

Catholic Candle

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Words to Live By – From Catholic Tradition

Let Us Enter this Lenten Season with All of Our Heart!

The great St. Augustine, Doctor of the Church, urges us to fast generously this Lent, setting before us the many advantages and benefits:

Fasting cleanses the soul, raises the mind, subjects one's flesh to the spirit, renders the heart contrite and humble, scatters the clouds of concupiscence, quenches the fire of lust, kindles the true light of chastity.

Quoted from the sermon of St. Augustine, *On Prayer and Fasting*, quoted by St. Thomas Aquinas, greatest Doctor of the Church, in the *Summa*, IIa IIae, Q.147, a.1, *respondeo*.

Catholic Candle note: These words are very consoling and show both the power of fasting and also the wisdom of Holy Mother Church urging us to fast generously. Pondering these truths, we should be moved to pity Protestants and worldlings who do no real fasting for a spiritual purpose. Their so-called religion is not only false but empty.

We see the hand of the devil in the conciliar church's elimination of virtually all fasting. What a moral peril for countless souls!

Let us frequently use the powerful tool of fasting! In this way, we can glorify God and gain strength to serve Him and to make sacrifices for all those confused people who do not fast!



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>



Lent Will Soon Be Upon Us!

Very shortly, it will be Lent! This is a much-needed time to summon all of the generosity we can muster and to make extra efforts to remove our “moral flab” and to “scrape the barnacles” of sin and bad habits off of the “hull” of our soul.

We need to do much penance in order to save our souls. This is true throughout the year but especially during Lent. The Devil is behind the modern elimination of virtually all requirements of fasting and abstaining.

This is not the time to do the minimum! *Catholic Candle* recommends that you use the pre-Vatican II rules for fasting and abstinence which are found here:

<https://catholiccandle.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Traditional-Rules-for-Fast-Abstinence.pdf>

Let us not be stingy with God! He is never outdone in generosity!



The Crosses that God Sends to Us are Very Precious and Highly Desirable!

Our life on earth is a “vale of tears”. We know this. In the *Hail Holy Queen* prayer (the *Salve Regina*), we pray, addressing our Dear Mother Mary: “to thee do we send up our sighs, ***mourning and weeping in this valley of tears***”.

So, we must expect Crosses.

† In fact, we must expect God to send us Crosses ***every day***.

† Not only that, we must ***not*** simply tolerate the Crosses that are being placed on our shoulder but we must ***actively grasp*** those Crosses that God sends to us.

Here is one way Our Lord teaches us this truth:

If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and ***take up his cross daily***, and follow Me.¹

So, Crosses are inevitable. However, Crosses are truly a great gift from God and are more precious than we can fully understand! As we will see below, God sends Crosses to us for ***our benefit*** and to ***help*** us. We should rejoice in this help!

In St. John’s Gospel, Our Lord gives the parable of the vine, the husbandman, and the branches. Here are Our Lord’s words:

I am the true vine; and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me, that beareth not fruit, He will take away. And ***every one that beareth fruit, He will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit***. Now you are clean by reason of the word, which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you.

As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine; you the branches: ***he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit***: for without me you can do nothing.

If anyone abide not in Me, he shall be cast forth as a branch, and shall wither, and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire, and he burneth. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you. In this is My Father glorified; that you bring forth very much fruit, and become My disciples.²

¹ *St. Luke’s Gospel*, 9:23.

² Ch.15, vv. 1-8, (emphasis added).

Commenting on this parable, St. Thomas Aquinas, Greatest Doctor of the Church,³ explains how Our Lord helps the good branches. Here are St. Thomas' words:

[God's] interest in the good branches is to **help** them so they can bear more fruit. So, He says, "Every branch that bears fruit [My Father] prunes, that it may bear more fruit."⁴

St. Thomas then explains what this pruning of the branches is:

Considering the literal sense, we see that a natural vine with branches that have many [*i.e.*, superfluous] shoots bears less fruit, because the sap is spread out through all the shoots. Thus, the vinedresser prunes away the superfluous shoots so that the vine can bear more fruit.

It is the same with us. For if we are well-disposed and united to God, yet diffuse our love over many [*i.e.*, superfluous] things, our virtue becomes weak and we become less able to do good. This is why, in order that we may bear fruit, God will frequently remove such obstacles [*viz.*, our diffuse loves] and **prune us by sending troubles and temptations, which make us stronger.**

Accordingly, [Our Lord] says that **[the Father] prunes, even though a person may be clean**, for in this life no one is so clean that he does not need to be cleansed more and more: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 Jn 1:8). And [the Father] does this **so that [we] may bear more fruit, that is, grow in virtue, so that the more pruned or cleansed, the more fruitful a person is**: "Let the just still be justified, and the holy still be sanctified" [Apoc. 22:11]; "The Gospel is bearing fruit and growing" (Col. 1:6); "They go from strength to [greater] strength" (Ps. 84:7).⁵

So, we see with our intellect that we should be grateful with our will, for the Crosses that God sends because **He sends Crosses to help us**. We should thank God with our whole heart (*i.e.*, our will) even if we don't "feel" grateful with our emotions.

³ Read this article: *Why Faithful and Informed Catholics Especially Follow the Doctors of the Church and Most Especially St. Thomas Aquinas*, which can be found here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2017/12/16/why-faithful-catholics-follow-the-doctors-of-the-church/>

⁴ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Lectures on St. John's Gospel*, Ch.15, #1985 (emphasis added).

⁵ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Lectures on St. John's Gospel*, Ch.15, #1985 (emphasis added; bracketed words added to show the context).

These Crosses are precious and are an essential help to us that we may more abundantly bear the fruit of virtue.⁶

St. John Chrysostom, Doctor of the Church, teaches us the value of crosses in these words:

If God were to grant you the gift of raising the dead, He would be giving you much less than when He permits you to suffer. In fact, with the gift of miracles He makes you His debtor, but with sufferings He makes Himself your debtor.⁷

Conclusion

So let us be grateful for our Crosses and earnestly thank God for each one as soon as He sends it!

Let us carry our Crosses willingly and even joyfully, knowing that they are precious and are God's helps so that we grow in virtue!



Catholic Candle note: The article below is part eighteen of the study of the Choleric temperament. Here are links to the first seventeen parts:

1. Part I: Beginning our Study of the Choleric Temperament:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2024/08/27/lesson-35-about-the-temperaments-the-choleric-temperament/>
2. Part II: A general overview of the weaknesses of the Choleric Temperament:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2024/09/26/lesson-37-about-the-temperaments-continuation-of-the-choleric-temperament/>
3. Part III: A consideration of the pride of the Choleric Temperament:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2024/10/24/lesson-38-temperaments-choleric-temperament-their-spiritual-combat/>
4. Part IV: A general discussion of anger as a passion – in order to establish a foundation for studying anger in the Choleric Temperament:

⁶ Read this article: *Strategies for Lightening the Crosses You Now Have*, which can be found here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2020/04/01/77/>

⁷ *Spiritual Diary*, p.82, St. Paul's Editions, Boston, MA, ©1962.

<https://catholiccandle.org/2024/11/26/lesson-39-temperaments-choleric-temperament-their-spiritual-combat-part-iv/>

5. Part V: Concerning the motivations for anger:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2024/12/30/lesson-40-temperaments-choleric-temperament-their-spiritual-combat-part-v/>
6. Part VI: Concerning what anger does to the body:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2025/01/27/lesson-41-temperaments-choleric-temperament-a-choleric-spiritual-combat-part-vi/>
7. Part VII: Explaining when anger is sinful:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2025/02/21/lesson-42-temperaments-choleric-temperament-a-choleric-spiritual-combat-part-vii/>
8. Part VIII: Explaining how being slighted provokes anger:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2025/03/27/lesson-42-temperaments-choleric-temperament-a-choleric-spiritual-combat-part-viii/>
9. Part IX: Explaining how anger turns into the sin of holding a grudge:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2025/04/23/lesson-44-temperaments-choleric-temperament-a-choleric-spiritual-combat-part-ix/>
10. Part X: Recommendations to help choleric to overcome pride:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2025/05/20/lesson-45-temperaments-choleric-temperament-a-choleric-spiritual-combat-part-x/>
11. Part XI: Explaining how a person sins by not using his reason:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2025/06/28/lesson-46-temperaments-choleric-temperament-a-choleric-spiritual-combat-part-xi/>
12. Part XII: Explaining some reasons why a choleric does not use his reason properly:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2025/07/24/lesson-47-temperaments-choleric-temperament-a-choleric-spiritual-combat-part-xii/>
13. Part XIII: Explaining why the choleric fears to use his reason well:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2025/08/29/lesson-48-temperaments-choleric-temperament-a-choleric-spiritual-combat-part-xiii/>
14. Part XIV: Explaining generally how Satan targets our fallen and weakened intellects:
<https://catholiccandle.org/2025/09/24/lesson-49-temperaments-choleric-temperament-the-choleric-spiritual-combat-part-xiv/>

15. Part XV: Explaining the passions in general, to lay the foundation for our consideration of the passion of fear: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/10/26/3050/>
16. Part XVI: Explaining fear as a passion: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/11/25/lesson-51-temperaments-choleric-temperament-the-cholerics-spiritual-combat-part-xvi/>
17. Part XVII: Explaining how fear works in the soul and influences all of the temperaments: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/12/29/lesson-52-temperaments-choleric-temperament-the-cholerics-spiritual-combat-part-xvii/>

Mary's School of Sanctity

***Lesson #53* About the Temperaments Part XVIII – Explaining how Pain and Death Are Objects of Fear for Persons of Any Temperament**

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

In our last lesson we saw how St. Thomas sets forth the way in which fear works in the soul. We saw that there are three appetitive powers in the soul and how each of these powers is used for the general purpose of pursuing something good (or what *appears* to be good) and avoiding something evil (or what *appears* to be evil).

Now let us consider the evil that St. Thomas calls an *evil of nature* – *viz.*, things that cause pain and/or death and also why it is that man fears these.

St. Thomas quotes the great Philosopher Aristotle, who teaches that “fear is caused by the *imagination of a future evil which is either corruptive or painful.*”⁸

St. Thomas Explains What It Means for Something to be an Evil of Nature

St. Thomas teaches that, just as a painful evil is that which is contrary to the will, so similarly a corruptive evil is that which is contrary to nature. This latter evil is properly described as “an evil of nature” because it is opposed to our nature. Just as ***evil is the***

⁸ Taken from the *Summa*, Ia IIae, Q.42, a.2, *Respondeo, Whether Evil of Nature Is an Object of Fear?*

absence of a good that something should have, so likewise an evil of nature is the absence of a good that belongs to nature. In this we see that an *evil of nature* can be the object of fear because it is the absence of something good which belongs to nature.

The evil of nature can arise from either a natural cause or a non-natural cause:

- When it comes from a natural cause it is called an evil of nature not only from the deprivation of a good of nature, but also because this evil is an effect of nature, such as natural death and other like defects.
- The evil of nature can arise from a non-natural cause, such as violent death inflicted by an assailant.

In either case the *evil of nature* is feared to a certain extent, and to a certain extent it is not feared.

For since fear arises *from the imagination of future evil*, as Aristotle explains,⁹ whatever removes our imagining of this future evil, removes the fear also. Moreover, if we reflect, we see that there are two ways that a future evil might not be feared – either because it is not considered as an evil or because it is not considered as future:

1. Because it is remote and far off: for, on account of such distance, a thing is considered as though it were not to be. Hence we either do not fear it, or fear it but little; for, as Aristotle teaches¹⁰, *we do not fear things that are very far off. This explains why so many people, e.g., most young people, do not fear death or think about it. They know that they will die but death appears to them to be far off so they do not think about it or fear it.*
2. A future evil is considered as though it is present (not future) and thus, as being inevitable and not escapable. As an example of this, Aristotle teaches¹¹ that *those who are already on the scaffold, are not afraid* because they are on the very point of a death from which there is no escape. This is because, *in order that a man be afraid, there must be some hope of escape for him.* If there is no hope of escape, the man has sorrow but not fear.

Consequently, evil of nature is not feared if it be not apprehended as something in the future. But if the evil of nature (that is corruptive) be understood as being near at hand,

⁹ Aristotle's *Treatise on Rhetoric*, Bk. 2; ch.5 #1382a21.

¹⁰ Aristotle's *Treatise on Rhetoric*, Bk. 2: ch.5, #1382a21.

¹¹ Aristotle's *Treatise on Rhetoric*, Bk. 2: ch.5, Bk 2. Ch. 5 #1383a5.

and yet with some hope of escape, then it will be feared.¹²

Some Further Considerations from St. Thomas

St. Thomas adds that sometimes the evil of nature is an effect of nature and the man cannot avoid it. However, he might try to delay that evil as long as possible. Thus, a man might seek advice and consider how he can defer death and avoid it as long as possible. However, when death does not seem to be near at hand, one does not fear it or consider how to avoid it.

Death and other defects of nature are the effects of the human nature that we have in common. Yet the individual nature rebels against them as far as it can. Accordingly, from the inclination of nature there arises pain and sorrow for such like evils, when present. There arises fear when these evils are imagined in the foreseeable future.¹³

Further reflection: Of course, it is appropriate to fear death especially in the aspect that with death, we will face our Divine Judge and have to render an account of our lives. This is especially true when we are ill-prepared to obtain a favorable judgment from Him. But, if we focus our efforts on pleasing God and living a just life, then we will be able to foster a filial fear of God and not merely the servile fear of facing God's just punishments.

A Preview ...

In our next lesson, we will continue our study of the objects of fear. We will discuss St. Thomas's explanation of the next aspect of fear, *viz.*, *Whether the Evil of Sin Is an Object of Fear*. In that discussion St. Thomas makes the important distinction between pain and sorrow on one hand and fear on the other hand. At that point, we will be able to make some practical applications for the spiritual life.



Catholic Candle note: Below is part 6 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".

¹² *Summa*, Ia IIae, Q.42, a.2, *Respondeo*, *Whether Evil of Nature Is an Object of Fear?*

¹³ *Summa*, Ia IIae, Q.42, a.2, *Reply*, ad 2 & 3, *Whether Evil of Nature Is an Object of Fear?*

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*,¹⁴ 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.
- 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 more memorizing and little thinking.
- Grade “inflation” and degree “inflation” is rampant. Grades and academic degrees do not mean much anymore.

In part 2 of this article,¹⁵ 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,¹⁶ after having seen what true education is, we examined the question *who should perfect his intellect*.

In part 4 of this article,¹⁷ having seen that modern universities do not provide a true education, we consider whether there is *ever* any reason for men or women to attend them.

¹⁴ Part 1 of this article can be found here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/06/28/the-blessings-of-a-true-catholic-liberal-education/>

¹⁵ 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/>

¹⁶ 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/>

¹⁷ Part 4 of this article can be found here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/09/24/the-blessing-of-a-true-catholic-liberal-education-part-iv/>

In part 5 of this article,¹⁸ having seen that women and girls should pursue a True Catholic Liberal Education – just as men and boys should, too – we then considered what the best environment is in which women and girls should do this.

At the end of part 5 of this series, we recognized that an objection could arise: having seen the great value of a True Catholic Liberal Education), *should we be afraid that the great blessing of this education would be a danger to our souls because it might make us proud?*

Below, in part 6, we consider this question.

The Blessing of a True, Catholic Liberal Education

Part 6

Objection: Because a *Catholic Liberal Education* is so Great, It Might Make Us Proud!

From the considerations we have made so far in the first five parts of this series (on the Value of a True Catholic Liberal Education), *shouldn't we be afraid that this great blessing might make us proud?*

We are on earth to know, love, and serve God and by this means to save our soul. We know that pride is one of the biggest obstacles to salvation. So, if we receive a true Catholic Liberal Education and if this were to result in our damnation (by making us proud), then shouldn't we avoid this education in order to save our souls?

Although a person could wrongly suppose that a Catholic Liberal Education can be harmful because it might make a person proud, in fact, a genuine Catholic Liberal Education is never, in itself, a cause of the sin of pride. Rather it is always, in itself, a motive for humility, for five reasons:

1. It is the occasion, in itself, of comparing ourselves to what is truly great and of seeing how “small” and unimportant we are in comparison to high truths;
2. A true Catholic Liberal Education takes more effort than mere job training or studying the creations of man, (e.g., computers). These greater efforts humble us because we are aware of the comparative weakness of our minds when studying the high truths of a real education, as contrasted to our false impression that our

¹⁸ Part 5 of this article can be found here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/10/26/the-blessing-of-a-true-catholic-liberal-education-part-v/>

minds are much stronger, when studying subjects which take less effort to master;

3. The greatness, in itself, of a true Catholic Liberal Education is a great gift of God for which we should be very grateful to Him, and such gratitude fosters humility in us;
4. High universal truths are so wonderful that they “lift us out of ourselves” and make us see that we are relatively unimportant and so, seek to devote ourselves to spreading the truth to others; and
5. We see the greatest examples of humility in others who have a Catholic Liberal Education.

Let us look at each of these reasons.

1. This true education is the occasion, in itself, of comparing ourselves to what is truly great and of seeing how “small” we are.

In a Catholic Liberal Education, one spends his time with the greatest ideas and truths and with the greatest thinkers, *e.g.*, St. Thomas Aquinas, Aristotle, and Euclid. This “company” naturally causes a person to compare his mind to the greatest of truths and to compare himself with the greatest of minds and thereby to see his littleness compared to them.

Similarly, surrounding ourselves with exceedingly tall people, would remind us of our own short stature.

Of course, the attainment of great truths in a Catholic Liberal Education can be abused like any other great blessing and high Good. But we should perfect our intellects with the greatest truth and we should not choose mediocrity or lowness on the excuse that if we were to perfect our intellect (which is the highest talent that God gave to us), it would make us proud.

In his 1920 encyclical, *Spiritus Paraclitus*, which concerns the magnificent learning of St. Jerome, Doctor of the Church, Pope Benedict XV condemns the false and slothful idea that it is better not to be learned. He cites St. Jerome’s condemnation of the:

“self-righteous lack of education” noticeable in some clerics, who “think that to be without culture and to be holy are the same thing, and who dub themselves ‘disciples of the fisherman’; as though they were holy simply because ignorant!”¹⁹

Just as one should never say “don’t pray the rosary” using the excuse that it will afford occasions to compare one’s self to his godless neighbors and thereby make him proud, likewise we should not fail to seek the high truths that perfect our mind – using this same excuse as for not praying the rosary.

In fact, such a lazy excuse has no limit. A person could even say that we should not strive to sanctify our souls at all because this would be a source of pride. Rather, (this excuse continues) we should live a life of sin and great decadence because, by seeing how low we are – wallowing in sin – this will make us humble. This, of course, is putrid rationalization for laziness!

Of course, there are *always* people who commit more sins than we do, to which we *could* compare ourselves if we are looking to exalt ourselves. But instead, we should compare ourselves with the great saints and the great thinkers and humbly see our defects in contrast to them. Thus, it would be ludicrous to avoid perfecting our intellects or to seek to do nothing good so that there is no one who is more sinful or more ignorant than we are, using the rationalization that this will make it easier to be humble.

So to summarize, God wills that we perfect our faculties, especially our highest one. It is mere rationalization to suppose that acquiring humility would be easier if we avoid perfecting our intellects and avoid doing good so that there is no one more ignorant, lazy, and sinful than we are.

2. A true Catholic Liberal Education takes more effort than mere job training or studying the creations of man, (e.g., computers). These greater efforts humble us because we are aware of the comparative weakness of our minds when studying the high truths of a real education, as contrasted to our false impression that our minds are much stronger, when studying lower subjects which take less effort to master.

Just as when a man sets out to climb a very tall mountain, he is humbled by seeing his strength and ability less adequate as compared to when that man sets out to climb a small hill. Similarly, a man is humbled when studying the great truths because his own weakness is more obvious and he is less able to conceal his deficiencies than if he were

¹⁹ *Spiritus Paraclitus*, Pope Benedict XV, 1920, ¶45.

studying lower subjects.

3. The treasure of a true Catholic Liberal Education is such a great gift of God that it inspires lifelong gratitude to God and this gratitude fosters humility.

A true Catholic Liberal Education is such a blessing which not only greatly perfects our minds but it tends to rectify the will too, thereby fostering true wisdom. This is because we see that the things of the body are unimportant in comparison. A love of the high truths inclines us toward spiritual things and to have contempt for the base things of the world. This is “because He [*viz.*, God] is the guide of wisdom, and the director of the wise”.²⁰

This true education shows us that the great truths are “worth more than kingdoms”. This reality is set forth in the *Book of Wisdom*:

I preferred her before kingdoms and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison of her. Neither did I compare unto her any precious stone: for all gold in comparison of her, is as a little sand, and silver in respect to her shall be counted as clay.²¹

For being blessed with this great gift of truth and wisdom, we see we owe God everything as the source of this great good. Understanding this inspires humility.

4. High Universal Truths are so Wonderful that They “Lift Us Out of Ourselves” and Make Us See that We Are Relatively Unimportant and the Truth is All-Important.

These high truths make us seek to be selfless missionaries of the truth, seeking to spread the truth, subordinate ourselves to the truth, and promote the truth to our neighbor.

We see that the petty concerns of the material world are trivial. Rather, it is a worthwhile life to help spread the truth for the good of our neighbor. Thus, the wise man in the *Book of Wisdom* declares the influence of the high things he had learned and how he subordinated himself to spreading the truth:

²⁰ *Book of Wisdom*, 7:15.

²¹ *Book of Wisdom*, 7:8-9.

I have learned without guile, and communicate without envy, and her riches I hide not.²²

These words which describe how high and wise truth affects the soul, are used by the Church to describe St. Thomas Aquinas's own unselfish subordination of himself to the truth.²³

5. We see the greatest examples of humility in others who have had a Catholic Liberal Education.

Another way that people come to believe that a true education makes a person proud, is by seeing some persons who have abused the gift of this true education that God gave to them.

But we should look at persons who did not abuse this gift God gave to them. For example, St. Thomas Aquinas was the greatest of all thinkers and philosophers and yet with the greatest humility.²⁴ As great as St. Thomas was/is, he did not measure himself and his knowledge by a comparison to the “average man” (much less, the lowest man) but he compared himself to the truth of God, especially the truth of the Divine Nature. That comparison is, in itself, an easy motive for humility and the remedy against pride. But a man who seeks to exalt himself will never lack a way to do this, just as a man who seeks to humble himself will never lack a reason to do so.

²² *Book of Wisdom*, 7:13.

²³ Here is the full prayer to St. Thomas Aquinas:

Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas, prince of theologians and model of philosophers, bright ornament of the Christian world, light of the Church and patron of all Catholic schools, ***who didst learn wisdom without guile and dost communicate it without envy***, pray for us to the Son of God, Who is Wisdom Itself, that by the coming of the Spirit of Wisdom upon us, we may clearly understand that which thou didst teach and by imitating thee, may bring to completion that which thou didst do; that we may be made partakers both of thy doctrine and thy holiness, whereby thou didst shine on earth even as the sun; and finally, that we may enjoy with thee in heaven for ever more, the most delectable fruits of the same, praising together with thee Divine Wisdom through endless ages. Amen.

We recommend that everyone pray this prayer every day.

²⁴ Read this article explaining why faithful and informed Catholics follow Saint Thomas Aquinas more than anyone else: <https://catholiccandle.org/2017/12/16/why-faithful-catholics-follow-the-doctors-of-the-church/>

Just as any blessing of God can be abused by men who are inclined to be proud (motivated by the wounds of Original Sin which they suffer), a Catholic Liberal Education can be abused in that way too. But we should not “blame” the blessing from God but rather blame the abuse and the twisting of this blessing by man who is so prone to turn any of God’s gifts – especially the best ones – into reasons why he deserves God’s punishments.

To be continued ...



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

Below is the sixteenth article in a series which covers specific aspects of the error of sedevacantism. As context for this sixteenth article, let us recall what we saw in the earlier fifteen 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.***²⁵

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 billion²⁶ 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.²⁷

²⁵ Read this article here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/09/26/cc-in-brief-sedevacantist-questions/>

²⁶ 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>

²⁷ Read this article here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/10/24/are-we-allowed-to-decide-that-pope-francis-knows-he-is-not-catholic/>

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.²⁸

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.²⁹

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.³⁰

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.³¹ 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*.³² 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).

²⁸ Read this article here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/10/24/are-we-allowed-to-decide-that-pope-francis-knows-he-is-not-catholic/>

²⁹ Read this article here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/11/26/bishops-have-excommunicated-heretics-cant-we-judge-the-pope/>

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

³¹ 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/>

³² 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/>

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.³³

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.³⁴

In the ninth article, we addressed the superficial claim 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.³⁵

In the tenth article, we saw more deeply what schism is and how sedevacantism is inherently schism.³⁶

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 but resist the evil of his words or deeds.³⁷

³³ 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/>

³⁴ 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/>

³⁵ 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/>

³⁶ Read this article showing that *Sedevacantism is Inherently Schism*, which can be found here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/06/28/sedevacantism-is-inherently-schism/>

³⁷ *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/>

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 heresy or other error.³⁸

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.³⁹

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.⁴⁰

In the fifteenth article of this series, we saw that even though Pope Leo XIV is objectively a very bad pope, all Catholics are in communion with him, since this is an essential condition of being Catholic and not schismatic.

Further, some sedevacantists (and a smaller number of other confused persons) make a related false argument directed against Catholics. They say that we must not pray for the pope in the Canon of the Mass because doing so would mean that we adopt his errors.

Traditional Catholics who have never heard of this error, might be tempted to think the error is so “far-fetched” that a non-sedevacantist could never *really* think it was wrong to pray for the pope at Mass. However, tragically, some persons have been fooled by the claim that praying for the pope in the Canon of the Mass somehow means that we adopt his errors. In fact, one non-sedevacantist priest in Canada was fooled into not praying for the pope in the Canon of the Mass and subsequently succumbed to the error of sedevacantism.

Below, we address the question whether praying for the pope in the Canon of the Mass indicates that we adopt the pope’s errors.

³⁸ *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/>

³⁹ *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/>

⁴⁰ *Sedevacantism is Un-Catholic Because it is Revolutionary:*
<https://catholiccandle.org/2025/10/26/sedevacantism-is-un-catholic-because-it-is-revolutionary/>

We Must Pray for the Pope, Especially at Mass!⁴¹

An examination of the erroneous argument claiming that we should not insert the pope's name in the Canon of the Mass

It is our duty to pray for others. When we pray the Mass, this is an especially perfect time to do this, since it is the infinitely meritorious sacrifice of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Further, every pope has the frighteningly grave responsibility for the souls of everyone in the world, especially for Catholics. Thus, we should continually pray for the pope, and most especially when we pray the Mass. (Of course, in our current times, where most faithful and informed Catholics do not have access to an uncompromising priest, these prayers for the pope should be offered while sanctifying the Sunday without a priest.)⁴²

In a previous article (#15) we saw that we Catholics are in communion with the pope – whether he is good or bad – and we are also in communion with all other Catholics – whether they are good or bad.

⁴¹ Of course, in our current times, where most faithful and informed Catholics do not have access to an uncompromising priest, these prayers for the pope should be offered while sanctifying the Sunday without a priest.

⁴² We at *Catholic Candle* don't know of any uncompromising priest or group, although that does not mean that there is not one (we just don't know about him).
<https://catholiccandle.org/2021/07/02/the-reckless-claim-that-there-are-no-good-priests-left/>

We recommend that you do what we do: we sanctify the Sunday at home.
<https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/sanctifying-sunday-no-mass.html>

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

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

We must continually guard ourselves against having a “go along” mentality.
<https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/we-must-neither-follow-bad-catholics-nor-rashly-judge-them>

We must have hope because God is in charge and everything that happens that is truly out of our control is God's Will for us. We keep in the front of our memory that all things “work together unto the good, for those who love God”. *Romans*, 8:28.
<https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/hope-during-the-current-great-apostasy>

The devil knows the importance of praying for the pope and greatly fears this, especially the efficacious intercession for him at a non-compromised Mass. Satan knows that if God reforms the pope through prayers offered for him, this reformed pope could spiritually transform (the human element of) the Church. Thus, the devil uses every lie and trick he has to discourage prayer for the pope, especially in the Canon of the True Traditional Mass.

One trick the devil uses, is to make priests and people afraid to pray for the pope when they pray the Canon of the Mass, fearing that somehow mentioning the pope's name in the Canon causes us to affirm we agree with the pope's errors.⁴³

For a priest not to pray for the pope during the Canon of the Mass is objectively a sin (since he is required to do so), even if no one ever knew the priest made this sinful omission.⁴⁴

This objective sin is increased if people *do* find out that the priest does not pray for the pope at Mass, because this omission is an objective sin of scandal, since all priests (and all Catholics) have a solemn duty to pray for the hierarchy, especially the pope.

Also, this scandal is gravely aggravated if anyone is led to conclude that the priest is a sedevacantist (because such a priest – like the sedevacantists – does not pray for the pope).

The Text of the Prayer for the Pope at the Beginning of the Canon of the Mass

Latin

Te igitur, clementissime Pater, per Jesum Christum Filium tuum, Dominum nostrum, supplices rogamus ac petimus uti accepta habeas, et benedicas haec dona, haec munera, haec sancta **sacrificia illibata; in primis quae tibi offerimus pro**

English

Therefore, most gracious Father, we humbly beg of Thee and entreat Thee through Jesus Christ Thy Son, Our Lord. Hold acceptable and bless + these gifts, these + offerings, these + holy and unspotted **oblations which, in the first place, we offer Thee for**

⁴³ Although no sedevacantists pray for our pope at Mass (because they deny he is pope), even some sedevacantists correctly understand that putting the pope's name in the Canon is praying *for* him, not declaring that we believe and adopt whatever errors he teaches.

⁴⁴ We don't judge the interior, subjective culpability of such a priest or anyone else who holds this error. See, the *Catholic Candle* article against the sin of rash judgment: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/10/24/are-we-allowed-to-decide-that-pope-francis-knows-he-is-not-catholic/>

Ecclesia tua sancta catholica; quam pacificare, custodire, adunare, et regere digneris toto orbe terrarum: **una cum famulo tuo Papa nostro N., et Antistite nostro N. et omnibus orthodoxis, atque catholicae et apostolicae fidei cultoribus.**

Memento, Domine, famulorum, famularumque tuarum N. et N. et omnium circumstantium, quorum tibi fides cognita est, et nota devotio, **pro quibus tibi offerimus.** vel qui tibi offerunt hoc sacrificium laudis pro se, suisque omnibus, pro redemptione animarum suarum, pro spe salutis, et incolumitatis suae; tibi que reddunt vota sua aeterno Deo, vivo et vero.

Thy Holy Catholic Church. Grant her peace and protection, unity and guidance throughout the world, **together with Thy servant [name], our Pope, and [name], our Bishop; and all Orthodox believers who cherish the Catholic and Apostolic Faith.**

Remember, O Lord, Thy servants and handmaids, [name] and [name], and all here present, whose faith and devotion are known to Thee. **On whose behalf we offer** to Thee, or who themselves offer to Thee this sacrifice of praise for themselves, families and friends, for the good of their souls, for their hope of salvation and deliverance from all harm, and who offer their homage to Thee, eternal, living and true God.

(Emphasis added.)

Una cum Papa nostro Leone

When we pray in the Canon of the Mass: “una cum famulo tuo Papa nostro, [name]”, this phrase is part of the same sentence in which we offer the oblation for the Church because *we offer this oblation for the Church and **also** (i.e., together) for the pope* (and the bishop, etc.).

Some people mistakenly think “together with” means that we declare we are together in mind with the pope in whatever he teaches. In other words, such a false claim asserts that putting the pope’s name in the Canon declares we are united (“together”) with the pope in whatever he believes. There are six reasons why this is false:

1. In this prayer, the pope is mentioned in the middle of a longer “list”. The prayer offers the oblation for the Church, then there is mention of the pope, then the bishop, then all Catholics and finally in the next prayer, we recall the people near and dear to us “on whose behalf we offer” this same oblation. This list has a clear order. We pray for the Church, then those governing the Church, then all members of the Church and lastly, those near and dear to us whether or not our loved ones are Catholics.

This grouping and the whole progression of thought shows that the reference to the pope and bishop is our prayer **for** them and is offering the oblation **for** them. It is unreasonable to understand this prayer as a declaration of solidarity: *viz.*, as if the prayer were to state that *we offer this oblation for the Church, then we declare we believe whatever the pope and others believe, and lastly, we offer the oblation for those people dear to us.*

If we were to wrongly assume (as this false claim does) that we break up the series of persons for whom we offer up the oblation, in order to declare sameness in beliefs with the pope, why wouldn't we declare that we believe what the **Church** teaches, rather than only the pope? Whatever the holy and infallible Catholic Church teaches, we must always believe because it is always true. By contrast, we believe what the pope teaches only *when he teaches what the Church teaches*. (Any errors that the pope teaches are not the teaching of the Church nor are they worthy of belief.⁴⁵) Plainly, it is wrong to think this prayer of the Canon unites us to whatever the pope teaches.

The Canon is the perfect time to pray *for* the pope, when we mention him immediately after we pray *for* the Church. Because the Canon of the Mass is perfect, we would expect the perfection of the Canon to include both the prayer for the Church and for the pope. This is a further reason to understand the prayer this way.

2. That the oblation is offered **for** all of these listed persons is further shown by this prayer (in the Canon) where it says the offering is made **for** the Church "***in the first place***", and then proceeds to mention the pope, bishop, all Catholics and lastly those near and dear to us. This prayer's phrase "in primis" (*i.e.*, "in the first place") shows that the offering will also then be made for others, the pope being the very next one listed.
3. That this reference to the pope (and bishop) is a prayer for him (rather than joining in his ideas), is shown by what the pope and bishops themselves say when they offer Mass. As the 1913 Catholic Encyclopedia explains:

⁴⁵ Previously, we saw (in the fifth article of this series) 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. 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/>

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.

A diocesan bishop in saying Mass changes the form “et Antistite nostro N.” into “et me indigno servo tuo” [*i.e.*, “and me thy unworthy servant”]. The pope naturally uses these words instead of “una cum famulo tuo Papa nostro N.”, and omits the clause about the bishop.⁴⁶

In other words, the pope and bishop pray for themselves and offer the oblation for themselves. They plainly are not saying that they unite with themselves and believe whatever they themselves believe. As they pray for themselves in the Canon, likewise we pray for them in the same place, by inserting their names (and we are not declaring that we believe whatever they teach).

4. This groundless fear (*viz.*, the fear of adding the pope’s name in the Canon) also ignores Church history. From the earliest days of the Church, the Canon of the Mass has included a prayer interceding for the Church, the pope, the bishop and Catholics generally, as well as (in some earlier manuscripts) also intercession for the emperor and for the priest celebrating the Mass.⁴⁷ The prayer was worded in various ways but always had this same intercessory meaning. That same meaning continues in the wording of the traditional missal we use.

By contrast, throughout the history of the Mass, in all the various formulations of the prayers in early manuscripts, the Mass has never included a *declaration of solidarity in belief* with the pope, as is baselessly feared by those who fear to include the pope’s name in the Canon.

5. There have been popes at different times of Church history who had problems in word or deed. If each person were supposed to decide whether to withdraw the pope’s name from the Canon of the Mass and not pray for him, this would create chaos. To take only two examples:
 - a. Pope Innocent VIII (1484 -1492) had illegitimate children whom he publicly acknowledged.⁴⁸ Pope Innocent VIII was so shameless that while his own illegitimate son was at the papal court and in the immediate papal circle, this son “paraded the streets at night ... forced his way into the houses of

⁴⁶ 1913 Catholic Encyclopedia, article *Canon of the Mass*, vol. 3, p.262.

⁴⁷ See, e.g., *The Mass, A Study of the Roman Liturgy*, by Adrian Fortescue, Longmans, Green & Co., London, © 1930, pp. 153 & 157 & Ch. III (entitled *The Origin of the Roman Mass*).

⁴⁸ *Popes Through The Ages*, by Joseph Brusher, Van Nostrand ,Princeton, N.J., ©1959, article under *Pope Innocent VIII*, available here: <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/popese-through-the-ages-13701>

citizens for evil purposes” and similarly led a life of avarice and debauchery.⁴⁹

Should Catholics have not prayed for Pope Innocent VIII in the Canon of the Mass under the theory that the pope’s open shamelessness was equivalent to showing that the virtue of purity is optional and therefore this pope was unworthy of prayers in the Canon of the Mass?

- b. Pope Nicholas I taught the heresy “that baptism was valid, whether administered in the name of the three Persons or in the name of Christ only.”⁵⁰ Should each person at the time have decided if Pope Nicholas’ heresy meant he should be cut off from the prayers he greatly needed?

How great a division it would sow among Catholics if this wedge of discord and chaos were permitted to exist among the faithful! This would mean that faithful Catholics would shun priests who refused to pray for the pope during the Canon and confused Catholics would refuse priests who prayed for the pope in the Canon.

6. The pre-Vatican II commentators unanimously explain this passage of the Canon as a prayer (intercession) *for* the pope, not a declaration of united belief with the pope. Here is a small sample of such commentaries:

- The 1913 Catholic Encyclopedia explains: “The priest prays first for the Church, then for the pope and diocesan ordinary by name.”⁵¹
- The book entitled *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass* explains: “[We have] a special and express offering and prayer for the Pope and for the chief pastor of the diocese in which the holy Mass is celebrated. ... It is proper that, throughout the entire Church, the Pope should be prayed for and the Sacrifice be offered for him ...”⁵²

⁴⁹ *History of the Popes*, Ludwig Pastor, edited by Frederick Ignatius Antrobus, Vol. 5 p.354. This quote comes from a 28 volume set written between 1886 and 1930. The volumes of the English translation contain no copyright dates.

⁵⁰ Cardinal Henry Newman’s treatise *On The True Notion of Papal Infallibility*. Cardinal Newman cites this example quoting St. Robert Bellarmine in *De Rom. Pont.*, iv. 12.

⁵¹ 1913 *Catholic Encyclopedia*, article *Canon of the Mass*, vol. 3, article *Canon of the Mass*, p.262.

⁵² Rev. Dr. Nicholas Gihl, Herder, St. Louis, 1941, pp. 596-97.

- The book entitled *The Mass, A Study of the Roman Liturgy* explains: “The Intercession (from “in primis”) ... begins by praying for the Church, Pope, bishop and the faithful.”⁵³
- The commentator in *The St. Andrew’s Daily Missal* notes at the Canon’s “in primis” that the priest “prays for the living heads and members of the Church Militant”.⁵⁴

Conclusion: for all six reasons, it is plain that we insert the pope’s name in the Canon in order to pray for him (not to declare we believe whatever he believes). The pope is the only one on earth who can authoritatively reform the (human element of the) Church. Although we reject the pope’s errors, we must pray for him unceasingly (especially when praying the Mass), that he reverses his own course and leads souls back to the traditions of the Church.

The Devil Uses a Second False Reason to Eliminate Prayers for the Pope at Mass

Some Catholics plainly see that this prayer in the Canon is a prayer *for* the pope (not a declaration that we believe whatever he believes). Yet they do not pray for the pope at Mass. Their reason for this is that they are troubled by the scruple that somehow it is a sin to pray for a bad pope in the Canon of the Mass because this prayer is the Church’s *public* prayer, and that it would be a scandal to pray for any bad man (including a bad pope) in the Church’s *public* prayer. (These misguided people think it is fine to pray for a bad pope in *private* prayer, but not the Church’s *public* prayer.)

But this scruple ignores Common Sense, Church history, and Ecclesiastic Tradition.

First, **common sense:** our prayers *for* anyone beg God’s help for the person. Those prayers don’t show the person is perfect but are asking God to change and perfect him. So it is the most natural thing for loyal sons of the Church to pray publicly for bad leaders, especially when praying the Mass.

Second, **Church history:** through many hundreds of years, it was the practice of good priests, bishops and laymen to publicly pray in the Canon of the Mass, for the emperor – not only for a good emperor but for **whoever** was the emperor, good or bad. Similarly, when we pray the Mass, our prayers for the pope are not conditioned on the spiritual condition of his soul.

⁵³ *The Mass, A Study of the Roman Liturgy*, by Adrian Fortescue, Longmans, Green & Co., London, © 1930, p.329 (parenthetical comment in original).

⁵⁴ *The St. Andrew’s Daily Missal*, Dom Gaspar Lefebvre, O.S.B., Lohmann © 1945, p.972.

Third, *Ecclesiastical Tradition*: the prayers of Good Friday (going back almost 1800 years⁵⁵) not only pray for the pope (for any pope, whether good or bad) but also *publicly* pray for the worst of men: heretics, schismatics, Jews, and pagans, who are inherently bad because they oppose Our Lord and His Church.

Conclusion

It is plain that, however much evil the pope is doing, we should pray hard for him, including public prayers and especially at Mass. Let us unite in fervent prayer for the pope – especially when praying the Mass – that God change his heart and enlighten his mind.



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⁵⁵ *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, Josef Jungmann, Benzinger Brothers, New York, 1955, English Edition, translator Francis Brunner C.S.S.R., Volume I pp. 481-2.