

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOUY, D. D.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

THE SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE

At that time there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee; and the Mother of Jesus was there. (John II. 1)

The very presence of Jesus was sanctifying; no one in any sense disposed towards grace could be near Him and not come under His influence. The attractiveness of Jesus brought souls to Him in all their purity; in fact it was only the pure, and those who, though once stained, were repentant, that were attracted by Him. The wicked, at the time He walked the earth, as today, scoffed at Him and approached Him only from wicked motives. For this reason they neither gained His favor nor received His sanctifying grace. No one can be an enemy of God and receive His divine grace while continuing in sin. There must be a complete change before grace can abide with the sinner; for it expels sin as the sun does darkness.

But Christ by His presence did not sanctify people only for places and things were sanctified by Him as well. What places are more hallowed today than the scenes of Christ's life and passion? What earthly object is more sanctified than the cross upon which He died? We see the effect of the power He instilled in things, especially in the sacraments. In all of them there is something material, some visible sign which, when placed as ordered by Him, is the means of life-giving grace flowing into our souls. In the Gospel of this Sunday, the Fathers are wont to see an instance of the sanctifying presence of Jesus at a wedding feast. By His presence at this marriage, the contract received a sacredness which He had pronounced belongs to it. And it was not this marriage alone that He sanctified, but all Christian marriages.

Marriage was not a sacrament in the Old Law. Nay, it even had lost its primal sanctity, God permitting exceptions to the rule He established regarding it, because of the wickedness and hardness of heart of so many of the people. But this lenient permission of God in the case of marriage, as in many other customs and ceremonies of the Old Law, was not to last. When the fulness of time would have come, marriage would not only be made as it was in the beginning, but it would receive an additional dignity—it would become a sacrament. This work Christ was to perform, and He clearly made it known that He did so, and indicated, evidently, that it must be monogamic. The husband and wife united in lawful marriage were to be husband and wife as long as they both lived. It was only the death of one that could permit another marriage of the other. There would be times perhaps when they would separate—specifically if one of the parties were guilty of adultery—but neither of the parties could enter into a new marriage as long as both were alive. Nothing but death severs the ties of matrimony—a union that God has made and sanctified—what God has joined together let no man put asunder.

Alas, how much the world has separated from this law of God, and set up one of its own! What city is without its divorce courts, where men and women daily attempt to sever the links that God has eternally welded? We cannot exactly blame these courts for their existence, but we must blame the people who have brought it about that their presence is required. Upon what slight complaints and petty grievances of the one and the other these sacred ties are pronounced broken! What a mockery to have said to each other for better or for worse! Above all—and this is the greatest of all divorce evils—what a defiance of God's law, that law that is wise, that is eternal! What a disobedience to His commands!

The principal ends in matrimony are mutual help and the procreation of children. The possibilities of a divorce proceeding destroys them. Rather than mutual help, we see disgusting egotism; rather than the procreation and education of children, we see marriage used for the lowest and meanest ends, and children propose to themselves, and children roaming the world parentless and homeless. It has gone to such extremes in many cases that not even the richest of angelic little ones—the rich fruit of a union—will hold man and wife together. The home is being replaced by a room in a hotel or a little quarter in an apartment house. And, unfortunately, the lesser the homes, the greater the crimes! Would that the family hotel were a true world. We must not be skeptical of all bearing this name, but there is poison in the combination. Divorce has brought all this about and it bids fair to play yet greater havoc among people.

Certainly, humanly speaking, incompatibility sometimes exists, but it is not an instantaneous product. In almost all cases it existed when the marriage vows were pronounced; that it comes about afterward is nothing more than a manifestation of its presence. Mutual help is the parasite to its very existence. Where there is egotism, there is marriage stripped of all its qualities. Marriage should be of compatibilities and not of foolish future expectations. They

who marry their kind, for the real ends of marriage, will never know there is such a word as incompatibility in the language, at least, from experience.

But how is one to know His or her kind? It is to be learned from the laws of the Church. Every Catholic is acquainted or should be, with the chapter in the Baltimore Catechism on matrimony. There the wisdom of the Church—greater than which no other exists—is set before those considering marriage. The Church, too, is speaking with the experience of almost two thousand years to her credit. The Church predicted the only preservation of the home, and the Church today is the only preserver of the home. She has seen all the incompatibilities of today, the compatibilities of yesterday, and she is seeing them yet where God's grace is present. The Church alone puts before people the ends for which they marry. Will you doubt that, if people married from the proper motives and with the right ends in view, there would be no divorces? Must you not admit that day after day, by the hundreds, couples are marrying at an age when a bad that would otherwise some day blossom is spoiled forever? You need not call it crime. Call it impudence if you will. But we may ask, who is to blame? Alas, in most cases it is the parents! Many of them did likewise. What are to be done? That can be done with a perverse society? Nothing, unless God and His Church be obeyed.

Catholics, fortunately, as a whole, are faithful to the Catholic law. But there are many cases where even they have followed the path of divorce. Of course, where they have done so, they have abandoned the work of their salvation, and defied their mother, the Church. Say, what they will, their excuses are vain. Christ, who made the laws of marriage severe and stringent, has given to all who come under them grace sufficient to enable them to obey. In the Old Law, it was different. Marriage, not being a sacrament, had not the grace attached to it that is united to it in the New Law.

Customs of countries and of peoples can never justify Catholics in any divorce proceedings. Such customs, since they are contrary to God's eternal law, cannot lawfully exist. They are a continual defiance of God's wise, eternal legislation and unless abolished in time will bring a disaster that may call what will remain of man to a realization of his folly. What God has established, man must obey. He is not bound to do so physically, but his moral obligations are eternal. Divorce, if you will; physically speaking you can do so, but God who united you, holds you yet bound together, and worst of all, will make you render an account for your sin, which is one of the gravest of the grave. But rather than fear have for a motive love of God's law and obedience thereto. Then you will obtain the grace to overcome difficulties even of a married life that is not the most fortunate.

A FALSE HOPE

Our age has been called the age of moods and fancies. Hardly have we without faith rejected the so-called law of progress that postulated the establishment of a terrestrial paradise here below, than they seem to have succumbed to a converse superstition of pessimism.

They seem now prone to accept the dictum of Wilkins Micawber "that our progress has retrograded." "In other words," as Mr. Belloc lately announced, "it looks as though the false hope of an age without faith, a false hope ascended into a doctrine, might be succeeded by an equally false despair also erected into a doctrine. And the consequences of such a mood, when it shall arise, will be formidable indeed."

If we are to believe speculative philosophers on progress like Dean Inge, Professor Bury, or H. G. Wells, the belief in the law of progress is an outworn form of optimism and the world today is hurrying to the destruction of its present civilization. All this speculation born of gross materialism has set in motion waves of pessimism that are rising higher and higher. A mood of despair has seized upon many of the great thinkers, who approach the problem without the light of faith.

Such a mood is as unreasonable as it is dangerous. There are necessary facts and principles which these philosophers ignore. What are these facts? The first great fact is that human nature is the same today as it has been for centuries, a medley of conflicting tendencies towards good and evil. But human nature is not essentially corrupt as the Calvinistic error would have us believe. The doctrine of original sin, which has been relegated by these materialistic theorists to the limbo of forgotten things, teaches that human nature has been stripped of some of its God-given gifts and is suffering from a wound that time will never heal.

This wound is a clouthing of the intellect and a weakness of the will, and a strong but not unconquerable inclination to evil. But the doctrine of Divine grace teaches that while the properties of human nature before the Fall of Adam can never be restored, nevertheless the tendency to evil can be counteracted by Divine grace merited by the sufferings and death of Christ.

St. Paul saw two laws fighting within himself, the law of perverse nature and the law of divine grace. But he also had in a vision the reality of his complaint that he was not

making progress. "My grace is sufficient."

Here then is the principle ignored by materialistic speculators on progress, that the progress of the human race depends on the acceptance of grace to counteract the evil tendencies of nature. One sided philosophies of life that enter into a conspiracy of silence against these basic facts and principles of progress, must necessarily follow the path of unassisted human nature to pessimism and despair.

The Christian fortified with the doctrine of faith which completes his view of life and its struggle for good, sees in each age evidences of progress in the individual, and sees in the world at large through all the centuries good predominating over evil. The Catholic philosophy of life is a philosophy of optimism, an optimism born not of his own powers, but of God's unfailing Providence, an optimism that is steered and strengthened by the example of the Savior, and by His remarkable prophecy: "These words I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you shall have distress, but have confidence, I have overcome the world."—The Pilot.

CATHOLIC GROWTH

The recent statistics published by Sindell show clearly the great progress made by the Catholic Church during the last century. These notes are taken from them:

In England at the end of the eighteenth century there were only 120,000 Catholics, six apostolic vicariates and 200 priests. In the year 1907 there were 2,000,000 Catholics, 21 bishops and 4,166 priests. From the year 1899 to 1907 amongst the converts were 445 priests, 117 from the legislative body, 205 officers and 60 doctors. For some time back England counts an average of 10,000 conversions per year.

Germany in 1800 counted only 6,000,000 Catholics. In 1901 the Catholic population in Germany was as large as 20,000,000.

In Russia the number of conversions is very great. During the four years (1905-1909) after the promulgation of the law of toleration the number of Catholics reached 250,000.

During the nineteenth century the Catholic population in the Balkan countries grew considerably. From 16,000 to 150,000 Catholics in Rumania. In Bosnia the increase was from 23,000 to 389,000. In Bulgaria from 1,300 to 28,000; in Serbia from 6,000 to 20,000, and in Greece from 15,000 to 44,000.

Out of all proportion is the progress made by the Catholic Church in the United States. A century ago there was only one bishop in the great republic, fifty priests and 40,000 Catholics. At the present time there are two cardinals, 13 archbishops, 88 bishops, over 10,000 priests and more than 28,000,000 Catholics. The conversions in this great republic are very numerous, varying from 30,000 to 50,000 per year. Like in England, in the United States there are very prominent men among the converts. Bishops, preachers and other clergymen of the different rites and sects are very often converted to the Catholic faith.

In Australia there were no Catholics a century ago. The missionaries were not allowed to enter freely until 1820. Today the hierarchy in that country is composed of one cardinal, two archbishops, 1,600 priests, with more than 1,500,000 Catholics.

In the mission countries the progress of Catholicism is increasing every day. In the year 1800, Africa had only a few Catholics; at present there are over a million. Asia numbers about 5,000,000; in the Chinese republic there are more than one million. Even in the countries subjected to Turkey the progress has been very considerable in the last century. Smyrna from 800 to 16,000, in Mesopotamia from 10,000 to 118,000, and in Palestine from 3,000 to 30,000.—The Missionary.

A WORLD OUT OF JOINT

In the welter of plans for social reconstruction, one fact of encouragement is apparent. No one needs to be convinced that the world just now is sadly out of joint. As long as we insist that good is evil and that evil is good, reform is impossible. The sick man who refuses all remedies is marked for an early death. The physician who cannot make a proper diagnosis is the undertaker's best friend. And men who cry, "Peace! Peace!" when the world is in flames are no better than the miscreants who would recreate society by the liberal use of dynamite. Both make genuine reconstruction impossible, because both paralyze intelligent action.

Yes, the world is out of joint. Labor lifts up scarred hands to rehearse the story of its woes. Women and children starve because of injustice in high places. Men are reduced to the condition of mere machines, yet not so well cared for. They do not live as human beings should live. They merely exist. The present is miserable and there is no hope for the future. And Capital, safe in its fortress, answers that if Labor chooses to walk in the paths of folly, Labor must be content with the fruits of folly. Capital points to the imperious demand of an eight-hour day, when the physician, the nurse, the clergyman and the teacher, set no limits to their period of toil, but are ready at all times to minister for a pittance, or for no

recompense at all, to the needs of the public. Capital talks of broken contracts, of a public suffering because Labor will neither work nor arbitrate. I am innocent of this blood," says Capital, calling for water and a basin. "Look you to it."

The world is out of joint, but it can be brought back to health. Few plans for social reconstruction suggest the complete treatment, but the beginning could be made by the re-establishment of two ancient commands. One: "Thou shalt not steal," and the other: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." Labor can steal from capital by dishonest work. Capital can steal from Labor by the denial of a living wage. Capital lies to Labor when it professes an adherence to the "open shop" meaning thereby a shop absolutely closed to the members of a union. Labor lies to Capital by making contracts in the open, and playing false to the terms in secret. These are evils which can be so skilfully concealed as to be beyond the reach of statute law. And what restraint is exercised at best by human law over men who habitually flout the law that is Divine?

Human devices have been employed, and the result is industrial war. Workers starve while Dives battles with Dives. Thousands of freemen, and Dives spends thousands on raiment for his miserable frame. And one day the worker tires of the mockery, applies the torch, is beaten into submission, and the old process recommences. In the Name of God, in whose image all of us, rich and poor, are made, let us at last have recourse to a plan of social reconstruction whose soul is justice and truth.—America.

"JUST NOTHING"

An army chaplain was visiting the prison ward at Camp Meade. The guard at the iron-barred door brought his rifle to the salute and passed the chaplain into the clean, plain room. There were two rows of beds along the two sides of the room and the chaplain went up one side and down the other, hearing confessions and keeping in touch with the Catholic boys. Most of them were in the prison for A. W. O. L., which means that the boys got a little homesick and went to see some one without the necessary permission. The boys were not hard cases by any means.

In his room, the chaplain came to a bed on which was stretched a big hulk of a man, sound asleep. The hulk was new to the chaplain and, pointing to the blissful slumberer, he asked the boy in the next bed: "Who's this, Jimmie?"

"McQuade, father. He just got in. Spent the week in Chicago."

"McQuade! A fine Irish name," thought the chaplain, and walked back along the beds, gripped the massive shoulder and shook it. McQuade awoke, rubbed his eyes, looked up at the chaplain, and then a big grin raced across his bronzed face.

"Wrong this time father," he said, "I'm not a Catholic."

"What! With that name! You're joking."

"No, Honest, father."

"Well, how does that happen?" "I guess it goes back to my grandfather. He was a Catholic and married a Protestant, and she brought me up a Protestant, and she brought me up—nothing. Just nothing."

But McQuade was too big to be good-natured and willing, and by constant attention, the Irishatholic grandfather's "just nothing" grand-son was brought back to the Faith.

It may not be a nice thing to contemplate, but the fact remains that if you marry a Protestant, your child may be a Protestant, or "just nothing."—Sacred Heart Almanac.

OUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

New Year's Day is the time dedicated by the world in turning over a new leaf. There is no particular reason why the first of the year should be selected as the time for making new resolutions. But in commercial custom has sanctified January First into a universal turning point in the lives of men.

The reason why so many people fail to improve in spite of good intentions and good resolutions is that they act on impulse and on the spur of the moment. In the genesis of every action there are three steps, deliberation, intention and execution. But in some actions resolution is substituted for intention. A resolution has been lately defined as a muscular determination to do what the grace of God tells you that you ought to do, but what you feel a great repugnance in doing. Resolution therefore betrays stress, while a simple intention implies merely the making up of the mind. Now it is quite easy to make good intentions and even good resolutions. All one needs is a conviction that they should be made. The whole difficulty comes in carrying them out.

A wise guide to the spiritual life has given us three rules to help us in carrying out good resolutions. First we should make our resolutions definite and particular, secluding the general resolve to "be better." Definite resolutions help us to foresee difficulties and to steel ourselves against the difficulties as they arise. Next, we should get very clearly before our mind the motive which prompts us to take the resolution.

The more solid the motive, the more the likelihood of our keeping it. Resolutions founded on whim or on caprice are built on shifting sands. They will vanish as soon as the feeling passes. Therefore let us ground our resolves not on fickle and inconstant feelings but on solid and lasting motives, which will rise up in times of discouragement and stress, to inspire us to carry them out.

Finally, to make resolutions more effective, we are advised to recall them at certain intervals. This is the great value of New Year's Day as a day of resolve. If we could remember from year to year our past resolutions, we could renew year by year our firm resolves, and keep better track of our progress. By writing down in a prayer book such resolutions and re-reading them on the first day of each month we should have much more success, than if we made them and left them to be forgotten until next new year.

"Do it now" is a prosaic maxim. Yet it is a wonderful stimulus for carrying out resolutions. Procrastination is not only the thief of time; it is the murderer of resolutions. It is remarkable how much a man can do in at once sets about his work. It is equally remarkable how little a man can do if he keeps putting things off until tomorrow.

Resolutions are not the futile and comical things that the shallow types of worldlings would have us believe. They are serious and holy endeavors to make spiritual progress. New Year's Day is an opportunity that should not be neglected, to make solid, practical, pious resolves, that will carry us on up the steep and rugged path that leads to holiness.—The Pilot.

MY FRIENDS TO BE

My friends to be, unknown yet dear, Ah, where are they, or far or near? I listen for their coming feet; My thoughts of them are awed and sweet.

Perhaps I pass them day by day And note their gentle, winsome way, Or think them grave, or gay, or fair, But lightly think, and do not care.

I wonder if their heart are light, As thus I dream of them tonight; Or torn with anguish, crushed by Dear Lord, O do not treat them so!

In God's own day our hearts will meet; He knows the moment, knows the place, The glad, glad moment, the dear place, O may they hasten, by His grace! —Florence Gilmore

THE HOLY NAME

The Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus will witness this year another striking demonstration of the force of that Name which has been the living energetic thought of successive generations and the awful motive power of a thousand great events. The large and flourishing society that has grown up under the protection of the Holy Name will gather together all over the world to do reverence to their Master, under the most precious of His titles the Name of Jesus.

The great Church which arose from Him who bore that Name will extol its praises which "is music to the ears, honey to the lips, and heavenly refreshment to the heart." In liturgy, in psalmody, in eloquence, honor to the Holy Name under Heaven by which we are saved.

The names of the great men in history are kept in perpetual remembrance. Their deeds are sung, their praises chanted, their exploits retold on each succeeding anniversary of their birth or death. Statesmen, warriors, sages, they deserve the encomiums that grateful posterity lavishes upon them.

But what heroic expedites are resorted to, to keep their memory green. And how few great names have come down to us from the millions in nineteen centuries, who have lived and labored and died for humanity since He Who bore the Holy Name was born. His is the only name in history that can be truly said to live, that needs no artificial prompting to save it from being forgotten, that has possessed the human heart for centuries and has maintained possession.

The reason of the undying vitality of the Holy Name is obvious. That name represents the power, the glory, and the Divinity of Him who bore it. Under its five letters are symbolized the majesty of God, His goodness, His mercy and His omnipotence. To human minds more accustomed to visualize effects, that Name recalls the marvellous achievements which fill history's pages with the record of what men have done through its power. Since the day when Peter and John at the gate of the Temple which was called Beautiful, healed the lame man by the power and in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, a favor He has bestowed on him, etc.; we afford him a new degree of honor, joy and happiness and draw his special love and protection on us.

Every time we assist at Mass we should, besides the other intentions, offer it in honor of the saint of the day.

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for hundreds of years at the head of human civilization, and has driven, harnessed to his chariot, as the horses of a triumphal car, the chief intellectual and material forces of the world. Its learning has been the learning of the world, its art the art of the world, its genius the genius of the world, its greatness, glory, grandeur and majesty have been almost all that in these respects the world has had to boast of.

Today when sinister forces are menacing Christianity and civilization, to whom are men turning as a last resort? They are turning to the same force that saved civilization in past ages from similar cataclysms to the force represented by the Holy Name of Jesus. In that name is our hope, our strength, our salvation. With singular appropriateness at this critical moment in history comes the message of the Cardinal's Hymn to The Holy Name:

"All o'er the earth, the hearts of men are dying, Chilled by the storms of greed and strife; All o'er the land rebellion's flag is flying, Threat'ning our altar and the Nation's life."

Taken up by thousands of voices on the Feast of the Holy Name the refrain will give the answer, instilling hope, and strength and confidence: "Fierce is the fight for God and the Right, Sweet Name of Jesus, in Thee is our might."

THE MASS

At the hour of death the Masses you have heard will be your greatest consolation.

Every Mass will go with you to judgment and plead for pardon. At every Mass you can diminish the temporal punishment due to your sins more or less according to your fervor.

Assisting devoutly at Mass, you render to the Sacred Humanity of Our Lord the greatest homage.

He supplies for many of your negligences and omissions. He forgives you all the venial sins which you are determined to avoid. He forgives you all your unknown sins which you never confessed. The power of Satan over you is diminished.

You afford the souls in Purgatory the greatest possible relief.

One Mass heard during your life, will be of more benefit to you than many heard for you after your death.

You are preserved from any dangers and misfortunes which would otherwise have befallen you. You shorten your Purgatory by every Mass.

Every Mass wins for you a higher degree of glory in heaven. You receive the priest's blessing which Our Lord ratifies in heaven. You kneel amidst a multitude of holy angels, who are present at the adorable sacrifice with reverential awe.

You are blessed in your temporal goods and affairs. When we hear Mass and offer the holy sacrifice in honor of any particular saint or angel, thank God for the favor He has bestowed on him, etc.; we afford him a new degree of honor, joy and happiness and draw his special love and protection on us.

Every time we assist at Mass we should, besides the other intentions, offer it in honor of the saint of the day.

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