



FAITH & REASON

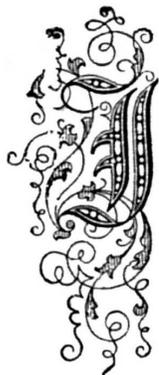
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SCRIPTURE, TRADITION, MAGISTERIUM: THE KEYS TO EVANGELIZATION

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The pervasive rejection of the faith of our fathers among modern catechists raises the question of whether or not the objective nature of Catholic truth is sufficiently recognized. Beginning with the suggestion that an attempt is being made to change a revealed religion into a purely natural one, Fr. Frederick L. Miller argues below that the only solution to the current crisis is to understand the vital relationship among Tradition, Scripture and the Magisterium. To deny the role of any of these in the transmission of the faith, he says, is tantamount to a denial of the fact of Divine Revelation itself. Fr. Miller goes on to prove that proper evangelization is impossible without the full deposit of faith and the living voice of the Church. Adapted from a speech delivered before the Confraternity of Catholic Clergy, his article is a masterly analysis of the issues at stake in modern exegesis as well as a guide to effective preaching on the part of those who truly wish to share the good news of Christ.



JUST OVER ONE YEAR AGO OUR HOLY FATHER, POPE PAUL VI, VOICED HIS DEEP CONCERN over the lack of doctrinal unity in some quarters of the contemporary church. In a general audience address he remarked:

A centrifugal influence of private judgment of Protestant origin, a concept of absolute freedom, isolated from the respective concept of duty and responsibility, the “treason of clerics” accepted with resignation, that is a historical relativism, and a social and political opportunism, often in fashion, have considerably weakened the sense of unity, solidarity and charity within the church.¹

The situation described by Pope Paul is obvious to the most casual observer: the doctrine of the Catholic Church is today subject to many devastating attacks. Unlike the attacks of previous generations of skeptics and enemies, the contemporary attack often issues from those who stand within the confines of the Roman Catholic community—often from those very people who by profession have the duty to defend the church from just such assaults. Also, unlike the attacks of the past which were directed at this or that particular article of the Catholic faith, the present attack seems to be directed at the very roots of the faith—the revealed Word of God.

In *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Pope Paul VI made a very definite statement to the effect that our Catholic Faith is rooted in and emanates from the Word of God—a Word which, in reality, is a person; a Word who is God Himself. Pope Paul defined the faith against the background of the various religious traditions of the world. Natural religion from its most primitive expressions in idolatry and nature worship to its most highly developed philosophical form embodies man’s search for the Divine. Our faith, however, although certainly based on sound logic and leading to a

vast expansion of the human intellect, was established, nurtured and is to this day preserved by the Lord Himself. The religion of the Old and New Testaments embodies a Divine Being's quest for mankind. Pope Paul observed: "Our religion effectively establishes with God an authentic and living relationship which the other religions do not succeed in doing, even though they have, as it were, their arms stretched out towards heaven."²

Throughout the past decade it has become painfully clear that many exegetes as well as dogmatic and moral theologians, their avid popularizers and their victims have either consciously or, hopefully, unconsciously rejected the foundation of Catholicism, i.e., faith in a God who has revealed both Himself as man's end and the means for the attainment of that end. In the face of sharply defined positions which contradict Catholic teaching, often in the name of compassion or modernity, one is faced with an intellectual dilemma—one must conclude that the Catholic who denies the doctrine of the church either does not fully understand that teaching, rejects God's existence or withholds from God His right to teach and direct the church. The third possible solution to the problem seems to be the root cause of the theological crisis which afflicts the church today.

In effect, there seems to be a movement afoot which has as its end the reduction of Catholicism as a revealed faith to the status of a natural religion—a religion which must be constantly adjusted to suit the needs of modern man, himself constantly changing. If our faith is a concoction of the human intellect, an embodiment of man's collective religious sensibilities, any and every element of belief should be re-examined, reinterpreted, and altered with frequency. In such a religion authority would reside neither in the objective Word of God nor in the church's right to preserve and propagate the Word, but rather in man's decisions concerning what is credible and opportune at any given moment. This stance, of course, is perfectly acceptable in any system of human thought, in any human institution. However, when confronted with Divine Truth, man has only to accept or reject what is presented to him by the God of revelation. Modern man seems to have difficulty accepting the God of reason. Needless to say, he has far greater difficulty accepting the God of revelation. Here, I believe, is where the contemporary theological problem rests.

The question many theologians seem to be asking is: "Does the doctrine of the Catholic church ema-

nate from God or is it simply the reformable word of a human and, therefore, reformable institution?" A theological climate in which one may question or even deny with impunity any article of dogmatic and moral belief naturally spawns a confused church. Intellectual or emotional perplexity often causes a child to be tongue-tied. A church intellectually and, therefore, emotionally upset by various waves of opinion which contradict official teaching is a church which will, likewise, become tongue-tied. The church's mission of evangelization, if it is to be effective and fruitful, must of necessity issue from a clear mind.

The objectivity of the Word of God has been perennially proclaimed by the Roman Catholic Church. It finds expression in her scriptures, in her creed, in her conciliar documents, in her liturgy, in the teaching of her popes. In our day the objectivity of the faith has been given splendid expression and fortification in the documents of Vatican II, especially in the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*); in Pope Paul's restatement of the faith of Nicea, *The Credo of the People of God*; and, most recently, in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*.

THE WORD OF GOD MUST BE THE FOUNDATION

The objective truth of the faith must of necessity be the foundation of any discussion of Sacred Scripture and evangelization. Either the Supreme Being, Himself truth, has spoken a Word in the form of human discourse, itself defining truth and giving direction to all human truth, which is contained in the inspired texts of Sacred Scripture and Tradition and lives in the evangelical word of the church, or He did not. If, in fact, God has not spoken definitively, we may and indeed should remodel the word and the church according to our own lights. In that case, evangelization would be defined as the propagation of changing opinions. If, however, God's spoken Word is the highest, most reliable and objective truth we possess, it is our task simply and with absolute fidelity to embrace that Word in faith and spread it far and wide.

The latter is the position of Pope Paul who in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* brilliantly defined evangelization as "the beauty of the revelation that it represents."³ In other words, there is an essentially organic relationship between the revealed Word of God and evangelization. Each is rooted in the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, the

latter to the former as effect to cause: the Father spoke ad extra and created a universe filled with intelligibility, a universe which in its created being led man to acknowledge God as his creator and sovereign Lord even after the fact of sin. God spoke again and called a people into being, a people who came to know His Name and live by His revealed Word. He spoke again and His eternal Word took flesh and drew those who believed in Him into a relationship of filial love with the Father. Still again, He confronted man through His son's apostles, "vessels of clay",⁴ and the church was born. In creation, Israel, Christ and the preaching of the apostolic church, Almighty God emerged from His ineffable silence, made His Being and Will known and challenged man to make a decision—a decision which involved faith, conversion and union. We may assert, therefore, that in the act of revelation, God Himself evangelized His people. Throughout the history of salvation, the Word proceeded from the Father and drew men back to Him. This procession defines revelation, and the recession is evangelization. Isaiah the Prophet bore witness to the effective, evangelical property of the Divine Word:

Yes, as the rain and the snow come down from heavens and do not return without watering the earth, making it yield and giving growth to provide seed for the sower and bread for the eating, so the word that goes forth from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.⁵

Our Lord Jesus, the Father's definitive Word, Himself declared that in revealing the Father He brought man into an intimate relationship with the Divine Life: "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you know Him and have seen Him... To have seen me is to have seen the Father."⁶

The Incarnate Word through the agency of His human nature is concomitantly revelation and evangelization. In the manifestation of the Father, Christ called man to a radical conversion of life which would come to term in a sharing of the Divine Life through grace. In short, the very revelation of the Word is evangelization. In revealing Himself, the Lord Jesus brought those who believed into the new life of the kingdom of God: He made them sharers of the Divine Nature.⁷

Our Lord on many occasions made clear to His

apostles that they were to continue His evangelical mission in the world. On the eve of the passion Christ prayed that their ministry might be effective: "I have passed your word on to them... Consecrate them in the Truth, your word is Truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world, and for their sake I consecrate myself so that they may be consecrated in Truth."⁸ In Matthew's gospel, Christ's final word comes in the form of a mandate: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you."⁹

Consequently, the sending of the Holy Spirit confirmed the church in the mission of Christ. The Spirit was sent by the Father and the Son in order that the church might extend Christ's evangelical ministry throughout space and time. Pentecost gave birth to a mystical body composed of many members yet having the Lord Himself as its principle of life. The mystical body of Christ was empowered to think with the mind of Christ, to love with His Divine love, to speak His own Word.



It is important to note that when the Apostles received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost morning they immediately spoke a word whose content was the crucified and risen Lord. In the verbal presentation of the kernel of the new faith—the Kerygma—God, through the words of Peter and the action of the Spirit in the minds and hearts of those who heard the first proclamation of the Word, called, justified and entered into communion with over three thousand believers. The miracle of the church's birth was accomplished through the Word. Her life was to be neither more nor less than the life of her risen Lord. His Gospel became her own. Hence, Pope Paul noted in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* that the church's primary task is the representation of the living Word: "The church has a vivid awareness of the fact that the Savior's words, 'I must proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God,'¹⁰ apply in all truth to herself... The task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the church."¹¹

The apostolic church was acutely conscious of the efficacy of the Word that she possessed and spoke. In

describing the power of the Word of God, St. Augustine wrote: “The apostles preached the word of Truth and brought forth churches.”¹² In the city of Jerusalem, in the towns of Israel, among the gentiles, the Word issued from the mouths of the apostles and in the power of the Spirit scores and scores of people turned from sin, adopted a new, startling way of life and, thereby, entered into communion with the Living God.

The apostles never forgot that the power of the Word was the power of God working through them. Paul reminded the Corinthians of this humbling fact: “Neither the planter nor the waterer matter; only God who makes things grow. It is all one who does the planting and who does the watering, and each will duly be paid according to his share in the work. We are fellow workers with God.”¹³ Furthermore, Paul taught that the content of the Word is none other than Christ: “For it is not ourselves that we are preaching but Christ Jesus as the Lord and ourselves as your servants for Christ’s sake.”¹⁴ In Galatians the Apostle of the Gentiles teaches that any alteration of the Word robs it of its power to save; to turn from the Word is, in fact, to turn from Christ: “I am astonished at the promptness with which you have turned away from the one who called you and have decided to follow a different version of the Good News.”¹⁵

It is evident on every page of the New Testament that the source, content and end of the apostle’s preaching was Christ. Hence, the Fathers of Vatican II teach in *Dei Verbum* that Christ is the font of revelation who, in turn, is the efficient cause of His church’s evangelization: “Christ the Lord in Whom the full revelation of the supreme God is brought to perfection commissioned the Apostles to preach to all men that Gospel which is the source of all saving truth and moral teaching.”¹⁶ In this document the Fathers of the Council, furthermore, state that through their preaching as well as by their example and observances, the Apostles “handed on those things which they had learned from Christ and through the promptings of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁷ They handed on to the church everything that would “contribute toward the holiness of life and increase the faith of the people of God.”¹⁸

TRADITION IS THE LIVING TRANSMISSION OF THE WORD

The scriptures themselves bear splendid witness to the fact that the Apostles understood the transmission

of the Word of God as a vibrant, oral communication, pulsating with the power of the Holy Spirit. The person who accepted the Word in faith would be initiated into a relationship of love with the Father and, concomitantly, with the community of believers. The transmission itself, like all forms of communication, existed in both an active and an objective sense. The disclosure was at one and the same time communication and content. It would be unthinkable for the apostles not to preach the Word. Although the Lord could communicate with man in any number of ways, the Apostles knew that preaching was God’s elected means of self-disclosure. Hence, Paul wrote to the Romans:

But they will not ask God’s help unless they believe in Him, and they will not believe in Him unless they have heard of Him, and they will not hear of Him unless they get a preacher, and they will never have a preacher unless one is sent.... So faith comes from what is preached, and what is preached comes from the word of Christ.¹⁹

On the other hand, to tamper with the content of the message—to alter or delete Christ’s words or any portion of them—would make preaching specious and vapid. Such preaching, although certainly capable of transmitting something of the evangelist’s inflated ego, would never be able to communicate the living Christ.

Regarding the transmission of the Divine Word, Paul the Apostle is extremely scrupulous. For instance, before he instructs the liturgically aberrant Corinthians in the revealed dogma of the Eucharist, Paul is careful to note that he is here and now handing on the authentic word of Christ: “For that is what I received from the Lord, and in turn passed on to you.”²⁰ Again, prefacing his teaching on the indissolubility of marriage, he writes: “This is not from me but from the Lord.”²¹ However, speaking of the benefits of the celibate life, he comments: “I have no direction from the Lord but give my own opinion.”²² Guiding the young Timothy in his ministry, Paul urges him to model his teaching after that of his own apostolic instructor: “Keep as your pattern the sound teaching you have heard from me.... You have been trusted to look after something precious; guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.”²³ Further, Paul advises Timothy to pass on to others what he himself had received: “You have heard everything that I teach in public; hand it on to reliable people so that they in turn will be able to teach others.”²⁴

This transmission of the Word of God, of course, is known in the church as Sacred Tradition. It is unfortunate that many today consider tradition merely as the static body of those truths which are not found in scripture. Needless to say, Sacred Tradition does include “that part of doctrine and usages which is not explicitly or sufficiently found in scripture but only in the oral tradition.”²⁵ However, tradition has a far greater significance in the life of the church. As Fr. Emmanuel Doronzo noted in his book *The Channels of Revelation*:

The Fathers and the theologians up to the Council of Trent used the word Tradition only in the general and complete sense of the entire Christian revelation entrusted by Christ and the Apostles to the church and by the church transmitted continuously through whatever means (either written or oral).²⁶

The teaching of Christ, His deeds and especially His atoning death and resurrection form the tradition of the church. Therefore, when we speak of tradition we mean not only those truths which are not contained in scripture, but the church’s living transmission, interpretation and inspired development of the sacred content of revelation preserved and kept perfectly intact by the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is precisely this tradition which finds expression in the words of Sacred Scripture. We call the scriptures the Word of God because in obedience to Christ’s mandate they were written by the Apostles and other apostolic men under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit and, therefore, embody the living and substantial Word as preached and taught by the Apostles.²⁷ The sacred texts emerge organically from the lived and preached tradition of the apostolic church. It was this same tradition which was the agent of demythologization in the primitive church. The tradition discerned those truly historical and inspired accounts and carefully separated them from myth-laden counterfeits. One important point in this is that those contemporary Catholic biblical scholars who worship regularly at the shrine of Rudolph Bultmann should spend themselves demythologizing the apocryphal gospels of Thomas and Barnabas and leave poor Matthew, Mark, Luke and John alone.²⁸ It is the same living tradition of the church which in the light of the Holy Spirit continues to penetrate, comprehend ever more fully, and authoritatively transmit the Word according to the sense intended by God.

This tradition has continued to live and confront mankind throughout the ages in the corporate person of the church’s sacred teaching office. The Magisterium, given authority to preach by the Lord and fortified by the special grace of the Holy Spirit in episcopal ordination and by the living charism of Papal Infallibility, has had the arduous task of serving the Word, of teaching it with great care, of protecting it from every assault of the enemy and of propagating it throughout the entire world.²⁹ This task rests preeminently in the person of the successor of St. Peter.³⁰ “With Peter and under Peter”³¹ the Sacred College of Bishops has the solemn responsibility of teaching and guarding the deposit of revelation. Through the Magisterium, or to be more precise, through the unfailing presence of the Holy Spirit at the heart of the teaching church, the Magisterium perennially and infallibly “with Peter and under Peter” preserves, interprets and teaches the Divine Person enfolded in Sacred Scripture and Tradition.

Commenting upon Dei Verbum’s assertion that there is an inviolable unity among Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition and the church’s Magisterium,³² Fr. Rene Latourelle, S.J. remarked in his *Theology of Revelation* that:

They are so intimately bound up together and mutually associated that no one of the three has any solidity without the others. These three realities taken together, each in its own way, under the action of one and the same Spirit, efficaciously cooperate in the salvation of souls.

Just as tradition and scripture are inseparable from each other, so are they inseparable from the Church’s Magisterium. They are bound together in mutual service.³³

It should be obvious at this point that it is patently impossible for a member of the Catholic community to speak of evangelization only in terms of Sacred Scripture. It is the Holy Spirit living in the church’s teaching office who gives the church the key which unlocks the mysteries of the sacred texts of scripture. This key is the living tradition of the church. Imagine, for instance, the difficulties one would encounter in attempting to explain the Person and mission of Christ unaided by the doctrinal teaching of Nicea, Ephesus and Chalcedon.

One would find himself in a similarly impoverished position if he attempted to explain the church's moral teaching, sacraments, liturgy or spirituality without the force of the church's ordinary Magisterium. Also, in view of those who deny all or some of the supernatural content of scripture (e.g., the virgin birth, the miracles of Christ, the bodily resurrection), the Catholic need not be overly concerned: he has only to appeal to the living tradition of his church for the answer. These sacred realities have always and everywhere been held by Christ's Mystical Body. And that is enough for assent.

We may, likewise, note that the church in the 1970's should daily praise God for Vatican I's explication of the doctrine of Papal Infallibility. Furthermore, she should intensify her praise in the light of the clear explication and clarification of the church's doctrine in the teaching of Vatican II. It might be mentioned here that in many ways Vatican II's statement on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*) contains the answer to today's theological confusion. Catholics should take very careful note of this amazingly lucid statement of the church's tradition regarding the revelation of Christ and its transmission. It is clear that apart from the Holy Spirit living in the church, the written Word of God would remain unintelligible and silent. This assertion in no way denigrates the exalted position Sacred Scripture holds in the Catholic church. Fr. Louis Bouyer very cogently situated scripture at the heart of tradition. Commending the teaching of the Council of Trent, he observed that:

The Fathers of the Council obviously wished to keep the ancient position, which held that scripture makes up one whole together with the totality of tradition, and could not be set in opposition to it. He continued:

The Word of God, given once and for all to the church by the apostles as coming from Christ Himself in the Spirit, is kept alive in her within the totality of tradition, and of which tradition the inspired scriptures forever remain the heart.³⁴

Therefore, we may assert that Sacred Scripture is quickened by the Holy Spirit through the Sacred Tradition of the Church on the lips of that same church's Magisterium.

FRUITS OF EVANGELIZATION AND
PRIESTLY MINISTRY

Similarly, faith in the revealed Word is also intimately related to the Holy Spirit living at the heart of the church. St. Thomas explained this truth strikingly in his *Summa*. Stating that the New Law of Christ is chiefly the inner grace of the Holy Spirit, the Angelic Doctor taught that "unless there were the inward presence of the healing grace of faith, the letter even of the Gospel would kill."³⁵ In other words, as the objective revelation and transmission of the Word is a Divine, gratuitous act, so man's acceptance of that Word in faith must in itself be the result of another Divine act. Man assents to the God of revelation only because the same Spirit who speaks through the voice of the church speaks also in the recesses of his heart. Man's acceptance of the Word is itself, therefore, impossible without an act of the God of revelation.

Through the proclamation of Sacred Scripture in its authentically developed doctrinal form, i.e., through the church's evangelization, man is confronted with the Word of God. The Word, as St. Thomas taught, "is not any sort of word, but one who breathes forth love." Thomas continued: "Thus the Son is sent [and, we might add, preached] not in accordance with every and any sort of intellectual perfection, but according to the intellectual illumination which breaks forth into the affection of love."³⁶

The love St. Thomas speaks of is, of course, the Holy Spirit who justifies man by turning him from the inordinate love of self and creatures as ends and uniting him to God as his proper end. Hence, it is clear that the end of faith is not intellectual assent to propositional truth for its own sake, but rather intellectual and volitional assent to the Divine Person of the Word presented and defined by the revealed propositional truth. In short, the interaction of the evangelical Word of the church and the inner movement whereby the Holy Spirit directs the human creature to freely accept that Word, unites the creature and God in a bond of supernatural charity.

However, since faith grasps the person of the Word and since that person is present in the church through the sacraments, it must be urgently insisted that the Catholic faith finds its perfect consummation in the sacraments of the church. It is, therefore, correct to assert that the church's ministry of the Word of God in its four forms—evangelization properly so-called, catechetics, liturgical preaching and theology³⁷—must always have as its end man's sacramental union with God. It is also

important to note that the sacraments in turn have as their proper end man's vision of God in the Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, the church's preaching of the Word is the dispositive cause of man's ontological union with God in the sacraments. The sacraments in turn are the dispositive and efficacious causes of man's eternal union with God in Heaven. Preaching, then, leads to faith; faith to the sacramental union of the Christian and God; and the sacraments, to eternal union.

It is hopefully obvious that in attempting to describe the transmission of the Word of God and its sanctifying effects in the life of man, I am, in fact, attempting to define the essence of the Catholic priesthood. Through ordination the church entrusts priests with the revelation of God. She, likewise, entrusts them with the task of making that revelation live through evangelization. In the words of St. Paul, priests are to be "Christ's incense to God for those who are being saved and for those who are not."³⁸ Fully aware that the content of their preaching is Christ, priests are to be ready and willing to die for that Sacred Deposit. The laity, of course, share in the priesthood of Christ and in the obligations of evangelization in its dispositive sense.

However, today this certainty of purpose seems to have all but vanished from large segments of the church. Clergy, religious and laity alike seem often to be tragically confused over the source, content and end of the church's sacred deposit of faith. The teaching of the ordinary magisterium has been pitted against a compassionate, accommodating and supposedly enlightened brand of theology. This pitiful cleavage has been accomplished beneath the guise of colorful euphemisms: the new theology appeals to pluralism, the application of new philosophies to the dogma of the church, the changing times, man come of age, the new scriptural hermeneutics, process thought, love, ongoing revelation, an increased knowledge of psychology and sociology, and the like. When all is said and done, however, one question must be asked with brutal clarity: Is this new theology faith seeking understanding of the revealed Word of God, or is it personal human experience seeking some sort of new faith?

Reading the new theology, one often has the feeling that he is witnessing a surgical operation. The Word of God is anesthetized before one's eyes. A somber doctor wields a sharp scalpel. On the blade is inscribed the command: "Cut through accretions to the pure faith of the

gospels." The command, however, is summarily ignored, for the first incision is aimed at separating Jesus from the scriptures. The words of the New Testament are barely the words of Jesus. They rather reflect the mythologized faith of the primitive Christian community. Rejecting the fact that every word of scripture is the substantial Word of God, the doctor of theology makes a second incision. He severs the Christ of faith, i.e., the Christ fabricated by the primitive Christian community, from the living tradition of the church. The primitive church, governed by the times and limited by her paucity of knowledge, placed time-conditioned, evolving truths on the lips of Christ. Therefore, today's church must reinterpret those values in the light of present conditions and needs. The third incision follows: the act of faith is severed from the tradition which no longer lives and from the historical Jesus who cannot actually be found in the Gospels. The surgical procedure has eliminated revelation, certainty, faith. The result: death.

How, then, can life be restored? We must first, I believe, thoroughly know the Sacred Tradition of the Church. The times are calling priests especially to reimmerse themselves with confidence in that tradition. They must study the texts of Sacred Scripture, with the Fathers and Doctors of the church as guides. They must reread and reassimilate all the conciliar statements of the church. They must especially devote themselves to the study of the documents of Vatican II.

They should turn often and direct their people to Pope Paul's Credo of the People of God, his encyclical on the priesthood *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus*, his encyclical on the Holy Eucharist *Mysterium Fidei*, his *Apostolic Exhortations on Reconciliation in the Church, The Cult of the Virgin Mary, Christian Joy, Evangelization in the Modern World* and his deeply theological and eminently practical weekly audience talks. Through contact with these sources of the church's ordinary Magisterium, priests and people alike will realize that the tradition in which they were reared continues to live and pulsate with the Holy Spirit of God.

Moreover, as evangelizers, priests must make the authentic tradition of the church as intelligible and appealing as possible to their people. In *Evangelii Nuntiandi* Pope Paul described the kind of preaching the contemporary church needs:

The faithful will greatly benefit from preaching

provided that it is simple, clear, direct, well-adapted, profoundly dependent on Gospel teaching and faithful to the Magisterium, animated by a balanced apostolic ardor coming from its own characteristic nature, full of hope, fostering belief, and productive of peace and unity.³⁹

It is evident that effective evangelization depends essentially on the orthodoxy of the preacher. However, for preachers, orthodoxy as an ideology cannot be the goal. In our times those who are faithful to the church's tradition and to her Magisterium are often tempted to become excessively polemical. Priests must always remember that preaching is pointless and vapid when it does not lead to contemplative union with God. The Devil himself is orthodox. However, his knowledge can neither save him nor unite him to the Father. Effective preaching has the power to accomplish these very ends. What the church needs is an army of contemplative evangelizers who have union with the Mysterious God of Israel, the God and Father of Jesus Christ, as their goal.

Finally, we must point out that St. Athanasius, the patron of troubled times and wounded churches, knew well the secret of fruitful evangelization:

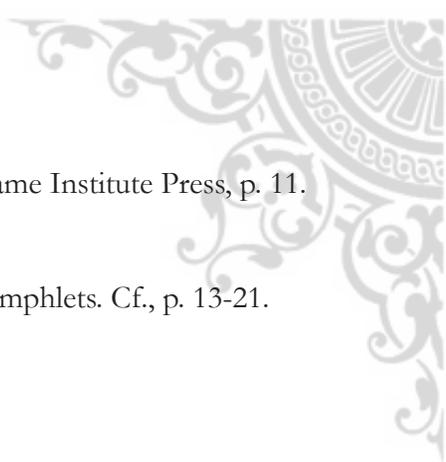
...anyone who wishes to understand the mind of the sacred writers must first cleanse his own life, and approach the saints by copying their deeds. Thus united to them in the fellowship of life, he will both understand the things revealed to them by God and ... receive that which is laid up for the saints in the kingdom of heaven.⁴⁰

In order to lead their people to intercourse with the God of revelation, priests themselves must become the Word. While the efficacy of the sacraments does not depend on personal sanctity, the efficacy of preaching, in fact, does. For laymen and priest alike, lifestyle, deeds and words must reveal to all a man who lives in the company of the Almighty. They must reveal a crucified man who would die for his fellow Christians—just as he would die for the smallest portion of that revealed Word of God on which their salvation depends.



NOTES

- 1 Pope Paul VI, *L'Osservatore Romano*, Eng. ed., 2/5/76, p.1.
- 2 Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, St. Paul's ed., No. 53.
- 3 Ibid., no. 5.
- 4 2 Cor. 4:7.
- 5 Is. 55:10-11.
- 6 Jn. 14:6-7,9.
- 7 Cf., 2 Pet. 1:4.
- 8 Jn. 17:14, 17-19.
- 9 Mt. 28:19-20.
- 10 Lk. 4:43.
- 11 E.N., no. 14.
- 12 St. Augustine, *Enarratio* in Ps. 44:23 in CCL XXXVIII, p. 510. Cf. E.N., no. 59.
- 13 I Cor. 3:7-9.
- 14 2 Cor. 4:5.
- 15 Gal. 1:6.
- 16 Vatican II, *Dei Verbum*, St. Paul's Ed., no. 7.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 D. V., no. 8.
- 19 Rom. 10:14-15, 17.
- 20 I Cor. 11:23.
- 21 I Cor. 7:10.
- 22 I Cor. 7:25.

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- 23 2 Tim. 1:13-14.
24 2 Tim. 2:2.
25 Emmanuel Doronzo, *The Channels of Revelation*, Middleburg, 1974, Notre Dame Institute Press, p. 11.
26 Ibid.
27 Cf., D. V, nos. 7, 11-13.
28 Domenico Grasso, S.J., *The Gospels: Historical and True*, Surrey, 1969, Faith Pamphlets. Cf., p. 13-21.
29 D. V., no. 10.
30 E.N., no. 67.
31 Ibid.
32 Cf., D. V., no. 7-10.
33 Rene Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation*, New York, 1966, Alba House, p. 484.
34 Louis Bouyer, *Dictionary of Theology*, tr. by Charles Underhill Quinn, New York, 1965, Desclee Co., Inc., p. 444-5.
35 S.T., I-II, Q. 106, A. 1. N.Y., Benziger, 1947.
36 S. T., I, Q. 43, A. 5, ad 2.
37 *Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, The General Catechetical Directory*, Washington, 1971, United States Catholic Conference, nos. 10-16.
38 2 Cor. 2:15.
39 EN., no. 43.
40 St. Athanasius, *The Incarnation of the Word of God*, New York, 1951, The Macmillan Co., p. 96.