### FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

Low Sunday.

How To USE GOD'S GIFTS.

If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. (Ep. to Colos., iii., 1.)

The feast of to day, my dear brethren, brings to a close the solemnities of Easter; and it was the practice, in the early ages of the Church, for those who had been baptized on Holy Saturday to put off, on this day, the white garments which they then assumed, and to resume again their accustomed occupation. The white garments were but an external sign of that internal purity and cleanliness which the soul purity and cleaniness which the soul received in the waters of holy baptism, and the soul, thus purified and strengthened by God's grace, went beldly forth to the battle-field of life, to meet again its three great and deadly enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil. So we, who, during the penitential season just closed, have faithfully observed the laws of holy Church, and, by fasting, have brought the flesh under subjection to the spirit; by foregoing our accustemed pleasures and amusements have brought the world under our feet, and, by a good confession and Communion, have again enlisted in the ranks of Christ, and thus declared ourselves eternal enemies of sin and the devil,

Christ, to certain victory.
St. Paul, in the epistle from which the text is taken, reminds the Christians at Colossa that if they be risen with Christ their thoughts must now be turned to where Christ is — sitting at the right hand of God. "Mind the things that are above," he continues, 'not the things that are upon the earth; for you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

start again to-day with renewed strength to follow our Leader, the risen

O brethren! would that Catholics did but realize this great truth! Would that their thoughts and affec-tions were directed towards their eternal destiny! Absorbed, as they are, in the sordid pursuits of this life, they cannot be too often reminded that we are here only on trial. An almighty and merciful God has, with a lavish hand, surrounded us with the means of gratifying our reasonable desires and appetites. But, alas! the very gifts of God serve not unfrequently to make us forget the Giver. ook around you and see what is the object for which this noisy, bustling world is striving—what the end for which most men seem to exist. The fact is, brethren, that Mammon, the heathen God of riches, has disputed Christ's sovereignty over the hearts of men, and has actually erected his altar in those very hearts where the grace of Christ once reigned. The only conception men seem to have of this pres ent life is this, that it is a place where we are to strive to become wealthy the shortest possible time, without being over-scrupulous as to the means, and then to retire from active pursuits the better to indulge our sensual appe They thus invert the order of Divine Providence, and make an end of that which was intended only as a means to enable us to attain our

Everything in this world, my dear brethren, was intended by God for our happiness here and as a pledge of an eternal and infinitely greater happiness hereafter. It is a great mistake to suppose that Christianity requires pleasures of this life. No, not at all! Indeed, we are absolutely obliged to make use of many of them if we would maintain our very existence.

eternal destiny.

God acts towards us as a kind and The father knows that his child loves him, and he feels confident that the little presents he makes the child from time to time will only serve to strengthen the fond affection which nature has implanted between them.

But what would you think if those gifts of the kind father served only to estrange from him the heart of his You would, undoubtedly, say that such a state of things was un-natural. Well, so it is, my dear brethren, with us, who, after all, are only children of an older growth. God, our Creator and Father, has given us life and all the things in this beau tiful universe to enjoy. And all He asks in return is our love—our hearts. But, remember. He is not satisfied with an imperfect and partial love. He is a jealous God, and will allow no one to share our hearts with Him. So that when men fix their affections on the things of this world without referring them to God, and use these gifts with out regard to the Giver, they, too, are acting in an unnatural or, at least, in an irrational manner. Give your whole heart to God, brethren, and then you will enjoy His gifts, and, as St. Paul says: "When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also appear with Him in glory.

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### OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

A True Little Gentleman.

Little boys and girls, get this story by heart, and practice in your lives the virture which it inculcates, and when you meet a little maimed friend think of lame Jimmie. Last summer I was passing through a pretty shady street, when some boys were playing at bat and ball. Among their number was a little lame fellow, seemingly about twelve years old-a pale, sickly looking child, supported on two crutches, and who evidently found much difficulty in walking, even with such assistance. The lame boy wished to join the game; for he did not seem see how much his infirmity would be in his own way, and how much it would hinder the progress of such an active sport as bat and ball. His companions, very good naturedly, tried to persuade him to stand at one side and let another take his place; and I was glad to notice that none of them hinted that he would be in the way, but they all objected for fear he would hurt himself.

"Why Jimmie," ssid one at last, you can't run, you know," "Oh hush!" said another — the tallest boy in the party; never mind, I'll run for him, and he took his place by Jimmie's side, prepared to act. "If you were like him," he said aside to the other boys, "you wouldn't want him to be told of it all the time." As I passed on, I thought to myself that there was a true little gentleman.

### A Tale of the Salve Regina.

As an illustration of the benefits of daily prayer, though offered by even the most hardened, and its efficacy in drawing upon them the grace of conversion, the following incident was related to me from his own experience by a holy Benedictine priest.

He was one day passing along the street, deeply engrossed in thought and with his eyes cast down, when he was stopped quite suddenly and in a most mysterious manner. Looking up to learn the cause of this unaccountable occurrence, he saw a woman making her way hastily toward him from one of the tenement houses before which he was standing. She seemed full of grief, and begged him breath-lessly to come and see her husband who was dying, but would not allow her to send for any spiritual assistance. She had seen the priest pass from a window above, and felt that he had been sent by Almighty God for the salvation of the dying man. She besought the Father, however, not to let her husband know that she had called him, as he would surely be very angry with

While ascending to the sick man's apartment, the priest gathered from the words of the woman that the life of her husband had been far from what it should have been. On enter ing the room, the man blamed his wife furiously for her disobedience in bringing in a priest, whom he had deter-mined not to see, but the latter quietly told him of the mysterious manner in which he had been stopped in the street, and the man soon became calm. He even listened to the words of the priest, who tried to make him realize his precarious state.

At first the dying man was unwilling to admit that he was dangerously ill. but added that in any case he should but added that in any case he should prefer to die as he had lived. Seeing that the time was short, for the man's life could be counted by hours only, if not minutes, the priest spoke so earnestly of the compassion of Christ for sinners, and appeared to be himself so deeply affected, that the hard heart was softened and the poor fellow us to ignore these wonderful gifts of a kind Providence, and to forego all the life could be counted by hours only, if was softened and affectionate father acts towards his finally consented to make his confession, declaring, however, that it was impossible in his present extreme weakness to remember all his sins But the information the priest had already gained from the woman, joined to his great experience of human nature, assisted him in overcoming this difficulty. The man was the more anxious now to do so as he believed that the priest was naturally stayed in the street in order to help him.

When absolution had been given the priest heard the woman's confession also, and then married her to the man whom she had called her husband, and made them promise that their children should be taken to the parish church as soon as possible to be baptized. The good Father then left them, but soon returned with the Blessed Sacrament and the holy oils necessary to adminis

ter extreme unction. After all had been thus happily ccomplished, the priest endeavored to raise the confidence of the dying man, and dwelt much upon God's evident designs on his soul. He then added that he supposed this great grace has been granted him in reward of some good work of his past life, but the now really penitent man disclaimed any thing on his part and declared his life to have been a succession of grevious

"And can you think of nothing," insisted the Father, "that, coupled with the all-saving merits of the blood of Christ-without which nothing is meritorious - can have brought this grace to you, when so many others have been eternally lost, with perhaps less

on their souls?"
"Well," said the dying man, brightening up after a pause, but speaking in a very low voice, "my mother—and a good mother she was-died when I was a lad. My brothers and sisters and myself were at her death-bed. After she had prepared herself to die she gave us all her last good counsel She called me close to her, and, giving me her blessing, placed her prayer-book in my hands and, opening it at a certain prayer, asked me to promise I

wild boy and but little comfort to her thither.

God rest her soul! Well, Father, I The l

The priest found the well-worn book as the man had said, and taking it up, it opened of itself at a deep yellow page, after dark. where his eyes fell upon that beautiful The story reached its height when prayer to the "Mother of Mercy," to once at midnight all the windows of

by this dearest of her titles:
"Hail, holy Queen! Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our

Deeply moved, the priest knelt down by the side of the dying man, and ended the penitent soul had taken its flight.—Messenger of the Sacred Heart. On the n

### THE MAD SACRISTAN.

BY G. O'C., S. J.

A more picturesque location for a church I cannot imagine than that of the church of my story. The town, to whose Catholic hearts it affords such ineffable comfort, lies embowered on a some other explanation of the light." Hudson river hill-top in a wealth of way leads up from their midst to the to avoid the subject.
woodland. But the town itself nestles The boys fancied a cloud of pain apshyly away amidst its perfumed trees and flowers, seeking no other attraction than its great cascade in the glen comance and sweetness.

The church stands about in the heart of this town. It is small, scarcely able after night for a week they watched to seat two hundred worshippers, but the church, but in vain. They made quite a gem. It was built by a widow that the soul of her husband might rest nothing unusual was heard or seen. in peace, and was built with that exquisite taste which the devout sex always brings to bear upon anything

linked with the service of God. The architecture is Gothic, the ma terial red sandstone. The single aisle is laid in marble mosaics. The altar and the sanctuary-railing are of hard pine, heavily carved, with the sanctuary-lamp is of solid silver polished like a mirror. The widow wished that, when possible, a hundred candles should flame upon the altar at Beneno lamp or gas-get be needed. Out-side, the church was covered with violate by so much as a whisper. clambering ivy and shrouded by seven tall elm-trees, and beyond the trees God's Acre lay enfolding its sleepers.

Sacristan. Mad indeed the old man was, but his madness was almost heavenly. It had no repulsive features. It attracted the very children of the town. It was this. No one ever heard him speak of earthly things, exhold my God face to face forever."

pastor's house adjoining, or to make They quickly deposited their burdens his few and humble purchases at the on the door-step and strove to enter, store. He seemed devoid of the least but the door held fast. They hurried store. He seemed devoid of the least curiosity. A newspaper was never seen in his hands, and he never inquired what was happening in the world beyond his church. He never even opened a book, not so much as a prayer-book. The place of the latter was supplied by his never-absent beads and his constant union, with God, in mystery of all the strange sounds and devout meditation.

devout meditation.

His whole being was absorbed in his work as a sacristan and his love burning on the altar, and vases of love was its secret.

day the little church was swept, and twice a day the little graveyard raked and trimmed and watered. When Christ-Child should be born. evening came and there were no services, the old man knelt at the altar in prayer till exhausted nature bade him one glance into the sanctuary told eck repose on his hard hair mattress. them

No wonder they called him mad. than the world can understand.

farers heard peculiar sounds more than amidst his last supreme act of homage Drawing near it fearfully at night, and whispered they were sure the gravestones were lit with a lurid light, and they knew

would say it every day. I had been a they saw dark shadows flit hither and

The light on the gravestones might or code rest her soul: Well, Father, 1 promised, and I kept my word. Never a night have I lain down on my bed without first saying that prayer, no matter how bad I have been."

'And what is the prayer? asked the priest.

The night on the gravestones night have come from the moon, and the shadows have come from the trees that swayed with the evening winds, but the boys preferred to think them caused by ghostly visitations.

The rocks on which the Sunnyside

"I cannot tell you the name," said had foundered in the Hudson long ago the dying man, his voice growing were haunted still by the shades of the feebler, "but it is a prayer to the passengers drowned—so the fishermen Blessed Virgin; in yonder corner you told them—and why should not their will find the book in an old valise. The place is marked."

The place is marked." And so the story grew apace, and the

her who never turns a deaf ear to her the church were seen by a distant children and who loves to be invoked watcher through the trees ablaze with Such a light it must have been which had formerly lit up the tombstones, but the frightened boys had not tarried long enough to discover it. The watcher called others and they too, from afar, beheld the phenomenor together with his wife, began to recite the prayer aloud; but before it had till early dawn, when the light slowly

On the morrow the boys reported the fact to the Mad Sacristan, protesting their belief that the church haunted.

"Oh, no," he replied, with a smile,
"no, uo, no. Where is your faith, my
children? What spirit would dare children?

The old man was wrong, of course, foliage which completely hides it from for many a soul departed had been the steam-boat traveller. Some dozen known to appear in church, called fisher-folks' cabins straggle round near thither by some wise design of Provithe wharf, and a red, winding road- dence; but he was evidently anxious

peared on his forehead, and as he walked away, he seemed unusually meditative. Could it be possible he to the north, its famous pineries on the knew the secret of the strange illumest, and its own unfailing solitude, ination? The bravest of the boys resolved to penetrate the secret. He won two more to his project, and night

With the slow rolling away of another year, the story was almost forgotten. The Mad Sacristan pursued his strange ways and grew stranger. Finally, when winter came and God's Acre was covered with snow, he was rarely known to quit the church. one spoke to him there, however, he made no answer for the moment but beckoned the speaker to follow him outside. Here he despatched the busidiction, so that the whole interior ness as speedily and as charitably as should be flooded with their light and he could, and then returned to the Its sanctity he would not

People noticed that the old man's steps were growing feebler. A trem bling ague often seized him and forced him to hasten to his attic, lest his sufferings should prove a distraction to To this church there came the Mad the worshippers. He graciously de Mad indeed the old man clined all proffers of assistance

It had no repulsive feature feature for the sake of our dear Redeemer," he said, "let me bear it. It

The end came on Christmas eve

constant union with God in mystery of all the strange sounds and sights unfolded before them.

of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. flowers were so charmingly set be That work was done perfectly. That tween, and wreaths of evergreen and myrtle hung round all the No cobweb, dust or disarrangement with such a beauty, that the men were of any sort could exist beneath his eye struck dumb with amazement. They for more than a moment. Twice a had never beheld a sight so lovely. I

But whence had the sobbing come

There on the altar-steps, with his Such detachment from earthly things, such absolute devotion to the Saviour Sacristan. The church indeed had such absolute devotion to the Saviour who laid down His life for us, is more not been haunted. The love of the than the world can understand. By and by, strange stories got afloat concerning the church. Belated wayonce from within it. Some of the altarboys dared to say it was haunted. They raised him gently and found him still breathing. He opened his eyes

Our dear Redeemer is calling me -I have prepared Him a great recep

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tion-I have done all things for His sake, and now He brings me my crown. Yes, O my Jesus, have mercy on my soul-receive me as thy servant for-

The effort cost him his last breath. His eyes grew fixed and his gray head fell over on the arm that supported it. Mad Sacristan was dead Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart.



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