

## FIVE MINUTE SERMON

Rev. J. J. HUNTER, PHOENIX, ILL.  
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTE-  
COST

"Take ye and eat, this is My Body. And taking the chalice, He gave thanks and gave it to them saying, Drink ye all of this, for this is My blood of the New Testament which shall be shed for many, for the remission of sin." (St. Matt. xxvi, 26, 27, 28)

The mysteries of our holy religion, my dear friends, have always been subjects of ridicule to the sceptic. The Holy Trinity is boasting declared to be contrary to reason; while the Incarnation of Jesus Christ is called an impossibility, an absurdity.

But perhaps no mystery of revelation has been so universally attacked as the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar. You know from your catechism what is meant by the Real Presence. You firmly believe, because the Church which is the pillar and the ground of truth teaches it, that Jesus Christ is really and truly, Body and Blood, soul and divinity, present in the Blessed Sacrament under the form and appearance of Bread and Wine. The Church in teaching this dogma asks us to believe nothing that is contrary to reason. In fact, if the Church could teach anything contrary to Scripture, tradition, or reason, she would cease to be the true Church, and the promises of Christ would fail to be fulfilled. It follows from this that, when any teaching of the Church seems to any one to be absurd, false, or unreasonable, it is because he does not properly understand it.

Let us then for a few moments examine this teaching of the Church—the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament—and see if it is not in perfect agreement with the Holy Scripture, tradition and reason.

If anyone will take up his Bible and read carefully the sixth chapter of St. John, the twenty-sixth chapter and twenty-sixth, twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth verses of St. Matthew, the fourteenth chapter and twenty-second verse of St. Mark, the twenty-second chapter and nineteenth verse of St. Luke and the tenth chapter of the first Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, sixteen verse, he will certainly see that the Catholic dogma of the Real Presence is founded on Scripture.

In the sixth chapter of St. John we learn that our Saviour before instituting the Blessed Eucharist, wished to announce, to promise it solemnly to His disciples in order to prepare them for it. He first presented them with a type of the Eucharist in the multiplication of the five loaves by which He fed five thousand persons. After this miracle, He told them that He would give to them bread superior to that which they had eaten and that this Bread was His own Flesh and Blood. "The Bread that I will give is My Flesh for the life of the world." "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood shall have everlasting life." "For My Flesh is meat indeed and My Blood is drink indeed." These words it is almost impossible to understand in any other than a literal sense. We find that He was thus understood by His disciples, and many of them left Him because they could not understand how He could give them His Flesh to eat. Now if Jesus Christ did not speak literally, would He not have told His disciples so, rather than have them withdraw from Him?

This promise which was so difficult to be understood by those who heard it, was to be fulfilled at the Last Supper. On the eve of His passion Our Saviour and His disciples assembled in a large room at Jerusalem where the Paschal supper had been prepared. After eating of the symbolical lamb and washing His disciples' feet, Jesus took bread in His sacred hands and lifting His eyes to heaven gave thanks to His Father, blessed the bread, broke it and gave it to His Apostles saying, "Take ye and eat. This is My Body which is given for you; do this in commemoration of Me."

And taking the chalice, He gave thanks and gave to them saying, "Drink ye all of this. For this is My Blood of the New Testament which shall be shed for many unto remission of sin."

These are substantially the words of the three evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke, and of the Apostle St. Paul. Again St. Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter tenth, verse sixteen, says: "The chalice of benediction which we bless is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? And the Bread which we break is it not the partaking of the Body of the Lord?"

Any one of these texts I have quoted abundantly proves the Catholic dogma of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

Reflect upon them. Reflect especially upon the words of Jesus Christ, "This is My Body. This is My Blood." Think what an insult it is to the divinity and veracity of Jesus Christ to doubt His words simply because you cannot understand how what appears to be bread is in reality the Body of Christ. There are many things in the world around us you cannot understand. Do you understand how the bread you eat becomes part of your own body?

If we only remember that Christ had the power to change bread into His Body, that He really did it when He said, "This is My Body," since He did not say this is the figure of My Body, nor this represents My Body; that He could confer this power upon others as upon the Apostles and their successors, the bishops and priests

of the Church, and that He in reality did so when He said, "Do this in commemoration of Me," if we only remember this, I say, then we will never have any difficulty in believing in the dogma of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

This dogma which, as we have just seen, is so clearly taught by Scripture, has been the belief of the Church of Christ in every age from the time of the Apostles to the present. Instead of quoting from the fathers and doctors of the different centuries in proof of this, I wish to call your attention for a few moments to what we call in theology the argument of prescription.

Prescription is defined to be a title acquired by long use or custom. This is what prescription means in law (a title acquired by long use) and it means about the same thing in theology. The argument of prescription, then, is an argument for a doctrine showing that it has been in use, been believed, from time immemorial, from the time of our Saviour.

Now if the doctrine of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament was not believed in every age since the time of the Apostles, somebody ought to be able to find out and tell us: who was the author of the new teaching; what time it began to be believed; in what place it was first taught; what occasion gave rise to it; who were its opponents, its adversaries at its birth and when it was condemned by the Church. But no one has yet been able to show us the man who was the author of this doctrine; the time, the place or the occasion of its birth; its adversaries and condemnation. And hence we cannot but conclude that it was believed in every age and had Christ for its author.

Such in brief is the argument of prescription for this doctrine, but that you may the more clearly see its force, a few words of explanation are necessary.

History records the names of the author of every new teaching of importance that has been introduced since the time of Christ. It not only records his name but also the time, place, occasion, adversaries and condemnation of the new teaching. Thus it is with regard to Arius, Pelagius, Nestorius, Berengarius and others. Do you think it would be different in this case? Is not this a doctrine of vital importance? Would not the people have arisen against such an innovator? Suppose some one would attempt to teach in our day a new doctrine that was difficult to understand. Would the people believe him? Would they follow him, or would they not revolt against him? So it would have been in every century; for the people had the same passions and the same feeling at all times.

Besides, no one would ever have thought of inventing such a doctrine. When men invent new doctrines they are shrewd enough to bring forward those that are easily understood and that pander to the passions. That is the secret of their success in gaining a large number of followers. They understand the evil propensity of human nature. Study the history of any of the innovations and you will see the truth of this.

Not so the doctrine of the Real Presence. It checks our pride, restrains our passions, and although humanly speaking it is hard to understand, it is easy to faith; for we have but to believe, as did all the early Christians, the Word of God when He says, "This is My Body." "This is My Blood."

But I cannot understand it, some one may say, and therefore it is contrary to reason. Did the consummate puerility, silliness, foolishness of this objection, my dear friends, ever present itself to you? You cannot understand it and hence it is against reason. Do you understand the Blessed Trinity? And is it against reason? No, although above reason it is not against it. Do you understand how Jesus Christ is both God and man? Do you understand any mystery? No, if you did, it would be no longer a mystery, for a mystery is something above human intelligence. It is something incomprehensible to us, for it pertains to the divine nature. And as well might you attempt to lade the ocean into a cavity on the shore as attempt to comprehend with your weak intellect the unfathomable ocean of Divinity.

The proper office of reason is to examine the evidences of revelation and see if God has spoken. But it constitutes no part of its office to dispute the Word of God. That God has spoken is evident from the fulfillment of many prophecies and the authority of numerous miracles. That these prophecies were fulfilled and these miracles performed is a matter of testimony. In proof of it we have the testimony of a large number of illustrious persons of all nations, professions and ages. Many of these were eyewitnesses to the fulfillment of the prophecies and performance of the miracles. Their testimony has been handed down to us by authentic

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tradition and history. Hence it cannot but be true.

Led by reason, then, we conclude that prophecies have been fulfilled and miracles performed. Reason also teaches that no one but God can prophecy no one but God can derogate from the order of nature by the performance of a miracle. Hence reason again compels us, as it were, to conclude that God has spoken, that revelation is divine.

Now when we know that God speaks, genuine reason will dictate that we humbly submit, that we bow our heads and say, "O my God, Thou art the omniscient, infinite Creator of all things; I am but a poor, ignorant, finite creature. Thou art incomprehensible to my limited reason. Thou cannot do many things I cannot understand. Therefore, when Thou revealest something incomprehensible, I will undoubtedly believe, knowing full well that Thou cannot deceive me." Thus will true reason ever act. And when God says: "This is My Body," it will not hesitate to believe the Word of God.

Besides, reason cannot show that this dogma is unreasonable. Again do not all who believe in the Blessed Trinity believe that the Holy Ghost is God? But we read in the Bible that the Holy Ghost appeared in the form of a dove. (St. Matt. iii, 16). Now is it not at least as conformable to reason for Jesus Christ, the second person of the Blessed Trinity, to appear in the form of bread as for the Holy Ghost, the third person of the Blessed Trinity, to appear in the form of a dove? But reason tells us that Jesus Christ is God and that He has declared that He is truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. Hence it is not only possible but absolutely certain.

We have seen, my dear friends, that the Catholic dogma of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is taught by all the four evangelists and the Apostle St. Paul in clear and unmistakable terms; that it has been the belief of every age from the time of Christ to the present, and that it is in perfect harmony with reason. Now how do we show our appreciation of this heavenly gift? Does it inspire in us acts of love, gratitude and adoration? Does it remind us to think more frequently of God, to give to Him our first thoughts in the morning and our last in the evening? Does it serve us as an aid in restraining our passions? Does it keep us from lying, from cursing, from drunkenness? Does it make us more meek, humble and charitable? If not, it is because we do not properly appreciate it. We do not frequently receive it, nor pray to our Lord really present there.

Let us, my dear friends, endeavor to stir up in ourselves a more lively faith in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Go to Him in your trials, pray to Him in temptations, and receive Him sacramentally with more frequency and devotion.

Then, like the just man, you will live truly by faith. The things of this world, sin and its consequences, will be abhorred. And penetrating the veil of futurity, heaven and its joys will brighten for you, and you will long for the day when your hope will be exchanged for reality, and your perseverance will receive the crown that awaits those who have kept the faith, persevered in the right path and not doubted the Word of God.

## TEMPERANCE

## THE CASE AGAINST ALCOHOL

Three-fifths of all the crimes are traceable to the use of alcohol. The drunks, the disorderlies, the assaults, the quarrels and the murders are the criminal spawn of liquor.

All the vice commissions agree in reporting that the saloon and the social evil are closely related, the former everywhere aiding, abetting, supporting and shielding the latter. Half the divorces and more than two-thirds of the marriage failures are traceable to alcohol. The most effective course of sermons against the divorce evil is a course of temperance sermons.

The case against alcohol is a strong one. Alcohol is not yet condemned and executed or outlawed, as is opium or morphine, because with a large element of the population, it is still the source of convivial pleasures. But we reach stages in the progress of thinking democracy where the pleasures of the many are weighed against the miseries of the many, and found wanting—found deficient in countervailing value. When the conscience of democracy is thus thoroughly informed, what think you it will do with alcohol?—Catholic Citizen.

## TEMPERANCE NOTES

Catholic total abstinence do well, in my estimation, to join themselves to those who, no matter what may be their philosophical or religious opinions, bring to the International Anti-Alcoholic Congress, the combination of their knowledge, their experience and their devotion. In our European nations thousands are poisoned by the social plague of alcoholism, and there is need of the co-operation of all men of good will to stay the progress of the evil.—Cardinal Mercier.

Intemperance is one of the most prevalent and destructive evils of our time and country. It is the cause of manifold sins and of much of the poverty and misery which afflict society. The priests and laity who are laboring with the Diocesan Union to suppress the evils of drunkenness, and to spread the practice of total abstinence, are worthy of special praise and honor. They are striving to save, whilst the agencies of drink never cease their work of destruction; they are laboring to repair and build up what drink and drinkers have ruined; they are an honor and a blessing to society, and all good men and women wish them God speed in their beneficent work.—Bishop Canavin.

## THE "NEW THOUGHT" WOMAN

A recent editorial in the Public Ledger (a well-written, thoughtful editorial it was) on "The Real Woman" set us to thinking. That editorial, plus religion, ought to be read in every home. Perhaps it might set others to thinking, and perhaps the "real woman" who has been submerged by the waves of vote gathering, public lecturing, club meetings, and so forth, would raise her graceful head and stamp that expression of editorial wisdom with an imprimatur that would impress her neighbors and friends. All women should have good sense in various quantities as one of their physical and mental constituents—it is a gift of their Creator; but some of them aspire to such wild heights of absurdity that a man gasps as he vainly tries to follow them. Talking with a valued friend the other day, a learned Jesuit, he gave me an experience of his that is too good to keep. This gentleman is a brilliant, witty, never-to-be-floored talker, as wise as he is witty, whose head is full of all sorts of knowledge, whose society is sunshine for the weary and comfort for the distressed, a man of unbounded zeal for souls and a veteran worker in the Church and pulpit, enthusiastically loved by many and revered by all. He sat to me as we sat together talking of the "New Thought Woman."

"I was on the Fall River boat this summer, on deck, and lo! She flattered along. She looked at me, noted my Roman collar, and noting a vacant chair asked me if it was 'occupied'."

"The word struck me curiously, and I smiled. Then I raised my hat. 'No, ma'am, I said; 'not if I can see well. May I offer it to you?'"

"She fluttered into it, and with a fetching smile volunteered the information that she had been to New York shopping. I bowed, glancing at the little reticule she carried (about three inches square), but, of course, I believed her! Then she volunteered another confidence, impelled no doubt, by my elderly presence and tell-tale garb: 'Reverend sir, do you know that I was an inmate of a convent for nine years? As a pupil, of course!'"

"Indeed, ma'am! In your green salad days, no doubt!'"

"She smiled and resumed: 'I hold the same views as you do; in fact, I am a woman of advanced ideas, quite up to-date. To tell the truth, sir, I run a church myself, and am on my way to Omsent, Mass., to conduct a service the coming Sunday. I am an Apostle of the New Thought. Of course, you too, are an educated gentleman.'"

"For a certainty, ma'am! I replied."

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"If so, as our service consists chiefly on the exchange of new thoughts, mayhap you can give me a new thought," she said, beaming on me.

"Well, ma'am, I'll give you an old thought dressed up in a new way. Perhaps it may serve you!"

"She did not notice the sarcasm in my tone, so I continued: 'Yesterday I was preparing an old man for death. He was disquieted, troubled in spirit. He said he had three enemies—his relatives, the devil and the worms!'"

"She gave a little shudder as I mentioned the last, but I kept on."

"His relatives did not care for his body or soul; they wanted his money. The devil did not care for his money or his body; he wanted his soul. The worms did not care for his soul or his money; they wanted his body!"

"How quaint!" she exclaimed: "Why, that is a New Thought, indeed!"

"Well ma'am you are perfectly free to exchange it with the members of your new church! Sorry, being a priest, I can't give you my arm to the dining-room. Good evening!"

"She looked at me and fluttered off without a word. And that was the 'new woman.' Very advanced! Half-fraud and half-fool! Making a penny by playing at progressive religion!"

"Can it be possible?" the reader will ask. Quite possible! Such women live!

Let the nobler of the sex assert themselves in the face of such absurd creations. Let them proclaim their choice of the antithesis of such beings by being content with home and husband and children and befriending all that is worth while in this too progressive age.—Rev. Richard W. Alexander, in Catholic Standard and Times.

## AN ITALIAN P. E. PERIODICAL

Protestant Episcopalians are in the habit of saying that in their work among Italians they have no idea of making proselytes. They merely step in to help those who have dropped out of the Catholic Church. One may presume this to be the position of Dr. Greer, Protestant Episcopal Bishop of New York, and, therefore, may take it to be an act of charity to call his attention to the violation of that principle by some who cover themselves with the authority of his name.

There is a petty monthly, La Croce, circulated to some extent among the Italians of New York. On its first page it claims to be "approved and recommended by the (sic) Bishop Greer of New York." Its editor, Carmelo di Santo, B.D., is, it appears, one of Bishop Greer's clergy. Its gospel contains two doctrines: Italians must be Americanized in their religion; and, the clergy must be married. Its April number contained an Easter address proclaiming the first, calling on all Italians in America to rise to the new life, by casting off the old superstition. Moreover, it is constantly insinuated that this apostasy is expected from them by the American people; that here all religions are the same; that there is "only one God in all the Churches." How the conclusion is reached that Italians should become Episcopalians is not clear. The question is, however, does Bishop Greer stand officially for the premises? If he does, he should for himself and for his denomination repudiate openly the principle quoted above. If he does not, he should silence La Croce.

To help on the conversion of Italians to an American religion, the same number pretends to show that all Italians are not Catholics, even in Italy. It might have attempted to prove this by enumerating the Waldensians, Methodists, and other Protestants there. But such a method would have grave disadvantages. It, therefore, tells how a religious procession was fired on and the priests and acolytes wounded. Evidently the assassins were not Catholics. If La Croce wishes to claim them as Episcopalians it is welcome to them. It tells of two cases in which the people came to blows in quarrels over their places in Easter processions. Their conduct is not to be praised, but one cannot argue from it that they were not Catholics. On the contrary, a Protestant preacher should naturally find in evidence of their popish blindness. The same must be said of the last case quoted by La Croce, that of a mob in rebellion against their Archbishop because he tried to suppress certain local customs involving the use of pagan symbols. Supposing the insinuation to be true, does La Croce wish to claim people tainted with paganism as Christians after their own heart? One may well ask whether Bishop Greer "approves and recommends" such stuff.

In support of the second doctrine, La Croce asserts the practically universal corruption of the Roman clergy from the Pope downward. To spread this odious calumny it devotes a story in three columns, a dialogue in two, not to mention brief paragraphs. These cannot be reproduced in English. Here is a specimen from the dialogue put in the hands of men, women and children to be, as Mr. di Santo says in a circular, "the helpful exponent of all that is the doctrine of our Church with the peculiar method of educating our Italians."

"Tu sai niente perché vuoi saper niente. Quel che saprai è che un bel giorno vedrai tua figlia gonfia come un tamburo, ed allora il tuo Parroco chianio ti dirà che è opera e virtù dello Spirito Santo. Hai capito?"

This is truly a "peculiar method of educating our Italians." Is Bishop Greer aware that his name is used to cover such blasphemous abuse of the mystery of the Incarnation? It has been said that some Episcopalians are active in circulating the Menace and such like periodicals. We do not know how true this is; but we would be glad to believe that when Bishop Greer learns that his

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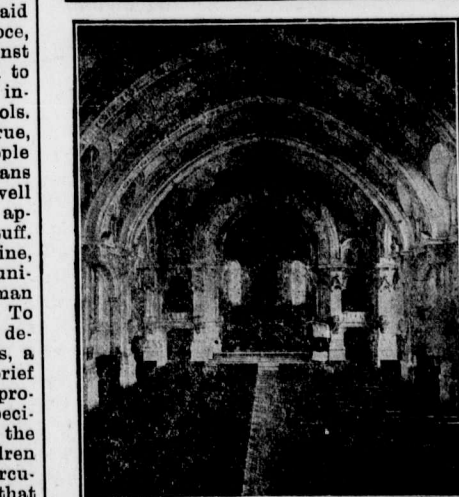


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