

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOY, D. D.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST

THE LORD'S ANOINTED

"At that time: The Pharisees going consulted among themselves how to ensnare Him in His speech." (Matt. xxiii. 15.)

The path of the righteous is a difficult one. This is due to two facts: First, because it is hard to conquer the cravings of nature; and secondly, because there are many outside obstacles to be overcome. The chief of these obstacles is that offered by our fellow-men. It is a well-known fact that the virtuous meet with more opposition from the world than do the wicked; and it is surprising that much of this comes from others apparently virtuous themselves. In fact, the most strenuous opposition comes from our supposedly virtuous and seemingly well-meaning neighbors. We need not seek for the reason. The causes are manifold and varied. We shall not speak of the first of the difficulties besetting the path of the virtuous—that is, of the inordinate demands of nature—but shall confine ourselves to those impediments offered by the world. The Gospel of the day suggests this consideration.

Our Lord, Jesus Christ, the man-God the most virtuous of men that ever walked the earth, is opposed by the Pharisees. They endeavor by various unlawful means to hamper His work, and have Him appear as violating the laws of God and of the State. Their efforts were futile, as we well know, though they finally did have Him crucified. They found fault with Christ when He was performing the sacred works of His public ministry. When He would speak they industriously would try to find fault with His utterances; or have Him contradict Himself; or have Him say something opposed to the law, especially to the law that God gave Moses, to which they claimed strict adherence. In a word, Christ was continually watched by a hateful mob ever anxious for a pretext to have the people turn against Him. The power and beauty of His divinity and the superb excellence of His humanity rendered their efforts futile. "Which of you," He well said, shall convince Me of sin?"

Today the people of God suffer in a similar manner. But God is with them, and if they themselves do their best He will render them immune from the attacks of their enemies. God is ever solicitous of His own, and to save them. He often routes their enemies by death or misfortune. He dwells in the heavens above, but He has His dwelling-places on earth also; He is the Lord, God, Master of all, but He has His representatives upon earth. He cares for them, nay almost identifies them with Himself. He wishes us to respect Him and His name, but He also desires us to show proper respect to His representatives on earth. He even goes so far as to choose these Himself: "Let no man take upon himself this honor, except him who is called like Aaron."

How much people should, in recognition of this fact and in obedience to duty, as well as out of reverence for God, respect the holy places of God and hold in sacred esteem those persons dedicated to the Lord. The unbelieving part of humanity is ever mocking at our religion, ever using weapons destined, they think, to destroy it. Even those who believe, but who believe differently from us, act, in many cases, in a similar manner. In certain respects, they are like the Pharisees of old. They give a false interpretation to our every word and deed, and criticize every move we make. Our most sacred ceremonies are made little of and termed superstitious by them. The lives of our priests and Religious of both sexes are, to use the most charitable expression, represented in a bad light. By lectures and by the dissemination of literature they are waging an open war against us; and, by listening to the promptings of Satan, they are employing his diabolical methods in attempts at our destruction. But we are God's own. If we are faithful to Him, there is nothing to fear.

What we lament most of all is that in our day, more so than in times gone by, some of our own people sometimes are inclined to speak disrespectfully of those dedicated to God. They are too quick to see a failure, too eager to detect a fault, too hasty in their judgments. We hear them now and again speak of the Lord's anointed as they would of any ordinary person, judging Him according to the same criterion by which they would judge any other mortal. Perhaps this can be done, but it certainly should not be done. And those who indulge in this practice, if they continue in it, will not long have faith. God cares for His own, and the person who does not respect and defend God's anointed will be deprived by Him, sooner or later, of that greatest of gifts—faith.

Some of our people, too, are inclined to be suspicious of the lives and actions of those who have dedicated themselves to God. They may feel sure that those who are in the service of the Lord will not remain there long, unless their lives be sincere and their actions meritorious. It is true that we are all human, and that those who are dedicated to the service of the Lord are also human, but pray tell us, where

will you find mortals who have conquered human nature as they have? Are they not in truth today the lights of the world and the salt of the earth? God, too, demands that they attain a certain standard; if they fail, He withdraws His support, and, as a consequence, they soon openly leave His service. But how seldom even this happens.

Catholics, above all others, should have the greatest respect, the most sacred esteem, for those dedicated to the Lord. Through them, they first received the grace of God in Baptism, and the growth of this same grace in their souls was accorded them chiefly through the ministrations of these same anointed of the Lord. Today, through them also, their sins are washed away and the burden of guilt lifted from their shoulders. Through these representatives of God, they can assist at a renewal of Calvary, where the great price of redemption was paid and where the greatest blessings were gained for man. Through them, again, they can receive the body and blood of Christ—the same Christ who said: "If any man eat My flesh and drink My blood he shall live forever." Who can begin to enumerate the blessings that come to Catholics through the ministrations of their priests? No others could afford them these opportunities and grant them these blessings. He who gives you the greatest blessings on earth, who weeps with you, who rejoices with you, who feels with you and for you—who, in a word, has given Himself for your service, you should respect, esteem, and protect—he is the Lord's.

A CANADIAN PHYSICIAN HONORED

A United States professional journal, The Therapeutic and Dietetic Age of New York City, published for physicians only, has come to Toronto for the talent to edit its Dietetic department, Robt. G. Jackson, M. D. being the favored physician.

Dr. Jackson, although a Canadian, formerly taught Dietetics in one of the Union's great Medical Schools. He is the same Dr. Jackson who won the \$1,000 Physical Culture prize for 1924, who won the 1,800 mile bicycle contest in 19 days against C. J. Gregory 30 years younger, who invented Roman Meal and whose marvelous physical development has been used as photographs of "Youth at 65" to demonstrate the growth and body-building qualities of Roman Meal throughout Canada, Britain and the States.

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BLESSED MARIANA DE JESUS

NUN SAINT'S BODY INCORRUPT AFTER THREE CENTURIES

By Rev. Manuel Gracia (Madrid Correspondent, N. C. W. C.)

Madrid is preparing with great activity to celebrate the third centennial of the death of one of her most illustrious daughters, the Blessed Mariana de Jesus, the science which denies miracles, or at least doubts them, has stood recently before her body without being able to deny the palpable fact of its conservation and without being able to explain it. The sarcophagus was opened in the presence of some famous physicians and the ecclesiastical authorities. The Bishop of Madrid and the medical men, in the presence of all these witnesses, examined the sacred remains, and, according to the statement of the experts, the body of the beatified nun has conserved its corporal integrity and does not show the slightest indication of corruption. On the contrary the body exudes a sweet perfume.

BODY TO BE EXPOSED

Although the Blessed Mariana de Jesus died in Madrid on April 17, 1624, the celebration of the centennial will not take place until November. It will be conducted with the utmost solemnity. For three days the body has been exposed for the veneration of the faithful, clad in a new habit, made of silk by the order of the Sisters of Mercy of the Capital, in whose church the body is kept. The old habit will be preserved as a relic, together with a few small pieces of flesh. During the month of November the body will be exposed publicly so that all the faithful may see and venerate it.

The Blessed Mariana was born in Madrid in 1568, the daughter of a furrier to the Royal House. Very young she entered the Tertiaries of the Order of Mercy and soon distinguished herself by her virtues, her mortifications, her love for the needy and her pity for the sick. An echo of blessings and praise followed her wherever she passed. She constantly besought the aid of the upper classes for the poor, giving to the latter her alms and compassion, and to the former the protection of her prayers. The nobles placed their children under the spiritual protection of the

humble nun, and she was even called upon to stand as god-mother at the baptism of a son of the Duke of Alba, where the King of Spain, Philip III., was the god-father. The Blessed Mariana de Jesus also had the gift of prophecy and of miracles.

The preliminary canonical process for the beatification of this holy nun was opened only one month after her death, such was the fame of her sanctity. Five months later the body was examined, and except for the face, which had been disfigured by smallpox, it was well preserved and did not show any sign of the absence of life. The precious relic was taken with loving care to a chapel of the Order of Mercy, and from that time on it remained under the supervision of the ecclesiastical authorities, and the coffin was never opened except in the presence of witnesses, a sworn statement before a notary public being drawn up each time. In 1627, as the last act in the canonical process, the body was viewed by seven doctors who declared it to be intact, even including those parts which were most susceptible to rapid decomposition. The same observation was made a hundred and seven years later after its examination by two surgeons and nine doctors, also certified as to its incorruptibility and fragrance.

BODY PROFANED BY SOLDIERY

In 1808 the French soldiers profaned the body of the beatified in order to steal the silver coffin. They wrapped the body in some mats and threw it in the attic of the convent, from where it was piously rescued by the nuns and hidden in the garden by night. The ecclesiastical authorities intervened in order to ascertain whether or not the body was actually the authentic body of the Blessed Mariana, and having recognized it as such, it was placed in the modest coffin in which it has been preserved up to the present time. This coffin will be opened again in November, and will be carried in procession to the Cathedral for the great festivities which have been planned.

Dr. Maestre, a physician well-known in Spain for his discussions with Catholic scholars, has been appointed, precisely because of his incredulity, to contribute to the statements of experts to be drawn up by a body of doctors concerning the incorruptibility of the body of the beatified. In the interviews given out by him to the Madrid press, Dr. Maestre declared that "under given conditions of humidity and heat, putrefaction never fails to take place except in cases of embalming. But the body of the Blessed Mariana de Jesus was not embalmed. There are no signs of any such operation; there exist only a few small incisions, especially under the knees, which were made by the doctors in previous centuries during their works and studies and who certified that this was so."

DR. MAESTRE MYSTIFIED

"The body," Dr. Maestre continues, "exhales an aromatic balsam. I am now making a study of the case and will confine myself to scientific reasons of a natural order. When I shall have completed my work, I shall say: I have gone thus far; this is what I know. The rest I do not know. The body appears to be whole. The skin, which has somewhat the texture of parchment, permits us to observe beneath it the muscular tissue in the form of a fibrous matter, soft, and easily cut. The body is not mummified, and this, after three centuries, is worthy of study. Why did putrefaction not occur? Why was the body not consumed by the micro-organisms and the workers of death despite the presence of the necessary conditions of heat and humidity? Especially since the Blessed Mariana de Jesus died of purulent pleurisy, which should have favored decomposition in the highest degree?"

"I do not remember," Dr. Maestre added, "more than three bodies of the XVIII century which have been preserved in a similar state—that of Saint Theresa, that of Saint Isidore and that of the Blessed Mariana de Jesus. The laboratory must tell me what I do not yet know."

Dr. Maestre appears to have repented already of having pledged himself to study the miracle and present a report. Incredible science is very proud, and is loath to declare itself beaten by the unexplainable.

Who fears men will do nothing great for God.—St. Ignatius of Loyola.

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