



## GENERAL INTENTION FOR JANUARY.

*Named by the Cardinal Protector and blessed by the  
Pope for all Associates.*

THE FOURTEENTH CENTENARY OF THE BAPTISM OF THE  
FRANKS.

Fourteen centuries is a long period on which to look back even in the history of the Church, which has lasted nigh two thousand years. And yet the celebrations to be held this year, and which are to culminate in the solemn Christmas festivals of 1896, are intended to commemorate an event which took place on the feast of Our Lord's Nativity as far back as the year 496. This event may fittingly be called "The Baptism of a Nation."

Remote, though it be from us Christians of to-day, it has ever exercised a preponderating influence on the changes and vicissitudes of Christendom during the ages which succeeded it; nor has that influence been other than benign for the successors on the throne of the Fisherman. So much so, that the great achievements of the nation, which was then christened, in upholding the rights and prerogatives of the Church have been passed down in history as the *Gesta Dei per Francos*.

We may safely conjecture that, long before the final conquest of the Gaul by the Franks, this warlike race had