

The CATHOLIC CHRONICLE...

DEVOTED TO... FOREIGN NEWS

ROME THE POPE'S JUBILEE

Rome, July 7.—At the Vatican at noon today a dinner was given to fifteen hundred poor people in celebration of the Jubilee of the Pope...

In the evening the members of the Catholic Societies of Rome assembled in the great Belvedere court of the Vatican to render homage to His Holiness The Committee of Fetes for the Pope's Jubilee had organized the reception which was attended by several thousand persons. The Court was decorated with tapestries, plants and flowers...

His Holiness was greeted with an enthusiastic acclamation. The band played the Pontifical March, and a chorus, composed by Signor Moriconi, was afterwards rendered by several hundred singers.

The pupils, belonging to all the clerical schools and institutions in Rome, preceded the Pope with their bands and flags. The various parish committees and clerical associations were also largely represented.

The members of the Diplomatic Corps and the high officials of the Vatican witnessed the proceedings from the windows overlooking the Court.

The fête terminated with the Papal Benediction. A large number of pigeons were then released, which had been sent to the Vatican from all the chief towns in Italy. Each carried a message with the date of the Pope's Jubilee, and will thus announce to the different cities of Italy that the ceremony has taken place.

The Pope, who took great interest in the fête, is in very good health. His physicians find that he has improved in health and spirits during the past year.

THE ORIGIN OF THE ANGELUS.

"Vox Urbis," in The New York Freeman's Journal writes under date of July 2:

For the first time in the memory of most people here (Rome), the great gong in the castle of Sant' Angelo failed to announce the hour of noon. The men in the streets who regularly look at their watches every day at the familiar announcement were aghast. The sacristans who stood in the different Campaniles with the ropes in their hands ready to ring the angelus grew sorely puzzled—everybody within a radius of half a mile of the famous mausoleum of Hadrian speculated on the cause of the omission. Whatever the cause may have been, the mere fact that the Angelus failed to ring for a few minutes from a hundred Roman bell-towers reminded a good many of us who have become stupefied by custom what an interesting and devotional practice it is of calling the faithful to meditate three times a day on the mystery of the Incarnation. Louis Veullot, most famous of Catholic Journalists, has a beautiful passage on the custom in his "Portum de Rome" which may well be repeated. He was on his way to Rome, and a little halt in a deserted spot permitted us to hear the hoarse Angelus. A woman and child were watching the train pass made the Sign of the Cross and recited the Angelical Salutation.

Why, do they make the sign of the Cross? asked Coquelet, "is it the train or ourselves they take for the devil? Neither the train, nor me, nor you, Coquelet, full of malice though you are. This woman and child are not thinking of the devil, they are thinking of God."

"They have heard the Angelus, and they are praying. Listen to those sweet and noble sounds—that is the telegraphic language of the Church, invented long ago, and now understood by all the people. What does it say?" asked Coquelet. It says something which is infinitely above you

and your learned kind, but which is still within the comprehension of these little ones

"It says that the Angel of the Lord announced to Mary that she was to become the Mother of the Saviour of the world; that Mary answered the Angel: Be it done unto me according to the will of the Lord. I am his handmaiden, that Mary conceived by the Holy Ghost that the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us

"To this divine account to this profession of faith, the bell adds the prayer of the Church: O Mary, Mother of God pray for us sinners, pray for us now and at the hour of our death. And this is what these poor people are saying in unison with the bell—the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us!

"Long ago, over the territories of St. Louis, King of France and Sutherland of England, fifteen hundred bells were used to point to the sky, with the Cross of Christ for a Crown upon them. In those days a man could hardly raise his eyes without beholding the sign of our redemption—the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us and died for us!

"This harmonious voice of prayer flooded the fields, climbed the mountain heights, descended into the hidden valleys, penetrated into the depths of the forest, dominated all human sounds. A voice of consolation, of hope, of love, of salvation! He loved us, He has pardoned us, He has died to win us, He reigns over us!

"It spoke without ceasing. It reminded men that they were kings, the sons of God, co-heirs of Heaven, and that Heaven is the reward of faith, hope and charity.

"The great voice did not disdain to speak of men after having spoken of God. It announced baptism, marriage, death, it asked the prayers of men for those who were just entering into life, and for those who were about to appear before the judgment, it asked prayers for those who were to be united in life. The human family in those days knew no parishes.

"I do not know where bells were invented, but it is certain that the widespread use of them is to be attributed to a Pope. It is Rome who has given us this harmonious voice with its divine language. It is she who baptized bells—conferring a sacrament on them that prayer might fall from Heaven upon our souls like a sea of benedictions!

O Rome, Mother of virtue, Mother of light and of hope, Mother too of all sweetness, all joy and all poetry! O Rome, inspired of God to fill with strengthening delights the poor heart of man!

Veullot cannot be blamed for not knowing the origin of the ringing of the church bell morning, noon and night, in honor of the Incarnation, for the question has never been really decided. Some interesting facts, however, were explained last week here in Rome by Mgr. Esser, secretary of the Congregation of the Index. The first clear documentary proof of the custom comes from Hungary (diocese of Gran) and dates from the year 1307. In 1317 the practice was common in Montpellier in France, and the following year Pope John XXII granted an indulgence for all who took part in the devotion in the Church of Saintes. In a few years the practice was generally observed in Spain, England and Germany, and in the year 1327 the same Pope ordained that a bell should ring the Angelus in one church of every Rome or district in the Eternal City at nightfall, granting an indulgence of ten days to all good Romans who recited the Angelical salutation.

The ringing of the Angelus in the morning became common in less than a century after the practice of ringing it in the evening had taken root. As far back as 1380 a bell used to be rung at noon at Prague to remind the people to pray in honor of the Five Wounds, but the first notice we have of the midday Angelus comes from Imola in 1506.

It is now more than thirty years since the people of Rome have been privileged to behold the Holy Father in the open air. Since 1870, as the world knows, the head of the Catholic Church has been a prisoner in his own palace. The festivities of the Holy Year of the three Pontifical Jubilees which have occurred during the present Pontificate have brought no relief, even of a momentary kind, to this enforced retirement. Next Sunday, then, will be a red-letter day in the Eternal City, for the Holy Father has determined to show himself to his beloved people in the open air. Not in the streets of Rome, of course, for such an event would be attended with as much unpleasantness to the Pope as to the present rulers of Italy. But in the heart of the Vatican there is an immense open court capable of holding over fifty thousand persons and here the Holy Father will publicly bless the Romans next Sunday afternoon. Passing the Camera of Raphael in the Vatican to-day Vox Urbis witnessed the erection of a throne opening out of the Vatican library into the court of the Belvedere, on which Leo XIII. will take his place to listen to the devout addresses of his people and to confer upon them the Apostolic Benediction. At noon on the same day, fifteen hundred poor people, a hundred from each of the fifteen divisions of Rome, will be entertained at dinner by Leo XIII, who is to be represented on the occasion by his Vicar Cardinal Respighi.

FRANCE

Another volume has been written in France about Cardinal Newman. The book is called "J. H. Newman, Essai de Psychologie Religieuse." It has a preface by Paul Bourget, the novelist and Academician, whose last production, "L'Étape," contained a monumental tribute to the power and the sublimity of the Church, although the novelist's limitations with respect to religious matters have been pointed out by able ecclesiastical reviewers. M. Georges Grappe is the author of the volume on the great English Cardinal. M. Grappe compares Newman's case to that of the famous Frenchman who died about a year since—Oilet-Laprune. Both felt, according to the author, that the question of religious truth was not purely intellectual, not abstract, but living, appealing not to man's intellect alone, but to his heart, and will. This was felt not only by Newman and Oilet-Laprune, but also long before them by Paschal, who wrote on religion as based on "raison de coeur que la raison ne comprend pas." M. Paul Bourget in his preface refers to the coincidence lately pointed out by Mr. Wildred Ward in The Monthly Register between the case of Newman and that of Renan. It was on the 6th of October, 1845, that Renan left St. Sulpice for ever, and on the 10th of the same month, in the same year, Newman was waiting for Father Dominic, the Passionist, at Littlemore. Renan's "College Letters" have been recently published here, with more of his souvenirs of childhood, and also a book by M. Mosillon on the Seminary of St. Nicolas in Paris. It was here that Renan first studied under the founder, afterwards Mgr. Dupanloup, Bishop of Orleans.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

The Poet of the Eucharist

The greatest proof that Jesus Christ "hath loved us" is that He "washed us from sins in His own blood." Next to His ignominious death on the Cross, nothing can make us admire our Saviour's love for us more than the most Blessed Eucharist.

When the end was coming nigh, and our Redeemer was soon to undergo the many sufferings that were to end His earthly life, the thought of His children whom He was to leave in exile here below, wrung from His heart that wonderful invention of His infinite wisdom and love—the Most Blessed Sacrament. Yes, He would go to the Father, but He could not leave us orphans. He would still remain with us. No obstacle could prevent Him from accomplishing this prodigy. Hence it is that we, His children, although we believe Him to be sitting at the right hand of the Father, also worship Him present on the holy altar, where He shrouds both His divinity and His humanity under the frail forms of bread. Such is our belief, such has been the belief of the Church from the beginning, and such shall it be to the end of time. In the Eucharist we have the same God-man who loved us, and died for us on the cross. We have Him as a perpetual victim, offered up daily in a mystical manner, a clean offer-

ing, the only one that is pleasing to the Father. Is He only a victim? He is more; He becomes our very food in Holy Communion. Could we wish for a greater treasure? Could we wish for the love of our Saviour have left a richer legacy than this Sacrament, wherein He is Himself, His all, His body, blood, soul and divinity? A priceless treasure indeed, does the Church possess, and she has guarded it, and guards it still with a reverential solicitude that we can easily understand. Nothing can be too precious, too costly, when it is to be devoted to the use of the Blessed Sacrament. Are our churches, our altars, our tabernacles, our sacred vessels, too costly to hold the Eucharist? Should we not rather ask are they precious enough to contain a treasure of such value? What Holy Church has done to honor the Holy Eucharist, and to induce men to honor and reverence that greatest of Sacraments, she did under the inspiration of the Spirit of Truth. How significative are the ceremonies at the Mass! How they inspire respect and devotion! Then, again, how venerable they are for their antiquity, dating as they do from the Apostolic times! What shall we say of the prayers and hymns of the most Holy Sacrament? Only a saint and a genius divinely inspired, could have so beautifully arranged them. The story of how this office was composed is a most interesting one, and deserves to be better known.

It was in the year 1264 that the special fast in honor of the Most Holy Sacrament was to be instituted by Pope Urban IX. When the zealous Pontiff most desired was to find a man, in whom learning and piety would be allied to the poetical genius worthy of the greatest theme that is given to the human tongue to sing. Such a genius was then flourishing in the Church of God—Thomas Aquinas, called the Angels of the Schools, both for the angelic purity of his life and the sublimity of his doctrine. Him did Urban IX. summon along with St. Bonaventure, styled the Seraphic Doctor. These two men were universally considered the most learned and pious of their time. St. Thomas was a Dominican; St. Bonaventure a Franciscan. The Pope told them that he wished them to compose an office for the feast by which he intended to commemorate the Sacrament of joy and mercy. The humility of both religious prompted them to object to the task; but to no avail. The Pontiff named a date on which they were to present their work to himself. On the appointed day Thomas and Bonaventure, full of diffidence, appeared before Urban. "Brother Thomas," said the Holy Father, "begin." St. Thomas read first the antiphons of the various canonical hours, the lessons and the responses. His thorough knowledge of the Holy Scriptures had enabled him to make a most befitting and judicious use of the figures and texts relating to the Holy Eucharist. The Pope listened in silence, while Bonaventure could not repress a spontaneous outburst of applause. Thomas then came to the hymn for matins—Sacris Solemnibus, which we quote entirely in Father Caswall's translation, which, though not equal to the Latin original, yet is fairly true.

Let old things pass away, Let all be fresh and bright, And welcome we with hearts renewed, This feast of new delight.

Upon this hallow'd eve Christ and His brethren ate, Obedient to the olden law, The Pasch before Him set.

Which done—Himself entire, The true Incarnate God, Alike on each, alike on all, His sacred hands bestow'd.

He gave His Flesh, He gave His precious Blood; and said, "Receive, and drink ye all of this, For your salvation shed."

Thus did the Lord appoint This sacrifice sublime, And made His priests its ministers Through all the bounds of time.

Farewell to types! Henceforth We feed on Angels' food, The slave—oh, wonder!—eats the Flesh Of His incarnate God!

O Blessed Three in One! Visit our hearts we pray, And lead us on through Thine own paths To Thy eternal Day.

When he read the second last stanza (farewell to types! Henceforth we feed on Angels' food, etc.—tears of tender delight ran down on Bonaventure's cheeks, while from under his cloak came the sound of paper being torn, and pieces falling on the floor under him. Then followed the hymn for Lauds, Verbum Supernum.

The Word, descending from above, Though with the Father still on high, Went forth upon His work of love, And soon to life's last eve drew nigh.

He shortly to a death accused, By a disciple shall be given, But, to His twelve disciples first, He gives Himself, the Bread from heav'n

To ransom us He died in shame; As our reward, in bliss He lives.

(O Salutaris Hostia.) O saving Victim! opening wide The Gate of Heaven to man below! So press our foes from every side, Thine aid supply, Thy strength bestow.

To Thy great name be endless praise, Immortal God-head, One in Three! Oh, grant us endless length of days, In our true native land, with Thee!

At the lines, O saving victim opening wide The gate of Heaven to man below! the enthusiasm of Bonaventure knew no bounds, and more little bits of paper fell to the floor at the saint's feet.

St. Thomas, whose humility was vanquished by his audience, then read the sequence of the Mass. "Gloria, in thy voice and song, Praise thy Saviour and thy King," etc., which is simply a masterpiece, wherein is found the highest and most sublime exposition of the mystery of the Eucharist. He ended his reading by the majestic Pange Lingua, the two last stanzas of which are invariably sung before the Benediction.

Sing, my tongue, the Saviour's glory, Of His flesh the mystery sing, Of the Blood, all price exceeding, Shed by our Immortal King, Destined, far the world's redemption, From a noble womb to spring.

Of a pure and spotless virgin Born for us on earth below, He, as Man with man conversing, Stay'd, the seeds of truth to sow; Then he closed in solemn order, Wondrously His life of woe.

On the night of that Last Supper, Seated with His chosen band, He the Paschal victim eating, First fulfill the Law's command, Then as food to His Apostles Gives Himself with His own hand.

Word made Flesh, the bread of Nature By His word to Flesh He turns; Wine into His blood me changes, What though sense no change discerns! Only be the heart in earnest, Faith her lesson quickly learns.

Down in adoration falling, Lo! o'er ancient forms departing, Newer rites of grace prevail, Faith, for all defects supplying, Where the feeble senses fail.

To the Everlasting Father, And the Son who reigns on high, With the Holy Ghost proceedings, Forth from each eternally, Be salvation, honor, blessing, Might and endless majesty.

A deep silence followed the saint's reading, his listeners remained spell-bound for a while. Urban broke the stillness and said, "It is your turn now, Brother Bonaventure." The good religious fell at the feet of the Pontiff and exclaimed, "Holy Father, while I was listening to Brother Thomas, I thought I heard the Holy Spirit Himself, for He alone can have prompted such beautiful thoughts, revealed to my brother Thomas by a special grace from above. I must frankly confess that I would have thought it a sacrilege to preserve my wretched writing alongside such a marvellous composition, and there are the remains of my scribbling." So saying he pointed to the bits of paper that were lying on the floor, where he stood while Thomas was reading. Urban was highly edified by the humility of St. Bonaventure and commended the admirable work of St. Thomas. He approved the office which is a gem of thought and of language, and is one of the most methodically arranged offices of the whole Breviary and the richest for the exactness with which the figures of the Old Testament are harmonized with the realities of the New.

The Angelic Doctor has written an incredible number of articles on theology, which, according to one of the Popes, are as many miracles, and he is therefore justly styled a "pillar of the church"; but should he have written nothing else than those hymns quoted above and compiled the office of the Blessed Sacrament, he would have the greatest claim to our admiration. He is truly the "poet of the Eucharist," and to him does the church owe those verses that resound in every Catholic church of the globe at every Benediction. O how this doctor, who here below was the "angel of the schools," must now sing with the angels in wondrous adoration before that God-man whom he honored and loved so passionately and whom, by his sublime verses he caused to be honored and loved so highly throughout all-ages! When after Brother Thomas had finished this admirable office, and while he was praying before the Crucifix, he heard our Lord say to him: "Thou hast well written of me, Thomas; what reward do you wish in return? The fervent saint replied, "None other but Thee, my Lord." Was ever poet more favored here below? But what untold delights o'erflood his soul now in heaven, where he sees face to face Him whom his soul-sighed to behold unveiled throughout all eternity!—Fidelis, in The Month.

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