

*firmed, the sacrifices of the law shall be abolished. After the death of Christ and the abolition of the sacrifices naught shall be seen but abomination and desolation ; we see the destruction of the Holy city and of the sanctuary ; one people (1) and one captain (2) who come to destroy all ; abomination in the temple, the final and irremediable desolation of the people who are ungrateful to their Savior.*

These weeks reduced to weeks of years, according to the custom of the Scripture, make 490 years and bring us precisely to that week, full of mysteries, wherein Jesus Christ immolated, puts an end by his death to the sacrifices of the Law and fulfils its figures. Soon the total destruction of this people of deicides corroborates still more strikingly this striking prophecy and affords a brilliant proof of the divine origin of the Church of Jesus.

The New Testament (Luc. I, 5—38) teaches us that St. Gabriel was entrusted with two still more glorious embassies : the first to St. Zachary to announce to him the birth of the holy Precursor of the Messiah ; the second to the Most Blessed Virgin to induce her to agree to become the Mother of the Son of God.

In the days of Herod, says St. Luke, there lived a holy priest named Zachary and his pious wife Elizabeth.

Notwithstanding their irreproachable life and pressing supplications, their hearth remained barren. One evening, Zachary vested with sacerdotal robes proceeded to the sanctuary. Four levites raised the corners of the curtain that closed its entrance, and he advanced alone to the altar of perfumes to burn incense thereon, while outside, the prayers of the multitude ascended as incense unto God.

Suddenly the old priest raised his head and to the right of the golden altar, he saw an angel of the Lord. He was troubled. The heavenly messenger said to him : « Fear not, Zachary, for thy prayer is heard. Thy wife, Elizabeth, shall bear thee a son and thou shalt call his name John. Thou shalt have joy and

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(1) *The Roman people.*

(2) *Titus.*