



Jesus said to his disciples. Whom do you say that I am?

Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ the Son of the living God.

And Jesus answering, said to him: Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my father who is in heaven. AND I SAY TO THEE: THAT THOU ART PETER; AND UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH, AND THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT.

AND I SHALL GIVE TO THEE THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven. S. Matthew xvi. 15-19.

“Was anything concealed from Peter, who was styled the Rock on which the Church was built, who received the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the power of loosing and binding in Heaven and on earth?” —TULLIAN PRÆSCRIP. XLII.

“There is one God, and one Church, and one Chair founded by the voice of the Lord upon PETER. That any other Altar be erected, or a new Priesthood established, besides that one Altar, and one Priesthood, is impossible. Whosoever gathers elsewhere, scatters. Whatever is devised by human frenzy, in violation of the Divine Ordinance, is adulterous, impious, sacrilegious.” —St. Cyprian Ep. 43 ad p'ebem.

“All of them remaining silent, for the doctrine was beyond the reach of man, PETER the Prince of the Apostles and the supreme herald of the Church, not following his own inventions, nor persuaded by human reasoning, but enlightened by the Father, says to him: Thou art Christ, and not this alone, but the Son of the living God.” —St. Cyril of Jerusalem. Cat. xi. 1.

Calendar.

- August 6—Sunday—VIII after Pent II August, Transfiguration of Our Lord Doub.
- “ 7—Monday—St Cajetan C Doub com
- “ 8—Tuesday—St Cyriacus &c, M M Semid cum &c.
- “ 9—Wednesday—St Emygdus B M Doub Sup com &c.
- “ 10—Thursday—St Lawrence M Doub II cl. with Oct.
- “ 11—Friday—St Sixtus II P M Doub Sup com &c.
- “ 12—Saturday—St Claro V Doub Sup com &c.

[Annals of the Propagation of the Faith.]

MISSIONS OF GHINA.

MARTYRDOM OF AGATHA HO, A CHINESE VIRGIN.

The author of this narrative is his Lordship, Dr. Rizzolati, Vicar-Apostolic of Hou Quang, who took it from the written statement of two Christians that were formerly companions of the captivity and torments of Agatha, and are now condemned to exile on account of the Faith.

“Agatha Ho was born at Patoun-sien a small town of the Province of Houpe. Educated by Christian parents together with a brother whom God called since to the priesthood, she felt inspired by her love for Jesus and her devotion to Mary, to consecrate her virginity to the Lord. Thenceforth, her life was nothing but one series of good works. The lustre of her piety was even the cause that betrayed her, when, in 1839, the viceroy Chou published the edict of persecution. God so permitted that his faithful servant was unable to withdraw by flight from the conflict, because *the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the strong.* Agatha was, therefore, arrested by satellites, together with two holy women named Dina-Lou and Liu-ki-ze, and two fervent neophytes named Si-viencai-sin and Quoan-ki-quoi. They were all five enchained for the sole crime of being Christians.

“The confessors of the faith whilst in prison were chained hand and foot. Agatha, especially endured an aggravation of prison horrors a night time. It is customary for both men and women, although separated in prison, to have their feet secured in shackles, in order to hinder each individual from stirring from the place assigned for sleeping. This irksome precaution is a nullity almost as regards females, whose feet having been from infancy subjected to rigorous contraction are commonly so small, that they slip out by the aperture of the wood which should confine them; this allows the captives to draw them out secretly in order to sleep more at their ease. Now, this alleviation was impracticable to the pious virgin, inasmuch as in her own country, which is all hilly, the young girls cannot sacrifice themselves to Chinese fashion without rendering it impossible for them to climb the steep ascents that rise in succession everywhere. Agatha, therefore, not having distorted nature, had feet of average length, and so in her sixtieth year had to endure the punishment of having the feet imprisoned.

“From the moment the neophytes entered the goal, those places, which hitherto had received naught but maledictions and horrible blasphemies, heard the accents of resignation and the hymns of hope. Each evening when silence disposed the mind to composure and darkness screened from the captives the walls of the cell,

the piety of our Christians reflected back the times of the catacombs,—their voices united in praises of God and chaunting their prayers. Mandarins, satellites, gaolers, and those amongst the criminals who were not in fetters, flocked to this enchanting concert, and transported with admiration for so much virtue—melted by the suavity of the holy canticles, said to each other with astonishment that they had never seen so much joy in irons, and that an individual should be a prisoner of Christ in order to have the secret of charming misfortune. These idolaters could not comprehend how it occurred that Christians incarcerated for having professed their religion, could still vow such fidelity that even in shackles they abated nothing of that worship which they were the victims.

“Agatha and her companions were frequently summoned to the presence of divers tribunals of *Ou-cham-fou*, and were eagerly urged to sign their apostasy; but the firmness of their faith triumphed over all trials. However, seeing themselves in the midst of tortures, and forsaken by their families, they let fall certain complaints on the manner in which Providence treated them, and conceived suspicions against certain persons to whom they attributed, rather than to the Divine will, their cruel captivity. They entertained these dangerous dispositions when the mandarin summoned them before his tribunal, and dissembling the snare under the guise of carresses, he said to them, ‘Your religion is good; but as the emperor is ignorant of it, I shall reconcile his orders with your faith. I do not require your apostasy; I am satisfied by a fiction; I merely want a word.’ And he presented them with a form for signature. The captives rejected this offer, protesting that their hands as well as their hearts repelled the disavowal of their faith; and they added, that if dissimulation could satisfy the mandarin and deceive the emperor, it would not succeed in satisfying or deceiving God.

Then the mandarin, as if he had succumbed to these observations, ordered the clerks to draw up another form, which he presented again to the prisoners, saying to them, ‘Sign this one, which does not raise the question of apostasy, and require at liberty. No one shall in future impede you from professing your religion and singing hymns to your God. Sign, and go in peace.’ Deceived by these expressions, they half signed.

“Alas! they were far from enjoying that peace which the mandarin had wished them. Pursued by the reproaches of their conscience, they sent me secretly a messenger to know what they should do. My reply was, that they should suffer everything, even death, rather than give their signature. ‘Do not complain of God,’ I added, ‘neither tarnish by unjust suspicions the glorious chains with which Providence has decked you. Think of your souls and forget your bodies.’ And these holy women, already on the threshold of their prison, reentered it at my voice without delay or murmur, and retracting their signature before the mandarin, they declared to him, that having received notice of how they had been taken by surprise, they would in future hold themselves on their guard against the mere shade of a disavowal. On this declaration they were fettered a second time.

“Shortly after I despatched to the captives a Chinese Priest, who received their confession, and confirmed them so firmly in the love of sacrifices, that they emitted no more complaints against Providence, nor complaints against their neighbours, and resumed with greater fervour than ever their pious exercises. The feast of

Christmas found them in these happy dispositions. On the eve of that lovely day they petitioned not to be placed in fetters, in order that they might in company with Agatha celebrate in holy joy the birth of the Saviour, and their petition having been acceded to by the governor, who admired such great piety, the prison resounded during the whole night with canticles to the glory of the Divine Infant.

“Practices of zeal and charity were superadded to those of devotion. They announced the Gospel to the other prisoners, amongst whom, two poor women, condemned to death, embraced the Faith, and received with baptism the pardon of their crimes before proceeding to expiate them upon the scaffold. Thus, the filial obedience of these three neophytes to the counsels of their Bishop, became to them a source of fresh merits, and doubled the lustre of the crown by sharing it with souls that were going to be lost for ever.

“At length, the day arrived when sentence was to be pronounced, it was in conformity with the decrees of the emperor *Tao-Kouang*, and condemned the three Christians to perpetual banishment. Whilst on their road to exile, they passed by the door of our religious house. They took advantage of the circumstance, in order to entreat the satellites for permission to enter there and bid a last farewell to their friends the inmates. But their chief motive was to purify themselves once more by absolution, which, in point of fact, they received from one of our priests, and, after joining in common prayer—after greeting their brother Christians, they embarked with serene countenances upon the ship which was going to convey them into exile, where the two companions of Agatha still endure the most galling slavery.

“As to Agatha, who always underwent the heaviest portion of torments, she was placed in servitude under a Tartar, so cruel, that in spite of the great age of the captive he treated her with more harshness than his dogs, and he forbade warm food to be given her. He would not even allow the water to be boiled for her drink—an omission which is reckoned so injurious in China, that the poorest beggar would not drink cold water. In her distress and infirmities, the pious virgin was utterly abandoned; no one cared for her in her old age; no one cast a glance of pity or uttered a word of consolation on her misfortune. It was in the midst of these trials, in the midst of contumelies directed against her faith, and supported by her angelic serenity, that Agatha Ho, having attained the age of seventy-two years, slept in the Lord, and consummated her long martyrdom in the year 1814, in the City of *Se-gan-fou*, the capital of the province of *Aen-sa*.

“I address this narrative to the piety of the Christians of Europe, who are so free to profess the Gospel, in order that—mindful of their brethren and their sisters exiled on account of the Faith, and still more to be pitied in Tartary than in the fearful dungeons of this city—they may earnestly pray the Lord to grant perseverance to these generous wrestlers. Perhaps there are many among them whose misfortunes equal those of Agatha.

“✠ JOSEPH, Bishop of Aradi, and Vicar-Apos of Hou-Quang.”

A Protestant Repeal Association has been established in Belfast! The fact that an attempt has been made to organize such a society among the Protestants of Ulster, is a remarkable sign of the times.

NOTTINGHAM.—CORPUS CHRISTI FESTIVAL IN ST. BARNABAS.

The solemnity of this festival was celebrated in the church of St. Barnabas last Sunday week. On the two previous days great quantities of roses and flowers, laurel, and various kinds of evergreen, were sent as offerings for the decoration of the church; and several members of the congregation, ladies and others, undertook the task of weaving them into wreaths and pendants, coronæ, garlands and festoons. Some idea of the style of the decorations may be gathered from the following outline:—The baptismal font was crowned with a rich canopy of roses, surmounted by a cross of the same material. All the walls in nave and aisles, from end to end, were covered with large shields of various colours, bearing different devices and monograms and ornamented with coronæ of flowers and evergreen, the arches were spanned with laths, covered with flowers; rich festoons of roses were suspended from pillar to pillar, and the capitals were crowned with crowns of roses. From the centre of the tower depended a coronet of roses, surmounting a large festooned canopy that hung against the tower pillars, and fell in pendants to the floor of the church. Beads of rose, marked the outline of the rood-screen and lath, to the pillars of which were attached a number of little wreaths of roses, and small shields in gold and rich colour. Thirteen large vases filled with choice flowers were placed in the front, between the pillars, above were fixed several pairs of branches, gracefully curving, and forming a series of pointed arches at the base of the rood. From the latter, and inclining to each side, were suspended two crimson silk banners, with gilt standards and crosses. Velvet hangings, enriched with lilies and other emblems, in gold and colour covered the walls and side pillars of the sanctuary the three pillars at the back of the high altar were clothed with rich enamelled work in gold and rich colour; and above these, close under the splendid Oriel window, hung the large banner of the Blessed Sacrament in crimson and gold. Garlands of roses were entwined round the screens, and the small pillars supporting the altar, the most select flowers and roses were tastefully arranged beneath the altar. A splendid canopy of crimson damask, with rich gold fringe, and a coronal of precious stones occupied the centre of the altar, over the tabernacle, on either side were distributed large gilt candlesticks with a countless array of wax lights, grouped in various designs—pyramids, triangles, &c. All the screens round the sanctuary, and connected with the altar chapels, were also enriched with candlesticks and wax lights, roses, flowers and evergreens. Long before the appointed hour, Sunday morning, the church was filled from end to end; every seat, every spot was occupied—and were it four times its present large size, it would have been equally filled—so great was the anxiety manifested, not only by the congregation but by others, to be present at this interesting festival. At half-past ten the officiating Priest, Rev. F. Cheadle, with his numerous attendant, in gorgeous vestments of cloth of gold, entered the sanctuary, to offer the Solemn Sacrifice, during the celebration of which the choir chanted portions of the service. When the last gospel was concluded, the Rev. I. J. Mulligan ascended the pulpit, and preached an elegant discourse from Isa. xiv. 15. “Verily, Thou art a hidden God, the God of Israel the Saviour.” When the sermon was concluded, the bell was rung the organ filled the Church with its sweet sounds in the meantime, the various members composing the procession took their appointed places; the