

The Carmelite News

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TRUTH OF A PROVERB

There is an old Portuguese proverb which runs:- "God says take what you want, but pay for it." How true that is! First it enshrines the doctrine of free will by which God allows a man to choose right or wrong. He allows men to grab what isn't theirs. He allows mean men to cheat others of their just rights. He allows men to exploit those who are unable to resist their power, but in the end He says "**You will pay,**" and pay we do. There is no escape.

Our lives are short but God is for ever. Eternal justice we will not find in this life because our cause is carried before the tribunal of God and there we will pay to the last grain, because justice is unmerciful. That is why men say that justice must be tempered with mercy. It enters even the courts of justice in this world. It enters into the justice of heaven, but always there is one condition.

There must be sincere repentance. There must be a change of life, and a turning away from evil. We can memorise the words of our Blessed Lord—"Men who do these things shall not enter the kingdom of heaven," and the list is fairly comprehensive. When you see an evil man pursuing inexorably the triumph of his ways don't be impressed. God gives him a certain amount of rope and when he comes to the end of the rope he will find justice, and maybe he will find that justice is without mercy.

Some men pay with their lives. Some men pay with the unhappiness their cruelty and meanness reap for

them; but all pay in the end. There are families where the husband works and then the wife works. The children are sent to school and when they come home they are left on their own. Husband and wife take what they want, a double income, but the price they pay for it in family life is high and is inexorable. Think of the young fellows who were hanged a week or two ago. Think of those who will perhaps meet a similar fate in the years to come. Why? Because they take what they want even at the price of other men's lives. We stand dumbfounded by it all, but do we realise the truth of the Portuguese proverb:- God says take what you want, but pay for it.

Where has society failed? Every social reformer has a different answer. Our answer used to be, lack of those things that practical Catholicism can give to a man. If there is no religious faith there is a terrible void in the human heart and the teenagers fill it with the things of their own choosing, jazz, knives, guns, coffee bars and a searing disrespect for those who have taken the trouble to bring them up.

I was talking to a social reformer the other day and he said to me, "Life is like the pendulum of a clock. It swings to the right and to the left, and as the spring of life dies down it comes to rest slowly in the centre." He said, "Don't you forget it. These young hooligans, these hoodlums, these teenagers of to-day who are taking all they can grasp with both hands, will become the stern parents of the future because they will know something that their children do not

know. They know something they will try to keep their children from knowing, the awful types they were themselves in their teenage years, and

they will try to save their children from the pit of Hell that they only just escaped. There is no gamekeeper so good as a reformed poacher."

CASTING A SHADOW

I am speaking from memory now but I think I am accurate. The old Spanish city of Toledo is sited on a hill. One of the roads that enters the Western gate leads up through a high sierra so that a man mounted on his mule as he tops the rim of the hill, when the Western sun is right behind him, finds that the sun casts his shadow right forward almost a quarter of a mile towards the Western gate. The inscription over the gate is, or used to be:- "Be not proud of thy shadow foolish man, lest thy heart grow weary at the setting of the sun." How true that is! Sometimes men are warned not to be afraid of shadows, but here is a case where a man should be cautious. He knows, that man on his mule, that his shadow will pass with the setting of the sun.

There is a moral in it! We should learn to walk humbly amongst men. We should be careful that men should not feel anxious just because we are around. We should always watch that our shadow is not too big either in business or in family life.

If conversation dies down when you enter the office. If the smile is frozen on the faces of those who serve you. If your return home at night casts a shadow over the spirit of the family, then reflect that you are just like the man upon the mule journeying towards the gate of Toledo. Your shadow is long because the sun is behind you. Try to find out what it is that makes your shadow so long in your business life, or in the life of the family.

THE INVISIBLE GOD

If God be real, His reality is such as to seem to eclipse all else. Perhaps it is for this reason that some religions and philosophies look on this world as no more than a shadow or a dream. Even the Hebrews, who held fast to human life, agreed with other wise men that a human being could not see God and live. How different all this is from our superficial way of thinking and acting! As God does not fall within our ordinary sensible experience, we set His reality aside and fall back on our own importance. Once when two undergraduates, who had been discussing God, asked Benjamin Jowett what he thought of God, Jowett shook their complacency by answering: "It is not what you think of God, but what God thinks of you, which is important."

God then fills our vision, and a believer might well be asked: 'If

God be what you say, how can you waste time on anything else?" This question has point: for we come from God, our present and future depend on Him, and if we reject Him we create chaos within ourselves: we are lost in chaos and enduring loneliness. The answer must be that of the Sermon on the Mount: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you."

Christ says "first," because He does not demand of us that we should think of God without stopping. Living by sensible experience, we are not able normally to think of spiritual things continually. We come gradually by the sciences, by art, by companionship to understand something of God, and by good intentions and resolutions we rise from the love of our neighbour to the love of God.

There are souls whom God calls to a life of contemplation, but for the majority of us it is through human concerns and sorrows and joys, in our solicitude for those in our care, that

we purify and perfect our religion and our love. If you do not love your neighbour whom you see, how can you love God, whom you do not see?

THE VALUE OF SUFFERING

No other element of life can so test character as suffering. Like a veritable furnace it smelts the gross ores of our composition, and reduces us to whatever true percentage of value we possess.

It eats into insincerity like an acid, and becomes the true gauge of friendship. It consumes mere sentimentality like a whirlwind of fire and leaves the mind purified. It holds impatience firmly in irons until endurance is branded deep into the will." Father O'Brien, O.F.B.

The best sermon on suffering, and its value in the sight of God and men, was preached by Pope John to sick pilgrims in the Basilica of St. Peter's in Rome. It was the most consoling address I have ever read because sick people, whether it is paralysis, polio, cancer, or any of the myriad diseases that plague the human race, are inclined to think that they are useless people and therefore expendable; that they have nothing more to give to society except to be a burden on it.

I agree with the atheists that there is too high a price to pay for life unless we accept it as a penance from God and live our lives in union with the suffering Christ. In that way we are the richest members in all society. We are putting far more into the world than we are taking out of it. We are filling up, as it were, the treasure house of God's mercy for the rest of the human race. We are the saviours of men.

From a material point of view it is so easy to come to the conclusion that life isn't worth living. It is the

view of an increasing number of people who do not believe in God and who have no knowledge of the value of suffering.

When the materialist loses his fortune, he has lost all, life is no longer worth living. He understands it no longer. he has lost his stake; his hands are empty, and his heart is a desert. He doesn't want to start again, and if he does, he asks himself—"With what?"

So, he sails over the top and becomes a grease blob on the pavement below. Because he had no faith in God he had no hope. His wealth was his all. He takes the road of every suicide—the easy way out, the quick way to oblivion. An overdose of sleeping tablets; the gas oven; the fall from on high. The more violent ways of shooting one's head off or slitting one's wrists. That is the way of the materialist.

The stockbroker on Wall Street, who jumps out of a window twenty storeys up is a worshipper of the Golden Calf. His money was all. What a life to live, and what a way to die!

I was so impressed by Pope John's sermon on suffering that I have printed it under a separate folder and I will send it to anyone who asks for it. It does one thing which I think is absolutely essential, it teaches those who suffer and who unite their sufferings with the passion of Christ that they are doing more good to the world than dictators, generals and politicians, because they are providing the Grace of God by which alone men can be saved. If you need a copy I will send it to you quickly.

A very Happy and Holy Christmas to you all,
and may 1961 bring you every Blessing

CHRISTMAS CONFESSION

Hearing confessions on Christmas Eve is sometimes an experience. There is usually a spirit or hilarity about it and it must be said that sometimes men give the real truth in the story. Their tongues have been loosened, sometimes to the point of imprudence. Well a little liberty is always a good thing and truth seldom suffers from an excess of words.

Yet, one must be careful. There was a priest who heard a man stumbling towards his box and finally kneel down awkwardly on the stool of penance and because many other people were waiting he told him

roughly, "You are drunk. Go out of here and come back when you are sober." The poor chap stumbled out. Shortly afterwards a woman came in and said to the priest, "That man you sent out was blind." The priest said, "Please go out and bring him back." But he was gone. Well, the priest couldn't be blamed for jumping to conclusions. The man should take part of the blame. He should have explained that he was blind and that his blindness was the cause of his stumbling. However, God will forgive us all for our mistakes in the end if our hearts are good.

THANKS

Grateful Sacred Heart, Our Lady and St. Jude. Mrs. McShane.

Thanks St. Jude, St. Philomena, and Father Titus. Mary Shannon.

Thank you St. Jude.

J. A. Pearson, Cambuslang.

Thanksgiving Divine Infant of Prague for favours received.

A.F.F., Co. Mayo.

Thanks to the Sacred Heart, Our Lady, St. Jude, and St. Christopher for a safe journey. B. Normoyle, Waterford.

Thanks to St. Jude, Our Lady, St. Anthony, and St. Teresa. B. Byrne, Carlow.

Thanks to the Sacred Heart, Our Lady, St. Jude, and Father Titus Brandsma for a safe confinement.

A. Schrubba.

Grateful thanks to St. Joseph, St. Rita, and St. Paul of the Cross.

E. O'Connell.

Grateful thanks to St. Jude for favour received. S. Dimond.

Grateful thanks Sacred Heart, Our Lady. S. Brown, Rugby.

Further Thanks held over.

Our Coming Novenas

SAINT JUDE - - -

Dec. 16th—Dec. 24th

THE DIVINE INFANT of PRAGUE

Dec. 24th—Jan. 2nd

THE HOLY FAMILY - - -

Dec. 31st—Jan. 8th

OUR BURSES

	Already acknowledged			Increase		
The St. Jude Burse No. 2	£960	13	6	now	£1,002	13 6
Holy Child of Prague Burse	48	0	0		60	0 0
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Burse	24	10	0		27	10 0
Our Lady of Lourdes Burse	16	10	0		18	10 0
Immaculate Conception B.V.M. Burse	55	10	0		65	10 0
Little Flower Burse	23	0	0		28	0 0
Sacred Heart Burse	19	0	0		22	0 0
St. Anthony Burse	22	0	0		25	0 0
St. Joseph Burse	17	0	0		21	0 0
St. Kilian's Burse	10	0	0		12	0 0

Our Lady keep you !

Yours in Carmel

M. E. Lynch O.C.