

NOTES FROM ROME

Rome, September 25, 1925.

In the *Ecclesiastical Bulletin* of the Archdiocese of Cologne (which, by the way, happens to be the greatest diocese in Christendom, with its 3,000,000 Catholics) an order to his clergy is conveyed by the Cardinal Archbishop of Cologne which will, in that part of the world at least, lessen the number of organised bodies going to Rome more as mere tourists than as pilgrims. This points out that travel agencies issue programmes which, in some instances, attract persons by indicating the pleasures in art and scenery that are to be had from a journey to Italy. It also indicates that the organised body will have an ecclesiastical director with the travellers, though he has little or no influence over it. In future no priest of the archdiocese of Cologne may take up the position of ecclesiastical director to any body of travellers going to the Eternal City during Holy Year without the express permission of the Cardinal Archbishop. In this way, no mere body of tourists can pose as a body of pilgrims.

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One morning last week there were gathered in the sacristy of St. Peter's the chiefs of the *dramatis personae* connected with the robbery of the jewels three months ago from the treasury of this basilica. Among the group were the prosecuting lawyers of the Italian Court of Justice, the lawyers for the defence, and two experts in jewels. The experts had been brought there by the Court of Justice to make a valuation of the jewels and gold stolen by the prisoners, and to say whether they do not amount to far more than 200,000 lire, viz., the valuation placed upon the booty by two other experts who had previously been called in to value them.

The two lawyers for the defence questioned the legality of this second valuation and reserved their decision on its merits for fifteen days.

The importance of this point is evident. If the value of the stolen jewels is more than 200,000 lire, then the case must be tried by the Court of Assizes, in which event the cobbler-thief will, with his accomplices, stick to his last for a longer term of imprisonment than if the valuation is below the 200,000 mark.

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Last week the press depicted the Holy Father as hankering for a place in the League of Nations, basing their reports on an address delivered by Father Gemelli, O.F.M., Rector of the Catholic University of Milan, at a Mass celebrated in the presence of the Bishop of Geneva and Lausanne on the occasion of the opening of the sessions of the League.

The following note published in *L'Osservatore Romano* (semi-official organ of the Vatican) puts the incident in a nutshell:—

"Some journals receive from Geneva that the Holy Father is stated to have said to a religious: 'Convey my salutations and good wishes to the representatives of the nations at Geneva for a great work of peace. But tell them at Geneva not to forget that, if a just peace is to be really made, the Church of Rome cannot be absent,' and from

this they conclude that the Holy See aspires to enter into the Society of Nations. We are authorised to declare there is not a shadow of truth in all this."

Father Gemelli telegraphed at once to *L'Osservatore Romano*: "I ask you to deny decisively and energetically report given in some journals that I expressed at Geneva, during Catholic function, any thought in the name of the Holy Father."

This closes the incident as far as His Holiness and the famous Franciscan are concerned. But it is here pertinent to ask: What has the League of Nations done yet? Who cares a snap of the fingers among the nations for its findings? When Italian officers were killed by Greeks some months ago, was the League able to do anything to avert a rupture? Mussolini told it plainly to keep its fingers out of his pie and dictated his own terms to Greece.

What real binding force is keeping the League together? So far only the hotel-keepers in Geneva have gained by the League. And yet there is one living in an ancient building by the Tiber, with experiences begot of peace-making for 1600 years, with more moral influence all over the world than any three of the Great Powers. Why is he not in the League of Nations, anyhow? After the next great war in 1930 or 1935 we shall have the answer.

And suppose a war broke out to-morrow, where is the League able to avert a fight to a finish? Would not Europe not divide up again into two mighty camps? And would not both sides go on their knees to America to beg her money, arms, and men?

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The union of the churches with the One True Church, having its centre in Rome, is a very live question these days. His Eminence Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines, has just sent the following letter to Abbot Lambert Baundin, of Mont-Cesar, on the matter:

"We follow with respectful attention the efforts of the Holy Father for the union of the churches. We recall the august words of his Holiness in the *Encyclical Ecclesiam Dei*, of November 12, 1923—The Latins are trying to acquire a more complete and more profound knowledge of the institutions and customs of the Orientals. Let them be persuaded that the Orient once known better among us, a just estimation and a true charity will follow. These dispositions of spirit are of the highest importance in the preparation for religious unity."

"We earnestly hope to see the priests and people of Belgium respond with filial attention to the ceaseless exhortations of the Sovereign Pontiff, and to associate themselves to the movement destined to prepare the way for the reconciliation between the Christians of the East and the West. The celebration of the centenary of the Council of Nicea, the First Oecumenical Council, and the solemnity of Holy Year, which is consecrated, according to the Pope's intention, to pray for the great cause of religious unity, will give a happy occasion for organising this apostolate and to awaken in the faithful an ardent zeal for the realisation of this eminently Catholic ideal."

If the dream of the late Pope Benedict XV be realised in the present Pope's reign, we shall see the greatest event in the Catholic Church since Luther tore so many nations from Christ's fold.

—Irish Weekly News.

BOOK NOTICES

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