

Then haste, sweet Justice, vindicate God's own
 Branding this doom on Britain's grasping breast:
 Your vestige on all coasts by blood is known
 And for brave Erin now avenged, caressed
 By exiles homeward marching from each zone
 Make Liberty's plumes her e'erenduring crest."

Father Rochford passed the last years of his life at St. Vincent Ferrer's Priory, New York, and despite severe suffering maintained a heroic spirit of cheerfulness to the end. The soul of this gallant knight of Our Lady found rest at last on October 5, 1896, and its earthly habitat was laid to rest with his brethren in Calvary. Death, which had often been the subject of his meditations and poems, came to him as a friend leading him to his God. Father Rochford had long since, when in the flower of manhood, answered for himself the question: "O! Whither A-Going Am I?"

"But far, far beyond the worm-eaten grave,
 Where death feeds corruption alone,
 My soul not hampered by chains of the slave,
 Will fly to God's flowery zone,
 There to rest by the river of stars above,
 Whose waves, rippling, march through the sky
 To the infinite ocean of mercy and love—
 O! thither a-going am I."

—Bro. Chrysostom Kearns, O. P.

"BLACKFRIARS"—A MONTHLY REVIEW

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The enthusiastic praise with which discerning readers are welcoming "Blackfriars" is not at all extravagant, for the first two numbers of this new Review are nothing if not excellent. Its aim, as expressed in the very first issue, is to find and tell the truth at any cost, never to compromise in order to live, but, if necessary, to die rather than fail in its one great purpose, Truth, —a sublime as well as an unique ideal in these days of corrupt and disreputable journalism.

The content matter of "Blackfriars" is made up of masterly articles on historical, political, economic, artistic and literary topics that are alive and timely. The potent names present in the table of contents are a strong temptation to read the whole thing through at a sitting. And when we have finished, the thought that cries for utterance is that the editors of "Blackfriars" are in a very fair way towards achieving their exalted ideal.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

The doctrine of the Communion of Saints has come down to us from the earliest times of the Church, although we do not find very many primitive evidences of it in writing for the simple reason that every one then believed it, and hence there was no occasion for writing in defence of it. It became a direct point of attack only at the time of the so-called Reformation. Even then Luther himself did not intend primarily to discard the Communion of Saints, but was led to do so in order to save his teaching on justification. He found the two irreconcilable, and therefore he ruthlessly cast the Communion of Saints aside—like so many other Catholic doctrines which he had been reluctant at first to part with. Today, Lutheran sects explain this article of the Creed as the union of Christians with Jesus Christ in one true faith, or as a congregation of true believers. The conflicting influences of Luther and Calvin, along with the lingering vestiges of the old Catholic teaching in the Anglican sects, have contributed greatly toward a return to the Catholic interpretation of this consoling belief among the more prominent Anglicans. The substitution of the Protestant motto, "Christ for all and each one for himself," in place of the old axiom of Hugh of St. Victor, "All for each and each for all," was a logical consequence of the Reformation doctrine on justification. The Communion of Saints and justification go hand in hand, and all the efforts that are being made to restore the old cherished doctrine of the Communion of Saints will be futile unless Protestants re-accept also the true doctrine on justification.

In the Communion of Saints we do not believe something in the realm of pure mystery, a doctrine that cannot be explained or a truth that is beyond the scope of our human intelligence. The beauty of this doctrine is apparent to all, even to those who cannot or do not believe it. All the members of the Church are embraced in this communion, not only the faithful on earth but also the saints in heaven and the suffering souls in purgatory. It is a great organic unity of the one mystical body of Christ, the Church, under its head, Jesus Christ, in a constant interchange of supernatural offices. The participants of this communion are called saints by the fact of their participation in the fruits of the Redemption and by reason of their destination to the glorious vision of God.

The Communion of Saints is an explanation of the article in the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." The one spirit by which the Church is governed establishes a common bond of spiritual blessings, which again communicates the fruits of all the sacraments to each of the faithful, and these sacraments are as so many connecting links binding and uniting all to Jesus Christ. This communion is directly accomplished by the Eucharistic banquet of the Mass. It is, moreover, continued every moment of the day by prayer, for when we praise God, we praise Him with the angels and archangels and with the saints of the city of God. When we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, or partake of the Sacred Species, we solemnly eat and drink of the powers of the world to come: "The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." (John, vi, 52.)

There is also another phase of this Communion of Saints in the Church; every pious and holy action done by one member belongs to and becomes profitable to all the members through charity, "which seeketh not her own." St. Ambrose, explaining these words of the Psalmist, "I am a partaker of all them that fear thee," observes: "As we say that a member is a partaker of the entire body, so are we partakers with all that fear God." In the "Our Father" we ask God to give *us* this day *our* daily bread and forgive *us* as *we* forgive others. This communication of merits is illustrated by a comparison borrowed from the members of the human body. Although there are very many members in the human organism, taken together they constitute but one body, in which each member performs its own, and only its own, function. All the members of the body do not enjoy equal dignity or discharge functions alike useful or honorable; nor does one propose to itself its own exclusive advantage, but that of the entire body. Moreover, they are so well organized and knit together that if one suffers the others naturally sympathize with it; if, on the contrary, one enjoys health the pleasure is common to all. The Church is composed of many different members, of different nations, of Jews and Gentiles, of rich and poor, yet all, initiated by faith, constitute but one body with Christ, who is their head. Each member of the Church has a special office to perform; to some it is given to preach, to others to teach; to some the office of government, to others to be subject and to obey; but whatever the duty of each one in particular, it is all for the good of the entire body.

The Communion of Saints is not confined to the realm of this material world of ours but claims members in heaven, those souls who have faithfully and loyally spent their lives in steadfastly treading the narrow path of virtue that leads to God. It embraces the suffering souls in purgatory, who are being purged and cleansed before their entry into heaven. Christ is king, not only on earth but also in heaven and purgatory. The souls in purgatory are His loyal subjects just as much as the faithful on earth. Why should death shut souls out of participation in the benefits which they shared on earth and of which they are now in special need? Very few have attained perfect holiness at death, and none but the perfectly holy are admitted to the vision of God. Consequently, our faith teaches us that Christ cannot be deaf to the prayers of His subjects in heaven and on earth for His suffering members in purgatory.

Does the world bow down in admiration before this beautiful and awe-inspiring doctrine of the Catholic Church? On the contrary, the world makes itself the standard of perfection and the centre of all good; and when the souls of Christians pass from it into their everlasting home of peace and happiness, it fancies that this is their loss, not its own; it pities the departed by speaking of them half-compassionately and half-contemptuously, as if the loss of its society were something greatly to be mourned. It pities them also because it thinks that the souls of the dead are ignorant of the fortunes of their friends or of the Church, that they are powerless over their own plans or rather careless about them as being insensible, but shadows and ghosts and not substances; as if we who live were the only real agents affecting the course of events and they were attached to us only as a church-yard to a church. Such is its opinion of the departed. We are in light and they in darkness, we in power and influence, they in weakness; yet with the views opened to us in the Gospel, with the knowledge that the One Spirit of Christ ever abides and that those who are made one with Him are irrevocably knit into Him and are never parted from Him, shall we dare to think lightly of these indefectible members of Christ and vessels of future glory? Shall we presume to compare that great assemblage of the elect perfected and at rest, the time of probation past—shall we weigh in the balance that glorious Church invisible, so populous in souls, so free from sin,—with ourselves, poor strugglers with the flesh and the devil, who have but the earnest

not the crown of victory, whose names are not so written in the heavens but that they may be blotted out again!

Who, then, is to profit by the graces and blessings which God bestows through the Communion of Saints? Those who lead a Christian life in charity. The just and beloved of God pre-eminently enjoy these graces, while those who are estranged from the grace of God, although not deprived of all advantages so as to cease to be members of this body, are, as it were, dead members lacking the vivifying principle which is communicated to the just and pious Christian. These latter, however, being still members of this communion are assisted in recovering lost grace by those who are animated by the Spirit of God. Even those outside of the Church who elicit acts of perfect charity and contrition under the impulse of actual grace are numbered among the children of God. Should such a one die in that state, he will surely attain heaven. Such acts could not possibly be elicited by one who would wilfully remain outside the true fold, for the love of God carries with it the practical desire to fulfill His commandments. All men outside the visible communion are not guilty of wilful disobedience to God's commandments. Many are kept from the Church through ignorance. Such may be the case of those who have been brought up in heresy. Those who are saved without the sacraments of the Church are not outside the pale of the Church; the will to fulfill all God's commandments is and must be present in them, and such a wish implicitly includes the desire for incorporation with the visible Church; for this, though they may know it not, has been commanded by God. In the order of Divine Providence salvation is given to man in the Church; membership in the Church Triumphant is given through membership in the Church Militant. Sanctifying grace, the title to salvation, is peculiarly the grace of those who are united to Christ; it is the birthright of the children of God. The primary purpose of those actual graces which God bestows outside the Church is to draw the recipients of them within the fold, and they are thus joined to the Church in spiritual communion, though not in visible and external union; they belong to the soul of the Church, though not to its body. The possibility of salvation apart from visible communion with the Church cannot blind us to the loss suffered by those who are thus situated. They are cut off from the sacraments God has given as the support of the soul. In the ordinary channels of grace, which are ever open to

the faithful Catholic, they cannot participate, and they are cut off from countless other means of sanctification which the visible Church offers.

These are inspiring thoughts for the solitary, the dejected, the harassed, the defamed or the despised Christian, and they belong to him if by prayer and good deeds he unites in that communion which he professes. He joins the Church of God not merely who speaks about it, or who defends it, or who contemplates it, but who loves it. The test of our being joined to Christ is love; the test of love toward Christ and His Church is loving those whom we actually see. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" We should feel tenderly towards all whom Christ has made His own by baptism; let us sympathize with them, and be warm-hearted and gentle-tempered towards them, and endeavor to aid them in their growth in faith and holiness. "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." For "God is love," and if we love one another, "God dwelleth in us and His love is perfected in us."

We who have been especially favored by God in being chosen to be members of this wonderful Communion of Saints enjoy a special sort of happiness here below and may truly say with the Psalmist: "How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts; My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord. Blessed are they who dwell in thy house, O Lord." (Psalms, lxi, 2, 5.)

—Bro. Clement Nowlen, O. P.