

THE CHURCH AND THE LEPER.

Isolation, Recommended By Our Government, Practised By Catholics Centuries Ago.

TREATMENT OF LEPEERS IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

The United States Public Health Service recently expressed, in its "Health News," an important but by no means new truth, in the form of a question: "Do you know that Isolation is the most efficient means of controlling leprosy?" This truth, confirmed by recent investigation and experience, is, as we have stated, by no means new; however it may not be generally known that this principle of treatment was observed even in Christian antiquity, and that the ecclesiastical authorities as well as individual priests and religious in later centuries devoted themselves with the greatest love to the care of lepers, such care being directed by a recognition of the principles above enunciated.

Division for Lepers in the Hospital at Caesarea.

In his history of the care of the poor exercised by the Church the sociologist Ratzinger repeatedly reports on the care of these priests for the poor exercised under the guidance of the Church. In his description of the great hospital at Caesarea in Cappadocia, in Asia Minor, founded about 369 by St. Basil and named after him "Basiliad," he says: "According to its various purposes the hospital... was divided into sections for strangers, for the poor, and for the sick. A separate large section was set aside for lepers, those unfortunate ones, who, being cast out from human society, were in constant danger of dying far from aid from anyone, without a comforting hand, without consolation." The Bishops were also ordered by a provision in canon 21, of the 5th Council of Orleans (549), to care in particular manner for the lepers; this provision was to the effect that, while the priests were obliged to care for the poor, "each Bishop was commanded to provide the lepers of his entire diocese with food and clothing." Even this provision indicates that separate treatment for lepers was recognized as necessary at that time.

Isolation of Lepers in the Middle Ages.

The saintly Abbot Othmar of St. Gall, who labored in the early Middle Ages, built a separate hospital for lepers. In his life we read that he erected 720 homes for the poor and one hospital for "Leprosi", that is, lepers. The custom however of isolating lepers was more generally observed at a later time. After the Crusades, the Arabian form of leprosy having been carried into Europe, the Church devoted a still more extensive care to those afflicted with this malady. The lepers, Ratzinger writes, "were divided into three classes: those afflicted with the lower, the moderate, and the higher form of leprosy. Those stricken with the illness in its last-named form were condemned to isolation. These afflicted persons were considered doomed to death by God himself, and were led into their cells, in which they were to conclude the rest of their lives, under the observance of a special rite." The surrounding public, we are told, "were exhorted to mercy and charitable kindness towards the unfortunate one, and the parents or the church wardens were requested to hold themselves ready to serve him at least during the next thirty hours, in other words until he would have become at least slightly accustomed to his new lot and surroundings.... Such a lot was sorrowful indeed, and even tragic, and yet the Church could not do more for such persons, since human science was not then familiar with any remedy for this terrible disease; she did all that could be done, by offering the leper an asylum, by nursing him lovingly and by assisting him in making his lot bearable through the inculcation of hope in the future life. Physicians of a later age deny the infectious character of leprosy, but science at that time was of a different opinion and the Church was obliged to guide itself by such knowledge." It is interesting to note that the statement from the publication of the U. S. Health Service justifies entirely the position taken by the Church in former days.

Special Care for Lepers.

The necessity of isolating these unfortunate ones from human society because of the danger of infection, and, still more, love and sympathy for them, resulted in the founding and erecting of numerous homes and institutions for lepers. In 1226 there were no less than 2000 such institutions in France. In Germany, Italy, Spain, and England there were a very large number of such houses at the end of the 13th century and these institutions stood, at least in Germany, under the patronage of St. George. "Each community, Ratzinger writes, "yes, almost each parish had such a home for lepers, and in the cities there were several of them. Mathew Paris estimates the number of homes for lepers existing in Europe about the middle of the 13th century at 19,000.... A special chaplain was appointed to look after the religious needs of these unfortunate people." Where there were no separate institutions for lepers, a hut resting on four posts was built for the patient in a lonely field; this, but as well as all his belongings were burned at his death. His body was then buried beside the spot on which his last home had stood.

Particular Regulations Concerning Lepers.

Other regulations assured the utter separation of such afflicted persons from their fellowmen, and were strictly enforced. Permission was given them only on certain stated days of the year to visit the cities, and even on these occasions they were obliged to observe certain restrictions. According to the authority quoted it seems that these days were frequently about two weeks before Easter and one week before Christmas. When lepers came into the cities they were obliged to observe all the regulations imposed upon them at the time of their exclusion, to call attention to their presence by means of a rattle, to point from a distance to the things

they wished to buy, and to wear clothing by which they would be recognized etc. Inn-keepers were forbidden to receive them under grave penalties. They were also obliged to warn people coming near to their huts by means of their rattle. Alms could be laid for them in a dish placed at a distance from the hut.

Papal Command to Isolate Lepers

The importance attached by Rome to the observance of the practice of isolating those afflicted with this dreadful disease may be inferred from the fact that, after the Order of Lazarus had been founded for the special care of these people, Pope Clement IV. (1265-68) commanded all lepers, under pain of excommunication, to enter hospitals conducted by that Order and to transfer their entire possessions to the Order; and the Bishops were held responsible for the observance of this command. Such regulations and orders did not fail to produce results. The fact is that in the course of time leprosy was eliminated in Europe while in the Orient, China for instance, the disease has never been eradicated. Largely in consequence of strict isolation this disease disappeared in Europe during the 15th and 16th centuries, and the funds donated for the care of lepers and the institutions provided for them were mostly used for other charitable causes. Homes for the poor, hospitals, and other isolation hospitals were erected with the means thus realized.

It would be a grateful task to describe in detail the mild ministrations of pious men and women, especially of the Order mentioned above, among those afflicted with leprosy; but this would be beside our present purpose. Our object is merely to call attention to the fact that the isolation of lepers as carried out under the auspices of the Church, especially during the Middle Ages, is entirely in harmony with the principle enunciated by the U. S. Public Health Service in the 20th Century.

C. B. of the C. V.

DE VALERA IN CITY FOR CHRISTMAS.

Eamon De Valera, president of the "Irish Republic," who is in Rochester visiting his mother, Mrs. Kate Wheelwright of Brighton Street, during the holidays, sent the following telegram to the Irish people late Wednesday night:

To Griffith care Lord Mayor Dublin:

Greetings to persecuted people of Ireland from the many millions of Americans who love victory and admire people everywhere who will not be denied liberty. Endure yet a little while.

The year 1920 may see the Republic of Ireland officially recognized by the United States, and then final victory, after 750 years of struggle.

Work and pray, every one. Colleagues and self are doing our duty. We send affectionate regards to every Irish citizen.

(Signed) DE VALERA.

De Valera will be in Rochester several days and then goes to Washington.

A meeting of the Friends of Irish Freedom will be held early in January, when De Valera is expected to speak.

His Holiness has appointed two protonotaries for Mexico, and conferred several distinctions upon Mexicans.

Let us do your Job Printing.

Hierarchy To Issue Joint Pastoral

Will Express Views of Church on Social Problems

Solutions Will Be Offered for the Conditions of Sorrow, Trouble and Danger Brought About by the World War.

An event the importance of which it is impossible to exaggerate will take place early in January, 1920, when from every Catholic pulpit throughout the United States there will be read, on a Sunday to be designated later, the joint Pastoral Letter now being prepared by a committee representing the entire Hierarchy of this country. The Pastoral will be the united utterance of every American Cardinal, Archbishop and Bishop. Not since 1884, following the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, have the Bishops issued a joint Pastoral letter. Important as was their pronouncement at that time, the circumstances of to-day—the crisis that now faces civilization, the acute struggle between the forces of utter anarchy and of law and order, of atheism and religion—combine to give the message which now will issue from the American Bishops a gravity and a significance of unparalleled importance.

The Pastoral Letter will express the views of the Bishops concerning all the problems now confronting the Church in America, as these problems were discussed at the meeting of the Hierarchy at the Catholic University in Washington between September 24th and 27th, of this year. Ninety-two Archbishops and Bishops were present at these sessions, and formed the National Catholic Welfare Council—which is the Hierarchy of America functioning between annual meetings through an Administrative Committee having under its jurisdiction a number of important sub-committees, such as education, social work, lay societies and the press. At this meeting there was also formed the Board of Home Missions and Foreign Missions, which is responsible directly to the annual meeting of the Hierarchy.

Archbishop Hanna of San Francisco is Chairman of the Administrative Committee of the National Catholic Welfare Council, and Archbishop Mundelein is Chairman of the Board of Home and Foreign Missions.

A movement is now under way, approved by Bishops and priests, and rapidly spreading throughout the country, to have all Catholics receive Holy Communion, on the Sunday when the Pastoral Letter will be read, for the intentions of the Bishops, and of our Holy Father the Pope, as expressed in the Pastoral Letter. Those who have already pledged themselves to take this action are also actively spreading the pledge among their friends and acquaintances and asking these again to continue the apostolate. The heads of several educational institutions have promised to instruct their pupils as to the importance of the coming pronouncement of the Bishops pointing out to them that in this manner the leaders of the Church are endeavoring to give the entire nation a message which will aid the leaders of the people, and the people themselves, to arrive at a peaceful and just solution of the great problems now confronting the whole world. These teachers are pointing out to the Church that Marshal Foch, the Command-

er-in-Chief of the Allied Armies and the greatest of all living generals, has declared repeatedly that he attributed his victory to the prayers of the children as much as to any other cause.

When the American Cardinals issued their pronouncement to American Catholics at the beginning of the World War they not only called them to work and to fight for their nation's cause, but they also urged them to pray without ceasing.

The war has left as its awful heritage a condition of sorrow and trouble and danger in all the world. And unless the efforts now being made by all men and women of good will to reconstruct human society are inspired and guided by God's grace, how shall such efforts prevail? The Holy Spirit speaks through our Bishops. Their united voice will at the opening of the New Year summon us all to heed the everlasting and immutable principles laid down by God Himself through Christ Jesus our Lord. If all Catholics everywhere in our country—the rich and the poor, the leaders and the led, all kinds and conditions of men—shall not merely listen to the words of our Bishops, but shall also kneel down together at the Holy Table, what a demonstration the event will be of Christian unity! What an outpouring of grace will follow!

Catholic Short Notes

Among the new hospitals in course of building are St. Francis', at Grinnell, Ia., under the care of the Sisters of Mercy, and the new \$200,000 hospital of the Sisters of Mercy at Marshalltown, also in Iowa.

The Franciscan Sisters of the Green Bay, Wis., diocese will add to their hospital in Appleton a \$500,000 structure.

St. Margaret's Daughters have secured the O'Brien home in New Orleans as a summer home for working girls.

The Catholic Greeks of Youngstown, Ohio, have built a handsome church costing \$100,000. It was dedicated by Very Rev. Martynak, Administrator of the Ruthenian Province.

At Emerson, Neb., a Sacred Heart School costing over \$50,000 was dedicated by the Bishop of Omaha.

At Dubuque, Ia., Mother Mary Cecilia, aged 81 years, Directress-General of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, died.

The Archbishop of St. Paul has appointed Rev. Thomas A. Welsh chancellor, and the Rev. Cyril Farrell secretary.

In England there is a guild or association for training priests' housekeepers.

The work of the Carmelite Fathers in India is quite gratifying. They have a seminary and educate natives for the priesthood. One of the missionary Fathers has baptized over 12,000 Hindus.

It is said that, within the last fifty years only about 20,000 Japanese have been baptized in Japan.

The Archbishop of Lima, Peru, has warned his diocese against supporting the proposed movement for the establishment of a branch of the Y. M. C. A.

CATHOLIC WELFARE MEETING

Organization Formed and Appointed For Department Of Each Diocese

The Administrative Council of the National Catholic Welfare Council met in Washington, D. C., December 10. There were present: Most Rev. E. J. Hanna, D. of San Francisco, Chairman; Most Rev. Dennis J. Dougherty, D. D., of Philadelphia; Rev. Austin Dowling, D. D., St. Paul; Rt. Rev. J. F. Canavin of Pittsburgh; Rt. Rev. J. Muldoon, D. D., Rockford; vice chairman: Rt. Rev. Schrembs, B. D., of Toledo; Rt. Rev. William T. Walsh, D., of Charleston, secretary.

The Committee formed organization and appointed funds to each department of Social Work to be directed by Bishops, the departments of lay men and women will be the direction of the Archbishop. Dowling, Director of the Board of Director of the Board of the diocese of the Holy City and Very Rev. act as assistants.

It was announced that the department of Social Work in these regions will be the executive committee of the administrative board. The executive committee of the National Catholic Welfare Council will be the meeting of the Council.

Rev. John J. Burke, of this position. Father Burke has been in charge of the activities of the National War Council. The management of whatever work should be used will be done at the Catholic Welfare Council.

dependent and administrative board and Father Burke is chairman of the National Catholic Welfare Council. In view of the work of reconstruction.

Father Burke is acquainted with the questions that arise in the case of Catholic institutions, and recommendations which will have to be made by the administrative Bishops after the National War Council is organized.

The National Catholic Welfare Council has about fourteen members.

Brazil's national Holy See is an

The Benedictine laboring in India under the auspices of 630 by 600

The Jesuit Father, St. J. J. East, has been ordained at

In the United States, the Holy See is an

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