

## FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOUY, D. D.

## FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

## THE CALLING OF THE LABORERS

"And Jesus saith to Simon: Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And having brought their ships to land, leaving all things, they followed Him." (Luke x, 1-11)

Of all the dignities of earth, that of the chosen one of God is the most sublime. A vocation is above an avocation; it is greater than a profession. This calling is something that cannot be said to be innate in man, but comes to him when God, who is its Author, chooses. It is a privilege, for it is not given to all; nay, it is given to but a few—and it elevates man to the highest point obtainable in life, when he lives up to it faithfully. It places man in the closest connection possible with his Maker, and records the will of God to be made known to other men. God works, in other words, through His chosen ones for the salvation of man's soul. To co-operate with God in this, the greatest of all works, can not fail to be most meritorious.

It is well that God chooses those whom He desires to be laborers in His vineyard. Did man make the choice himself, his works to that end would be in vain, for a power from God and an adaptability from the same source are absolutely necessary for success in this work. Man is saved through grace. He can not be urged on effectively to salvation by any other means. He is incited to this pursuit by him who has an abundance of God's grace and a certain likeness to his Master abiding in him, and manifested by his words and works. God will not give the power to work in men's souls except to him whom He Himself calls. It is for this reason that the preachers and deacons who work themselves into God's ministry attain no lasting success and, sooner or later, show their true colors. Sometimes, because of people's good faith, God may use them as a means through which to exercise His beneficence toward man, but this does not help them personally. They are instruments, perhaps; but, being rational beings, it depends upon themselves what kind of instruments they become. We must never overlook the fact that man has a free will, and though God may for a while work through him, he is not thereby necessarily in God's favor, living in the state of grace. Since God calls His own, then alone does He adorn with His special graces, and to them only does He give the power to bring souls to Him. He sometimes may lead souls to Himself through others; but whether the souls of these others also will be brought to Him, depends upon themselves.

The beauty of the life of those called by God and actively and meritoriously engaged in His works, can not be surpassed. Why should this be so? Because it is an adornment coming from God Himself, from whom all beauty proceeds. In that soul in which God acts in a special way, there is but loveliness. He makes it His own, and only the purest and brightest are God's possession. Where stains exist, God is absent, or is not present in any intimate degree. The dwelling-places of God are those of His chosen souls. In body they must live on earth, work, toil, and suffer; but in spirit and in their higher and nobler life, they live in constant communication with God. The delight that words can not speak is theirs in abundance. And a sad heart never beats in their breasts, except such as was Christ's when He considered the hardened sinner. The divine in Christ, which ever gave Him happiness and made Him dwell in bliss, may be said to exist, in a certain sense, in God's chosen ministers who are faithfully doing His will and laboring for Him, even amidst sufferings. In them this is not a nature as in Christ, but it is a sort of presence of the Almighty, and is a reward even in life for their labors.

God would choose greater numbers of ministers, no doubt, were the necessary dispositions found in parents and in the subjects. We must never forget that God does not, as a rule, act against nature. He rather acts in accord with it. It is nature that He finds worthy or unworthy of His love. This does not mean nature itself, but nature as we have made it, or as we make it. Where human nature is made an object worthy of God's love, the highest spiritual blessings will be given it, and among the principal, the chief of these, is a call to work in His cause. Of course, God does not expect to find us as worthy of His love and esteem as He will make us. This would not be possible for us. However, He wishes to find fit subjects for what He is desirous of making of us. There always has been a certain disposition to an end which God called one to attain. Sometimes it was hidden, not through one's own fault, but because of wrong rearing, faulty education, and false teaching. Some have thought, as no doubt did St. Paul before his conversion, the acts they were engaged in, to be lawful and even meritorious. But God lifted the veil from their eyes, and they then applied all their faculties and powers to a noble cause. So it is yet that many, once in good faith enemies of God's one religion, are called to His service and become indefatigable laborers in His vineyard. But we do not intend to speak of these exceptions. It is among God's own that He should

find the greatest number of subjects properly disposed to hear His call. He has acted thus since the foundation of His Church. He always has selected His workers from among those who were the most faithful in the practice of their religion. His call has been, too, as a reward to those who nobly have kept the faith and courageously fought His cause. To perfect what has been shaped by chisel and hammer, God has applied the finishing touch, by a gentle process of calling. It is rare that He will do more.

It is in the Christian home that the future priest of the Church should be disposed for God's invitation to become a co-operator with Him in the salvation of souls. Prayer brings much in this direction. To no one more directly than to parents is it said, "Pray ye, therefore the Lord that He send laborers into His vineyard." Encouragement to children, an effort to have them love the things of God, often sow the seeds of a vocation. It will not generally come in the home where religion holds a secondary place, where bishop and priest are criticized, or spoken of irreverently. Children should be told repeatedly, also, the true story of life. To how many the brightest and the most worldly hopes are pictured without sufficient foundation, and which, if realized, would make them rich in money, worldly goods, and influence, but poor in grace and virtue. Parents should put before their sons and daughters the pictures of two careers—one worldly, the other spiritual, but both impartially portrayed. If this were done, the number that would adopt the spiritual career, would be much larger than it is today. May the day come when this will be so, for the harvest is great and the laborers few.

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## CURED BY LITTLE FLOWER

CARDINALS DI BELMONTE AND TOSI GIVE THANKS TO BLESSED THERESE

Rome, Italy.—His Eminence Cardinal Granito di Belmonte, Bishop of Albano, on recovering from a very grave malady, addressed to his diocese a letter of thanksgiving for the tender veneration and the prayers which were accorded him during his sickness.

His Eminence writes of the intervention of the Little Flower of Jesus in his behalf, attributing to her powerful intercession with God his speedy recovery.

The letter of Cardinal di Belmonte published in La Croix, is as follows:

## TRIBUTE TO LITTLE FLOWER

"The operation to which I had submitted had proved successful when, through unlooked for complications, the healing of my painful wounds was retarded, a circumstance which would oblige me as well as those who had the charity to assist me, to endure many prolonged weeks of annoying and painful weariness. I was exceedingly sorrowful at the prospect.

"One evening I went into my oratory, and with a confidence perfect in familiarity, I addressed myself to the Blessed Theresa of the Child Jesus, and said to her: 'In this malady I have often invoked your aid: now I ask of Jesus if it be for His glory, by your intercession, to heal me; this night I will place your relic upon me.'

"My dear friends, upon lying down on the bed that evening, I found that my wound was suddenly healed!

"The physicians, several days later, declared that according to science, this wound could not have been cured by natural means in this manner.

"Today with golden pen, Mgr. Blazio Verghetti wrote to me: 'The

Virgin Theresa has healed this wound.'

"Most dear brethren and sons, if you have prayed for me, pray with me at this hour and help me to render thanks to God."

## ANOTHER TESTIMONIAL

One month later, the Milanese press gave echo to a second testimonial to the power of the Little Flower's intercession for another faithful client of hers, His Eminence Cardinal Tosi of Milan. After several months' endurance of a grave malady which was apparently rapidly bringing him to the tomb, to the great anguish of his diocese, this zealous pastor addressed the following touching letter to his flock:

## LETTER OF CARDINAL TOSI

"Never to be forgotten and sweet to my heart will be my gratitude toward the Blessed Theresa of the Child Jesus. This dear little Saint was always favorable to me, because when I was at Squillace and at Andria I attributed a prodigious circumstance to her intercession. Since then the august Pontiff has proclaimed her Blessed, and my devotion and confidence in her have increased extremely. When therefore I found myself confined to my bed of a malady which was rapidly bringing me to the tomb, my thought turned naturally toward Blessed Theresa, and I prayed her to let fall upon me at least one of those flowers which she showers with so much largesse from Paradise.

"But only God knows the hour of grace. The month of August passed, then September; came the 15th of October and the malignant fever, symptom of morbid humors which circulated in my veins, persisted still.

"A devoted friend acquainted me that on October 15, Feast of the great St. Theresa, there was to be celebrated at Liseux, a Mass for me on the altar of the Little Flower, and that on the same day the Vicars and Pro-Vicars would also offer for my intention the Holy Sacrifice at Concessa (province of Milan) in the Convent of Discalced Carmelites, to obtain the protection of the Little Theresa.

"O, prodigy! The fever ceased as if by enchantment the same day, and all, astonished, did not know how to explain this phenomenon since for several days my life had been menaced. From this moment, however, there remained to me only the weakness of convalescence.

"I cannot cry out that this is a miracle, but this fact constitutes for me a favor of the first order, and I intend to render my thanks to the Lord and the Blessed Theresa. As for you, very dear sons, keep this teaching: He who confides in the Lord will never be confounded. EUGENIO, CARD. TOSI."

One of the journals which reproduces this letter concludes:

"We have read with joy the noble words of our Archbishop. Joy, because his letter confirms us that his cure is an accomplished fact. Joy because we rejoice with him at seeing our Father return to the midst of his children. Joy yet more because to the cure of our common Father is joined the glory and the sanctity of a sublime creature whom the Church proposes, this very year, as a model of heroic virtue, Theresa of Liseux. The little saint of Carmel's garden will have in our diocese and in the hearts of all the faithful a particular cult of gratitude."

A public ceremony of thanksgiving was held in Milan upon the return of its beloved Archbishop. Also a pilgrimage of the Milanese to Liseux which was promised in the event of the cure being granted, is being organized to take place in August, 1924.

## SAINT JOAN

Opinions have differed widely about Mr. Bernard Shaw's "Saint Joan," which is still attracting a crowded audience in London, and some Catholic observers have felt that the play shows signs of a better spirit and of a truer appreciation of facts than the eminent playwright has shown in the past. This opinion is not shared by a very competent Catholic critic who saw the play in America—Mr. Conde B. Fallon, the eminent scholar, associated with the Catholic Encyclopedia. Mr. Fallon went quite prepared to revise his views of Mr. Shaw, but found the play "a hideous travesty." Its purport is to depict Joan as an "essential Protestant." Joan is made to "appeal to God against the Christ," when in fact she constantly appealed from the tribunal at Beauvais to the Pope. The trial is depicted as an honest trial for heresy, whereas it was "a farce boosted up by calumny, false witness and chicanery." In fact, contrary to the representation in the play, the conflict was between the Saint and her traders, not between the Saint and the Church. The issue was political, racial, temperamental; it was not religious nor ecclesiastical. Mr. Shaw makes it a matter of the Protestant principle of individual judgment in matters of revelation against the Catholic principle of authority in those matters; and this it was not.—The Universe, London.

Kind words are the music of the world. Devote each day to the object then in time, and every evening will find something done.—Goethe.



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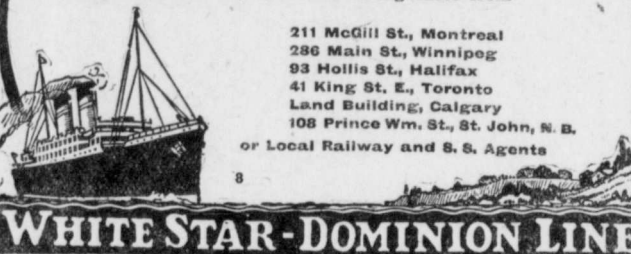
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