



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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FINAL AND ULTIMATE END

If man sits down and thinks of it, by his mere human mind he can see that there is a God who created him. And this God created him for an end. And this end is happiness here on earth and in the life after with Him wherever He is. This end that God has for man is commonly called Beatitude.

In all his acts, therefore, man must have this end in sight. As long as he does this he is in the right direction towards Beatitude. However there are many steps he must take before he can reach Beatitude. These steps had been laid down by God and taught to man in various ways so he does not lose his way.

But there are many things in the world, many desires of the flesh; and there is the devil who has

different plans for man, first and foremost is for man not to reach Beatitude.

When man is distracted by these alien things that do not lead him to his final goal, that is called SIN; and it will definitely prevent him from reaching Beatitude. Or it can happen that man is doing something that God, Himself, had set as a means leading to his final and ultimate end but he had made this means into his ultimate end. This is also SIN because he has made a means to an end as an end. Usually when something like this happens he gets bogged down in this temporary means and becomes incapable of proceeding to his final and ultimate end. Loving our neighbor is a means to love God. When we love our neighbor as an end, then we become incapable of rising to our final and ultimate end of loving God.

THREE WAYS OF VIEWING THE CHURCH.

The first is the look of a superficial observer. The statistician, or the historian of religion who limits himself to a mere description of the Church. She appears to him as one religious society among others. It is, initially, relatively easy for him to distinguish her from other Christian religions or those that are non-Christian, to delineate her system of government, her structures, teachings, forms of worship, her sacrifice, sacraments, liturgical and paraliturgical prayers.

The second, a keener observer will penetrate more deeply. He will be able to recognize those exceptional qualities that distinguish the Catholic Church from other sects. He may even go so far as to discern in her steadfastness, in her unity and universality, in her effect of sanctity, an assemblage of extraordinary characteristics. He may see in the papacy a spiritual power whose origins, development, growth and influence comprise the most extraordinary phenomenon in the history of the world.

The third way is with the eyes of faith. Then the Church is seen in her mystery, in her profound reality as

the Body of Christ, inhabited by the Holy Spirit, who directs her and dwells in her as her Guest.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH is both Mysterious and Visible.

The Catholic Church is mysterious in her reality. But this mystery that animates her which is totally Divine is visible in its brilliance, by which that life is announced and communicated to men.

The Holy Spirit is the invisible life of the Church. If this is so it is necessary that the men who are called to serve such lofty intentions be endowed with spiritual gifts, which are as an outpouring of the riches of the priesthood, the sanctity, and the kingship stored up for them in the sacred humanity of Christ, the Head of the Church.

The Holy Spirit descends upon men from on high. It is incarnated in the Church. It animates the men in them, fathers them in Christ, and transforms them interiorly. The permanent virtues and hidden powers that it confers on them will



be for them the principle of a new mode of being and acting. Thence, both in the measure in which they allow themselves to be animated by the Spirit of God and by the gifts that he pours upon them, a change is produced even in their exterior condition and comportment. These external manifestations, taken together, are the body of the Church, that by which she becomes visible to the world.

THE VISIBLE HIERARCHICAL POWER OF THE CHURCH

It is by the visible hierarchical powers that Christ orders the hidden mysteries of his grace and his truth to be dispensed to men. Besides the reflection of evangelical sanctity in the comportment of her authentic children, the Church is visible in the hierarchical powers from which she issues forth; in the teaching of the word of God, revealed by the prophets, Christ, and the apostles, found in the Scriptures and the early apostolic preaching transmitted and developed through the ages, like a never-changing and never-failing

light; in the celebration of her worship, inaugurated by Christ and continued first of all by the unbloody sacrifice of the Mass, where the complete redemption, merited by the blood of Christ, is communicated to us, then by the dispensation and reception of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, finally by the liturgical offices and public prayers.

THE CHURCH IS SIMILAR TO CHRIST

It is fitting that the Church, intended for men and gathering them together, is, like man, at the same time invisible and visible, composed of a spiritual soul and a visible body. However, the Church has for her model, not man, but Christ; for it is in Christ that divinity and humanity are united. And if it is true that the Church resembles man, it is because Christ himself, of whom the Church is but a prolongation in space and time, has resembled man. All of tradition, in fact, has compared the union of divinity and humanity in Christ to the union of soul and body in man.

SERMON *in a sentence*

The desires of man are never satisfied, because the heart of man is made for God. Thus says St. Augustine: "Thou hast made us for Thee, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in Thee." ... Thus, nothing less than God can satisfy the human heart.

The more one covets, the less one loves.

Ask that from the abundance of Your immense generosity You may bestow that which is needed to cure my illness, to wash away my uncleanness, to illuminate my blindness, to enrich my poverty, and to clothe my nakedness.

As the world or God predominate in a man's heart, he must be drawn contrary ways; for God draws him who serves Him to things above; the earth draws to things beneath.

St. Thomas Aquinas

But often times if we brace ourselves with strong energy against the incitements of evil habits, we turn even those very evil habits to the account of virtue.

St. Gregory the Great

THE SECOND STATE OF THE CHURCH – in the course of time.

The second is called the age of Christ awaited, or the first regime of the Church. Why did God permit the destruction of the state of innocence? We know the answer: God only permits evil that he may bring about a greater good. To the regime of creation, which seemed perfect, succeeded the regime of redemption which, as a whole would be better.

The first age totally excluded a visible mediator; the second would be essentially the regime of a mediator. The first regime had given birth to the first form of the people of God; the following regimes would give birth to the Church properly so called, to a people of God marked by the image of the redemptive incarnation, called the Body of Christ, whose vocation would be to prolong in space and time the temporal life of the Savior.

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