

## FEAST OF THE CROSS

THE NOTABLE EVENT THAT IS CELEBRATED ON MAY 3.

Story of the Finding of the True Cross by St. Helena in the Year 326, Long After It Had Been Buried by the Enemies of Christianity.

The Feast of the True Cross is celebrated by the Church on the third day of May. This day, which is also called Holy Rood day, is observed as a festival in honor of the finding of the true cross of Calvary by St. Helena in the year 326, about 180 years after it had been buried by the heathens. Out of an aversion to Christianity the enemies of the Saviour had done all in their power to conceal the place where it lay and where the Saviour was buried. They had therefore heaped upon this sepulcher a great quantity of stones and rubbish, besides building a temple to Venus, that those who came to adore Him might seem to pay their worship to a marble idol representing this deity. They had, moreover, erected a statue to Jupiter in the place where Christ rose from the dead, which figure continued there from the emperor Adrian's time to Constantine's reign. The precautions of the persecutors showed the veneration which the Christians paid from the beginning to the instruments of redemption.

Historians tell us that Helena, Constantine's mother, being inspired with a great desire to find the identical cross on which Christ had suffered for the sins of the world, came to Jerusalem and consulted all those whom she thought likely to assist her in compassing her pious design. She is stated to have been credibly informed that if she could find out the sepulcher she would likewise find the instrument of the punishment, it being always a custom among the Jews to make a great hole near the place where the body of the criminal was buried and to throw into it whatever belonged to the execution, looking upon all these things as detestable objects and which for that reason ought to be removed out of sight.

The empress therefore ordered the profane buildings to be pulled down, the statues to be broken in pieces and the rubbish to be removed, and upon digging to a great depth the sepulcher was discovered and near it three crosses; also the nails which had pierced Christ's body and the title which had been affixed to His cross. By this discovery they understood that one of the three crosses was that which they were in quest of and the other two belonging to the two malefactors; but, as the title was found separate from the cross, a difficulty remained to distinguish which of the three was that cross on which the Saviour had been put to death. The good people of that time were in great perplexity, but a bishop, knowing that one of the principal ladies of the city lay extremely ill, suggested to the empress to cause the three crosses to be carried to the sick person, their faith carrying the conviction that the Almighty would, through the instrumentality of the sick person, designate the cross they sought. They offered up fervent prayer and after this prayer applied the crosses singly to the sick person, who, ecclesiastical writers tell us, was immediately recovered by the touch of one of the crosses. The other two were tried without effect.

The people were full of joy at the finding of this treasure, which they had so earnestly sought and highly esteemed, and St. Helena built a church on the spot and lodged it there with great veneration, providing an extraordinarily rich case for it. Emperor Constantine afterward received a part of it, and the other she carried to Rome, to be placed in the church which she built there under the name of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem, where it remains to this day—that is, the larger part is there, from time to time great churchmen have been intrusted with small relics of the cross for the edification of their flocks. This distribution has resulted in bona fide relics of the true cross being scattered broadcast in the world as is Christianity itself.

The title of the cross was sent by St. Helena to the Church of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem and deposited on the top of an arch, where it was found in 1492. The main part of the cross was inclosed in a silver shrine and placed in the church at Jerusalem, where it is shown even to this day on Easter Sunday. With this largest section of the crosses there is also one of the nails. There is a practice among those in charge of the relic of making nails corresponding in size to the original, which are touched to the wood and nail and are in themselves objects of great regard among the faithful.

Considerable has been written in regard to the nails used to crucify Christ. They were found together with the cross. It has been said that one of these nails St. Helena threw into the Adriatic sea to lay a severe storm in which she lay in danger of perishing and which, a noted writer has said, immediately ceased. In other quarters the opinion has been held that the nail was not thrown irrevocably, but held under water. Constantine the Great fixed a nail in a rich diadem of pearls, which he wore on the most solemn occasions, and for protection he set a third in a costly bridle which he used. This bridle and the nails were preserved at Constantinople with great respect until 550, when they were brought to Rome by Gregory the Great, who was then legate at Constantinople. One was also placed in the famous iron crown of Lombardy.

"My God," said a saintly person, "give me each day a little work to occupy my imagination, a little suffering to sanctify my soul, some good work to satisfy my heart."

## THE MONTH OF MARY CATHOLIC DOCTRINE.

WHY MAY IS DEDICATED TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

There Are Many Reasons For Special Devotions In Honor of the Mother of God Being Performed In This Season of Hope and Promise.

Why is May chosen as the month in which we exercise a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin?

The first reason is because it is the time when the earth bursts forth into its fresh foliage and its green grass after the stern frost and snow of winter and the raw atmosphere and the wild wind and rain of the early spring. It is because the blossoms are upon the trees and the flowers are in the gardens; it is because the days have got long and the sun rises early and sets late, for such gladness and joyousness of external nature are fit attendants on our devotion to her who is the Mystical Rose and the House of Gold.

A man may say, "True, but in this climate we have sometimes a bleak, inclement May." This cannot be denied, but still so much is true that at least it is the month of promise and of hope. Even though the weather happens to be bad, it is the month that begins and heralds in the summer. We know, for all that may be unpleasant in it, that fine weather is coming sooner or later. "Brightness and beautifulness shall," in the prophet's words, "appear at the end and shall not lie. If it make delay, wait for it, for it shall surely come and shall not be slack."

May, then, is the month, if not of fulfillment, at least of promise, and is not this the very aspect in which we most suitably regard the Blessed Virgin, Holy Mary, to whom this month is dedicated?

The prophet says, "There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise out of his root." Who is the flower but our Blessed Lord? Who is the rod or beautiful stock or stem or plant out of which the flower grows but Mary, Mother of our Lord, Mary, Mother of God?

It was prophesied that God should come upon earth. When the time was now full, how was it announced? It was announced by the angel coming to Mary. "Hail, full of grace," said Gabriel, "the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women." She was then the sure promise of the coming Saviour, and therefore May is by a special title her month.

Why is May called the month of Mary and especially dedicated to her? Among other reasons there is this—that of the Church's year, the ecclesiastical year, it is at once the most sacred and the festive and joyous portion. Who would wish February, March or April to be the month of Mary, considering that it is the time of fasting too? Christmas itself does not last for a month, and January has indeed the joyous Epiphany, with its Sundays in succession, but these in most years are cut short by the urgent coming of Septuagesima.

May, on the contrary, belongs to the Easter season, which lasts fifty days, and in that season the whole of May commonly falls and the first half always. The great feast of the ascension of our Lord into heaven is always in May, except once or twice in forty years. Pentecost, called Whit Sunday, the Feast of the Holy Ghost, is commonly in May, and the feasts of the Holy Trinity and Corpus Christi are in May not frequently. May, therefore, is the time in which there are frequent halleluials because Christ has risen from the grave, Christ has ascended on high and God the Holy Ghost has come down to take His place.

Here, then, we have a reason why May is dedicated to the Blessed Mary. She is the first of creatures, the most acceptable child of God, the dearest and nearest to Him. It is fitting, then, that this month should be hers, in which we especially glory and rejoice in His great providence to us, in our redemption and sanctification in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost.

But Mary is not only the acceptable handmaid of the Lord. She is also Mother of His Son and the Queen of All Saints, and in this month the Church has placed the feasts of some of the greatest of them, as if to bear her company. First, however, there is the Feast of the Holy Cross, on the 3d of May, when we venerate that precious blood in which the cross was bedewed at the time of our Lord's passion. The archangel St. Michael and the apostles have feast days in this month; St. John, the beloved disciple; St. Philip and St. James. Seven popes, two of them especially famous, St. Gregory VII, and St. Pius V.; also two of the greatest doctors, St. Athanasius and St. Gregory Nazianzen; two holy virgins especially favored by God, St. Catherine of Sienna (as her feast is kept in England) and St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, and one holy woman most memorable in the annals of the Church, St. Monica, the mother of St. Augustine. These are some of the choicest fruits of God's manifold grace, and they form the court of their glorious queen.—Cardinal Newman.

**A Notable Conversion.**  
A very notable conversion has taken place in that of Dr. K. Krogh-Tønning, the celebrated pastor, writer and pulpitor of Christiania, Norway. He was formerly a Lutheran and is a man of profound and varied learning. He had a brilliant reputation throughout Sweden, Denmark and Germany, as well as in his own country, and his entrance into the Catholic Church will no doubt make a profound impression. He is author of a five volume work of Lutheran theology, which was considered by that church as a standard production.—Catholic Pioneer.

MODERN MATHEMATICS MORE "UNTHINKABLE" THAN DOGMA.

The Triune Godhead and the Divinity of Christ Less Difficult of Conception Than the Geometric Theory of Multiplicity of Dimensions.

That the dogmas of Christianity require no more in the way of belief than the postulates of science has often been maintained by apologists. The same attitude is assumed by C. de Kirwan, writing in Cosmos (Paris). The writer, who is an orthodox Roman Catholic, has been aroused by the statement of a recent French writer that the dogmas of the Church are "unthinkable" and he proceeds to show that, without taking up the question of proof, the concepts presented by what is called "modern" or "non-Euclidean" geometry are infinitely more difficult to grasp. Among the systems to which he calls our attention are the geometry of hyperspace, in which more than three dimensions are assumed; the geometry of Lobatchewski, in which an infinite number of parallels can be drawn to a given line through a point in its plane, and that of Riemann, in which no parallels at all can be so drawn. After stating the principles of these geometrical systems he goes on to say:

"For minds not long trained by special mental gymnastics—that is to say, for the immense majority—such propositions are hard to conceive.

"Nevertheless professionals in higher mathematics and transcendental philosophers deal easily with the subject. They have reached the point of considering three geometries—those of Euclid, Lobatchewski and Riemann—as particular cases of a 'general geometry' that demands . . . an extension of our notion of space. We may assert, it would appear, that, besides the one-dimensional space represented by a geometrical line, the two dimensional space represented by a surface and, finally, the three dimensional space represented by a volume, we may have a space of four dimensions, a space of five, six, and so on up to  $n$  dimensions—in other words, a hyperspace.

"How can we conceive a space of more than three dimensions—a space of indefinite dimensions? It may be done, it appears, but it requires a powerful faculty of abstraction joined to a vigorous tension of mind for at least a common mortal in the immense majority to which allusion has been made. Several scientists have devoted much energy to making these notions accessible, if not to the mass of cultivated minds, at least to those who are driven by a healthy curiosity to investigate the subject.

"Our intention is not to dwell at present on these lofty abstractions, but there is a point that naturally presents itself to the mind apropos of a certain controversy of the past year which is far from being settled. The bimonthly review La Quinzaine recently published an article, signed Edouard Le Roy, under the heading 'What Is a Dogma?' The author of this article, while professing to be a Catholic, asserts that our dogmas are no longer in harmony with 'the modern spirit'; that the said spirit is of too high a degree of mentality to be able to admit them except as simple moral rules; that even the statement of them is repugnant to this mentality, for which they are 'unthinkable.' Thus this modern mentality, which lays down such abstruse propositions as the impossibility of parallelism or that of 'infinity' or, finally, that of a 'hyperspace' composed of a multitude of spaces contained one within another in an always increasing number of dimensions, which doubtless will also conceive of a multidimensional time (the assertion has already been hazarded)—this mentality, essentially 'modern,' assuredly finds 'unthinkable' (a polite euphemism doubtless signifying 'absurd' in the thought of the authors) the enunciation of our dogmas.

"Is the concept of a personal god, threefold in the unity of his nature, more difficult to think of than that of an infinity of parallels to a line in one plane? Is the mind less able to conceive, to think of, the unity of person in the duality of nature in Christ than to comprehend the impossibility in Riemann's system of drawing a parallel to a straight line? The incarnation, the redemption, the resurrection, the communion of saints, etc., appear to me incomparably easier to conceive, to 'think,' than the indefinite multiplicity of spaces of 4, 5, 6, . . . up to 1,000 or 100,000 dimensions. . . .

"There is no desire here to make the princes of science . . . responsible for the strange theories of Edouard Le Roy and his school. . . . We wish only to say that Le Roy and those who share his views are badly advised when they attribute in the name of 'the modern spirit' insoluble difficulties to the simple statement of our dogmas when modern science itself offers to the contemplation of cultivated minds data of such lofty abstraction as those on which rest the new geometries or the notions of space and time of an indefinite number of dimensions. . . .

"Of course we can in no wise assimilate the concepts of geometric metaphysics with the dogmas proposed by the Church for our belief. But if 'modern thought' accepts the former, notwithstanding their particularly abstruse nature, it should not exclaim against the statement of dogmas which, though incomprehensible in themselves, since they surpass the limits of human reason, are perfectly assimilable to the same thought so far as the terms go that are used in their definition."—Translation Made For Literary Digest.

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## Five Minute Sermon

The Good Shepherd.

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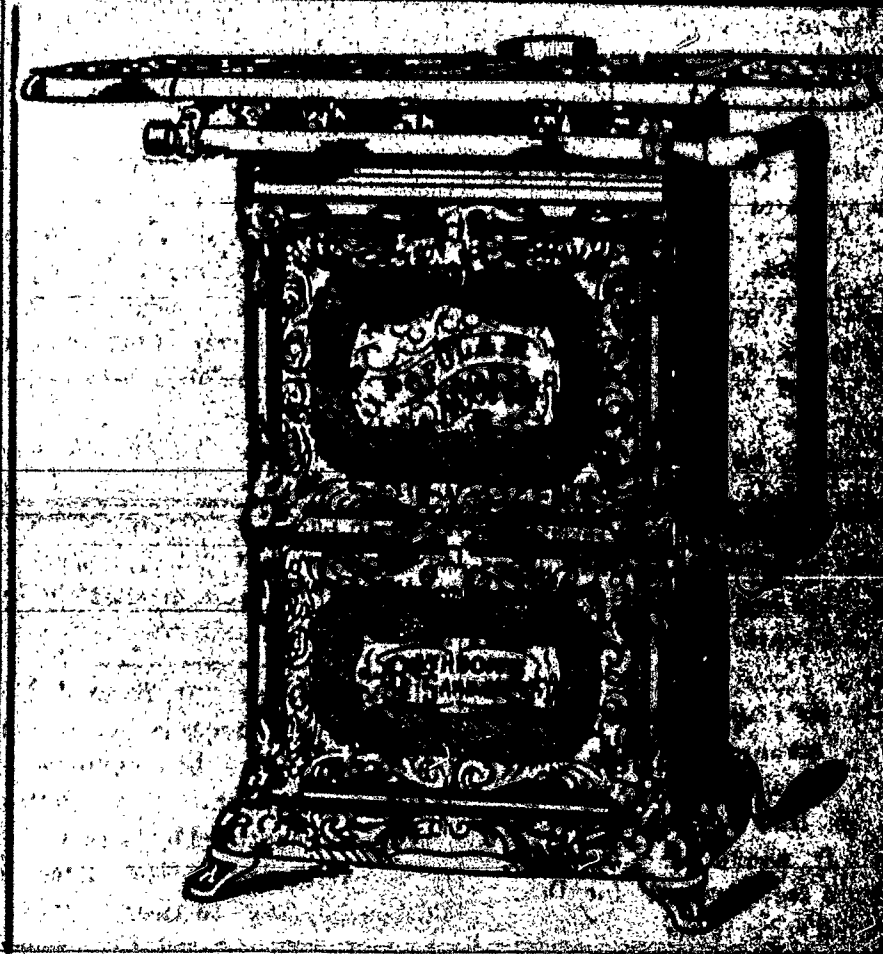
We are to learn from this Gospel what a great happiness it is to belong to a shepherd so loving, powerful and solicitous for our salvation! Secondly, we should constantly thank our good God for His great mercy. Lastly, we should show ourselves loving and obedient sheep.

MISS ELIZABETH MCCARTHY  
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