

## FIVE MINUTE SERMON

REV. F. P. HICKET, O. S. B.  
EASTER

## THE VICTORY OF CHRIST

"Lo, this is our God . . . and He will save us." (Isa. xlv. 9.)

This is the day of the victory of Jesus Christ. In rising from the dead He proved He was the conqueror. "If Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain, and we are found false witnesses of God. . . . Your faith is vain, for you are yet in your sins. . . . We are of all men most miserable. . . . But Christ is risen from the dead." (1 Cor. xv. 14-20.)

So let us then, my dear brethren, to the glory and the honour of God, to the encouragement of our own souls, celebrate the victory of the Resurrection.

Christ was the conqueror over death. He was dead and buried and all Jerusalem knew it. And His enemies remembered His words better than His disciples: "That seducer said, while He was yet alive, 'After three days I will rise again.'" (Matt. xxvii. 63.) So, for fear of that, they placed a guard to watch His body, and say that He was risen. And after the Resurrection, His enemies became the first evangelists, and spread the tidings through the city. Good Friday is past, and this is Easter Day. The Crucified is risen; His wounds are His glory; the dead is immortal; the Man of Sorrows is the King of Heaven, victorious after the battle.

Christ was victorious over sin. "The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquities of us all." (Isa. liii. 6.) And He expiated them by dying on the cross. Sinners, no longer the children of wrath and perdition, on Easter Day hear their Saviour say to Mary Magdalene: "Go to My brethren, and say to them, I ascend to My Father and to your Father, My God and your God." (John xx. 17.)

He was a conqueror likewise over the powers of the world. What a league had been made against Him! Pharisees, high-priests, Herod, and Pilate—bigotry, envy, paganism, banded together. They had tried to ignore and discredit Him, and yet they had to own, "Behold, the whole world is gone after Him." (John xi. 49.) They had insulted and blasphemed Him, treated Him with every indignity and cruelty, crucified Him; and He was risen, glorious and impassible! They tried to stamp out His very Name, and they lived to see Him the one power believed in and adored.

The victory of Jesus Christ, my dear brethren, is not the victory of a day; it is a victory for all time. For He rose from the dead, the saviour of the world, claiming the allegiance and the love of the hearts of men. Many fall in their duty and ignore their God, but we will not think of them to-day; rather let us recall with joy the memory of those holy men and women, saints of God, the fruits of His Redemption, the glory of His Resurrection. The victory He loves the most is over the hearts of men. And the Saints gave Him the worship and love of their hearts. There is no half-heartedness, no fear, no bargain with them; it is "all for Jesus." "Lo, this is our God, and He will save us."

This veneration and exaltation of Christ, which began on Easter Day, has lived and thrived through all the centuries of time until this very day. No rival has ever risen to claim the throne of the hearts of men from the risen Saviour Jesus Christ.

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And where is this Conqueror now? In heaven. Yes; but where else? In His Church. "Behold I am with you all days . . . even to the consummation of the world." (Matt. xxviii. 20.) The Church is the partner of His victory, and as Christ is, so is His Church. "Through Him and with Him and in Him," its mission in the world has been a long triumph. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, our faith." (1 John v. 4.)

Like its Master, the Church is victorious over death. How? Because it does not forsake us at the grave-side. The mourners tarry there, and then in grief retire; but not so the Holy Church. It transfers the souls of the faithful to the Church triumphant in heaven; it bridges over from time to eternity; its prayers and blessings bear us on to the Saviour Who died for us, and rose again for our salvation.

And over sin is the Church victorious. For this is the very work of Lent and of our Easter Confession. All the prayers, and sorrow, and penances of poor sinners are all to this end, that they might be fit to rise at the word of the Church—"I absolve thee." Sin is overcome.

And again, like its Master, the Church is victorious over the powers of the world. The Resurrection commenced a new life, which the world cannot assail, and the Church draws its vitality from its Lord's. Three hundred years of persecution only served to let the seed of the Church germinate, stamped into the ground and watered by the blood of the martyrs. Then came the spring-time and the marvellous growth of the Church. Heresies assailed it, with emperors to back them up in their infamous designs, but they only served to urge the Church, by its General Councils, to make more pre-

cise and definite its holy doctrines. The barbarians overran Europe, but they were soon taught to reverence the Name of Christ. The Church became a civilizer, cultivator, builder, as well as apostle, until the barbarians became nations ready to take the place of those effete races, whose kingdoms were tottering to their fall. The Saracens and the Turks followed on, but the result of the Church's warfare was always victory. Then the Reformation and the defection of Northern Europe; but there were new continents discovered, and the Cross of Christ claimed them and won them to make up for the children that had revolted from her. Then there is the infidelity and godlessness of later days, but all that is counterbalanced by the increase of unity, loyalty, and piety within the Church itself.

For, lastly, like its Master, the Church loves to be supreme over the hearts of men. And in this twentieth century it can exultantly thank God, on this Easter Day for the number of its children. It can thank God that over the whole world, in a thousand dioceses, in countless churches, the Resurrection is celebrated with fervent devotion. Hundreds of thousands have made their Easter Communions, have pledged again their loyalty and love to the Church and the risen Saviour. With one voice they have proclaimed Him conqueror over sin and death and the powers of the world, and King for ever over the hearts of men. "Lo, this is our God, and He will save us."

WORLD NEEDS THE  
LENTEN SPIRIT

Rev. John Talbot Smith in The Irish World

It is a pleasant sight, and to the irreligious must be a startling one, to observe how the Church, in the midst of these bloody years, calmly reminds her children of the necessity of penance, opens the penitential season at the appointed time, and calls them and the non-Catholic world to fasting, abstinence and prayer.

Having witnessed the catastrophes of many centuries, having seen her own children engulfed in the disasters of schisms, heresy and invasion, having weathered the most violent storms, she remains undismayed even by the present cataclysm, which threatens the entire world.

Her ideas of penance have been ridiculed, and her Lenten season has been rejected, flouted, proved foolish and futile over and over again. Cheerful and sensible people, quite cheerful and friendly to her activity, have objected that life itself is a penance, and why double the bitterness by voluntary suffering? No saint of the desert wore a more painful sackcloth than the war-ridden earth is wearing just now. The blood of millions saturates it, the grief of other millions poisons it.

Yet amid the groans of mankind, as formerly amid their laughter and mockery, the Church calls her children to the observance of the Lenten season; as a mother in a beleaguered city might gather her little ones about her for the daily lesson in morals and manners. For her course is like that of the stars, her life continues to the end of time, she must teach and train, discipline and hearten, nurse, protect, feed and finally bury each generation, even amidst their wars.

## HISTORY OF THE LENTEN SEASON

The history of the Lenten season in this country is a curious and illuminating episode of American life. The Puritans banished Lent along with other "Popish nonsense" from their religious custom. When the Catholics of the first quarter of the nineteenth century began its public observance in their few and scattered churches, no one paid any attention.

In the second quarter, however, which embraced the career of Archbishop Hughes, their devotion excited considerable ridicule. Gilmory Shea tells a story that perfectly illustrates the temper of the time. Bishop Hobart of the Episcopal church was chatting one day in his rectory with a member of his clergy. Rev. Virgil Barber, afterward a Jesuit priest. The music of a neighboring church reached their ears. "What a tremendous devotion these people have," said the minister, and the bishop replied affably, "they certainly have, but they work too hard for salvation." Another convert recorded that the tramp of the Catholic workers on their way to Mass at four in the morning first drew his attention to the faith.

Evidently religion was a comfortable affair in those early days. The Puritan had discarded all symbolism and all superstition. His churches had no paintings, no crosses, nothing but the pews and the lectern and the Bible, in order by this simplicity to leave nothing between Christ and the soul. The idea was fair enough, but it did not work well. As Catholics increased in number, and built their expressive churches, and held their varied devotions, public attention was fixed on their activities, which began in many ways to affect the popular mind.

LENT ACQUIRES PUBLIC VOGUE  
IN 1870

The Oxford Movement had its echo in this country, and numbers began to observe Lent. As a commemoration of Christ's long fast, in the desert, it had a biblical sanction, which could not be easily gained. Its great attraction for the common people proved its utility. The way of the cross, the litanies, the hymns,

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the sermons, drew crowds to the Catholic churches, when others were empty. The more courageous ministers adopted the season, and in spite of protests carried out their plans until opposition died away.

It would be difficult to say just when Lent became popular, but I imagine the date would be around 1870. Society had come into existence, High Society, and had begun to find the interminable round of dinners and dances a bore. Society doctors suggested that redness of servance of the Lenten season would lessen the strain. The jaded votaries of Society welcomed the suggestion; it was made a law that functions should cease during the Lenten period; and at once Lent became aristocratic.

Food hygiene became a notable American fad around the same date, 1870. Dr. Dio Lewis of Boston led a brilliant assault on American eating habits, and left hardly an eatable thing on his diet list. The easy-going journalist of the day printed sharp discussions on corned beef and cabbage, hot biscuits, pie, pigs knuckles, and other delicacies of the period. The Catholic abstinence and fasting were praised to the skies on hygienic grounds. Physicians illustrated their directions or appeals for a sane diet by the Catholic practice. All at once, it would seem, Lent was a public vogue, theatres prepared for it by lessening expenses, there was a well-recognized lull in commercial life, and business men utilized their leisure by taking stock and getting ready for the activity.

## THEATRES CLOSED ON GOOD FRIDAY

As the change coincided with other remarkable things, such as the use of crosses on Protestant churches, stained glass windows with figures of the saints, the rise of Ritualism, and the journalistic acceptance of the situation as ordinary, enthusiastic Catholics began to feel the faith was coming into its own. When Augustin Daly closed his theatre on Good Friday, and when some States made the day a holiday, progress could be marked.

Meanwhile a new development of successful materialism appeared on the horizon. The Trust had been invented, as a machine to economize production, raise wages, and cheapen the product to the consumer. At least that was the song of the Trust sirens to the credulous public. With the Trust came the enormous increase of millionaires, luxury, and extravagance in American life, and behold! Lent was swamped everywhere by a grosser materialism than ever before. It invaded the Catholic body.

Particularly in the cities was its work visible. Now the metropolis and the larger cities show no lessening of speed in Lent, either in work or pleasure. Theatres are in full blast, the dancing craze becomes diabolical in the winter season, and a large section of Catholics keep pace with the world during that holy and wholesome time. High Society makes only a pretence of observance. All the former forces which helped to make Lent popular have faded away. In fact sensible people saw no limit to the increasing diabolism of the public, the young in particular, until the War burst upon Europe and its effects reached our shores. Now, after five decades of increasing prosperity, wild extravagance and luxury, the world has entered upon a Lent of its own devising.

## THE FORCED LENT OF 1918

And what a Lent! The world plunged in blood, in debt, in horror,

in grief, in starvation, in despair! One by one the temples of pleasure are closed for lack of food, coal, light and even of votaries, who "are withering away with fear and expectation of what is to come upon the world." The people who mocked at the wholesome and reasonable Church discipline of body, mind and soul, now starve or approach starvation, with minds from which contentment has departed, with souls filled with secret but uncontrollable alarm. They formerly preached indulgence for the body, wild freedom for the mind, and annihilation for the soul; now these three are clamoring for food and peace, for recognition of their needs, for the mercy which rulers will not or cannot show them.

In this country particularly, where prosperity has abounded for a century, the habits of the people in eating and drinking and amusing themselves, have become ruinous to health and competence. The spread of various diseases, like insanity, diabetes and Bright's, cardiac and stomach troubles, not to mention the unmentionables, have had such increases as to alarm the physicians. The wild indulgence in dancing, in motion-picture shows, which have maddened the very children and youths into wild-eyed, demon-footed, nocturnal animals with only nests, not homes, look more like mania than honest pleasure and recreation. A generation brought up in the present fashion will be something startling ten years hence.

FAKERS INCREASING BY THE  
THOUSAND

What the mind becomes without the wholesome discipline of wise and correct thinking, such as the Church alone provides in the teaching of Christ, the past century has made clear. The mind of the modern world is maggoty with errors that multiply like microbes. Every niche breeds its own teachers and schools, because there is money in the teaching.

All over the country the fakers are increasing by the thousand: fakers in spiritism, new thought, deep breathing, poise, culture, therapies of all kinds; and beneath them or behind are the secret teachers of various forms of diabolism, with whom only the police are officially acquainted. The mind must be fed on knowledge, and will seed on garbage if the right sort is not at hand.

The teaching of Christ is the only disciplinary and sure knowledge for the mental appetite. Without this the mind runs into the abnormal, the foolish, the maggoty. He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth. These are the words of Christ, and the modern world, which has done without Him in great part since 1789, is awfully illustrating His teaching.

## NO DEMOCRACY WITHOUT THE SOUL

What is the soul without the discipline of Christ? As the master of the individual man, it must be the pilot of the ship, the navigator in the stormy sea of life. It must keep the body in strict discipline, in perfect training, and the mind clear, far-seeing, tranquil, sweet and sound in knowledge; and this it cannot do without the illumination of Christ in our times. For that came Christ into the world.

What can be expected from people who ignore the soul, decree its annihilation, teach its insignificance or worthlessness? There can be no true democracy without the soul, because it is this immortal part of man which makes him not only equal to himself and his surroundings, but the citizen of eternity.

## HAVE CATHOLICS LOST INFLUENCE?

It was upon principles of this sort that the Catholic minority of 1850 swung the non-Catholic majority into the polite observance of Lent. It is by lack of their constant repetition and sturdy observance, that the twenty millions of American Catholics today lost their influence with their brethren outside the Church. In neither case have Catholics worked consciously to affect society. The change of 1870 was a surprise, the change of 1900 was to be expected.

But as the world is always in need of the teaching of Christ, as it welcomes in its distress whatever assuages its suffering and helps towards a cure, it is clear that Catholics should be more insistent than ever in their preaching to the sick world, that their increased power should be universally employed, that their methods should be modern, effective, hitting the mark at every shot. Can this be said of them? Assuredly not. When numbers of them have ceased to pay any attention to the spirit and devotions of the Lenten season, but keep up the follies of the year at the same pace as the pagans, how shall the knowledge of Christ and salvation ever reach the suffering world?

## NOT AN ENLIGHTENED AGE

This is called an age of enlightenment and science; it is more truly an age of pagan superstition and childish credulity, says the Annals of Saint Joseph. Shallow and superficial men reject God and Christianity; they have no faith in the Catholic Church, the synthesis of all truth, but millions of dollars are spent in supporting fortune tellers, palmists, clairvoyants, etc. Men believe in the ouija board, the Christian Science humbug, the spiritistic medium fraud, the Dowdite lunacy, the Mormon polygamy, the "Holy Rollers," etc.

Certain crack-brained professors assert that their great-grandmother was a monkey and their great grandfather a wild beast roaming in the woods; they believe that the world made itself and therefore did something before it existed; they reject the reasonable miracles of Faith and swallow with full draughts the ridiculous miracles of unbelief.

## FORCE OF EXAMPLE

A CATHOLIC'S DEVOTION BRINGS MAN  
INTO THE CHURCH

Some time ago five young men came up to Sacramento from San Francisco to take examination for the bar, says the Catholic Herald. The hotels were crowded and they were forced to occupy cots in the same room. According to one of them, a Protestant—though now preparing to become a Catholic—four of them, non-Catholics, undressed and jumped into bed without a thought of God or prayer, but one—a Catholic—knelt down and said his night prayers to the astonishment of his companions.

THIS WASHER  
MUST PAY  
FOR ITSELF

A MAN tried to sell me a horse once. He said it was a fine horse and had nothing the matter with it. I wanted a fine horse, but I didn't know anything about horses. And I didn't know the man very well either. So I said him I wanted to try the horse for a month. He said "All right, but pay me first, and I'll give you back your money. If the horse isn't straight, I won't take it. I was afraid the horse wasn't 'straight' and that I wasn't going to get my money if I once parted with it. So I didn't buy the horse, although I would have liked it. Now this is the thinking."

You see I made Washing Machine—the "1900 Gravit" Washer. And I said to myself, lots of people may think about my Washing Machine as I thought about the horse, and about the man who sold it. But I'll never know, because they wouldn't write and tell me. You see, I will pay my Washing Machine by mail. I have sold over half a million that way. I know what our "1900 Gravit" Washer will do for them, just as I wanted to pay the horse. Now, I know what our "1900 Gravit" Washer will do. I know it will wash the clothes, without wearing or tearing them. In less than half the time they can be washed by hand or by any other machine. I know it will wash a tub-full of very dirty clothes in six minutes. I know no other machine ever invented can do that with such ease as a strong woman, and it doesn't wear the clothes, fray the edges nor break buttons the way all other machines do. It just drops soapy water clear through the fibres of the clothes like a force pump might.

So, said I to myself, I will do with my "1900 Gravit" Washer what I wanted the man to do with the horse. Only I won't wait for people to ask me. I'll offer first, and I'll make good the offer every time.

Let me send you a "1900 Gravit" Washer on a month's free trial. I'll pay the freight out of my own pocket, and if you don't want the machine after you've used it a month, I'll take it back and pay the freight too. Surely that is fair enough, isn't it? Doesn't it prove that the "1900 Gravit" Washer must be all that I say it is?

And you can pay me out of what it saves for you. It will save you at least a few months' wages, and wear and tear on the clothes alone. And then it will save you. . . . It saves you 50 cents a week, and me the same. I'll take that cheerfully, and I'll wait for my money until the machine itself earns the balance.

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