BISHOP LEBLANC ISSUES FIRST PASTORAL LETTER

Read Before Large Congregations in Cathedral and Other Churches of the Diocese, at Yesterday's Services.

The first pastoral letter from Bishop LeBlanc was read in the cathedral and churches of the diocese on Sunday.

Edward, by the Grace of God and Favour of The Apostolic See, Bishop of Saint John, to the Clergy, Religious Orders and Laity of the Diocese:

Health and Benediction in the Lord.

Dear Brethren:—

Raised by Almighty God to the exalted dignity of the episcopate through no merits of our own, and mindful that we shall one day have to give an account of the souls entrusted to our keeping, we deem it a duty to address you a few words of spiritual advice at the commencement of the Lenten season. It is related of St. John the Apostle, that, when far advanced in years and not able to deliver a lengthy discourse at the meeting of the faithful, he contented himself with saying on each occasion: "Little children, love one another." When some of his followers, weary of hearing the same words, asked him why he always spoke thus, the apostle replied: "Because it is a commandment of the Lord and if you fulfil this, it is sufficient." And so, dear brethren we borrow today the words of Christ's Apostle; that which was the burden of his message in the latter days of his apostolic life, we make the burden of ours in the very beginning of our episcopate and we say to you: "Love one another." The dearest wish of a bishop's heart is to see his flock united, not only in the bonds of a common faith, but in the bonds of fraternal charity, since this is the characteristic mark of all true followers of the Divine Master. "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." —John XIII, 35.

What a pleasing sight it must have been in the early ages of the church to behold the harmony and good will that reigned among the faithful. "The multitude of the believers," says the sacred writer, "had but one heart and one soul."—Acts IV., 32. As there was but one interest, there was but one mind among them. This spirit of brotherly love was a source of wonder to the very heathens of those days. "See," they said, "how these Christians love one another." Edifying, indeed, it must have been to see such unity among people who, for the most part, had not the slightest acquaintance with each other, and who were natives of different countries, spoke different languages, and who had different national customs. This mutual charity, the result of Divine grace, subsisted so long that even in the age in which St. Ambrose lived—the fourth century—it was still the subject of universal admiration.

Fraternal charity, dear brethren, is part of the very foundation and essence of Christianity. It may be defined to be a supernatural virtue infused into the soul, inclining it to wish well to every human creature for God's sake, and to be prepared to render to our fellow men, when occasion requires, those kindly offices we would wish them to render to us under similar circumstances. It is not a mere evangelical counsel which we are at liberty to adopt or reject, but it is a duty binding our very consciences. When our Lord said: "Thou shalt love they neighbor as thyself," He imposed upon us a strict obligation which forbids us to exclude a single member of the human race from the sanctuary of our affections. He wished us to understand that the love of our neighbor should be similar to that which we entertain for ourselves, having for its motive, the love of God, and, for its rule, our neighbor's welfare. We are all children of the same God, having but one and the same origin, redeemed by the blood of Christ and destined for everlasting happiness. Wherefore, our Blessed Saviour inculcating a lesson unknown before He came on earth has stamped it with the impress of His own power and made the precept of loving mnkind, universal. He has even gone so far, out of the depths of His desire to fix in our minds a profound conviction of the necessity of this virtue to refer to it as His own especial commandment: "This is My commandment that you love one another, as I have loved you."—John XV., 12.

The Catholic, therefore, who forms his conduct on the lines of the Gospel will never do anything that can tend to injure his neighbor in any respect in body, in reputation, in property, or in peace of mind; he will wish well to him, and always assist him as far as he can in his spiritual and corporal necessities. "True charity," remarks Cardinal Wiseman, "endeavors to see only the good side of our neighbor's conduct, and to throw a veil over his faults where duty does not oblige us to notice them. It teaches us to make every allowance for his circumstances and temptations. It brings before our eyes our own weakness, greater, perhaps by far, than that which our keen observation detected in him, and bids us extend towards him that pity and indulgence which we should wish should be shown to us by others, who are, doubtless, trying no less to discover flaws in our own character."

It is true, not much difficulty will be found observing the precept of brotherly charity as long as it regards only those with whom we are on friendly terms, but when it comes to love those who hate us or do us harm, who are still doing all in their power to injure us—this is, indeed, a galling obligation to flesh and blood, a humiliation against which our pride protests and stubbornly rebels. And yet, dear brethren, for the very reason that it is repugnant to our nature, and because we cannot practise it without the special assistance of divine grace, it is the most shining and god-like part of the love of our neighbor, and, of all other acts, the most profitable and meritorious to those who practise it.

The precept of loving our enemies is one which Christianity had the honor of introducing in to the world. It belongs essentially and exclusively to the Christian religion. To the old pagan philosophers, it was utterly unknown. They understood well enough what clemency meant, and they thought a man could do no more beautiful act than forgive an injury, but their philosophy went no further. Even the Old Law, which God Himself dictated and delivered to the Hebrew people, did not go far beyond this. It forbade hatred and the desire of revenge; it even commanded the Jews to render kindly offices to an enemy, but did not go the length of commanding them to love him. That great precept, which is one of the glories of our religion, remained hidden in the mind of God until His Son, our Lord, brought it with Him from heaven and promulgated it to the world. It was clearly against the law of Moses, yet, it was deeply rooted in the minds and habits of the people, and this maxim, this immemorial custom, while it recommended them to love their friends, authorized them to hate their enemies. Now, this was in direct contradiction to the spirit of the Gospel, to the fundamental principle of the religion our Lord came to establish, and He opposed it with all the weight of His sovereign authority. "You have heard," said He to them, "that it hath been said: Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thy enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you."—Matt. V., 43. To which is added in St. Luke: "An bless them that curse you."—St. Luke VI., 28. Here, you will observe, our Lord makes no mention of the precept already laid down in the Old Law. He does not bring forward the celebrated examples of Joseph or Moses or David who forgave freely the most atrocious wrongs and treated kindly those who tried to injure them. He does not even stop to show the justice and necessity of His commandment and the advantages accruing from it to society. He does not condescend to expose the sophistry, to tear in shreds the futile pretexts with which men seek to justify their hatred of their neighbor, but He simply lays down His law as a Divine Teacher and Legislator: I, who am your God, your Redeemer, your Master, I say to you: Love your enemies. Here is a command, positive and absolute, from which no exception is made either on account of the greatness of the injury or of the baseness of the offender. As if to enforce the perfect observance of it, He proposes His own example: "This is my commandment that you love one another, as I have loved you."—John XV., 12. And the high perfection of His love for us consisted in this that, while we were sinners, His declared enemies, He loved us to the extent of dying for us.—Rom. V., 8. "In this is charity," says St. John, "not as though we had loved God, but because He first loved us and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins. My dearest, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."—1 John IV., 10.

Dear brethren, all things are possible with God's assisting grace. Pray, therefore, that He may bestow upon you the spirit of humility and charity, and often meditate on the motives that urge you to the fulfilment of His law, motives most forcible to convince the understanding and to touch the heart. "All things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them."—Matt. VII., 12. Charity is the queen of all the virtues, and without it, vain will be every other. You might be attentive at your prayers, you might be assiduous at all your duties, you might even distribute all your goods to feed the poor and deliver your body to be burned, but, if you do not love your neighbor and succeed in conquering your aversion to those whom you dislike, your virtues are only on the surface, you practise them merely because they are pleasing to you. "Put ye on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience."—Col., III., 12. "Bear ye one another's burdens."—Gal. VI., 12. Be on good terms with every man. "If thou offerest thy gift at the altar, and there shalt remember that thy brother hath anything against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and first go be reconciled to thy brother; and then come and offer thy gift."—Matt. XXIII., 24. Do this that you may inherit a blessing.

We cannot close this pastoral letter without admonishing all those under our charge to enter most earnestly into the spirit of the sacred season of Lent, a season set apart by the Church to prepare our souls by fervent prayer and by works of penance to commemorate the mysteries of the Passion and Death of our Divine Lord. We sincerely hope that this holy time may witness a revival of Catholic spirit, illustrated in attendance at daily Mass, at evening devotions, in frequent communion, in works of charity to the poor and in the avoidance of profane amusements. We also exhort you, dear brethren, with all the energy in our power, for the glory of God, the honor of religion and for the salvation of your souls, so dear to our episcopal heart, to abstain from all intoxicating liquor.

Among devotional exercises we recommend the Via Crucis, or Stations of the Cross, and the Rosary of the Mother of God as best suited to the spirit of this penitential season. Let a spirit of prayer and piety also reign in your homes. In but too few families is found the beautiful practise of saying the daily prayers in common, and yet, "the Christian home, in which family prayer is practised, becomes a sacred oratory, a holy shrine which Christ honors and blesses by His presence." "Where two or three are gathered in My name, there I am in the midst of them."—Matt. XVIII., 19. You will not forget that there is a grave obligation on every child of the Church to comply with the Paschal precept.

The Regulations for Lent will be the same as those of last year.

The grace of our Lord Christ be with you all, brethren.

The Reverend Clergy will read this letter to their congregations on the first Sunday after its reception.

Given from our residence in St. John on the Feast of the Commemoration of the Passion of Christ, January 28, 1913.

✠ E. A. LeBLANC,
Bishop of St. John.

A. W. MEAHAN,
Pro. Secretary.

Sent to Asylum.

London, Feb. 8. — Percy Collins charged with sending threatening letters to King George, was today sent to the insane asylum.

GAGETOWN FARMER IN A SERIOUS ACCIDENT

Reuben Fox Sustains Broken Leg while Assisting Horse on Feet—Other News from up River.

Gagetown, Feb. 8—The many friends of Reuben Fox will be sorry to hear that he was the victim of a very nasty accident on Wednesday last. One of his horses in the barn was unable to get up and Mr. Fox was attempting to get it up singlehanded. He had almost succeeded when the horse fell onto his leg, causing a very bad break. The unfortunate man crawled out of the barn and called for help. Dr. Caswell attended and the patient is progressing favorably.

Last Wednesday a successful basket social and entertainment was given in the Summer Hill Settlement. In spite of the bad travelling the Orange Hall was crowded. The entertainment, which consisted of purely local talent, was a marked success. The baskets sold well, the local auctioneer showing clearly that he had missed his vocation, brought forth not only rounds of laughter, but also good prices from the audience. The proceeds were devoted to the building of the new Church of England when it is to be started in the spring.

Owing to Lent coming so early, the village has been making merry ever since the new year. Entertainments and dances have been the chief features. On Saturday a new building, which has been erected on the front street, was well filled on Saturday night for the first time, through the invitation of the owners.

Another dance was also enjoyed by many on Monday night in the temperance hall and on Tuesday the light-footed couples spent a very pleasant evening at Glenora.

Miss Mary Scovil, of Meadowlands, has returned after a month's visit to Montreal and other cities.

As snow is so badly needed in the district, prayers were offered in St. John's church, on Saturday last for snow or frost.

The farmers are having great difficulty in getting their hay from the intervales and up to the present most of it has been brought off by wagons.

HARBOR AND FERRY REVENUES GROWING

Commissioner Schofield will Deliver Report to this Effect to City Council this Afternoon—Other Business.

At the meeting of the city council this afternoon Commissioner Schofield will submit a report on the work of the harbor and ferry departments for the past year. Both the harbor and ferry revenues are growing. In the month of January just closed the number of passengers carried on the ferry boats was 215,087, an increase of 45,076 over the corresponding month of last year, while the number of teams carried was 10,010, an increase of 735 over the same month last year.

The commissioner's report will show a considerable increase in the harbor revenues, indicating a good increase in the business of the port. At the present time the harbor is taxed to its capacity and additional facilities will be needed to handle the traffic next season.

The council will take up a recommendation of the commissioner to ask the federal government to enact a law requiring ships to have netting on their gangways so as to decrease the risk of accidents; also a recommendation to have telephones placed in the collectors' booth in the toll house on the West Side, so as to make it possible to hold the ferry boat for an injured man. Other requests of the longshoremen for an ambulance basket and special stretchers at Sand Point may also come up.

The land commissioners will recommend the sale to Miss Welsh, of three lots in Brooks ward under lease to her.

The matter of asking the government to provide a big floating crane for the harbor will also be dealt with.

Com. Wigmore will submit a report on the arrangements made for the paying of a pipe line from the Marsh Bridge through the park property to Mt. Pleasant, connecting with the distributing system there, and assuring a better pressure than is now available. The commissioner has secured a right of way through the park.

In view of a request for an extension of the water service in Lancaster in the direction of South Bay, the commissioner will recommend that the water assessment district of Lancaster be enlarged so as to take in this section.

The water and sewer department has completed the work of putting in the new sewer on Main street and Paradise Row. They have also taken advantage of the mild weather this winter to proceed with the Adelaide Road extension, and now have about 500 feet of sewer pipes laid and are working in a rock cut.

WEDDINGS.

Corbett-Short.

At the home of the bride on Wednesday last, Feb. 5th, Miss Mabel Bertha Short, of Jerusalem, N. B., was united in marriage to George Mills Corbett, of Petersville, N. B. Rev. G. Earle officiated. The bride who was unattended, was becomingly attired in a suit of brown. After the ceremony a dainty luncheon was served. Mr. and Mrs. Corbett left on the evening train for Boston. On their return they will reside at Petersville.

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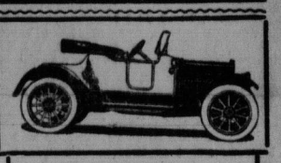

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