

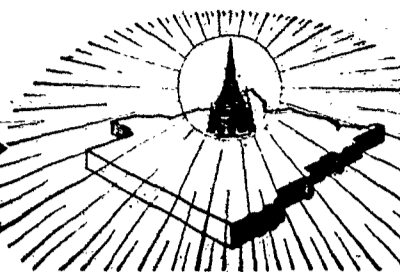
Thoughts Of Christians At Eastertide Turn To Two Places

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Finding Arch Of 'Ecce Homo' Provides Further Easter Link Between Rome, Jerusalem

Great Discovery In Holy Land Followed Conversion of Alphonse Mary Ratisbonne, To Whom Blessed Virgin Appeared in Eternal City

By MSGR. ENRICO PUCCI (Written for N. C. W. C. Easter Supplement)

Rome and Jerusalem are the two places to which Christian thoughts turn most spontaneously during the holy days of Eastertide. These two places are linked together by a thousand ties established by Providence in the course of centuries and which renew and confirm that first fundamental link through which Our Lord desired that the work of the Divine Redemption which He accomplished through His Passion and death should be continued through the ages of time, chosen to be the See of the Head of the Church.

One of these ties belongs to both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is the miraculous conversion of Alphonse Mary Ratisbonne, which took place in Rome nearly a century ago, and the discovery only a few years ago of one of the most famous places of the Passion in Jerusalem, as a result of his efforts.

Alphonse Ratisbonne was born at Strasbourg on May 1, 1814, of a family of rich bankers. In 1832 he was engaged to be married and his father had taken him into partnership in his bank. His position was bright and secure, and his future was most promising. His brother, Theodore Ratisbonne, had been converted from Judaism to Christianity a number of years before and had become a Catholic priest famous for his apostolic zeal and his learned writings. Alphonse was more or less indifferent in religious matters, but his brother's conversion produced in him a strong aversion to the Catholic religion and particularly to priests.

In the course of a journey undertaken for his health, the ways of Providence led Alphonse Ratisbonne to Rome. He himself was unable to explain why he had gone there. A view of the Ghetto confirmed his feelings for his own people and his hatred of Christianity. Purely out of courtesy, Alphonse accepted from a friend named Theodore Bussiere, a convert from Protestantism, a Miraculous Medal. He carried it around in his aversion to Christianity, and conversations with his friend on subsequent days were marked by his ironic and blasphemous replies to the pious counsel of Bussiere.

At noon of January 25, 1842, Alphonse entered the Church of Saint Andrea della Fratte with his friend and remained within the temple while Bussiere went into the sanctuary to give some directions for the funeral of a friend which was to take place on the morrow. What happened then, Alphonse never was able to tell precisely. The church disappeared before his eyes, and he saw nothing but a great light shining around an altar, in the middle of which appeared a shining image of the Blessed Virgin—just as she appeared on the Miraculous Medal which he had now carried for some days. The Blessed Virgin, with her arms extended, had her eyes fixed on him, and he felt himself suffocating, as if he were being presented to her friends in a sepulchre to hear the Blessed Virgin speak.

Returning some minutes later, Bussiere could not believe his eyes when he saw Alphonse prostrate and crying with emotion. He raised him up, while Alphonse between sobs told him that the Blessed Virgin had appeared to him; that he felt himself entirely changed, and that he desired to become a Catholic. Indescribable was the fervor with which Alphonse, until then a sceptic and enemy of Christianity, expressed his new faith, and the fullness of the new zeal that filled his soul. Every uncertainty and doubt vanished. His eyes swelled with tears and his heart suffocating, as if he were being presented to her friends in a sepulchre to hear the Blessed Virgin speak.

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RENOUCED WORLD

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City of Jerusalem Once Called Salem

(By N. C. W. C. News Service)

Jerusalem, in Palestine, was originally called Salem, and was the capital of King Melchisedech in 2150 B. C.

Jerusalem's most famous rulers were David, who brought the Ark of the Covenant into the city, and his son Solomon, who built the Temple, and during whose reign Jerusalem attained the height of its glory and grandeur. Its destruction fell in 70 A. D. after a siege of 143 days, in which it is said 900,000 Jews perished, when it was conquered and destroyed by the Romans under Titus. The house which was the scene of Pentecost and the Last Supper was spared.

His Eminence Rodrigue Cardinal, Villeneuve, Archbishop of Quebec, presided at the opening session.

Canadian Catholics Hold Unusual Social Week

Quebec, N. C. W. C. News Service

The most successful "Social Week" was held in the city of Quebec last week. Speakers discussed the various means of extending social education at school, in the family and through labor groups. Scouting, the press, motion pictures and the radio.

Period For Easter Duties Given

The time during which the Easter duty is to be performed is from the first Sunday of Lent until Trinity Sunday. This year the dates are from March 1 to June 7.

Many Easter Customs From Early Centuries Are Preserved In Erin

Free State Commission Begins Catalogue Throwing New Light on Adaptation of Pagan Customs To Christianity and Influence on People

Every European land has its folklore and its tales of ancient times, often fabulous. Likewise, in every European land there persist today customs and old practices that cast back to these early days. No country is more rich in folklore than Ireland, populated by a people of sturdy imagination and love of tradition. It is thus that intensely Catholic folk in Ireland today cast back even before the days of St. Patrick and treasure the legends of their forefathers. In some instances, they have captured ancient legends to their religion of today. Similar attitudes toward the legendary are to be found in every European country. However, the most striking example is Ireland, where an official commission is throwing new light upon old stories.

New light is expected to be thrown on that obscure part of Irish history in the early fifth century when St. Patrick brought Christianity to the country, by a catalogue of folklore which has just been begun by the recently established Free State Folklore Commission.

The completion of the catalogue will, it is understood, take a number of years but already it is possible to gain some idea of how ancient pagan customs in Ireland were adapted to Christianity, and how this adapted some of them influenced the whole life of the people.

There seems to be agreement among Irish historians at the present time for the belief that the festival of Easter early in the fifth century, before the introduction of the Gregorian calendar, almost coincided with the time of festival in Ireland known as Bealtaine, the Irish for the first of May, which was the festival of summer, one of the two great festivals of the year, the other heralding the days of winter.

Clash of Two Fires

The May Day festival was at first a pagan festival, and it was to whom fires were lighted above the hills. The pagan festival, however, now holds the view that it was the fire of "Beal" which was to have been lighted on the day following that on which Saint Patrick lighted the Paschal fire on the Hill of Slane. Here we have the clash of the two fires, the fire of the Gospel and the fires of the old paganism.

Historians in their most recent accounts agree that it was towards the end of April that the Paschal fire was first lighted in Ireland. This would be at the beginning of the Irish people's ancient festival of Bealtaine, the festival of summer, one of the two great festivals of the year, the other heralding the days of winter.

In pre-Christian times, a sacred fire of the god, Beal, that all fires were extinguished on the eve of his festival and it was ordered that none could be relit until the High King of Ireland, the High King, had lighted the fire in the year 432 that St. Patrick, in contradiction of the existing law, lit the Paschal fire on the nearby hill of Slane.

It is not unlikely that the desire of the ancient Irish to celebrate their new Easter festival at about the same time as their old festival of Bealtaine, prompted the High King to order that the Paschal fire be lighted on the Hill of Slane. Many parts of Ireland for long years after the arrangement of the

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Easter - The Greatest Feast Day of Year

Easter is the principal feast of the Christian year. Pope Leo I called it the greatest feast, and said that Christmas celebrated the birth of the Son of God, Easter is the center of the greater part of the Christian year. The order of Sunday, from the Resurrection to the Last Sunday after Pentecost, the Feast of the Ascension, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, and all other movable feasts, from that of the Prayer of Jesus in the Garden to the feast of the Sacred Heart, depend upon the Easter day.

Cadets Represent Reparation For Acts Of Roman Soldiers

In the Holy Thursday procession, the canopy over the Holy Eucharist was borne by four members of the military uniform. While a detachment of other officers formed a military guard of honor throughout the remaining day and night, there was a detachment of the Blessed Sacrament, men of the parish and cadets, keeping "holy vigils."

On Good Friday cadets, at Attention, are to stand guard during the veneration of the Cross and in the procession for the Way of the Cross other uniformed cadets will bear replicas of the instruments of the Passion.

CROSS BEARERS PROCESSION MOST UNIQUE

Age-Old Holy Week Custom on Adriatic Island of Hvar Described

By DR. FREDERIC VON MINNAUS (Written for N. C. W. C. Easter Supplement)

The Asiatic archipelago is a thing of marvelous beauty. Azure waves wash white cliffs and scents of laurel myrtle and rosemary fill the air.

The island of Hvar is a part of this glorious setting. Hvar was called Lissa before it became a part of Yugoslavia. It has been a part of the Adriatic Sea for centuries. The flags of Byzantium have flown from its towers. The Venetians, the Turks and the Genoese have fought for it. With Hamelin, it formed a part of the Elbsburg Empire. The centuries have wrought such little change in Hvar that its towns and people look like visions of long ago.

The little town of Vrbskita is situated on the island of Hvar along a portion of the Adriatic Sea that probes inland like a long thin finger. Vrbskita was built in the Middle Ages to afford protection against the pirates who with swift horses descended their rock fortresses to prey upon Adriatic shipping. The church of the town is an interesting mixture of barbaric and place of worship. Sloping down from the middle of Vrbskita is a long, narrow, covered hill. It leads down to a peaceful, green valley. Situated on slopes that rise up from the valley and surrounding it like a wreath of blossoms are four tall towers. The tallest of these is Vrbskita, which is situated on a bay recessed from the Adriatic Sea. The other four towers are on the tops of high mountains. Misted in the sunlight of better still, the night the gleaming white walls of towers look for the world like points in a lovely crown.

PROCESSION OF CROSS

In the small, walled town of Vrbskita, in the village of Vrbskita, on the night of the greatest event of the year, the inhabitants of the village, who have come abroad to seek their fortunes, are constantly seeking how to observe the observance of the night of the Procession of the Cross, which takes place on the night of Holy Thursday.

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EASTER ISLAND NOW MONUMENT

By N. C. W. C. Easter Supplement

For many years the Government of Chile has been endeavoring to protect the Easter Island, a lonely spot in the Pacific Ocean more than 2,000 miles off the coast of Chile.

Resurgam

By JOHN MORELAND In Sign Magister

It happened on an April day, Bounded by skies so blue and still And olive trees all flushed and gray. They led me up a steep, sloping hill Followed by a crowd whose piercing cry Was, "Crucify!"

POPE RECEIVES EASTER EGGS

By MSGR. ENRICO PUCCI (Written for N. C. W. C. Easter Supplement)

The Pope himself often receives gifts of Easter eggs which are presented to him by his friends in keeping with a long-established custom.

At the Easter festival, the Pope receives gifts of Easter eggs which are presented to him by his friends in keeping with a long-established custom.

The First Easter Sunday



From the painting by B. Prochard

Easter Sunday Date Fixed By Full Moon

By N. C. W. C. News Service

Easter Sunday is the first Sunday after the full moon which occurs on or after March 21. Easter Sunday always falls on some date between March 22 and April 25. The time for its observance was fixed by the Council of Nicaea in 325. Easter did not fall on April 25, the latest possible date in the year 1943. The earliest it will fall in the twentieth century is March 24, in the year 1940.

ASHES OF BURNED PALMS

The ashes of burned palms, which are used in the beginning of Lent, are obtained by burning palms blessed on Palm Sunday of the year before.

NO MAN CAN SAVE HIMSELF FROM MORAL DESTRUCTION UNLESS HE PRACTICES SELF-DENIAL

No man can save himself from moral destruction unless he practices self-denial.

Urges Spread Of Easter's True Meaning

'Good Friday' Incident Reveals Need To Teach Day's Significance

By GEORGE BARNARD (Written for N. C. W. C. Easter Supplement)

I want you to try a little personal experiment. Just read the following passage, and then ask yourself if the news surprised you or not. And be sure to answer, "swearing it. This is the passage. It is a news item:

Speaking in the British House of Commons, in a debate on religious knowledge, a member stated that an inquiry was carried out in one of the new housing districts on the fringe of London, and one of the questions asked was "Why is Good Friday celebrated?" All the children were silent, except one. "That one answered 'Good Friday commemorates a public holiday'."

It is necessary to explain that in England Good Friday is a public holiday. That was all a London schoolboy, product of British compulsory education, knew about it. And he seems to have been the brightest boy in the class. His companions knew nothing whatever about it.

Did this news shock you? Or does it just seem foolish? You may know all the time about the state of religious knowledge among the people with whom you mix?

Are there people in other countries who do not know the meaning of Good Friday, the meaning of Easter, and the meaning of Christmas? My guess is that there are schools of them. I know that it is so in England. How could it be otherwise when the state schools give no dogmatic teaching, and when the teachers of the dote of Christianity which satisfies the examiners may themselves be atheists?

There are schools where children get nothing but a little Bible teaching, with its efficacy watered and whittled down by the understanding that even that slight smattering of religious knowledge is subject to the pupil's individual interpretation.

And so children in England grow up to think that the great fast days, and the one day of great fast and penitence, are just arbitrarily arranged as public holidays to give the populace an opportunity to throw off the yoke of labor.

With one exception all our national holidays mark feasts of the Church, and the great fast of Good Friday, the feast of the Ascension, and the day which follows—the feast of St. Stephen. There is Good Friday and Easter Monday. And there is Whit Monday. Apart from these we have only the first Monday in August for a public holiday, and that was chosen as a convenient break between Whitsun and Christmas.

We do not mark the beginning of the secular year with a public holiday, though Scotland does. We have no Independence Day. We

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Saints' Testimony To Find True Cross by Empress

(By N. C. W. C. News Service)

St. Ambrose, Augustine and Cyril of Jerusalem testify to the finding of the True Cross by the Empress St. Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine, in the year 326.

St. Paulinus also carefully recorded the finding of the Crown of Thorns. As the result of a special appeal by St. Helena the Crown of Thorns was kept in Jerusalem for centuries, and then, probably in the eleventh century, it was conveyed to Constantinople. In 1238 Baldwin II pawned it to the Venetians as a pledge for his indebtedness. It was redeemed by St. Louis IX, King of France, in 1250. The king built the magnificent Saint-Chapelle in Paris in its honor. Since 1806 it has been preserved in the Cathedral of Notre Dame.