A Visit

TO LAMY, NEW MEXICO

HE Santa Fe railroad, which runs across country and through the stock markets under the flowing title, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe, does not enter Santa Fe, and, incidentally, its main lines do not touch Atchison, and some of them pass up Topeka. Lamy, named after the first Bishop of Santa Fe, is the station nearest to Santa Fe. It is eighteen miles away. Busses meet all the trains. But we came, not from Lamy to Santa Fe but from Santa Fe to Lamy, and that by the Chevrolet route. Our engineer was the tall Sycamore of the West. Friar Leonard, just six feet, seven, a giant among men. He could carry an Austin to Lamy.

It was the patron feast of the Lamy parish, the feast of Our Lady of Light (Nuestra Señora de la Luz), that is observed annually on May 29th. The services always include the chanting of Vespers on the evening before the feast, followed by a procession with the

statue of Our Lady.

A pastor in Mexican or Spanish-American parishes is pastor and a great deal more. He must be all things to his parish. We arrived about forty-five minutes before services began. Florentino, the sacristan, was waiting for us, as were two young men, live wires of the parish and aids of the pas-"Florentino, primero" was the Padre's first order, and immediately the church bells announced the arrival of the Padres. Adjusting the gasoline lamps that illumine the church for the few evening services during the year, was next in order and the pastor filled them, aired them, lighted them and hung them, two in the body of the church and one in the choir-loft, for old Alfredo, an organist from Santa Fe, had come with us for the fiesta's opening services.

While "airing" the lamps, a part the services began. Ishioner, called with his young daughter to inquire about her first Holy Communion on the following Sunday. Tenyears of age is the rule in the parish. The girl looked about seven or eight, but the father claimed that she was ten and just shrugged his shoulders and smiled when Padre Leonardo doubted his word. A hurried argument and a decided "mañana"—an order to see him the next day—and the pastor turned his attention again to the lamps. He would see Carmela's little playmates on the morrow and learn her true

age,—the little ones are not so far advanced in truth-extension as some of the older folks,—or he would consult the records on his return to the central parish. Autos carry everything nowadays and the one that brought us carried a chair in the back seat for the comfort of the visiting clergymen.

"Florentino, segundo" was the next order and again the bell sounded through the valley, calling the parishioners to the services as it rang in boisterous competition with the Santa Fe switch engine's bell on the tracks nearby. At the arbitrary "ultimo" the services would begin. A number of children, among them the four little girls, selected to carry the statue, were on hand at "primero," the first bell.



The Chapel at Lamy

The church began to fill up with parishioners, almost crowding the village shrine of Our Lady to capacity. The pastor hurriedly lighted the coals for the censer, and then all things being ready, the "Florentino, ultimo" and the services began.

The visiting priest, "un ingles" (an American or anyone who does not speak Spanish, on this occasion your correspondent), was the celebrant. With the pastor he formed one choir which alternated with the organist, who formed the other choir, chanting the Vespers of the Blessed Virgin in true ecclesiastical style, as is the custom at all the fiesta celebrations. At the Magnificat the pastor served as censer-bearer,—a capable altar-boy,—and the ceremonies proceeded. The

congregation were in admiration at the fine singing.

Vespers over, the pastor made a few announcements in Spanish, directing the evening's procession and telling about the morning services. Then the procession formed. Moving around the church, bonfires of piñon logs, kerosened for speedy lighting, illumined the path of the marchers. The little girls carrying the statue of Our Lady, dressed neatly in white—the Spanishspeaking people dress up their "santos" for their celebrations-led the procession, followed by the children's choir. The clergy walked next in line and the parishioners followed. Padre Leonardo. with his mighty voice, led in the chant of the "Dios te salve, Maria" (the Hail Mary) while the congregation and the choir chanted the response "Santa Maria," in divers tempos and pitches, as the spirit moved them. It is a simple, yet inspiring melody and is chanted in all Spanish-speaking parishes and processions. Entering the church the solemn "Gloria al Padre" (Glory be to the Father) was sung by priest and people. The statue, resting just outside the rail, was now incensed, a few prayers said and a powerful "Benedicamus Domino" ended the ceremony. The celebrant blessed the people from the altar and all returned to their homes with anticipations of a glorious fiesta on the morrow.

Services over, a gentleman and his señora, called at the sacristy begging to be released from his "envelopes"; he was "pobre" (poor) and had "no trabajo" (no work), and he argued for mercy. The pastor listened awhile and asked if he was sincere in what he stated. Father Leonard put his preacher's finger in the señor's face and said, "Es la verdad?" "Seguramente, padre, seguramente," the man insisted with the warmth of an injured saint. "Mañana," said the pastor, for he wanted to be sure of seeing the man at Mass the next morning, when he knew he would call again and be excused from his "envelopes."

Padre Leonardo is doing great things at Lamy. His giant form and powerful voice would frighten a pagan into Christianity and the people are conscious of its power, but it is his pleasant smile and hearty handshake and his consideration for his people that have won them all back to their duties.

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The people love their giant pastor and are eager to do his every bidding.

A new roof, a recent improvement, gives tone to the church and the stuccoing of the outside walls, an improvement of the near future, will make it very attractive. The sanctuary has been calcimined, a cream color, and the rest of the inside walls will be done in a color to match. Neat stained-glass windows enhance Our Lady's church and the altars and statues are all of the modern type. The old dilapidated first church, adjoining the present structure, will soon disappear, and the Church of Our Lady of Light will be an attraction in Lamy and an object of appreciation for all travelers on the Santa Fe railroad.

In addition to Lamy, Father Leonard is pastor of the mission Rio Tesuque, chaplain of the State Penitentiary-and how the prisoners and officers respect him!-assistant at the Cathedral, director of the young people's sodalities-the girls' sodality numbers more than three hundred and fifty members-and is generally a "towering" attraction in Santa Fe.

Gathering in the lamps, seeing that all lights were out on the altars, the windows closed, and the doors locked, for Florentino is very old and feeble, we said "good night" to Lamy and through the piñon fires motored back

to Santa Fe.