

## FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOUY, D. D.

## NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

## TEMPTATIONS

"Let no temptation take hold on you, but such as is common to all men. And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it."—1 Cor. x, 13.

How wonderful is the spiritual power that God's grace brings to us. We were born "children of wrath," our souls were stained with original sin; we were not fit then for a place in God's kingdom. But when the waters of regeneration flowed over our foreheads, there came to us a new birth, and we were at once made children of God, with a right to inherit a place in heaven. Our souls were cleansed and adorned with a God-like purity, and within them was infused the habit of faith, with the possibility, as we would grow into consciousness, of gradually increasing sanctifying grace within us.

We never would have grown to manhood or womanhood had we not gradually developed the powers of mind and body that were latent within us. The means necessary for our growth to maturity were used, and the effect, unless some destructive power intervened, necessarily followed. We know that now, in order to conserve it, we must continue to use appropriate means, and to avoid what we feel would endanger it. How sad to note in the world today the number of those who have disobeyed this law and consequently are physical wrecks. They are deprived of health, strength, and happiness; and in most cases these physical blessings they have lost never can be regained.

Now, in order to preserve our spiritual life and to increase its strength and intensity, there are means that necessarily we must use. God has pointed them out to us after having supplied them. We know what they are; our Church instructs us in this respect, and our conscience should guide us in their use.

As there are many dangers to our physical development and conservation, so also are there many to our spiritual development. We know that undue exposure will endanger our physical well-being; we realize that our food must be good and wholesome so that our bodies may get the proper nourishment; we also are aware that the water we drink should be as pure as possible, lest through it disease germs enter our bodies, and we fall victims to some terrible sickness or malady. We need not mention other dangers known to all, and to which people in general realize if they expose their bodies carelessly and continuously they will become wrecked in health.

The dangers to our spiritual life are called, principally, temptations. Every Catholic is well acquainted with the meaning of this word. We all should know where open temptations exist, and we should be prepared to meet them when they spring up unexpectedly. They are the dangers that beset us on our march toward heaven, and, unless we use all the means God has provided us, they will be the cause of our deviating from the straight and narrow path. The fight against temptations never must cease; we must wage war on them within and without, and we never should think that we have the enemy under our complete control. As dangers face us daily in our temporal life, so do temptations come before us in our spiritual life. We must nourish our bodies daily, to keep strength and health in them; we should strengthen our souls, not only daily, but always, at every conscious moment, in order to preserve intact our spiritual life.

The Epistle of today tells us that God is with us in our fight. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able." We must remember, however, that God acts with us as we deserve—namely, as creatures endowed with free will, which means co-operation with His graces. God does not help us unless we, in this matter, make use of the means He has given us. Hence, we must be active and energetic, thoughtful and well-meaning, prayerful, and submissive to His divine will.

God expects us to avoid all the temptations we possibly can: "Let no temptation take hold of you but such as is human."

If unnecessarily we expose ourselves, as unfortunately many do, reasonably we can not expect help from God. "He who loves the danger shall perish in it." Let us, as good earnest Christians, summon sufficient courage to shun any person, place, or thing that would be a cause of temptation to us. It is sometimes very difficult, but our spiritual life and happiness depend upon it; if we fail to do it, we risk our right to heaven. The temptations we can not avoid, God helps us to fight if He finds us prayerful and willing to practice mortification to some extent at least; if He finds us good members of His Church. Are we such? Do we act accordingly? If not, we will be shipwrecked.

If we take all things as from God, and behold all things as in the light of the brightness of His coming, all shall be well.—Cardinal Manning.

## GENERAL INTENTION FOR AUGUST

RECOMMENDED AND BLESSED BY HIS HOLINESS THE LATE BENEDICT XV.

## THE CHURCH IN LATIN AMERICA

Never has the Church in Latin America been in greater need of our prayers than at the present time. For a number of years, and especially since the close of the War, Protestant ministers have been flocking to those countries in hundreds, eager to root out of Latin Americans that most precious legacy from their ancestors, the Catholic Faith, and to win them over to "fair and free" Protestantism.

That alone, however, would not be subject for alarm, were the condition of the Catholic Church in Latin America favorable enough to guarantee her triumph. Unfortunately this is not the case. For, generally speaking, the conditions under which the Church is forced to toil in Latin America are such as to make reflecting persons fear that the Catholic Church may lose the hold she still has on those nations.

To begin with, the Catholic Church in Latin America, as in every other land, cannot exert her beneficent influence on individuals or on nations unless she is what she ought to be, namely, an essentially vital society. But she cannot be a vital society unless she gets her life from the Sacraments, and these in turn presuppose the existence of a proportionate Catholic priesthood to administer them. The Church, therefore, cannot continue her influence on the Latin American countries unless the number of her priests keeps pace with the increase in population. And this is the first thing we have to ask God, while praying for the Catholic Church in Latin America: that He may give her numerous vocations to the priesthood.

Up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, to have one or more sons priests was the greatest honor as well as the greatest ambition of every Catholic family. But since that time an unfortunate custom has established itself of sending young men to Europe for their education. In the Universities of Germany, France and Spain, they sat at the feet of the "super-men" of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; and these took care, along with their professional teaching, to instill in the minds of the Latin American youth false ideas about all things Catholic,—that the Church is the most benighted of human organizations, that Catholic priests are the most dangerous members of civil society, the greatest hypocrites the world has brought forth.

Returning to their native land with such convictions, they entered political life, rose to the highest government offices and then began to persecute the Church. As a result the history of the Church in Latin America for the last century is one of ceaseless persecution. She has been robbed of whatever was her own; her schools have been closed; her Religious Orders banished again and again, her priests insulted and defamed. In many Latin American countries today a young man who heeds God's call to the priesthood not only brings down upon him the scorn of the irreligious and the hatred of the anti-Catholics, but is even looked on with pity by many educated men who call themselves Catholics, men who in their inmost minds entertain the ludicrous as well as slanderous idea that the Catholic priesthood in their countries is a sort of degraded profession, which none but the unpromising, ignorant, and uncouth enter.

Exteriorly, of course, respect and courtesy are still shown by Latin Americans to their priests; but unmistakable evidence is found that their interior esteem and veneration are slowly declining. The fault, however, cannot be imputed to the priests; insulted and persecuted as they have been, these Latin American priests are still, as a rule, men of God, devoted to the fulfillment of their duties, full of zeal for the spiritual welfare of their flocks. As, however, owing to the bitter persecutions, their position in civil society has nothing attractive in the eyes of the world vocations to the priesthood are not only not encouraged but in many instances positively discouraged, this explains why, in Latin America, there are many large villages where a Catholic priest is not seen even once a year; many towns and even cities where the two or three priests are altogether inadequate for the needs of the Catholic population.

How, then, shall they believe Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? Without priests, therefore, in a fair proportion to the number of Catholics, the life of the Catholic Church in Latin America is seriously threatened.

But there is something else, the remedy of which should be the constant aim of our prayers to the Sacred Heart in the month of August. That is the low vitality of the faith in the hearts of not a few Latin American Catholics. The great majority of those peoples are Catholics. Catholics were the Spaniards, Catholics were the Portuguese who civilized those countries; Catholic, too, the heroic missionaries who instructed them

in the Christian Faith. Their schools and universities, their hospitals, their institutions of credit, their art, their literature, their science, their very laws and governments, all were the ripe fruit of that Catholic Faith, which even now is the admiration of all civilized nations and the pride of Catholics the world over. With such a rich legacy, therefore, one would think that the present day Catholics of Latin America should be, if not the most, at least among the most, staunch guardians of the fruitful Faith they have inherited. But here, perhaps, we might have another proof of the old saw, "What lightly comes, lightly goes." And just as they were not called upon to make sacrifices for the establishment of the Catholic Faith in their countries; just as most of their splendid cathedrals were built for them, without their aid; just as their schools, seminaries and universities were in times past sumptuously endowed and had successfully passed the period of struggling infancy before the present generation came into being; just as it had become a tradition that the Church would do everything for them; in the same way they have grown up with the idea that it is the duty of the Church to care for them, not for them to work for the welfare of the Church. And so we find a widespread attitude of apathy and unconcernedness towards a Divine Institution that one hundred years ago was a magnificent achievement of Catholic Faith, but which the incessant pounding by the waves of persecution may soon reduce to a tottering mass, whose collapse would carry away with it the very foundations of Latin American culture.

It is not enough for Latin Americans to be aware of the dangers threatening the very existence of the Catholic Church in those regions; the least of all should they belittle the Church on account of the shortcomings that may have been noticed in her organization. They should set to work; they should see to it that there are seminaries, amply provided with everything needed to turn out good, efficient and cultured priests; that there are schools and colleges well equipped and numerous enough for the Catholic education of their children; that their pastors are esteemed and respected; that the laws are fair and that the will of the Catholic majority is obeyed, not trampled under foot by pigmy tyrants and knavish minorities. All this can be achieved if they show more of that plucky, manly faith which "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers" have been able to overcome.

Such, finally, is the present position of the Church in Latin America that well educated Catholics there must either rally at once and present an unbroken front, or they will be swamped under the onrush of anti-Catholic forces. In practically every Latin American country, Freemasons are in power; and remember that Latin Freemasonry means war, and war without quarter, on all that bears the name Catholic. Communists of all breeds and tongues are winning over to their anarchical ideas the rabble by thousands and thousands, peons from the farms and laborers from the cities. The peons are awakening; they have been aroused by the virulent propaganda of Latin American Bolsheviks. Unless the Catholics, confident in the justice of their cause and the protection of their God, strongly resolve to defend their rights, the deadly work will soon be complete. Protestants of all shades and dilutions of doctrine, but especially the rabidly aggressive Methodists, are in full campaign against the Catholic Church. Strong in the millions of mighty dollars at their disposal, they are flooding Latin America with Protestant schools, Protestant churches, Protestant literature and Protestant ministers. How will it be possible for the Catholic Church, under the battering of these combined elements, to hold her ground if Catholics remain passive, hiding in the seclusion of their homes, and passing the time for action in bewailing the viciousness of the assault, the lack of strategy in the defendants, the inferiority of the weapons at the disposal of the Catholic Church? It is certainly hard for them to organize themselves as the circumstances imperatively demand. Their countries are torn by revolutions. But if we pray that an era of peace may soon open for them, there is still hope that the Church in Latin America will again shine forth in all her former splendor and again be able to exert that influence to which were due all the glories Latin America can boast of.

Let the whole world see that just as the United States are so jealous for the observance of the Monroe doctrine, so Catholics the world over are eager to help their Catholic brethren to regain their full freedom of conscience for the greater glory, and honor of the Catholic Church.

EDWARD DE LA PEZA, S. J.

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## THE LOVE OF GOD

Those who have learned to love the Divine Heart are taught day by day to appreciate more and more the wondrous love that was manifested towards the human race when Our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist. They learn, too, to form a right estimate of the coldness and indifference with which Our Lord is treated in this Sacrament of His Love, and they are inspired with a desire not merely to cultivate a tender affection in their own hearts, but to spread the devotion to all mankind.

Attendance at the daily Mass and Communion if possible, or a daily visit to the Blessed Sacrament, reading spiritual books, are means by which we may foster devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and by the influence of our example bring others to a closer union with God. To numberless Catholics in our day the reproach of Our Lord might truthfully be repeated: "There hath stood One in the midst of you whom you know not." So many act as if they were unaware of the Sacred Presence patiently waiting in the tabernacle to receive the homage and love of His children.

His return to us on our altars at Mass, at Communion, is not simply that we might worship, but that the need we have of sweetness in religion might be amply supplied. We must approach His presence, gather about Him, for the refreshment of our lives, to break down the hideous monotony of our work, to add the brightness of love to the gray streets and grayer skies. Not holiness alone, but the beauty of holiness is required to bind our hearts, our whole souls to God. The child, which with its wistful trust demands protection, asks for something more than strong defense; it needs also the warm welcome of love. And in so far as we all children we need the gentleness and mercy of God to be made manifest, else we shall be too frightened to go on. If religion is to mean much to me, I must approach the altar of the sweetness of God that giveth joy to my youth.

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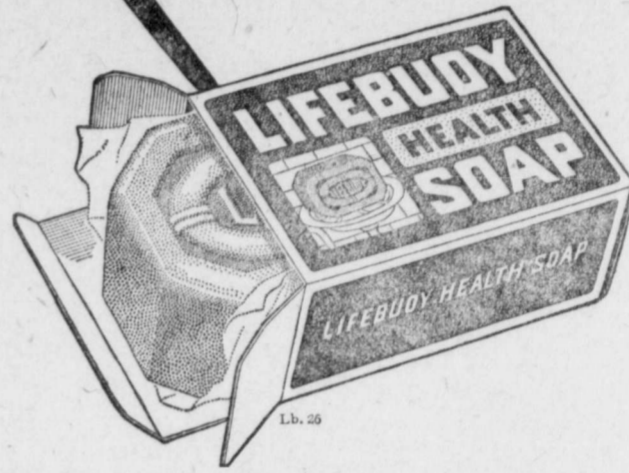
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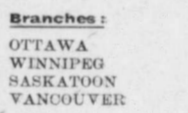
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