

of the crosses which await you in your apostolate.

"And," the Holy Father added, "that cross, my son, was borne by Pius IV. It was given me by Pope Gregory XVI. at the moment of my consecration; it has never quitted me since."

Upon this avowal of Pius IX., Mgr. Medeiros cried out with a gesture of holy horror, "But, Holy Father, how can I consent to carry an object so precious, an object which Pío Nono has consecrated?"

"My son," replied the Pope, "you shall carry it. It is Pius IX. who tells you."

While speaking these words Pius IX. closed the box and presented it to the young prelate. Suddenly the features of the Pontiff, until now beaming, appeared clouded. Re-opening the box, Pius IX. raised the cross which it contained to his lips and gazed upon it long and earnestly. In that moment, no doubt, all the remembrances of his long episcopal career came back to the memory of our holy Pontiff, and he made a last effort over himself to separate himself from an object which recalled to him so many remembrances. One word escaped from his lips: it expressed all that was passing within his heart. "Dear little cross! I thought that you would never leave me."

But like a saint accustomed to self-denial in all things, as well as in great, Pius IX. soon overcame the moment of emotion, and again presented the casket to the bishop with a sweet and fatherly smile.

"It is still a further reason for me, my son, to give you this cross," he hastened to say. "Preserve it. Do not forget that it should be a symbol of courage and a mark of consolation in affliction."

Dear readers, all the details of this charming incident were given to us at Rome by Mgr. de Medeiros himself. Eight days after his consecration, he came to the French college where I was and delighted us all by his recital. What emotion filled him, and trembled in his voice, as he related it to us; what tears filled his eyes. Besides, this story is not yet finished, dear readers; here are the last two circumstances. You will acknowledge that the conclusion is worthy of such a charming beginning.

Possessor of such a treasure, Mgr. de Medeiros asked himself what ought he to do with it? Not to wear the cross would be contrary to the will of the Pope, he knew. But after him, what would become of it? Should it become a family heritage? No; would not the bishop who

would succeed him in Pernambuco reclaim it? Did not Pius IX. intend to honor his successors as well as himself?

Full of these thoughts the pious bishop the very night following his audience (sleep could not close his eyes), drew up a kind of testament concerning the precious cross. He there said that the cross given by Pius IX. should pass after him to the bishops of Pernambuco, his successors; that they should wear it until such time as Pius IX. would be canonized; that on that day the holy relic could no longer belong to the bishops of Pernambuco; that it should be given to the Madonna of the Cathedral for an ornament.

A few days after his consecration, Mgr. de Medeiros betook himself once more to the Vatican. This time the new bishop came to offer his homage of thanks and devotion to the prince of bishops. Upon his breast flashed the cross of rubies, present of Gregory XVI. to Pius IX., and of Pius IX. to the Bishop of Pernambuco; and in his hands might have been seen a little casket. What did that casket contain? A second pastoral cross. This one was glancing with emeralds. The brother of the bishop had presented it to him, and the bishop did not wish to keep this second treasure; he brought it to Pius IX.

"Most Holy Father," said he to the Pontiff, "you have given me a most precious gift. Permit me in my turn to make an offering to the treasury of St. Peter. My brother, who could not have anticipated or foreseen your most benevolent kindness of Your Holiness, has sent me this cross; I have no longer need of it; that which I have received from you, and which I shall always wear, shall suffice me. Is it not just that the new present pass into the exhausted treasury of the Holy Church?"

Pius IX. received the casket and thanked kindly and with emotion the bishop for his generous heart, for his soul so full of gratitude. Then after a moment of silence, giving to his trembling voice a tone of solemnity:

"My son," said he to the bishop, in returning to his hands the jewel box, "you have made your sovereign Pontiff a present; he has accepted that present. But Pius IX. cannot consent that the paternal gift which he has made you should deprive you of a brother's gift. Pius IX. gives back this cross; guard it, for it came not only from your brother; it is also your Father who gives it to you."

Without duty, life is dead and desolate.