



WINNOWING FAN

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NEW EVANGELIZATION

PART TWENTY FOUR

Disentangling the “New Evangelization” that leads to “Porta Fidei”

The ‘New Evangelization’ proposed by Pope Benedict as early as 2000 AD, which consists in returning to the Apostolic Commission given by Christ and narrated in the last chapters of the Gospel of St. Matthew, is very simple and clear. It is easy for any preacher to use in examining himself if he has Faith or not. And it is easy for the preacher to teach it to the lay men and women for them to examine if they, in turn, have Faith or not. He who has Faith is already saved and he who does not have Faith is already condemned, Scriptures remind

us. So the Holy Father wants all of us, without exemption, to find out if we have Faith. Our eternal salvation depends on this. But because it is difficult to describe and define Faith everybody thinks they have Faith just because they are baptized, confirmed, ordained or consecrated bishops. There are ways by which we can have Faith. But there are many more ways of losing Faith. The most common reason why souls do not have Faith is because they never made the Act of Faith.

Pope Benedict had already reminded us last March that we should concentrate on ‘conversion.’ And the International Theological Commission that had been raised to Pontifical status has made a rejoinder after the Bishop's Synod that

‘conversion’ should be the central preoccupation of the ‘New Evangelization’ that leads to ‘Porta Fidei.’ Conversion is the preparation that leads to Faith. If someone asks “how do you acquire Faith?” The answer is: “Undergo conversion.” The dynamics of conversion is the dynamics of Faith. Let us once more describe the Act of Faith.

In the Act of Faith, the memory is focused on its learned knowledge about God as learned from Divine Revelation. Secondly, the intellect should be masticating and judging the knowledge it has in the memory. This is done with the help of the Fathers of the Church who have given the Church explanations of truths in Divine Revelation. And the intellect must assent to the knowledge it got and judged from the memory. Thirdly, the intellect must convince the free will that the knowledge it has judged and assented to which were taken from the memory is good, thus convincing the free will to consent.

When the free will consents to the above process, then and only then will God grant the soul the theological virtue of Faith. And suddenly the memory, intellect and free will rise up to the level of supernatural operations. Faith raises all our actions into the supernatural and, therefore, meritorious level.

Now, let us further describe the Act of Faith using the Myself - God schema. So there is the Myself.... and I go inside myself. My mind goes into the functioning and contents of my mind. And my mind goes into the functioning

and contents of my free will. When I enter into Myself, particularly into my mind and free will, I encounter the image and likeness of God within myself. Thus in entering myself I become conscious of God whose image within myself I have encountered. Now there is Myself face to face with God. But as I enter into my mind I see my past, my present and my future.....and I see God face to face. So I am forced to make a judgment of my past, present and future before God. That is the portion of the mind. Now let us go to the free will.

As my mind is faced with my past, present and future before God, I have to decide which of my past, present and future I consider good and I can continue; and I must decide which of my past, present and future I consider as bad and, therefore, I must stop. When I have decided on these my mind must assent to the process and then try to convince the free will to give its consent. When the free will gives its consent, then God gives my soul the gift of Faith. I begin my life in the supernatural level in a manner pleasing to God.

We have described the Act of Faith as it is actually being made, that is the memory filled with the truths about God, the intellect trying to understand the contents of the memory and assenting to its contents which by now is in the intellect. And there is the free will that is consenting to the above processes. But the memory cannot do the above if it is filled with worldly memories. The worldly memories will

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St. Teresa of Avila

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be preventing the memory in doing its part in the Act of Faith. If this happens the intellect will not be able to judge on the contents of the memory and thus be unable to give its assent to its judgment. If this happens then the free will will not be able to consent to the judgments of the intellect. So the soul continues to be Faithless.

This is exactly what will happen when one is in the world. With all the stimulation that will bombard the senses the three faculties of memory, intellect and free will will not be able to perform its part in the Act of Faith. So what do we do? St. Augustine suggested the old monastic practice of *'fuga mundo.'* It will not completely solve the problem but it will be a very big help in forming the Act of Faith. Pope Benedict, also, gave this suggestion in an address in St. Paul outside the Walls.

It is unfortunate that in all the topics taken during the Bishop's Synod to discuss the 'New Evangelization' that leads to 'Porta Fidei' there is NO description of an Act of Faith when that should be the central point in the 'Year of Faith.'

WHY HAPPINESS ELUDES ALL MEN

God created man to be happy here on earth and in the next life in heaven. And God implanted this desire in the hearts of all men. But

the hearts of men must be directed by the intellect, for ordinarily the heart of man, being a blind faculty, follows the dictates of the intellect.

Happiness is the goal of man's heart. But he cannot attain this immediately. There are many steps man must take to attain happiness. And God in His goodness dictates to man the many steps he must take to attain happiness, because only God knows the way leading to that goal. If man follows God's instructions he is certain to attain happiness both here on earth and in the life after.

However, more often than not, the mind of man is misinformed, misdirected or just guided erroneously to this common goal known by all men. This occurs when he refuses the guidance of the First Cause who wants him to attain happiness. St. Thomas describes God as the *per se* guide; while the many instruments that lead to the final goal is described as *'per accidens.'* This *'per accidens'* is constantly in danger of being the wrong means to the final goal of happiness. There is where all the errors occur. And these errors are the causes for all the misery of mankind.

Misery is when man makes one of these *'per accidens'* as his final goal of happiness when it should only be a means to the goal. Or when one

makes a mistake about what is the *'per accidens'* that lead to the goal.

God gave man an intellect with the object of aiming at truth. And by nature man will never reject the truth unless he erroneously thinks that a certain thing is the truth. God gave man a heart with the object of aiming at happiness. And by nature man will never reject happiness. A miserable man is one who contrary to God's will had committed too many mistakes in his mind and heart.

SERMON *in a sentence*

Now sinners do not cease to be men, for sin does not destroy nature. Therefore we ought to love sinners out of charity.

Peace is the *work of justice* indirectly, in so far as justice removes the obstacles to peace: but it is the work of charity directly, since charity, according to its very nature, causes peace. For love is a unitive force.

If any man loves not his neighbor, neither does he love God.

Of all the virtues which relate to our neighbor, mercy is the greatest, even as its act surpasses all others.... The sum total of the Christian religion consists in mercy, as regards external works.

The reproof of the sinner, as to the exercise of the act of reproving, seems to imply the severity of justice, but, as to the intention of the reprover, who wishes to free a man from the evil of sin, it is an act of mercy and loving kindness. . . . *"Better are the wounds of a friend, than the deceitful kisses of an enemy."*

Spiritual almsdeeds hold the first place. . . . The spirit is more excellent than the body, wherefore, even as a man in looking at himself, ought to look to his soul more than to his body, so ought he in looking after his neighbor, whom he ought to love as himself.

We are bound to give alms of our surplus, as also to give alms to one whose need is extreme.

The object both of charity and of envy is our neighbor's good, but by contrary movements, since charity rejoices in our neighbor's good, while envy grieves over it.

In saving another, salvation is gained for ourselves also.

St. Thomas Aquinas

