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ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

F.K.C.—Matter was reported in our Christchurch correspondence at time. The affair is a month old now, and it would not be fair to our readers to serve it up again and in extended form as 'news.' Cordial thanks for photo.

M.C.K. (Christchurch).—Since the death of the late Queen we have several times referred, editorially and at length, to the Coronation Oath. The opinions of several secular papers were quoted in our issue of March 14, and a further comment upon the subject appears in this issue. So far as our knowledge goes, Catholic feeling in this and other countries of the Empire is very much alive upon the subject.



'To promote the cause of Religion and Justice by the ways of Truth and Peace.'

LEO XIII. to the N.Z. TABLET.

THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 1901.

THE TITLE 'CATHOLIC.'



ON Sunday next, the parting day of the present month, it will be the duty of our householder-readers to fill in the particulars required for the census enumeration of the Colony for the year 1901. The time is therefore opportune for reminding them that the only designation by which our co-religionists are officially known to the State in these countries is that of 'Roman Catholics.' The title is the last of a variegated series of terms which mark as with mile-posts the course of legislation affecting Catholics living under the British flag. In the 50th of her Injunctions Queen Elizabeth 'straitly commands all manner her subjects' 'not to use in dispute or rebuke of any person these convicious words, papist or papistical heretic.' In the statutes of her time Catholics were referred to as 'recusants' or 'persons in communion with the Church of Rome.' During the long agony of the penal days—from 1692 till the closing years of the eighteenth century—Catholics were officially known by the nickname of 'Papists' and 'Popish people.' In 1793, after the days of the French Revolution, these epithets were somewhat mellowed down, and Catholics came to be known as 'persons professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion.' And in later statutes they were finally and definitely designated 'Roman Catholics.' Social usage had in the meantime so far softened towards the Catholic body that in 1812 DENYS SCULLY could say in his *Statement of the Penal Laws* that 'the reproachful epithet of "Papist," "Romish," "Romanist," was no longer applied to Catholics by any gentleman or scholar.'

The term 'Roman Catholic' is none of our creation. And Catholics, while acquiescing in it as a legal formula, have never taken kindly to it, very rarely use it, and in no wise regard it as their proper title. On this account there lies a danger that individual Catholics here and there may omit the term 'Roman' and merely write the word 'Catholic' in the column set apart in the census-paper for information as to the religious belief of the people. It so happens that—for some reason which we do not profess to

be able to fathom—returns are published in this Colony for 'Catholics (undefined).' And thus the omission, by Catholic householders, of the word 'Roman' from our full legal designation would render the return of members of our Fold in New Zealand incomplete and misleading. It is the duty of Catholics to aid intelligently and to the best of their power in furnishing this and all other information required according to the intention of the civil authority. And we would respectfully urge the clergy to impress upon their congregations the need of faithfully discharging this important civic duty.

No Pope, no General or National Council, no Father or Doctor of the Church, not one of her approved creeds, rituals, or liturgies has ever used the term 'Roman Catholic' as the official title of our religion. Its genuine official title is 'the Holy Catholic Church,' or 'the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church,' or briefly, 'the Catholic Church.' We claim the title 'Catholic' as ours exclusively. No other creed or sect claims this exclusive right. At most, they would share the title with us. Fifteen hundred years ago St. AUGUSTINE—who was certainly a 'Roman Catholic' and in full communion with the Holy See—made light of all such claims to partnership in the title 'Catholic' in his book *De Vera Religione*. 'We must,' he writes, 'hold the Christian Religion and the Communion of that Church which is Catholic, and is not only called so by her own children, but by all her enemies. For heretics and schismatics, whether they will or no, when they speak not to their own people, but to strangers, call Catholics, Catholics only. For they cannot be understood if they give them not that name which all the world gives them.' The same great Saint concludes as follows the statement of his reasons for remaining in the Catholic Church: 'Lastly, the very name of Catholic holds me, of which this Church alone has, not without reason, so kept the possession that though all heretics desire to be called Catholics, yet if a stranger asks them where the Catholics meet, none of the heretics dare point out his own house or church.' A similar test was recommended by St. CYRIL, who was Bishop of Jerusalem early in the fourth century. He tells the stranger in a strange city to 'ask which is the Catholic church, because,' he adds, 'this title belongs to our holy mother.' The term was used by these two Saints as a test to exclude those who were not in communion with the Holy See. In the same sense it was used by St. PACIAN. 'Christian is my name,' said he, 'Catholic is my surname. By the former I am called; by the latter I am distinguished. By the name of Catholic our society is distinguished from all heretics.'

It is the same to-day as it was in the far-off times of AUGUSTINE and CYRIL and PACIAN. The title 'Catholic' is now, as it was then, the distinguishing mark of our Church, and not a vague general term which is intended to include a hopeless salmagundi of non-coalescent and mutually repellent Christian creeds. The well-known lines of HORACE have been metrically translated as follows:—

Yes, words long faded may again revive,
And words may fade now blooming and alive,
If usage wills it so, to whom belongs
The will, the law, the government of things.

AULUS GELLIUS puts the same idea in the following words: 'Custom is the mistress of everything, and, in a most especial manner, regulates the use of words.' And custom is quite agreed that the word 'Catholic' is the peculiar designation of the Church which has for its visible head on earth the Pope or Bishop who sits upon the chair of St. Peter in Rome. The very street-arab finds only one meaning in the words of a stranger who inquires for the Catholic church, the Catholic priest, the Catholic sisterhood. Standard English writers—we need only instance Lord MACAULAY, EDMUND BURKE, JAMES MARTINEAU, LECKY,—agree in using the word 'Catholic' to designate the Church which is in communion with Rome. LECKY, when taken to task some years ago in Dublin for having used the word 'Catholics' to designate members of the papal Church, refused to employ the compound word 'Roman Catholic,' which he regarded as a solecism in language. This noted Unionist and rationalistic historian cannot be suspected of any leaning towards our faith. But in all his learned and voluminous writings he habitually applies the term 'Catholic

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