

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOSTTHE CHIEF COMMANDMENT
"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Matt.
xii, 39)

God desires that all men should be saved, and in order that we may know how to work our salvation He has given us the Commandments. He urges us to keep these commandments, especially the commandment of love of God and of our neighbor, which in today's Gospel He calls the greatest and first commandment, by promising us a reward for observing and a punishment for ignoring the same: "Whosoever loveth Him, He loveth less (Luke vii, 47), which means, whoever does not love God will not receive the remission of sins, therefore St. John says: He that loveth not abideth in death" (1 John iii, 14). We are promised a magnificent reward if we love God, of which reward the Apostle says: "That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. ii, 9). To become worthy of this reward let us consider how we may love God perfectly.

The fathers of the Church teach that five things are necessary for the perfect love of God.

(a) We must heartily believe in God's perfections, His wisdom, goodness, justice, faithfulness and omnipotence, and we must earnestly desire that for these perfections He be unceasingly adored, praised, and honored by the angels and saints in heaven, and by the faithful on earth. This desire will make us inclined for instance, to seek the places and occasions of public worship of God, it will make us rejoice when learning of the conversion of a sinner. Just as a faithful child is happy when it sees its father honored, and sad when its father is grieved: so the good and loving child of God will rejoice when his Father in heaven is praised and honored, and will mourn because of the many offences which are committed against Him.

(b) This mourning because of the many transgressions of God's commandments, committed either by ourselves or by others, also tends to the perfect love of God, and is exercised as often as we have confessed our sins, and expressed our sorrow for them, and for the sins committed by others.

(c) For the perfect act of the love of God it is furthermore necessary that we should desire that God be paid all the homage due Him by the faithful, also that the infidels and pagans may receive the light of the true faith. This may be practised as often as we recite in the Our Father: "Hallowed by Thy name, Thy kingdom come."

(d) We must, moreover, have the good intention to perform all our actions for the greater honor and glory of God, to suffer all trials and adversities for His sake, and this practice, for instance by beginning our daily work with a good intention. The apostle says: "Whether you eat or drink or whatever else you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. x, 31.)

(e) Finally, to love God perfectly it is necessary to resign ourselves to the will of God, in all our undertakings, plans, desires, and sufferings, and to say humbly, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," not in the manner that I will, but as Thou wilt, for you are infinitely good, holy and just.

These, my dear Christians, are the necessary qualities of the perfect love of God. Is it necessary to tell you that this act of love merits a great reward? This perfect love of God is of such value and power that if unable to receive the sacrament of penance in the hour of death, all our sins may be remitted, if we sincerely have this perfect love and contrition. After Mary Magdalen with a perfect act of love and contrition, had anointed the feet of our Saviour she departed with all her sins forgiven. With regard to this love, St. Peter says: "Charity covereth a multitude of sins" (1 Peter iv, 8). An act of perfect love will cause even the smallest good deed, if performed for the love of God, to be of merit for heaven. What a trifle it is to give a drink of water to the thirsty! Nevertheless our Saviour assures us that if this be done for His sake it shall not go unrewarded.

My dear Christians! Let us endeavor to acquire this perfect love of God. Let no one say it is not possible for him to love God in this manner, God demands only our hearts. Let us love Him with all our heart and we shall receive the reward of which the apostle says: "That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love Him." (1 Cor. ii, 9) Amen.

THE OCTOBER DEVOTIONS—
THE ROSARY

It was in the reign of Pope Leo XIII. that October became "Rosary Month." Our readers will remember when he called upon the Catholic world to observe this month by the use of this beautiful devotion. He it was, too, who added to the Litany the invocation: "Queen of the Most Holy Rosary pray for us." He wished to see the people use the Rosary as part of their daily prayers. We speak of Leo XIII. in particular, but of course the Rosary has for Catholics, all the interest that centres in, and clings to, an ancient pious practice, and one which furnishes us with that combination of oral and mental prayer which is the most perfect of all prayers. The saying of the Rosary involves reflection on the mysteries which are to be considered. The five Joyful Mysteries place before our minds the five events through which were laid the foundation of the work of redemption. The five Sorrowful Mysteries take us through the accomplishment of the work that Jesus came to do, and leave us to contemplate Him hanging on the cross. In the five Glorious Mysteries we contemplate the fruits of our redemption—the awakening of the soul; the entry of the just into their eternal home; the dispersing of God's light and truth; the reward of the mother of God; her great place in heaven, "above all

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the angels in glory unfold," there to be our friend and our intermediary with God.

That a devotion so admirably conceived has become the delight of the pious, and the refuge and appeal of the repentant sinner, in every land beneath the sun, is surely not surprising. That Popes, Bishops and pastors have joined for ages in urging it upon the people as a constant practice and not merely an occasional one is most natural. Prayer is natural to man; prayer dignifies man; prayer is the first and highest duty of man. If a man never adores God, never contemplates the truths that concern God, how can he hope to do right else well? It is true that our work and our acts may be offered as homage and adoration; but such adoration cannot take the place of the practice by which a man brings his mind directly and unequivocally to the contemplation of his Creator and Master and Sovereign Lord, addressing to Him his feeble praise, acknowledging His power, goodness and love, and laying his humble petitions before Him.

And, since we must pray, since we have nothing reasonably to hope for if we do not pray, how shall we pray? How, better than in the Rosary? There is the Creed; there is the Our Father; there is the contemplation of Jesus Christ, from the announcement of the angel, to the day when He was nailed to the cross; to the time when He received His Blessed Mother and installed her in glory; there is the consideration of Mary's part and place in the plan and accomplishment of the redemption of man.

We have known some men who seem to think that the Rosary was a good devotion for old women who had plenty of time. Prince Eugene of Savoy, the victorious general of the eighteenth century, the ally of the English army under Marlborough, wore his beads beside his sword, and said them always before going into battle. He had not on such occasions time to throw away; neither can he be classed an old woman. Radeletsky, another famous general, did the same. To go as far as possible from a battlefield for other instances, the great musical composers, Haydn and Glick used the beads constantly; and Glick called them the "musician's breviary." The Rosary has, and throughout its whole history has had, its devotees all up and down the lines, from Kings and Queens to the poorest of their subjects; from the Pope to the altar-boy. Plinix, said:

"To arms! my children, I invite you to battle with the evils in the world and society, not, however, with the sword, but with prayer and good example."

And no prayers have been more warmly pressed upon us by the Popes than the Rosary. Twenty-seven Popes have endowed it with indulgences. Such is the devotion to which this month of October is now particularly appropriated, through the piety and zeal of the late Pope Leo. Can any man afford to ignore it?—The Casket.

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A SPIRITUAL IMPOSSIBILITY

"You cannot serve God and Mammon," said our divine Lord, and yet in the face of this solemn declaration many are trying to do so. It is said to be unwise, not to say sinful, to give ourselves up entirely to the things of this world. And yet this is just what most men are doing. They forget that there is a God Who created them, or if they do that He has any claims upon them, or that there is anything more than this life. Let us follow that mass of men pushing along our business throng; they are hurrying on with quick step and serious mood, pale and haggard, beset with the weight of their thoughts and the burdens of their labors, hastening here and there in the one effort not so much to supply the needs of life as to get rich, have ease, luxury, and independence.

Do they stop to think of their folly?—that the treasures they are striving for may evade their grasp, or once obtained may prove to be dust again, or that death may take them away from them any time, or even granted that should they live long years in the enjoyment of the wealth that they have acquired, it is the experience of those who have grown rich that they were far happier in meagre circumstances than ever they were in their wealth. With all their possessions they feel poor still, and they are in chains, golden if you please, but none the less painful, than any the poor man knows. New surroundings, new society absorb their free moments, and the vying with one another for the palm of superiority and the flattering praise of the world makes their hearts sore and their minds distressed. They feel the richer they become the poorer they really are, so great the need they feel of more and more riches, and hence the saying of some wise old philosopher that wealth creates more wants than it can supply.

Now, there is no objection to striving moderately for earthly possession. We must make some efforts even for the necessities of life. It is the living for these things alone that is condemned. The primary object of our creation in heaven, and this ought to be the first object of our thoughts. With attention to the things of this world, the matter of earthly needs will hardly be neglected. God prospers the good. It may be that we will not amass great fortunes, but they will have a sufficiency, and any more than that becomes a burden. Our wants are many, but our needs are few. We fancy that we have need of more than what ordinarily falls to our lot, but it is not always so. A very little is enough, or if we need more it will be given to us. God our Father is a good provider. Let us leave our interests to Him and they will be in good hands. But let us do as He bids us, and seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, and then all things will be added thereto.

How many are the wrecks of souls stranded on the rocks and shoals of business! We all can recall cases where men ceased to adore God for the worship of the golden calf. Men who in their youth were good practical Catholics, they were the offspring of pious parents, went to parish school and Sunday school in their young days, were perhaps serving at the altar, but after a few years the practice of their faith was abandoned. They no longer approached the sacraments, were not seen in church, the business fever, the thirst for gain got hold of them, and they have no time for anything else. Church and sacraments have no particular relation to them, with business success, and so they consider time wasted that may be spent on it.

Societies are the rage, and even societies forbidden by the Church are not disdained by men who should and do know better, and who seek by affiliation therewith wealth, riches, and the position and the applause they may bring. So men live and so they die, not perhaps denying their faith, but practically denying it, since they do not identify themselves with it.

A case in point. We recall a case of one who in his early manhood was a superintendent of a Sunday school. He seemed and no doubt was all the position would require. But he married a non-Catholic and soon went from his home in New York out to what then was the almost unexplored present State of Minnesota. He started in business, and to hasten success joined the Masons. He prospered in a worldly sense, but lost his soul, for he died as he lived—out of Church and without the sacraments. As our Lord said, "You cannot serve two masters, God and Mammon," though not a few are trying it. Let us hope and pray they will cease their folly before it is too late. A Catholic

who gives up his faith gives up his salvation.—Bishop Colton in Catholic Union and Times.

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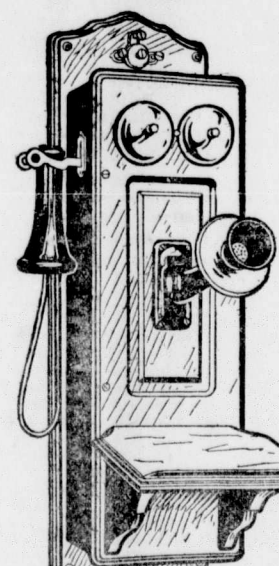
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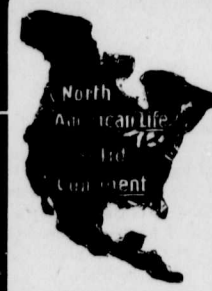
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