

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

By Rev. M. BOSSART

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

WE KNOW NOT WHEN, HOW AND WHERE DEATH WILL OVERTAKE US

The thought of the young man on his bier, of whom we read in today's Gospel, arouses very serious and profitable considerations in our minds. We are reminded of the solemn truth that each of us, sooner or later, will die, as he did, on a bier ready for burial. Yes, the hour will come, when the Angel of Death will lay his hand upon us, when our hearts will cease to beat, and our limbs will stiffen; the hour will come for the bell to toll, and for our bodies to be carried to the grave. We know not when this hour will be; our own experience and Holy Scripture both teach us that it is hidden from us, but no reasonable person can possibly doubt that one day he will have to die.

1. We know not when we shall die. "No man knoweth when he shall die," he is aware that he will die, and that every step brings him nearer to the grave, but he cannot tell when death will overtake him, whether by day or by night, whether soon or at some distant date. Our Divine Saviour often told His disciples that they would not know at what hour the Lord would come, and bade them be vigilant. No position and no age affords security against death. You will be convinced of this truth if you go into the churchyard and read the inscriptions over the graves; every age is liable to death.

2. We know not how we shall die.—what will be the manner of our death. Death presents itself in many different forms; some die after a long illness, others suddenly; some receive the Sacraments of the Church, others are deprived of all spiritual assistance; some linger on for years, in constant expectation of death, others pass away without a moment's warning; some die an easy death, others suffer a terrible agony. Yes, death comes in many different forms, and we know not how it will come to us.

Where we shall die is equally uncertain; but there is no place in the world where death cannot find us out. "If I take my wings early in the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea," even there he will discover me; nowhere can I be safe from him, neither in town nor country, neither on mountain nor in valley; neither in a palace nor in a cottage; everywhere I am within reach of his powerful hand and of his shaft. One man dies at home, another abroad; one in his bed, another amidst the way of the sea; one in church, another at some place of amusement; nowhere is safety to be found; death may meet you as you play, as you eat, or as you are about to commit some sin; you know not where you will die.

3. We shall all die. Almighty God Himself said: "Thou shalt return to the earth out of which thou wast taken, for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." This is undoubtedly true; we shall all die, although we know not when, how or where. Is it not therefore, very foolish for any man to live as if he were never likely to die? or to let his heart cling to this wretched world, when that poor heart of his will perhaps soon cease to beat? Is it not the height of folly to be anxious about ensuring one's happiness in this life, and to forget eternity? What shall we say of a man who devotes all his energy towards embittering his hour of death and making his life after death unacceptably miserable? Or of one who spends his short span of life here in shameful sins and lust? How terrible will be the remorse and despair of such men, when they realize too late that death has taken his grip! Let us never act thus foolishly, but often think of death. This thought will stimulate us to sow as we hope to reap in eternity, and to lay up treasures "where neither rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through and steal." Because we do not know when, where and how we shall die, let us no longer delay, but break at once with the world and sin, so that henceforth we may seriously prepare for a happy death. Amen.

A MYSTERY MADONNA

SIXTEENTH CENTURY MASTER-PIECE FOUND IN A BARN

Much interest is being taken in the recent discovery of an unknown painting of the Madonna, found, in a barn in Batemaduna. To keep the picture in Spain the well known Bilbao millionaire, Senor Echevarria, advanced the considerable sum demanded by the possessor, and the painting is at present deposited in the Spanish-Italian room of the Prado Museum, pending the decision of the Government to acquire it or not, says the Madrid correspondent of the times.

The newly discovered picture has been seen by a number of critics, who all hail it as a masterpiece, and there is general agreement that the work belongs to the 16th century. But there is great diversity of opinion as to the personality and even the nationality of the artist.

CONSTANT PAIN AFTER EATING

The Tortures of Dyspepsia Corrected by "Fruit-a-lives"

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"For two years, I suffered tortures from *Severe Dyspepsia*. I had constant pains after eating; pains down the sides and back; and horrible bitter stuff often came up in my mouth.
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The painting is on wood, less than 4ft. square, and represents Our Lady seated on a throne with the Child on her lap. A monk and a friar are believed to represent St. Benedict and St. Bernard, and at the feet of St. Bernard kneels the diminutive figure of a man wearing a cloak, on which the red cross of the Knightly Order of Montesa is prominent.

The composition and many of the details, as well as the delicate colour scheme, are distinctly Italian; other points recall the Flemish Primitives; while the white tones and strong play of light and, above all, the burning fervour of spirit that emanates from the figure of the Knight and pervades the whole work, are decidedly Spanish.

The two most authorised opinions expressed so far attribute this picture to an unknown Spaniard, Don Manuel B. Cassio sees in it a work of transcendent importance for the history of Spanish art, precursor of the aesthetic figures immortalised at a later period by El Greco and Zurbaran.

A closer examination of several interesting details noticeable, in particular an Arabic inscription in the design of the carpet, and research as to the personality of the Knight, may yet throw valuable light on the origin of the picture.—London, Eng., Universe.

POWER OF SACRAMENTS IS FROM CHRIST

When Bishop Kinsman resigned from his position in the Episcopal Church he assigned as the principal cause that the church did not give a definite opinion on the Sacraments. The fact is that Protestantism has from the beginning been uncertain and by its very nature cannot define the Sacraments, give their origin or explain their effects.

Private interpretation of the Scripture and justification by faith alone logically lead to a rejection of the Catholic doctrine of the Sacraments. Martin Luther would gladly have swept away all the Sacraments, but the words of Scripture were too convincing. Henry VIII. received the title Defender of the Faith as a reward for his defense of the seven Sacraments. His followers, the Anglicans and Episcopalians reject five of these Sacraments, admitting at the most that they may be tolerated as "lesser Sacraments."

The Catholic Church clearly points out the origin of the Sacraments as well as their number, and gives to us the matter and form that have been determined by Christ. The Council of Trent declines that the Seven Sacraments of the New Law were instituted by Christ. The question of fact is thus settled for all Catholics. It is often asked by unbelievers how can one reasonably believe that the pouring of a few words, with the pronouncement of a human seal, can answer to the power of conferring grace. It is evident that all Sacraments must originate in Divine appointment. Saint Thomas says, "Since the sanctification of man is the power of God Who sanctifies, it is not in the competency of man to choose the things by which he is to be sanctified, but this must be determined by Divine institution." No one but God can decree that exterior ceremonies shall make men partakers of His nature. It is God alone Who can authoritatively and by innate power give to external, material rites the power to confer grace on men. Saint Thomas thus explains the origin of the Sacraments: "Christ produced the interior effects of the Sacraments by meriting them and by effecting them. The Passion of Christ is the cause of our justification, meritoriously and effectively, not as the principal agent and authoritatively, but as an instrument, inasmuch as His humanity was the instrument of His divinity." The old maxim is theological truth as well as piety: "From the Side of Christ dying on the Cross flowed the Sacraments, by which the Church was saved."

The Catholic doctrine is contained in these facts and realizing them one will understand why Catholics have such great reverence for the Sacraments. They have their efficacy from the merits and sufferings of Christ. They are sanctified and they sanctify in His Name. He

could and He did institute the Sacraments, although He could produce the effects of the Sacraments without external ceremony. While it is not absolutely impossible for Christ to communicate this power of excellence to men, had He done so they could not have possessed it with the same perfection of Christ, for as Saint Thomas puts it, "He would have remained the Head of the Church principally, others secondarily." It is a fact that Christ did not communicate this power. He did not wish to permit the possibility of different Sacraments giving rise to divisions in the Church.

While the Church through the council of Trent has defined that Christ is the Author of the Sacraments it does not define as a matter of faith that the Sacraments were immediately instituted by Christ. A few theologians hold that some of the Sacraments were instituted by the Apostles, using power that had been given to them by Christ. While the council did not define as a matter of faith that the Sacraments were immediately instituted by Christ, most theologians contend that it is theologically certain that Christ immediately instituted all the Sacraments of the New Law. In the decree condemning modernism, Pius X. condemned this proposition: "The Sacraments had their origin in this that the Apostles persuaded and moved by circumstances and events interpreted some idea and intention of Christ." It then continues and condemns eleven propositions which would deny that Christ immediately instituted the Sacraments.

It does not necessarily follow that Christ determined all the details of the sacred ceremonial or prescribed minutely all those things that relate to the matter and form that is to be used. Immediate institution by Christ requires only that Christ determine the special grace to be conferred by means of external rite. It is true that in both Baptism and Eucharist Christ determined minutely the matter and form, but is not so certain that he determined so precisely the form to be observed in the other Sacraments. He ordained that there should be an external ceremony by which special graces were to be conferred, but left to the Apostles or to the Church the power to prescribe and determine what He had not the power to change—the substance of the Sacraments. This would not mean that the Church could not use her divine authority to determine more precisely the matter and form in so far as they had not been determined by Christ. This is not a new theory and is not only perfectly consistent with the decrees of the Council of Trent but will help to solve many difficulties relating to the Sacraments, and particularly to the Sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Orders. It must not be understood that Christ instituted some of the Sacraments in an implicit state. The Church does not admit that Christ personally only instituted the two Sacraments, Baptism and Eucharist, and left the institution of the other five to the Church. To accept the Catholic definition of a Sacrament it must mean that the rite which confers grace was instituted immediately by Christ Himself.—B. X. O'R.

WORLD FAMOUS LECTURER AND WIFE ARE CONVERTS

MR. AND MRS. JOHN L. STODDARD BOUGHT AND FOUND THE TRUE FAITH

It will be of the greatest interest to the readers of the Pilot and in fact to the whole public of the United States interested in literature, lectureship and travel to know that the eminent lecturer John L. Stoddard and his wife have been received into the Catholic Church. For many years the Stoddards lectured were attended by thousands in all parts of the country. He probably was the pioneer in the matter of beautifully illustrating his travel talks.

No one who has been fortunate enough to have heard Mr. Stoddard lecture can deny his power of mind, his command of language, and his appealing personality. How he would glow when describing some wonderful piece of God's handiwork in nature, although he did not then clearly see the Master's hand.

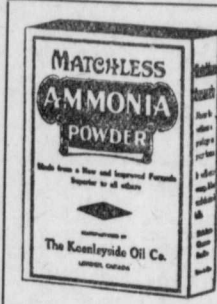
Finally came the War, the battle cries of Europe's struggling armies almost at the door of his beautiful villa in the Tyrol. Then the Stoddards saw the healing, saving hands of Mother Church stretched forth to comfort the departing souls of men whose bodies were in torment, but whose hearts were firmly fixed on God and the future life. After about two years of life in the inner war zone, where the not very distant growl of the heavy guns kept Mr. Stoddard and his wife constantly reminded that each hour of the day and night countless souls were passing out, going into the great beyond, the horror and misery around them made them see their hearts as well as their minds in arriving at a decision as to where these souls were going.—Boston Pilot.

If hope and fear go hand in hand, much more do hope and charity. But perfect charity, it must not dwell merely on what benefits we may look to obtain from God. It must put before us a higher object. It must point us to the happiness of loving God for His own sake.—Fr. R. F. Clarke, S. J.



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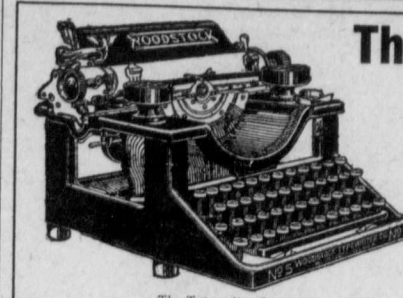
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