The Catholic Journal

Vol. X, No. 29. Rochester, N. Y., Saturday, April 15, 1899. $1.00 [illegible]

CATHOLIC CONVERTS.

THEIR HAPPINESS DIFFERS FROM PROTESTANT CONVERTS.

Not Evanescent, But Deep and Lasting—The Church the True Home of the Soul.

Yes, the Catholic converts are happy—we may well say, perhaps, the happiest people on earth. Their happiness is not the evanescent enthusiasm of the protestant convert under the influence of a temporary excitement of a camp-meeting or the machinery of an ordinary revival. The Protestant religion of "sweetness and light" appeals to the feelings. The Protestant convert having been persuaded that he has suddenly passed from death to life and that he is now a true child of God, is for the moment carried away by his feeling and esteems himself the happiest of men. But too soon his feelings subside and he is left high and dry like the driftwood on the banks of a stream after a flood.

Not so with the Catholic convert. His happiness arises not from mere excitement and enthusiasm, but is a calm, substantial, reasonable happiness founded in a deep conviction of truth which is brought home to him with great power. As a Protestant he did not know what to believe. He was of a religious turn; he had a general vague belief in Christianity; he may even have been a preacher in some one of the numerous denominations which so much abound in these days of free thought and independence of authority, but what to believe or what to preach—that became a constant source of doubt, speculation and uneasiness. In every sect people are left very much to their own private views and interpretations, and between high and low, broad and ritualist, old school and new school, hard shell and soft shell and the numerous subdivisions of each, the really honest inquirer becomes involved in a labyrinth of doubt and uncertainty which is anything but a source of comfort, consolation or hope.

Through the great mercy of God the honest inquirer becomes a Catholic, and what a change. He has found rest and peace to his troubled soul. How? He had found an infallible tribunal for determining the great essentials of faith and morals, and he rests upon the authority of that tribunal with implicit confidence, and he feels now like a storm-tossed mariner who has arrived at a safe harbor after a tempestuous voyage.

The Catholic church is a new world to him, a world of light, comfort and peace. He realizes now that he is in communion with the old, original Church founded by Christ and His Apostles. Here is the traditional teaching of the Apostles. He is in communion with the long line of saints and martyrs and holy men of old who fought the good fight and kept the faith and are now reaping the reward of their faithfulness in the world of light and bliss above. Here is the chair of Peter, the rock upon which our Lord Himself built the Church, promising that the gates of hell should never prevail against it. Here are the keys of supreme authority entrusted to Peter and his successor with the command to feed the sheep and lambs of the flock, to confirm the brethren with the promise that their faith should never fail.

Here is that wonderful institution established by our Lord Himself, so fraught with peace and comfort to the sin-burdened soul—the confessional. His old prejudices vanish in the light of that declaration of our Lord: "Whose sins ye shall forgive they are forgiven them, and whose sins ye shall retain they are retained." Why did he never discover before that that language involves the necessity of confession? For how can the spiritual director determine what sins to forgive and what to retain unless they are confessed to him? Now the joyful penitent needs no urging to avail himself of this inestimable boon. He has longed to unburden himself to some confidential friend. He needs spiritual direction, and his great desire has been for the assurance of forgiveness. So he opens his heart freely to his confessor; he receives absolution and spiritual counsel and direction and goes away happy—his peace flows like a river.

Here, too, are devotions, private and public, which are a revelation to him. Oh, how different from the bald, dry, superficial and unsatisfactory devotions of Protestantism! The supernatural becomes a reality to him. He is brought in close contact with the invisible, spiritual world. He has the unspeakable consolation of praying for the souls of his departed friends. The saints of God in heaven are his friends, and he appeals to them with confidence that through their intercession he will obtain graces and blessings for which he feels himself unworthy to ask.

Above all, that saint of saints—that transcendently beautiful and glorious being, the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of his God and Saviour, appeals to him with all the power and fascination of the most absorbing devotion. He sees now the absurdity of the Protestant objection to devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Instead of weaning him from his Saviour, she brings him nearer to Him and makes him realize more deeply the infinite blessing of having a Saviour who is both God and Man. She is still the Mother of her Divine Son, and the mutual love that exists between them is the best guarantee of her all-powerful intercession with Him. She is well styled the mother of perseverance. The interests of her Son are her interests. She sympathizes particularly with Him in His desire for our salvation, and she thus becomes a powerful "friend at court" of all who seek her kind offices.

But the crowning source of happiness for the convert is the real presence of his Lord and Saviour in the holy sacrament of the altar. It is this especially that distinguishes Catholics in contrast with Protestant devotion. Protestant churches are simply meeting houses, and the principal attraction is the preacher. If he is eloquent and stirs the feelings, his hearers are greatly pleased and satisfied. This is mostly human—a sort of man-worship which does not reach the depths of the soul. But in the Catholic church the Real Presence is the chief point of interest, and it imparts life and warmth as well as a deep solemnity to the devotion. It is that blessed truth that comes home to the heart of the convert with extraordinary freshness and power of attraction. He loves to approach the altar and commune with his Saviour and receive Him into his very heart of hearts. In short, he realizes that the Catholic church is in very deed the true home of the soul, and in her life-giving sacraments and institutions he finds abundant satisfaction for all his spiritual wants, his desires and aspirations, with a joyful hope of blessed immortality beyond the grave.—Sacred Heat Review.

HIS WIFE A CATHOLIC.

Major General Arthur MacArthur, who is prominent just now in the public attention by reason of his bravery and the effective work done by his division in the Philippines, married a Catholic. He was married in Norfolk by Rev. M. O'Keefe, now editor of the Catholic Mirror, to Miss Mary Pinckney Hardy, an estimable young lady of that place shortly after the close of the civil war. The groom was at that time a captain of infantry.

Father O'Keefe was then pastor of St. Mary's church, Norfolk, and Miss Hardy, who was a convert and the only one of her family in the membership of the Catholic church, having been instructed and received into it by Rev. John S. Foley, now bishop of Detroit, was a member of his parish. Miss Hardy's family was one of the best in Norfolk; her father was an eminent merchant of that place.

When the present war was declared MacArthur held only the rank of lieutenant-colonel and was on duty in the adjutant-general's department. His elevation to his present rank as major-general of volunteers, was a gratification to his friends, who were confident that he would distinguish himself at the front. His assignment to the Philippine campaign and the active influence he has had, demonstrate the advantage to the army of such officers as Gen. MacArthur. It is thought that his work as a commander of a division of volunteers will win him promotion to the command of a division or at least a brigade of regulars. He is not a graduate of West Point, his position in the regular army having been obtained through bravery in the civil war. Congress awarded him a medal for bravery in that conflict, and he is a prominent member of the Society of the United States Military Medal of Honor. He is a man of strong character, and is popular in army circles.

Miss M. McNulty,

Of the New York millinery store begs to inform her friends and customers that on Wednesday morning she will be found in the millinery parlors of Hennen & Doyle, 38 East Main street.

A PRIEST ADDRESSES MASONIC MOURNERS

BLUNTLY BUT INOFFENSIVELY STATES THE POSITION OF THE CHURCH IN REGARD TO SECRET SOCIETIES.

Deceased a Catholic Convert—The Masonic Name of a Catholic Family—God Heard and Answered Their Prayers.

The novel spectacle of a Catholic priest officiating at funeral services held in a private residence and delivering a discourse of considerable length to the assembled relatives and friends of the deceased was witnessed on Thursday of last week at Bala, which is about fifteen minutes' ride from Broad Street Station. The funeral was that of Thomas McCully, who died on March 27 in the seventy-ninth year of his age, and the residence in which the services were held was that of his son, Charles P. McCully. The deceased had been a non-Catholic almost to the moment of his death, when he expressed a desire to die in the faith. He had been a member of the Masonic fraternity, and among those assembled to pay their last tribute of respect were a number with whom he had become intimate in the lodge. It was to these that the officiating priest, Very Rev. John J. Fedigan, provincial of the Augustinians, addressed his remarks and to whom he bluntly but without offense, stated the position of the church with regard to secret societies. In the priest's remarks will also be found the explanation of the holding of the services in a private residence and not in the church. Interment was at St. Denis' cemetery, Haverford, Pa.

Father Fedigan read the text:

"A good name is better than precious ointments, and the day of death than the day of one's birth." Eccles. vii., 2.

He spoke as follows:

"Ladies and gentlemen: I cannot say 'dearly beloved brethren,' as that might be a dubious expression on this occasion and it might reach the ears of our Most Rev. Archbishop, who might construe it to mean that I have become a Freemason. It is my duty to state, however, that in owing to his kindness and that of the local pastor that I am here to say a few words to you and give Christian burial to our departed friend. The full solemn and beautiful ritual of the Catholic church is reserved for those who during life proved themselves good practical Catholics, and, therefore, entitled to it. This is in every truth consonant with right reason and the practice of every society in regard to its members; the better member in life the better for you in death.

"Mr. McCully was not a Catholic during his long life, except perhaps in heart, compelled thereto by the good example of his Catholic household, of which he was a constant eye witness, thus proving the true and trite saying that 'example is stronger than words.' I knew him years ago, and I was then pastor or spiritual director of his family, with which arrangement he in no way at any time ever interfered. He was content to be as he was and to leave them as they were—good practical Catholics. So much so that he sent his sons to our college at Villanova, where they were confirmed in their faith and drank as from the fountain source, the true and saving principals of Christianity. Such and so great was the piety of that family that God gave the greatest of his gift—a religious vocation—to one of the daughters of that father, and she became one of the Sisters of Notre Dame. Why wonder, therefore, if the heartfelt prayers of mother and children brought the grace of conversion to the father upon his deathbed. 'Wonderful beyond finding out are the ways of God.' The pleadings of that mother before the throne of heaven and the religious spouse of Jesus Christ on earth brought about that glorious result, although it was at the last hour of his mortal existence in this 'valley of tears.'

"I should feel very much disappointed if it were otherwise, for I have been taught to believe that prayer is all powerful before the throne of God; that the prayer of man ascends and the Grace of God descends in answer to it. He left, therefore, no record of Catholic practice behind him, but he did leave a good name, which is better than perfect ointment; and as a man, a citizen, a neighbor, a brother in your society, as father in his family he was without reproach. The day of [illegible]

stood by his death bed the priest of the Prince of Peace who came on earth to call sinners to repentance and said, "Whosoever believeth in Me, even though he be dead, yet shall he live." There and then, my friends, stood the minister of Jesus Christ pleading between the sinner offending and God offended for mercy for the dying man. Ah, my friends, the good priest is a welcome guest at the beside of the departing Christian. His power then is great beyond our understanding; it is that of the Saviour who said: 'As the Father sent Me I send you' to save poor sinners for whom Christ died that they might have life everlasting. Thank God, who has given so great power to man, His representative.

"His body is laid away to-day in mother earth, from which it was formed, that in accordance with the Divine command dust to dust may be gathered, but on this very day Holy Church commemorates the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, wherein Christ gives Himself to us to be spiritual food and life of our immortal souls, and so great is the joy of the faithful believers in this greatest gift of God to man that no regular funeral service can take place in any church, no matter how good and holy the deceased may have been.

"Just a word to you of the fraternity of which for many years he was a member. I imagine you asking me, 'What fault have you to find with us, are we not all good fellows?' Yes, you may be, but bad Christians, because you do not obey the representative of Christ, the supreme visible head of the Church of Christ on earth. 'But why should he condemn us?' Because he knows you better than you do yourselves. He knows you in your principles. That is just the difference between you and us. We have good principles but do not always live up to them; you may be good fellows, but your principles are bad. You ask why? Well, I don't want to make you laugh at a funeral, but I tell you it is because one half of you know nothing about masonry and cannot lay two stones properly together. If you can, come up to Villanova and I will give you a job. You do not deliver what you profess, or did in the beginning profess. If you doubt this, read your own histories. Mr. Gould, who in the third volume, speaking of the chapter of Clermont, tells us that on the feast of St. John—June and December—you should go to mass. Who don't you do it? That a member behind in his dues or not regularly attending the lodge meetings shall give to the altar of the Virgin as many wax candles. Why don't you observe your statutes? You are different now from what you once were, and that is why the church condemns you.—Standard and Times.

CONSECRATING THE NEW POPE

A Dignified Ceremony, Occupying Parts of Three Days.

The votes of two-thirds of the Cardinals of the Roman Catholic church assembled in conclave are all that is necessary to change any Roman Catholic—layman, cleric, Bishop, Archbishop or Cardinal—into the Pope, the head of the most numerous body of Christians on earth. The moment that the person who receives such proportion of the votes of the Cardinals has said he will accept the election he becomes without any further ceremony the Vicar of Christ on earth, head of the Bishops, Bishop of Rome, Supreme Governor of the Catholic church, Patriarch of the West and Prince of the Pontifical States. It is not necessary that he should hold even minor orders. Laymen might have been chosen Pope, sub-deacons have been, and one of the greatest of all the greatest of all the Popes, Hildebrand, after his election called Gregory VII., was not ordained priest until after he had been chosen Pope.

But in spite of this the enthronization of the new Pope is an occasion of great ceremony and pomp, inasmuch as it is the visible setting apart of the chosen person as the head of the Roman Catholic church. The ceremonies are many and complicated, carried out with all the wealth of detail that the long succession of pontifical masters of ceremony have been able to devise.

The proceedings begin early on the appointed day in the Sistine chapel, where, for the second time, the Cardinals adore the new Pope. The first adoration was immediately after the election, while the cardinals were still in conclave. After this adoration the procession is formed to [illegible]