

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. F. PAPPAS

THE BIRTHDAY OF THE SAVIOUR

"For this day is born to you a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David." (Luke ii, 11.)

My dear friends, these words of joy were spoken by the angel of the shepherds near Bethlehem nineteen hundred years ago. As they filled the hearts of the Jewish shepherds with joy long ago, so to day they fill the hearts of all with gladness, love, thanksgiving and reverence.

Every nation celebrates the anniversary of the most important events in its history. The 22nd of February and the 4th of July will never be forgotten by the American people; for they are kept alive each succeeding year by a proud and grateful nation in honour of the birth of the Saviour of our country and also in honour of the birth of independence in America.

To-day we celebrate the anniversary of the birth of Him Who was the Saviour, not in one particular portion of the earth, but of the whole world. What joy, then, should fill the hearts of all "For this day is born to you a Saviour."

If we cast a glance back, and consider what the world was nineteen hundred years ago, before the coming of Christ, and then consider what it has been since among peoples guided by Christian principles, then we will have some idea of our motives for rejoicing to-day. When Christ came, the majority of mankind was in slavery, without honor, without freedom, without hope. They were sunk into the lowest depths of immorality and crime. He taught them new doctrines concerning the duties of men to men, of the strong to the weak, of the rich to the poor, of man to woman. He inculcated the mutual duty of love and charity. He sent those who loved Him to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to ransom the captive and to visit the sick. He laid special stress upon the virtues of purity, meekness, humility, gentleness, faith and love. These doctrines of Christ were instrumental in securing the abolition of slavery, popular rights, free government, protection of children and the poor, in bringing knowledge within the reach of all and in spreading over the whole world institutions of charity.

Is it any wonder then that we rejoice to-day and feel that heaven is brought nearer to us? Angels are, no doubt, singing around us at this moment and assisting us to be more fervent in our acts of thanksgiving and praise. For it is a day of universal joy and the angel's message has not been received in vain.

But if it is a day of rejoicing for all, it seems to me to be in a special manner a day of rejoicing for the poor and afflicted. The poor seem to be the special favorites of Christ. He was born in poverty. He, to whom the whole world belonged, was born in a stable, destitute of the comforts of life. His parents were poor, and His first adherents on earth were poor, hardworking, mountain shepherds. And afterwards He pointed out as one of the signs that He was the Messiah that "The poor have the Gospel preached to them."

And one of the characteristic marks of His Church seems to be that it is the Church of the poor. Is not to-day, then, in a special manner a day of rejoicing for the poor? When we cast our eyes on that Divine Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying on a little bunch of straw in a stable on that cold December night, can we complain any more of our poor and wretched lot? When we see that God man suffering from cold and privation, can we refuse to suffer and bear our trials and tribulations patiently for His sake? When we reflect on the humble and abject birth of the Son of God, shall we any longer have those proud thoughts because of our wealth, our clothing or our beauty? No. Let us practice those virtues especially taught by the Infant Jesus in the manger at Bethlehem. Let us practice the Godlike virtues of humility, poverty and mortification, and try as much as possible to imitate Him Who came on earth to show us the way to heaven.

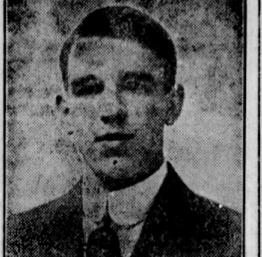
He humbled Himself by becoming man. By humility He began and completed His victory over hell. He chose as His friends and apostles the humble. And He says to His followers "Learn of Me because I am meek and humble of heart." He was rich, but for our sake became poor that by His poverty we might become rich. His whole life, from the crib of Bethlehem to the cross on Calvary's heights, was one continual series of suffering and mortification endured for sinful man. Without these virtues, no progress can be made on the road to heaven.

For as pride is the source of almost all sin, so humility is the foundation of all virtue. Is there not much, then, to cause us to rejoice on this day? And should it not be a day of happiness and joy to all the world? But, although it is a day of rejoicing for all, and especially for the poor, there are some so weighed down with poverty and misery as to such, try to make him happy, at least at this joyful season by relieving his wants. Those who do so may be assured that their own Christmas time will be all the more happy and blessed: for He, who promised that a cup of cold water given in His name should not go un-

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rewarded, will not fail to repay those who remember His poor. Do this and you will have what I most earnestly wish you, A Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

TEMPERANCE

A GLASS OF TEA

A humble cottage, a wife and four children, supper is waiting, frugal as it is. The hour is almost 8 o'clock; the father, where is he? It is Christmas eve. No Santa Claus in that cottage. The streets are filled with merry laughter and salutations:—Merry Christmas. Every one has presents to give to the loved ones at home, but there are none for the waiting wife and children in that humble cottage. Boisterous laughter, maudlin songs, sounds of glasses from drunken men, come from a nearby glided saloon. The men are having, as they call it, a glorious Christmas eve; dirty stories are told, games of chance to lure the money from the poor unfortunate men, nothing for the Christmas dinner but the frog. The hour is getting late, some are going home to homes such as they are, where the poor loving wife is watching and waiting, her heart heavy.

The proprietor of this glided hall—large, pompous, magnificently clothed in the finest of raiment a four-karat diamond eared in his shirt bosom—is talking to one poor man, God help him. We will call him Joe; the other man, the proprietor, we will call George. The following conversation takes place: "Well, George," said Joe, "this is Christmas eve and it has been ten long years since I have been coming here and took my first drink; so I have always taken my money, also drank with me from your private bottle and always charged 15 cents straight. It must be awful good liquor for the price." "Yes Joe," said George, "that is a fact, and as it is Christmas Eve, I shall show you what I have bought for my wife. See this beautiful diamond necklace? It cost me \$1,500 and a nice four karat ring for myself, which cost \$1,800." "Yes they are certainly fine," said Joe, "and all my money has gone to help pay for it." "Yes, Joe," said George, "like all the rest." "Now, George," said Joe, "on the strength of that, let's have a drink and let me taste that precious liquor from your private bottle." "All right, Joe if you insist." The drink is poured out and Joe lays down his last 30 cents, tastes the liquor,

looks at George and says: "This is only Tea." "Yes Joe," says George, "that is all I ever drink."

Poor Joe began to muse. The hour is midnight; his poor wife is still watching and waiting and Joe thinks of the beautiful presents which his money has helped to purchase for George's wife and none for his own poor wife and children.

"I've been paying 15 cents for every drink I've bought of him all these years. What can I bring home to my little family? Nothing but a hellish temper, a foul breath, headache; worse than that, an immoral mind, wrecked nerves. No thought of God; my poor neglected wife and children scarcely clothed."

Joe makes up his mind. "I will do it, George, you have a very nice home, wife well clothed, your children living in luxury, presents for all of them while I have nothing to bring to my poor neglected wife and children. You taught me to take my first drink and for ten long years I have been spending my money with you and neglected my home and ruining my health, forgetting my church and my God all these years and you have always had a clear head drinking your Tea. I can do the same thing and by the help of God I shall go home to night, for I know that my dear wife is waiting for me and I will take the pledge and keep it."

One year later. It is Christmas Eve. Joe has made good and sees the folly of the past fading away before him. His wife and children are well clothed; he has presents for all of his children; the cottage is all furnished and he has a bank account and all for that glass of Tea.

Joe has his Tea at home now and for every drink of Tea he takes he puts away 15 cents and by the time ten years roll by, has a nice team saved up.—Catholic Bulletin.

SAVE A SMILE FOR THE OLD FOLK

There are many parents in the world to-day betrayed by their children. Boys and girls, men and women are the offenders. And, alas! that it should have to be said,—they are among our Catholic people. It is hard to think that the little children, once the darling of parental eyes, should become callous to the love of the father and mother and treat them with contempt or neglect them uncharitably in their old age. There is a terrible awakening for people of this class, if not in this world—in the next. The boy or girl grown to manhood or womanhood earning even a moderate salary is bound by every law both human and divine to at least help to support parents if they need such help. If they are blessed with this world's goods and do not need this help then the children are bound by another law—the law of love—to show them every tenderness and respect for what they have done and suffered for them in the years when they as children were helpless and could not do without father or mother.

It seems a terrible thing that Catholic children should have to be arraigned on such a score. And yet not a day passes but that complaints are made publicly or in private of the inhuman conduct of some children towards their parents. Particularly in this so-called modern age, when the parents are growing old and helpless. Then they are looked upon as a burden by these heartless ones, some of whom have not even the excuse of limited means as a cloak for their ingratitude. The latter class seek every means to rid themselves of this so-called burden and look for "homes" to put them into at a small cost and think themselves mighty good for doing even this much.

This solicitude of parents with regard to their children's welfare has always been recognized as one of the most beautiful of the virtues. Mother love and father love: what would the world be without it? Our dear Lord explains this in the Gospel of the twentieth Sunday after Pentecost, (St. John iv: 46-53) when the son of the ruler of Capernaum was sick unto death and he in agony of spirit, because it was his son who was sick, after vainly seeking every means of curing him and having heard that Jesus was come from Judea to Galilee, went to Him and prayed Him to come down and heal his son. He was an unbeliever, but his anxiety and love for his son were so great that he neglected no means that might cure him. We are assured that Our Lord took pity on him and cured his son, saying, "Thy son liveth." Thereafter the ruler and his house believed in our Lord.

With such an example before us of parental solicitude, should it not be the duty of every son and daughter to repay the love lavished on them by parents in times of sickness or sorrow? Do we Catholics live up to the commandment of "Honor thy Father and thy Mother"? If we can answer this question in the affirmative, then we have nothing to fear. There are plenty of good sons and daughters who are the shining lights of the home, whose coming and going are looked for by aged eyes glowing with the affection and love that fill their hearts as they gaze on the good son or daughter. But what is there too severe to say about a heartless son or daughter? Can any punishment be too great for them? In the first place they are beneath contempt. They have lost all self respect or they would not act so. Some of these offenders are hypocrites. Outwardly they pretend to be kind to the old people lest they

should be blamed and lose the respect of people in whom they are interested. Otherwise they neglect and ignore them. This class, generally speaking, has money enough to support their parents without draining their purses, but then they lack the one essential thing that makes any life worth living: love.

Real neglect is shown openly by people in humbler classes in life—people who have little or no means to help the old people. It is a remarkable fact that this class contrives money enough to spend in drink—perhaps by depriving themselves of some of the necessities of life—but, no matter how it is done, the old people suffer, suffer horribly. That is one good thing that is to England's credit—the old peoples pension bill. No one need fear old age in England—the State provides a modest competency for the aged. The poor haven't to go to the workhouse when age and sickness overtake them.

Here is an example which shows up both types—the good and the reverse. Not long since a dear, delightful old lady, the mother of a friend of mine, whom the daughter cherished like a hot house plant and who taught her children to love and respect her, took ill and died. There was great lamentation in that house. Something had gone from it—something precious. The tears of the daughter and the little granddaughters fell unceasingly. The latter could not keep from speaking of the old lady's goodness, her virtues and her kindly ways. Before the funeral procession left the house a neighbor called to express his condolence.

"You thought so much of your mother," he said, "I know you will feel her loss. She was a grand woman."

"Yes, we feel it terribly, said my friend. The visitor was one who had the reputation of treating his own mother very harshly, teaching his children to be disrespectful to her because she happened not to be educated in her youth and didn't speak good English. She had given him a good education, having toiled and worked hard to do it. He had married and prospered in a worldly sense, but, instead of being proud of his old mother, he was ashamed of her and begrudged her a home and support.

My friend knew the circumstances. She had met the mother and had recognized her good qualities. So, when this man sympathized with her, she said, "You can feel for me for you have a mother."

"If my mother were like yours," said the man brutally, "I might feel it. Your mother was an educated woman."

My friend was so disgusted that she couldn't say another word. But expressing herself afterwards, she said: "I was very near telling him what I thought of him and asking him to whom he was indebted for the school education he had got, who had worn herself out ministering to him. But I refrained, the time and the place not being propitious. I'll let him know some day what I think of him," she added indignantly. "Some people don't deserve to have fathers and mothers."

She hit the nail on the head. Some people do not deserve to have had this blessing. There are many lonely men and women in the world to-day who would give all they possess for the love of a good father and mother, but God's ways are not our ways and these people have been deprived of this blessing. "Honor thy father and thy mother" is the divine command and was to be them who heed it not? Give the old people a smile and a kindly word. It costs nothing, but what a host of sunshine it brings to the tired hearts of the aged.—Suzela Mahon in the Tablet.

THE CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE

The Catholic Church has ever been in sympathy with the poor, upholding their rights, alleviating their wrongs, supplying their bodily wants and ministering to their necessities. The fact, however, is sometimes denied, and is often forgotten in these days. It may be well if some persons are confirmed, and some are reminded of the fact by a Protestant author. The Rev. E. Curtis, D. D., in a work published some years ago by the Christian Knowledge Society, wrote as follows: "In the Middle Ages the Church was a great popular institution. . . . One reason, no doubt, of the popularity of the Medieval Church was that it had always been the champion of the people and the friend of the poor. In politics, the Church was always on the side of the liberties of the people, against the tyranny of the feudal lords. In the eyes of the nobles, the labouring population were beings of an inferior order. In the eyes of the law, they were chattels. In the eyes of the Church, they were brethren in Christ, souls to be won and trained, and fitted for Heaven. In social life, the Church was an easy landlord and kind master. . . . On the whole, with many drawbacks, the Medieval Church did its duty—according to its own light to the people. It was the great cultivator of learning and art, and it did its best to educate the people. It had vast political influence, and used it on the side of the liberties of the people. . . . By means of its painting and sculpture in the churches, its mystery plays, its religious festivals, its catechizing, and its preaching, it is probable that the chief points of the Gospel history and the doctrines of the creeds were more universally known



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PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH NINETEEN CENTURIES OLD

From the time that the early Christians were led to the lions for the announcement of the gospel of Rome, the Catholic Church has had to suffer persecution at the hands of pagans and barbarians, and although we may boast of our great civilization of the present time when we speak and act against the mother Church of Christianity, we but revert to paganism and barbarity, in the opinion of W. H. Van Duran, a non-Catholic, which he voices in the Ladies Ledger.

The keen observer will find that before you can give proper credit to the Catholic Church, for what it has done to bring man from heathenism to civilization, we must go back to the history of the time when Christ gave the command to His apostle to teach the world, and if you will but take the time and trouble to study and read, you will then appreciate what the Catholic Church has had to endure in the past twenty centuries.

It is not my purpose to recount the horrors of the martyrdom of the early Christians, the tale is too terrible to tell. But suffice to say that in that time the privileged few of the pagan leaders revelled in wealth, luxury and vice, and when the gospel of Christ was preached and taught it bid fair to separate them from their carnal and sensual pleasures, and as a consequence, they bitterly fought the new faith, and inflicted horrible torture on those who preached and followed the teachings of the Humble Shepherd of Bethlehem.

Comparing the history of the early Christian faith, it can be likened to the present age, when man is prone to repeat a religion belief that is a substance of authority, and one that will compel him to observe and practice the doctrines and forms of that period at wor-ship. Hence, the need (?) of so many varied and con-

troual beliefs and teachings—in fact the average American likes to have a religion like a suit of clothes, when he gets tired of the pattern, he can throw it away and have another made to his liking. This is probably one of the great reasons why our seventy millions of American people take up with and believe (for the time being) with every new fetish that is propagated in and under the guise of religion.

But on the other hand, just as soon as one begins to study out the real from the false, just that soon is he compelled to turn to the Catholic Church for authority of what he must profess to his own satisfaction.

Your deliver after facts will find that the Catholic Church was the first Christian organization to consecrate the lives of its men and women to the mission of reclaiming humanity from savagery and was the first to unfurl the banner of civilization and wage a war that has been fought for nearly two thousand years, in an effort to bring mankind to understand and accept the teachings of Jesus Christ.

For this she has sacrificed millions of lives, and the Church stands today, the one institution that has withstood the storms and hatred of centuries, and if the Catholic Church is not of divine origin, I would be pleased to have you tell me what particular religious faith it is that was intended by Christ, Himself, when He bade His followers to go forth and teach the world?

ASSUMPTION OF IRISH NAMES BY CRIMINALS

One of the greatest wrongs possible is for a criminal to lay his guilt at the door of an innocent man. Greater still is it to asperse a community and worst of all to impugn the character of a country. The devil, who ever hates what, to his liking he can not pervert, has been lately, quite busy giving fine old Catholic names to notorious criminals, and so we have on the dockets of our courts aliases of criminals who were never extracted from natives of a land, where purity is woman's brightest jewel, and where felony for man is not a trade.

Here then is calumny of the most daring kind, which transcends in its enormity the prejudice against the Irish race inspired by theatrical tra-ge-comedians, for these generally make the Celt a clown, whereas those make him a criminal. To rob a man by forgery of his fortune is bad enough, but more villainous is it to forge the name of a great family of a good race, and permit that which never polluted in its whole history to stand as a word for guilt.

Ireland is the flower garden of faith and chivalry and honor and not a hot bed of vice and lawlessness. The crimes of Irishmen generally spring from anger or hate and are not cold and calculating resulting from a callous conscience. Hence we do not wonder that, with all the assumed names that besmen them, the Irish are in the great city of New York with its teeming thousands of Brit's sons, the fifth on the list of persons convicted of felonies in the Court of General Sessions and the criminal branch of the Supreme Court during the years from 1904 to the present date. God speed the sensible and patriotic work of the United Irish Societies of New York, who are to be commended for the grand movement of stopping this use of Irish names by the scum of Continental Europe.—Catholic Columbian.

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