

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOUY, D. D.

PALM SUNDAY

THE FICKLENESS OF HUMANITY

And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut down branches from the trees and strewed them in the way; and the multitudes that went before and that followed cried saying: Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. (Matt. xxi. 8-9)

How wavering are the opinions of men! Today they will be ready to give their lives for a certain cause, tomorrow they will be ready to give their lives to destroy the same cause. These changes are justifiable in some instances, but certainly not justifiable in many others. When some attitude of mind exists among men, because of certain prevailing conditions, this should last only as long as the conditions that cause it remain the same; but when these conditions are changed, the attitude also should be changed. Men, however, always are not guided thus in their convictions and opinions. Reasons more subjective than objective cause them to change their minds on many subjects. Very often when there are objective reasons influencing them, these reasons are not solid ones, nor are they always just.

This fact is true of men regarding their political, social, and religious views. Few people really stop to think. The majority blindly are led on by their so-called leaders. These latter are active and energetic, and use every means to have all their followers fully conform to their teachings. How often it happens that the followers understand but little of the cause for which they are fighting! Many examples of this truth are evident today. Socialism affords us an instance. In this country thousands of foreigners, and also many of a certain class of native Americans, are borne toward socialism, even though they comprehend but little of its meaning. They will listen to speeches extolling its merits, hear some of the beautiful impracticable theories it inculcates, and this will suffice to win their aid in its diffusion and propagation. They never heed the reasons on its side, even for an instant. There are no demerits attached to it. The words of their leader or spokesman, in their eyes, are as infallible as if spoken by the great Lord of the universe Himself. If these people would consider the theories advanced by socialist demagogues from the viewpoints of right and wrong, of practicability and impracticability, and thus acquire a clear knowledge of them, they quickly would see how foolishly they give their assent and support to a system that never can solve the problems it asserts it is endeavoring to solve. But as it has been in days gone by, so it will be in the future; the system will live its day, and then decay. With the passing of socialism, however, men will be as ready to adhere quite as blindly to whatever is substituted for it as they did to itself. It is easy enough to change men's minds, but very often the reasons why it can be done so easily is that they do not possess the truth. The truth never can die, and once man has attained possession of it he never can let it go—provided, of course, that he understands it. Sometimes the truth men possess is not sufficiently inculcated in the hearts of the younger generation. When this is the case, it is due to negligence on the parts of parents. If the duty of instructing the young had always been properly performed, we would not have so many dissenting sects in religion today. The Catholic faith would remain the one true faith for all. The world never would have witnessed the so-called Reformation. There was a field prepared for a Luther, a Calvin, and a Knox. The ancestors of those who fell away had possessed the truth and had known it clearly, but a gradual neglect had crept over them, particularly as regards the instruction of their children. As a consequence, that generation and those following it were not taught the truth as clearly, and were not convinced of it as strongly as were their sires. When put to the test, many were deceived and fell into error. Their children imbibed it deeper than they themselves, and their posterity still deeper. The fruits are witnessed today, in the thousands of men-made religions existing throughout the world. And will they ever end! It seems not. New ones are springing up every day. It is true that some individuals are returning, but they do not come back as easily as their forefathers fell away. How true progress in the spread of the Gospel has also been retarded! We are practically forced to spend most of our time in recalling, if possible, the lost sheep. How many who have not yet heard the Gospel, long ago would have been given the opportunity of listening to and accepting its pure and elevating doctrine, had we been able to give all our time, outside of caring for our own, to those who were never of the true fold.

The narrative of today's Gospel is a clear illustration of the wavering opinion of man. Christ on this day was honored as much as the people could honor Him, in accordance with the occasion. It was not long afterward that the people of the same locality turned completely against Him. Today it is "Hosanna to the Son of David;" tomorrow it will be "Crucify Him!" Yet, why

such a change of opinion regarding Jesus? No true objective reason can be found. The people wildly were led on to it.

We must all take heed lest we, under certain pressure, deny the Faith or even doubt its doctrines. Why should not all Catholics be proud of their glorious inheritance, learn its teachings and its maxims as perfectly as possible, see the truth clearly and, as a necessary consequence, be unalterably convinced of it, and be able to teach their children in the same way? Whoever fails in this has not his faith at heart as his most precious possession! And if not, what may he expect after death? Certainly not a very great reward.

UNDER THE LAW OF PROFIT

Our social life is dominated by the idea of profit to such an extent that all other considerations, not excluding moral and religious ones, pale into utter insignificance. The thought of profit closes up every other outlook upon life and obstructs every other view. Many that have for a time been engaged in business become color blind, so that they know only one color, that of gold. The universe holds no beauty for them; they look upon it with a calculating eye figuring in what manner it can be made to yield a larger return on their investments. They would fain mint the golden sunshine into cold and hard coin that might pass from hand to hand as a medium of exchange. If they had their way they would rob the world of charm and convert God's handiwork into a thing of ugliness. Ruthless industry has gone far in accomplishing this; for wherever it dominates it blots out the beauty of the landscape and dims the lustre of day.

The desire for profit has notoriously blocked many a scheme of betterment and obstructed many a movement for the improvement of public morality. We only recently referred to the violent opposition of the photoplay industry to a censorship that would suppress improper films. The same opposition is encountered whenever an effort is made to improve the tone of the other places of commercialized amusement. All this opposition flows from the same source, the fear lest the profits might be diminished. The history of our economic life contains many black and stained chapters.

We are wont to associate this disregard for human interests and moral considerations with big business and industrial enterprise on a large scale; but the small business man can be as unscrupulous as the industrial magnate. Only a few days ago we witnessed an exhibition of greed of the worst type in the ranks of petty enterprise. The jitney drivers of Elkton strenuously combat an amendment of the marriage laws of Maryland because this amendment would deprive them of profitable trade. These drivers derive their chief income from the couples who come to the place mentioned to have a hurried marriage performed. Every sensible man sees that an amendment of a law that permits such conditions and that consequently is responsible for such matrimonial unhappiness, for numerous divorces and broken homes is imperatively necessary. But profit is in its way. The profitmaker does not care whence his profits come, whether it be from the imprudence and the inexperience of youth or the vice of his fellow-men. Nor does it make any difference if he is the cause of moral ruin and the occasion of misery.

The craving for profit must be held responsible for many of the terrible tragedies that happen from time to time and the holocaust of human life they involve. The building contractor erects buildings primarily not with a view toward safety, but with a thought of the possible profits that may be extracted from the undertaking. Of course, there are in human life accidents that cannot be prevented in spite of care and caution; withal those calamities that may be traced to the use of inferior material in construction or undue haste in the work remain quite numerous. The general carelessness with regard to human life that prevails in the whole country is intimately connected with that predominant desire of increasing profits. Human life is subordinated to this one supreme and overshadowing aim. Repairs are put off from day to day, because they involve an outlay in cash and would reduce profits. That meanwhile the lives of the employees are threatened gives little concern to those who are delighted with the rich and generous returns on their investments. Even where a building is condemned by the authorities, not infrequently subterfuges of every kind are resorted to in order to delay the work needed to render the edifice secure. Thus profit toys and trifles with human life. When some startling catastrophe occurs that snuffs out precious human lives there is a flutter of public opinion and investigations are set on foot; the final outcome, however, is trivial. A few warnings are issued, and there the matter rests. Even at this moment there are death traps in our very midst that will some day exact a heavy toll of human life, but which with some expense could be made thoroughly safe for all concerned. Profit hardens the hearts of men and

makes them insensible and callous to the woes and afflictions of their fellow-men. There remains only this way out that the machinery of inspection which we have been set in motion and that the constituted authorities insist on safety regardless of the loss of profit that may result. For human life is more precious and more valuable than profit and should be placed above every economic consideration.—Catholic Standard and Times.

HOLY WEEK

Nearly two thousand years ago in the springtime of the year events transpired in one week in the little city of Jerusalem that have made this week forever Holy Week. It was ushered in with a procession; it ended with a procession. In both the Son of God was the central figure. On Palm Sunday He entered the Holy City in triumph, surrounded by His faithful followers, acclaimed by the glad Hosannas of admiring multitudes. On Good Friday he left the city in apparent failure, abandoned by His friends, jeered by the mob, carrying His own cross to Calvary.

After the transient glory of Palm Sunday, Jesus spent Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday teaching in the Temple, healing the sick, and casting out devils. The nights He spent alone in prayer. Thursday He gathered His faithful apostles around Him, prepared a supper, and then gave them as a memorial His greatest gift, the power to consecrate bread and wine into His body and blood and to transmit this power to their successors.

On Friday He trod the wine-press of sorrow, and offered Himself to His Heavenly Father as a victim for the sins of men. All was consummated, sin conquered, grace merited, and man's redemption accomplished. After three days in the tomb He rose again glorious and triumphant on Easter Sunday.

Now in the year 1929, in the same springtime of the year, the same sacred mysteries are commemorated during this week in every Catholic Church throughout the world. On Palm Sunday the sound of glad Hosannas fill the Churches, and their aisles are filled with multitudes bearing palm branches in their hands, singing "glory and praise, glory and praise."

During the whole week our Lord is mourned as an only son. On the sad lonely evenings of Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, the Psalms are recited and the Lamentations sung in the mournful office of the Tenebrae. On Thursday for a moment the Church lays aside her mourning. A festive chamber is prepared, white flowers festoon the altar of the Repository, and the joyous ringing of bells proclaims the gratitude of the people for the last good gift received from our Lord. Then the Altar is stripped, the Church is made desolate, and the sanctuary lamp is extinguished and the Crucifix takes the place of the Blessed Sacrament.

Good Friday dawns and with the shadow of the cross upon them the faithful with hushed voices and solemn mien, wend their way to Church, there thrice they bend their knee in humble sorrow for their sins, touch with their lips the wounds of the Sacred Feet, and take their stand during the three hours agony like Mary and John and Magdalen beneath the Cross on which our Saviour hung. As three o'clock strikes every knee is bent, every head is bowed, as once more they commemorate Our Lord's expiring cry, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

There are two ways of spending Holy Week. We can imitate the world, and go and play in the market-place whilst our Prince suffers in our stead, or we can imitate Our Blessed Mother, the faithful apostles and the holy women, and follow Our Lord on the road to Calvary to stand beneath His Cross. But only by passing over the dolorous way with our Divine Lord can we hope to enjoy the fruits of His glorious Resurrection.—The Pilot.

BISHOP HUNTING SEEKS CHANGE IN DIVORCE LAWS

STATISTICS A NIGHTMARE

Through the Reno Gazette, which will be conceded to be a good authority on the question at hand, since through its news columns even actions speak louder than words, we learn that Bishop George C. Hunting of the Episcopal Church is making a sustained effort to have the Nevada divorce law amended, so that at least, one year in residence shall be required for a decree. After discussing the question at length before his annual convention, the Bishop added these startling figures. "One hears many expressions that conditions are not unpleasant. I do not see how they could be worse. In various publications one reads that there is one divorce in Nevada for every one and one-half marriages. This was bad enough. But I have obtained figures for 1921 and find that the figures are reversed. Last year in Nevada there were 1,000 marriages and 1,200 divorces—one and one-quarter divorces for every marriage. There is no country in the world, even nominally civilized which equals that record. In Washoe county there were 461 marriages and 896 divorces, and in Clark County 700 marriages and 109 divorces."—The Antidote.

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