

EUCCHARISTIC CONGRESS AT MALTA

PAPAL LEGATE ENTHUSIASTICALLY WELCOMED

The people of Malta poured in their thousands into Valetta on Tuesday, April 22, to welcome the Legate from the Holy Father. Cardinal Ferrata was not due to arrive until 4 o'clock in the afternoon, but two hours before that time Valetta was thronged (writes the special correspondent of the *Universe*).

Between the arms of the breakwater at 4 o'clock came the Hussar. Three launches filled with University students were waiting near the harbor mouth. From their decks went up a splendid cheer of welcome. Other boats lying nearer shore took up the cry, and thus was the messenger from the Eternal City received by the people amongst whom he was to stay. Valetta welcomed Cardinal Ferrata from one side of the port. The three cities expressed a no less generous welcome from the other.

The Papal Legate's Arrival.

On stepping ashore his Eminence was met by the Hon. the Collector of Customs and the Superintendent of Police, and was welcomed by the members of the Congress Working Committee. Entering a carriage drawn by four horses, the Cardinal was driven through streets densely lined by cheering spectators to the Sarria square in Floriana. There the Archbishop of Malta (Mgr. Pace), the dignitaries from abroad, the Cathedral Chapter, the Chapter of the Collegiate Churches, the clergy, secular and regular, and the General Committee of the Congress gave

Cardinal Ferrata a Formal Welcome.

Replying to a touching address by Mgr. Pace, Cardinal Ferrata said in the course of his remarks: 'It is all the easier for me to accept these sentiments of homage and affection with complete satisfaction, seeing that, through me, they are directed to the Vicar of Jesus Christ, whom I have the honor to represent on this solemn occasion. His Holiness has desired that Malta shall succeed the great cities of Cologne, London, Montreal, Madrid, and Vienna as the seat of the twenty-fourth Eucharistic Congress, with the idea of giving a special and public testimony of His paternal benevolence and consideration to this generous people, who throughout long centuries have held high and unsullied the Flag of the Catholic Religion and of their unshrinkable attachment to the Holy See. For my own part, I shall only say that in again setting foot on this beloved island, I feel that deep and sincere joy which one feels at seeing, after the lapse of several years, persons who are truly dear to one and who have never been forgotten. Your Grace, I desire to say to your venerable and worthy clergy and to this strong and sympathetic population, that the very hearty reception accorded to the Legate of the Pope is a fresh and luminous proof of their faith, which I acknowledge by bearing to them all the Benediction of the Holy Father, a token and pledge of the choicest Divine favors.'

The last sentiment evoked cheers which must have been heard miles off. When silence reigned once more, Judge Puelicino, LL.D., welcomed the Legate in the name of the population. Cardinal Ferrata again replied, and those taking part in the reception ceremony formed up in processional order, and thus they conducted the Cardinal to Valetta through streets rich with decorations and triumphal arches. Again the bands played; again the thousands cheered.

Opening of the Congress.

Wednesday morning was spent in visiting by most of the Congressists. The church bells gave notice all over the island at a quarter to three that the Cardinal Legate was leaving the Archiepiscopal Palace on his way to Musta, where the formal opening of the Congress was timed for 3.30. Musta is outside Valetta, but all along the road by which the Cardinal passed were crowds and decorations to mark the triumphal progress.

The street leading to the rotunda was garlanded overhead. Inside the church the Legate was supported at the throne by Cardinal Nava and Cardinal Lualdi. After a prayer, the proceedings commenced with the declaration by Bishop Heylen that the Malta Eucharistic Congress was inaugurated by the authority of his Holiness Pius X. His Lordship then read the telegram it was proposed to send to the Holy Father, expressing their loyalty and begging the Apostolic Benediction. Applause greeted the announcement. When Mgr. Canon Gauci read the Brief of Appointment of the Papal Legate loud cries of 'Long live the Pope' rang through the church.

Cardinal Ferrata then delivered his inaugural address, to which Archbishop Pace replied, and the Marchese Alfred Mattei, LL.D., followed. In welcoming the English Congressists the latter speaker said:—

'Welcome to you our fellow-subjects who have come from the land of St. Augustine, which is privileged to be the Heart of the Great British Empire, a land so justly famed for its beautiful abbeys, incontrovertible evidence of the past, and which sends us from a stone's throw from the great Westminster Abbey our good friend to whom we owe so much for this Congress—Cardinal Bourne.'

Masses were celebrated on Thursday morning from 4 o'clock onwards. At 7 some 13,000 children assembled at the Church of St. Publius at Floriana. The Cardinal Legate celebrated Mass, and then, assisted by six bishops and several clergy, gave Holy Communion to the boys and girls. At the end of the service they filed out and were joined in procession by about 2000 other children, who, for want of space, had perforce to approach the Communion rails at other churches. Then they moved on to Valetta.

Sectional meetings were held from 10 until mid-day. The English assembled at St. Augustine's Church, the Italians at Gesu, the French meeting were at St. Francis's, the Spanish at the Church of St. Maria di Gesu. Santa Caterina d'Italia accommodated the Belgians, Santa Maria Damascena the Greeks, Our Lady of Mount Carmel the Germans. The clergy gathered at the Church of St. Paul Shipwrecked, the ladies at St. Dominic's, the students at the Oratory of St. John's, and the Maltese people at the parish churches. At the English sectional meeting Father McGlade read a paper on the Quarant' Ore. Bishop Clune and others also addressed the meeting.

The Duke of Norfolk Thanked.

Four Cardinals, including Cardinal Bourne, attended the second general assembly held at Musta Church on Thursday afternoon. The Bishop of Namur (Mgr. Heylen) presided, and expressed gratitude to Cardinal Bourne for his efforts to make Malta the scene of the Congress. Addressing the Duke of Norfolk in English, his Lordship added: 'I wish to give a hearty welcome to his Grace the Duke of Norfolk, the first of all Catholics in England.'

There was a reception by the Cardinal Legate in the evening at the Bishop's Palace.

The Cardinal Legate celebrated Pontifical Mass at the Cathedral on Friday morning, and Solemn Masses were sung at the other churches of the island by the prelates taking part in the Congress. The sectional meetings were continued from 10 till noon, the gathering at St. Augustine's Church, where the English Congressists congregated, being particularly large. Cardinal Bourne was at Imbina in the morning. Imbina, it may be recalled here, is possibly the oldest town in Malta, and was the ancient capital. The Cathedral there occupies the site of the house of St. Publius, and some of the old walls still stand to form part of the structure of the Cathedral.

The third general assembly was held in the church at Musta in the afternoon, Cardinal Bourne reading a paper in English upon 'The Eucharist and the Family.'

The solemn Blessing of the Sea was the feature of Saturday's proceedings. The day opened with a general communion of the students and the Children of Mary, the former in the Collegiate Church of St. Paul Shipwrecked, and the latter in the Basilica of St. Dominic.

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