

**FIVE MINUTE SERMON  
—  
EPIPHANY OR SUNDAY WITHIN  
THE OCTAVE**

"And entering the house, they found the child with Mary His Mother, sitting on the floor, they adored Him. And opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh." (Matt. II. 11)

The Church, my dear friends, in her series of festivals, desires to appeal to the heart as well as to the intellect of her followers. Beginning with the birth of the Son of God on Christmas day, she follows Him in her festivals step by step until His tragic death on Mount Calvary.

If we learn from the Divine Infant, lying in the stable on Christmas, the virtues of poverty, humility and mortification; we likewise learn obedience to the laws of our Church and of our country when we see Him obey the law of circumcision eight days after His birth. In other festivals in His honor we have presented to our consideration charity, forgiveness of injuries and all other virtues.

To day we celebrate the feast of the Epiphany.

Epiphany means manifestation. It is on this day, the 12th after His birth, that He manifested Himself to the Gentiles. It is sometimes called Little Christmas, or the Christmas of the Gentiles.

The first adorers of our Lord in the stable of Bethlehem were Jews—shepherds who were led thither by the angels singing "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will." The Gentiles were likewise led to adore Him in the manger in a miraculous manner. For Christ was the Saviour of all—of Jew and Gentile. And if the Jew was led to the Infant Jesus by an angel, the Gentile was led by a miraculous star.

At the birth of Our Lord this star appeared in the East. Many saw this wonderful star. But three wise men followed it. Thus "Many are called, but few are chosen." The star went on before them and directed their steps. When they came near Jerusalem, the star disappeared. They entered the city, and not being ashamed to confess Christ, asked "Where is He who is born King of the Jews?" We have seen His star in the East and have come to adore Him. Herod asked the scribes and priests where Christ was to be born and was told that it was in the city of Bethlehem. Then Herod told the wise men to go and search for this child and bring him word. And when they were outside the city "Behold the star which they had seen in the East was before them until it stood over where the Child was."

And they going in saw the Child and Mary His Mother. And falling down they adored Him. And opening their treasures they offered Him gold, frankincense and myrrh. And being admonished in their sleep not to go back to Herod who wished to kill Jesus, the wise men returned another way to their own country.

Thus we see, my dear friends, that the birth of Jesus Christ was a subject of joy both to Jew and Gentile. Both were invited to come and partake of the common blessing. For at the time that the angel called the Jews in the persons of the shepherds, the star called the rest of mankind in the persons of the three Holy Kings. Jesus Christ was born for the salvation of all mankind. Hence He wished that all would begin to know Him in the infancy of His humanity. The rich and the poor, the Jew and the Gentile, the ignorant and the learned, the king and the subject were all called to Bethlehem to adore the Divine Infant lying in the manger. Lying there on that bed of straw who would suspect Him of being the God of heaven and earth? No external sign of His Divine character could be seen. He appeared to the senses to be a child of misery, distress, affliction and tears. Everywhere in His surroundings was poverty and want. But the Magi did not doubt. They saw with the eyes of faith. Under the form of a newborn infant they believed the eternal God to be present. They were convinced that the child they beheld was their God, the long expected Saviour and Redeemer of mankind.

Knowing this, they fell down and adored Him. Then opening their treasures they offered Him gold, frankincense and myrrh. Gold is the tribute usually paid to kings. Jesus Christ was the King of kings, hence in this light gold was offered Him.

Frankincense was offered to God in the temple morning and night. The smoke of the incense represents the prayers ascending to the throne of grace.

Myrrh was used by the Jews in embalming. Hence as offered by the Magi it represents the humanity of Christ.

Gold was offered Him as king, incense as God and myrrh as man; jointly offered by the Magi they represent the two natures of God and man in the person of Jesus Christ.

The Magi worshipped God in spirit and in truth. The same spirit must animate every true follower of Jesus Christ. We have been called to the true faith as the Magi were. This faith has been announced to the world by Jesus Christ Himself; it has been sanctioned and confirmed by miracles; it has been handed down to succeeding generations by inspired Evangelists; and it has been preserved in its original purity by the infallible teaching of the Catholic Church. This great gift has been bestowed upon us. Hence we owe God a debt of adoration for so singular a mercy.

The tribute of love, the tribute of devotion and the tribute of self-

denial are the three acts of homage signified by the gold, frankincense and myrrh of the Magi. This homage of love, devotion and self denial God exacts from every Christian.

Let us my dear friends, endeavor to render God this homage. Let us follow the teaching of the Church, the star of Bethlehem for us, that bright and evening star that will lead us to Jesus; it will guide us through all the trials of life; it will light us in the darkness of the valley of death, and it will lead us safely to the other shore into the haven of eternal rest.

**TEMPERANCE  
—  
ALCOHOL AND WAR  
(By Sir James Christon-Browne, in the Observer, London.)**

When the history of the present great and terrible war comes to be written I believe, be found that alcohol has had a not inconspicuous part, both actively and negatively, in its progress and final issue. It has been responsible, I believe, in some degree for the hideous cruelties and barbarities perpetrated in Belgium and France by the soldiers of Germany, and in some degree for the barbarities which have deprived her of the moral support of the civilized world.

On the other hand, the withdrawal of alcohol by Russia, by means of her decree prohibiting the sale of vodka, a fertile source of demoralization and disease, will be found to have strengthened her arm and helped her to those victories she is achieving and to that sustained resistance necessary to conduct this atrocious war to a triumphant finish in Berlin.

We have innumerable substitutes that possess some of alcohol's attractive qualities without its drawbacks.

Look at tea. I sometimes think that teetotal should be spelt with an A instead of two E's, for tea has been one of the saviors of mankind. I very truly believe that but for the introduction of tea into Europe might have drunk itself to death.

I recollect a great surgeon, Mr. Lawson Tait, telling me: "I always operate at 9 o'clock in the morning, and I find that if I take wine at dinner the previous evening, even only a pint of claret, my fingers are not just as exact and nimble as they are when I have had no wine at all, and so I never take wine or any stimulant when I have to operate."

Well, the handling of a magazine rifle is a very delicate operation, and those men will perform it best who have had no alcohol.

**THE WATER WAGON**

I've seen the circus wagon pass, with stately horses hitched in line, all bright with shining paint and handled by circus span, and its seats and springs are built upon a stern, old-fashioned plan: methinks its wheels are needing grease; and one can hear them squeal and grind, but those upon it ride in peace and leave the Land of Grief behind. Hang on, hang on, O thirsty boys, be not dismayed by jests or sneers; your headed now for saner joys than you have known in many years!"—Walt Mason.

**BEST THING HE EVER DID**

Looking at the matter from all its angles, I am convinced that the best thing I ever did for myself was to quit drinking, I will go further than that and say it is my unalterable conviction that alcohol, in any form, as a beverage never did anything for any man that he would not have been better without.

I can now sit back and contrast the old game with the new. The physical gain is so obvious that even those who have not experienced it admit it, and those who have experienced it comment on it as some miracle of health that has been attained. Any man—I do not care who he is—who was the sort of a drinker I was, who will stop drinking long enough to get cooled out will feel so much better in every way that he will be hard put to give a reason forever beginning again.—Samuel G. Blythe, in Saturday Evening Post.

**LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE**

In "The Faith of Our Fathers," says the Freeman's Journal, Cardinal Gibbons gives a very clear exposition of the points on liberty. Therein in he quotes from a letter written by Archbishop Fenelon to the son of King James II., of England. That letter gives the Catholic view. It is worth producing here:

"Above all, never force your subjects to change their religion. No human power can reach the impetrate recess of the free will of the heart. Violence can never persuade men; it serves only to make hypocrites. (Grant civil liberty to all, not in approving everything as indifferent, but in tolerating with patience whatever Almighty God tolerates, and endeavoring to convert men by mild persuasion.)"

The history of Spain furnishes us with a good commentary as to the correctness of this view. That kingdom, whose "Inquisition" has furnished much of the stock in trade for

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Many people do not realize that the Skin is one of the three great eliminators of waste matter from the body. As a matter of fact, the Skin rids the system of more Urea (or waste matter) than the Kidneys. When there is Kidney Trouble, Pain In The Back and Acrid Urine, it may not be the fault of the kidneys at all, but due to faulty Skin Action, or Constipation of the bowels.

"Fruit-a-tives" cures weak, sore, aching Kidneys, not only because it strengthens these organs but also because "Fruit-a-tives" opens the bowels, sweetens the stomach and stimulates the action of the skin.

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anti-Catholic platform lectures, is a land in which the Church has always battled for freedom. The historian Prescott, non-Catholic as he was, eulogizes the Spanish Catholics for their courageous defence of human liberty.

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ON ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

In his sermon at the new Cathedral Most Rev. Archbishop Glennon took the life, the character and the work of St. John the Baptist for his text and eloquently pointed the appropriate lessons to be found in the same. His Grace said:

The Christmas time develops a character unique and picturesque in St. John the Baptist—the relative, the early companion, and the prophet of the blessed Lord. The Gospel, especially that written by St. Luke, have much to say concerning the birth and antecedents of St. John and his mission, and in later years, also, the tragedy that terminated his life. For the rest, we have only allusions made, for which, however, the outlines of his exalted and spiritual character may be determined, a study of which is most opportune in these days when life with so many lacks simplicity and purpose, and is blurred by luxury and wasted on trifles. St. John the Baptist, child himself of prophecy, given to his parents in their later years, and declared by Christ that amongst those born of women none was greater than he, from his earliest years dedicated his whole life to the mission that was given him. There was around him a waiting and a doubting world filled with its Sadducees and Pharisees. Piety had given place to hypocrisy, and the power that of old was held for the Lord was now wielded in the interests of the Roman Caesar. Striving for place, anxious for power, greedy for money, the world, including the chosen people, had yielded to a large extent to the world-spirit. There was luxury and the pride of life stalking forth; but there was death following in the wake. From under the pall some did still lift their eyes; and voices were heard from out the darkness, praying for the redemption of Israel and the world.

And now St. John the Baptist leaves his home and friends, set behind him the cities with their pride and luxury, seeks the higher atmosphere of the mountain side, the clearer view of the desert, there to commune with nature and with God—there to listen again to the voice that was calling him, and to read the prophecies that were written in all the stars.

But more definite still was the thought that over at Nazareth there was One for whom the world had waited so long, and yet knew not. Who was come to be the redeemer of Israel and the glory of His people. That thought filled the soul of John, so that the desert living was not a place of solitude, but peopled with mighty thoughts of what was, and what was to be.

The Scriptures tell us of the simple life of St. John in the desert; how he was clothed in camel's hair with a leathern girdle, and that his food was locusts and wild honey. They tell us, too, not only of the example he gives of the homely life, but also his abstinence from wine and similar drinks, in which example should be found the idea of the total abstinence as encouraged and fostered by the Catholic Church. We have in St. John the example of one who himself abstained from intoxicants; but when it came to denounc-

tion, all he denounced was sin. In other words, by his example he would lead all to perfect and saintly living, and by his denunciation he would limit the same to what was definitely wrong and sinful.

Such a picture is easily brought before the mind; the desert with its long line of light, deepening towards the horizon, with its shimmering haze, its brilliant coloring, its vastness, and over against it, the figure of the simple, brave, clear visioned Baptist, who as the lion stood full of energy, fearless of fate, or like the pyramid unmoved amid storm and stress, a witness of misery and impotence down below—while its summit stands crowned amid the stars.

St. John went to the desert to fast and to pray, and to make preparation for his mission as the forerunner of the Christ. And the Church in holding up the life of the Baptist also commands to its children this example that he has given, namely, that they should from time to time retire to where, the world forgetting, they may have companionship and direction of the spirit of God. Few realize how helpful, and in a certain sense how necessary such retreats are. Bound up with the things of earth, they feel they have no time to change the ways to which their course, nor otherwise to think than according to the way, the course and the thought their business demands. And yet to know ourselves, to see our duty in that only true light, namely, the light of God's presence, to hear His voice without distraction, and to understand and face the mission that is ours without hesitation, the retreat is the ordinary and the necessary way.

We do not know how long St. John spent in the wilderness; but we do know when he returned, when as St. Luke tells us, the word of the Lord came to John in the desert, he comes in response with a willingness and a consecration that soon was felt throughout all Judea. He came preaching penance—"Do penance, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." They must be sorry for the sins, they must be baptized and purified, they must prepare, for the Kingdom of God is at hand. They ask the prophet who he is; he answers, matters not. He came from the desert. From the solitude came as the messenger of good tidings, he himself answering nothing but only the voice of one crying in the wilderness, makes straight the way of God.

When our Blessed Saviour made His entrance into public life, it is by His being baptized by John in the Jordan; and it is by commending the ministry of John and his prophetic mission; but when the Blessed Master arises, then St. John disappears until he expires that life of simplicity and purity and devotion by the martyrdom that marks the end. He was headed by the master of Judea, Herod, because he denounced the profligacy of the ruler.

We especially note in the life of St. John the simplicity of his living; and our day with its luxuries and refinements and debaucheries and cruelties may well take to heart the lesson of John, living in the desert, pure of mind, clean of hand, exalted of character, devoted altogether to the mission that was his to perform.

St. John not only lived the simple life, but no foolish notion of exaltation or pride because, of his mission entered his soul. When our blessed Saviour sought baptism at his hands he said, "I ought to be baptized by thee, and comest thou to me." And again, not only did he declare himself to be the voice of one crying in the wilderness; but he who would come so far surpassed St. John that he was unworthy to loose the latchet of his shoe.

St. John the Baptist showed great moral force. He feared neither the king's anger nor a nation's wrath. Pharisees and Sadducee were alike denounced because of their hypocrites and sins. A race of vipers, he called them, who will soon be overwhelmed in the coming wrath.

St. John's course is clear. He will be the voice proclaiming right, he will be the voice denouncing wrong until that voice is hushed in death. He goes bravely to die, muttering no complaint, showing no fear; but steadfast to the cause of virtue, he gives back his soul and his mission to his Master remaining for all time an example of simple faith, holy hope, firm resolve, the friend and companion of Jesus, the prophet of his mission; and after the holy innocents the first of those to die in the knowledge and profession of the advent of the Saviour.

**IT DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

Those persons who have had experience in discussing religious questions with the world at large, soon arrive at the conviction that there is an easy-going set of people whose aspirations seldom rise above the material; while there are others who pretend to be seekers after truth with such avidity that they like to be known as religious reformers. Beyond the multiplicity of beliefs they assume to have arrived at the one true religion of feeling as opposed to faith. They talk much of "getting back to Christ," of "shaking off dogma, which is always indicative of bigotry," and of having "fanaticism," a term they apply to the defense one makes of his honored doctrines. Their fundamental principle is that one religion is as good as another. This means, of course, that falsehood is as good as truth. A somewhat intolerant affirmation, the non-Catholic urges. But truth is always intolerant of error. It is, in a sense, unyielding in character. Let our readers consult St. Paul regarding the armor the Christian is to wear in his conflicts with unbelief and unfaith. The description is given in the sixth chapter of his epistle to the Ephesians. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one; and take unto you the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit ("which is the word of God.") Notice, that in all this armor, the Christian is covered with a metallic vesture. Even the belt of truth about his loins is covered with metallic scales, as we learn from the Greek word that describes it. This is to be unyielding in character. It savors of intolerance, but truth must necessarily be intolerant of everything that would destroy truth. Concerning this matter we would recommend what Rev. Bernard J. Otton, S. J., says in his work, "Does it Matter Much What I Believe?"

On the supposition that one religion is as good as another, it must needs be admitted that falsehood is as good as truth. For of the hundreds of existing religions there cannot be found two that agree in principle and practice. What one teaches as true, others reject as false; what one commends as holy, others condemn as impious. According to Anglican, for instance, Christ is a divine person; according to Unitarians and Socinians he is a mere man. By Lutheran infant baptism is considered valid; by Baptists it is rejected as invalid. Catholics hold that Bishops were divinely instituted to rule the Church; Presbyterians teach that Bishops were not so instituted. And so all along the line, when one religious body teaches a certain doctrine, others almost invariably deny it, and hold the contradictory as true. Yet it is the very first principle in philosophy, and of common sense as well, that two contradictory statements cannot both be true at the same time. It is true, for example, that two and two make four; it cannot at the same time be true that two and two do not make four. And so also if it be true that Christ is a divine person, or that infant baptism is valid, or that Bishops were divinely instituted to rule the Church it cannot at the same time be true that Christ is not a divine person, or that infant baptism is not valid, or that Bishops were not divinely instituted to rule the Church. Hence as existing religious systems teach *de facto* opposite and contradictory doctrines, some of them must necessarily be false; consequently, if it is true, as Indifferentists hold, that one religion is as good as another, it must also be true that a false religion is as good as the true one, or that falsehood is as good as truth, unless, indeed, we are prepared to maintain that no religion is good which is the very opposite of what Indifferentists have been holding heretofore.—The Missionary.

**A SOUND REBUKE**

"To what religion do you belong?" a minister of State in Holland asked a young man who had applied for a government office. The minister, though a Protestant, had a great respect for the Catholic belief, and was greatly surprised when the candidate answered: "I am a Catholic, but I do not much care whether I continue to be one or not." "I have no appointment for you," said the minister. "You were born and brought up in the greatest institution in the world, and yet you betray your cause! A Catholic who does not love and esteem his faith as his great treasure is not fit for the king's service, since he knows not how to serve his God."—Sacred Heart Review.

**NO CLAIM**

Pastor Russell, of the "Russellite Church," in a recent sermon in the City Temple, New York City made remarks on the Catholic Church in the course of which he said: "I am discussing the Church of Rome only because for a time there was no other."

Here is a noteworthy admission. There was a time when there was only one Church and that the Church of Rome. What then of the other bodies claiming to be Churches, and Christian and Apostolic? Did the

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