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FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost.

DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Why do Catholics pay so much honor to the Blessed Virgin? Are they not doing an injury to her Son by over-honoring His Mother? What is the reason, the doctrine, of the Catholic's devotion to Mary?

Very fair questions, brethren—questions which you should be ready to answer with intelligence and kindness. So that now, as we approach the Feast of Our Lady's Assumption into heaven, let us renew our faith in her dignity. What, then, does the Catholic faith teach us about her? It teaches us that she is the Mother of God; and further, that, on account of the fore-earned merits of her Son, she was preserved from the stain of original sin; that she was always a virgin; and that it is lawful and profitable to ask her prayers. Such are the articles of faith concerning the Blessed Virgin.

Once you know something about her Son's divinity you easily perceive her dignity of Mother of God. Her title of Mother of God plainly rests upon the fact that her Son is God. Jesus Christ is God; His nature is divine and His person is divine. And here you must bear in mind the distinction between nature and person. He has the nature, being, essence of God. And He has the person of God; for our Saviour is God the Son, second person of the Most Holy Trinity.

What, then, is human about Him? for we know that He is as truly man as He is truly God. The answer is that He has a human nature as well as a divine nature. He became man; and He did so by taking human nature from Mary, His Mother. But, you ask again, is He a human person also? No, for we have seen that He is the divine person, God the Son. There cannot be two persons in Christ. He is but a single person, one individual, and that is divine. So that the divine personality of the Son of God takes human nature and unites it to the divine nature. The one divine person whose name is Christ, and who is of both divine and human nature, has no human personality, but divine.

And this is the Son of Mary. Is she not the Mother of our Lord, personally His Mother? Can any one be a mother and not be mother of a person? Is He not personally her Son? What a dignity! What a mysterious and wonderful eminence, to be mother of the divine person of the Son of God made man. No wonder that we honor her; although we know full well that all she has of dignity and sanctity she has by no power of her own, but by gift of God, and that she is purely a human being. Those who do not honor Mary fail to appreciate the majesty of Christ; fail to understand the doctrine of the Incarnation; fail to grasp the immensity of the divine love in God becoming man.

No wonder, then, that God should have saved her from the taint of Adam's sin, should have preserved her a spotless virgin, should have saved her pure body from the grave. The Angel Gabriel tells us what Mary is: "Behold thou shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee, and therefore the Holy (One) that shall be born of thee shall be the Son of God."

Now, brethren, to be a mother is to hold an office. It is to exercise by divine right the highest powers committed to a human being. What wonderful rights a mother possesses! An affectionate allegiance is due her from her son; an obedience instinctive, sacred, supreme; a reverential and hearty loyalty which arouses the noblest emotions in the hardest heart and gives birth to heroic deeds even in men of the weakest natures. A mother is entitled to her son's love by the most sacred of all obligations. Well, just think of it, our Blessed Lord was, and is yet, bound to His Mother by that imperative divine law: He was, and is yet, subject to the sweetest and, for a noble nature, the most resistless impulse to do His mother's will and to make her happy. He owes her love, obedience, reverence, friendship, support, companionship, sympathy. And He that doth all things well, would He not do His whole duty as Son, would He not be a model Son? Would He not grant her slightest wish while He lived with her on earth, will He not gladly do so now in heaven?

Hence our Lord Jesus Christ spent nearly His whole life in His mother's immediate company, consenting to postpore for her sake His Father's work of publishing His divinity and preaching His Gospel. Hence He worked His first miracle at her request at the wedding of Cana. Hence He inspired her to prophecy that all generations would call her blessed. Hence, too, our Lord has instituted into every Christian heart some little glow of His own deep filial love for her. In truth, brethren, whatever Christ's mother is to Him by nature, that she is to us by adoption. Just in proportion to our union with Him are we bound to her. And if we wish to know Him well we can study in no better school than His Mother's. If we wish to love Him tenderly, her maternal heart can best teach us how. And if we have favors to ask Him we shall be glad, if we are not too self-conceited, to secure her prayers to assist us.

Mind's Liniment, is used by Physicians.

The House that John Built

By MAURICE F. EGAN, LL. D.

When Johnny O'Neill was a little boy, his father gave him, on Christmas morning, a chest of tools. Johnny felt very happy when he saw the shining steel and new wood of the chisels, plane, and all the other instruments which a big, grown-up carpenter uses at his trade.

But Johnny soon became tired of looking at his chest and its beautiful contents. He wanted to get to work. His mother would not have shavings in the parlor. The weather was very cold, and he could not work in the open air. Sarah, the servant, scolded when he took his tools into the kitchen. And so the ambitious young carpenter was made almost unhappy, by the obstacles thrown in his way, as he had been happy at the sight of the tools, all his own.

Johnny's father saw that Johnny wanted something more; but, being a very busy man, he did not think of asking what he wanted. "You cannot clutter up my kitchen with your trash," said old Sarah. "No, you can't have the kitchen table when I'm not using it. I'm always using it. Don't bother me any more."

"Now, Johnny," said his mother, "you must not play with your tools either in the parlor or the sitting-room. You might cut the furniture, and I can't have shavings on the carpet."

Poor Johnny wondered why there was so much room in the house for furniture and carpets, and so little for a boy with a box of tools. "Father gave them to me," he said, "and I think I ought to use them somewhere."

"I wish father had never given them to you," replied his mother. Johnny felt like crying. It seemed rather hard to him. If his mother would only let him take the sitting-room carpet up, he was sure he could put it down again before evening came. But she would not. And there was the parlor! Of what use was the parlor? It was always cold in there; nobody went into it except on Sunday, and when "company" came. His mother might let him have the parlor for a work-shop. Nobody else seemed to want it.

Johnny did not go to school. The Catholic school, taught by the brothers, was too far away. His mother taught him in the morning. The afternoon he had all to himself. The afternoons had been very dreary, since he had received the chest of tools. He could only look at them, and try their edges on pieces of kindling wood.

The man who owned the place across the road went to work to put up a rough shed, in which to store potatoes, as his cellar had become damp. Johnny watched him eagerly. How he would have liked to help him! But when he climbed over the hedges of hard snow, which lay between him and the farm across the road, and offered his services, the man laughed, and told him he was too small.

Johnny, in spite of this rebuff, watched and admired him at his work. The man concluded to make a little house instead of a shed. He nailed up four sides and cut a window, into which he put an old sash. When it was finished, Johnny thought that it was one of the most beautiful pieces of work he had ever seen.

Why could not he build one like it? He had the tools. He had observed closely the manner in which the man had used his. There was no place for his tools in his father's house; he felt that he ought to build a work-shop of his own.

There came a sudden spell of very cold weather, about the first of February. Johnny was kept in the house a great deal just then, because his mother said he was "delicate," and that he might catch cold. He thought and thought over the project of building a house for himself. He dreamed of his house. One night he dreamed he had built his house behind the barn; that it had two windows, a door, and wooden steps; and that suddenly fire broke out in his father's house. The fire consumed everything; his father and mother were homeless! Then Johnny said—

"Come to my house, dear father and mother."

"Your house! you haven't any house."

Then Johnny (in his dream) led the way to the little house behind the barn, and made a fire in the grate, and his father and mother kissed him, and said—

"Oh, how sorry we are that we didn't let you play in the parlor!"

Johnny awoke, and resolved to buy some boards. He had seventy-five cents in his bank. That sum, he thought, was more than sufficient to buy all the boards he wanted.

March came with some fine days. On one of these, Johnny, having obtained permission from his mother, went across the road to negotiate for timber.

II. The man across the way was putting a new handle to a shovel. He asked after Johnny's father. Johnny was much struck by a hen-coop with a little steple on it.

"Did you make that?" he said, admiringly.

"Oh, yes," said the man. "Haden't anything better to do. I'm fond of architecture."

Johnny thought how happy he would be if he could make a hen-coop like that. Then he spoke of his business. He wanted to buy enough of lumber to put up a little house, in which he could work with his tools.

"For you know," he said, "mother don't like shavings on the parlor carpet."

"Women folks are particular," said the man, pulling his sandy whiskers. "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll put up a carpenter's shop for you for \$2 a day and find the boards."

Johnny's countenance fell. And the man continued—

"I'm not much of a carpenter, but I can do that. I wish we had a good carpenter down in these diggings. He'd find plenty to do."

Two dollars a day! Where could Johnny get that fabulous sum?

"I'll come some other time," he said. "Good-bye!"

"Good-bye. Think about it, and let me know."

Johnny did think about it a great deal; but thinking did not increase his seventy-five cents to the amount demanded, by the man across the road.

About this time, Johnny began to prepare to receive the Holy Eucharist. He was taken to the church three times every week; it was seven miles away. Finally he made his First Communion; and having been well instructed by his father, his mother, and Father Freno, he made it very fervently. For some weeks his anxiety about the carpenter's shop disappeared. He was very happy.

Johnny's father resolved that, so soon as the Great Day was past, he would mark the event by a favor to his son. He asked Johnny what he wanted.

"A carpenter's shop," Johnny said, seriously.

His father laughed.

"Why Johnny!"

"Yes, father, I want to learn to work, and I can't work in the house without spoiling everything. I want to be a carpenter."

"My dear Johnny," said his father, "I intend that you shall be a lawyer, like Mr. Squibbs, who goes by every morning on the fine gray horse, with a green bag on his arm. Study hard, Johnny. Ask for something else."

"But I want that most of all."

Johnny's mother lifted her head from her work-basket.

"Did you take my scissors, Johnny? No, here they are. I don't approve of Johnny's cutting his fingers all to pieces in a carpenter's shop. He shall go to college by and by and become a great lawyer. Perhaps he may be President some day."

Johnny, unlike most boys nowadays, had been taught to be very respectful to his father and mother. He was silent.

"Do you hear that, Johnny?" asked his father. "Or you may go into town every day, like your father, and have a real estate office."

"I want to use my hands," said Johnny. "They're no good to me now, except to play ball with in the summer. Suppose mother were to become an orphan—no, I mean a widow—what could I do for her?"

His father and mother both laughed. It was funny to see a small boy gravely considering such an important subject.

At this moment there was a knock at the door, and Mrs. Angelica Smythe, a neighbor and friend of the O'Neills, entered. She was said to have very elegant manners; she smiled a great deal, and astonished the country people around her by the grandeur of the millinery she had, from New York.

Mrs. O'Neill told her with a smile, the subject of the conversation.

"Dear me!" cried Mrs. Smythe, with a smile that took in the whole party, it was so very wide. "The boy has extremely low tastes. I intend my Augustus and Reginald for professions. Their father is only a farmer, but I hope that Augustus and Reginald will aim at something much higher. Matilda practices six hours a day at the piano-forte. When your Mary gets old enough, I would—if I were you—have her do the same."

Mary was just two years old. Mrs. O'Neill laughed.

"Mary will have to learn to be a good house-wife."

"Nonsense," exclaimed Mrs. Smythe. "I can't see where your Johnny got such low tastes. A carpenter!—a mere mechanic! Dear me!"

"St. Joseph was a carpenter," said Johnny, getting red in the face. "I don't want to be a better man than St. Joseph."

There was a pause. Mrs. Smythe



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tossed her head until the beads on her bonnet rattled.

"You shall have your carpenter's shop," said Mr. O'Neill, after a thoughtful pause.

"He'll cut his hands!" cried Johnny's mother.

"It would be better that he should cut his right hand off," answered Mr. O'Neill, gravely, "than that he should grow up with idle or useless hands."

"This comes of marrying an Irishman, Mrs. O'Neill," said Mrs. Smythe. "They have such low tastes!"

Mr. O'Neill laughed; and Johnny laughed, too. Why not? Was he not to have his own little house?

Sarah, the servant girl, and all the neighbors said that Mr. O'Neill was very foolish, to indulge Johnny in his taste for carpentering; and when he actually paid the man across the road \$2 a day, for a week's work on the amount demanded, by the man across the road.

But Johnny was contented; he helped to build the house.

Smytheville was a very "genteel"

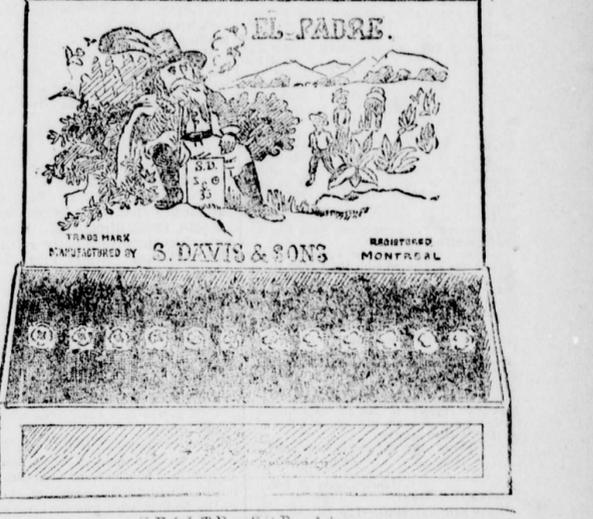
place. There were only about twenty houses in the place, scattered through big and little farms. There was a railroad station of a fantastic pattern, and all the houses in Smytheville had, in imitation of the railroad station, been decorated with ornaments of fantastic kinds. The people, except the man across the road, had hired men to work for them. There was a "select" school where a great many useless things were taught.

Mrs. O'Neill, like most mothers in Smytheville, had ambitious dreams for her son. She was engaged in economizing, that, after a time, he might be sent away to college.

He already knew his declension of Latin nouns, and had even begun to conjugate "Amo." But the young Smythes were studying Greek, Latin, Geometry, Trigonometry, German, French, Mental Philosophy, Rhetoric, Physiology, and other things too numerous to mention.

TO BE CONTINUED.

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