

FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost. ERRONEOUS VIEWS OF VOCATION. As a prisoner in the Lord, I beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called.

Brethren, has it ever occurred to you that each one of us has a vocation in this life? I refer not to our Christian vocation, which we all have in common, but to the particular state of life to which each one of us has been called.

It is not an uncommon error for people to think that priests and nuns are the only privileged mortals who are called by God to some special work, and that to their vocation alone God has attached peculiar and extraordinary graces.

This is an error we must correct. We have all, thank God, the vocation to be Christians and the call to be saints, and we have, moreover, our own special calling, suitable to our own Christian vocation, and in a great measure our eternal salvation, depends on our fulfilling worthily the particular vocation in which we are called.

Some of us God has called to be priests, to serve continually at His altar. Some to be fathers of families, and others to remain single all their life. Some He has called to the higher professions, and others to the hard but mainly toll of every-day life. But to all these vocations, to all these different states of life, He has attached certain duties, peculiar obligations, which must be met and fulfilled.

The great danger, brethren, that we have to avoid is the common and stupid error of those who hold that their every-day vocation has nothing to do with this Sunday calling; that there is little, if any, connection between their own special calling and their general calling to be Christians; who maintain that as business men they can and must act in their own business like any other man, and that their hearts and His law from their lives, at least during their hours of business.

This error, stupid as it is, is not so uncommon as one might at first imagine. Take a few practical cases. How many are there who, when they examine their conscience, ever think of questioning themselves upon the duties of their position in life? How many fathers of families, listening to their wives' complaints, are they able to take care of themselves? How many business men question themselves as to the honesty or propriety of this or that mode of action they have been following? Alas, they are few indeed. And this is the practical outcome of not recognizing the close connection there is between our every-day calling and our Christian vocation.

As every vocation, brethren, has its duties and its difficulties, so every calling has its special helps and graces. God saw each one of us from all eternity—just as we are to-day, with all the weaknesses of our character, with all the difficulties that surround us, and all the temptations with which we have to contend. His goodness, His grace, His love, and His wisdom, all these things He provided for them, regarding his help and graces according to our wants, and directing all things towards our final destiny. His grace is always sufficient for us, and as long as we remain in His friendship there is no vocation or calling so difficult or trying but what can be cheerfully and manfully borne and worked towards our soul's salvation. The lot of some is certainly not an easy one, but God always has the back for the burden.

The practical question I would have you ask yourselves to-day, brethren, is this: Granted that I have a vocation in this life; granted that Providence has placed me in a position that involves duties and obligations to my neighbor, or myself, how am I fulfilling these obligations? How am I walking in the vocation in which I am called? Worthily or unworthily—that is the all-important question for me to answer to-day to the satisfaction of my conscience, as I will have to answer it one day to Almighty God.

Am I the father or mother of a family? If so, do I discharge the duties of my calling? Do I make my home pleasant and agreeable for my children? Do I supply them with suitable home amusements? Do I furnish them proper reading matter, or do I allow them to waste their time and ruin their souls with the vile penny literature of the day? Do I oblige them to come to Mass and approach the sacraments, while I neglect these duties myself? Or am I a business man who deals squarely and honestly with my neighbors, never on the alert to take advantage of the ignorant and weak? Am I in the employment of others, and, if so, do I fulfill my calling worthily by doing all that strict justice or Christian charity requires of me? Or am I just to men who work for me? These are some of the questions regarding your vocations that I would have you ask yourselves to-day.

Brethren, when we come to render our account to God, be sure of this: He will not trouble us with the question as to whether we have been experts in our respective professions, whether we have been successful business men or skilled mechanics; no, but whether we have been just and honorable, whether we have walked worthily in the vocations to which we have been called. Walk then, brethren, worthy of your vocation, worthy of the Church which has reared you, worthy of the hope that is in you, worthy of the name you bear, that of Christ, Who has redeemed you. Imitate Him, live as He lived, and suffer in your calling the things He suffered. Then the prayer of our patron, St. Paul, will not be in vain, and we will walk worthy of the vocation in which we are called.

Drops follow a stone not by their force, but by the frequency which one follows another.

TALKS ON RELIGION.

SATISFACTION FOR SIN.

Sacramental satisfaction means reparation to God for sin. It is not enough for us to be our own accusers by confession; we must also be ready to execute justice on ourselves by making satisfaction. The catechism tells us that satisfaction is the doing of the penance given us by the priest. It means the punishment or penalty of some sort, which the priest, in his capacity as judge, gives to us, for the satisfaction of the justice of Almighty God, which is offended by sin.

It is absolutely necessary, in order to receive pardon, that the penitent should be ready to expect, and have the will to perform a penance. The disposition to make amends goes naturally with sorrow for sin. Satisfaction usually consists of some prayers, some good works, fasting, or humiliation, and should be performed as soon as possible, or at the stated time. The penitent himself is not at liberty to change the penance he has received, even by substituting a greater penance than the one imposed. No matter how great be the penance given to us, it bears but a small proportion to the malice of our sins. It is advisable that the penitent should not speak of the penance imposed upon him in the confessional.

It is very well for us to dwell frequently upon the solemn warnings that are contained in Holy Scripture, that we may not lose sight of our responsibilities. "The wages of sin is death." "Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me to render to every man according to his works." (Apoc. xxi, 12.) By sin, we contract a debt to Almighty God. "One was brought to him that owed him 10,000 talents." "A certain man had two debtors, and one owed him 500 pence, and the other 10." (St. Luke vii, 41.) In the Lord's prayer we say, "Forgive us our trespasses"—that is, forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.

If men would look upon their sins as a debt, which they certainly have to pay some day, they would not be so careless in contracting them. Almighty God regards sin as a debt due to His justice to be satisfied some way or other, not only when sinners are His enemies, but also when they are His friends. Moses and David both stood very high in the favor of God, and were especially privileged. They were both men according to God's own heart. When they sinned, however, God acted towards them as towards others, and in spite of the high favor in which they stood, they had to pay the penalty of their transgressions.

The great mystery of our redemption should put plainly before us the necessity of satisfying the justice of God, which we do in Him and with Him, so that we are able by His grace to make a real and true satisfaction for sins by which His justice has been outraged. He has borne His Cross, and He also expects us to take up our cross and follow Him. Hence, we read in St. Matt. xvi, 24, that "if any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." When sin has been committed, the debt of punishment may still remain, which we ourselves have still to pay. The Council of Trent declares that "it is wholly false and foreign from the words of God that the guilt of sin will never be remitted by God, without the whole punishment being also pardoned."

Throughout the whole Jewish religion will be found that whatever sin was committed, some sacrifice was always required, as "an offering for sin." St. Paul therefore says that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission." (Heb. xii, 24.) We have many instances in the Old Law that Almighty God was pleased to receive the prayers and offerings of His faithful servants in satisfaction for sinners. When the children of Israel had grievously offended God, He sent fire to destroy them, and "Aaron, putting incense in his censur, ran out in the midst of the multitude which the burning fire was destroying, and offered the incense, and standing between the Judge and the living, he prayed for the people and the flames ceased." (Num. xvi, 42.) Catholic Universe.

Advice to Graduates. Bishop Carroll of Helena, who addressed the graduates of the State University of Montana, said, among other things, that a "principle which college and university graduates must teach to humanity is that greater doctrine of temperance, that restraining force which must be rightly applied to all pure lives. It is not enough to be educated to help lift a fallen brother, but we must teach mankind to refrain from the gratification of the material senses, whereby man falls. Man is continually attacked by these in passions, and must learn to control them properly before a higher spiritual self will prevail. Statistics prove that the evil of strong drink is perhaps the most degrading, and causes more misery, crime and suffering in the world than all other evils combined, and no grander influence can be exerted by our graduates than to teach a warning against this evil. To tear it out, root and branch, would be the greatest boon to civilization."—Sacred Heart Review.

Don't on any account let people's shortcomings or anything of that kind bother you in the least. God leaves each one of us our free will, and we are accountable for ourselves. So do what you can, but keep your mind not alone peaceful but joyous, and the more joyous the better for yourself and all.

CUPID'S ADVICE



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CHURCH WILL GROW IN FRANCE

MONSIGNOR VAUGHAN IS OPTIMISTIC DESPITE PRESENT PERSECUTION—HOLY FATHER'S GOOD JUDGMENT. "The persecution which the Catholic Church is now undergoing in France will eventually strengthen it instead of weakening it," said Mgr. John S. Vaughan, Canon of Westminster Cathedral, London, to a New York News reporter. "Why?" he replied. "Because it will teach her self-reliance and to depend upon herself, as the Church does in the United States and other countries where it flourishes like a willow beside a running brook."

Mgr. Vaughan is an optimist. He is a brother of the eminent Jesus, Father Bernard Vaughan, who has been inveighing against the evils of England's "smart set" in the Jesuit church in London for several weeks.

"The Church is safe in France," continued Father Vaughan, "that does not say that the days of her persecution are over or that she will not continue to resist governmental oppression to the last."

"What do you think of the stand which the Pope has taken in connection with the situation?" "The Holy Father has shown remarkably good judgment in the matter and his recent Encyclical on the situation was a master stroke of diplomacy."

Continuing Father Vaughan said that the recent consecration of fourteen French Bishops, who are independent of the French Government and answerable to no one but their religious superiors, will infuse new life into the Church.

"The clergy are no longer handicapped by the French Government," he remarked. "The bishops are free and independent. They are at liberty to go among the people without governmental interference, and this religious and political emancipation cannot fail to produce the most gratifying results. The bishops will meet soon and will have a plan of procedure which will be submitted to the Holy Father."

"Their recommendations will undoubtedly meet with the approval of the Vatican and form the basis of the Pope's final instructions regarding the controversy."

"What changes will the separation of Church and state bring about among the rank and file of the clergy?" "A great many of the clergy do not go among the people, mingle in the same life of the parishioners as we in England do, for instance. The clergyman says, 'Well, I'm here; if you want me come; or if it's a sick call send for me.' And the laity have come to look upon the clergy in much the same manner. That is far from being the Catholic spirit. That is one of the many things that will have to be changed gradually. Unless there is a union of hearts between the parishioners and the clergy there can be no progress."

GOVERNMENT TO BLAME. Asked to what he attributed the apparent disloyalty of the laymen in France, he said: "Principally to the Government. The Catholic is haunted in private and stirred in public, if he is weak he falls; if he is strong he stands, but at a great sacrifice. Such a condition could only exist in France."

"It is no longer strong among the men, but under the new dispensation it will take on a new life and preserve itself at any cost." Father Vaughan expressed the belief that the Government will continue its policy of persecution, but that it will be as futile as that which the Church encountered in other countries. "Because," he remarked, "its founder, Christ, has promised that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and that He would be with it all days even to the consummation of the world." Mgr. Vaughan is now the guest of Archbishop Ireland.

BLESSED THOMAS MORE AS A WRITER.

We quote these concluding passages from a very interesting paper on "The Blessed Thomas More" in the Irish Ecclesiastical Record, from the pen of Richard J. Kelly, B. L.

As a writer More's Utopia is the best known of his works. It is destined to live as long as English is spoken and written. "The vision of a perfect State," is a theme that has engaged many minds in all ages. We find Plato attempting it in his Republic and Aristotle in his Politics. In the Middle Ages, Campanella in his City of the Sun. None equals More's Utopia in seeming sincerity, so that even some persons of his day, more zealous than discerning, actually proposed sending missionaries to convert the Utopians to Christianity. The plan and ideas of the work are excellent, and a few extracts may give one a fair notion of its character.

In Utopia every man learns a craft, mostly his father's and the women, too. The magistrates' business is chiefly to see that no one is idle. At the tables in hall young and old are placed alternately, so as to blend the gaiety of youth with the wisdom of age. They have few laws, and such is their conviction that they do not need many. They have no lawyers amongst them, for they consider them a sort of people whose profession is to darken matters and to wrest the laws, and therefore, they think that it is much better every man should plead his own cause and trust it to the judges as in other places the client trusts it to a counsellor. By this means they both cut off many delays and find out truth more certainly.

He preaches absolute religious toleration, and needless to say war is condemned. He shows how they care for the sick by hospitals, how they regard hunting—"to see a holy innocent have murdered of a dogge"—as unworthy of freedom, how they despise gold, how they have everything in common. He shrewdly remarks in a letter "for it is not possible for all things to be well unless men were good, which I think will not be yet these many years."

But he also wrote a life of Edward V, which Italian thought was the finest example of good English, without vulgarity or pedantry.

Such is brief what the great and good man—Blessed Thomas More—whose canonization will soon be proceeded with. Amid trying and terrible times, with temptations to go from the straight path, he kept an even course, walked through life as a saint almost with God's law in his heart, and guided his conduct. He was dragged into position and prominence, says Erasmus, for no man ever struggled harder to gain admission there (to court) than More struggled to escape. He was always kind, always generous. Some were helped with money, and some with influence; when he can give nothing he gives advice. He is Patron-General to all poor devils. This was what Erasmus thought of him, and a finer character we cannot find in history than that of Thomas More, the first lay Lord Chancellor of England, and the greatest and the last Catholic who held, or who by subsequent legislation could legally hold, that exalted position. Although in later years the post was actually filled by a Jew, and may be held by an Atheist, the only religious member of it may not be Lord Chancellor of England is one which was professed by the greatest man who ever in that country held the Great Seal—Sir Thomas More.

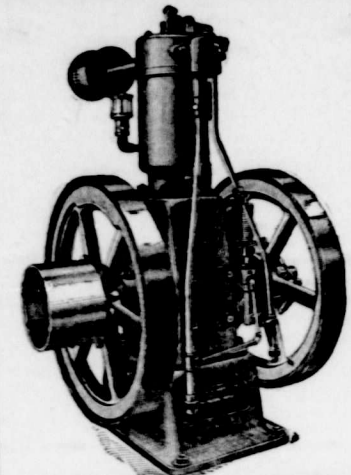
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