

FEATURES OF THIS WEEK'S ISSUE

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MESSAGE OF POPE LEO XIII. TO THE N.Z. TABLET.

Pergant Directores et Scriptores New Zealand Tablet, Apostolica Benedictione confortati, Religionis et Justitiae causam promovere per vias Veritatis et Pacis.

Die 4 Aprilis, 1900.

LEO XIII., P.M.

TRANSLATION.—Fortified by the Apostolic Blessing, let the Directors and Writers of the New Zealand Tablet continue to promote the cause of Religion and Justice by the ways of Truth and Peace.

April 4, 1900.

LEO XIII., Pope



THURSDAY, MAY 31, 1923.

DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART



THE month of June is dedicated to the Sacred Heart. In accordance with the will of several Popes, many Catholic countries have specially consecrated themselves to the same Adorable Heart of Our Redeemer. Like the people of France and of Ireland, the people of Australasia have made the Act of Consecration in the Catholic churches, as well as privately in their homes. Hence it is opportune for us at the beginning of the present month to dwell on this great devotion and to stir up anew our fervor.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart is a phase of the soul's love for Christ. It is the same love specialised and directed to the heart which is the seat of the passion of love. When we say passion, we use the word in its primary and philosophical sense and not in the perverted sense it has come to have in the English language. Again, the love of God may be called the formal element in the devotion, and the love of the Sacred Heart the material element. The love of God is older than Christianity; and the material element of this love has had several phases, being manifested in the devotions to the Passion, to the Five Wounds, and to the Pierced Side of Christ, as far back as the time of St. Ambrose, and St. Augustine, and St. Gregory. In the fifth century there is explicit mention of devotion to the Heart of Jesus, and Paulinus of Nola (431, A.D.) is among the writers who encouraged it. But it was not until the sixteenth century that it became widespread and fixed in the affections of the people of Christendom. At that period Lauspergius, a Carthusian, Louis de Blois, a Benedictine, and the Jesuit Fathers, Hajnal and Druzicki, did much to make it popular among the faithful. In 1670 Father Eudes became its great apostle, publishing a treatise on *Devotion to the Adorable Heart of Jesus*; but it is with the name of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque that the devotion is most closely associated in our minds at the present time. Margaret Mary was a Visitandine nun in the Convent at Paray-le-Monial, from 1671 to 1690. In her instructions to her novices, and in her letters to her friends she pictures the Sacred Heart as the fountain of God's love and goodness to mankind; and her fervor, as well as the simple holiness of her life induced many to practise the devotion which was so dear to her. As time went on numerous confraternities were founded all

over the Continent, and eloquent preachers and writers were raised up to make the devotion more widely known. There was opposition from theologians, and notably from the Jansenists, but the devotion spread swiftly, until in the reign of Clement XIII. (1758-1769) there were one thousand and ninety confraternities established all over the world, and bishops and priests were urging the Pope to grant a special Feast, Mass, and Office. Pius IX. beatified Margaret Mary; Leo XIII. consecrated the world to the Sacred Heart; and the canonisation of the saint by Benedict XV. gave to the devotion its present official status in the Church. The theology of the devotion is clear. Christ is at once true God and true Man. He is One in person, both natures being united hypostatically, that is to say in His person. Hence the Second Divine Person of the Blessed Trinity is hypostatically united to Christ's humanity and to all its parts—to His hands, His feet, His precious blood, and to His Heart. Hence every one of these parts, like the humanity itself, is worthy of adoration in view of its union with the Godhead. The infinite love of Christ for mankind is both the motive and the formal object of the devotion, while the material object is the Sacred Heart as the symbol of that love. On this question theologians and spiritual writers are unanimous. It must be noted that the heart, in this devotion, is not regarded as the *organ*, but as the *symbol* of love, and, on the part of Christ, it is held by Alvery and Ramière and others that the Sacred Heart directly symbolises Christ's created love and remotely His increased love. Vignat writes: "Christ being only one Person in two natures, divine and human, manifests to us the whole love of His Person by His Heart, not only His created but also His increased love. Only in this sense, but in the fullest extent of this sense, one may say: Jesus as God loves us by means of His Human Heart." For a discussion of the questions concerning the Nine Fridays, readers ought to consult Dr. Petrovitz's book on the *Sacred Heart* (it may be had at the Tablet Office) where they will find a very full and satisfactory treatment of the subject. It will suffice to say here that his view is that the Promise with reference to the Nine Fridays encourages sinners to hope for the reward of final perseverance, rather than to feel that by any action of theirs they have an inalienable right to it.

To make this brief article practical for ourselves, let us recall that the object of the devotion is to return love for love to the Heart of Our Divine Saviour, and, at the same time to make reparation to Him by our fervor for the coldness and ingratitude with which His love is met by so many of the men and women whom He died to save from Hell. Hence, it is fitting that during the month of June we should by means of acts of love and reparation, by special prayers, and by Holy Communions of atonement, take our share in the world-wide devotions which true children of the Catholic Church will practice for the love and honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus during the next few weeks.

NOTES

Hokitika on the Map

Few of our readers are aware that the Eternal City has a rival on the West Coast, and in Hokitika no less! But if any person should be so rash as to doubt this, let him consult the *Christchurch Press*, which, through its correspondent, informs us that the Bishop of Christchurch has gone to Hokitika on his *ad limina* visit! His Lordship will be honored to find that one of his parishes is so remarkable. We have not heard that the Pope gave a dispensation whereby New Zealand, Australian, and American Bishops might fulfil their obligations by going to the old mining town by the lonely sea instead of to Rome. In view of the rush of prelatical visitors in the near future, what about organising a company to erect hotels over there?

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