



Mary Immaculate

THE SENTINEL
OF THE
BLESSED SACRAMENT

Vol. XIX. No. 12 - Montreal. - December 1916.

IMMACULATE

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I watched the glory of the morn
 'Upon a mountain height,
Its thousand, gleaming, streaming rays
 Of rich effulgent light;
When in my heart I heard this strain
Like some far-distant sweet refrain:
 "O Mother loved, thou art more bright
 Than all the glow on mountain height,
More fair by far thou art to me
Than all the beautiful I see,
 O Spotless One! Immaculate!

I watched the glory of the night
 Upon a crystal sea;
The silver moon's soft, shimmering light,
 The starry galaxy.
Still in my heart I heard the strain,
Like some far-distant sweet refrain.
 O Mother loved, thou art more bright
 Than all the glory of the night,
More fair by far thou art to me
Than all the beautiful I see
 O Spotless One! Immaculate!

S. R.

OUR LORD'S BIRTH

Yet reflect how much more becoming God and His Son was this manner of birth from any other that could have been imagined. What addition could the most sumptuous attendance and most gorgeous circumstances of Oriental pomp have been to His own proper splendor and glory? Suppose Him laid in a bed of state, as rich as gold and jewels and imperial purple could have made it. What would He have gained? He would have been more like an earthly monarch's son, destined to grow up a haughty, imperious tyrant. Men would have approached Him, though an infant, with a certain awe; they would have been more engaged in contemplating the dazzling objects that surround Him, than in gazing upon His own charms, and meditating upon His own glories. But, as we now see Him, it is Himself that we love and reverence. In the other case the tenderer feelings would have had but little room to play; what compassion, what interest, could we have taken in Him? What would we have called our own? He would have seemed to be able to give rather than to receive; we should have retired abashed from His presence, feeling that we could afford no service to one so magnificently attended. But as it is, He is indeed raised above all those circumstances which shed some lustre round the birth of the great, and we find Him upon His bed of straw, more glorious and majestic than an infant sovereign upon a gilded cradle. He is surrounded by His own glory, a glory which we feel is superior to the need of all outward aids. But then, in addition, He seems to us all our own. We may go in, together with the shepherds, and feel no timid reserve. We find none but Mary and Joseph there, both of whom we so well know and love. We salute them familiarly. The one, grave yet mild, seems to welcome us; the other, all gentleness, and smiling with the fondness of a young mother's heart kindly encourages us to approach. She takes her veil from over the little straw bed, and shows us the face of her dear little babe, all smiling, and bright as heaven. She allows us to look upon Him with all affection, and admire His beautiful features, beautiful indeed beyond the children of men.

THE GREAT SACRAMENT

The Holy Eucharist is the third Sacrament in the order of reception, but it is the first in order of dignity. In the natural order nourishment is required to develop strength, and in the spiritual order the Holy Eucharist is the nourishment of the soul.

The Eucharist may be considered as a Sacrament and as a sacrifice. It is a sacrifice inasmuch as it mystically renews the death of the Saviour; it is a Sacrament because we find in it all that is necessary to constitute a Sacrament, namely, the sensible sign, the institution by Christ, and the giving of grace.

The word "Eucharist" is derived from two Greek words meaning "the good grace" or "thanksgiving." The propriety of these words is evident, for the Eucharist contains Christ our Lord, the true grace and the source of all heavenly gifts. The second translation is also appropriate, for when we offer this most spotless Victim we render to God a homage of infinite value in *thanks giving* for all His benefits. The Holy Eucharist is spoken of by three other names. It is called the *Most Holy Eucharist* because it is the most holy of all the Sacraments, inasmuch as it gives us the author of grace, while the others only bestow the gifts of grace; the *Adorable Sacrament*, because Jesus Christ really present is therein to be adored as the Son of God made man; the *Sacrament of the Altar*, because the Eucharist is consecrated on the altar at Mass, and after Mass is preserved on the altar in the tabernacle. The Holy Eucharist is likewise called *Sacrifice*, *Holy Communion* or *Viaticum*. It is a sacrifice by which we give to God the supreme honor and adoration that is due to Him. Holy Communion is the name given to the act of receiving the Eucharist. Viaticum is a combination of Latin words literally meaning "on the way with Thee," and is the name given to the Holy Eucharist when it is administered to the dying.

Of all the dogmas of the Catholic Church, there is none which rests on stronger scriptural authority than that of the Holy Eucharist. There are many doctrines in Scripture on which the Evangelists seem to differ

but the sacred writers all agree in regard to the blessed Eucharist.

Even the great St. Paul adds to the testimony of the four Evangelists. How any thinking man who professes to be a Christian can refuse to believe in the Holy Eucharist, in the face of the plain testimony of the five greatest writers of all times, is incomprehensible.

A short time after the multiplication of the loaves and fishes Christ was preaching to the multitude in a synagogue at Capharnaum. Then it was that Christ promised the Holy Eucharist to mankind. "What sign therefore dost thou show, that we may see, and may believe thee?" said some of the multitude to Jesus. And Jesus said to them: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall not hunger: and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst." "The Jews therefore murmured at Him because He had said: I am the living bread which came down from Heaven."

Then follows the clearest, plainest and greatest explanation that Christ ever gave to any of His followers on any subject: "I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven: that if any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give, is My flesh, for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying: How can this *man* give us His flesh to eat? Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed: and My blood, is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this bread shall live forever."

The Priesthood

The priesthood is the most sublime dignity on earth.

It is far above that of kings. Its empire is over souls, its arms are spiritual, its goods are divine, its glory is that of Jesus Christ Himself.

Its power is divine. The priesthood engenders souls to grace and for eternal life. It has the keys of Heaven and of Hell. It possesses all power over Jesus Christ Himself, whom it daily brings down from Heaven upon the altar.

It has, in the name of Jesus Christ, every gracious power. It can pardon all sins, and Almighty God has promised always to ratify its sentence in Heaven.

O formidable power, divine power, which commands even God Himself!

The angel is the servant of the priest. The demon trembles before him. Earth looks upon him as its saviour, and Heaven as the prince that acquires for it the elect.

Jesus Christ has made him His second self. He is a God by participation. He is Jesus Christ in action.

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The priesthood is the holiest of states. The life of the priesthood ought to be in accord with its dignity.

How *pure* ought to be the priest's life! "Purer," says St. Chrysostom, "than the rays of the sun"; nay, it ought to be the sun itself: *Vos estis lux mundi*.

It ought to be more incorruptible than the salt, which preserves other substances from corruption: *Vos estis sal terrae*.

It ought to be more chaste than virginal chastity. The priest ought to be an angel in a mortal body, and, as it were, already dead to any sensual emotion.

The *humility* of the priest ought to be as great as his dignity, for all that elevates him is from God, all that lowers him is from himself. He is of himself only misery, sin and nothingness.

The *charity* of the priest ought to be great as God Himself, who has appointed him His minister of charity and mercy on earth.

His *gentleness* ought to be that of his good Master, whom the people called *Sweetness*, whom the children loved as goodness itself.

The priest ought to be the living image of Jesus Christ, and he should say to all, as did the great Apostle Paul: *Imitatores mei estote, sicut et ego Christi.*

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The ministry of the priest is the most glorious to God.

The priest perfects divine creation by elevating man to God, by restoring him to His image and likeness, which sin had sullied and deformed: *Creati in Christo Jesu.* By His minister we are created anew in Jesus Christ.

He raises up the ruins of this magnificent edifice and makes of it the masterpiece of grace, the object of God's complacency. Man baptized becomes again a child of God. Man sanctified becomes an honorable member of Jesus Christ, the spiritual *King* of the world.

The priest continues the Saviour's mission on earth.

At the altar, he continues and perfects the Sacrifice of Calvary, and applies to souls its divine fruits of salvation.

In the Confessional, he purifies souls in the Blood of Jesus Christ, and engenders them to the holiness of His love.

In the pulpit, he proclaims His truth, His Gospel of love. He reflects upon souls the rays of that Divine Sun, which enlightens the man of good will, and renders him fruitful in good works.

At the foot of the tabernacle the priest adores his God, hidden through love, as the angels adore Him in glory. There he prays for his people. He is the powerful mediator between God and the poor sinner.

In the world the priest is the friend of the poor, and, like his Divine Master, the consoler of the afflicted, the sick. He is the father of all. He is the man of God: *Tu autem, O homo Dei!*

How charming, how lovely is the mission of the priest! It consists in establishing on earth the reign of truth, of holiness, of the love of God. It is to do good to man.

But how holy the priest ought to be worthily to serve the God of sanctity, and not, like the angels, to lose himself through pride in his own dignity!

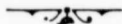
How can the priest acquire that supereminent sanctity?—By Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ loves His priest. He is prodigal toward him of all His graces, all His favors.

The eagle flies with more ease and power than does the tiny bird. Its strength lies in its wings. The strength of the priest is in the royal love of His Master, Jesus Christ.

VEN. EYMARD.

In holy communion we reverse, in a manner, that token of love and friendship which passed between Jesus and St. John at the Last supper; for there the disciple leaned upon His Master's bosom, but here the Lord condescends to repose in the breast of His unworthy servant. Oh! how pure and brightly clean should we keep the couch on which He thus deigns to rest.



CHRISTMAS

Mary, a Virgin, was chosen by God above all others to become the Mother of His beloved Son. Joseph was made their protector and guardian. In obedience to an edict for enrolment which was issued by Cæsar Augustus, Joseph with his espoused wife left his humble dwelling in Nazareth and proceeded over eighty miles of rough country to the city of David, Bethlehem. On their arrival they could not obtain lodging with relatives, friends or at the inn, so they took refuge in a cave of limestone without the city gates. Thus Our Lord was born; then His Virgin Mother wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger. What a birth-place! What a crib for the Son of God! What a throne for the King of kings!

The birth of Christ is pictured to us as taking place in the month of December. On this cold winter night the most beautiful present that the human race has ever received was given to it. Mary and Joseph alone were His court until the shepherds came to adore Him. He was kept warm by the breath of the animals that were sheltered in the cave. Holy Scripture tells us that on that night the angelic choirs sang out praise to God and also a choir of angels appeared to a body of shepherds on the hillside and told them of the birth of the Messiah. Thus was born Christ, the Son of David, the Saviour long foretold by the Hebrew prophets, the long awaited Redeemer of the Jewish race. Thus was accomplished the greatest, the most incomprehensible and the most wonderful of all mysteries wrought by the Almighty.

Twenty centuries ago the same constellations that are now blazing in the heavens looked down and trembled, as the angels clove their way among them and sang together the praises of the Most High. It is a strange, a most stupendous thought—that these stars looked down then as now on Bethlehem; then they saw, they wondered and they were still. Abyss called out to abyss, the

heavens told the glory of God, the firmament revealed His wonders.

And now as we pass into our churches that first wonderful Christmas is brought vividly to our minds by the Crib and the evident joy of Christ's Spouse, the Church. The jubilant chorus of the "*Gloria in Excelsis*," the ever sweet, ever tender words of the "*Adeste Fideles*" fall upon our ears.

Thrilled with emotion we bow down in lowly adoration before the King of kings, for we realize the Omnipotent One who guides and rules the universe, who was born two thousand years ago at Bethlehem, is here hiding under the most helpless of forms, and He will be with us as long as eternal sacrifice shall be offered. Our Emmanuel, God with us forever, is the same to whom the angelic hosts chanted praise in far-away Galilee.

Jesus in the Tabernacle

Our Divine Master.

Consider the delight with which Mary and Martha learn that Jesus their beloved and divine Master, was approaching to honor and to console them by His sacred presence. When thou dost kneel in the presence of Jesus, Who is in the Tabernacle, and especially when He comes to visit thee in Holy Communion, take care that every power of thy soul, together with all thy interior and exterior senses, unite to render Him the most profound and respectful homage. Jesus arrives at the dwelling of Mary and Martha, and the divine sweetness which beams forth in the heavenly countenance of this most beautiful "above the sons of men" was already to them a source of purest joy and a sure pledge of the ineffable delights they should taste in His sacred presence. With what reverence do they behold Him? With what respect do they salute Him? With what gratitude do they conduct Him into their

house! But above all with what tenderness and dignity does Jesus receive their lively demonstrations of attachment. They place themselves at each side of their God, like two seraphim, one offering her love, the other her eagerness to serve and minister unto Him. They lodge Him, not only in their richest apartment, but also in the center of their hearts, where they lose not sight of His adorable presence, nor a single word of His heavenly instructions.

When you kneel before the Tabernacle and especially when Jesus comes to visit you in Holy Communion, let your soul be penetrated with joy, your faith animated, your hope enlivened, your charity inflamed. Receive your Redeemer with Martha's zeal and Mary's recollection. The two sisters, though occupied in different ways, had but one subject in view, namely the service of Jesus. Martha busied herself about 'much serving,' and prepared the corporal nourishment for her divine Lord; but Mary sat at His feet and listened to His words; she remained at those sacred feet, where she had once received the pardon of her sins, and is now prostrated with as much tenderness and joy, as she then was with contrition and anguish. With what delight does she now enjoy the Real Presence of this amiable Saviour! How attentively does she listen to and how carefully does she treasure up His sacred words. Martha complains to our divine Lord, that her sister leaves her alone to labor in the arrangement of temporal affairs. But her ideas are rectified by these admirable words of Jesus: "Martha, Martha, you are careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary." There is but one thing necessary—one food, one support, and that is, the faithful, fervent accomplishment, of the blessed will of Him who has sent us into the world for this sole purpose. The science of the saints is to know and do the will of God.



A Legend of the Holly

When the Shepherds came to the holy Cave,
 (Their lambs, like snowdrifts, bringing)
 While, under the stars, the Angels brave
 Their song of praise were singing,

They found with awe at the Stable-door,
 Where the Christmas-snows lay whitest,—
 With awe and fear, at the Stable-door,
 Where the Christmas-stars shone brightest,—

A shrub, 'round which sweet fancy weaves
 Her spell; at Yuletide, showing
 Its jagged, emerald, glossy leaves,
 With blood-red berries glowing.

Amazed, the Shepherds softly said:
 "Who, 'mid the snows, hath set it?"—
 An Angel drifting overhead
 Replied: "Ah! ne'er forget it!

"The symbol, 'tis, of days to be,
 Foreseen by prophet-dreamer,—
 The future's spinous misery
 Awaiting earth's Redeemer!

"Behold, in each sharp-pointed leaf,
 The knife of Circumcision,—
 The thorns, the nails, which Love and Grief
 Salute with tear-dimm'd vision.

"And in each scarlet berry, view
 The Blood-drops, pure and holy,
 Of Him Who here is born for you,
 A Saviour, meek and lowly!"

—The Shepherds heard. Their wisdom poor
 This world may scorn as folly,—
 But, kneeling at the Stable-door,
 They hailed the Christmas Holly!

CHRISTMAS PLAY

A Christmas practice now extinct, but in olden times very popular, and whose history is most interesting is the Christmas spectacle or religious play. The most famous of these representations were celebrated at Rheims and Rouen. One of the features of this celebration at Rheims, which was very popular, was Baalam and his ass. From this practice was invented the spurious feast of the ass. This practice began about the eleventh century. The original ceremony itself was a highly dramatic piece. The preacher impersonated the Hebrew prophets, whose utterances he worded into an argument establishing the divinity of Christ. Having confuted the Jews by their own teaching, the orator addressed himself to the Gentiles and adduced the testimony of Virgil, Nabuchodonosor and the Sibyl in favor of his thesis. At Rouen twenty-eight prophets took part. These twenty-eight assumed the roll of the chief prophet from the time of Moses. They came in procession into the choir and each one in succession starting with Moses testified to the birth of the Messiah. When the Sibyl had recited her lines on judgment, all sang in unison a hymn to the long sought Saviour. In this beautiful drama the part that pleased the congregation was the role of Baalam and the ass. Baalam's part soon expanded and became an independant drama, celebrated with great splendor and in various manners according to the country. To these plays are due many Christmas songs, carols, and customs. On the other hand some pagan customs have entered into the celebration of Christmas. For example a Roman feast celebrated in January, still survives in the giving of Christmas boxes, cards etc.



SUBJECT OF ADORATION

God upon earth

ADORATION

Recognize and adore, with all the power of your faith, Our Lord Jesus Christ, God and man, really present in the Blessed Sacrament. And after having saluted Him with profound reverence, as the Magi did at Bethlehem, prepare yourself to comprehend this capital truth, namely, that the Eucharist was instituted to continue and extend the great blessing of the coming of God upon earth.

You profess to believe in the mystery of the Incarnation, in which the Word, the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, the only Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, and began to dwell among us, similar to one of us.

In virtue of this fact, God Himself, God in person, corporally inhabited on earth. He ceased to be invisible and inaccessible; He was seen in Jesus, He was approached and spoken to, and He was touched in Jesus; for Jesus, truly man, was also truly God. Jesus was God upon earth, inhabiting it, treading on it with His feet, watering it with His sweat before watering it with His blood.

This fact of the coming of God upon earth had been awaited, desired, demanded by the anguish and sufferings of the creature and of the whole world during more than forty centuries; it was the work of works, the gift of gifts, the masterpiece of omnipotence and the greatest blessing which had ever emanated from the goodness of God. The Incarnation of the Word is the end and the reason of everything in the works of God.

The Eucharist continues to give to the world this great blessing, this incomparable masterpiece. Through the Sacrament God is present in person, in body and soul, in all parts of the Globe; God is amongst us God has dwellings; God can be approached, supplicated. He sees us, He hears us, He loves us with His human heart, in all things like to ours; and, His presence is no longer confined to one point as it was formerly in Judea, but it is to be found in all parts of the earth at one and the same time: it is not there for a few years only, but always, until the end of the world.

Adore Then with faith, the Son of God made man, the Man-God the Incarnate Word, present and living in the Holy Eucharist.

THANKSGIVING

It is impossible to read in the Gospel of the numberless blessings which the Saviour bestowed all around Him, without envying the happiness of those who were able to approach Him, to see Him, and to receive from Him a word of peace or a miraculous cure. His Countrymen exclaimed with admiration: "No one ever spoke like this man." And His life upon earth is summed up in these words: "He went about doing good."

Now the same presence ought to produce the same results. If Jesus continues and perpetuates Himself upon earth, He will do so with the same power, the same goodness and for the same merciful and beneficent object as ever. Therefore it is true to say that in the same way in which all good things were restored to the guilty world by the Incarnation, they are preserved and applied to it at all times and in all places by the Eucharist: seeing that the Sacrament is the same Christ, the omnipotent Son of the Father, the wholly merciful Son of the Virgin Mother. Truth, virtues, order, peace, harmony in the world and in souls, the continuation of the relations between the earth, in spite of its crimes, and a justly irritated God—all is preserved for us, continued and given ceaselessly, by means of the fact, the power, and the admirable efficacy of the presence of Jesus perpetuated here below in the Eucharist. If it were to disappear for one moment, there would be a chaos in the world of souls worse than that which would be caused by the disappearance of the sun or the falling into ruin of the universe.

Thank Jesus, therefore, for the love which makes Him remain here below for you, and enables you to enjoy all the advantages of His presence as much as did those who lived with Him during the days of His mortal life, and even more still; for if they saw Him and heard Him, you feed on Him in reality, and you possess Him so perfectly that He is yours fully and entirely.

REPARATION

Before the Incarnation, God was seen only in His creatures, which are but imperfect images of Himself. But in Jesus He was seen in His reality, in person. Whilst continuing to be everywhere, He was nevertheless circumscribed in Jesus; He had a soul, a body, blood, a heart, and human limbs—He spoke and acted by the mouth and by the hands of Jesus. He was one of us, like to us, born in

poverty, of a human mother. He labored, was weary, He was hungry and thirsty, as we are: He performed miracles, placing at our service, in His compassion for our miseries, His marvellous omnipotence, which rules over sickness, afflictions and death, and makes them retreat. He announced the truth for which human reason longs, the eternal truth, without any mixture of error, with regard to God, His majesty, His goodness, His mercy, and with regard to our sublime destinies.

The great crime of the Jews, was to repel Him, to refuse to acknowledge Him, and to persecute Him down to His death on Calvary. Alas! the great crime of nations at the present hour is, to refuse to the God of the Eucharist the means of establishing His beneficent empire and ruling it for the good of souls. Disowned and persecuted, men desire to make Him disappear, even from His material temples, after having snatched from Him the soul of children and of Christians of all conditions. Oh! make reparation for this great crime, by becoming more and more faithful to the Eucharist and by bringing souls to it as fast as it is possible for you to do so.

PRAYER

Ask for the grace of a lively, hearty faith in this great fact of the Eucharist perpetuating for you upon earth the presence of the Incarnate Word. Ask to believe so easily and in so inspiring a manner that the Eucharist is Jesus in person, that it may draw you towards Him, and that His presence may impress you and excite in you the same feelings you would have if you were to see the Saviour in His crib, upon Thabor, or on the cross.

Ask this faith and these feelings not only for you but for the nations at large. All nations belong to the Lord, they are the inheritance of Christ, and, because they have disregarded His presence amongst them, and have taken no account of His supreme authority, He feels Himself bound to upbraid them and to rule them with His "iron rod." Let us then acknowledge that we are not our own masters, but that Christ alone is the Master and Ruler of nations as well as of individuals. Let us with most heartfelt pleadings and most earnest prayers, call for the extension and the lasting establishment of His Eucharistic Kingdom on earth, over nations and peoples, the most assured pledge of durable peace.

The Sanctuary Lamp

In honour of Jesus Christ a lamp burns perpetually before the altar. The Christian souls longs to remain in constant adoration at our Lord's feet there to be consumed by gratitude and love. In heaven alone, will this happiness be given to us, but here below, as an expression of our devout desires, we place a lamp in the sanctuary to take our place. In this little light St. Augustine shows us an image of the three Christian virtues. Its clearness is faith, which enlightens our mind; its warmth is love, which fills our heart; its flame, which, trembling and agitated, mounts upward till it finds rest in its centre, is hope, with its aspirations toward heaven and its troubles outside of God.

The Lamp of the sanctuary represents Jesus Christ risen and glorious, source of all light and of all charity in the Church. Nothing is commoner in Holy Writ than the comparison of oil to mercy and in the sanctuary lamp, He Who is infinite mercy presents Himself to us under the same emblem. The Church herself is also symbolised by the oil which is being perpetually consumed before the Eucharistic God. That oil is extracted from olives, and in the Bible the olive tree is a figure of the Church.

The evergreen of the tree may indeed well suggest the perennial vigor of the Church militant, and the shade it provides for the traveler corresponds to the Church's care for her children. In very truth the Church, the Spouse of Christ, really present in the tabernacle before which the sanctuary lamp is ever glowing, is, "as a fair olive tree in the plains," bringing to us her children the precious oil of mercy.

Little flame of fire bright!
How I envy you,
Standing there a sentinel
The night watch through!

THE GROTTTO

The history of the grotto of the Nativity is the most interesting of those histories connected with Christmas and especially so because it inspired the Christmas Crib. The account of the birth of Our Lord tells us that the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph left the town and came to the cave or stable on the eastern hill, which served as a refuge to the shepherds and their flocks in rainy weather. Very ancient tradition avers that an ass and an ox were found in the stable at the birth of Christ. This tradition indorses the saying of Isaias: "The ox knoweth his own and the ass His Master's crib."

St. Helena converted this grotto of the Nativity into a chapel and adorned it with the most costly marble and other ornaments. The first basilica of truly regal style is due to the devotion of her son Constantine. Both grotto and basilica have undergone numerous restorations and modifications made necessary in the course of centuries by the ravages of wars and invasions. In 1873 this grotto was plundered by the Greeks. The few relics left are at Rome.

Yearly from the eve of Christmas until the day of the Epiphany a crib representing the birth-place of Christ is shown in all the Catholic churches in order to remind us of the Incarnation. The old Franciscan church of Ara Cœli possesses perhaps, one of the largest and most beautiful cribs in the world. In this crib the famous Santo Bambino di Ara Cœli is exposed. It is a figure carved out of wood representing the newborn Saviour. It is said to have come from the Holy Land and in course of time has been bedecked with numerous jewels of great value.

The disciples of Jesus were afraid when a great tempest arose in the sea because their Master was asleep. Within the tabernacle He seems to sleep, but His heart watcheth. In every tempest of trial or temptation, let us seek Him there, and call Him to our aid.

THE LORD'S DAY

Man is a witness of two creations, that of the world and that of its redemption. The first was from the very beginning commemorated and honored by making Saturday a day of divine worship; whereas, the second has been for the last nineteen hundred years, and will be till the end of time, commemorated and honored by making Sunday the day of divine worship.

In the first chapter of the sacred book of Genesis, we read: "After all things had been created, on the sixth day God made the first man and a helper like himself" (Gen. XXVII); and in the second chapter of the same book, we are informed that "On the seventh day" from the creation of the heavens and the earth, God rested in order to sanctify it (Gen. i, 3). From this fact it is plain that the moment the first man became conscious of his own existence, he also became aware that he had it from God; and on realizing this first and fundamental truth, he could not fail to see that with life he possessed the gifts of intelligence, free-will, and rational affection, or love. His heart must have been filled with gratitude to God, and spontaneously drawn to believe in Him, hope in Him, and love Him. These sentiments must have been intensified when he saw before him a helper like himself, when he began to converse with her on the almighty power, wisdom, providence, and goodness of their Creator, and with her to vie in loving and serving Him.

And when gazing around and upward, they saw the innumerable wonders that He had created for their well-being, they must have adored and thanked Him.

This just tribute began to be paid by man on the very day that God sanctified by resting from the work of creation. There is, therefore, every reason to believe that, from the very beginning of the world, "the seventh day" of the week, namely Saturday, or the Sabbath, was a day of divine worship. True, when God gave the Decalogue to the Jews, among the ordinances He

commanded them "to keep holy the Sabbath day" in gratitude for His having delivered them on a Sabbath from the slavery of Egypt, and chosen them to be His people. But if we will consider the emphatic verb "Remember," used by God in connection with that command, we are led to infer that He thereby wished to call their special attention to the time-honored observance of the Sabbath as a day of divine worship. This obligation was so well understood by the Jews that they are observing it to this very day, though for over nineteen hundred years they have lost their king, their nationality, and their priesthood, have ceased to offer sacrifices, and have been wanderers over the face of the earth.

But for the last nineteen centuries, "the seventh day" of the week, namely Saturday, or the Sabbath, has been superseded by the first day, Sunday, as a day of divine worship. If Saturday was kept holy, because on that day ended the first creation and God rested to sanctify it, Sunday has been from the time of the Apostles kept holy, because on a Sunday, the first day of the week, began the *second creation*, the Redemption of the world. In fact, according to several learned ancient writers, the promised Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ, was born on a Sunday, God thus disposing in His all-wise counsels that, as light was made on the first day of creation, namely, on Sunday, "Be light made, and light was made" (Gen. 1, 3), so Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Light to the upright of heart, should be born upon the night of a Sunday. It is also most certain that it was on a Sunday that the glorious Resurrection of Jesus Christ and the Descent of the Holy Ghost took place.

On the first day of the week, on Sunday, God created the world, and on a Sunday He sanctified it. Hence, what inaugurated the Sunday as a day of divine worship, were the events occurring on a Sunday, namely, the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Descent of the Holy Ghost. And most justly so, for if the Jews were commanded to keep holy every Saturday to honor and commemorate the benefit of their deliverance from

material bondage on that day and to profess their gratitude to God for it, with much greater reason is every Sunday kept holy, because the Redemption and sanctification of mankind were accomplished on a Sunday by the Divine Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, through His Resurrection and the Descent of the Holy Ghost.

It is in the heart of man to commemorate the annual recurrence of a birthday, the founding of a city, of a town, or of some famous institution, the achievement of national independence, a victory gained in war, in fact, of any event of importance. But nothing is more glorious and profitable, more in conformity with man's own heart, than the proper celebration of Sunday, since it is the day on which man's estrangement from God ceased, the bonds of his enslavement to the devil were sundered, and the sentence of his eternal damnation revoked and annulled by Our Lord Jesus Christ, through His Resurrection and the Descent of the Holy Ghost. Yes, Sunday is preeminently the day of man's independence and liberty, independence from the darkness of ignorance as to his highest interests and destiny, and liberty from the slavery of sin and vice, the liberty of the children of God, whereby they may call Him, "*Abba, Father.*"

According to the account of Genesis, now fully endorsed by science, after creating on the first day the formless primitive matter of the heavens and the earth, on the same day God created the light, saying: "Be light made." At this command of His will, "the light was made"; and, through the action of that light, started all organic developments. It was then that the world began to receive its present form. Even so, the restoration of the human race to its primitive excellence and destiny dawned upon it on a Sunday, probably at the Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, but surely at His Resurrection and the Descent of the Holy Ghost.

It was then that our Lord Jesus Christ proved Himself the Light of the world; for after it had already shone forth through the sanctity of His life, the truths and precepts which He had taught, the virtues He had

praised and inculcated, the miracles He had wrought before astounding multitudes of people, it manifested itself in all its splendor in His Resurrection, whereby He put the infallible seal of truth on all that He had previously done and said.

Witnesses of this divine light were the multitudes of Jerusalem on the Sunday on which the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles. On that very day, they heard St. Peter preach, and wondered at his sudden extraordinary wisdom, eloquence, and courage, and at the hitherto unheard-of event that men of different tongues, should have understood him as if he had spoken in their own language. Being enlightened by that light, they then and there to the number of three thousand, made public profession of their belief in Jesus Christ. That it was a full and sincere profession was evidenced by the manifestation of the gift of prophecy they then received, by the conformity of their lives to the truths of the Gospel, and by their entire submission to the Apostles. Thus it was that the Church of Jesus Christ, and with it the Christian worship, originated on a Sunday.



A CORPORAL was in his dug-out in a first-line trench, when a shell came and buried him in the debris. His comrades quickly ran to the spot and managed to free his head and shoulders. It was then perceived that his lower limbs were smashed to pulp, and could not be disengaged without hastening his death.

"Leave me alone," he implored, and turning to a priest stretcher-bearer, he said: "Do you help me to pray" With that he prayed calmly and resignedly. A chaplain came up. "Ah!" said the dying man, "I felt sure you would come. I should so much like to receive my God." The chaplain had the Blessed Sacrament with him, and gave him Communion. "Would you like me to say some prayers aloud with you?" asked the chaplain. "No, I would rather talk quietly now with Jesus." A few moments after the poor fellow serenely expired.

Veni, Veni, Emmanuel

Come, come, Emmanuel, O come!
Lead Thou Thy captive Israel home,
Who groan in exile and in woe,
Until the Son of God they know.
Be glad! be glad! Emmanuel
For thee is born, O Israel.

Come, stately Stem from Jesse's root!
Thy people, crushed 'neath Satan's foot,
From hell's deep pit in mercy save;
Uplift Thy throne above the grave.
Be glad! be glad! Emmanuel
For thee is born, O Israel.

Come! come! O Orient Dawn, arise!
With thy bright advent charm our eyes;
Far from us drive the shades of night,
And turn our darkness into light.
Be glad! be glad! Emmanuel
For thee is born, O Israel.

Come, Key of David's palace-place!
Fling back heaven's portals to our race,
Make sure the road to endless day,
And close the paths to hell for aye.
Be glad! be glad! Emmanuel
For thee is born, O Israel.

O come! O come, Adonai!
Who once, in glorious majesty,
The law, on Sinai's cloud-hidden height,
Didst give Thy people in Thy might.
Be glad! be glad! Emmanuel
For thee is born, O Israel.

EMERY.

Why the Holy Eucharist?

The end or design for which Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist was that it might be the spiritual food and nourishment of our souls, to preserve and augment that life of grace which we receive in Baptism, and which is completed and perfected in Confirmation; according to the words of our Saviour, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever." And, a little after, "he that eateth me, the same shall live by me." This is explained from the similitude of the natural life of our bodies; for we see, that however lively, vigorous, and strong we be as to our natural life, yet our strength will soon diminish, our vigour fail, and our life become weaker and weaker, and at last be destroyed entirely, unless it be preserved by proper food, which feeds, nourishes, and strengthens the body; so, in like manner, however lively and strong the soul be in the life of grace, which we receive in the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation; yet, by reason of the corruption of our nature, and the many temptations to which we are continually exposed, from the malice of our spiritual enemies, this spiritual life would soon fail and decay, and at last be extinguished entirely by mortal sin, if we had not a proper food to support and nourish it in the soul. For this reason, our blessed Saviour was pleased to institute the sacrament of the holy Eucharist, in which, under the outward appearances of bread and wine, He gives us his precious body and blood, to feed and nourish our souls, and to preserve and augment in them the life of grace, by which we live to Him.

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"Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened and I will refresh you." Does not Jesus still address these words to us from the Tabernacle? He who labors, needs refreshment. He who is weary, needs comfort and repose. The Holy Eucharist is at once refreshment and rest to our souls.



## "PEACE ON EARTH."

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In seeking the reason for the love which every good person has for Christmas, we must travel back the long, long centuries to the Birth at Bethlehem. The reason why this feast has been beloved and cherished by ages past and will be revered and venerated by ages to come lies in the lowly manger; it is the Christ-Child Himself.

His birth, it is true, did not redeem us but it marked the inauguration of a new era the beginning of the kingdom of God. It marked the passing of the old and the beginning of the new law; the passing of the old in which God ruled his rebellious children with threat and rod, and the succession of the new, whose first gift was the Author of reconciliation, who was to restore prodigal humanity to the bosom of its all-loving Father.

The dawn of the first Christmas heralded to expectant nature the installation of a new law—a new commandment, which did not command through force or fear, but which was to influence forever the actions of mankind by its exemplifications. "A new commandment I give unto you: that you love one another as I have loved you."

In showing how dear Christmas is to the heart, the spirit of Christmas is likewise made clear to us. What is the spirit of Christmas? "Peace on earth to men of good will" sang the angelic choir. Yes, truly peace, the peace of God.

And mindful of God's benevolence, could man be logical or grateful and refuse to have the same sentiment towards his fellows, which God has towards him?

"Merry Christmas" to one's neighbors marks the revival of fraternal charity as inspired by the memory of the first Christmas and its significance.

As long as the world lasts, Christmas will continue to be the popular feast of the Christian people. Hallow-

ed by memories and traditions of the past, it appeals to our own nature, for it commemorates the first union of The Holy Family.

It is not wonderful then that Christmas is a family feast for Christians. Once a year this blessed feast comes with its unity of faith and love. Then it is above all times that faith strikes the string of that oldest of instruments, the human heart, and the song in response to that touch divine, is a hymn of joy, an anthem of real, true, triumphant love.,

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### The Star of Bethlehem

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The star that shone o'er Bethlehem  
Is surely shining yet,  
Altho' unseen by mortal eye;  
And never will it set  
And leave the world without its light,  
In darkness and regret.

The star that shone o'er Bethlehem  
Was God's sweet star of love,  
That showed-itself when Christ was born  
The manger rude above,  
And hung there in its mellow light  
Like a fair silver dove.

The star that shone o'er Bethlehem,  
The love of God Divine,  
Is shining now as it did then  
In that dear heart of thine,  
And there, as when the Lord was born,  
That star will ever shine.

## *A Christmas Song.*

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It was Christmas Eve. All through the day the snow had been silently falling on the hills, on the valleys, on the city, and the keen frost gradually knit the tiny snowflakes, crusting them as with beautiful enamel, a fitting garb for Nature to assume in anticipation of her Maker's coming. And tonight a thousand starry worlds, in no way abashed by the crescent moon that was hanging in the heavens, looked upon the busy people in the city below. The people themselves hurried to and fro, eager to have their work over, so that they could seek the cheering warmth of their own firesides.

Such was the scene without. Now let us enter that stately mansion standing back from the street, away from the busy mart, and the rush of the work-a-day world. Before the open grate, in the beautiful and magnificently furnished library, sat Mr. John Conlon, the master, deeply buried in thought. As he gazed into the glowing coals, but one picture arose from their depths—his past life. Once more he sees himself a young man entering life; once more he is tossed upon the sea of trouble and buffeted by the waves of misfortune; and now he fights again the old fights and gains the dearly-bought victory. And this is the laurel wreath, honor, respect and wealth.

But tonight his mind is not at rest. He had been a Catholic once, but wealth had thrown him in with those who scorned religion, and the song of the siren sounded sweeter and sweeter, in his ears, and he went farther and farther away from God, until now he is all but a scoffer at religion. But the spirit of unrest is working in his soul, and it seems as though the final struggle is at hand.

So absorbed was he in his own meditations that he did not notice the presence of an intruder until a peal of merry laughter, like the ripple of a silvery cascade, met his ears, and Miss Helen, of the warbling voice

and the calm blue eyes, as fresh as a new-blown rose and as bright as a sunbeam, came softly to his side. The bloom of sixteen summers was fresh upon her brow, and she was the acknowledged mistress and ruler of the house, the idol of her fond father and loving mother.

"Why are you so sad tonight, father? Won't you forget your business worries? You know this is Christmas Eve, and why should we not be happy?" she continued, gently stroking her father's hair.

A beautiful picture they made. Helen, seated upon the arm of her father's chair, was as pure and fresh as a rose nurtured in God's own garden. Her father, still in the strength of his manhood, was vigorous, in spite of his worried looks.

"Father," Helen continued, "do you remember that some time ago you promised to give me whatever I asked for at Christmas?"

"Yes," answered her father, smiling, "and I was thinking you had forgotten all about it, but I should have known that you would not forget."

Again the silvery laughter rippled softly from her lips. But suddenly her face became grave.

"Father," she said, "I want you to go to mass with us in the morning. You promised me long ago; and now, will you not come?"

What a shock this was! He who five minutes ago had almost resolved to forget God was now assailed by the child he so loved. A mighty struggle was going on within. But he answered in an agitated voice:

"Come, daughter, we won't speak of that tonight. Some other time will do, won't it? Yes—yes—some other time."

A grieved look crossed Helen's face, for she loved her father dearly, and his religious carelessness troubled her.

"But I am to sing my first solo tomorrow," she said, struggling to check her tears, "and I had hoped to give you a surprise. But you will come, will you not?"

"There, there, we will not speak of this any more," he said; and rising to his feet he began to pace the room.

After calming himself sufficiently he returned to the fire, and kissing Helen he said quietly:

"There, we won't trouble ourselves more, but you will leave me now, as I have business to attend to."

No business for Conlon that night, for there was a struggle going on in his soul. A vivid picture kept flashing before his eyes. He saw two forces arrayed against each other. On one side were the sweet faces of his wife and daughter, praying, ever praying for his return. On the opposite side he saw the world, with its cruel countenance and sneering smile, and a scornful finger pointed at him, a weakling, who could not withstand the tears of those whom he loved.

"What a wretched state I am in," he muttered, as he threw himself into the chair before the fire. "How long will this torture last?"

He could feel the waves of remorse slowly rising and threatening to overcome his resolution. At last, with his head buried in his hands, he dropped into a troubled sleep.

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As the gray dawn of the approaching day was diffusing itself over heaven and earth, and the stars, as if ashamed of their feeble light, were fast retreating, Conlon awoke with a start, cramped and sore from his uncomfortable position. Passing his hand across his brow he rose to his feet and began to walk up and down the library.

Whilst he was thus engaged the library door opened softly, and Helen, bright and cheerful this happy morn, came toward him with a glad cry of "Merry Christmas!" on her lips.

"How kind of you, father," she said, "to be up so early and ready to accompany us to mass. We must hurry or we shall be late."

A firm voice urging him on, but his weak resolve held him back. But there stood Helen at the door, waiting for him, there was the pleading look upon her face and the yearning love in her eyes.

With a smile he said to her: "You go ahead! I will follow soon." How long he stood musing he knew not, but finally he donned his coat and hat and went forth into the cool, invigorating air of the early morn.

The early mass was beginning and, as Conlon entered the church a brilliant and gorgeous sight met his gaze. The altar was beautifully decorated and surrounded by a wealth of sweetscented flowers. The candles, burning away their very lives in God's praise, shone with added brilliancy; the priest, the great arbiter between God and man, was humbly bending before the altar, surrounded by a choir of white and red-robed altar boys, like unto so many angels. The congregation, bent in adoration, listened to the joyous strains of the organ, whose music thrilled through the church.

Conlon remained in the last seat, awed by the solemnity of his surroundings. He was wearily resting his head on his hands, when he was aroused by a clear, sweet voice, and the notes of the *Venite adoremus* seemed to linger on the solemn air. The voice trembled with emotion and then grew firm. Conlon sat as one in a dream and listened, for the voice was Helen's. She seemed to realize the importance of the words, for her whole soul was absorbed in them, and the grace of God, lingering on the wings of the song, entered Conlon's soul. As the last note quivered and trembled above the hushed assemblage, Conlon sank upon his knees and gave himself up to the prayer of the penitent.

Seated at breakfast this happy Christmas morn, father, mother and daughter are gay and buoyant. A happy smile lights Conlon's face as he compliments the blushing Helen, and it lingers as he says:

"Daughter, I promised you whatever you would ask at Christmas. What shall it be?"

And Helen, with the strains of the *Venite adoremus* still lingering in her memory, and emboldened by the victory already won, replied:

"You shall take us to communion on New Year's Day."



## CHRISTMAS DAY HISTORIC.

Ever since the birth of Christ, Christmas Day has been celebrated by the people. Little is known of the early Christmas festivals, because our historical documents are incomplete. The date of those days and now are very different. Some say that Christmas was celebrated on the sixth of January. If this be true, custom changed at a very early date. The celebration of Christmas, however, is not, as some enemies of religion have charged, to be confounded with certain pagan festivals. For instance, the feast of Christmas should not be joined to the festival of the Saturnalia, which was celebrated about the seventeenth of December. Until the tenth century Christmas counted in Papal reckoning as the beginning of the ecclesiastical year. On this day the priest says three Masses. The privilege is of Pontifical origin. In early times the first of these Masses was celebrated by the Pope at the Oratorium Præsepis in the basilica of St. Mary Major and the last at St. Peter's in Rome.

This was the reproduction of the office at Bethlehem and Jerusalem, where there were splendid childhood feasts in which the bishop proceeded nightly to Bethlehem and returned to Jerusalem for the day's celebration. The second Mass was celebrated by the Pope in the royal chapel of the Byzantine court officials on the Palatine, known as the chapel of St. Anastasia. This was a papal compliment to the imperial church on its patronal feast. In 1143 the Pope abandoned St. Peter's and said the High Mass at the main altar of St. Mary's Major. It was at this third Mass that Pope Leo III, inaugurated in the year 800 by the coronation of Charlemagne, the Holy Roman Empire. The day then became a favorite for court ceremonies and on this day William of Normandy was crowned king at Westminster.

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*Published with the approbation of the Archbishop of Montreal.*