

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

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

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

CHRISTMAS
"There was no room for them in the inn," (Luke ii. 7.)

There is a word ever dear to our hearts, but dearer at this Christmas season than at any other time. Our hearts agree with the old saying, "There is no place like home."

Just as it was nineteen hundred years ago, there will be gatherings of friends and happy hours spent in our homes this Christmas-time.

But there were two poor travellers—oh, you know them well—who had journeyed in the winter-time all the way from Nazareth.

So much for the world at large, but not, please God, as regards ourselves. Yet even amongst Catholics there are men who forget Christ at Christmas-time.

He deserves a welcome; and we can give Him one. He seeks a home, and we have one to offer Him—our heart.

At last earth's hope was granted, and God was a child on earth; and a thousand angels chanted the lowly midnight Birth.

reign supreme; and then, so soon, our home will be with Him in the Kingdom of His glory.

NO ROOM IN THE INN

Footsore and weary, Mary tried some rest to find; but was denied. "There is no room," the blind ones cried.

Meekly the Virgin turned away, No voice entreating her to stay; There was no room for God that day.

No room for her, round whose tired feet Angels bowed in transport sweet, The Mother of their Lord to greet;

No room for Him, in whose small hand The troubled sea and mighty land Lie cradled like a grain of sand.

No room, O Babe Divine, for Thee, That Christmas night; and even we Dare shut our hearts and turn the key.

In vain Thy pleading Baby-cry Strikes our deaf souls, we pass Thee by, Unsheltered 'neath the wintry sky.

No room for God; O Christ, that we Should bar our doors, nor ever see The Saviour waiting patiently.

Fling wide the doors. Dear Christ, turn back, The ashes of my heart lie black;

Of light and warmth a total lack. How can I bid Thee enter here, Amid the desolation drear

Of lukewarm love and craven fear? What bleaker shelter can there be Than my poor heart's tepidity.

Chilled, wind-tossed as the wintry sea? Dear Lord, I shrink from Thy pure eye;

No home to offer Thee have I, Yet in Thy Mercy, pass not by.

—AGNES REFFLER

CHRISTMAS NIGHT

At last Thou art come, little Saviour! And Thine angels fill midnight with song;

Thou art come to us, gentle Creator! Whom Thy creatures have sighed for so long.

Thou art come to Thy beautiful Mother, She hath looked on Thy marvelous face;

Thou art come to us, Maker of Mary! And she was Thy channel of grace.

Thou hast brought with Thee plentiful pardon, And our souls overflow with delight;

Our hearts are half broken, dear Jesus, With the joy of this wonderful night!

We have waited so long for Thee, Saviour, Thou art come to us, dearest, at last!

Oh, bless Thee, dear Joy of Thy Mother, This is worth all the wearisome past!

Thou art come, Thou art come, Child of Mary! Yet we hardly believe Thou art come!

It seems such a wonder to have Thee, New Brother! with us in our home.

Thou wilt stay with us, Master and Maker, Thou wilt stay with us now evermore;

We will play with Thee, beautiful Brother! On Eternity's jubilant shore.

—REV. FREDERICK W. FABER

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO!

Gloria in excelsis! sound the thrilling song; In excelsis Deo! roll the hymn along.

Gloria in excelsis! let the heavens ring; In excelsis Deo! welcome, new-born King!

Gloria in excelsis, over the sea and land; In excelsis Deo! chant the anthem grand.

Gloria in excelsis! let us all rejoice; In excelsis Deo! lift each heart and voice.

Gloria in excelsis! swell the hymn on high; In excelsis Deo! sound it to the sky.

Gloria in excelsis! sing it, sinful earth, Is excelsis Deo! for the Saviour's birth.

Thus joyful and victoriously, Glad and ever so gloriously, High as the heavens, wide as the earth,

Swelleth the hymn of the Saviour's birth. At last earth's hope was granted,

And God was a child on earth; and a thousand angels chanted the lowly midnight Birth.

A PILGRIMAGE TO CASCIA

EN ROUTE

By Cecil Fanning

My brain is absolutely in a whirl tonight, for I am in Cascia. I have been talking at a table with a group of men, each of whom had a command of several languages.

While we were reviewing the frescoes of Giotto, in the Upper Church, depicting the miracles of St. Francis, we talked of Padre Pia of Foggia, who is also a member of the order of St. Francis.

I had completely forgotten my little buttons guide, but he waited patiently for me in the sun, and perched on the cycle back of my "Fearless Fiend," took me to the tomb of Saint Clara and the Cathedral.

The bells of Assisi were striking eleven-thirty, as we started for Foligno, again en route to Cascia. We arrived there at twelve-thirty.

The descent for Foligno is in a valley with groves of ancient gnarled olive trees. A wide view of the Umbrian mountains, lovely and peaceful, would have been more appreciated but for the heat which was almost overpowering.

By one-thirty we were ready to proceed to Cascia. We were—but our conveyance was not! For at the city gate, my chauffeur discovered that we were out of benzina, the Italian word for gasoline, and because, like all the shops in Italy, the local garage was indulging in its daily two-hour siesta, we were forced to wait nervously until two o'clock.

For years I have wanted to travel by motorcycle. I have toured Europe and America in everything from a Ford to a Rolls-Royce, but have ever watched with envy the motorcyclists.

My motor was a noisy, aggressive, diabolical and defiant. It should be prohibited by law, but it isn't—and I am for it.

We started off, and how perilously close to nature I seemed in my bassinet... actually only about twelve inches from mother earth, and going at twenty, thirty and forty miles an hour!

The scenery, withal, was almost overpowering in its loveliness... Suddenly my chauffeur slowed down and, pointing to a hill top which rose ahead with a soft mist or haze of summer over it, exclaimed, with hushed tone: "Signor, Mont Assisi!"

There it was—truly awe-inspiring. The discovery revealed to us that we were at least six miles off the road to Cascia, but I was never so thankful for a guide's error, and we rode right on into Assisi.

At this hotel, I secured the services of a perky little page in uniform decorated with many brass buttons, whom I asked to direct me to the San Francis Monastery.

My guide at the monastery was a young man, of Polish parentage from near Boston. He will be ordained and sent back to America next year.

Among the collection of personal souvenirs of St. Francis which he showed me, is a fragment of a habit worn by the Saint. It is of neutral gray homespun quality and not the brown or black that most painters have clothed him in.

The order at present wears black, but I was told that in 1226 it returned to the original gray. While looking at the collection of relics, I told my fellow countrymen that I liked to think that St. Francis and all the Saints were not very different from ourselves...

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from everywhere, and frequently a whiff of delicious fragrance would be wafted to us as we hurried by, exchanging therefor, our own sacrilegious odor of exploded benzina. At times I was ramplined of the north-west Columbia River Highway (only there was no great river below) and again, of some fertile canyon of Colorado.

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all the difficulties now preventing a settlement of the question. The education of the clergy is another subject discussed by the last meeting of the hierarchy. In the three parts of "Anna and Russia," different requirements existed for seminarians. It is now proposed to establish uniformity in the various dioceses and raise the standards wherever they are found to be low.

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CENTRIST COMMENT

By Rev. Dr. Wilhelm Baron von Caplaine

Cologne, Oct. 23.—Publication of that part of the former Kaiser's Memoirs in which he discusses his relations with the Center Party and the Catholic Church in Germany, has provoked considerable comment in the Centrist press.

A typical Centrist comment in one of the party's papers reads as follows: "That the former Kaiser was never the friend of the Center party is made known by many of his public statements. And because he still retains that feeling today, he lacks, even after the World War, a proper estimate of the patriotism of the Center party. The former Emperor would have done well to have spared the party this attempt to cast suspicion upon it."

He who has not suffered and overcome some fiery temptation is unworthy of Divine contemplation.

Several questions of the utmost importance to the Church and to national life were discussed by the bishops at the recent annual meeting of the Polish Hierarchy. These meetings, which were impossible before the reconstruction of Poland, are a dominant factor in the work of Polish reconstruction and unity, as they tend to restore uniformity, to those Polish dioceses which, while under the domination of three distinct empires, were unable to retain the homogeneity they possessed before the dismemberment of Poland.

One of the principal tasks undertaken by the bishops is that of making it possible for Catholicism, which was oppressed by hostile governments, to develop a new life. To this end, the formation of Catholic organizations such as exist in other countries, but which were hitherto prohibited in Poland, will be encouraged by every possible means, as will Catholic and social action on the part of the clergy.

The bishops have all agreed on establishing in every diocese associations of Catholic young people and Catholic labor unions.

Another question to which attention is being devoted by the bishops at their annual meetings is the support of the clergy. The governments which formerly divided Poland, especially the Russian government, confiscated property belonging to the Church, and administered all church property on the pretext of relieving the clergy of this responsibility. In return the government paid the clergy a very meager stipend.

The present Polish Diet has voted that the adjustment of the question of Church property must be made in concert with the ecclesiastical authorities. The intention of the government is to take possession of this property, divide it among the peasants, and compensate the clergy by providing for its support. Such a project obviously presented great difficulties, and the negotiations are proceeding very slowly. A mixed Commission has been formed, composed of an "Ecclesiastical or Papal Commission," appointed by the Holy Father, and including five archbishops, several bishops and some superiors of religious orders, and a "Government Commission" made up of representatives appointed by the government. This joint Commission will endeavor to overcome

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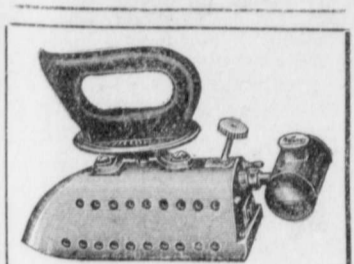
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