

Palestine Ceremonies Note 19th Centenary of Holy Priesthood

Patriarch in Jerusalem Presides At Rites On Mount Zion; History of Hallowed Spot Scene Of Last Supper Is Recalled

By DR. ALEXANDER MOMBELLI
 Jerusalem—(NCWC).—At the same moment that the solemn Holy Hour was presided over by His Holiness Pope Pius XI in the Vatican Basilica, March 15, a similar religious service was conducted by Patriarch Barlassina in Jerusalem at the Church of the Dormition on Mount Zion, which stands near the building of the Holy Cenacle.

Both ceremonies were in celebration of the nineteenth centenary of the institution of the Priesthood and of the Eucharist.

The Jerusalem ceremony attracted the attention of the Catholic world to the blessed house where, 1,900 years ago, Our Lord established the tribe of the Levites of the New Law, making possible through their ministry the perpetuation of His Presence in the Tabernacles, which were destined to become the Sancta Sanctorum of all religious life.

Mount Zion had the privilege of giving hospitality on its summit to the most ancient Christian church of the world, to which were given the titles of "Mother of all the Churches" and of "Church of the Apostles." Until the beginning of the fourth century, it remained the only Christian temple of Jerusalem.

And even after the construction of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, it kept its distinguished place in the worship of the faithful. Its survival after the siege by Titus in the year 70 seemed due to a miracle. The Holy City was, indeed, reduced by the Roman legions to a heap of ruins, but the Quarter of the Cenacle, was spared. Thus Simeon, successor of St. John the Minor as Bishop of Jerusalem was enthroned in this Mother of all Churches on Mount Zion.

With the revolt of Barcokeba, in the time of Hadrian, the sons of Israel were forbidden even entrance into the interior of Jerusalem. As a consequence of this decree, the series of the Bishops, Hebrew by race, was interrupted to give place to prelates converted from the Gentile world.

When the capital of Palestine was transformed by order of the same Emperor into a Roman colony under the name of Aelia Capitolina, the Quarter of the Cenacle remained outside the walls of the new city consecrated to the worship of the paganism.

In the course of the persecutions against the Christians, which record in the martyrology of the Church the names of several Jerusalem bishops, the Shrine on Mount Zion remained a building without splendor. But with the liberty edict promulgated by Constantine the

Relatives and Friends In Diocese Mourn for Sister Mary Christina

Niagara Falls.—With St. Mary's of the Cataract Church filled to capacity, final tributes were paid on March 15 to Sister Mary Christina, who died in the Sisters of Mercy Convent here Monday, March 12, by numerous relatives and close friends, members of the Order of Mercy with which she was affiliated for the past 45 years, and students who had come to know and love her during her 14 years of teaching at St. Mary's School.

Selected choir composed of students and alumni of St. Mary's sang the solemn mass of requiem, attended by the entire student body of the school in solemn procession led by the third graders who had known Sister Mary Christina best, and loved her most. The Rev. Cornelius F. Kileen, pastor of the church and a cousin of the deceased officiated at the Mass.

Among the relatives of the deceased who were present for the funeral services are the following: the Misses Margaret and Mary Falsay, both nieces from Waverly; Edward Falsay and B. J. Scanlon, both nephews from Waverly; J. A. Kileen and Miss Sue Kileen, both of Hornell; Miss Minnie Kileen, of Penn Yan, all cousins; and John F. Rolly, of Sayre, Pa., a close friend of the family.

Great. It was enclosed within a temple. Painful Vicissitudes

Its history in the fifth century is known in part through Eteria, an Aquitanian pilgrim, who wrote an ingenuous book on her visit to the Holy Land. She tells that on the occasion of Pentecost all the Christian Community of Jerusalem used to assemble with its Bishop on Mount Zion to celebrate the Sacred Mysteries. The ceremony was repeated on the Easter evening.

The souvenirs of the Gospel attached to the Quarter of the Cenacle very soon attracted many Religious who started there their monastic life.

Meanwhile the Sanctuary of the Priesthood and of the Eucharist followed the vicissitudes of the Palestinian history.

Until Constantine's time, it remained, according to Epiphanius, in the form of a simple private house used as a place for reunion of the faithful for their religious ceremonies. The first basilica built to enclose it within its walls seems to go back to the time of St. Helena.

The magnificent constructor of the Hagia Sophia, mentioned in the famous mosaic of Madama as standing near the Holy Sepulchre was probably of the period of the Empress Eudoxia, wife of Theodosius II, who sojourned in Jerusalem in the year 438 and had some churches built there. It was a basilica of the Byzantine style with five aisles similar to that of the Nativity in Bethlehem. According to the description of an Armenian pilgrim, its apse and lateral chapels reproduced the different mysteries to the spot of the Cenacle.

With the invasion of the Persians in 614, the Sanctuary suffered very much. Then we have no sure news about it until 720, when Bede the Venerable tells us that on Mount Zion there was, surrounded by the cells of the monks, the Church of the Apostles. It remained almost unchanged for about a century and a half. Then, under the domination of the Islam, it was damaged several times, until in 1010 it was condemned to demolition by Sultan Hakem of the Fatimite dynasty.

Rebuilt by Crusaders

The Crusaders had the honor to rebuild the precious Sanctuary, following the map of the ancient basilica. The main apsis was devoted to the memory of the Descent of the Holy Ghost, while the Room of the Last Supper was venerated in the aisle at the South. But even the splendor of this building did not last long.

With the fall of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, it gradually fell into ruins. Subsequent attempts at repair had no real results until the Franciscans took over its custody. On July 11, 1309, Bibars II, granted to the Friars Minors a firman confirming the privileges already given to them by his predecessors. Later, a rich woman of Sicily, Margaret, bought the land which contained the "Cenacle of Zion" and offered it to the Franciscans. Finally, Robert of Anjou, King of Naples, and Sancia, his wife, bought from Naser Mohammed, Sultan of Egypt and Damascus, all the ruins of the Sanctuary and the Convent on Mount Zion and gave them to the Pope on the condition that they be entrusted to the guardianship of the Franciscans. The offer was accepted by Pope Clement VI in 1342. It was then that the Friars Minors rebuilt the Room of the Last Supper, which is still standing almost unchanged.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century, the Moslems prevented pilgrims from visiting the lower part of the building on the pretext that it was the site of the tomb of David. In 1522, they took possession of the Cenacle and transformed it into a Mosque. The Upper Room, which is the only one opened to the Christians, has the form of a parabolic dome of 13 1/2 x 45 1/2 feet. It is within this small Shrine, which still remains in the hands of the Islam that is venerated the institution of the Priesthood and of the Holy Eucharist.

Bishop Ryan Chosen One of Judges for Rushmore Contest

Washington—(NCWC).—The Most Rev. James Hugh Ryan, Titular Bishop of Modra and Rector of the Catholic University of America, has been named one of the judges of the inscriptions submitted to the Rushmore Memorial Committee for the great monument in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

In accepting the appointment, Bishop Ryan said: "I will gladly serve as a member

of the Washington committee of judges to select the most appropriate inscription, for I consider the Rushmore Memorial a splendid venture in American patriotism.

"The inscription, no less than the sculptured historical figures, should be such as to arouse, in all visitors a deep sense of the great deeds of the past of our people and to point to the present and all future generations the road along which the United States must travel if it is to endure as a nation."

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