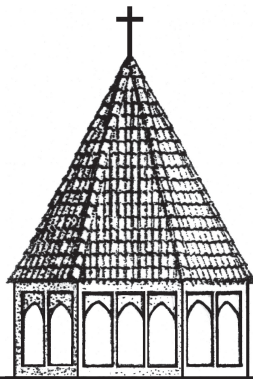


# WINNOWING FAN

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 FIVE

Let us put together the first part of Pope Benedict's schema on the New Evangelization, i.e. the structure and method of Evangelization, referring to the preacher or the priest..... with the first content (i.e. taken from the second part of the schema) i.e. conversion. The preacher must be a converted soul. The correct definition of a converted soul referring to the mind and free will as given by St. Augustine would disqualify most priests.

There is the active life and the contemplative life as represented by Martha and Mary. Most think that these

are two ways of life from which one may choose. So I had companions in the Benedictine Order of monks who left because they wanted to be missionaries. And most Diocesan priests think they belong to the active life and are not destined for the contemplative life. This idea is erroneous. The active life leads to the contemplative life and only upon reaching the contemplative life can a person evangelize. The active life is a life of works of mercy but does not include evangelization, a superior supernatural work. Contemplative life is when a soul is infused with the knowledge of all the teachings of Christ

that enables one to evangelize. Today, even our canonical contemplative orders are not contemplative. Most are active as shown by their activities. Few are truly contemplatives, maybe a few Carthusians, or monks of St. Romuald.

We are also faced with the ridiculous courses on contemplative prayer experience sprouting everywhere mainly run by layman and held for 3 to five days. Contemplation in five days!!! It smells like pure pelagian heresy.

And to add to this requirement that the evangelizer must be contemplative is the fact that he must preach with a community of persons who are themselves equally contemplatives. Isn't one enough? St. Paul says it is not enough and so he always waited for a contemplative companion.

Fulfilling this requirement today is made impossible by the whole worldly environment of relativism. Having lived in this environment for almost 200 years it would be pure luck if we find a handful of contemplatives. Though we had a St. Therese 200 yrs ago whose parents had to transfer to the province to escape the industrialization of their town, and who was even prohibited to read the newspapers; today with the giant supermalls, televisions and computers and cell phones, no one can reach contemplation.

Contemplation is a gift by which a soul receives infused knowledge of the complete teachings of Divine Revelation. This is in effect Faith. And sharing this knowledge of contemplation with others is the necessary fruit, St. Thomas states, and this is Charity. New Evangelization is sharing one's grace received through Faith with others in an act of perfect Charity.

Contemplatives have a knowledge of the complete teachings of Christ. Few priests or even bishops show this quality. Even religious orders and ecclesial communities do not show this complete knowledge. Some may speak well of two or three topics splendidly but they do not show perfect knowledge of complete Catholic doctrines. To lead souls to God which is evangelization needs explanation of the complete teachings of the Catholic Church, a gift of the Holy Spirit.

In the different crises that befell the Church in the past we saw saints raised by God to help the Popes prop up the Church. Today we only see the Popes propping up the Church. I am sure there are saints raised by God hidden somewhere maybe in Pietrelcina or a little town in France or even a Diocese in Switzerland. But how can we find a Padre Pio, a John Vianney or a Francis de Sales? A handful of souls maybe can

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St. Teresa of Avila

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find them and learn how to make an act of Faith. How about the rest? Will there be only a handful who will be saved? Christ said something to that effect but does it have to be that few?

Pope Benedict described the Evangelizer as one who is holy, a contemplative, who has a zeal in his love for God, in whom the theology of grace is of primary importance and who is knowledgeable in Scriptures. He mentioned this in his talk in New York as Cardinal, he repeated it in his talk during the 'Year of the Priest,' he mentioned it in his address to the Pontifical commission of New Evangelization, he mentioned it in his address to the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, he said it in his address on Mission Sunday, also in his address instituting the 'Year of Faith,' and he included it as part of the schema for the Bishop's Synod this year. With the above short phrase the Holy Father said everything, a complete exegesis of the Apostolic Commission given by Christ to His Apostles. Nothing else had to be said.

In short, the Pope is saying that the preacher in the New Evangelization should be a St. Athanasius, or a St. Odo, or a St. Thomas of Aquinas, or at least a St. Francis de Sales or he would settle for a St. Alphonsus Liguori. We cannot find these saints around. Instead each

bishop and priest should ask why they do not qualify.

All those characteristics mentioned above by the Holy Father mean exactly the same thing. A contemplative is one who has a perfect knowledge of Scriptures. While the same would be the best preacher of the Word of God because preaching is the expression of his lively Faith expressed in Charity. A contemplative preacher is the best Evangelizer of the New Evangelization. The New Evangelization is the teaching of the New Commandment of Christ which only Christ can teach and which He teaches only to contemplatives. Someone less than a contemplative cannot do it.

Let us further look on those few descriptions: the preacher must be a contemplative, he must be a contemplative who preaches the fruit of his contemplation. And let us add what the Holy Father wrote: and he must be a missionary disciple (i.e. he must preach in community) emphasizing in all things the primacy of grace. That is asking too much.... but the illness of the Church is terminal, and the Pope is applying the last resort. Blessed John Cardinal Newman, a favorite of the Holy Father had discussed this need of the Church during his time but was rejected by Church men. Newman who was faced by a church in turmoil was already

voicing a remedy for this our times. And the description of the preacher for the New Evangelization, given by the Pope is a quotation from Newman.

Newman lived in a tumultuous time in the history of the Church. He found Catholic Churchmen contradicting him. Well versed in the writings of the Fathers of the Church and in a special way to St. Benedict, upon whom he based his Idea of a University, he saw the importance of having a handful of contemplatives to aid the Church. He even tried it in his Birmingham community. It was pure Benedictine monasticism minus the few aids provided for beginners. Pope Benedict, himself, mentioned this spirituality at the beginning of his pontificate as the only saviour of Europe. This is the Pope's New Evangelization. It was known by the Church for all these centuries but never explained as John Newman did it. Again, it is pure Benedictine monasticism without the appendages and, therefore, will be unrecognizable to most: that is why we have to study in detail what the Holy Father is saying. By now he has said everything about it and is still explaining it further. We should keep in pace with his explanations.

## MIND AND FREE WILL

The teachings of the Catholic Church can be easier understood when we view them from the aspect of the mind and free will. All the acts of a Catholic that will bring him to eternal life are all acts of the mind and the free will. If a Catholic concentrates on these two faculties of the soul he will more easily see the way of salvation.

Faith, which is the first important theological virtue needed for salvation is an act of the mind. And Charity, without which Faith if useless, is an act of the Free will. So Faith without Charity is useless. In fact, Faith without Charity can easily be lost.

Faith teaches us what we must know. Charity gives us the grace to do what we know. The truths we learn from Christ through Faith must be obeyed or put into practice. This is the reason why obedience is of the utmost importance in the Catholic Church. Even Christ said: I came not to do my will but to do the will of my Father in heaven. That is obedience. Thus Christ's life was summarized in these words: He was obedient unto death.

