

through the air, the angel close by his side. After some time the singing of the heavenly choir, keeping guard over the place wherein lay the Divine Child, fell upon Gideon's ears, and soon they reached the open door of the stable, through which shone a glowing brilliancy. Gideon paused on the threshold in trembling fear, but the angel touched him lightly, bidding him enter and fear not. Gideon did as the angel ordered.

Softly he entered the stable, but, for a few minutes, being dazzled from the light that came from the corner wherein was the manger, he could see nothing. Then his vision cleared, and he found himself looking into the eyes of the Divine Babe, Who smiled sweetly on the gentle lad.

He felt himself drawn by invisible hands nearer and still more near, till he was close to the bed of straw wherein lay the Infant King with tiny hands outstretched towards Gideon. "Oh! my Lord and my God!" cried Gideon, as he cast himself on the ground in adoration. The eyes of the Divine Child seemed to pass through him, and he felt his heart melt within him. Time passed unheeded, but the things Gideon saw in the eyes of his God he never would reveal. Then he felt the we hands of the Babe press lightly on his eyelids, and a cloud of darkness fell over his vision—Gideon was blind! . . . The angel lifted Gideon gently up and bore him swiftly through the air back to his humble dwelling. "Fare thee well, Gideon," said the angel, "though blind to the things of this world, the Lord shall be ever in thy sight, for it has been granted to thee to follow with thine inner vision the whole earthly career of the Redeemer of the world, and when His last moment on earth has come thou shall have the happiness of yielding up thy spirit at the moment of His death.

Gideon, from that night forward, was blind to all earthly things, but to the eyes of his mental vision was present ever the whole earthly life of Jesus. He watched Him as He worked with His foster-father, St. Joseph, and His Virgin Mother, in the little House of Nazareth; and he followed Him step by step through the three years of His public life till at length, the last final scene of His earthly life—His death on the cross on Calvary's Hill—was at hand; then the soul of Gideon, the pure of heart, went forth to greet his Saviour.

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Evils of the Day

IMPORTANT STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE HIERARCHY ON THE OCCASION OF ITS ANNUAL MEETING IN MELBOURNE
OCTOBER 9-10, 1924.

THE MARRIAGE BOND.

I. In view of renewed attempts to confirm and extend State interference with the marriage bond, we deem it our duty to remind the faithful that no human authority can break the bond of marriage. "What God hath joined, let no man put asunder." No human power, civil or ecclesiastical, can dissolve a marriage duly entered into between baptised persons and followed by conjugal intercourse. A civil "divorce" granted to such persons is null and void before God and in the eyes of the Church; the marriage bond remains intact after the "divorce"; the persons so "divorced" are not free to contract another marriage; and should they attempt to do so, they cannot be admitted to the Sacraments.

THE PESTILENTIAL "BIRTH CONTROL" CAMPAIGN.

II. The pestilential campaign which is openly and shamelessly carried on in our midst by the advocates of what is called "birth control" compels us to warn our people against the defilement of the marriage bed and bond by immoral practices, which are intended to minister to sexual passion, and to prevent the birth of children. Even some of those who are clamoring for population to fill the spaces of Australia and to defend Australia against foreign aggression are found to be the most persistent advocates of the limitation of Australia's families. If married persons are not giving way to mere selfishness, and if disease, or any reasonable cause, makes it prudent or necessary to avoid having offspring, or to limit the number of the family, God has provided the remedy. The remedy is self-control, and there is no other remedy that can be

reconciled with God's law. The shameful devices and practices recommended by the advocates of so-called "birth control" are utterly immoral and detestable. If those who are preaching "birth control" would turn their attention to supporting "child endowment" and to encouraging large families, they would be within God's law, and they would do a real service to Australia.

Outside the Catholic Church there is, we regret to say, no united and definite stand against those immoral practices which are summed up under the words "birth control." This is an additional reason why Catholics should avoid mixed marriages. For while many non-Catholics share our detestation of those "birth control" practices, many others do not, and the marriage of one of the latter class with a Catholic is almost sure to be a difficult and unhappy union.

CHILD LIFE AS SACRED AS THAT OF THE MOTHER.

III. Lastly, we desire to remind the faithful that the life of the unborn child is just as sacred as the life of the mother. As no one is justified in taking the life of the mother in order to save the life of the child, so, and for exactly the same reason, no one is justified in taking the life of the child in order to save the life of the mother. The civil law may sometimes attempt to discriminate. It may call the act of taking the mother's life murder, and punish it as such, while it may take no account of the act by which the life of the unborn child is sacrificed. But God's laws makes no such distinction, and those who would avail themselves of any impunity which the civil law might allow would have to answer to Him Who breathed the spirit of life into child and mother alike.

WEDDING BELLS

JAMES-McKENNA.

St. Patrick's Church, Patea, was the scene of a very pretty and interesting wedding on August 27, when Mollie, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. E. McKenna, was married to Francis William, second son of Mr. and Mrs. H. James, of Ararata. Father Phelan, officiated. The bride, who entered the church on the arm of her father, looked charming in a simple frock of rich ivory satin, gracefully draped to the left side, where the soft folds, which formed a long, loose panel, were caught with a large rosette of satin ribbon. Her beautiful hand-embroidered tulle veil was held in place by a coronet of pearls and orange blossoms, while a bouquet of hyacinths, fresas, and snowdrops completed a charming ensemble. The bridesmaids—Misses Nellie and Cassie McKenna (sisters of the bride) and Misses Myrtle Johnston and Jean McClean (both of Hawera)—looked dainty in their frocks of early Victorian design, the two former in pale-blue satin marocain and lemon taffeta, respectively, with wreaths of gold leaves and ribbon adorning their hair, and gold shoes and stockings; and the latter two heliotrope and pink charmeuse of the

palest shades, with silver leaves in their hair, and silver shoes and stockings. All four bridesmaids carried posies to match their frocks. Mr. E. J. McKenna (Wellington) was best man and Messrs. Fred McKenna and Monty Hoult (Patea), and Rod Ellis (Wellington), groomsmen. After the ceremony, the guests were entertained at the residence of the bride's parents. The newly-wedded couple left later by car for the North, the bride travelling in a saxe-blue costume and a shot taffeta hat, finished with a wreath of blue flowers.

AN APPEAL FROM OMAKAU

Father O'Dea, of Omakau, appeals to his friends throughout the Dominion to whom he has sent books of art union tickets to return blocks with remittances at once, so as to enable him to have the drawing take place on January 13, 1925, as well as to give him a helping hand to raise the sum of £5000 to build a new church on a beautiful site which he has secured overlooking the rising town of Omakau, Ida Valley, Lauder, and surrounding districts. This is his first appeal to the public in 20 years.

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