

IV. Life of the Church

B. The Liturgical Year

114.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, December 3, 1853 (2)

The Time of Advent.

According to the ancient tradition, four Sundays preceding Christmas are set apart by the Church, "to prepare the way of the Lord and make His paths straight," in order to celebrate with becoming devotion the Nativity of the Son of God. As in Lent, so in Advent the ancient Christians were accustomed to fast, and perform special works of mercy and penance. For if we cannot commemorate the resurrection of Christ without a penitential preparation of forty days, it would seem impossible to rejoice rightly in the birth of the Savior, unless we had first spent some time previous bewailing in sackcloth and ashes the misery from which through Him we are redeemed. Still the Church, condescending to the coldness which has benumbed Christian charity, in these last times, does not prescribe as of obligation, any fast except on Friday, during Advent. And although she would desire and recommend a more rigid fast and more austere penance, she refrains from enforcing her wish by any law. But to pious Christians is not her wish enough, as a stimulant to penance in this holy time? That wish of the Church is founded on the deepest knowledge of human nature. We all desire to rejoice on Christmas Day with a becoming joy. We seek not the sensual rejoicing of the profane and shallow world, but a joy such as that expressed by the angels in their sublime canticle of praise, and felt by the simple shepherds in the starlight of the first Christmas night, near Bethlehem. Now how can we rejoice in the coming of the Savior unless we feel the burthen of sin from which He relieves us?--What care we for a promised release from an evil whose magnitude we have never considered and therefore never appreciated? But we cannot *understand* without *feeling*; our reflecting powers are never stimulated into vigorous activity except through the medium of our sensitive nature. Hence the Church in recommending to us fasting, and corporal works of penance as an atonement for sin and thereby stimulating us to reflect on its evils, has displayed the most consummate wisdom.

We know there is in vogue a shallow philosophy, which objects that God has no need of these external works--that they are useless.--We answer that though God has no need of them, man *has*. And God has exacted them for the good of man.

Let all good Catholics therefore practice as many works of penance during Advent as their circumstances will permit, in order that they may be filled with joy at Christmas time. If we would feel the consolation of His coming, we must try to appreciate the desolation of His delay.

115.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, Dec. 25, 1875 (1)

To all our readers a Merry Christmas.

On this joyous Christmas Day, when all Christendom is gladdened by the birth of the Infant Savior and our Holy Mother Church invites us to join our hearts and voices with the heavenly choirs, whose songs of praise first resounded over the hills and plains of Judea and proclaimed peace throughout the earth to men of good will, we enter into the prevailing spirit and wish from our heart a Merry, Merry Christmas to all. Though to many of our readers this Christmas greeting may come after they shall have made their offerings at the crib of Bethlehem, still we are confident that as they bow in adoration to the Infant-God, they will not forget our undertaking in their petitions or thanksgivings. We all have something to be thankful for and to rejoice over, and if at the fireside the family is grouped, that during the year has been separated, the chair of the absent one may bring sorrowful recollections, yet the Catholic will be rejoiced by faith that assures him of life eternal and leads him to hope that the absent one enjoys a Christmas in the realms of bliss. If, on the other hand, the family group has remained untouched by the rude hand of death, yet, nevertheless, experience a sad feeling when reflection forces upon them the thought that this may be the last Christmas they shall enjoy together on earth. "Peace to men of good will," announced the angels eighteen-hundred years ago, and so today that salutation rings in our ears, as we sanctify the day. Let the sweet and holy memories revived by the soul-inspiring song of "Adeste Fideles" enkindle in our hearts the spirit that actuated the shepherds, when they went to adore the Infant. Once more, then, kind readers, we wish you a happy Christmas and many joyful returns of the blessed day.

116.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, Dec. 25, 1875 (2)

Christmas.

The Feast of the Birth of Our Lord is to us Christians the greatest of the year. Easter is the festival which demonstrates the truth of Christianity to the entire world. But we believe already and to the fruit of the Resurrection is sense. [sic] But the feast of the Little Babe of Bethlehem is one of love. "Son, give me thy heart!" is the voice from the manger. The life, the direction, the energy of all that is salutary in the world is from the Person of the Incarnate Word. The government, the teaching, the healing, the grace He gave to men were not given through a system but through persons acting with His authority and under His guidance. The government of the universe is personal. It is not natural law but the living God Who moves the suns and their systems in their vast

tracks. "Laws" are but the abstractions of our feeble minds and mean only the way in which we have seen God do things. In themselves they have neither efficacy nor even being.

People talk of "self government" and governmental systems. There is in practice no such thing. Governments follow the drifts of the public sentiment all the world over. But under every form of rule the vital force that governs comes from some individual man. Men free themselves from "one man power" only by falling under "another man power." The world's heroes do the world's work of war and conquest and revolution.

So Jesus Christ established, in conformity with our nature, a personal government of His kingdom on earth. "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church." He sends out His Spirit through human channels. The Heavens bend clean down to kiss the Earth. The omnipotent is helpless in the crib. So the world is won from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. The weak things of the world, the fishermen, the martyr pontiffs, overcome the strong. The iron rule of imperial Rome is shattered, and the representatives of poverty and suffering survive to consecrate its ruins and hallow its dust.

It is an empire of love, and the little Child of Mary is the King.
"O come, let us adore Him."

117.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, December 19, 1857 (1)

Christmas.

Before the date of our next issue, the Festival of the Nativity of Christ, will have been celebrated by the Church. Even the non-Catholic world--at least that little portion of it which surrounds us, relaxes for a few hours its eager hunt after money, and makes Christmas a day of fireside feasting. Puritanism with all its bigotry, has never been able to root out from the Protestant mind a veneration for this day, though it has obliterated all correct knowledge of the reasons for that veneration. The Anglicans alone hold it as a religious festival, and put forth an awkward effort of aimless devotion, in adorning the bare walls of their meeting house with cedar leaves, and festooning the pulpit, and organ, with wreaths of evergreens. All the rest hold it as a day for merry-making, of whatever kind best suits the taste of the merry-makers. The children look upon it as a Fourth of July *plus* the stocking full of toys and eatables. The old people look forward to it, as a day when their children and grandchildren will be gathered around the home fireside and eat a turkey for dinner. Only the Catholics celebrate it in the spirit in which it was instituted, for to them does it express what it expressed in the beginning. To them it is like all the feasts of the Church, a well of living water, while to those without it is but a broken cistern, separated from the fountain of grace.

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To the Catholic it speaks of heaven opened, of sin conquered, of an earth renewed, a race redeemed. In his mind it stirs up the fondest affections, kindles the brightest hopes, rouses the deepest energies, and recalls the dearest associations. It is no forced commemoration of a long buried event, which no one understands, or feels interested in, but of one that comes to the soul of every man as a reason for praise and thanksgiving, and hope and renewed fervor.

Christmas is our festival. Let us celebrate in the spirit of the Church.

118.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, December 25, 1858 (1)

Christmas Day Tells Us That

There is joy even on the earth. On the desolation of nature, through the angry clouds of winter, a star sheds its trembling light, telling the earth to rejoice, but to remember that the home of joy is above. Let those who build on earth abiding habitations, pursue their wild revelries, and continue to call their sensual frenzies, in whose wake follow remorse and gloom, by the name of delight; to "the stranger and pilgrim on the earth," all its joy is the hope of leaving it, all its pleasure, the consciousness of being able to live without it. That hope is kindled, that consciousness confirmed, by the Festival of Christmas. "The heavens have dropped dew, and the clouds have rained on the just--the earth has opened and brought forth the Savior;" and from this little crib the Divine Infant has given peace throughout all generations to men of good will. Through Him we have reconciliation with God the Father; through Him the knowledge of our end; through Him strength to conquer sense, and hope of everlasting life. Through Him we know that the thorns and briars of earth are not our enduring portion, that its clouds need not frown forever upon us, that its strifes will not even [ever?] toss us, its anguish and desolation of heart will not dwell forever in our souls. So with hope shedding its radiance over us, we kneel by the Infant's crib, and as our heart warms with love for Him, and our understanding begins to attain the meaning of His immense humiliation, we forget the cold dark night and howling storm without, and to the eye of faith, a world in which our life is to be led, spreads out scenes of surpassing and calm beauty--scenes which would be ill described by all the images of peace and joy that ever flashed on a poet's fancy.

To him who has learned the lesson taught by the divine infancy, its lesson of humility, poverty, and resignation, what matter the changes of seasons, the vicissitudes of the material elements, the conflicts of nations, the rockings to and fro of empires, the strifes of faction, the ragings of the heathen against himself? They are but storms on the sea, which he looks at from the land, convulsions in an empire from which he is an exile. His own path, hidden in his own soul, where the Redeemer is his guide, lies

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through flowery meadows, along the banks of crystal streams beneath skies ever bright; and if what seem to others, and to his own grosser sense, clouds of tribulation gather over him, at any time, or even at all times, these clouds, dark without and threatening within, catch a gleam from the light God has placed in his soul, and glowing with hues of ineffable beauty, make his world far more gladsome than would the unclouded light.

Blessed lot to live alone with Jesus! to be His in time, and His in eternity!

119.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, January 31, 1878 (1)

[Candlemas Day.]

Saturday is the Feast of the Purification. It is called Candlemas day, sometimes, because the candles for the altar are blessed just before the Mass. In Pennsylvania it is midwinter, according to the couplet,

"Candlemas Day,
Half your corn and half your hay,"

which originated in that poetical state. The great people of Ohio call it "Groundhog day," borrowing the phrase from Old Virginia. It is a Catholic tradition lingering among an uninstructed people until the memory of its meaning has died out among them. Our Catholic readers need no explanation of it.

120.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, March 6, 1875 (1)

[The Feast of St. Joseph.]

We beg our readers not to overlook the devotions of the month of St. Joseph--on which we have already entered--and we apologize for not publishing this reminder in our last, instead of the present number. The Feast of St. Joseph is on the 19th, but there is another feast--of his Patronage--on the third Sunday after Easter, on which the Titular Feast of the Cathedral will be celebrated.

One of the many inestimable works of the glorious pontificate of Pius IX. was the declaring St. Joseph Patron of the Universal Church. He who was thought to be the father of Jesus; who exercised over Him all a father's love, care, and authority; and received from that most tender, dutiful, and upright heart all the love, obedience, and respect a Son can give; who was the head of the family Jesus and Mary were members of, has still the office, in heaven, which he held upon earth. God made him lord of His home and master of His possessions. Now that the holy family has widened out by the adoption of children out of so many generations and so many nations, St. Joseph still holds his place in it.

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Let us have recourse to him, therefore, during the month, by some special daily devotion--by assisting at Mass or Benediction in his honor; by some prayers added to our ordinary ones; some act of alms, deeds or mortification, and implore him to succor us in our present difficulties.

121.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, March 13, 1875

The Passion Time.

The last two weeks of Lent are called the Time of the Passion. While they are passing we are expected to devote all our meditations to the sacred passion of our divine Redeemer. In the office and Mass the *Gloria Patri* is omitted, and all other expressions of sentiment which remind us of the exaltation of Jesus Christ. The Psalms and Lessons speak of His humiliations, His sufferings, and His love for us. The pictures of the saints are veiled in the churches. The glorious mysteries of the rosary are omitted.

The liturgy of the Church, from beginning to end, is a dramatic representation of the mysteries of religion from Christmas to Easter--and the Ascension; the history of the Incarnation of the Son of God is given in all its details.

It is a pity that Catholics do not understand it better, and that the young people do not study it more. With our common schools and non-Catholic surroundings, we find the knowledge of religion fading out of the minds of the people. They will scarcely give themselves the time to learn the things that are necessary for salvation. Even educated Catholics scarcely know more than how to sit, or stand, or kneel, during High Mass and Vespers with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. They do not understand the spirit, much less the detail of public worship. They never dream of starting from the central truth--the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, and going out through all the manifestations of the Church's adoration and love--temples, altars, vestments, ceremonies, fasts and feasts, paintings, statues, hymns, and music--try to understand what is the meaning and beauty of each. The more is the pity, because this ignorance connotes an indifference to spiritual things, a disregard of God's invitation--"Son, give me thy heart," which is more deplorable than the ignorance itself.

122.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, April 18, 1878 (4)

Holy Week.

Jesus Christ, personally, is the measure of all the good or evil that touches humanity. Worldly matters may be regulated by kings, parliaments and conventions;

but in the spiritual direction of mankind, no roles are taken, no discussions in order. Our Lord "speaks as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Under the teaching of His Church, salvation is made so plain that "the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein." Hence the public worship of the Church is mainly directed to exalt Him in the minds of the faithful. "The Christian is another Christ," says Tertullian. His birth, passion, death and resurrection ought to fill our minds continually. The office of Holy Week is the drama of His passion, the sublimest of all passion plays. The simple and touching story of His betrayal, arrest, mock trial and execution is told in the Gospels; and the lessons from the prophets and the Old Testament are put in to explain the meaning and intent of the awful recital. The office, known as "Tenebrae," is conspicuous only in non-Catholic countries, by being chanted; elsewhere the office is chanted daily all the year round. On Holy Thursday the church suspends her grief to celebrate the institution of the adorable Sacrament of the Altar. On Friday there is no Mass, but only the consuming of the Host laid in the repository, and the adoration of the cross. And on Saturday, the eve of Easter, her joy begins with the Gloria at the Mass. But all the ceremonies are intended to impress on us the fundamental idea of Christianity, the personal government of Jesus Christ, that we know nothing, can do nothing, hope nothing, outside of Him.

123.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, April 15, 1854

The Great Fact of the World's History.

None of the ceremonies of the Church represent in so lively a manner her *Catholicity*, as those of Holy Week. Whoever witnesses them *intelligently*,--takes the pains to understand the psalms, prayers, lamentations, etc., (as every one can, if he choose to provide himself with the little book called "Holy Week,") cannot fail to be impressed with a Catholic feeling.

By the prayers (e.g.) of Good Friday, his mind will be carried over all the different classes of people in the world--Jews, pagans, heretics, schismatics, rulers, subjects, with their various wants,--a feeling Catholic, or universal, with regard to space; and seeing the solemn representation of the crucifixion, hearing, in the lessons of Saturday, the account of the creation, the flood, the captivity of Israel, etc., his thoughts must run over all the generations that have gone before, and he will have a view universal with respect to time.

This Catholicity of view, with regard to time, the Christian can take, because the Church gives him the stand-point from which to look. Others besides Christians may know all the events of history, but no other besides Christians can have a Catholic or universal view of them. There is no Catholicity without *unity*, whether in practice or in

speculation, whether in communions of men or in the ideas of the mind. And since no other but a Christian knows the great fact to which all other facts of history refer, no other but a Christian can see any unity in the events that have transpired since the beginning of the world. As we have said before, others may be as familiar with these events as the Christian, but others cannot view them in their integrity.

As he who wanders through the valleys sees, one at a time, all the fields, and groves, and streams, and hamlets, which the man on the mountain-top takes in at a glance, yet can never view them as *one*; so the non-Christian may have studied all the annals of the nations, and know every state, and name, and action, yet he cannot view them as a whole. To him, the rising and falling of empires--the growth and decay of civilization--the great wars, and famines, and pestilences--the intrigues of statesmen--the influence of orators and poets--are all isolated events, that occurred in a place, time, and circumstances, to be carefully committed to memory. He cannot see them all at once. To him they have no meaning, because he does not understand their language. *Calvary* is the mountain-top, whence all the events of time are visible; the death of a God-man for the redemption of the world, is the alphabet and vocabulary of the language of facts. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ is the great fact to which all other facts of history must be referred, to be seen in their true light. The cross is planted in the centre of the moral world, and is the axis around which it revolves. When He was "lifted up on the cross," the Son of God "drew all things unto Him," that is, on the cross He became the measure of goodness, of wisdom, of excellence, for all things in the world. Whatever occurred before His coming, was, in the providence of God, disposed to prepare His way; and whatsoever has occurred since, is designed to further the purpose of His mission.

The revolutions of empires, the crumbling of dynasties, the meeting of armies, the uprising of peoples, and such like events of the political world; the finding of new inventions, the illustration of new principles of science, the publishing of new books, the discovery of new countries, the opening of new traffics, and similar occurrences, in the so-called literary and commercial world, are in themselves of no importance; because they scarce come ere they are gone, as shadows of clouds flitting across the endless life-path of man. Only as they have relation to the Redemption, are they worthy to be remembered.

It is a wonder that the reformers of our age, who claim the name of Christian, do not think of this. It is a wonder how they can for a moment suppose that God could come down from heaven to teach truth to men--could teach them, by word, and by the example of a life of suffering and virtue, their true end and the means of its attainment; and, with all His infinite wisdom, fail to fulfill His purpose--leaving men still to grope in darkness, and truth still to be searched after by money-making system-mongers, and young men out of employment. It is a wonder that among a people calling themselves

Christians any scheme can excite enthusiasm, that is not sealed with the sign of the cross. Yet so it is. In the philosophy of life of our reformers, the cross has no place. A God came from heaven to renovate the world--suffered, died, to found His Church. Yet still the world remains to be renovated; and what God failed to do, Mazzini, Kossuth, John Mitchell, and Meagher, have now, with the applause of believers in Christ, undertaken! Believers in Christ, indeed!--*mouthers*, rather, of a venerable name, to them no longer significant--professors of a Christianity, soulless, lifeless, meaningless--that but profane the name, by adapting it to express every man's capricious opinion.

The crucifixion of Christ is the fact, *par excellence*, of all history. Christ *crucified*--no Christ, the preacher of truth, the worker of miracles, the reprove of vice, the founder of an everlasting kingdom--but Christ *crucified* is "the wisdom and the power of God." The cross is the standard by which all systems and system-makers will be measured, their excellence tested, or their folly unveiled; and as surely as God is the arbiter of our destiny, so surely will every man be compelled to acknowledge it as the fountain of all good; individual, social, and political, temporal and eternal--of all wisdom, of all peace, of all liberty, of all truth.

124.

Sermon, Book 1, No. 6

From the first paragraph, this sermon appears to have been delivered near the end of the Civil War, in the spring of 1865. On Easter Sunday, April 4, General Lee's army was retreating from Richmond.

Easter

At its coming this year Easter Sunday finds us all rejoicing. The clouds that lowered so long unbroken over the nation are rifted at last, and the light of hope is now painting the rainbow gorgeously on the lurid masses as they sweep sullenly away. The people have seen the light, from East to West, and their joy has been as wild as their sorrow before was deep. It has flashed upon a million homes and made them radiant. Some with promise that the vacant place will soon be filled and others with the certainty that the place never to be filled again was not made vacant in vain. Peace with her thronged highways, her busy work shops, her thriving, and her growing knowledge broadening, her quiet joys of social life and home, is just seen stepping towards us across the horizon of the future; and gladness thrills the nation's heart.

The Resurrection day ought to hallow this joy and to heighten it. For it is the joy feast not of a nation merely but of all ages and climes. It marks the consummation of a work which is to the world the only fount of hope and joy.

Now is the Lord risen indeed. The mortal has put on immortality. Death is

swallowed up in victory. The stone is rolled away from the door of the sepulchre. The body the scourges bruised is all sound and well. The mangled hands and brow and back are healed now. The blood has come back to the veins. The heart is throbbing now, never to be stilled again; the light is in the eyes once more and life in the limbs. His enemies have been caught in the trap of their own malice, their calumnies confuted, and their triumph is turned into hopeless defeat. The night is past now. Day beams on the beloved of our hearts, never to darken more. Death is swallowed up in victory. Did he not say to us--so think the women who hastened at early dawn with sad hearts to his tomb, as the truth begins to flash upon them—did He not say to us, "Daughters of Jerusalem weep not for me?" And they rush to find the disciples. Tell us, O Mary, what hast thou seen by the way; and she all tremulous with delight answers, I have seen the tomb of the living Christ; and the glory of Him rising. The angels by the sepulchre bore witness, and so did the cast off shroud and napkin. Doubt soon became impossible. And the "Alleluia" begins. The Lord is risen indeed. He was after all the restorer of Israel's kingdom. He was verily the Son of God. What He taught was true; what He promised certain. The Holy Ghost will come. The face of the earth will be renewed. His Church built on Peter will be an everlasting kingdom, dispensing light and healing to souls until the end of time. Alleluia! Joy to the angelic hosts, whose vacant thrones are forthwith to be filled up. Joy to the long waiting souls of the just patriarchs and prophets, upon whom flashes more gorgeous [than] the sunlight the vision of the Beatifier.

Joy to Christ's Mother in whose pierced heart the sword of grief is changed to a thrill of rapture.

Joy to the Apostles and to the nations that are by them to be enlightened and cleansed in Baptism, to the remotest ages, joy to all who sit in darkness under the shadow of death, that is to all of Adam's seed.

This Alleluia is the sound that has gone forth into every land, to the uttermost bounds of the world, first heard on earth in closed rooms, in lonely places, in caves and catacombs, and martyrs' cells, then swelling out in the halls of palaces and the arches of great Cathedrals, it has been borne down the stream of time through ages of vicissitude and revolution of all things else until it greets one's ears today with the same ring of joy, if we are right minded, that it had for them. Christ is risen indeed. Those words announce whatever of good men and nations may hope for in the world and out of it, in time or in eternity.

It seems hard to be obliged to dwell on this assertion, to explain and prove it to a people calling themselves Christians. But there are two sorts of persons for whom it must be done:

1. Men who deny the divinity of Christ and say the time of His work is past;
2. Men who without denying his divinity look elsewhere than to Him for the

happiness they need.

Against the first, this is the statement of doctrine. The sentence Christ is risen must be understood as expressing the whole doctrine of the incarnation, atonement, and redemption. The fact itself asserts His divinity, not so much because it evinces His divine power as because it was avowedly wrought in proof of His godhead. "A wicked and adulterous generation asketh for a sign: but no sign shall be given it but the sign of the prophet Jonas. For as Jonas was three days in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days in the bowels of the earth."

Another time when they asked a sign He said destroy this temple and in three days I will build it up," speaking of His body. The scribes and Pharisees remembered this when they asked a guard for His tomb, "He said He would rise in three days." So the point of the contest between them and Him was sharply defined. He said He was the Son of God, and would rise from the dead to prove it. Was not the offer a fair one? They understood it so. No one can give life but the author of it. The author of it can not give it to endorse a lie. Christ did rise from the dead as He said he would. Therefore He was God as He said He was. Therefore He is no philosopher of the past, no prophet of single age and country, but the wisdom and justice and power of God to every age and every nation. He was the Messiah, the seed of the woman who was to crush the serpent's head; [the seed] of Abraham, in whom all the nations were to be blessed; the Just one in whom mercy and truth were to meet, justice and peace to kiss each other, the deliverer of men from the thrall of sin. It was to him the Eternal Father said, "Sit thou on my right hand until I make thy enemies thy footstool. Ask of Me and I will give to Thee the gentiles for Thy inheritance, and the bounds of the earth for thy possession." He was the author of an everlasting kingdom, to whom all nations were to flow and whom the gentiles were to serve.

He was what He said He was, the way, the truth and the life. Out[side] of Him no path does not lead astray, no truth gives salutary light, no life does not speedily end in death. He is the door through Whom alone nations or individuals can enter into the house of benediction. He is the vine out of Whom no branch can bear fruit of merit or of happiness. He is, in one word, the sole author and sole dispenser of good, having all power in heaven or on earth.

Why do men who seem to be well informed and earnest in seeking good not recognize this fact? Jesus Christ is God. He proved it by His resurrection. Therefore it is idle to inquire after truth and goodness and happiness either for the individual or for society from any one but Him. Is that not plain? Would God become incarnate to save men from ignorance and passion and sin, and after all leave them to their own devices, helpless and oppressed? Has His plan failed, that there is need of reformers, and agitators, and aimless revolutions? No, Christ is still living in his Church, the teacher of truth, the giver of grace, the fount of good. The nations are feverish and restless with

desire of change, because false leaders have seduced them away from the fountain of living water, and they are just finding out, after three centuries of wandering, that the cisterns they then dug do not hold water. They may demolish thrones, upturn established institutions, destroy social order shedding rivers of blood. They will never better their condition without looking to Christ; they will never go elsewhere than from abyss to abyss under the leadership of men who do not know the difference between Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

Who can measure the waste of energy and wit, and power, and even heroism for which the revolution of the XVI. Century which led so many astray from Christ's Church will be held responsible? Within the last three hundred years what mighty revolutions have torn society! What fierce struggles have taken place, and are still going on! What a world of wit has been spent in exploring the fields of science, and subjugating the domain of art! What HiHilibraries have been filled with literary and scientific works! All good, but all in vain. The energy, the will, the power, the heroism have been spent in hunting for water in broken cisterns, in seeking for the living among the dead. The good of society is not in time, and no scientific investigation will ever find it there. Upset all the thrones on earth, and you will not find the happiness of the people hidden under any one of them. Mock us no more then, O philosophers, with declamations about progress or with dreams of any coming era, worth a drop of blood or a moment's controversy. If we have escaped evil as a nation, thank God. But do not tell us of a time coming when we shall find no thorns and briars in this dark world. If we are to be free, Christ must make us free; if we are to be happy, Christ must make us happy. There is no resurrection out of Him; and all ruin will consist in neglect of Him. His Father is the source of being and truth, and light and joy. None can come to the Father but through Him and by his Church.

This truth, Christ the sole savior, while it enables us to convict of folly the unbelieving theorists of our age, is also full of instruction and edification to each one of our souls. All studies are idle which are not of Him; all enterprises are vain which do not lead to Him. Jesus Christ crucified and risen is the only book worth studying, the only object worth loving. In Him should be all our faith, all our hope, and all our love.

Love is the master of life. "*Trahit sua quemque voluptas.*" Tell me where your love is, and I will tell you what your thoughts are. If you are eager to rise in the world, then, war and peace, birth and death, good fortune and evil fortune, truth and falsehood will be to you the stepping stones to power. If you want to accumulate money then all that happens will be to you what affects the markets. If I see you weeping I will ask how much have you lost? Or laughing, how much profit did you make?

If you are given to sensuality, then all nature and art will be to you only what they are to gluttony and lusts. The very imaginations of your heart will be full of corruption. Obscene fiends will stand before you in the air, the flowers, the walls, in all

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you meet, in the words you hear.

So if Jesus Christ were the only joy of your hearts, all our thoughts would be with Him. Like St. Bernard if we saw a new book, we would soon throw it down, unless it said something of Him. Conversation would seem tiresome unless it were of Him. No new enterprise would interest us unless it was intended to honor Jesus Christ and His Church.

125.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, March 27, 1875

Easter Sunday.

Our readers will be enjoying their Easter when this number of the COLUMBIAN is before them. May it be a happy one to all of them in the good Confession and fervent Communion they will have made!

Easter is the sum of all the Christian festivals, giving the substance and life to them all. In its logic, its sentiment and its poetry it is the epitome of all Christianity. What the Apostles preached and what Pius IX. preaches is Christ crucified by His enemies in their determination to crush Him; and Christ risen to show His divine nature, and His right to exact submission of the human intellect to His teaching, and of the human will to His commands. He is no founder of a sect--charming or repelling by yielding to the prejudices of society or grating on them. He does not lay His doctrine before the learned or the ignorant, saying, "Here is my supply; look and see if it is not a suitable one." He came not to save the just but sinners. He speaks with authority and exacts submission. It was to vindicate His authority that He arose from the dead. The Scribes and Pharisees never argued with Him about particular doctrines; such as Baptism, the real presence, the Divine Trinity. They questioned Him about Himself. "What sign showest thou that thou dost these things?" Then He, omitting mention of the many miracles he had wrought up and down Judea, promised them the miracle of His rising from the dead. "Destroy this temple and in three days I will build it up." "No sign shall be given but the sign of Jonas the prophet."

So the Jews said to Pilate, "We remember that this seducer said, 'after three days I will rise again.' Order therefore the sepulchre to be guarded," etc.

He did rise, and the logic of the Resurrection is that He is God. Directly, His rising proves nothing about the Bible, nothing about Baptism or Sanctifying Grace, or inspiration of the Gospels and Epistles. It does not prove what He taught, but His right to teach what He pleased. It proves that everything He teaches through the Church must be believed, and everything He commands must be obeyed.

In its sentiments, Easter is Love, Hope and Joy.

In entering upon His glory our Lord shows what he put off in order to rescue us,

shattering the gates of death, putting to flight the legions of hell, triumphing over the power of men, He but resumes the character that was His own, from all eternity, before He annihilated Himself for our sakes. Let us love Him because He first loved us. While His body was in the tomb, His enemies exulting, His disciples scattered and cowering, the holy women weeping, hope seemed to have died out. But when the word went round, "now is the Lord risen indeed!" they remembered His promises; the vision of His kingdom stretching out among all nations, and down through all generations, seemed already realized.

"We have seen the Lord," said the Marys to whom He had spoken. "Then Peter and that other disciple ran" to the sepulchre--and O joy!--find it empty. He is alive again! The bowed head is once more erect, the bruised body is healed, the mangled brow is set now with a wreath of everlasting gladness; the blackened name has become a sign of adoration to men. His goodness, purity and gentleness are now proved to the shame and confusion of His calumniators.

Death hath no more dominion over Him. He shall sit at the right hand of the Father, and His enemies, Ananias, Caiphas, Herod, and all who hate Him shall be made His footstool.

Now we understand what he meant when he said, "In the world you shall have tribulation--but be of good cheer for I have overcome the world."

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Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, April 15, 1876 (2)

The Resurrection

Easter Sunday is the day which commemorates the fact that underlies all Catholicity. Christianity is all fact--no opinion, speculation, or guessing. It is clear, positive, definite, and certain, in all that it affirms, and all that it condemns. Its speech is all "yea, yea," and "nay, nay." And the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is THE FACT which establishes all the rest. "What sign showest thou," said the Jews to Him, when He assumed to be the Son of God, and called the Temple "His Father's House," "that thou doest these things?" "Destroy this temple," He answered, "and in three days I will build it up." The Jews understood Him, and when their hour came, "destroyed the temple." having full scope to execute all their wit could invent, their power could perform, to make the destruction sure and final. Yet He baffled them and "rose as He said." This "sign" shows Him to be all that He pretended, and demonstrates the authority of the apostolic system He set up to teach and command the human race for all generations. His resurrection was no isolated wonder. It pervades all the wonders He has wrought among the generations since. It is the reason of our faith, the ground of our hope, the guiding star of our Lord.

127 - The Nations of old expected the Messiah to be a Redeemer

We sometimes call the Church a "system;" yet though it is systematic, and organized, and enduring, we fear the word often leads minds astray. For the Church is a LIVING BODY, speaking the message of God to all nations and generations from day to day. Christ Risen lives in her, giving infallibility to her decisions, authority to her laws, efficacy to her Sacraments--in a word--soul to her life.

The prisoner at the Vatican is not one to be baffled by politicians, hooted at by mobs; he is the one on whom rest the pillars that uphold nations and empires. He represents Him "who is patient because He is strong."

To the sane and logical mind this Resurrection of Jesus Christ proves today what it proved the day it took place, that Jesus Christ was no isolated and solitary wonder among the generations, but the teacher, master, and judge of all men.

127.

Sermon, Book 1, No. 15

The Nations of old expected the Messiah to be a Redeemer

(An incomplete Pentecost Sermon)

The Descent of the Holy Ghost was the accomplishment of the new creation for which the death of Christ had been the preparation. In the cross He had paid the price of redemption; but the Holy Ghost was to apply that redemption to the souls of men. "I will give you another Comforter who will remain with you forever." "It is expedient that I go, for if I go not the Paraclete will not come to you. But when he shall come he will teach you all truth, and will bring to your mind all things whatsoever I have said unto you."

Only the infinite mind of God can comprehend the greatness of the work whereby the face of the earth was renewed, for He alone can comprehend fully either the degradation of the human condition through sin, or the sublimity of the height to which it was raised by redemption.

Nevertheless, we may understand enough to nourish our feelings of gratitude to God for the benefits this festival commemorates by considering attentively what the Holy Ghost does on account of the merits of Christ, on the individual soul and on society.

I suppose a soul that has had as yet no share in Christ, uncleansed by baptism, unenlightened by faith, unsustained by grace, cut off from God and from hope of salvation, a beggared prodigal feeding swine; or one fallen among thieves, stripped and left for dead by the wayside. Even in its ruin the soul is a very sublime and excellent creature. The proud theorists of modern times, who flippantly reject Christianity, never fell into grosser folly than when they tried to establish the doctrine that soul is but the effect of material organization and that man is but a delicately constructed brute. They

rob man of all dignity who rob him of immortality, and pride, like every iniquity, lies unto itself.

According to faith nothing is more excellent than the substance whose characteristic is to understand and to freely choose.

These powers, understanding and free will, are infinite in God, whence He is infinite in excellence and in every way adorable. They are limited but pure in the nine orders of angels who are therefore in excellence next to God. In man they are still more limited, and by the union of soul with body, [are] mixed with imaginations, various desires, manifold passions, which are neither soul nor body but a consequence of the union between the two. Man therefore is a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor. His soul is the image and likeness of God, a ray of his infinite light, a spark of divine fire.

It is therefore better than all the material universe. It is brighter than the sun, more enduring than the stars, more subtle than any corporeal fluid, swifter than lightning, more penetrating than heat, stronger than the elemental forces that produce storms and earthquakes, more beautiful than any possible combination of form and color. It is more excellent than all because they perish, and it endures forever, and because they are driven on by irresistible necessity, while it moves itself whensoever it pleases in [the] vast region lying between the extremes of heaven and hell, and because in following the path of its choice, from birth to judgment, it can defy and overcome them all. It is not the soul that is appalled in the face of an angry sea or sky, or that quails before the lightning flash, or amid the crash of the earthquake. It can live on though the stars fall from heaven, though the elements dissolve with fervent heat, and partake, if it chooses, the strength and immortality of God.

It came forth from Him by creation to return to him by sanctification. It came forth into the harvest field of time to gather sheaves of merit and, returning with them, to be gathered into the everlasting granaries. By its nature it is fitted to find happiness in nothing less than God. The understanding rests not till it find the first cause, the primal truth, and the will must always prefer the infinite to any finite good. But the act of sin cuts the soul off from God, partially in time, utterly in eternity. Partially in time, because although the Creator holds no direct communication with the soul in sin, yet the good in His creatures is still within its reach. The rain is sent upon the just and the unjust. A person in mortal sin may be in possession of health, talents, wealth, rank and honor, all goods of God's giving; but these goods slip through his hands like vapor, and as the last one passes from his grasp in death, at the threshold of eternity, the utter and total separation begins.

We, my friends, are too near dead ourselves to comprehend the misery of this spiritual death. Our feeble efforts to be Christians go but little farther than the fear of dying in mortal sin pushes us. And so if the man has health, wealth, honor, yet our dull

unspiritual minds say: well what then does he lack? Lack? Why, he lacks uprightness of soul, he lacks grace, he lacks the right to heaven, he lacks the companionship of the angels, he lacks the smile of God which is spiritual. He has sinned and what evil has befallen him? -- loss of innocence befell him, loss of a princely throne and regal associates, loss of merit and truth, loss of hope of Heaven, loss of peace present and prospective.

If we had but the discernment of spiritual things which fidelity to duties would bring with it, these things would not sound so coldly in our ears. We are so careful of our bodies that no loss strikes us as worth mentioning which is not of food or raiment or of something earthly. Yet spiritual goods are none the less excellent because we do not appreciate them. The soul is still the pearl of great price, which is worth buying at the cost of all else, whether we see it or not; and the death of the soul by sin is still infinitely more dreadful than the death of the body, though we who would grow sick and faint in the gory battlefield, do laugh and make merry in the charnel house [of] souls. It is an evil and a bitter thing for the soul to turn its back upon the Lord to fall a gem from the coronet of His glory though he sparkle in the mire, to turn the understanding from thoughts of Him to idle and barren speculations, to impious theories, or to groveling plans for the gratification of the body, to drag down the will that might have clung to Him in unalterable peace, as the ivy clings to the oak through the storm, or the moss to the rock over which the billows of ocean dash, to an unprofitable chase after what is unworthy of it, to make it serve the vile appetites and passions it should have ruled with relentless severity.

It is an evil and a bitter thing to stand in the sight of God and the angels deserving of hell, and held only by the brittle thread of life from falling into its flames.

It is an evil and a bitter thing to reject the mercy of God, to turn from his infinite goodness to make curses of His [name], to renounce fellowship with the wise and good and take up with the foolish and malignant, to stand among the crucifiers of Christ, and join the rabble in trampling on the blood that redeemed us. If we understood as God and the Angels understand the body of this spiritual death we would not wonder at the vision of Ezechiel who saw a field covered with human bones, and despaired when he was asked, "Thinkest thou these dry bones will live?" It infects every faculty of the soul. The intellect is full of ignorance, error, prejudice, false opinion, about itself, about God, and about the world, and withal of pertinacity and self conceit. The will is entangled with a thousand unclean desires, yet well pleased with its own affections and arrangements. Then there are a million ways of being bad and but one way of being good; root out one error from the mind, another enters. The soul is wedded to its own conceit, is set to find its happiness in this world, to follow its own devices. To be free from sin it must completely and utterly change. Son of Man, thinkest thou these dry bones will live? We sometimes wonder very foolishly why we cannot make good

Catholics of our friends, the obstacles seem so small. We ought rather to wonder why they are not farther from it than they are. Spiritual life comes [from] the breathing of the Divine Spirit and requires an effort of omnipotence. At his word, and the free will not resisting, the dry bones live. Faith drives away ignorance and error, hope expels presumption and despair, and love blots out guilt and extinguishes every unclean affection. In the twinkling of an eye the new creation is done. The love of the world, the desires of the flesh, the deceits of error vanish, and the love of justice, the longing after heaven, the spirit of truth take their place in the soul. So soon that the heart is healed almost before it is crushed.

II.

In renewing the face of the earth, the Holy Ghost did not intend to exercise any direct influence upon human society. As one does not spend time or money in improving and adorning a rented or temporary dwelling, so religion never aimed to regulate customs purely social, or institutions purely political. She told men not to look for happiness on earth, and she did not weaken her warning by any direct effort to make the earth a pleasanter habitation.

Still what she did in the individual soul could not but have its effect upon society, and without intending it, or caring for it, she wrought there also a revolution. I do not mean to say that the world is converted to Christ, or that it is so changed now as not to need but to dispense salvation. I only mean to say that the world tho' still set in malice, has been forced to accept better maxims, and to do evil now does not always defy truth, but perverts it.

Before the time of Christianity the world's rule of action, "might makes right," was not only practice but theory. The Christian martyrs who laid down their lives for truth and justice, an abstract idea, were deemed not only criminals but fools. The idea of dying rather than offer incense to idols, when they could afterwards believe what they pleased and enjoy life, was hooted at as lunacy. So the strong had everything their own way, and the weak had to toil and die.

Right in the face of this grand error which had divided society into castes and justified a thousand odious and evil despotisms, the Church announced the supremacy of God and his law, the accountability of all to God, and the absolute equality of men. Christ died for all, Jew and Gentile, Greek and barbarian, bond and free. All, without distinction of caste or color, were sold under sin alike needing redemption, alike invited to share it. All could receive the Sacraments, could become incorporated with Jesus Christ, and look forward to a common heaven. Nay more, the weak were exalted because the Redeemer chose their condition and pronounced them blessed, thus giving to their state not only rights but privileges. These rights of the poor were hedged in by the doctrine of the supremacy of right, and that there is no profit in gaining the whole world if one loses his soul, and that Christ will come to judge the living and the dead.

128 - Corpus Christi

These doctrines, then scoffed at, the world has since been forced, at least outwardly, to receive; and now the cause of the poor is so near the hearts of men, that self-seeking men have to adopt it, as a means of gaining public confidence and honor. And the same class of men who of old urged on the mob to violence against Christians because they believed in the equality of men, and the right of every man to his own soul, now proclaim themselves the sole champions of human rights.

(End of text)

128.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, June 18, 1859

Corpus Christi.

On next Thursday the Church celebrates a festival devoted to the honor of our Lord, really present in the Most Holy Sacrament. It is a day when hearts which love Him delight to manifest their gratitude and affection. It is a day of interior joy which is incomprehensible to those without faith. With the Catholic it is a combination of all the other festivals of the year. The joyousness of Bethlehem, the wisdom of the Sermon on the Mount, the glory of Thabor, the meekness of the Passion and the divinity of the Resurrection, all united like rays in a focus, present for our homage this wondrous mystery of Jesus really present in the sacrament of love. His "delight is to be with the children of men." "With desire," He says, when He instituted the sacrament, "have I desired to eat this pasch with you." It was the last legacy of Jesus Christ to those who believed in Him. It was the perfection of all His other gifts and blessings because it was Himself! It is this sacrament which gives glory to our worship and solemnity and dignity to the service at our altars. It was the faith in this sacrament constantly urging the heart and mind of His believers, to prove by exterior works their veneration for the mystery, which designed and executed those great works of Catholic architecture which are the wonder of the world. It is this adorable Sacrament which consoles the poor, compensates the religious for their retirement from the world, and breathes, wherever there is a tabernacle, a holy atmosphere.

It is to honor our Lord that the children of the Church throughout the world will assemble next Thursday, to assist at the Mass and processions of the Blessed Sacrament. In what a multitude of quiet village churches, and through flowery avenues, in valleys and mountain glens will these processions be seen, clouded with incense and accompanied with hymns whose words and music are from the remote antiquity of the great and holy Church. If our Lord in His lifetime on earth went about doing good, how much more so will He do good now to the souls of those who assist at these processions? For the unbelief, for the insults of the infidel, for the profanity, for the jeers of those who say now as of old, "how can this man give us his flesh to eat?" for all the

129 - The Feast of the Sacred Heart

indignities offered to our Lord in the Sacrament, this feast is the day of atonement, of reparation, of reconciliation--the feast of love. Let all His children gather around Him--the old, the young--the rich, the poor--and for the multitude of favors received through a year, express their gratitude and adore their God as He passes, and renounce sin forever. Let the hearts of all respond to the hymns entoned in His honor, let tears of joy salute Him, and may our thoughts, like the roses which will be scattered in His path, ever breathe for Him, purity, devotion and fidelity unto death.

129.

Editorial, The Catholic Columbian, June 27, 1878 (1)

The Feast of the Sacred Heart

The Jansenists and their partizans made much clamor over this devotion when it was first introduced. The Heart of Jesus was a creature. To worship it, then, would be idolatry. The Heart of Jesus is a part of His body. To make it an object of adoration would be "to divide Christ." But the Church, having ever in view the true meaning of those words of the Gospel, "The word was made flesh," went calmly on to sanction and encourage the devotion. We give supreme worship to Jesus Christ. But His Sacred Heart, the heart being, in the general estimation of mankind, the seat of the affections, presents Him to us in the most tender and touching light. *Quis non amantem redamet?* [Who would not, to the loving, return love for love?] In adoring His heart we simply adore His Person; and this is eternal life.

130.

Editorial, The Catholic Columbian, Oct. 2, 1875 (2)

[Feast of the Most Holy Rosary]

Tomorrow is the fest of the Most Holy Rosary. The origin of the devotion of the Rosary is commonly ascribed to St. Dominic. Like most devotions that have sprung up in the Church, the spontaneous outburst of Catholic piety, the Rosary is intended to keep Christians familiar with the Person of the WORD MADE FLESH by contemplation, affection and imitation. It consists of one hundred and fifty Hail Maries divided into tens by one "Our Father" and one "Glory" for the vocal part; and of a contemplation of the Incarnation, Life, Passion, Death and subsequent glory of JESUS CHRIST for the mental part. It is simple enough for the unlettered and sublime enough for the learned. All that enlightens the mind, and all that touches the heart in Christian Revelation, is in the Holy Rosary. It is a pity that Christians do not make more use of it.

C. Church Buildings

131.

Sermon, Book 1, No. 8

Reverence for Churches

God is everywhere present to all creatures He has made. Wherever we may be we can make a throne for Him in our hearts and adore Him, we can call upon Him and He will be nigh to help us. Nevertheless there are places to which He vouchsafes something more than this general substantial presence. As He has a peculiar manner of dwelling in the souls of those who love Him, so He has a peculiar manner of dwelling in certain places consecrated to Him by the Church. One of those places is this cathedral which was consecrated to Him [blank] years ago today. And while our hearts are swelling with gratitude to God who inspired the people with the generosity, and the priests with the devotion to begin and bring it to perfection, let us consider what reverence and respect are due to it and all the other temples of God. The custom of giving up certain places entirely to God, old as the human race, is no doubt derived from the command and the primitive tradition of the race. The first five children of Adam were taught to build altars whereon Cain offered of the fruits of the earth and Abel the firstlings of his flock.

When Abraham was passing through the land of Chanaan, the Lord appeared to him and said, "Unto thy seed I will give this land." (Gen XII.7) And passing from thence to a mountain that was on the east side of Bethel he there pitched his tent and built there an altar to the Lord. Years later he took his son Isaac and went to the place which God had shown him and built an altar.

Jacob was journeying to Mesopotamia when he had his wonderful vision of the angels of God ascending and descending on the ladder that reached to heaven. And when he awoke he said, "Truly the Lord is in this place and I knew it not." And arising he took the stone which he had laid under his head and set it up for a table, pouring oil upon the top of it, thus marking the place in the plain which God had hallowed as his own. And he made a vow saying, "If God shall be with me and keep me in the way and shall give me bread to eat and raiment to put [on], and I shall return prosperously to my father's house, the Lord shall be my God. And this stone which I have set up for a title shall be called the House of God and of all things that Thou shall give to me I will offer tithes to Thee."

After Moses had received the commandments of Sinai, "Where he entered into the dark cloud from which the people stood afar off the Lord said to him, 'You shall make an altar of earth unto Me, and shall offer upon it your holocausts, and peace offerings, in every place where the memory of My name shall be, and I will come to thee and bless thee.'"

Later than this the people of God had the ark of the covenant which contained not only the two tables of the law, the rod of Aaron and some of the manna which fed the children of Israel in the desert, but also was sanctified by the peculiar presence of God which is called in scripture sometimes the Glory of the Lord, sometimes the Majesty of the Lord; and once the Lord Himself. This consecrated to God the place, not which it rested, [sic] and when it was deposited in the Temple by King Solomon, with the sound of trumpets and voices, and cymbals and organs, and divers kinds of musical instruments, the house of God was filled with a cloud. Nor could the priests stand and minister by reason of the cloud for the glory of the Lord had filled the House of God.

And when Solomon had made an end of the prayer in which he called upon God to dwell forever in the new temple fire came down from heaven and consumed the holocausts and the victims, the Almighty thus showing by miracle that the prayer had been heard.

Almighty God therefore is Himself the author of the custom of dedicating places, and buildings, to His worship, and He hallows those places through the Church's benediction, so that in them all levity is profanity, and all sin sacrilege. The "high places" of the ancient idolaters, the groves and temples of Diana and Jupiter, among the Greeks and Romans, the tangled thickets in the cover of which the Druids immolated their human victims, the caverns in which the sanguinary Northmen offered libations of human blood in human skulls to Woden, were but one particular in which the worship of demons mimicked the worship of God--and their unhallowed rites were but perversions of the rites ordained by the Most High. God does sanctify particular places and dwells there in a special manner.

It is true that He is everywhere substantially present, and therefore equally in the valley and the high place, in the field and in the grove in the dwelling and in the temple. But He is in the dwelling and the grove to attend to what we do, but in the consecrated temple for us to attend to Him. He is in our chambers as a master overlooking our actions, but as a guest letting us order things to suit ourselves. But He is at home in the Church, and there what is done must be done by His direction.

It is not the agreement of men to treat a place as consecrated that consecrates it. It is not because people adopt the custom of walking silently among the graves of the dead, or uncovering in churches, that these are holy places--but it is because God makes these places His own, walks in them as He walked in Paradise in the cool of the day, fills them with his majesty as He did of old the temple. He dwelleth not in temples made with hands, that is, He is not confined within their walls, as were the statues of brass and marble which the heathen set up and worshipped. Yet He makes the temples which the prayers of the Church have consecrated His own house, and the gate of heaven, and sets up in them the throne of His grace in condescension to our weakness that prevents us from concentrating our thoughts on anything to which fancy has not

given a form and assigned a place. Elsewhere God is moving the universe on through its preordained cycles. In the consecrated temple He remains to attend in mercy to the wants of men. Outside He is guiding stars in their ceaseless motion, giving vigor to the causes that make the seasons come and go, dividing the rain and the sunshine among the valleys and hills, measuring the violence of the earthquake, directing the course of the storm-cloud, appointing boundaries to the habitations and limits to the lives of men. But here He is to show that His delight is to be with the children of men. He is here to receive our adoration and to give us what we need. Here He humbles Himself to hear the complaints of our sorrow and console us, to listen to the story of our guilt and pity us, to mark the rising tear of contrition, and heal the bruised and bleeding heart. How terrible then is His place! It is God's own house and the gate of heaven.

This holiness has every place consecrated to God, whether graveyard, church or cloister, in virtue of the rite by which it is dedicated. It belongs to Him. Hence the canon law declares that no such place can ever be used for secular purposes without sacrilege--that if desecrated by bloodshed or unnatural crimes it must be solemnly reconsecrated by a rite prescribed. Hence in countries like ours where God is not recognized as a holder of property, the title to them is vested in the bishop, His representative, in order to secure them forever from profanation.

But a Christian [i.e. Catholic] temple has another glory far exceeding that arising from its solemn consecration to God, namely that arising from the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar. The prophet promised that the glory of the new temple should exceed the glory of the old because the heavens would be moved, and He that reigneth would come into His temple and fill it with majesty.

Of old to the heart of King David the dwelling of the ark seemed lovely beyond expression and his soul fainted with desire for the courts of the Lord. But if the ark with its tables, its manna, and its peculiar glory of the Lord could excite in him such vehement desire, what measure ought this to be to the tenderness with which we ought to look upon every altar in which the Blessed Sacrament is held?

The real presence consecrates our churches into places holy beyond conception. Though we could gather every pearl from the ocean's depths and dig up every gem from the bowels of the earth to adorn a tabernacle it would yet be poor in comparison with the worth of Him who dwells therein. When the priest stands with his assistant ministers in gorgeous vestments with his back to the people and his face to the altar, to those who kneel in the body of the church the spectacle seems grand and imposing. But to the ten thousand times ten thousand angels who are ranged on the other side of this vestibule of heaven in the train of Him to whom the everlasting gates are lifted up, it can not but seem meagre and pitiable. No beauty and fragrance of bright flowers, no glare of candles and torches, no display of marble and silks and diamonds and gold can be too great to honor the Author and giver of them all.

132 - The Decoration of Our Churches

Blessed are those who love the beauty of God's house, who have contributed to erect or adorn it, who have wrought vestments for the ministers, or added to the beauty of the altar, who have put statues and paintings about it or laid flowers on the chancel railing at its feet.

But the richest reverence that could be paid to a church is the reverent behavior of those who assemble in it. Those who leave all worldly thoughts behind them as they cross the threshold of God's house, who forget how they themselves appear and do not see how others look, who scarcely see which priest says Mass or which one preaches, who are wholly taken up with the audience granted them by the Great King, these are the ones who bring a richer offering to the feet of Jesus Christ than mines of gold or clouds of incense.

132.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, Sept. 11, 1875 (4)

The Decoration of Our Churches.

The ornamentation of our churches ought to be an object dear to the heart of every Catholic. Penetrated with the spirit of faith, he feels that it is for Almighty God he is doing it. It is to show love for our blessed Lord, who dwells within them, that our costly cathedrals are erected; it is for that same object that all the aesthetic skill of the artist is taxed in decorating them. Feeling as we do, that all we have is from God, we cannot do too much for Him in return. Gratitude and love are two of the noblest sentiments of man's heart. If he really feels that gratitude and love towards God, he will not stop to think of what he has done already, but will consider all that he can do as paltry in comparison with the graces and gifts which he has received. To honor Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, who deigns to come and dwell in our midst, is the motive which prompts the true Catholic, even to make sacrifices--and our cathedrals and churches stand as lasting monuments of his love and adoration of the Creator of the universe.

133.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, February 7, 1878 (1)

[A Gift is a Gift.]

Editor Catholic Columbian:

A Mr. Schilling over here (oughtn't he to call himself Penny?) says he helped to build our church and is therefore entitled to a free seat in it during his life-time. He is not going to pay anybody for the use and shelter of his own house. What is to be said to him? ADVICE SEEKER.

134 - Temples for the Well-Dressed

Ans. Perhaps you could be patiently explaining, drive it into this man's head that the Church is God's House; that whoever helped to build it, from the priest down to the contributor of half a dime, made a free gift of it to God and has no right in it on that account. If Mr. Schilling in the generosity of his heart were to present a wooden leg to a crippled soldier, would he insist on going over once in a while and walking on it? If he is not going to do his share to support his pastor and the school, a seat in the Church will do him very little good, and he will find out too late that his love of money got him a seat in a very uncomfortable locality.

134.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, July 3, 1875 (3)

[Temples for the Well-Dressed.]

In the old times, when Catholic faith held Christendom in one bond, there were no seats at all in the churches; and now in the cathedrals of Europe, the wide floors are open and clear, for rich and poor, beggar and nobleman, to enter and kneel together. In other days, Christian people were not ashamed to kneel on the church floor, bearing the fatigue in contrition for their sins. Then religion was a principle; but now it is a fashion. In these days we do not go to church like the publican, with a feeling of penitence and humility; but we sail into our pews in full feather, and kneel and sit on cushions, as if we were paying a compliment to Almighty God.

We trust the Protestant idea of a temple for the well-dressed will never be allowed to creep into any of our Catholic churches.

135.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, Dec. 4, 1875 (2)

[Beauty for the Church, Care for the Poor.]

"Costly places of worship," says a non-Catholic cotemporary, "widen the breach between religion and the people." And the saying is true of man-made religion and of churches that are merely "meeting houses." If the splendor of the building and the costliness of its decorations are the style of the builders, and not of Him to whose honor the building ought to be devoted, the envy that follows wealth will, of course, follow it into the sanctuary, where the splendor of the sanctuary only sets fort the wealth of the congregation. But in the Catholic Church it is a different matter. The building is not erected for man, but for God. Its decorations and furniture are not intended for the style and comfort of the worshippers, but to inspire devotion to Him who annihilated Himself for love of us. Preciousness is not there to dazzle the eye, but to abash itself in the presence of the divine majesty; and when there, must be so disposed as to lead all

the thoughts of beholders to the tabernacle. For this alone the priest puts on costly vestments, over his homely cassock, at Mass and Benediction, that he may be forgotten and Jesus Christ remembered.

In times gone by, when the mighty fabrics, whose ruins astound the unsympathizing tourist, were reared in God's honor, were the poor forgotten? Were they neglected when St. Gregory set the table for them and waited on it, when St. John of God cleaned their ulcers, when St. Anselm fought their battles before the king? Were they spiteful against religion when they could get lodging for the asking at the gate of any monastery? Alas, the days of majestic churches passed away at the same time with those that were succeeded by the poor house and the name and crime of pauperism.

It was not the poor that looked upon rich shrines and costly altars with eyes of envy and greed. It was the rich, longing to be richer. The Elector of Brandenburg, King Henry the Eighth, and the rabble that followed them, greedy for spoils, they were the ones who pined to see wealth lying idle in the sacristies, glittering unused upon the altar or hanging incomeless about the shrines while the poor were suffering. So they seized the treasures, drove out the charity, and under their management, poverty became a crime.

Trust no man's love for the poor, who does not love Jesus Christ. Believe no man's charity who grudges to the Blessed Sacrament anything that love and gratitude and hope may prompt men to offer for its honor.

136.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, February 13, 1875 (1)

[Fine Churches and the Poor]

Some foolish person from Philadelphia had been writing to one of our Ohio contemporaries against building fine churches. Can any church be too fine to be the dwelling place of the Blessed Sacrament? We have seen this view before much better set forth by anti-Catholic writers, expending their spleen on the grand churches of the old country and of Mexico. And a very stupid view it is. "Such vast sums," they say, "put in stone walls and marble altars, when it might have been given to the poor!" Why, has not the money gone to the poor already? The quarryman, the drayman, the stone-cutter, the laborers of all kinds, have they not received all that was contributed? Would it have been better, more humane and more Christian to have left the stone in the quarry, the brick in the field, the work untouched? Why, the money collected would have remained to be spent frivolously or hoarded uselessly. What advantage is there to society in this?

137.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, Oct. 9, 1875 (1)

[Spending Money on the House of God.]

A little noisy editor in this State frequently gets off the track when he undertakes to meddle with affairs entirely without his province and much beyond his power of intellect to treat in a becoming manner. When the editor of a newspaper must sacrifice common sense, common decency and even Christian feeling in order "to keep on the right side" of a certain class of people who patronize him in his boyish efforts at journalism, we cannot but rank him among those whose self-love and worldly gain force them into places where angels would not be permitted to tread. Even to pander to the tastes of a few friends, such individuals would call Almighty God Himself to an account for some of His acts. It could have been no other spirit than this that prompted an individual, who attempts to run a paper in this state, to indite such a shameless attack on the clergy of New York Diocese, in the matter of the new and elegant altar that will soon be placed in the handsome cathedral. He complains of the heavy burden of defraying its cost, \$250,000, which will fall upon the poor laboring people of New York. Is it not too bad, reader, that this unfledged writer should thus appeal to the poor man to help him support his paper? This is his aim. He wants to curry favor with the poor class in order to get their dimes himself to pay his printers. Stop and think awhile, friend, before you commence to run your paper in the ground. Remember that the diocese of New York is presided over by a man who is generally considered your superior, in every department. We will not say whether he makes a better Cardinal in America than you would, but would advise you, nevertheless, to keep quiet, that you may not display your ignorance to the world. Remember how little you ever gave towards the greater honor and glory of God, and then you will not call Solomon a fool for building such a magnificent temple to the Most High. We will not say that this costly altar is necessary, any more than we should say that it is necessary to have any decorations in a church or chapel, but it stands an enduring testimonial of the piety of a faithful Catholic people, most pleasing and acceptable to the infinite majesty of God, whose only beloved Son is daily immolated thereon. If our friend will take the pains to read the twelfth chapter of St. John, he will find that he is acting very much as did he who betrayed our Saviour, for there it is written that "Mary, therefore, took a pound of ointment or right spikenard, of great value, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, he that was about to betray Him, said: Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief and having the purse, carried what was therein. But Jesus said: Let her alone, that she may keep it against the day of

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my burial. For the poor you have always with you, but me you have not always." We advise this editor, who fears in spending too much money on the house of God, to ponder upon this passage, and be careful in future how he calls the Catholics of New York a gaping throng who come to scoff and not to pray.