

It is the greatest proof of God's love for us, and it is the greatest bond of love between us and Him and with one another.

The Last Testament

When He Who had taught the apostles to love Him and to despise the world came to take leave of them a great sadness came upon Him. His Public Life was drawing to an end, and only the last great scene of the divine tragedy remained now. He had one final word for them: He did not speak it until Judas had gone out. He had washed their feet; He had warned the traitor in vain: He had given them the Blessed Eucharist. It was the solemnest moment in His Life. When He spoke now, emotion and tenderness made His words vibrant. All that had gone before prepared the apostles to receive His message. It was this:

"I give you a new commandment: that you should love one another as I have loved you:

"By this sign shall it be known that you are My disciples, that you have love, one for another."

The Sacrament of Love was in their souls when He spoke. They knew the love He spoke of—the love that is inspired by the Holy Spirit, that has its origin in grace, that knows no distinction of race or age or sex, but regards all mankind as one great family for the salvation of which He came to die upon the Cross. Where is that love found to-day? Where it is, there He is: where it is not, He is not. For it alone is the sign by which He will recognise His own.

The Cross

The death of the cross was unknown in the Jewish law, except that in the case of great criminals their dead bodies were exposed on a gibbet. The Jews did not crucify. Amongst the Egyptians, the Persians, the Phœnicians, and the Romans crucifixion was practised, but the latter crucified only slaves, rebels, and great criminals. The Roman Governors in the provinces practised crucifixion, and in Syria and Judea they had put to death in this way many Jews. The Jews hated the cross, and death by crucifixion had become for them a symbol of shame and ignominy. It was a cruel death. The sufferer hung in agony a long time—even a day or more—with his body torn and strained, and the blood flowing from the holes in the hands and feet, devoured by thirst and consumed by fever. No crueller torture could be imagined. Yet, it was this death the Jews demanded for Christ, at the instigation of the High Priests and Pharisees. Inspired by diabolical hatred, they cried out:

Crucify Him! Crucify Him!

The Women of Jerusalem

When making the Stations of the Cross, we have often thought of the significance of the representation of that meeting with the women of Jerusalem who wept with pity at seeing the Saviour pass through the streets under the heavy cross. "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me. Weep for yourselves and for your children! Behold, the days will come when it will be said: Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that have not borne and the breasts that have not suckled. Then they will cry out to the mountains: Fall upon us! and to the hills: Hide us." It is a terrible word. Bruised and bleeding, He forgets His own suffering in the foreknowledge He has of the calamities to come upon this people now persecuting Him. If He, the innocent, accused by false witnesses, suffers thus, what will be the fate of the guilty, criminal people who have turned their backs on God and put His Son to death? He looks into the future and He sees what the vengeance of God has in store for them; and, in His pity for the weeping women, He forgets for the moment His own sorrow and pain. That word of His, spoken on the street, had its complement a few hours later when He said again: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Sin and Ignorance

Sin and ignorance keep men away from God. There are those that sin against the Holy Ghost, knowing what they do, but the majority sin because they are ignorant. Woe to them that keep them ignorant! It was for the blind guides and deceivers of the people that the only harsh word He ever spoke was meant. Merciful to Magdalene, He was stern and hard towards the hypocrites and the political leaders who kept the people in darkness and blinded them against the Truth. The hypocrites and the politicians are the same to-day as they were in His day. It is a terrible thought that He never prayed for them; for they know what they do. But for the weak and the ignorant and the tempted He was merciful always. To-day, as on that day when the politicians had their hour and the powers of darkness seemed to triumph, the weak and the ignorant will find His arms open to receive them—as wide as they were on the Cross. It was for them He prayed and for them He died: and in the Cross they have His pledge of mercy and pardon. Father, forgive them! That prayer covers us with a mantle of mercy and gives us hope, no matter how low we have fallen. We have only to get rid of our ignorance and to come to know Him and love Him, and He will save us as He saved the thief who died by His side after hearing the promise: "This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."

DIOCESE OF DUNEDIN

Mr. Thomas Kelly, district president of the H.A.C.B. Society in New Zealand, left by the second express train for the north on Tuesday morning, after completing a tour of the South Island.

The annual meeting of the Christian Brothers' Association Football Club was held on last Thursday evening, with an attendance of over 60 members and intending members. We are obliged, however, to hold over a detailed report of the meeting till next issue.

The art union in connection with the recent carnival in aid of the Christian Brothers' residence building fund, will be drawn at St. Joseph's Hall on Saturday evening, April 10. The coronation ceremony relative to the carnival queen competition will take place in May, at a date yet to be arranged.

The Marist Missionary Fathers will commence their missions in Dunedin and suburbs on next Wednesday, when their attention will be devoted to the children. On the Sunday following (Low Sunday) missions for adults will be commenced at St. Joseph's Cathedral and the other churches of the city.

The Christian Brothers' School A cricket team succeeded in winning the secondary schools' cup, going through the season undefeated. The most consistent performers in batting and bowling during the year were C. Wynne (captain), H. Baker, and M. Crowley. T. McCarten gave a fine display of batting against High School D in the final match, which the Brothers won by an innings and six runs.

The members of St. Joseph's Glee Club, under the conductorship of Mr. T. J. Anthony, have resumed weekly rehearsals preparatory to the Thomas Moore festival on May 28, when a very complete programme of Moore's melodies will be presented by the Glee Club. New members are cordially invited to join the club, the promoters of which hope to rival, if not excel, the successes achieved in the past.

In the senior grade cricket competition on Saturday Christian Brothers brought the season to a close by comfortably defeating Morningside, last year's champions, the scores being: Christian Brothers 164, Morningside 45. Bowling for the Brothers, Casey secured five for 24 and Bond two for 18. Higgins 63 (including three sixes and six fours), Bond 25, Casey 24, McCarten 16, Tarleton 10, and Hayes 10 batted well for the winners.

HELD OVER.

Owing to extreme pressure on our space, we are obliged to hold over till next week a considerable amount of diocesan news and other matter.

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