

ABOUT CATHOLIC CLUBS.

The Catholic Church is the most perfect organization on earth. She is a most perfect organization, and the fruitful mother of organizations. She has her great Religious Orders, her Congregations, Communities, Confraternities, Sodalities, and that latest splendid manifestation of organized prayer and work—the League of the Sacred Heart, now counting its members by millions.

But though the Church so favors the creation and development of these special organizations, indeed perhaps because she does, our Catholic people and their pastors too are liable to forget the need as well as the power of purely social organization.

The Catholic Church is a supernatural society founded by Christ for the salvation of souls. But the Church of Christ is not supernatural only. Like her master and model she is human and divine. Her members on earth are mortal men, united by social ties, and the Church is for the salvation of human society as well as for the salvation of immortal souls. Now it is this social part of the Church's work that Catholics may not sufficiently value. Those who have strayed from the centre and source of revealed truth and supernatural life, are forced as it were in self-defence, to make their religion entirely social. While Catholics, who feel secure in their certainty of faith and unity of worship, may be too easily content with the merely supernatural. By all means let pastors and zealous missionary priests exhort the faithful, and get all they can, to join Sodalities, Confraternities and Leagues of Prayer. But let them remember for that not in bread alone doth man live, though that blessed Bread be divine, and that He who told us to pray always, did not tell us to be always at prayer. Christians are not to be of the world, but they are to be in the world, and they must learn how to utilize this life while fitting themselves for the next. It is true indeed that Catholics have secular societies, that exist chiefly, if not only, for earthly interests. Such are our beneficial, financial, and protective associations. But besides the societies that are purely spiritual, or primarily secular, we need organizations that shall be principally social; that will fit in, as it were, between the religious and the secular, and taking something from each harmonize both. It is often said and truly that this is the age of the people, and preachers talk to us about the apostolate of the laity. But if the Catholic laity are to use their power and be worthy of their apostolate, they must be more united socially. The meeting in church for prayer, or in the hired hall for business, bazaar, or public lecture, is not sufficient for their social needs. Amongst the foremost of those social needs, is a mutual and more intimate knowledge of each other. Such knowledge and friendly companionship as should lead to social harmony and civic strength; two things that are not as characteristic of Catholics as they should be. Then, our people, espec-

ally our young people, must have amusement. And legitimate recreation and innocent pleasure should be one of the principal objects of a social organization. Man is not all muscles but neither is he all and only mind. Physical culture may be unduly exalted, but it may be as unduly ignored, or unjustly condemned. There is really nothing heretical or anti-Catholic in a well equipped gymnasium, a bowling alley, or a billiardroom, or even in a quiet game of cards. But there is much in all these that will bring and keep our young men together. The world knows this work, and the children of the world are, in this particular, wiser and more practical than the children of light. There is no reason why we should not have in each of our large cities, at least one first-class Catholic Club. The difficulty sometimes brought forward against such an organization seems to us one of the strongest arguments in its favor. The difficulty is this; our Catholic people are separated off into distinctly marked classes it is said, and could never be got to unite in the easy and familiar companionship of a club. That's just it. There is unfortunately too much of this social separation, and the very best way to bridge over the chasm is by the union and equality that club life gives—equality not of wealth or class, or condition; but a nobler equality or friendly rivalry, in talent, industry, energy and skill. A more practical difficulty in starting and supporting a club is lack of funds. But this could be met by the financial ability, experience, and energy of the members, and by the generous patronage and co-operation of our more wealthy Catholics, who would thus become public benefactors as well as model members of social and civic life. In this matter of public and practical beneficence we may learn some useful lessons from our non-Catholic friends. As we may also indeed, in the matter of social organization, which with them is such a source of strength. We have incidentally given a name to the Catholic organization we contemplate: we have called it, a Catholic Club. We are aware that some object to the name. They find fault with the term Club, are somewhat afraid of it in fact, as they think the terms Club and Catholic, are incompatible. Well, here we must hold, there is something in a name, because it but expresses and specifies the social idea, which should be of the essence of this special organization. If this idea be carried out we should not quarrel about the name. To those who think, this compound idea, Catholic Club, cannot be carried out, cannot be successfully realized, the best answer is—it has been. Catholic Clubs have already had splendid success in some of the leading cities of the United States; and we have seen enough to believe that a like success awaits them in Canada. There is no city on this continent better situated for such a club than the Queen City by the lake: no place better suited than, the "city of conventions," and of "generous contributions."

THE EPIPHANY.

To-morrow, January 6th, the Church celebrates the great feast of the Epiphany, which is closely connected with Christmas not only by reason of the mystery of Bethlehem, but also by the history of the two days.

For some centuries several local churches consecrated this day to the Feast of our Saviour's birth. But when in A. D. 376 the Holy See decreed that the Nativity should be celebrated on the 25th of December, Epiphany was somewhat, though not altogether, stripped of its original glory. It still bore its name, which signifies *The Manifestation*, and carries with it the hallowed memory of our Lord's baptism by St. John, which also took place, according to tradition, on this day. Another mystery honored on the Epiphany, is the first exercise of the Divine power of Christ in changing water into wine at the marriage feast of Cana, when our Lord "manifested his glory, and His disciples believed in Him." But the mystery which is honored the most by the Roman Church on this feast, although in the Greek Church it is placed in the office of Christmas, is the adoration of the Magi or Wise men. This was the manifestation of the Messiah to the Gentile world: on which account the day has been termed the Christmas of the Gentiles. Then while the star rested over the manger, shedding its pale silver light upon a scene upon which the stars had never looked before, there shone over the souls of the great men who had come to adore the King the mighty light of Christ's truth and love divine. The holy Gospel tells us that they brought with them gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Gold was due to Him as the King of Kings, the sovereign master of all treasures. And they offered it to Him as we offer our charity, our earnest, mine-developed love. Frankincense was due to that wondrous Babe, because He was the high God towards whose infinite being every man should ascend by the incense of humble prayer. Myrrh was offered to our Lord as a profession of faith in His holy humanity, which one day was to suffer death upon the cross.

Thus we see that three classes of persons receive our Lord in three different degrees—the holy, the simple, and the learned. Learning is represented by the Magi—the last illuminated—it comes from afar and by a difficult journey. Faith and the simple minded are represented by the shepherds; prayer by St. Joseph. Mary, the Mother, stands apart in a special order, too sacred and too special to be compared or explained. To which of these classes shall we belong? Prayer will always find us near Jesus and Mary; the faithful fulfilment of our daily duties, the night watching of our little flocks, will always find us prepared to pass over to Bethlehem, if only our ears are open to hear the angels' song and the word of the Lord. Will reason lead us there, where alone peace abideth? It will if we follow the star and are not deceived by Herod and his court:

better, prayer and simple faith. But to us who have been translated already to Bethlehem, what gratitude upon the great feast of Epiphany. All through the centuries the nations and the islands of the seas have flocked around the crib, and opening their treasures have offered their gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh. Be we among the number, that the light may shine and may illumine our soul forever more.

Editorial Notes.

The mission of Mgr. Satolli to the United States seems to occupy a good deal of the attention of the public press, more than is for the edification of all concerned. Interviews are reported; opinions asked and obtained; explanations sought and given—and all tending to render the venerable legate's task more difficult and to throw open all his decisions to that criticism which is so hostile to the spirit of the Church. The following extract from the *Catholic Review* of New York is couched in devoted terms and in a tone of loyalty and respect which we hope will be more widespread than it has been for some short time past: "In spite of the wish of the Holy See that the school question should not be agitated in the Catholic newspapers, disputation still continues in some quarters from which a more prompt obedience should be expected. In controversies of this kind, which must be described by the Hierarchy, the *Catholic Review* has no part to take. Its one mission is to co-operate with the Church teaching—not to instruct the clergy, nor to lay down the law for the bishops, nor to dictate to the Pope. It does not believe in washing the family linen in public. Its own course is clear. Serene in fidelity to duty, it has no hobby to ride, no axe to grind, no views to maintain to the detriment of union and peace, and no desire to participate in any "victory" that shall have for victims any large body of devoted Catholic prelates, priests and parents."

We learn that his Lordship Bishop Dowling of Hamilton, quits that city on the 28th of the present month, on a visit to Rome, where he will assist in the celebration of the Pope's episcopal jubilee. His Lordship will, before his return to Canada, pay a visit to the Holy Land.

The other day we received a book with an accompanying note, asking us to preach in St. Basil's church upon the subject of certain marked passages. Will the donor kindly call upon us at St. Michael's College, when we shall be happy to help him in any spiritual difficulty into which the book in question seems to have placed him? We regret that no name was given, as it would have saved us calling any attention to a doubt which is more easily solved by prayer and advice, than from pulpit or editorial chair.

We have also received a long letter from an esteemed correspondent, in connection with Dr. Douglas' diatribe against Sir John Thompson. As the *Catholic Weekly Review* in its last issue dealt very fully and ably with this insolent, uncharitable and uncalled-for attack upon our distinguished co-religionist, we deem it better to drop the question for the present. Without belittling the harm which such spiteful tongues as that of Dr. Douglas do, we somehow think that they hiss like serpents, but are harmless as geese.