

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

A NEW YEAR WISH

God bless the work that lies before your hand!
 God's blessing be on all that you have done!
 For what is fame or gift or treasure grand,
 If His approving smile we have not won!
 God strengthen you when crosses come to stay,
 When shadows close around your heart and home!
 God guide your soul when light seems far away,
 When all the world's tossed waves are white with foam!
 God dower you with kind, consoling words
 For wounded hearts, with gloom and anguish filled—
 Soft, soothing words to sing like happy birds
 With voice prophetic, till the storm is stilled!
 In body and in soul, God keep you strong
 To toil for Him and never fail through fear!
 That is my wish, the burden of my song—
 God bless you in the dawning of the year!

—BRIAN O'HEIGINS

RENEW RESOLUTIONS

The New Year calls on all young men to renew their good resolutions; to begin again with fresh courage the war against the world, the flesh, and the devil; to enlist once more under the standard of Christ.

It calls on them to make more of themselves than they have hitherto done—to cultivate their talents, to improve their minds, to elevate their ambition, to seek to do more good in the world than ever before.

An educated laity, truly Catholic, with high ideals, enthusiastic, generous, persistent in good works, is a great power.

The new year offers opportunities for study, for the acquisition of information and accomplishments, for practicing kindness, for thrift and for the laying up of treasures in Heaven.

How much of last year was wasted? How much of the time of this year will be used?

THE COMING YEAR

The coming year will have three hundred and sixty-five days, but really we will have only one working day: and that is called "Today." That is all you will be accountable for; none but a fool lives in Tomorrow. Serve God Today. Each twenty-four hours brings its own duties to be done; its own temptations to be conquered; its own loads to be carried, and its own progress to be made Heavenward. There never was a Christmas yet strong enough to carry today's duties with tomorrow's worries piled on top of them. Take short views, and never try to climb hills until you get to them nor to cross a bridge until you reach it. Begin every day with Jesus Christ, and then keeping step with Him, march on to duty over the roughest road that lies before you, and in the teeth of the hardest wind you may encounter. My times are in Thy hands; and they could not be in better hands. Our times are in the hands of our All-Wise and All-Loving Father. He takes care of us; and yet we cannot tell just what Tomorrow or the next year will bring forth.—Catholic Columbian.

RECIPE FOR A HAPPY NEW YEAR

Take twelve fine full grown months, see that these are thoroughly free from all old memories of bitterness, rancour, hate and jealousy; cleanse them completely from every clinging spite; pick off all specks of pettiness and littleness; in short, see that these months are freed from all the past—have them as fresh and clean as when they came from the great Storehouse of Time.

Cut these months into thirty or thirty-one equal parts. This batch will keep for just one year. Do not attempt to make up the whole batch at one time (so many persons spoil the entire lot in this way); but prepare one day at a time, as follows:
 Into each day put twelve parts of faith, eleven of patience, ten of courage, nine of work (some people omit this ingredient and so spoil the flavor of the rest), eight of hope, seven of fidelity, six of liberality, five of kindness, four of rest (leaving this out is like leaving the oil out of the salad—don't do it), three of prayer, two of meditation and one well-selected resolution. If you have no conscientious scruples, put in about a teaspoonful of good spirits, a dash of fun, a pinch of folly, a sprinkling of play, and a heaping cupful of good humor.

Pour into the whole love ad libitum and mix with a vim. Cook thoroughly in a fervent heat; garnish with sweet smiles and a few sprigs of joy; then serve with quietness, unselfishness and cheerfulness, and a Happy New Year is a certainty.—Southern Cross.

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

With the beginning of a new year, opening vistas of new opportunities for good, it has ever been the impulse of thinking men to make resolutions. Too often, these resolutions have remained barren, never attaining fruition in act.

Some people, considering it futile, refuse even to resolve, forgetting the words of a Kempis, "And if he who strongly purposeth doth yet oftentimes fail, what will he do that seldom or but weakly resolveth?"

To reach a higher spiritual and moral plane, effort must be seconded by method, and there is no more efficacious method than the particular examen, incorporated in the rule of the various monasteries, it had been for centuries the favorite of the Latin and Greek philosophers. The emperor, Marcus Aurelius, and the freedman Epictetus both employed it, and Popes, monks and laymen have used it to their advantage.

In practice it is quite simple. One particular resolution is formed and this is renewed every morning. At noon and in the evening, an examination is made and the number of failures noted. This repeated self-scrutiny incites one to improve; and perceptible progress will result in a very short time. This method holds for positive as well as negative resolutions.

Of course, the need of success that will be attained depends entirely upon the good will of the one resolving. The truth of the old maxim, "God helps those who help themselves," is indisputable. The particular examen has proven effective through the ages, and sincere Catholics who wish to improve themselves cannot do better than adopt it.—Catholic Standard and Times.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

THE NEW-YEAR BABE

Two together, Babe and Year, At the midnight chime, Through the darkness drifted here To the coast of Time.

Two together, Babe and Year, Over night and day, Crossed the desert Winter drear To the land of May.

On together, Babe and Year, Swift to Summer passed; "Rest a moment, Brother dear," Said the Babe at last.

"Nay, but onward," answered Year, "We must farther go; Through the Vale of Autumn serene To the Mount of Snow."

Toiling upward, Babe and Year Climbed the frozen height. "We may rest together here," Brother Babe—Good-night!"

Then together Babe and Year Slept; but ere the dawn, Vanishing, I know not where, Brother Year was gone!

—JOHN B. TARR

HOW "LITTLE CHRISTMAS" IS OBSERVED IN THE ETERNAL CITY

In the very heart of Rome, on Capitol Hill, where once rose statues to Jupiter and other pagan deities, and where now stands the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, is one of the oldest and most famous of the many old and famous churches of the Eternal City. In its air of antiquity, of rooted permanence, the Church of St. Maria in Ara-Coeli seems to mock the statue of Victor Emmanuel II., the enemy of the Papal power, which confronts it.

It attracts the attention of every visitor and richly rewards those who explore its many beauties. But there is one season of the year when the Church of the Ara-Coeli becomes the church of the Romans. Its very steps—and there are one hundred and twenty-four of them—become, in the days before Epiphany, setting for a traditional Roman spectacle. Here, at the entrance to the church, which contains the Chapel of the Presepio with its famous image of the Santissimo Bambino d'Ara-Coeli, merchants of all kinds take their stand offering every article even remotely connected with the major feast which is to be celebrated, or not connected at all. Thus, hawkers of waxen figures of the Mother and Child and of medals bearing representations of the image of the Bambino compete in strident clamor with vendors of the latest agricultural almanac. But the chief stock in trade consists of pictures of the Nativity of generous, not to say violent coloring, and quaint dolls of cotton wool representing sheep and shepherds, St. Joseph and the Wise Men.

Meanwhile, disregarding the uproar, a steady stream of all sorts and conditions of men is passing in and out of the church. For, in the few days of this Epiphany season, the chapel of the Presepio is open and all may see the wonderful image of the Babe and the jeweled statue of the Virgin Mother who holds Him in her arms. The figure of the Blessed Virgin holding the Infant and St. Joseph standing beside her are shown in the grotto in the foreground. Nearby, kneel the shepherds and the kings and above, God the Father is seen surrounded by crowds of cherubs and angels playing on various instruments, as in the early pictures of Raphael. Behind stretches the plain where the shepherds were watching their flocks when they heard the strains of the angelic choir. But for some reason the night scene is not depicted. Instead, the whole landscape is flooded with bright sunshine, and the shepherds recline under palm trees or stand on slopes with hands shading eyes regarding their charges gathered around a crystal fountain which is seen in the middle distance. All of nearer figures, including those of

women who are shown bearing baskets filled with real fruit for the men, are life-size, of wood painted with rare skill.

While hundreds are flocking to study the remarkable reproduction which takes up half the floor space of the chapel, on the other side an equally singular exhibition is being given. To quote from Story's "Koba di Roma":

"Around one of the antique columns a stage is erected, from which little maidens are reciting, with every kind of pretty gesticulation, sermons, dialogues and little speeches in explanation of the Presepio opposite. Sometimes two of them are engaged in alternate questions and answers about the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Redemption. Sometimes there is a piteous description of the agony of the Saviour and the sufferings of the Madonna.

"All the little speeches have been written for them by their priest or some religious friend, committed to memory, and practiced with appropriate gestures over and over again at home. Their little piping voices are sometimes guilty of such comic breaks and changes that the crowd around them rustles into murmurous laughter. Sometimes, also, one of the little preachers has a dispetto, pouts, shakes her shoulders, and refuses to go on with her part; another, however, always stands ready on the platform to supply the vacancy, until friends have coaxed, reasoned, or threatened the little pouter into obedience. These children are often very beautiful and graceful and their comical little gestures and intonations, their clasping of hands and rolling up of eyes, have a very interesting effect.

An inscription in the sceristy of the church gives a brief history of the Bambino in the following words:

"In this Church of the Ara-Coeli from Christmas Day to Epiphany, large crowds of people visit and worship at the Crib of Christ, where is shown the image of the Infant Saviour, which was made from the wood of olive trees that grew on the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem, by a certain devout Franciscan for the special purpose of sending it to Rome to aid in the celebration of the feast.

"It happened, however, at the very start of his work, that he found he had not sufficient colors properly to decorate the image in the full figure of an infant. So this pious Franciscan Brother besought God that he might find the means to complete his work. These were found and with the figure completed, he took the boat for Italy. But the vessel was shipwrecked and the image to which he had given so much time, was lost. It was washed ashore on the shores of Croatia. There it was found and immediately recognized by the Franciscans who had already received a description of the image in letters received from Jerusalem. They brought it to the Ara-Coeli.

"It is reported also that a certain pious woman who had a great devotion toward it was rewarded, when, because of this devotion, the figure was miraculously transported to her house.

"As it has always been held in great veneration by the Roman people, as time has passed, this veneration has resulted in ever greater gifts and richer ornaments."

The Bambino itself is fresh colored and is swathed in gold and silver, crowned, and sparkling with jewels. The figure of the Blessed Virgin is also covered with jewelry, which includes especially fine diamond pendants in the ears.

As the Feast of the Epiphany approaches, the crowds on the steps of the Ara-Coeli, grow daily larger and larger and the Chapel of the Presepio is thronged every hour of the day. Confraternities and other organizations visit the church in bodies and the hawkers do an enormous trade; for while none of the articles offered for sale cost more than a few cents, the true Roman would not think of returning to his home from one of these visits without having his pocket filled with offerings for the children of his family "bought at the Ara-Coeli."

The culmination is reached on January 6, when the hour is reached for the blessing of the people with the Bambino. Right up to the last minute the buying and selling continues and the child preachers continue their discourses. Bands, leading processions, add to the noise without. Then, suddenly, silence. The little orators descend from their platform, the church is cleared, and the steps, which, but now echoed with the deafening shouts of the traders and the blare of trumpets, become the platforms of expectancy where the tightly wedged crowds stand glued, every eye as one turned on the main door of the church.

A small procession emerges, a monk, his hands encased in white gloves, is seen carrying the Bambino. He moves toward a small raised dais near the door and with much squeezing and surging to make it possible, the crowd falls on its knees.
 The Babe is held aloft. Slowly he is raised, slowly turned from left to right. The blessing of the Bambino has been given. For a moment the silence holds. Then a band crashes into music; others follow, and amid the thunder of their combined strains the Bambino of the Presepio is restored to his place in the Ara-Coeli.—The Monitor.

THE LAST TESTAMENT

There is no scene more pathetic than that which frequently takes place at the bedside of the dying when an affectionate father of a family, knowing that his hour is come, prepares to issue his last commands or wishes which shall be carried out by those dear to him when he is no more.

It is habitual to most men to defer that which is serious, painful and difficult to the last possible moment. In the morning of life, or its radiant noonday, it is hard to put aside the glitter and the tinsel for the sober thought and preparation for eventide. So many are accustomed to defer the execution of a most important affair, the making of their last will or testament, until they are certain that the end is near. Then they make haste to send for the attorney and arrange their material affairs. Sad duty, that too often is accomplished with the realization that the donor of these good gifts will be soon forgotten in the seductive enjoyment that money has power to give.

To apply for the will, there are men who have something to leave behind them besides an accumulation of worldly treasures. Happily for us, all the bequests of noble souls lives far longer in the hearts of those who have received the inheritance than the pleasure or benefit which accrues from great wealth.

We all know of men who had little or nothing of this world's goods, but who were able, on their death-beds, to dispose of a vast amount of property, not only to their relatives and immediate friends, but to all mankind. Their accumulations may be said to resemble those of the wonderful baskets of bread which, in the long ago, on the shores of a lake, were multiplied in their contents so amazingly that thousands were fed from matter that humanly speaking was scarcely sufficient for a few.

Rich men die poor in the midst of all their gold; poor men die rich in the midst of their poverty and want—strange anomaly!
 To him who has left all that is dangerous, harmful and non-productive to his last end, what a serene and happy harmony exists in all things: The whole universe glorifies its Creator, and the universal riches of the earth are the property of the poorest of mortals. In the temple of his spirit, the free man rejoices because he feels that he is not bound by ignoble chains to the earth.

"Everything is in its place," says a young hermit of our own day. "His members, flesh and blood are all in subjection to his thought and thought itself is dependent upon God. The beasts of the field see only as far as the azure heavens, man alone penetrates beyond this blue veil and sees Heaven."

What of the men who have struggled all their lives in the obscurity of the cloister, striving to overcome that most formidable foe, self? When age was creeping upon them and their members already began to stiffen at the approach of death, they consecrated their last efforts to reproducing faithfully for the world the story of how the conquest was achieved. We have not a few, but many who so labor, and by the easy pathway of their experience we may sooner arrive at the heights which they reached. It was only after he had struggled and labored and suffered very much that Thomas a Kempis could write the secret of a happy and contented life: "Love to be unknown and to be esteemed as nothing."

THE SCAPULAR

By Right Rev. H. T. Henry, Litt. D.

In religious nomenclature, the word scapular is ambiguous. It may refer to that most important part of the monastic dress (borrowed thence by numerous religious orders and confraternities of men and women which is ordinarily placed over the habit or cassock, and which consists of a broad band of cloth from fourteen to eighteen inches wide, with an opening in the centre to permit of its hanging longitudinally over the breast and back, and of a length permitting the ends to reach nearly to the feet. It may also refer to the smaller scapular worn by the Carmelites at night measuring about ten inches in width and twenty inches in length. Finally, it may refer to the still smaller "great scapular" of the Franciscan tertiaries.

The laity commonly use the word in reference to the smallest form of the scapular, consisting of two quadrilateral pieces of woven woolen cloth, about two inches wide and two and three-quarters inches long, connected by two bands or strings of cloth which are supported by the shoulders.

The word itself comes from the Latin (scapular, the shoulder; scapularis, pertaining to the shoulders), and obviously suits all forms of the scapular, large or small. For the sake of brevity, the smallest form will be designated here by the letters L. S. (Lay Scapular or scapulars), and the larger forms by the letters M. S. (Monastic Scapular.)

The L. S. is, practically speaking, merely a greatly abbreviated form of the M. S., or the badge of a confraternity, or simply a devotional emblem. It may be considered, nevertheless, as the natural heir of the beautiful symbolism of the M. S. As the opening in the center of the M. S. permitted the garment to rest on the shoulders, the M. S. was often styled Jugum Christi, i. e., the yoke of Christ, in reference to the Divine Master's tender invitation to come to Him, for that His yoke is sweet (Jugum meum suave est) and His burden light (Matt. 11: 28-30.) The L. S. may clearly

retain the symbolism of the yoke, as the head passes through the parallel bands or strings.
 The original form of the Dominican scapular provided a segment for covering the head. This became in time the "hood." The scapular was called the scutum (Latin for shield), and recalls the words of St. Paul (Eph. 6: 16.) The L. S. hardly suggests the symbolism, but the pious mind may easily reconstruct it.

An early form of the M. S. had flaps hanging down laterally over the shoulders, thus making with the longitudinal portions, a garment having the form of a cross. The scapular was therefore sometimes referred to simply as the crux (Latin for cross.) Except in so far as the strings of the L. S. are borne upon the shoulders, even as the Cross was borne upon those of Christ, the symbolism is not closely suggested by the form of the L. S. One variety of the M. S. had transverse pieces or bands binding the longitudinal portions. This form is still in use, and equally suggests the symbolism of the Cross.

Less suggestive of symbolism, however, is the "scapular medal" which the Holy See, in 1910, permitted as a substitute for the L. S. Worn constantly on the person or carried decently thereon, the single medal may replace any or all of the L. S. (there are seventeen recognized varieties), although it requires a separate blessing by a competent priest for each of the scapulars. Not in itself suggestive of the various symbolisms, those who wear it may still recall these with spiritual profit.



Answers for last week: Adeste Fideles (Oh, come all ye faithful).



In the oblong at the top is the name of a great celebration, its date & place.
 The 2 circles in the squares give the name of next Sunday's feast.
 The picture at the bottom represents the feast which the Church keeps New Year's Day. Can you find a knife?
 Answers next week.

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