

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON

EASTER SUNDAY

PEACE

"Peace be to you." (St. John's Gospel xx. 19.)

It was the evening of the first bright Easter day. The accounts of the rising from the dead of Him Whom they had hoped should redeem Israel were being discussed, in that upper room where they had celebrated the Passover, by the disciples. Suddenly Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them: "Peace be to you."

He Who burst the bands of death, He Who is the Author of life, came back to earth with the same message which He first came—the message of peace. The angels over the plains of Bethlehem sang "Peace on earth to men of good will," but to day is heard that word of Peace of which theirs was but the faint echo. When God, the mighty One, chants His psalm of triumph, well may all created things be silent.

My brethren, Our Blessed Lord has for us a message of peace this day. For three years He went up and down the hills and vales of His native land, and His whole pilgrimage there seemed but a warfare. Men scorned His teachings. They despised Him and His words. He died, and it seemed as if a great light had been extinguished. But when He rose triumphantly over death when by His death He overcame him who had the power of death, then came victory, and with victory came peace.

Is this the case with you? Hearts today, my dear brethren? Has Our Lord Who perchance lay, as it were, dead in your soul—has He, I say, risen in you again? Are you in Him risen up to a new and a better life this glorious Easter morning? If such be the case, peace is yours.

For six long weeks you have been preparing for this day. To this hour you have looked forward. Lent has been a preparation for you. You piously entered on the performance of certain duties which you took upon yourself. You engaged to battle in a special way with sin. You have fought the battle nobly, and with the aid of the sacrament you stand in our midst. He is in your very breasts, and says: "Peace be to you."

What means this word? It means a victory won in your hearts. It means that, having overcome, and being in a state of grace, you are now so strong that you can say: "I never will, with the help of God, commit mortal sin again." It means that you have the power to live new lives. So put into continual practice those means which you found so helpful in Lent. Did you pray regularly in that time? Do not leave off the practice now. Did you receive the Sacraments often? Why not keep on in the same good custom?

Ah! so many people when Lent is over ruin all the good they gained by leaving it all behind them. But the person who will put into practice all the good deeds, all the prayers and devotions, which he used in Lent for the rest of his days, he is the one who may be said to have obtained the great and inestimable gift of peace—Our Lord's benediction on Easter Day.

Neither is peace exactly the same thing that we mean when we speak of a peace being concluded between two nations who have been at war.

We are still at war with sin. There is no truce, there can be no truce with it. There is not and there never can be any cessation of hostilities. It is nothing else than the firm purpose of amendment of life, put into daily practice, by efficaciously using the spiritual weapons which Jesus Christ in His mercy so lovingly provides for you.

Be not discouraged then, though you have yet to fight and wage war. Peace is yours, because He is on your side Who overcame, and by Whom you, too, will conquer. What care you for such battles when Christ Himself fights for you? Your souls are in peace, for He is dwelling in you. Such my dear brethren, is the gift of peace which our Divine Redeemer bestows upon you this Easter morning. And I wish you no greater happiness than that when, soon or late, He may stand in your midst, your ears may rejoice to hear those blessed words—"Peace be to you."

GENERAL INTENTION FOR APRIL

RECOMMENDED AND BLESSED BY HIS HOLINESS PIUS X.

PRESERVATION OF POLAND'S FAITH

Our readers may wonder why we write about "Poland," since it has long ceased to figure as a nation on the map of Europe. Even a schoolboy might know that Poland's existence as an independent state ended with the eighteenth century, the former Polish kingdom being divided up among the three adjoining states. Of this we are of course quite aware and we may add, for a clearer understanding of the present situation, that, at the final partition of Poland in 1795, there were two obnoxious partitions in 1772 and 1793. Russia received 8,500 square miles and 6,500,000 inhabitants; Prussia, 2,700 square miles and 3,000,000 inhabitants; and Austria, 2,100 square miles and 4,275,000 inhabitants. In 1807 Napoleon took Prussia the Polish territories annexed in 1793 and 1795 and created the independent Grand duchy of Warsaw. New territorial changes were effected by the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Prussia received a part of the Grand-duchy of Warsaw and called it the Grand-duchy of Posen, which now numbers about 4,000,000 Poles; Russia received the rest of the Grand-duchy of Warsaw as a separate kingdom of Poland, which, with Lithuania, Volynia, Podolia, and the Ukraine, comprises some 9,000,000 Poles; Austria retained the territories previously acquired and named them the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria which at the present time has a population of more than 7,000,000, of whom somewhat less than 4,000,000 are Poles, and a little more than 3,000,000, Ruthenians.

In spite of arbitrary barriers set up by war and diplomacy these 3 branches

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SYDNEY MINES, N.S., Jan. 25th. 1910.

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have the same traditions, the same language, the same faith, the same character, the same love of liberty, in a word, all that constitutes the reality and oneness of a nation. The victorious might of 3 conquerors does not affect, still less impair, the right of the conquered to racial and religious unity.

They look back with pride to their age-long strife with the Prussians, who at one time were vassals of Poland. Especially do they most righteously glory in the well-known fact that their ancestors were the chief bulwark of Christendom against the Turkish invasion, which was not finally and forever checked till it stopped in 1683 under the walls of Vienna before the restless valor of Sobieski.

The Polish language, in spite of the difficulties it presents to those who have not learnt it in their childhood, is the parent and still the finest of all the Slav languages. The Jesuit orator Skarga remains as yet, indeed, unequalled. In his sermons and writings, during the Golden Age of his country's literature (1548-1600), he is "the purest embodiment of Polish patriotism." But in the present period, one of exceptional brilliancy, Sienkiewicz, the author of "Quo Vadis" and "With Fire and Sword," has won world-wide fame. How passionately the Poles cling to their language may be gathered from the lamentable failure of a 1 the meanly hostile attempts made in Russia and Prussia to drive it away from out of the school, the church, and the very streets. Not so long ago did all Europe applaud those Polish children who solemnly vowed to fly to the aid of their motherland, because they would not pray in a tongue that was not their mothers'.

What enhanced the heroism of this ultimately triumphant struggle was Poland's most valued treasure, her faith.

For it is undoubtedly her faith, still more than her language, that maintains intact the unity of this wonderful nation. Poland was born Catholic. Her centuries of fights against Russia were mainly in defence of religion. If, in the sixteenth century, she was, like France, on the point of becoming Protestant, like France too, whom she resembled in so many respects, she drew back in time—Poland has remained, on the whole, truly Catholic. The catastrophe that dismembered her was above all a defeat of Catholicism by Prussian Protestantism and Muscovite Orthodoxy. Even in our day all Russianizing and Germanizing measures are aimed chiefly at the traditional faith of the Poles. Their enemies are evidently convinced that, if ever Poland ceases to be overwhelmingly Catholic, she will then cease to be a nation.

But this faith, which is the secret of her abiding vitality, is she sure of keeping it ever unimpaired? The truth, as presented by observers on the spot and by lookers-on from afar, seems to be that, while Catholic sentiment is still an integral factor in the Polish mind, convictions are beginning to waver among many of these sons of martyrs. However, the mischief is not irreparable; it has hardly begun. In soliciting prayers from the entire Catholic world we are acting upon our persuasion that the Polish Church, great as is its zeal for the flock and eager as it is to help itself, trusts even more to the blessings of heaven obtained by the

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fraternal intercession of united Catholic Christianity throughout the world. In order to make as plain as possible the object of our thoughts and prayers during this month, we shall briefly review the conditions that obtain in the three branches of the nation, now commonly, though less correctly, spoken of as the three Polands.

Of the three powers that divided the apollis of the ancient Polish kingdom one only was Catholic, Austria, and there the Polish nation remains more vigorous than elsewhere. The evolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which, under the wise guidance of its venerable and most wise Emperor, tends more and more towards federalism, has favored this survival. Those who have lived in Galicia know that one hears little of any other language than Polish not only in social intercourse but also in political life. The diet of Lemberg is practically a national parliament; the administration, the schools, the press, the law courts and to a certain extent the army, are all Polish. At Vienna the influence of the P. has members has often decided the fate of ministries. There is nothing in Austrian Poland to remind one of a fallen nation. Galicia is the rallying point for the less fortunate Poles of the "kingdom" and the "duchy." Cracow has become once more the real capital of Poland; its University is the center of the great intellectual centre of a nation.

The Catholic faith benefits largely by this liberty. The clergy is not hampered, as in so many other countries, by the petty tyrannies of secretly inimical governments. The public manifestations of popular piety, such as processions, pilgrimages and frequent communion, show that Poland still has a living faith. The Postanice Serca Jesusowego (Messenger of the Heart of Jesus) is one of the most flourishing organs of our holy League. Founded as early as 1872, it has over 150,000 subscribers. Of late, since the Russian custom-house has become somewhat tolerant, 30,000 copies of this Messenger are sent monthly from Cracow into Russian Poland.

What a contrast between Galicia and the two other non-Catholic empires! In Germany religious liberty, the equality of the two chief Christian denominations is a fundamental principle of the Constitution, which the valiant Centrist members know how to enforce. But in practice the Berlin government cannot forget that Prussia owes its conquest of Germany to the hereditary Protestantism of its kings. So it favors mixed marriages in order to weaken the integrity of Catholic faith. Moreover Prussia forces odious laws expropriating Polish landowners and replacing them by Germans. Whatever may be the future in store for the German Empire and the socialist gaining at the recent elections forbids no good—it is quite certain that the Polish question will not be one of the easiest problems of Imperial policy.

There remains the "Kingdom of Poland," or, as Russian bureaucracy prefers to say, "the province of the Vistula." It is the largest third of old Poland, and also the richest, for its industrial resources are daily developing through a multiplication of factories. No wonder the Muscovite coveted this splendid prey. But his Tartar aversion got the better of his avarice. Instead of winning over the conquered Poles, he brutally persecuted them. The history of Russian Poland is one long martyrology. In 1905 the Catholic world, long weary of such horrors, heaved a sigh of relief on learning that religious liberty was at length granted and promulgated by the Tsar. In Russia, however, words have not the obvious meaning they enjoy elsewhere. What has been the exact gain for Catholicism can be apprehended by those only who are familiar with the astute dodges of Muscovite legislation. An Orthodox Russian can henceforth become a Catholic without incurring confiscation or exile. Assuredly this is something. But it would be rash to infer that the interior government of the Catholic Church has thereby gained an increase of freedom. Albert recognized and subsidized by the Government for the sake of its Polish subjects, Catholic worship is, nevertheless, subjected to the most annoying supervision. A Catholic priest cannot preach a sermon till his manuscript has been censored; he cannot, without leave of the police, go outside his parish, even to make his confession; all communications between him and his flock, his clergy, and still more between the Holy See and the Bishops, are closely watched and often intercepted; episcopal sees remain vacant very long; State officials are present at examination in the seminaries, and the syllabus of studies is fixed by the foreign reviews and the official doctrine of the Holy See cannot cross the frontier unless they are approved by the censors, who never hesitate so to black out entire pages as to render them illegible.

Proselytism is forbidden to every priest under the severest penalties. Thus each individual conversion may entail an enquiry tending to prove that a word of advice from a priest originated this conversion. A nice damper, this, to apostolic zeal. The Orthodox Church alone is allowed to evangelize the numerous Pagans of Siberia, thereby cutting off all hope of Catholic extension in a region where the true Church could easily make converts. Moreover, spontaneous conversions must be registered by the civil authorities, under pain of rendering impossible important certainties of marriage and baptism. This registration of conversions bristles with technical formalities that place it beyond the reach of that multitude of peasants, who, having formerly belonged to the Uniate Greek Church, had been forcibly incorporated into Orthodoxy, and innocently fancied that they might now return in a body to Catholicism; in point of fact, if a single one of these unfortunate victims of State tyranny has neglected one single technical formality, the priest who consents to baptize that man's child incurs a heavy fine.

However, it would be a mistake to suppose that persecution, even without the only danger, the threatening faith of the Polish nation. Outside foes are powerless so long as they do not find a

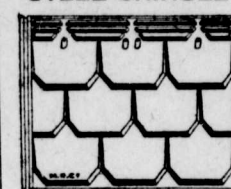
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AGENTS IN PRINCIPAL CITIES

response in the social conditions of families. Among these conditions a prominent one is the economic "rans" formation of a nation of farmers into a people of workmen. Warsaw and Lodz have become in the last few years great industrial centres, in which, though the capital may not always be Polish, the labor is exclusively so. In these masses of workmen socialism finds a chance to misrepresent the Church as the foe of all popular demands. Elsewhere the Church can effectively combat this slander by proving that she is always faithful to the Divine preference of her Founder, who devotedly to dry up the Poland the Church is not free to act. Government chicanery and vexatious almost force the clergy to confine themselves strictly to the administration of the sacraments. Even this is not always easy; for instance, frequent communion, so necessary for youth in these times of school regulations. Less, therefore, than elsewhere can we count on the direct action of the Church. In the struggle with atheistic socialism the great need is lay apostles so numerous in France, Belgium and Germany. Unfortunately in Poland the rich are not always the first to believe in socialism, and aristocracy are poorly equipped for the new situation and captains of industry have no care for the faith and morals of their workmen.

The recent antics of the Mariavites show that Poland, so long the staunchest of Catholic countries, is not dream that, while the lesser Slav people are lusting and agitating for freedom, the great mother of them all, Poland, will at long last husband her magnificent vital force and concentrate it on the cause of a peaceful Pan-Slavism? Why should not Holland, backed by the experience of many centuries of freedom, teach the other Slav nations the danger of freedom running riot, the extreme peril of fratricidal rivalry, and then united them in a pacific federation?

CURED OF DRINK BY SIMPLE REMEDY

A Devoted Wife Helps her Husband to a Cure Through Samaria Prescription

Mrs. S. of Trenton, was in despair. A loving father and a careful provider when sober—her husband had gradually fallen into drinking habits, which were ruining his home, health and happiness. Drink had inflamed his stomach and nerves and created that unnatural craving that kills conscience, love honor and breaks all family ties.

But read her letter: "I feel it my duty to say a few words about your Tablets. As you are aware, I sent and got a bottle thinking I would try them in secret. My husband had only taken them a week when he told me he was going to Port Arthur for the summer, so I had to tell him all about the Tablets. He said he would try them just the same, so I sent and got the second bottle for fear one would not be enough. He writes me saying that he has taken the contents of both bottles, and he feels splendid, does not care for drink. In fact, he has not taken any liquor from the first of my giving it to him. I feel I cannot say too much in favor of your wonderful Remedy."

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Who knows if even the huge Russian colossus may not one day, in the inscrutable designs of Providence, be brought round to the unity of Catholic faith by the generously forgiving spirit of Catholic Poland? From the Vistula to Kamchatka, from the White Sea to the Caucasus there is hardly a town where Catholic Poles are not radiating the true faith upon their less favored neighbors. Why should not this little flock be as the salt of the Russian earth and the light of the schismatically bedeviled world? LEWIS DRUMMOND, S. J.

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