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THE LIFE OF A PRIEST

WHY MINISTERS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH DO NOT WED.

Masterly Presentation of the Subject by the Rev. Xavier Sutton, a Passionist Father, in a Sermon at a Non-Catholic Mission.

At a mission for non-Catholics recently held in a Philadelphia church the Rev. Xavier Sutton of the Passionist Fathers delivered the following sermon on "Why Priests Do Not Wed."

Among mankind there are great leading truths upon which all men are agreed—the love of the beautiful, the admiration of the grand, the esteem for what is good and virtuous—and among these is included the love of purity and chastity. Infidels and materialists have praised and even Brahmans have extolled it. Savage tribes have invested it with a holy character. Wherever we go we find among all nations a respect and love for it, even among the pagans. Livy tells us that the vestals were commanded to remain virgins. Moreover, those who do not possess this virtue assume the garb of purity and pretend to have it. Only the most degraded publicly proclaim their lack of it, and the detached man who enters into the presence of a pure maiden feels his inferiority and is abashed and ashamed and instinctively pays respect to the purity she possesses. Why is it that we instinctively love and cherish what is pure and chaste? It springs from our nature, because our soul, created by God, is after his own image and likeness. It is the divine within us going out and loving what is pure and giving us the triumph of the soul over matter.

This virtue has ever been the glory of the Catholic church. She has ever inculcated it on her children, fostered it and held it up before the people as an excellent virtue to practice. Our Saviour is our model. A virgin himself, he selected a virgin for his mother. He extolled it in his beatitudes, for he said, "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God."

Go back in the history of the Catholic church and see the thousands of young men and young women who forsook all in order to follow Christ in purity and chastity. Did not he say, "Come, follow me?" Did he not invite us? He a virgin, the model ever before us, shall we not walk in his footsteps and practice this most beautiful virtue?

Now as to the law of the church. No one who is married can be ordained a priest. No priest can ever enter into the married state. The law was made in the early ages of the church. As early as the year 305 we read that none can become a priest except a single person. Later there were further regulations, but they only enforced what had previously been practiced by the apostles. They were single men, except those previously married, and they afterward led a chaste life. This law is not forced on any one. You are not compelled to become a priest. Every one who feels himself called to the priesthood knows this law will bind him.

Why is this regulation? Why are priests debarred from the married state? It is not to cast any reflection on the good ladies or to insinuate that they are a hindrance to man. But the duties of a priest are so many, so grave, so serious, that the church does not wish him to be hampered by the cares of a family. The church wants this body of men, the priesthood, as free as their Master was. But the church has a more fundamental reason, because the ideas of sacrifice and marriage are mutually repugnant. The two are not to be placed together. In all religions in which they have had a sacrifice this idea prevails. It was so among those who attended the fires before the altar of Vesta and among the priests of Egypt. The chief priests as soon as they entered the service of their false gods and began to offer sacrifices were obliged to lead a chaste life. Some of you who remember your classics will recall that the chief priest had to be a single man. Demosthenes said, "I am firmly convinced that one who enters the sanctuary, touches holy things, presides over divine worship, should be chaste not only for a time, but during his entire life."

How was it in the old law given to Moses? It was death for any of the Levites to exercise their functions unless prepared for them by the practice of this virtue. The priest who came to the temple to offer sacrifice must have been away from his family, must have been chaste. If this regulation was enforced on the pagans of old who offered false sacrifices to idols; if it was given by God in the old law, where were offered only the figure and the type of the sacrifice of the new law, how much more should it be required of the priests of the new law, who offer not the shadow, not the figure, but the real sacrifice; not once a year, but every morning—a clean oblation, as the prophet Malachi says—a clean oblation is offered among the gentiles from the rising to the setting of the sun. He offers the body and blood of Christ every morning. He holds in his hands the chaste body of Christ, and it is for this reason principally that the church insists on chastity for its priesthood.

What his office practically is, for about one and three-quarters hours daily, prepares sermons and instructions? What prompts young men to enter the priesthood? Is it pleasure, honor or wealth? No. It is love of their Saviour, Jesus Christ, the love of their God and the love of souls for which Christ died on the cross. When discouraged during their novitiate, their eyes are turned to the altar, and they think of the day when they will stand there and hold in their hands the spotless body of their Saviour. This encourages them, and when they enter the sanctuary it is the happiest day of their lives. They saw there Christ suffering and dying for poor humanity, and they felt no sacrifice could be held back from him. Every one of you instinctively honors the priest, whether you admit it or not. You recognize that he is different from other men, from other ministers, and, like your Catholic neighbors, many of you lift your hats to him as you meet him, and he accepts this respect not as meant for him personally, but for his office.

Can such a life be lived? Is it possible? I must answer in the affirmative, because if our nobler nature goes out and loves this virtue it must be possible. Moreover, Christ holds himself up as our model and thus asks us to practice it. It is a little delicate, but I know the expressions made use of by those who consider themselves intelligent and refined ladies and gentlemen: "Priests and sisters cannot live thus. They only impose on the people." Let us take this subject up and examine it. What does celibacy mean? It means that we abstain and keep free from those things forbidden by the law of God. These are covered by two commandments, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" and "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife." Not only the celibate, but the married state is required by these commandments to be chaste in thought, word and deed. Who is so bold as to say these commandments cannot be kept? You have seen thousands who have observed these commandments. "But those who pretend to be celibates are hypocrites." Was John the Baptist a hypocrite? Was Christ a hypocrite? Was Paul a hypocrite?

There is a temporary celibacy as well as a perpetual celibacy. Every unmarried person is bound by temporary celibacy. Perpetual celibacy is that which I have assumed, which is assumed by every religious. Those not in the married state are commanded by the unchanging laws of God to be as chaste as I am. If it is impossible for the priest, then it is impossible for every unmarried man and woman, it is impossible for your widowed mother, it is impossible for the woman you love and in whose eyes you see purity and truth. Nero, the profligate, was the first to raise this standard and proclaim publicly that man could not resist the sexual instinct any more than he could abstain from eating and drinking. This principle has been taken up by latter day so-called Christians. If they were mere animals, they might subscribe to such a doctrine. If they believe in the Bible and in Christ, they must deny it.

Would God have encouraged chastity if it was impossible? Yet he commanded the prophet Jeremiah never to marry. Would he have done so if it were not possible? Have you not found, as I have found among non-Catholics as well as Catholics, many of your acquaintances as pure as the dewdrops, chaste and moral? Would I appear here before you if I found it impossible to lead this life and look into your faces, many of you unmarried, and feel that you were the impure, degraded creatures such a doctrine makes you? I see in your own countenances that it is not so, and I am glad that I have uttered this vindication of your own purity. If you ever hear it said again, stamp it, as it should be stamped, the confession of the speaker's own depravity. Remember that those who give out this doctrine are simply speaking the experience they have had and are publishing their shame to the world.

The young man seeking admission to the priesthood must feel called to it. If God gives him the call, will he not give him the grace? The church does not admit to the priesthood every young man who applies. He must have been born of good and virtuous parents and in lawful wedlock. No illegitimate child can become a priest. His parents must not have been stained by any serious vice. He is not even then admitted immediately. Perhaps at fourteen or sixteen years he tells his confessor that he feels that he is called to the priesthood. The confessor studies the boy's character and his moral life and watches him closely for nine months or a year. If he then feels satisfied, he sends him to the seminary, where he is examined by careful men. From eight to ten years he prosecutes studies which are of a serious nature. He is not permitted to mix freely with the world, to go to all kinds of amusements, to read what he pleases, to associate with women. He not only studies seriously, but certain parts of each day are devoted to religious exercises. If after ten years spent in this manner his superiors feel that he is of a character to do honor to the priesthood, then he is permitted to enter the sanctuary. Often when just about to be ordained young men are sent away. Sometimes an unworthy man, a hypocrite, succeeds in entering the priesthood, but the church is watchful and careful. If you people in the world, surrounded by temptations and abstractions, can live pure lives, why not the young man who leads a life separated from the world, who attends the bed of the dying, offers the holy sacrifice every morning, reads his Bible, for that is

MIXED MARRIAGES.

THE LAW OF THE CHURCH ON THIS SERIOUS SUBJECT.

Conditions under which Catholics are permitted to enter the Holy State of Matrimony With Those Who Are Not of Their Faith.

On what conditions are Catholics permitted to contract marriage with those who are not members of the Catholic church? The conditions may be reduced to four. The marriage tie must be regarded as indissoluble except by death. The Catholic party must be guaranteed the free exercise of religion according to his belief. The non-Catholic must agree that the children that may be born of the marriage shall be baptized and educated in the faith and according to the teachings of the Roman Catholic church, and no other marriage ceremony than that before the Catholic priest is permissible.

Ireland and the Holy See.

Both England and Ireland are sending many pilgrims to swell the ranks of those who tender congratulations and tokens of affection to the holy father on the occasion of his jubilee, and recently his holiness received representatives of both nations, Mr. Stonor representing the English pilgrims and Sir Thomas Esmonde laying before the venerable pontiff the address from the Irish parliamentary party, which was inclosed in a silver casket. In honoring the jubilee Ireland can claim a unique distinction. Owing to the bitterness of the Protestants in Belfast and some other parts of Ulster the idea is prevalent that Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants are, as a rule, peculiarly hostile to one another. A strong and admirable proof that the opposite is the case is supplied by the Protestants of Ireland in connection with the papal jubilee. Not only have Protestant members of parliament voted for the address to his holiness by the parliamentary party, but Protestant representatives have heartily joined in the address which 225 public bodies have intrusted for presentation to the Irish pilgrims who are now on their way to Rome. This is an incident of the jubilee in which Irishmen may well rejoice. No other nation in the world offers the pleasant spectacle of Catholic and Protestant uniting to honor the jubilee of Leo XIII.—London Catholic Opinion.

Deception.

It should be pointed out to children with continual earnestness that the essence of lying is in deception, not in words. A lie may be told by silence, by equivocation, by the accent on a syllable, by a glance of the eye attaching a peculiar significance to a sentence. And all these kinds of lies are worse and baser by many degrees than a lie plainly worded, so that no form of blinding conscience is so far sunk as that which comforts itself for having deceived because the deception was by gesture or silence instead of utterance, and finally, according to Tennyson's deep and trenchant line, "A lie which is half truth is ever the worst of lies."

Decorated by His Holiness.

The holy father has made George D. Pope of Brooklyn a knight of the Order of St. Gregory the Great. Only two other Americans have had this honor—Major John D. Kieley and John D. Crimmins. The decoration, a gold cross with red enamel and the image of St. Gregory the Great, entitles the holder to access to the Vatican at all times, as if he were a member of the household. Mr. Pope is president of the Manhattan Enamel Brick company. He has been generous in gifts to the church, among them pipe organs for the churches of St. John the Baptist and of St. Barbara in Brooklyn.

Bishop Favier Stricken.

Bishop Favier of the Roman Catholic mission at Peking has had a stroke of apoplexy. His left side is paralyzed. The bishop has great influence among Chinese and foreigners. The Chinese government recently conferred upon him high official honors and appointed the bishop as delegate on a commission to settle disputes between Chinese and Christians in one of the provinces.

Catholic Work in Germany.

The People's Union for Catholic Germany, from its seat at Munster, Godbach, sends forth articles on social questions by the hundreds to Catholic newspapers. It sends millions of fly leaves and tracts through every county district, and it provides the annual lecture course on social topics, while it encourages, advises and helps all social institutions.

Education.

Education without religion is a total eclipse of the soul. The parent, not the state, is responsible to God for the training of the child. Hence the obligation is a religious, not a civic duty.—Catholic Home Companion.

Four McKinley Books Left.

For 39 cents you can get one of these books while they last. They are worth \$1.50 of any man's money. Call and see them at the Catholic Journal office.

SYSTEMS OF STUDY.

THE ADVANTAGES THAT ACCRUE TO THE CATHOLIC GRADUATE.

Essence of a Paper Read by Rev. Dr. John F. Quirk, S. J., at the Recent Chicago Conference of Representatives of Catholic Colleges.

At the Chicago conference of the representatives of the Catholic colleges of the United States Rev. Dr. John F. Quirk, S. J., read a paper on "Intellectual and Moral Education in Catholic and Nonsectarian Systems." Father Quirk closed with the following forcible passages:

"Summing up the results of the respective systems of study I would say that the graduate in the Catholic system is more enlightened and more broadly educated in each and all his faculties than his fellow of the nonsectarian system. He is, for instance, better informed in mind with those principles which lead to knowledge of himself, of his limitations and of the unexplored field of knowledge as yet lying beyond his ken. Especially is he the gainer over his fellow who has not enjoyed his own fair opportunity in that he has 'the unthought grace of life, the pursuit of heroic ideals,' which spring from a right study of religion and philosophy. In other words, he has the gift of spiritual insight and endeavor and that of courage to face and encounter evil out of the motive of supernatural duty. If these gifts happen to be the precious holding of the graduate in the other system, they are only accidentally so; they do not belong to the system, but to some home or other noble influence.

"In the final study of these graduates, representative of their respective systems, we cannot fail to see that the man of settled principles and unified knowledge as well as of spiritual ideals must deserve better of society than his fellow men who may be fuller in matter of knowledge and can boast a greater freedom and impatience of restraint. He is certainly to be deemed better fitted for benefiting society, for he is apt to be a more thoughtful and conservative while none the less energetic member in all that concerns its interests.

"He is a better citizen of his country than his fellow with whom he is compared by reason of his greater acquired reverence for authority. He is, again, a better example of the patriot because he has learned to merge in one his love of God and country, for he has been taught to view all piety as united in his love for God, so that God, country and parents blend together in his eyes as almost one object compelling like, though unequal, love and devotion.

"To say all this, I well know, striking a high keynote of praise, yet I dare to claim all this for the graduate of the Catholic system who pursues his course of study faithfully to the end. I claim for him in society a place of pre-eminence as a lover of law and order, as a useful member of its ranks, as the embodiment of civic virtue and patriotism. Finally, I attribute much of all that he is and has to the character of his education.—Guidon.

Western Catholic Chautauqua.

The Western Catholic Chautauqua is the new name of the Columbian Catholic summer school. Like the Catholic summer school now so strongly established at Oak Haven, Lake Champlain, the Columbian school began session in an opera house. Its first place of meeting was Detroit, and it aims to be to Catholics in the west what the Lake Champlain movement is to those in the east. Last summer it went to St. Paul for its session and succeeded so well that it is now to be permanent there under its new name. Efforts are to be made to build up not alone summer school features, but also reading courses for all the year and a social side that shall foster larger acquaintance among Catholic folk of the west, athletics, and it may be the forming of a summer colony, with club-houses and private summer homes. The president of this new Chautauqua is the Rev. P. Danely of Minneapolis, the vice president the Rev. P. J. McGrath of Charles City, Ia., and Mr. M. J. Cantwell of Madison, Wis., the secretary Mr. John A. Harrigan of St. Paul and the treasurer Mr. L. B. Murphy of Madison, Wis. It is stated that the next session of the school will be held in St. Paul.—Exchange.

Give Up Your Best.

Never be afraid of giving up your best, and God will give you his better. If the question will intrude: "What shall I have if I give up this?" relegate that question to faith and answer: "I shall have God. In my giving, in my love, God gives himself to me."—James Hinton.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

Mgr. Joseph Schroeder, formerly at the Catholic university, is to be the head of the German university at Munster.

Count Adami has presented to the pope his magnificent villa near Chiasso, Italy, and some 600 works of art contained therein.

The Catholic Women's Union of France is appealing to capable women of that country to obtain certificates and take the place of the

SHORT SERMONS.

We lose the gift of prayer through our want of gratitude to God, who bestows it.

God regards not how much we do, but from how much we proceed. He does much that loves much.

Prayer is a pasturage, a field, where in all the virtues find their nourishment, growth and strength.

Tact is a gift; it is likewise a grace. As a gift it may or may not have fallen to our share; as a grace we are bound either to possess or acquire it.

Revenge is a momentary triumph of which the satisfaction dies at once and is succeeded by remorse, whereas forgiveness, which is the object of all revenge, entails a perpetual pleasure.

When Sir Edmund Barton, premier of the Australian commonwealth, was in New York, he looked at the tall buildings and heard about the subways and tunnels with a very doubtful expression.

"You'll find that so much tunneling combined with such high buildings, will make a lot of trouble for you," he said to an American friend. "They're learning that in London now. It is said that the foundations of St. Paul's cathedral have been weakened by the tunnels."

"Strangers are all doubtful about the solidity of our high buildings," was the response. "When Prince Chen drove up Broadway the other day, he looked at the tall buildings and smiled. A gentleman who sat in his carriage asked through an interpreter, if the prince would talk just what he was thinking about."

"I'll bet that I know what he was thinking about," said Sir Edmund. "He was thinking what a fine mask they would make for a shell."

"No," he said that he was wondering when those buildings would fall down and what we would all do when they did fall."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Sir Edmund. "How true it is that language was made in order to conceal thought."—New York Times.

Your Share of Money.

Have you \$28,867? If you have not, you are short your per capita share of the money circulation of the United States, and some one has what would be coming to you if the money that is in circulation were equally divided. This statement is made without reservation, on the authority of the latest report of the treasury department.

Another thing you are entitled to: 70 cents more than you were a year ago, according to this same report, even though there has been a loss of an increase of 112 per cent of the population, for in that same time there has been an increase of more than \$68,000,000 in the money in circulation. So, you see, you are better off than you were a year ago—if you get your dues.

In fact, you are getting better off all of the time. What has happened since 1879? The population has increased 58 per cent, and the money in circulation has increased 178 per cent, and more than the half of that increase in circulation has been in gold or in gold certificates.—New York Herald.

The Paris Critics.

An amusing bit of gossip comes from Paris by way of the London Era, which says that the Paris theatrical managers are at daggers drawn with the critics. Last week the managers quit issuing invitations to the latter to the "repetitions generale," or dress rehearsals, and now they have decided to give free tickets to the great theatrical performances. The Paris critics have not been doing well of late, and the bad business is according to the critics, the entrepreneurs themselves, going to attack the critics in the law courts. "If a journalist comes down a play," says one of the managers, "we shall prosecute him on the law."

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