

Our schools in the city have been successful in the recent Junior Civil Service examination. From St. Mary's Convent High School, Ponsonby, the following passed: Ivy Ansley, May McGuire, Eileen Herlihy, and Matilda Brown; from St. Leo's Academy, Devonport, A. M'Gettigan and Florence M. Cogan (the former also passed the Matriculation examination held last December); from the Marist Brothers' High School, Arthur R. Staunton and Walter P. Shearman. These results are very satisfactory and reflect credit upon the indefatigable Sisters and Brothers.

Mr. Berkeley, a solicitor from Fiji, addressed a public meeting here on Tuesday night, when he condemned in strong language the administration of the Crown Colony, under which the Fijians were but slaves, unable to call their bodies and souls their own. Mr. Napier, member for the city, supported the speaker, and then moved a sweeping resolution condemnatory of the government of the island and calling for federation with this Colony. Nearly all present were shocked that in the British Empire such a state of things could exist. It is surprising indeed what short memories these suppose enlightened speakers possess. Another island in the North Atlantic, within the confines of the Empire, is at present worse governed than Fiji, and far more worthy of sympathy and assistance.

On last Sunday at the Church of the Assumption, Onehunga, Mass was celebrated for the Catholic troops of the 9th contingent by the Rev. Father Patterson, Adm., St. Patrick's, who also addressed the men. His Lordship Dr. Lenihan, Very Rev. Mgr. Paul, V.G., and Rev. Fathers Purton, O.S.B. and Morrogh, S.J., of Melbourne, were present in the sanctuary. After Mass the Bishop and priests visited the camp, where they were courteously received by the officer in charge, Captain L. O'Brien, and shown over the encampment. Last Tuesday evening Father Patterson entered camp, where he intends to stay for a few days in order to minister to the spiritual wants of our Catholic troops, a mission which no doubt the men will highly value and avail themselves of.

THE LITURGICAL YEAR.

THE SUNDAYS.

THE liturgical year, or the year according to its festive or fasting seasons as arranged by the Catholic Church (says the *Catholic Watchman*) commenced in December with the first Sunday of Advent. The 52 Sundays of the year are apportioned as follows:—In the season of Advent there are four Sundays; between Christmas and Epiphany inclusive, there are two Sundays; and between Epiphany and Septuagesima, the number of Sundays cannot be less than one, or more than six. Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima are the three successive Sundays before Lent, so called from their falling severally within the seventieth, sixtieth and fiftieth day before Easter Sunday. In Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday, which falls on the Wednesday after Quinquagesima or Shrove Sunday, there are six Sundays, whereof the fifth and sixth are Passion Sunday and Palm Sunday respectively. Then comes the great festival of Easter. Easter Sunday—on which all the movable feasts of the year depend—is followed by six Sundays, whereof the first Sunday is called Low Sunday. The seventh Sunday after Easter is Pentecost, which is another of the great landmarks of the Ecclesiastical Year. The first Sunday after Pentecost is Trinity Sunday. The number of Sundays between Pentecost and Advent, cannot be less than 24 or more than 28. In this respect, there is a concomitance, between the Sundays after Epiphany and those after Pentecost, which has an inverse bearing. Accordingly as the Sundays after Epiphany are one, two, three, four, five or six in number, those after Pentecost are 28, 27, 26, 25, 24, or 23. The Office of the 24th Sunday after Pentecost is always said on the Sunday immediately before Advent. If between the 24th and the last Sunday there is but one Sunday, the Mass of the sixth Sunday after Epiphany is said. If there are two the Masses of the fifth and sixth are said. If there are three those of the fourth, fifth and sixth are said; and if there are four, those of the third, fourth, fifth and sixth.

PENTECOST.

The Catholic Church has from primitive times reckoned the Sundays before Advent, from the great festival of Pentecost; a custom which even the separated Greek and Russian Churches follow to this day. It is only the Church of England, since the so-called Reformation of the sixteenth century, that has departed from this universal practice, by counting the Sundays from Trinity Sunday, instead of from Pentecost; doubtless with a view to assert her independence of Rome. But whence is this usage? There is certainly no warrant for it, in the pre-Reformation Church in England. The documents and charters of the Norman and Plantagenet periods bear ample proof, that when a Sunday before Advent is mentioned therein, it is always reckoned from Pentecost. The only way we can account for this is to bear in mind that Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, and others of the Reformation party, in the reign of Edward VI. who had the framing of the Book of Common Prayer, were mostly Cambridge men, and Cambridge having been, at one time, a Dominican University, just as Oxford was Franciscan, they must have while there, followed the practice, of counting the Sundays from Trinity Sunday, which the Dominican Order by a special dispensation, has been permitted to follow, if we mistake not, even to this day. But this local or special usage, allowed from some reason, is no justification for going against the universal law of the Church.

On the Sunday within the Octave of the Epiphany, the feast of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, instituted by Pope Clement VII. in 1530, at the solicitation of the Friars Minor, is commemorated. The Sunday within the Octave of the Nativity of Our Lady (September 8) is the solemnisation of the Holy Name of Mary, a festival insti-

tuted by Pope Innocent XI., in gratitude for the protection of Our Lady during the siege of Vienna, in 1683, when the pious King John Sobieski, of Poland, gave the Turks a crushing defeat, before the walls of that city. On the third Sunday of September is solemnised the Feast of Our Lady of Dolors. The first Sunday of October is the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, instituted by Pope Pius V. in commemoration of the victory obtained by Don John of Austria, October 7, 1571. over the Turks at Lepanto, which destroyed for ever the naval supremacy of the latter Power, in the Mediterranean.

THE MOVABLE FEASTS.

Although the first Sunday of Advent begins the Liturgical year, it is the date of Easter, which determines the dates of all the movable feasts thereof. The scientific and historical questions involved in the computation of Easter, attracted the attention of the Church from an early period. The Churches of Lesser Asia celebrated Easter on the same day that the Jews kept the Passover, that is to say, on the fourteenth day of the moon after the Vernal Equinox, on whatever day of the week it fell. The Roman Church and all the rest of the Christian world, kept Easter on a Sunday, whether it fell on or followed such fourteenth day of the moon. This divergence of observance led to a serious dispute towards the close of the second century, between Pope St. Victor and the Asiatic bishops, in the course of which the Pope threatened to cut off the latter from the communion of the Church; but moderate counsels prevailed, and the obnoxious custom was tolerated for some time longer, when it effectually died out. Anatolius, Bishop of Laodicea, about the end of the third century, employed the Metonic or lunar cycle of 19 years for calculating the date of Easter. Early in the following century the assembled Fathers, at the first General Council of Nice A.D. 325, feeling the necessity for a sure rule to know the variations of the pascal moon, once for all laid down the following canons for the observance of Easter:—First, that the feast of Easter should always be celebrated on a Sunday. Second, that this Sunday should always be that which immediately followed the fourteenth day of the moon of the first month; but if this fourteenth day fell on a Sunday, the feast of Easter was to be put off till the Sunday following, to avoid celebrating it on the same day with the Jewish Passover. Third, that the month counted first by the Council was that on which the fourteenth day of the moon, fell on or after the Vernal Equinox. Fourth, that the fourteenth day of the pascal moon might vary from March 21 to April 18.

EASTER.

From the foregoing rules it is clear, that the feast of Easter cannot fall earlier than March 22, or later than April 25. The Bishops of Alexandria, a city renowned at that time as the seat of mathematical science, were to fix the date on which Easter fell, and the Roman Pontiffs, in virtue of their supremacy, were to announce the day so fixed to the entire Church. Those who stubbornly opposed this rule, and celebrated Easter, on the same day that the Jews kept the Passover were known as Quartodecimans. In this connection it is well to note that a few Protestant writers of the old school, in their futile attempts to show that the ancient British Church was independent of Rome, have alleged that Britain received the faith directly from the East and accordingly followed the quartodeciman rule of observing Easter on the same day as the Jewish Passover. A slight acquaintance with history might have shown that the case was otherwise. The Britons followed, not the quartodeciman, but the old or unreformed Roman custom, according to which, Easter fell on a Sunday whether that Sunday fell on or after the 14th day of the moon. But to avoid celebrating Easter on the same day as the Jews the Council of Nice, as we have seen, decided that when the 14th day of the moon fell on a Sunday the celebration of Easter was postponed to the following Sunday. But the ancient Britons, whose orthodoxy in matters of faith cannot be called in question, either through ignorance or perversity failed to accept the canons declared at Nice; hence it happened, only at distant intervals, that the celebration of the Roman and British Easter did not coincide.

SAINTS' DAYS AND OTHER FEASTS.

The Liturgical year, as regards the saints' days and other feasts of the calendar which are not movable, begins on St. Andrew's Day, November 30; but in this article we can only afford space to devote our attention to an enumeration of some of the movable feasts of the year, dependent on Easter. Ash Wednesday, which is the forty-seventh day before Easter Sunday, is the beginning of Lent. On this day the pious custom of applying ashes on the foreheads of the faithful takes place. The priest, whilst administering the same, repeats the awful sentence pronounced against our first parents after their fall: 'Remember man thou art dust, and to dust thou shalt return.' In the primitive Church, however, ashes were laid only on the heads of public penitents, on the first day of Lent. We have already referred to Passion Sunday and Palm Sunday, as being the fifth and sixth Sundays in Lent. The feast of Our Lady of Dolors is solemnised on the Friday preceding Palm Sunday, i.e., the Friday in Passion week. Maundy, Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday are, as we all know, the Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of Holy week, or the week beginning with Palm Sunday. Rogation days are the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday immediately following the fifth Sunday after Easter. It is said that St. Mamertus, Archbishop of Vienna (A.D. 477), instituted the fasts and supplications called rogations, in order to avert the anger of God, which he, with reason, believed was the cause of plagues, droughts, earthquakes, fires, and the ravages of wild beasts, which desolated his diocese. He selected the three days immediately preceding the feast of the Ascension, since 'it is admitted,' says Bossuet, 'that the Church wished to lay upon Jesus Christ ascending into heaven all her desires, as the true mediator for men with God.' This pious practice was soon adopted by the entire Church.