

The Restoration Movement

As the Old Catholic Movement combines the tradition of the great spiritual leaders of the latter ages of the Christian Church it has also effectively united the factors in Catholic Christendom that Hague untiringly labored to preserve the first administrative principles of the Apostolic Church--to hold in violate "the faith once for all delivered to the Saints." The undaunted spirits of the great Christian revolutionaries, the Port Royalists, the so-called Jansenists, the Mariavites and many others have served to prove by their struggle against ecclesiastical intolerance and pharaseeism, that in every age within the church they loved the same struggle has been manifest in the lives of but a handful of people at all times--the torch they carried from age to age many have been dimmed at times but it has always been carried forward, never dropped, never entirely extinguished. Today their efforts are merged in handfuls of many people in almost every part of the world to whom the sympathetic hands of the great Oriental Christian Church lends strength.

Added to the growing Old Catholic Movement in America were the independent Portuguese Catholics under the Rt. Reverend Bishop Antonio Rodriguez of Massachusetts in 1917 and the appointment of the Rt. Reverend Joseph Zielonka of New Jersey, after his reception into union with several Polish congregations in 1924. The joint Encyclical the Old Catholic Bishops in America in 1925, in which an outline of a really Christian society was advocated, met with such approval by representatives of the Eastern Orthodox Church that the Metropolitan John Bienipotentiary-Delegate of the Holy Synod, of Russia, representing 127 Bishops and Archbishops in Russia, received the Old Catholic Church in America into union with that body in the same year. In 1933, under an agreement jointly entered into, the Orthodox Archbishop of Prague and Czechoslovakia, Savvatios, under the Orthodox Patriarch of Constanople, placed the Orthodox Czechoslovaks in America under the jurisdiction of the American Old Catholic Archbishop while at the same time Savvatios was named Protector of the Old Catholics in Czechoslovakia. Thus with a threefold rapproachment with the church of the East a practical and organize unity of a great part of Catholic Christendom has been realized by Old Catholics under a program inaugurated by Archbishop Mathew of England in 1910. Underlying the terms of this union are the fundamental principles of the Old Catholicism--An acceptance of the doctrinal points of unity prevailing in the undivided Christian Church prior to the year 1054 A.D., i.e., a belief in Seven Sacraments and in the dogmatic Decrees of the Seven Ecumenical Councils.

Thus the Old Catholic Church in America though autonomous and self governed by its own synod of bishops is an organic part of the Old Catholic Church in the Western world and the great Orthodox Church of the East, united in the faith of the first century Christian fellowship and differing only in the language and customs of its different units.

The American movement under Archbishop Francis, as well as the units of the Old Catholic Church in England, Australia, Canada, unoccupied France and South America, comprise with the following church what is known as the Orthodox-Old Catholic union--The Old Catholic Church in Poland (Archbishop Jan Michael Kowalski, Felicianow, Bodzanow), The Old Catholic Church in France (Bishop Mary Mark Fatoine, Nantes). The Old Catholic Church in Lituania (Bishop Felix Taluba, Kaunas), The Old Catholic Church in Yugoslavia (Bishop Marko Kalogjero, Zagreb), The Old Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia (Archbishop Savvatios, Prague), The Old Catholic Church in Portugal and the Azores (Bishop Antono Rodriguez, Lisbon).* In all these churches the usual temporal dignities and appointments of ecclesiastical superiors are voluntarily relinquished for a common life with the lesser clergy and the laity. An evangelical spirit dominates the traditional expression of Catholic worship, the greatest distinguishment is considered to be that earned by the hard labor of one's hands in work dedicated wholly to the Glory of God.

* The status of the church in Germany is undetermined due to its extreme nationalistic characteristics. The dominant

party of this Church which finds union with the "Old Roomsch Kirch" of Holland and the "Christian Catholic" Church of Switzerland has been led by its chiliastic chauvinism into the orbits of Nazi-ism and has organized itself into the "National Catholic Church of Germany." Having no official connections with the Orthodox Old Catholic Church, this group of Old Catholics have granted sought-for recognition to certain representatives of the Anglican Church, causing no little concern and confusion to the pious faithful of both the Anglican and Orthodox-Old Catholic communions.