

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

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

PALM SUNDAY

OUR LORD'S LAST DAYS

"Me you have not always." (Matt. xxvi. 11)
Memory loves to dwell on the details surrounding the death of our dear departed friends. Their farewells and messages are remembered, and repeated, and handed down. They live again in memory. And who deserves such kindly thought, whose words and every action should be treasured up, as devoutly and as gratefully as His, Who for us and our salvation laid down His life? He seems to appeal to us not to forget Him: "Me you have not always with you."

The public entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday was the simple and short-lived triumph of the Saviour. The multitude who had come to Jerusalem for the Paschal festival, hearing of His approach and moved by the crowning miracle of raising Lazarus from the tomb, went forth to meet Him, waving palm branches, the token of victory, and even spreading their garments beneath His feet. As He drew near to the city, with the Temple in view, the disciples burst forth with cries of joy, and the crowds took up the welcome, "Hosanna to the Son of David." The Pharisees feared that their plots against Him would be frustrated, and owned in the bitterness of their disappointment, "Behold, the whole world has gone after Him." But also! In the midst of those triumphal cries, an unrecurrent of sound swept across the soul of our Lord. In five days hence, instead of "Hosanna" it would be "Crucify Him! away with Him!" The populace was fickle; the priests and Pharisees malicious; and He had come to save His people from their sins. Even as He entered the Temple the royal reception was continued; crowds pressed on Him, with their sick longing to be cured, and the very children taking up the cry of "Hosanna!" St. Luke sums up our Lord's doings thus: "And in the day time, He was teaching in the Temple; but at night, going out, He abode in the mount that is called Olivet" (Luke xxi. 87).

On the following morning, coming early to the Temple, we are told of an occurrence that strikes us with amazement. Passing by Bethphage which means "the house of figs," our Lord noticed a tree, that gave promise of fruit, although the time for figs was not yet. Luxuriant in leaves, barren of fruit! The very type of the Jewish people: they honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. It was natural for our Blessed Lord to seek fruit, for the fruit of the fig-tree is formed before the leaves open, and when they are fully developed ripe fruit should be found beneath them. There was no fruit and our Lord cursed the tree, and it withered away. This our Saviour's only miracle of destruction signified the judgment of the Jews, and accords with His prediction of the destruction of the Temple and the calamities that would overtake the nation.

It was the object of His enemies to force Him to such a declaration of His divine power that they might stone Him to death as a blasphemer. Or again, as when they tempted Him with the coin of the tribute, they hoped to extort from Him a reply that might convict Him of treason to Caesar, and thus make Him a victim to the Roman power. The parables He spoke—the wicked husbandmen; the man not having on the wedding garment—and His answer, "Render to Caesar," disconcerted them and put them to silence. "They knew that He spoke of them," says (St. Matthew xxi. 45). His enemies' last attempt to ensnare Him was, "A doctor of the law asked Him, tempting Him: Master, which is the greatest commandment of the Law?" And our Lord's triumphant reply, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the first and the greatest commandment, and the second is like to this: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. He had begun his ministry by declaring that He came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets, and He concludes this—the last exposition of His doctrine—with the words, "On these two commandments dependeth the whole Law and the Prophets" (Matt. xxii. 35, 40).

Christ's enemies, foiled in their attempt to stir up the popular fury or the enmity of the Romans, were driven to plot to seize Him by treachery; and the opportunity occurred that very night, by the offer of Judas Iscariot to betray Him. Greed led him to it, and he accepted the miserable price fixed for the compensation for the life of a slave.

From the Tuesday evening until the afternoon of Thursday, our Blessed Lord is shrouded in sacred silence. Long hours indeed in prayer He passed before His sacred Passion. We know not the manner nor the hour of our death. In God's mercy it is veiled from us. Our loving Saviour knew every detail. Oh! the anguish of that anticipation. He foreknew the cruel work of every mortal sin; and He offered Himself a willing victim to make atonement for each of us. Surely in gratitude we should remember His sufferings and His death, for He, in His loving mercy,

remembered each one of us and offered them for us.

And in those hours of silence, the events of which are hidden from us, may we not believe that there was a solemn leaving-taking between the Mother and the Son? Our Lady's heart had to be nerved and strengthened for the Sacrifice of Calvary. The work of Redemption had to be realized more poignantly than ever. She had to consent, poor broken-hearted Mother, to the death of her Son. She was obedient to the Will of God even to His Death! Thus Mary Immaculate shared in the Redemption of Calvary.

THE EMBLEM OF LOVE

The outstanding figure of this coming week is the Cross, the Altar upon which the incomparable Victim was immolated. In the ancient covenant God said: "Accursed is he that hangeth on a tree." The Lamb of God did not disdain to suffer this curse. The wood of infamy is dear to us beyond measure.

On Good Friday we follow our Divine Saviour up the hill of Calvary. It is not hard to find the road because it is marked red with His Precious Blood. We reach the place of execution and behold Him stripped of His garments, nailed to the Cross, lifted up to expose Himself to insult. Standing there we watch each drop of blood that flows for the cleansing of the world. We hear each word that is spoken for our instruction. His Mother's Heart is pierced with the sword of sorrow and we compassionate her. After His Three Hours of Agony with reverence we watch His Sacred Head bowed down and receive with adoring love His last breath. There is nothing left of the Son of Man but a bruised and mangled corpse, stiffened by the cold of death.

The Cross is a great sermon on the love of God for us. He was not satisfied with emptying Himself and taking the form of a servant. His birth in the Flesh was but the beginning of His sacrifice. Love led Him unto death, even unto the death of the Cross. He knew that to win our love He must pay a generous price, the immolation of Himself, and He did not hesitate to pay it. St. John says: "Let us therefore love God because God first loved us. This is the lesson of the Cross. During this great week we should say with the Apostle: "The charity of God presseth us; that they who live may not now live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them." We should make at least this return to Him Who made Himself a victim for our sake. He did not pronounce against us the curse that we so justly deserved but He prayed and obtained for us mercy and grace. One day He will appear in the clouds of Heaven and men shall look upon Him Whom they pierced. When that day comes, if we have loved the Cross we shall be numbered among those who having made amends for their crimes by love will find confidence in the sight of the Wounds that love made in His beautiful Body.—Catholic Sun.

SPANISH STUDENTS

HOLD IMPORTANT CONGRESS IN SARAGOSSA

By Rev. Manuel Grana

Madrid, Feb. 17.—In Saragossa, the historical capital of Aragon, under the shadow of one of the most venerable sanctuaries of Spain, that of El Pilar, there has just been held a congress of Catholic students which was an event of national importance. It is barely three years since a handful of students, full of enthusiasm, began to organize in some of the universities in order that their groups might affiliate with the brilliant ranks of social Catholicism. Today there is not a single Spanish university which has not an association of Catholic students, and the recent Congress was a striking proof of the vitality of the Students Confederation.

HAS SYMPATHY OF PROFESSORS

Aided by the Papal Nuncio, the Cardinal Primate and other members of the Spanish Hierarchy, the student movement has met with great sympathy and favor even among those professors who, despite the religious character of the organization, nevertheless see in it a great promise for the future of the nation. Among the innumerable letters and messages received by the students during the congress, those from the former president of the Council, Don Antonio Maura, the former Ministers of the Crown, Senores Allendezalazar, Sillio, and Osorio Gallardo, the deans of various universities and many professors of universities, normal schools and special schools, are particularly worthy of note. The delegates from seventy-one associations of Catholic students formed a fair-sized assembly, and their numbers were still further increased by the presence of many university professors.

WORK OF STUDENT BODY

The Congress of the Catholic students opened with a day of retreat in the famous Cogullada monastery. The sessions began with a solemn Mass of Communion in the sanctuary of El Pilar which guards the most ancient traditions of Spain. The president spoke of the progress of the association and its work during the three years of its existence. The Association par-

ticipated in the debates for the defense of the liberty of education and the autonomy of the universities, and has sent delegates to many international meetings and conventions. It has organized many study circles, lecture courses and public activities of many kinds, and in the short period of its existence it has won an important place in practically every city of Spain. It is worthy of note that the Association of Catholic Students arose spontaneously, so to speak, when it was announced that the Protestants were to establish Y. M. C. A. centers in the Spanish peninsula, and that since its origin it has won the support of the majority of Spanish students.

The Spanish universities have been somewhat obstructed by the French system of centralization which has deprived them of the resources and liberty which brought fame to such universities as those of Salamanca, Alcalá and Sevilla. The impulse they are receiving from the youthful energy of the Catholic students will bring them new life and expansion. In fact, one of the objects of the organization of the students is to enable them to intervene in the functioning and government of the universities, in harmony with the democratic atmosphere in which we live. At the recent congress resolutions of great importance to university life were presented and approved, and will be submitted with irresistible moral support to the Minister of Public Instruction through whose hands all questions of school authority must pass. The resolutions call for reforms in the programs of study, changes in university buildings and material equipment, the autonomy of the universities, sports, pensions and scholarships for poor students, the independence of Catholic students societies in the universities and many other things.

HORRIFIED BY BOOK FROM LIBRARY

New York, Feb. 17.—Indignant because a circulating library had placed a salacious book in the hands of his daughter, Supreme Court Justice John Ford said that he would seek the prosecution of those responsible for the circulation of the book and, if necessary, propose a bill to the legislature to "put teeth in the present law against books likely to impair morals."

When Justice Ford learned that this book and its publishers had been brought to court and that a City Magistrate had exonerated both, he said: "This book is a terrible thing. It is loathsome. The fact that a Magistrate may have approved of it doesn't alter the fact. A grand jury still can act. There are various ways of dealing with such a thing. This is not in my line, and I will have to study the matter before proceeding but I'll find some way of acting, or I'll go to the Legislature with a law that will stop this sort of thing."

I understand that the book is now in the hands of Chief Assistant District Attorney Pecora and that he may start a new prosecution. I intend to communicate with him and will help him in every way. "A circulating library recommended this thing to my daughter. She turned it over to her mother, who was horrified, and she put it in my hands. It is a disgrace to the community if we cannot protect ourselves against such things. I had no idea that anything of the kind was tolerated."

Justice Ford said that he had been informed that the present statute on the subject of immoral books had been rendered powerless by an interpretation by the Court of Appeals of certain phrases and that he proposed to draft new legislation.

HIGH-MINDED MINISTER

Washington, D. C., March 4.—An unwritten incident in the Knights of Columbus war history came to light here when Colonel John T. Axton, chief of American chaplains received a letter from a minister attached to the American United Presbyterian Mission in India, enclosing a draft of \$50, which he requested be turned over to some branch of the K. of C. "where it will serve the best use for the privates of the Army." The writer explained that the money represented the value of athletic goods he had received from the Knights of Columbus while on duty as chaplain at a base hospital and which he had issued to officers of the station with the result that "The boys did not benefit at all."

Colonel Axton decided that the case was not one that called for restitution and has returned the check. "Your whole record," said Col. Axton in his letter, "indicates that you are self-sacrificing, conscientious and painstaking and that you rendered most excellent service in the Army. From personal experience, the three chaplains in this office, one of whom is a Roman Catholic, know that the use of athletic goods and similar materials supplied by the various welfare organizations was not limited to the enlisted personnel. The morale of officers had to be sustained and you were amply justified in using any or all of the equipment that was sent to you as a contribution to the contentment of the officers with

whom you were serving. Our experience tells us that materials were so abundant that if you had diverted the entire consignment to which you refer in all probability no hardship would have been worked upon the enlisted personnel of your hospital. We fully appreciate the very high sense of honor indicated by your action, but we feel that there is no necessity for the refund by you of any sum. The Catholic chaplain in this office expresses the view that you could use this \$50 to a far better advantage in the field where you are now laboring than to have it sent to some point in the Army. Most of our stations are abundantly supplied with those things that contribute to the moral and religious well-being of the enlisted men. May God bless you in the work upon which you are engaged, keep you always as high-minded as your action in this case indicates, bring you safe to the homeland at the conclusion of a successful tour of service in India and give us the privilege of some time knowing you personally."

If a certain person is your enemy, it is not necessary for you to be his.

MAGNESIA BEST FOR YOUR INDIGESTION

Warns Against Doping Stomach With Artificial Digestants

Most people who suffer, either occasionally or chronically from gas, sourness and indigestion, have now discontinued disagreeable diets, patent foods and the use of harmful drugs, stomach tonic medicines and artificial digestants, and instead, following the advice so often given in these columns, take a teaspoonful or two tablets of Bisurated Magnesia in a little water after meals with the result that their stomachs no longer trouble them, they are able to eat as they please and they enjoy much better health. The Bisurated Magnesia is a natural product of the earth, it is not a chemical compound, it is not a drug, it is a food, it is a natural food corrector, which can be obtained from any good drug store, will instantly neutralize the stomach acidity, sweeten the stomach, prevent food fermentation and without the slightest pain or discomfort. Try this plan yourself, but be certain to get pure Bisurated Magnesia especially prepared for stomach use.

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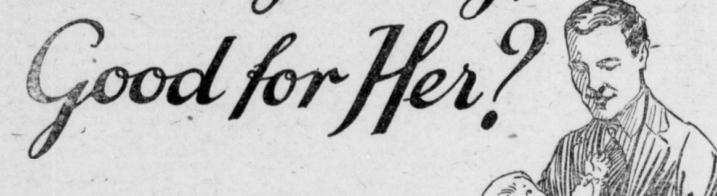
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