

## FIVE MINUTE SERMON

THE REV. F. P. HICKY, O. S. B.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER  
PENTECOST

## HOW TO PRAY

"O God, be merciful to me a sinner. (Luke xviii, 13.)

How many of us at times have wondered why our Blessed Lord spoke only of two kinds of prayer, the Pharisee's and the Publican's. Where do we come in—we ordinary, everyday kind of Catholics? Surely we are scarcely as proud and presumptuous as the Pharisee, whose very prayer was turned into sin and offended God; and, on the other hand, perhaps in our own hearts, we almost resent being classed with the Publican. And yet our Lord, divine truth and wisdom, made no reference to such as we think we are—not so bad as either.

Let us not be too complacent. Our Lord describes a man who was well instructed, outwardly irreproachable, a model man as he thought himself, and yet he knew not how to pray. He mistook vainglory, boastfulness, attitudinizing, as prayer; he despised his neighbor, he praised himself instead of the Almighty. Whereas the other, humble in the consciousness of his sinfulness and frailty, besought the mercy of God. Short was his prayer, but it was from the heart. He found mercy and was justified. It was mercy that he needed; mercy that he longed for and prayed for; and mercy that was granted him.

The Pharisee knew not how to pray, because he did not realize his need of God's mercy, but trusted in his own self-righteousness. The Publican knew his need of God's mercy, prayed for it and obtained it. According, then, to our realizing our need of mercy, our prayer will be acceptable and blessed. If we resent in our hearts being classed with sinners, needy and weak and prone to evil, we are not in the state of humility, which longs for and receives the mercy of our Father from heaven. Without prayer we cannot be saved, and there can be no genuine prayer unless we realize our need of grace and mercy. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity (1 John i, 8, 9). Thee" (Ps. cxxv, 1). And God's mercy is not only to forgive, but to keep us safe and strengthen us to be faithful. In answer to prayer there is God's constant watchfulness and the care of a loving Father. Prayer makes us mindful of God's mercy and anxious to correspond to His graces, and be faithful in observance. It makes us grateful for our Father's love and solicitude. And gratitude merits a continuation of God's favors. The kindness of God is revealed to us in prayer. How does the Scripture describe the goodness of God? "Thou, O Lord, art a God of compassion, and merciful: patient, and of much mercy" (Ps. lxxxv, 15). "The Lord is gracious, merciful, patient, and plenteous in mercy. The Lord is sweet to all; and His tender mercies are above all His works" (Ps. cxlv, 9).

It is prayer that creates this peace and trustfulness in God; that made the austerities of the saints a foretaste of the joys of heaven. They were wisely humble enough to know that they could not do without the mercy of God, and yet truthful that they could obtain it and ever pray if they prayed for it. How different our prayers would be if we realized our need of the mercy of God, and how prayer would always obtain it for us, if we humbly sought it. The saints did, and constant was their earnest, humble prayer. Who are we to dare to be self-sufficient, and imagine we need not pray for forgiveness of the past? Pray to make a good beginning once again; pray to persevere, for without it we cannot hope to persevere, a day or an hour, in doing good.

Let us recall a prayer of St. Gertrude. It reads as if a poor sinner, like the Publican, had composed it; and not a great saint, who was favored with the gift of miracles, had frequent visions of our Blessed Lord, and who was the first to introduce devotion to the Sacred Heart. This is the prayer: "O sweet mercy of God, full of tenderness and clemency, behold, in the sorrow and pressing need of my heart, I seek safety in Thy loving Will, for Thou art my whole hope and trust. Thou hast never despised one sad and sorrowful. Thou hast never rejected the vilest sinner. Thou hast never abandoned one seeking help. Thou hast never passed by one in grievous trouble without a look of mercy. The needy and poor Thou dost

always assist, as a mother her child. To all invoking Thy most holy name Thy loving assistance is given. And even unworthy me, Thou wilt not cast from Thee on account of my sins and my unworthy life" (Exer. c. vii). Let us implore our Lord to grant us the spirit of such prayer as this. We shall not then be ashamed to use the prayer of the Gospel, "O God, be merciful to me a sinner." Frequently and from our heart let us say it, and we shall be justified in the sight of God.

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## THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

Look at the Precious Blood for a moment as it lies within the Sacred Heart with a living peace, like the restless tranquillity of the ocean. It is itself the ocean of joy from which all other joys in creation come. It is through it that the immensity of God's gladness pours itself into all the universe, and at the same time lets itself also be mysteriously gladdened by the Precious Blood. All the joys, and they are numberless, which are still left in the fallen world, whether they be natural or supernatural, are in substance indulgences. Indulgences which are granted because of the Precious Blood. Sinners upon earth still have joys; they come from the Precious Blood. Saints on earth are the gladdest of God's creatures. Their lives are all flight and song, like the hot-blooded lives of the birds of the air. All this gladness is from the Precious Blood. The saints in heaven are spirits overflowed with joy, spirits whose quiet is transport and whose soberness is ecstasy. It is the Precious Blood which flows over them for ever. The wide, outspread vastness of angelic jubilee, the thing likest to immensity of all created things, created to mirror the immensity of God, is all an emanation from the Precious Blood. Nay, it is a changeful, changeless sea, with tides; for there are daily, hourly increases of new joys in the angels from the conversion of sinners; and these conversions are precisely the operations of the Precious Blood. Yet that ocean of jubilee washes but the base of Mary's throne. Her joy is like the fringe of the blessedness of God. It is all the multitudinous joys of creatures made one joy by her Divine Maternity, and multiplied, as well as intensified, by being one. Yet the bliss of Mary is all from the Precious Blood, the nearest gladness to the gladness of the Sacred Humanity, the first heart filled from the Sacred Heart. But who shall tell the nameless, immeasurable joys with which the Precious Blood fills the Sacred Heart itself? It cannot contain its own jubilee. It multiplies itself in order to relieve its exultation.

The Word delights eternally in His Human Blood. Its golden glow beautifies the fires of the Holy Ghost. Its ministries beget inexplicable joys in the Unbegotten Father.—Father Faber.

## PRESBYTERIAN REBELS

Like other Protestant communions, the Presbyterian Church is suffering from the presence in its ministry of gentlemen whose hold upon Christianity seems largely nominal. These clergymen apparently consider themselves free, independently of their pledges, and incidentally of common sense, to proclaim the last half-formed conclusions upon which they have stumbled, as the ultimate truth in Revelation. Some weeks ago, the Presbyterian General Assembly attempted to put a check to this disorder, but its action did not win the favor of several New York clergymen, one of whom thus expressed himself in his regular sermon to his congregation: "The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church voted that it was essential and necessary for a Presbyterian minister to believe in the inerrancy of Scripture, in the virgin birth of Jesus, in a particular theory of the death of Christ upon the Cross, in the physical resurrection of the Lord, and in the veracity and genuineness of the miracles attributed to Jesus. In all frankness, I do not believe one of these points." (New York Tribune, May 28.)

However distressing this defiance may be to the old-line Presbyterians, it is really difficult to understand how the Assembly can proceed against this rebel, except, possibly, on grounds that are purely disciplinary. Taking his stand on a well-known Protestant principle, this clergyman can argue that there is no inerrancy in the Assembly which is not also promised

to any prayerful soul, and he can vigorously protest against any ascension which claims the right to dictate to him what he must believe and what he must preach.

On the very day on which this rebel-clergyman issued his defiance, Catholic people throughout the world heard from every Catholic pulpit the following words:

"At that time Jesus said to His disciples, All power is given Me in heaven and on earth. Going, therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (Matthew, xxviii, 19-20.) Obviously, there is in the world a teaching body, established by Jesus Christ, empowered by Jesus Christ "to teach all nations," and preserved by Jesus Christ from all error, "even to the consummation of the world." Quite as obviously, that body is not the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. To do it justice, the Assembly makes no such claim; like every other Protestant association, it admits that it may err. But the Church, founded by Jesus Christ, cannot possibly err. She alone whose visible head is Peter's successor, binds and looses the souls and the hearts of men, conscious of her inerrancy preserved to her by the abiding presence of Jesus Christ, her Divine Founder.—America.

## FROM INDIA TO ROME

## FATHER MATHIS DESCRIBES VOYAGE

EAST AND WEST NEED BETTER KNOWLEDGE OF RESPECTIVE RELIGIONS

(With this letter the N. C. W. C. News Service continues the narrative of the Rev. Michael Mathis, C. S. C., the Holy Cross College missionary who is now bringing to an end his journey around the world. Father Mathis' letter was mailed from Rome, when he arrived there from India.)

By Rev. Michael Mathis, C. S. C.

My six months in India came to a rather sudden and untimely end, when I shook hands with a Bombay Jesuit at the pier of the Lloyd Triestine line, bound for Venice.

In spite of the fact that arrangements for my passage had been made long in advance, the actual parting came with a suddenness and shock that I had not anticipated. Evidently, the lure of the Orient had caught me in the spell of its charm.

As the big ship slipped out of the harbor I got my last glimpse of India! Turbaned coolies balancing huge burdens on their heads, "sari" women waving a modest farewell to friends aboard, and the natives taking the ceremonial bath on the steamer. This picture in surroundings varying from the green luxuriance of jungle to the brick and mortar of European cities was typical of what I constantly saw in India from November third to May first. As I turned from the steamer rail to take my place among my fellow voyagers I could not banish a thought which had been growing daily within me! "The most religious land in the Orient, perhaps in the world, is India."

## MEETING OF EAST AND WEST

The character of the passenger list on a boat playing between India and Europe at the end of the year is unique. There were British Government officials from Generals to clerks; there were Western Missionaries, young and old, of many creeds; there were Indian sages and Western converts to Oriental cults; students of the East bound for the schools of the West; Western and Eastern representatives of commerce and empire; delegates from Afghanistan and newly established States, flush with money but ignorant of the fine art of buttoning their newly donned Western shirts; and, finally there were the inquisitive globe-trotters whom every one tries in vain to avoid.

Government officials, commercial agents, and Western missionaries give a distinctly holiday atmosphere to life aboard, because they are going "back home" on leave. The Indian sages from their "Bhuddha" posture on the hot decks of the ship, the rather noisy Protestant American missionaries, surrounded by family cares, "frankly" stating their views, and the quiet dignity of the few Catholic missionaries grown white and grizzled under India's scorching sun—all these things kept religion on the tapis throughout the voyage.

An illustration may prove illuminating. If perchance a passenger had forgotten what he might once have learned about the fire worship of the Zoroastrians of Persia, his or her memory might easily be refreshed in the most natural and unobtrusive way. I learnt it from a cigar or to be more exact a cheroot. Observing that my charming Parsee friend was not smoking over his coffee after dinner, I offered him the delights of a Burmese cheroot such as the one I was balancing between my orthodox fingers. The Parsee graciously declined, explaining that smoking was against his religion: Parsees worship fire and, hence, they can scarcely be expected to place their Divinity at the far end of a cigar, much less a Burmese cheroot.

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## WHAT INDIA'S LEADERS THINK OF US

The leading Indian savant aboard was Swami Satyi Deo. The Swami (Master) is a noted non-cooperator, having shared his very room with Gandhi for months at a time. He also suffered imprisonment ranging from six months to six hours, for the Nationalist cause. Furthermore, it is claimed that he is a writer on Hindu philosophy and Buddhism and even a student of things American. The Swami spent five years in the United States at the University of Chicago and "hobnobbing" (to use his own words) from Seattle via Los Angeles to El Paso. He is on his way to Europe for the purpose of having a cataract removed from his eyes.

The Swami opened up his campaign aboard from his throne on the ship's rear hatch with an English translation of some ancient Buddhist texts which purported to show that even for a Buddhist there are limits to non-violence. He calls me the "American missionary with specks," and I confess that I appreciate the Swami if not as so profound a student as some of the ladies avow yet as a leader who is conversant with the highest religious and patriotic ideals of his people.

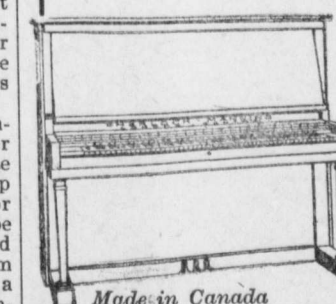
The one thing of note which I received from him and which confirms the observations of Rabindranath Tagore and the other Indian leaders whom I have consulted, is this: on the one hand, oriental students of Western civilization have underestimated its spiritual value because in the data for their investigation the richest religious life of the West, i. e., Catholic contemplative life, has been practically excluded; and, on the other hand, perhaps we Westerners have not yet fully grasped the true nature of India's conception of that union with God which alone explains her age-long struggle

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for things religious. There are some Catholic theologians who are convinced that the Beatific vision of Christian revelation is the "Eldorado" of India's intense religious quest.

## THE EUCHARIST

Hermann Cohen, celebrated pupil of Listz, great pianist and inspired artist was born in Hamburg, November 10, 1821. In 1847 he was converted from Judaism by the Most Blessed Sacrament exposed for public veneration on an altar.

In 1849 he clothed himself in the Carmelite habit, and after a life filled with holy and penitential deeds, completed his glorious career assisting the victims of smallpox in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Stricken by the dread disease, he fell a victim to his heroic charity.

He composed many noted works on music, and wrote on religious subjects. Among his writings is a document which treats of the Blessed Eucharist, the instrument of his remarkable conversion and the sole happiness of his existence. "I have travelled through the world," he says, "I have seen the world, I have loved the world, and from the world I have learned but one thing—that it cannot furnish happiness."

"Happiness? I have sought it in the cities, I have gone in search of it through kingdoms, I have ploughed the ocean in quest of it. Happiness! I have sought it in the delights of poetry, in the beauty of the universe, in the grand spectacles of nature, in the whirl of gaiety, in the dizziness of play, in the possession of gold, in the delirium of romances of literature, in the satisfaction of unbridled ambition, in the homes of famous men, in the pleasures and sense of spirit . . . and I have found it only in the Eucharist."

Truly a sublime confession which many a humble soul has cause to re-echo. Sated with the unwholesome and sickish repasts which the world offers, such souls know where to find the true sustenance for their earthly pilgrimage, as the great musician and Carmelite found it,—in the Eucharist.—The Pilot.

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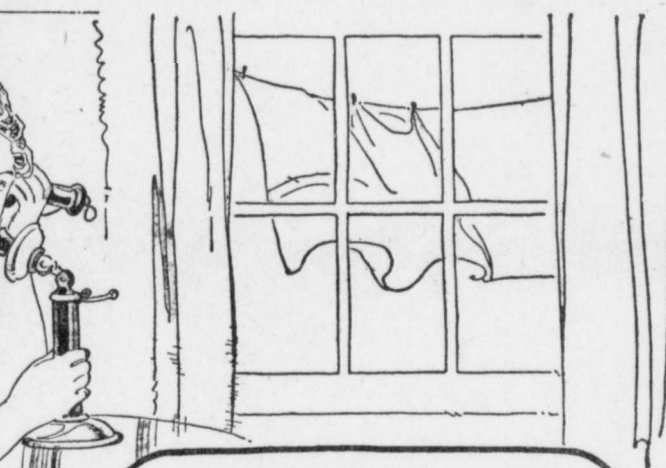
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