

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

MARRIAGE OF THE CHURCH

In our course of instructions on marriage, my dear friends, we have so far spoken chiefly of the care which should be taken in the selection of the person who is to be one's constant companion through life, and show that not only earthly happiness, but even the salvation of the soul, may depend on this choice being made wisely. We will now go on to consider the ceremony of marriage itself.

Some people, though they have always been Catholics and lived among Catholics, seem to be entirely ignorant of the laws and requirements of the Church on this subject. They appear to think that nothing has to be done but to call on the priest some fine evening, and that he will marry them as he sees fit, or if he makes any difficulty about it, why then a Protestant minister or his honor the mayor will do it for them.

Now there are several points which these people need instruction about, and several mistakes which they make in this very important affair. We shall have to consider them separately. And we will begin with the greatest mistake of all which can be fallen into by Catholics who wish to get married, and that is to go to a Protestant minister for the purpose.

What is, then, the harm exactly of going to a Protestant minister to get married? Is it that a Protestant minister is an immoral or vicious character, with whom we should have nothing to do? By no means. He is, indeed, more likely to be a blameless man, in religion than his people, for he has, from his greater knowledge in religious matters, a better chance to know the truth; but even a minister may be in good faith about his doctrine. And in other respects he may be a worthy and estimable gentleman.

But the reason why Catholics should avoid going to him for marriage is that marriage is one of the seven sacraments which our Lord has entrusted to men, and which He has made a part of His Church, and we cannot recognize the right of those who separate from her to administer them or to assist officially at them, though they may have the best intentions. Therefore, though marriage be real and valid when contracted before a Protestant minister, and though his own people, of course, are not to blame, if in good faith, for availing themselves of his services, we cannot do so, if indeed, this would be the case even if marriage were not a sacrament, but merely a religious rite or ceremony; we cannot allow the ministers of any sect separated from the Church to act as such for us in any religious function; to do so would be to allow their claim to act in the name of Christ. This we can never do, and above all, where the sacraments are concerned.

Another, and a very weighty reason, why Catholics cannot go before a minister for marriage, is that no one but the Catholic clergy can be supposed to be sufficiently acquainted with the laws of God and of the Church regarding Christian marriage. There are impediments, as they are called, which make marriage invalid unless a dispensation is obtained from the proper source. Some of these are commonly known, such as those which proceed from a near relationship of the parties; but there are others which are not known even by name to the great mass of the faithful and which a Protestant minister, even should he happen to know them, would never for a moment regard. Catholics, therefore, if they go to a minister to get married, run a great risk of not being really married at all, owing to these impediments not being detected or attended to. By the law of the State their marriage may be a good and real one, but in the sight of God it will not be so, if any such impediment should exist, and not have been removed by dispensation; and this holds, even though no suspicion of such an impediment should have arisen. You see, then, how important it is in this matter to consult those who are competent to advise them.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF KINGSTON

PRESENTATION TO HIS GRACE AT TRENTON

Trenton Advocate, Dec. 7, 1911.

On Sunday afternoon Nov. 27th ult., Most Rev. Archbishop-Elect Spratt, came up from Belleville and met the congregation of St. Peter-in-chains in the parish church when the following address, read by Mr. T. A. O'Rourke, was presented to him, accompanied by \$500 in gold His Grace made a suitable and eloquent reply. The following is the address:

The Most Rev. Michael J. Spratt D.D., Archbishop-Elect of Kingston. May it please Your Grace. It is not many years ago, since you came here, unheralded, and as a stranger, to become our priest. In a very short time we had all become so attached to each other that it was with sorrow in our hearts and tears in many an eye that we learned that we had to bid adieu to our dear pastor. Our memorable departure to Belleville had failed to accomplish its purpose Your Grace had, in holy obedience resigned this church, in which you had been ordained priest with the late Archbishop of Toronto, and surrendered to the Holy See, we know, you would have willingly passed the remainder of your life. Our farewells said, you left us as quietly as you had come. But not forever, as God had decreed that Your Grace should go away from us as our priest, and come back to us as our Archbishop.

Words cannot tell how happy we are to have Your Grace with us to-day as our loving and beloved Shepherd. From the bottom of our hearts, we greet you with a hundred thousand welcomes. Thrilled with joy, we salute you no more as our dear Father Spratt, but as your Grace, the Archbishop-Elect of the grand old Mother Diocese of Kingston, and be assure Your Grace of our loyalty

to your throne and person, as a Prince of the Church. Your Grace will pardon us for touching on such a delicate subject, when we state that we were not surprised when we heard that you had been chosen on High to wear the mitre and wield the crosier of the Holy See. Your Grace was searched, and the Book of Life was thrown open and scanned. Your Grace was weighed in the balance and found not wanting, and declared most worthy to fill the vacancy created by the translation to Ottawa of our never-to-be-forgotten Archbishop Gauthier, formerly our priest in Trenton.

What heavenly felicity must have filled your soul, when the glad tidings reached Your Grace from Christ's Vicar that you had been raised to the purple and named Archbishop of Kingston. Your saintly life was thus stamped with a seal of Divine approbation, as you have ever lived, and moved, and spoken, and acted, as if conscious of being always in the Divine Presence.

And your loving care of the sick and dying; your watchfulness over the young, both day and night; your charity towards all, irrespective of creed; your Christian humility and forgetfulness of self; your cheerful response to the call of duty, and your love for all mankind; have made your life to us, who have seen you so close range, a living sermon, more eloquent than could have been expressed in language, however grand and flowing.

We hope and pray that Your Grace may be long spared to this Diocese to teach us your holy example the nothingness of this transitory world, and the greatness of the next, and to impress upon us the necessity of following in the footsteps of Our Saviour to reach the latter world, for which we are daily marching, on our pilgrimage from the cradle to the grave. May Your Grace ever wield the crosier according to your expressed wish, so characteristic of your wild and gentle nature, as a magic wand to attract souls, rather than as an emblem of authority to command. And now, although we know that Your Grace cares nothing personally for the wealth of this world, as your heart is in the next, we cannot but hope, let us go from us without a golden offering. So, as a very slight token of our love, we present Your Grace with this purse of gold, the free will offering of your old parishioners, and of many of your adoring friends of different denominations in Trenton. We couple with it the wish that Your Grace may often make your home in our new palace, second to none in the diocese, and none too good for our new Archbishop. Our good, big hearted pastor, Father Connolly, will always be pleased to keep the latch string hanging outside, so that Your Grace may enter at any hour, as a proof of the standing welcome extended to Your Grace from the good old parish of Trenton.

The kindness of Your Grace in sending us, one and all, an invitation to your consecration on St. Andrew's day next in Kingston touched us very deeply, as it was only another proof of your affection for us. The invitation was highly appreciated and will be gratefully accepted by as many as possible. On that solemn occasion, we will join with St. Michael's of Belleville, and pray that all the necessary graces may be showered down on Your Grace to enable you to perform the duties of your high and holy office, in accordance with the Divine will. With a fervent God bless you and protect you, we humbly ask Your Grace's blessing and remembrance at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Vivat Pastor Bonus so say we all. Trenton Nov. 26th, 1911. Signed on behalf of the congregation. Owen Fortune, T. D. Kinsella, P. J. O'Rourke, P. J. Shannon J. A. Pelkey, Geo. Auger, James McDonald, T. A. O'Rourke.

CAN THIS CHILD BE GOD?

"Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us." (Luke II, 15).

Ring out, O Gladness Christmas bells! the joyful invitation of the shepherd, who uttered nineteen centuries ago; for Holy Mother Church presents the same wonderful scenes in her liturgy that excited the admiration of the humble, God-fearing men who were attending their flocks on the hillsides of Judea.

Hear the melodious chant of the angels in the "Gloria in Excelsis!" Behold the shepherds watching their flocks, and see them paying their visit to the Divine Child in the Christmas crib. There have been two spirits: the spirit of the world and the spirit of faith, who have stood beside that manger at every recurring Christmas, during the ages. The world has never tired of asking the question: Can this Child be God? And faith hath replied: "He was in the world and the world knew Him not. But as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name. Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we saw His glory, the glory as if were of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.) (John I, 10-14).

It is true that our mortal eyes discern only a helpless infant and two poor persons whose poverty has obliged them to take refuge in a stable, because "there was no room for them in the inn," and did not faith enlighten us we might be tempted to declare: "We are only the child of Joseph the carpenter." But out of that poverty shall come heavenly riches; out of that weakness omnipotence; out of that humility exaltation, glory and honor.

Look upon your Saviour in Bethlehem and on Calvary! The human side of the Messiah appears so prominently that it seems to hide His divinity. It is not, however, always thus. Follow His public career, and dare you conclude that He is merely man? He shall be poor, humble, suffer; His whole life shall be one of sublimest sacrifice, His Divinity, however, shall not always be veiled from human sight. It shall flash forth in the resurrection with an effulgence brighter than a thousand suns. The very power and force of evidence

shall cause men to acknowledge "that He was God, and that He had lightened every man that cometh into this world." —Bishop McFall in Pittsburgh Observer.

PRAYERS FOR THE DEPARTED SOUL

If a brother leaves you to cross the broad Atlantic, religion and affection prompt you to pray for him during his absence. And if the same brother crosses the narrow sea of death to pass to the shores of eternity, why not pray for him then also. When he crosses the Atlantic his soul, imprisoned in the flesh, is absent from you when he passes the sea of death, his soul, released from the body of the flesh, is present to you. What difference does this make with regard to the duty of your intercession? What is the difference between the living and the dead? The body, indeed, dies but the soul "lives and moves and has its being." It continues after death, as before, to think, to remember, to love.

If this brother, your dear friend, who some slight stain upon his soul, a sin of impatience for instance, or an idle word, a lie to enter heaven with those blessings upon his soul? No, the sanctity of God forbids it, "nothing defileth his name, rather than a living man." Will you consign him, for these minor transgressions, to eternal torments with adulterers and murderers? No; the justice and mercy of God forbid it.

I have seen a devoted minister minister to a sick patient at the bedside of a fond parent. Many an anxious and sleepless night did she watch at his bedside. She moistened the parched lips, and cooled the fevered forehead, and held the drooping head of his pillow. Every change in her patient for better or worse brought a corresponding sunshine or gloom to her heart. It was a lie that prompted all this. Her father died and she followed him to the grave. Though not a Catholic standing by the bed she burst those chains which a cruel religious prejudice had wrought around the heart, and, rising superior to her sect, she cried out, "God, have mercy on his soul." It was the voice of nature and of religion.

Oh, far from us a religion which would decree an eternal divorce between the living and the dead. How consoling is it to the Catholic to know that his prayers are not in violation of, but in accordance with, the voice of the Church, and that as, like Augustine, he watches at the pillow of a dying mother, or like Augustine, he can continue the same office of piety for her soul after she is dead by praying for her! How cheering the reflection that the golden link of prayer unites you still to those who "fall asleep in the Lord," and that you can still speak of them and pray for them.—Cardinal Gibbons.

"SOUL SAVING" AS AN INDUSTRY

Under this head a recent issue of the Bellman of Minneapolis makes the following timely and sensible comment on a phase of non-Catholic revivalism which deserves the exhortation it receives from the caustic pen of the editor.

"An example of this 'soul saving' industry is displayed itself when religion is degraded from its high and serious mission and made the basis for incongruous, impertinent and improper mercenary comparisons, the recent discussion in Boston over the 'cost of saving souls' is beyond question a humiliating and lamentable exhibition which cannot fail to disgust right-minded people who look upon the religion of the 'soul savers' as a subject of the pseudo-religious speculation of the expert.

"The Bellman has already stated that there were those professionally engaged in so-called revivals who tabulated their results according to the most up-to-date system of accounting, and offered as justification of their employment and the pay they received, returns based on so many 'souls saved' as to such per cent. The very thought of such a business travesty on the true evangelistic spirit is nauseating, and possibly many of those who read the statement considered it an exaggeration of the facts. The notorious Billy Sunday a sensational revivalist, became a professional baseball player, started the Boston controversy by claiming that it cost \$450 for each 'soul saved' in Boston. Three ministers in that city lowered themselves by taking exception to this method of estimating souls on the basis of dollars and cents, but, actually, to the figures given. One clergyman said the cost was only \$3.12 another estimated it at \$70 and a third at \$312.

"According to these estimators, 'saving souls' means inducing people to become more or less permanent and consistent members of a church. They affect to believe that the act of membership represents a 'soul saved,' and they arrive at their results by a simple process of dividing the cost of church maintenance by the number of members gained. Billy Sunday's estimate was, high, evidently, because, in proportion to what is known as the 'thank offering,' always taken up at the end of his revivals and sometimes as much as \$1,500, the number of so-called 'converts' was small, while the number of those who arrived persons whose poverty has obliged them to take refuge in a stable, because 'there was no room for them in the inn,' and did not faith enlighten us we might be tempted to declare: 'We are only the child of Joseph the carpenter.' But out of that poverty shall come heavenly riches; out of that weakness omnipotence; out of that humility exaltation, glory and honor.

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draged into the market and made the subject of lip-pat and irreverent speculation, to be tossed upon the scrap heap, were mere worthless, while the merchants who affect to deal in such things argue as to its monetary value and how much it costs to 'save' it.

"How dare such mountebanks take to themselves or the human organizations they represent the credit of that which is the sole prerogative of a Power beside which they are as nothing! How dare they have the effrontery to claim that they are the saviors of a soul? How dare they, as a soul and its Creator and 'saver' it, meanwhile amply giving the exact cost in paltry money of an accomplishment which requires the wisdom of the Infinite and the judgment of the All-seeing? 'All the money that was ever coined in all the world since time began is powerless to bring salvation to a single soul. The grace and mercy of the Almighty will save souls if they are to be saved; and the puny mortals who for a brief day play their poor part upon the earth, when they essay to traffic in such a commodity and boast the measure of their success by what it costs the world in dollops of money they are in the best of professions of what is due to their profession and what is due to the dignity of the thing of which they know nothing and of which nothing can be known this side of another life.'

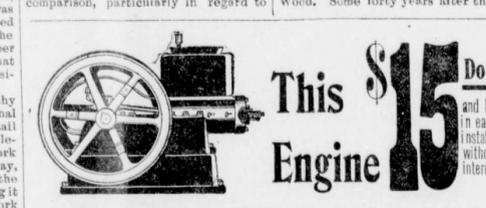
"As an example of such terms reflect no honor upon religion; they merely show to what extent cant, pretense and audacity will go when an attempt is made to reduce the immeasurable and unfathomable, the sacred and profound, to a basis which can be measured, weighed, estimated and determined by the card system of accounting. They also emphasize not only the folly but the danger of encouraging the sensational revivalist to substitute his get-rich-quick methods for the ministrations of those who approach their sacred duties reverently and with due regard for the dignity and importance of their mission."

BENIGHTED SOUTH AMERICA

It is current coin in the remote district to vote statements derogatory to religion in South America. The missionary who has been in the employ of the Extension Societies comes back from "benighted" Brazil and his stock in trade is "the priest-ridden people," "who never have access to the Bible," "where Bibles have been unconsciously dropped," "Christian churches have sprung up."

It is well to put alongside such statements as the following from John Barrett, now Director General of the Pan-American Union, and offer them as a basis for comparison. Barrett speaks through a reporter in an interview in the New York Times. He said: "I must now make a statement I am sorry to put forth, because it reflects upon the young men of this country; but in making it I am simply telling truth and doing justice to our neighbors."

"A contrast will explain just what I mean. Pick at random a hundred young men who have just been graduated from one of the great Latin-American universities, and then pick the same number at random from the graduates of any of the principal universities of the United States. Let them be examined competitively and tested by comparison, particularly in regard to



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MANY CANDIDATES

throughout Ontario are now busily engaged, striving to make their "calling and election sure." In the very nature of things, however, a large percentage of them are bound to fail in achieving the success and honor which is being sought.

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It was brought to the knowledge of Queen Victoria that four of these nuns were still living and had received no official recognition of the service they had rendered. They then received a command to attend at Buckingham Palace, where Her Majesty decorated them with the Order of the Red Cross.—London Morning Post.

There is nothing we can go into that will pay like doing right.

Only an ideal can be eternal, but every honest attempt to give it shape has a longer life than any living creature. Nature makes only to destroy, but art creates for the very sake of preserving the beautiful.

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