



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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LAST SERIES

Editor:

We are presenting for the last time the whole plan of salvation as explained in the evangelization of Christ described in the last chapter of St. Matthew often described as the 'Apostolic commission.' The words are Christ's. The interpretation is also Christ's as He explained it to His Apostles. This was, in turn, explained by the Apostles to the first Christian communities. But the interpretation was not written down by the Gospel writers for obvious reasons; like they had no time, they did not have enough writing papers, not enough ink, etc. Fortunately some holy bishop successors of the Apostles thought of writing it down while the first communities still remembered them. And these instructions, which St. John the Evangelist described as so numerous that if it were written down would

occupy all the libraries of the world, were written down eventually by these holy bishops who saw the importance of these documents. These are the so-called 'Fathers of the Church,' commonly referred to as the 'Tradition of the Catholic Church.'

While all the writings in these newsletters are from the Fathers of the Church, our main sources are St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Alphonsus Liguori, two saints whose writings are purely quotations from the Fathers of the Church. Between the two saints we have quoted mostly the copious writings of St. Thomas Aquinas who quoted the most Fathers of the Church in practically all his works, like in his Commentary on the Gospels and Epistles, Contra Gentiles, Quodlibet, etc.

It is a teaching of the Catholic Church that the sources of Divine Revelation are Scriptures and Tradition, both of which are our main sources for the articles here. We have not ventured into any source outside these two sources.

FIRST STAGE: The three elements of repentance.

The three elements of repentance presented for our instruction on Ash Wednesday are; prayer, fasting and good works.

The life of repentance is essentially recalling our sins, asking forgiveness for our sins, making a purpose of amendment not to sin again and restitution for past sins. We cannot accomplish these four things without help from God. And so we have to accompany our whole life of repentance with prayer so God can help us accomplish all the above.

For our prayers to be pleasing to God we must accompany it with fasting. Fasting is the giving up of three things; the giving up of sinful things, the giving up of indifferent things and the giving up of good things.

Evidently we must give up sinful things like the sins we have just committed. To avoid future sins we train ourselves by giving up

indifferent things. Since indulgence in indifferent things can still be sinful, says St. Augustine, then we must give up good things. The giving up of good things is what will help us give up our sins. It is like saying; if we give up all our possessions to our neighbours we will surely not steal from them.

What, then, does God look upon with pleasure and delight? It is the man who is fighting for Him against riches, against the world, hell, and himself, the man who is cheerfully carrying his cross.

St. Louis Marie de Montfort

FIRST ELEMENT OF REPENTANCE is PRAYER.

We cannot pray the way we want. We must pray the way God wants; that's why the Apostles went to Christ and said; 'Lord, teach us to pray.' In prayer we talk to God and we must find out the protocol on how to talk to God. We do not talk to presidents the way we talk to a taxi driver. We do not talk to God the way we talk to presidents.

Since talking to God in prayer is talking to someone over and above our nature we must know the protocol to be observed.

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The *Winnowing Fan* hopes "...to do what little it could to solve the evils that beset the Church."

St. Teresa of Avila

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THE FOUR VISIBLE SIGNS OF THE TRUE CHURCH.

God, knowing that there will be many false churches that will confuse men saw to it that His true Church will have four visible signs that all men can know. This will give all men the knowledge on how to choose the true Church from the false ones. All the false churches, St. Paul wrote, are from the devil. So we really cannot afford to commit a mistake.

However, knowing those four visible signs does not mean man will choose the true Church. Man can choose to be stupid and choose the wrong church. And that is more often the case because of man's fallen nature. With his fallen nature, man can know the true Church and yet reject the true Church and choose the wrong church. So, all the more should we be careful.

Of course, the more we know about the true Church, the more we shall choose the true Church. The less we know the greater is the probability that we shall choose the wrong church.

It is ours to offer what we can, His to supply what we cannot.

St. Jerome

TO KNOW THE FOUR VISIBLE SIGNS.....is it easy?

Yes, it is easy. Except that we have to be knowledgeable and careful in choosing the signs.

We have to know the correct definition of the four words: One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. We cannot just define these words the way we want or the way the dictionary defines them. We must know what Divine Revelation means by those four words.

But even Divine Revelation, whose author is God, had defined those words in a way that can be easily understood by all. It needs a little knowledge of Philosophy but that kind of Philosophy that is ordinarily called Common Sense. This common sense is the Philosophy of the common man that is not blinded by so much sins. It will be sufficient to understand many Catholic concepts that are in the borderline between the natural and the supernatural.

ONE

Remember that we are trying to find out if we have Faith or not. Since we cannot know if we have Faith by knowing what is Faith because it is a supernatural virtue, God gave us an easier way to know if we have Faith by means of visible and natural signs called the four visible signs of the true Church.

Though these signs are merely natural, they are, nevertheless, signifying supernatural realities. The visible signs are natural signs but they refer to supernatural realities. Let us take the first visible sign; ONE. The true Church of Christ is ONE. Meaning that all the members are one in mind in assenting to all the teachings of Christ and one heart in consenting to those same truths.

Note that we are referring to the contents of the mind and the heart which are the spiritual faculties of the soul and, therefore, do not fall in the natural level.

So what is the visible sign? The ONENESS of the contents of the mind and heart; that makes the truths identical in all the members of the Church. The members of the Church do not believe in any truths that are

different from the beliefs of the other members. But it does not describe what those truths are. Those truths will fall under the sign APOSTOLIC.

SERMON *in a sentence*

Our Passover is celebrated when we leave the things of the earth, and hasten to the things of heaven.

Covetousness is said to be idolatry on account of a certain likeness of bondage, because both the covetous and the idolater serve the creature rather than the Creator.... Unbelief corrupts the intellect whereas covetousness corrupts the affections.

The rich man is reproved for deeming external things to belong to him principally, as though he had not received them from another, namely from God.

A man's good name takes precedence of wealth because it is more akin to spiritual goods, wherefore it is written (Prov 22:1): *A good name is better than great riches.*

St. Thomas Aquinas



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