

only partially correct, and has in any case no bearing on the relation of Christianity to heathenism. As the name of the first day of the week Sunday is derived from Egyptian astrology. The seven planets known to us as Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, and the Moon, each had an hour of the day assigned to them, and the planet which was dominant during the first hour of any day of the week gave its name to that day. During the first and second century the week of seven days was introduced into Rome from Egypt, and the Roman names of the planets were given to each successive day. The Teutonic nations adopted the week as a division of time from the Romans, but they changed the Roman names into those of corresponding Teutonic deities. Hence the *dies Solis* (day of the Sun) became Sunday (German, *Sonntag*). The 'Sunday' of the heathen world was not, as the Christian Sunday is, a day specially set aside from the other days of the week for the purpose of worship. As everybody knows, the Jews observed the seventh day—and not Sunday—as the sabbath or day of rest. In the time of the Apostles this arrangement was superseded by the setting aside of the first day of the week for the public and solemn worship of God. The day was referred to by Christians simply as the Lord's Day; and it was some time before they adopted the current usage and called it Sunday. The important matter is, of course, not the mere name by which the day is designated, but the distinctive religious character and observance by which it is marked. The Christian Sunday is the institution of one day in seven for the commemoration of Christ's Resurrection, and for the special public worship of God. As such it had absolutely no counterpart in heathen times and institutions.

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We had hoped to answer also in this issue the next two questions on the list; but exceptional pressure on our space, arising from a welcome and lengthy report of the important doings of our Catholic Federation, has compelled us to curtail our editorial matter. We will deal with these next week, merely remarking now that they show a surprising want of knowledge on the part of one who professes to find in them a ground for the rejection of that historic faith which has revolutionised the world, and which by its prolonged and varied successes has demonstrated its claim to be a religion for all mankind and for all time.

**LETTER OF
HIS LORDSHIP THE BISHOP OF DUNEDIN
TO THE VERY REV. AND REVEREND CLERGY
OF THE DIOCESE.**

ON THE

UNIVERSAL JUBILEE

PROMULGATED IN MEMORY OF CONSTANTINE'S EDICT OF PEACE, A.D., 313.

DEAR REV. FATHERS,—

During this year we commemorate the sixteenth centenary of an event of Church history which is of deep interest to all Christians. It was in the year of our Lord 313—sixteen centuries ago—that the great Emperor Constantine gave liberty to the Church of Jesus Christ and repose from the persecutions which had afflicted her for nearly three hundred years.

The Divine Founder of our Holy Church, our Lord Jesus Christ, was contradicted and persecuted during His life upon earth. His Apostles were cast into prison, scourged, and sentenced to death. For over 250 years the early Christians were most cruelly persecuted. They were treated as slaves, and forced to labor on the public works. They were cast into prison, cruelly tortured, or put to death. But they cheerfully endured every suffering rather than abandon the Faith which they had

received. In spite of all the efforts of the pagan world the Christian religion spread over every part of the great Roman Empire, and at length, by the interposition of Divine Providence, persecution ceased, and liberty was granted to the Church.

The tenth general persecution was still raging at the beginning of the fourth century, but great events were then taking place in the Roman Empire which prepared the way for a new order of things.

The Western portion of the Roman Empire was then governed by the Emperor Constantine, whilst Italy was held by Maxentius, a cruel tyrant who ruled in Rome. In the year 312, Constantine, led on by the course of events, or rather guided by Divine Providence, resolved to crush Maxentius and take possession of Rome. Accordingly he conducted his troops across the Alps and passed triumphantly through northern Italy. One day, about noon, as he was preparing for a decisive conflict, he saw in the heavens a bright Cross surrounded by rays of light and bearing this inscription: 'With this sign shalt thou conquer.' This wonderful sign was witnessed by the whole army. On the following night, our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to Constantine and commanded him to make the Cross and its inscription the standard of his army. Constantine obeyed, and under the standard of the Cross he marched to victory. On the banks of the Tiber near the Milvian Bridge, within a few miles of Rome, he encountered the army of Maxentius. A great battle was fought, in which Constantine was completely victorious. His rival Maxentius lost his life in the waters of the Tiber. In commemoration of that victory the Senate and the Roman people erected a triumphal arch which still stands near the Coliseum in Rome, and records that under 'Divine guidance' Constantine had delivered the city and the Empire from the tyranny of Maxentius.

Some months afterwards, in the year 313, the famous Edict of Milan was published. It declared that the limitations which were imposed on the Christians in former rescripts were to be done away with; that every subject of the Empire who desired to profess the Christian religion might do so without fear of being in any way molested; that churches and church property which had been confiscated should be restored to the rightful owners; and that Christians as a legal association might acquire and hold property. This decree was destined to produce most important effects on the fortunes of the Church. As our Holy Father says in his Apostolic Letter: 'Then at last the Church Militant gained the first of those triumphs which throughout its history have invariably followed persecutions of every sort, and from that day ever increasing benefits have accrued to the human race.'

Our Holy Father Pope Pius X. has ordained that the sixteenth centenary of this great event should be celebrated with great solemnity in Rome. And in order that all the faithful spread over the globe may share in the celebration he has proclaimed a General Jubilee, which will continue until the eighth day of December of the present year. 'To the purpose,' he says, 'that the humble prayers that should be offered on the occasion of this solemn commemoration throughout the Catholic world may redound to the greater spiritual good of the faithful, We ordain that they be enriched with a Plenary Indulgence in Jubilee form, urgently exhorting all the children of the Church that they unite their prayers and their works of piety to Ours, to the end that by means of the spiritual favor of Jubilee offered to them these may bear the greatest possible fruit both to the profit of souls and the advantage of religion.'

The conditions for gaining the Jubilee, as laid down by the Sovereign Pontiff in his Apostolic Letter are:—

1st. To make six visits to a church or churches to be designated by the Bishop of the diocese.

Persons residing in the city of Dunedin will make three visits to St. Joseph's Cathedral, and three visits to St. Patrick's Church, South Dunedin, or to the Church of the Sacred Heart, North-east Valley. Persons who cannot without inconvenience visit two churches may make the six visits in any one of the three above-mentioned churches.

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