

Friends at Court.

GLEANINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S CALENDAR.

(Written for the N.Z. TABLET.)

- August 5, Sunday.—Ninth Sunday after Pentecost. Our Lady and Nives.
- " 6, Monday.—Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ.
- " 7, Tuesday.—St. Cajetan, Confessor.
- " 8, Wednesday.—St. Cyriacus and Companions, Martyrs.
- " 9, Thursday.—St. Emidius, Bishop and Martyr.
- " 10, Friday.—St. Lawrence, Martyr.
- " 11, Saturday.—St. Nystus, H., Pope and Martyr.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

The glorious Transfiguration of Our Blessed Lord took place a few months before His Sacred Passion. The scene of this mystery, which was intended to confirm the faith of His Apostles under their coming trials, was probably Mount Thabor, a lofty mountain in Galilee situated a few miles to the east of Nazareth. 'And after six days,' says the Evangelist, 'Jesus taketh with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain to pray.' These three Apostles, who were afterwards to behold Our Lord sorrowful in the Garden of Gethsemani, were chosen to be the special witnesses of the glory of His Transfiguration. And while He prayed He was transfigured before them. And His face did shine as the sun and His garments became shining and exceeding white as snow.' In other words, Jesus laid aside the ordinary appearance of His mortal flesh and assumed by anticipation His glorified Body, revealing to the astonished eyes of His Apostles the glory and splendor which delight the eyes of the heavenly citizens and fill their hearts with an indescribable sweetness and joy.

ST. LAWRENCE, DEACON AND MARTYR.

There are few martyrs whose names are so famous throughout the Church as that of St. Lawrence. His praises have been celebrated by St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, and other illustrious writers; innumerable churches have been erected in his honor, and his Feast has everywhere been kept as one of special devotion. The following is the history of his glorious combat and victory:— Brought up in Rome under the care of St. Sixtus, Lawrence received from his hands the sacred order of the Diaconate, and was appointed to the first place among the seven deacons who served the Roman Church. In this office he was entrusted with the charge of the sacred treasures and the distribution of alms, while at the same time he assisted the Pontiff in the solemn functions of the altar. When St. Sixtus was condemned to death under the Emperor Valerian, and was led forth to execution, Lawrence followed him, weeping. 'Father,' he cried, 'whither art thou going without thy son? O holy priest, whither art thou going without thy deacon? You were never wont to offer sacrifice without me your minister. In what have I displeased you? Have you found me wanting in my duty? Try me now, and see whether you have made choice of an unfit minister to dispense the Blood of the Lord.' Moved to compassion at the sight of his grief, St. Sixtus replied: 'I do not abandon you, my son; but a greater trial and more glorious victory are reserved for you, who are strong and in the vigor of youth. I am spared on account of my weakness and old age. In three days you shall follow me.' He then charged him to distribute at once the treasures of the Church amongst the poor. At these words the grief of Lawrence was converted into joy, and he lost no time in carrying into execution the last wishes of the Pontiff. Passing from house to house he sought out with care the poorest and most destitute of the faithful, and distributed amongst them the sacred treasures, not sparing even the gold and silver vessels used for the Holy Sacrifice. While thus employed he was summoned before the Prefect, who demanded the surrender of all the rich and precious ornaments which were reported to be placed under his care. To this Lawrence made answer: 'It is true indeed, O Prefect, that the Church possesses a treasure greater than any that the Emperor can boast of. Give but three days to put it in order and make an inventory; you can then come and take possession.' The day appointed having arrived, Lawrence collected together in front of the church a great crowd composed of the most pitiable objects of charity, among whom were to be seen the lame, the blind, the leper, and the infirm. He then went to the Prefect and invited him to come and see the treasures of the Church. Having brought him to the spot he thus addressed him: 'Behold, O Prefect, the treasures of which I spoke. The gold which you so eagerly desire is a vile and worthless metal, which too often leads mankind to sin. The heavenly light which these poor creatures enjoy is the only true gold. To this I will add pearls and precious stones—namely, the widows and consecrated virgins, who are the crown of the Church. Make use of them far the advantage of Rome, the Emperor, and yourself.' At these words the tyrant, transported with rage, declared that Lawrence should die, but only by inches, and amid new and unheard-of torments. Accordingly, having prepared a large gridiron, he ordered the saint to be stretched upon it and secured with chains. It was then suspended over a bed of burning coals, partly extinguished, so that the martyr's agony might be prolonged. While his flesh was being slowly consumed and the fire had begun to penetrate his very bones, the face of Lawrence shone with a heavenly light and a sweet fragrance was exhaled from his burning flesh. At length, looking towards the judge with a cheerful and smiling countenance, he exclaimed: 'Let my body be now turned; one side is sufficiently broiled.' When this had been done by the tyrant's orders, after a time he exclaimed: 'It is now dressed and it is time to eat.' Then praying with much fervor for the conversion of Rome, watered by the blood of so many martyrs, he gave up his soul to God, A.D. 258.

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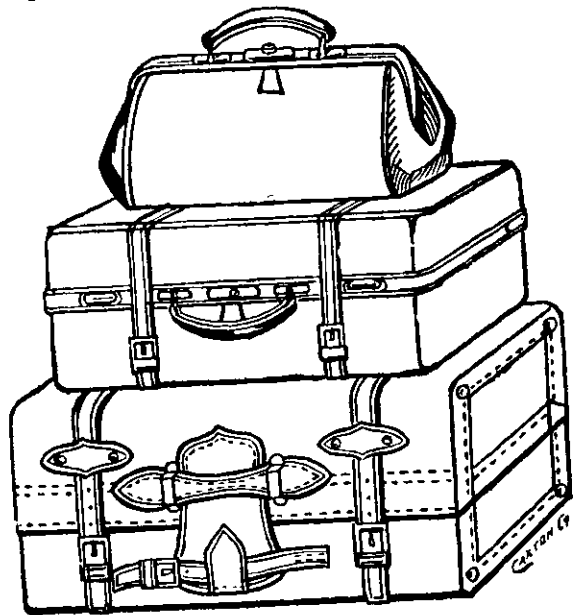
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