



WINNOWING FAN

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

Vol. XXIX No. 2 ENGLISH EDITION Feb. 2012

"YEAR OF THE FAITH" part 1

Editorial

We wish to feature the "Year of the Faith" because of its importance; and in unity with the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, who is showing its urgency. Without Faith we cannot enter heaven, putting it simply. Without Faith we cannot enter the Catholic Church outside of which there is no salvation. And so it is of the greatest urgency that we make certain we have the theological virtue of Faith NOW before it is too late. This is one of the most obvious teachings of the Catholic Church.

BACKGROUND.

As Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the Holy Father had already noticed the ill that besets the Catholic Church: a crisis of Faith, as he wrote in his "Ratzinger Report" (1985). He pinpointed the cause as the 'restlessness of the priests.' This is one of the worst vices which St.

Thomas of Aquinas noted as a sign of the absence of virtues, notably the natural moral virtues and more so the theological virtues. This is like saying that most of our priests are merely ordained Protestants if not ordained pagans. If the priests are like this what is to be expected of our laymen? - not much different from the priests from whom they learn their religion. This is surely a worrying scenario. In fact, very worrying. It would mean that most Catholics are not Catholic at all. And as Joseph Ratzinger he noticed this state of affairs in seminaries during a demonstration of seminarians where he was teaching. They were thoroughly communists.....which means they could not be Catholics.

Ratzinger's involvement with Vatican II as a *peritus* made him see further the extent of the crisis in the

Church. He saw the crisis within the very fathers of the Council. The contentions were very appalling. And so in the year 2000 he gave a talk where he expressed that there was something wrong in the catechisms used by the Church. This error was both in the contents and method of teaching. It was here that he first coined the word "New Evangelization." And he made it clear that his 'New Evangelization' is not new but is the old, classical and traditional Evangelization; except that everybody had forgotten it and he wants to re-instill it in the heart of the Church. Then came Pope John Paul II's "Veritatis splendor," evidently co-authored by Ratzinger where they wrote down in very clear terms the errors that had beset the Church, which is the cause of the crisis of Faith, and a concise re-statement of the truth. But this met with very minimal reaction from the men of the Church.

During his papacy as Pope Benedict XVI he immediately moved to resolve the crisis. He issued his first three encyclicals, *Deus Caritas Est*, *Spe Salvi* and *Caritatis in Veritate*, which is a reminder that all Catholics should have the three theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity to enter the kingdom of heaven. This was, of course, the usual things that all Popes do: that at the beginning of their pontificates they

remind all the Faithful of the true way of Salvation as taught by Christ and proposed by the Church throughout the centuries. Then he began to resolve the crisis of faith in the Church.

Seeing the poor reaction to these encyclicals he issued the "Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church" almost at the same time as the Catechism produced by Vatican II, in fact a better, clearer and concise version of the Vatican version. Then he calls the "year of St. Paul" which is again an urgent call for Faith. And like a nagging mother Pope Benedict called the "Year of the Priests," pinpointing the root of the crisis of Faith as the faithless priests immersed in vices and heresies with the expressed instruction that they should return to seminaries and re-learn their Moral Theology. Nobody did. Maybe a few reviewed their copies and that was it. This was followed by "Instrumentum Laboris" where he asked Bishops to check on the Faith of their priests and send back their response. The next Bishop's synod will base their discussion on the Bishops' response.

And now "Porta Fidei" a moanful plea to have Faith. The Pope signed this "Motu Proprio Data" last October 2011 for a year of Faith starting on October 2012 and ending on November 2013. One year in preparation and one year in

celebration together with a “Pastoral Recommendations” for the Year of Faith.

It is because of urgency that we share this document with the readers that we may be counted as members of the Mystical Body of Christ, the Catholic Church, through the act of Faith.

POVERTY IN SPIRIT

All we have comes from outside us. And everything we have can be taken away from us whether we like it or not. We cannot hold on to anything as our own. We entered into the world with nothing. We will go out of this world with nothing. This is the primordial poverty, the central void which nobody can do without the supernatural virtue of Faith.

Without Faith it is impossible for us to believe that ‘blessed is the poor in spirit for they shall be happy.’

To make this act of Faith is impossible without grace because it is so against the fallen nature of man born with instinctive possessiveness. Urged by possessiveness, man tries to acquire all sorts of goods and accumulate things needlessly. He tries even to possess people, so that he can use them for his personal designs or simply for the

pleasure of power. . Above all we want to possess ourselves, to be our own masters and to do as we wish. This is the height of pride.

Faced with the choice between poverty and worldliness we can either refuse it and go on a binge of possessiveness OR surrender to poverty and be shaped by it into an open abode for the indwelling of God.

*NEW TESTAMENT
SPIRITUALITY.*

There is the Old Testament spirituality and the New Testament spirituality. The Old Testament spirituality has its foundation on the 10 commandments of God, while the New Testament spirituality has its foundation around the Beatitudes.

The O. T. consists in prohibitions and obligations, like Thou shalt not commit adultery and Thou shall honor thy father and mother. While the N. T. consists in virtues like humility, faith, hope and charity.

In the encyclical ‘Veritatis splendor’ of Pope John Paul II, he strongly hinted the fact that most Catholics are not really Catholics because they are bogged down in the Old Testament and are unable to cross to the New

Testament.

Since we have to be in the New Testament to be Catholics and to be saved then the question arises how many are inside the Church and how many are saved. Are we inside or outside, are we going to be saved or not?

**HOW TO ENTER THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH.**

Christ, in Scriptures, had always repeated that the way to enter the Kingdom of God or the Catholic Church is to repent and believe.

To repent, according to St. Augustine consists of three activities taught to us already in the spirituality of the Old Testament; namely, to pray, to fast and to perform good works.

These three activities will enable us to know our sins, be sorry for them and to make a purpose of amendment not to commit them again. When we have applied these to all our past sins our sins are forgiven, we receive sanctifying grace and with this grace we receive the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity. As long as these three theological virtues are not developed into perfection, there is a possibility of losing them.

THE MORAL VIRTUES

All Catholics have been baptized that’s why they are Catholics. At Baptism, the soul received sanctifying grace with its accompanying virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity. But these virtues are ‘small.’ Thus Christ often criticized His disciples often for having a ‘small or weak faith.’ And because these virtues are weak or small it can easily be lost. More often than not when they reach the age of reason, the children lose these virtues because of their first free choice. So strictly speaking they leave the Church with their loss of the theological virtues.....mostly without knowing it. They are out.

What must be done to prevent this? They must develop the Moral Virtues. The theological virtues received at Baptism are preserved in the soul of the child if the parents help the child develop the Moral virtues. This is easy because the Moral virtues are natural virtues easily developed in a human way. They are not supernatural virtues that need grace to be acquired. So parents can and are obliged to develop the Moral virtues to maintain the initial grace received at Baptism. This is what keeps them inside the Catholic Church.

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1257 Makati City, PHILIPPINES

*A Publication of the Caryana Lay Monastic Community
(Not for Sale)*

