



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 THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES AND THE MARKS OF THE CHURCH - II

The theological virtues are supernatural and spiritual. The Marks of the Church are natural and visible. God established the latter by which all men can know the true Church. By these Marks we can distinguish the true Church of Christ from all false churches, the true religion from the false religions. And these marks are the visible signs of the presence of the invisible theological virtues. We can say that the Marks of the Church, namely, One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic....are the visible signs of Faith, Hope and Charity. Both the virtues and the Marks are the guarantees of one's membership within the Catholic Church and assurance of one's salvation.

The Nicene Creed, which we recite every Sunday, after the Homily, enumerates the two major Catholic truths of the Catholic

Church. First, the truth of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. And secondly, the Church in which the Blessed Trinity dwells here on earth.

The first Catholic Truth is the Mystery of the Blessed Trinity. This states that there are three persons in one God; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. And the Creed proceeds to describe briefly each person. The Father is the creator of heaven and earth, etc....Then the only Son, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius, etc....And the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, etc...

Then, we go to the second truth. I believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. We review how a soul is saved within that Church; baptism, forgiveness of sin. We end up with our final goal; the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.

There, we have the truths of Faith wherein Hope and Charity follows. And the Four visible Marks of the Church. Two major truths of the Catholic Church that we must believe.

THE GREAT PANIC.

The four common visible signs by which we can know the Catholic Church are the ones we recite in the Nicene Creed during Sunday Mass. But these four visible signs are really difficult to understand. So very few, including priests and bishops understand these signs. And they cannot use them to find out if anybody, or any parish Church is really Catholic. In fact, so few really understand these signs that the few who understand them do not even know if they are Catholic or not. That is how deep these signs are that really few can apply them to themselves or to others.

When the writings of St. Robert Bellarmine on the Marks of the true Church were translated recently and came out in English, there was a world-wide panic. Because now that it became easier to understand the marks of the true Church of Christ, most Catholics discovered that they were not Catholics. And these included many priests and, even

Jesuits. It was translated only around 2015. Very recently.

All who were complacently Catholic were stunned by the fact that most of them are not Catholics at all. And seriously studying the short treatise one can see that most priests, bishops and cardinals are not Catholics. And since the treatise included chapters on the Pope, the present Pope came under suspicion.

Religious orders and associations both of brothers and nuns came under suspicion. Well known and popular ecclesial communities came under suspicion. There was a worldwide paranoia that the Church had disappeared from the face of the world.

But St. Robert Bellarmine's Notes on the Church is no different from the original four visible signs of the Church recited in the Creed.

Clearly we never understood those four visible signs. And now that St. Robert Bellarmine went into detail and made it easier to understand the signs of the Church we began to see that no one has them.

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And never to despair of God's mercy.

St. Benedict

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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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CHECK ON YOUR SEATBELT.

So the universal call today is 'CHECK YOUR SEATBELT.' Check if you are Catholic or not. Set aside, first, the visible signs we recite in the Nicene Creed during Sunday Mass. Sit down and read St. Bellarmine's treatise 'In controversiis' because these 15 signs, though longer, are easier to use for analysing ourselves, our neighbors, our parish priest, bishops and even our present Pope.

And check things out before it is too late. Because if we or our love ones die without these signs we won't go to heaven. And it takes some time to learn and to have in us these visible signs of true Catholicity. We must check now as soon as possible.

CONFUSING SIGNS OF THE CHURCHES.

All churches are exerting efforts and much propaganda to prove that their church is the true Church. The Protestants are leading in this

propaganda but the pagan religions are not behind.

An ordinary person would be totally confused with all these advertisements in finding out which is the true church. Most probably they would rather give up than continue their quest. And this is what most have done....give up and go with the flow of the wave. And that wave is liberalism....the religion with liberty as its god personified by the United States. It is referred to as the American Dream. Which like all dreams are castles in the air.

Because it is not really a religion, like all religions, it will not satisfy the natural yearning of the soul for the Divine.

Because all religions are proposing their own signs as the credentials of the true religions, which of them are the right ones?

Think. If there is a God and He established a true religion, wouldn't He in His Divine Wisdom know that a lot of fake religions would eventually rise in the world? And if this is so wouldn't He make provisions so that all men can know which the true religion is.

If so we must find out if God spoke; if what He said was written down; and what did He say about the

signs of His true religion. That simple. But the book where all what He said is rather thick. What among those lines can tell us what those signs are.

Some of those signs are present in all religions. What would be the signs that are present only in the true religion?

Now, that could be a long and arduous task and we could end our life not knowing the answers. Fortunately many saints have done this job. And they were all united in what are the visible signs of the true Church. St. Augustine was one of these saints. St. Robert Bellarmine is another saint. And it is his work that I, now, have in front of me and will share with you all.

ST. ROBERT BELLARMINE'S ERA.

St. Robert Bellarmine lived in an age similar to ours....a time filled with heresies. And the populace were totally confused on what was the true religion.

The great difficulty is that all the Protestant sects during that time were similar to the Catholic Church with very little difference.

Many Fathers of the Church had answered many heresies but there were new ones. In general, all heresies are identical; they are disobediences to the commands of Christ as written down in the New Testament and interpreted by the Fathers of the Church. Most of the Fathers of the Church used common sense to refute heresies. But during St. Bellarmine's time some Philosophy was needed to clarify, to defend the Truth and expose heresies. And St. Robert did a good job defending the truths of the Catholic Church and answering major Protestant writers.

He was not the first to defend the Faith but he did it systematically and by drawing his arguments from the works of great Doctors of the Church like St. John Fisher, St. Peter Canisius, etc.

Pagan heresies retained their animism while Protestants retained their 'sola fidei' and 'sola Scriptura.'

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God's precepts are light to the loving, heavy to the fearful.

The Christian is bound to obey the authorities when their power is from God, but not otherwise.

St. Thomas Aquinas

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