

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

REV. F. P. HICKEY, O. S. B. TRINITY SUNDAY

THE COMMISSION OF THE CHURCH

"Gofus, therefore, teach ye all nations." (Matt. xxviii 10) This gospel is short, but the message is all-important. They are the final words of St. Matthew's gospel.

And with the command, He gave them the power, communicating to His Church His own divine power, to preach the truth, to administer the Sacraments, "to observe all things that I have commanded you."

All Christians, who have the Bible, and profess to cling to it as the rule of faith, find this commission and these farweld words in their Bible. St. Matthew, who heard these words of Christ spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, wrote them in his gospel, and the Church accepted them as the true words of the Author of its faith.

It is not the individual members of the Church who can pride themselves or boast of their faith or their good works. Their sole chance or hope of salvation is in clinging to the Church, as obedient children, glorying in their inheritance. But it is the Church itself, strong in the power of its divine Founder, trusting fearlessly to His promises that "the gates of hell should not prevail against it," and "the Holy Spirit would teach it all truths and remain with it for ever," that glories in its existence, its vitality, its unchangeableness.

Believing this, as we do, thank God, are we not amazed to find men—not pagans nor infidels, but men—holding their Bible in their hands, daring to find fault with this Church, the spotless bride of Christ, who braves the world to say that He has gone wrong and needs reforming? The Son of God founded the Church; man, ignorant, sinful may be, dares to exchange and improve, as he thinks, the Holy Church of God. According to them, the Almighty must have promised more than He could perform. He promised to be with His Church all days, but He, the great God, must needs have them to help Him to put things right. They have forgotten that "there is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord" (Prov. xxi. 30).

Another complaint is that the Church is out of touch with the times; that it has grown old and decrepit. That is no new cry. There were men, in the days of the apostles, who were the content humbly to accept the teaching of the Church, but urged their own innovations and opinions. St. Jude the Apostle writes: "There are certain men . . . denying the only sovereign ruler, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4). And St. Paul speaks in sorrow, "There are some who trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ" (Gal. i. 7).

How vain are the innovators of the present day! All they can find to say has been said and preached long ago and come to nothing. "Nothing under the sun is new," says the Bible, "neither is any man able to say: Behold, this is new! for it hath already gone before in the ages before us" (Eccles. i. 10).

This great Festival of the Holy Trinity is a day on which to renew our faith. Baptized as children of the Church in the name of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we must be loyal, faithful, and glory in our holy religion. Our Blessed Lord, in His power, said, "Teach ye all nations," so we must humbly accept and cling to the teaching of His Church. And not only must we accept the teaching, but we must also obey, because He said, "observing all things that I have commanded." Unlike so many others, we cannot discard the ancient traditions of the Church, and the holy customs that have prevailed from the beginning, for these are apostolic observances. As these disarray, so we the more must cling to and reverence these holy practices. And chiefly amongst these divine observances we reverence that word "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them," and hence we publicly in word and work, must stand by the salutary practice of confessing our sins to a priest that he may absolve us from them by the power of God. And again that blessed word we take in all simplicity of faith, "Do this in memory of Me," and that leads us to worship Christ, our Lord, in the Holy Eucharist, and to receive Him in Holy Communion.

By living up to our religion we make our Faith shine before men,

by giving testimony to the truth. So many in error, so many utterly careless around us, so many forgetful—yes, even some denying that they have a Father in heaven—all this demands of us more faith, more loyal acceptance of the teaching of the Church.

CELEBRATED CONVERTS PLACE ON RECORD THEIR PEACE AS CATHOLICS

CARDINAL NEWMAN I can only say, if it is necessary to say it, that from the moment I became a Catholic, I never have had through God's grace, a single doubt or misgiving on my mind that I did wrong in becoming one. I have not had any feeling but one of joy and gratitude that God called me out of an insecure state into one which is sure and safe, out of the war of wangles into the realm of peace and assurance. I shrink to contemplate the guilt I should have incurred, and the account which at the last day would have lain against me, had I not become a Catholic and it pierces me to the heart to think that so many excellent persons should still be kept in bondage in the Church of England, and should, among the many good points they have, want the great grace of faith, to trust God and follow His leadings.

CARDINAL MANNING Christianity is the fulness of the revelation of God. Moreover, I find that the maximum of human and historical evidence proves this true and perfect Christianity to be coincident and identical with the world-wide and immutable faith of the Catholic and Roman Church. On these foundations—four-square and imperishable—rests the faith to which God in mercy has called me, in which I hope to live and die; for which I also hope that, by God's grace, I should be willing to give my life.

REV. ROBERT HUGH BENSON (Son of a Protestant Archbishop.) It seems very remarkable to be obliged to say that the idea of returning to the Church of England is as inconceivable as the idea of seeking to enter the Choctaw fold.

It is of no use to pile up asseverations; but, in a word, it may be said that to return from the Catholic Church to the Anglican would be the exchange of certitude for doubt, of faith for agnosticism, of substance for shadow, of brilliant light for sombre gloom, of historical, world-wide fact for unhistorical, provincial theory. I do not know how to express myself more mildly than that; though even this, no doubt, will appear a monstrous extravagance, at the least, to the sincere and whole-hearted members of the Anglican communion.

C. KEGAN PAUL Those who are not converts are apt to think and say that converts join the Church in a certain exaltation of spirit, but that when it cools they regret what has been done, and would return but for very shame. It has been said of marriage that every one finds, when the ceremony is over, that he or she has married another, and not the bride or groom who seemed to have been won, and Clough takes the story of Jacob as a parable representing this fact. We wed Rachel, as we think, and in the morning, behold it is Leah. So the Church hears a number when seen from a distance, "ab extra," and another when we have given ourselves into her keeping.

But the Church is no Leah, rather a fairer Rachel than we dared to dream. Her blessings are greater than we had hoped. I may say for myself that the happy tears shed at the ritual of Penance, on that 12th of August, the fervor of my first Communion, were as nothing to what I feel now. Day by day the mystery of the Altar seems greater, the unseen world nearer, God more a Father, our Lady more tender, the great company of saints more friendly—if I dare use the word—my guardian angel closer to my side. At the same time, I have become holier, all human friendships dearer, because they are explained and sanctified by the relationships and the friendships of another life. Sorrows have come to me in abundance since God gave me grace to enter His Church, but I can bear them better than of old, and the blessing He has given me outweighs them all. May He forgive me that I so long resisted Him, and lead those I love into the fair land wherein He has brought me to dwell! It will be said, and with truth, that I am very confident. My experience is like that of the blind man in the Gospel who also was sure. He was still ignorant of much, nor could he fully explain how Jesus opened his eyes, but this he could say with unflinching certainty: "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, I now see."

RIGHT REV. MGR. G. H. DOANE I thank God that I can say, "It was a true report that I heard in mine own land," of the glory and blessedness of the Catholic Church. "Mine own eyes have seen it, and behold the half was not told me; it exceeded the fame which I had heard." Nay, when I remember the many doubts and misgivings which I felt when I was a Protestant, and the many fears with which I shrank from joining myself to a

system which I had long believed to be corrupt and horrible, and when I compare these feelings with the certainty and peace and blessedness which I have found since I had grace to make the venture, it seems to me as if the change which I have made can be compared only to the happy death of the just, from which in years gone by they perhaps shrunk with dread, and hardly dared to look forward to it; but to which they forever look back as to their new birth into a state blessed beyond all that the heart of man can conceive. Oh, that every one of my dear friends, who are still trembling on the brink of that which seems to them so dark a river, would take courage by our example and risk all upon the faith of the words of Christ. And for myself I need ask nothing, for there is nothing else need ask for me, beyond the grace of perseverance, that having been sought out by the grace of my Lord and Saviour, and brought into the Church of His mercy, contrary to my own deserts, I may endure unto the end, and through the blood of my Lord and Saviour, may lay hold of eternal life.

ADELINE SERGEANT. (THE NOVELIST) Then came the inspiring thought—the Catholic Church is of God. It is the church of all nations and peoples. Friends, family, tastes and opinions must be given up for the love of God. I dare not move without complete conviction, and I am profoundly thankful that I did not wait too long, but was enabled to take the step which brought me into the haven of my desires, the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of God, in which I hope to live and die.

GILBERT K. CHESTERTON I always believed in the Catholic view of Christianity, at least I have believed in it for twenty years. Unless the Church of England was a branch of the Catholic Church, I had no use for it. If it were a Protestant church, I did not believe in it. In any case the question is whether the Church of England can claim to be in direct descent from the medieval Catholic Church. That is the question for every Anglo-Catholic or High Churchman.

Among the people who have helped me to answer the question as to whether the Church of England was Catholic are the Protestant leaders in the Church of England; for instance, Dr. Inge, Dean of St. Paul's, and Bishop Hensley-Henson, Bishop of Durham. They have done me this good service and wish to express my gratitude to them for it. They have shown me the best service one man can do to another. I will give you examples. It appears to me quite clear that any church claiming to be quite authoritative church must be quite definite when great questions of public morals are put. Can I go in for cannibalism or the murder of babies to reduce the population, or any other scientific progressive reform? Any church with authority to teach must say whether it can be done. But the Protestant churches are in utter bewilderment on these moral questions.

For example, on birth control: when you have people—and such sincere men as Dean Inge—coming out publicly and definitely as champions for what I regard as a low and poisonous doctrine, removed from infanticide, you can see what I mean. On divorce, spiritualism and suicide also they fail to speak with certainty. It is perfectly true that there are in the Church of England and other Protestant bodies, many who would denounce these heathen vices as much as I can. Bishop Gore (retired Bishop of Oxford) would speak about them as strongly as the Pope. But the point is the Church of England does not speak strongly. In short, it has no unity of action; it cannot give a common reply to people when they ask for authoritative view.

It would take me too long to discuss all arguments which influenced my decision, but those are the principal, practical reasons which led me to embrace Catholicism.

"CAMPAIGNING FOR CHRIST"

Boston, May 7.—Over two thousand persons gathered on Boston Common on Sunday afternoon to assist in the beginning of the ninth annual season's work of the Catholic Truth Guild under whose auspices the campaign for Christ in the streets, squares and parks of America is conducted. They stood for the nearly three hours while Laymen told the story of the Catholic Church, what she is and what she is not; what her doctrinal, historical and sociological teachings offer for the good of society and the salvation of man. One of the striking features of this work is the quiz periods, conducted by David Goldstein who is well known for his pioneer thirteen thousand mile tour of street meetings between San Francisco and Boston.

This apostolate to the man in the street was organized in Boston in

1917 under the patronage of Cardinal O'Connell. Since then, meetings have been held in twenty-six dioceses in which the bishops have given this lay work their approbation. The leaders in this movement are Mrs. Martha Moore Avery, president of the Catholic Truth Guild, and David Goldstein, secretary, two converts from Socialism, the authors of "Campaigning for Christ," that tells the story of how to reach the man in the street with the Catholic message.

FARMERS COOPERATE IN SPAIN

By Rev. MARIU GRANA (Madrid Correspondent, N. C. W. C.)

Madrid, April 22.—The Federation of Catholic Agricultural Syndicates of the province of Orihuela is carrying out a vast irrigation project which will benefit 800,000 inhabitants of that district and which has won the admiration and gratitude of the King, the Government and the entire nation. This Federation is a part of the great Confederation of Catholic Farmers which extends its branches by every part of Spain. It is unnecessary to give a detailed description of the work of this organization, as the example of the Orihuela diocese will more than suffice to show its nature. The organization includes 54 other local federations, and the capital loaned by the Confederation to needy members amounts to 300,000,000 pesetas. While the land divided among small land owners represents a value of 25,000,000 pesetas. The Confederation has also founded numerous producers and consumers cooperative associations and is now undertaking further foundations on a national scale, chief among which is a butchers association, the object of which is to reduce the price of meat throughout Spain.

BISHOP ORGANIZED WORK

The work of the Federation of Catholic Agricultural Syndicates of Orihuela is a good example of the agricultural work. Dr. Francisco Javier Irazorza is the Bishop of this diocese, which occupies the greater portion of the province of Alicante, one of the poorest in Spain, not because of the quality of the soil, which is very fertile, but because of the lack of water. This lack of water has caused the population to emigrate to the neighboring coast of Africa, with great benefit to the French province of Oran. The great need of the working people of this district has long been obvious to all.

In order to remedy the situation, the Bishop developed the small farm unions and brought them to a flourishing state. After many efforts he considered the time ripe for a larger venture which would restore the prosperity of the province. His labors have been crowned by the recent signal success, and the King and the Government have extended to him and to the Catholic syndicates their thanks in the name of the nation. The Bishop recently had the satisfaction of imparting his blessing to the work and of opening the irrigation channels in the presence of a vast multitude of peasants. The Government representatives of the province were present, and in the address which he made on that occasion, Alfonso XIII. thanked the Catholic Agricultural Federation and Bishop Irazorza "for having brought riches to a poor community and for having transformed emigration into immigration."

NINE VILLAGES BENEFITED

The work was begun two years ago, and the Federation has continued to push it by every means in its power, so that already nine villages, with a total population of 82,000 inhabitants, have been benefited. The main canal, already constructed, is 29 kilometers long. When the whole work is completed the length of the various canals will be 118 kilometers, reaching 17 villages with a population of over 300,000, for whom a prosperous future is thus opened. It may not be amiss to say a word or two about the beneficent results to be derived by the Catholic Federation from the execution of this project. In the first place, as this district is relatively warm, it lends itself admirably to growing cotton, successful trials having already been made along this line. The technical experts estimate that by devoting 100,000 hectares of land to this crop, in the district which is to be irrigated, a total of not less than 100,000 tons of cotton can be produced. This is about the total amount of cotton consumed in Spain each year. This domestic production would introduce a new phase of prosperity in the textile industry of the nation.

OPENING CEREMONY

The King, the Bishop and their suites visited the greater portion of the district in which the irrigation work is being carried out. The people everywhere gathered to acclaim them. At the point where the main canal was to be opened, the solemn ceremony was held and an altar was erected where Bishop Irazorza said Mass. The King and his suite and a vast crowd of humble working people assisted at the Holy Sacrifice. It was a touching sight. And when, after the Bishop had imparted his blessing, the King gave the signal which caused the water to fill the new canal, the enthusiasm of the people was indescribable, for the shining flood, rush-

ing down the channel, represented happiness and prosperity for 300,000 human beings. "Nevertheless," said the Bishop, in his speech, "there is something greater and of more importance than this material work accomplished by the Federation. It is the fact that it has lifted the hearts of men above political differences and secular pessimism. This work has spread patriotism in all souls, convincing them that while there is a realm in which legitimate differences may occur, there is another realm in which all who sincerely desire the betterment of the life of the people may agree and cooperate. The work of the Catholic Federation is a work of love and concord, a work of union which has united human effort and co-ordinated it in the interest of the public."

KING PRAISES CATHOLIC INITIATIVE

Replying to the Bishop, King Alfonso expressed great satisfaction over the work of the Catholic syndicates. He praised in enthusiastic terms the activity of the prelate, and in alluding to the numerous trips which he had made to the Court to interest the Government in the realization of the work, he said: "Better than for the Bishop to go to the Court would be for the Court to come to these fields, for the men of my Government and those who have problems to solve, to come and see your work. In Orihuela, Your Lordship has undertaken to exercise not only your spiritual mission, but you have sought to procure the material welfare of the members of your diocese and to see that they are good patriots. You have gone into the

fields, you have drawn near to the humble working man, bringing him not only spiritual peace, but material abundance, feeling that the ideal is to be achieved in the satisfaction of these two desires."

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