

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOUY, D. D.
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER
EPIPHANY

HONORING THE BLESSED VIRGIN

"And the wife falling, the Mother of Jesus saith to Him: 'Thou have no wine.' And Jesus saith to her: 'Woman, what is it to me and to thee? My hour is not yet come. His Mother saith to the waiters: 'Whatever He shall say to you do ye.'" (John 1:35)

It is our duty to honor and love all men. The honor we give them can be of two kinds, namely, one, because they are creatures made to the image and likeness of God; the other, because of some extraordinary quality they may possess. This quality may be something inherent in them, as the extraordinary talent some men possess, or it may be something acquired, as an extraordinary virtue. Again, in may be that we owe some creature an especial honor because he has been honored in a particular way by God.

Some men we honor only in so far as they are men; others we honor because they are these or those particular men. We can not honor all men in the same degree because all are not equally deserving of it. When we honor a man simply because he is like unto his Creator, this honor is given him for something he has not merited by his acts. But when we honor a man also because of his gifts which he uses rightly, and because of the virtue he has acquired and practices, then we give him an honor that he, personally, really merits.

There are others to whom we must give an honor far surpassing that given to either of these two classes. These are they whom God has especially honored. They are those noble personages of the Old and the New Law, to whom God gave a special work to do and a high mission to perform. We should not hesitate to honor them above all other human beings, because they did well the work that God gave them to do; and thereby merited before Him even a greater honor, owing to the fact of their having been chosen by God. The person whom God has deigned to honor should be honored by all humanity.

Among those of His creatures whom God has particularly privileged, the first place must certainly be given to the Virgin Mary. Which one of the creatures of God has been as much blessed and favored by Him as Mary? No other indeed. To this humble maid was granted the great privilege of being the Mother, in an extraordinary way, of Jesus, the God-man and the Saviour of the human race. God revealed to her in an unusual way, namely by sending one of the brightest of His angels, the mystery that was to take place in her. Within her dwelt, from the moment of His conception by the Holy Ghost to the night of His birth, the Saviour of men. After birth He subjected Himself to her until the time came when He should carry on His public ministry. She followed Him from the cradle to the cross. When He was dying in agony on Calvary, Christ made her the mother of all mankind. After death she was assumed into heaven. That spotless body, which never had known sin even at the time of its conception, would be permitted to undergo corruption, one of the things consequent upon death, which in turn was caused by sin; but should follow the immaculate soul to the throne of glory prepared in heaven for it by Him whom she bore. Such was the honor conferred upon Mary by God, her Creator. What would we be did we not honor her? Could we ever allow her name to be forgotten, or her privileges to pass into oblivion? We never can do so as long as the Bible, which records it all, remains the word of God. The truths of her life are as indelibly written there as are any of the truths of Christianity. The Catholic Church, the faithful and unerring transmitter of what Christ, the apostles, and their successors have taught, as well as the guardian of God's written word, always will keep before the minds of her children this model of true greatness, unsurpassable virtue, and extraordinary, heavenly privileges.

Mary's name never will be forgotten. Her own prophetic words: "Behold, from henceforth all nations shall call me blessed," will ever come true. True Christian people will always strive to imitate her virtues, and pray to her as their most powerful intercessor with her Divine Son. This text will encourage them to have confidence in her. Even now on her throne in heaven, she is persistent in asking favors of her Divine Son until He finally yields to her. Her power is very great, for she enjoys now a special power for the faithful fulfillment of her duties during life. The work God imposed upon her she happily consummated. For this God will heed her prayers even more than He did during her mortal life.

The child will go to a good mother with confidence. Mary is our common, heavenly mother. Let us, then, prostrate ourselves in humble prayer before her throne as our mother. She certainly loves us as her children. Christ's words addressed to her from the cross, intending all men to be represented in St. John, Woman, behold thy son, are as dear to her heart now as when first spoken to her at that solemn and sad moment. Let us continue to give her the honor that is due her. It was begun by God, and is continued by Him, as is manifested by the many miracles

worked through her intercession at her various shrines the world over. We will be gaining God's favor while giving her honor, for she is His own especially privileged creature; and because the honor we give her does not detract from His own, but rather redounds to it. By loving and honoring Mary, also, our minds will be carried to sources from which pure thoughts arrive, from which bright hope comes and where the purest love resides.

HOPE IN THE CANCER PROBLEM

James J. Walsh, M. D. Ph. D., in America

Nothing more interesting and encouraging has developed in recent years than the work of the Society for the Prevention of Tuberculosis and the American Society for the Control of Cancer. True, modern medicine has not yet succeeded in discovering the cause of cancer and as a consequence cannot proceed directly to its suppression. However, in spite of this unfortunate lacuna in our knowledge, the beginning at least of successful warfare with cancer has been made. The American Society for the Control of Cancer does not hesitate to announce in a recent bulletin that it is of the highest significance that the increase of the death-rate from cancer has been arrested. Since 1916 cancer mortality has remained practically stationary with only minor fluctuations. As the disease had reached a stage where it was known to be taking away at least 100,000 persons every year in this country and probably 1,500,000 throughout the world, it is easy to understand how significant this announcement is.

For the most discouraging element in our knowledge of cancer was the fact that while the mortality from all the infectious diseases and most of the other ills of mankind had been decreasing, that from cancer had at least apparently been on the increase. Not only were more cancer deaths reported every year, but more in proportion to the population, until the situation became alarming. It is probably true that most of this was due to the growing knowledge of cancer and the ability of physicians to recognize the disease better than before. A generation ago a great many deaths really due to cancer were attributed to terminal stages of the disease, such as intercurrent pneumonia, liver diseases and stomach troubles, and so on. Even discounting this element in the problem, however, seemed to good authority that there had been a real increase in cancer all during the twentieth century down to the Great War. The disease seemed to be mocking the best efforts of modern medicine and to be proclaiming the negative value of human knowledge to prevent suffering and lengthen life.

This increase in cancer mortality was usually attributed and probably with a great deal of reasonableness to the fact that modern hygiene and sanitation by lessening the contagious and infectious diseases kept people alive to older years, during which there was an increased liability to death from cancer. For cancer is typically a disease of the involution of life occurring when the tissues are gradually lessening or actually giving up their functions. Every additional year of life, particularly after forty, adds distinctly to the possibility of death by cancer, for while it may occur in younger years, cancer is typically an affection of the middle-life period.

It is easy to understand then how much reason there is for congratulation in the definite announcement on the part of those who have been carefully following and collecting the statistics of the disease that for five years there has been surely no increase in mortality from this disease.

The cause of this very gratifying cessation of the forward progress of humanity's most serious scourge seems to be clear. It is particularly during this last ten years that a strenuous campaign of publicity with regard to cancer has been carried on. The status of the disease was so discouraging, its mortality so high, the outlook so hopeless that there had come to be something of a conspiracy of silence with regard to the affection. It was not mentioned unless in connection with someone actually afflicted, and to talk about the subject was considered highly unsocial. The result was a very general ignorance with regard to the affection, and most people knew only some of the hideous effects of its later stages. This was extremely unfortunate, for it led a great many people to neglect the preliminary symptoms of the disease at a time when cure is ever so much more possible and even progress of the disease makes cure almost an impossibility.

What the American Society for the Control of Cancer has particularly accomplished is the spread of such information with regard to the disease as leads people to apply early for relief from it, by the proper treatment of initial symptoms.

What is needed now is more information and prompt action. A physician should be consulted immediately. Any suspicious symptoms, as for instance, a small lump of any kind that has a tendency to grow, or any unusual abdominal symptom that persists in spite of treatment, should lead to a definite investigation of the possibility of cancer. It must not be forgotten that while

cancer is more particularly a disease of the later years of life, it may occur well before middle life and true cancer has been found at even younger years. Such advice will, of course, lead many people to imagine they have cancer when they have not, but it is ever so much more important to be sure than to be sorry.

There is very definite cause for rejoicing over the fact that cancer mortality is at a standstill. That is surely a prelude to a definite decrease of deaths from the affection, if the policy of having early symptoms treated is followed out faithfully. Because of the campaign of information which has initiated the new policy more than one-half of those properly treated for cancer, are known to survive for ten years or more and the great majority of them then die of other diseases. Indeed, the mortality of the disease still remains so high, mainly because there are so many who refuse to face the issue and apply for treatment lest they should be told that they are suffering from cancer. They allow their cancer to drift into a condition where it is much less amenable to treatment or absolutely incurable. The rule in tuberculosis is now that "tuberculosis takes only the quitters," that is those who have not the will power to go at once and see about their disease and then bravely set about the fulfillment of the treatment.

Very probably the same thing will prove true of cancer in the course of the next generation. The American Society for the Control of Cancer which brings the consoling message of the stationary death-rate for the past five years announces a special campaign for the diffusion of information with regard to the disease. It proposes that the week from October 30 to November 5 shall be made an occasion for helping on this campaign. Educators particularly are invited to be sympathetic toward this movement for the sake of the immense saving in life and suffering it may effect. The very word cancer has been deterring in the past but the only hope of overcoming the disease is to face it bravely, and knowing all there is to be known, take the precautions that are necessary. Great good has undoubtedly been accomplished in this way already and greater things may be looked forward to with confidence. The subject is so important as to deserve the attention of all those who have the good of humanity at heart.

A FONT OF INEFFABLE LOVE

On the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, the Church commemorates the sweetest word that is given to human lips to utter. That Sacred Name summons before us the Son of God as He walked among men, His face suffused with tenderness, His Heart glowing with love, His every action radiating virtue and healing.

It conjures up the blessed picture of the trembling Babe, who nestled in Mary's arms on Christmas night, the Child at Nazareth, growing in age and grace and wisdom, the Man, Who went about doing good to all, the Sufferer Who tread the wine-press alone, whose name, according to the Spirit of Truth that touched the lips of the prophet Isaiah with hallowed fire, shall be called "Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace."

This Sacred Name with all its sad yet hallowed reminiscences is the watchword of Christianity. It is written in our temples, borne aloft on banners, wafted through cathedral aisles with the swell of the organ. No great book was ever written, no poem sung, no statue carved, or painting limned, that does not depend for all that is noble and uplifting in it upon the inspiration of that Name.

The story of all that has happened from the creation of Adam and Eve to the present day centres about Him Who bore that hallowed Name. Ancient history converges to Him, modern history diverges from Him, all history, is His story, the story of Him who came down from Heaven and under the name of Jesus Christ became humanity's great Prophet, Priest and King.

Among all great men Jesus Christ is the only One who has been truly loved. "One Man alone," cried Lacordaire in an eloquent conference, "has gathered from all ages a love which never fails: 'He is the Sovereign Lord of hearts as He is of minds, and by a grace confirmatory of that which belongs to Him, He has given to His saints also the privilege of producing in men a pious and faithful remembrance. There is a Man, Whose tomb is guarded by love, there is a Man Whose sepulchre is not only glorious, as a prophet declared, but Whose sepulchre is loved. There is a Man Whose ashes after nineteen centuries have not grown cold; Who daily lives again in the thoughts of an innumerable multitude of men; Who is visited in His cradle by shepherds and by kings, who vie with each other in bringing to Him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. There is a Man Whose steps are unweariedly retreaded by a large portion of mankind, and Who, although no longer present, is followed by that throng in all the scenes of His bygone pilgrimage upon the knees of His mother by the borders of the lakes, to the tops

of the mountains, in the byways of the valleys under the shade of the olive trees, in the still solitude of the deserts. There is a Man dead and buried, Whose sleep and whose waking have ever eager watchers, Whose every word still vibrates, and produces more than love, produces virtues fruiting in love. There is a Man Who nineteen centuries ago was nailed to the gibbet, and whom millions of adorers daily detach from this throne of His suffering, and kneeling before Him, prostrating themselves as low as they can, upon the earth, kiss His bleeding feet with unspeakable ardor. There is a Man who was scourged, crowned with thorns, and crucified, whom an ineffable passion raises from death and infamy, and exalts to the glory of love unfulfilling which finds in Him peace, honor, joy, and even ecstasy. There is a Man pursued in His sufferings and in his tomb by undying hatred, and Who, demanding apostles, and martyrs from all posterity, finds apostles and martyrs in all generations. There is Man, in fine, and only one, who has founded His love upon earth and that Man is thyself, O Jesus! Who hast been pleased to baptize me, to anoint me, to consecrate me in Thy Love, and Whose Name alone now opens my very heart, and draws from it those accents which overpower me and raise me above myself."

These same sentiments fill every Catholic heart on the Feast of the Holy Name. There is something in the inspiration of this great feast day that impels men to go forth and manifest to the world the faith and love they have for Jesus Christ. For years it has been the custom amongst us to celebrate the feast of the Holy Name by magnificent demonstrations of men, by parades, and by religious mass meetings. These are living testimonies in all true followers of the Holy Name of the faith that animates and the love that inflames.

Enrolled under that glorious banner in this Archdiocese are thousands of men, loyal, reverend, faithful Catholics. They do honor to themselves in honoring the Holy Name of Jesus, and they bring added lustre to the Church, which alone can produce such demonstrations.

Every Catholic man, who loves the name of Jesus Christ, and who appreciates what it stands for should feel himself honored and privileged in being allowed to turn out on the feast of the Holy Name to participate with the members of his parish in the annual public acknowledgement of fealty to their Prophet, Priest, and King. That this Sacred Name will be respected by all men, that it be spoken with affection, and heard with reverence is one of the radiant hopes this feast inspires. That He Who bore that name will yet reign over all hearts, is the holier hope that will bloom into actual accomplishment by such demonstrations as the Feast of the Holy Name annually inspires.—The Pilot.

WORLD'S FOREMOST LINGUIST

Prague, Dec. 15.—One of the world's foremost linguists recently celebrated his sixtieth birthday in the small parish of which he is cure. He is Rev. M. Koudeka, better known under the pseudonym, "O. S. Vetti," and is known to have mastered thirty-four languages. While at school and in the seminary he learned Latin, Italian, English, Spanish, and various Slav tongues. He is quite probable that Czech, Father Koudeka is the world's greatest linguist. Cardinal Mezzofanti, who is regarded as the greatest linguist of all times, spoke fifty-eight languages.

No soaring of genius can ever get beyond the jurisdiction of the true, the beautiful and the good.—Archbishop Keane.

Be courageous and make the best out of every situation. We should not stand weeping and complaining in the face of difficulties, but see what use we can make of them for the next world.



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