



WINNOWING FAN

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NEW EVANGELIZATION

PART TWENTY SIX

Where is the Catholic Church?

St. Thomas Aquinas reminded us of the importance of having the final goal in mind before we begin a journey. On the 'New Evangelization' Pope Benedict was very clear in his schema on what is our proximate goal and what is our final goal. The proximate goal of Evangelization is Faith or entrance into the Kingdom of God (or the Catholic Church) while our final or ultimate goal is Eternal Life.

In this Year of Faith, the Pope wants us all to concentrate on our proximate goal - Faithor entrance into the Catholic Church. Where is the Catholic Church and how does she look like?

The Holy Father had already expressed many times the problem of the Catholic Church today. In his popular book 'Ratzinger Report' he described it as 'a crisis of Faith.' This does not consist in the loss of Faith but in the total inability of most souls to make the 'Act of Faith'. We have described the 'Act of Faith' in a previous post and we saw that it truly is impossible for many to make the 'Act of Faith' though we had postponed giving the reasons why.

Basing it on the reasons already hinted by Pope Benedict and further elaborated by theologians like Fr. Pinckners, the cause of this universal inability to make an 'Act of Faith' is due to an error in teaching Catholic doctrine in

seminaries that probably happened as early as the 16th century. Its domino effect through the centuries up to the present is devastating to the Catholic Church. Cardinal Ratzinger described it as 'wrong method and wrong contents' in Evangelization. That is like saying: everything went wrong.

This is how it happened. There are two levels of knowledge available to men; natural and supernatural. Natural knowledge is what man can ordinarily learn and what man can ordinarily teach. Supernatural knowledge is what man cannot ordinarily learn and what man cannot ordinarily teach to men. The latter can only be taught by God and it comes along with the grace that God gives man. All the teachings of the Catholic Church are supernatural knowledge.....though it is built on natural knowledge.

How can natural man learn supernatural knowledge? By ASCENDING the steps beginning from natural knowledge and going up to supernatural knowledge. This process of ASCENDING from the natural to the supernatural is called CONVERSION. And this process of conversion is taught to men through 'evangelization.' 'Conversion' and 'Evangelization' is what Jesus Christ commanded in His Apostolic Commission when He said: "Go to all nations, Baptizing them....and teaching them all that I have commanded and how to obey them." 'Conversion' and 'Evangelization' is WHAT to "teach all." Notice that WHAT to 'teach all' are commandments and NOT doctrines. We learned the same thing when the young rich man went to Christ and wanted to have eternal life. Christ said: "Go home, sell all your things and give it to the

poor." Notice again that Christ did not give him doctrines. Christ gave him 'commandments.' The grievous error in seminary courses from the 16th century up to the present is that they are not teaching 'how to ascend from the natural to the supernatural.' In effect they are not teaching conversion of life. They are not evangelizing the seminarians according to the teaching of Christ as shown in the Apostolic Commission and in the advice given to the young rich man.

So what happened to those studying for the priesthood from that time up to now? St. Augustine says that Scriptures has two levels of interpretation. Scriptures has words with dictionary meanings like if I say 'This is a word,' every human can understand that in the natural level. But if Scriptures says: 'This is the WORD,' those words still have a dictionary meaning BUT it also has a deep, hidden, supernatural meaning, i.e. that this is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Ordinarily those in the natural level can understand the dictionary meaning of the words of Scriptures. But only those in the supernatural level, those with Faith, can understand the deeper, hidden and supernatural meaning of Scriptures.

Seminarians in seminaries, because they were not taught how to ASCEND from the natural to the supernatural, learned only the dictionary meaning of the words of Scriptures but did not learn the deeper, hidden and supernatural meaning of the teachings of the Catholic Church as found in Scriptures. Remember that they learned the meaning of the words of the Doctrines but not the meaning of the Doctrines. In short, they learned Scriptures like Protestants. Having failed to ASCEND they failed to make the Act

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St. Teresa of Avila

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of Faith. Imagine the domino effect that would have from the 16th century up to the present. We can almost conclude that no graduate from those seminaries who would later become priests and bishops, and no future pupil of those priests would have Faith. All the problems of the past Popes was not the 'loss of Faith' but that many priests never even made the 'Act of Faith.' This was evident from the Pontificate of Pope Pius IX up to the present. And Pope Paul VI in an Advent homily described this situation as 'total ignorance of Christ.' And that precisely is how Pope Benedict is describing the present state of the Church. The consequence is that the world has lost contact with the face of the Catholic Church. Of course she is still in the world but many bishops and priests, do not know her and could not show her in their lives to the world. The world could not find the Catholic Church anywhere.

Unable to rise from the natural to the supernatural level (which is the level of Faith) some priests and Bishops showed ignorance of supernatural doctrines of Scriptures. And since the documents of an Ecumenical Council are also in the supernatural level because it is inspired by the Holy Spirit, they continued to know the Dictionary meaning of the documents but not the deep, hidden and supernatural interpretation of the same documents. Some bishops and priests, impatient to wait for the Holy Spirit to interpret Vatican II, gave merely the natural, dictionary interpretations of the documents of Vatican II thus establishing a 'new' man-made Catholic Church. All of the books written immediately after Vatican II are of this kind. The Holy Father had been condemning this tendency in many of his exhortations but

it had persisted up to the concluded Bishop's Synod and its tentacles can be found in the 58 proposals of the Synod. Theologian-Bishops had been preaching this new man-made Catholic Church both during the Synod and now in their dioceses and even dared to describe it as the goal of the 'New Evangelization' of Pope Benedict. Fortunately, the CDF had recently declared this erroneous interpretation of Vatican II as 'HERETICAL.' Every description of this church shows it is man-made. This tendency was rampant even during the Council's discussions especially between the Germans and the French fathers where the then Bishop Ratzinger took a middle ground. Seeing how the document on 'ecclesiology' had a difficult time being formed the Pope decided to clarify today the image of the Catholic Church.....the proximate goal of evangelization.

To understand the image - picture of the Catholic Church painted by Pope Benedict we must know why he mentions St. Augustine, St. Bonaventure, Blessed John Cardinal Newman.....and surprisingly St. Thomas of Aquinas. Let us leave for a while the important topics of the 'ACT of Faith', the elements of conversion and the necessity for the evangelizer to be a contemplative. We will return to them shortly. In the last posts we discussed the proximate goal of the 'New Evangelization,' which is entrance into the Catholic Church, and we began discussing how the Catholic Church looks TODAY.

One of the papal audiences was held in St. Peter's square and not in the Pope Paul VI auditorium where it was usually held. And Pope Benedict XVI said it was because he wanted to point to two statues on top of Bernini's collonades. These are

the statues of St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas of Aquinas. We saw that Pope Benedict quoted these two saints in describing the Catholic Church today. St. Bonaventure described her as an 'ecclesia contemplativa' (from St. Bonaventure's 'Theology of History') while St. Thomas described her as a Church that has perfected the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity and the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (from St. Thomas' commentary on the Gospel of St. John). And we briefly expanded those descriptions. The two saints described the Catholic Church not during their times but TODAY in exactly the same way but in two different angles.

Now let us add a third description of the Catholic Church using Pope John Paul II's words. Pope John Paul II had earlier described the face of the Catholic Church as 'Marian' as he was highly influenced by St. Grignon de Montfort in his youth. Then later declared Our Lady of Guadalupe as the patroness of the 'New Evangelization' together with St. Therese of Lisieux. Why did he choose these two? First, Our Lady of Guadalupe is a representation of the Woman of the Apocalypse which is the Catholic Church. Now notice where she was at first. She was in the WORLD where she could lower her nets and get both the bad and good fishes. Now see where she was transferred. God gave her two wings and brought her to the desert where He had prepared a 'special place for her' where only good fishes can be caught. Let us stop there for a moment and note that the Catholic Church was once upon a time in the world getting both good and bad fishes. Then God transferred her to a 'special place' where she could harvest only good fishes. And this is in the desert.

This coincides with the commentary of St. Thomas of Aquinas on the Gospel of John. The fact that the Woman flew with two wings given by God to the desert coincides with St. Bonaventure's comment on the 'ecclesia contemplativa' which he described. Note, also, that the Apocalypse is written by St. John and he was only continuing his unfinished fourth Gospel. Here we have St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas of Aquinas and the imagery of Our Lady of Guadalupe as portrayed in the Apocalypse describing the Catholic Church of today.

Since the Woman in the Apocalypse, a figure of the Catholic Church, was transferred to another place 'out of the world,' there are two things we must learn; first how does that Church look today in that 'special place prepared by God' and where is 'that place?' And secondly; what is the 'new way' that leads to her 'new' location.

It is the same identical Catholic Church. But She has a 'new' look...She has virtues in their perfection and personified by Mary. She is NOW in a 'new' place specially prepared by God. And there is a 'new' way of going to her shown by the two 'giant wings' given to Her by God to transport her to the new place.....these make up the 'New Evangelization' that Pope Benedict is teaching us. It is indeed 'NEW.' If the Bishop's Synod deputized to teach the whole Catholic world, does not adjust their 58 proposals according to the Pope's 'New Evangelization', we might end up entering a man-made Catholic Church.

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