

Catholic Candle

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Pope Francis stands condemned by Catholic Tradition for promoting unnatural impurity

Q: What should I say when people tell me that the Catholic Church now accepts unnatural “lifestyles” because the pope does not condemn them and he says “Who am I to judge?”

A: Although Pope Francis is our pope, he is a bad pope. He is our father, but is a bad father. He is reconciling himself with modern licentious, unnatural, and debauched views. It is true that he scandalized the world with his refusing to condemn “lifestyles” of unnatural impurity, saying: “who am I to judge?”. But this is merely the tip of the iceberg. He has a long history of supporting and fostering the unnatural lifestyle itself. For example, he suggested that those engaging in the unnatural vice as a pair should be given legal status and rights: “What we have to create is a civil union law. That way they are legally covered,” Francis said in the documentary, ‘Francesco,’¹ He has issued many other such scandalous statements.²

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/22/world/europe/pope-same-sex-unions-mystery.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article>

² For example:

- Pope Francis told a man who openly lived an unnaturally impure “lifestyle” in Chile, “You know Juan Carlos, that does not matter. **God made you like this. God loves you like this.** The Pope loves you like this and you should love yourself and not worry about what people say.” <https://www.cnn.com/2018/05/21/europe/pope-francis-gay-comments-intl/index.html>
- Through an interpreter, he told another man who openly lived an unnaturally impure “lifestyle”, “Giving more importance to the adjective rather than the noun, this is not good. We are all human beings and have dignity. **It does not matter who you are or how you live your life, you do not lose your dignity.** There are people that prefer to select or discard people because of the adjective – these people don’t have a human heart.” <https://cruxnow.com/church-in-uk-and-ireland/2019/04/pope-francis-tells-gay-man-you-do-not-lose-your-dignity-on-bbc-show/>

But Sacred Scripture condemns the unnatural vice in over twenty places. Here are just a few:

- “For this cause God delivered them up to shameful affections. For their women have changed the natural use into that use which is against nature. And, in like manner, the men also, leaving the natural use of the women, have burned in their lusts one towards another, men with men working that which is filthy, and receiving in themselves the recompense which was due to their error.” *Romans*, 1:26-27.
- “Do not err: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate ... shall possess the kingdom of God.” 1 *Corinthians*, 6:9-10
- Genesis narrates the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha and the cities around these, and shows clearly that it was in punishment for the unnatural vice, which God says is “very grave”. *Genesis* 18:20-21, 19:1-15.

The pope’s claim that one cannot lose his dignity no matter what a person does, is a conciliar error in direct opposition to Traditional Catholic teaching – which states that man retains his dignity only by obeying God’s laws and the natural law, but loses his dignity through sin.

St. Thomas Aquinas lucidly explains how man loses his dignity through sin:

By sinning, man departs from the order of reason, and consequently falls away from the dignity of his manhood, insofar as he is naturally free, and exists for himself, and he falls into the slavish state of the beasts Hence, although it is evil in itself to kill a man so long as he preserves his dignity, yet it may be good to kill a man who has sinned, even as it is to kill a beast. ***For a bad man is worse than a beast, and is more harmful***, as the Philosopher states (Polit. i, 1 and Ethic. vii, 6).

Summa, IIa IIae, Q.64, a.2, ad 3 (emphasis added).

For a further treatment of this Catholic principle, read the explanation in *Lumen Gentium Annotated*, by the editors of *Quanta Cura Press*, © 2013, p.73, footnote 48. This book is available:

➤ for free at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B49oPuI54eEGbzRhdmQ3X0Z6RFE/view>

and

➤ sold at cost on Amazon.com at this link: https://www.amazon.com/Lumen-Gentium-Annotated-examination-revolution/dp/1492107476/ref=sr_1_1

Catholic catechisms take note of such exceptionally strong condemnations of certain sins in Scripture, including this one, and label these as the sins “crying to heaven for vengeance”.

Besides Sacred Scripture, however, countless writings from early Church Fathers, popes, saints, and Church Doctors are in unanimous agreement in condemning this vice. The quotes would be too numerous to list, but they share the strength of quotes like these:

- “No sin in the world grips the soul as the accursed sodomy; this sin has always been detested by all those who live according to God Deviant passion is close to madness; this vice disturbs the intellect, destroys elevation and generosity of soul, brings the mind down from great thoughts to the lowliest They become blind and, when their thoughts should soar to high and great things, they are broken down and reduced to vile and useless and putrid things, which could never make them happy Just as people participate in the glory of God in different degrees, **so also in hell some suffer more than others for this is the greatest sin.** St. Bernardine of Siena, Sermon XXXIX in *Prediche volgari*, pp. 896-897, 915.
- “If all the sins of the flesh are worthy of condemnation because by them man allows himself to be dominated by that which he has of the animal nature, much more deserving of condemnation are the sins against nature by which man degrades his own animal nature....” St. Thomas Aquinas, *Super Epistolam B. Pauli ad Romanos*, Cap. 1, Lec. 8.

Pope Francis appears to think all the above “was then, but this is now”. But truth does not change, and he is condemned by the infallible condemnation in Pope Pius IX’s *Syllabus of Errors*:

Condemned statement #80:

The Roman Pontiff can, and ought to, reconcile himself, and come to terms with progress, liberalism and modern civilization.

Pope Francis appears to consider the above-quoted condemnations to be changeable and “subject to progress”, but this is condemned by Pope Pius IX’s *Syllabus of Errors*:

Condemned statement #5:

Divine revelation is imperfect, and therefore subject to a continual and indefinite progress, corresponding with the advancement of human reason.

Words to Live by – from Catholic Tradition

The Voice of Christ:

What more do I ask than that you give yourself entirely to Me? I care not for anything else you may give me, for I seek not your gift but you. Just as it would not be enough for you to have everything if you did not have Me, so **whatever you give cannot please Me if you do not give yourself.**

The Imitation of Christ, by Thomas à Kempis, Book IV, ch. 8 (emphasis added).

In Fear and Trembling: It is a Good Thing to Ask for Tears of Compunction

Objective truth series – Reflection #19

“With fear and trembling work out your salvation.” (Phil. 2; 12).

In our last reflection, we addressed what it means to have an eternal perspective of life, namely, to live for our last end. We must work out our salvation every day, and at no waking moment can we stop laboring at this crucial task.

But what in particular do we think about when considering the salvation of our soul? It would seem that if we **really** penetrated the reality that we can lose our souls, we would tremble and quake. This reality is what St. Paul is admonishing us about in his Epistle to the Philippians. We simply cannot take our salvation for granted.

We speak of fear and trembling. One can speak of two kinds of fear—servile fear and filial fear. Servile fear is the fear of being punished for an evil we’ve done, *i.e.*, as a slave’s fear of his master. Filial fear is the fear a son has towards his father because the son does not want to displease his father. Filial fear is based on love.

As Catholics we are taught from our childhood to fear hell as a place of punishment and torment. However, God expects us to have filial fear of Him and that we will want to please Him always.

We know that we owe God everything, and that we owe Him gratitude for everything He has done for us. We further know that we do not fear God’s Justice enough and we do not love God as we ought. For example, St. John Chrysostom when referring to the sins of rash judgment, anger, and detraction as being such general vices among men, says,

“What hopes of salvation remain for the generality of mankind, who commit without reflection, some or other of these crimes, one of which is enough to damn a soul?”³

This quote gives one pause and invokes fear. What hope do we have of salvation when we are so guilty of so many crimes against Our Dear Lord? Naturally, compunction should seize our hearts. *Compungere*, which means *the sting of conscience*, should be what we **want** in order to weep for our sins. We should consider these words of Our Lord, “Many sins are forgiven her, because she has loved much,” which refer to St. Mary Magdalene who was washing His feet with her tears [St. Luke 7; 47]. This quote, coupled with St. Peter’s words, “Charity covereth a multitude of sins,” [1st St. Peter 4:8] should make us want to weep for our sins in order to console Our Lord and Our Lady for the many sins and insults we have committed against them.

Especially in these times of the great apostasy and chastisement, we should want to pray and weep for the offenses that are continually being hurled against Our Lord and Our Lady. We know that we deserve the punishments of a chastisement for our sins. Our Lord and Our Lady have told us of the necessity of penance. Our Lady of Fatima insisted on us praying the Rosary and performing sacrifices for the conversion of sinners and for peace to be obtained through the Consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart.

Our Lady’s remedy is not unlike what St. John Chrysostom recommended during his times. As Alban Butler summarizes St. John Chrysostom’s books *On Compunction*, he notes how St. John prescribes a life of mortification and penance as an essential condition for maintaining a spirit of compunction. Butler refers to St. John Chrysostom’s analogy that water and fire are not more contrary to each other than a life of softness and delights is opposed to compunction. In the same vein, Butler relates how Chrysostom states that a love of pleasure renders the soul heavy and altogether earthly; but compunction gives the soul wings, by which she raises herself above all created things. St. John Chrysostom mentions, too, how Our Lord blesses those who mourn for their sins.

With all of the above in mind, let us not forget to turn to Mary, our Mother of Sorrows, and ask her to teach us about the malice of sin and how much pain we have caused her Divine Son. She, better than all mankind put together, understands the massive weight of sin that her Beloved Son bore. Her Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart was pierced with a sword of sorrow. She was a first-hand witness of the sufferings of Our Lord. This is why tradition teaches that she is the Co-Redemptrix and the Queen of Martyrs because she stood at the Foot of the Cross offering herself in union with her Divine Son.

³ Of course, our catechism teaches us that the three conditions for mortal sin are: 1) it must be a serious matter or considered to be a serious matter; 2) sufficient reflection; and 3) full consent of the will. See, e.g., *Baltimore Catechism* #3, Q.282. St. John Chrysostom here alludes to sinners becoming callous to their grievous vices.

So, begging Our Lord through Our Lady for the gift of tears of compunction, we pray that our hearts can melt. If we ponder the Passion of Our Lord, the innocence of Our Lady, and how we have both afflicted Our Lord **and** Our Lady, perhaps our cheeks would be moistened as we say the following:

Oh, if only we could full keep,
The love of Our Lord and Lady deep,
In our minds, each day and night,
How would we bear the sight?

Of so much grief, for this blest pair,
For their sorrow, beyond compare,
Attend and see if there like be,
Sorrow that pierced the heart of she,

Who was chosen to watch her Son,
And stay with her, beloved One,
While journeyed He, each step with pain,
The ground covered, with precious Stain

If tears could well up, as we see,
Each awful wound endured by Thee,
But could our hearts melt like wax,
Tears of Thee, Lord, would we dare ask?

Yeah, Lord Thy heart **did** yield wax-like,
Poured out like water, without dike,
The nails dug deep, Thy wrist and feet,
With growing love, could our hearts beat?

If tears could flow in rivers too,
But woe to us they are **so** few,
Beg we do now, for an increase
And weeping let us, never cease.

Our sins have caused Thee, pain so great,
We cannot full appreciate,
What our malice has done to Thee,
And the price of, iniquity.

And with fear then, do let us quake,
Seeing what Thou, bore for **our** sake,
Not displease Thee, in any way,
Working to save, our souls each day.

Mary, our Mother of sorrow,
Assist us with each new morrow
Without thee, we cannot endure,
And our love cannot, be pure.

Mary, us, with compunction fill,
With melted hearts our tears can spill,
Such a gift, we do not deserve,
From the right path, let us not swerve!

"If You Can Say the *Our Father* without Distraction, I Will Give You My Horse."

*"Our Father Who art in heaven hallowed be Thy name ... The saddle and the
bridle also?"*

I'm certain that most of you have heard that story told of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, and his offer to a man who boasted he was never distracted in prayer. The story relates how that man was distracted during his prayer by the scope of St. Bernard's offer.

I remind you about this to point out that distraction in prayer is the work of Satan, and a big problem for all of us. How can we correct the problem and give greater significance and meaning to our prayers? After praying on the problem, I had an idea that could help.

Now if distraction during prayer is not a problem for you, you are one in a million and you can stop reading now. But if you do have a problem, read on. I believe praying with energy and "hand action" demonstrates where your heart and thoughts are. Much the same as when we make the Sign of the Cross. Our hands go from head to heart to shoulders, demonstrating our thoughts and devotion to the Crucifixion of Our Lord. Why not use the same energy and attention-provoking action when praying ... say, the Rosary?

At Fatima Our Lady stated there will come a time when you will have only the Rosary and her Immaculate Heart. She could be referring to now as we suffer through the great crisis in the Church.

The action I am suggesting should be "hidden". You wouldn't want to distract others praying with you. If you can, schedule your prayer at a time when no outside noise and activity will distract you.

Let's start with the Rosary. Pray all prayers except the *Hail Marys* with your hands open, facing up, about one foot apart, forming a "holy channel" to heaven, much as the

priest does saying some parts of the Mass. The Rosary is in one hand, keeping track of your progress. At the *Hail Marys*, your hands are back to the usual position, but at the words "Fruit of thy womb, Jesus" you bow your head and your free hand touches your chest when you say "Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death," demonstrating you are a sinner and that the Blessed Mother's prayers now and at the hour of our death are most necessary.

Praying with this thought-provoking extra effort and energy, and with your attention for sure on the significance of each Mystery, should reduce your thoughts drifting to the distracting events in your life.

Keep in mind that you are talking to your Creator, and that distraction calls for an additional effort to keep your mind focused. While visiting Fatima and a friend who moved there with his family, I recall him saying, "when the Blessed Mother asked us to pray the Rosary, she meant all 15 Mysteries each time", or so he believed.

When you pray the rosary and other prayers, I recommend that you try this method to help you pray more earnestly and with more recollection. You will see your efforts have borne fruit when your prayers are a more intimate conversation with Our Lord and His Mother.

***An Apostate's Journey Back* – The N-SSPX tells of a journey from apostasy to liberalism**

Long ago, the SSPX's *Angelus* magazine used to do good work in helping souls understand Tradition. Although always enjoying a somewhat undeserved reputation for "hard-hitting articles", in reality, most of its articles even in the good days were too short and lacked sufficient substance to warrant that praise. But it may be the magazine kept the articles short because that was precisely what its audience wanted.

In November, 2020, the *Angelus Online* did not hesitate to print a particularly poisonous piece called *An Apostate's Journey Back*.⁴ Its author is a certain John McFarland, father of SSPX priest Mark McFarland (about whose scandals as an SSPX priest we could write a separate article). In this article, Mr. McFarland, a self-described fighter against the

⁴ This *Angelus* article is available here:
http://www.angelusonline.org/index.php?section=articles&subsection=show_article&article_id=4367

Resistance,⁵ first describes his journey to “Tradition”. It is, however, clear from what he tells of his story, that he never truly found Tradition, but instead, only a softened, watered-down idea of who Archbishop Lefebvre really was, and thus a false “Tradition”.

First, to his credit, early in his “conversion”, Mr. McFarland correctly identifies the problem. He says,

I didn’t go more than 50-75 pages into [a book called] “Iota Unum” before I recognized the crucial fact: the Church’s terrible problems did not stem primarily from Rome’s being disobeyed. They stemmed from Rome’s being followed [by Catholics] in its failure to oppose and its supporting the modernist offensive during and after the Council.

McFarland, who tells us that he is an amateur philosopher and a lawyer, then began to assist at Fr. Ringrose’s *St. Athanasius* chapel in Northern Virginia. [To our readers: Fr. Ringrose was a long-time friend of the SSPX until the SSPX’s liberalism and treachery became very apparent. He broke with the “new” SSPX afterwards, and the “new” SSPX condemned him for it. He now is affiliated with Bp. Williamson’s group.]

McFarland goes on to say that his newly-ordained son was home in 2012 when he and his son learned of Fr. Ringrose’s signing what McFarland calls the “foundational document” of the Resistance. McFarland’s reaction was to immediately stop attending that chapel:

He [newly-ordained Fr. McFarland] was home on vacation when I came home from Holy Name Sunday Mass and discovered online its [*i.e.*, The Resistance’s] foundational document, whose signatories included the pastor of St. Athanasius. I told [my son, newly-ordained] Father, he said “Well, you can’t go back there [*i.e.*, to Fr. Ringrose’s chapel].”

We have seen this knee-jerk reaction before, in otherwise-good men who continue to support the liberal “new” SSPX, and will hear nothing of the Resistance’s claims that the SSPX has become increasingly liberal. We think such men long ago made the tremendous mistake of placing their loyalty firstly in particular men or organizations (such as the SSPX or particular priests they admire), instead of **giving unwavering loyalty first to uncompromising, unadulterated Catholic Tradition**. This principle is exemplified in McFarland’s case, where he did not ask Fr. Ringrose (who had a better “nose” for liberalism than McFarland) to carefully explain his decision for his break with the SSPX. The McFarlands seem instead to have simply left ***because Fr. Ringrose objected to their group, viz., the SSPX***. If the McFarlands did give Fr.

⁵ McFarland calls those opposing the SSPX’s liberalism “the Resistance”. As such, he would probably call *Catholic Candle* part of “the Resistance” because it points out the “new” SSPX’s liberalism. However, we don’t tend to call ourselves “the Resistance” but instead simply focus on striving to be completely uncompromising Traditional Catholics.

Ringrose a chance to explain, McFarland does not mention it, and thus leaves off all of Fr. Ringrose's substantial reasons, which in justice he should have mentioned.

McFarland goes on to say he got involved in polemics with Resistance websites, and that the Resistance was, in general, uncharitable. McFarland does not give any evidence to support this claim but, of course, it is always possible for individuals to overstep civility or charity. In any case, the *Angelus Online* article allows McFarland to vent his poison by going on to say,

Most of those who consider themselves traditional Catholics and attack the SSPX refer to themselves as the Resistance. From the time that I first learned about them, it was obvious that they had no proof and that their thinking was incoherent.

Even Bishop Williamson, who must have a great deal of SSPX internal information from before his break with the Society, has never offered testimony for any of the charges against Bishop Fellay circulating in the Resistance.

In regards to thinking [sic], in 2012 Bishop Williamson condemned what he styled the SSPX's wishing to put itself under the authority of the pope. But if Bishop Williamson does not accept the authority of the pope, then His Excellency and those of his followers who agree with him look to be schismatics.

Let us take three of McFarland's assertions, in the order he makes them.

McFarland's first assertion:

1. **"From the time that I first learned about them [*viz.*, the Resistance], it was obvious that they had no proof and that their thinking was incoherent."**

Is it not rash (and uncharitable) for McFarland to conclude it was "obvious" at his *first learning about* the Resistance, that they had "no proof" and that their "thinking was incoherent"? How often does it ever happen that when receiving the initial information about any group, a person can prudently conclude that it is "obvious" that the group as a whole both has no evidence and also is illogical?

Further, McFarland's hasty conclusion of "no proof" is shown by his overlooking a very long catalog of proof either because he failed to look deeply or he is too liberal to recognize the "new" SSPX's own liberalism. For example:

- Isn't it liberal for the "new" SSPX to reverse its position on abortion-connected vaccines in order to now conclude they are acceptable?⁶
- Isn't it liberal for the N-SSPX to call the new mass "Catholic worship"?⁷
- Isn't it liberal for the N-SSPX to promote a conciliar speaker who is an expert favorably promoting Pope John Paul II's heretical "Theology of the Body"?⁸
- Isn't it liberal for the N-SSPX to accept the post-conciliar popes as saints?⁹
- Isn't it liberal for the "new" SSPX to urge its followers to join the pope in praying *with* false religions?¹⁰

For anyone who wants additional concrete evidence of the "new" SSPX's increasing liberalism, click on the "Society of St. Pius X" tab at this link:
<https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/#gsc.tab=0>

McFarland's second assertion:

2. Bishop Williamson and the Resistance cannot support "the charges against Bishop Fellay circulating in the Resistance."

Again, McFarland fails to look deeply or he is too liberal to recognize Bishop Fellay's own liberalism. Here are a few examples of it:

- ❖ Bishop Fellay promotes the new mass as good and holy;¹¹

⁶ See part 3 of this article: <https://catholiccandle.org/2021/01/01/reject-the-covid-vaccines/>

⁷ <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/priests/sspx-the-new-liberal-sspx-calls-the-new-mass-catholic-worship.html>

⁸ <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/priests/sspx-the-n-sspx-promotes-a-conciliar-speaker-who-is-an-expert-in-pope-john-paul-ii-s-heretical-theology-of-the-body.html>

⁹ <https://catholiccandle.org/2019/06/20/the-new-liberal-sspx-accepts-the-post-conciliar-popes-as-saints/>

¹⁰ <https://catholiccandle.org/2020/04/01/the-n-sspx-urges-its-followers-to-join-the-pope-praying-with-false-anti-catholic-religions/>

¹¹ <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/priests/fellay-teaches-the-new-mass-is-good-and-holy.html>

- ❖ Bishop Fellay denies that there are any errors in the documents of Vatican II;¹² and
- ❖ Bishop Fellay claims that Vatican II's teaching on religious liberty "is a very, very limited one: very limited!" although Vatican II itself says that religious liberty is entirely unlimited as long as society does not erupt in violence.¹³

For anyone who wants additional concrete evidence of Bishop Fellay's liberalism, click on the "Society of St. Pius X" tab, subtab "Bishop Fellay", found at this link:
<https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/#gsc.tab=0>

McFarland's third assertion:

3. Perhaps the worst of McFarland's nonsense however, is his attempted smearing of the Resistance as schismatic or sedevacantist. He says, "In regards to thinking [sic], in 2012 Bishop Williamson condemned what he styled the SSPX's wishing **to put itself under the authority of the pope**. But if Bishop Williamson **does not accept the authority of the pope**, then His Excellency and those of his followers who agree with him look to be schismatics" (emphasis added).

We emphasize those parts of that remark which show how McFarland grossly misrepresents and over-simplifies the true position of Resistance Catholics; and he does this not once, but twice. McFarland implies that Bp. Williamson (and Resistance Catholics) have since 2012 wrongly condemned the SSPX for putting itself "**under the authority of the pope**". That is, he implies that Resistance Catholics think that Catholics should reject the pope's authority outright, simply speaking. If the situation were really as simple as McFarland paints it, then yes – Bp. Williamson and others who hold that view would indeed have committed the mortal sin of schism (as today's avowed sedevacantists indeed have). Such however, is not the case.

McFarland (knowingly or unknowingly) ignores critical distinctions which separate true Traditional Catholics from men like himself, as well as those outside the Church (sedevacantists and other schismatics).¹⁴ The truly Traditional Catholic attitude has always been to both acknowledge the authority of the pope as the supreme head of the

¹² <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/priests/fellay-denies-that-there-are-any-errors-in-the-documents-of-vatican-ii.html>

¹³ <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/priests/fellay-pozzo-religious-liberty.html>

¹⁴ Sedevacantism is wrong and is schismatic. Read this short book: <https://catholiccandle.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/sedevacantism-material-or-formal-schism.pdf> Concerning our duty to recognize the pope's authority but resist his evil commands, read chapter 7 of this book.

Catholic Church, and to protect oneself and one's loved ones by **refusing to obey sinful commands from that superior (that is, those commands that are against Faith and Morals)**. This is true obedience and this principle applies **whether the superior is ecclesiastical, political, or familial**.

But it is true that in the last 50 years, almost every command from conciliar church authorities has posed a serious danger to faith and morals, and thus, Catholics ***in practice*** refuse to obey almost everything their superiors command. **Yet those same Catholics know the men issuing these evil commands continue to be their superiors.**

It is precisely this attitude of true filial obedience coupled with caution and prudence that sedevacantists (on the one hand) and liberals like John McFarland (on the other) lack. But this very balancing act is what Archbishop Lefebvre understood and “walked” every day. It is true that in the earlier days (1970s) he was not yet certain of what Modernist Rome's intentions were, and wanted to give them the benefit of the doubt. But after the mid-1980s, he became completely convinced that Modernist Rome had no other intention but to destroy Catholic Tradition.

Bishop Williamson (despite his own serious liberalism on various matters)¹⁵ clearly understands all of the above distinctions, as he has repeatedly, clearly, and publicly shown. Yet McFarland, who implies he has engaged many times in serious polemics with the Resistance, as well as having spoken with Bp. Williamson, mentions none of this.

Conclusion: The N-SSPX continues to print poison such as McFarland's article so as to continue to corrupt its readers as well as faithful Traditional Catholics everywhere. Not only is the N-SSPX no longer Traditional Catholic, but also it works directly AGAINST Catholic Tradition by misrepresenting, smearing, and silencing those who try to sound the alarm concerning its own liberalism.

Revolution is now “in the Air”: Can a Catholic ever be a Revolutionary?

Revolution seems to be “in the air” and this has been true during much of 2020. There were riots, burning, destruction, and looting across the U.S. (and in other places in the world) especially in the Summer 2020.

¹⁵ See, e.g., the articles found at this link: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/#gsc.tab=0>
Click on the “Bishop Williamson” tab.

Here is one account of the leftist demonstrations in Seattle on January 20, 2021, the day Joe Biden was sworn in as U.S. president:

The demonstrators, mostly clad in black, spray-painted anarchy symbols on buildings, broke windows and marched under a banner that read, “We are ungovernable.”

“We don’t want Biden – we want revenge for police murders, imperialist wars, and fascist massacres,” read another banner that the group marched under. ... The crowd called for the abolition of ICE¹⁶ and, outside the federal immigration court, several people set fire to an American flag¹⁷

There was not only burning and looting during the leftist riots in 2020 but anarchists even established a long-term violent occupation of part of Seattle, Washington, excluding police from the area, and re-naming the captured territory “the Capital Hill Autonomous Zone” (a/k/a “CHAZ”).

Further, six men reportedly planned to kidnap Gretchen Whitmer, the leftist governor of Michigan who was infamous for her abusive lockdowns of her state.¹⁸

Also, the mainstream media, the Democrats, and some others blame then-President Trump for inciting a supposed “coup attempt” on January 6, 2021.¹⁹ They blame Trump, despite him telling his followers that day to “peacefully and patriotically make your voices heard”²⁰ about the election fraud.

On January 6, 2021, while Trump was speaking to his supporters at a different location, some hooligans already began some lawless activity at the U.S. capitol building.²¹ It

¹⁶ “ICE” in an acronym standing for the U.S. agency *Immigration and Customs Enforcement*.

¹⁷ <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/biden-press-secretary-biden-riots-seattle-portland>

¹⁸ https://www.theepochtimes.com/trump-and-whitmer-trade-barbs-in-wake-of-foiled-kidnap-attempt_3532642.html

¹⁹ <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/01/jeffrey-clark-justice-department-trump-coup/617818/>

²⁰ <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/trumps-jan-6-full-speech-we-will-never-concede-when-theft-is-involved>

²¹ <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/capitol-riot-on-jan-6-began-already-30-minutes-before-trumps-speech-ended>

appears that leftist activists²² led the violence and successfully got a tiny percentage of Trump supporters to follow their lead, e.g., following those leftists into the Capitol building through a smashed window. One of the *Black Lives Matter* founders had previously put out a call on her Twitter feed telling her followers that they should disguise themselves as Trump supporters at post-election events.²³

All these events raise the general question:

Is it *ever* permissible for Catholics to be revolutionaries?

Let us examine the traditional teaching of the Catholic Church on this question.

We must distinguish between resisting and revolting.

When someone in authority commands something evil, we must never “obey” that evil command.²⁴ But it is one thing to resist that evil command (as we must) and it is a further step to use that evil command as a basis for rejecting the ruler’s lawful authority *as such*. This further step is to revolt.

For example, the American revolutionaries considered it evil that King George III imposed taxes on them without their consent, and that he did many other things to which they objected. But the American revolutionaries not only resisted such commands of King George but also used the commands as a (purported) “justification” for their revolution.

In their *Declaration of Independence*, the revolutionaries objected to many things such as their king “quartering large bodies of armed troops among us”; “imposing taxes on us without our consent”; and “depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of trial by jury”.

After listing their grievances, the American revolutionaries then did what all revolutionaries do: they said that their ruler was to blame for their own revolution because his conduct caused him to lose his status as their king. The American revolutionaries declared that King George III, “whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.”²⁵

²² See, e.g., https://www.theepochtimes.com/self-proclaimed-revolutionary-eggs-on-capitol-intruders-as-he-records-them-publishes-video_3649617.html

²³ <https://twitter.com/AGarcia7805/status/1346987432005263362/photo/2>

²⁴ For a careful examination of true and false obedience, read this article: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/the-false-obedience-of-cowardly-and-confused-catholics.html>

²⁵ Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776.

The American revolutionaries did what revolutionaries always do: they declared that their ruler had lost all authority over them. Here are their words:

[T]hese United Colonies are, and of right ought to be free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved.²⁶

Finally, the American revolutionaries then did something else which revolutionaries always do: they declared that it was their right and duty to revolt:

[W]hen a long train of abuses and usurpations ... evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is [the colonies'] right, it is their duty, to throw off such government.²⁷

This is what it is to be a revolutionary: to reject and resist not just particular (perhaps evil) commands but to also reject the very authority of his ruler.

The American revolutionaries followed the same pattern as countless other revolutionaries, *e.g.*, in France, Russia, and Latin America.²⁸ In all human history there is **not even one** revolution²⁹ which the Catholic Church recognizes to have been praiseworthy and not sinful.³⁰

²⁶ Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776.

²⁷ Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776.

²⁸ To read how Masonic revolution swept throughout Latin America, read the sketches of the political histories of the individual countries, in this book: *Latin America: A Sketch of its Glorious Catholic Roots and a Snapshot of its Present*, by the Editors of *Quanta Cura Press*, ©2016.

²⁹ Generally, political revolt is called by the name “sedition”, whereas revolt against the Catholic Church is called “schism”. But at the root of all such revolts, there is the same “*non serviam!*” which echoes that of Satan, the father of all revolutionaries.

³⁰ If there could ever have been a place and circumstances where revolution could have appeared justified, it would have been a civil revolution by Catholics in newly-apostate England, where the English government inflicted horrors and injustices of every type upon the Catholics. The torture, imprisonment, extreme suffering, and martyrdom inflicted on Catholics and the outrageous confiscation of Catholic property seemed to many as something impossible to bear. See, *e.g.*, Chapters 1-3 of *Narrative of the Gunpowder Plot*, by Fr. John Gerard, S.J., *Quanta Cura Press*. This book is a fascinating contemporaneous account of the Anglican and Puritan persecutions of Catholics during the reign of King James I, which is the context of the Gunpowder Plot.

In summary, revolutionaries follow a common pattern:

1. they assert that their ruler committed wrongs (whether actual wrongs or merely imagined); and then
2. they use such wrongs as a basis to declare that their ruler's own conduct has resulted in his losing his authority to rule them.

The Cristeros were Not Revolutionaries

On a superficial level, a person might have the false impression that the Mexican Cristeros were revolutionaries because they took up arms against the anti-Catholic Mexican government in the 1920s. But the Cristeros' goal was to defend their priests, their churches, and the Catholicism of their families. The Cristeros resisted the many wrongs committed by their anti-Catholic, Masonic government. By successfully taking up arms, the Cristeros prevented the anti-Catholic government from further harming them unjustly (arresting them, killing them, *etc.*).

But unlike persons who ***are*** revolutionaries, the Cristeros never used their government's

Because of the Anglicans' and Puritans' shocking treatment of Catholics, Guy Fawkes and a few other Catholics devised the Gunpowder Plot to blow-up the Parliament Building when King James I was there with the rest of England's political leaders. However, the two consecutive popes of the time, as well as all of the Jesuit superiors and priests in England all strongly forbade Catholics to take part in such plots or otherwise to revolt against their rightful (but bad) king, James I.

In his contemporaneous account of the Gunpowder Plot and the savage persecutions leading up to this plot, Fr. John Gerard explains:

All Catholics received strict commandment from the See Apostolic, that in no case they should stir or attempt anything against His Majesty [*viz.*, King James I of England] or the State [*viz.*, England], and this both from Pope Clement VIII, of pious memory, and from Paulus Vtus [*viz.*, Pope Paul V] that now sitteth in the Chair, who both before and since his assumption to that supreme dignity of governing the Church of Christ, hath showed [*sic*] himself most earnest to procure the quiet, safety, and security of our Sovereign [*viz.*, King James I], ... [and by ordering] that no Catholic people should go about to interrupt or trouble the same [*viz.*, King James I of England] by their impatient proceedings

Id., page 120 (bracketed words added for clarity; note: In this quotation, Fr. Gerard uses "Vtus" which is the Roman numeral "V" (five) plus the last three letters of the Latin word "Quintus", meaning "fifth").

wrongs as a basis to declare that their government had lost all authority over them.³¹ Instead, by taking up arms, the Cristeros merely prevented their lawful but anti-Catholic government from doing the harm it intended.

The American Revolutionaries could have – but did not – take the same approach as the Cristeros. That is, the American Revolutionaries could have resisted even by force of arms any wrongs that were severe enough while still acknowledging King George of England as their rightful king.

Revolution is Always Wrong

It is un-Catholic to be a revolutionary. All authority comes from God, regardless of the method by which a ruler is chosen to wield civil or religious power. Here is how St. Paul teaches this truth:

[T]here is no power but from God: and those [powers] that are, are ordained of God. Therefore, he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation. ... For [the ruler] is God's minister. ... Wherefore, **be subject of necessity**, not only for [the ruler's] wrath, but also **for conscience's sake**.

Romans, ch.13, vv. 1-2 & 4-5 (emphasis added).³²

Pope Pius IX faithfully echoed St. Paul:

[A]ll authority comes from God. Whoever resists authority resists the ordering made by God Himself, consequently achieving his own condemnation; ***disobeying authority is always sinful except when an order is given which is opposed to the laws of God and the Church.***

Qui Pluribus, November 9, 1846, §22.

Pope Pius IX taught this same doctrine in his infallible ***condemnation*** of the following proposition:

³¹ To read more on the Cristeros resistance to their anti-Catholic government's oppression, read *Latin America: A Sketch of its Glorious Catholic Roots and a Snapshot of its Present*, by the Editors of *Quanta Cura Press*, pp. 40-42, ©2016.

³² God also declares: "By Me kings reign, and lawgivers decree just things; by Me princes rule, and the mighty decree justice." *Proverbs*, 8:15-16.

It is permissible to refuse obedience to legitimate rulers, and even **to revolt** against them.

Quanta Cura, proposition #63 (emphasis added).³³

Pope Leo XIII taught the same doctrine as St. Paul and Pope Pius IX:

If, however, it should ever happen that public power is exercised by rulers rashly and beyond measure, **the doctrine of the Catholic Church does not permit rising up against them** on one's own terms, lest quiet and order be more and more disturbed, or lest society receive greater harm therefrom.³⁴

Because it is sinful to even willfully desire to sin, Pope Leo XIII taught that even the "desire for revolution" is a "vice". *Auspicato Concessu*, §24.

Although revolution is forbidden, Pope Leo XIII gave us the remedies of patience, prayer, and ***resistance to the particular evil commands*** of a bad ruler. Here are his words:

Whenever matters have come to such a pass that no other hope of a solution is evident, [the doctrine of the Catholic Church] teaches that a remedy is to be hastened through the merits of Christian patience, and by urgent prayers to God.

But if the decisions of legislators and rulers should sanction or order something that is contrary to divine and natural law, the dignity and duty of the Christian

³³ Pope Pius IX used his *ex cathedra* (infallible) authority to condemn this error as part of a list of errors contained in the syllabus of *Quanta Cura*. Regarding these condemnations, the pope said:

We, truly mindful of Our Apostolic duty, and especially solicitous about our most holy religion, about sound doctrine and the salvation of souls divinely entrusted to Us, and about the good of human society itself, have decided to lift our voice again. And so all and each evil opinion and doctrine individually mentioned in this letter, by Our Apostolic authority We reject, proscribe and condemn; and We wish and command that they be considered as absolutely rejected, proscribed and condemned by all the sons of the Catholic Church.

Thus, Pope Pius IX's condemnation fulfills the conditions for infallibility set out in Vatican I's document, *Pastor Aeternus*, because the pope was: 1) carrying out his duty as pastor and teacher of all Christians; 2) in accordance with his supreme apostolic authority; 3) on a matter of faith or morals; 4) to be held by the universal Church.

³⁴ Encyclical, *Quod Apostolici muneris*, December 28, 1878, §7 (emphasis added).

name and the opinion of the apostles urge that “we ought to obey God, rather than men” (Acts 5:29).³⁵

St. Thomas Aquinas, greatest Doctor of the Church, offers the same remedy to persons who suffer the evil of a bad ruler:

[S]ometimes God permits evil rulers to afflict good men. This affliction is for the good of such good men, as St. Paul says above [ch.8, v.28]: “All things work for the good, for those who love God.”³⁶

The Example of the Saints shows Revolution is Wrong

Look at the example of Catholics, including great saints like St. Sebastian, who served bravely and faithfully even in the army of the pagan emperors of Rome. They did not revolt, *even when their emperor openly sought to kill all Catholics* (although, of course, those soldier-saints did not aid in the persecution of Catholics).

Here is Pope Gregory XVI’s praise for those Roman soldier-saints, who were faithful to God first, but also to their emperor (whenever the emperor’s commands were not themselves evil):

[T]he early Christians ... deserved well of the emperors and of the safety of the state even while persecution raged. This they proved splendidly by their fidelity in *performing perfectly and promptly whatever they were commanded which was **not opposed** to their religion*, and even more by their constancy and the shedding of their blood in battle. “Christian soldiers”, says St. Augustine, “served an infidel emperor. When the issue of Christ was raised, they acknowledged no one but the One who is in heaven. They distinguished the eternal Lord from the temporal lord, but were *also subject to the temporal lord for the sake of the eternal Lord.*”

St. Mauritius, the unconquered martyr and leader of the Theban legion had this in mind when, as St. Eucharius reports, he answered the emperor in these words: “We are your soldiers, Emperor, but also servants of God, and this we confess freely . . . and now *this final necessity of life has **not driven us into rebellion.***” ...

Indeed, the faith of the early Christians shines more brightly, if we consider with Tertullian, that since the Christians were not lacking in numbers and in troops, they could have acted as foreign enemies. “We are but of yesterday”, he says, “yet we have filled all your cities, islands, fortresses, municipalities, assembly places,

³⁵ *Quod Apostolici muneris*, December 28, 1878, §7 (bracketed words added to show context).

³⁶ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Romans*, ch.13, lect.1.

the camps themselves, the tribes, the divisions, the palace, the senate, the forum. ... For what war should we not have been fit and ready even if unequal in forces – we who are so glad to be cut to pieces – were it not, of course, that *in our doctrine we would have been permitted more to be killed rather than to kill?* ... [Y]ou have fewer enemies because of the multitude of Christians.”

These beautiful examples of the unchanging subjection to the rulers necessarily proceeded from the most holy precepts of the Christian religion.³⁷

Summary of this article so far

As shown above, it is Catholic dogma that revolution is always wrong but that resisting the particular evil commands of our ruler **is** permitted and is sometimes necessary. When resisting is just, such resistance might include taking up arms and fighting the government soldiers who seek to enforce the ruler’s evil orders. The Cristeros did this in Mexico.

If the evil is great enough, the resisters may even place themselves beyond the reach of the harm which the ruler seeks to unjustly inflict on them. The Cristeros did this, succeeding in defending three-quarters of Mexico from the anti-Catholic harm attempted by Mexico’s Masonic government.³⁸

However, even when strong resistance is justified by the greatness of the evil attempted by the ruler, those persons resisting the evil are not permitted to revolt, *i.e.*, to declare that the ruler has ceased to be their ruler. The ruler does not lose his authority *in principle*, even when the resisters prevent him by force of arms from accomplishing *in practice* the evil he wishes to do. This is the meaning of *Quanta Cura*’s **infallible condemnation** of the assertion that “**It is permissible ... to revolt**”. (See above.)

Regarding the early soldier-saints fighting in the Roman army (see above) even while the emperor martyred Catholics: those Catholic soldier-saints served their emperor faithfully in honorable activities but never aided the Roman persecution of Catholics. In those quotations above, St. Augustine, Pope Gregory XVI, and the other authorities praise those soldier-saints for not revolting but do not address the option of armed resistance since

³⁷ Encyclical *Mirari Vos*, August 15, 1832, §§ 18-19 (emphasis added), quoting and relying on the teaching of St. Augustine (Doctor and Father of the Church), as well as St. Mauritius, and Tertullian (a Father of the Church).

³⁸ To read more on the Cristeros resistance to their anti-Catholic government’s oppression, read *Latin America: A Sketch of its Glorious Catholic Roots and a Snapshot of its Present*, by the Editors of *Quanta Cura Press*, pp. 41, ©2016.

those soldier-saints of Rome did not choose to do what the Cristeros did, *viz.*, defend themselves by force of arms, (although without revolting).

A note about a different but related issue: determining whether a ruler is the *legitimate* ruler

Above, we see that Catholics must never revolt against their *legitimate* ruler (although they must resist his evil commands). However, a person can ask: “how do we know when a ruler is *legitimate*?”

This article does not lay out principles from which we can know in all cases if a ruler is legitimate (and thus has authority over us). There are many ways a ruler might not be the legitimate ruler. Here is an easy case of a ruler being illegitimate:

When the head of a foreign, attacking army first lands on a country’s soil and immediately declares himself the legitimate ruler of the country simply because he is there and is strong, it is easy to see that he is a usurper and not a rightful, legitimate ruler of the country he is attacking. The people of that country can justly deny his authority over them and fight against him to try to expel him from their country.

Is Biden our legitimate president (with authority over us)?

The legitimacy of a ruler is currently a very pertinent question because there is much evidence from which to conclude that Joe Biden and the leftists stole the 2020 presidential election from President Trump.³⁹ So then is Joe Biden the legitimate U.S. president wielding the executive authority of the presidency?

³⁹ For example, here is the Navarro Election Fraud Report, in three parts, written by former White House trade advisor, Peter Navarro:

1. <https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/be36dc6d-0df4-4c20-addf-fca72be46150/The%20Immaculate%20Deception%2012.15.20.pdf>
2. <https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/be36dc6d-0df4-4c20-addf-fca72be46150/The%20Navarro%20Report%20Volume%20III%20Final%201.13.21-0001.pdf>
3. <https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/be36dc6d-0df4-4c20-addf-fca72be46150/The%20Navarro%20Report%20Volume%20III%20Final%201.13.21-0001.pdf>

That is a difficult question, involving many facts of which we have incomplete knowledge. However, it seems that he *is* the U.S. president, wielding the authority of a president because:

- A person becomes president by being sworn in as provided by the U.S. Constitution. Joe Biden has been sworn in as president.
- Even with the apparent election fraud, it seems more accurate to say that Biden has become president through fraudulently stealing the election, rather than that he is an imposter who falsely poses as president.
- If Biden weren't the president, then who would be president? Trump does not claim to be president and does not claim that Biden is not president. Rather, Trump claims (apparently correctly) that Biden stole the presidency (*i.e.*, he became president) through fraud.

Further, whatever Biden does while acting as president would be enforced and implemented by other, lower government officials who *do* have lawful authority over us. We would have to recognize their lawful authority (when they are *not* commanding something sinful, of course).

Conclusion

Faithful and informed Catholics are not revolutionaries. We must obey those in authority over us when they command something which is not sinful.

Any abuse we cannot avoid from our legitimate authorities we should face with prayer, patience, and our best efforts to vote, stay informed, instruct our children and fellow citizens, as well as work in other ways to improve the quality of our leaders.

However, our obedience extends only to those who legitimately have authority over us. We do not have to obey those who falsely claim to have authority.

Even though Biden (apparently) stole the 2020 presidential election, he is apparently still the legitimate U.S. president, wielding the authority of the U.S. presidency.

May God help us!

Download *Catholic Candle*'s 2021 traditional liturgical calendar

The calendar is available here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2021/01/06/2021-calendar/> Instructions to make this calendar into a hanging calendar are available on our old website, here: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/#gsc.tab=0>

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