

# THE CATHOLIC JOURNAL

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SATURDAY, SEPT. 12, 1903.

## The Death of Voltaire.

[Written for The Catholic Journal by Veritas].  
It concerned the friends of the world's Arah-Infidel, Voltaire, at the time of his death, as it has concerned his admirers since, to deny that he ever sought reconciliation with God in his last moments, but there is the testimony of his physician Mons Tronchin (a protestant) who attended him to the last, that "O Christ" and "I am abandoned by God and man," were the last coherent sounds to cross his lips. In this his final illness he sent for the Abbe Gualtier requesting him to come and take his retraction and confession: "You promised me, sir," he wrote, "to come and hear me, I entreat you to take the trouble to call as early as possible." The priest of course went at once, but as Voltaire had been in a dying state on two previous occasions, on which he had professed to make his peace with God and the Church, and afterwards recanted with his own inimitable fanfare of blasphemy, it was deemed necessary on this occasion to exact the most solemn and complete abjuration of his past infidelities. In the presence therefore of the Marquis de Ville-vielle, and the Abbes Gualtier and Mignet, the dying man made the following declaration: "I, the undersigned declare that for these four days past having been afflicted with a vomiting of blood, at the age of eighty-four, and not having been able to drag myself to church, the Reverend Rector of St. Sulpice, having been pleased to add to his good works that of sending to me the Abbe Gualtier, a priest, I confessed to him, and if it pleases God to dispose of me, I die in the Holy Catholic Church, in which I was born; hoping that the Divine Mercy will deign to pardon all my faults. If ever I have scandalized the Church, I ask pardon of God and the Church. 2nd of March, 1778, Voltaire."

This document was deposited with Mons Momet, Notary at Paris, but was first submitted to the Rector of St. Sulpice, and the Archbishop of Paris, for them to judge whether it were sufficiently explicit.  
But when Pere Gualtier returned with the Archbishop's answer, he was refused admission to Voltaire's presence, by a group of rationalist "friends." Their leader's former reconciliation had caused them sufficient mortification without submitting to another, and they effectually succeeded this time in their heartless object. When Voltaire discovered that he was thus cut off from the consolations of religion, his rage was terrible, no reproach, no curse being deemed bad enough for the D'Alemberts and Diderots who kept guard over him: "Begone, he said, 'it is you who have brought me to my present state. Begone! I could have done without you all; but you could not have existed without me and what a wretched glory you have procured me!" Then alternately cursing, praying, and blaspheming, he passed the last hours of his life on earth. He died May 30th, 1778. His physician, Tronchin, in describing the closing scenes, said: "to see all the turries of Orestes, one had only to be present at the death of Voltaire: Such a spectacle would benefit the young, who are in danger of losing the precious helps of religion." The Marquis de Richelieu, also, was so unmoved at what he saw that he quitted the bedside of Voltaire declaring the sight to be "too awful for endurance."

Villette, the friend of Voltaire, and of course his amanuensis Monks, denied these statements, but Paris paid little heed to these disclaimers, as they were only to be looked for.  
The fact remains, that, whatever the actuating motive, it was Voltaire's wish to save his soul, even at the eleventh hour, and his "friends" saw another triumph for rationalism, in preventing him. They saw to it that he should die as he had lived. Only at the seasoning of all hearts shall we know whether by a supreme act of perfect contrition Voltaire laid claim to the boundless mercy of that God whom in life he had so persistently vilified and outraged. Looking at it from a human standpoint, there seems little hope, especially when one reads these words of his physician: "I did everything in my power to calm him, for the agitation that he was in was so violent that no remedies could take effect. I could not succeed, and unable to endure the horror of the peculiar nature of his frantic rage, I abandoned him."

## Five Minute Sermon

**The Widow of Naim.**  
The dead man is a figure of a sinner dead in the eyes of God deprived of every spiritual good and of the strength to do works for life eternal. The sorrowing mother who followed the bier was the figure of the Church, which never loses sight of those of her children whom sin has deprived of life. She continually prays for their conversion fervently and constantly.

By to day's Gospel our Divine Master wished to teach us that for the conversion of a sinner, who is a slave of his passions and bad habits, a powerful and special grace is necessary which almost like a miracle stops the course of the predominant passions, and hinders them from going further. Oh, how should habitual sinners tremble when they reflect that God gives this grace out of pure mercy, notwithstanding our unworthiness, and that He does not give it to all, but only to whom He pleases, and when and how He pleases, for no one can merit this grace.

Let us learn to weep with the Church over the unhappy death of so many of our brethren who are the slaves of sin, and to pray with her that the Divine Mercy may recall them to life. Let us learn to beg Jesus to come to meet us in His great charity, as He did the dead young man of Naim, when we have had the misfortune to fall into mortal sin. Lastly, let us learn to thank God for all He has done for us, either by resuscitating us when we were in the state of sin, or by preserving us from what might again cause our spiritual death.

The Catholic Citizen is the name of the newest paper in Rochester. There are now about forty papers published in this city.

**Forty Hours Devotion.**  
The Forty Hours Devotion will be held in the following churches next week:

September 18—Holy Redeemer, Rochester; Scipio, Roxville; Our Mother of Sorrows, Lady Hill.

**Weekly Church Calendar.**  
Sunday September 13—Gospel, St. Luke, vii 11-16—The Holy Name of Mary  
Monday 14—Exaltation of the Holy Cross.  
Tuesday 15—St. Nicomedes, martyr.  
Wednesday 16—SS. Cornelius and Cyprian, martyrs. Fast.  
Thursday 17—Stigmata of St. Francis.  
Friday 18—St. Joseph of Cupertino, confessor. Fast.  
Saturday 19—SS. Jannarius and Comp. martyrs. Fast.

**Personal.**  
Miss Anna Sheil of Brighton, N. Y., has returned home after a month's trip through Canada. She had a most enjoyable time spending two weeks as a guest at the Bandel House near Hayden Shore Park and at Willow Cottage, Port Whitley and Toronto where she attended the fair and visited friends and relatives.

**Beware of Ointments for Catarrh that Contain Mercury.**  
As mercury will surely destroy the sense of smell and completely derange the whole system when entering it through the mucous surfaces. Such articles should never be used except on prescriptions from reputable physicians, as the damage they do is ten fold to the good you can possibly derive from them. Hall's Catarrh Cure, manufactured by F. J. Cheney & Co., Toledo, O., contains no mercury, and is taken internally acting directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. In buying Hall's Catarrh Cure be sure you get the genuine. It is taken internally and made by F. J. Cheney & Co. Testimonials free.  
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## DEVOTION TO MARY.

THE LOVE OF THE CATHOLIC FOR THE MOTHER OF GOD.

It Follows the Divine Example and is a Test of Orthodoxy, For Those Who Love and Reverence the Son Honor His Immaculate Mother.

The most beautiful relation of love to mother that ever existed was that of Jesus to Mary. He was so wholly her Son. No human father shared this filiation. No human father had a natural claim on this Divine Son of a Virgin Mother. Mary could look on her as all hers. He could look on her as all his. Well did Joseph understand this marvelous relationship, and thoroughly did he respect it.

Following the divine example of loving the Mother of God, Catholics in every age have been most devoted to her. The Christian world is replete with monuments of this devotion. Cathedrals, churches, chapels, shrines, monasteries, convents, asylums, hospitals, institutions of learning and of mercy in Mary's honor and bearing her name and titles are to be found all through the ages. In every land where her Divine Son is known and honored.

The love of the Christian heart for Mary is a test of orthodoxy. The first devotion attacked by the heretic is the love for Mary and the honor shown her. The attack may be veiled at first and the devotion deprecated as being excessive. The excess is claimed to be an abuse and an insult to Christ. It is said to detract from the honor due to him. Later it is characterized as blasphemous, for, says the heretic, so jealous of God's honor, Catholics give divine honor to Mary. First, apparently, the honor given was not unlawful in itself, but only in its excess. It is evident that if divine honor were given to a creature in any degree it would be blasphemous and idolatrous. Blasphemy and idolatry do not admit of degrees. A title in either respect is grievous. Therefore there can be no question of giving Mary the least bit of honor that belongs to God alone. God is a jealous God and shares his honor with none. Any one attempting to give of the divine honor to Mary is guilty in his sight.

Does any Catholic do this? Yes, say the enemies of the church. Assertion is one thing, proof is another thing. What proof is offered? Certain practices, books, prayers and hymns are alleged. They breathe a spirit, they speak a language, that is unknown to the cavalier. Let those who have never loved glance through the letters of lovers, and they will be scandalized at the fervid expressions, the seemingly exaggerated protestations of love and devotion, but to the experienced they seem natural and suitable.

Once grasp the doctrine of the Incarnation and the relation of the Virgin Mother to the Incarnate Son of God, there is no honor that is not divine honor seems too great for her upon whom has been conferred the unique and peerless privilege of divine motherhood. From this surpassing honor spring all Mary's titles to her other matchless privileges, such as the immaculate conception, the preservation of her original body from corruption and the assumption of that body into heaven. No wonder that persons who do not believe in the incarnation should deny all honor to Mary, since they deny the ground claim for any such honor. So with the true honor due to the incarnate Son of God stands the true honor due to his mother according to the flesh. This is the test of orthodoxy, and those who love and reverence the Son cannot refuse to love and reverence his mother.

Those who began by trying to deprive the mother of her rights have ended by denying that Son's rights. They sought to dethrone the mother from the King's right hand. They seek now to dethrone that Son. They deny his divinity, therefore for him no divine honor. They pretend to reverence him as a man, the greatest of men, but a man and no more. A man—yes, true man the greatest of men, but also true God, the God-Man, and Mary is his mother, and Mary is the mother of God. Infinitely below him is she, for he is infinite and she is finite. He is God and she is a creature. But she is the noblest, greatest of creatures, who gave of her flesh and blood to form the human body of God the Son, his mother then and, as relationships never change, his mother now and for eternity; hence the power; hence our confidence in her.—Church Bulletin.

**The Faith in Denmark.**  
There are at present in Denmark but 8,000 Catholics out of a population of 2,400,000. The ruin of Catholicism in this country dates from 1586, when by a royal decree the kingdom was closed to all Catholic missionaries. Of recent years the laws in this regard have become more liberal. There are now twenty-one secular priests in the country, and of these fourteen are natives. Since the promulgation of the charter of 1849 there has been nominal freedom in the matter of religion.  
In Iceland there has been recently established a little group of Catholics. In 1865 Pope Leo sent a small company of missionaries to Iceland, and their indefatigable labors against all kinds of difficulties have been crowned with satisfactory results.

**The Way of Salvation.**  
Says Lacordaire: "Pray regularly morning and night, read a short passage from the gospel, go every month to confession and communion, have some little practice of penance to keep you chaste and to preserve you from the spirit of the world. That will be enough to support you, to lift you higher than a merely sensuous life, to bend you to God, to strengthen and comfort you."

## JEWELS FOR CHALICES.

Costly Offerings For the Paulist Mission House in Washington.  
Four pounds of solid gold, in addition to a large number of precious stones, have been sent in the shape of various articles of jewelry by women from all parts of the country to be fashioned into chalices for the Paulist mission house in Washington.

The offerings are in response to an appeal by the Rev. Father Doyle of the Paulist order in West Sixtieth street, New York city. Almost every one of the offerings represents a life's romance.

"This is how it all came about," said Father Doyle. "The mission house in Washington is to be the home of priests whose special duties are to be the imparting of knowledge of the Catholic church to non-Catholic friends. Being priests, they must say their mass every morning. Each one of them will need a chalice. (Chalices cost from \$50 up). Now, our friends aid us and at the same time do honor to God by offering these golden or silver gifts to be used in the fashioning of the chalice. The chalice is by all odds the most sacred vessel in the service of the church, inasmuch as it is used in the essential act of Catholic belief—the transubstantiation.

"I had not expected to see such a widespread interest in the movement. Only the other day I received a gold watch from some one in the Melbourne (Australia) prison. A Milwaukee girl sent a jeweled bracelet. A prominent young society woman sent a pearl studded ring worth several hundred dollars. The pearls are to be taken out and wrought into the base of one of the chalices. All the jewels will be used for the base and staff of the chalices, while the gold will be melted for the cup proper.

"Probably the most interesting gift is a chalice which was found in an ash pile in Chicago. A priest in one of the hotels died during the night. He had only an old satchel, which contained a silver chalice lined with gold and some small books. Evidently the scrub woman thought it was a bag of soiled clothing. At all events she threw it out the window. It was carted to an ash pile, where a curious negro opened it and discovered the chalice."

**The Church and the People.**  
In the choice of the cardinal patriarch of Venice as pope the Catholic church has once more reminded the world that in her wonderful organization she blends the two seemingly irreconcilable ideas of absolutism and democracy. Her highest office is again bestowed, as on many previous occasions, on a man of the humblest origin. Macaulay in his celebrated analysis of the vitality of this great historic church adverts to her marvelous hold on the masses of the common people. Can it be doubted that it is due, at least in part, to the fact just newly attested in the election of Pius X., that there is in her service no priest so poor or of such obscure origin that he may not hope to bear the keys of St. Peter?—New York World.

**Religion is the Saving Salt.**  
Commenting upon the degeneracy into which so many descendants of the Puritans have fallen, the Catholic Transcript says: "The fact is, the human race is about the same in all its branches. Left to itself it does tend downward along the line of the least resistance. Nor will pure intellectual culture, no matter how brilliant or how general, do much to check the sinking movement. Religion, inculcating the hope of heaven and the fear of hell, the love of God and the terrors of his judgment, will alone suffice to lead men along the steep and thorny road of virtue. It is infinitely better than ceaseless and rancid self enjoyery."

**An Incident in France.**  
A correspondent of the Philadelphia Public Ledger writes: "Some time ago I was visiting the hospital at Caen, in Normandy, where there was a man being tended by a Sister of Mercy. She was praying quietly by the bedside and rose with tears in her eyes. I asked her later on why she wept and she said that the dying man had asked that a crucifix might be placed on the wall opposite his bed. Under French law this is now illegal. Words would fall to describe the simple woe of the sister, who lamented the action of a powerful government in carrying its political warfare even to the bedside of the dying."

**The Total Abstinence Union.**  
At the recent national convention of the Catholic Total Abstinence union at Pittsburg the following officers were elected: President, Rev. Walter J. Shanley, Hartford, Conn.; vice presidents, W. J. Gibbons, Chicago; Rev. John G. Beaul, Pittsburg, and Mrs. L. M. Lake, St. Louis; secretary, J. Washington Logue, Philadelphia; treasurer, Rev. J. J. Curran of Wilkesbarre. St. Louis was chosen as the place for next year's convention and the first week in August the time.

**SHORT SERMONS.**  
The most sacred heart of Jesus is the heart of our best friend.  
Religion is the best armor in the world, but the worst cloak.  
The best cure for spiritual morbidity is a little unselfish benevolence.  
If we love Christ we must love his mother. We must know her in order to know him.  
God has promised forgiveness to your repentance, but he has not promised a tomorrow to your procrastination.  
Morality is the good taste of the spirit, and a lapse from it should disturb every sense as keenly as any most violent discord of sound or color jars the eye or ear of an artist.

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