

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. M. BOSSAERT

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST

HOLY COMMUNION

Many fathers of the Church and commentators of Holy Scripture understand the great Supper, of which we read in today's Gospel, to be a type of Holy Communion; we may follow their example, for it is perfectly right to describe this holy and adorable Sacrament as a great Supper. It is undoubtedly great, because it was instituted by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, because in it we receive no earthly, but divine and heavenly good, and because not only a select few but all are invited to partake of it. Let us consider briefly today our obligation to receive this holy Sacrament frequently.

1. The graces bestowed upon us, when we receive any Sacrament worthily, are very great, for we are released from our sins, sanctified and made children of God and heirs of heaven. But there is an incomparable greater grace offered us in Holy Communion, since in it we receive not graces merely, but the Author and Giver of all graces. Jesus Christ enters into our hearts and unites Himself most closely with us, penetrating, ennobling and purifying our whole being. He tells us Himself: "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, abideth in Me, and I in him." Just as natural food sustains natural life and gives the body strength to labor, so does this heavenly food sustain the supernatural life of the soul, and preserve sanctifying grace; it weakens our evil inclinations and imparts energy to do right; it cleanses us from venial and at times from mortal sin, and is to us a sure pledge of a glorious resurrection and of eternal happiness; therefore, our Lord said: "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

2. It is because the effect of Holy Communion is so wonderful, and because it confers so many graces, that souls eager for salvation have always regarded it as their greatest happiness to be allowed to approach the Lord's table frequently. The early Christians communicated daily, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles for they assisted every day at the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and received Holy Communion at the same time as the priest. St. Cyprian, who lived in the third century, says that the Christians in his time still communicated daily. He writes as follows: "We receive the Lord's Supper every day as food whereby our salvation is assured, that we may not be cut off from the body of Christ." St. Jerome tells us that as late as the fourth century daily Communion was usual amongst the Christians in Rome and in Spain. Subsequently, however, men lost their zeal, although they still were in the habit of communicating every Sunday. It was not until the year 1216 that, owing to the lukewarmness then prevalent amongst Christians, the Church, at the Fourth Lateran Council, was obliged to lay down rules for Holy Communion, requiring everyone to confess his sins and to communicate at least once in the year, and that at Easter. Anyone who did not conform to this rule was to be cast out of the Church and deprived of Christian burial after his death. At the Council of Trent this rule was re-enforced, and at the same time the Church expressed her ardent desire that Christians should communicate frequently during the year, and not only at Easter.

Pope Pius X. our late Holy Father, issued a decree dealing especially with frequent and daily Communion, urging and encouraging the faithful of every age and rank to receive Holy Communion very often, and if possible daily. Ought we to turn a deaf ear to the invitations and wishes of the Church and of the Holy Father? Ought we to follow the example of those who approach the Sacrament once only in the year, and then under compulsion rather than of their own accord? I consider it absolutely impossible for one who communicates so seldom to lead a truly Christian life. Experience shows that those who communicate very seldom and perhaps only once a year are, as a rule, lukewarm Christians, careless about their own salvation, and living as if they possessed no immortal soul or doing very little for the sanctification of that soul. How much better would be the spiritual condition of the faithful, how different would be the position of Catholicism in many places, if everyone were eager to receive the Sacraments of penance and of the altar very frequently!

Do not be influenced by the example of the world, or deterred from so beneficial and necessary a practice as frequent Communion by the sarcastic words and mockery of others. The world has always been opposed to all that is good, and the very fact that the world disapproves of frequent Communion should convince you that it is good and pleasing in God's sight. All the Saints went often to Holy Communion—follow their example, and obey your holy Mother, the Church, when she bids you approach the Sacraments as often as you can; yes, obey Jesus Christ Himself, and listen to His solemn words: "Amen, amen, I say unto you: Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you." Amen.

GENERAL INTENTION FOR JUNE

RECOMMENDED AND BLESSED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XV.

THE EUCHARISTIC APOSTOLATE

The Eucharist is the bond of unity in the Catholic world, just as it is the test of our Catholicity and the measure of our fervor. Our faith, hope and charity are gauged by our devotion to this glorious Sacrament, the great central dogma of our religion. Love of the Eucharist is the magnet that attracts all who wish to serve God intimately, just as the absence of this love spells lukewarmness, a state that our Lord wished to crush out of the souls of men when He revealed His Heart to Saint Margaret Mary, and when He asked her to go to Communion on the First Friday of every month and as often, besides, as obedience would allow. It was His invitation to her to nourish her soul with the Bread of Life, being well aware that her example would in the coming centuries move others to do the same. The Eucharistic apostolate was being clearly outlined when He asked her to perform this sublime act of union with Himself in a spirit of atonement for the coldness of others.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart, the symbol of our Lord's love, necessarily leads to the altar rail. It makes us share in the sentiments that fill His Heart burning with love for us on our altars; it reminds us that He deeply feels the coldness of those whom He loves; it forces us to atone in some way by the fervor of our affections and the sanctity of our lives. Listen to the tender, plaintive words which He uttered in one of His revelations to Margaret Mary, words which should move the hearts of all who have the power to feel. "Behold," he exclaimed, "My Heart which has loved man so much that it has suffered everything, has given all its treasures, and has made every effort to show its love. In return I receive from the greater number of them only ingratitude, contempt, irreverence, sacrilege, and coldness, in the Sacrament of My love." Who is there so devoid of understanding that he cannot see how the loving Heart of Jesus feels our ingratitude? And who is so heartless as not to long to atone in some way by greater fidelity and fervor in His service?

When we possess Him in Holy Communion, more tender thoughts are suggested, more fervent prayers are uttered, more tears of compunction are shed, more faith and hope are aroused, more love is quickened. When we hold Him near to our hearts we feel more acutely the coldness and indifference to those who know Him, not as who, knowing Him, love Him, not, and we feel rising in us a spirit of atonement which can be satisfied only by making others share our sentiments. This is the Eucharistic apostolate which we all may exercise, and which the Holy Father invites us to engage in. It will explain the why and the wherefore of the decree on Holy Communion issued by Pius X. in 1905. The Sovereign Pontiff desired to see the practice of frequent, even daily, Communion spread among the faithful and he laid down the simple conditions required. What more consoling than to know that mortal sin is the only real obstacle to Communion; and that venial sin is not. Mortal sin surely kills the soul and it must be blotted out by sorrow and penance before the soul dare approach again the Holy of Holies. Venial sin prevents the communicant from receiving the plenitude of the fruit which the soul would draw from this great Sacrament, but there is always an increase of sanctifying grace and those who receive frequently disengage themselves little by little from venial sins, which are necessarily offensive to God, and from the affection to those faults which they deplore interiorly. Frequent Communion gives us strength to restrain our concupiscent, to blot out defects and to avoid the grievous sins to which human weakness is exposed. When we receive the Body and Blood of Christ in Communion our hearts throb in union with the Sacred Heart; we enjoy sacramentally the privileges which St. John the beloved disciple and Saint Margaret Mary enjoyed mystically when they leaned on the bosom of our Lord and felt the pulsations of His Heart.

"Holy Communion is the great act of devotion to the Sacred Heart. It is consoling to witness the increase in recent years in the number of Promoters and Associates who carry on the Eucharistic apostolate by the good example they give in going to Communion frequently. But we are living in a world that is spiritually cold. Much more might be done to extend this Eucharistic apostolate. There is a great deal of lukewarmness among Catholics. How different it would be if we were once conceived of the efficacy of our example among our fellow-men and fellow-women. It may be that we are not called to preach or teach by word or pen, but how much we could do by example! Frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament, assistance at Mass, not merely on Sundays and holidays when assistance at Mass is obligatory, but also on week-days, when it is not, are ways of exercising our apostolate.

The need of spreading the influence of the Holy Eucharist in the world will explain the other decree issued by the same Pontiff, Pius X. on the Communion of children. It was his intention that the little ones of the flock should become

Eucharistic apostles, whose work begun early in life would extend into the years to come. Have we ever stopped to think what the results of Holy Communion are on souls of children? It strengthens them in virtue and prepares them even from childhood, to meet the trials and temptations of the future; it fosters in them zeal and a purity of life which are the ordinary prelude of vocation. Who are they that are usually singled out from the ranks to enter the immediate service of God? Who are they that bear most clearly and respond most readily to the invitation to give themselves to the service of the altar? Undoubtedly those who as children had acquired the habit of frequently going to Communion. Further, are not our cloisters filled with inmates who from their early years nourished their souls with the Eucharist? Long before they were called upon to make the sacrifice of the world and its follies, those spouses of Christ had learned how sweet was union with Him in Communion.

The moments spent with Him were so precious that the souvenir was still vivid when the great step was to be made. When the time came to choose between Him and the world, their choice was for Him whom they had learned to love in Holy Communion. If parents and teachers wish to show their love for the Church and their interest in her welfare, they will provide for the recruitment of her glory and her Brotherhoods and Sisterhoods by exercising the Eucharistic apostolate among children and who lead to them for guidance. Devotion to the Sacred Heart will help their work enormously. The League in its third degree, is keeping up the practice of frequent Communion.

But there is also the rank and file of the Catholic world. Catholics living in the world have also to work out their salvation; they also need the help and grace that frequent Communion provides so abundantly. A fitting field for the Eucharistic apostolate is surely to be found among so many, even in our neighborhood, who live in lukewarmness and sin, who neglect confession, who put off their Easter duty, who are indifferent in the matter of religion as if it were no affair of theirs. If we really love our Lord and wish to give pleasure to His Sacred Heart, we must necessarily deplore the danger to which so many Catholics expose their immortal souls. If we have any zeal for their salvation, we are going to urge them to receive frequently as the most efficacious means of rising out of their torpidity, and thinking of the only thing that matters here below. Let us be up and doing. The years are passing rapidly. Shortly we shall be asked what we have done to spread the love of God in the hearts of those around us. What answer shall we be able to give when that time comes?

E. J. DEVINE, S. J.

THE OULJA BOARD

A seemingly innocent toy, advertised in papers and catalogues as an instrument of amusement for children, the Oulja Board is an invention of hell for the ruin of souls. Through it thoughtless men and women become first familiar with the Devil and in the end his slaves. These are strong statements but they are not stronger than the truth of the matter.

The facts are that the Oulja Board gives information which a dead piece of wood evidently cannot give. To account for the phenomenon by an appeal to the automatic working of the subconscious mind is an attempt to explain a mystery by a mystery. For what do we know about the subconscious mind? And that the subconscious mind should know all those things which the "magic hand" writes down in answer to questions—this supposition is taxing our credulity too much.

It seems certain, then that an outward intelligence wields the pen. This cannot be God but because of the silly answers sometimes given and because God does not lend Himself to satisfy the morbid appetites of idle curiosity. Nor can we reasonably think that good spirits, whether angels or souls of the blessed, either would be willing to participate in such profanities or God would permit them to do so. Evil spirits, on the contrary, and lost souls, as far as they have latitude of movement, do not regret their doing by the will of God. They—and we mean especially the evil spirits while allowing the possibility that lost souls might act as their agents—will welcome any opportunity to draw souls within the sphere of their influence with a view to their final ruin.

Therefore Scripture is full of warnings against the snares of evil spirits. We are exhorted to be sober and to watch because our adversary, the Devil, goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. At the time of Christ, presaging the early downfall of his power, he made a desperate effort to hold on to his dominion over man as evidenced by the many cases of demonic possessions. But to no avail: the "prince of this world" was cast out. Wherever Christ holds sway the Devil is a conquered foe.

fasten on them the strings by which they become his captives. The Oulja Board is now a-days one of his favorite and most successful baits to catch souls with.

If there are those among our readers who innocently have indulged in the satanic superstition, let them burn up the Devil's trinket before it is too late. This terrible fascination works like an opiate. At first it seems a pure pleasure and a welcome exhilaration. By and by it becomes an enslavement against which an almost stifled will-power shall rebel in vain.

Listen, in conclusion, to what the Scripture says (Deut. 18, 10-14): "Let there be found among you on one that consulteth soothsayers, or observeth dreams and omens, neither let there be any wizard, nor charmer, nor any one that consulteth pythonic spirits, or fortune tellers, or that seeketh the truth from the dead. For the Lord abhorreth all these things, and for these abominations he will destroy them at thy coming. . . . These nations whose land thou shalt possess hearken to soothsayers and diviners; but thou art otherwise instructed by the Lord thy God."—S. in The Guardian.

CORPUS CHRISTI, SALVA ME!

O word made flesh, beneath these humble forms So lowly art Thou hidden in Thy shrine; Veiled all Thy splendor, veiled Thy glory here, Nothing is seen, nor human nor Divine.

An earthly light points out where Thou art hid, A small red lamp, a tiny glowing flame; And here we kneel, and worship, Lord, by faith, Thy majesty, eternal years the same.

O loving Wisdom! Thou Who here dost design To hide Thy glory from weak man, that we With eyes undazzled, kneeling at Thy feet, See nothing but Thy great humility.

Yet faith can pierce the veil that shrouds Thee, Lord; And as we kneel, perchance our hearts may guess Uplifted in Thy Presence towards Thy Throne, Some faint, dim image of Thy loveliness.

And day by day Thou art incarnate, Lord, Where'er Thy Priest before Thine Altar stands; The whispered words, and lo! the wondrous change;— 'Tis God raised high in his anointed hands.

In every clime, in every distant sphere, Behold the Miracle! Our God appears; The Sacrifice on Calvary begun, Daily renewed, prolonged through-out the years.

And so we worship, And, O Love Divine! Bowing Thyself all lowly from Thy Roof, Thy sacred Body and Thy precious Blood, Thou giv'st to each in sweet, life-giving food.

And each receives the undivided whole; Complete, intact, Heaven's radiant, glorious Sun, Ever unparted, and yet multiplied, A thousand, thousand fragments, and yet One.

So poor our praises, and so weak our tongue, Thyself in this great Sacrifice, supplies our need; Thou giv'st to God the thanks we fain would give, And praised thus, O God, Thou'rt praised indeed. —LESLIE MOORE

THE SACRED HEART

The month of June is dedicated to the devotion of the Sacred Heart of our Saviour. From the earliest ages of the Church the attributes of the mercy and love of God have had a special attraction for the faithful. Such a devotion as the one specially recommended for the coming month brings with it as one of its distinctive graces a feeling of love in the human heart in return for the love which Christ lavished on the human race.

According to Catholic theology the Heart of the Redeemer is an object of adoration, and this by virtue of the hypostatic union by which divinity was united with humanity in the Person of the Incarnate Son of God. The devotion of the Sacred Heart then, from its very nature, brings with it two things of which the world particularly stands in need at the present time. The first of these is the recognition of the divinity of Christ. Because of forgetfulness of this great fundamental religious fact men have gone astray, rejected the teachings of the Gospels and plunged a great portion of the earth into desolation. The terrible war would never have occurred had faith not been weakened or destroyed in the greatest of doctrinal truths, namely that Christ is God. When the restoration of peaceful relations among nations is eventually brought about the security for their continuance may best be found in the recognition that we are all brothers in Christ, the object

of His special affection, and in Him, united one to another, with a spiritual relationship that should be and is the basis of any lasting peace. In the Sacred Heart and devotion to it, as encouraged by the Church, the goodness and loving kindness of the Saviour appears in a particularly strong light. May this coming month of June have the effect of teaching more generally the sublime lesson which it alone can impart.—Providence Visitor.

THE CATHOLIC HABIT OF PRAYER

Nothing bespeaks the practical Catholic so much as the salutary habit of prayer. In temptation, in each surprise of danger, in fear, anguish or grief, the well-trained soul, like a confiding child runs to the protecting arms of its mother, turns instinctively to God, and in so doing but follows the maxim of our Lord to "pray always."

Prayer for the Catholic is the armor of the soul, which from constant use is kept clean and bright; it is the ever-present shield against which the fiery darts of enemies strike, but are powerless to harm. It is as natural for the good Catholic to

pray as to breathe, and prayer will always spring spontaneously to his heart and lips with even the first intimation of danger. If he be victorious over temptation; if he be successful in overcoming an inclination to evil; if he is to accomplish any good whatsoever, it is traceable always to prayer. All good things must come to him through prayer.

When prayer ceases, the spiritual life of the Catholic ceases, and when the spiritual and practical part of the Catholic life is laid aside, all meriting works are likewise laid aside or forgotten. Catholic life without good works becomes weakened, and that faith which is not stimulated by good works soon becomes a dead faith.

Prayer is the keynote of Catholic life, the touchstone of all the good which is to come to us in the day of health and strength, and of all the comfort for which we hope in the hour of death.

It is meant for us to ask in order that we may receive, and it is only through this means of humble, earnest asking in prayer that God is pleased to bestow His grace upon us, and to guard that treasure of the true faith which in His goodness He has entrusted to us.—The Monitor.

How Coca-Cola Resembles Tea

If you could take about one-third of a glass of tea, add two-thirds glass of carbonated water, then remove the tea flavor and add a little lemon juice, phosphoric acid, sugar, caramel and certain flavors in the correct proportion, you would have an almost perfect glass of Coca-Cola.

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