

**FIVE MINUTE SERMON**

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

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**CHRISTMAS**

"There was no room for them in the inn." (Luke ii, 7.)

There is a word ever dear to our hearts, but dearer at this Christmas season than at any other time. Our hearts agree with the old saying, "There is no place like home." Home! what a charm, a fascination clings to that word. It does not matter whether it is a mansion or a cottage, so that it is our home. Childhood's affection nestles round our home, and it is the pride and comfort of venerable old age. And Christmas is the time of all others when our memory and thoughts gather round our home. We all go home in spirit or in glad reality at Christmas. And amidst all our pleasures and comforts we have a thought—a loving thought for those who are far away, whether distance or death separate us. We remember them all at Christmas. We miss their voices and their tender glances; we notice a vacant chair or a little token of the past. Perchance on coming to the Christmas Mass we may cast a wistful glance at the churchyard, where in their little home some dear one is at rest.

Just as it was nineteen hundred years ago, there will be gatherings of friends and happy hours spent in our homes this Christmas. Yes, it was a busy and a festive time at Bethlehem, the little city of David, so many centuries ago. All the friends and kinsfolk of the place were gathered together for the feasting of the census. By order of the Roman Emperor the people had to be counted, each in his native place, the old home of the family. So that all the people, rich and poor, had come from all parts, far and near, each to be enrolled in his own city. Each house was full and the inn crowded with these family gatherings.

But there were two poor travellers—oh, you know them well—who had journeyed in the winter-time all the way from Nazareth. And they had no home. No welcome was waiting for them. Doors were pitilessly closed against them as they humbly sought a shelter. And the gospel says: "There was no room for them in the inn." When the bleak night came on, Mary and Joseph sought refuge in a cave, which was used as a stable. There our Lord was born. "And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped him up in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." (Luke ii, 7.) The very One Who provided all those homes for others had no home Himself. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John i, 11.)

As of old, so now, Christ Jesus our Lord is seeking a home. How many at this holy Christmas-time, taken up with the comforts and pleasures of the season, with their home full of friends, will treat Him like the Bethlehemites of old! How many will fail to recognize the wanderers, and, closing the door against them, will soon forget the cold and cheerless night without! There are those standing without, who indeed deserve a home. Joseph and Mary would bring Jesus to us, if we would but let them. Oh, the bitter irony of this festive time! Why is it a festive time? Because of the birth of Christ. His blessed name and the name of holy Mary united—Christmas—is on every tongue. The world resounds with Christmas greetings, but to so many, so very many, there is not a thought of remembrance of Him.

So much for the world at large, but not, please God, as regards ourselves. Yet even amongst Catholics there are men who forget Christ at Christmas time. We must reduce the fervor of our piety to make up for those who forget Him. Who is it that their hearts keep standing without, and refuse to bid Him enter, and give Him welcome? Is it a beggar? Yes, a beggar indeed! He came into the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not! Everything we have belongs to Him. He gave it to us all. Where would be our home, if He had not given us our health and our livelihood, our happiness, our children, our very existence? And now He will not force us, but asks us, begs of us to give Him a home. And He that seeks a home is no stranger, but a kinsman and a brother. He made us His brethren. For the Son of God became man, that we poor men should become the sons of God. He came "to be in all things like His brethren" (Heb ii, 17.)

He deserves a welcome; and we can give Him one. He seeks a home, and we have one to offer Him—our heart. Do not let this holy time pass by without bidding Him enter and make it all His own. His coming was for us. He came to atone for us; to give to our poor lives and daily actions an eternal reward. He came as an infant to force us to love Him; to make it easy for us to remember Him; to take away all fear, and to give us full confidence in His devoted love for us. Our hearts are unworthy of Him, but if they are all for Him, He will gladly make His home there. And Mary and Joseph will teach us how to serve Him and be faithful. Our hearts, for a little while now, to be His home, where His love will reign supreme; and

then so soon, our home will be with Him in the Kingdom of His glory."

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Special winter Tourist tickets are now on sale to points in Florida allowing diverse routings and stopovers at principal points with final return limit June 15th, 1926. Secure detailed information and arrange your reservations through any Canadian Pacific agent.

**A MATTER OF THINKING**

In a story that appeared recently in a magazine a character is made to say: "The toughest test of a man's pluck that I know is the hard, monotonous grind of standing up to every-day duties and responsibilities. For there is no excitement in that, no glory—but just grit."

Everybody cannot stand right in the glare of the limelight. There are dusky corners appointed for a good majority of people. And in these dusky corners the most sporting thing to do as well as the most courageous, is to play up as conscientiously as if corners and dusk were non-existent.

"God pity all the brave who go The common way, and wear No ribboned medals on their breasts No laurels on their hair."

It has often enough been said by the philosophers of life in words more or less varied but always containing the same familiar old truths, that no matter what work we do, or where we do it, in the home or outside the home, we will find it to have its monotony, its tiresomeness of routine, its crushing dullness.

Sometimes the work may seem to hold nothing but dullness, breaking the spirit of long weary years, and the active-minded may well and excusably question with impatience what there is in it for him or for her, what development, what gain? Let, from only a purely ethical point of view, if the tired, depressed worker is strong enough to endure it, there is in a dull job, a dull existence, the greatest opportunity in the world to demonstrate backbone. It is a great trial, and a great manifestation of the strength of the spirit.

One of our modern poets has given us the same thought in a pleasant fragment of verse:

I will be strong; Burdens are muscle-makers; tests make powers, And weariness well-won brings happy balm. 'Tis fretful coward weakness saps our strength and kills. I will be strong."

A very wise woman, full of common sense and the mature wisdom which is the fruit of a trained intellect facing the problems of life squarely and sanely, has written words on this subject which are worth pondering on with quiet reflection. She very sensibly remarks that the dull jobs of the world have to be done by someone, so "shoulder the share that comes your way, and don't shirk it."

If it is small work, and unworthy of your powers, learn to do the same thing in a big way. One has not conquered a job until it can be done without impatience and without resentment. You are not fit for a better job until you have won from this one the best gifts it has for you—perseverance, patience, good humor and heroic persistence.

It is all mostly a matter of thinking. Life depends on the way we take it. The ideal in practice is to take the plain day just as it comes, and by our generous acceptance of all its dull and trivial details, transmute it with a radiance and a charm such as color adds to pictures, and fragrance to flowers.

It was a man, so I learn, but it should have been a woman, who said that the finest of all arts is to improve the quality of the day. It is men as a rule who scorn the trivial trials of life. For them are the wings of initiation, enthusiasm, a broad scope of activity, a satisfactory sphere of influence, a wide area for talent and power, a gratifying netting-in of solid results of personal work done on large free lines of individual liberty. But women have to be content with the aprons of humble service, the aprons donned for life-long homely duties which have no glamor, no halo of splendid lustre.

They would, perhaps, prefer wings to lift them to glorious

heights, but, for them, aprons are allotted, not high-soaring wings; for them, and for the general average of ordinary folk, be they men or women, in the beaten tracks of life, an ordered Destiny has settled aprons, not wings. But—

"The best men doing their best Know peradventure least of what they do: Men usefulest in the world are simply used; The nail that holds the wood must pierce it first, And He alone who wields the hammer sees the work advanced by the earliest blow. Take heart."

Nothing is too little that is ordered by God our Father; nothing too little in which to see His hand; nothing is too little when done for Him; nothing, which touches our souls, too little to accept from Him. Everyone should live and work as if no one but himself could do the special work which lies to his hand. Has not someone said this, hinting at the general charity which should underlie our lives—

"Do the work that's nearest Though it's dull the while, Helping, when you meet them Lame dogs over stiles."

It is not by change of circumstances, but by fitting our spirits to the circumstances in which God has placed us, in bringing ourselves docilely to the line of God's leading that we truly find our souls, and finding them, we realize the Divine Love that settles every detail of our lives.

We learn to sacrifice our dreams of wings, and smilingly don the aprons of loving service, ready to spend ourselves in the dullness of a dull job for the sake of Him who asks it from us.—(From the Catholic Herald of India.)

**MUTE REMINDERS OF HEROISM**

The Vatican Missionary Exhibition, established by the Holy Father, for the instruction and edification of pilgrims to Rome during the Holy Year, has become one of the most attractive features of the Holy Year celebration in Rome. During the six months of its existence, it has been attended by 296,500 visitors.

Of these visitors 123,000 came in groups and 173,500 came as individuals. May was the most crowded month at the Exhibition, for the Director reports that during that month there were sometimes as many as 9,000 visitors a day. The attendance by months shows the growing interest in this wonderful exhibition of missionary subjects arranged by the Holy Father. Thus December brought 4,000 visitors, January 17,000, February 21,500, March 34,000, April 68,000, and May 91,503. June saw a slight falling off, due to hot weather, but even then 58,000 visited the Exhibition.

All the world has been represented in these visitors. And the good that has been done by the missionary cause thereby is incalculable. From day to day the arrival of new exhibits has enhanced the attractiveness of the Missionary Exhibition. The Holy Father has recently caused a new pavilion to be erected in the center of the Cortile della Pigna, where many new and interesting exhibits from China will be placed. Another addition recently made is a beautiful Korean tent of a thick woolen material.

The Holy Father has also converted the large central salon, which forms a sort of court of honor to the Exhibition, into a hall filled with geographic descriptions and representations of the missions of the world. Immense maps of Asia and Africa have been painted on the walls, and huge panoramas depict the other missionary countries of the world.

Another collection which has just been added to the Exhibition and which is attracting the attention of visitors contains many souvenirs of Father Daniele of Samarack, the Capuchin missionary, who died of leprosy contracted among the lepers in the upper Amazon missions of Brazil. These mute reminders of the heroism of American missionaries have made a deep impression upon American pilgrims.

The universal admiration expressed by so many visitors and pilgrims has caused those in charge of the Vatican Missionary Exhibition to announce that the Exhibition will remain open until the summer of 1926. Many have expressed a desire that the Exhibition be made a permanent institution. This can hardly be done in its present form. But plans are being considered by the Holy Father to retain many of the articles on exhibition in Rome and house them in a Museum of the Missions, where they may remain as a center of information on the missionary work of the Church.

The Exhibition has more than justified the high hopes that the Holy Father envisioned, when he established it. Catholics and non-Catholics alike, who have visited it have gained a more profound realization of the missionary activity of the Church, and Christ's Command "Go, teach all nations," will receive from its lasting influence a speedier and more complete fulfilment.

The Missionary Exhibition conceived and planned by Pope Pius XI. is an object lesson to the world of the high purpose and holy self

sacrifice of our zealous missionaries. Its graphic representations tell more eloquently than mere words can express, the trials, sufferings, and successes of that noble band who have given up everything that

the world holds dear, to preach the Gospel of Christ and to win souls for God. And it mutely pleads with us to help the missionaries by our prayers, our good works and our generous donations.—The Pilot.

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"I have the pleasure to inform you that the Grand and Upright Pianos of your make, placed in the Vatican for the use of His Holiness, Pius Eleventh, have afforded the Holy Father the greatest satisfaction.

"And so, desirous of giving to the pianos of Mason & Risch, Limited, of Toronto, a testimonial of his high appreciation of the fine musical qualities of these pianos, the Holy Father has been pleased to confer upon Mason & Risch, Limited, of Toronto, the title of 'By appointment, manufacturers of His Holiness, Pius Eleventh, and the Apostolic Palaces.'"

The formal appointment recently reached Toronto and is reproduced alongside. The original bears the Papal seal and, translated, reads as follows:

**SACRED APOSTOLIC PALACES.**  
His Holiness, Pope Pius XI, wishing to give a testimonial of his sovereign consideration to the firm of MASON & RISCH, piano manufacturers of the City of Toronto, deems it worthy to confer on them the title of

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The Vatican, under date of October 10th, 1925.  
The Major Domus of His Holiness, Prefect of the Sacred Apostolic Palaces.  
(Signature) R. DE SAMPER.

BELOW—Grand Piano in the private apartments of His Holiness.

ABOVE—Section of the Oratory of His Holiness, Pope Pius XI. (Inset) Upright Piano on the platform of the oratory.

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