

FIVE-MINUTE SERMON.

Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost. MATRIMONY.

The worthy and regular reception of the sacraments during life, brethren, is our surest guarantee of saving our souls in the end. They are the special means of keeping us in close union with God, they satisfy every want of the soul, and, unless we put an obstacle in the way, they will infallibly work for our sanctification. One of these sacraments St. Paul calls a great sacrament—the sacrament of Matrimony; and with good reason, for on this sacrament rests the whole structure of civil society, and on its worthy reception depends much of the happiness which should follow every Christian marriage.

What you are to hear to-day, brethren, is intended for all—for those who are already married, as well as for those who are not; for without doubt there is not one of the sacraments about which people give evidence of so little knowledge as about this, and I think you will agree with me when I say there is none other which is open to so many abuses, so much irreverence, so little respect. And there is a reason evident enough for this. Do what we say, there is no denying the fact that we live in a Protestant atmosphere, and that our outward conduct is more or less influenced by the conduct of those about us. If the Reformation has succeeded in accomplishing anything decidedly positive it is this: that which it has destroyed in the minds of many of its followers the dignity and sanctity of this sacrament, it has substituted in its stead the fatal idea that marriage is simply a contract to be entered into and broken again at the whim or fancy of the contracting parties, if they can only do it under cover of some process of law.

Thank God I no longer call myself a Catholic holds any such notions of this holy and christian state. But still there is the danger of our giving countenance to it in others, of making the plea for them that they know not what they do, since they have been brought up to believe that way. All of which, after years filled with such experiences, weaken our grasp of the true doctrine and induce a less exalted respect for the sacrament itself and of the responsibility connected with it.

The Catholic Church has always and by every means in her power, both civil and religious, upheld the sanctity of marriage. She has fought its battle against those in high places, and sooner than violate the strict command, What God hath joined let no man put asunder, she has seen whole nations torn from her already bleeding bosom.

In such a spirit, brethren, must we love and venerate this great sacrament and therefore I have a word of warning for all. And first for those who are still unmarried. There is undoubtedly among our young people too much levity, too little reverence exhibited whenever there is question of this sacrament. They speak about it in a light, frivolous, and flippant way, and not infrequently approach this Sacrament with dispositions somewhat similar. Catholics do not approach the other sacraments in this wise. Have you not been edified as you entered a church on Saturday evening and gazed on the crowd of men, women, and children, all in silence, examining their consciences, meditating on their past offences, humbly invoking God's pardon, and thus preparing for a worthy confession? Such a sight has often of itself awakened the grace of repentance in a hardened soul. The same may be said of the edifying manner in which all prepare themselves for Holy Communion, for confirmation, for extreme unction. Why should it be different with marriage? Why should people rush madly into this holy state without thought, without respect, without due preparation?

When you think of getting married, let this be your first resolution: I am going to do whatever the laws of God and of the Church require or advise; I must see the priest beforehand and make any arrangements necessary; I must prepare for this sacrament by a good confession and a worthy Communion; I am going to be married as a Catholic, with a nuptial Mass, not in the darkness of night, as if I were ashamed or afraid of what I am doing.

And to you who come to witness such marriages let me say one word. Don't act as if the Church were a theatre and you were present at a play; don't act as you would never think of acting when the other sacraments are administered; in a word, behave yourselves on such occasions as becomes good Catholics.

HOPEFUL BISHOPS OF FRANCE.

M. A. Janne, of the Croix, is making an inquiry concerning the reorganization of the Catholic Church in France. Several of the interviews he has had with Bishops have already been published. The statements made by the prelates are, on the whole, reassuring. For instance, Mgr. Delamare, the Co-adjutor of the Archbishop of Cambrai, said his heart was full of confident hope. The State seminaries had been suppressed, but new free seminaries had been opened, and those in his diocese were, he said, already crowded with pupils. Mgr. Delamare added: "It seems as if the persecution had developed and multiplied the apostolic ambitions. I have more than 350 young men in my seminary. That number does not, however, satisfy for me and I intend to undertake a veritable recruiting campaign. I wish, by a very careful selection, to ordain no priest who has not a veritable vocation, and I must be able to furnish recruits to less favored dioceses than mine, and to the foreign missions which are the glory and ornament of the French Church."

In reply to a question concerning the Denier du Culte, Mgr. Delamare showed that, though he required for his diocese more than £40,000 a year, it was increasing. Mgr. Denier, Bishop of Amiens, speaking on the same subject, said the Denier du Culte

had surpassed his expectations, though 25 per cent. of the inhabitants of the diocese refrained from subscribing because their principles opposed it, and another 25 per cent. because they were too poor to do so. Consequently all the money had to come from the remaining 50 per cent., and they subscribed sufficiently generously to make up the amount required for all the needs of public worship throughout the diocese. Mgr. Tochelet, Bishop of Orleans, explained to M. A. Janne that each prelate organized the collection of the Denier du Culte in the manner he had thought most advantageous. For his part, he had left it in the hands of the parish priests, who were allowed great liberty in the matter. In some cases a lump sum was given by a family, and in others a small contribution was made at short intervals. The priests were urged to visit their parishioners frequently.

Mgr. Gibler, Bishop of Versailles, declared to M. A. Janne that he was full of hope. "The Church of France was broken to pieces, but those pieces are good. We are picking them up, and with the ruins we will construct a new edifice which will be more beautiful than the old one." In reply to the question as to what he desired most fervently for the Church of France, Mgr. Gibler said: "I desire that at any price the Church of France may always preserve its independence, and that never more may a Dumay or a Briand designate Bishops and impose priests on them."

THE UNASSAILABLE SANCTITY OF THE CHURCH.

A paper once contributed by the late Cardinal Newman to the publications of the Catholic Truth Society, dealing with the unassailable sanctity of the Church, is well worthy of consideration at the present moment by all those who are prone to adopt the easy-going view that the Catholic Church is, by her own fault, as it is alleged, mainly responsible for the indifference and anti-clericalism that prevail in certain countries which are known as Catholic.

The reproach levelled against Catholicity, said the Cardinal in effect, was that it produced a certain definite character which was far from being essentially reverent of religion. As an example of the centrally profane nature of the Catholic, the excesses of the Carnival, in Catholic countries, is usually cited. Irreverence of this kind is charged against the member of the Church as a sure sign that he possesses not the real spirit of Faith. Those who talk in such a way, says the Cardinal, forget that when Catholics speak of Faith, they are contemplating the existence of a gift which Protestantism does not even imagine. To the Protestant Faith is the same as obedience and he determines it by its effects, with the result that he asserts that there is no faith where there are no good works.

With the Catholic, however, faith is a certainty of things not seen a spirit of trust which may find its nearest parallel in the "moral sense." This certainty, or spiritual sight, is perfectly distinct in its own nature from the desire, intention and power of acting in conformity with it. * * * The case with most men is that they grow up more or less in practical neglect of their Maker and their duties to Him.

Nature tends to irreligion and sloth, and it may be said that "the many are dead." Nevertheless, a Catholic people, however sinful or unmindful of its obligations, is far from being in the same case as one which is not Catholic.

The grace of baptism bestows upon the soul a germ of all the supernatural virtues. Its faith can never become extinguished, at least not in a country which has at any time been wholly and ardently Catholic. As the idea of God is before the mind of all men in a common way, so, but more vividly, these revealed ideas confront the minds of a Catholic people, whatever be the moral state of that people, taken one by one.

The laxity which is noticeable in Catholic countries, and which so offends the non-Catholic critic, the mixture of seriousness and levity, the familiar handling of sacred things, these arise from the strength of the faith that is in the Catholic, and which allows him to consider in the light of facts what the non-Catholic approaches with the dread arising from uncertainty or ambiguity, and considers with the eye of one whose faith in the supernatural is a varying or nebulous quantity. For the Catholic, the truths of religion stand in the place of facts and public opinion. Sin does not obliterate the impression.

Ordinarily speaking, once faith, always faith; eyes once opened to good, as to evil, are not closed again; and if men reject the truth, it is in most cases, a question whether they have ever possessed it.

The non-Catholics condemn the Catholic for his naturalness, his ease and cheerfulness and think themselves never so real as when they are especially solemn.

It is in the way in which the Catholic faces death, says, in effect, the Cardinal, that one may judge of the effects of real faith and unreal. The non-Catholic has nothing but sighs of this world around him, wife, children, friends and worldly interests. The Catholic has too; but the Protestant has not but these. He asks for some chapter of the Bible to be read to him, but rather as the expression of his horror and bewilderment, than as the token of his faith. The Catholic, on the other hand, has within him almost a principle of recovery, certainly an instrument of it. He may have been lax, but he has ever been loyal in his heart. He may have repined against the lot he has had to put up with; but with the waywardness of a child who is cross with his parents. He has laughed at priests and formed rash judgments of them, and slandered them to others, but not as doubting the divinity of their function and the virtue of their ministrations. Even one who has been a bad Catholic may have a hope, in his death, to which the most virtuous of Protest-

ants are necessarily strangers.—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

THE KING'S COURT.

If we are going to make a formal call on some one and especially if that "some one" is a person high in authority, we are eager to appear at our best, to act and to speak according to the usual rules, in such cases, and not to seem in any way awkward or ignorant. We know that there is a special etiquette to be observed in approaching the Holy Father in the Vatican, or the president in the White House, or the Catholic Church is the solemn court of the King of Kings, from Whom all power proceeds and before Whom the angels veil their faces with their wings. Surely, then, we have certain ceremonies to observe in the churches that are His palace-homes, certain rules to follow, a certain holy etiquette to maintain.

First, we ought to enter and leave God's holy house silently and reverently. We should not rush in, at the last moment, just as Mass begins, or hurry out as soon as Mass is done, without having the decency to wait until the priest has left the altar. We should not bow to an acquaintance here and chat with a friend there, as though we were actually anxious to spend as brief a time as possible with our best Friend Jesus Christ.

Secondly, we must center our whole mind upon our act of worship and of prayer. We should carefully avoid the reprehensible habit of whispering and looking about us. Why should there be need to caution any Catholic against this serious breach of good manners and good morals in God's house?

Thirdly, at the Consecration and Holy Communion our reverence and devotion should be increased and carefully shown. When we go to Holy Communion, we should be neither too swift nor too slow in approaching the altar-rail. There is time enough. Why, if the railing is full, do people kneel down at the very head, and return quietly to our places, and then let us remain as long as we can in prayer and thanksgiving with Jesus Christ. Can we receive Him into our hearts and then rush heedlessly into the street to talk and chatter, while He still abides within us, longing to have us talk all alone with Him.

How mortified we are if we commit, by mistake, some fault against the writer's way and rules, in so-called society; if we make some error in grammar or pronunciation; if we are not dressed in the style of the day, or if we have not learned some passing fad like a new handshake or the latest bow. And meanwhile, how many those follies look to the clear-eyed angels in our great King's court, when they contrast them with our strange carelessness, our boorishness, our insolence, in His presence. Who knows all things and can do all things, and Who has made us, poor finite beings that we are, out of a very little dust.—Sacred Heart Review.

OUTWITTED BY A BOY.

The following incident is narrated as a redoubtable fact: In Ireland potatoes go by a variety of names. When the writer was a boy, over twenty summers ago, the name "Protestants" was given to potatoes with a bluish rind, being oblong in shape. A lad named Johnny Downing carried a "kiss" full of them on his back one day. "Kiss" is an arrangement made of wicker work and almost square in form, used generally for carrying turf, or potatoes. Johnny, while carrying his load, happened to meet a Protestant minister. "Presence among the mountains of the South of Ireland."

"Say, young lad, what's that you've got on your back?" asked the minister. "Potatoes, yer reverence," responded Johnny.

"What kind of potatoes are they that you have got there?" continued the minister. "And are you a Protestant, Johnny?"

"No sir, I'm a Catholic." "Then 'tis a great wonder that you would carry 'Protestants' on your back."

"Nothing wonderful at all about it, sir, because you see we like to return good for evil, and do you know also that when I go home my mother will blame those 'Protestants' I've got on my back and take the harm out of them!"

The minister indulged in a very hearty laugh, and, like the liberal gentleman he was, he generously threw Johnny a crown piece, British money; whereupon the latter burst out laughing.

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in an exclamation: "O, sir, may the Mother of God pray to her Divine Son to convert you, and may you win day get a crown of glory in heaven for that crown piece you give me."

The minister thanked the boy for his prayer and did some tall thinking as he walked pensively along the road, musing on the intimate connection there necessarily must be between a mother and son, and especially such a Mother and such a Son.—The Voice.

HONOR THE PRIEST.

Honor the priest. Who receives your soul as it entered on its spiritual life by baptism? The priest. Who nourished it and gave it strength on its pilgrimage? The priest. Who will prepare it to go before God? The priest—always the priest. And if the soul should die by sin who will call it back to life and give it rest and peace? Again the priest. Can you remember a single gift of God without seeing at its side a priest? Of what use would be a lion which forbids a man's being an active participant in the public life of his community and country. In movements for civic betterment Catholics are not so prominent as they should be. They should take to heart these words of Archbishop Ireland:

"Be good citizens. Mingle in all movements that make for the advancement of civic, state and national development. One of the chief difficulties in America has been the tendency of its members to hold aloof from non-sectarian movements for general good. Take an active interest in general affairs. Do not give the impression that Catholics are a separate body—that they seek to isolate themselves. We have done this too much and too long. I like to see Catholics in chambers of commerce, in commercial clubs, in political movements and offices in every activity, working for better citizenship. Do not wait for your Bishop and priest to take the initiative; do things for yourselves, as you have done, but do them in even greater measure."

In too many instances unworthy representatives of our people force their way into public life. If all our Catholics of education and character were active in public affairs, this state of things would be soon remedied. The Catholic voter ought to show himself able to discriminate between the self-seeking politician and the capable, but, above all, conscientious man who, by his honest public service, will bring honor, not dishonor, to the Catholic name.—Sacred Heart Review.

SHAMELESS CATHOLICS.

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A QUESTION FOR MEN.

"Many a man," says the Messenger of the Sacred Heart, "making enough to support his family would be offended if it were even hinted that he was unjust and cruel to his wife and children. Yet if he spends a dollar or two for drink and his wife must go without home comforts for herself and the little ones, by what name are we to call this one, by what name are we to call this one, if it because he drinks—not of course to excess, but because he daily leaves some of his earnings in the saloon—the wife must slave in the making of clothes for the children, must worry about the rent, must postpone the long promised shoes to her little boy, by what name can we call such treatment? When a man day by day stands before the bar and glibly invites his companions to 'have another,' does he reflect that he is spending money to which his wife and children have as much claim as he? What are we to think of his sense of justice? Let the men answer."

Fiction has no right to exist unless it is more beautiful than reality.—Joubert.

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Our vision of the are evidences of what glimpses of possible castle in the air, castle on the earth.

George Stephenson dreamed of a locomotive world revolutionizing world. While working for sixpence a day, clothes and mending, fellow workmen to attend a night same time supporting him continued to dream him crazy. "His set the houses on fire everybody cried, 'the air; ' 'carriage men will starve for this dreamer in the when members of P.

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The great lists, seers of dreamer who rough block with his chib imagination fever) and before he convs.

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