

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOUY, D. D.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER
EPIPHANY

THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH

"And forthwith his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith to him: See thou tell not this to any man; but go, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them." (Matt. VIII. 3-4)

God acts with man in a twofold way; namely, directly and indirectly. He acts directly in him principally by His inspirations. His more common way of dealing with earthly beings is through His representatives. This was true in the Old Covenant, when He dealt with His people through Moses and through the other patriarchs and prophets. The people learned of His commands from those whom He appointed His representatives. In the New Law the same is true. God spoke to men and directed them through His Divine Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Man always was to be directed by those whom Christ appointed the dispensers of the word of God, and by their successors. To the apostles was given the mission of teaching all nations and at all times. To the ordinary Christian was given the command to submit unreservedly, in matters of faith and morals, to the ministers of Christ. Hence, to be a child of God, one must submit to the authorities in His Church. The commands and teachings of the Church can not be overlooked.

God could have so established it that men should communicate directly with Himself, but we must not consider what God could have done, but what He did in reality. Many of the so-called reformers of religion endeavored to spread this doctrine, particularly in order to disprove and discredit many points of Catholic doctrine. The attempt was futile. It only tended to decrease the amount of contrition a person should have for his sins, and deprive religion, in many cases, of its seriousness and, especially, of its power and influence over men. Time continues to tell of the emptiness of this attempt. We need not wonder that many yielded to this false doctrine, and that it still finds favor among a certain class of people. It is an easy religion and imposes no obligation upon the individual, except such as he himself chooses. This sounds well, but it is not what God established. Hence is not the true religion. All must be guided by those whom God has placed as His ministers over the human race, and His representatives on earth. These are the authorities in the Church He founded, with which He abides, and which He directs and preserves from error.

The incident related in the Gospel of this Sunday affords an excellent and weighty confirmation of the doctrine we have indicated. Christ healed the sick man of his leprosy, but ordered him to fulfill the demand made by the law of Moses, in the case of a cure from that horrible disease. Christ was God—the Supreme Being and Supreme Lawgiver—and was not bound to take notice of such a law. But Moses was God's representative, and even though Christ had acted directly in the leper and cured him in a miraculous way, He still required of him that he satisfy this demand of Moses expressed in the Law, for such was God's will.

If Christ so acted with regard to the obedience due to the laws of Moses, it is easy to say what His will is with regard to the requirements of the New Law established by Himself. We must, in all things religious, obey His ministers, the authorities and pastors in the Catholic Church. His will is made known to us through them, and from them we learn His doctrine. He speaks to us through His doctrine. He is our Mediator with His heavenly Father, but our relations with Himself must be carried on through mediators between Himself and ourselves. This fact in no way tends to lighten the doctrine that He is our Mediator with God and His representative on earth are our mediators with Himself. This does not, in our private devotions, hinder us from praying directly to God. Many are the prayers in the Church that are directed immediately to God, though they generally end, as is just: "through Our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with Thee [God] for ever and ever." We often pray directly to Christ, and many times we pray directly to Him through His Virgin Mother and the saints. All this is true of our prayers and devotions, but when there is a question of what Christ taught us to believe and to do in order to be saved, we must go to His Church for the true answer.

This doctrine is consoling to the earnest Christian. It affords him greater security in his religious beliefs, offers him a guide in his spiritual life, and gives him great confidence in his Maker. He need not worry about the favor the representative of God has with his Maker. Of course, he would prefer to see him as nearly approaching sanctity as possible. But even when quite the contrary is verified, it does not interfere with the amount of his own merit or with the truth for which he may be searching. God can speak to us through His representatives, as He often does, whether they be good or bad. If they be not worthy representa-

tives of His and but weak instruments in His hands, this is something personal, and God will not allow this defect to interfere with their relations with us.

We may, then, go to God through His ministers with all confidence, even though, sometimes, we observe points in their character unworthy of the dignity they hold. This fact will detract nothing from the merit of our obedience and prayers. Once we know that a certain man is God's representative, we need not hesitate to act with God through him. In our charity we should pray for the unworthy minister, and in justice—if it can be done without great scandal—we should remove from the office he holds, for he is but a wolf in the clothing of a lamb. However, if we prudently can not do this, we should remain silent in order not to lessen the influence the representative in the Church may have, and trust in God, who will, in His own time, remove the unworthy one from the dignity he disgraces.

SO SOON REMOVED

Catholic Herald

There is a striking line of thought in one of John Ayscough's books where a girl, strongly rooted in the Catholic faith, finds herself a guest of a man brought up, by a series of unfortunate circumstances, without even the initial grace of baptism, or any religious training at all. Groping his way in the dark, and prejudiced against Christianity from his youth, he is attracted by Gautama Buddha's tenets, and makes "The Awakened One," as he calls him, his ideal of religious perfection.

In one of the rooms used much by her host, the girl sees a bronze statue of the Awakened One. She recognizes its value as a work of art, but she is actively repelled by the air of imperturbable repose it conveys. She was aware that millions of men were then living, that millions had lived and died in the faith of his teaching. It was not possible to escape these facts, and she regarded the image with wondering interest and sad conjecture.

There was the beauty of contemplation about the quiet face, the attitude of the whole figure had a subtle dignity, but the Absolute impassivity it expressed, inflexibly aloof and passionless, seemed to her heartless and callous, as of one who sat above the sorrow and pain of the world in an impregnable isolation. And as she looked, her thoughts flew on rapid wing to the Man of Sorrows, and her heart swelled with an access of sweet and grateful love. It was impossible for her not to compare or contrast. One was a man who had never claimed to be more than man, withdrawn from men and all man's agony, crowned with a serenity built up on indifference in its ability to avoid suffering, with no higher aim than to secure the questionable happiness of non-being for his own individual entity. There was nothing more in his creed than the advice "Desires nothing." Desires lay at the root of all men's troubles, and desires, therefore, inevitably led to suffering; existence itself was the force and spring of all misery; escape from it back into nothingness the only remedy; man's aim should be by desiring nothing to free himself from his humanity, to wear out each link in the chain of all being till nothing should be reached as the final goal.

The girl's heart thrilled when she thought of the crucifix and of Him who hung thereon for the redemption of the world. He was not seated, but cruelly nailed: His throne was the hard wood of the cross stained crimson with the blood flowing from His tortured head and expression of detached serenity, but was pallid and drawn with the agony of Love crucified to save the souls of men. This Victim was God, who left heaven to seek humanity, and by an unimaginable exercise of omnipotence had deliberately become man for the astounding purpose of being able to suffer that He might win His gentle way into the hearts of men by being one with them in sorrow and suffering and all things, and so triumphantly force them to love Him by the proof of His own over-mastering love for them. "Greater love than this no man hath, that he lay down his life for his friend." Far from suppressing desires to escape pain, He was consumed with desires to meet it, for Love suffering is the master-key to the human heart. "I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished." Another time He sighed out in His eager generosity: "With desire have I desired to eat this Pasch with you"—the Pasch which was to consummate His self-sacrifice by a summation of Love! Here there is no standing apart, no viewing the struggles of mankind with serene indifference, no strangling of one's nature to attain Nirvana for oneself, but a God mingling with His own creatures, sharing their nature, partaking of their woes, shedding His heart's blood in direct agony for their salvation. How diminutive looks Gautama and how self-absorbed His teaching beside the selfless love of Christ, beside Calvary, silently preaching its grand sermon on Divine Love, whilst the blood of the Saviour drips down from the cross to wash away the sins of the world!

And yet—alas! how sadly wounded by ingratitude was the tender heart of Christ even during His life on earth. Now and again the Gospel He reveals His sensitiveness to the sting of ingratitude.

"I entered into thy house; thou gavest me no water for my feet. Thou gavest me no kiss. My head with oil though didst not anoint." Again, when the lepers, abhorred outcasts of society, obtained a perfect cure from Him, and only one of the ten comes back to thank Him, how much pain lies in His few words: "Were not ten made clean? And where are the nine? There is no one found to return and give glory to God but this stranger."

The heart of our Lord is a human heart responsive to all the chords of human emotion. He is as sadly alive today to the ingratitude or thoughtlessness of men as when He revealed His disappointment over the nine lepers who so soon forgot He owed them Him. In one of Shakespeare's plays there is a song with lines that are cutting in their bitter truth:

"Blow, blow, thou winter wind
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remembered not!"

And who knows better than the gentle, forgiving Christ, He who carries each one of us in His loving heart as a shepherd carelessly holds a lamb in his arms, the pang of disappointment in being "the friend remembered not." Benefits earnestly bestowed on benighted knees are eagerly grasped, but once obtained, they are "benefits forgot," and the Benefactor slips from the memory until His love is needed again.

"Sometimes we creep up to Thy very feet
In holy silences, and hear Thee speak;
Yet we forgot Thee in the busy street—
We are so weak!

Or seeking Thee in Thy calm house of prayer,
Sometimes we touch the wonder of Thy wings,
And know Thy perfect peace—yet leave it there

For outer things!
Dear Lord, how strange a thing it is
That we Who hunger so for Thee the Well-Beloved,
Can lean upon Thy very heart,
Yet be—
So soon removed!

And yet so humble and gentle and sweet is Christ that He forgets all He has done for us, but welcomes and treasures with a great joy one glance of love in His direction, one word of gratitude, even one thought to show Him He has a place in our hearts. There is no one so unutterably grateful as He whose greatest sorrow is when we wilfully or thoughtlessly shut Him out of our lives, and whose greatest joy is when He knows He is all-in-all to us.—Loretto House.

THE OLD GRACE OF
COURTESY

Not long ago I read an article in which there was the contention that chivalry had died out of our land and that the "sweet flower of courtesy" bloomed no more. When I read it I was glad of the fact that I could read many things that aren't true. One has only to have an observant eye to discover that the "sweet flower of courtesy" blooms all over our land. As a matter of fact, good manners obtain in our country in a much greater degree than they once did. Men are more courteous to women and the boy receives greater training in politeness. It is to be feared that girls and women do not try to make themselves worthy of chivalrous treatment. In one of the books the late Miss Louisa M. Alcott wrote this: "The only chivalry worth having is that which is the readiest to pay deference to the old, protect the feeble, and serve womankind." One need not look far any day of the year to discover these things in our land. They obtain to a far greater degree than do discourtesy and the things akin to it. It is rarely indeed that one sees an old person clinging to a strap in a street car while men and boys keep their seats. Let an old person fall or be in need of any helpful service in a street car or in a public place and that service is instantly given. The other day I saw three young fellows rise when a woman entered the room in which they were and they remained standing until she was seated. I have often seen young girls give their seats to old people on the cars. Only the other day I saw a young fellow in knee trousers rise and open the door for a woman leaving a railway station.

I believe that for every deed of open discourtesy in our land one may cite a hundred deeds of kindness and courtesy. I do not believe that there is any land in which the "sweet flower of courtesy" blooms more abundantly than it blooms in our land. We stress politeness today as never before. It is demanded by employers of all kinds. The hundreds of thousands of clerks and others in clerical positions in our country are told that they must be courteous. The openly discourteous conductor on any kind of a railway could not hold his position

long if he were constantly discourteous.

If we put each day at its close to the test and discover that we have done even one act of kindness we may have the satisfaction of knowing that the day has not been wasted. It is within the power of young and old, rich and poor, to do these things.

The power of doing good, the ability to be happy, is never dependent upon wealth or position. One will find some of the happiest people of the world in the humblest walk in life, just as one may find some of the unhappiest people among the rich and the privileged.

We owe something to the age in which we live and young and old should recognize this debt. They who live for themselves alone are apt to come to the end of the journey saying "It is all barren." Just before Christmas I was in a large department store in the shopping center and near me at a glove counter were two young women who were looking at different kind of gloves. As I stood near the counter waiting for some one to serve me I heard one of the young women say:

My aunt sent me five dollars and told me to get me a thing I want with it. I thought I would put it all into a very handsome pair of gloves, but—well, I don't know. It is a good deal to put into a pair of gloves no more serviceable than a cheaper pair, but finer looking. On the whole I think that I will get this three-dollar pair for myself and buy this neat looking pair for two dollars to give to an old lady I know who never has gloves at all.

Here was a young woman discovering in her own experience that "A pleasure shared is a pleasure doubled." There was a kindly deed to cheer her at the close of the day. She had left a mark upon the way.

If kindness and courtesy are not universal in our land, it is only the pessimist, and the person with the unseeing eye who will say that they are dead and that the "sweet flower of courtesy" blooms no more. Look for it today and you will discover it and smell its sweet perfume in some kind deed, some gracious act.—The Echo.

STRIKING AT THE
ROOTS OF CRIME

The appalling increase in crime that has been noted in recent months has prompted the educational authorities in a nearby State to introduce into the school curriculum a course in honesty. Most people are willing to admit that some such course is badly needed. The educators have rightly concluded that the source of the evil is in defective early training and they have determined to take preventive measures against its further spread by training the pupils in their schools in honesty. So far so good.

They will have the approval of cooperation of all good men in their endeavor to introduce more training into the schools. But as we examine their plan more closely we find to our astonishment and amazement that the motive for practicing honesty to be recommended to the children is the worldly adage that honesty is the best policy. Their plan is to tabulate the number of thefts for the children and to show them how large a percentage of the thieves were caught and punished.

This will no doubt convince the children that honesty is a job, without it will not be a sufficient motive to deter them from stealing, when the danger of being caught is absent. It may even teach them to cultivate a craftiness in wrong doing that will reduce to a minimum the danger of being found out. The average thief knows well his chances of being caught. He never undertakes a job, without first making sure of his "getaway." Few thieves have ever been deterred from their lives of crime by the fear of being caught. That is a chance they are willing to take. Perhaps it even adds zest to the adventurous career on which they have embarked.

Educating to honesty will not be accomplished that way. The mere utilitarian motive, of doing good and avoiding evil, because it is to one's interest to do so, the "honesty is the best policy" brand of morality, is unsound. The time will come when utilitarian morality will break down, for the power of conscience will be lacking.

Education in honesty will be effective only when religion is recognized and accepted as an integral part of education. We are not the authors of our being nor the masters of the end of our existence. He has established the norm of morality.

Obedience to his law, making our wills conform to His, because He is our Creator and Sovereign Lord, is the standard of human actions. Therefore we do good and avoid evil because it is His law, because eternal happiness or eternal punishment will follow from the fulfillment or the non-fulfillment of His law.

The law of morals is not a mere convention arranged by men to enjoy the goods of the present. It is the ordinance of Divine reason planted in the heart of every man ordering the moral order to be kept and forbidding its violation under penalty of eternal reprobation. This is the ultimate motivating force that must be appealed to, in any course in honesty that hopes to

be efficacious, for it is the only force in the world that can make anybody really honest.—The Pilot.

PAPAL CUSTOMS
RETAINEDA CURIOUS EXAMPLE OF
ANGLICAN "CONTINUITY"

(By N. C. W. C. News Service)

London, Dec. 23.—If any Catholic is curious enough to attend a solemn religious function in Westminster Abbey, when either the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Bishop of London is officiating, he will, on occasion, hear read out by the Dean of Westminster a Latin formula, pronounced in the odd way introduced at the Reformation in which the Abbey of Westminster protests against either the Archbishop or the Bishop having any jurisdiction whatever over the Abbey and announcing that the Anglican prelates are only allowed in on sufferance.

This is not a piece of modern ecclesiastical Bolshevism on the part of the Deans of Westminster, but the assertion, strangely enough, of an ancient Papal privilege vested centuries ago in the Abbot and monks of Westminster. There are many curious survivals of this kind in England. For example, the Anglican cathedral of St. Paul's in London has two officials who are styled Cardinals, though what their exact function is nobody seems to know.

But during the Pontificate of Innocent IV., when Dr. Crokeley was Abbot of Westminster, the Abbey of Westminster was declared by Papal documents to be exempt from the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Canterbury and to be *nullo mediante* subject directly to the Pope.

It is maintained that this exemption from English episcopal jurisdiction goes back to even an earlier date, and the historian Dugdale says that the exemption was granted either by Pope Innocent III. or Honorius III., when William de Hume was installed as Abbot of Westminster by the Papal Legate, Nicholas of Tusculum, who was holding a Papal Visitation of Westminster and deposed the Abbot Ralph de Arundel.

However, when Henry VIII. set about reforming the Catholic Church in England, he transferred the higher ecclesiastical jurisdiction from the Pope to himself—substituting Royal Supremacy for the former Papal Supremacy. As a result of this the exemption of

Westminster Abbey was maintained, but instead of being subject immediately to the Pope, it became subject, directly to the King, as Supreme Governor of the Church of England.

Some of these exemptions still exist in different parts of Great Britain, and they are known as "peculiarities," which simply means in ordinary language that there is no episcopal oversight of them, and that they are subject immediately to the Crown. For example, Caldey Island, the home of the Benedictine monks, when those monks were Anglican, never at any time came within the jurisdiction of any Anglican Bishop, and in this sense it never became a part of the domains of the Protestant Church. Its position was that no Bishop of the Church of England could claim to exercise jurisdiction there, and so the Anglican monks were exempt from episcopal supervision. The situation is, of course, different under Catholic auspices, since the island comes within the jurisdiction of the Catholic Bishops of Merioneth.

There are other places where the Papal privilege of exemption from episcopal jurisdiction still prevail, though the privilege has been wrested to the advantage of the Crown. The Chapel of Saint George in Windsor Castle, the Chapel of St. Stephen in the House of Commons, are still exempt from the jurisdiction of the Anglican Bishops solely because in the ages of faith they were subject immediately to the Holy See.

The Papal privilege, which the Deans of Westminster Abbey continue to enjoy, seems to have been very far reaching in its effects. For it appears that not only are the Archbishops of Canterbury and the Bishops of London excluded from exercising any jurisdiction within the Abbey, but they are also excluded from officiating at the burial of the Deans, though they may be invited, as an act of grace, to officiate at these funeral functions.

Another curious incident arises whenever the English Sovereign is crowned. According to ancient tradition, the Coronation takes place in Westminster Abbey, and the proper prelate to place the Imperial Crown on the head of the Sovereign is the Archbishop of Canterbury. Yet before the function takes place the Dean of Westminster makes his protest against the Archbishop of Canterbury exercising any episcopal functions within the Abbey, and when that is done, the Dean very amiably takes part in the Coronation, at which certain duties are assigned to him.

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Pres. Publications
Nov. 18, 1920

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