

The Holy Father's Working Day

Popes of the twentieth century are expected to be hard at work all the time, if they would allay catastrophic surmises (says *Rome*). Kings, Prime Ministers, men of affairs, can afford every now and then to take a few weeks off duty without alarming anybody. If they are overworked, or convalescent, or in need of a change, their medical man says gravely: 'What your Majesty needs is a month's rest—go to the Riviera or to Cairo, and above all things, don't occupy yourself with business.' Dr. Marchiafava cannot say that to the Holy Father—all he can say and insist upon is: 'Take as much rest as you possibly can under the circumstances.'

It is only when Papal audiences are suspended that one realises how important a feature they form of the life of Rome. During the year 1912 the number of persons received in private and public audience by his Holiness was 49,597—in the first quarter of the year 11,581, in the second 20,116, in the third 9846, in the fourth 8054. These figures do not include the numerous pilgrimages, often numbering many hundreds of persons, and other collective audiences given in the Sala Clementina, the Sala Ducale, the Loggia. Nor do they include the official audiences of Tabella, as they are called, which take up much of the Pontiff's time. Every morning of the year the Pope confers for about an hour between 9 and 10 with the Cardinal Secretary, who lays before him the chief happenings of importance of the previous twenty-four hours. Every Friday Cardinal De Lai, Secretary of the Consistorial Congregation, consults the Pontiff on the more important affairs of his department—especially the nomination of bishops all over the world; every Saturday the Cardinal Vicar of Rome has a long interview connected with the business of the diocese; these audiences usually begin about sunset and sometimes last for two hours. Twice a month the Pope receives an account of the working of the congregations from the Cardinal Prefect of the Council, the Cardinal Prefect of the Rites, the Cardinal Datary, always accompanied by the Sub-Datary, the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda; once a month he receives the Cardinal Chancellor of Holy Church, the Cardinal Prefect of the Segnatura Apostolica, the Cardinal Penitentiary, the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation of Studies and the Cardinal Prefect of the Archives.

Nor is this all. Every morning the Pope grants a private audience to his Maestro di Camera, who acquaints him with the arrangements made for audiences, functions, etc.; every Thursday evening the Assessor of the Holy Office makes a special report on the work of that congregation; every Tuesday the Pontiff receives one of the two Secretaries of Propaganda for Ordinary Affairs and for Oriental Rites; twice a month he receives officially his Private Almoner, the Secretary of Briefs to Princes, the Secretary of Latin Letters; once a month he gives audiences to the President of the Noble Academy, the Promoter of the Faith, the Dean of the Rota, the Master of the Apostolic Palaces, the President of the School Commission for Rome, the Secretary of the Biblical Commission. Every Tuesday an audience is set apart for the Secretary of the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs which has to treat of the politico-religious questions affecting the Holy See and the various civil governments; and every Friday an audience is granted to the Substitute for Ordinary Affairs of the Secretariate of State. Other important officials of the Roman Curia have speech with His Holiness at irregular intervals as occasion requires.

Finally Pius X. is normally engaged for two hours every morning, between 7 and 9, with his two secretaries, Mgr. Bressan and Mgr. Prescini, over his private correspondence. How important this last work has become is known to everybody who knows anything about the Vatican—indeed, the chronic grumblers, who are to be found in Rome as everywhere else, complain that the Segretariola has invaded the domain of congregations, tribunals, and offices, and that the Pope is constantly doing things which should be done through

the ordinary channels. But then there is another species of chronic grumbler who laments that the Pope does nothing, but has put everything into the hands of Cardinals De Lai, Merry del Val, and Vives y Tuto. Both kinds manage sometimes to get their ideas reflected in the newspapers, and both kinds agree that when the Pope suspends all his audiences and most of his work for a few weeks he must be very near death's door.

Father Nolan, Provincial of the Irish Jesuits, who presided in Dublin on Monday, April 20, at a lecture given there by Mgr. Benson on 'Lourdes,' dwelt on the extraordinary versatility of the lecturer. On Friday the Monsignor took part in a meeting of journalists in London. On Saturday he wrote a special report of the English Cup Final for a London paper, on Sunday he preached in London, and on Monday he was lecturing in Dublin on 'Lourdes.' Possibly enough, posterity may find that a new novel was blocked out in such intervals of leisure as the period comprised.

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