The Catholic Journal.

Twenty-sixth Year, No. 20. Rochester, N. Y., Friday, Feb. 12, 1915.

St. Rita.

St. Rita was born in 1456 in a little village about two miles from Cascia, in Umbria, Italy. From girlhood she wished to devote herself to the religious life, but this was not permitted by her parents, who, fearing to lose their only child if she entered a convent, gave her in marriage to a man who proved himself a harsh and tyrannical husband. The young wife, however, modeled her conduct toward her husband on that of St. Monica toward her pagan spouse, and by her unfailing self-control and her submissive devotion finally wrought such a change in his heart as to cause him to humbly beg her pardon for the wrongs inflicted upon her.

One of the great sorrows of her life was the murder of her husband by an enemy. Finding that her two sons were contemplating to avenge their father's death in blood, and that all her entreaties could not turn them from their purpose, Rita besought God to take them to Himself before their souls could be stained with crime. Her prayers were answered.

In the year 1413, friendless in the world, Rita sought admission to the Convent of Cascia. In spite of her ardent entreaties the poor widow was politely, but firmly refused admittance among the virgin spouses of the cloister. Rita, however, did not despair; again she sought entrance, and again was repulsed. Then, having redoubled her prayers and penitential exercises, she presented herself for the third time and failed to attain her desires. God, however, selected Rita to be an example of the triumph of faith and perseverance in prayer, and to show how pleasing her conduct was to Him, sent in the middle of the night her three special patrons, St. Augustine, St. John the Baptist, and St. Nicholas of Tolentine, who made known to her that God had pleased to close his period of her sorrows. They told her to rise from her prayers and follow them. They led her not only to the gates of the Augustinian Convent, but, without opening bar or door, placed her unknown to the community within the sacred precincts of the cloister. Then her mysterious guides disappeared and here later on the nuns found her in prayer. Having heard the story of her miraculous admission, and beholding therein the wonderful effects of God's love for His humble servant, the superioress and the other nuns immediately embraced and welcomed their new sister.

This marvelous event was duly examined and authenticated as one of the miracles which the Holy See admitted in the process of her beatification.

In the convent Rita led a life of the greatest mortification and penance. She wore at all times a hair shirt through which thorns were woven and scourged herself three times a day, using an instrument made of chain. After hearing a sermon on the Passion, the holy nun prostrated herself before her crucifix and besought the Lord that she might experience some of His sufferings, at least that she might endure the pangs of one of the thorns with which His head had been crowned. Suddenly she felt in her forehead an excruciating pain, from the torture of which she swooned. Thereafter the nun bore upon her forehead a wound which refused to heal and from which so offensive an odor emanated as to cause her to be separated from the rest of the community.

At her death, which occurred at seventy-six years of age, her features aged and worn with suffering, were suddenly transformed to the beauty of their youth. The wound upon her forehead glowed like a star and emitted a delicious fragrance.

A few years ago Rita's name and fame were practically unknown in America. To-day, we may safely make the boast that there is scarcely a diocese in America in which her devotion is not spread, or a city in which if there is not a church dedicated in her honor, there are at least of be found shrines dedicated to her, before which thousands of devoted clients kneel in supplication or thanksgiving. That the spread of devotion to St. Rita is most agreeable to God is evident from the many miraculous favors He has granted to the clients of His favored Saint.

Lent

February 17th, Ash Wednesday, will open the holy forty days, the days of fasting and of prayer—of retirement and of mortification. He who shall now remain in ignorance, he who shall not shake off the shadows of death, by which he was surrounded, will indeed be culpable; for religion, the mother of all mankind, offers on all sides her succor and her instruction, her peace and consolation.

Great and sublime subjects are not wanting to the preacher during these forty days of penance. Look at the pictures he presents: the earth, hell, heaven, repentance, penitence, mercy, virtue, death.

What holy inspirations!—All those of the prophets! What consolations to bestow!—All those of the Gospell The majestic power of Jehovah, amid the thunders and lightning, dictating his laws from Mt. Sinai! The touching tenderness of Jesus, blessing little children!

Ash Wednesday, has, like all days of penitence, lost much of its ancient austerity. In former ages this day was selected to expose in public penitence those sinners who were to be received and reconciled, or to partake the communion with the faithful on Easter Sunday; the priests, first of all heard their confessions, and covered them afterwards with a shirt of hair cloth, or a sack, then strewed ashes upon their heads, sprinkled them with holy water, and recited to them, accompanied by all the priests, the seven penitential psalms.

Then they drove them from the Church with a crozier, and they were not received into it until Holy Thursday. The door was then shut against them, and the Mass of the faithful was then commenced.

During the whole of Lent the words of the Gospel are daily heard. God holds his court of forgiving mercy, and all are called upon to present themselves to seek pardon.

The Church has laid aside its colored ornaments; flowers are no longer seen upon its altars; veils envelop the form of Christ and the images of the saints.

This fast is of apostolical tradition, and it was authoritatively established by Pope St. Telesphonius, who lived in the time of Adrian and when several of the disciples of the apostles were still existing.

In our days the Church is full of indulgence, and has rendered this fast much more lenient to its children that it was in former times. Two hundred years ago there would not have been found in any city in a Catholic country ten families who did not abstain from meat from Ash Wednesday until Easter Sunday.

If the butchers then sold some few pounds of meat for persons whose feeble health required it, they did so in secret, to avoid scandal. Towards the end of the eighth century eggs, cheese, milk, fish and wine were forbidden.

The Christians of former ages partook of but one repast each day, and this repast, from which all meats were excluded, was never eaten until after the Vespers—near nightfall.

The origin of fasting goes back to a very remote age; fasting is of almost as ancient date as grief. Abraham weeping for Sarah, Jacob weeping for Joseph, mingled fasting with their regrets and prayers.

Joshua and the Elders of Israel remained prostrate before the ark from morning until evening, without taking food.

In all countries men, in their days of trouble and grief, have imposed upon themselves privations, in order to avert the scourges or sorrows by which they were threatened.

Lent is a commemoration of the fasting of our Lord, when He remained in the desert forty days and nights. He, who had never sinned, had surely no reason to perform penance; but He had come to teach men to mortify their passions, and it was His will that each act of His life should be to show a model—an example for them to imitate.

In order to reach the great week—that week of suffering to the Son of God—Lent is a holy preparation.

To celebrate Easter duly, we should be pure; we should take up our pilgrim's staff; we should be prepared for our long journey. The instruction we receive during the forty days teaches us that Death delights in surprising men and he takes pleasure to come like a thief in the night. The Christian is a traveler. The earth is not his resting place; his habitation is in heaven.—Truth.

The annual pastoral letter of Bishop Hickey will be read in all the churches Sunday.

Catholic News Notes

The Slovak church of the Transfiguration and its school, at Mt. Pleasant, Penn., have been destroyed by fire. Loss $70,000. A man 87 years old, discovered the fire and gave alarm, and then fell down dead.

The St. Peter's new parochial school, in Hartford, cost $100,000.

By the last testament of John Golden, Marshfield, Oregon, approximately $25,000 is devised to Catholic institutions.

The citizens of Scranton will inaugurate a campaign to preserve the fine monastery of the Passionists, which is, valued at $200,000, and which is in danger of collapsing because of the mines beneath it.

Loretto Heights Academy of the Sisters of Loretto, at Denver, Colo., is to have a pavillion and skating rink.

There will be added to the celebrated St. John's Preparatory College of the Xaverian Brothers at Danvers, Mass., two more spacious buildings in the course of this year.

This year the Catholic Young Men's National Union will meet in Pittsburgh, Aug. 16-18th.

The See of Lead, S. D., will be translated to Rapid City.

The ordinary receipts of the cathedral of Denver in 1914 were $43,976.22.

Bishop Shahan, rector of the Catholic University, preached to 2,500 men in the cathedral of Hartford on the duties of the American citizen.

At Silver Creek, Mich., a monument to the pioneer missionary priest to the Indians, Father Baroux, has been dedicated by Bishop Kelly.

The former General of the Capuchins, Fr. Pacifico, has been named Bishop of Albenga, Italy.

The Palace of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Brussels has been converted into a hospital.

The Sulpician Seminary at Issy, France, is transformed into a hospital, in which ladies of the nobility nurse about a hundred wounded soldiers.

The greatest Cathedral in Poland is that of Cracow. It contains the bodies of Poland's Kings and the great patriots Sobieski and Kosciusko, and of St. Stanislaus, Poland's patron saint.

From Spain we hear of the bankruptcy of Socialism and Atheism, in that country.

Dedication of St. Francis Xavier New Church.

The dedication of the new St. Francis Xavier Church at Bay and Same Streets will take place at 10.30 o'clock Sunday morning. Bishop Thomas F. Hickey will dedicate the church and will be assisted in the ceremony by Monsignors D. J. Curran, V. G., and A. B. Meehan, D. D., and members of the clergy from all parts of the diocese.

The officers of the mass will be as follows:—celebrant, Rt. Rev. T. F. Hickey, D. D.; assistant priest, Rt. Rev. D. J. Curran, V. G.; deacons of honor, Rev. Mathias J. Hargather & Rev. D. Laurenzis, M. D.; deacon of the mass, Rev. John P. Schellhorn; sub-deacon of the mass, Rev. John F. Boppel; master of ceremonies, Rt. Rev. A. B. Meehan; and second master of ceremonies, Mr. Theodore Winteroth.

The choir will sing under the direction of Mrs. Louise Kiefer with Mrs. Stockschlaeder at the organ. In the evening solemn vespers will be sung by Rev. Francis Hoefen assisted by Rev. Edw. Eschrich and Rev. Otto Geiger. Music will be sung by the choir. The sermon will be preached by Rev. Louis W. Edelman of Pittsford, N. Y.

The new church is to take the place of a brick structure which was designed to serve the purpose of both church and school and which was dedicated on the 28th of October, 1888, by the late Bishop McQuaid.

Rev. Mathias J. Hargather of St. Michael's church was pastor at the time, he being succeeded the Rev. Jos. Netzel in April 1896. Father Netzel remained with the parish until death took him away on July 17, 1909. As a successor to the late Father Netzel, Rt. Rev. Thomas F. Hickey in August, 1909 appointed Rev. Michael Krischel of Dansville, N. Y., to fill the vacancy which he at present holds.

The new church has accommodation for 750 people. It may be described as Norman Romanesque in style adapted to modern conditions. It is built of Tapestry brick, red, browns and blues, laid up in white mortar in what is known as a dutch cross bond and which gives a pleasing, diagonal effect to the joints. The trimmings are of Ohio Sand stone. The roof is covered with Spanish Tile. One of the most interesting features of the exterior is the tower, 120 ft. in height which stands like a sentinal watching over the parish of St. Francis Xavier. The main facade has a large rose window of stone.

Another feature of the front is the main portal entrance with its tile roofed porch supported by large columns of stone. The Tympanium has a statue of St. Francis in the center surrounded by tile mosaic of the two hemispheres separated by the oceans and bridged together with a rainbow symbolic of the teachings of St. Francis which were broad cast. The interior has a large spacious vestibule across the front with doors leading to Same St. aisles and stairway to choir gallery. Inside there is a wide nave, the pews coming between large stone columns of Bedford Lime Stone. The confessionals are built with the aisle walls being housed on the exterior. The Sanctuary is circular and roofed with a half dome. On either side in front of the triumphal arch are recesses for the side altars. All of the aisles, vestibules, sanctuary and side chapels are floored with Terrazza composed of red, yellow and white mosaic tile and Tennesee marble.

On entering the church one's attention is attracted by the deeply coffered ceiling of the nave tinted in bright Romanesque greens, blues, reds and orange over old ivory. The auxiliary beams are supported by angels bearing a book with the greek letters Alpha and Omega meaning the beginning and end. The general tone of the walls are a warm grey relieved with stenciled Romanesque patterns over tan in the same bright colors. The soffits of the arches and the side walls of the sanctuary are stenciled in a like manner. The dome of sanctuary is in light blue. The chapel of the Blessed Virgin is also blue and that of St. Joseph red, being their symbolic colors.

The twelve large aisle windows of ornamental patterns and symbols are extremely decorative in effect. They are made of antique and cathedral glasses, rich in tone, deep blues and greens predominating. The sanctuary lights are richly colored figured windows. The center window having the figure of the Saviour. The other four, the figures of the Evangelists. A simple geometric pattern in light tones will be used in the clearstory.

The woodwork is stained flemish oak. The decorations were done by Louis F. Hahn of this city. The stained glass windows by the Pike Stained Glass Studies, Stations by Benziger Bros., of New York. Peter G. Hauck of this city was the general contractor. The church was constructed from plans prepared by John T. Comes and John E. Kauzor, associated Architects of Pittsburg, Pa., at a cost of $55,000 including furnishings. Charles William Eldridge, of this city was the Supervising Architect.

Throughout Italy, Masonic influence is on the wane.

News From Ireland

[illegible]

William Buckley [illegible] of a boat at Ballycotton [illegible] drowned.

Ray F. Buckley [illegible] street, has been appointed [illegible] Mount Ray, Dr. J. Mahony [illegible] charge of Milltown [illegible] ty Kerry.

Fermoy Guardians [illegible] ed the resignation of [illegible] office Patrick Roche [illegible] Kooly district, who was [illegible] ed with the board [illegible] Guardians and officials.

M. J. McCarthy, [illegible] Magherafelt, [illegible] horse [illegible] dead in his [illegible] stall. He [illegible] cattle market [illegible] and was in [illegible]

On January [illegible] Letterkenny [illegible] of William [illegible]

In London [illegible] Chancery, [illegible] church, Spanish [illegible] Adl. H. Barr, of [illegible] Elate, only daughter [illegible] Patrick Mathews [illegible] Mathews, of [illegible] County Meath.

Captain H. Dixon [illegible] has been appointed [illegible] for Kildare.

John Ready, Main [illegible] asterevan, [illegible] agent for the [illegible] trict of the Irish [illegible] Insurance [illegible] the Co[illegible] dare Insurance [illegible]

Miss Anne Bolger [illegible] was found in an unconscious condition in a train at [illegible] last week, and, on being [illegible] ed to a waiting room [illegible] most immediately.

Leitrim

Joseph Irwin, Derrana [illegible] Dromod, met with a fatal accident near Mohill [illegible] and died two days after [illegible]

The British war [illegible] ties have announced the [illegible] of James Gormley, Mohill; D. Rodgers, Carrick-on-[illegible]

Limerick

A lad of eleven, named [illegible] Mason, died in Barrington's Hospital, Limerick, from [illegible] of the brain caused by falling from a car on the pavement [illegible] the New Barracks square.

Mayo

The Lord Lieutenant has revoked the order closing Castlebar jail for the detention of prisoners, and ordering prisoners committed thereto to be [illegible] in Sligo prison.

T. B. Donnelly, Dunsany [illegible] been appointed High Sheriff [illegible] County Meath, and W. [illegible] Mccartney Filgate, D. [illegible] briggan, for the County [illegible]

C. H. P. Dunne, Clonsilla [illegible] been appointed by the Lord Lieutenant high sheriff for the county.

Wicklow

The Lord Lieutenant has appointed A. E. West, Kilruddery, Bray, high sheriff for [illegible]