well-wishers according to the depth and fervor of their personal happiness.

I have no recollection of such a bountiful harvest of blessings invoked upon me, and, therefore, never felt, as I do to-day, the weight of obligations under which it places me to the Congregation of the Holy Cross and its many friends in both hemispheres. It is true, the very word harvest brings home to me the thought of the autumn of my life; but I turn it into a consoling expectation of the rich and abundant fruits and crops for which a faithful husbandman looks from the day he begins to sow. I confess (I should be the last to deny it) that our good God has blessed me, through the mediation of His Holy Mother and St. Joseph, far beyond what, forty years ago, I could have anticipated. But the merit of our success I cheerfully ascribe to your generous and unfailing devotedness. What could I have done, were I not supported by your heroic good-will, which has ever sustained me amidst trials and sufferings? May God in His infinite mercy be mindful of the noble soldiers of the Cross who have already fallen on the glorious battle-field; and may He bless, especially and above all, the dear veterans whose fidelity entitles them to my esteem and gratitude in proportion to the length and importance of their services! Long life to our first pioneers! Time passes swiftly away; very soon everyone will share, I trust, in this precious blessing.

It is not in my power to reply individually to more than eight hundred well-wishers who have done me the honor and pleasure to express, in their admirable style, their truly honorable sentiments of affection and respect; and yet I feel so grateful to each and to all that I can scarcely rest in peace until they know that their congratulations, either in person, or in writings or presents, have been received with an appreciative heart.

The celebration of St. Edward's Feast, here and at St. Mary's, calls for my unbounded thanks to all who took part in it; only one thing deprives me of the intended honor and gratification, and that is, the consciousness of not deserving it. We are blessed, far more than ever before, thanks to your general devotedness and religious spirit. But, at the same time, and above all, let us not forget to pray for la poevera Francia!

Before closing this address of thanks, I wish to express to you my profound cordial attachment and regard. I have known you from the very beginning of my mission, and have been with you and for you all during my life in Notre Dame, in the days when you were a tiny community, and in the days of our gloire. You have formed me, as I have formed you. You have been the chief object of my affection, and a principal cause of my success. You have always been the first object of my solicitude. You have always before been the first object of my good wishes and of my prayers. You have always been the first object of my hopes and of my ambitions. You are, therefore, the monument we intend raising to the Divine declaration: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself." Indeed she will; and with our eyes, surely she will draw all our hearts. On Assumption Day she was carried to heaven on the wings of a legion of angels. Here, on her own lovely dominion, she will be lifted up on high, chiefly by the loving hands of beautiful little, innocent children, whose affection for their dear mothers at home will be increased each time they will look up to see their heavenly Mother raised to draw all hearts from the earth.

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,
Superior General.

J. M. J.