

FIVE MINUTE SERMON TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

FEAST OF ALL SAINTS

All saints, my dear brethren, and all sinners who attain to eternal life, are closely joined together in the solemnities of the first two days of November. The morrow of All Saints' day is All Souls' day. The joy of Paradise and the weariness of its vestibule are both offered to our thoughts and almost at the same time. We quickly leave praying to the saints in glory to begin praying for the sinners in Purgatory. And this is a beautiful way of meditating on the future life, for love is too unselfish to tarry long with a happy friend while there is another friend outside the door in a state of great unhappiness.

Holy Church would have us measure our charity for the souls in Purgatory by our value of the joys of Heaven. And experience tells us, very great an effect this has on us, for we see everywhere among Catholics an intense affection for the poor souls waiting at Heaven's gate, much intensified by the sights and sounds from within that gate which have been granted us beforehand on the feast celebrated today.

Now, there is a strict duty of friendship to be fulfilled in praying for the departed. There are our relatives, our former companions in the journey of life, our former associates in business and in pleasure. Can there be any doubt that you do suppose that the suffering souls were any worse Christians than you are yourselves at this moment? In some cases, yes; but these were exceptions. Nearly all who have gone before us are about the same as those whom they have left after them—poor, weak, sinful mortals, sinning and repenting, stumbling and falling and rising again, and finally disappearing in the grave.

We have every hope that they were forgiven their sins, but what about their full atonement? They have paid the great debt, but what about the last farthing,—the affections still clinging to passionate indulgence, the lowness of motives, the gross inclinations chained, indeed, but not tamed? What about the venial sins committed by them, as by ourselves in tens and hundreds every day—the nasty little lies, the mean selfishness, the slothful habits, the greediness at table, the worship of man's opinions, the vanity, the self conceit, the selfish temper, the silliness, and giddiness, the harbored aversion even for relatives, the petty dishonesty—what about all this which we know must be atoned for by them, because like ourselves they were commonplace Christians? Ah! brethren, we ought to have a fellow-feeling for them; we ought to thank God that we can interpose in their behalf. Blessed be the prayers we say for them, true pledges of friendship; blessed be the Masses offered for them in this their day of gloom and desolation! How well they realize the truth of the Scripture saying, "Blessed is the man who hath found a true friend."

But there is a yet closer bond between us and the souls in Purgatory than that of friendship, however strong they may be. I mean the bond of common guilt. I mean the dreadful fact that we are participators in that guilt of theirs for the imperfect repentance of which they now suffer even after forgiveness. They committed venial sins, but who made them do it? Who but you, my brethren, their former relations and friends? You provoked them to the anger they suffer for, you poisoned their minds with envy, you failed to teach them rightly if they were your children, you ambittered their hearts if they were your parents.

Come forward, then, all of you, and bear your own share of the burden. If not from friendship's love, at least from the urgent call of justice, take a share of the sufferings of the poor souls in Purgatory, for you had a share in their guilt. By so doing you will hasten the happy hour of their deliverance, and earn a share in their heavenly joy.

THE FIFTH STATION

Thomas F. Coakley, D.D., in America

It was in the winter of 1918 in France, not far from the front. There were but few American soldiers overseas, and the Germans had broken through the French lines, entailing heavy casualties on some of our units brigaded with the French. I well remember the hospital train as it stopped for a short time at the railroad station. News quickly spread about among our troops, and for the first time those who had not yet been under fire had seen the terrifying results of battle at first hand, the nineteen long hospital cars being filled from end to end with the wounded and the dying. One of our boys had met his own brother among that suffering crowd, blinded by mustard gas; and as if to accentuate the horror, when we had all returned to camp, word was received that we ourselves were to leave that night to replace the casualties.

Arrangements were made at once for all the Catholic men to go to confession, and as we had some time yet to wait for the troop train, it was decided to have the Stations of the Cross for them. The village church was almost of cathedral proportions. Snow was on the ground, a cold rain was falling steadily, and the dim, great church, so old, so cold, so beautiful, had within it the chill of

ages that cut to the very bone, and made it almost impossible to hold a prayer book. To make it still more impressive, the troops walked about the church, from station to station, one soldier carrying the processional cross, two others flanking him, carrying the candles. These, with the candles on the altar, were the only lights in the edifice, making it, if possible, more solemn and mysterious, the heavy, unmeasured tread of the troops, the clanking of their steel boots, the unknown tortures hinted at by their gas-masks, the crunching of their muddied shoes on the ancient stone pavement, the flickering candles, peeping in and out between the massive pillars, and sending creeping shadows under the lofty soaring arches of the lovely old twelfth-century church, standing erect today after centuries of war and persecution.

Everything went as usual until we reached the fifth station, where Simon the Cyrenian helps our Lord to carry His Cross. All knelt to read the prayer, a prayer that with gravon on my memory still I die: "I will not refuse the cross as the Cyrenian did; I accept it, I embrace it. I accept in particular the death Thou hast destined for me, with all the pains that accompany it." Just as we reached this sentence, I heard immediately behind me the anguished sound of a deep, convulsive, suppressed sob. One often hears of broken hearts, but until then I had never heard one in the notes of breaking. The first impulse was to turn around, but in a flash the unwisdom and indelicacy of such a procedure was evident, dragging out, as it would, into unsympathetic notice the supreme agony of a soul in conflict. So we continued, and rising from our knees to go to the next station, a swift glance revealed Phil, a big, upstanding fellow, some six feet and odd inches in height, a machine gunner, and one of the notable men of the battalion. And there were two great tears, like walls of living water, resting just beneath his closed lids, like a cataract leaping to sacrifice, as they rolled down his bronzed cheeks, flashed momentarily in the dim candlelight, and fell with a splash upon the cold gray slabs.

During the remainder of the Way of the Cross I listened, somewhat distracted, for any indication of continued distress, but he moved on quietly, resolutely, devoutly, with no apparent emotion. Of a certainty he had won; the die was cast, the Rubicon crossed, and the decision, whatever it was, signed and sealed. But when the ceremony had concluded, while packing my chapel case in the almost impenetrable gloom of the sacristy, I noticed Phil waiting for me. "Father, I want to go to Confession," he said. "Why, lad," I replied, "you were at Confession this evening; it is not necessary to go again." "I rather think it is, Padre." "What is the trouble, Phil?" "Well, Father, I showed the white feather tonight at the fifth station." "Nonsense," I answered. "You are as brave as any one alive." "I want to be, Padre. I'm no yellow Cyrenian; I'm a real American, and I'm going through with this thing." "Well, Phil, that's a soldier's act of perfect contrition. Don't worry about getting killed. No German gas or shell or bullet will ever touch you."

So we all vanished out into the freezing night, taking the troop train a few minutes later for the front. Meeting him from time to time in action, the customary greeting to him always was: "Well, buddy, how are you getting on with your stations?" "Padre," he would reply, "I'm still at the fifth station." On one occasion, at Verdun, coming across him in a shell-hole, in the rain, under a German barrage, and inquiring as usual about his stations, he said: "It is almost the fourteenth, Padre; I don't think I will get through this." Later on, in the Argonne, when he was exhausted from loss of sleep and lack of food, and scarcely able to speak from the effects of the poisonous gas that dripped the atmosphere, he said: "Padre, I can make all the stations now, except the fourth and eighth." This seemed rather peculiar, and it took a few minutes to grasp his meaning. "Yellow again, are you Phil?" I asked laughing. "A few months back you wanted to cheat on the fourth and eighth. What kind of Catholic are you, anyhow?" "Well, Padre, it's just this way." "The fourth station is where Christ meets His Blessed Mother, and the eighth is where he meets the woman of Jerusalem, and while I can go up to Calvary myself, I would not want my mother and Rose, whom I'm going to marry, to see me here and now; it would break their hearts; it is not for my sake, but theirs, that I want to dodge."

This threw a new light upon this singularly saintly character, and my racing thoughts called up visions of the Centurion of the Gospel, and St. Sebastian and St. George, and St. Ignatius, and the other canonized warriors that stand out so luminously upon the horizon of history. While chatting with him he spoke of his mother and Rose, of their ennobling influence upon him, how steady and stimulating it was how that when all was tempestuous and hopeless and dark they were a lamp unto his feet, a center to which all his thoughts gravitated; how amid all the unimaginable privations of the front they formed in his mind a background of tremendous reverence that bathed their memory with a precious halo. He showed me their photographs, and while the guns roared at Montfaucon, we examined them; it was a wholesome, happy group of two, his mother and Rose,

the aged woman erect and smiling, although a practised eye could see that her heart concealed a multiple wound, and every gasb was red; and the girl, healthy, neat, modest, her limpid eyes flashing forth virtue and intelligence, and her arms entwined around his widowed mother.

The armistice put an end to the carnage, Phil remaining with the combat troops, while I was sent to headquarters. One day in Coblenz a telephone message from a hospital far back in the hills of Germany said that Phil was seriously ill and wanted to see me. It was in the early morning, before daylight, that I reached his bedside, and I found him dying of pneumonia. Almost his first words were: "Father, I'm willing to make all the fourteen stations now; please say them for me." When he had received all the Sacraments, I began the Stations of the Cross and he answered as well as he could, though every word must have been a martyrdom. When we reached the fifth station, with gasping breath, he held my hand as I read: "I will not refuse the cross as the Cyrenian did; I accept it, I embrace it; I accept in particular the death Thou hast destined for me, with all the pains that accompany it." As I reached the last word, the rising sun, streaking the eastern sky with splendor, bathed his pillow with a beam of golden light, and he closed his eyes and died, finishing his Way of the Cross in heaven.

Writing to his pastor in the Far West with a request to call upon his devoted mother and the girl whom he loved as a girl ought to be loved, and to break the news to them, brought in some weeks later a note stating that Phil's mother and Rose both had died of influenza within a few days of each other. After Calvary comes Easter. The three were keeping it in Paradise.

RELIGION OF THE SOLDIERS

LETTER OF AN ENGLISH PRIEST TO AN AMERICAN JESUIT

A STARTLING SURVEY

An English priest writing to Father Wynne, S. J., makes the following observations: "A few months ago a committee of Protestant clergymen, working under the chairmanship of Dr. Charles Gore, the former Anglican Bishop of Oxford, set about compiling a substantial report as to the effects of the War on religion. Their idea was to issue a comprehensive statement which would apply generally to all creeds. They had not carried their investigations very far before they realized that although they could generalize in a satisfactory way concerning the Church of England and the many and various forms of Nonconformity, they could not deal in the same way with regard to the men who are officially labelled "R. C." (Roman Catholic).

Among other facts established one stands out painfully conspicuous among non-Catholic soldiers as many as from 80 to 90 per cent. had but the haziest notions of things supernatural; their ignorance on such definite points as God, the Incarnation, the Church and the sacraments, was unpeppably depressing; and of course, one has to bear in mind that the soldier of to-day is not the same class of man as in pre-war days, there is no more such a thing as a typical soldier at the present time in England than there is in America.

The Protestant committee was of the opinion that the information they had collected concerning Catholic soldiers warranted their believing that except for about five per cent., all the men classified "R. C." were well informed as to the fundamentals of Christianity (?), and even those who had neglected their faith and in consequence were rather "rusty," could soon be put right, and needed but little preparation to fit them to receive the sacraments.

A CATHOLIC INQUIRY STARTED

The decision of Bishop Gore's committee not to include Catholic soldiers in their report led Cardinal Bourne to authorize direct investigations to be made among our Catholic chaplains.

A number of suitable questions were drawn up and sent to the man who was sent to each chaplain, inviting him to answer from his personal experience. The report is not likely to be published for a few months as the chaplains' replies are still being dealt with and their answers classified. When it is ready it will certainly make most interesting reading, although it will not be altogether pleasant.

We shall hear for instance of young men who have had several years' training in the seminary losing all desire to persevere with their vocation. On the other hand, there will be instances of men in the prime of life becoming filled with an ardent desire to attain to the priesthood, and a new set of problems seems likely to arise as to how to deal with men who have had a clear vocation but no classical education.

But what impressed me most of all was the fact that generally speaking, although our Catholic soldiers are well informed as to the fundamentals of their faith, in the overwhelming majority of cases it seems evident that no spiritual progress has been made since they left school. This remark appears to apply equally to men who attend the higher grade school as well as those who went to the Catholic equivalent for the boarding school; it applies to much to what over here is called "the better

classes" as it does to the working class.

This brings me to a point I have often felt to be one of the great obstacles to Catholic progress: the average Catholic's knowledge of his religion remains throughout his life elementary.

Only rarely does one come across a layman who is able to give a satisfactory reason for the faith that is in him. On the other hand, I won't say the Protestant, but the man of no religion is often very well read and his mind matured in a negative way with regard to religion. Often he is able to make out a good case for his position. And here I am not thinking so much of young men (or even older men), who think it clever to say they do not believe in God; but of the decent-living, serious-minded men who are leading highly respectable pagan lives. Such men will not go to a priest with their difficulties, but they will often open up to a layman and expect from the layman a reasonable answer to their questions. In many instances the answers they get are no better—let us hope no worse—than they would receive from a boy who has just left an elementary school.

WHAT IS THE REMEDY?

Some months ago there was constituted over here a Catholic Evidence Guild; it is composed of laymen who are supposed to undertake a course of study under a priest's direction with a view to being suitably equipped to speak on the Catholic religion in public parks and elsewhere. I believe it has already done excellent work, but as far as I can make out from the experiences of some of my friends, their dealings with non-Catholics serve but to emphasize the urgent need of educational work among our own people.

It is right here that your League of Knowledge should do work of enormous value.

What I should like to see is a sort of Catholic Encyclopedia Correspondence College. While the work it would do would be more important than its name, still the name should be one which would not lend itself to any progress regarding shipwreck, and the trouble about the word "league" is that it has already certain associations of a character very different from the one now proposed.

Yours sincerely, (Signed) E. VINCENT WARING, London, England. The Rev. John J. Wynne, S. J., New York.

BINDING UP THE WOUNDS

The Central Verein has just finished its first post-war convention in Chicago. It has taken up the strands laid down at the coming of the War. It had its definite sphere of social, economic and religious endeavors. Though the work was interrupted, there was never any thought of abandoning it. Compact and complete as a Catholic organization it resumes its activities, and as Providence would have it, a new activity is thrown into its lap by the letter of the Holy Father read by Archbishop Mundelein. It is called on now to help bind up the wounds of a lacerated world. It is unnecessary to stress the particular appropriateness of this owing to the old ties of race. But there is a more special truth that the knitting of the race is a Catholic work. For rancor can find no place in the bosom of the Church. Economic relations may come before others, but sympathy and understanding must come from religion. Even under the stress of War the Church did not cease to be an international body. Separated, we nevertheless, had a common father. And no matter how we differed there were fundamental ties that could not remain permanently severed. The War is of the past. Its ill will is fading. It is wasteful at least to perpetuate hatreds. Moreover there are grave issues facing every nation that demand undivided attention. The common foe is abroad. Those who stand for the right, and who do not want our civilization to perish ought to unite in soul and body. The new danger will signal out of the Church. She stands in the way of the unbridled passions of men. So she will be the special target. Endeavor will be made to subvert her teaching and overturn her moral away. This ought to make cause enough to unite Catholics of every land. Catholic solidarity throughout the world was never needed as now. So the Central Verein with its fine record of Catholic activity ought to, and will, take its place in the work of reconstruction given to it by the Holy Father.—Chicago New World.

LAWLESSNESS AMONG CHILDREN

The increase of lawlessness among children as chronicled in the daily press is becoming alarming. What is the cause of the steadily rising wave of juvenile delinquency? No doubt the influence of moving pictures has something to do with it. Again, the reaction from war-time conditions is being felt by children as well as by their elders. Social unrest, industrial discontent, and Bolshevik tendencies may all be added to explain this juvenile crime wave. But all these explanations merely scratch the surface.

The real explanation lies deeper. It is to be found in the lack of moral responsibility. Our system of public education has been woefully lacking in the most essential element in the

training of character. It has failed to teach the child religion. Yet, without it, the moral law is without proper sanction.

Without religion there can be no sense of moral responsibility. The only deterrent of crime is the worldly-wise caution of not being caught. Hence when the conscience of the child has not been trained to avoid evil and do good from religious motives he will follow the lines of least resistance.

We reap as we sow. Education without religion has sown the seed of youthful depravity. The country is now reaping the harvest. The one institution that has insisted constantly and uncompromisingly upon religion in education is the Catholic Church. Against obstacles that were cruel, abusive, and misrepresentation, she has never ceased to teach that religion is the one indispensable element in education, and to put her teachings into practice in the classroom.

When governments refused to teach the saving doctrine of religion in the schools, she erected at great expense and through the heroic sacrifices of her people, her own Catholic schools, academies, and colleges. The religious training that so many of our Catholic men and women have received in Catholic schools is the one vitalizing influence in this country.

The crime wave is illuminating since it illustrates the folly of trying to rear a God-fearing and law-abiding generation while banishing religion from education. How long will our leaders be blind to the fact that national morality depends upon individual morality, and that individual morality can only be preserved by religion, and by the religious education of children? When children are taught that there is a God and that His laws must be observed then only can we look for any cessation of crime by the youth.—The Pilot.

DO THE FRENCH GO TO CHURCH

One hears from returning soldiers various answers to this question. In The Living Church (August 30), an Episcopalian weekly, Rev. Dr. William C. Woods, of the Maine Agricultural Experiment Station, gives us this testimony: "Although not one of the 'great ones' invited to reply, the writer ventures to 'scatter a few crumbs broadcast' from his experiences as an enlisted man in the American Expeditionary Forces in France.

A PROTESTANT'S TESTIMONY "What is the attractiveness of Rome? It is the wonderful devotion of her adherents. For six months I was stationed in Marseilles, with liberal pass privileges. I do not know how many parish churches there are in the city, but I can recall visiting eighteen, and in four I was a frequent worshiper.



Conditions were the same in all: the first Sunday Mass said at five o'clock, with Masses following at hour or half-hour intervals until noon, and the Church filled to capacity from beginning to end; three or four daily Masses even on ordinary ferias, and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament almost every evening. Last Sunday morning, as I wended my way to the early Eucharist at our tiny Anglican chapel, I had to pass two Roman churches, in each of which I used to pause to say a few prayers. Always, rain or shine, there were crowds of devout worshippers thronging the altar rail; regularly each Sunday morning, several hundred Communion were made in those churches before 7 o'clock. "Often times a new Mass would be commenced before all the faithful had been communicated at the one preceding. This may seem shocking to some, but the crowds that press our Lord needs hate it, even though, of course, the Blessed Sacrament is

administered only under one species. "Such times as I was able to attend Benediction, invariably I found, even on ordinary week-day nights, a company of forty or fifty gathered together to receive the blessing from the Lord." The congregational singing made a deep impression; the fervor of the "Tantum Ergo" and the "Gloria Immortelle au Sacre Coeur" is a memory that does not fade.

"I never passed a parish church without entering for at least a moment of prayer, and never was I disappointed in finding some of the faithful at their devotion. . . . The French Catholics believe their religion, and practice it. Most Episcopalians apparently do not believe the religion of the prayer book, certainly they do not practice it. Therein lies the 'attractiveness of Rome' in the Latin countries."

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