

That Church He promised would last till the end of time; that the gates of hell would never overcome it or prevail against it, for He would be with it, and with it to protect it. We Catholics say, to what other authority are we to appeal for knowledge that leads to salvation if not to the Church which He established to take His place? Had Our Saviour intended that we should be our own guide in religion, had He wished us to make our own form of belief, had He intended that we should—each one of us—be sufficient for himself, He would have told us so, and He would not have set up special teachers, He would not have established a Church. Instead, however, of entrusting everything to ourselves, He founded a Church, He appointed a head, giving him extensive authority, saying to him, "I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: Feed My lambs, feed My sheep." We Catholics believe that the Catholic Church was established by Christ, and that St. Peter was the first head, and that his place as head is now taken by Pope Benedict XV. And hence this morning I say in presence of his representative, now seated on the Bishop's throne, that we acknowledge Pope Benedict as the head of the Church, and only Church, established by Jesus Christ our Saviour. To whom, then, shall we turn for guidance? To what religious authority can we give our allegiance but Benedict, now happily ruling the Church of Christ; for he has the words of eternal life? The faith of Catholics, who number about 300 millions, is no blind unreasoning faith. It is in full agreement with reason, not in conflict with it. The Catholic reasons with himself in this manner: God exists, for my reason convinces me of His existence. He made a revelation of Himself to man and sent a messenger to earth. Of this messenger the book, called the Bible, gives me much information. I examine this book and find it worthy of credence and reliable. That book tells me that the messenger sent from heaven was God, for the book is historically accurate and it tells me that, by His own power, He raised Himself from the dead. I learn also from that historical work that this Divine messenger established a Church and endowed it with authority to teach in His name and therefore to teach the truth and only the truth, and that it was to last till the end of the world and that it was to be limited only by the bounds of the earth. Whatever, then, this Church bids me believe, I must believe under the penalty of disobedience to its Founder who was God and who had said, "He that heareth you, heareth Me." That Church tells me that Peter was made head of the society by Our Lord Himself, that the keys of heaven were entrusted to him and that he was to teach the whole flock, pastors and people, for Christ commanded him to do so when He said, "Feed My lambs, feed my sheep." Briefly stated, then, the Catholic says: Christ was God (for He proved it by his Resurrection); He established a Church—only one Church—that Church must be divine; He gave it authority to teach in His name; He promised to be always with it so that the gates of hell, the powers of hell, should never overcome or conquer it; He would therefore protect it from teaching error, for if it did teach error the gates of hell would have prevailed against it; it would last always, for He said He would be with it till the consummation of the world. That is our belief, my dear people—yours and mine—and that belief it is that gives us that great confidence that if we are faithful on earth to our belief and everything it involves, we shall be happy with God for ever in heaven.

In the many addresses presented to his Excellency the Apostolic Delegate during the few days he has already spent in the Dominion, he has been asked to assure his august master, Benedict XV., of our loyalty to his throne and person. Both his Excellency and his Holiness the Pope are well aware of our attachment to the Holy See. The gifted writer of the "Song for the Pope" said:—

Over all the orb no land more true than our own old Catholic land,

Through ages of blood to the Rock hath stood, Oh! true may she ever stand.

If that is true of Ireland, it is true also of all the English-speaking countries in which the scattered sons and daughters of Ireland have found a home. Ireland's allegiance to Rome and the faith has never wavered even for a moment. St. Patrick went to Ireland with the blessing and the sanction of Pope Celestine. The land became Catholic in a short time from end to end. Irish missionaries were soon able to spread the faith over Western Europe, France, Belgium, Switzerland, and even Italy early benefited by the zeal of those learned and saintly missionaries. Traces of their enduring work are still discernible in the names of patrons of churches and towns in many parts of Europe.

Successive Popes, remembering their obligation to Ireland, sent to her help of various kinds when the sword of persecution was dripping with the blood of her martyrs.

And Ireland never forgot her duty to the Holy See. Rather than abandon their fidelity to Peter, the Irish people in their darkest days sacrificed their wealth and even their lives. Who, then, or what can separate us from Rome? Neither life nor death, nor poverty nor affliction can divide us.

The Irish people of to-day, Irish either by birth or by descent, appreciate the gallant fight of their ancestors for the faith. That faith has come down to us as a precious heirloom, and here in the southern seas our professions of loyalty to the faith ring as true as in Ireland itself.

We are proud of our line of supreme pontiffs stretching back in a long array to the days of St. Peter. Amongst them we recognise some two score who laid down their lives for the faith of Christ and an equal number whose sanctity gave them a place amongst the canonised confessors of Holy Church. Coming down to our own times, we honor the memory of Leo XIII. for many reasons, one of which is his fatherly interest in the working classes. Read his Encyclical on "Labor," which has been styled the "Magna Charta of the rights of Labor," and you will see that, nobleman though he was by family, he was at heart a democrat and keenly grieved for the social conditions which placed so heavy a burden upon the weak shoulders of the toiling multitude.

His successor, Pius X., was noble, not because of descent from the aristocracy, but because he belonged to the aristocracy of brains and virtue. He aimed at restoring all things in Christ (after the example and under the inspiration of St. Paul) and left a record of work done which will long continue to bear fruit.

And what shall I say of the present august occupant of the papal throne? As in examining a large edifice, we fail to see its huge proportions if we stand close to it, so in appraising the worth of Pope Benedict, we are too close to realise its sterling qualities. What he accomplished during the fearful ravages of the war, we cannot see for the smoke of the battle which has not yet been dissipated. His tender heart has been bruised and wounded by the useless carnage that has devastated the world. His statesmanship, which he was ready to lay at the feet of Europe, has not been accepted, and that refusal has been to the great injury of a peaceful settlement of a bewildered world.

It is a consolation to his kind fatherly heart to know that his children throughout the world sympathise with him in the evil days through which he is passing. His representative, whom it is an honor to us to be allowed these days to honor, can with genuine sincerity assure him that here, at the uttermost end of the earth, almost under the shadow of the South Pole, we are watching with filial interest his efforts to alleviate the distress that is now afflicting many parts of his extensive dominions. It will please him to hear of our loyalty to the throne of Peter, of the strong faith and fervent piety of our people, to hear of the gallant army of our religious teachers implanting the faith in the hearts of our little ones, to hear of the enlightened zeal and generous sacrifices of our priests in these southern latitudes, and of the strong bond of union joining together with hoops of steel bishops, priests, religious, and people, and of our undiminished fidelity to the faith of our fathers, to God, our Father in Heaven, and to himself, our Father on earth.

At the conclusion of Mass his Excellency imparted the Apostolic Blessing. The music, very capably rendered by the choir, was Gounod's "No. 3 Mass." Mr. A. Vallis conducted and Mr. F. Stokes was organist. The high altar was tastefully adorned, while the rear of the altar and throne and the pulpit were draped in the papal gold and white. There was Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from the eleven o'clock Mass. Long before the hour appointed for evening devotions the Cathedral was crowded, and by 6.30 o'clock every available space was thronged. His Excellency again presided at the throne, attended by Rev. Dr. Farrelly and Rev. M. Spillane, with Very Rev. Father Coffey as master of ceremonies. His Lordship the Bishop was present in the sanctuary. After Compline, at which Rev. Father Kageney officiated, a fine discourse on the Blessed Sacrament was delivered by Rev. Father Morlane (rector of Holy Cross College). Prior to Pontifical Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament the choir sang the "Ave Verum" (Mozart). Probably the largest procession yet seen in the Cathedral was participated in by the men and boys of the congregation, a number of little flower girls immediately preceding the canopy raised above the Sacred Host borne by the Apostolic Delegate. The ceremonies of the day were, throughout, most impressive, and marked an important event in the history of the Church in this diocese that will be long remembered.

His Excellency, accompanied by his Lordship Bishop Whyte, Very Rev. Father Coffey, Adm., and Rev. Dr. Farrelly, left on Monday morning for Queenstown, and is expected to return from the Lakes District to Dunedin on Wednesday night.

Jack Metcalfe

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