

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. F. PEPPER

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Now I go to Him that sent me, and none of you asketh Me: "Whither goest Thou?" (John xvi, 7)

Our Lord announced to His disciples the approaching completion of His work of redemption. "Now I go to Him that sent me, and none of you asketh Me: 'Whither goest Thou?'"

As Man and Redeemer Jesus has fulfilled His destiny, and how much this ought to encourage us to attain to ours!

Many people live on, year after year, without ever asking: "Whither are we going? What is our allotted task?" It is, however, man's privilege to know what his task is, and to exert his free will in order to accomplish it.

"God will have all men to be saved." (I. Tim. ii, 4) says the Apostle, and the happiness that we are to enjoy is so great that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him" (I. Cor. ii, 9).

For such eternal happiness it is surely worth while to abandon and renounce the trifling delights of this world, in as far as they are sinful. If we could see heaven and all the joys awaiting us there, we should ask ourselves: "Why do you care so much about what appears pleasant on earth? Why are you discontented when things here do not go according to your desires? Cannot you do without a few things and deny yourself a little for the sake of obtaining such unspeakable bliss?"

The pleasure that sin affords is a pitiful thing, soon passing away and leaving behind it nothing but remorse and shame, and would you barter for it an eternity of happiness on earth? Why do you care so much about what appears pleasant on earth? Why are you discontented when things here do not go according to your desires? Cannot you do without a few things and deny yourself a little for the sake of obtaining such unspeakable bliss?"

We are destined, as St. Paul says, one day to see God face to face, and to know even as we are known, but we shall never be worthy to behold Him, unless even now the most ardent desire of our heart is to know Him aright. Faith teaches us to know God, and, without faith no one can hope to see Him.

Our faith remains secret to us until we draw our last breath. May all that we learn and experience be regarded by us in the light of faith, i. e., may we refer it all to God, and employ it in learning to know Him better. Let us never waver in our faith, and never be infected with the spirit of worldliness, which cares for everything but God. Let us cherish a firm and steadfast faith in God, for thus we shall become worthy one day to behold Him, and, as the Apostle says, to enjoy Him, to find unspeakable happiness in loving Him whose love alone is able fully to satisfy the heart of man. This is man's destiny, this is the highest possible bliss, but this love must at least begin on earth, for only a heart that has lived for God in this world will live in Him in the world to come.

Love of God is displayed in obedience to Him. The better we love Him, the more ready and joyful will be our obedience. If He one day asks us whether we had loved Him on earth, we shall answer with gladness proportionate to the humility and fidelity with which we have done our duty, to the number of good works that we have performed, and to the amount of self-restraint that we have practised out of love of Him. The genuineness of our love will be proved in this way and by the solidity of the virtues that we have acquired; not by the number of fine speeches that we have made, or of pious books that we have read. We ought to love God not only in word and with our emotions, but in deed and in truth. We are destined some day to join the company of those blessed spirits, who stand before the throne and never cease their worship of God. Let us now prepare ourselves to fulfil this glorious duty by means of prayer, for prayer alone will furnish us with the grace of faith, will strengthen us to disregard the things of earth and to overcome temptations to sin, and will help us to be faithful in good works. Thoughtful prayer, proceeding from hearts earnestly desirous of salvation, brings us even now closer to God, and will some day

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R. A. WAUGH

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unite us forever with Him. Therefore let us pray without ceasing, as the Apostle bids us, by prayer with heart full of good will really to accomplish the task, for which our prayer obtains us strength.

We know whether our Lord has gone; He is in heaven; preparing a place for us. We know, too, whether He wishes us to go—also to heaven, to be happy with Him for ever.

TEMPERANCE

A PROBLEM EVERY NATION HAS TO DEAL WITH

Prohibition has a special sanction as a war measure which is lacking in time of peace, and the motive may vary according to conditions. Russia forbids vodka in the interest of sobriety; what course it is to take in regard to milder beverages is not yet clear. Germany, on the other hand, limits the making of beer, not as a temperance measure, for beer has a well established place in the national life, but to save grain for food, and in case of shortage this tendency would increase. France has not the same motive, because foodstuffs can be imported from abroad and paid for with the products of the vineyards and the primary concern of the government is to encourage the replacement of deleterious strong drinks with the mild wine on which the country long flourished. This no doubt explains the action of the Senate in agreeing to the compromise of 1917, when licenses are to be made "hygienic drinks," which in France includes not only soda-water, milk and cocoa, but cider, wine and beer. The new law, which went into effect Jan. 1, retains the high tax on distilled liquors, the effect of which upon the nation has been by general consent harmful. Every country has to deal with the problem in its own way.—Springfield Republican.

"DISCRIMINATING AGAINST WOMEN"

Because Monsignor Brown of London, England, recently proposed that women should not be served in the public houses (saloons), he was subjected to criticism from some unthinking individual on the ground that he was discriminating between the sexes, and any such exclusion of women from the rights and privileges of the bar would be a wrong done to them. Explaining his idea, Monsignor Brown, at a meeting of the Catholic League of South London, said he thought too highly of women, and particularly those who bore the burden of maternity, to be willing that they should be exposed to the temptations, and to the shameful language and scenes that were to be witnessed very frequently in public houses. There were scenes to be witnessed and language to be heard, certainly in many of the public houses of London, which he considered were an absolute disgrace to civilization. It was with a view to protecting women against these dangers, on account of their high degree of being a refining and ennobling influence amongst men, that he had moved the resolution which had evoked criticism in certain quarters. So long as women were seen passing in and out of the public house bar he was old-fashioned

enough to believe they could not exercise that influence as they should exert it. If they got upon the question of absolute equality between the sexes they would at once be treading upon exceedingly difficult ground. Indeed, he would declare that there were many public duties which women were physically incapacitated from performing. There were various forms of employment, particularly with regard to women who were child-bearing, which every one, on the face of it, would admit were quite unsuited for women. There was this striking fact to be borne in mind—that women alone are prevented, purely on sex grounds, from following certain occupations by statute law. Such, for instance, to mention only one case, that of working in the mines. In his opinion, if equality of sexes would involve the employment of women at labor of such a character he had referred to, or if equality between sexes was to expose women to shame and degradation, then he believed there must be inequality between the sexes.—Sacred Heart Review.

OUR MOTHER MARY

We dedicate to our beautiful and immaculate Mother Mary the month of May, this month of brightness and beauty and bloom. We dedicate to her of whose astounding dignity the Nicene Creed tells us, that she is Mother of the "one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, And born of the Father before all ages. God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God. Begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; by Whom all things were made. Who for us men, and for our salvation, descended from heaven. And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary; and was made man."

From the cross this God-man, our Divine Redeemer, gave us His Mother to be our mother; she loves us for His sake, she prays for us; from her throne in heaven where she reigns, the Queen of Angels, she watches over us weak, erring mortals with a mother's tireless love. Preserved from all stain of sin herself, she grieves over and pleads for sinners for whom her dear Son died.

What tributes have been paid to Mary by artists and poets, by preachers and doctors of the Church! Let us quote some examples for our reflection and meditation. Father Ravet says: "O ever Blessed Trinity, I glorify and praise Thee for Mary, Thy most glorious, most perfect of all mere creatures!"

"She came into the world, and the angels saw her; and when they looked on her they were astonished, gazing in love and wonder. The Lord increased her loveliness and added to her beauty. Never had there been in the world such a vision of grace and sweetness. Her footsteps were light and fragrant on the hills of the morning, on the mountains of Israel. Rejoice, O my Mother Mary, for the brightness of thy love and the beauty of thy crown. Thou art the elect Daughter of the Eternal Father; for this I love thee, and for this I give thanks to Him. Thou art the Virgin Mother of the Incarnate Word; for this I love thee, and for this I give thanks to Him. Thou art the elect Bride of the Holy Ghost, for this I love thee, and for this I give thanks to Him. Heaven and earth are gladdened by thy presence."

"Thou art the Queen of Confessors and Doctors, and Virgins and Martyrs, and Prophets and Apostles. Thou art the glory and the gladness of the Church on earth, the Consoler of the afflicted, the Help of Christians and the Refuge of sinners. Thou ever bringest refreshment to the Holy Souls. In thy great love thou dost turn to Jesus, and dost ask Him for His pity and His help."

"O Mother Mary, dear star-crowned Mother, listen to thy children, and lift up for them those immaculate hands which once took the crown of thorns from the brows of the dead body of God. Mary, Mother of love, pray for me that I may obtain great gifts of grace."

During this month of May, let us bring to Our Lady our prayers and praises, knowing that it pleases her Divine Son when we love and praise His beloved Mother. Let us follow her example in her humility, her patience, her zeal, her holiness. She, like us, owes everything to Jesus Christ, the word's Redeemer. Let us follow her example in our constant gratitude to Him, our unflinching service of Him. Let us cry with her: "Behold the servant of the Lord!"—Sacred Heart Review.

TOLD BY A MISSIONARY

A few years ago in a Brooklyn church a Dominican priest in the course of a sermon on Our Blessed Lady told a little anecdote that has lingered in the writer's mind and it seems worth repeating. The preacher had been dilating on the capacity of a mother's heart for love and sufferings, holding up of course Our Blessed Mother of Sorrows as the peerless type of holy motherhood. His very tones linger in the memory. At times his mighty voice would resound through the sacred edifice like peals of thunder, but as he spoke of the matchless power of mother love his tone sank almost to a whisper, and every ear in that crowded church was strained to catch the speaker's every syllable.

PRAYER

Prayer, like liberty, or any word that is often in the mouth, is poorly compassed by the mind. Many a fine fellow thinks he has done nobly when he reads page after page of a prayerbook. Prayers are not words. Words reach only the ear, and pass as the idle wind; but never pierce the skies, as they have no carrying force. Words are only breath beating against the roof of the mouth, and are to God, and often to men, "trifles thin as air."

Thought alone can mount up to the eternal God, and receive audience therefrom. Truly has Shakespeare written "Words without thought never to heaven go." In contemplation, where words have no purpose, we see God and He hears us. Seeing Him, we are not humble, and hearing us He exalts us with His strong arm—lifting us from our knees and truly putting us on our feet.

The great trouble is that we are not sincere in our helpless expressions. We appear before the Infinite Creator as if we were orators dealing in speeches, and not as beggars crying for wants. God, instead of bestowing our heads, does graciously in pitying our arrogance.

In prayer we should be humble, for a suppliant is never pompous. We should be constant, not naming the hour when we must get our request, for God the Infinite, is not chained by the finite. We should pray, and leave God free to give His own gift in His own time.

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