

Catholic Candle

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Words to Live by – from Catholic Tradition

We Must Live According to Reason – Not According to Inclination

St. John of the Cross, the Mystical Doctor of the Church, teaches this crucial truth in these words:

Blessed is he who, setting aside his own liking and inclination, considers things according to reason and justice before doing them.

Quoted from his work, Prayer Of A Soul Taken With Love, #42.

☪☪☪

Catholic Candle note: *Catholic Candle* normally examines particular issues thoroughly, at length, using the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas and the other Doctors of the Church. By contrast, our feature **CC in Brief**, usually gives an extremely short answer to a reader's question. We invite every reader to submit his own questions.

CC in Brief

Should we EVER go into St. Peter's Basilica?

Below is a reader's question in light of an article in the April 2025 *Catholic Candle* concerning conciliar (and other compromise) churches being unfitting places to pray¹:

¹ See, <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/04/23/the-new-sspx-promotes-praying-in-conciliar-churches-during-the-holy-year/>

Q. Are you saying that a Catholic should not go into St. Peter's Basilica? Did not the Lord go into the Temple, that den of thieves where blasphemies were regularly committed?

A. You are correct to follow Our Lord's example in all things. But we must be careful to make sure that we are in the same situation before doing the same physical act that Our Lord did. So, *e.g.*, we should not attempt to walk on water, as He did.

The Temple was Our Lord's own house. Consider the possible difference between a well-armed man who walked into his own house which has been taken over by a drug gang, when he seeks to clean out the riffraff (like Our Lord going into the Temple to clean it out). Compare this to someone else deciding to walk into the same drug house with lesser good reasons, or even just for gawking and photo opportunities, *etc.*

Further, there seems to be a difference between Catholic practice near the time of Our Lord and after that. There was a certain transition period during which Catholics like Saints Peter and John went into the Temple [*Acts of the Apostles*, 3:1-6], but after this transition period, Catholics did not enter. In fact, the three reasons given in the *Catholic Candle* article² are an ample basis for explaining why faithful and informed Catholics ceased entering synagogues, just as they should not enter conciliar or compromise churches as explained in the *Catholic Candle* article. So, for the reasons set forth in the *Catholic Candle* article, we think people should not go into conciliar or other compromise churches to **pray**.

But what about entering a conciliar building for tourism purposes? Is there scandal³ then?

Yes, there is still scandal, but for different reasons. There would not be the same *type* of scandal when one enters a church building – like St. Peter's in Rome – if it is a daily tourist trap full of large crowds who are obviously not there to pray. In such a case, if a man were to walk into the building snapping pictures, dressed like a tourist, and not praying or genuflecting, it reduces or eliminates the scandal of being seen entering there as a place of prayer.

But there would still be a different problem than the scandal of a man going into that church to pray. This is because it seems unfitting to simply treat St. Peter's as a secular tourist site because this ignores the fact that the basilica was **formerly** a place of

² See, <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/04/23/the-new-sspx-promotes-praying-in-conciliar-churches-during-the-holy-year/>

³ Scandal is giving the appearance of evil which makes another person more likely to sin. *Summa*, IIa IIae, Q.43, a.1, ad 2.

holiness, although it is now desecrated. Profane treatment of a once-holy building would seem to be wrong, like treating a previously-consecrated chalice like a secular drinking vessel because it has already been desecrated. So, we should not go into conciliar or compromise churches either to pray or to simply gawk around and look at the beauty of the art.⁴

Besides the scandal of praying in conciliar churches, there are other concerns and occasions for compromise when entering these places. One temptation would be to genuflect (out of a misguided reverence) in front of the “tabernacles.” (There is a serious doubt that Our Lord is really present in the novus ordo and various “Latin Mass” venues, based not only regarding the problems with the novus ordo “mass” itself, but also doubtful ordinations/consecrations, and invalid form, matter, or intention.)

One might see some otherwise well-meaning “Traditionalists” dipping their fingers into the “holy” water fonts, or even showing respect for the masonic “altar” tables. All of this constitutes compromising / mixing with the Revolution. We must never do this.

In contrast, every year the “new” SSPX leads hundreds of “Traditionalists” through these conciliar buildings on European pilgrimages. These pilgrimages are led by SSPX priests, and one sees in the advertisement pictures that “Traditionalists” are kneeling reverently in prayer.

Pilgrimages are good and wholesome in regular times, but now is not the time for such activities to the locations desecrated by the ongoing Conciliar Revolution. We are in full-scale war with this Revolution!

For all the above reasons, we must avoid entering conciliar or other compromise churches to pray or “just to look around” – including the famous churches in Europe. This is a sacrifice for faithful and informed Catholics but is an act of integrity and prudence to offer to Our Lord the King, as well as to avoid scandal.

We would do well to remember the famous quote from St. Athanasius when the Arian heretics of his day took possession of the churches: “They have the churches, but we have the faith.”⁵ It is clear that St. Athanasius, knowing the horror of heresy, would have been saddened had he heard that some Catholics were entering such Arian churches (or,

⁴ Although we should not go into compromise churches to pray or treat those buildings like secular tourist sites, there is a narrow situation where one might go into such a building to fulfill an office of nature without participating in any religious activity. Read this article: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/other-than-weddings-and-funerals-we-should-never-attend-any-religious-services-of-compromise-groups-or-false-religions>

⁵ Read the longer quote from St. Athanasius here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/11/15/the-duties-and-role-that-god-has-given-men-2/>

in our times, entering into conciliar or compromise churches) because of their art, their beauty, their history, *etc.*

Let us stay out of such churches! We should be completely content and extremely grateful to God that we have the True Faith! Let us not seek those buildings until God delivers them back once again, to be used for holy purposes!



***Catholic Candle* note:** The article immediately below is part ten of the study of the Choleric temperament. The first nine parts can be found here:

1. Mary's School of Sanctity – Lesson #36: About the Temperaments – Beginning our Study of the Choleric Temperament – Part I:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2024/08/27/lesson-35-about-the-temperaments-the-choleric-temperament/>
2. Mary's School of Sanctity – Lesson #37: About the Temperaments – Continuing Our Study of the Choleric Temperament– Part II:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2024/09/26/lesson-37-about-the-temperaments-continuation-of-the-choleric-temperament/>
3. Mary's School of Sanctity – Lesson #38 -- About the Temperaments – Continuing our Study of the Choleric Temperament – Their Spiritual Combat – Part III:: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/10/24/lesson-38-temperaments-choleric-temperament-their-spiritual-combat/>
4. Mary's School of Sanctity – Lesson #39 About the Temperaments – Continuing Our Study of the Choleric Temperament – That Temperament's Spiritual Combat – Part IV: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/11/26/lesson-39-temperaments-choleric-temperament-their-spiritual-combat-part-iv/>
5. Mary's School of Sanctity – Lesson #40: Temperaments – Choleric Temperament – Their Spiritual Combat – Part V:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2024/12/30/lesson-40-temperaments-choleric-temperament-their-spiritual-combat-part-v/>
6. Mary's School of Sanctity – Lesson #41 - About the Temperaments - Continuing Our Study of the Choleric Temperament: a Choleric's Spiritual Combat -- Part VI: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/01/27/lesson-41-temperaments-choleric-temperament-a-choleric-s-spiritual-combat-part-vi/>

7. Mary's School of Sanctity – Lesson #42: About the Temperaments – Continuing Our Study of the Choleric Temperament – a Choleric's Spiritual Combat – Part VII: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/02/21/lesson-42-temperaments-choleric-temperament-a-choleric-spiritual-combat-part-vii/>
8. Mary's School of Sanctity -- Lesson #43 About the Temperaments --Continuing Our Study of the Choleric Temperament -- Their Spiritual Combat Part VIII: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/03/27/lesson-42-temperaments-choleric-temperament-a-choleric-spiritual-combat-part-viii/>
9. Mary's School of Sanctity – Lesson #44 About the Temperaments – Continuing Our Study of the Choleric Temperament – Their Spiritual Combat, Part IX: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/04/23/lesson-44-temperaments-choleric-temperament-a-choleric-spiritual-combat-part-ix/>

Mary's School of Sanctity

Lesson #45 About the Temperaments – Continuing Our Study of the Choleric Temperament – The Choleric's Spiritual Combat Part X

Note: When referring to a person with a choleric temperament in this article, we simply will label him as a choleric.

Previously, we have discussed anger and its link to pride in the choleric. Likewise, we have discussed at length how a choleric must acquire self-knowledge so he can master himself. He must beware of nurturing hatred, which fosters holding grudges.

In addition to all of this is another character trait which is directly linked to pride, namely, the choleric's tendency to criticize and misjudge others.

When one thinks about the fact that with fallen human nature we are all infected with pride, one can see many results of this infection. One result is that we do not like others to see our weaknesses and failings. In fact, we tend to try to hide our faults rather than admit that we have them.

The bad-willed choleric is especially prone to this tendency to never admit that he is wrong. He does not want to see himself the way he really is. He avoids looking deeply into himself because he dreads discovering anything that he needs to improve in himself. This is a form of pride which in turn leads to blinding himself further regarding his own defects. He tries to convince himself that does not have his various defects. Likewise, he does not want others to see that he has any flaws.

One common way that this choleric attempts to deflect attention from his defects is to accuse others of flaws or supposed flaws. Thus, this choleric has a very strong tendency to criticize others as a means of keeping others from seeing him as he really is. Of course, this is directly linked to his denial of some (or all) of his defects. (A bad-willed choleric might be aware of his defects but does not want to correct them.) This form of pride is extremely strong in him.

An interesting point is that it seems that the more pride the bad-willed choleric has, the more critical he is and, therefore, the more he is unbearable he is to others. He seems to find constant fault with everyone around him. Thus, it can be that with some choleric, nothing seems to please them.

Another important point to consider is that the proud choleric is instinctively intimidated by virtuous people around him, as if he can sense his defects more intensely in comparison to them. The intimidation he feels is so great within him that he vents his vexation by especially attacking any virtuous person associated with him.

If anyone points out to him any defect, this proud choleric can't handle it and he lashes out at the "accuser". He hurls insults at him and insists that the virtuous one, who was giving fraternal correction with love, is full of vice. It is ironic that oftentimes the so-called vice the choleric accuses his corrector of having, is the very vice he himself is full of. Instead of the choleric showing gratitude to the one giving charitable fraternal correction, the proud choleric displays his defects even more prominently by his haughty reaction to the correction.

Unfortunately, this pattern of behavior in a proud choleric is usually a vicious circle. His relatives and acquaintances become overwhelmed with the situation and do not know how to try to help him. However, since pride is blind, the choleric tends not to see any problem, so the problem becomes worse.

What can a choleric do to avoid turning into an unjust criticizer? (Below is a short list of suggestions. Of course, more can be found.)

- 1) Be aware of the tendency of choleric to be proud.
- 2) Work very hard at acquiring the virtue of humility.
- 3) Saying ejaculations such as, "Jesus Meek and Humble of Heart make my heart like unto Thine," is extremely helpful. Likewise, saying the *Litany of Humility*⁶ often, even twice a day, is a powerful means to fight pride.

⁶ **Litany of Humility**

O Jesus! meek and humble of heart, Hear me.

4) When a critical comment/thought about another person comes into his mind, he could tell himself that he himself possesses that problem and he should not say or think of criticizing others, because doing so would be like the “pot calling the kettle black.”

5) He should pray to Our Lord and Our Lady to help him acquire more and more self-knowledge so he can see himself more in the Divine Light and work on improving his character.

6) He must tell himself to not be afraid of seeing his flaws because God intends him to continually convert and become more Christ-like— for our life on earth is to be an imitation of Christ and so we Catholics should want with all our hearts to go to heaven and to be divine friends with Our Lord.

7) He should remind himself that everyone has a form of pride and other defects to work on, and being aware of his is a great blessing. Knowing oneself is half the battle, so to speak; then all he needs to do is to get to work and improvements **and peace of soul will come.**

From the desire of being esteemed, Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being loved... Deliver *etc.*

From the desire of being extolled ...

From the desire of being honored ...

From the desire of being praised ...

From the desire of being preferred to others...

From the desire of being consulted ...

From the desire of being approved ...

From the fear of being humiliated ...

From the fear of being despised...

From the fear of suffering rebukes ...

From the fear of being calumniated ...

From the fear of being forgotten ...

From the fear of being ridiculed ...

From the fear of being wronged ...

From the fear of being suspected ...

That others may be loved more than I, Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be esteemed more than I ... Jesus, grant *etc.*

That, in the opinion of the world, others may increase and I may decrease ...

That others may be chosen and I set aside ...

That others may be praised and I unnoticed ...

That others may be preferred to me in everything...

That others may become holier than I, provided that I may become as holy as I should...

8) He should also remind himself that others will find him easier to bear if he has begun in earnest to change his attitude to a humble one.

A Preview...

In our next lesson we will examine the very core of the choleric pride – a lack of mental discipline, *i.e.*, an unwillingness to force himself to reason deeply.

This lack of mental discipline has the following consequences (which we will examine):

- Not making good choices/decisions;
- Plans are poorly formulated and poorly implemented;
- Failures leading to blaming others;
- Failures leading to making excuses and covering up problems;
- Trying to compensate for poor thinking by acting overconfident and/or bragging; and
- Trying to manipulate others and control them to avoid the problems caused by bad planning.



***Catholic Candle* Note:** Sedevacantism is wrong and is schism. *Catholic Candle* is not sedevacantist. A reader would be mistaken to believe that the article below gives any support to sedevacantism. The article simply shows that we should resist (and not follow) the evil command of a pope or any other superior.

The False “Obedience” of Cowardly and Weak Catholics

Faithful and informed Catholics know that Our Lord’s enemies have long planned to corrupt the human element of the Catholic Church through false “obedience”. For example, here is the Masonic plan set out 200 years ago, to use false “obedience” to attack the Church:

The Pope, whoever he may be, will never come to the secret societies. It is for the secret societies to come first to the Church, in the resolve to conquer the two [*viz.*,

the Church and pope]. The work which we have undertaken is not the work of a day, nor of a month, nor of a year. It may last many years, a century perhaps, but in our ranks the soldier dies and the fight continues. ...

That which we ought to demand, that which we should seek and expect, as the Jews expected the Messiah, is a Pope according to our wants. ... [With such a pope, we] have the little finger of the successor of St. Peter engaged in the plot, and that little finger is of more value for our crusade than all the Innocents, the Urbans, and the St. Bernards of Christianity. ...

Let the clergy march under your banner in the belief always that they march under the banner of the Apostolic Keys. ... You will have fished up a Revolution in Tiara and Cope, marching with Cross and banner – a Revolution which it will need but to be spurred on a little to put the four quarters of the world on fire.⁷

Faithful and informed Catholics know that the Freemasons have accomplished their goal in the human element of the Catholic Church, mainly through Vatican II and the subsequent conciliar church.

Archbishop Lefebvre recognized this successful corruption of the human element of the Church through false “obedience”. Here are his words:

Satan’s master stroke will therefore be to spread the revolutionary principles introduced into the Church by the authority of the Church itself, placing this authority in a situation of incoherence and permanent contradiction; so long as this ambiguity has not been dispersed, disasters will multiply within the Church. ... We must acknowledge that the trick has been well played and that Satan’s lie has been masterfully utilized. The Church will destroy Herself through obedience.⁸ ... You must obey! Whom or what must we obey? We don’t know exactly. Woe to the man who does not consent. He thereby earns the right to be trampled underfoot, to be calumniated, to be deprived of everything which allowed him to live. He is a heretic, a schismatic; let him die – that is all he deserves.

Satan has really succeeded in pulling off a master stroke: he is succeeding in having those who keep the Catholic Faith condemned by the very people who

⁷ Quoted from the permanent secret instruction given to the members of the High Lodge (Alta Vendita) dated 1819. An English translation is found in *The War of Antichrist with the Church and Christian Civilization*, by Msgr. George F. Dillon, New York, Burns and Oates, 1885, pp 66, 67 & 71 (emphasis added and bracketed words added to show context). Pope Pius IX vouched that this *Alta Vendita* Masonic plan is authentic.

⁸ In other words, the Church will be corrupted *in Her human element*.

should be defending and propagating it. ... Satan reigns through ambiguity and incoherence, which are his means of combat, and which deceive men of little Faith. **Satan’s master stroke, by which he is bringing about the auto-destruction of the Church, is therefore to use obedience in order to destroy the Faith: authority against Truth.**⁹

In the quote above, Archbishop Lefebvre is talking about the corruption of the human element of the Church since the Divine element of the Church cannot be destroyed and will continue and remain perfect until the end of the world.

So, Satan and the Masons have used the Vatican to cause the corruption in the human element of the Church by using modernist Ecclesiastical authorities to attack and suppress the truth through false “obedience”.¹⁰

To help us to avoid this trap of false “obedience”, let us look more carefully at what true obedience is. Here are six points regarding obedience:

1. True Obedience is Subordinate to Faith and Must Conform to Faith.
2. We have *no duty* to “obey” the evil command of a superior.
3. Not only have we no duty to “obey” the evil command of a superior, but we ***must refuse*** to “obey” it.

⁹ Quoted from *Satan’s Master Stroke*, a public statement by Archbishop Lefebvre, October 13, 1974, *Le Sel de la terre* #94, Autumn 2015 (emphasis added).

¹⁰ On this issue and so many others, the SSPX’s current leaders teach the opposite of their founder, Archbishop Lefebvre. For example, when Fr. Arnaud Rostand was U.S. District Superior (before he was promoted and transferred to Menzingen), he asserted that:

[T]he crisis [in the Church] came from the ***collapse*** of Church authority.

Quoted from the June 2013 *Regina Coeli Report* (emphasis added and bracketed words added to show the context).

Similarly, then-seminary rector, Fr. Yves le Roux, lamented the “**distrust of authority**” in “**the ranks of defenders of the tradition of the Church**”. Quoted from Fr. Yves le Roux’s 10 November 2013 letter entitled “Subversion or Tradition?”

In other words, the N-SSPX falsely teaches that the problem is that Church authority is too weak (collapsed) or too distrusted. However, faithful and informed Catholics know that the crisis in the human element of the Church is primarily and fundamentally an attack on the truth *through false “obedience” and abuse of authority*.

4. Not only must we refuse to “obey” the evil command of a superior but we **must oppose** the accomplishment of that evil command.
5. We must resist the bad command of **any** superior, including the pope.
6. [Objection:] But shouldn’t we wait for good leaders before resisting the evil command of a superior? [Answer:] No! We must act now!

Below, we discuss each of these six points.

1. True Obedience is Subordinate to Faith and Must Conform to Faith

There are three virtues, Faith, Hope and Charity, which are called “theological” because they have God as their object. Through these virtues, we believe what God has revealed, we trust in God¹¹ and we love God. These Theological Virtues are greater than all other virtues including the virtue of obedience.¹²

Besides these three Theological Virtues, every other virtue is a moral virtue – it is either one of the four Cardinal Virtues (Prudence, Justice, Courage and Temperance) or is a virtue which “comes under” a Cardinal Virtue and is connected with that Cardinal Virtue.

¹¹ For an explanation of the difference between the true Theological Virtue of Hope and the vice of presumption, read this article: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/priests/sspx-the-new-sspx-teaches-the-vice-of-presumption-as-if-it-were-the-virtue-of-hope.html>

This article shows that the “new” liberal SSPX now promotes the vice of presumption as if it were the true Theological Virtue of Hope.

¹² Here is how St. Thomas Aquinas, greatest Doctor of the Catholic Church, states this truth:

[T]he theological virtues whereby a person adheres to God in Himself, are greater than the moral virtues, whereby he holds in contempt some earthly thing in order to adhere to God.

Summa, IIa IIae, Q.104, a.3, *Respondeo*. See also, *Summa*, IIa IIae, Q.4 a.7 *sed cont.* & ad 3; IIa IIae, Q.23 a.6.

For example, the virtue of obedience is a subordinate virtue “coming under” the Cardinal Virtue of Justice.¹³ This is because Justice is *giving each person what is owed to him*¹⁴ and the virtue of obedience is giving our superior the obedience which is owed to him.

We must never obey a lower superior if that superior’s command is contrary to the command of a high superior because then we would be failing to give the higher superior the obedience we owe to that higher superior.¹⁵

God is our highest superior, Whom we must obey in all things. We must never “obey” the commands of other superiors which are contrary to the Will of God.¹⁶ When Jewish

¹³ Read St. Thomas Aquinas’ marvelous explanation of this truth here: *Summa*, IIa IIae, Q.104. a2.

¹⁴ *Summa*, IIa IIae, Q.58, a.1.

¹⁵ Here is how St. Thomas Aquinas, greatest Doctor of the Catholic Church, states this truth:

There are two reasons, for which a subject may not be bound to obey his superior in all things:

First, on account of the command of a higher power. For as St. Augustine comments on *Romans* 13:2 (“He that resisteth the power, resist the ordinance of God”):

If a commissioner issues an order, are you to comply, if it is contrary to the bidding of the proconsul? Again, if the proconsul command one thing, and the emperor another, will you hesitate, to disregard the former and serve the latter? Therefore, ***if the emperor commands one thing and God another, you must disregard the former and obey God.***

St. Augustine, *De Verb. Dom.* VIII (emphasis added; slight editing for clarity).

Second, a subject is not bound to obey his superior if the latter commands him to do something wherein he is not subject to him. For Seneca says (*De Beneficiis* iii): “It is wrong to suppose that slavery falls upon the whole man: for the better part of him is excepted.” His body is subjected and assigned to his master but his soul is his own. Consequently, in matters touching the internal movement of the will, man is not bound to obey his fellow-man, but God alone.

Quoted from the *Summa*, IIa IIae, Q104, a.5, *respondeo*.

¹⁶ Here is how St. Thomas Aquinas, greatest Doctor of the Catholic Church, states this truth:

Man is subject to God simply as regards all things, both internal and external, wherefore he is bound to obey Him in all things. On the other hand, inferiors are not subject to their superiors in all things, but only in certain things and in a particular way, in respect of

authorities in Israel gave the Apostles commands which were contrary to God's Will, the Apostles told them "we ought to obey God, rather than men." *Acts of the Apostles*, 5:29.

Because we would disobey God by following a bad command of any other superior, ***following that bad command is really a sin of disobedience.***¹⁷

2. We have *no duty* to "obey" the bad commands of a superior.

Our salvation depends upon discerning the difference between true obedience – which is necessary, and false obedience – which is a sin. Here is how the book, *Liberalism is a Sin*, explains the duty of any subordinate, contrasting when he receives a good command and when he receives a sinful command:

Obedience to a superior in all that is not directly or indirectly against Faith and Morals is his bounden duty, but *it is equally his duty to refuse obedience to anything directly or indirectly in opposition to the integrity of his Faith.*¹⁸

which the superior stands between God and his subjects, whereas in respect of other matters the subject is immediately under God, by Whom he is taught either by the natural or by the written law.

Summa, IIa IIae, Q.104, ad 2.

¹⁷ Here is how St. Thomas Aquinas, greatest Doctor of the Catholic Church, states this truth:

[A]nyone who obeys the sinful command of his superior, commits the sin of disobedience to God's law.

Summa, IIa IIae, Q.33, a.7, ad.5 ("...*ipse peccaret praecipiens, et ei obediens, quasi contra praeceptum Domini agens...*").

Here is another way St. Thomas distinguishes three categories related to obedience: 1) true obedience; 2) perfect obedience; and 3) false obedience:

[W]e may distinguish a threefold obedience; one, sufficient for salvation, and consisting in obeying when one is bound to obey: secondly, perfect obedience, which obeys in all things lawful: thirdly, illicit obedience, which obeys even in matters unlawful.

Summa, IIa IIae, Q.104, a.5, ad 3.

¹⁸ Fr. Felix Sarda y Salvany, *Liberalism Is a Sin*, 1886, reprinted by TAN Books, p.84 (emphasis added).

One of the errors of both the sedevacantists and so-called “conservative” Catholics, is failing to distinguish between opposing the authority of the pope **as such** (which is a sin), and opposing a pope’s evil **exercise** this authority (which is good). Both groups falsely hold that if we have a pope, then we must do whatever he says and cannot resist what he does and says.

However, when we resist a superior’s sinful command (or conduct), we do not thereby reject the superior’s authority *as such*, but only his evil command (or conduct). St. Thomas makes this crucial distinction when he discusses St. Paul resisting St. Peter, the first pope, to his face. *Galatians*, 2:11. St. Thomas explains that “the Apostle opposed Peter in the **exercise** of authority, **not in his authority of ruling [as such]**.”¹⁹ Thus, while recognizing our superior’s authority, we must oppose his abuse of authority when he commands evil.

St. Athanasius, Doctor of the Church, is our model. He was excommunicated²⁰ because he refused Pope Liberius’ evil command to accept Arian-infected doctrine and the command to not oppose those persons who taught the infected doctrine.

If today’s so-called “conservative” Catholics had been alive then, they would have obeyed Pope Liberius and accepted Arian-infected false doctrine.

If today’s sedevacantists had been alive then, they would have denied that Pope Liberius was a real pope.

3. We have a *duty to refuse* to “obey” the bad command of a superior.

Not only do we have no duty to “obey” the evil command of a superior (as shown in the section immediately above), but we have a **duty not** to “obey” an evil command.

St. Thomas explains this truth as follows:

¹⁹ *Super Epistulas S. Pauli, Ad Galatas*, ch.2 lectio III (emphasis and bracketed words added).

²⁰ See, *The Voice of Tradition*, By Michael Davies, *The Remnant*, April 30, 1978, page 13-4, citing various authorities showing St. Athanasius was excommunicated.

Pope Liberius’ excommunication of St. Athanasius was null and void. Read the explanation for this truth here: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/against-sedevacantism.html#question-001>

[S]ometimes the things commanded by a superior are against God. Therefore, superiors are not to be obeyed in all things.²¹

There is a great difference between doing evil under false “obedience” (which is a sin) and refraining from doing a particular non-obligatory good deed because a superior commanded us to refrain from this deed. Here is how this distinction is explained by Pope St. Gregory the Great, Doctor of the Church:

Know that **evil ought never to be done** through obedience, though sometimes something good, which is being done, ought to be discontinued out of obedience.²²

We must always obey God and never “obey” anything contrary to God’s Will. We know His Will through reason and the Catholic Faith. Here is how Pope Leo XIII explained this truth:

[T]he nature of human liberty, however it be considered, whether in individuals or in society, whether in those who command or in those who obey, supposes the necessity of obedience to some supreme and eternal law, which is no other than the authority of God, commanding good and forbidding evil. And, so far from this most just authority of God over men diminishing, or even destroying their liberty, it protects and perfects it, for the real perfection of all creatures is found in the prosecution and attainment of their respective ends; but the supreme end to which human liberty must aspire is God. ...

[W]here a law is enacted contrary to reason, or to the eternal law, or to some ordinance of God, obedience is unlawful, lest, while obeying man, we become disobedient to God.²³

Because an evil command from a superior is, in effect, a command to disobey God’s Will, we should strongly reject such a command ***just like any other temptation to sin***. Here is how this truth is taught by Juan Cardinal de Torquemada, who was the holy and learned medieval theologian responsible for the formulation of the doctrines defined at the Council of Florence:

It is necessary to obey God rather than men. Therefore, where the Pope would command something contrary to Sacred Scripture, or to an article of Faith, or to

²¹ *Summa*, IIa IIae, Q.104, a.5, ad. 3.

²² *De Moral.*, bk. XXXV, §29 (emphasis added).

²³ *Libertas Praestantissimum*, §§ 11 &13 (emphasis added).

the truth of the Sacraments, or to a command of the Natural Law²⁴ or of the Divine Law, he ought not to be obeyed, but *such command ought to be despised*.²⁵

4. Not only must we refuse to “obey” an evil command of a superior but we have a duty to *oppose* the accomplishment of that evil command.

Above, we saw that we have no obligation to obey a bad command of a superior. Then we saw that we have a *duty to refuse* to “obey” this bad command. But our duty is even greater than that. *We have a duty to resist the carrying out of that command* according to our abilities.

²⁴ The Natural Law is what we know we must do 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 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 in the Eternal Law.

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

²⁵ *Summa de ecclesia* (Venice: M. Tranmezzium, 1561). Lib. II, c. 49, p. 163B. This English translation of this statement of Juan de Torquemada is found in Patrick Granfield, *The Papacy in Transition* (New York: Doubleday, 1980), p.171 (emphasis added).

We are soldiers of Christ and we must work to achieve the Will of Christ the King even when the one opposing Christ's Will is our superior (including the pope).

Satan's most effective weapon is the Catholic who "doesn't want to get involved" and doesn't want to sacrifice himself for the cause of Christ the King. At the beginning of the same Great Apostasy in which we now live, Pope St. Pius X blamed those weak and timid Catholics for Satan's success. Here are the saintly pope's words:

In our time more than ever before, the chief strength of the wicked lies in the cowardice and weakness of good men All the strength of Satan's reign is due to the **easy-going weakness** of Catholics.

Oh! if I might ask the Divine Redeemer, as the prophet Zachary did in spirit: What are those wounds in the midst of Thy hands? The answer would not be doubtful: With these was I wounded in the house of them that loved Me. I was wounded by My friends, who did nothing to defend Me, and who, on every occasion, made themselves the accomplices of My adversaries. And this reproach can be leveled at the ***weak and timid Catholics*** of all countries.²⁶

5. We must resist the bad command of *any* superior, including the pope.

We must resist the evil commands of any superior. However, the pope is the highest of all superiors on earth. Thus, when discussing the sin of false obedience, wise men often spoke particularly about false obedience to the pope because what applies to resisting the evil command of a pope also applies to resisting the evil command of any other, lower superior.

After setting out the exalted authority of the pope, Pope Paul IV then tells us that we are right to resist the pope whenever he deviates from the Faith. Here are his words:

[T]he Roman Pontiff, who is the representative upon earth of our God and Lord Jesus Christ, who holds the fullness of power over peoples and kingdoms, who may judge all and be judged by none in this world, may nonetheless be **contradicted** if he be found to have deviated from the Faith.²⁷

The great Thomist and theologian, Saint Cajetan taught:

²⁶ Pope St. Pius X, Discourse on the Beatification of Joan of Arc, December 13, 1908.

²⁷ *Cum Ex Apostolatus Officio*, §1 (emphasis added).

One must **resist** the Pope who openly destroys the Church.²⁸

Fr. Francisco Suarez, S.J., was the greatest Jesuit theologian, whom Pope Paul V called “*Doctor eximius et pius*” (most exalted and pious doctor). Fr. Suarez teaches:

If [the Pope] lays down an order contrary to right customs one does not have to obey him; if he tries to do something manifestly opposed to justice and to the common good, it would be licit to **resist him**; if he attacks by force, he could be repelled by force, with the moderation characteristic of a good defense.²⁹

Fr. Francisco de Vitoria, O.P., was the great and glorious Thomist of Salamanca, philosopher, theologian, jurist and the *Father of International Law*. Fr. Vitoria teaches:

A Pope must be resisted who publicly destroys the Church. What should be done when the Pope, because of his bad customs, destroys the Church? What should be done if the Pope wanted, without reason, to abrogate Positive Law [*i.e.*, Church Law]?³⁰

Then Fr. Vitoria answers his own question:

He would certainly sin; he should neither be permitted to act in such fashion nor should he be obeyed in what was evil; but he should be resisted with a courteous reprehension. Consequently, ... if he wanted to destroy the Church or the like, he should not be permitted to act in that fashion, but **one would be obliged to resist him**. The reason for this is that he does not have the power to destroy. Therefore, if there is **evidence** that he is doing so, it is licit to resist him. The result of all this is that if the Pope destroys the Church by his orders and actions, he can be resisted and the execution of his mandates prevented.³¹

²⁸ In *De Comparata Auctoritate Papae Et Concilii*, as quoted in *Is Tradition Excommunicated?*, Angelus Press, p. 20.

²⁹ *De Fide*, disp. 10, sect. 6, n. 16, in *Opera Omnia*, Paris, Vives, vol 12.

³⁰ *Obras de Francisco de Vitoria, Dialogus de Potestate Papae*, para. 4 (Madrid: BAC, 1960), pp. 486f (emphasis added).

³¹ *Obras de Francisco de Vitoria, Dialogus de Potestate Papae*, para. 4 (Madrid: BAC, 1960), pp. 486f (emphasis added).

6. [Objection:] But shouldn't we wait for good leaders before resisting the evil command of a superior? [Answer:] No! We must act now!

Catholics must work tirelessly to help their fellow members of the Mystical Body of Christ. Because Catholics seek the good for their friends, they want their friends to share this great good, *viz.*, the truth. To be ignorant of an aspect of the Faith is harmful to salvation, even if the person is not blamable for his error. This is why the Catholic Church is and must be ***always missionary***, *although the conciliar hierarchy and compromise groups*³² *have lost their missionary zeal*. In other words, we must abide in the truth and work tirelessly that our friends, our family, and all people, also abide in the truth.

St. Thomas quotes and confirms St. Augustine's words, that the truth is everyone's good and correcting an erring superior is anyone's duty. Here are his words:

If the Faith be in imminent peril, prelates ought to be accused by their subjects, even in public. Thus, St. Paul, who was the subject of St. Peter, called him to task in public because of the impending danger of scandal concerning a point of Faith. As St. Augustine's commentary puts it:

St. Peter himself set an example for those who rule, to the effect that if they ever stray from the straight path, they are not to feel that ***anyone*** is unworthy of correcting them, even if such a person be one of their subjects.³³

Another Doctor of the Church, St. Robert Bellarmine, assures us that we are right to resist a pope who uses his office to attack souls (whether through false doctrine or bad morals). Here are his words:

In order to resist and defend oneself ***no authority is required*** Just as it is licit to resist a Pontiff who attacks the body, so also is it licit to resist him who attacks souls or destroys the civil order, or above all tries to destroy the Church. I say that it is licit to resist him by not doing what he orders and by

³² Bishop Williamson's group and the "new" SSPX lack missionary zeal. Read their own words cited to their own sources.

Here are Bishop Williamson's words: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/priests/williamson-faithful-catholics-have-a-missionary-spirit-bishop-williamson-tries-to-destroy-this-spirit.html>

Here are the N-SSPX's words: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/priests/sspx-extinguished-missionary-spirit.html>

³³ *Summa*, IIa IIae, Q.33, a.4, ad. 2 (emphasis added).

impeding the execution of his will; it is not licit, however, to judge him, to punish him, or depose him, for these are acts proper to a superior.³⁴

Where matters of faith and morals are involved, resistance to a superior's bad commands is *every* Catholic's duty. The only correct course of action is that taken by Eusebius and so highly praised by Dom Guéranger in his epic work, *The Liturgical Year*:

On Christmas Day, 428, Nestorius (Patriarch of Constantinople), profiting from the immense crowd assembled to celebrate the birth of the Divine Child to Our Lady, uttered this blasphemy from his Episcopal throne: "Mary did not give birth to God; her son was only a man, the instrument of God."

At these words a tremor of horror passed through the multitude. The general indignation was voiced by Eusebius, a *layman*, who stood up in the crowd and protested. Soon a more detailed protest was drafted in the name of the members of the abandoned Church, and numerous copies spread far and wide, declaring anathema on whoever should dare to say that He Who was born of the Virgin Mary was other than the only begotten Son of God. **This attitude not only safeguarded the Faith of the Eastern Church, but was praised alike by Popes and Councils.**

When the shepherd turns into a wolf, the first duty of the flock is to defend itself. As a general rule, doctrine comes from the bishops to the faithful, and it is not for the faithful, who are subjects in the order of Faith, to pass judgment on their superiors. But every Christian, by virtue of his title to the name Christian, has not only the necessary knowledge of the essentials of the treasure of Revelation, but also the duty of safeguarding them. The principle is the same, whether it is a matter of belief or conduct,

³⁴ *De Summo pontifice* Book II, ch. 29, in *Opera omnia*, Neapoli/ Panormi/Paris: Pedone Lauriel, 1871, vol. I, p. 418.

St. Thomas explains the reason for this distinction St. Robert Bellarmine makes, *viz.*, that we are right to resist (*i.e.*, to correct) the pope or other superior, but we cannot punish or depose him:

A subordinate is not competent to administer to his prelate the correction which is an act of justice through the coercive nature of punishment. But the fraternal correction which is an act of charity is within the competency of everyone in respect of any person towards whom he is bound by charity, provided there be something in that person which requires correction.

Summa, IIa IIae, Q.33, a. 4, *respondeo*.

The sedevacantists err by denying St. Thomas' distinction. They depose the pope, by declaring and seeking to persuade others that he is not pope.

that is, of dogma or morals. Treachery such as that of Nestorius is rare in the Church; but it can happen that, for one reason or another, pastors remain silent on essential matters of faith. The true children of Holy Church at such times are those who walk by the light of their baptism, **not the cowardly souls who, under the specious pretext of submission to the powers that be, delay their opposition to the enemy in the hope of receiving instructions which are neither necessary nor desirable.**³⁵

Where the Catholic Faith and morals are concerned, we must have a great zeal and complete liberty to speak the truth regardless of the feelings or the anger of our superiors.³⁶

A superior is not representing God when he gives an evil command. Charity requires that we correct him.³⁷

³⁵ *The Liturgical Year*, Vol. IV, Dom Guéranger; Feast of St. Cyril of Alexandria, February 9th (emphasis added).

³⁶ Here is how St. Thomas explained this fact:

To the Prelates [was given an example] of humility so that they do not refuse to accept reprehensions from their inferiors and subjects; and **to the subjects**, an example of **zeal and liberty so they will not fear to correct their Prelates**, above all when the crime is public and entails a danger for many.

Super Epistulas S. Pauli, Ad Galatas, 2, 11-14 (Turin & Rome: Marietti, 1953), lec. III, n. 77 (emphasis added).

³⁷ Here is how St. Thomas explains these truths:

Ecclesiasticus, ch.17, v.12 says that God ‘imposed on each one duties toward his neighbor.’ Now, a Prelate is our neighbor. Therefore, **we must correct him when he sins**. ... Some say that fraternal correction does not extend to the Prelates either because a man should not raise his voice against heaven, or because the Prelates are easily scandalized if corrected by their subjects. However, this does not happen, since **when they sin, the Prelates do not represent heaven** and, therefore, **must be corrected**. And those who correct them charitably do not raise their voices against them, but in their favor, since the admonishment is for their own sake. ... For this reason, ... the precept of fraternal correction extends also to the Prelates, so that they may be corrected by their subjects.

St. Thomas’ Commentary on Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*, Book IV, distinction #19, Q.2, a.2 (emphasis added).

Conclusion

Bad ecclesiastical superiors have been using false obedience to attack the truth. They have been corrupting the human element of the Church.

We must always remember that:

1. True Obedience is Subordinate to Faith and Must Conform to Faith.
2. We have *no duty* to “obey” the evil command of a superior.
3. Not only have we no duty to “obey” the evil command of a superior, but we ***must refuse*** to “obey” it.
4. Not only must we refuse to “obey” the evil command of a superior but we ***must oppose*** the accomplishment of that evil command.
5. We must resist the bad command of ***any*** superior, including the pope.
6. We should join the fight without delay, for Christ the King and against His enemies!



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