

On Being At Home.

Home is where the heart is. The Mother is the font and source of the reciprocal love of the family. Wherever you go in the world the one other place in which you will always be at home is a Catholic church. It is the abiding place of Supreme Love, a unit of the Mystical Body. You and everyone there are blood-brothers in Christ, coheirs of the Kingdom. One special spot in it is set apart to honor her who is the Queen of the heart as well as of heaven.

The Catholic Tradition.

Love builds the church and sustains it, whatever may be its physical conformation the essential parts are, - the sanctuary for the offering of the sacred mysteries, and the nave for the accomodation of the people who participate in them. Local conditions may determine further elaborations, for architecture is some index of the culture of a people. Traditionally, the location took into account the points of the compass. Architecture still retains these designations even though the church is not orientated. The altar stood at the East end to symbolize Christ, the Light of the World.

The Lady of the House.

"The Lady," "The Lady of the House" are expressions common to every language. They are instinct with reverence. Nor do they ever imply any displacement of the "Master." The coming of Gothic in the Middle Ages effected many modifications in church architecture. One of these was the extension around and beyond the altar, technically called the apse. Here were built radial, or apsidal chapels in honor of different saints. Generally, the largest of these was beyond the main altar, at the easternmost end, and was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, the Queen of all Saints. This was especially true of England, once called "Mary's Dowry." Quite naturally it came to be called The Lady Chapel, a shorter form for the Chapel of Our Lady.

Come Rack! Come Rope!

At the Reformation the sacrilegious onslaught fell heavy upon these sacred shrines. Here was evidence of idolatry, they said. On Tyburn Hill and in the Tower of London a martyr's death came to those Catholics who refused to deny their allegiance to their Master and their love for their Lady. The caption of this paragraph is the title of an historical novel by Robert Hugh Benson. This, as well as his "By What Authority" and "The King's Achievement," offers engaging reading on the history of these times.

Revival and Irony.

The Protestant tradition about the honor we pay to Mary continues even to our own day. Nonetheless signs multiply of a better understanding of the place of the Blessed Mother in the economy of salvation. Long since the Anglicans have tried to repair some of the ravages of their forefathers. More and more the Protestant Episcopalians include a Lady Chapel or a Lady Altar in their churches. Even the Methodists at a recent convention deplored the absence of a liturgy in their services. Strange irony that some Catholics see in all this only a diletanteism. We may well leave it to the Lady of the House to use this trend to welcome home her erring children.

The Lady of the Campus.

It is more than a unique coincidence that the Founder built here a church in the tradition of the Middle Ages. (Saint Patrick's Cathedral, New York, is the only other church we know of in this country that has a Lady Chapel.) Nor can anyone doubt the efficacy of his having consecrated this spot to the Mother of God as he knelt in the snow now nearly one hundred years ago. These days of May you are kneeling in adoration before the Host exposed on the altar in the Lady Chapel. A prayer of thanksgiving for the traditions that envelop you, the security that surrounds you, will surely be on your lips; and a prayer of reparation for the outrages that multiply in other lands against both Son and Mother.

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The editor thanks Father L.V. Broughal, C.S.C., for this timely contribution on Our Lady.

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