

Catholic Candle

☪ December 2025 ☪ catholiccandle.org ☪ catholiccandle@gmail.com

Words to Live By – From Catholic Tradition

*Our Life on Earth is Warfare!
We Must Fight Tirelessly for Christ the King!*

Nothing is so incongruous in a Christian, and nothing so foreign to his character, as to seek ease and rest. To be engrossed in the present life is foreign to our profession and enlistment [as Soldiers of Christ]. Thy Master was crucified, and dost thou seek ease? Thy Master was pierced with nails, and dost thou live delicately? Do these things become a noble soldier?

St. John Chrysostom, Doctor of the Church, quoted from his sermon #13 on *Philippians*, 3:18-21 (bracketed words added to show the context).



Catholic Candle's 2026 Catholic Calendar

The *Catholic Candle's* 2026 Traditional Catholic calendar is now available at catholiccandle.org. Here is a link: https://catholiccandle.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/calendar_2026.pdf The calendar is free to download and is freely distributable.

Here is how to make this calendar into a hanging calendar:

1. Staple two heavy-duty plastic sleeves or sheet protectors together using the wider unused left edge on each plastic sleeve, one sheet below the other. Slip a holy picture into the top half and insert monthly calendar page in bottom half.
2. Here is one source out of many from which you can purchase the page protectors: <https://www.amazon.com/Office-Depot-Heavyweight-Protectors-Non-Glare/dp/B08VD16P8D>

3. Here is one suitable picture you could use in the top half of the calendar:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B49oPuI54eEGeXhRWW5nQWthb1U/view?resourcekey=0-s4bE9kl8PGx1KWwbxfF48Q>



Are You in Desolation? Do You Find Yourself “Stuck in a Rut” Making No Spiritual Progress?

What Can I Do When My Spiritual Life Feels Dry and Boring, and I Feel Like I Am Only “Going Through the Motions” of Practicing My Faith?

This condition is a description of a classic case of spiritual desolation. Here is how the great spiritual master, St. Ignatius of Loyola, defines this desolation:

I call desolation everything contrary to the consolation explained in the third rule, such as darkness of soul, disturbance in it, movement to things low and earthly, the unquiet of different agitations and temptations, moving to lack of confidence, without hope, without love, when one finds oneself all *lazy, tepid, sad*, and as if separated from his Creator and Lord. Because, as consolation is contrary to desolation, in the same way the thoughts which come from consolation are contrary to the thoughts which come from desolation.¹

Although God can (and sometimes does) give desolation in order to test even a very holy soul, the most usual reason for desolation is because of the person’s sins and his negligence in his spiritual duties.

Here is St. Ignatius’ advice for the person in desolation:

Although in desolation we ought not to change our good resolutions, it is very helpful to *intensify our good efforts against the temptations that come during desolation*, by insisting more on prayer, meditation, on much examination, and more penance.²

We can do this – *viz.*, intensify our good efforts – even when we are in desolation! And God will help us!

¹ Quoted from *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, Rule #4 for the Discernment of Spirits, First Week.

² Quoted from *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, Rule #6 for the Discernment of Spirits, First Week.

How Can I Make Spiritual Progress?

So how does one advance in the spiritual life? Well, there are a lot of very important parts of this program. And we should strongly desire to make great efforts to attain spiritual progress. Our future happiness is determined by this progress in the spiritual life. The greater a person's future holiness is, the greater will be his future happiness.

The secret of holiness is a person's generosity with God. If a person asks himself: "What do I need to do to avoid sin and hell?", **that is a stingy goal!** Looking at things that way, the spiritual life is a burden and most people fail (and go to Hell) because they aim so low and the result is even lower.

The spiritual life is Divine Friendship³ and so we should seek to be generous with our Divine Friend. We don't have to *feel* generous but nonetheless we should resolve with our will to *be* generous.

³ This all-important love of God is Divine Friendship. Here is how St. Thomas Aquinas, greatest Doctor of the Church, explains this truth:

It is written (John 15:15): "I will not now call you servants . . . but My friends." Now this was said to them by reason of nothing else than charity. Therefore, ***charity is friendship. . .***

According to the Philosopher (Ethic. viii, 2,3), not every love has the character of friendship, but that love which is together with benevolence, when, to wit, we love someone so as to wish good to him. If, however, we do not wish good to what we love, but wish its good for ourselves, (thus we are said to love wine, or a horse, or the like), it is love not of friendship, but of a kind of concupiscence [*i.e.*, the seeking of the pleasures of the senses]. For it would be absurd to speak of having friendship for wine or for a horse.

Yet, neither does well-wishing suffice for friendship, for a certain mutual love is requisite, since friendship is between friend and friend: and this well-wishing is founded on some kind of communication.

Accordingly, since there is a communication between man and God, inasmuch as He communicates His happiness to us, some kind of friendship must needs be based on this same communication, of which it is written (1 Corinthians 1:9): "God is faithful: by Whom you are called unto the fellowship of His Son." The love which is based on this communication, is charity: wherefore it is evident that ***charity is the friendship of man for God.***

Summa, IIa IIae, Q.23, a.1, *sed contra* and *respondeo* (emphasis added).

How many times has a parent done what he should do (such as take care of a sick child in the middle of the night), not because of feelings, but because of a will to do good! That is how our love and friendship with Christ should be – generous and willed by us regardless of feelings.

Remember, sin is an offense against our Divine Friend Whom we should never want to offend! Therefore, we must avoid occasions of sin, including persons who make it more likely that we will sin. We humans easily fool ourselves and have many excuses to continue to expose ourselves to our past occasions of sin. We must be unshakably firm in avoiding bad companions and other occasions of sin.

We should associate with persons who will influence us with greater generosity toward our Divine Friend! We should avoid persons who influence us toward greater ease, less sacrifice, and less generosity with Christ our Lord. Even if such people do not explicitly lead us into sin, their influence on us is “in the wrong direction” and that fact makes them bad for us.

We must pray more⁴ – much more – every day – especially when we are in desolation. We should especially pray the rosary⁵ – ideally all 15 decades every day. We should implement a daily meditation.⁶

We must avoid bad music. We should not watch TV, movies or use the internet for entertainment. We should avoid most things on the internet, especially “social media”.⁷ Even aside from the many sins involved, these weaken us and make the spiritual life (and prayer) distasteful to us.

⁴ Here is a brief explanation about what prayer is essentially:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2024/08/10/cc-in-brief-essence-of-prayer/>

⁵ Read this article about how to properly pray the rosary:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2019/12/23/the-rosary-how-why/>

⁶ Here is a brief explanation about how to do a meditation and why it is important to mediate: <https://catholiccandle.org/2021/09/03/lesson-2-meditation-how-why/>

⁷ Read this article, especially the section about social media:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2023/12/12/the-connection-between-virtue-and-happiness-part-2/>

There are many noxious effects of “social media”. It is very unwholesome, is *un*social, and fosters the antithesis of real, deep friendship (especially a profound friendship with God – which is our reason for living).

[Footnote continued on the next page.]

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Beyond the very obvious mortal sins which are virtually everywhere on the internet, *e.g.*, sins against the holy virtue of purity, additionally the sins of worldliness, superficiality, immodesty, time-wasting, and many other types of sin are endemic and pervasive there. This is evident to faithful and informed Catholics whose goal is to live every day the way that, at their judgment they would want to have lived.

Of course, there are countless mainstream studies also, which discover what faithful and informed Catholics already know, *viz.*, that “social media” makes a person unhappier and more isolated. Here are just a few of those mainstream studies:

- ❖ <https://guilfordjournals.com/doi/abs/10.1521/jscp.2018.37.10.751?journalCode=jscp>
- ❖ <https://penntoday.upenn.edu/news/social-media-use-increases-depression-and-loneliness>
- ❖ <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4853817/>
- ❖ <https://mitsloan.mit.edu/ideas-made-to-matter/study-social-media-use-linked-to-decline-mental-health>
- ❖ <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10476631/>
- ❖ <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-social-media-makes-people-unhappy-and-simple-ways-to-fix-it/>

Lastly, the Government and Big Tech use “social media” (and many other activities on the internet) to spy on us and to amass huge dossiers on us for their future commercial exploitation and political use against us. Here is a small sampling of articles on this subject:

- <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2024/09/ftc-staff-report-finds-large-social-media-video-streaming-companies-have-engaged-vast-surveillance>
- <https://privateisland.tech/dev/spying-by-your-provider>
- <https://www.identity.com/the-privacy-problem-with-big-tech-companies/>
- <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/social-media-surveillance-us-government>
- <https://go2tutors.com/14-tech-companies-that-were-caught-spying-on-their-users/>
- <https://www.security.org/resources/data-tech-companies-have/>
- <https://knightcolumbia.org/blog/the-worrying-expansion-of-the-social-media-surveillance-industrial-complex>

We should avoid “smart” phone use as much as we can. If we must use a “smart” phone, we should use it only for necessary tasks. We should not scroll or shop on our phone as a form of “recreation”.

We should study our Catholic Faith every day. We should do some spiritual reading every day without fail, *e.g.*, a chapter from the *Imitation of Christ*.

Do some extra penances every day. A generous amount! Three really good ones are to take totally-cold showers, don’t eat in-between meals, and abstain from junk food, desserts and alcohol, especially outside of social occasions and when we are alone.⁸

Again, Dear Reader, we can do this! God will help!



***Catholic Candle* note:** This article below was written by one of *Catholic Candle*’s more senior editors, who has a wealth of experience and wisdom.

The Comfort and Security of the True Catholic Faith and God’s Providential Care, Living During Our Perilous Times

It’s a pretty scary world out there.

Nuclear war, cancer, street crime, heart attacks, the steady decline of public morals, the decaying of educational standards, the subversion of the human element of the Church ... there are so many other things that could be added to this catalogue of perils in our modern life.

If one chose to dwell on what *could* happen to us at any time, he might be paralyzed and unwilling to even get out of bed in the morning. And to carry this a step further, he may then wonder how he could possibly survive the dangers that threaten to prevent his death from being a happy and holy death – which would be the ultimate tragedy for him.

That is, and should be our biggest concern: whether we have the fortitude to make it safely through the “minefield” of our life on earth to the safe harbor of heaven.

⁸ Read this article about the ideal penance of not eating for pleasure when you are alone: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/the-spiritual-benefits-of-not-consuming-sweets-and-junkfood-when-you-are-alone>

Some time ago, I found the answer. Not that it was unique to me. Undoubtedly many of you have long known what it is:

Nothing that happens to me today can hurt me because God allowed it to happen.⁹ And if the God who loves me allows it, then it must be for my good.¹⁰

How can we argue with that? This is comforting and reassuring, especially when we lose a job, get unhappy news from the doctor, are deceived by a friend or relative, suffer a financial loss, or experience any other of the wide variety of the travails of this life.

Of course, this trust in God pertains to all things – including all evils – which are *out of our control*, as shown by the few examples listed above: (e.g., nuclear war, cancer, street crime). It should “go without saying” that we should not rashly suppose that God will protect us from all of the consequences of our own sins and the decisions which we make without seeking His will.

For example, it would be folly to get drunk and, because of this, to miss work and be fired from our job, on the excuse that “Nothing that happens to me today can hurt me because God allowed it to happen.” Rather, we are speaking of the complete trust we should have in God regarding what happens to us beyond our control and through no culpability on our own part.¹¹

⁹ Here is how St. Thomas Aquinas explains this important truth:

It is impossible to trust too much in the Divine assistance.

Summa, IIa IIae, Q.17, a.5, ad 2 (emphasis added; capitalization added).

¹⁰ As St. Paul teaches us: “All things work together unto the good, for those who love God”. *Romans*, 8:28.

¹¹ For an explanation of the crucial difference between the 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>

Conclusion

Let us have complete security and confidence in Divine Providence!¹² He will take perfect care of our needs, both spiritual and temporal!



Catholic Candle note: The article below is part seventeen of the study of the Choleric temperament. The first sixteen 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->

¹² Our life should be stress-free and worry-free. Here is how to do that:
<https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/a-wise-and-traditional-catholic-can-live-a-stress-and-worry-free-happy-life.html>

[temperament-a-cholerics-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-cholerics-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-cholerics-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-cholerics-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-cholerics-spiritual-combat-part-x/>
11. Mary's School of Sanctity – Lesson #46: About the Temperaments – Continuing Our Study of the Choleric Temperament – The Cholerics' Spiritual Combat – Part XI: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/06/28/lesson-46-temperaments-choleric-temperament-a-cholerics-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-cholerics-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 Combat Part XIII: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/08/29/lesson-48-temperaments-choleric-temperament-a-cholerics-spiritual-combat-part-xiii/>
14. Mary's School of Sanctity -- Lesson #49: About the Temperaments – Continuing Our Study of the Choleric Temperament – The Choleric's Spiritual Combat Part XIV: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/09/24/lesson-49-temperaments-choleric-temperament-the-cholerics-spiritual-combat-part-xiv/>
15. Mary's School of Sanctity -- Lesson #50: About the Temperaments – Continuing Our Study of the Choleric Temperament – The Choleric's Spiritual Combat Part

XV: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/10/26/3050/>

16. Mary's School of Sanctity -- Lesson #51: About the Temperaments – Continuing Our Study of the Choleric Temperament – The Cholerics' Spiritual Combat Part XVI: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/11/25/lesson-51-temperaments-choleric-temperament-the-cholerics-spiritual-combat-part-xvi/>

Mary's School of Sanctity

Lesson #52 – About the Temperaments – Continuing Our Study of the Choleric Temperament – The Choleric's Spiritual Combat Part XVII: the Objects of Fear¹³

Note: In this article, when referring to a person with a choleric temperament, we will simply refer to him as a “choleric”.

Now that we have examined the *types* of fear,¹⁴ let's now consider with St. Thomas the *object* of fear – which logically comes next. The *object* of fear is simply *what* we fear. But there is a lot to be said about this!

Humans of all temperaments are afflicted with fear. All of us have felt fear. But have we ever stopped to ponder deeply *what it is* that we fear? Again we have the blessing of St. Thomas' guidance when answering this question.

St. Thomas probes all subjects deeply and takes each one to its foundation, so when inquiring about the object of fear he begins by asking the question, *Whether the Object of Fear is Good or Evil?*

As always, St. Thomas examines this question humbly and methodically. He does not assume that the great thinkers who preceded him cannot help him with the inquiry. As

¹³ Fear influences all temperaments but not in the same way. Later, when we study the other temperaments, we will draw upon the teaching of St. Thomas about fear which we now set out in the context of the choleric temperament.

¹⁴ See Lesson #51, found here: *Mary's School of Sanctity -- Lesson #51: About the Temperaments – Continuing Our Study of the Choleric Temperament – The Cholerics' Spiritual Combat Part XVI*: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/11/25/lesson-51-temperaments-choleric-temperament-the-cholerics-spiritual-combat-part-xvi/>

with other inquiries, St. Thomas searches what the Fathers and Doctors of the Church teach on this question.

First, he informs us that St. John Damascene, Doctor of the Church, teaches that, “Fear is of a future evil.”¹⁵

St. Thomas explains how fear works in the soul

St. Thomas explains that fear is a movement of the appetitive power. By “appetitive power”, he means the power of the soul by which it desires.

There are three types of appetitive powers:

- The natural appetite – which seeks what is suitable according to nature. An example of this is a tree naturally seeking the sunlight and so a tree which is always in the deep shade of other trees will grow sideways in order to obtain unshaded sunlight;
- The sensitive appetite – which seeks what is desirable in relation to the power of sensation of a man’s (or other animal’s) soul. One example of a sensitive appetite is an animal’s hunger for food; and
- The intellectual (or rational) appetite – otherwise known as the will. This appetite desires the good known by the intellect in a way analogous to the sensitive appetite desiring the good which is sensed by man or another animal.

St. Thomas explains what is involved with this appetitive movement in the soul. Here are his words:

It belongs to this [*viz.*, appetitive] power to:

- ❖ Pursue the good. Consequently, whatever movement of the appetitive power that implies pursuit, has some good for its object; and
- ❖ Avoid the evil. Consequently, whatever movement implies avoidance, has, for its object, some evil.

However, fear can regard good also, in so far as referable to evil. This can be in two ways.

¹⁵ Taken from St. John Damascene, *De Fide Orthodox ii, 12*, as quoted in the *Summa*, Ia IIae, Q.42, a.1, *Whether the Object of Fear is Good or Evil?*

1. Inasmuch as an evil causes privation of a good. A thing is evil from the very fact that the evil thing is a privation of some good. Wherefore, since evil is shunned because it is evil, it follows that evil is shunned because it deprives a person of a good that one pursues through love. St. Augustine explains that there is no cause for fear except the loss of a good that we love; and
2. Good can be related to evil as its cause *in a way: viz.*, in so far as some good can, by its power, bring harm to another good that we love. And so, fear regards things in two ways, namely,
 - a. The evil from which it shrinks; and
 - b. That good which by its power can inflict that evil [on us]. In this way God is feared by man [although God is All-Good], inasmuch as He can inflict punishment, spiritual or corporal. In this way, too, we fear the power of man; especially when the power of the man has been thwarted, or when the power of the man is unjust because then that power is more likely to do us harm.

In like manner one fears a person who is over him or that has the power to do him harm. Thus, a man fears another who knows him to be guilty of a crime, lest he reveal the crime to others.¹⁶

Therefore, we can see that the passion of fear is a good thing when it is used properly – when we fear the appropriate things, *e.g.*, when we fear sin or anything that displeases God, and when we fear something else which is truly harmful and so this fear can help us to avoid the evil. By contrast, when we fear inordinately, that is, irrationally in any way, then we are not using fear as God intended.

We must remember that God created the passions in us and they are good. But we must use fear (and the other passions) correctly because fear (and all things created by God) can be abused, resulting in sin and chaos in our lives.

If we reflect well, we see that there are many things that we are accustomed to fear. But we must learn to distinguish – by using our reason – exactly what is appropriate for us to fear and what is not.

¹⁶ Taken from *Summa Ia-IIae Q. 42 a. 1 Whether the Object of Fear is Good or Evil? Respondeo* [Bracketed words added for clarity.]

A Preview ...

In our next lesson we will continue our study of the objects of fear. We will discuss what St. Thomas calls the *evil of nature* – viz., things that cause pain and/or death, and how it is that man fears these. We will also make some practical considerations concerning how we should handle our fears.



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

Awhile back, a reader forwarded to us a question (below) which he found posted on a sedevacantist website. The question (which was directed to non-sedevacantists) troubled him. He asked how Catholics should respond to this question. We answer below, but change the name (Pope Francis) to reflect the current pope (Pope Leo XIV).

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

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.***¹⁷

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 billion¹⁸ people who profess to be Catholic. We must not judge they are not “real”

¹⁷ Read this article here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/09/26/cc-in-brief-sedevacantist-questions/>

¹⁸ 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>

Catholics if they tell us that they are Catholics. Instead, we should count them as Catholics who are very confused or are uninformed.¹⁹

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.²⁰

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.²¹

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.²²

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.²³ 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*

¹⁹ Read this article here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/10/24/are-we-allowed-to-decide-that-pope-francis-knows-he-is-not-catholic/>

²⁰ Read this article here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/10/24/are-we-allowed-to-decide-that-pope-francis-knows-he-is-not-catholic/>

²¹ Read this article here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/11/26/bishops-have-excommunicated-heretics-cant-we-judge-the-pope/>

²² Read this article here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/12/30/protecting-ourselves-from-a-bad-pope-or-bad-superior/>

²³ 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/>

pope and during which the Church’s unified government continues to function.²⁴
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.²⁵

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 (*i.e.*, believe) is the pope must **be** the pope, since the pope must be visible to all.²⁶

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 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.²⁷

In the tenth article, we saw more deeply what schism is and how sedevacantism is inherently schism.²⁸

²⁴ 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/>

²⁵ 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/>

²⁶ Read this article: *The Man Whom the Whole Church Accepts as Pope, IS the Pope*: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/04/23/the-man-whom-the-whole-church-accepts-as-pope-is-the-pope/>

²⁷ 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/>

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

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.²⁹

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.³⁰

In the thirteenth article of this series, we saw the falsehood of a related sedevacantist error (or “half-truth”), claiming that we have no pope because the conciliar popes had doubtful consecrations and/or ordinations.³¹

In the fourteenth article of this series, we considered another way to see that sedevacantism is wrong and sinful, *viz.*, because it is the sin of revolution.³²

In the fifteenth article of this series, we address a question which arises because we see that Leo XIV is Pope:

Does that mean we are in communion with *him*?

Below, we address that question.

All Catholics are in Communion with the Pope

Sedevacantists attempt to show that their own Catholicism is “exalted and pure” by saying that *they* are not, and would *never be*, connected with *that man* (who is our pope) because his words and deeds are often so problematic, scandalous, and heterodox.

²⁹ *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/>

³⁰ *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/>

³¹ *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:* <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/09/24/a-man-need-not-be-consecrated-a-bishop-or-ordained-a-priest-to-be-a-valid-pope/>

³² *Sedevacantism is Un-Catholic Because it is Revolutionary:* <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/10/26/sedevacantism-is-un-catholic-because-it-is-revolutionary/>

So these sedevacantists attempt to pressure Catholics into becoming schismatics (like themselves), by urging those Catholics: “Don’t be in communion with *that man* (*viz.*, the pope)!”, suggesting that somehow it is un-Catholic to be in communion with a bad pope.

So the question arises: Are we Catholics *really* in communion with the pope, even when he is a bad, scandalous pope or teaches heresy? In this article, we examine that question.

Answering a Sedevacantist Question

The sedevacantists’ question:

Are you in communion with “Pope” Leo and his religion?

Catholic Candle note: the quotation marks (around the word “Pope”) are in the sedevacantists’ original question, indicating they don’t believe he is a real pope. Again, though, the sedevacantists’ original question said “Francis” not “Leo”.

The sedevacantists’ question is deceptively-framed in two ways

1. We interpret the question’s reference to *his religion*, as a reference to the new conciliar religion (not Catholicism). Through this reference, the question *sneaks* in the assumption that Pope Leo has a single religion and it is not Catholicism. This sedevacantist ploy tricks an unwary Catholic into conceding this falsehood and participating in the sedevacantists’ rash judgment.³³

³³ Sedevacantism’s main error is rash judgment, *viz.*, confusing these two things:

- our duty to judge a pope’s (or anyone’s) *objective* error on a matter of Faith (*i.e.*, material heresy); and
- our duty *not* to judge that person’s subjective, interior culpability for his error (which would be rash judgment).

Sedevacantists rashly presume that the pope believes some error or heresy which he *knows* is incompatible with being Catholic *now* and so he “knows” he is not Catholic but he “won’t admit it”. Concerning the sedevacantists’ error of rash judgment, read the full explanation here:

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

and

- <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/09/26/cc-in-brief-sedevacantist-questions/>

2. The question is compound; that is, it is really two questions in one. Thus, it is deceptive (either intentionally or carelessly). The question seeks a single “yes or no” answer, but either answer would be false (see below our two-part, short answer).

Beware of sedevacantist traps for the unwary!

Two-part, short answer to the sedevacantists’ question

- **Part one:** All Catholics are in communion with Pope Leo.

However ...

- **Part two:** *No faithful and informed* Catholics are members of (*i.e.*, in communion with) the conciliar church (which is a false religion).

Summary of our full explanation below

1. Although Pope Leo does much evil, he is truly the pope and a member (as well as the head) of the Catholic Church.
2. To save our souls, we must be members of the Catholic Church.
3. Because all Catholics are joint members of the Catholic Church along with Pope Leo, all Catholics are in communion with him and with each other.
4. Although Catholics are joint members of the Catholic Church along with Pope Leo, this does not also make us members of whatever other groups he belongs to, including the conciliar church.

Below, we discuss each of these four points.

1. Although Pope Leo does much evil, he is truly the pope and a member of the Catholic Church.

As we have seen in past *Catholic Candle* articles, the Catholic Church infallibly teaches that we will always have a pope and we are **not** in a 67-year papal interregnum (as most

sedevacantists pretend).³⁴ (An interregnum is a period during which the papal throne is briefly vacant between the death (or abdication) of one pope and the election of a new pope).

Presently, our pope is Pope Leo XIV because he is visible to all (as a pope must be)³⁵ and because virtually all Catholics accept him as pope (as is true of every pope).³⁶

Pope Leo is a bad pope and a bad father.³⁷ We must oppose the evil he does³⁸ but must avoid the sedevacantists' (objective) mortal sins of rashly judging his interior culpability and of denying that he is the pope or is even Catholic.³⁹

³⁴ Read this article here, showing 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/>

³⁵ 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/>

³⁶ Read this article: *The Man Whom the Whole Church Accepts as Pope, IS the Pope*: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/04/23/the-man-whom-the-whole-church-accepts-as-pope-is-the-pope/>

³⁷ See, for example, this article: *The Blessed Virgin Mary Is the Mediatrix of All Graces – Defending Catholic Doctrine and Our Lady's Honor Against Pope Leo XIV and the Conciliar Barbarians*: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/11/25/the-blessed-virgin-mary-is-the-mediatrix-of-all-graces/>

³⁸ *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/>

³⁹ Sedevacantism's main error is rash judgment, *viz.*, confusing these two things:

- our duty to judge a pope's (or anyone's) *objective* error on a matter of Faith (*i.e.*, material heresy); and
- our duty *not* to judge that person's subjective, interior culpability for his error (which would be rash judgment).

[Footnote continued on the next page.]

This is like a child who has a bad father denying the paternal relationship. That would be wrong. Instead, if the father is bad, then the child must still recognize the paternal relationship and his father's authority but also refuse to be led astray if his father attempts to cause him to sin.

2. To save our souls, we must belong to the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church infallibly teaches that *Outside the Church there is no Salvation*.⁴⁰ Thus, to save our souls, it is absolutely necessary that we are members of the Catholic Church.

[Footnote continued from the previous page.]

Sedevacantists rashly presume that the pope believes something (*viz.*, an error) which he *knows* is incompatible with being Catholic *now*. Concerning the sedevacantists' error or rash judgment, read the full explanation here:

- <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/10/24/are-we-allowed-to-decide-that-pope-francis-knows-he-is-not-catholic/>
- and
- <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/09/26/cc-in-brief-sedevacantist-questions/>

⁴⁰ Here is how Pope Boniface VIII infallibly declares this dogma:

With Faith urging us, we are forced to believe and to hold the one, holy, Catholic Church and that, apostolic, and we firmly believe and simply confess this (Church) outside which there is neither salvation, nor remission of sin.

Unam Sanctam, 1302, Denz. 468.

For more information and more of the Church's declarations of this dogma, read this article: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/priests/williamson-bishop-williamson-promotes-vatican-ii-heresy-that-people-can-be-saved-outside-the-catholic-church.html>

3. Because all Catholics are joint members of the Catholic Church, with Pope Leo, we are in communion with him.

“Communion” is the *mutual connection between members* of the Catholic Church.⁴¹

All Catholics are in communion with the pope and with each other because we are all mutually connected as members of the Church under one head, the pope. *Id.*⁴²

This article (linked immediately above) discusses Vatican II’s and Bishop Richard Williamson’s heresy denying that there is *No Salvation Outside the Catholic Church*. This is one of very many heresies of Vatican II and of Bishop Williamson.

⁴¹ Here is how St. Thomas Aquinas admirably explains this truth:

Accordingly, schismatics properly so called are those who, willfully and intentionally separate themselves from the unity of the Church; for this is the chief unity, and the particular unity of several individuals among themselves is subordinate to the unity of the Church, even as the mutual adaptation of each member of a natural body is subordinate to the unity of the whole body. **Now the unity of the Church consists in two things; namely, in the mutual connection or communion of the members of the Church, and again in the subordination of all the members of the Church to the one head**, according to Col. 2:18, 19: “Puffed up by the sense of his flesh, and not holding the Head, from which the whole body, by joints and bands, being supplied with nourishment and compacted, groweth unto the increase of God.” Now this Head is Christ Himself, Whose viceregent in the Church is the Sovereign Pontiff. *Wherefore schismatics are those who refuse to submit to the Sovereign Pontiff, and to hold communion with those members of the Church who acknowledge his supremacy.*

Summa, IIa IIae, Q.39, a.1, *respondeo* (emphasis added).

⁴² In other words, “communion” is the union which binds together the members of the Church. Here is how Addis & Arnold explain this meaning of “communion”, in their very large, 1884 *Catholic Dictionary*:

Communion of Saints is mentioned in the ninth article of the Apostle’s Creed, where it is added, according to the *Roman Catechism* [*i.e.*, the *Council of Trent Catechism*], as an explanation of the foregoing words, “I believe in the holy Catholic Church.” The **communion of saints consists in the union which binds together the members of the Church on earth**, and connects the Church on earth with the Church suffering in Purgatory and the triumphant in heaven.

(1) The **faithful on earth have communion with each other** because they partake of the same sacraments, are under one head, and assist each other by their prayers and good works.

A person can only belong to the Catholic Church by being in communion with all Catholics, under one head, *viz.*, the reigning pope.⁴³ Without being in communion with the pope and all other Catholics, a man is in schism and is outside the Catholic Church.⁴⁴

4. Although Catholics are joint members of the Catholic Church with Pope Leo, this does not make us members of whatever other groups he belongs to, including the conciliar church.

A Catholic Dictionary, Addis & Arnold, The Catholic Publication Society, New York, 1884, under the entry, *Communion of Saints* (bracketed words and emphasis added).

⁴³ Here is how Pope Boniface VIII declares this truth:

We declare, state, define, and pronounce that it is absolutely necessary for the salvation of every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff.

Bull *Unam Sanctam*.

Here is how Pope Pius IX declares this truth:

There is only one true, holy, Catholic Church, which is the Apostolic Roman Church. **There is only one See founded in Peter by the word of the Lord, outside of which we cannot find either true faith or eternal salvation.** He who does not have the Church for a mother cannot have God for a father, and **whoever abandons the See of Peter on which the Church is established trusts falsely that he is in the Church.**

Singulari Quidem, §4 (emphasis added).

⁴⁴ Here is how St. Thomas Aquinas admirably explains this truth:

Schismatics are those who refuse to submit to the Sovereign Pontiff, and to hold communion with those members of the Church who acknowledge his supremacy.

Summa, IIa IIae, Q.39, a.1, *respondeo*.

All Catholics have a duty to recognize that the current pope has authority over us. Even though we frequently cannot do what the pope commands us or hold what he teaches, we must “acknowledge his supremacy”, as St. Thomas teaches we must (in the quote above).

We must do what the pope commands us to do and believe what he teaches, when we can do so in good conscience. Thus, for example, if Pope Leo XIV commanded Catholics to recite at least five decades of the rosary each day, under pain of sin, we would be bound in conscience to do this, under pain of sin.

Everyone is a member of many groups. For example, *at the same time*, a person can be:

- a son in one group (a particular family);
- a father in another group (a different family);
- an employee in another group (his corporate employer);
- a coach in another group (a sports team);
- a parishioner in another group (a parish);
- a member of a civic orchestra group;
- a member (*i.e.*, resident) of his state or province;
- a member (*i.e.*, citizen) of his country;
- a member of volunteer civic or religious organization;
- ***perhaps a member of the true Catholic Church;***
- ***perhaps a member of the conciliar church or some other false religion***⁴⁵;
and
- perhaps a member of the Freemasons.

⁴⁵ An objection could be made here that a Catholic cannot (at the same time) also be a member of a false religion or of the freemasons. A faithful and informed Catholic knows that being a Catholic is incompatible with belonging to these groups. However, in our time of ecumenism and religious ignorance, much is scandalously permitted that is evil. Catholics are allowed to largely do what they want to do and might not know the truth or might do what they want to despite it being sinful. Do they know better? God will judge. Even though this dual membership (*viz.*, in the Catholic Church and in some false “church” or freemasonic lodge) is an objective mortal sin, we must not judge the sins on their hearts.

It would be the sin of rash judgment for us to decide the subjective culpability of a particular person who tries to, at the same time, be a member of the Catholic Church and also be a member of an anti-Catholic group. Thus, for example, we do not make the determination that Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was no longer a Catholic (although he professed to be Catholic) based on the fact that he was also a freemason at the same time.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolfgang_Amadeus_Mozart

Pope Leo, like everyone else, is a member of many groups. Because we are members of the Catholic Church with Pope Leo and acknowledge that he is pope, this does not make us members of any other group to which he belongs. So, for example, we do not become Americans, Peruvians, Chicagoans, Augustinians, or White Sox fans, merely because he is a member of those groups. Similarly, we are not members of (in communion with) the conciliar church⁴⁶ simply because he is.⁴⁷

Conclusion

All Catholics are in communion with Pope Leo because we are members of the Church which he governs as pope. Every Catholic is also in communion with all other Catholics, including mainstream “new mass” Catholics.

Our joint membership with Pope Leo XIV in the Catholic Church does not make us joint members (with Pope Leo) of the conciliar church.

To be continued ...

Catholic Candle Addendum:

There is No Such Thing as “Partial Communion” with the Catholic Church

From the above article, we see that all persons who are members of Christ’s Mystical Body are Catholics and only they can go to heaven, since ***There is No Salvation Outside the Catholic Church.***

⁴⁶ The conciliar church is not merely a mindset or a set of opinions, but is a real, organized group of persons. Read the full explanation here: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/priests/sspx-faithful-and-informed-catholics-reject-even-the-concept-of-recognition-by-modernist-rome.html>

⁴⁷ Of course, it would objectively be a mortal sin for a Catholic to join a false religion. However, suppose a very confused Catholic thinks the Catholic Church allows this dual membership (in the Catholic religion and also some other religion). Suppose also he believes he continues to fulfill all conditions for being Catholic. We should not rashly judge that we ***know*** he is not Catholic and that if he dies as he is, we would be ***certain*** he will go to hell (as would be true if we knew he were not Catholic). Giving him (and everyone else) the *benefit of the doubt*, we suppose he could ***possibly*** be inculpably ignorant and God will judge this, not us.

We see from the above article that all Catholics are in communion with all other Catholics and with the Pope, since this is what it means to be Catholic and not be a schismatic.

As St. Thomas teaches:

Now the unity of the Church consists in two things; namely, in the *mutual connection or communion of the members of the Church*, and again in the *subordination of all the members of the Church to the one head*, according to Col. 2:18, 19: “Puffed up by the sense of his flesh, and not holding the Head, from which the whole body, by joints and bands, being supplied with nourishment and compacted, groweth unto the increase of God.” Now this Head is Christ Himself, Whose viceregent in the Church is the Sovereign Pontiff. *Wherefore schismatics are those who refuse to submit to the Sovereign Pontiff, and to hold communion with those members of the Church who acknowledge his supremacy.*

Summa, IIa IIae, Q.39, a.1, *respondeo* (emphasis added).

Noah’s Ark is a figure of the Catholic Church, since all persons outside the Ark perished – just as all persons outside the Catholic Church perish and do not go to heaven. Just as no persons were “partially” in Noah’s Ark, likewise there are no persons who are partially in Christ’s Mystical Body or in “partial communion” with the Catholic Church.

The conciliar church promotes the heresy that a person can be in “partial communion” with the Catholic Church. Vatican II promotes this heresy in many places, for example:

For men who believe in Christ and have been properly baptized *are put in some, though imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church*. Without doubt, the differences that exist in varying degrees between them and the Catholic Church whether in doctrine and sometimes in discipline, or concerning the structure of the Church do indeed create many obstacles, sometimes serious ones, *to full ecclesiastical communion*. The ecumenical movement is striving to overcome these obstacles. ... But even in spite of them it remains true that all who have been justified by faith in baptism are incorporated into Christ.

Unitatis Redintegratio, §3, (emphasis added).

But there is no partial communion with the Church! “Whosoever ... is not united with the Body *is no member thereof, neither is he in communion* with Christ its Head.” Pius XI, *Mortalium Animos* Jan. 6, 1928, §15.

Conclusion

Thus, we see that the same dogma that teaches us that all Catholics are in communion with the pope, also shows us that the conciliar church teaches heresy when it teaches that persons in heretical sects can be in “partial communion” with Christ and His Mystical Body.



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