

LAGUE OF THE SACRED HEART.

General Intention for March. (Named by the Cardinal Protector and blessed by the Pope for all Associates.) DEVOTION TO THE CRUCIFIX.

Message of the Sacred Heart. In connection with the subject of this month's intention, Holy Writ exhibits two passages which, if not parallel, are analogous and very striking: the one from the New Testament after the great work of Redemption had been accomplished, the other from the Old before the coming of our Lord.

"And I saw an Angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the sign of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four Angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying: 'Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, till we sign the servants of our God in their foreheads.' (Apoc. viii. 1, 2, 3) What was this mysterious sign, endowed with preternatural power to stay the hands of the destroying Angels, here mentioned by St. John, while he prophetically describes the appalling events which are to precede the world's final destruction? Were it possible for us to entertain the least doubt as to its character we might turn to the prophecies of the Old Testament for an answer. It is to be found unmistakably in the ninth chapter of Ezekiel. 'Go,' said the Lord, 'through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem: and mark the sign upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and mourn for all the abominations that are committed in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in my hearing: Go ye after him through the city, and strike: let not your eye spare, nor be ye moved with pity. Utterly destroy old and young, maidens, children and women: but whosoever you shall see Thau, kill him not, and begin ye at my sanctuary.' According to St. Jerome and other interpreters, those to be spared in this dreadful massacre were to be marked with the letter T (Thau), which, in the ancient Hebrew character, was the form of a cross.

The Cross, therefore, long before the coming of our Lord, but in prevision of His choosing it as the great instrument of His oblation was already potent to avert the wrath of the Most High, just as it will become, in the latter days, the glorious seal or mark of the elect. Still, in ages antecedent to the death of Christ, the mysterious and saving Thau was not identified with the ignominious gibbet of the malefactor; for all held the latter in execration. Few now are aware of the sickening spectacle of abjection, of anguish, of torture disclosed to the onlookers, when it was reared aloft bearing the form of some notorious criminal, hanging in mid air, an object of horror and commiseration.

The God of all might and majesty wishing in His infinite wisdom to make manifest His power in the person of His Beloved Son, decreed that this same instrument of the Cross should become a source of incomprehensible glory. It was for this that the Saviour Jesus Christ, though His life was without blemish and without even the shadow of imperfection, ended that life as an outcast and a criminal. And as if debasement and death alone were not ignominious enough, of all the modes of paying the last penalty He willingly chose the most shameful and the most inhuman. For, the torment of crucifixion was but one long lingering agony, wherein life was quenched by slow degrees and amidst atrocious sufferings. Mean while, the wretched victim, stripped of his garments and overwhelmed with confusion, hung for hours an object of contempt and ridicule for a jeering and heartless rabble. It would seem that he was raised on high, on the degrading rood, the better to command a view of all the crowd that had gathered to witness his opprobrious death. The imagination can conjure up no more repulsive sight; and nothing more horrible has ever been devised for the torture of the guilty, or more ignominious for the slave who was condemned to suffer death.

All this the Apostle thoroughly understood when he said: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written: Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Christ Jesus: that we may receive the promise of the Spirit by faith" (Gal. iii.). Now, while redeeming us from the curse of the law, by hanging on the tree He sanctified that tree and made it for evermore an object of veneration among Christians. The Cross, consequently, or with still more reason the Crucifix, that is, the Cross bearing the figure of Our Lord crucified, is become for us the image before all others to be revered, and which none other can ever replace: it is the official and liturgical emblem of the Church, surmounting the altar of the sacrifice; it is the standard of the King of Christians *Vexilla Regis*.

And how could it be otherwise? Was it not alluded to by Christ as an integral part of, or at least intimately connected with His preordained sacrifice? Moses had made a brazen serpent, and had set it up for a sign "which when they that were bitten looked upon they were healed" (Num. xxi. 9) and, referring to this figure in the Old Testament, Our Lord Himself had declared that "As Moses lifted up the serpent, in like manner must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting." (St. John iii., 14, 15)

Hence that marvellous unanimity in the veneration of the Cross in every age of the New Dispensation. When the Church was yet in her infancy, when her solemn rites were performed hushed within the deep galleries of the catacombs, when her children were hunted down and the blood of her sons flowed in torrents over every province of the Roman Empire, fertilizing those vast fields and scattering broadcast the blessed seed from which, as a harvest for the Divine Husbandman, new generations of believers were to spring; then it was, that every Christian hero who was called upon to make profession of his faith entered the arena signed with that sign of sacrifice. While it imparted strength within, it boomed before the upturned gaze as a sure token of triumph, for round it was twined the branch of laurel and on it hung a victor's crown.

Martyrs of the Crucified, signed with that sign, scorned the jeering and scoffing of the pagan throng; with it they stood undismayed before the wild beasts of the amphitheatre and were ground as wheat to become the bread of Christ. It was with that sign upon their foreheads and with it graven in their hearts, that they withstood the straining of the rack, the scalding of the boiling caldron, and the blistering, all permeating flame. Youth and age, manhood and old age, men of letters and men of arms, all were ground as wheat to become the bread of Christ. It was with that sign upon their foreheads and with it graven in their hearts, that they withstood the straining of the rack, the scalding of the boiling caldron, and the blistering, all permeating flame. Youth and age, manhood and old age, men of letters and men of arms, all were ground as wheat to become the bread of Christ.

It has even found its way into the very chancel; and we are edified at the sight of a solemn and erudite judge in England, who in deciding a question of legitimate church adornment in the Establishment, gravely draws the line between the Crucifix and the Cross. Let us hope, however, that the very presence of the Cross will draw down the grace of a whole and entire conversion, and lead misguided men, through its "kindly light," back to the one true fold.

It is well nigh inconceivable, so numerous, so obvious and so emphatic, that during all these long years which have coalesced into centuries, whole nations have been led to believe that they were returning to primitive Christianity when they rejected, among other practices of Apostolic times, the devotion to the Crucifix.

Tertullian, in his book *De Corona Militis*, written A. D. 235, says: "Whenever we move: when we come in and go out: in dressing, and in washing; at table and in bed: during conversation, or any other employment, we impress on our foreheads the sign of the Cross. Should you ask for Scriptural authority for this, and such like practices: I answer, there is none. But there is tradition, that authorizes it: custom that confirms it: submission that observes it." (Ch. iii., iv.)

St. Cyril of Jerusalem, about the year 348, instructing catechumens in the rudiments of Christian religion, says: "Let us not be ashamed of the Cross of Christ; and, if any one be so, do thou at least openly mark it on thy forehead: that the devil, beholding the royal standard, may retire trembling. Use that sign eating and drinking, sitting and lying, rising from bed, conversing and walking: in one word, use it on all occasions." (Catech. iv., n. x. See Catech. xiii., n. xviii., xix.)

St. Athanasius, of the Greek Communion, about the year 370, inculcates the Christian practice of blessing meat before meals, in these words: "When thou art set down at table, and beginnest to break thy bread, having signed it with the sign of the Cross—give thanks." (B on Virginity, n. 13)

About the same time, St. Basil writes in his book on the Holy Ghost: "If we attempt to reject those practices, as things of little moment, which rest on no written authority, we shall, by our imprudence, materially injure the Gospel itself; even we shall reduce the very preaching of our faith to a mere name. Such—to mention this in the first place which is the most common—is the practice of making the sign of Cross, by those who put their hope in Christ." (C. xviii., tom. iii.)

St. Chrysostom attests that the sign of the Cross was anciently used by the Greek Church in the administration of the sacraments and the performance of different acts of religion. In his homily on the adoration of the precious Cross, which was delivered about the year 386, he says: "The Cross appears in the performance of all the sacred rites of religion. If baptism is administered, the Cross is there. If the mystical food is to be received, if any other sacred function is to be performed, the Cross of Christ is there. Wherefore let us diligently impress it on our houses, on our walls, on our windows, on our foreheads and on our minds and hearts. The Cross is shown as often as we offer the Holy Sacrifice." (tom. 6. See also Hom. 55, in Mat. ev., tom. 7.)

Eusebius of Caesarea, who died in 339, in his life of Constantine, relates that this first Christian Emperor placed in the most conspicuous parts of the city, images representing our Saviour; and in his palace a magnificent Cross, "the sign of our Lord's Passion;" and to me it seems, "adds the historian, "that the religious prince viewed that sign as the defence and bulwark of his empire." (De Vita Const. lib. iii., 149)

The ancient and public veneration of the Cross, as it was called of crosses representing the Cross of Christ on Good Friday, in the Latin Church, is described in the Sacramentary of Pope Gelasius (about 492), and also in the *Ordo Romanus*, which first appeared not later than the time of St. Gregory, and contained the order of the rites and ceremonies observed in the Church of Rome.

There is no end of similar testimonies, drawn from the Fathers and from the ancient liturgies, and dating from the first ages of the Church, all attesting the universal veneration in which the Cross was held. What was true then is equally true to this day. The Cross, and still more the crucifix, are loved and honored wherever the faithful are to be found. The deeper and livelier the faith the more tender also and the more tenacious is that love for the symbol of Christ's Passion in the heart of the Catholic Christian, and the more effusive does he become in its outward manifestation of his devotion. Nor could it well be otherwise, for in every phase of Catholic life, from the cradle to the grave, its benign influence is felt.

At the holy font, the sign of the Cross is used in the baptism of the child, who, by this second birth, becomes a Christian and an heir to the Kingdom of Heaven. By the Cross with the holy chrism, the confirmed is made a soldier of Jesus Christ. At the first glimmering of reason, he is taught this sign, and with it begins his day and, at nightfall, closes his eyes in sleep. As a pledge of eternal life, and with the sign of the Cross, he receives his Lord and God in Holy Communion. When, as a sinner, he kneels in the holy tribunal, contrite of heart, he is shriven with that sign. With that same sign, the indissoluble tie is blessed

in wedlock. Married and signed with it, do the ministers of the altar receive their august and awful power of calling down the Word upon our altars, and of loosening and binding in His name.

And when the Christian soul, yearning for greater perfection and a closer union with its God, breaks from the ties of kindred, and leaving behind the perishable goods and empty promises of the world, enters religious life, then it is that the Crucifix becomes, at one and the same time, its instructor and its model. There, in the silence of the cloister, for the contemplative, or in the early hours which precede the busy day, for the religious who blends contemplation with the active ministry, there, at the foot of the Crucifix, are those lessons learnt which baffle the sagacity of earthly wisdom, and produce before a wondering world an Aquinas, an Ignatius or a Theresa. What wonder if, in return for the well-delivered errand received from the Crucified, the bronze should appear instinct with life, and the figure of the Christ, breaking away from the fastenings of the cross, should stretch forth its arms and exclaim: *Bene scripsisti de me Thoma*.

Christ assumed the functions of a teacher in Jerusalem, in the wilderness, in the towns and hamlets of Judea, on the banks of the Jordan, and everywhere did He put in practice the lessons He imparted. But consider Him on the Cross: for it was from that blood-stained pulpit that more particularly did He instruct the world. As He hung thereon, He taught it, says St. Augustine, to scorn vanity: He crushed its pride: He condemned its errand received from the Crucified, the bronze should appear instinct with life, and the figure of the Christ, breaking away from the fastenings of the cross, should stretch forth its arms and exclaim: *Bene scripsisti de me Thoma*.

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WELL BEGUN IS HALF DONE Start wash day with good soap, pure soap; that's half the battle won. SURPRISE SOAP is made especially for washing clothes, makes them clean and fresh and sweet, with little rubbing. It's best for this and every use.

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98 CENTENARY.

SPECIAL IMPORTATIONS FROM IRELAND FOR ST. PATRICK'S DAY.

98 CENTENARY HANDKERCHIEFS (REGISTERED.)

A neat memento of '98, chaste and artistic in design, showing portraits of Wolfe Tone, Robert Emmet, Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Henry Joy McCracken, containing motto "Remember '98," together with design of two Croppy Pikes crossed, wreathed with shamrocks, and surmounted by a harp.

Table with 2 columns: No. 1, No. 2. Rows include Singly, postpaid; Half dozen, paid.

98 CENTENARY JEWELLERY (REGISTERED.)

Table with 3 columns: Gents Scarf Pins, Silver, Rolled gold fronted, Solid gold, With green flag, Brooches—solid silver, Rolled gold fronted, Solid gold.

HEART CHARMS made out of stone from Vinegar Hill or Marts Fort (Cave Hill).

Table with 2 columns: Silver, Gold figures and mounts.

Only five hundred handkerchiefs have been ordered from the MAKERS IN COULK and when this supply is exhausted it will be almost impossible to secure more.

The jewellery is only imported to order from the manufacturers in Belfast and if goods are wanted early orders must be sent at once to

CATHOLIC RECORD OFFICE, London, Ont. T. RYAN, Cor. Esther and Carr Streets, Toronto, Ont. T. P. TANSEY, 14 Drummond Street, Montreal. D. & J. SADLER & Co., Toronto. D. & J. SADLER & Co., Montreal.

or to THE ONLY IMPORTERS, DIRECT LINES GENERAL FOREIGN AGENCY, 11 Mullias Street, MONTREAL.

Cash must accompany all orders.

Advertisement for Vapo-resolene, showing a person using the product and text describing its benefits for coughs, croup, colds, asthma, and catarrh.

THE READING OF THE HOLY GOSPELS.

Cardinal Vaughan has written the following preface to a new edition of the New Testament:

If read in due submission to the authority of the Church (to whom alone it belongs to interpret authoritatively the meaning of Holy Scripture), and in a spirit of faith and piety, nothing can be more salutary or profitable than the perusal of the Holy Gospels and other parts of the New Testament. In the words of our Catechism, "We ought frequently to read good books, such as the Holy Gospel, which nourish our faith and piety, and arm us against the false maxims of the world."

In the words of a Doctor of the Church: "Hearken to this, all ye who live in the world and have the care of a household; hearken to this—God commits to you also the reading of the Holy Scriptures. No man teacheth like Holy Writ. Get, at least, the New Testament, the Acts of the Apostles, the Gospels for your constant teachers. If sorrow befall you, hasten to them as to a chest of healing medicine: take comfort out of them in trouble and anxiety, whether it be loss of fortune, or friends, or death itself that afflict you. I shall always advise you, not only to attend to the instruction you hear in church, but to be diligent in reading the Holy Scriptures at home. Give not such frivolous excuses as that 'I have the cares of a family, a trade, and much worldly business to attend to.' If it be so, the greater your need of the instruction and comfort that are to be drawn from Holy Writ."—In such words as these did the great St. John Chrysostom exhort and teach the people from the pulpit of Sancta Sophia.

Another Doctor of the Church speaks thus: "Read each day a fixed number of verses of Holy Scriptures. Never retire to rest without having filled the casket of your heart with this regular provision." This was the direction given by St. Jerome to one of his spiritual daughters.

St. Alphonsus says that "to think over the account given in the Holy Gospels is alone sufficient to inflame a faithful soul with divine love. The contemplations which devout authors have written on the Passion are useful and beautiful; but assuredly a single word of Holy Writ makes a deeper impression on a Christian than a hundred or a thousand contemplations and revelations ascribed to certain holy souls: for whatever the Scriptures attest is certain with the certainty of divine faith."

The early Christians often carried the Gospel on their person. The body of St. Barnabas was found after death with St. Matthew's Gospel, which he had copied with his own hand, laid upon his breast.

We recommend all Catholics to become familiar with the words of the Holy Gospels, and to read them with the faith and reverence which are due to the Word of God.—Catholic Telegraph.

It Don't Pay To buy drinks for the boys—it don't pay to buy drinks for yourself. It will pay to quit, but the trouble has been to do this. The Dixon Vegetable Cure will absolutely remove all desire for liquor in a couple of days, so you can quit without any self denial, and no body need know you are taking the medicine, which is perfectly harmless, pleasant to taste and produces good appetite, refreshing sleep, steady nerves, and does not interfere with business duties. You'll save money and gain in health and self respect from this start.—Full particulars sealed. The Dixon Cure Co., No. 40 Park Avenue, (near Milton St.), Montreal.

If you are ill you need a doctor in whom you have confidence. If you need a remedy you want one that has been tested for years; not an obscure, untried thing that is urged upon you, or on which you save a few cents—that is no consideration as against health. For wasting in children or adults, Scott's Emulsion of Cod-liver Oil with Hypophosphites has been the recognized remedy for twenty-five years.

The Priest with the Brogue.

A MINER'S REMINISCENCE.

Down by the gulch, where the pickaxe's ring— Never struck chords with the stream's smothered singing— For we had damned its bright ardent to death: Damed it with claybanks and damed it with oath— Curses in Mexican, curses in Dutch, Curses in purest American—such Polygot blasphemy didn't leave much Room for the rest of the language— Down by that gulch, where all speech seemed one swear— Naught but profanity ever in vogue, Wand'ring one morning a priest with a brogue.

Also a smile. Now no mortal knows whether God has ordained they should travel together. But if in longish Erin's music you trace, Hot Erin's sunshine peeps out in the face. Anyhow, Father McCabe had 'em both, Sunshine and harmony—natural growth. While the air trembled with half-suppressed oaths, Right down among us he stepped 'all the while Feeling his way, as it were, with his smile, And what staggered the obstinate rogue, Knocking him head over heels with his brogue.

Inside a fortnight the brown throated robins Perched undismayed just in front of our cabins: Sang at our windows for all they were worth— Laid their own all of the earth! Pistols grew rusty, and whisky seemed sour: Nobody hunted the right or left bowler; Deserts put verdure on—one little daisy bloomed in a niche of the rock. At its root, Earthwile undreamt of, lay rich golden—fruit! Yes; we struck gold. Arrah, Luck's "thurr-rum pugnae, Couldn't go back on a priest with the brogue.—Arthur M. Forrester.

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Second Sunday in Lent.

BENEFITS OF A GOOD CONFESSION.

"In thee, O God, I put my trust; let me not be ashamed." (Ps. xxiv. 2.) When our first parents fell from virtue they immediately hid themselves. This sense of shame for sin committed is in every human nature, and therefore a good thing, but like every good thing it may, by excess, become an evil. Let us see how it can become an evil.

There are some who from this very sense of shame go from year to year making bad confessions, go on from year to year hiding some sweet darling sin from the priest. Cowards who are unwilling to bear a momentary flush of the cheek! Sinners who are willing to commit sin but unwilling to bear its shameful effects! There are others—hypocritical penitents who pose before their spiritual directors and smooth over certain sins for fear they might incur the shame of losing the good favor of the priest. Foolish people! They forget that the confession the more tender becomes the heart of the priest and the more effective the spiritual remedies he prescribes. There is no such thing as a loss of reputation before the priest the confessional. The priest is but the representative, the agent of God and God knows all. What shall I say of those who imagine that they might have to suffer the shame of lifting the priest very much shocked the sin they have committed and unable to attend to it? Let us make such mistakes. There is no spiritual difficulty, no form of sin which a priest cannot offer a solution and cure. Every confessor has in special studies to meet the requirements of every soul—from the innocent child to that of the blackest sinner. Here we see what a great safeguard to morality the sacrament of penance is. Why, even the very shame incurred confessing a sin is half the victory over that sin! Sometimes, also, meet persons who refuse to bear shame of the rebuke from their father confessor. They blush, they are confused, they are ashamed. The hardest and most cruel treatment, the dearest shame that man could suffer, would not be enough punishment for commission of one deliberate mortal sin. The priest knows how much grace we deserve; he has sounded under-currents of society; he knows its rocks and shoals, and is therefore capable of guiding the soul to its waters.

And now, what shall we say of peaceful relief and calm repose which follows the shameful confusion of lifting dark sins to a priest? What we say? Those who have experienced this season of rest, know what Although the sorrow for sin still abides in the soul, nevertheless the shame is lost in the sense of freedom from sin.

Finally, shame may incline one to seemingly little things, small circumstances which, if confessed, would add special malice to the sin. It may also incline us to drug our senses so to speak, to stifle doubt to whether a thing is a mortal or not. Oh! let us have some conscience with regard to this matter. We tell all, in spite of the nervous and remorse and feverish brain, the great weight will be lifted from our souls. Let us for once be true with ourselves, without being morose scrupulous. Let us choke the throat of our souls to the scientific expectation of having a flood of electricity poured down into its very depths.

In His sight our souls are as before in the limpid stream that flows down the mountain. Once a time the sacred body of Jesus was stripped of its raiment, hung on Mount Calvary—Jesus Christ, immaculate Victim of shame he would, cruel, and jeering mob!