

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

By Rev. M. Fossbert

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE AWAKENING FROM SPIRITUAL DEATH

Dear brethren, when our divine Saviour entered the house of the ruler, of whom today's Gospel speaks, He said: "Give place, for the girl is not dead but sleepeth."

(1) The first condition is the summoning of Jesus. Dear brethren, when the ruler had died the father realized that she was past human help, for what human being can recall to life a dead person?

Although the prayer of the sinner, like any good work performed in the state of mortal sin, has no merit for salvation, it is nevertheless required to secure for him the grace of conversion. He must seek the help of Jesus, with the sincere desire to escape his miserable condition and be must be filled with confidence in the mercy and grace of God.

And now the time for His departure had arrived. When He felt that they were sufficiently well trained, He announced that His hour had come and surrendered Himself into the hands of His enemies to make the great sacrifice. He delivered Himself up to be crucified that by His death He might save the souls of men.

(2) The second condition was the help of Jesus. The dead girl remained lifeless until Jesus took her by the hand. Thus, my dear brethren, is the help of Jesus necessary for the raising of the sinner from spiritual death. Even if the sinner has the intention to return to God from his evil ways, he can not do it without the help of God.

Soon after his death the newly-founded society assembled. They hid themselves away in an upper room in a house in Jerusalem because they feared the Jews. Now that He Who had been their sole support and strength was taken away from the work for which they had been appointed. Consequently, they remained in hiding until the first Pentecost day when the Holy Spirit descended upon them, bringing the light and strength that were so necessary for the preaching of the Gospel.

HOLY VIATICUM

A time will inevitably come, and sooner, perhaps, than we think, for each one of us, when we shall no longer be able to assist at the Holy Mass, or approach the altar rails, to receive Holy Communion, or visit Him in the tabernacle, or be present at His Benediction, when we shall be stricken with sickness and lying on our death beds, then, indeed, in that critical moment, on which an eternity depends, shall we need the consolation and help of a true friend.

proportion to their poverty and abandonment, and that is Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. When they can no longer go to Him, He allows Him to be brought to them in the bosom of His priest, to be given to them in the Holy Viaticum, to console them by His presence, to fortify them for their last journey by the food of the dying, to ward off the assaults of the evil spirits, and to speak words of pardon, peace and hope to the soul about to be judged.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

The work of the Redemption did not end with the life of Christ. In fact, it was just beginning at His death by making the supreme sacrifice upon the Cross He gained for us certain benefits. He died to save all men, not those of His own time, but men of all times, even to the end of time.

Its beginning was most humble, a humble one we cannot conceive of. Christ the promised Messiah, had arrived and started to spread His new doctrine, something entirely at variance with any existing system of religious truths. Almost immediately He won adherents who were ready to follow Him wherever He went.

And now the time for His departure had arrived. When He felt that they were sufficiently well trained, He announced that His hour had come and surrendered Himself into the hands of His enemies to make the great sacrifice. He delivered Himself up to be crucified that by His death He might save the souls of men.

THE START OF THE CHURCH

Soon after his death the newly-founded society assembled. They hid themselves away in an upper room in a house in Jerusalem because they feared the Jews. Now that He Who had been their sole support and strength was taken away from the work for which they had been appointed. Consequently, they remained in hiding until the first Pentecost day when the Holy Spirit descended upon them, bringing the light and strength that were so necessary for the preaching of the Gospel.

Realizing that there could be no continuation between the forces of light and darkness, they would not tolerate any such thing as a compromise. And this attitude of theirs has been maintained from the very beginning down to our own times, and will be held always because the Truth is always the same, unchanging because unchangeable.

Today the Church is the same as it was in those early days, the same faith, the same sacraments, the same form of government, the same intolerance, if you will, attitude towards everything that does not conform to Her teaching. She cannot be otherwise and retain Her reputation for

sincerity. Her unswerving policy has meant for Her at times great material losses, yet She has never hesitated to suffer them rather than yield the smallest point in Her doctrine. It is faithfulness to this policy of Her early founders that has kept Her in existence. If She had relaxed and surrendered any of Her essential dogmas under the pressure of opposition, long since She would have shared the fate of the other institutions of Her day, both secular and religious.

PROBLEMS AND THEIR SOLUTION

The reaction that always follows the tension of war is upon the country, and the result is a passionate confusion that bodes ill for domestic peace. The President of the United States is abroad in sentiment denouncing those who differ from him as pro Germans and hyphenates and in his wake follows a vigorous Senator whose rhetoric is far from conciliatory.

But then who are the people that will accomplish this noble purpose? The rich? They originated the industry that has brought us so much comfort and luxury. The poor? As soon as power falls into their hands they abuse it. A few race of men must be found, Americans, bred and trained in the spirit of Washington who knew God, and strove to guide his everyday life by the principles of revealed religion.

HALLOWED MEMORIES

OF A SAINTED PONTIFF

It is a significant fact that when men were elaborating their program of destruction that in a few years were to plunge the world into the greatest war in history, the saintly Pope Pius X. was issuing a great reconstruction program that was to restore all things in Christ. He proposed to build a new order of things, to re-establish Jesus Christ in the school, in the family, and in society.

This reconstruction was to be accomplished through the Holy Pontiff himself. Hence, the saintly Pontiff issued in 1905 his decree on frequent and daily Communion. He aimed at bringing back society to the ideals of Christ. In his program of reconstruction society was to be governed by the ten commandments and to be nourished by the sacred Body and precious Blood of Christ.

Our Lord's evident today, His reconstruction program announced by Pope Pius X. will yet lead the world back to God. "Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will refresh you," cries the voice of Christ from the tabernacle. To those who

labour under the delusion that present problems are beyond solution that voice points out how every modern question can be answered by a practical application of the ten commandments.

To the statesman He will give courage to live up to his convictions. To the captains of industry, He will declare what is the real secret of success. To the labor leader He will give the power of guiding aright the masses on whose toil the whole structure of society is built.

The so-called Reformation with its deadly heritage of materialism, the cause of our present social disorders has in turn gone down to defeat. On the ruins of the present defunct world through the energizing power of Christ in the Holy Eucharistic. For He who dwells behind the Eucharistic veil will conquer the materialistic spirit of the times. Has He not said, "Behold I am with you all days—And the gates of Hell will not prevail against you."

THE GIFT OF FAITH

We must never forget that while we possess the Faith once delivered to the Saints we also possess the responsibility that goes with it. Too many Catholics hold their faith lightly and do not appreciate, at anything like its true value, this most precious of all gifts. They are proud to be Catholics, ready sometimes to show its influence in their lives. They regard it as a kind of inheritance come down from a long line of ancestors who preserved it amid a thousand trials and persecutions, and which as a matter of course, they are to transmit unaltered to future generations.

Every parent should implant in the hearts of his children a love for the Faith and a high idea of its value. As they grow up they may look upon the very idea of losing it as the greatest of perils. They should instill in their minds that loyalty to the constituted authorities, above all to the Vicar of Christ, is one of the greatest guarantees of Faith.—The Southern Messenger.

PROTESTANT TRIBUTE TO CATHOLICITY

OF A SAINTED PONTIFF

In the New Zealand Tablet Professor A. M. Fairbairn is quoted thus: "I freely admit the pre-eminence of Catholicism as a historical institution; here she is without a rival or a peer. If it be at once the most permanent and extensive, the most plastic and inflexible ecclesiastical organization were the same thing as the most perfect embodiment and vehicle of religion, then the claim of Catholicism were simply indisputable. The man in search of an authoritative Church may not hesitate; once let him assume that a visible and audible authority is of the essence of religion, and he has no choice; he must become or get himself reckoned as a Catholic."

The Church of Rome assails his understanding with invincible charms. Her sons proudly say to him! She alone is Catholic, genuine, venerable, august, the very Church Christ founded and His Apostles instituted and organized. She possesses all the attributes and notes of Catholicity—an unbroken apostolic succession, an infallible chair, unity, sanctity, truth, an inviolable priesthood, a holy sacrifice, and efficacious Sacraments.

The Protestant Churches are but of yesterday, without authority, whose confused voices but protest their own insufficiency, whose impotence almost atones for their own sin of schism by the way it sets off the night, the majesty, and the unity of Rome. In contrast, the Catholic Church stands where Her Master placed her on the rock, endowed with the prerogatives and powers He gave her, and "against her the gates of

hell shall not prevail." Supernatural grace is here; it watched over her cradle, has followed her in all her ways through all her centuries, has not forsaken her yet. She is not, like Protestantism, a concession to the negative spirit, and unholy compromise with naturalism.

Everything about her is positive and transcendent; she is the bearer of divine truth, the representative of divine order, the supernatural living in the very heart, and before the very fact of the natural. The saints, too, are hers, and the man she receives joins their Communion, enjoys their godly fellowship, feels their influence, participates in their merit and the blessings they distribute. Their earthly life made the past of the Church illustrious, their heavenly activity binds the visible and the invisible into unity, and lifts time into eternity.

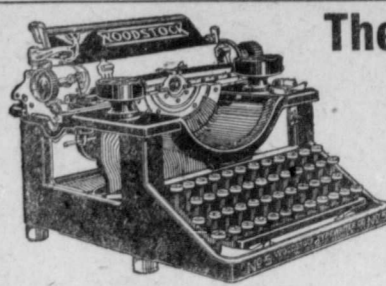
But, rich as she is in person, she is richer in truth; her worship is a great deed. Hidden sanctities and meanings surround her; the sacramental principle invests the simplest things, acts, and rites with an awful yet blissful significance, turn all worship into a divine pascha, which speaks the deep things of God, now into a medium of His gracious and consolatory approach to man, and man's awe and contrite, hopeful and prevailing approach to Him. Symbols are deeper than words; speak when words become silent; gave where words lose in meaning; and so in hours of holiest worship the Church teaches by symbols truth language may not utter.

It is necessary to raise one's self again towards heaven, when stricken down upon the earth.—Ozanam.

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