

## FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Third Sunday after Epiphany.  
THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY.

I think you are all persuaded, my brethren, of the wrong and the danger of Catholics going to a Protestant minister for marriage; and similar ones can be given why we should not go before a magistrate for that purpose. It is plain that the authorities of the State are not the right persons to assist officially at the sacraments of the church. It would be just as proper to ask the mayor to baptize your children as to go to him for marriage. To refer the matter of your marriage to him, however fine a man he may be personally, would be to acknowledge the right of the civil authority to take charge of religious affairs; and such a right Catholics cannot admit.

Besides, the magistrate labors under the same difficulty as a Protestant minister in conducting a Catholic marriage, of not knowing the laws of the Church on the subject, and the impediments which may make the marriage invalid; that is, which may make it, though seemingly good, in reality no marriage at all. You know, for instance—to speak of this a little more fully—that the catechism says that you should not marry within certain degrees of kindred; very well, it is not only forbidden to marry within these degrees, but a marriage within these degrees is not recognized by the laws of the church as a real and true marriage, and the parties have to be married over again at least privately, if it is ever found out. And there are some other impediments which have the same effect. It is of no use to publish all these and try to explain them; many mistakes would be made, and matters would only become worse. No, to be safe in all affairs of this kind you must go to those who have made a special study of it; just as you find the law of the state from your lawyer, and not from a book. Go, then, to the priest; he is the one who has made a special study of the law of the church, and the only one.

In order to make sure that Catholic marriage shall be contracted before the priest, a law has been made that binds in some countries, and in some parts even in this country, making it invalid, or null and void, if contracted without the presence of the parish priest or at least one of the parties. This does not, however, hold just here. But there is a very special and urgent law in this diocese, and in many others, forbidding the going to a Protestant minister for marriage, and reserving the absolution for this to the Bishop, or some one authorized by him. Catholics, therefore, who are guilty of such a rash act get themselves into a very unpleasant position; still, they must, of course, try to get out of it sooner or later, and if any one finds himself in this predicament, the only sensible thing to do is to come at once to the priest, who will help him as far as possible. All sins can be forgiven, and all mistakes rectified, if one has the right dispositions.

One word more on this most important subject. Some people seem to imagine that the difficulty which may come, especially in a mixed marriage, of avoiding the Protestant minister, may be got over by going both to him and to the priest, and going through the form of marriage twice. Now, let it be understood that this course cannot be thought of for a moment; for by it not only is the law broken which I have just mentioned, but a profanation of the sacrament also is committed by endeavoring to make the contract to which it is attached twice in the same case. It is as if one tried to be confirmed twice. No, in this matter there can be no compromise; a marriage in which a Catholic is a party must be put in charge of the Catholic clergy, and of no one else, except as far as mere settlements of money and the like are concerned.

Go, then, to the priest for marriage; do not think of doing anything else. But do not go to him, as I have said, some people do, for the first time just at the moment you want the ceremony performed, and expect him to marry you off-hand; for there are some very important preliminaries to be settled first, and it may take some time to settle them.

## A PROTESTANT GIRL IN A ROMAN CONVENT.

A YOUNG AMERICAN DESCRIBES HER EXPERIENCES AT FAMOUS "TRINITA DEL MONTI."

The managers of the Home for the Friendless, a Protestant institution of this city, says the Buffalo Catholic Union and Times, publish an entertaining little monthly journal, *Our Record*, which tells of the work of the home. In the current number we find "A Protestant Girl's Experience in a Catholic Convent in Rome." It is a simple tale and truthful. Happy months were those spent with the nuns in Rome. They would have been just as enjoyable had they been spent in any convent in the world. These institutions are all the same. Behind their walls is perfect peace. The writer is Dorothy Seabury Copeland. Her story follows:

A shrill whistle announces that the omnibus is waiting. Quick, quick! We put on our things and run out. It would not do to be slow because it only waits three minutes, then gives another whistle and starts. A nice, quiet old lady in black opens the door from the inside for us. There are a dozen or so other girls. They look up from their books, give us a friendly nod, then resume their reading. Most of them are reading their French grammars which they find difficult, for they are mostly Italians. My friend and I, though, generally look out of the windows. We have only been in Rome three weeks and are still enraptured as to its beauties. Besides, this ride from the Hotel Quirinal to the "Trinita del Monti" is especially beautiful. It is early in the morning and the sky is dazzling in its blueness.

Finally, we come to the open place in front of the old convent. To our left are the graceful Spanish steps, covered with beautiful flowers and with pretty models, in bright colors, awaiting their

fate. At our right stands the great "Trinita del Monti," the pretty chapel with its two high towers, and next to it the old pink convent which would look rather fierce if it were not for the pretty climbing roses which creep over it so timidly.

We mount the old staircase to the left of the chapel. Perhaps we are all thinking of the people who have mounted them before our generation. Some of them were very mighty and yet so small in front of this great monument erected to God. Some of these people have even been kings. A nun opens carefully and slowly the great door to let us in. We find ourselves in a small vestibule; but presently she leads us into a great cloister, the walls of which are covered with frescoes—most of them masterpieces. Then we pass the chapel door. We all make a courtesy and cross ourselves. Then we go up a long narrow winding staircase at the top of which another nun meets us. She brings us into a small room where we take our hats and coats off. There are no looking-glasses, in front of which we may fix our disheveled hair. Looking-glasses are not permitted in a convent. Nuns may not know what they look like, for some of them might realize the beauty of their pure faces! The same nun leads us to the general schoolroom where we all find our own teacher, who takes us in the room where she teaches. All these rooms have once been cells and still keep their bareness, but we see the beautiful garden from the window—a garden thick with trees and little mysterious nooks.

We are never more than fifteen minutes with one teacher. Of course, all the teachers are nuns; and how patient and quiet they are! They never raise their voices nor get angry. I found after a while that my Italian teacher was a princess—a member of one of the great Roman families. We called her "Madre Doria."

After each lesson we have a recreation of about ten minutes. We go out in the garden and play childish games; ball, puss in the corner, skip the rope, and all sorts of things. A nun stands by us, and when there is any discussion it is to her that we go.

At luncheon all the externes and the internes sit together. It is the only time when we are allowed to mix, but speaking is not permitted during meals. There are three long tables in the room. At the middle one, all the younger girls sit, and it is very amusing to watch all these pretty little children of five and six sitting there so demure and quiet. During luncheon Madre de Neuville walks up and down between the tables reading the letters sent to the internes. When a girl wishes something, she stands up and Madre de Neuville comes to her to satisfy her wish.

At table every sixth girl serves the other five. The dishes and the plates are placed in front of her. If you wish anything she is to be asked. But of course, every week it is somebody else, so that every serious girl has the right to be a mother every row and then. During luncheon one girl sits up on a high pulpit and reads the Bible aloud in French. After and before meals Madre de Neuville says grace.

What I like the most is Sunday. Sunday we only come at 10 o'clock. We go right into the vestry and put on long white veils which cover our faces; we look like brides. I forgot to say that we always wear uniforms. Oh, but very nice ones! Dark blue serge trimmed with velvet of the same color. When our veils are ordered, we go through a private passage to the chapel. But we don't mix with everybody; we are behind the great grill which divides the church in two. It is a very pretty church. All the way up the aisle there are tiny little chapels on each side; these are just big enough to hold a toy altar, a beautiful fresco and two or three kneeling nuns. There are generally several priests to attend Mass. Sometimes they are even higher than priests. Sunday afternoon the nuns sing behind the division. And many are the people who come to hear this glorious chant. For they have heavenly voices!

We found the "Trinita del Monti" delightful, if that adjective may be attributed to such a sacred place. We being Protestants had great trouble in entering the convent. We got in through the courtesy of a friend who knew Merry del Val.

To my astonishment the Sisters never tried to convert us or never spoke of our religion, which I found very noble in them. It is so easy to convert a child!

The nuns were very kind to us and they all treated us as if we were their equals. I have often regretted that we only stayed there for two months; but I am pleased that I had a glimpse of a life so secluded to the world and yet so sweet and simple. And I can truthfully say that I never saw an unhappy look on anybody's face while I was there.

One of the nuns told me the secret—how always to have a smile on one's lips—to forget yourself and only think of others.

## JOAN OF ARC.

That was a phrase of masterly eloquence, considering all the circumstances, used by Mgr. Touchet, recently, when he spoke of this Vatican which is the highest place in the world. They were in the Hall of the Consistory; the Pope was on his throne surrounded by many of his Cardinals: Crotoni, Prefect of the Rites, Merry del Val, Vivesco, Tuto, Ferrata, Leont, and with them the high officers of the Congregation of Rites, the Postulators of many causes of Beatification, a great many Bishops from various parts of the Catholic world. And the Pope, X, made a sign to Archbishop Pannelli to approach and read four solemn decrees concerning the sanctity of a little band of Christian heroes. What the decrees meant was that those present in this highest part of the world became privileged as it were to look into the heights of heaven and to recognize, more or less clearly, among its inhabitants the Venerable Joan of Arc, and, more distinctly, the Venerable Francis de Capillas, the Spanish Dominican who is to be known as the proto-

martyr of China, with Stephen Theodore Guenet, Bishop of Metropolis, Peter Neel, Peter Francis Neron, Theophanous Venard and twenty-nine companions who died for the faith in Cochinchina, Tokin and China, and the Venerable John Eudes, Missionary Apostolic and Founder of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary (Eudists) and of the Order of Our Lady of Charity. For all, except the Venerable Joan, the Decree meant the happy conclusion of the process for their beatification, and the declaration that there is now no reason why the Church should not solemnly proclaim that they are worthy of the honors of the Altars. For her the Decree meant that God has given us the evidence of miracles to prove her heroic sanctity and that there is every reason to believe that within a few months the faithful may publicly invoke her as among the Blessed.

When that happens Joan will be the most epic of all the saints, worthy of the songs of some Christian Homer of the future, who shall tell how half a thousand years ago, at the end of a century of warfare which left France, bleeding and exhausted, at the feet of England, appeared the peasant Maid from obscure Domremy with the incredible declaration that heaven had sent her to save France and crown the young King Charles VII. at Rheims and to free her country. In the annals of war no achievement is more remarkable than that which was accomplished by an unhappy Bishop of the true Church for which she was ready to give her life, and to be burnt with ignominy as a witch by the English at Rouen in her twentieth year on May 30, 1531. What a marvelous story! A simple, illiterate country girl; a general of superhuman skill and power; a heroine whose name was blessed by millions: a spotless virgin amid the lusts and brutalities of war; a tender woman who never shed a drop of blood, a heretic, a witch, abandoned by the King and the people she had saved, burnt amid execrations in the public market-place, and now after nearly five hundred years about to be numbered among the Blessed to the exultation of the whole Catholic world!

"I do not know A from B," Joan had said, when she first appeared before the royal court, "but I come on the part of God to liberate Orleans and crown the Dolphin at Rheims. But first I must give notice to the English: God wills it. You have paper and ink—write as I shall dictate. You, therefore, Suffolk, Gloucester, La Poudre, I warn in the name of the King and of heaven, to return to England." After the coronation she wished to return to her quiet fields and attend her flock. "Gentle King," she pleaded to Charles VII. after he had been anointed, "now is executed God's pleasure that you should come to Rheims to receive your sacred Sign, showing that you are a true King and he to whom the realm belongs. I have accomplished what my Lord commanded me, which was to raise the siege of Orleans and to have the gentle King crowned—now I would that he had me taken back to my father and mother to tend the sheep and cattle and do as I would wish."

But the Church had not waited all his time to reverse the judgment of Bishop Cauchon and the English. Twenty-four years after that tragedy in Rouen Pope Calixtus III. declared that the Maid was "a martyr of religion, of her King, of her country," and the scene recently in the Vatican, "the highest place in the world," was the solemn confirmation of the Pontiff's words. The cause of her beatification was begun in 1876 when Mgr. Dupanloup, Bishop of Orleans, began the process in his diocese; it was continued by his successor, Mgr. Coullié, now Cardinal Archbishop of Lyons, who completed the diocesan examination, and had Father Capillet, the present General of the Sulpicians, appointed as Postulator of the Cause. The English Cardinal Howard gladly assumed the office of Pontiff of the Cause. On January 27 it was formally admitted to the Congregation of Rites and from that moment Joan became "the Venerable Servant of God." Four years later, on June 28, 1898, the Tribunal of the Sacred Rota pronounced a favorable sentence on the question of the non cultus.

The second stage of the process was practically terminated in 1903 when Leo XIII. a few months before his death, assembled in the Vatican a meeting of the Congregation of Rites to decide concerning the heroic virtue of the Venerable Joan. On January 6, 1904, Pius X. presided over a solemn assembly of the Congregation of Rites for the first time since his election and the occasion was the reading of the Decree pronouncing that the Maid of Orleans had practised virtue in the heroic degree. The cause of her beatification, the three miracles alleged to have been wrought through her intercession. On November 24 the miracles were approved and recently this approval was solemnly announced in the presence and by the authority of the Holy Father. Shortly another decree known as the *Tuto* will be issued, proclaiming that there is no further obstacle to the beatification of the Venerable Servant of God, and it may be taken as practically certain that the crowning function will take place next April in St. Peter's.

A few days before this inspiring scene in the Vatican a remarkable incident took place in France. At the usual

11 o'clock Mass in the cathedral of Laon, Mgr. Pecheux preached before a modest congress of young men on the subject: "Truth begets liberty, and error begets servitude." Among the large congregation present in addition to the young men were fire officers of the French army. A few days later without the semblance of a trial the five officers were degraded—a colonel was deprived of his command, the others were reduced in rank. They had been denounced to the government by spies sent to the cathedral to watch them! A local newspaper which nobody will accuse of clericalism, the *Republicain de la Terre*, expresses the general indignation thus: "Such an attack upon officers on the cowardly denunciation of policemen in the service of freemasonry means the direct encouragement of espionage." It will be remembered that Combes was obliged to retire from power a few years ago on account of the indignation caused by the revelation of the wholesale system of espionage devised by the freemasons against officers who attended Mass or sent their children to Catholic schools. To-day the freemasons of France laugh in their sleeves at the futile and passing indignation of honest men.—Rome.

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## A TEMPERANCE SERMON.

Out in Jackson prison, the State penal institution of Michigan, Timothy Linehan, a lifer, ended his earthly career recently by hanging himself with torn strips of a sheet. The unfortunate man had been declared insane a few days previous and was to be committed to the insane asylum at Ionia. Linehan murdered his wife in cold blood in Detroit, Oct. 8. At the time, some who knew him thought his mind was diseased, as undoubtedly it was. He was reared in Detroit, for years was a good workman, was intelligent and made friends. Then boon companions and drink absorbed his attention, and home was neglected, work left undone while he enjoyed the liquor which makes demons of God's best.

His wife was a hard-working good woman, who tried everything to make him do justice to himself. She failed, and time and time again left him and returned, only to meet abuse. Both were Catholics; both reared in good Irish-Catholic homes, and both met the unhappy and most unprovided for deaths. Drink was the cause of it all. Liquor, with all its horrors, blighted their lives, wrecked their home and sent them into eternity without warning. When misfortune came to Timothy Linehan his boon companions deserted him and only his broken hearted wife came to his aid. Drink had mastered the man and he broke his promises to reform and began again. The revolver in the hands of the drunk—maddened man ended the life of the crushed wife, the rope cut off the earthly career of the crazed murderer. Surely a strong temperance sermon.—Michigan Catholic.

## CATHOLICISM AND SOCIALISM.

To a letter from a "Catholic Socialist Society" soliciting his approval and support, the Catholic Bishop of Salford (England) replies through his Secretary that whilst there may be, and are, many social and economic reforms which can be advocated both by the Catholic Church and by the system known as Socialism, the latter itself, as a system, is not consistent with Catholicism. It is, therefore, the Secretary writes, as inconsistent to speak of a "Catholic Socialist Society" as it would be to speak of a "Catholic Wesleyan Society." There are many doctrines and many social reforms which are held and advocated both by Wesleyanism and Catholicism, but the two religious systems, as such, are clearly incompatible; and it is self-evident that no Catholic could be a Wesleyan and a Catholic at the same time. The same holds good of Socialism. Under these circumstances the Bishop not only finds himself unable to extend any encouragement to your society, but feels bound in conscience to express his entire disapproval of any Catholic joining the ranks of any society which professes itself Socialist, or in any way allied with the system known as Socialism.

It seems strange that well-informed Catholics should have expected from a Catholic Bishop any other judgment on a "Catholic Socialist Society."—New York Freeman's Journal.

## KNOCKING AWAY THE PROPS

"See, father," said a boy who was walking with his father, "they are knocking away the props from under that bridge. What are they doing that for? Won't the bridge fall?" "They are knocking them away," said the father, "that the timbers may rest more firmly upon the stone piers which are now finished. God often takes away our earthly props that we may rest more firmly upon Him. He sometimes



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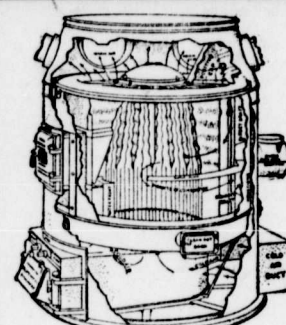
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takes away a man's health that he may rest upon Him for his daily bread. Before his health failed though, he perhaps repeated daily the words, "Give us this day our daily bread," he looked to his own industry for that which he asked of God. That prop being taken away, he rested wholly upon God's bounty. When he receives his bread he receives it as a gift of God.

God takes away our friends that we may look to Him for sympathy. When our affections were exercised upon objects around us, when we rejoiced in their abundant sympathy, we did not feel the need of divine sympathy, we felt our need of God's sympathy and support. We were brought to realize that He alone can give support, and form an adequate portion for the soul. Thus are our earthly props removed, that we may rest firmly and wholly upon God.—Calendar.

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