

# Northwest Review

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.

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SATURDAY, AUG. 27, 1904.

## Calendar for Next Week.

- AUGUST.**
- 28—Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Feast of the Most Pure Heart of Mary.
  - 29—Monday—The Beheading of St. John the Baptist.
  - 30—Tuesday—St. Rose of Lima, Virgin.
  - 31—Wednesday—St. Lazarus, Bishop, Martyr.
- SEPTEMBER.**
- 1—Thursday—St. Raymond Nonnatus, Confessor (transferred from yesterday).
  - 2—Friday—St. Stephen, King.
  - 3—Saturday—The Mother of the Divine Shepherd.

## PERENNIAL PRAISE

The most perfect act of religion is the praise of God, the giver of all good gifts. Praise implies knowledge, gratitude and love, the three essential factors of the complete and unalloyed happiness we hope to enjoy in heaven. Thus those who praise God continually take the straightest road to everlasting bliss. This is the origin of that exclamation so common among our pious forefathers: "God be praised!" And even now in German Catholic centres the priest is greeted with the words, "Praised be Jesus Christ," to which he replies, "For ever and ever."

From the earliest ages of the Christian era those of the monks who aimed at the highest perfection kept up continually the praise of God by singing or reciting psalms and hymns or other prayers. In the East the votaries of perennial praise were called "Akoimeto!" or "The Sleepless Ones," because day and night they took turns in this holy office without interruption. The same practice was observed in the monasteries of Agaunum, founded by King Sigismund in 522, and later on in the monasteries of St. Denis and St. Germain in Paris. Abbot Augustin of St. Riquier in Picardy, who died in 814, left special instructions for this perpetual adoration.

It was in France also that the perpetual adoration of the Blessed Eucharist—a more specialized form of Divine Praise—began. Anne of Austria asked her confessor, a priest of St. Sulpice, to make a vow in her name for the deliverance of France from the scourge of war. He resolved to found a convent of nuns for the perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and chose Catherine de Bar, a native of St. Die in Lorraine, to carry out his intention. She became a nun of the order of the Annunciation. A little house was bought in the Rue Feron, Paris, and here Mother Mechilde of the Blessed Sacrament, as she was called in religion, began the perpetual adoration on March 25, 1654. The sisters observe the primitive rule of St. Benedict in all its rigor. One or more of them is always kneeling before the altar. Until lately the order had fifteen houses in France, one in Alsace, one in Poland, and four in Holland.

From France this beautiful devotion spread to Italy, where there are at least two orders of Perpetual Adoration; to Belgium, where the practice is kept up by the

Dames du Saint-Sacrement, instituted at Brussels by the Jesuit Father Boone; to Germany, where the Servite Nuns at Munich and the Franciscan Nuns at Mayence practise perpetual adoration; to Canada, where the Fathers of the Most Blessed Sacrament, founded in France, adore the Sacred Host exposed day and night in Montreal; and to the United States, where there are two or three different orders of perpetual adoration.

Our enumeration, though incomplete, is sufficient to show how this idea of perennial praise has taken hold of fervent Catholic souls. But what is more extraordinary and at the same time known to few is that this perennial praise was actually practised in the first half of the seventeenth century by a Church of England deacon and his family and friends, so that his house was generally spoken of as "The Convent" or "The Nunnery." When Dr. Pusey, some seventy years ago, founded the first Anglican convent in Oxford, he was condemned for doing something that had never been heard of before in the Church of England, and yet more than two hundred years before his time the thing had been done much more thoroughly than he ever succeeded in doing it.

The facts are related by Izaak Walton, the celebrated author of "The Complete Angler," in his "Life of Mr. George Herbert," the pious poet. Nicholas Farrer, a dear friend of George Herbert's, had travelled a great deal in Catholic countries, and, although he never left the Church of England, he put in practice the many Catholic principles he had picked up in his travels. The rest of the story we give in Izaak Walton's own quaint words:

Not long after his return in England, Mr. Farrer had, by the death of his father, or an elder brother, or both, an estate left him, that enabled him to purchase land to the value of four or five hundred pounds a year; the greatest part of which land was at Little Gidding (or Gidding), four or six miles from Huntingdon, and about eighteen from Cambridge; which place he chose for the privacy of it, and for the Hall, which had the Parish-Church or Chapel, belonging and adjoining near to it; for Mr. Farrer, having seen the manners and vanities of the world, and found them to be, as Mr. Herbert says, "a nothing between two dishes," did so content himself that he resolved to spend the remainder of his life in mortifications, and in devotion, and in charity, and to be always prepared for death. And his life was spent thus:

He and his family, which were like a little College, and about thirty in number, did most of them keep Lent and all Ember-weeks strictly, both in fasting and using all those mortifications and prayers that the Church hath appointed to be then used, and he and they did the like constantly on Fridays, and on the Vigils and Eves appointed to be fasted before the Saints' days; and this frugality and abstinence turned to the relief of the poor, but this was but a part of his charity; none but God and he knew the rest.

This family, which I have said to be in number about thirty were a part of them his kindred, and the rest chosen to be of a temper fit to be moulded into a devout life: and all of them were for their dispositions serviceable, and quiet, and humble, and free from scandal. Having thus fitted himself for his family, he did, about the year 1630, betake himself to a constant and methodical service of God; and it was in this manner;—He, being accompanied with most of his family, did himself use to read the common prayers—for he was a Deacon—every day, at the appointed hours of ten and four, in the Parish-Church, which was very near his house, and which he had both repaired and adorned, for it was fallen into a great ruin, by reason of a depopulation of the village before Mr. Farrer bought the Manor. And he did also constantly read the Matins every morning at the hour of six,

either in the Church, or in an Oratory, which was within his own house. And many of the family did there continue with him after the prayers were ended, and there they spent some hours in singing Hymns or Anthems, sometimes in the Church, and often to an organ in the Oratory. And there they sometimes betook themselves to meditate, or to pray privately, or to read a part of the New Testament to themselves, or to continue their praying or reading the Psalms; and in case the Psalms were not always read in the day, then Mr. Farrer, and others of the congregation did at night, at the ringing of a watch-bell, repair to the Church or Oratory, and there betake themselves to prayers and lauding God, and reading the Psalms that had not been read in the day: and when these or any part of the congregation grew weary or faint, the watch-bell was rung sometimes before, sometimes after midnight; and then another part of the family rose, and maintained the watch, sometimes by praying or singing lauds to God, or reading the Psalms, and when, after some hours, they also grew weary or faint, then they rung the watch-bell and were also relieved by some of the former or by a new part of the society, which continued their devotions—as hath been mentioned—until morning. And it is to be noted, that in this continued serving of God, the Psalter or whole book of Psalms, was in every twenty-four hours sung or read over, from the first to the last verse; and this was done as constantly as the sun runs his circle every day about the world, and then begins again the same instant that it ended.

Thus did Mr. Farrer and his happy family serve God day and night; thus did they always behave themselves as in his presence. And they did always eat and drink by the strictest rules of temperance, eat and drink so as to be ready to rise at midnight, or at the call of a watch-bell, and perform their devotions to God. And it is fit to tell the Reader, that many of the Clergy, that were more inclined to practical piety and devotion, than to doubtful and needless disputations, did often come to Gidding Hall, and make themselves a part of that happy society, and stay a week or more, and then join with Mr. Farrer and the family in these devotions, and assist or ease him or them in their watch by night. And these various devotions had never less than two of the domestic family in the night; and the watch was always kept in the Church, or Oratory, unless in extreme cold winter nights, and then it was maintained in a parlour, which had a fire in it; and the parlour was fitted for that purpose. And this course of piety, and great liberality to his poor neighbors, Mr. Farrer maintained till his death, which was in the year 1639.

Prudent Izaak, as may be observed in the foregoing long but picturesque quotation, carefully avoids the use of the words "convent" or "nunnery." He lived at a time when such words were almost an insult; but the 1840 illustrated edition of "Walton's Lives," which we have before us, describes one of the vignettes as "Portrait and Arms of Nicholas Farrer, placed between two figures in the Religious habit worn at his Convent of Little Gidding, in Huntingdonshire;" and the female figure in that vignette wears a nun's wimple and presses to her breast with her right hand a rosary, while the male figure on the other side wears a clerical cap and gown. How unique this all is in the reign of Charles I., when, as George Herbert himself deplora, the Anglican clergy were, for the most part, sadly deficient in the most elementary piety, when England was seething with the most extreme Calvinistic doctrines that were soon to issue in the Great Rebellion.

That gleam of true light, which Nicholas Farrer kept alive in the spiritual darkness of the majority of the nation, was soon to be ex-



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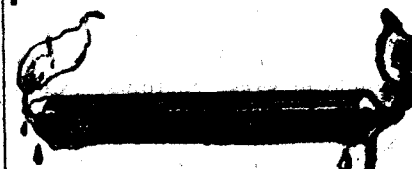


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Catechism in the Church, 3 p.m.  
N.B.—Sermon in French on first Sunday in the month, 9 a.m. Meeting of the children of Mary 2nd and 4th Sunday in the month, 4 p.m.  
WEEK DAYS—Masses at 7 and 7.30 a.m. On first Friday in the month, Mass at 8 a.m. Benediction at 7.30 p.m.  
N.B.—Confessions are heard on Saturdays from 3 to 10 p.m., and every day in the morning before Mass.

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The Northwest Review is the official organ for Manitoba and the Northwest, of the Catholic Mutual Benefit Association.

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Meets in No. 1 Trades Hall, Fould's Block, corner Main and Market Sts., every 1st and 3rd Wednesday in each month, at 8 o'clock, p.m.

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