

SIX

## FIVE MINUTE SERMON

BY REV. WILLIAM DEMOY, D. D.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY  
AFTER PENTECOST

## OUR DEBT TO GOD

"Have patience with me and I will pay thee all." (Matt. xviii, 23.)

In the Gospel of this Sunday we read the parable of the king who had many servants whom he called together, requesting them to pay him what they owed him. Among them was one who owed a considerable amount; and, when he saw that the king was to have patience with him, as he would, in the future, pay him all.

We are all debtors to the one great Master, God. We owe Him for what we are and for what we have, and also for what we expect Him to give us. God created us, God redeemed us from sin, God preserves us and watches over us by His providence. He gave power to the earth to yield us fruits on which we live and thrive physically. He gave us the Church which, by its spiritual fruits, help us to live a moral, just life. If we examine into things a little, we shall see that whatever we have had, whatever we now possess, and whatever we may yet acquire, God has provided for us—not always proximately but certainly ultimately. Man can not create; he can only build with what God has created, or use God's creation for new productions. Man has not added a grain to God's creation; if anything, he has detracted from it, or, at least, not developed it as much as is possible.

Now, we are debtors to God for all we have. The fact that we must labor to make use of many of God's gifts does not fully repay Him for them; does it not rather make us greater debtors to Him, since He allows us to apply His gifts to the world, to our individual needs and pleasures? Do any of us stop when we have gained what is necessary for us? We do not. We want more, and, if we do not possess more, it is not because we do not want it, but because we can not acquire it, or because we squander it as we gain it.

God has promised us blessings incomparably greater than any we can acquire in life. He has promised us an eternity of bliss and at a very little cost to us, when we take everything into consideration. He tells us to keep His commandments during our earthly sojourn, and this will be the price to pay for an eternal reward. To keep these commandments brings peace and great happiness even in this life. Should we not, then, call ourselves debtors to God also for this great opportunity He is now affording us, at the same time helping us, to use it to our greatest advantage? He who denies his dependence upon God and refuses to admit that he is a debtor to God, is lacking in truthfulness, or, at least, to interpret his attitude more charitably—has a distorted reason.

How many there are in the world today who are asking God, if not by word at least by deed, to have patience with them! But, we may ask, are they promising Him that in future they will pay Him all? We fear the majority of them are not. Many may intend to pay Him all, but they are letting the best days of their life slip by without rendering to God any payment of their many debts to Him. Will they offer Him only the fruits of a worn-out life, or of a decrepit old age? Many are acting as though this were their intention. Their present strong, active life they are giving to themselves or devoting to the world, or both, while God is patiently awaiting a payment of the debts due Him. Alas, life closes for many with these debts unpaid. How sad must be the consequence!

This state of affairs is verified in all walks of life. There is scarcely a profession, a vocation, a trade, where it has not crept in. And how lamentable it is that so often the most highly gifted are the most neglectful! How many thousands of men of extraordinary talents, of ascending genius, are neglecting to pay God the debts they owe Him! Men occupying seats in the great institutes of learning, the world over are forgetting to render to God a payment of what is due Him, many are casting Him aside; many are blaspheming Him. Is not the same true of great numbers of the world's rich? The gold they possess is God's gift; the prestige and influence they have come from it and ultimately must be attributed to God. They, more than others, owe debts to God, but are in many cases the last to pay them.

It is a sad but true fact that the devil has managed, especially in modern times, to get people to use for wrong ends the greatest of their gifts from God. What must be said of the so-called learned philosopher who is arguing against the existence of God, or of His attributes? What of the "lights" in literature who are discarding God and His immutable law? These are using great natural gifts—gifts which only God could give them—to deny God or to form a god after their own fashion. Satan is the "dynamic" power behind them. He realizes their gifts, he knows what those so gifted owe God, and he understands that, if they repay God, they will be a detriment to the work he is carrying on. The result is that Satan lures them into

darkness, and, turning himself into an angel of light, illumines the darkness for them.

But to come to a more ordinary class of people. Can you fail to be struck with amazement, to say the least, if you stand on a street corner in a modern city and notice the people who pass by? What a spectacle presents itself! True, you see many examples of real Christian people, but the glare of the worldly attracts your attention to its source. The latest, the most extravagant style, is displayed. This would matter little in itself, but the fault lies in this—these "worldlings" are doing their best to make their charms conspicuous. Many, it is true, are blessed with excellent natural gifts, such as beauty of person, but why are they making such a display of these gifts in such a manner? Did God give these to them for this purpose? Did He intend them to use them so? Are they repaying God for them as they should? One answer is sufficient for all—"vanity of vanities and all is vanity." In many cases, we fear that those same bodies, when they arise from the corruption of the tomb, will not be clothed again in beauty, but in misery and filth will be forced to pay debts to God that then will have become eternal.

Whatever we are, whatever we have, we owe all to God. Let us render Him our thanks and use our gifts for Him. To use them for other ends—ends at least not compatible with His will—will only add to our debt. Let the more gifted especially in body, add virtue to their other attractions, and thus build a spiritual kingdom of beauty over an earthly, beautiful form.

THE MONTH OF THE  
ROSAIRY

The month of the Rosary is with us once again. To the fervent Catholic every month is the month of the Rosary, for the beads are an integral part of Catholic devotion. But the month of October has been dedicated by the Church in a particular manner to the devotion of the Rosary.

At other seasons of the year the Rosary is recited in private. In October it becomes a public devotion in our churches. Every day the sweet fragrance of this garland of spiritual roses ascends to the throne of Mary in Heaven. And every day from that throne above descends in return sweet favors and blessings to Mary's faithful clients.

No single devotion in the Church next to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass has such universal appeal as the Rosary has. It has been called the layman's breviary, the unlettered man's prayer book, the popular manual of piety. The devout find in it their inspiration, the lukewarm cling to it as to their anchor, the sinful rush to it as an unfeeling refuge. The good have their piety increased, the indifferent have their tepidity warmed, and the wicked are quickened to repentance by its blessed influence. Nations, like individuals that have been faithful to the devotion of the Rosary, have prospered in the faith, while those that have neglected the beads have declined into atheism and heresy.

In times of stress and trial pious folk fall back upon their beads for their consolation, their strength, and their inspiration. In times of national crisis in the ages of faith the leaders of the faithful set forth a proclamation for the people to say their beads. The victory of Lepanto is not the only example in history of victory gained through the influence of the Rosary. Ireland can furnish many instances in her sorrowful career of the favors bestowed by the Queen of the Most Holy Rosary. Our own country in the early days owes much to the fervent recitation of the beads by her missionaries and Catholic pioneers. How many victories in every land which have been attributed to the action of some great leader are due to the numbers of Rosaries offered up by the faithful in their homes or by fervent nuns in the solitude of their cloisters.

Today tremendous issues face us for solution. The future of the world for weal or woe will be decided in these few crucial years. It behooves us therefore to go to the Mother of God for help. She will hear our prayers in whatever form they ascend. But we know how much she loves to be supplicated under the form of the beads. One fervent recitation of the beads can do more for the amelioration of society's ills, than all the midnight oil burned by academic theories working without the light of faith.

The average man is content to leave the solution of society's ills to those to whom he has entrusted the care of the State. But fervent Catholics know that it is their duty to pray earnestly and unceasingly for God to guide their minds that good may prevail and that evil may be defeated. They also serve who only stand and wait. They serve better, however, who kneel and pray. They serve mightiest who during this month of October offer up their Rosary day by day that God through the sweet influence of His Blessed Mother may lead the world back to Himself, and purge mankind of the fell diseases that atheism, pride, and wickedness in high places have thrust upon them. The Pilot.

## CATHOLIC PARENTS

## AND CATHOLIC SNOBS

The story is told that a certain Catholic father suddenly withdrew his son from a Catholic High School. He had expressed no dissatisfaction with the institution, and the boy himself was exceedingly loath to leave his Catholic surroundings for the atmosphere of a non-Catholic private school. But the experience had taught the father to put the Catholic school in his black books. He had discovered, quite by accident, that his son was sitting cheek by jowl in that Catholic classroom with the son of a coachman!

In assigning the desks, the unfortunate teacher, a Catholic and an American, had given no recognition whatever to the social values so highly prized in this democratic country. This man was the son of an honest, hard-working, God-fearing Irishman who began his career in the United States as a day-laborer. The immigrant was a valuable citizen; his son was a parasitic snob. The son, unfortunately, has many followers. Ask any Catholic father or mother why their child is in a non-Catholic school, and whatever the answer, it is, as a rule, easy to see that un-Catholic, un-American snobbery and servility have dictated the choice. To people of this class, an appeal is rarely possible. Like Demas, they have left Christ's representative, "loving this world."

But to Catholics who in good faith ask what consideration may be given "fashion" and social position, in the selection of a school, no better answer can be given than that made by the late Archbishop of St. Paul: "I am not unaware that now and then in quarters otherwise sincerely Catholic, the notion is entertained that fashion and social ambitions advise certain non-Catholic schools, public or private, rather than Catholic. What the dictates of fashion or social ambition are, I do not know, nor do I care to inquire. For this I know, that fashion and social ambition, running counter to the dictates of religion, are kingdoms offered from the mountain-top to the Saviour, as the reward of adoration given Satan, and that the answer to fashion and social ambition must be none other than the answer of the Saviour to the tempter: 'Begone Satan, for it is written: The Lord thy God thou shalt adore,' and Him only shalt thou serve."

There is no other answer. The law of the Church is plain. The duty of the Catholic father is plain. And let this be noted, now that the children are going back to school: no Catholic may take upon himself the responsibility of entering his child at a non-Catholic school without violation of a solemn law of the Church. The Bishop alone can authorize that act. But not even he can give the permission unless indubitable guarantees are offered, first, that the child will suffer no harm in faith and morals, and next, that the religious training of which attendance at a non-Catholic school deprives him, will be fully given under other auspices. The easiest, as well as the best, way out of the difficulty, is to send the child to the Catholic school from the beginning.—America.

THE MASS HOUSE AT  
MOORFIELDSTHE OLD AND NEW: A PAGE  
OF HISTORY

As is not unnatural, the Catholic Church which possesses the distinction of being the only one within the boundaries of London City, has a history behind it which bears retelling when occasion arises. St. Mary's, Moorfields, to which Mgr. Nolan was recently appointed on the retirement of Canon Fleming, is a parish which conserves the traditions of a mission served under penal conditions, and also of the centre of the Catholic revival of the present church, built in a by-street, wedged in between blocks of commercial buildings, recalls in a striking way the "Massing-house" of the penal days in the manner in which it eludes notice. It is also reminiscent of the old "Pro-Cathedral," inasmuch as the fine marble columns, altars, and other adjuncts of the former building are there, as well as a reproduction on the smaller scale of the remarkable panorama of Calvary which met the eye of the visitor to the former church like a living scene.

"BROWN & THOMPSON'S PENNY HOTEL" In this curious composite manner the new St. Mary's, Moorfields, preserves the tradition of London's penal mission, and of its Vicar Apostolic Pro-Cathedral, being itself, by virtue of the decree of 1908, when England ceased to be a missionary country, a parish church—the successor of the 126 parish churches of pre-Reformation London.

The first record of a Mass-house at Moorfields occurs in 1740, when there appear to have existed two secret places for hearing Mass, known to the world outside as "Messrs. Brown & Thompson's Penny Hotels," Messrs. Brown and Thompson being the caretakers. These two chapels were united in a small building, into which a man in his shirt-sleeves, thus garbed to divert suspicion, admitted the faithful on the payment of a penny—a demand which (although the

Catholic reader may be sceptical on this point) was also made to divert suspicion.

VICTIMS OF PERSECUTION From the "Penny Hotel" at Moorfields a number of priests were taken to be "dealt with according to the law." The Mass-house, in Ropemaker's Alley, is said to have held 1,000 people. In 1771, Bishop Talbot and two priests were arrested there. In 1780, during the Gordon Riots, the chapel was demolished as far as its interior was concerned. Father Dillon, who had been five times tried for his life, was dragged from his sick-bed and beaten practically to death by the mob. Dr. Challoner frequently said Mass at Ropemaker's Alley.

In 1791 the Catholic population of Moorfields was 4,200. In 1816 it had risen to 12,700, and was served by four priests. It appears to have been then dedicated to St. Paul. The City of London having compensated Father Dillon's successor for the damage done, a large house was purchased in White Street, which served as a church until 1820. Here Catholics were unmolested, and the congregation increased.

THE NEW CHURCH In 1820 the church, with its fluted marble pillars, the gift of Pope Pius VII., and the famous fresco painting of the Crucifixion by Signor Aglio, triumphantly opened its doors to the public, Catholic and non-Catholic. In 1852 the church was enlarged, and became for a time the pro-Cathedral of Cardinal Wiseman, and the symbol, as it were, of the Catholic revival in England. Pope Pius VII. presented it with solid gold plate, including a chalice set in precious stones. The bodies of three Bishops lay in its vaults when it was demolished. Cardinal Wiseman preached some of his most famous discourses in the church, whose foundation-stone had been laid by Dr. Poynter, the Vicar Apostolic of the London district. From its pulpit Dr. Manning delivered the former's funeral oration on February 25, 1865.

Moorfields had the founder of the Province Row Night Refuge—Dr. Gilbert—for its rector previous to the late Canon Fleming, whose connection with the church began (as assistant priest) at that period. Latterly the congregation of Moorfields became scattered. The ornate music of the days prior to the *Motu proprio* decree no longer brought people from long distances and the great crescendo from the "Penny Hotel" days to those of the aristocratic Temple, as closely associated with the names of dignitaries as the other had been with martyrs, became a steady diminuendo.

Yet Moorfields remains to guard a noble tradition in a very living present—for London City is a teeming parish in the day-time, and the doors of the "Massing house" in Eldon Street stand open, and the traditional invitation is there.—The Universe.

PRIESTS' HEROISM WHEN  
EXPLOSION KILLS  
WORKERS

Philadelphia, September 16.—Four priests provoked admiration by their acts of heroism when a gigantic still filled with naphtha under high pressure exploded at the plant of the Atlantic Refining Company here last Wednesday, causing the death of eleven men and the injury of twenty-seven others. The men who lost their lives were caught in a flood of burning oil. Several leaped from the top of the still sixty-five feet, only to fall in a lake of flaming naphtha. Workmen on other stills were burned by the rain of blazing oil that was cast into the air by the explosion. A leak in one of the stills is held responsible for the explosion.

A reporter for the Philadelphia Public Ledger gives the following account of the feats performed by the priests: "The four priests who risked their lives to save the lives or to administer the last rites to the dying were Fathers J. A. McGonigal and A. J. Schulte, of St. Gabriel's Church; Father J. J. Fealy, of the Church of the Epiphany, and Father F. J. Fox, of Mahoney City, who was visiting in this city.

"The priests were sitting in a room in the parish house adjoining the Church of St. Gabriel. Father Schulte was looking out of the window toward the oil works. His view of the stills was unobstructed and he was watching the workmen on top of the stills. He saw the sheet of flame shoot skyward.

"Come on! Father Schulte shouted to his companions. 'Men must have been killed in that explosion! I saw them right in the path of the flame!'

"Without waiting to put on their hats, the four priests dashed downstairs and into an automobile and went full speed to the gates of the plant. They attempted to drive through, but being stopped by the guards, they jumped from their machine and before the guards could stop them dashed into the plant several minutes ahead of the city firemen.

"They ran directly to the stills and there in the burning lake of oil they saw the victims of the disaster. Not heeding the warnings of the danger of other stills exploding, the priests administered the last rites of the Church to several men and offered prayers for the dead and dying."

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