

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOUY, D. D.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST

RENEWAL OF SPIRIT

"Brethren, be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth." (Eph. 4, 23)

From the fact that we are all sinners it follows that we must, at least periodically, endeavor to effect a reform within ourselves. Sin disposes us more and more to sin, and unless we "renew ourselves," we are liable to come under the influence of our enemy, or become a slave to habit. Even God's grace must find us somewhat disposed for its reception and its continuation. Human effort never can be dispensed with in the work of our salvation. When we sin we fall from our original state, and the rising to it again entails a special effort. As we are left weak after sin, we must use a tonic as a means of arriving once more at a state of spiritual strength equal, if possible, to a state in which we were when most perfect. If we fail to recover lost ground in this respect, we continually grow more languid until we are wrecked almost beyond repair.

Sin leaves an impression on man—soul and body. He is prone to forget this too often. It is a fact that never we were the same after sin as we were before falling into it. We can receive as much grace as we had before, by doing penance and returning to virtue, but with it all we still remain scarred. The fight after falling into sin is stronger than previous to the lapse, and this alone should teach man that he can not escape from the clutches of sin without its mark being left upon him. He should not, however, be discouraged by this fact, but should take it as a warning to return to the path of virtue as quickly as possible and to be more careful than ever before lest he deviate again. It should make him grow braver in his fight, and give him more courage to do the things God commands and to shun what He forbids. Man carefully must guard against human respect and he must remember that he alone will be accountable for his soul. No excuses are valid in God's sight when we, as rational beings, are called upon to do His will and afterward to render an account. Man must be most conscientious when facing his duty to God and working out his salvation.

The victims of habit are hard to recall to the path of duty. Sin has made such inroads into their nature that they effectively feel inclined to nothing else. A strong will—a will that has been trained by stern discipline—and an abundance of God's grace, are the only medicines to apply to these sad cases. Many are sometimes very willing to hear edifying things and in their minds are anxious to do them, but this willingness and this good will are not enough. They will not heal the wound, nor curb an unruly nature. To expect mere good will to accomplish this is almost like wishing a stream that rushes through rocky valleys where it does little good, to divert itself and take its course toward the arid desert, where its moisture would make the sands blossom with vegetation. The mere wish, and abundant wisdom about how it can be done, will not alone do it. But action and labor can effect it. So it is, too, with the course of nature. Not only must its direction be changed, but it also must be purified after it has been polluted by bad habits. Definite action on our part with the assistance of God's grace will do this. It may take years to obtain the result desired, but the acquisition will be worth the effort. Nay, it is necessary—no matter how long nor how strenuous the work.

But it is not only those who are in the clutches of bad habits who must recall themselves to duty and bring about continual reforms in their lives; it is the work of the virtuous as well. We have an injunction from God to perfect ourselves even up to the day of judgment. There is no plane of virtue at the level of which we can always remain. We must go higher and higher. The lamentable fact that so many virtuous people live, year after year, committing the same minor faults, comes from this neglect to strive after perfection. They lead a wavering virtuous life, to use the mildest terms. This, while it may be pleasing to God, is not all that He looks for from them. We never are free from the danger of sin, on account of our corrupt nature, but our greatest safeguard and strength is in virtue. When we possess virtue, therefore, the danger of offending God is not close to us; so that, instead of having to fight against sin, we have the opportunity of advancing in perfection. God expects us to take advantage of it, and instead of wasting each successive day in the commission of the same minor faults, we should rather spend it in referring and renewing ourselves. If we were to do this, then no day would be a loss, although perhaps it might not always be a gain, in virtue. Such action would, at least, be a very efficacious step toward an increase in righteousness.

Christians, young and old, occasionally at least, should rouse themselves and see whether they are progressing. If not, though

they think they are standing still and can save their souls while doing so, nevertheless they must renew themselves and advance. Salvation is worked out only by advances, never by the so-called holding of one's ground. In virtue we must advance. As, from a physical standpoint, an increase in age is inevitable; so, from a moral standpoint should growth in virtue necessarily come. Too many have gone backward simply because they were satisfied to arrive at a certain degree of sanctity. They thought further advance to be impossible, or else to be attained only by saints. Certainly the saints did extraordinary things; but a continual increase in virtue and merit should not be considered anything out of the ordinary. It is simply what God demands of us and what the very nature of salvation exacts. In regard to virtue, we are as a child in regard to maturity. A child must use the means adapted to give it strength and growth, such as food and exercise, and it must continue this always, trying to keep life at its best. So must we always consider ourselves children as regards our salvation, and day after day use spiritual nourishments to increase our growth in virtue and grace—and this growth must be added to incessantly. There is a sharp difference, however, to be noted between our physical and our spiritual development. It is this, namely, after a certain period our bodies deteriorate; with our souls this never should be the case. They should grow stronger and stronger in virtue until God sees fit to crown us with glory in the world beyond.

Few people give their salvation the serious thought due it; otherwise more frequently they would renew themselves in spirit and advance more rapidly in grace. They should plan, as regards their spirituality, as they do regarding temporal things. The world advances in material things with rapid strides, because the greater part of human thought and endeavor is bent toward this advancement. But little effort is made to bring the world to a deeper spirituality. Each individual, however, must do it for himself. If he does not, he is lost.

FAMOUS WINDOWS
REPLACED

Paris.—The glass windows of the cloister of the church of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont, behind the Pantheon, which had been removed for safety during the bombardment of Paris, have just been replaced after having been restored by the artistic service of the Municipality of Paris. These glass windows which date from the first quarter of the seventeenth century, are of great importance in the history of art, not only because they are masterpieces but because they are one of the few remaining examples of an art, which, formerly flourishing, has now completely disappeared—the art of enamel work. All the glass in these windows is enameled glass. Instead of being stained, the glass is covered with enamel of different colors, applied directly to the white glass and made to adhere by baking.

Formerly there were twenty-two glass windows in the cloister, but now only fourteen remain. The parishioners of Saint-Etienne vied in their zeal to supply them to such an extent that the clergy and builders complained more than once that they lacked money for the essential needs of the church and received too much for its adornment.

COPIES OF ANCIENT ENGRAVINGS

The subjects represented in the glass windows vary, but as a general rule they refer to the Life of Christ and the Redemption. Recent discoveries have shown that they were copied from old engravings of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries which have been found by some scholarly archaeologists.

One of these scholars recently found in the Library of Amiens a little book of theology published at Paris in 1609 by a religious of Poitiers, Rev. Father Guillaume de Requieu, the title of which is: "The Concord of the Mystic Figures of the Old Testament with the Truth of the Gospel for the Defense of the Church against Heresies, both Ancient and Modern." Ten of the engravings reproduced in this book are exactly copied in the glass windows of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont.

Two other engravings of the sixteenth century were also used, one of them by an unknown engraver and the other by Albert Durer, the Nuremberg master.

The subjects are generally very picturesque and interesting. Those copied from Father Requieu's book compare a scene from the Old Testament with a scene from the Gospel or with a Christian allegory. Thus, one window shows a curious Noah's Ark with three superposed roofs and a large three-masted ship—the ship of the Church—filled with doctors, pontiffs, and faithful, and piloted by Christ. Elsewhere the Manna is compared with the Parable of the Wedding Guests. Melchisedech offering bread and wine to Abraham returning from battle is the companion piece of the Last Supper. The Jewish Passover and the massacre of the Holy Innocents has a corresponding scene with the title "Communion and the Mortal Sins" in which devils—the mortal sins—attack and kill sym-

bolic children who represent the good dispositions and graces brought to souls by communion.

This comparison of the engravings in a book and the windows of a church forms a very interesting and useful contribution to the history of the religious art of past centuries, as it proves that the illustrations in a work which was popular at the time influenced and inspired the illustration of an entire church.

ST. GENEVIEVE'S TOMB IN CHURCH

It is a great joy to the Parisian Catholics to have been able to preserve intact the wonderful series of enameled glass of the cloister of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont, as its striking colors are a wonderful example of the marvelous art of the Christian artists of ancient times.

The Church of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont was begun in 1577 and consecrated in 1624. It contains the tomb of Saint Genevieve, the patron of Paris.

BAD COMPANY

PRUDENT PARENTS WILL
PROTECT THEIR HOME
AGAINST ALL EVIL

Purely secular journals are quite at libitum in discussing the problems of the home and the family, and are cautious not to enter upon ethical considerations, probably because they fear some reader may be displeased. The Chicago Journal of Commerce, however, seems to be an exception, for in a recent number we find the following sound advice to parents:

"Prudent husbands and wives guard their homes carefully against visitors likely to bring scandal, immorality and shame into them. Bad company is an association to be shunned everywhere, but especially in the home, which is the citadel of virtue, respectability and honor for the nation."

Visitors in this family sanctuary from which all evil communications should be barred, must be entirely reputable, if it is to be kept clean in thought and deed. The husband and father wants no man of questionable reputation given hospitality by his wife or daughter; the wife will tolerate in her home, to associate with her husband or son, no woman of immoral character.

These are fundamental facts bearing on the purity and happiness of home life, which nobody disputes. No decent man or woman wants a guest given to conversation about immoralities, or sensational stories of crime, or the exploitation of criminals, seducers of vampires.

Boys and girls budding into manhood and womanhood are entitled to only the best influences, the highest ideals, the finest examples, of purity and righteous ideals, the finest examples, of purity and righteous living, in their homes, because since it was first established as the center of family life, the home has been recognized by all enlightened governments as the most potent incentive to good citizenship and respectable life.

It is a strange fact that many families which exercise the most scrupulous care as to the persons who enter their homes as guests, entirely overlook certain insidious and dangerous promoters of evil thought and bad conduct which are given unquestioned admittance. We refer to immoral books, magazines or newspapers.

POPE'S UTTERANCES
ON PRIESTHOOD

On the occasion of the publication of the decree of heroic virtue of Venerable Andre Fournet, parish priest of St. Pierre de Maillet, Pope Benedict who never allows such an opportunity to pass without inculcating a needed lesson, made some striking remarks about the importance of the ministry of the parish priest. After dwelling on the life of renunciation and mortification of the pious priest, the Venerable Andre Fournet, the Holy Father showed how much the priest could do for his children beyond the purely spiritual help, assisting them with generous effort in the material things of life, helping them to dissipate trouble in families, and caring for the education of the young, the hope of the future.

Continuing, the Holy Father declared: The parish is like a family; the priest must be an affectionate father, always at hand to care for his spiritual children, their religious and moral interests, instructing and comforting them, sharing in their joys and sorrows. He must live the life of the parish, as the father lives the life of his children, and in special measure setting them a good example.

The priest is associated intimately with his flock in the most sacred relations of life. His work is to apply to them individually the graces of the Church, throughout their lives and more especially at the chief epochs of life. He baptizes them when they come into the world; provides for their Catholic training; administers to them for Confession and Holy Communion; assists them in life and fortifies them at the hour of death with the last sacraments. He keeps a perennial watch over their lives, consoles them in sorrow, assists them in trouble, advises them in danger, absolves them from sin and constantly stimulates them in countless ways in the practise of their holy religion.

In return his faithful flock looks upon the priest as their shepherd, who gives his life for them. He is not always called upon to lay down his life for his flock but he is always prepared to do so. The recent shocking murders of two faithful priests in this country, both killed in the performance of their duty, illustrates the heroic extremes to which every priest is prepared to go in fulfilling his sacred duty.

Realizing this, his children render to the priest filial loyalty and obedience that are summed up in the endearing term with which they designate him. He is their father in deed as well as in name. Non-Catholics have often marvelled at the loving respect which the Catholic priest always commands from his people.

A little study into the life of the priest, and his relations with his people would show them the reason for this apparent marvel. The contributions of countless pious and zealous priests through many centuries to the service spiritual and temporal of others, is a record of heroism hidden from the world, but carefully guarded by the Master Whom they serve so faithfully.

In recalling attention to the importance of the ministry of the priest, the Holy Father has given new inspiration to his priests, and shown the world how much it depends for its good order and stability upon the ministrations of the Catholic priesthood.—The Pilot.

THE PASSING OF
OBEDIENCE

Sometimes I wonder what has become of that old time virtue, Obedience. Is it lost, has it been stolen, or has it strayed away? If the first, then may heaven help us, for obedience is the foundation of the true Christian life and of good citizenship, and when that is lost, chaos must reign. It can not have been stolen, because no one seems to want it. It may have strayed off. If so, then we should seek it and try by every means to bring it back to be our safeguard and help.

Every thinking, sober-minded person of today must admit, does admit that the wickedness, immorality, and their attendant evils which now exist, come from lack of obedience. Some persons carelessly say, "Oh, the conditions which exist at the present time are only the aftermath of the war and things will readjust themselves."

Obedience! Let us study awhile the existing condition. Do we obey the laws of God and of the Church? I answer, No. In the home, the beautiful home life once existing, do parents obey the laws of God and man? Do they exact obedience from their children? I think not. Ask any teacher which child gives the least trouble and the answer invariably will be "this child who has been trained from infancy to obey and who comes from a home where obedience reigns."

Take the young girl and the young man of today. To them obedience is an unknown quantity. They neither obey the laws of God or man, hence they become lawless to citizens to whom morality is a stranger and dishonesty no crime unless you are caught.

I heard a boy a few years ago say in answer to another boy who would not do something on the Fourth of July, which had been forbidden by the city officials, and so published, "Dad says the laws are bum and I need not mind them. I can do just as I please." And he did, and I can state that he has turned out to be utterly lawless, and a great thorn in the flesh to the father who had given him such advice.

We have all learned the Ten Commandments, but how many of us put them each and all into practice. Did we but live up to their teaching there would be no need of man-made laws, for everything is embodied in those Ten Commandments which will protect every human interest.

Lack of obedience if we stop to think and analyze is the cause of all the ills that confront us today. We have become a money grabbing, money worshipping people and in this as everything else we overlook that obedience to the law which demands that we deal honestly with one another.

As Catholics we have it in our power to re-establish that old-fashioned virtue, obedience, in our midst. We have so many material interests today that we overlook many necessary things. If Catholic parents would set the example in the home of obedience and enforce it in their children we would have a change of conditions which would certainly add glory to the Church and by degrees establish a different code of morals and a safer, better citizenship.

One of the first things a boy has to learn upon entering the army is obedience to orders, unquestioning obedience to superiors and respect to and for them. When our young men were in training camps before going overseas the very hardest lesson all had to learn was obedience. Who was to blame for this state of affairs? Parents.

Everything has changed, I know, and the old teaching of children, obey your parents, and it stands now, parents obey your children, when obedience is desired. Yet we can improve matters if we try.—Mrs. Blake L. Woodson in The Echo.

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