

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

By Rev. N. M. REDMOND
FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

DUTY OF PRAYER

"Amen, amen. I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My Name, He will give it you." (John xvi, 23.)

It is evident from the Gospel, and from this being Rogation Week, that the subject for our thoughts to day should be prayer.

The use of prayer is necessary for our salvation. The simple answer of the Catechism tells us that prayer is: "The raising up of our minds and hearts to God."

The raising up, the lifting up from this earth, where the tepid are allured by the false promises of an easy, worldly life, where even the good are often discouraged for want of taking a loftier view of life.

Yes, it is to God that prayer raises us up: God, our Father, Who is watching us from heaven, proud of our endeavors, and inspiring us to be faithful—the God, Who is our end and our eternal reward.

And what does it raise up to God? Not our voice only, but the best and noblest of our nature—our mind, that we may know Him more and more; and our will that we may centre all our intentions, interests upon Him; our heart, that there may be only one love, the motive of our life.

This is prayer; but what does it do, what is its power, what does it accomplish? By prayer we honour God; influence Him so that, in spite of our sins and unworthiness, He listens to us, and grants our requests.

Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me. (Ps. xlii, 15.) "You shall pray to Me, and I will hear you. You shall seek Me, and you shall find Me, when you shall seek Me with all your heart." (Jer. xxxi, 12, 13.)

When God placed man in this vale of miseries He bestowed upon his weakness—yea, upon his sinfulness—a power that appeals effectually to His mercy—the power of prayer! When a man sets himself to pray, and to pray earnestly, his very helplessness becomes a power.

Our past prayer would not have led us to think this—that prayer had such power and influence on God and our own souls. For this we have to blame ourselves: it is our own fault.

Tepidity—that half-heartedness that we have in God's service. Prayers are hurried, prayers are shortened, prayers are many a time omitted, through sloth and love of ease.

Distractions are the second cause of the sterility of our prayers—distractions that come and steal away our thoughts before they rise up to God. How often have we addressed Almighty God with our thoughts wandering, and our affections choked with cares and jealousies!

And the third reason why so many prayers are unanswered is our selfishness. We only turn to God when we are driven. In fear, misery, illness—oh, we can think of God, and selfishly cry for help.

Prayer, then, is the great power that Almighty God has bestowed upon our weakness and sinfulness. The misery of it all is that men will not come to Him that they may have life. Come to God in prayer day after day. Prayer is the daily bread of our souls.

Thank God for this great means of salvation. Realize what it is, the

raising up of our minds and hearts to God—how it transforms our poor soul, and how the good God has given it such power even over Himself. It is the cry of the children, and the Father cannot be deaf.

TEMPERANCE

HOW AN EVERY-SENSE DRUNKARD CAME BACK

My drinking began, where the drinking with so many men begins, in my own family. I dined frequently at my uncle's house, and especially on "occasions" wine was served to the adult members of the party.

My uncle invited me to dine with him at his hotel. Champagne was ordered, and I determined to decline any wine. As the waiter was about to fill my glass, and before I could raise my hand to stop him, my uncle checked him with a quizzical smile and said: "Don't give him any of that. It's too good stuff for boys."

By the time I was thirty-five I had accustomed myself to a morning "bracer" one and then two, and then, later, several cocktails before meals: wine, beer, or whisky, and soda at table; a "nightcap," which rapidly increased in potency and amount, at bedtime; and an untold number of drinks of one sort or another at odd times during the day.

I made a single heroic effort to cast off my chains by stopping my stimulants abruptly, and within a few hours I developed alcoholic convulsions, followed by a terrific attack of delirium tremens. At no time throughout this attack was it thought by my physicians that I could live from one hour to the next.

I am not a fanatic on the subject of either drink, temperance or total abstinence. I have no particular quarrel with the man who can and does drink in moderation and with no apparent ill effect, except that I always shudder at the thought of what may be in store for that man if he should misjudge his own power of self-control, as I did in the early years of my life.

Many of us remember, when we were learning to ride a bicycle or drive a car, how a wave of apprehension would sweep over us whenever we neared a pedestrian, an approaching vehicle, or a wayside telegraph pole, and impel us to head straight for him or it!

Tom Moore, the poet, was the son of a Dublin grocer. Without any pushing on his part, his genius and his unaffected manner made him a welcome guest everywhere.

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TRUE BUT IN PART

A judge gave the motion picture world somewhat of a shock when he asserted that pictures declared unfit for children were no more fit for their elders. This had reference particularly to certain films acknowledgedly of shady moral complexion which thus far have been given a permit on the condition that minors would not be allowed to view them.

The judge is partially right in his verdict, in as far as it refers to this type of pictures. The immoral, or that on the border line, is no more for adult than for youthful eyes, and the limitations now imposed on its exhibition is no assurance that it will work no evil.

There is, though, to-day, no restriction, only too frequently not even parental prohibition, to keep children out of the picture theaters where these films are shown. The conception seems to be that anything which municipal censors have passed, can contain nothing objectionable.

By way of digression we desire to call attention to the notable difference between converts to the Catholic Church, including non-Catholic ministers, and the pervert priests and nuns who leave the Church to join the ranks of non-Catholic denominations.

What Walter L. Judge says in The Pilgrim cannot but remind our readers of the manner in which Melancthon, persuading the divided Protestants of his time to peace and unity, illustrated his arguments by the parable of the wolves and the dogs who were marching onward to fight one against another.

It is hardly conceivable that intelligent and fair-minded Protestants should be duped by untroubled priests and by real or bogus ex-nuns. To place faith in the stories of such individuals presupposes a degree of prejudice and credulity that is ready to accept anything tending to discredit the Catholic Church.—The Echo.

THE CHILD IN ME

She follows me about my House of Life (This happy little ghost of my dead youth!) She has no part in Time's relentless strife. She keeps her old simplicity and truth. And laughs at grim mortality— This deathless child that stays with me— 'This happy little ghost of my dead youth!

For jealous Age, whose face I would forget, Pulls the bright flower you give me from my hair And powders it with snow—and yet—and yet I love your dancing feet and jocund air. And have no taste for caps of lace To tie about my faded face; I love to wear your flower in my hair!

and art; the daring character of its leaders, their singleness of purpose, their heroic resolves—were not all these worthy of the admiration of the world, were not all these entitled to its loudest acclamation? How resplendent they all seemed in the light of the suns of the sixteenth century! Who could believe that the time was to come when all their glory was to fade?

APPLIES TO EX-PRIESTS AND SUCH

In language not very elegant, perhaps, but expressing considerable truth, Billy Sunday recently indirectly scorned anti-Catholic bigots who exploit ex-priests on the lecture platform. "Whenever," he said, anyone wants anything dirty done, they get an old back-slidden preacher.

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