

## FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOUY, D. D.

## LOW SUNDAY

## THE NECESSITY OF FAITH

"Jesus said to him: Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen Me and have believed."

Man is an imperfect being in many respects. The effects of original sin extended over his body and penetrated into his soul. All who thus far have come after our original parents have experienced these defects; and all who will partake of their nature in the future will do likewise. In our bodies there are imperfections almost innumerable. The student of anatomy studies the physical human structure minutely. Experience has taught us that this knowledge of our body is necessary, in order that a cure may be applied to our ailments, for there is not a part of us that ever can remain free from the dangers of disease. Ills can appear in our body anywhere and in any of its parts. How imperfect is our body, therefore, in this respect! Then, too, how feeble it really is! Even the soundest body has a very limited capacity and is of very short endurance. The giant in strength must exercise the greatest care, or he will soon lose his extraordinary power. But, even with the most careful treatment, the human body lasts only a few years. If disease or accident do not destroy or weaken it, old age will encroach upon it and rob it of its youthful vigor and its strength.

God has not, however, left us without remedies for our bodily ills. There is a noble and elevating science by means of which our sufferings can be alleviated, and our weakened bodies given new strength. This is the science of medicine and surgery and its accessories. God is pleased to have us relieved as much as possible in our sufferings. We know how willing Christ was to heal the sick and relieve other human ills. This must have been His Father's will, for otherwise He would not have performed these miraculous cures and healings. Hence, God has planned a way in which sufferings may be relieved, and thus has supplied for the ills of life. Of course, not all can be relieved. Nor would He wish all to be relieved. Many have deserved sufferings because of their wickedness and neglect; some He allows to suffer so that they may gain a high place in heaven; others are afflicted because of neglect of their ancestors and contemporaries. But we must finally die—as God has eternally decreed—in punishment of the first great sin of the human race. He has, however, planned relief for what He has not fixed to happen inevitably, and has supplied remedies for defects in which necessarily we are born.

Besides the defects in our body, we have also many imperfections in our soul. Its faculties are not as bright as they were before Adam's sin. No longer does the intellect fathom the great truths of God and nature with precision, quickness and clearness. Will power sometimes becomes practically no power at all. Unbridled freedom has made men slaves to their lower nature. The voice of the will has become in many cases almost silent. The memory no longer has the retentive power that it had in its primal purity. All these are the nobler parts of our nature; and if God has given powerful remedies for our bodily ills, we necessarily must conclude that He has given even mightier remedies for the defects of our soul. These remedies are faith and the virtues that flow from it. Faith is a supplement to intellect; it aids us to strengthen our will, and indelibly impresses our memory with the great truths of God and eternity.

Were we forced to stop at what our intellect comprehends, we would know but little. Possessing faith, we learn many other things beyond the vision of our intelligence, but which we know to be true because founded on God's word. Our storehouse of knowledge would be but scantily filled, were it not that God has added much to its supply by endowing us with the gift of faith. As we believe on human testimony thousands of truths, historical and scientific, so on divine faith do we believe many truths elevated above the sphere of our intelligence. History, which is but human testimony, will tell of a Napoleon and his wonderful feats, and we believe it all—or, at least, the greater part of it. We would be unreasonable if we refused to admit truths told us by Scripture and tradition which are divine testimonies. In accepting these we are applying remedies to the defects of our higher nature, and the man is certainly guilty of gross neglect, who fails to use the means which he has at hand, to the defects existing in him.

By the knowledge of revealed truths, the necessity of believing them, and the obligation existing of fulfilling their precepts, our will gradually is strengthened and gains more power to resist the dictates of what is inferior within us. It is certain that the will must play its part in the acceptance of these truths, but it is principally after this acceptance is made that the fortifying of this faculty begins. From faith follows much that is practical, such as the reception of the sacraments and the practice of devotional exercises. All this helps to strengthen the will, and to enliven it to give its consent in

works of good and merit. The memory also reaps great benefits from faith. Its continual presence in mind and heart must make the Christian ever mindful of his religious duties; and its impressions warn him of God's law when Satan, the world, and the flesh are tempting him to forget it and act contrary to it. The continual sights of the religious functions, and the frequent presence of faithful Christians to attend them, must keep God and His law alive in the Christian memory. Faith and what accompanies it brings this blessing to the Christian.

How incessantly, therefore, Christians should implore God for the gift of a great and all-embracing faith! Life is incomplete without it, even in this world. This gift shall be so in the next. This gift must be prayed for more today than ever before, for the influence of millions of doubting Thomases is afloat, and it will work its evil on the Christian who does not earnestly seek of God the true knowledge of faith.

## CATHOLIC SOCIAL ACTION

## FRENCH BISHOPS AND PEOPLE INDORSE POSTMEN'S FIGHT FOR REST ON SUNDAY

By M. Massiani

A meeting has just been held in the largest hall in Paris at which the Catholics assembled to express their determination to protect their right to the Sunday day of rest. A senator, the chairman of the Labor Committee of the Chamber, the president of the Confederation of Christian Workmen, the president of the Federal Union of Employers and the president of the Federation of Catholic employees were the speakers. The meeting was presided over by the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris, who opened and closed the proceedings with the recitation of the Lord's Prayer and the Creed. Thus the highest authority in the French Church has again shown publicly that the hierarchy will give the most active support to the workmen.

Just now it is the postal employees who complain that their Sunday day of rest is compromised. They have had their Sundays free for several years, all Sunday deliveries having been suppressed, while the majority of the post offices remain closed and the movement of mails is reduced to a minimum. Recently, however, a group of merchants, financiers and business men complained of this situation, and the Assistant Secretary of State for the Postal Service decided, on January 22, to re-establish at least one Sunday delivery in all cities and in all villages of at least 100 inhabitants. Thirty thousand postal employees are deprived of their Sunday off by this order.

CATHOLICS SUPPORT POSTMEN'S CLAIMS. Protests have been made everywhere, but the various syndicates of workmen and employees have not all responded, in fact certain syndicates have deliberately avoided taking up the matter on the ground that a protest might involve them in "religious discussions."

The Catholic associations and the representatives of the Church have, on the contrary, given the heartiest support to the postmen's claims. Everywhere the Catholic authorities have taken part in the campaign and have helped the petitions. The Cardinal Archbishop of Bordeaux, the Bishop of Le Mans, the Bishop of Angers, in mention only a few, have sent public letters of sympathy to the protesting postal employees, and the Bishop of Amiens has gone even further, and has ordered the priests and faithful of his diocese to refuse to accept mail delivered to them on Sunday.

Last Sunday pamphlets were distributed at the door of all the Paris churches requesting the faithful to sign the petitions against the Sunday postal service.

The pamphlet is, in part, as follows: "Thirty thousand employees are affected. Are not telegrams and special delivery letters sufficient for urgent cases?"

"Commercial employees are also threatened. Certain stores are already remaining open without authorization."

"The breach will widen if public opinion does not cry: Halt! Sunday mail will lead to Sunday office work. Why would business men demand their mail on Sunday if not to study it, classify it and answer it? Sunday office work will lead to the Sunday store and the Sunday store to the Sunday workshop."

"The Sunday day of rest is a sign of progress. It is the restoration of the workman to social life: visits to his friends, walks, sports, intellectual culture; it is also the restoration of the workman to family life, to his wife, children and parents; it is the restoration of the workman to religious life, which lifts him up, brings him consolation and strength."

## GREAT PETITION OF PROTEST

The petition of protest already bears thousands of signatures of persons who declare that they are "willing to sacrifice personal advantages in favor of social progress," and they demand that public authorities should not only apply strictly to law concerning the Sunday day of rest, but that they should also

revise the numerous exceptions which diminish its value. They demand that all shops remain closed on Sundays except those handling food supplies.

While organizing the defense of the Sunday day of rest, the Catholics are also endeavoring to find a solution for another troublesome question which threatens to come again.

As is well known, after the war the labor organizations demanded and obtained the passage of the eight-hour law. Numerous exceptions were permitted, and some of them worked very well. It is undeniable that in some cases the law was applied too hastily without provision for necessary adjustments. But at the present time, certain liberal economists, many industrial and commercial men and a large portion of the general public have gradually come to indulge in violent criticism of the very principle of the reform, and now a Jewish senator, M. Raphael Georges Levy, demands that the law be abolished entirely.

Needless to say, certain agitators of the Socialist world have taken advantage of this situation to excite the workmen against the employers and cause their unions to remain inflexible and refuse to study any adjustment in the details of the law.

ADOPT CATHOLIC COMPROMISE. On the other hand, while the Socialists and employers refused to come to any agreement, the Union of Study of Social Catholics has taken up the question and day after day the big spirit of good will that the big industrial men and the representatives of the workmen who are members of the union have reached an agreement as to the attitude to be adopted in regard to the problem, which is that the principle of the eight-hour law should be firmly maintained, that the system of exceptions should be made sufficiently flexible to permit the application of the law to certain special, temporary or permanent needs in given districts or in given corporations, the respective organizations of workmen and employers to be consulted in every case.

RELICS AND MIRACLES. It is somewhat curious to see how much Protestants talk and write about Catholic relics and miracles compared to what Catholics themselves do. From the days of the Apostles the faithful have preserved faithfully mementos of martyrs and other holy personages, and regarding all bodies of departed Christians as having once been temples of the Holy Ghost, treat them with reverence. Special care was always taken of the bodies of martyrs and holy personages. In the East people gather even now on the anniversary of the death of an honored or venerated person to eat a frugal meal at his tomb. So, no doubt, the early Christians did, and the tomb of the martyr became the altar for the Eucharistic sacrifice. Tobias warns his son not to break his bread on the grave of a sinner, that is, not through human respect to pay an honor due only to the just and good.

Catholics believe that God has never ceased to work miracles in His Church, through the instrumentality of relics and without it, but beyond the miracles recorded in Scripture, none are made an article of faith, nor has the Church by her dogmatic teaching declared any relic authentic. There are indeed a few miracles, so generally recognized in the traditional belief of the Church, relics similarly regarded as authentic, that a Catholic attacking them would cause general scandal. In regard to relics generally, every Catholic is free to examine and form his own judgment. Where a Catholic sees that learned, trustworthy, pious people have regarded a relic for a long time as authentic, he naturally adopts the general opinion in regard to it, as people do about other remains of past times.

Where a miracle is said to have been wrought, it is about the same. If there is any circumstance tending to raise a doubt, many will hesitate to believe until they find the case has been thoroughly examined by competent persons. To reject without examination would be absurd. There is as much common sense in Catholic heresies as there are in Protestant heresies, if not more, for in the latter class of heresies common sense is apt to be biased by life-long prejudice. The part played by Protestants in Catholic miracles would astonish some persons. Miracles are wrought in Canada, which are believed by Protestants as well as Catholics who knew and saw the sufferers before going to St. Anne de Beaupre, helped them, perhaps, to take the journey. Now it is very well for some people like the Jewish priests in the case of the blind man, to argue from prejudice that it cannot be so, that there can be no miracle in the case. The blind man stuck to his facts which are undeniable. "I was blind now I see."—Michigan Catholic.

Our Saviour's resurrection is the firmest foundation of our religion, because by it Our Lord proves beyond all doubt that He is truly God, and consequently that His doctrine, whereon our whole religion is based, is divine. "And if Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and our faith is also vain."—(1 Cor. xv. 14.)—Rosmini.

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