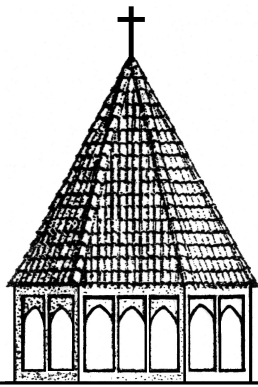


# WINNOWING FAN

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

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## YEAR OF THE PRIEST - Meditation 8 - The Theology of Grace

In inspiring priests to be faithful to their mission the Holy Father mentions the basis for this quest: all is grace. And he mentions St. Paul, St. Augustine (a saint close to his heart) and he mentions St. Thomas of Aquinas a saint he was a little aloft before.

For the candidate to the priesthood to love God and neighbor, which is "Caritas," he needs grace. For him to have the virtue of Hope as explained in "Spes Salvi," he needs grace. And for the seminarian to have Faith, the virtue that brings him inside the Catholic Church, he needs grace with the accompanying "Veritate" enlightened by "Caritas."

For the future candidate to the priesthood to have the Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity he must have the proper disposition in mind and free will to receive these Virtues from God. This proper disposition is also a work of grace from God. Yes, all is grace.

We live in a world that is ignorant of the theology of grace. First: our whole environment, a product of the blossoming of the philosophy of the French Revolution that is entirely Pelagian and Semi-pelagian has indoctrinated the minds of men to reject the concept of grace as unscientific and an obstacle to the progress of men. The candidates for the priesthood are children of three generations of parents who were bombarded with this spirit of secularism

and materialism. We have candidates to the seminaries who have no concept whatsoever of what is Catholic Doctrine, Cardinal Baum once mentioned in a Vocation address. And this ignorance is on the theology of grace. This makes the seminarians ignorant of the role grace plays in the studying of Catholic truths. And as Cardinal Ratzinger mentioned in his "New Evangelization" this defect is found both in the content and method in teaching and studying theology.

Since the correct way of studying Theology leads the student towards happiness and the development of virtue, ignorance of the correct way of studying leads to unhappiness and vices. It is this unhappiness in the service of God (which is unthinkable) and the plunging into a life of vices, that had haunted the priesthood, is the natural consequence of this grave error.

This situation had been described by Cardinal Ratzinger in his "Ratzinger Report." He said that the problem of the priesthood is 'restlessness.' Let us sit down and analyze that statement. Ascetical Theology enumerates 7 vices. Vices prevent us from reaching Faith, Hope and Charity. In short, vices prevent us from being Catholics.

The vices are the sources of sins. From one vice can come numerous sins. When a soul has the first vice, namely gluttony, it becomes easy for him to slide down to the second vice..... lust, etc. etc...If a soul has the fifth vice it means that he has all the other four previous vices. With 5

vices we cannot imagine how many sins can come from these sources. Let's say 50 different sins could come out of those five vices.

'Restlessness' is enumerated among the last vices; 6th or 7th. That means some priests have all the vices and it is difficult to imagine how many sins he is exposed to or is committing already. This easily explains the problem of the priesthood that is even more recently exposed in Ireland. And sadly, the solution is easy. It is difficult to understand why the Church could not easily solve it. It seems the men of the Church are ignorant both of the reason for the crisis and the solution.

But when we say ignorance we simply mean that the mind or intellect does not know what it could easily learn. Everything could be learned from the Theology of Grace, the very foundation of Catholic Theology.

Ignorance of the Theology of grace and therefore the lack of these necessary graces placed the seminarian in the absurd situation where he finds himself in a graceless natural state and trying to learn divine supernatural truths which were too much over and above the capabilities of his natural mind.

But these seminarians frequent the Sacraments! Ignorance of the theology of grace would make them receive the sacraments sacrilegiously. How many times has Pope Benedict reminded us on how to receive Holy Communion worthily. That word "worthily" demands a knowledge of the workings of grace.

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could do solve the evils that beset the Church."  
St. Teresa of Avila

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How many times has the Holy Father mentioned the strange phenomenon of many receiving Holy Communion and few going to confession. This shows ignorance of the importance of grace.

Indeed, if we can restore the way seminarians are trained as they used to train them during the times of the Fathers of the Church we would not need a Year of the Priest.

### YEAR OF THE PRIEST - Meditation 9 - "Curiositas" vs "Studiositas"

Holy Mother the Church teaches her children the way of salvation through the Liturgy. The Liturgical calendar is the vehicle wherein the Catholic truths are spread out in the right order and in its completeness during the Sunday Masses. It is amazing to see the beauty of the arrangement of the truths and how the truths gradually developed from the first Sunday of Advent up to the feast of Christ the King. It is enough to study one cycle 'to believe.'

On the third and fourth Sundays in ordinary time (cycle C) we began the Gospel of St. Luke. Prior to these Sundays was Advent and Christmas season where we were taught how to live the life of Repentance according to the Old Testament. On the third and fourth Sundays in ordinary time we are given a preview on how to live the life of Repentance according to the New Testament. This is in preparation for the

season of Lent where the Liturgy completes the teaching on Repentance (which Our Lady complained in Fatima that the world was no doing.) From Holy Week to Easter Holy Mother the Church begins teaching us how to live the life of Faith and Hope. And on Pentecost she describes to us the virtue of Charity. Faith, Hope and Charity make up the spirituality of the New Testament

I just mentioned the third Sunday in ordinary time because it is on this Sunday that before we seriously study Repentance in the New Testament we are taught how to study the Gospel messages of the next following Sundays leading to Lent. Studying how to live a life of Faith, Hope and Charity is no easy task and is very much different from studying nuclear physics. The Gospel is on how to study.

St. Luke, in fact, begins his Gospel by teaching us how to study, showing us how the Israelites in the synagogue had wrongly studied Scriptures and so ended up rejecting Christ. While Scriptures narrate several incidences wherein after an encounter with Christ they followed Him.

There are two ways of acquiring knowledge. One is when we study with the end of merely acquiring that knowledge, like studying astronomy. We just want to know what is going on up there. The other kind of knowledge is when we learn something in order to be able to do a good work like when we study medicine. We study not just to

know about medicine but to be able to do good by curing others. The latter is the way we study Scriptures.

In studying Theology, going on a retreat, listening to a Homily, reading a book or attending Congresses on the Year of the Priest - we don't just want to get information but to be able to do some good like the salvation of our soul or the souls of other people which we often times think we are doing but closer examination shows we are not.

The first kind of knowledge is commonly referred to as "curiositas" and the second is called "studiositas."

"Curiositas" is listed by Tomas a Kempis as the 'forbidden knowledge' that is an obstacle to the attainment of Faith and holiness. And it falls under the category of 'vices.' And vices are such that the longer you stay with them the faster you deteriorate in the spiritual life. If the seminarian studies his theology with 'curiositas' he deteriorates spiritually everyday. How bad can he deteriorate in a six year course staggers the mind.

On the other hand "studiositas" is a virtue and the longer you resort to it, not only do you develop knowledge, understanding and wisdom of Catholic truths, but you develop great self-control over the passions, emotions and concupiscence.

In "curiositas" the seminarian studies things unnecessary for salvation; like studying how to socialize or improve the economic condition of people, how to start a new business, holding retreats in

beaches, psychological techniques, learning things from television, surfing the internet, wanting to pass the final exam, to learn the arts and to become a bishop or cardinal. To make these the end of one's study is "curiositas."

"Studiositas" is everything of the above plus a great emphasis on nature and how to find the God of nature (the way Bl. Louis Martin taught St. Therese to find God in a beach or sunset) and with greater emphasis on God and the things of God. The seminarian must ponder intellectually over all earthly things with the goal of knowing God whose image is reflected in all these things. This exercise will aid him in contemplating God and the things of God thus increasing his knowledge of Divine Love and increasing his ability to Love God. And this love for God will, in turn, increase his desire to know more about God, the inexhaustible source of knowledge.

This contemplation of divine truths helps develop the moral virtues leading to the possession of the Theological virtues. Life in the seminary becomes an active life wherein the seminarian becomes active in developing the moral virtues. This way of life helps him quell his passions making it conducive for him to live a contemplative life. Only in this way can we put into practice what Pope Benedict XVI said in his document on the Year of the Priest " to contemplate the Heart of Jesus" when he declared the Year of the Priest on the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

