

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON
QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY

LENTEN OBLIGATIONS
Next Wednesday, my brethren, we enter, as of course you know, on the great and holy season of Lent. On that day, no doubt, as many of you as can will come to the church and receive on your foreheads the ashes which remind us of the penance to which these coming weeks are especially devoted.

The church is generally full on Ash-Wednesday, and one would think, on seeing the crowds pressing forward to receive the ashes, that they were all determined to enter into the spirit of the church, and to keep Lent as it should be kept. Yet how many there are who go through this outward form, and make a great deal of it, and yet neglect all that is signified by it; who give a show indeed of penance, but bring forth none of its fruits. Some, perhaps, of our Ash-Wednesday penitents will not be seen again in the church till they come forward again on Good Friday to kiss the cross.

It is better to come to church, if only on Ash-Wednesday and Good Friday, than not at all; better to do God than to neglect the virtues altogether. But how much better still it would be to now thoroughly understand and seriously take to heart what God requires of us, especially in this holy time, and to make it the means, as it may be more than anything else, of our final salvation.

First, then, to thoroughly understand what we are now to do. Everything must be well understood before it can be well done, and the keeping of Lent is no exception to this general rule. Many people break the rules of Lent because they do not clearly understand them.

Lent, then, my dear brethren, is not a time to be spent in idleness according to one's own devotion. Far from it; the duties to be performed in it are clearly and precisely laid down and should be attended to very strictly. They are not many; they are no great demands on our strength; but the Christian who discharges them properly will make his Lent far better than one would who should neglect them and take any other practices, no matter how hard, in their place. It is better to keep the real laws of Lent faithfully, and come to all the extra services, and give half one's goods to the poor, and yet neglect our regular duties.

What, then, are these laws? The first is the Master duty, which should be made before Easter. If possible, through the church indulgently extends the time several weeks after that festival. Make, then, this great duty, far the greatest of all the duties of a Christian, at once; it will be very easy for all of you who have just made the mission to do it now, and the longer you put it off the longer it will be. Make it, then, if possible, the first day it can be made—that is, next Sunday—and get it, if I may say so, off your mind. Do not fancy that, as you have so lately made the mission, the Easter duty is of little consequence. If you had made twenty missions during the past year, and any number of Lenten fasts, the law of the Easter duty would bind you exactly as much as if you had neglected them all. It is like hearing Mass on Sunday; nobody is excused at all from Mass on Sunday because they have been to it through the week. So the Lenten fast, the great Sunday for the precept of Holy Communion; it must be fulfilled at this time, no matter how often one has received outside of it.

The second and only other real law of Lent is that relating to fasting and abstinence. If you attend carefully to the rules that have been read to you, you will understand this well enough. But do not confuse fasting with abstinence; that is the most common mistake. People often say: "Oh! I have to work hard; I can eat meat if I like." This is a great error, and a very foolish one. Many are excused from fasting on the days appointed. If you want to have a safe conscience in eating meat, you should consult a confessor, unless seriously ill.

Attend to these two things, then, and you will make your Lent as a Christian should. But of course you will also try to follow, to the best of your ability, the other devotional practices recommended by the church at this time. Come to daily Mass, and to the occasional services, and give aims according to your means. These practices, especially now, are of the greatest spiritual profit, and are of the greatest danger. Remember that Easter duty and fasting, with abstinence, are the real laws. Obey these at any rate, and then, so far as you are able, add the others beside.

BENEDICTION

In compliance with the request of a non-Catholic for an explanation of benediction, a writer gives the following most beautiful and comprehensive description of that sublime ceremony so frequently witnessed in our churches on Sundays and holidays of special importance, and graphically describes and explains that particular form of blessing imparted by the Church to the faithful on those occasions:

By Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament Catholics understand the imparting of bestowing of a blessing by our Divine Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself, through the instrumentality of the Holy Eucharist in which He is truly present. The ceremony consists in prayer and adoration on the part of the people assembled in the church and the conferring of a blessing on the part of our Divine Lord.

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The book tells of a line of business that has and is paying enormous dividends, and which is being supported by Catholics to the extent of \$75,000,000 a year. It contains most complete facts and figures relating to this particular business and the astonishing dividends paid stockholders. It shows how Catholics may, for the first time, not only receive the interest on their share of the profits of this great business, but the stock of old-established companies in this line is worth ten to twenty times par value, and original investors are receiving 100 per cent. dividends.

This is not a get-rich-quick scheme, but a high-class, legitimate business enterprise, endorsed by leading banks and the Catholic hierarchy and laity.

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If you would like to have a copy of this book, address: Phillip Harding, Dept. 604V, Box 1301, Philadelphia, Pa. Mr. Harding requests that no one write simply through idle curiosity, and unless you are a member of the Catholic Church the book will be of no interest to you, because only Catholics will be permitted to hold stock in this particular institution.

which he at once elevates to position high above the main altar where the Host is left for the adoration of the people. He next descends to the foot of the grand altar, as if suspended from heaven, and in a soft, sweet melody like angelic voices, flows the triumphant tones of the "O Salutaris," penetrating with their sweetness and delicacy the most remote corners of the edifice. High over the grand altar, as if suspended from heaven, the angelic message to the humble shepherds of Judea, emblazoned on letters of gold: "Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to men of good will." The air is fragrant with the odor of incense, countless lights twinkle and glitter around the altar, and illumine the surroundings in one magnificent blaze of glory. The effulgent rays of the sacred monstrance shine forth in grandeur and brilliancy unequalled and unseen before by human eyes. The Sacred Host is now exposed for adoration and the Saviour, veiled by the outward form of that Host, blesses His children, who are hushed and bowed awaiting the solemn moment of benediction. The vision of St. John is here reproduced—Christ is really present, the altar is His throne, the blazing lights are the glories that unceasingly shine in His august presence, the incense rising heavenward, is the prayers of the faithful, and finally the congregation in the kneeling multitude that bows before the lamb and utters its ceaseless, Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus. At that moment a tender and delicate hand is laid upon our heads, the bright blue rays of the Saviour look down upon us, while His voice speaks lovingly through the ages gone before: "Suffer, little children to come unto Me," and He blesses us as He blesses the anxious multitudes who followed Him through the hills and valleys of the Holy Land, centuries ago, for we are all His children. At that instant every soul is lifted to heaven, every heart is bared to the glance that saved Peter. At this moment His peace He gives us, His peace He leaves us. Not as the world gives does He give.

The priest again ascends the altar, takes the monstrance from its exalted position; turns towards the congregation prostrated before him and makes the sign of the cross over the bended forms, Jesus Himself imparting the blessing.

15 YEARS A DYSPEPTIC
Forced to Live on Stale Bread and Porridge.

"FRUIT-A-TIVES" CURED HIM

AVONDALE, N. B., October, 19th. "I have been a great sufferer from Indigestion for fifteen years. I was forced to deny myself all such hearty foods as beans, meats, potatoes, and could not drink tea or coffee. For the past two years, I lived on porridge, stale bread, etc. I had treatment from two doctors, and tried nearly every kind of medicine, but got worse.

"Finally I saw a testimonial of 'Fruit-a-tives' and concluded to give them a trial. I took nearly four boxes of 'Fruit-a-tives' and they have made me feel like a new man. I can eat all kinds of hearty foods without suffering, and am no longer constipated."

slung. No wonder a plenary indulgence attaches to the worthy reception of these blessed words, graciously granted by the august father of Christendom, ever solicitous for the welfare of his children, a favor that elevates man to the third heaven of ecstatic delight and enjoyment. Such, my dear sir, is benediction, and should you ever be given the privilege of assisting at that sacred ceremony, turn your eyes toward the altar and repeat with St. Paul, humbly and sincerely, "If it be Thou, Lord, command me to come unto Thee."—True Voice.

KEEPING LENT

Lent begins this year on February 21. A great number of Catholics are exempted from the Lenten fast because of hard labor or delicate health, and even for those who abound in health and means and leisure the fast has been mitigated as to cause but little suffering or inconvenience. Devotees of athletic sports, women faint to preserve their beauty submit to dietary regimens, involving more self denial and lasting longer than the fast of Lent. This was as true, at least for the athletes, in the days of St. Paul as it is to-day; for in the presence of the Lenten season we find his reminder to his converts of the runner who refraineth himself from all things that he may win in the race and receive the corruptible crown, so they might be heartened by the familiar example to do as much for the incorruptible crown, the reward of life everlasting.

Has the Church in our day ever imposed as severe a fast for the weal of our souls as many persons willingly take on themselves for the weal of their bodies? We knew a young woman who lived for many months on brown bread and apples and weak tea with a view to rooting out a disease which threatened her health and beauty. We have seen a man subsisting for an equally long time on an unvaried diet of milk and crackers, and thus overcoming a more malignant disorder.

The Rosary Magazine cites the cases of Luigi Corrao and Horace Fletcher. The former utterly broken at the age of thirty-five by luxurious living, renewed his youth and strength by abstemious diet, to which he adhered not only for forty days but for his whole life, and he lived happily and usefully to an advanced age of one hundred and five.

The latter, equally far gone at forty-five—and retused by every life insurance company—overcame three chronic diseases and brought himself into robust health by Corrao's methods. No one questions that more illness and premature deaths result from over-indulgence than from self-denial in food and drink; and the great age in full possession of their health and mental faculties attained by many men and women in the austere orders of the Church attests the salutary value of a spare and simple diet.

The well and leisurely therefore can run no bodily risk by the observance of the Lenten fast.

But Lent remains a penitential season even for those who are rightfully exempted from the fast. The hard-working man may not safely omit the substantial breakfast which he consumes as his daily toll, but he can dispense with his beer or tobacco without serious danger to life or limb. Earnest Catholics interdict the theatre and dancing parties as a matter of course during Lent.

To be sure there is no formal legislation on the subject, but would one be seen at a "great night" or a ball within the fortnight following a family bereavement? If one have a living faith the analogy will not be accounted far-fetched.

But to keep Lent well it is not enough that we refrain ourselves. Fasting, be it from food or amusement, is especially aimed at the elimination of worldly pleasures. Let us estimate the cost of certain daily dishes, of between-meals candy and confection, of theatre-parties, concerts and whists foregone during the six weeks of Lent. Will not the aggregate of these self-denials make a very respectable contribution to some struggling charity, to our parish conference of St. Vincent de Paul, to some pitiful need known only to a limited circle? "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth," says Christ Himself, in the Gospel of Ash-Wednesday, "where thieves break through and steal, and where moths and rust corrupt, and where thieves dig up and carry away." But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes, and where thieves do not break through and steal."

Limited means, perhaps, limit our amusements at all seasons, and we find so little to retrench in Lent that we cannot thus materially increase our charities. But what we cannot augment in money, we may augment in sympathy and service. There are plenty of charities to show us how we can turn our leisure hours to good account.

The Lenten trilogy is fasting, alms-deeds and prayer—and the last is not the least. What consolation is the man made desolate because there is none that considereth in his heart, as said the prophet of old. One of the incidental evils of the strenuous life is that it leaves so little time for spiritual introspection. By the subduing of the appetites and the elimination of worldly amusements we Catholics are expected to find heart and time to note how we stand with God. Special devotions are provided for several evenings in the week, there is often a week-day Mass at an hour convenient for all, and not seldom a retreat in our respective parishes to help us to do our duty. Let us lightly forego these helps to a holy Lent. There is a word from God awaiting us in the sermon; there is strength for our sorrows in the Way of the Cross. There is Christ Himself in the Mass and the Benediction. There is the benefit of our example to some weak and timorous soul.—Boston Pilot.

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Dr. Haywood said there had been mischievous reactions in the religious thought of the world due to the advent of the Protestant reformation. "One of those has resulted in the creation of a prejudice with respect to the Holy Virgin," he added. "Her name is rarely mentioned in a Protestant church. We have dispossessed her of that glory and honor which is hers by divine right."—Cleveland Universe.

The Faith of the Exiles The Dublin Freeman's Journal notes that the part which Irish emigrants played in the building up of the Catholic Church in Lancashire (England) is feelingly acknowledged in an appeal which the Most Rev. Dr. Whitehead, Archbishop of Liverpool, has issued on behalf of the Liverpool Diocesan Mission Fund. He contrasts the religious condition of England as seen by Pius IX. in 1850 with that which meets the gaze of Pius X. in 1911. "So little influence had they" (writes the Archbishop), "and so much were they unknown by their fellow-countrymen, that as a Catholic writer expressed it, 'before the agitation for Catholic Emancipation in 1829 rural Englishmen hardly knew more of Catholics than they knew of fossil mammoths.' Yet about this time forces were at work which were destined under the Providence of God to accomplish great things for this land." Following the Catholic Emancipation Act came the Oxford Movement, but so far as the North of England was concerned, the strongest influence was supplied by the men and women driven from Ireland. The Archbishop points out that hundreds of thousands of them fled to England from famine and fever in their own land, and "it is chiefly by the faith, and

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Audited and found correct. J. M. SCULLY, F.C.A., Auditor. Waterloo, January 25th, 1912.

New Business (Canadian) written in 1911 \$10,027,374; Increase over 1910 \$ 694,600 Assurance in force, December 31, 1911 71,020,770; " " " 6,165,491 Assets - December 31, 1911 18,161,847; " " " 1,882,285 Surplus, Govt. Standard, December, 1911 3,653,123; " " " 599,669 Surplus Earned in 1911 731,065; " " " 115,982

Some Results for the Past Year

Assets \$12,313,107.57
Net Surplus 1,300,784.00
Total Payments to Policyholders 998,348.87
Dividends Paid to Policyholders 148,135.09
Insurance in Force 46,000,000.00
Annual report will be mailed to those interested upon request.

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Financial Statement OF THE MUTUAL LIFE OF CANADA (HEAD OFFICE, WATERLOO, ONTARIO)

For the Year Ended December 31st, 1911

CASH ACCOUNT INCOME DISBURSEMENTS
NET LEDGER ASSETS December 31st, 1910...\$15,511,218.00
PREMIUMS (Net)..... 2,454,061.77
INTEREST..... 875,476.75
PROFIT FROM SALE OF SECURITIES..... 2.83
\$18,840,759.35

BALANCE SHEET ASSETS LIABILITIES
Mortgages.....\$9,718,099.03
Debentures and Bonds..... 4,967,664.50
Loans on Policies..... 2,264,431.07
Premium Obligations..... 12,052.46
Real Estate..... 181,344.61
Cash in Banks..... 186,098.58
Cash at Head Office..... 2,724.60
Due and Deferred Premiums (net)..... 412,031.09
Interest due and accrued..... 416,801.22
\$18,161,847.25

Audited and found correct. J. M. SCULLY, F.C.A., Auditor. Waterloo, January 25th, 1912.