



**His Eminence Thomas Cardinal Boggiani, O. P., Cardinal
Protector of the Holy Name Society**

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The Holy Name Apostolate

By BRO. ALBERT DREXELIUS, O. P.



OUR nation's capitol is preparing to receive this month the largest gathering of Catholic men ever convened in this country. Delegates from more than six thousand branches of the Holy Name Society throughout the nation will meet in Washington to commemorate the six hundred and fiftieth anniversary of their society's foundation. The object of this first national congress of Holy Name men is twofold. First, it is to recapitulate six hundred and fifty years of the Holy Name Society's living and acting faith in the Divinity of Jesus Christ; and secondly it brings to the center of our national civic life a pledge of the genuineness of the citizenship of the society's vast and still growing membership. This unique demonstration marking six hundred and fifty years of zealous and unwearying apostolate for the spiritual interests of men bears forth the strength of organized influence and leadership. In our day, when storm after storm of religious prejudice, of doctrinal and moral discussion emphasize the need of this organized influence and leadership, the thinking observer is prompted to inquire into the reasons for such manifest strength.

The Holy Name devotion was the pious proposal of Pope Gregory X, at the general Council of Lyons in September, 1274. The Holy Father builded better than he knew, when he laid the foundations of what later became the Holy Name Society. It was his intention merely to strike a blow at the spirit of religious indifference of his time; but the devotion went beyond this aim and became an instrument to repel the like tendency in the future, and the foundation of a mighty lay apostolate for succeeding ages. On the 20th of September, 1274, Pope Gregory X intrusted to the Dominican Order, the commission of propagating

and directing the devotion of the Holy Name of Jesus. In behalf of the Order, its Master General, John of Vercelli received the commission as a priceless privilege and blessing from Almighty God. The Fathers threw all their zeal into making it one of the subjects of their apostolic preaching. They erected shrines, conducted devotions and established societies. The first of these societies approaching ours of today was erected by a Dominican preacher of the devotion, Father Didacus of Victorio. He drew up constitutions substantially the same as we have them today, with the aim of stamping out profanation, blasphemy and vain irreverence to the Holy Name of Jesus. His proposed society was received with joy by Pope Pius IV, April 13, 1564, who established it as a confraternity and bestowed upon it the riches of privilege and indulgence.

The Holy Name Society is an active apostolate of devotion to the Divinity of Jesus and to His loving presence in the Most Holy Eucharist. Besides its active protests against all irreverence to Him, it strives to effect a living exemplification of His life and teachings in the lives of men. With these principles it took its rise in the thirteenth century, six centuries and a half ago. These same principles even now spell the secret of its triumphs. Through more than six centuries, these sterling truths and the divine objective of the Holy Name Society have attracted great and small, prince and peasant, merchant and laboring man to its ranks. Rulers have recognized its salutary force for the peace and benediction of their realms. Sovereign Pontiffs, from its very beginning, have given this apostolate unhesitating commendation and blessing. Many of them have added to its treasury of spiritual benefits and have encouraged its expansion.

Wherever the Society has raised its banner, it has aroused enthusiasm for the divine honor of Jesus Christ. We may follow its standard into nearly every country of the world, and find that under it much is achieved for the Faith of Jesus Christ. With its principles founded in Christ Himself, its work in any land has never become obsolete, and the danger of bowing for a moment in submission to worldly ideas or to the tyranny of modern purposes has ever been avoided. Religious triumph and the embellishments of spiritual successes have kept apace with the spread of its apostolate; but especially here in the United

States, with its extraordinary leadership and the guidance of divine favor, it has advanced to new dignity and success.

The organization of the Holy Name Society in America was commenced, we may believe, in the first days of our republic; but by whom, we can only surmise. By some zealous



Very Rev. Michael J. Ripple, O. P., P. G.

National Director of the Holy Name Society, in charge of the arrangements for the convention to be held in Washington, September 18-21, in commemoration of the 650th anniversary of the Holy Name Society.

missionary, perhaps, who did not consider his work a matter for earthly record. But early in the development of our country, there were some Holy Name Societies established with the authority from the Dominican Master General, and others that functioned without canonical affiliation and its privileges.

In 1900, the V. Rev. Chas. H. McKenna, O. P., P. G., was appointed National Director of the Society. The preaching of

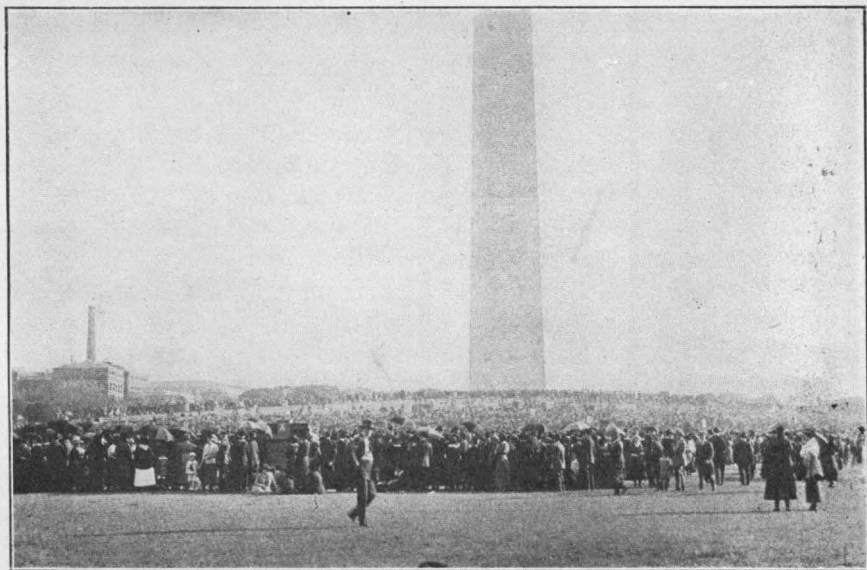
this devotion had been for years a work dearly cherished by Father McKenna, and into the task of organization he put his best efforts. The religious needs of America brought from this apostle of the Holy Name in this country the personal and pleading appeal to the Holy Father to strip the confraternity of several papal restrictions and to allow it the freest opportunity to grow. His success was singular. The law that allowed only one society to a city or town, and, where there was a Dominican church, only in that church, was suspended. With this privilege in hand, Father McKenna again went through the entire country, preaching as he so marvelously preached, the Divinity of Christ and the love and reverence of the Holy Name of Jesus. Wherever he went, he established branches, and where he could not go himself, he delegated others to erect the confraternity. Thus was soon moulded the organization of the Holy Name Society, now the proud boast of the Catholic Faith in America.

There is something particularly notable in America's reception of the Holy Name apostolate. It came as an ideal in perfect harmony with the spirit of America. America's creed is freedom and fellowship among men. The Holy Name Society splendidly jibes with this spirit of tolerance in seeking the free and open manifestation of faith in Jesus Christ, and the unrestricted participation in this faith by all men. America is a nation still in its youth, with traditions still in the making, with confirmation of its democratic experiment still forthcoming. Development is America's password. The Holy Name Society reechoes this same note of development in the spiritual life of busy men engrossed in the idea of progress. The true progress, the fundamental concern of the Holy Name Society, is the supernatural perfection of man. In this development it supported the idea of democracy, by uniting rich and poor, trade and profession in the principles of supernatural duty and with the single object of a perfect, mutual alliance with Christ. It proposes the means that Christ gave, and, in its democratic way leads its members every month in public, banded and equal reception of the Body and Blood of Jesus. Without the least pretense at control or direction of social, political or economic policies, the Holy Name Society went about its work and found the secret of its success in public, organized and practical profession of belief in Jesus Christ as God.

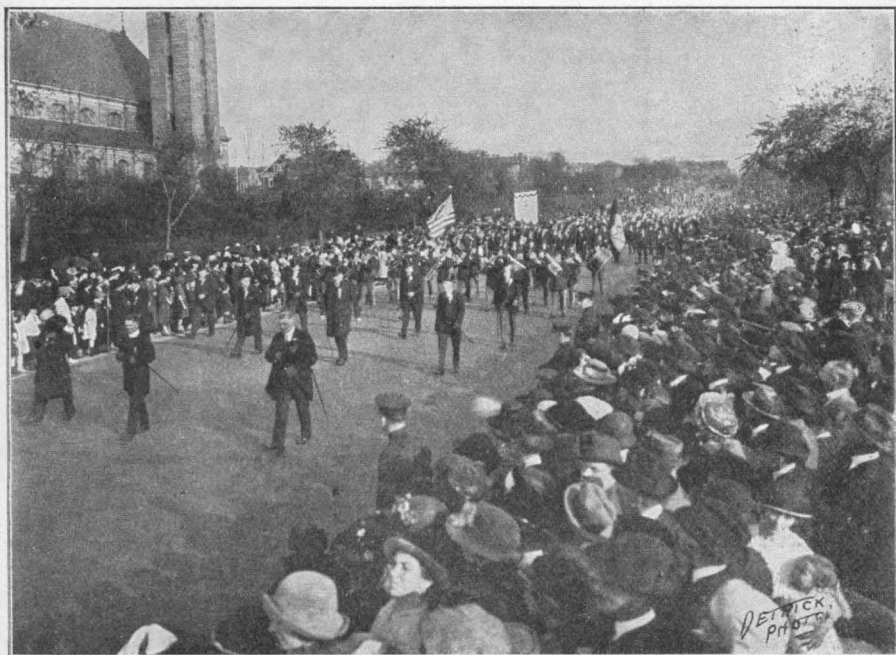
The Holy Name Society is by no means a device for stimulating some local devotion or for fanning the fires of parish activity. Its primary object is purely spiritual. Its greatest concern is with the soul of man; to draw it nearer to its Maker by the process of inculcating respect, devotion, imitation and, then, union of love. For this reason, its good offices and the glory it has emblazoned about the Name of Jesus will never be realized until the secrets of the book of life are revealed, and when alone, a comparison can be made with its apostolic activity.

With a supernatural principle and a supernatural object, its influence in the United States has been spiritual and the aim of the authorities has been to keep it so. Nevertheless, we tread a world largely materialistic, testing even the spiritual by some material standard, and we are wont to judge the good of anything by its external influence. Even to the casual or half-serious observer, the influence for good, both religious and civil, that flows from the apostolate of the Holy Name among Catholic men is manifest. In America it cannot be questioned. To the fairminded, Catholicity need present only the merits of its sound and tried doctrine, but to stubborn bigotry, marked by the absence of fairness and reason, it must offer potent examples of its charity, broadness and practical spirituality in action. The Holy Name Society has succeeded in this public mission for the Church, as well as it did in the cultivation of the inner piety in the spiritual life of the Catholic layman. Its insistence on the reverence and daily exemplification of the Divine Master's teaching makes the sincere Holy Name man an observant, cooperating citizen, whose example and leadership cannot help but cast their glow on his fellowman.

Freedom of worship in our country has brought Catholic citizens to the center of the civic stage. Together with his fellow citizens, the Catholic is in duty called upon for law-observance and civic interest. Along with its fundamental principles, loyalty to Christ's Divinity, His Church and His Sacraments, the Holy Name Society stresses the object and the dignity which the teaching of Jesus gives to civil authority. The influence of the Holy Name Society on Catholic citizenship is more than we can estimate. A good Holy Name man is synonymous



Closing Services at Washington Monument



A Section of Holy Name Parade

with a good citizen. He honors God and all that leads to God; and so his principles of action must likewise involve public welfare, its good and proper administration by ordinance and progressive interest. The man who adheres steadfastly to the pledge of the Holy Name is a reserve power to good citizenship in his country. He challenges those forces that would corrupt citizenship, he breaks the slavery of human respect by the demonstration of his humble position towards his Creator. The Holy Name man exercises the truest liberty in choosing the guidance of his Creator in the authority of his state. We could hardly look for a better influence on citizenship than this. The reflection of such fidelity and obedience on society in general reveals itself in the fact that as the Holy Name Society has grown, civic recognition of its potential service to the nation has increased.

The influence of the Holy Name Society reaches into Catholic citizenship and society in general, but as we have said before, the initial place of its operation is in the soul of man and its basic purpose is the devotion to the Divinity of Jesus Christ. The Holy Name Society achieves its purpose here in the center of man's spiritual life in two ways, whereby is represented, man's internal and external religion. First, it concerns itself with the personal sanctification of its members; and, secondly, it brings forth from the man who places himself beneath its standard an open profession of the Faith that is in him. This forms the scheme of the creature's relations to his Creator, the incorporation of the truths and duties of his Faith in the life of the soul on the one hand, and their outward expression on the other.

It is the essential note of the Holy Name Society to be ever an aid to each member in his striving after supernatural perfection, which is the development of Faith and Charity in his soul. To do this it employs the most direct and effective means: the August Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood. It requires a monthly communication with the God of the Eucharist and counsels a life of more frequent intercourse with Jesus in the Tabernacle. Nor does it stop at this, for its ideal is the growth from such a practise to deeper and more fervent degrees of Faith and Charity. The Society builds upon the mystery of the Incarnate God and the truths and duties ordaining us to Him. In

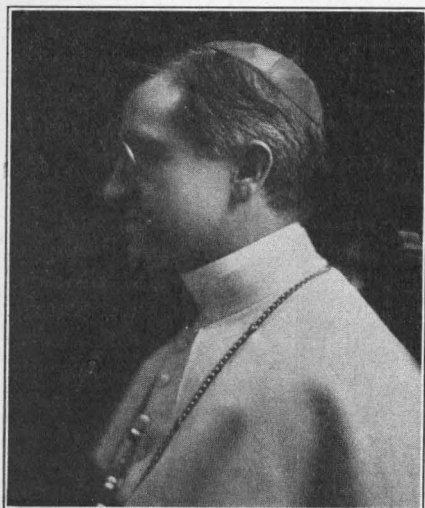
this insistence upon truths whose beginning and end are in God Himself, it makes of man's soul a rising edifice after the model of Jesus, the God-man.

We understand from this that the Holy Name Society's first concern is to help makè men Christ-like, by teaching the ways of perfect manhood from the lessons and examples of the Perfect Man. Drawing the soul nearer to its Creator is the formation of a truly spiritual man, whose manly piety demonstrates that manhood lies in strength of soul, not of body. In other words, it is the strength of the superior part of man and without that strength there is no manhood. Such strength reveals itself in self-control, virtue, peace and happiness after the teachings of Jesus Christ.

But from its very foundations, the Holy Name Society has added to its hidden activity in the soul of the individual member, a peculiar external apostolate. It has ever held that its mission is only half achieved if the fruits of the devotion are kept hidden within the soul. They must take form in word and deed and thereby draw all men to follow them. The Society acts upon the teaching of our Faith, that man receives from the creative hand of God a material body as well as a spiritual soul, and consequently he must render acknowledgment of his devotion and reason for his Faith with his body as well as with his soul. Man's nature of a united soul and body is such that he naturally gives vent to the forces that are acting within him. Our own experience teaches us this truth: we may partly hold in check some of the treasures of our soul, but to crush those forces that truly move it, we cannot. Thus the Holy Name man unconsciously and spontaneously acts out in his daily life the intense reverence and spiritual conviction which the Society has planted in him. And not only does one man or do a few scattered individuals live as testimonials of the Divinity of Jesus Christ and devotion to His Name, but thousands upon thousands consistently give public expression to their belief in and their respect for Jesus Christ and His Holy Name.

Unmarked with vain show and revelry, the public apostolate of the Holy Name is carried on with solemnity, dignity and order befitting its sublime object. It takes its form in the public and united fulfillment of its religious obligations and devotional practises. For its creed is not to allow the error of pride to

put shame before the practise of our religion. If the Holy Name Society does nothing else, it is putting to flight the idea that manhood and achievement cannot harmonize with religion, that manhood thrives on coarseness. Another feature of its apostolate is its example for clean comportment, its campaign for the reverence of holy things, for clean speech and for honest dealing. Last of all, are the popular rallies which are held from



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First National Director of the
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time to time to keep its members alive with its aims, and to give a manifestation of the power of its conviction. When we see or read of from five to forty thousand men marching beneath the banner of the Holy Name, we know the warrant of it all must be a strength of conviction which is bound up in Divine Truth, the conviction of a true and living Faith. These marchers are not uniformed nor armed, but like the crowds that watch from the curbing, they are simple citizens, known to all, men of peace. Their only armor is truth and the courage to confess it; their

only warfare is the battle against those who spread error and profane God's Holy Name.

These weapons with which the Holy Name Society operates are not manifestations of intimidating numbers, nor the accumulations of political strength. They are a gentleman's reproof to the offences against the Holiness of God, and a Christian's effort for the solid establishment of the truth of Jesus Christ. The banding together of a million and a half men, drawn from every state of life, is a challenge to all weakness of Faith and blind error. The antagonism of evil forces that from time to time looms up against Catholicism in this country must

be met with arguments that are based on the beauty and service of Catholic life. Today Catholicity has living examples of the power of its Faith and the strength of its truth in the Catholic loyalty of a million and a half Holy Name men. In these men the glories of God's Holy Name are put into practise and tested before antagonistic and scoffing observation. When men rise to deny the Divinity of this same Jesus, to take from Him the prerogatives of His Incarnate mission, the Holy Name Society attests by principle and practise, an orthodoxy begun in Jesus Himself and continued in its solid devotion to His own Body and Blood. While scoffers deride and man-made creeds cast aside the fundaments of revealed religion, the Holy Name Society, by its name alone, proclaims its unflinching stand against such religious anarchy that spells national disintegration.

The national convention of the Holy Name Society in Washington is the commemoration of six hundred and fifty years of accomplishments for the cause of Christ in the eternal sanctification of men. It proclaims to America the triumph and stability of its work among Catholic laymen. These delegates from six thousand or more branches of the Society meet with the spirit of true apostles of the Divinity of Jesus Christ. Coming from every corner of this vast republic, we will watch them return with a renewed energy for the spread of salutary truth among their fellowmen. A pilgrimage of this kind to the nation's capitol is significant of the Holy Name Society's adaptability to the American spirit, its welcomed ministration to the present and rising needs of the American Catholic layman. Certainly this is the representation of an open enthusiasm for manly spirituality and spiritual manliness, that proves the Society man's champion. Six hundred and fifty years of success in the Holy Name apostolate and its singular triumph in America are the necessary consequence of an aim and activity so elevated: its reverence, honor and following of Jesus Christ. It is the influence of Jesus Christ Himself, all virtue in visible form, and hence operative of good alone.