

GENERAL INTENTION FOR JUNE

RECOMMENDED AND BLESSED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XV.

CANONIZATION OF BLESSED MARGARET MARY

All friends of the devotion to the Sacred Heart will welcome the Intention for the present month. If the Holy See were to confer the honors of canonization on Blessed Margaret Mary, the great apostle of the Sacred Heart, this Pontifical act would give a marvellous impetus to the devotion which has already brought millions nearer to God.

Margaret Mary was the herald of the revelations of the Sacred Heart, revelations which, one of her historians tells us, were the greatest given to man since the days of the Incarnation and the institution of the Holy Eucharist. In her monastery at Paray-le-Monial she planted the seedling which has since become a great tree, whose roots are solidly enrooted in dogmatic truth and whose branches have spread over the Catholic world.

The friends of the Sacred Heart throughout the world rejoiced at this act of the Sovereign Pontiff, for it gave an impetus to the devotion which she had done so much to foster, and resulted in many remarkable manifestations of Catholic piety. Let it suffice to recall the consecration of the world to the Sacred Heart by Pius IX., the more recent solemn acts of Leo XIII. and Pius X. in the same direction, the pilgrimages to the shrine of the Servant of God at Paray-le-Monial, the multiplication of Communions of Reparation throughout the world, the First Friday devotions, the Holy Hour, the Guard of Honor, and most remarkable of all, the rapid spread of the League of the Sacred Heart on every continent, and the consequent increase of personal piety among the millions who make up its membership.

But, as in the decrees of beatification of other servants of God, the one giving the title of "Blessed" to Margaret Mary had its limitations. It was a solemn pronouncement of the Holy See, but it was not definite or final; the veneration authorized by the Church was partial and restricted. Beatification is only one stage of the glory with which the Church may gratify the memory of the saints.

There is another, which is the highest earthly honor which can be conferred on those heroes and heroines of the Church Triumphant, that of canonization. This is also a solemn act which extends the veneration of the saints to the Universal Church; it authorizes the faithful everywhere to implore their intercessory power; it establishes feasts in their honor; permits churches and altars to be built and dedicated in their names, and encourages other methods of glorifying them, the writing of their biographies, and even the raising of statues to them in public thoroughfares, so that the lesson of their lives may reach the whole world. The saints deserve all this glory; they fought the good fight and were victorious; death for them meant the beginning of eternal life and happiness; they live in the light of the Beatific Vision; they are the true children of God; but they are not officially recognized as such in the eyes of men until the Church canonizes them.

The Catholic world still awaits the canonization of Blessed Margaret Mary, and we are asked during the present month to pray earnestly that God may inspire His Vicar on earth to give this solemn approval to her incomparable mission. However, before this can be done there are formalities to be observed and condi-

tions to be fulfilled, the most important of which is the securing of absolute proof that at least two miracles have been wrought by God through the intercession of the Blessed since her beatification. After this further proof of her intercessory power has been fully established, a decree will be drawn up by the Sacred Congregation of Rites declaring that no doubt exists relative to the Cause presented for investigation, and that there is no longer any reason why the honors of canonization should be withheld from one who undoubtedly is in heaven.

Friends and clients of Blessed Margaret Mary everywhere long for the day when this honor will be conferred on her. But while they are convinced that she is safe with God and enjoying the fruit of her labors and her life of virtue, her solemn beatification being sufficient proof of that, still their own wishes or their urgent demands on the Holy See are not sufficient to justify the Church to proceed in such an important step. In an affair of this magnitude God also has a role to play. Suspension of the laws of nature, through the intercession of a creature, is the best proof that the creature enjoys the friendship of Nature's Lawgiver. In the present instance, God must give a preliminary sanction to any action His Vicar may take by performing at least two miracles through the intercession of Blessed Margaret Mary; and it should be a pleasing duty for us during the present month to beg of God to gratify us with those two examples of His mighty power. This would hasten the Cause already in hand, and secure forever to the great apostle of the Sacred Heart her official position in the calendar of the Church.

Blessed Margaret Mary has her place assured in the hearts of the faithful, but her canonization would give pleasure to the whole Catholic world; it would also put the final seal of approval of the infallible Church on the mission she was providentially called to fulfill. In the first place, it would be equivalent to a new approbation of those dozens of passages in her writings wherein she relates that Jesus Himself really appeared to her, that He wished to see His Heart, the symbol of His love, loved and honored by men, that He wished pious souls to make reparation to His Heart for the sins of the world. Secondly, the canonization of this Servant of God would be a proof that the Church recognizes as authentic and genuine the wonderful promises made to her by the Divine Master, promises as consoling as they are magnificent, and with which we are all familiar. Thirdly, Margaret Mary's whole life would be presented to us again as a model to admire and possibly to imitate. She was consumed with a tender affection for her Blessed Redeemer, whose apparitions to her only intensified her affection, and she answered by her words, her examples, her writings, her self-immolation, to spread devotion to His Sacred Heart. Her absolute certainty of what God wanted her to do made her work in season and out of season to enkindle in the hearts of others the fire of Divine love. To carry out God's will in this respect she left no stone unturned both in her own monastery and among those outside who were within reach of her influence. God helped her in her consoling work; it will suffice to look over the world today to see the results of Blessed Margaret Mary's zeal. If, therefore, we love our Lord's Sacred Heart, and if we appreciate the work of His devoted Servant, let us not rest satisfied until all the honor due to her is conferred on her. Half a century has passed since Margaret Mary was beatified. May God hasten the day when the greater honor of canonization will give her a higher status in the Church and a correspondingly wider influence in the world of souls.

E. J. DEVINE, S. J.

IS CATHOLICISM "MATERIAL?"

"Sensual" is the epithet, some critics apply to the Church. "Materialistic," the description of "kinder critics."

But kind or unkind wish to express the fact that our church is not like theirs. Their churches are purely spiritual, they say. They do away with most exterior aids to prayer or penance. They would break the statue that helps the dull plodder to think of God and His saints; they would do away with the act of auricular confession, which is justified by millions of lightened hearts: some of them would abolish Communion, although Catholics without end, in the precious moments after Communion, discharge their Christian duty of adoration more completely than at any other time.

High spiritual life has undoubtedly been attained by many, many Protestants who have received no further exterior aid than reading, conversation, study and sermons. But to deny other sorts of exterior help to people, is to display an unsympathetic indifference to their psychological needs, as well as we Catholics think, as to misinterpret Scripture.

of those who live under the stress of East London sordidness and pressure lies in what may be called the materialization of religion—I mean the supplying of acts and images on which religious emotion may concentrate itself. Extreme definiteness seems necessary, and that not only in the bright and impressive adjuncts of worship, but in the modes in which individual approach to God is made.

"Men's clubs, where religious and political conversation is against the rule (as was the case with others) furious visiting, children's pantomimes, and general activity and fervor certainly have their place and function; but unless the individual understands where and how he may discharge his penitence or adoration, not merely as a member of a congregation, but as a unique soul which God has made and redeemed, piety can never be more than vague and diffuse."

That, however, need of "material" aid is felt, not only by the uneducated, is shown by the fact that shortly after he came to this conclusion, Benson, in order to concentrate vague desires for doing penance made his first confession.

As the critics say, and in obedience to its Founder, Catholicism is materialistic; she uses "materialism" to develop spirituality.—New World.

LIFE WITHOUT FAITH

A well known and gifted American artist committed suicide a few days ago by drinking poison. It appears that he had just received a work that was to be his masterpiece. At the same time his sight began to fail and he realized that he would not be able to finish the work. In his despair he ended his life. To a fellow-artist he said only a few days before his death:

"There is nothing left for me; the inspiration of my life has come and my eyes are all but gone. Never again shall I put brush to canvas." The unfortunate man was logical. He lived for fame, for the human glory and applause that sometimes come to men of genius. When he found himself unable to reach the only goal of his ambition he killed himself. There was nothing for him in life, there was no hope for hereafter. As he did not know that God gave him the sense of sight that he might use it to glorify the Divine Giver, he could not understand that the same God was about to deprive him of this gift for the very same end.

How meaningless and empty and pitiable is a life which reckons without God. It is one of the sad, inexplicable things that people of great talent are often lacking in faith in that spiritual light, the possession of which enables others to appraise earthly success and worldly praise and distinction at their true value.—Intermountain Catholic.

CORPUS CHRISTI

FATHER FABER'S DESCRIPTION OF THE FEAST—ITS OUTER SPLENDOR, ITS INNER GLORY

Now the first thing we have to do is to get the spirit of the Feast into us. Thus writes Father Faber of Corpus Christi in his precious volume "The Blessed Sacrament." When this is once accomplished, he continues, we shall be better able to sound some of the depths of the mystery. Nay, the whole theology of the grand dogma of the Eucharist is nothing less than angelic music made audible to mortal ears; and when our souls are attuned to it we shall the better understand the sweet secrets which it reveals to our delighted minds. But we must go far away in order to catch the spirit of the Feast. We must put before ourselves, as on a map, the aspect which the whole Church is presenting to the Eye of God to-day. Our great city is deafened by her noise; she cannot hear. She is blinded with her own dazzle; she cannot see. We must not mind her; we must put the thought of her away, with sadness if it were any other than this, but to-day, because it is to-day with complete indifference.

O the joy of the immense glory the Church is sending up to God this hour: verily! As if the world was all unfallen still! We think, and as we think, the thoughts are like to many successive tides-waves filling our whole soul with the fulness of de-light of all the thousands of Masses which are being said or sung the whole world over, and all rising with one note of blissful acclamation from grateful creatures to the Majesty of our merciful Creator.

EXTERNAL MAGNIFICENCE

How many glorious processions, with the sun upon their banners, are now winding their way round the squares of mighty cities, through the flower-strewn streets of Christian villages, through the antique cloisters of the glorious cathedral or through the grounds of the devout seminary, where the various colours of the faces and the different languages of the people are only so many fresh tokens of the unity of that faith which they are all exultingly professing in the single voice of the magnificent ritual of Rome!

Upon how many altars of various architecture, amid clouds of humble incense and the tumult of thrilling song, before thousands of prostrate worshippers, is the Blessed Sacrament raised for exposition, or taken down for benediction! And how many blessed acts of faith and love,

of triumph and of reparation, do not each of these things surely represent! The world over, the summer air is filled with the voice of song. The gardens are showered with the fairest blossoms, the fountains beneath the feet of the Sacramental God. The steeples are reeling with clang of bells; the canon are booming in the gorges of the Andes and the Apennines; the ships of the harbours are painting the bays of the sea with their show of gaudy flags; the pomp of royal or republican armies salutes the King of kings. The Pope on his throne and the school-girl in her village, cloistered nuns and sequestered hermits, bishops and dignitaries and preachers, emperors and kings and princes, all are engrossed to-day with the Blessed Sacrament. Cities are illuminated; the dwelling of men are alive with exultation. Joy so abounds that men rejoice they know not why, and their joy overflows on sad hearts, and on the poor and the imprisoned and the wandering and the orphaned, and the homeless exiles. All the millions of souls that belong to the royal family and spiritual lineage of St. Peter are to-day engaged more or less with the Blessed Sacrament; so that the whole Church Militant is thrilling with glad emotion, like the tremulous rocking of the mighty sea, in an ecstasy of joy, tears even of rapture rather than of penance. It is like the soul's first day in heaven; or as if earth itself were passing into heaven, as it well might do, for sheer joy of the Blessed Sacrament.

GLORY OF THE INTERNAL CELEBRATION

But all this represents and reveals an interior world of deep worship and of countless supernatural operations of the Holy Ghost, and of many exuberant activities and incalculable energy of the Precious Blood. A single supernatural act—how much dearer is it to God than a thousand sins are hateful; for the odour of Christ and the unction of His grace and the seal of His merits are on that single act. Grace grows active as great feasts draw nigh; and its pre-ludes bring many souls to the feet of their spiritual physicians. Crowds that were in sin yesterday now for the love of Jesus have made to-day's sun to rise upon their penance; and over each one all heaven's angels rejoice, more than over a newly-created world. Millions have made their preparation for Communion, and the least fervent of them all did something for God he would not else have done. The same millions communicated; and think of all that Jesus did in them, and with them, and for them, while the sacramental union lasted! The same millions made their thanksgiving, and what a choir of praise was there. How many aged men will the evening find less worldly than the morning saw them.

How many moments of children has not faith started and grown strong, simple, juicy growth more than that whole year's growth in one brief day; and what a glorious thing is each growth of faith in a childish soul, seeing there comes along with it such a glorious promise for eternity! And what shall I say of those deeper depths, the souls of mortified interior men? I suppose that the mere exercise of faith, to say nothing of love, in a saint is something so deep and high, so far reaching and full of union with Christ, that we common Christians can know nothing of it, and how many real saints, how many heretics, he raised on the altars of the Church, have been in rapture, in ecstasy, in transcendent communion with God this day, through the stirring of the life giving mystery in their souls. The silent cloister has sent up thousands of sweet perfumes from espoused souls throughout the day; acts of faith enough to win grace; acts of faith enough to win grace for unconverted tribes, acts of love sufficient to expiate a sea of blasphemies and a world of sacrileges, acts of union which have strengthened and invigorated the whole Church and quickened all it pulses in places far remote from the cells, where the acts were perfected in solitude and prayer and austere concealment. Who can tell the vocations begun or achieved to-day, the first blows given to a sinful habit or the crowning virtue to a devout resolve, the sins remitted or the sinful purposes abandoned, the deathbeds illuminated or the souls liberated from purgatory through the quickened charity of earth? There has been a vast and busy and populous empire of interior acts open to the eye of God to-day, so beautiful, so glorious, so religious, so acceptable, that the feast of the outer world has been the poorest possible expression of the inner feast of the world of spirit. And what is it all but triumph, the triumph of our hidden Lord?—St. Paul Bulletin.

TO PROMOTE GOOD FEELING

The Congregationalist devotes a whole page to an editorial "Four Things Which Protestants Should Do." Here they are in brief: (1) "Do not circulate rumors prejudicial to Catholics"; (2) "Do not get into a panic over the likelihood of the Catholic Church dominating this country"; (3) "Make friends with Catholics as widely as possible"; and (4) "Care as much for your religion as your Catholic neighbor does for his." We trust, says the Sacred Heart Review, the readers of the Congregationalist will follow these four simple rules. If they do they will help greatly to modify the bitter, anti-Catholic feeling that is now so prevalent, and that finds expression in convent inspection bills and similar legislation.

Meanwhile Catholics can do something by an increase of Catholic fervor, by leading better Catholic lives and by showing a better Christian example to their non-Catholic neighbors. Every Catholic worthy of the name should be above narrowness and bigotry. Indeed, the truly pious Catholic so Christ-like that he has no place in his heart for anything but kind thoughts of his neighbors of all religions. Unhappily, however, all Catholics are not like this. Many who bear the name are ostensibly great champions of the Church, but at heart they are looking out for themselves and their own temporal welfare. Such men often raise a race and religious issue where there is no warrant for it.

They pretend to see in a personal discrimination against themselves an attack upon the religion of Catholics; and they work mischief among those whom they mislead. It is just as well for us all to remember this, and be alarmed at every cry of bigotry."—Canadian Freeman.

MONSIGNOR BENSON

It is not often that one brother writes about another, but the task did not present any special difficulty to Arthur C. Benson who has just published a sketch of his brother Monsignor Benson under the title, "Hugh: Memories of a Brother."

In this delightfully intimate sketch we have references to their parents which all readers will devour with avidity. It seems that Monsignor Benson was born to his mother by the closest of ties, and that he consulted her about everything. And she merited the confidence. When he contemplated leaving the Anglican Church in which his father had been a bishop she wished him to make up his own mind, although she never concealed her own views, and when, after his reception into the Church, he was leaving for Rome, she accompanied him to the train. A Bishop Wilkinson was a witness to the parting between mother and son, and his comment brings the father into relief. "It" said he addressing Mrs. Benson in language which was meant to console her, "Hugh's father, when he was here on earth, would—and he would—have always wished him to follow his conscience, how much more in Paradise."

These delicate touches which show the broadness of Monsignor Benson's parents have a tendency to whet our appetite for the larger biography which is promised later on.—Southern Guardian.

CROWN OF THORNS

Though the words thorns, briars and thistles have a very indefinite meaning, not only in scripture, but also in modern nomenclature, we are quite certain as to the identity of the plants used to make the Crown of Thorns. The spinous plant used was undoubtedly the shrub known to botanists of our day as Zippus Spina Christi. It was formerly considered a buckthorn, and included by Linnaeus in the genus Rhamnus. The plant is common in Syria, and is a native of the east, where it sometimes grows to the height of twenty feet.

There is an opinion—not very prevalent, however—that the plant from which the Crown of Thorns was made may have been another common spinous plant of the east, Poterium spinosum, but neither tradition nor fact is in its favor. This plant is rather small, with prostrate stems never two yards long and not rising high above the ground. There is no science in which names have been so conservatively and unchangeably held to as botany previous to the eighteenth century, and the very name of the plant—Spina Christi, as it was known before this time, and ever since—suggests its identity.

The Crown of Thorns is not mentioned among the relics discovered by St. Helena on Mount Calvary, nor are others, such as the holy tunic, for the crown passed from the hands of the soldiers into the possession of one of our Lord's disciples. St. Paulinus first refers to its existence in a letter to Macarius, and later on we hear of it from St. Gregory of Tours. Robert, Count of Flanders, speaks of the relic in the year 1100. It was given by Baldwin II. to St. Louis of France in 1238. The following year it went to Sens, and was kept in a special chapel, where it remained until the French revolution.

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After the restoration of peace, it was solemnly transferred, in 1806, to the Church of Notre Dame, Paris.

In 1806, when the Crown was placed in a new reliquary, it was photographed, and at the time competent persons established the identity of the plants composing it. It consists of a circle of the thorny plant above mentioned, and certainly identified as Zippus Spina Christi. The branches of this plant are wound and held together by stems of the common rush (identified as Juncus balticus), which grows throughout northern Asia, Europe and America, and is abundant in the Holy Land. The whole crown is about seven inches in diameter.

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The thorny plant is no longer so abundant in the crown itself as formerly, because pieces have been taken as relics to various other places, the principal being at Plas, Trevas and Weveighem, in the diocese of Bruges, Belgium. All these relics show thorns very unlike those of the plant called Poterium spinosum, which are often much branched, and therefore there can be little doubt as to the identity of the plant of which the Crown of Thorns was made.—Intermountain Catholic.

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