



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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A SOUL'S ENCOUNTER WITH CHRIST

Pope Benedict had been reminding the Church of the need for the soul to encounter the person of Christ. He describes this encounter as looking for the face of Christ which the psalm had always described as the longing of the human soul. This encounter is a meeting between two: the soul and God. The two proceed from two opposite points as they meet. The encounter takes place and the human soul is transformed into divinity. And this is called Faith, the divinization of the human soul.

Pope Benedict XVI described the journey of the human soul to the meeting point where he encounters God during the 'Year of St. Paul'. The Holy Father described the journey of God through the Church to the meeting point where He encounters man during the 'Year of the Priest'.

This is like describing the role of man and the role of God in the act of Faith.

The goal of the Year of St. Paul is what St. Paul described for men 'to go

deeper into the knowledge of Christ' which Pope Benedict described 'as the indispensable condition for a spiritual and ecclesial renewal.' The Holy Father described the role of God through the Church in her priests as to 'reinvigorate in the priests their mission' as described in the Apostolic Commission given by Christ to the Apostles.

The journey of the soul towards that encounter is a journey of faith. God's meeting man through the Church, especially through her bishops and priests is also a journey of Faith.

Let's see how the role of man looks like.

The human soul must study all the commands of Christ as found in the Scriptures in a natural way and obey them in a natural way. If Christ says 'Feed the hungry' then I should go and physically feed a hungry person.

Then I should meditate on this command of Christ and try to know

more about this command by studying what the Fathers of the Church have to say and lastly, find out what the Holy Father has to say about it. This will still be a natural act of my intellect. My mind might see that the reason why I should feed the hungry is not so much that he is hungry but because it is an act of love for God. So now I begin to feed the hungry because obedience to God's command is an act of love of God and not merely a social act or Christmas obligation. That is only one command.

Learning all the commands of Christ is the sign we have reached Faith from the side of man towards the encounter with God.

When we begin to act upon or obey the commands that we have knowledge of by an act of the free will, that is contemplation. We have reached the maturity of the virtue of Charity which Pope Benedict reminded us and which he described in 'Deus Caritas Est.'

Now from the side of God: God meets us through the Church, Bishops and priests.

The Divine commission described as the Apostolic Commission at the end of the Gospel of Matthew states: Christ commanded them to go to all nations, baptizing them.....and teaching them all My commandments and how to observe them. The first part: 'Go, baptizing them...' is the power of grace (or orders) of the Catholic Church and may be compared to one arm of the Church. The other power of the Church is the second part 'teaching them all...and

how to observe My commandments,' is called the power of jurisdiction and may be compared to the second arm of the Church.

It is by these two arms that the Church brings us into her bosom. Man, on his part rushes to God by doing his role in the act of Faith. And God, with the two arms of the Church embraces him and brings him into the Church. This is man's part and God's part that make up the Act of Faith.

HOW GOD SPEAKS

When God speaks He first conceives the word. This conceived word is the existing likeness of the Father and is also a likeness to all the creatures which were made. Secondly, every manifestation proceeding from the eternal Word is called a speaking. Thirdly; the Word was made flesh. St. Augustine says that the Incarnate Word relates to the uncreated Word just as the word of the voice does to a word of the heart.

The same process is followed by man. Three processes are required for our speaking. First, a conception of the word by which what the mouth is to speak is conceived in the mind. Secondly, an expression of the conceived word, by which what has been conceived, is introduced. Thirdly a manifestation of this expressed thing, by which the thing expressed becomes evident.

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The *Winnowing Fan* hopes "...to do what little it
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St. Teresa of Avila



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THE PRIEST IS OBLIGED TO SEEK PERFECTION.

In the Year of the Priest, Pope Benedict called all priests to the perfection of the spiritual life. What does this mean? He must be in the state of sanctifying grace and an initial perfection better than that required for those entering the religious life. The priest is supposed to enlighten all those who attend his Mass. This would require that he is in the illuminative stage of the spiritual life while the Bishop must be in the highest state of the spiritual life the Unitive way.

In the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the priest receives the sacerdotal character, a participation in the priesthood of Christ. He also receives sacramental grace to enable him to fulfill his priestly function in a holy manner. These graces are added to his sanctifying grace which gives him the right to receive more actual graces for the holy administration of his priesthood. In the ordination ceremony he is reminded to "study to live in a holy and religious manner, and to please God in all things"...which sounds like the motto of most religious orders (like the Benedictines and Jesuits.)

When he celebrates Mass he has the cross in front of him to remind him to bewail his sins. He also has a cross behind him to remind him to learn to

suffer meekly for God's sake all the evil that men may do him. In his Mass he honors God, edifies the Church, helps the living and obtains rest for the departed. No man can do so much good as he if he celebrates Mass well.

His divine office must be the prelude and finale of his Mass. And Pope Benedict repeats what St. Thomas said: his preaching should proceed from the fullness of his contemplation. He must preach like a savior, not only of a few, but of many souls.

The very sacrifice of the Mass should remind him of the necessity of self-immolation; he ought to die to his body, to his own mind, his will, his reputation, his family and the world. and in silence.

5 THINGS REQUIRED FOR SOMEONE TO BE A PROPHET.

First: he receives revelations which exceed all human knowledge, otherwise he is not called a prophet but merely a wise man, as in the case of Solomon, whose mind was illumined as concerns those things which are according to human reason.

The second is the understanding of the things revealed. If he does not have

understanding, like Nabuchodonosor, he is not called a prophet. But Daniel understood and was a prophet.

The third is that a prophet is not detained in the visible things he is viewing as if they were the things themselves but as if they were figures. Otherwise he is a madman who apprehends imagined things as if they were real things.

The fourth is that the prophet perceives the revelations with certitude as if knowing through demonstration; otherwise it is a dream.

The fifth: there is the will to announce the things which have been revealed.

3 KINDS OF VISIONS

God speaks to men in diverse manners. These manners refer to the three kinds of vision by which He communicates with men. The first is through corporeal vision, as the way He spoke to Daniel (5:5) "There appeared fingers, as it were of the hand of a man, writing over against the candlestick upon the surface of the wall."

The second is by imaginary vision as in Isaiah (6:1) "I saw the Lord sitting...." And thirdly through an intellectual vision as in David's case (Ps. 118:10) "I have had understanding above ancients."

And Osee seems to have all kinds of vision (Osee 12:10) "And I have multiplied visions."

These three visions are the three ways by which God speaks to men. Sometimes by reproving the wicked, sometimes attracting the just and instructing the ignorant.

THE CAMP OF GOD

St. Paul described the Church as the Camp of God, continuously under attack but always on guard for battle. It is for the same reason that the Church is also referred to as Church Militant. And it is because of our forgetfulness of this fact that we are often caught off guard. We are at war not by our own design but by the declaration of our enemies. The Church Militant is the Catholic Church.

This camp is attacked in three ways.

First, by those aggressors who openly rise against the Church. They march the broad earth and surround the camp.

Secondly, the camp is deceitfully undermined by heretics. By fair and flattering words they deceive the hearts of the simple-minded. And this will go from bad to worse.

Third, she is attacked by some of its own members who become depraved from sins that spring from the corruption

