

Apostolic Pastoral Principles Taught by Scripture

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Evidence for what follows is referenced in the “booklet” (*What Catholic Seminaries are Omitting*) and the “evidence document” (*Why Western Catholicism Has Been Losing Communicants and Vocations—for 50 Years!*), and at www.joyfulshepherdretreat.org, especially in Talk II of the “Retreat Outlines” and Ch. I under “Theological Background.”

These are recommendations for seminary curriculums based on the *pastoral* implications of the Church’s Hierarchy of Christian Truths (HCT; see booklet, pp. 1-3). The vast majority of priests could pass theology tests on the HCT. But the appreciation of the HCT that our discipleship, including that of priests, depends on is not catechetical. It is a conscious personal appreciation.

We owe it to our dedicated, self-sacrificing ministerial priests that all future decisions about what criteria to use in evaluating seminary training take into account what the New Testament shows us about how the apostles pastored. For centuries the Church discouraged (unofficially but de facto) frequent communion; yet we always had the same *doctrine* of the Eucharist. So God has emphatically shown us that sound doctrine is insufficient for *pastoral* wisdom, which is knowledge of a practical kind. But if sound doctrine is insufficient, where can we reliably get pastoral wisdom? From the Scripturally *demonstrable* teaching of the apostles relevant to pastoring.

What follows are criteria based on what the New Testament shows the apostles considered most important in Christian pastoring and on how the Lord taught them that their pastoring was taking for granted things that couldn’t be taken for granted (“I have more to teach you but you cannot bear it now,” Jn 16:12).

How does the Church’s normal pastoring today compare to the kind of pastoring the epistles show the apostles giving and learning to give? I will show that the epistles contain crucial pastoral lessons that are meant for all time but that the Church’s normal pastoring today is hardly aware of. All future seminarians must be explicitly taught the pastoral strategies and pastoral mistakes shown in the epistles, and they must be taught that they should pastor accordingly (except for special circumstances like Trent’s having to oppose Protestantism in a society where enough of the fundamental Christian principles were already in place to some degree. See booklet, front cover and p. 1.)

And please note that, contrary to any possible appearance, nothing here is meant to imply that we are over emphasizing the *greatest* sacrament, the Eucharist. Rather, we are *under emphasizing* things that, by the HCT, are pedagogically, and so pastorally, more *important* than the Eucharist, things on which the goals of the Eucharist depend. As a result, the Church’s normal pastoral life is far out of balance because pastoring “that neglects this integration and harmony of its content (the HCT) can become entirely useless for achieving its end” (the Magisterium; see booklet , p. 2). What seminaries give can be theologically correct but be presented in a way that is pastorally incorrect, by the standard of what the New Testament teaches about pastoring.

- I. All future seminarians must learn what the pastoral teaching in the New Testament shows to be *the four specific pillars* on which the rest of pastoring must rely and which cannot be taken for granted:

- a. Christians' appreciation of the "surpassing, inexpressible" grace that receiving Jesus gives us: the Trinity itself really present in and living its life through us—the appreciation that is the main motivator for Christian behavior according to the apostles. (See 2, 4, 8 and 10 below.)
- b. What St. Paul says (1 Co 1:17, 3:10) is the pre-sacramental and pre-catechetical foundation for all the effectiveness of the sacraments, catechesis and subsequent pastoring: the proclamation of the Great News of Jesus and what He did for us, and our corresponding personal reception of Jesus as Lord (who He is) and Savior (what He did for us). (See 3 and 7.)
- c. Christian brother/sisterhood, love of Christians specifically for other Christians, by which we give testimony to the world that we really believe that each of us has been divinized----Jesus' explicit pastoral plan for the salvation of nonChristians (Jn 17:21-23). (See 9 and 10.)
- d. The regular reinforcement, as opposed to the taking for granted, by pastors of the previous three pillars (2 Pt 1:3-15). (See 6.)

2 All future seminarians must learn that the epistles' main motivator for Christian behavior is Christians' appreciation of the "surpassing, inexpressible" (2 Co 9:14-15) glory (Jn 17:22) and dignity (1 Jn 3:1-2) we have been given by sanctifying grace: our divinization, the Trinity's real presence in us. (See the booklet, pp. 6-7; evidence doc pp. 17-26.)

Paul says the motive for mutual Christian love is our appreciation of the "surpassing grace of God in us, His inexpressible gift" (2 Co 9:14-15). So does John 17:21-23. Paul makes Christian appreciation of the glory of grace the main motive in his pastoring for Christian behavior in general (texts cited in booklet, p. 6; evidence doc pp. 17-18). For by the HCT, sanctifying grace is "the one thing necessary," "the pearl of great price," "*the Gift of God.*" Being in grace is infinitely more important than anything that can happen to us until death, including receiving the Eucharist and ordination. The sole purpose of the Church's institutional structure and sacramental system is the preservation and perfection of grace. Everything else is not just subordinate but infinitely subordinate in importance to the real presence of the Trinity's life in us.

Other texts that show the apostles' way of motivating us to Christian behavior are:

- a. 1 Co 6:15: Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?
- b. 1 Co 6:19: Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit? (And see 3:16; 2 Co 13:5)
- c. 2 Pt 1:3-9: His divine power has granted us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to **His own glory and excellence**, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, that through these you may . . . become **partakers of the divine nature**.

For this very reason make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, (etc.)

- d. 2 Co 6:16-7:1: For we are the temple of the living God: as God said, “I will live in them and move among them . . . and I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” **Since we have these promises** (i.e., since what was promised has been given; see 2 Pt 1:3-9, above) beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit.
- e. 1 Jn 3:1-3: See what love the Father has given us that we should be called **children of God**; as so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Beloved, we are God’s children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, for we shall know Him as He is. And **everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure.**

Being a child of God is another name for having the Trinity’s infinite life. (1 Jn 3:1) Whenever the epistles refer to those who are “God’s children,” they are talking exclusively about those who share divine life because they have been baptized, by water or desire. In Acts 17:18-19, the New Testament does use a word that can be translated as God’s “children” to refer to all human beings; in every other place, being God’s child means sharing the Trinity’s life by sanctifying grace.

Other ways to put how the apostles motivated Christian behavior: they explained the reasons that justify St. Paul’s repeated exhortations for us to “Rejoice always; again I say rejoice!” And the apostles reminded us of the great dignity we have been given by saying things like “You have been purchased at the price of the precious blood.”

So we avoid sin because it is *beneath the glorious dignity* that Christians are supposed to appreciate having, and on the basis of which we are supposed to live in joyous expectation of future glory. The early Christians knew that to be a child of God is to share divine life itself. (Booklet, p. 7; evidence doc p. 21) That knowledge was the basis of the hope so great that for the sake of it they would keep themselves pure (1 Jn 3:1-3, and see Col 1:27: Christ in you, your hope of glory.). Until we die, fear must be part of Christian motivation. But that fear should be fear of losing the “surpassing, inexpressible” (2 Co 9:14-15) gift that we know we have already received, “eternal life in Christ Jesus” (Rm 6:23).

Today’s pastoring hardly mentions that motivation and reason for joy; instead, it demonstrably, though unconsciously, waters down our deification in the minds of Catholics. Seminarians must learn that our pastoring waters down this core motivation for Christian behavior in ways like the following:

- Today, pastoring implies that “God is in all people” *in the same way*, thereby suppressing Christianity’s *essence*, the real presence of the Trinity living its own life in

and among Christians.

- Today, pastoring doesn't tell Catholics that, except for one place, the New Testament uses "children of God" to mean *only* Christians (by water or desire), because only they have the Trinity's life.
- Today, pastoring tells Catholics about only one way of "acting in *persona Christi*," the presbyter's secondary, functional way (*Evangelii Gaudium* 104), and doesn't mention that all those in grace act in the person of Christ in a way that is infinitely greater in importance, dignity and glory, namely, by participating in the Son's personal worship of the Father (the royal priesthood), which the presbyter in mortal sin cannot do, even when he is fully acting in the person of Christ in his functional, instrumental way.
- Today, pastoring keeps secret that the real presence of the Trinity in each Christian and in Jesus' communal body is infinitely more important, not just to us but to Jesus, than His Eucharistic real presence. (See booklet, pp. 6-7 and 10-11; evidence doc, pp. 17-26 and 31-35.)
- Today, pastoring often reduces Jesus' real presence in us to something subjective, "Jesus is *in our hearts*." Scripture does sometimes use such subjective language, but today's pastoring often does nothing more than that. Seminarians must learn that such subjective descriptions, while alright in themselves, are far from sufficient. My deceased parents are in my heart too; that does not deify me.

These reasons why today's Catholics are ill prepared to receive the message they should are listed on pp. 5-6 of the booklet (evidence doc pp. 19-21) and discussed on pp. 6-7 and 15-19 at

www.joyfulshepherdretreat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Session-B-Second-Talk.pdf

All of this illustrates the problem of priests leaving the seminary not knowing in what ways Catholics are now ill disposed to receive the pastoring they need. In our society "children of God" almost always means all human beings. So that phrase has a pastoral effect on us opposite from the one that Scripture usually intends. Likewise for "Love one another." We hear "Love all" instead of "Love your fellow Christians with a visibly familial love." And both of these now enfeebled pastoral truths are much closer to the top of the HCT than what the Church's normal pastoral life usually gives us on Sundays.

Worse, it is demonstrable (see the evidence in Ch. I under "Theological Background" at the web site) that many ministerial priests today *cannot* motivate Christians this way because the culture they acquire at the seminary puts their focus on Jesus' *sacramental*, and so instrumental, real presence in the ministerial priest, in the Mass, and under the species of bread and wine, rather than on Jesus' *personal* real presence in each Christian and in His communal body. For them to pastor as the apostles did, they must be trained to stress Christianity's invisible *essence*, the Trinity living its life in and between Christians,

rather than the visible but instrumental life of the institutional Church and sacramental system. If they don't sufficiently stress that invisible essence, human nature will obviously take the easier path and focus on the visible aspects, and so aspects of lesser importance, in Christianity rather than on the invisible.

The one exception to the superior importance of the invisible is the importance for evangelism of the Church's principally being, not a delivery system for spiritual goods and services, but sacrament of a particular kind of unity, the unity consisting of the visible brother/sisterly love of Christians for fellow Christians (evidence doc, pp. 5-16).

3. All future seminarians must learn that scripture makes Christians' appreciation of their deification depend on the most basic step in pastoring: proclaiming the Great News about Jesus and what He did for us in a way that calls for an on-going personal, not just intellectual, response of sincerely intending to avoid sin (repentance) and acceptance of Jesus as He who has reconciled us to the Father and will fulfill the just requirements of the law in us (Rm 8:4) by His virtue, not ours (faith).

The correct and important academic teachings of Fundamental Theology about apologetics do *not* replace the much higher spiritual and pastoral principles that

- a. the most "important motive of credibility" (one seminary catalog's words) is the fraternal love of Christians for other Christians by which they are united in spirit and are a sign of unity (*Gaudiam et Spes* 21, at "Ad praesentiam . . .").
- b. while apologetics is valuable, the clear proclamation, and our acceptance, of the Great News has a power that is independent of apologetics and even of the sacraments (1 Co 1:17, 3:10, Rm 1:16). So pastors need a clear understanding of the kerygma, which by the HCT is about Jesus of Nazareth and what He accomplished for us, not about His presence in the Church's hierarchy or sacramental system. The proclamation/reception of the Great News has a sanctifying power that even precedes that of baptism (1 Co 1:17; 3:10; Ac 18:11, 24-27; Rm 1:16-18). What baptism adds is a permanent modification, the so-called "character". (Weddell, *Forming Intentional Disciples*, p. 102, citing the 1913 *Catholic Encyclopedia*).

Paul twice explicitly says the "commission given him" did *not* include baptizing people but laying the indispensable foundation for baptism's, and by implication all the other sacraments', fruits: our repenting and believing the Great News (1 Co 1:17; 3:10), the kerygma, which contains truths at the top of HCT. Since Paul said this was the foundation preceding baptism, it is also the foundation for everything else in the Christian life.

Objectively, that foundation was the proclamation of the Great News about Jesus and what He did for us. Our subjective response to the foundation consists of two dispositions: repenting and believing that Great News. This is not only demonstrable scripturally but also metaphysically: since God is God, what more could conceivably be needed on our part than sincere repentance and asking with faith? From the point of view of the

operantis, that is, of our subjective cooperation with grace, everything else follows from those two responses. Repenting and believing would have implied a decision to be baptized, but Paul's Corinthian converts were put in the state of grace before they were baptized, which most of them would not have received until at least a year and a half later (Ac 18:11, 24-27).

All future seminarians must learn the objective and subjective steps that are the foundation for all cooperation with grace. They must learn that unless they correctly communicate the objective Great News, Catholics will not understand the subjective Great News that all we have to do to receive the benefit of what Jesus did is to *sincerely* want Jesus to be our Lord (repent as opposed explicitly to trying to make ourselves better) and ask Him to be our Lord with *trust* (not just intellectual belief, but the firm expectation—the English “hope” doesn't really say it—based on intellectual belief) that Jesus will do what we ask. The Great News is great both because it gives us deification and because it does so entirely freely, with no requirement that we do anything to merit it.

Today's pastors, however, often don't even have a “conceptual category,” as Weddell says (pp. 11, 90-91, 103, 237, 246-248) for what the Great News and the way we respond to it are. What the proclamation of the Great News is happens to be one of those truths at the top of both the theological and pastoral HCTs whose foundational pastoral importance gets lost in the maze of theological truths seminarians need to learn. That is one reason why so few seminarians have a conceptual category for it. But this does not mean we should replace academic theology with “kerygmatic” theology. Instead we need to add apostolic pastoral *praxis*, not more academic *theology*, to the seminary curriculum and the seminary experience.

4. All future seminarians must learn that the apostles' main motivator for discipleship includes Catholics' appreciation of “the surpassing, inexpressible” (2 Co 9:14-15) glory of the royal priesthood, i.e., its primacy in glory, dignity and importance over the ministerial priesthood (Booklet, p. 11; evidence doc, pp. 31-35)

The Catechism, 1547, says that the royal priesthood is the life of sanctifying grace, the grace which is that greater than which nothing else created can be conceived. So a presbyter's royal priesthood is infinitely more important and glorious than his ministerial. For their own spirituality, pastors need to know that, and not just catechetically. Incomparably, the most important “priestly” spirituality is the spirituality of the royal priesthood that all Christians share. But I have never heard a presbyter tell us these things in any homily about the royal priesthood. So where in those presbyters' consciousness is their royal priesthood as compared to their ministerial?

The epistle to the Hebrews describes the characteristics that are unique to Jesus' priesthood as compared to Jewish high priests. Those in Jesus' communal body share in Jesus' priesthood primarily and most importantly through their royal priesthood. It's not just that presbyters have to first be royal priests in order to be ordained. Every *operantis* effect of the presbyter's sacramental ministry in person

A—including the actual grace moving that person to receive a sacrament in the first place---comes to A through the prayers, sacrifices and sufferings of all the royal priests, including presbyters themselves, in Jesus' communal body.

Correspondingly, the meaning of "presbyter" is much closer to elder brother than to father. And "*hiereus*" not presbyter, is the word in Scripture that means a performer of sacred rituals. (Does the New Testament ever use "*hiereus*" when it wants to refer to a priest in the sense of a presbyter rather than to Jesus or to royal priests?)

5. All future seminarians must learn about the two specific cases where the epistles show the Lord teaching St. Paul that he had to *reform* his pastoring ("I have more to teach you but you cannot bear it now," Jn 16:12).

By the Lord's plan, Paul twice learned he had to fundamentally *revise* his pastoral thinking in midstream because he had been falsely taking for granted that his converts would continue to have the foundational dispositions required by the HCT without his pastoral reinforcement (Ga 3:1-5:12; 1 Co 3:16; 6:15, 19; 2 Co 13:5). In both cases, the Lord taught Paul that his pastoring was based on incorrect assumptions about how well the addressed communities already appreciated foundational pastoral truths without which Christians could not cooperate with grace sufficiently for full discipleship. Paul's pastoring was wrongly taking it for granted that he did not need to regularly reinforce those things. (2 Pt 1:12-15)

- a. First, Galatians 3:1 to 5:12 show Paul flabbergasted that the Galatians forgot that the Great News is great because it is entirely free and unmerited by works. They had forgotten the crux of the subjective side of the Great News: that we cannot and need not do anything to obtain grace by works other than repenting and believing; all we can and need do is to sincerely want Jesus to change us and ask Him, with trust, to do it. If the converts were confused about that, their ability to cooperate with grace at the *operantis* level would be hampered, at the very least.

Paul was shocked to find that he had to regularly remind people who had already accepted Jesus as Savior and been baptized in the Holy Spirit that "(Receiving) the promise is through faith in order that it may be by a free gift" (Rm 4:16), as opposed to any meritorious efforts on our part. That meant they had forgotten what the "foundation" (1 Co 1:17; 3:10) of their Christianity, the proclamation of the Great News, was all about.

His earlier epistles never made a special point of reinforcing the freely given, unmerited character of what Jesus did and does for us. After the shock of what he learned about the Galatians, his later public epistles never fail to remind Christians that justification is by faith in freely given grace, not by the merit of works. His later epistles show that he never again took Christians' appreciation of that for granted. (If you think that is a mere coincidence, please see the next section, 6.)

- b. Second, texts from the Corinthian epistles show how surprised Paul was to learn that he had to reinforce the basic motive of Christian behavior. In 2nd Corinthians 13:5 (which is probably earlier than most of 2nd Corinthians) and 1st Corinthians 3:16, 6:15 and 19, Paul is surprised and exasperated to find how weak is the Corinthians' appreciation of the main motivator for Christian behavior: their deification by grace. Paul would have been assuming that their being baptized in the Spirit was sufficient for that appreciation; for according to Scripture, that appreciation is the purpose of the Pentecostal reception of the Spirit. (See 8 below; booklet p. 7; evidence doc, pp. 23-26.)

The Lord was teaching Paul that the way the Spirit meant to preserve and nourish that extraordinary Pentecostal change of conscious was through the Church's ordinary pastoral life. That's what sacramental grace usually does, namely, work by bringing each of us into a new or deeper relation to Jesus living in His communal body, whose members are endowed with the gifts necessary to build one another up. The *operantis* is communal, not just individual. (See 10 below; booklet, p. 16; evidence doc, p. 41.)

Again, Paul was learning not to assume that his communities were so well disposed that they did not need pastoring to reinforce what they had already learned. And that is exactly the error our pastoring is based on, the incorrect assumption that Catholics' prior evangelization and catechesis, such as they were, has sufficiently disposed Catholics regarding foundations that pastors can take the foundations for granted, rather than regularly reinforce them.

And today reinforcing cannot amount to just reminders of foundational truths, since most Catholics have not learned those truths well enough. Today, pastors must recognize that the foundations need to be laid again, since we are no longer living in a basically Christian society which supports at least some of the foundational truths, as well as supporting the family as the primary evangelizer and pastor. Vatican II specifically repaired the walls and roof of God's temple, but the council fathers did not realize that the foundations of the temple were cracking at that very moment, because society at large no longer supported the Christian basics that the walls and roof were resting on.

Of course, ministerial priests can't reinforce those foundations unless they have a clear idea of what the foundations are. The reason they don't have a clear idea is no one's fault. Seminaries continued to train them in the manner the Tridentine pastoral strategy could take for granted, namely, by focusing on the distinctively Catholic rather than on what Popes have unequivocally stated to be greater: the things we share with other Christians, which are at the top of the HCT. (See booklet, pp 1-3; evidence doc, pp. 2-4.)

But one thing did change in seminary training after Vatican II: *even more stress was put on the distinctively Catholic and less on the HCT* because we misunderstood, pastorally if not doctrinally, "the source and summit of the Christian life,"

“acting *in persona* Christi,” and being an “*alter Christus*.” (See 4 above; booklet, p. 11; evidence doc, pp. 31-35.) We misunderstood them because the culture from which we viewed them was not based on the HCT but on the pastoral strategy that was temporally appropriate after Trent. As a result, pastors are now even more removed from understanding the pastoral role of the Christian basics. They don’t even have “a conceptual category for them” (Weddell).

6. All future seminarians must also learn that Paul was not alone in recognizing the pastoral need to regularly reinforce foundations. They must learn that 2nd Peter, one of the relatively late epistles, written after the Lord would have shown the apostles most of their pastoral mistakes, explicitly states:

Therefore I intend always to remind you of these things, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. I think it is right, as long as I am in this body, to *arouse* (read: motivate) you by way of reminder. . . . I shall also make every effort to enable you to remember these things after my departure. (1:12-13, 15)

The author of 2nd Peter was doing precisely what Paul’s pastoring had not adequately done in Galatia and Corinth but which Paul subsequently learned his pastoring must do: remind the converts of important truths even though the converts were already supposed to know them.

What were the things the author of 2nd Peter was reminding the early converts of? (And again, today reminding is not sufficient reinforcement since the foundations were not adequately laid in the first place.) A look at what immediately precedes this statement reveals an order of priority. He begins by reinforcing Scripture’s main motivator for Christian behavior, their appreciation of their deification:

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to *His own glory and excellence*, by which He has granted to us His *precious and very great promises*, that through these you may escape the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and *become partakers of the divine nature*. (1:3-4)

Only after his pastoring has reinforced that motivation for Christian behavior, does he go on to call for Christian behavior:

For this very reason make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. . . . For whoever lacks these things is blind and shortsighted and has *forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins*. (1:5-9)

Motivating Christians by reminding them of the greatness of what they have received

does not exclude fear from being part of the way the apostles motivated Christians. But that fear was secondary to joyous appreciation in the precise sense of being fear of losing the great thing they knew they had already received:

Therefore, brethren, be the more zealous to confirm your call and election, for if you do this, you will never fall; so there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (1:10-11).

We couldn't ask the epistles for more explicit instructions to pastors than those in 2nd Peter 1: 3-11.

7. All future seminarians must learn that, while *theologically* the opposite of justification “by faith alone” is “by faith and good works,” *pastorally*, which is Paul’s point of view in Romans and Galatians, the opposite of “by faith *alone*” is “by faith *and repentance*, i.e., the sincere intention to do good works” as opposed to “by faith and the actual accomplishment of good works.” Paul is telling his readers about the personal and practical psychology of justification, the ascetics of justification, i.e., how his readers must be disposed to take advantage of Jesus’ promise that He Himself, rather than our good intentions, will “fulfill the requirements of the law in us” (Rm 8:4).

Again, doctrinal orthodoxy is not the same as practical pastoral wisdom (see p. 1 above). Paul is not talking, except by implication, about the doctrinal theology of justification. If Catholics and Lutherans both think he is, they are both wrong. He is talking about the praxis of justification. (Compare what Maritain says about the difference between Aquinas’ theology and John of the Cross’ ascetics, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, Ch. VIII, ##3-8, 13-19.)

Like Paul, pastors must strive to ensure that Christians are firmly conscious that Jesus, not our good intentions, causes our good works in us by His free gift, unmerited by any work of ours, of grace. That we do not have to merit that gift, together with the infinite glory of sanctifying grace, is why the Great News is so great as to call for “rejoicing always”. (1 Thes 5:16) Fully cooperating with grace presupposes an habitual personal appreciation of the greatness of the Great News, as the texts cited in paragraphs 2, 4 and 8 show (and as the ascetics of John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila imply, at the very least).

If nonChristians listened to Catholic homilies for years, they would hear weak-kneed references to Jesus “helping us” and not know that, by the HCT, the difference between Christianity and “religion” is that, while religion is humans trying to lift themselves up to God, Christianity is God’s coming down and lifting human beings up to Himself. How many Catholics appreciate the difference between Christianity and religion today? (See pp. 26-27 at www.joyfulshepherdretreat.org/documents/pastoralAscetics/secrt2.pdf.)

And how many Catholics who participate in the Church’s normal pastoral life could tell you that to repent and believe the Great News are the two essential things they need to do in order to cooperate with grace? Repentance is the sincere decision to do good and avoid

evil, a “firm purpose of amendment,” but it is *not* a decision to make ourselves better. Coupled with faith, it is a decision to ask and permit Jesus to make us better. That is what Mary did at the Annunciation, the only pure example of faith alone without works (other than the “work” of asking with faith) *or* repentance. Mary did not need repentance, but she still needed faith.

I present more than sufficient Scriptural and Magisterial evidence for this interpretation of Paul on faith and works at

www.joyfulshepherdretreat.org/documents/pastoralAscetics/seprt2.pdf

The same material is covered in two internet posts designed to be read in sequence:

www.joyfulshepherdretreat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Session-C-Third-Talk.pdf

and

www.joyfulshepherdretreat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Session-E-Fourth-Talk.pdf

The first (pp. 47-49) and second (pp. 34-37) of these three posts include the same detailed appendix explaining key Pauline texts concerning justification and works of the law.

Unless the Great News is adequately proclaimed and regularly reinforced, Catholics will inevitably tend to fall back “under the law,” as the Galatians and Romans did, not exactly in the same way but in ways that are still spiritually deadly. Catholics will think, at least semi-consciously, that they have to earn their salvation by keeping the rules and/or doing good works.

And once they are under the law, they will think of sanctifying grace as a ticket out of hell and into heaven, rather than as their deification by being adopted into the Trinity’s familial life. And if they do not appreciate that, which is Christianity’s essence, how will they be motivated to Christian behavior in two crucial ways? First, motivated to love their fellow Christians in a way that visibly testifies to their belief that their fellow Christians have been divinized (see 9). Second, motivated to offer up their sufferings for the salvation of all because they know the divine value of their sufferings. (Col. 1:24-29, and see section 11 below.)

Without regular, clear proclamations of the Great News, Catholics can still be under the law in another way. The fruits of the sacraments in us will be in proportion to our faith. When they come to the sacrament of Reconciliation, how many participants in the Church’s normal pastoral life have faith that all their sins have *already* been forgiven beforehand (Rm 5:10; Col 1:21-22; 2:14; 2 Co 5:19)? Forgiveness is a gift that has already been purchased, wrapped, sent and is just waiting for us to pick up in Reconciliation, if we sincerely want it (repent). Catholics who do not believe that have not been given faith in the great thing Jesus really did for us. Without that prior faith in what Jesus did for us, they cannot benefit from Reconciliation, or any other sacrament or spiritual exercise, as

much as they are meant to.

8. All future seminarians must learn that Scripture promises that, as a result of repenting, believing and being baptized, by water or desire, we will receive the conscious appreciation of our deification that we need to be full disciples. For Scripture says that this appreciation is what the descent of the Holy Spirit did for Christians (Jn 14:16-20). See booklet, p. 7; evidence doc, pp. 23-25, and at www.joyfulshepherdretreat.org, see *Retreat Outlines*, Talk V, and *Theological Background*, Ch. V).

That *change in consciousness* is what empowered the disciples on Pentecost. Luke twice records Jesus commanding the apostles to stay in Jerusalem until they receive “power” (Lk 24:49; Ac 1:8). But they had already received their *operato* sacramental powers to offer the Eucharist and forgive sins. So the power for their pastoring comes from the sacrament of Confirmation, which they share with all Christians, not Holy Orders. Seminarians must learn that beyond the sacramental powers the apostles received at the Last Supper and on Easter evening, the apostles and the other disciples needed the new power received on Pentecost for their sacramental powers to bear fruit. For the conscious appreciation of our deification is meant to be our main motivator. That appreciation was itself an unmerited, free gift received by Christians after repenting and believing the Great News. (Ac 1:38-39)

Receiving that strengthening (i.e., *con-firming*) gift need not be a dramatic experience (later called “infused contemplation,” i.e., infused personal consciousness of the Trinity’s indwelling) as it was throughout Acts. John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila told their communities that infused contemplation was not necessary for doing God’s will, but they did not deny that some form of conscious appreciation of the Trinity’s indwelling was the normal motivation for fully cooperating with grace.

Still, such a dramatic experience did not disappear from the reception of the Holy Spirit after the apostolic age. (See McDonnell and Montague, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit: Evidence from the First Eight Centuries*.) Probably, pastors should often observe experiences like that in the normal course of proper pastoring. But pastors should not teach that they are necessary.

The purpose of the sacrament of Confirmation is to obey God out of love and joy, not just to avoid punishment, by causing an appreciation of the unmerited and glorious indwelling of the Trinity. And that was probably why Paul was so surprised to learn that his pastoring had to regularly reinforce that appreciation in his converts. He seems to have thought that the appreciation they would have received when he laid hands on them was enough. Still he could, and our pastors can, rely on the Holy Spirit received in Confirmation—or by desire for the graces of Confirmation, as Aquinas points out someplace; again, what only the sacrament itself can give us is the permanent modification (see 3.b above)—to make their regular reinforcement of it succeed. Pastors don’t need to, and shouldn’t, rely on emotion or advertising enthusiasm.

Overcoming fear may have been part of the Spirit’s work at Pentecost, but if so, it was not the essential part of that work. Overcoming fear is not mentioned in Scripture and is not

even relevant in the three other descents of the Spirit presented in Acts. The disciples gathered in the upper room not out of fear but out of obedience to the Lord's command and His promise of power.

Scriptural evidence demonstrating these points about the descent of the Spirit and Confirmation is presented on pp. 7-14 at

www.joyfulshepherdretreat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Session-F-Fifth-Talk.pdf

and at

www.joyfulshepherdretreat.org/documents/pastoralAscetics/secr5.pdf

9. All future seminarians must learn Jesus' specific, scripturally demonstrable, pastoral plan: that pastors foster visible Christian brother/sisterhood, familial love between Christians. And seminarians must also learn that this scriptural pastoral principle can be adequately explained only to the extent that the three Scriptural principles in paragraphs 1a., b., and d. above are already implemented in their pastoring.

The New Law (Jn 13:34-35) does not concern love of neighbor but love of fellow Christians, "one another" as distinct from "all." See also 1 Thes 3:12, 4:9-10; 5:15; 1 Jn 5:1 with 3:1 and 4:20-21; and booklet, pp. 4-5, evidence doc, pp. 5-16. So seminarians must learn how to explain this idea to people in a culture for which this is a radically foreign, even repugnant, idea. It looks like discrimination to people who constantly hear about equality of *rights* but not about our different *responsibilities* to show love to some people and groups of people, e.g., our parents and families, in ways different from others. The New Law, given only to our first pastors, tells pastors to make the Church a visible sign, a sacrament, of the Trinity's familial unity, i.e., love (Jn 17:23, 26). That is Jesus' pastoral plan (Jn 17:21, 23) for saving the world. The Church's being a delivery system for spiritual goods and services is just a means to that end.

That the New Law concerns only Christians is confirmed by Ch. 17's prayer for unity where Jesus explicitly says He is praying only for His disciples, not for others. He there prays for the kind of unity He and the Father have. What kind is that? "The fellowship of the Holy Spirit," of course. (Which may be why it can seem that the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in Ch. 17. Naming Him there would be superfluous; the whole prayer is about Him. For it is about Christians being one "as we are one" [Jn 17:22], i.e., in the Father and Son's Spirit of ecstatic mutual love.) John 17 is *not* talking about the abstract metaphysics of their unity in "essence" rather than as "persons"; for Christians are supposed to be one the way the Father and Son are there described as being one. Nor is that mere doctrinal unity (ecumenicism) between the Father and Son. Nothing is higher in the HCT than the love uniting the Father and Son and their including us in it.

Abundant Scriptural, and Magisterial, proof that this is indeed Jesus' pastoral plan is referenced on pp. 4-5 of the booklet, evidence doc pp. 5-16, and quoted in Retreat Outlines, Talk VI, and Theological Background, Ch. III. The Scriptural quotes show that the apos-

tles keep repeating the special need for Christians to have love specifically for other Christians over, and over, and over (evidence doc pp. 11-14). The writers could not get it off their minds that we need to love “especially . . . those who are of the household of the faith,” “the saints,” “the brothers,” “one another” as distinguished from “all” (1 Thess 3:12, 4:9-10, 5:15), those who are children of God in the specific sense of believing in Jesus (1 Jn 3:1, 4:21-5:1; Gal 3:26).

The New Law and the prayer of Ch. 17 show (1) that the Church’s essence is to be an extension of the divine family; so they also show (2) that in the HCT the Church’s having its institutional structure as a delivery system for spiritual goods and services is infinitely less important than its visibly being a brother/sisterhood whose members love each other as the Father and Son do. The end is always more important than the means, and Christian familial love is the end for which the Church’s institutional structure and sacramental system are the means.

The New Law, and the prayer of Ch. 17, was given only to Jesus’s pastors; other Christians would have to learn about it from them. So Jesus’ giving them the New Law placed a solemn obligation on His pastors to ensure that their congregations understood the reasons for it and obeyed it. The New Law and prayer of Ch. 17 make fostering mutual love of Christians for other Christians the main *proximate* goal of pastors. The ultimate goal, of course, is the salvation of mankind. But Jesus explicitly says that the ultimate pastoral goal, i.e., the world’s coming to know that He is from the Father, will be achieved by Christians loving other Christians as if they really believe they have all been adopted into the divine family. “I have given them the glory you have given me, *so that* they may be one as we are (i.e., by love), *so that* the world may come to believe that you sent me and have loved them as you love me.”

So we should call the New Law Jesus’ *pastoral* commandment and the prayer for mutual Christian love Jesus’ *pastoral* prayer. Jesus’ first pastors’ repeated insistence on Christians’ love specifically for other Christians (texts cited in booklet, p. 5; evidence document pp. 11-14) shows that that is how they took the New Law and prayer for unity.

But this scripturally demonstrable understanding of Jesus’ New Law is all but totally forgotten in today’s Church. In the past 50 years, I have heard only one (1) ministerial priest preach on it, Sean Cardinal O’Malley. But I have heard him give that homily three times, and he posted the correct interpretation of the New Law on his web site.

The last time I heard him give it, I asked several people present, whom I knew to be serious and intelligent Christians, whether they heard him say the New Law concerned Christians loving other Christians. All but one of them did not even *notice* that he taught that. And the one that did notice had already figured out the New Law for himself by reading Scripture, not from any catechesis the Church gave him. That is how foreign the crucial idea of mutual Christian love is to today’s practicing Catholics. They don’t even hear it when it’s mentioned because they don’t have a “conceptual category” to put it in.

I had the same experience when I gave a half hour talk to a group of fine, prayerful priests

about the role of mutual Christian love as explicitly distinguished from our obligation to love everyone. All their comments and questions referred to love in general, none to mutual Christian love. Two weeks later I was speaking to one of them about the talk, and he said “Oh, you were talking about Christians loving other Christians!” Their seminary training had obviously not even given them a “conceptual category” to put mutual Christian love, the very pastoral plan that Jesus gave the apostles, in.

But the reaction, or lack of it, by those Catholics reveals another equally important truth about how poorly disposed to receive the pastoring they need today’s Catholics are, namely, that our pastors don’t know how poorly disposed Catholics are. The fact that Cardinal O’Malley knows the need to give Catholics a correct interpretation of the New Law shows how far his pastoring is beyond that of any other ministerial priest I have heard in 50 years. Yet even he does not realize that Catholics *cannot* understand the reason for the New Law unless it is very carefully explained. And that explanation must address the specific obstacles to understanding the New Law that our society creates. (See pp. 3-4, above; booklet, p. 5; evidence doc, pp. 13-15.)

And all future seminarians need to learn that Christian brother/sisterhood is the proximate goal of the Eucharist. (But do today’s seminarians even think of the Eucharist as having a specific goal or goals for which their pastoring is needed?) Again, there is abundant scriptural proof of this.

That is why the 4th gospel has Jesus keep repeating the call for mutual Christian love at the last supper, as opposed to re-telling the story of the first Mass and first ordination. And that is why the discourse at the last supper begins with the washing of the feet and a command equivalent to the Eucharistic “Do this in memory of me” (Jn 13:15), and ends with an elaborate prayer for mutual Christian love “I am praying for my disciples, not for the world, that they may love each other as you and I do”—which love *Gaudiam et Spes*, 21, says is the meaning of the “unity” Jesus prays for in Jn 17, i.e., the unity of the Holy Spirit. The author of the 4th gospel obviously wants there to be no doubt about the sacramental *meaning* of Jesus’ sacrificial meal, and so of the apostles’ ordination to perform it.

Only Paul’s epistles mention the Eucharist, and they do it only twice (1 Co 10:16-17; 11:17-30). But both times Paul specifically connects the sacrament to the goal of unity, i.e., mutual love, between Christians. Scripture makes that mutual love essential to the meaning of the Eucharist because by the HCT the Church as a visibly loving family is the *primary* sacrament.

10. All future seminarians must learn that the *operantis* effects of sacramental grace are not *solely* the responsibility of the individual who must cooperate with grace. Catholics can only respond adequately to grace if the Church pastors them properly: the Church must teach them what they have to know and what they have to do to cooperate with grace, and provide them with environments that support their cooperating with grace.

So our theology of the *operato/operantis* is truncated and only true as far as it goes. The sacraments are normally meant to achieve their goals by empowering the pastoral life of

the Church in the broadest sense of those words. Before achieving its *operantis* effects by empowering the individual, sacramental grace normally empowers the Church's pastoral life, so that the Church's pastoring can empower the individual. (See 1 Co 12:28-31; Eph 4:11-16; booklet, p. 16; evidence doc pp. 1-4, 27-28, 39, 41.) For example, infant baptism gives us the virtue of faith but only in the sense of giving us the ability to later exercise the virtue of faith in response to the Church's proclamation of the Great News. (Saint John Paul II, *Catechesi Trandendae*, 19).

Grace is meant to bear its *operantis* fruit by supporting contexts of mutual Christian love in order that Christians get the environmental support we need to love *all* people as Jesus does, nonChristians as well as Christians. Without environments of mutual Christian love, Christians cannot fulfill their mission of bringing salvation to nonChristians: "May they love their fellow disciples as you and I love each other, that the world may believe that you have sent me. . . . that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." (Jn 17:21-23)

Theologically, we understand the family in terms of the Church: the family is the domestic Church. Pastorally, we must understand the Church in terms of the family: the Church is by essence an extended family, first an extension of the Trinity, second an extension of the nuclear family where pastoring normally begins, continues and is completed. In Scripture only the husband in the family, not the presbyter, is compared to Jesus in His function as head of the Church (Eph. 5:23).

After the personal evangelization of Catholics and their appreciation that sanctifying grace is the created gift greater than which none can be conceived, what would contribute most to the effectiveness of the Sunday liturgy is a context of Christians consciously striving to be the kind of brother/sisterhood the empowerment of which is essential to the Eucharist's meaning as a sacramental sign. (See 9 above; booklet, p. 4; evidence doc pp.6-7.) That context is incomparably more important to the effectiveness of the Sunday liturgy than all the changes to rubrics, translations and music put together.

Although I have many times heard ministerial priests say that the *operantis* depends on individual's doing the right thing, I have never heard one say that the *operantis* depends on the Church's pastoring the right way. Again, the *operantis* is communal, not just individual, as is everything in the life of the Trinity and our participation in it.

11. All future seminarians must be trained to *prepare* Catholics, as the epistles do, for the inevitability of suffering (texts in booklet, p. 13, and see evidence doc pp. 37-38).

Christianity IS the solution to the problem of suffering. So Catholics deserve and need a much better treatment of suffering than our normal pastoral life provides. Pastors need to explain the *purpose* of suffering the way it is explained at the bottom of p. 12 of the booklet (evidence doc pp. 37-38; for more see the web site, "Retreat Outlines," Ninth Talk, pp. 21-27, and "Theological Background," Ch. 4, pp. 10-20.). God's purpose for finite suffering, like His purpose for everything else in creation, is to help us avoid infinite, eternal suffering. Add up all the finite suffering in the history of the world; it does not even com-

pare to the infinite, eternal suffering that God is using finite suffering to save us from. God must know that our salvation is more likely that way than any other way.

And seminarians should be taught that the right time for Catholics to learn to understand and expect suffering is *before* they are actually going through acute suffering, as we all will. When we are going through it is hardly the time that we can think most clearly about it. Pastors have the obligation to prepare Christians for suffering as the epistles do (texts in booklet, p. 13).

1st Peter explicitly states that Christians are *called* to suffer (2:21) and that we should not be surprised when we suffer as if something *strange* was happening to us (4:12). Yet we often hear “Why is this happening to me? What did I do to deserve this?” When we think like that, and we are all tempted to, we are still *under the law* to that extent. For we are thinking of what we receive from God in terms of justification by our own merit.

But seminarians must especially be taught that all the preceding scriptural pastoral principles must be in place before Catholics can adequately receive teaching about suffering. We are not ready to understand the place of suffering in God’s plan unless we have had the joy of accepting the Great News of what Jesus did for us and of appreciating the glory He has given us, including the great privilege of being the bearers of His divine life to others, which is what offering up our sufferings does, and unless we are in an environment where people can support and encourage us when we suffer because we know they believe in and are trying to do the same things we are.

12. All future seminarians should be given a good way of explaining how God is in control of absolutely everything that happens to us, no matter how bad. I recommend the Scripturally-based explanation on pp. 26-27 at

www.joyfulshepherdretreat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Session-K-Ninth-Talk.pdf

Same explanation on pp. 12-14 at

www.joyfulshepherdretreat.org/documents/pastoralAscetics/secrt4.pdf