

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST

PRAY FOR THE DEAD

"Lord my daughter is now dead, but come lay Thy hands upon her, and she shall live." (Matt. ix, 24)

The ruler of whom we read in to-day's Gospel possessed a great love for his child, otherwise he would not have come to Jesus for aid; he liked to temporal confidence in the mercy and omnipotence of Christ, else he would not have said: "Come, lay Thy hands upon her, and she shall live." In connection with this incident I would ask you, well, another thought to the custom of the Church to pray for the departed, not praying, however, that the dead body be brought back to life, as this ruler prayed, but that God may cleanse their souls from their imperfections and release them from the atonement demanded in purgatory. Let us make this atonement in purgatory the point for our consideration to-day, so that by the realization of the pitiable state of the poor souls on the one hand, and, on the other, of our ability to assist them, we may be urged to persist in our prayers for the dead.

Even under the old dispensation there was, besides heaven and hell, another place for the departed, called Limbo, where the just souls were detained until redemption opened for them the gates of heaven. According to the teaching of the Church, there is now a place where the souls of men go, who, though they have done penance for their sins, have not yet done sufficient penance, and must be thoroughly cleansed before they can be admitted to the face of God. This place is called purgatory. To understand this teaching of the Church perfectly we must remember the following facts: Whosoever offends God by a mortal sin, not only deserves the punishment of being excluded from heaven, but makes himself liable to temporal punishment. If the sinner does sincere penance, the offense and the eternal punishment incurred by it are remitted, but not necessarily and not always the temporal punishment. This temporal punishment must be paid by deeds of penance, either in this or in the next life, otherwise this sinner can not enter the kingdom of heaven. He, therefore, that dies without discharging this penance, without having satisfied this temporal punishment, though he die as a child of God and with a claim upon heaven, must first be cleansed of all the imperfections not yet wiped out by penance, and this cleansing takes place in purgatory and in a very painful way.

And how long will this purging last? This question is answered by our Saviour, who warns us: "Until thou repay the last farthing." These poor suffering souls in purgatory can do nothing to shorten their time there, or to lessen their suffering; for them the night has come, in which no man can work. They are, indeed, poor souls, and in their agony and pains they cry out to us: "Have mercy on us! Have mercy on us, at least you, my friends!" Can we help them? Yes, we can, for we read in Holy Scripture: "It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins." We may also help them by good works, such as fasting, giving alms, and other good deeds, but most of all, through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Imagine, my dear Christians, that in this place of suffering your parents, children, relatives or friends may be calling out to you unceasingly: "Help us, for we can not help ourselves! You who have known and loved us during life, can you forget us now? In adversity and need true friends are proved, but what misery can be likened to ours? Therefore, have mercy, have mercy upon us at least you, my relatives and friends; for the hand of the Lord has been laid heavily upon us!"

My dear Christians, would it not be heartless and wrong of you to pay no heed to the supplication of your parents, relatives, friends; not to stretch forth your hand to alleviate their sufferings or free them from it? Therefore, do not forget the souls in purgatory! They suffer greatly and can do nothing to shorten the time of their suffering or to ease their pains. Come to their aid in the sense of true Christian love! Pray for your departed parents, husband, wife, children, sisters, brothers, relatives and friends, and remember them especially in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Pray for all the poor souls in purgatory; remember also those who have no one else to pray for them. Recall often with devotion: "Lord grant them eternal rest and let perpetual light shine upon them," and be assured that these souls will plead with God for those who helped to rescue them from purgatory. Amen.

A GROWING EVIL

It is a striking commentary on the Pagan spirit of the times that the following words from the lips of a woman could find place even in a yellow journal: "Mothers cannot afford to rear families, because in the attempt they will lose the affection of their husband, squander their beauty, break their own hearts, and receive no reward for their pains. On these grounds the woman of to-day may lawfully excuse herself."

The rantings of irresponsible persons would best be treated by silence, but when everybody with a lad—be it criminal or unnatural or absurd—is given first place in a certain class of widely read journals, it is inevitable that harm will come to those who absorb the daily poison. Of course the glorious galaxy of Catholic mothers who have pride and honor in the fruits of their motherhood are not affected by such atrocious drivel, but it is not impossible that some, tainted already by the selfishness of immoral doctrines, do not hold these views in abhorrence as they should.

Altogether apart from the consideration of stern duty in the matter, it is clear to any person who is not abnormal or debased, that children are a bond that binds the loves and the lives of husband and wife. Only the criminally selfish married shirker can fail to see that the child in the mother's arms—that most endearing of human sights—

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It is true, of course, that the duty of motherhood does not square with the horrid ambitions of the debased creatures who love their country for its easy divorce laws; nor with the desire of the wife whose god is self, but Catholic women are not of these. — Providence Visitor.

THE MOMENT OF CONSECRATION

Rev. Chas. Coppens, S. J., in The True Voice.

No wonder that the golden tongued doctor of the ancient Eastern Church, St. Chrysostom, wrote in his treatise on the priesthood: "During that time angels stand by the priest, the whole order of heavenly powers fervently pray and the sanctuary is full of choirs of angels come to honor Him Who is offered up in sacrifice." All this may be most easily credited even from the very nature of the sacrifice which is celebrated. But I have been told by a certain person who had it from an aged and wonderfully venerable man, to whom God was wont to reveal His secrets, that a clear vision had once been granted to him by God of what went on at Mass. He then beheld during that time a multitude of angels come down on a sudden upon the sanctuary, bearing a human appearance, clothed in brilliant and surrounding the altar. Then they reverently bowed their heads, like courtly soldiers, standing in the presence of their King. And all this I most easily believe. (b. vi)

The lives of many saints narrate similar apparitions. Frequently they were favored with the vision of Christ Himself, either under the form of a lovely infant resting in the uplifted hands of the priest or smiling on him from the corporal on which lay, under the aspect at other times of the crucified Redeemer hanging on the Cross. Thus St. Basil, the founder of the Basilianist monasteries, relates of St. Colleta that one day while she was assisting at a Mass said by her confessor, she suddenly exclaimed at the elevation: "My God! O Jesus! O ye angels and saints! O ye men and sinners! Behold the great marvel!" She saw our Lord as if hanging on the Cross, shedding His sacred blood and imploring His Heavenly Father saying: "I beseech Thee, My Father, to spare poor sinners and to forgive them for my sake."

In 1258 in the "Saint Chapelle" in Paris, close to the palace of St. Louis, at the elevation of a Mass, a beautiful child was seen in the hands of a priest by those present. The apparition lasted some time. But St. Louis refused to go and see it saying: "Let them go who do not believe that our Lord is in the Sacred Host; my faith enables me to see Him in it every day." It is the thought uttered by Christ: "Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed." Various well authenticated facts are on record by which Jesus glorified the celebrant of the Mass himself.

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who, as explained above is merged in Christ during the consecration. Thus St. Philip Neri was several times seen by the faithful present raised above the ground while he said Mass, at other times with rays of glory around his head. The priest is a son of the people as is our ruling Pontiff Pius X, but at the altar he is vicar of Christ the mystery of propitiation.

INDIFFERENTISM — THEN WHAT?

We hear a great deal these days about "tearing down the barriers of creed and dogma." Indifferentism in religion is popular among our non-Catholic friends. "One religion is as good as another." "One religion is no religion at all." We heard a representative of the Volunteers of America, (a secession branch of the Salvation Army), declare in a public address: "So putting up the barriers of creeds and theological opinions! Let us unite!" And the lady who promulgated this dictum was cheered by those who believed as she did, that is, very little of anything.

Quite in what? In believing nothing. Unbelieving in rejecting God's truth as revealed to man by Jesus Christ. That is what public speakers, who love for popular applause, on any occasion, no matter whether it is prison reform, better politics or a new sewer that is being discussed. As if they could not unite to secure reforms or public improvements without throwing overboard revelation and positive religion!

It may be all very well for Protestants to talk about uniting on the last day of revelation on which they can agree. They have little enough at best. But, we confess, we prefer the man who has religious convictions, however erroneous, and who is not afraid to stand up for his convictions if necessary. We prefer a sincere and earnest Episcopalian or Lutheran, to a "liberal non-denominational" who has no religious convictions worth mentioning. For Catholics, of course, indifferentism in religion is unthinkable. They cannot wobble down their faith to accommodate the unbeliever of others. For them it must be all of God's religion or nothing. To attempt to minimize their need is to destroy it altogether. They must be Catholics in the full sense of that term or else not at all. Those who do not—or who will not—understand may call us intolerant. They would have us believe that indifferentism and toleration are convertible terms. What nonsense! And this is what Protestantism has come to to-day! How long before it turns from indifferentism to intolerance, which is even the shreds of revelation to which it still clings?—True Voice.

METHODS OF MODERN GOSPELERS

WHILE PASTOR RUSSELL WOULD DEPOSE THE POPE, HE WOULD AT THE SAME TIME GIVE HIMSELF SIMILAR OFFICE

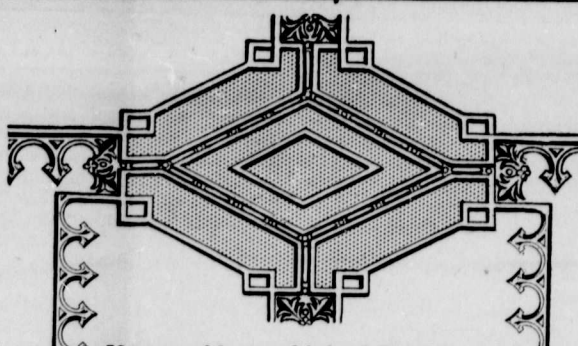
Rev. Albert Muntch, S. J., St. Louis University, in the Catholic Fortnightly Review.

Pastor C. T. Russell of the Brooklyn Tabernacle is carrying on an active literary propaganda in favor of his books and of the Tract Society whose destinies he directs. His publication People's Pulpit, is distributed gratis all over the land. His "weekly sermons" are reprinted by those who have no policy of their own and gladly give space to "new theology" of the Russell brand. Recently the Catholic Fortnightly Review received a letter from a subscriber in Iowa, who enclosed a slip from the Daily Argus Leader of Sioux Falls, which contained one of these delectable sermons of Mr. Russell. The writer remarked that the (Russell) sermon assumed the rather unique role of self-confessed spiritual director of the rest of Christendom.

A glance at the article in question shows that this criticism is more than justified. For the whole sermon is in the spirit of a "Federation of Churches" (of which Mr. Russell, no doubt, would be the head and guardian). The opening sentence gives the keynote. "We meet to-day to consider what sacrifice would need to be made in the interests of federation by the three oldest denominations of Christendom."

Before giving Pastor Russell's suggestions as to the methods to be employed by Catholics for falling in line with the new Federation of Churches, we wish to offer some straightforward testimony as to what church of this kind—made up out of the "disjecta membra" of denominations at variance with one another—is an what sensible people think of it. A year or two ago I had an excellent opportunity to talk to a great many men confined in one of our state reformatories. A kind of "Federation of Churches" had been inaugurated by the Methodist chaplain for all the prisoners, and attendance at the services meant a better standing with the prison officials. Now from my talks with the men, Catholic and non-Catholic, Jew and Gentile—I learned that the "Federation of Churches" is a big humbug. Most of the prisoners attended to please the wardens and to get a "good mark" and afterwards had huge sport at the "federated" attempts of the chaplain to get them on the road to heaven. The Catholics went there to get out of their cells and perhaps hear the Jews, the Protestants ditto, and the Jews ditto. For all they knew that no "Federation of Churches" had the power or wisdom to meet their various spiritual needs and felt that there was more of the human than of the divine in its foundation. Be it remarked, also, that membership in the Federated Church was denoted by a special button which, we noticed, was conspicuously displayed by those who expected to reap the hundred-fold reward of their church allegiance here below.

And now what Catholics do to enter and secure membership in the Federation? The preacher of the People's Pulpit is quite specific in telling us what to do. "For Catholics to join the federation would signify the surrender of a great deal, and yet, in the light of the twentieth century, surely much could be surrendered without any sacrifice of manhood—merely with sacrifice of little pride. For the Church at Rome to



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