

FIVE MINUTE SERMON

THE REV. F. P. HICKEY, O. S. B.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE VOICE OF THE TEACHER

And putting He taught the multitude out of the ship. (Luke x. 1).

With a little thought we can see the wisdom of the Church in choosing the gospel just read for this Sunday. The great festivals are past. Christmas, Lent, Passiontide, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, Corpus Christi—one after another in stately procession have passed. They claimed our attention and veneration, and now begins the long line of the Sundays after Pentecost. We have worshipped the mysteries of our Redemption and the love of Christ, and now each Sunday fresh lessons are given us that we may keep faithful to our religion. Naturally, then, today we begin with the episode of our Lord teaching the multitude out of the ship. What the Master did then, the Church continues to do Sunday after Sunday. Some may resent the word "teaching." They may say, We know our religion. Have we to come week after week to be taught like children? Yes, that is the very word—as children of the Church. We may know our religion, and know it well; but the knowledge may lie latent in our souls. And therefore, that we may be able to use our knowledge as occasion requires, without hesitation or mistake, we have to be constantly reminded of our duties. Does not a business man keep his knowledge bright and keen? his mind alert by constant watching the state of the market, the rise or fall of shares, and the rest? He is not content with what he has already known, but he has to be watchful and keep up to date. We have a more important business to see to than the greatest financier that ever lived. The wealth that he may amass, he has to leave and forsake, when death summons him. Whereas we are laying up treasures in the everlasting Kingdom.

Oh! the value of listening to the teaching of the Church. Any Sunday may recall to mind something that we have overlooked, some duty in which we have grown slack and careless. Any Sunday may give us a warning of failure and disaster, that the enemy of our salvation is plotting to bring about. As soon as we hear the word, we know; yes, but we needed the reminding; we are saved by the warning. Thus we can see the danger of those who neglect hearing the word of God, the teaching of the Church. There are many who despise it; who begrudge the time to listen to it. In their pride, they think they need it not; and when it is too late, when they have fallen into some sin, into some bad habit, they have to own in the bitterness of their soul, "Oh! if I had only thought of it in time!" They would not have fallen, disaster would not have overtaken them, if they had only listened to the Church week after week.

That teaching of the Church, which they resent is the teaching of Christ. The Church has its ministers, and they are only men. You may be more learned than they are, but they are blessed, because they are doing their duty. They speak what the Church has taught them, and that is the doctrine of Christ. His words are alive and efficacious now as if we heard them from Simon Peter's boat. In that multitude which He addressed, our Blessed Lord saw each of us. He meant His words in the gospels for each of our hearts, and in humble faith we have to receive them from the ministers of His Church.

Take the teaching of the Church each Sunday humbly and your knowledge of the way to heaven will be quickened to make right decisions, to choose the better way. Your way to heaven will be very safe and sure. The great St. Antony, when a youth, heard certain words of the gospel read. He took them as addressed straight to himself, and, forsaking all things, he followed Christ. His great sanctity was the reward of obeying the voice of the Teacher, Christ our Lord. And so with us. We know not the day when the voice will speak direct to our heart. It is not enough to hear it: we must accept it and obey it. St. Peter had listened with wondering attention, drinking in the words of the Master, as He sat in his boat; and then came the command, "Launch out your net for a draught." "At Thy word," the word he had listened to, that had given him an insight into the ways of God, that had quickened his faith and given him courage; "at Thy word," despising all worldly prudence; "at Thy word I will let down the net." He had listened, he obeyed, and then the reward! No wonder he fell at the feet of Jesus, his heart bursting with gratitude, yet humbled at the thought that perhaps for a moment he had been tempted not to obey.

That poor fisherman, who obeyed the voice of the Teacher, became the Prince of the Apostles, the Vicar of Christ on earth. What an example he gives us! If he had not listened, he would not have had the faith courageously to obey; he would have forfeited the reward that was ready for him. He would have remained Simon the fisherman, instead of becoming St. Peter, the ruler of the Church of Christ.

So with us. Love to hear the words of Christ; the incidents of the gospels; the inspired words of the epistles. Then you will be equipped with the knowledge of the Faith, and alert and ready to obey. "You will be able to resist in the evil day and to stand in all things perfect." In all things taking the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Eph. vi. 13, 17).

PAGAN ROME OUTDONE

FORMER MINISTER DESCRIBES BLOODY RUSSIAN CHEKA

The persecution of Christianity under the Russian Bolsheviks has been the most terrible since the days of pagan Rome, according to Charles R. Crane, former minister to Russia, who has been a close student of religious affairs in Russia for the past six years.

Mr. Crane, who was a member of the special commission sent to Russia by President Wilson following the Kerensky revolution, asserts that the recent murder of Monsignor Budkiewicz was instrumental in tearing away a veil of secrecy that has hidden the bloody operations of the Russian Cheka for five years.

In a time he estimated that Cheka, the terrorist organization, has done away with 2,000,000 persons, a great number of them church officials.

The Russian Orthodox Church, according to Mr. Crane, has suffered the most bitter persecution, but because that church has no followers outside Russia and no voice in Russia, little or nothing has been heard by the world concerning its sufferings. The Bolshevik news censorship makes it practically impossible for news to get into Russia or out of it.

RUSSIAN CHURCH REORGANIZED

"At the time of the first revolution," said Mr. Crane, "the Russians took advantage of the opportunity to get the church back into their own hands. While social and political affairs were in chaos the revolution in the church proceeded smoothly."

Word was sent throughout Russia that the organization and administration of the church was to revert to the form prevalent in the third and fourth centuries. The Rasputin priests and bishops were thrown out into the street.

"A new synod composed of 60 bishops, priests and laity—each one a thoroughly tested and respected man—took charge of church affairs."

"Elections were ordered for the church council, which was to validate all changes. Elected by votes of men and women, delegates came from all over the country—from as far as Vladivostok—to sit in council at Moscow August 1, 1917."

"Tikhon was elected patriarch and he lived up nobly to his great responsibility in the face of the ferocious Bolsheviks."

TERRIBLE PERSECUTION

"There has not been such a terrible persecution of Christianity since the time of Rome. The churches were plundered right and left in a thorough fashion. All the ecclesiastical educational institutions were closed, including the beautiful school of church singing, one of the finest institutions of its kind in the world."

"The church was allowed no publication. It was subjected to the most violent attacks on the part of the Bolshevik press and speakers. If members of the church dared to respond in any way they were arrested as counter-revolutionaries. If they tried to teach religion to any child under eighteen years old they were tried on the same charge."

"In the Bolshevik schools, however, children were not only taught atheism, but were told abominable things about the church and church people."

"A regular process that can be called nothing other than torture was applied to officials of the Orthodox Church. Once a month their homes were entered by parties of Bolsheviks, who stormed up and down, making all kinds of threats and performing all kinds of brutalities to intimidate the persons they wished to prefer charges against, and to force them to admit having committed various 'crimes' against the Government."

"I can tell part, but not the worst of the persecutions. Nobody except the persecutors knows all. The most efficient thing the Bolsheviks have accomplished is the establishment of a news censorship that makes it practically impossible for news to get into Russia or out."

MALIGNITY OF THE CHEKA

"I know something, however, of the secret practices of Cheka. It probably has killed 2,000,000 persons in the last five years. It has vented its malignity especially on the church."

"The world was shocked and startled a few weeks ago when a little of the truth leaked out. Similar trials and executions have been visited upon low and high officials of the Orthodox Church as an almost daily occurrence for the last five years."

"Hundreds of priests have been killed, and many bishops. There were six metropolitans. Their office is next in importance to that of the patriarch. All were executed—and the outside world knew nothing of it. The Orthodox Church had no means of making its voice heard."

"The Bolsheviks have made persistent efforts to discredit the

church, but it must not be forgotten that the church they are trying to stamp out today is not the vicious church of the Czarist regime."

BISHOP SHAMEFULLY FOOLED

"They have deluded the Methodists into thinking this is not true, apparently. The Methodist bishop who is now flirting with the Bolshevik Government, co-operating and acquiescing in a manner with the attacks upon the Orthodox church, is being fooled shamefully."

Mr. Crane declares that there is a brighter side to the picture in the fact that many Russians who were misled by the Bolsheviks have come to recognize the vicious character of the Bolshevik regime and have been flowing back to the church in ever-increasing numbers. The intellectual class which left the church beginning in 1850, is returning. The church spirit is growing stronger and stronger, a fact evidenced by the new policy of the Bolsheviks to take the church into their own hands by the formation of the "Living Church" manned by its own agents.

BROOKLYN GIRLS' CLUB

The Catholic Young Women's League of Brooklyn, N. Y., with a membership of over 500, will hold a formal opening of their club house on May 15. The club will occupy two big, old-fashioned houses which were presented to the League by Bishop Molloy. The upper floors of the buildings will house about twenty-four girls.

The Catholic Young Women's League started four years ago as a parish society. Now it is a diocesan-wide organization. "We have high school girls, students of all kinds, home girls and business girls," said Joseph T. Cunningham, director and founder of the league.

"The idea of forming the league came to me at the close of the War. I felt that our girls needed a club of their own, similar to the Carroll Club in Manhattan. When Bishop Molloy became head of the diocese he showed his approval of the work of the league by giving us two houses."

"It is my hope that these houses will serve as the nucleus for a home for working girls, which will eventually be as large as the Harriet Judson of the Young Women's Christian Association. Everything that can possibly be done to maintain the home atmosphere at the club house will be done. Personnel managers of several banks have asked the league to find rooms for their girls."

It is planned by the League to make the club house a self-supporting institution. Room rents will be kept as low as possible.

SAVINGS CERTIFICATES

The Catholic peasantry in Ireland are, as a rule, most thrifty. All they can do with their savings, however, is to deposit them in the banks. The interest allowed on the money is at a meagre rate. Deposits in Irish banks amount to \$1,050,000,000.

It is announced that the Free State government is about to issue savings certificates on the principle adopted by the British government. According to this plan the person who invests something less than four dollars today will, five years hence be entitled to draw five dollars. This mode of investment should be an encouragement to thrift.

SUMMER FOODS AND WINTER SICKNESS

Summer food habits are largely responsible for health or sickness in the winter which follows. Science has demonstrated that all foods are either acid or alkaline. Human blood must be alkaline or the body is diseased and soon dies. "Excess Acid" foods cause acid blood and these leave the blood by the skin and linings of the nose, throat, lungs, etc. In winter the skin is inactive and the linings of the air passages have to bear the brunt of acid elimination, becoming irritated; and the bodily vitality being lowered in the process, ideal conditions for disease germs to set up business in and disease the body—flu, pneumonia, etc., are the result.

White flour, refined cereals, fats, meats, sweets are "Excess Acid" foods, largely used by civilized races in summer, their acids added to by ice cream, iced drinks, etc. Acid blood results, taken care of by the skin in summer, but the nose, throat, lungs, etc., have to eliminate the acids in winter, resulting in flu, pneumonia, etc.

Uncivilized races, who do not have these acid foods, do not have our winter diseases. They live upon alkaline whole grains, milk, nuts, beans, eggs, greens and fruits, which keep the blood alkaline, "cooled," healthy.

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