

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOY, D. D.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST

THE DANGER OF SMALL FAULTS
"So do you also reckon that you are dead to sin, but alive unto God, in Christ Jesus Our Lord." (Rom. vi. 11)

St. Paul, in the part of his Epistle to the Romans fixed by the Church to be read today, speaks of our baptism in Christ and our consequent death to sin, and the resurrection, similar to that of Christ's, to come. By baptism we die to sin; we must not revivify ourselves to sin. This is a death from which we ourselves never should rise, nor allow any one else to cause us to rise. It is a death, fortunately, of which we are more or less conscious, owing to the faculties with which God has blessed us. We never can be absolutely certain that we are justified before God, but the consciousness of duty well performed and of evil avoided affords us a great assurance that God in His mercy counts us among His children. While we can truthfully feel thus, without presumption or pride, we can say that we are dead to sin.

Then there are the means, established by Christ, for keeping the spiritual life within us. This life must permeate us totally. It can not exist where sin is. These means are especially the sacraments. As food conserves the life of the body, so does grace, the spiritual food of the sacraments, keep life in our soul. Nay, grace is itself the life of the soul. Hence, as we must often partake of material food in order to have life in our body—so, to preserve the life of our soul, begun at baptism, we frequently must consume spiritual food. In proportion to the quantity of spiritual food of which we partake will be the amount of vigor and strength of our spiritual life. The stronger and more vigorous our spiritual life, the less the fear of a rising again to the life of sin. But alas, how small the number of people that remain dead to sin! Many, it is true, do not rise to a full life of sin, but how frequently they are in danger of it! Small habits take possession of them and gradually assume dangerous proportions. How few people think a habit is progressive! Its mode of progress is a deceptive one. While habit goes on in its deadly course, it molds nature its way and tends to weaken the inward voice of even the most insistent conscience. Thus people begin to pay little attention to it. When the awakening day comes, how sad the experience that follows! How many, for instance, have begun almost unintentionally to call attention to faults in their fellow-beings? At first it was only a casual remark, perhaps confined to the members of their immediate family; then it may have been repeated to others less closely related. These gave a more willing ear, which is always an incentive to further confidence, and it was not long before the casual remark had grown into an eloquent criticism. Those guilty of this vice no doubt examine their conscience on some soul stirring occasion, and they discover what slaves to habit they have become. Then the fight to regain their freedom is more strenuous than they could have imagined possible. Week after week they commit the same faults. The habit has grown into them and has become a second nature. How many conquer it completely? It is a fact, lamentable but true, that very few ever finally escape. And it is only the thought of God's mercy that can, to some extent, silence the victim of this terrible habit. Even though one becomes only a "material sinner" under its influence, there is still the punishment of remorse. Often scruples arise in the conscience of those so addicted, and, remaining through life, rob them of the peace that usually comes to those who serve God.

It is indeed difficult to remain dead to sin, or to preserve one's baptismal innocence. There are so many dangers surrounding us that the inclinations to evil existing within ourselves are not easily conquered. In the modern world we are in daily intercourse with all classes of people. The example set by these tends to influence us. It sometimes seems as if we were endeavoring to build two kingdoms within ourselves—a kingdom where righteousness reigns and a kingdom where malice holds sway. Commonly speaking, we say that there is something good and something evil in each one of us. It may be so, but this evil should not be wilful; it should be only the evil inclinations inherent in our nature on account of original sin and its consequences. These inclinations to evil are not sinful in themselves, though they strongly incline us to evil. The reasons, then, why it is so difficult for us to remain dead to sin may be summed up in these two classes: the evil inclinations within, and the bad example without.

But does the fact of the existence of these incentives to evil excuse us for our lapses into sin? It does not. Were there no remedies at hand for these spiritual maladies, and no help offered as in our weakness, perhaps it could be given as an excuse. But God has provided for our insufficiencies, and if we fall, at least seriously, into sin, it is because we have not heeded these remedies, nor gone in search of them. God's grace is our salvation and our help. It is the antidote for the poison we are liable to absorb from without, and for the infection present within. Of course we are free agents, and

grace will not be forced upon us. We must try to preserve it by the means at hand, and, if we are so unfortunate as to lose it, we should use the means that God has provided for the regaining of it.

Christians often should examine their lives seriously, and see whether or not there exist in them habits or faults that are tending, or that could in time tend, to rob them of grace and revivify them to sin. Considering our evil tendencies, and the awful examples and bad influences that often surround us, the danger of falling exists about all of us. And the fall will not come suddenly, especially in the more or less earnest Christian. There are many things, as a rule, leading up to it. These, if discovered in time, can be rooted out or removed, and the danger averted. It is a constant fight throughout our life. We are never sure of our salvation. But, as the soldier is rightly counted brave who dies fighting on the battlefield, so God will regard us as brave soldiers in the spiritual combat, if we continue the fight until death. And this means for us a triumphant entry into His kingdom, for the glory of which His own divine Son, Jesus Christ, came upon earth and by suffering and death conquered the enemy of God.

FAITH OF CATHOLIC IRELAND

SOME FACTS FOR PUZZLED QUERISTS

By "M. C. L." in Catholic Herald

A Paisley correspondent writes that a fellow-worker stated that "the Catholic Church was first established in Ireland during the tenth century; previous to that time there was an Orthodox Church; St. Patrick went, or was sent, from Ireland to England and was consecrated by the then Archbishop of Canterbury." Now, these are most interesting discoveries, announced on the authority of "a French author." Surely the French author has a name, and, given a reference, it should be possible to consult his works; we are naturally anxious to know who founded the "Orthodox Church" in Ireland before St. Patrick's time, and who was the illustrious person who converted the Irish people; we are entitled to be told his name and some details of his mission, and where its record is to be found; or is there a conspiracy of silence among historians concerning it? However that may be, seeing that St. Patrick died in 493, we must respectfully decline to believe that he was consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, for the simple but all sufficient reason that there was no Archbishop of Canterbury until a century or so after St. Patrick's death. The first Archbishop of Canterbury was St. Augustine, whom Pope Gregory the Great sent to England in 596. (He received the pallium in 601.) Ireland was Catholic long before the tenth century. St. Patrick having been sent in the fifth, by Pope St. Celestine, to preach the Gospel to the Irish people. When St. Patrick came, Druidism, a form of paganism, was the religion of the people, but the Faith preached by the Saint triumphed over it: Ireland became Catholic and Catholic she has remained. My correspondent and his friend also discussed Peter's Pence. The name was given to an annual sum, originally of a penny paid by the holder of land of a certain value, paid to the Holy See by various Christian peoples, more or less intermittently. In the Middle Ages it was confined to England and a few other northern nations. A letter of Pope Leo XIII. mentions promise of a contribution confirmed at the Synod of Chelsea in 787; it is stated that the money was for the relief of the poor, and for providing lights in the churches of Rome, and, according to later chroniclers, for the support of the Anglo-Saxon School in the Borgo. A letter of Canute (King of England in the 11th century) written to his people during his visit to Rome, enjoining the payment of Peter's Pence. (This letter is interesting, as showing what was the faith of the age, and leaves no doubt as to Canute's belief in the supremacy of St. Peter.) After the Reformation, Peter's Pence was not paid. But when Pius IX. was driven from Rome, a committee of Catholics was organized in France, and was successful in collecting funds for the Holy See under the name of Peter's Pence. The work spread to other countries, and since the occupation of Rome by the Italian Government Peter's Pence is one of the chief sources of income of the Holy See. It is perfectly true that "the Church had great power previous to the sixteenth century." Happily for the human race she had. The Church raised the nations of Europe from depths of barbarism to heights of Christian civilization, kindled and kept alive the lamp of learning by schools, colleges, and universities, raised the dignity of womanhood, and protected the sanctity of home, and, thanks to her, the people, a band of slaves, were working out their freedom. Victories of peace were won through the intervention, mediation, or arbitration of the Popes from early centuries. In the fifth, Pope St. Leo protected the civilized world against Attila and his Huns; in the twelfth, Pope Innocent III. made peace between England and France, and so on. Even enemies of the Church have admitted that "law, learning, education, science, all that we term civilization in the present social condition of the European people, spring from the supremacy of the Roman Pontiffs and the Catholic

priesthood over the kings and princes of the Middle Ages." (Laird, "Observations," etc.) Guizot, Haxthausen, and other men of vigorous intellect have declared that but for the humanizing influence of the Church, mind must have been bruted down everywhere by brute force. The historian Staudlin writes that "the Papacy united in one common bond the different European nations, furthered their mutual intercourse, and became a channel for the communication of sciences and arts; without it the fine arts doubtless would not have attained to so high a degree of perfection. The Papal power restrained political despotism, and kept off from the multitude many of the vices of barbarism." ("Universal History.") The French historian Michaud writes that the power of the Popes in the Middle Ages was "the result of their position, not of their will. . . . as the nations formed no idea of civilization than that which they had received from the Christian religion, so the Popes were quite naturally the supreme arbiters among peoples. In the midst of darkness, while the light of the Gospel incessantly strove to disperse, their authority must have passed as the first and highest." Kings and nations besought their aid, and asked counsel of them." He adds that their power was often exercised in behalf of public morality and social order, it protected often the weak against the strong. Checked the execution of criminal designs, restored peace among States, and preserved an infant society from the wild excesses of ambition, of licentiousness and of barbarism." ("Histoire des Croisades.") "The weak," writes Rabe, in his "Manual of the Middle Ages," "then found in spiritual authority a better protection against the encroachments of the powerful than afterwards in the so-called balance of power—a system which, as it was a thing purely abstract, devoid of all external guarantee, must soon have lost all influence. The Popes have always present before the eyes of the people the figure of a Christian prince, and to protect the people against the injustice and tyranny of their rulers." Is there any institution, other than the Catholic Church, which, in the worst times, standing up in opposition to the mightiest rulers, and regardless of all external considerations, has protected with such energy the sanctity of the marriage tie, the rights of the defenceless, the purity of morals, and has with so much tact and moderation influenced the "progressive march of human society?" And this in such a way that in later times Protestants could express the wish to see erected again in Rome, under the presidency of the Pope, a supreme tribunal for the settlement of disputes amongst rulers, (Leibnitz, "Tract, de Jure Suprematus." And "Appel d'un Protestant au Pape," Paris, 1869.) Such a tribunal might have prevented the late War. As it was, during the War between France and Prussia, the Pope was reproached and abused for not exercising—in a given direction and to the violation of his neutrality—a power and an authority rejected and denied by the very persons who desired their being exercised against others! The outcry and the desire were significant, if involuntary, admissions of a consciousness that without that supreme tribunal something is wanting in our civilization. Possibly at least a few will also discern that the League of Nations is not achieving much without the Father of Christendom, Excluded from its councils, nevertheless he remains the Father of Christendom, venerated by innumerable hearts, invested by the Divine with a power before which, in the long succession of ages, the greatest human dynasties, from the Caesars to the House of Hohenzollern, have vanished.

THE MONTH OF THE SACRED HEART

Scarcely have the echoes of the tender hymn in honor of the Mother of God died away, when the Church bids us turn our thoughts to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. May, the month of flowers, has passed, but the month of roses is here. The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the latest development of the love of the Church for her Divine Spouse, is one of the richest inheritances of our Catholic faith. With the canonization last year of St. Margaret Mary, the apostle of the Sacred Heart, devotion to our Lord under the sacred symbol of His Divine Heart has received an added impetus that should make the month of the Sacred Heart this year one of the most magnificent manifestations of love for the Divine Heart that our loved men. Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord has existed in the Church from the very beginning. The trembling Babe of Bethlehem, the Holy Child of Nazareth, the Divine Man, going about doing good, the Man of Sorrows on Calvary, and the glorified Christ of the Ascension, have elicited the worship and inspired the devotion of countless generations of Christians. The Divine Hands lifted up in prayer, the blessed feet walking the sands of Gethsemane or washed by Magdalen, the wounded hands and side, examined with incredulity by Thomas, have all been familiar objects of loving worship. But during the month of June the Church reminds us of the mysterious love of Christ for men and exposes for our worship and adoration the very fountain head of love unfathomable—the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

With theological precision, that leaves no room for misconception, the Church tells us that the object of our devotion is no visionary symbol, but the real living pulsing Heart of Our Divine Lord, the Living Chalice of the Precious Blood, the same Heart that burst with love for men on earth, the same Heart that beats in the breast of the glorified Humanity of Jesus, at the right hand of His Heavenly Father, the same Heart that throbs under the fingers of the priest at the consecration of the Mass.

The heart symbolizes love. We worship the Heart of our Divine Lord that symbolizes His love for us. His love led Him to suffer agony and death for us, His love leads Him to forgive us time and time again when we fall into sin, His love makes Him watch over us in this world and draw us to Him for eternity. And His great love reaching down from Heaven impelled Him to give to St. Margaret Mary the revelation that told us that not content with giving His love so superabundantly to us, He desired to be more loved by us.

God leads with man for love. This is the simplest statement of the reason for the existence of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. And it shows at one and the same time the infinite love of God and the cold ingratitude of man. "Whence is this to me," said St. Elizabeth, "that the Mother of my Lord should come to me," and we might well say, "Whence is this to me, that my Lord should come to me for love." We should go rather to Him, to testify again and again our sense of appreciation for the innumerable favors He has lavished upon us. The month of the Sacred Heart gives us an opportunity of doing just this, of going frequently to Him and of pouring our hearts' love to Him. It gives us an opportunity of doing even more, that of going to Him and making up by the fervor and intensity of our love for the coldness and ingratitude He has received from others. Reparation for our own and for others' sins, is one of the fruits of devotion to the Sacred Heart.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is one of the most effective means of infusing into our hearts the true spirit of Christianity. The world has had enough of hate. The reign of love must succeed to the former era of strife if peace is to rest again upon the world. One of the eleven promises of Our Lord to St. Margaret Mary to those who cultivated this devotion was, "I will give peace to their families." The whole Christian family needs to turn to the Sacred Heart that peace may reign among nations and individuals. The month of June, the month of the Sacred Heart, is a time of special grace, which every Catholic should take advantage of.—The Pilot.

A TYPICAL KNOW-NOTHING

In the old Know Nothing days in New York one of the bigots called upon a certain editor, who had criticized the association and its purposes. He entered the office "with fire in his eyes," and said:

"I am a member of the X-Club. Are you the editor of this paper?"

He was all the more fierce because Mr. D.—happened to be an elderly man, slight and delicate. But the editorial wits were in excellent working order.

"Have the goodness to be seated," said the little editor. "I will send for Mr. O'Brien."

Calling a messenger boy, he dispatched him for James O'Brien, the manager of the engine-room of the establishment. O'Brien, standing nearly seven feet in his shoes, and with broadth of shoulders in proportion, soon made his appearance.

"Mr. O'Brien," said Mr. D.—with a twinkle in his eye, "this gentleman is a member of the Know Nothings, and desires to see the editor. Will you please receive the message?"

The "Know Nothing" seemed to know something all at once, as he surveyed the confidently smiling giant. Recollecting the proverb about discretion being the better part of valor, he withdrew prudently—and suddenly.

DAILY MASS AND COMMUNION

To assist at Mass every morning is an excellent way of beginning the day. To receive Communion every morning makes the day doubly blessed. While thousands of Catholics all over the world make a practice of attending Mass every morning and while thousands more could do so without the slightest inconvenience to themselves or their families. There can be no question as to the effect upon the person who every morning receives the Body and Blood of Our Lord in the Blessed Eucharist; no one can possibly estimate the effect of the excellent example. And then our Holy Father has made it very easy for all to receive Communion. So long as one has committed no mortal sin he may approach the altar without going to confession. Can any one who receives Communion every morning so far forget himself as to fall during the day? It does not seem reasonable that he should. Poor old human nature, however, is very frail; but should a man fall even seventy times seven, if he is sincere in his repentance, if his act of contrition does not consist merely in words, if he prays earnestly for the grace of perseverance, he will be given strength to overcome all temptation, the Church

of God, like its Divine Founder, will not turn him away, but will welcome him to her bosom. And while on the subject, it may not be out of place to call attention to a little work just issued by the University Press, Notre Dame, Ind. There are only twelve pages of printed matter, but what there is so effective that it must make a lasting impression on the reader.

"Frequent Communion for College Men" is the title of the brochure and it consists of a number of views of college men who are frequent communicants. Here are just a few samples of what frequent Communion has done:

"Frequent Communion has kept my mind free from evil thoughts."

"I feel that I have gotten far more out of this year than I had not received Communion every day."

"Frequent Communion helps me to ask God's help in temptation and trouble."

"I find it easier to avoid temptation when I think of receiving Communion the next day."

"I think that frequent Communion is the best help to leading a clean life, and this, I think, is the best ambition any young man can have."

We are all subject to temptation. If frequent Communion had done so much for these college students, will it not also do it for others?—Catholic Life.

LABOR TROUBLES

Labor troubles are well nigh universal. They indicate that there is a state of war between employers and employees. When such controversies become rife and ripen into labor battles, all must recognize the fact that the social machinery is badly out of gear. All members of society should be concerned in the cause of the disorder and mutually seek to apply a remedy. The cabin and the steerage passengers on an ocean liner are equally interested in all that concerns their mutual welfare. Should the engines breakdown in mid-ocean, all want to know the reason, and hope that the stoppage will not be prolonged or occur again during the voyage.

Strikes indicate that something is

wrong with the social machinery. What is it? Where is it? Who is at fault? One side or the other must be at fault, or possibly both sides share in the blame. Too often the interested parties forget that rights and duties intertwine, and that rights and duties measure themselves. Justice and not mere selfishness should hold the scales between capital and labor. Might can never be the permanent standard of right. We often see mere power exercised by both sides in the controversy without any reference to justice or the claims of fraternal charity. Revenge is stored up on both sides, and an opportunity is awaited to exercise it. It comes to the men when the firm is tied up with contracts and the labor market is depleted, and they sometimes take it by means of a strike. The opportunity comes to the employers when orders are not pressing, or when men are plentiful, and they retaliate by a cut in wages, by reduced time or by a shut-down. Where there ought to be an alliance between mutual interests, there is a state of warfare.

It appears to us that some tribunal with power to arbitrate, backed by legal enactments, should exist for the welfare of society and for the mutual protection of employers and employees. Society recognizes the necessity of legal tribunals to settle disputes among its members. But the disputes along labor lines are many and constant and growing. Why should this fruitful source of estrangement and of evil have no recognition in law? Were the golden rule observed, there would be no necessity for a legal rule. But as men drift away from the teachings of Him who spoke on the Mount as no man ever spoke, there must be some enactments to prevent society from being dragged to the precipice of destruction. The heaven of evil is at work, and is blinding men to the claims of justice and arraying class against class as antagonistic forces.

We boast of our advancement yet in the matter of labor legislation we have much to learn from New Zealand. Strikes and shut outs are almost if not entirely unknown in that far-off land.—Catholic Universe.

Prayer is speaking to God from the heart.

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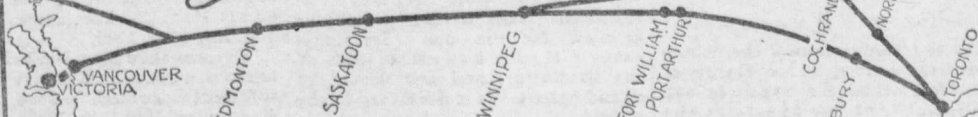
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