

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. F. PEPPER
EASTER SUNDAY

"He is risen, He is not here." (Mark xvi, 6)
Not only to the pious women who went out to embalm the body of Jesus, but also to us and to the whole world did the angel beside the empty tomb announce tidings of the utmost joy: "He is risen, He is not here." These words are in perfect harmony with those sung by the angels at our Lord's birth: "Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will." By His resurrection Jesus proved that it was really He, Who, for God's honor and peace amongst men, had offered on the Cross the great sacrifice of atonement—that He was indeed the Redeemer. His resurrection was the seal of our redemption, and therefore Easter is the great festival when we give thanks for the graces and benefits that we owe to it. "With Him is plentiful redemption"—these words in the psalm are true to the words of our Lord. When He rose, He showed that death had no power over Him; His resurrection was a triumph over death. Death had come into the world through the devil's malice, because men by sin had put themselves in the power of the evil one; and Jesus, by conquering death, conquered also the devil, who had power over it, and thus by His death He really delivered us from the power of the devil and from the dominion of sin. As St. Paul says, He blotted out the handwriting of the decree against us, fastening it to the Cross (Col. ii, 14). In His own Blood He washed away our sins, and He suffered both for our sins and for those of the whole world.

Through our Lord's infinite merits, men are now again admitted to be friends and children of God, and to heaven. Hence the angel's words: "He is risen" remind us that we ought not to let His resurrection be in vain, as far as we are concerned, but we must take part in His redemption, and lead good lives in future, after cleansing our souls from sin by penance. In this way only shall we show true gratitude to Jesus for His resurrection, and in the way only will it be really Easter, not only in the Church, but also in our hearts.

Jesus, having conquered death and the devil, through His infinite merits has power to help us in our long struggle against sin and evil. In thought stand by the empty tomb whenever the tempter whispers to you: "It is too hard for weak mortals to avoid this or that sin." Your Saviour, who once lay in the tomb, is with you, if you earnestly desire it, and ready to give you strength. Nothing that He asks can be too hard for those whom He redeemed, since He died in order to obtain for them the powerful assistance of God.

A pagan may say it is too hard to do right, because his religion gives him no help; an unbeliever may say it is too hard, because his intellect, though he may value it very highly, is unable to withstand the fury of his passions; but a Christian cannot say it is too hard when he is called upon to obey Christ's commandments with His Redeemer's help.

Ask all the saints, who relied so firmly upon their risen Saviour, what would have been too hard for them. The world is amazed at their virtues, which in a heathen age would have been deemed unattainable; they accomplished what appeared to be far beyond the power of mankind, and led an angelic life in their Saviour's strength.

We are told that our Lord's tomb was in a garden, and from the moment when it was opened, blossoms and fruits, virtues and good works, such as had never been seen before, have abounded on earth. Christ has redeemed us, too; let us, too, be willing to be guided by His grace; let us, thankfully, by His assistance, practice virtue and good works, and not surrender to cowardice, lukewarmness and indolence under the pretext that what He requires is too hard. He has risen and redeemed us; He has proved by His resurrection that His doctrine is true, for again and again He foretold to His disciples that He would rise again, but they did not understand Him, for His words were hard to comprehend. Therefore, He proved that the hardest doctrine which He ever taught was true, thus proving the truth of all the rest. Like a bright light this doctrine flashes forth over the whole world from the tomb of our risen Lord, and what was its effect? It swept away all the superstitions of idolatry, all the horrors by means of which men thought to honor their false gods; Christ's teaching was for all mankind; it was not restricted to a few favored individuals; even a very ignorant Catholic knows more about God and our salvation than hundreds of learned men would have known in pagan times. The life of whole nations is permeated by the doctrines of Christianity, their moral standard has been raised, their modes of thought changed, and their ideas and actions sanctified. So deep was the impression made upon the whole of civilized existence by the doctrines of our own risen Lord, that at the present time those who in their ingratitude refuse to believe in Him are nevertheless, without being aware of it, influenced by His Spirit. Whatever good they do, or teach, is due to Christianity, without which they would never have known many truths that they regard as matters of intellect.

Let us thank our risen Saviour for His teaching and for the precious gift of redemption. Let us beware of trying to bring His doctrines into

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agreement with our passions, or to interpret them according to our perverse minds; what He taught, we will believe, now and for ever, and thus we shall reach heaven, our final goal.

Jesus is risen, He has redeemed us, and so we are destined for heaven. What encouragement does this truth contain! Without it life would, indeed, be cold and hopeless. Without redemption we should not know why we were sent into this world to undergo so many troubles during our short span of life, nor why we should be encompassed on all sides with sorrows. Life has no meaning for one who does not believe in the redemption, but in its light life appears full of significance and importance. In the light of the redemption we see that life is the narrow way, often painful and perplexing, leading up to heaven, if we are guided by the hand of our risen Saviour. We were created not for this brief life on earth, but for eternity, to which we may attain through Jesus Christ. Let us therefore thank Him to day for all the graces of redemption, that He ratified by His Resurrection. Let us avoid sin, resolving firmly to do what is right and faithfully to follow out His teaching. Let us live, not for earth, but for heaven. This should be our thanksgiving to Him to-day on the feast of His Resurrection, our thanksgiving for His abundant redemption. Amen.

TEMPERANCE

PRISONERS AGAINST BOOZE

Below we quote at length from an article which recently appeared in the Philadelphia North American, entitled, "What Prison Papers Are Saying." We think the article needs no comment:

From the human interest view-point, the most impressive feature of these prison papers is that part contributed by convicts in signed articles or letters to the editor. With few exceptions, the widest latitude of free speech is permitted the writers, and we are informed by several editors that no attempt is made to influence the selection or treatment of subjects.

This being the case, it is significant to note the frequency with which liquor is discussed. In a recent issue of the Empire, published in our own Eastern Penitentiary, were two letters dealing with this topic. One written by "B 6591," concluded as follows:

"Seventy per cent. of crime is attributed to drink. Why not make an effort to 'burn our bridges' and cut off the principal cause of our being here? A petition signed by 1,400 men and women in this place would carry more weight and be ten times as effective as any petition signed by a similar number of people on the outside.

"Lobster," went to a warm bed, and good victuals, a cozy home and a loving wife, taking with him the earnings of a poor man. It was the cause of leading me often to beggary. It is causing men to go to jails for villainy. It is a wife's woe and children's sorrow to neglect. It makes a self-murderer out of a man who drinks to another's 'Good health,' and robs him of his own."

We think neither of these needs comment. Men in prison usually have time to ponder the real meaning of their situation. Love of liberty may have led them to compromise with facts prior to conviction and sentence, but confinement brings them face to face with basic causes.

The Better Citizen, published by the inmates of the New Jersey Reformatory School in Rahway, prints this editorial:

An exchange says that "alcohol will remove stains from summer clothes." The exchange is right. It will also remove the summer clothes, and the summer, also the spring, the autumn and winter clothes, not only from the one who drinks it, but from the wife and family as well. It will remove the household furniture, the tables from the parlor, the smiles from the face of his wife, the laugh from the innocent lips of his children and the happiness out of his home. As a remover of things alcohol has no equal.

A WORSE TASKMASTER THAN PHARAOH

An Ohio saloon-keeper once stood in front of his saloon early in the morning; he was watching the long line of laborers filing past on their way to work. Turning to a man at his side, he said: "Those men are going to work for me to-day." The other asked him to explain. "Well," replied the saloon-keeper, "to night they will come in my place and spend almost all they made during the day, so, practically, they work for me."

Those words were only too truthful. May God hasten the day when the laborers will work for their families instead of the saloon-keepers, which will be when the saloon evil is wiped out.—St. Paul Bulletin.

CUSTOMS PECULIAR TO EASTER

The Catholic Encyclopaedia devotes a portion of its lengthy article entitled "Easter" to an account of those customs which were peculiar to the festum festorum, or greatest feast of the year, as Leo I. called it. How many Catholics, one wonders, have heard of the Paschal Lamb (agnus paschalis)? This custom originated in Catholic Bavaria in the fifteenth century. The priest incorporated in his Paschal sermon several funny stories which would cause his hearers to laugh, as, for example, a story going to show how the devil tried to keep the doors of hell against the descending Christ. From this story the preacher would proceed to draw a moral. The custom gave rise to many abuses and was prohibited by several Pontiffs.

Common though it is, the origin of the Easter egg is not generally known. It is to be traced to the fact that since eggs were forbidden during Lent, they were brought to the table on Easter morning colored red in token of Easter joy. The egg is the emblem of the germinating life of Spring. The "egg season," as celebrating the return of Spring, was known to the pagan ancients. In France Easter handball was an amusement of this season, the ball representing the Sun which is believed to take three leaps in rising on Easter morning. Bishops, priests and monks, after the strict discipline of Lent, used to play ball during Easter week, and this was called "libertas decembris," because formerly in December the masters used to play ball with their servants, maids and shepherds. In England the ball game was a hardy annual, and in Norfolk the custom was kept up, until recent years, twelve old women meeting yearly to keep up the practice in a ball alley at Bury St. Edmunds.

More strange is the fact that on Easter Monday the women had a right to strike their husbands, though on Tuesday the husbands struck their wives—gentle tap, respectfully—in order to reassert their right. In the month of December, it may be remembered, there was set aside a day in olden times, upon which servants were allowed with impunity to scold their masters. In the Neumark (Germany) the men servants whip the maid servants on Easter Day, and the maids return the "compliment" on the day after. Easter Fire is, of course, still commonly lighted in many countries. To comply with the proper practice, the fire is lighted by the friction of newly cut wood rubbed together. The Church adopts this practice in the Easter service, when, on Holy Saturday, the new fire is drawn from flint symbolizing the Resurrection of the Light of the World from the tomb closed by a rock.

In both the Eastern and the Latin Churches, it is customary to have those victuals which were prohibited during Lent blessed by the priests before eating them on Easter Day, especially meat, eggs, butter and cheese. On the eve of Easter, the homes are blessed in memory of the passing of the angel in Egypt and the signing of the door posts with the blood of the Paschal Lamb. The parish priest visits the houses of his parish; priests visit the houses of his parish; the Pope's apartments are also blessed on this day, the room in which the Pontiff is found by the

visiting Cardinal being, however, blessed by the Pope himself.

Easter, as we have mentioned, is the principal feast of the ecclesiastical year, and described Christ-mas as being celebrated only in preparation for Easter. It is the center of the greater part of the ecclesiastical year. The order of Sundays from Septuagesima to the last Sunday after Pentecost, the feast of the Ascension, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, and all other movable feasts depend upon the Easter date. That the Apostolic Fathers do not mention it, and that we first hear of it principally through the controversy of the Quartodecimans are purely accidental, says Frederick Holweck, who writes in the Encyclopaedia. The connection between the Jewish Passover and the Christian feast of Easter is real and ideal. Real, since Christ died on the first Jewish Easter Day; ideal like the relation between type and reality, because Christ's Death and Resurrection had its figures and types in the Old Law, particularly in the Paschal Lamb, which was eaten on the evening of the 14th of Nisan, the 15th being the Jewish Easter.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

OUR LADY OF PEACE

"All the people of Rome, the popolino, the little people who live in the narrow streets, are praying for peace," says the paper that takes its name from the city of Popes. Our Lady of Victories has her shrine in the high part of the city, and the people are proud of its beauties and treasures. But Our Lady of Peace has a special place in their hearts. Her shrine is down in the maze of medieval streets in the lower part of old Rome; and there her children seek her, pleading to be guided through peace to light. Visitors to Rome may pass within a hundred yards of this shrine without discovering it. And yet it was here that Raphael painted his Sybils on the walls, here Michael Angelo made his mark in the architecture of the Coat Chapel, and other men of renown have left traces of their genius in sculpture and architecture. "It is also the 'title' of a cardinal, and the portrait of Cardinal Logue stands over the apse, side by side with that of Benedict XV." Rome tells us, adding: "This week (Jan. 11 16) it was crowded for three days with Romans praying to Our Lady for peace for a warring world, and like most other things in Rome the reason for this had its roots in history."

Away back in the fifteenth century, when Pope Sixtus IV. was on the Papal throne, all Italy was torn with sedition and strife. The Holy Father turned to Our Lady for help, begging her to aid him in securing peace. Among her many shrines in Rome was a very humble one in a little old church that was known as St. Andrew of the Water Carriers, and there Sixtus IV. made his way in solemn procession to pray at Our Lady's feet, and to promise her, that when she had restored peace among Christian princes, he would build a fitting church on the spot.

The prayer was granted, the Pope kept his word, and at long intervals of years, great Roman families engaged the highest talent to adorn the church.

Another crisis came, when Alexander VII. ruled the See of Peter, and, like Sixtus, he besought Our Lady of Peace, that a war, devastating Europe, might be ended. He wrote to all the Sovereigns asking them to lay down their arms, and once more Our Lady of Peace triumphed. In gratitude, Alexander completed the decoration of the church. Rome says:

This is why the facade is to day adorned with medallions of Sixtus IV. and Alexander VII., and underneath them you read two beautiful

invocations to peace. This, too, is why the priests of Rome who have a traditional and special devotion to the Church of Our Lady of Peace, organized the triduum there this week, and the Holy Father granted many spiritual privileges for the occasion and the people flocked thither in such numbers that the church could not contain one-fourth of them.

THE ROSARY OF THE REGIMENT

This is a true narrative, the events of which are of recent date, says the Orphan's Friend. The hero was a young soldier of the infantry who went by the name of the "Little Angel." It was whispered around the barracks that the "Little Angel" had a Rosary. Some of those who had seen it said that "It was an enormous concern, long as the girth of a monk and with bands the size of the colonel's plume."

On one occasion more than 200 soldiers gathered around our young man jesting and mocking him at the expense of his Rosary. "Let us see it, young fire eater," said one. "He thinks he can hang the whole regiment with that chain of his," shouted another. "You're wrong," said a third. "It's a new fashioned necklace he wants to introduce."

So it continued. Now, what do you think he did? Did he break out in explosive abuse, as young men usually do? Or did he wag the ineffectual wipe out on the field of honor? He did neither.

He quietly drew the Rosary from his pocket—an ordinary cheap Rosary which had seen much service in his keeping, and, holding it up in both hands, said:

"There now, you see my Rosary would you like to measure it?"

Not a jer was returned. One turned his head away; the rest looked at the sacred sign of our holy religion. Who knows what memor-

CAN BE SAVED AND CURED OF DRINK

Good News to Mothers, Wives, Sisters
To have seen one you love, going down this road to ruin, and to have heard him try to laugh and joke away your fears, while you watched the drink habit fasten on him; is to have known suffering and to have borne a sorrow to which physical pain is nothing. And when at last he comes to that turn in the road that, sooner or later must come, and wakes to the fact that he is a slave to the drink you think everything will come right. He will fight the habit and you will help him escape it; but he can not do it. Drink has undermined his constitution, inflamed his stomach and nerves until the craving must be satisfied. And after you have hoped and then despaired more times than you can count you realize that he must be helped. The diseased condition of the stomach and nerves must be cured by something that will soothe the inflamed stomach and quiet the shaking nerves, removing all toxic liquor.

My marvellous remedy—Samarita Prescription—has done this for hundreds of cases in Canada. It can be given with or without the patient's knowledge as it is tasteless and odorless and quickly dissolves in liquid or food. Read what it did for Mrs. G. of Vancouver:

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les of home and mother, of the little village church, passed rapidly through the minds of those silent men? Only one voice was raised, "That was sincere, my boy; that was well done." And the soldiers' mockery came to an end.

No one can have too much courage, but courage displayed in the

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