

## FIVE MINUTE SERMON

REV. J. J. BURKE, PEORIA, ILL.  
NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER  
PENTECOST

FEAST OF THE SEVEN SORROWS OF  
THE BLESSED VIRGIN

"Now, there stood by the Cross of Jesus His Mother." (St. John 19:25)

A month ago Holy Church placed before us for our contemplation the triumphant entry of the Mother of Jesus into heaven, and invited us on the great feast of the Assumption to glory in our Blessed Lady's triumph and rejoice in her joy. To-day Holy Church places before us for our contemplation the sorrows of the Mother of Jesus, and invites us to mourn over her sufferings and sorrow in her sorrows. One is the feast of hope, the other the feast of faith; one is of heaven, the other is of earth. And our Blessed Lady's sorrows, being of earth, come close to us and teach us a practical lesson—sojourners as we are in a vale of tears.

Sorrow is in very truth the monarch of this lower world, and sooner or later every soul is sure to feel the touch of his sceptre. There is nothing that men find so difficult to understand and account for as the mighty wall of sorrow that rises up from generation to generation throughout the whole wide sea of mortal life, and extends to its most distant shores. What is the reason of all this suffering that exists in the world around us? Is a question that has been asked day after day, and year after year, and century after century, since the first human tear fell upon the unconscious earth. And the attempt to solve this enigma of mankind has founded schools of philosophy and philanthropy, systems of religion, and methods of life, from the dawn of human history and before it to the present hour. Yet the reason of sorrow, though it has escaped the search of mankind, is not far to seek—it is sin, and sin is everywhere. On any other theory than the religious one of the probation and fall of man, this present existence is a dark and hopeless riddle. But even Christians, to whom this explanation is the first lesson of their faith, seem to lose sight of it in their practical views of life. We have not the heart to meet the stern truth face to face, and recognize that our life in this world is not a season of joy, but rather of sorrow; that we are not here to loiter through the light of a long summer day, but to endure and to labor in darkness and storm. And this is the great lesson of the feast of to-day.

Picture the Mother of Jesus in her early childhood, when, a feeble vision of innocence, she rested in the arms of St. Ann; behold her growing up a spotless flower in the Temple of God; contemplate her in the tranquil purity and beauty of her girlhood and the bright hopes it inspired. And then behold her, a Virgin Mother, sword-pierced in the Temple, a fugitive in a foreign land, a distracted pilgrim seeking her lost Son, the mother of a persecuted, betrayed, and convicted Man, the saddest follower in that sad procession to Calvary, meeting her Son face to face on His way to death, standing by His gibbet, the witness of His ignominy, the sharer of His sufferings, the partner in His sorrows, the sentinel by His Cross, the mourner over His bier, the guardian of His tomb, and learn from her that suffering is the portion of all who follow faithfully in the footsteps of Our Lord Jesus Christ and secure His salvation. For "Unless you take up the Cross and follow Me you cannot be My disciple."

## TEMPERANCE

## THE HUMAN TELEPHONE SYSTEM

It is the business of the brain to know what happens in different parts of the body and to prompt and determine its actions. To do this there has to be a system for receiving information and giving orders. From the brain to different parts of the body run many white threads called nerve fibres. They look as if they were all alike but there are two separate kinds, nerves of feeling, and nerves of motion.

The nerves of feeling report what is seen, heard, felt, smelled and tasted. The brain tests the report, and this is called thinking.

Thinking is the finest and most important part of the work of the brain. It is what makes man what he is. It is carried on in the very, very small chambers in the brain, the place where the thinker is at home.

The thinker gives out to the different members of the body his delicate orders, either to wait or to do something. These orders are carried out for the most part by the nerves of motion.

Many nerve fibres are like a cable, composed of numerous fine threads. In these, nerves of motion are bound up in the same bundle with those of feeling.

The brain and nerves are dependent upon each other. If one is not in a normal condition, the other can not do its part as well.

The telephone system of a large city is sometimes out of order here and there. A heavy fall of snow may break down the wires and thousands of messages are held up. In Paris, the central telephone station burned down one day. For a whole day no messages could be sent and half of Paris was in a state of desperation.

Our human telephone system is also liable to get out of order. Here also the worst disturbance is that which affects the control by the brain.

There is nothing that so frequently and so noticeably disturbs the brain as alcohol. It has a depressing or paralyzing effect. A little paralyses only the most delicate and sensitive brain cells. These are the chambers in which thinking is carried on. Much alcohol paralyzes also the strongest nerve cells. These are the telephone stations of the nerves of motion, or the parts that receive orders from the thinking part of the brain.

Experiments have steadily shown that the part of the brain that thinks is where the worst injury is done by alcohol. The thinking power is stupefied and thus alcohol often causes unnecessary or senseless orders to be given to the nerves of motion.

Whoever wishes to have his actions always under the control of his best thinking powers will use no alcohol, because it weakens the power by which we weigh and consider actions.

—Scientific Temperance Journal.

## THE FIGHT FOR TEMPERANCE

We wish to recall to the minds of our readers what was said some time ago. The cause of total abstinence is one of the most serious questions that can engage the attention of any thinker of the day. If we consider the immense amount of harm that is done everywhere by intemperance in drinking it is easy to understand the importance of this question. Of all the varieties of sin into which human nature can fall, that of intemperance seems to be the most inexcusable. For if man glories in the possession of an intellect and reason as his chief endowments, surely anything that will tend to blunt or to destroy these faculties must be a heinous matter. Rational nature alone separates man from the beast; but through intemperance man forfeits his right to be considered a rational being. His nature is degraded, his faculties are dulled, and his sense of right and wrong becomes thoroughly atrophied in fact, he becomes an irresponsible being. The worst of the matter, however, is that he is personally responsible for this state of irresponsibility. We all know the terrible effects of intemperance; no one but has seen the actual effects in real life. Homes have been invaded and broken up, children cast adrift, husbands and wives estranged, business ruined, reputations shattered, health undermined, divorce encouraged, and a thousand other evils have followed in the putrid wake of the intemperate. Thanks to the societies that have fought intemperance we find this evil combated on every hand, so that at the present day it is not considered even good form for a gentleman to drink to excess—a far cry from the old Saxons who consumed vast quantities of ale at every sitting. —Catholic Bulletin.

## MODERATE USE OF ALCOHOL

"I hear makers of alcohol, at last aroused by the prohibition wave, crying out that they stand for its moderate, not its immoderate use," says Dr. Howard Kelly, Baltimore.

"In reply to this I answer that if they made it and sell it the use is practically beyond their control, and that their plausible declarations are as light as the paper on which they are written, and can in no way affect its use, whether moderate or immoderate. I further inquire why these gentlemen have been so long in reaching this benevolent conclusion. I declare that I believe their contention and their expressed desires are specious and false and, further, I aver that, judging by such scientific evidence as we now have, there is no such thing as a moderate use of alcohol.

"If it is a sign of weakness to be a total abstainer, I hasten to confess my weakness, and I confess it for all who are dependent upon me; would that I might also make confession for the whole world. We are no stronger than many of the thousands of bright young men and fine women who thought they were strong and found out their weakness only too late."

## THE GREAT SACRAMENT

By the Rev. Vincent McNabb, O. P.

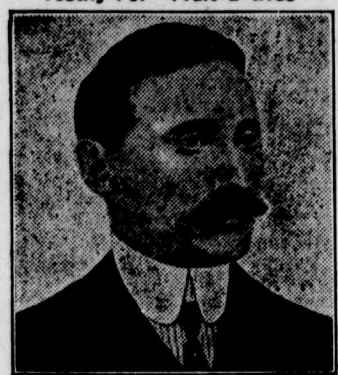
It is part of the danger of our ecclesiasticism to look upon most of the sanctities of the soul with an eye of casuistry. Just as a Eugenist may look upon features from the standpoint of mating, and a chemist look upon even a flower as an intricate problem in synthesis, so may a hard-worked priest look upon the Sacraments almost as a storehouse of teasing *casus conscientiae*. The wonderful spiritual mechanism of the production and distribution of sacramental grace, its varied and vivid history, its delicate psychological adjustments, its high ethical atmosphere, its depth of dogmatic truth, and, not the least, its arresting liturgical beauty, may pass at last before ecclesiastical eyes that have become familiar and unheeding. It is then almost an insult to the splendid truth and poetry of our wedding ritual to make it the subject matter of mere legal bickerings.

For this reason, if for no other, may I be allowed the *gratia gratis* data and indeed *gratum faciens* of prefacing the mere official replies with a word of history and theology?

It has been left to modern times to evolve a marriage with ceremonial of only most meagre description. The nineteenth century is thus responsible for secularizing and uncrowning a social rite which has its roots far beyond the Christian era. There is hardly a people, civilized or uncivilized, that has not surrounded the wedding of their young with a wealth of ceremony. Indeed, the liturgy of even pagan wedlock be-

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long to the poetry of social institutions. Where a nation's topmost note of song has not been a "Te Deum," it has been for the most part an epithalamium.

Nowhere was the instinct of the Church of Christ truer and wiser than in the preservation of all that was best and most human in pre-Christian wedlock. Her attitude is symbolized in the miracle of Cana, whereby the water was not cast out into the street, but was changed into wine at the wedding feast. There is a rare touch of poetry in the dry legal preciseness of the Council of Trent when it says, "Gratum vero, quae naturalem illum amorem perficiunt. Ipse Christus venerabilium sacramentorum institutor sacra nobis passione promeruit." The "natural love" which is such a feature of this giving and taking of two trustful hearts is looked upon as the clear water, dyed into wine by the spilt blood of Jesus crucified.

This attitude towards the *naturalis amor* and *naturalis contractus*, the natural love and bond of marriage, has led the Church to take over from paganism such characteristic ceremonies as the giving of the wedding ring. The clasping and uncloping of the hand was a rite of the Romans and may even have had its rise in the Teutonic respect for women and wedlock. The giving of gold and silver is even more linked with Teutonic ceremonial. Tacitus, in his "Germania," tells us that "The wife does not present a dowry to her husband, but the husband to the wife." This ceremony, which has almost become a symbol, has lessons even for to-day, when the law courts and prisons tell tales of the hireling relations between a breadwinner and his wife and offspring.

The chief change made by the Church was characteristic. She linked the wedding ceremony, as indeed she linked almost everything, with the mystic offering of Christ's death. Every one of the Sacraments was more or less closely joined to Holy Mass. Even baptism was but an interlude in the Sacred Liturgy.

So early as the first decade of the third century, Tertullian (d. about 220 A.D.) uses the phrase "matrimonium quod ecclesia coelestis et confirmat oblatio," "marriage which the Church accepts and the Sacrifice strengthens." The Leonine, the Gelasian, and the Gregorian Sacramentaries contain the nuptial Mass, with our present prayers (a special *Hanc igitur* and Preface). The Gelasian Sacramentary, which is not later than the seventh century, and may be as early as the fourth, contains the blessing now said after the *Ite missa est*. It is more than interesting to know that one of the oldest fragments of our Liturgy is thus the *Missa pro sponsa et sponsa*. One could have almost discovered the finger of antiquity in the noble lines of its structure.

The present rite of marriage, as found in the "Rituale Romanum," received its authoritative setting at the Council of Trent. It was at the last memorable phase of the Council,

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some seventeen years since it had been begun. Protestantism had already wrought out to their conclusion some of the specious untruths which it had propagated as principles. The lines of cleavage between Catholic and Protestant nations which obtain to-day in Western Europe were definitely set. Many losses, due mostly to the heresy of the heretics, yet not a little to the unwisdom of many of the most zealous churchmen had begotten something approaching a sense of compromise, or at least toleration. Bohemia, the classic home of the Waldenses and the birthplace of Protestantism, had won the right to Holy Communion in two kinds, which but a year before had been defeated by the Spanish vote at the Council. The twenty-fourth Session of the Council met in November of 1563, when the first five years of Elizabeth's government had set the foot of Protestantism firmly upon English life. Too many errors about marriage were abroad in Europe to be tolerated; too many national customs had passed into the place of Protestantism, had won the toleration. The duty of the Council was, on the one hand, to condemn such errors as polygamy (already accepted by Luther), the denial that matrimony is a sacrament, the rejection of the Church's power to make impediments, the right to divorce, the evil of virginity. On the other hand, the Church's duty was not to reject, but to foster those local customs which had been the national conscience alorning a great human institution. For this reason the best feature of the famous Council may perhaps be found in the quiet adjunct to the form of marriage "juxta receptum uniuscujusque provinciae ritum," according to the received rite of each province. It was a broad, statesmanlike recognition of local varieties, or home rule, which had been, not a decadent, but a fruitful principle in her liturgy. This phrase of the Council was expanded in the "Rituale Romanum" into the simpler form, "Ita, however in any provinces other laudable customs and ceremonies are in use besides the foregoing in the celebration of the sacrament of matrimony, the Holy Council of Trent desires that they should be retained."

Nowhere have more provincial customs been retained than here in the British Isles, where the noble Sacrament had run for centuries. As early as 1604, four years before the Catholic version of the New Testament was published, the printing press at Douai had issued an edition of the Ritual, for use in England. The Old Sacrament rite for marriage was kept untouched. A second edition was called for in six years, and was the same in every detail. It was only as late as 1626 that an edition, printed perhaps at Antwerp, contained those slight changes which are still part of our marriage liturgy. And thus our present rite more closely resembles the Anglican than the Roman one. It is surely significant to-day, when the air is stirring with talk of reunion, that, in the spirit of the Council of Trent, our marriage service should be more akin to a heretical Church than to the Seat of Orthodoxy. I am not sure whether, in this broad tolerance of the later divines of the Council of Trent, we have not a quality which it would be well to justify or foster.

The nuptial Mass, as we have seen, followed the actual ceremony of marriage. We have seen, too, that allusions to it are found as early as the third century. By the seventh, or perhaps the fourth century, a nuptial Mass, with special variants of the preface and *Hanc igitur* are in use in Rome and Gaul. A special blessing now said after the *Ite missa est* had already found a place after the Communion. Later on the prayer *Propitiare Domine et Deus, qui potestatis* was given what can only be called a passage of unique honor after the *Pater Noster*. With this crowning honor the liturgy of this great sacrament was complete. The whole spirit of the Church in the gradual evolution of this finished piece of liturgy may be summed up with the Roman terseness of the Tridentine Fathers:—"Sancta enim res matrimonium; et sancte tractandum."

As it stands, the whole wedding ceremony is one calculated to stir up those feelings which should be the accompaniment of a mutual love coveting to be stronger than death. Not one of the simple ceremonies has less than a nation's history, or ho's less than a Master's power to teach. The whole atmosphere of human love is charged during the Holy Sacrifice with that uncreated love which carried self-sacrifice to self-immolation. The breadwinner is reminded of Him who feeds with His own blood. The child-bearer is reminded of the travail pains of Him who gave life by Himself dying. Marriage becomes not a mere mating of two chance acquaintances, but the tragedy of two hearts daring to promise each an eternity of love.

In these days of denial, we priests of the truth must make it a part of our duty to surround Catholic wedlock with all the pomp and ceremony of the Holy Sacrifice. We should remember that the Rubrics demand the nuptial Mass, or nuptial blessing, even though the obligation is under venial sin alone. Where the desire for Mass is present, we must foster it; where it is lacking, we must create it. The mere fruit of it is not to be judged either by the stipend received or the fatigue borne. It can be measured only by the atmosphere of wedded love and sacrifice, which is its normal fruit.

## PRESIDENT'S SUSPENDERS NONE SO EASY

Here in England we are allowed to give the blessing outside the Mass. In other countries where this is not allowed, the nuptial Mass binds, under venial sin. Here it is not binding, but is part of our policy of building up a Catholic-minded people. It may be celebrated some time after the ceremony of marriage. But it is forbidden during the closed season of Advent and Lent, when the gravest thoughts of Christ's suffering have supremacy in the Catholic heart.—Tablet.

## THE MASS ROCK REMINDER OF THE DAYS WHEN PRIESTS WERE HUNTED IN IRELAND

The eighteenth century was the age which gave to Irish topography the "Corrie-an-Affric," or "Mass Rock," to be found on every barony map of Ireland. What memories cling around each hollowed, moss-clad stone or rocky ledge on the mountain side, or in the deep recess of some desolate glen, whereon for years and years the Holy Sacrifice was offered up in stealth and secrecy, the death penalty hanging over priest and worshipper.

Not infrequently Mass was interrupted by the approach of the bands of the law, for, quickened by the rewards to be earned, there sprang up in those days the infamous trade of priest hunting, five pounds (£5) being the price paid by the government for the head of a priest or the head of a wolf.

The utmost care was necessary in divulging to the faithful the place fixed on for the Holy Sacrifice. The poor, half-starved people flocked in ones and twos to the spot to avoid arousing suspicion, and before Mass began sentries were posted all around so as to obtain an early view of the arrival of troops or priest-hunters.

Yet, despite all vigilance, not infrequently the blood of the priest dyed the altar stone.

It might be inferred that one hundred years of this persecution would have extinguished Catholicity, but, on the contrary, God as if by a miracle, preserved the faith, vitality and power of the Irish race. Ireland, after one hundred and fifty years of bloody persecution, rose from its sepulchre and walked forth full of life. No mere human faith could have accomplished this transformation.

## UNUSUAL PROTESTANT TRIBUTE

We have need in this country, more than ever before, astonishingly remarks a writer in the Presbyterian Examiner, of the Franciscan ideal—an ideal of simplicity and poverty, a heart fixed on the realities of life. These are strange days, when men will fast for the good of their stomachs who would never do it for the good of their souls; when men will lead the "simple life" for a whim, and speculate what they save thereby on fresh luxuries when the whim is over.

We have need, now more than ever, of object lessons in the true "simple life," led with the single, burning aspiration for the true, full life of eternity and sustained by an abounding faith in the glorious abundant life after death. The nearer we come to bare necessities, the nearer we come to true beauty; for true beauty is serviceableness. A cottage kitchen, with its unpretentious furniture, its pewter and plain crockery, is a far more beautiful place than a modern drawing room. In such surroundings life is

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OLD FALLACY THAT DRUNKENNESS CANNOT BE CURED EXPLODED

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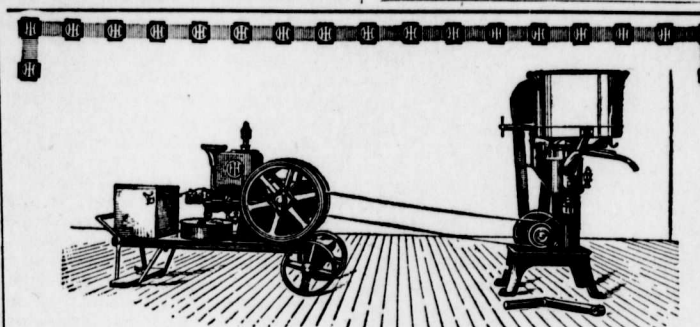
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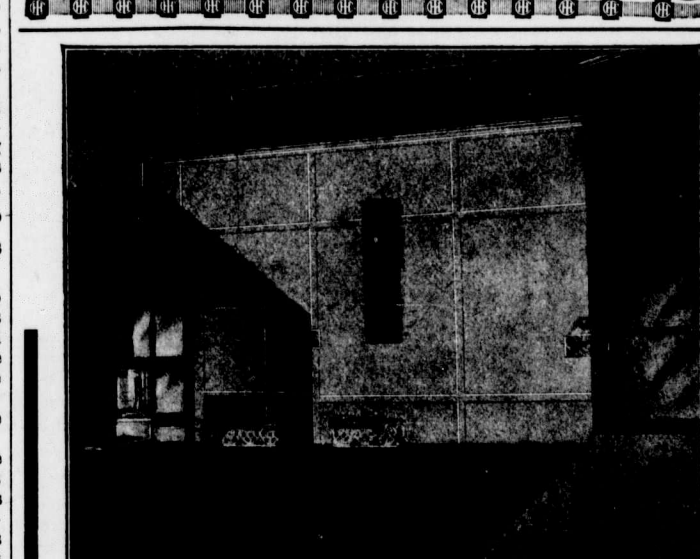
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