

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY THE REV. F. P. HICKEY, O.S.B.
FIRST SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

THE MOST HOLY NAME JESUS

"His name was called Jesus" (Luke 1: 31)

This is the name of which the Scripture says, "Our help is in the name of the Lord." You remember how St. Peter boldly declared this to the princes of the people when he was examined about the miracle done to the infirm man.

Behold, here is our help, and help is just what we all need. All through life, and especially at the hour of death, we stand in need of help. The reason is plain. Of ourselves we cannot resist temptations and preserve our innocence, for we are weak, irresolute, and inclined to sin.

And how blessed are we with this firm hope and assurance that we have. One always ready to listen to this cry for help. Can we picture a mother heedless of her child's cry when in deadly peril? How, then, can we for a moment doubt our Lord? And not only does He hearken to our cry, but as He is all-powerful He is able even miraculously to assist us.

When, then, and in what manner, should we make use of this blessed means of help? First and chiefly, we must use it during prayer. For what could fix our attention and turn our minds to God better than simply to utter the holy name Jesus? How often, alas! have we pronounced it irreverently and without a thought.

Let us firmly believe and cherish in our hearts the promise of God, with which He has endowed this name. It is the inspired word of the Almighty that gives us the assurance, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts ii. 21.)

It is not then, well worth our while—in fact, it is not so necessary for us—to acquire the habit of frequently and reverently using the holy name of Jesus? Unless we learn the habit, that sacred name will not rise spontaneously to our lips, when we may so grievously need it.

Even with our last sigh we may be able, please God, to breathe that tender name. And the last Blessing hovering over us only requires the one word "Jesus" and the Blessing descends upon us. "Our help is in the name of the Lord."

modern and in very good taste. Round about hang pictures, the originals of those with which we of the Saint Rita cult, who are not fortunate enough to have visited Cascia have grown familiar through post cards and holy pictures.

A young peasant woman, with a handkerchief thrown over her head was kneeling in the same pew with me. But prayers were thickly interspersed with heavy sighs, but I finally took courage and interrupted her sighing to ask her where Saint Rita was buried.

I have written a greeting, a wide-scattered greeting, which I have written a greeting, a wide-scattered greeting, which I have written a greeting, a wide-scattered greeting.

This wonderful year that is new? I have written a greeting, a wide-scattered greeting, which I have written a greeting, a wide-scattered greeting.

THE OLD YEAR'S BLESSING

I am fading from you, but one draweth near. Called the Angel-Guardian of the coming year. If my gifts and graces coldly you forget, Let the New Year's Angel bless and crown them yet.

Where I brought you sorrow, through his case at length— I may rise triumphant into future strength. I gave health and leisure, skill to dream and plan; Let him make them nobler—work for God and man.

A PILGRIMAGE TO CASCIA

CASCIA AND ROCCA PORENA II.

By Cecil Fanning

There is a French proverb which says that one should not die before seeing Carcassonne. Tonight I make my own proverb: "You must not die before seeing Cascia and Rocca Porena!"

The Borough of Cascia embraces considerable territory, and a population of over five thousand, and the town proper houses only about one thousand.

High above St. Rita's convent (which with her church is the center of interest in the locality) are the ruins of the ducal palace and its ancient fortifications. Many are the songs of flowing water that one hears on all sides as one wanders through the town.

the rushing Corno before she had progressed a hundred yards. While I waited for my bill at the hotel "Sole" the secretary of the Mayor talked with me, and when it came, he said, "Signor, I could not help seeing the amount. It is too much, but there is nothing to be done. I regret that my countrymen have always had the custom of fleeing the foreigner."

With a hideous noise, my chauffeur and I were off in our benzina-wagon. As we rounded the foot of the hill we stopped to take a final look at Cascia, the dream-shrine of my youth, which was now a reality.

One was: Did Saint Rita receive her stigmata from a crucifix or a picture of a crucifix, for accounts of this vary? I was informed that the correct tradition relates that the devotion of Saint Rita for a picture of the crucifixion, before which she frequently prayed, and it was from this picture that, during her devotions, a shaft of light appeared and ever after she bore the stigmata, or the mark of a thorn on her brow.

The Mother Superior came at once and lighted the candles, then led down the side of wood, and, behind glass was the body of Saint Rita, in a black habit, her hands resting on a cushion of gold and rose brocade.

The Order is that founded by St. Augustin and his mother, Saint Monica. There are priests of this Order in the United States but only one convent of nuns, from a Belgian mother house, located in New York City.

I engaged a guide to take me to Rocca Porena, a hamlet about two miles from Cascia, back in a remote corner of Corno Canyon. Rocca Porena was the birthplace and home of Saint Rita up to the time she miraculously entered the barred door of the convent at Cascia.

The coolness and fragrance of early morning was everywhere, everything, and in the boxed-in portions of the canyon, it was cold. The footpath was scarcely ten inches wide in many places and impossible for a vehicle. It constantly forced us to ford the river, winding now on one side and then on the other.

I had asked the chaplain of Saint Rita's Church to try to secure permission for me to photograph the cloister and cell of Saint Rita, but he doubted his ability to obtain it. He asked me what time I wanted Mass, saying the regular Mass was at six-thirty. I told him I could not attend the six-thirty services on account of my arrangements to go to Rocca Porena, so he told me to come to the church at ten o'clock and he would tell me about seeing the cloister.

There is no other way of reaching Rocca Porena than by the path along which we came, and so it has been for more than a thousand years! As one approaches the hamlet, he sees a few squat, ancient houses and a chapel perched half way up the side of a huge gray rock, which is itself a steeply alone and frightened, to a height of about one thousand feet.

There is a little church in the hamlet, next to the former home of Saint Rita, and on the summit of the peak is an oratory in the process of construction. It is being built over the strangely shaped rock, under which Rita used to go to meditate and pray. The rock now serves as the altar in the oratory; but the temple made by hands is so much more beautiful. The view from the oratory is stupendous, but the ascent is most difficult. Saint Rita must have had tireless energy to climb it so frequently. We rested for a quarter of an hour before attempting the slippery descent and I took some pictures.

We returned through the sleeping hamlet and looked through the grilled windows of the chapel, as the door was locked, but there was nothing of interest in the little edifice. The sun had come up over the mountains to the east, and as a result, we were uncomfortably warm all the way back to Cascia. Surely Saint Rita must have been divinely guarded to have traveled this path at midnight, otherwise she would have fallen headlong into

DAILY MASS

When we get into the next world we shall see how foolish we have been not to go to Mass frequently on week-days. The Churches ought to be crowded every morning. The power of one Mass is enough to redeem the world.

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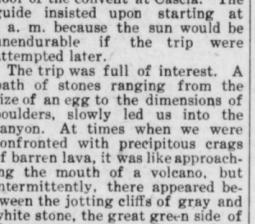
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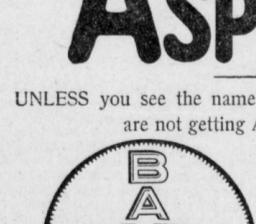
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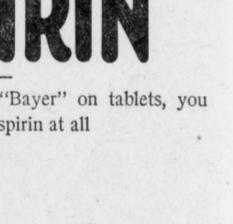
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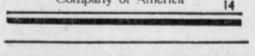


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