

BELLS BLESSED AT ST. NORBERT

The venerable parish priest of St. Norbert, Monsignor Ritchot, who has for some time been visibly sinking into the grave, had long desired to bestow on his dear parish church, which owes him so much, a last token of his love in the shape of three bells ordered from Mears of London, England, the founder who cast the historic bells of St. Boniface Cathedral. Last Tuesday Mgr. Ritchot was able to gratify his desire. The bells had come from the same Catholic house which had cast, and after the fire of 1860, recast the "bells of St. Boniface," sending them here via Hudson's Bay and Nelson River. The Very Rev. Vicar General Dugas went through the instructive and beautiful service for the blessing of bells. One of the three bells was "baptized" Norbert Alexander Adelard, the Christian names of the three Bishops (two of whom are archbishops) of St. Boniface; a second is named "Mary conceived without sin," the third is Joseph Noel, the Christian names of Mgr. Ritchot.

At ten o'clock in the morning of the 20th almost all the parishioners and many outside friends assembled in the fine Church of St. Norbert to witness the imposing ceremony, to be present at Mass and to hear the sermon.

The Holy Sacrifice was offered up by the Very Rev. J. A. Dugas, V. G., with Rev. Father Giroux as deacon and Rev. Father Fillion as subdeacon. Were present in the sanctuary: Rev. J. Dugas, S. J., Rector of St. Boniface College; Rev. Father Louis, Prior of the Trappist Monastery, with two other Trappist Fathers; Rev. Father Borgonie, C. S. R., Superior of the Brandon residence; Rev. Fathers Beaudin, Lacasse, Portelance and Frigor, O. M. I.; Rev. Father Lorieau, F. M. I.; Rev. Father Antoine, C. R. I. C.; Rev. Fathers Beliveau, Cherrier, Gandos, Jutras, Lalonde and Sauve.

It was fitting that Father Cherrier, Mgr. Ritchot's confidential adviser, should preach the sermon on an occasion to which the near approach of death gave such a poignant significance, and he did so with great tact and appropriateness. After describing the symbolism of church bells in general and the purpose they serve as reminders of grace, joy and sorrow, after showing how well chosen were the names of the three bells now blessed, he made a touching reference to the venerable prelate there happily present, who had been saying for the past few weeks, "Will the bells get here in time to toll my funeral knell?" The devoted pastor who can thus calmly discourse on the nearness of his deliverance from the bondage of the flesh is now, more than ever, a model for his parishioners and friends.

After the solemn function the clergy and several ladies and gentlemen among whom were the many sponsors, particularly Chief Justice Dube and Senator Bernier, were entertained at an excellent dinner in the dining hall of the new convent wing now in process of construction. Monsignor Ritchot, who was able, with considerable difficulty, to walk to the banquet hall near by, expressed his joy at meeting so many dear friends and said he hoped, if God spared him long enough, to build a suitable belfry for the three new bells.

CHRISTMAS IN HEAVEN.

If only we could roll the clouds away and look into the Kingdom of God, what an ineffable scene of bliss would we gaze on at Christmas, when the birthday of Christ is celebrated!

Imagine the splendor of the place, the light, the music! Behold all the actors of the event on earth—Jesus, Mary, Joseph, Gabriel, the angels of the choir, the shepherds, the three Kings, Zachary and Anna, John the Baptist, and all the other blessed who were concerned in the mystery of the Incarnation. Behold, too, all others of the millions and millions in Paradise.

Who can think how they will commemorate the occasion? Joy is on every countenance. Rapture is in every heart. Praise and thanksgiving are in every creature's mouth. Surely Christmas in Heaven must be a day of unalloyed delight!—Catholic Columbian.

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