

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

(MARRYING OUT OF THE CHURCH)

In our course of instructions on marriage, my dear friends, we have so far spoken chiefly of the care which should be taken in the selection of the person who is to be one's constant companion through life, and shown that not only earthly happiness, but even the salvation of the soul, may depend on this choice being made wisely. We will now go on to consider the ceremony of marriage itself.

Some people, though they have always been Catholics and lived among Catholics, seem to be entirely ignorant of the laws and requirements of the church on this subject. They appear to think that nothing has to be done but to call on the priest some fine evening, and that he will marry them then and there. And if it is not convenient to go to the priest, or if he makes any difficulty about it, why, then a Protestant minister or his honor the mayor will do at a pinch.

Now there are several points which these people need instruction about, and several mistakes which they make in this very important affair. We shall have to consider them separately. And we will begin with the greatest mistake of all which can be fallen into by Catholics who wish to get married, and that is to go to a Protestant minister for the purpose.

What is, then, the harm exactly of going to a Protestant minister to get married? Is it that a Protestant minister is an immoral or vicious character, with whom we should have nothing to do? By no means. He is, indeed, more likely to be to blame for his errors in religion than his people, for he has, from his greater knowledge in religious matters, a better chance to know the truth; but even a minister may be in good faith about his doctrine. And in other respects he may be a worthy and estimable gentleman.

But the reason why Catholics should avoid going to him for marriage is that marriage is one of the seven sacraments which our Lord has entrusted to the keeping of His Church. These sacraments, then, belong to the Church, and we cannot recognize the right of those who separate from her to administer them or to assist officially at them, though they may have the power to do so validly. Therefore, though marriage be real and valid when contracted before a Protestant minister, and though his own people, of course, are not to blame, if in good faith, for availing themselves of his services, we cannot do so. Indeed, this would be the case even if marriage were not a sacrament, but merely a religious rite or ceremony; we cannot allow the ministers of any sect separated from the Church to act as such for us in any religious function; to do so would be to allow their claim to act in the name of Christ. This we can never do, and, above all, where the sacraments are concerned.

Another and a very weighty reason, why Catholics cannot go before a minister for marriage, is that no one but the Catholic clergy can be supposed to be sufficiently acquainted with the laws of God and of the Church regarding Christian marriage. There are impediments, as they are called, which make marriage invalid unless a dispensation is obtained from the proper source. Some of these are commonly known, such as those which proceed from a near relationship of the parties; but there are others which are not known even by name to the great mass of the faithful, and which a Protestant minister, even should he happen to know them, would never for a moment regard. Catholics, therefore, if they go to a minister to get married, run a great risk of not being really married at all, owing to these impediments not being detected or attended to.

By the law of the State their marriage may be a good and real one, but in the sight of God it will not be so, if any such impediment should exist, and not have been removed by dispensation; and this holds, even though no suspicion of such an impediment should have arisen. You see, then, how important it is in this matter to consult those who are competent to advise them.

TEMPERANCE

TOTAL ABSTAINERS WILL REMEMBER PIUS X.

The Catholic Temperance Advocate, writing of Pope Pius X, says: "Lovers of the cause of temperance will remember him as their defender on earth and will regard him as their patron in heaven. His approbation of the International Catholic Anti-Alcohol League and his appeal to all Catholics to stand in the very van of the movement against alcoholism will for all time make clearer the duty of good Catholics everywhere, and will make easier the labors of those who have been making every effort to promote the virtue of temperance. The indulgences offered to the members of all temperance societies have sealed the approval given by our saintly pontiff to those who strive by word and example to make all Christ's brethren forget Pius X. We shall never indeed pray for the repose of his soul. We shall not cease to pray that he remain our patron in heaven. We need his intercession in the heavenly courts that we may continue on earth our efforts to re-

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store some things in Christ that need restoring badly.

"When history has passed its final verdict on Pius X. it will, we believe, place him among those who have rendered signal service to the cause of Christ among the sons of men. It will count him as a greater pope than we who have lived in his day and revered him as our saintly father in Christ can yet appreciate."

TEMPERANCE NOTES

You young men, or middle-aged men, or old men, had best take note of the signs of the times and make up your minds to the fact that in this day and generation it is your drink or your job. You may compromise with your conscience or laugh at the atrocious temperance orator, but you can not fool the man with your job in his hand. Nor can you sign a truce with the growing ostracism that separates success from the man who habitually crooks his elbow.—Atlanta Constitution.

A young player may bat in the three hundred class for a season, and fathom may hail him as a second Cobb. Let him begin to patronize the saloon, and spend his leisure hours before a bar, and he drops like a spent rocket. Whisky nerves and beer weakened muscles are spotted on the instant on the diamond. Ben Johnson, President American League.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS CONVERTS

In his work "Roads to Rome" (Kegan Paul) which gives the story of the conversion to our Church of some sixty-five persons of more or less celebrity, Mr. I. G. Raupert, who was himself the holder of Anglican Orders during ten years, declares that the tendency of modern times is to take very seriously in all parts the migration of non-Catholics into the body of the Catholic Church. When the message comes to the fortunate being who is called to perform the most important act of his life, it is rare to find in these days that men look upon the Church as a gigantic fortress which cannot in any of its activities or forms be at all overlooked. Mr. Raupert says that in this age he finds from his large experience two distinctive states of mind and feeling which the very mention of the Catholic Church isapt to call into operation. The first is that of sympathy, or at least of respectful and sympathetic interest. It is everywhere exhibited by that steadily growing class of persons who although not Catholics themselves, have nevertheless a keen appreciation of Catholic doctrine and seem to be conscious in a vague sort of way

A BACKACHE

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that in spite of all that can be said and is being said and urged against the Catholic faith, it is the most stable and consistent system of Christian thought and the most emphatic and also most uncompromising witness to the existence and reality of the supernatural in this very materializing and rationalizing age. This class of persons naturally view the whole matter from a sympathetic point of view. They are apt to interpret all the current statements respecting the Catholic Church, her doctrine, her clergy, her influence, the motives inducing so many thoughtful and distinguished persons to submit to her claims in a way favorable to herself. They are conscious of that indefinable thrill of joy which is experienced at the thought that there are even in this sceptical and pleasure-loving age people who really live upon a belief and hope in the invisible and who count all as dross to win Christ.

The other state of mind is the distinctly hostile antagonistic one. It is represented by that daily diminishing number of persons who have been trained to view Rome and her doing with grave suspicion and distrust, who cannot get themselves to believe that anything true and good and holy can under any circumstances emanate from that quarter and that the motives which prompt those who often after many years of anxious search and wanderings and of incessant prayer have sought and found rest in her Fold, can possibly be honest and reasonable and valid ones. These people will of course place their own peculiar construction upon the reports respecting the present advance towards Rome which reach them from time to time. They will look upon the flow of converts into the Church as a downward movement rather than an upward one. They seek to tone down its real meaning and significance, and they will forevermore be casting about for reasons that may serve in a plausible way to account for so unique and strange and to them so very incomprehensible a phenomenon.

These two very divergent states of mind and feeling respecting the Catholic Church have certainly found emphatic expression in the press in recent times, but it is (says Mr. Raupert) only by the recognition of these divergent attitudes of thought, these states of mind and feeling, that we are able to understand much that is otherwise dark and incomprehensible. It is for example customary for many sceptical people to declare that conversion to the Church is a matter of weakness and vanity and that "impatience often plays a conspicuous part in the change of religion which is plausibly represented as an agonizing conflict." (London Protestant Guardian). Then, again, other critics fall back upon the old theory that all intellectual experiences which lead to conversion are the result of emotionalism. It is, indeed, (says Mr. Raupert) a matter of common and constant experience that no step in life is so calculated to be misinterpreted by the prejudiced non-Catholics mind as the act of submission on the part of admittedly highly intelligent persons to the Catholic body. The wildest statements are apt to be made and the most irrational motives assigned—often with the result that the moral effect which such an act is likely to produce, is either entirely lost or at least is very considerably modified. Most of the would-be converts, even those who eventually come over to our Church, find their most obstinate stumbling-block in the question of the Infallibility of the Pope. Catholics have no hesitation at all about it, since we hold that the doctrine of Infallibility is essential to the existence and persistence among men of Revealed Truth. For the intelligent Catholic it is enough to know that with the visible Head of the Church there is a divine and supernatural assistance and that God co-operates with him. And indeed if anything were wanting to demonstrate the need of such an Infallible Authority, it is the chaotic condition in which we find to day the sects of non-Catholic Christianity. Many and strangely varying statements have been made as to the causes which are instrumental in producing the modern movement towards the great historic Church, but few of them, says Mr. Raupert, are of any particular weight and most of them show little knowledge of the processes of thought which are at work in the sphere of the religious life of our time. Personally Mr. Raupert thinks the movement is due to the increasing re-assertion of those fundamental needs and aims of the human heart which no passing or fragmentary form of Christian thought or belief can ever wholly satisfy, but which the Catholic Church alone with her perfect system of doctrine, her divine authority, the wondrous adaptability of her teaching to the human soul, does most fully satisfy.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

CATHOLIC WOMEN

Catholic women, you are called upon to follow Mary, and to help in the regeneration of a corrupt world. At this moment we want women who regard life as a mission, and not as a masquerade of pleasure-seekers. There is a wide field of Catholic womanhood and old, who have good minds and firm wills and broad sympathies. You can be apostles of prayer. Pray for yourself; pray in your home with your brothers, with your sons, with your husbands, with your children. You can be apostles by your good example in your homes,

SCRUBBING is well begun and half done when you start it with — Old Dutch Cleanser

emulating Mary's virtues—humility, purity, devotedness and patience. You can be apostles of good example at your business and work by your pure lives and your fidelity to Christ. At home and in public you can make some reparation for the lives of those who have fallen away from the Church. Catholic women if you know the power you have, if you only used it, what glory would be given to the Most High! You would see what theorists and faddists ignore—that the true power and dignity of women lie in her weakness; that the virtues that have made women respected and honored and that gave her real influence over men, are the virtues of Mary.—Truth.

THE HEROISM OF NON-COMBATANTS

We are all baffled and annoyed by the inconsistencies and contradictions of the war news. But God knows the very truth of these awful butcheries and these fierce hatreds, and He overbalances their horror by the noble virtues He inspires in the women and the children and all the other non-combatants left at home. He knows and will well reward the patient love, and the trustful love, and the brotherly love, whose shrine is the desolate home and the tearful heart far in the rear of the battle front.

One can hardly read the following address of the Belgian Cardinal to his people without feeling one's eyes moistening. How noble is that witness to its Christian fortitude at home, whilst all the world reverences its patriotic valor on the firing line—in both cases cleansed of all narrow and religious motives the most admirable! The scourge of war is the direct adversity known to mankind, and the Belgians bear up under it with truest heroism. How bright are the warlike laurels on which shines the favor of heaven!

The following extract from Cardinal Mercier's war-pastoral is the occasion of our remarks: "Belgium is writing in the battle-fields the grandest page in her history. But what she does not write what God alone is witness of—is the heroism of souls. We can only trace some indications of it, and how eloquent they are already! On Sunday, during a procession which the city of Malines had organized in honor of our Lady of Hanswyck, a father gave me a vigorous handshake and said: 'I have six sons and they are all in the army.' A young mother writes to me: 'My eldest son has gone to the front. I have had the courage to bless him without trembling.' A workingman who has seven children says to me: 'I do not resist the irresistible current, but will you not assure bread to my wife and children?' And how noble in their sad solitude are those humble farms where the men are absent and

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the stables empty! It is the women who with their own hands bring home the harvest.

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"Courage, my brethren; persevere in your faith, your repentance and your charity. Put above everything purity of conscience, for what is chiefly of importance is not what the world sees, but the bottom of the heart, the invisible part which is known only to the eye of Divine Justice and Divine Love.

"Christian mothers, your sons have made their peace with God before leaving you. Encourage their faith when you write to them. Recommend them to their angel guardians. Stir up the piety of those who are at home. Bring your little children to the altar rails."—The Missionary.

REASONABLENESS OF MIRACLES

The reasonableness of miracles needs no defense by the Catholic Church. Since her Divine Founder, Jesus Christ, worked many miracles, thousands more perhaps than are of record in the gospels, and since the Apostles in accordance with the Saviour's promise wrought many more and even greater, if such a thing were possible, the reasonableness and veracity of miracles have ceased to be problematical from the very foundations of Christianity. Unbelievers, rationalists, materialists, pantheists, monists and modernists—all those who deny the supernatural in religion—have put miracles into the scrap-heap of unmitigated nonsense and absurdity long ago. But while these have professed themselves the Apostles of Reason, they can easily be shown that they are the Apostles of Unreason. They all have made the most unreasonable claims. Bergson, the French philosopher, who has a considerable following, is so unreasonable as to hold that we may find out what we want by trying to get it—without knowing what it is. The late Professor William James is quite as unreasonable in many points of his philosophy. Nietzsche, too, may be put down as an Apostle of Unreason, when he makes the unintelligible statement: "We must have chaos within, that we may give birth to a dancing star." Pragmatists do not escape the criticisms that they are Apostles of Unreason. Modernists as condemned by the Encyclical of the late Pope, are in the same category. Oscar Wilde was in this company when he declared that brute reason hit below the intellect. Dr. Brandes was amenable to the charge of lunacy when he asked the question: "Who knows that two and two do not make five in the planet Jupiter?" John Davidson became an Apostle of Unreason when he championed the cause of pure force and will. Bernard Shaw is another Apostle of Unreason when he maintains that all logic leads to killing oneself.

It is objected to miracles that they suppose a Supreme Being, the Creator and Arbiter of the Universe, could change His mind. A miracle is something different from nature, extraordinary, taken out of the eternal run of things. But this is begging the question. God from all eternity sees as present everything that is going to happen. He therefore does not change His mind when something unusual occurs out of the ordinary course of Nature. From all eternity, He has willed it to be so according to His own wisdom, for the benefit of created man, and His own glory. Only God can perform a miracle. What He has made He can unmake, or change. If by human ingenuity a piece of machinery has been constructed according to certain mathematical principles and rules, it can be unmade by the same artificer and reconstructed on different lines. In so far as a miracle is a stupendous occurrence, beyond our comprehension, it is not so great as the miracles with which we are surrounded in the ordinary course of nature and events. We cannot explain the multiplication of seed in the fields, which makes for the bountiful harvest; nor the mystery in the growth of a single blade of grass. St. Augustine says that a miracle wrought is not so great as thousands of other miracles with which we are daily surrounded. We become so accustomed to them that they become commonplace. Among the greatest miracles to which we have become callous is our body and soul—making one personality and working in harmony with each other. It is God's privilege and within His power to set aside the laws of nature—for as He made, so also can He unmake them.

The reasonableness of miracles cannot be explained away by any quibbling or sophistry. It stands secure on God's omnipotence.—Intermountain Catholic.

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