

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTE-
COST

THE REAL PRESENCE

"Take ye and eat, this is My Body. And taking the chalice, He gave thanks and gave it to them saying, Drink ye all of this, for this is My Blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many, for the remission of sin." (St. Matt. xxvi, 26, 27, 28)

The mysteries of our holy religion, my dear friends, have always been subjects of ridicule to the sceptic. The Holy Trinity is boastfully declared to be contrary to reason; while the Incarnation of Jesus Christ is called an impossibility, an absurdity.

But perhaps no mystery of revelation has been so universally attacked as the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar. You know from your catechism what is meant by the Real Presence. You firmly believe, because the Church which is the pillar and the ground of truth teaches it, that Jesus Christ is really and truly, Body and Blood, soul and divinity, present in the Blessed Sacrament under the form and appearance of bread and wine. The Church in teaching this dogma asks us to believe nothing that is contrary to Scripture, to tradition, or to reason. In fact, if the Church could teach anything contrary to Scripture, tradition, or reason, she would cease to be the true Church, and the promises of Christ would fail to be fulfilled. It follows from this that, when any teaching of the Church seems to any one to be absurd, false, or unreasonable, it is because he does not properly understand it.

Let us then for a few moments examine this teaching of the Church—the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament—and see if it is not in perfect agreement with the Holy Scripture, tradition and reason. If anyone will take up his Bible and read carefully the sixth chapter of St. John, the twenty-sixth chapter and twenty-sixth, twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth verses of St. Matthew, the fourth chapter and twenty-second verse of St. Mark, the twenty-second chapter and nineteenth verse of St. Luke and the tenth chapter of the first Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, sixteenth verse, he will certainly see that the Catholic dogma of the Real Presence is founded on Scripture.

In the sixth chapter of St. John we learn that our Saviour before instituting the Blessed Eucharist, wished to announce, to promise it solemnly to His disciples in order to prepare them for it. He first presented them with a type of the Eucharist in the multiplication of the five loaves by which He fed five thousand persons. After this miracle, He told them that He would give to them Bread superior to that which they had eaten and that this Bread was His Own Flesh and Blood. "The Bread that I will give is My Flesh for the life of the world," "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life." "For My Flesh is meat indeed and My Blood is drink indeed." These words it is almost impossible to understand in any other than a literal sense. We find that He was thus understood by His disciples, and many of them left Him because they could not understand how He could give them His Flesh to eat. Now if Jesus Christ did not speak literally, would He not have told His disciples so, rather than have them withdraw from Him?

This promise which was so difficult to be understood by those who heard it, was to be fulfilled at the Last Supper. On the eve of His passion Our Saviour and His disciples assembled in a large room at Jerusalem where the Paschal supper had been prepared. After eating of the symbolic lamb and washing His disciples' feet, Jesus took bread in His sacred hands and lifting His eyes to heaven gave thanks to His Father, blessed the Bread, broke it and gave it to His Apostles saying, "Take ye and eat. This is My Body which is given for you; do this in commemoration of Me."

And taking the chalice, He gave thanks and gave to them saying, "Drink ye all of this. For this is My Blood of the New Testament which shall be shed for many unto remission of sin."

These are substantially the words of the three evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke, and of the Apostle St. Paul. Again St. Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter tenth, verse sixteenth, says: "The chalice of benediction which we bless is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? And the Bread, which we break is it not the partaking of the Body of the Lord?"

Any one of these texts I have quoted abundantly proves the Catholic dogma of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

Reflect upon them. Reflect especially upon the words of Jesus Christ, "This is My Body. This is My Blood." Think what an insult it is to the divinity and veracity of Jesus Christ to doubt His words simply because you cannot understand how what appears to be bread is in reality the Body of Christ. There are many things in the world around us you cannot understand. Do you understand how the bread you eat becomes part of your own body?

If we only remember that Christ had the power to change Bread into His Body, that He really did it when He said, "This is My Body," since He did not say this is the figure of My Body, nor this represents My Body; that He could confer this power upon others as upon the Apostles and their successors, the Bishops and priests of the Church, and that He in reality did so when He said, "Do this in commemoration of Me," if we only

remember this, I say, then we will never have any difficulty in believing in the dogma of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

This dogma which, as we have just seen, is so clearly taught by Scripture, has been the belief of the Church of Christ in every age from the time of the Apostles to the present. Instead of quoting from the fathers and doctors of the different centuries in proof of this, I wish to call your attention for a few moments to what we call in theology the argument of prescription.

Prescription is defined to be a title acquired by long use or custom. This is what prescription means in law (a title acquired by long use) and it means about the same thing in theology. The argument of prescription, then, is an argument for a doctrine showing that it has been in use, been believed, from time immemorial, from the time of our Saviour.

Now if the doctrine of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament was not believed in every age since the time of the Apostles, somebody ought to be able to find out and tell us; who was the author of the new teaching; what time it began to be believed; in what place it was first taught; what occasion gave rise to it; who were its opponents, its adversaries at its birth and when it was condemned by the Church. But no one has yet been able to show us the man who was the author of this doctrine; the time, the place or the occasion of its birth; its adversaries and condemnation. And hence we cannot but conclude that it was believed in every age and had Christ for its author.

Such in brief is the argument of prescription for this doctrine, but, that you may the more clearly see its force, a few words of explanation are necessary.

History records the names of the author of every new teaching of importance that has been introduced since the time of Christ. It not only records his name but also the time, place, occasion, adversaries and condemnation of the new teaching. Thus denunciation of the new teaching, Arius, Pelagius, Nestorius, Berengarius and others. Do you think it would be different in this case? Is not this a doctrine of vital importance? Would not the people have arisen against such an innovator? Suppose some one would attempt to teach in our day a new doctrine that was difficult to understand. Would the people believe him? Would they follow him, or would they not revolt against him? So it would have been in every century; for the people had the same passions and same feelings at all times.

Besides, no one would ever have thought of inventing such a doctrine. When men invent new doctrines they are shrewd enough to bring forward those that are easily understood and that pander to the passions. That is the secret of their success in gaining a large number of followers. They understand the evil propensity of human nature. Study the history of any of the innovations and you will see the truth of this.

Not so the doctrine of the Real Presence. It checks our pride, restrains all our passions. And although humanly speaking it is hard to understand, it is easy to faith; for we have but to believe, as did all the early Christians, the word of God when He says, "This is My Body." "This is My Blood."

But I cannot understand it, someone may say, and therefore it is contrary to reason. Did the consummate purity, silliness, foolishness of this objection, my dear friends, ever present itself to you? You cannot understand it and hence it is against reason. Do you understand the Blessed Trinity? And is it against reason? No, although above reason it is not against it. Do you understand how Jesus Christ is both God and man? Do you understand any mystery? No, if you did, it would be no longer a mystery, for a mystery is something above human intelligence. It is something incomprehensible to us, for it pertains to the divine nature. And as well might you attempt to ladle the ocean into a cavity on the shore as attempt to comprehend with your weak intellect the unfathomable ocean of Divinity.

The proper office of reason is to examine the evidences of revelation and see if God has spoken. But it constitutes no part of its office to dispute the Word of God. That God has spoken is evident from the fulfillment of many prophecies and the authority of numerous miracles. That these prophecies were fulfilled and these miracles performed is a matter of testimony. In proof of it we have the testimony of a large number of illustrious persons of all nations, professions and ages. Many of these were eyewitnesses to the fulfillment of the prophecies and performances of miracles. Their testimony has been handed down to us by authentic tradition and history. Hence it cannot but be true.

Led by reason, then, we conclude that prophecies have been fulfilled and miracles performed. Reason also teaches that no one but God can prophesy, no one but God can derogate from the order of nature by the performance of a miracle. Hence reason again compels us, as it were, to conclude that God has spoken, that revelation is divine.

Now when we know that God speaks, genuine reason will dictate that we humbly submit, that we bow our heads and say, "O my God, Thou art the omniscient, infinite Creator of all things; I am but a poor, ignorant, finite creature. Thou art incomprehensible to my limited reason. Thou canst do many things

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I cannot understand. Therefore, when Thou revealest something incomprehensible, I will undoubtedly believe, knowing full well that Thou canst not deceive me." Thus will true reason ever act. And when God says: "This is My Body," it will not hesitate to believe the Word of God.

Besides, reason cannot show that this dogma is unreasonable. Again do not all who believe in the Blessed Trinity believe that the Holy Ghost is God? But we read in the Bible that the Holy Ghost appeared in the form of a dove. St. Matt. iii, 16. Now is it not at least as conformable to reason for Jesus Christ, the second person of the Blessed Trinity, to appear in the form of bread as for the Holy Ghost, the third person of the Blessed Trinity, to appear in the form of a dove? But reason tells us that Jesus Christ is God and that He has declared that He is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. Hence it is not only possible but absolutely certain.

We have seen, my dear friends, that the Catholic dogma of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is taught by all the four evangelists and the Apostle St. Paul in clear and unmistakable terms; that it has been the belief of every age from the time of Christ to the present, and that it is in perfect harmony with reason. Now how do we show our appreciation of this heavenly gift? Does it inspire in us acts of love, gratitude and adoration? Does it remind us to think more frequently of God, to give to Him our first thoughts in the morning and our last in the evening? Does it serve us as an aid in restraining our passions? Does it keep us from lying, from cursing, from drunkenness? Does it make us more meek, humble and charitable? If not, it is because we do not properly appreciate it. We do not frequently receive it, nor pray to our Lord really present there.

Let us then, my dear friends, receive this heavenly gift more frequently, and let us pray to our Lord really present there.

Let us then, my dear friends, receive this heavenly gift more frequently, and let us pray to our Lord really present there.

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Let us, my dear friends, endeavor to stir up in ourselves a more lively faith in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Go to Him in your trials, pray to Him in temptations, and receive Him sacramentally with more frequency and devotion.

Then, like the just man, you will live truly by faith. The things of this world, sin and its consequences, will be abhorred. And penetrating the veil of futurity, heaven and its joys will brighten for you, and you will long for the day when your hope will be exchanged for reality, and your perseverance will receive the crown that awaits those who have kept the faith, persevered in the right path and not doubted the word of God.

TEMPERANCE

A DRUNKARD'S QUERIES

I wonder as I stagger home
Along the street so far,
Why he from whom I buy the
"stuff"
Rides in a motor car.

I wonder why my wife at home
Wears threadbare dress and torn,
While she whose husband sells the
drink
Has jewels to adorn.

I wonder why my children go
To "pinnies" for the poor",
While children of the publican
Spend months at lake or shore.

I wonder why my mind is clogged
Since I began to drink,
So that I cannot as of yore
Intelligently think.

I wonder why I drudge so hard,
For such a paltry sum,
When once I had a princely wage,
I wonder—was it—rum?

I wonder why I do not see
The cause—that the reply
Is that the rumrunner grows rich
Because of such as I.

I wonder I can't break the chain
That holds me in its thrall;
That every time I make a start
I'm weak, and therefore fall.

I wonder why the government
Won't make the demon fly,
And help a man regain his soul,
O friends, I wonder why?

—EDITH M. RUSSELL

DEFINITION OF ALCOHOL

Remarking that any young man who thinks that he must drink to get trade in business or to advance in politics, is making a mistake, the Catholic Columbian says: "Alcohol is a poison. It injures the man who drinks it—habitually. It is an obstacle to prosperity, an impediment to achievement, a bar to promotion, a sure way to waste money, and a cause of unhappiness in the home."

FATHER MATHEW

In a little paper devoted to the cause of total abstinence, says the Ave Maria, we come upon this interesting reminiscence of the immortal Father Mathew, and incidentally learn the confirmed opinion of a veteran in the practice of medicine on the use of alcohol. The writer, Dr. F. Gibbon, of San Francisco, says:

In 1847 the saintly Father Mathew was administering the temperance pledge to thousands of people in Ireland. He was announced to in Croom chapel, County Limerick, on a Sunday in August, four miles from where I was born, and three across the country as the crow flies. I was then nine years old. No one asked me to go,—it must have been my Guardian Angel that prompted me; and I went the short cut. The chapel would hold about five hundred; it was surrounded by an open space. There must have been four or five thousand there. The windows and doors were all open, so that all could hear. Father Mathew sat at the Mass. When it was over, he removed the vestments and preached a sermon on temperance. At the end of it he requested all to kneel down and repeat the pledge he gave out. I, among thousands of others, did so. I have practised medicine in California over fifty years, and I am glad to say I never yet prescribed liquor for a patient. Alcohol is not a stimulant, but a narcotic. If I were seriously ill to-morrow and the best physician in town were to order alcohol of any kind, I should answer, "No." I have not been confined to the house by sickness for over half a century. I thank God and Father Mathew for it.

ARE YOU "THE GUY IN FRONT?"

Considerable comment has been going the rounds of the secular press in reference to the circular issued by the Bartenders' Union of Chicago. The New York State has a recent issue had this to say about it:

"Bartenders necessarily see more of the drink habit than any other class of men. And what they think of it is indicated by Bartenders' Union No. 41, of Chicago, which has just formed a temperance society, the secretary appealing to all bartenders to join, in the following circular:

"Dear Pal:—Join the Bartenders' Temperance Club. The boss won't like it if you drink on the job. A guy can't tend bar, and hit the booze and make good. It gets him just as quick as the guy in front, who pays for it. If any one wants to drink let the man on the other side of the bar do it. Send me your name if you want to join the club."

"We do not find waiters appealing to each other to beware of foods, nor shoe clerks forming an organization to save their fellows from wearing shoes. The bartender is in a posi-

PRESIDENT
SUSPENDER
NONE SO EASY

tion 'to know,' and his advice is to let it alone. We have never read a more striking and eloquent temperance sermon than this hundred-word appeal from bartender to bartender, with its implied scorn of 'the guy in front' of the bar, 'who pays for it.'"

ECONOMY

RUBBING clothes on the washboard, for a few minutes, saves them out faster than several weeks' use. You save all that wash-board wear with the

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