

# St. Dunstan's Red and White

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## Editorials

### EASTER

Once again the Easter season is at hand. The winter is almost past and spring is being ushered in by the warm south



wind. The penitential season of Lent is drawing to a close. Having passed Lent in a profitable manner, we look forward eagerly to the feast of Easter, as we look forward to spring after the long winter.

The season of the year during which Easter falls is symbolic of Easter itself. Spring brings about sweeping changes. It delivers the world from the harshness of winter into the friendliness of the summer. Men await it all through the winter months and are happy when it arrives. Before the crucifixion on Good Friday and the subsequent resurrection on the first Easter morning man was not in God's favour. Christ had to die on the cross to deliver us from the bleakness of a life without God into the sunshine of God's grace.

In the Light of Easter's true meaning it is proper that Easter should be a time of joy. There could be no greater cause of rejoicing than man's Redemption, the greatest event the world has ever seen. So let us, putting aside earthly cares, enjoy Easter in a state of peace with God, if not with nations.

"Red and White" extends to all its readers best wishes for a joyful Easter.

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### THE WAY OF THE CROSS

During the Holy Season of Lent many Catholics make the Way of the Cross daily as a special form of prayer. It is the closest they can come to following Our Lord through His Passion and Death. But only a few of those who perform this special devotion know how it came into use in the Church. Of course all know that it had its origin in what it represents, the Passion and Death of Christ, but few can say just how it came to have its present form.

During the first ten centuries the Way of the Cross as we know it was not in existence. Nor was there any evidence of it during the next few centuries. However, during these years the pilgrims to Jerusalem always made it a point to pass along the road taken by Our Lord on His way to Calvary. They halted reverently at designated spots where tradition had it that He met His Holy Mother or fell to the ground or that some such incident took place. This practice became very popular with the pilgrims, and popes of the times attached indulgences to it. It seems strange



that at first the pilgrims started at Calvary and ended in Jerusalem, a procedure which is the exact reverse of that in use today.

In the fifteenth century many holy people, realising that only very few could actually journey to Jerusalem to pass over Via Dolorosa, reproduced the Way of the Cross in European Churches. Blessed Alvarez, one of the first to do this, built a series of little chapels at Cordova in which were painted the principal scenes of the Passion. Blessed Eustachia, Emmerich, and Sterckx also reproduced the Way of the Cross in others Continental Churches.

These reproductions are generally held to be the remote Source of the stations as we have them in our churches.

In making these reproductions, the artists encountered many difficulties. In the first place they could not agree on the number of stations; some had only seven, while others had as many as twenty-seven. Nor could a single arrangement be found that would be suitable to all. Again, some sets of stations included some scenes which others excluded. Many people made special journeys to Jerusalem to obtain exact information, but even in this there was variation.

When Jerusalem fell into the hands of the Turks, pilgrims were forbidden to make the Way of the Cross. This caused great consternation among pious Europeans, and many more reproductions were made, having as their models the imitations already found in a few large churches. Special prayers were prepared for making the Way of the Cross. Then the Pope granted to the Franciscans the privilege of having stations in all their churches. This privilege was gradually extended to include all churches by the decrees of later popes, who also attached to the practice all the indulgences that could be obtained by actually making the Way of the Cross in Jerusalem. It is a strange fact that it is not exactly known what these indulgences are.

Although the Franciscans retain some of their initial privilege in so far as one of their superiors must first bless the stations or delegate someone to do so before they can be erected. The Way of the Cross is now as universal as Catholicism. Scarcely any devotion is more popular among Catholics, and none is more richly endowed with indulgences. Though the Way of the Cross, man literally obeys Our Lord's injunction, "Take up your Cross and follow me."



### THE KEY TO THE ORIENT

A scant six weeks ago the word Singapore was borne by every broadcasting medium of man. Newspapers and magazines placed it in every home; the oriental phrase was blaring from radios; it was on the lips of every war-conscious Canadian, fearfully, wonderingly, hopefully. Here, at last the Nipponese would be stopped. Singapore would frustrate the avid conquerors. After all, was it not the "Gibraltar of the East"? So ran our thoughts.

Yet, today, the British sea and air base is gone. The so-called "Key to the East" has fallen prey to the Japanese who have boastfully rechristened it "Shonan, Light of the South". And now the allies are hurriedly attempting to change the lock, lest the precious door, control of the South Pacific, be thrown open to the invading hordes.

But why did the stronghold fall so easily? Was not its importance realised? Could the "key" have been left unturned in its lock?

As early as 1819 the strategic location of the 26-by-14-mile island was realized by Sir Thomas Stanford Raffles, who purchased the "key" for Britain in that year. He it was who first called the Island "Britain's Oriental Gibraltar" in prophesy of its role-to-come. Thus the importance of this steaming, tropical isle was indeed early appreciated. In the 123 years following, the island was systematically converted into a huge fortress. \$170,000,000 worth of defenses, including three landing fields and batteries of eighteen-inch guns, along with naval facilities for the Pacific fleet, served to turn this natural "key" in its lock.

Yet with all the planning and care of execution, the possessor of the "key" committed a single costly error in barring his door. The jealously-guarded portal was never quite locked. Somewhere, "someone had blundered." The Malay jungles were considered impenetrable for an invading army, with the result that the island defenses were concentrated on the seaward shore, leaving the land side unprotected. Furthermore the inhabitants, surrounded by these defenses, were lulled into a state of lethargic somnolence and indolence, and soon became morally flabby, victimized by the vices of a life of luxurious ease. A similar social catastrophe is succinctly but strikingly described by



Titus Livy in his account of the downfall of ancient Rome :  
"Nuper divitiae avaritiam et aboundantes voluptates desid-  
erium per luxum atque libidinem pereundi perdendique  
omnia invexere." Thus the base, with its natural mainland  
"protection" and its impregnable shore defences lolled com-  
placently in the tropical heat while the wily Japs laid plans  
to deliver his "coup de surprise."

Suddenly he struck—and within six weeks he had cut  
through nature's "barrier". With superior land and air un-  
its he forced the Allies to a position but fifteen to twenty  
miles from the island. Employing 85,000 troops, the Nipp-  
onese invader precipitated a British withdrawal, and on the  
night of January 30th the combined British, Aussie, and  
Malay troops removed to Singapore. The spectacular  
eruption of the \$12,000,000,1,153 y's-long causeway sig-  
nalled the end of the Malay campaign and the inaugural of  
the island's defense.

The plight of these besieged forces is best summed up  
in their commander's words, "Today we stand beleaguered  
in our island fortress....." And beleaguered they in-  
deed were—60,000 troops defending a coast unprotected by  
defenses against a horde now swelled to 120,000 fighters sup-  
ported by a merciless, everblasting air assault. Faced with  
such odds, the defenders were doomed to defeat. They  
possessed not the strength to hold closed the portal in which  
was an unturned key. With overwhelming numbers the  
Japs, after two months of vicious slashing, obtained the  
strategic base.

Thus runs the tragedy of the "key to the orient", a key  
which was carelessly left half-turned, the story of a door  
which was never quite locked, so that now it has been forced  
open with barbaric violence, patently exposing our treasures  
within.



No matter what you try to do,  
At home or at your school,  
Always do your very best;  
There is no better rule.