

Spanish Chronicle

Perhaps the greatest religious problem in Spain at the present time is that of emigration. By some authorities, if the seasonal emigration to France be included, the figure stands as high as 100,000 emigrants a year. In 1959 16,000 Spaniards emigrated to South America, 18,000 to Central America, 24,000 to countries in Europe, others to the U.S.A., Australia, etc. The country which received the greatest number of emigrants was Venezuela. It is undoubtedly a fact that many of those emigrating become lost to the Church. Whereas 95 per cent of the Spanish and Brazilian immigrants who enter the American continent have been baptized as Catholics, it is estimated that only 10 per cent lead the life of a practising Catholic after arrival. Many have little or no knowledge of their faith. They have received baptism, indeed, but no other sacrament. The problem is accentuated by the scarcity of priests in South America, though Spain is doing everything possible to send out more priests. For the seasonal emigrants to France who go each year to help with the grape harvest, an *Hogar español*, or centre of welcome, has been opened in Béziers. This centre gives every kind of social help and last year alone welcomed more than 6,000 of these Spanish workers, providing a service of buses, sleeping accommodation and meals. Through this centre in Béziers groups have been organized in other towns in France to welcome the grape harvesters and give them what help they need.

Spanish opinion on the visit of Dr Fisher to the Pope was sympathetic but prudent. There seems to have been no disposition to read into the visit more than was implied by the facts themselves.

The greatest interest is taken in the forthcoming Council, as it is in the possibility of a return of the Orthodox Christians to the Church. There is also a move forward in the field of biblical study and the Bishop of Ibiza recently pointed out that assiduous reading of the Bible was the basis of all spiritual formation.

A school of Catholic journalism has been opened in Madrid. At the inauguration proceedings, the Bishop of Huelva, Don Pedro Cantero, gave a discourse showing the necessity, mission and characteristics of Catholic journalism. If the professional exercise of modern journalism, he said, requires journalists endowed with a doctrinal, moral and technical formation to carry out efficiently and with a sense of responsibility the mission that society and the state have entrusted to the press as a social and political institution, so also the exercise of journalism by the Catholic press needs Catholic journalists who, in addition to the training mentioned above, must acquire a Catholic culture, judgements, mental perspectives, a *sensus Ecclesiae* which will enable them, as Catholic journalists, not only to present public opinion with a vision of actual happenings and events that will be in accord with the truth, but also to infuse that opinion with a Catholic vision and give a Catholic reply to the most important concrete problems of the present time. The school has sixty-one pupils and an adequate staff. The Cardinal Pri-

mate and Archbishop of Toledo, Dr Pla y Deniel, was present at the inauguration, as was the Nuncio of the Holy See in Spain, Monsignor Antoniutti, and many other eminent ecclesiastics and laymen.

A study week for nuns—the first of its kind to take place in Spain—was recently held in Madrid. The general theme of the lectures was ‘Congregations and the problem of educating Spanish working women’. Papers were read by several Jesuit fathers and by nuns of various congregations on: Moral problems, Virtues and defects of Spanish girls of to-day, Virtues and failings of Spanish nuns of to-day, The Nun in the slums, Girls’ secondary schools, etc.

The important editorial in the *Osservatore Romano* for March 25th on ‘Latin, the language of the Church’ was quoted in full by *Ecclesia*, the organ of Catholic Action. In this article attention is drawn to the harm that may be done by the campaign being waged against liturgical Latin and the words of Pope Pius XII are quoted—‘It would, however, be superfluous to recall once more that the Church has *serious* reasons for firmly maintaining in the Latin rite the unconditional obligation for the celebrating priest to use the Latin tongue’. (22nd September 1956).

The tercentenary of Velázquez has not unnaturally received a good deal of attention in Spain. An exhibition, opened by General Franco, has been held in Madrid, in which not only the work of Velázquez himself has been included but that of some of his most famous contemporaries or near contemporaries—El Greco, Ribera, Murillo, Zurbarán, Pacheco, Alonso Cano, Pedro de Mora, etc. Many of these exhibits have been lent by cathedrals, churches, museums, art galleries and private collectors both in Spain itself and in other countries. The event was also commemorated by a series of lectures at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, at which Dr Eijo Garay, Bishop Patriarch of Madrid and Alcalá, took the chair, and by a ‘Velázquez Week’ of lectures at Madrid University. A granite column surrounded by a wrought-iron cross has been erected to the memory of Velázquez in the Plaza de Ramales, Madrid—the site of his burial. In Barcelona a course of lectures on the artist and his work was given, accompanied by documentary films.

Some thirteenth-century romanesque wall-paintings have been discovered—and restored—in the parish church of Santa María del Bruch (Province of Barcelona). There was a primitive romanesque church on the site of the present building. The wall-paintings were covered over by a layer of whitewash and also by a seventeenth-century painting, seemingly of little value artistically. The thirteenth-century paintings represent the Dormition and Assumption of our Lady, the Christ Pantocrator with the four evangelists and two angels, and, on the right-hand side of the apse, the Coronation of the Virgin, in which Christ and our Lady are represented seated in the act of Coronation and the four evangelists are the witnesses. There are further paintings on the left side of the apse and on the roof vault, where various scenes of the Sacred Infancy are depicted.

From 10th July to 10th October 1961, there will be an exhibition of romanes-

que art held simultaneously in Barcelona and at Santiago de Compostela. Exhibits from many different countries, as well as from Spain, will be displayed.

The Royal Benedictine Monastery of San Cugat del Valles in the province of Barcelona has been handed over to the Diputación Provincial for restoration and preservation. The monastery dates back to the time of the Visigoths and was built on the ruins of a Roman camp on the road from Narbonne to Tarragona. Persecuted Christians were buried there and it was the scene of the martyrdom of Saints Cucufate (in Catalan, Cugat), Juliana and Semproniana in the year 304, during the persecution of Diocletian. The monastic church, roman-sque in style, was probably begun in the early years of the eleventh century and finished in the twelfth. The abbots of San Cugat were advisers to the Crown of Aragón. The monastery was destroyed in the revolution of 1835. Reconstruction work has recently been begun and a pre-Roman building of the basilica type has been discovered.

Various inaccuracies concerning Spain and Spanish affairs continue to circulate. The report in *Il Populo* (Rome, 5th February 1961) of 'Anti-Franco protests of the bishops of Málaga, Lugo and Ciudad Real' is without foundation. The Bishop of Ciudad Real has pointed out in a letter to the editor of the Italian journal that he and his fellow bishops form part, at the invitation of the government, of a committee for the study and amendment of what is known as the Law of Bases for Information. As members of this committee they have, like other members whether clerical or lay, suggested certain amendments where they thought it desirable. Such an action is neither pro-, nor anti-, Franco. The small-pox epidemic reported in certain foreign journals to have broken out at the beginning of April was limited to fourteen cases in Madrid and none elsewhere—this, for a population of twenty-nine million.

Serious floods occurred at the beginning of January in the basin of the Ebro and the area under water in the province of Zaragoza was 30,000 hectares. A large subsidy was voted for relief and every possible help given to those who lost their homes or property. After January 15th the waters of the Ebro, which had risen very considerably, began to subside.

It may perhaps be of interest to mention that Spain has sent 100 tons of rice for the relief of the starving zones in the Congo.

The original manuscript of the Poema del Mío Cid (twelfth century) has been discovered. Acquired by the Fundación March for the sum of ten million pesetas, it has been made over to the Biblioteca Nacional. Ramiro Pinilla, a clerk from Bilbao, has won the Nadal prize for the novel, with his *Las ciegas hormigas* (The Blind Ants). New Spanish films, of varying merit, are constantly appearing on the screen. Two important films are that of the sixteenth-century picaresque novel *Lazarillo de Tormes* and *El Príncipe Encadenado*, a film of Calderón's *La Vida es Sueño*—a daring, but successful enterprise.

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