

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

REV. F. P. HICKEY, O. S. B.
PALM SUNDAY

THE MERCY OF GOD, AND HOW IT WAS RECEIVED

"They will reverence My Son." (Matt. xxi. 37.)

It is fitting in Holy Week to meditate on God's mercy and how it is received. Who brought God's mercy into the world? Of old, when prophets spoke, it was not of mercy, but judgment and punishment. No, not angel, nor prophet, nor patriarch was the messenger of mercy; it was the Son of God, made Man for us. "They will reverence My Son."

See how everything in His coming spoke of mercy. His very name, foretold by the angel, is the Name of mercy—Jesus and Saviour.

His words, words of mercy. When the Baptist sent his disciples to Him, He said: "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." (Matt. xi. 4, 5.) And again: "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke ix. 10.)

His actions were in accord with His words. The examples course through your memory. The many blind whom, at their entreaty, He touched, and they went away rejoicing; the poor bent woman, who only touched His garment, and she was made whole; the palsied, the lepers, the very dead, who felt the touch of His mercy; His mingling with publicans and sinners, calling Matthew, the tax-gatherer, to be an Apostle; letting Magdalene, the sinner, kiss His feet and be His Mother's friend.

Enough: name, words, actions, all speak of mercy. But He was all-powerful; they cost Him little. Lest we might think that, He endured His sufferings and submitted to die on the cross to prove His mercy—"He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins." (Isa. liii. 5.) "When as yet we were sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 8, 9.) All mercy, life and death.

How was His mercy received on earth? Welcomed by all? Stray words in the Gospel would lead us to think so. "When they read in the synagogues, 'Behold, the whole world is gone after Him.'" (John xii. 19.) And after the miracle of the five loaves they wanted to take Him and make Him King.

But let facts answer how God's mercy was received. He that was the Way and the Truth and the Life dwelt at Nazareth many years. How was God's mercy received there? St. Luke will tell us. Our Lord rose up to read in the synagogue. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, wherefore He hath anointed Me, to preach the gospel to the poor. He hath sent Me, to heal the contrite of heart. . . to preach the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of reward." And He added, "This day is fulfilled this Scripture in your ears." And what did His friends and kinsfolk do? "They were filled with anger. And they rose up and thrust Him out of the city, and brought Him to the brow of the hill, that they might cast Him down headlong." (Luke iv. 16-29.) God's mercy, and how it was received!

Again, when at length He approached the subject so dear to His Sacred Heart, the Institution of the most Blessed Sacrament, what happened then? How was the announcement of the crowning mercy of all received? "The Jews therefore murmured at Him, because He said, I am the living Bread which came down from heaven. . . How can this man give us His Flesh to eat? Jesus said, My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed. . . He that eateth this Bread shall live forever. . . Many of His disciples, hearing it, said, This saying is hard, and who can hear it? . . . After this many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." (John vi. 41-67.)

Does it not seem as if God's mercy was a failure to His kinsfolk sought to kill Him because He preached? His disciples murmured at His goodness and deserted Him. And, my dear brethren, let us go further, His death itself! How was that brought about? Oh, you will answer, His enemies did that. No, the most cruel part of it was that His friends had such a share in it.

Who sold Him to His enemies? One, who had been made a friend for three years, who had witnessed all His miracles, who had just made His First Communion. He gave the mercy of God the welcome of a traitor's kiss! And the chief of all the Apostles, coward as he was then—forgive us, dear St. Peter, for saying it—denied His Master, and swore that he knew Him not. And the rest of the twelve fled and left Him. Oh, what a welcome to the mercy of God, preparing for the sacrifice of Calvary! And were all those who reviled Him, who cried, "Away with Him! Crucify Him!"—were all those His enemies? Many of the populace there had been His friends on Palm Sunday. The same voices, when He had been triumphant, had cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" Was there no one to stand up and say a word in His defence? Not one of those—surely friends—whose eyes He had opened, to whom He had given speech, whose crippled limbs He had straightened and strengthened?

Cruel facts, then, show us how God's mercy was treated when it would have redeemed the world. We see the injustice, the ingratitude of it all is quite evident.

There is one momentous question to ask ourselves—Is it now as it was then? God's mercy is the same; the same Jesus here; the same sacred Name we invoke and reverence; the same blessed words from the Gospels console us and instruct us; His actions the same. For our souls are now the recipients of His mercy. He cures the blindness, the dumbness, the palsy, the leprosy of our souls. He feeds them, far more wonderfully than He did the five thousand. And His sufferings are brought before us, made the object of our devotion, and commemorated in every Mass that is offered. His mercy the same then?

But is it received now as then? It is outraged now? We are indignant at the Jews; are we any better ourselves? Look and find yourselves—either in the synagogue at Nazareth, grumbling against God, rejecting some truth, unwilling to accept His mercy. Oh, see ourselves amongst those who deserted Him—on who neglect your Easter Communion, who put off time after time, who resent the priest pressing for attendance at Mass and frequent Communion.

And those, who have committed mortal sin, they know where to find themselves. They recognize their own voices—"Crucify Him!" Away with the Saviour, and give us an easy life of pleasure, of indulgence in our sins. Our mortal sins are the welcome we have given to the mercy of God.

By a good confession and Communion let us give God's mercy a true welcome; let us promise Him fidelity and loyalty, and choose Him now King of our hearts.

TEMPERANCE

INSURANCE RISKS AND LIQUOR

John Barleycorn is being rapidly cornered. Twenty-five States will hereafter be totally dry, observes "Girard" in the Philadelphia Ledger.

Some other commonwealths have wet cases only, as a result of local option laws. The progress of prohibition in the United States has been swifter than such apostles of a saloonless world as John B. Gough and Francis Murphy could have dreamed possible.

Why is our country going dry so fast? Business and health! That combination beats moral suasion and the appeals of a "Ten Nights in a Barroom."

Life insurance companies for some years past have paid very close attention to liquor as an insurance hazard. They have compiled figures, using hundreds of thousands of persons as a basis for computations.

These prove that a man who does not drink will on the average live much longer than the man who drinks even moderately.

A large British company finds that users of liquor among its insured persons show a mortality 36% greater than do total abstainers.

Of men around forty years of age the mortality among users of alcohol is more than 80% greater than it is among non-users of that age.

Another company finds that when men pass forty-five and drink no alcohol they are a 25% better insurance risk than are men who fondle the flowing bowl.

I heard William J. Bryan say not long ago that nobody would employ a young man who admitted that he was moderate drinker. He said no business man could afford to make an investment in depreciated ability.

Taking 2,000,000 policy holders as a few insurance companies discovered that men who only occasionally "got tight," suffered a death rate just one-half greater than strictly temperance men.

Among men who drink only two glasses of beer or one glass of whisky in a day the mortality was almost a fifth greater.

Other men who drink more than that, but still not enough to bar them from insurance companies, showed an appalling mortality. It was almost double that among men who were never introduced to John Barleycorn.

Insurance company figures give a black eye even to the "occasional drinker." The abstainer has an 18% better chance to go on living than the fellow who "hits one" only once in a while.

JOHNNIE'S GREAT PRIVILEGE

The Catholic Herald has a word to say about altar-boys and their parents which we trust many parents will read. We quote: "The fault in this matter lies largely with the parent, who does not insist that Johnnie shall get up if it is a cold morning and who does not impress upon Johnnie the idea that serving Mass is a great privilege, one of the greatest possible and that it is an honor that every boy should be glad to merit. It really is a lack of faith on the part of parent and child. If the President were coming, or the Governor, or some other public personage, and wanted Johnnie to wait upon him, the youth would be kept up all night rather than miss the great occasion. But when the Lord of Lords, the Great God is going to visit us, why Johnnie must not be disturbed in his slumbers. It is far more important that he snooze for an hour longer than that he secure the blessings and graces which serving the priest would mean for him."

There is no earthly glory, no pictures in the newspapers, no publication of names, when we serve God and therefore it is not worth the trouble."

FOOD PRICES INVESTIGATION

GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES OF VARIOUS KINDS WILL TRY TO FIND THE CAUSE OF THE HIGH PRICES OF FOODS

Tables prepared by the Department of Justice at Washington show an advance of 10% to 100% in prices of food during the past year. The advances in price of some of the staple articles are: sirloin, 11%; ham, 21%; lard, 29%; flour, 11%; eggs, 18%; butter, 14%; potatoes, 100%; sugar, 25%; milk, 4%.

In many instances the advance in prices is even greater in Canada where the markets are naturally affected by war conditions as well as by shortage in supplies.

News dispatches say that President Wilson will approve of the appropriation of \$400,000 to be expended by the Federal Trade Commission for investigation of food prices.

In the meantime, what is the poor consumer going to do about it? It is a condition that confronts him, not a theory. It will be mighty interesting to know who is really to blame for these remarkable advances in the prices of foods; but the matter of most immediate concern to the consumer is how to get three meals a day for the family and keep within a fixed weekly wage.

As a matter of fact this problem is simple enough for the housewife who will make a little study of food values. If she tackles this subject in earnest she will soon find that even at the present time the most expensive foods are the least nutritious and the wholesome, nourishing foods have really not advanced much in price. She will find that there is really more body-building nutriment in the cereals, such as whole wheat, rice, oats and corn, than there is in meat, eggs or potatoes.

Two shredded wheat biscuits, eaten with milk, make a meal that contains more real, nutritive value, heat-making nutriment than meat or eggs, and the total cost for such a meal is not over four or five cents. These crisp little loaves of baked wheat not only furnish the elements needed to build healthy tissue and furnish energy and heat for the body, but they also contain the bran of the wheat grain which is useful in stimulating bowel movement, thus keeping the alimentary tract in clean and healthy condition, which is one of the first requisites of good health.

These shredded wheat biscuits not only solve the food problem in many a home, but being ready cooked and ready-to-eat they are a boon to the busy housewife, saving her from much kitchen drudgery and work at a time of year when her energies are needed in other directions.

Shredded wheat biscuit is very satisfying and sustaining when served with hot milk and is also delicious served in combination with stewed prunes, sliced bananas or other fruits.

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

In Lent the earnest Catholic often makes the fourteen stations of the cross with devout meditation on the principal scenes in the passion of our Lord as they are depicted in the Church. At each striking incident in the sorrowful journey from His condemnation in Pilate's court till the scene of the crucifixion on Mount Calvary, the pious Christian kneels and says: O Christ, we bless and adore Thee because by Thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world.

The external devotion to the cross of Christ developed slowly in the Church. Of course, St. Paul gloried in the cross of Christ and preached Jesus crucified to the Jews foolishness and to the Gentiles a stumbling block. With Christ he was nailed to the cross and was crucified to the world in which he beheld those who were the enemies of the cross of Christ.

The early Christians did not openly use the figure of the cross and the image of Christ upon it or the crucifix, probably out of fear of insult and persecution from the pagans. After the conversion of Constantine in 313 when he is said to have seen the blazing sign of the cross in the heavens with the words, "In this sign thou shalt conquer," the cross became a sign of honor and was placed on the royal banners and appeared on church and public buildings.

The reported finding of the true cross in Jerusalem by the Empress Helena a little later promoted the cultus of the cross in the whole Church. Pieces of the true cross became precious relics and then began the pilgrimages to the Holy Land which have never ceased. The earliest account extant of such a visit is that of the pilgrim of Bordeaux, France, written in 333 and one by the Lady Egeria about the same time.

The pilgrims loved to visit the historical spots pointed out where Christ, Jesus, the Son of God, was born, where He fell beneath His cross and met His Mother, Simon the Cyrenian, the women of Jerusalem, Veronica, and finally, the sacred spot on Golgotha

where He yielded up the ghost on the cross.

Our Blessed Lord Himself first made the way of the cross and pious pilgrims followed in His footsteps on that sorrowful journey to Calvary's summit where He laid down His life in self-sacrificing love for men. When it was impossible on account of wars or distance and various other reasons for devout souls to journey to Jerusalem they made a miniature pilgrimage at home by depicting in pictures erected in churches the chief scenes of the sufferings of Christ. In this way our stations of the cross developed as a substitution for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

Christianity is the religion of the cross and the Church has always fostered great devotion to the emblem of our salvation. Before the redemption it was an instrument of punishment, an object of horror. After Christ's death it became a sign of love and the means to arrive at heaven. It represents the love of Christ who satisfied for our sins and reconciled us to God. It is part of loving Christ to take up the crosses we meet with in daily life and follow Him and then we shall be like Simon the Cyrenian who helped our Saviour to carry the cross. If we suffer with Him we shall likewise triumph.—The Monitor.

THE CARDINAL'S PRIDE

A long while ago, when Cardinal Cullen lived, there was a sick call for a priest in Dublin. The sick person was at — Hotel, the sick person of which was a Protestant. As soon as the messenger got there, a priest started. Through mud and slush he made his way, and at last arrived at the hotel, saw the sick person, and gave him the Sacraments. Everything went off as usual thus far, but now the curious part began.

The proprietor of the hotel, thinking to do a little private proselytizing, invited the priest to come into his own sitting-room. After administering some welcome refreshments, this Protestant evangelizer let himself out.

"To think, Father," said he, addressing the priest, "of the pride and sloth of these Bishops and Cardinals! Is it not monstrous! I warrant you that, while the Cardinal has sent you this long tramp through the muddy snow, he is comfortably toasting his heels and drinking a good warm punch."

"I think you wrong him," said the priest.

"Because he is doing nothing of the kind."

"You don't tell me! But how do you know?"

"I know by the best of reasons. You have never asked my name."

"Your name? What is it?"

"Cullen—Cardinal Cullen."

In a moment the hotel-keeper was on his feet, hat off.

"Will your Eminence forgive me? I spoke in ignorance. Shall I order a carriage for Your Eminence?"

"Oh, no, I can go back as I came; I am used to such journeys."

The Cardinal departed. A few days afterwards the hotel-keeper went to a priest for instructions, and was finally received into the Church. This incident is strictly true.—Our Sunday Visitor.

EDUCATION

A PROTESTANT EULOGY

We shall seek far to find a more eloquent tribute to the wisdom of the Catholic Church in her work of education than the following enlightened eulogy which appeared in the pages of the New England Journal of Education. It is from the pen of a Protestant apologist:

"There is one Church which makes religion essential to education, and that is the Catholic Church, in which mothers teach their faith to the infants at the breast in their lullaby songs, and whose Sisterhoods and Brotherhoods and priests imprint their religion on souls as indelibly as the diamond marks the hardest glass. They ingrain their faith in human hearts when most plastic to the touch. Are they wrong? Are they stupid? Are they ignorant that they found schools, academies, colleges in which religion is taught? Not if a man be worth more than a dog, or the human soul with eternity for duration, is of more value than the span of animal existence for a day. If they are right, then we are wrong. Looking upon it as a mere speculative question, with their policy they will increase, with ours we shall decrease. We are no prophet, but it does seem to us that Catholics, retaining their religious education and we our heathen schools, will gaze upon cathedral crosses all over New England when our meeting houses will be turned into barns. Let them go on teaching religion to the children, and let us go on educating our children without recognition of God, and they will plant corn and train grapes on the unknown graves of Plymouth Pilgrims and the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay, and none will dispute their right of possession. We say this without expressing our own hopes or fears, but as inevitable from the fact that whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

There is question not merely of preserving the Church, which can never fail, but of preserving Christian civilization itself. A heathen school, as the writer correctly styles every educational institution from which religion is excluded, can produce a heathen population only. The brief Sunday-school lesson, or the religious

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home education received from parents whose indifference permits their children to be educated in such a school, may delay but cannot stay the general retrogression of a nation into paganism.—America.

A JACK LONDON STORY

The well-known novelist, Jack London, whose death was recently announced, was in the habit of paying periodical visits to England to see his publishers and transact other business.

On the last occasion that he was over there he was introduced to a noted musician.

"I, too, am a musician in a small way," said Jack London. "My musical talent was once the means of saving my life. There was a great flood in our town in my boyhood. When the water struck our house my father got on a bed and floated with the stream until he was rescued."

"And you?" asked the musician.

"Well," said Jack London, "you see, I accompanied him on the piano."—The Monitor.

There is no duty we so much underrate as the duty of being happy. The man who forgets to be thankful has fallen asleep in life.—Robert Louis Stevenson.

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Well, I didn't like that. I was afraid the horse was not all right, and I might have to whistle for my money if I once parted with it. So I didn't buy the horse, although I wanted it badly. Now this set me thinking.

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So, said to myself, I will do with my "1900 Gravity" Washer what I wanted the man to do with the horse. Only I won't wait for the people to ask me. I'll offer first, and I'll make good the offer every time.

Let me send you a "1900 Gravity" Washer on a month's free trial. I'll pay the freight out of my own pocket, and if you don't want the machine after you've used it a month, I'll take it back and pay the freight too. Surely that is fair enough, isn't it?

Doesn't it prove that the "1900 Gravity" Washer must be all that I say it is?

And you can pay me out of what it saves you. It will save you whole cost in a few months in wear and tear on the clothes alone. And then it will save 50 to 75 cents a week over that on washwoman's wages. If you keep the machine after the month's trial, I'll let you pay for it out of what it saves you. If it saves you 60 cents a week, send me 50 cents a week till I paid for it. I'll take that cheerfully, and I'll wait for my money until the machine itself earns the balance.

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