

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOUY, D. D.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE QUALITY OF MERCY

"At that time, Jesus said to His disciples: Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not; and you shall not be judged. Condemn not; and you shall not be condemned." (Luke vi, 36)

Were it not for mercy, this world would be a place of continual torment. It would be bitter beyond expression. Mercy is the flavor that sweetens it, and makes it agreeable to the taste of most people. This quality shows love—the love that is the perfection of man. Where it is not found, there can be little or no justice. It is mercy that makes smooth the way of poor erring man, and gives to the repentant sinner the hope for a share in God's kingdom.

Mercy, like all virtues and good qualities, is found first and most perfect in God. From Him it flows, as the stream comes from the spring. Mercy refreshes with His goodness the souls of those it reaches, as the crystal streams in the valleys by their moistness enliven trees, plants, and shrubs. The soul into which it does not reach must become as barren of spirituality as the stony deserts are barren of vegetation. We become perfect in so far as we participate in the infinite qualities of God. Mercy is one of the principal of these qualities.

It was mercy that urged God to give man another opportunity to obtain a share in His kingdom, after man had fallen from grace. Justice might have demanded otherwise, but mercy softened His harshness. There was a reason, no doubt, why God allowed it to intervene; and this reason still inclines Him to exercise His mercy in our regard. Were it not for mercy, after falling into sin we would be as helpless as is the young spig along the banks of the rushing river, the current of which engulfs and carries it away to the broad sea. Were stern justice alone the norm of God's notions toward us we would be carried headlong to the merciless sea of destruction.

But we should not contemplate God's mercy alone, for mercy as it exists among ourselves needs serious consideration—our often it is violated. Our Lord, in today's Gospel, speaks of it, and He says that we should model our mercy after the mercy of His Heavenly Father. It is not to be exercised on some occasions, and neglected on others; but it is to be ever in the foreground of our relations with our fellow-beings. There seldom will occur a case in which mercy can not be practised, at least to some extent. No one need wonder why. We need only consider one of the reasons why God exercises it. Man is weak, he is imperfect, he is sorely tempted, he is ignorant, he has passions ever rising against him. He is not infallible, he is not all-powerful, he is not all-wise, he has not a perfect eye to discern evil everywhere it exists. We are all alike, though some a little weaker than others; but the imperfections and weaknesses of nature are in all of us. We condemn our neighbor when he succumbs to temptations, as if we were not always in the same danger. But the eyes of mercy should see differently.

We do not believe that a case ever existed or ever will exist, where a person who condemned and refused to forgive one who had fallen, had not himself been guilty of similar or more grievous sins. It seems to be the natural consequence to the stern critic and the searching judge. The methods of the saints are different. Those leading holy lives on earth are never harsh in their condemnation. If they condemn at all, their beautiful sentiment is expressed by "God forgive him," or "God have mercy on his soul." Christ never would have instituted the sacrament of Penance if He did not place mercy practically above everything else; and, in fact, this sacrament could be called the sacrament of mercy as truthfully as it is called the sacrament of penance. Mercy is dispensed in it, and in a way befitting God.

Blessings will come to him who closes his eyes to the neighbor's faults, but opens them wide to his own failings. A realization of our own condition is one of the best incentives to mercy for our brethren. It is useless to endeavor to persuade any one with a good knowledge of human nature that our own faults are much less than those of other men. It may be so in some cases, but the best have sometimes fallen; and as long as we are human we must place ourselves in the category of sinners. There are people who spend two-thirds of their time in discussing the faults of others. This very fact makes them often more guilty than the ones whose character they are ridiculing. It is quite evident that the great command of God to be merciful to others is never observed by such people. Discord is the seed they are sowing, and unforgiveness the plant they are cultivating. The harvest will be hatred of God.

We must admit that life is a warfare. It is difficult to avoid sin. God knows this well, and often He has let us feel His understanding of it. His mercy is "above the clouds principally for this reason. Why can we not be like unto Him in this respect? It is not difficult to have mercy, especially when we have not been wronged. God is always wronged by the sins of man, yet He seldom fails to exercise His mercy, even where a person appears utterly unworthy of it. As a rule, we are

wronged but little, if at all, by those whom we seem not to forgive.

Mercy must be generous. It can not be extended to one and denied to another, nor cheerfully given to some but reluctantly granted to others. All, without exception, deserve a goodly share of mercy. If any one renders himself unworthy of it, we should not render ourselves unworthy of God's mercy by denying it to him. To have mercy is one of the things we can really do to every one. It should be as universal as charity. As every one deserves our love in a certain sense, so do all deserve our mercy. Catholicism should set a perpetual example of mercy, for they know well what it means. Over and over again they have felt its influence and experienced its sweetness in the confessional. A hundred times and more, it has opened to them a new road of hope. Let them extend it to their neighbors and, like God, be merciful to all.

THE QUEEN OF MAY

The month of May is the fairest month of the year. For this very reason the Church has designated the Month of May as the Month of Mary. As Father Faber says, "To the sweetest of Queens be the fairest of seasons, sweet May." From childhood days this month has been eagerly awaited by Catholics as a time in which they can lay their fairest flowers of filial love and loyal devotion at the feet of their Mother and their Queen.

The feast days in Mary's honor throughout the year call Catholics to the sense of their duty to their Mother. But the Month of May is a special season consecrated to the daily practice of acts of loving homage to Our Lady. On every day of this month and in every hour of the day Catholics in some part of the world will honor their Mother and their Queen.

Daily Mass during this month will attract a larger throng of worshippers, the altar rails will be visited by more communicants, households will unite in the daily recitation of the Rosary, May shrines in homes and schools and institutions will be erected by loving hands and festooned with sweet May flowers, and the sad earth encompassed by many woes will once again resound with the music of sweet hymns to the Mother of God.

May is the month of young loveliness. The green of growing things, the white blossoms on the fruit trees, the frolicsomeness of the lambs in the fields is typical of the whiteness, the fairness, the childlikeness of Mary. So in like manner we who dedicate ourselves to her this month must have joyousness in our hearts, whiteness in our souls, and the innocence of childhood in our smiles. These best befit the child's attitude to a mother. For are we not her children? Has she not exercised a mother's care in our behalf? All days of the year we both owe and render to her testimonies of our affection. But during May we seem to be closer to her and she dearer to us. As Cardinal Newman sings in the last stanza of his beautiful poem:

HOW FAR WILL IT PAY TO MAKE GERMANY PAY?

A calm and well-considered statement of the economic, social and religious aspects of the reparation question is given in the April London Monitor. In regard to the economic point of view the editor says: "Germany can pay only out of her surplus wealth; to produce surplus wealth to the extent required, her trade must flourish exceedingly; her trade cannot flourish if handicapped by such a tariff [as proposed by the Allies] in so many directions: it is not likely that the German Government will agree to reimburse its traders, and if not, they will seek markets amongst the neutral nations and undersell the Allies in those quarters. The economic interdependence of the nations seems to us to be ignored by this policy of high compulsory indemnities. The free coal sent into France under the Treaty has brought about a crisis in our coal trade and injured the French mining industry. The vast amount of German shipping which has accrued to the British and other Allies, has stopped shipbuilding here, whilst depriving Germany of one means of regaining her prosperity. The great increase in German imports necessary to make the 6 1/2% tax really productive will still further injure our home manufacturers. The Premier himself said on February 5th: 'If Germany paid in goods, it would throw hundreds of thousands of workmen out of work in France, in Italy, in America, and in every country receiving the indemnity.'"

It is interesting to note that the same explanation is given in the

Foram. The statement by Amos Pinchof made there can be briefly reduced to the dilemma that Germany must pay either in ready money or through her commerce. The former is clearly impossible since the money is not on hand, the latter is possible only by underselling the Allies in foreign markets or at home. To whatever extent this is done it throws our own toilers out of work, causing untold suffering through unemployment at home and swelled labor in Germany. The social aspect is thus touched upon: "Through Germany is nominally a Socialist State and has actually limited fortunes by legislation, that legislation has not been effective. Those responsible for the War, the financiers and the politicians, will not suffer. It is the German poor that will be cruelly sweated by the process of exacting punitive reparations, just as the poor over here will suffer if they are successfully exacted. We need say nothing of the prolongation of European unrest, the perpetuation of hostile feelings, the indefinite postponement of any real League of Nations, the sowing of the seeds of future war, which the forcible collection of indemnities will entail."

The problem, as can be seen, is not a simple one. But there remains the religious side still to be considered: "Had the Allies been beaten in an unrighteous war, they would have been glad of consideration at the hands of the victors, and of peace terms which would enable them to cooperate in re-establishing the prosperity of the world. The terms they have imposed upon Germany do not seem likely to produce that result. We are not questioning their justice: we only think they will not make for peace."

It is, of course, wrong, as the editor correctly states, to look upon the German people as "conscious criminals."

Loving your enemies is not only sound Christianity, it is good business." Lord George is quoted as saying, but the editor fails to see that either he or his colleagues have hitherto acted upon that excellent principle. It would be, in fact, good policy, the editor of the month believes "to ask from our beaten foe less even than we could obtain."

LAND FOR EVERYBODY

DEPT. OF INTERIOR WILL GIVE INFORMATION FREE TO THOSE WHO APPLY

An increased demand by the public for information regarding land settlement is reported by the Department of the Interior at Ottawa. This increased interest is attributed partly to the fact that Crown lands in Western Canada within fifteen miles of a railway, which heretofore have been available for returned men, became available for civilian entry on the 1st of May.

Besides Crown lands that may be available, it is estimated that there are about 200,000 quarter sections of privately owned lands lying idle in the Prairie provinces, most of them within easy reach of railways. The same condition applies, though in a lesser degree, to the older provinces of Canada. This condition is not, however, due to lack of value in the land itself—on the contrary and particularly in the Prairie provinces, much of this idle land is rich virgin soil—for when one considers Canada's vast land area and its comparatively small population it is at once apparent that a large portion of the area in private ownership must be uncultivated and available for purchase at reasonable prices.

In addition to its activities in connection with the settlement of vacant Crown lands in the Western provinces the Department of the Interior, in co-operation with Provincial officials, has compiled and published very full particulars regarding uncultivated, privately owned, farm lands in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. This information which was published by districts is issued free of charge and includes such details as the price at which land may be purchased, the terms of sale, acreage suitable for cultivation, nature of soil, and value of buildings. With such information in his possession the intending purchaser may negotiate with owners of land in any district in which he is particularly interested.

In their endeavour to find a suitable location prospective home-owners or purchasers will find of marked value the dual service which the Department of the Interior through its Natural Resources Intelligence Branch is now in a position to render.

THE LEAGUE OF CATHOLIC WOMEN IN URUGUAY

John P. O'Hara, C.S.C., in May Catholic World When the divorce question was first agitated in Uruguay, a few Catholic women held a meeting of protest against this assault upon home life, and decided to circulate a petition throughout the country to be carried to Congress. The work was carried into effect and some tens of thousands of signatures to the protest were secured. This was presented to Congress in due time, and was rejected, because it had not been made out on the stamped paper required for legal documents. Undaunted, the women framed their protest in proper legal form, with an increase of signatures.

In the midst of the divorce agitation Sarah Bernhardt came to Montevideo to open a new theatre, the Orquiza. She was announced for three plays, all of them arguments for divorce. The Committee of Catholic Women waited upon her and begged her in the name of common decency and womanhood not to present these plays, but "the divine Sarah" rejected their pleas and presented the plays announced. The Catholic women then inserted a brief note in the columns of the Catholic newspaper, El Bien, which stated: "The Committee of Catholic Women announces that the performance advertised for the Orquiza is reprehensible." The effect was electrical. The newspapers are in the habit of publishing the names of those who occupy boxes at the theatre, and no person who aspired to recognition by the social leaders who formed the Committee, would witness the plays. The boxes were not occupied by the better class of society on these three evenings.

THE MASS

The meaning of the word "sacrifice" is really to do something sacred. As spoken of here, "Sacrifice is the offering of a visible object, with its destruction or immolation made to God alone by a lawful minister, in acknowledgment of His supreme dominion. As creatures, we owe God, two species of worship, adoration and sacrifice. Adoration is the personal or private worship of God. Sacrifice is the public worship of God, and requires a church or temple, a priest, an altar, an offering, etc.

There never has been, and there never can be a religion without some sort of external and visible worship. It is easy to cite many examples. We have the sacrifices offered by Adam, Cain, Abel, Melchisedech, Abraham, Jacob, and many others who offered up the fruits of the earth to God, and consumed them by fire. Now what exactly did they intend to express by this action of burning, killing, destroying, consuming? Simply this: Their action was a public and solemn protestation of their recognition and confession that God is the giver of all gifts; that He has no need of created things, which are as nothing in His sight—and hence it is that in His sight they are destroyed and annihilated; that God is the absolute Master of life and death; that just as they are created by His power, so they are destroyed by His power; that the destruction of the thing offered, so were they themselves ready to die, and be sacrificed in His service; and finally, that by their sins they had merited the death or destruction inflicted on the victims offered in their place. Such is the meaning, and necessity of sacrifice in general, and the sacrifices of the Old Law in particular.

SACRIFICE OF THE CROSS

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross is a true sacrifice. In every true sacrifice there must be four things: God to whom the sacrifice is offered; the minister or priest who makes the offering; the victim, or thing, or creature offered; and the destruction of that victim in recognition of God's supreme dominion. Now these four conditions are perfectly verified in the sacrifice of the Cross. It was offered to God on the altar of the Cross; the priest who offered it was Jesus Christ; He, too, was the Victim offered because it was His own will (Isa. liii: 7) while as for the destruction of the victim, it is enough to read the Gospels about the Crucifixion. Thus did he at one and the same time, Priest and Victim, pay to the majesty of God the homage and glory due to Him; expiate the sins of all the world; and by means of one single oblation, according to words of St. Paul, hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (Heb. x, 14).

THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

The Mass is the true and real Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, which is offered each day on our altars, under the outward appearances of bread and wine, and which continually represents the Sacrifice of the Cross, and applies its saving fruits to our souls. The sacrifice of the Mass was foretold. Almighty God after having reproached the growing impiety of the Jews, from whom He had been receiving sacrifice, goes on to say, "I have no pleasure in you, and I will not receive a gift from your hand. For from the rising of the sun to its setting, My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation." (Mal. i, 10.)

Now if we compare the Sacrifice of the Mass with other sacrifices, and especially with that of the Cross, we find that it is wanting in nothing that goes to constitute a true and proper sacrifice—neither in victim, nor in priest, nor in altar, nor in oblation to God alone, nor in instrument of immolation, nor in change or destruction of victim. The victim that is offered up is Jesus Christ—His body and blood under the out-

ward form and mystic appearance of bread and wine: "This is My Body which is offered for you; this is My Blood which is shed for you." The altar is present before our eyes. The priest is Jesus Christ, acting through the outward ministry of lawfully ordained priests of His Church, who officiate in His name. Now what is the instrument? How is the Sacrifice accomplished? When a living victim was offered up in sacrifice, according to the Old Law, the immolation was effected by separating its flesh and blood. So also when Jesus Christ offered up Himself on the altar of the Cross, the immolation was accomplished by the separation of body and blood. In the Sacrifice of the Mass, neither knife, nor sword, fire nor wood is required: the only instrument used being the words, which do the work of the sword. In virtue of the words of consecration, the body and blood of our Lord are mystically and eucharistically separated, representing mystically His real death on the Cross.

If the Sacrifice of the Mass is a representation and a renewal of the Sacrifice of the Cross, as often as you assist at it, picture to yourself that you stand on the hill of Calvary. You are witnesses of the death of Jesus. With eyes of faith contemplate Him dying for you. What sentiments of faith, respect, love, would penetrate you? Such are the sentiments which you should bring to Mass, if you are desirous of showing yourselves grateful to God, and deriving thence abundant fruits of sanctification.—The Tablet.

HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN

The logic of the Christian religion nowhere appears more clear and evident than in the life of Jesus Christ Himself. Realizing, as the apostle later wrote, that faith without works is dead, Christ wrought even as He taught. His works were ever the proof of His teaching. He claimed to be God, and at once He defended this claim by performances possible only to God. He foretold that His lovers would be scorned, persecuted, even put to death; and He Himself showed them in His own personal experiences just how to comport themselves when these things would come to pass.

He had taught the people and cured their sick; He read the hearts of many and raised the dead; He crowned this achievement by coming forth of His own power from the depths of the tomb. What more could the world expect as proof of His divinity. Why did He not convert the whole world? Because man's free will must be preserved at any cost, and the task of winning souls to God was to be the work of His ministers. He showed the way, they shouldered the burden for the world. They would lay siege to man's free will; they would compass it about with trenches; but the surrender itself must be voluntary.

Christ was a wayfarer upon the earth. He had wandered far from His home in quest of humanity. His work done, it behoved Him to return whence He came. With parting instructions and words of encouragement, with the promise ever to be with them, He rose before His followers, hundreds of them, and slowly disappeared from view. No sudden vanishing this, but a slow, deliberate ascent to His heavenly mansion. Man might dare question this or that doctrine; he might seek to pick flaws in one or another miracle; he might question an action here or there; could he logically reject the whole accumulation of evidence, capped by the resurrection and the ascension, as proof that Christ was just what He claimed to be, God? Men have been found to utter captious criticism of the Redeemer and to reject His whole career. They did the same to God the Creator. Wise men admitted the evidence; but the only one to say "There is no God" was the fool who uttered these lying words in his heart.

Fidelity to the Christian teaching in this world is a sign of sound judgment. It is the prelude to a higher form of loyalty which will last through eternity. At the same time it is a pledge of future association with Christ during that endless duration. Such faithful people will dwell with the Redeemer in His eternal home which is heaven, for Christ ascended into heaven and will there present His friends to His

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