

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOY, D. D.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER

"Jesus saith to him: 'Go thy way, thy son liveth. The man believed the word which Jesus said to him and went his way.' (John 11:42)

Have we not a clear picture in this text of the way God rewards prayer with confidence? The prayer of this man was certainly a petition from his heart and from his lips; but perhaps the most striking feature of it is the confidence with which he asked the favor of Jesus. Any loving parent naturally would have been sincere in a prayer to cure a dying son; and may we not say that Jesus was conscious more of this man's faith and confidence than of the depth of his prayer? It was natural for the man to pray sincerely when such sorrow was weighing so heavily upon his heart; but it was meritorious to pray with such confidence as he manifested. When he approached Jesus he, no doubt, expected Him to come to his house, to lay hands on his son, and probably bid him arise cured from his sickness. But Jesus did none of these things. He simply said to him, "Go thy way, thy son liveth," and forthwith the suppliant departed for home, finding his son cured upon his return.

It required confidence, indeed, for this man to turn immediately homeward, leaving the great Healer, Christ, behind, and to believe that his son was cured. It showed also his great faith in Christ. Such a prayer and such a faith could not fail to have been rewarded by Christ. What more could have been added to make a petition worthy of a response? It would be difficult to conceive a prayer fraught with more merit; and if Christ had not answered it according to the suppliant's wishes, He certainly would have given him a great reward for it in some other way.

There is a great lesson for us in this incident. We must all pray. Physically, we require help from God; morally we need it also. To overcome many of our physical deficiencies, we require God's help; to become and to remain morally good, we need God's help. We speak here of the things we need, principally, though the same can be said proportionately of the things we desire and wish for, but do not absolutely need. Besides the necessity for prayer, which we recognize from the very condition of our soul and body, there is also the command from God telling us we must pray. Our intellect shows us, without any great effort, the justice of this command of God; nay, reason tells us we should pray as God commands us. From Him we come; to Him, if we wish to be happy—and we all do—we must go. Life we have from Him; life more abundant we expect from Him. It is clear, therefore, that we must adore God, thank Him, petition Him. And oh, how much confidence we should have in Him!

We need not reason much to understand this fact plainly. If God had given us so much without our asking—such as life, the grace of Baptism, the Church, the sacraments—how much more will He give us if we ask? His goodness has no bounds; His generosity knows no limits. He is not selfish, for there is nothing to be added to Him. He suffers no loss as He lavishes blessings and graces upon us. The same intention He had in creating man—namely, that man could enjoy the blessedness of heaven—He continues to have in preserving and saving man. Can you doubt, then, that God will hear your prayers, especially those regarding the things that are necessary for your welfare? But more than this, He Himself tells us to ask anything of Him, and He will give it to us. Of course, God exercises His wisdom in answering our supplications, for He is a kind Father, and will not give us anything as a response to prayer that could be a detriment to us. Hence, often He gives us something different from what we asked, though it may not be until we enter into eternity that we will realize His generous response.

The incident in the Gospel shows us that God often gives us more than is necessary for our eternal welfare. It was not vitally necessary to this man that his son should live, neither was it absolutely essential to the son himself. But Christ answered the natural desire of their heart. His goodness was manifested, and He showed also what weight prayer, rightly said, has with Him. Now Christ does not act differently in the world today. He is as ready to answer now as He was when He walked the earth clothed in humanity. And although He does not answer our prayers so openly as He did those offered to Him in the days of His visible presence here on earth, this is not a sign that He no longer hears our petitions. Who will doubt that even today many a case of sickness is revealed, and often cured, by prayer? Have you not known of many cases where skilled medical aid proved of no avail, and where medical men despaired of a cure? How many individuals, once so near death, are now living in good health? We can not say with certainty, but we do not doubt that in many cases it was the prayers of dear ones that saved the afflicted. It is not only in cases

of sickness that unusual facts have happened and that apparent miracles have been worked. How many wonders in other spheres have been wrought through prayer? Has not many a hardened sinner been recalled to the performance of his duty through prayer? Have not thousands, even millions, of impending dangers been averted through prayer? Have not what appeared as impossibilities if left to natural power and ordinary means, or even extraordinary means, been rendered possible and feasible and brought into execution through prayer? The one who prays really, sincerely, confidently, and perseveringly, can answer; and this reply will never be, as it never has been, negative.

It is certain, too, that he who prays, receives more favors than he who neglects to pray. Who will doubt this? Prayer is a duty. Will not he who does his duty receive a reward? Will not recompense be wanting, and a punishment due, in the case of the one who neglects his duty? And do we not see in the Gospel that those who prayed, or who asked Jesus for favors, received more, and were more abundantly blessed, than those who did not ask? Compare the case of Magdalen with that of other women of her class, who did not come to Jesus. View the two thieves dying on crosses on either side of Jesus. He who prayed to Jesus was saved; the other scoffed at Him, and there is no assurance that he died repentant, rather there is great probability that he left the world without having made peace with his Maker.

But we need not turn to the pages of the Gospel. Do we not see similar instances about us continually? Can not Christians of today relate as many and almost as convincing examples of the efficacy of prayer as are recorded in the Bible? Christ is the same, "yesterday, today and forever," and with regard to prayer He makes no exception.

THE PASSION PLAY

For some unknown reason, the Passion Play has furnished occasion for most bitter attacks which have been appearing regularly in British and American prints. The pretext for these articles is clearly stated in this excerpt from a metropolitan paper:

"The play and its surroundings have become a veritable scandal of profiteering and the village has been transformed into a world's fair of curious tourists. . . . In a word, Oberammergau has become the greatest money-changing mart in Europe. Wild speculation is going on in the dollar, the pound sterling, the mark and the Austrian krona. On all sides there is talk only of money and bargaining. A vast circle of profiteering tourists and exchange agencies dominate affairs there, and the visitor must bid for seats at the performances which greedy speculators have already cornered."

"Besides, all manner of new taxes and extra charges are made, opportunely, as the mark drops steadily. The whole atmosphere surrounding the play has become poisoned by post-war profiteering, and all tinge of sacred sentiment about it has vanished. It was the last straw when a group of tourist girls clamored for admission to the pension presided over by Anton Lang, who takes the part of Christ in the play, a part which once was looked upon as one of the greatest earthly honors."

"The girls declared they had been swindled and that they would not have come to Oberammergau but for the privilege of being billeted in Lang's house. Similar scenes staged by disgruntled visitors occur daily, and many of them in which Americans figure are justified to the hilt by the disgraceful overcharging and dual sale of seats at the performances and of reservations at the hotels."

"One may be permitted the reverent thought that if Christ came to Oberammergau His wrath would be greater by far than that which He displayed when He drove the money-changers from the Temple."

This, then, is the charge and even though it were not half as scathing as it is, it would be serious were it true. But fortunately it is a tissue of the grossest misrepresentation. The writer of this editorial was a guest at Dahaim, Anton Lang's villa, this summer. During his stay of three days, he saw the Play, investigated the village, the sale of articles of devotion and of post-cards; questioned villagers and guests and, therefore, knows whereof he speaks. His zeal for investigation was made more keen by the fact that during his stay in Oberammergau, an English journalist sent to his paper an article almost identical with the one that has just appeared in New York. It, too, was false, so false, that the wonder is how any self-respecting person could have written it, for after all, calumny degrades the calumniator.

exalted honesty and would not stoop to fleece a guest. Moreover, the writer's bill was before him as he writes. It reads as follows: Ticket for play, 100 marks; less than thirty American cents at the then rate of exchange; lodging and food, government tax, service tax and so on, 870 marks, in American money about two dollars and seventy five cents for a stay of three days. The rest of the article is on a par with the parts just examined. Judgment is in order.

THE PRIEST IN THE SLUMS

The "Novelist of Note" who dwelt in the tenement house districts of New York for four years, known to her companions as either a working-woman or a social worker, doubts that Dante pictured "a blacker hell than the slums of New York City during the influenza epidemic." And the chapters of her book: "Four Years in the Underbrush," dealing with the phase of her experience, will satisfy the reader that the oft-quoted inscription the great poet tells his readers he saw over the gate of the inferno: "Leave all hope behind, ye who enter here!" may be applied to the tenements of New York under the conditions described by this woman. Still, "in all those months of dread, suffering, despair, and death, we are told, 'never once in those tenement districts did I meet or hear of a Protestant minister of the Gospel."

That is a terrible indictment, but this writer makes it clear that she is certain of her facts. In another chapter of her "Adventures as a Working Woman in New York" she says: "If there is a nationality on the globe not represented in that district (meaning a certain section in which she was engaged as a license inspector for the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals,) I never heard of it. It is a district in which anybody from anywhere may be met any day. Reading my diary, it would seem that I met somebody from everywhere almost every day. That is, with one exception—I never met a Protestant minister of the Gospel." Yes, she reiterates: "Every profession, every trade in every walk of life, but never a Protestant minister of the Gospel."

This is not to be attributed to the fact that there were no Protestants in that district. The author of "Four Years in the Underbrush" tells her readers that she met with people whom she would describe as God-fearing. "They were loyal citizens, and doing the best they could with their opportunities." That they were Protestants is evident, because she says: "None of them ever more than mentioned their church, none of them spoke to me of knowing or ever meeting their minister. In order to emphasize this fact she continues by saying that she never heard a certain woman, though she lived in the same tenement with her and talked with her day after day, mention the name of her minister, nor did she in any way reveal that she so much as dreamed of his ever calling to see her. But the author of the book this is quoted from says: "I used to see the man who preached in the church that she attended, walking down Fifth Avenue, exuding wealth and over-eating."

While she speaks thus with a certain bitterness of the fact that during her "four years in the underbrush" she "never saw or heard of a Protestant minister in the slums of New York City, nor in a hospital," she admits, there never was a day that she did not meet at least one Catholic priest. "During the influenza epidemic they were everywhere, at all times, day and night. They ministered to the sick, offered comfort to the living and buried the dead."

"Many, many times while I was doing social work," thus her statement continues, "I had Catholic priests to go out of their way to assure me of their willingness to help, to tell me where I could locate them." She says, they made no denominational distinction. "Once when I was calling on a patient at the Presbyterian Hospital, there chanced to be two priests in that ward of twelve beds. On their way out both stopped and spoke to me and gave me their addresses."

The "Novelist of Note" removes any doubt that this was merely done in order to create a favorable impression. "Several times I had occasion to call on the services of a priest. The response was always immediate. I never had occasion to call on a Protestant minister, for the Protestant who finds himself or herself in the slums of New York City, soon learns that they must die as they have lived, unattended by a spiritual adviser."

And all this is said by a woman who in other chapters of her book speaks rather unkindly of Catholics she met during the adventurous period of her life described in her book. So she cannot be accused of partiality. But let it also be said that she tells Catholics nothing new. When the plague raged in Geneva in the times of Calvin, the champion of Predestination, neither he nor any of the preachers among his immediate following could be induced to

visit the stricken of his flock. Questioned why they did not go to assist the sick and dying, the "Reformers" answer was: "Because God did not give them the strength to carry out this task."—C. B. in The Echo.

"SAY IT WITH FLOWERS"

"Say it with Flowers" is a nice sentiment, only a trifle trite. But there is a suggestion of novelty in the words when they refer to prayer. The following from the London Tablet may be enlightening to some Catholics, as well as to our separated brethren:

There are many methods of prayer—a Protestant cannot understand why a person puts up a candle and lights it in broad daylight, and that is because the Protestant does not understand prayer. The Catholic Church makes everything pray as God intended it should. There is vocal prayer, and mental, and color prayer, and movement prayer. All prayers is language—it speaks and conveys the thoughts of our heart to God. The most unimaginative person understands how much meaning can be pressed into a shake of the hand. It is a language. The raising of the hat is a sign of reverence and respect. It also speaks. We kneel before the King and even salute the empty Throne, and it is all language. We send a forget-me-not to an absent, silent

UNABLE TO WALK FOR A YEAR

Paralysis Entirely Relieved by "Fruit-a-tives"

The Wonderful Fruit Medicine Paralysis is a break-down of the Nervous System and affects the victim in various ways. Sometimes, nervousness makes itself known by hysteria, insomnia, constant headaches, or it may be so bad that one is partially or completely helpless in some part of the body, just as Mrs. Heacock was.

"When I was twenty-eight years of age, my doctor advised me to have an operation, which I did and it proved very serious, leaving me weak and unable to walk for a year. Seeing your "Fruit-a-tives" advertised in the papers, I decided to try them. I continued to use them regularly, and today I am able to go about my home duties and care for my family."

Any form of Nervousness is often caused by, and is always aggravated by, Constipation, which poisons the blood, irritates the kidneys and inflames the nerves. "Fruit-a-tives" stimulates the action of liver and bowels, kidneys and skin—tones and sweetens the stomach—keeps the blood pure, and builds up the entire nervous system.

In a word, "Fruit-a-tives" has proved that it is the most scientific and effective remedy in the world for Nervousness or a disordered condition of the nervous system. 50c a box, 6 for \$2.50, trial size, 25c. At dealers or sent postpaid by Fruit-a-tives Limited, Ottawa, Ont.



For Baby's Woollens

The little woolly garments for Baby must be kept soft or they will irritate the tender skin. Washed in Lux suds, Baby's woollens will keep beautifully soft and fluffy. The thin satiny-like flakes of Lux are made by our own exclusive process, and dissolve instantly into a lather as harmless as pure water itself.

Just dip Baby's clothes into a bowlful of the rich Lux suds—rinse them, squeeze out the surplus water and hang to dry.

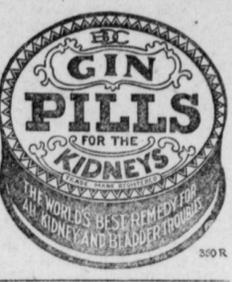
There is nothing like Lux. Sold only in sealed packets—dust-proof!



Booril makes you enjoy life

friend and it speaks. All this is the prayer of act. A gentleman who has lost his wife sends \$5. with the request: "Please plant a rose in Our Lady's Garden in memory of my dear wife." It is more than a memorial; it is a prayer in flowers.

First keep thyself in peace, and then thou wilt be able to bring others to peace. A peaceful man does more good than one that is very learned. A passionate man perverts even good into evil, and easily believes evil. A good peaceable man turns all things to good.—Thomas a Kempis.



LADIES, BOYS and GIRLS May Have This Beautiful Rosary of Ste. Anne de Beaupre as a Premium

By selling 8 of our Religious, Fruits, or Landscape Pictures, which are in size 16x20 inches, in beautiful natural colors. These Pictures sell at the very low price of 25c. each, and we have a very large assortment to choose from, as we have over thirty different subjects. The premium of the Ste. Anne de Beupre Rosary, is in three decades of five beads each, beautifully done in a Gilded Mounted Finish, imitation cut stone, on which is a Rolled Gold Medal of Ste. Anne de Beupre.

The wonderful devotion of Ste. Anne de Beupre has found favor all over Canada, U. S. A. and Newfoundland, and this premium will be a fitting souvenir of your meritorious work. We trust you with these Pictures, and you may make returns in 15 to 30 days' time after receiving the Pictures.

Address all communications to Catholic Supply Co., 46 St. Alexander St., Montreal, Canada

Advertisement for Imperial Votive Candles. Includes images of candles of various sizes (15, 18, 20, 22, 25, 28, 32 hours) and text: EXTRA QUALITY Canadian-Made Votive Candles, IMPERIAL NITE-LITES, IMPERIAL OIL LIMITED.

Advertisement for Cuticura. Includes image of a woman and text: Cuticura Quickly Soothes Rashes and Irritations. Hot baths with Cuticura Soap, followed by light applications of Cuticura Ointment, afford immediate relief in most cases of rashes, irritations, eczemas, etc.

A real Smoke SIR HAIG Cigar 5 Cents At all Stores