

her Apostle's lifetime. This zealous piety of the Irish people manifests itself outwardly in the erection of religious buildings of all kinds, cathedrals, churches and convents, and upon a scale of magnificence strangely at variance with their limited means. Considering the well-known poverty of Catholic Ireland, desolated by the scourges of landlordism and famine, we can form some idea of the boundless generosity and love for the adornment of God's temples which prompted this people in the sacrifices they must have made to bring about such grand results. The Pastoral does not exaggerate when it refers to their efforts as "unsurpassed, and perhaps unequalled, by those of any other people in the Church."

Nor are there wanting evidences of a more spiritual nature to prove the deep rooted religious fervor of Irish Catholics. The Holy Father's oft repeated desire for the propagation of various public and private devotions has been met by them with a touching readiness. The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus has spread with wonderful rapidity over the whole country, and the practice of First Friday Communion has become almost universal. A remarkable increase in external reverence and homage towards the Holy Sacrament of the Altar has been its first fruit. Hitherto, the Bishops remark, there have been shortcomings in this respect, "an unhappy survival from the penal times," when there were but few opportunities for public adoration. But now ample atonement is being made for the lukewarmness and negligence of the past. Other exemplary practices inspired by the great Vicar of Christ, which have become firmly implanted in the Irish heart, are those of consecrating families to the Holy Family of Nazareth, ("the means, we trust, of planting and cultivating in their hearts those domestic virtues which lie at the very foundation of all human society") and of reciting the Rosary in common in all households. The Irish as a nation have ever been noted for their devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and this daily recitation of her particular prayer in the bosom of the family has a special attraction for them. And all these pious exercises are crowned by that which above all distinguishes the fervent Catholic—frequent approach to the sacraments. "It is questionable," says the Pastoral, "whether it has ever been exceeded, in proportion to the popula-