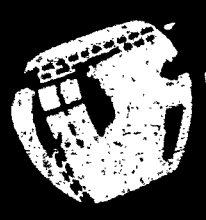


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# The Church's Songs At Eastertime

By Rev. Benedict Ehmann  
 Editor of The Catholic Choirmaster  
 (Written for N.C.W.G. Easter Supplement)

The feasts of the Church are not mere memorials of the past. They are living powers of the present. Easter commemorates the historical resurrection of Christ from the dead. But further than that it symbolizes the resurrection, thru Baptism and the Eucharist, of that Body of Christ which is the Church. This is a resurrection from death to life for those whom Easter Baptism or Easter Confession establish in grace. It is a resurrection from life to further life for those others, already in the state of grace, who unite themselves with the Paschal Victim in the Easter Mass.

"Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle: because He hath done wonderful things." (Psalm 97, 1). The Church's Easter exultation begins on Holy Saturday. The grief-stricken silence of Good Friday with its empty tabernacle gives place now to a hush of expectancy. It is the Feast of the New Light and the New Life that issued from the tomb. Marching up the aisle from the vestibule where the new fire has been struck from stone, the deacon breaks the silence with the triple call, each time on a higher tone, *Lumen Christi* (Light of Christ), as each time one more candle on the three-branded candlestick is lighted. And the people respond *Deo Gratias*.

Thus begins the Church's Easter joy, full of light. **PASCHAL PROCLAMATION:** Returning to the sanctuary, the deacon, after being blessed by the celebrant sings the jubilant Exultet, the Church's Paschal Proclamation, among the most perfect and glorious songs of exultant love ever written. Let him whose office is to sing it, love it devoutly enough to practice it well. Accompanying this grand canticle is the action of lighting the Paschal Candle, the sanctuary lamp, and the other lamps of the church, from the flame of the new fire. It must have been a soul-stirring sight in the early Church and in the days before electric light, to see the shadows and the twilight give place gradually to the growing brilliance of the new light: a glad Easter light after the twilight of Lent and the darkness of Good Friday.

After the Exultet, the Church turns her attention to the neophytes who are ready for Baptism. In the early centuries, Lent was the season when these candidates were prepared for their great initiation into the life of grace. Holy Saturday was the day of their Baptism. At the Baptismal Font, they died to sin together with Christ, and were buried in the saving water, as He was buried in the

tomb. Coming forth they lived unto God, risen with Christ and made partakers of His life. The actual Baptism of converts is no longer usually performed during the Holy Saturday service. But the Blessing of the Baptismal water remains, a fitting reflection of the permanent, living reality of the Resurrection; for it is with the grace of the Resurrection that the Church invokes the Holy Spirit to make fruitful the waters of Baptism, so that at the Font children may be born to the Father with the new life of Grace.

**TWELVE GREAT LESSONS** Before the Font is blessed, twelve great Lessons are sung from the Old Testament, giving the great incidents in the long preparation for the Redemption of the world. Originally intended as a final graphic instruction for those who were to be baptized, they may now be taken as powerful foreshadowings of the regeneration through Baptism. As one of the intervening prayers sung by the priest expresses:

"O God, whose ancient miracles we see shining even in our own times: since what by the power of Thy hand Thou didst confer upon one people by delivering them from Egyptian persecution, Thou dost operate by the water of regeneration for the salvation of the Gentiles, grant that the fulness of the whole world may pass over to the children of Abraham, and the dignity of Israelites."


During the Blessing of the Font, the priest lowers the base of the Paschal Candle into the water, and sings: "May the power of the Holy Spirit descend into all the water of this font." A second and a third time, he repeats the action, dipping the Candle still lower, and singing the invocation in a higher key. The Kingdom of the just, ransomed by Christ and reborn in the sacred waters, is symbolized in the chanting of the Litany of the Saints as the priest returns from the Font to the altar to celebrate the Paschal Sacrifice. Toward the close of the Litany, the Altar is prepared, the Mass candles are lighted, the Easter flowers are brought. The final Kyries of the Litany are followed by the initial Kyries of the Mass. The sacred ministers return from the sacristy, vested in Easter white, the preparatory prayers are said, and the Altar is incensed. The wave of expectation poises at its climax as the priest sings the Gloria in excelsis Deo: after its 48 hours of silence, the organ now bursts into triumphant and glor-

(Continued on Page 13)

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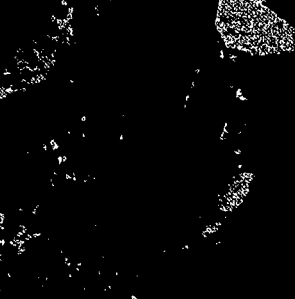


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CHURCH LEAGUE		Individual Averages	
(Season of March 30, 1942)			
St. Mary's	St. Anthony's	1. Peterson ... 18114	Deane ... 148
Graham ... 145 149 194	Vendette ... 123 149 237	2. Tanner ... 17635	Gowley ... 144
Ellis ... 191 184 179	Carrossa ... 127 149 245	3. A. VonKendy ... 17124	Baraville ... 144
Fr. Stan's ... 133 167 188	Santoro ... 139 178 231	4. Rice ... 16917	Petti ... 134
Wack ... 112 116 121	Fr. Vogt ... 132 148 229	5. Meek ... 15916	Kelly ... 137
Fraser ... 146 132 206	DeLano ... 139 167 222	6. Shaska ... 14918	Greider ... 137
-131 121 131	-131 141 241	7. DeSocio ... 16729	Fair ... 135
Total ... 592 608 945	Total ... 527 635 261	8. P. VonKendy ... 16521	Comiskey ... 134
		9. Cardone ... 16522	Pietruski ... 131
		10. DeSocio ... 16423	Drake ... 128
		11. Graham ... 14525	Womack ... 124
		12. Shaska ... 14224	DeLano ... 120
		13. Fr. Stan's ... 14026	Clara ... 118
			VonKendy ... 117

K. of C. LEAGUE		Members	
(Season of March 30, 1942)			
St. John's	St. Patrick's	A. VonKendy ... 155 169 169	Ellis ... 142 137 137
DeMotte ... 135 175 200	Homonick ... 146 217 274	Ellis ... 159	139
Schiffen ... 136 159 182	Johnson ... 148	Mann ... 222 134 129	Pietruski ... 124 126 121
Shoben ... 154 184 169	Shobe ... 174 202 204	Fr. Stan's ... 190 130 162	Graham ... 114 124 141
Rhoad ... 141 136	Roman ... 142 174 233	Mann ... 169 178 141	Fr. Stan's ... 114 124 141
Rushel ... 171	Thayer ... 131 169 231	Meek ... 149 147 141	Shaska ... 118
Fr. Stan's ... 146 132 187	Greene ... 141 234	Meek ... 149 147 141	Shaska ... 118
-131 121 131	-131 24 26		
Total ... 582 647 954	Total ... 592 645 945		

ST. JOHN'S HOLY NAME LEAGUE		Members	
(Season of March 30, 1942)			
Foodman	Holy Cross	Baraville ... 155 152 149	Peterson ... 152 242 249
Albin ... 111 125 140	Johnson ... 143 159 243	Womack ... 156 177 169	Shaska ... 144 132 142
Albin ... 126 142 179	Johnson ... 138 125 132	Ellis ... 159 149 144	Ellis ... 159 149 144
Shoben ... 146 136 179	Proctor ... 136 142 208	Womack ... 159 149 144	Ellis ... 159 149 144
DeMotte ... 171 131 132	Rushel ... 138 147 231		
-131 121 131	-131 147 231		
Total ... 582 647 954	Total ... 592 645 945		

ST. MARY'S LEAGUE		Members	
(Week Ending March 30, 1942)			
Mann ... 149 121 131	Pietruski ... 147 149 139	A. VonKendy ... 151 162 145	Peterson ... 150 150 150
Tanner ... 131 130 134	Womack ... 131 131 131	Fr. Stan's ... 149 149 149	Shaska ... 149 149 149
Ellis ... 149 149 149	Womack ... 149 149 149	Ellis ... 149 149 149	Womack ... 149 149 149
Shaska ... 149 149 149	Womack ... 149 149 149	Shaska ... 149 149 149	Womack ... 149 149 149
Total ... 592 645 945	Total ... 592 645 945		