



LEAGUE OF THE SACRED HEART.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart.

GENERAL INTENTION FOR JUNE 1898.

Recommended to our Prayers by His Holiness, Leo XIII.

American Messenger of the Sacred Heart.

Continued.

We admit that Baptism has the preeminence of necessity; that Confirmation imprints a character; that Holy Order, concerning, as it does, the government of the whole Church, should take precedence of those sacraments which only concern the sanctification of the individual; yet the Eucharist is pre-eminent over them all because it is Christ Himself. Besides, if order tends to the good of the community, the Eucharist contains this very good in substance; if Confirmation by imprinting a character initiates the Christian to the priesthood of Christ, the Eucharist unites the Christian to Christ Himself; if Baptism is the most necessary of sacraments, it tends itself to the Eucharist and finds in it the perfection of its grace, which is to unite us perfectly to Christ: for the Eucharist puts us here below in possession of the object of our last end.

According to St. Thomas Aquinas, whose teachings we have been giving so far, "The Eucharist seems to be the end to which the other sacraments tend. Baptism was instituted to prepare man for its reception, and opens to him the door of the house where the Father of the Christian family nourishes His children with His own substance. Confirmation perfects the Christian for the same purpose; it arms him with the strength to combat the enemies of his faith, who would deter him from believing the word of God; from the enemies of his purity, who would make him fall into sin, in order to prevent him, from want of faith or want of purity, receiving Holy Communion.

Penance and Extreme Unction dispose man to receive worthily the Body of Christ, under different aspects. Penance is the requisite preparation for eating our daily supersubstantial bread. So, whenever our robe has been soiled, we must wash it in the fountain of the Saviour by confession, that we may take our place worthily at the heavenly banquet. Extreme Unction reserves its power to purify the soul from the remains of sin, at the moment when it receives the Holy Eucharist as viaticum. It is the preparation for the last Holy Communion, which should be the purest, the best made, because the last before the eternal communion.

Holy Order, it is plain, was instituted to give the power to consecrate the Eucharist. It has no other end but that of constituting ministers for this august mystery: its dignity, its greatness it draws from this noble end.

Even matrimony tends to the Eucharist. For it represents the union of Christ with His Church, and this union has the Eucharist for its seal. The Eucharist is the pledge, the sign, the marvellous means of the union contracted by Christ with His Church. Hence the wish of the Church that the sacrament of Matrimony should be followed by the nuptial Mass, at which the newly wedded pair should communicate. Moreover, the grace of the sacrament

will enable them so to live that they may be ever disposed to receive the sacrament of purity and of mutual charity—the Holy Communion.

Thus the Eucharist is to the seven sacraments what the heart is to the members, and the sun is to the chief planets. Being the sacrament of union with Christ, it is prepared for by all the others. They beget, purify, fortify, consecrate the Christian soul, but to lead it to the sacrament of divine union. All the others unite the soul to the grace of Christ, the Eucharist unites to Christ Himself: it is, as St. Thomas says, "the sacrament of consummation in Jesus Christ."

We must remark, too, how nearly all the other sacraments find their completion in the Eucharist. For instance, ordinations are held during the holy mysteries, adults when baptized usually at once receive holy Communion. Matrimony, as we have noted, is followed by the nuptial Mass at which the bride and groom receive. With us confirmation is commonly given on first Communion day. Penance prepares the soul for Communion. The connection between Extreme Unction and the Holy Eucharist is close, and, if death occur, the Requiem Mass shortly follows.

Under how many heads, then, does the Blessed Sacrament deserve our devotion! As Father Faber says: "The Blessed Sacrament is God. Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is simply divine worship. Turn it which way we will, throw the light of love and knowledge now on one side, now on another, still the result is the same, the one inexhaustible sweet fact, the Real Presence. In the hands of the priest, behind the crystal of the monstrance, on the tongue of the communicant, now, and for a thousand times, and almost at our will and pleasure, there are the hands and feet, the eyes and mouth, the swift blood and living heart of Him whom Thomas touched and Magdalen was fain to touch, the soul that delighted Limbus with its amazing beauty and set the prisoners free, nay the Eternal, Incomprehensible, Almighty Word who is everywhere and yet fixed there, the flashing fires of whose dear glory we could not bear to see, and so, for love of us, He stills them and He sheathes them in the quiet modesty of the Blessed Sacrament."

The very hiddenness of our Lord in the Tabernacle, His very speechlessness, should inflame our love and enkindle our zeal to bring men within the reach of His voiceless eloquence, within the range of His attractive power. And since He has deigned to make known peculiar ways in which He desires to be honored under the Eucharistic veils, it should be our part to endeavor to realize His desires. We should visit him more frequently in the prison-house of love on the altar. We should assist oftener and more devoutly at the holy sacrifice of the Mass. We should receive Him more fervently in the spirit of reparation in holy Communion. We should not rest content at doing all this ourselves, but should work to draw others to the knowledge and love of the Blessed Sacrament. So that, loving Him, adoring Him and receiving Him, now hidden beneath the veil, we may one day see Him face to face in the beatific vision.

ON PETER OR ON PETER'S FAITH?

N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

The opponents of Papal supremacy in the Church of Christ have always found a stumbling block in the following verses from Chapter xvi. St. Matthew:

15. Jesus said: Whom do you say that I am?

16. Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

17. And Jesus answering said: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona because flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father who is in heaven.

18. And I say to thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

To avoid the force of verse 18 in proof of the primacy of St. Peter and his successors, some Protestant writers have recourse to various interpretations. Some contend that the "rock", on which Our Lord promised to build His Church was not Peter's person, but Peter's faith. Others contend that by "rock" Our Lord indicated Himself, and not Peter.

To those who hold that the rock meant Peter's faith, Father Louis Jouin, in his "Evidences of Religion," replies thus: "If they mean faith in the abstract, we deny their assertion, because the text in question does not admit this interpretation. Our Savior speaks to Peter personally; him He calls a rock, not his faith; hence He is to build His Church on Peter, not on his faith. Besides, no writer of the earliest ages of Christianity, giving the literal meaning of the word 'rock' used in this text, ever dreamt of such an interpretation; a few, besides the literal meaning, said that, in an allegorical sense only, the word 'rock' means faith."

He goes on to say in effect that if they mean Peter's faith in the concrete, that is, as existing in Peter, then Peter's faith is Peter believing, and to build the Church on Peter believing is certainly to build it on Peter, and we can have no quarrel with such an interpretation.

There is another consideration which shows that the "rock" was not Peter's faith in the abstract. In St. John's Gospel, I, lx. to lxiii., we read that Andrew brought his brother Simon to our Lord, "and Jesus looking upon him said: 'Thou art Simon the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter.'"

Here our Lord foretold an event which was to come to pass. In the above verse 18 Christ Himself fulfilled this prophecy when He said: "I say to thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church." Now, it is beyond question that in the text from St. John Our Lord declared that Peter, not Peter's faith, was to be called a rock. It is equally clear from the 18th verse of St. Matthew that Christ did call Peter, not his faith, a rock, as He had foretold; and rock, Peter, Cephas, it is up to the present. He said, "Simon, thou art Peter;" not "Simon, thy faith is Peter."

There is more in this change of name than appears at first sight. Why did Our Lord prophecy to Simon Bar-Jona on first meeting him that his name was to be changed, and why did He change it when about to establish His Church and give to this same Simon

Bar-Jona "The keys of the kingdom of heaven," and the power of binding and loosing? (See Matthew xviii.-xix.) This is not the first instance of change of name in the Scriptures. And when such change has been made it indicated the conferring of some prerogative or privilege. God said to Abram (Genesis xvii., 5): "Neither shalt thy name be called Abram; but thou shalt be called Abraham, because I have made thee a father of many nations." Again, same chapter, "God said to Abraham: Sarai thy wife thou shalt not call Sarai, but Sara. And I will bless her, and of her I will give thee a son, whom I will bless, and he shall become nations, and kings, of people shall spring from him." In Genesis, chapter xxxii., Jacob's name was changed: "Thy name shall not be called Jacob, but Israel, for if thou hast been strong against God, how much more shalt thou prevail against men."

These changes of name marked a new departure. They were epoch making, and indicated a divine purpose. In view of them we can better understand the import of Our Lord's words found in the gospels by which the name of Simon Bar-Jona was changed to Cephas (a rock). "And Jesus looking upon him said: Thou art Simon, son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter." (John i., 42.)

It is to be noted that for the changes of name in the Old Testament a reason was invariably given. It is the same in the case of Simon. He was asked by Our Lord, "Whom do you say that I am?" He answered, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God." This declaration of faith gave occasion for the change of name, for in answer Our Lord said: "Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father, who is in heaven. And I say to thee that thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church. . . . And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." The change from Simon to Peter was epoch making.

It is thus, says the eloquent Lacordaire, that Our Lord, by a sublime play upon words, founded His Church upon Peter.

The contention that the rock meant Christ Himself is equally untenable. Our Lord did not say, Simon, I am Peter (a rock), and on this rock I will build My Church; he said, Simon, thou art Peter (a rock), and on this rock I will build, etc. Our Lord had evidently some object in changing Simon's name to Cephas, Peter, rock, and if the rock in the text does not signify the person of Peter, there appears motive for the change of name. On any other hypothesis than that the rock meant Peter the change of name is utterly inexplicable and purposeless.

But did not St. Augustine say (sermon 270): "Non supra Petrum sed supra Petram quam confessus est edificatur ecclesiam;" and (sermon 70), "Tu es Petrus quia ego Petra, negue enim a Petro Petra, sed a Petra Petrus?"

St. Augustine said this through a misapprehension that Petrum and Petram, Petro and Petra, had different significations, whereas they are identical in meaning. Concerning this identity of meaning, St. Jerome, a contemporary of St. Augustin, and a

greater Greek and Syriac scholar, said, in his comment on the text, "Thou art Peter and upon this rock." Non quod aliud significet Petrus, aliud Cephas, sed quod nos Latine et Græce Petram vocemus, hanc Hebraei et Syri, propter linguæ suæ inter se viciniam, Cephan nuncupent."

St. Augustine himself tells us in his retractations (1-21) that he had said of the Apostle Peter that the Church was built upon him as upon a rock; and that he had also often expounded the text, "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build My Church," as to be understood of Christ, whom Peter confessed. After stating that he had taught both these interpretations, he add, "Let the reader choose whichever of these two opinions may be the more probable"—harum autem duarum sententiarum quæ sit probabilior, eligat lector.

In his comment on the lxx. Psalm St. Augustine writes: "Peter, the chief of the Apostles, doorkeeper of heaven; Peter who for his confession was named the rock, on whom the Church was to be built."

Whatever doubt he may have had as to the interpretation of the rock, St. Augustine was always clear and emphatic as to the primacy of St. Peter. For instance, "Who can be ignorant that the most blessed Peter is the first of the apostles?" (Tome iii., tract 56, in John.) Again, "Of this Church, Peter the Apostle, on account of the primacy of his apostleship, bore a character which represented the whole Church." (Tome iii., tract 124, in John.) Again, "In that one apostle, Peter that is, in order of the apostles the first and the principal." (Tome v., Col. 597.)

The best work in English treating of this subject is "The Primacy," by Archbishop Kenrick.

IT IS NOW DEWEY STREET.

Admiral Dewey has been honored by the people of New Orleans. The street heretofore known as Spain street, has been rechristened Dewey street and all the Spain signs are being replaced by those bearing the name of the famous American.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN SPAIN.

From The Jewish Messenger.

The statement is made in several of our Jewish papers that Spain is proscriptive in its policy toward the Jews. This is entirely untrue. Civil and religious liberty is enjoyed by Jew and Protestant in the realms of the Catholic Queen.

PADDY MALLON.

(The man who fired the first shot in the war of the United States against Spain.)

Through the echoing halls of fame,

Paddy Mallon,

Swells the murmur of your name,

Paddy Mallon.

You're the man who faced the foe,

Aimed the cannon thus and so,

Pulled the lanyard, let her go!

Paddy Mallon.

'Twas the first gun of the war,

Paddy Mallon,

That you fired, you son of Thor,

Paddy Mallon.

Oh, we touch to you our hat,

For you knew what you were at,

And you really struck it Pat,

Paddy Mallon.

We hope you'll live to aim,

Paddy Mallon,

At both big and little game,

Paddy Mallon:

And may every cannon screech

When it's honored in the breach

By bold Paddy—you're a peach,

Paddy Mallon.

—Cleveland Plain Dealer.