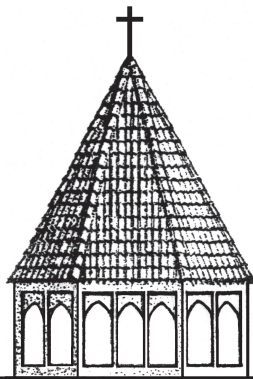


# WINNOWING FAN

The Spiritual Life according to the Fathers and Saints of the Catholic Church in preparation for Christ's Second Coming.

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## NEW EVANGELIZATION

PART THREE

The second part of Cardinal Ratzinger's speech on the New Evangelization is a correction of what was lacking in the contents of former Evangelizations. What should be preached? He mentions four general topics that should be taught and the correct order in teaching them. The first is "conversion." The second is "entrance into the Catholic Church. The third is "union with the created soul of the Church, Jesus Christ. Added to the third is "union with the uncreated soul of the Church, the Holy Spirit." And the fourth, is "Life Everlasting."

These are the classical complete and

right order of teaching Catholic doctrines even before Vatican II. We can find these in all books of spirituality like in the books of Garrigou-Lagrange. It makes us wonder how the mistakes came in.

Let us take each topic. The first is conversion, often referred to as Metanoia or popularly described as 'repentance.' When Our Lady appeared at Fatima, she called for 'Repentance' three times. Though we had thousands of Bishops and priests at that time with all the treasures of the writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church the world was not able to repent; thus we

were chastised two times and the third seems to be coming. Was the teaching of the Catholic Church on repentance so unclear that the world was not able to respond to Mary's call? Unfortunately that could only be the reason. Thus the Holy Father is clarifying it.

Let us look first at the concept of sin using St. Augustine's aversion from God and conversion towards the world. Man was created with a mind that has an innate tendency to know God and a free will with an innate desire to love God. When this potency becomes active wherewith the mind begins to try to know God and the will begins to love God ....we have a saint. And since this innate tendency can be activated in childhood, then Pope Benedict was right to declare that children who die without Baptism, precisely because of this God-given innate tendency, are most probably saints in heaven.

Now sin is when a soul, due to lack of faith turns his mind away from the quest of knowing God because his mind is now more interested in the things of the world, like a car.....and when his free will turns away from loving God because it follows the mind and now loves a car. The sin is not in thinking and loving the car but in turning one's mind and free will away from God.

When this happens the soul begins to

walk away from God, just like the Prodigal Son. When the soul stops sinning or walking away from God, he stops dead on his track but he does not necessarily return back to God. Most Catholics believe that when they go to confession and receive absolution they have necessarily returned to God after going away from God. Of course that is possible just like in the case of St. Peter when he denied Christ. But for most of us when we take ten steps away from God by our sins, we stop dead in our tracks but we remain ten steps away from God. We do not know that we have to turn around and begin to retrace our steps back to God, which the Prodigal Son did. This is achieved through the four moral virtues of Prudence, Justice, Temperance and Fortitude, which are not taught in most seminaries and are not taught by priests to the faithful. The absence of the four moral virtues prevents any soul from repenting well and reaching the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity.

In the act of conversion we need to know all our sins as Psalm 50 states. But a soul cannot know his sins as long as he is still committing them. An adulterer cannot know his sin is adultery unless he first stops that sin. A thief will not know he is stealing unless he first stops stealing. And since everyone in the world due to their exposure to sin are constantly committing sin thus

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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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remaining ignorant of their sins, they are unable to repent because they are ignorant of most of the sins that they are still committing. In such a situation repentance becomes impossible....unless we tell the whole world to come to complete stop in committing sins so they can examine their conscience....which is not a bad idea.

Another problem is that confessions are done based on the Old Testament spirituality based on the 10 commandments given to Moses. We are in the New Testament. Confessions must be based on the spirituality of the New Testament Beatitudes.

In the act of conversion most do not follow the complete steps enumerated in Psalm 50 or in the parable of the Prodigal son. The sign that one is unrepentant is when he is still enjoying the world as shown by the prodigal son when he went to a far country to enjoy. This is in accord with the definition St. Augustine gave on conversion towards the world. The first sign of repentance is when suddenly all worldly things become worthless (which is the beginning of aversion from the world and conversion towards God). This step is what enabled the saints to leave all things. Thus St. Peter and Andrew left boats and nets, while James and John left boats, nets and their father. Without

this step no one will be willing to leave anything.

The second step which is the result of the first realization is that the soul begins to see all his sins and is able to label them properly. While before he labelled them as good works, acts of kindness and acts of understanding now, he sees them for what they really are, acts of vices, acts pride and acts of superiority. This is a very unnerving experience for all. A few are brave enough to continue to the third step, most are filled with fear on what is coming and retreat back to the life of unrepentance thinking "Oh, maybe, I don't have to go through this."

The third step is an experience of the real presence of a God demanding atonement. This is the first time that a soul experiences the presence of a God outside of himself. God is not showing mercy but demanding atonement. The Prodigal son wants to go back to his father but he is afraid of what his father will demand. Maybe, I will say do not treat me as your son but as one of your paid servants. That was the lowest position he could think of at that time. If he knew of a lower place he would have asked for it.

The fourth does not sound well to one's ears. But this is what it really is: that the

soul goes into despair because he knows there is nothing he can do to atone to an offended eternal God. Ok, see if that can be said in any nicer way. That is the truth. There is absolutely nothing a creature can do to atone for offending an eternal God. And the Prodigal son knew that and we should realize that.

But that is no reason for despair because we know the mercy of God. We just have to bring our despair to God and let Him show what He had always wanted to show, His mercy. So the Prodigal son walked half of the way towards the father in despair and stops half way because he knows there is nothing he can do to be worthy to go closer. While remaining in despair, that is the time the Father approaches him making up for what the son could not do. And the son remained in great sorrow both for having sinned against the father and not being able to atone for those sins. Ok. Stay there don't celebrate too soon. The conversion is not complete.

Then the father offers the son new robes and a ring. The son had left through his sins (aversion from God) and now he has returned (conversion towards God). Now it is time to celebrate.

Pope Benedict's critique of the former Evangelization is that we are celebrating too soon.

## ***OBEDIENCE SOLVES ALL CONFUSION.***

If you have a question you could not answer, or a problem you cannot solve, or a conflict you cannot resolve or any problem for that matter, the attitude the Psalms tell us to adapt is to wait and pray and be obedient. We should wait and pray for the solution or answer to our question and obey the rule of our way of life. The obedience we practice will make us deserving of the right answer and the waiting and praying is what will enable us to receive the answer.

St Thomas Aquinas used to have many theological questions he wanted clarified in his search for the truth of Christ. He merely waited and prayed and obeyed the rules of his order's way of life and in this way he received all the deep answers to his theological queries. Sometimes God would even send St. John the Evangelist to answer his questions on the Gospel of St. John.

This is even more useful when one is seeking the next step one should take in the spiritual life. Wait and pray and obey the rules of your way of life. And you will receive your answer from God.

So Blessed John Newman states that obedience is the solution to all the perplexities we experience in life. A calm and joyful soul is the fruit of obedience.