

**FIVE MINUTE SERMON**

THE REV. F. P. HICKOX, O. S. B.

**FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

**HOW TO PERSEVERE**

"And in doing good, let us not fail." (Gal. vi. 9.)  
How often has not this been our resolution—to be good and not to fail again! But what does our past life show us? Ah, the retrospect is one that may daunt the bravest heart. Our confessions make the revelation. How many, many times have we confessed in sorrow those things, in which we have failed, in spite of all our resolutions to be manful and persevere. The past has been a bitter and repeated disappointment to the best of us.

And why? Because, though we are poor, weak, erring creatures, we have placed too much reliance on ourselves. We thought that if we made up our minds, if we were determined, then we could start afresh and surely persevere. We forgot that we can do nothing, not even invoke the most holy name of Jesus, without the grace of God; and for this grace we have humbly and continually to pray. We have failed, because, again, we became negligent in little things, not heeding the warning of Scripture, that he that despiseth little things shall fall by little and little. For instance, by shortening, omitting, or carelessly performing our devotions, we have paved the way for a failure. Because, again, we have ventured too near a dangerous occasion of sin; dallied with a temptation; forgot the all-seeing eye of God, and to cry out, like Joseph tempted in Egypt, "How can I do this wicked thing, and sin against my God?" (Gen. xxxix. 9.)

But however often we have failed in the past, it is imperative, absolutely necessary for us, for our soul's sake, not to remain failures. We must not dare to give up the attempt to try again. How can we, then, do better for the future, and begin, with some chance of success, to do good and not to fail? First, when we find we have failed, we must begin again at once. It is only wounded pride that makes us lose heart and despond. If we humble ourselves and turn to God, He, in His mercy, will make that very fall a means of a new beginning, and give us fresh strength. A good life is simply a continuous good beginning. God wishes us to be good, therefore He is ready and pleased to help us.

Rising up and beginning again at once after failing, and earnestly turning to God for help, are the means of doing good and not failing. Our Blessed Lord complained, "You will not come to Me that you may have life" (John v. 40). We choose to trust to ourselves, whereas our only hope is from Him. "Commit thy way to the Lord, and trust in Him, and He will do it" (Ps. xxxvi. 5). He will give us life and what is life in a man, but strength of will, of purpose, and courage to make the endeavor to fulfill that purpose? We need not say that we cannot. That excuse will not hold at the Judgment—that we could not help failing—when all the time the grace to will and to do was offered us. The patient Saviour was waiting to be asked to give it us, and complaining that we would not come.

We starve our soul and let it perish of want, and wonder why we fail, and have not the power manfully to persevere. We look for our daily bread to sustain our bodily strength; and can we be excused for the folly of neglecting the daily bread of our souls? Prayer is nourishment for our souls, but a far greater and stronger nourishment is the most holy Eucharist. Our Lord has said, "He that eateth this bread shall live for ever." Ah! if we wish really to do good and not to fail, let us have devotion to the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. We gain strength, we prove our love for our Blessed Lord, and we give Him glory by receiving Holy Communion. Here is the strength that is offered us to enable us to persevere in doing good. We must not fear that we are trespassing on His kindness, as we are not fit or worthy to receive Him. No, we are not worthy; but our Blessed Lord "went about doing good to all," yea, even to those who He knew would fall Him many a time, and perhaps turn against Him. Come to Communion, to frequent, yea, daily Communion, and thus prove that you wish for His sake to have the good heart and strength to do good and not to fail. You will thus please our divine Lord; and be sure He will not fail you, but gladly will He give you the grace and strength that you may not fail Him.

So we see that the secret of perseverance is to begin again and again. And where shall we find the dispositions to wish to begin each day earnestly and zealously better than at the altar-rails? He comes to us there, who inspires us with the desire to be faithful and generous, and He comes to give us the strength to fulfill that desire, that purpose, that longing. Look back gratefully at the countless times that our Saviour has thus helped us to start afresh. Oh! what could have made us tire of Him, and wish to leave Him and abandon Him? Of ourselves we might despair, but never of His goodness. Our time is growing

short; let us begin again at once, and pray to persevere. No more to trust to ourselves—our good will or our strength—but whole-heartedly to trust to that good Lord, who would have us, for love of Him, to do good and not to fail.

**PREJUDICE AS A PROFESSION**

Joseph Huselton, S. J., in America

The recrudescence of prejudice after the loyalty shown by Catholics in the World War may to many have seemed almost incomprehensible. Perhaps the most obvious reason for the rebirth of this passion is the fact that the more Catholics win the esteem of their fellow-citizens the more also will the envy and enmity of their ill-wishers become open and pronounced against them. While Catholics are insignificant they are more readily overlooked. But there is still another explanation that deserves consideration. It is the existence today of a numerous class of men who have made of bigotry a business.

Bigots may be divided into three classes. There are bigots out of ignorance, bigots out of malice, and, lastly, bigots by profession. Often, it is true, these three types will be found blended in a single individual. But for not a few the creation of political animosity and religious strife is a bread-and-butter proposition, and little more. For others it is a financial investment that brings them big returns. Still others capitalize it as a political venture that is to gain wide influence, and so bring back the dollars devoted to anti-Catholic campaigns a hundred-fold through other channels. The money handled and pocketed in this industry of civil discord swells into such enormous sums that we do not exaggerate in speaking today of the high finance of bigotry.

Investigations made into the business of the Menace Publishing Company by the Knights of Columbus in 1914 showed that, up to that date, its receipts had been over \$3,000,000. At the close of the year 1914 the circulation of that purely anti-Catholic sheet had been 1,400,000. Yet the Menace as a business proposition could surely not compare with the Ku Klux Klan, which has been described as "the most colossal, peace of salesmanship in history."

Need we wonder then at the manufacture and circulation of such forged documents as the ridiculous oaths attributed to the Jesuits and the Knights of Columbus; the false Papal Bulls; the obscene narratives of a fictitious nature that pander to the lowest instincts of the class of readers indulging in such literature, and, finally, the invention of non-existent papers, such as the pretended National Catholic Register? The forged documents thus produced and the falsehoods circulated concerning Catholic life and teaching are sufficient to poison completely the mind of any one gullible enough to believe in them. That such readers still exist, and possibly in large numbers is without doubt.

When in 1915 the Knights of Columbus Commission on Religious Prejudices, under the chairmanship of Colonel P. H. Callahan, made the report of its investigations the results disclosed "an anti-Catholic feeling, more or less excited," in every section of the country and practically in every community. While most conspicuous in political circles, it was evident also in business, social and commercial lines. Referring to the origin of this anti-Catholic sentiment, the report states that

"It was being largely incited by a number of papers printed in various sections of the country for this purpose and which regularly published most outrageous calumnies against priests and nuns, and Catholics generally. Aiding these papers were several lecturers, some claiming to be ex-priests and ex-nuns, who were going about the country to stir up excitement by their lurid, scandalous attacks on the confessional and convents.

"Other agencies were discovered to be either consciously or unconsciously contributors to the general anti-Catholic propaganda. Chief among them were non-Catholic denominational and fraternal papers, some of which occasionally indulge in the practise of deviating from their constituted purpose of furthering the interests of their patrons in order to publish the scandalous inventions of anti-Catholic propaganda."

How widespread these activities were and how large a force of professional anti-Catholic propagandists were drawing their living from them, or building up substantial fortunes on such foundations, cemented by the elements of civic discord and religious hatred, can best be understood from the mention of a single fact. Without seeking to offer a complete list of anti-Catholic papers, the Commission was able to mention by name thirty-three publications, almost all of which were at that period devoted exclusively to propagating suspicion and hatred of all things Catholic. Most of them were largely of a political character; others presented a religious aspect.

We are not then surprised that an organization like the Ku Klux Klan could, even after the display of Catholic loyalty in the War, successfully carry on its promotion of anti-Catholic bigotry in many sections of the country. The Klan,

as was so frequently pointed out, offered unexampled opportunities to the professional bigot. Describing the origin and the profits of this sheeted and hooded fraternity Governor Henry J. Allen made the following statement on December 13 in New York:

"The organization and its promoters revamped the old A. P. A., which was essentially an anti-Catholic proposition. To this they added the Negro issue, and to these they plussed the Jew. Then they rolled up the three in the American flag and sold it all over the United States at ten dollars a throw. Of those ten dollars four go to the organization and the rest to the profiteers who are steering the work from down Atlanta way."

"In addition to the initial organization dues the profiteers in the Klan sell you a cheap cotton robe and a hood, which cost not exceeding \$2.35, for six dollars. If then they have a membership of 9,000,000, as they allege, and if they all buy robes and hoods, the people who are exploiting the order have cleaned up several millions of dollars."

The Klan drew to it many Protestant ministers, who were willing to join it or to receive its donations, given as a further lure to secure both membership and business. Yet the Administrative Committee of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America strove to correct what it designated as "the mistaken impression that the Ku Klux Klan deserves, and is receiving the support of the Protestant Churches." In a similar manner, while the Klan claimed an overwhelmingly Masonic membership, prominent Masonic authorities were uncompromising in their condemnation of it. So, too, in spite of the allegiance sworn to the Klan by many Methodist clergymen, their leading papers vigorously opposed it. Methodist Bishop was among the first to point out the danger of Klan-domination for Protestantism. In its issue of November 30, 1922, the Methodist Christian Advocate wrote:

"Whatever else the secret Klan may be or professes to be, it is known to be an organization which tends to destroy respect for law and constituted authority, and which is committed to policies which are the opposite of Christ's law of brotherly love. America is as much the land of the Jew, the Catholic, the African, and the Mohammedan as it is of the Anglo-Saxon, the Methodist or the Baptist. The law knows no distinction in their citizenship, and should know none. They are capable of being '100 per cent. Americans,' whatever that phrase may mean, and many of them have proved it by the habit of their life and the sacrificial manner of their death. The descendants of the Huguenot Pilgrim has no claim to a higher percentage of Americanism than the naturalized citizen who was born on the banks of the Liffey, the Danube, the Po, or the Volga. The only test is the man's own loyalty to American principles, and his service to the commonwealth. Nor is the man who regards Rome or Jerusalem as the heartstone of his Faith to be discounted in comparison with the Puritan, the Huguenot, the Lutheran, or the Methodist."

Such broadness of view has by no means been invariably shown by Protestant publications, yet Catholics on their part have consistently relied on the good-will and common sense of their non-Catholic fellow citizens. "Catholics feel at home among their countrymen," Cardinal Gibbons wrote:

"They are conscious of an unshaken record of loyalty, of patriotic self-sacrifice and of law-abiding behavior. Their dearest ambition is to live at peace with all, to antagonize no class. There is no barrier erected to set them apart as a class in political or civil life. Strong in the knowledge that an overwhelming majority of their fellow citizens understand and appreciate them American Catholics usually ignore the occasional insults directed to them by a small and rapidly decreasing section of the community not yet emancipated from ancestral misconception and prejudices."

But while, with sound reason, we have ever relied upon the good-will of our fellow citizens, it is none the less important that everything in our power be done to correct the false statements that still unfortunately poison and deceive too many minds in our regard. The results of paid anti-Catholic agitation can be seen in such enormities as the Oregon school law, opposed to everything that is sacred to true American liberty. To promote this same spirit of intolerance in State after State is even now the purpose of these bigots.

Loving secrecy and darkness, the agents of evil are everywhere busily engaged. Like Middleton's witches their ceaseless occupation is to "raise jars, jealousies, strifes and heart-burnings, and stir up a thick scurf of evil life." Let us then be alert, not so much in correcting false impressions that have already been made and injustice that has already taken place as in vigorously forestalling all such evils. There is but one way in which this can be done, and that is by spreading the Catholic truth in season and out of season, in word and in writing.

The ingratitude of the world can never deprive us of the conscious happiness of having acted with humanity ourselves.—Goldsmith.

**HILLS AND VALLEYS**

There is no element of nature more inspiring, more ennobling, than the mountains. To the traveler who views the gigantic masses of the Alps for the first time, there comes a feeling of wonder, of awe. Nowhere in creation is the Omnipotence of the Creator more apparent. Nowhere does man receive a stronger impression of the eternal years than here. Where was man when these giant bodies were fashioned? In the eternal concept.

When a man returns to the town or village where he was born, he walks upon his youth, the philosopher tells us. He walks on past days which spread themselves like a carpet beneath his feet. So when a man contemplates the eternal hills towering high into the heavens, he walks, like Moses, reverently, putting off the shoes from his feet.

Men, impelled by the lure of the giant mountain peaks, have left earth far behind, have climbed wearily, assiduously, day after day up the dizzy steeps, feeling but slightly the effort in the mighty enthusiasm for the conquest of the ethereal heights. Many over-ardent and impetuous, have strayed from the path, and have lost themselves forever in some unfrequented mountain pass.

The mountains and valleys encircling this wondrous earth of ours present a striking picture of the journey of man through this world.

As the traveler approaches the hills, they appear tremendous, insuperable, insurmountable. But, having once gripped his staff and followed in the sure footsteps of his guide, he ascends boldly. As he ascends, the treacherous steeps seem to decline, until finally the summit is reached. And then, what a rich reward for all the fatigues and the labors encountered on the journey! For another world beyond the mountain stretches out to the enchanted gaze of the climber. He is amply repaid for all the fatigue, the distrust, and the pain. The conflicts of individuals, as those of nations, must be approached boldly and with confidence. Here is no place for craven cowardice. He who shrinks back can have no part in the glorious reward which awaits the intrepid climber.

A strange history is that presented by the life journey of men since the creation of the world. The vast procession, passing in slow caravan over the earth from east to west, may be easily catalogued in two classes,—the workers and the shirkers. And this is particularly true of the moral life.

The work of building the Temple of Jerusalem went on, the Sacred Writer tells us, with no noise of hammer . . . in silence this mighty work was consummated. Life and beauty were wrested from the yielding marble and gold, in silence, until the whole was complete.

In silence the moral battle goes on throughout the world. Every man is drafted into this vast army. No one is exempt. To the outward eye, things may appear calm, but within—what a strife! Tears, blood, wounds, death,—while outwardly all is peace.

The biographer of a French monarch says of him: "The fever of ennui was the worst of his diseases. Instead of progressing with determination, he drew back within himself and watched."

It is always a fatal moment when a man ceases to consider his own personal warfare, and begins to consider the struggle of his neighbor. Many a man is lost through this unwise procrastination. "The thing that makes the most light-hearted man melancholy is analysis of joy or suffering." Aristotle is a prophet of silence, inaction. In this warfare no man can afford to stop fighting.

Said the Court Physician once to his Monarch who was afflicted with this most deadly disease of moral ennui: "I do not know much of anything to suggest to Your Majesty. Your Majesty has been to War. Your Majesty has tried to love scholars and artists and the pleasures of the palate. Now, when or how he has tasted glory, flattery, love and wine, I declare to your Majesty that I seek in vain a muscle, a chord, a nerve center that discloses the existence of any untried aptitude for new forms of distraction."

Here was the honest man for whom the oldest philosopher wept about the world seeking. The Court Physician did not know of any remedy for the King's disease, and he was willing to acknowledge it thereby proving that he was above the mediocrity of those who are unwilling to avow: "I do not know."

The Court Physician did not know that the remedy for this fatal soul disease is not a physical one, but a moral. St. Paul could have told him the recipe for strength and happiness; St. Ignatius could have told him; St. Francis Borgia could have told him. All these men had possessed power, wealth, influence, but embracing the meek doctrine of Christ, had found in stripping themselves of all things earthly,—suffering, yes,—but grace and peace.

Having once commenced the steep ascent of the mountain of the soul, the pilgrim may not look backward. Nothing is more dangerous, for closing earth and its comforts so close behind, he is apt to lose courage and grow faint-hearted. A rigid resolution to keep onward, upward, is the only course, and marks a true nobleman.

There have been men who in the face of death have scaled the dizzy

heights, undaunted. No threat of punishment could deter them when once they had marked the course. So, when the Duc de Fronsac once promised, to the Cure of Versailles on the word of a gentleman that he would throw him out of the window at the first words he uttered to a profligate and dying King on the subject of the Last Sacraments,—the steadfast Cure replied: "If I am not killed by the fall, I shall come in again by the door, for it is my right."

And through this heroic resolution the unhappy King was enabled to make a tardy peace with God.

In the contemplation of that most sacred of all objects, the Crucifix, the most faint-hearted finds courage to climb the blood-stained hills of the soul. With such a heroic Leader, Who Himself climbed to the very summit of the Mountain of the Cross, sustaining the load of us all,—it is easy to set one's face away from earth, toward the eternal peaks of Heaven, where the journey ends in peace and triumph.—The Pilot.

**A SAINT'S LETTER**

Writing to console a mother whose infant child had been taken from her by death, and who had expressed her belief that God had thus punished her for her sins, St. Francis de Sales addresses these consoling words:

"No, my daughter, it is not to chastise you, but to favor this child, that God has saved it so soon. At the close of our days when our eyes are opened, we shall see that this life is so little a thing, that we need not regret those who lose it first; the shortest is about the best, provided it conduces to the eternal.

"But, come, behold your little child in heaven, among the angels and the Holy Innocents. It knows the pleasure you took in caring for it during the brief time you had it in charge, and above all the devotions you practiced for it; in return it prays to God for you, and sends up a thousand good wishes for your life, that it may be made more and more comfortable to thus gain the happiness which it enjoys. Remain in peace, my dearest daughter, and keep your heart in heaven, where you possess this brave little saint. Persevere in desiring always to love more and more faithfully the supreme will.

"Oh, how happy for this child to have flown away to heaven before having touched the earth! What a pledge you have on high, my dearest daughter! But I am sure you have treated heart to heart with Our Saviour on this affair, and that He has already clothed the natural tenderness of your mother's love, and that you have many times pronounced, with all your heart, the filial protestation which Our Lord has taught us: 'Yea, Eternal Father, for so it hath pleased Thee and it is good that it should be so.'"

**THE FIRST PRIEST**

The discouraged priest who sees his best efforts to make his people good, met with indifference and carelessness, must often wonder at the blindness of the eyes that can look with so much eager interest on the paltry concerns of pleasure and business; and at the same time turn away from the terrifying vision of future punishment; the terrors of retribution. We say those thoughts must often come to the mind of a priest; for if laymen ever think of such things it is so seldom and so fleetingly as to do them little good. Have you ever stopped to think what fools men must sometimes appear to the reflective mind of a zealous and earnest priest, when he sees the indifference with which his most earnest exhortations, his most touching pictures of the Divine love and mercy, are received by those in whose service he is spending his life and himself. The first priest of the Catholic Church was Christ Himself; and we know how he wept over the hard-heartedness and the blindness of Jerusalem; that city on which the choicest gifts of God had showered in vain. And in like manner, every priest who has by God's command exercised the holy ministry in the Church from that day to this, has had only too much reason to lament that God's graces have been tossed aside in favor of the gods and the idols which man has set up in the place which the Most High God should hold in the human heart.—The Missionary.

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