

CARDINAL MERCIER'S LENTEN PASTORAL

In all Catholic churches in Holland the day of prayer ordered by Pope Benedict XV. was observed with great devotion. Many thousands of people approached the Holy Table, and in the five episcopal towns the solemnities were conducted by the bishops. In Antwerp and Brussels, as in Malines, the day of prayer was observed with much fervor. In the damaged church of St. Rombaut, Mass was celebrated at 9 a.m. at a temporary altar erected in the nave of the church, Cardinal Mercier being present at the ceremony, supported by the canons and assistant bishops. During Mass Holy Communion was administered by the Cardinal personally, a large number of the faithful, among them being many German soldiers, partaking. Cardinal Mercier was accompanied on his way back to his palace by the pupils of the Grand Seminary. In the afternoon Vespers were sung, and Benediction was given by Cardinal Mercier. In the morning a vast number of worshippers were present in the Cathedral, among others being the Mayor of Malines, M. Dessain, and his brother, the publisher, who was fined by the Germans for printing Cardinal Mercier's Advent Pastoral.

Cardinal Mercier communicated to his clergy in the usual way the Papal instructions regarding the prayers for peace, and the special instructions for the diocese of Malines, and these communications were not interfered with in the least. Everywhere the day of prayer was freely held. In most of the Belgian parishes the Catholic German soldiers zealously participated, and this joint prayer of the German garrison and the population whose country is in the grip of the enemy, offering up supplications for peace, was extremely moving.

The Pope's voice calling on Christendom to do penance and pray for peace also penetrated into the quiet solitude of the heaths of Nunspelt, where at the present moment about 6000 Belgian refugees reside in the concentration camp. As true children of the Church, the refugees answered the call of the Holy Father, and in great numbers came to beseech God to have mercy on them and their dear Fatherland. It was a touching moment when the broad-shouldered navvies from Flanders and the hardy brickmakers from the land of Boom knelt down at the Holy Table side by side with the quiet countryfolk and the agitated workers of the towns.

Cardinal Mercier's Lenten Pastoral contains a striking dissertation regarding Holy Church and the Papacy, and the following are his principal points: The world was astonished and at times even uneasy (says the Cardinal), at seeing the valiant Pope Pius X. waging battle against Modernism. If the Church at the time of the revolt of Luther and Calvin had had a Pope like Pius X., who knows whether Protestantism would not have failed in wresting a third part of Christian unity from Rome's authority? Pius X. showed prudence and determination in the struggle. He was not to be tempted by the coaxings of the reformers who, frivolously impious, sought to pour fresh blood into the veins of the Church, and dreamt of giving her an up-to-date appearance—to 'modernise' her after the caprices and errors of present-day Protestantism and Rationalism. True to Catholic tradition, he put forward the unchangeable principles which were enunciated in the fifth century by St. Vincent of Lerins, himself a disciple of the martyr-bishop, the holy St. Cyprian, against the advocates of so-called progressive teachings, the only result of which would have been the loss of the treasures of the past. *Nihil innovetur nisi quod traditum est.* One thing especially caused Pius X. anxiety, according to those who had confidential conversations with him, namely, the thought that priests, servants in the cause of peace, would have to sacrifice the lives of their fellow-members in the priesthood. As he lived, so he was up till his last hour. 'I did not possess anything,' he said at the end, 'on ascending the Papal throne, neither do I now leave anything which belongs to me, and which I can leave to my relatives, but I ask my successor in his charity to remember my two sisters who followed me to Rome. My

brother will continue to live on the earnings of his labors, but I should like an allowance to be made to my sisters of 250 francs a month.' What a lesson to those who delight in displaying their wealth! What respect for the dignity of labor! What an honoring of poverty! The population of Rome, to a man, was moved by a spectacle of such grandeur, and a daily paper said that Pius X. was a second St. Francis of Assisi, and a saint.

Let us pause for a moment (proceeds the Cardinal) and behold the grand spectacle of Catholic unity; and let us bow down under the fatherly hand of him who is the cause of it. It is well in the troubled time of war to observe that while the nations are annihilating each other, our Mother, Holy Church, goes her way, and summons to the centre of the Catholic world Cardinals from both hemispheres. It does the heart good to see Benedict XV. ascending the throne of Pius X. and beholding the stability of Catholic tradition in Peter's See, the proof of her inexhaustible vitality given for the 260th time. The best homage we can pay to God in the times through which we are passing is to preserve clearness and composure of mind. In the evening when the daily task is done; at the hour when degenerate human creatures in disreputable places defile the night by bestial pleasures, the Church summons her servants to common prayer, and from their lips arises the song of joyful thankfulness: 'Come brothers, come sisters, let us be joyful before God, Who is our salvation; let us show ourselves before Him and bless Him.'

Preaching at St. Carthage's Cathedral, Lismore, recently, his Lordship Bishop Carroll announced his intention of appealing to the people of the diocese to clear away the remainder of the debt on the Cathedral. In March, 1910 (said his Lordship), the debt stood at £12,000. In the meantime the attention of the people was occupied by the building of the memorial tower, the erection of the bells, the building of an organ gallery, and the installation of a new organ. In addition to these works the parish established a new school for boys, and provided a residence for the Marist Brothers. Yet, though no special appeal was made, the principal was reduced by £1370. This amount was raised by donations and bequests made by friends of the Cathedral. In February last the debt stood at £10,000. Through the generosity and loyalty of the people, the Bishop, on the day of his return from Europe, was able to give a donation of £1152, and the debt on this Easter Sunday, 1915, stands at £9478. Now, in the name of God, I propose to make an appeal to the people of this Cathedral parish, and to the people of the diocese, to blot out this remaining debt.

Lampware is going to be very dear buying. Hadn't you better make a selection from Smith and Laing's stock, Invercargill, before they go up in price?

Ladies! Wear MANN'S BOOTS

Gents! Wear MANN'S BOOTS

OUR PRICES ARE RIGHT.

Agents for Bostock Celebrated English Footwear.

We will give *Tablet* readers mentioning the paper when purchasing, a discount of 1/- in £

64 Vivian Street, } WELLINGTON
And 177 Cuba Street, }

LANGFORD & RHIND,

Address—HERBERT LANGFORD, 19 London Street, Richmond. Phone 689

(Late W. & H. Langford's) FUNERAL FURNISHERS and EMBALMERS
LONDON STREET P.O. Box 523

Town Office—104 Cashal Street