

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY THE REV. P. P. HICKEY, O. S. B.

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

DUTIES OF LENT

"God hath called us to sanctification in Christ Jesus our Lord." (I Thess. iv. 7.)

Our heavenly Father has granted us to start another Lent, during which "let us amend and do better for those things in which we have sinned through ignorance; lest suddenly prevented by the day of death, we seek time for penance, and be not able to find it." And the means by which we can amend and do better are plainly set before us during Lent. Each of us knows them; and each of us, if he followed his selfish inclinations, would find excuse not to use them. Fasting, almsdeeds, and prayer are not duties that human nature welcomes. But these are the means unto sanctification to which we are called.

There are so many reasons and excuses found for the non-observance of fasting, that very few are found to take any heed of the obligation. But the necessity of doing penance is still urgent upon us. And if we cannot endure the hardships that our forefathers bore humbly and penitently—are we less sinful, less prone to evil, have we less to make atonement for than they had? And is there no means of doing penance other than depriving ourselves of food? Is all that we drink as necessary to sustain us as meat and bread? Would it not be real fasting to do without some of our pleasures and pastimes, cards, theatres, and the rest? Let us try the Rosary and attendance at the Stations of the Cross for a change. We may be unwilling, granted; but otherwise how shall we answer to God that we used the means to our sanctification?

Self also is ready with excuses when there is mention of almsdeeds. "Charity begins at home," and other well-known pleas immediately find utterance. But we are called unto sanctification, and not slavishly to obey the dictates of selfishness. The Holy Scriptures tell us: "Give alms out of thy substance, and turn not away thy face from any poor person; for so it shall come to pass that the face of the Lord shall not be turned from thee." For alms deliver from all sin and from death, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness. Alms shall be a great confidence before the most high God to all them that give it. (Tobias iv. 7, 12.) And did not our Blessed Lord Himself note and commend the widow's mite, for He sees and blesses the good intention of the kindly heart. Remember His words: "Give, and it shall be given to you, good measure and pressed down and shaken together and running over shall give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you shall mete withal, it shall be measured unto you again." (Luke vi. 38.)

It may seem most unlikely to us that we shall ever need the alms of others; and it may be so in this life, but the day will come that we shall be needy and poor. When our soul, friendless and alone, shall be imprisoned in purgatory till the last farthing be paid, that is the hour when with bitter regret we shall bewail our selfishness in neglecting the poor and needy, and especially the souls of the faithful departed. "Take pity on me, at least you my friends!" Yes; but how seldom did we heed that cry from others amidst the pleasures and occupations of our life on earth! Prayers, a holy Communion, a Mass offered for the departed—what a blessing, what will prove to us hereafter! "Give, and it shall be given to you."

The Lenten duties that we have considered—viz., fasting and almsdeeds—have reference to ourselves and our neighbours; the third great duty—prayer—refers directly to God. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all He hath done for thee: Who forgiveth all thy iniquities, Who redeemeth thy life from destruction, Who crowneth thee with mercy and compassion" (Ps. cii. 2, 4.) To use this greatest means of our sanctification, as it should be done, not so many more prayers are needed—though in Lent there should be an increase—as an intensifying of our devotion during prayer. We must throw our hearts into our prayers. We must remember Whom we are addressing.

Lowly adoration of our heavenly Father, our Creator, with an ardent offering of ourselves to do His blessed Will, and thus inherit the Kingdom of heaven, should commence our prayer. And that our prayers may be acceptable, "our sins should be always before us," that He may fill our hearts with true sorrow, for "a humble and contrite heart" God will not despise. Then, lest we should fall away again, let us pray for help and strength. God loves thus to be implored, and He is our hope and strength in all our necessities.

There is another part of prayer in which we are often wanting—thanksgiving. Our Father loves to be thanked. Thanksgiving is the work of the angels, their eternal and blessed occupation. And we poor sinners are permitted to join our voices with theirs to praise and glorify and thank the good God. St. John the Evangelist, when blessed with a vision of heaven, heard the angels cry out, "Glory and honor and benediction! Thou art worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power,

because Thou hast created all things, and for Thy Will they were and have been created" (Apoc. iv.) Should our prayers aspire to this? Yes, in very deed, we can thank and glorify God in union with the prayers of Mary Immaculate and the very prayers of the Sacred Heart of our Lord Himself. For we are "called unto sanctification in Christ Jesus our Lord."

These are the means by which we can sanctify Lent—prayer, fasting, and almsdeeds. We have need to make good use of this holy time. It is a duty, and an imperative duty. And how consoling it will be to us, when we come to die—perhaps before the next Lent—that we have made good use of this holy time.

BLIGHT ON TEA PLANTATIONS

In India, and to quite an extent in Ceylon, the two largest tea producing countries in the world, the tea crop for the current year has been disappointingly small, largely owing to the labor troubles fomented by the "non-co-operation" doctrines of Chandii, but also to a considerable extent due to climatic adversities. Drought at times, excessive rains at others, coupled with bad blights in some districts have very seriously effected the output of good teas this year. Prices for all grades are very high now, but all indications seem to point to still further advances very soon.

PRESIDENT HARDING AND RELIGION

As everybody realizes religion is in a bad way, not only in the United States, but also, and perhaps especially, in other parts of the world too. This may come as a surprise to emotional folk who have preserved their simplicity to such an extent that they still believe the war-stories of propagandists paid to play upon their credulity. Such people tell how the pious Tommies were protected by an angel at Mons, and persist in speaking of the tremendous religious revival that has taken place in France. But the plain fact is, religion has declined to an alarming extent and morals have followed on after it. True, there is hope of better conditions, for men have begun to realize the need of God, and that is the first step towards improvement. How sincere and deep seated is this realization, is clear from President Harding's letter to the "Jewish Jubilee Dinner," in which he says:

"I had hoped to take part in this commemoration because it seemed to afford occasion for saying some things which have been much in my thoughts of late. One of the marvels of humanity's story has been the strength and persistence of the Jewish faith and the continuing influence and power of the Jewish people. I cannot but feel that these things are in large measure owing to the Hebrew conception of a personal God and of the individual accountability of men and women. There is evident almost everywhere in the world the need for a restoration of the soul of religious devotion; for individual consecration to that ideal of religion which recognizes it as able to give something that neither patriotism nor civic virtue can ever afford. The human race, or certainly great and potential sections of it, has been getting away from its religious moorings. It needs a revival of the sincere conception of personal relationship of God to man and of man to God; a restoration of faith in the fundamentals that are eternal."

These are admirable words and altogether true. But where will men surely find the saving doctrine, the "religious moorings," the fundamentals that are eternal? Umindful of St. Peter's warning, they have sought for them in Scripture, privately interpreted, and their search has resulted in over 200 warring sects with diverse doctrines. Nor do the different Protestant Churches make pretense to doctrinal certainty. Quite the contrary, they scorn the dogma of infallibility in faith and morals. Indeed, it is not uncommon for one or other of what-soever his office in his respective Church may be, can or may speak for the Church as a whole. Thus Dr. Hodges in his work entitled "The Episcopal Church" wrote: "Nobody may speak for the Episcopal Church. One of its characteristics is hospitable inclusion of different people."

Once again, where will man find for a certainty the "religious moorings" without which religion is an evanescent sentiment? Not in the Bible, privately interpreted; not in an infallible Protestant Church, for there is none such. Yet there must be a teacher to guide us in the way, for Christ has put upon us the obligation of holding fast to His doctrine, an impossible task if we do not know the truth for certain. Where, then, can this infallible teacher be? There is but one Church which claims and vindicates that office.—America.

GOD ANSWERS PRAYER

God always answers every good prayer though not always in the way we propose. No good prayer ever remains barren and fruitless. It may be bearing fruit in distant regions of the earth, among souls in Purgatory who have been there for centuries or merely for hours, or it may be stored up to be applied

to souls yet unborn. It may be hidden from our eyes, but we know that no good prayer is barren; it bears real fruit.

So in like manner with weary thankless work, the fatigue of weary visits, kind words, and exhortations, which seem to be so much wasted time and energy. One of the most marvellous revelations that will strike upon our wondering minds at the judgment will be the way in which, by our actions and labors quite as much as by our prayers and penances, we have played a great part over an immense theatre, dealing with souls, and covering spaces and times, such as we had never dreamt of. We imagine there is an extraordinary waste going on, but in the economy of God there is no waste whatever, but everything done for His love bears fruit, thirty, sixty or hundred-fold.—Cardinal Vaughan.

POLLUTED FOUNTAINS

It may be old fashioned to long for the days when writers sent forth their material in staid and sober dress unadorned with garish headlines, and not redolent of the crimes and follies of men. But if it is old fashioned, it is part of our heritage from an age that had an abiding faith in God, that respected His commandments and had a horror that amounted to loathing for the revelation of the sins of others.

It was part too of the obedience of an age that is gone to the injunction of St. Paul in regard to certain things that should never be mentioned among Christians. But the modern era of pitiless publicity, the present apotheosis of the "knowledge-is-power" fallacy, and the fad of exploring the subconscious, has broken down the barriers to let loose upon the world a flood of revolting news that is doing irreparable harm.

Some of the so-called best sellers of the day are notoriously corrupting. Some magazines, with their pictures and stories are as bad. When we reflect that the average person in this country seldom reads anything but the modern periodical magazines and books of the day, it is not difficult to understand one reason for crime waves.

When the fountain is polluted, then the germs of deadly moral contagion are taken in by millions of readers. Poisoning the wells in ancient times was a crime that called for most drastic punishment. Used even in legitimate warfare such a barbaric practice outlawed the perpetrators from the pale of civilization. Yet here is a poisoning of the wells that carries moral and spiritual disease to countless thousands, that is allowed to proceed with few protests, and seems to be rewarded with universal approval rather than punished by social ostracism.

The moral sense of the community will be aroused sooner or later, when this growing abuse gets beyond bounds. Then inevitable reaction will come.

In the meantime Catholics should jealously guard their own reading, and above all keep from the eyes of their children all publications that come into homes, wet with the latest spray from the polluted fountains of folly.—The Pilot.

FAMOUS BIBLE WAS PROPERTY OF ST. LOUIS OF FRANCE

Toledo.—One of the remarkable Bibles of the world is carefully preserved in the Cathedral of Toledo. It is a Bible which was the property of St. Louis, King of France.

Aside from its obvious value as a memento of antiquity, of a great personage and of a memorable epoch, it possesses great artistic worth. It is said to be incomparable in its artistry, surpassing all the books that were illuminated in the same manner during the great Middle Ages, when such work was wonderfully done.

The work, indeed, has been called the most valuable book of Christian art in the world. Not only is its artistic beauty marvellous in the extreme, but, fortunately, it is in a remarkably fine state of preservation.

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The rareness of this edition of the Bible is indicated by the statement that it is known to very few people. It is shown to the public only under exceptional circumstances. It is in three volumes, of which 750 folios are illustrated, representing about 6,000 biblical scenes.

Before the War M. Bertaun, Professor of Art at the Sorbonne, went to Toledo to study and examine carefully this famous work, and was so filled with enthusiastic admiration for it that he suggested that he should be given authorization to copy the illuminations in an edition which would surely have great artistic value. M. Bertaun, however, died before he had carried out this project.

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The London Life Makes Remarkable Progress During 1922

NEW BUSINESS written by this all-Canadian Company amounted to nearly \$57,000,000—a net increase of 18%. Insurance in force was increased 16%, now amounting to almost \$130,000,000. During the year, a new high level in Surplus Earnings was reached, and generous bonuses were voluntarily declared to policyholders in the Weekly Premium Branch.

TEN-YEAR COMPARATIVE STATEMENT

	1912	1917	1922
Income	\$1,134,472	\$2,385,098	\$ 5,505,797
Total Assets	4,059,376	8,050,269	19,234,187
Net Surplus (Govt. Standard)	451,512	895,513	2,468,768
Insurance issued	8,206,070	15,703,595	36,947,404
Insurance in force	25,264,820	50,787,565	129,682,541

The year's report shows that:

The Company's Investments are in an exceptionally satisfactory condition, with Interest Earnings averaging 6.78%—an excellent Gain for the year. The Mortality Experience in the Ordinary Branch was low, amounting to only 56% of the Expected. All Accruing Profits at the Company's high scale of Dividends (running to more than 200% of Estimates) have been fully provided for, a practice followed by this Company for 25 years. Every actual and contingent liability has been ascertained and accounted for, and, in addition, the Net Surplus has been increased more than 70%.

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Mount Robson, 13,069 Feet, Is the Highest Peak in the Canadian Rockies

Canada has some of the most magnificent mountain scenery in the world, as anyone who has travelled through the northern Canadian Rockies knows. The scenery is so varied, so full of surprises, that if the traveller gives his constant attention to one side of the car he is almost certain to be missing something very wonderful on the other side.

For years transcontinental railways in America have tried out various types of observation cars through the mountains, the objective being to give their patrons the best possible views of the scenery. Some of them have been simply open platform cars, with no protection from the sun or inclement weather.

Car builders have been vying with one another in the construction of these cars to provide the finest observation facilities along with the maximum of comfort. At

last the Canadian National Railway shops at Leaside, Toronto, have turned out a car which has all the requisites.

This car might almost be described as a sun-room on wheels, in view of the large percentage of glass used in its construction. It is regulation size, with a closed-in section 44 feet long and a spacious open compartment at each end where passengers may enjoy the open air. The interior of the car has sixteen large windows on each side running from the seat arm rests to the ceiling. These windows are 4 ft. 6 in. high by 28 in. wide, having two panes of glass, 24 in. by 24 in., one above the other. There are also two of these windows at each end of the car, one at each side of the door leading out on to the platform.

The seats are arranged transversely on each side of a centre aisle, as in an ordinary car, there

being sixteen double seats on each side providing seating capacity for 64 passengers. The platforms provide capacity for 36 additional persons. The entire car side framing is of steel, with the interior finished in British Columbia cedar, stained mahogany. The interior is equipped with the most up-to-date ventilators, electric light and shades.

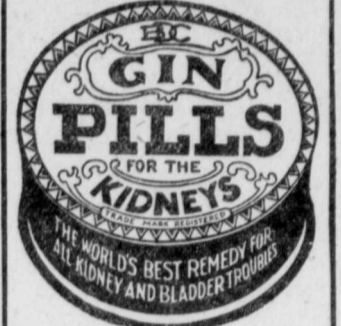
One of these new cars was exhibited at Toronto Exhibition last year for the first time, and 150,000 people inspected the car during the fair. It was very favorably commented upon. The car in many ways is an innovation, and marks another advance move by our National Lines.

These cars are to be used on the Mountain Division of the Canadian National Railways, and will enable travellers to view the majestic scenery on both sides of the car with the utmost ease and comfort.

Your Headaches A Warning

It is a dangerous habit to seek relief from headaches through drugs which deaden the pain but fail to remove its cause. Ninety per cent of the sick headaches and accompanying dizziness are a warning that inactive kidneys are leaving poison in your system. You need Gin Pills. A few doses will relieve the kidney congestion and banish the cause of your headaches. Thousands of people have won lasting benefit from Gin Pills. So can you!

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