

THE HOLY YEAR.

The Jubilee of 1900 Years of Redemption: History and Reflections.

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THE JEWISH YEAR OF JUBILEE.

FOR AN EXPLANATION of the word "Jubilee," we must go back over three thousand years — back to the days of Moses. In Leviticus, one of the Mosaic books, the following law is set forth: "You shall also number to you seven weeks of years; that is to say, seven times seven, which together make forty-nine years. And you shall sound the trumpet in the seventh month, the tenth day of the month, in the time of expiation in all your land. And you shall sanctify the fiftieth year, and shall proclaim remission to all the inhabitants of your land: for it is the year of jubilee. Every man shall return to his possession, and every one shall go back to his former family. Because it is the year of jubilee and the fiftieth year. You shall sow not, nor reap the things that grow in the field of their own accord, neither shall you gather the first fruits of the vines, because of the sanctification of the jubilee. But as they grow, you shall presently eat them. In the year of jubilee all shall return to their possessions" (Leviticus Chapter 25, Verses 8-13).

The trumpet which was to be sounded was a ram's horn. Now the Hebrew word for a ram was "Jobel," and, by a series of changes, this word came to mean, first, the horn of a ram, then the sound produced by blowing through it and, finally, the solemnity of which that sound was the signal. From the Hebrew word "jobel," therefore, we get the word "jubilee," with its present meaning.

For the Jewish people the year of jubilee was a time of joy. The soil was rested. There was no tillage and no harvest. Land which had been sold under pressure of poverty was restored to its former owner; Israelites who, through poverty or otherwise, had become the slaves of their brethren, were set free. The words of Scripture were realised: "Every one shall return to his possession, and every one

shall go back to his former family."

This Jewish year of jubilee was the prototype of the year of jubilee, which has been established in Christ's Church.

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR OF JUBILEE.

WHEN AND UNDER what circumstances was the first Christian jubilee celebrated? A definite answer to this question cannot be given. The first jubilee of which there is clear and conclusive evidence is that of the year 1300, which started strangely.

As the year 1299 was drawing to a close, the report spread in Rome and other places that a great indulgence would be gained by all Christians visiting the Roman Basilica of the Prince of the Apostles during the following year. On the first day of January, 1300, nothing unusual happened in Rome till evening. Just about sunset, however, people began to flock from all quarters of the city towards the great Basilica of Saint Peter. They streamed across the Tiber, and crowded into Saint Peter's, until the vast space was a sea of humanity; yet the human tide flowed on, every member of the crowd intent on one aim only — to gain the great indulgence. The succeeding days saw no diminution in the throngs who came to visit Saint Peter's, for now strange faces were to be seen: the inhabitants of the surrounding country and neighbouring towns were no less eager than the people of Rome to gain the spiritual favours of the New Year — and with these strangers were yet others who had come great distances, impelled by the same pious motive.

The Pope of that day — Boniface VIII — had noticed the crowds and, on learning the object which had brought them, he caused diligent search to be made among the records, but the records contained no reference to any indulgence such as was now talked of. Was there, then, no foundation for the report, which had drawn such multitudes from far and near to the Basilica of Saint Peter? The records were silent, it is true, but they had suffered during the turbulent times Rome had experienced, and were incomplete. In the absence of written evidence, oral testimony was forthcoming. An old Savoyard was presented to the Pope. He declared that he had been brought to Rome by his father a century before, to gain the indulgence which was offered every hundred years. His father had told him to return to Rome in 1300, if alive, and to visit the new church of Saint Peter, so as to gain once more the great Indulgence. As the old man's age was 107, his testimony as to what had happened a hundred years before was considered satisfactory. Others were found — some Italians and two old men from the diocese of Beauvais, in France — who gave similar evidence.

They were not in agreement as to the extent of the indulgence. The old Savoyard declared that it was an indulgence of 100 days, which could be gained on every day of the year. The two men from Beauvais maintained that it was a plenary

indulgence.

The Pope consulted the Cardinals and published, on 22nd February, 1300, the Bull *Antiquorum habet fida relatio*. (Full translation in [Appendix](#)).

In this Bull, he stated that, according to the trustworthy testimony of some old men, great indulgences had been granted to those visiting the Roman Basilica of the Prince of the Apostles. The Pope confirmed and renewed these indulgences, and also granted, for the year 1300 and for every hundredth year following, "not only a full and copious, but the most full pardon of all their sins," to all those who, being truly contrite, should confess their sins and visit the two Roman churches of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, at least once a day for thirty days, if Romans, and for fifteen days, if strangers or pilgrims.

Although the word "jubilee" does not appear in the Bull *Antiquorum*, the resemblance between the Christian Holy Year and the Jewish Year of Jubilee was sufficiently striking for the Jewish word to be borrowed, and to come into general use at once. The first Pope to use the word officially was Clement VI (1342-1352).

Following the publication of the Bull *Antiquorum*, pilgrims flocked to Rome from all parts of Europe. Asia even contributed to the throng. A list of nations represented at the Jubilee ends with "one Tartar." The pilgrims were of all ages and of all conditions. Some were so infirm or so old that they had to be carried by their companions. Many died on the way, or before they could complete the visits to the Basilicas. To all such, the Pope granted the Jubilee indulgence, just as if they had carried out all the conditions.

So great an influx of strangers was a severe strain on the resources of the city; but owing to the Pope's forethought, special supplies were available, and provisions for men and fodder for horses did not run short. One of the chroniclers of the jubilee, John Villani, wrote:

"The greater marvel I have ever witnessed was that throughout the whole of this year there were continually in Rome 200,000 pilgrims, exclusive of the inhabitants of the city, and without counting those who were on their way, and all were sufficiently provided with food, both men and horses. I can render this testimony as I was present."

Naturally, the streets were crowded — so much so that people lost their lives in the crush. A breach was made in the walls to relieve the congestion, and another device adopted was the erection of a barrier along the middle of the Ponte Sant' Angelo, so that the crowds pressing forward to visit Saint Peter's, and the crowds returning to the city might be kept separate. It is to this that Dante refers, in the 18th Canto of the *Inferno*, when he writes:

“Even as the Romans, for the mighty host,
The Year of Jubilee, upon the bridge
Have chosen a mode to pass the people over;

For all upon one side towards the Castle
Their faces have, and go unto Saint Peter's;
On the other side they go towards the mountain.”

Whether or not Dante took part in the Jubilee is uncertain. The lines we have quoted show that the Roman authorities had experience of the traffic problem, and took steps to meet it.

The amount of spiritual good of which this Jubilee, was the cause cannot be estimated, but the visit to Rome, the centre of Christendom, the inspiring example of the multitudes of devout pilgrim's, the spiritual exercises, the ceremonial, so full of meaning, all must have conspired to confirm the faith and enliven the devotion of those who took part and, through them, of many of their neighbours who had stayed at home.

For Pope Boniface the success of the Jubilee was especially gratifying. The manifestations of faith and loyalty to which it gave rise contrasted sharply with the coldness and insults which had been, and were to be, his portion. The Jubilee has been described as "the only successful and cheering event in the whole pontificate of Boniface."

According to the Bull *Antiquorum*, the next Jubilee should not have been held until 1400, but in 1342, the people of Rome sent a deputation to Avignon, on the banks of the Rhone, where Pope Clement VI was then residing. One of the members of the deputation was Petrarch, who had become a Roman citizen. They made two requests — first, that the Pope would return to Rome; second, that he would shorten the period of one hundred years, which was to separate each Jubilee from the next. They pointed out that the period was too long, having regard to the normal duration of human life.

The Pope did not grant their first request, but he reduced the period between the Jubilee years to half a century, and proclaimed a Jubilee for the year 1350. The conditions were to be the same as in 1300, save that the church of Saint John Lateran was to be visited in addition to Saint Peter's and Saint Paul's. As the "Babylonian Captivity" continued, the Pope sent a legate to Rome to take his place.

The times were not propitious. The terrible pestilence known as the Black Death had devastated Europe, carrying off, it is estimated, forty million victims. On the 10th September, 1349, Italy was shaken by an earthquake, which did much damage to Rome, and was looked upon by the superstitious as an omen of greater evils to come. The same country, moreover, was rent by factions; civil order no longer

existed; on both sides of the Alps bandits flourished, tolerated and even encouraged by the local barons. In Rome itself, the pilgrims were often victims of the rapacity of the inhabitants, many of whom were unable to resist the temptation of overcharging strangers for the necessaries of life.

In spite of all these adverse circumstances, the Jubilee Year 1350 far surpassed that of 1300 in the number of its pilgrims. According to the annalists, there were at times, between Christmas and Easter, 1,200,000 pilgrims in Rome, and never less than a million. From Easter to Pentecost, the average was eight hundred thousand.

The third Jubilee was that of 1390. Only forty years, instead of fifty, had elapsed since the second Jubilee, but Urban VI anticipated the date in order to placate the Romans, who were at that time unusually restive. Urban died in October, 1389, so it was his successor, Boniface IX, who was Pope during this Jubilee. Visits to the church of Saint Mary Major were added to the former conditions for gaining the Jubilee, and since then the churches to be visited have always been the same four — Saint Peter's, Saint Paul's, Saint John Lateran and Saint Mary Major. The wonted throngs were seen at this Jubilee, but they were chiefly composed of pilgrims from Central Europe. The Great Schism was running its disastrous course, and France withheld its multitudes. Repudiating, as they did, the authority of Urban VI and his successor, Boniface IX, they refused to recognise the change in the period of fifty years prescribed by Clement VI. But in 1400, the proper year according to them, they came in very large numbers. The Romans welcomed this influx of visitors, for it meant a substantial increase in their revenue. The Pope was then living at Assisi — whither the violence of the Roman populace had driven him. The Romans were afraid that the Pope's absence would diminish the solemnity of this unorthodox Jubilee, and that the numbers of pilgrims would be reduced. They sent an embassy to the Pope, asking him to return to Rome. This he did, and it is believed that he granted, orally, to the French pilgrims of 1400 the customary Jubilee privileges.

Urban VI had decreed that the Jubilee should be held every thirty-three years, as that was the period of Our Lord's life on earth. Martin V therefore proclaimed a Jubilee in 1423, but Nicholas V returned to the period of fifty years, and held a Jubilee in 1450. The occasion was a fitting one, for peace had just been restored to the Church, after an era of turmoil and conflict. Once again, crowds flocked to Rome. They were compared by an eye-witness to a flight of starlings or a swarm of ants. We cannot tell what part Ireland took in the earlier jubilees; but "full fifty" of the old Irish "went to Rome to celebrate the jubilee" (of 1450), "and seven never more returned" (Malone, *Church History of Ireland*). A special feature of this jubilee was the Canonization on Whit Sunday (1450) of Saint Bernardine of Siena, "the most popular saint who had for centuries appeared in the Italian peninsula."

On the 19th December, a calamity occurred which cast deep gloom over Rome. A greater crowd than usual had assembled in Saint Peter's to venerate the holy

handkerchief or towel of Saint Veronica and to receive the Papal Benediction. At about four o'clock in the afternoon, the Pope sent word that the Benediction would not be given that day.

All the people hurried home across the bridge of Saint Angelo. On the bridge, the crowd met some horses and mules, which had taken flight, and a blockade followed. Many of the pilgrims were trampled underfoot or pushed off the bridge into the Tiber. The multitudes from Saint Peter's were still pressing on, ignorant of what was happening, and the catastrophe would have been even more serious had not the bridge been closed and the throng held back. The crush on the bridge continued for an hour, and two hundred persons lost their lives.

In 1470, Paul II decreed that the Jubilee should be held every twenty-five years, and Sixtus IV confirmed this decree, and held a Jubilee in 1475. For this Jubilee, extensive preparations were made. "The bridge, which, from its ruinous state, had long been called by the Romans the Ponte Rotto (the broken bridge), was rebuilt from its foundations. This restoration was an immense boon, both to the Romans and to the strangers who came for the Jubilee, and Sixtus IV, with a justifiable pride, desired that it should bear the name of Ponte Sisto."

This bridge, which still stands, was very probably the fruit of the disaster in the time of Nicholas V. For centuries, the care of Sixtus IV for the Jubilee pilgrims was commemorated by marble tablets, but these memorials have been removed by certain vandals. Ever since 1475, the normal period between Jubilee years has remained twenty-five years, as fixed by Paul II.

At this Jubilee, Sixtus IV introduced the custom of suspending other indulgences during the Holy Year. (Footnote: Nowadays [1933], indulgences for the dead are not suspended, and the suspension of indulgences for the living is subject to certain exceptions. We shall explain this more fully further on.)

In 1500, Alexander VI, by a special Bull, extended the Jubilee of that year to all Christians outside Rome. It was thus possible to gain the great indulgence anywhere, but only on condition of contributing towards the expenses of the war against the Turks. This concession of the Jubilee indulgence, without the obligation of visiting Rome, was a development of the privilege first accorded by Boniface IX, in 1390. In connection with the Jubilee of that year, Boniface IX granted a privilege to the people of Cologne, by which they and all visitors to that town could gain all the benefits of the Roman Jubilee by visiting certain churches in Cologne, and by complying with other conditions. This privilege was gradually extended — much to the dissatisfaction of the Roman people — until, as has been said, Alexander VI extended it to the whole world. Thus originated the custom of extending the Jubilee to the entire Catholic world in the year following the Holy Year at Rome. The extension usually lasts for six months, during which the Faithful, wherever they

reside (outside of Rome), can gain the Jubilee indulgence by fulfilling the ordinary conditions, namely, Confession, Communion, Prayers for the Pope's intentions, and Visits to local churches, as directed by the Ordinary. As the conditions may vary somewhat from time to time, the official documents published for each Jubilee should be carefully read in order to ensure one's gaining the indulgence.

By the year 1500, the Jubilee had developed all the chief features, which distinguish it at the present day, and we may regard the task of sketching the development of the Jubilee as complete.

There were, however, details of interest connected with some of the subsequent Jubilee years, which are worth recording.

The Jubilee of 1550 is memorable for the great work, which Saint Philip Neri had started. "Philip's plan was this — to receive and lodge poor pilgrims when they came to Rome for the Jubilee, or for any other pious motive. . . ."

"The near approach of the Jubilee of 1550 was as a ray of light which led him on to the foundation of that vast and amazing institute of charity which was called the Work of the Pellegrini (pilgrims), and which in the end gave its name to the Confraternity of San Salvatore." It was on 16th August 1548, that Philip Neri — still a layman — began the Confraternity of Pilgrims and of the Convalescent. He began with fifteen persons living in the world. When poor pilgrims came to Rome, they found a home where a welcome awaited them and tender charity supplied their needs. As the fame of the institution spread, the numbers who came increased rapidly, and the membership of the Confraternity increased in proportion. "Princes, priests and even prelates" were eager to share in the good work of serving the poor, under the orders of the zealous layman — Philip Neri. The Confraternity was removed to a larger house — the Trinita dei Pellegrini, where the good work is still carried on.

In 1575 Philip Neri — now a priest, and venerated as a saint, saw thousands of the Jubilee pilgrims relieved daily by his Confraternity, and among those who served them were Bishops, Cardinals; and even Pope Gregory XIII himself. Saint Charles Borromeo was one of these servants of the poor, and he also contributed generously towards the expenses of the Confraternity. That these expenses were far from light may be judged from the fact that from the 25th December, 1574, to May, 1575, the Confraternity had sheltered and fed ninety-six thousand eight hundred and forty-eight pilgrims, and during the year, food and lodgings were provided for over one hundred and forty-four thousand pilgrims, exclusive of twenty-one thousand during sickness and convalescence. They were provided with all necessaries — some for three days, some for five days, and those who came from beyond the mountains for ten days.

When the Jubilee of 1600 came, Philip Neri had joined the Host of Heaven; he

passed to his reward in 1595. But the work he had founded — rather, one of the works — had taken firm root, and its vigorous condition is best understood from the fact that in the course of the Jubilee of 1600, the Confraternity entertained in three days 444,500 pilgrims, besides 25,000 women.

In 1800, for the first time in five centuries, there was no Jubilee. Pius VI, an old man of over eighty years of age, had been brought a prisoner from Rome to Siena, then to Florence, then across the Alps to Valence, where he died on 29th August, 1799. His successor, Pius VII, was not elected till March, 1800, and the times were not propitious.

The only ordinary Jubilee between 1775 and 1900 was held in 1825, under Leo XII. Among those who took part in that Jubilee was Giovacchino Vincenzo Pecci, afterwards Leo XIII. When promulgating the Jubilee of 1900, Leo XIII referred to the Jubilee of 1825 as follows:

"We have ourselves seen with our own eyes the fruitful result of the last solemn celebration of the Holy Year. It was in the Pontificate of Leo XII, and we were, as yet, but in the years of our youth. It was truly a grand sight, to see then the manifestations of religious fervour in Rome. We can remember as if the scene were still before our eyes, the immense concourse of pilgrims, the multitudes who flocked processionally to one or other of the great basilicas, the sacred orators who preached in the public streets, and the most frequented quarters of the city resounding with the Divine praises. The Sovereign Pontiff himself, with a numerous suite of Cardinals and in the sight of all the people, gave a noble example of piety and charity."

THE EXTRAORDINARY JUBILEE.

So far, the ordinary Jubilee only has been dealt with. There is another kind of Jubilee — the extraordinary or minor Jubilee. This latter is granted by the Pope in specially serious or solemn circumstances. It is held at the same time in Rome and all over the world. Its duration varies: the conditions for gaining it usually includes a fast and the giving of alms. Otherwise, it resembles in its main features the ordinary Jubilee.

Among the extraordinary Jubilees of which we find records is the Jubilee granted by Pius IV, in 1560 to obtain the help of the Holy Ghost for the Council of Trent, which was resuming its labours after an interval of eight years. Sixtus V, on his election to the Holy See in 1585, granted a Jubilee for fifteen days to implore the Divine Assistance in his responsible position. Pope Leo XIII, announced an extraordinary Jubilee in 1881, to obtain from God's all-powerful mercy help in the troubles of the time, and strength to resist the numerous and powerful enemies of the Church. He appointed the whole of the year 1886 as a year of Jubilee for the whole Church in order to obtain, through the intercession of the Queen of the Most Holy Rosary,

special help in the trials, which the Church was then experiencing.

Pope Pius XI, by the Bull *Auspicantibus*, dated 6th January, 1929, proclaimed an extraordinary Jubilee for the whole world from that date to the end of the same year. The reason for this Jubilee was the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination to the Priesthood.

THE JUBILEE INDULGENCE.

THE JUBILEE indulgence is a solemn plenary indulgence. Like all plenary indulgences, it remits, for those who gain it fully, all the temporal punishment due to sin. It differs from other plenary indulgences, not substantially, but only by reason of

- (1) the solemnity with which it is promulgated;
- (2) the privileges which accompany it regarding dispensation from vows, absolution from censures, et cetera;
- (3) the greater hope of actually gaining it fully on account of the extra good works to be performed, and the united effort of the whole Church.

EXTENSION OF FACULTIES.

THE JUBILEE indulgence is the chief element of the Holy Year, but it is not the only one. The number of the Roman Penitentiaries is greatly increased, and to them and certain other Confessors in Rome, special faculties are given by which they can:

- (1) Absolve penitents from almost all reserved sins and censures.
- (2) Commute vows and dispense from them.
- (3) Dispense from irregularities and impediments.
- (4) Substitute other pious exercises for some of the good works prescribed for the gaining of the Jubilee Indulgence.

These faculties can be exercised only in favour of those who seriously intend to gain the Jubilee Indulgence. Similar faculties are given to Confessors all over the world for the six months during which the Jubilee is ordinarily extended.

Can the jubilee Indulgence and other Privileges be gained during the Holy Year without Visiting the Basilicas-in Rome?

From what has been said, it follows that to gain the Jubilee during the (ordinary) Holy Year itself, the visitation of the Basilicas in Rome is essential. There are two exceptions to this rule:

- (1) The first exception is in favour of those who, either in Rome or on the way to Rome, are prevented, by illness, death or some other legitimate cause, from completing or even from beginning the visitation of the Basilicas.

Such persons, provided they make a good confession and receive Holy Communion, gain the Jubilee indulgence, just as if they had made all the visits prescribed.

(2) The second exception is in favour of nuns, and others for whom the journey to Rome would be impossible, owing to certain special circumstances.

For the Jubilee of 1933-1934, His Holiness Pope Pius XI has specified, as follows, those to whom this second exception applies:

(a) Cloistered nuns and all religious sisters, including their novices and postulants;

(b) Pious women, girls and others living in institutions for women or in boarding-schools for girls, even though these places are not under the care of religious;

(c) Members of certain monastic Orders of men, such as Trappists and Carthusians;

(d) Prisoners-of-war, or in jails or houses of correction, and those suffering the punishment of exile or deportation;

(e) Those who are too sick or too weak to travel to Rome or to perform the visits to the Basilicas; those who, either for pay or gratis, attend continuously to the sick in hospitals; those in charge of prisons or houses of correction; workers who earn their living by daily labour and cannot leave their work for long;

(f) Those who have completed their seventieth year. To all these the Pope grants the Jubilee Indulgence just as fully as if they had gone to Rome and visited the Basilicas. They must, however, during the Holy Year, make a good confession, receive Holy Communion, pray for the Pope's intentions, and perform certain good works in place of the visits to the Roman Basilicas. What these good works are to be is a question to be decided by the Ordinary of each diocese, either personally or through the Confessors approved by him. The indulgence is gained also by those who have begun to carry out the good works, and die of a dangerous illness, before completing them.

The six classes described above (a to f) can gain the Jubilee Indulgence as often during the Holy Year as they fulfil the conditions. The Confessor to whom they make their confession, for the purpose of gaining the jubilee, has special faculties regarding censures, reserved sins and (for nuns) private vows.

SUSPENSION OF FACULTIES.

DURING the Holy, Year it is customary to suspend, outside of Rome, some of the faculties given to priests regarding censures, reserved cases, vows, irregularities and impediments. The reason, for this suspension, is to encourage the faithful to visit Rome, where, as we have shown, an abundant supply of confessors, provided with ample faculties, awaits them. The faculties that are not suspended are, however, at present, so extensive that, practically speaking, the limitation of power is not considerable.

SUSPENSION OF INDULGENCES.

IT is customary also to suspend indulgences — not all indulgences, however — in order that the faithful may be disposed to concentrate on gaining the Great Indulgence, which is offered to them for this limited period.

Pope Sixtus IV, when proclaiming the Jubilee of 1475, introduced this custom by suspending all plenary indulgences only. This regulation remained in force for the next four Jubilees. In 1600, Clement VIII suspended all indulgences. Between 1600 and 1750, certain indulgences were excluded from the suspension, and since the latter year, the usage has been uniform, and is as follows:

All the indulgences for the living are suspended, except the following:

- (1) Indulgences to be gained at the hour of death;
- (2) The indulgence attached to the prayers said when the Angelus bell is rung;
- (3) The indulgences for visiting a church in which the Blessed Sacrament is exposed for the Forty Hours Adoration;
- (4.) The indulgences for accompanying the Blessed Sacrament when brought to sick persons,

or for sending a candle to be carried by another on such an occasion;
- (5) The indulgence for visiting the *Portiuncula* chapel in the church of Saint Mary of the Angels, near Assisi;
- (6) The indulgences which Cardinals, Apostolic Nuncios, Archbishops and Bishops are accustomed to grant.

To these are to be added, for the Jubilee of 1933-4

- (i) the indulgences granted to those visiting the Holy Places of Palestine; and
- (ii) the plenary indulgence for visiting Lourdes during the year of celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Apparition of the Immaculate Virgin. (11th February, 1933, to 11th February, 1934.)

Indulgences for the dead are not suspended. Moreover, all the indulgences for the living, which are suspended during the Holy Year, may be gained for the dead, even though at other times they could be gained for the living only.

THE CEREMONIES OF THE JUBILEE.

THE ORDINARY Jubilee Year begins on the Christmas Eve immediately preceding the secular year for which it is proclaimed, and ends on the Christmas Eve next following. Thus, the Jubilee Year 1925 began on 24th December, 1924, and continued till 24th December, 1925. It is inaugurated with great ceremony, as Our Holy Father Pope Pius XI reminds us in his Bull announcing the Jubilee of 1925. He says that it is customary to refer to the Jubilee Year as "the Holy Year," because "it is inaugurated, celebrated, and terminated with the most holy rites, and is regarded as being most conducive to promoting sanctity of life."

The Holy Year begins with the opening of the Porta Santa or Holy Door in each of the four great Roman basilicas, namely, those of Saint Peter, Saint Paul, Saint John Lateran, and Saint Mary Major. Each of these has five doors; but, in each basilica, one door of the five is ordinarily closed up with solid masonry, and is opened only during the Holy Year. In Saint Peter's the Holy Door is the one on the extreme right.

The Pope himself performs the ceremony of opening the Holy Door of Saint Peter's. He goes in solemn procession to the Door, all the other doors of the basilica being closed. On arriving before the Holy Door, he strikes it three times with a golden hammer, repeating at each stroke one of the following versicles:

VERSICLE: *Aperite mihi tartar justitiae.*

RESPONSE: *Ingressus in eas, confitebor Domino.*

VERSICLE: *Introibo in domum tuam, Domine.*

RESPONSE: *Adorabo ad templum sanctum tuum in timore tuo.*

VERSICLE: *Aperite portas, quia nobiscum Deus.*

RESPONSE: *Quia fecit virtutem in Israel.*

TRANSLATION:

VERSICLE: *Open to me the gates of justice.*

RESPONSE: *I will go into them and give praise to the Lord.*

VERSICLE: *I will come into Your house, O Lord.*

RESPONSE: *I will worship and adore towards Your holy temple, in Your fear.*

VERSICLE: Open the gates, for God is with us.

RESPONSE: Who has shown his power (and virtue) in Israel.

Workmen stationed inside the door rapidly remove the masonry, which has been loosened beforehand. The threshold is swept and washed by the Canons. Then, the Pope, cross in hand, again advances to the gate, places himself on his knees, prays for a short time, then rises and intones the *Te Deum*, (You, O God, we praise,) to which thousands at once respond, and “amid the grand and majestic chorus of voices which in the wide world through can only be heard at Saint Peter's on special festivals, His Holiness advances the first through the gate, followed by his cardinals, and bishops and clergy, secular and regular, and the Jubilee has commenced.”

While the Pope is opening the Holy Door at Saint Peter's, three Cardinals, specially appointed, perform a similar ceremony at the three other basilicas.

"The closing of the Jubilee is equally majestic. On the next Christmas Eve, . . . the Pope goes to close the Holy Gate. He intones the antiphon, *Cum jucunditate exhibitis*, (With joy you shall go out,) he blesses all the materials that are to be used, himself takes some mortar on a silver trowel, and places the first three stones, one in the centre, the others to the right and left.

“The Grand Penitentiary places three more, and four Canons of Saint Peter's do the same. Gold and silver medals are enclosed in the wall as memorials; master masons at once finish this work, and the grandest ceremonial of a Pontificate is brought to a close by the Papal Benediction.”

It is not necessary to enter or to leave the Basilicas by the Holy Door when making visits in order to gain the Jubilee Indulgence.

THE JUBILEE OF 1925.

THE MOST RECENT Ordinary Jubilee was that of the year 1925. It was proclaimed on the 29th of May, 1924, the Feast of the Ascension, by the Bull *Infinita Dei Misericordia*. We give here a translation of the greater part of it:

PROMULGATION OF THE HOLY YEAR OF UNIVERSAL JUBILEE, 1925.

PIUS, BISHOP, SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD.

“To all the Faithful of Christ who shall read these Letters,

“Health and Apostolic Benediction:

"FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE given by *God's infinite mercy*, the Church, from time to time, provides special occasions and means for disposing men to

expiate their sins and amend their lives. These occasions are provided in particular in order to benefit those who through spiritual sloth have neglected the usual means of salvation, and who, so far from considering carefully and with fruit, the punishments due for their sins, do not even think of them. The Great Jubilee to be celebrated offers, most opportunely, extraordinary assistance towards a renewal of spiritual energy — for, as you know, it is sometimes called the Holy Year, both because it is inaugurated, celebrated and terminated with the most holy rites, and because it is regarded as being most conducive to promote sanctity of life.

“Today, more than ever, it is our duty to remind you, in the words of Saint Paul: 'Behold, now is the acceptable time, behold, now is the day of salvation' when, of all times, there is available so opportune a means of acquiring the treasures of reconciliation and grace. It was assuredly a Divine instinct that led the Church to institute this year of expiation, to be held at intervals. For just as the Church has borrowed with profit other rites from the Old Law, so this Holy Year introduced into Christian life has as its prototype the sabbatical year of the Hebrews. And the great benefits which the Hebrews derived from their divinely-appointed, jubilee were only a foreshadowing of those benefits which are offered to the faithful during the course of the Holy Year. To the former their goods were restored; those of them who had been slaves were sent back to their family as freemen; debtors were forgiven their debts. To the latter, if they comply with the requirements of the Jubilee, merit is restored; they are freed from the slavery of Satan, while their debts, the fruits of sin and vice, are completely wiped out through the most abundant merits of Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all the Saints.

"But the reconciliation of sinners is not the only aim of the Jubilee Year. The graces showered down will exercise a universal influence on leading souls to higher sanctity and repairing human society. For just as individuals, by their lawless deeds, tend to injure the whole community, so do individuals, by their strivings towards better lives, tend to improve the human race and to bind it more closely to Christ Jesus. May the Jubilee hasten that improvement. Although, indeed, Catholicity has recently made no small progress, and though multitudes realise how foolish it is to hope for better things (only in this world); and how restless the soul is, if God be abandoned; and seem to desire most keenly religion, yet it remains necessary for peoples and nations to restrain their unbridled and cruel greed, according to the teachings of the Gospel, and for all men to be united by the bond of divine charity. Unless this charity, which the recent war has weakened, nay, even destroyed, unless this charity find once more a place in the hearts of men and in the policies of rulers, it is very difficult to see, how peoples are to be joined in brotherly alliance or how a permanent peace is to be secured. It is scarcely necessary to point out to what an extent the Holy Year can bring about this general

reconciliation of peoples.

"What could be more conducive towards uniting men and nations than the assembling of a vast number of pilgrims in Rome — the second native-land of Catholic peoples — where they together meet their common Father, together profess their common faith, together receive the Most Holy Eucharist — the principle of union — and thus acquire that spirit of charity which is the chief mark of Christians?

“The holy monuments of Rome itself teach us this, and drive home the lesson: We desire that those Churches, which the sad dissension of centuries keeps away, may be united to us in that same spirit of perfect charity. On the occasion of this great Jubilee, nothing could be more truly gratifying to us than to welcome them affectionately back to the one fold of Christ, and if not in a body, at least very many of their members; and to number them amongst our dearest children. That the celebration of the Holy Year may produce fruits so glorious and so desirable, is our earnest hope. It would have greatly helped to kindle the piety of all, if we had been permitted to perform the Jubilee solemnities as in times past. To whatever extent they may be deficient, we implore God in his bounty to supply what is lacking out of the riches of His mercy.

“Therefore, with full confidence that most abundant advantages will accrue to Catholicity in general, and to the souls redeemed with the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, and beseeching God, the source and giver of all good, to favour our undertaking, to move men to penance, and to inspire them to profit by this special grace, we, following the example of the Roman Pontiffs, our predecessors, and with the assent of our Venerable Brethren, the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, order, with the authority of God Almighty, of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and with our own, and promulgate, the great and universal Jubilee, to commence in this Holy City at the first vespers of the Nativity of Our Lord of the year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Twenty-Four, and to end at the first vespers of the Nativity of Our Lord of the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Twenty-Five.

"During the Holy Year, we concede and impart mercifully in Our Lord full indulgence, remission and pardon of sin to all faithful Christians of either sex, who, having made a good Confession and received Holy Communion, shall devoutly visit the Roman Basilicas of Saint Peter, Saint Paul, Saint John Lateran and Saint Mary Major at least once a day for twenty days continuously or at intervals, if they reside in Rome, and for ten days, if they come as pilgrims, the days to be reckoned either as natural days or ecclesiastical days . . . and shall pray at each visit for our intentions. You are well aware what the Pope's intentions are in general; but on this occasion, we

have in mind something special, for which you will pray in union with us. We mean the restoration of international peace, not so much the peace which is written in documents, as the peace which is engraven on men's hearts, and which, if not so remote to-day as it was some time ago, still seems further away than we ourselves and men generally would wish.

“Surely if you all, both inhabitants of Rome and pilgrims, with souls freed from stain and on fire with charity, come to the threshold of the Apostles, and pray for this great blessing, may we not hope that Christ, the Prince of Peace, whose gesture once sufficed to calm the waters of the Sea of Galilee, will now have pity on His people and command the storms, by which Europe has so long been tossed, to subside and be still. It is our desire also that those who reside in Rome or have come thither to gain the Jubilee should earnestly recommend to God's mercy two other matters which cause us the keenest anxiety and are of the greatest concern to religion — namely, that non-Catholics should hasten to take refuge in the true Church of Christ, and that affairs in Palestine be finally settled in accordance with the rightful and most holy claims of Catholicity.

“For those who are prevented by illness, death or other legitimate cause, either in Rome or while actually journeying thither, from beginning or completing the requisite number of days or visits, we mitigate the conditions already laid down to this extent, that such persons, by making a good Confession and receiving Holy Communion, can gain the Jubilee Indulgence, just as if they had actually made the visits to the four Basilicas.

"It only remains for us to invite you all most affectionately to Rome, to enjoy the treasures of the Divine clemency, which your Holy Mother the Church holds out to you. If you were to show yourselves indifferent and slothful in this matter, it would be very unbecoming, in these days especially, when earthly gains are sought with such impetuous avidity that men are blinded to honesty and duty. Remember, besides, the vast number of pilgrims of every rank, who, in years past, came to this fair city during the Holy Year, regardless of the length and hardships of the journey; pilgrims who were not deterred by any difficulties in their zeal for eternal happiness. But should the journey to Rome or the sojourn there cause inconvenience or discomfort, this, if accepted in the spirit of penance, will not only be a help towards meriting a more ample pardon, but will also be compensated for by numerous consolations of every kind. For you are about to visit that city which Jesus Christ the Saviour of men, chose to be the centre of His religion, and the permanent seat of His Vicar; that city, from which the springs of sacred doctrine and heavenly pardon alike flow out to you, inviolate and undefiled.

“Here the common Father of you all, to whose love you respond, will pray for

you, here you have easy access to the ancient catacombs, to the tombs of the Princes of the Apostles, to the relics of the most glorious martyrs; you may enter those temples which have been built in the course of centuries in honour of God and of His Saints, with such grandeur and skill that the world has not ceased, and will not cease, to look on them with awe.

"If you visit these monuments of the Christian religion piously and pray devoutly, you will return to your homes with your faith wonderfully enlivened and your wills disposed towards better things. Your conduct in Rome should not be that of the every-day traveller and visitor; but rather you will avoid all profane occupations, and, filled with the spirit of penance, which is so foreign to the godless spirit of the day, you will exhibit modesty in your countenance, your deportment, and your apparel, thinking of no other thing but the salvation of your souls. . . .

"Given at Rome, at Saint Peter's, on the 29th day of the month of May, in the Nineteen Hundred and Twenty-Fourth Year of the Incarnation of the Lord, and the third year of our Pontificate."

This Bull was solemnly read in public, in the portico of Saint Peter's, by the Dean of the Proto-notaries Apostolic on 29th May, 1924, and thus the Jubilee of 1925 was solemnly proclaimed. The Bull proclaiming the Jubilee was followed on the 5th July by a Constitution suspending Indulgences and Faculties during the Holy Year.

On 25th July, a Constitution was published granting special faculties to Roman confessors for the Jubilee and on 30th July, the Jubilee Indulgence was extended to nuns and others who, for special reasons set forth in the Constitution, would be unable to make the visits in Rome.

By the Bull *Servatoris*, dated 25th December, 1925, the Jubilee was extended to the whole world — not for six months only, as had been customary — but for the whole year 1926.

THE JUBILEE OF 1933-1934.

ON CHRISTMAS EVE, 1932, His Holiness Pope Pius XI, in the course of his address to the Cardinals who had assembled to offer him their Christmas greetings and good-wishes for the New Year, proclaimed a Holy Year of Jubilee from the 2nd of April, 1933, to the end of April, 1934, in celebration of the nineteenth centenary of the Redemption of the human race.

The Bull *Quod nuper*, dated 6th January, 1933, was solemnly published on the 15th of the same month.

The following translation of the Bull appeared in the *Standard*, to which we are indebted for permission to reprint it.

**THE DECLARATION BY OUR MOST HOLY LORD PIUS XI BY DIVINE
PROVIDENCE POPE OF AN EXTRAORDINARY HOLY YEAR AND OF
THE GREATEST GENERAL JUBILEE ON
THE NINETEENTH CENTENARY OF THE REDEMPTION OF THE
HUMAN RACE,**

PIUS, BISHOP SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD,

**TO THE FAITHFUL IN CHRIST THROUGHOUT THE WORLD WHO
SHALL READ THESE PRESENT LETTERS,**

GREETING AND APOSTOLIC BLESSING!

RECENTLY, at the Feast of the Nativity, We announced, not only to the Sacred College of Cardinals and to all those who were assembled around Us to greet Us, but to the entire Catholic world, a great plan which We are eager to put into execution, when We announced an extraordinary Holy Year and a great Jubilee in honour of the nineteenth centenary of the Redemption of the human race.

Even though it may not be absolutely certain at what exact date in history it occurred, nevertheless this event, or, rather this marvellous succession of divine events is of such significance and importance that it cannot be passed over in silence.

Through this happy commemoration may men be turned — even a little — from the fleeting and earthly things, which oppress them so direly today, to fix their thoughts on celestial and eternal things.

May they lift their souls from the troubles and fears of the present time to the hope of that perpetual beatitude to which Christ Our Lord has called us by shedding His Blood and by giving us immense benefits of every sort.

May they withdraw themselves from the daily tumult of life and "search their hearts" during this year to see how much Our Saviour loved us, and with what ardour He delivered us from the servitude of sin. Thus, surely, they will glow with a greater charity and they will be constrained in turn to love Him who has loved them so much.

It is well to recall here, at least briefly, the succession of these divine gifts from which, properly speaking, this civilisation which we enjoy and in which we glory has sprung. First of all, the institution at the Last Supper of the Blessed Eucharist, entrusted to the Apostles who were raised to the priesthood by the words "Do this in commemoration of Me" (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinth 11:24); the Passion of Jesus Christ, His Crucifixion and Death for the

Salvation of mankind; the Virgin Mary appointed, at the foot of her Son's Cross, Mother of all mankind; then, the glorious Resurrection of Jesus Christ, a condition and a guarantee of our (resurrection); next, the giving to the Apostles of the power to remit sins; the true primacy of jurisdiction given and confirmed to Peter and his successors; and, finally, the Ascension of Our Lord, the Descent of the Holy Ghost, and the prodigious and triumphal evangelical preaching of the Apostles.

What is more holy, dear children? What more worthy of a secular celebration? From these wonderful things, these divine gifts with which the earthly life of Jesus Christ ended, a new life came to us, the true life, and a new era was begun for all the human kind.

Let us recall these great memories, then, with attention, and let us venerate them with ardent love during this Holy Year of reparation. Let us be stimulated to zealous prayer and penance for the faults of each one of us. But let us not offer our prayers and expiation only for our own eternal salvation, but also for that of the entire human race, misled by so many errors, divided by such hatreds and rivalries, torn by so many struggles, and terrorised by such a multitude of fears.

May the most merciful God grant that the Holy Year which We are soon to inaugurate will restore peace to souls, bring to the Holy Church that liberty which is Her due everywhere, and re-establish all peoples in concord and true prosperity.

And since this Jubilee Celebration will commence at the approach of Paschal time and will likewise finish about Paschal time, We think it opportune that the Bishops should exhort their faithful flocks to approach the tribunal of Penance and nourish themselves with the Eucharistic Bread, not only during these Paschal times to satisfy the precept of the Church, but also as often as is piously possible, above all, during the course of the Holy Year; and also that they should exhort them to meditate most intently on the Passion of Our Lord upon Good Friday. May this be the peculiar and most important fruit of this celebration.

And since the full remission of pain, which We are about to accord, can only be gained at Rome during this year of expiation, We desire keenly that you, dear children, will come in great numbers to the Eternal City, the centre of the Catholic faith and the home and seat of the Vicar of Jesus Christ. It is here that the great Relics of the Passion of Our Lord can be venerated, which no one can behold without being stirred by Divine love and moved to a more perfect life. It is here, as you know, that the Table is preserved on which, according to tradition, Our Lord Jesus Christ consecrated the Bread of Angels and gave Himself, hidden under the Eucharistic veils, to His wondering

disciples. And here, too, dear children, you have a common Father who awaits you with a lively affection, and who hopes that God will bless yourselves, your goods and your works.

It is very fitting, too, that numerous pilgrimages should go this year to the Holy Places of Palestine, and that the faithful should visit and meditate with the greatest piety on the theatre of these most holy happenings, which are to be commemorated. It is also desirable that in this Holy Year the great Relics of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ should be particularly venerated in all the places where they are preserved.

Wherefore, rejoicing in the prospect of these abundant fruits, which We already taste in advance, and offering them to the Father of Mercy; in union with our most venerable Brethren the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, by the authority of the omnipotent God, of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and of Ourselves, for the Glory of God, the salvation of souls, and the prosperity of the Catholic Church,

We declare and promulgate by These Presents an Extraordinary General Jubilee in this Holy City from the 2nd day of the month of April of this year, to finish on April 2, 1934, according; to the terms of Canon 923;

and We desire it to be held declared and promulgated.

During this Holy Year, to all the faithful of either sex who, having duly confessed and received Holy Communion, shall visit three times, either on the same day or on different days, the Basilicas of Saint John Lateran, Saint Peter at the Vatican, Saint Paul Outside the Walls, and Saint Mary Major, and shall pray for Our intention, We mercifully concede and grant in the Lord a Plenary Indulgence from all pain which they ought to suffer for their sins, provided that they shall have obtained remission and pardon for them. It must be mentioned here that the faithful may, after leaving a basilica after a holy visit, enter again immediately to pay the second and the third visits. We have decided this so that the conditions may be more easily observed.

Dear children, you are certainly not ignorant of the general intentions of the Roman Pontiffs, and We have made sufficiently clear above what Our own intention is on this occasion.

We declare, moreover, that this Jubilee Indulgence may be gained for oneself or for the faithful departed, and as many times as one complies with the conditions imposed.

In order that the prayers said during these holy visits may better excite the attention of the faithful and stir their souls with the memory of the Divine

Redemption and, above all, the Passion of Our Lord, We stipulate and prescribe as follows: -

Besides the supplications which each one's piety will prompt him to make to God, the faithful must recite before the altar of the Blessed Sacrament six Our Fathers, six Hail Marys, and six Glorias ('Glory be'), one of each of which must be for Our intention; before the Crucifix they must say the Creed three times, and, the ejaculation: "We adore You, O Christ, and bless You, because by Your Holy Cross You have redeemed the world," once, or some other prayer of the same nature; before the image of the Mother of God, and reminding themselves of her sorrows, they must say seven Hail Marys, as well as the prayer beginning "Sancta Mater, istud agas," {Holy Mother, do this, pierce me through, in my heart each wound renew, of my Savior crucified.}: (from the *Stabat Mater*) {At the Cross Stands the Mother}, or another of the same nature; and, finally, before the Altar of the Confession, anew and with devotion, they must say the Creed.

The conditions which we have laid down for gaining the Jubilee Indulgence will be modified in favour of those who in Rome or on the way (to Rome) are prevented by sickness or other legitimate cause such as (the approach of) death from commencing or finishing the prescribed visits; provided that they duly receive absolution and Holy Communion, they shall gain the Jubilee Indulgence just as if they had visited the four Major Basilicas.

No more remains, dearly beloved children, whether ye dwell in Rome or come as pilgrims from afar, but to exhort you in the Lord to visit on such an appropriate occasion the celebrated Chapel of the Holy Relics of the Passion in the "Sessorian Basilica of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem", to climb the "Holy Staircase" and say the customary prayers and make the usual meditations.

So that these Our Letters may more easily reach the faithful, We desire that copies of this document, even printed ones, which shall carry the written signature of a notary, and the seal of an ecclesiastical dignitary shall be regarded as the original itself would be.

No one may alter the terms of this declaration, promulgation and concession of favours, and of this expression of Our will; no one has the right to oppose it. If anyone should dare to attempt it, let him know that he will incur the anger of the Omnipotent God, and of the Blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul.

Given in Rome, from Saint Peter's, this sixth day of January on the Feast of the Epiphany of Our Lord, in the year Nineteen Hundred and Thirty-Three, and the Eleventh of Our Pontificate.

E. CARD. PACELLI,
Secretary of State.

FR. A. CARD. FRUHWIRTH,
Chancellor of the Holy Roman Church.

P. CARD. GASPARRI,
Chamberlain of the Holy Roman Church.

JOSEPH WILPERT,
Dean of the College of Proto-notaries Apostolic.

DOMINIC JORIO,
Proto-notary Apostolic.

On the 30th January, 1933, three Apostolic Constitutions were published, suspending indulgences and faculties, giving extraordinary faculties to confessors in Rome, and providing for nuns and special classes of others prevented from visiting the Basilicas in Rome.

APPENDIX.

THE following translation of the Bull *Antiquorum* of Pope Boniface VIII appeared in *The Month* for May, 1875:

BONIFACE, BISHOP, SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD.

FOR A PERPETUAL REMEMBRANCE OF THE THING.

According to the story of some old men, there is a tradition, that great remissions and indulgences for sins are granted to those who visit the venerable Basilica of the Prince of the Apostles in the city (of Rome). Wherefore, we, who according to the dignity of our office desire and ought to procure the salvation of each, holding all and each of these remissions to be authentic, do by our Apostolic authority confirm and approve the same, and even renew and sanction them by this our present seal. In order that the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul may be the more honoured as their Basilicas in this city shall be the more devoutly frequented by the faithful, and that the faithful themselves may feel that they have been replenished by an abundance of spiritual favours in approaching their tombs, we, confiding in the mercy of Almighty God, in the merits and power of these His Apostles, in the counsel of our brethren, and in the plenitude of the Apostolic authority, grant to all those who being truly penitent and confessing their sins, shall reverently visit these Basilicas in the present year 1300, commencing from the festival of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which has just been celebrated, and to all who being truly penitent, and shall confess their sins, and shall approach these Basilicas each succeeding hundredth year, not only a full and copious, but the

most full pardon of all their sins.

We determine that whosoever wishes to gain these indulgences granted by us, must, if they be inhabitants of Rome, visit these same Basilicas for thirty days in succession or at intervals, and at least once a day; if they be foreigners or strangers they must in like manner visit the Basilicas for fifteen days. Nevertheless, each one will merit more, and will the more efficaciously gain the indulgence as he visits the Basilicas more frequently and more devoutly. Let no man, therefore, dare to infringe or impugn this our rescript of confirmation, approval, renewal, grant and decree. And if any one presumes to assail it, let him know that he will incur the indignation of Almighty God and of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul.

Given at Saint Peter's, Rome, February 22nd, 1300, and the third year of our Pontificate.

(Thanks to the *Irish Messenger*.)