



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 SPIRIT OF LENT INTRODUCTION

The growth of the spiritual life may be divided into seven stages corresponding to the seven days of creation and the corresponding days of the week. It, also, corresponds to the gradual growth of a child from babyhood to adulthood within the womb of the mother. This similarity is used to show that the soul grows within the Catholic Church as a baby grows within the mother's womb.

When the baby gradually grows within the womb of the mother, the mother feels certain signs on how old the baby is. In fact, she knows exactly when the baby is ready to be born, around 9 months after conception.

Before the baby is about to be born, the mother feels the pangs of child birth; these are the signs of the child's readiness to be born. Then the breaking of the water sac is the sign

the baby is ready to be born.

The same thing happens in the process of being a mature Catholic. A Catholic does not become a full mature Catholic at baptism. He begins like a baby Catholic, he gradually grows within the Catholic Church after baptism. And then when he reaches the 9-months gestation period, the Church experiences her birth pangs and the child in the womb is born to be a 'child of God,' worthy of eternal life.

The Church celebrates the different stages of man's spiritual growth in the Liturgy of the Mass. The Liturgical seasons gives us the visible signs of the different stages in the spiritual growth of the soul. And the soul must determine if it is growing according to schedule. If the soul is not growing according to schedule, then the soul can be

compared to be undergoing ectopic pregnancy; i.e. the soul is like a foetus that has died in the womb. This is like the soul has spiritually died within the womb of the Church due to the death of the virtues of Charity and Faith.

The Lenten season can tell us whether we are going to be born alive as children of God or we will be born dead.

A PROPHET.

The preacher of the Catholic Faith must be a prophet. What is a prophet? A prophet's role is first, to teach the commands of Christ and secondly, to remind the people of the commands when they forget them.

A prophet must know the commands he must teach. And he must remember all those commands so that he can remind the people.

He must live with the people so he can teach them; and so that he can, also, remind them. If he does not live with the community how can he teach the people all the commands of Christ; and how can he remind the people if they forget those commands.

God's blessing is to give a community a prophet and God's punishment is when He does not

send a prophet to a community, as the Psalms says.

The entire Catholic Church is a prophetic Church. The whole Church must know all the commands of Christ, teach those commands to all men and remind all men of those commands when they forget. Anyone who does that is truly a Catholic. Anyone who does not do that is not a Catholic.



TO REPENT vs TO DO PENANCE.

St. John the Baptist's repentance is often referred to as 'to repent.' The repentance of Jesus is often referred to as 'to do penance.' While John's repentance is often referred to as 'to do penance.' The repentance of Christ is often referred to as the 'fruits of repentance.'

When Christ saw the Pharisees going to John for Baptism He emphasized that they should, also, show fruits of repentance otherwise their repentance is useless.

Here, we can see that the repentance of Jesus Christ in the New Testament contains the 'fruits of repentance' that is necessary for the forgiveness of sins.

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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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CONTINUOUS REPENTANCE

The life of repentance must be lived up to the end of our lives. It is while living the life of repentance that the three theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity are developed. Again, it is while living the life of repentance that the theological virtues are developed.

These three virtues are not intentionally developed. They are infused virtues that God gives to souls while they are continuously living the life of repentance. So the soul must just concentrate on repentance without having to attend to the three virtues. Those virtues will just come as gifts from God.

3 FRUITS OF REPENTANCE.

Repentance has no effect on the soul unless there are fruits of repentance. The 'to do penance' which is the repentance of the New Testament has three fruits.

The first is that the penitent punishes himself for the sin he has committed. He afflicts his body in some way. This is the rationale for the physical punishments practiced by the saints.

Secondly, the penitent should flee away from his sins and the occasion

of sins. Since sins and its occasions are all over the world, it becomes necessary to 'flee away from the world.' Thus the first monasteries were away from the cities.

Thirdly, the penitent must be eager to do good. The penitent should not just do any good that he wants. The list of 'good works' are enumerated in Scriptures. And the proper way of doing these works are clearly delineated in Scriptures.

Unless these three fruits are found in the penitent, he has not yet repented. Therefore his sins are not yet forgiven.

IMPEDIMENTS TO REPENTANCE.

St. Thomas Aquinas enumerates two impediments to repentance. The first is presumptuousness, when one thinks that just because he has a baptismal certificate he is repentant. Just because he is a priest or a bishop he is repentant. Just because he had an audience with the Pope he is repentant. And as Christ said; just because Abraham is your father you think you have no sins.

The above is common among men. The second is rarer; it is despair. This is the thought that God is unforgiving, which is due to doctrinal ignorance.

TWO COMMON REASONS WHY CATHOLICS DO NOT REPENT.

Many Catholics do not take time to repent because they do not believe they will be judged when they die. They do not believe in the article of the catechism about the four last things; death, judgment, heaven and hell. They, also, do not believe the articles of the Apostles Creed that state; 'He will come to judge the living and the dead.'

The problem is seriously the lack of faith on the truths of the Church.

Secondly, they keep on delaying examining their consciences because it is inconvenient.

MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY.

When St. John prepared the way to Christ through his preaching of 'to repent,' making the way straight means to obey the commandments of God as listed in the Old Testament.

If a soul obeys all the commands of God as found in the Old Testament, he will be directed to Christ, the true God and man.

And John who made the way straight to Christ for his disciples, now tells his disciples to go straight

to Christ. John's role is over. He will soon go to his reward, so it was necessary for him to direct his own disciples to Christ. John points to Christ. John's disciples go to Christ and report to John what they heard and saw.

With what they heard and saw in Christ, the disciples of John recognized the Messiah and believed in Him because what they heard and saw was a prophet greater than John.



Not all solicitude about temporal things is forbidden, but that which is superfluous and inordinate... We ask God for them in the sense that they may be granted us in so far as they are expedient for salvation.

We ought to avoid a thoughtless choice.... Submit all choice to Christ as the Judge.

We ought to serve God because He alone has in us the right of possession, as being the true Lord.... To serve God is to reign.

St. Thomas Aquinas

