

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
The beautiful feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin being at hand, let us consider it this morning. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, then, my dear brethren, is simply this: that our Blessed Lady, though the offspring merely of human parents, like the rest of us, and naturally liable to inherit original sin from them as we have inherited it from ours, was nevertheless by the special providence and decree of God entirely preserved from it.

She was preserved from it entirely, I say. This may be understood in two ways. First, it was never in her. It was not taken from her at the first moment of her existence, as it has been taken from us at baptism; no, it was not taken from her, for it was not in her even at that first moment.

Secondly, she was entirely saved from its effects, not partly, as we have been. None of its consequences remained in her, as I have said they do in us. No, she was as if there had never been such a thing; except that her Son willed that she should suffer together with him, on account of its being in us.

Now, my brethren, I hope you all understand this; for a great deal of nonsense is talked about this matter, especially by Protestants, most of whom have not the least idea what is meant by the Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Mother, and who yet object to it just as bitterly as if they did. They either confound it with her virgin motherhood, in which they themselves believe and yet seem to object to our believing it, or they accuse us of saying that she was divine like her Son. Our Lord, if they would only examine they would find that what the Church teaches is simply this: that our Lady is a creature of God like ourselves, having no existence at all before the time of her Immaculate Conception; but that she is a pure and perfect creature, the most pure and perfect that God has ever made; immaculate, that is to say, spotless; free from any stain or imperfection, especially from the fatal stain of original sin. And that the reason why God made her so was that she was to be His own mother, than which no higher dignity can be conceived. If they object to this, let them do so, but not let them at least know and say what they are objecting to.

Let us hope that some Protestants, at least, will not object to this doctrine when they understand it. But perhaps some of them may say: "This is all very good, but what right has the Pope, or any one else, to say that the Pope has not added anything at all to the Christian faith in defining the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. He has no more done so than the Council of Nicea did in defining the doctrine of the Divinity of Our Lord."

You remember, my brethren, perhaps, that from this council the Nicene Creed, which is said or sung at Mass, takes its name. It was called together to condemn the errors of some who maintained that Our Lord was not truly God. And it solemnly defined that He was very well; and that He was of the same substance with the Father. Of course not; it was simply declaring what the Christian faith was, to put an end to the doubts which were arising about it. That is plain enough, is it not?

Now what was it that the Pope did in defining the Immaculate Conception? Exactly the same thing. He defined what the faith really was, to put an end to doubts about it. The only difference was that those who opposed or doubted the Immaculate Conception of our Lady were not so much to blame as those who opposed or doubted the Divinity of Our Lord, or even in many cases not at all to blame. It was not such a prominent part of the faith, and had been more obscured by time. But the action of the Pope and the council in the two cases was just the same.

THE TEMPERATE MAN
The temperate man is the one who is addressed. No matter how depraved those admirers may be. There is something essentially manly about the man who can use the gifts God gave him without making a "fool" or an "ass" of himself. The man who drinks to excess takes the gifts of God, and instead of using them to benefit himself and friends, injures himself with them and causes mischief and sorrow for those who are interested in him. There is something pitiable about the drunkard, no matter how much we condemn his actions. The strongest men mentally, morally, physically have fallen victims to the drink habit only because they were not on their guard. They thought foolishly that they were stronger than they really were—they courted occasions and finally they fell—perhaps never to rise again.

Hence one suggestion would be, "Be on your guard!" Do not cultivate the drink habit. Keep away from the clubs whose members indulge to the extent of being what is known as "good fellows." Generally they are good for nothing save to waste their time and money and to drag others into following their vile habits. The man who gets into a habit of drinking really falls into a trap which he cannot escape. He is in the hands of the devil when they tempt. But if he wants to come off victor he must be fully prepared before the assault comes. Otherwise his slimy forces will be scattered and the enemy will be in full possession of the citadel. Those of us who have had acquaintance with the actions of men given to the use of drink go so far as to be almost helpless, so that when they see a sign advertising liquor, or when they smell the vile stuff, they have absolutely no control over the de-

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mand of their nature. They are in the literal sense of the word slaves to their passions.

ATHLETICS AGAINST LIQUOR
Mr. Thomas Starkey, the former pugilist and now a saloon keeper, declares that athletics are putting a check on the use of liquor and tobacco by young men. He states his views as follows:

"Everybody in America seems to want to be an athlete. A fellow can not be an athlete and drink at the same time. I notice in my own place that there is not near as much whiskey drunk as there was a year or so ago. People who drink make it beer. It is not because they cannot afford whiskey or wine, but because they are afraid strong alcoholic drinks will spoil them as athletes.

"The thing which is doing the most damage to the liquor trade is school athletics. Schoolboys everywhere in America now are being brought up to be athletes. Every school boy has training ideas hammered into him constantly. He is taught that he can not be an athlete and drink or smoke, and so he leaves tobacco and alcohol alone. Then he gets into the habit, and when he is grown up the habit sticks. In the old days the university undergraduates used to come to town after a big football or baseball game and drink everything in sight. They do not do it any more, because the universities are full of this athletic idea, and the undergraduates have no use for a chap who drinks whiskey and gets out of condition.

"Schoolboy athletics are costing me a lot of money every day, but I am for it just the same. It is going to make this nation the healthiest on earth. I would like to see every boy in New York an athlete, who has no use for tobacco or whiskey. If a man wants to drink something, let him drink it right, but I would vote for this schoolboy athletic business."

To this influence of athletics must also be added the force of the teaching in the schools that liquor and tobacco are more or less poisons to the human body. The influence of women and the growth of temperance society, too, are against the alcoholic habit.

DRUMMERS AND DRINK
The Temperance Cause expresses the opinion that a remarkable change has taken place within recent years among traveling men in regard to the use of liquor. It is safe to assert that a majority of these commercial travelers let strong drink alone. Recently a couple of Boston traveling men on their way home were discussing business, politics and current events generally, when one of them remarked that he certainly had a thick head on him that day because of a few drinks of liquor he had taken the night before. The other asked him why he drank and the reply was, to clinch an order. His companion turned on him with this advice:

"Better cut it out. Better lose a customer than your own self respect, and gain the habit. I was instructed to do the good-fellow play when I started on the road, but I am older than you. I used to do a little business that way, but since little Jimmie and Pat came along I have done some hard thinking on the long jump and have concluded no drink for me. You can't do yourself justice and drink."

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liquor to please some one else. The man who tells you he has always drunk a little and it never hurt him isn't quite sure of himself and wants you to help bolster him up. I have no sympathy with you or with your headache. I hope the next time you throw in the calamity what it will put me on the blink for three weeks. Cut it out.

A CONVERTED SOCIALIST

There are no doubt in the ranks of the Socialists many excellent men who have convinced themselves of the righteousness of the movement, and act out of regard for the betterment of the condition of their fellowmen. One has only to remember Mr. David Goldstein, a leader in Socialism at one time, but now a convert to Catholicism and an ardent combatant against the falsehood of which Socialism is chiefly composed. And now there is another prominent Socialist who has seen the error of his ways. It is Mr. Ben S. Henry the business manager of The Citizen, the Socialist organ of Soberscody. His decision to abandon Socialism, and the results of his observations and experiences gained in Socialist meetings, and from the perusal of the ideas and doctrines of Socialism, in all their phases and varieties. No one understood Socialism better than Mr. Henry. He was closely associated with the Socialist Mayor Lunn of Soberscody, and was a friend of all the great exponents of the movement, and had "explored its highways and byways most thoroughly." His view therefore, is worth considering.

"The longer I stayed," he writes, "the more disgusted I became with the delusion and inconsistency of Socialism as I beheld it. I resolved to follow my conscience and get out of this deluded rut and to do so at once, lest I might get so filled with the dope and become like an opium fiend, unable to leave its dreamy atmosphere of self-hypnotism, making one's self believe the impossible and impracticable. Not unlike the opium fiend raving for dope, are some of the wild clamorings, abusive language, wholesale denunciations of everything, except that which they want, and they are willing in some cases to sacrifice all to get it."

The party, he tells us, has many well-meaning members who will some day come out of their trance as he has. To follow out Socialism, he says, is to become atheistic. "I believe in God," he writes, "and my experience and study with Socialism convince me absolutely that it is impossible to be a sincere Christian or Jew and a sincere Socialist. How anyone can be a sincere Catholic and a sincere Socialist is beyond my understanding."

With such a realization it is not strange that Mr. Henry's conscience rebelled against such a system of hypocrisy, and as he has done, so also will do the others who have been Socialists from a higher motive self-hypnotized thought they have been. The Socialists may be expected to abuse this new convert from their ways as they have abused Mr. Goldstein and others who have preferred to obey God rather than man. But the abuse will do no harm, and Mr. Henry will have the great consolation that his example will be as a shining light to some of his former fellow-Socialists who still sit in darkness.—Pilot.

Makes Sweet Wholesome Bread
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HOW TO TELL A CATHOLIC

You find among Catholic people certain phrases that you do not find among people who are not Catholics. Take that phrase, "Thank God." It is purely Catholic. Anywhere that you hear a man or woman use that simple phrase, "Thank God!" you know he or she is a Catholic. Another expression among Catholics is, "If it please God." "If it is God's will." This is rather common among the Irish. "If it is the will of God," they never make a statement that regards the future, without adding that safeguarding clause. "If it is the will of God," so deep down in the Irish nature is that conviction that God controls everything.

And among the French, God's name is ever upon their lips, and it is always spoken with the adjective "good," "the good God." Every good thing comes from God. And to day the infidels of France have invented a new epithet of derision, and they speak of Catholics and the Catholic people of France and call them "Les Bon Dieuxards." "The Good Godlies." Think of it! Because the people of France are always speaking about "the good God" and what He does for men, they have become identified with Him in the speech of the rabble. But to be more plain, I will tell you how you can tell a Catholic from a Protestant in a much more ready manner than this. A Catholic always speaks about our Saviour as "Our Lord." A Catholic always says, "Our Lord did so and so," "Our Lord said so and so." They always speak of Him as "Our Lord."

A Protestant always speaks of "Christ," "Jesus Christ," whenever you hear a person in ordinary parlance speak the words "Jesus Christ," you may be sure he is a Protestant. Why? Because it is more historic and scientific. A Catholic does not call the Son of Mary by the name "Jesus," "Our Lord," "God," "Christ," "Our Lord," because "Our Lord" means "Master," because "Our Lord" means "Sovereign Lord." And we always look upon Him as the "Lord." We don't call Him by any other name than that which was His even in the Old Law. He is our Lord, and that is the name He had from the beginning.

The Apostles themselves called Him "the Lord." When He appeared after His resurrection, on the shore of the lake, Peter first recognized Him, and He said, "It is the Lord." When Thomas recognized Him, he said, "My Lord and My God." And from the days of the Apostles we have always

spoken of Jesus Christ as "Our Lord." And all Catholics speak of Him to-day as "Our Lord."—Rev. D. S. Pellan.

LESSON OF UNREST

A special correspondent of the New York Times declares in that journal that a marked reaction toward the Church has set in throughout France.

This reaction has been already noted in our columns, and it gives us joy to record the word of the Times writer: "Amongst the most important of many changes which are now passing over the spirit of the French nation is the reaction toward Catholicism, which is being marked on all sides. The view is often expressed that the contempt for religion which was so universal a few years ago has now quite gone out of fashion, and that the most brilliant and talented thinkers and writers of the younger generation are now turning toward the Church as their guide in life." An influential critic of the contemporary France, who adopts the pseudonym "Agathon," writing in L'Opinion on the Catholic movement, points out that the strongest tendencies among the youth of France are out of character and personality, a taste for the heroic, and not a preference for abstract theories and systems. It is this he says, which is leading the young people more and more toward the deepest source of all activity namely, moral and religious life. The intellectual youth who over twenty years ago seemed to be won over by anti-clerical theories is now turning toward Catholicism, a fact the importance of which cannot be exaggerated. As a concrete instance, he states that a higher normal school, where not long ago there were only two or three pupils of declared religion, one-third are now practicing Catholics. Of this number a majority are science pupils. The professors of philosophy at the great intellectual of Paris declare, says this writer, that a majority of their pupils are practicing Catholics, while among those indifferent to religion there is now no anti-clerical rancor. At the Sorbonne the students in philosophy have chosen for professor a Catholic, Victor Delbois. "The Catholic renewal is also showing itself, it is pointed out, in literature. Some of the finest lyric poets of modern France, who exercise an incalculable influence over the younger generation, draw their inspiration, not from vague religious notions, but from the foundation of the Catholic doctrine. Many of these writers are men who began their careers as agnostics and whom the experiences of life, says Agathon, have brought to the same belief."

MARTIN LUTHER AND THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Some of our Protestant contemporaries, says the Messenger, may feel surprised when they learn that Martin Luther taught and defended the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In 1527 Luther published, at Wittenberg, a book of sermons entitled "Explanation of the Gospels for the Principal Feasts of the Whole Year." In order not to have the text tampered with, he himself took care of the editing. The collection contains a sermon preached by the reformer on the "Day of the Conception of the Mother of God." But this is not all: there are passages in the sermon which not merely state the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, but defend it, too, with some of the arguments used to-day by our Catholic theologians. "We exult to do," he says, "the Feast of the Virgin Mary, how she was conceived without original sin. * * * We believe justly and happily that it (Mary's conception) occurred without original sin. * * * At the first moment, when she began to live, she was clean and adorned with God's grace, full of grace; and this is not unbecoming. * * * This is implied in the words spoken to her by the angel: 'Blessed art thou among women.' For she could not have been addressed, 'Blessed art thou' if she had lain under the malediction. Again, she was right and befitting that she should be preserved without sin from whom Christ was to take the flesh that was to overcome all sins. For that is properly blessed which is adorned with grace, i. e., what is without sin. Many others have written much about this, and have pointed out several reasons, which are too lengthy to be enumerated here."

"MY ROSARY"

How many among the thousands who have sung or listened to the popular "My Rosary," know the real origin and meaning of the Rosary? The fact that in the Catholic calendar October is specially dedicated to "Our Lady of the Rosary," makes it a timely topic. The word may mean either the world-wide devotion of the Rosary itself, or the beads used to keep count of the oft-repeated prayers of devotion. The beads themselves may be made of almost any hard substance, from wood from the Garden of Olives to silver, gold or precious stones, strung on a flexible wire chain. This chain or chaplet consists of five decades of small beads and three large ones, terminating in a small crucifix. The prayers composing the Rosary are the most popular in the Catholic Church. The Apostles' Creed, composed by them as a bond of unity before dispersing throughout the world to evangelize the nations, is recited on the crucifix. Then comes the greatest of all prayers, the "Our Father," composed by Christ Himself when His Apostles asked Him to teach them to pray, recited on the large beads. On the small beads we recite the "Ave Maria" or "Hail Mary."

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composed partly by the Angel Gabriel, partly by Saint Elizabeth, mother of St. John the Baptist, cousin to Our Lord, and partly by the Church, ending with the words: "Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." This famous prayer has been set to music by almost every musician of prominence in the world, regardless of denominational preferences. The entire Rosary consists of fifteen decades with fifteen repetitions of the Doxology commencing the events in Our Lord's life, as follows: Five Joyful Mysteries, the Annunciation, Visitation, Nativity, Presentation in the Temple, and Finding in the Temple; the Sorrowful Mysteries, the Agony in the Garden, Scourging, Crowning with Thorns, Carrying the Cross, the Crucifixion; the Glorious Mysteries, the Resurrection, Ascension, Descent of the Holy Ghost, the Assumption, and Coronation of the Blessed Virgin. Among the laity the Rosary has almost entirely superseded the recital of the one hundred and fifty Psalms of David, though the custom still prevails by priests, monks and nuns in their daily "office."—Freeman's Journal.

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