

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY THE REV. F. P. HICKEY, O. S. B. SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His ways." (Prov. viii, 22.)

The dominant thought in this holy time of Advent is the coming of the Redeemer. How appropriate it is, then, that there occurs at this time the Festival of the Immaculate Conception. For the Son of God offering Himself to become a Man to redeem us, a Mother had to be chosen for Him. A Mother of God! Picture the amazement of the angels in heaven that a human creature could possibly be so exalted! The purest, the holiest, the humblest of all the daughters of Eve was chosen.

But above all the endowments of grace, above all her virtues, one singular prerogative was needed and was granted. This chosen one should never for an instant be under the curse of fallen man. Original sin could not be allowed to taint her soul. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His ways." This is what we believe in accepting and professing the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

But it is not the boast and glory of the Holy Catholic Church that its faith is and has been always the same? That what was believed from the first is the faith of all its children always and everywhere? How can this be, says the world, when within our memory the Immaculate Conception was declared to be an article of faith? The definition was simply a declaration that belief in the Immaculate Conception had always existed, and was the mind and sense of the Church. Proof irrefragable of this is found in holy Tradition, in the writings of the Fathers of the Church, in the unanimity of the rulers and the faithful of the Church in venerating our Lady's Conception as such. What had been formerly freely, willingly, lovingly believed, was now declared to be a necessary part of our belief. Henceforth obedience to the Church demanded full, explicit belief and profession of this doctrine, that Mary in the first instant of her Conception was preserved from every stain of original sin by the power of Almighty God, to His honour and glory, and the glory of His chosen Mother.

And why was this declaration necessary? To defend the honor and glory of Mary. Impiety was assailing her; disbelief was denying her holiness; and the world was sneering at her purity. Cowardly Catholics thought it prudent not to provoke impiety to insult our Lady and wished to be silent; and doubt was stealing into the souls of the poorly instructed, and of many seduced by the irreligious. Therefore for God's honor and glory, and of His Virgin Mother, it was made imperative to believe and to own that the Virgin Mary was Immaculate. What had formerly been professed in love, had now to be professed in obedience as well, by the loyal children of the Church.

The other saints and blessed ones of God are crowned with many graces, but Mary is "full of grace" and is favored with that no other can share with her. She is Immaculate! And this being her unique privilege, no other supplication to her touches her Mother's heart as this: "Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us, who have recourse to thee."

Two effects result from this belief and profession in the Immaculate Conception. The first is a wonderful increase in devotion to our Blessed Lady. Not only have prayers been multiplied, but the wearing of her medals, the use of the Rosary, the holy pictures and statues in homes and in churches, all have increased. But above all we can notice the public testifying of our love and veneration of Mary. A few years ago, pilgrimages had almost died out in these countries. But now, not only is no one afraid to be a pilgrim, but publicly and enthusiastically pilgrimages are joined by rich and poor. The sneers of the world are silenced. Yea, even in non-Catholic papers we read paragraphs—tolerant, kindly, sympathetic—about the blind and ailing journeying to distant Lourdes in faith and hope, seeking the help of Mary Immaculate.

And does Mary fail to respond to her children's faith and trust? This is the second wonderful result in the belief in the Immaculate Conception: the miracles that Mary works through her intercession. There are countless wonders wrought in the souls of men; of those we know nothing. They are recorded by the angels. But we Catholics rejoice, and the world cannot deny, that there are many marvelous and incontestable miracles wrought year after year at Lourdes. In this age of doubt and unbelief, miracles are multiplied in behalf of those who turn to the Immaculate Virgin in their mery and distress. Thus this most favored, honored, exalted Queen of angels and of saints proves that she hearkens to and graciously answers the prayers of poor sinners. She loves to prove to us that, though she is the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God, she is our Mother too. Though the Almighty has done great things for her, she does not disdain our humble prayers.

How meet and appropriate it is, then, that our Blessed Lady's festival is the harbinger of Christmas. Her uniqueness—Immaculate from the first moment of her Conception—was given that she might be worthy to be the Mother of our divine Saviour. Praise and glorify her on this great day, and for a reward for our devotion pray her to show us at Christmas her Son, our Saviour, and to obtain for us loyalty and fidelity to Him.

BOTH WERE CATHOLICS

AN ANTI-CATHOLIC DILEMMA

By Benedict Eldor An Associated Press despatch sent out from Washington, October 21 reads as follows: "Christopher Columbus was a Catholic; therefore Lief Ericson was the real discoverer of America. This is the tenor of propaganda bearing the earmarks of the Ku Klux Klan and signed 'Nordic' that is being sent to members of Congress."

The document signed "Nordic" is then quoted as follows: "The real discovery of America was accomplished by Lief Ericson in the year 1000, and there are no grounds for disputing that fact. All the doubt that ever surrounded it was the effect of Roman Catholic propaganda. Around the discovery of this continent Rome has woven the most diabolical conspiracy ever conceived by 'the spirit of anti-Christ.' All, of course, because Columbus was a Catholic!"

But Lief Ericson was a Catholic, too. He was on his way to make Greenland Catholic when he discovered this continent. The proof of the one is proof of the other for both are related in all the original documents on the subject, namely, the Scandinavian and Icelandic Sagas collected by the Royal Danish Society of Northern Antiquaries since 1837.

Among those sagas, preserved in the University Library of Copenhagen, is one known as Kristni-Saga, written in the 14th century, a paragraph of which reads as follows: "That summer (1000 A. D.) King Olaf (Norway) sent Lief Ericson to Greenland, to proclaim the faith there. On this voyage Lief found Wineland the Good; he also found men on a wreck at sea, wherefore, he was called Lief the Lucky."

In the saga of King Olaf, also preserved in the University Library of Copenhagen, appears the following account of the discovery of this continent by Lief, son of Eric: "That summer when Gizur went to Iceland, King Olaf sent Lief, son of Eric the Red, to Greenland, to proclaim Christianity there. He sailed that summer to Greenland. He found men upon a wreck at sea and succeeded them. Then, likewise, he discovered Wineland the Good, and returned to Greenland in autumn. He took with him thither a priest and other spiritual teachers."

Another saga in the University Library of Copenhagen collection, known as the Friis' Book, contains the following account of Lief's discovery: "King Olaf then sent Lief to Greenland to proclaim Christianity there. The king sent a priest and other holy men with him, to baptize the people there, and to instruct them in the true faith. Lief sailed that summer, and rescued at sea the men of a ship's crew who were in great peril clinging to the wreckage of a ship; and on the same voyage he found Wineland the Good, and at the end of the summer arrived in Greenland."

The anti-Catholic propagandists are welcome to all the consolation they can get out of Lief Ericson's discovery of this continent, but if they insist on leaving out the influence of the Catholic Church, they will have to go back another thousand years.

Circle the globe with a Catholic missionary. The Rev. Michael A. Mathis, C. S. C., of Holy Cross College of the Catholic University, has embarked on a missionary journey that will take him clear around the world. He is accompanied by Monsignor Joseph F. McGlinchey, diocesan director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith for the archdiocese of Boston. Traveling with them for part of the journey is the Rev. John B. Delauney, C. S. C., formerly professor of Church History and Canon Law at Holy Cross College, who will take up missionary labors in the fields of Bengal, Father Mathis will spend considerable time in Japan, China, India and other countries where Catholic missionary effort is bringing wonderful results. He is in a position to give a close-up view of the Catholic missionary work and to tell something about what other denominations are doing in the mission field. He will also be able to give his views on the effect that world events are likely to have on Catholic missionary progress.

Father Mathis' articles will be released through the N. C. W. C. News Service.

By the Rev. Michael A. Mathis, C. S. C. Aboard the Korea Maru, Sept. 10.—San Francisco, our port of departure is far in our wake. The breaking of the symbolic ties of paper

ribbon which snapped when we slowly moved from the dock meant a great deal more to Father Delauney than to either Monsignor McGlinchey or myself. With God's help, we hope to be back in the United States within seven months, whereas our companion is sacrificing this hope for the chance of doing missionary work in the jungles of Bengal.

More than a hundred passengers on the Korea Maru, almost half the total number, are missionaries and all save ourselves are Protestants. The trip gives us a unique opportunity to study the Protestant missionary. I presume half of them are married and have their wives and children aboard. Most of the Protestant missionaries were either recently married or were single persons on their first trip aboard. About ten families are returning to the field after a furlough in the United States. All intend to work in either Japan or China, and most of them are going as evangelists or educators, although there are a few specialists for the medical and agricultural missions. Those who are beginning their missionary careers will study the language of the district to which they are assigned for at least two years.

Although all are courteous to our party, those of the Episcopal denomination, the Dutch Reformed, are the first to become friendly. A few persons of other denominations remain rather frigid throughout the trip.

The first religious episode aboard is indicative of the attitude of the Protestants towards Catholics in the foreign mission field. A delegation of ministers called on us to invite us to participate in a union service on the first Sunday at sea. They contended that denominational differences ought not to be emphasized on the foreign missions, since a divided Christianity is an obvious obstacle to the conversions of pagans.

It was not difficult to explain the impossibility of Catholics joining in non-Catholic religious services, in spite of the difficulty in which this position placed Christianity in pagan eyes. So on Sunday we had our daily Mass and the Protestants their union service. Apparently our Catholic position on the union service was not taken amiss, for we continued to beat the ministers—or be beaten by them—at deck golf, the fat men's race and other ship pastimes. In the meantime, we had a splendid opportunity to size up the ministers and no doubt they welcomed the same opportunity to scrutinize our party. They were universally impressed by the fact that Father Delauney was going to the Bengal jungles to stay.

On the sixth day of the voyage we reached Honolulu, where we were to have seven hours. We were agreeably surprised, when we stepped from the ship, to find that Bishop Boyanna and one of his missionary priests, Father Stephen, had come to meet us, having read of our coming in a morning edition of the Honolulu paper. The extreme graciousness of this courtesy dawned on us when we realized that the day was one of the warmest of the year and that the good Bishop is well advanced in years. We were soon parked in Father Stephen's Chevrolet and another few blocks brought us to the Catholic Mission.

UNDER-NOURISHMENT OF CHILDREN By Rev. Dr. Wilhelm Baron von Capitaine An alarming number of German school children, varying from 50% to 90% in different districts, are either under-nourished or tubercular, according to reports which have been based upon a compilation of the records kept by school-board physicians. The problem of safeguarding the health of the rising generation to avoid serious consequences in future years is becoming alarming.

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A statement adopted at a recent Congress of the German Hospital Physicians at Hamburg, declares that there is a direct connection between the economic distress of the nation and the menacing condition of an almost universal decline of physical health. Unless something is done soon to remedy the situation, the physicians say, a national catastrophe is bound to ensue.

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SOME OF THE BETTER JUVENILE BOOKS THE LITTLE GREEN ROAD TO FAIRYLAND... THE MAGIC EGG... RAINBOW GOLD... A NAVAL ALPHABET WITH RHYMES BY M. BERKELEY... RAINBOW GOLD

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AROUND THE WORLD WITH A CATHOLIC MISSIONARY PRIEST

Circle the globe with a Catholic missionary. The Rev. Michael A. Mathis, C. S. C., of Holy Cross College of the Catholic University, has embarked on a missionary journey that will take him clear around the world. He is accompanied by Monsignor Joseph F. McGlinchey, diocesan director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith for the archdiocese of Boston. Traveling with them for part of the journey is the Rev. John B. Delauney, C. S. C., formerly professor of Church History and Canon Law at Holy Cross College, who will take up missionary labors in the fields of Bengal, Father Mathis will spend considerable time in Japan, China, India and other countries where Catholic missionary effort is bringing wonderful results. He is in a position to give a close-up view of the Catholic missionary work and to tell something about what other denominations are doing in the mission field. He will also be able to give his views on the effect that world events are likely to have on Catholic missionary progress.

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