

# Catholic Candle

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## Words to Live By – From Catholic Tradition

### *Fasting is a Great Treasure!*

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

Fasting loves not many words, deems wealth superfluous, scorns pride, commends humility, helps man to perceive what is frail and paltry.

From the sermon of St. Augustine, Doctor of the Church, *On Prayer and Fasting*. Quoted by St. Thomas Aquinas, Greatest Doctor of the Church, in the *Summa*, IIa IIae, Q.147, a.1, ad 1.

**Catholic Candle note:** Let us be grateful that we are fasting, as Holy Mother Church wisely instructs us!



## We Are Now In Lent!

We are now in 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, with explanations: <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!**



***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:  
<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/>

[temperament-a-cholerics-spiritual-combat-part-ix/](https://catholiccandle.org/2025/05/20/lesson-45-temperaments-choleric-temperament-a-cholerics-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-cholerics-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-cholerics-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-cholerics-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-cholerics-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-cholerics-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/>
18. Part XVIII: Explaining how pain and death are objects of fear for persons of any temperament: <https://catholiccandle.org/2026/01/26/lesson-53-temperaments-choleric-temperament-pain-and-death-are-objects-of-fearf-any-temperament/>

# Mary's School of Sanctity

## ***Lesson #54 – About the Temperaments Part XIX – Considering Whether Sin Is an Object of Fear for All Temperaments***

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

Let us continue our investigation of the objects of fear. St. Thomas addresses the question, *Whether the Evil of Sin Is an Object of Fear?*

In order to answer this question, St. Thomas explains two important aspects.

1. That fear comes from an extrinsic evil (that is, an evil that lies outside of a man).
2. Comparing pain and sorrow on one hand, to fear on the other hand.

### **The First Aspect**

St. Thomas tells us that the object of fear is some future evil which is arduous and not to be easily avoided. Fear results in us considering some future evil which is outside of us.

Now that we have examined the types of fear, let us join St. Thomas in the next appropriate thing to ponder, namely, the object of fear. St. Thomas teaches that “from this, we may gather that whatever is entirely subject to our power and will, is not an object of fear. Nothing gives rise to fear save what is due to an external cause.”<sup>1</sup>

However, the human will is the proper cause of the evil of sin: (because sin is voluntary, requiring that the will consents to what is contrary to reason). Consequently, the evil of sin, properly speaking, is not an object of fear because the will could say “no” to the sin which is the subject of the temptation.<sup>2</sup>

But the human will may be inclined to sin through an extrinsic cause having a strong “pull” on him. For instance, a man may be afraid to be lured into sin by dwelling in the company of wicked men.

Yet, in this case, the man fears being led astray rather than the sin considered in its proper nature, that is, as his voluntary act. So, we see that voluntary acts are not objects

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<sup>1</sup> *Summa*, Ia, IIae, Q.42, a.3, *Respondeo*.

<sup>2</sup> *Summa*, Ia, IIae, Q.42, a.3, *Respondeo*.

of fear to a man.

## **The Second Aspect**

St. Thomas explains to us that both sorrow and fear regard evil. Sorrow is about an evil which is now present, and fear concerns a future evil. Sorrow is in the concupiscible power so it regards evil absolutely, whether it be great or small. On the other hand, fear is in the irascible part and regards evil to the extent that it is arduous or difficult. But plainly, an evil loses this character of difficulty when it is subject to our will and choice. Consequently, only those things which we consider to be difficult for us would make us fear that they will come to us.

With St. Thomas having explained these two aspects to us, we see that strictly speaking, the evil of sin is not a subject of fear.<sup>3</sup>

## **Two Additional Questions Concerning the Objects of Fear**

St. Thomas raises two other questions which we should discuss briefly. They are:

- ✓ Whether Sudden Things Are Especially Feared? and
- ✓ Whether Those Things are More Feared for Which There is no Remedy?

### **Whether Sudden Things Are Especially Feared?**

As St. Thomas has taught us, the object of fear is an imminent evil, which can be repelled, but with difficulty.

This fear can be due to one of two causes:

1. The greatness of the evil; and/or
2. The weakness of him who fears.

Yet, the unwontedness and suddenness of an evil increases both of these causes. Firstly, suddenness helps the imminent evil to seem greater. “Because [as St. Thomas explains]

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<sup>3</sup> Taken from the *Summa*, Ia, IIae, Q.42, a.3, *Respondeo & ad. 2.*

all material things, whether good or evil, the more we consider them, the smaller they seem .... Fear of a future evil is diminished by thinking about it beforehand”<sup>4</sup>

This is why Our Lord told his apostles ahead of time about the hatred and persecution of the world which they would suffer in the future. Knowing ahead of time would diminish their fear:

These things have I spoken to you, that you may not be scandalized. They will put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth a service to God. And these things will they do to you; because they have not known the Father, nor me. **But these things I have told you, that when the hour shall come, you may remember that I told you of them.**

*St. John's Gospel, 16:1-4 (emphasis added).*

Secondly, unwontedness and suddenness increase the weakness of him who fears, in so far as they deprive him of the remedies with which he might otherwise provide himself to forestall the coming evil, were the evil not taking him by surprise.<sup>5</sup>

St. Thomas says that although, overall, the above is true (*viz.*, that suddenness increases fear), there may be some circumstances in which the greatness of some evil inspires greater fear through being much thought about.<sup>6</sup>

## **Are Those Things More Feared for Which There Is No Remedy?**

In his answer to this question, St. Thomas explains that since the object of fear is evil, whatever tends to increase the evil brings about an increase in fear. Evil is increased not only based on the nature of the evil itself but also in respect of particular circumstances.<sup>7</sup>

It is very interesting to note what St. Thomas tells us about how circumstances increase our fear:

Of that of all the circumstances, longlastingness, or even everlastingness, seems to have the greatest bearing on the increase of evil. Because things that exist in time are measured, in a way, according to the duration of time: wherefore if it be an evil

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<sup>4</sup> Taken from the *Summa*, Ia, IIae, Q.42, a.5, *Respondeo*.

<sup>5</sup> Taken from the *Summa*, Ia, IIae, Q.42, a.5, *Respondeo*.

<sup>6</sup> Taken from the *Summa*, Ia, IIae, Q.42, a.5, *Respondeo & ad. 3*.

<sup>7</sup> Taken from the *Summa*, Ia, IIae, Q.42, a.6, *Respondeo*.

to suffer something for a certain length of time, we should reckon the evil doubled, if it be suffered for twice that length of time. And accordingly, to suffer the same thing for an infinite length of time, *i.e.* forever, implies, so to speak, an infinite increase.<sup>8</sup> However, those evils which, after they have come, cannot be remedied at all, or at least not easily, are considered as lasting forever or for a long time: for which reason they inspire the greatest fear.<sup>9</sup>

St. Thomas is speaking here of the kind of remedy for a future evil by which it is warded off from coming. He has already explained how, when this type of remedy is removed, then one gives up hope and so here he is referring to the kind of remedy by which a present evil is removed.

St. Thomas also addresses the circumstance that even when one is speaking of death as a thing in which there is no escape, we recognize the fact that we do not fear death from the perspective that death doesn't threaten us from near but only from afar, and it is for this reason we do not fear it.

## Some Spiritual Applications of These Principles

There are many practical applications to draw from this study of fear that we have undertaken. In future lessons, after we study St. Thomas's teaching concerning the causes of fear and the effects of fear, then we will have the foundation we need to be able to consider better how the principles apply to our spiritual life. But let us here note a few initial fruits of the principles we have learned so far.

It is very interesting to note, based on the explanation of St. Thomas (given above), how Our Lord, in His Providential care and mercy for us warns us about the everlastingness of hell's punishment because He knows that we humans fear something more when it lasts forever. We Catholics see a connection here to the evil/malice of sin: Because sin is an infinite offense against the all-good, all-loveable God. Thus, Our Lord warns us about the eternal punishment due to sin in order to help us to hate sin and to avoid it.<sup>10</sup>

The Lord knows how weak we are. He knows that a filial love and filial fear of Him don't come easy for us, and that this fear takes great effort for us (and of course, doesn't come

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<sup>8</sup> Concerning the four reasons why sin is an infinite evil, read this article: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/the-infinite-evil-of-sin> Especially see reason #3.

<sup>9</sup> Taken from the *Summa*, Ia, IIae, Q.42, a.6, *Respondeo*.

<sup>10</sup> Concerning the four ways in which sin is an infinite evil, read this article: <https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/the-infinite-evil-of-sin>

without His grace). So, God starts by inspiring servile fear in us, that is, fear of punishment because this is easier for us to understand.

In a future lesson we will discuss servile fear and filial fear in more detail. Suffice it to say for now that filial fear, based on love of God, is the fear of displeasing God. Filial fear is more perfecting than simply fearing God because we fear His just punishments. One has a tremendously happier and easier time working out his salvation when moved by filial fear. This is because filial fear is based on love and love builds true friendship. Friendship makes sacrifice and duties to be done with joy and generosity. When one loves and performs deeds and works out of love for another, then these deeds, works, and sacrifices are not so painful because our hearts desire to show that we love and care. The heart longs to do something for the beloved in order to prove one's love to his beloved.

## A Preview...

In our upcoming lessons we will study the causes of fear and the effects of fear. With a proper understanding of these, we will be able to see how God wants us to use this passion (*viz.*, fear) to serve Him well.



**Catholic Candle note:** Below is part 7 of the article concerning the best type of education – which is a *Catholic Liberal Education*. Do not confuse this education with many university programs called “liberal arts” but which are full of fluff, falsehood, and aimless so-called “cultural enrichment” courses and “humanities”.

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

As context for this seventh article, let us recall what we saw in the earlier six articles:

Previously, *in part 1 of this article*,<sup>11</sup> 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.

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<sup>11</sup> Part 1 of this article can be found here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/06/28/the-blessings-of-a-true-catholic-liberal-education/>

- Most “education” is merely job training, fluff courses, and/or leftist indoctrination.
- The students are taught to sound like someone in their field but they do 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***,<sup>12</sup> 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***,<sup>13</sup> after having seen what true education is, we examined the question *who should perfect his intellect*.

***In part 4 of this article***,<sup>14</sup> 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.

***In part 5 of this article***,<sup>15</sup> 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.

***In part 6 of this article***, we addressed the objection that, having seen the great value of a True *Catholic Liberal Education*, we should be afraid that the great blessing of this education would be a danger to our souls because it might make us proud.<sup>16</sup>

**Below, in part 7**, we consider more fully the difference between the education which is appropriate for a free man as contrasted to the education which is appropriate for a slave.

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<sup>12</sup> 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/>

<sup>13</sup> 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/>

<sup>14</sup> 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/>

<sup>15</sup> 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/>

<sup>16</sup> Part 6 of this article can be found here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2026/01/26/3129/>

# The Blessing of a True, *Catholic Liberal Education*

## Part 7

How is it that a true *Catholic Liberal Education* elevates and perfects a man? To see this better, let us contrast a liberal education – a free man’s education – with the work and the education of a slave. First, let’s start with a slave’s work.

### What is a Slave’s Work?

The central idea of slavery is that a slave is someone else’s property<sup>17</sup> – just like a hammer or a car is someone’s property. A man uses a hammer, a car, or any other property for his own benefit. Likewise, he uses a slave for his own benefit. He does not use any of his property for the benefit of that property, except as a means of benefitting himself. So, a man might polish his shoes to protect them or he might buy new tires for his car. But he does this so that these shoes or the car might last longer and benefit him longer. Likewise, a slave’s work is for the purpose of benefitting the master, not the slave himself.

A slave would most often benefit his master by works of the body, such as cooking meals, cleaning the gutters of a house, repairing a faucet, digging a hole, weeding a garden, *etc.* It is certainly possible for a slave to enjoy such activities but that is not the point. That does not change the fact that those jobs are servile, *i.e.*, they are jobs proper to a slave. Instead, the fundamental characteristic of a slave’s work is that it is for the benefit of his master rather than to benefit himself.

The slave does receive something in return – food, clothing, shelter, *etc.* – otherwise he would die. But his work is for the benefit of others, not himself. Thus, in our society, a man generally works a job which is slavish, in exchange for the money he needs to provide for his family.

A man could enjoy his work, *e.g.*, composing sonatas for sale. But for most men, their work is slavish regardless of whether they enjoy the work. This is true regardless of whether the work he does is “professional” or not. So, the work of an engineer, an architect, a software engineer, and a lawyer are servile, as are the work of a truck driver, a plumber, a house painter, and a grocery store clerk.

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<sup>17</sup> Slavery can be just or unjust. For example, it is unjust to enslave someone simply because of the color of his skin. On the other hand, it might be just to enslave a mass murderer for a life of hard labor to punish him for his crime, perhaps as an alternative to executing the murderer. These considerations are beyond the scope of this article.

The fact that a man's job is servile does not make it sinful or something to despise. A man's work – which is slavish in itself – can (and should) be elevated by the high purpose of this work, which is to do his duty before God (which is hopefully his motive) and to provide for the material needs of his family, whom he loves.

But not all physical work is slavish. For example, it is not slavish for a man to hike up a mountain for the fresh air and exercise. It is not slavish for him to go jogging and to do pushups to promote his own health. It is not slavish for a person to practice a musical instrument to perfect his talent and his mastery of the art of music.

Whereas most (but not all) physical labor is servile work, similarly most (but not all) intellectual work is not slavish, *e.g.*, reading a novel, learning the catechism, writing a letter to a friend or composing a treatise on astronomy, sketching a sunset, and studying geometry are not servile. This is why those activities are not forbidden on days when servile work is forbidden. They are not the work of a slave but are undertaken to perfect the non-slave (the free man) engaging in the activity.

But some intellectual activities *are* servile. The practice of the professions, *e.g.*, medicine, law, accounting, pharmacology, and architecture, are slavish pursuits even though they are primarily intellectual. Likewise, it is slavish to balance one's checkbook or to prepare one's income tax return. One sign that medicine and pharmacology are slavish pursuits is the fact that, in ancient times, rich Roman families would buy slaves who were physicians and pharmacists in order to provide for those families' health. Likewise, a lawyer does not practice law principally for enjoyment or self-improvement but rather to benefit his client (who is his "master" for that task).

## **What is a Slave's Education?**

A slave's education is that which trains him to be capable of performing slavish work well and to benefit his master more. So, the purpose of a slave's education is to enable him to perform any of those jobs of a slave. A slave might be taught to practice medicine, to bind books, to give haircuts, to make sausage, to paint a house, or anything else that the master wants to accomplish.

## **Next, Let Us Consider the Reality that All of Us Are on Earth to Work.**

Above, we have been considering how a true *Catholic Liberal Education* elevates and perfects a man. To see this better, we first looked at the work and the education of a slave so we can better understand a liberal education in contrast to this.

Now let us consider that fundamental truth that God puts everyone on earth to work. Then, after that, let us consider what work and education are appropriate for a free man.

## God Put Man on Earth to Work.

God made us and He owns us. We see the way that the simplest catechism explains why we are on earth. The first *Baltimore Catechism* (used for the youngest children) teaches us:

**Q.** Why did God make you?

**A.** God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in the next.

In his *Spiritual Exercises*, St. Ignatius of Loyola teaches this same truth in his *Principle and Foundation*:

Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God Our Lord, and by this means to save his soul. All other things on the face of the earth are created for man to help him fulfill the end for which he is created. From this it follows that man is to use these things to the extent that they will help him to attain his end. Likewise, he must rid himself of them insofar as they prevent him from attaining it.

Therefore, we must make ourselves indifferent to all created things, insofar as it is left to the choice of our free will and is not forbidden. Acting accordingly, for our part, we should not prefer health to sickness, riches to poverty, honor to dishonor, a long life to a short one, and so in all things we should desire and choose only those things which will best help us attain the end for which we are created.

So, anything we do which is not serving God is not part of the reason why we are on earth, but is idleness, and is a wasted part of our life. Our Lord warned us “that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment.” *St. Matthew’s Gospel*, 12:36.

Thus, even in our tenderest years, even in our oldest age, even when sick or an invalid, God owns us and we must work for Him every day, every moment, to the best of our ability given our condition of life.

Does this mean that we must never sleep or eat? No. God made us the type of creatures who need these things in order to maintain our strength and health so that we can serve Him. Thus, it is part of serving God when we take a reasonable rest and meals.

Does it mean that we can never do anything “fun” or social? No. God made us social creatures and made us to need a reasonable amount of recreation, so that, being refreshed, we can more vigorously serve Him. Thus, we are serving God when we take this reasonable recreation because we are acting according to the way that He created us to act.

But God's ownership of us **does** mean that food, sleep, recreation, and everything else must be ordered to, and be a part of, knowing, loving, and serving Him. Any other life would be an unhappy failure and would anger God.

So we see that God wants us to engage in reasonable and wholesome recreation *when it is time for that activity*. Although, a life **devoted** to entertainment and "fun" is an evil life, by contrast, a life devoted to serving God – but which includes reasonable recreation – is a happy life well-spent.

So, we see that at all times of our life, we must work for God. We must serve Him. But **what** work should we do? Well, we should do the duties that God placed in our state in life. So, a man must be the selfless head of his family and work to support the wife and children that God gave to him. This work (in order to earn money) is usually slavish. That is, this work involves a man agreeing to serve an employer "like a slave" (in a way) doing his employer's work, in exchange for the money needed to support his family. Four, of countless examples of such work, are being a truck driver, a mechanic, a lawyer, and an engineer. Of course, the father's work, although slavish in itself, is good and pleases God **because of its end (goal)**, *i.e.*, it is ordered to him being the breadwinner for his family as a means of serving God.

Likewise, God intended a woman to have many homemaker duties, *e.g.*, washing the dishes, vacuuming the house, *etc.* That homemaker work is good and pleases God because it is ordered to her being the heart and maker of the family home as a haven of beauty and goodness. She and her husband are (or should be) happy even in their slavish work, because they are doing this work out of love for God and for the good of the family they love.

But when this man and woman are no longer required to devote as much of their time to performing such slavish, practical work because their children are adults and pursuing their own vocations, or because they have saved enough money to provide for their own material needs, they must still work. God gives us additional years of life because he wants us to do additional work for Him, not merely so that we can live for our own amusement.

However, when the practical needs are taken care of, people can devote themselves to serving God by performing different work which is not slavish, which is better in itself and not merely good because of its end (*viz.*, supplying the material needs of their family).

What kind of work is that? It is work that perfects the worker himself, *e.g.*, prayer, works of charity, acts of virtue, and perfecting his mind.

Although of course, all persons must pray throughout their lives, people with more leisure can (and should) give themselves more fully to a life of prayer. This is work but is not slavish, *i.e.*, suitable to assign to a slave to relieve the master of the duty involved. Notice, that if, hypothetically, a man had a slave, there are many things that the man

would tell his slave to do to benefit that man himself (*i.e.*, the master). That master could, for example, tell his slave to do all of the grocery shopping or cut all of the firewood needed to keep the house warm. In this way, the master might never have to go shopping or cut firewood and his time would thus be freed up for other work. But, by contrast, it would be wrong and ridiculous for the master to tell his slave to pray in the master's place so that the master did not need to pray. This is a sign that prayer is worthwhile in itself and is a free man's activity; the master himself must pray in order to receive the benefit of prayer.

Similarly, the master could possibly cause the slave to learn shoemaking or pharmacology so that the master and his family could get the benefit of those activities without needing to learn them or engage in those activities themselves. But there are other fields of knowledge, the study of which is high, valuable, and perfects the knower of that knowledge, *e.g.*, the Catholic Faith and the high matters of philosophy. It would be wrong and ridiculous for a master to direct his slave to study the Catholic Faith or other high truth, so that the master himself would be "free" to be an ignorant Catholic or a stupid man.

## Now Let Us Consider the Free Man

Seeing what a slave's work and education are and seeing that everyone is on earth to work, let us now consider what a free man's work is and then what a free man's education is.

### What is a Free Man's Work?

Above, we saw that the central idea of a slave's work is that this work is ordered to benefiting the master (*i.e.*, someone else and not the worker himself). By contrast, the work of a free man is work which makes the man himself better. A man is truly free when he lives a disciplined life devoted to learning high truth, *e.g.*, about God. As Our Lord teaches us, "the Truth will make you free". *St. John's Gospel*, 8:32. So we are made free by the **Truth**.

- **A free man's work is not the pursuit of the pleasures of the world.** Freedom is not merely licentiousness. When someone devotes himself to a life of pleasure or wild parties, we don't call him free but rather dissolute and bestial. In fact, the licentious man is really a slave to his passions and emotions, which bully his reason and his will and obstruct him from enjoying the freedom of abiding in the truth.
- **A free man's work is not to devote himself to material goods.** Freedom is not merely devoting oneself to becoming a business mogul or what the world would

call financial “success”. Beyond earning money to provide for necessary and modest<sup>18</sup> material needs, it is perverse to devote one’s life to building a “corporate empire” or even to making his small business (*e.g.*, a doughnut shop) a great success. After all, “what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul?” *St. Mark’s Gospel*, 8:36.

- **A free man’s work is not to achieve the goals of the world.** Freedom is not “chasing some dream” such as setting a world record in some sport or event. Freedom is not seeking worldly triumphs or exploits admired by the world.

**Instead, a free man’s work** is to serve God in the best way he can and to use the talents that God gave him – especially his highest talents – in the best way he can for the glory of God. A man should perfect his soul. This means that a man should especially:

- † Perfect his mind with intellectual virtue about the highest truths; and
- † Perfect his will with the moral virtues.

## What is a Free Man’s Education?

As we saw, a slave’s education is training which enables him to perform slavish work well and to benefit his master more. So, the purpose of a slave’s education is to enable him to perform any of those jobs which are slavish.

By contrast, a free man’s education is to develop his mind related to work which is a free man’s work and is not slavish. (In this discussion, let us keep in mind that everyone, including a free man, is on earth to *work*.) *A Catholic Liberal Education* is most of all a free man’s education. Its aim is to develop the mind of the student, to cause him to possess the highest truths which are the greatest perfection of our mind, and to make his mind apt to be further perfected.

Let us look a little deeper into the nature of a true education – *viz.*, a free man’s education. To do this, let us look a little more fully at Our Lord’s words quoted above. Notice that Our Lord uses “free” in this same sense in which it is used when referring to a liberal education. Here are His words in the Gospel:

Jesus said to those Jews, who believed him: If you continue in my word, you shall be my disciples indeed. And **you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**

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<sup>18</sup> St. Paul teaches us all to be moderate in seeking material goods: “Having food, and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content.” 1 *Timothy*, 6:8.

*St. John's Gospel*, 8:31-32.

This is freedom in a spiritual sense of the word. This important freedom is the absence of *interior* enslavement through ignorance. This is the freedom to direct one's self wisely on the clear, good path instead of the path of confusion and the darkness of ignorance.

This meaning of freedom is far more important than the meaning of freedom which is to avoid subjugation through enslavement by another man.

When a person is enslaved by another man, his principle of directing his actions is not within himself but is outside himself (in his master). Similarly, when a person is enslaved by ignorance he does not have within himself the principle of directing his actions because he does not know clearly what he should do.

St. Thomas Aquinas, the greatest Doctor of the Catholic Church, explains how ignorance removes from a man his power of directing himself to his proper end. St. Thomas starts with a prophecy of Isaiah, as quoted in St. Matthew's Gospel:

The people that sat in darkness, hath seen great light: and to them that sat in the region of the shadow of death, light is sprung up.

*St. Matthew's Gospel*, 4:16.

St. Thomas then quotes and adopts St. John Chrysostom's explanation as follows:

But that you may learn that he [*viz.*, Isaiah] speaks not of natural day and night, he calls the light, "a great light", which is in other places called "the true light"; and he adds, "the shadow of death", to explain what he means by darkness. The words "arose", and "shined", show, that they found it not of their own seeking, but God Himself appeared to them, they did not first run to the light; for men were in the greatest miseries before Christ's coming; ***they did not walk but sat in darkness***; which was a sign that they did not hope for deliverance; for as ***not knowing what way they should go, shut in by darkness they sat down, having now no power to stand. By darkness he means here, error and ungodliness.***<sup>19</sup>

This is like a man who is lost in the wilderness, who does not know which way to travel to safety. If in each direction he could choose, it would be equally likely to make his rescue harder and more unlikely, he would sit down and wait, not go in any direction to try to find the way out of the wilderness. Similarly, the Doctors of the Church explain that, as fallen man was spiritually lost and hopeless, he "sits down". In other words, when a

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted from St. Thomas Aquinas's *Catena Aurea on St. Matthew's Gospel*, 4:16.

person is in the darkness of ignorance and does not know the truth, it removes his “power to stand” since there is “no good way” for him to choose to go.

But when Our Lord taught the Jews that the truth would make them free, notice their carnal understanding of freedom in their reply:

They answered him: We are the seed of Abraham, and we have never been slaves to any man: how sayest thou: you shall be free?

*St. John’s Gospel, 8:31-34.*

For the present discussion, we leave aside the lie that the Jews told here, *viz.*, that they had never been enslaved, *e.g.*, by the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Assyrians, and others.

But notice that the Jews make a reply which shows they focus on freedom in the carnal sense, not in the sense of being free through the possession of the truth and through not being a slave through error.

So, we see that a *Catholic Liberal Education* is the freedom of mind that makes us free in the way that Our Lord makes us free. This is fitting because the truth is liberating and Our Lord is the Truth Who came to free us from ignorance and interior slavery.

Finally, note that the freedom a person achieves through this *Catholic Liberal Education* is ordered to being a disciple of Our Lord.

## **Recap of the Article**

God put us on this earth to work. We perform practical, slavish work when this work is our duty and is necessary. This work is not a disgrace and should not be despised because this work is ennobled by it being performed in the service of Christ the King.

But when our practical needs are taken care of, we must still work. But that work should be serving God by performing different work which is not slavish, which is better in itself and not merely good because of its end (*viz.*, supplying the material needs of one’s family).

We should engage in higher work that is not slavish, *e.g.*, prayer, works of charity, and perfecting our minds. We should pursue the Truth, which makes us free. We should serve God in the best way we can and to use the talents that God gave us – especially our highest talents – in the best way we can for the glory of God. We should perfect our souls. This means that we should especially:

† Perfect our minds with intellectual virtue about the highest truths; and

† Perfect our wills with the moral virtues.

Perfecting our highest faculties is the purpose of a *Catholic Liberal Education*. This education makes us free in a spiritual sense. This is why Our Lord came to earth: to make us free. This is the freedom to wisely direct one's self on the clear, good path instead of the path of confusion and the darkness of ignorance.



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

Below is the seventeenth article in a series which covers specific aspects of the error of sedevacantism. As context for this seventeenth article, let us recall what we saw in the earlier sixteen 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.***<sup>20</sup>

**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 billion<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup>

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

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<sup>20</sup> Read this article here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/09/26/cc-in-brief-sedevacantist-questions/>

<sup>21</sup> 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>

<sup>22</sup> Read this article here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/10/24/are-we-allowed-to-decide-that-pope-francis-knows-he-is-not-catholic/>

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.<sup>23</sup>

**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.<sup>24</sup>

**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.<sup>25</sup>

**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.<sup>26</sup> 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*.<sup>27</sup> 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

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<sup>23</sup> Read this article here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/10/24/are-we-allowed-to-decide-that-pope-francis-knows-he-is-not-catholic/>

<sup>24</sup> Read this article here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/11/26/bishops-have-excommunicated-heretics-cant-we-judge-the-pope/>

<sup>25</sup> Read this article here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2024/12/30/protecting-ourselves-from-a-bad-pope-or-bad-superior/>

<sup>26</sup> Read this article here: *Is it 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/>

<sup>27</sup> 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/>

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.<sup>28</sup>

**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.<sup>29</sup>

**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.<sup>30</sup>

**In the tenth article**, we saw more deeply what schism is and how sedevacantism is inherently schism.<sup>31</sup>

**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.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> 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/>

<sup>29</sup> 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/>

<sup>30</sup> 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/>

<sup>31</sup> Read this article showing that *Sedevacantism is Inherently Schism*, which can be found here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/06/28/sedevacantism-is-inherently-schism/>

<sup>32</sup> *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 recognize what the Catholic Truth is and how we can know when the pope (or anyone) is promoting heresy or other error.<sup>33</sup>

**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.<sup>34</sup>

**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.<sup>35</sup>

**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.<sup>36</sup>

**In the sixteenth article of this series**, we considered the position (and saw the error) that those who pray for the pope in the Canon of the Mass are declaring that they adopt his errors.<sup>37</sup>

**Now, in the seventeenth article of this series**, we consider we must have a pope because the Fatima apparitions show that a pope will consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

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<sup>33</sup> *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/>

<sup>34</sup> *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/>

<sup>35</sup> *Sedevacantism is Un-Catholic Because it is Revolutionary:* <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/10/26/sedevacantism-is-un-catholic-because-it-is-revolutionary/>

<sup>36</sup> *Answering a Sedevacantist’s Rhetorical Question: All Catholics are in Communion with the Pope:* <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/12/29/all-catholics-are-in-communion-with-the-pope/>

<sup>37</sup> *We Must Pray for the Pope, Especially at Mass!:* <https://catholiccandle.org/2026/01/26/we-must-pray-for-the-pope-especially-at-mass/>

# The Revelations to Sister Lucy of Fatima Show That the Catholic Church has a Pope Now

## Part 17

The Catholic Church infallibly teaches that there will *always* be a pope.<sup>38</sup> For example, the First Vatican Council infallibly teaches us:

If anyone says that it is not by the institution of Christ the Lord Himself (that is to say, by Divine Law) that blessed Peter should have *perpetual* successors in the primacy over the whole Church; or that the Roman Pontiff is not the successor of Blessed Peter in this primacy, let him be **anathema**.<sup>39</sup>

This dogma fits perfectly with the revelations given to Sister Lucy (one of the Fatima seers) in connection with Our Lady of Fatima's request (and her Son's command) for the consecration of Russia to Her Immaculate Heart.

## The Fatima Request that the Pope and Bishops Consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

In 1917, Our Lady of Fatima revealed that God Wills that Russia be consecrated to her Immaculate Heart. Our Lady promised to come later and, at that later time, to ask for the consecration of Russia to Her Immaculate Heart. Here are her words in 1917:

I shall come [*viz.*, in 1929] to ask for the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart, by the Holy Father and all the bishops of the world. If my request is heeded [*i.e.*, promptly], Russia will be converted and there will be peace. **If not, she will**

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<sup>38</sup> Read this article here: *The Catholic Church Will Always Have a Pope*: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/02/21/the-catholic-church-will-always-have-a-pope/>

<sup>39</sup> Vatican I, Session 4, Ch. 2 (bold emphasis and parenthetical words are in the original, italic emphasis added). For a full examination of this dogma (that the Catholic Church will always have a pope), see also this article: <https://catholiccandle.org/2025/02/21/the-catholic-church-will-always-have-a-pope/>

**spread her errors throughout the world, provoking wars and persecution against the Church.**<sup>40</sup>

On this same day in 1917, Our Lady of Fatima revealed to the three Children of Fatima that the pope *definitely will* consecrate Russia to her Immaculate Heart and through this means God will grant peace. However, as shown further below, this consecration will be greatly delayed. Here are Our Lady's words in 1917:

**The Holy Father *will* consecrate Russia** to me, and she [*viz.*, Russia] shall be converted, and a period of peace will be granted to the world.<sup>41</sup>

Then Our Lady of Fatima came to Sister Lucy (one of the Fatima seers) in 1929 and told her:

The moment has come when **God asks the Holy Father to make**, in union with all the bishops of the world, **the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart**, promising to save [*viz.*, Russia] by this means....<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> This is a portion of Our Lady's message during the Third Apparition of Fatima, July 13, 1917 (emphasis added; bracketed words added to clarify the timeline), quoted from *The Whole Truth About Fatima*, Frère Michel de la Sainte Trinité, translator John Collorafi, vol. II, Immaculate Heart Publications, Buffalo, NY, © 1989 for English translation, pp.281-282.

<sup>41</sup> This is a portion of Our Lady's message during the Third Apparition of Fatima, July 13, 1917 (emphasis added), quoted from *The Whole Truth About Fatima*, Frère Michel de la Sainte Trinité, translator John Collorafi, vol. II, Immaculate Heart Publications, Buffalo, NY, © 1989 for English translation, pp.281-282..

<sup>42</sup> *The Whole Truth About Fatima*, Frère Michel de la Sainte Trinité, translator John Collorafi, vol. II, Immaculate Heart Publications, Buffalo, NY, © 1989 for English translation, p.464 (emphasis added).

The pope must perform this consecration together with all of the bishops of the world, as Our Lady instructed in the *Third Apparition of Fatima*, July 13, 1917. In order to perform this act of consecration, these bishops do not need to have valid sacramental consecrations, but need only to validly wield the episcopal power to **govern** their respective dioceses. For an explanation of this point, read this article:

*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/>

In 1929, Our Lord assured Sister Lucy that the pope and bishops would actually perform this consecration – but only after a long delay. Here are Sister Lucy’s words describing Our Lord’s revelation to her:

Later on, by means of an interior communication, Our Lord said to me, complaining: “They [*viz.*, Pope Pius XI and the bishops of the world] did not want to heed My request! ... Like the King of France, **they** [*viz.*, the pope and bishops of the world] **will repent and do it, but it will be late.**<sup>43</sup>

Again, in 1931, Our Lord assured Sister Lucy that the pope and bishops **will** perform this consecration – but He revealed that there will first be a **long delay**. Here are Sister Lucy’s words describing Our Lord’s revelation to her:

By means of an interior communication, Our Lord said to me, complaining: Make it known to My ministers [*viz.*, the pope and bishops], seeing that they follow the example of the King of France in delaying the execution of My demand, they will also have to follow him into misfortune. Like the King of France, **they** [*viz.*, the pope and bishops of the world] **will repent and do it** [*viz.*, the consecration], **but it will be late.**<sup>44</sup>

Thus, from these revelations to Sister Lucy, we know that there will be a pope and bishops who will actually perform this consecration in obedience to Heaven’s request (although “it will be late”).

**The Catholic Church has a full hierarchy (a pope and bishops), although they might not possess Episcopal sacramental power because of their doubtful conciliar consecrations.**

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<sup>43</sup> *The Whole Truth About Fatima*, Frère Michel de la Sainte Trinité, translator John Collorafi, vol. II, Immaculate Heart Publications, Buffalo, NY, © 1989 for English translation, p.464 (emphasis added).

<sup>44</sup> *The Whole Truth About Fatima*, Frère Michel de la Sainte Trinité, translator John Collorafi, vol. II, Immaculate Heart Publications, Buffalo, NY, © 1989 for English translation, p.464 (emphasis added).

The consecration of Russia does not require Episcopal sacramental powers.<sup>45</sup> This consecration must be performed by the Catholic Church's rulers, who govern the Church.

Previously, we saw that the Catholic Church continues to have a full hierarchy (a pope and the local ordinaries of the dioceses of the world) and that the Church leaders' jurisdictional power (authority to govern) remains.<sup>46</sup> It is these bishops (the local ordinaries), who must join the pope to consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

## **This Consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary Has Not Yet Occurred and so There Must Still be a Pope and Bishops to do this in the Future.**

The pope and bishops have not yet consecrated Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in the way that Our Lord commanded.<sup>47</sup> Our Lord promised that this consecration would occur although He predicted "it will be late". Because this consecration requires a pope and bishops with jurisdiction, this shows indirectly that a pope (and bishops with jurisdiction) exists now, because otherwise there would not be means through which to elect a future pope (who appoints the future bishops).

## **Sedevacantists deny we now have a pope, so they concoct false scenarios imagining how a future pope could take office 68 years after the last pope they recognize.**

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<sup>45</sup> We know that the conciliar rite of consecration is doubtful and so we might possibly have only a very few valid bishops (as far as their *sacramental* power), *viz.*, possibly only those bishops from Archbishop Lefebvre's line and any (extremely old) bishops consecrated before late 1968. For an explanation why the conciliar rite of consecration is inherently doubtful, read this article: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B49oPuI54eEGZVF5cmFvMGdZM0U/view>

<sup>46</sup> Read this article: *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/>

<sup>47</sup> The pope and hierarchy have not obeyed Our Lord's command and consecrated Russia in the way He commanded. Read this thorough analysis of this issue: *Did the Pope's Consecration Fulfill Heaven's Command? No!*, which can be found here: <https://catholiccandle.org/2022/04/20/did-the-popes-consecration-fulfill-heavens-command-no/>

We Catholics recognize the Catholic Church continues to be governed by a pope and bishops (scandalous though they are) and that the present Church leaders (or their successors) are the ones who will consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

The contrast could not be greater, between the Catholic truth (that we have a full Church government) and the empty, sedevacantist position – *viz.*, there is no one exercising the jurisdiction of the Church: no pope, no cardinals, no local ordinaries, no Church government!

Our Lord’s prophecy (*viz.*, that the pope and bishops will perform the consecration but it will be late) is an unsolvable problem for the sedevacantists. They have no credible answer to this question:

***From where will the pope and bishops come, who will consecrate Russia?***

The sedevacantists’ fuzzy answer is that “somehow” there will be a pope and bishops in the future. Some sedevacantists (wrongly) suppose that perhaps God will choose a pope by some future, currently-unknown miraculous sign.

In any event, if the sedevacantists were correct (which they are not) that the Church has not had a pope in 68 years, there could be no future pope of the Catholic Church (who could perform the consecration of Russia in union with the bishops then in office).

If (as the sedevacantists claim) there has been no pope for 68 years, then any such future pope (who would “somehow” come into office to perform the consecration of Russia) would not reign over the same Catholic Church which has existed continuously from the time of Our Lord. Instead, such future pope (falsely imagined by the sedevacantists) would be part of a restored papal monarchy and a re-founded hierarchy which would be part of a different “church”.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> See the history of monarchy in various countries, *e.g.*, England and France, where historians describe the monarchy (which had been cut off) as having been “restored”. One example of this description of a monarchy interrupted by revolution and then later restored, is the ***Bourbon Restoration in France*** after the French Revolution and the Napoleonic years. Here is how one historian described this restoration of a king in the Bourbon line:

The Bourbon Restoration was the period of French history following the first fall of Napoleon in 1814 and his final defeat in the Hundred Days in 1815, until the July Revolution of 1830. The brothers of the executed Louis XVI came to power and reigned in highly conservative fashion. Exiled supporters of the monarchy returned to France.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bourbon\\_Restoration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bourbon_Restoration)

As explained more fully below, there are two reasons why the sedevacantists' (imagined) future "church" would not be a continuation of the true Catholic Church founded by Christ:

1. There would be no continuity between the true Catholic Church founded by Christ, and a (supposed) future "church" with a re-established government; this gap (discontinuity) would mean that the second "church" would be a different "church".
2. Christ founded a Church with a succession of human vicars chosen by men, not by miraculous Divine selection.

Each of these reasons will be discussed below.

- 1. There would be no continuity between the true Catholic Church founded by Christ, and a (supposed) future "church" with a re-established government; this gap (discontinuity) would mean that the second "church" would be a different "church".**

The very essence and definition of the Catholic Church includes the concept of a continuous government by the Catholic Church's living authorities ruling over the Catholics then living. This definition of the Catholic Church does not require that those leaders are virtuous, holy or faithful.<sup>49</sup> However, the Church's very nature (definition) requires that there must be *continuous* Church government, *i.e.*, a continuous Church hierarchy.

The very definition of the Church tells us that the Church will continuously have a hierarchy and government. For example, *The Catechism of St. Pius X* teaches:

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<sup>49</sup> It is always true, of course, that we must resist *any* leaders, including Church leaders, if they command evil. For example, St. Robert Bellarmine, Doctor of the Church, teaches us that we must resist a pope who uses his office to attack souls (whether through false doctrine or bad morals). Here are St. Robert Bellarmine's words:

Just as it is licit to resist a Pontiff who attacks the body, so also is it licit to resist him who attacks souls or destroys the civil order or above all, tries to destroy the Church. I say that it is licit to resist him by not doing what he orders and by impeding the execution of his will. ***It is not licit, however, to judge, to punish, or to depose him, for these are acts proper to a superior.***

*De Romano Pontifice*, St. Robert Bellarmine, Bk.2, ch.29 (emphasis added). For a full explanation of this important Catholic principle, read this article:

*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/>

Q. What is the Catholic Church?

A. The Catholic Church is the Union or Congregation of all the baptized who, still living on earth, profess the same Faith and the same Law of Jesus Christ, participate in the same Sacraments, and **obey their lawful Pastors, particularly the Roman Pontiff.**<sup>50</sup>

Again, this definition shows the Catholic Church will always have a living hierarchy which has authority over us. However, this continuity of Church government in no way implies that this hierarchy will be good or that we must blindly “obey” our superiors when they tell us to do evil.<sup>51</sup>

*The Baltimore Catechism* similarly defines the Catholic Church as having a living human government:

Q. What is the Church?

A. The Church is the congregation of all those who profess the faith of Christ, partake of the same Sacraments, and **are governed by their lawful pastors under one visible Head.**

Quoted from *The Baltimore Catechism* #3, Q. 489 (emphasis added).

If (as the sedevacantists wrongly suppose) there has been no hierarchy for 68 years, and further (as they imagine) that the hierarchy will “pop” into existence “miraculously” in the future, then this many-decades gap in Church government would result in a new or a re-founded “church”. This (supposed) future “church” would not be the same as the Catholic Church founded by Christ, because there would be many decades during which there was no Catholic Church that fit Her definition given above (which includes a *continuously-existing unified government* of living men who have authority over us).

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<sup>50</sup> Quoted from *The Catechism of St. Pius X*, Section: *Creed*, Subsection: *Article 9*, Q.8 (emphasis added).

<sup>51</sup> Pope and Doctor of the Church, St. Gregory the Great, taught this truth in the following words:

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

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

Regarding the true, Catholic virtue of obedience, 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/>

This many-decades gap (imagined by the sedevacantists) between Pope Pius XII and the next pope would destroy the continuity of the Church, just as would a 68-year gap during which no one professed the Catholic Faith. Any gap in the Church's government or Faith would discontinue the Church because She would no longer fit Her definition during those decades.

Thus, the sedevacantists are wrong that, after many decades without a Church hierarchy and government (as they falsely imagine), the supposed later revival of a hierarchy would be the same, true Catholic Church.

## **2. The Church that Christ founded has a succession of human vicars chosen by men, not by miraculous Divine selection.**

Our Lord founded His Church with a perpetual government whose leaders are chosen by human means: election of a pope by men (not by miracle), and the pope ensures the appointment of bishops to govern the Church's dioceses.

The sedevacantists' error causes them to deny the continuation of those human means through which the Catholic Church's government is perpetuated.

## **Conclusion of this Article**

Our Lord prophesied that there will be a future pope who (together with the Church's bishops) will consecrate Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This prophecy shows that there is a pope now. Therefore, **the Seat of Peter is not vacant. We have a pope.**



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