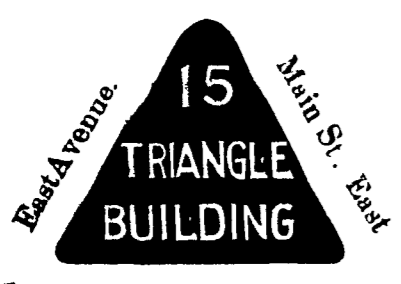


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CHANGE OF FAITH

SOME REASONS GIVEN FOR BECOMING A CATHOLIC.

Rudolph Clement Altschul a Farmer Reformed Episcopal Minister Writes Interestingly of His Conversion to the One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Among the most notable of recent conversions is that of Rudolph Clement Altschul and his entire family, seven in all. For some years he exercised the ministry in the Protestant church and at the urgent request of the editor of the Missionary he present a short account of his religious history.

"I have been asked to define my reasons for entering the Catholic church and I confess that the task is a most difficult one. There are certain questions which will not yield to human arguments. There are certain questions which will not be subjugated to our reason. Yet the question, 'Why are you a Catholic?' is put to me by both sides. Catholics and Protestants alike desire me to explain why I gave up my ministry and my prospects for the future and 'went over to Rome'.

"I was born in Prague (Bohemia) one of the most ultra-Catholic cities in the world. From childhood I associated with Catholics and while my home atmosphere was one of perfect religious indifference, I was neither encouraged nor forbidden to enter Catholic places of worship. Well I remember how I used to steal into a church to hide behind the high, dark pews, watching with awe and wonder the priest at the altar, the figures and pictures of saints. How I used to envy the people and my schoolmates for being entitled to enjoy all these glories freely and openly, and how the fragrance of the incense had to me the favor and the sweetness of the forbidden fruit!

"This passed, I went to England, married and settled down to the humdrum of life of the average man, without any special aim and without faith in anything but a well filled purse. But it should not remain thus. "One day I passed a building where 'Gospel Meetings' were held and entered. As the daily said: 'I got religion' there and then, or at least what I supposed to be 'religion,' and a short time after I decided to study for the ministry. In due season I was ordained and for some time acted as assistant to Bishop Richardson of the Reformed Episcopal church.

THE POPE'S LETTER

CONCLUSION

and nobody else is, or could be, the visible head of His church. Some months ago I wrote to His Grace Archbishop Corrigan, asking for an interview. I explained to him my position, my state of mind.

"With his natural kindness and grace he met my difficulties and introduced me to Rev. Father A. P. Doyle, of the Paulist Fathers, who instructed myself and family in the doctrines of the Catholic Church. "On the 22d of February, 1902, (Washington's birthday) I, my wife and five children, were received into the church at the Paulist Fathers' church. On the 24th of March we were privately confirmed by His Grace in the vestry of St. Patrick's Cathedral.

"I dare not contemplate what my feelings would have been if any member of my family should have opposed my desire to join the Catholic Church. "As it is, we are all in the fold, all happy.

The Spanish Benedictines recently opened a college in a suburb of Manila which already has sixty boarding students. It is stated that the Benedictines resolutely refuse to send their sons to the over-anxious schools supplied by the government.

It is for us, we never weary as often as the occasion presents itself to inculcate these great truths, and we desire to do so once again and in a very explicit manner on this extraordinary occasion. May God grant that the faithful will take courage from what we say and be guided to unite their efforts more efficaciously for the common good; that they may be more enlightened and that our adversaries may understand the injustice which they commit in persecuting the most loving mother and the most faithful benefactress of humanity.

We would not wish that the remembrance of these afflictions should dimish in the souls of the faithful that full and entire confidence which they ought to have in the Divine assistance. For God, in His own hour and in His mysterious ways, will bring about a certain victory. As for us, no matter how great the sadness which fills our heart, we do not fear for the immortal destiny of the church. As we have said in the beginning, persecution is its heritage, because in trying and in purifying its children, God thereby obtains for them greater and more precious advantages. And in permitting the Church to undergo these trials He manifests the Divine assistance which He bestows upon it.

While so many powers conspire against the Church and while she is progressing on her way deprived of all human help and assistance, is she not in effect carrying on her gigantic work in the world, and is she not extending her action in every clime and every nation? Expelled by Jesus Christ the prince of this world can no longer exercise his proud dominion as heretofore, and although doubtless the efforts of Satan may cause us many a woe they will not achieve the object at which they aim. Already a supernatural tranquility due to the Holy Ghost Who provides for the Church and Who abides in it reigns not only in the souls of the faithful but also throughout Christianity; a tranquility whose serene development we witness everywhere, thanks to the union ever more and more close and affectionate with the Apostolic See, a union which is in marvelous contrast with the agitation, the dissension and the continual unrest of the various sects which disturb the peace of society.

There is nothing more natural than that like the branches which spring from the roots of the tree, these numberless associations which we see with joy flourish in our days in the bosom of the Church should arise, grow strong and multiply. There is no form of Christian piety which has been omitted whether there is a question of Jesus Christ himself, or His adorable mysteries, or His Divine Mother, or the saints whose wonderful virtues have illumined the world. Nor has any kind of charitable work been forgotten. On all sides there is a zealous endeavor to procure Christian instruction for youth; help for the sick; moral teaching for the people and assistance in the goods of this world. With what remarkable rapidity this movement would propagate itself and what precious fruits it would bear if it were not opposed by the unjust and unfriendly efforts with which it finds itself so often in conflict.

God, who gives to the Church such great vitality in civilized countries where it has been established for so many centuries, consoles us besides with other hopes. These hopes we owe to the zeal of Catholic missionaries. Not permitting themselves to be discouraged by the perils which they face; by the privations which they endure; by the sacrifices of every kind which they accept, their numbers are increasing and they are gaining whole countries to the Gospel and to civilization. Nothing can diminish their courage, although after the manner of their Divine master they receive only accusations and calumnies as the reward of their untiring labors.

Thus our sorrows are tempered by the sweetest consolations, and in the midst of the struggles and the difficulties which are our portion we have wherewith to refresh our souls and to inspire us with hope. This ought to suggest useful and wise reflections to those who view the world with intelligence, and who do not permit passions to blind them; for it proves that God has not made man independent in what regards the least and of life, and just as He speaks to him in the past so He speaks again in our day by His Church which is visibly sustained by the Divine assistance and which shows clearly where salvation and truth can be found. Come what may, this eternal assistance will inspire our hearts with an incredible hope and persuade us that at the hour marked by Providence and in a future which is not remote, truth will scatter the mists in which men endeavor to shroud it and will shine forth more brightly than ever. The spirit of

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the Gospel will spread life anew in the hearts of our corrupted society and in its perishing members. In what concerns us, Venerable Brethren, in order to hasten the day of Divine mercy we shall not fall in our duty to do everything to defend and develop the Kingdom of God upon earth. As for you, your pastoral solicitude is too well known to us to exhort you to do the same. May the ardent name which burns in your hearts be transmitted more and more to the hearts of all your priests. They are in immediate contact with the people. If full of the spirit of Jesus Christ and keeping themselves above political passion, they unite their action with yours they will succeed with the blessing of God in accomplishing marvelous works; by their word they will enlighten the multitude; by their sweetness of manners they will gain all hearts, and in succoring with charity their suffering brethren, they will help them little by little to better the condition in which they are placed.

The clergy will be firmly sustained by the active and intelligent co-operation of all men of good will. Thus the children who have tasted the sweetness of the Church will thank her for it in a worthy way, viz., by gathering around her to defend her honor and her glory. All can contribute to this work which will be so splendidly meritorious for them; literary and learned men by defending her in books or in the daily press which is such a powerful instrument now made use of by her enemies; fathers of families and teachers, by giving a Christian education to children; magistrates and representatives of the people, by showing themselves firm in the principles which they defend as well as by the integrity of their lives and in the profession of their faith without any vestige of human respect. Our age exacts lofty ideals, generous designs, and the exact observance of the law. It is by a perfect submission to the directions of the Holy See that this discipline will be strengthened, for it is the best means of causing to disappear or at least of diminishing the evil which party opinions produce in fomenting divisions; and it will assist us in uniting all our efforts for attaining that higher end, namely, the triumph of Jesus Christ and His Church. Such is the duty of Catholics. As for her final triumph she depends upon Him who watches with wisdom and love over his immaculate spouse and of Whom it is written: "Jesus Christ, yesterday, today and forever." (Heb. xiii., 8.)

It is therefore to Him that at this moment we should lift our hearts in humble and ardent prayer, to Him who loving with an infinite love our erring humanity has wished to make Himself an expiatory victim by the sublimity of His martyrdom; to Him who seated although unseen in the mystical bark of His Church can alone still the tempest and command the waves to be calm and the furious winds to cease. Without doubt, Venerable Brethren, you with us will ask this Divine Master for the cessation of the evils which are overwhelming society, for the repeal of all hostile laws; for the illumination of those who more perhaps through ignorance than through malice, hate and persecute the religion of Jesus Christ; and also for the drawing together of all men of good will in close and holy union.

May the triumph of truth and of justice be thus hastened in the world, and for the great family of men may better days dawn; days of tranquility and of peace.

Meanwhile as a pledge of the most precious and Divine favor may the benediction which we give you with all our heart descend upon you and all the faithful committed to your care. Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, 19th March, 1902, in the twenty-fifth year of Our Pontificate. LEO XIII.

A Story of Nordica. Lillian Norton, (Nordica) was born and reared in Farmington, Maine. She studied in Boston, sang in many of the Catholic church choirs (Mme. Nordica is a devout Catholic, and finally appeared as a Concert singer in New York with Gilmore's band. Under Gilmore's direction she made a tour of Europe, where, for the first time, foreigners realized that a nightingale could be heard in bleak prosaic New England. From Italian to French and German operas she glided with ease, establishing a new interpretation of "Elsa," "Brunhilde" and "Isolde." Her personification of Verdi's masterpiece, "Aida," has been unsurpassed in the world of music. Her position in the operatic world has been established now for years, and she reigns with queenly grace as the only supreme American prima donna. One of Mme. Nordica's favorite concert numbers is the great dramatic aria from Ekel's Hungarian opera, "Ladies," in which the climax depicts the grief of a mother upon the loss of her child. One day while driving in the country, she was startled by a wall of anguish from a nearby cottage. Jumping from her carriage she ran to the door and found a young mother whose child had just died in her arms, giving way to the first passion of her woe. Mme. Nordica did what she could for the poor bereft mother, but she knew also that chance had placed in her grasp what she had tried so worked until she could perfectly imitate that frenzied cry. There was the climax, and all who have heard Nordica sing Ekel's aria know the effect is nothing less than electric. Sunday Morning. I hear the bells ring out Across the silent squares; A holy calm has come Upon the world's affairs. The roar of yesterday— The fury of the fray— Is hushed and people's cares Are softly put away. The distant bells ring out, I hear their echoes die, And breathe the fragrance of The seraph singing by. I know that man, somewhere, Fight on and slay and slay, But still I see the sky, And know that God is there. —S. E. Kiser. A college for the education of Australian priests is being considered at Rome.

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