

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

By Rev. M. POISSAERT

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

IMPURE CONVERSATION

We read in today's Gospel that when our divine Lord was curing the deaf and dumb man. He looked up to heaven and groaned. Why was this? A learned commentator tells us that it was because He perceived in this one tongue all the evil wrought by the tongue in the history of the human race.

1. We may class as impure every kind of conversation that raises a blush on the faces of honest people, whilst only the shameless approve. Every word is impure that reveals what is unseemly and imparts a knowledge of evil to one's neighbor.

2. Some will try to excuse themselves by saying: "My offences against the Sixth Commandment are only fun; I only hint at things and do not mean any harm." Can it be an innocent joke to allude to things that are sinful things of which St. Paul says that they should not be mentioned at all among Christians?

3. Others perhaps will argue this: "Whatever unseemly remarks I make before children and young people cannot possibly injure them, because they do not understand them."

Would God it were true that your foul conversations caused no scandal and produced no evil fruits among your neighbors, and especially among children! Unhappily it is not true, for we all know by sad experience what locustable and irreparable mischief can be done by an evil word falling on the ears of an innocent child.

Take therefore to heart St. Paul's admonition: "Let not fornication and all uncleanness so much as be named among you." If you have hitherto allowed yourselves to indulge in shameful conversations, jests, songs and ambiguous phrases, resolve to avoid these sins in future, remembering St. Basil's words: "Impure persons with poisonous tongues do not only themselves perish, but they drag down to destruction all whom they infect."

FOCHE'S FAVORITES

(Canadian Military Gazette)

The writer has the following story from a gentleman in whose word he has absolute confidence. Shortly before the armistice a private luncheon was given by a lady in Paris to a number of her friends, of whom Marshal Foch was one.

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RELIGIOUS PICTURES IN THE HOME

Parents have the most serious duty that can be imposed upon human beings, viz., that of training up their children in the fear and love of God. Those children have souls as well as bodies, and while their bodies will die and crumble into dust, their souls will live forever.

In this article, it is my aim to make a plea for religious pictures in the home, for the sake of the spiritual god they will do to the children.

Religious pictures are numbered among the sacramentals of the Church. As such they inspire good thoughts and increase devotion among adults, as well as help the spiritual upbuilding of the children.

When a child is born, its mind is blank, and it begins to furnish ideas to that mind through its carriers, the hands, the ears, the taste, the eyes. But, much as it learns through the other senses, I think that it acquires the most through the eyes.

People who wish their children to speak French or German, allow only those languages to be spoken in the hearing of the children; and those parents who wish their children to grow up healthy, keep them out in the air as much as possible. In the same way, those parents who wish their children to grow up religious and pious, should create an environment of religion and piety for them; and one of the factors in such an environment would be a plentiful supply of pictures portraying religious subjects, on the walls of the home.

What is it that makes the Church so devotional? Of course it is chiefly the fact that Our Lord is there in the Blessed Sacrament. But, besides, it is the plentiful supply of religious art. There are the statues, the Stations of the Cross, the pictures, and the stained glass windows, all portraying religious subjects; and the number—and weight, I might say—of all these creates an atmosphere of piety and devotion that is perceptible and unmistakable.

For the home is to do the same work as the Church—to train the child for heaven. If the child would get the best possible start in life, the difference between his home atmosphere and the Church atmosphere should be as little as possible; the more they resemble each other, the better. And when the child comes to the Church or to the Sunday School, if what he hears explained by the priest or teacher he has already seen depicted on the walls of his own home, he is much better prepared to profit by such instruction than if the work in the Church were not aided by various good influences at home.

A certain priest was once giving an instruction on the life, deeds and death of John the Baptist and he noticed that one little girl listened

to him with more than ordinary attention. As the instruction was nearing an end she showed by her uplifted hand that she, too, wished to be heard. And when the priest asked her what it was, she said: "We have a picture of the 'Beheading of John the Baptist' at home." It was this fact that made that instruction of particular interest to her; and, further, it called to the priest's attention the wonderful aid that can be given the work of the Sunday School by the presence in the home of pictures that illustrate the matter explained.

If children are to get all the profit possible from these pictures in the home, the subjects should be explained to the children. Many of them are symbolic, such as the Immaculate Conception and the Eternal Father; and their symbolism needs to be explained, if the meaning of the picture would be grasped. But even if the parents are not able to explain the pictures they should, nevertheless, have them in the home, for the children will later on obtain the explanation themselves, or, if they don't, they will inhale their spiritual fragrance anyway. A flower is just as sweet, whether the one admiring it knows its name or not.

Another advantage of having these holy pictures in the home is that they enable the children to fix their attention while saying their prayers. A child who from the beginning has been in the habit of saying his prayers before a really beautiful picture of Our Lord or the Blessed Virgin, learns to put meaning into his prayers, and feels that those prayers are being listened to and will be heeded by one who is kindly disposed towards him.

And besides being a wonderful help towards getting the child properly started in the manner of saying his prayers, these pictures will at all times help to protect the child from distractions; and when he is preparing to go to confession

or receive Holy Communion they will help to get him into the state of soul in which he should be.—Catholic Bulletin.

CATHOLICS AND THE BIBLE

In the current number of "Physical Culture" George Bernard Shaw contributes an article on Morality and Birth Control, in the course of which he trots out the following oft-refuted fallacy: "To this day it is an unsettled question between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Churches whether the one is right in withholding the Bible from the laity, or the other in scattering copies broadcast and enjoining its constant study."

That the Catholic Church withholds the Bible from the laity, is a statement that one might excuse in some obscure Protestant preacher who didn't know any better, but coming from a man who occupies a commanding position in the intellectual and literary world, it goes to show that misinformation concerning things Catholic is not confined to the dustiest among our non-Catholic brethren. We could quote Papal pronouncements exhorting the faithful to study the Scriptures, without convincing those who are not open to conviction. The whole controversy turns about the extravagant claims of the Protestants as to the importance of the Bible. Because the Catholic Church does not recognize these specific claims she is declared to be opposed to Bible reading.

Protestants have come well nigh to believing that the mere possession of the Bible is an indispensable means of salvation. As some one has said: "The Bible, and the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants." Private interpretation is a principle holy defended by Protestants, no matter to what conflicting opinions such interpretations may lead. The Catholic Church holds that the Bible alone does not adequately convey to the general reader a sure knowledge of faith and morals; that all revealed truths are not contained in the Bible; and that she, the Church, is the appointed witness and guardian of revelation.

As for the indiscriminate distribution of the Bible without note or comment by Protestant Bible Societies, there is a growing feeling among many thinking Protestants that this is a doubtful means of propagating Christian doctrine. A missionary on the Malay peninsula once complained that although thousands of Bibles had been distributed he "did not hear of a single Malay convert on the whole peninsula."—The Echo.

What is experience? A poor little hut constructed from the ruins of the palace of gold and marble, called our illusions.—Abbe Roux.

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