

Nov^y 1922.

A New Passionist Foundation.

Our readers will be interested to learn that at the invitation of the Right Rev. Dr. Cowgill, Bishop of Leeds, our Fathers have purchased an ancient Catholic mansion near Ilkley, in Yorkshire. We subjoin an account of this new foundation taken from "The Yorkshire Observer," November 27th, 1922.

HISTORIC MANSION FOR A CATHOLIC MONASTERY.

MIDDLETON LODGE.

PURCHASE BY PASSIONIST FATHERS.

An event of outstanding interest to Roman Catholics, not only in Yorkshire but in the North generally, is the acquisition by the Passionist Fathers, of Highgate Hill, London, of the historic Middleton Lodge, which, situated on the north side of the River Wharfe and commanding a fine view of Ilkley, was once a Catholic stronghold, but in recent years has been in non-Catholic though sympathetic hands.

Included in the property purchased are adjoining farm land, a number of cottages, the house known as Tivoli, a notable "Calvary" retreat, an open-air shrine containing representations of the fourteen stations of the Cross carved in stone and situated at intervals on paths shaped like a large Latin cross, with a grotto surmounted by three wooden crosses. The shrine, which is familiar to visitors to Ilkley, was constructed by Mr. Peter Middleton over one hundred years ago.

A BULWARK OF CATHOLICISM.

Middleton Lodge was one of the bulwarks of Catholicism in the North in the old pe~~ri~~ days. For generations it was the home of the Middleton family, stalwart Catholics, who maintained the faith during the dark days of persecution, and provided the means of religious consolation for the Catholics of the district, who were always a numerous body. The Middletons had their own private chaplain, who celebrated Mass in a chapel attached to the Lodge. The Catholic residents of the neighbourhood, as well as the members of the Middleton family, worshipped there until the erection of the Church of the Sacred Heart, Ilkley, in 1879, though for some years afterwards Mass continued to be said at the Lodge. The last time Mass was said there was about thirty years ago, while the late Father Watson was chaplain.

The late Dr. Robert Collyer has some interesting notes on Middleton Lodge in his work, "Ilkley, Ancient and Modern." "The upper chamber of the Lodge," he writes, "was formerly used as a chapel in which its occupants could worship in secret according to their ancestral faith. Nor was it without cost that they persisted in their devotions to the Roman See, for in addition to the general obloquy and social persecution to which Roman Catholics were subjected for generations after the Reformation the Middletons had to bear heavy monetary penalties, as shown by the formidable pile of papers referring to 'Fines for Recusancy' still preserved in the family archives."

TRAINING OF PRIESTS.

The last Lord of the Manor of Middleton was Mr. George Marmaduke Middleton, who died after the family had left the estate, parts of which have been sold at various times. The Middleton Lodge portion of the estates was bought by the late Mr. Sidney Kellett, of Ilkley and Bradford, for the Middleton trustees, and the property was put up for sale in London some months ago by Mr. Kellett's executors, but was withdrawn. The price paid by the Passionist Fathers has not been disclosed publicly. Their settlement of Middleton is the first by their Order in the Leeds Diocese. It is understood that, besides using the Lodge for the purposes of a monastery, the Catholic fathers, who are a congregation of missionary priests, may establish a family there for the training of priests for their Order.

Naturally, the reversion of Middleton Lodge to Catholic ownership has aroused considerable interest, and has caused the greatest satisfaction to members of the community. Yesterday was a red-letter day at this historic mansion, Mass being said there for the first time for thirty years. The celebrant was the Very Rev. Malachy Gavin, head of the English province of the Passionist Order, who has directed the negotiations for the purchase.

VENERABLE ASSOCIATIONS.

Preaching afterwards at the Holy Catholic Church, Father Gavin said: "This is just as proud a day for you as it is for us, for I have just said Mass this morning for the first time after all these years in that place which must be so dear in its recollections to you all. I am sure that you all heartily rejoice with us that that dear old place, so venerable in its associations for the Catholics of the neighbourhood and county, has come again into Catholic hands."

Father Gavin said that in all transactions relating to the transfer of the property they had found Mrs. Kellett, the former owner, to be the soul of kindness, cordiality and courtesy. He knew she rejoiced that it was passing into Catholic hands. It was to the honour of her and her late husband that during the whole of their tenancy they had scrupulously preserved that portion of the building which had been used as a Catholic chapel and had never allowed it to be used for the purpose of amusement.

Father Gavin thanked Canon Wood and Father McGuire, of Hkley, for their assistance in the negotiations and for their cordial welcome, and added: "We ask you heartily to join with us in thanking God for what we trust will be a great boon to you as well as to us. We have not started as a parish; we have only come to the hillside, as it were, to watch and pray, but at the same time we hope to be helpful not only to you Catholics here but to the Catholics of the whole of the Diocese of Leeds, and in that way repay as best we can the confidence placed in us and the enthusiastic welcome we have received both from the Bishop and the priests of the diocese."

In an early issue we hope to give a photograph of our new Retreat.

THE PASSION • PLAY

— AT —
OBER-AMMERGAU.

DURING the year just past, the eyes of the Catholic world were turned towards Ober-Ammergau. The villagers were performing their famous Passion Play. All who have seen it confess it leaves an indelible memory and gives an unforgettable experience.

Ober-Ammergau is a little village with 2,000 inhabitants. They are engaged in agriculture and wood-carving, and their simple homes nestle under the Bavarian Alps. The river Ammer runs south-west of the village. In some places it is very shallow and as it makes its way over the bed of rocky stones its noise is the only sound that disturbs the silence.

Lourdes and Ober-Ammergau are alike in their remoteness and solitude. Both are far from the centres of the great world, and both are sheltered from their din and roar by the surrounding hills. The similarity of their situation is striking. They are the two great spiritual centres of the modern world. Lourdes always; Ober-Ammergau every decade of years; and in their remoteness and solitude the Christian soul seems to hear the Divine invitation "Come ye apart."

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NEW PASSIONIST RETREAT.

CONSECRATION OF ALTAR BY BISHOP OF LEEDS.

HISTORY OF MYDDELTON LODGE.

For the above sketch we are indebted to *The Cross Herald*.—Ed.

THE links in the broken chain of centuries of Catholic history connected with Myddleton Lodge, Ilkley, have been welded together in the estate, of which the Lodge forms part, passing by purchase into the hands of the Passionist Fathers for future use as one of the Retreats or Houses of their community, with its chief purpose as a training college for students contemplating a religious life under the rules of this Order. Up to some twenty-odd years ago, Myddleton Lodge was the home of the Middleton family, whose unbroken connection with Middleton and Stobham (a part of the district now unknown as such) covers a period of about eight centuries.

The present Lodge is an early Elizabethan structure, and up to the thirteenth century days of the Middleton settlement, the Lodge then existing was used for hunting purposes by the de Percies, the great Norman barons and over-lords. The Middletons have ever remained true to the Catholic faith. One of the family suffered martyrdom, and the name frequently figures amongst the recusants penalised by fines and imprisonment. An upper chamber in the Lodge was used for private devotional purposes during this period, with hiding places for the officiating priest, sacred vessels and vestments.

THE CHAPEL AND ITS BUILDER.

Following the passing of the various Acts which gave Catholics freedom to worship openly, a chapel was attached to the Lodge and a presbytery erected near at hand as a home for the priest. The Middletons maintained this officer primarily as their private chaplain, though up to the erection of a Catholic Church at Ilkley in 1878, Catholics from all over the district made the chapel at Myddleton Lodge their spiritual home, and on Sunday dinner was provided in the servants' quarters of the Lodge for those attending Mass from any considerable distance.

The chapel was erected by Peter Middleton, father of the last owner, who was born in 1786 and died in 1866, his wife being Juliana, a daughter of the sixteenth Lord Spourton. Peter Middleton was a man of pious inclinations, and he constructed the beautiful devotional retreat in the woods to the North of the Lodge known as "Calvary," with its cruciform shaped paths flanked by 14 large upright slabs on which are beautifully illustrated the closing scenes in the life of the Saviour. Here also is a representation of the Hill of Calvary, on which stand three crosses and other emblems of the Crucifixion.

The late Mr. C. M. Middleton was the last of this family to reside at the Lodge, and when he left, it was let for some time, and eventually coming into the market, was purchased by Mr. Sidney Kellert, a Bradford merchant resident in Ilkley. Mr. Kellert was a Protestant, and during the years of his residence the chapel was dismantled and used for secular purposes, but "Calvary" he maintained intact, and also restored it where necessary. The death of Mr. Kellert brought the estate again into the market, and although it was not sold when offered by public auction last year, it was purchased privately some months ago by the Passionist Fathers of Highgate, London.

ELABORATE DECORATIONS.

In order to adapt the Lodge to the purposes of a religious house, a good deal of alterations have had to be made internally, particularly in the provision of quite a large number of cells or cubicles; for each Father, Brother or Novice in residence is provided with one of these cells, plainly furnished and containing a single bed. The chapel is a Gothic structure, and the re-decorating in ecclesiastical style has been done by Brother Michael, one of the brethren at the Lodge. Emblems of the Passion predominate in the scheme of decoration, and a passion flower pattern is a fabric for the frieze. The colour scheme is distinctly pleasing, and the whole effect most artistic. Over a memorial tablet to one of the members of the Middleton family is embellished the Middleton coat of arms, and over the Sanctuary door is the arms of the Bishop of Leeds. The beautiful new altar is composed of a perfect blending of coloured marbles and alabaster, with a medallion in the centre featuring St. Paul of the Cross, the founder of the Order, in white alabaster. On the Gospel side of the altar is a statue of St. Joseph, and on the Epistle side a statue of Our Lady of Lourdes. The stalls for the members of the Order and seats for the laity are of polished pitch pine, and a richly coloured and stained glass window has been erected over the altar, the gift of Madame Frewen, of Highgate, London. One of the two principal lights represents Christ's Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane and the other St. Paul of the Cross praying before a crucifix. A large and handsomely designed sanctuary lamp has been provided by the Confraternity of the Cross and Passion, Highgate.

The mason's work necessary in making the alterations to the Lodge and Chapel was carried out by Messrs. Deans, of Ilkley.

A sermon was preached at the solemn opening of the new Retreat by the Rev. Reginald Middleton, S.J., of Craighead House, Bothwell, near Glasgow, second son of the late Charles Murmaculike Middleton, the last of the Middletons to own and reside at the Lodge.

Father Middleton based his discourse upon the text: "He that loves father and mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loves son and daughter more than me is not worthy of me, and he that takes not up his cross and follows me is not worthy of me." (Matthew, Chap. 1). He pointed out that from the beginning of the Christian era there had been those in the Church who had been called upon to renounce the ties of family and the ties of love and devote themselves wholeheartedly to the Ministry of God. They also had renounced self-love and independence. Pride was the rebellion of the will against God. Without discipline no army or navy, or even a factory could be carried on, and there must be discipline in that Order. They could not serve God without facing trials and difficulties; neither could they serve the devil and the world without trials and difficulties; but in the service of God there were compensations. There were no compensations in the service of the world, though for a time pleasure and sin might have their attractions. The consecration of that altar and Holy House was associated with the feast of St. Paul of the Cross, the Founder of the Passionist Order, who set a noble example of self-denial, austerity, and good works, which all would do well to emulate as far as possible.

THE RETREAT HOUSE

Disastrous as the Second World War was to the country and the world, the Passionist Fathers at Ilkley had to face a special tragedy of their own. A short time before the outbreak of war in 1939, the old stables had been converted at a cost of about £3,000 into a house for retreats for the clergy and laity. It was a temporary expedient to fulfil the ever urgent need for a Retreat House in the Diocese. The building was solemnly blessed by the late Bishop Poskitt on February 26th, and the engagement list for many months ahead was fully booked by groups of Catholics who wished to spend a day or a week-end in quietness and retreat. Then in September came the appalling news that we were at war. Of necessity many bookings had to be cancelled and the plans for the future had to be laid aside indefinitely. Soon, however, the fact of the war itself brought many to the Retreat House. Chaplains and servicemen, as well as many who were not in the armed Forces realised how necessary it was to come close to Almighty God and in the midst of living dangerously, to find the means of doing so with tranquil mind. The Retreat Director, Father Fidelis, with his assistants, the newly-formed Guild of St. Gabriel, was fully occupied. God alone knows the grace that was granted to souls in those dark days. Throughout the years that followed, the work of the Retreat Movement was carried on under different Directors, different helpers and different retreatants, but the temporary Retreat House had become something quasi-permanent. The difficulty of obtaining materials and the rising costs made it impossible to proceed with the plans drawn up before the war.

Last September, Fr. Fidelis returned to Ilkley in his former office of Director and the Guild of St. Gabriel was re-formed—a Guild of men who are prepared to sacrifice time and leisure to carry forward this essential work of spiritualising the lives of men. Without their help and the help of the other friends who have, over the years, worked selflessly and often at very considerable sacrifice, it would not have been possible to carry on. May they continue in their great work of Catholic Action.

Each year two retreats are held for the Clergy of the Diocese and every month there is a Priests' Day of Recollection, whilst the constant round of lay-retreats continues week-end by week-end. In these days there is no need to prove the necessity of retreat or the great benefit it is to souls. The Popes have spoken with ever-increasing urgency on the subject. We look forward to the day when the Retreat House at Ilkley will be a building worthy of its important work but until then the present Retreat House continues to serve the Diocese in this work of the sanctification of souls.

" A Retreat, a work providential among all others "

ST. PIUS X.