

The Catholic Journal

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Friday May 23, 1913.

Peace

Do you recall that this year marks the sixteenth centenary of the granting of civil liberty to the Catholic Church by the edict of Milan A. D. 313?

It is a fact, nevertheless, and in many parts of the world celebrations in honor of the event are taking place. This serves to recall that the Catholic Church has been preaching the Gospel of Peace and heralding the principle of universal peace, peace with honor, centuries before Mr. Carnegie and even Secretary of State Williams Jennings Bryan knew what world-wide peace signified.

There is this difference, however, between the peace the Carnegies and others would have and that advocated and championed by the Catholic Church. The Church recognizes that there may be peace with dishonor, that peace may sometimes be had by sacrifice of conscience and divine rights. This cannot be. True liberty of conscience does not need to embrace sacrifice of principle.

Another thing: Demagogues and agitators stalk up and down the land prating noisily about the rights of the people, the relative rights of the rich and the poor, learned savants are just as bad as the agitator when they undertake to tell the uneducated masses that God does not exist, that man can produce another man by artificial means. The latter know they lie when they make their assertions, down deep in their hearts they do not believe what they say but they are too proud to admit a mistake and so continue to bluff the people.

A modern non-Catholic writer is quoted as saying:-

"It is reported that in all the struggles between the Church and the State in the Middle Ages there is always something that concerns the rights of the common people. We see widows appealing to the Church for justice against the rapacity of rulers. Throughout Europe the confidence in the readiness of the Church to defend the weak, who had no other defender then, was universal. Against the ruthless power of a stronger neighbor, a wronged duke would make complaint to the Primate of the Church. If two kings were at war and the arbitration of the Pope became unsatisfactory, the justice of whose decree was assumed in advance."

A New Departure

A convention of the Catholic chaplains of the United States Army and Navy is to be held in Washington next month. The general public is hardly aware of the number of chaplains enlisted in this service but there are many, so many in fact that the convention is really necessary in order that views may be exchanged as to the best methods to reach and hold the soldiers and sailors, that one may tell the other of work that has succeeded and work that has failed.

As a matter of fact, there are now so many Catholic chaplains that Rev. George Waring, chaplain of the Eleventh Cavalry, has offered a suggestion that has met with favor from both chaplains and the Catholic hierarchy of the United States:- that the necessary steps be taken to have a one bishop designated as the ecclesiastical superior of the chaplains while they are in service.

A Catholic contemporary has this to say of the plan proposed by Father Waring:-

"The time seems to have arrived when it is absolutely necessary for the sake of religion to have some one in command of the body of zealous priests who are laboring earnestly for the moral uplift of our soldiers and sailors. A simple priest cannot possibly fill the post acceptably from either an ecclesiastical or a military viewpoint. Orders must of necessity be issued by higher authority, and, according to Catholic practice, that authority is the Bishop. Should this plan be adopted, and there is little doubt that it will be, an improvement would soon be manifest even over the splendid work now being done by our priests in the army and navy. Under this plan there would be no difficulty about effective presentations to the War Department, ecclesiastical authority would be secured, unity of method guaranteed and facilities placed beyond the realm of doubt or speculation.

In the British army a Bishop has jurisdiction over all Catholic chaplains, and he exercises this authority while at the same time governing his own diocese. They are subject to him only while in the service, and from him they receive their faculties and powers. They are responsible to him for their conduct, and he is responsible for them to their respective Bishops. The plan has worked satisfactorily and to the benefit of religion. That the same good would follow the adoption of a similar plan in our country admits of no doubt.

Consider This

It is a sad fact for the defamers of the Catholic Church to cite foreign countries, where proof and refutation are difficult of prompt access, as substantiation of the charge of these interested defamers that Catholic countries are a low level or standard of morality. They studiously omit comparison of the standard of morality in Ireland with the other countries comprised in Great Britain, because Ireland "has them all beat," to use a sporting phrase familiar to every youth of to-day.

Just now these defamers are pointing to Spain, Portugal and to Porto Rico, as well as the South American countries to support their contentions. Fortunately we have Catholic bishops and clergymen in the latter countries who promptly puncture the false assertions and confound their authors.

However, we have wondered that these defamers never refer to the revelations of the vice commissions that have worked in Chicago, New York and in other American cities. We need not be concerned with the low level of morality in any foreign country, we have plenty to worry over and to correct right here in the United States and this is not among the foreign immigrants either. It is most prevalent in those circles which can be designated as purely "American."

Truly we need to examine into the mote in our own eye ere we presume to cast the beam out of our brother's eye.

Be honest with yourself and then it follows that you will be honest with your fellows. The envious man is not at peace even with himself.



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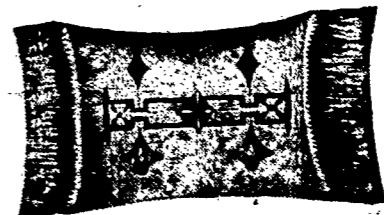
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