

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOUY, D. D.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

OUR SPIRITUAL FORTRESS

"But I tell you the truth: It is expedient to you that I go; for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." (John xvi. 7.)

The help God gives His Church and His children, members of this Church, He gives without show or display. He is an abominator of the ostentatious. Quietly and calmly all His works are effected, and all His desires carried out. It is only once in a while, when He sends some heavy punishment upon men for their wickedness, that He acts very conspicuously. When He so acts, it is to recall men to a sense of duty and to teach him the awfulness of his Judge-to-be, unless he mends his ways. In the Old Testament particularly do we find examples of God punishing man, while manifesting His terrible anger and stupendous power. In the New Testament, He sends His blessings and His punishments also, as a rule, gently and many times almost unnoticeably.

It is different with God's enemies. Their way is one of ostentation and clamor; and even where they hide their actions from the sight of others, it is not for the sake of virtue, but with the intent of deceiving. Wickedness can not hide very long under the cloak of modesty and gentleness. It is ever on the search for a battlefield where it can murder and wound and destroy. It endeavors by loud shouts to attract the people toward it, and lead them to adopt its cause. It must follow him who originated it—Satan—him who disturbed the great order established by God when He created angels and men. Since there is no gentleness to it, there can be no peaceable procedure. The rough winds can not but disturb the calm of the sea; the appearance of wickedness can not but destroy peace and create waves of discord.

Today's Gospel gives us an excellent example of the ways of God. Christ says it is expedient for us that He go. We would imagine that He could do more by remaining after His glorious triumph over death, thus giving His followers greater strength and encouragement, and effectively confounding His enemies. But such was not His method. All this would be done, but in a way other than by His visible presence. Men had seen Him, had discoursed with Him, had witnessed His wonderful power as manifested in His works, yet they had crucified Him midst uproar and tumult. Even while on the cross He could have called down the thunderbolts of heaven upon them, but He would not adopt any such means. His enemies, like His faithful followers, were yet to live on their natural lives, and then justice, indisputably clear, would be done them. He must go. His Father's work is accomplished. He will remain in an especial way with His Church, but He will be seen no more. Like the gentle breeze that comes to soothe us in the midst of the hottest days, He will come to guard and protect and revive us, while we struggle in the heated days of spiritual and bodily difficulty.

But He will do more. His Father has planned something else for His weak followers. God of very God, the Paraclete, will come and abide with His people. This Person of the Blessed Trinity will not suffer, will not be crucified. He is simply to be an ever-present help in our combat against the powers of darkness. He will be the fortress that guards the Church, which no enemy artillery can batter down. He will stand by, as silent as the highest peaks in the mountains and as impenetrable. He will be admired, not so much for the show He makes in preserving the Church, but for His insuperable power, though it be associated with no apparent activity. He is God. Why should He show His strength to man? What haughtiness could be ours part to ask God to manifest His infinite power unto us! How easily we forget what small creatures we are! Possessing but a spark of God's intelligence, we often try to put ourselves on a level with Him—nay, even above Him—and demand of Him a reason for His acts.

The conflict between light and darkness, between manifested weakness and silent, infinite power, continues. We must not think that we poor weak creatures—clergy or people—are the bulwarks of safety to the Church. We would be like the apostles before the Holy Ghost came upon them, were it not that the same Holy Spirit is with us. We must certainly carry arms—not the arms of Peter in the garden before the apprehension of Christ and His crucifixion, but the arms of Peter after his repentance succeeding the denial of His Master, and the arms of Peter after the scene in the supper room at Jerusalem. Our enemies are coming with the clang of sword and the boom of cannon, and there are others lying in ambush for us. Gently and almost silently we go forward to meet them. Our defense is impregnable, it is the Holy Ghost, the "Spirit of Truth." Truth alone conquers and will prevail.

There will be times when it will seem that our bark is about to be submerged, and it will appear that our guide is sleeping, as Christ appeared to be, when the boat bear-

ing the apostles was being tossed about the lake by the winds. But the danger is no real danger so long as we remain fast to our bark. He only is conquered who deserts. True it is that many, who were once within it, are now floating on different seas in barks unlike our own; but this is due to their own fault. The boat on which they once sailed is still gliding over the troubled waters, and will continue to do so until time is no more. He is indeed a frail weak Catholic who does not earnestly and confidently, while doing his best, trust in the silent strength and power of God. The tactics of our enemies plainly show how very often they have no other guide than the disturber of peace. In heaven there can be no enmity, no combat, no hate. Some one of the sides now waging war can not enter there. Let it not be ours. While we must fight, let us do it, as did Christ and His apostles and the martyrs that followed them, with no hate for our poor erring brethren, but as possessors of the true faith with a command from its author—God Himself—to defend it; for it is truth, and truth can lead us nowhere but to eternal bliss.

GREATER NEED FOR HOME TRAINING

Conditions at present are such as to make it imperative that parents give special heed to home training and watchfulness, writes Warfield Webb in the Christian Family. The many allurements that seek to divert the mind and time of the child call for that eternal vigilance that mean so much for the future of your children. Home influence is a powerful factor, either for good or evil. If the child finds that there are few restrictions placed about him at home he will quickly take advantage of this laxity and seek companions away from this home that should be his safeguard.

The result? We are witnessing today the direct consequences of this deplorable state, and thus we find an increasing number of infractions of the laws, more or less serious. The child who fails to receive the proper guidance from parent or guardian—the heart-interest that is so vital to his future well-being—becomes to a greater or lesser degree an outcast from respectable society.

There is a duty God gives—resting upon parents, to safeguard the moral as well as the physical well-being of their children. It is not an easy matter to properly train the child. Its nature—like that of the grown-up—is naturally perverse. Restraint, admonitions, example, all enter into the moulding of the youthful mind and heart. Where these elements are wanting, the child quickly takes advantage of the loophole, and seeks to assert his authority. Often this is simply the beginning of a state of heart and mind that is magnified until it becomes of grave import.

The times have materially changed in the last decade or so. The home, in a large number of cases, has lost its finer influence. So many parents failing to take cognizance of the consequences of this modern freedom, allow the child to choose his own companions, to seek his own amusements. Being unable to judge wisely in such instances, what is to prevent him from going astray?

The great and serious menace to proper home influence is being noted in the willingness of parents to allow their children to become the judges of their own actions. They appear to forget, or many times find it too difficult a task, to become the monitors of their children. It is admittedly a grave responsibility to rear children under the most favorable surroundings. Even the children born and reared in the country, removed for the most part from serious temptations and many city allurements, must be admonished continually. Being ignorant of that which is best for them, the tendency is to usurp the authority of the parents and act accordingly. How much more grave must be the case where the child is daily surrounded with a vast number of temptations that have now become daily diversions, and that are to be found in the cities, where density of population has brought about a thousand-fold number of causes to entice the child from home?

There are then two outstanding factors that rest upon parents, and that cannot be cast aside as of trivial moment in order that the child may be guided on the path of rectitude. There are example and precept. They are paramount in importance. Without both example of the most particular and inspiring kind, and admonition wherein kindness is accompanied by sane judgment, the results will prove of grave moment.

If the home is such only in name, the bulwark that will be able to combat the onslaught of the enemy, the effect for good will be frail indeed. The home should be a haven wherein the child can find security from worldly harm. How often do we not find, alas, that the home is merely a name, a misnomer; for it is sadly lacking in the very essentials that should become its sweetest sanctity.

If the parents fail to make the home a reality, the children can hardly be expected to supply these defects. And yet what a large and increasing number of so-called homes are far from being justly entitled to the sacred name.

There must also be precept. The duty of parents to guide and admon-

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ish is no less an imperative obligation than their example. Making the home a place wherein the children will find it a pleasure is a much needed condition now. We have been drifting away from this idea in recent years. The consequences are all too evident.

Among the more important reasons for this distressing condition can be mentioned the automobile, the moving-picture shows, the outings, dances, and a myriad number of allurements that entice, not alone the children to find their pleasures away from the home, but often the parent as well.

It is right and highly proper that we enjoy ourselves. Innocent amusements are but a natural desire. But moderation—a term too much laughed at now—is essential to counteract the baneful influence of so-called pleasures found elsewhere. It has become a serious matter. It is a topic that should be viewed with increasing alarm. If we can no longer find in the home our highest ideal, then the effects of this state of mind must bring about its own calamities. Make the home the haven that was intended. Make it the ideal wherein true happiness can be found—so that the children will not wander from the path of rectitude—ere it is too late.—The Echo.

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