



THE HOLY YEAR

On Christmas Eve Pope Pius XI will proceed in solemn state to St. Peter's and knock upon the "holy door," saying: "Open to me the gates of justice." Three times the Pope will knock with a gold hammer, the gift of the episcopate throughout the world. After the third blow the walled door will open for the first time in twenty-five years and the Jubilee Year will be formally opened.

This opening ceremony is one of the most distinctive features of the Jubilee Year. It is a feature which has been observed for centuries and which is of marked significance, for every one anxious to gain the Jubilee indulgence passes through the "holy door" which is walled up again as soon as the Holy Year is ended.

The present practice of a Holy Year celebration every twenty-fifth year dates back to the fifteenth century. Before that time the length of the period between celebrations varied from a hundred, to fifty, to thirty-three years at different times in the history of the Church. The last previous celebration was held in 1900. There were no Jubilees in 1875 or in 1850 due to the disturbed political conditions of those times. Even the celebration of 1900 was shorn of much of its splendor by the confinement of the Pope within the limits of the Vatican.

The forthcoming celebration, however, gives promise of being observed with all the solemnity possible. It will be marked with many pilgrimages to Rome and by special impressive ceremonies. The Pope has expressed the wish that the

Holy Year be replete with religious observance and special devotion. He has urged, in the Bull announcing the Jubilee, that even those who are not Catholics take some part in it.

Among the announcements already made of the events planned for the Jubilee Year is one to the effect that His Holiness will celebrate Mass in St. Peter's Basilica on Pentecost Sunday. Beatifications and canonizations will be divided into two groups during the Holy Year, and the ceremonials will be held in May and October. The date for the formal opening of the great Missionary Exhibition, which will be one of the attractions for visitors to Rome during the year, has been tentatively set at December 21.

Two souvenir medals will be struck off to commemorate, respectively, the Holy Year and the Missionary Exhibition. The Holy Year medal will bear a representation of His Holiness proclaiming the Holy Year on one side, with the dome of St. Peter on the other. The second medal will portray the ceremony of the opening of the holy door on one side, with a picture of the missionary buildings in the Cortile della Pigna on the other.

THE HOLY NAME CONVENTION

Probably no religious event in the history of our country has received such general and favorable notice from the secular press as the recent Holy Name Convention. It deserves all the praise that has been bestowed on it, for it was an unique event in the religious life of our people.

Washington, the city accustomed to large crowds, huge pageants and monster demonstrations, was taxed to its hospitable limits to care for the almost interminable stream of Holy Name delegates, members and guests that filled the hotels and restaurants during the days of the convention. The magnificent Washington railroad station, especially designed to accommodate large crowds of people, was crowded to its capacity during the rush hours of the convention. Railroad officials have said that the station has never been put to such a severe test as that which confronted it on Sunday evening after the close of the convention when huge crowds of returning Holy Name men flocked within its enclosure.

After five hours of marching on that wet Sunday afternoon that long line of Christian soldiers and thousands of reverent spectators gathered in close formation at the foot of Washington monument to participate in the closing religious and patriotic ceremonies. An audience was assembled for the address of President Coolidge that in all probability was the largest gathering that ever listened to the speech of any president.

But while numbers are impressive this is not the outstanding feature of the history-making convention. The purpose which those 100,000 men had in mind, the motive which induced them to journey to Washington at much expense and sacrifice, is the most significant and momentous circumstance of the gathering. They came with one object: through a public profession of faith to pay tribute and reverence to the Holy Name of God. That this motive was ever foremost in the minds of that magnificent Christian host was evident to any observer who witnessed their orderly behaviour, their reverent enthusiasm, their tremendous earnestness and their religious fervor.

To every one who in any way assisted in making the convention possible, either by their individual work in preparing for it, or by their presence on Pennsylvania Avenue that Sunday afternoon, it must be a source of great satisfaction to know that their efforts have been so fruitful, so productive of results both for the greater honor and glory of God and for the welfare of our country.

It is a pleasant remembrance to know that not only the attention of the whole country was riveted upon the convention, but that our Holy Father was likewise intensely interested in it. His appointment of Cardinal O'Connell as his Papal Legate indicates in a measure his interest, for it was the first time that any American convention enjoyed the distinction of being presided over by one with such Papal powers.

The Pope's letter to the convention in an especial way evidenced his interest in the gathering, for in it he bestowed the privilege of a plenary indulgence and extended his blessing "to all those who have given their aid to this important work of the convention, especially to Father Joseph Ripple, O. P., we gladly give our blessing, and as a proof of our particular benevolence to you, our beloved son, to other cardinals and bishops and to the clergy, likewise to the whole people of America, we lovingly impart in the Lord our apostolic benediction."

These words and this blessing of our Holy Father will long be remembered and cherished by the Holy Name men of our country, as likewise will be his message of congratulation upon the success of the convention. In a cablegram forwarded to the National Director of the Society, Cardinal Gasparri, Secretary of State, expressed the Pope's great pleasure in these words: "The August Pontiff rejoices that the traditional piety of American men towards the Holy Name, which is the health and life of the people, was solemnly affirmed in the national

demonstration and worthily eulogized by the President of the United States. He wishes ever increasing prosperity to the great Republic of America."

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

The custom of Christmas giving is as old as Christmas itself; and yet despite the passage of years the genuine spirit of our giving has undergone no change. It has not altered one jot beneath the shifting ideals of past ages, nor changed one particle under the weight of modern persuasion. The true spirit still remains what it always has been: the giving out of the sheer joy of giving.

Our world is a very beautiful place at Christmas time, for it shows at every turn something of this true spirit of giving. Our stores with their fairyland display windows, the attractive counters piled high with waiting gifts, the eager Christmas shoppers with happy faces, the heavy laden mailman, the holly-decked express wagons, the Christmas cards and greetings, the home-comings,—all this shows a people turned from contemplation of self to consideration of others.

There is nothing more inspiring than the spirit of Christmas-giving when thus observed in the forgetting of self and the remembering of others; when we ignore what we are to enjoy out of life and plan what we are going to contribute to the lives of others. Gifts bestowed in this spirit live longer than a day for they are the very embodiment of Christ's gift to us. He came into the world to give everything and to ask little in return.

The worth of a gift is not in its intrinsic value, but in the sentiment which accompanies it. The best gifts are not those whose price is greatest, but those whose contribution to happiness is of truest measure. The unselfish Christmas gifts are the only valuable gifts; the ones that reflect and radiate the spirit of Him

who was our first great Christmas gift.

Every Christmas gift that is offered with this spirit is an offering on the altar of the Christ-Child. It is gifts of this character that make our own Christmas blessed and happy. It was this spirit of giving which brought peace and joy to the shepherds on that first Christmas in Bethlehem when they came to the Infant Jesus with their simple offerings of personal service; the same peace that filled the Wise Men with their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Each gave according to his means, realizing that no exchange could be adequate to that gift which the angels announced and the star foretold—the gift of God Himself to man.

The only gifts worth while are those measured by the spirit of Him in whose Name the tokens are given. "It is not to give but to share; the gift without the giver is bare." No one is so poor that he cannot give something from his heart this Christmas season. A word, a smile, a passing on of the Christmas spirit may be a rich gift to make some heart lighter, some life happier. Such gifts are priceless and are within the power of all. They bring joy alike to the giver and to the receiver. Such gifts make the day truly a "Merry Christmas."

THE DOCTOR

When I was much younger than I am now, I had occasion to spend a few minutes in the waiting room of a doctor. I do not remember what errand brought me there, but I am sure that in those days I would have shown much indignation if any one had suggested that I came in need of the physician's professional services. At any rate, it must have been some idle purpose, for I had enough peace of mind and freedom from meditation on my own infirmities to gaze about the room and locate a small picture with a few lines of

doggerel verse. The gist of the verse was that in time of sickness men call upon God and the doctor; but when they are well they only thank God and forget the doctor.

That little bit of plaintive cynicism suggested a beautiful phase of the life of a physician. To God men first look in their afflictions, but also to a mere man, to a physician. The physician ranges high above the common infirmities of humanity like some lofty mountain, and as men walk down the mystic valley of desolation they look aloft to this high summit to find the sun still shining somewhere and to understand that in some future time it will brighten their valley, too. Where despair might have overtaken them, they have found confidence and hope in the trust they place in this man so like and so unlike themselves. Left to themselves they might have been miserable, disconsolate and disastrously melancholy; but because of the life of this one man they feel that their own life still has some fragments, great or small, which they can enjoy and enjoy vastly.

No public man whom we meet so seldom as we do our doctor seems to be so absolutely our own. Friends can not share the same lover, and it hardly seems possible for friends to share the same doctor, unless they observe a tacit agreement not to recognize the fact. For when our doctor comes to see any one of us, there is no other in this dense world whom he must care for; we are his one patient and on us alone must he concentrate his attention and devotion. No one demands this, no one asks for this—it is taken for granted. The doctor's blithe entry and cheery greeting show convincingly enough that the whole day has been held in suspense until he could reach our sick

bed. And now that he is there, no foreign thought disturbs him, no demands of the future hasten him; his life is complete in waiting on us. The medicine that he says he has brought us is for us and us alone, and no other will ever share it or use the like again; for no other has a like claim on our doctor and no other has just the same sort of sickness we have.

And as he looks on us with that knowing and unruffled steadiness of gaze, we realize more and more that he sees the end of our sickness, and that there remains but a little time before he will stretch his hand into the future and bring down to us the health we have been waiting for so patiently, or so impatiently. We get a confidence from his sharp and efficient movements, his ready manner of opening his professional case or even from his familiar way of unscrewing the cap of the thermometer case.

Each day the doctor comes to us while we lie helpless beneath some sickness; weeks may pass and others of our household may fall victims to the contagion and infection; but day by day the doctor unremittently appears like some Aeneas within a divinely charmed cloud, which the virus of disease does not dare profane. We look upon him as some being set apart and absolved from Nature's laws which make all merely human beings subject to sickness and death; and when by chance he does become sick, or after a long life does die, every one of us feels the discord, the impropriety of illness or death making company with the person of a physician. It is too bold by half, almost absurd for microbes to conquer a doctor; and we feel some secret, half-ashamed surmise of foul play somewhere. Doctors should be immortal.