

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOUY, D. D.

THE MYSTERY OF THE TRINITY

"Gather, therefore, teach ye all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. xxviii, 19)

Christ's command to His apostles and their successors was, as this text indicates, to initiate the Christian into His religion by baptizing him "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." He was not to be baptized in the name of any one of these three Persons, but in the name of each one of them. By this a proof is afforded us that the three Persons are one and the same God. Each Person is God, yet the three are one God. The human intellect is incapable of ascending to the height of this great mystery, and while we admit it and believe in it, it is faith that makes us do so. But we could not have a stronger reason for our belief in it. Faith is founded on God's infallible word, and when His word is as clear as it is in today's Gospel, what stronger motive could we desire for our belief in this greatest of mysteries? Nothing more could reasonably be asked for by the Christian. He should not seek to be able to understand it, for God has told us that that privilege is reserved for us in the other world, where a new light will be added to our intelligence through which we will then be able to see God as He is.

How much this mystery of the Trinity adds to the dignity of our religion, and how it proves the truth of the faith we possess! God can not be seen by us here on earth, nor can He be fully comprehended by us. Why, then, should we demand only such truths regarding Him as our intellects can fathom? Many do make this demand, but they destroy in their minds the truth about God as He Himself has revealed it. And if He, in His very works, particularly that of creation, has kept so many truths hidden from us, how much more regarding Himself has He not kept from us? He has revealed to us what is necessary for our temporal and eternal welfare, and we should not ask for more. Even if He were to make more truths known to us, we would not be able to comprehend them, and the number of truths to be believed through faith would be greatly increased. This would be a stumbling-block to the conversion of many who are inclined toward rationalism. What we know of God through revelation and through creation is enough for our intellects to carry. More would be almost a burden to us.

In the presence of God, we are bewildered, as an ordinary person is perplexed in the presence of some very intricate machinery. After sufficient explanation, this person would acquire some idea of the machinery; but to try to have him understand it thoroughly would only be to weary him. He would be satisfied with the slight knowledge he was given of it, and would realize that to understand it minutely and perfectly, it would be necessary for him to go through years of study and practice. We understand a certain amount about God, and we know much of Him through faith; but we do not know all about Him, and we should use the means—namely, the leading of a good, religious life—of knowing everything regarding Him in the world to come. If we live as we should, He promises that He will lift the veil from our eyes in His heavenly kingdom, and we shall then "know Him as He is" and "see Him face to face."

The knowledge we have of this great mystery of the Trinity should be an incentive to us to labor and yearn for our heavenly home. This mystery is so great that the mind can not conceive it; it is something too dignified for man, as he now is, to enter into its presence; it is something that will so consume our affection and so brighten our vision that we will never, even for a moment, withdraw from its all-absorbing power. It is a fact that people love to see the great things of this world, and gaze upon and examine its wonderful sights. They will spend years accumulating sufficient wealth to journey to where these things are and meanwhile patiently await the opportunity of having even a few glimpses, or of spending a few days, among the objects of their admiration. Did they not find these truly wonderful and great, but only ordinary, capable of being understood by all, they would be greatly disappointed and would be heard to say, "It is only ordinary." People yearn for the sight of the truly magnificent and the really exceptional.

Now, the Trinity is something more wonderful than man even can imagine. God has told us so. We experience the truth of this when we try to understand this mystery. Yet God has said that it will be the lot of His faithful children to be in the presence of the Trinity, see it, and enjoy it forever. Can we refrain, then, from laboring faithfully and untiringly that this joy may some day be ours? Were we given the opportunity to see all the great wonders of the world, we surely would take advantage of it. Shall we allow this chance of enjoying forever the greatest of all blessings, go by? This opportunity is contained in our days on earth. If we make them days of profit and mold our lives after our Model, Christ, the opportunity will not be lost. We must bear in mind also

that every day counts. To see a day dawn is a blessing from God—but the day is to be spent in a manner that will make us more worthy of the great blessings He intends for His faithful. To spend it for the world alone is to waste it.

Today, as we are reminded of this greatest of mysteries, let us thank God for its existence; for the dignity it adds to our religion, causing it to possess truths that are superior to man's limited intelligence; for the incentive it affords us to work faithfully for its realization in our future life; but, above all, let us pledge the Three Persons our undivided service, highest love, and deepest faith.

AMERICAN COMPOSERS
TELL WHY GREAT CHURCH
MUSIC IS NOT PRODUCED
IN U. S.

Never has Washington seen such a notable group of American composers as that which assembled to protest against the bill introduced in Congress, to permit the broadcasting, without payment of royalties, of their musical productions. Advantage was taken of their presence to ascertain from these leaders in the realm of music why more attention is not given in America to the composition of sacred music. It was pointed out that while Sir Arthur Sullivan had for years charmed England with his musical settings for the light opera librettos of W. S. Gilbert, he had also contributed "The Lost Chord" to the collection of classic devotional melodies.

America is not a great Catholic country, and the great religious music masterpiece is essentially the product of Catholicism," said Victor Herbert, America's foremost composer of the semi-classical in music writings, a Protestant of Irish descent. "Every great writer of church music with one exception—Wagner—was a Catholic," he continued. "It is almost a tradition. The great cultural Catholic countries are in Europe; hence our sacred music comes from overseas. That, too, has become a tradition."

Mr. Herbert made it clear he had no idea of slighting the works of a religious character done by American music writers. American musical writing has been well done, he said, wherever it has been seriously attempted by competent composers, and America has its share of these. But the tradition that the great in sacred music comes from Europe has been hard to overcome.

Mr. Herbert made the additional point that the church music field is limited, and that the very pinnacle has been reached by European artists. Therefore, he said, it has seemed to American music writers that the field already had been covered, adequately and excellently.

SOUSA REPORTS PROGRESS

American composers of music intended for religious purposes have progressed as far as could be reasonably expected both with regard to the volume of production and its quality, in the opinion of John Philip Sousa, former director of the Marine Band, and one of the closest students of musical composition in the country. Mr. Sousa does not agree with the popular impression that American composers have devoted their energies, in the main, to fields other than the production of compositions of a religious nature. On the contrary, he cites the compositions of men like Henry Hadley, Horatio Parker, Fred S. Converse, and George Chadwick, as examples of religious composition which, he says, can well be compared with compositions of similar character by European composers. Admitting that in the matter of great oratorios, and other musical works of that magnitude, America cannot show a record that will equal the older nations, Mr. Sousa explains this by pointing to the absence of musical tradition in America.

Mr. Sousa is confident that there is a great field for the American composer of the future in the production of religious music.

"The answer to that question," he said, "is to point to the number of church steeples throughout the country and to the efforts many of the churches are making to raise the musical standards of their services."

Oley Speaks, composer of "On the Road to Mandalay," said he was unable to account for the fact that a greater number of American composers, had not given attention to church music. He declared, however, that the volume of such compositions in the United States is far greater than is popularly supposed and that it is constantly increasing. Mr. Speaks is the author of several religious compositions, including: "The Lord Is My Light," "Thou Wilt Keep Him in Perfect Peace," and "How Long Wilt Thou Forget Me?"

The idea that religious composition has been neglected because of supposedly smaller financial returns was controverted by Mr. Speaks.

"On the contrary," he said, "as a general thing they pay better than secular compositions. That is, they pay better in the long run. A secular composition may enjoy a phenomenal success when it is first popularized, but, with few exceptions, it will die after a year or so. A religious composition, on the other hand, will show a steady and often steadily increasing volume of sales for many years, if it has any success at all."

Irving Berlin, whose compositions served to lighten the lot of the soldiers in camp and at the front in War times, said he believed that the chief reason that deterred many composers from attempting to write sacred music was the fact that there were no many excellent church melodies that Americans of several generations had known and loved that it was felt that the field was adequately covered. "However," he remarked, "America is doing a certain amount of religious music writing and doing it well."

Jerome D. Kern has collaborated with Victor Herbert, but although he is known chiefly through his own many successes in the lighter field, he takes a deep and serious view for the art of writing music. He follows Mr. Herbert in recognizing the dominant influence of the Catholic Church in sacred music, but he differs with him in his interpretation of the effect of this influence. The Catholic Church leans much on tradition, says Mr. Kern, and its powerful influence is lent to the use of the old compositions, of which it has inspired the truly great.

The greatness of these older compositions, perpetuated through this chief continuing force of religious music, has awed the would-be writer of religious music in America, Mr. Kern says. "Why, it would be an impertinence to write a new Mass," he exclaimed. "And it is not needed. The paucity in other fields presents the great need."

Mr. Kern believes, however, that those Americans who have essayed the religious music field have produced works equally as meritorious as those of Europe. Americans, he adds, if anything, have excelled. He points to Dudley Buck and Alfred Robyns and declares that a dozen more Americans have attained striking success in the writing of religious themes.

LIMITATIONS OF LANGUAGE

Still another deterrent was seen by Mr. Kern in the English language. "It is not a singing language," he said, "and I doubt if the world's greatest heights in these more elaborate serious works will ever be attained in English."

Gene Buck, President of the Society of American Authors, Composers and Producers, said flatly, "The church and schools won't let Americans write sacred music. The people, said Mr. Buck, demand the things mellowed and hallowed by age, when they want sacred music. Of these, there is a great fund, written through the ages and carried on down and loved by generation after generation. He insisted, however, that Americans are working earnestly and with success in the religious music field, and pointed to the relatively large section of his society whose members are devoting their efforts to religious themes.

GOOD LEADERS
NEEDED

It is one of the anomalies of history that the Catholic Church despite her numbers, freedom, prestige and resources has almost failed to penetrate public thought and mould the civic mind in these United States. The influence of the American Church on public affairs was never less than it is at the present time. So insignificant are Catholics in the eyes of the land that it is next to impossible to establish an embassy, or send a representative to the Vatican, as was done during the days of the Civil War. Even the handful of Irish emigrants who backed up Washington during the stormy days of the American Revolution, exercised more power over American thought than our twenty million fellow religiousists wield today. The Father of his Country taking cognizance of the address of the American Bishops went out of his way to register his approbation of the support received at Catholic hands. Such a thing is almost unthinkable today.

Protestants, on the other hand, have set great store on influencing public opinion, so much so indeed that this country is looked upon and spoken of as a Protestant land. We are treated as aliens. We are derided as a people out of step with the American spirit. We are merely tolerated in high places. Political weather-prophets say that a Catholic candidate for the presidency is doomed to certain defeat. No one ever brings up the religious issue when a Protestant runs for public office. No one raised a voice of protest when Protestant officers were preferred for places of trust during the days of the World War. The only opposition—and it was ridiculously weak—against the eighteenth amendment, which in spirit, conception and animus is Protestant through and through came from the camp of Catholics. They knew, as well as the Jews, that the Volstead Act in depriving us of wines was making an armful swing at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Protestants had grown so accustomed to taking liberties with the Scriptures that they had no doubts about their ability to juggle away the incident of the Marriage Feast of Cana.

Protestantism has had its day in America. It has influenced public and civic thought without hurt or hindrance. If the American machine is creaking today we know at whose doors to lay the blame without criminal injustice and blatant uncharity. If America is not better off today it is because the

Catholic Church has not had a larger part in the moulding of public thought, feeling and action. After all, the rafters on which our national edifice are built are thoroughly Catholic. Liberty of worship was first arrogated by the Christians when they refused to drop incense before the shrine of the deified Caesars. It was vindicated again by the democratic orders of the Medieval Church in the face of a growing bureaucracy. It stood up fearlessly in the days of the high-handed Reformers who inveigled kings and princes to their side by promising them all kinds of liberties with morality. St. Thomas Aquinas is the legitimate grandfather of the American Declaration of Independence. The Church's hand did not tremble when America came to her for baptism because long before she had baptized democracy in the Middle Ages. Therefore, if any one has a right to seek to influence public opinion in the United States, and if any one has the courage and experience to do it without bungling up affairs it is the Catholic Church the great parent of liberty of conscience.

The Catholic Church built up a civilization in the Middle Ages before which our American civilization must blush. With all our vaunted advancement we must still confess that it has been purely material. Our minds, our hearts and our spirits have not been cultivated and refined by telephones, railroads and automobiles. The U. S. Patent Office is a poor school of the higher things of the spirit. Inasmuch as it encourages the making of those things that minister to the body does it war on the things that minister to the mind.

If the Church with her glorious record of achievement cuts so sorry a figure in the public courts of the United States it is because the individual Catholic has not educated himself up to the state where he can become a leader to whom all men will look. If the schools of economics and politics babble an unintelligible jargon today it is because they have never learned to talk in Catholic terms and have never enjoyed the broadening influences of history studied in Catholic light. What we need in America are leaders who can meet the noisy apostles of a godless science and a religionless people. "Science puffeth up." Therefore, the American carries his head

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high even in the presence of kings and philosophers. Creeds contradictory of one another engender discord. Therefore, America is full of lobbyists and social reformers, mutually suspicious of one another and covertly bent, with the aid of politicians and plutocrats, on circumventing one another. "And a house divided against itself must fall." The only unifying power is the Catholic Church with her teachings of justice and charity. Therefore, obviously, the first duty of Catholics is to fit themselves individually to exercise a beneficent influence on public opinion, and corporately to stand solid, foursquare, for those principles which alone make possible the functioning of a State without revolutions and revelations.—Rosary Magazine.

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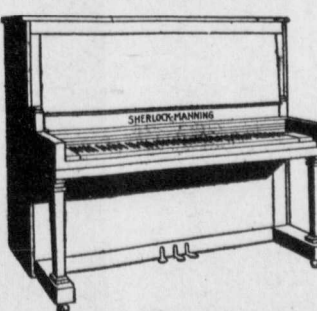
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