Catholic Candle

❧ October 2026 ❧ catholiccandle.org ❧ catholiccandle@gmail.com

Words to Live By – From Catholic Tradition

Husbands and Fathers beware!
You Must Answer for the Conduct of All Members of Your Household!

St. Basil the Great, Doctor of the Church, gives this warning concerning a husband's and father's responsibility for his family's conduct:

> When a house is badly managed, and in it are found passion and screaming, insolence and mocking laughter, wantonness and profligacy, impurity and licentiousness, the disgrace and shame of what happens fall upon him who is its master.

Quoted from St. Basil the Great's Sermon #13.

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Catholic Candle note: All faithful and informed Catholics know that we must be different from the world. If we imitate the world, then we will go to hell. If we imitate Our Lord, then we will not "fit in" with the world. As Our Lord teaches, the elect are not of this world and Our Lord has chosen them out of this world. Cf., *St. John's Gospel*, 15:19.

Our Lord is a Sign of Contradiction to the world. *St. Luke's Gospel*, 2:34. We must imitate Him and be signs of contradiction too. Regarding this principle, read the article at this link: https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/priests/sspx-wants-fit-in.html

Here is one crucial way to apply this vital principle of life: we must stand against the world by not participating in Halloween or other pagan activities – even "just for fun" or "just for the neighborhood children". Here is a further analysis of the evil of participating in Halloween: https://catholiccandle.org/2015/11/01/reasons-not-to-celebrate-halloween/

Below are additional considerations of the evil of Halloween.

The Devil Inspires Halloween as the Mockery of the *Feast of All Saints*

The devil always seeks to mock Christ and His Church. Satan would ***like*** to be worshipped as God but he is truly a foul parody of God. Satan has always acted this way. For example, seeking to receive Divine adoration from Our Lord, Satan promised to give Him the world if He would adore him:

> Again the devil took Him up into a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and said to Him: All these will I give thee if, falling down thou wilt adore me.

St. Matthew's Gospel, 4:8-9.

Unlike God, Satan cannot create anything. The Devil merely "imitates" God's wonderful works – ***but in a grotesque, repulsive fashion***. That is why Satan is popularly called the "ape of God" – because Satan and his works are monstrous and hideous caricatures of God and His magnificent works.

When God permits it, Satan performs pseudo-miracles. For example, in *Exodus*:

> Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharao … and ***Aaron took the rod*** before Pharao and his servants, and ***it was turned into a serpent***. And Pharao called the wise men and the magicians: and they also by Egyptian enchantments and certain secrets did in like manner. And they every one cast down their rods, and they were turned into serpents: but ***Aaron's rod devoured their rods***.

Exodus, 7:10-12.

Because the Church is the true Mystical Body of Christ, Satan "apes" the holy rites and works of the Catholic Church. For example, Satan promotes the "Pentecostals" and "charismatics" speaking in supposed "tongues" of gibberish – in order to mock the true gifts of tongues which God gave to some Catholics in the earliest days of the Church.

In our times of apostasy Satan's servants are remarkably bold in their vicious attacks against Christ. A dictionary entry for the word *Halloween* is "the evening preceding Allhallows or All Saints' Day."[1]

Of course, *All Saints Day* is a great and uniquely Catholic feast which dates back to the beginning of the Fifth Century. Pope St. Boniface IV (550-615 A.D.), when dedicating the Roman Pantheon, as *the Church of Our Blessed Lady, and All Holy Martyrs,* appointed

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[1] *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, ©1948, entry: *Halloween*.

November 1st as the chief annual festival of this Sacred Building. Then Pope Gregory IV (797-844 A.D.) instituted the *Feast for All Saints* for the universal Church in the year 835 A.D.[2]

As early as the sixth century in Spain and Gaul, Catholics prepared for this feast by three days of penance and litanies, fasting and alms deeds.[3]

In his magnificent work, *The Liturgical Year*, Dom Guéranger explains to us:

> When extended to the entire world, the feast became complete; it was made equal to the greatest solemnities, and widened its horizon till it reached the infinite, embracing uncreated, as well as created, sanctity. [In other words, this feast praised God, His Angels, and all the Saints in heaven.][4]

However, the solemn fast and abstinence (in preparation for this feast) was probably fixed at the time when the pope chose November 1st as the date on which this feast would be celebrated in the universal Church.[5]

What a sharp contrast there is between the traditional preparation for this feast and how the modern world regards the vigil of this feast! The secular world knows nothing about the true *Feast of All Saints*. This ignorance can be especially attributed to (and follows from) various evils spawned by Vatican II.

Over the decades there has been a constant pull to secularize Allhallows and certainly to divert attention from its religious significance. Instead of knowing even in the remotest way that Halloween is referring to all the hallowed friends of God – the Saints – people only associate this day and evening with dressing up in costumes and having parties. It is utterly disgusting to witness the perversity of the modern world with regard to this great Catholic feast day.

Nowadays, people collectively spend many billions of dollars annually to "celebrate" Halloween. Halloween has become one of the largest commercial "holidays" of the year.[6] Indeed the devil inspires society (in a twisted way) to make Halloween increasingly more like Christmas in decorations (such as black "Halloween trees") and also an assortment of "Halloween greeting cards". While making the day seem like innocent fun, the devil

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2 Information taken from *the New Roman Missal,* by Fr. Lasance, ©1945.

3 Dom Guéranger, *The Liturgical Year,* volume XV, entry: *Feast of All Saints*.

4 Dom Guéranger, *The Liturgical Year,* volume XV, entry: *Feast of All Saints*.

5 Information taken from *the New Roman Missal,* by Fr. Lasance, ©1945.

6 https://www.investopedia.com/the-big-business-of-halloween-americans-spend-billions-8719833

draws society into his mockery of God, His Saints, the seriousness of death and the horrifying misery of hell.

One only needs to look with an observant "Catholic eye" to notice that the diabolical influence is present on many levels. Of course, as is usual, our society at large is oblivious to such traps (and trappings) of Satan.

If one looks at the colors associated with the secular version of Halloween, one sees black, orange, and purple. The black and orange suggest the darkness of hell and the fires of hell. Black is also a symbol of death.

Recently, a member of the *Catholic Candle* Team saw some (supposedly) "innocent" Halloween cards which, upon careful reflection, had very demonic sounding greetings. One such card stated: *A spellbinding Halloween with moonlight bright and spirits light, may treats and laughter fill your night!*

When one considers carefully what this card is actually saying, one should shudder. This card is promoting what might sound like innocent fun but think about the shallowness of such a card: it makes a mockery of spells (something God sometimes allows Satan and his worshippers to do), and encourages one to spend the night eating treats and laughing. Contrast this with the way God looks at the Vigil of the Feast of all of His Saints and then it is easy to see how displeased God is regarding the world's view of the holy feast day's vigil. With this vigil being a traditional day of fast and abstinence, one can clearly see how Satan would choose this day to promote the opposite – encouraging people to gorge themselves on sweets and have parties.

This obvious disregard for God's plan is only the beginning of the evils that occur on this great vigil of the Church. Consider that witchcraft and the occult are real forces of evil in the world. We must not forget that this night is the most important "feast" of the year for Satan's servants. We must remember that these evils are their so-called religion.

Further, Halloween mocks the seriousness of death. Halloween makes light of the horrors of hell and casts the devil as someone who is "just for fun" or that doesn't exist. These are grave dangers to society and to our salvation!

We Catholics should not simply shrug our shoulders nonchalantly about this! We must perceive what is happening and warn others about the evil of this diabolical perversion of the great Catholic feast given to us.

We must do penance and make reparation for all the attacks against God and His Divine Majesty that occur on this day. We certainly cannot condone or take part in any of these Satanic practices! For example, we must neither give out candy to youngsters dressed up for Halloween nor decorate our homes with things associated with this perversion of the holy vigil.

As the world is becoming more and more immersed in the enticements of the devil, we see that the devil would have the world become Satan worshippers!

We must also remember that God is in charge and will protect us from the onslaughts of the devil. Trusting in the help of heaven, let us pray with all our hearts to the Blessed Mother who crushes the head of Satan, and also to St. Joseph, who is the *Terror of Demons!*

Catholic Candle **postscript:** If there are Halloween "trick or treaters" where you live, we suggest you print and hang on your door the sign available here: https://catholiccandle.org/2015/11/01/reasons-not-to-celebrate-halloween/

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Catholic Candle **note:** *Catholic Candle* published a series of articles on gluttony as a vice and as an obstacle to spiritual progress and to salvation. You can find those prior articles at these links:

- *What is Gluttony?* https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/what-is-gluttony
- *Conquering Gluttony Occurs at the Beginning of the Spiritual Life:* https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/we-remain-at-the-beginning-of-the-spiritual-life-until-we-conquer-gluttony
- *Gluttony is a Most Disgraceful Vice:* https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/gluttony-is-a-most-disgraceful-vice
- *The Wisdom of Ecclesiasticus Against Gluttony:* https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/the-wisdom-of-ecclesiasticus-against-gluttony
- *The Spiritual Benefits of Not Consuming Sweets and Snacks Alone:* https://catholiccandle.neocities.org/faith/the-spiritual-benefits-of-not-consuming-sweets-and-junkfood-when-you-are-alone
- *The Leftists' Defense of the Vice of Gluttony:* https://catholiccandle.org/2023/09/27/the-leftists-defense-of-the-vice-of-gluttony

Below is another article about gluttony, but with a different focus. This article shows gluttony is a trap of the devil which he uses to attack our rational nature and our ability to think deeply.

Mary's School of Sanctity

Lesson #62 – About the Temperaments, Part XXVII – The Devil Uses Gluttony to Prevent Us from Having a Life of Deep Prayer and Deep Thinking

Because the devil does not want ***any*** of us to think deeply and to love reasoning, no person of ***any*** temperament is immune from the devil's wily deceits to lure us away from the life of reason. Previously,[7] we discussed some tricks that the devil uses to lure our ***minds*** away from serious and deep thinking. Now let us consider the devil's age-old tactics to entice us through our ***bodies*** (and passions) as a means to pull us away from the life of reason.

We see the devil using this tactic with Our Lord and we see how Our Lord responds to the devil, returning the focus to the greater and higher importance of spiritual and intellectual matters as compared to food and our bodily needs:

> Then Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry. And the tempter coming said to him: If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. Who answered and said: It is written, Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.

St. Matthew's Gospel, 4:1-4.

Below, in this lesson, we will discuss the devil's attempt to divert us from high intellectual and spiritual matters through a common and rudimentary trap: gluttony.

Fighting Physical Allurements

In both the Old and New Testaments, God plainly tells man to fast because this is such a powerful means of strengthening his will and clarifying his intellect, as well as curbing and training his passions.

Because of the fall of Adam, man has the wounds caused by Original Sin. Concupiscence of the flesh is one of these wounds.[8] Also, because man is composed of body and soul,

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[7] Read this article: *Mary's School of Sanctity – Lesson #61 About the Temperaments – Part XXVI – The Fight against Worldliness which is a Huge Detriment to a Deep Prayer Life*: https://catholiccandle.org/2026/09/28/lesson-61-about-the-temperaments-part-xxv-the-fight-against-worldliness-which-is-a-huge-detriment-to-a-deep-prayer-life/

[8] For all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence

what affects one part of him also affects the other part. In other words, what affects the soul also affects the body – and vice versa. Thus, man's bodily disorders affect his soul.

St. Thomas Aquinas explains that the effects of intemperance include the dulling of a man's reason, and the weakening of his will. He further warns us that gluttony leads to lust.[9] The devil tempts man to gluttony in order to inflict precisely these harms. This vice weighs down a man's soul so much, and fills him with a fear so great (often instigated by the devil), that he loses the courage to fight against this vice.

St. Augustine recounts these very harms suffered in his own soul. He was a glutton and the slavery to this vice led him also to the slavery of lust. Addressing God, St. Augustine explains, in the following words, how he was a slave to his lower nature:

> Overeating has sometimes crept up on Thy servant. ... [I]t is not any uncleanness in the meat that I fear but the uncleanness of my own gluttony.
> …[10]

> I sighed and longed to be delivered, but was kept fast-bound, not with exterior chains or irons, but with my own iron will. The enemy held my will, and of it he had made a chain, with which he had fettered me fast. For, from a perverse will was created wicked desire or lust, and the serving this lust produced custom, and custom not resisted produced a kind of necessity with which, by certain [chain] links fastened one to another, I was kept close-shackled in this cruel slavery.[11]

St. Augustine explained further that the "load of the world agreeably kept me down"[12] and so he delayed his conversion and any serious attempts to discipline his passions. St. Augustine describes how he struggled with himself. He was ashamed of himself and yet still did not have the courage to convert. He wrote:

> I now was enraged at myself that I did not courageously at once resolve on what my reason convinced me to be so good and necessary to be done. I would … and I

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of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world. 1 *John*, 2:16.

9 St. Thomas explains these points fully in the *Summa*, IIa IIae, Q.148, a.6.

10 *St. Augustine's Confessions*, Book 10, Ch. 31.

11 *St. Augustine's Confessions*, Book 8, Ch.5.

12 *Butler's Lives of the Saints*, vol. 3, entry August 28, quoting *St. Augustine's Confessions*.

> would not. I was, as it were, divided between myself and myself; I shook my chain with which I was fettered, but could not be released from it.[13]

What St. Augustine is describing here is true for the glutton and especially one whose gluttony is deeply rooted and has led him into the vice of lust. As was true of St. Augustine, such a person's vices are so entrenched that he tells himself that he cannot give those vices up. What is ***really*** happening in that struggle is that, because of a man's passions, he "lies to himself" that it is impossible to give up his vice. As with St. Augustine, the man will not change until he ceases to lie to himself and begins telling his passions "***no!***" He must not yield to his passions and must reject their deceptive siren song. As was true of St. Augustine during this early part of his life, the vicious man capitulates to the "screaming" demands of his passions because he does not sufficiently will to let go of his vice.

Our Fight Against Gluttony – With God's Help

God, being the Sculptor of souls, helps the glutton to feel more and more embarrassed about his vice. This helps him to begin to seek a way to escape the chains of his vice.

Further, God leads the person to see that he cannot rid himself of his vice without God's assistance. In this manner the vicious man sees that he must have recourse to prayer. Also, he sees that he must do the penance of fasting to gain strength.

This is exactly what happened to St. Augustine. When he realized with humility that he was not going to be able to fight his vices entirely by his own effort – *i.e.*, without God's help – his fears about converting vanished and he fully embraced the life of prayer and penance.

Fasting and Temperance Heal the Harm Caused by Gluttony

St. Thomas Aquinas, quoting St. Augustine, tells us how powerful fasting is for the soul:

> 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.[14]

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13 *Butler's Lives of the Saints*, vol. 3, entry August 28, quoting *St. Augustine's Confessions*, Book 8, Ch.11.

14 *Summa,* IIa IIae, Q.147, a.1, *Respondeo.*

We can see from these words how fasting reverses the damage that intemperance causes in the soul. Fasting makes the mind keener and strengthens the will to do good. The devil knows this and does not want us to fast. He does not want our minds to become sharper so that we will enjoy using them more. Likewise, fasting helps to strengthen our resolve to improve – and the devil certainly does not want that either!

With our minds keener and our wills stronger, we incline more towards God. Prayer becomes easier and gradually becomes truly enjoyable. Our hearts grow in love for God. Well does Satan know the truth of these effects in us and does everything in his power to prevent them from occurring!

It is no wonder then that Satan does not want man to conquer his flesh. He fears that a man will think deeply and be able to use his reason well. So, in our busy world, the devil constantly lures people into focusing on food and sensual self–gratification. Consequently, the devil promotes all kinds of "fad" food in order to distract people from their true end, namely, God. Satan even goes so far as to tempt people that they "need" to have certain foods and drinks in order to be healthy. Here are some examples:

- So-called "protein bars" which are, basically, "glorified" candy bars;
- Granola bars;
- Energy bars;
- So-called "protein drinks" which are, basically, shakes "in disguise";
- Sports drinks;
- Energy drinks;
- "Plant-based meat";
- Frozen yogurt;
- Yogurt-covered snacks;
- Veggie chips; and
- Trail mix.

In our last lesson,[15] we asked ourselves a series of questions regarding our use of creatures. So here too, we should be aware of how we use food and drink, which are creatures of God. We should examine ourselves to see if we have inordinate attachments to them. We should be guided by the Church's traditional rules for fasting and abstinence.[16] We should faithfully and generously follow those rules to the best of our abilities.

Considerations which Encourage Us to Fight the Unruly, Lower Part of Our Nature

We should remind ourselves how fasting will help our souls so very much. Fasting helps us fight our concupiscence which had led us into the bestial vice of gluttony.

Another aspect of this battle to conquer ourselves is to remind ourselves of the rewards, fruits, joys, and the love we gain by winning this victory over ourselves. Not only in final beatitude but even in this life we are rewarded. By penance and fasting, we become more lucid and more reasonable. We have more stamina and strength—both spiritual and physical; our hearts grow warmer in our love of God and neighbor. We find that we better understand the meaning of our prayers. Our interest in, and attraction to, spiritual things grows keener.

We should remind ourselves that this better direction in our lives requires that we have the spirit of penance – generously lived. Daily sacrifices; pondering deeply upon the lives of Our Lord, Our Lady, and St. Joseph; spiritual reading and discussions; all help to make us and keep us as willing soldiers fighting in the "trenches" of the Church Militant and keep us focused on our life's goal – which is heaven.

Plus, these practices keep us enthused about being Catholics and living the Catholic life. In short, all these aspects help us to become and to remain faithful and uncompromising Catholics who humbly thank God for His many blessings.

A Preview…

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[15] Read this article: *Mary's School of Sanctity – Lesson #61 About the Temperaments – Part XXVI – The Fight against Worldliness which is a Huge Detriment to a Deep Prayer Life*: https://catholiccandle.org/2026/09/28/lesson-61-about-the-temperaments-part-xxv-the-fight-against-worldliness-which-is-a-huge-detriment-to-a-deep-prayer-life/

[16] 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-Abstinance.pdf

Having considered how the devil tries to lure all souls into gluttony, in our next lesson we will take a brief look into other pleasures and distractions which the devil uses to entice us away from a life of deep thinking and prayer.

Catholic Candle **note:** The above article is Part XXVII of the study of the temperaments, starting with the Choleric temperament. Here are links to the first twenty-six 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-cholerics-spiritual-combat-part-vi/

7. Part VII: Explaining when anger is sinful: https://catholiccandle.org/2025/02/21/lesson-42-temperaments-choleric-temperament-a-cholerics-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-cholerics-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-cholerics-spiritual-combat-part-ix/

10. Part X: Recommendations to help cholerics 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/

19. Part XIX: Explaining in what way sin is an object of fear for all temperaments: https://catholiccandle.org/2026/02/26/lesson-54-temperaments-choleric-temperament-whether-sin-is-an-object-of-fear-for-all-temperaments/

20. Part XX: Explaining the causes of fear – applying to all temperaments: https://catholiccandle.org/2026/03/31/marys-school-of-sanctity-3/

21. Part XXI: Explaining the effects of fear in all temperaments: https://catholiccandle.org/2026/04/26/about-the-temperaments-part-xxi-explaining-the-effects-of-fear-in-all-temperaments/

22. Part XXII: Explaining how to order our loves so we can use the passion of fear properly, and how the devil attempts to prevent this ordering: https://catholiccandle.org/2026/05/28/about-the-temperaments-part-xxii-how-to-order-our-loves-so-we-can-use-the-passion-of-fear-properly/

23. Part XXIII: Explanation of sloth in order to analyze this snare of Satan and to combat him: https://catholiccandle.org/2026/06/26/about-the-temperaments-part-xxiii-explanation-of-sloth-in-order-to-analyze-this-snare-of-satan/

24. Part XXIV: Explaining more about how the devil tries to draw us away from reasoning and from the things of God: https://catholiccandle.org/2026/07/29/about-the-temperaments-part-xiv-how-the-devil-draws-us-away-from-reasoning-and-the-things-of-god/

25. Part XXV – Explaining the Devil Attempts to Destroy Our Prayer-Life and How We Should Counterattack: https://catholiccandle.org/2026/08/31/lesson-60-about-the-temperaments-part-xxv-the-devil-attempts-to-destroy-our-prayer-life/

26. Part XXVI – Explaining how the devil uses worldliness to harm or destroy a person's deep prayer life: https://catholiccandle.org/2026/09/28/lesson-61-about-the-temperaments-part-xxv-the-fight-against-worldliness-which-is-a-huge-detriment-to-a-deep-prayer-life/

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***Catholic Candle* note:** Below, a reader asks about paying income taxes.

Should Catholics Pay Taxes, Especially to a Government that Uses Tax Revenue Badly?

A reader sent to *Catholic Candle* the cluster of comments and questions in the following four indented paragraphs (quoted immediately below):

> **Q.** In terms of specifics what can you say about our current situation regarding the payment of annual personal income taxes to the IRS? There is strong evidence brought out in actual legal cases that the tax is illegal and even unconstitutional.
>
> Aside from that, there is the question as to whether it is just in terms of the exorbitance of it in many cases, not to mention the extreme evil that so much of the money goes towards funding. Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, but if Caesar is an outright thief operating under the cover of the law, however unjust it may be in its

actual exercise thereof, is it really fair to say it is Caesar's in the first place? (The evil "powers that be" already rob the public unjustly in the form of inflation!)

And then comes the crunch on the 1040 that actually calls for our signature to affirm that what we have put down on the form is all truthful! [Would this be] a time for a legitimate use of mental reservation? Ugh!

Just a few thoughts of my own to which I hope you can shed some concrete light on too.

A. Good questions! In substance, these are perennial questions probably asked by people for millennia concerning the taxes levied by their own governments.

We understand that you are asking six questions, which we take to be as follows:

1. Is it immoral, in principle, for a government to require payment of income taxes?

2. Is it illegal or unconstitutional for the U.S. government to require payment of income taxes because income taxes were never authorized by the laws, due to a failure or deficiency in the U.S. Constitution or laws?

3. If income taxes are not evil in principle, is the current level of taxation immoral because it is excessive?

4. If the taxes are excessive, is it moral for us to refuse to pay them?

5. Even if income taxes are not evil *in principle*, nonetheless, should we not pay them because the government uses the revenue from those taxes to pay for evil things?

6. Is it moral for a person to use "mental reservation" or put falsehoods on his tax return to avoid paying unjust amounts of taxes?

We will answer these questions in order.

1. Is it Immoral, in Principle, for a Government to Require its People to Pay Income Taxes?

Short answer: No.

Explanation:

a. Government is a Good Institution which is Willed by God.

Various modern thinkers teach that government is a "necessary evil". For example, Thomas Paine, the American Revolutionary, falsely asserted that government is always bad. Here are his words:

> Society in every state is a blessing, but ***government even in its best state, is but a necessary evil***; in its worst state, an intolerable one.[17]

But that position is false. Government is a ***natural*** institution, created by God through the way He created human nature. This means that God wills for there to be government and He created man to be a social and political animal.

God made man a ***social*** animal – that is, to congregate and live together like bees, ants, and deer. But much more than that! God also made man a ***political*** animal – to use his reason to coordinate and to cooperate on projects which are for the Common Good and in their common interests.

The Great Philosopher Aristotle explains:

> A city is a natural production, and … man is naturally a political animal. … The gift of speech also evidently proves that man is a more social animal than the bees, or any of the herding cattle: for nature, as we say, does nothing in vain, and man is the only animal who enjoys it [*viz*., speech].[18]

St. Thomas Aquinas, greatest Doctor of the Catholic Church and greatest of all thinkers, teaches the same thing, following Aristotle:

> It is evident … that ***the political community exists by nature, and that human beings are by nature political animals***. And those who live outside a political community because of their nature and not by misfortune are either wicked or superhuman, the wicked like those condemned by Homer as unsocial, lawless, and criminal. For such persons are by their nature also bent on war, being free of restraint like birds in flight.
>
> And ***human beings are clearly political animals*** more than bees and other animals living in groups are. For nature does nothing in vain, as people say, and only human beings, in contrast with other animals, use speech. Therefore,

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[17] Thomas Paine, *Of the Origin and Design of Government in general, with concise Remarks on the English Constitution,* from his pamphlet series entitled *Common Sense* (emphasis added).

[18] Aristotle's *Politics*, Book 1, Ch.1, #1253a1–11 (bracketed word added for clarity).

> expressions of sadness and pleasure are signs and so also belong to other animals. For the nature of other animals is such as to have sense experiences of sadness and pleasure and to signify these experiences to one another. But ***speech indicates what is useful or harmful, and so also what is just or unjust. For, strictly speaking, it belongs to human beings alone, in contrast with other animals, to perceive good and evil, just and unjust, and the like. And communicating these perceptions produces households and political communities***.[19]

So government is natural and is willed by God. Therefore, government, *as such*, is a good thing (even though it can be abused). Government is ***not*** a "necessary evil", as Thomas Paine and some other modern thinkers wrongly held.[20]

b. Governments are Entitled to Collect Taxes.

Because government is a good institution and has operations it must perform (for example, defending the nation or kingdom from invasion), therefore government is entitled to charge taxes – *i.e.*, to collect money to use to do its job. For this reason, Our Lord taught:

> Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God, the things that are God's.

St. Matthew's Gospel, 22:21.

c. Well, What About Government Collecting Income Taxes in Particular?

Income tax is one way that reasonable taxes can be levied, although it is not the only possible way.

Catholic Candle is not aware of any argument based on reason or based on Catholic teaching which shows that it is unjust, *in principle*, for the government to tax its people on this basis (*viz.*, levy income taxes).

One argument ***in favor*** of income tax (as a proper source of government taxation) is based on government's duty to protect its citizens' property. Because it seems plausible

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19 St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Politics*, Book 1, Ch.1, #1253a1–11.

20 For an explanation why it is always wrong to revolt and why Catholics are not revolutionaries, read this article: https://catholiccandle.org/2021/02/01/revolution-is-in-the-air/ (Emphasis added.)

that a person who has more income would tend to have more need for the protection of his property (because he has more property or its value is greater), it does not seem unreasonable for the government to use a person's income level as a rough approximation of a particular person's need of government services. Looked at this way, a citizen would pay more taxes because he needs more protective services.

d. Conclusion:

It does not seem that it is unjust or immoral *in principle*, for a government to charge reasonable income taxes and for citizens to be obliged to pay reasonable income taxes.

2. Is it Illegal or Unconstitutional for the U.S. Government to Require Payment of Income Taxes Because Income Taxes Were Never Authorized by the Laws, Due to a Failure or Deficiency in the U.S. Constitution?

As far as the legality of income taxes, one could ask whether the U.S. Constitution's 16th Amendment (authorizing income taxes) was ever legally ratified. (The U.S. government declared that this Amendment's was ratified in 1913.) Rightly or wrongly, for many decades, various people have asserted this lack of valid ratification.

For over 40 years, some members of the *Catholic Candle* Team have been hearing the assertion from various people that Americans have no obligation to pay income taxes because this amendment to the Constitution was not validly or correctly ratified. But these *Catholic Candle* Team members have ***never received convincing evidence*** which supports such assertions, despite encountering many persons who ***attempted*** to provide such evidence.

a. Practical Reality Interposes Itself

However, even if a person were to suppose that the 16th Amendment was never ratified, ***look at the practical reality of the situation***. What is perfectly clear is that the claim (*viz.*, that the 16th Amendment is void) would never win in court. This non-ratification argument has lost so often in court that the judges summarily reject it without any fresh examination, whenever the argument is again presented to the courts. For example, in the 2009 federal appellate case, *U.S. v. Benson*, the court stated:

> ***[W]e have repeatedly rejected the claim that the Sixteenth Amendment was improperly ratified***. One would think this repeated rejection of [the substance of the taxpayer's] Sixteenth Amendment argument would put the matter to rest. …

> We find it hard to understand why ***the long and unbroken line of cases upholding the constitutionality of the Sixteenth Amendment*** generally, and those specifically rejecting the argument advanced [by the defendant], have not persuaded [him] and his compatriots to seek a more effective forum for airing their attack on the federal income tax structure [*viz*., seeking to overturn the tax laws through the legislative branch of government].[21]

Further, the court's opinion in the *Benson* case characterized as a ***"nutty opinion"*** that the 16th Amendment has not been properly ratified.[22]

Clearly, a citizen would never win in court in today's legal milieu. Therefore, at the time of the government's choosing, he will be hauled into court for the punishment that the government chooses to inflict upon him.

b. Be a Martyr for Christ, Not a "Martyr" for Money or Politics

So this non-ratification argument would not protect a person in a practical way from the strong arm of the government enforcing its asserted tax laws (regardless of whatever technically-correct arguments we might suppose there to be).

But ***we are on earth to save our souls***. Even if the government were beyond its rights and authority to collect income taxes, nonetheless, ***if you are going to be arrested for something, make sure that it is because you are a faithful and informed Catholic rather than because of money.***

As the *Book of Wisdom* declares:

> I preferred her [*viz*., wisdom] before kingdoms and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison to her. Neither did I compare unto her any precious stone: for ***all gold in comparison to her, is as a little sand; and silver in respect to her shall be counted as clay***.[23]

Consider this: Suppose a man is walking in a dark alley and is confronted by an armed robber demanding his wallet. Although that robber is acting unjustly, a man's right to

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[21] *U.S. v. Benson*, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, Cases Nos. 08-1312 and 08-1586, decided: April 06, 2009 available here: https://caselaw.findlaw.com/court/us-7th-circuit/1137787.html (emphasis added).

[22] *U.S. v. Benson*, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, Cases Nos. 08-1312 and 08-1586, decided: April 06, 2009 available here: https://caselaw.findlaw.com/court/us-7th-circuit/1137787.html (emphasis added).

[23] *Book of Wisdom*, 7:8-9.

keep his wallet is not the principle for which he should die. At issue is merely money. The robber is sinning. But the victim of the robbery is not sinning by handing over his wallet rather than being murdered.

Similarly, even if it were true that the government is unjust in the taxes it collects, nonetheless, it is not a sin for a person to hand over the money compulsorily demanded of him in order that he avoids incarceration (however unjust). Remaining out of jail would provide a man many advantages for serving God and saving his soul.

So if a Catholic goes to jail for the Holy Catholic Faith, blessed is he! But if he goes to jail to avoid paying money (taxes), that seems imprudent and seems to show his misplaced priorities in life.

c. Regardless of Technicalities, Citizens Have a Duty to Pay Taxes

Further, let us recall what we saw above – *viz.*, that government has a right to collect a reasonable amount of taxes – in fairness (equity). This is because God wills that there be government and He wills that this government receive reasonable revenue to use to perform its proper work (*e.g.*, defending the country).

Therefore, even if there were a technical mistake that effectively nullifies all tax laws (so that there is no tax law validly "on the books"), nonetheless, we have a duty to support the government by paying reasonable taxes. This is our duty in conscience regardless of a detail missing which nullifies the law.

To illustrate this equitable principle, suppose the following fact scenario:

> Suppose your neighbor hired professional painters to paint his home. Suppose you looked out your window and noticed those painters had parked their vehicles near your home. They set up for work at your home and then began painting your house – (which, suppose, was truly in great need of paint). You could have stopped the painters but delightedly watched while they painted your house – which they did because they mistook your home for your neighbor's home. Although you do not have a painting contract with them, you still have a duty in fairness to pay them for the benefit you received.

d. Applicability of This Explanation to Readers in Other Countries

Although this discussion has been about a claim regarding the U.S. Constitution in particular, readers in other countries would have the equivalent issue if there were any kind of technical, legalistic argument for not paying taxes in their own countries,

assuming that the governments of those countries enforced their tax codes as the U.S. does. The physical force of government would still compel them to pay taxes and their equitable duty would require payment of reasonable taxes also.

3. If Income Taxes are Not Evil in Principle, is the Current Level of Taxation Immoral Because it is Excessive?

And:

4. If the Taxes are Excessive, Is It Moral for Us to Refuse to Pay Them?

As we saw above, a citizen has the duty to pay ***reasonable*** taxes.

However, it is prudent for a citizen to pay even more than a reasonable amount of taxes if the alternative is to be sentenced to a long jail term.

But how much is reasonable to pay in taxes? That is a question requiring considerable prudence and is a determination very heavily dependent upon the particular facts of the situation.

For example, when the Muslim horde surrounded Vienna in 1683 and laid siege to the city, the government would seem to have had a reasonable claim to levy very high taxes upon its citizens in order to defend the city in that crisis, as compared to the taxes which would be levied in a time of peace.

Further, it would be unreasonable for every citizen to be allowed to act upon his own judgment regarding the correct level of taxes because:

- He does not have all necessary information and has less information than the government does on the issue of the level of taxes that are appropriate, considering:

    1. The level of government services needed throughout the entire realm;

    2. The cost of these services under expected conditions;

    3. Alternative government payment sources;

    4. Competing government expenditure needs; and

    5. The expected foreseeable timeframe for the services.

- Besides an individual citizen's lack of information, he is also usually less skilled than government personnel in making such a judgment because they are professionals who are usually more experienced in making such determinations;

- The individual citizen would be "judging his own case" and would be self-interested in making this judgment because he personally benefits depending upon the assumptions he uses and the determinations he makes; and

- If every citizen made his own judgment, this would result in chaos and lack of uniformity.

Thus, the taxes levied by the government must be ***reasonable*** but citizens should consider the range of reasonable taxes to be a ***broad range*** and not be quick to substitute their own evaluation in place of the government's determination.

This is like the fact that the government has the duty to be ***reasonable*** in setting speed limits on the roads. But citizens should consider the range of reasonable speed limits to be a ***broad range***. Drivers should ***not*** be quick to ignore the speed limit on the assertion that their own judgment on the matter is more reasonable than the government's determination.[24]

5. If Income Taxes Are Not Evil in Principle, Should We Not Pay Them Because the Government Wastes Tax Money or Uses It to Pay for Evil Things?

It takes great prudence to determine if (or when) a government is wasting so much money or is spending so much on causes that are evil, that a citizen should refuse to pay his reasonable share of the tax burden.

Let us look at the Roman Empire during the time at which Our Lord told us to "render unto Caesar". The Roman Empire was not clearly less wasteful or spending less for evil purposes, as compared to our modern governments. In Our Lord's time, the Romans spent large amounts of money:

- On foreign wars that were not plainly necessary. (Does this sound familiar?)

- On grain subsidies and other handouts and freebies to the people. (Does this sound familiar?)

- On public games and entertainment for the people. (Does this sound familiar?)

[24] The civil law is binding in conscience. Read the explanation of this truth in *Summa*, Ia IIae, Q.96, a.4.

- ❖ On building and maintaining pagan temples and in other ways promoting false gods.

Yet, in this context, Our Lord teaches us that we should render taxes unto Caesar.

So, we should at least not be quicker than Our Lord was to jump to the determination that the government wastes so much money or spends it on so many things that are evil, that Caesar should not be paid.

6. Is it Moral for a Person to Use "Mental Reservation" or Put Falsehoods on His Tax Return to Avoid Paying Unjust Amounts of Taxes?

The phrase "mental reservation" can have multiple meanings. Here is one of them from Encyclopedia.com:

> Mental Reservation, … in the strict sense it means giving utterance to only part of one's judgment while retaining in mind or whispering inaudibly another part necessary to make the statement objectively truthful. In the classical example, Titius privately said to a woman that he would take her for his wife, although he had no intention of marrying her. Later, when asked by a judge whether he had said he would take the woman for his wife, he replied that he had not, understanding that he had not spoken the words with the intention of marrying the woman.[25]

But whatever definition a person uses for so-called "mental reservation", he should ***never lie***.

To tell a lie is always evil and sinful. ***No end ever justifies a sinful means***. Even if we were to suppose that a person had the very highest of all motives – which is to promote the glory of God – that would still never justify a lie.

Here is the very striking way in which St. Thomas Aquinas, greatest Doctor of the Catholic Church, teaches this truth:

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[25] https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/mental-reservation

> A lie must be shunned to such an extent that, even if it seemed that the lie would increase the glory of God, we should still not tell a lie.[26]

Let us consider an example: Suppose a pagan were on his deathbed with only minutes to live. Suppose also that we happen to know that he would convert to the Catholic Faith and agree to baptism if we were to tell him a small (so-called) "harmless" lie, such as that the dog he loved would go to heaven. We can never justify even such a (so-called) "white" lie even to save his soul.

Further the *Book of Ecclesiasticus* infallibly teaches us:

> ***Be not willing to make any manner of lie***: for the custom thereof is not good.[27]

St. Augustine, Doctor of the Church, teaches:

> Since every man withdraws from eternity in so far as he withdraws from truth, it is most absurd to say that by so withdrawing one is able to arrive at any good. Or, if there appears to be an eternal good which truth does not embrace, it will not be true; therefore, because it is false, it will not be good.
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> Besides, as the mind must be preferred to the body, so truth must be preferred by the mind, so that not only does the mind seek truth more than it seeks the body, but even more than it seeks itself.[28]

Lastly, Pope Innocent XI, in the bull *Sanctissimus Dominus*, ***condemned*** the following propositions:

> 25. If a man has cause for it, whether it be small or great, he may lawfully swear without an intention of swearing. ***Condemned.***
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> 26. A man either alone or before others, may either when he is asked, or of his own accord, or for his diversion, or any other end swear that he did not do a thing which he really did; having a secret meaning, either of some other thing which he did not

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[26] Here is the Latin:

> Adeo enim vitanda sunt mendacia, ut etiam si cedere videantur ad landem Dei, non sunt dicenda.

St. Thomas Aquinas' *Lectures on St. John's Gospel*, ch.13, lecture #3, section #1776.

[27] *Ecclesiasticus*, 7:14.

[28] St. Augustine, *On Lying*, ch.7.

do, or of another way of doing it, or of any other truth which he adds to it; in which case he is in truth neither a liar, nor is he perjured. ***Condemned.***

27. A just cause of using those secret meanings is as oft as it is necessary or profitable for the preservation of life, or honor, or ***saving one's goods***, or for any other act of virtue; so that the concealment of truth seems in that case expedient or desirable.[29] ***Condemned.***

Conclusions

† We have a duty to pay reasonable taxes to our government.

† It is difficult to determine the ***amount*** of tax which is reasonable. This determination requires great prudence and a careful knowledge of many circumstances which are often known better to the government than to an individual citizen.

† Our Lord taught people that they should pay taxes to the Roman Empire despite a rather high level of government waste and also spending for evil purposes. Our modern governments are not clearly worse than the Roman Empire and we should not be quick to refuse to pay taxes based on government waste and evil expenditures.

† Even if the government demands taxes which are higher than are reasonable, we should pay them rather than suffer significant punishment (*e.g.*, incarceration) if that punishment would be a serious obstacle to our serving God and saving our souls. ***If we are martyred, let it be for Christ rather than "martyred" for money or for politics.***

† ***We must never tell a lie for any reason***. If we tell a lie, it is still a sin even if we label our words as "mental reservation".

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Let Us Be Devoted the Christ the King!

Having just celebrated the Feast of Christ the King, let us remind ourselves of this important dogma of the Catholic Faith. Read these articles:

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[29] Bull *Sanctissimus Dominus*, Pope Innocent XI, in 1679 (emphasis added).

- https://catholiccandle.org/2023/02/14/lesson-18-the-call-of-christ-the-king/

- https://catholiccandle.org/2025/08/22/christ-is-king-over-all-men-with-no-exceptions/

It is Time to Vote! (in many places)

It is the time of candidate elections in many places! Here is a reminder of our duty to vote: https://catholiccandle.org/2024/10/24/our-duty-to-vote-for-the-least-bad-political-candidate/

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Cana Search Relaunch

Lifelong Traditional Catholics helping to connect unmarried Traditional Catholic men and women seeking to fulfill God's call to their married vocations.

Interested persons can find out more information here:
https://catholiccandle.org/canasearch/

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