

## THE LUSITANIAN CHURCH, CATHOLIC, APOSTOLIC, EVANGELICAL.

AS we have continued to receive letters from Bishops, Archbishops, and other Members of the Anglican and Old Catholic Communions, thanking us for the letters published in "The Guardian" and assuring us of their sympathy and readiness to help the Lusitanian Church, also asking us for more information, we believe it to be our duty, although difficult to find time, after a silence of six months, to write another letter to "The Guardian," thanking our Heavenly Father for the blessings and many mercies He has graciously bestowed upon this little branch of the Catholic Church.

The financial and political state of Portugal is very depressing and lamentable; for several years no Government has remained in office more than a few weeks, so that even when the members are endued with good intentions they seldom have time to do anything more than nominate an ever-increasing army of Government employees.

The majority of the members of all the late Governments are professing infidels; many scoff at religion and all set the fashion of making no religious profession.

The Roman Catholic Church has been deprived of all her revenues and privileges, and all religious Communions labour under considerable difficulties, yet these difficulties, like persecution generally, have produced a palliative; many of the clergy are now more active, more tolerant and more charitable than they were before, and it is a great satisfaction to us to be on very friendly terms with our Roman Catholic neighbours. We have been pleased to co-operate with them in works of charity, also in defending the rights of schools not supported by the State.

If you ask a man of the middle-class what religious persuasion he belongs to, a very general answer is:—I am a Republican and therefore a free-thinker and profess no religion!!

A reaction in favour of religion has already commenced in the small towns and rural population of the north and centre of Portugal, where religious services and processions (prohibited in the towns) are better attended now than they were a few years ago. The price of food and all articles has, we believe, risen more in Portugal than in any other country in Europe, some traders have amassed large fortunes in paper money, but the majority of the middle class have difficulty in providing the necessities of life and the poor are suffering serious privations; yet notwithstanding the difficulties by which we are surrounded, we have abundant reason to praise the Almighty for the blessings vouchsafed to the Lusitanian Church which has increased in numbers, has received sympathy sometimes from the authorities and often from the public.

The Church and School expenses have greatly increased, yet in answer to prayer God has supplied all our needs, the members have increased their contributions and not a week passes without our receiving some free-will offerings entirely spontaneous and generally without any solicitation on our part. The Municipality of Gaia and the Parish Boards have contributed to our School and Poor Funds and we are grateful for the help given and goodwill shown. Matins and the celebration of the Eucharist on Sunday mornings are, always well attended, also generally Vespers in the evening, but not so well in the afternoon. Special Lectures on Biblical or instructive subjects always with a religious tone have frequently been held and often crowded to excess, not only by the lower classes but by men of position. Public services have been held in the cemeteries, the only place where open-air services are allowed, on All Saints' Day and other suitable occasions, always well attended by Roman Catholics and others, all bare-headed, even Priests being present at a respectable distance from the preacher.

Last year on two occasions there was a celebration of the Holy Eucharist and a Memorial Service in commemoration of those who fell in the Great War. These services were attended by the Civil Governor of the District and his Staff, Representatives of the Municipal Corporation, Parish Boards, also a group of Officers representing several regiments, the Commanders of the Fire Brigade and of the Police, groups of Subalterns, &c. &c., all came to show their respect for the departed, and their sympathy with the Lusitanian Church. The Church was crowded, every seat occupied, and many standing in the aisles.

The School of the Lusitanian Church are always full and are patronised by many sincere Romanists because they know that their children are taught to honour their parents and to fear and love God, and that Catholic truth is inculcated by the example of the Saints who preceded us, carefully avoiding all controversy. Several ex-Roman Catholic Priests, who married in the Lusitanian Church, and left Rome for conscientious motive, seek to be admitted into the ministry of the Lusitanian Church; they don't ask for foreign support, but will not join us until our Catholic organisation be completed by the consecration of a native-born Bishop.

We endeavour to live at peace with all men and never attempt to make proselytes among the members of other branches of the Catholic Church, but to those who have been excommunicated by Rome, or who are unable to accept the unlawful terms of communion imposed by that Church, and who seek us, we ought not to refuse the help and privileges we are able to give.

Groups of Catholics in various parts of Portugal, and one large parish of well-to-do farmers, begged us to send them a Priest of the Lusitanian Church to preach and administer the Sacraments in the vulgar tongue, but we had no one to send, so this opportunity was lost.

There are seven congregations of the Lusitanian Church in the North of Portugal, comprising five organised churches and two Missions. Here the Lusitanian Church holds four neat and substantial church edifices, two of them with beautiful stained-glass windows, two parsonages, four parochial halls, three large schoolhouses with a great many classrooms. Two of these Churches are endowed with a sufficient sum to pay the modest stipend of a chief pastor.

In the South of Portugal also there are seven congregations, four organised and three Missions. Here the Lusitanian Church possesses the large church and other valuable

property known as the Convent of the ex-Marianos Carmelitas, also two other church edifices.

No advance on an extensive scale is possible until we have at least one native-born Bishop, and, for the sake of economy and efficiency, we ought to have two, one in the North, and one in the South of Portugal.

We believe that most of the Priests of the Lusitanian Church are doing a good work, and we know that several of the congregations have increased in numbers and in the amounts collected.

The Rev. José Pereira Martins, Priest-in-Charge of the church in Setubal, is most active, he not only is Minister and Schoolmaster of the growing church and school, but also the Pastor of two Missions in neighbouring towns. There, unfortunately, the congregation meets in a private house which the minister has tried to furnish and make to look like a church, but this is impossible, as the building is too small and not at all suitable. The congregation has started a building fund, but as the cost of building has so very much increased in Portugal it is still about £350 short of the required amount. The writer of this paper will willingly give £50 if others will give or collect the remaining £300 required.

We much regret we are not able to give at present the statistics for the past year, except of the two churches at Gaia under our care.

During the past year thirty-eight fresh members were registered in these two churches: six died, and nine emigrated, leaving 450 adult contributing members, not reckoning any children, except those who have been admitted to Holy Communion; also 170 contributors to the School and Poor Fund total 620 contributing members, nearly all adults.

The members of these two congregations gave or collected for the Poor Fund...	\$3,421.62
For Mission to the Heathen in China, to support the Rev. Archdeacon Ku-ho-lin in W. China, also in Portuguese Africa...	1,250.15
Contributions to the Parochial Fund...	3,293.07
Contributions to the School Fund...	8,916.25
	\$16,881.09

The WHOLE CONTRIBUTED LOCALLY (a proof it is not of foreign origin), which at a normal exchange of \$5 escudos to the pound equals £3,314s. 4d., but at the present disastrous exchange is worth here less than a quarter of the above, yet even so is a large sum to be contributed by a Church composed almost entirely of the labouring class and commercial clerks.

We praise God for His great mercies and blessings past and trust His grace for more.

DIOGO CASSELS,  
Priest-in-Charge of the Churches of St. Juan Evangelista and Salvador do Mundo, Gaia, Portugal.

## THE CHURCH BROAD.

### PROGRESS OF THE LUSITANIAN CHURCH.

From the Rev. Diogo Cassels, priest in charge of St. Juan Evangelista and St. Salvador do Mundo, Gaia, come some interesting particulars of the growth of the Lusitanian Church. "Groups of Catholics in various parts of Portugal, and one large parish of well-to-do farmers, have begged us to send them a priest of the Lusitanian Church to preach and administer the Sacraments in the vulgar tongue, but we had no one to send; so this opportunity was lost." There are altogether fourteen congregations of the Lusitanian Church, but no advance on an extensive scale is possible until we have at least one native-born Bishop; and, for the sake of economy and efficiency, we ought to have two—one in the North and one in the South of Portugal." In Setubal the congregation meets in a private house, and has started a building fund which is still about £350 short. Mr. Cassels himself is willing to give £50 if the remaining £300 can be collected. "The majority of the middle class," writes Mr. Cassels, "have difficulty in providing the necessities of life, and the poor are suffering serious privations." "A reaction in favour of religion has already commenced in the small towns and rural population of the North and Centre of Portugal, where religious services and processions are better attended now than they were a few years ago."

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