

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

REV. F. P. HICKY, O. S. B. SECOND SUNDAY OF AVENT

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

"Hail full of grace" (Luke 1, 28). From Apostolic times the Church has always believed in the sinless Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Yet, though an ancient Festival, it is pre-eminently a modern one. For in the year 1854 Pope Pius IX. declared it to be a doctrine of faith, that Mary was conceived without sin.

Why was it decreed and made an Article of Faith? First, to defend the dignity of Mary. As long as her sinlessness was not assailed, it sufficed to leave the pious belief a matter of devotion.

The second reason was to rebuke the world, grown material, gross, licentious, which can believe in nothing purer than itself.

And, thirdly, to necessitate weakened Catholics to have the courage to stand up boldly in defence of their Immaculate Mother.

Though we, my dear brethren, believe in the Immaculate Conception on the authoritative word of the Church, it is good for us to recall to mind the reason why our Lady was Immaculate.

How much has been written on this subject! There are countless reasons and proofs, but as far as our devotion needs, they can be summed up in one word, "It was becoming."

For the honour of the Blessed Trinity! Daughter of the Heavenly Father, Spouse of the Holy Ghost, Mother of the Son! how could the most pure God ally Himself to anything that sin had sullied?

For the honour of the most Blessed Sacrament! We say, "Hail, true Body born of the Virgin Mary." And is it not repugnant that the Lamb of God, the spotless Victim of the altar, was born of a sinner?

Calvary tells us, too, that Mary must have been Immaculate! Standing by the cross, and, later, with the dead Body of Her Son laid on her lap, how could she have looked upon those wounds if she, by sin, had caused even one of them?

How could she have co-operated in our Redemption, if she had not been Immaculate?

Heaven cries out, too, "Mary Immaculate." For how could she be Queen of Heaven, if she did not transcend all the blessed Spirits there in holiness?

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false so very often, that perhaps we have worn out her patience and her pity.

This is a temptation, and we must never give in to such a thought against Mary Immaculate. Is she not the Mother of the Saviour of poor sinners? And her spotlessness makes her realize sin all the more, and be more filled with pity for us, poor sinners, that call upon her.

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HEALTHIEST ONE IN THE FAMILY

No Sign Of Dropsy And Kidney Trouble Since Taking "FRUIT-A-TIVES"



HATTIE WARREN Port Robinson, Ont., July 8th, 1915.

"We have used 'Fruit-a-tives' in our house for over three years and have always found them a good medicine. Our little girl, Hattie, was troubled with Kidney Disease. The doctor said she was threatened with Dropsy. Her limbs and body were all swollen and we began to think she could not live. Finally, we decided to try 'Fruit-a-tives'."

WILLIAM WARREN. 50c. a box, 6 for \$2.50, trial size, 25c. At all dealers or sent postpaid on receipt of price by Fruit-a-tives Limited, Ottawa.

offices and prayers. How wonderful, how inspiring is this holy "fellowship." The parables of the Kingdom reveals its corporate nature, and the continuity which links together the Kingdom in our midst and the Kingdom to come.

The next morning he set out with twenty-four men that he had selected from the Indians, and an old trapper, named Galpin, who had lived more than thirty years among the Sioux. They rode away towards the Bad Lands—an immense tract where nothing grew. It was the home of 5,000 pagan Indians, who knew nothing of the Catholic religion, except what they had heard about Father De Smet.

When the priest and his escort drew near this section, Father De Smet sent four men with a gift of tobacco to the enemies' camp.

"The gift of tobacco is equivalent to an invitation or signifies the desire for a conference upon an important matter," Father De Smet told his white friends in a letter. "If the tobacco is accepted you can present yourself; if not, access to the camp is forbidden you."

Six days after the delegation went to the camp with the tobacco, a band of Indians appeared, scouts and warriors, to smoke the pipe of peace with the missionary.

"Black Robe," they said, we accept your tobacco, but entrance to our camp is to you alone; no other white man could come out of it with his scalp."

Then "Black Robe" went with them, and five hundred hostile Indians came out to meet him. The priest unfurled a banner with the Holy Name of Jesus on one side and a picture of the Blessed Virgin on the other. Four chiefs rode up, greeted the priest, and the procession with the banner at the head started for the camp. The chiefs were called Four Horns, Black Moon, No Neck, and Sitting Bull—who was a very famous chief indeed.

Sitting Bull received Father De Smet most kindly, gave him a big lodge in the center of the camp, with a guard of warriors. For sixteen days "Black Robe" had been on the march, so he asked to be allowed to rest and he fell asleep, wrapped in his cloak, and with four thousand hostile Indians surrounding him.

Sitting Bull said to him in the morning: "I will listen to thy good words. In thy presence my hands fall to the ground as if dead." At a big council the Indians listened to the priest and agreed to make peace. The next day Father De Smet went back, with an escort; a warrior covered with scars carried the banner.

Another member of the guard was an aged Indian who wore on his breast a copper cross. This was the only religious emblem the priest had seen in the camp, so he asked the Indian where he got it.

"You gave it to me, 'Black Robe,'" said the Indian. "I have not laid it aside for twenty-six years. The cross has raised me to the clouds among my people. If I still walk the earth, it is to the cross that I owe it, and the great Spirit has blessed my family."

He then told how he had loved whisky at the time he met the missionary, and how he promised "Black Robe" to give up drink. He often longed for a drink, but then he would take the cross in his hands and say over the words the priest had spoken. "Since we first met, I have never touched a drop," he said.

Father De Smet wanted to baptize him, but couldn't wait to instruct him. "I will go with you, 'Black Robe,'" said the old man eagerly. He could be instructed when they camped, he thought. And the missionary gladly prepared the Indian, and at the end of eight days he baptized him.

Two days later the whole party got a fine reception at the Fort. The priest received great praise for his work, but, you may be sure, he did not forget his convert who treasured the iron cross.—Sacred Heart Review.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Years ago the notion prevailed that somehow the devotion of Catholics to the Blessed Virgin Mary was excessive and diminished, if it did not altogether destroy devotion to our Divine Lord.

In spite of the insult to Catholic piety and intelligence which this notion implies, and in spite of the luminous saying of Cardinal Newman, "The glory of the Mother is for the sake of the son," the notion has not yet entirely disappeared. Catholics find it difficult to understand this attitude on the part of non-Catholics. Just as they cannot understand why the glory of the stars should eclipse the glory of the sun for any human being, for as it has been said by some one "only idiots prefer the better to the best," and to all Catholics, Mary with all her glory is only a star, whereas Christ is the sun.

As we are especially concerned with eradicating false notions from the minds of our fellow Americans, we are especially grateful that the feast of the Immaculate Conception set apart to emphasize Mary's singular prerogative has been selected as the patron feast of the Church in America for the periodic celebration of this feast on each recurring eighth day of December will give the press and the pulpit an opportunity of repeating what the public is more or less likely to forget. The words "Hail Mary, full of grace," addressed by the angel to the virgin when announcing to her that she was to be the mother of the coming Saviour, were sufficient to enable a non-Catholic poet to write the line which is quoted perhaps more frequently than any other line of poetry "—and that ought to be sufficient to any one with a sense of fitness, for surely if the Saviour was to be born of woman, it was fit and proper that she who bore Him should not know sin in any shape or form.

Much stress is laid on the paucity of texts about Mary in Scripture, and on the meagre character of devotion to her in the early days of Christianity. It is quite true that Holy Scripture is singularly silent about Mary after the meeting in the Upper Chambers in Jerusalem, but that was to be expected, for St. John, who would be the one to whom we should naturally look for details concerning her who was committed to his care, was so absorbed in setting forth the glories of our Lord's Divinity, that he had no time for even so marvelous a creature as Mary; and if early history has not the fulness of detail which our affection for the Blessed Virgin would prompt us to expect, that was in keeping with the development and growth which are apparent in all theology. The idea of Mary's sinlessness was there in germ from the beginning, and it gradually expanded with time; and the fire of devotion to Mary kindled early in the hearts of the faithful kept burning brighter and brighter until it burst forth in all its brilliancy when Pope Pius IX., after feeling the pulse of the entire Catholic world proclaimed that Mary was conceived without sin, and that this singular prerogative should be known to the faithful as the Immaculate Conception. That means that unlike all the other children of Adam, the soul of Mary was never never subject to sin, for in the words of a poet:

"God gazed on thy soul—it was spotless and fair, For the empire of sin—it had never been there."

When the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was proclaimed an article of faith in 1854, it was regarded as a providential reminder to those who were disposed to make light of sin in any form. As the world has not improved during the sixty-two years that have elapsed since then we must regard the annual celebration of the promulgation of the dogma as equally providential, because if anywhere the words of the poet—

"God of might, be with us yet, Lest we forget, lest we forget," are eminently appropriate, it is in connection with keeping alive within us the sense of sin.—The Guardian.

"BLACK ROBE" AND THE INDIAN

Here is an Indian story that really happened, nearly fifty years ago. There are two heroes in it—one, the brave and holy Father De Smet, S. J., the other an aged Indian. You have read of the Father's noble work for the Indians and for the United States. Leading men said that the priest could do what no one else could to bring about peace with the tribes. So the Government looked to him for help when there was a great difficulty to overcome. One time a Council of Indians was going to be held, and Father De Smet said he would go himself and persuade the hostile chiefs to attend the conference.

He was then sixty-eight years old. "Don't go, 'Black Robe,'" said the friendly Indians. "It will cost you your scalp."

But the missionary said he wasn't afraid. Before a picture of the Blessed Virgin, Mother and Protector of all nations," he told the Indians, "six lamps are burning day and night during my absence, and before these lamps more than a thousand children beg heaven to protect me." "How wonderful! We want to go too," said the Indians.

"When do you start?" "To-morrow at sunrise," answered the priest.

The next morning he set out with twenty-four men that he had selected from the Indians, and an old trapper, named Galpin, who had lived more than thirty years among the Sioux. They rode away towards the Bad Lands—an immense tract where nothing grew. It was the home of 5,000 pagan Indians, who knew nothing of the Catholic religion, except what they had heard about Father De Smet.

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LUX

To give sweater coats a new lease of life

Now that sweater coats are getting more expensive, it is more than ever desirable that you wash yours with LUX. Of all things a sweater coat, which is seen so much, must be kept soft, fluffy, fleecy and "new" in appearance. You can keep yours that way and wash it again and again if you do this:

Four boiling water over LUX flakes—pure essence of soap—allowing 3 or 4 tablespoons for every gallon of water you use. Whip into a creamy lather—a few seconds is needed. Then put in the garment and stir it about. Let it soak until cool enough for your hands to squeeze the water out of the coat—the dirt just runs away. Rinse in two or three relays of tepid water, and hang to dry.

Very simple. Anyone can do it—just a few minutes' work and you get a result that the most expert French cleaner might envy.

LUX won't shrink woollens. Won't hurt any fabric or color that pure water can safely touch.

At all grocers —British made Lever Brothers Limited Toronto

Advertisement for Old Dutch Cleanser. Includes image of a kitchen sink and a can of cleanser. Text: "Quickly Cuts Burnt-in Grease from the range and all cooking utensils. That means your labor will be lessened and your kitchen brightened. Never harms your hands."

Advertisement for Revillon Freres furs. Text: "We want, and will pay highest prices for all kinds of RAW FURS. Ship your skins to us at once. We pay Express Charges, or Postage. Price list and shipping tags sent on request. Revillon Freres 134 McGill St., MONTREAL, P.Q."

Advertisement for St. Thomas College. Text: "St. Thomas College Chatham, N. B. Boarding and Day School Conducted by the Basilian Fathers. COLLEGE, HIGH SCHOOL, COMMERCIAL SCHOOL, PREPARATORY SCHOOL. The College is beautifully situated near the Miramichi River. Fine Athletic Field. Wrought Skating Rink. WRITE FOR OUR CATALOGUE"

Advertisement for Stained Glass Memorial Windows and Leaded Lights. Text: "STAINED GLASS MEMORIAL WINDOWS AND LEADED LIGHTS. B. LEONARD QUEBEC: P. Q. We Make a Speciality of Catholic Church Windows"