

## HOW THE CHURCH IS GOVERNED

Next to the Pope in the Church's hierarchy, come the Cardinals. They are the counsellors of the Pontiff in many important matters which pertain to the government of the universal Church, and some of them exercise much jurisdiction in the various 'Congregations' and tribunals which have been instituted for the administration of Church law. They form, so to speak, the Senate of the Church (says the Rev. J. F. S. in the *Providence Visitor*).

The word Cardinal is derived from the Latin 'cardo,' a hinge. They are, as it were, so necessary to the Government and discipline of the Church that it may be said to revolve around them as a door on its hinges.

Their origin was as follows: In the time of Pope Marcellus, early in the fourth century, the priests in charge of the various parishes of Rome were called cardinal priests. The city of Rome was divided into fourteen wards or districts, in each of which a deacon was appointed to care for the sick and poor; these were called cardinal deacons. The bishops of the sees in the immediate neighborhood of Rome were accustomed to sit in council with the Pope and consult with him for the good of the Church; after a time these were known as Cardinal Bishops. Later on, these three grades were united into one body, still preserving their respective ranks of bishop, priest, and deacon, and they became the counsellors and assistants of the Sovereign Pontiffs.

### The College of Cardinals.

The Cardinals are appointed solely by the Pope. Their number, by a law made in 1586, is not permitted to exceed seventy, and generally there are several vacancies. Taken collectively, they are called the 'College of Cardinals.' They are chosen from many nations, although the number of Italian Cardinals is usually greater than that of all other combined.

They are still of three grades: Cardinal Bishops, who are six in number, being the bishops of certain suburban towns around Rome; Cardinal Priests, so-called, although they are bishops also—these may number fifty; and Cardinal Deacons, of whom there are fourteen. These last are priests, or may be merely in minor orders.

The garb of Cardinals is scarlet, with a biretta or cap of the same color. Chief among their insignia is the red hat, which also forms a prominent feature of their armorial bearings. A Cardinal is usually addressed as 'your Eminence.'

Their principal duty is to assist and advise the Sovereign Pontiff in the governing of the Church. This is done in many ways—in 'Papal Consistories,' in which details of Church administration are discussed and settled, and in 'Congregations,' so-called, by which they decide questions of discipline, subject to the approval of the Holy Father. They have also a most important function when the Holy See is vacant, for they elect the new Pope.

### The Roman Congregations.

The Cardinals residing in Rome have many duties. They are appointed to various committees known as congregations, in which they assist the Holy Father in the administration of Church law. The Roman Curia or court is made up of the following Congregations:—

The Congregation of the Holy Office, which guards faith and morals, judges heresies, legislates concerning indulgences, and has certain powers in regard to matrimonial impediments.

The Consistorial Congregation has power over dioceses in parts of the world which are not 'missionary countries': it can institute and divide them, and it examines the reports of bishops.

The Congregation of the Discipline of the Sacraments, as its name denotes, attends to the practical details of the administration of the Sacraments.

The Congregation of the Council has the care of the universal discipline of the secular clergy and of the laity. It exercises watchfulness over the observance of the precepts of the Church, over ecclesiastical property, sodalities, etc.

The Congregation for the Affairs of Religious has jurisdiction over all Religious Orders and communities of men and women throughout the world.

The Congregation 'de Propaganda Fide' (for the Propagation of the Faith—usually known as 'the Propaganda') exercises authority in nearly all matters over those parts of the world which are considered to be missionary countries. A branch of this Congregation has special charge of the 'Affairs of Oriental Rites.'

The Congregation of the Index examines, and, if necessary, condemns books submitted to it, and instructs Bishops throughout the world regarding the prohibition of harmful writings.

The Congregation of the Sacred Rites regulates the details of the Church ceremonies and music.

There are also other committees of lesser scope, such as the Ceremonial Congregation, which attends to the ceremonies of the Pontifical Court; the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs, which considers chiefly the relations of the Holy See with the civil power; and the Congregation of Studies, which supervises the work of Universities and empowers them to confer degrees.

### The Roman Tribunals.

Among the tribunals, or 'offices,' so-called, are the Sacred Penitentiary, which decides matters of conscience submitted to it by confessors or Bishops; the Segnatura, before which come many appealed cases; the Dataria, in charge of benefices and dispensations; the Chancery, which attends to the sending of letters, etc., the Rota, to which civil or criminal cases are referred for trial; the Apostolic Camera, which cares for the property of the Holy See; the Secretariate of State, and the Secretariates of Briefs and of Latin Letters.

We see, then, that the government of our holy Church is a complex and thoroughly organised body. So numerous and so varied are the matters submitted to it that the Holy See has found it necessary to establish all these committees and tribunals, that every doubtful point, be it great or small, may undergo prompt investigation.

## Christchurch North

January 31.

The Rev. Father Hickson, S.M., is at present on a short visit to Wellington.

The Rev. Father O'Farrell, S.M., of Greenmeadows, celebrated the 7 o'clock Mass at St. Mary's on Sunday, and preached in the evening.

The concert, under the auspices of the Hibernian Society, which was organised for the benefit of the widow and family of a deceased member, was held in the Choral Hall on Wednesday, January 26, and proved very successful. The audience showed its appreciation by generous applause after each item, and encores were frequently demanded. Messrs. H. J. Johnston and F. A. Roche (joint secretaries) carried out their duties in a creditable manner. The following was the programme:—Song, Mr. A. McDonald; monologue, Miss Lissack; violin solo, 'Le cygne,' Mr. R. Clark; song, 'Come sing to me,' Mrs. F. O'Brien; recitation, Mr. F. McDonald; song, 'The devout lover' (with violin obligato by Mr. R. Clark), Mr. B. Renell; Irish jig, Miss Egan and Master Darragh; song, Miss Olga Wacked; humorous selection, Mr. F. Dickie; song, Miss Main; song, Mr. C. Dickie; humorous recitation, Mr. F. Rowe; musical monologue, Mr. F. Cordery; gyroscope revolutions, Master Handisides (of the Marist Brothers' School). Mr. T. B. Riordan's orchestra played selections during the evening, and Mr. P. Augarde acted as accompanist.

The Pope has founded a school of artistic tapestry at the Vatican. The Cardinal Secretary of State has written to the director, Commander Peter Gentili, conveying the thanks of the Holy Father for the presentation of copies of his publications on *The Art of Tapestry*.