

CARDINAL MERCIER

EXTOLS FAITH WITNESSED DURING SOJOURN IN AMERICA

Confirming the expression of heartfelt gratitude which he often expressed during his visit to the United States, His Eminence, Cardinal Mercier, the outstanding figure of the World War, has told his appreciation in no uncertain terms to the clergy and religious of the diocese of Malines in a characteristic letter. A translation of the Cardinal's letter follows:

"To you, beloved brethren in the priesthood, religious souls, especially consecrated to God, a cordial thank you, and my best wishes for a holy and happy year."

"During the trip, which to my great surprise I was led to make to the United States and to Canada, you have accompanied me with your good wishes and your prayers."

"Our Lord has heard you. The trip was a happy one, it was blessed."

"The Catholic Episcopate, the people, every social class of the great American Republic and of the Dominion of Canada, gave us the warmest reception, because in their midst we represented Belgium, whose high morality was so impressive to these sincere people."

"The American does not like speculative dissertations; he wants to see, he wants to touch."

OWE MUCH TO AMERICANS

"In the absolute disinterestedness of the Belgian nation, which with an unanimous and magnificent outburst, without wishing to give itself time to calculate the consequences of its attitude, sacrificed itself to remain faithful to duty, to check the fury of the invader, to safeguard the prestige of right and her permanent intrinsic moral valor, even and above all under foot of the oppressor. In the magnanimous simplicity of her king; in the valor of her warriors, in the perfect loyalty of her clergy, the Americans saw living, and tenacious, that which their hearts place above everything, the ideal of human dignity, the religion of humanity."

"Perhaps this is, at one and the same time, the weak side of this generous people."

"Detroit, an industrial city of such activity that in ten years it population has increased from two hundred and fifty thousand to one million inhabitants, was at the time of our passage, the center of a religious reunion, to which I was invited with the Catholic Bishop of the city. This was a fine occasion to offer to the Protestant people who had come so liberally to Belgium's aid during the War, and had given me everywhere such a hearty welcome, the expression of our gratitude and the promise of our prayers."

"The orators who had preceded us had obeyed a common desire to exalt human fraternity. I thought I should respond to their most intimate sentiments by inviting them to rise higher, towards the universal fraternity of Him Who wishes us all to be brothers in His only Son, our Jesus Christ."

"We owe very much to the American people. Their disinterested participation in the War, at the time when Russia failed us; the eminent assistance in food, clothing and money which a marvelous efflorescence of private initiative brought to our country at the time when famine was ready to destroy our unfortunate people, have created for our benefactors, titles to our imperishable gratitude."

"In the future national basilic which will be dedicated to the Sacred Heart at Kookelberg, a special monument must perpetuate the remembrance of our spiritual debt."

"Henceforward, I ask you to pray especially for the progress of the Catholic Church in the United States."

"As far as I can judge, there is an abundant harvest almost ripe for the Catholic apostolate."

DEEP RELIGIOUS DEVOTIONS

"In no part of Europe have I seen the religious devotions asserted in public with a tranquil simplicity, without ostentation or fear, as I have seen in the United States."

"I have taken part in banquets where twelve or sixteen hundred persons were seated, business men, heads of industrial affairs, financiers, magistrates, politicians; the repeat was never begun without the president of the committee having asked me to bless the table. At the blessing of the Bishop, the Catholics made the sign of the Cross, the non-Catholics stood, with heads bowed in a most respectful silence."

"The same spectacle was reproduced in all the universities which did me the honor of inviting me within their walls. At the moment of our entrance at the University of Princeton, the scholars of students intoned the 'Veni Creator,' while the corps of professors and crowds of young men listened, standing, with religious respect. Everywhere, before closing the academic session, the chancellor requested me to solemnly bless the assembly."

"In the stations, in the public places, I have blessed rosaries and medals; I have blessed immense compact crowds; I have never seen an ironical smile on the countenance of any spectator, nor did I find in the press a single disrespectful word with regard to religion."

"In the cathedrals of New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati and many others, we were witnesses of religious ceremonies of incomparable grandeur and dignity."

"I have told these crowds that I would relate to you the subjects of edification which they have given, and I would recommend them to your prayers."

"In the New World we have brothers who henceforth will pray especially for us. We will pray also for them."

"When I was there, praying, celebrating, preaching in their cathedrals, I often thought of the consoling dogmas of the unity of the Church and of the Communion of Saints. There as here, the faithful and their clergy are groped around the same altar where every morning, at the word of the priest, the same Jesus, Saviour of the world, King of glory, descends on the altar of sacrifice and gives Himself to our souls in the most Blessed Sacrament of love, the Divine Eucharist."

PROGRESS OF CHURCH IN U. S.

"May the progress of the Catholic Church in these distant regions compensate for the losses that we have to deplore in our Catholic centers."

"In 1870, there were in the United States only 3,000 priests, there were a few less than 2,500 churches, and a Catholic population of 3,000,000 faithful. Today the Church in the United States counts 20,000 priests, 20,000 parishes, a Catholic population of 17,000,000. The ecclesiastical vocations suffice nearly everywhere for the needs of the dioceses, the proof of which is that the Episcopate is at this time founding a seminary for foreign missions."

"These figures and these facts, which I have just related, console us for the present decline in Catholic vitality in our dear country."

"May this consolation be not sterile, however; May it be a stimulus to us!"

"We will have at heart to redouble our zeal to repair, first of all, the offenses committed against God in our country by the torrent of sensual manners, by the neglect of religious practices, by the skeptic or idle indifference of a great number; in fine to aid our people to rise above the evil currents which are drawing them down."

"To this effect, my dear brethren in the priesthood, my dear sons and daughters of our religious communities, let us inscribe as the first article of our program the sanctification of our life, knowing that our merits revert to the flock that surrounds us."

"Let us work without ceasing, let us triumph over what has been called 'a wave of idleness,' that is, of natural lassitude which has followed the trials of tragic years."

"Let us pray; let us pray for faith. Our divine saviour tells us: 'Ask and you shall receive.' If we ask, then we shall receive. But we must ask with firm confidence that the Divine Mercy will have pity on our miseries. Our confidence will be the measure of the divine liberality, according to this word of Our Lord to the centurion: 'Go, the cure of thy son will be My answer to thy faith.' ('Vade, et sicut credidisti, fiat tibi.')"

"Faith is all powerful," says Our Lord. ('Omnis possibilis sunt credenti.') Let us have faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ the Son of God; writes the Apostle St. John, and we shall be stronger than the world. ('Hæc est victoria, quæ vincit mundum, fides nostra.')

"We exhort the religious communities, our colleges, our boarding schools, to practice the devotion of the Holy Hour, at least in the evening from 8 to 9 for instance, the eve of the First Friday of the month, and we invite them to expose the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar during three hours to the adoration of the community, the eve of the First Friday, every month of the present year."

"Receive all, I beg you with my most lively gratitude for your faithful devotedness, my paternal blessing."

D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER, Archbishop of Malines.

UNION OF NATIONS CHRISTIAN IDEA

CARDINAL AMETTE DELIVERS IMPORTANT ADDRESS IN PARIS SORBONNE

(By N. C. W. C. News Service)

Paris, April 22.—In the course of a great meeting held a short time ago in the Paris Sorbonne in favor of the Society of Nations and after speeches by Mr. Bourgeois and Mr. Poincaré, this important statement of Cardinal Amette was read by the Auxiliary Bishop, Monsignor Roland-Gosselin:

"The inspiration of the Society of Nations is essentially Christian, for the Christian doctrine is that all men are brothers, all created by the same God, and all called by God to the same eternal destiny. Issued from the same Father, men, as they multiplied, formed at first families, then tribes, and lastly nations. But these different groups must not remain strangers and still less, hostile to one another."

"In the designs of Providence narrower are the bonds which unite the members of a family or of a nation, but just as families cannot remain isolated, so must nations be united. Such union, however, must be founded on two laws: justice and charity. Justice proclaims to the people as well as to the individuals: 'Render to all men their dues.' Charity adds: 'Love one another.' Such are the necessary foundations of a genuine society of nations."

"Let justice first of all reign amongst nations through the respect

of every one's rights and through the reparations of the rights that may have been violated. And once justice has been assured, let charity, let mutual good will bind nation to nation as they bind man to man. On these conditions the world will enjoy peace."

"The Catholic Church, a vast society of nations established by Christ, destined, as its name indicates, to spread all over the world, had sought in the Middle Ages to realize this ideal among the peoples which professed its faith and obeyed its laws. It was Christendom. Now, a days the world does not enjoy such unity of faith, yet there remain moral principles unanimously recognized by all civilized peoples. It is a noble and praiseworthy undertaking to aim at founding on this common principle a covenant that may guarantee the peace of the world and preserve it from the frightful conflicts which have soaked it in blood. The Church can but wish heartily the success of this project."

"Since the men working for its realization have called upon me for an expression of my thought in this solemn gathering, may I be permitted to formulate the wish that the future Society of Nations provide a place worthy of Him for the Supreme Representative of the highest moral authority that exists on earth; of that authority which, speaking in God's name, has the greatest power to bring men to the practice of mutual justice and of mutual love."

DIED

WELLS.—At Hillendale, Saskatchewan, on March 30, 1920, Mrs. William Wells, wife of Mr. William Wells, aged fifty-two years. May her soul rest in peace.

COUGHLIN.—At Warwick, on Tuesday, April 27th, 1920, Sarah Cox, relict of the late John Coughlin, in her seventy-first year. May her soul rest in peace.

Our bravest lessons are not learned through success, but misadventure.—A. Bronson Alcott.

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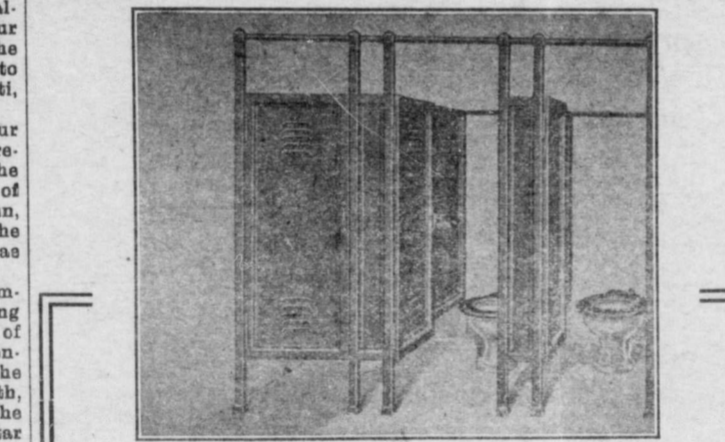
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