

The Catholic World

BELGIUM—Franciscan Tertiaries

In Belgium there are upwards of 100,000 Franciscan Tertiaries, in the proportion of 30,000 men to 70,000 women. These are representative of all classes of Belgian society, members of the Government, civil servants and other functionaries, merchants, mechanics, and working men. They are to be found in the smallest villages and in the industrial centres, in the colleges and seminaries, and in the famous University of Louvain. The Fraternities, as the Congregations are usually called abroad, are very much alive and exceedingly active; without neglecting that personal piety which is the basis of the Franciscan spirit, they carry on quite a number of good works of various kinds.

ENGLAND—Westminster Cathedral

The exterior of the Catholic Cathedral of Westminster, which sacred building will be consecrated on June 28, is now complete but for the mosaic over the main entrance, and up to September of last year the cost had been £252,523.

FRANCE—The Floods in Paris

Special intercessory services were held in all the principal churches in Paris on Sunday, January 30, under the personal direction of the Archbishop of Paris, who officiated at the Cathedral of Notre Dame. The churches were unusually crowded during the course of the week. The Bishop of Versailles visited all the districts in the valley of the Seine from Corbeil to Villeneuve St. Georges. The clergy were busy day and night in the afflicted quarters of Paris and suburbs.

The Holy Father's Generosity

A kindly and generous letter has been sent by his Holiness the Pope to the Archbishop of Paris expressing his sympathy with the sufferers from the floods, and enclosing a gift of £1200.

ITALY—Brought to Book

The Archbishop of Ancona, Monsignor Giovanni Battista Ricci, cited Professor Vadi before the civil tribunal of that city on January 26 in an action for libel and defamation of character through the columns of the press. At the opening of the case the Archbishop accepted an apology and expression of regret from Vadi. The case was then withdrawn, the defence undertaking to bear all the legal costs incurred in the action.

ROME—Visits of Bishops

Regarding the presentation of statements on the condition of their dioceses to the Holy See by Bishops, and their visits *ad limina Apostolorum*, an important document (writes a Rome correspondent) has emanated from the Consistorial Congregation by which several alterations are made in existing arrangements. A synopsis of the document, already published in Rome, will give sufficient information as to its contents:—'The new discipline establishes for all Bishops without distinction, except those subject to Propaganda, a fixed term of five years within which the "relatio" as to the condition of their dioceses must be completed. This term is common to all dioceses of a determined region. The regulation will begin to bind in January, 1911. In the first year the reports of dioceses in Italy and the adjacent islands must be sent to Rome; in the second those of Spain, France, Portugal, Ireland, Belgium, Holland, England, and Scotland; in the third those of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the rest of Europe; in the fourth those of the two Americas; in the fifth those of Africa, Asia, Australia, and other places not subject to Propaganda. In the fifth year the report must be renewed for each diocese. In the same year in which the report is sent to the Holy See Bishops must fulfil their visits *ad limina*. For non-European Bishops it is permitted that the visit be made only every ten years. But if the year in which a Bishop ought to fulfil both obligations (the sending of the report and the making of the visit) falls within the first two years since he took charge of the diocese, a dispensation is granted him for this occasion. Thus for the current year 1910 all Bishops are dispensed both from the Apostolic visit and the diocesan report; and for 1911 and 1912 a dispensation is also given to those Bishops who, according to the intervals laid down above, should make their visit or send in their report in those two years, but have already done so in the year 1909. Finally, the decree states that no change is made in the law of the Council of Trent regarding the episcopal visitation of dioceses, and lays down minute rules as to the filling up of the form of the "relatio" by each Bishop. According to this, a detailed account is to be given concerning the state of a diocese, of the Faith, and divine worship. Information must be given as to the Bishop, the diocesan curia, clergy, chapters, parish priests, and parochial residences, the diocesan and inter-diocesan seminaries, religious institutes, male and female, the people, the conditions of education, the instruction of youth, religious societies, confraternities, pious bequests, religious and social works, books and journals.'

Mission from Belgium

The official mission from Belgium sent by King Albert to announce to the Holy See his accession to the throne of that country arrived in Rome on January 25, and was received by Pius X. on the 27th with all solemnity and honors suitable to the occasion. The personages composing the mission were Baron de Faverau, Minister of State and Vice-President of the Senate, Count de Merode Westerloo, M. Visari de Bocarné, and M. Paul de Faverau. At the railway terminus the party were met by Mgr. Sanz de Samper, Private Chamberlain of the Pope, Baron d'Erp, Belgian Minister to the Holy See, and M. Paul Waterkein, Private Chamberlain of the Sword and Cope. Seated on the Papal throne, the Holy Father listened to the address of homage read by Baron Faverau in his Sovereign's name, in which reference was made to the sympathy shown to Belgium by the Pontiff on the death of King Leopold. Through his representative King Albert sent expressions of his profound gratitude, and said he earnestly desired that the friendship that exists between the Holy See and Belgium may continue unshaken during his reign. The King assured his Holiness of his filial affection and begged of him that the benevolence with which the Pope has always regarded the Belgian people may remain unchanged, and that he may graciously pray Heaven to bless the people and Royal Family of Belgium. 'May I be permitted to add,' concluded the Baron, 'how flattered I feel that this mission of honor has been confided to me by my august Sovereign, and to implore for myself as well as my companions the Apostolic Benediction.' Baron Faverau then approached the throne and presented his credentials and the autograph letter of King Albert announcing his accession to the Belgian throne. After charging the mission to convey his thanks to the King, the Pontiff said: 'Assure your Sovereign that I have felt, in common with the Belgian people and the Royal Family, the loss of the late monarch, and that I have participated in the universal joy with which the succession of his nephew has been received.' The Pope then expressed confidence in the sentiments of filial affection and piety of the new King, and invoked on the King, the Royal Family, and the Belgian people the choicest blessings of Heaven.

Anniversary of a Remarkable Conversion

The Religious of St. Francis of Paulo (writes the Rome correspondent of the *Catholic Times*) commemorated by a series of brilliant ceremonies in the Church of S. Andrea delle Frate the sixty-eighth anniversary of the conversion of Alphonsus Ratisbonne. A wealthy Jew of Alsace, he entertained all the prejudices of his race against the Catholic religion, but within a minute after presenting himself before the Blessed Sacrament he was converted to the True Faith. 'I was only an instant in the church,' said Ratisbonne, in a description of his miraculous conversion, 'when I felt myself perturbed in a fashion quite inexplicable. I raised my eyes. The entire edifice had disappeared from my sight; but one chapel had gathered in itself all the light, and amid radiant splendor appeared on the altar, full of majesty and sweetness, the Virgin Mary. An irresistible force impelled me towards her. The Virgin signed to me with her hand to kneel down, and seemed to utter an expression of approval. She did not speak to me, but I understood everything. A large painting in the chapel in which this scene took place touchingly represents the circumstances of the conversion, and a slab on the interior records the facts. The convert commenced to study for the Church, became a priest, and died in Jerusalem, where several monuments attest his zeal and laborious life for the Faith so unexpectedly found.'

UNITED STATES—Cardinal Gibbons on High Prices

Cardinal Gibbons, speaking to a press representative on the increasing agitation against the high price of foodstuffs in America, declared that something ought to be done to correct the evil. 'I heartily endorse,' said he, 'any movement which will tend to reduce the cost of living for the masses of the people of this country.'

A Poor Man's Hotel

Father Dempsey's Hotel in St. Louis, U.S.A., has just finished its third year. It provides clean, comfortable lodging for 10 cents a night; good meals at from 5 to 15 cents, and a reading-room, bath, and other means of comfort and cleanliness free. During the three years of its existence it has entertained 19,824 guests; has furnished free lodgings to 23,333, and served 8616 free meals. It has put to work 1417 men by means of its free employment agency; transferred 141 to free beds in Catholic hospitals, and has buried 8 in the 'Exiles' Rest,' its cemetery lot. During 11 months ended December 1, 1909, 6420 guests were entertained, 1822 free meals were served, 8202 free lodgings were given, all expenses were paid, and other charitable calls were not neglected. Yet the institution is practically self-supporting, the deficit of the year being only £530, not quite 10 per cent. of the expenditure, which may include several extraordinary items.

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