

## FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. M. BOSSAERT

## EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

## THE MAN SICK OF THE PALSY

During the year of His public ministry, our Divine Saviour travelled about Judea, visiting one town after another, in order to proclaim everywhere the good tidings of salvation and to win souls for the kingdom of God. He preached incessantly, striving to make His hearers realize their true destiny and think of God and eternity. He is still as anxious now as He was then to win our hearts, if only we will go to Him, as did the man sick of the palsy, of whom we read in today's gospel. We ought to learn from this poor sufferer how to go to Jesus, and what graces we can obtain from Him. Let us consider these points today.

When the man sick of palsy, suffering both physically and mentally, heard that Jesus had cured many others in a condition similar to his own, he felt at once an earnest desire to approach our Lord, and ask of Him health of body and mind. Being unable to walk, he caused himself to be carried by four men, and St. Mark, who gives a fuller account of the occurrence, tells us that they could not succeed in entering the house, because it was so crowded with people, and consequently they removed the roof, and let the sick man down by means of ropes into the room where our Saviour was.

1. As soon as our Lord perceived his earnest desire to approach Him, and noticed that apparently insuperable obstacles did not deter him, without waiting to be asked for help, He said to the man: "Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee." How graciously does our Lord welcome those who come to Him with confidence! He will welcome us, too, if we really try to approach Him, as did the man sick of the palsy. If we do not allow our manifold occupations to interfere with our doing "the one thing needful," and devoting at least a few minutes of each day to God; if we are not deterred by the remarks and ridicule of worldly people from availing ourselves of the means of salvation offered us by the Catholic Church, viz., prayer and frequent reception of the Sacraments—Christ will welcome us graciously, and heal our souls of the malady caused by sin; He will give us strength to lead in future a Christian life, and He will enter in and abide with us.

2. In this way we shall obtain peace and joy of heart. The Pharisees could not understand how our Lord could say to the sick man: "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee," but they saw how, in obedience to Christ's command, the man arose, and joyfully took up his bed, and carried it to his own house. In the same way the worldly-minded cannot understand how those who really come to our Lord, and live as true Christians, can be so happy and cheerful. They cannot appreciate the consolation felt by a contrite heart, when after confession the priest, speaking in the name of Jesus Christ, says: "Go, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee." They cannot comprehend the grace and inward comfort that we receive through union with our Divine Lord in the most holy Sacrament of the Altar. All this is quite beyond their power of comprehension. If they chose, they might learn it by experience in their own persons, but this they are unwilling to do.

3. Our Lord conferred a temporal benefit also upon the sick man by healing his bodily disease. He will not abandon His faithful followers in trials affecting their health and worldly concerns; and a Christian who has made his peace with God will naturally work better and more industriously for labor will have more attraction for him when performed for love of God, and his heavenly Father will bestow upon him in abundance His blessing without which nothing on earth can prosper.

Let us therefore follow the example of the man sick of the palsy, and have recourse to our Lord, whenever our sins have cut us off from Him. Many of you may often have wished to begin a better life; per severe in this resolution; despise the gossip and mockery of the world, and with humble and contrite hearts approach our Saviour; He will not fail to welcome you, and you will feel what consolation is contained in the words: "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." Amen.

## THE MADONNA

Lecky, the champion of Rationalism, its eulogist and historian, whom no one can claim to be afflicted with "superstitious credulity" or "Romanizing tendencies," speaks in this fashion:

"The world is governed by ideals, and seldom or never has there been one which has exercised a more salutary influence than the medieval conception of the Virgin. . . . All that was best in Europe clustered round it, and it is the origin of many of the purest elements of civilization."

Again: "Whatever may be the thought of its theological propriety" (he speaks as a Rationalist, who would, no doubt, use the same language when speaking of our Lord,) "there is, I think, little doubt that the Catholic

reverence of the Virgin has done much to elevate and purify the ideal woman and to soften the manners of men. It has had an influence which the worship of the pagan goddesses could never possess; for these had been almost destitute of moral beauty, and especially of that kind of moral beauty which is peculiarly feminine. It supplied in a great measure the redeeming and ennobling element in a strange amalgamation of licentious and military feeling, which was formed around women in an age of chivalry, and which no succeeding change of habit or belief has wholly destroyed."

Schlegel, the great German poet and critic, a staunch Lutheran, coincides with Lecky, when he claims that "with the virtue of chivalry was associated a new and purer spirit of love; an inspired homage and genuine female worth which was now reared as the pinnacle of humanity, and ennobled by religion itself under the image of the Virgin Mother infused into all hearts a sentiment of unalloyed goodness."

Ruskin confesses: "I am persuaded that the worship (sic) of the Madonna has been one of the noblest and most vital graces of Catholicism, and has never been otherwise than productive of true holiness of life and purity of character. . . . There has probably not been an innocent cottage house throughout the length and breadth of Europe in which the image of the Madonna has not been given sanctity to the humblest duties and comfort to the sorest trials of the lives of women." And, continuing, he ascribes to the Immaculate Maiden every highest and loftiest achievement of the art of manhood.

It is not only idealized; but sanctified womanhood, as the same writer elsewhere maintains: "From the moment when the spirit of Christianity has been entirely interpreted to the Western races, the sanctity of womanhood, worshipped in the Madonna, and the sanctity of childhood in unity with that of Christ, became the light of every honest heart and the joy of every pure and chastened soul."—The Sentinel of the Blessed Sacrament.

## AN ADVERTISER WE CAN VOUCH FOR

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## BOLSHEVISM

(By N. C. W. C. News Service)

Washington, D. C., Aug. 16.—The recent note issued by Secretary Colby defining the position of the United States as regards Soviet Russia has given unusual importance to the pamphlet "Bolshevism in Russia and America," by Rev. R. A. McGowan of the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Council. Father McGowan's work, which is just off the press, was prepared early this year and is the first publication, in pamphlet form, of the Social Action Department.

Not only does it contain a comprehensive explanation of the manner in which Lenin and his followers, who boasted that "Two hundred thousand members of the Bolshevik party are imposing their proletariat will on the mass," gained their power but it pays particular attention to religion, marriage and divorce under Soviet rule and gives a survey of the strength of the Bolshevik movement in the United States as well as a summary of other American political parties which are often misnamed Bolshevik.

"It is not new to anyone," says the pamphlet, "that Marxian Socialism is joined to hatred of religion. Bakunin, the other theorist of the Russian revolution, was graduated in atheism in the school of Marx. Before the revolution, the program of the Bolshevik party called for separation of Church and State and separation of the Church and School. Their seizure of power gave them the opportunity."

"Among their decrees is found the following: 'All the properties of existing church and religious societies are declared national property. Buildings and articles designed for religious services are, by special

decision of the local or central authorities given for free use by corresponding religious societies.'"

"This decree took from the churches and religious societies not only their lands, but also their church buildings, schools, monasteries, hospitals and asylums. It gives to men who hate religion and despise it, the power of forbidding public religious services. It attempts to put the church under complete control of the State. A later order tempered the certain rigor of the law by advising officials not to offend feelings of the religious. Religious oaths are also forbidden in the courts and no sign of religion is allowed to appear in the government. The net effect is to make the State an atheist state and place even the right to use the churches and hold public services in the hands of State officials, who, though despising religion, are advised not to be too severe. Another law forbids 'the teaching of religion in all State and public, as well as in private educational establishments in which general subjects are taught.'"

## MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

"The Soviet laws on marriage and divorce give further ground for the charge that Socialism is opposed to Christian marriage and the home. The only valid marriage ceremony in Russia is a civil marriage; a religious marriage is not considered a marriage. Marriage is contracted by merely signing a statement that it has been contracted voluntarily and that no legal impediments are present. When the marriage is recorded it is legally effective. The divorce law is in keeping with the kind of marriage allowed by the State. It is very lax. All that is necessary is for either husband or wife to want a divorce. A divorce may be obtained by mutual consent by merely having a record of the divorce made. If only one of the parties wants a divorce the local court gives it, and either at the time of the divorce or in a later civil suit decides on the care of the children. Alimony is allowed the wife if she cannot work."

"These two laws lead to normal degeneracy. They give color to the old accusation against Socialism that it stands for 'free love.' The border of 'free love' is preached in Bolshevik Russia."

## BOLSHEVISM IN AMERICA

In discussing Bolshevism in the United States the pamphlet points out that "Bolshevism has lately been used very much as an epithet," and that organizations and individuals of all varieties of radical and progressive thought and action have at one time or another during the past year found themselves listed as 'Bolsheviks'."

"Even the united labor movement has been accused of Bolshevism. Still, when it is recalled that collectivism and the strike are not Bolshevik, and that no one of the leaders is a Bolshevik, who can see the very few are Socialists the accusation is seen to be very groundless. Others say that very many of the rank and file of the labor movement are Bolsheviks, but this is only an assumption."

"The Socialist party itself is not a Bolshevik organization. Separating from the Socialist Labor party in 1901, it has consistently followed a policy in opposition to the theoretically quasi-Bolshevik parent organization. During 1919, it expelled many local organizations for being, as it thought, Bolshevik. In so doing it diminished its own membership by half."

"There is one test which decides the question. The Bolshevik believes in direct seizure of political power. He rejects the ballot and political elections as a method of accomplishing the Socialist revolution. A Socialist who believes that the revolutionary seizure of political power is the first and necessary step towards the common ownership and use of the means of production and distribution, is a Bolshevik. The Socialist party, however, is committed to the use of the ballot to obtain legislation, reform Capitalism, and obtain a Socialist majority in the Government. It is therefore, not a Bolshevik organization. This idea was frequently repeated during the recent trial of the Socialist Assemblymen at Albany."

"The Plan has frequently been called Bolshevik, and more recently, an attempt to set up a railroad Soviet. But it is not Bolshevik, because it aims at obtaining the public ownership of only one industry through political victory at the polls. Under this plan, though public ownership is widely extended, it is to be obtained by purchase through political legislation, and it leaves still a very wide area for private ownership. For these reasons it is not Bolshevism, or even Socialism."

"Public ownership of some of the means of production and distribution is sometimes mistaken for Socialism, and in the turmoil of today is frequently called Bolshevism. Public ownership may or may not be a foolish policy—that is not the question here. But whether wise or foolish, it is not Socialism for the precise reason that it is public ownership of some of the means of production and distribution. The field of private ownership in the means of livelihood is limited by it, but not destroyed."

## THE CATHOLIC POSITION

"In the Bishops Program for Reconstruction, published by the National Catholic War Council, we find the following sentence: 'The majority must somehow become owners, at least in part, of the instruments of production.' This

statement shows that the program of the bishops, while opposing Socialism, opposes capitalism also and aims at the extension to the majority of the people of private ownership in the means of livelihood. It aims at a society in which wage earners will also be part owners of the tools and materials with which they work. Involving to a great extent the abolition of the wage system, still it does not propose public ownership of all the means of production and distribution. It rejects capitalism, but, not private ownership."

"Bolshevism is not an isolated phenomena. It has its roots in the present and past of things. It is an angry, impatient protest against the economic and social evils of the modern man. It is a bitter cry against Capitalism. Because Capitalism is one kind of private ownership, many have experienced, men are led in their protest to embrace Socialism. They plan then to build on the ruins of the Capitalist world, a new society based on common ownership. But their angry protest and sharp impatience, their hatred of private ownership and their yearning for a revolution even at the cost of life itself, are the bitter fruits of Capitalism."

"But in the United States at the present time, the demand for common ownership has made only slight headway, while Bolshevism has obtained even fewer adherents. Social unrest is wide and deep, but the people have not yet turned in large numbers to Socialism or to Communism. But if the threat now of a revolution cannot be taken seriously, no one can be certain of the future. For our social unrest can easily grow to revolutionary proportions, unless concerned and far-reaching action is taken to right the economic wrongs which are the soil from which revolution springs."

## THE FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

Our Divine Lord while on earth led a life of sacrifice and prayer. He expected His Apostles to do the same. Yet He understood well their human frailty and provided for it. Often in the midst of his journeying by the lakeside and along the dusty roads of Judea He looked with compassion upon the tired but earnest faces of His followers and commanded them to "come aside and rest awhile."

The Feast of the Transfiguration was pre-eminently such an occasion. Worn out by their wanderings and by their incessant toil the three chosen Apostles, Peter and James and John, were taken by Our Lord up to Mount Thabor. There He showed them the glory of His Divinity. They had been gazing on His five baptizing and on the mount of His public ministry. But now for a brief moment He manifested His glory. His face did shine as the sun and His garments became white as snow. On his face was the look, not of earth, but of Heaven. Stunned and dazzled by the sublimity of the vision the Apostles fell down in ecstasy at His feet, and could only exclaim in rapture "Lord it is good for us to be here."

The vision on the mount of Transfiguration sustained the Apostles during many grievous days to come. It was not sufficient to avert the denial of Peter and the desertion of the three favored Apostles on the night of the Agony, but it no doubt brought them back and proved one

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of the influences that kept their hopes sustained during the days of the Crucifixion and the Sepulchre.

Similarly with us, Our Lord expects us to take up our cross and follow Him. The Christian's life is a life of sacrifice. Yet occasionally Christ offers the sweetness of His consolations. We have our moments when we seem to sense the glory of Heaven in our souls, when we seem to burn like the sun and to be arrayed in glistening garments and like the Apostles to feel how good it is to be at friendship with God. These manifestations of the "Divine goodness," these celestial premonitions, tide us over many a dark and dreary period in our lives. A visit to the Blessed Sacrament, a fervent Holy Communion, or a moment of self-communing with God are visits to the mount of Transfiguration. They are given to us for a useful purpose, for He who made the human heart knows how hungry it is for consolation and happiness.

The Apostles came down from the Mountain to take up the dreary round of unpleasant duties. So we also return from moments when we almost glimpse the entrance to the celestial paradise to realize that we are not changed, that we still have our infirmities, our weaknesses and our pettiness. But courage, perseverance, and the reflection upon the reward that is awaiting in Heaven those who serve God, will spur us on to victory. The Feast of the Transfiguration is a breath of Heaven sent

down to earth to inspire us with the same thoughts that animated the chosen three Apostles on Mount Thabor.—The Pilot.

Courage, St. Teresa says, is necessary for a person who is striving at perfection; and when you feel lonely, and because I know that often in the midst of many there is

loneliness—loneliness of heart, of sympathy—offer that up to the Sacred Heart. He knows you, and He sees to the very depth of your heart, because He is the Man-God. He can sympathize, He can console, as no other can.

When the secret of a blessed life is made plain to us, we see that each one must learn it for himself.—Bishop Spalding.

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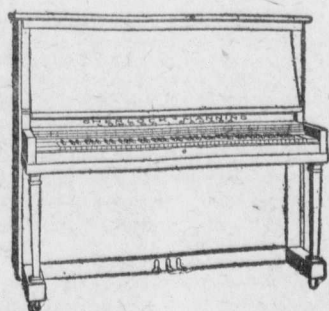
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