

Our Catholic Churches.

A party of sightseers, all of whom were non-Catholics, decided to visit the churches in the town through which they were passing. From church to church they went arriving at last at the only Catholic church in the place. When the group emerged from the sacred edifice one of them said: "How strange! Scarcely a word was spoken by any of us while we were in there, and think how we laughed and chattered while passing through the other churches." The others did not attempt to explain the reason of their silence, but all admitted that there was a mysterious something that checked the flow of conversation and forbade levity of manner before the Catholic altar. A Catholic to whom this incident was related suggested that the hush and decorum was due to the invisible but real Presence in the tabernacle. And who shall say different? Of course natural causes would account for the reverent behavior of the non-Catholics in the Catholic church. There is an impressiveness and solemnity about the interior of even the humblest Catholic chapel that is lacking in the Protestant houses of worship. The latter are not so bare of devotional objects as formerly, but at their best they are cold and unappealing to the religious sense. The stranger stepping inside a Catholic church realizes at once the difference. The stained windows with their pictured glories, the crucifix and holy images, the altar and sanctuary with the ever burning light flashing like a brilliant ruby in the dusk of the sanctuary, all these combine to produce a feeling of awe and solemnity. More than all these material and visible objects, however, is the invisible, abiding Presence in the little tabernacle. Did the visitors feel the influence of Our Blessed Lord's nearness? Cardinal Vaughan in his volume "The Young Priest" asserts that "the Eucharist sometimes becomes sensible to persons entering into its presence. I know several cases in which Protestants received the grace of conversion in consequence of the sensible and very powerful influence of the Blessed Sacrament during a visit made through mere curiosity".