

ST. MARY'S, CHRISTCHURCH NORTH

VISIT OF BISHOP BRODIE.

(From our own correspondent.)

His Lordship Bishop Brodie visited St. Mary's on Sunday, August 12, and at 11 o'clock presided at the ceremonial re-opening of the church after the recently effected extension and renovation. A guard of honor to his Lordship was formed at the entrance to the church by members of the Hibernian Society in regalia. As the episcopal procession advanced to the sanctuary the choir sang "Ecce Sacerdos Magnus." Solemn High Mass was celebrated by the Rev. Father Burger, S.M. (St. Bede's College). Very Rev. Father Graham, S.M., M.A. (Rector of St. Bede's College), was deacon, Rev. Father Long subdeacon, and Rev. Father Roche, S.M., master of ceremonies. The Very Rev. Dean Regnault, S.M., was priest attendant on his Lordship the Bishop. The choir, conducted by Mr. Simon, with Mrs. W. Cronin as organist, rendered the Mass of St. Mary Magdalen (Turner) most effectively. The high altar was tastefully adorned, and, combined with the recent alterations, presented a spectacle of chaste beauty. At the conclusion of Mass the Very Rev. Dean Regnault extended a cordial welcome to his Lordship the Bishop, and assured his Lordship that his presence was appreciated by the people of St. Mary's, and that his kindly interest in the parish would be a great encouragement to them. The church in its improved state (stated the Very Rev. Dean) would have to serve them for some time, though it was in his (the speaker's) mind to be able to welcome his Lordship some time in the future to a temple that would prove more fitting as a dwelling-place for the Eucharistic King. Circumstances were, however, against any project of the kind at present. He wished, he said, to place before his Lordship as their bishop the excellent spirit of co-operation that existed between priests and people. In referring to the parish school, which will shortly have to be rebuilt, the Dean mentioned the carnival now being promoted to raise funds for that object. He extended to his Lordship the Bishop the sympathy of the people in the trials and anxieties he was being subjected to owing to the unsatisfactory state of the Military Service Act. In this matter the support of the people would be cheerfully given in whatever measures the hierarchy decided upon. In conclusion the Dean expressed the fervent wish that his Lordship the Bishop may enjoy long years of health and strength to rule over his diocese. His Lordship Dr. Brodie thanked the Dean, priests, and people for the kindly welcome accorded him; and to this triple unity of bishop, priests, and people he hoped a solution of the present anxiety referred to by their pastor would be brought about. His Lordship complimented the clergy on the manifest piety and faith of the people, and expressed his appreciation of the devotional and artistic singing of the choir. Taking his text from the day's Gospel—"So much the more did they wonder saying He hath done all things well," he referred to the sadness and sorrow of a world prostrated with grief—in the words of our Holy Father the Pope—the crime of suicide of European civilisation. The nations of Europe had forgotten God, but when they once again prostrated themselves before Him with the prayer "To whom shall we go but to Thee—

Thou hast the words of Eternal Life," peace and happiness would replace the slaughter of the present. Truths necessary for the attainment of this end were kept before us by the Church throughout her ceremonial from the day of our Baptism until our last hour. His Lordship thought it wise on an occasion such as the present to review briefly the progress of the Catholic Church in this diocese of Canterbury. Just 77 years ago next Thursday, the first British warship, H.M.S. Britomart, arrived at Akaroa and planted the Union Jack upon our shores. The following day a French vessel came upon the scene, and the sight of the British flag filled many on board with feelings of disappointment. Two of her passengers were priests, and they made up their minds to sow the seeds of the Gospel and at once set to work to do so. In 1860 was celebrated in Christchurch the first Mass, which was attended by some 60 or 70 Catholics, and a fortnight later saw the first church established. The Catholics of the diocese now number 30,000; there are 60 churches which have been built at a cost of £242,000. Whilst erecting churches the pioneers of the Faith did not lose sight of the religious education of the children, and schools grew apace until a sum of £260,000 had been expended in this direction. These figures do not include the maintenance and upkeep of the churches and schools. The charitable institutions of the diocese represent £120,000, so that a sum of about £650,000 stands to the credit of the Catholics of Canterbury during the last 57 years—a handsome tribute to their love of and loyalty to the faith. He rejoiced with them that day at the improvements made to their church, and in conclusion requested the parishioners of St. Mary's to rise in earnestness and co-operate with their devoted priests in the works of the future, and by so doing perpetuate the deeds so nobly begun by the pioneers. In the evening the devotions, which began at 6.30, consisted of the Holy Rosary, sermon by the Bishop, and Pontifical Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, his Lordship being attended by the Very Rev. Dean Regnault and Very Rev. Father Graham. The church was thronged, his Lordship's discourse on devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, being listened to with the closest attention. In convincingly simple language he outlined the teaching of the Church, culling from the Sacred Scriptures the most telling and touching references to prophecies right up to their fulfilment in the person of our Holy Redeemer; and made an earnest appeal to the congregation to foster a greater love for the Adorable Sacrament of the Altar and for Holy Mass. The music, effectively rendered by the choir, consisted of "Ave Maria" (Gounod), "Ave Verum" (Turner), "O Salutaris" (Elgar), "Tantum Ergo" (Turner), and the Litany of the Blessed Virgin.

Your time admits of several divisions, but there is one invariable rule: no part of it should pass uselessly; for every hour concerns your salvation—every hour has a duty appointed for it by God Himself, and of which He will demand account; for, from our first to our last moment, He has given us no instant in vain or to be lost.—Fenelon.

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