

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

REV. F. P. HICKY, O. S. B.

TWENTY SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

CHRIST OUR FRIEND

"He that is a friend loveth at all times."—Prov. xvii, 17.

The richest man who walks the earth, my dear brethren, is poor indeed if he has no friend. And a true friend is most rare, for such friendship is most excellent and above all praise. How often in choosing a friend we are deceived! It was their own interest, gain, happiness they were seeking, not ours; it was selfishness, not friendship. Many of us too, have not the way of winning friends. In our loneliness we look around and wonder what will become of us in old age, poverty, sickness; who will care when we die, who will shed a tear at our funeral. But there is a message for each one of us that should dispel such gloomy thoughts—a message from Jesus Christ our Lord. He says: But I have called you friends. . . . you have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." (John xv, 15, 16.) So, whether we wish it or not, there is one claim to be a friend.

Friend? The Son of God the Creator of the universe, the light and the joy of heaven, can it be that He wishes us to know Him and count upon Him as a friend? Yes, my dear brethren, that is His claim. Our unworthiness is no obstacle. "Behold a man. . . . a friend of publicans and sinners." (Matt. xi, 19.) That is a title that Jesus Christ loved.

Think what manner of friend is He? The Wise Man tells us. "A faithful friend is a strong defense" (Eccles. vi, 14); and again, "a faithful friend is the medicine of life and immortality." (Ibid. vi, 16.) So what may we not expect from the friendship of the Son of God? He is all-wise! So what a counsellor, guide, and teacher we find Him! He is all-powerful! In all our needs then, we can be sure of help. What blessed security against the Evil One is ours—the Lord is our protector! But how unto me a God, a protector, and a house of refuge to me. For Thou art my strength and my refuge, and for Thy name's sake, Thou wilt lead me and nourish me." (Ps. xli, 3, 4.) All-wise, all-powerful, and all-loving too! Love ensures that He will constantly exercise His wisdom and His power in our behalf. All-loving! What is there that His love has not bestowed upon destitute humanity? What would there be on this earth to please, satisfy, console us, or give us any hope, were it not for the love of Jesus Christ? And He, all-loving that He is, claims and asks to be our friend.

What an offer! What a mercy! How blessed are we in having such a friend! And why does He wish, in His infinite condescension, to be our friend? Through pure benevolence, because we are needy and poor, frail and sinful, the love of Christ urges Him to be our friend. Faithful to His title yet, "the friend of sinners," He who allowed Mary Magdalene to kiss His feet, and appeared first to her when arisen from the dead, He does not disdain our own poor selves as friends.

How seldom have our hearts been really grateful for this friendship: in fact, looking to the past, we are ashamed and humbled to find how we have treated our Friend, Jesus Christ. Look back! What coldness, forgetfulness, neglect, ingratitude have been ours! How have we treated our Friend? We have passed most of our time with those who care nothing for Him, do not know Him—yes, with those who are His enemies. We have grumbled and found excuses not to do as He advised us and wished us. A friend! And when our consciences have known that it was He that was knocking at the door of our hearts, we have let Him knock, and kept Him outside. We did not want Him. We have pleased ourselves, followed our own evil passions, and sinned against Him. This is the way that in the past, we own it sorrowfully, we have treated our Friend Jesus Christ. We beg pardon for our ingratitude, and resolve that the future shall be different.

For how should we treat this King of friends, so loyal and so true? We should place full trust in Him, no secrets from Him, no half-confidence, no interests, no attachments that He does not approve of, no aim in life that He does not bid us take and persevere in. Trust in Him! Can we not trust in Him Who proved His love for us by dying on the cross—trust in Him Who had His side opened by the spear, that we might find a refuge in His Heart, and ever trust in Him.

We desire should be to please Him. If love does not tell us how to love, what can teach us? His friendship is thrown away upon us. Cultivate devotion to His Sacred Heart, and you will learn what it is to love after Him, seeking in everything, great or trivial, to please Him. Everything will be done for His sake. The intention of your heart will be "all for Jesus." Your friendship for Him will learn to be like His for you. "He that is a friend loveth at all times." All whatsoever you do—prayers, work, sufferings—will all be blessed and consecrated by your longing to do them all and suffer them all for His friendship.

And, finally, my dear brethren, we must adhere to Him, and be united more day by day. Nothing must separate our hearts from Him, neither

or pleasure or pain, joy or sorrow, success or disappointment, contentment or bereavement. And to persevere thus day after day we need a special grace and power. And this we obtain from frequent Communion. This is practically, actually adhering to our Friend and Saviour Jesus Christ. This is what He longs for and asks of us. This is the reward He loves to have for His friendship. And this to us not only strength and a safeguard, but it is our joy and our glory, the consummation of our friendship with our Blessed Lord, the foretaste of those heavenly joys which will be the reward of His sacred friendship. "A faithful friend is the medicine of life and immortality, and they that fear the Lord shall find Him." (Eccles. vi, 16.)

INTERESTING ITEMS

Catholic War News Service
CARDINAL BOURNE ON PEACE

On September 8, the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster dedicated a war shrine at the old cathedral, the Church of Our Lady of Victories, at Kensington in London. In the course of his address the Cardinal gave a sturdy lead regarding the issues of the War, which might be taken to heart by some of the highly placed ecclesiastics of other religious bodies who are inclined to be somewhat lenient to Germany. His Eminence said in part:

"Be not misled by some of the pernicious things that are occasionally said and written today about peace. Often we are told that it is the greatest blessing God can bestow, but it is not, unless founded on justice. Do not be carried away by formulae, such as 'no indemnities and no annexations,' because justice may demand indemnities and annexations, and to get peace without justice is to get peace that would not last, and is not worth having."

GERMAN BRUTALITY

If anyone were so foolish as to believe that the Germans are capable of showing any leniency to Irishmen, the notion will be immediately dispelled by the story of the sufferings and death of Private J. Sullivan of the 1st Irish Guards, who was taken prisoner at Ypres, and in June, 1915, sent to the prison camp at Merselberg. The death of Private Sullivan was reported in July last by the German Government, and as no cause was given, it was assumed that he had died a natural death. But among the non-commissioned officers who have been repatriated within the past few days, is one who witnessed the manner of Private Sullivan's death, and who gives his testimony under oath. The prisoners, says the witness, were put to work from 4 a. m. to 6 p. m., although the captain in charge of them had said they were to have light work from 6 a. m. to 6 p. m. On July 28 the prisoners refused to start work at 4 in the morning and what followed is told in the witness's own words:

"The senior sentry in charge then struck me a brutal blow in the face, so the remainder of the prisoners thought it better to proceed to work, and fled out, leaving me alone with Private John Sullivan. Private Sullivan had been badly wounded and had lost the whole of his second, third and fourth fingers and half of the first finger of his left hand. This hand was always bleeding when he was at work. The two sentries kicked and beat us with their rifles out of the passage, as far as the second landing, where Private Sullivan halted, showing them his bleeding hand and trying to explain that it was impossible for him to work with a scythe in his wounded condition. The sentry at once put his rifle up and shot Private Sullivan through the chest. Private Sullivan fell without speaking, and the two sentries at once reversed their rifles and placed the butts between Private Sullivan's legs. In this way they levered him up and threw him down the stairs, where he fell on the landing on his feet. He raised himself on his hands and knees, looked at me, smiled, and collapsed without speaking. I was not permitted to assist Private Sullivan in any way. He was left on the ground alone until he died."

IS IT SIGNIFICANT?

The attacking German armies have done their worst to the Cistercian Abbey at Mont des Cats, and the building is now a heap of dust and rubbish. A crumbling wall or two is all that is left of the church; the floor is heaped with debris, and the cloisters piles of broken brick and stone. The ground everywhere is strewn with shattered sacred statues, torn books, splintered glass lamps, and broken metal work. And in the midst of the ruin is the outraged cloister garth, overrun with weeds, with a bronze statue of Our Lady and the Holy Child, the head of which has been broken off at the neck by an exploding shell. Outside the walls of the abbey stands the ruins of an ancient windmill, and between the windmill and the abbey, on ground of which it is impossible to find a square foot that is not pitted with shells, stands absolutely untouched a large Calvary with the outstretched arms of Christ still extended uninjured to the world. Everything around is chaos and ruin, and Christ on His Cross alone is without any mark of violence.

It has been remarked that this same coincidence has appeared in many parts of the battle fields. At Montauban the statue of Our Lady stands uninjured, whilst the church in which the statue stood has been

blown into fragments. In the ruined church at Chippilly the figures of Christ and Our Lady, unscathed, alone marked the spot where once the high altar stood.

NEW DUTCH CABINET

The formation of the new Dutch Cabinet brings into power a Ministry that is distinctly Catholic in character. M. Ruijs de Beerenbrouck, who becomes Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, has represented one of the districts of Limburg for 14 years. Although he received his education at the non-Catholic University of Leyden, the new Prime Minister is a prominent Catholic, and is identified with many Catholic schemes for social and civic reform. During his political career, M. de Beerenbrouck has consistently maintained the Catholic standpoint, and his moderation in his utterances has earned for him the respect of his political friends and adversaries alike. The new Ministry is a Ministry of the Right, a natural consequence of the Catholic majority at the July elections. Its formation is largely due to the efforts of Mgr. Nolens, who, though not occupying a place in the Cabinet, was charged by the Queen with the construction of a Ministry, and he has worked hard to fulfil this commission. Of the nine Ministers who form the Cabinet four are Catholics.

A CONVERSION

A priest, who was a prominent pastor in the city of New York a few years ago, recently told us the following story of the conversion of a man with whom he was well acquainted and who was one of his own parishioners:

The gentleman in question had in his service a pious Catholic girl, who happened to lose her beads, which were picked up by her employer. After wondering what sort of thing they could be, he put them in his pocket, supposing, however, as he saw a cross and a medal, that they were the object of some Catholic superstition.

At the end of a week he heard his servant still bewailing the loss of her precious beads. They were, she said, the souvenir of a loved friend, one very dear to her: they had been blessed by the Holy Father himself; in fine, she would give everything in the world to find them.

M—, hearing her, was reminded of the object he had found eight days before, and drawing the beads from his pocket, he showed them to the girl, saying: "Are these what you lost?"

"Yes," she cried, in joyful surprise: "those are my beads!" Oh, give them back to me please!"

"I will," was the answer, "on condition that you will tell me what use you make of them."

The happy girl at once consented, and clearly explained how she used the beads, not only to count the beautiful prayers which compose the Rosary, but also to help her meditate on the principal mysteries of the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ and of His holy Mother. She assured him it was a very easy manner of praying, and at the same time it was a humble little shop where religious articles were displayed, several pairs of beads exposed for sale.

The thought of going in to buy a pair of those beads struck him. But he hesitated, thinking also how absurd it was for him, a Protestant, to buy such an article of Catholic superstition. Nevertheless he entered, and bought a pair.

Once in possession of his purchase he did not know exactly what to do with it.

Certainly his servant had told him that the beads were used for saying "Our Fathers" and "Hail Marys," but what about the "mysteries of religion" of which she had spoken?

He tried several times to pray on his beads but he did not even know the "Hail Mary" by heart. Nevertheless, he carried them continually in his pocket, and the thought of them was ever in his mind.

A few days afterwards he happened to be again passing the little shop where he had bought his beads. This time he entered to inquire if they had not for sale some devotional book explaining the method of saying the beads. Such a book was immediately shown to him. He bought it, and when seated in the street car a few minutes later, at once opened it and began to look for an explanation of "the beads." He knew them only by this name, and so was much disappointed on searching the table of contents to find no mention of the word beads.

Next day he returned to the store with his book, complaining that he had been deceived, that the explanation of the "beads" was not in the book.

The saleswoman looked at him in surprise, then took the volume from him, and opening it quickly read aloud: "Explanations of the fifteen Mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary," adding sharply, "Well you must be a pretty ignorant Catholic

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not to know that beads and Rosary mean the same thing."

Our poor friend, somewhat taken aback, murmured his thanks, bowed, and left.

It was with the greatest interest that he read the explanation of the fifteen mysteries. He was charmed with the clear and concise way in which the great truths of the Christian faith were thus set forth, while he was lost in admiration of the beautiful prayers accompanying the mysteries, which seemed to him sublime in their very simplicity.

He set himself to learn the "Hail Mary" by heart, and from time to time recited his beads in secret, using his book in order to aid his memory in recalling the different mysteries.

But one day it happened that he lost his beads, and they were found by his servant.

She was naturally surprised to see a rosary in the house, and wondered to whom it could possibly belong. As she stood thus, lost in astonishment, she heard a step behind her. Turning suddenly, she confronted Mr. M—.

At the same instant he saw the rosary in her hand, and exclaimed: "Why B—I those are my beads: give them to me, please."

"What, sir?" cried the girl, "are you then a Catholic?"

"No," was the answer, "but I think seriously of becoming one."

In effect, soon after he called upon a priest, who gave him some preliminary instructions and then directed him to the Priestly Fathers, who received him into the true fold.

Later, his wife and young children followed him into the Church, and all form today a fervent Catholic family, in which the holy Rosary is held in the greatest honor.—The Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament.

ROSARY MONTH

October is the month of the Rosary—the month of Our Lady's rose-garden. It is not the time of flowers, this month when the trees are aflame with glory before the light of the frost comes upon them. But it is a flower-time, nevertheless, in that never-fading flower plot of her who is God's fairest flower. "Queen of the May," we sang her a few months ago. "To the fairest of queens be the fairest of seasons, sweet May." And here in these fall days she is still Queen, Queen of the fairest garden of all—Her own Rosary.

Father Robert says somewhere that just as the Eucharist is Our Lord's testament to us, so the Rosary is His mother's testament. From Her hands the Church has taken that treasure and has added to its wealth from the treasure-house of indulgences. Hence after devotion to Our Lord there is no devotion to compare with that of the Rosary.

What is the Rosary that it is considered of such excellence, and is enriched with so many indulgences? It is, in a word, the epitome of our Catholic faith. There is then the greatest of all prayers, the prayer put upon our lips by God Himself, the Our Father; the Hail Mary, that prayer of praise and invocation to her who is our intercessor with the Redeemer. And running along through these prayers is the chain of meditation upon the mysteries of God's dealings with men. It is all a treatise on the Incarnation.

It is so perfect a devotion that it is very easy for us to accept the story of its revelation. It is so perfect that we do not wonder that it has become a very part of Catholic life. The Catholic of every station finds comfort and delight in it. It has been called the "unlettered man's prayer book." But that is only a half-truth; for it is not limited to the unlettered. In truth, the more learned in theology a man is, the more he delights in the Rosary. The mighty Doctors of theology, the masters of asceticism, the great Popes, all have loved to bind themselves with the chains of Our Lady's Rosary.

So has it been for centuries. What consolation of soul our fathers in the Faith have found in these prayers. We should remember that in these days of trial, Our Catholic soldier boys off to the front are not content unless they have with them this

badge of their Faith. We should bind them to us here at home by these loving chains. During the month of October, especially, let us say the beads incessantly for the welfare of those who are needing our prayers, needing the help of the Mother of God. Surely it is a good time to revive the old Catholic customs that cluster about the Rosary. One of these customs is to gather the family together at night and recite the beads in common. That custom has sanctified many a home, and brought many a vocation. Another beautiful custom is to go to Mass every morning during the month of October.

It is in a word, Mary's testament to us. Realization of that beautiful thought will show us how to make the most of the treasure she gives us.—Boston Pilot.

MACHREE

(This was written in answer to a correspondent. "Whenever I ask what machree means, I am told, 'I hear of it.' What does it mean?" Professors of Gaelic will find the translation, I fear, somewhat free.)

"Pray, come and interpret this Gaelic for me."

And tell what an Irishman means by machree?"

"'Tis the white of the day and the warmth of the sun;

The ripple of waters that laughingly run;

The sweet bloom of youth, the harvest of years;

The gold of all smiles and the salt of all tears;

'Tis the thrill of the hand and the light of the eye.

The glow of the cheek and the lips' parting cry:

'Tis father, 'tis mother, 'tis brother or wife.

The music of woman, the wine of man's life;

'Tis all that he lives for and hopes for above;

'Tis an Irishman's heart making vocal his love:

The whole of creation and one isle in the sea:

And that's what an Irishman means by machree."

—REV. F. P. DONNELLY, S. J.

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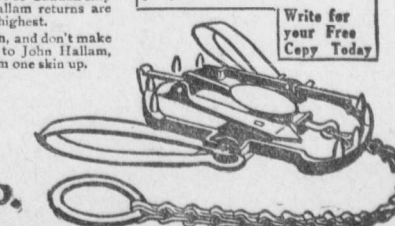
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