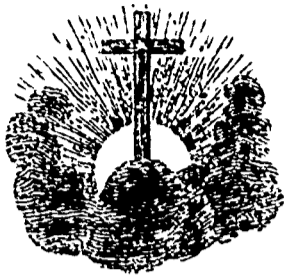


All Letters and Remittances are to be forwarded, free of postage, to the Editor, the Very Rev. Wm. P. McDonald, Hamilton



THE CATHOLIC.

Hamilton, G. D.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1841.

PASTORAL ADDRESS

For the time of Lent, and for the establishing of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith in the Diocese of Toronto.

MICHAEL POWER,

By the Grace of God, and the Authority of the Holy Apostolic See, First Bishop of Toronto, and Immediate Successor of the Holy Roman Church, &c. &c.

To the Clergy Secular and Regular, and to all the Faithful of our Diocese, Health and Blessing in the Lord.

We feel it our duty, Dearly Beloved Brethren, to address you according to the custom of our Fathers, at the approach of the Penitential Season of Lent, and invite you in the name of the Church to enter seriously during this holy time into the secret of your own minds by self-examination, to conceive in the bitterness of your souls a deeper sorrow and more profound humiliation at the recollection of your past offences, and to make to yourselves a new heart and a new spirit in the presence of God, whom you have so often and so grievously offended. We need not remind you of the obligation of observing the solemn fast of the forty days of Lent, and performing other works of penance, nor exhort you to unite with your brethren in the Faith throughout the world, in humbling yourselves before the Throne of God and by earnest prayers and supplications to appease the Divine anger and obtain the forgiveness of your multiplied sins; but we wish that you should remember that the will of God is, that we should join alms-deeds with our prayers and acts of penance; for fasting, without mercy, fasting without works of piety will be of little advantage to us before God; a true fast, says one of the ancient Fathers, does not merely consist in the mortifying of the body, but implies likewise that we bestow upon the widow, the fatherless, and the poor, the amount of that which we would have expended on ourselves, and thereby obtain the benefit of their prayers, for we are assured that "the prayers of the poor shall reach the ear of God." The Church during this holy time repeats in her daily office the words of the Prophet: "Break thy bread to the hungry and bring the needy and harbourless into thy house; when thou shalt see one naked cover him, and despise not thy own flesh, and then, continues the Sacred writer, shall thy light break forth as the morning and thy health shall speedily arise and thy justice shall go before thy face and the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward." With this duty, you should the more willingly comply when you reflect that from a variety of causes and especially in consideration of the peculiar difficulties under which you labour in this diocese, We have determined not to enforce the law of the Church in all its rigour, but to extend to you the dispensation, which you have already obtained in preceding years. We therefore, by the authority delegated to Us by the Holy See, permit throughout the Diocese of Toronto, the use of flesh-meat on all Sundays of Lent, except Palm Sunday; on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, in each week, except the Thursday immediately following Ash-

Wednesday and the last week called Holy Week, during which, the use of flesh-meat is strictly forbidden. The use of meat on the days in which it is allowed, is to be restricted to one meal, except on Sundays, and the fast is to be strictly observed on all the week days of Lent from Ash-Wednesday to Holy-Saturday both included. Endeavour, Beloved Brethren, to compensate for this indulgence on the part of our Holy Mother the Church by your good works, by the interior dispositions of the Soul, by your tears, by the most perfect spirit of compunction for your past transgressions, and your sincere purpose of amendment: May this acceptable time, these days of salvation, which will undoubtedly be the last granted to many among you, be to all confided to our care, through the merits of Jesus Christ, a season of mercy, and grace and reconciliation with God.

We have never failed, both when writing to you and in our exhortations to impress on your minds the duty of bestowing alms and performing other works of mercy, each one according to his ability. We have done so the more frequently on account of the unfeeling, uncharitable, frozen spirit of the age in which we live: the minds of men are for the most part so much taken up with the desire of acquiring wealth, of amassing riches, with the love of money, which, St. Paul calls the "root of all evils" that they for the most part overlook altogether the one thing needful, their eternal salvation, and neglect, for the sake of laying up for themselves perishable goods, the spiritual and corporal wants of the suffering members of Jesus Christ. Like the Pharisees of old they hear the word of God, but through their covetousness, they understand it not, and in their ignorance they deride, as it were, even the Son of God by rejecting his heavenly lessons touching the spirit of poverty and the detachment of the fleeting things of this world. To counteract in some measure this narrow, selfish, impious tendency of these degenerate days, in which our lot is unfortunately cast. We now call upon you to join one of the most admirable Institutions and Greatest Works of mercy of modern times. You already anticipate the expression of our mind and perceive at once that we refer to the Association for the Propagation of the Faith: Its object, as you are aware, is to send zealous Missionaries to every part of the world to make known the true faith, chiefly to infidel nations, to call them to the liberty of Children of God and to impart to them the knowledge of the Catholic Religion, and likewise to help and assist those infant Churches which have been lately established in different parts of the universe. The number of those who are not yet enlightened by the light of the Gospel is much greater than many imagine: out of eight hundred millions of men spread over the earth, perhaps five hundred millions, according to the energetic expression of the Holy Scriptures, are seated in darkness and in the shadow of death. Who will come to their assistance in their spiritual distress, and deliver them from the bondage in which they are held, if the children of the only true Church, whose duty it assuredly is to enable Apostolic men to announce the glad tidings of the Gospel to the most distant nations, do not come forward with zeal and concur with the merciful designs of Almighty God in their behalf? for God wills the salvation of all men and consequently that the Gospel of peace be preached "to every creature" throughout the whole world. We should not forget that we have not fulfilled our duty towards our neighbours if we confine our charity and our solicitude to those with whom we live: no! certainly not: for the Divine light of Revelation shows us a brother, a friend in every member of the human race, and the order of the Lord is that each man should take care of his neighbour: it teaches us, moreover that all men without exception are our neighbours and should be dear to us: for all men form but one family in Adam, and in Jesus Christ. We therefore stand indebted to those who have not yet received the precious gift of faith, and who would perhaps, have made a better use of this inestimable blessing than we have done.

Let us therefore cheerfully contribute to the Good Work and bestow our mite on those truly Evangelical men, who sacrifice all the comforts of this world, their repose, their health, their liberty, and who are even ready to lay down their lives for the Propagation of the Faith. For how can these infidel nations

believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach unless they be sent? What would we have become, what would we be at the present day, if in former times, the Apostles of the different countries from which we have sprung, had not brought to our forefathers the precious torch of faith, the pure and heavenly light of the Gospel? How we enjoy the full benefit of our Holy Religion, if every day She lavishes upon us the most abundant favours for the sanctification and the comforting of our souls, should we forget those who are altogether destitute of these advantages and remain insensible to their spiritual wants? We are told by our Blessed Redeemer that a cup of cold water given in his name will not go without its reward; and shall we in our selfishness, refuse to make some slight sacrifice for the conversion of so many souls to the faith of Jesus Christ? If they should perish through our avarice and indifference, will not God require an account of the blood of his Son at our hands? One half-penny each week and a few short prayers, which can scarcely draw us even for a few minutes from our ordinary avocations, are within the reach of all, even the poorest of our flock. But the advantages accruing from our small but united contributions to the poor heathen, and to the newly established Churches, and Missions lately formed in both hemispheres are incalculable and will draw upon Yourself and on this province the choicest blessings of Heaven. We know that we shall receive from a good and merciful God in proportion to our gifts: his words are infallible: "with the same measure that you have dispensed to others, it shall be measured to you again." We acknowledge, Beloved Brethren, that We hesitated for some time to address you on this important subject, for We are but too well acquainted with the poverty and straitened circumstances of many among you; but on the other hand, when We reflected on the commendation given by our Saviour to the humble offering of the poor widow, We feared that if We waited until the new settler enjoyed a greater share of the good things of this world, his offering would be less pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God: again, We had before our eyes the noble example of long suffering Ireland, whose distressed, but moral, religious and generous population stands pre-eminently distinguished in the holy cause of Religion. Notwithstanding her destitution and that she is still rebuilding her ruined altars, Ireland ranks the third among the nations of the earth, immediately after France and Bavaria, as a contributor to this divine and meritorious work, the Propagation of the Faith. Let us follow then, in the footsteps of that enthusiastic and truly Catholic people, by helping to spread the light of the Gospel; and let us make use of offering with willing hearts. Remember that Tongking, Cochinchina, [and Corea,] are still reeking with the blood of our Martyrs, who renewing the admirable examples that illustrated the first ages of Christianity have fearlessly braved the most cruel death, and sealed their faith with the effusion of their blood. We must help to fill up the places once occupied by these holy pastors: New Missions are to be formed in China, in Tartary, in the depths of Upper Asia and Africa, in the far distant Archipelagoes of Polynesia, on both sides of the vast mountains that divide this continent, on the banks of the Columbia and its tributary streams, in a thousand other portions of the Globe, and nearer home, even beyond this portion of Canada which we inhabit and over our North Western Territory: the Church has ordered the net to be cast: the missionary is waiting with impatience for the moment when he may be allowed to commence his painful and laborious career; he is ready to join his brethren who are already in the field before him, as soon as we have provided the means of conveying him to the scene of his future labours and secured to him, for a time, the mantle of the Apostle and the brown bread of the Prophet in the desert. Let us therefore hasten to mingle our humble tribute to that of more zealous Churches: let us obey the call, the general appeal of the Catholic Church and hasten with our friends and our brethren of the household of the faith, to become members of this Admirable Work of Charity, so that, in our days, if it be the will of God, "glad tidings of good things" may be brought to every country where the faith is not yet known, where the Redeemer of man is not yet loved nor adored. Let us at the same

time lift up our hearts with earnest prayer to the Ruler of ages, that he may be pleased to shorten the years of desolation upon so many nations and hasten the moment when according to the prediction of the Prophets, every corner of the Globe shall remain without hearing the Voice of the Messengers of Peace, no spot where the Immaculate Sacrifice shall not be offered, no land where the Cross shall not unfold its triumphant banner; for it is written: "I will set a sign among them and I will send of them, that shall be saved, to the Gentiles, into the Sea, into Africa and Lydia, to the Islands afar off, to them that have not heard of me or seen my glory: and they shall declare my glory to the Gentiles and they shall bring your brethren out of all nations as a gift of the Lord. . . and I will take of them to be Priests and Levites—And from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is a sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation."

To you Beloved Brethren, Shepherds of Souls and our Co-operators in the Holy Ministry, We recommend in the most pressing manner, this work of zeal and of love, sealed on Mount Calvary with the Blood of the Son of God, a work of real progress and civilization, a work of sanctification and blessed hope: For this purpose, We address you not in our own words but in the language of the Common Father of the Faithful, in his Encyclical Letter addressed to all the Bishops of the Faithful on the 18th before the Calends of September in the year 1840. We know that his voice will not reach you in vain, and the influence it will have over your hearts. "Above all, writes the Supreme Pontiff, We greatly recommend to you the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, founded in 1822, in the ancient and noble City of Lyons, and from thence spread through all parts with astonishing celerity and admirable prosperity. . . . This work, truly great and holy, which supports, increases, and strengthens itself by the scanty offerings and prayers of its members,—this work, which aids in the support of evangelical labours exercises works of charity towards the newly converted, and delivers the faithful from the fury of persecutions—seems to Us to be especially worthy of the admiration and love of all good men. Nor must it be supposed that so great an advantage has come to the Church, in our days, without a special counsel of Divine Providence, whilst the infernal enemy torments, by every contrivance; the beloved spouse of Jesus Christ. Nothing can be more appropriate than the assistance and the combined efforts of all the faithful to enkindle the desire of propagating the truth of Christian faith!"

For this motive We, called to watch over the church, notwithstanding Our unworthiness have allowed no occasion to pass without manifesting, after the example of our Predecessors, and in the most evident manner, our affection for this important work, and of exciting the charity of the faithful in its behalf. You, also Venerable Brethren, called to participate in our solicitude, apply yourselves assiduously to the same end, that this work may daily increase in the flocks committed to your care. "Sound the trumpet in Sion," and by your admonitions and paternal persuasion, induce those who have no part as yet in this pious Society, to become members immediately, and those who are associated, to persevere in their resolution.

This is certainly the time in which the enemy exercises his fury in the world, the Christian army ought to combat. (St. Leon, Sermon 2, line 20.) It is therefore the time for all the priests to weep, to pray and to cooperate with the faithful. We firmly hope that God, in these great trials of his Church, and in this cruel and incessant combat with her enemies, will not cease to support her by his Almighty hand—rejoice her by the constancy, charity and devotion of the faithful—be touched by the multiplied prayers of pastors and flock—be appeased by works of piety and grant her the tranquility and peace after which she sighs.

For These Causes, and having previously invoked the most Holy Name of God: We by these Presents, establish in the Diocese of Toronto, in the Province of Canada, the Association for the Propagation of the Faith, which We hereby declare to be united to and in connexion with the Institution of the same name and the Central Councils already established in the Cities of Lyons and of Paris,

* Ezek. i. ch. xiv. 31. † Hermas, Pastor. l. iii. Siml. 5. ‡ Ecclesiast. xxi. 6. § Isaias, ch. lxiu.

* 1 Tim. vi. 10. † Luke xvi. 14. ‡ Luke i. 79. § Mark xvi. 15.

* Rom. x. 14. † Luke, vi. 33. ‡ Encyclical Letter, 1840.

* Lucas, ch. lxi. † Mal. chap. i. ‡ Encyclical Letter.