

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOUY, D. D.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

TRUE EDUCATION

"He hath made both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak." (Mark vii. 37.)

We are all born deaf and dumb as regards religion. Even after we have been purified from our original stain by the waters of Baptism, we are not conscious of the incipient state of grace within us. We are under its influence, but altogether unconscious of it. We are saved from physical dangers by the vigilant care of parents; we are safeguarded, as regards our soul, by the habit of grace infused at Baptism. We are deaf and dumb to both until we reach the age of reason. Then we gradually learn how we were helped to emerge from the state of ignorance. Our ears are opened, and our speech is given to us to use in thanking our parents for the care taken of us, and praising them for their good work. We should look upon our fathers and mothers as the absolute rulers of our physical life, at least, in this world. God helps them from on high, and gives them, as He gave the power to bring us into the world, strength to continue the noble work in rearing us. We must be deaf to every voice in contradiction to our parents, and every word we speak should be in accordance with their wishes. Of course, we are speaking now of God-fearing parents, not of neglectful fathers and mothers, though even they must be obeyed and submitted to by their children.

But this absolute deafness and dumbness is overcome as we grow in years. As our reasoning powers increase in intensity and clearness, we begin to speak for ourselves, and to hear rationally. We rejoice at the fact of this physical progress taking place within us, and at the development of our mental powers. In other words, maturity brings with it many joys.

But do we develop equally as well religiously? Is our blindness gradually overcome, until we have a clear vision of our religion through knowledge and faith? Are we ready to listen to those in authority or those who are in a position to teach us? Growth in religion does not come of necessity, as does progress in the physical and mental part of us. Religion refers to the noblest part, and requires the exercise of the noblest of our faculties. The will is the great motive power behind religion. Now, we can use our will as we please, and though it is true that we are inclined to goodness, we also have strong tendencies to wickedness. Are we earnest members of the school of religion? Certainly God demands us to be.

Oh, how great is the number of those who have never seen religiously, nor heard religiously! They are still spiritually deaf and dumb. Do they not more than half fill the world? And is not their blindness and dumbness a cause of the same defects continuing in others? The world in the last few centuries has exalted education. No one will blame it for seeking knowledge on a pedestal, but it is a fact that it has made education the god of all. Religion has not played the part it should in this recent enthusiasm. What is education without religion? And what is education with a false religion? Of the one, we have examples unnumbered; and of illustrations of the other, there are scores. The world, it is true, often gives both of its best gifts—though worldly, of course. Their spiritual eyes never see, and their spiritual ears never hear. The greatest lights of the world, who at first were only educated, but who afterwards also saw and heard spiritually in the true sense, admit that the happiest and most consoling days of their lives were lived after they had received this new sight and hearing. Such was the conviction of St. Augustine, one of the greatest geniuses of the older centuries; and the same may be said of Cardinal Newman, one of the brightest minds of recent years.

People are blinded today by the glare of these so-called educated individuals. Is it not true that a highly educated man is almost deafened by the world, no matter what he thinks of God? Have you not seen thousands of such instances during your lifetime? Do you not see as many today? In our everyday literature are we not extolling men of distorted ideas of religion, or of no religion whatever—nay, even those who deny God an existence? The same is true in the financial world. The money giant is the hero. He is honored, he is looked up to, he is sought after. But has he a religion? How few stop to consider. He is famous; that fact seems to suffice. He may remain forever spiritually blind and deaf, but he always will have his coterie of admirers—people no better than himself. The blind still lead the blind.

But why is it that so many remain forever deaf and dumb and blind as regards religion? It is because they do not apply to the right source to overcome these defects. It was the same with the Pharisees. They saw Christ, viewed His works, but remained deaf and dumb. The representative of Christ in the world today is known, is seen, yet by how many is he despised! And for what cause? Why was Christ hated and mocked and falsely accused? Search for the reason,

not in the person of the Supreme Pontiff, not in the person of Christ, but in those who hate them, despise them, and persecute them. Had these people of old come to Christ as did the deaf and dumb man, He would have healed their infirmities—especially their spiritual ones. Let the Pharisees of today come to the great school of Christ on earth, and their eyes will be opened, and hearing and proper speech will be imparted to them.

Let us who have listened to Christ endeavor to become yet more instructed in His life and His teachings. Our eyes are not yet fully opened, our ears do not yet hear His command alone, nor our voice speak only His love. His school is one in which we must remain scholars as long as we breathe mortal life. But what other school is half so noble with Himself as teacher?

A PRIEST'S MOVIE

"HOW I KILLED MY CHILD" TURNS YOUNG MAN TO PRIESTHOOD

By M. Masland (Paris Correspondent, N. C. W. C.)

Paris, France.—"Father it is decided; I am entering the seminary. I was hesitant about my vocation; I was about to say no when I went to the movies and saw Pierre l'Hermite's film 'Comment j'ai tue mon enfant' (How I Killed My Child). I no longer hesitate. I shall be a priest."

This was the announcement made by a young man a few days ago at Lille to Father Vuillemer. Father Vuillemer is a well-known preacher and teacher of ethics who has devoted himself especially to the training of leaders and of young men. He hastened to write to the author of the film which determined or strengthened this vocation: Pierre l'Hermite which is the pen name of Canon Edmond Loutil, pastor of the church of St. Francis de Sales at Paris.

Pierre l'Hermite is one of the most brilliant journalists of the day. For forty years he has supplied each Saturday to La Croix a scintillating article on religion, politics, charity or some phase of every-day life, and these articles have greatly increased the circulation of the paper. He is also a preacher, an art critic and a novelist some of whose works have had a circulation of over 200,000. Now he has become a writer of scenarios.

He had just received the letter from Father Vuillemer when I went to see him the other day in the rectory; which is always filled with a crowd of visitors, parishioners, artists, directors of organizations, coming to ask him for help or advice.

"If my film had never done more than strengthen this vocation," he said to me, "I should be glad that it had been made. I should not regret having appeared in it myself—in order that it might strike the public opinion more forcibly and receive greater notice—I the pastor of one of the most fashionable parishes in Paris, I should not regret having appeared in person in the company of the most prominent movie stars."

The film deals with a burning problem of religious vocations which was treated by Pierre l'Hermite a few years ago in a novel which won a tremendous success: "Comment j'ai tue mon enfant," the problem as to whether a mother has the right to prevent her son from entering the priesthood.

The author did not invent the plot of the drama. He took it out of real life. He had known personally each of the actors in the original drama. He merely arranged the events and changed the names of persons and places.

The plot was as follows: Dominique Yholdy, son of a wealthy Parisian family, a boy with a generous but rather weak nature, was led by the example of a priest, Abbe Firmin, to devote himself to the workingmen and the poor of the faubourgs. Finally, in order better to devote himself to this ideal, he decided to become a priest. But when he reveals his intention to his mother, the proud bourgeoisie revolts at the idea of her son's withdrawal from the world and immediately organizes a skillful intrigue to keep him from entering the seminary. After many happenings she makes him abandon his vocation by marrying him off to a young girl—who is very charming—Lolita de Prevese. Then comes the Great War. The blind and selfish affection of the mother keeps the son away from the field of battle just as it had kept him from the religious life. But Dominique Yholdy, in the sadness, humiliation and disillusion of life, is soon overcome by remorse for his weakness and for the cowardice which has been imposed on him. He finally loses all desire to live and seeks by some act of heroism to redeem himself in his own eyes. One day, on the Breton coast, he meets death in a desperate and mad attempt to save someone at sea, and the mother, in agony of soul, cries, on the day when she is brought face to face with her son's director: "It is I who have killed my child." She too asks to die, but the priest persuades her to take up life again in order by her devotion and her charity to give back to God and His poor what she robbed them of in refusing to give them her son.

NOVEL A BEST SELLER

Vivid, moving and poignant, Pierre l'Hermite's novel has proved one of the best sellers of the past few years. And last year, on the very day when Canon Loutil had gone to spend his vacation on an island off the coast of Vendee, the director of a large motion picture concern called upon him and said: "Monsieur le Chanoine, we are going to film your novel. It is necessary. The subject demands it. Do not protest. In any case it is too late. I have brought the necessary equipment and the actors with me. We are going to work at once."

Pierre l'Hermite allowed himself to be convinced, and after thinking the matter over, and having been assured of the success of the film, he gave his personal assistance. It is Pierre l'Hermite himself who appears in the role of the priest who received the dramatic tale of Madame Yholdy.

The film was not made especially for Catholic theaters and clubs. The producer was a man who works for the "Boulevard." With all the authority of experience he assured the pastor of Saint Francis de Sales that the film would be well received on the Boulevard and even in the labor faubourgs. Experience has justified his assurances. At Brussels and at Amsterdam (where there were 250 priests in the theater) in the populous quarter of Belleville, as in the aristocratic Plaine Monceau district, the film has received the most favorable reception.

As a matter of fact the film caused so much comment that Canon Loutil, as a result, received some of the most singular requests. There is, in Paris, a big club called the Club du Faubourg, composed for the most part of young Frenchmen and foreigners of revolutionary tendencies. The Club is in the habit of organizing debates—often rather agitated debates—on current questions.

The director of the Club sought out Canon Loutil and asked him to come in person to present his film to the "Faubourg" to meet the contradictions of the adversaries of his religion and justify his work. He did not evade the invitation. At the Faubourg he had to undergo a veritable "assault": certain anarchists spoke with no regard whatsoever for religion or the religious vocation. Although the audience was not favorably disposed toward him in advance, the author of the film made some such brilliant replies that he forced the applause of his opponents.

And he did not fear to reply to the anarchists who had come to combat him: "I have seen others besides you—more violent and more aggressive—and I, sometimes, have calmed them. More than one has returned to me wept before me; more than one has sent me for the comfort of religion when he believed himself about to undertake the Great Journey. There are many tormented souls among you. I'll give them rendezvous in my office before long if God gives me life."

When I saw Canon Loutil the other morning his prophecy had already begun to be realized. Several habits of the "Faubourg" had written to him and two had come to him to open their consciences.

These are not the only visits which the priest-novelist has received since then. Several motion picture producers have called on him and all his novels are to be screened, one after the other.

ZIONISTS SEEKING DIRECT RELATIONS WITH THE VATICAN

By Dr. Frederiek Funder (Vienna Correspondent, N. C. W. C.)

Vienna.—An effort on the part of the Zionist organization to establish friendly and direct relations with the Vatican was forecast here by Chief Rabbi Dr. Chajes, Chairman of the Zionist International Executive Committee, who was in Vienna to arrange for the Zionist International Congress to be held here. In his talks with newspaper men here the Zionist leader indicated plainly that the Zionists are quite cognizant of the tremendous spiritual power of the Vatican and are anxious to establish friendly relations with the Holy See, notwithstanding that the League of Nations has so far failed to make any move in that direction. Discussing the tentative program for the Congress next month Dr. Chajes said:

"The Vienna Congress will have to deal also with the external relations of Zionism. The establishment of proper relations with the Arabs, relations with the British as the Mandatory Power, the position to be taken toward the League of Nations at Geneva, where the Executive Committee has already set up an office, as well as relations with the Vatican, will occupy the Congress. We have a direct avenue of approach to the Vatican, but we have reason to assume that during the past six months a change for the better has taken place in the attitude which the Vatican holds with regard to our constructive work in Palestine. It would be a great good fortune if it would be possible to come to direct relations with the Vatican and to demonstrate that there is no danger that the prosperity of Palestine could injure any Catholic or Christian interests."

Concerning the attitude to be assumed by the next Zionist Congress Dr. Chajes commented as follows:

"We have no secrets but we look for one thing. How shall man be delivered? This secret we are looking for. If we can find it we are willing to tell it to all men." Dr. Chajes' statements have excited great interest here, the interest being heightened by recent dispatches from Palestine telling of anti-Zionist feeling there.

"TOO FUNNY"

Being a Catholic in Northern Ireland is a taste of martyrdom to a man or woman of any political aspirations. Though two of the six counties under Ulster government have a Catholic majority, and two more are nearly half Catholic, a public official has to apologize for every Catholic appointed to office. Here is how the Minister of Agriculture justifies his action in appointing four Roman Catholics among 109 subordinates.

"I have one hundred and nine officials, and there are four Roman Catholics. Three of them were civil servants transferred to me, whom I had to take when we began. The charge against me is too funny."

If he calls that display of bigotry "funny" we congratulate him on his penetrating sense of humor. He would doubtless laugh himself to death if he could rid himself of these four—it would be so funny. What he calls "fun" the rest of the world calls bigotry, an ingredient not wholly lacking in his makeup if we may judge from his answer to the charge that his secretary is a Catholic.

"That young man," he answers, "is a Methodist and is married to a Presbyterian, and that ought to be good enough."

The real joker in the case is the man who accused this Minister of Agriculture of leaning towards Catholics. It does not take much to be accused of favoring Catholics—in Ulster or at a K. K. meeting.—The Mirror.

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