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IMPETRATION OF THE MASS.

SHORT SERMON FOR BUSY PEOPLE.

He hath made a memorial of his wonderful works.—Psalms.

While the saintly Bishop Cheverus was in Boston, he preached once in a Protestant church at the request of its pastor, a learned and good man. His subject was "The Royal Presence." At the conclusion of his discourse the Protestant minister crossed to where the Holy Mass was being celebrated and in awe-struck tones said: "I wish you were here to receive daily the Son of God, you must be a very good man." The bishop naively relates that he kept silence. If all that you read and hear about the Holy Mass be true, dearly beloved, it would seem that we should maintain a discreet silence when questioned about our appreciation of its precious blessings. The moment when a Catholic realizes the value of the Mass marks an epoch in his spiritual life. His attendance at Sunday Mass is more devout and loyal; a desire to assist at daily Mass is awakened, and if not efficacious throughout the entire year, is so at least during Advent and Lent. He can appreciate the sentiments that inspired the Saints to endeavor to hear as many Masses as possible. Devotion becomes strong and substantial. Abundance of graces develops his soul. He is as swift as the warm spring sun, as bright as the throbbing earth. To his end, he is brethren, you cannot receive too much instruction upon the Mass. It is indeed a complete memorial of the wonderful things the Lord has done. To us it is a constant source of surprising manifestations of the love of the Sacred Heart—an interpretation of that verse in St. John's Gospel—"having loved them, he loved them to the end." Even when applied to ourselves to a study of the workings of the love of the Sacred Heart, endeavoring to assist us in the Mass, we see, dear brethren, that your own affection and gratitude would draw you to a more frequent assistance at the Holy Sacrifice. Consider, then, briefly, the benefits that come to you through the Mass. First, if you regard the Mass as a personal offering to the priest or the Father, you really incur His oblation in all the fruits of any good work and from His oblation these effects are in the highest degree. For those, therefore, assisting at it in a state of grace, it is a most efficacious, deserving of an increase of grace with a corresponding additional degree of glory. It is a satisfactory for the broad of temporal punishment begotten by sin; it is a satisfactory, or able to obtain by the power of intercession every divine gift truly profitable or useful to us. Even for those who assist at it, though in a state of mortal sin, while it can bring neither merit nor satisfaction, it has sufficient power to obtain graces by intercession.

Since the power of impetration is much affected by the worthiness of the one interceding as well as by his past offences, and since it is liable to be hindered in its effect by the obstacles raised by the divine justice. The more numerous and more worthy, therefore, the number of intercessors, the more likelihood of requests being granted. Inasmuch, then, as the Mass is offered by the priest delegated by the Church and acting in her name, the desires and needs of the faithful are presented to God by the Church, always holy and pleasing to Him. Hence, as far as the Church is concerned, the impetration is surely efficacious. However, from the very nature and conditions of prayer for others, the intercession of the priest in the Mass for individuals does not always infallibly obtain its effect.

The most powerful effects of the Mass, therefore, are in the fact that it is the personal action of Christ. For as you know the priest is an instrument while Christ, in this as in the other sacraments, is the Principal from whose dignity and personality all the power of moving God that the Mass possesses is derived. It is well to remember that Christ does not merit in the Mass—His power of acquiring merit ended with His earthly life. In the Mass He simply applies for our benefit the merits that he earned. Nor does the Mass directly forgive sin or even increase the sanctifying grace in our own souls as do the sacraments. It would be untrue to say for example that if a sinner assisted at Mass and possessed or conceived attrition that he would thereby be justified. But as far as direct action or benefit to man is concerned the Mass is effective, inasmuch as it possesses the power of propitiation and impetration. For it appeases the Divine wrath against man, either because of sins not yet remitted or because of the unpaid punishments due to remitted sin. These impel God through vindictive justice either to inflict evils upon us or at least to refuse us further and fuller spiritual aids. By pleading God's anger the Mass renders Him inclined to bestow benefits upon us. For the most part these are spiritual, although often-times when conducive to our salvation we receive temporal favors likewise.

Through the Mass, therefore, sinners' hearts are touched and they receive the grace of true repentance and reconciliation with God. We receive abundant help in our struggle against the temptations that surround us; either in the shape of more efficacious graces to enable us to resist, or even such aids as will lessen the assaults and even do away with them. At Holy Mass the pure young girl in the Irish innocence of her soul can pray for and obtain the grace of prudence that will enable her to escape the pitfalls all around her; God's protect-

ing grace as a mantle will enfold her; as it will seal her eyes and ears to sights and sounds of danger; keep the roses of virtue blooming in her heart as the signals of modesty burn on her cheeks. Here the young man can pray for and receive the firmness of faith, the integrity of heart that will keep him loyal to God and to Church, chaste, dutiful, honest, upright in spite of the evil associations that surround him. Here the youthful mother and the aged matron will find the strength and wisdom they need for the proper conduct of their homes, the education of their children, the maintenance of harmony and peace among all the dissimilar elements that make up home; the inexhaustible patience, the unlimited capacity for suffering; the tireless endurance; the consummate diplomacy; the gentle forbearance that make our mothers wonderful and to be revered; the comfort and consolation and affection that are often denied them at home. Husbands and fathers will find in the Mass the justice, the tenderness, the consideration for others, the strong reliance on God, the courage they need to fight the battle of life and guard those entrusted to their care. The sustained will feel the gentle insistence of the pleading of Christ's blood, and will gain strength against relapse; the innocent and pure will find in the Mass a well-spring of zeal and a burning fire of love, that make them invulnerable. All will find the Mass a great power to make them advance in the spiritual life, directing their thoughts to works of charity, enabling them to secure the conversion of heretics, schismatics, Jews and infidels; to obtain the grace of perseverance; to increase their future glory. They will learn by future experience that the Mass throws around us the special protection of God's providence in spiritual and temporal necessities. Those who go daily to Mass can testify that when they are absent from one cause or another, they feel a sensible deprivation of God's protection.

The fact that in the Mass Christ prays to the Heavenly Father not only through His delegate, the priest, but also that when He is really present. He intercedes Himself for men, is an additional assurance that these benefits shall be bestowed. It must be remembered, however, that we cannot always infallibly secure this or that petition for which we ask in the Mass. For although the prayer of Christ is infallibly sure of a hearing, yet the conditions required in praying for another may not be complied with. The one prayed for, since he possesses free will, can oppose obstacles to the graces offered him; or, on the other hand, the object prayed for may not be in conformity with God's will; and hence the prayer and impetration of Christ are not directed to that, but to something that He knows will be salutary.—N. Y. Catholic Review.

Practices of Our Holy Religion.

It is a sad thing to think that Catholics should get tired of their holy religion, and find its beautiful practices dull and lifeless. Yet, so it is, and Mother Church knows full well and compassionately the weakness of her children. Like the wise father of the family mentioned in the Gospel, she is ever bringing forth from her belt treasure new things old and old, and spreading them before the eyes of her little ones, that so, perchance, she may awaken their interest and inflame their love. She knows that we are ever desirous of change, and that the most delicious food falls upon the spiritual appetite by its sameness. Hence she is ever varying her offices and devotions; at one time she directs our attention to a Mystery of Our Lord's life and death, at another to a corresponding one in the life of His Blessed Mother. Now she celebrates the triumph of a martyr and anon she joins her hymns to the choir of the Virgins. She has divided the year into five great seasons: Advent, Christmas time, Lent, Easter, and the long period between Pentecost and the recurrence of Advent, when she proposes to our meditation each blessed action and word of Our Lord's public ministry. She has, in like manner, assigned special devotion to particular months: January is dedicated to the Holy Infancy; March to St. Joseph; May to Our Blessed Mother; June to the Precious Blood; August to the Sacred Heart of Mary; October to the Holy Angels; and November to the Souls of Purgatory. If we had the wisdom which the children of light ought to have, if we wished to abound with spiritual joy, and so make our sojourn on earth a foretaste of heaven's everlasting rest, we would model our private devotions, during each ecclesiastical season, on the public ones of the Church.

The Vatican Observatory.

The Observatory of the Vatican is now completely finished, and daily observations are taken. The instruments are all of the newest kind, and have been furnished by Richard Brothers of Paris. The observatory itself is just over the library in that part of the building called the Torretta. Telescopes of various kinds and powers are also to be found in the observatory. The dome in which the big equatorial is to be placed is finished; it has been built on the top of an old tower at the furthest end of the garden. This old tower was built by Leo III, and was used as a watch-tower, it being close to the old wall of the city. One of the chief aims of Leo XIII in re-establishing the Vatican Observatory was to enable Father Dezza and his assistants to take part in the work of the highest importance to astronomical science. The work is the preparation

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of a colossal photographic map of the heavens, for the production of which arrangements are being made by an international congress of astronomers now sitting in Paris. The enterprise is one of the most gigantic ever undertaken. The proposed map is to be made up of something like a thousand separate sheets photographed at different points of both hemispheres. An idea of the magnitude of the task is furnished by the fact that it is necessary to explore an expanse in which no fewer than forty million stars can be reckoned. The work will extend over a period of three or four years, and if it is successfully accomplished the astronomers engaged in it will be able to hand down to future generations an exact record of the firmament as seen from this planet at the close of the nineteenth century. The part taken by Leo XIII in this undertaking is worthy of a Pope whose Pontificate is already distinguished by so many memorable deeds.

The Holy Cross.

A Catholic correspondent of the Newcastle Leader writes: "Among the relics of the True Cross, what is probably one of the largest pieces in the world is now in the Ursuline Convent, Cork. It is said to be about seven inches in length, and was given by Pope Pascal II to Murtagh, King of England. The part taken by Leo XIII in this undertaking is worthy of a Pope whose Pontificate is already distinguished by so many memorable deeds.

An Irish Farm House.

In one of his letters to the Scotsman on the potato plague in Ireland, James MacDonnell gives a description of the dwelling house on a small farm which he visited high up on the McGillicuddy Reeks in County Kerry. I was hospitably invited to join at the family dinner of one of those Kerry mountain farmers high up on the reeks, he says: "It was a comfortable house of the class, one long room, quite fifteen feet long and ten or eleven wide, with a central floor and hanging chimney. Chairs with straw-woven bottoms made comfortable seats. In one corner near the easy turf fire was the dinner table, with its plentiful supply of potatoes and milk awaiting the hungry family of eight. The opposite corner was the happy hunting ground of a fine big white sow and her splendid lot of little ones. A very handsome sow she was, of the large Yorkshire type, almost good enough for Smeaton's Spencer limited. And she was as well-mannered as she was handsome, and a good disciplinarian to boot, for during the dinner I could not but admire the irreproachable habits of that happy porcine family. The dinner-table was covered with a piece of canvas, and in the centre was turned out an inviting heap, a huge potful of well-grown Champions, with their jackets burst just as they ought to be, and as floury and as well flavored as the most fastidious Irishman could desire. With these potatoes ad lib, and a bountiful supply of milk, the rosy children and growing lads and lassies made a very hearty meal. The mention of milk will, no doubt, interest dairy authorities, who are now so plentiful and who would, perhaps, like to know something of the dairy management on an average farm on the Kerry mountains. There are eight cows of the small Kerry breed in this dairy, and there is a good market for the produce. It is all consumed on the premises. Little attention is paid to the system of setting, for it is not allowed to sit long. Fastidious dairy authorities would say that, in the circumstances, it is just as well that this should be so. The milk-house is a spacious cupboard right over the corner assigned to the social sow and her numerous tribe of young ones.

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"Now, Jane, get those clothes washed. What are you standing idle for?" "Please ma'am, I've put the self-washer soap in to the tub."

A man's wife should always be the same, especially to her husband, but if she is weak and nervous, and uses Carter's Fruit Pills, she cannot be, for they make her "feel like a different person," so they all say, and their husbands say so too!

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Rev Mr. Winkwunk—My hearers, I shall have to ask your indulgence for a few minutes. I forgot my manuscript and have sent my little boy for it. His Son (coming in)—Marm couldn't find the writin', but here's the book you copied it from.

Rich is he whose lightness of heart hangs not upon the heaviness of his purse.

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