

Translated from n.º 341 of the "Egreja Lusitana", of
November 6th 1913.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of the *Egreja Lusitana*
Villa Nova de Gaya.

I have often read in your excellent paper that the Lusitanian Church, Catholic, Apostolic, Evangelical, is essentially national, truly independent of any foreign authority, and without doubt, this is as it should be.

It happens, however, that I have just read in a foreign newspaper that the House of Irish Bishops *has appointed* the Bishop of Tuam a member of the Council of Bishops of the Lusitanian Church!!

I refrain from any ~~comment~~ on the action of the House of Irish Bishops.

Asking you to publish this letter, thanking you beforehand and enclosing my name and address

I remain Yours gratefully
A Roman Catholic
José Mario Netto.

The Lusitanian Church is essentially national and independent.

We think that the notice given by the foreign paper cannot be correct as we do not believe that any house of Bishops in any country claims to nominate any person, however competent he may be, as a member of the council of Bishops of a National and Independent Church, because this would be contrary to the principles of all Catholic and Episcopal Churches with the exception of the Roman Catholic Church.

We know: — That the Bishops of the Anglican and

old Catholic communions have no desire whatever to govern in Portugal, but are favourably disposed to help us *if they should be convinced that the Lusitanian Church is really independent.*

If the notice of the foreign paper is correct, then the nomination made by foreign Bishops is most illegal and cannot be tolerated because it is entirely contrary to our Constitution and Liturgy which says, on page 315 of the 1st edition:— «Neither the Bishop of Rome, nor any other foreign prelate has, or can legitimately have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, ecclesiastical or spiritual authority in the Lusitanian church, Catholic, Apostolic, Evangelical.»— «The said Lusitanian Church has, and enjoys by right, independence, jurisdiction, and authority, according to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, the practice of the primitive church and the canons of the ancient Councils.»

The nomination of the House of Bishops, if correct, must be resisted, because it is contrary to the laws of our country, as articles 18 and 180 of the *Law of Separation* prohibit the direction or administration not only of foreigners, but even of naturalized Portuguese citizens, in any Church of any communion or in any Portuguese Society under the penalty of the Society being extinguished.

The nomination, if correct, must be resisted as contrary to our national pride and contrary to the wishes of the great majority of the lay members of the Lusitanian Church who love her as being really catholic, essentially national, really independent, sincerely evangelical, and only under this character has she any right to exist. We cannot sell or barter our independence for anything whatever. No entity or foreign society has any power to nominate Bishops or Ministers, license preachers or annul licences in Portugal.

The nomination, if correct, must be resisted as con-

trary to the practice and custom during more than 30 years, because since the organisation of the Lusitanian Church C. A. E. in 1880 all the Members of the council of Bishops were always nominated by our Synod.

It is well to remember that we do not attack any person but we wish to defend with all the reins of our heart and soul the essentially national character, the liberties and the independence of the Lusitanian Church, which is not a Mission of the Irish Church.

We believe that the Right Rev^d Bishop of Tuam of the Ancient Catholic Church of Ireland, son of our great friend the late Archbishop of Dublin is a most competent person to be a member of our Council of Bishops, if he should follow the steps of his venerable father who in all his discourses always repeated;— «I neither have, nor desire to have, any authority or jurisdiction in your country; I come here only at the request of your synod to ordain and confirm episcopal functions which only a Bishop can perform.» But any nomination must be made by the *general Synod* of the Lusitanian Church, the only competent power to nominate or exercise jurisdiction until we have a Bishop of our own.

No Bishop or other foreign entity can legally send instructions, or exercise any jurisdiction or oversight in the Lusitanian church which would be very prejudicial to her essentially national character.

The members of our council of Bishops cannot but be foreigners until we have 3 national Bishops, but they can only be nominated by the *general Synod* of the Lusitanian church and their powers are only consultative as they cannot exercise any jurisdiction or make any nomination in Portugal.

According to our general basis the council of Bishops and the *general Synod* shall vigilantly guard the purity and integrity of our Liturgy. (Art. xxii).

The council of Bishops, assisted by a permanent ge-

neral commission nominated by the *general Synod*, (Art. xviii) shall be charged with the examination and sanction of all acts of general interest (Art. xix) but no addition or alteration can be made in the general basis but by the *general synod* (Art. xxxi) and only the alterations approved by the *general synod* and sanctioned by the council of Bishops shall have the force of law (Art. xx and xxxi).

The council of Bishops has no jurisdiction whatever in the Lusitanian Church.

We well remember when the general basis was prepared, discussed, and approved of in 1880 these formalities and necessary delays in making any alteration in the general rules were purposely placed in order to prevent an occasional majority in any moment of excitement making alterations which can only be made after sound reflection and necessary delay. All foreign jurisdiction or oversight, even with the approval of Portuguese citizens, is prohibited by the Law of Separation.

We only desire that the general basis and the Liturgy of our Church shall be kept and observed; we do not wish nor desire anything more, and we cannot be content with anything less.

So long as the Lusitanian church is treated as if it were a Mission of any foreign church, all progress on an extensive scale as an independent and national corporation will be much impeded.

The Lusitanian Church does not claim any monopoly to teach the Gospel but she has no right to exist but as a National and Independent Church.

Let us trust in God and the victory is certain through Jesus Christ our Lord.