

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOUY, D. D.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE CALLING OF THE LABORERS
 "And Jesus saith to Simon: Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And having brought them ashore to land, leaving all things, they followed Him." (Luke v. 10, 11.)

Of all the dignities of earth, that of the chosen one of God is the most sublime. A vocation is above an avocation; it is greater than a profession. This calling is something that cannot be said to be innate in man, but comes to him when God, who is the Author, chooses. It is a privilege, for it is not given to all; it is given to but a few—and it elevates man to the highest point obtainable in life, when he lives up to it faithfully. It places man in the closest connection possible with his Maker, and records the will of God to be made known to other men. God works, in other words through His chosen ones for the salvation of man's soul. To co-operate with God in this, the greatest of all works, can not fail to be most meritorious.

It is well that God chooses those whom He desires to be laborers in His vineyard. Did man make the choice himself, his works to that end would be in vain, for a power from God and an adaptability from the same source are absolutely necessary for success in this work. Man is saved through grace. He can not be urged on effectively to salvation by any other means. He is incited to this pursuit by him who has an abundance of God's grace and a certain likeness to his Master abiding in him, and manifested by his words and works. God will not give the power to work in men's souls except to him whom He Himself calls. It is for this reason that the prevaricators and deceivers who work themselves into God's ministry attain no lasting success and, sooner or later, show their true colors. Sometimes, because of people's good faith, God may use them as a means through which to exercise His beneficence toward man, but this does not help them personally. They are instruments, perhaps; but, being rational beings, it depends upon themselves what kind of instruments they become. We must never overlook the fact that man has a free will, and though God may for a while work through him, he is not thereby necessarily in God's favor, living in the state of grace. Since God calls His own, then alone does He adorn with His special graces, and to them only does He give the power to bring souls to Him. He sometimes may lead souls to Himself through others; but whether the souls of these others also will be brought to Him, depends upon themselves.

The beauty of the life of those called by God and actively and meritoriously engaged in His work, can not be surpassed. Why should this be so? Because it is an adornment coming from God Himself, from whom all beauty proceeds. In that soul in which God acts in a special way, there is but loveliness. He makes it His own, and only the purest and brightest are God's possession. Where stains exist, God is absent, or is not present in any intimate degree. The dwelling places of God are those of His chosen souls. In body they must live on earth, work, toil, and suffer; but in spirit and in their higher and nobler life, they live in constant communion with God. They delight that words can not speak is theirs in abundance, and a sad heart never beats in their breasts, except such as was Christ's when He considered the hardened sinner. The divine in Christ, which ever gave Him happiness and made Him dwell in bliss, may be said to exist, in a certain sense, in God's chosen ministers who are faithfully doing His will and laboring for Him, even amidst sufferings. In them this is not a nature, as in Christ, but it is a sort of presence of the divinity, and is a reward even in life for their labors.

God would choose greater numbers of ministers, no doubt, were the necessary dispositions found in parents and in the subjects. We must never forget that God does not, as a rule, act against nature. He rather acts in accord with it. It is nature that He finds worthy or unworthy of His love. This does not mean nature itself, but nature as we have made it, or as we make it. Where human nature is made an object worthy of God's love, the highest spiritual blessings will be given it, and among the principal, nay, the chief of these, is a call to work in His cause. Of course, God does not expect to find us as worthy of His love and esteem as He will make us. This would not be possible for us. However, He wishes to find fit subjects for what He is desirous of making of us. There always has been a certain disposition toward which God called one to attain. Sometimes it was hidden, not through one's own fault, but because of wrong rearing, faulty education, and false teaching. Some have thought, as no doubt did St. Paul before his conversion, the acts they were engaged in, to be lawful and even meritorious. But God lifted the veil from their eyes, and they then applied all their families and powers to a noble cause. So it is yet that many, once in good faith enemies of God's one religion, are called to His service and become indefatigable laborers in His vineyard. But we do not intend to speak of these exceptions. It is among God's

own that He should find the greatest number of subjects properly disposed to hear His call. He has acted thus since the foundation of His Church. He always has selected His workers from among those who were the most faithful in the practice of their religion. His call has been, too, as a reward to those who nobly have kept the faith and courageously fought His cause. To perfect what has been shaped by chisel and hammer, God has applied the finishing touch, by a gentle process of calling. It is rare that He will do more.

It is in the Christian home that the future priest of the Church be disposed for God's invitation to become a co-operator with Him in the salvation of souls. Prayer brings much in this direction. To no one more directly than to parents is it said, "Pray ye therefore the Lord that He send laborers into His vineyard." Encouragement to children, an effort to have them love the things of God, often sow the seeds of a vocation. It will not generally come in the home where religion holds a secondary place, where bishop and priest are criticized, or spoken of irreverently. Children should be told repeatedly, also, the true story of life. To how many the brightest and the most worldly hopes are pictured without sufficient foundation, and which, if realized, would make them rich in money, worldly goods, and influence, but poor in grace and virtue. Parents should put before their sons and daughters the pictures of two careers—one worldly, the other spiritual, but both impartially portrayed. If this were done, the number that would adopt the spiritual career, would be much larger than it is today. May the day come when this will be so, for the harvest is great and the laborers few.

THE MENACE OF DIVORCE

Anthony M. Benedik, D.D., in America

The menace that divorce is rapidly becoming to the stability of family and national life throughout the world is well evidenced by figures taken from the New York World Almanac for the current year. In 1890 there were in the United States 542,587 marriages and 88,461 divorces or one divorce for 16.5 marriages; in 1890 there were 618,873 marriages and 42,987 divorces, or one divorce for 14.5 marriages; in 1900 there were 858,290 marriages and 72,602 divorces, or one divorce for 12 marriages; in 1916 there were 1,040,778 marriages and 112,086 divorces or one divorce for 9.3 marriages. Thus, within a quarter of a century, while the number of marriages has not even doubled, the number of divorces has increased almost fourfold. It does not take a specialist in mathematics to make plain that, at the present rate of increase, the annual divorces will soon equal the marriages in number, thus practically bringing about the free love which is the extremist's dream.

This condition, however, is not confined to our land of traditional freedom. In staid old England and Wales the number of divorces has leaped from 1,075 in 1914 to a total of 2,328 in 1918, thus more than doubling itself in four years. Then we have the case of Canada. In some provinces of Canada, notably Ontario, Quebec and Prince Edward Island, there have been up to the present no divorce courts. Those who desire to be divorced must apply for a special act of Parliament and present their evidence to a committee of the Senate, which practically accepts only one ground, that of adultery, as sufficient for granting divorce. But if adultery is proved and the necessary fees are paid, a special act allowing divorce gets through both houses of Parliament and becomes law.

Claiming that this procedure works unnecessary hardship on poor litigants, especially in the case of returned soldiers whose wives have been guilty of infidelity during their absence, and that it is the cause of much misery and immorality, a party has started active agitation for divorce courts. This party is opposed, of course, by the Catholics, aided by many of other denominations.

These latter reply that one of the results of divorce is to reward adulterers by allowing them to remarry, and therefore they would rather remedy the evil by making adultery a penal offense. The crop of post-war applications due to returning soldiers, they say, will prove only transitory and it would be unfortunate if, because of this temporary plague, the country should be saddled permanently with the evil of divorce courts. In addition, during fourteen years there was only one divorce for every 29,992 persons in provinces which had no divorce courts, while there was a divorce for every 8,282 persons in the provinces which had courts, and therefore the courts would increase divorces about sevenfold. What harm this would cause to the family life of Canada is easily seen. The evils, they claim, arising through infidelity or cruelty or marital troubles of any kind are less serious than those, which in the permanent breaking up of a home and the neglect of children result from divorce.

One thing to be deplored is that so much publicity is given to the divorce sensations that through our courts, and that has an appeal to seekers after cheap notoriety. For the past few weeks we have been regaled with front page stories of a prominent man who accused his wife of sin, and the boomerang, returning, has thus far endowed him with two

mistresses. The one New York paper which tried to keep this case quiet was compelled by the pressure of competition to bring it back to the first page. In another case before the public eye there are five co-respondents—five! This reminds us of the woman in the Gospel with seven husbands. And the newspapers, in detail, describe these gay Lotharios. Co-respondent No. 1, a cousin of the woman under fire, is "a sleek head youth, blond hair slicked down in the middle, well dressed, square-shouldered." No. II—"tall, graceful, gray-haired, expressive features, the most interesting of his colleagues." No. III—"tall, bald-headed, angular," boyhood friend of the dame. No. IV—"her step-brother, 'middle sized, dark-haired, sturdy, with a square jaw.'" No. V—"a dark young man"—only this description and nothing more, an unknown. Truly, *varietas delectat*! All classes, types, sizes, and styles, save a lawfully wedded husband!

That the divorce evil is desperate is apparent from the disastrous consequences that it entails. It is destructive of individual and social morality. Supreme Court Justice Ford of New York says, in this connection, "There is no gainsaying that divorce, especially if it keeps on increasing, is a menace to the nation. The home is the foundation of the State, and the home is disrupted whenever a divorce action is brought." Divorce, demonstrates the Rev. John J. O'Gorman, D.C.L., in his booklet entitled "Divorce in Canada," is unjust, unnatural, anti-national, and immoral; it is unjust, because the right of the child is ignored; it is unnatural because it breaks the bond between parent and child; it is anti-national, because the race as well as the child, suffers from the dissolution of marriage by divorce; and it is immoral, because it encourages the commission of those crimes on account of which divorce is given.

But how are we going to stop the onrush of the evil? In the first place, note the statement of County Detective John Butler of Long Island City, that in every case of husband desertion he has had in twenty-two years, the wife had blue eyes. That seems to argue the faithlessness of the blue-eyed lassies.

In all seriousness, however, there cannot be much doubt where lies the blame. The laxity in regard to the marriage bond nowadays is directly ascribable to the waning of religious spirit, to the loss of faith throughout the world. Men have lost the old, simple faith that once made the world a place fit to live in. The Rev. Charles Tyndall of Christ Church, Williamsport, Pa., speaking in the Trinity Episcopal Church of Pittsburgh on "The Christian Home," clearly described the need of religion, when he said:

"The solution of every problem today facing the American people is contained in one word—Christ! Christ at the marriage altar, Christ on the bridal journey, Christ when the new home is set up, Christ in the plucking times, Christ when the baby comes, Christ when the baby dies, Christ in the days of plenty, Christ when the wadded pair walk toward the sunset gates, Christ when one is taken and the other left, Christ for time—Christ for eternity!"

The meaning of which is simply that religion, and religion only, is the salvation of our nation. God must enter into every duty, every phase of life, if we would keep life right and holy. For when we throw off the governing hand of God that keeps the universe in order, nothing but chaos and confusion can result. Divorce means the ruin of the family; the downfall of the family means the end of the State. Shall we be so blind to our own interests as to allow this cancer to spread unchecked? Our Divine Lord's words are clear: "Every one that putteth away his wife and marieth another committeth adultery."

THE ANGELUS BELL

Softly the sound of the Angelus Bell
 Falls from the tower, o'er village and dell,
 Gently it touches a something within,
 And offers a refuge from sorrow and sin.
 Appealing to hearts that are tepid or cold,
 Calling the stray ones again to the fold,
 Telling to all that an hour is here
 Pleading with sinners in tones sweet and clear.
 Prompting the heart in the hour of prayer,
 Soothing the life that is weary with care,
 Sounds floating over me seem to instill
 Bow in submission to God's holy will.

Ring to all, to the lonely, the sad,
 Ring to all, to the happy, the glad,
 Soundings of sorrow and soundings of joy
 Telling that much of the world is alloy.

As softly the sound of the Angelus Bell
 Falls from the tower o'er village and dell,
 Hushed in its music, divine,
 A soul going home at the Angelus time.

Ring to o'er mountains, o'er valley and sea,
 Ring to weary and fettered and free,
 Softest of music, awake me to tell
 Of life everlasting, Sweet Angelus Bell.

A SONG FOR JUNE

O Sacred Heart of Jesus,
 I fain would near Thee be,
 To have Thy warm and precious
 Blood

Renew the life in me.

Could I but lean upon Thy Breast
 As John did long ago,
 What burst of all embracing love
 From me would surely flow.

But do I not, O Sacred Heart,
 Thyself within me hold
 Each morning in the Eucharist?
 And yet, alas, how cold!

Pray give me courage, Loving Lord:
 With time, Love's fire will melt
 The coldest soul or hardest heart
 And make Thy Presence felt.

—LOUIS A. GILES

A PROTESTANT IN A CATHOLIC CHURCH

About 4 o'clock in the afternoon, said a man to his friend, I had half an hour to get through, and I could think of absolutely nothing I wanted to do. The sidewalks were red-hot, and the atmosphere was stifling.

I turned down Barclay street in idleness. As I passed St. Peter's Church, I noticed the doors were open, and, do you know, it looked so cool and quiet that I just went up the steps and went in.

The light was so subdued that at first I could hardly see anything. I sat down in one of the back pews and at first I just gave way to the restfulness of the place.

Then my eyes began to get accustomed to the gloom, and I began to take in the surroundings. A couple of priests were hearing confessions and there were little gatherings of twenty people or so near their confessionals, and every once in a while some one would come out of the box and another would noiselessly glide in. But these groups did not interest me anything like as much as the isolated figures dotted here and there over the Church.

Standing by the holy water font, just inside the door as I went in, was a tall, middle-aged man. As I made out the details of his figure, I saw that he had all the appearances of a prosperous business man. He stood with his face bent on the floor. His lips moved constantly and at intervals of a minute or so he dipped his fingers in the font and crossed himself.

After about five minutes, his devotions ended, and he seemed to come back to the world. He mechanically adjusted his collar, flicked a particle of dust from his coat, threw a glance of abashed interest over the church and its occupants, bent his knee in the customary way, and stepped out with the confident step of a man sure of himself.

Then, next, I noticed a couple of nuns, sisters, who knelt in front of the great cross on the right hand side of the altar and kissed it before passing into a pew to pray. A young woman across the aisle from me was praying fervently, the tears streaming down her face at first without her even taking the trouble to stop them from dropping on her dress.

When I watched her, two priests came in. They wore beads and looked like Germans. First they went direct to the altar rail and knelt there a minute or two. Then they passed around to the far side of the church from me and sat down in a pew.

One of them produced two little books from a bag he carried. They seemed to find a place and began some office together. I noticed they knelt and crossed themselves simultaneously. They concluded their devotions together. The one who had the bag swung it over his shoulder and they went out, exchanging a word and a smile.

When my attention came back to the young woman, she was drying her tears and composing her hair. She stopped praying and sat back in her pew for a short time. When she got up to go out there was no trace of trouble in her face. As she went out a rough elderly man came in. He might have been a truck driver. He knelt in the girl's place and prayed long and earnestly, so long indeed that I left him behind me.

Perhaps the figure that excited my interest most of all was a young man who sat in front of me. His attitude caught my attention to such a degree that I stood up and moved over to the other side of the aisle to watch him.

He was a neatly dressed, attractive looking young fellow, of say twenty-three or twenty-four years, a clerk or salesman I would say on a guess. But I never in my life saw anything like the dejection of his face and pose. He was not praying. He was sitting with his head resting on his hand and a questioning look in his eyes.

Well, sir, he sat that way for twenty minutes, varying his pose just a little now and again and then, all of a sudden, down went his elbow on the end of the pew. His pose did not express to me so much hopelessness as uncertainty of decision. With all the troubles there was an eager expression in his face. He went on his knees, clasped his hands on the back of the pew in front of him and lowered his head till his forehead touched them.

After a few minutes in that attitude he straightened up and lifted his face as if he were looking through the roof. His face had a sort of rapt look on it and his lips moved feverishly—I noticed that all the worshippers moved their lips as they prayed, actually uttered the words under their breath. At last my young fellow made the sign of the cross

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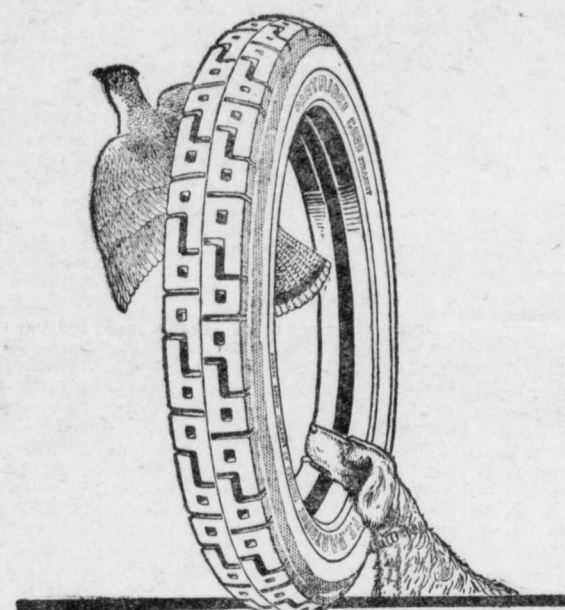
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