

## Friends at Court.

GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR.

(Written for the N.Z. TABLET.)

January 14, Sunday.—Second after Epiphany. St. Hilary Bishop and Doctor.  
 „ 15, Monday.—St. Paul, Hermit.  
 „ 16, Tuesday.—St. Marcellus, Pope and Martyr.  
 „ 17, Wednesday.—St. Antony Abbot  
 „ 18, Thursday.—St. Peter's Chair at Rome.  
 „ 19, Friday.—St. Wulstan, Bishop.  
 „ 20, Saturday.—Sts. Fabian and Sebastian, Martyrs.

ST. PETER'S CHAIR AT ROME.

ROME was the capital of the world; and there St. Peter, 12 years after our Lord's Ascension, finally established his chair or seat of authority, to feed from thence the lambs and sheep of Jesus Christ. It was from Antioch, the chief city of the East, that he had previously ruled the Church of God. So great from the earliest ages was the devotion of the faithful to the supreme authority of the Vicar of Christ, that they honoured it by the observance of two solemn feasts, namely, St. Peter's Chair at Antioch, where it was established for a time, and St. Peter's chair at Rome, where it has remained fixed for many centuries. This devotion of pious Christians need not astonish us, for we can never make as much of St. Peter as Christ Himself did. When St. Andrew first brought his brother to our Lord, Jesus looked upon him and said, 'Thou art Simon, the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter.' Now, the meaning of the word Peter is 'rock,' and this new name evidently signified the future office of St. Peter, which was to be the firm foundation on which the Church was to be built. Later on, when Jesus was walking with his disciples near the city of Cesarea Philippi, he put to them the question, 'Whom do men say that the Son of Man is?' But they said, some John the Baptist, and some Elias, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Jesus saith to them, but whom do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering said to him, blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood have not revealed it to thee, but My Father Who is in heaven. Let us pray to Jesus to teach us the mysterious sense of these words. When He asks what men think of Him, all the apostles answer without any distinction. But when He asks what they the apostles think of Him, it is Peter only who answers in their name. It is Peter still, in the person of his successor, who speaks in the name of the Church, and he speaks, not inspired by flesh and blood, but by the Father who is in heaven. But let us listen to what the Son of God said to the son of Jona. '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. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, it shall be bound also in heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.' It is the Son of God who speaks, He Who, by His word, made heaven and earth. He says, 'Thou art the rock upon which I shall build My Church.' By these words He signifies its unshaken firmness throughout future ages. The gates, that is the power of hell, shall never prevail against the rock or the Church which is built upon it. Oh, how good it is to be in this house where there is nothing to fear from storms or tempests; Peter, too, has the keys. It is he who opens and who shuts, who binds and looses. All are subjected to his authority, learned and ignorant, sheep and shepherds, kings and people. Jesus says, 'I will build, I will give.' It is a promise of the future, and will have its accomplishment when He shall say, 'Feed My lambs, feed My sheep.'

After our Lord's resurrection, Peter and some of the other apostles were gathered together on the shores of Tiberias. 'Simon Peter saith to them: I go a fishing. They say to him: We also come with thee. And they went forth and entered into the ship, and that night they caught nothing. But when morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore, yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus therefore said to them: Children, have you any meat? They answered him: No. He said to them: Cast the net on the right side of the ship and you shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. That disciple therefore, whom Jesus loved, said to Peter: It is the Lord. Simon Peter, when he heard that it was the Lord, girt his coat about him, for he was naked, and cast himself into the sea. But the other disciples came in the ship, dragging the net with the fishes. As soon as they came to land, they saw hot coals lying and a fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith to them: Bring hither of the fishes which you have now caught. Peter went up and drew the net to land full of fishes, and although there were so many the net was not broken.'

After thus showing forth the success which would attend the labours of Peter and those who fished with him, when they should cast their apostolic nets over the pagan world, Jesus fulfilled the promise which he had previously made to Peter at Cesarea Philippi—namely, that he would make him not only the firm foundation, but also his head of the Church, by investing him with the keys, or supreme authority, accompanied with power to bind and to loose. 'When, therefore, they had dined, Jesus said to Simon: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Feed My lambs. He said to him again: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Feed my lambs. He saith to him the third time: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved because He had said to him the third time: Lovest thou Me? And he said to Him: Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He said to him: Feed my sheep.' Then it was that Peter was actually installed as supreme shepherd of the flock of Christ.

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