

**PASTORAL LETTER FOR THE CONVOCATION
OF THE FIRST SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF
CHRISTCHURCH.**

JOHN JOSEPH, BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND FAVOUR OF THE APOSTOLIC SEE, BISHOP OF CHRISTCHURCH.

TO THE CLERGY AND FAITHFUL OF THE SAID DIOCESE, HEALTH AND BENEEDICTION IN THE LORD :

DEARLY BELOVED BROTHERS AND CHILDREN IN CHRIST JESUS,—Five years and more have now passed by since, in spite of our unworthiness, God and His Church imposed on Us the appalling burden of the Episcopate. Notwithstanding our protracted illness and forced absence from your midst, We have reason to be grateful to the Most High, Who has enabled Us, during that time, to make a thorough visitation of every parish in the diocese at least twice, whilst not a few districts We have visited far more frequently. These visitations, together with the many other administrative acts of our office, have brought no little consolation to Us at the sight of the great good that is being done in this remote part of Christ's vineyard. We have rejoiced, and blessed the Almighty, on beholding the striking memorials of your piety, your zeal and devotion, which prompted you to second the glorious efforts of a noble band of self-sacrificing missionaries, some of whom have gone to reap the reward of their labours, whilst others, emulating their sacerdotal spirit, are still working amongst us.

It is our duty to leave no means untried that the great good hitherto done may prove more lasting—that our dearly beloved brethren and children in Christ may walk more securely in the ways of God—that they may grow in the knowledge, and love and service of the Most High, bear more abundant fruit, and thereby become the more pleasing to the Divine Majesty.

As a powerful means to this great end, Holy Church bids her chief pastors convoke, at times marked out by her Canons, certain solemn assemblies, called "Diocesan Synods." Announced long beforehand, preceded by serious study and fervent prayer, opened and carried on amid the most sacred and august rites of her Ritual, these assemblies are convoked by the Bishop who summons thereunto all the priests of his diocese whose right or duty it is to attend; with them he examines whatever, before God, he considers to be conducive to the greater glory of the Most High, the perfection of the clergy, and the spiritual good of the faithful. Drawing from the treasures of the Fathers and Councils of the Church, he therein promulgates decrees to secure the end priests and people must always have in view more especially for the right observance of all that pertains to ecclesiastical discipline. The time has, at length come, for Us to convoke the first of these assemblies in the diocese of Christchurch.

Wherefore, We hereby announce that, with the blessing of God, our first Synod will begin on the morning of the seventeenth day of January, in the year of grace 1893, and end on the nineteenth day of the same month. All who, by right or custom, are bound to attend the Diocesan Synod We summon to the same, and, in virtue of holy obedience, We command the attendance of all having charge of souls in our diocese of Christchurch. Should any canonical reason prevent any priest from attending, We must be informed, and permission for absence be previously obtained from us. Following the salutary customs of old, We, moreover, wish all who are summoned to the Synod to take part in the spiritual retreat, which, D.V., will begin on the evening of the eleventh of January and close on the morning of the Synod. Thus, we shall, We fondly trust, obtain the chief fruit which the holy Fathers and Councils of the Church so strenuously sought and urged in these Canonical assemblies—viz., holy recollection, careful examination of conscience, and the thorough renovation of our whole lives.

But in order that the salutary object of both the Synod and the retreat may be obtained, it behoves us to pour forth fervent prayers to the Father of all mercy, the God of all consolation, from Whom "every best gift and every perfect gift cometh down." Let us go with confidence to the throne of all grace, and there supplicate our loving Saviour Who, having redeemed us by the shedding of His precious blood, is ever pleading in our behalf before the throne of His Eternal Father. Let us implore the light of the Holy Spirit that We may decree, and one and all fulfil, whatever is holy, right, and meet. That the Almighty may vouchsafe to hearken to our supplication and grant our request, let us turn to the glorious and immaculate Mother of God, Mary, who is our own dear Mother, our Queen, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. Ask her to look down upon us and our deliberations with eyes of mercy, to pray for us, and to spread the mantle of her protection over us. Let us, too, secure the help and advocacy of all the heavenly host, especially the great St Joseph, Mary's spotless spouse; the illustrious precursor, St John the Baptist; the blessed martyr, Peter Chanel, and all the patrons and protectors of this diocese.

We know by experience that God is wont to do much in His Church through the prayers and supplications of His consecrated spouses and little children so dear to His Adorable Heart; we beg

and implore the many spiritual children it is our privilege to have in religious communities, to unite in more frequent and fervent prayer and the reception of the Most Blessed Eucharist, from now until the close of the Synod, to obtain for us the help we need from on high.

We earnestly beseech the many pious souls who live in the world without being of it, to give us the same holy help.

On each of the three Sundays, preceding the Synod, we direct that in all the Churches and chapels in the diocese, the hymn "Veni Creator Spiritus" with the versicle and prayer, be sung before the principal Mass, to bring down the blessing of God on the Synod and the preceding retreat. Where this hymn cannot be sung, the litanies of the saints with accompanying prayers may be recited instead.

At Benediction, on the same Sunday, the hymn *Ave Maria Stella* shall be sung after the Litany of our Lady of Loretto.

From the receipt of this pastoral, until further order, instead of the prayer hitherto prescribed, that of the votive *de Spiritu Sancto* shall be said or sung at Mass and Benediction, whenever the Rubric allows it.

Moreover, on the Sunday immediately preceding the opening of the Synod, the Blessed Sacrament shall be solemnly exposed to the veneration of the faithful from the last Mass till the evening, in our pro-Cathedral church, in St Mary's, Manchester street, and the other principal churches of the diocese. To all who shall visit these churches and unite in the prescribed prayers when said or sung, We hereby grant an indulgence of 40 days in the usual form of Holy Church.

We would further have all our faithful flock know that the Sovereign Pontiff grants a plenary indulgence to all who, having received the Holy Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist shall, during the days of the Synod, visit our pro-Cathedral, and pray therein for the intention of our Holy Father the Pope.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the charity of God, and the communication of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

Given at our pro-Cathedral, Christchurch, this 8th day of December, in the year of our Lord, 1892, being the festival of our beloved Mother's Immaculate Conception, and appointed to be read, and afterwards placed in a conspicuous place in the churches and chapels of the diocese.

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Bishop of Christchurch.

CHRISTCHURCH.

(From our own Correspondent.)

AT the conclusion of the Rev Father Aubrey's examination, which took place last week, of the convent schools, the pupils entertained him at the establishment with a private and a complimentary concert, and presented him with an address. This was the first opportunity which they have had to honour him since his appointment to the spiritual charge of the parish at Timaru. He left this city unexpectedly, and they have keenly felt the want of an occasion to express their gratitude for the very practical interest he has ever taken in their welfare and school. A very select musical and instrumental programme was successfully gone through, and the address, which is a splendid piece of illuminating work, displays great artistic skill and taste. The harmonious blending of colours and the chaste design produce a most pleasing effect. At the foot of the address is a very picture of the convent in the neutral tint. The children presented Edison's mimeograph and accessories with the address, which is in a massive gilt frame, and reads as follows:—"To the Very Rev Father Aubrey, S.M.—Dear Rev Father,—We have been looking forward to this occasion to give expression to the sentiments of affection and gratitude which animates us at the remembrance of the many marks of kindness which you have conferred on us since your arrival in New Zealand. Though we saw in your appointment to the parish at Timaru a proof of the Bishop's appreciation of your merits, it was, indeed, a cause of sorrow for us, as it deprived us of one who for so long had been the director of the schools, and the spiritual guide who, with untiring zeal, prepared most of us for the first Holy Communion and Confirmation. We will ever remember with gratitude the instructions you have given us, and it shall be our constant endeavour, with God's help, to give proof that the seed has not fallen on barren soil. We trust you will long continue to discharge the duties of inspector of schools in this portion of the diocese, and thus afford us an opportunity of seeing occasionally the devoted Father to whom we are bound by the strongest ties of esteem and gratitude. Thanking you again for your past kindness, and praying that God may bless you and all your undertakings, we are, dear Father, your affectionate and grateful children, the pupils of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions." Father Aubrey thanked, when replying, the pupils for their unexpected and beautiful presents, and for the compliments which accompanied the gifts. He had tried, he said, to do his best for their progress, and was pleased to see how they had seconded his efforts. He emphasised the earnestness wherewith they had entered into the work