

Archdiocese of Chicago

The annual report of Rev. Francis A. Barry, Chancellor of the Chicago archdiocese, shows an increase for the year of about 200,000 members in the churches of the archdiocese and 12,000 children in the parochial schools and church institutions. Father Barry estimates that the present Catholic population of Chicago reaches 1,000,000 persons, with 300 places of worship and 566 priests, secular and religious. The largest city parishes are St. Stanislaus, with 30,000 parishioners; the Holy Family, with 20,000, and St. Michael, 15,000. The predominating nationality of these is, respectively, Polish, English-speaking, and German.

The Catholic Population

According to the advance sheet of the official Catholic directory of America for 1903, there is a total Catholic population of 11,289,710 in the United States, or one-seventh of the total population. Taking into account the newly-acquired possessions, the Catholic population under the American flag, from the latest figures obtainable, is as follows—United States, 11,289,710; Philippines, 6,565,998; Hawaii, 33,000; American Samoa, 3000; Guam, 9000; Porto Rico, 953,243; total, 18,853,951. The total population of the above-mentioned territory is 84,233,069. There are 100 prelates in the States—1 Cardinal, 13 archbishops, and 86 bishops. Other statistics of the clergy and institutions are—Secular clergy, 9743; clergy of religious Orders, 3225; churches, 10,878; universities, 7; seminaries, 71; students in seminaries, 3382; parish schools, 3978; children in schools, 963,683; charitable institutions, 923. New York is the largest diocese, with an estimated Catholic population of 1,200,000. Chicago comes next with 1,000,000, but it has the largest number of churches—300.

GENERAL.

The First Church in America

It is an historical fact that the first church erected in the New World was a Catholic church. It was dedicated at Isabella, in Hayti, on the festival of the Epiphany, January 6, 1494. This event took place 126 years before the pilgrims landed at Plymouth.

The Bishop of Baghdad

The Rev. John Drure, of the Order of Discalced Carmelites, has been appointed Latin Archbishop of Baghdad, and Consecrated in Rome by Cardinal Gotti, Prefect of Propaganda. The Latin see of Baghdad was created in 1632, with residence at Ispahan (Persia), and transferred in 1842 to Baghdad (Turkey). It embraces the missions of Baghdad, Mardin, and Mossul, and contains 54,000 Catholics of various rites.

Nuns in Japan

The nuns of the Catholic Order of the Holy Church, who have many houses and institutions in England, have established an orphanage at Kioto, Japan, which shelters some hundred Japanese orphans. Half of the number are being trained as school teachers, but so frail is the constitution of these girls that many of them break down under the strain. Those who do not qualify for school teachers are trained as nurses. The nuns have recently opened a school for the study and practice of subjects of domestic economy, and here the Japanese girls are taught needlework, washing, and the general management of a household. This new departure proved at once to be popular, over 50 girls joining it as soon as it was opened.

The Marists and French Penal Laws

The Protestant correspondent of an American Protestant paper, 'The Living Church,' writing from France, speaks as follows of one of the religious Orders against which the Combes' Government is carrying on its infamous campaign—

'The general subject of the crusade against the Congregations brings up naturally the merits and services of the different bodies attacked. With the work of most of them people are generally acquainted broadly. There are, however, some special congregations of religious—priest and freres banded together—who fall under the present ban, and with whose exploits many are less conversant. It may interest your readers to learn a few facts of a body of such men, who, from their fulcrum in France, have made the other side of the world especially their field of labor; whose mines are indeed much better known in Australia, and in the Islands of Oceania, than they are in France itself. Such is the Congregation of the "Marists." The Marists are a modern body. Their work is less often quoted in papers and periodicals than that of others with greater antiquity and more sounding names on the roll. But they have, none the less, done devoted and true missionary work in the sense of the very first evangelists.

In 1790, a young priest from the Beaujolais named Colin, who from a child had the fixed idea to found a new institution for evangelising, set to work to carry out his determination. His first disciple was his brother. He strove, worked, prayed, and convinced others. The small Society grew. It took the name of "Marie." In 1822, having put himself into communication with the Holy See, Colin received from Pope Pius VII. a laudatory and permissive "brief." After this Pere Colin held the post of director of the seminary at Belley, where instruction became one of his necessary duties.

'Now came the "occasion" which launched the Marists on their special work. The Holy See asked, in 1836, of the Society of the Propaganda at Lyons whether they had not a man or men who could work in Western Oceania, a district that the Congregation at Rome specially desired to be cultivated.

Colin and his friends were signalled out, and the proposal made to them "to go." It was accepted with generous fervor. This was the beginning of a mission that has been actively worked ever since.

The Marists soon became a household word in that far-off part of the world. In some of the islands where their work lay the inhabitants were known cannibals, so the prospect was not alluring. Certainly several of the number of devoted missionaries suffered martyrdom for their cause. This body especially ministers to the wants of New Caledonia, and the convicts sent thither from France. This has, from a kind of unwritten tradition, become their particular task.

'The islands of the archipelagoes of the Navigators' and of Fiji have been worked and converted entirely by them.

New Zealand owes its early Christianising influences to them. Besides such far-off stations, the Marists have centres of work in London, Dublin, and Louisiana, and a college at Jefferson, as well as several houses in France.'

Life in an Old English Monastery

There has recently been published in England an interesting volume, a transcript of the 'Customary of the Monastery of St. Augustine's, Canterbury,' from an early 14th century manuscript of the Cotton Collection. A 'Customary,' we may say for the benefit of those who are not familiar with the technical meaning of the word as used here, is a written or printed statement of laws and customs. In this volume (says the 'Sacred Heart Review') are to be found the fullest and most minute directions as to the rule and discipline of the ancient and historic foundations of St. Augustine's.

There is a chapter describing the election of an abbot, and also particulars as to the election and duties of prior, sub-prior, third and fourth priors, chanter, sub-chanter, sacrist, sub-sacrist, cellarer, sub-cellarer, granator, hostilar, crypt-master, refectioner, almoner, and sub-almoner. The details of the hostilar's or hospitaller's duties are certainly interesting as showing how the least matters were ordered in the monastery. The chief duty of this functionary was to act as guest-master; and he had charge of beds, seats, tables, towels, table-cloths, plates, basins, and cups in the hospice, and had further to see to the supply of straw or litter for the beds, and charcoal or wood for the hearth from the cellarer, and cups and spoons from the refectioner. On guests arriving at the gates, news was sent to the hospice by one of the cellarer's servants, and the hostilar, or one deputed by him, first conducted them to the church for prayer, being instructed to offer them holy water and to kneel by their side. They were then taken to the parlor, where, after Benedicite had been pronounced, and a kiss of salutation offered, the hostilar straitly inquired of them their names and estate and from what house (religious) or place they had come. They were then led to a cell in the hospice, where their conductor, inviting them to be seated, read to them a short passage from Holy Writ for the health of their souls. If the visitors were monks and unacquainted with the house, he led them through the cloister to the dormitory, and if time permitted, showed them the whereabouts of the offices; but only if due explanation had been given of the cause of their visit. Inquiry was also made as to the number of their servants and grooms and horses, and the result communicated to the cellarer in order that they might be fitly housed. If the visitor was a monk he was usually entertained in the common frater, or dining-hall; if a prior, in the frater, but with a double portion; if an abbot, provided he wished to take his meals in the frater, he was to be served as their own abbot.

In the evening the hostilar was to receive from the sacristan four candles, and from the chamberlain a cresset-light, for each guest-monk; if a prior, the lights were to be double; if an abbot, no certified number, but an ample sufficiency.

All these curious details are given in the 'Customary'; and it seems also that the compilers were aware that some time their hospitality might be abused, for there is a rule laid down that if any guest should be a mere vagabond or acted in any dishonest or disorderly way, he was to be corrected according to his fault, either by words or stripes, and after his correction suffered to depart.

The volume further contains the usages and discipline of the frater, the dorter (or dormitory), and the chapter, also everything pertaining to the admission and profession of novices; to the infirmary; to the rules observed in visiting the sick, in Extreme Unction, and at death and burial; to the provision of candles and lights, both for conventual and church purposes; to the respective dignity of festivals, and to the ringing of bells.

Altogether the volume gives a most interesting insight into the orderly, everyday life of an old-time monastery.

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