



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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THE NEED FOR FAITH

We have seen the probable defect why the Catholic Church is faced with a crisis of Faith. The Holy Father, as Cardinal, described this in his Ratzinger Report. He stated that the cause of the crisis was restlessness in the priesthood. If we look at this vice from St. John Cassian, restlessness is one of the worst vices that presuppose the presence of more than 5 vices, the common sources of sin. A priest who is restless would have so many sins that he cannot possibly have sanctifying grace and he cannot have the three theological virtues. So he would definitely will not have faith. As such he would not have the infused knowledge of the Doctrines of the Catholic Church. He would not even know that Christ is the Son of the Living God. He would not be a contemplative.

Faith is needed to be able to know the teachings of the Catholic Church. Faith is needed to know the teachings of the New Testament because knowledge of the New Testament is infused knowledge, it must be taught by the Father in Heaven. To have Faith is to be a contemplative. The Holy Father had been emphasizing that in the "New Evangelization" the evangelizer must be a contemplative and he should raise his listeners to the Contemplative state so they in turn can be taught by the Father in Heaven the New Testament truths.

The Holy Father had expressed that the training of priests in the seminaries has two defects, the first is the manner of teaching is wrong and the topics taught are confused. And he corrected both errors in his "New Evangelization." He said: you

don't teach seminarians the truths of the Catholic Church. This is infused by God. They cannot learn these truths from flesh and blood. Seminarians are taught how to progress from meditation to contemplation. That is both the method and contents in the training of seminarians. That is the "New Evangelization." All truths of the New Testament are taught by the Father in Heaven. All the truths of the Catholic Church are infused, they come together with the theological virtue of Faith.

And Faith is given by God to those who seriously meditate on the Truths of Divine Revelation. So in the seminary, candidates are taught and disciplined to meditate on Divine Revelation. And the monastic setting is the best ambiance in accomplishing and attaining Faith. That was the primary reason monastic communities were founded. They were meant for lay people who wished to seriously work for the salvation of their souls. And the way was to read, study and meditate on Divine Revelation seriously. If God in His mercy sees the efforts of the seminarian and sees him worthy then he will receive the theological virtue of Faith and together with this virtue he will receive the infused knowledge and wisdom that is called the Catholic Faith.

TEACHING CHILDREN THE GOLDEN RULE.

Teaching children the Golden Rule is the best way of teaching them morality because morality is interiorized. So it rules them and they do not forget what they have learned. It is more difficult to teach grown ups the Golden Rule because they tend to rationalize and insist in what they want, violating the Golden Rule.

It is easy to obey the Golden Rule because God had written it into the hearts of man. All men know it and being natural, all men can obey it. The Old Testament is all in the natural level and describes the Golden Rule in detail. By themselves, both adults and children can easily moralize reasoning from the basis of the Golden Rule. More often than not, their conclusion is morally sound and in accordance to God's commands.

Children, by nature, know the Golden rule. And in their innocence they can easily make common sense conclusions from it. This is the reason why children are a sense of embarrassment to grown ups....in that they can easily detect the immoralities of grown ups.



FIRST STEP: as shown IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES.

Christ taught us how to go to heaven using words and examples. He, first, would tell what we must do; as He did in His Apostolic Commission. Then He would demonstrate how to do it through His actions. So we have words and demonstrations.

How did Christ show us how to become a disciple of God? By living 30 years a hidden life. St. John the Baptist imitated Christ by living in the desert. And the first Apostles who were disciples of St. John did it that way, too: Maybe not as long as 30 years but long enough to accomplish the same goal, i.e. to become a disciple of the God of creation.

Note that after His 30 years of hidden life, Christ was baptized by St. John in the river Jordan. The efficacy of that baptism was based on the perfection of Christ's being a disciple of God and the perfection of His obedience to the commands of His Father which He was demonstrating for our instruction.

HOW CAN WE DESCRIBE THIS 'BEING A DISCIPLE?'

This first step is often described as the Life of Conversion. It is more commonly called, 'the life of repentance.' It is the natural good life; very good but not enough to bring us to heaven. St. John the Baptist called this way of life the 'baptism of water.' And he often repeated the fact that this cannot forgive our sins. And he pointed to Christ who would introduce the true forgiveness of sin with a new kind of baptism.

This 'being a disciple' is essential for the effective receiving of the Sacrament of Baptism. And this 'being a disciple,' must be done before Baptism. If, however, this is not done before baptism, it must, at least, be done immediately after baptism. Otherwise, the whole process of evangelization will not work; we cannot be saved.

The common error among many Catholics is the omission of the first step, done either before or after baptism. Almost everybody, from the Pope down to the youngest baby was baptized without being a disciple either before or after baptism. The consequence is that most Catholics had not really entered the Catholic Church.

MAKING DISCIPLES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

To make all nations disciples of God consists in teaching all the commandments of God the Father as enumerated in the Old Testament. The Fathers of the Old Testament accomplished this by living in the desert. When God wanted to make disciples out of the Chosen people who were slaves in Egypt, He brought them out of Egypt and brought them to the desert. St. John the Baptist in becoming a disciple had to stay in the desert all his life.

How can we become a disciple in the New Testament? By living the monastic life. The monastic life is none other than living the first step of evangelization. It can be lived anywhere. It can easily be put into practice in the privacy of one's home. But the very essence of monasticism is that those wanting to become disciples put themselves under a superior who will guide them towards their goal of reaching Faith.

At the beginning of Christianity, all those who wanted to become Christians had to undergo a period of training. And this training was done

in monasteries. The monastic life is the first step of evangelization. In fact, Pope Benedict described the 'new' evangelization as the 'new' monasticism.

Monasticism was for lay people. And they were usually ruled by lay people. St. Benedict, who was the patriarch of monks was a layman.

BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME.....

The second step of evangelization is to baptize those that have become disciples. Isn't baptism that which makes us disciples of God? It seems so. But no. We must first make all nations disciples of God and, afterwards baptize them to prepare them to become disciples of Christ. So you see, they must first become disciples of God the Father before they can become disciples of Jesus Christ.

Baptism makes them disciples of Christ but only after they have first become disciples of God the Father; otherwise baptism would have very little spiritual benefit, St. Thomas of Aquinas states.

