

## FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Fourth Sunday in Lent.

## CONSTANT PRAYER.

\* Watch ye and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak." (St. Matt. xvi. 4.)

Not infrequently, my dear brethren, a priest is told when he asks his penitents about their prayers, that they have been too much put out to say them; that they have had so much trouble, so many anxieties and disappointments, that they have had no satisfaction in praying. Something or other has gone wrong, and, as a consequence, their prayers have been omitted. In not a few cases matters go farther than this, and on account of some reverse or trial a man will leave off going to church altogether. Now, I wish this morning to point out the mistaken notion persons who act in this way must have of the necessity and purpose of prayer.

Some people think, or at all events act, as if they thought that prayer is a kind of spiritual luxury, a thing to practise as long as things go well and pleasantly, but to leave off when the times are dark. Others do not go so far as this, but look upon prayer as a duty to be done, a command to be obeyed, and if they grow careless about their other duties and obligations, this must share the same fate. I wish to point out, however, that prayer and its necessity stand in an entirely different position. While it is perfectly true that prayer is a duty, yet the necessity of prayer is greater even than the duty of observing God's commandments. To understand this you must remember the difference which exists between those things which must be done because God commands us to do them, and those things which must be done, or which we must have, because God has made them means to obtain our salvation. Perhaps the best way to make this clear is by a few examples.

Now, we all know that to tell a lie is a sin; that Almighty God has commanded us not to depart from the truth. Yet there are many persons so dull, and possessed of so little sense and intelligence, as to think that in some difficult circumstance it is right to tell a lie; for example, to save a friend from death or even from getting into small troubles. Well, suppose a man were to act in this way, thinking he was doing right. Would he commit a sin and offend God? By no means, if he did it in good faith. His ignorance would excuse him; it would not be a sin in such a case.

Take another example and a more important one. All Catholics know, owing to the advantages of their birth and education, that God has founded His Holy Catholic Church, and that He preserves it in the world in order to teach His truths and to administer the sacraments which He has instituted as the means of grace and sanctification. He has commanded all men to enter this Church, and that they may be able to know that it is His Church, He has given to it certain notes of which no other body of men is in possession. But now, let us suppose that there are some men, owing to their dullness of apprehension, their bad education, their prejudice or any other reason, are unable to see that the Catholic Church is really and in truth the Church of God; would they commit a sin on account of the mere fact that they do not do that which they did not know they are bound to do? By no means.

Ignorance in this case also excuses. It brings with it many disadvantages and entails many evils, but it is not sinful in itself.

But when we come to those things which are necessary, not merely because God has commanded them, but because they are made by Him means to the end, then the omission of such things involves more serious consequences. If a thing is a means to the end, the end cannot be attained unless the means is made use of; and if we could suppose a case in which a person were even in culpable ignorance of such a means, that ignorance would not excuse him; he would not, and could not, without the means, get the end.

Now, there are some things which are necessary to salvation, not merely because God has commanded them, but as means to attain it, and among these things is prayer. If we wish to be saved, prayer is so necessary that even ignorance will not excuse us from it. How foolishly, then, do those people act who leave off their prayers for every little misfortune or contradiction, when our Lord bids them pray at such times.

## FASTING IN LENT.

IT HAS ALWAYS PRECEDED THE GRANTING OF DIVINE FAVORS.

Lent is a time of fasting and abstinence instituted by the Church from her very beginning as an appropriate preparation for the great feast of Easter. Fasting and abstinence have always been regarded as a necessary preparation for the reception of great divine favors. Moses, for instance, to fit himself for receiving the Law from God on Mount Sinai, fasted forty days; the prophet Elias also fasted the same length of time to prepare himself to behold the passing of the Lord on Mount Horeb. The Old Testament abounds in passages wherein fasting is prescribed for obtaining the forgiveness of sins. When Jonas preached in Nineveh, threatening its destruction because of the sins of its people, a general fast was proclaimed, and all the inhabitants joined in it to avert the impending punishment and to obtain mercy. "Be ye converted to Me," says God through His prophet, "with all your heart in fasting, in weeping and in mourning." (Joel 2: 12.)

The Church wishes all her children to reap at Easter the fruits of the Redemption and to rise to a new life of grace. She, therefore, prescribes fasting during Lent as a means of securing the pardon of our sins, of drawing down upon us the divine favor and of worthily receiving Holy Communion—the pledge of a glorious resurrection and of life eternal. The Communion unites us individually to Christ, makes us live by His life, and imparts to us the fruits of redemption—the forgiveness of sins, the peace of soul and a right to

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## PEDIAR People of Oshawa

Resident, Toronto, Halifax, St. John, Winnipeg, Vancouver.

heaven and its joys \* \* \* Speaking of Lent, Benedict XIV. in his letter of March 30, 1741, says: "The observance of Lent is the very badge of Christian warfare. We thereby show that we are not the enemies of the cross of Christ; we thereby turn away from ourselves the scourges of divine justice and acquire strength against the princes of darkness, for it secures for us help from heaven. Were mankind to relax in the Lenten observance, it would prove detrimental to the divine glory, dangerous to the Christian religion and dangerous to Christian souls. Such negligence would result in misery to the world, in public calamities and private woes."—From "The Holy Season of Lent."

## ST. JOSEPH, OUR PATRON AND MODEL.

St. Joseph is next to our Blessed Mother, the highest in the Heavenly Court, and next to her the most beloved on earth. He was the friend, father, guardian and protector of the Holy Family, and he stands ready to be the same to all Christians, for we are members of that same family by adoption. Our divine Lord, by taking our humanity, became our brother; then Mary became our mother, and Joseph our father, and as such we have his love and care, and as such we should give him our gratitude and our love. We glory in St. Joseph for all he was to our divine Lord and to His blessed Mother. We esteem him for his goodness to them, for his labors and his sacrifices. We admire him for what he was in himself, his modesty, his virtues, and, above all, his purity, which made him worthy to be the protector of the Son of God and of Mary, His Virgin Mother.

We see in St. Joseph all that we should be. Laboring, yet adoring, hidden and unknown to the world, yet close in the friendship and esteem of God, he is, indeed, the model for every Christian man and woman. He knew the trials and sorrows of life, and could sympathize with those who bore them, because in them he discerned the divine will, and by resignation gained greater interior consolations than his external trials. He experienced what every confiding Christian ever experiences, that God will not let us want; that those who put their trust in Him have their burdens on the Lord, and He will nourish them," so says Holy Writ and time has proved it. The abiding trust of Joseph of old, who fed the famishing Egyptians, shows us the greater power of St. Joseph with God to help all who call upon him. We all need help—help in life, help at death—and this help we shall have in abundance if we make St. Joseph our advocate. "Go to Joseph," he will give you what you need," were Pharaoh's words to his people, and these selfsame words are used by holy Church to exhort and to encourage her children to have recourse to St. Joseph's prayers. Let us be worthy of his love and care by imitating his virtues, and let us requite his goodness by having like him a tender love for our divine Lord and of His blessed Mother and proclaim and honor their names.

The month of March is the month of St. Joseph, and during it we are asked by holy Church to give him special honor and to invoke his prayers for ourselves and for the Church at large. As the head or foster-father of the Holy Family, St. Joseph was its protector and provider, and so the Church places him over all her children, the one great Christian family, under the title of Patriarch of the Universal Church. Let us invoke him as such, and let us give the greatest hope in his prayers. He will be a good father to us, as he was to our divine Lord and to His Virgin Mother. All three would have us share their love and union. Yes, we may, if we will become the adopted members of the Holy Family, for our Lord has adopted us as His beloved brothers and sisters, and so His Virgin Mother is our mother, and her chaste spouse is made our father, protector, provider and friend. Happy we who are so highly honored, and unwise would we be not to avail ourselves of it.

St. Joseph loves all mankind with a special love; let us reciprocate his affection. He was beloved of God and chosen by the Father to watch over the Son during his helpless years of infancy, because he was "a just man." Let us imitate St. Joseph in his virtues, that we may be worthy to be the adopted members of the Holy Family, and so united with them always in spirit, one day we shall be united with them face to face in heaven. To this end, let us invoke St. Joseph's prayers and say often, "St. Joseph our Father—pray that we be thy worthy children." "St. Joseph, our advocate—pray for the graces of which we stand in need." "St. Joseph, our friend and friend of the Sacred Heart—pray for us that we may one day share thy glory and happiness." "Good St. Joseph, pray for holy Church and

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pray for all the faithful. Pray for us living, and pray for us dead!"—Seedlings.

## A JEWISH ORGAN TO LUTHERAN BIGOTS.

MINISTER'S CIRCULAR ELICITS A RATHER DISAPPOINTING OPINION CONCERNING THE "VATICAN PERIL."

The February issue of The Federation Review, of New York, the organ of the Federation of Jewish Organizations, contains the following:

"We received a circular from the Reverend William Schoenfeld and Martin Walker, of the Lutheran Church, in reference to their letter to President Roosevelt on the question of religion in politics, from which we quote the following passage:

"Are you not struck with alarm at the bold advance that Vaticanism has recently been making in the United States? It seems to us that this question of Romanism in our Republic is indeed a grave matter, and that it is the solemn duty of every citizen, more especially of every Protestant, to inform himself and then act accordingly, not fearing to speak out publicly as occasion presents itself."

"The circular then winds up with words to the effect that the reverend signatories would be pleased to have some expression of our opinion on this matter."

"We have no hesitation in expressing our opinion, which is certainly not of the nature canvassed for."

"In this land of opportunity we have accustomed ourselves to see a possible occupant of the White House in every newboy. Can it be said that amongst the ten or fifteen million Catholic citizens of America there is not a likely Roosevelt or a Taft? We may perhaps discover even a Lincoln among them. Supposing we find none or in some future generation an American citizen gifted with the genius of a Richelieu, should he be debared from the White House on account of his going to Mass? Our Protestant friends are afraid of Vaticanism, of the encroachment of the Church upon the rights of the State. \* \* \* Men such as Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop Ireland and other lights of Catholicism would be set to militate against such pretensions. \* \* \*

"To debar a man of merit from public office on grounds of faith is wholly un-American and unconstitutional. We see the day not far off when a Roman Catholic will sit in the Presidential chair of the United States. It is bound to arrive, and it is wise to prepare for the inevitable with a good grace. Let us welcome the era of tolerance and leave to coming generations, in which God only knows which denomination will prevail, an example of broadmindedness and square dealing."

"As regards the Catholics, moreover, let us not forget that they well-nigh constitute the backbone of our fighting forces on sea and land and the upholders of law and order in our cities and villages. It is an optimistic truth that the Catholic faith is the largest proportion of bluecoats, bluejackets and boys in khaki."

In the same issue of The Federation Review, under the heading True American Spirit, publicity is given to a letter from Hon. T. V. Powderly, chief of the Division of Immigration, Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, at Washington, to Hon. Edward L. Dineen, chairman of the advisory board of the Federation of Jewish Organizations. Though unable to accept an invitation to be present at a meeting of the Federation, Mr. Powderly expresses his sympathy with the aims and objects of the body.

"Association and co-operation," he says, "will do more for mankind than isolation and distrust. What we want, Brother Luther, is to get acquainted, to know each other and strive to understand each other. Racial prejudice should be buried, and I'd like to be one of the undertakers at its funeral."

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men and woman; shall we fail to provide her with them?—The Missionary.

## A SUBLIME ARMY.

In a sermon preached at Maline in 1863 Mgr. Dupanloup, the celebrated Bishop of Orleans, said:

"Atheistic philosophers, agnostic followers of Voltaire and critics, I ask you for the sake of suffering humanity, to publish this advertisement on the fourth page of your journal:

"Wanted—500,000 heroes of both sexes, to care for the sick, to instruct neglected and troublesome children on condition that these heroes and heroines keep themselves chaste, patient, forbearing, working ten hours a day for 33 cents, and receiving in return to supplement their salary, injuries and calamities, while they deny themselves even innocent pleasures."

"Print this in your papers; I will pay for the advertisement. You laugh at me. Not without reason, perhaps. . . . And yet you are wrong. This army exists, and it is sublime. One only Master could have created it and inspired it. He raised it, He recruits it. He arms it and has commanded it for twenty centuries. . . . and it asks no reward save the smile and benediction of its Master, our Lord Jesus Christ."

Is it not noble, this phalanx . . . praying, serving, comforting, teaching without cessation or rest, their only thought the smile and benediction of their Master, while the world shanders and curses them?

## Married A "Freak."

Writing of English prejudices against Catholics, a correspondent of the New York Sun says: "I was brought up in London and the suburbs many years ago, not in awe or horror of Catholics, but rather to look on any one of the creed as a freak. I well