

THE HERALD

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1898.

PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY

SUBSCRIPTION—\$1.00 A YEAR,

JAMES McISAAC,

Editor & Proprietor.

LENTEEN PASTORAL.

Issued by his Lordship the Bishop of Charlottetown and read in all the churches of this diocese.

James Charles, by the Grace of God, and favor of the Apostolic See, Bishop of Ch'town. To the Clergy and Laity of the Diocese of Charlottetown, Health and Benediction in the Lord.

DEARLY BELOVED.—The holy season of Lent again reminds us that we are fast approaching that supreme moment of our lives, when we shall be called upon to divest our souls of their earthly habitations and to appear for judgment before the Divine Arbitrator of our eternal destiny.

Our principal concern in this world should be that of saving our immortal souls, and consequently of employing the time which Almighty God has given us for that purpose; so that we may in God's own time be prepared to meet Him with our souls enriched with the fruits of penance and other good works.

Our holy mother the Church, ever mindful of what constitutes our true happiness both here and hereafter, continually points to the example of her Divine Founder as a most powerful incentive to virtue on the part of the faithful.

At the commencement of the present holy season, when penance is her theme, she selects for our contemplation the penitential exercises which He underwent prior to the opening of His mission, when retiring into the desert from the distractions of the world He subjected Himself to a severe and unintermittent fast of forty days, "to show us" in the words of St. Ambrose, "that we also must follow his example, and fast for the same time."

The ordinance and practice of fasting, according to the Christian dispensation, date back to the Apostolic times. We are clearly informed by St. Jerome of how this ordinance was observed in the early Church. When speaking of the Christians of his time, he says: "We fast for forty days at a suitable time according to the Apostolic tradition," and St. Leo speaking of the necessity of penitential works during the Lenten season, exhorts all to be mindful of the Apostolic law of fast and abstinence during this holy time.

"What every Christian ought to do at all times," he says, "let us now do with greater care and devotion, that the Apostolic ordinance of the forty days' fast may be observed."

In keeping with his sacred and Apostolic practice we also desire, in a most sacred duty to remind the faithful, for whose salvation we are responsible before God, to enter upon this holy season with a view to effecting a perfect reconciliation with our Divine Lord through the effective means afforded by penitential works as applied through the law of fast and abstinence.

It will avail very little to have been restored to the dignity of children of God, if by a life of inordinate worldly pleasure and effeminacy, we oppose the triumphs of grace, and keep an understanding with the mortal enemy of our salvation.

Hence the Church has at all times incessantly inculcated the law of fast and abstinence during the holy season of Lent as a time most acceptable to our Divine Saviour, whereby we may more effectually dispose our souls for the worthy participation of those graces which we stand in so much need of; and it is in view of the great necessity of controlling our sinful inclinations, and thereby adapting ourselves to the requirements of God's supernatural assistance that she insists upon the due observance of this sacred practice.

The observance of the law of fasting during Lent, is not a work of mere supererogation; it is not an observance that may be practised or omitted at pleasure; it is one of absolute precept, unconditionally enjoined by Apostolic and revealed law, and sanctioned by the practice of our Divine Saviour. It is an observance on the fulfillment or neglect of which depends in no small measure the ultimate welfare of our immortal souls.

For without the grace of God no one can attain to eternal life; but in neglecting the practice of mortification, in giving way to sensual indulgence, we directly oppose the saving influences of Divine grace, and thereby cast away the armour of supernatural protection offered us by Christ, and place ourselves as defenceless creatures in the power of the mortal enemy of our souls. Consequently, deeply beloved, as you value the salvation of your souls, be most assiduous in the due observance of this most salutary precept.

During the Lenten season resolutely undertake the mortification of all inordinate, rebellious will, and the destruction of the evils which originate from self-love.

We would also utter a word of admonition to all the faithful to cherish with care the sacred deposit of Catholic truth, as consigned to our holy Church by her

Divine Founder. Let it be borne in mind that to the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church was given the duty authorized commission to teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Our holy mother the Church, then, is the duly constituted agent of our Divine Saviour in the work of carrying to a successful termination the redemption of mankind. It is through the Church that the merits of Christ's passion and death are to be applied to our souls, whereby we are raised to the dignity of Christians and enabled to work out our eternal salvation. "All power is given to me in Heaven and on earth. Going therefore teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (Matt. xxvii, 19, 20.) Thus was the Church commissioned by her Divine Founder to carry the sacred truths of our holy religion to the furthest extremities of the world. With God's own authority does His holy church lead us by her teaching and example through the dangers that everywhere surround us in this life, and it is only by a sincere cooperation with her sacred teaching that we can hope to obtain the blessings of eternal life.

We cannot in reason expect to participate in the benefits of our Lord's passion and death if we do not receive them through that church which He constituted His visible representative in this world, nor can anyone flatter himself that he is a Catholic at heart and by profession, if he considers that it is within his province to sit in judgment on our Blessed Saviour and His holy Church. Dearly beloved, remember this, that in the adequate profession of that holy faith which Christ committed to His Church, there is no neutral ground on which we may stand to hold, as it were, one hand towards our Divine Saviour, and the other towards the powers of darkness.

"He that is not with me," says our Lord, "is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth" (Matt. xii, 30), and again He tells us that "whoever denies me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. x, iii.) It is therefore only by a close union with the church, through faith and good works, that we may consider ourselves the associates of our Divine Redeemer, while it is a most pernicious deception to suppose that we can be reputed by Almighty God as His faithful children by merely professing our faith in word, if our actions are in contradiction to His sacred teachings. But the respect, the faith, and the obedience which we owe to our Divine Redeemer, are in their own respective measures to be rendered to His holy Church, and her duly constituted teachers. Let it not be forgotten that in this world the Church is the representative of our Divine Saviour, entrusted by Him to complete the work of our salvation, the foundation of which He laid in His own passion and death. To St. Peter and His successors—the Popes—did He commit the supreme care of His flock, to teach them the sacred truths of our holy religion. "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock," says our Lord to the Prince of the Apostles, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven." (Matt. xvi, 18, 19.) "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you" (Jo. xx, 21.) "He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me." (Luk. x, 16.) Dearly beloved, we have here a concise statement from the sacred lips of our Divine Saviour, as to the position of the church and her teachers among the faithful, to the effect that the power and authority by which Christ performed His visible mission in this world, the same are the power and authority which He committed to His holy church. "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you." We are also told according to the manner in which we have heard the voice of the church and her teachers, the same shall be regarded as the manner in which we hearken to the voice of our Divine Saviour. "He that heareth Me, he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me." (Luk. x, 16.) Dearly beloved, we have here a concise statement from the sacred lips of our Divine Saviour, as to the position of the church and her teachers among the faithful, to the effect that the power and authority by which Christ performed His visible mission in this world, the same are the power and authority which He committed to His holy church. "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you." We are also told according to the manner in which we have heard the voice of the church and her teachers, the same shall be regarded as the manner in which we hearken to the voice of our Divine Saviour.

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truth" (1 Tim. iii. 15.) For, in the words of the holy prophet, speaking of the church, "the nation and the kingdom that will not serve thee, shall perish: and the gentiles shall be wasted with desolation. And the children of men that afflict thee, and all that slandered thee, shall worship the steps of thy foot, and shall call thee the City of the Lord, the Sion of the holy One of Israel. Because thou wast forsaken, and hated;—I will make any to be an everlasting glory, a joy unto generation and generation." (Is. ix, 12.)

We must again warn you, dearly beloved, of the supreme importance which attaches to the religious training of children. Let all Christian parents remember that, in order to fulfill their obligations to Almighty God, they must educate their children to something higher than to merely earn their bread and live respectably in the eyes of the world. Be mindful that there is an eternal punishment to which their children may be condemned—that there is an eternal heaven, in which they may be happy. To this latter place they are all called by our Divine Lord, and they are entrusted to their parents that they may attain it. The chief object for which they were created is to live joyfully to fear and love God, and to be eternally happy in heaven. If they do not attain that end, it were better for them never to have been born, and parents who neglect to train up their children for eternal happiness are in the sight of heaven their spiritual destroyers, and God will demand a strict account of the manner in which they have fulfilled this obligation.

In compliance with the Divine mandate given to the Apostles and their successors to teach all nations—teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you (Matt. —). The holy church has been always careful to teach the truths of our holy religion to all the faithful. It is only a few weeks ago that the Vicar of Christ in His recent encyclical spoke plainly in condemnation of any system of education from which religion as a part of the curriculum of studies is excluded. Local circumstances, however, make it impossible for the children of the faithful under our care to be instructed in every instance in their religion through regularly organized schools, and it is only through fire necessity that the church tolerates the practice of having them frequent the secular schools that now obtain.

This sad state of affairs, however, renders it all the more imperative for parents to attend personally to the religious education of their children, who, if they are to attain to eternal happiness, which is the chief object of their existence, must necessarily be instructed in all their religious duties, and constantly exercised in these duties by those on whom devolves the obligation of teaching them. "Lay up these my words in your hearts and minds," says the Lord, "and teach your children to meditate on them." (Deut. xi. 18.) And again the words of Almighty God to parents are: "Hast thou children? Instruct them from their childhood." (Ecol. vii. 25.) You will find in the sacred scriptures, dearly beloved, many edifying examples of the care with which parents attended to the education of their children. Of the manner in which the holy Tobias instructed his son, we read in the words of the sacred text that "from his infancy he taught him to fear the Lord, and to abstain from all sin." (Tob. i. 10.) "Hear, my son," the words of my mouth," says this most exemplary parent, "and lay them as a foundation in thy heart. All the days of thy life have God in thy mind, and take heed that thou never consent to sin, nor transgress the commandments of the Lord thy God. Thou shalt honor thy mother all the days of her life; for thou must be mindful what and how great perils she suffered for thee. If though have much give abundantly if thou have little, take care, even so, to bestow willingly a little, for thus thou shalt store up for thyself a good reward for the day of necessity. Never suffer pride to reign in thy mind; for from it all perdition had its beginning. Keep away from bad company, never eat or drink with the wicked. Be as God at all times, and desire of Him no direct thy way, and that all thy counsel may abide in Him." (Tob. iv.) Such, dearly beloved, are some of the teachings and exhortations of this pious parent. Whereupon the son replied: "I will do all these things, father, which thou hast commanded me." Let Christian parents compare this with the teaching they give their children, and see wherein they agree.

There is another matter, dearly beloved, which we deem it our sacred duty to bring to your notice, and it is the reprehensible conduct of those who, wishing to be considered dutiful Catholics, nevertheless have no hesitation in associating themselves to those secret societies which have not been approved by our holy Church. All the faithful should understand that the Catholic Church condemns the very principle on which secret societies are founded, and has at all times discontinued their existence, while to their more pernicious forms she has meted out an unqualified condemnation. If the Church in some cases has not yet condemned some of these minor secret societies individually, it is nevertheless most erroneous to assume that she either approves or tolerates their existence. Our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII, in condemn-

ing the more dangerous forms of secret societies, in an encyclical promulgated in 1884, thus speaks of these minor secret associations: "Now, there are various associations of men, which though in name, rites, form and origin they differ, yet when in sameness of aim, and likeness of first principles they are bound together, really they agree with the Masonic sect, which forms for all a common centre—for many things done in them have the nature of strict secrecy—while the candidates for enrollment are bound by promise—may more, by a special oath, to swear, as in most cases they are required, never in any way to divulge their associates, their signs or their doctrines." Further on in the same encyclical the Sovereign Pontiff says: "Now, even if those who are enrolled in this sect are not required in so many words to renounce the Catholic religion, it is because such a line, so far from being repugnant to the interests of Masonry rather serves the cause; for, first, they thus easily deceive the simple and unwary, and are able to invite many more to join them; then besides by their adopting certain well known practices of religious rite, they succeed in establishing the well known error of these times—that the care of religion is a matter of little or no importance, and that there is no difference of worth

between them. This view is well fitted to destroy all religions, and especially the Catholic, which, as it is the only true one of all, cannot be treated on equal grounds with the rest without the greatest injury done to it."

There is then, dearly beloved, no mistaking the doctrine of the Church as explained by the Vicar of Christ, regarding those secret societies which never have met, and never will meet with her approval, and it is therefore incumbent on the faithful to carefully abstain from the membership of all such associations, and especially when the same pecuniary advantage which they claim to possess, may be obtained with equal facility in Catholic societies approved by the Church. Now, that there be no misunderstanding our position in this regard, we forbid the faithful under our spiritual care from associating as members with all such societies, whether now existing, or to be organized at any future time. Wherefore, dearly beloved, in the words of the inspired Apostle, "I beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called. With all humility, mildness, with patience, supporting one another in charity. Careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. One body and one Spirit, as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all."

By virtue of authority granted us by the Holy See, we publish for the present Lenten season the following dispensation: (1) The use of flesh meat without restriction on all Sundays.

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