

LEAGUE OF THE SACRED HEART.

GENERAL INTENTION FOR NOVEMBER 1900.

Propagation of the Faith.

Recommended to our prayers by His Holiness Leo XIII.

American Messenger of the Sacred Heart.

It must be admitted without reserve that there is nothing so exceptional in its beauty, nothing so divine in its power to develop holiness, nothing so sublime in its magnificent pre-eminence over all other institutions as the Church of Jesus Christ, the parent, the pre-creator and the nursing mother of the family of the faithful, outside of which there can be naught that is good, healthful or helpful for the souls of men.

Such were the words which Leo XIII addressed to the Polish pilgrims on the occasion of the jubilee of 1888. He was speaking of certain religious rites that had come down to them from a remote antiquity and he added: "This unity in variety is like a royal robe, that delights us by its wonderful beauty and grace, and by its very diversity makes the immaculate spouse of Christ all the fairer and more lovely in the eyes of men."

This Queen arrayed in the glory of every age and of every race is under a divine commission of subjecting all nations to her sway in the unity of faith, no matter how they differ from each other in manners, time or place.

She can do naught else than incessantly strive, in spite of every obstacle and at any cost, to advance the boundaries of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. This propagation of the faith, or to use the words of the Church by the constant addition of new territories to her domain is the aim that must be ever before her. It is the reason of her existence. To help her to do so and to achieve in our days greater triumphs than ever before is to be the special object of the prayers of the 25,000,000 associates of the League during the ensuing month.

Let us examine first to what extent this work of expansion is being carried on at the present time, omitting for the moment the consideration of countries which, rightly or wrongly, are still regarded as Catholic, and directing our attention to what are called the foreign missions.

At the beginning of the century there were no missions at all and the reason is not hard to find. In the first place the Society of Jesus had just been suppressed. That meant the immediate cessation of missionary enterprises extending from Cape Horn to the northern countries of Japan, and the forcible ejection of 16,000 men who were engaged in the work. They were torn from the neophytes in America and Asia, flung into prison or scattered over the face of the world.

Secondly, the atheistic spirit of the eighteenth century had extinguished the missionary spirit of the clergy. The apostolic torch had gone out completely. It was, besides, the epoch of the French revolution; the churches were despoiled and all money resources cut off, while the persecution of the clergy put a stop to ecclesiastical vocations. Germany was at this time given over to Josephism; Italy and Spain were at odds with the Holy See with a consequent result of the destruction of religious discipline, and all the rest of Europe, as we know, was plunged in schism and heresy.

Nevertheless the Church which is the "eternal beginner," as Paul Bert called her, set to work. The religious restoration in France, brought about by Napoleon Bonaparte, gave back to the missions their richest source of supplies. The seminaries of the Missions Etrangères were re-peopled. Under the Propaganda at Rome, missionaries full of enthusiasm were sent hither and thither and the accounts of their labors published everywhere in the press, set the heart of Catholic youth on fire. The desire of martyrdom was kindled and the great work of the present century began.

The missions of the nineteenth century are unlike those of former times. It is easier now to reach the territory to be evangelized; the climates are not as likely to be fatal; political interests afford a certain measure of protection, but nevertheless the old barbarism remains, and there enters also a new element, viz: the rivalry of Protestant sects.

The latter difficulty dates only from about 1850, but there are already at present about eighty Bible Societies, chiefly English and American, which have their agents everywhere in Oceania, northern and western Africa, Madagascar and Asia, working with feverish activity and with apparently illimitable financial resources at their command.

Holy Russia also enters with its Greek schism, not that it makes converts, but it nullifies all the efforts of Catholicism.

But neither of these obstacles can be permanent. For, in the first place, higher criticism is destroying Protestantism in Europe and America, and the effect must soon be felt in the missions. Secondly, Democracy must presently have something to say to Russian absolutism, and as the Greek Church is a political machine, its power must inevitably wane in the near future.

The Jesuit and other missionaries of the seventeenth century had given three million Catholics to the Church in the Indies. Difficulties arose, like the quarrel about the Malabar Rites, but in spite of that they would have made the country Catholic but for the destruction of the Society of Jesus.

In Hindustan the entrance of the

English stopped the reorganization of the missions for a time, but by 1886 there were already a million of Catholics in those countries, and to day they have gone beyond the two million mark. It is true this is only in the south. Up in the north it is dark night yet, but everything there is full of promise, and hope is bright while the power of England remains unimpeded.

China, after all its terrible persecutions, counts a million Catholics, and the readiness with which thousands laid down their lives in the outbreaks which are just now filling the world with horror, shows how deeply the faith was planted in their hearts. It is a sad revelation of the inconsistency and unreliability of human agents, coming so soon after the honors given by the Court of Peking to Bishops, and the eagerness of the emperor to enter into relations with the Holy See. But the blood spilt will only give more vigor to Catholic life after this storm subsides. God knows how many have died. The number may mount high into the thousands.

Corea is especially the land of martyrs, even in our own days, but it counts at the present day 20,000 Christians, although the bloody laws of the country hang like a sword above their heads.

Japan once had 2,000,000 Catholics, and in the persecutions 1,000 priests with 200,000 natives sealed their belief with their blood. A noteworthy fact is that after one hundred and eighty years without priests and without sacraments, the missionaries who entered there in 1856 found several thousand Catholics who still clung tenaciously to their faith. Those old apostles knew how to implant Catholicity in the hearts of their neophytes. At present they number 45,000, with an archbishop and three bishops at their head. The number should be greater, but as late as 1873, 10,000 were exiled, tortured or butchered, because they were Catholics.

Crossing the Pacific to the New World, we find that in South America, in spite of the suppression of religious orders and the chronic state of revolution which prevails there, there are at present 43,000,000 Catholics, 10,000,000 of whom are native Indians.

The history of North America is the most brilliant page in missionary annals. In 1760, 63,000 French Catholics passed from the dominion of France to that of England. To-day there are 2,000,000 Canadian Catholics, exclusive of another million who have emigrated to the United States. The only sad feature to be noted there is that the native races have disappeared. It would not have been so if the French had remained in control.

In the United States the progress is phenomenal. In 1789, John Carroll, the Prefect Apostolic, could count only 30,000 Catholics, and he had but one church for them all. In 1889, we find John Carroll's successor a Cardinal Archbishop. Around him are 84 bishops, 10,000 priests, while the little flock of 30,000 has grown to 10,000,000. Emigration, of course, figures largely in all this, though there has been, on the other hand, considerable loss for want of priests, but the zeal of the bishops and clergy are the chief factors in this marvelous increase.

Leave San Francisco and travel over the 9,000 miles that separate California from the new continent of Australia. The penal colony of 1789, with a few priests scattered through the bush in quest of souls, possesses now a mighty church of 300,000 Catholics, with 21 bishops, nearly 1,800 priests and 880 schools; while New Zealand and Malasia give another 150,000 to increase the number.

The Dark Continent has been exploited, and on its western coast there are 38,000 Catholics with bright hopes of soon adding to the number. Down at the Cape of Good Hope 25,000 more are to be found.

The Fathers of the Holy Ghost are ransoming as many as they can of the 60,000 slaves that are brought every year to Zanzibar, and in Ethiopia the Capuchins are hard at work, while in Egypt and Algiers, where there were at most 15,000 Catholics at the opening of the century without priests and without churches, there are now 600,000 with a complete hierarchy perfectly organized, with schools, seminaries and hospitals established, and numbers of religious communities consecrated to the work of the Apostolate.

In Asia Minor also the work is going on, but political complications impede the efforts of missionaries there. Nevertheless, the number of Catholics of the United Rites has doubled in the course of the century, and even the Sultan shows himself more liberal than the schismatical powers of Europe. The future is full of promise, unless Russia establishes itself in Constantinople. If that takes place there will be a temporary lull; but as adhesion to the Greek schism is largely political, and as politics are shifting wonderfully these days, it will be at most a delay, and the once great Church of those beautiful countries may rise again to something of its former glory and power.

Nor is there any immediate likelihood of the supply of missionaries giving out. In the first place, we have the great Urban College for the propagation of the faith, which was established in Rome as long ago as 1627, and which has at the present day 110 students from all parts of the world preparing for the labors of the apostolate. In its long list of teachers we find professors of Hebrew, Chaldeic, Arabic, Syriac, Armenian, Chinese and Greek, who are engaged in preparing their scholars for work among those various peoples. Alongside of it is a similar institution, called the Seminary of SS. Peter and Paul. There are

the English, Scotch, Irish, American and Canadian colleges for the same purpose, with an aggregate of 227 students. Milan has another establishment, begun in 1850, and Lyons another, inaugurated in 1856, which counts already 110 students. The great Paris Seminary for foreign missions, which has been revived in our times, counts 1,100 of its pupils out in the missions at the present moment, 33 of whom are bishops, besides 332 others, who are in Paris awaiting to be sent. This house has already 77 of its pupils on the roll of martyrs. Venice established its missionary seminary in 1867 and a special one for Albania in 1868. There is an American college in Louvain, an English college at Lisbon and another at Valladolid, as also a Scotch and an Irish college, and in Paris there is one specially for Hindustan. There is Mill Hill in England, Rosendaal in Holland and St. Joseph's in the Tyrol, while the Holland missionaries of Szei have four colleges for the same purpose, and finally, All Hallows in Ireland, with its 180 students, completes the list of splendid institutions established by the secular priesthood for the propagation of the faith.

Nor should we forget that in many places in Europe there are apostolic schools for boys, in whose hearts the divine fire of the apostolate is beginning to exert its power.

We omit mention of the triumphs of the religious orders, as the labor of the missions has been their work of predilection from the beginning. Their labors are too gigantic to attempt to describe here.

There is the story as briefly as we could put it. An army of 60,000 missionaries has gained for the Church in this century alone 20,000,000 souls. With such a showing it does not seem as if these were days of religious decadence, and we have every reason to hope that the coming century will be able to record still more glorious results.

How was all this brought about? It was brought about largely by the co-operation of the laity in missionary work. The Church, which knows the masses better than the politicians can ever hope to know them, felt the pulse of mankind, and saw the great popular movement coming, which is so ominous for the statesmen of the present day, but so full of hope for the Church.

Formerly missions were the work of individual enterprise. Great souls like the apostles hurried with the torch of faith to the limits of the Roman Empire! The monks lifted up Europe out of the ruin into which the Barbarian invasion had plunged it; and to them it owes its present civilization, and now it is getting the torch from them. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries kings and princes as well as the statesmen of Europe organized great missionary enterprises for Asia and America. To-day the people are doing it. A young girl inspired the establishment of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and it was inaugurated in Lyons only in 1822; yet by the help of the voluntary subscriptions of the faithful it is now able to dispense on an average every year, in the furtherance of apostolic effort, the amazing sum of 4,000,000 francs. Last year it rose to 6,814,270 francs, or \$1,362,845. For us it is gratifying to know that \$68,202 of this was sent from the United States, and that we are thus beginning to pay our debt to that magnificent society which has contributed to the propagation of the faith in our country since the year 1822, when it was founded, no less than \$5,600,000.

What this particular association is doing others emulated, and the Society of St. Francis Xavier was founded for the same purpose in Aix la Chapelle in 1832; the Leopoldineverein in Austria in 1839; the Ludwigsverein in Bavaria in 1843; the Society of St. Boniface in Paderborn in 1849, while the work of the Holy Childhood is appealing to the hearts of mothers all over the world for the rescue of the little children of China abandoned in the streets and roads by their cruel and unnatural parents.

Surely there was never in the history of the Church such a popular impulse felt, and never such a universal response given, to the work of propagation of the faith as in these days of ours. It should fill us with joy and consolation.

But what has this to do with the Apostleship of Prayer? It has everything to do with it. It appeals first to the members of the League who are able to further this glorious work by their contributions, and it reminds them that with their aims, their earnest and associated prayers, must be united. Protestants give fortunes to their missions, but do not pray for them; and so the cold hand that gives chili the heart that receives. Our arms help to support the laborers in the work. That is essential, but our prayers go further and make their words touch the hearts of their hearers.

Besides, there are plenty among us so miserably poor that they can scarcely give even the widow's mite for the cause. And, above all, there are vast numbers of religious men and women in convents and monasteries whose hearts are on fire with zeal for souls, and who are yet debarred by their very vows from almsgiving. By their contribution to this mighty work that is going on can only be prayer. And it was precisely this kind of co-operation by prayer with the Society of the Propagation of the Faith which Father Guaretot had in view when he was first sketching the Apostleship. Listen to the touching appeal with which he closes his little book on the Apostleship of Prayer:

"Faithful souls," he says, "shut your eyes for a moment to the illusions of the senses, come away from the

world and the tumult of creatures, and lend your ears to the distressing cries of so many unhappy souls who are hanging over the abyss and who implore your help.

"O God! what eloquent voices are heard pleading the cause of these wretched people. It is the voice of those generous apostles whom a sublime devotion transports in our own days to the limits of the world. From the midst of the tempest-tossed ocean, from the depths of the barbarous people whom they are striving to gain to Jesus Christ, from all parts of the universe they turn their gaze to you, and in the fierce struggle with error, while subject to every privation; from their battlefield, so often reddened with blood, they cry out with St. Paul: O brethren, well-beloved, pray for us. It is the voice of the Church which moans and weeps.

"She weeps for the little children who die before they are regenerated by grace—the victims of a cruelty that the tiger would not feel; or who, worse still, consumed by corruption beyond their years perish like the tender flower that withers in the glare of the noontid sun.

"She weeps for the numberless slaves of sin who, dead to virtue, dead to the faith, and dead to every sentiment of decency, bear already on their brow the fatal seal of reprobation.

"She weeps for those whom schism and heresy have dragged from her embrace, and who, like the branch torn from the trunk, have only a curse for their heritage and eternal fire for their lot.

"She weeps for the still greater throng of idolaters, who are the sport of monstrous errors and who, groveling on their faces before infamous idols, prostitute to demons the homage that is due to God.

"It is the voice of Jesus Christ. From the depth of His tabernacles, where His love for us has imprisoned Him, a cry escapes from His heart: 'I came to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it should be kindled.' Then showing us the generations of men that like the waves, driven by the storm, dash themselves against the rock, and hurry on, one after the other, to leap into the abyss. He says to us: 'O my children, I have given My life for these souls. Do not refuse them the help of your prayers.'

There is the glorious work that is set for us during this month which we are about to begin.

CARDINAL GIBBONS ON LITTLE THINGS.

In a recent sermon preached by Cardinal Gibbons with the text "He had done all things well," the extreme importance and absolute necessity of little things in the struggle for existence and for salvation were especially dwelt upon. The Cardinal, as usual, was simple, clear, and his remarks were to the point.

"He had done all things well," said Cardinal Gibbons in commencing his sermon. "The multitude came to our dear Saviour and they praised Him, not because of the great exploits He had accomplished as the conqueror of men, but because He did all things well for the glory of His Father and the welfare of humanity, small as well as great.

"I propose to make a special plea in behalf of the small things of life. I hold that our sanctification here and our salvation hereafter do not depend upon the accomplishment of greater achievements, but rather upon the faithful, diligent performance of the commonplace daily duties of our life—our public and domestic duty, the manner in which we go about our daily avocations, the attitude we maintain in society, our conversation one to another, and the way in which we conduct ourselves during the recreation which we are enjoying here in this beautiful world.

"I hold it as an axiom that we can sanctify all this work. It matters not to God whether we are a king or a clown on the stage of life; the great object is to fill faithfully the post to which God has assigned us.

"How many a brave Briton and Boer sheds his blood and goes down to his grave in South Africa unwept, unhoored, and unsung! Yet it is the rank and file that accomplish the victories for which generals receive the praise.

"When the traveler has approached Mount Lebanon, in Syria, and beheld in admiration in the distance those tall majestic cedars that crowd that mountain, he pays no attention at all to the grass that has grown around those trees. True, when he approaches the summit those grand trees afford, in deed, to him some shelter from the rays of the sun, but the little blades of grass perform a noble and more important duty, because they give food and refreshment to the beast of burden. It is the little deed well done that adds much to the sum of human happiness.

"Those little acts of Christian courtesy that we show to one another; those little kindly acts of politeness that are inseparable from polite society—those do more to cement together the bonds of social and family life than the most brilliant achievement ever accomplished.

"We are too much given in this world to do honor to those who pride themselves on the great works they have performed, while we neglect and forget those who accomplish meritorious though comparatively small deeds. But that was not the case with Christ, as was instanced with His words to His disciples concerning the widow who contributed her mite at the temple.

"People come to me and say, 'Cardinal, if I were a rich man or a rich woman I would give many presents

and I would endow a university. I would found a hospital. I would make my name conspicuous by the great works I would accomplish.

"These remarks do not do any good. They do not boil the kettle. They are a waste of words. And I notice that these people who make these hypothetical professions do not, as the widow did, give the little they possess. They exempt themselves from contributing even a farthing according to their means.

The Cardinal told anecdotes of great men to illustrate the lesson he was endeavoring to inculcate. He spoke of the diligence, patience and persistence of Michael Angelo, of the attention to details paid by Isaac Newton and of the pains bestowed upon his work by Lord Tennyson.

"Let me admonish you to begin each day as a rational Christian man by consecrating that day to God," he said: "Thus you will sanctify all the actions of the day."

THOUGHTS ON THE SACRED HEART.

Who would not love that royal Heart, so paternally maternal towards us!—St. Francis de Sales.

Open Heart of my Redeemer! Blessed abode of souls smitten with heavenly love! O! do not refuse to receive my soul also!—St. Alphonsus Liguori.

Recommend all your actions to the most sweet and most tender Heart of Jesus, that It may correct and perfect them.—Blotius.

In its ardent love the Heart of Jesus may be compared with a censor filled with burning coals.—St. Bernardine of Siena.

With what sweetness is not that soul replenished, which through the wounds of Jesus Christ, is united to His Heart.—St. Bonaventure.

Lord! admit me into the sanctuary of Thy interior sufferings; plunge me into that ocean of bitterness which Thy Heart encloses.—St. Gerard.

Two baptisms emanated from the wound in the Heart of Jesus Christ; that of water by which we have been called, and that of blood by which we have been chosen.—Tertullian.

The Heart of Jesus is a book of life, written in letters of love; let us study those characters of love, of compassion and of fear which it contains.—St. Antoninus.

Though the hearts of all men be closed against you, do not be disturbed, for the Heart of Jesus will be always faithful and always open to you.—Lanspurge.

Nothing is better founded upon reason, nothing is more conformable to the doctrines of the faith, than the devotion to the Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Cardinal Pie.

Thanks to the death of Jesus Christ, our death has ceased to be a cause of fear; the Heart of Jesus has made of it a passage from the miseries of this world to the ineffable delights of Heaven.—St. Alphonsus Liguori.

Oh, how much did St. Aloysius Gonzaga love when upon earth! When he was in this mortal life he was continually discharging arrows of love at the Heart of the Word; now that he is in Heaven these arrows return to his own heart, because the acts of love and charity which he made then, give him an extreme joy.—St. Magdalen of Pazzi.

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