

the Pope's Vicar-General for the diocese of Rome. And it is in St. John Lateran's that the ordinations take place at the several appropriate seasons of the year, when great numbers of students from all the ecclesiastical colleges and the religious houses in the Eternal City are admitted to the minor or the major Orders.

The site of Lateran has been connected with the Church since the days of the Emperor Constantine. His wife, Fausta, was the owner of the houses there that she received from the family of Plautius Lateranus (hence the name Lateran); and the Emperor built thereon a Basilica for the worship of the true God to whom he had been converted from paganism. It is also believed that Constantine gave to Pope St. Sylvester, as his residence, the building known as the *domus Faustæ*, or house of Fausta. The Popes lived at the Lateran for about a thousand years, until (as already stated) they left Rome and resided for a time at Avignon, in France. There is no detailed description extant of the original form of the Lateran Basilica as it was built by Constantine. It was known as Constantine's Basilica, likewise as the Basilica Aurea (or Golden Basilica) on account of the rich adornments of gold with which it was bedecked.

The majestic façade of the church (of which we publish an engraving) was erected by order of Pope Clement XII. The interior consists of a great nave and four large aisles, with a beautiful mosaic floor (opus Alexandrinum). Fine marble statues of the twelve Apostles fill niches in the pilasters of the nave. The Basilica is also enriched with exquisite chapels to right and left, and with sumptuous paintings and sculptures. Important renovations and additions to the Basilica were carried out by the architect Vespignani, under the direction of the late Pope, Leo XIII. One of the trophies of the Basilica is the banner which was captured from the Turks by Mark Antony Colonna at the naval battle of Lepanto, which broke for ever the power and the conquests of the Turks in central and western Europe.

Five Councils of the Church were held within the walls of St. John Lateran's—in 1123, 1139, 1179, 1215, and 1512. At the right, near the sanctuary of the Basilica, is the beautiful circular Baptistry—called the Baptistry of Constantine, because it is said that the first Christian Emperor of Rome was baptised there. It was already well known in the fifth century; and in the ninth century—over a thousand years ago—it had the same shape and the same tall and handsome columns that it possesses at the present day. On each Holy Saturday it is the custom to baptise, in the vast and ancient font of basalt, Jews and converts from other faiths. The writer of these lines assisted several times at these ceremonies.

Attached to the Basilica is the fine old Palace of the Lateran, part of which may be seen in one engraving. This Palace, together with the Vatican, the Palace of the Chancery, and the country seat of Castel Gandolfo, are all that are now left to the Pope out of the old Papal States of which he was robbed by the Piedmontese in 1870. The places mentioned above enjoy, under the so-called Law of the Papal Guarantees, extra-territorial rights. The Lateran Palace was formerly more extensive than it is now. It was destroyed by fire in 1308 and rebuilt in 1586. Pope Innocent XII. (1693) established an orphanage within its walls, and Pope Gregory XVI., in 1843, founded within it two important museums (one of Christian, and the other of secular, archæology), and fine collections of paintings, which were further enriched by Pius IX., Leo XIII., and Pius X. The present Holy Father it was who completed the restoration of the massive carved and decorated wooden ceiling, which a few years ago threatened to collapse. The work was commenced during the Pontificate of Leo XIII., and the funds were supplied, in response to an appeal, by the Third Order of St. Francis throughout the world. The work was brought to a successful termination early in the present year.



Angelo Sarto, Brother of Pius X.



Signora Sarto-Parolin, Sister of Pius X.