

History has furnished no instance in which a confessor has proved unfaithful to this sacred trust. It has furnished many cases in which priests have faced imprisonment, and even death, when occasion demanded it, rather than violate the obligation of perpetual secrecy. Thus, St. John of Nepomuk endured chains and dungeons rather than reveal the secret of confession to the tyrant Wenceslaus of Bohemia. And his lips were still sealed when the waters of the Moldav closed them in endless silence. But he is only one of many sufferers for the seal. Some of our Irish readers may, for instance, recall the long imprisonment of Father Gahan in a Dublin gaol for 'contempt of court' arising out of his resolute refusal to disclose matters which could have come to his knowledge, if at all, only through the confessional. Precisely similar experiences befell Father McLaughlin, of Ayr (Scotland) many years ago, and Father Giles, of Notre Dame, Montreal (Canada), in 1896. The locks of their prison-cells opened at last. But the bolt was never shot that held the secrets committed to them, not as men, but as ministers of the Most High God.

The present generation has witnessed at least two cases of more heroic mould. One was that of Father Kobylowicz, parish priest of Oranow, in Kiev (Russian Poland). In 1853 he was found guilty of murder and sentenced to penal servitude in the mines of Siberia. Twenty years later (in 1873) the organist of his church lay dying. He confessed that he was the murderer, that he had used Father Kobylowicz's gun to commit the deed of blood, and that, in a remorseful mood, he had confessed his crime to the priest. A 'pardon' was made out. But the martyr-priest's soul had flitted before it arrived. He had endured the slow martyrdom of the Siberian mines for twenty years. He had borne that far keener agony—the dread ceremony of public degradation, at Zhitomeer. And he spoke not. He carried his heavy cross with him in sacred silence to the grave. In 1891, Father Lutz, an American priest, endured in silence the shame of a conviction for robbery from a sick penitent, coupled with a sentence of ten years' penal servitude. But one happy day, a document was found among the papers of Father Lutz's supposed victim, then dead. It showed that the money supposed to have been stolen had been entrusted to the priest to be restored to a third person. So Father Lutz was released. The romantic story of the Abbe Dumoulin is more recent still. It was told by us some years ago in full detail, partly from the French press, partly from an appreciative article in the 'Sydney Morning Herald' in the early part of 1898. It was briefly this: that the Abbe (a priest of the archdiocese of Aix, France), with the secret of the confessional locked up in his breast, allowed himself to be tried, convicted, and sentenced for a murder committed by another. For three years, Father Dumoulin wore the prison garb, and toiled under a tropical sun in New Caledonia, herding with the basest outcasts of society. Then the real murderer's remorse compelled him to present himself before the authorities and declare his crime. Even among the human weeds that the Popes have thrown over their garden wall, every form of human frailty has respected the 'still-born silence' which guards for ever the portals of God's tribunal of mercy, the Sacrament of Penance.

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# Christchurch Cathedral

## First Anniversary Celebration

(From our own correspondent.)

The distinguished prelates, his Grace the Archbishop of Melbourne and the Right Rev. Dr. Higgins, Bishop of Ballarat, who so graciously and generously acceded to the request of his Lordship Bishop Grimes to participate in the anniversary ceremonies in connection with the dedication of the Christchurch Cathedral on Sunday, arrived on Friday morning, journeying from Wellington in the 'Rotomahana.' The illustrious visitors met with a most cordial reception at Lyttelton. Those present included the Right Rev. Bishop Grimes, the Very Rev. Dean Ginaty, Rev. Fathers Marnane, Cooney, Price, Ahern, Mahony, O'Connell, Peoples, and Rev. Gilbert. Representing the laity were Messrs. E. O'Connor, J. Barrett, T. O'Connell, and J. R. Hayward. The visitors were greeted at the Christchurch railway station by a fairly numerous gathering, considering the somewhat inconvenient hour, and, entering open carriages, the party were driven to the episcopal residence. Here striking preparations had been made for their reception. Over the entrance gateway an arch of foliage and flowers bearing the inscription in golden lettering—'Welcome to our distinguished visitors and illustrious prelates' was erected, thence along the drive were festoons and garlands of flowers and foliage on each side. The children of the convent schools and Marist Brothers' boys' school were drawn up along the drive to welcome the guests, who were here received by the Very Rev. Vicar-General. As the visitors drove up the Cathedral bells rang out a merry peal, and on alighting the children of the Convent High School sang a song of welcome. At this the prelates were delighted, and the children were heartily thanked by his Grace the Archbishop, who afterwards gave them his blessing and added to the happiness of the occasion by announcing a holiday. The visiting prelates were then introduced to the teachers in charge of the children.

### THE CEREMONIES.

There were the usual early Masses in the Cathedral on Sunday, that at half-past nine being celebrated by the Right Rev. Mgr. Mackay, of Oamaru. Just before eleven o'clock an imposing procession of prelates and clergy left the episcopal residence and entered the Cathedral. The musical chimes of the bells, greeting the approach, at this moment were stilled; the organ pealed out the 'Ecce Sacerdos Magnus,' the choir taking up the refrain as the procession filed up the Cathedral and into the sanctuary. Solemn Pontifical Mass was then proceeded with. His Lordship the Right Rev. Dr. Grimes, Bishop of Christchurch, was celebrant, the Very Rev. Father Le Menant des Chesnais, V.G., was assistant priest, the Very Rev. Dean Ginaty and Rev. Father Marnane deacons of honor at the throne, the Rev. Father Richards deacon, and Rev. Father Delany subdeacon of the Mass, and Rev. Father O'Connell and Rev. Father Cooney masters of ceremonies. The Rev. Father Mahony acted as chaplain to the Archbishop of Melbourne, and Rev. Father Peoples to the Bishop of Ballarat. Others of the clergy in the sanctuary were Rev. Father Khouri (Marounite) and Rev. Gilbert. The music of the Mass was Gounod's 'Messe Troisième.' Mr. H. H. Loughnan conducted, and Miss Katie Young was organist.

The preacher was his Lordship the Right Rev. Dr. Higgins, Bishop of Ballarat, who from the text 'I have loved O Lord the beauty of Thy house and the place where Thy glory dwelleth' delivered a very fine discourse, in the course of which he paid an eloquent tribute to the noble proportions of the building, to the untiring energy and zeal of Bishop Grimes, and to the generosity of his flock. Twelve months ago he said it had been their pleasure to be present at the opening ceremony by invitation of Bishop Grimes. The building which was then offered to the most High God was a gift that spoke more eloquently than human tongue could ever do; it was the outcome of years of anxious waiting, of patient exercise, of frugal thrift, and a general curtailment of personal needs in order that they might be enabled to carry out the work of the Church in this diocese. He spoke in eulogistic terms of the noble structure, standing out in its graceful details, spacious towers, and clustered columns, and praised the work of their illustrious prelate, Bishop Grimes, who had done so much towards its completion. It was

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