

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER
EPIPHANY

THE MOST HOLY NAME OF JESUS

Prayer has always been blessed by God, my dear brethren, with a wonderful power. In the old Testament we read of numerous cases of God's mercy being, as it were, exerted from Him by prayer. And those were the days of smiting the sinner and avenging an insult to the Almighty, and not the days of mercy.

You remember how the prayer of Moses appeased the wrath of God. The Lord said to Moses, Let Me alone, that My wrath may be kindled against thee, and that I may destroy thee. . . . But Moses besought the Lord His God, by saying . . . Let Thy anger cease, and be appeased upon the wickedness of Thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Thy servants. . . . And the Lord was appeased from doing the evil which He had spoken against His people. (Exod. xxxii. 9-14.)

And again the Lord said, "This word also, which thou hast spoken, will I do; for thou hast found grace before Me" (Exod. v. 17); and the prayer of Moses was heard. . . . If, then, the prayers of Moses, Isaac, Daniel, and David could pierce the heavens, could appease God's anger, could win forgiveness and mercy, what confidence should we have in prayers that are taught to us "through Jesus Christ our Lord"? What a treasure we have in that sacred Name, in which we are taught to pray: "For thou hast found grace before Me" (Exod. v. 17); and the prayer of Moses was heard. (Acts iv. 12.)

Let us study and try to realize what a grace and power that Sacred Name is to us. Attached to it is that solemn pledge and promise of our Lord: "If you shall ask Me anything in My Name, that I will do." That promise was not lightly made, but was uttered by the God of Truth and Wisdom. Power, made Man for our sakes. To each of us that promise holds good, and He means it. He has the power to fulfill it. He is anxious to be taken at His Word. Where, then, is the faith and hope and love that such a promise should enkindle in our hearts? There is something shamefully wrong about us if there is no earnest response on our part. Is there some limit to the promise, or some hard condition in its fulfillment that takes away the liberality and splendor of the offer? "If you ask Me anything, that I will do."

Oh yes, my brethren, I have omitted those words, "in My Name." We are so taken up with pleasure, greed, and love—that is not the love of God—that we have little room in our hearts for aught else. "For all seek the things that are their own; not the things that are Jesus Christ's." (Phil. ii. 21.) We cannot ask in His Name for continuance of worldly pleasure, of forgetfulness of our Creator. We cannot ask in His Name for more money that our greed and selfishness may be satisfied, for He chose poverty as a friend, and bade us beware of money. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God." (Mark x. 23.) We cannot ask in His Name for continuance and prosperity of love that is not His, for love that distracts us from His love, for love that usurps the heart that should be His, for love that defiles the soul that has been given to Him in Baptism and Holy Communion!

"These are thy gods, O Israel!" (Exod. xxxii. 4.) Pleasure, greed, love are the gods that most men are satisfied with in this life, and the promise of Jesus Christ is no use to such as these. Oh, how humiliating for us, my dear brethren, if looking into our hearts, we find there is something else ruling there, and not the Name of Jesus Christ.

But, on the other hand, to the humble and contrite, to those who are striving to make up for the past and live clean lives now, what a treasure is that Sacred Name and promise: "If you shall ask Me anything in My Name, that I will do."

We can come in our sins to the foot of the cross and plead for mercy in His Name, and contrition will fill our hearts, lead us to Confession, and the Precious Blood will wash away our iniquities. We can approach Him, and tell the Master how we are faring in the struggle against our enemies, and we can ask in His Name for loyalty, that we may not prove traitors to Him; and that day, again, we have strength to persevere. And when He bids us "Take up the cross and follow Me," when poverty, hardship, false friendship, or the shadow of death oppresses us, we may feel it hard, our lips may almost falter a murmur against Almighty God, but the good habit of invoking the Holy Name will come to our rescue, and resignation and strength to offer ourselves to do His Will will be given to us because we have asked it in His Name.

And the inextinguishable treasures of this legacy of the Holy Name, that has been bequeathed to us, are such that we can enrich our friends with it as well. What can be prayed for with more confidence in the Saviour's Name than the salvation of souls? Then let us ask in that Sacred Name for the salvation of our friends, and of those who are dear to us. Let us pray for the young and innocent that they may persevere. Let us pray for some poor friend whom we know went away wandering in his own heart. (Isa. lvii. 17), that he may return to the service of God. Let us pray each day for the dying, that they

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may repent and receive the Sacraments, and have the grace to invoke the Holy Name Jesus in their last hour.

And if there is one thing that our Lord will do us as we pray for the souls in Purgatory. The very mention of that Sacred Name Jesus will fall sweetly on their ears, and how grateful they will be that it is invoked on their behalf! Oh that we ourselves may become as frequent and devout in invoking it, trustful in its power, grateful for its having been given to us, as the Holy Souls would be if they were once again on earth! "If you shall ask Me anything in My Name, I will do it."

TO HIS MOTHER

Nay, never weep,
For he hath won beyond all sad to-
morrow's.
His weary ashes sleep
Far in sweet France, his soul, assailed
of sorrows,
With unexpected longing, leaps be-
fore
Unto his God. He lives, so weep no
more!

I know.
A mother's heart
Is fertile still of tears.
Her griefs unbidden start
And she will not be tutored in her
woe.
Her anxious love is very full of
tears.
Ah, love must bleed and suffer all
the years!
God made all mothers so.

But now,
Thy time of grief is over. He is
gone
But is not lost. Nay, rather he has
won
Abiding peace. Christ cherishes thy
son.
There is a light of glory on his brow.
While all exultant, as on earth,
He shall have naught but joy where
God has put him now.

Ah, wouldst thou pray
To have him caught again in webs of
care?
How serious and worthy was his
way
Through a swift death to lasting
glories there.
He won his goal with such a brief
delay!

Wouldst thou, dear mother, have
him once again
Take up the burden of uncertain
years,
Give pledges unto weariness and
pain
And be the toy of woe, the sport of
fears?

Then leave
All needless sorrow. Only pine and
grieve
For those that know no honor, faith
and truth,
Thy dear one doth receive
For his brief dying an immortal
youth.

Swift through the years to his dear
arms thou'lt go,
For God hath planned it so.
And life but leads thee nearer, day
by day,
To that celestial tryst, that secular
holiday!

—EDWARD GARENGHE, S. J.

Let all who are Christian by name
be Christians in deed and there will
be no longer any social problem.—
George Clemenceau.

APROPOS OF THE

"FLU"

The Public Health Service at Washington, in its latest report, estimates the number of deaths from influenza among the civilian population of the United States from September 15th to December 1, 1918, at between 800,000 and 850,000.

Such a record of deaths from such a cause is nothing less than appalling, and, unfortunately, the end of the epidemic is not yet in sight. In many places there has been a recurrence more serious than the first outbreak. In St. Louis, for example, the deaths from influenza and pneumonia have averaged about fifty a day.

After careful inquiry we find that three distinct classes of disease go by the name of "Spanish influenza." The first of these is plain, ordinary "grippe," which sometimes, especially when neglected, takes a fatal turn. The second resembles cholera, and the third bears a superficial likeness to the pulmonary plague that was reported from China a few years ago. It is the second and third of these diseases that are causing most of the "influenza" deaths.

Whether the first-mentioned sickness is really the influenza with which we were made uncomfortably familiar in 1890, is a question in dispute among doctors. A professor in the medical department of St. Louis University, for instance, maintains that in but very few instances of a large number that he has investigated, have there been traces of the so-called Pfeiffer bacillus, the characteristic germ which causes influenza properly so-called. On the other hand the Royal College of Physicians in a memorandum on the influenza epidemic in England, just published in the London Times (weekly ed., No. 2186), finds that this outbreak is essentially identical, both in itself and in its complications, including pneumonia, with that of 1890, though there are some new and special symptoms, e. g., nose-bleeding. These eminent physicians also assert, without qualification, that "the present epidemic has no relation to plague." In regard to the Pfeiffer bacillus they declare there is not sufficient evidence for holding that it is the primary infecting agent in influenza, but that it "seems to be responsible for most of the fatal complications of influenza." In the vaccine treatment the Royal College of Physicians has little confidence, declaring that if it does protect, which is rather questionable, the protection could in no case last for more than a short period. As for drugs, "no drug has yet been proved to have any specific influence as a preventive or any specific curative effect in influenza, though many are useful in guiding its course and mitigating its symptoms."

What has caused this dread epidemic? Dr. Albert Croft of Chicago traces it to poison gas generated on the European battlefields, which, he says, has spread in minute quantities over the earth, causing irritation of the mucous membrane in sensitive persons. This theory is interesting in view of this discovery that after the tremendous earthquake of Krakatoa, in 1883, the vast clouds of volcanic dust cast up to a height of fifteen miles traveled completely round the globe. Compared with the dust ejected by Krakatoa, however, the poison gas generated in the war was infinitesimal, both in quantity and energy of projection. It is more probable that the soil and atmosphere of the war zone, filled with putrid matter and emanations, have caused this world-wide sickness.

As it is the war that has evidently bred this pestilence, one lesson of the situation would seem to be that the human race ought to try to abolish war. Our great and good President has gone abroad in an endeavor to bring about this cherished consummation. Let us hope and pray that he will succeed.—Buffalo Echo.

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CONVICT PREACHES
A SERMON

You see these rather grisly processions from time to time in Grand Central Station: a sheriff or two, a few policemen, perhaps, in the van and rear guard, and the reason for it all, half a dozen prisoners, en route for Sing Sing. For the law must be fulfilled and justice satisfied. Pressing close to such a company some weeks ago, a poorly dressed old woman pushed through the crowd to put something into the hand of a swaggering young criminal. A sheriff interposed, and capturing the envelope, opened it. Within was a line scrawled on a piece of yellow paper, "Now try to be a good boy, Johnny," and two crumpled one dollar bills. Johnny took the money eagerly enough, but what he said about his mother's advice cannot be repeated here. Briefly, it was to this effect, that as he would be withdrawn from the busy haunts of men for the next twenty years, his chances of revisiting his old fields might be safely considered small.

But as the train pulled away, he mellowed. "Strange," he reflected, "how a feller never gets wise until it's too late. He always thinks he can get away with it. If I had to begin all over again, I'd do what my mother told me." The young gentleman philosophized wisely, if too late. He differs, perhaps, from many of us in this, only that the law has caught up with him. For all of us are under the law. Education and environment keep us far from vulgar

infractions of the criminal law, but of the law of God we are not so careful. For "mother" in the convict's conclusions, substitute "the authority of God," and most of us can make a salutary examination of conscience. It will teach us the folly of thinking that we can forever trifle with God's law in small things or in great, and, in the language of the day, "get away with it." God is infinitely patient, but our day is short, for soon the night falleth. Will it find us in a plight that has no odor of salvation about it? Our little Saviour has come, with His gift of peace and healing, but we must be ready to receive it. It is given to weak men, to sinful men, to struggling men, but only if they are men of good will. "Begin all over again" before it is too late.—America.

ONLY AN AVE MARIA

Only an Ave Maria,
In a moment sweetly said,
Relieving a soul's sad anguish
In the realm of suffering dead.

Only an Ave Maria,
Murmured in sorrow for sin,
Opening Heavenly portals
To let a prodigal in.

Only an Ave Maria,
Whispered in silence and tears,
It lightened a soul's great burden
And sweetened declining years.

Only an Ave Maria,
How little it seems to be,
But who can measure its greatness
When weighed in Eternity.

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Full wheat ears and humble men
bow the head; empty ears and proud
men hold the head erect.

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