

Bishop Hafey Lauds People of Carolina Jubilee Parish

Salisbury Congregation Established Nearly Century—"Christian Reid" Donated Site for Present Church—Benedictines and Sisters of Mercy Chief Laborers There.

(Sermon of Most Rev. William Hafey, D. D., Bishop of Raleigh, in observance recently of the Golden Jubilee of Sacred Heart Church. Salisbury N. C.. Rev William Ragnat, O. S. B., pastor):

In the history of the church, which was built upon a Rock, milestones have been erected in each of the 20 centuries of her existence and in every nation of this habitable globe. While the life which was breathed into her by her Divine Founder might be likened to the tiny riverlet which has never ceased to flow and which has never ceased to increase in volume as it spread itself into the thousands of streams which serve to quicken the spiritual life of all peoples, and while, therefore, the Catholic Church can celebrate only one birthday, the Feast of Pentecost, yet the advance of the stream of Catholic Faith into hitherto untouched sections again and again offers opportunities to point to its energizing powers and to celebrate its rebirth in the hearts of men.

Compared with the vast continents where human beings are born, live and die, the City of Salisbury and the County of Rowan in the State of North Carolina are but tiny portions of this revolving globe. Yet in the Providence of God they were not forgotten. and in the long story of the Catholic Church a most fascinating and instructive paragraph describes the planting of the seeds of Faith in the City of Salisbury and the adjacent territory. Today we are assembled to reread that paragraph, to note the certain, if slow growth of the seed, watered with tears and cultivated with sacrifice; to point with joy to that day when our Divine Savior took up His permanent abode in this picturesque and historical section of North Carolina, and finally rededicate ourselves to the spreading of Christ's kingdom for the salvation of souls and the purification of the soul of society.

As in the beginning, Christ used human beings as His ambassadors to men, so in every age since have men and women been the instruments of God in extending His reign over the minds and hearts of the souls purchased with no less a price than the blood of the God-man. Historical records of Catholicity in Salisbury carry us back a century when we come upon the names of Dr. Ferrard and Major McNamara, the first two individuals to stand forth prominently as devoted sons of the Church of the Ages.

But not until 1838 do we meet with a Catholic family reliving in Salisbury the life of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

FRENCH FAMILY PIONEER CATHOLICS OF SALISBURY

The same nation which sent her sons to aid America in the birth of a new nation also sent one of her most devoted citizens to become the Joseph of the first Catholic family in Salisbury. Francis Richard Roueche ever will be revered as the father of Catholicity in this city and county.

The home of Mr. Roueche became Salisbury's Bethlehem and Salisbury's Nazareth and Salisbury's Calvary. Within the 'Old Mansion House' on the site of the present Wallace building, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered; there Christ became present and the Sacrifice of the Cross was renewed. Within that home "the Bread which cometh down from heaven" became the food of those favored souls who were by their Catholic lives to preach the unchanging truths of Christianity. That this family can look back and find no record of apostasy, that out of this same sturdy family, God has seen fit to call the first priest whom Salisbury will soon give to the ranks of Christ's priesthood in the Old North State, are but evidences of the sterling character and unalloyed Faith of that lovable Frenchman who became a beloved American in this fair city of the South.

The next great personality to become an instrument of God in advancing the campaign for Christ in this sector of the vineyard was Mrs. Francis C. Tieman. who, under the pen name of Christian Reid, has shed lustre not only on Salisbury but on the entire Commonwealth and whose influence has reached into innumerable homes in every state of the Union. A convert to the Faith in her early years, her example of Christianity enables us to point to her as an exemplar of that Catholic Action which today is emphasized as holding the secret of a decadent world's regeneration. By the use of the pen, she spread far and wide the Catholic principles of the Christian Home, while she exposed the lurking cancers of irreligion, divorce, and moral turpitude eating out the vitals of society in America. By her unselfish personal attention to the children of the parish, she was able to beget an intellectual understanding of Catholic dogma and morals, and this laid the foundation of a sturdy parish. She also gave of her limited material resources and the acre of ground up on which today stands this church and rectory was her contribution to God and souls.

SACRED HEART CHURCH ERECTED IN 1882

Thus through the unselfish service of these members of the laity, the efforts of the missionary priests finally brought into being in 1882 this edifice dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Poor, indeed, does this little structure appear beside the edifices of brick and stone which dot our land, but it is rich in its testimony to the Faith of our fathers who out of their slender resources gave generously that they and their children might have a Tabernacle of the Most High God and a house of worship. The erection of the church was followed ten years later by the installation of a resident pastor, the Rev. Joseph Mueller, of the Benedictine Order, and from that day the few but earnest souls have been enriched by the presence and ministrations of their spiritual Father and Shepherd.

While touching only briefly on the life-story of the Church in Salisbury, we must not omit that the building of the church and the coming of the zealous Benedictine Fathers as resident pastors was in due time followed by the erection of that institution without which no parish can be considered complete. I refer to the courageous and far-seeing wisdom of the Rev. Leo Kunz, O. S. B., who welcomed to Salisbury the Sisters of Mercy to establish a school in which the youth would be trained in character, as well as in mind. This establishment of a school which would

never be hampered in its curriculum by the divorce of religion from secular education has proved its worth and today it carries on unhesitatingly in its service to God and country. Indeed, in this, our day when the millions of our citizens are clamoring for some bulwark against devastating wave of crime and lawlessness which threatens the very existence of our nation, this school of the Sacred Heart in Salisbury in unison with eight thousand similar schools spread from the Atlantic to the Pacific, is presenting to America the only hope of our nation's safety and permanence. This school in its own sphere of influence and activity is a constant reminder to all our , citizens that "unless the Lord build the city, they labor in vain that build it"; it is a constant reminder to all Americans to attune their ears once more to the words of the Father of our Country, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. And let us, with caution, indulge in the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion"

"CHRISTIAN REID DONATED SITE OF THE CHURCH

Since that far-off day when Mrs. Tieman, or Christian Reid, dispossessed herself of an acre of God's green earth that it might become God's Acre and the dwelling place of God in this city of Salisbury, this earth has revolved on its axis fifty times three hundred and sixty-five. Between the first and latest sunset of that long era, this city of Salisbury, this State of North Carolina, and this Union of States in the great Republic of the West have witnessed a growth in population, in wealth and power, undreamed of by the hardy pioneers who in the sweat of their brow were laying enduring foundations. Changes in the mode of living, inventions to facilitate travel, means of communication which have all, but annihilated space and time, have completely transformed what we might term the mechanics of civilization. The advance has been so rapid, I might say almost so devastating, that we have become amazed, bewildered. In the minds of many, the mechanics of our life have become synonymous with civilization, with life itself. During the cycle of half a century millions of babes have opened their eyes on the wondrous beauty of God's creation, have grown into giants of strength in their wrestling with the elements of nature, and then have returned their tired bodies to the spacious bosom of Mother Earth.

Let us imagine the re-incarnated souls of Dr. Ferrard, Major McNamara, Francis Roueche, the first missionary priest Father Cronin and the others who followed him, the O'Connell Brothers, Father Moore, Father Mark Gross, returning today to join us in prayer and jubilation on this commemorative day—what would be their exclamation in viewing the changed circumstances of life? Indeed they would recognize the same sun coursing through the heavens and the same stars nightly lighted for the guidance of man. They would feel at home by the banks of the Yadkin, among the pine forests, or roaming the green carpeted fields. As with God, Who knows no change or shadow of alteration, so in the great evidences of God's handiwork the note of permanency is enduring. All else would have the earmarks of change, all except the Altar of sacrifice and the message of salvation delivered unto men by the duly ordained priests of God. Again that which is of Divine institution, the Catholic Church, like the sun in the heavens, sending forth its rays of light and heat, has not lost in giving, nor has change altered its appearance. Within this Church today, our forefathers would feel at home; would know the

Master in the "Breaking of Bread," and would recognize the Master's voice in the enunciated dogmas of faith and morals. Yes, this is a fact of tremendous significance upon which we do well to ponder today—the unchanging creed of the Catholic Church.

"ANTIQUATED" CHURCH SURVIVES "MODERN WORLDS"

That the Catholic Church is the one Church which has not altered in one iota the creed delivered to it by her Founder needs no lengthy proof. Her enemies bear witness to this fact, be they of the twentieth, sixteenth, fourth, or the first century. All have chosen the unchangeable creed of Catholicity as their most evident target. It is the one institution which the "modern" world, whether it be the "modern" world of Arius, or the "modern" world of Luther, of the "modern" world of Shaw or Wells, loves to speak of as outdate antiquated, behind the times. That each "modern" world has not only become antiquated but obliterated, while the supposedly antiquated is amazingly youthful in its regeneration and exuberance of vitality is the paradox which escapes the "modern mind" conspicuous for its absence of thought.

But be that as it may, the change is true—The Creed of Catholicity in the twentieth century is identical with the Creed of Catholicity in the days when Peter was Pope and the Apostles were the Bishops of the Church. The explanation of this unchanging creed is simple. The Catholic Church is fulfilling the mission entrusted to her by Jesus Christ: Going, therefore, teach ye all nations . . . teaching them all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world." Jesus Christ formulated the creed—"The faith once delivered to the saints." That this creed is today the context of the Church's message to mankind is evidence that the mandate has been observed. This same Church has never forgotten the words of St. Paul: "If anyone preach to you a gospel, beside that, which you have received, let him be anathema."

What briefly was the creed, the dogmatic religion taught by Jesus Christ, and taught in turn by the apostles, and afterwards by their successors? Jesus taught his Messiahship, His Divine Sonship, His oneness with the Father: He taught His right to fulfill the law of Moses. His power to forgive sins; He taught the establishment of His Church, the giving of His flesh to eat, of His blood to drink; He taught the immortality of each human soul, and He taught the duration into eternity of rewards and penalties; He likewise taught the actuality of sin and its malice, as well as the salvation from sin through the Cross of Calvary; He went with His creed into the family circle and taught that what God had joined together in marriage could not be dissolved by man. He went out into the arena of public life, into the domain of civil government and proclaimed that obedience to rightfully constituted authority is obedience to God, the source of all authority.

Today from ten thousand pulpits the ambassadors of Christ, be they in Europe, Asia or America, are preaching these very doctrines fearlessly and without minimization. The Catholic Church as the custodian of eternal truth cannot compromise with the votaries of change, alone eternal. Institutions builded on the shifting sands of human fallible opinion come and go. but the

Church of the Divine Architect build upon a Rock is itself the pillar and ground of truth in all times, in all climes, in all nations.

Regardless, therefore, of the taunts of human thinkers and humanly established religious bodies, the Catholic Church ceases not in her mission to save souls and to civilize society by proclaiming her unchangeableness and the unchangeableness of the deposit of faith entrusted to her by God, Himself. But the world of opinion does change and in the midst of the chaos in which nations and peoples find themselves after their efforts to build a new social structure minus God and God's Church, it is interesting to find an American of outstanding ability, Newton D. Baker, taking issue with the false prophets of change and paying this tribute to the Catholic Church:

NEWTON BAKER AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

"If one looks at the life about him nowadays, so many things are changing that one seems to feel as though change was life itself. Sometimes it seems to me that the stream is washing away the bottom of the river, and leaving nothing to contain it, and I suspect that if we are to maintain our civilization and improve our institutions, the first thing we need is some great things which do not change. Some great landmarks which, as we are swept hither and yon upon the breast of a surging current, we can wave to and greet and say, 'Thank God, that stands safe.'

"It is because the Church in varying degrees (and yours most of all) dates itself back nearly two thousand years, and in its major essentials remains steadfast, unchanged and unchanging, that we can see that the real vital things about our life are its morality, its ethics, and if we be troubled about our modern times we can take assurance from the fact that those ancient principles of right and wrong, those tried disciplines of conscience, those unselfishness and devotion and loyalty which have filled the calendar of the Church with an increasing number of saints, testify to us that there is in that ancient doctrine salvation for all our new distresses, and that if we can but acquire by a survey of the intellect and conscience of man since the Christian era, the serenity and dignity and assurance which its lessons really teach, then all will be well with the world."

To the Church in America as in every part of the world the challenge has now come to rescue a civilization which has all but wrecked itself by the sin of pride and disobedience to the Divine Lawgiver. A rash world which has fed itself upon a thousand isms finds itself in the turbulent waters on which it essayed to walk without God's help now humiliated and crying out "Lord, save us, we perish!" To the unchanging Church does this appeal come, and as the Vicar of Christ gives his orders from his watchtower, it is for every loyal Catholic to bend himself to the great work ahead. In paying tribute today to the memory of the great souls who brought into being this parish of the Sacred Heart in Salisbury, let us also here resolve to enkindle our souls with the same flame which lit up their lives with zeal and devotion; thanking God for the gift of Faith which enables us to be counted members of Christ's Mystical Body on earth: admiring their sacrifices in behalf of their children, let us also by practical obedience to the laws of God and God's Church enrich the spiritual life of the community in which we live to the end that we may

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not only save our souls but do our part in saving the souls of civilization for Christ and Christianity.