

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. M. BOSSAERT

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

CONSOLATION IN PRAYER

Dear brethren, the ruler of Capernaum in today's Gospel had no doubt resorted to all possible means and ways to secure for his beloved son a soothing of pain and recovery from his disease: but without success.

And surely, dear brethren, to whom else should he go, but to the Lord Himself, who indeed is the true physician of all those sick in body or soul; the true helper in all need? He, who made it the task of His stay on earth to bestow with lavish hands grace and benefit upon men.

(1) Necessity teaches how to pray, and how to have recourse to God. This ruler had been taught to pray by his adversity. Urgently he implores the Divine Saviour, "Lord, come down before that my son die."

(2) When sickness enters our homes, when dear parents, husbands, wife, children or friends are thrown upon the sick bed, when in their misery they appeal to us for relief and we are impotent to soothe their pain, what indeed can we do then?

(3) The hours of trial and of adversity are often a severe test for our faith in Divine Providence, but, my dear brethren, pray and in prayer you will find consolation, strength, and encouragement.

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(5) Suredly, my dear brethren, if you thus pray to the Divine Father, He will not fail to send also to you a consoling angel, and when your trials are greatest and most pressing, have confidence that the Lord is nigh with His generous assistance.

THE MIRACLES OF TEMPLEMORE

REV. DR. COTTER WRITES OF WONDERS WROUGHT

By Rev. Dr. Cotter of Ironton

Templemore, Ireland, Aug. 28.—Hearing in Tralee, County Kerry, of the wonders wrought in Templemore, I made a long and tedious trip by train and motor car to this town, where now, as I write, tens of thousands from the world over, are kneeling on the stones of the street—awestruck, when frequently the subject of a miracle proclaims glory to God and His Blessed Mother.

In the beginning, I would say, in the most emphatic manner, that the Church authorities, guided by the experience of ages, have prudently abstained from giving a judgment, believing that if a miracle exists, it will prove itself.

Thousands visit shrine. There is however, one miracle to everyone's eye and mind, for whose genuineness, no court's verdict is needed—"The Faith of Ireland."

Thousands of young men, as well as their fathers, sisters, and mothers, are seen from my window walking reverently, as pilgrims to a shrine. The volunteers—these brave fellows, who give their whole time gratuitously, just as they are ready, at a moment's notice to offer their lives for their country, march the immense throng in the largest square of any town or city in Ireland.

A week ago, hundreds were fleeing for their lives from Templemore. Now, instead of a "Hegira," we have a "Mecca," whither the people from every clime are coming.

In the centre of the square stands the ruins of the Town Hall—a grim and ghastly memorial to the recent work of the preservers of "Law and Order," who attempted to destroy the town. This infamy was followed by the death of the two military officers, burned to death by the flames they kindled, and by the refusal of the other fires to do deadly work, although intensified with petrol seized in a private garage.

HAVE THEIR REASON?

For the wonderful salvation of the town, all classes now thank God and His Blessed Mother. Have they reason? The facts answer, and, doubtless when read, many will be

like hundreds of priests, who came here as doubting Thomases, but remain to pray, mystified by the marvels now grown common.

In this town, there are in the courtyard of a good Catholic, named Dwan, four statues that have died. The blood is all around them on the white cloth on which they stand. The same is true of statues of Curragheen, seven miles from here, and four from where I was born.

In Curragheen, there lives a boy of sixteen, named James Walsh, who declares the Blessed Virgin appeared to him, and ordered him to scrape the floor in his bed-room, and a well would spring up. From this well I, today filled a bottle with the water.

INTERVIEW WITH BOY

In the parlor of the convent of the Presentation nuns here, I had an interview with the boy, who is followed by thousands whenever he appears. He is a guileless country lad, and I firmly believe, absolutely incapable of trickery. He was preparing to be a monk in Mount St. Joseph's near Roscrea, but was advised to leave, as his delicate health could not stand the rigors of the religious life. I fancy that Bernadette of Lourdes was the same type of girl, as is he type of boy—plain, fervent, and truthful. He is as much in awe of the wonders of which he is the central figure as are the people who flock around to see him or touch his hand. Although the cynosure of all eyes and although his name, "James Walsh," is on every lip, he is timid and modest, and never perfectly happy until he answers the good nuns to the familiar name of "Jimmie."

THE BOY'S STORY

I give his words in his own halting expression. He says: "Father, the 5th of July I was going down to the creamery at half past nine, and I saw the Blessed Virgin. At first I was afraid, that is, I did not know who she was."

"How did you know?" said I. "I spoke one word, 'Who are you, my good lady?' 'Mary Immaculate,' she answered."

"Describes her," I said. "She was dressed in white, rays of light shone from her face and hid her looks, and a round ring of light rested over but not on her head. She told me, then, I was not to make her presence known for some time. About a week later, when I was working in the cow-house, she appeared again. About this time, the statues in my room began to ooze water, which later turned into blood. Then the Blessed Virgin silenced me from two to seven o'clock. I became unconscious during that time and saw her again. Whenever I see her, she says the 'Our Father' when departing. A week ago, in Curragheen, on the hill, I saw her. She told me that some would be cured, if they believed, and that those who sought relief at the statues were to say seven 'Our Fathers' and seven 'Hail Marys.' At this time she told me to scrape the floor in my bed room, and a well would come. I did so, and the well is there."

RELIGIOUS SEES CRUCIFIX BLEED

Brother Grey, of the Salesians, who is home on a visit, told me that on Tuesday morning, Aug. 24th, Jimmie Walsh came with him into his mother's house on Main Street, and said he wanted to say a few prayers. He went into the parlor and knelt before the crucifix he brought with him. In a few minutes the Brother went in to find the boy dazed and the crucifix bleeding from eyes and heart. "That, I saw myself," said Brother Grey, in the most pronounced terms.

Any money left at the statues is returned by the volunteers. The jingle of the guinea is unheard, but the voice of faith is loud in convent, church and street in Templemore.

If we consider the boy, the well, the statues, the vision and the cures, either separately or conjointly, I cannot see why the church will not gladly and proudly proclaim very soon the Lourdes of Ireland, and permit a new name in a hallowed shrine—"Our Lady of Templemore."

Let us consider the boy: Current report confirms my own opinion that he is a Saint. His whole conduct viewed in unusual circumstances causes no doubt about the vision, and there can be no doubt about the well in his room.

CURES WROUGHT

Regarding miracles: Yesterday I saw a man groaning in pain, dragging one leg into Dwan's court yard, and he returned a few minutes afterwards crazy with delight and jumping up and down. To prove his cure, he stripped his leg, all bandaged and yellow with supplices. "I came, your reverences," said he, "twenty-three miles, and thanks to Jesus and His Sacred Mother I am well."

A woman from Ballinaloe was cured. The doctors told her, her leg would have to be amputated, after an operation that removed a piece of bone from her ankle. She was carried to the statues and I saw her the same hour walking unaided along the street followed by wondering thousands.

Mary Brennan from the town of Blarney, left a four-inch iron shoe and crutches behind to prove the cripple was made whole.

These are only some of twenty I saw and interviewed. Regarding the statues, Mr. and Mrs. Dwan, both pronounced devoted Catholics by their priests, and level headed to an exceptional degree, told me of the bleeding statues, and how they frightened them. Mr. Dwan told me he called

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In a neighbor, Michael Conroy, whom I went to see. Mr. Conroy declared to me he is yet nervous and could not sleep with the fright of the sight he beheld. These are only some devoted souls, who saw, and are ready to swear to the strange phenomenon.

Why are the statues bleeding in Ireland? They are bleeding for Ireland and her woes unutterable.

Why are the miracles? As a reward for Ireland's fidelity though hell itself is lost upon her. Why the vision of the Virgin? To show how near is God to a land, again the "Isle of Saints and Scholars," despite all the attempts to make her ignorant and vicious—a land where pious patriotism is fathered—a land the beacon light of civilization in this sorry day—a martyred land, where people feel the strength of Christ's arm, and the pulsation of His Heart's Love.—Catholic Columbian.

THE MACSWINEY CASE

The Monitor

If Terence MacSwiney, Lord Mayor of Cork, dies in the English prison at Brixton, near London, he will be the first hunger striker permitted to die by the British Government. He has been sentenced to two years' imprisonment under the recent infamous Coercion Act for the terrible crime of swearing allegiance to the Sinn Fein organization. This is an offense for which myriads of Irishmen would be proud to plead guilty and, if necessary, to die for their country.

In protest against this iniquitous law and war measure aimed at the liberty of the Irish people, the young and accomplished Mayor of Cork has gone on a hunger strike which this Thursday has lasted to the unprecedented period of thirty-four days. It is the only weapon which he can use to fight the tyranny of the British Government. It requires great bravery to undertake a hunger strike and indicates a willingness to undergo torture and even death in the great and virtuous cause for which he suffers. It also presupposes that the hunger striker is supported by a great body of public opinion.

Mayor MacSwiney has the Irish nation at his back because his life is a vicarious sacrifice for their freedom. If Lloyd George refuses to release MacSwiney and persists in his position that the inhuman English Coercion law must take its course, then those responsible for the Lord Mayor's death may find that there is a righteous Irish law that will also take its course.

While the noble Mayor of Cork lies heroically struggling with death in an English prison, there are those who scoff at his sacrifice and call him a fool, like the Protestant Bishop Quayle. Let him come down from his cross and rise from the rack of suffering on which a cruel British law has stretched him, exclaim these scoffers of mankind, as in stultic case they bark in the tyrant's smile. They are not of the stuff of which heroes are made, and not by them is redemption wrought in Israel.

Some well-meaning persons, even Catholics, are inclined to think that a hunger strike, like Mayor MacSwiney, by his refusal to eat bread is guilty of the sin of suicide. It is difficult to follow their reasoning as it is not founded on solid principles of Catholic moral theology.

Suicide or self murder is the freely intended saking of one's life by one's own power. It is absolutely rejected by Christianity and the Church which punishes the heinous sin of directly causing one's own death, by

refusing Christian burial to the suicide on the ground that the Almighty hath set his canons against self slaughter.

There are times, however, when it is allowable and even laudable to indirectly offer up one's life in a great and noble cause, as a soldier who goes to certain death when he volunteers to undertake a mission which means that he will never return alive. It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country, in an old proverb of patriotism and the Gospel tells us that "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. . . . Fear not them who can destroy the body, but fear Him who can destroy both body and soul in hell."

In the case of the Mayor of Cork, he does not positively and directly desire his own death. His intention is primarily to force his release and to call attention to the injustice and brutality of a vile law that brands a man a criminal for loving his country. Against a policy of force it is the only weapon that he can employ. As the early Christian martyrs refused to apostatize by burning a grain of incense before the heathen idol, and were sent to the lions for their faith, so the Mayor of Cork is ready for the sake of Irish liberty to die rather than to submit to the British law of oppression.

No one can deny that the Mayor's intention is good, the object he has in view is noble and the means he uses are sanctified by the circumstance that he is acting thus to preserve the liberty of his country. Even if he should fail to gain his release, his main purpose will have been won, and his death will ever be considered by lovers of human freedom as an exalted act of heroic virtue. The morality of his act according to Catholic theology is thus explained by Rev. Father Tierney, S. J., editor of America, in a recent number of that periodical.

"In the opinion of competent theologians Mayor MacSwiney's hunger-strike is not suicidal. Omitting technicalities, it may be premises in the simple language of the more capable moralists, that, it is lawful to perform an act from which flow two effects, one good and the other bad, under the four following conditions: (1) The act in itself must be good or at least indifferent. (2) The good effect must follow immediately from the act as does the bad effect. (3) The reason for the act must be proportionate to the gravity of the act itself. (4) The intention of the person who performs the act must be upright. If these four conditions attend Mayor MacSwiney's act, it is not suicidal. On the other hand, if any one of the conditions is absent, the act is immoral."

"Are the four conditions present? They are. (1) In itself abstention from food is at worst an indifferent act. If it were evil in itself a man would sin every time he abstained from food, by fasting according to Church precept, for instance. The act is clearly indifferent in itself; therefore the first condition is fulfilled. (2) The good effect of the

present act, the hunger strike, is as immediate as the bad effect. For instant good effects of the act are, firstly, the publicity it gives to official British tyranny and brutality and, secondly, renewed moral strength by which the Irish nation can continue to vindicate Liberty. On the other hand the bad effect, if indeed it is morally bad, is death. Clearly the first good effect of this hunger strike is as immediate, to say the least, as the bad effect, if for no other reason, because it has already occurred, whereas even at this date, September 7, death has not yet occurred. The same may be said of the second good effect, as the Irish papers show. This, however, is unnecessary for our argument. One good effect is sufficient. The second condition required for a moral act is therefore fulfilled. (3) The reason for Mayor MacSwiney's hunger strike is in most grave; indeed, its gravity is in full proportion to the gravity of his act. For the reason is the vindication of the right of an oppressed nation to liberty, to independence: the reason is, in short, the liberty of the Irish nation. Therefore the third condition necessary for a moral act is fulfilled. (4) Mayor MacSwiney's purpose is upright, not only upright but most noble, most deserving of praise. He desires not to kill himself but to destroy tyranny to help free his country. Thus the fourth condition necessary for a moral act is present. Hence Mayor MacSwiney's act is justifiable. There are many other circumstances that can be brought forward to defend this conclusion, but for the present at least enough has been said to answer the question put by the doctor of Roxbury, Mass., and by other correspondents.—Ed. America."

However much light there may be in the mind, there are always some corners which remain in the shadow.—Abbe Roux.

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