

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

THE REV. F. P. HICKET, O. S. B.

SUNDAY AFTER CORPUS CHRISTI

THE HOLY MASS

"A certain man made a great supper."

The holy Sacrifice of the Mass—the Lord's Supper—is the great, pre-eminent act of our religion. The gospel gives us the very words of our divine Lord: "This is My Body; This is My Blood; do this in memory of Me" (Luke xxii. 19).

And St. Paul, to whom the mystery was divinely revealed, proclaims the same great truth: "For I have received of the Lord, that which I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke and said: 'Take ye and eat, this is My Body, which shall be delivered for you; do this for the commemoration of Me, in like manner, after He had supped, saying, This chalice is the new testament in My Blood'" (1 Cor. xi. 23, 25).

And this word was received by the Church and believed in, and the Apostles began the sacred rite—the breaking of Bread; and ever since in the Church of Christ the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass—the Lord's Supper—has been celebrated day after day throughout the long succeeding ages.

Ancient proofs still exist that the Mass was offered in the Catacombs in the days of persecution; and the ruins still existing of ancient and venerable churches tell us of the Holy Mass. The altar was the throne, the church the palace of the King! The art, the skill, the labor of man found their triumph in erecting the noblest buildings for the celebration of the Mass.

Long centuries passed, and there was scarcely an evil whisper breathed against this holy belief, this centre of our worship. Nigh four hundred years ago heretics arose, who denied the divine Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. Their churches, the stolen temples of the ancient faith, became no longer a home, for He did not dwell there for Whom they had been built. The cold desolation of those empty edifices! The altars no longer needed for sacrifice; the tabernacles destroyed, for the Lord had been driven forth!

Is there not a call, a strong and piercing cry from the Sacred Heart for us Catholics, who believe in the Holy Mass, to be more devout, to be more earnest and loyal towards it? Our forefathers bravely risked fines, imprisonment, and even death for attending Holy Mass. And are we, their children, slack and remiss and coldhearted towards the Sacrifice of the Altar? Even those who never miss a Sunday's Mass, might they not many a time attend a Mass out of devotion on a weekday?

But, alas! we cannot help but know that there are many who disregard and miss the Masses of obligation; through their own neglect and disobedience the Church has been compelled to imitate the Master in the gospel narrative and try to "compel them to come in." Too often the precept of the Church and the solicitations of the priest are all in vain.

This knowledge should add earnestness to our devotion in attendance at Holy Mass. Devoutly let us renew our faith. The Sacrifice of the Mass is the renewal of Calvary. The same divine Victim becomes present at the consecration; offers Himself for the same intentions—the glory and honor of God; the remission of sins; the salvation of mankind. His love and the efficacy of the offering are the same. It is the want of desire, of love, of willingness to give ourselves to His service and obedience, that limits the power of the blessings of the Holy Sacrifice upon our souls. When we are present let us unite our intentions with those of the Sacred Heart. He died on the Cross, and is offered in the Mass to give His Almighty Father the honor and glory robbed from Him by the sinfulness of mankind. He offers Himself in thanksgiving for the goodness, the unwearied patience in bearing with sinners, and for all the graces and blessings which are ours by our heavenly Father. Then He offers Himself, with our souls humbly clinging to Him, as if He were the chief of sinners—for He took all our sins upon Himself—for pardon and for mercy. Did He not say that He would be offered "for the remission of sins"? And that we may persevere wholeheartedly in His loving service He offers Himself pleading for all the favors and blessings and graces that we need and implore for the living and the dead.

If we only gave ourselves a little time, a serious moment, to think, how our hearts would yearn to be present at the holy Sacrifice. It is the test of a true Catholic. It is our faith if we are not impelled to be present at Mass as often as we can, even at inconvenience and when an effort is required to enable us to attend? Where is our hope? Do we ever think of and wish for heaven, and yet not use the best means of all to secure it? Where is our love, if we forget or begrudge to spare the time to attend? Love nailed the Victim to the Cross; love brings Him down upon our altars morning after morning to be offered for us. And where is our love unless it brings us here to our knees to praise and thank and bless our Saviour in return? Our Lord longs

to be remembered, to be loved, to be thanked: He loves to see us around Him, making humble amends for those who never think of Him; and at each Mass learning ourselves to love Him, trust in Him, and be grateful to Him more and more.

THE FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI

It is now nineteen centuries since Christ walked visibly in His humanity among the sons of men in the fields of Galilee and Judea. It is nineteen centuries since the Jews brought forth their sick for the shadow of Christ to fall upon them as He passed and to heal them. It is nineteen centuries since Christ went about visibly doing good. And then the Jews took that same gentle and loving Christ and crucified Him. And Christ died, and was buried, and on the third day He rose again, and after forty days He returned to His Father.

God the Son became man to redeem and save us. He came from heaven to communicate Himself to us, and the primary idea of the Incarnation is Emmanuel—God with us. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us." Our Divine Lord first dwelt with us in the lowly cave at Bethlehem; later on He dwelt at Nazareth, and when He began His public ministry He went about among the people, and lived with them, sharing their joys and sorrows. Even when the end came, Christ in the grave shared the last dark home of our mortality. "And My delights were to be with the children of men."

When Christ ascended to His Heavenly Father the work of the Incarnation had been complete, if one may so speak, if allowed to stand by itself. Christ had certainly come down upon earth; but He remained for a very few years comparatively, and these years spent in a very remote country, far removed from the great centers of civilization an habitation. It would almost seem as though the work intended by God to be accomplished by the Incarnation had been left partly undone. However, the moment we understand the mystery of Our Lord's Presence in the Blessed Eucharist, the moment we comprehend the full import of the words "Corpus Christi," all sense of incompleteness in the work of the Incarnation vanishes. "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." This was the promise of Christ, and most effectually has He fulfilled it.

Emmanuel—God with us. This is the central idea of the dogma of the Incarnation perpetuated for us in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist—Corpus Christi—Body of Christ. By taking together these two mysteries, viz., the Mystery of the Incarnation and the Mystery of the Real Presence, we gain the grandest and sublimest idea of God's dealings with His creatures.

Corpus Christi is, then, the treasure of the Church, and was recognized as such by the Church herself from the very beginning. Under the stress of persecution, the infant Church was compelled to betake herself underground with the treasure, and here in the catacombs the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered. When times of persecution passed away, the Church came forth again into the light, and her first care was to provide fitting shrines for her most sacred treasure. Thus, Christendom became dotted with glorious cathedrals and beautiful churches, all designed to render honor and glory to Emmanuel—God with us.

And now the world was Catholic, and many devotions were instituted to do honor to Our Divine Lord dwelling amongst us. The Feast of Corpus Christi, instituted by the Bull "Transiturus," in the year 1264, by Pope Urban IV., has come down the centuries, and is with us today. On this day the whole Catholic world unites in doing honor to the Son of God made Man, dwelling with us upon our altars, the treasure of the Catholic Church. On this day in every part of the world He is borne in triumphal processions among His faithful, with His sacred hands raised in benediction, as nineteen hundred years ago He went about Galilee and Judea doing good. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever." Even today, as of old, and as always. His delights are to be with the children of men. "Behold this Heart which has so loved man."

Surely our faith in this glorious mystery of our religion is strong enough to induce us to be present at the procession and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament on this day. And when the Sacred Host is raised aloft in solemn benediction, blessing the faithful present, blessing the whole of our fair country, we have the great satisfaction of knowing that with those present we are atoning in some measure by our love and faith for the many outrages, offered to Christ in this Sacrament of love.—Truth.

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

A French scholar has recently completed a remarkable piece of work which proves the magnificent professional conscience of Saint Francis de Sales, who was recently appointed by the Pope to be the patron of Catholic writers, and who may well serve as their model.

M. l'Abbe Francis Vincent, professor of literature in the Catholic Faculty of Angers, who has already published a work on Saint Francis de Sales the Director of Souls, has now made a deep study of the Introduction to the Devout Life. By comparing the first edition with a later edition published by the Saint himself shortly before his death, Abbe Vincent has discovered more than one thousand corrections, which he has carefully analyzed. Saint Francis de Sales is shown to have been anxious to express himself more clearly, more precisely, more vigorously and with more imagery, at the same time striving to simplify and amend his text.

CHINESE TO BUILD NUNCIO A HOME

A committee of sixteen representative Catholic Chinese laymen has recently made a very noble and gracious offer to His Grace, Archbishop Celso Constantini. In the name of all the Catholics in China, and as a pledge of their love for the Holy Father who has sent them their first Apostolic Delegate, they have petitioned His Grace to accept a residence which shall be worthy of his dignity and the Church which he represents, and which shall be the gift of all Catholics in China. For this purpose, these ardent Chinese laymen have asked His Grace to consent to a nation-wide subscription—not that the necessary funds are difficult to obtain, but solely that each and every Chinese Catholic may share in this gift and thus assure His Grace that every Chinese home extends a welcome to him, and that all the Chinese Catholics are as united in their love for the Holy See and its representative as they are united in their Catholic Faith.

The Committee has asked His Grace to express his choice in the location and the design of the dwelling that is to be his; but with childlike simplicity, it has put forth the wish that Pekin might become the place of his abode. The reasons they give are, that Pekin is to China what Rome is to the Church; it was in Pekin that Christianity was first established in China, and it is in Pekin that China can best do honor to the representative of Rome.

In reply to this beautiful and touching offer of the Chinese Catholics, Archbishop Constantini has said that he is most happy to come to live among them in Pekin. He recalls another noble letter written to the Holy See by a Minister of State at Pekin, in 1621, in which the same devotion and reverence were expressed as now. He refers to that heroic missionary, Bl. Odoric de Pordonone, his fellow-citizen, who also made Pekin his home.

His Grace insisted, that if the house he built, it should follow the lines of Chinese architecture. The Catholic Church, he said, is at home in all climes, among all peoples, and it has always been her way to see and use the best that she finds among the nations that welcome her into their midst, and to ennoble all that they offer her.

IRISH TEMPERANCE PROGRAM

A minimum programme, as a stepping stone to more drastic reforms, has been adopted by the Irish Association for the Prevention of Intemperance. This programme includes a thorough enforcement of the existing licensing laws, the complete elimination of Sunday drink traffic and the withdrawal of licenses from at least half the 15,670 saloons in the country.

The annual drink bill of Ireland has reached the large figure of \$180,000,000.

At the yearly meeting of the Association the programme was supported by Catholic and Protestant clergymen, by prominent business men and the leader of the Labor Party in Ireland. Rev. Father Lawrence, O. S. F. C., who presided, said that whatever success temperance work had achieved in the past was won when the work was under the auspices of religion. With religion, their grasp they should all participate with renewed vigor in a national crusade against the vice of intemperance.

CATHOLIC ACTORS' GUILD

The Most Rev. Patrick J. Hayes, Archbishop of New York, was the guest of honor at the annual luncheon of the Catholic Actors' Guild held in Hotel Astor. Fifteen hundred persons, comprising many of the most noted figures of the theatrical, business and social life of the nation, were present. Brandon Tyman was toastmaster.

Archbishop Hayes, in his address, said that he always had a shepherd's prayer in his heart for the members of the theatrical profession. "Our stage folks are always in the spotlight," he asserted, "and therefore it is easy to have their lives misinterpreted and their motives questioned. Some say that the stage has no ethics in the present era, but I want to remind the critics of the profession that stage ethics are identical with the ethics of the individuals who people that stage."

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Will Rogers made one of the most humorous speeches of the occasion. "The last time I was at the Astor ballroom," said Rogers, "it was at a banquet for another notable

named Hays—the czar of the movie industry. So well has this Hays done his work of purifying the industry and those in it, that recently Jackie Coogan came to New York and remained for a whole month and there wasn't a breath of scandal connected with his stay."

Irvin S. Cobb, in his address, bemoaned the fact that it was not so easy to entertain guests at a gathering after lunch as it was in the ancient days, "before the Volstead amendment had made America safe for hypocrisy."

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