FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS FOR EARLY MASSES

By the Paulist Fathers. ed in their Church of St. Paul the stie. Fifty-ninth street and Minth ine, New York City.

TWENTY FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST Pay what thou owest."-Gospel of the

"Pay what thou owest."—Gospel of the day.—St. Matt xviii., 28.

Justice, my dear brethren, is the first and highest law of human conduct. And although our Bleesed Lord in the Gospel gives us to understand that justice should be tempered with mercy, He none the less insists on the strict observance of the law of justice, always and in all cases. No amount of faith or hope or charity can supply for it. Faith without justice is hypocrisy, hope without justice is presumption, and charity without justice is little less than the mockery of virtue. The sins that cry to heaven for vengeance are those against justice. The men whose works our Blessed Saviour constantly condemned were the Scribes and Pharisees—dishonest men. Every sentence of Divine Revelstion, and every diotate of human conscience affirm the absolute necessity of the law of justice. So that if we fail in this our failure is simply fatal.

Without doubt, my dear brethren, we all appreciate the excellence and the importance of the virtue of justice; but when we come to apply the law to ourselves, some of us, I fear, are rather lax in our interpretation of it. "Pay what thou owest" is right enough, we don't dispute it; but, as a matter of fact, do we do it? Are not we also given to make excuses, and do we not put off our payments when they are due? And when, with a more rigid sense of justice, we would strain a point to make them? It is positively amazing how indifferent some seemingly pious people are in the matter of paying their debts. They won't pay what they owe, either because they want to hold on to the cash as long as they can, or because they wish to spend the money for something else. Here is a man who is in debt, or who is bound to restitution, and he will go on for years without fulfilling his obligation, because he hesitates to reduce his bank account. Here is a woman who owes her grocer or her butcher, and she postpones payment indefinitely because she wants to buy a fall bonnet or a seal bank account. Here is a woman who owes her grocer or her butcher, and she postpones payment indefinitely because she wants to buy a fall bonnet or a seal shin sacque. Here is another, and a very common specimen of disbonest humanity, who has been running up bills without any apparent purpose of meeting them, for he spends all his earnings in the grog shop. God help us! People now a days make light of their debts and obligations; they make no housest effort to redeem they make no houest effort to redeem them: they lose sight of that final account-ing when the unjust debtors "shall be cast

ing when the urjust debtors "shall be cast into prison from which they shall not depart until they pay the last farthing."

But suppose a man is not able to pay his debts. What then? Well, in the first place, a man has no right to contract debts unless he can see his way to pay them; and, in the second place, he is bound in conscience to make every effort in his power to meet his obligations. in his power to meet his obligations. If due prudence and economy be exer cised, and through accident or untoward If due prudence and economy be exercised, and through accident or untoward circumstances a man becomes unable to diquidate his indebtedness, there is, of course, no help for it, and no charge of dishonesty can be alleged against him. But in the ms jority of cases people get into debt, and continue in it, through down right reckleseness or ext-avagance. The rum shop is the great feeder of the d-bt cis prison, as well as of the Tombs. The dissipation or the criminal extravagance of the head of the family, or some mem ber of it, is at the bottom of most of the cases of hopeless indebtedness we meet with. Debts incurred through sickness or mere accident are the honorable exceptions. And even here you cannot be classed among honest debtors, unless you make every effort in your power to cancel them. It is true you are not bound to deny yourself or your family the necessities of life in order to pay your debts, but you are bound to practice the most rigid ties of life in order to pay your debts, but you are bound to practice the most rigid economy, so that, sooner or later, you may be able to meet them; and if you neglect doing as you are not as honest man.

be able to meet them; and if you neglect doing so you are not an honest man.

Now, my dear brethren, we all hold justice in high esteem, and we recognise an honest man as the noblect work of God. Only let us carry our admiration into practice and illustrate in our own conduct the glory of God's greatest attribute and the incomparable perfection of Christian honesty. And let us begin by paying our lawful debts, for to pay what you owe is the A B C of justice. Remember that this is a matter where the intention counts for little without the act. Outside of professional thieves there are few debtors who have not the intention of making everything square when their ship comes in or their mine pans out, but all such intentions are mere sops to con science and they are the inventions of dishonest souls. Don't mock justice in this way, but resolve at once to "pay what thou owest," for the obligations of justice brook not a moment's delay.

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FLOWER-PRAISES OF OUR LADY.

(Professor Stace, in the Ave Maria.)

Vivyo practicands one pro nobis The laurei has always been the symbol of renown. Among our American laurels, species of the general Kalmia, Rhododen dron, and others, there is an embarras de richesse; we hesitate which among them to choose as celebrant of the praises of the most renowned Virgin. The mountain laurel of the Pennsylvanian Alleghanies (Kalmia latifolia) commends itself by its bright green foliage and profuse blossoms, rose color and white. Be it, then our chosen vocalist to chant her praises on its native hills.

Virgo potens ora pro nobis. Rising like a sceptre of virginal power above the prairie flowers, its lithe and graceful stem gemmed with a wealth of gold flecked crimson bloom, on the long days of the summer solstice we may find that lovely orchid Calopogon pulchellus, sometimes known as the "grass pink." It shall elevate our hearts to the Virgo potens.

Virgo clemens, ora pro nobis. Few of our native plauts are lairer and richer than the American centaury (Sabbatia angularis), its profusion of rose colored blossoms lavishly poured forth as from the inexhaustible fountains of Divine mercy, every blossom bearing a star of hope in its centre. Prize it when found; for it changes its places of growth, and next year you may not find it again. And let it be for you a remembrance of the most merciful Virgin.

Virgo fidelia, ora pro nobis. Around the death-bed of the year, amid fading autumnal glories, stand the faithful asters, their starike blossoms telling of a higher life to come, and their balsamic odors breathing peace upon the last hours of the departing season. Wonderful in the multitudinous variety of species and coloring — rich purple, bright gold, aerial gray, deep wine color, spotless white, and clear blue—they seem designed to add the hues which autumnal foliage fails to supply, and to be complement of its splendors. In a thicket of dwarf sassafras and summen, the former

designed to add the hues which autumnal foliage fails to supply, and to be complement of its splendors. In a thicket of dwarf sassafras and aumach, the former turned to scarlet and gold, the latter to crimson and purple, I have seen the azure stars of Aster laevis shining like sapphires on a velvet robe. What more beautiful emblem of the Virgo fidelis can we choose?

we choose ?

Speculum justitiae, ora pro nobis. The speculum justitue, ora pro nobis. The emotiens of justice—the sword to punish offenders, and the crown to reward merit—stand forth mirrowed in our native flower de luce (Iris versicolor), its ensilorm leaves raised in threatening guise while its beautiful blossom—the flower-de-luce itself—is the chosen ornament of royal coronais.

itself—is the chosen ornament of royal coronals

Sedes sepientiae, ora pro nobis. The gift of wisdom is the epitome of all virtues. Far from seeking display, it yet cannot be hidden, the vicissitudes of human life continually demanding its exercise. But it must be sought after, like the most brilliant flower American woods produce. I knew a young lady, an American born and a great lover of flowers, whose privilege and delight it was to adorn the altars of her parisan church with the choice productions of her garden, and yet she had n-ver seen the cardinal flower (Lobe in cardinalis). It grew within a mile of her home, out in an alder swamp, whose approaches defied the femioine foot, and whose tangled twigs threatened destruction to feminine attire. One might travel from New York to San Francisco and back without seeing it, even though it were the season of its flowering; but once seen it is not to be forgotten. Wherever it grows it always has a name, which is more than can be said of any other wild flower. Some of these names are neither poetic nor choice, but all express the intense impression made upon the optic nerve. For this flower seems to shine by its own light, so bright is its red among the surrounding verdure. Red—not searlet, not rose color, not crimson, tint, but pure, elementary red. It seeks not to display its cherms; it grows not by the way side, unless you speak of those wood-land ways that penetrate the inmost recesses of the forest. There, in seclusion, in the haunts of the contemplative, like that wisdom of which it is the symbol, it is to be found, with its chosen colleagues—the creamy, recurved spike of the szururus, the lush foliage and fantastic, freckled biossom of the wild balsam; and the blue lobelia, its congenial relative. It is known to the herbalist, the physician, the hermit; unknown in the turmoil of worldly strife. It is rapidly disappearing before so called civilization. Spots in this neighborhood where it used to be plentiful, know it now no more. But whenever its unparalleled radiance flashes across our woodland path let us raise our hearts to her whose bosom the lucarnate Wisdom chose for His most excellent throne.

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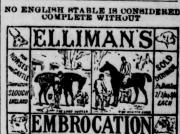


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