

THE RE-BAPTISM OF INFANTS.

(From the Irish Ecclesiastical Record.)

There is hardly any duty of the missionary priest in which he is called on so frequently to exercise his judgment as that of infant baptism.

Gury lays down (No. 200) the following rules regarding the repetition of the Sacraments:— (1) The Sacraments can be repeated as often as a prudent doubt arises regarding their validity.

Under No. 249 the same author states in reply to the question whether infants baptized by midwives or other laics are to be re-baptized, that such repetition of the sacrament is to take place only in case of a probable suspicion of error arising as to validity.

The question then arises, what kind of doubt justifies a priest in re-baptizing? Must the doubt be probable, resting on substantial reasons; or is a slight doubt sufficient? On this point theologians are by no means unanimous.

In explaining the second principle he divides the sacraments into two classes, viz., those which are very necessary and those which are not. In the first, which includes baptism, repetition is lawful when the doubt is anything more than a scruple, or, as Goba says, non aperta vanum.

Continuing, he introduces a rather novel distinction when he says that the repetition of such sacraments may be sometimes lawful though not obligatory; for instance, a troublesome and long-continued scruple can make it lawful to repeat a baptism, although in reality there may be no obligation to do so.

applies to all about whose baptism any doubt is raised. It would seem, therefore, that the other theologians required a probable or grave doubt concerning the validity of the former baptism to justify repetition.

It is true that Gury, in explaining the above-mentioned rules regulating the repetition of the sacraments, says that the more necessary sacraments such as Baptism and Holy Orders can be administered on more generous lines, and, therefore, that even when the doubt is only doubtful or slightly probable (dubie aut tenuiter probable) that they can be repeated.

From such an array of testimony, therefore, we may with safety conclude that in the case of infants previously baptized we may repeat, sub conditione, when the doubt of its validity is probable, or even slight (dubium leve), or, in fact, anything above a scruple.

Indiscriminate re-baptism is specifically condemned by all theologians, and they are equally emphatic in insisting on an inquiry in each case.

The Roman Ritual says the case must be diligently investigated (diligenter pervestigata) before conditional baptism is given, and as to the nature and extent of such inquiry, Lehmkühl (No. 19, note) quotes a response of the S. Cong. Prop. Fid. to an American missionary, in which it is stated that it should be such as circumstances will allow, prout ad iudicium ferant.

With regard to private baptism given by midwives, I have heard a very experienced priest say that he "always baptized after women," and although it is laid down by theological writers that the testimony of one witness, even a woman, suffices to establish the validity of a baptism still as a rule the former is a sound principle to adopt.

In the case of baptism given by a non-Catholic doctor there need not be much ground for hesitation; and even when the medical man belongs to the true fold, I think it may safely be laid down that there will not be many instances in which sufficient doubt will not arise to justify the re-baptism, sub conditione.

An irregularity is incurred, according to Benedict XIV., by anyone re-baptizing even sub conditione, without just cause (Gury, 1032). This is called by Genicot (No. 633) the more common opinion, and the annotator of the Retiabor edition of Gury states that the Sacred Congregation of the Council required in such cases a dispensatio ad cautelam.

In those cases mentioned above, therefore, the minister of the sacrament, relying on the fuller and more liberal teaching of the most recent theologians, can carry on his ministrations free from anxiety, always keeping in mind the weighty words of Lehmkühl (No. 19, note), when treating of this matter: "The supreme law ought to be the securing of the salvation of the child."



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any doubt (aliquid dubium) remains, the baptism ought to be repeated. From such an array of testimony, therefore, we may with safety conclude that in the case of infants previously baptized we may repeat, sub conditione, when the doubt of its validity is probable, or even slight (dubium leve), or, in fact, anything above a scruple.

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POPE PIUS X HONORS A CATHOLIC EDITOR.

Rev. D. S. Phelan, editor of the Western Watchman, of St. Louis, writing from Rome, gives the following exceedingly interesting account of his recent special audience with Pope Pius X.:

Mgr. Kennedy, of the American College, introduced me as "the oldest Catholic editor in the United States, and the nestor of Catholic journalism in America." The Holy Father rose from his chair and stretched out his hand in a way that scarcely permitted me to kneel and in words slow, deliberate and grave, blessed my work, prayed that it might bear increasing fruit, and that I might be given grace and strength to continue in it along.

He did not permit me to remain kneeling, and I told him that the great numbers of Americans who were visiting Rome every year were impelled by the one desire of seeing the Holy Father, and the multitude of visitors from across the ocean would increase rather than diminish; and it would not be long before the Catholics of the United States would be more Roman than the Romans themselves; that the clergy of America had always had the profoundest love for the "Episcopus Episcoporum," but that they saluted in the person of His Holiness a new title to their veneration, and hailed Pius X. as the "parochus parochorum."

The Holy Father has a pair of laughing eyes. There is a merry twinkle in them that does not suggest mirth, much less roguishness, but a world of fatherly and familiar affability. He comes so near you, he speaks so kindly, he almost wraps you about with his descending interest, and one is tempted to touch him with the hand, and kissing his ring becomes almost a self-locking clasp.

Happiness is in simple things—a cup of cold water, a kind word, a bright smile, or pleasant "Good morning," and these cost nothing.—Mary Doran.

A PROTESTANT LADY'S REQUEST.

To-day I had the happy privilege of presenting about twenty Americans to the Holy Father. Three were from St. Louis, four from St. Paul, one from St. Joseph and others from different parts of the United States and Canada. Mgr. Kennedy was to have presented the last named, but he asked me to assume the duty. I had the cards of those to be presented, and on each the particular request each had to make of the Holy Father. The first one presented was a lady from Pittsburg, a Protestant and the wife of a multi-millionaire.

HONORS THE CATHOLIC PRESS.

The Holy Father's attention to us on these two occasions is the surprise of the whole Papal entourage.—Mgr. Kennedy was very much astonished at the Pope's reception of me. But there was nothing personal in it. The Holy Father was honoring the senior Catholic editor in America, and in honoring him he meant to honor the entire Catholic press of the United States. I shall never forget the scene, Pius X. holding my hand in his, rising from his chair and addressing to me the prayer spoken of above. It was an historic picture and deserving of commemoration on canvas.



IN THE SISTINE CHAPEL.

A private letter from Rome, published in The Western Watchman, contains the following description of an impressive ceremony in the famous Sistine Chapel, at the Vatican, as witnessed by the writer:

In the first flush of my enthusiasm I write to tell you of the glorious music we heard yesterday at the anniversary Requiem for Pope Leo XIII. Only a limited number of tickets were given, and we were fortunate enough to be among the "favored few." Arriving at the Vatican, we found the Swiss Guard doubled in number. We passed on from one to the other with our invitations as passports. At the given time they gave the word and every one was allowed to pass up the stairs, which number four flights before reaching the ante-room of the Sistine Chapel, where we passed through a line of soldiers in the brilliant uniform designed long ago by Michael Angelo.

We were shown to fine seats, and in a few minutes the different cardinals with their attendants began to arrive; real princes of the Church they were in their magnificent robes, but shining out and above all was the intellectual beauty of their patrician faces. Cardinal Rampolla was there in all his glory, a king among them, Cardinal Satolli, a slender figure, all soul. Ambassadors glistening in brilliant uniforms, footmen looking like Walter Raleighs in knee breeches, velvet coats, deep lace collars, and stiff ruffs around their necks, and from gold chains hung the crest of the Vatican, viz.: the tiara of Peter; Knights of Malta, in white and scarlet; from their shoulders hung long circular velvet cloaks, bearing on the left side a great Maltese cross of white.

When all were assembled the door of the sanctuary opened. A cardinal and priests, vested in black and gold, entered, passing the guard with shining silver helmets, who never left his post during the ceremony. A few moments more of silence and the door opened again. A cross-bearer, carrying a golden cross, came, followed by monsignori, etc., and last of all came His Holiness, magnificent in his rich robes of office, a picture of saintliness and humility, who seemed bowed down with the greatness of his office. Over his robe of white he wore a scarlet cope weighted with gold, on his head a silver mitre, which being removed, showed the snowy skull cap, as white as his hair. Four train-bearers carried the mighty length of silk, velvet and gold. After kneeling a few minutes before the altar, he mounted the red throne, and then we all knelt to the only King we acknowledge on earth.

The scene was one of most superb splendor. A glorious chapel filled with regal color, princes of the Church and earth gathered beneath a canopy of Michael Angelo's Prophets and Sybils, the walls one unending fresco, and above the collected brightness the unrivaled Sistine choir led by the youthful Porosi. Never again, perhaps, shall we hear such strains till we pass beyond the eternal gates. The "Dies Irae" was so great that I could have cried aloud. The verse " Rex Tremendae Majestatis" burst out after a minute's pause with gigantic volume. The boy sopranos, like angels, called to judgment, and the great rolling basses followed like the moaning winds, that perhaps shall sigh like that on the last day because their task is over.

"Salve me Fons pietatis" came from all soft and pleading like children might sing to a merciful Father. Porosi part of the time sang with them, and at the close, resting his eyes upon the beautiful ceiling, smiled like an angel as he listened to the wonderful voices he swayed by his magic Saton. No organ, no accompaniment, only voices, great, deep ones, silver tenors and the golden voices of the sweet-faced little boys who seemed too young almost to read music. After Mass a catafalque covered with gold cloth was carried to the middle of the chapel, and the Pope, in a sweet, strong voice, sang the blessing etc., and then was sung the "Libera," that beautiful rite of mercy, in an exquisite setting. When all was over, we came down and our in silence. Meeting Cardinals, ambassadors and all the graneees face to face failed to rouse us. We had been so near heaven, earth was still far away. We left home and came to Florence. Still I close my eyes and listen, before it grows too faint in my memory, to the wonderful music I would keep with me forever.

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