

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON
LOW SUNDAY

HOW TO USE GOD'S GIFTS

"If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." (Eph. Colos. iii. 1.)

The feast of to-day, my dear brethren, brings to a close the solemnities of Easter; and it was the practice, in the early ages of the Church, for those who had been baptized on Holy Saturday to put off, on this day, the white garments which they then assumed, and to resume again their accustomed occupation. The white garments were but an external sign of that internal purity and cleanliness which the soul received in the waters of holy baptism, and the soul, thus purified and strengthened by God's grace, went boldly forth to the battlefield of life, to meet again its three great and deadly enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil. So we, who, during the penitential season just closed, have faithfully observed the laws of holy Church, and, by fasting, have brought the flesh under subjection to the spirit; by foregoing our accustomed pleasures and amusements have brought the world under our feet, and, by a good confession and Communion, have again enlisted in the ranks of Christ, and thus declared ourselves eternal enemies of sin and the devil, start again to-day with renewed strength to follow our Leader, the risen Christ, to certain victory.

St. Paul, in the Epistle from which the text is taken, reminds the Christians at Colossae that, if they be risen with Christ, their thoughts must now be turned to where Christ is—sitting at the right hand of God. "Mind the things that are above," he continues, "not the things that are upon the earth; for you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

Brothers! I would that Catholics did but realize this great truth! Would that their thoughts and affections were directed towards their eternal destiny! Absorbed, as they are, in the sordid pursuits of this life, they cannot be too often reminded that we are here only on trial. An almighty and merciful God has, with a lavish hand, surrounded us with the means of gratifying our reasonable desires and appetites. But alas! the very gifts of God serve not infrequently to make us forget the Giver. Look around you and see what is the object for which this noisy, bustling world is striving; what the end for which most men seem to exist. The fact is, brethren, that Mammon, the heathen god of riches, has disputed Christ's sovereignty over the hearts of men, and has actually erected his altar in those very hearts where the grace of Christ once reigned. The only conception men seem to have of this present life is this: that it is a place where we are to strive to become wealthy in the shortest possible time, without being over scrupulous as to the means, and then to retire from active pursuits, the better to indulge our sensual appetites. They thus invert the order of Divine Providence, and make an end of that which was intended only as a means to enable us to attain our eternal destiny.

Everything in this world, my dear brethren, was intended by God for our happiness here and as a pledge of an eternal and infinitely greater happiness hereafter. It is a great mistake to suppose that Christianity requires us to ignore these and to forego all the pleasures of this life. No, not at all! Indeed, we are absolutely obliged to make use of many of them if we would maintain our very existence.

God acts towards us as a kind and affectionate father acts towards his child. The father knows that his child loves him, and he feels confident that the little presents he makes the child from time to time will only serve to strengthen the fond affection which nature has implanted between them.

But what would you think if those gifts of the kind father served only to estrange from him the heart of his child? You would, undoubtedly, say that such a state of things was unnatural. Well, so it is, my dear brethren, with us, who, after all, are only children of an older growth. God, our Creator and Father, has given us life and all the things in this beautiful universe to enjoy. And all He asks in return is our love—our hearts. But, remember, He is not satisfied with an imperfect and partial love. He is a jealous God, and will allow no one to share our hearts with Him. So that when men fix their affections on the things of this world without referring them to God, and use these gifts without regard to the Giver, they too are acting in an unnatural or, at least, in an irrational manner. Give your whole heart to God, brethren, and then you will enjoy His gifts, and, as St. Paul says, "When Christ shall appear, Who is your life, then you also shall appear with Him in glory."

The Catholic Against Injustice

"The great Catholic Church has always stood against injustice and rapacity; nothing more, nothing less," says the New World. "She thus stood for more than eighteen hundred years before Socialism was born; she is so standing to-day, and will be so found standing two thousand years after Socialism is forgotten. We need not go back to St. Ambrose of Milan to find the rapacity of the rich flayed in thunder-tones. We so find it in the sermons of Father Bernard Vaughan and Cardinal Gibbons and Archbishop Messmer and every other Cardinal, Archbishop, Bishop and humble priest throughout the world. In his masterly Encyclical on labor Leo XIII. vigorously condemns unjust lords and masters, as the Pope has done in all ages; and yet, with their eyes wide open to the myriad injustices that obtain, it is a startling fact that Leo XIII., Father Vaughan, Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop Messmer, et al., are strong adversaries of Socialism. They regard it, and justly, another huge injustice. They do not believe in swapping the devil that exists for a demon that threatens to establish conditions even more terrible. They know that the only cure for existing evils must be brought about through Christianity; not through irreligious Socialism, and so must everyone who has given the subject proper thought."

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THE PRIEST AT THE SICK BED

EMINENT PHYSICIAN ON THE PHYSICAL BENEFIT TO THE PATIENT OF SPIRITUAL MINISTRATIONS

Occasionally—though fortunately very rarely—one hears of a clash between the doctor and the priest in the sick room. On this subject Dr. Charles W. MacCarthy, the eminent physician of Sydney, Australia, has written the following interesting letter:

"I cannot understand how any section, however limited, of those in charge of the sick, should be so lamentably ignorant of the physical benefit to the patient which naturally accrues from that peace of mind brought about by the services of a priest at the bedside. But if this benefit arises, the converse is also clear, namely, that physical harm may result from the denial of such services. Let us suppose a religious person who, during illness, craves inwardly for spiritual comfort, or, on the other hand, a patient overburdened with the weight of wrong doing, and who longs to be relieved. In either case it is not right and reasonable that the wish should be gratified, and, if not gratified, can be expected that mental disquietude and resultant physical harm? Without considering spiritual benefits, in which all Catholics have a right and reason to believe, the psychological aspect alone is of sufficient import, not in some but in all cases of illness, to claim our attention. I speak absolutely from conviction, the result of thirty years' experience of all phases of illness. Everyone nowadays knows of the effect of mind on body—how for good or ill, the various bodily functions are influenced by the mental condition. Removal of appetite by the reception of bad news at meals, are instances showing the effect of mental disturbance. Examples of the converse are also frequently seen. But not only every vital and physiological, but also every pathological process is impressed by the mental state. To detail how this happens would be to write pages, and then, perhaps not to make oneself quite intelligible except to the trained medical mind. I may explain, however, that the first and chief factor in the cure of disease or, which is practically the same, in the process of repair in surgical conditions, is efficient nerve action. The great sympathetic nerve chain plays an important part in this regard. Any hampering of the action of these nerves has a retarding effect on the process of cure. The special mental disquietude caused, we will say, by inability to obtain needed spiritual relief, produces that retarding effect. Just as the removal of mental disturbances will bring back appetite and normal digestion or will induce needed sleep, so a relief from spiritual perturbation will also go, and go a great way towards enabling the immensely sensitive clockwork of nature, aided or unaided by medical science or surgical art, to proceed normally in effecting a cure.

"It might be urged that over-sensitive patients may take the presence of a priest as an indication of approaching dissolution, or, on the other hand, that at a time when the powers need sustaining, the exertion necessary on the part of the patient to comply with the spiritual duty will bring down the balance. But surely no tactful priest will unwisely and obstructively force his way to the bedside or, when his services are desired, will tire out the patient by ill-directed zeal. Undoubtedly, therefore, the serenity of mind resulting to the patient from priestly administration is a blessing from a physical standpoint. I have known instances of unexpected and rapid recovery after extreme unction. This is also, I believe, the experience of other doctors. Such discoveries can hardly come within the domain of chance. Possibly some priests might ascribe such happy results to spiritual agency alone. That you consider there is also a medical psychological aspect is evidenced by your writing to me. Some doctors, on the other hand, might say it is merely a matter of hypnotic suggestion. But there is more in it than mere suggestion. I think it was Martin Tupper who said: 'He that commeth with himself and doth not impart his sorrow to others, corrodeth his own heart-strings.' The priestly balm which can remove this corrosion removes also an imposing factor to the serene action of the delicate and nicely-balanced mechanism which is concerned in the healing process.

"No doubt some medicines nowadays are inclined to pay too much attention to the material and too little to the psychological aspect of cure. The latter is essentially within the domain of medicine and should never be lost sight of by the wise physician or surgeon.

"For the reason stated, therefore, and others, as well, I should certainly join issue with those who would hold that the exercise of the priestly function at the bedside is otherwise than salutary to mind and body as well as to soul."

WHERE IS THE SECRET OF LIFE?

"Secret of Life to be Sought Here"

caught our eye lately in a New York newspaper. It interested us, as we had seen similar headings in San Francisco newspapers some years ago when the University of California drew Professor Jacques Loeb from Europe to its faculty. On reading further we found the same gentleman to be about to migrate again, having been appointed director of experimental biology in the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. The too sanguine hopes of California, it appears, have been disappointed. The secret of life is still to be found. But there can be no doubt of Professor Loeb's ability to find it; for the newspaper alluded to tells how he asserted that he had fertilized artificially the eggs of sea urchins and has expressed repeatedly his belief that life is only a matter of chemistry. Evidently, therefore, he is on the very threshold of the great discovery. Let anyone should hesitate to admit his sufficiency, it closes its panegyric with these words: "In a recent utterance he said: 'Living organisms have the peculiarity of developing and reproducing themselves automatically, and it is this automatic character of reproduction and development which differentiates them for the time being from machines made of inanimate matter.'"

This is profound, truly worthy of being called an utterance. The utterances of sibyls and prophets may be forgotten, but this deserves to stand forever by that of the Butcher solving the problem 2 plus 1:

"Take 3 as a number to reason about, A number convenient to state, Add 20 less 3, then multiply out By 1000 diminished by 8. "This product we next will proceed to divide By 900 plus 90 plus 2. Subtract 17, and it's easily seen The answer can't fail to be true."

By the way, what does "character" mean; and what is an "automatic character?" Can a professor have a character, automatic or otherwise, of talking nonsense; and if he can not, how can a living organism have a "character of reproduction and development?" As this character is only temporary, "for the time being," like a footman's "three years good character," does the living organism in losing it become a machine? Suppose a cat should lose it during sleep. When it wakes up and begins to wash its face, is the action something altogether different from that of all previous face-washings? Is it now made of inanimate matter? What is inanimate matter? How does it differ from animated matter? The professor seems, like the butcher, to leave us at the point we started from. But the butcher understood the meaning of the words he used.—America.

FATHER DOYLE AND PREACHER

Here is a good story about Father Doyle, the Paulist orator, now giving missions on the Atlantic coast. In one of the inland towns of North Carolina there lives a very worthy, earnest and hardworking Methodist preacher. He is a good man and a good pastor in many points, though not a very wise one. He has a monomania. He has, or did have, an idea that the Pope of Rome is anti-Christ, and that he (the preacher) had a special mission to denounce him and the Catholic Church. True it is that the members of his congregation are simple Methodists; they had never seen a priest, and had no more idea of Transubstantiation or a Sacrament than they had of the Binomial Theorem. This was no fault of his; and thus year after year did this good man fulfil his mission. Sunday after Sunday, did his anti-Romish thunder shake the walls of his little church; ah! if the Pope had only heard him!—the Pope lived in Rome, and in the meanwhile

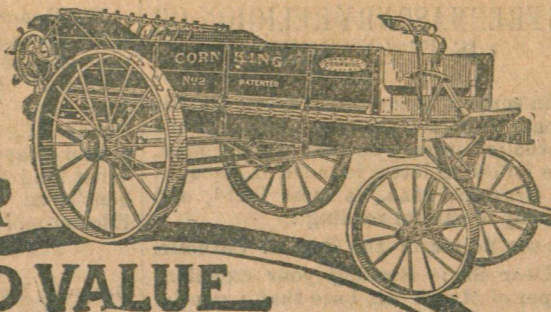
"He was Sir Oracle; when he opened his mouth No Popish dog dared bark."

There was no Popish dog there to bark. Whether the people profited by all this, or whether they went home

"Compounding for sins they were inclined to, By damning those they had no mind to," is impossible to say. "Thus happily the days of Thababra went by," till on one unlucky Sunday morning, in the porch of his church, and in the presence of his own elders, and fully half of his "respectable congregation," who had assembled here for their Sunday's gossip, he was accosted by a well-dressed, muscular and gentlemanly stranger in a dark-colored suit.

The gentleman congratulated the minister upon his sermon, said he was much edified by his powerful discourse, for he must confess that hitherto he had held the doctrines of the Romish church. There were, however, a few questions which he wished to have explained, and

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which he could not very well interrupt the sermon to ask in church; would he kindly meet him at 7 o'clock the next evening in the town hall, where they might each explain to the other the doctrines of their respective faiths. The gentleman was so respectable in appearance, so engaging in address, and so persuasive in his manner, that the good preacher was flattered by the invitation, and in an evil hour consented. The result may be easily imagined. They met in the presence of half of the town; the poor preacher, versed perhaps in the Bible so far as mere texts were concerned, but very doubtful about the doctrines of his own church, immeasurably ignorant about the religious tenets held by the stranger, hazarded wild assertions, which were disproved; maintained impracticable points, which were turned against him; got confused, got angry, began to be abusive and finally started for home, leaving the stage in quiet possession of his self-possessed and smiling adversary.

People wondered who the stranger was, but when he was leaving on the train the next morning a commercial traveler shouted from the hotel "bus: 'Hello, Father Doyle, how are you?' The same Father Doyle is one of the greatest controversialists in the United States.

And the moral of all this is, that whenever we talk big against any man or class of men, even though it be against the Pope of Rome and his doctrines, it is well to have some knowledge of the subject on which we talk. The most effective weapon against our adversary is plain truth when we possess information; when we do not, prudent silence.—Intermountain Catholic.

Couldn't Rest Outside
During a three weeks' mission at Holy Trinity Church, Shreveport, Ala., ending December 19, given by the Revs. Lewis Jerome O'Hern and Robert L. Skinner, Paulists, the postmaster of the town, Mr. Isaac Lafayette Game-well, an elderly gentleman, called upon the Fathers and gave an account of his religious experiences. Though born of Protestant parents, he said he had had a leaning towards the Catholic Church from boyhood. During the war, while serving in the ranks of the Confederate army around Atlanta, he became a member of the Church. He was a

practical Catholic until the definition of the dogma of Papal Infallibility was promulgated. Influenced by what he read at the time, he found it impossible to accept this article of faith, although he sincerely wanted to do so. Once out of the Church, he became a Presbyterian minister and preached for years, but he never found any peace or happiness outside the Catholic Church. Now, influenced by this providential mission, the prodigal son begged to be received once more into his Father's house, after forty years of wandering. Nothing can describe his happiness when, near the close of the mission he made anew his profession of faith and received the sacraments of Christ.—Sacred Heart Review.

Religion is the light of the home, the guiding star of the world-weary traveller and the source of every abiding joy and comfort. Without it there is nothing worth struggling for, nothing worth having.—Rev. W. F. Hayes.

Let your heart expand each day with the giving of a kind word, a word of comfort, a gift the most insignificant if you will, but let it give; it is as necessary for the heart to give as it is for the chest to breathe.

HOSTILITY TO CATHOLIC CHURCH

How is the fierce hostility displayed towards the Catholic Church throughout the world to be accounted for? People who profess other creeds are not thus hated. The antagonism shown towards the different forms of Protestantism and the schismatic churches of the east is mild compared with the opposition offered to the Catholics obedient to the Holy See. There is nothing else in the world like this, and the only explanation to be found for it is the strange and remarkable assurance of the Holy Spirit that the world would abate His disciples because of their being His. Strange, too, it is that the incessant attacks made on the Catholic Church appear not to have made any injurious effects upon her, but rather to benefit her. Dr. Albert von Ruville, professor of modern history, at the Protestant University of Halle, has just become a convert. He did not come in contact with Catholics, and no Catholic influence was brought to bear upon him. He was at first attracted to the Catholic Church by the enmity she seemed to arouse. Some time afterwards, as he explains in "Back to the Catholic Church," a work just published for him by Herman Walter of Berlin, he studied Harnack's book, "Das Wesen des Christentums," and this impelled him still further in the same direction. He now regards the Papacy and the Blessed Sacrament as the Church's two great pillars of strength.—Liverpool Times.

The Right Way to Use Liquor
A Kansas man who was formerly an Indian fighter told how the soldiers used to keep their feet warm by pouring whiskey in their boots. "We were escorting a wagon train across the snow," said he, "when it was thirty degrees below zero. Of course, we were fixed for it. We had the 'Nelson

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