

Catholic Candle

February 2024 catholiccandle.org catholiccandle@gmail.com

Lent is Here! Let Us Fast Generously and Do Penance!

For your easy reference, here is *The Basics of the Church's Traditional Laws of Fast and Abstinence*: <https://catholiccandle.org/2019/12/22/1476/>



Words to Live by – from Catholic Tradition

Trust in Divine Providence

The Voice of Christ:

My child, allow me to do what I will with you. I know what is best for you.

The Disciple:

Lord, what You say is true. Your care for me is greater than all the care I can take of myself.

Imitation of Christ, Thomas à Kempis; Book III, Ch. 17.



In Case You Missed It

The COVID-19 “Vaccine’s” Harm Continues to Be Further Disclosed

As *Catholic Candle* has shown in a January 2021 article, the first reason to avoid the COVID-19 mRNA gene therapy (which is falsely called a “vaccine”) is because it is a

mortal sin of cooperating in the murders of innocent aborted babies who these pharmaceutical companies chose to use to develop the vaccine.¹

As shown in that same article, the “new” liberal SSPX reversed its prior Traditional Catholic position and now follows the modernist Vatican in accepting the use of abortion-tainted injections including this evil Covid “vaccine”.² As shown in that article, the SSPX previously condemned its current position.

In *Catholic Candle*’s January 2021 article, we warn of other harms which are also caused by this COVID-19 “vaccine”.³

Since *Catholic Candle* published that article three years ago, there has been much additional evidence published about the harm caused by this COVID-19 “vaccine”.⁴

Another study was just published on January 24, 2024. Among its many important conclusions is:

applying these reasonable assumptions, the estimated *harms of the COVID-19 mRNA injectables outweigh the rewards by nearly 14-fold*.⁵

This entire study is filled with information showing the sloppiness, concealment of the truth, and other evils of the leftists pressing people to receive this evil gene therapy. We recommend reading the entire study. However, here we quote the conclusion section of this new study:

Conclusions

Careful, objective evaluation of COVID-19 mRNA product safety is crucial for upholding ethical standards and evidence-informed decision-making. Our

¹ <https://catholiccandle.org/2021/01/01/reject-the-covid-vaccines/> parts 1 & 2.

² <https://catholiccandle.org/2021/01/01/reject-the-covid-vaccines/> part 3.

³ <https://catholiccandle.org/2021/01/01/reject-the-covid-vaccines/> part 4.

⁴ See, e.g., <https://catholiccandle.org/2023/03/13/more-information-to-remind-us-to-avoid-the-covid-vaccine/>

⁵ Appendix 2, of this study; Mead M, Seneff S, Wolfinger R, et al. (January 24, 2024) COVID-19 mRNA Vaccines: Lessons Learned from the Registrational Trials and Global Vaccination Campaign. *Cureus* 16(1): e52876. doi:10.7759/cureus.52876, found here: <https://www.cureus.com/articles/203052-covid-19-mrna-vaccines-lessons-learned-from-the-registrational-trials-and-global-vaccination-campaign#!> (emphasis added).

narrative review concerning the registrational trials and the EUA's [*i.e.*, Emergency Use Authorization] aftermath offers evidence-informed insights into how these genetic vaccines were able to enter the market. In the context of the two pivotal trials, **safety was never assessed in a manner commensurate with previously established scientific standards either for vaccines or for GTPs [*viz.*, gene therapy products], the more accurate classification of these products. Many key trial findings were either misreported or omitted entirely from published reports. The usual safety testing protocols and toxicology requirements were bypassed by the FDA and vaccine manufacturers, and the premature termination of both trials obviated any unbiased assessment of potential SAEs [*i.e.*, serious adverse events] due to an insufficient timeframe for proper trial evaluation. It was only after the EUA that the serious biological consequences of rushing the trials became evident, with numerous cardiovascular, neurological, reproductive, hematological, malignant, and autoimmune SAEs identified and published in the peer-reviewed medical literature. Moreover, the COVID-19 mRNA vaccines produced via Process 1 and evaluated in the trials were **not the same products eventually distributed worldwide**; all of the COVID-19 mRNA products released to the public were produced via Process 2 and have been shown to have varying degrees of **DNA contamination**. The **failure of regulatory authorities to heretofore disclose process-related impurities** (e.g., SV40) has further increased concerns regarding safety and quality control oversight of mRNA vaccine manufacturing processes.**

Since early 2021, excess deaths, cardiac events, strokes, and other SAEs have often been wrongly ascribed to COVID-19 rather than to the COVID-19 mRNA vaccinations. Misattribution of SAEs to COVID-19 often may be due to the amplification of adverse effects when mRNA injections are followed by SARS-CoV-2 subvariant infection. Injuries from the mRNA products overlap with both PACS ["post-acute COVID-19 syndrome"] and severe acute COVID-19 illness, often obscuring the vaccines' etiologic contributions. **Multiple booster injections appear to cause immune dysfunction**, thereby paradoxically contributing to heightened susceptibility to COVID-19 infections with successive doses. ***For the vast majority of adults under the age of 50, the perceived benefits of the mRNA boosters are profoundly outweighed by their potential disabling and life-threatening harms. Potential harms to older adults appear to be excessive as well.*** Given the well-documented SAEs and unacceptable harm-to-reward ratio, we urge governments to endorse and **enforce a global moratorium** on these modified mRNA products until all relevant questions pertaining to causality, residual DNA, and aberrant protein production are answered.⁶

⁶ Conclusion section of this study: Mead M, Seneff S, Wolfinger R, et al. (January 24, 2024) COVID-19 mRNA Vaccines: Lessons Learned from the Registrational Trials and Global

Catholic Candle readers know that the most important reason to refuse the COVID-19 “vaccine” is because it gravely harms souls, *viz.*, it is a mortal sin because of its link to murder. But we should thank God for also protecting us from this evil concoction because it is such a grave harm to bodies as well.

Truly, as St. Paul infallibly teaches us, *all things work together unto the Good for those who love God!* *Romans*, 8:28.



The Conciliar Church is Anti-God and Anti-Catholic

The conciliar church scrapped the perfect Faith and perfect Church, founded by Christ while He was on earth, and started a false, anti-Catholic church. It kept the name “Catholic” to deceive the laity – and most clergy, for that matter.

Lest one should be tempted to believe the changes were minor, and therefore, unimportant, let us once again review some of these changes. Besides considering the Mass a *meal*, rather than a Holy Sacrifice, the conciliar church has its own:

- ❖ false doctrines (*e.g.*, the teachings of VC II);
- ❖ false and sacrilegious worship (*e.g.*, Novus Ordo mass);
- ❖ places for these sacrileges (*viz.*, the conciliar churches stolen from the Catholic church);
- ❖ false priesthood (with its new concept of priesthood; doubtfully valid ordinations, *etc.*);
- ❖ false laws (*e.g.*, within the 1983 Code of Canon Law);
- ❖ false catechisms (*e.g.*, the new conciliar *Catechism of the Catholic Church*);
- ❖ false bibles (*e.g.*, instead of the Latin Vulgate and its English translation, the Douay Rheims Bible);
- ❖ new, politically-correct “Decalogue” (*i.e.*, a new “10 Commandments”);

Vaccination Campaign. *Cureus* 16(1): e52876. doi:10.7759/cureus.52876, found here: <https://www.cureus.com/articles/203052-covid-19-mrna-vaccines-lessons-learned-from-the-registrational-trials-and-global-vaccination-campaign#!> (emphasis added).

- ❖ new, politically-correct “beatitudes”;
- ❖ new Mysteries of the Rosary (the so-called “luminous mysteries”);
- ❖ new (supposed) “saints” and new canonization process (e.g., so-called “Saint” John Paul II), the first pope whom the conciliar church (supposedly) “canonized” but certainly not the last;
- ❖ new (supposed) “sacraments” with conciliar names and formulae (e.g., Catholics have the Sacrament of Penance; conciliar have its substitute called “Reconciliation”, and on occasion it’s “group Reconciliation”); and
- ❖ new (supposed) “miracles” and “apparitions”.

In the aggregate, these changes accomplished what they were meant to accomplish; they deceived laity and clergy alike, who were confused into believing that the conciliar, counterfeit “church” is the Roman Catholic Church, founded by Christ.

The scope of this evil deed is beyond comprehension by most. There were hundreds of millions of devout Catholics in the world before the Second Vatican Council, which was promoted by Popes John the XXIII and Paul VI. The conciliar church was developed by the Council and completely took the Faith from the hearts of those Catholics who, sadly, had no idea they were “joining” a new church. Because it still called itself Catholic, it raised few alarms.

But as we know, the conciliar church was Catholic in name only. In reality, it is *anti-Catholic*. So, now those hundreds of millions of Catholics are members of the anti-Catholic conciliar church and have little or no connection with genuine Catholicism.

It is obvious that the devil is behind this; he is a master of deception. And this time his deception is far worse than his efforts in starting the Protestant sects in the 1500s. He has not destroyed the Catholic Church, but he has taken the substance of the true Faith and Catholic practice out of the hearts of hundreds of millions of Catholics and made them instead into lax, non-practicing, or apostate (former) Catholics.

The conciliar church is a wasteland and complete disaster. To prove my point: can anyone name one good thing the conciliar church has done? I didn’t think so.

Remember: there’s no salvation outside the Catholic Church.



We Should Not Dress Like Cultural Revolutionaries!

One aspect of the weakness of character which marks most people today, is that they devote all of the time that they can, **not** to real human activity worthy of a free man and child of God (*viz.*, the intellectual and the spiritual life), but instead to bodily rest and bodily pleasure (which are lower things we have in common with brute beasts).

Such people have no sense of the **propriety** of their attire but always seek comfort – *as long as that comfort is in a manner which conforms with the opinions of the “crowd”*. When they go to church (if they **do** go to church⁷) or when they attend a special dinner with friends, most people dress like slobs nowadays. But, again, they dress like slobs only in a way which conforms with the approval of the “crowd”, by wearing the particular sloppy clothes that conform to what everyone else approves.

Such clothes tend to be vulgar, base, and banal in those circumstances. Thus, many people wear ripped trousers – but those trousers must be jeans (or jean-type pants). These people would not be “caught dead” in ripped pants which are not acceptable to their peer group!

⁷ *Catholic Candle* recognizes that most faithful and informed Catholics have no access to an uncompromising Mass and uncompromising priest. That is true of the *Catholic Candle* Team members too. We are in the same “boat” as you are! So, we are certainly not advocating that faithful and informed Catholics go to a compromise group or priest in order to “get my Mass” or “get my sacraments”. However, in this present article, when referring to people always seeking comfort, we refer to persons who don’t *bother* to go to church rather than to those persons who stay away from compromise churches out of love for Our Lord and our holy Catholic Faith.

We urge you not to attend compromise groups to get the Sacraments, even where they are valid Sacraments. We at *Catholic Candle* sanctify the Sunday at home using this method:
<https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/sanctifying-sunday-no-mass.html>

The Sacraments of compromise groups do not please God.
<https://catholiccandle.org/2020/04/02/a-compromise-groups-masses-and-sacraments-do-not-give-grace-because-the-end-does-not-justify-the-means/>

Even if we don't “feel” content with our feelings, nonetheless with our will and intellect (the important faculties) we should be perfectly content without the Mass and Sacraments when this is God’s will for us, that is, when they are not available without compromise. <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/complete-contentment-without-the-mass-when-it-is-not-available-without-compromise.html>

This is a time of great blessings! We hold that this is a glorious time to be Catholic and to live for Christ the King! <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/it-is-a-blessing-to-live-during-this-great-apostasy.html>

They wear conforming casual clothes to the office too. Only *certain* clothes are acceptable and they know what sloppy, casual clothes they should wear because everyone follows and imitates the same “fashion” guidelines.

Universally, from the beginning of history, clothes have shown a person’s office or station in life. So, those persons who perform rugged manual labor dress appropriately for that hard work. Throughout history, those who do intellectual non-physical work for a living (e.g., thinking, speaking, writing, making decisions, or managing people), dressed in a way showing their occupations. Kings, presidents, lawyers, judges, mediators, *etc.* did not dress in clothes that are suitable for being a farmer, a black smith, a mechanic, *etc.* They wore clothes showing their office or station in life, through wearing the fabrics and the cut of the clothes that show they are not dressed for manual labor.

Here is how this truth is explained by St. Thomas Aquinas, greatest Doctor of the Catholic Church:

Those who are placed in a position of dignity, or again the ministers of the altar, are attired in more costly apparel than others, not for the sake of their own glory, but *to indicate the excellence of their office* or of the Divine worship.⁸

Similarly, in former times, when people went to church, they wore formal clothes (their best clothes), which were not suitable for hard manual labor. They wore their best clothes to show respect for God, as St. Thomas explains immediately above.

Down through the ages, when people attended a symphony performance or an intellectual activity like a lecture, they dressed up, showing respect for the activity (cultural or intellectual) and for the persons attending with them. When invited to dinner at someone’s home or when a young man took a young lady to dinner, he dressed up (as did she) to look their best and show respect for each other and for the importance of the activity in which they were engaged (*viz.*, seeking a spouse and life-long companion with whom to start a family).

In short, the reason why we should dress well is to honor the others we are meeting and show that we esteem their dignity and/or that of the occasion. We also show that there is a hierarchy of occasions. By contrast, when we dress like slobs, we show that the other person (who has to look at us) or the occasion is not worth our efforts or our better clothes.

As the world around us gets ever-more corrupt, we see the pronounced trend of people dressing in whatever way makes them most comfortable. That is, they dress down and thereby inherently show another person that they disregard him and that their own comfort and gratifying their passions is more important to them than the other person. In better times, people showed proper respect by dressing well (as was the reasonable

⁸ *Summa*, IIa IIae: Q.169, a.1, ad 2.

custom, etiquette, and propriety) when coming into the presence of persons of a higher station of life.

But revolutionaries and communists sought (and seek) to destroy this order in society. So, the Chinese communists wore “Mao suits” earlier in their revolutionary times. These suits were poorly-tailored, and in the same medium gray color, to falsely pretend that everyone is equal. Similarly, starting in the 1960s in the U.S., the cultural revolutionaries wore blue jeans even to high cultural events because they aimed at destroying the propriety of attire that society respected (showing contempt for custom) and sought to portray a false appearance of equality.

We live in a time of deliberate destruction of those morals and good customs which were developed over the centuries of Catholic culture and civilization. We must be counter-revolutionaries! We should do what is in our power to stand up for virtue and reason, against the cultural revolutionaries who are destroying Western Civilization. This culture – though much of it has been destroyed since the height of Christendom – is worth fighting for!

We must strive to be the sort of soldiers of Christ that God and our reason show us that we must be. In this way, we will have spent our lives doing something truly worth living for, and if God wills, also dying for! Let us do this together!



***Catholic Candle* note:** The article below is a companion article to our article about *Mary-like Neckline Modesty*, which can be found here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2023/05/21/marylike-neckline-modesty/>

Both of these articles apply to girls as well as women. The principles set forth in this article helps them to fulfill the role and great work for which God created women. Read more about this role and great work here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2019/12/02/the-role-and-work-that-god-gave-to-woman/>

Below is the first part of the article.

Women should Wear Dresses and Skirts, Not Pants

We live in a pagan world (as we see all around us). Even many Catholic women adopt the evil fashions they see all around them. Let us inquire whether women should ever wear pants.

But first, let us inquire whether this issue is one that only women need to know about.

Is it Important for Men (as well as Women) to Know the Catholic Standard of Modesty for Women?

Men and women should all care about feminine modesty and know the standards of Catholic modesty. It is obvious that a woman should understand and live the Catholic standard of modesty so that she can please God, edify her neighbor, be a good example, teach her daughters, and avoid sin.

But there are five reasons why men should know these standards too:

1. It is important for men and boys to know the standards of female modesty because they have a duty to avert their eyes from women's and girl's attire which does not comply with such modesty standards.

This is obvious. The main reason why women and girls *have* standards of modesty (and must not “wear whatever they want”) is because there *are* men and boys who will look at them.

Women must *cover up* for the sake of the men. This is common decency and is a minimum charity that they owe to their (male) neighbors. Women would be callously disregarding the salvation of men (and themselves) if women dressed without concern for the temptations their attire would cause in men.

This is like the fact that a person must not wildly swing a butcher knife “whenever he wants to” without regard for the risk of injuring those around him. In fact, immodesty is more dangerous than the butcher knife because immodesty can kill the soul whereas a butcher knife can only kill the body.

Of course, it is also true that men must dress modestly for the sake of the women too. This is men's minimum charity toward their (female) neighbors. However, there are three reasons that female immodesty is a greater problem:

- Women are the more beautiful sex and so are more attractive;
- Men are more prone than women are to sins of impurity by looking impurely at the opposite sex, as is evident by the fact that the filthy practice of viewing pornography is a sin which is far more frequently committed by men rather than by women; and
- Men and women both are more inclined to weaken on women's standards of modesty than on men's modesty. This is because women

have a stronger focus on pleasing men by their (*i.e.*, women's) appearance, and men have less of a focus on pleasing women by their own (*i.e.*, the men's) appearance but have a greater tendency to **be pleased** by women's appearance (than are women focused on and pleased by men's appearance). Here are three signs that this is true:

first, women desire and usually have a far larger wardrobe and wear far more jewelry than men do;

second, women take many other pains to look attractive for men, such as wearing makeup, getting their hair curled or permed, *etc.*, and

third, men's clothes and shoes are more practical and serviceable. By contrast, women's clothes and shoes are much more likely to be less comfortable because they are more designed to please men rather than for comfort. (For example, women's shoes are designed to make a woman's foot look smaller.)

2. It is important for an unmarried man who is called to the married vocation (and not to the life of consecrated virginity) to have prominently featured in his "blue print" of the future spouse he seeks, that she possess and love this great treasure of the Catholic standard of holy modesty;
3. It is important for a man to know the Catholic standard of feminine modesty so that he can give moral support and defend the modesty of good women against scoffers, mockers, and other enemies of Our Lord. (For example, it is all too often that women who take modesty seriously are made to feel prudish and isolated, especially by other women who have a more liberal dress code.) Men should be gallant and gentlemanly. They should defend women, especially good women who are living the standards of modesty and other virtues;
4. It is important for a man to know the Catholic standard of feminine modesty because he will be responsible for guiding his wife and daughters (when God sends him his own family) and will be ultimately responsible for this standard being implemented in his own home and family; and
5. It is important for a man to know the Catholic standard of feminine modesty so he can love this beautiful virtue and admire and appreciate the Mary-like women and girls who practice it.

Four Reasons Women Should Not Wear Pants

There are four reasons why it is a sin for women to wear pants:

1. It is objectively a sin against the revealed Divine Law for a woman to wear pants;
2. It is objectively a sin of lewdness⁹ under the Natural Law for a woman to wear pants, even apart from the issue of pants being more revealing of a woman's body;
3. A woman who wears pants objectively commits a sin of feminist usurpation of man's role and "nature" and denial of her own "nature" and role in God's plan; and
4. A woman wearing pants objectively sins because pants are immodest for her due to their revealing too much of her figure.

Below, we consider each of these reasons.

1. It is Objectively a Sin against the Revealed Divine Law for Women to Wear Pants.

God has revealed His law that it is evil for a woman to wear a man's clothes (and also for men to wear women's clothes). Here are the words of God's law:

Let not a woman wear men's clothes nor a man use women's clothes. For they are abominable with the Lord who do such things.

Deuteronomy, 22:5.

One article of man's clothing is pants. Although at any time in history, one can find deviant persons wearing clothes which are taboo in order to get attention or to shock those around them, nonetheless, it only relatively-recently that the enemies of Christ succeeded to such an extent in their cultural revolution that society more generally was desensitized to women wearing pants so that it became no longer shocking to most people. This occurred roughly in the revolutionary 1960s, when society also became

⁹ Lewdness (noun): indecency or obscenity; vulgar sexual character or behavior.
<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/lewdness>

desensitized to other evils such as to tattoos¹⁰, to cremation¹¹, to rock and roll “music”, and to wives and mothers being career women¹². These things are still sins despite most people accepting them.

One history of women wearing pants (published by *Time Magazine*), noted that the popular fashion magazine, *Vogue*, did not print a picture of a woman wearing pants until 1939 and that people were shocked by that picture. Here is that entry in that history:

It wasn't until 1939 that *Vogue* pictured its first woman wearing slacks in a spread, at a time when those garments still weren't widely worn by women and had the power to shock.¹³

Citing a book on women's clothes and their style during the 1900s, another history called it “radical” that society began to accept women wearing pants. Here are the words of this history:

“One of the most radical developments for women was the gradual acceptance of trousers, which were no longer considered either eccentric or strictly utilitarian,” write historians Valerie Mendes and Amy de la Haye in their book, *20th Century Fashion*.¹⁴

¹⁰ Society began to view tattoos as neither shocking nor deviant at roughly the same time (the revolutionary 1960s) as society began considering women wearing pants as acceptable and not shocking. Read this article here: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/tattoos-are-a-sin-to-obtain-and-a-sin-to-display>

¹¹ Society began to view cremation as neither pagan nor barbaric at roughly the same time (the revolutionary 1960s) as society began considering women wearing pants as acceptable and not shocking. Read this article here: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/cremation-is-barbaric>

¹² Society began to view it as acceptable for wives and mothers to abandon their role in life at roughly the same time (the revolutionary 1960s) as society began considering women wearing pants as acceptable and not shocking. Read this article here: *The Role and Work that God Gave to Woman*, <https://catholiccandle.org/2019/12/02/the-role-and-work-that-god-gave-to-woman/>

¹³ <https://time.com/4363815/history-women-pants-hillary-clinton/>

¹⁴ *History of Women Wearing Pants*, found here: <https://qz.com/quartz/1597688/a-brief-history-of-women-in-pants>

This history correctly calls this change “radical” because, as a third history remarks, “wearing trousers was considered shocking by many women at the beginning of the 20th century”.¹⁵

Lastly, a fourth history (of women wearing pants) points specifically to the cultural revolution of the 1960s as the turning point in which women in pants had become common enough that there was no longer much outrage at the practice. Here is how that history phrases it:

By the time the counter-culture movement of the 1960s had reached its height, a woman in pants wasn’t much to be outraged by, even if in workplaces pants remained the preserve of men for a while longer.¹⁶

In a 1977 *New York Times* retrospective on feminism’s effect on women’s “fashion”, the newspaper explains that:

The early 1970s was the period [in which] ... women seeking to express their individuality wore pants.¹⁷

This, of course, is because such women thought themselves to be showing “individuality” because women wearing this men’s garment was still uncommon then.

This 1977 *New York Times* article continued, pointing particularly to the influence of a fashion corrupter named Calvin Klein, who led this revolution in women’s “fashion”:

Calvin Klein was instantly successful with clothes that were influenced by menswear — pants, tailored coats and jackets. “Ten years ago [*i.e.*, 1967] a woman wore pants as a way of showing daring and security in herself,” he says¹⁸

The reason why it was considered “daring” for a woman to wear pants in the 1960s and early 1970s, is because society considered her to be provocative by wearing men’s clothes.

So, we see that our culture was not degraded enough until roughly the 1960s or 1970s, and only then was society callous enough to no longer be shocked by women wearing these men’s garments.

¹⁵ <https://the-toast.net/2014/08/07/wearing-pants-brief-history/>

¹⁶ *History of Women Wearing Pants*: <https://qz.com/quartz/1597688/a-brief-history-of-women-in-pants>

¹⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/1977/08/28/archives/feminisms-effect-on-fashion.html>

¹⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/1977/08/28/archives/feminisms-effect-on-fashion.html>

It is true that a person could wonder whether women wearing pants was accepted in other parts of the world earlier. It seems that in some places in the world, where a false and corrupt “religion” formed a different and corrupt “culture”, women wearing pants was accepted earlier because the “culture” was worse.

However, in former Christendom (the Western World), which had been formed by the Catholic Faith, and by true Catholic culture, women wearing pants was not generally accepted earlier. It was only when (former) Christendom had slid far enough into degradation that people were no longer shocked by women wearing pants. Again, this was roughly in the 1960s – 1970s. Only then had Our Lord’s enemies sufficiently prevailed in their cultural revolution.

(To be continued)



Mary’s School of Sanctity

Lesson #31 The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius – EXPLANATION ON A METHOD FOR MAKING CHOICES AND ON HOW TO DO A SPECIAL EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE AND HIS NOTES ON PENANCE

Having finished the last meditation set out by St. Ignatius, we would now like to share some of his additional gems, namely, his words of advice concerning how one should make choices; his method on how one can make a special examination of one’s conscience geared to the exercitant during a thirty-day retreat; and likewise on the penance he recommends during the retreat.

First let us address St. Ignatius’s advice concerning making choices. He says:

INTRODUCTION TO MAKING A CHOICE OF A WAY OF LIFE

In every good choice, in so far as it depends upon us, the direction of our intention should be simple. I must look only to the end for which I am created, that is, for the praise of God Our Lord and for the salvation of my soul. Therefore, whatever I choose must have as its purpose to help me to this end. I must not shape or draw the end to the means, but the means to the end. Many, for example, first choose marriage, which is a means, and secondarily to serve God Our Lord in the married state, which service of God is the end. Likewise, there are others who first desire to have benefices [an ecclesiastical office], and afterward to serve God in them. These individuals do not go straight to God, but want God to come straight to

their inordinate attachments. Acting thus, they make a means of the end, and an end of the means, so that what they ought to seek first, they seek last. My first aim, then, should be my desire to serve God, which is the end, and after this, to seek a benefice or to marry if it is more fitting for me, for these things are but means to an end. Thus, nothing should move me to use such means or to deprive myself of them except it be only the service and praise of God Our Lord and the eternal salvation of my soul.

Next, St. Ignatius gives:

A CONSIDERATION TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ON THE MATTERS IN WHICH A CHOICE SHOULD BE MADE

This contains four points and a note:

First point: All matters in which we wish to make a choice must be either indifferent or good in themselves. They must meet with the approbation of our Holy Mother, the hierarchical Church, and not be bad or repugnant to her.

Second point: There are some things that are the objects of an immutable choice, such as the priesthood, matrimony, etc. There are others in which the choice is not immutable, as for example, accepting or relinquishing a benefice, accepting or renouncing temporal goods.

Third point: Once an immutable choice has been made there is no further choice, for it cannot be dissolved, as is true with marriage, the priesthood, etc. It should be noted only that if one has not made this choice properly, with due consideration, and without inordinate attachments, he should repent and try to lead a good life in the choice that he has made. Since this choice was ill-considered and improperly made, it does not seem to be a vocation from God as many err in believing, wishing to interpret an ill-considered or bad choice as a divine call. For every divine call is always pure and clean without any admixture of flesh or other inordinate attachments.

Fourth point: If one has made a proper and well-considered choice that is mutable, and has not been influenced either by the flesh or the world, there is no reason why he should make a new choice. But he should perfect himself as much as possible in the choice he has made.

NOTE

It is to be noted that if this mutable choice is not well-considered and sincerely made, then it will be profitable to make the choice anew in the proper manner if one wishes to bring forth fruits that are worthwhile and pleasing to God Our Lord.

Then St. Ignatius sets forth when a wise choice can be made by the following:

THREE OCCASIONS WHEN A WISE AND GOOD CHOICE CAN BE MADE

THE FIRST OCCASION is when God Our Lord moves and attracts the will so that the devout soul, without question and without desire to question, follows what has been manifested to it. St. Paul and St. Matthew did this when they followed Christ Our Lord.

THE SECOND OCCASION is present when one has developed a clear understanding and knowledge through the experience of consolations and desolations and the discernment of diverse spirits.

THE THIRD OCCASION is in a time of tranquility. Here one considers first for what purpose man is born, which is to praise God Our Lord and to save his soul. Since he desires to attain this end, he chooses some life or state within the bounds of the Church that will help him in the service of God Our Lord and the salvation of his soul. I said “a time of tranquility,” when the soul is not agitated by diverse spirits, and is freely and calmly making use of its natural powers.

IF A CHOICE HAS NOT BEEN MADE ON THE FIRST OR SECOND OCCASION, BELOW ARE GIVEN TWO METHODS OF MAKING IT DURING THE THIRD OCCASION

The first method of making a wise and good choice contains six POINTS:

THE FIRST POINT: To place before my mind’s eye the thing about which I wish to make a choice. It may be an office or a benefice to be accepted or refused, or anything else that is the object of a mutable choice.

THE SECOND POINT: I must have as my aim the end for which I am created, which is the praise of God Our Lord and the salvation of my soul. At the same time, I must remain indifferent and free from any inordinate attachments so that I am not more inclined or disposed to take the thing proposed than to reject it, nor to relinquish it rather than to accept it. I must rather be like the

equalized scales of balance, ready to follow the course which I feel is more for the glory and praise of God Our Lord and the salvation of my soul.

THE THIRD POINT: I must ask God Our Lord to deign to move my will and to reveal to my spirit what I should do to best promote His praise and glory in the matter of choice. After examining the matter thoroughly and faithfully with my understanding, I should make my choice in conformity with His good pleasure and His most holy will.

THE FOURTH POINT: I will use my reason to weigh the many advantages and benefits that would accrue to me if I held the proposed office or benefice solely for the praise of God Our Lord and the salvation of my soul. I will likewise consider and weigh the disadvantages and dangers that there are in holding it. I will proceed in like manner with the other alternative, that is, examine and consider the advantages and benefits as well as the disadvantages and dangers in not holding the proposed office or benefice.

THE FIFTH POINT: After having thus weighed the matter and carefully examined it from every side, I will consider which alternative appears more reasonable. Acting upon the stronger judgment of reason and not on any inclination of the senses, I must come to a decision in the matter that I am considering.

THE SIXTH POINT: After such a choice or decision has been reached I should turn with great diligence to prayer in the presence of God Our Lord and offer Him this choice that His Divine Majesty may deign to accept and confirm it, if it be to His greater service and praise.

The second method of making a wise and good choice contains four RULES and a note:

THE FIRST RULE is that the love which moves me and causes me to make this choice should come from above, that is from the love of God, so that before I make my choice I will feel that the greater or lesser love that I have for the thing chosen is solely for the sake of my Creator and Lord.

THE SECOND RULE is to consider some man that I have never seen or known, and in whom I wish to see complete perfection. Now I should consider what I would tell him to do and choose for the greater glory of God Our Lord and the greater perfection of his soul. I will act in like manner myself, keeping the rule that I proposed for another.

THE THIRD RULE is to consider that if I were at the point of death, what form and procedure I would wish to have observed in making this present choice.

Guiding myself by this consideration, I will make my decision on the whole matter.

THE FOURTH RULE is to examine and consider how I shall be on the Day of Judgment, to think how I shall then wish to have made my decision in the present matter. The rule which I should then wish to have followed, I will now follow, that I may on that day be filled with joy and delight.

NOTE

Taking the above-mentioned rules as my guide for eternal salvation and peace, I will make my choice and offer myself to God Our Lord, following the sixth point of the first method for making a choice (above).

Here is a method St. Ignatius explains as to how the exercitant can make a special examination of conscience while making his thirty-day retreat.

PARTICULAR EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE TO BE MADE EVERY DAY
[geared to be done during a thirty-day retreat, but this can be adapted for outside of retreat]

This Exercise is performed at three different times, and there are two examinations to be made.

THE FIRST TIME: As soon as he arises in the morning the exercitant should resolve to guard himself carefully against the particular sin or defect which he wishes to correct or amend.

THE SECOND TIME: After the noon meal he should ask God Our Lord for what he desires, namely, the grace to remember how many times he has fallen into the particular sin or defect, and to correct himself in the future. Following this he should make the first examination demanding an account of his soul regarding that particular matter which he proposed for himself and which he desires to correct and amend. He should review each hour of the time elapsed from the moment of rising to the moment of this examination. He should make note on the first line (of a chart that he keeps for himself) and make a mark for each time that he has fallen into the particular sin or defect. He should then renew his resolution to improve himself until the time of the second examination that he will make.

THE THIRD TIME: After the evening meal he will make a second examination, reviewing each hour from the first examination to this second one, and on the second line (of his chart), he will again make a mark for each time that he has

fallen into the particular fault or defect.

FOUR ADDITIONAL DIRECTIONS

The following directions will help to remove more quickly the particular sin or defect.

1) Each time that one falls into the particular sin or defect, he should place his hand on his breast, repenting that he has fallen. This can be done even in the presence of many people without their noticing it.

2) Since the first line of the chart represents the first examination, the second line, the second examination, at night the exercitant should observe whether there is an improvement from the first line to the second, that is, from the first examination to the second.

3) He should compare the second day with the first, that is to say, the two examinations of the present day with the two examinations of the preceding day, and see if there is a daily improvement.

4) He should also compare one week with another and see if there is a greater improvement during the present week than in the past week.

Fr. Hurter gives a more extensive explanation of the purpose of this *particular* examen:

Everyone has a more or less *characteristic* fault into which he falls more frequently than into others; it is more noticed by his companions than his other faults; it is the root of many other faults, and if it be eradicated, the faults which sprang from it will cease. A man's capital fault may be compared to the capital of an enemy's country, which is the key entry point that an experienced general would use to enter into the entire region in time of war. Thus, a person will make great progress in perfection if he attacks and overcomes his capital faults. He digs out the fertile roots of many other faults. If we have succeeded in doing away with our more noticeable faults, we can change our particular examen and aim at cultivating the more necessary virtues.¹⁹

Fr. Hurter explains the importance of being strict with oneself when fighting his particular fault. St. Ignatius suggests one good way to do this is to strike one's breast and say an ejaculation such as, "My Jesus, mercy," when one becomes aware of having fallen into the fault. He says that we have to make a firm resolution to combat the

¹⁹ Considerations from *Sketches for the Exercises of An Eight Days' Retreat* by Hugo Hurter, S.J., Ph.D., D.D., Professor Emeritus of Theology in the Catholic University of Innsbruck, copyright 1918; third edition, 1926, St. Louis, MO and London, Pages 89-91.

particular fault and direct our daily meditations and other prayers to this actual battle in order to strengthen our efforts. He says, “By the attentive use of the means we shall gradually mend our ways with regard to the more radical faults, and plant the most beautiful virtues in the garden of our heart, thereby reaching the basic virtues and great purity of soul.”²⁰

The above advice is designed to be used while the exercitant is on retreat; however, one can use these methods to conquer his predominant fault at any time. It is a great blessing to discover one’s predominant fault and if one has not found it, he should earnestly entreat God to enlighten him so he may find it. Once one has found his predominant fault, he should try with all of his might to conquer it, of course, with God’s all-powerful aid.

Now let us turn to what St. Ignatius says about penances done during retreat.

ST. IGNATIUS’S DIRECTIONS ON PENANCES

He first addresses the importance of keeping *silence*. In general, he speaks about keeping *exterior* and *interior* silence when making the *Spiritual Exercises*. These *Exercises* were designed to be done for the period of a month. The exercitant keeps *exterior* silence including restraining his eyes and keeping a guard of himself, remaining in a serious frame of mind. For example, he can even go so far as to deprive himself of light in his room when he is trying to excite feelings of pain, sorrow, and tears for his sins. The exercitant refrains from speaking to anyone besides the retreat master.

The *interior* silence is kept by the exercitant focusing on the subjects of the meditations and not allowing his mind to wander from the topic at hand. This interior silence is intended to help the exercitant stay recollected so he can make the *Exercises* better and they can assist him in finding what he desires for his soul.

In addition to his instructions on silence, St. Ignatius speaks of *interior penance* as follows:

The interior penance is sorrow for one’s sins and a firm resolution to not commit them. Exterior penance is a fruit of interior penance, and is the punishment we inflict upon ourselves for the sins we have committed. We perform these penances in three ways:

²⁰ Considerations from *Sketches for the Exercises of An Eight Days’ Retreat* by Hugo Hurter, S.J., Ph.D., D.D., Professor Emeritus of Theology in the Catholic University of Innsbruck, copyright 1918; third edition, 1926, St. Louis, MO and London, Pages 90-91.

a. Regarding food. It will be noted that when we deny ourselves what is superfluous, it is not penance but temperance. It is penance when we deny ourselves what it is proper for us to have, and the more we deny ourselves, the greater and better is the penance, provided we do not harm ourselves or cause ourselves serious illness.

b. Regarding sleeping. Here again it is not penance when we deny ourselves the superfluity of delicate and soft things. But it is penance when we deny ourselves what is suitable for us. Again, the more we deny ourselves, the greater is the penance, provided we cause ourselves no injury or serious illness. Nor should we deny ourselves our due amount of sleep unless we have the bad habit of sleeping too much. It may then be done to arrive at a proper mean.

c. By chastising the flesh, thereby causing sensible pain. [Here St. Ignatius mentions particular austerities.]

What seems the most suitable and safest thing in doing penance is for the pain to be felt in the flesh, without penetration to the bones, thus causing pain but not illness.

OBSERVATIONS ON PENANCE

1. *Exterior penances are performed principally to produce three effects:*

a. To satisfy for past sins.

b. To overcome ourselves, so that sensuality will be obedient to reason and our lower inclinations be subject to higher ones.

c. To seek and find some grace or gift that we obtain, as for instance, a deep sorrow for our sins and to grieve for them for the pains and sufferings that Our Lord endured in His passion, or for the solution of some doubt that is troubling us.

When St. Ignatius discusses the types of exterior penances, he stresses doing the penance that obtains for the exercitant the desired goal, whether it be tears of compunction or the curbing of one's passions, *etc.*, and that the exercitant should alternate penances as needed in order to obtain the desired goal. It should be noted, though, that he advises that the penances which refer to the chastising of the body are **not to be done in public**.

RULES TO BE OBSERVED IN THE FUTURE IN THE MATTER OF FOOD

- 1. There is less need to abstain from bread for it is not the kind of food over which the appetite is usually inclined to be uncontrolled, or over which temptation is so insistent as with other kinds.*
- 2. Abstinence is more appropriate with regard to drink than in eating bread. Therefore, one must consider carefully what would be beneficial to him and therefore permissible, and also what would be harmful, and so to be avoided.*
- 3. With regard to foods, greater and more complete abstinence must be practiced because here temptation is likely to be more insistent and the appetite inclined to be excessive. In order to avoid overindulgence, abstinence may be observed in two ways: by accustoming oneself to eat coarse foods, or if delicacies are taken, to eat them sparingly.*
- 4. While taking care not to become sick, the more one abstains in the quantity of food suited to him, the sooner he will arrive at the mean he should observe in eating and drinking. There are two reasons for this: first, by thus helping and disposing himself he will more frequently feel the interior directions, consolations, and divine inspirations that will show him the mean that is proper for him. Secondly, if he finds that with such abstinence he lacks sufficient health and strength for the Spiritual Exercises, he will easily be able to judge what is more suitable for sustaining his body.*
- 5. While one is eating, he may consider that he sees Christ Our Lord at table with His Apostles, how He eats and drinks; how He looks and how He speaks, and he will strive to imitate Him. He will thus keep his understanding occupied principally with Our Lord, and less with the sustenance of his own body. Thus, he may adopt a better method and order in the manner in which he should govern himself.*
- 6. At other times, while eating, he may consider the lives of the saints or some other pious contemplation, or he may consider some spiritual work that he has to perform. If he is occupied with such matters, he will take less delight and sensual pleasure in the nourishment of his body.*
- 7. Above all, he must take care that his mind is not entirely occupied in what he is eating, and that he is not carried away by his appetite into eating hurriedly. Let him rather master himself both in the way that he eats and the amount that he takes.*
- 8. To avoid excess, it is very useful after dinner or after supper, or at another time when one feels no desire to eat, to make a determination for the next dinner or supper, and so for the subsequent days, on the amount of food that is proper*

for him to eat. Let him not exceed this amount, no matter how strong his appetite or the temptation. Rather, it is the better to overcome every disorderly appetite and temptation of the enemy. If he is tempted to eat more, he should less.

Although these eight rules are meant for the duration of a retreat, they can be adapted for outside of a retreat.

In our next lesson we will complete our treatment of St. Ignatius's *Spiritual Exercises*, which include his advice concerning scruples and his additional meditation points on the life of Our Lord. We will also include some thoughts about resolutions we can take based on the *Spiritual Exercises*.



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