

CATHOLICS AND CIVIC ACTIVITIES

(By JOSEPH A. McNAMEE, in America.)

Cleric or lay, the Catholic is bound, each in his own degree, "to go forth and teach all nations." The clergyman is the shepherd of the flock; he is the official teacher of the people. But in the work of teaching, the layman too has his part. As related in the Gospel narrative, the main purpose of this teaching is to aid in the propagation of the faith, and it does not seem an exaggeration to say that in this work, the obligation of the layman is daily growing larger. To teach with success, not some only, but all the people must be reached. Whatever the circle which the clergyman can reach, the layman in pursuit of his ordinary calling meets almost daily men of all callings, with whom the clergyman rarely, if ever, comes in touch. But to impress and educate, the teacher must be in sympathy with his pupil, must know his inclinations, his ambitions, his desires. This knowledge can come only from intimate association. Hence, the Catholic, if he is to preach effectively, must mingle with the people.

Catholic Interest in Civic Affairs.

To combine "the people" with "civics" does not call for any stretch of the imagination, since the rights, duties, and privileges of citizenship are all phases of civics. For the development and full exercise of these rights, duties, and privileges, the people are obliged to organise. They therefore group themselves, to secure effective results in the advancement of social, political, and financial interests. Men thus come to know one another and grow in sympathy with one another's activities.

Taking the teaching office of the Catholic citizen for granted, it follows that he must mingle with his fellows in their civic activities, co-operate with them whenever this can be done consistently with his belief, and be ever ready to give them any assistance that lies in his power. It should be his object to aid them in the accomplishment of such purposes as are according to right reason, and to combat all agencies which are opposed to the natural or the Divine law. Never was there a time when there was more need for genuine Gospel teaching and spiritual support than at the present day. To-day the world does not present a picture of peace, joy, and contentment; on the contrary, the hearts of many in the social body are filled with unrest, bitterness, and unhappiness. A relentless war on spiritual ideals and on the principles of supernatural religion is waged by powerful forces. For the first time in the history of the Christian ages, representatives of the civilised nations organize to bring peace back to the world, and on no occasion call on the name of God or of the Prince of Peace.

By itself this example suffices to indicate the need of missionary effort in the modern world. If the leaders of the world's thought are, in their utterances, examples of that atheism which purposely ignores God, it would seem that a large number of the men and women who follow these leaders, assent to the same godless philosophy. To combat this subtle atheism in its many manifestations is the duty of the Catholic citizen. One method of doing this is found in his interest in all civic affairs. He should strive to gain the confidence of his associates, so that he may be able to warn them against tendencies in public affairs which, often innocent in appearance, are, because of their hidden but irreligious purposes, a menace rather than an aid to the State. The forces that build on materialism build on sand, and their structures are doomed to destruction. Man is not an animal merely, and any civic philosophy which does not take into consideration the possibility of his spiritual development, leads to civic ruin.

Error and Intolerance.

It is, of course, generally understood that the Catholic religion inculcates loyalty to one's country and unswerving obedience to the just commands of rightful authority. The need of teaching our modern world this lesson of order, loyalty, and reasonable submission is too plain, in these days of social unrest, to be insisted upon. In his mission of teaching the Catholic citizen is to avoid all that savors of the spirit of the Pharisee. He gives because to him much has been given. He must be ever ready to defend the teachings in which he believes, but never to force them upon others. It is not his business to make men, but, according to his ability, to give men a chance to make themselves. Intolerance of error does not imply intolerance of the men and women who entertain error. If the Catholic citizen has taken care to inform himself of the needs and aspirations of those whom he wishes to help, there will be no question of force, or of personal intolerance. While it is sometimes possible

to crush a liar by force, a lie can be crushed only by the proper presentation of the truth. If he undertakes his work with prudence and zeal, the Catholic may feel sure that in his knowledge of his faith he will find a remedy to meet every difficult condition.

The Cry for Help.

In trying to make the world realise the strength and beauty of his faith, the Catholic citizen has every encouragement to continued labor. From all sides appeals are made to come to the help of suffering humanity. The Catholic citizen knows that the Church is founded on the rock of Peter, that she has been commissioned by God Himself to teach all nations, and that with this commission comes the guarantee that she can never teach error. The Church was founded for all time; her mission is not confined to any century, to any country, or to special circumstances. Whatever man's needs may be, she has a remedy for them. If he is in error, she can lead him from darkness to light; if he is enmeshed in the net of an evil life, she can teach him how to escape therefrom; if darkness and despair, in the face of the world's injustice, fall upon him, she can make life brighter by unfolding before him the vision of that world in which all wrongs are righted, and in which peace and eternal rest are the portion of men who suffer for righteousness' sake. To do his part in this great work, the Catholic citizen must be well equipped, first of all, in his own personal life, and then in the practical application of those great principles of Christianity which alone can lead to perfection the individual and society. There are with us to-day loud and powerful factions which boast the speedy triumph of an unbridled liberalism over the forces of Christianity. Are the men who compose these groups true prophets or false? A complete triumph over the Church of God will never be registered by her enemies; nevertheless, in many places they may sorely cripple, and even destroy for a time, her beneficent mission. The extent of their evil influence will depend very largely upon the civic activities of the Catholic citizen.

Diocesan News

ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON

(From our own correspondent.)

April 22.

His Grace Archbishop O'Shea will leave New Zealand during the week for Samoa, where he will consecrate, on May 16, the Right Rev. Mgr. Darnaud, who has been appointed Bishop of Samoa in succession to his Lordship Bishop Broxer, who died last year, and who was well known to the Catholic boys of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force Advance Party which occupied Samoa when war broke out. His Grace will be assisted at the consecration ceremonies by Bishop Nicholas, of Fiji, and Bishop Blanc, of Tonga. His steamer will pick up these two prelates on the way to Samoa. His Grace will be absent from the Dominion until about the end of June.

Mr. St. Leger Reeves, an old boy of the Marist Brothers' School and St. Patrick's College, and a member of the literary staff of the *Evening Post*, who has resigned to enter the legal profession, having joined the staff of Messrs. O. and R. Beere, was the recipient of a presentation from his colleagues. Mr. Reeves is a son of Mr. F. Reeves, who has been connected with journalism in Wellington for many years.

The quarterly meeting of the Catholic Education Board took place last Wednesday in the Catholic Federation Rooms, Willis Street. His Grace Archbishop O'Shea presided, and there were present the Very Rev. Dean McKenna, Rev. Fathers Mahony, S.M., Smyth, S.M., Bowe, and Connolly, Messrs. Burke, Dolerty, Strafford, McPhee, Carroll, Troy, and Hoskins. Accounts totalling £168 18s 5d were passed for payment. It was announced that the intended Boxing Day picnic, although cancelled owing to bad weather, would bring in £80 to the fund as a result of the art union and donations. The final result of St. Patrick's Day celebrations had not yet been ascertained, but it was expected that the profit would be between £450 and £500. The date of the annual schools' social was fixed for Wednesday, June 23, and members were urged to make both that function and the Thomas Moore Anniversary concert a success, so that the fund would benefit thereby.

The syllabus in connection with the Thomas Moore Anniversary competitions has been circulated amongst the Catholic primary schools of the city and suburbs. The

E. A. ROGERS

FOOTWEAR SATISFACTION is always at your feet if you step along in ROGERS' BOOTS OR SHOES. Phone 37.

TEMUKA