

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. M. BOSSAERT
SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST

OUR DAILY BREAD

The miracle wrought by our Divine Lord in the wilderness still takes place every year, when God multiplies the fruits of the earth, so that daily bread and nourishment are provided for us all. Yet the earth does not bring forth her produce without the cooperation of men, who must also do their part, if the harvest is to succeed. Let us consider shortly today what we must do in order to have our daily bread and means of livelihood in the world.

1. In the first place, we must ask God for what we want. We all, even the rich, are, as St. Augustine says, beggars at our heavenly Father's door, for everything that we possess and enjoy comes from Him. Without Him we should not have a grain of corn to eat, nor a drop of water to drink, nor anything to wear, nor a house in which to dwell. St. James tells us that "every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights." Now, God has told us plainly that He wishes us to ask Him for His gifts: "Ask and it shall be given unto you," said our Lord, and in the "Our Father" He taught us to pray: "Give us this day our daily bread." Hence it is our duty to ask God for His gifts, and to pray humbly, with the consciousness of our own poverty and unworthiness, but yet with confidence that He will not refuse us what we need for our sustenance in this world. Many people, however, act very differently, and never think of praying in the morning or at night; they do not thank God for their meals, and devote all their time to worldly business and interests. Even on Sundays and festivals they do not pray, and either absent themselves altogether from public worship, or behave at it in a manner calculated to insult rather than to honor God; they even mock at others who really pray. How can men who thus look down on prayer expect God to bless them and enrich them with His gifts?

2. The second thing required of us is labor. The sentence pronounced by God against Adam: "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat thy bread," concerns us all. We can look for food and sustenance from God only on condition that we work diligently each at our respective task. In the book of Proverbs we read: "In much work there shall be abundance, but where there are many words, there is oftentimes want." St. Paul says very plainly: "He that will not work, neither shall he eat." You see, therefore, that an idle man has no right to food and drink, and he cannot claim our pity if he comes to want. It is God's will that we should work, as well as pray, in order to have our daily bread. Prayer is necessary to obtain God's blessing, but we must not simply pray and do nothing; every one is bound to labor in the position in which God has placed him, and it is only when we work that He will bless us and supply our needs. There is much truth in the proverb: "God helps those that help themselves."

3. By means of prayer and labor man can procure his sustenance, but it will not suffice unless he uses a reasonable amount of thrift. We must limit our expenditure by our earnings, and not spend more than we have. A desire to live in luxury on a small income must inevitably lead to poverty. We ought to apportion what we have with prudence, so as not to run short. It is no wonder if people are ruined who spend in one day what ought to last them a week. If a workman wastes all his wages on drink, gambling or amusements, how can his family live? If a woman, as soon as she receives her money on Saturday, buys a quantity of unnecessary things, she will have nothing for the rest of the week. Such people have no right to grumble, they ought to remember the saying: "A penny saved is a penny gained."

FRANCE MAY MAKE JOAN OF ARC DAY NATIONAL FESTIVAL

By N. C. W. C. News Service

Paris, May 17.—A bill has been presented to the Chamber by Maurice Barres, Mr. Ferry and the Deputies of Alsace-Lorraine for a national festival in honor of Joan of Arc. In his preamble, Mr. Barres said: "All parties may lay claim to Joan of Arc. But she is still beyond them all and none can do away with her. It is around her radiant banner that has been once again achieved, as it was five hundred years ago, the miracle of national reconciliation. Why did we hesitate and delay? I think that unconsciously and in a way instinctively, we were waiting for a perfect opportunity; we were waiting to be sure of a thorough accord with the great figure. Something told us not to be too hurried, and that an hour would strike, one of

those great moments that have the power to uplift all minds and to reconcile all hearts. "And that hour of victory has come. We have achieved our union sacred in the face of the foe. It is the eternal miracle of France. Let us seize this sacred moment to glorify by an annual festival of Joan and of patriotism the power of recuperation and resurrection which France preserves above all other nations."

THE WIND-SWEPT GRASS

The grass is in its glory. Ruddy bloom, Or purple, or pale gold, o'ertops the green. The sea-breeze sweeps it into waves serene Or haughty gales raise billows, where a gloom Of darker emerald fills the hollow room That underlies each crest. The curious scene Mimics the swell of ocean's wide dame. Ere the scythe come to bring its Day of Doom. Today its splendor shines! And our How is it friends? As fair, as full of glow. As ripe a bloom? As ready for the call Of the great Reaper? Glad to greet His way. Bend, meek, before Him, and when suns are low. Rest, quiet, in His care who cares for all?

—CAROLINE D. SWAN

FEAST OF PRECIOUS BLOOD

Just as June is consecrated to the Sacred Heart, so is July known as the month of the Precious Blood—for the Sacred Heart, which is indeed the chalice of the Precious Blood, cannot contain its treasures, but must ever pour them out. Until recent times the Feast of the Precious Blood did not extend to the entire Church. We owe it primarily to the Venerable Giovanni Merlini, Superior General of the Fathers of the Precious Blood. In 1849 he shared the exile of Pope Pius IX, and suggested to the Holy Father that he make a vow to celebrate this feast throughout the whole Church, if he should regain the lost rights of the Holy See. A few days later the following message was sent: "The Pope does not deem it expedient to bind himself by vow. Instead, His Holiness is pleased to extend the feast immediately to all Christendom."

That same day the Republicans suffered defeat in Rome, and it was decreed that henceforth the first Sunday in July should be dedicated to the Most Precious Blood. Everything in Our Lord's human substance was so exalted by its union with His Divine Person as to be adorable. Yet it was only His Blood which was to redeem the world, and it was only His Blood as shed in death, which was to be the price of our redemption. Well does the Church sing on this day: "Thou hast redeemed us, O Lord, in Thy Blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us to our God a kingdom."

The assured hope and carefully tempered trials of the Christian dispensation have therefore been bought for us with His very substance. For Our Lord does not give as a rich man gives without cost to himself. Not a cooling breeze blows upon us that has not been earned for us by His labor in the sun. Not a success crowns our efforts that the "Poor Man of Nazareth" has not worked for much harder than we have, and if we have any hope in sorrow, any peace at the hour of death, it is because He faced alone and without consolation the unmitigated consequence for evil of every separate human life. He expiated each sin separately, considered and bought each needed grace for us. And this—not grandly, not all at once as a rich capitalist buys, but as a poor man earns any great thing, step by step, by little and little, with sweat and toil, with sweat and tears, and His life's blood.

When we wish to know the value of anything, we ask: "What did it cost?" So we must consider the excess of the Passion if we would appreciate the value of our Christian inheritance. The Feast of the Precious Blood indicates the measure of this excess. It is a matter of Faith that just one drop of this Precious Blood is enough to redeem a thousand worlds more wicked than this one. Yet see the lavishness with which it is poured out. The senseless women from Jerusalem to Calvary are red with it; it washes the armor of the pagan soldiers and dyes the robes of the false priests. Its pleading is infinite and irresistible, and it begs for mercy, not justice. It is out of this Blood that all graces come, whether those of Mary, or those of the angels, or those of men. It is this blood which merits all good things, not alone for the distant day of eternity, but here and now. It is the sin of Adam alone that makes the world so dark. That was more than atoned for by the Precious Blood on the day of Calvary. If we only labored under the proper consequences of original sin, the world would be a paradise. Far more has been bought for us by the Precious Blood than we lost in the beginning. That is God's Royal way of reparation; He does nothing by

halves. We may attribute our present troubles, not to Adam but to ourselves—to our failure to lay hold on the heritage of the Precious Blood, to drink of it daily in Holy Communion, to become inebriated with the true spirit of Jesus Christ.—Providence Visitor.

MODERN FEMALE FASHIONS

ROME HAS REMEDY

(N. C. W. C. News Service)

Rome, May 21.—It is related that the cure of a parish church in Paris, famous for the number of fashionable people that get married there, put up a notice that he regretted to see that so many of his parishioners were so hard hit by the bad times that they could not afford to buy more than half a frock to get married in. He had, therefore, bought a large white shawl with which, during the marriage ceremony, they could cover the part of them that the dress left uncovered.

CONDITIONS REALLY SERIOUS

This, as a story simply, is light comedy, but the seriousness of the fact is witnessed to by numerous pastorals of Bishops and warnings of priests reproving the indecencies of the prevailing fashions. Some time ago there was a warning from the Chair of Peter itself on this subject and, with the charity that always emanates thence, it bore witness to the fact that nine-tenths of the women who wore unbecoming things did so purely through ignorance, incapacity or thoughtlessness. And ladies' experience endorses the Holy Father's charity. There is not one woman in a hundred, or in a thousand perhaps, who knows how to make a frock or how a frock should be made. She goes to a good place and is practically bound to take what they have to sell her. And that thing, unfortunately, just now, is not nice. The reason, according to one who is acquainted with conditions in four European countries, is that fashions are originated for, and sometimes by, the demi-monde.

Succinctly, these are facts. Yet there is a remedy, an easy one. It is to be seen in Rome.

THE REMEDY

Twenty-one years ago an initiative was started in Turin by three Italian ladies, sisters, of very good family and excellent Catholics. When the idea came to them they were doing nothing more than holding catechism classes for a certain number of girls. They wished to do something more for the girls and they started first of course on quite small lines, a dressmaking establishment. They put all their work into it and it grew. Now they have two houses in Turin, one in Genoa and one here in Rome. The number of girls they employ in Turin runs well into three figures; here they have on and off, about fifty. The small lines on which they started have extended. Their managers and chief buyers go to Paris every year and return here with the latest models. They make frocks here for their clients in the very latest fashion, with workmanship as good as any to be found, only the frocks are shorn of everything that is not nice. Obviously it is easy for an expert to do this; to make a nice frock fully as good and as fashionable as the unice ones that the other crowd force on their customers. And that is just what is done in the Roman atelier that is interesting to see. The small clientele first secured at Turin grew so that the business could be extended to Rome and Genoa. Ladies of the queen's court patronize it here, the queen mother buys frocks from it; ladies of the Catholic and, if not necessarily Catholic, of the well-thinking aristocracy find that to be dressed decently they need not wear badly and unfashionably made clothes. The profits made go to extend the business, so that not only may more ladies be well and nicely dressed, but more and more girls may be well employed. There comes in the remedying of the evil on its second side.

CHAPEL IN WORKROOM

Here in the Roman atelier there are bright, airy workrooms, the girls are paid the current rate of wages, the business is run on business lines; all that is different from other places is the atmosphere, which is not pagan, irreligious, immoral, as unhappily it is in some such places, but Catholic. The girls do not live in the house, they come in to work in the ordinary way, but the life is a Catholic life. There is a charming little chapel; when there is a feast of the Church the feast is kept. When the feast of Our Lady of Consolation comes round there is great devotion at Turin to the "Consolator" and that was the name and dedication the founders gave their enterprise. The house and workers in it will have a visit from their Cardinal Protector. If a girl is ill she is not put out in the street, she is looked after till she is well enough to come back; maybe she is sent down to the seaside for a bit. In the off season when work always becomes slack in similar establishments those who are known to be badly off are kept on somehow. The result is a cheerful brightness that is a delight to see. The original idea was good, the founders were and are good, the managers are good, the girls are good, the work is good. And when you come to think of it, it is all so easy.

CARDINAL VICAR ENTHUSIASTIC

There is hardly need to point the moral. What has been done here

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can be done elsewhere. His Eminence the Cardinal Vicar knows the work well. He is enthusiastic about it. "Spread it, keep on spreading it," he says. His Holiness' recent warning on the subject contained the suggestion that Catholic ladies in high position could help by letting it be known that they did not receive in their houses ladies who carried their subservience to fashion to the extent of wearing frocks that were unbecoming. But these ladies must have an opportunity given them of buying frocks that while fashionable are still nice. Here they have that opportunity. Let it be given them all over the world. It will save them from responsibility from impure suggestions and it will save number of young working girls from an atmosphere which is trying to virtue.

THE HEART THAT HAS LOVED

In order to express the depth of admiring affection we entertain toward one another, we exclaim: I love him. Love is the last word in the supreme test of human devotion; it is the origin of more heroism, the mainspring of more telling deeds of fine spirit than any other motive in the gamut of human emotions. Men suffer for material gain and honor; they die for love in a worthy cause. Even the tawdry imitation that sometimes passes current for real love has a certain amount of fascination in its own way; it is a faint reflection of the original, and the strength of its appeal lies entirely in its being a reflection of a noble exemplar, even though it be but an infinitesimal miniature.

The original lover, Almighty God, is the fount and source of this noblest of all affections in heaven or on earth. An inexhaustible spring in itself, the love which God extends towards His creatures is the purest and the most intense within the realm of created things. No ulterior motive of divine selfishness lurks behind that love which God pours out in copious streams upon the hearts of men.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus! Man is wont to point with pride in the race to the greatest masterpieces of human genius. A Murillo's Madonna, an Angelo's Last Judgment, a Transfiguration, works of Dante, Homer and Shakespeare: all such standards are set up by man as the criterion of supremacy in human art. In like manner, but infinitely more so, is the heart of Jesus the most unassailable masterpiece of God's world. In vain will man strive to equal the depth, the strength or the intensity of that love: for it is limitless, being divine. Love demands a return of love, and in this alone does it appear selfish. "No greater love than this," is the way Christ describes His own attitude towards mankind. "Depart ye into everlasting torments," is His stand towards those who dare to spurn His love. No middle ground here, no dallying with the world and with God: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart."

The month of June is set aside in a particular manner that we may study in the school of divine love. This is the highest art to love our Redeemer, and in the loving to pattern our affection after the divine model, inasmuch as human imperfection will permit. Not every instrument is a Stradivarius, but one may draw rich melodies from an ordinary violin if sufficient deftness and artistry be employed.—Catholic Bulletin.

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God's answers to our prayers are so magnificent that often we do not recognize them as the response to our meagre petitions.—"Through Convent Windows," in the Dublin Review. Though I prefer learning joined with virtue, to all the treasures of kings, yet renown for learning, when it is not united with a good life is nothing else than splendid and notorious infamy.—Sir Thomas More.

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