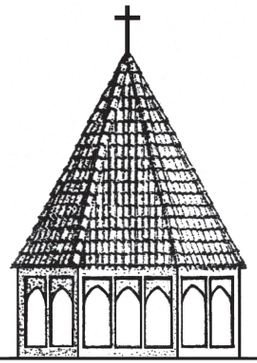
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WINNOWING FAN

The Spiritual Life according to the Fathers and Saints of the Catholic Church in preparation for Christ's Second Coming.

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The *Winnowing Fan* hopes "...to do what little it could to solve the evils that beset the Church."
St. Teresa of Avila

THE APOSTOLIC COMMISSION ON EVANGELIZATION
IV

Aside from knowing all the commandments of Christ as enumerated in the New Testament, it is also necessary to know how to put those commandments into practice. It doesn't mean just because someone knows the recipe, he knows how to cook.

Knowing the commands of Christ does not mean that those commandments had been put into practice. Though the commands of Christ can be learned from the Gospels, the way to put into practice is not necessarily found in the Gospels. The way to put those commands into practice is more found in the writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church.

Christ commanded us to pray unceasingly in Scriptures. But how to actually do it is not found in Scriptures. It is found in St. Augustine and later on in St. Thomas Aquinas.

In Evangelization, this takes the longest time to do. To go to all nations is pretty easy. To Baptize takes a few minutes. To teach all the commands of Christ takes longer. But to teach a community how to put those commands into practice can take not less than 30 years. This was shown by Christ during His 30 years of hidden life; to show us how long it takes to evangelize.

This last part of evangelization has to be done within a community living permanently together with superiors and with a very specific way of life. This process is often referred to as 'the monastic life.' The communities of St. Benedict are an example of this process.

St. Benedict went to Monte Casino. The monk-applicants were re-baptized through the monastic life. Then during the postulancy they lived a life of repentance as taught in the Old Testament. During Novitiate they tried living the life of the New Testament, the beginning of which is the Life of Faith. And if it is seen that they can live that life, they proceed to live the rest of the commands of the New Testament, i.e. Hope and Charity.

JOHN'S 'Repentance.'

A common source of confusion among Catholics is the concept of 'repentance.' There is a repentance of John and a repentance of Christ. They are different from each other. John's repentance cannot forgive sins. John, himself, said so. While Christ's repentance leads to the forgiveness of sins. John, said so. So there is a difference. But most Catholics do not know this. In fact, many Catholics do not know either of them.

John's repentance consists in knowing one's sins, being sorry for them and having the purpose of not committing them again. We learn this in the Catechism. It is often referred to as 'repentance.'

But to know what our sins are we must know what commands of God we have disobeyed, because sin is defined as disobedience to God's command. So we must first know what are God's commands, like the 10 commandments of God, then see what commands we violated. Be sorry for them and try to avoid them in the future.

This is the preaching of John on how to prepare for the coming Messiah. But this cannot forgive past sins. It is just a preparation for the coming of Christ who will teach us how to have our past sins forgiven.

This element of repentance is of the utmost importance because most sins are not forgiven because the penitent does not know his sins. How can you repent for your sins if you do not know your sins.

Knowing one's sins is the hardest activity in repentance.

KNOW ALL YOUR SINS.

It is not sufficient to know a few sins to be forgiven. In the context of repentance you cannot be sorry for only a few sins. You must be sorry for all the sins you can remember. John's repentance is a pure act of the intellect. It is a matter of thinking what your past sins are.

The repentance of Christ is a mature human act of the mind and the will with the help of grace.

John's repentance being a pure act of the intellect, it can be done by all men who have a normal mind. It means using the memory, knowing and judging. All of these acts are intellectual activities all men can do. So John's repentance can be done by all men.This means that all men can prepare themselves to believe in Christ.

Unbelief is a sin all men can commit.

ELEMENTS OF JOHN'S REPENTANCE.

In the story of St. John the Baptist three elements are shown that are needed for his repentance. First, the place or the classroom needed to study repentance. Secondly, the person who must teach repentance. And thirdly, the topic learned.

First, the classroom. It is clear that St. John taught in the desert and the people went to the desert to listen to John.

The teacher must be a prophet, like John the Baptist.

Thirdly, the subject matter for teaching is about the kingdom of God.

THE CLASSROOM

The classroom chosen by John the Baptist in teaching was the desert. John was not known to teach in the cities or in the synagogues.

The reason is that repentance must be taught in a place with the minimum of distraction. It is a topic that needs concentration. The mind cannot be occupied with other concerns.

This was a prelude to the rise of monasteries; they are places that duplicate the desert, wherein souls learn the lessons of repentance.

The first Christians went to monasteries to learn repentance. These first monasteries were called penitentiaries or therapeutae (a therapeutic place to cure the soul.

THE TEACHER = A PROPHET.

The Gospel described the teacher as St. John the Baptist who was a prophet. John had stayed in the desert since he was a child to be trained by God to be a prophet. His training had been for 30 years.

The Catholic Church is a prophetic Church and functions like a prophet teaching like John. Just as John prepared the world for the first coming of Christ, the Catholic Church is like John the prophet, preparing the world for the Second Coming of Christ.

A true preacher of the Catholic Faith must be a prophet.

TOPIC IN SCHOOL – THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

The words the 'Kingdom of God' were never mentioned in the Old Testament because nobody would understand it. The world was not ready to hear about the topic. But Christ was going to establish the Kingdom of God in the New Testament. So John was sent to prepare the world for the coming of the Kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God is the Catholic Church. This Church existed in the Old Testament in the form of a type but not yet actually. The Catholic Church will officially be established on Pentecost and it was Christ who would establish it by sending the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

THE MESSAGE

The topic of John's preaching is to go to Christ. The topic of Christ's teaching is the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the Catholic Church. Christ's teaching is how to enter the kingdom of God; how to enter the Catholic Church.

To enter the Catholic Church three things must be known. First, how does the Catholic Church look like. Second, how to enter the Church. Thirdly, how can you know that you are inside.

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