

FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

Second Sunday after Pentecost, and Sunday Within the Octave of Corpus Christi.

HOLY COMMUNION.

A certain man made a great supper and invited many. (St. Luke xiv., 16.)

I suppose every Catholic here to-day, except some young children, has once or many times in his life been to the "Great Supper," and eaten the "Bread of Life" which is served at it; and those little ones of the Lord's Holy Catholic family are looking forward to the bright day, to be for ever afterwards the day of sweetest memory, when they, too, shall have that honor and happiness—the day of their First Communion.

If such be the case, what is the use of the Church repeating to us every year the threat in the Gospel against those who made foolish and selfish excuses for staying away—“None of those men that were called shall taste of my supper?” We have been called. We have answered the invitation. We have been to the supper. Isn't that enough? The Gospel evidently does not apply to us. But wait a bit. I have two things for you to think about. In the first place, the calling to the Great Supper the Gospel speaks about is a standing invitation for life. By this I mean that the law of the Catholic Church obliges every one to receive Holy Communion annually—that is, during the Easter season. It is then, first of all, an annual invitation: and going one year is not answering the call for the next year. Every one who has learned his Catechism ought to know that. In the second place, what would you think of a near relative whom you had invited to present at your marriage anniversary dinner, who should send for reply that he had already dined with you on the Fourth of July? This is like what people say who, when asked if they make their Easter duty, tell you, "Oh! no, I went at Christmas," or "I was at the mission." Now, the annual marriage supper which the King makes for His Son, and to which we are invited, is at Easter, and neither Christmas, mission time, the Forty Hours, nor the Fourth of July will do, unless, indeed, the mission or the Forty Hours' took place in the Paschal season.

The second thing I want you to think about is that the invitation to partake of the "Great Supper" of Holy Communion, whether at Easter or at any other time, is a call to make what is known as a *worthy* Communion; that is, you must be absolved from sin and thus be yourself worthy. That is requisite, and that is enough. There are some scrupulous people who fancy that they themselves have got to do beforehand all that the Communion is intended to do and will do. Who is it that prepares the Supper, they or the Lord? If they will do the little that is asked of them, they can safely leave to the Lord the responsibility of doing His part. A *worthy* Communion should also be one that is worth something to the one receiving it, and should not be a worthless exterior performance, which has no interior act of communion in the heart to correspond to it. And now this kind of worth of each and every Communion depends upon what the communicant chooses to make it. All is to be had that God can give. The means of getting the good from Communion is one and the same means for getting the good in receiving other sacraments—that is, prayer. Prayer beforehand, prayer during it, prayer afterwards. The more you want and the more you ask of, the more worthy will your Communion be. Suppose our Lord should suddenly quit the sacramental form of the host and ask a communicant at the altar-rail, "What do you wish for?" and he should answer, "I don't know; I never thought of asking for anything," he would reasonably conclude that he was not likely to receive very much. Now, I hope you who often come to the holy table are paying attention to this. If you come often, it is supposed, and justly supposed, that you want a good deal, and that you are deeply in earnest about obtaining what you desire. Much as I am sure, your Communion is worth to you, I wish you would set about making them worth still more. In a word, you must think more about what you need. Get your requests ready. Have them, as it were, well by heart, so that if the Lord should ask you what you came for, your reply would come out quick and earnest enough. Of all privileges and honors in this world, receiving Holy Communion is, indeed, something for us Catholics to boast of. How the "outsiders" envy us our faith and the comfort it brings to us!—the infidels of every name and kind, the Protestants and others, who either have no Communion, or at best a sham one. How would you like to have yourself thrust aside and one of them called by the Lord to take your place at His table? Beware, then, how you treat His invitation: come as often and be as well prepared as the Spirit of Divine Love shall inspire you.

It is conjectured that a specific may yet be found for every ill that flesh is heir to. However this may be, certainly the best specific yet found for diseases of the blood is Ayer's Sarsaparilla, and most diseases originate from impure blood.

A HAPPY HINT—We don't believe in keeping a good thing when we hear of it, and for this reason take special pleasure in recommending those suffering with Piles in any form, blind, bleeding, protruding, etc., to Dr. J. C. Smith's Pile Remedy, the best and surest remedy in the world, the use of which cuts short a vast deal of suffering and inconvenience. Send 50 cts to the Winkelman & Brown Drug Co., Baltimore, Md., or ask your druggist to order for you.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

"Father, May I Die?"

A sudden pull at the gong, a hurried throwing back of the door, and there in the vestibule of the rectory stood two flushed, breathless girls.

"A person is dying! Tell the priest, please, to come at once. There's no time to be lost."

In the shortest possible time I reached the parlor, with oil stocks—though not with the Blessed Sacrament—ready to accompany the two callers. They were so excited that they could hardly tell the street and number. Their eyes were red with tears, and soon as they caught sight of me they bounded in a rush towards me, and stretching out their arms as if they were about to drag me with them, both cried out at the same time:

"Oh, Father! please hurry. Jenny is dying? She wants to see you. She begged so piteously to bring you. Won't you try to get there in time? Oh, do, Father!"

We were already outside the door, hurrying to the dying Jenny's bedside. I followed the girls, cutting across corners and streets, regardless of pavements, looking only for the shortest distance. It was after 10 o'clock at night, and the feeble light from the miserable gas lamps caused many a misstep in our reckless haste, while a number of passers-by stopped short in their course to look after us in wonderment. A policeman, standing on the corner of a street in the shadow of a gaslight, looked on us suspiciously, as if our hurried pace meant an evil flight.

I was soon on the granite steps of a large three-story house on a much frequented street. The bell had scarcely sounded before the door flew open, and I stood inside, where a matronly-looking, gray-haired woman, holding the door with one hand, pointed with the other up the stairway. Following the direction, I mounted, and upon landing met a young girl in tears who motioned to a room towards the front. Feeling that this was the room of the dying Jenny, I dropped my top hat and entered.

This was the room. Several persons were there, some kneeling, some standing; one was fanning the patient, while another was offering reviving spirits. There on the bed lay Jenny gasping for breath and at intervals coughing convulsively. Her eyes were closed, and her wavy hair lay spread over the white pillow. Her hands were twitching alternately with the crucifix which she held and the counterpane which covered her. Her face and hands were emaciated, and the skin so thin and clear that it was almost transparent. Youth and beauty were strikingly stamped on her features, but there was on her countenance a sweet placid grace that told of inward beauty of soul, and made me realize the presence of God's angels in the death chamber. Evidently consumption would claim its victim in a few moments.

I stopped and said in her ear: "The priest is here dear child, and brings you God's blessing."

She slowly opened her eyes, and for a moment seemed bewildered; then, recovering herself, she stretched out her hands and drew me close to her lips and whispered, for her voice was very weak:

"O, Father! Father, I'm suffering so much! Won't you help me? It's so hard to be patient—and—and—I am dying!"

Finding there was no time to be lost, I told her that I had come to anoint her and give her the last absolution, asking her at the same time to try and make an act of contrition from the very bottom of her heart. I heard her confession, administered the Extreme Unction and gave the last blessing. When I had finished I bent down to her ear to say words that would suggest thoughts of sorrow for sin and confidence in God's mercy. Just then a sudden change came over her wan features, and a smile, beautiful with some hidden, holy thought, lit up her thin, white face, and she said:

"Father may I die now?"

The question startled me, she had not quickly remembered that she had not yet received Holy Communion. So, answering the girl of her innocence, I said: "But wouldn't you like to go to Holy Communion before dying?"

"Oh, yes, Father! Mayn't I go now?"

It was with embarrassment and some shame, too, that I have explained how, in my haste to reach her bedside in time, I had not brought the Blessed Sacrament with me. Inspired with some unaccountable, some superhuman assurance, I promised her she should receive Communion if she would try and bear her suffering patiently for a few hours for her crucified Saviour's sake. The promise was given willingly, joyously.

Meanwhile she had wonderfully revived. She now spoke with ease, something she had not done for two days. Manifestly the Sacraments had brought her temporal benefits along with the spiritual, while the hope of receiving the Blessed Sacrament was infusing new vitality into the well-nigh exhausted body. I felt now no misgiving about her living long enough to realize her desire, and on leaving her I told her I would come back in the morning after I had said Mass.

Shortly after 6 o'clock I was in her room again, and had brought the Blessed Sacrament with me. I was startled when I saw her, so great was the change for the worse. Only a few hours ago I had left her so bright, but now she was apparently in the last extremity. The same distressing, gasping and convulsive coughing as

when I first saw her showed the narrow thread on which life was holding for support. Going to her beside, I bent over her and said: "My child, the priest is here, it is Father—He has brought the Great Consoler with him."

At the last words, the hard breathing ceased, the eyes opened, a delicate flush tinged her cheeks, the eyes grew bright, and clasping her hands, she cried out, exultingly: "God, my God, be thanked!"

I gave her the benefit of sacramental absolution, and then administered the *Vaticum*. For many minutes after I joined with her in prayers and ejaculations of thanksgiving. I shall never forget this thanksgiving. The tender and confiding love, the deep humility of this young girl, her fervent aspirations to the Sacred Heart, made me realize, as I never realized before, how fully God takes possession of the heart after a good Communion. The little consumptive Jenny was surely near the eternal gates of Heaven. When least expecting it, she stretched out her thin white hand and drew me close to her lips. The words came faintly:

"Father, O Father, may I die—now?"

She was waiting for the word of obedience. I asked if she was perfectly resigned, if she had no wish, nothing to be satisfied before dying. There was no hesitation, but on passing the question, she answered:

"Yes, Father: I have one sad thought in dying. It is my mother. How good she is, and yet—her voice grows thick—she never goes to church, and has not attended to her religious duty for many a year. Dear, poor mother! If she would only promise me to go to the sacraments, I'd die happy. But she won't promise. God pity my dear, poor mother!" This she said in a tone of piteous sadness.

I told her how powerful with God are the prayers of children for their parents, particularly if said for their spiritual reformation. I assured her the prayers she told me she had offered for her mother's conversion would be answered in God's good time and bring back her mother to Him. But there was one more prayer, one sacrifice, I said, that would be most acceptable to God—the sacrifice of her life. I asked her to offer her life for her mother. It was a new light in her mind, and the joy this new thought caused was manifest, as she eagerly said:

"Oh, Father, will that be a prayer, and do you think God will hear it? Then willing do I give up my life for her—for my poor, dear mother."

I assured her that God would be pleased with her offering, and together we then made the gift of her life to God for her mother's conversion. The sacrifice had been made and there was calmness in her heart. The face was peacefully happy, and she said:

"Now, Father, I leave my mother in God's hands, and I want to go to Him—always—forever."

She lingered on the last words as if the vision of the supreme happiness appeared to her. Then casting her eyes on the crucifix she held in her hand, and lovingly turned towards me, she impulsively turned towards me with tears in her eyes and pleadingly asked:

"May I die now, Father?"

"Yes; now you may die," was my answer. I have often seen the expression of intensest joy depicted on the countenances of persons who have received some sudden good news, or were told of some unexpected good fortune that had fallen to them, but that was nothing like the happy gladness that shone in Jenny's sweet face when I gave her my reply. Clapping her hands and raising them towards heaven, she closed her eyes and prayed: "O Jesus, may my eyes never see anything till they open on Thee in heaven forever—forever!"

Her prayer was granted.

Three months after Jenny had been laid to rest I was summoned to the reception-room.

"You do not remember me, Father, I suppose?" somewhat timidly said a woman dressed in black.

"You attended my Jenny when she was sick and—"

"Oh, yes, I remember!" I said.

"I am in trouble, Father," she went on. "I've been thinking of her all most all the time for the past two days, and last night I couldn't sleep on account of her. She seemed to want something from me. Won't you please say some Masses for her? Perhaps she wants prayers?"

I remembered Jenny's sacrifice, and simply said: "Yes; I think Jenny does want something from you, and that something is not prayers nor Masses for herself, but for you. Jenny wants your return to God!"

It was the one word needed, the one word she had been waiting for. She burst into tears, which ceased to flow only after she had made her peace with God by confession. She went home relieved of her trouble.

I love to think that it was the child's prayer and sacrifice that won the mother's return to God.—Philadelphia Standard.

Minard's Liniment cures La Grippe.

AN ODD BIT OF LIFE.

One evening last week when a shower came up so unexpectedly, says the New York *Evening Sun*, a small boy, armed with a huge umbrella several sizes larger than himself, stood at the foot of the stair way of the Sixth avenue elevated station at One hundred and Sixteenth street. "Here you are, gents and ladies," he cried, waving his umbrella invitingly, as the passengers began to descend and look about them for some means of getting home. "Twenty-five cents to take you home, ladies. If I wet your dresses I get no pay, see?" The men stared at him, and in most cases turned their collars up and passed. But with the women it was different. They stared at him also, but while their eyes were taking in the small boy's brains were weighing their gowns and their new spring bonnets in the balance with the small boy's fee. The result was practically a foregone conclusion. During the hour and a half that the storm lasted the youngster actually made \$2.75. All of his patrons were women, with one exception—an old man almost bent double with rheumatism.

After the storm had cleared and the small boy and his umbrella were resting from their labors at the bookstand at the corner the young financier consented to talk. "It was a pretty good night, this was," he remarked as he stowed away his net proceeds in the one pocket which his trousers possessed. "It came up nicely, that rain did. None of the women got on to it at all. Did you see the fat old woman, the one with the parrot on her? Oh, she's a corker, she is. There ain't been a rain in the last six months but what she's got caught in it. She's mighty sweet to me now, but she didn't use to be. I did her up once. She's scared of me." "How did you manage it?" he was asked. "Well, yer see, last year when I first went into the biz the old woman used to kick. She said I was extorting of her. Once she gave me the shake at the door and wouldn't cough up the price. After that she threw me a 10-cent piece out of the window. But I let it lie there, for me blood was up. The next week I seen her start down town one day all dressed up daisy. I knew there was a comin' on, so I waited. In about three hours it began to rain lickity cut. The old woman came home right in the middle of it. I was standing there wid me umbrella. Soon as she came down the steps I smiled at her, same as if nothing was wrong between us. The old woman looked kind of ashamed like, but she smiled at me too. 'Little boy,' she said—she always calls me 'little boy,' explained the youngster with a pained expression—'Little boy,' she says, 'I want you to take me home to-day. Please be very careful of my new bonnet.' 'Yes, ma'am,' I says, and we started. Soon as we started I says to her, says: 'Where's me quarter for the other day?' She pretended she didn't catch on. But I was on to her, you bet. 'Give me me quarter now,' I says. 'If you don't I'll sneak.' I pulled the umbrella off her a bit. The old woman began to scream 'You little wretch,' says she, 'I'd box the ears off you if it wasn't raining.' Then, when she seen I wasn't goin' no further, she pulled her purse out and gave me fifty cents for the two trips. Now she and me always travel on the dead level. She ain't a bad old bloke," he added considerably, "if you only knows how to treat her. Men ain't no good," he continued, in answer to a question as to which sex he preferred as customers. "They always want to hold the umbrellas. Once a feller tried to run away wid it. But I was on to him. Sometimes I want women to carry it, they're very tall. But I'm gettin' an umbrella made now as will stop all their monkey business. It's goin' to be a good one, fit ladies of every size. It'll be finished by next Friday. Then I'll have it for Sunday."

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Health Department.

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