NEW CHURCH AT ST. THOMAS

In last week's issue we made reference to the completion of a new and beautiful sacred edifice in the parish of St. Columban, of which Rev. Albert McKeon is pastor. It was the crowning effort of his apostolic zeal in that important parish. This week we desire to chronicle the laying of the corner stone of a new church in the parish of St. Thomas, of which Rev. T. West is pastor, with Father Hogan as assistant. The erection of the old church takes us back to the early history of St. Thomas. It was a capacious one, built of brick, and at the time when its corner stone was laid there were those who thought that it was too large and too expensive for the needs of the parish. There were then, as there are now, men who were too prone to be wrapped up in the present, men who were loath to build for the future, which reminds us of a saying of a member of the old Irish parliament in similar circumstances: "Why should we build for posterity? What has posterity ever done for us." Father West is not of the mould of Mr. Boyce, the author of this saying. He is not only building for the present, but building for the future, building for the teeming Catholic population which will, when he is laid to rest, bless him and revere his memory because of his splendid foresight. Nor is he alone in his effort. The encouraging words of the chief pastor of London diocese, Bishop Fallon, spurred him on with a noble resolve to build a temple of Catholic worship which will reflect honor upon the Catholic people of St. Thomas for generations to come, and which will be a true type of the honor and glory due to God and His Church. The new edifice will be built entirely of stone, and will have a seating capacity almost as large as the Cathedral itself.

On last Sunday an immense concourse of people assembled to witness the ceremony. At 3:30 His Lordship Bishop Fallon proceeded to the new building and solemnly blessed and laid the corner-stone, the ritual for such ceremony being carried out in full. His Lordship was assisted by the pastor Rev. T. West; Right Rev. Mgr. Aylward, of the Cathedral; Rev. J. Stanley, Woodstock; Rev. John Hogan, St. Thomas; Rev. John Brennan, La Salette; Rev. E. L. Tierney, Secretary to the Bishop, Rev. Father Fuerth, West Lorne; Rev. Chas. Nagle, Simcoe; Rev. Father Downey, Windsor; Rev. Father McKeon, St. Mary's Church, London, Chancellor of the diocese; Rev. Father Tobin, London; and Rev. Father Gnam, Ingersoll.

Rev. Father Stanley was the preacher of the day. His sermon was not only an eloquent one, but contained matter of a highly instructive character and in every way worthy the occasion. He spoke as follows:

"Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (St. Matthew xvi, 18.")

My Lord, Right Rev. Bishop, Right Rev., Very and Rev. Fathers and my dear people.—We are assembled here to-day to assist at a ceremony that is full of sense and meaning not only to the citizens of St. Thomas but to all those who are interested in the spread of the Christian religion and of giving to God a dwelling place worthy of Him and worthy of a people who have always been devoted to the cause of God. The laying of this corner stone by His Lordship Bishop Fallon will long be remembered with pleasure by the members of Holy Angels parish. It is the fulfilling of a long cherished hope and a long felt want. It will in years to come tell of the devotion of an energetic and zealous Pastor, of a people generous and self-sacrificing. The temple that will be builded upon these foundations, well and securely laid, will in time to come be the noblest memorial, the strongest proof the incontestable testimony of your Faith. It will accomplish, even when we of to-day are passed and gone, its share of work in the mission field of the Church militant and Universal of bringing souls ito eternity sanctified and saved through her ministrations.

WHY BUILD CHURCHES

With the spirit of irreligion rampant in the world to-day, the theories of Rationalism devastating every walk of life, the doctrines of socialism dwarfing the minds and thwarting the best interests of men, and the wave of Infidelity threatening to destroy our people, we may well ask ourselves, Why Build Churches? Relying on the testimony of the Old and the New Testament, historic documents of unquestionable authority, the divinity of the Christian religion can be and has been conclusively proved. But the Christian religion, instituted to be practiced by all men, does not and cannot exist in an abstract state. It is presented to us and to all men by a concrete society called the Church, a visible society which professes the doctrines of Christ, observes His laws and gives the final perfection to supernatural religion.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

The Church can be defined as a society of the faithful, instituted by Christ to preserve His doctrine, observe His laws and thus attain the final end of man, or eternal life. Jesus Christ truly and personally founded His religion under the form of a Church. We learn from Holy Scripture that Jesus Christ solemnly promised to institute a Church. When choosing among His twelve apostles one to whom He gave the symbolic name of Peter, He said to him: Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. He executed this promise when He gave His apostles the mission and power to preach the Gospel to every creature, to administer the Sacraments, to govern the faithful, and He further promised that He would be with His Church until the end of time.

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At the head of the Apostles He placed Peter, to whom He gave universal jurisdiction when He said "Feed my Lambs, Feed my sheep." We learn furthermore from the same Gospel and the acts of the Apostles that the Apostles themselves after the Ascension fulfilled the mission they had received. They preached the doctrine of Christ, they observed the laws of the Master, they increased from day to day the number of the disciples under the guidance of Peter who had been appointed their supreme head. The word religion means a society. The Christian religion and the Christian Church are one and the same thing; one is only the visible manifestation of the other; therefore if Jesus Christ founded His religion He founded His Church, that is the visible society of those who profess His doctrine. Thus if was Christianity, not in the abstract, but as forming a society, a church, which was predicted by the oracles and the prophets. It was the establishment of the Church which was marked by the seal of miracles, it was her divine origin which was attested by the blood of martyrs, which twas miraculously established and preserved, and which produced the most marvellous fruits of virtue in souls and brought the richest blessings to mankind.

THE END OF THE CHURCH

In defining the Church we have said that it was instituted by Christ for a particular and a specific purpose. He determined the end of the Church. He fixed or stated what her mission was to be, namely, the work of saving the souls of men. The business aims and end of the Church therefore is to help you save your soul, reach heaven and escape hell. The Church, in order to carry out effectually her mission of saving souls to the end of time, must have certain privileges or prerogatives which are indispensable to accomplish her purpose. We shall consider carefully how Jesus Christ conferred upon His Church all the prerogatives necessary for her fulfilling her splendid mission that has been the object of wonder and of admiration in all the centuries that have gone.

INDEFECTIBILITY

In the first place Christ in establishing His Church conferred upon her the prerogative of Indefectibility, namely, that she would last until the end of time, maintaining intact her interior institution and her exterior form, admitting at no time of any essential change. We have ample proof of the Church's Indefectibility both in the Old and New Testament, but in support of this prerogative let it suffice to call your attention to a text already quoted which has become classic and dispenses with commentary, "And I say to thee thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

POWER

In founding His Church Christ conferred upon her all the power necessary to continue the work of Redemption. This power represents the threefold office of Christ as Teacher, Priest, and King. The Church has received from her divine Founder the power to teach, to preach and to impose upon all men the moral and dogmatic doctrines of Jesus Christ. As the doctrine of Christ cannot be made known but by teaching, the Church in receiving this mission to make this doctrine known everywhere must necessarily have received also the power to teach all men. The words of Christ on this subject are sufficiently clear and well known: "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth; going therefore teach all nations." (St. Matt. xxviii. 18 and 19.) "He that heareth you, heareth Me and he that despiseth you despiseth Me. And he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me." (Lukex.16.) The apostles, strengthened by those words of the Master, devoted themselves immediately after the descent of the Holy Spirit to the ministry of preaching. Going forth they preached everywhere, says St. Mark. In consequence of this missson and power you will understand the attitude of the Church to-day in dealing with many of those questions that are most important for the welfare of her children. She is obliged to maintain the purity of Faith, to guard her children against erroneous, impious and immoral doctrines, to forbid the reading of books and papers that might corrupt the faith and morals of her people, to supervise all dogmatic and moral teaching given in society, whether private or official, that is, appointed by the State. No one will dispute this point when there is a question of a Christian society. But even though the constitution be based upon liberty of worship, the state, if it truly respects liberty, cannot refuse the Church this supervision, which is an integral part of the Catholic Apostolate. The State moreover should allow ecclesiastical superiors power to exercise an efficacious control over the various branches of human knowledge, otherwise the liberty awarded the Church would be a fallacy, since official pedagogues could, in teaching science, for example, astronomy, history and literature attack contradict or neutralize the teaching of the Church. Finally, with still greater reason may the Church claim the right to brand and condemn the anti religious and so called neutral teaching org anized under the patronage of the State. In cases of this kind the Church must have recourse to every means in her power, to every spiritual arm in her possession to protect her children from the baneful influence of such teaching. These reflections suffice to make us understand the Church's attitude toward governments which have promulgated hostile Legislation. It explains how dear to the heart of every Catholic is the affair of Catholic education and of how we should appreciate the fair and just laws of the Province of Ontario in regard to a system of schools that to-day gives our children an unparalleled moral and religious training. It explains the wonderful system of parochial schools in the United States established and maintained by the strenuous efforts of the Catholic priests and Bishops and the enormous but voluntary contributions of the faithful, for in these schools the faith of the child is protected and the morality in the child is guarded and the doctrines of the Master taught.

POWER TO CONFER SACRAMENTS.

The Church has received from Jesus Christ the power of regulating all that pertains to the administration of the Sacraments, of deciding all that pertains to public worship, for how could the Church fulfil her mission of saving souls if, while enlightening minds with the light of revelation, she did not at the same time impart the strength absolutely indispensable for the observance of the precepts imposed by Revelation? Now, it is through the seven Sacraments that the faithful obtain the graces necessary to preserve the spiritual life. Our Saviour's will in this respect is very clear. Thus we see that when He gave His apostles the power to teach He also imposed upon them the obligation to baptize all men. At the last Supper, after distributing His body and blood to them, He told them to do the same in remembrance of Him; on another occasion He gave them the power to forgive sins. The Apostles affirm this power implicitly by exercising it and explicitly by their words. We see them baptising, confirming, ordaining, celebrating Mass, ministering to the sick, and St. Paul writes, "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and the dispensers of the mysteries of God." (I cor. IV I.)

POWER TO GOVERN

Christ conferred upon His Church a Legislative power or the right to make laws binding upon her subjects, a judiciary power to define the sense and reach of her laws and finally an executive or coercive power that has the right to procure by the use of penalities, either spiritual or temporal, the observance of her laws imposed upon her subjects. A society cannot exist and attain its end without the power to govern. A multitude of wills seeking to attain the same end necessarily requires common and efficacious guidance. Hence when it pleased Our Saviour to unite in a perfect Society all who believed in Him, He could not but endow this society with the authority necessary to accomplish its mission. The Apostles, from the beginning exercised all these powers, making laws, pronouncing judgment, hurling anathemas at the guilty and rebellious without consulting the civil power, and the Church in the centuries that followed continued to exercise the same powers in virtue of the authority properly belonging to her, nor has the belief in the legislative authority of lawful heads ever varied in the Church. The Church forms no constituent element of any other society. Her end is not subordinate but incomparably superior to that of all other societies; moreover, every well ordered society must ultimately be subservient to the end of the Church, which is the supreme end of man's eternal salvation. In virtue of the Church's constitution and the assistance of divine grace the Church has every means of attaining her end. Such in a few words is the sublime mission of the Catholic Church in the wide world to day. No selfish motive can be found in her action, no biased opinion can play any part in her decisions, no influence can be brought to bear to shatter or change her doctrines. The Catholic Church has her charter from God and she came from the hands of God, who has promised to be her constant and consoling companion. Let this temple therefore rise to completion to give glory to God, peace and salvation to men, and thus fulfil its share of the work in the mission field of the Church.

At the conclusion of Father Stanley's sermon His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Fallon, in cope and mitre, advanced to the front of the platform, and spoke briefly to the people. Although he occupied their attention but a few minutes all eyes were constantly riveted on the distinguished personage whose reputation as a preacher is known in every part of Canada. His remarks were prefaced by a happy allusion to the peculiar circumstance which called him to St. Thomas to lay a corner stone for the first time in the Diocese of London, for a church which was to be known as "Holy Angels," the same name which was borne by a church in the city of Buffalo where he had spent ten years which might be considered amongst the most happy of his life as a priest. His Lordship went on to describe the glory and the honor which would come to the people of St. Thomas in the possession of such a splendid memorial in which would be carried on for generations to come the praise and glory of the Divine Being who commissioned Peter to establish a church on earth which would endure for all time. We are sorry we cannot give the Bishop's remarks in full. Amongst the Catholic people of St. Thomas who were present it created not a little enthusiasm, and amongst those not of the faith, as well as Catholics, his truly eloquent and impressive deliverance will serve as an influence which will certainly promote and extend a feeling of brotherhood and charity and Christian conduct amongst all classes of the community. His allusion to the character of the parish priest of St. Thomas and his unbounded zeal, coupled with a saintliness of life—his every thought bound up with the extension of God's Kingdom upon earth—his unselfish devotion to every, even the least, of his sacred duties—touched the people keenly, and was recognized as a true picture of the pastor whose devotion would bring a blessing to his loving flock.

THE CARDINAL'S REMINDER

The need to-day of Catholic men and women who will courageously and intelligently, in public and in private, stand for Catholic faith and Catholic practice must be evident to any one who walks with his eyes open. A world that is dangerously close to a lapse into materialism must be taught the worth of the supernatural; a world that sacrifices everything in its unreasoning rush after ease and comfort and pleasure must be shown the worth of principal and integrity; a world that is slipping away from its Christian moorings and drifting out upon the charted seas of indifference and religious unrest needs to have evidence of the peace and vigorous strength that belong to them who abide within the shadow of the immovable rock of the Church.

No wonder that Cardinal Gibbons emphasized the opportunity facing the Catholic layman to-day, whilst expressing his deep gratification at the splendid reception arranged for him recently by the Catholic Club of New York. His Eminence is ever wont to show a keen sense of the fit word to be spoken, and the representative body of the Catholic laity that night greeting the great prelate of Baltimore should find excellent inspiration in the reminder he addressed to them: "A zealous and enlightened laity is the glory of the Christian Church. The most luminous periods of the Church's history have been epochs conspicuous for laymen who have vindicated the cause of Christianity by the eloquence of their writings or by the splendid sanctity of their lives." —America.

DEATH OF A RELIGIOUS

On Ascension Thursday, at St. Joseph's Convent, Hamilton, Mother M. Philip, the oldest member of St. Joseph's Order in Canada, and one of the pioneer religious of the community, was called to her eternal reward after a few days illness resulting from an attack of pneumonia. When it was made known to her that she could not possibly recover, she resigned herself calmly to the holy will of God, and her preparation for death was truly saint-like in every detail. The Sisters who watched at her bedside were edified by the wonderful patience with which she bore her great sufferings. The only fear that disturbed her calmness was that she might be giving too much trouble to those in attendance. It was the vigil of the feast of her patron, St. Philip, when this dear old sister bade farewell to her loved community of which she had been a faithful devoted member for fifty-nine years. Mother Philip was born in County Wexford, Ireland, and was eighty-five years of age. During her long religious life she was remarkable for the zeal and energy with which she labored for the advancement of her Order; its rules and traditions were to her a sacred trust. With a marvellous activity even to an advanced age, she took an enthusiastic interest in the success of every work of charity undertaken by her community. During the cholera epidemic in Hamilton, she gave herself to the care of the afflicted throughout the city, and did so much to alleviate their sufferings that her heroic charity was highly praised and commented on by the press at that memorable time. She was the first Superior of St. Joseph's Hospital, Hamilton. She was also general Superior of the Community for years, and had filled almost every other important office during her long career.

St. Patrick's Dramatic Club of Toronto

This organization, composed of the young ladies and gentlemen of this flourishing parish, under the direction of Rev. Thomas Jones, C. SS. R., have won a reputation for themselves as amateur players. The last entertainment of the season was held in St. Patrick's Music Hall, on Monday and Tuesday evenings of last week, and may be styled the crowning success of this season's performances, critics having expressed great admiration at the capable manner in which the players performed their various parts. The cast was Miss Elizabeth Quigley, who played the part of a charming heiress to perfection, Miss Christina Collins, Miss Dorothy MacMahon, Miss Agnes Higgins, who kept the audience in constant humor, Mr. J. B. Costello, and Mr. Jas. Mohan, all of whom made a very creditable showing for themselves and the Catholic young people of Toronto. The stage arrangements were managed by Mr. J. J. Burns.

FAVORS RECEIVED. — A Promoter wishes to return thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph and St. Anthony, for favors received.

NEW BOOK

"Francisco Ferrer, Criminal Conspirator." A reply to the articles by William Archer, in McClure's Magazine, November and December, 1910. By John A. Ryan, D. D., author of a "Living Wage," "The Church and Interest Taking," etc. Published by B. Herder, St. Louis, Mo. Price 15cts.

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