

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOUY, D. D.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

THE LAY APOSTOLATE

And he came into all the country about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins. As it was written in the book of the sayings of Jesus the prophet: A voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His paths. (Luke III. 3.)

The noblest work in the world must be the work that has the noblest end. Now, what end is greater than that of the glory of God and salvation of men's souls? Surely there is nothing higher nor greater to be accomplished. Hence, the work directed toward this end must be the greatest and highest that man can perform. Considering man in his present lamentable condition, there is much to be done by him and for him in order that this great end may be attained. Nor, as a rule, can it be accomplished suddenly or quickly; it is rather the task of the whole time that God allots to man. He does not intend man to desist from this important duty, nor neglect it even for a moment; but He would have him direct the acts of every rational moment toward this end. It was for this, alone, that man was created by God. But he is free physically and, unfortunately, often abuses that freedom. Many ends has he set for himself, and many idols has he erected for his worship. So much so is this the case that the spectacle presented us by the world is truly a lamentable one. This being so, whereas it always was noble to save men's souls and glorify God, now it may be said to be even more noble—almost heroic. Certainly, in many respects, it is a very difficult task, owing to the fact that men have changed so much regarding religion, its practices, and its beliefs. But, nevertheless, it continues and must continue, as it is God's wish; and He gives the grace wherewith it can be accomplished. But must we say that this work is the task of the ministers of God alone? Primarily it may be said to be so, but to some extent it is the work of every individual. God has established His sacred priesthood, and through it He acts as He otherwise would act directly; but this does not forbid a lay apostolate, particularly of co-operation. Strictly religious functions must be performed only by him who is called and ordained for that purpose. To him who succeeds to the apostles in their prerogatives and powers alone is given the right to offer up the great sacrifice of the cross in an unbloody manner, and to sit in judgment in the tribunal of penance. No other can perform these acts, but all may co-operate with the anointed of the Lord in the work of the apostolate—at least by example, by persuasion, and by guidance. They can, if nothing else, lead men hither, that they may taste of the Lord's grace and be set anew on the path to reform and righteousness. There is an apostolate that every Christian can perform, and God unceasingly suggests to every one how he may lay his hands to the work. Zeal must exist in the hearts of the good, and from no one else does it come save from God.

But what is the great obstacle existing in the world to the salvation of man and the glory of God? It is sin. Sin has robbed man of his primal beauty and strength, has put him in his present condition, and is aiming to put him in a worse state. Sin has spoiled the world of its loveliness to a great degree, and brought about such inequality among men as we witness around us today. We scarce can say that man is effectively brother to man; nay, rather, he is as a rule, inimical. What trivial things will often make him so! The lure of the dollar will make him fratricidal in a second, at least in desire and as far as charity is concerned. Every one knows how small the weapon that cleaves friendships and severs brother from brother. Sin has done more. It would take history, longer than any man could complete in a lifetime, to tell of even a few of its ravages. Sin and sin alone is what shuts men out of heaven, and endeavors to rob God of some of the glory that should be His.

However, though sin has conquered man, God has given to man the means of conquering sin, and thus he may liberate himself from the bondage to which sin subjects him. It is a difficult task, nay, a fight that requires the greatest valor and courage. But man must strive, and, if he fails to succeed, it will be his own fault, and God will hold him accountable. He who sins allows Satan to conquer him, and God wants him to subdue Satan in return, and hold him ever afterward at bay.

Man is weak, especially when he once has been under the power of the enemy, and, in order to wage the perpetual battle for his safety, he needs help. Of course the principal aid comes from God, but man can do much for him also. The Gospel of this Sunday gives us an example in St. John the Baptist, the precursor of our Divine Lord, of the way we should help man and thus destroy sin in him, at least indirectly. St. John was "preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sin;" we must wage a war on sin in some way also. Perhaps it is not for all "to preach the baptism of penance for the remission of sins;" but does not some

way suggest itself to you, in which you can help others to combat sin while you avoid it yourself? No doubt it is your plain duty to do so. If you are a parent, must you not teach your children how to fight sin? Must you not raise them in such a way that they will be given the training and the example which they need to form them into good soldiers for the cause of Jesus and their own salvation? Are you a guardian, an instructor, an employer? If any of these, have you not an important task to perform, and an excellent example to set? Your influence will mean much. Of what kind is it? Are you solicitous only about yourself and your material prosperity; caring little, so long as your own interests are guarded, what happens to those connected with you in many ways? But maybe you are a person responsible only for yourself. Oh, if so, much can you do for your neighbors—by example, by persuasion, by exhortation, by even sacrificing yourself—to bring them back to their Father's home, if they once knew it and left it, or to gain them admittance, if they have never known it before. You are no doubt doing many things in life, but remember none can be so noble as to help your neighbor to avoid sin, and to do your share in destroying sin wherever you know it to exist.

Would that more were lay apostles! Were it so, the banner of Christ would be unfurled over a greater part of the world, and in many instances the strongholds of Satan would be demolished.

STATESMANLIKE AND CHRISTIAN MEASURE

U. S. CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR STARVING PEOPLES

Washington, D. C., November 21.—Provision for a great Christmas gift of food, clothing and medicines to the suffering peoples of Europe and Asia, particularly those of Russia, the Near East and China, is made in a bill which Senator France, of Maryland, has introduced in Congress and which contemplates the distribution of the surplus supplies purchased by the United States during the War and still remaining unused.

Senator France says that the existence of these supplies, the value of which runs into millions, "constitutes a disturbing influence on agriculture, industry and business."

It is specifically provided in Senator France's bill that the Knights of Columbus shall be included among the organizations to be created, authorized or appointed to attend to the work of distributing the relief which the disposal of the supplies would make available for the stricken peoples of the countries named.

Among the organizations mentioned in the bill, besides the Knights of Columbus, are the Relief Committee of the Society of Friends (Quakers), the Near East Relief, the Young Men's Christian Association, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Russian Relief Committee, the Russian Famine Fund, and the Jewish Distribution Committee.

It is not improbable that the bill may be broadened in its scope so as to make provision for the suffering people of Germany, Austria, and Poland.

Explaining the purpose of the bill may be broadened in its scope so as to make provision for the suffering people of Germany, Austria, and Poland. Explaining the purpose of the bill and the methods he proposes for turning to account the surplus stocks now in the Government's keeping, Senator France said: "The bill which I have introduced provides for the gift by the Government of its surplus War supplies to the people who are suffering so acutely in the countries where there is now economic distress or famine, particularly in Russia, China, and the Near East. "Everyone knows that, during the War, the Government accumulated vast supplies of drugs, chemicals, shoes, clothing, blankets, harness, meats, canned goods, and other foods, trucks, automobiles, and other materials, and that huge quantities of these are still on hand. From time to time quantities of these are declared surplus and are sold. "My bill does not seem to ask too much, if we consider that had the War lasted six months longer all the material that we now have as surplus would have been used up in the natural course of events and nothing would have remained to represent the outlay. We can look upon the surplus which we have as being saved from the wreckage, and even if we destroyed it to stimulate production it would be profitable. "When we consider how splendidly our people responded to the call to arms, the action and endurance on the part of labor, the deeds of heroism performed in the domestic service of our homes during the emergency, it is then we realize that something must be done to relieve our people of the demoralizing effect which the dumping of the Government supplies in an irregular way is having upon our markets. "The disposal of these goods outside of the country would tend to stabilize business, reassure manufacturers, increase employment, relieve the Government of storage charges and rents, release for pro-

ductive work a large corps of Army officers and employees who have been in charge of these goods, and would have a wholesome effect generally. "The humanitarian side of the question is important. The Russians stand in desperate need of such supplies. The shipment of these supplies to Russia would be an act of humanity and a piece of wise business diplomacy as well. All these supplies will serve as samples of American-made goods, and may result in future business transactions. "I have before me advertisements of sales by the Government of large quantities of these materials in various cities. These sales tend to greatly disturb the business in these cities."—N. C. W. C.

MISERY IN AUSTRIA

MATERIALISM RECEIVED A DEADLY BLOW IN THE WAR

Vienna, October 20.—At a time when the press is full of reports of the dangers to which Austria is exposed and when the new Republic's existence is threatened by the ruinous fall in exchange, it doubtless will be interesting and informative to Americans to receive the views of a leader of the Christian Socialists, the predominant political party of this country. This leader is Rev. Dr. Drexel, member of the National Assembly, who is remembered for his truly apostolic work among the prisoners of war in Siberia.

Dr. Drexel is an admirer of America and a firm believer in her ability and wish to take an active, impartial hand in the rehabilitation of Europe, including Austria. The N. C. W. C. correspondent has obtained from Dr. Drexel a discussion of the conditions which now confront Austria, and their causes and cure.

"Which are the special tasks of the Austrian Catholics with regard to the present situation of the country?" the N. C. W. C. correspondent asked him.

"It would be a mistake to attempt an explanation of existing conditions in Austria by ascribing them wholly to economic and financial causes," he replied. "Deeper than these two are the ethical reasons for the present state of things. The World War has greatly affected the moral life of every nation that had a part in it. This influence has been all the greater in the case of the vanquished nations. In addition, the defeated nations are confronted on the one hand by misery and distress and on the other by a craze for speculation, such as has never heretofore been seen, and by a lust for pleasure on the part of the nouveaux riches.

"All this is exceedingly demoralizing; the quest for the luxuries of life has done grave moral mischief. It is now the task of the Austrian Catholics to overcome all these evils and to bring the people to a higher conception of life. That materialism which has done so much harm to Germany and which had its exponents in the highest scientific circles as well as among the lowest classes of the most radical tendencies, received a deadly blow in the War. That cannot be doubted. It was an experiment which brought a painful decision in matters which had previously been subjects of academic debate in books and in political parties.

"There are today many God-seekers in quarters where formerly it was necessary to profess atheism as a means of maintaining prestige among scientific men. By talking of a science free from assumptions, they meant to disavow any belief in God. But today many of them have faith. These pseudo-scientists are frankly admitting the limitations of their science. They are no longer content with it. They are turning to philosophers and metaphysicians to continue where they left off in their search for a solution of the world's problems.

RESULTS OF FALSE PHILOSOPHY

"Without question our economic conditions are the product to a large degree of the aberrations of this false philosophy. Other countries besides Austria are affected in the same way and by the same factors. In connection with Austria, whose problem is presenting these ethical considerations in a distinct and insistent fashion, one necessity, one demand, is made manifest—God must again come to the foreground not only in the life of the individual but also in the life of nations and governments.

"The thought of God must be the guide for the principles and the development of the nation, its political, economic and cultural achievements. This is an important work, but it is facilitated by the fact that in all callings and ranks there are many who, having lost God, are willing to turn to Him and are seeking Him sincerely. These people make no secret of their disappointment with materialism, which they trusted. They are now, in their heart of hearts, in need of a religious experience. It is true of the workmen belonging to the Socialist parties. It becomes the duty of Catholics to lead them back to God, Whom they seem, temporarily, at least, to have forgotten.

"In the fight against materialism the Catholic Church has been the stoutest champion. The Church is

now triumphant. That is beyond question, but in the long and terrible conflict hosts have fallen and many have perished. It will be one of the tasks of Austrian Catholics to heal the wounds of the battle and to bring back the missing, if that is possible.—N. C. W. C.

JEW GIVES BISHOP PECTORAL CROSS

New York, Nov. 18.—One of those rare incidents in the course of the religious life, an ardent, sincere admiration of a Jew for a Catholic clergyman is the feeling shown by Aaron Naumberg, a wealthy New York Jew, for the newly consecrated Bishop-Auxiliary of New York, the Right Rev. John J. Dunn. This admiration has found expression on frequent occasions in the making of contributions by Mr. Naumberg to the cause which has been one of the principal interests of the religious life of the Bishop—the foreign missions.

The friendship began at the time America entered the War. Before the drives for funds by various organizations were consolidated under the plan of Secretary of War Baker, the Catholics, like other, had raised a separate fund. Bishop Dunn was very active in the direction of this drive, and was rather surprised to find Mr. Naumberg a contributor of \$5,000. Mr. Naumberg's contribution was prompted primarily by his desire to help, and it was given to the Catholic drive because of his conviction it would be used to the best advantage. Meeting the Monsignor in this way, Mr. Naumberg, like every one else who has ever come in contact with the new Bishop, became a warm admirer of the genial, yet tremendously efficient worker.

The depth of this feeling, moreover was amply proven by the fact that when the new Bishop was consecrated, on October 29, one of the many gifts he received was a pectoral cross from Mr. Naumberg. It is a beautiful piece of work, five inches long and three and a half inches across, a fine specimen of the goldsmith's art. It is made of green gold, with a clear sapphire of about one carat, at each extremity. In the center of the cross, in relief, is the Agnus Dei, surrounded by diamonds. The whole cross is engraved with a tracery of wheat and grapes, emblematic of the Sacrifice of the Mass.

ALSO AIDS CARDINAL MERCIER

Mr. Naumberg's admiration for Bishop Dunn is not the limit of his aid to Catholics. When Cardinal Mercier was here he gave him \$5,000, for the relief of the distress Belgians, and later, on a visit to Belgium, gave him \$1,000 more.

Another beautiful incident in connection with the presentations to Bishop Dunn was the announcement that he had another pectoral cross which had been treasured for some years. As is well known, Monsignor Dunn, as head of the New York branch of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith has been enormously successful, increasing the annual contributions for the foreign mission service from a usual four figures to six figures. No cry of "heavenly bodies" came from the earth, no matter how far away, or how small in numbers were those seeking the light of faith, that the prelate did not hear and heed.

A PRESENT FROM JAPAN

Naturally, he won the deep love of all of those valiant souls in the far places who are struggling to teach the gospel to those who have had least opportunity to learn its truth and beauties. Among the friends he won is Bishop Berlioz of Hakodate, Japan. The Bishop was in New York some eight years ago on a visit and when he was leaving he placed in the hands of Monsignor Dunn a beautiful gold pectoral cross.

"I give you this," he said, "as an expression of the hope and faith I have that such splendid work as yours will bring its reward and that you will attain the episcopate. I do not know when that will be, but I want you to have this cross when it comes to you."

And now the hope of Bishop Berlioz has been realized. Bishop Dunn's Episcopal ring is another beautiful gift, which came from the seven priests associated with the Catholic Charities. It is of heavy chased gold, with an immense sapphire of at least ten carats, surrounded by small diamonds. This ring and Mr. Naumberg's cross were worn at the consecration.

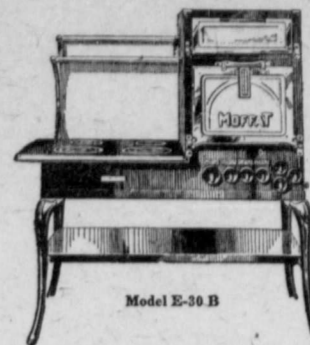
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