



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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EDITORIAL

POPE BENEDICT AND THE PROBLEM

"Veritatis Splendor" presented to us a daunting problem: that most Catholics, both layman and priests are unable to cross the bridge from the Old Testament into the New Testament. Simply said: most Catholics are not Catholics because the Church is in the New Testament.

Pope Benedict first noticed this in 1985 while still Cardinal Prefect of the Doctrine of the Faith. He wrote the "Ratzinger Report" where he noted this problem and its cause. The sub-title of the book was 'The crisis in the Church.' which consists in the inability of souls to make the act of Faith that makes us Catholics. And he attributed this to the inability of both laymen and priests to have the virtue of Faith due to Vices. Vices and virtues are exclusive, St. Thomas states.

As Cardinal, Ratzinger co-operated with Pope John Paul II in writing the encyclical 'Veritatis splendor' where the same problem and its solution were described in detail. Because of the depth of the theology the encyclical, it was addressed exclusively to Bishops. This was in 1993.

In the year 2000, Cardinal Ratzinger gave a talk to Catechists entitled the "New Evangelization" where he gave in outline form the cause of the crisis: defective catechism, and gave the solution a 'new evangelization' which he has been emphasizing up to now.

When Cardinal Ratzinger became Pope Benedict XVI, the first thing he did among other things was to write the 'Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church' to overwrite all the

previous defective catechisms including the 'new' Catechism of the Catholic Church. Then he called the 'Year of St. Paul,' who is the doctor of grace, which is the first thing that we receive when we enter the Church.

It's impact on the Church is unknown but he immediately followed it with the 'Year of the Priest' in which he instructed all priests to return and review their theology and note that the Moral virtues are needed to cross from the Old Testament into the New Testament. We, also, do not know the impact of that Year on the Church.

But the impact of the previous program was suspected to be very weak because Pope Benedict immediately issued 'Instrumentum Laboris' where he instructed Bishops to interview all their priests on certain questions and submit the responses to Rome to be used as topic for the next Bishops' Synod in Rome. It was an attempt on the Pope's part to feel the spiritual pulse of the priests of the Catholic Church. But many Bishops failed to answer the questionnaire.

And now, still aiming at the same goal the Pope is calling for another 'Year of Faith' from October 2012 to November 2013.

This seems to be a desperate call to all

Catholics to enter the Church through Faith by putting into practice in their lives the four Moral Virtues.

TRINITY SUNDAY

After the fall of man, God in his love for man and in His goodness devised a plan for his salvation. The plan was to be executed by God Himself. He had to because He, alone, can save man from where man fell and raise him up again to his previous supernatural level.

But there are three Persons in God. Though the three Persons act together we, humans would be confused if we try to understand how God acts. So theologians tend to attribute to the three different Persons in God certain specific acts. But keep in mind that the three Persons in God act in unity as one.

So we attribute the first step in man's plan of salvation to God the Father. This consists in the life of repentance which He taught us in the Old Testament ending in the preaching of John the Baptist. This way of life is easy due to the spiritual state of man who would only understand things in the natural level. So all the teachings in the Old Testament are in the natural level. And

this is found in the 10 commandments given by God to Moses on Mt. Sinai.

Holy Mother the Church teaches us this first step in the Plan of Salvation during Advent.

But the lesson on Repentance was not completed in the Old Testament. The teaching overlaps with the coming of God the Son in the person of Jesus Christ who completed teaching the life of repentance in the New Testament. Holy Mother the Church teaches us this during Lent. And Christ continues to teach us the next steps which are Faith, Hope and the beginnings of Charity from Holy Week (Lent) through Easter up to the Ascension. And Holy Mother the Church teaches us these steps in the Plan of Salvation during Lent, Holy Week, Easter up to the Ascension. With Ascension the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity teaches us the beginnings of Charity but did not complete it.

The perfection of Charity that will make us worthy to attain eternal life was taught to us by the Holy Spirit on Pentecost and is going to be perfected up to the end of the world. This is taught to us by Holy Mother the Church from Pentecost up to Christ the King, the end of the Liturgical year.

Having taught us the teachings of

God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit we celebrate the feast of the Blessed Trinity that summarizes what we have learned so far in the Liturgy of the Mass.

WHO TEACHES THE CATHOLIC FAITH.

We have seen how God had taught us the Plan of Salvation. By attribution we saw how God the Father taught us the Old Testament commands, how God the Son taught us the New Testament commands and how the Holy Spirit taught us the post-New Testament commands.

To know God the Father we must know God the Father's commands and how to obey them as taught in the Old Testament. To know Jesus Christ we must know God the Son's commands and how to obey them as taught in the New Testament. To know the Holy Spirit we must know the Spirit's commands as given to us after Pentecost.

The commands of God the Father in the Old Testament can be learned in a natural way. So all men are obliged to know and obey them. To know what the commands are and how to obey them all

we need is our minds. We do not need books or teachers to know these commands. In fact they are written in the hearts of man and man just has to listen to his own heart.

But the teachings of God the Son in the New Testament and the teachings of the Holy Spirit after Pentecost cannot be learned in a natural way. No amount of studying or research can make man know these commands. They cannot be taught by men. Only Christ can teach His commands thus revealing Himself to us and only the Holy Spirit can teach us his commands thus revealing himself to us. Unless we receive supernatural grace we cannot know the commands of Christ and the Spirit. Thus we cannot know them and we cannot love them... And as a consequence we cannot have eternal life.

HOW MUST WE LOVE GOD?

If God's first act of love for man consists in knowing that he has a soul, man's first act of love for God is to think like God and know that he has a soul and never to forget that.

And if God's love for man consists in

Him desiring man to be happy, then man should desire the same thing... to be happy. That makes man not only one mind with God but also one heart with God.

And if God's love for man consists in His desiring man to be good then man should also desire to be good not for any reason but because that is God's will.

And if God's love for man consists in teaching man what are His commands and how he should obey them then man being one mind with God should know all His commands and become one heart with God by obeying His commands. If you love Me keep my commands. This is the way we love God in exactly the same way that He loved us.

In a eulogy for his sister:

[St. Gorgonia] was never adorned with gold or... with spiral curls.... Hers were no costly, flowing, diaphanous robes, hers no brilliant and beautiful gems... While familiar with external ornaments of women, she recognized none more precious than her own character and the splendor which lies within.

St. Gregory Nazianzen

