

Some Notes On the Organization Of The Church.

Rev. Dr. D. S. McMackin, St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, in an article, published in "The Evening Post," of that city, outlines some features of the relations of the Pope to the Cardinals and to the Church at large. Rev. Dr. McMackin writes: "Cardinal Segna, one of the ablest Cardinals in the Roman Curia, a member of five Roman congregations and of the Biblical Commission, when asked what he considered the fundamental principle guiding the administration of the Church, replied: 'Consultation.' The Supreme Pontiff, while possessing the plenitude of power, never exercises it in an arbitrary manner, but only after mature consultation with men of profound learning and sanctity. The immediate counsellors of the Pope are the Cardinals, who constitute the Supreme Council or Senate of the Church. In like manner every archbishop or bishop in his respective diocese has a board of consultors, who assist him in the exercise of his jurisdiction."

Before Paul III. and Sixtus V., the Pope and Cardinals discussed Church matters in public consistory. It soon became necessary, however, to introduce in ecclesiastical administration the principle so well known in the industrial world as "the division of labor."

The revolt of Luther assumed such dangerous proportions in a few years that Paul III., in 1542, established the Congregation of the Inquisition or Holy Office, whose chief purpose to-day, as then, is to combat heresy and false doctrines.

Sixtus V., following the principle adopted by Paul III., created fifteen congregations (Bull "Immensa Aeterni Dei," Jan. 22, 1587), to each of which he assigned a special work, a definite procedure, and adequate jurisdiction.

Thus the Consistorial Congregation (Sixtus V., 1588) prepares, discusses, and examines the questions which the Pope is to treat formally in his allocution to the Cardinals in a private or public consistory. All matters concerning the erection, union, or division of metropolitan or cathedral churches, the examination of candidates for the episcopacy, the granting of palliums and of ecclesiastical dignities, are referred to this congregation.

The Congregation for the Reunion of Dissenting Churches was created by Leo XIII., in 1896, for the special purpose of studying the causes that have divided Christendom into a multitude of sects and of establishing a preparatory basis for the reconciliation of these dissidents with the Roman Catholic Church.

The Holy Father himself presides over the three congregations just mentioned, because the first, the Holy Office, discusses questions of faith and morals; the second, the Consistorial, deals with problems which call for a formal pronouncement of the Pope; and the third, the Commission for Reunion, besides examining differences of doctrine, was created to hasten the unity of faith in which is the "bond of peace"—a work particularly dear to the great heart of Leo XIII., who had the courage and magnanimity to begin the vast project and has given it his own personal attention.

The Congregation of Bishops and Regulars is perhaps the most important congregation of the Roman Curia. Its special office is to pass upon all difficulties arising either between the bishops and the priests directly subject to them, or between the bishops and the members of the religious orders residing in the diocese. It is a court of appeal to which the seculars or the regulars may refer the decisions of the bishops. This commission also revises and approves the rules of religious orders.

The Congregation of the Council, instituted by Paul IV. in 1563, has the power of giving an authentic interpretation to the decrees of the Council of Trent, except those bearing on matters of faith. Sixtus V. increased its powers, confiding to it the examination of provincial councils held in the various countries by the examination of provincial councils of his province, and also

the examination of the reports presented to the Holy See by the bishops and archbishops of the world when they make their regular visit "ad limina apostolorum," to the tombs of the apostles, and to the successor of St. Peter, Benedict XIV. modified the Congregation somewhat, establishing a special section for the examination of provincial synods, while Pius IX. later formed a special section for the "ad limina" visits of the bishops. Another very important work assigned to this Congregation is the solution of the very complicated difficulties that arise occasionally concerning the sacrament of matrimony. No power on earth can dissolve a marriage legitimately contracted and consummated by the contracting parties. However, if the marriage be not consummated, or if either or both parties be affected by an impediment nullifying the marriage contract, then the Sovereign Pontiff has the divinely committed prerogative of dissolving such contract or declaring it null and void. It is the duty of the Congregation of the Council to institute a thorough canonical examination and decide whether the conditions requisite for the exercise of the Pontifical prerogative have been verified.

The "Propaganda," the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, is a most important factor in the government of the Church. It is divided into two distinct branches, the Latin and the Oriental, each having its own prefect, cardinals, secretaries, and consultors. The Latin branch has full charge of Church interests in countries where the Latin rite prevails, namely, in Europe, Africa, America, Oceania.

The Oriental branch has jurisdiction over the Eastern schismatic peoples and those who employ a liturgical language other than the Latin, such as the Greeks, Armenians, Copts, Chaldeans, and Syrians. The Propaganda has complete jurisdiction over all missionary countries and exercises towards them the role of nearly all the other congregations. By missionary countries are meant those wherein the Hierarchy has not been completely organized. However, some countries, such as the United States, remain under the Propaganda even after the Hierarchy has been established because of the special privilege accorded to missionary lands.

Some idea of the vast and varied duties devolving upon this Congregation may be had from the fact that the Oriental rite alone comprises four principal rites, namely, the Greek, the Armenian, the Syrian, and the Coptic. The first mentioned, numbering with the Slavs nearly 100,000,000 Christians, is divided into five different branches—the pure Greek rite, the Ruthenian, the Melchitic, the Georgian, and the Slavic, which is subdivided into Russian, Servian, Bulgarian, and Ruthenian Greek rites. The Syrian rite includes the pure Syrian, the Syro-Chaldean, the Syro-Maronite, and the Syro-Malabar. Finally, the Coptic is divided into Egyptian, Abyssinian, and Ethiopian Coptic. It is no easy task to keep these various rites within proper limits so that they may not become a menace to the unity of faith. To expedite matters, the Propaganda has been augmented by three special commissions.

The Cardinals assemble on the first Monday of every month for the more important business of the Congregation. Once a week the Cardinal Prefect presides at a meeting of the secretaries and minutants, who dispose of minor matters at once and prepare the different questions to be discussed and settled by the Cardinals. The Propaganda possesses one of the finest polytyp printing establishments in the world. It furnishes liturgical and other works to the missionaries, who are educated in the Propaganda College and thence are sent into all parts of the known world to spread the Gospel of Christ.

It is marvellous how the Church, while ever holding fast to principles, in the application of those principles adapts herself to the peculiar circumstances and needs of every age and of every country. In Rome the vast administration of the Church centres in the Secretariat of State under Cardinal Rampolla, and in the Propaganda under Cardinal Gotti. The Secretariat of State deals with countries that have maintained diplomatic relations with the Holy See, where Catholics are in the majority and the Canon Law of the Church can be properly enforced. The Propaganda, on the contrary, has to do with countries where Catholics are in the minority and infidels and heretics are numerous. The policy of Rome is to grant as many privileges as possible to the missionary countries while strengthening the Government at home.

The Congregation of the Index has always met with considerable opposition and criticism, especially, in these days of free speech and the liberty of the press. This opposition is without foundation and is due in most part to misapprehension. The Church, following the example of the Good Shepherd, does not believe in turning the flock out upon indiscriminate pastures. We are told today that the science of medicine can do very much to prevent disease, but little to cure it. And so the great benefit derived from boards of health is that they eliminate the causes which produce or spread contagious diseases. The Index is a remedy against contagious literature. The Church from the beginning has always taken great care to point out to her children all those false or pernicious doctrines that are calculated to impair or blight their faith. Many modern thinkers realize that it is a very difficult thing to cure minds afflicted with anarchism, and are beginning to recognize the great wisdom of the Church in doing all she can to prevent such infection from taking hold of the individual and of society.

The Cardinals and consultors comprising the Congregation of the Index represent nearly every language and every country of the civilized world, so that Rome may keep in close touch with the publications of the different nations. The Congregation takes no cognizance of a publication unless it be referred to Rome by some bishop or other ecclesiastic having jurisdiction in the Church. The work is assigned for examination to some consultor familiar with its matter and language. The consultor analyzes the book, draws up his conclusions and presents them for approval to the Board of Consultors, who prepare a final statement which is presented to the general meeting of the Cardinals. The latter determine first of all whether the publication merits condemnation, and secondly whether under the circumstances such condemnation is opportune. Sometimes it happens that the Cardinals, whose judgment has been matured by long years of study and experience, refuse to proscribe a work which has received the unanimous condemnation of the Board of Consultors.

The Congregation of Rites was created by Sixtus V. to regulate the celebration of the divine offices, to preserve the ancient rites of the Church in all their purity, to revise and correct liturgical works, and finally to settle all questions relative to the canonization of saints. A characteristic of this Congregation is that one of its members is called familiarly the "Devil's Advocate," whose office is to set forth with all possible skill the reasons why a certain person should not be formally declared a saint by the Church.

It would take a whole volume to describe adequately the process followed by the Congregation of Rites in the canonization of saints. An English Protestant, while conversing with a prelate attached to this Congregation, deprecated the facility with which the Church recognized certain cures as miraculous without satisfactory evidence. The prelate sent him two volumes containing the process of a cause then pending at Rome. After reading them very attentively he returned the books, declaring that if all the miracles proposed to the Congregation of Rites were as thoroughly proved as those in the process he had just read, he was willing to retract what he had said and become a Catholic. "Very well," replied the prelate, "the very miracles which you consider so exhaustively proved were rejected by the Sacred Congregation."

The Congregation of Studies provides for the various courses of study in Catholic universities, directs the examinations, and confers the degree of doctor on those who have satisfied the authorities of their ability to expound the doctrine of the Church and confute the errors proposed to it.

This Congregation watches over all branches of secular as well as ecclesiastical knowledge, and hence among its members we find some of the most eminent Catholic laymen, who have rendered great service to the Church by their scholarly attainments. Such were Alibrandi, the eminent authority on Roman law, and J. B. de Rossi, the founder of Christian archaeology.

The Sacra Penitentiaria, the supreme tribunal for the remission of sins to which the jurisdiction of the ordinary confessor does not extend, the Cancellaria Apostolica, or Apostolic Chancery, which drafts and expedites the bulls and briefs of the Sovereign Pontiff, and keeps a record of all Pontifical acts, and, finally, the Dataria for the concess-

ion of favors asked of the Pope—these, with the Biblical Commission recently appointed by Leo XIII. to study the effects of higher criticism on the traditional view of the Scriptures, constitute the most important bureaus into which the vast and complicated administration of the Catholic Church is divided.

No organization in this world has so many and such boundless resources of human wisdom as the Catholic Church. The traditions of twenty centuries are hers, and she has a precedent for every emergency. She meets the new situation in the Philippine Islands and the recent persecutions in France with the same calm dignity and courage with which she encountered difficulties in the past, and she will solve the former with that sagacity which has always characterized her course in the history of the ages.

The prelates and clerics attached to the various congregations have had a long and thorough training. Educated in the Roman universities, they have won distinction there and as a reward are assigned to the lowest places in the administration of the Church. Some pass their entire lives in the Eternal City, and are promoted from one post to another until they become chief secretaries of the most important congregations, and finally are created Cardinals.

Others are sent to foreign nuntiatures or delegations as auditors to assist the nuncios and delegates in organizing and directing Church affairs in the different countries of the world. Nuncios are sent to nations having diplomatic relations with the Holy See, while delegates are assigned to missionary countries. The former are appointed from the Secretariat of State, the latter from the Propaganda.

After some ten years of service the auditors are transferred elsewhere as inter-nuncios for six years, as nuncios of the second class for six years, and finally as nuncios of the first class for six years, at the end of which period they are created Cardinals and assigned to the congregations best suited for the exercise of their talents and experience.

Thus it will be seen that the Cardinals who preside over the various departments of the government of the Church are not merely men of books, but men possessed of a wide and profound knowledge of men and things. The Sacred College comprises men who are specialists in all branches of theology, in canon law as well as Roman and international law, in Scripture, in science, and all branches of secular and ecclesiastical knowledge. Many of them are unequalled for diplomacy, having been trained early in the College of Noble Ecclesiastics, and having had afterwards a long experience in foreign countries, both monarchical and republican.

It is not possible here to give more than a general outline of the methods pursued by the congregations in disposing of questions submitted to them for solution. A question presented to Rome may be important or unimportant. If unimportant, the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation to which the matter has been referred may settle it at once with the secretary. If important, then the question is handed down to a board of consultors, who make a thorough study of the problem and present their conclusions to the Cardinal Prefect. The latter, if satisfied with the report, brings the matter before the general meeting of the Cardinals, who discuss it exhaustively, and if they agree on the solution of the case, a statement is drawn up by the Cardinal Prefect and presented later to the Sovereign Pontiff for confirmation.

The present system of administration embodies the wisdom and experience of centuries, and has given most satisfactory results. Formerly, as we have said, the Pope and Cardinals discussed Church affairs in public consistory in the presence of foreign ambassadors, who interfered with the independence of the deliberations and votes by endeavoring to win the favor of the Cardinals for their respective countries.

Sixtus V. by creating the Congregations and making their deliberations secret secured the independence of the Cardinals from outside influences, and at the same time enabled them to do more efficient work by relieving them of the burden of studying all matters that concern the Universal Church and by confining their labors to a few Congregations in which they had had considerable practice.

The Cardinals, finally, constitute the Electoral College and on the death of the Pope meet in conclave to elect a successor. Unlike our

Presidential electors, the Cardinals are not hampered by universal suffrage or any other influences, but are free to choose the candidate whom they feel most worthy of the Pontifical throne and the one destined by Divine Providence to rule the Church. The Presidential electors to-day would not dare select a candidate other than the one chosen by the people, even if they believed in conscience that the man was unworthy of the high office.

There is much speculation concerning the successor to Leo XIII. Is there any Cardinal in the Roman Curia who can be compared to the present Pontiff? Who would have thought that Cardinal Pecci, while Bishop of Perugia for so many years, would become the illustrious Leo XIII., a nonagenarian, and one of the greatest Popes that the Church has ever had? Leo XIII. is in many ways the wonder of the age, and he has achieved great things because he has surrounded himself by great men. I am convinced that there is more than one Cardinal in the Roman Curia who would make a great Pope. Opportunity develops the man, and who can tell the real worth or capacity of the present candidates for the Papacy until one of them has been elected and put in possession of the great opportunities which his sublime office affords?

With Our Subscribers.

From all the provinces of the Dominion and from many districts in the neighboring Republic, we have received kind words of appreciation of the great change which has taken place in the "True Witness," since its enlargement. Here are a few of the most recent:—

A subscriber of Florida Station, New Mexico, writes:—Herewith please find two dollars in currency to apply to my subscription. Continue the paper to same address. I cannot understand how you can publish such a good paper for so little money. My family like the paper as a whole nicely varied news of the kind that suits their taste and full of reading matter that suggests good thoughts.

A subscriber from Minnesota writes:—"I claim to be one of the oldest subscribers of the 'True Witness,' having continuously subscribed for it for the past fifty years. I remember the time when I paid \$2.50 per annum for it. I cannot understand how you can print your paper now, much larger in size for the price of \$1.00. I enclose you my subscription for the coming year, and wish the old organ the success it really deserves."

An esteemed priest of Maine who recently sent us the name of a new subscriber, writes:—"I take pleasure in commending the 'True Witness' to my friends as an up-to-date, bright and sound Catholic newspaper."

To the Editor of the True Witness. Dear Sir,—I herewith enclose \$1 subscription to the "True Witness" which becomes due on the 15th inst. I have been a subscriber to it since Mr. Clark first started it in Montreal, and whom I knew. I wish it every success, and shall while I live, take it and I look for its arrival every Saturday with the greatest pleasure. I may take the liberty of telling you that I am 81 years old, and enjoy the perusal of the dear old "Witness" as much as I ever did. You will, I trust, pardon my taking up your time in thus writing you, but I think few are now living to-day who took it from the beginning and at my age.

From Newfoundland a subscriber writes:—Herewith find enclosed Post Office order for amount of my subscription. Your paper has become a great favorite, and I and many others are well pleased with the excellent reading it affords.

LYNCHING IS MURDER.

Justice David J. Brewer, of the United States Supreme Court, says in an interview given out at Milwaukee that any person who takes part in a lynching is a murderer and should be so considered in the eyes of the law.

Old Letters.

(By a Regular Correspondent.)

I have just came upon a letter that I received in 1886, and I had almost entirely forgotten its existence. Even the writer of it, who is now dead, and buried, in a little cemetery near Havre (France) had been almost equally forgotten. I had met him in the winter of 1884-85 away at the head waters of the Ottawa river. He was on a missionary tour. Subsequently he went to South America, whence he wrote me this letter. He was a French priest from some place near the borders of Alsace. I have hesitated about publishing the letter, on account of the peculiar English it contains. But when I explain that this good Father had been only three years learning English when he wrote this, it can be easily understood that he could not have become a master of the language. Moreover, I think he deserved immense credit for being able to write so well with only such a short term of study. I will, therefore, give the letter as it stands, and no matter how queer the language, the sentiments and ideas are beautiful, and the account of his trip very instructive.

Esderales-Ecuador, Sept. 19, 1886.

My Dear Friend,—

From the extremes of the earth I come to you with a letter, to tell you my remembrance of you and to say one "God bless you" in my heart. You ask, suppose, how did you come to that hot land so far away? This is what my purpose to inform you is. I am not obliged to talk of all my voyage which was of the most pleasant to Colon. Colon is on the Panama Isthmus. From that point we journey by railway cars like for cattle, on a crazy road that menaces death over the precipice here, the cataraet there, the big stones everywhere. The sun at Tomaco where we arrive is hot with torrid heat. Tomaco is a dirty town full of soft mud with little wharf, little street, little casarne for military, little military men, and more little donkeys. The trees all grow savage as likewise flowers and fruit. There is a revolution each time the moon become full and an earthquake when the moon makes the last quarter. Very pleasant place for mosquitos and reptiles; they enjoy much life there.

When I came to Ecuador I was to go to Quito, the capital. No road, no carriage, no car, I rode on a mule in the woods for six days to come to Esderales which is my location temporary.

Quito, the capital, my final end of journey, is a hundred miles, perhaps more, perhaps less, no one hear can tell. It is far, far up in the mountains inland where there is temperature like Canada in May. When I will go there I do not know. I await guide. In Esderales no person knows anything of the road, all know Quito it is far, all say it is great capital of the country. Myself, I did not yet meet one person who ever saw Quito. Ah! It is like an Eldorado, or like the city of the Arabic fable. For me it is an vast Spanish castle in the air.

In Esderales the boys and girls, the old men and old women all pick nuts. The nuts are abundant to falling off. They ship them to Germany; the Germans make buttons for clothes with these nuts. It is a great industry. And monkeys help to pick the nuts. In one day I counted 76 wild monkeys in the forest trees, all picking nuts and casting them on the ground.

Oh! it is most delightful. I am enchanted. No water to drink, if not boiled, for it contains many kinds of insects; no place to wash only in the river, and it is full of alligators. Grand place for sacrifice and penance and fast. Great place for to save one's soul. But I do not invite you to come. In Canada you, may save your soul too, and better.

Well, I will go to Quito. If you have the inclination to write a letter to me, address me there. Remember me to all my good friends of alas! only a few weeks. Pray for me that I may reach Quito. You always have the prayers of your friend.

F. X.