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CENTENARY OF THE RESTORATION OF  
THE JESUITS IN THE UNITED STATES

Edward I. Devitt, S.J.

DANTE AND THE POPES

Henry A. Brann, D.D.

THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE PHILIP-  
PINES

S. Sarasola, S.J.

AN IRISH LULLABY

Cahal O'Byrne.

THE ENGLISH GUILDS

M. M. Mallock.

A SPEAR OF THE DAWNING LIGHT

Eileen Walsh.

ARCHBISHOP CHAPELLE

EDITORIAL  
READER

CHRONICLE  
LITERARY

SCIENCE

EDUCATION

SOCIOLOGY

## THE MESSENGER

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## ARCHBISHOP CHAPELLE.

His Excellency, Most Reverend Placide Louis Chapelle, D.D., Archbishop of New Orleans and Apostolic Delegate to Cuba and Porto Rico, died on August 9. His death caused grief and consternation throughout the country. All eyes had been turned towards the city of New Orleans during the days of its visitation by the dreaded yellow fever. When the news went forth that the great Archbishop was numbered among the victims, the sympathy of our whole people was extended to one whose services to the Church and to the nation are fresh in everyone's remembrance. He has died, as he lived, devoted unswervingly to the fulfilment of his duty. Whilst we deplore his loss, yet we rejoice in the heroic example of his life and point to him as an inspiration for loyal service to Church and State.

It is too early yet for the full account of his labors as priest, Bishop and Apostolic Delegate, but as a tribute of veneration and gratitude to his sterling qualities and his great achievements, we have compiled the following sketch of his career. (1)

Most Reverend Placide Louis Chapelle was born in the diocese of Mende, France, August 28, 1842. He belonged to a family noted for its piety and for its attachment to the Church. His early studies were made at Enghien College, Belgium. At the age of seventeen, having completed his classical course, he was brought to the United States by his uncle, Very Reverend Canon Chapelle, who had been directed by Cardinal Antonelli to negotiate a Concordat with the Republic of Hayti. Canon Chapelle placed his nephew in St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, to prepare to become a missionary to Hayti. When the Canon died, in 1861, on the eve of his appointment as Archbishop of Port au Prince, the nephew abandoned the idea of going to Hayti, and became affiliated with the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

He was ordained priest in June, 1865, and was placed in charge of several missions in Montgomery County, Maryland. He continued his studies during the moments of respite from mission work, and in June, 1868, he received his degree of doctor in theology

(1) We are indebted for materials to *The Daily Picayune*, New Orleans, August 10 and 12.

after a brilliant examination. Archbishop Spalding took a great interest in Dr. Chapelle, and in May, 1869, made him Secretary of the Tenth Provincial Council of Baltimore, and took him to the Vatican Council in Rome as consulting theologian.

In 1870 he was appointed assistant pastor of St. John's Church, Baltimore, and soon after became its pastor. In October, 1871, shortly before Archbishop Spalding's death, the young priest was made pastor of St. Joseph's Church, and besides his parish work he presided over the ecclesiastical conferences of the Baltimore clergy and had charge of several religious institutions. Higher honors came to him in May, 1882, when Archbishop Gibbons appointed him rector of the important parish of St. Matthew, Washington, D. C.

During the years that Dr. Chapelle spent in Baltimore he had attained great prominence as a theologian, a zealous pastor, and a man of great suavity and distinction. His transfer to St. Matthew's Church, the place of worship frequented by Government officials, diplomats, ambassadors and members of the legations in the National Capital, was a recognition of his talent, his great executive ability and his fitness to deal with the statesmen of foreign countries. He found himself in direct contact with the members of the diplomatic corps, and often the Sunday services in St. Matthew's Church were attended by officials in brilliant uniforms. He had the most pleasant relations with Presidents Arthur, Cleveland and Harrison, as well as with other high officials of the Government in both parties. He was never mixed in party politics, and he was profoundly convinced that political partisanship is wholly outside the proper sphere of a priest. This attitude contributed to gain for him the confidence of the most eminent statesmen, and did not prevent him from taking a deep interest in all that concerned the welfare of his country.

In the summer of 1884 he was designated one of the seven theologians to make the preliminary studies for the holding of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, and afterwards his name figured as the notary of one of the principal committees appointed by the Fathers of that venerable assembly. He worked hard and to good purpose toward founding the Catholic University in Washington, selecting and buying the land upon which that institution stands. For several years he was vice-president of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, and his zealous work for the promotion

of the missions attracted the attention of Archbishop Salpointe, of Santa Fe, who asked the Holy See to appoint Dr. Chapelle his Coadjutor Bishop. He was consecrated on November 1, 1891, and succeeded to the Archbishopric in 1894. In the course of his episcopal labors in New Mexico he visited almost every corner of the territory confided to his care, confirmed 40,000 persons and promoted the cause of education among whites and Indians.

In the latter part of November, 1897, Pope Leo XIII selected Archbishop Chapelle to govern the Archdiocese of New Orleans, and in so doing approved of the choice made by the council of priests who had sent his name to Rome as *dignissimus*. That the Pope had manifested a preference for Archbishop Chapelle even before having received the list of names sent by the priests and bishops, was stated soon after the appointment had actually been made. It is related that Pope Leo and Archbishop Chapelle were conversing about the vacant See of New Orleans, and that the Pope had said: "My son, if I appoint you to the vacancy of New Orleans, will you accept?" and that Mgr. Chapelle had replied: "Holy Father, I have not asked anything; neither is it in me to refuse whatever is offered me by Your Holiness." Then the Pope said: "My son, give me a positive answer. Should I appoint you, would you accept?" and the reply was, "Yes, Holy Father." Then the Pope closed the conversation with the remark: "I am content, my son; receive my benediction."

During his administration Archbishop Chapelle succeeded in paying a heavy debt that had weighed a long time on the Archdiocese: he re-opened the Theological Seminary and in many ways powerfully contributed to the great progress made by the Church during the last few years in Louisiana. He took part in very public event, and was present at the opening sessions of the Catholic Winter School every season, when in the city.

When the Holy See looked for a man to handle the complicated situation that had arisen in the Church as a result of the Spanish war, it turned to Archbishop Chapelle, as a prelate possessing those qualities of discretion, business tact and zeal necessary to solve the difficult problem. In October, 1898, he was appointed Apostolic Delegate to Cuba and Porto Rico and commissioned by the Holy See to attend the peace negotiations in Paris. During these negotiations he rendered signal service to both the Holy See and to the United States, as events proved. He was the means

through which the clause guaranteeing religious liberty and the rights of ecclesiastical property was inserted in the Treaty of Paris. On his return from Paris, President McKinley complimented him on the great service rendered during the negotiations.

He visited Cuba and Porto Rico after peace was restored, reported to the Pope as to the condition of those islands, and suggested a plan for the re-organization of the Catholic Church there, which was adopted. The same year he consecrated Father Barnada as Archbishop of Santiago, and Father Blenk of New Orleans as Bishop of Porto Rico, both of whom he had recommended to the Pope.

His settlement of the Church questions in Cuba and Porto Rico having been so satisfactory, he was appointed by the Pope in August, 1899, as Apostolic Delegate to the Philippines. The task was a difficult one, including a settlement of the disputed claim to the Friars' lands. Archbishop Chapelle finally succeeded in arranging the matter satisfactorily, and was warmly congratulated by the Pope for the good work he had accomplished. He returned by way of Rome, where he had a long conference with the Pope in relation to the condition of the Church in the former Spanish possessions. The Holy See, in a special brief, complimented him and highly approved every step taken by him, and again praised his work in the Bull, published by Monsignor Guidi, re-organizing the hierarchy in the Philippines. President McKinley also, on several occasions, expressed his satisfaction at the course followed and the work done by the Delegate.

The Holy Father wished the Archbishop to return to the Philippines, but he felt that the direction of affairs in the Archdiocese of New Orleans and the performance of the duties of the delegation in Cuba and Porto Rico would fully occupy his attention. Three years ago he was relieved of the responsibility of his mission in the Philippines, but continued his jurisdiction over Cuba and Porto Rico. He made frequent visits to both Islands and was constantly in touch with all the work of his vast diocese. He returned from Cuba only a few months ago.

Towards the end of May the Archbishop began his pastoral tour of Louisiana to administer confirmation in the various parishes. He came back to New Orleans on July 29, worn out by the tiresome journeys during the warm season. On his way home, his carriage had to pass by the infected district and it is surmised by

his physicians that he was bitten by a mosquito and thus contracted the fever, which manifested itself on Friday, August 4. Every care was taken of the distinguished patient, but his enfeebled condition and the organic complications, which set in unexpectedly, caused his death on August 9. Shortly before noon, the Archbishop felt himself sinking, and told his attendants that he was dying. One of the priests administered Extreme Unction and gave the last blessing. The Archbishop continued to pray and kiss his crucifix repeatedly until he became unconscious a few moments before the end at ten minutes to one o'clock.

The funeral obsequies were held on Saturday, special permission having been granted to keep the remains. Though shorn of solemnity by the enforced absence of his suffragans and the other Archbishops and Bishops of the country, the entire clergy and people of New Orleans united in the public tribute of respect and love. It was not only the great Archbishop of New Orleans who was dead, the eminent Apostolic Delegate to Cuba and Porto Rico and formerly to the Philippine Islands, the accomplished diplomat, the wise statesman, but a great pastor of souls, a man intrusted by heaven with a high and noble mission, and who, when the supreme test came, had risen to the most heroic heights and had sacrificed his life on the altar of duty.

The most touching incidents marked the entire progress of the ceremonies. The poor and humble began to come with the morning dawn, and hundreds passed in and out of the church who could not remain for the services because of the daily struggle for bread which lay before them. Poor women and hard-working laborers came and paused a moment in prayer beside the bier; in simple faith many laid their hands upon the casket as though it were a sacred relic; poor, unlettered women came, bringing their babes in arms, and telling them in hushed whispers that a martyr lay dead before them; a father who had given his life for his children. Within the pews sat the representatives of many of the most distinguished families of the city. All were touched by the great demonstration of affection and reverence paid the hero-prelate.

The days that had intervened before the yellow fever manifested itself were spent by the Archbishop in the preparation of a pastoral letter to his diocese, giving advice in reference to the yellow fever of which he himself fell a victim. He would not listen to the entreaty of his Rev. Chancellor to postpone the work, insisting that

it was not seemly for him to shirk duty, especially in times when his flock needed his advice and sympathy. The letter is as follows:

Pastoral letter to the clergy and faithful of the Archdiocese of New Orleans:

Venerable Fathers and Beloved Brethren—A solemn duty is incumbent on me to address you a few words of salutary advice in reference to the fever which now afflicts New Orleans and threatens to invade further localities.

There can be no doubt but that Divine Providence permits the invasion of this dreadful scourge to bring us a clearer sense of our duties towards God and towards one another. The sooner this end is obtained the greater will be our hope for an early deliverance from this grievous visitation, and the stronger our motives for laying aside all disastrous and useless fear.

We must confess that as individuals and citizens we have grievously erred and sinned. Instead of ever walking in God's presence, we have too often forgotten to raise our hearts to him; we have allowed worldly vanities to make us forget him, and material prosperity to so absorb our energy as if this world were our abiding city, an earthly paradise and the end of all our endeavors. In as far as we have in any manner contributed to corruption in civic life, we have also seriously helped to bring about the fever which threatens the lives of our citizens, is destroying the good name of our city, crippling our commerce and reducing many to dire poverty.

We must acknowledge that we have been guilty of 'inexcusable negligence in not heeding the warnings of past experience and those of science concerning the taking of proper hygienic precautions. It is a bitter thing for us to acknowledge sincerely our blindness and delinquencies, but this is the first condition which God requires that he may deliver us from our sins and enlighten us as to our duty in these trying times. God of old commanded his prophets to confess publicly the sins of the people when plague or defeat desolated Israel. Our Lord Jesus Christ wept over the impending ruin of Jerusalem because that city did not know the things that were for its peace, they were hidden from the eyes of the people. (Luke xix, 42.)

As the chief pastor of this Archdiocese, ready as I am to cheerfully lay down my life for the safety of the whole people, I am bound, with sorrow in my heart, to exhort you to humble yourselves before God and to urge you to pray earnestly that you may

be delivered from spiritual blindness, so that you may know the time of God's visitation. And now, Venerable Fathers, our Consolation and our Crown, we know that you are ready to spend yourselves and be spent for souls. We deeply sympathize with you on account of your more arduous work and increased anxiety. You know, however, that God will reward adequately your heroic priestly endeavors, and you will be comforted by the happy results of your ministry. We feel confident that you will greatly contribute within your sphere of duty to stamp out in a short time the scourge that afflicts us.

Our affectionate thoughts turn towards you also, beloved brethren. We know of your faith and good works, of tens of thousands of members of the more than thirty parishes of this city whose pure, charitable, Christian lives will be as many prayers ascending to the Merciful Giver of every good gift, which we feel confident will speedily bring upon us health and prosperity. We cherish you too much to say aught to bring sorrow to your hearts, but duty compelled us to utter a few severe words that you may the sooner rejoice.

Nor will we forget you in our prayers, beloved brethren, whom we exhorted to the practice of all the virtues of a pure Christian life in our recent pastoral visit. We must confess that we were deeply moved by the marked and sincere tokens of affection and loyalty that were shown us everywhere. Our heart was comforted at the sight of the good done for the cause of Christ by a devoted and zealous clergy, and though our Auxiliary Bishop had faithfully visited the parishes during our absence, we were more than compensated for the fatigues and labors of our pastoral tour by the 8,000 children and adults who received the sacrament of confirmation at our hand.

Impelled by the desire of bringing God's loving protection upon all our people and by other serious motives, we ordain and order as follows:

First—The prayers of the Votive Mass: *Pro vitanda mortalitate* will be said at all Masses throughout the archdiocese until further order whenever not contrary to the rubrics.

Second—The Litany of the Saints will be chanted or recited publicly every Sunday after the parochial or community mass.

Third—The verse "*Parce Domine,*" etc., will be chanted thrice after the "*O Salutaris*" at every benediction of the Blessed Sac-

rament. Whenever convenient it would be well to recite in the vernacular the Seven Penitential Psalms after benediction.

Fourth—We desire that every parish and every community be consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the first Sunday after receipt of this pastoral letter, and that the invocation, “Cor Jesu Sacratissimum miserere nobis” (S. Congr. Indulg. 17 June, 1904) be added to the prayers after the Mass prescribed by Leo XIII.

Fifth—Pastors of souls will earnestly urge their faithful people to approach the Sacraments and say family prayers every night, at which time they may recite the Penitential Psalms, the Litany of the Saints or a part of the holy rosary.

Grace unto you and peace from God, our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Given from the archiepiscopal residence, Aug. 4, 1905.

P. L. CHAPELLE,

Archbishop of New Orleans, Apostolic Delegate.

PETER SCOTTI, Chancellor.

Archbishop Chapelle played such a prominent part in the history of our country during the past few years that we are not surprised at the expressions of grief and sympathy elicited from Catholics and non-Catholics in all parts of the United States. President Roosevelt sent the following telegram to Cardinal Gibbons:

“I am deeply shocked and grieved at the death of my beloved friend, Archbishop Chapelle. His death is one of the most lamentable losses in the course of the outbreak of fever in New Orleans, which is causing much sympathy and concern throughout the nation.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.”

The *New York Tribune* said in its editorial columns:

“Mgr. Chapelle’s death will be sincerely regretted outside the Church which he served, as well as within it, for he contributed most efficiently to settling many of the problems which have arisen in our insular possessions. He was a prelate of broad and patriotic views and of sterling worth and character, and his death at 63 years is a serious loss to the Church and to the country.”

The eulogy pronounced at the funeral by Father Albert Biever, S.J., seems to us to contain no exaggeration. It is a worthy picture of his career as a prelate and of the interior life that made the Archbishop truly a man of God. “Archbishop Chapelle’s ex-

ecutive and administrative abilities, his vast learning, his thorough acquaintance with the customs and languages of many nations, his integrity and loyalty to the Catholic Church, singled him out and appealed to the great Pope who nominated him his Apostolic Delegate in the colonies acquired by the United States. Fearless in the pursuit of right, the Archbishop mapped out a policy the wisdom of which shines out the brighter as time and prejudice wear away. Few, even of his most intimate friends, knew the momentous issues dependent on his labors to bring about a 'modus vivendi' between Church and State, and fewer were aware of the brilliant success that has crowned this gigantic undertaking. His rule of golden silence may have surprised the public and called forth adverse criticism from prejudiced persons, but it won for him the confidence of the Popes and Presidents of the United States. I know from good authority that tempting offers were made by leading reviews and papers to obtain his views on the intricate questions he was sent to solve, but, true to his trust, he reported only to the authorities of Church and State, whose implicit confidence he enjoyed to the very hour of his death. In him the much-slandered friars found a fearless champion and staunch friend, who did not wish to sacrifice the honor and labors of hundreds of years of good and noble men to the caprice and ambition of a few.

“ There is, however, in the life of every priest a record whose pages the great God alone can unfold and read. It is the spiritual element that must enter largely into every sacerdotal life. It has been my privilege to possess the fullest confidence of the illustrious prelate, and thus to gain an insight into that inner life with God, which must be the mainstay and daily bread of every true priest and bishop. Punctual in his morning rising, the Archbishop found time in the midst of his varied and immense work and vast correspondence to make his daily meditation, to offer the holy Sacrifice of the Mass and recite his breviary at the liturgical hours. Every Saturday he would cleanse his soul in the sacrament of penance, so as to make it every day more worthy and more holy for the celebration of the great mysteries and the reception of the Holy Eucharist. Even on the day he was stricken by the insidious disease the Archbishop, though greatly suffering, stood at the altar of God offering for the last time the holy Sacrifice of the Mass for his beloved people, to whom he had returned in time of danger and disaster.”

An appreciation of his work in the Philippines has been given by the Rev. Father Thomas Lorente, O.P., who was Secretary of the delegation at Manila.

“The Archbishop immediately won the esteem and friendship of the authorities, while the Spanish prelates and the clergy in the Philippines declared that the Holy See could not have chosen a more capable person for this difficult post. Affairs were then in a terrible condition. The revolution started by Aguinaldo was triumphant and millions of Spanish prisoners were suffering under the maltreatment of the revolutionists. Archbishop Chapelle presented their cause to General Otis and pleaded for justice to these poor sufferers, among whom were a bishop and more than 150 friars. By the beginning of 1900 the prisoners entered Manila in triumph. Archbishop Chapelle won the love and respect not only of the Spaniards in the Philippines, but of the Americans and Filipinos. And this affection and respect have not diminished.

“Civil and ecclesiastical history will yet do justice to Mgr. Chapelle, who did not allow himself to be swayed by either secular fanaticism or by evil designs of politicians from doing his duty. He always defended the rights of the Church at the same time that he defended the rights of America.

“Mgr. Chapelle was a man eminently fitted for the position he has held. I have often heard him quote as his favorite verse of Scripture, the thought of the Royal Prophet David: ‘I have always loved justice, and I have hated iniquity.’ This was the motto of his life, the basis of all of his actions. He was never afraid to express his opinions, and if he thought that an injustice was being done to any one, he was the first to step forward and demand that it be righted. If it lay within his power, he did at any cost what his conscience told him was right. In his diplomatic relations, this high sense of right and justice shone so conspicuously that he won the esteem and love of the most distinguished men. President McKinley, President Palma of Cuba, and Mr. Roosevelt entertained the highest regard for him. I myself witnessed the cordiality and warmth with which Mr. Roosevelt greeted him when we returned from the Philippines, the President leaving everyone else to come straight to the Archbishop and thank him for all that he had done.

“In like manner I was an eye-witness to the great affection that the late illustrious Pope Leo XIII bore to our venerated Archbishop, as also the desire that the Pope had to see justice done him, as

witnessed in the brief he published setting forth the work the Archbishop had performed in the Philippines. For when we returned to Rome we found that both the foreign and American newspapers had erred greatly in the reports that they had published of Mgr. Chapelle's mission and its results. The great Cardinal Parocchi took me aside and said to me, 'Mgr. Chapelle has been an angel of Providence to the Philippines.'

"Such was the great Archbishop of New Orleans, a man of highest integrity and honor, of noble and generous impulses, a pure and upright citizen, a fearless upholder of the truth, a true and holy priest of God, a bishop who had but one thought, the eternal good of his flock, a father and friend to all who needed his help. His loss cannot be estimated, and I, who knew him so well and loved him, feel that no tribute is too great that his people and clergy can pay to his blessed memory."