

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOY, D. D.

TRINITY SUNDAY

THE MYSTERY OF THE TRINITY

"Going, therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. xxviii, 19.)

Christ's command to His apostles and their successors was, as this text indicates, to initiate the Christian into His religion by baptizing him "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." He was not to be baptised in the name of any of these three Persons, but in the name of each one of them. By this a proof is afforded us that the three Persons are one and the same God. Each Person is God, yet the three are one God. The human intellect is incapable of ascending to the height of this great mystery, and while we admit it and believe in it, it is faith that makes us do so. But we could not have a stronger reason for our belief in it, than is found in the demand only such truths regarding Him as our intellects can fathom? Many do make this demand, but they destroy in their minds the truth about God as He Himself has revealed it. And if He, in His very words, particularly that of creation, has kept so many truths hidden from us, how much more regarding Himself has He not kept from us? He has revealed to us what is necessary for our temporal and eternal welfare, and we should not ask for more. Even if He were to make more truths known to us, we would not be able to comprehend them, and the number of truths to be believed through faith would be greatly increased. This would be a stumbling-block to the conversion of many who are inclined toward rationalism. What we know of God through revelation and through creation is enough for our intellects to carry. More would be almost a burden to us.

In the presence of God, we are bewildered, as an ordinary person is perplexed in the presence of some very intricate machinery. After sufficient explanation, this person would acquire some idea of the machinery, but to try to have him understand it thoroughly would only be to weary him. He would be satisfied with the slight knowledge he was given of it, and would realize that to understand it minutely and perfectly, it would be necessary for him to go through years of study and practice. We understand a certain amount about God, and we know much of Him through faith, but we do not know all about Him, and we should use the means—namely, the leading of a good, religious life—of knowing everything regarding Him in the world to come. If we live as we should, He promises that He will lift the veil from our eyes in His heavenly kingdom, and we shall then "know Him as He is" and "see Him face to face."

The knowledge we have of this great mystery of the Trinity should be an incentive to us to labor and yearn for our heavenly home. This mystery is so great that the mind can not conceive it; it is something too dignified for man, as he now is, to enter into its presence; it is something that will so consume our affection and so brighten our vision that we will never, even for a moment, withdraw from its all-absorbing power. It is a fact that people love to see the great things of this world, and to gaze upon and examine its wonderful sights. They will spend years accumulating sufficient wealth to journey to where these things are and mean-while patiently await the opportunity of having even a few glances, or of spending a few days, among the objects of their admiration. Did they not find these truly wonderful and great, but only ordinary, capable of being understood by all, they would be greatly disappointed, and would be heard to say, "It is only ordinary." People yearn for the sight of the truly magnificent and the really exceptional.

Now, the Trinity is something more wonderful than man can ever imagine. God has told us so. We experience the truth of this when we try to understand this mystery. Yet God has said that it will be the lot of His faithful children to be in the presence of the Trinity, see it, and enjoy it forever. Can we refrain, then, from laboring faithfully and untiringly that this joy may some day be ours? Were we given the opportunity to see all the great wonders of the world, we surely would take advantage of it. Shall we allow this chance of enjoying forever the greatest of all blessings go by? This opportunity is contained in our days on earth. If we make them days of profit and mold our lives after our Model,

Christ, the opportunity will not be lost. We must bear in mind also that every day counts. To see a day dawn is a blessing from God—but the day is to be spent in a manner that will make us more worthy of the great blessings He intends for His faithful. To spend it for the world alone is to waste it. Today, as we are reminded of this greatest of mysteries, let us thank God for its existence; for the dignity it adds to our religion, causing it to possess truths that are superior to man's limited intelligence; for the incentive it affords us to work faithfully for its realization in our future life; but, above all, let us pledge the Three Persons our undivided service, highest love, and deepest faith.

AN IRISH MARIA MONK

Were I an Irishman I should be heartily ashamed of some Irishmen now writing about Ireland and her people. My experiences with the Irish and the near-Irish have been less than theirs. They fairly justify my visions, stirred by the events of Easter Week, 1916, of a singularly pure and upright people. But if I were to credit these new Irish writers, the "Neo-Celts," so scorned of that fine critic, Joyce Kilmer, I should now regard the Irish as incredibly vulgar, sordid beyond conception, a people endowed with the manners of barbares, the language of fishwives and the morals of pervers.

These reflections are prompted by the perusal of a coarse and ignorant book, written by an Irish apostate, to attack the asceticism of the Catholic Church, exemplified in her celibate clergy and in the Sisterhoods. Long ago Newman described the man who wrote it. He is the wretched creature who, seeing in our consecrated Sisters a purity which is utterly beyond his concept, transfers to them all the foulness that is in his own mind. Reverence for womanhood, it is commonly thought, is characteristic of the Irish. Rather is it characteristic of every good man, and "O, the pity of it, Iago," dominates his conduct when some woman casts the pearl of her purity before him. To make capital of the tragedy is impossible for any decent man; unless he is wholly vile, it is unthinkable that he should forthwith attribute the weakness of some unhappy woman to all her sisters. For men who specialize in attacks upon the chastity of womanhood, we Americans have a special name. It is a very good one, although we seldom put it in print. It comes from the lips of a general, generally accompany it with a blow; and the Recording Angel, as he notes the material sin, marks it as an act of virtue.

The name of this last apostate I shall not give, nor do I propose to advertise his stupid book, which is a hodge-podge of Gallic filth, steeped in a decadent Irish imagination. As attractive as a midden-heap, and as accurate as a chronicle of Munich, it is written in the spirit of Maria Monk, who, as Chesterton wrote years ago, was "only a dirty half-wit." Being a half-wit, Maria was hardly capable of incurring moral guilt, and I am tempted to extend the same absolution to my Irish apostate. But what of the American publishers who have given their name, a name somewhat begrimed, it is true, to this compost of vice and imbecility, and what of the critics who have pronounced the book a "proof," a "demonstration" of the moral evil is promoted by the asceticism of the convents to which we Catholics entrust our sisters and our daughters?

Frankly, is it true that almost all our Catholic girls embrace the religious life under compulsion exerted by parents or by some priest, or because they are disappointed in love? Is it true that of nine Catholic Sisters, eight are procuresses, sexual perverts, semi-lunatics, or plain common fools? Is it true that Catholic priests send their cast mistress to the convent, or plan to seduce the consecrated women within their walls? Is it true that our Bishops are either unspeakable fools who do not know the inner life of the convents, given them as a solemn charge, or knowing the villain which they shelter and develop, encourage them?

I must beg pardon for formulating these questions. They are answered by my apostate in the affirmative, and the sole penitent fact in connection with his pornographic book is the welcome, incredible as this may appear, which it has received from the reviewers. "The result of real experience," comments the London Times. "The psychological revelation is masterly," writes the London Herald. "A powerful demonstration," contributes the New York Herald of the inherent wrongness of asceticism. "Sober, ripe, and of the utmost convincingness," chimes in the Nation. But the choicest criticism is reserved for the pen of a man, whose Jesuit brother has probably aided many an Irish girl to a life of beneficent activity in the convent. "It is one of the most amazing revelations ever made, irrefragably honest." And all this weighty verbiage in praise of a book which professes to show "the inherent wrongfulness of asceticism!" What would any sane critic say of a novel written to demonstrate that lawyers, as a rule, are dishonest men, that of every ten physicians, nine are immoral, and

that Protestant clergymen are, generally speaking, libertines?

Why cannot the same common-sense be used in reviewing this new Maria Monk? But these critics cannot absolve their duty to the public in a few sounding paragraphs, full of a moral indignation which does them credit. Granting their conviction that the charges made by this apostate are true, they are scoundrels if they leave their case within the pages of a novel. A novel is rightly suspect, for an author creates his facts, shaping them to the purpose in hand. If these critics are upright men, they will at once approach the Archbishop of New York, or the Prelate of the diocese in which they find themselves. Putting aside the novel, which is not competent testimony, they will present the facts which have convinced them of the novel's irreproachable honesty. It is possible, at least approximately, their own unstained whiteness. They are bound to do this, or to admit themselves guilty of a dastardly and unmanly attack upon women, the hem of whose garments neither I nor they are worthy to touch.

The challenge is fair, but it will not be accepted. Any stick is good if it beats Catholicism, especially consecrated Catholic women. But they dare not accept it. Like every prelate in the Catholic Church, the Archbishop of New York knows what convents are, and why they exist. It is incredible that he should be ignorant of the realities within their walls; equally incredible that he would shelter them, did he not know them to be places of sanctity. And likewise all good men know what convents are. Even men who, although not candidates for the halo, have not fallen so low as to believe womanly purity an impossibility, reverence these consecrated virgins who minister to the afflicted in body and soul, or throughout the night hold up white hands in prayer for the salvation of the world. That an apostate should not show this reverence, is easily understandable.

We Americans, as I have said, have a name for the professional defamer of women. I may be permitted to quote it toward the end of a paragraph, written by Brann of Texas:

"The Roman Catholic Sisterhoods, God bless them! One of these angels of mercy can walk unattended and unharmed through our reservation at midnight. She can visit with impunity the most degraded dive in the Whitechapel district. At her coming the ribald song is stilled, and the oath dies on the lips of the loafer. Fallen creatures reverently touch the hem of her garment, and men steeped to the very lips in crime, involuntarily remove their hats as a tribute to noble womanhood. The very atmosphere seems to grow sweet from her coming, and the howl of all hell's demons is silent."

"None so low in the barrel-house, the gambling den or the brothel as to breathe a word against her good name. But when we turn to the Baptist pulpit, there we find an inhuman monster crying, 'Unclean! Unclean!' God help a religious denomination that will countenance such an infamous cur." For the Baptist pulpit I substitute the London Times, the New York Herald, and the Nation, and leave them to extract such comfort as they can from Brann's scathing denunciation. Not I, but they themselves, have written down what manner of men they are.—John Willbye in America.

SOCIAL ACTION IN FRANCE

Fifty years ago, at the close of the Franco-Prussian war, Count Albert de Mun, then a young cavalry officer, watched a group of insurrectionists passing through the gates of Paris. They were the remnant of that misguided undertaking, the Paris Commune. "Poor misguided men," exclaimed Albert de Mun. "Why did you rise up against your country?" One of the prisoners looked him squarely in the eye and said savagely. "It is you who are the insurrectionists. You the military men, the bourgeois, the rich, the priests," you have risen against the people!" Count de Mun saw the injustice of this remark. But he also saw its cause. False prophets had sown the seeds of hatred among workmen and this was the ripening fruit. Meditation brought inspiration. "How can this people whom we love, so misjudge us?" he asked his companions. "Why should we not go to them in their faubourgs, and in their meetings, taking, the Paris Commune, 'poor misguided men,' exclaimed Albert de Mun. 'Why did you rise up against your country?' One of the prisoners looked him squarely in the eye and said savagely. 'It is you who are the insurrectionists. You the military men, the bourgeois, the rich, the priests,' you have risen against the people!"

The motto of the Circles was the Constantinian symbol "In Hoc Signo Vinces." In this Sign thou shalt conquer. Step by step the little

circles spread through Paris and the neighboring cities. Anti-religious groups became alarmed and demanded the suppression of the Circles on the ground that they tended to threaten the Republic.

Count de Mun left the army to devote all his time to social work. He entered the French Parliament and placed his keen intellectual gifts and power of oratory, the greatest that France had seen for fifty years at the service of Catholic Social Action. Every form of Catholic Social work gradually came into being, Christian syndicates, social legislative councils, Christian mutualities, apprenticeship committees social service centres, social conferences.

Men elected by social Catholics, entered the Supreme Labor Council, and many of them are in the French Parliament today. One of them is the Chairman of the Committee on Labor Laws. In every field of social action founded on the principles of Pope Leo XIII. is making its influence felt.

The fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of these Catholic Workmen's Circles has just been observed in Paris. A Solemn High Mass was celebrated by Cardinal Dubois in the basilica of the Sacred Heart of Montmartre. The representatives of Church and State attended. General Castelnau delivered an eloquent oration. Senator de Lamarzelle, one of the first collaborators of the circles, declared that Albert de Mun and his companions had been the best artisans of the Catholic renaissance in France. Crowning this splendid celebration was the presence of the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Geretti, who added his praise to the movement in no uncertain terms.

"The work of these circles," said the Papal Nuncio, "is as vital and as necessary today as when they were first instituted. For now, as then, a people must be made to realize that it has not only rights but duties, and that there is no salvation for society but in the practice of justice and charity. The realization of the principles of the Encyclical Rerum Novarum must be pursued."—The Pilot.

CATHOLIC EVENING DEVOTIONS

The up-to-date business man makes use of every legitimate means to extend the sphere of his business activity.

Why should not the members of the Church use all the helps that are at their disposal to strengthen their spiritual life? They have not only the Sacraments, the Holy Mass, membership in confraternities and sodalities, retreats, missions, etc., but the special devotions of the church attendance all which will surely enrich them spiritually.

But it has become the fashion in some Catholic families to neglect these special devotions, especially if they be held in the afternoon or at night. The best excuse they can offer is the following one (and the pastor knows it is sometimes given): "Let the people next door go. They are pious Catholics, but we are not interested."

Yes, this is precisely the reason why the members of the family who have such a low opinion of their devotions, ought to attend these devotions. They are not pious enough. They need more piety, like "the people next door." But the young folks are afraid of piety. They used to go to these services when they were at school and belonged to the Sodality. But the Sodality is "out of date" and so they never attend its meetings. And with the Sodality gone, they have no evening services, interest in Catholic missions, and in manifestations of Catholic life in general. "The Sunday Mass is enough for me," is another fine phrase which the pastor must sometimes listen to.

Well, let us reason for a moment. Suppose that a person is very anxious to reach a certain goal or obtain a high position and is offered all the means needed to gain his heart's desire by a good friend. The friend says: "You better use all these means—great and small, otherwise you may not win out. Not all the means are equally important, but they will all help you in your work."

Our Divine Lord calls every Christian man and woman to a certain work. The reward for the successful performances of that work is of immeasurable value. Unless you achieve that reward as the crown of your years spent in God's service, your life is a failure. The means offered to reach the goal of eternal life are many, and adaptable to your particular station in life. Those extended to the whole Church—Missions—to priest and people, to religious and seculars, are the Seven Sacraments—seven channels of grace and divine assistance, each Sacrament conveying the help most needed by the soul at a certain crisis or at a certain stage of life's pilgrimage. But other spiritual aids we have besides these. The grace coming to individuals of congregation united for common worship, the daily holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, membership in pious confraternities, missions, retreats, etc., all these are freely offered to every Christian wayfarer. They are not means absolutely necessary to salvation, but who would make little of these priceless helps for waging the spiritual warfare successfully?

Now the person who carefully avoids coming to church, except for the "Sunday Mass," the Christian who never attends evening service, or makes use of any of the other powerful means of warfare, is only making that spiritual warfare more difficult for himself. It is hard enough to persevere in God's grace even with all the helps so liberally provided by Mother Church. Why make the struggle more, and its outcome more uncertain, by refusing to have recourse to the spiritual helps of the Church?—Rev. Albert Muntsch.

LEANING ON CHRIST

Corpus Christi means, in the language of the people, the feast of the Blessed Sacrament. It is a day when Catholics of piety assemble in their edifices to thank Heaven for the privilege of the Mass and the honors of Communion. There is not a Catholic church in any corner of the world where this celebration attention will not rest on the Christian Tabernacle with its precious presence of Christ as our Emmanuel, our God with us. The Catholic altars will glow with candles, they will breathe the sweet odors of fresh flowers. Costly vestments will adorn the priests. The choirs will send forth their happiest harmonies. It is by far a brighter day than any on which we honor the saints of God. It is one of the great days for Catholic piety.

Catholics realize the value in their lives of the Mass and the altar-rail. Temptations lose their power and virtues grow rich when Catholics assist at Mass and devoutly receive Communion. In fact, devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, for which this celebration stands, is the real test of the sincerity of our Catholicity. No one is a real Catholic who is not wholeheartedly given to honoring in a practical manner the residence of Christ on our altars and in our Tabernacles. He is the Bread that came down from heaven. This Bread has been left with us to furnish full honor to God and to assist mankind in its efforts after sanctity. Corpus Christi drives this lesson home with telling force.

The world is tortured today with many vexatious problems. Though the clang of arms is heard no more, yet our country is not at peace. Dissensions are tearing our forces asunder, and hatred keeps our citizens at sword's point. God is needed by us. Not the far distant God that lives away from the actual touch of men, but the God who through His own design still lingers among men. It has been noticed that as the worshippers of the Blessed Sacrament grow more numerous and more devout, the world passes through its days melting out to all a greater measure of happiness and prosperity. The quieting hand of God's blessing is laid on the world's disturbance only when the Presence of Christ in the tabernacle is better known and loved. Catholics should be at attention to keep clear in their mind the teaching of the Church about the Real Presence, and should take pride in widening the circle of those who gather around the altar as about God's throne, there to seek



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