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Box 07, Folder 38 - "Impressions of the Canonisation Ceremony" (E.M.S.)

Edwin Mortimer Standing

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IMPRESSIONS OF THE CANONISATION CEREMONY

With justice the Catholic Church looks upon the Canonization of a Saint as a ~~high and~~ wonderful occasion; She honours it with a festival which combines the solemnity of a great ritual with an almost riotous expression of joy and thanksgiving.

Therefore in celebrating this victory of the Faith the Church spares neither, time, trouble nor expense. Like the rich Householder She is, She brings forth from the vast treasure store a wonderful array of things new and old. On the one hand She displays to the admiring eyes of Her children rites so ancient that they can be compared to the stirring in her age-long memory of customs forgotten by the world centuries ago; while on the other She intones these very ancient prayers in the ears of the faithful by means of loud-speakers installed in all parts of the Basilica. world.

Simply to get the great Basilica ^{of St Peter's} ready is no light task.

For days, even for weeks beforehand, workmen have been busy at the decorations. Enormous coloured tapestries, over 100 ft. high, have been hung up on both sides of the aisle at regular intervals. At the Eastern end of the Basilica, more than 200 yds. from the front entrance, (under the famous Cathedra or throne of St Peter's) is set up a throne for the Pope, behind which is hung a cloth of gold. or

Other pictures too have been prepared by the Vatican artists - huge pictures far more than life size - one representing the martyrdom of Cardinal Fisher and the other of Sir Thomas More. Another picture represents the latter's farewell to his wife and family as he is being taken away to be imprisoned in the Tower . And there is also one depicting Cardinal Fisher in the act of presenting to the mother of Henry the Eighth the plan for the construction of St. John's College , Cambridge . These last two pictures are done on large banners to be carried in the procession .

It is clear that the Holy Father regards the canonisation of these two Englishmen - the first to receive that honour since the Reformation - as a specially great event. For in the evening ~~the~~ of the canonisation the outside of St Peters was also illuminated ; an honour which is not given to every new saint . No words can describe the splendour ~~off~~ the great basilica thus doubly illuminated at the same time . It reminds one of those awful and mysterious creatures in the Apocalypse who are described as being " full of eyes within and without " .

Paragraph to be
inserted in "Impressions
of Canonization Ceremony"
on page 2 - after the description
of the illuminations in St Peter's

Up in the air

Up in the air, 2

above the Chair of St Peter, has been placed ~~a more than life~~
^a sized picture of the Saint to be canonized. At the beginning
of the ceremony this is covered with a veil; but ^{when} ~~the~~ ^{the}
Pope has read the actual words of canonization ~~and~~ just when the
Gloria is being sung the veil is taken away. The Saints ^{are} ~~is~~ seen
up in the air surrounded by innumerable lights - fit symbol of
souls in glory [Here insert paragraph on back of page I]

Perhaps the most striking of all the preparations are those made in connection with the illumination of the interior of St. Peters. When one remembers that the roof is 145 ft. high, and the interior of the dome 260 feet above that, one realizes that it is no mean engineering feat to hang up lights all round the interior of the moulding. There are literally hundreds of thousands of lights, arranged in rows of huge candelabras, each containing thirty or more separate lamps. The disposition of the illumination follows the main lines of the building - along the colossal pillars and round the vast arches and the stupendous circle of the dome (430 ft. in circumference). They are so arranged in fact, that when they are lit, the whole structure of the ^{church} building - the vastest ~~church~~ in Christendom - stands out in dazzling and magnificent lines of light.

The ceremony begins at 8 a.m. with the great Procession from the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican to St Peters. Long before the hour, however, the great Piazza in front of St Peters is black with people crossing it. To gather a crowd of 65,000 people into one building requires some organising, but the organisation is perfect. A barricade - lined with soldiers - is erected right across the great square in front of St. Peters. At certain intervals in this barricade are openings, at each of which a board is

erected on a post. Each board is pasted over with three or four large sheets of paper, each of a different colour; so that, on coming near to the barricade, the crowd is automatically sorted out into various streams by the colours of their tickets. ~~Then~~ ~~there are~~ hundreds of stewards - immaculately dressed in evening dress, with white gloves - who sub-divide these main streams still further, sorting them out to this or that entrance, according to the particular colour and number of ticket.

Laurel leaves are also used to strew the ground over which the procession will pass. The use of laurel in these festivities is of course of pagan origin and is only one of many such customs - innocent in themselves - which the Church, in her tremendous vitality has absorbed into herself, bending them to her own uses.

A crowd ^{is} ~~was~~ waiting in the portico, between the Piazza and the main entrance of St. Peter's, for it is along this portico, that the great procession has to pass on its way from the Vatican buildings to St. Peter's, and to this crowd I joined myself. I was in an excellent position facing the door through which the Procession was to emerge. The door was open and revealed on the other side of the passage, to which it gave access, a large equestrian statue of the Emperor Constantine (~~done~~ in Bernini's most flamboyant style,) riding a very vivacious horse standing on its hind legs.

~~The procession begins in~~ ^{leaving} the Sistine Chapel ~~and descends~~ ^{the} "Scala Regia" to pass out through the door just mentioned, thence along the portico and in to the Church by the Central Door.

~~It was a bright sunny morning and as~~ Each section of the long pageant emerges from the dark doorway, under the hoofs of that prancing horse, ~~they stepped~~ into the sunlight causing the colours of their various costumes to flash out with rainbow brilliance. And such colours too! ^{in/} Excepting the cities of the East I have never seen such a dazzling blaze of colours. In the eastern bazaar it is a motley display of colour, but here every colour and every costume has its special significance. There were all kinds of gay and gallant uniforms and ecclesiastical costumes. It seemed as if there were gathered there men from all ages since the time of Our Lord, representing as it were cross-sections taken in the various centuries through which the Church has lived her unending life. ~~Even the Priest at the altar was wearing a dress, which strange to us, would not have been strange to a Roman, for it was in fact essentially the dress of the ancient Roman.~~

~~that first garb of Antiquity had been worn.~~ (We all know how a past period will leave behind one feature like a fossil; how Beef-Eaters wear the uniform of guards under Henry VIII or Blue-coat Boys wear the garments of boys under Edward VI. But here was not a question of one or two survivals in incongruous clothes. All the generations of men were here, and most of them still playing a part congruous to their original purpose. The Franciscans, in their brown and corded frocks, were simply peasants of the Middle Ages; unaltered since St. Francis changed clothes with a peasant. The men who immediately surround the Pope, and carry his throne, seemed quite familiar figures in square-cut garments of Genoese velvet; for we have seen them in hundreds of pictures. They were simply men of the Renaissance, whose dark red garments have glowed in countless canvases of Titian or

(one could omit this quote from Chesterton if too long)

5

Veronese. In a ring outside these stood men so startlingly like academy pictures of Essex and Raleigh that for a moment one might suppose it was a highly historical carnival; yet these were not fancy dresses but the ancient ceremonial dress of old orders

of knighthood or offices of piety handed down for three hundred years. They stood in their stiff ruffs and ribbed trunk hose with all that easy gravity of men wearing their own proper clothes, as if they were standing about in the court of Philip II of Spain. So it was right down the ages; there were later types with the knee-breeches and court swords of the eighteenth century, and others in an evening dress to us rather reminiscent of the nineteenth century; and behind, the huge twentieth century crowd, with the clothes of our day. Pageantry, as I say, is little enough in itself; but if you are talking of pageantry, there never was a pageant in the world like this; for it is a procession of all the centuries, not of actors dressed up as dead things, but of things really dating from those centuries and yet alive. As the vast throng moved by, I caught a glimpse beyond of the coloured image of Our Lady, and the words went through my mind: "All generations shall call me blessed." * [G.K. "Resurrection of Rome"]

The Church is indeed like a golden thread joining all the epochs together, herself of no particular epoch being not for an age but for all time.

~~Prayers~~ Minor. Everyone in the Procession carried a lighted candle, which had been presented to them by the attendants together with a little book of prayers in honour of the new saints. There were thirteen different groups representing the Mendicant Orders alone. Then came the Monastic Orders, the Dominicans making a special impression as they passed in their white habits flashed dazzlingly white into the sunlight.

6

who were followed by ^{after these} ~~Then came~~ the Canons Regular ~~after which came~~ the representatives of the Secular Clergy. The Procession flowed on and on steadily from out of the door beneath the man on the prancing steed, with no sign of abatement. Now a large umbrella shaped object appeared in the doorway, about the size of a ^{a army bell tent} ~~bell~~, a multicoloured umbrella made of radiating strips of different colours, the whole surmounted with a golden ball and a cross. This "ombrellino" was preceded by a man carrying a picture of Our Lady in a tremendously ornate gilt frame. Surrounding the "Ombrellino", as a cortège, were a number of persons carrying large candles and one a huge golden Cross. Choir boys came too singing divinely. This was followed by another "Ombrellino" of similar size and shape but different in colour. This too was preceded by a man bearing, not a picture this time, ~~but a piece of wood carved to represent a tiara with two keys below it, all covered with gilt.~~ ^{and then a kind} A third "Ombrellino" with a similar cortège followed. These three "ombrellinos" representing the three Great Basilicas of Rome: St Peter's, St John Lateran and Santa Maria Maggiore. What the precise symbolism of the umbrella is ^{I could not find out} ~~I don't know~~; but it suggests the protecting shelter of the Churches - "as a hen gathers her chickens under her wing."

In the next part of the Procession came groups of people carrying large banners. Each banner ^{bore} ~~bears~~ a picture of ^{one} the ~~Saint or~~ Saints about to be canonized. ^{one of} ~~one of~~ ^{Card. Fisher. The} ~~other~~ ^{other} ~~of~~ ^{St Tho More.}

And still the unending procession kept pouring out under the heels of that prancing horse. It seemed almost as if all that continuous extravagance of colour had startled it into a permanently shying position.

Now comes a burst of music louder than before. It is the Papal Choir and ~~now~~ a fresh phase of the procession becomes

7

visible in the doorway. Bishops' mitres - a whole bevy of them can be seen above the heads of the crowd, white against the dark background. In front of the Bishops come Deacons bearing the objects to be used in the Papal Mass, including the Tiara and a red mitre. ^{former} The ~~tiara~~ is a wonderful object ~~seen quite near~~ - like a tower of pearl ornamented with jewels.

The Bishops and Abbots have now descended the steps leading from the door of Constantine to the Portico, but there are more behind - more and yet more. Still they come, two or three abreast. They extend now all the way from the door to the main entrance of the Basilica. Imagine it! Forty yards of mitred Bishops, Abbots and Cardinals ~~two and three~~ deep. The Archbishops, ^{and} even the Cardinals have the same shaped mitres as the bishops; the differences in rank are shown by the quality of the material. The Bishops' mitre is of a simple white calico: that of the Cardinals of ornamented silk; that of the Bishop of Rome is red ornamented with gold.

It was now getting very near ~~the time for~~ the culminating part of the Procession - ~~the appearance of the Holy Father himself~~. ^{his Holiness} As soon as ~~the Holy Father~~ has entered through the side door ^{a great} and ~~the shouting~~ begins, ^{and famous} the silver trumpets blaze forth, and ~~they~~ play all the time the Holy Father is being carried in state down the centre of the Basilica, until he comes to the gilded chair which is waiting for him in front of the altar.

It is not easy to describe the august effect of the long, majestic chords ^{which issue} from these silver trumpets, ~~which~~ cleaving their way through the air above the confused noise and shouting. They seem to symbolise the Living Voice of the Church, speaking - clear and majestic and full of harmony - from its supernatural eminence, across the confused clamour and tumult of ~~the ideas and theories~~ of the day.

8

The Holy Father is carried on a throne - the Sedia Gestatoria ^{borne} on the shoulders of about a dozen men in scarlet costumes. Above him is the glorious Baldacchino or canopy, carried on poles by four other bearers. On either side of the throne, on which the Pope is being borne, there are two magnificent Flabelli - or peacock fans. These are just the sort of thing one sees held

by slaves, in pictures of oriental potentates. They add a touch of oriental splendour to the ~~surroundings~~ ^{Spectacle} and seem to remind one that the Church is for the East as well as for the West.

^{As he is borne along}
~~In his progress~~ His Holiness inclines his head slightly ~~now~~ to this side now to that, smiling benignly on ~~the~~ ^{Crowd} enthusiastic children. In his left hand he carries a burning candle, while with his right he blesses the ~~crowd~~ ^{people} as he goes along (as the Rubric says: "dextera benedicens populo".)

The first thing that struck ~~me~~ ^{one} when the Holy Father comes near enough for ~~us~~ ^{one} to see his features ~~was~~ ^{is} the extraordinary majesty and dignity of his bearing. He looks a King indeed. And next ~~I~~ ^{one} ~~was~~ ^{is} impressed by his massive and scholarly head - the head of a thinker; ^{the author of all those wonderful Encyclicals.} And then, when he came quite near, the thing that impressed ~~me~~ ^{one} most ~~was~~ ^{is} the calm benignity of his expression. ~~It is indeed a moving spectacle to see this kindly and happy relationship between him and the crowd, as between a Father and his children.~~

*

The ceremony begins with the Act of Obedience, in which the most important ecclesiastics present pay homage to the Pope, the Cardinals by kissing the Holy Father's hands, the Patriarchs and Archbishops by kissing a cross of silk on his knees, the Abbots General by kissing his feet.

*

9

The Act of Obedience over the Cardinal Procurator of the Canonization, accompanied by a Master of Ceremonies and a Consistorial Magistrate, approach the throne. Kneeling the Advocate says: - (in Latin of course)

"Holy Father, the Very Reverend Cardinals here present earnestly petitions Your Holiness to insert in the list of Saints of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and order that by all the faithful be venerated as a Saint, the Blessed ..Thomas..More. . . . ~~or~~ ~~the~~ .

Then after various special prayers The Assisting Prelate replies

~~responds~~ that His Holiness is convinced that the requested Canonization is pleasing to God, and will pronounce final sentence.*

All the faithful then arise. The Pope, remaining seated on the Cathedra in quality of Doctor and infallible Head of the Church, solemnly utters the following words:-

"In honour of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, for the exaltation of the Catholic Faith and the spread of the Christian Religion, by the authority of Our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, of Ourselves given after mature deliberation and having repeatedly implored divine assistance, with the favourable advice of Our Venerable Brethren, Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, of the Patriarchs, Archbishops resident

in Rome, We decree that the Blessed Thomas More is a Saint, and enrol him (~~on her~~) in the list of the Saints: ordering that his (~~on her~~) memory on every birth anniversary, be devoutly celebrated by the Universal Church. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen".

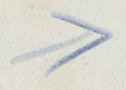
The Holy Father then rises and intones the Te Deum ,
adding at the end of it an invocation to the new Saint . After
this the Cardinal Deacon sings the Confiteor - including ^{also} an invoc-
ation to the new Saint ^{Then} and the Holy Father then gives the Papal
Benediction .

This finishes the part of the ceremony which is directly
concerned with the Canonization . The action now proceeds at once
without any break to the Papal Mass, which is, as it were, organically
united with the ceremony so far described .

[Note .

This article could be
made to finish here .]

over



11

The Papal Mass at a Canonization is a very long and complicated ~~ceremony~~ ^{ritual} and would take a whole book to describe in detail . The tremendous current of the Liturgy sweeps onwards hour after hour , and the action is so manysided and so complicated that one wonders how one single mind ^{could} can comprehend it all . It comes to an end about ~~at~~ one o' clock ; so that after five, or sometimes six hours of it the actors and the spectators in this divine drama are feeling tired enough .

After he has read the Last Gospel the Pope descends to the foot of the Altar where he remains a short time in prayer . As soon as he has finished a Cardinal puts on his mitre , ring and gloves . Meanwhile the Sedia or portable throne has been brought forward and the Pope takes his seat in it, no doubt thankful the long labour is finished . Then his mitre is removed and the Tiara put in its place . The Pope is lifted up; and the ^{outgoing} procession gets under way again .

Suddenly some one in the crowd cries out "^{E viva} Viva il Papa " ; and like an explosion the cheering and clapping breaks out . Such cheering , such waving of hands , handkerchiefs , caps , papers — anything . It seems such a striking contrast to the intense dignity of the long liturgical action .

The cheering continues until the Sedia , with its precious burden , and the peacock fans and all the cortege ~~around him~~ have passed, through the door, into the mysterious seclusion of the Vatican palace — and the long ceremony is over .

Thus once again Rome has spoken .

As we pass slowly with the crowd down the great basilica we admire again the dazzling galaxy of innumerable lights on the roof far above our heads . Soon the electricians will be taking them down , for they are but for a day . But the Saints , at whose canonisation we have been assisting , can never be taken down from the celestial firmament - where they will shine like stars for ever .

Saint Thomas More , Saint John Fisher pray for us !

Pray for England !

Thus once again Rome has spoken.
As we pass slowly with the crowd down the great hall
we admire again the dazzling galaxy of innumerable lights on the
roof far above our heads. Soon the electricians will be taking them
down, for they are but for a day. But the saints, at whose canon-
ization we have been assisting, can never be taken down from the
celestial firmament where they will shine like stars for ever.
Saint Thomas More, Saint John Fisher pray for us!
Pray for England!

E. Martimer Standing
c/o Mrs Silcock
Ching-tu
Lake View
Edgeware
Middlesex

SORRY ABOUT THE CARBON LOOKING GLASS WORDS ON THE OTHER SIDE . FANCY BEING CAUGHT BY THAT OLD RICK . AGE IS NO PROOF AGAINST FOLLY I HAVE LONG DISCOVERED . I AM STILL READING TEILHARD AND WITH THE MOST DISTURBING RESULTS . AFTER STRUGGLING FOR TEN YEARS TO BELIEVE IN ADAM (BEFORE I JOINED THE CHURCH) NOW IT SEEMS THAT PERHAPS HE NEVER EXISTED AS ONE MAN BUT A GROUP . (PERSONALLY I AM FOR KEEPING ADAM NOW I'VE COME TO BELIEVE IN HIM) OF COURSE THAT BUSINESS OF THE RIB OF ADAM AND THE CREATION OF EVE IS A BIT OF A TALL STROY AS IT STANDS . (WHAT DOES EVE THINK ABOUT IT ? I EXPECT SHE SAYS " WHY BOTHER ABOUT IT ANYWAY ... IT'S ALL ANCIENT HISTORY ANYHOW .. WHAT MATTERS IS WHAT THE PRESENT EVES DO !!)

I AM HOPING TO GO DOWN TOWN NEXT WEEK OR TH WEEK AFTER AND GET THE L TEST BOOK ON THE NEW MASS SO THAT MY GOOD FRIEND SHARON AND I CAN GET TO THE REVISION OF THE MASS CARDS (SHARON IS A CHARMING YOUNG THING WITH FOUR DELIGHTFUL CHILDREN AND A HUSBAND WHO IS ON THE STOCK EXCHANGE ... AND SHE COMES ONCE A WEEK TO HELP ME OUT WITH VARIOUS ODD JOBS) I HOPE CARRIGAN CONOR IS DOING WELL AND HAS MADE A GOOD RECOVERY FROM HIS OP .

I HEARD RECENTLY FROM FATHER COELHO'S BISHOP IN AJMER INDIA AND HE TOO HAS NOT A GOOD WORD TO SAY FOR HIM . IN A LETTER FROM VALERIE THE OTHER DAY SHE SAYS HE HAS JUST STARTED TWO NEW SCHOOLS .. SO HE MUST HAVE FIVE OR SIX NOW UNDER HIS CONTROL . HE SAYS IT IS A NON PROFITING UNDERTAKING - BUT HE HAS THE MOST LUXUSIOUS CARS FIVE OR SIX OF THEM, INCLUDING THE SCHOOL BUSES TO COLLECT THE CHILDREN . NO DOUBT ABOUT IT HE HAS A VERY GOOD BUSINESS HEAD AND IS AN ADEPT AT RAISING THE WOND FROM THE BANES) WHO I IMAGINE ARE IMPRESSED BY HIS CLERICAL COLLAR ! AND IMAGINE THE BISHOPS ARE BEHIND HIM .

WE HAVE JUST RUN INTO A SPELL OF REALLY WARM WEATHER THE FIRST THIS YEAR SO I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG IT WILL LAST .

TODAY IS MARCH 27th AND SO WE HAD SOME MORE PROMISED CHANGES
IN THE MASS .. A LOT MORE BITS PUT INTO ENGLISH INCLUDING THE
CANON , WHICH WAS RATHER BREATH TAKING .

I GOT A LETTER FROM THE VILLAIN OF A PUBLISHER IN FRESNO
WHO OWES ME A BUNCH OF ROYALTIES . HE EVEN ADMITS TO OWING ME
OVER \$1000 worth , SO IT IS PROBABLY MORE THAN THAT . PITY I DID
NOT HAVE AN ABLE FINANCIER LIKE YOU BEHIND ME TO ACT AS A SHIELD
AGAINST THESE RAVENING WOLVES !

I HOPE THE WEATHER HAS CHANGED AND THAT YOU HAVE BEEN
ABLE TO SOW ALL THE SEED THAT YOU WANT TO (CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT THE
PARABLE OF THE SOER WOULD BE LIKE IN MODERN TERMS WITH ONE OF
THOSE BIG MACHINES SUCH AS YOU HAVE --NOT HALF SO STRIKING AND
POETIC .)

I SAW THE CHIEF ENGINEER YESTERDAY AND HE TELLS ME THAT
THE NEW LAUNDRY HAS BEEN BUILT AND IS ALREADY WORKING ON THE
OTHER SIDE OF THE BUILDING . IT WAS NEWS TO ME THAT CARDINAL
CUSHING HAD FINANCED A NEW LAUNDRY . BUT TO KNOW HOW TO RUN
IT SUCCESSFULLY IS ANOTHER THING ! HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO DUBLIN
LATELY ? GEE HOW I WOULD JUST LOVE TO LOOK IN AND SEE YOU ALL !
WHAT A JOY TO SEE A SIMPLE GUY SITTING ON HIS ASS ANND CART
WITH A PILE OF TURF GOING ALONG THE ROAD SMOKING HIS PIPE
IN SERENEXITY AND LEISURE IN STEAD OF DASHING ALONG SO FAST
HE HASN'T TIME TO SEE ANYTHING .

WELL CARISSIMO THERE GOES THE BELL FOR THE AFTERN ON
ROSBARY . WE OLD GUYS ON FLOOR TWO SAY THE ROSARY TOGETHER AT
3.30 p.m. every day LEAD BY "THE CAPTAIN "A RETIRED CAPTAIN OF
A TUG)BOAT WITH A WOODEN LEG LIKE LONG JOHN SILVER ! (WHO DID
NOT USUALLY SAY THE ROSARY !!)

ALL THE BEST NOW AND AGAIN MILLE GRAZIE FOR YOUR LETTER

WITH LOVE TO EVE AND ALL
PAX DOMINI

YOURS EVER