

## A PROGRESSIVE PARISH

**O**N the 22d of October, 1916, the Most Reverend Archbishop of San Francisco, in the presence of some two thousand of the faithful, laid the corner-stone of the new Dominican Sisters' school at Vallejo, California. This event can hardly fail to awaken in the heart of every true follower of Saint Dominic, a feeling of pride for what his Order is doing for the spiritual and intellectual uplift of Catholic youth. To preach and teach; this was the vocation of Saint Dominic, and this is the vocation of every religious who wears the white habit of the Dominican Order. Whether in the great cathedral of some large city or in the class-room of a little parish school, these religious are carrying out the command of their holy Founder to teach and preach God's word. Each new institution of learning that arises under the direction of this illustrious Order is but another link in the golden chain of successes and achievements, begun by its holy Founder, and continued down through seven centuries to our own times. Thus each success, small and insignificant as it may appear to the world at large, contributes to the glory of the Order and its work for the salvation of souls. Praise, therefore, is due in no small measure, to those whose zeal and self-sacrifice have so successfully brought about the erection of this new academy. To fully appreciate what this event means to the Catholics of Vallejo, we must look back over the years that have passed, to the very foundation of Saint Vincent Ferrer's parish.

The Catholic Church at Vallejo traces its foundation to the days when California was still the great hunting ground for the thousands of sturdy pioneers who braved the perils of the

Sierras and the fever of the Isthmus, in the hope of finding on the shores of the Pacific those shining precious nuggets—gold. Among the men of forty-nine there were many Catholics who, though unable to practice their religion, never forgot their duties to God. The inborn desire to live up to the religion divinely given them, caused many to seek places where the ministrations of a priest were available. The Catholics of Vallejo, however, were deprived of this consolation for many years. It was not until the foundation of a Dominican convent at Benicia, that they were able to obtain the services of a priest. From its foundation in 1855, until the appointment of a permanent pastor in 1865, Vallejo was attended from the convent at Benicia. Each Friday saw the friars setting out on horseback to minister to the spiritual wants of the few Catholics gathered there. With the establishment of the government navy yard on Mare Island just across from the city, a new era might be said to have opened for Vallejo.

In order to meet the demand of the multitude that flocked to the city on the opening of the navy yard, it was deemed necessary to erect a new church and place it in charge of a resident pastor. To Father Louis Daniel, O. P., belongs the honor of being its first pastor. His zeal for the house of God, and his true devotion to the flock placed under his charge, endeared him to his parishioners from the very beginning. With their earnest whole-hearted cooperation, he soon made Saint Vincent Ferrer's one of the model parishes of the archdiocese. It was due to his foresight that the church was moved from the site now occupied by the city hall, to a more convenient lo-

cality. A small frame building served as a chapel for a time, but the rapidly increasing congregation made it evident that a larger building would soon be necessary. In 1870 the present magnificent church was erected. It is an imposing structure of Gothic architecture. The square tower rising from the massive brick walls may be seen from any part of the city. Observing it from afar off, one is struck by its lofty position overlooking the whole city and offering to the eye a fitting symbol of the Church's mission, to rule over the hearts of all men.

On the completion of the new church the old wooden building was converted into a school. This was immediately placed in charge of the Dominican Sisters. Such was the humble beginning of what has come to be one of the finest schools under the care of the Sisters. In 1893 when the need of larger quarters became imperative a brick building capable of accommodating four hundred pupils was erected. Father Daniels had lived to see the fulfilment of his fondest hope—a flourishing parish, a temple of worship in keeping with the dignity of the Royal Presence which dwells therein, and a school which would instill into the hearts of the young the sound principles of Catholic doctrine. Such successes rarely fall to the lot of any one man. In 1896, after long service in the vineyard of the Lord, he passed to his eternal reward mourned by all who had known him as a father and as a friend. So great was his personal influence that even to this day it endures in the hearts of those whom he served so zealously during his lifetime.

On the death of Father Daniels, the parish was turned over to a brother Dominican, Father Manñez Doogan, O. P. Under his wise and prudent administration the parish continued to flourish as it had under his predecessor and brought forth the fruit of his ar-

dent apostolic zeal. When old age and illness had combined to make the performance of his pastoral duties almost impossible Father Doogan resigned his charge and went to live with his brethren in the quiet and solitude of the convent at Benicia. But a short time elapsed before Almighty God deigned to summon His faithful servant from the labors and toils of this world.

The parish was administered successively by several Dominican Fathers until 1914, when Father Damien O'Brien, O. P., was appointed permanent pastor. It was under his direction that the plans for the new school began to take form. Realizing the inadequacy of the present building to meet the demands of the rapidly increasing population, wishing to offer every advantage in the way of higher education, he proposed the erection of a new school. No expense has been spared to make it perfect in every way. When completed, it will be the finest building in the city, and certainly one of the best equipped parochial schools in the State of California. It has been estimated that its cost will be in the neighborhood of \$50,000. It will be a fire-proof structure of re-inforced concrete measuring 165 feet by 64 feet, three stories high. Many new features have been introduced which were hitherto passed over in the erection of schools. One of these features which is of especial interest, is the gymnasium which will be on the ground floor. This gymnasium although contributing in no way to the intellectual advancement of the children, will, however, be a powerful aid not only in training them, but also in keeping them from seeking such recreation in institutions where their faith would be in danger. Another feature worthy of note is the arrangement of the roof in such a way that it can be utilized as a recreation place. The ground floor, consisting of a large assembly hall, club rooms and

parlors, is to be devoted entirely to parish purposes. The second floor will contain five class rooms and a room for domestic science purposes. On the third floor there will be seven class rooms perfect in every way. Five large windows open into each one so as to furnish an abundance of light and air. Under the supervision of Father Dominic Donnelly, O. P., one of the assistant pastors, the work is steadily progressing. Father Donnelly, whose ability as an architect is well known in the Dominican parishes of the West, has been concerned with the erection of other buildings, most notable of which was the new priory of St. Dominic's parish in San Francisco.

The sixty-two years existence of St. Vincent Ferrer's as a parish, has been a period of unparalleled progress. In its beginning it possessed a small wooden church, whose proudest boast was whitewashed walls. Today its stately church and school may be accounted the pride of the city of Vallejo. Divine Providence which in the past fostered and cared for this parish in a remarkable manner will not fail it in the future. The work that is being carried on by the humble servants of the Lord, is God's work, and God, the Giver of all good things, is always mindful of His own.

—William McClory, O. P.

### DOMINICANS AND THE "MOTU PROPRIO"

**W**HEN, in 1903, Pius X issued his decree, "Motu Proprio," regarding church music, the Catholic musical world was more or less taken aback. True, staunch defenders of its principles arose. But the great number of dissenters only proved the crying need of just such legislation. These people either did not or would not see conditions as they were—and ought to be. The Holy Father, on the contrary, realized that the churches were being desecrated by displays of profane music. Choirs seemed to have lost sight of the fact that they were participants in a religious service. In short, Truth was being assailed in a very flagrant though subtle way. Hence it behooved the Guardian of Truth to protect It and demand Its rights.

This is why the "Motu Proprio" is a question of interest for Dominicans—Truth's "watch-dogs." The Dominicans, who have always been foremost in the war on error, both as defenders

of Truth as well as exponents of a special liturgical chant, ought especially to be energetic in bringing about the fulfilment of the "Motu Proprio."

When Pius X issued this decree, he wrote: "We will with the fulness of our Apostolic Authority that the force of law be given and we do by our present handwriting impose its scrupulous observance on all." The General of Truth's forces has given the command. Is it not a duty for his army to follow his instructions? God having placed him in the watch-tower, he can see when error is at hand and just how deadly are her blows. We, below on the battle line sworn to Truth's defence, have merely to obey orders.

In this case, Truth is being assailed by inartistic and inappropriate music in churches. In fact it is inartistic largely because it is inappropriate, since art is but one of Truth's manifold expressions. Art to be art must be true. And art of any kind must be perfect accord with its surroundings. For