

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY THE REV. F. P. HICKEY, O. S. B.

LOW SUNDAY

THE VICTORY OF FAITH

"That believing, you may have life in His Name." (John xx. 31.)

Christ, our Lord, rose from the dead to prove His Divinity, that we might have faith in His name. Faith is a gift from God, and the necessary gift, for without it we cannot please God nor attain to life everlasting. So St. Paul calls it a mystery which cannot be acquired by learning or reasoning, it is a gift from the Almighty which we must accept and treasure, whereby we believe without doubting what God has revealed. "Thus it is to know God and Him Whom He sent, Christ Jesus, our Lord."

The first effect, then, of having the Faith is that we become children of God. "For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," says St. Paul (Gal. iii. 26). Raised up from this world, our souls can truly pray: "Our Father, Who art in heaven." Secondly, by faith, Christ dwells in our hearts. Him, then, we must obey, the God of Truth; to Him we must be loyal as our King; to Him we must be devoted, for He is the God of love. Thus we are "holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience" (I Tim. iii. 10). The third glorious effect will be our salvation! "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls," as St. Peter assures us (I Pet. i. 9).

But to have been endowed with this great and necessary gift—faith—is not all. We, in the first place, must obey it. We cannot tamper with it, or pick and choose amidst the doctrines revealed; but simply we have to accept whatever it may dictate. And one moment's thought shows us the reason—because faith is of God, all-wise, all-holy, and all-powerful. And calmly to accept obediently is not all. We have to work with it. Nothing availeth but "faith that worketh by charity" (Gal. v. 6). We have to work for heaven; faith shows us the way. Not in the conceits of our own will shall we find the way to heaven, but in following the footsteps, the precepts of Him Who is the author of our Faith. Not only to work, but we must constantly and carefully hold fast to our faith. "Watch ye, stand fast in the Faith, do manfully, be strengthened" (I Cor. xvi. 13). Be wise and listen to the warning of the great apostle, St. Paul. He had adversaries of the Faith; he was quick to note their guile and hold in denouncing their insidious attacks. As then, so now, the world battles against the Faith in every way, by open attack, by slander, by ridicule; and cunning and danger are added to these attacks by the wiles and power of the evil one. The ways of the world, the maxims, the life of the world are all against Christ and His Church. We are in the world, but we must not be of the world, but "must hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience" (I Tim. iii. 10).

If others disbelieve and are unwilling to accept the Faith in its divine entirety, we on our part, to make reparation, must believe all the more, work with it in all charity, and hold fast to it in all loyalty. Faith is a great and heavenly gift, but what a weight of responsibility rests on those who have received it! We have to be the champions of the most high God. To give Him glory, to spread His Kingdom is for us our duty and our labor of love. And the remembrance of Him, for Whom we are striving, should make us bold and strenuous and earnest. And with all humility and holy fear, lest we fall away, let us labor. We must always remember that it is God Who gives us both to will and to accomplish. And that should be our prayer; grateful thanks for the Faith, that gives us the good will and the impulse; and humble supplication that we may not be slack in our endeavors, cowardly when difficulties surround us; but fight the good fight to the very end for Christ's dear sake.

What a vile object is a lukewarm Catholic! He is miserable in his own heart, for he knows that he is not living as a child of God, as one in whom Christ dwells, as one to whom the salvation of his soul and the glory of God should be the supreme impulse and work of his life. He feels contemptible himself, and he is the object of contempt even to the worldly-minded. The world despises a coward. And what must he appear like to the angels and saints in heaven, and to his disappointed Master, Who has done so much, Who has done everything for a loving God could do for him?

Let us cherish our Faith and be grateful for it. Let us endeavor to be of those "who, by the power of God, are kept by Faith unto salvation." That the trial of your Faith may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the appearing of Jesus Christ; in Whom, having not seen, you love; in Whom also now, though you see Him not, you believe; and believing shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorified, receiving the end of your Faith, even the salvation of your souls. (I Pet. i. 5-9.)

Those only watch, Oh, my God! who think of You and love You. All the rest sleep; they dream dreams, and attach themselves to shadows. You are the only reality.

GENERAL INTENTION FOR APRIL

RECOMMENDED AND BLESSED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE PIUS XI.

CATHOLICS IN POLITICS

In the Christian man, divine grace evolves character, the proof of which is conduct, from a day to day common and base as fallen human nature; the moulder of character is conscience; the teacher of conscience is religion; and the light of religion is God's relation. This Heaven-sent revelation, by the light of which religion teaches conscience how to mould character rightly as it rises by grace from the spiritual mire of mere nature, sets before regenerate man certain lessons that he is to master and certain lessons that he is to teach. These are his life's tasks. He is to accomplish this in the sweat of his brow; for, by the fact of creation, he has been called, not to a barren existence of lethargic inactivity, but to a life full of purpose, energy, and high resolve. He is in this world that, at least in some small and unobtrusive way, the world may be bettered by his presence. Only if he were to dwell wholly unknown as a hermit, remote from the haunts of all his fellow-men, could he fail, in every sense of the word, to exercise over the lives of others, somehow, somewhere, sometimes, an influence akin to leadership.

"For none of us liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself," is the way in which St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, expresses the thought that man's life and death are not chiefly for his own good and benefit. A Christian man, then, in his capacity of disciple or learner, is to take in and make his own certain lofty lessons. Briefly put, these lessons teach him how to live and work with others; or, in a little more detail, whether at home or in social intercourse, or in his business relations, or in parish activities, or in any other feature of his life as an intelligent and patriotic factor in the body politic, they teach him to demean himself as becomes his Christian character.

But, we must add, whatever his limitations, a Christian man, inasmuch as he is a member of a society, domestic, religious or civil, is always a teacher, and therefore, he is in some way an exponent of thought and a leader. Though he may never sit in the professor's chair nor harangue the multitude from the tribune, he has a weighty message for the world. He is tutor to humanity. His life-work is to be the messenger of the Church as the Church is the messenger of God. A lofty commission from a lofty source! In his continence and honesty, in the fulfilling of his duty toward his neighbor, wherever that neighbor may be, and in the faithful and conscientious practice of his holy religion, he is ever to let his light shine, not merely to be seen of men, but unto the glory of Him Whom his integrity honors. Fame is the voice of men; conscience is the voice of God. There is no withholding such a teacher of such lessons. A Christian man, therefore, because he is a Christian man, is to be a man of character, is to be a learner, and to be a teacher. In this threefold capacity is summed up the whole reason of his being. Let us give a few reflective moments to the consideration of each of these three phases of his existence.

Mere natural brilliancy of intellect does not constitute the Christian character; else, Aristotle, who is now as in his own age, the prince of dialecticians, would not have laid down certain ethical principles which are so hopelessly at variance with truth. In itself, intellect is but fire and flame, the fierce forest fire with its attendant heavens of molten brass. Divine grace transforms the horrid monster into a willing and obsequious servant. Subjection to legitimate control, therefore, is nature's first law of efficiency. Harness the lightning and lo! the telegraph and the telephone are at our disposal. This is the history of the conversion of unbelievers of every age and rank in every period of the life of the Church. But, since this efficiency in man is not that of mere brute matter, but of a being capable of thought and free choice of action, it must be moulded into a form in keeping with its nature; that is, moral right and wrong and moral goodness and badness must be impressed upon character for its proper and normal development. Else, physical force may prevail and call itself right because of its might. The language of right and wrong is the language of conscience; but conscience, of itself, cannot peer far into the haze which elements in reason when the personal element is involved, and therefore it cannot descry unaided those unchanging laws which should govern it in this or that particular case. Conscience, because it is capable of learning, is to be taught.

Teachers abound. In the confused sight and sound of various alleged systems of knowledge, some of them will tell us that, objectively, mine and thine are so jumbled together in meaning that the resultant mish-mash may be indifferently either or neither or both. In other words, they tell us that what is doubtful or pleasing is right, and what is difficult or displeasing is wrong. This so-called rule of expediency is subversive of those rights of proprietorship which even

the babe shows and feels in its toys. It reduces all morality to the ignoble condition of a set of playthings in a nursery. The Church teaches with authority. Her whole message is to reason as it discusses the nature and relations of things, whatever they may be, and to the same reason as it discusses the rightness or wrongness in the nature and relations of those same things, whatever they may be. In faith and morals, the Church is the representative, duly accredited by divine revelation, of God Himself. When she teaches the whole body of the faithful what is contained in her divine commission, she may declare in so many words: "Thus saith the Lord!"

To the generality of non-Catholics, the attitude of Catholics toward the Church as a teacher of faith and morals is a mystery as dark as night and as deep as the sea; for, be it said with great regret but without any bitterness, the attitude of the heterodox toward their churches is rather one of patronage, toleration, or benevolent indulgence. To the outsider, it would seem that their churches exist to play an accompaniment while they do the singing, to voice their sentiments, and "to speak the piece" that they have selected. They teach their churches. The Church teaches us.

Equipped, so to speak, with accoutrements which can fail only when God fails, the faithful have learned certain lessons of right conduct which are to govern them in all the affairs of life. It is not idle to recall those lessons in general terms. At home, in social intercourse, in business relations, in parish activities, and in civic honors and duties, there are wrapped up great principles of right which cannot be sacrificed without sin; and there are great principles of wrong-doing which, though half the world cling to them with fanatical obstinacy, do not lose one whit of their moral blackness under the false and flimsy cloak of public approval. Before Pontius Pilate, a few held their peace and some murmured words of compassion. The mob shrieked "Crucify!"

Having made these great lessons of upright living his own, the disciple is qualified for the responsible office of teacher. He who would teach without having been taught could hardly offer himself as a duly qualified exponent of Catholic thought and practice. It has happened at times that the ill-advised and unsound tactics of some bold but unqualified champion in the lists have brought great and undeserved humiliations upon the Church; while at other times, Catholics have become infected, to some extent, with the errors which are rife in the social atmosphere which they breathe; for, as good Father Frederick W. Faber once said very pointedly, it is hard to live among icebergs and not become chilled. Unaware ignorance is easily transformed into flintlike obstinacy.

The parable of the leaven is the parable of the Catholic's action in public affairs. His is a patriotic duty to come to the assistance of the body politic, not only with his pecuniary contributions, but also with the political wisdom that he may have garnered. The government is never better than those who administer it, and the administration is never better than those who placed it in power. Water, of its own motion, does not rise higher than its source. It may be raised by heat, capillary attraction, and whirlwinds, but they are not water.

If the seraphic St. Francis could preach an effective sermon, as indeed he did, without pronouncing a word, so the Catholic can teach without opening a school or summoning pupils. If he is known as a Catholic, he is thereby constituted, in a general sense, a representative of the Church; for, although it is unfair to the Church, the public perceive the words and actions of the Church in the words and actions of a Catholic. Even if the public do set up an artificial, one-sided and faulty standard for judging the Church, it is for Catholics to rise loyally to the occasion and really speak and act as their holy faith would have them speak and act, for then and only then, are their words and actions reasonably and justly attributable to the Church.

If we have ventured to set down twice the lessons that a Catholic is to learn, there is sufficient warrant, we take it, to repeat the lessons that he is to teach. Because he has learned to love and practise lessons of continence, honesty, duty, and religious observance, it becomes a part of his duty to give the world an example of upright living, and thus he becomes a teacher. If there were one set of commandments for private life and another set for public life, the Church could not be ignorant of so vital a fact. She knows of but one set of ten commandments. Therefore, these same ten and all these ten are equally for all occasions, whether public or private. As continence and honesty are to adorn the soul both of the humble hickster and the world's greatest accountant, so are they to be among the spiritual ornaments of those who have some share in the administration of public affairs. As duty to one's neighbor and responsibility at the bar of conscience to Almighty God cannot be taken out of private life without destroying its high ideal and leaving it only a mutilated remnant of its former self, so the

same two lessons must be active and vivifying principles in the public life of the people.

Duty is a word that bespeaks conscience. In public affairs, therefore, there is a duty which is a duty in conscience; else, the meaning of the word duty is corrupted. This is no secret to Catholics. If others see fit to attempt the impossible feat of effecting an absolute divorce between private life and public life, it is for Catholics to speak up for duty, and their work as teachers in this respect is worth all the labor it may involve. What costs nothing is worth only what is paid for it. As a little leaven leavens the whole mass, so it is a matter only of conscientious effort to introduce and maintain in public affairs those lessons which please God by sanctifying the soul. "Happy is that people whose God is the Lord." (Ps. cxliii. 15.)

HENRY J. SWIFT, S. J.

"WHAT'S YOUR HURRY?"

This is an age famous for time-saving machinery. Surely then, we ought to have plenty of time. In reality we have less than before the advent of speed. It may be a pose; but we insist on rushing madly about. It may be doubted if this adds a moment to our time. We carry our rush tactics into our church. We rush in at the last moment—at least, it is hoped that we come no later. But this much is certain: we do rush out of church. Even before the priest has finished the last Gospel, we spring to our feet ready to bear down those that might oppose our onslaught. If we are more contained we keep our patience until the prayers are said at the foot of the altar. But only great composure restrains us until the celebrant has left the sanctuary. The Latins had the word *extremum* (from temple) to mean hurriedly. Let us leave that distinction to heathenism. At the rear of every church a large glittering sign might be put: "What's your hurry?"—Pittsburg Catholic.

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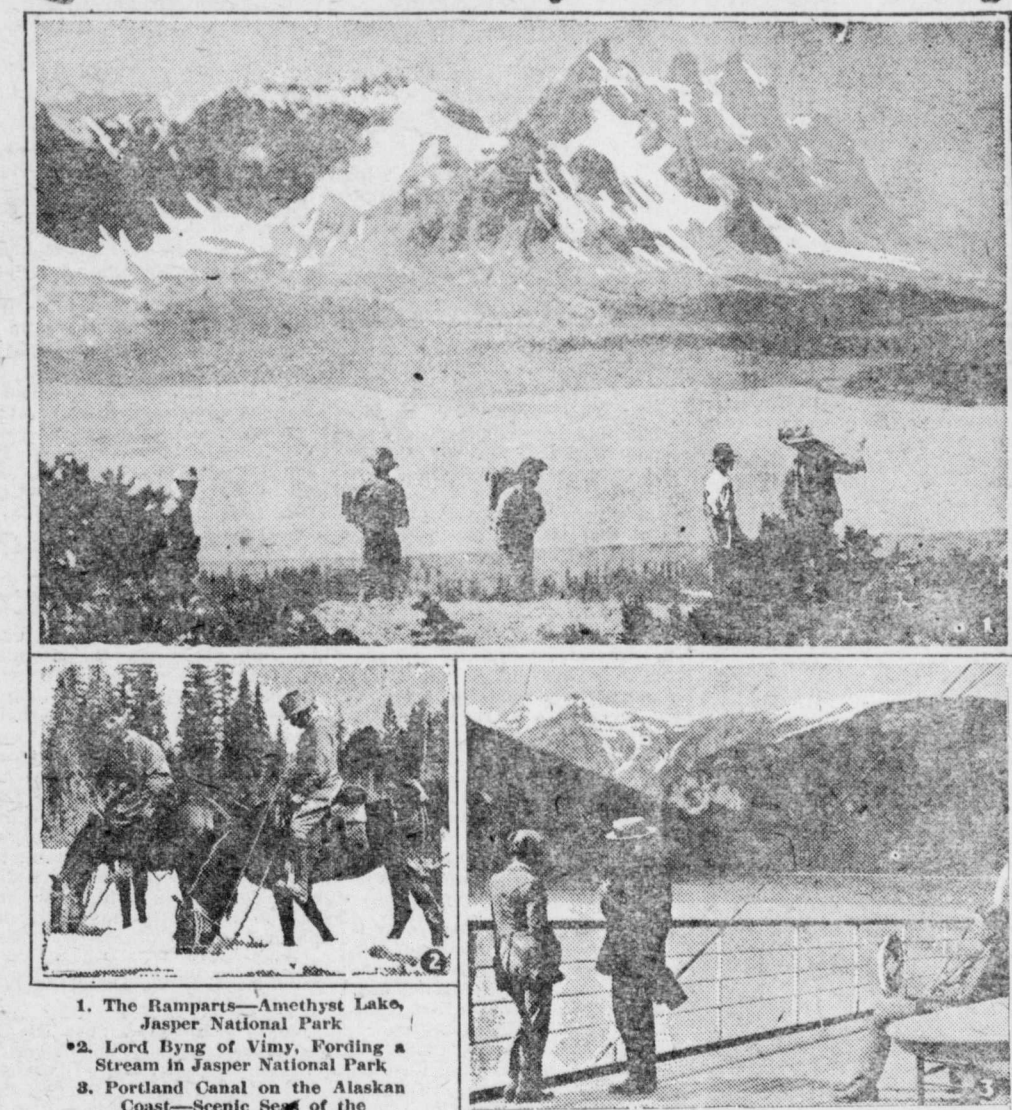
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"We have to-day travelled through the most glorious scenery it has ever been my privilege to witness."

In this simply-worded sentence, uttered during the course of a speech at Prince Rupert, the Duke of Devonshire, statesman, diplomat and traveller, paid tribute to Canada, of which he was then Governor-General. Like many of his predecessors he was no stranger to the beauties of nature in many parts of the world. Yet during his stay in this country he repeatedly extolled the fascination of Canadian scenery.

To-day Canadians are realizing that there are many wonderlands within the boundaries of their own country, as fair as anything that some of them have travelled over half the earth to see. That knowledge has given a great stimulus to their desire to know more about Canada by personal observation. Hence the growing appreciation of the educational value of travel intelligently planned and carried out. Many Canadians indeed plan their business trips so that they may be able to devote a little time to visiting beauty spots that lie in their way. Thus they find brief relaxation from the complexities and strain of modern business life.

It is in the summer months, however, that the minds of the majority of Canadians are turned to

travel. The sea, the lake, the quiet streams, the mountains, the rolling plains and the great forests, all have their appeal to the seekers of recreation, health, and pleasure.

Summer resorts and journeys full of charm and attractiveness are legion in their choice. But the trip of all trips, the one that is essential to the completion of knowledge by Canadians of Canada, is that across the Dominion to the Pacific coast. On the way lies Jasper National Park, a desirable stop-over point, which is an historic area. David Thompson, explorer and idealist, struggled with dauntless courage through this section of the country in 1810. In 1811 the Athabasca Pass through the Rockies was discovered, and about 1826 the Yellowhead Pass became known to the white man.

The men who led the way and blazed the trails through these passes, were fortunate if they made more than six or eight miles a day. Their discoveries opened a new route between the Pacific and Hudson Bay, over which, twice a year, dog sleigh and pack horse made trips with goods and passengers. That was considered one of the marvellous feats of the time. To-day this land of wonder may be traversed in a modern railway train at a speed of forty miles an hour, or may be viewed in leisurely fashion over roads and well defined trails, by those whose time permits of camping and exploring

among surroundings whose ever-present beauties are a source of never-ending amazement and delight.

To the travellers who journey thence on the Pacific coast, with its charm of climate, scenic setting, and growing cities and towns, there is in prospect the finest water trip in the world. The 750 miles of ocean voyage from Prince Rupert to Vancouver and Victoria, or on to Seattle, is incomparable in its beauty. This trip is a fitting climax to the succession of gorgeous scenic pictures that can never be erased from the observant mind.

Nature has been lavishly kind to Canada. Her resources in natural wealth are beyond human computation. The greatest factors in the development of these are the railways. What they have done to develop the country in a material sense can never be adequately described. Now they are bringing not only Canadians, but tourists from all over the world into touch with the matchless natural wonder places of the Dominion. They are in a very large measure responsible for the awakening to the fact that a land can be rich in all that makes for a great agricultural and manufacturing nation, and yet be noted to the ends of the earth for its scenic delights. In these phases of development the Canadian National Railway System is active.

A trip across Canada aside from the pleasure it gives, will prove to be of inestimable educational value.