

The Catholic Record

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A MERRY CHRISTMAS

Nineteen centuries of accumulated experience makes the Catholic Church wise in the way of teaching men; and her supreme mission and commission is to teach all nations. But human wisdom, even wisdom enlightened by unique experience, is not the sole guide of the teaching Church; for according to the glorious promise of our Blessed Lord, the Holy Spirit of truth teaches in and through the Church and abides with her forever.

Whether it was human experience or divine guidance or both that led the Church to institute feasts, to set apart certain days to the exclusive commemoration of certain great events in the life of Christ, she showed in this an intimate knowledge of the human mind and heart.

In the institution and observance of Christmas she preaches more eloquently and effectively than an endless succession of Chrysostoms the stupendous fact that "Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages, for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary; and was made man." In Asia, in Africa, as well as in Europe and the Americas, as these words of the Nicene Creed are sung, priests and people kneel; and in the hearts and souls of all—white, black, red, and yellow—there is a quickening and deepening of the faith that was so triumphantly defined sixteen hundred years ago.

For it is Christmas Day.

"Glory to God on high and on earth peace to men of good will." The Church militant and the Church triumphant never seem so closely united, the glorious privilege of the Communion of Saints more real, than at Mass on Christmas Day.

On the wings of faith and love we are carried in spirit back to the first Christmas, and hear the Angel's good tidings of great joy: this day is born to you in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And in our souls we hear the heavenly strains of the angelic choir, praising God and saying: Glory to God on high; and on earth peace to men of good will.

That is the dominant note of the great Christmas feast.

Our ears hear the Gloria in excelsis Deo of earthly choirs, our souls hear the multitude of the heavenly host as did the shepherds on that holy night when Christ was born singing the same glorious hymn. Heaven and earth seem near.

The shepherds found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in the manger. And when they had seen it they understood. And they returned glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen as it was told them.

In the Christmas Mass we, too, have with us the divine Babe that it was the shepherds' marvellous privilege to be called by heaven to see. At Bethlehem that first Christmas night the Godhead of Christ the Saviour was hidden behind the veil of His humanity. With us, both His divinity and humanity are hidden; but He is as really present in the Sacrament of His love as He was nineteen centuries ago in the manger at Bethlehem. It is one of the special graces of this holy Christmas feast, and of the Mass which is the very soul of it, that we realize more vividly Christ's Real Presence on our altars; and like the shepherds when they had seen the Babe, return glorifying and praising God.

"It is the Mass that matters."

"For from the rising of the sun to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation: for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Malachi I, 11.)

The very name of Christmas comes down to us from the thousand years of England's Catholic history. In old English it was Cristes Maesse, Christ's Mass, Christmas.

Alas! the time came when it was high treason for a priest to be in England at all and felony for anyone to harbor or relieve him. Yet

Mass was celebrated and for its celebration hundreds died the heroic death of martyrs. Not only was the Christmas Mass stamped out under the heel of relentless persecution, but the time came when any meritorious religious services were forbidden by Act of Parliament on the ground that it was a heathen festival; and the joyous feast of Christmas was ordered to be kept as a fast. At the Restoration this Puritan ban was removed; but the dour Scots Presbyterians still frowned on this "man-made Sabbath" and adhered to the Puritan view of Christmas.

Well, thank God things have changed. The Catholic Feast of Christmas with its message and appeal has reached all hearts.

Recently in the Forum there was a series of articles on the question: "Does the Pope rule Massachusetts?" The writer affirmed that he does. Well, it is only about three generations ago when Catholics were not suffered even to live in Massachusetts; this colony took its first great step toward religious freedom when it was decreed in 1691 that "forever hereafter there shall be liberty of conscience allowed in the worship of God to all Christians (except Papists)." In this atmosphere it is perhaps not surprising that in 1659 an ordinance was passed making the observance of Christmas a punishable offence.

The remembrance of these bad old days should arouse in us not resentment but gratitude for the freedom God's Church enjoys today; and it should incite us, also, to a more fervent celebration of the great and holy feast of Christmas this year of grace.

But there is another consideration. As was said in the beginning of this article, the institution and observance of Christmas is the most eloquent and effective of sermons on the Incarnation. The present universal observance of Christmas not only by Catholics but by the whole English-speaking world bears testimony to that fact.

That the Christmas spirit is now so potent an influence for good—as Dr. Kerby points out on page one of this number of the RECORD—is due chiefly if not entirely to the Catholic institution and observance of this great and joyous Feast with its message of Peace on earth to men of good will.

While we rejoice and are glad that the Christmas spirit now extends to countless thousands not of the visible body of Christ's Church, that it pervades the very air of this holy season, still for us, Catholics, the very soul of the feast is the Christmas Mass.

It is, by excellence, the feast of children. And there is something wrong with those who do not feel it a duty and a privilege to bring some special joy to the hearts of the little ones whom Jesus loves with an especial love.

Sometimes we hear pious Catholics change the old, time-honored, and Catholic form of greeting "A merry Christmas" into "A happy Christmas." We have no sympathy and little patience with such inchoate puritanism. Christmas is a feast not a fast. There is a time for all things. And when the religious observance is over it is entirely in accord with Catholic tradition and Catholic practice that we feast and be glad and joyous and merry.

So, while we pray that all our friends and readers may receive in abundance the special graces and blessings of this holy feast-day, we wish them, one and all, without reservation and with all our heart, a merry Christmas!

THE CHINA MISSION SEMINARY

"Go forth, beloved brothers to the sheep that are perishing, for they were bought with a great price; depart ye powers of evil; may the angel of God be with you on the way. To God alone, invisible and immortal, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."

In these words solemn yet joyously heart-stirring did His Grace, the Archbishop of Toronto, address Father John M. Fraser and his two companions, Fathers V. Morrison and S. Serra on the eve of their departure for the Chinese missions. The whole ceremony was solemnly impressive, soul-stirring; faith and hope were the dominant notes; and though at times hearts beat faster and eyes grew dim there was an undertone of joy throughout. In the sanctuary with His Grace were the other two episcopal members of the governing board of St.

Francis Xavier China Mission Seminary, the Bishops of London and Peterborough. Clergy from the diocese and from other dioceses, the staffs and students of St. Augustine's and St. Francis Xavier's Seminaries and Brother Francis' boy choir filled the spacious sanctuary. These, together with the Cathedral choir, furnished a musical service in worthy keeping with the great ceremony of farewell and God-speed to the missionaries. Every seat in the church and every inch of standing room in aisles and vestibules were occupied by the vast concourse of the laity that crowded the Cathedral.

We shall not further attempt to describe the ceremony or the singing. Everyone was profoundly impressed. Everyone felt that it was an evidence of the Spirit of God moving over the waters of Canadian Catholic life; and that soon Canada will take her worthy and great place in the vast field of the foreign missions.

Every reader of the CATHOLIC RECORD has long been familiar with the name and work of Father Fraser. Twenty-two years ago he gave himself with all the simple and devoted zeal of a single-minded young priest to the work of the Chinese missions. His work in the Field of Far was signally blessed by God and generously appreciated by the Catholic authorities in China. Letters to the CATHOLIC RECORD informed tens of thousands of his fellow-countrymen of the great fields white to the harvest in China. Interest grew and material help followed. It was through the RECORD that the present writer first heard of Father Fraser. Eagerly he sought further information.

About that time he was reading Snead-Cox's great biography of Cardinal Vaughan. The story of heroic work of establishing England's great foreign missionary college was one to move to the depths the Catholic reader, even though of little faith.

We dreamt of a little college, a juniorate—such as had already been established in Catholic Holland and elsewhere—for Canada. So that vocations amongst the generous souls of Canadian Catholic boys, still clothed in the unstained white robes of baptismal innocence, might be enlisted in the great work and prepared for Mill Hill. The late great-souled Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Stagni, was earnest and enthusiastic in his approval.

Seven years ago Father Fraser came back to Canada with his more ambitious and in every way more desirable and effective project of a Chinese Mission Seminary for Canada. Despite the great consolations of his signally successful missionary work in China, he had asked himself: "What is going to become of it all if anything happens me, if I should die?"

If the Catholics of England with everything to do, with the overwhelming task of providing churches, schools, priests and teachers, with the endless work of rebuilding the lost faith of England, could undertake and bring to a triumphant conclusion their great Foreign Mission College, why not Canada do likewise? Why not establish a seminary that would give a constant and ever-increasing supply of priests to the Chinese Missions?

Through the dark days of discouragement and apparent defeat as well as in those times when faith seemed justified and hope well grounded, with courage unflinching and unconquerable, Father Fraser persevered.

Today we have St. Francis Xavier China Mission Seminary, an actual fact; built, equipped, almost paid for; staffed and successfully launched on its great work. It will, for all time to come, send a stream, ever deepening and widening, of Canadian missionary priests to the white harvest fields of far-off China.

Father Fraser is humble as he is successful as an Apostolic missionary. He modestly says that he could do nothing had not the Holy Spirit of God moved thousands and thousands to cooperate with him. And he gives generous credit to the CATHOLIC RECORD and its great Catholic constituency for the aid given him.

Personally we feel humbled but withal inspired to more active interest and effective aid. We are sure that we may bespeak for our generous and wholeheartedly Catholic readers a renewed and deepened interest, a more active and effective cooperation with Father Fraser and

his crowning missionary work, the St. Francis Xavier China Mission Seminary.

"Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren you did it unto Me."

Father Fraser and his brother missionaries give themselves; we can at least give of the material means of which we are but the stewards. By completing the burses we can ensure the unflinching supply of priests without which nothing lasting can be done for our Chinese brothers still seated in darkness and the shadow of death. It is a great privilege to be associated in this great work. It is a dangerous thing to turn a deaf ear to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit of God within our souls; and we feel sure that the Holy Ghost is giving to many the generous and pious impulse to aid, to sustain, and to complete the work He so clearly has inspired.

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS

By THE OBSERVER

The so-called wisdom of the world has put its own construction and its own mark on Christmas. A very worldly construction, you may be sure; and yet, peeping out from the midst of the worldliness and the selfishness of the worldly Christmas, we see glimpses of the Christian idea; and that shows what a powerful hold the Christian idea of Christmas has on the human heart.

The worldly Christmas consists in making a great bluff at happiness whether you are happy or not. It consists in an extravagant spendthriftness on unnecessary things and an artificial excitement in making purchases which are handed over as Christmas gifts to persons who might choke tomorrow for all we care. And yet, though we are to a great extent following a custom which has become fixed and binding in appearance at least, there is, as we have said, a bit of the Christian idea left; there is some recognition of the fact that we are all brothers and all fellow travellers in a passing world, and that we owe some duties towards others and that part of what is ours belongs to them.

The more place we give to that idea the more we shall approach to the proper recognition of the birthday of the Lord Jesus. The world has made His birthday a hollow show and a mockery of His teachings; for, He taught humility and charity and where do we find either in the worldly celebration of this great day? He taught unselfishness, and selfishness is the key-note of modern life. Have you not noticed that the better off people are the less they are disposed to help others, or to put themselves out for others?

Poor people build our churches; and poor people keep them up. Poor people give millions in charity, which mighty sums is not noticed as the occasional large sums given by the rich. Poor people are more patient with the demands that are made on them for social or financial help. Poor people are more truly hospitable and are much more unselfish than those who are rich or who think they are.

Christ taught to the world from His crib in the cold stable at Bethlehem the dignity of poverty, and the grandeur of unselfishness, and only those, as a rule, who are poor, understand the meaning of unselfishness.

The clamor and clang and glitter and show that we see on Christmas eve, the brilliant shops, the wonderful skill by which cardboard and paste and glass and light and tinsel and tawdry finery are made into a semblance of reality, appeal to the child that is in every grown person; and that is not any harm; we should be better if we were childish oftener than we are. But, if we are going to be childish, why not take some thought of the Child Jesus. There is childhood in its perfection. No, the world does not want to think too much about the Child Jesus. The lessons of the Childhood of Jesus, like those of His manhood, are unwelcome to a world whose maxims and philosophy are based on considerations of the human and not of the Divine.

The world despises poverty, and He was poor. The world admires a conqueror, and He was put to death by His enemies. The world exalts this life, and He pointed always to eternity. The world loves combat, and He is the Prince of Peace. Men love their own perishable carcasses, and are determined to pamper them; and He fasted; fasted till he was hungry. Oh, do

not talk of it within sight of our gorgeous hotels and our extravagant private tables!

Is it strange, with these different ideals, that men should give only a faint recognition of the spirit of Christmas? Gluttony in eating and drinking is un-Christian; but nothing could more accurately represent the selfish and self-indulgent spirit which possesses the age in which we live.

Well, we have once more before us an opportunity. It matters little what the worldly people around us think of our method of keeping Christmas; but it matters a great deal what Christ thinks of it.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

"CHRIST NEVER wrote a book. He foresaw the danger of writing a book. He knew the way men would misinterpret it, would read wrong meanings into its sacred context." How little the Anglican minister who uttered this sentiment realized how aptly it described his own position! And what a tribute he paid, no doubt unthinkingly, to the attitude of the Catholic Church in regard to the Scriptures!

ANOTHER UNSTUDIED tribute to the Church, and unsaying of a much-cherished Protestant tradition, comes from the much-talked-of Dean of St. Paul's. Discussing in a recent book the assumed cleavage between science and religion, Dean Inge gives utterance to these memorable words: "The truth is, I think, that the Reformation not only checked, but obscured the scientific progress which had begun in the century which preceded it." "It was," he adds, "the chaos precipitated by the Reformation that made the fatal rift between religion and science." It may have taken nearly four hundred years for such as the Dean to find this out, but the old saying "it is never too late to mend" still applies. Unhappily, in his attitude to historical Christianity generally, the said Dean seems to have set his face in the opposite direction.

AS AN offshoot of science, it seems a shocking thing to freeze fish alive to keep them fresh for the market at their journey's end, but it has been found that when they are "unfrozen" they are just as lively as before, says the Children's Newspaper, an English periodical. They show no sign of injury or illness, and flop about just like a newly landed trout. It was noticed that fish in Siberian rivers which freeze solid in winter, come out all right in the spring, and this led to a long series of experiments resulting in the adoption of a method of freezing for commercial purposes. The fish are put in a tub into which oxygen is forced, and after being kept three days just above freezing point they are frozen and the blocks of ice, stripped of the tub, are wrapped up and put in cold storage.

PHILATELIS ESPECIALLY (and their name is legion) may be interested to learn that notwithstanding her long connection with the Throne, the late Queen Alexandra's portrait appeared on three stamps only, and none of these of Great Britain proper. The Newfoundland series of 1897 included portraits of four generations of the Royal Family, Queen Alexandra's on the three cent orange, a finely executed portrait. On the Coronation issue of the same "oldest colony," she was portrayed on the ten cent green stamp. The only other example is Canadian. In the Quebec Tercentenary issue of 1908 Queen Alexandra shares the two cent carmine stamp with King Edward, and this is pronounced by experts to be not only the best philatelic portrayal of the Queen, but one of the finest stamps ever issued.

THE CATHOLIC Church, as all know and as even her enemies are forced, however grudgingly, to admit, is the founder of most of the great universities of the Old World. Oxford and Cambridge, Paris and Louvain, Edinburgh and St. Andrews, Vienna, Madrid and Salamanca, all date back to Pre-Reformation times, and it was the Roman Pontiffs who were the fathers, as the different national hierarchies were the nursing mothers of all of them. This was brought out with great clearness on the occasion of the celebration of the founding of St. Andrews a year or two ago.

The part which the Church had in the founding and early history of

the Grammar Schools of Scotland is perhaps not so well known. That of Perth, for example, dates back to 1160, in which year the Bishop of St. Andrews confirmed the gift of King David I. of "the church of Perth and that of Sterling, with the schools and all other things pertaining to them" to the Abbey of Dunfermline. The gift was confirmed by succeeding bishops. This school, like others dating from about the same period, were not solely devoted to the training of aspirants to the priesthood, but were for the benefit of all who were able to avail themselves of their advantages, and were in very truth grammar schools, the Latin grammar being the foundation of the education imparted.

COSMO INNES, in his history, "Scotland in the Middle Ages," states that "there were considerable burgh schools at Perth, at Sterling, and at Roxburgh in the reign of Malcolm IV. (1153). Sixty years later (1218), the master of the Grammar School of Perth was chosen, along with the Deacons of Dunkeld and Dunblane, by Pope Innocent III. to adjudicate in a dispute regarding the church of Prestwick. Another pre-Reformation reference is to be found in the 'Registrum Dunfermlini,' where it is stated that 'George Abbott has granted to Sir Thomas Burrell, prebster, for the whole time of his life, the principal Grammar School of the burgh of Perth, vacant by the resignation of Simon Young, official of Dunkeld, the last teacher (1544).'" The more these records of the past are uncovered, the clearer does it become that the Church in those days was not only the spiritual guide of the people, but their pathfinder to the higher civilization which she sponsored. In more ways than one the so-called Reformation set civilization back, as Dean Inge affirms it set science back, at least two centuries.

HOLY YEAR: 1825-1925

RASH PROPHECY MADE RIDICULOUS

By Mgr. Enrico Pucel
(Rome Correspondent, N. C. W. C.)

Rome, Dec. 1.—It is nearly a hundred years ago since Marie Henri Bayle, better known under his novelist's nom de plume of Stendahl, wrote in *Memoirs of Rome*, under date of November 24, 1827: "St. Peter's has five doors, one of which is walled up and is only opened every 25 years for the ceremony of the Jubilee. The Jubilee that once brought 400,000 pilgrims of all classes to Rome, only gathered 400 mendicants in 1825. It is necessary to hurry if one wants to see the ceremonies of a religion which should be modified or extinguished."

A century has passed and the Church has not been extinguished. Its ceremonies have not been "modified"; but in the hundred years since the brilliant skeptic wrote, the world which he knew has been "modified" in most marvelous manner. Never, perhaps, in the history of mankind has there been record of a century of such profound change in the political and material life of the peoples of many nations. Institutions, nay, the very ideas by which the public and private life of millions of people were ruled, have dissolved—they were, they are not. Only one institution has experienced no change—the Catholic Church for which Stendahl rashly predicted extinction remains unchanged and firm in its divine foundation.

FROM THE FOUR-CORNERS OF THE EARTH

Seldom has prophet of desolation been so unfortunate in appointing his prophecy as was this hater of Catholicism. Of course he lied in his statement of the Jubilee conditions in 1825, but the thunder of nearly a million voices from every corner of the earth has given the lie to his prognosis of future Holy Year celebration in Rome.

Since last Christmas, Rome has truly been the Holy City to which people have flocked from every continent, desirous—as the Pope has so often said—to be near the throbbing heart of the Church. They have come dressed in all fashions: Europeans and Americans in the correct garb of their countries; Egyptians swathed in fine silk mantles; Indians with heads draped in large turbans; Breton fishermen in plain jerseys; Spanish ladies with rich mantillas and the high tortoise-shell combs; Polish peasants in costumes of all colors of the rainbow; Swiss mountaineers in the Alpine dress; Moravian agriculturalists in costumes ornamented with silver buckles and artificial flowers; Rumanian ladies wearing large veils and wraps of silver cloth; German students in their traditional high shining boots and white and flame-red jackets; Bosnians and Albanians in small jackets ornamented with frogs, wide sashes and white trousers; Scottish Highlanders in kilts.

They have come, and in thousands of processions both in the churches and in the streets, they have lifted up their voices to God in prayers

and hymns in all tongues. Like brothers at each other's side, though perhaps not understanding a word of their respective languages, they have been uplifted by consciousness of the same spirit of faith, the same spirit of piety and the same divine and only charity.

RICH AND POOR TOGETHER

They have come, rich and poor alike. At the Piazza San Pietro which seemed to be the general headquarters of the pilgrimages, one saw drawn up along the porticoes scores of automobiles belonging to parties of rich people who were praying in the Basilica or visiting the Vatican Palace, and between the same columns, seated on the marble steps, were poor peasants, sometimes entire families who had brought their bread and cheese and between visits allayed the pangs of hunger and drank water from the nearest fountain. Among those who came from afar, from America and Australia, and who had therefore to incur heavy expense, there was one who had sold his house to find the means necessary for the journey. The Pope himself related this fact whilst conversing with the eminent French writer, Georges Goyau.

A group of Neapolitan laborers, when the Jubilee was proclaimed on the Feast of the Ascension, 1924, proposed to put aside each week a day's wages so as to have at their disposal the few hundreds of lire that were necessary for the journey and stay in Rome. Among the pilgrims of places nearer Rome the spirit of sacrifice was even more eloquent and visible. These poor thousands, and as they could not be more than a day absent from their work in the country, had permission to make the visits to the Basilicas and all the prescribed practices in a single day. They arrived by the early morning train and many of them had begun to walk at dawn, some indeed at midnight, because they had to travel four, five or six hours by foot before reaching the nearest station. On their arrival at Rome, they heard Mass and went to Communion, and still fasting, at once commenced the visits to the Basilicas in long processions behind the cross, singing and chanting psalms. The last visit was reserved for St. Peter's, where they arrived at noon, and after the visit entered the Vatican for the audience of the Pope. In the atrium of the entrance to the Papal Palace they left the poor provisions they had brought with them: bread, cheese, and fruit. Until two o'clock and even later, they were kept at the audience and only after it, amidst the gigantic columns of the colonnade, tired and hungry, did they partake of their frugal lunch. They then walked to the railway station, and after the train journey, they had still four, five or six hours of trudging before they could rest in their own homes.

But what shall be said of the pilgrims who came to Rome from France, Spain, Switzerland, Poland and Germany? They have been many—some hundreds. And not a few might be seen with bare feet walking along the streets of the city leading to the holy Basilicas.

Side by side with these poor and humble folk, how many of the great, how many titled and rich people, how many scientists, how many magistrates, how many senators and deputies and ministers, from the President of the Belgian Senate, the Dutch Premier, the Belgian Minister for Colonies, the Prince of the Sovereign House of Spain, and the former reigning Houses of Germany, Austria, Bavaria, Hungary, Portugal and Saxony, to President Cosgrave, who, in honor of Ireland, came humbly among the last of the pilgrims to this Holy Jubilee.

Every nation that has an ancient history of the past has its church in Rome; St. Louis for the French, St. Maria in Monserrato for the Spaniards, St. Maria dell'Anima and St. Maria in Campo Santo for the Germans, St. Isidore for the Irish, St. Anthony for the Portuguese, St. Stanislaus for the Poles, St. Wenceslaus for the Bohemians, St. Sylvester for the English, St. Julian for the Belgians, St. Athanasius for the Greeks, St. Jerome for the Yugoslavs, St. Salvatore for the Rumanians. And the churches recently constructed or assigned, as the beautiful Church of St. Patrick for the Irish, and the ancient classic church of St. Susanna for the Americans of the United States. Finally, a dozen or more churches for the various Italian provinces, for the Lombards, the Venetians, the Tuscans, the Neapolitans, the Sicilians, etc. All these national and provincial churches were during this Holy Year so many centers at which the respective pilgrimages made their headquarters, so that, even outside the greater Basilicas, the life of piety and intense religious fervor of the crowds who flocked to the Jubilee was manifest in every part of the city.

But, besides these, how many other pious manifestations, how many prayers, how many songs, how many processions! The historical ways with beautiful classic names—Via Appia, Via Ostiense, Via Ardeatina, etc.—flanked by ruins and famous monuments which are found everywhere in Rome, were also traversed without ceasing by the crowds of pilgrims who went to the Catacombs and who, after having chanted psalms in streets drenched in sunlight, disappeared