

Catholic Candle

☛ September 2025 ☛ catholiccandle.org ☛ catholiccandle@gmail.com

Words to Live by – from Catholic Tradition

We Must Have Self-knowledge!

He who knows himself well is mean in his own eyes and is not delighted with being praised by men.

My Imitation of Christ by Thomas à Kempis, (c)1982, Confraternity of the Precious Blood, 5300 Fort Hamilton Parkway, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11219, Bk.1 ch.2.



***Catholic Candle* note:** The article immediately below is part thirteen of the study of the Choleric temperament. The first twelve 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-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/>
10. Mary's School of Sanctity – Lesson #45 About the Temperaments – Continuing Our Study of the Choleric Temperament – The Choleric's Spiritual Combat Part X: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/05/20/lesson-45-temperaments-choleric-temperament-a-choleric-spiritual-combat-part-x/>
11. Mary's School of Sanctity – Lesson #46 About the Temperaments – Continuing Our Study of the Choleric Temperament – The Choleric's Spiritual Combat – Part XI: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/06/28/lesson-46-temperaments-choleric-temperament-a-choleric-spiritual-combat-part-xi/>
12. Mary's School of Sanctity – Lesson #47 About the Temperaments - Continuing Our Study of the Choleric Temperament - The Choleric's Spiritual Combat - Part XII: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/07/24/lesson-47-temperaments-choleric-temperament-a-choleric-spiritual-combat-part-xii/>
13. Mary's School of Sanctity – Lesson #48 About the Temperaments - Continuing Our Study of the Choleric Temperament - The Choleric's Spiritual

Mary's School of Sanctity

Lesson #49 About the Temperaments – Continuing Our Study of the Choleric Temperament – The Choleric's Spiritual Combat – Part XIV

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

In our last lesson we discussed how Satan hates the fact that humans are created with intellects and are capable of knowing universal truth. This *archenemy of mankind* has launched his major attack on man's highest faculty, namely, his intellect.

We saw how Satan tempts us humans to believe that making efforts to think carefully puts a damper on our enjoyment. We saw how this is a lie and that man's highest delights come *when he engages his mind* in the pursuit of truth.

Now we will consider another snare that Satan uses – he inclines people to believe that they do not have the ability necessary for careful thinking. However, in order to understand how it is false to believe that we do not have the ability to think carefully, we must first reflect more about human nature itself.

Satan Preys on Fallen Human Nature

As we stated above, one of the devil's tricks is to tempt humans into supposing that they do not have the necessary ability to think carefully and deeply. Someone could claim that thinking deeply was easy for Adam but ever since the fall of man, man does not have the ability to think. This is an old deception of Satan.

St. Thomas Aquinas explains the effects of original sin as follows:

Original justice was forfeited through the sin of our first parent [Adam], as already stated above (I-II Q. 81 a. 2); so that all the powers of the soul are left, as it were, destitute of their proper order, whereby they are naturally directed to virtue; which destitution is called a wounding of nature.

Again, there are four of the powers that can be the subject of virtue, as stated above (I-II Q. 61 a. 2), *viz.* the **reason**, where prudence resides, the **will**, where justice is, the **irascible** [passions], the subject of fortitude, and the **concupiscible**

[passions], the subject of temperance. Therefore, in so far as the reason is deprived of its order to the true, there is the wound of ignorance, in so far as the will is deprived of its order to the good, there is the wound of malice; in so far as the irascible is deprived of its order to the arduous, there is the wound of weakness; and in so far as the concupiscible is deprived of its order to the delectation moderated by reason, there is the wound of concupiscence.

Accordingly, these are the four wounds inflicted on the whole of the human nature as a result of our first parent's sin. But since the inclination to the good of virtues is diminished in each individual on account of actual sin, as was explained above (in I-II Q. 85 a.1& 2), these four wounds are also the result of other sins, in so far as, through sin, the reason is obscured especially in practical matters, the will hardened to evil, good actions become more difficult, and concupiscence more impetuous.¹

Personal Sins Increase the Effects of These Wounds

In the above text from St. Thomas, he explains that not only the wounds of original sin are evident in man, but also that one's personal, actual sins increase the effect of these wounds of original sin for him. We can readily guess that Satan and all of his fellow demons know the strengths and weaknesses of each individual, so of course, they know exactly what temptations to use on each individual soul.

Natural Inclinations Affect All Humans

Although the wounds of original sin influence all humans, each person is unique in his material dispositions, and from this it is easy to see how each person can be uniquely affected by the wounds of original sin. In other words, each person has his own individual degree of the wounds of original sin. In the vast number of humans that have ever lived, there is a wide spectrum of strengths and weaknesses. For example, some races of people seem to be naturally strong in their mental acuity whereas other races seem to be stronger in their physical prowess.² We can observe that God certainly has created a variety of humans and we must take many things into consideration in our relations with our neighbor. We will discuss this aspect of relationships in more detail at

¹ *Summa Ia IIae Q. 85 a.3 Respondeo* (bold and italic and bracketed words added for emphasis or clarity).

² Read this article: *God Wills the Natural Inequalities between Different Persons and between Different Peoples*. This article can be found here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2019/09/22/god-wills-the-natural-inequalities-between-different-peoples/>

a future time.

Personal Dispositions and the Seven Capital Sins

The demons make ready use of tempting humans to the seven capital sins. Here is what the *Concise Catholic Dictionary* tells us about these sins:

The so-called “deadly sins” seven in number, called “capital” because they are the source of most other sins: called “deadly” because they easily lead to mortal sins. They need not be separate acts but can exist as habits or vices. The seven capital sins are: pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth.³

Just as humans have natural tendencies connected to their material make-up, they have natural weaknesses and strengths. There is not a perfect balance between the strengths and weaknesses. Some may have far more weaknesses than they have strengths. Some may have only weaknesses and, seemingly, no strengths. Furthermore, there are souls who may have more strengths and fewer weaknesses.

The demons know that humans share the wounds of original sin. The demons also know that one capital sin often leads a soul to the other capital sins, and because the demons know the inclinations of souls, including their strengths and weaknesses, they strive to drag the soul into the capital sin to which that soul is most prone.

In addition to this common condition of the wounds of original sin and the particular genetic (*i.e.*, material, bodily) disposition⁴, human nature also includes the passions. In Lesson #39 we reflected how the passions work in order to get a better understanding of the passion of anger. We studied anger and how the choleric is prone to this passion. We also saw how anger is one of the capital sins which the choleric is prone to commit.

³ *Concise Catholic Dictionary* compiled by Robert C. Broderick, M.A. ©1944, the Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee.

⁴ A soul is created by God at the instant of the particular person’s conception. That soul, as such, is identical to every other rational (human) soul created by God. The differences between persons are on the part of the person’s matter. Thus, *e.g.*, a baby girl differs from a baby boy not in the type of soul she has, but in her material part. Likewise, one person’s strengths and weaknesses, as compared to another person, are not because God created them with differences in their souls, but because of differences in their bodily, material parts.

A Genetic (Material, Bodily) Disinclination toward the Effort to Think Carefully

Thus, there can be a genetic (material, bodily) disinclination to make the effort to think carefully. A person can be ill-disposed to do the mental work involved in deeper thinking. St. Thomas goes so far as to call the *fear* of mental work, *stupor*. He adds, “just as laziness shrinks from the toil of external work, so amazement and stupor shrink from the difficulty of considering a great and unwonted thing, whether good or evil; so that amazement and stupor stand in relation to the act of the intellect, as laziness does to external work.”⁵

So when a person has not previously made habitual efforts to think deeply or carefully, he is not accustomed to the task. In this way, the work involved is unusual to him and viewed by him as “unwonted”.⁶ Such a person “shrink[s] from the difficulty of considering” a “great and unwonted thing”, as St. Thomas explains.

The Attitude that “*I don’t have the ability*”, Stems from Fear.

Ultimately this kind of attitude is caused by fear. In order to give this topic a thorough treatment and to gain a clearer understanding of how this problem is not exclusively a choleric one, we will need to consider further the passion of fear.

A Preview...

In our next lesson we will begin our study of the passion of fear because this passion affects all the temperaments. We will then be able to see how deep-thinking is really perceived by the choleric.



Catholic Candle note: Sedevacantism is wrong and is (material or formal) schism. *Catholic Candle* is not sedevacantist.

Below is the twelfth article in a series which covers specific aspects of the error of sedevacantism. As context for this twelfth article, let us recall what we saw in the earlier eleven articles:

⁵ *Summa*, Ia IIae, Q.41, a.4, ad. 4.

⁶ The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines *wont* as a noun meaning *custom; habit; usage* or as a verb meaning- *to be accustomed; to be used*. *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* ©1949.

In the first article, we saw that we cannot know whether the pope (or anyone else) is a formal heretic (rather than a material heretic only) – and thus whether he is outside the true Catholic Church *based simply on his persistent, public teaching of a heretical opinion*.⁷

Then, in the second article, we saw that we must not judge a man to be a formal heretic if he professes to be Catholic and says he believes what a Catholic must believe now, in order to be Catholic now. When a person professes a heretical opinion, we must judge him in the most favorable light (if we judge him at all). So, we must avoid the sin of rash judgment and we must not judge negatively the interior culpability of the pope and the 1.4 billion⁸ people who profess to be Catholic. We must not judge they are not “real” Catholics if they tell us that they are Catholics. Instead, we should count them as Catholics who are very confused or are uninformed.⁹

Thus, we must judge the conciliar popes to have been material heretics, not formal heretics (if we judge them at all), and that each was pope in his turn until his death (or abdication). Regarding any of the world’s 1.4 billion self-described Catholics who hold heresy, we must judge them to be material heretics only (if we judge them at all), unless they themselves tell us that they know they don’t qualify to be Catholics.¹⁰

In the third article, we examined briefly the important difference between persons in authority who fulfill their duty to judge those under their charge in the *external forum*, as contrasted to a sedevacantist or *anyone else except God* who judges the *interior* culpability of other persons and (rashly) judges them to be formal heretics.¹¹

⁷ Read this article here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/09/26/cc-in-brief-sedevacantist-questions/>

⁸ The Vatican estimates that the number of Catholics worldwide is about 1.375 billion. <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2023-10/fides-catholic-church-statistics-world-mission-sunday.html>

⁹ Read this article here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/10/24/are-we-allowed-to-decide-that-pope-francis-knows-he-is-not-catholic/>

¹⁰ Read this article here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/10/24/are-we-allowed-to-decide-that-pope-francis-knows-he-is-not-catholic/>

¹¹ Read this article here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/11/26/bishops-have-excommunicated-heretics-cant-we-judge-the-pope/>

In the fourth article, we saw that it does not help us to protect ourselves better from a conciliar pope's heresy, to declare that we know he is not the pope and is not a Catholic.¹²

In the fifth article, we saw that it is possible for a pope to teach (or believe) heresy and in fact, popes have taught and believed heresy at various times during Church history.¹³ We looked especially at the cases of Pope John XXII and Pope Nicholas I, who both taught explicit heresy while pope and nonetheless continued to be the pope. Pope John XXII also taught the same explicit heresy before he became the pope.

In the sixth article, we saw that the Church infallibly assures us that we will have a pope at all times until the end of the world, except during very short interregnums between papal reigns, *during which the Church is in the process of electing a new pope and during which the Church's unified government continues to function*.¹⁴ In this sixth article, we saw that we are not presently in an interregnum (even though the sedevacantists absurdly claim we are in a many-decades-long interregnum).

In the seventh article of this series, we saw that the Catholic Church is a visible Body and remains visible to all. The Catholic Church has a visible monarchical government and the pope is visible to all. Thus, we know we have a pope and that the one who is pope is visible (known) to all as the pope.¹⁵

In the eighth article, we saw that the necessary visibility of the Catholic Church and the pope, requires as a corollary that the one who virtually all Catholics see (believe) is the pope must *be* the pope, since the pope must be visible to all.

In the ninth article, we addressed the superficial "argument" of sedevacantists (addressed to Catholics) saying that "if you think we have a pope, then you have to obey him in whatever he tells you to do". We examined the true Catholic virtue of obedience

¹² Read this article here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/12/30/protecting-ourselves-from-a-bad-pope-or-bad-superior/>

¹³ Read this article here: *It is Possible for a Pope to Teach Heresy and Remain the Pope?*: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/01/27/it-is-possible-for-a-pope-to-teach-heresy-and-remain-the-pope/>

¹⁴ Read this article here that the Catholic Church's unified government always continues, even during an interregnum: *The Catholic Church Will Always Have a Pope*: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/02/21/the-catholic-church-will-always-have-a-pope/>

¹⁵ Read this article showing that *The Catholic Church Will Always be Visible, and Will Always Have a Pope Who is Visible to All*, which can be found here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/03/27/the-catholic-church-will-always-be-visible-with-a-pope/>

and saw that we must not obey the commands of even a real superior like our pope, if/when he commands us to do something evil.¹⁶

In the tenth article, we saw more deeply what schism is and how sedevacantism is inherently schism.¹⁷

In the eleventh article of this series, we saw more deeply how we should respond to a pope (or other superior) who does harm – *viz.*, we should recognize his authority as pope but resist the evil of his words or deeds.¹⁸

In the twelfth article of this series, we saw how we ordinary Catholic laymen can know what the Catholic Truth is and how we can know when the pope (or anyone) is promoting error.¹⁹

Below, in the thirteenth article of this series, we will examine a related sedevacantist error, claiming we that we have no pope because the conciliar popes had doubtful consecrations and/or ordinations.

A Man Need Not Be Consecrated a Bishop or Ordained a Priest to Be a Valid Pope

An Explanation How the Catholic Church Continues to Possess A Full Hierarchy even in these Times of Great Apostasy

Against the Sedevacantist Argument that only a Valid Bishop Can Be Pope because He is Bishop of Rome

From the many prior articles in this series (linked above), it is plain that sedevacantism is wrong. However, some sedevacantists use a different, more indirect attack on our present

¹⁶ Read this article examining false obedience, entitled, *The False “Obedience” of Cowardly and Weak Catholics*, which can be found here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/05/20/the-false-obedience-of-cowardly-and-weak-catholics/>

¹⁷ Read this article showing that *Sedevacantism is Inherently Schism*, which can be found here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/06/28/sedevacantism-is-inherently-schism/>

¹⁸ *Our Catholic Duty: Resist the Harm Done by a Bad Pope But (Of Course) Recognize His Authority*: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/07/24/our-catholic-duty-resist-the-harm-done-by-a-bad-pope-but-of-course-recognize-his-authority/>

¹⁹ *Judging the Pope’s Words & Deeds According to Catholic Tradition*: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/08/29/judging-the-popes-words-deeds-according-to-catholic-tradition/>

pope's possession of his office. They assert that because one of the pope's titles is "Bishop of Rome",²⁰ he cannot be pope because he is not a valid bishop. These sedevacantists then declare that, because conciliar ordinations and consecrations are *definitely* invalid (so they assert), the more recent conciliar popes cannot be real popes because they are not valid bishops.

While those sedevacantists are rash²¹ to the extent they claim *certitude* that conciliar consecrations are invalid, it is true that conciliar consecrations and ordinations are inherently doubtful, and that doubtful sacraments should be *treated* as invalid (because they might be invalid).²²

However, as shown below, a more careful examination of this sedevacantist argument (*viz.*, that the pope must be a valid bishop because he is the Bishop of Rome) shows that even if the pope is a layman (*i.e.*, not a bishop or priest), this is not an obstacle to his valid papacy.

The papacy is a monarchy, giving the pope jurisdiction (*i.e.*, governing authority) over the entire Catholic Church, as Vicar of Christ. But this jurisdiction which is the essence of the papal office, does not require the pope to be a bishop or even a priest, to validly hold the papal office. Certainly, the Catholic Church has good reason for Her custom that the pope be a bishop, because it is very fitting that the ruler over even the bishops, would himself be a bishop.

²⁰ Traditionally, one of the pope's titles is "Bishop of Rome", because he is the Ordinary who exercises ecclesiastical jurisdiction over that diocese, as other bishops exercise jurisdiction over other dioceses.

²¹ We Catholics do not take upon ourselves the authority to "declare" conciliar ordinations and consecrations *definitely* invalid. We simply protect ourselves by staying away from conciliar ordinations and consecrations because we see there is good reason to *doubt* the validity of conciliar consecrations and ordinations.

²² Because doubtful ordinations and consecrations should be *treated as invalid*, this is why *conditional* ordinations and consecrations are required for all conciliar consecrations and ordinations. For a thorough explanation of the doubts about their validity, see these *Catholic Candle* articles:

- <http://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/new-ordination-doubtful.html>
- <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B49oPuI54eEGd2RRcTFSY29EYzg/view>
- <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B49oPuI54eEGZVF5cmFvMGdZM0U/view>

However, to hold the papal office and possess this universal jurisdiction which the pope has, does not require him to be a bishop as an essential condition which would otherwise prevent him from being pope.

A pope must be a male Catholic²³ who has use of his reason when elected. To become pope, any such male Catholic²⁴ only needs to be elected and to consent.²⁵ By being elected

²³ Sedevacantists rashly judge that the pope is interiorly culpable for his material heresy (*i.e.*, his errors on matters of Faith) and that he is not “really” a Catholic, although he claims to be. We treat this sedevacantist error here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/10/24/are-we-allowed-to-decide-that-pope-francis-knows-he-is-not-catholic/>

But, when a male with the use of reason is elected pope and he says he is Catholic, none of his errors should cause people to rashly declare he is not a “real” Catholic. *Id.*

However, we are presently considering a different issue, *viz.*, whether a man can be pope without being a bishop.

²⁴ This is how Father John F. Sullivan explains this point, in his book *The Externals of the Catholic Church*:

Who may be chosen to fill the office of Pope? Strictly speaking, any male Catholic who has come to the age of reason – even a layman. Strange to say, it would be legally possible to elect even a married man.

The Externals of the Catholic Church, by Rev. John F. Sullivan, Kennedy & Sons, New York, 1918, p.6.

²⁵ In his book defending the papacy, Bishop Kenrick explains this truth as follows: “After the election of the Pope, his consent is demanded”. *The Primacy of the Apostolic See Vindicated*, by Bishop Francis Kenrick, 3rd Ed., 1848, Dunigan & Bro., New York, p.300.

Pope Pius XII explained that becoming pope did not require a man to be a bishop:

Even if a layman were elected pope, he could accept the election only if he were fit for ordination and willing to be ordained. But **the power to teach and govern, as well as the divine gift of infallibility, would be granted to him from the very moment of his acceptance**, even before his ordination.

Pope Pius XII, Speech to the participants in the 2nd World Congress for the Apostolate of the Laity, October 5, 1957 (emphasis added).

In his book *The Externals of the Catholic Church*, Fr. Sullivan explains this point in more detail:

When a candidate is found to have the necessary number of votes and has manifested his willingness to accept the office, he is thereby Pope. He needs no ceremony of consecration to elevate him to the Papacy. [Footnote continued on the next page.]

and consenting, this male would *immediately* become the pope but he would have the moral obligation to seek Episcopal consecration so he could fulfill the sacramental duties of a pope.²⁶

But once a male Catholic is elected and consents to be pope, he *is* the pope without any need of ceremony, coronation, or confirmation in office.²⁷

Thus, because all conciliar popes have been Catholic males who had the use of reason, each of them, in his turn, was a valid pope with full papal jurisdiction (to govern), even if he were not a valid bishop (or even a priest) and did not have Episcopal powers to perform sacraments.

With full papal jurisdictional powers, he governs not only the universal Church but he also governs Rome as Bishop of Rome,²⁸ although, again, he could not ordain priests or

[Footnote continued from the previous page.]

It would be possible, though far from probable [*Note*: this book was written in 1918], that a person might be elected Pope who is not already a Bishop. He would become Pope as soon as he was lawfully chosen, and could then perform all the duties of the Papacy which pertain to jurisdiction [*i.e.*, governing]; but he could not ordain or consecrate until he himself had been raised to the episcopate by other Bishops.

The Externals of the Catholic Church, by Rev. John F. Sullivan, Kennedy & Sons, New York, 1918, pp. 7-8 (bracketed words added for clarity).

²⁶ *Outlines of Dogmatic Theology* explains this truth as follows: “[I]f the person elected [pope] has not already received episcopal consecration, it is his duty to seek it.” *Outlines of Dogmatic Theology*, Sylvester J. Hunter, S.J., 2nd ed., vol. 1, p. 394, Benziger Brothers, N.Y. 1894.

²⁷ In *Outlines of Dogmatic Theology*, Fr. Hunter explains:

[J]urisdiction vests immediately on the completion of the election, for the Pope has no superior to confirm him in his office.

Outlines of Dogmatic Theology, Sylvester J. Hunter, S.J., 2nd ed., vol. 1, p. 393, Benziger Brothers, N.Y. 1894.

As the *Summa* explains: “jurisdiction is not something sacramental”. *Summa Supp.*, Q.25, a.2, ad 1.

²⁸ When a man is appointed as bishop of a diocese, he has jurisdiction (*i.e.*, ruling power) over the diocese even before he is consecrated as a bishop. This applies to the pope, when elected, with respect to being Bishop of Rome (as well as being pope over the universal Church).

[Footnote continued on the next page.]

otherwise exercise Episcopal sacramental powers without himself being first validly consecrated a bishop.

This same principle (which allows a layman to be pope) applies to local ordinaries throughout the world, who exercise true jurisdictional power over their dioceses, even if they are laymen.

For the same reason that the pope does not have to be consecrated a bishop or even ordained a priest, in order to wield universal jurisdiction to **govern** the Catholic Church as pope, likewise the Ordinary of a diocese does not need to be consecrated a bishop or even ordained a priest to govern his diocese.

Being the Ordinary of a diocese is an office of jurisdiction (*viz.*, of governing). The Ordinary receives jurisdiction from the pope by being appointed by the pope. He is like the “king” of the diocese (under the pope) and wields jurisdictional power (under the pope) in that particular diocese.²⁹ As is the custom of the Church, it is very fitting that the local

[Footnote continued from the previous page.]

That new pope, even if a layman, could even be **called** a “bishop” in **some** respect, just as the *Catholic Encyclopedia* calls a layman a “bishop” when he possesses Episcopal jurisdiction even *before* he is consecrated. Here is the *Catholic Encyclopedia*’s explanation:

[F]or the exercise of external jurisdiction the power of orders is not necessary. A **bishop**, duly appointed to a see, but *not yet consecrated*, is invested with external jurisdiction over his diocese ...

1917 Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 3, article: *Church*, §VIII (2), p.755.

In the same way, a pope who is a layman, could be truly called the *Bishop* of Rome **in some respect**, even without Episcopal consecration and without Episcopal powers to perform Sacraments. But obviously, calling a layman “bishop” (referring to possession of Episcopal jurisdiction) could mislead some people into believing he was validly consecrated as a bishop. For this reason, it seems better to generally use quotation marks around the title “bishop”, or in some other way distinguish such a layman with Episcopal jurisdiction, from a sacramentally-consecrated bishop.

²⁹ As the 1917 Catholic Encyclopedia’s explains:

Internal jurisdiction is that which is exercised in the tribunal of penance. It differs from the external jurisdiction of which we have been speaking, in that its object is the welfare of the individual penitent, while the object of external jurisdiction is the welfare of the Church as a corporate body. ...

[Footnote continued on the next page.]

Ordinary be a bishop, since the Ordinary will govern the Church in that diocese, including any auxiliary bishops and diocesan priests there.

Conclusion One of this Article: *The Catholic Church has a full, worldwide hierarchy (not only a pope), even though that (post conciliar) hierarchy abuses its power and promotes error.*

[Footnote continued from the previous page.]

[F]or the exercise of external jurisdiction the power of orders is not necessary. A bishop, duly appointed to a see [*i.e.*, a diocese], but ***not yet consecrated***, is invested with external ***jurisdiction*** over his diocese ...

1917 Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 3, article: *Church*, §VIII (2), p.755 (bracketed words added).

Further, a man appointed as Ordinary of a diocese is mentioned in the Canon of the Mass even if he has not received sacramental consecration. As Fr. Adrian Fortescue explains:

The bishop must be canonically appointed and confirmed, otherwise he is not mentioned [in the Canon of the Mass]. But he need not yet be consecrated.

1917 Catholic Encyclopedia, article *Canon of the Mass*, author: Fr. Adrian Fortescue, vol. 3, article *Canon of the Mass*, p.262 (bracketed words added).

Here is how the *Summa* explains a “bishop elect” wielding Episcopal jurisdiction without having been sacramentally consecrated a bishop:

There are two kinds of key [Note: The *Summa* here refers to the “Keys to the Kingdom of Heaven” that Our Lord gave to St. Peter]:

One key reaches to heaven itself directly, by remitting sin and thus removing the obstacles to the entrance into heaven; and this is called the key of “order” [*i.e.*, Holy Orders]. Priests alone have this key, because they alone are ordained for the people in the things which appertain to God directly.

The other key reaches to heaven, not directly but through the medium of the Church Militant. By this key a man goes to heaven, since, by its means, a man is shut out from or admitted to the fellowship of the Church Militant, by excommunication or absolution. This is called the key of “jurisdiction” in the external court, wherefore ***even those who are not priests can have this key***, *e.g.*, archdeacons, bishops elect, and others who can excommunicate. But it is not properly called a key of heaven, but a disposition thereto.

Summa Supp. Q.19, a.3, *Respondeo* (bracketed words added for clarity).

The Catholic Church not only has a Pope but also a full worldwide hierarchy of diocesan Ordinaries possessing true jurisdiction to govern those dioceses (portions of the Catholic Church) even if they are laymen (and even though they abuse their authority).

Each Ordinary around the world has been appointed by the pope to govern his diocese. Even if he is a layman, he has the jurisdiction to govern.

Conclusion Two of this Article: *The Catholic Church has in place the structure to elect future popes.*

When the pope dies, it is the cardinals' duty to elect another pope. A cardinal does not need to be a bishop (just as Cardinal John Henry Newman was not). The recent popes have used their jurisdictional power to continue appointing cardinals (even supposing they are laymen) to elect future popes, leaving in place the structure for papal succession.

By contrast, sedevacantists speculate that God will somehow miraculously intervene to raise up a pope, although they deny the Church has had any pope, cardinals, or hierarchy for decades.

The sedevacantists' false, unfounded supposition that God will revive the Church by Divine intervention, would really be a new, second founding of the Church (or founding of a new church). This (false) sedevacantist theory is un-Traditional because God founded His Church once, with the Church perpetually handing down Her doctrine and Her hierarchical authority.

It is as baseless for the sedevacantists to assert that God will miraculously choose a new pope as it would be for God to miraculously establish a new doctrine.

Conclusion Three of this Article: *Because a Man Elected Pope must also Voluntarily accept his Election (in order for the Papal Office to vest in him), this further Refutes the False Theory that Cardinal Siri Was the Real Pope in Place of one (or more) of the Conciliar Popes.*

One small, confused sedevacantist group denies the real pope because they believe that Cardinal Siri was validly elected in one or more of the conclaves after the death of Pope Pius XII. This group variously speculates either that Cardinal Siri was pressured not to accept the office or pressured to resign during the conclave, after he first (but very briefly) accepted his election as pope.

In fact, if it were true (hypothetically) that Cardinal Siri had been elected but had been pressured to not accept the office, then (as shown above) he would never have been pope, since the man who has been elected does not become pope without *accepting* this office.

If (hypothetically) Siri accepted his election and then decided to resign almost immediately (e.g., because he was threatened), then having resigned, the conclave could elect another pope (and so Siri would have been the real pope for only a few minutes).

Further, some members of this small, confused group of Siri advocates somehow suppose that Cardinal Siri continued to be pope but that the oath of secrecy prevented him from revealing that he was elected pope. However, this oath pertains to the secrecy of deliberations and to inconclusive votes.

There is obviously nothing to prevent a cardinal from disclosing his own election or any other person's election after it occurs. This is obvious because all the cardinals swear this oath of secrecy. If they could never reveal the successful election of a pope, then a successful election could never be disclosed and no one outside the conclave would ever know who the new pope is.

Thus, if (hypothetically) Siri were elected pope, had accepted his election, and continued in office, he would have had a duty (as would everyone else in the conclave) to state this "fact". Yet, in the decades after these conclaves, Siri never claimed to be pope nor did any other member of the conclave proclaim him as pope. Instead, Cardinal Siri recognized those same popes recognized by everyone else. Plainly, the Siri hypothesis is unworthy of belief.



***Catholic Candle* note:** Below is part 4 of the article concerning the best type of education, which is a Catholic Liberal Education. Do not confuse this education with many university programs called "liberal arts" but which are full of fluff, falsehood, and aimless so-called "cultural enrichment" courses and "humanities".

A liberal education also does not refer to liberalism, nor is a true liberal education an indoctrination into that error of liberalism or *political correctness*. In fact, a true Catholic Liberal Education is the best antidote to the errors of liberalism.

Previously, ***in part 1 of this article***,³⁰ we examined the problems we see in modern education:

- Modern colleges do not improve the quality of their students' minds and their thinking ability much or at all.

³⁰ Part 1 of this article can be found here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/06/28/the-blessings-of-a-true-catholic-liberal-education/>

- Most “education” is merely job training, fluff courses, and/or leftist indoctrination.
- The students are taught to sound like someone in their field but they do little thinking and more memorizing.
- Grade “inflation” and degree “inflation” is rampant. Grades and academic degrees do not mean much anymore.

In part 2 of this article,³¹ we examined, in general, what education is. We considered the human soul and the perfection of its highest faculty (power) – the intellect – which is immaterial. We saw that our intellects are perfected through knowing eternal, unchangeable truths and their causes.

In part 3 of this article,³² after having seen what education is, we examined the question *who should perfect his intellect?*

But since modern universities do not provide a true education, is there *ever* any reason for men or women to attend them? Below, in part 4 of this article, we will consider that question.

The Blessing of a True, Catholic Liberal Education

Part 4

Is There Ever Any Reason for Anyone to Attend a Modern University?

Because a true education is a Catholic Liberal Education, and because modern universities do not provide this, is there *ever* any reason for *anyone* to attend a *modern* university? We will first look at that issue in the case of men; then, we will consider this question regarding women.

Of course, every person’s priority should be to perfect his mind with a *true education*. This is what God made us to do (*viz.*, perfect our highest faculty) and we should all do this to the best of our ability and circumstances throughout our life.

³¹ Part 2 of this article can be found here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/07/24/the-blessing-of-a-true-catholic-liberal-education-part-ii/>

³² Part 3 of this article can be found here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/08/28/the-blessing-of-a-true-catholic-liberal-education-part-iii/>

For some persons, this beginning of a lifelong pursuit of truth and of further perfecting of our intellects would involve attending a college or university to obtain a true Catholic Liberal Education (if/when such an education is available there).

Even if/when there were a Catholic Liberal Education available at the university/college level, some persons could not attend such institution of higher learning because their abilities or opportunities do not allow this. For these persons, the best they can do would be to proceed on their lifelong journey of perfecting their intellects in other settings, according to their abilities.

Although we all have a duty to continue to perfect our minds throughout life, especially studying our Catholic Faith,³³ the ability of different persons will not be the same. Some persons will advance much further and faster than others and, over the course of their lives will perfect their minds much more. But everyone should do it according to the ability that God has given him.

Even those who have the blessing of a formal, genuine, college-level, Catholic Liberal Education – which is the best way for adults to begin their lifelong journey pursuing truth – they still must at some point transition from this blessed full-time activity to then obtaining the practical preparation they need in order to answer God’s call to their vocation.

For men called to marry and to start a family, this means preparing to provide for the material needs of their future family. To do this, some men might need college-level or even post-graduate level job training, (in engineering, medicine, law, *etc.*)

This job training has little or nothing of true perfection of the mind but involves matters such as building codes, construction standards, surgical techniques, applicability of commercial laws, pharmacological contraindications, *etc.*

Universities and colleges can have a role in training those persons who have a practical need for this advanced job training, although that training is a much lower pursuit than a genuine Catholic Liberal Education.

³³ After St. Thomas states that a person (the Latin word is “homo”) “desires to the highest extent to have knowledge of the truth”, he then adds “***the truth is especially considered as regards God.***” Quoted from a sermon by St. Thomas Aquinas, *Ecce Rex Tuus, Collatio in Sero*, preached in the evening of the 1st Sunday of Advent, November 29, 1271, to the faculty and students of the University of Paris, §3.1.

Of course, other men, who do not need such advanced job training, can prepare to provide for the material needs of their future families in other ways, such as through apprenticeships, *on-the-job-training*, etc.

So, in the case of men, a modern university could play a role in their life's material vocational preparations. Of course, those men must be appropriately vigilant against all of the contamination present there, because this moral and intellectual contamination seeks to derail them from leading the life that God intends for them to live on earth and from the happiness that God intends for them in heaven.

Is There Ever Any Reason for a Woman to Attend a Modern University?

Having considered whether there could be a reason for men to attend a modern university – hopefully after a strong beginning in their lifelong pursuit of high truth – now let us consider the question of whether there is ever any reason for a woman to attend a *modern* university – *i.e.*, an institution that does not offer a true education (*viz.*, a Catholic Liberal Education).

We already saw that women (and men) should get a true and genuine college-level Catholic Liberal Education if they are able to do so. We saw that this true education is not merely for a few elite men who would benefit the very most. Rather, this education is for women as well, and for everyone who is capable of benefiting from it in some amount.

Of course, as we saw, everyone should continue to perfect his mind throughout his entire life – especially studying the Catholic Faith more deeply. However, just as men who obtain a college-level Catholic Liberal Education, must leave off from the *full-time* pursuit of high truth at some point to take time to prepare for the practical aspects of the vocation to which God is calling them, this is true of women too.

After obtaining a college-level Catholic Liberal Education, she could pursue a reasonable amount of job training to help her to support herself while (patiently) waiting for God to send to her the husband that He wills for her.

If it happens that a woman finds that she needs to provide for her own support for a more extended time before God sends her the man that He intends her to marry, then she might possibly need college-level job training such as to become a nurse or otherwise get a job in one of the “helping professions”. However, in all but unusual circumstances, this job training would not mean that she needs to earn an additional degree (*viz.*, in addition to her Catholic Liberal Education).

Hopefully, such academic job training would occur – if at all – only after her Catholic Liberal Education because, commonly, the young woman who is capable of obtaining a college nursing degree would also be capable of using that same opportunity (*viz.*, time

and money) to perfect her mind with a true Catholic Liberal Education. Such genuine education would benefit her and her future family far more than her job training. Further, by the time she has had that blessed education, she would often find herself at the age and stage where God is calling her to marry now and to start a family with her husband.

This is because, if God is calling her to be a wife and mother (instead of a professed religious), then He would usually send the right man to her without her spending an extended period of time getting specialized job training and then using it in the workforce – assuming that she does her part to make herself available so her future husband can find her.³⁴

In any event, in addition to all of this, the woman must spend the time while she is waiting for her future spouse, continuing to cultivate the womanly arts. For it is an important preparation for marriage for women to master the arts which they will practice as wives, mothers, homemakers, and the homeschool teachers of their children (as is usually necessary nowadays). In other words, women must prepare themselves to respond to the call of their vocations to be the *future hearts of their respective homes and families*.

But there are many jobs which she should *neither* train for *nor* engage in. She should not be a doctor, a lawyer³⁵, or practice a similar profession, for four reasons:

³⁴ In our corrupt times, it is a real challenge to find the spouse God wishes to send. But this challenge should not be discouraging! God can do all things and He wants each person to respond to His vocational call with great courage, prudence, generosity, patience, and complete trust in Him.

Of course, not only in our corrupt times, but in every time, both the young lady and the young man must do “his (or her) part” to find the right (future) spouse. For the young man, he must actively seek out all gentlemanly opportunities to find his future wife, including his availing himself of opportunities which are “out of his comfort zone”. He should act like a man and not like a coward or a lady, waiting for others to do his “work” for him – that is, seeking and meeting her.

The young lady does *not* have the same role. She should not approach the young man and introduce herself, ask for his phone number, call him, *etc.* But without being “forward”, she should arrange to be available in many ways so that the young man has a way of meeting her, *etc.*

³⁵ Here is one way that St. Thomas teaches this common-sense truth of both nature and the true religion:

If therefore they [*viz.*, women] ask and dispute in public, it would be a sign of shamelessness, and this is shameful to them. Hence it also follows that in law the office of

[Footnote continued on the next page.]

1. The years of this training and the cost would rarely “pay off” because she would usually meet her husband and get married before she finished her studies or at least before paying off her additional school debts.
2. The increased debt she incurred, as well as her time and effort obtaining this job training, might easily create (or increase) the temptation to work outside of the home after marriage.³⁶

[Footnote continued from the previous page.]

advocate is forbidden to women [*viz.*, in the better civilization in which St. Thomas lived, which more closely followed the Natural Law and Catholic teaching].

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Lectures on 1 Corinthians*, 14, lect. 7, n. 881, (bracketed words added for context).

³⁶ Luring mothers to leave their homes and children to join the workforce of businesses is one of the chief tools of communism and is one of the main ways Russia has spread its errors. Here is how Pope Pius XI explained this truth:

Communism is particularly characterized by the rejection of any link that binds woman to the family and the home, and her emancipation is proclaimed as a basic principle. She is withdrawn from the family and the care of her children, to be thrust instead into public life and collective production under the same conditions as man. The care of home and children then devolves upon the collectivity.

Divini Redemptoris - On atheistic communism, Pope Pius XI, §11.

Pope Pius XI condemns married women working outside the home, in the following words:

Neither this emancipation of the woman is real, nor is it the reasonable and worthy liberty convenient to the Christian and noble mission of the woman and wife. It is the corruption of the feminine nature and maternal dignity, as well as the perversion of all the family, since the husband lacks his wife, the children their mother, and the entire family her vigilant guard.

On the contrary, this false liberty and *unnatural equality with man* is harmful for the woman herself, because at the moment that she steps down from the royal domestic throne to which she was raised by the Gospel, quickly she will fall into the ancient slavery of Paganism, becoming a mere instrument of man.

Pope Pius XI, *Casti connubii*, #75 (emphasis added).

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3. These types of professional employment are suited to only the most clear-thinking men, since such professions principally require the greatest prudence and the most careful thinking.³⁷
4. Such professions are detrimental to her God-given role as man's helpmate and assistant, rather than man's boss and an authority over him.³⁸ Such employment is both against the natural role God gave her as a woman and also will make it harder for her to be an obedient and submissive wife when she gets married.

Likewise, a woman should not obtain academic job training in order to seek political office, or to become a police officer, a soldier, or have a similar job for two reasons:

1. The above types of jobs oppose the way God made her because she would be wielding authority over men³⁹; and

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Anyone who thinks a mother's work outside the home is more important than her family and homemaking duties, fails to understand the *Great Work* of her life, for which God created her. Considering anyone else as an acceptable substitute for the mother being at home with her children, is a failure not only to understand Catholic teaching, but is also a failure to understand the family on even a natural level (although this natural truth was accepted and was obvious even to non-Catholics, until a few decades ago).

³⁷ Here is one way St. Thomas Aquinas states this truth:

[M]en are wiser and more discerning and not so readily deceived as women are. ... Man is the head and counselor of the woman.

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Lectures on St. Matthew's Gospel*, Ch.23, #1859.

³⁸ The reason is that it is not woman's role to lead (exercise leadership) in society. This is why St. Paul explained that "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to use authority over the man: but to be in silence." 1 *Timothy*, 2:12.

³⁹ Isaiah mentions the rule of women as a way to measure how corrupt a society (*viz.*, Israel) is. Here are Isaiah's words: "As for my people, their oppressors have stripped them, and **women have ruled over them**". *Isaias*, 3:12.

Summarizing the Divine Law (from St. Paul) and Natural Law (from Aristotle) concerning the perversity of a woman being in charge of a government, the *Summa* teaches:

According to the Apostle (1 *Tim.*, 2:11; *Titus*, 2:5), woman is in a state of subjection: wherefore she can have no spiritual jurisdiction, since the Philosopher [Aristotle] also says

[Footnote continued on the next page.]

2. Such work opposes her God-given nature as a nurturer, compassionate, a comforter, *etc.* Being a policeman, soldier, *etc.*, would require a woman to be aggressive, to harden herself, twisting and distorting the way God made women, to her detriment and the detriment of the crucial work⁴⁰ of her life, *viz.*, being her husband's helpmate and raising children well.⁴¹

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(Ethic. viii) that **it is a corruption of public life when the government comes into the hands of a woman.**

Supp. Q.19, a.3, ad 4 (emphasis added; bracketed word added for clarity).

This corruption of having a woman rule is obvious from the fact that she must not even rule her own family. Rather, she must obey her husband. St. Paul commands: "Wives, be subject to your husbands". *Colossians*, 3:18. Therefore, how much more perverse it is for a woman to have authority over, and be the head of, **all** of the families of a country by being the head of the country!

Here is how Pope St. Pius X taught this same truth:

Women in war or parliament are outside their proper sphere, and their position there would be the desperation and ruin of society"

Quoted from Pope St. Pius X's 1909 *Address to Delegation of the Union of Italian Catholic Ladies*.

⁴⁰ Read this article: *The Role and Work that God Gave to Woman*, found here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2019/12/02/the-role-and-work-that-god-gave-to-woman/>

⁴¹ A man's role is to protect his family in both spiritual and temporal matters. A woman's role is to nurture her children and be a helpmate for her husband.

Raising her children well, not other works, is the **Great Work** for which God intended women. In other works, in works such as being a partner in business, men help other men better than women do. Here is one way St. Thomas Aquinas, greatest Doctor of the Catholic Church, explains this truth:

It was necessary that woman be made, as Scripture says, as a helpmate to the male; not indeed as a helpmate in some other work, as some have said, since in any other work a male can be more conveniently helped by another male than by woman; but as a helper in generation.

Summa Ia, Q.92, a.1, respondeo.

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Let us contrast these two scenarios:

1. *A woman marrying shortly after finishing a university job training degree; and*
2. *That woman marrying shortly after finishing a college-level, true Catholic Liberal Education.*

Generally, it makes no sense to undertake very expensive, years-long training for a job which she will hold for only a short time before the time comes when God sends to her the husband she should marry.

In contrast to the imprudence (generally) of obtaining such expensive and lengthy practical job training, a Catholic Liberal Education is directed toward perfecting the mind that God gave to her, not primarily for outside employment and so such true education is not a “waste of money” even if she never “uses” it for outside employment, since that is not the point of a true education. The true perfection of her mind is a lifelong asset for her to use in every aspect of her life and vocation.

So, we see that, although Bishop Williamson is wrong in other respects, his words (quoted here⁴²) have a correct element: that “true universities are for ideas”.⁴³ But such “true universities” are nearly non-existent now. Modern universities are not devoted to ideas which perfect the mind with high truth. Rather, these universities are dens of iniquity, leftist indoctrination, leftist social conformity, and job training. Availing themselves of the opportunity to obtain very expensive, years-long job training would usually be a mistake for “true girls” (to use his words), since these women need to remain available to answer God’s call to their vocation. So, Bishop Williamson would have been more correct to have said “expensive university job training is not for true girls”.

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Sacred Scripture infallibly says the same thing in many ways. For example, here is one way St. Paul states this truth:

[S]he [*viz.*, woman] shall be saved through childbearing; if she continues in faith, and love, and sanctification, with sobriety.”

1 *Timothy* 2:15.

⁴² <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/08/28/the-blessing-of-a-true-catholic-liberal-education-part-iii/>

⁴³ Quoted from *Girls at the University*, Bishop Richard Williamson’s Letter to Friends and Benefactors of St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary, Winona, September 1, 2001.

But to the extent that “true universities” do exist, at which a person could obtain a true Catholic Liberal Education, Bishop Williamson’s words are false that “universities are not for true girls”.⁴⁴ Women should obtain as much good as they are able to obtain from such a true education, striving for higher-level perfection for their intellects.

A Question Arises

Having seen that women and girls, as well as men and boys have a duty to perfect their minds in the best way that they can do so, what is the best environment in which women and girls could pursue a true *Catholic Liberal Education*?

To be continued ...



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⁴⁴ Quoted from *Girls at the University*, Bishop Richard Williamson’s Letter to Friends and Benefactors of St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary, Winona, September 1, 2001.