

THE ADVENT SEASON.

A Period of Preparation for the Better Celebration of Christmas.

The liturgical year in the Catholic Church commences with the first Sunday of Advent, the latter word being the name given to that period of the year which closes the coming of Christmas. The Advent season, which is a time set apart by the Church wherein the faithful are exhorted to prepare themselves duly for the better observance of the feast of the Nativity, begins annually on that Sunday that falls nearest to St. Andrew's day, November 30; and that Sunday may come as early as Nov. 27, or as late as December 30.

Formerly, the Adventide, like the Lenten Season, consisted of forty days, and it was observed, moreover, as rigorously as the penitential period; but since the ninth century its duration for the general body of the faithful has been limited to four weeks; although an Advent of forty days, with all the original severities of the season, is yet observed by some of the most austere of the religious orders. For the people at large, though, with the lessening of the length of Advent, there was also granted a mitigation of the observances which attended it of old; and in the middle of the fourteenth century Pope Urban V. dispensed the laity from the abstinence that, up to that time, was daily required of them.

The date of the institution of Advent is generally placed in the early part of the fourth century. Then the name which it now bears was given to Christmas and the Church, anxious to secure the best possible observance of that great festival, prefaced it with a period of forty days, upon which she bestowed the appellation of Advent. The season is found mentioned in the writings of St. Perpetuus, the eighth bishop of Tours, which See he presided over from 461 to 491; and his reference to it—he ordered that during Advent an additional fast day should be observed every week from St. Martin's day until Christmas—shows that the season had been instituted before his time. The Council of Macon, which was held in the year 581, during the Pontificate of St. Pelagius II, ordered that in France all Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays of Advent should be considered fasts of obligation. In the Greek Church, as was illustrated by the marriage this week of the new Czar—marriages being forbidden by that church in Advent—the season differs in duration from the Catholic Advent; and in the Protestant churches in Germany many of the Catholic rules regarding the manner of keeping Advent are still in force. On the part of some of the Protestant denominations in this country there has also been shown of late years a disposition to copy the Catholic way of keeping Advent; and the Ritualists nowadays have their special services for the season, while their preachers aim at adapting to its spirit the sermons they deliver during its continuance, thus returning to a practice that has always prevailed with the Catholic priesthood.

After it had instituted the Advent season, the Church prescribed special offices for its days; and the Sacramentary of St. Gregory the Great, that illustrious Pope who occupied St. Peter's chair in the latter part of the sixth century, are found Masses and offices proper for the five Sundays which, at that period, were comprised in the season. The present offices, covering only four Sundays, were fixed in the ninth century, when, as already stated, the length of Advent was lessened. The more notable features of the Advent Mass are the violet vestments worn by the priest, the omission of the *Gloria* and the substitution of the *Benedicamus Domino* for the *Ite Missa Est*, in dismissing the congregation. The antiphon of the office during Advent in honor of the Blessed Virgin is the *Alma Redemptoris Mater*, wherein the maternity of Mary is honored and her intercession as the Mother of God invoked. This hymn dates from the eleventh century, and its author was the Blessed Hermann, who was educated at the celebrated Swiss Monastery of St. Gall, and who died in 1054 at the age of 41.

In many of the older Catholic countries, in the churches of all the principal cities, special courses of Advent Sermons are annually delivered by the most eloquent preachers whose services can be secured. The Advent sermons in Notre Dame, in Paris, and those at the Church

of San Andrea delle Valle, in Rome, are famous throughout the world; and to be asked to preach therein is one of the highest honors that can be bestowed upon an ecclesiastic. Among the most noted European Advent preachers whose fame has reached this country, are the Dominican Fathers Didon and Monsabre, Mgr. d'Hulst and, in his day, Father "Tom" Burke, whose splendid eloquence was often heard in the Eternal City. Mgr. Keane and other American divines have also preached in Rome during the Advent season. The late Mgr. Preston, of New York, during his pastorate at St. Ann's Church in that city, always made it a point to preach a course of Advent sermons. Nowadays the custom is quite common, and the gospels, furthermore, of the Advent Sundays furnish the preacher always with appropriate themes for the season.—*Catholic Columbian*.

WHAT OUR MISSIONARIES ARE DOING IN EVERY LAND.

A BRAVE YOUNG PRIEST.

Rev. Father Jamond, a young Marist Father, was sent as a missionary to Kandaboo, one of the Feejee Islands. He was told plainly of the poverty of this mission; that he would have but a poor thatched cabin for a church; that he would have neither plantations nor means of living, save what the charity of his converts could spare him.

The valiant Father did not allow himself to be daunted by fear of the want of so many things; that we look upon as the necessities of life. He thought only of the souls to be saved, and he went. For more than two years he has lived in this cabin, into which the wind and the rain penetrated on every side, and in which he had not even a chair. Indifferent to all the comforts of life, he only remembered that if he abandoned them the poor natives would die without a priest, and he remained.

Mgr. Vidal, vicar apostolic of the Feejee Islands, who visited the Island of Kandaboo, writes as follows of the missions at that island:—

"Father Jamond's poor hut was built upon ground not belonging to the mission, and is of a poverty worthy of that of the Divine Master who had not whereon to lay his head. We have been able to buy a little corner of ground, and we have at last decided on building a wooden house for our missionary. It was with the two-fold intention of inspecting this little property, and of planning the house, that I went to Kandaboo, where I also had to administer Confirmation to thirty converts.

"We left Suva and embarked on the Saint Andrew, Fathers Rouillac and Terrien being with me, the latter having only arrived at Feejee the previous day. Our voyage lasted two days and two nights, owing to contrary winds. At last we arrived at Kandaboo towards the middle of the night, but this did not prevent our good converts hurrying to ring all the bells, and then coming down to await us on the shore, bearing torches of dried coconut leaves, by the light of which they conducted us to the church, singing their sweetest canticles. On account of the lateness of the hour we put off all ceremonials until morning and went to snatch a short rest, but not without having shaken hands with our converts and blessed them all.

"During the following days, I administered the sacrament of Confirmation to all who had been prepared, and baptized three newly converted adults.

"We had also to receive the presents of our converts and to attend the games and dances which they performed in our honor, after which we went to inspect our newly acquired estate and to fix upon a site for the house and chapel. Having examined all and calculated the cost, I said to our good missionary:

"Father, it will cost £160 to build the chapel, and nearly as much to build your house. But £320 for this year, tried as we have been by famine, is too heavy a charge for the mission; it would be impossible to meet it. And yet I do not like to leave you another year in this wretched cabin, where everything, books, clothes, and even the altar linen, is rotting."

"Monseigneur," answered the missionary, "let us think of the good God above all; I can have patience yet awhile; I should be ashamed to have a wooden house for myself, while the good God had but a poor cabin of reeds."

"Being absolutely without money, I could but admire and yield, but what re-

grets did I not carry away in my heart when, after such an act of lofty and disinterested faith, I cast, on leaving, a last glance at that poor damp hut, where everything was mouldering! God will not, I hope, allow the health of his apostle to suffer too severely."—*Sacred Heart Review*.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

Celebration in Different City Churches on Last Saturday.

AT THE CATHEDRAL.

Mg. Fabre officiated at Pontifical High Mass at the Cathedral, assisted by Vicar General Bourgeault, assistant priest; the deacons of honor were Canons Leblanc and Vaillant; the deacons of office, Canons Archambault and Martin. Mr. Pelletier was the organist, and Mr. Couture the maître de chapelle. The Mass was a musical one, with full choir and orchestral accompaniment. The ceremonies were very impressive.

AT NOTRE DAME.

The music at Notre Dame Church was equal to former occasions. A musical Mass was sung by a full choir under the leadership of Mr. Rateau. Mr. Beique presided at the organ.

Rev. Mr. Larue, P. S. S., officiated, assisted by deacons and sub-deacons. Rev. Mr. Saurin, P. S. S., preached the sermon.

AT THE GESU.

At the Church of the Gesu there was a large congregation, and the ceremonies were impressive. The music was of a very high order, and the Mass was sung in an artistic manner. Professor Alex. Clerk led the choir, composed of fifty voices. Prof. D. Ducharme was organist. The Mass was that of "E Silas," it is pretty, and has been seldom sung here. The soloists were: H. C. St. Pierre, Q. C., basso; A. Comtois, R. Masson, A. Gosselin, tenors; A. Pinsonnault, baritone; E. St. Amour, basso. Wagner's "Ave Maria" was sung at the offertory. Rev. Father Jones, S. J., officiated, assisted by Rev. Mr. Forest and Rev. Theophile Hudon, S. J., as deacon and sub-deacon. Rev. Father Desjardins, S. J., preached the sermon. This evening there will be a solemn benediction, and there will be special music.

AT ST. PATRICK'S.

There was a grand ceremony at St. Patrick's Church. The music of the mass was pretty and well rendered. The choir was under the leadership of Prof. Fowler. Rev. Father McCallen, P. S. S., officiated, assisted by Rev. Father James Callaghan, P. S. S., and Rev. Father Toupin, P. S. S.

AT ST. ANTHONY'S.

At St. Anthony's Church the choir rendered "La Messe des Anges." There was a very large congregation, and the music was excellent. Rev. Father Guibault officiated, and Rev. Father Donnelly preached a sermon on the feast. Miss Perrigo was the organist, and Mr. Henault led the choir.

AT ST. MARY'S.

The ceremonies at St. Mary's Church were unusually grand. Besides the celebration of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, the ceremonies of the "Forty Hours' Devotion" were begun. The Blessed Sacrament remained ex-

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posed until Monday. On account of this there was no sermon. Rev. Father Fahey officiated. The musical part of the mass was ably rendered by a full choir, under the leadership of Mr. Paquette. Prof. Wilson was organist. On Monday the ceremonies of the Forty Hours Devotion ended. A special musical mass had been prepared. The retreat of the ladies of the parish ended also Monday morning. Rev. Father Fahey conducted this retreat.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL.

To the Editor of THE TRUE WITNESS:

SIR,—In the last issue of your valued paper there is an article announcing the consecration of St. George's Cathedral, Southwark, in which it is stated that that church is the pro-cathedral church of the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, and has been for half a century the Metropolitan church for England.

Permit me to say that the above statement is incorrect. St. George's being the cathedral Church of the Bishop of Southwark, who is a suffragan of the Archbishop of Westminster, and whose diocese extends over that part of London south of the River Thames and the country adjacent thereto.

The pro Cathedral of the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster is St. Mary's Church, Kensington, in the West End of London, and the southern limit of the archdiocese is, of course, the River Thames, as it is the northern limit of the Diocese of Southwark.

Yours truly,

FRANCIS W. COTTER.

No. 129 Drolet street,
Montreal, 9th December, 1894.

"Ah," said the casual caller, seeing the poet at work in an adjoining room, "the fire of genius is burning, eh?" "No," said the poet's practical wife, "I guess it is his cigarette that smells so."