

Catholic Opinions

51839

Room 714, Myrick Building.

MEETINGS MONDAYS AT 3.

There exists a widespread belief that the Catholic Church is officially opposed to Woman Suffrage. In a reply to a direct question concerning the Church's attitude, His Eminence James Cardinal Gibbons under date of March 27, 1914, stated: "The Church has taken no official attitude on the subject, but leaves the matter to the good judgment of her children as to what they think best. The statement that the church is opposed to the enfranchisement of women is incorrect."

II.

Most Rev. Patrick W. Riordan, Archbishop of San Francisco, Cal., in a letter to his pastors read in all the churches of his archdiocese, on Sunday, August 11th, 1912, said: "While our Catholic people, with the high ideals which the church holds before them, ought to be models of right living and exemplars of the highest Christian virtue, they should also possess a high degree of civic virtue. The enjoyment of the privileges and blessings of citizenship impose correlative duties and obligations which no citizen should ignore. Among these duties the chiefest is voting. . . . In California Woman's Suffrage is now an accomplished fact. Women ought not therefore to permit their traditional love for the virtues of the home, their innate dignity and becoming reserve to prevent them from discharging the chiefest of civic obligations. I wish, therefore, that you would take a seasonable opportunity of advising our new electors to register that they may be at all times prepared to give their services in making California a model state, and of handing down to their children that come after them a tradition of righteousness and of unselfish patriotism."

III.

Rt. Rev. Paul P. Rhode, Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago, Ill., on hearing that many foreign women hesitated to register without the sanction of the church, issued the following letter, which was read in all the churches of Chicago, on Sunday, March 15th, 1914: "Catholic women of Illinois, in complete harmony with the teachings of the church, should all accept the new prerogative of their citizenship with which they have been invested by the extension of suffrage to them by law. Conditions demand that they be not reluctant to exercise their right of voting, but, on the contrary, that they take a lively interest in the political life of the country. . . . Let the Catholic women remember the debt of gratitude to society and to the state for the benefits which they and all enjoy under its protection. When entering the polling place or voting booth no other motives should actuate them than the welfare of the state, the good of society and above all, the protection of the family life of the nation and of sound principles."

IV.

Rev. Joseph H. McMahon, Ph.D., Rector of The Church of "Our Lady of Lourdes," New York, in a lecture delivered January 15th, 1913, said in part: "It is well for

Catholics particularly to take note of this, as far as there is a tradition, it is in favor of Woman Suffrage. . . . To say that the exercise of the right to vote will mean that a woman must neglect her home duties is to utter a smug commonplace, that shows how little given to reflection we are. . . . Purify your social life, but do not be guilty of the stupidity of saying that the exercise of the right to vote would degrade any virtuous woman in the world. As long as you send your daughters out into the busy market place with all its dangers and expect them to escape the pitfalls, which are, alas, too common, please do not commit intellectual suicide by declaring that they cannot vote because their modesty or reserve might suffer."

V.

Rev. John A. Ryan of St. Paul's Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., author of the "Living Wage," stated under date of March 24, 1914: "I am in favor of Woman Suffrage, because I believe that its net results would be beneficial to the community as a whole, and to working women in particular."

VI.

Rev. J. E. Ross, C.S.P., of Chicago, Ill., author of "Consumers and Wage Earners," said: "It is not only just and proper to give women the vote, it is good policy, for we need the influx of their humanity in dealing with our problems. Man has by long absorption in commerce been trained to think in terms of property, whereas woman by immemorial custom has been trained to think in terms of humanity, the home, husband, and children. I would give women suffrage for three reasons: that they need it for their own spiritual and intellectual development as well as for a protection against man-made laws, that men need that women should vote, and that there is no reason against giving them the suffrage." (From the "New World," Chicago, Ill., January 9, 1914.)

VII.

Rev. Geo. M. Searle, C.S.P., of San Francisco, Cal., under date of April 16th, 1914: "It is true that I am and have been all along in favor of woman suffrage. I regard the argument so commonly advanced about woman's sphere being the home as simply and obviously absurd. One might as well say that the doctor's sphere is his office or the hospital or his patients' homes. The point is that no time needs to be taken from one's regular duties in order to vote. It is quite plain that with regard to moral questions the interests of morality would be advanced by woman suffrage."

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