

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY THE REV. F. P. HICKEY, O. S. B.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST

HOW TO IMPROVE

"He hath begun a good work in you
will perfect it." (Phil. 1, 6)

Surely we are all wise enough and humble enough to know and confess that there is nothing good in us from ourselves. We have learned that from sad experience of our many failings and infidelities. We are full of love of self, and of ease and comfort; we are uncharitable, cowardly, ungrateful, and yet within us there is something good. Ah! that is from God. He gives us this desire for something better; this remembrance of His gracious goodness, how He has given us the faith; implanted the hope of heaven in our heart; and made us conscious that He himself, the great God, is asking and longing for our love. He hath begun the good work in us.

It is for us to treasure those graces. We must not receive them like an ungracious child, and never say a word of thanks to our Father. How many of His favors, His forgivenesses, and opportunities for good have we sinfully wasted in the past! The proof of gratitude for graces is to make use of them and work with them. To receive blessings and favors is only the beginning: the work of our life is to correspond to them.

Then what does Almighty God expect from us? First to refer everything to Him. By a pure and holy intention to offer Him all our thoughts, words, actions, and sufferings. They may be poor things indeed, but coming from a child they are accepted and blessed by our Father. And this good intention would certainly keep us from anything unworthy and sinful, for how could we dare to offer that to our heavenly Father! Thus we see we have to renew this pure intention and offering to God many a time, for how often do sudden gusts of temper, of temptation sweep us from the path of perfection! But we must never despond. What God loves is that we should at once begin again, trusting that He will help us.

Another thing that God expects from us is that all we do for Him should be done with exactitude and promptness. Our work for God must not be done slovenly. Our self-respect would forbid us to act thus to our betters, even to act thus to our Father! Duties have their fixed hours, and duties to God, then, must not be put off or curtailed. And punctuality is true politeness; then to Whom should we be polite if not to the Almighty? How many of our prayers and Mass attendances have been so spoiled by want of exactitude and punctuality! Promptitude shows a good and willing heart.

To persevere in acting up to grace requires, then, a pure intention, exactitude, and finally fervor. This is a devout disposition of heart, which enables us to offer to God our thoughts and our prayers with earnestness, zeal, and love. One devout Hail Mary from the heart is of more worth than a rosary hastily slurred over with a distracted mind. And here again, the good intention comes to our help. A moment's thought! and we should remember Whom we are addressing, and in Whose presence we are. We may be on our knees, but our hearts are not worshipping. The thought of our great needs and necessities; that thought that the great God in heaven is listening to us, the thought that we are supplicating help through Jesus Christ our Lord, Who died for us, Who purchased these blessings that we are imploring, and Who, perhaps, is present on the altar before us—this thought should make us reverent and fervent.

We have help, too, given us by our Blessed Saviour, to keep us fervent and to increase our devotion. One such help that should spur us on is to remember purgatory. There all the penalties for remissness and carelessness have to be purged away in sufferings far greater than we can picture to ourselves here on earth. What a dreadful store of punishment are we, perhaps, accumulating for ourselves now! God knows. But would not this thought check us in our tepidity and sloth? Would it not spur us on to do our very utmost, praying and working, with zeal and generosity of heart? Another and a more consoling help is to call on our Mother Mary, "our life, our sweetness, and our hope." We offer up our prayers through her; surely, then, we should offer her of our best. And how transformed our poor prayers will be when they have passed through the hands of Mary Immaculate! She will not despise our petitions. She lovingly accepts every little prayer. And more than that: she prompts us to pray, and blesses our hearts with fervor and persevering love.

This life is the time for tilling and sowing the seed; the harvest-time comes later, when God perfects the good work. Look forward to that time, and we shall be strong and manly in acting up to God's graces and blessings. The wonder to us will be that our little efforts, our poor, faulty prayers, our beginning again at once after every failure, have been received and blessed by God; that day after day He has led us on to persevere, perfecting the

good work, making us "sincere and without offence" until the day of recompense shall come. Our pure intention—all for God, our careful exactitude, our fervor have led us on safely to persevere "through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."

SHOULD WOMEN KNOW?

Should women know that whole races now living have never seen a case of cancer, tuberculosis, goitre, heart, liver, or kidney disease and that science attributes their immunity to the foods they eat? Surely yes, since women know that these diseases are rampant among civilized races whose foods differ radically.

Races who know nothing of "denatured" white flour, polished rice, refined cereals, white sugar, etc., but who live upon nature's whole grains, milk, eggs, nuts, beans, vegetables and fruits are free from the above diseases, but when they adopt our "denatured" foods, they soon die out with our dread diseases.

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THE POWER OF THE ROSARY

There is much in the world to make us sad. Vices innumerable afflict humanity as a result of the Great War. Whole nations are either destitute, like the Central European countries, famine-stricken like Russia, or engulfed in cataclysmic disaster like Japan.

We have become used to the "tear, the groan, the knell, the pall, the bier."

We have had the greatest War, the greatest famine, and the greatest earthquake in history in the last decade. No wonder that a cry of anguish is wrung from the heart of the world.

Moreover, man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn. There is injustice, infidelity, and icy uncharitableness. Crime stalks through great cities, ambition tramples upon the rights of others, and greed squeezes the life blood of the poor. Gloomy jeremiads on the approaching demise of civilization fill the air. The world seems to be sick unto death, and without the power of recovery.

Shall we give way to despair and join in the dance macabre that is forming around the bier of modern civilization? Or shall we look for some ray of hope to assure us that all will yet be well? It all depends on what we call our faith, for faith is the foundation of hope, as well as of charity. And faith teaches that there is always hope, if we only practice charity.

In one of Browning's greatest poems, the play of incident revolves about a little girl who saunters through the city streets and country lanes singing beneath the open windows in the early morning and in the soft twilight, the quaint and simple, yet gripping and tender sentiment.

"God is still in the Heavens, all is right with the world."

God is still in the Heavens. And while He remains all will be right, if the world only turns to Him. How to reach Him is for many the great difficulty. Fortunately, we have an ever present auxiliary. While He was on earth men learned to know that the easiest way of approach to His heart was through His mother. Today it is the same. The way to Jesus is through Mary.

In this month of October we are urged to offer prayers to Mary through the form of prayer she likes the best, the Rosary. We are urged by the Church to make the month of October the month of the Rosary by reciting the sweet and tender prayer of prayers every day. In our churches, convents, chapels, schools, and institutions, October devotions will be offered daily to Mary for the glory of God, for the conversion of sinners, for the spread of the faith, for the welfare of humanity, and for the salvation of souls.

There is much in the world to make us sad. But there is much also to make us glad. We cannot help feeling our hearts glow happily within us at the thought that the month of October is here. Each day of this month will bring more and more glory to God, more and

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more consolation to souls, more and more blessings to the world. Millions of souls in every clime, of every blood, and of every condition, will daily grow in deeper reverence and warmer love of the Immaculate Mother of God.

Of old it was said of the Jews, "there hath stood One in the midst of you that you know not." Today there stands One in the midst of the world Who came for the salvation of the world, for the reformation of society and for the healing of the nations. The way to Him is through her whom we honor in October.

Once before in a critical period of history the devout public recitation of the Rosary saved civilization and conferred upon Mary the glorious title, Help of Christians. The same recourse is open to us at this critical stage of the world's affairs. The same aid will be forthcoming if we diligently supplicate her with the Rosary. More things are wrought by prayer than this world knows. One devout recitation of the beads in October for the improvement of the world will do more to bring peace to the world, than the world itself can ever realize. Let us make October in fact as well as in name—the month of the Rosary.—The Pilot.

TAKE CARE OF BABY

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CATHOLIC EVIDENCE GUILD

London, Sept. 6.—Some years ago, before Bolshevism had risen to the degree of a political creed and Communism was associated with unwashed Europeans, who plotted revolution in obscure cafes off Oxford Street, there used to appear on Sunday afternoons and evenings a band of truculent orators in Hyde Park, London, who under a lurid banner, preached the equally lurid doctrines of professional atheism. It was not a particularly inspiring doctrine, though it was believed to appeal to the working man, who in some cases found it a rather good excuse for giving up church-going.

About the same time, and not very far away from the atheist platform, there gathered regularly a little band of Catholics, under the banner of the Guild of Our Lady of Ransom, who came regularly week after week to speak on the teachings of the Catholic religion. Beyond a few mild jeers, the crowd never interfered with the Catholic speakers. But if numbers be a sign of popularity, the irreverencies of the atheists seemed to point to the fact that they had secured the popular ear.

That was before the War. Today things are somewhat different. For the atheist, with his lurid banner and more lurid doctrines has disappeared. At least the London park sees him no longer and a reliable searcher through the other parks of London declares that his blasphemies have practically ceased to be heard.

But where in former years the atheist gathered a crowd, waiting to have its ears tickled with highly improper references to the Christian religion, the people gather to hear the Catholic religion expounded by trained speakers in terms easily understood of the average crowd. The modest effort of the Ransomers, who met undeterred by the mocking of the crowd, has given place to the platform of the Catholic Evidence Guild, at which not only laymen and laywomen, but also members of the religious orders appear in their religious habit to bring the old faith of England to the hearts of the English people.

The day is past when the Catholic speaker was mostly equipped with

his own burning faith, and an ardent to impart that faith to others. The Catholic speakers of the Catholic Evidence Guild are not only soundly grounded on the teachings of the Church, but they also go through a course of obstruction. They are up to all the tactics of interrupters; they are ready to tackle all catch questions, so that they are fully prepared, not only to reply to genuine questioners, but also the wilful obstructors whose only purpose is to cover the speaker with ridicule—if possible.

For all the happy results shown thus far, the movement is still in its infancy. But one possible development may be the sending of bands of Catholic laymen through the villages and small towns of the country, a modern counterpart of the preaching friars of a far-off day, who carried the Gospel into every corner of England.

How friendly all men would be to one with another if no regard were had to honor and money.—St. Teresa.

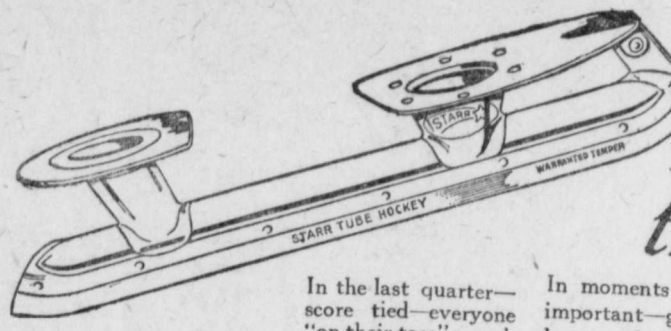
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