



Adsum

Adsum is published by the seminarians of **Mater Dei Seminary** for the enjoyment of our families, friends, and benefactors.

LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

With the feast of the Birth of Our Divine Savior and the feast of His Circumcision, both celebrated so close to Sunday, our priests have had an extraordinary task to provide Holy Mass throughout the Midwest this Christmas season. Although we have had to put in many hours of travel, what a joy it has been to bring to the faithful, during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the same Jesus whom the Blessed Virgin Mary held in her immaculate arms on that first Christmas night, over 2000 years ago. What a great privilege our priests have to celebrate His Divine Birth with three Masses each Christmas!

How many people in the world are unaware that the word *Christmas* is a compound word for Christ and the Mass? How appropriately we celebrate the Birth of Christ



Fr. Letourneau offers his first Solemn High Mass on Gaudete Sunday



Frater Francis Crawford, CMRI chants the epistle as subdeacon

with Jesus' Divine presence with us in the Holy Eucharist! How significant is His birth in the town of Bethlehem, for Bethlehem in Hebrew means the "house of bread." And Jesus has told us so clearly, "I am the living Bread that came down from Heaven, and if anyone eat of this Bread he shall live forever. And the Bread that I will give is My Flesh for the life of the world." (St. John, ch. 6) How special it is for us to receive Him in Holy Communion and to visit Him in the Blessed Sacrament during this Christmas season and kneel in adoration as did the shepherds and the Magi!

Many of the faithful in the Midwest wish for snow every year in order to have a white Christmas. Meteorologists this past December had the disappointing news that there would be no white Christmas, for they forecasted rain. Nevertheless, one of the children in our parish very confidently had prayed for ten inches of snow. On Thursday, December 24, very early in the morning, the snow was falling deep and thick! Fortunately, this did not inhibit our travel in Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, and Wisconsin; however, Fr. Gronenthal did get stuck in Oklahoma with an ice storm.

We hope and pray all of our friends and benefactors have a holy and grace-filled new year of 2016! Please save the date of this coming May 11 for priestly ordination, the diaconate, minor orders and tonsure for our seminarians at Mater Dei Seminary.

With our prayers and blessing,
Most Rev. Mark A. Pivarunas, CMRI

Letter of the Coeur d'Alene Indians to Pope Pius IX

Of all the tribes, the Coeur D'Alene Indians were distinguished for their devotion to the Church. Learning in 1871 of the Pope's situation and that the Italian Government had seized Rome, the Coeur d'Alenes immediately addressed to Pius IX the assurance of their filial attachment:

"Most merciful Father, it is not temerity, but love which moves us to write to you. We are, it is true, the most humble of all the Indian tribes, while you are the greatest among living men. But you were the first to cast a look of pity upon us. Yes, Father, thirty winters

ago we were a savage people, miserable in both body and soul until you sent us the great Black Robe, Father De Smet, to make us children of God through baptism. We were blind, and you sent him to open our eyes. Many of us were still in darkness when Father De Smet left us; then you sent us another

Black Robe, our good Father Nicholas Point, who came and lived with us and awakened us, directing us in the path that leads to heaven. And how many other Fathers have you not given us to teach us and our children the law of God and make us better Christians.

"Hence, Father, hearing that you are in affliction, we wish to thank you for your charity, and express to you our great love and deep sorrow in learning that some of your wicked children continue to cause you suffering after having robbed you of your house.

"Although we are only poor Indians, ignorant of the amenities of life, we regard such conduct as a

crime. Only fifty years ago, we ourselves were still savages, but we would not have dared to act thus had we known that the dignity and power of the Pope come from Christ. For this reason we have prayed and will continue to pray with all the ardor poor Indians are capable of, for thee, Father, and for the entire Church. Moreover, having come from our various camps to assemble in the mission church, we have for nine days said many prayers and performed acts of virtue which we offer to the Heart of Jesus for thee. This morning we counted our acts and devotions and found they num-

bered 120,527. Judging this insufficient, we offered our own hearts for our excellent Father, the Pope, in the assured belief that this offering will not be rejected.

"We have a number of soldiers, not trained for war, but to keep order in our camp. If these men can be of service to the Pope, we

offer them joyfully, and they will esteem themselves fortunate in being able to spill their blood and give their lives for our good Father Pius IX.

"And now may we tell you our fears and misgivings? The sellers of whiskey are daily drawing nearer. We fear to betray our Savior in taking back the hearts we have given Him. Help us, and strengthen us by thy prayers! But our dear children are still more to be pitied, because they are more exposed; not so much our sons, who have real fathers in the Black Robes, but our daughters, who as yet have no kind mothers to look after them. We have often asked for Black Robes of



their sex, but our voices are too weak to be heard, and we are too poor to do more than ask. Who will send us good mothers to instruct our daughters and strengthen them against the enemy that draws near, if not thou, who hast always had compassion on us, even when we were pagans?

“These are the sentiments of our hearts, but as we poor Indians attach little value to expressions of feeling unless they are accompanied by material gifts, we have collected dollars and small coins, that we may give you, so to speak, a piece of our own flesh, as a measure of our sincerity. Notwithstanding our poverty, to our great surprise we have been able to collect \$110.

“And now, Father, once again allow us to open our hearts. Oh, how happy we would be, despite our unworthiness, could we receive a word from your lips, a word that will help us and our wives and children to find an entry into the Heart of Jesus!

“Vincent, of the Stellam family.

“Andrew Seltis, of the family of Emote.”

If we reflect that the Coeur d’Alenes formerly passed for the most ferocious of the mountain tribes, we shall see in their naïve and generous piety an extraordinary fruit of grace. The Father General presented the letter to Pius IX, who in reading it forgot for the moment the misery of his captivity. If old Europe repudiated the Faith, the Church now beheld new sons

coming to her from the other side of the ocean, their fresh souls ignorant of falsehood and opposed to vice and error with a fidelity worthy of the early Christians.

The Holy Father’s reply reads:



“Beloved Sons, salutation and apostolic benediction!

“The devoted sentiments which you, in the simplicity of your hearts express, have caused us great joy. Your sorrow over the attacks made against the Church, as well as your devotion and filial love for the Holy See, is striking proof of the faith and charity that fill your hearts, attaching you firmly to the center of unity. For this reason we feel certain that your prayers and supplications which rise unceasingly to God will be efficacious for us and for the Church, and we accept with deep feelings of gratitude the offering of your generous charity. The hand

of God protects those who seek Him sincerely, and we believe that your good words will obtain the grace to resist the dangers of corruption that threaten you, and the spiritual help which you desire for your daughters. We beg God to complete in you the work of grace, and to fill you with His choicest blessings. As a presage of this and a token of our gratitude and paternal favor, we give you from our heart the apostolic benediction.

“Given at Rome, near St. Peter’s, July 31, 1871, in the twenty-sixth year of our Pontificate.

“Pius IX, Pope.”

Father Connell Answers Moral Questions

by Very Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., S.T.D., LL.D., L.H.D.

FUNERAL SERVICES FOR AN UNBAPTIZED INFANT

Question: May a priest conduct burial services for an unbaptized infant?

Answer: Canon 1239, #1, states that those who have departed this life without Baptism are not to be granted ecclesiastical burial. Now, ecclesiastical burial consists in the bringing of the body to the church, the funeral services, and its burial in a place lawfully designated for the sepulture of the faithful. Evidently, a priest would not be allowed to conduct over the body of an unbaptized infant any form of service that might be regarded as a portion of the Church's burial rites. On the other hand, it would not *per se* (of its very nature) be forbidden to say a private prayer over the body of an unbaptized child, as long as it does not contain or imply anything out of harmony with orthodox doctrine—for example, the statement that the child has been admitted to eternal life even though it did not receive Baptism. A prayer for the spiritual welfare and strength of the bereaved parents would be appropriate on such an occasion. However, since it is unusual for a priest to conduct any form of service over the body of an unbaptized person, and is likely to cause surprise, if not scandal, a priest should not perform this type of function until he has proposed the matter to his bishop and received his approval.

THE CONFESSIONS OF SINS COMMITTED BEFORE BAPTISM

Question: If an adult who has never been baptized is about to receive this sacrament, is any confession of previous sins required?

Answer: Sins committed before Baptism are not subject to the church's jurisdictional power of the keys, exercised in the Sacrament of Penance. Consequently, they cannot constitute sufficient matter for sacramental confession and absolution. One who was never previously baptized is not to be obliged, or even permitted, to make a confession of previous sins as a sacramental act before receiving the sacrament of regeneration. Of course, if the convert wishes to confess some previous transgressions, especially those that have been habitual, in order to receive advice and guidance from the priest, he may do so. But he should be definitely informed that Baptism, worthily received—that is, with faith and contrition (at least imperfect)—takes away all sins and the entire debt of punishment due to them.

Adsum, a publication by the seminarians of **MATER DEI SEMINARY** for the reading enjoyment of friends and benefactors, is sent free of charge to all who request it. If you are interested, please provide your name and mailing address to:

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