

1 (Copy of my letter of Aug. 2)nd to the Bishop of Meath)

It was with great satisfaction that we heard that your Lordship intends visiting Oporto early in October, & we are much obliged to your Lordship for so kindly coming to Portugal, as it is many years since we received an episcopal visit & we trust that your visit will not again be unavoidably put off.

I am by far the oldest minister of the Luteran Church & for upwards of 50 years, first as an evangelist, then as licensed lay minister, afterwards deacon & later priest, have endeavoured to preach Christ crucified. I had the honour of being called by D^r Pops to help in the preparation of our liturgy, canons, formalae & catechism & was obliged by him to read & give my opinions on all the manuscripts written by him & Padre Henrique Ribeiro. This work took us over 6 years. D^r Pops used always to say that the Lus. Church had a great future before her, if she had a Bishop & maintained her independence, but without a bishop she was in a worse position than other evangelical communions who had their organisation complete. Both D^r Pops & the 2nd President, the Pad. Candido J. de Sousa, repeated this on their deathbeds with much earnestness. In 1894 D^r Pops was unanimously elected bishop but refused to accept, as advised by your venerable father, because he was not a native born Portuguese. I

In 1897 at the earnest desire of our Synod he altered his opinion & I was commissioned by the Synod to go to Ireland & ask the Irish Bishops to consecrate him. The Archbishop of Armagh presented our Memorial before the heads of Irish Bishops. They answered that they could not consecrate at present, but hoped we would ^{first} encircled in members.

We have increased in numbers, but have been informed by several important bishops & Archbishops that the Irish Bishops are not at all likely ever to consecrate without the approval of Lambeth.

The Rt. Rev. W. E. Collins, late Bishop of Gibraltar was formally commissioned by Lambeth to visit the Catholic reformed churches on the continent of Europe. He showed us much sympathy, received an address at a public meeting & advised our Synod in its corporate capacity to send a memorial to Lambeth, either direct or thro' our Council of Bishops & further said if we maintained our independence & our Catholic organisation, as declared in our formulae, we might be sure that a Bishop of our choice would be consecrated by the Anglican bishops or at their recommendation by the Old Catholic Bishops of Central Europe. Instructions were sent to the President of our Synod that no memorial must be sent as the matter was in the hands of the Irish Bishops & these instructions were obeyed.

In 1911 a memorial formally drawn up was unanimously voted to be sent to the hands of Irish bishops at Armagh thro' our Council of Bishops, but we know that this memorial never reached the hands of Irish Bishops & we fear that it never officially reached the members of our Council of Bishops!!

In October 1912 the Archbishop of Canterbury kindly told me that "his right hand man", Dr Collins, late Bishop of Gibraltar, had given a favourable report of the Les. Church & that the Anglican Bishops were disposed to help us, but that it was essential that our Synod in its corporate capacity should address a memorial to Lambeth which might be sent direct or thro' our Council of Bishops.

In 1913 Dr Knight, then Bishop of Gibraltar received

all the ministers of the Lus. C. in the North of Portugal & confirmed what the Archbishop had informed me & further said that if the Lusitanian Church were independent & could guarantee a modest stipend for a bishop or bishops then he knew no reason why bishops should not be consecrated.

Instructions were sent from London that no memorial must be sent, as it would show a want of consideration to our friends the Irish Bishops & these instructions were obeyed.

Several prominent Anglican bishops have informed us that if a memorial were sent to Lambeth it would be received with great sympathy, & if any technical reason should be brought forward to prevent the Anglican bishops from consecrating for a foreign country then we might be sure that they would advise us to go with their recommendation to the Old Catholic Bishops in Central Europe & they would consecrate.

Several Old Catholic Bishops have examined our liturgy, formulae, canons & catechism & said: "C'est avec la plus grande satisfaction que j'ai lu tout ce que vous m'avez envoyé et je n'ai rien trouvé qui ne soit pas aussi enseigné par notre église. Je fus aussi étonné par d'excellente ordres que vous avez établis dans l'administration tantôt interne comme externe de votre église," - & they have congratulated us ready to consecrate a bishop if asked by our Synod in its formal capacity.

Your Lordship's venerable father twice attended Old Catholic Congresses & asked the Old Catholic Bishops, if necessary, if they would consecrate bishops for Spain & Portugal & also asked Père Hyacinthe to take part in the consecration of Bishop Cabrera & he accepted your father's invitation.

We certainly never had any thought of showing any want of gratitude to our first friends the Irish Bishops. We still remember how your venerable father taught the Lus. Church to maintain her independence & catholic teaching; but if the Irish Bishops cannot consecrate, what is the objection to a bishop being consecrated by the Anglican bishops or the Old Catholic bishops who are in communion with the Anglican Church?

We much regret to see by the cover of "Light & Truth" that now not a single English Bishop, over a diocese, is patron of the S.P.C.K. etc!!

It is of course true that the ceremonial of the Old Catholic Church is more elaborate than the simple ritual of the Lus. Church but the Old Catholic Bishops, like the Anglican, have no wish to govern or impose their ritual upon the Lus.C.

In 1916 another Memorial addressed to the bench of Irish bishops at Armagh was signed by the members of our Synod & voted to be sent thro' our Council of Bishops. This Memorial was returned with the instructions that it must be altered & addressed to our Council of Bishops. I do not know what alterations were made in this Memorial as it was never sent to me or to the lay representative of this congregation to sign, altho' we had all signed the original one!!!

In April of this year all the members of our Synod in the North of Portugal formally petitioned the President of the Synod to call a meeting of the Permanent Committee in order to consider the advisability of sending a Memorial to the Lambeth Conference thro' our Council of Bishops, praying that one or two bishops might be consecrated for the Lus.C.

Our President for weeks put off giving any answer until he received

situations, finally he refused to call a meeting of the Permanent Committee at just before the meeting of the Lambeth Conference (when too late to be included in the agenda of that Conference) he consented that a memorial might be signed & sent to our Council of Bishops but not to Lambeth or this would show a want of confidence in our Council of Bishops!!

This Memorial was very kindly read by your Committee, for which we are much obliged to your Lordship, but was received by you too late to form any part of the agenda of the Lambeth Conference several Bishops wrote to me, saying that the great majority of Bishops were aware that any memorial had been sent or it ceased too late.

We have also been informed that a reason why some oppose the consecration of a Bishop for the Lus. Church is a fear that I might be elected Bishop. This reason falls to the ground because I never was a candidate & even the fact to know that I have not the necessary learning & qualifications to be a Bishop & certainly have no wish to accept of a difficult position altho' I am a native born Portuguese. But it is true that I have helped to promote the consecration of a Bishop for the North of Portugal (it is advisable for the sake of economy & travelling expenses & efficiency that there should be two Bishops) by giving in my will the whole of my property in Portugal for the support of the Churches & Schools at Ovar, if a Bishop should be consecrated for the North of Portugal, then the first charge on the property given will be the stipend of the Bishop, because any other Bishop could continue to influence gifts & contributions towards the Schools, churches & Missions, but an active schoolmaster can't influence contributions towards the stipend of a Bishop.

It is most distressing that after waiting so long years, & after having increased in numbers, in contributions & influence that the consecration of a Bishop should continually be put off.

The Lus. Church can never & always has been in Portugal & can never be admitted into full communion with the Anglican Communion or other churches in communion with her, until she have a native born Bishop.

Personally, I regret that the President of our Synod is not more active & more independent & that he has not a wider outlook, even to the extent of condemning Processional Services as a commemoration of the faithful departed, eastward position, or a plain cross (recommended by your father) & natural flowers near the Communion table, but I do not for granted that whereas we are allowed to elect a Bishop he will be elected & I shall rejoice, because Bishop is necessary & it generally happens that when a priest receives the grace of consecration, whatever school of thought he might belong to, he then becomes more Christlike.

Please forgive my troubling you with this long letter but I think your Lordship would like to know what has passed & I have prayerfully leave all in the hands of a Loving Father in Heaven who knows what is for the good of His Church. I should be much obliged if your Lordship would kindly show this letter to His Grace the Archbishop of Dublin who has several times written to me advising me that the Lus. C. should be independent & have a national Bishop consecrated.

Believe me Your Lordship's humble servant in Christ
 P. Jorge Lopes