

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. M. BOSSAERT

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

GOD IS LOVE AND DESIRES NOTHING BUT LOVE

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

1. God is love; all the doctrines of Christianity proclaim this fact; He is love, and for this reason He created the world and peopled it with human beings, giving them immortal souls, equipping them with many glorious privileges and powers and destined them for eternal happiness.

God is love, and therefore He had mercy upon our fallen race, and sent His only begotten Son to seek and to save that which was lost. All Christ's life on earth, all His actions and sufferings, and especially His death on the Cross, teach us the same lesson: God is love! We learn it again from the holy Sacraments, these precious sources of grace that supply strength to the weak and weary traveller on his journey through life.

2. But God, being love, desires love. All the teaching of Christianity on the subject of morals may be summed up shortly thus: Love God with thy whole heart, and love thy neighbor as thyself."

Whoever loves God with his whole heart is doing all his duty to his Lord and Master. He delights in thinking of God, and does his best to live so as to please Him. He thinks, speaks and acts only in accordance with the will of God. He obeys those in authority, because it is God's will; he keeps order in his home, encourages his household to do right, trains his children in the fear of the Lord, and watches over his subordinates, that they may not stray from the straight path. He assists devoutly at public worship, because God desires us to pray together and to edify one another. A man who truly loves God, bears with patience whatever suffering God sees fit to send him knowing well that God can do no wrong; his confidence in Him is firm as a rock, and never wavers. In short, whoever truly loves God is careful to avoid all that might displease his heavenly Father, even in the least degree, and any, like Joseph the patriarch, "How could I do evil in the sight of my God."

Yet God's commandment of charity is fulfilled perfectly only by one who at the same time loves his neighbor as himself, for thus he discharges all his duties towards his fellowman. He who loves his neighbor as himself allows no angry or revengeful thoughts to rise up in his heart; he hates no one, and never returns evil for evil; he greets every sin committed by one who injures him, far more than over the wrong that he suffers. He is unjust to no one, but gives to each his due, treating others as he would wish to be treated by them. He never begrudges another his good fortune, and rejoices not in the losses and failures of others, but shares their happiness when they are prosperous, and their sorrows when they are in trouble.

He who loves his neighbor as himself always thinks and speaks well of others, for he would wish them to think and speak well of him. He never talks scandal, nor does he repeat any evil that he may have heard, but does his best to conceal his neighbor's faults and to put the best interpretation upon their actions. He who loves his neighbor as himself exerts himself to do all the good that lies in his power, and to help others, to the utmost of his ability. He is particularly zealous for the salvation of souls, desiring all to be good and happy. Hence he warns those who go astray, he instructs the ignorant, sets a good example to everyone, and prays that all men may be saved.

The man, therefore, who truly loves God does all these things.

Let us, too, always strive to act thus, and then we shall be able truthfully to assert that we love God, and do our duty perfectly to our fellowmen, and then we may venture to hope that God will some day take us to Himself in His grace and love. Amen.

FAITHFUL COMPANIONS CENTENARY

VISCOUNTESS DE BONNAULT PAYS BEAUTIFUL TRIBUTE TO FAITH OF IRISH

The celebration of the centenary of the foundation of the Faithful Companions of Jesus brings to notice an interesting story of activity.

In 1820 the first house was opened in a humble way at Amiens, and later another foundation was made at Chateaux. The Order quickly spread through France and England, Ireland, Italy, Switzerland and other countries.

When religious persecution in France caused the Faithful Companions to close their schools, they sought asylum in Belgium, and in the islands of Jersey and Guernsey they found a vast field for apostolic labor.

There are novitiates in Namur, Belgium; St. Anne's, Brittany; Upton Hall, Cheshire, England; Gunley House, Isleworth, London; Newtownbarr, Wexford, Ireland; a place at Fitchburg, Mass.; and at "Gmazano," Kew, Australia. Everywhere the Order is flourishing—a tribute to the work of the Sisterhood. Their primary, secondary, and technical schools are recognized as leading educational establishments.

The F. C. J. Order is governed by a Superior-General, who, up to the time of the religious persecution in France, resided at the head House in Paris. She then removed to Brussels, Belgium, and since the outbreak of the great War has lived in Wales.

LIFE OF FOUNDRESS The Viscountess De Bonnauld D'Houet was the foundress of the society. She was left a widow after ten months of married life. She was devoted to her son, and in her widowhood gave up much to charitable works.

It is related that she had a dream early in her widowhood, and awoke inspired with a vivid impression of death, and of the necessity of making preparation for it. It was many years, however, before she made up her mind finally to change her life. She experienced much hostility in her wishes to devote herself to God's work. At the time she had decided to start her first community her mother died, and her father expected that she would live with him. He expressed strong disapproval of her decision to renounce worldly position, but subsequently fell in with her resolve, and assisted her. A start was made at Amiens in 1820, and a few nuns joined Mme. d'Houet. The beginnings were full of hardships, and at the end of two years the community was reduced to three. At that critical moment she was very ill. Her chief helper, Mother Louise, broke down, too, and it seemed as if the small community would soon disappear.

HELP FROM BISHOP Help came from the Bishop of Amiens. The education of girls was the object of the foundress and her companions. They were so successful that from Amiens they were invited to Chateaux. There Mme. d'Houet looked after the young boarders, teaching them and doing the lion's share of the work. Then she went to Nantes, where the same occupations awaited her, and where she opened schools for the children of the upper class, of the middle class, and of workmen.

When times were bad and the price of food had risen, the local superiors of Nantes were wont to complain that it was all but impossible to keep on this last school, the reason being so slender. To their remonstrances the holy woman always replied that on no account were they to refuse to accept the children of workmen.

In 1826 the fourth convent was started at Sainte-Anne d'Auray. In that year Pope Leo XII. gave his approval to the Society of the Faithful Companions of Jesus. Her opponents endeavored to induce her to change the name, and threatened to employ all their power in Rome to force her to do so, but Mme. d'Houet replied that the cross which she bore was not the cross which heavy one, but that she would not alter the name of her society, since she held it with the sanction of the Sovereign Pontiff.

VISITS TO IRELAND The one thing this intrepid woman feared was lest she could not carry out God's designs. Human opposition never held her back. However, if she had bitter opponents, she had good friends, too, who realized the good she was doing, and her efforts were successful beyond any dreams of hers. She died in 1858, leaving twenty flourishing convents in France, Italy, England, and Ireland.

The visits to Ireland used to give Mme. d'Houet a singular pleasure. "That country," says her French biographer, "had always evoked her deepest sympathy. She admired the courageous and staunch fidelity of its people to the ancient faith." Her nuns found it easy to prepare Irish children for their First Communion.

"These children edified us," writes another biographer of Mme. d'Houet, "by their disposition, in which faith and piety were so conspicuous. For their souls, like virgin earth, gave back abundant fold the smallest seed implanted therein."—The Pilot.

A TRULY CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

Catholics know that the evils from which the world is suffering today can be cured only by the return to Christian principles. They hold the fixed and unalterable conviction that the social and economic problem which the world today considers well nigh insoluble have been solved again and again by the Church. They point to the great encyclicals of Leo XIII. as a modern instance of how the application of the principles of the Gospel applied to present day industrial conditions can bring order out of chaos. These saving principles enunciated a generation ago by Pope Leo and reiterated many times by his successors and by the Hierarchy of the Church have met with the universal approval of constructive thinkers in all countries. That few attempts have been made to put them into practice is due to the willingness of the world to sacrifice justice to expediency.

It is with gratitude therefore that we learn that an attempt has been made in Spain to reconstruct society according to these tried and true Christian principles. The movement which began some eight years ago has already passed the experimental stage and has met with such success that Catholic thinkers are now pointing to Spain as the leader in bringing the world back to Christ.

A writer in the London Universe gives a graphic account of the genesis and development of the movement. Under one vast confederation are affiliated 57 federations embracing 4,000 associations and numbering more than 500,000 members. Membership consists of families, so that the real number is greatly in excess of that figure. The Confederation Nacional Catolica Agraria is the name of the association, and it aims at organizing the agricultural industry of Spain on the most approved methods.

It is not merely an economic movement. It is essentially Catholic. Its aditus in its constitution the principles of religion, of the family, and of the right of private property as the only sure foundation of the social order. Its purpose is to secure the social, economic and moral upbuilding of society through fearless

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application of Catholic principles. The establishment of rural banks, the encouragement of peasant proprietorship, and education through religion are the methods the confederation pursues to interpose an effective barrier to the Continental socialism that finds a ready acceptance in such an agricultural community.

The real significance of the movement consists in the fact that on a groundwork of Catholic principles it has gone from success to success. It is being carried on by Catholic men of the highest ideals, in close touch with the ecclesiastical authorities, and along the lines laid down by Pope Leo XIII. It has shown that Christian principles are eminently practical. The success of this movement is not only a source of pride to Catholics throughout the world but should be an inspiration for right thinking men in all countries who realize that in normal and religious principles lies the true solution of social and economic questions.—The Pilot.

Let us ask the Blessed Virgin to help us: you know what a loving mother she is. Pray to her to teach you how to suffer little crosses and annoyances for the love of her Divine Son; how to meditate on His sufferings, as she did under the cross; and how to despise all but God and what is for His glory.

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