

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

REV. P. P. HICKEY, O. S. B. THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

CONFESION

"He that hideth his sins shall not prosper, but he that shall confess them and forsake them, shall obtain mercy." (Prov. xxviii, 13)

Last Sunday we tried to awaken in our hearts love and loving sorrow for our sins. To-day let us study the next part of the Sacrament of Penance, and see how to prepare for Confession, make the Confession and obtain Absolution.

There are words in the text that teach us the whole lesson. "He that hideth his sins shall not prosper, but he that shall confess and forsake them, shall obtain mercy."

We must not hide our sins; therefore it is necessary to examine our conscience; but we must confess and forsake them, and so obtain mercy and forgiveness.

The examination of our conscience is our own duty. If we shrink from it, we are hiding our sins from ourselves and from our confessor, but not from God. Mortal sins have to be detested and confessed individually, their number as best we can calculate, and any aggravating circumstances that may change their species. Many seem to think that it is the confessor's duty to see that they tell all. The confessor always helps, and if penitents ask him to examine them, as perhaps they can not read or they are not well instructed, he will gladly do so. But the obligation of a full, entire confession rests, in the first place, on the penitent. It is trouble, no doubt, and the longer you stay away the more trouble it will be; but if you take as much pains over examining your conscience as you do when shopping in seeing that you obtain the best goods and that the right change, you need not be scrupulous if any sin is forgotten.

Then, with your heart full of sorrow, your mind with the list of your sins clearly before it, enter into the confessional and lay your sins open before the priest. Confession is the accusation of our sins with the hope of obtaining pardon. It must be entire and complete as far as regards all mortal sins. Be not afraid or ashamed to confess your sins; for the priest is there bound in secrecy. You can seek a priest that does not know you if you wish; but whatever priest it is, he is there solely with the desire of making you friends again with God. If you are afraid or worried how to confess any sin, ask his help, and it will all be made easy. Keep nothing back through shame. It is not only to the priest that you are confessing, but to Almighty God. Tell not a lie to the Holy Ghost. "I will recount to Thee all my iniquities, in the bitterness of my soul." (Isa. xxxviii, 15)

"He that shall confess and forsake his sins," says the text. What does "forsake" imply? My dear brethren, "true repentance is a change of life," says St. Ambrose. There are some sins for which a firm purpose of future amendment is not sufficient. At once to prove we are sorry we have to forsake, put right, satisfy for certain sins, or there is no forgiveness. As the Scripture says, "When the wicked turneth himself away from his wickedness and doeth judgment and justice, he shall save his soul alive." (Ezech. xviii, 27). So those who are at enmity, are bound to forgive, or they cannot be forgiven. Those, who have wronged another, are bound to restore their neighbour's good name, or the money they have stolen or cheated; to pay the debts they owe, if it is in their power. And those, who are living in the occasions of sin, are bound to give up those occasions; and those, who are repeatedly falling into the same sins, are bound to use the means necessary to save them from relapsing. All this is comprised in the word "forsake" your sins. In this forsaking, restitution, and the rest cannot actually be done at once, the priest can take the penitent's solemn promise that he will do so the first opportunity. But remember God is witness to that promise. God, who reads your heart as if the promise is genuine; God, who never forgets! But if the priest cannot rely on promises—broken, perhaps, many a time—he then has to defer and put off absolution till the debt is paid or the occasion forsaken. How many, alas! take offence at the priest, if he is driven to this course. How unjust! The priest cannot please himself. He has to judge justly, and give an especial account to God for all he does as confessor. In hearing confessions, he is endangering his own soul to seek to save the souls of others.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." (1 John i, 9) Yes; all leads up to this—forgiveness or absolution. We have excited our hearts to be contrite; we have reckoned up our sins and prepared the list of our faults and failings; we have humbly confessed against ourselves—nothing hidden, nothing excused, but all plainly and frankly declared; we have accepted the penance given us, promised the required amendments and forsakings; and now comes the blessed moment when the priest, with the power of Christ, says: "Thy sins are forgiven thee." The miracles of the Gospel renewed on behalf of our souls! What gratitude should be ours! Sin banished, our soul alive once more, endowed with grace, washed with the Precious Blood of Christ, by the power of the words of Absolution!

Prove your love and gratitude for being forgiven, by doing what our Lord so often told those He had

curd to do: "Go, and sin no more."

The priest is the best of our past confessions. If we fall again, almost immediately and without a struggle, then, alas! we may fear for our contrition and purpose of amendment—they were not genuine. "Go, and sin no more." Faithfully, manfully strive to keep out of sin, to honour Him, Who so often and so lovingly has forgiven us.

TEMPERANCE

SCIENCE HAS SHATTERED THE CLAIMS OF BEER

The man who drinks his half pint of wine daily or his two glasses or more of beer is just as surely submitting his body and mind to the deleterious effects of alcohol as the man who chooses to go down on the whisky slide.

Science of recent years has dragged out into the open the mischief done by beer and wine quantities of alcohol. A great variety of experiments, performed in many countries, under the direction of investigators, in laboratories and in the practical work of every-day life, have snatched the mask from beer and wine, and to those who will see have revealed these drinks as they are—liquors of poisons, alcohol, that is ever at war with human welfare. What do the experimenters say?

It was a beer and wine quantity of alcohol (equivalent to two or three glasses of 4% beer or half pint of 10% wine) that Kraenkin found impaired the perception and attention needed by lookouts, signal men, sentries, engineers, automobile drivers, machinists and others in military and civil life.

It was beer and wine quantities of alcohol (equivalent to one-quarter glass of beer or one-fifth to four-fifths of a pint of wine) that Joss found decreased in adult students the power of attention, concentration, mental keenness 4.9% the first hour, 10.9% the second hour, 12.5% the third hour.

It was a beer or wine quantity of alcohol (equivalent to 2 glasses of beer or a half pint of wine) that Totterman found markedly reduced the coordination of eye and hand work needed in range finding, sextant-observing, sighting of guns, delicate machine work of all kinds.

It was a beer and wine quantity of alcohol (equivalent to three quarters of a pint of wine or a little over four glasses of beer) that Frankfurter found increased 17 times the relative number of errors in typewriting.

It was a wine quantity of alcohol (equivalent to four-fifths of a pint of wine) that Aschaffenberg found decreased the amount of work done by typesetters 8.7%.

It was beer and wine quantities of alcohol (equivalent to about two pints of beer or three quarters of a pint of wine) that Kraepelin found impaired accuracy in marksmanship in the Bavarian Army.

It was beer and wine quantities of alcohol (equivalent to 2 1/2 glasses of beer or 1 pint of wine) that Lieutenant Boy of the Swedish army found reduced endurance in shooting 22%.

It was beer and wine quantities of alcohol (the equivalent of 2 1/2 glasses of beer) taken daily that Smith found impaired ability to memorize and to add numbers.

It was beer and wine quantities of alcohol (equivalent to 2 1/2 glasses of beer, or 10 ounces of wine) that Durig and Schnyder found diminished muscle working ability in lifting and mountain climbing and increased fatigue.

It was beer and wine quantities of alcohol that in practically all cases using experiments on the person using the alcohol into thinking that he was working better, when actually his work was poorer.

It was beer and wine quantities of alcohol (equivalent to 1 1/2 pints of beer or 10 1/2 ounces of wine) that Dodge and Benedict of the Carnegie Nutrition Laboratory, Boston, found definitely depressed combined nerve and muscle activity. This with other results gave "clear indication of decreased organic efficiency as a result of moderate doses of alcohol."

The amounts of alcohol used in the foregoing experiments are commonly taken in wine or beer by hundreds of thousands of drinkers. "Alcohol is alcohol, either in whisky or beer," says Dr. Eugene Lyman Fisk of the Life Extension experiments and the person using that beer is a hygienic drink. It is drunk chiefly for its alcoholic effect, and if the alcoholic effect is produced the danger of alcohol exists. Any one who doubts that beer can produce a certain form of intoxication need only visit the saloon and watch the beerdrinker in various stages of befuddlement or excitement. If beer does not intoxicate or produce any alcoholic effect, what becomes of the "racial craving for stimulants" which it is said to satisfy? Furthermore, heavy beer-drinking, as in the case of brewery employees, adds the danger of excessive fluid intake, entirely apart from alcohol. The heavy mortality of brewery employees is sufficient evidence that beer, so far as its effect on the nervous system is concerned, is not a hygienic drink.—C. F. Stoddard, in Welfare Orator.

A CHILD AT PRAYER

Among the many beautiful things in this world there is probably nothing more elevating and impressive than a child at prayer, says the Annals of Saint Joseph. It is a vision of paradise. What a joy overpowers the heart of a mother when

her little one lips for the first time the sweet word, "Mama." How delighted must be our Father in heaven when the young child sends its first greetings to the unseen God.

What solemn earnestness in the depths of those innocent eyes, and what awe-inspiring reverence depicted on the pure face of a child at prayer! How near God seems to be; we almost feel His presence. Happy are the homes in which mothers teach their children in the earliest spring-time of life to converse with Jesus, the divine Friend of children!

CARDINAL O'CONNELL

IN LENTEN PASTORAL SHOWS HOW WORLD MUST RETURN TO FEET OF CHRIST

Once more returns the holy season of Lent and our tired minds wearied by a thousand perplexities, and our heavy hearts torn by a thousand griefs welcome its sacred hours of retirement and quiet as a favor from Heaven, since only by withdrawing momentarily from the turmoil of anxiety and worry, all about us we may renew our vigor of spirit and gather strength for whatever the morrow may hold for us.

Surely no one can be so blind as to fail to see not only the pressure of present urgent duties but also very clearly the trying problems which lie before us.

These problems, whose solution is bound to affect not ourselves alone but the whole world, must, if they are to be solved right, be faced with a clear vision of responsibility and a firm determination to stand by results through weal or woe.

Since our form of government, more than any other, relies for its direction and progress upon the uprightness of view and steadfastness of purpose of the individual citizen, it is now that we, more than others, are bound to keep well before our minds the straight and strong principles upon which individual virtue rests, and by which it grows stronger as it enlarges into the nation's conscience.

FALSE PRINCIPLES OF LIFE Whoever casts his glance even superficially over the warring world of humanity cannot fail to see that underlying the fierce physical conflict there is a whole realm of shifting and seething moral turmoil, parting cause, partly effect of this war. Indeed, no student of history can fail to recognize that the present upheaval is but another of those ever-recurring crises in the story of humanity when the seed of false principles, sown in darkness and nurtured by deceit, lies dormant for a while and then suddenly blossoms into a deadly weed whose foul sight darkens the day and whose poisonous vapors vitiate life. Who now looking back over the half century past can be so dull of vision as not to see that all those things which today we so vigorously detest and denounce as hurtful and fatal, were until very recently held up to us as signs of progress and the golden key to national development and individual greatness?

We can still hear distinctly the denunciations hurled against those who refused to bend the knee to the god of mere individualism, mere money and mere efficiency. It was we who were told a perian bound to usher in the expected era of world-wide perfection and prosperity. Because a few men by doubtful methods had, with hands of steel and hearts of stone, wrenched from the industry of millions unheard of wealth, we were told and were abused if we did not believe, that these were but signs and portents of a golden age for all.

MATERIALISTIC PHILOSOPHY When carrying into the policy of nations this same utterly selfish code, a few rulers forgot completely their common international duties and relations, recognizing only the isolated splendor of a segregated and self-satisfied group of their own subjects, closing their eyes to the woes and sufferings which this regime was working upon the smaller and weaker peoples oppressed by their greed and arrogance, again we were told that the world was at last entering upon an era of perpetual glory. Science, machinery, efficiency, cold-blooded enforcement of a materialistic philosophy to the exclusion of the ideals and principles upon which Christian civilization rests, these were the columns of strength erected as the bulwarks of the great millennium, the twentieth century. Who among us now does not recall this cant and its false prophets?

What a tower of gold they were building whose summit should pierce the heavens! Nay, there were to be no more heavens, and over the lights of heaven were to be forever extinguished! We know now that the tower was after all only another Tower of Babel, whose half-finished structure even now is tumbling about the heads of those who impiously attempted to rear it.

The Church, through whose teaching and influence the nations of Europe were founded, looked on sadly, though not silently, at the blasphemy. Again and again saintly Popes, whose very holy office renders their zeal as disinterested as it is sacred, warned these vainglorious rulers and impious prophets of the folly of their dreams and the falsity of their principles.

NEW ERA IN HISTORY Standing as we now do upon the threshold of a new world, a world which America under God will have the greatest share in fashioning if only she follows the voice of God, we need

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England and Italy of the futility of building a house upon sand or a government upon fables. Plus X, seeing in his later years the rapid approach of the catastrophe which burst upon Europe and all the world just as he closed his eyes forever, re-echoed again and again the solemn warnings of his sainted predecessor.

APOSTASY OF EUROPE But the nations of Europe had apostatized. For daring to speak the truth, religion was punished and so has happened what must have happened in the end, for not with impunity is God mocked.

Higher and higher the conflagration has reached and now America has faced the fire, not thank God, to fan the flames, but to extinguish them soon and if possible forever. Now that the day of reckoning for all the nations has arrived it would be but puerile and would serve no good purpose for us to pretend that we have always read aright the signs and portents which should have been a beneficent warning to Europe and are still so to our country.

The time has arrived when we, as sincere men, should look into our innermost hearts and by honest self-examination prepare for ourselves and our beloved country a great future, founded, not upon flattering falsehood but stimulating truth.

Even this War will not settle everything. The very first day of peace will bring with it problems just as difficult, just as arduous and just as clamorous for solution as this bitterest of all wars. It will not be the demigods of finance nor the supermen of arms who will settle these claims. With this War their supremacy will have passed forever and let us hope, with them, all the misery and ruin they have caused.

SUBLIME PURPOSE OF AMERICA We have a right to be proud of the fact that America has not entered this raging conflict for any selfish purpose. Our President, nobly voicing the ardent soul of the whole nation, has made it clear to the world and to history forever that, whatever comes, we have faced our national duty with a clear conscience. We want no land, no tribute, no gold, no vengeance. We want only justice and a peace which shall be secure.

It is well to feel that in the very sublimity of our purpose is our whole strength. So long as we keep that clearly before our conscience as a nation, so long shall our nation stand as a glory to humanity and an eternal rebuke to our enemy, even before we strike the first blow.

When we remind ourselves that this whole nation has arisen as one man and pledged itself to common treasure to see to it, come what may, that no more may might usurp the place of right, that no more may the strong oppress the weak, that no more may the heartless few wrong the lowly many, we may justly feel that no matter what our sacrifices America will never perish, but from this day forth she will stand among the nations, not only more powerful than any other, but, what is of infinitely greater value, more powerful just because she was more unselfish.

The art of command arises chiefly from personal ascendancy, and the highest claim to superiority is that which is based upon disinterestedness.

NEW ERA IN HISTORY Standing as we now do upon the threshold of a new world, a world which America under God will have the greatest share in fashioning if only she follows the voice of God, we need

more than ever before as individuals and as a nation to scrutinize well our own past failings and search keenly the divine mandates for future guidance.

To-day America leads and true leadership thinks not of glory but of responsibility.

To Washington Almighty God the Ruler of the world gave a clear vision that this nation might begin its course aright. To Lincoln heaven imparted that superb sense of love of the plain people which guided the Union through dangerous years.

To the rulers and citizens of America to-day neither vision nor justice must be lacking if we are to maintain our glorious traditions and see to it, "that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

All these considerations of national and international import are now brought forward only that they may serve to teach every citizen of the nation that personal sense of duty which, well performed, alone can bring to the whole nation the strength needed for the days just now before us, and this blessed season of Lent should be fostered by all as a time to study the needs of our own souls and acquire those virtues, which, more than arms, will bring us victory.

From Ash Wednesday until Holy Saturday let us consecrate each day to useful labor, serious meditation and humble supplication.

It is no time for frivolous amusement or wasteful expenditure either of energy or money.

The spirit of Lent is a spirit of retirement, of sacrifice and of calm self-examination, that we may become stronger by virtue—for the very nature of virtue connotes strength, the strength which enables us to overcome ourselves and to subdue all our enemies.

We must put aside and unreservedly the false conceits which flatter the senses and ruin the soul. We must by a great imperious act of the will discard preposterously the foolish maxims of a self-deceiving world which have brought only war and ruin, and return generously, simply and sincerely to the feet of Christ, our Sacred Redeemer, the one eternally true Teacher of a life that is real.

With the ashes of penitence upon our brows and the vision of the cross before our souls let us renew the health of mind and heart at the only fountain of real life—the Truth of God.

We are holding up to all the nations a wondrously fine ideal of international justice. Let us not fail first to realize the splendid vision in our own souls.

Whatever comes of war or peace, certain it is, that every one of us will soon need all the sanity of mind, all the sacredness of right, all the firmness to do and to suffer, all the ingenuity of thrift that we can call to our command. These qualities of sound reason and moral uprightness are the things which, more than all else, the whole nation will need in its days of stress and strain. What are these qualities after all but the old-fashioned virtues made known to us in earliest youth by the familiar names of Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance?

He who during the holy season of Lent will daily turn mind and heart to the study and the acquisition of these four pillars of moral and mental greatness will find when Easter comes that he is well equipped and perfectly ready to do his complete duty to God and country.

Nothing short of a willingness to perform that complete duty, first in our own souls and then translated into valiant deeds, will save our country and ourselves from dire calamity, either during this War or when, God willing peace has come upon the nation and the whole world.—The Monitor.

LENT Now is the time of humblest prayer, When consciences to God lie bare, And mercy most delights to spare. O harken when we cry, Chastise us with Thy fear; Yet, Father, in the multitude Of Thy compassions, hear!

Now is the season, wisely long, Of sadder thoughts and sorer song, When ailing souls grow well and strong. O harken when we cry, Chastise us with Thy fear; Yet, Father, in the multitude Of Thy compassions, hear!

The feast of penance! Oh, so bright, With true conversion's heavenly light. Like sunrise after stormy night! O harken when we cry, Chastise us with Thy fear; Yet, Father, in the multitude Of Thy compassions, hear!

Full long in sin's dark way we went, Yet now our steps are heavenward bent, And grace is plentiful in Lent. O harken when we cry, Chastise us with Thy fear; Yet, Father, in the multitude Of Thy compassions, hear!

You will find in the Sacred Heart the strength necessary to be troubled about nothing, not even your faults, at sight of which you must humble yourself, but not be discouraged. Say to our Lord: "O my Love, pay for Thy poor slave, repair the evil that I have committed. Make it turn to Thy glory, the education of my neighbor, and the good of my own soul."—Blessed Margaret Mary.

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