

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

REV. F. P. HICKY, O. S. B. SEXTAGESIMA SUNDAY

EXAMPLE OF ST. PAUL THE WORKER "I have labored more abundantly than all they; yet not I, but the grace of God with me."

Last Sunday the Gospel impressed upon us the necessity of working to get to heaven—the laborers called to the vineyard—and to-day in the Epistle, we have the example of the great worker St. Paul set before us—the worker who cried out during the moment of his conversion, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

We have to be saved as well as St. Paul; may recalling his example stir our hearts up to be willing and anxious to work for God! Now, what was the secret of the earnestness, that carried him through such labors, journeys, perils, preachings, persecutions? Why did he work so hard?

Because he valued the grace of God—the grace which had singled him out. Others had been passed over, but the persecutor had been chosen for an apostle! Guilty of the death of St. Stephen, breathing forth vengeance against the disciples at the very moment of his conversion, yet he was called!

Because he valued the grace of God, which made all things work to his good. The very fact, even that he had been a Pharisee and a persecutor made his preaching the Name of Jesus all the more wonderful, and aroused the interest, the faith, the enthusiasm of his hearers. Even that he was a Roman citizen procured him the chance of preaching Christ in the Eternal City.

Because he valued the grace of God by which heaven was secured to him. "That being justified by His grace, we may be heirs, according to the hope of life everlasting." (Titus iii. 7.)

And another reason why he labored so unweariably was this, because of the years he had wasted. He wanted to make up for the past. How he would regret that he had not known our Blessed Lord! Others had heard the words of Christ and seen His miracles; others, like Peter and Andrew and John, had been with Him, called, and chosen, and taught, and filled with the Spirit of the Saviour: and, meanwhile, Saul, wise in his own conceits, filled with the pride of the Pharisees, had scorned the new Teacher. Who went about doing good to all. The Pharisees had to own that the whole world was gone after Christ, yet Saul had disdained to approach and listen. Oh! those years that had been wasted!

And, worse still, the evil he had done! He had been more bitter against the disciples than anyone else. He was consenting to the death of Stephen. Saul made havoc of the Church, entering in from house to house, and dragging away men and women, committed them to prison." says St. Luke. (Acts iii. 3.)

No wonder, then, St. Paul labored, hurried, pressed on, filled with remorse and anxiety for the days he had not known Christ.

Let us turn from St. Paul to ourselves. He worked, because he valued the grace of God. We do not work, because we do not value that same grace. He was singled out and chosen, so have we been. There are countless better people than we are, who have not the gift of faith, who have not been called to be God's own true children.

And how God's grace has made all things work for our good—even our sufferings, poverty, sickness, death of those dear to us! All these have happened to us to check us in our evil ways, to recall us to the service of God, to win us back to Christ, who alone can heal the stricken heart. And God's grace, poured out upon our souls by the Sacraments, makes it so easy, if we only would, to be saved.

And do not past wasted years urge us on? No; it is too unpleasant to look back, and we shut our eyes, and try not to remember our neglect, our infidelities to God. Those wasted years might now be made a powerful motive to urge us on to work. Think of them, beg God's pardon, and resolve to be up and doing. If not, they will rise up against us at the end and call for our condemnation.

To get to heaven we must work. Make up your minds to that, at once and generously. Then, how must we work? "Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it." (Luke vi 25.) God's real glory is our obeying Him through love. So let us seek His will and do it, and work it out day after day. Prayer is the work, and regular attendance at Church is the work, and forgiving our neighbors, and keeping the commandments. Oh, the work is ready to our hand! Do it for the love of God.

If we have not the courage to set up to grace, to give our hearts to God, to please Him and work for Him, ask St. Paul to help us. He, who converted so many thousands by his preaching, can convert us by his prayers. And his example is preaching to us yet. If we need a friend to help us, on whom we can rely more surely than on St. Paul? If we are converts to the faith, we have a special claim upon him. If we wish to make up for years misspent and wasted, he will make us zealous. Remind him how he labored, congratulate him on his reward from the faithful Lord, and humbly, earnestly ask him to win us over, and bring in another soul to God.

A good word is as scorp said as an ill one.

TEMPERANCE

THE STRONGEST POEM ON TEMPERANCE EVER WRITTEN

The following is considered the strongest temperance poem ever written. It was written by a young lady, who was told that she was a monomaniac in her hatred of alcoholic liquors:

GO FEEL WHAT I HAVE FELT

Go feel what I have felt, Go, bear what I have borne; Sink 'neath a blow a father dealt, And the cold, proud world's scorn! Thus struggle on from year to year, Thy sole relief the scalding tear.

Go, weep as I have wept O'er a loved one's fall; See every cherished promise swept, Youth's sweetness turned to gall; Hope's faded flowers strawed all the way That led me up to woman's day.

Go, kneel as I have knelt, Implore, beseech and pray, Strive the besotted heart to melt, The downward course to stay; Be cast with bitter curse aside— Thy prayers burlesqued, thy tears defied.

Go, stand where I have stood, And see the strong man bow; With gnashing teeth, lips bathed in blood, And cold and livid brow; Go, catch his wandering glance, and see

How mirrored his soul's misery. Go, hear what I have heard: The sob of sad despair, As memory's feeling fount hath stirred

And its revelations there Have told him what he might have been, Had he the drunkard's fate foreseen.

Go to a mother's side, And her crushed spirit cheer; Thine own deep anguish hide, Wipe from her cheek the tear; Mark her dimmed eye, her furrowed brow,

The gray that streaks her dark hair now, The toll-worn frame, the trembling limb, And trace the ruin back to him Whose plighted faith in early youth Promised eternal love and truth,

But who forewarned, hath yielded up This promise to the deadly cup, And led her down from love and light

From all that made her pathway bright, And chained her there 'mid want and strife, That lowly thing—a drunkard's wife! And stamped on childhood's brow, so

Then look within the wine-cup's glow. See if its brightness can atone; Think of its flavor you would try, If all proclaimed—"Tis drink and die.

Tell me I hate the bowl— Hate a feeble word; I loath, abhor—my very soul By strong disgust is stirred When'er I see, or hear, or tell Of the Dark Beverage of Hell!

GLORIES OF THE CHURCH

William Winter, the noted dramatic critic, paid this tribute to the Catholic Church, in the New York Tribune, in connection with the centennial of the New York Archdiocese:

"To think of the Catholic Church is to think of the oldest, the most venerable, and the most powerful religious institution existing among men. I am not a churchman of any kind; that, possibly, is my misfortune; but I am conscious of a profound obligation of gratitude to that wise, august, austere, yet tenderly human ecclesiastical power which, self-centered amid the vicissitudes of human affairs, and provident for men of learning, imagination, and sensibility throughout the world, has preserved the literature and art of all the centuries, has made architecture the living symbol of celestial aspiration, and, in poetry and in music, has heard, and has transmitted the authentic voice of God.

"I say that I am not a churchman; but I would also say that the best hours of my life have been hours of meditation passed in the glorious cathedrals and among the sublime ecclesiastical ruins of England. I have worshipped in Canterbury and York; in Winchester and Salisbury; in Lincoln and Durham; in Ely, and in Wells. I have stood in Tintern, when the green grass and the white daisies were waving in the summer wind, and have looked upon those gray and russet walls and upon those lovely arched casements—among the most graceful ever devised by human art,—round which the winds of heaven sing a perpetual requiem.

"I have seen the shadows of evening slowly gather and softly fall, over the gaunt tower, the roofless nave, the giant pillars, and the shattered arcades of Fountain Abbey, in its sequestered and melancholy solitude, where ancient Ripon dreams, in the spacious and verdant valley of the Skell. I have moved upon Netley, and Kirkstall, and Newstead, and

Bolton, and Melrose and Dryburgh; and, at a midnight hour, I have stood in the grim and gloomy chamber of St. Columba's cathedral, remote in the storm-swept Hebrides, and looked upward to the cold stars, and heard the voices of the birds of night mingled with the desolate moaning of the sea.

"With awe, with reverence, with many strange and wild thoughts, I have lingered and pondered in those haunted, holy places; but one remembrance was always present—the remembrance that it was the Catholic Church that created those forms of beauty, and breathed into them the breath of a divine life, and hallowed them forever; and, thus thinking, I have felt the unspeakable pathos of her long exile from the temple that her passionate devotion prompted and her loving labor raised."

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CANDLEMAS DAY

FEAST SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2ND

The Mosaic Law commanded that a woman who had given birth to a son should not approach the Tabernacle for forty days. On the fortieth day she offered a sacrifice of purification, a lamb as a holocaust and a turtle dove as a sin offering. If she was poor a second pigeon or turtle dove was offered in place of the lamb. As the first-born was to be considered as belonging to God, it must be redeemed or ransomed. The price of ransom was five shekels, about three dollars in our money.

Mary was a daughter of Israel. She had given birth to her first-born. By the spirit of the law she was not bound. The law of purification was made for women espoused to men. Mary was espoused to the Holy Ghost. Her Child was the Creator of all things and could not be ransomed as a slave. The Holy Spirit revealed to Mary that she should fulfill the law like other Hebrew mothers, that her Son should be ransomed as a common Jewish boy. The same Divine plan that protected Mary's fruitful virginity obliged her to visit the Temple and make the offering. She was truly the handmaid of the Lord. Her Son was obedient unto death.

Joseph and Mary start for Jerusalem. She carries the Child and Joseph carries the two doves, their simple offering for they were poor. They can not afford the price of a lamb but they bear with them the Lamb of God. The people gaze at them. They wonder at the sweetness of the Mother, the beauty of the Child and the serene majesty of Joseph. They smile at them and say a pleasant word to the simple little family from the hill country. They do not know how close they are to God. The party enters the Temple. It is the second Temple, built after the return from Babylon.

The great Temple of Solomon had been destroyed. It is the Temple which the Child now sleeping peacefully in His Mother's arms shall soon sanctify by His presence, the one that He shall tell His people shall be destroyed until not a stone is left upon a stone.

In the midst of the assembled priests and people there are faithful ones. They are praying for the day of their deliverance, not knowing that at that very moment they are under the same roof with the promised Messiah. The whole ceremony is simple and the preliminary forms are soon completed. But God will not let so signal an event in the earthly life of His Son pass without a welcome. His Angels summoned the shepherds on the Great Night. His Star guided the Magi to the crib of Bethlehem. The Holy Spirit sends witness to the Infant in the Temple. The Prophet Simeon is advanced in years but he goes over to the Temple. The Holy Ghost has promised him that he shall not see death until he beholds the Salvation of Israel. There were many mothers who had come to present their children. The old man immediately recognizes one of his own. He had often read of her in the Book of Isaiah. He presses through the crowd. Mary, inspired by the Spirit of God, recognizes him and places the Child in his trembling arms. His saintly old face is illumined with divine love. He raises his eyes to heaven and sings, "Now, O Lord, dismiss thy servant according to Thy word, because my eyes have seen Thy salvation." He gives the Child back to His Mother. The doves are presented to the priest, the sacrifice is offered, the price of ransom is paid. Mary and Joseph pay homage to their Creator. The Temple is dear to Mary for in it she spent the years of her young girlhood. The little family quietly but joyfully leave for their humble home.

The beautiful feast commemorating this event in the life of our Lord is one of the earliest in the Christian Church. Many of the Fathers believe that the solemnity was instituted by the Apostles themselves. It is certain that it was long established feast in the fifth century. The Greek Church and the Church of Milan count it among the feasts of our Lord. The Church of Rome considers it a feast of the Blessed Virgin. While it is true it is the day our Saviour is offered in the Temple, the offering is the consequence of the Blessed Virgin's purification. The most ancient Apostolic calendars call it the Feast of the Purification.

It is impossible to say certainly why the blessing of candles as well as the Feast of the Purification. Some Fathers are of the opinion that it was instituted towards the close of the

RHEUMATISM WAS MOST SEVERE

Dreadful Pains All The Time Until He Took "FRUIT-A-TIVES".



MR. LAMPSON Verona, Ont., Nov. 11th, 1915. "I suffered for a number of years with Rheumatism and severe Pains in Side and Back, from strains and heavy lifting."

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fifth century by Pope Saint Gelasius in order to give Christian tone to certain remnants of the old Lupercalia still retained by the Romans. In support of this opinion we have the recorded fact that Saint Gelasius did abolish the feast of the Lupercalia, which was held in the month of February. Pope Innocent III, in a sermon on the Feast of the Purification, attributes the institution of the ceremony of Candlemas to the wisdom of the Roman Pontiffs, who turned into a Christian rite the remnants of an ancient pagan custom which had not fully died out among Christians. "The old pagans," he says, "used to carry lighted torches in memory of those which the fable gives to Ceres when she went to the top of Mount Aetna in search of her daughter Proserpine."

An objection to this explanation is the fact that in the pagan calendars of the Romans there is no record of any feast in honor of Ceres for the month of February. Pope Benedict XIV., probably the most learned of all the Popes, connects it with the ancient pagan custom of going through the streets with lighted torches in their hands. The Sovereign Pontiffs turned this custom into a Christian feast and attached it to that feast in which Jesus, the Light of the World, is presented in the Temple by His Virgin Mother.

The Feast of the Purification is a beautiful one; the solemnity of blessing the candles is most impressive. The Church begs Almighty God to watch over and protect those who use the blessed taper: "Whether on The Ave Maria. It contained a delicate-looking boy, showing the signs of a recent illness in his spiritual face, and his tutor. As they arrived at the foot of a hill they noticed a poor lad clad in a shepherd's dress, who was covered with dust and crying bitterly, as if in great pain. This was not strange; for one of his bare feet was very much swollen.

As the carriage reached him the horses were stopped; and the youth, jumping out, begged the little shepherd to tell him the cause of all his misery. The child replied that he had been run over by a milk wagon and that the driver had hurried on without stopping to discover what damage he had done. "And I can go no farther," he said. "My foot hurts so badly!" The youth, a scion of a noble house, was moved with compassion; and making his way through the briars which separated the road from a little stream, filled a cap with water, carried it to the wounded boy that he might drink, and then washed the poor bruised foot and wrapped his handkerchief around it. "Where do you live?" he asked. The shepherd boy pointed to a little village high up on the side of the hill.

"You can not get there without help," said the little Samaritan. "I will take you to Carpineto, where

your foot can be properly attended to." The wounded boy smiled his gratitude, and was helped into the carriage. "Joachim," inquired the tutor, "what in the world are you going to do?" "I am going to do what any Christian would do. Can we leave this poor wounded boy by the wayside?" "But what will your parents say?" "What can they say but that I have done well? Is it anything unusual for us to help those who suffer?" The tutor was convinced. He gave his pupil a friendly pat on the shoulder, and the carriage proceeded on its way.

When they reached home Joachim's mother was surprised at the ragged and untidy guest her son had brought; but when she heard the story and saw the expression of gratitude on the child's face, she sent for the family physician who attended to the bruised foot. Joachim's face shone with joy. "Have I not done right, mother?" he asked. "My child, you could not have done better!"

The lad who was so easily moved by the sufferings of a stranger became Pope Leo XIII.; and in all the record of golden deeds with which his life was filled this one glows like a star. The illustrious Pontiff was a worthy successor of the kind-hearted child; and now, when the Catholic world likes to remember him as the Pope of the Workingman, it is pleasant to recall this story of the little Joachim. God chose him to heal the wounds of humanity as he ministered to that shepherd boy, and gave him a heart large enough to compassionate the woes of the whole world.—Sacred Heart Review.

THE BOY CHORISTER'S STRATAGEM

Evening shadows were fast falling, and the deep peace of the twilight gloom filled the interior of a little village church. Through the open window came the evening song of a bird, calling her mate to the nest, while the droning of myriads of insects made a pretty accompaniment to her solo.

Busily engaged up in the organ loft putting away the hymn-books used by the choir in the service just finished, Paul Stanley was insensibly affected by the witching spell of the hour. Of a high strung artistic temperament, little Paul was the musical director's favorite. With him music was a passion, and many an hour had master and pupil spent together discussing some work of one or another of the great composers.

Tonight, however, Paul was left alone. Seated before the open bookcase, clad in his soutane and surplice, he made a picture which would delight the heart of a painter. Turning over sheet after sheet of music, he finally selected one which seemed to absorb him entirely; and a rapt look came over his face and his eyes took on an unwonted glow.

It was a little hymn which Paul had often sung at Benediction, a touching tribute to the Sacred Heart, a fitting expression of the special devotion he had ever cherished towards our Lord in the Sacrament of Love Divine. Rapt in his own thoughts he paid no heed to the passing moments, until his head fell upon his breast and he was fast asleep.

Night settled down, and still the boy slept on. Suddenly he started and awoke. Dazed for a moment he failed to realize his situation; then memory reasserted itself and he knew that he had been locked in the church alone! He had no thought of fear entered his mind, for in the silent darkness twinkled the sanctuary lamp.

Instinctively he knelt in prayer, when suddenly a sound broke the stillness. Surely it was the footfall of someone moving about in the church below. Peering into the darkness, Paul discerned the figure of a man stealing with stealthy tread up the aisle. On moved the crouching form to the very sanctuary rail. Will he stop there? No! he has entered the sanctuary and passed up the steps to the altar.

In a moment the boy divined the terrible truth—the intruder was about to rifle the tabernacle of its sacred vessels. What shall he do? This dreadful sacrilege must be averted. A cry trembles upon his lips, but dies away unuttered. He is only a boy, and it were idle to cope with a grown man, bent on robbery, and in all probability armed.

An inspiration comes to him. He will yet save his Lord from the hands of this miscreant. With a single bound he reaches the organ, and seating himself before it he places his feet firmly upon the pedals which operate the bellows. Then out upon the startled air floats a long, low wail from the instrument, like the plaintive cry of a breaking heart, and mingling with the music the sweet, clear, soprano voice.

With his whole soul in his effort, Paul sings the beautiful hymn he loves, the words of which, following him into dreamland, now are recalled to his mind with strange clearness. Full of wondrous pathos and tender entreaty, they tell the story of the yearning for the souls of men which fills the Sacred Heart because of sin, the grief, too, of that Heart because of pardon and the sweet promise of pardon and peace to the repentant sinner.

Softly, lingeringly, died away the

last sweet note of music, and now there is no other sound to mar the awful hush, which has fallen upon the place save the great choking sob which rack the strong frame of the man as he totters down the aisle and out into the night.

Coming in the early dawn to open the church, the sacristan found the door ajar. Filled with alarm he hastened to make an inspection of the interior. Upon the aisle and sanctuary carpet he saw the imprints of muddy boots, and stretched across the keyboard of the organ lay the unconscious form of the sleeping chorister, who had guarded his Lord from desecration, and had called to repentance the criminal in the very act of committing the most heinous sacrilege.—Catholic Opinion.

AFTER COMMUNION

Now art Thou in my house of feeble flesh,

O Word made flesh! My burning soul by Thine Caught mystically in a living mesh! Now is the royal banquet, now the wine The body broken by the courteous Host

Who is my humble Guest—a Guest adored— Though once I spat upon, scourged at the post, Hounded to Calvary and slew my Lord!

My name is Legion, but separate and alone; Wash, wash, dear Crucified, my Pilate hand; Rejected Stone be Thou my cornerstone!

Like Mary at the Cross's foot I stand; Like Magdalene upon my sins I grieve; Like Thomas do I touch Thee and believe.

—THEODORE MAYNARD

THE STRAYED WORSHIPERS

Love Divine, immortal, Ope Thine unseen portal, Shed Thy radiance that we again the Way may find; Blighted garlands bringing, Very sadly singing:

Lo our Roses we have strewn, alas! before the Blind, Ay, at idol-altars, Where the spirit falters, Weary worshipping vain gods, who never loose nor bind; In unhalloved bowers Died our fervid flowers,

Lo, our Roses we have strewn, alas! before the Blind. We who, rapt in vision, In life's dawn elysian, Hymning, trod the wondrous Way that unto Thee doth wind, Spent, bestained, belated, Came Thy consecrated,

Lo, our Roses we have strewn, alas! before the Blind. And our only token, Heart and spirit broken, And the tears that never now perchance, the Way we find; Take us to Thy keeping, who confess it wailing:

Lo, our Roses we have strewn, alas! before the Blind. —BEATRICE MOORE

LEARNING TO OBEY

A typical American youth—typical in that throughout his boyhood he was allowed to have altogether too much of his own way—wrote a few days ago from one of the training camps to his friends at home: "One thing I've thoroughly learned here so far is, how to obey." That lesson is distinctly worth while, says The Ave Maria, compensating the young man for much of the discomfort and gen-

uine hardship which his present condition and his future experience before the close of the war will naturally entail.

Discipline, kindly and judicious if you will, but resolute, firm, unyielding—that is what the American boy of this twentieth century needs; and the obviousness of the need is the most forcible argument in favor of universal military training.

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