

Catholic Candle

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Passiontide 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

The Power of the Sign of the Cross

Let us remember that each time we make the Sign of the Cross:

- ❖ We offer the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ to the Eternal Father;
- ❖ We thank Our Lord for dying for us on the Cross; and
- ❖ We offer the infinite merits of the Passion for our own souls and for the salvation of the world.

Each time we make the Sign of the Cross this way:

- we console the Heart of Jesus;
- we obtain pardon for our sins; and
- we help to save the world from great evils.

Taken from *An Easy Way to Become a Saint*, Fr. Paul O'Sullivan, O.P., Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., Rockford, Ill., 1990, Ch. 5. p. 36.



We Need Frequent Crosses to Help Us to Turn Away From Sin

For earthly happiness and eternal happiness, live your life as prescribed for us by the Creator, Who is all-wise and loving. He knows what is best for us and gives us everything we need. We may not always see the wisdom of God's gifts to us, but be assured they are for the best.

Let us never then attribute our losses, our disappointments, our afflictions, our humiliations to the devil or to men, but to God as their real source. "To act otherwise," says St. Dorothy, 'would be to do the same as a dog who vents his anger on the stone instead of putting the blame *on the hand that threw it at him.*' So let us be careful not to say, 'So-and-so is the cause of my misfortune.'

Your misfortunes are the work not of this or that person but of God. And what should give you reassurance is that God, the sovereign Good, is guided in all His actions by His most profound wisdom for holy and supernatural purposes."¹

Here is an admirable *Prayer When Receiving Your Daily Cross*:

Do with me and mine as Thou please. I ask and desire only three things: Thy love, final perseverance, and the grace always to do Thy holy will. And if to love Thee thus, I must endure persecution and suffering, I am perfectly satisfied.

Let us then conclude with St. Augustine:

All that happens to us in this world against our will (whether due to men or to other causes) happens to us only by the will of God, by the disposal of Providence, by His orders and under His guidance; and if by the frailty of our understanding we cannot grasp the reason for some event, let us attribute it to Divine Providence, show Him some respect by accepting it from His hand, believe firmly that He does not send it to us without cause.²

Some find it hard to believe one has to suffer to avoid sin. But consider this: If you were very, very successful (e.g., in business), it is easier to see that salvation is likely not your

¹ *Trustful Surrender to Divine Providence*, Father Jean Baptiste Saint Jure, S.J., & Saint Claude De La Colombiere, S.J., Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., Rockford, IL, 1983, pp. 25-26.

² *Trustful Surrender to Divine Providence*, Father Jean Baptiste Saint Jure, S.J., & Saint Claude De La Colombiere, S.J., Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., Rockford, IL, 1983, pp. 17-18.

top priority, not if you are constantly seeking more awards and honors and even world-wide recognition.

Now contrast that with how the Saints wanted to leave the world and live and seek salvation in the desert or in the wilderness. Thus, they earned Heaven.

Remember, *you* have to *earn* Heaven.

Here are some reflections on earning Heaven and the part suffering plays in that:

Suffering is thought by many to be the *great evil* of life. Oh, if they could only avoid it! The truth is that if they did find a way of avoiding it, *that* would be the greatest evil of their lives.

All about suffering. Our Lord has given us a most perfect redemption. He could have dispensed the law of suffering if He so willed. Why does God, being of infinite goodness and mercy, ask us to suffer?

He does so for the simple reason that suffering is a very great grace.

Our suffering is a share, a small but most valuable share, in the Passion of our dear Lord.

It is priceless in value – if we only accept it and offer it in union with Christ's Passion.

He has suffered unspeakable agonies for each of us. Are we such arrant cowards as to refuse to suffer a little for Him?

How little gratitude we show for all that He has done for us! The easiest and best way of thanking Him is to offer our daily crosses and trials for love of Him.

The one big trouble about suffering is that we do not know *how* to suffer. We have no idea of its merits.

The secret is to suffer with patience and serenity. Then suffering loses all its sting, all its bitterness.

We need only remember that it is our sweet Lord Himself Who asks us to bear these daily trials for love of Him, suffering loses its horrors.

God gives us abundant strength and grace to bear our crosses, if we ask Him.

Many good and pious Christians never think of asking God to help them to bear their crosses! Therefore, their crosses weigh heavily on them.

Our sufferings are the purest gold in our lives. Five minutes' suffering is of greater worth than twenty years of pleasure and happiness.

One fact well worth remembering is that our daily sufferings, the least as well as the greatest, if borne well, merit for us a crown of martyrdom.

Suffering, well borne, makes us saints.³

In closing, this might be a thought to bear in mind:

If a little suffering makes you impatient now, what will hell fire do? In truth, you cannot have two joys: you cannot taste the pleasures of this world and afterward reign with Christ.⁴



Catholic Candle note: The article below is part 2 of an article the first part of which is found here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/02/19/women-should-wear-dresses-and-skirts-not-pants/>

This article 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 and assist them in fulfilling 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/>

Part 2

Women should Wear Dresses and Skirts, Not Pants

Recap of part 1

In part one of this article, we saw five reasons why men (as well as women) need to understand the Catholic standards of modesty for women (and men).

³ *An Easy Way to Become a Saint*, Fr. Paul O'Sullivan, O.P.,(E.D.M.) Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., Rockford, IL, 1990, pp. 68-70.

⁴ *Imitation of Christ*, Thomas à Kempis; Book I, Ch. 25.

The article then lists four reasons why women should not 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 lewdness⁵ 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.

Then the article looks at the first of those reasons. Below, is the second reason why women should wear dresses and skirts and not pants.

2. It is a Sin against the Natural Law for Women to Wear Pants.

A person could suppose that it might have been permissible for women to wear pants and other men's clothes (or for men to wear women's clothes) if God had not forbidden this in the revealed Law in Sacred Scripture. But that supposition is false because such cross-dressing is forbidden by the Natural Law, too.⁶

⁵ Lewdness (noun): indecency or obscenity; vulgar sexual character or behavior.
<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/lewdness>

⁶ The Natural Law is what we know is right (or wrong) by the light of the natural reason God gave us. One example of the Natural Law is that we must never tell a lie. We naturally know this because we know that the purpose of speech is to convey the truth and so we naturally know that telling a lie is abusing the purpose of speech.

Here is how St. Thomas explains what the Natural Law is:

[L]aw, being a rule and measure, can be in a person in two ways: in one way, as in him that rules and measures; in another way, as in that which is ruled and measured, since a thing is ruled and measured, in so far as it partakes of the rule or measure. Wherefore, since all things subject to Divine providence are ruled and measured by the eternal law, as was stated above [in *Summa*, Ia IIae, Q.91, a.1]; it is evident that all things partake somewhat of the eternal law, in so far as, namely, from its being imprinted on them, they derive their respective inclinations to their proper acts and ends. Now among all others, the rational creature is subject to Divine providence in the most excellent way, in so far as it partakes of a share of providence, by being provident both for itself and for others. Wherefore it has a share of the Eternal Reason, whereby it has a natural inclination to its

This prohibition under the Natural Law is especially because wearing the clothes of the other sex causes lewdness. Here is how St. Thomas Aquinas, greatest Doctor of the Catholic Church, teaches this truth:

It is in itself sinful for a woman to wear man's clothes, or vice versa, especially since this can cause lewdness.⁷

Pants are men's clothes and it is a sin for women to wear pants just as it is a sin for a man to wear a dress because dresses are a woman's clothes. This particular reason why it is sinful for women to wear the clothes of the opposite sex does not depend on how much such clothes reveal a woman's body. For example, even if she should wear a complete men's suit with a dress shirt buttoned up to her neck, nevertheless, it is inherently sinful to do so.

It would also be a sin of cross-dressing for a man to wear a dress even if it were a "very modest" dress, precisely because it is woman's attire. The same example (a man wearing a dress) is *all-the-more cringe-worthy* if the dress is pink calico with lots of lace and frills as well as accompanied by broaches, pearl necklaces, and 4-inch-high spike heels. But those conditions and accessories are not necessary circumstances for the man to have committed the sin of cross-dressing (although such feminine accessories might increase the sin).

This is because, as St. Thomas explains, such cross-dressing is a cause of lewdness and sensuality. This lewdness arises because it is lewd for a man to insert his body into women's clothes (*i.e.*, for him to commingle his body with women's clothes). Similarly, it is lewd for a woman to insert her body into a man's clothes or commingle her body with man's clothes.

Again, this reason we are discussing now (why it is a sin for men and women to cross-dress) does not pertain to whether a woman's figure is more revealed in pants (which it is) but pertains to the fact that pants *are men's clothes*. In other words, it is a sin for a

proper act and end: and this participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called the natural law. Hence the Psalmist after saying (Psalm 4:6): "Offer up the sacrifice of justice," as though someone asked what the works of justice are, adds: "Many say, Who showeth us good things?" in answer to which question he says: "The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us": thus implying that the light of natural reason, whereby we discern what is good and what is evil, which is the function of the natural law, is nothing else than an imprint on us of the Divine light. It is therefore evident that the natural law is nothing else than the rational creature's participation of the eternal law.

Summa, Ia IIae, Q.91, a.2, *respondeo*.

⁷ *Summa*, IIa IIae, Q.169, a.2, ad 3.

woman to wear men's clothes regardless of whether such clothes would immodestly reveal her body.

This is the second reason it is a sin for women to wear pants.

(To be continued)



Mary's School of Sanctity

Lesson #32 The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius – VARIOUS TOPICS: MAKING RESOLUTIONS, AND ST. IGNATIUS' TREATMENT OF SCRUPLES

Due to limited space, we have decided to defer giving St. Ignatius's additional meditation points until our next lesson. This current lesson may be considered as really a combination of instructions that we decided to put at the end of our course on the *Spiritual Exercises* because we did not want to break up the of flow of the progression of the *Exercises* especially our study of Our Lord's Life and Death.

Making resolutions ---

After concluding the *Spiritual Exercises*, it is very profitable for us to make some concrete resolutions to help ourselves to amend our lives in earnest. The following are some practical resolutions we can all make:

1) Have the spirit of penance as Our Lord admonishes us to do to help us refrain from sin and to make reparation for our past sins.⁸ We must practice penance, both passive penance and active penance.

Passive penance is simply patiently accepting circumstances as they occur in our daily lives, whether we experience some illness or some calamity, *etc.* There are plenty of crosses in our daily lives that the Good Lord lovingly sends us in order to teach us virtue. These crosses are more meritorious than self-imposed penances.

⁸ St. Augustine says, "Sin must not remain unpunished; it is not becoming, it is not good, it is not right. Then, as sin must be punished, punish it yourself, that you may not be punished for it." As quoted in *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, p. 92.

Active penance is a self-imposed penance. Examples of these are almsgiving and additional fasting. Practicing mortification of our eyes, our ears, our tongues, (in fact, all of our senses) is an excellent form of active penance. The saints did many different kinds of penances, including wearing hair-shirts and chains, or flagellations called the “discipline”. However, there are more ordinary penances that, often, we should embrace, *e.g., taking cold showers, refraining from condiments on our food, etc.*

By practicing *active* penances, we can help curb our flesh, our self-love, and our fallen human nature, all of which are easily attracted to worldly pleasures. We must fight against these enemies of our salvation by being constantly vigilant and mortifying ourselves because we are prone to selfishness.

Fr. Hurter has some practical advice on how to be cautious about our souls. He says we must have a “newness” of heart, tongue, and action. ⁹

The **newness of our hearts** is obtained by focusing on *purity*, avoiding, of course, mortal sin and also voluntary venial sin, and bridling our passions. To obtain this newness of heart, the heart “must be new by its right *direction* to God, by purifying our *intentions* and motives.” This newness of heart also entails that we have an increase in *fervor*, and in this way have a greater *zeal* in our service of God. This includes a dedication to “repairing the losses caused by our past negligence.”¹⁰

When speaking about the **newness of tongue**, Fr. Hurter recommends that we put five bridles on our tongue, a *fivefold silence*, and by doing so avoid many faults.

1. The silence of *charity*. By the use of our tongue, we so easily offend against the love of our neighbor. We scarcely open our mouth without committing sins of the tongue. We criticize people, make their faults known, or attribute ignoble motives to them; we often begin well by praising a brother: soon, however, the praise turns to blame. Even pious souls easily forget themselves. We wish to amuse ourselves, spread news, make ourselves important and interesting, and before we are fully aware of it, we have sinned. Let us hold on to two golden rules which will be of great use to us. First rule: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” (Matt. 19:19) What I do not wish another to say about me, that I ought not to say about him.

⁹ 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, p. 244.

¹⁰ 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, pp. 244-245.

Second rule: What I would not say in his presence because it might offend, mortify, or humiliate him, that I ought not to say in his absence.”¹¹

2. The silence of *patience*.¹² In this type of silence Fr. Hurter explains how we are apt to complain about whatever suffering we experience. In this complaining, we offend God, our superiors, and our neighbor. We offend God because we show that we are not resigned to His will. We offend our superiors because we readily blame them as being severe and unjust. We offend our neighbor by blaming him for his lack of consideration of us.¹³

We offend by exaggeration, spiteful expressions, rash judgments, and frequently condemning the most innocent doings of others; urging our friends to make similar complaints, and thus cause dissension and discord. In order to learn this silence of patience, let us often think of Our Divine Savior, Who was accused, calumniated, mocked, and ridiculed before the tribunals, but even in the most agonizing pain did not open His mouth to complain.¹⁴

3. The silence of *humility*. This we practice when we keep silent about our real or supposed advantages, when we do not willingly speak about ourselves, and do not, except for grave reasons, talk about our good works, mindful of the words of Our Lord: “When thou dost an almsdeed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as hypocrites do in the synagogues....Amen I say to you, they have received their reward.” (Matt. 6:2)¹⁵

4. The silence of *purity*.” Here Fr. Hurter addresses how our speech must be free from all uncleanness. In general, as members of society it is appropriate to have

¹¹ 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, pp. 245-246.

¹² 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, p. 246.

¹³ 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, p. 246.

¹⁴ 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, p. 246.

¹⁵ 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, p. 247.

proper decorum and decency, but all the more so for those who intend to be true followers of Our Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁶

5. The silence of *prudence*. If we wish to escape vexation, we must be prudent in our speech. How often is not something said without consideration, then told to others; and then depression, misunderstanding, discord, and enmity spring up. It often takes weeks and months before the tension is broken and friendly relations are again restored. We should be careful when giving our opinion about others, and not be too trustful, for even “walls have ears,” as the significant proverb says. What we believe has been said in private will soon be heralded from the housetops. Therefore, we should always speak so that we need not be afraid of publicity. Be not hasty in speaking, but deliberate and careful, if you wish to live in peace. Let us diligently observe this fivefold silence. We shall never regret having been silent; but we are often sorry for having spoken carelessly.¹⁷

In his discussion of a **newness of action**, Fr. Hurter makes three main points:

1. Our actions should all proceed from faith; and as its fruit, they should be ennobled by the motives of faith. Only what proceeds from faith is pleasing to God: “Without faith it is impossible to please God.”(Heb. 11:6)
2. We must strive to make our actions faultless and our works perfect: “In all thy works keep the preeminence.” (Eccl. 33:23) We do not offer decayed fruit to an honored guest; much less should we offer as an homage to the Most High works that are defective. Rather should we endeavor to deserve the praise which the good people gave to Our Lord: “He hath done all things well.” (Mark 7:27)
3. We must be generous towards God. We must not be satisfied with doing that to which we are bound under pain of mortal, or at least venial sin. We must do more

¹⁶ 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, p. 247.

¹⁷ 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, pp. 247-248.

One note about never regretting silence is that one should keep in mind that when one finds himself confused or not sure about a crucial matter in order to be able to take reasonable action, one is obliged in prudence to seek advice of one's superior or of a virtuous and wise person. Remember also how St. Ignatius describes in his *Rules for the Discernment of Spirits* that when one is tempted, one should reveal his temptation to an appropriate person in order to thwart the evil one's plan to harm the soul.

than strict duty calls for out of pure love. A heartfelt love among men often performs great deeds; surely then our love of God should not be niggardly and narrow-minded. Self-interest ought to urge us to be generous towards God, for God will not be outdone in generosity; that would be unworthy of His infinite goodness.¹⁸

One consoling aspect to keep in our minds at the end of doing all the ***Spiritual Exercises*** and in setting about making resolutions to strengthen our desire to serve God well is that the ***Exercises*** and our resolutions should engender peace in our souls.

Fr. Hurter gives many considerations about St. Augustine's explanation concerning true interior peace. St. Augustine says that four things are required: (1) *serenity* of mind; (2) *tranquility* of soul; (3) *simplicity* of heart and (4) a *bond of peace* based on brotherly love.

SERENITY OF MIND

A serene mind results from seeing by faith that God is our loving Father Who provides for us, and knowing that "for those who love God, all things work for the good." (Rom.8:28) Therefore, in whatever state of life we have, we can serve God and become perfect and holy.¹⁹

The devil tries to get us to distort reality and imagine that we are in a storm, that is, in some calamity. He would have us blow a situation way out of proportion so we will lose our confidence and peace. Then, our imagination urges us on to be suspicious of the motives of others, and our emotions follow suit and bad consequences follow.²⁰

At other times, he clouds our perspective by blinding us to our own failings or minimizing them, and instead exaggerating faults of others. When we are like this we do not take

¹⁸ 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, pp. 248-249.

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, p. 250.

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, pp. 250-251.

corrections well and we see the one correcting us as harsh and severe. Our soul becomes dark.²¹

Indeed, our imagination often leads us off course. If we want to retain cheerfulness of spirit, we must not give our imagination too much play, but rather let the Holy Ghost waft over our interior.²²

TRANQUILITY OF SOUL²³

There are three ways that our tranquility of soul may be disturbed. Dwelling on the past, dwelling on the present, and being anxious about the future.

Many people fret about the past. They are scrupulous about their past contrition. They second guess everything. We must remember that uneasiness without a good reason comes from the devil. (See St. Ignatius's notes concerning scruples below.) As long as we can say, "I *honestly* examined my conscience", we can be at peace. We must trust in the Good Lord because we know that He lovingly cares for us.

Present events can also be alarming to us. Our predominant *passions* and unregulated inclinations readily cause a storm to rise in the soul. Hence, self-control must be acquired by a vigilant examination of conscience.

We must also acquire *indifference* in regards to our inclinations. If we are not mortified then there will be excitement and disturbances as soon as we meet with something which is opposed to our inclinations. Furthermore, if we act in a *stormy* and hasty manner, we can scarcely maintain our interior peace. We must remember, too, that there is a very close connection between the interior and exterior man.

Another source of undue alarm is when we *meddle* in other people's business which does not concern us at all. We must be concerned with our present duty and not concerned about things that we cannot control.

²¹ 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, p. 251.

²² 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, p. 252.

²³ *The following section is paraphrased from* 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, pp. 252-253.

We sometimes allow ourselves to be disturbed by too much *anxiety* about the future. The first step in counteracting this is to be childlike in our confidence in the providence of God.

If we picture to ourselves future difficulties, we become sad and discouraged. We soon find out that when the time comes, the difficulties have vanished. The things we dread do not come to pass. If there is a question of something that may concern us in the distant future, we should quiet ourselves with the thought: "God will provide!"

We must be on guard when the imagination pictures *improbable* events and thus disturbs us with useless anxiety. If God permits something extraordinary to happen, He will also us give the necessary graces in due time. For fictitious cases, He need not give grace. No wonder that we do not know how we should act in such cases. Let us be calm and satisfied in submitting to the Sacred Heart.²⁴

SIMPLICITY OF HEART

This means that one is direct in his meaning and not a hypocrite.

Whoever has such a contradiction between the dictates of his conscience and his external conduct cannot enjoy true peace because true peace consists in perfect harmony. Simplicity of heart therefore seeks only to please God, and has no other motives. It is not guided by the principles of this world, or by the wisdom of the flesh, does not lend a willing ear to sensuality, but strives to bring all into unison with the enlightened principles of Our Divine Savior. Also, He gives us a beautiful example by His mode of life, which is so pure, so noble, so enlightened, so simple, so captivating, and so capable of winning the hearts of men.²⁵

²⁴ 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, pp. 252-254.

²⁵ 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, pp. 255-256.

THE BOND OF PEACE²⁶

This mark of true peace is cordial *agreement* with one's brethren and neighbors. Just as Our Lord said, "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." Our Lord is compelling us to love with an unconditional love. He does not want us to count the cost.

The mutual love that He wanted His apostles to have towards each other He wanted to be an outward sign, a *mark*. "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another." (John 13:35) Likewise, we should earnestly ask ourselves if we have this mark on us, and appreciate it highly.

We can show our love for Our Lord by showing love to our neighbor. Our Lord tells us that what we do for the least of our brethren, He considers done unto Him.

This love *strengthens* our prayers. Indeed, Our Lord tells us that, "For where there are two or three gathered together in My Name, there I am in the midst of them." (Matt 18:20) Therefore, we should appreciate prayers said in the company of others.

We should then endeavor to make every effort to acquire this heavenly peace simply because this peace is a foretaste of heaven.

St. Ignatius' Notes concerning Scruples

The following notes will be of help in discerning and understanding scruples and the snares of our enemy:

1. The name "scruple" is ordinarily given to that which proceeds from our judgment and free will; for example, when I freely judge something to be a sin which is not a sin. This might happen when someone, after having accidentally stepped on a cross formed by two straws, of his own accord judges that he has sinned. This is in reality an erroneous judgment and not a real scruple.

2. After I have stepped upon that cross, or after I have thought, said, or done some other thing, the thought comes to me from without that I have sinned. On the other hand, it seems to me that I have not sinned. Nevertheless, I am disturbed in this matter, doubting and not doubting that I have sinned. This is truly a scruple and a temptation from the enemy.

²⁶ This section is a paraphrase of 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, pp. 256-257.

3. The first scruple, mentioned in the first note should be much abhorred because it is completely erroneous. But the second type of scruple mentioned in the second note, is for a certain period of time of no little advantage to the soul that devotes itself to spiritual exercises. It may even greatly purify and cleanse such a soul, separating it far from all appearance of sin, according to that saying of St. Gregory: “It is a mark of good souls there to recognize a fault when there is none.”

4. The enemy observes very carefully whether one has a delicate or lax conscience. If the conscience is delicate he strives to make it excessively so in order to disturb and ruin it more easily. For example, if the enemy sees that a soul consents to no sin, since he cannot make the soul fall into what has the appearance of sin, he strives to make it judge that there is sin where there is none, as in some insignificant word or thought.

If the conscience is lax, the enemy strives to make it still more lax. Thus, if before it took no account of venial sins, he will strive to have it take no account of mortal sins. If before, it did take some account of them, now he will strive that it cares much less or not at all about them.

5. The soul that desires to advance in the spiritual life must always take a course contrary to that of the enemy. If the enemy seeks to make the conscience lax, he must strive to make it delicate “to excess”; the soul must strive to establish itself solidly in moderation so that it may better maintain its tranquility.

6. When such a good soul wishes to say or do something that is acceptable to the Church and to the mind of our superiors, something that may be for the glory of God Our Lord, there may come to it from without, a thought or temptation not to say or do it because it is motivated by vainglory or some other specious reason. On such occasions one must raise his mind to his Creator and Lord, and if he sees that the action is for God’s service, or at least not contrary to it, he ought to act in a manner diametrically opposed to the temptation, as St. Bernard answered a like temptation: “I did not begin this because of you, nor because of you will I desist.”

In our next lesson, we will give St. Ignatius’ additional meditation points on the life of Our Lord.



Catholic Candle note: Below is an article concerning the U.S. economy in particular, and, by analogy, pertaining to the economies of other Western countries.

Catholic Candle usually writes on topics more directly related to the Catholic Faith, as well as Catholic philosophy and Catholic practice. But there is an ongoing cultural and political revolution all around us, and this revolution has other aspects too. That is why we also write on topics that could be called “political”, in order to shine a light on current evils in government and society. Here are examples of such *Catholic Candle* articles:

- The COVID-19 “Vaccine’s” Harms Continue to Be Further Revealed:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2024/02/20/in-case-you-missed-it-february-2024/>
- Glacier-Melting Alarmism: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/01/23/glacier-melting-alarmism/>
- The Leftist Attack on the Moral Fiber of Society:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2023/10/29/the-leftist-attack-on-the-moral-fiber-of-society/>
- The “Deadly Heat” Alarmism: <https://catholiccandle.org/2023/08/24/the-deadly-heat-alarmism/>
- The False Principle of “Diversity and Inclusion”:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2022/01/05/the-false-principle-of-diversity-and-inclusion/>
- “Big Data” – a New Version of an Old Danger of Manipulation and Deception:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2021/12/11/h/>
- Black Lives Matter is Showing its “True Colors” – and They are Red:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2021/10/03/black-lives-matter-is-showing-its-true-colors/>
- The Evil & Dangers of Yoga: <https://catholiccandle.org/2021/09/05/the-evil-dangers-of-yoga/>
- Wikipedia – a Deceptive Tool of the Leftists:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2021/08/02/wikipedia-a-deceptive-tool-of-the-leftists/>
- The Current Leftists Follow the Usual “Tyrant’s Playbook”:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2021/05/03/the-current-leftists-follow-the-usual-tyrants-playbook/>
- Empathy – a Tool for Good or for Evil:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2021/04/02/empathy-a-tool-for-good-or-for-evil/>

- Reject the COVID Vaccines! <https://catholiccandle.org/2021/01/01/reject-the-covid-vaccines/>
- Face masks present grave health risks & are to control people, not a virus: <https://catholiccandle.org/2020/12/01/856/>

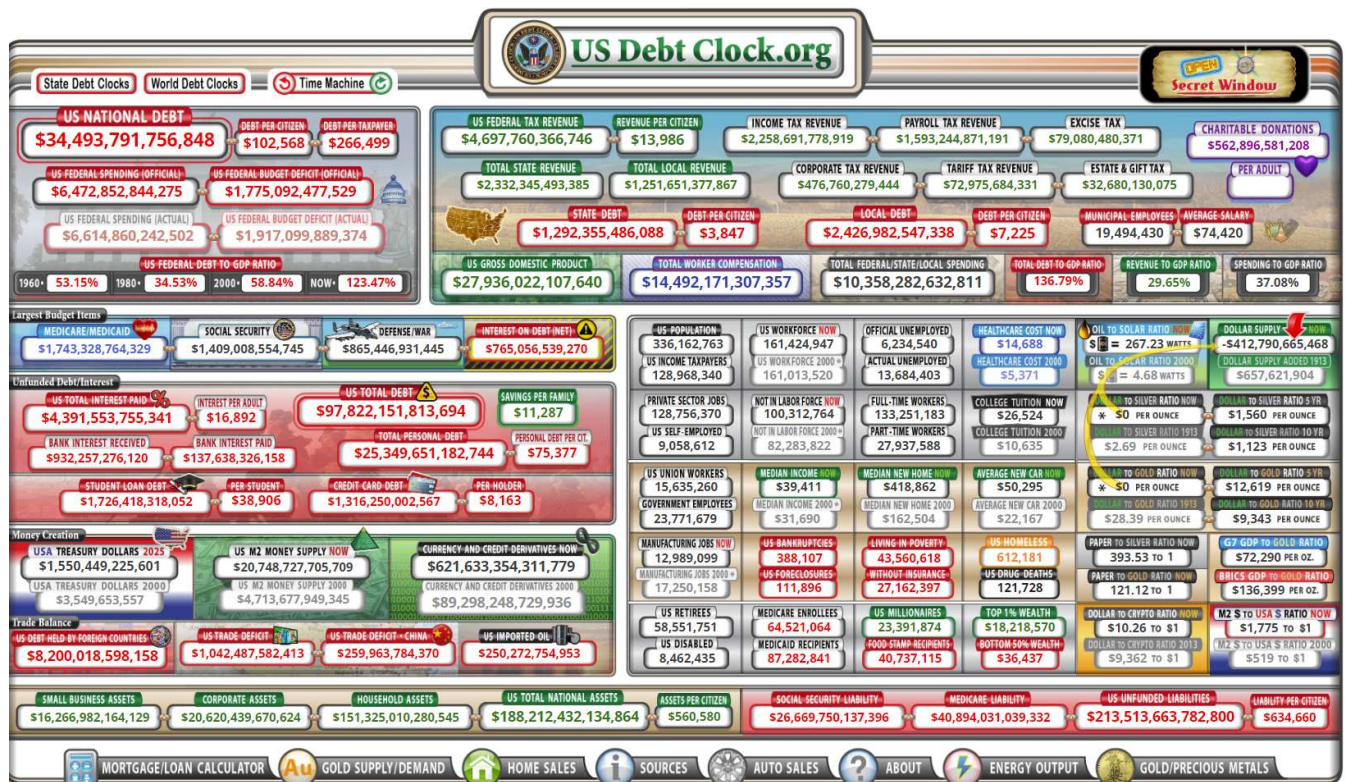
Catholic Candle holds that the globalists are positioning the U.S. economy and other economies in the Western World to be pushed into collapse if and as needed, to compel people to accept a future globalist tyranny.

Thus, we have an eye on the economy in order to monitor (in a general way) its condition and its readiness for use as a weapon compelling acceptance of a globalist tyranny.

The Condition of the U.S. Economy and Comparing it to Leftist Spin about the Economy

The National Debt

We live in dramatic times! For “starters”, let us note that the National Debt Clock (using government data) currently shows the federal debt to be about \$34½ trillion! Here is a screen shot of the “U.S. Debt Clock” from a few days ago:



That is such a huge number it is hard to grasp in “everyday” terms. One of the *Catholic Candle* Team checked this same “debt clock” almost 15 years ago, on March 6, 2009. On that day, the “debt clock” was \$10.95 trillion. So, for comparison purposes, in nearly 15 years, the U.S. National Debt has increased more than \$23 trillion!

The St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank has graphs showing the growth of the U.S. National Debt. Here is the graph which we downloaded a few days ago:



This graph available here: <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/GFDEBTN>

This graph shows the same thing as the debt clock, *viz.*, on roughly March 6, 2009 the graph shows (roughly) the National Debt of \$11 trillion.

Look how the National Debt has skyrocketed in the last 15 years especially! The above graph starts at roughly 1965. From that date, it took (roughly) 20 years to reach the first \$1 trillion, and (roughly) ten more years to add another \$5 trillion to that amount (with a total debt of \$6 trillion at about 1995). Then it took about 13 years to add another \$5 trillion to that (to a total of about \$11 trillion in 2009). In the 15 years since 2009, the National Debt has increased more than \$23 trillion!

Such increases in our country’s debts are unsustainable. Drunken sailors spend their money more carefully than our government! Where is this all leading? Ask yourself that.

The Annual Federal Deficit

Here is a little more information to help us to extrapolate where this is heading.

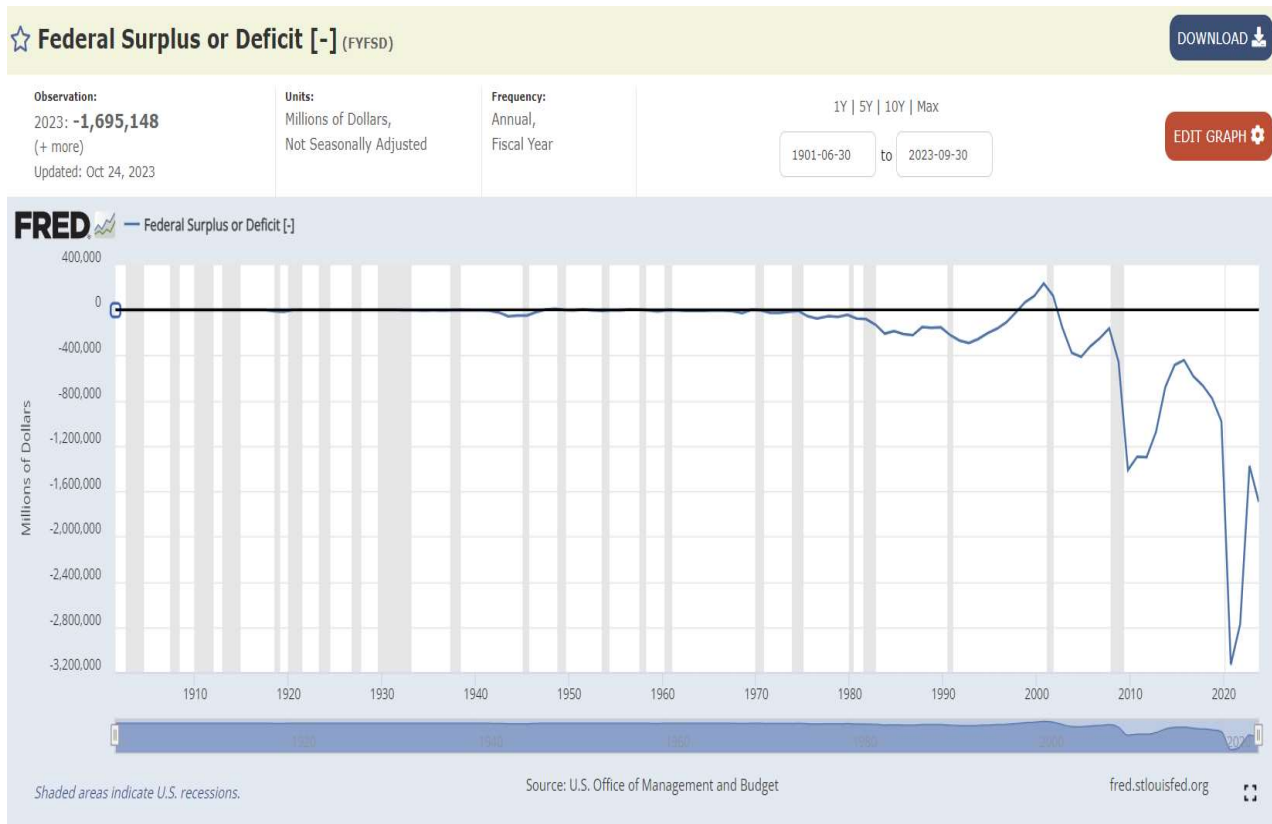
Every year, the U.S. government makes fiscal matters much worse by adding to the National Debt. And the government is adding to the total debt at a faster rate. The U.S.'s annual budget deficit (*i.e.*, the amount by which federal spending exceeds federal revenue) is currently 16% higher than it was a year ago.²⁷

The federal deficit for the first third of the current fiscal year is \$532 billion.²⁸ Multiplying this number by three (in order to “annualize” this deficit) shows that we are running an annual deficit of about \$1.6 trillion ($\$532\text{B} \times 3 = \1.596 trillion). This shows the U.S. is running a larger budget deficit compared to the average of the last 15 years.

The St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank calculates the current annual federal budget deficit as larger than that – *viz.*, approximately \$1.7 trillion (*viz.*, \$1.695T). See the upper left-hand corner of the graph below.

²⁷ <https://www.theepochtimes.com/us/us-budget-deficit-widens-16-percent-as-interest-costs-surge-treasury-5585773>

²⁸ <https://www.theepochtimes.com/us/us-budget-deficit-widens-16-percent-as-interest-costs-surge-treasury-5585773>



This graph is found here: <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/FYFSD>

Notice on the St Louis Fed’s graph that, although the average of the last 15 years is \$1.5T, the larger deficits are more recent. Although the largest federal budget deficits were during the COVID scare, nonetheless, after this so-called “pandemic”, the deficit spending level continues to be larger than the largest deficits before that. Again, the federal government’s current annual budget deficit is roughly \$1.6T or \$1.7T. So the U.S. government is adding a huge amount to the enormous existing federal debt. So, extrapolating to this time next year (2025) the National Debt will be \$36.2 trillion (or more). And so on.

U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Is there any *good* news about the economy as a whole? Perhaps you have heard that the most recent numbers for GDP (Gross Domestic Product) were higher than expected. The mainstream media treated this as a good thing. For example, one leftist news source, CNN, called the current GDP number “shockingly robust”.²⁹ Strong GDP growth *would*

²⁹ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/25/economy/fourth-quarter-gdp/index.html>

have been good under other circumstances but not under the present ones. Let us explain.

The GDP is an important measure of national economic activity. It is supposed to measure increase or decrease of the nation's wealth by measuring economic activity. But the GDP does this imperfectly and is, literally, simply measuring spending. When this spending reflects increases (or decreases) of economic activity related to homes constructed and factories built, cars made, crops grown, *etc.*, then GDP is a reasonably good proxy to measure the increase (or decrease) in the nation's wealth.

But at present, this higher GDP largely reflects more *government* spending. The government makes almost nothing and so its expenditures, for the most part, do not reflect things built and produced. Government expenditures commonly reflect lots of waste. For example, the government wasted hundreds of billions of dollars doling out COVID relief money which was stolen by fraudsters.³⁰ Even the non-fraudulent trillions of COVID freebies the government handed out were not productive but largely paying for people to stay home.

Yet, even when the government spending is wasted or spent unproductively, it is counted as part of the GDP as long as the government money is spent/paid.³¹ So if the government spent money hiring persons to dig holes and then fill them in again (an unproductive activity), this would be counted as an increase in GDP, since money was spent on this.

With lots of wasteful government spending, it not only increases the federal debt and deficit but it is also counted as an increase of GDP and so is counted as a sign of a supposed "healthy economy".

Besides *out-and-out* government waste, the government also spends huge amounts of money on non-productive activities, *e.g.*, hiring more bureaucrats, passing more laws, enacting more regulations, increasing social welfare spending, *etc.*

Further, our corrupt government's spending so often does great harm. Our ***Corrupt Government is about the only thing concerning which it would be better if we do not receive our "money's worth"***. So often, we would be better off if our ***corrupt*** government just burned money instead of spending it.

³⁰ <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/justice-department/biggest-fraud-generation-looting-covid-relief-program-known-ppp-n1279664>

³¹ <https://brownstone.org/articles/2-7-trillion-buys-spectacular-gdp/>

So, unlike when the private sector manufactures, mines, or otherwise produces goods, the increase in GDP because of a strong increase of *government* spending is a bad thing, not a good thing, especially when it is deficit spending (as it is).

Thus, we have the government wasting money and causing much harm by spending money that it does not even have, and which it borrows.

Common sense shows the evil of this situation.

This federal spending is ***not*** like a family increasing its spending (investing) in order to buy a house, a farm, or a car. The increases in spending of the federal government are for its “living expenses”, *e.g.*, current welfare payments, current healthcare welfare payments (Obamacare *etc.*), current freebies for everything from unnecessary grants to foreign aid.

This is like a family continually spending beyond its means for ***current*** expenditures in its monthly bills, *e.g.*, food and rent. The government’s spending is like a business which is borrowing to meet its current payroll and to pay rent for its factory building. Such a business, or family, or the government is living beyond its means and is heading toward ruin. We see that the government is spending like that now.

Is There a “Biden Bull Market”?

Let us briefly examine what the mainstream media says is the current “bull market” during the Biden presidency. A “bull market” is a stock market that is rising because of a healthy and strong economy.

The mainstream media call the current stock market a “bull” market attempting to paint the economy as strong. But “regular people” experience something largely the opposite. That is why, for example, a few days ago *The New York Times*, in its election coverage, proclaimed that, *despite the robust economy the voters are not giving Biden the credit for this*.

In other words, according to the media, Biden’s economy is really good but the voters somehow don’t realize this “fact” and so aren’t grateful to him. The mainstream media misuses the economic data to claim there is a “Biden bull market”.

Regardless of what the media claims, inflation is causing prices to go ever higher and people know this fact when they go to the grocery store, the gas station, *etc.* Consumer prices have risen 20% in the last four years, according to government-issued statistics.³²

³² [https://www.theepochtimes.com/opinion/bidens-speech-on-shrinkflation-was-unbearably-bad-5585506?src=ref share&src cmp=mb-cc](https://www.theepochtimes.com/opinion/bidens-speech-on-shrinkflation-was-unbearably-bad-5585506?src=ref%20share&src_cmp=mb-cc)

There is good reason to believe that the government inflation numbers are a lie and a deceptive minimizing. The *apparently-more-accurate* estimates show that last year's inflation rate was about 18% and that the rate was 24% over the last four years.³³

In that same four-year period, the costs which producers pay is up 35%.³⁴ This gap between consumer and producer inflation is a typical pattern because, when producers' costs go up, the producers initially absorb some of the increase in order to avoid angering consumers and losing market share. So, although the producer inflation rate is now higher than the consumer rate, producers can only absorb the cost differential for so long. Inevitably, consumer inflation will "catch up" to producer inflation eventually.

In this same last four years, the nation's money supply has increased a whopping 39%!³⁵ This extraordinary increase shows us where our economy is heading. This large increase in the money supply *must* result in greater inflation in the future. When everyone has more money without changing the amount of goods available for purchase, then this circumstance **MUST** cause inflation. For example, if suddenly, everyone received \$1,000,000 with no increase in goods available, then people would be willing to pay a lot more for any given item. Prices would go up. This is inflation. One way the economists speak of this situation is that "there are more dollars chasing the same quantity of goods".

With all of this inflation, let us ask ourselves how this impacts Biden's supposed "bull" market, *i.e.*, the recent increase in the stock market. Of course, with each dollar being inflated and worth less, the price of stocks must increase just to stay even in terms of "real dollars". This is like the fact that if there is a doubling of the money supply with no additional goods produced, then we would expect that the stock market would compensate and, over time, roughly double the price of the stock shares for sale, just to keep the shares valued at the same price in terms of "real dollars".

Further, the current supposed "bull" market is a reversal of the previous Biden "bear" market and makes up for the stock market "tanking" and being about 15% lower in about October 2022 compared to when Biden took office. In other words, most of the increase during the Biden "bull" market is merely making up for the 15% decline earlier in Biden's tenure.³⁶ So after taking account of the current stock market rise which merely returns

³³ <https://www.theepochtimes.com/opinion/the-inflation-rate-hit-18-percent-last-year-worse-than-carter-era-561113>

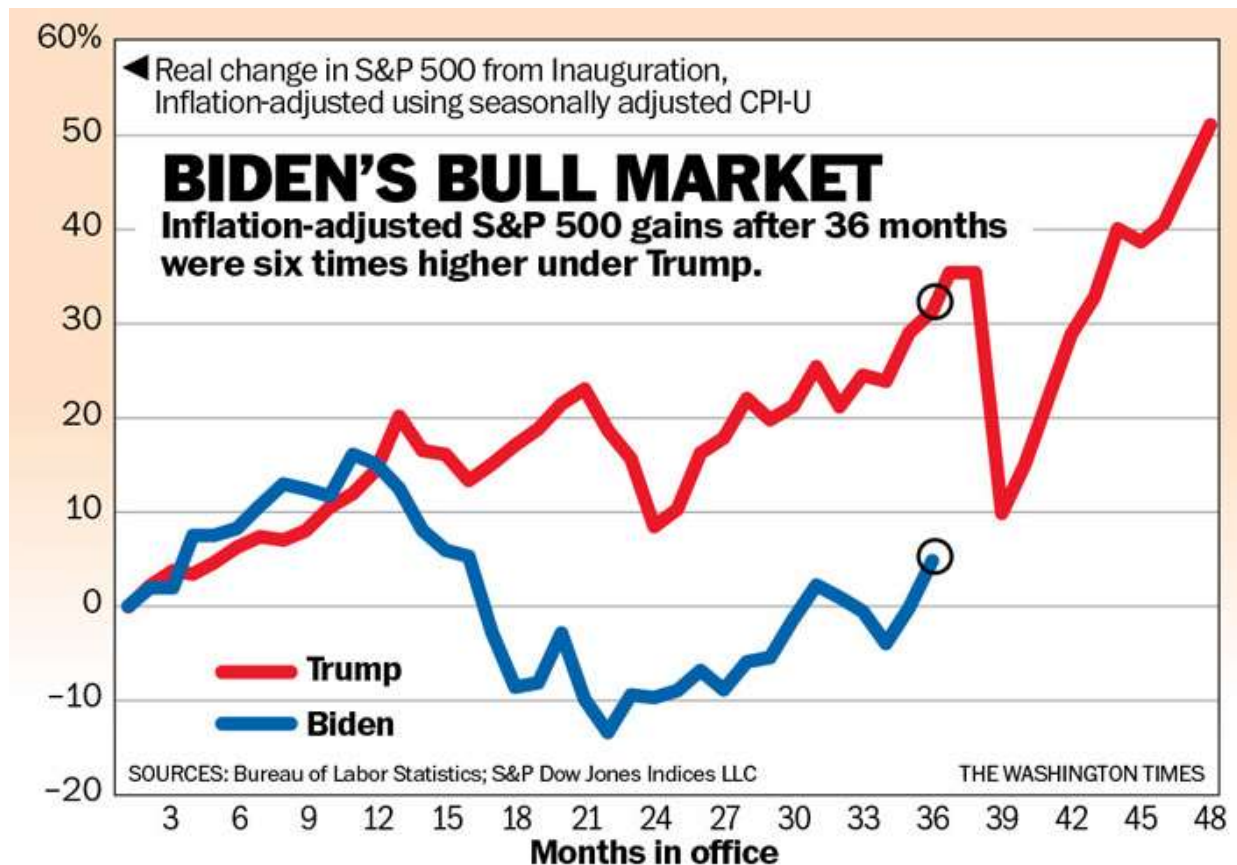
³⁴ https://www.theepochtimes.com/opinion/bidens-speech-on-shrinkflation-was-unbearably-bad-5585506?src_src=ref_share&src_cmp=mb-cc

³⁵ https://www.theepochtimes.com/opinion/bidens-speech-on-shrinkflation-was-unbearably-bad-5585506?src_src=ref_share&src_cmp=mb-cc

³⁶ <https://amac.us/newsline/economy/what-biden-bull-market/>

the market to the pre-Biden level, and then after adjusting the market for inflation, the stock market's increase is anemic and is a smaller annual increase than the average annual increase over the last 30 years.

In contrast to Biden's supposed current "bull" market, during Trump's presidency, the *S & P 500* stock index increased 36% in *real, inflation-adjusted* terms. Below is a graph comparing how the stock market performed during the Trump and Biden presidencies, *after adjusting for inflation*:



This graph is available here: <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2024/feb/21/what-bull-market-two-thirds-of-stock-market-rise-u/>

So, we see that, as the economists say, "there is no such thing as a free lunch". When the federal government prints trillions of dollars "out of thin air", this results in "more dollars chasing the same number of goods". This resulted in inflation and these inflated dollars caused, in part, the Biden fake "bull" market.

Conclusion

The U.S. economy is on a path to ruin.

The leftist agenda is bad for the economic health of the country and this Biden “bull” market is just another leftist lie.

We live in a strange and daunting time, so we must place ourselves in God’s Hands, by acts of our wills and intellects.

Also, we must pray for our country, help each other, and pray for each other!

If we use this present time the way God wants us to use it, then this is a time of great blessings and merit!



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