

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE CHRISTIAN VOCATION

I beseech you to walk worthy of your vocation in which you are called.

In the gospel of today our Lord says that the perfect love of God and of our neighbor fulfills all the law and the commandments of God through the prophets.

At another time He said: "Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect." It is plain that every Christian has a vocation—that is, is called to a Christ-like, a God-like life. Something more is expected of Him because He has received infused light to know by divine grace how to do more. In general, we call that a higher, a more exalted spiritual state. Now, there are degrees even in this depending upon the particular grace it pleases God to give to one person or another.

One star differs from another star in brightness and glory, and so shall the glory of the Christians differ in heaven, according to the perfection to which they have brought their souls while in this school-time of the world-life.

Over and above what are called strict Christian laws, which one must obey or lose heaven, there are certain principles of Christianity called evangelical counsels—namely, poverty, chastity, and obedience. Some folks fancy these counsels apply only to monks, nuns, and priests. That is a gross mistake.

Monks, nuns and priests receive grace and are bound by their vocation to practise these counsels in a higher manner. A secular priest, for instance, is not called to practise poverty in the same manner as a priest of a religious order, although he or even a layman living in the world may practise that counsel, as he may the other counsels, too, just as perfectly as any monk ever heard of.

All depends on the grace one has. His vocation and his responsibility and his position in heaven all hang on his fidelity to grace.

All Christians should practise the counsel of poverty. Yes, both rich and poor. The spirit of poverty is detachment from created things. One's heart must not be set on them. One must not love riches for their own sake. One must feel obliged to share with the poor. One must not despise the poor, but love them for Christ's sake. One must give a good deal for religious purposes. One must keep his baptismal vows to renounce the devil and all his pomps.

Every Christian must practise the counsel of chastity. Heaven help us! In these degraded times, to judge by the fashionable indecencies sanctioned by so-called society—indecent, the horrible abuses of the holy state of marriage, the fifty accounts appearing every day in the newspapers—one would think that even the Sixth Commandment was abolished. Now I need not enter into particulars, but you know, without further argument or illustration, that every Christian man, woman or child would be unworthy the name if he did not, almost every day, make many sacrifices and struggles against temptation—all of which mean practising the counsel of the Christian perfection of chastity.

TO YOUR FEET ACT

Feeling tired, weak and stiff, and feet swollen, itchy, and sore, you need a remedy that will relieve you permanently. This is the only remedy that will give you permanent relief. It is the only remedy that will give you permanent relief.

To the mind spontaneously. If 75 per cent. of the Sunday school children are lost to the Church, what becomes of the children of Protestant parents who do not go to Sunday school at all, and what percentage of the whole do they represent?

What is the element in the English Sunday school or church, which reduces the loss to the insignificant figure of less than 3 per cent. if we are to believe the English delegate quoted above? Can it be anything else than the fact that in Great Britain, at least among the Anglicans, the work of the Sunday school is continued every day in ordinary school, and the secular branches are sanctified, so to speak, with religious teaching?

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We were become a self-centered, material people, loving frivolity, folly and amusements before duties. What England was suffering from was apostasy from God. We were a compromising people, who would not tell their countrymen their faults. If from every pulpit in the land there went forth the cry, "Come back to Christ!" instead of "Come back to the land," there might yet once again be hope for this dear land. It was with a nation as with an individual, if the nation abandoned the worship of God, if its Churches were empty, its souls would be empty, and Heaven would be empty and hell would be full of his countrymen.

Conditions in England spoken of by Father Vaughan are not much different in this country. It is interesting to have the view of a distinguished American Churchman upon them.

Cardinal Gibbons' view. Cardinal Gibbons is spending a few weeks' vacation at Southampton, Long Island. Last Saturday afternoon he sat on the spacious veranda of the large country house where he is visiting, and watching the automobiles file down the road before him in one unending stream, moralized on the dangers of self-indulgence that have beset all republics.

Protestant vs. the Catholic pulpit. Current writer says differences between them explain present religious conditions in this country.

What earthly judge can restore the innocent alone to freedom, but a priest can give the blessing even to the guilty. The angels, indeed, may keep away the evil spirits which surround this poor child of Adam; Mary may pray for him; but neither the angels nor Mary can remove one single sin from his soul.

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