

**FIVE MINUTE SERMON**

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOUY, D. D.

**SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

**THE CONSISTENCY OF FAITH**

"One Lord, one faith, one baptism." (Eph. iv, 5.)

The inconsistencies of man can not be numbered. Sometimes we are inclined to think that our courage is deplorable, since our inconsistencies are so many. They would be less, no doubt, if our courage were always displayed. It is not always a lack of courage that often causes us to be so inconsistent; in many instances it must be attributed to our ignorance. We may not admit that we are ignorant, and usually we are slow to acknowledge our lack of courage; but this does not alter the fact. These two failings are what make us act so often as if we were bereft of reason.

We do not manifest our inconsistencies so openly regarding material things as we do with reference to things spiritual. The very material things before our gaze give us an experimental knowledge that we seldom, if ever, deny. It is not so with regard to spiritual things. These we cannot experience; we must believe them on the authority of another. But neither can we absolutely speaking, experience all material facts. There are thousands of these that we believe on authority. Who will question the incontestable facts written on the pages of history as having happened hundreds or thousands of years ago? Yet those who believe in the reliability of history never experienced the facts which it records. These things happened years before they were born. It is true that we, perhaps, see similar things happening around us; and by comparison we can judge those mentioned by history to have been possible. However, we do not, as a rule, stop to consider this, but we give our assent readily, almost blindly, to one whom we recognize as an authority.

For the sake of the comparison we wish to make, we intend to speak principally of experimental knowledge. And it is not so much of the knowledge itself that we wish to speak, but of our attitude in the face of it; of the way, in other words, in which we accept it.

We do not like to have violence done to us, as it is contrary to our nature. Now, this repugnance toward violence exists in our senses and our mind. We naturally recoil at it; our senses resent it almost automatically. In our everyday life we meet with it often. Sometimes we almost fail to recognize it until we experience it. However, this violence is not always the result of intent. What we consider violence is often done to us by irresponsible agents. Who does not know, for instance, of the violence of a stormy sea? Who has not heard of the force of a cloudburst, or of a thunderstorm? Do we not consider the earth violent also, when it trembles and lays cities waste?

The point we wish to clarify is this: We do not consider the sea evil, nor the skies, nor the earth, even though, now and then, they do work havoc among us. We would rather that they exist than that they should not. Why? Because the blessings they afford us are practically invaluable to our lives. What would we be without the fruits of the earth, without the canopy above us, without the mighty expanses of water between us and other continents? We are willing to suffer their occasional violence in order to enjoy their continual blessings.

Now let us turn to the Almighty: Unfortunately there are many who think that God does them violence—not physical violence, it is true, but intellectual violence. They say that God wishes to force them to believe truths that they can not understand, and that they can not experience. This they consider violence to their intelligence. Let us ask this class of people: Even if God did demand of you a sacrifice of your intelligence on some occasions, why should you complain? Are you blinded to the vast number of blessings He gives you? Can they, even for a moment, be compared in number with the few so-called acts of intellectual violence He inflicts upon you? Certainly God's favors to man are innumerable, and His blessings of inestimable worth. Man does not even know the number of times God is blessing him. He can not exist without God's help. Man will not regret his material blessings, though the sources of these often inflict violence upon him. Why, then, does he not act consistently, and consider God in this light?

But, as a matter of fact, does God really ask us to do violence to our intelligence in assenting to His truths? He certainly does not. If we think He does, we are culpably ignorant and full of pride. God is infinite in every respect. We are but finite. Can not truths, then, far above our grasp, exist? And can not God ask us, on His authority, to admit them? Nor does He demand of us that we do this without a recompense. That faith we need in admitting them, to which is conjoined good works, will win for us peace in the present world and eternal glory in the next.

How frequently we hear people say that man may believe as he pleases. If this be so, he can believe only what he experiences, thus limiting his faith to belief in natural

facts. Then, too, according to this theory, he need not believe anything that he himself has not really experienced, even though it actually happened. As St. Paul says, we must believe in "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," on our faith. If there is unity in God, unity in faith, and unity in baptism, how can man have multiplicity of belief regarding any or all of them? The truth remains always the truth, no matter what man says or believes. Fire burns. If a man, lunatic or not, denies that it burns, will his assertion deprive the fire of its power to burn? Will the modern or post-Reformation man change the nature of God, or of any of His attributes or commands, because he doesn't believe in them as the Church, commissioned by God, tells all to believe in them?

It may be tolerant to believe as you like and to allow your neighbor the same liberty, but is a virtue that is not religious. Nay, in one who possesses the true faith, it ceases to be a virtue in any respect. True, man must be tolerant and we exhort him to be tolerant; but with tolerance he must have hope for the conversion of the erring one. Indiscriminate tolerance must not be encouraged in an individual. It must be fought, but with only one weapon—charity. It is a spiritual work of mercy to instruct the ignorant, and today the tolerant are but the ignorant; many, perhaps most of them, invincibly ignorant.

**GENERAL INTENTION FOR OCTOBER**

RECOMMENDED AND BLESSED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE PIUS XI.

**THE JUBILEE OF 1925**

The origin of the word "Jubilee" is disputed. It is most probable that the Hebrew word "yobel" meant a ram, a ram's horn, and a trumpet made therefrom, and that a certain idea of rejoicing was connoted by the word from the fact that such a trumpet was used in proclaiming a celebration. Passing through the Greek, the Hebrew "yobel" became confused with the native Latin *jubulum*, meaning "a shout," and gave rise to the terms *jubilato* and *jubilacium* which found their way into most European languages.

Among the Israelites the Jubilee year was one of universal rejoicing and pardon. As every seventh day was sanctified unto the Lord, so too was every seventh year; but the year which followed the completion of seven times seven years was celebrated with special solemnity. "Thou shalt sanctify the fiftieth year, and shalt proclaim remission to all the inhabitants of thy land; for it is the year of jubilee" (Leviticus, xxv, 10.) It was prescribed that in such a year every household should see the return of its absent members, the dispossessed should recover their lands, the slaves should be set free, and all debts remitted.

It is this same idea applied to things spiritual which forms the basis of the Christian Jubilee, though it would be hard to say what, if any, degree of continuity may have existed between the two. The first Christian Jubilee of which we find any precise record was celebrated in the year 1300. It is related that about that time a large number of pilgrims made their way to Rome. Among them was an old man of a hundred and seven years who told Pope Boniface VIII. that at the close of the preceding century he had been brought to Rome by his father in order to visit the Basilica of St. Peter and thus gain a great indulgence. Two old men of the diocese of Beauvais and some Italians confirmed this tradition. Despite the absence of written documents, after an unavailing search in the Roman archives, the Pope took counsel of his Cardinals and issued a Bull declaring that during the year 1300 and the years that would mark the close of each succeeding century, a plenary indulgence would be granted to all those who for thirty days would visit the Basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul.

Boniface VIII. had intended that the Jubilee should be celebrated only at the close of each hundred years; but some time before the middle of the fourteenth century St. Bridget of Sweden and others besought Pope Clement VI., then residing at Avignon, to shorten the interval between Jubilees on the ground that the average span of human life was so short that many of the faithful never had a hope or a chance of seeing a Jubilee. Clement VI. acceded to this request, and though he did not return to Rome himself, he sent Cardinal Gaetani Ceccano thither to represent him at the Jubilee accorded in 1350. In this year, besides the visits to the Basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul, visits to the church of St. John Lateran were prescribed, and in the following Jubilee year visits to St. Mary Major were added to the obligations. To visit these four churches has ever since remained one of the primary conditions for gaining the Roman Jubilee.

The next Jubilee was held in 1390, and it was proposed by Urban VI. that a Jubilee should be held every thirty-three years as representing the period of the Saviour's sojourn on earth and the average span of human life. Accordingly another Jubilee was proclaimed in 1423 by Martin V. Nicholas V. in 1450 reverted to the period of fifty years,

but Paul II. decreed that the Jubilee should be celebrated every twenty-five years, and this has been the custom ever since the Jubilee of 1475, with the exception of 1800, 1860, 1875, when the Jubilee was omitted on account of political disturbances.

It is not possible for everyone to go to Rome, and so the Sovereign Pontiffs, urged by the charity of Christ our Lord, have been wont to modify the conditions for gaining the indulgences of the Jubilee so as to enable all the faithful in various parts of the world to profit by the Apostolic favors accorded during the holy year. These modifications and the conditions required for gaining the indulgences of the Jubilee of 1925 will be announced in all the parishes in due time, and will include confession and Communion, prayers for the intentions of the Holy Father, and visits to a church, or other pious works.

The Jubilee year usually begins with the first vespers of Christmas Day. Its inauguration is symbolized by the opening of the "holy door" of St. Peter's basilica, a door that remains walled up during the intervals of Jubilees. This door the Pope himself opens, while the walled-up doors of the three other great Roman basilicas are opened by Cardinals. The origin of this ceremony is not clear; but its great moral significance is evident. The legitimate successor of Peter to whom Christ entrusted the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, the power to loose and to bind upon earth, opens more widely in the year of Jubilee the gates of Heaven by granting special powers to confessors for the remission of the guilt of sin and special indulgences to the faithful complying with the Jubilee conditions for the remission of the temporal punishment due to sin.

This opening ceremony, then, indicates to us the object of Holy Mother Church in declaring the Jubilee year: the conversion of sinners and an increase of fervor among the faithful. It is, moreover, the ardent hope of Pope Pius XI. that the coming Jubilee will bring all the faithful into closer union with the Apostolic See as the bond which should unite all peoples, and that all the children of the Church will earnestly pray our Lord Jesus Christ, when He comes into their hearts in Holy Communion, for three things: especially that He drive away all causes of discord and trouble and grant a lasting peace among nations; that by the pouring out of His heavenly graces He call back to His Church those of his children who have been torn from her bosom; that He suffer not the Holy Land which He sanctified by His labors and consecrated by His blood to be violated and desecrated and to fall into the hands of the enemies of His Cross.

The Jubilee should also arouse our respect and love for pious pilgrimages, or journeys that have as their prime object a spiritual aim: to do honor to God either directly, or indirectly through His saints. It should above all bring Christians back to the custom of visiting their churches frequently and voluntarily, interests with the Divine Prisoner of the Tabernacle, who is so ill-repaid for all His great love by the coldness and forgetfulness of men. It will be an excellent occasion for men to arouse themselves from their lukewarmness, to shake off human respect, and to give God that place in their daily lives to which He has an absolute right. These collective manifestations of religious belief and practice on the part of our Catholic men and women are a great source of edification both within and without the fold of the Church: within they stimulate the lagging; without, they force even the most blinded by prejudice and prejudice to acknowledge the undiminished vitality of that one true Church, old yet ever young, the Church of Christ entrusted to Peter and his successors.

It is for us then to respond generously to the loving intentions of Holy Mother Church in putting such a season of grace and spiritual profit within our reach. All who have at heart the extension of the Kingdom of Christ among men should be zealous apostles in bringing as many souls as possible to make the Jubilee; for at the same time that the Church does so much to facilitate the return of sinners to the way of true life, God will speak to the hearts of His wayward children and inspire them with a salutary remorse for their sins. It may need but the encouraging word of some good friend to win back such souls to the love of their Creator and Master.

But it would be a gross mistake to limit the efficacy of the Jubilee to a good confession made by number of sinners. Those who strive habitually to keep in the state of grace and to give the best of their service to God are also invited and exhorted to gain the Jubilee indulgences, and it would be wrong and foolish for them to pass over this precious means of sanctification on the pretext that the Church does not oblige them to accept the favor.

Some would be likely to make the following objection. In the time of Boniface VIII. a plenary indulgence was an altogether exceptional favor, and in order to gain it no condition was considered too hard or too irksome; but today through the generosity of Holy Mother Church we are enabled at all times to gain big indulgences and, frequently, plenary indulgences; so why bother with the prescriptions

of the Jubilee to gain what at other times we may win with less trouble? The first answer to this is that the granting of an indulgence by the Church does not mean necessarily that it is gained. If it is necessary, as we know, in order to gain a plenary indulgence to have a perfect disposition of soul, to have put aside all voluntary attachment to the least venial sin, we may well ask ourselves how many persons ever gain completely a plenary indulgence, for how many they are in reality plenary. Among the faithful who, for example, after a Communion more or less fervent, recite by routine the prayer, "O good and most sweet Jesus," is it the greater number or even a great number who gain completely the plenary indulgence which the Church has attached to this practice? God alone can answer this question. But one thing is sure. The soul that will have completely the conditions of the Jubilee by putting forth efforts of good will and corresponding to the special graces offered by God through His Church, will have notably improved its dispositions and will have a reasonable hope of having gained a plenary indulgence at least once during its sojourn on earth.

There is another consideration more important still. The essence of Christian life does not consist, as some pious but unenlightened souls seem to imagine, in gathering in the greatest possible harvest of indulgences and in multiplying indefinitely diverse practices of devotion. Worthy as indulgences are of our esteem, merit is far more worthy. An indulgence wipes out wholly or in part the debt that remains after guilt of our sin has been washed away by the sacrament of Penance. But merit enriches us in a positive way: it develops the divine life of grace within us, embellishes our souls with heavenly splendor, makes them more agreeable in the eyes of God, and gives us a sure title to a reward beyond measure in the life to come. If we may help the souls in Purgatory by offering certain indulgences gained and applicable to them, we must not forget that by sanctifying our lives by seeking first the Kingdom of God and His justice, we spread abroad the good odor of Jesus Christ and win souls for Heaven by the brightness and force of our example. Indulgences properly understood should encourage us in the practice of virtue and the love of God, and not reduce all our preoccupations to that selfish arithmetical calculation in the service of God which smacks of the formalism of the Pharisees. Let us never forget that the perfection of Christian life consists above all in the love of God and the love of our neighbor for God's sake. To assure more and more in our own individual lives the reign of charity in our souls, and so to cultivate the virtues which prepare the way for this Christian ideal or accompany it, is the noble object set before us in the approaching year of Jubilee.

The best preparation for the Jubilee confession and Communion is without doubt a more frequent and more devout reception of these sacraments from now on. Nothing will more quickly and more efficaciously renew in us the spirit of Christ and bring us more surely to the perfection of that charity of which the Divine Master said: "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another." (John, xviii, 35.)

**AN OLD REMEDY**

GUARANTEED CURE FOR DOMESTIC DISCORD PRESCRIBED FOR WIVES

One of our Catholic contemporaries recently printed a story of a woman who found an efficacious remedy for an old affliction. It is an old remedy, but its application occurs every day.

A woman had gone to the priest and complained bitterly of her husband.

"Father, I cannot live with that man any longer. He is an impossible character. He has the bitterest tongue in the world and says the nastiest and sharpest things to me. I cannot put up with him any more."

The priest was experienced and knew well the weakness of human nature. He turned quietly to the indignant woman.

"Will you use the remedy which I prescribe to cure your husband?"

"He is beyond any remedy, I fear, Father."

"But if I promise you that the remedy will be successful, will you use it?"

"Certainly. I will try anything to cure him."

"Then, try this: keep a bottle of holy water on the sideboard and when your husband says something sharp or nasty, take a mouthful of holy water and hold it in your mouth for five minutes."

"What has that got to do with my husband?"

"Do as I say and let me know, in two weeks, what the effect is."

Two weeks later, a smiling woman entered the rectory.

"Father," she said, "my husband is a changed man. We haven't had a quarrel since I saw you."

It takes two to make a quarrel and quarrels come because each is unwilling to remain silent. When a husband or wife is irritable, if one will remain silent, God's peace will soon be found in that home. Remember the holy water.—The Echo.

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